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The family gift-giving process and consumer socialisation: a cross-cultural analysis

Constance Faye Hill
University of Wollongong

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THE FAMILY GIFT-GIVING PROCESS
AND CONSUMER SOCIALISATION:
A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

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Constance Faye Hill, MBA (UTS),
Grad Dip Mktg (CSU-Mitchell)

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The purpose of this research was to establish the link between the family gift-giving process and consumer socialisation in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Because of the exploratory nature of this investigation, the objective was to develop rather than to test a model. Four assumptions that emanated from the theoretical concepts in the existing literature were made. These assumptions were used to generate five research questions. The five research questions were explored through a series of in-depth interviews with sixty-eight individuals from sixteen families of Australian Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese backgrounds. All the families were nuclear and of middle-class socioeconomic status. They consisted of both parents living together with their children. The fathers were the main income earners and the mothers were primarily working as full-time homemakers. All the children were between the ages of 12 and 21 years. The findings supported the main assumptions of the study. They established that: (1) individuals differ in the role that they play in family gift giving within and across cultures; (2) culture affects the gift-giving family interaction style; and (3) the family gift-giving process leads to consumer socialisation in the two cultures. The findings from this research were used to suggest extensions of the proposed model, directions for further research, and practical implications for marketers.
AGREEMENT

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I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

Constance Faye HILL
DEDICATION

Thanks be to God for His gift
that is too wonderful to explain!
(2 Corinthians 9:15)

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my partner, Peter James Crompton Rattenbury; my mother, Marguerite Faye Phillips Hill; and to my late father, Conrad Charles Hill, for their gifts of love.
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In the conduct of this study I have benefited from the guidance and encouragement of a number of people. I offer my sincere thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Celia T. Romm and Dr. Allan Bordow, who listened patiently, guided gently, encouraged continuously and never stopped believing in me. Their gifts of time and expertise can never be fully reciprocated.

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# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGREEMENT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 1. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1.1 INTRODUCTION | 4

1.2 RECIPROCITY | 8

1.2.1 EARLIER STUDIES | 9

1.2.2 LATER STUDIES | 16

1.2.2.1 RECIPROCITY AND CULTURE | 18

1.2.2.2 RECIPROCITY AND THE FAMILY | 25

1.3 SELF-CONCEPT | 30

1.3.1 SELF-CONCEPT AND CONSUMER SOCIALISATION | 32

1.3.2 SELF-CONCEPT AND INDIVIDUAL FAMILY ROLES | 37

1.3.3 SELF-CONCEPT AND CULTURE | 39

1.4 COMMUNICATION | 42

1.4.1 FAMILY INTERACTION AND GIFT-GIVING RITUALS | 43

1.4.2 COMMUNICATION AND GIFT SELECTION | 47

1.4.3 COMMUNICATION AND SYMBOLIC MESSAGES | 49

1.4.4 COMMUNICATION AND REACTION | 51

1.5 DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH | 53

1.5.1 RECIPROCITY | 53

1.5.2 SELF-CONCEPT | 55

1.5.3 COMMUNICATION | 58

1.5.4 CONCLUSION | 60
2. PROPOSED MODEL ................................................................. 61
   2.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................... 61
   2.2 ASSUMPTIONS .............................................................. 61
   2.3 VARIABLES ..................................................................... 65
      2.3.1 INDIVIDUAL FAMILY ROLE ........................................ 65
      2.3.2 FAMILY INTERACTION STYLE ..................................... 66
      2.3.3 CULTURE ................................................................. 68
      2.3.4 FAMILY GIFT-GIVING PROCESS ................................... 69
         2.3.4.1 MOTIVATION ...................................................... 69
         2.3.4.2 SELECTION ....................................................... 70
         2.3.4.3 COMMUNICATION ............................................... 70
         2.3.4.4 REACTION ......................................................... 71
      2.3.5 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ............................................ 71
   2.4 RESEARCH GOALS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS ................. 72

3. METHODOLOGY .................................................................. 74
   3.1 INTRODUCTION .............................................................. 74
   3.2 SUBJECTS ...................................................................... 74
      3.2.1 POPULATION .......................................................... 75
      3.2.2 SAMPLING STRATEGY ............................................... 76
      3.2.3 SAMPLE SIZE .......................................................... 76
      3.2.4 SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS .......................................... 76
         3.2.4.1 FAMILY TYPE .................................................. 77
         3.2.4.2 SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS .................................. 77
         3.2.4.3 LIFE-CYCLE AND AGES OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS .. 77
         3.2.4.4 EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN .......... 80
      3.2.5 EDUCATION OF PARENTS .......................................... 80
      3.2.6 EMPLOYMENT OF PARENTS ....................................... 81
   3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT ................................................ 82
   3.4 FIELDWORK .................................................................. 88
   3.5 TREATMENT OF DATA .................................................... 90
      3.5.1 TRANSCRIPTION ....................................................... 91
      3.5.2 THE ETHNOGRAPH .................................................... 91
3.5.3 ANALYSIS ................................................................. 92
3.5.3.1 STAGE ONE ......................................................... 92
3.5.3.2 STAGE TWO ....................................................... 94
3.5.3.3 STAGE THREE .................................................... 94
3.5.3.4 STAGE FOUR ...................................................... 95
3.5.3.5 STAGE FIVE ....................................................... 96

4. RESULTS: STAGE ONE .................................................. 97
4.1 INTRODUCTION .......................................................... 97
4.2 ANGLO-CELTIC FAMILIES ............................................. 97
  4.2.1 ROLE OF MOTHER ................................................ 98
    4.2.1.1 MOTIVATION ................................................. 98
    4.2.1.2 SELECTION ................................................. 100
    4.2.1.3 COMMUNICATION ......................................... 103
    4.2.1.4 REACTION .................................................. 105
    4.2.1.5 SUMMARY .................................................. 106
  4.2.2 ROLE OF FATHER ................................................ 107
    4.2.2.1 MOTIVATION ................................................. 107
    4.2.2.2 SELECTION ................................................. 109
    4.2.2.3 COMMUNICATION ......................................... 112
    4.2.2.4 REACTION .................................................. 114
    4.2.2.5 SUMMARY .................................................. 115
  4.2.3 ROLE OF DAUGHTER ............................................... 116
    4.2.3.1 MOTIVATION ................................................. 116
    4.2.3.2 SELECTION ................................................. 118
    4.2.3.3 COMMUNICATION ......................................... 120
    4.2.3.4 REACTION .................................................. 121
    4.2.3.5 SUMMARY .................................................. 123
  4.2.4 ROLE OF SON ........................................................ 123
    4.2.4.1 MOTIVATION ................................................. 124
    4.2.4.2 SELECTION ................................................. 125
    4.2.4.3 COMMUNICATION ......................................... 128
    4.2.4.4 REACTION .................................................. 129
    4.2.4.5 SUMMARY .................................................. 130
4.3 SINO-VIETNAMESE FAMILIES ............................................. 131
  4.3.1 ROLE OF MOTHER ...................................................... 131
    4.3.1.1 MOTIVATION .................................................. 132
    4.3.1.2 SELECTION .................................................. 134
    4.3.1.3 COMMUNICATION ............................................. 137
    4.3.1.4 REACTION .................................................... 139
    4.3.1.5 SUMMARY ................................................... 141
  4.3.2 ROLE OF FATHER ................................................... 141
    4.3.2.1 MOTIVATION ................................................ 141
    4.3.2.2 SELECTION ................................................ 144
    4.3.2.3 COMMUNICATION ............................................ 146
    4.3.2.4 REACTION .................................................. 147
    4.3.2.5 SUMMARY .................................................. 149
  4.3.3 ROLE OF DAUGHTER ................................................. 149
    4.3.3.1 MOTIVATION ................................................ 149
    4.3.3.2 SELECTION ................................................ 152
    4.3.3.3 COMMUNICATION ........................................... 153
    4.3.3.4 REACTION .................................................. 155
    4.3.3.5 SUMMARY .................................................. 157
  4.3.4 ROLE OF SON ....................................................... 157
    4.3.4.1 MOTIVATION ................................................ 157
    4.3.4.2 SELECTION ................................................ 159
    4.3.4.3 COMMUNICATION ............................................ 161
    4.3.4.4 REACTION .................................................. 162
    4.3.4.5 SUMMARY .................................................. 164

5. RESULTS: STAGE TWO ..................................................... 165
  5.1 INTRODUCTION ....................................................... 165
  5.2 FAMILY INTERACTION STYLES ......................................... 168
    5.2.1 CONSENSUAL FAMILY INTERACTION STYLE ..................... 171
      5.2.1.1 ROLE OF ANGLO MOTHER ................................ 171
      5.2.1.2 ROLE OF SINO MOTHER .................................. 173
      5.2.1.3 ROLE OF ANGLO FATHER ................................ 175
      5.2.1.4 ROLE OF SINO FATHER .................................. 177
      5.2.1.5 ROLE OF ANGLO DAUGHTER ............................... 179
      5.2.1.6 ROLE OF SINO DAUGHTER ................................ 180
      5.2.1.7 ROLE OF ANGLO SON ..................................... 183
      5.2.1.8 ROLE OF SINO SON ..................................... 185
6. RESULTS: STAGE THREE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.2 ROLE OF ANGLO AND SINO MOTHER

6.2.1 MOTIVATION

6.2.2 SELECTION

6.2.3 COMMUNICATION

6.2.4 REACTION

6.3 ROLE OF ANGLO AND SINO FATHER

6.3.1 MOTIVATION

6.3.2 SELECTION

6.3.3 COMMUNICATION

6.3.4 REACTION

6.4 ROLE OF ANGLO AND SINO DAUGHTER

6.4.1 MOTIVATION

6.4.2 SELECTION

6.4.3 COMMUNICATION

6.4.4 REACTION

6.5 ROLE OF ANGLO AND SINO SON

6.5.1 MOTIVATION

6.5.2 SELECTION

6.5.3 COMMUNICATION

6.5.4 REACTION
6.6 ANGLO AND SINO FAMILIES ACROSS ROLES ............................................. 226
  6.6.1 MOTIVATION .................................................................................. 228
  6.6.2 SELECTION .................................................................................... 229
  6.6.3 COMMUNICATION ......................................................................... 230
  6.6.4 REACTION ...................................................................................... 230

7. RESULTS: STAGE FOUR ............................................................................. 232
  7.1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................. 232
  7.2 ROLE OF MOTHER ............................................................................. 233
    7.2.1 ROLE OF ANGLO MOTHER .......................................................... 233
      7.2.1.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION ................................................... 233
      7.2.1.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT .............................................. 234
      7.2.1.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES ................................................... 236
      7.2.1.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES ...................................................... 237
      7.2.1.5 CONSUMER REACTION ...................................................... 238
      7.2.1.6 SUMMARY ............................................................................ 239
    7.2.2 ROLE OF SINO MOTHER .............................................................. 240
      7.2.2.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION ................................................... 240
      7.2.2.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT .............................................. 240
      7.2.2.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES ................................................... 241
      7.2.2.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES ...................................................... 242
      7.2.2.5 CONSUMER REACTION ...................................................... 244
      7.2.2.6 SUMMARY ............................................................................ 244
    7.2.3 CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS ..................................................... 245
  7.3 ROLE OF FATHER ................................................................................. 247
    7.3.1 ROLE OF ANGLO FATHER .......................................................... 247
      7.3.1.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION ................................................... 247
      7.3.1.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT .............................................. 248
      7.3.1.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES ................................................... 249
      7.3.1.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES ...................................................... 250
      7.3.1.5 CONSUMER REACTION ...................................................... 251
      7.3.1.6 SUMMARY ............................................................................ 251
    7.3.2 ROLE OF SINO FATHER ............................................................... 252
      7.3.2.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION ................................................... 252
      7.3.2.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT .............................................. 253
      7.3.2.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES ................................................... 254
      7.3.2.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES ...................................................... 255
INTRODUCTION

The gift-giving practices of traditional societies have been extensively studied by anthropologists since the beginning of this century. In the 1960s, psychologists and sociologists started to investigate gift giving. By the 1970s, some of the most interesting developments in consumer behaviour began to occur at the boundaries between marketing and the other social sciences. At that time, the study of gift-giving behaviour started to be explored by consumer researchers. This interest was initially prompted by the recognition of how important gift giving is to retailers. Even though it provides economic benefits, gift giving in the field of consumer behaviour also serves a number of other important functions. Consumer socialisation is one of these gift-giving functions.

Research into consumer socialisation, which stemmed from socialisation theories, gathered momentum by the mid-1970s. This research was based on the assumption that early childhood consumer-orientated experiences influence later consumer skills and behaviours. Recently it has become universally recognised that although consumer socialisation begins in childhood, it continues throughout adulthood. For this reason, it seems appropriate for any study attempting to understand the processes that affect consumer socialisation to consider both children and adults.

The objective of this research is to explore the link between the process of gift giving and consumer socialisation within a theoretical model. In particular, the study focuses on the process of gift giving in a family context that leads to the consumer socialisation of parents and
children in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Thus, the consumer socialising effects of gifts are assumed to be reciprocal between parents and children rather than uni-directional from parents to children. Also, the children in the study are in adolescence, i.e. twelve to twenty-one years of age, as this age group is assumed to be the most appropriate for investigating the consumer socialisation of parents. Families from individualistic and collectivistic cultures, i.e. Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese Australians, with contrasting value orientations, are used as the basis for the research. In this way, the study represents an attempt to move beyond the prevailing consumer research on gift-giving behaviour in the United States that has concentrated on the Western perspective.

The research, which was exploratory in nature, used an inductive, qualitative approach. A series of in-depth interviews with families in the two cultures were conducted to test the validity of the major assumptions in the proposed model. These interviews served as the basis for the description of the family gift-giving process in relation to consumer socialisation across cultures.

The thesis contains nine chapters. The first chapter reviews the literature across the social sciences as it pertains to gift-giving behaviour within the family. The second chapter proposes a model that emanated from the literature that was discussed in the previous chapter. Five research questions are presented. They were generated from the assumptions in the model and were used to guide the study. The third chapter discusses the methodology that was employed. The sample, research instrument, fieldwork, and treatment of the data are described. The next five chapters address the research questions. Each
of these chapters presents the data that relates to a particular research question. The final chapter assesses the results in terms of the proposed model and integrates the results with previous research. An extension of the proposed model is presented. Also, the limitations of the study are outlined, its practical implications are discussed, and suggestions for further research are offered.
CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides the background information for the current study that explores family gift-giving behavior from a marketing perspective. It reviews the relevant literature to identify gaps that merit further investigation but have not been adequately addressed. The examination of the literature extends beyond the specific area of interest to show how it links with the wider body of knowledge. It, therefore, not only explores the consumer research on family gift-giving behavior but also relates it to pertinent themes across disciplines. In this respect, the major theories and findings are described in terms of their theoretical and empirical implications to the study. This data then serves as the basis for the proposed model that is presented in the next chapter.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Gift-giving behavior is a topic of growing interest among consumer researchers in the marketing discipline. It has been and is still being approached from many different directions. Much of this interest has stemmed from the multi-disciplinary model developed by Sherry (1983) in which concepts from anthropology, sociology and psychology are integrated. Even though Wagner and Garner (1993) have recently noted that the potential contribution of economics is not well-developed in
Chapter One

the model, Sherry was the first consumer researcher to recognise the necessity for a holistic approach to the study of gift-giving behavior. Despite the need for this approach, the existing research in this area has not linked the various concepts at different levels of analysis.

This literature review specifically concentrates on gift-giving behavior in a family context as it cuts across the social sciences. Several recurring themes have emerged in the literature that have provided the orientation for this discussion and have led to an identification of the areas that require further investigation. These relevant themes focus on several behavioral concepts that include reciprocity, self-concept, and communication. During the review, other issues are also included when they are considered to be of relevance to the research. Before the major themes are discussed, however, it is necessary to describe gift-giving behavior as it is currently conceptualised.

According to Banks (1979) and Sherry (1983), gift-giving behavior is an interactive process. During the process, the giver and recipient move through a series of stages. Banks has indicated that the process consists of four stages: (1) purchase, (2) interactive/exchange, (3) consumption, and (4) communication. Sherry has identified three stages in the process: (1) gestation, (2) prestation, and (3) reformulation.

The purchase stage in the Banks (1979) model and the gestation stage in the Sherry (1983) model resemble the pre-purchase and purchase stages in the traditional consumer decision-making model, e.g. Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1968). The interactive/exchange stage in the Banks model and the prestation stage in the Sherry model involve the actual gift exchange. At this stage, the giver is primarily concerned
with generating a response from the recipient. The consumption and communication stages in the Banks model and the reformulation stage in the Sherry model pertain to the disposition of the gift, i.e. consumption, display or storage, as well as the feedback from the recipient to the giver. Thus, these stages are synonymous with the post-purchase stage in the consumer decision-making model. As Banks and Sherry have pointed out, the recipient may then become the giver in a subsequent gift exchange. Both models suggest that the process is linear and has the potential to be continual. Even though Banks and Sherry acknowledge that each stage in their respective models may have a direct bearing on subsequent stages, a stage is temporal by definition and, therefore, tends to be isolated to specific periods of time.

Sherry (1983) has assumed that there are multiple motives for gift exchange that lie between altruism and agonism on a motivation continuum. An altruistic gift-giving motive attempts to maximise the pleasure of the recipient and has an other-serving orientation while an agonistic gift-giving motive attempts to maximise the giver’s pleasure and has a self-serving orientation. More recently, Goodwin, Smith and Spiggle (1990) noted the distinction between voluntary and obligatory gifts in relation to consumer motivation and the gift purchase process. Voluntary gifts were seen as those made with a minimum amount of external pressure, whereas obligatory gifts were described as those made as a result of strong social norms. Also, there are few ulterior motives when low self-interest exists while ulterior motives play a major role in gift-giving occasions that involve high self-interest. When the gift is voluntary and low self-interest is present, the motives are more altruistic and other-serving. For example, giving a gift to a sick friend. In contrast, when the gift is voluntary but high self-interest exists, the
motives are more agonistic and self-serving. For example, giving a gift that suggests a personal favour is expected in return. On the other hand, low-risk ritual gifts occur when an obligation exists but the giver has low self-interest in the exchange. For example, giving a Christmas gift to an acquaintance. It was also found that the level of self-interest leads to a similar amount of risk during gift selection. For example, a high self-interest motive is more likely to involve a high-risk purchase decision, whereas a low self-interest motive tends to involve a low-risk purchase decision. But, Belk and Coon (1993) pointed out that gift-giving research should go beyond the present paradigms that assume we give gifts only to get something in return. Instead, they recommended that other, less agonistic and more altruistic, paradigms should be considered to explain gift-giving behaviour.

Belk (1979) stated that gift giving varies according to the types of: givers, gifts, recipients and situational conditions. Belk also identified four functions that the process of gift-giving behaviour may serve, namely: (1) social exchange, (2) economic exchange, (3) socialisation and (4) communication. The social exchange function describes the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships through the giving and receiving of gifts. The economic exchange function describes the obligatory nature of reciprocal exchange in which gifts are given in anticipation of an equitable return. The socialisation function describes gifts received by children that influence their self-concept and behavioral patterns. Finally, the communication function describes the messages transmitted through gifts between givers and recipients. It should be noted that the three recurring themes, which were previously mentioned, relate to these four gift-giving functions. That
is, reciprocity considers the social exchange and economic exchange functions, self-concept concentrates on the socialisation function, and communication focuses on the communication function.

In the next chapter, a model that explains family gift-giving behavior is presented as the theoretical basis for this research. This proposed model is not limited to individuals or dyads, which was the case in the models of Banks (1979) and Sherry (1983), but takes into consideration that there may be a number of participants during family gift exchange. Furthermore, the elements that make up the gift-giving process and the way they operate are perceived differently from the way in which the stages are described in these previous models.

1.2 RECIPROCITY

Reciprocity theory, which covers a wider range than gift exchange, has been given a considerable amount of attention in the literature. This review, however, focuses on the most important contributions on reciprocity that are relevant to the study of family gift-giving behavior.

The following discussion on reciprocity is divided into two sections. The first section considers the earlier works in the field that have provided the basis for later research. The second section is divided according to culture and the family. It examines subsequent studies that have contributed to the development of the concept by extending upon the earlier works.
1.2.1 EARLIER STUDIES

The English anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski (1922, 1926), was the first scholar to recognise the importance of reciprocal relations and reciprocity in general for the social life and cohesion of traditional society. In his early works, he framed the rule of reciprocity in connection with the entire area of interpersonal relations. That is, he considered the concept not only in terms of its social and economic implications but also its involvement in the administration of equity.

In *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (Malinowski 1922) and subsequent works, Malinowski evaluated the network of rights and obligations pertaining to the various roles and statuses of the individual among traditional society in the Trobriand Islands. As a result of his fieldwork, Malinowski developed a list of various kinds of gifts, payments and commercial transactions. These gift categories are included in this discussion to show that even though they pertain to traditional societies, there are certain instances where they resemble modern gift-giving practices. As Camerer (1988) recently noted, family gift giving is essentially like primitive pre-market exchange, described in anthropological studies, where gifts provide social insurance.

The first category that Malinowski (1922) identified was 'pure gifts', such as gifts that a husband would give to his wife or a father would give to one of his children. But, he subsequently decided that gifts always involve some sort of obligation and, therefore, withdrew the term 'pure gifts'. In a later work, Malinowski (1926) included 'pure gifts' as a part of the complex system of give-and-take within a family. He reckoned that these gifts, duties and mutual benefits exchanged...
between family members would eventually balance. The second category were gifts made to more distant relatives or the village chief to acknowledge previous gifts and services. He found that these return gifts were unbalanced and usually were of a smaller value than the original gifts. The third category were gifts as repayments for rewards in which an attempt was made to keep the gift equivalent to the reward received. These types of gifts were given to the medicine man for having cured an illness or to a female lover for having provided personal pleasure. The fourth category were return gifts of economic equivalence exchanged between friends. The fifth category were payments made for the acquisition of magic or dances. It is interesting to note that even though these first five gift categories were different, they all had one thing in common. That is, service and payment, gift and return gift, were incommensurable since equivalence was determined by standardised norms.

A sixth category was more specific in that it included ritual exchange with deferred payment. The first type of ritual exchange involved two villages where everyone had their own exchange partner. But, there was no bargaining during this exchange. Instead, each member of the visiting village brought their gifts and deposited them in front of their exchange partner's house. This presentation invited a return gift which could not be rejected. The second type of ritual exchange was the famous kula in which armlets of different values were exchanged. After the armlet was received, it could not be retained but had to be offered to another exchange partner. Kula was central to an exchange system in which ownership was of minor importance and where wealth and prestige accrue to men who gave well and in that way succeeded in
Chapter One

mobilising networks of people who were obligated to them. The final category was pure trade in which bartering occurred before an agreed price was paid.

Malinowski (1922, 1926) remained satisfied with his conclusion that reciprocity has a useful function by creating a network of rights and obligations to generate social cohesion. But, he never attempted to answer the question of why people universally accept the rule of reciprocity.

Marcel Mauss (1925) was the French anthropologist who extended upon the works of Malinowski in his *Essay on the Gift*. He endeavoured to explain why people have maintained reciprocal relations since the earliest of times. Mauss was initially interested in the contract in which two people pledge themselves to a 'prestation' and a 'counterprestation'. That is, they commit themselves to a service or a reciprocation for a service. The gift, which is always followed by a return gift, was considered by Mauss to be the prototype of the contract. He found that the only difference between the two is that the contract needs the law to enforce it and the gift does not. Mauss, therefore, attempted to explain why this situation occurs. His inquiry was considered to be the first significant contribution to the field of social exchange and is now ranked as one of the classics of anthropology.

During his examination, Mauss (1925) considered the economic and social implications of gift transactions in order to explain the mechanism whereby an established social system is able to sustain itself. Citing evidence from numerous archaic societies, he concluded
that gift giving is a self-perpetuating system of reciprocity in which there is an obligation to give, to receive, and to make a return for gifts received.

Mauss (1925) followed the French anthropological tradition that takes a collectivistic approach. Thus, he emphasised the notion of generalised exchange which entails at least three parties and where any of the participants may not necessarily receive a return gift from the person to whom a gift is given. In this respect, exchange involves shared values and trust along with the expectation that others will fulfil their obligations to the group or society rather than pursue self-interests. He labelled these transactions 'total prestations' where the action of each individual essentially involves the group. Thus, in theory, families and clans voluntarily give gifts but, in fact, they are given and repaid under obligation. Mauss used the potlatch, which is a unique ceremony of total exchange among coastal tribes in British Columbia, to describe the ideal type of total prestations. It is discussed here to provide another example of a custom among traditional societies that reflects modern gift-giving practices.

In a potlatch, the host initiates a gift to express and maintain his hierarchical position in the society. During this ceremony, the generosity displayed is in the extreme since all the assets of the host are liquidated. This generosity, however, is anything but sincere because the host endeavours to humiliate the guests by surpassing them with gifts of food and valuables so they have nothing left to give in return. In this contest for status and prestige, the gift is used as a weapon. Based on the principle that the superior gives more than the
inferior, it has the power to shame. By creating future obligations of others, the potlatch is considered by the host as an investment in the future.

Following the publications of Malinowski (1922, 1926) and Mauss (1925), there began a period of intensive ethnographic fieldwork in which exchange relations received most of the attention. During this time, Malinowski set new standards for fieldwork based on three principal features. First, there was a concentration on detailed empirical study of small-scale societies. Second, there was an emphasis on direct participation with native informants. Finally, there was an adherence to functionalist theory in which the customs of a culture were considered to be direct expressions of human needs. For the interested reader, a review of these ethnographic studies can be found in the essay, *On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange* by Sahlins (1965).

Almost twenty-five years elapsed after the works of Malinowski (1922, 1926) and Mauss (1925) before Claude Levi-Strauss (1949) made the next notable contribution to the concept of reciprocity. Even though Mauss gave an excellent description of the way in which reciprocity was practiced among archaic societies, he did not take his research any further. That is, he could not give a sufficient explanation for why reciprocity during voluntary gift exchange was able to be maintained without the need for legal enforcement that was required for the fulfilment of a contract.
Levi-Strauss, who closely associated himself with the views of Mauss (1925), improved upon what Mauss had started through his treatise, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Levi-Strauss 1949). In this work, which made a major contribution to reciprocal exchange, Levi-Strauss argued that the purpose for exchanging tangible objects was to achieve intangibles. That is, gifts were given in order that the giver would attain the social objective of power, status, sympathy or emotion. He found these objectives to be true for the potlatch as well as all other gift-giving situations. In response to Levi-Strauss, Leach (1951) pointed out that the objectives of the giver were achieved in the form of intangible gifts reciprocated by the recipient. Although this was a subtle point, it seems worthy of mention since it clearly illustrates the mutual dependency that exists between the exchange partners which is embodied in the concept of reciprocity.

In his treatise, Levi-Strauss (1949) identified the notion of reciprocity and the character of the gift as two universal cognitive structures. It is important to note that he kept reciprocity and gift exchange separate from each other to indicate that reciprocity covers a wider range than the exchange of gifts. Regarding reciprocity, Levi-Strauss stated that it is the most immediate way that self and other can be united. Thus, he suggested a fundamental condition in the human mind. At the same time, he defined gift exchange as one way in which the unification of self and other occurs. That is, an agreed transfer of a value from one person to another changes the giver and recipient into exchange partners and adds a new dimension to the relationship. As he explained, while gift exchange makes partners of the participants, there is no need for any further obligation to occur between the parties when they are involved in economic transactions, i.e. contracts.
In order to explain the operation of his theory, Levi-Strauss (1949) described the development of integrative cultural ties within kinship networks that create generalised exchange. Even though his research involved traditional societies, the issues of social structure and culture that were addressed are equally relevant in contemporary society, especially in relation to families. Furthermore, Levi-Strauss acknowledged the role of gift exchange in the everyday life of modern society by suggesting that Christmas gift giving could be considered a gigantic potlatch.

The contributions of Mauss (1925), Malinowski (1922, 1926) and Levi-Strauss (1949) stood alone in the field of social exchange until the 1960s. This hiatus may be due in part to the fact that the works of Mauss and Levi-Strauss were not translated into English until 1954 and 1969 respectively.

As previously mentioned, Mauss (1925) followed the French anthropological tradition that takes a collectivistic approach to social exchange by emphasising generalised reciprocity among traditional societies. This perspective was also adopted by Levi-Strauss (1949). But, the British and American sociological traditions adhere to the individualistic approach to social exchange that concentrates on modern, Western societies and assumes that individuals seek to maximise their personal gratifications through mutual reciprocity. In the early 1960s when research on reciprocity began to emerge from the U.S., there was a shift in emphasis from a collectivistic to an individualistic perspective. Ekeh (1974) claimed that at that time Homans' (1961) individualistic exchange theory was developed in
response to the collectivistic exchange theory of Levi-Strauss. But, even though the focus changed, the essay by Mauss (1925) is still considered the seminal work in the field.

1.2.2 LATER STUDIES

Social exchange in terms of the norm of reciprocity was first described as a cultural universal by the American sociologist Gouldner (1960). While Mauss (1925) had stated three active obligations, i.e. to give, to receive and to return gifts, Gouldner was only concerned with the third obligation. Taking an individualistic stance, Gouldner disagreed with Mauss’ premise that there was an obligation to give. He argued that instead of individuals having an obligation to give, they are motivated to give because they expect reciprocation. He also considered that the obligation to receive a gift was an unnecessary moral issue since each partner in a reciprocal transaction is in the position to benefit from the exchange.

When Blau (1964), who was heavily influenced by Homans (1961), developed his social exchange theory, he disagreed with Gouldner (1960) on one major point. He maintained that the norm of reciprocity is not the starting mechanism for social exchange as Gouldner had claimed. According to Blau, the norm appears after the transaction is in progress as a means of regulating and reinforcing those tendencies already inherent in the character of social exchange. That is, social exchange was characterised as an activity that involves individuals motivated by self-interest who reciprocate in order to ensure that they
will receive future benefits. It was, therefore, selfish motivations that were considered to be inherent in human nature and which activated reciprocation.

Sahlins (1965), however, agreed with Gouldner (1960) that reciprocity is the starting mechanism to social exchange. His major contribution was to distinguish between three types of reciprocity, namely: (1) generalised reciprocity, (2) balanced reciprocity, and (3) negative reciprocity. Generalised reciprocity was described as mainly occurring within families where a gift is not expected to be returned immediately and does not need to be of equal value. Balanced reciprocity was considered to be similar to an economic transaction in which a gift is expected to be returned immediately and of equal value. Finally, negative reciprocity was explained as an attempt by the participants, who have opposing self-interests, to maximise utility at the other's expense. By considering reciprocity to range from generalised to negative on a continuum, Sahlins proposed that it would move towards the generalised pole for close kinship and towards the negative extreme in proportion to kinship distance.

Although Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity established give-and-take as inherent in all cultures, Sahlins (1965) attempted to qualify the concept by identifying three types of reciprocity according to kinship distance. Both spheres of thought are of particular importance for the purposes of this research. For this reason, most of the studies selected for further discussion have flowed from one of these sources, i.e. Gouldner (1960) and Sahlins (1965).
1.2.2.1 RECIPROCITY AND CULTURE

Several recent scholars have independently endeavoured to provide more insight into the way in which the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner 1960) operates during gift exchange by using culture as the explanatory variable. Greenberg (1980) and Schieffelin (1980) recognised that the norm of reciprocity is expressed differently across cultures. Befu (1980) identified additional concepts to consider when examining reciprocal practices between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Caplow (1984) provided specific examples of different rules of reciprocity found in an individualistic culture, i.e. the United States, while Hwang (1987) and Yang (1989) described the type of reciprocity that operates in a collectivistic culture, i.e. Chinese society.

A cross-cultural analysis was conducted by Greenberg (1980) to examine the concept of indebtedness, i.e. the obligation to repay another, based on the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner 1960). From field studies carried out in a number of countries, he found that feelings of indebtedness are embedded in all cultures. He also found, however, that these feelings of obligation mediate different cognitive and behavioral responses according to culture.

Schieffelin (1980) proposed that social exchange is a system of meanings that involves the shaping of particular cultural realities. He used the symbolism of Kaluli reciprocity in Papua New Guinea to demonstrate that the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner 1960) takes various forms. For example, he found that even though the Kaluli practice a balanced form of reciprocity, another culture may practice a competitive form of reciprocity. Thus, Schieffelin suggested that the only way to
define accurately and to interpret the form of reciprocity that is operating in a particular culture is to understand the underlying belief system which entails listening to its members. A qualitative approach is, therefore, required.

Before discussing the concepts of Befu (1980) that involve reciprocal practices between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, it seems appropriate to first consider the principal differences between individualism and collectivism which Triandis (1988) and his colleagues described. Individualism is characterised as a cultural value system in which self is independent from the ingroup, i.e. the family. The most important relationships are horizontal, e.g. spouse-spouse and friend-friend. Emotional detachment and privacy for children is also maintained within the family. Collectivism is characterised as a cultural value system in which self is seen as an integral part of the ingroup, i.e. the family. An essential characteristic of collectivistic cultures is that individuals may be expected to subordinate their personal goals to the goals of the family. The most important relationships are vertical, e.g. parent-child, with an emphasis on filial piety. While children are taught to respect their elders, interdependence is encouraged between parents and children. For this reason, parents usually give regular supervision and consultation to their children and endeavour to include them at most social occasions. On the other hand, children are expected to care for their elderly parents. But, even though children from individualistic cultures have many rights and few obligations within the family, they have less social support, resources and security provided by the family than children from collectivistic cultures. It is interesting to note that while Hofstede (1980) indicated that modern Western societies are typical
individualistic cultures and Southeast Asian societies are typical collectivistic cultures, he found that the United States and Australia are the two most individualistic cultures among Western societies.

When investigating the norm of reciprocity between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, Befu (1980) recommended that three additional concepts be considered. They include: (1) rules of exchange, (2) strategies of exchange, and (3) frame of reference. He described cultural rules of reciprocity as dependent on norms that structure the cultural frame of reference within which decision-making occurs. At the same time, he described cultural strategies as guiding the alternative choices which the cultural frame allows. He noted that when the cultural frame of reference is the kinship system, cultural rules define who are to be included in family gift giving and govern what type of gifts are acceptable to be exchanged. Cultural strategies, however, seek to maximise tangible and intangible benefits associated with the exchange within the boundaries set by the cultural rules. In several studies, it was found that money is an acceptable gift in cultures based on tradition (Schwartz 1967; James, Lehman & James 1985) and collectivistic cultures (Johnson 1974) but it is an unacceptable gift in individualistic cultures (Caplow 1982). Poe (1977) also noted that gifts of money denote the giver’s superior status. From these findings, it seems reasonable to assume that gifts of money may be more acceptable as a gift in collectivistic cultures or traditional societies where people expect to be ranked hierarchically along some dimension of inequality that denotes their status position in relation to others. But, it also seems reasonable to assume that money may be an unacceptable gift in individualistic cultures that are not based on these type of social stratifications.
As part of a larger study that examined social change in Middletown USA, Caplow (1984) described a number of unwritten and mainly subconscious rules of gift exchange that operate among families in this community at Christmas. The rule that is of particular relevance to this discussion concerns reciprocity. It states that family members are obligated to give at least one Christmas gift, either individually or collectively, to all members of their immediate family and their spouses as well as to their own spouses. Siblings are the only family members who are not included in this obligatory gift exchange. By the operation of this rule, there is also the expectation that at least one gift will be received from each of these individuals, excluding infants. Even though conformity to the rule of reciprocity was 90 percent, it was found that there are no customary forms of moral disapproval for family members who ignore their Christmas gift-giving duties. The rule also does not require reciprocated gifts to be of equal value. For example, it was revealed that parents plan to give more expensive and more numerous gifts to their minor children, who live at home, than they expect to receive in return. It was noted, however, that adult children, who live away from home, give the same number of gifts to their parents as their parents give to them even though the parents still tend to give the more expensive gifts. The findings also showed that husbands often give more valuable gifts to their wives than they receive from them.

Since it was found that these rules are not formalised and have no moral support, Caplow (1984) assumed that the family members are the ones who unknowingly enforce the rules. He stated that the explanation given for their enforcement is dependent on the particular approach to exchange theory that is adopted. That is, the individualistic approach would conclude that the rules are implemented
because of self-interest while the collectivistic approach would claim that the rules are executed in order to strengthen group solidarity, i.e. kinship ties. By demonstrating that both of these contrasting approaches to exchange theory may be used to explain the same data, Caplow argued that neither approach adequately addresses cultural uniformities in gift giving. Instead, he assumed that individuals are socialised as children to use a particular gift-giving language that is unique to their culture and, in the process, learn to express an unspoken set of gift-giving rules.

Although Caplow's (1984) assumption is worth considering, it is also important to note that since each approach to exchange theory addresses a specific cultural orientation, i.e. individualistic and collectivistic, the appropriate approach to use depends on the world view of the particular culture under investigation. For example, since Middletown USA involves a Western culture, it seems more appropriate to use the individualistic approach to exchange theory to explain rules of reciprocity operating in this particular cultural setting.

Hwang (1987) was another researcher to consider the two approaches to exchange theory. Rather than criticising both approaches, however, he argued that research emanating from the West on interpersonal behavior patterns and rules of exchange needs to move beyond Blau's (1964) individualistic social exchange theory when investigating collectivistic cultures. That is, an assumption should not be made that all individuals are autonomous and socialised to make rational decisions on the basis of self-interest. He stated that by making such an assumption, cultural variations are not taken into consideration. For example, Chinese societies as typical collectivistic cultures follow
rules that differ from individualistic cultures in the West, e.g. the United States and Australia. In Chinese societies, the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner 1960) is intense but it is heavily shaped by the hierarchically structured network of social relations in which people are situated, by the public nature of the obligations, and by the long-term period over which these obligations are acquired through face work, i.e. making a good impression on others.

To guide future research on collectivist cultures, Hwang (1987) described the rules that operate in relation to the norm of reciprocity in Chinese society. These rules apply to three types of relationship ties, namely: (1) expressive, (2) mixed, and (3) instrumental. The expressive-tie relationships signify a close bond of affection and, therefore, are primarily established within the family. The amount and type of gifts are unlimited and the date of reciprocation is uncertain. It is usually delayed, however, and occurs when the need arises. The mixed-tie relationship consists of expressive and instrumental elements among friends. But, when a gift is received, good etiquette requires reciprocation so that the affective element in the relationship is maintained. Since the recipient is considered to be indebted to the giver until reciprocation occurs, a return gift is given as soon as possible. If reciprocation does not occur, the relationship is jeopardised. Thus, the affective element in the relationship serves the instrumental purpose of providing needed resources. Finally, the instrumental-tie relationship is established as the means of attaining other goals outside the relationship. It involves individuals who are not family members or close friends and mainly consists of casual
acquaintances. When gifts are exchanged, the primary concern is to ensure that fairness is maintained. Thus, a reciprocation of equal cost tends to occur immediately.

In a more recent study, Yang (1989) provided further insight concerning the Chinese perspective on reciprocity. He indicated that since the Chinese construction of self is collectivistic in nature, it is different from the autonomous individual, which is dominant in Western societies. Moreover, the Chinese sense of self is not fixed but changes in relation to particular social relationships. Thus, the boundaries of self may enlarge to encompass a scope beyond the individual. In gift giving, a part of the giver's self is incorporated within the recipient which reduces the boundary between the parties in the exchange. Accepting a gift, however, is not so much a gain as a loss or reduction of stature and control. To restore an individual's self-concept and, in turn, self-respect, the debt must be repaid either to regain the balance of the relationship or to create a new imbalance by giving back more than was originally received. This type of exchange is referred to in Chinese society as the practice of guanxi. It specifically involves the social connection between parties outside the family, which occurs during the personal circulation of gifts, favours and banquets. The art of guanxi lies in the skilful manoeuvring of moral and cultural obligations, such as reciprocity, in the pursuit of both social and instrumental ends. Yang also stated that the heart is a central symbol for self in Chinese culture, whereas the mind is the key to self in the West. It is especially interesting to note that there is no need in Chinese society to activate obligations by giving gifts through guanxi exchange to family members since there already exists a sharing of hearts or a fusing of selves in these relationships.
1.2.2.2 RECIPROCITY AND THE FAMILY

Johnson (1974) attempted to determine if the symmetrical or balanced reciprocity (Sahlins 1965) found in traditional cultures is feasible in a modern, Western society. Since traditional societies are based on collectivistic values, the study investigated Japanese Americans, who were regarded as characterising a collectivistic culture and who were living in Honolulu, which is a modern, individualistic society. The system of gift giving referred to as kosai was analysed by using the concept of reciprocity. Kosai refers to a circle of social obligations among a network of kin, friends and acquaintances with whom Japanese Americans practice balanced reciprocity. Kosai occurs at births, graduations, weddings, trips, illnesses, and funerals. At those times, gifts of money are given and the recipient is required to reciprocate with a token gift of appreciation. Although special birthdays can be incorporated into kosai, gift giving at Christmas and birthdays are not generally included. But, in addition to kosai, generalised reciprocity was found to occur within the family and between close friends at Christmas, birthdays and other non-traditional gift-giving occasions. It is important to note that even though the study was not specifically examining generalised reciprocity, Johnson's (1974) findings confirmed Sahlins' (1965) proposition that exchange moves towards generalised reciprocity for close kin.

Depending on the extent of the social network, the kosai can be extremely expensive for the participants and, therefore, was found to be viewed negatively by those involved in the practice. Nevertheless, it was found that for the past three generations young people in the Japanese American community have continued to be socialised to participate in
kosai after graduating from high school. Johnson (1974) assumed that the practice is maintained to reaffirm bonds of kinship between two or more families. It symbolises continuity between generations, and distinguishes intraethnic relationships from non-Japanese relationships. The study also showed that only when the economic situation of a family deteriorates is balanced reciprocity, i.e. kosai, temporarily replaced by generalised reciprocity. During that time, the concerns for equivalence and time-bound return are discarded because of financial necessity.

Even though kosai consumes a relatively large portion of family resources, it was found that very few families would consider breaking this chain of reciprocities since this would symbolise withdrawal from their social network and imply the rejection of their Japanese identity. At the very least, the failure to meet these expected obligations would damage the reputation of the family and create a loss of trust within the Japanese American community. From these findings, Johnson (1974) concluded that balanced reciprocity is workable in a modern, individualistic society and predicted that the Japanese Americans in Honolulu would endeavour to maintain the practice of kosai in the future.

Another study was conducted by Pryor and Graburn (1980) to investigate reciprocal distribution between households in a small Eskimo village. Their findings indicated that the proposition of Sahlins (1965) also has merit. That is, the results showed that kinship distance tends to correspond with the likelihood of balance or imbalance between parties involved in an exchange transaction.
Laughlin (1985) discussed different aspects of exchange based on the three types of reciprocity introduced by Sahlins (1965). He assumed that in addition to kinship distance, the psychology of the parties who are participating in the exchange is also a contributing factor. For example, he stated that if the focus is on cooperation, then giving will tend to be towards the generalised end of the continuum. But, if the emphasis is on maximising return to the giver, then giving will tend to be towards the negative pole. Citing a previous study (Laughlin and Brady 1978), Laughlin (1985) stated that each type of giving will vary in response to stress. Thus, people who are under extreme stress may become more prudent in their giving and, therefore, limit generalised reciprocity to the immediate family. Laughlin also claimed that modern mass society, which is individualistic in nature, is a 'gimme' environment that emphasises self-gratification and where negative reciprocity is the primary form of exchange.

The research conducted by James, Lehman, and James (1985) is of particular interest since it seems to be the first research to investigate specifically the concept of reciprocity from a marketing perspective. Using Sahlins (1965) as the theoretical basis for the study, James, Lehman, and James interpreted exchange in terms of both generalised and balanced reciprocity. They then related their findings to Sherry's (1983) model of gift-giving behavior.

Adopting the participant observation approach, the research of James, Lehman, and James (1985) was conducted in West Ireland. This site was selected because it is one of the last regions of Europe to industrialise and incorporate the individualistic world view. That is, it maintained cultural ties to more traditional, collectivistic societies for
a longer period of time. Until the late 1940s, this region was an agricultural economy in which the farm household served as the major unit of production and consumption. The present elderly cohort as well as their children experienced the transition from peasantry to industrialisation. It was, therefore, assumed that remnants of rural Ireland, reflected in more traditional attitudes, would still be evident among the older residents in the area. Thus, the majority of the data was collected among the elderly cohort even though some middle-aged participants were also included.

The findings of James, Lehman and James (1985) revealed that there are currently three patterns of balanced reciprocity and three patterns of generalised reciprocity in West Ireland. These patterns of exchange are remnants of traditional practices that have been passed down from generation to generation.

The first pattern of balanced reciprocity involves shared labour, i.e. field work, between neighbours and relatives. This form of exchange corresponds with Sherry's (1983) model of gifts as services. The second pattern of balanced reciprocity pertains to gifts of food between neighbours, which are usually exchanged at the time of a visit. This form of exchange agrees with Sherry's (1983) model of gifts as tangible goods. The third pattern of balanced reciprocity entails the buying of a round of drinks by each man at the pub. This form of exchange also fits Sherry's (1983) model.

The three related patterns of generalised reciprocity are intergenerational in nature. The first pattern of generalised reciprocity involves children performing various tasks in the home as repayment
for parental care. This form of exchange describes gifts as services. The second pattern of generalised reciprocity entails the sending home of money for a sibling to emigrate. Since the giver is the previous recipient, the reciprocation is made to another family member rather than to the original giver. This form of exchange illustrates gifts as tangible goods. The final pattern of generalised reciprocity concerns the obligation of children to care for their elderly parents in the family home. But, since elderly parents remain the property owners and now also receive government aid, they are no longer in a dependent position. Thus, a reversal of power positions between parents and children has recently occurred. In this form of exchange, the elderly parents are giving the children tangible goods, i.e. a home and land, whereas the children are reciprocating by providing services, i.e. taking care of elderly parents.

It was found that although the three patterns of balanced reciprocity were included in the Sherry (1983) model, the three patterns of generalised reciprocity that consider gift giving in a family context are not well represented. It was, therefore, suggested that the Sherry model needs to be modified to incorporate family gift giving. In particular, it was recommended that for the purposes of cross-generational analysis, the model should also reflect the intergenerational nature of the exchange and the fact that reciprocation may apply to the entire family. James, Lehman, and James (1985) also proposed that marketers pay more attention to the reciprocal patterns among ethnic groups who may have retained more traditional forms of gift exchange. For example, it was suggested that special attention should be given to Asians and Hispanics who have recently emigrated in significant numbers to the United States.
In a more recent study on possessions and the extended self, Belk (1988) stated that when parents give to their children, the self-satisfaction experienced by the children is transferred to the parents' sense of self. That is, the children's self-enhancement during gift exchange contributes to the parents' self-gratification reflected in a positive self-concept. For this reason, as he explained, a tangible gift is not expected to be reciprocated in a close relationship, which usually exists within the family, even though intangible benefits are still required in return.

1.3 SELF-CONCEPT

By the late 1960s, the socialising effects of gifts on the individual's self-concept began to be explored. This review primarily considers the most important contributions on family gift-giving behavior which focus on the theme of self-concept. The following discussion is divided into three sections. The first section considers self-concept in relation to consumer socialisation. The second section discusses self-concept in relation to individual family roles. The final section discusses self-concept in relation to culture. Before beginning the discussion, however, it is necessary to define several key concepts.

Self is defined as the essence of a person that emerges through the process of social interaction with others in which the conditioned responses of individuals include taking on the roles of others (Mead 1934).
**Self-concept** refers to the looking-glass self and is defined as the perception individuals have of themselves, which is reflected in their perception of how they appear to others. Thus, their self-concept is formed as a consequence of their perception of the attitudes that others have of them (Cooley 1902).

**Role** is defined as any pattern of behavior that is expected of an individual. That is, an individual role is what is expected of a person by others. After the role has been learned and internalised through the socialisation process, it is also what individuals expect of themselves (Mead 1934).

**Role modelling** is defined as the process by which individuals acquire new behavior patterns or modify already existing ones by watching others engage in some behavior and copying their actions (Bandura 1969).

Finally, the **socialisation process** is conceptualised in two ways that may be considered separately or together. This study combines the two conceptualisations, as in the work of Talcott Parsons et al (1955). Thus, the **socialisation process** is conceived as: (1) the internalisation of social norms which becomes a part of the individual; and (2) an attempt by individuals to enhance their self-concept by gaining acceptance and status in accordance with the expectations of others. In the early 1970s, Ward (1974) took the socialisation concept and applied it to the field of consumer behaviour. Thus, he introduced the concept of **consumer socialisation**, which he described as an ongoing process whereby individuals learn how to behave as consumers. Even though this literature review does not encompass the numerous
studies that have developed consumer behaviour as a significant area of research within the marketing discipline, several specific contributions seem worthy of note. In particular, the consumer behaviour models of Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968), Howard and Sheth (1969), and Nicosia (1966) should be mentioned, especially since issues based on these models are discussed as expressions of consumer socialisation in the next chapter.

1.3.1 SELF-CONCEPT AND CONSUMER SOCIALISATION

Schwartz (1967) was the first scholar to make a notable contribution to the study of gift-giving behavior from a social psychological perspective. The insights he introduced, which were theoretical in nature, served as the basis for later empirical research. In his essay, Schwartz considered the ways in which gifts are used during family gift exchange.

Schwartz (1967) assumed that gifts impose a self-concept on recipients. For example, parents transmit mental images they have about their children through the gifts they give to them. Thus, when children accept gifts that reflect the gender preference of their parents, they are accepting the sexual identity that their parents have of them.

Schwartz (1967) also assumed that gifts impose a self-concept on givers. For example, parents make non-verbal statements about themselves when they give their children an excessive amount of expensive gifts that are then conspicuously consumed. Besides indicating parental affection, gifts may also be used by parents to convey a desirable self-concept to the community. Furthermore,
Schwartz argued that when parents give more than their children are able to reciprocate, it sets up an imbalance. He claimed that since children are unable to give gifts in return, they are denied the opportunity to identify as the source of pleasure to others. They may then expect personal gratification in order to maintain a positive self-concept and, thus, become self-indulgent consumers, i.e. buying self-gifts. According to this argument, the consumer socialisation of children through gift-giving behavior has long-term marketing implications. Since Schwartz (1967) believed that gifts were powerful instruments in the development of a child's self-concept, he proposed that an analysis of the gift-giving behavior of parents would make a significant contribution to the study of childhood consumer socialisation. A number of years later, Belk (1979) responded to the proposal of Schwartz by conducting two studies on gift-giving behavior.

In the first study, Belk (1979) considered the similarity between the transmission of the giver's self-concept through a gift and the messages conveyed and feedback sought from conspicuous personal consumption. The study revealed that the ideal self-concept of givers is transmitted through gifts rather than their actual self-concept. These findings confirmed the assumption made by Schwartz (1967) that parents give gifts to their children in order to enhance their self-concept. For example, when parents give expensive gifts, e.g. name brands, to their children, they are vicariously engaging in conspicuous consumption. By projecting their ideal self-concept through gifts, they are displaying the way in which they want to be perceived by others and themselves.
In the second study, Belk (1979) investigated the socialising effects of gift giving on children in relation to sex-role stereotyping. This study examined the possession and perception of various sex-role related toys by preschool children, aged 4-5 years, and their parents. This age group was selected because it was assumed that before children attend school, they are especially susceptible to the influence of their parents. Evidence showed that parental sex-role preferences are related to parental toy preferences and that children's toy ownership also relates to their sex-role preferences. These findings supported the assumption of Schwartz (1967) that parents' gifts to their children play a crucial role in shaping their sexual identity.

An independent inquiry (Caron and Ward 1975), which was conducted in Canada a few years before the Belk (1979) study on sex-role stereotyping, also revealed parental influence on children's self-concept through gifts. Although the purpose of the research was to investigate television influence on children's gift requests, Caron and Ward found that parents mediate whatever influence television has on 8 and 9 year-old children. The study also revealed that middle-class children usually prefer non-interactive toys, e.g. dolls and models, whereas upper-class children request more competitive games. Since it was found that children from both social classes were exposed to a similar amount of television advertising, Caron and Ward assumed that parents transmit different value orientations through gifts which shape the children's different gift preferences. The findings, therefore, indicated that by the time children are around 9 years old, they have already been socialised, primarily by their parents, to identify with certain types of consumer goods. Since these items depict their self-concept, they are requested as gifts.
Schwartz (1967) also assumed that parents use gifts to manipulate their children's behavior, especially at special gift-giving occasions. He described Santa Claus at Christmas, who has the power to monitor children in order to give or withhold gifts according to merit, as a practice that parents use to try to gain control over their children's behavior. At the same time, Schwartz described the Jewish Hanukkah gelt, which involves money, as having less control over children than Christmas gifts, which usually involve tangible objects. That is, since Jewish children are generally able to spend the money on whatever they want, Hanukkah gelt gives them more freedom to express their self-concept than Christmas gifts, which impose a self-concept on the recipients. It should be noted, however, that Caplow (1982) was not able to find any instance involving parents withholding Christmas gifts from their children for disciplinary reasons. Camerer (1988) more recently assumed that the amount of gifts children receive may be their reward or punishment rather than not receiving any Christmas gifts.

In an essay on the myth of Santa Claus in America, Belk (1987) also considered the assumption made by Schwartz (1967) that parents control their children's behavior through Santa Claus. Belk stated that even when parents do not socialise children in this way, they still expect something in return even if it is only their children's affection and appreciation. Thus, Belk proposed that the gifts that parents give to their children in the name of Santa Claus are not the altruistic pure gifts they might initially seem to be and that Malinowski (1922, 1926) considered to be the ideal.
In his commentary, Belk (1987) referred to Santa Claus as the god of materialism who is exploited by retailers each Christmas to encourage children to request consumer goods as gifts. He stated that in this way, young children are taught materialistic values and their self-concept as consumers is formed. Belk cited the countless Santa letters that ask for material items rather than intangibles, e.g. good health, better skills, and family benefits, as evidence that the socialisation of children into the consumer market has been successful. Belk argued that by persuading children to make such gift requests, self-interest and greed are promoted instead of the pure gift of love. He stated that this type of gift exchange is considered negative reciprocity, which Sahlins (1965) described as wanting something for little or nothing given in return.

Belk (1987) noted that if his interpretation of Santa Claus is correct, then the modern Christmas ritual is more than what Caplow (1982) described as a family celebration in which abundance, prosperity and wealth are celebrated. It is also an observance of consumption, materialism, and hedonism. Since the American practice of Christmas gift giving has spread to other countries, Belk suggested that future research needs to focus on family gift-giving behavior to gain a better understanding of both childhood consumer socialisation and the consumer culture around the world.
1.3.2 SELF-CONCEPT AND INDIVIDUAL FAMILY ROLES

Self-concept expressed through family gift-giving roles has also been examined. In the pioneering study on Christmas gifts and kin networks in Middletown USA (Caplow 1982) and in a later study on gift-giving rituals in Winnipeg, Canada (Cheal 1988), it was found that women adopt the gift-giving role of prime initiator and agent. That is, women do most of the shopping, decorating and gift-wrapping. These findings support a number of other studies in which nurturing was found to be the self-concept of women in the family. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) noted that among the women they studied, caring for people and preserving and nurturing relationships were still the primary tasks most valued by women. Graham (1983) also stated that the caring role of women, which is what mainly differentiates them from men, is the primary process through which both a sense of self and a sense of self-fulfilment is achieved. Di Leonardo (1987) more recently found that in addition to housework and child care, women's work consists of the maintenance of kinship ties which includes, among other things, being responsible for family gift giving. Since women as wives and mothers perceive that their main role is to take care of the needs of the family, it seems reasonable to assume that they adopt an assertive gift-giving role as a means of more fully expressing their self-concept.

Caplow (1982) found that while women were seen as adopting the active role of gift-giver, men prefer not to adopt a gift-giving role in the family. Instead, they would rather leave the gift giving to their wives. That is, men tend to bear most of the cost of the gifts purchased, be more supportive of the gifts selected by their wives, and provide assistance
when required. Furthermore, Caplow noted that the only gifts that men usually select are gifts for their wives, which supports Veblen's (1918) previous assumption that men confirm their self-concept through the public statement of gift giving to their wives.

Caplow (1982) also found that the gift-giving role of young children is essentially passive. They receive a large share of the Christmas gifts but are not required to reciprocate except with a small, often handmade, token gift. At the same time, the gift-giving role of older children, which includes adolescents, was not fully explored in the study. Even though it was noted that older children usually participate during the gift-giving process and frequently give joint gifts to each parent, the study did not include level of involvement for each gender or how their self-concept may affect their individual and gift-giving roles within the family.

Although the existing literature on individual family roles tends to emphasise the Western perspective, several studies reveal differences in the statuses associated with various family roles in collectivistic and individualistic cultures. First, Talcott Parsons (1955) and his colleagues found in the United States during the 1950s that the father usually adopted the instrumental role as a link between the family and society. At the same time, they found that the mother usually adopted the expressive role that concerned the relations within the family. Although these role expectations may remain the ideal, Goodnow, Burns and Russell (1989) more recently found that the traditional roles of mother and father in Australian families have changed as more women are seeking full-time and part-time employment outside the home. For this reason, the roles of mother and father in individualistic
cultures are more likely to vary across families. But, Tan and McCullough (1985) found that traditional Confucian values persist in Chinese societies where the father’s role continues to be outside the family and the mother’s role continues to be inside the family. Woon (1986) also found that among middle-class Sino-Vietnamese families who had emigrated to Canada, the roles have remained the same while the structure has changed from an extended to a nuclear family. From these findings, it indicates that there is a tendency for the roles of mother and father in collectivistic cultures to remain constant across families.

1.3.3 SELF-CONCEPT AND CULTURE

Belk (1984) proposed that gift giving serves different purposes across cultures. He related these differences to the extent to which the culture emphasises the individual. Belk noted that in group-based cultures, which are collectivistic in nature and have emanated from small-scale traditional societies, individuals evaluate themselves and others on group-based characteristics, e.g. ancestral background and national historical achievements. In such cultures, e.g. Japanese and Chinese societies, the purpose of gift giving is to reinforce a group-based self-concept. According to Belk, family gift giving in these cultures may be described as giving to self. At the same time, Belk pointed out that in individual-based cultures, which are individualistic in nature and found in large-scale industrial societies, individuals assess themselves and others on personal characteristics, e.g. age.
occupation and education. In such cultures, e.g. the United States, gift giving is found to be most satisfying to givers when their personal needs are gratified (Belk 1976 and 1979).

Belk (1984) concluded that when self-concept is mainly defined in terms of personal characteristics, gift giving may be more a means of enhancing the giver's self-concept than a means of enhancing a group-based self-concept. Moreover, he assumed that the emergence of individual-based cultures has brought a lost sense of self which individuals are trying to regain through the acquisition of self-gifts. Belk also noted that the relationship between cultural variations in concept of self and different consumption practices has not been sufficiently explored. He, therefore, recommended that cultural comparison studies be carried out in this area.

More recently, an exploratory study conducted in the United States by Green and Alden (1988) applied Belk's (1984) hypotheses on the cross-cultural relationships between self-concept and gift giving to the Japanese consumer market. In-depth group interviews were conducted with a small sample of Japanese and American university students. Structure was provided to the focus group interviews by Sherry's (1983) model of gift giving.

In relation to Sherry's (1983) gestation stage, which includes gift motivation, search and purchase, Green and Alden (1988) found several cultural variations in gift-giving behavior which point to differences in self-concept. First, since there are more gift-giving occasions during the year for Japanese than Americans, it was proposed that gift exchange may be an important method used in a group-based culture.
to reinforce self-concept. Second, since Japanese usually shop for gifts with another person while Americans tend to shop alone, it was proposed that this difference reflects greater reliance on group self-concept and approval during gift search in a group-based culture. Third, since Japanese purchase several gifts at the same time without experiencing anxiety and Americans find multiple gift purchases at Christmas extremely stressful, it is proposed that frequent gift-giving occasions in Japan make gift selection a less onerous task. Furthermore, it was assumed that anxiety during the gift search phase among Americans may be partly due to increased dissonance caused by a conflict between group-based expectations and individual-based self-concept.

In relation to Sherry's (1983) prestation phase, which involves the actual gift exchange, Green and Alden (1988) found two cultural variations in gift-giving behavior which suggest differences in self-concept. First, since Japanese of both gender always wrap their gifts whereas American males sometimes do not gift wrap, it was proposed that gift wrapping in Japan may be used to reduce risk and reinforce the value of the group-based self-concept. Second, since Japanese recipients seldom open their gifts in front of givers, it was proposed that the recipients may be trying to reduce risk to the group-based self-concept of the givers.

In relation to Sherry's (1983) reformulation stage, which includes the reaction to the gift, Green and Alden (1988) found another cultural variation which implies a difference in self-concept. The study revealed that Americans sometimes express a mild disappointment with gifts if the giver is a close family member or friend whereas Japanese never
openly convey a negative reaction. It was, therefore, proposed that the avoidance by Japanese to indicate disfavour with a gift reflects a stronger relationship between group and self-concept.

Finally, Green and Alden's (1988) findings confirmed Belk's (1979) conclusion that U.S. gift-givers derive greater satisfaction from giving if they perceive they will receive self-gratification in return. Thus, it was found that individualistic self-serving motivations for gift giving are more important in the United States while group-oriented self-satisfaction is more important in Japan.

1.4 COMMUNICATION

Banks (1979) referred to interaction and communication as two distinct stages in the gift-giving process. Even though Sherry (1983) implied that interaction and communication are separate elements, he stated that they both occur throughout the gift-giving process and are not isolated to any one stage. Yet, it seems more appropriate to view them together as synthesising elements which form the communication function and are continually active during the gift-giving process. This view agrees with Newcomb (1953), who indicated that interaction can more adequately be studied as communicative acts. That is, interaction between two or more parties during gift giving cannot occur without verbal or non-verbal communication also taking place. In this study, communication is defined as an interactive process "through which persons create, maintain, and alter social order, relationships, and identities" (Cronen, Pearce, and Harris 1982, pp. 85-86).
Chapter One

The following discussion is divided into four sections. Each section discusses research on gift-giving behaviour that has emphasised a different aspect of communication. The first section discusses the research that has concentrated on family interaction in relation to gift-giving rituals. The second section discusses the research that has considered communication in relation to gift selection. The third section discusses the research that has focused on the symbolic messages communicated between exchange partners. The fourth section discusses the research that has examined the recipient's reaction to the gift-giving communication message.

1.4.1 FAMILY INTERACTION AND GIFT-GIVING RITUALS

The first study to examine family interaction during gift-giving rituals was conducted in Finland, Ireland and Germany (Luschen 1972). In this investigation, cultural variations were expected in relation to social class and religious affiliation, i.e. Catholic and Protestant Christians. Thus, cultures that were non-Christian and non-Western were not included. Although families with at least one child in elementary school were selected, only the parents were interviewed. The findings revealed that regardless of the change in social structure to nuclear families, the maintenance of kinship ties continued to be of equal importance across social class and religious affiliation. It was also found that ritual events are crucial mechanisms to actualise communication so that the nuclear family is strengthened and solidarity among kin is maintained.
Later, in the Middletown USA study, Caplow (1982) seems to have been unaware of Luschen's (1972) work since he independently arrived at a similar conclusion. That is, ritualised gift giving is a method of reinforcing relationships that are important but insecure. As an example of family instability, Caplow cited the relative ease of divorce in contemporary society. The findings in Caplow's study showed that since family relationships are more valued than other affiliations, a great deal of effort goes into ritualised gift giving as a means of promoting interaction to strengthen family bonds. Also, as previously noted, most of that effort is borne by the mother in the family.

In another account of the Middletown USA study (Caplow 1984), gift giving was referred to as a communication of objects. Caplow gave examples of gift-wrapping and the exchange of gifts at family gatherings rather than in private to show that Christmas gift giving is a non-verbal language. These family gatherings were described as usually consisting of a parent-child unit containing one or two parents and one or more children together with other persons who are linked to that unit by shared membership in another parent-child unit. These other parent-child units include children's children, children's spouses, parents' siblings, or parents' parents.

Caplow (1984) explained that gift messages are required between every person at a family gathering. Although the individual messages communicated between exchange partners state the value accorded to that relationship, the compound messages that emerge from the unwrapping of the gifts in the presence of the entire family gathering communicate more subtle messages. For example, it permits a husband to say to his wife that he values her more than his parents. It
also allows a daughter to say to her mother or father that she values them more than her brothers or sisters but less than her husband. According to Caplow, these messages taken together define and sustain the family unit. That is, both parties to each dyadic relationship confirm their interpretation of the relationship. In turn, the other family members, who are present at the exchange, endorse that understanding by tacit approval. Even though Caplow focused on similarities rather than variations in style of family interaction, he noted there were some differences from one family to another and from one cultural group to another.

More recently, in the Winnipeg Ritual Cycle Study, Cheal (1988) confirmed the findings of Luschen (1972) and Caplow (1982, 1984). That is, the most important time of year for family and kinship interaction is the annual Christmas gift-giving ritual.

Cheal (1988) noted that if the assumption is made that rituals in Canada are mainly established to stabilise the family, secondary rituals would then focus on family roles, i.e. Mother's Day and Father's Day. But, even though Mother's Day was found to be a more important ritual than Father's Day in Winnipeg, the study revealed that birthdays are the second most important gift-giving occasion. These findings, however, seem appropriate in an individualistic, Western society since the distinguishing characteristic of a birthday is to honour the individual.

McLeod and Chaffee (1972) developed a model that consists of two dimensions, i.e. socio-oriented and concept-oriented. The socio-oriented dimension is indicated by the frequency of (or emphasis on)
communication that is ‘designed to produce deference and to foster harmony and pleasant social relationships in the family’ (McLeod & Chaffee 1972, p. 83). The concept-oriented dimension is indicated by the frequency of communication that involves ‘positive constraints to stimulate the child to develop his own views about the world, and to consider more than one side of an issue’ (McLeod & Chaffee 1972, p. 83).

When these two dimensions are combined to form a two-by-two model, four distinct combinations are produced. Each of these combinations represents a different family type that is characterised by a specific parent-child interaction style, i.e. laissez-faire, protective, pluralistic and consensual. Laissez-faire families are low on the socio- and concept-oriented dimensions. Protective families are high on the socio-oriented dimension and low on the concept-oriented dimension. Pluralistic families are low on the socio-oriented dimension and high on the concept-oriented dimension. Finally, consensual families are high on both the socio- and concept-oriented dimensions.

Based on the McLeod and Chaffee (1972) model, Moschis (1987) submitted a series of propositions in which family interaction style was related to consumer behaviour. Even though only one of the propositions directly referred to gift-giving behaviour, they have all been included because they are regarded as significant to this study.

First, Moschis (1987) proposed that socio-oriented families encourage the development of consumer needs and behaviours on the basis of their perceived effects on others while concept-oriented families foster more objective consumer behaviour. Second, Moschis proposed that
socio-oriented families contribute to an adolescent's concentration on products of social significance, e.g. name brands, while concept-oriented families contribute to an adolescent's price consciousness. These propositions suggest that socio-oriented families encourage conspicuous consumption and a materialistic approach to consumer behaviour while concept-oriented families promote a more logical approach to consumer behaviour. Finally, Moschis proposed that since gift giving is viewed as an expected obligation within the nuclear family, such normative expectation is more likely to be of greatest importance in socio-oriented families where interpersonal relationships are highly valued.

1.4.2 COMMUNICATION AND GIFT SELECTION

The Luschen (1972), Caplow (1982, 1984), and Cheal (1988) studies on family interaction were primarily concerned with the bonding effect of ritualised gift giving on nuclear families and kin. Gift selection as part of family gift giving was not stressed even though Caplow (1982) and Cheal (1988) noted that women are more actively involved in the gift selection task than men.

Much of the research on gift selection has given an inventory of gifts that are frequently selected, such as clothes, by conducting Christmas gift-giving surveys in England (Lowes, Turner and Wills 1971) and the United States (Caplow 1982) as well as gift-giving surveys across occasions in the United States (Belk 1979) and Western Canada (Cheal 1988). Other studies on gift selection have involved situational conditions, particularly those thought to vary in terms of degree of
involvement in the gift-giving relationship. For example, it was found that a gift purchase requires a greater amount of search effort than a personal-use purchase (Clarke and Belk 1979). Two additional studies more precisely indicated that the gift for a family member or a personal-use item takes longer to select than a gift for a friend (Ryans 1977; Heeler, Francis, Okechuku and Reid 1979). Ryans (1977) also noted that when gifts are selected for family members, the gift recipient is frequently involved in the gift selection. Sherry (1983) suggested that when recipients hint or make direct requests, they may have more input and greater control over gift selection than the giver.

Although there is limited research on gift selection in relation to communication, a few studies are noteworthy. Belk's (1976) earliest study on gift-giving behaviour examined communication in relation to the gift selection process. He stated that the gift's characteristics communicate the giver's perceptions of five relationships, namely: (1) the giver's self-concept, (2) the giver's liking/disliking of the gift, (3) the giver's perception of the recipient's liking/disliking of the gift, (4) the giver's perception of giver-recipient similarity, and (5) the giver's perception of the recipient. In a later study, Belk (1979) found that while the giver's actual self-concept and perception of the recipient are both important to gift selection, the strongest determinant of the gift message is the self-concept the giver ideally wants the gift to convey. Belk, therefore, considered that in most cultures the particular gift that the giver selects is very significant since it has a direct bearing on the message communicated during the transaction. In this respect, Belk suggested that he disagreed with Goffman (1961), who had assumed that the gift exchange is sufficient to communicate importance and, thus, the actual gift is irrelevant. Also, Ryans (1977) noted that if the
recipient is a family member, communication between exchange partners is more likely to occur during gift selection. That is, when gift giving is within the family, the recipient tends to have more influence on the gift selected.

1.4.3 COMMUNICATION AND SYMBOLIC MESSAGES

When considering the communication function in gift-giving behavior, Belk (1979) focused on the communicative acts that occur between exchange partners during the actual gift transaction. He assumed that one of the most general functions of gift giving is to act as a means for symbolic communication. Sahlins (1972) had previously made the same assumption when he stated that since gift messages tend to be ambiguous, gifts function as communication symbols.

Belk (1979) viewed gift-giving communication in terms of the traditional communication models (Lasswell 1948, DeFleur 1970, Cherry 1978) whereby the gift is a substitute for the message and channel. He noted, however, that since non-verbal messages in the form of gift objects are more prone to multiple interpretations than verbal messages, there is always the risk of encoding and decoding errors. Belk explained that an encoding error occurs when the giver is unable to select an appropriate gift that expresses the intended message while a decoding error occurs when the recipient misunderstands the message communicated through the gift. Although Belk observed that the giver's message is indirect and, thus, symbolic in nature, Cheal (1987) later elaborated on this point by noting that since commodities interfere with the gift message, the giver tends to increase
the number of gifts to ensure the symbolic message is received over the noise in the marketplace. Thus, a number of special occasions throughout the year provide the giver with the opportunity for repeat messages to be communicated. On the other hand, Belk (1979) stated that the recipient's feedback is both direct and indirect. The direct response is usually expressed through verbal appreciation and reciprocal gifts while the indirect response suggests how the gift message has been interpreted.

Poe (1977) considered that gifts are symbolic to the extent that they communicate the status of a relationship, the promise of future interaction, concern, love, or domination. He used money as an example of a symbolic gift to show that it tends to reinforce the superior status of the giver. Furthermore, Poe claimed that recipients usually make excuses for givers of money in order to restore their feeling of equality. Thus, the recipient may state that the giver is old and cannot shop or lives far away and does not know what the person wants. In a later study, Caplow (1982) confirmed that money denotes a difference in status when he found it is considered improper in Middletown USA to give money to parents or grandparents, even from adult children.

Using a semiotic approach, Pandya and Venkatesh (1992) recently conducted a study to investigate the assumption that products operate symbolically during gift giving. Over one hundred respondents agreed that gifts communicate metaphoric symbols in which complicated ideas or emotions are expressed. In one instance, the gift symbolised a reunion between old friends. In another instance, the gift was a symbol of the bond between a mother and daughter. The study revealed that
when the giver wants to communicate the depth and ambiguity of the relationship, he or she usually tries to select a gift that is as unique as possible. Since the gift is used to communicate a special message, a new and individual interpretation is required for each gift-giving situation. But, Pandya and Venkatesh found that although voluntary gifts tend to communicate symbolic messages, obligatory gifts function as signs to represent a code of behavior rather than as symbols to express feelings. Thus, when people give gifts to meet an obligation, the gift is seen as a mere gesture and acts as a sign of the relationship's lack of authenticity.

1.4.4 COMMUNICATION AND REACTION

Poe's (1977) basic assumption was that gifts are given by the giver and often recognised by the recipient as being more than, and sometimes less than, what they seem to be on the surface. Using equity theory, attribution theory and reactance theory, he described the possible reactions of recipients to various gift-giving communication messages.

First, Poe (1977) stated that one aspect of equity theory in relation to gift-giving behavior is the need for exchange partners to communicate similar perceptions of their relationship. If a gift conveys to the recipient that a difference in perception exists, dissatisfaction may occur. Under those circumstances, the gift is outside the limits of the recipient's expectations of the relationship at either extreme, e.g. too inexpensive or too expensive, too inferior or too superior, or too intimate or too distant. When there is a perceived inequity, the
recipient endeavours to restore equity by altering reciprocal gifts, changing his or her view of the situation, or severing the gift-giving relationship.

Second, Poe (1977) stated that reactance theory is applicable any time a gift is perceived by the recipient as communicating an implicit or explicit threat to personal freedom. Since a recipient tends to react according to the strength of the perceived threat, an expensive gift may be considered more threatening than a less expensive gift. Also, the strength of the threat may vary in relation to the gift's value as well as its cost. For example, gifts that are handmade usually denote more value. Since they cannot be so easily ignored, they may be more threatening than store-bought gifts. Furthermore, the recipient may react against a gift that implies subsequent threats. For example, a gift that conveys dominance over the recipient that is likely to continue may represent a continual threat to personal freedom. According to Poe, when the recipient experiences reactance, he or she may try to reassert lost freedom through direct or indirect feedback. When the reaction is negative, however, Poe noted that the recipient usually prefers not to give direct feedback, i.e. rejecting the gift. Instead, the recipient usually gives indirect feedback by not using or wearing the gift.

Finally, Poe (1977) stated that attribution theory is applicable any time the recipient attempts to infer intentions of the giver. For example, when a gift is seen by the recipient as a bribe, the reaction is more likely to be quite different than when it is not seen in this manner. But, since the attribution process involves the recipient's interpretation
of the gift message, there is always the risk of the recipient misinterpreting the intentions that the giver is attempting to communicate through the gift.

1.5 DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The previous discussion has indicated that the existing literature has made a significant contribution to the study of family gift-giving behavior. But, a number of gaps can be identified in the literature that deserve more attention. This final section discusses each dominant theme in the literature to suggest areas that require further research.

1.5.1 RECIPROCITY

Regarding the theme of reciprocity, two gaps in the literature can be identified that require further investigation. The first area that has not been adequately addressed involves the use of culture to explain reciprocal rules of exchange. The existing research has either used culture to explain the fact that different cultural rules govern the norm of reciprocity (Befu 1980) or to describe the ways in which these reciprocal rules operate in a particular culture (Caplow 1984, Hwang 1987, Yang 1989). There is no indication, however, that a cultural comparison of these reciprocal rules has been made. That is, no studies were found in the existing literature that compared rules of reciprocity between two groups within similar cultures, e.g. individualistic or collectivistic, or compared two opposite cultures, e.g. individualistic and collectivistic. It, therefore, seems necessary that
future research on gift-giving behaviour include cultural comparison studies in which both individualistic and collectivistic approaches to exchange theory are considered.

The second area that has not been adequately addressed involves the types of reciprocity that operate in a family context. Caplow (1984) discussed rules of reciprocity among family members but he did not attempt to show a link between these reciprocal rules and Sahlins' (1965) three types of reciprocity, i.e. generalised, balanced, and negative. He also restricted his study to tangible gifts exchanged at a particular time of year, i.e. Christmas. Although James, Lehman, and James (1985) described tangible and intangible gifts exchanged within families throughout the year, they limited their study to generalised reciprocity. Regardless of the fact that generalised reciprocity is considered to be the main type of exchange that takes place within the family, it is reasonable to assume that the other two types of reciprocity, i.e. balanced and negative, may also occur in a family context. But, no studies were found on family gift-giving behaviour that compared the three types of reciprocity in relation to tangible and intangible benefits exchanged. Also, the literature indicates that there have not been any cultural comparisons made on reciprocal patterns of exchange in a family context. It, therefore, seems necessary for future research to consider Sahlins' (1965) three types of reciprocity in relation to family gift exchange within and between cultures.
1.5.2 SELF-CONCEPT

Regarding the theme on self-concept, a number of gaps in the literature can be identified where further research is required. First, although a link has been established between family gift-giving behavior and consumer socialisation, it has not been fully developed. Even though Schwartz (1967) recommended that investigations be conducted on the gift-giving practices of parents and their socialising effects on children, scant attention has been paid to this area of research. Belk's (1979) study on the sex-role stereotyping of preschool children has been the only research that specifically considered this link. Furthermore, Schwartz (1967) and Belk (1987) described other purposes that gifts serve in the socialisation of children, e.g. materialism, but no studies were found that attempted to address them. Since Ward (1974) first introduced the concept of consumer socialisation that concentrated on younger children, his research has continued to focus mainly on younger children (Ward, Wackman and Wartella 1977). Also, the few studies that have specifically considered the consumer socialising effects of gifts on children (Belk 1979; Caron and Ward 1975) have focused on younger children. But, since younger children have little experience practising consumer skills, it seems more appropriate to investigate the socialising effects of gifts on older children, i.e. adolescents, who are active consumers. It should be noted, however, that even though the socialising effects of gifts on adolescents have not been investigated, Moschis, Moore and Smith (1984) have considered adolescents when they investigated the development of consumer learning in relation to the role of family communication.
Also, since socialisation has recently been considered as a reciprocal process (Moschis 1987; Ekstrom, Tansuhaj and Foxman 1987), it seems reasonable to assume that consumer socialisation messages are transmitted in both directions during family gift exchange. Moreover, since socialisation continues throughout a person's life (Brim 1968), it follows that even though children may be influenced to a greater extent, parents may also learn new ways of behaving as consumers through their children's tangible and intangible gifts. Since tangible gifts are not necessarily reciprocated by children (Belk 1984), parents usually expect an intangible form of reciprocation (Belk 1987) in which children may transmit powerful socialisation messages.

In the Caron and Ward (1975) study, it was also revealed that even though children's gift requests were selectively granted by their parents, they usually received the gifts that they requested. This type of gift negotiation suggests that parents and children may socialise one another over a period of time. Furthermore, children's gift requests to Santa, which are encouraged at Christmas (Belk 1987), may be described as order-taking in which children are in the position to shape the consumer behavior of their parents. As Ekstrom, Tansuhaj and Foxman (1987) noted, reverse socialisation occurs when children, who have greater product knowledge than their parents, influence parental preferences by communicating new knowledge to them. Thus, any time children make gift requests for consumer goods in which they have more cognisance than their parents, it is reasonable to assume that reverse socialisation may take place. Ekstrom, Tansuhaj and Foxman (1987) also claimed that adolescents, which include children over the age of 11 years, have more influence on the consumer socialisation of parents. It, therefore, seems appropriate to consider both parents and
children in the adolescent age group as part of the reciprocal process when investigating the link between family gift-giving behavior and consumer socialisation.

Second, Belk (1984) noted that because there are cultural variations in concept of self between group-based and individual-based cultures during family gift giving, a need exists for cross-cultural research in this area. But, even though Green and Alden (1988) have taken an important first step towards understanding Japanese gift-giving practices, a search of the literature has not uncovered any cross-cultural research which specifically emphasises the variations in self-concept during family gift-giving behaviour. It also seems reasonable to assume that gifts serve different consumer socialisation purposes in these two cultures that are reflected in contrasting patterns of consumption. For this reason, it follows that cross-cultural comparison studies are also required in order to investigate the consumer socialising effects of gifts in collectivistic and individualistic cultures.

Finally, although studies have described the self-concept of parents (Caplow 1982, Cheal 1988), especially mothers, and younger children (Caplow 1982) in relation to their individual and gift-giving roles in the family, no studies were found that adequately addressed the individual and gift-giving roles of older children, i.e. adolescents, or fathers in the family. Furthermore, no research was found that considered consumer socialisation in relation to family gift-giving roles. For example, children may observe their parents in certain gift-giving roles expressed through their consumer behavior. The children may then adopt the gift-giving role of a particular parent and imitate their respective
consumer behavior. In this way, children are becoming socialised as consumers through role modelling. Since older children, i.e. adolescents, are more active gift-givers and consumers than younger children, adolescents would seem to be particularly susceptible to using their parents as role models in family gift-giving situations. Thus, in order to understand the socialising effects of gift-giving roles that lead to children's consumer behavior, it seems crucial to explore the fundamental learning process of role modelling by adolescents during family gift giving.

1.5.3 COMMUNICATION

Regarding the communication theme, several gaps in the literature can be identified that warrant further investigation. First, in the gift-giving studies on family interaction, the findings of Luschen (1972), Caplow (1982, 1984) and Cheal (1988) are limited in scope since they mainly apply to Western cultures in which gift-giving is usually restricted to special occasions, e.g. Christmas and birthdays. But, even though the commercial aspects of Christmas are observed in certain non-Western societies, e.g. Japan, the ritual is primarily celebrated in the West. Also, birthdays, which are individualistic in nature, are important gift-giving occasions in Western cultures but may not have the same significance in non-Western cultures that are collectivistic. As Caplow (1984) suggested, there may be some variation in family interaction style within and between cultures during Christmas gift-giving. Also, as Moschis (1987) later proposed, a particular style of family interaction may shape gift-giving behaviour. It is, therefore,
recommended that future research undertake cross-cultural comparison studies to investigate the effect of family interaction style on gift-giving behaviour.

Second, since there is limited research on communication in relation to gift selection, more research needs to be undertaken in this area. For example, the learning of consumer skills through family interaction at the time gifts are selected in the stores needs to be considered when studies explore the link between gift-giving behaviour and consumer socialisation.

Third, despite the fact that Belk (1976) stressed the importance of understanding how gifts are used by givers to make statements about themselves and recipients as well as how recipients interpret those statements, no research was found that compared the encoding and decoding of gift messages between exchange partners within or between cultures. Also, there was no research found that compared the meaning of particular gifts between cultures. For example, in one culture money as a gift may mean one thing while in another culture it may mean something else.

Finally, the recipient's reactions and possible misinterpretations of the gift message, which Poe (1977) described, have not been explored in relation to equity theory, reactance theory or attribution theory. To contribute to this area of gift-giving behaviour, it is recommended, as Poe suggested, that these theories be considered when studies are conducted within or between cultures.
1.5.4 CONCLUSION

As the previous discussion has indicated, there is a need for a model to be developed that explores the link between the process of family gift giving and consumer socialisation in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. To serve as the theoretical basis to guide this study, such a model has been developed that incorporates the three major themes in the literature. This proposed model is described in the next chapter.
CHAPTER TWO

PROPOSED MODEL

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The proposed model has attempted to conceptualise the process of family gift-giving in relation to several theoretical concepts or variables. Since previous research has not considered most of the variables together or compared them across cultures, the model is essentially inductive and exploratory. The purpose of the assumptions is, therefore, to generate a series of research questions rather than to test hypotheses. The research questions are used to guide the empirical study which is described in the next chapters.

2.2 ASSUMPTIONS

The proposed model is based on four assumptions emanating from theoretical concepts in the existing literature.
PROPOSED MODEL OF THE FAMILY GIFT-GIVING PROCESS AND CONSUMER SOCIALISATION

The first assumption states:

*Family gift-giving is a continual process that consists of four, interactive elements: (1) motivation, (2) selection, (3) communication, and (4) reaction.*

The first assumption is based on the previous gift-giving behaviour model of Sherry (1983). It is also based on the contribution made by the earlier model of Banks (1979). Since the proposed model involves gift-giving behaviour in a family context, it is not limited to individuals and dyads as were the models of Banks (1979) and Sherry (1983). Instead, it takes into account that there may be more than one giver and one recipient during family gift exchange. Also, in contrast to the
models of Banks (1979) and Sherry (1983), the proposed model does not assume that the above four elements are stages that involve fixed periods of time. Instead, it assumes that after an element is activated, it may continue to have a direct or indirect impact throughout the entire family gift-giving process and may affect future gift-giving behaviour in a family context that involves the same exchange partners. The proposed model also assumes that these elements have a significant impact on family gift-giving behaviour since gifts tend to be exchanged regularly among family members over a long period of time.

The second assumption states:

*The family gift-giving process is shaped by a series of variables, namely: (1) individual family role, (2) family interaction style, and (3) culture.*

The second assumption consists of three variables. These variables are based on the theoretical concepts that constitute the dominant themes in the existing literature on gift-giving behaviour. The first variable is individual family role. It relates to self-concept. The second variable is family interaction style. It involves the communication concept. The third variable is culture. It focuses on the concept of reciprocity.

The third assumption states:

*Consumer socialisation is a continual process that is expressed by consumer behaviour. For the purposes of this study, consumer behaviour consists of five*
issues: (1) consumer motivation, (2) consumer involvement, (3) consumer influences, (4) product attributes, and (5) consumer reaction.

The third assumption is based on Ward (1974) who introduced the concept of consumer socialisation as the process in which consumer behaviour is learned over a period of time. Because consumer socialisation is an ongoing process, the model uses consumer behaviour to explore the process at a given point in time. The model also assumes that consumer behaviour consists of five issues. This assumption is based on the consumer behaviour models of Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968), Howard and Sheth (1969) and Nicosia (1966).

The fourth assumption states:

The family gift-giving process in individualistic and collectivistic cultures leads to consumer socialisation of both parents and children.

The fourth assumption attempts to characterise the consumer socialisation process across cultures in relation to the family gift-giving process. Consumer socialisation research has focused on children and adolescents (Ward 1974; Ward, Wackman and Wartella 1977; Moschis, Moore and Smith 1984). As mentioned earlier, it has recently been recognised that family learning and communication is not unidirectional and that consumer socialisation messages may be transmitted in both directions (Moschis 1987; Ekstrom, Tansuhaj and Foxman 1987). Although consumer socialisation is now regarded as a reciprocal process, the existing research on gift-giving behaviour
(Schwartz 1967, Belk 1979) has concentrated on the socialising effects of gifts on children, ignoring the influence on parents. The proposed model assumes that parents too may learn new ways of behaving as consumers through their children during the family gift-giving process.

These four assumptions can be explored by an inductive, exploratory study. For this reason, their exploration is the major goal of the empirical research that is described in the following sections.

### 2.3 VARIABLES

In this section, each variable in the proposed model is defined and operationalised. First, the three explanatory variables, i.e. individual family role, family interaction style, and culture are addressed. Second, the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction are considered. Finally, the consumer behaviour variable is explained.

#### 2.3.1 INDIVIDUAL FAMILY ROLE

Based on Mead's (1934) role theory, individual family role is defined for the purposes of this study as the status of a family member that carries with it certain expected patterns of behaviour that are learned and internalised by the person through the socialisation process. In this way, a person's self-concept emerges during family interaction which is expressed by taking a particular role. In accordance with James, Lehman and James (1985), it is assumed that the statuses and role
expectations of family members may vary across cultures. Since the proposed model seeks to explain the consumer socialising effects of gifts between parents and children but not between spouses or siblings, individual family role in the context of this study concentrates on the roles of mothers, fathers, daughters and sons rather than the roles of wives, husbands, sisters and brothers.

**2.3.2 FAMILY INTERACTION STYLE**

The definition of family interaction style in this study is based on the McLeod and Chaffee (1972) model of family communication systems. The model consists of two dimensions, i.e. socio-oriented and concept-oriented. The socio-oriented dimension is indicated by the frequency of (or emphasis on) communication that is designed to produce deference and to foster harmony and pleasant social relationships in the family' (McLeod & Chaffee 1972, p. 83). The concept-oriented dimension is indicated by the frequency of communication that involves 'positive constraints to stimulate the child to develop his own views about the world, and to consider more than one side of an issue' (McLeod & Chaffee 1972, p. 83).

When these two dimensions are combined to form a two-by-two model, four distinct combinations are produced. Each of the four combinations in the McLeod and Chaffee model (1972) represents a different family type that is characterised by a specific parent-child interaction style, i.e. laissez-faire, protective, pluralistic and consensual. Laissez-faire families are low on the socio- and concept-oriented dimensions. Protective families are high on the socio-oriented
dimension and low on the concept-oriented dimension. Pluralistic families are low on the socio-oriented dimension and high on the concept-oriented dimension. Finally, consensual families are high on both the socio- and concept-oriented dimensions.

THE MODEL OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS
(McLEOD AND CHAFFEE 1972)

SOCIO-ORIENTED COMMUNICATION

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LEGEND: A = Child; B = The Parent; X = Topic under discussion. e.g. gift: arrows indicate relations in family communication system.

In agreement with McLeod and Chaffee (1972), family interaction style is defined for the purposes of this study as the structure of parent-child communications that may involve socio- and concept-oriented
dimensions and four family types. Since the proposed model concentrates on the gift-giving process that leads to consumer socialisation between parents and children, family interaction style in the context of this study refers to the communication between parents and children during gift giving but not between spouses or siblings.

2.3.3 CULTURE

Based on Hofstede (1980), culture is defined for the purposes of this study as the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that distinguishes the members of one human group from another and influences their responses to the environment. Thus, it is assumed that cultures may adopt different reciprocal rules and strategies during gift exchange. Since the proposed model seeks to explain how the family gift-giving process leads to consumer socialisation in individualistic and collectivistic cultures, culture in the context of this study includes the Anglo-Celtic culture that represents individualism and the Sino-Vietnamese culture that represents collectivism. In accordance with Triandis (1988) and his colleagues, individualism is defined as a cultural value system in which self is independent from the in-group, i.e. family. On the other hand, collectivism is defined as a cultural value system in which self is seen as an integral part of the in-group, i.e. the family.
2.3.4 FAMILY GIFT-GIVING PROCESS

Family gift-giving is defined for the purposes of this study as a continual process that includes at least one giver and one recipient and involves four, interactive elements: (1) motivation, (2) selection, (3) communication, and (4) reaction. Based on Belk (1979), the process is considered to have three main functions: (1) social exchange, (2) communication, and (3) socialisation. The following sections define and operationalise each of the four elements in the family gift-giving process for the purposes of this study.

2.3.4.1 MOTIVATION

Based on Sherry (1983), motivation is defined as the precipitating condition, i.e. special occasion or ad hoc situation, in which the motivating state of the giver ranges from altruism to agonism on a motivation continuum. When the giver has low self-interest in relation to the recipient, the motive is considered to be more altruistic. In contrast, when the giver has high self-interest in relation to the recipient, the motive is considered to be more agonistic. To operationalise the motivation element in this study, the following issues are included: (1) how individuals explain what they try to achieve by giving a gift; (2) how individuals explain the significance of a gift; and (3) how individuals explain the timing for giving a gift.
2.3.4.2 SELECTION

Based on Sherry (1983), selection is defined as internal and external search and evaluation whereby the giver decides on a suitable gift for the recipient. To operationalise the selection element in this study, the following issues are included: (1) how individuals explain their involvement during gift selection; (2) how individuals explain the family influences on them during gift selection; (3) how individuals explain the advertising and point-of-sale influences on them during gift selection; and (4) how individuals explain the necessary attributes of gifts.

2.3.4.3 COMMUNICATION

Based on Belk (1979), communication is defined as essentially non-verbal, symbolic communication between the exchange partners in which the gift is the message and the channel. To operationalise the communication element in this study, the following issues are included: (1) how individuals explain what they are trying to say through gift presentation; (2) how individuals explain what they are trying to say through gift allocation; and (3) how individuals explain the recipient's understanding of what they were trying to say through the presentation and allocation of gifts.
2.3.4.4 REACTION

Based on Poe (1977), reaction is defined as the indirect or direct response of the recipient to the gift exchange that is immediate or delayed. To operationalise the reaction element in this study, the following issues are included: (1) how individuals explain whether they achieved what they originally intended by giving a gift; (2) how individuals explain the feedback from the recipient about the gift; and (3) how individuals explain what the recipient does with the gift.

2.3.5 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Consumer behaviour is defined for the purposes of this study as consisting of five issues: (1) consumer motivation, (2) consumer involvement, (3) consumer influences, (4) product attributes and (5) consumer reaction. This definition is based on three leading consumer behaviour models (Engel, Kollat and Blackwell 1968; Howard and Sheth 1969; and Nicosia 1966). First, the issue of consumer motivation considers what individuals are trying to achieve when they shop in general. Second, the issue of consumer involvement considers the individuals' level of involvement when they shop in general. Third, the issue of consumer influences considers the influences on individuals by family, friends or promotions when they shop in general. Fourth, the issue of product attributes considers what individuals regard as the most important product attributes when they shop in general. Finally, the issue of consumer reaction considers why individuals are satisfied or dissatisfied with their purchases when they shop in general. To operationalise the process of consumer
socialisation in this study, the five consumer behaviour issues are considered in relation to the four elements in the family gift-giving process. In this way, the model seeks to explain the manner in which gift giving in a family context socialises parents and children as consumers.

2.4 RESEARCH GOALS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As noted earlier, this study is inductive and exploratory. The model's major assumptions serve as the basis for a series of research questions that guide the empirical investigation which is described in the following chapters.

The main goal of the research questions is to explore the various concepts of the model. The specific research questions that the study intends to explore are as follows:

1. Assuming there are differences between individual family roles, how do they shape the family gift-giving process in individualistic and collectivistic cultures?

2. Assuming there are differences between family interaction styles, how do they shape the family gift-giving process in individualistic and collectivistic cultures?

3. Assuming there are differences between individual family roles and family interaction styles, how do they shape the family gift-giving process across individualistic and collectivistic cultures?
4. Assuming there are differences in the way families behave as consumers, how do they express themselves within and across individual family roles in individualistic and collectivistic cultures?

5. Assuming that family gift giving leads to consumer socialisation, how does the process express itself in individualistic and collectivistic cultures?
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study was to explore the link between the family gift-giving process and consumer socialisation in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. The research was exploratory in nature and used an inductive, qualitative approach. Thus, the study was undertaken in an attempt to explain the significance of the phenomena as described from the perspective of the respondents and interpreted by the researcher. This required in-depth interviews with a limited number of respondents who met specific selection criteria.

3.2 SUBJECTS

As noted, the study involved a cross-cultural comparison. The subjects included families from individualistic and collectivistic cultures who lived in Australia.
3.2.1 POPULATION

The population consisted of Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families. The study was limited to the Sydney region of New South Wales, Australia. The Anglo-Celtic respondents were born in Australia of second-generation parents. The Sino-Vietnamese respondents had lived in Australia for at least ten years and, therefore, were assumed to have gone through the acculturation process.

These two cultures were selected for several reasons. First, as Hofstede (1980) stated, they represent two extremes on a continuum ranging from individualism to collectivism. The Anglo-Celtic culture represents individualistic values where self is seen as separate and apart from others. The Sino-Vietnamese culture represents collectivistic values where self is seen in relation to others. Second, according to a recent report on Multicultural Australia (ABS 1986), the Anglo-Celtic culture remains the most prevalent group in Australia, whereas the Sino-Vietnamese culture is one of the fastest growing cultural groups to emigrate to Australia in recent years. Third, the Chinese from Indo-China, which includes Vietnam, were found to adhere more closely to the traditional collectivistic values based on the philosophy of Confucius than the Chinese from mainland China or the Asia-Pacific region.
3.2.2 SAMPLING STRATEGY

The study relied on a snowball sampling strategy. This approach initially used informants from each culture with whom the researcher had made contact. These individuals were asked to introduce the researcher to families from the chosen population who had the appropriate demographic characteristics. Each family thereafter was asked to recommend another family who fit the selection criteria.

3.2.3 SAMPLE SIZE

The sample included eight Anglo-Celtic families and eight Sino-Vietnamese families. A total of sixty-eight in-depth interviews were conducted with thirty-two parents, i.e. sixteen per culture, and thirty-six children, i.e. eighteen per culture, over a fourteen-month period. Thus, each culture was represented by the same number of parents and children. Also, with regard to the children in the sample, each gender was almost equally represented, i.e. nineteen females and seventeen males.

3.2.4 SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

In order that the findings would reflect cultural orientation, the only major distinguishing demographic characteristic in the sample was culture. For this reason, it was necessary to ensure that the two groups were as similar to each other as possible with the only difference being culture.
3.2.4.1 FAMILY TYPE

The study focused on the traditional nuclear family, consisting of both parents living together with their children. This family type was selected for both cultures for the following reasons. First, despite the fact that a number of new family types has emerged in Australia in recent years, the traditional nuclear family is still considered the cultural norm (Borrie 1989). Second, although the predominant family type in Vietnam is the extended family, the majority of Sino-Vietnamese families in Australia more closely resemble the traditional nuclear family because of family displacement during emigration.

3.2.4.2 SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

The latest Australian census report on Population and Housing (ABS 1986) has revealed that the majority of the population in Australia are in the middle-income bracket, i.e. $15,001 to $40,000 per annum. In that segment, sixty-nine percent are families with dependent children. Thus, in order for the major segment of the chosen population, i.e. families with dependent children, to be represented in the sample, the study focused on the middle-class SES (socioeconomic status).

3.2.4.3 LIFE-CYCLE AND AGES OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Within the traditional nuclear family, the study concentrated on those children who were in the adolescent stage of their life-cycle. There were several reasons for focusing on this age group. First, it was assumed
that adolescents would be more experienced consumers than younger children in both cultures. Second, in agreement with Ekstrom, Tansuhaj and Foxman (1987), consumer socialisation within the family was considered to be a reciprocal process and adolescence to be the most suitable age group for investigating the consumer socialisation of parents. Third, the majority of Sino-Vietnamese families in Australia currently consist of children who are now reaching adolescence since young families with small children tended to be the largest group of Sino-Vietnamese to emigrate to Australia ten to fifteen years ago.

The parameters set for adolescence were from the lower physiological limit of puberty at around the age of 12 to the upper social limit of marital and full-time employment duties at around the age of 21. An attempt was made to include in the sample at least one male or female child of every age. Except for the 21 year olds in the Anglo-Celtic families, a male or female child was included for all ages. The following table presents a cross-cultural comparison of the number and percentage of male and female children in the sample according to age.
### Chapter Three

**NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SINO-VIETNAMESE AND ANGLO-CELtic CHILDREN IN THE SAMPLE ACCORDING TO AGE**

| Age | Sino-Vietnamese Children | | | Anglo-Celtic Children | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
|     | No./% of Male | No./% of Female | No./% of Fe/Male | No./% of Male | No./% of Female | No./% of Fe/Male |
| 12  | 0 0.0% | 2 11.0% | 2 11.0% | 4 22.0% | 1 5.5% | 5 27.5% |
| 13  | 0 0.0% | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% | 0 0.0% | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% |
| 14  | 2 11.0% | 1 5.5% | 3 16.5% | 0 0.0% | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% |
| 12-14 | 2 11.0% | 4 22.0% | 6 33.0% | 4 22.0% | 3 16.5% | 7 38.5% |
| 15  | 1 5.5% | 0 0.0% | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% | 2 11.0% | 3 16.5% |
| 16  | 1 5.5% | 2 11.0% | 3 16.5% | 2 11.0% | 0 0.0% | 2 11.0% |
| 17  | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% | 2 11.0% | 2 11.0% | 1 5.5% | 3 16.5% |
| 18  | 0 0.0% | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% | 0 0.0% | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% |
| 15-18 | 3 16.5% | 4 22.0% | 7 38.5% | 5 27.5% | 4 22.0% | 9 49.5% |
| 19  | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% | 2 11.0% | 0 0.0% | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% |
| 20  | 1 5.5% | 0 0.0% | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% | 0 0.0% | 1 5.5% |
| 21  | 0 0.0% | 2 11.0% | 2 11.0% | 0 0.0% | 0 0.0% | 0 0.0% |
| 19-21 | 2 11.0% | 3 16.5% | 5 27.5% | 1 5.5% | 1 5.5% | 2 11.0% |

The life-cycle of the children in the study determined that the parents were in the mid-life stage of their life-cycle between the ages of 35 to 55 years. The ages of the Anglo-Celtic mothers ranged from 35 to 44 years with an average age of 40 years while the ages of the Anglo-Celtic fathers ranged from 36 to 47 years with an average age of 42 years. On the other hand, the ages of the Sino-Vietnamese mothers ranged from
Chapter Three

39 to 53 years with an average age of 43 years while the ages of the Sino-Vietnamese fathers ranged from 41 to 55 years with an average age of 47 years.

3.2.4.4 EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN

Since the children in a traditional nuclear family are dependents who live at home with their parents, all the children in the sample were living at home and attending high school, university or TAFE (Technical and Further Education) with or without part-time employment.

3.2.4.5 EDUCATION OF PARENTS

Since children are required to attend school until Year 6 in Vietnam and until Year 10 in Australia, it seemed appropriate for all parents to have attended school until at least Year 10 so that the academic requirements of both cultures were taken into consideration. It seems worthy of mention that all of the Sino-Vietnamese parents attended Chinese schools in Vietnam rather than Vietnamese schools. It should also be noted that the Vietnam war usually prevented the men from continuing their academic studies while the women were not encouraged to go beyond high school.

Among the Anglo-Celtic mothers, four mothers had obtained a university or TAFE (Technical and Further Education) degree and two mothers were currently continuing their education as part-time
students. Among the Anglo-Celtic fathers, six fathers had obtained a university or TAFE (Technical and Further Education) degree and two of those fathers had also received graduate degrees. Among the Sino-Vietnamese mothers, one mother had completed four years of English school after finishing high school in Vietnam and was currently attending TAFE (Technical and Further Education). Among the Sino-Vietnamese fathers, three fathers had attended but not graduated from university in Vietnam. At the same time, one father had completed four years of English school after finishing high school in Vietnam and received a degree from a university in Australia. Another father had received an undergraduate and Masters degree through an external program at a university in Hong Kong.

3.2.4.6 EMPLOYMENT OF PARENTS

As the father's principal role in a traditional nuclear family is to be the major breadwinner, sample selection was based on all fathers being the primary source of income in the family. On the other hand, since the mother's principal role in the traditional nuclear family is to be the homemaker, all the mothers in the sample considered homemaking duties to be their priority function.

Three Anglo-Celtic mothers and two Sino-Vietnamese mothers were employed part-time outside the home. Among the Anglo-Celtic fathers, three fathers were small business owners, two fathers were academics, and two fathers held senior positions with large corporations. Among the Sino-Vietnamese fathers, three fathers were small business owners, one father was a journalist, one father was a government employee, and
three fathers worked for a large steel company. When the Sino-Vietnamese fathers were employed in Vietnam, they were officials in the government, managers in private industry, or owners of family businesses.

3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument used in the study was a semi-structured interview agenda. Before the research instrument was adopted, however, it was pre-tested on four Anglo-Celtic and four Sino-Vietnamese families. After a preliminary data analysis was conducted on these eight families, the researcher determined that the topic areas in the interview agenda were adequately addressing the five research questions within and between cultures. Since the research instrument was found to have face and content validity, it continued to be used for the remaining interviews. Thus, the following interview agenda was maintained throughout data collection.
INTERVIEW AGENDA

TOpic AREA ONE: FAMILY GIFT-GIVING PROCESS

A. PARENTS’ GIFTS TO CHILDREN OR CHILDREN’S GIFTS TO PARENTS

1. GIFT-GIVING MOTIVATION

JUSTIFICATION:
What did you try to achieve by giving the gift?

SIGNIFICANCE:
What do you think makes a gift significant?

TIMING:
Why did you give the gift at that particular time?

2. GIFT-GIVING SELECTION

INVOLVEMENT:
What was your involvement during gift selection?

FAMILY INFLUENCES:
What were the family influences during gift selection?

PROMOTIONAL INFLUENCES:
What were the advertising and point-of-sale influences on you during gift selection?

GIFT ATTRIBUTES:
What do you consider the necessary attributes of gifts?

3. GIFT-GIVING COMMUNICATION

PRESENTATION MESSAGES:
What are you trying to say through gift presentation?

ALLOCATION MESSAGES:
What are you trying to say through gift allocation?

UNDERSTANDING OF MESSAGES:
What was the recipient’s understanding of what you were trying to say through the presentation and allocation of gifts?
INTERVIEW AGENDA (CONTINUED)

4. GIFT-GIVING REACTION

ACHIEVEMENT:
Did you achieve what you originally intended by giving a gift?

FEEDBACK:
What was the feedback from the recipient about the gift?

USAGE:
What did the recipient do with the gift?

B. CHILDREN’S GIFTS TO PARENTS OR PARENTS’ GIFTS TO CHILDREN

Would you discuss some of the gifts that you’ve received from your children/parents?

TOPIC AREA TWO: CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ISSUES

A. CONSUMER MOTIVATION
What do you try to achieve by shopping?

B. CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT
When, where and how often are you involved in shopping?

C. CONSUMER INFLUENCES
Are you influenced by family, friends or promotions when you shop?

D. PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES
What do you consider are the most important product attributes when you make purchase decisions?

E. CONSUMER REACTION
Why are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your purchases?
The interview agenda had the same four characteristics. First, the format was pre-determined by specifically pertaining to the five research questions. The respondents were asked to discuss two topic areas in the same order. Only when it was necessary to consider separate issues within the same topic area were the questions different for the children and parents. In the first topic area, a number of issues on the family gift-giving process were included. These issues served to answer the first three research questions. In the second topic area, a number of issues were included that pertained to consumer behaviour. These issues along with the issues that were included in the first topic area served to answer the last two research questions. Second, probing questions were used to elicit more information about the issues in each topic area. Third, each respondent was asked the same question in different ways during the interview for cross-check purposes and to gain additional information. Finally, a cross-check was made of individual accounts across respondents within each family to gain accuracy by determining any discrepancies. In this way, data-source triangulation was used for comparative validation purposes.

The semi-structured interview was chosen for several reasons. First, this technique is more flexible than a structured interview and, therefore, seemed more appropriate for the purposes of the study. Second, because of the sensitivity of the issues and the necessity to reduce the anxiety and stress of the respondents, the interview structure needed to be as similar as possible to a normal conversation. Third, interviewing children of various ages required that the presentation of the topic areas was flexible. For example, in order to suit the level of understanding of a particular age group of children, it was sometimes necessary to alter the manner in which the questions
were asked. Fourth, since English was not the first language of the Sino-Vietnamese respondents, it was sometimes necessary to re-phrase the questions to ensure that they were fully understood. All these factors confirmed the decision by the researcher to use a semi-structured rather than a structured interview.

In the first topic area, the parents were asked to discuss their gift-giving behaviour to the children as well as their children's gift-giving behaviour to them. In turn, the children were asked to discuss their gift-giving behaviour to the parents as well as their parent's giving behaviour to them.

When the parents were asked to discuss their gift-giving behaviour to the children, a number of issues were explored in relation to each of the four elements in the gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction. The same issues were also explored when the children were asked to discuss their gift-giving behaviour to the parents.

The motivation element was explored by asking the following questions: (1) what did you try to achieve by giving the gift; (2) what do you think makes a gift significant; and (3) why did you give the gift at that particular time?

The selection element was explored by asking the following questions: (1) what was your involvement during gift selection; (2) what were the family influences on you during gift selection; (3) what were the advertising and point-of-sale influences on you during gift selection; (4) what do you consider are the necessary attributes of gifts?
Chapter Three

The communication element was explored by asking the following questions: (1) what are you trying to say through gift presentation; (2) what are you trying to say through gift allocation; and (3) what was the recipient's understanding of what you were trying to say through the presentation and allocation of gifts?

Finally, the reaction element was explored by asking the following questions: (1) did you achieve what you originally intended by giving a gift; (2) what was the feedback from the recipient about the gift; and (3) what did the recipient do with the gift?

When the parents were asked to discuss their children's gift-giving behaviour to them, they were given the opportunity to discuss what they considered to be relevant. The children were allowed the same freedom of expression when asked to discuss their parents' gift-giving behaviour to them.

The second topic area explored the five consumer behaviour issues by asking each family member the following questions: (1) what do you try to achieve by shopping in general; (2) what is your level of involvement when shopping in general; (3) are you influenced by family, friends, or promotions when shopping in general; (4) what do you regard as the most important product attributes when shopping in general; and (5) why are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your purchases when shopping in general?
3.4 FIELDWORK

The fieldwork began in November of 1992 and was completed by the end of January 1993. Before entering the field, it was decided that four Anglo-Celtic families would be initially interviewed. There were several reasons for making this decision. First, since snowball sampling was used, it seemed more efficient to focus on a group of families from one culture over a period of time. Second, since gaining access was a major issue, it seemed reasonable to start the fieldwork with the culture where more contacts were readily available. Third, it was assumed that the researcher would develop more confidence by conducting the first group of interviews with Anglo-Celtic families who were fluent in English.

As previously mentioned, the research instrument was pre-tested on four Anglo-Celtic families and four Sino-Vietnamese families. When the research instrument was found to be valid, it continued to be used for the interviews with the remaining four families from each culture.

Before a family was included in the sample, the researcher contacted one of the parents by telephone to explain what was involved if the family agreed to participate in the study. In order to ensure that the family satisfied all the selection criteria, their demographic characteristics were initially obtained. If the family was suitable, the following issues were discussed. First, each person would be interviewed separately for at least one hour. Second, the interviews would be tape recorded in order to be transcribed verbatim for subsequent data analysis. Third, in the case of the Sino-Vietnamese families, an interpreter would be required at the interview for those
family members who were not fluent in English. Fourth, the researcher would usually have to return on several occasions in order to conduct all of the interviews. It was also stressed that the interviews would be kept confidential, i.e. the names of the family members would remain anonymous throughout the study and the information obtained during an interview would not be revealed to any other family member. Furthermore, it was explained to the Sino-Vietnamese families that the interpreter also adhered to a strict code of ethics in relation to confidentiality. If the parent was agreeable for the family to be interviewed under those circumstances, the researcher asked the parent to speak to the other family members to seek their cooperation. A few days later, a second telephone call was made to confirm that everyone in the family was willing to be interviewed. If full agreement was reached, a convenient time was set for the first meeting.

Although the family members were aware of the nature of the interview before the first meeting, the researcher still asked each respondent if there were any questions before the interview was conducted. By adopting this approach at the outset, misunderstandings were clarified and rapport was developed.

A cassette recorder was used to obtain a complete and accurate record of the interviews. Since the respondents tended to forget that they were being recorded shortly after the interviews began, the machine did not seem to interfere with the discussion. In fact, it seemed to improve the interviews by allowing a more natural conversational style, i.e. the researcher was free to be an attentive listener without having to take notes.
Even though some of the Sino-Vietnamese parents required an interpreter to be present during the interview, the questions and answers were not paraphrased by the person doing the interpreting. Instead, the interpreter, accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) in Australia, made every effort to provide both the respondent and the researcher with an exact account of what was actually being said so that the original meaning was not distorted.

Because the researcher had to maintain total concentration during the discussion, no more than three interviews were conducted during any one meeting. Consequently, there were usually two and as many as four meetings arranged with each family. Furthermore, to ensure continuity, all the interviews were completed for each family before any interviews were started with another family. As soon as possible after each meeting and before the next meeting was scheduled, the interviews were transcribed verbatim into a word processor. Separate notes were also written within twenty-four hours after an interview to describe any fieldwork experiences that were considered relevant at the time.

3.5 TREATMENT OF DATA

The treatment of the data consisted of three stages. The first stage involved transcribing the data. The second stage consisted of preparing the data for analysis by using a computer software program. The final stage involved an analysis of the data.
3.5.1 TRANSCRIPTION

To ensure complete accuracy, the researcher personally transcribed all of the data from cassettes into a word processor. Also, during the transcribing, the number of the transcriber tape counter was placed at the beginning of each typed page so that a particular portion of the data could be easily located if it became necessary to listen to it again. The interview documents were then loaded into a computer software program called The Ethnograph (Tesch 1990).

3.5.2 THE ETHNOGRAPH

The Ethnograph (Tesch 1990), which was developed by a group of qualitative social scientists in the United States, was the computer software program used to organise the data for analysis. After examining a number of qualitative data analysis programs, The Ethnograph was selected because it seemed to be the most capable program for performing all the tasks required in this study. Furthermore, in relation to other available programs, it was considered the most logically structured and easiest to understand and operate.

After each interview document was loaded into The Ethnograph as a file, a number of steps were taken to prepare the data. First, the computer program automatically numbered the lines of the text. Second, the researcher attached a 'face sheet' to the file that contained all the demographic information about that particular respondent. Third, the file was printed and then manually coded by the researcher. During the coding stage, code words were assigned to segments of data.
that identified pre-determined issues. Fourth, an initial set of code words was entered into The Ethnograph. These code words, however, were able to be modified when required.

After the code words were entered into the computer program, The Ethnograph de-contextualized the data, i.e. separated relevant portions of data from their context. During the search phase, The Ethnograph was able to re-contextualise the data, i.e. assemble all the data that belonged to a specific code category. But, The Ethnograph was still unable to re-contextualise in the sense of framing coded material in the context of the entire interview transcript. For this reason, it continued to be necessary for the researcher to return manually to the original data throughout the analysis. Thus, The Ethnograph merely served as an augmenting tool to the manual analysis.

3.5.3 ANALYSIS

The analysis was divided into five stages to address each research question. The following discussion describes each stage of the analysis.

3.5.3.1 STAGE ONE

The first stage of the analysis addressed the first research question, i.e. assuming there are differences between individual family roles, how do they shape the family gift-giving process in individualistic and collectivistic cultures?. The Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families were analysed separately. The analysis of the roles of mothers and
fathers considered how parents give gifts to their children, whereas the analysis of the roles of daughters and sons considered how children give gifts to their parents. During this stage, the roles of the mothers, fathers, daughters and sons were analysed in relation to the four elements in the gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction. As noted earlier, each of the four elements included a number of issues.

The analysis of the motivation element included the following issues: (1) how individuals explain what they try to achieve by giving a gift; (2) how individuals explain the significance of a gift; and (3) how individuals explain the timing for giving a gift.

The analysis of the selection element included the following issues: (1) how individuals explain their involvement during gift selection; (2) how individuals explain the family influences on them during gift selection; (3) how individuals explain the advertising and point-of-sale influences on them during gift selection; and (4) how individuals explain the necessary attributes of gifts.

The analysis of the communication element included the following issues: (1) how individuals explain what they are trying to say through gift presentation; (2) how individuals explain what they are trying to say through gift allocation; and (3) how individuals explain the recipient's understanding of what they are trying to say through the presentation and allocation of gifts.

The analysis of the reaction element included the following issues: (1) how individuals explain whether they achieved what they originally
intended by giving the gift; (2) how individuals explain the feedback from the recipient about the gift; and (3) how individuals explain what the recipient does with the gift.

3.5.3.2 STAGE TWO

The second stage of the analysis addressed the second research question, i.e. assuming there are differences between family interaction styles, how do they shape the family gift-giving process in individualistic and collectivistic cultures? The focus of the analysis was on the parent-child interaction within each family, involving the individual family roles of mothers, fathers, daughters and sons. An attempt was made to identify the family interaction styles and to compare how they shaped family gift-giving behaviour within the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese cultures. During the analysis, the McLeod and Chaffee (1972) model of family communication systems served as a guide. As previously mentioned, this model consists of two dimensions, i.e. socio-oriented and concept-oriented, and four family types, i.e. laissez-faire, protective, pluralistic and consensual.

3.5.3.3 STAGE THREE

The third stage of the analysis addressed the third research question, i.e. assuming there are differences between individual family roles and family interaction styles, how do they shape the family gift-giving process across individualistic and collectivistic cultures? In this stage, the previous two stages were used as the basis for a cross-cultural
analysis, involving the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families. That is, the roles of mothers, fathers, daughters and sons were compared and contrasted as they applied to the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction.

3.5.3.4 STAGE FOUR

The fourth stage of the analysis addressed the fourth research question, i.e. assuming there are differences in the way families behave as consumers, how do they express themselves within and across individual family roles in individualistic and collectivistic cultures? In this stage, the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families were analysed separately and then together in relation to their consumer behaviour. That is, the roles of mothers, fathers, daughters and sons were compared and contrasted as they applied to the five consumer behaviour issues, i.e. consumer motivation, consumer involvement, consumer influences, product attributes, and consumer reaction.

The consumer behaviour issues included: (1) how individuals explain what they are trying to achieve by shopping in general; (2) how individuals explain their level of involvement when shopping in general; (3) how individuals explain the influences from family, friends or promotions when shopping in general; (4) how individuals explain the important product attributes that they consider when shopping in general; and (5) how individuals explain why they are satisfied or dissatisfied with their purchases when shopping in general.
3.5.3.5 STAGE FIVE

The final stage of the analysis addressed the fifth research question, i.e. assuming that family gift giving leads to consumer socialisation, how does the process express itself in individualistic and collectivistic cultures? In this stage, the families in the two cultures were analysed separately and together in relation to their gift-giving behaviour and consumer behaviour. Thus, an attempt was made to demonstrate the link between the family gift-giving process and consumer socialisation.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS: STAGE ONE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The following research question was the basis for the data that is presented in this chapter.

Assuming there are differences between individual family roles, how do they shape the family gift-giving process in individualistic and collectivistic cultures?

The Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families were analysed separately. When presenting the data for each culture, the roles of the mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons were considered.

4.2 ANGLO-CELTIC FAMILIES

The following analysis involved the interviews with the eight Anglo-Celtic families. The analysis of the role of mother and father considered how parents give gifts to their children, whereas the analysis of the role of daughter and son considered how children give gifts to their parents.
4.2.1 ROLE OF MOTHER

The following analysis considered the role of mother in the eight Anglo-Celtic families in the study. It involved the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction.

4.2.1.1 MOTIVATION

The analysis of the motivation element included the following issues: (1) justification of the gift, (2) significance of the gift, and (3) timing of the gift.

**Justification.** Most mothers mentioned two reasons for giving gifts to their children. First, they wanted to give pleasure by providing gifts that satisfied their children's desires and enhanced their self-concept. For example, several mothers acknowledged that when deciding on gifts for their children, the decision mainly stemmed from wanting them to maintain a sense of status in relation to their peers. Second, they wanted to receive pleasure by obtaining their children's love and appreciation. Even though it seemed that the motivation of the mothers was altruistic since they were primarily interested in their children gaining pleasure from the gift exchange, it was also agonistic because they wanted their children to love and appreciate them. In this respect, their motivation appeared to be in conflict since it was both altruistic and agonistic.
**Significance.** All the mothers considered that birthday gifts were the most significant because they were very personal and commemorated the individual, especially on 18th or 21st birthdays. Three mothers thought gifts that would last and be remembered, such as jewellery, were most important: two mothers indicated that handmade gifts given to their daughters were extremely important; and two others said that gifts were important because of their monetary value.

**Timing.** All the mothers were primarily motivated to time their children’s gifts to coincide with special occasions, e.g. Christmas and birthdays. For this reason, they rarely gave gifts at other times of the year. Four mothers stated that one of the main reasons they gave gifts at Christmas was out of a sense of obligation to fulfil their children’s expectations. When their children received items that were not timed to coincide with a special occasion, the mothers considered that they were necessities since gifts represented something extra, mainly associated with ritual celebrations. Also, timing a gift to correspond with their children’s academic or sports achievements was not the usual practice. While four mothers mentioned that a family dinner was occasionally arranged to celebrate good school reports, four mothers did not reward through gifts and two of those were against it.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the motivation element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic mothers.
I mainly give them gifts on birthdays and Christmas but I'd rate their birthdays as the most important because it's the only day of the year that's theirs. I suppose I'm trying to leave a lasting impression. I mean, they know I'd do most of the thinking and the buying and the "Oh, wow, Mum, it's just what I wanted". Yeah, I want to give them pleasure. There's a lot of gratification in that. That they can single you out, well you're the one who has done it. It seems as if I'm chasing extra affection. It's hard to weigh it up against the fact you enjoy it. I don't think you even realise you're probably seeking extra favour. Maybe I'm trying to differentiate with my husband, you know, that Mum is the one who does it.

4.2.1.2 SELECTION

The analysis of the selection element included the following issues: (1) involvement, (2) family influences, (3) promotional influences, and (4) gift attributes.

Involvement. All the mothers considered that they spent more time selecting gifts for their children than the fathers. While some of the mothers said that the fathers were occasionally involved in the decision making during gift selection, especially when gifts were expensive or in the fathers' area of expertise, all the mothers believed that it was essentially their responsibility in the family. Most mothers, however, enjoyed the task and put a lot of effort into it even though several found it stressful at Christmas.
Family Influences. All the mothers said that their children were the main source of influence during gift selection. While the mothers would have preferred to surprise their children, the majority asked them for gift suggestions to ensure satisfaction. In this way, the children seemed to be primarily in control of the gifts selected by the mothers. But, since most mothers limited the number of name brand gifts and refused to give money unless it was for a specific purpose, it seemed that the mothers were endeavouring to maintain some measure of control during gift selection. Although most younger children supplied gift lists at Christmas and for their birthdays, several mothers said that they only used these lists as guides to make the gift selection. On the other hand, older children, i.e. over 11 years old, were inclined to request their gifts, which mainly included name brand clothes, shoes and sports equipment. Some mothers mentioned that their children sometimes bartered in order to get a more expensive name brand gift. At those times, a compromise was reached whereby the children were frequently given one name brand. Most mothers, however, said that when a name brand item was extremely expensive or several items were wanted, their children often contributed money towards the gifts and accompanied them to make the selection. Several children had received their bicycles and surfboards in this manner.

Promotional Influences. The majority of mothers were mainly influenced by letterbox leaflets. Otherwise, they did not think that promotions directly influenced them. The mothers, however, believed that they could be indirectly affected by promotions since television advertising often directly influenced their children's gift requests.
Also, because most mothers decided on gifts before going to the shops, they did not regard point-of-sale promotions or sales staff as a significant influence.

**Gift Attributes.** Even though some of the mothers said that their children enjoyed receiving money gifts, all the mothers found money to be an unacceptable gift since it was considered impersonal and lacking in thought and effort. When the mothers gave money, they indicated that it was given for a specific purpose. When making the final gift selection, all the mothers stated that a quality item that would last was a gift's most important attribute. Since most mothers associated name brands with quality, they tended to wait to buy them for their children as gifts.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the selection element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic mothers.

> My husband leaves it all to me. But I'd have to take him to look at something big because I wouldn't like to buy that sort of thing on my own. ..... When the kids were younger, a lot of the gifts I gave probably would have been my own thinking to stimulate them to be bright and intelligent kids. ..... I always spend time before Christmas and that quizzing the kids about what they might want because I think it's pretty disappointing if they aren't getting something that they figured they really wanted. ..... My kids are guided by name brands. They've become more so once they hit high school. It comes from peers and advertisements. My son, he paid for half himself. That's one way we've gone with them in name brands. The same with my daughter. She wants the dearer ones because of the brand and I guess the quality. I appreciate some of the name brands are better quality.
and I don't mind buying them for gifts. ... So I like to give value. What I consider value for money. Quality that lasts. I wouldn't necessarily buy the cheapest. ... I don't like giving money as a gift. Well, there's no thought been put into it. I feel that it's a cop out really. It's a nothing gift unless it's given to buy something specific.

4.2.1.3 COMMUNICATION

The analysis of the communication element included the following issues: (1) gift presentation messages; (2) gift allocation messages; and (3) recipient's understanding of the gift presentation and allocation messages.

Presentation Messages. When the mothers presented gifts to their children, the majority indicated that they were attempting to communicate the amount of effort, and sometimes sacrifice, that had been made in order to consider their requests. In this way, they were trying to express their love and hoping to gain their children's appreciation and affection. A number of mothers mentioned that when they gave their children name brand items as gifts, they were trying to tell them that they understood the importance of these items in relation to peer group acceptance. Even though some mothers indicated that they had occasionally sought to influence their daughters and sons through their gift-giving messages, the majority of mothers said that they preferred not to interfere with the development of their children's individuality. Since they were usually
unwilling to impose their identities on their children through gift messages, they were not inclined to use gifts as socialisation instruments.

**Allocation Messages.** Most mothers said that a number of gifts were allocated to each child on special occasions. At those times, they tried to convey their impartiality, especially at Christmas when comparisons were usually made. For this reason, the majority of mothers stated that although their children did not necessarily receive gifts of equal value on every occasion, they all received gifts of the same value over a period of time.

**Understanding of Messages.** Most mothers were reasonably satisfied that their gift messages were understood and accepted by their children.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the communication element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic mothers.

When I give the kids gifts, I want to tell them that they're special and I really care. I think they have a fairly high self esteem. ... I try and keep it so it looks like they've got a similar sort of spread of gifts. Birthdays, no, because they are sorta staggered through the year but at Christmas when they're sorta looking and they are all on the floor together and it's laid out, it's more obvious that one's got one thing and one's got four things or something like that. ... I just want them to know they've got a network of loving people around them. Naturally, that doesn't all come through giving gifts but, yes, I think it helps. And I suppose, they get the message. You can only try.
4.2.1.4 REACTION

The analysis of the reaction element included the following issues: (1) achievement of gift-giving motivation; (2) feedback of recipient; and (3) gift usage of recipient.

Achievement. Since most mothers tried to do whatever was necessary within reason to satisfy their children, they believed that their objectives were achieved. That is, their children ordinarily derived pleasure from the gifts and appreciated them, which, in turn, gave pleasure to the mothers. But, several mothers admitted that they were occasionally disappointed with their children’s reaction to their gifts. At those times, the mothers tended to blame themselves for not being able to provide suitable gifts rather than to blame their children for being ungrateful.

Feedback. Most mothers believed that while the daughters and sons tended to gain the same amount of pleasure from their gifts, they mentioned that the feedback of the daughters was more expressive than the sons.

Usage. The majority of mothers mentioned that when the daughters received clothes or jewellery, they preferred to wear the items without delay. The sons, on the other hand, usually waited for an appropriate occasion to wear their gifts of clothes. When the children received sports equipment, they tended to use it at once. Although gifts were sometimes shared among siblings, e.g. games, the mothers said that the children usually regarded gifts as exclusively
their gifts, especially since they were given individually. For this reason, it was customary for gifts to be taken to the children's bedrooms where they were displayed and privately consumed.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the reaction element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic mothers.

>Sometimes I think they're very pleased but other times I think they get disappointed because we don't always give them the things they want. I guess I also feel a little disappointed at times if I can't. I think it would be nice to be able to buy such and such for them but it may be beyond our means. ... They're very possessive of their gifts I suppose. If you gave them some clothes, they wouldn't want anyone else to wear them for a while. Or they'd say "That's mine because that was given to me". If it's Christmas, they take their gifts to their rooms.

### 4.2.1.5 SUMMARY

Overall, the analysis of the role of the Anglo-Celtic mothers has found that their gift-giving motivation appears to be in conflict since it is both altruistic and agonistic. The mothers perceive that they spend more time selecting gifts for their children than the fathers, especially in relation to the shopping task. Because the mothers are mainly influenced by their children during gift giving, they are not inclined to communicate socialisation messages to them. The mothers also believe that they are directly affected by promotional messages through letterbox leaflets and indirectly affected through their children's gift requests. Finally, the mothers are reasonably
satisfied that they have achieved their objectives since the children tend to be pleased with the gifts and express their love and appreciation.

4.2.2 ROLE OF FATHER

The following analysis considered the role of father in the eight Anglo-Celtic families in the study. It involved the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction.

4.2.2.1 MOTIVATION

The analysis of the motivation element included the following issues: (1) justification of the gift, (2) significance of the gift, and (3) timing of the gift.

**Justification.** The fathers mentioned several reasons for giving gifts to their children. First, they wanted to give practical gifts that they believed would be put to good use. Second, they wanted to ensure that their gifts directed their children's personal development, especially if they fostered one of the fathers' areas of interest. Finally, they wanted to receive personal pleasure from their children's show of love and appreciation. For these reasons, it seemed that the motivation of the fathers was agonistic since they were primarily interested in making sure that their gifts were used, by imposing their own interests upon their children through gifts, and
receiving love and appreciation from the gift exchange. But, since the fathers wanted their children to benefit in the short term from the exchange, it could be considered that their motivation was also altruistic.

**Significance.** All the fathers indicated that gifts were especially significant on birthdays because they honoured the individual. Most fathers also mentioned that practical gifts were important since they tended to be used and appreciated.

**Timing.** All the fathers said that birthdays and Christmas were the two times of the year when gifts were primarily given to their children. A number of fathers indicated that they refrained from giving gifts throughout the year since they believed this practice was teaching greed and materialism. Instead, they tried to confine their gift giving to special occasions when expensive items and a limited number of name brands were given. Even though gifts were rarely given at other times of the year, some fathers mentioned that they were sometimes motivated to acknowledge their children's good school reports by taking the family to dinner. But, tangible gifts were not given for good academic records because the fathers regarded this practice as a form of bribery.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the motivation element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic fathers.
I think I'm giving because it's a special occasion for them. That's one thing. ... Christmas time is a time where gifts are bought and given and there's a fair bit of effort to make sure they're appropriate and they're wanted. But the birthday time is again the individual time and I think a lot more thought and care goes into something that's especially appropriate. A gift that touches something about the child's individuality. Something that's about them. ... I've differentiated between regular things and things for birthdays and Christmas to make them special and so the expectation is there that it will be something different and something that they've been waiting for to make it exciting. If I go the extra extent of say a name brand or something they want especially, then they appreciate it. ... On special occasions I also think I'm giving them things that they need because I see that as being a saving down the track for me rather than having to supply that need later on during the year. So I suppose that's a hidden agenda which is probably selfish in the long term. ... And I think the other thing is that I want them to enjoy and use what I give them rather than just have something for the sake of having it.

4.2.2.2 SELECTION

The analysis of the selection element included the following issues: (1) involvement, (2) family influences, (3) promotional influences, and (4) gift attributes.

Involvement. All the fathers said that the mothers usually made the gift purchases. But, the majority felt that they were involved in the decision making before purchase and four fathers also indicated that they were sometimes involved at purchase. Some fathers.
however, thought that they should take on more of the responsibility of gift selection, i.e. the shopping task. The fathers who made gift purchases indicated that they tended not to make them alone but were accompanied by the mothers and sometimes by the children. Several fathers stated that they had been or were currently more involved in the selection of gifts for younger children than they were for older children. A number of fathers also admitted that when the gifts pertained to their area of interest or an area that seemed worthwhile to foster in their children, they were usually involved in gift selection.

**Family Influences.** Several fathers mentioned that they were influenced by the mothers during gift selection. But, all the fathers said that their children either directly influenced them by making gift suggestions and providing lists or indirectly influenced them through the mothers. The majority of the fathers mentioned that they believed one of their primary functions during gift selection was to use their veto power in the family. For this reason, the data suggested that the fathers were indicating a need to stay involved and to feel in control which they expressed by limiting name brands to gift-giving occasions and restricting money gifts to special purposes.

**Promotional Influences.** Most fathers did not consider that advertising influenced them during gift selection. But, several fathers mentioned that they were sometimes influenced by sales staff.
Gift Attributes. Even though some fathers acknowledged that their children liked to receive money gifts, all the fathers found that money was an unacceptable gift for exactly the same reasons as the mothers had stated. That is, money was considered to be impersonal and lacking in thought and effort. Also, several fathers said that they did not give money to their children because they considered that it would be misused. The majority of fathers thought that the most important attributes to consider when making a gift selection were the practical value of the item in relation to cost and the short-term needs of the children.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the selection element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic fathers.

I don't think I've gone out too many times on my own to buy the kids gifts. I'd say prior to the actual purchase of the gift, both the wife and I would probably put a fair bit of thought into it and also would go along with whatever the kids had in mind. And I suppose it all boils down to if the kids like the gift and responded, I'd be happy. ... If it's good quality and it's a good name brand and the kids are comfortable with it ... well, the kids want to be like their peers. Name brands put a lot of pressure on the kids and then they put them on the family. Now if you send a kid out with a cricket bat that you think is absolutely fantastic but the kid won't use because he won't be seen dead with it, I mean you might as well be wasting your money. So I get them something that they are going to feel comfortable with that is going to fulfil that need of theirs and be used. ... I don't like the idea of giving money to my children. I think it's a flexible gift for people who you don't know well enough because it lets
them buy what they want rather than you having to anticipate what you think they might want. That’s where it fails with your own kids.

4.2.2.3 COMMUNICATION

The analysis of the communication element included the following issues: (1) gift presentation messages; (2) gift allocation messages; and (3) recipient's understanding of the gift presentation and allocation messages.

Presentation Messages. Most fathers indicated that their children gave them as many gift messages through gift requests as they gave messages to their children through gift presentation. Most fathers also mentioned that even though they tried to communicate their love by providing their children with the gifts that they wanted and needed, they sometimes used gifts to communicate a number of other messages. Several fathers stated that when they gave the children their first bicycles, they were telling them that they had reached the age where they were old enough to ride. For this reason, the children's first bicycles could be considered rites-of-passage gifts. Another father said that he gave his children living gifts, such as plants and pets, to communicate that he expected them to learn to take responsibility for something beyond themselves. Several other fathers said that when they gave sporting equipment, educational games, musical instruments, books, or model sets, they were communicating to their children that they considered these areas of interest were worthwhile. But, it is important to note that one
father stated he seldom gave sports-related gifts to his sons. In this way, he believed he was inadvertently communicating that he considered sports activities were not worthwhile. Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that the omission of gifts as well as their inclusion may be communicating socialisation messages to children.

**Allocation Messages.** Most fathers said that they attempted to communicate their lack of favouritism by making certain that their children received gifts that were approximately the same value.

**Understanding of Messages.** The majority of fathers said that they were reasonably satisfied that their gift messages were understood and appreciated by their children.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the communication element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic fathers.

> I guess the main message is not just that we love them but that we’ve taken the time and care to think through what they would like. I guess that’s the most important message. ... Kids can also learn a great deal about themselves from the gifts they receive from their parents. However, it doesn’t seem that they learn so much any more from their parents. It seems now to be going in the other direction and parents are beginning to learn more about what their kids want. In the past, parents seemed to be primarily directing the communication through the gifts they gave. Now the communication seems to be going in both directions. ... We deliberately buy different things for each of the kids. I feel it’s important to differentiate the gifts. And that helps because there’s no direct comparison. But before Christmas we lay the gifts out on the bed in clumps to see how the clumps look and
Chapter Four

if they're balanced. There's also the size factor. This big thing isn't worth as much as this little thing. I'm usually happy with the balance. I think we usually end up doing a bit of juggling and I feel it looks fair. It's important that kids perceive they've done well. But, I'm lucky, my kids are very appreciative.

4.2.2.4 REACTION

The analysis of the reaction element included the following issues: (1) achievement of gift-giving motivation; (2) feedback of recipient; and (3) gift usage of recipient.

Achievement. Most fathers indicated that since their children generally received the gifts that they requested, they were normally pleased with them and showed appreciation by using them. For this reason, the fathers believed that their objectives were usually achieved.

Feedback. Several fathers found that even though their daughters showed more emotion than their sons at the time gifts were received, they considered that their children were equally pleased and appreciative. But, there were several instances where gifts were not well received. On these occasions, the fathers attributed their children's reaction to peer group pressure for name brand items.

Usage. Some of the fathers stated that they wanted their children to learn to share their gifts. But, the majority of fathers acknowledged that while their children used their gifts immediately,
they were usually consumed individually rather than being shared with their siblings.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the reaction element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic fathers.

Whatever you give them, they think is wonderful. I really would be very surprised to hear any of them say "Oh, look. This one got that and it's better than what I got". They are fairly aware too that I have expectations of them in terms of their behaviour. They know that they'd get very short shift if they didn't respond in a way that's appreciative and caring. But, I'm not very often disappointed with them. As I said, the kids are appreciative so I've succeeded in what I set out to achieve. ... My daughters are pretty emotional about their gifts though, but my sons wouldn't be very emotional. Maybe a little bit when they got something like a bike in their younger years. No, as they get more mature, boys seem to lose that emotion. ... When they're little they show off their gifts but as they get older, they mainly take all their stuff to their rooms. Watches they'd wear all the time. Yes, they put all their stuff in their rooms.

4.2.2.5 SUMMARY

Overall, the analysis of the role of the Anglo-Celtic fathers has found that even though their gift-giving motivation seems agonistic, altruistic motives are evident. The fathers also indicate that they are more involved in gift selection before purchase than during the shopping task. Even though the fathers' gift messages convey that
they have tried to comply with their children's requests, most fathers attempt to impose their identity onto their children by transmitting additional socialisation messages. Finally, the fathers are reasonably satisfied that their objectives are achieved since the children tend to use and appreciate their gifts.

4.2.3 ROLE OF DAUGHTER

The following analysis considered the role of daughter in the eight Anglo-Celtic families in the study and included interviews with eight daughters. It involved the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction.

4.2.3.1 MOTIVATION

The analysis of the motivation element included the following issues: (1) justification of the gift, (2) significance of the gift, and (3) timing of the gift.

Justification. Most daughters mentioned two reasons for giving gifts to their parents. First, they wanted to make their parents happy by showing their love and appreciation. Second, they wanted to gain personal pleasure from their parents' happiness. Even though their motivation was altruistic because they wanted to give pleasure to their parents, it was also agonistic since they wanted to obtain pleasure from the exchange. Some daughters also said that they were occasionally motivated to give gifts to their parents that
encouraged them to have a younger self-concept. In this respect, their motivation was essentially agonistic because they were attempting to change the parents' self-concept to suit their own. Thus, the motivation of the daughters appeared to be in conflict inasmuch as it was both altruistic and agonistic.

**Significance.** Two daughters said that gifts were significant because they were associated with a special occasion while another daughter stated that gifts were significant at Christmas because everyone in the family received gifts at the same time. A number of daughters believed that when gifts were unique to the individual and given as surprises, they were especially significant because the preferences of the parents were taken into consideration. Several other daughters believed that gifts were significant when they came from the heart and showed love. One of these daughters also mentioned that gifts from the heart should be items of a lasting value so that they could be kept for sentimental reasons.

**Timing.** Most daughters stated that they gave gifts to their parents at Christmas, on birthdays and Mother's Day. Even though the majority of daughters also gave gifts on Father's Day, several daughters said that they rarely, if ever, celebrated the occasion. But, when Father's Day was not observed, there was no indication that the daughters were conveying a lack of appreciation for their fathers. Instead, since the mothers were always honoured on Mother's Day, it seemed that they were especially appreciated because of their role of nurturer in the families.
The following excerpt from an interview with a 19 year old gives a typical account of the motivation element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic daughters.

Well, I think a gift is important if it's something my parents will always remember and they'll always remember when they're opening it or something like that. And something that will always stay with them, something that they can always keep. Oh, I like to give gifts to Mum and Dad on Christmas and birthdays and Mother's and Father's days to show them how much I appreciate what they've done for me. It makes me feel good.

4.2.3.2 SELECTION

The analysis of the selection element included the following issues: (1) involvement, (2) family influences, (3) promotional influences, and (4) gift attributes.

Involvement. Most daughters indicated that they gave a lot of thought to the selection of gifts for their parents. The majority of the daughters also said that they were more involved than the brothers when the siblings selected gifts together for each parent.

Family Influences. Most daughters mentioned that they were influenced by their siblings when gifts were selected together for each parent. But, at those times, the daughters tended to take a more dominant role than the sons, especially when they were the oldest sibling. In most cases, the daughters found it was more difficult to
select gifts for their fathers because they were considered harder to please than their mothers. The daughters also perceived that the fathers liked items that were beyond their price range. For this reason, the majority of daughters frequently sought the influence of their mothers by asking them to make gift suggestions for their fathers. Although some daughters asked their parents to tell them what they wanted in order to make sure that their gifts were liked, several other daughters preferred to surprise their parents by selecting gifts that they considered were suitable or that they wanted their parents to wear or use.

**Promotional Influences.** The daughters indicated that while advertising sometimes influenced their personal purchases, they did not consider that it affected their gift selections. Since the daughters tended to make their final gift selections at the stores, it seems reasonable to suggest that their primary sources of promotional influence were point-of-sale material and sales staff.

**Gift Attributes.** Most daughters mentioned that quality rather than price was the main attribute that they considered when making gift selections for their parents. For this reason, they sometimes selected name brands as gifts.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 12 year old gives a typical account of the selection element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic daughters.
Last Mother’s Day we thought of the idea of getting Mum one of those big pillows and because they cost a bit more the children put in money all together and we also got her this little terracotta duck thing but Dad got her a separate one. But quite often we get separate gifts. Usually it depends on the cost or the size of the present. Like if it’s going to cost a lot of money, then you’d need more people for it to be better. But if you can afford it by yourself you don’t mind. It also depends on what ideas you come up with. You see, Dad’s harder than Mum because she’s a woman and I sorta know more of what she’d like. And where it comes to her, you can always get her some makeup or something. But with Dad, you don’t know what he likes and you sorta ask Mum or ask him or you get him some socks or look around the shops for something.

### 4.2.3.3 COMMUNICATION

The analysis of the communication element included the following issues: (1) gift presentation messages; (2) gift allocation messages; and (3) recipient’s understanding of the gift presentation and allocation messages.

**Presentation Messages.** All the daughters mentioned that they were trying to express their love and appreciation towards their parents during gift presentation. Several daughters also said that when they gave gifts as surprises, they were trying to express individuality as well as sensitivity to the needs of their parents. And on a few occasions, trendy clothes were given to convey the message that the parents should dress and behave in a more youthful manner.
**Allocation Messages.** The daughters did not indicate that any partiality was shown to either parent during the allocation of gifts at Christmas or on birthdays. But, since some daughters gave gifts on Mother's Day but seldom on Father's Day, it seems reasonable to suggest that they showed a certain amount of favouritism towards their mothers on these occasions.

**Understanding of Messages.** Most daughters felt that both their parents understood that whenever they gave gifts to them, they tried to express their love and appreciation.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 17 year old gives a typical account of the communication element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic daughters.

> Well, I guess I'm saying that the gift appealed to me. I mean it would have to appeal to me for me to buy it in the first place. And so it's letting Mum and Dad know I liked that so I wanted them to enjoy it and I thought they'd like it too. You see, I'm wanting to tell them I care and that I appreciate what they've done for me.

**4.2.3.4 REACTION**

The analysis of the reaction element included the following issues: (1) achievement of gift-giving motivation; (2) feedback of recipient; and (3) gift usage of recipient.
Achievement. All the daughters said that their parents appreciated their gifts and the majority said that they acted pleased with them. For this reason, the daughters were generally satisfied with the reaction of their parents and felt their objectives were achieved.

Feedback. Although the majority of daughters felt that their gifts pleased their parents, they sometimes expressed uncertainty about whether their gifts were genuinely liked. For example, a 17 year old stated that even though her father said he liked the gifts, she could tell when he was not altogether happy with her selection by the expression on his face. An 18 year old also stated that she was aware when her mother pretended to be pleased. Finally, a 13 year old stated that her mother acted happy even when she did not like what she received. These accounts suggest that the daughters were especially aware of their parents' feelings.

Usage. Most daughters mentioned that their parents used their gifts. They also mentioned that their parents sometimes made a special effort to ensure that they were used.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 13 year old gives a typical account of the reaction element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic daughters.

Well, my folks like what I give them. My Mum, she's very grateful. Oh, she always gives me a big hug and says thank you and she's always very happy. Even if she doesn't like it, she always acts very happy anyway. My Dad, well he sort of says "Come over here" and he gives
me a big hug and he says "Thank you" and you know, that sort of thing. They really try to show they like things and want to use them too.

4.2.3.5 SUMMARY

Overall, the analysis of the role of the Anglo-Celtic daughters has found that their gift-giving motivation seems to be in conflict because it is both altruistic and agonistic. The daughters also perceive that they take a more active role in the selection of gifts for their parents than the sons. But, even though the daughters are mainly trying to express their love and appreciation through gifts, they sometimes attempt to socialise their parents. Finally, while the daughters are reasonably satisfied that their objectives are achieved, they sometimes are uncertain that the pleasure expressed by their parents is sincere.

4.2.4 ROLE OF SON

The following analysis considered the role of son in the eight Anglo-Celtic families in the study and included interviews with ten sons. It involved the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction.
4.2.4.1 MOTIVATION

The analysis of the motivation element included the following issues: (1) justification of the gift, (2) significance of the gift, and (3) timing of the gift.

**Justification.** The majority of the sons mentioned two reasons for giving gifts to their parents. First, they wanted to give pleasure by showing their love and appreciation. Second, they wanted to receive pleasure. Even though their motivation could be considered altruistic since they wanted to give pleasure to their parents, they also wanted to receive pleasure. For this reason, their motivation seemed to be in conflict because it was both altruistic and agonistic. Several sons also admitted that giving gifts to their parents was an obligation associated with a special occasion. That is, they said gifts were mainly given to avoid any criticism from their parents. For this reason, their gift-giving motivation was considered to be essentially agonistic since they were primarily thinking about themselves rather than wanting to give pleasure to their parents.

**Significance.** Most sons were unable to explain the significance of their gifts. Yet, two sons said that Christmas gifts were the most significant because they were associated with a happy family occasion. Another son mentioned that heart-shaped jewellery for his mother, which expressed his love, were the most significant gifts.
Timing. The majority of sons said that they frequently gave gifts to their parents on birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day. But, only one 12 year old mentioned that he had voluntarily given gifts to his parents when it was not a special occasion.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 17 year old gives a typical account of the motivation element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic sons.

Oh, I mainly just give them gifts on Christmas and birthdays and Mother's Day and Father's Day. I just go out and think of what they might like. My Mum loves getting the usual stuff women like. But for my Dad it's hard to buy things for him. It's hard to buy special things for guys I reckon. But if they're getting joy out of it and it brings a smile to their face and it's something they've wanted, it makes you feel good because you've actually given that to someone else, that joy.

4.2.4.2 SELECTION

The analysis of the selection element included the following issues: (1) involvement, (2) family influences, (3) promotional influences, and (4) gift attributes.

Involvement. Even though the majority of the sons selected gifts for their parents, they did not put a lot of time and effort into the activity. Most older sons mentioned that they shared the involvement and cost with their siblings by selecting gifts together for
each parent. But, several sons admitted that their mothers or sisters sometimes made their gift selections without their necessarily being involved.

**Family Influences.** Most older sons mentioned that because they tended to give joint gifts to each parent with their siblings, they were primarily influenced by their siblings, especially their older sisters, during gift selection. On the other hand, the younger sons mainly gave individual gifts to their parents at Christmas or on birthdays. On those occasions, each parent helped make the gift selection for the other parent. But, the younger sons tended to make their own gift selections at school fetes for Mother's Day and Father's Day. Also, several sons said that since they preferred for their gifts to surprise their parents, they seldom asked their mothers or fathers for assistance. Instead, they observed and listened. The majority of sons mentioned, however, that they found it particularly difficult to select suitable gifts within their price range for their fathers.

**Promotional Influences.** Most sons mentioned that while advertising sometimes influenced their personal purchases, they did not consider that advertising affected the selection of gifts for their parents. Since the sons mainly made their final gift selections at the stores, it seems reasonable to suggest that their primary sources of promotional influence were point-of-sale material and sales staff.

**Gift Attributes.** Most sons mentioned that they mainly considered quality gifts within their price range. But, it is interesting to note that even though they seemed to prefer quality items, none of the
sons indicated that name brands were considered when selecting gifts for their parents.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 12 year old gives a typical account of the selection element in the family gift-giving process for the younger Anglo-Celtic sons.

_They all seem to like the same things. Dad helps me for Mum and Mum helps me if it's for Dad sorta thing. So they sorta know what each other likes more than I do. Or I just go out and maybe buy something even though I'm not sure whether they will like it or not. Sometimes I go with Mum and sometimes just Mum goes and buys it and gives it to me to give to Dad. Mum's always there but I can help choose. Dad sometimes goes to the shops with me too but he doesn't really like shopping._

The following excerpt from an interview with a 17 year old gives a typical account of the selection element in the family gift-giving process for the older Anglo-Celtic sons.

_I think I'm influenced by my older brother. We're always sort of getting together in our gift giving, maybe to make it cheaper or to combine our ideas. A lot of the time we give joint gifts. It's normally if we're giving a joint one, it's the person who can get to the shops who will get it. It will probably be my older brother because he can drive or me because I can drive. But if we're all down at the shops, then depending on what it is, like if it's Mum's present or if it's Dad's present, then the girls will get it or we will get it. Like if it's an item of clothing, then the girls will get it or something like that._
4.2.4.3 COMMUNICATION

The analysis of the communication element included the following issues: (1) gift presentation messages; (2) gift allocation messages; and (3) recipient's understanding of the gift presentation and allocation messages.

**Presentation Messages.** Most sons mentioned that they wanted the gifts to communicate that they loved and appreciated their parents. But, they found it easier to select gifts for their mothers that conveyed this message than for their fathers. As noted earlier, several sons also mentioned that they preferred to surprise their parents rather than to ask for gift suggestions. In this way, it seems reasonable to suggest that they were trying to express their individuality by selecting gifts that showed originality. It also seems to indicate that they were attempting to convey to their parents that they were sensitive to their needs. Even when the younger sons were influenced by their parents, they still seemed to want to convey the same message. That is, they had contributed something of themselves during gift selection that was unique to the exchange. Thus, the younger sons seemed to be especially pleased when they were able to personally select gifts for their parents at school fetes.

**Allocation Messages.** The sons did not indicate that they attempted to express a partiality to a particular parent when gifts were presented. Thus, the parents tended to be treated in a similar manner.
Chapter Four

**Understanding of Messages.** Most sons seemed satisfied that both parents understood that they were trying to communicate their love and appreciation through the gifts.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 12 year old gives a typical account of the communication element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic sons.

> At school, I bought presents for Mum and Dad. Well, I know Dad likes to make home brewed beer so I decided to get him a beer mug with a bell on it so that every time he ran out of beer all he had to do was ring the bell and Mum would come running with beer. And I got Mum a plait because I knew Mum liked craft and it smelled good because it had potpourri in it and so I bought it for her. So I just decided because I knew Mum and Dad liked those kind of things and I wanted to tell them I wanted to be generous back because they'd been buying us gifts for no reason.

### 4.2.4.4 REACTION

The analysis of the reaction element included the following issues: (1) achievement of gift-giving motivation; (2) feedback of recipient; and (3) gift usage of recipient.

**Achievement.** Most sons believed that they accomplished what they set out to achieve. That is, they were able to give their parents pleasure by showing their love and appreciation and receive pleasure because of their parents' favourable reaction.
Feedback. Most sons mentioned that while their mothers showed more emotion than their fathers when the parents received gifts, the sons felt that they were both genuinely pleased.

Usage. Most sons stated that since their parents used their gifts, they considered that they were liked.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 12 year old gives a typical account of the reaction element in the family gift-giving process for the Anglo-Celtic sons.

*It doesn't really matter what you give them, they always say "I like it" like it's always different. Like one year I gave Mum a dress and she said "I like it" and the next year I gave her a ring or something. And Dad always likes his gifts too, no matter what they are. Even when my little brother gives him something weird, he just goes "Oh, it's the thought that counts" and still likes it just the same. But I still just don't give them anything and say they'll like it anyway. I think of what they'll like and everything.*

4.2.4.5 SUMMARY

Overall, the analysis of the role of the Anglo-Celtic sons reveals that while the gift-giving motivation of the majority of the sons tends to be both altruistic and agonistic, the motivation of several sons is essentially agonistic. The sons also indicate that they put little time or effort into gift selection. The younger sons are mainly influenced by their parents and the older sons are mainly influenced by their
siblings, particularly by their older sisters. The data suggests that when the sons want to surprise their parents with unique gifts, they are attempting to express their individuality and to convey their sensitivity to the needs of the parents. Finally, since the sons state that they are reasonably satisfied with their parents' reactions to the gifts, their objectives are usually achieved.

4.3 SINO-VIETNAMESE FAMILIES

The following analysis involved the interviews with the mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons in the eight Sino-Vietnamese families. The analysis of the role of mother and father considered how parents give gifts to their children, whereas the analysis of the role of daughter and son considered how children give gifts to their parents.

4.3.1 ROLE OF MOTHER

The following analysis considered the role of mother in the eight Sino-Vietnamese families in the study. It involved the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction.
4.3.1.1 MOTIVATION

The analysis of the motivation element included the following issues: (1) justification of the gift, (2) significance of the gift, and (3) timing of the gift.

Justification. The mothers mentioned several reasons for giving gifts to their children. While they wanted to give pleasure and show that they cared, they mainly wanted to give useful gifts, especially if they were beneficial to their children's education. Even though it may be assumed that the mothers received pleasure from giving gifts to their children, it is notable that none mentioned the possibility of personal gain. Instead, by their responses, the mothers seemed to be solely interested in securing their children's future security. For this reason, the data suggested that their motivation was highly altruistic since they wanted to give pleasure and ensure their children's future well-being. Their motivation was also agonistic since they were imposing their personal expectations upon the children. Thus, the motives of the mothers appeared to be in conflict because they were both altruistic and agonistic.

Significance. Despite the fact that most mothers wanted their children to like the gifts, they were more concerned that they contributed towards the children's well-being. For this reason, the majority of mothers considered that gold jewellery was significant as a gift because of its lasting material value. As one mother explained, her children could always sell the jewellery later if they required money. In this way, she was expressing a need to provide insurance for their future. The same could be said about most gifts that the
mothers considered were significant. For example, any tangible gift was deemed important if it advanced the education of their children, e.g. computers and school supplies. Lucky money was also considered to be important as a teaching instrument. That is, while it was customary for children to learn to make independent purchases with a small portion of their lucky money, most of it was used to teach children the power gained from saving money, especially in relation to higher education.

**Timing.** The majority of the mothers maintained the tradition of giving their children lucky money in red packets at Chinese New Year. They also mentioned that gifts were frequently used to encourage and assist their children’s academic progress. Since Christmas was a Western gift-giving ritual and birthdays were not important in Chinese societies except to honour elders, the mothers did not make an effort to time their gift giving to correspond with these occasions. Instead, they were more inclined to give gifts to their children throughout the year when needs occurred. When the mothers observed birthdays and Christmas, they said that they were complying with their children’s wishes to feel a part of the Australian culture. But, they did not necessarily give gifts on the exact day of the occasion since they preferred to buy their gifts at reduced prices. Several mothers said that because they did not consider birthdays were important, they periodically forgot their children’s birthdays until they were reminded.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the motivation element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese mothers.
Well, I feel that within the family because it's a very close relationship, I don't just have to give gifts on a certain occasion. I can give gifts whenever. I think a gift is important because it means that you don't just need it now. For example, I give my children lucky money in the red packet for Chinese New Year and on their birthdays I give them gifts or if they get a good result in school I give them gifts or if I go shopping and think this is good for them I give a gift to them because I love them and they are trying very hard with their studies. Or because they are going to school and following in Australia now, at Christmas time I give them gifts. But sometimes they get a gift before Christmas and sometimes after Christmas. If it's too expensive, after Christmas I will get it for them when it's on sale. The Australians probably have a tree and gifts under the tree but we are different.

4.3.1.2 SELECTION

The analysis of the selection element included the following issues: (1) involvement, (2) family influences, (3) promotional influences, and (4) gift attributes.

Involvement. Most of the mothers said that while the fathers gave lucky money as gifts, they tended not to be involved in the selection of tangible items as gifts. For this reason, the mothers considered that it was their main responsibility to select these gifts for the children. But, they preferred to make their gift selections as quickly as possible.
Family Influences. Most mothers mentioned that their children encouraged them to observe Western gift-giving rituals, e.g. Christmas and birthdays. Although it was not the normal practice for children to supply gift lists, the mothers were still guided by what their children wanted. Several mothers, however, said that they would not give gifts because their children wanted them unless they were also beneficial and reasonably priced. Most mothers said that while they primarily influenced the gift selections for younger children, they allowed their older children to occasionally make their own gift selections. Still, most mothers accompanied their older children to give their final approval. A few mothers, however, let their older children go by themselves so that they could have the opportunity to learn how to make independent purchase decisions.

Promotional Influences. Several mothers mentioned that when they made gift selections, they preferred to go to familiar shops where they knew the proprietors and were able to get a better price by bargaining in their language. For this reason, they seldom, if ever, were persuaded to shop at expensive department stores. The mothers also indicated that they preferred to use their own judgment and, therefore, believed that they were not unduly affected by sales staff. But, since most mothers said that they frequently made their final gift selections at the shops during sales, it seems reasonable to suggest that they were influenced by point-of-sale material. Yet, some mothers said that they were advised of special sales by newspaper, television or direct mail advertisements.
**Gift Attributes.** Since the mothers wanted gifts to be useful, money was considered a suitable gift since it mainly could be saved for future purposes. While all the mothers mentioned that price was the main attribute considered for tangible gifts, lower prices did not necessarily mean lower quality goods. Instead, the mothers preferred to buy good quality gifts that had been reduced in price. For this reason, they frequently gave gifts before or after an occasion rather than paying a premium price to ensure that it was given on the actual day. Several mothers recalled having stocked up on gifts when they or their husbands visited Hong Kong. In this way, they could avoid paying the higher labour costs for Australian products. While several mothers said that their children preferred name brands, most mothers indicated that name brands were not of particular importance. Some mothers even said that their children disliked name brands. Thus, most mothers did not consider name brands as an important attribute when selecting gifts for their children.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the selection element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese mothers.

*I make all the decisions about gifts because my husband just doesn't have time. I sort of take care of the internal things and he takes care of the outside affairs. I normally don't plan ahead before I go out. I do my shopping and if I see anything that is good and that appears to me that I can buy this as a gift, then I will buy it. I rarely ask my kids before. I mainly just make the decision myself. But since they are starting to get older now, they have their own ideas and their own opinions. Now they can tell me what they like and sometimes I go with their ideas. But I don't always agree. If I think it is good for them, I get it. But I don't*
want to spend the money just because they want it. I look for good quality but the cheaper price when things are on sale. Sometimes I know what they like but I try to get it when it is on sale. And sometimes I like to give them a surprise.

4.3.1.3 COMMUNICATION

The analysis of the communication element included the following issues: (1) gift presentation messages; (2) gift allocation messages; and (3) recipient's understanding of the gift presentation and allocation messages.

Presentation Messages. Most mothers indicated that one of their main purposes for giving gifts was to use them as vehicles to further their children's education. For this reason, most mothers mentioned giving tangible gifts to reward or improve their children's academic efforts. In this way, the children were being told through gifts that they were expected to perform well at school. Lucky money was also used to transmit instructive messages. For example, most mothers said that they tried to tell their children from an early age that it was important for them to save lucky money for future use, e.g. higher education, and to spend lucky money wisely when making purchases. Several mothers also said that they taught their children that lucky money was not necessarily theirs but was meant to be shared within the family.
Allocation Messages. When lucky money was distributed among siblings, the majority of the mothers stated that the older children frequently received a greater amount than the younger children since their needs were greater. When tangible gifts were allocated among siblings, it was not the usual practice to give multiple gifts to each child or to ensure that all the children received gifts of the same economic value. Instead, gifts were given as their needs dictated. For this reason, the older children often received gifts that were more expensive than the younger children. The majority of mothers, however, indicated that since most gifts were meant to be shared among the siblings, the children did not consider that the mothers were showing partiality if the gifts were different in value.

Understanding of Messages. Most mothers were satisfied that their children understood and accepted their gift-giving messages because they tended to be diligent students and careful with their money.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the communication element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese mothers.

When my son was younger, he liked to play with a transformer and I bought if for him because I thought he might learn from it to use his imagination to make up whatever he liked it to be. Well, to my daughters, most of the time, I bought them dolls and cooking sets so the two of them could learn to play together. And I bought my elder daughter a typewriter but it was an old model, not a new one. I said it doesn't matter because you learn to type and after you learn better I will buy a new one for
you. This typewriter is just for her learning so she does not have the best one yet. Now if I gave a game, it is nothing; but if it is a book, they learn. They learn that next time they get a gift, they will have to study hard. If they are good, they will get a present. So I think by giving them gifts, they learn there is something useful to do with the gifts. It doesn't have to be the same number of gifts. They can share. They don't complain.

4.3.1.4 REACTION

The analysis of the reaction element included the following issues: (1) achievement of gift-giving motivation; (2) feedback of recipient; and (3) gift usage of recipient.

Achievement. The majority of mothers believed that their objectives were always achieved. That is, the children were happy with their gifts and able to put them to good use. But, some mothers said that their children had occasionally expressed a dislike for gifts of clothes. At those times, the children were severely reprimanded and told to wear the clothes.

Feedback. Most mothers mentioned that they received positive reactions when they gave gifts to their children. But, they indicated that their daughters were more inclined to express their feelings than their sons.

Usage. When the children received tangible gifts, they frequently shared them with their siblings. For this reason, it was not customary for the children to consider that gifts were exclusively
their\'s. When they were given lucky money, the majority of mothers mentioned that even though the children ordinarily used a small portion to buy incidental items, they saved most of it. While the younger children frequently gave their lucky money to the parents for safekeeping, the older children put their lucky money into the bank for future use.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the reaction element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese mothers.

*My kids are very happy when they get gifts. They say \"thank you\'. But in the family it\'s not necessary for them to return something like they do among friends. And when they get the lucky money, they put it in the bank. But we\'ve taught them that this money isn\'t you and this money isn\'t me. It is all we can use together. They understand that. My son\'s lucky money is for when he goes to university because there is a lot of other expenses when he goes to uni. For example, he might need a car to go around and also he will need to pay for his books and fees. And by the time he goes, we will probably not have enough money to support him so he will be able to get some from his own account. And my daughter, she has been having a problem with her teeth and she is very worried about her appearance. She wants to save her lucky money so that when she needs the money to fix her teeth, then she will have it to use. With other gifts, like the walkman I bought them, after the older daughter used it, the brother used it and now the younger one is using it.*
4.3.1.5 SUMMARY

Overall, the analysis of the role of the Sino-Vietnamese mothers has found that their gift-giving motivation appears to be in conflict since it is both altruistic and agonistic. The mothers also perceive that they are primarily in control of gift selection and tend to hold the power of veto. Since the mothers are actively and effectively socialising their children through gifts, they are attempting to impose their expectations upon the children and trying to teach them that it is important to prepare for the future. Finally, because the children are ordinarily happy with their gifts and consider them useful, the mothers are generally satisfied that their objectives are achieved.

4.3.2 ROLE OF FATHER

The following analysis considered the role of father in the eight Sino-Vietnamese families in the study. It involved the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction.

4.3.2.1 MOTIVATION

The analysis of the motivation element included the following issues: (1) justification of the gift, (2) significance of the gift, and (3) timing of the gift.
**Justification.** Most fathers mentioned that when they gave gifts to their children, they primarily were trying to foster their children's education or give them the opportunity to save money. For this reason, they gave lucky money or gifts to assist or reward their academic performance. Although it seems reasonable to assume that the fathers received a certain amount of personal satisfaction from gift giving, they did not mention the possibility of personal gain. Even though their motivation could be considered altruistic since they wanted their children to benefit from receiving gifts, the data also suggested that they were attempting to impose their personal expectations upon the children. Thus, their motivation appeared to be in conflict since it was both altruistic and agonistic.

**Significance.** The fathers were not in agreement as to what constituted a significant gift. Some said that significant gifts were associated with special occasions while several mentioned that significant gifts contributed to their children's education. Two others believed that significant gifts were tangible objects of lasting value, such as gold jewellery that also symbolised a close relationship. But, the majority of fathers indicated that gifts were important in relation to their usefulness. For this reason, they mainly gave money to the children since it was considered to be the most useful gift.

**Timing.** Since Western gift-giving rituals were not important to the fathers, they mentioned that their gifts were not timed to coincide with special occasions but were provided according to their children's needs throughout the year. They also stated that since these gifts were not associated with rituals, they were rarely referred to as gifts.
Although the fathers were not inclined to give Christmas gifts to their children, they frequently gave a party on Christmas day for family and close friends. While most fathers mentioned that they sometimes observed their children's birthdays by giving them money and taking the entire family to dinner, the majority of the fathers gave money to reward good school performances and lucky money at Chinese New Year. But, lucky money was generally regarded as more of a tradition than a gift.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the motivation element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese fathers.

I would have the goal to encourage them to do well in school. I give gifts to encourage them to study hard and work in their studies. I like to give them rewards for their hard studying. But in the Chinese family, gifts are not important. I don't buy gifts for them at any special time of the year but whatever they need. I give them the money or buy for them during the year. For the Chinese New Year, according to our Chinese traditional way, I give them lucky money. And on the children's birthdays, I normally give money to them. Well, I give them a certain amount of money because I'm thinking that in case I'm going to give them good clothing it may not be suitable to them. So that's the reason I give them a certain amount of money because they can spend whatever they like and they need. I normally don't give any gifts at Christmas. We may have some turkey on that night and invite friends and some close relative to have a dinner party and that's it. Oh, yes. I give to them after my travelling overseas because I find some items that may be still new to the Australian market and then I
can get it from overseas. They might think it was quite interesting as well and that it is very useful and a very educational item so I will try to buy it for them.

4.3.2.2 SELECTION

The analysis of the selection element included the following issues: (1) involvement, (2) family influences, (3) promotional influences, and (4) gift attributes.

Involvement. Most fathers mentioned that since gift selection was considered to be the responsibility of the mothers, they were not usually involved in this activity. One father considered that his gift-giving role was confined to buying birthday cakes, another father stated that he occasionally bought gifts for his children when his wife was too busy, and one other father said that he sometimes accompanied his wife to make an expensive gift selection. Also, when some fathers travelled overseas on business trips, they mentioned taking orders from family members for various goods that were less expensive abroad. One father also mentioned that when he went to Hong Kong, he selected educational items for his children that were unavailable in Australia and that they had not requested.

Family Influences. Since the mothers mainly selected the gifts, the fathers rarely influenced gift selection. When they were occasionally involved, it was mainly to fulfil requests that family members had
made, especially on overseas trips. For this reason, the mothers primarily influenced gift selection with suggestions from the children, whereas the fathers mainly provided the money.

**Promotional Influences.** Most fathers mentioned that they were not influenced by any form of advertising. But, some fathers said that they had sought the assistance of sales staff during gift selection or occasionally looked at the brochures in the mail.

**Gift Attributes.** Since the fathers wanted their gifts to be useful, money was considered to be the best gift for this purpose. When the fathers occasionally bought tangible items as gifts, price was regarded as the most important attribute. But, they did not seem to place as much emphasis on price as the mothers.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the selection element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese fathers.

*I just buy the birthday cakes, that's all. I don't like to think too much what I want to buy for my kids. I'll let my wife do the thinking. I never disagree with her. In our society in Vietnam, men normally are the breadwinners and wives take care of the domestic duties. It's the same here. She takes care of gifts.*
4.3.2.3 COMMUNICATION

The analysis of the communication element included the following issues: (1) gift presentation messages; (2) gift allocation messages; and (3) recipient's understanding of the gift presentation and allocation messages.

**Presentation Messages.** Even though the fathers were not as actively involved in gift giving, they were still inclined to use gifts to communicate socialisation messages to their children. For this reason, most fathers mentioned that they were communicating two main messages during gift exchange. When they gave lucky money, the fathers were trying to tell the children that they wanted them to learn how to save most of the money for future use. At the same time, they were also telling them that they could use a small portion of the money for incidental purposes. When they gave tangible items as gifts, the fathers were trying to tell the children to do well at school or to use the item to improve their academic performance. In this way, they were imposing their expectations upon the children.

**Allocation Messages.** Since the fathers mainly gave gifts in accordance with their children's needs, they tended to feel that their gifts were evenly distributed over a period of time. But, several fathers indicated that sometimes the older children received more gifts, e.g. lucky money, because they tended to have more requirements than the younger ones.
Understanding of Messages. Most fathers found that their older children understood the gift-giving messages because they tended to save money and study hard. Also, several fathers mentioned that the younger children were still in the process of learning. For this reason, the fathers said that the messages were frequently repeated.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the communication element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese fathers.

> When I give my kids gifts, what I want to say to them is that you kids are all right and you don't have to worry about how to make money right now. What I only want for you to do is to concentrate on your education. You must be a very successful man when you are grown up, so I just want them to understand and then try to study hard and to be obedient to their parents. I think they do. But I don't normally have any particular proportion for them. And, on the contrary, they never ask "Father, I need this" or "I am the eldest and I need more" and "I'm the youngest". It never happens.

4.3.2.4 REACTION

The analysis of the reaction element included the following issues: (1) achievement of gift-giving motivation; (2) feedback of recipient; and (3) gift usage of recipient.

Achievement. Most fathers said that they felt they had achieved their objectives by encouraging their children's education and teaching them to save money.
Feedback. Most fathers mentioned that their children seemed to be happy with their gifts. The fathers also did not believe that the children needed to reciprocate with a tangible gift.

Usage. The fathers mentioned that a small portion of the lucky money was sometimes retained and spent immediately by the children. But, the younger children frequently returned the lucky money to their parents, whereas the older children always deposited most of the lucky money into their bank accounts. Regarding tangible gifts, the fathers said that while their children sometimes shared their gifts among the siblings, they always put the gifts to good use.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the reaction element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese fathers.

*When my son got his computer, he was very happy. Well, two years after he was given the computer he was still doing homework with the computer and also playing games on it. When I give them lucky money, the young ones have their own piggy bank at home to save. But the older one has a bank account and puts the money in it to save. They might find something they like in the shop to buy. But they ask first. They must ask me or my wife first. So I think I have achieved my purpose in the way of encouraging them to study and save.*
4.3.2.5 SUMMARY

Overall, the analysis of the role of the Sino-Vietnamese fathers has found that their gift-giving motivation appears to be in conflict since it is both altruistic and agonistic. While the fathers mainly give lucky money to their children, they prefer to let the mothers select the children's tangible gifts. Even though the fathers are not actively involved in gift giving, they are still attempting to convey socialisation messages, i.e. to study and to save, when they give gifts to their children. Finally, since the children tend to be happy with their gifts and put them to good use, the fathers are generally satisfied that their objectives are achieved.

4.3.3 ROLE OF DAUGHTER

The following analysis considered the role of daughter in the eight Sino-Vietnamese families in the study and included interviews with eleven daughters. It involved the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction.

4.3.3.1 MOTIVATION

The analysis of the motivation element included the following issues: (1) justification of the gift, (2) significance of the gift, and (3) timing of the gift.
**Justification.** Most daughters said that they were not frequently motivated to give gifts to their parents on special occasions, i.e. tangible gifts. Instead, they considered that when they contributed all of their money towards family expenses or went beyond their usual household duties by taking on extra responsibilities that were not required, they were voluntarily giving of themselves in an intangible way rather than having to give something tangible as a gift on special occasions. For these reasons, their gift-giving motivation was deemed to be more altruistic than agonistic. Nevertheless, the daughters were occasionally prompted to observe Western gift-giving rituals. At those times, they mentioned two main reasons for giving gifts to their parents. First, they wanted to show their love and appreciation. Second, they wanted to feel a part of the Australian culture. For these reasons, the gift-giving motivation of the daughters appeared to be in conflict since it was both altruistic and agonistic. That is, they were striving to show consideration towards their parents but they were also endeavouring to adopt a Western practice in order to feel better about themselves.

**Significance.** As noted, most daughters differentiated between tangible and intangible gifts. The majority also mentioned that intangible gifts were more meaningful than tangible ones because they required more personal effort. Most daughters, however, considered that tangible gifts were significant when they were surprises because an effort had been made to determine what the other person wanted.
Timing. When the daughters gave tangible gifts to their parents, they were frequently timed to coincide with special Western gift-giving rituals, i.e. Christmas, birthdays, Mother's Day and Father's Day. Only a few daughters, however, gave Christmas gifts to their parents since the occasion was associated with a Christian religious festival and was usually irrelevant, especially if their parents were Buddhist. But, the daughters sometimes gave gifts to their mothers on birthdays and at Mother's Day but rarely gave gifts to their fathers on birthdays and at Father's Day.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 21 year old gives a typical account of the motivation element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese daughters.

I used to give my parents gifts, especially for Mother's Day and birthdays because my Mum deserves a lot and I wanted to surprise her. But that was only when I was about 8 or 9 or 10 that I bought her gifts and I had to ask Dad for the money. I tried to give my Dad gifts too but he didn't really want anything. He told me not to buy him anything so it's a bit hard. He wanted me to save my money and not spend it on him. I think that European type culture with birthdays and Mother's and Father's Day and Christmas and all the little bits in between, I think it's too materialistic anyway. You know how on television you've got big commercials fighting it out. I don't think that's right. That's probably why I feel Chinese among my Australian friends because they take Christmas and Mother's Day and Father's Day and birthdays really seriously and I just think that's not as serious as some of the other things I can do for the family.
4.3.3.2 SELECTION

The analysis of the selection element included the following issues: (1) involvement, (2) family influences, (3) promotional influences, and (4) gift attributes.

Involvement. Most daughters mentioned that because they were not accustomed to give gifts to their parents on a regular basis, they were rarely involved in gift selection.

Family Influences. Since most daughters wanted to surprise their parents when they gave gifts to them, it was not customary to ask for gift suggestions. But, several daughters were discouraged by their parents from giving gifts, especially by their fathers. That is, the parents said that they preferred for their daughters to save their money for the future rather than to spend it on gifts for them. Several daughters also recalled that they had influenced their parents to contribute towards a gift for the other parent. When the siblings combined resources to select gifts for each parent, the eldest daughter tended to assume the main responsibility for gift selection and, therefore, was more influential.

Promotional Influences. Most daughters mentioned that advertising did not influence their gift selections. Since most of the gift decisions were made at the shops, it seems reasonable to suggest that point-of-sale material and sales staff would be the primary promotional influences.
**Gift Attributes.** Most daughters considered price as the most important attribute when selecting gifts. But, several daughters indicated that they would be willing to buy more expensive items than they would ordinarily buy because they were gifts for their parents.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 16 year old gives a typical account of the selection element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese daughters.

*If it's meant to be a surprise. Actually, I don't buy gifts if it's not a surprise. If it's for Mum, probably my brother and I will go to the shops. It's not for him, so we'll go together. Sometimes I put my money with my brother but not always. I might buy a gift that I put all the money in and sometimes I wouldn't. If it's a gift for my Dad, probably Mum, me and my brother will put some money together. I'll go to the shops and look around and decide. But if it's something I think they would like and if it's expensive, I probably would buy it anyway because I think they would like it.*

4.3.3.3 COMMUNICATION

The analysis of the communication element included the following issues: (1) gift presentation messages; (2) gift allocation messages; and (3) recipient's understanding of the gift presentation and allocation messages.
Presentation Messages. Most daughters said that when they gave gifts to their parents, they were expressing their love and appreciation. But, they considered that these messages were more frequently transmitted by their contributing money to the family or helping beyond the usual household duties, i.e. intangible gifts, than by giving tangible items as gifts. The daughters indicated that when they gave gifts associated with special occasions, i.e. tangible gifts, they tried to give surprises. In this way, they believed that their gifts expressed more love because they showed that some thought and effort had been made to select what their parents wanted.

Allocation Messages. Most daughters mentioned two reasons for directing most of their gift-giving messages to their mothers rather than to their fathers. First, the majority of the fathers were not interested in receiving gifts because they preferred that the daughters save their money. For this reason, in order to communicate to the fathers that they were complying with their wishes, the daughters seldom gave gifts to them. Second, since the mothers were the dominant parent in the home and assumed the role of nurturer in the family, which included gift giving, most daughters felt more responsive to their mothers than to their fathers.

Understanding of Messages. Most daughters believed that their parents understood their messages when they provided practical assistance to the family, i.e. intangible gifts. But, the daughters were not always as confident that their parents understood the messages that were conveyed through gifts on special occasions, i.e. tangible gifts.
The following excerpt from an interview with a 14 year old gives a typical account of the communication element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese daughters.

A gift to my parents is saying what’s in my heart. That I can help Mum with the day and then my Dad I can make him a cup of tea or something. It’s that special feeling I’m telling them. It’s not giving something because I’ve got the money to buy it. It’s something that I feel inside to give to them. It shows them how much I care and how much I want to show them what they mean to me. So it doesn’t have to be spectacular for them to know how I feel.

4.3.3.4 REACTION

The analysis of the reaction element included the following issues: (1) achievement of gift-giving motivation; (2) feedback of recipient; and (3) gift usage of recipient.

Achievement. When the daughters gave gifts to their parents that were associated with special occasions, i.e. tangible gifts, they were not altogether satisfied with their parents’ reaction. For this reason, they generally did not feel that their objectives were achieved. But, when they gave their parents intangible gifts, the daughters were satisfied with the overall reaction of their parents and felt that they had achieved their objectives.
Feedback. Most daughters mentioned that at least one of their parents, if not both, were uncomfortable when they received gifts on special occasions. At those times, the daughters said that the parents found it difficult to express their feelings. Also, the parents mainly wanted their daughters to save money. For this reason, the daughters were discouraged by the parents, especially the fathers, from giving gifts to them.

Usage. Although most parents preferred not to receive gifts on special occasions, there was no indication that they refused to use them. Yet, only one daughter mentioned that her mother had put her gifts to good use. The rest of the daughters were unable to confirm the same level of usage by their parents.

The following excerpt from an interview with an 18 year old gives a typical account of the reaction element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese daughters.

I remember Father's Day in 1992. Dad was always wearing a tacky old tracksuit and we decided to get him a brand new, really nice track suit because it was in Winter and it looked really good. And he looked at it and said "why do you always spend all this money on me?", so he's not really into receiving things. But, we sort of understand. He's always been like that. He likes it but it embarrasses him. You can tell he likes it when the family all gets together and gives him something. From his background in Vietnam, money was very important because it could have gone any day because of the government. But deep down he likes gifts but the money side of it bothers him. But Mum, I suppose she's likes them. She says "oh, thank you", that sort of thing. Just normal.
4.3.3.5 SUMMARY

Overall, the analysis of the role of the Sino-Vietnamese daughters has found that their gift-giving motivation is altruistic when it involves intangible gifts. But, when tangible gifts are given on special occasions, their motivation appears to be in conflict since it is both altruistic and agonistic. The daughters are also rarely involved in the selection of tangible gifts. While they are mainly expressing their love and appreciation through gifts, the daughters believe that these messages are more frequently conveyed through intangible gifts than tangible ones. Finally, since the parents do not want their daughters to give gifts to them, their reaction is frequently negative. For this reason, the daughters are not altogether satisfied that their objectives are achieved.

4.3.4 ROLE OF SON

The following analysis considered the role of son in the eight Sino-Vietnamese families in the study and included interviews with seven sons. It involved the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction.

4.3.4.1 MOTIVATION

The analysis of the motivation element included the following issues: (1) justification of the gift, (2) significance of the gift, and (3) timing of the gift.
**Justification.** Most sons mentioned that when they gave gifts to their parents, they wanted to express their love and respect even though they were not required to give gifts. Thus, their gift-giving motivation was deemed to be altruistic. Although the sons did not indicate whether they sought any pleasure from the gift exchange, the data suggested that they wanted to gain their parents' favour by giving gifts to them. For this reason, their motivation was also considered to be agonistic.

**Significance.** Although the sons indicated that gifts did not necessarily have to be objects, they tended to consider that important gifts were tangible items associated with special occasions. Several sons also mentioned that gifts were significant if they were surprises because thoughtfulness was indicated; several other sons mentioned that gifts were significant if they were items of lasting value.

**Timing.** The sons stated that they were not consistent in their gift giving. But, when they gave gifts, they were timed to coincide with special occasions. While gifts were seldom given at Christmas, the sons frequently observed Mother's Day and Father's Day and sometimes gave gifts to both parents on their birthdays. But, the Sino sons sometimes cooked meals or took their parents to dinner with the family rather than giving tangible gifts on those special occasions. They also did not indicate that they gave tangible or intangible gifts to their parents at other times of the year.
The following excerpt from an interview with a 14 year old gives a typical account of the motivation element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese sons.

Sometimes I'll give them Mother's Day and Father's Day presents and I might cook them breakfast or dinner or something but that's when we all do it because I don't cook very well. It depends really. Sometimes I can manage a cake from the packages. I can do that. But sometimes we forget their birthdays and we don't remember when it is and we don't really celebrate that. It's not important to them anyway. And my parents don't really care about Christmas either so if we don't get them anything, we just use the money to give each other things.

4.3.4.2 SELECTION

The analysis of the selection element included the following issues: (1) involvement, (2) family influences, (3) promotional influences, and (4) gift attributes.

Involvement. Most sons mentioned that since they did not give gifts regularly to their parents, they seldom engaged in gift selection.

Family Influences. Although several of the sons stated that they sometimes combined resources with their siblings and gave gifts together to each parent, they were equally inclined to give independent gifts. But, when they gave joint gifts, several sons mentioned that their sisters played the dominant role during gift selection. Despite the fact that they ordinarily found that shopping
for gifts was a difficult task, the sons said that they did not ask their parents for help by seeking gift suggestions. Instead, they preferred to surprise their parents to show that some thought had gone into the selection of their gifts. A few sons, however, said that they were more inclined to give money to their parents to avoid the problems associated with selecting suitable gifts.

Promotional Influences. Most sons mentioned that they were not influenced by advertising when making a gift selection. But, one son admitted that he was frequently reminded of Father's Day through advertising. Since most sons indicated that they made their final gift selection at the stores, it seems reasonable to suggest that they were primarily influenced by point-of-sale material and sales staff.

Gift Attributes. Most sons mentioned that price was the main consideration when they were making a gift selection. They also wanted their gifts to be good quality items that were within their price range.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 16 year old gives a typical account of the selection element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese sons.

Sometimes I go in with my sisters for Mother's Day and Father's Day. We put in money together. But my sisters decide. Probably my oldest one because she's smarter. I suppose. She knows what to do. Sometimes I do it myself. Not too much though. Oh, my mother is hard to buy for because my mum doesn't really like many things. She mostly likes fruit and all that. But the fruit is mostly Vietnamese fruit and I have to go to Cabramatta to get
those. There’s spiky fruit. I have to get those. Oh, my father is easy because I know that my father doesn’t have very much. I know that my father doesn’t dress properly, so that’s one thing. So I get him better clothes or something that has to do with mechanics. My father likes to fix up the car even though sometimes there’s nothing wrong with it. Or he likes doing things around the house. But I don’t ask them. I surprise them or ask my sister or go in together.

4.3.4.3 COMMUNICATION

The analysis of the communication element included the following issues: (1) gift presentation messages; (2) gift allocation messages; and (3) recipient’s understanding of the gift presentation and allocation messages.

Presentation Messages. The sons were generally reticent to discuss their gift-giving messages. For this reason, there was no evidence to suggest that the sons were trying to convey anything through their gifts beyond the fact that they wanted to surprise their parents with objects that would be liked. In this way, they were attempting to express their love and appreciation. While the sons considered that gifts could be tangible or intangible, they ordinarily associated their gift-giving messages with tangible items that were given on special occasions.

Allocation Messages. Most sons mentioned that they tried to remember to give gifts to both parents. But, they said that while they usually remembered Mother’s Day, they sometimes inadvertently
forgot Father’s Day because it was not as universally recognised. For this reason, the evidence does not suggest that the sons were deliberately expressing partiality towards their mothers.

**Understanding of Messages.** Most sons mentioned that their parents understood that they were trying to express their love and appreciation through their gifts. Nevertheless, as the sons explained, these gift-giving messages were indirectly communicated since they were not accustomed to make an outward show of affection to their parents.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 20 year old gives a typical account of the communication element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese sons.

> It is quite hard to explain. Quite hard to say. But I think a gift is given to your parents to show the bond of love and appreciation between you. It links two persons together so they can have a better understanding of each other and make each other happy by giving. That’s what it is saying. It’s an expression of that bond, that love.

**4.3.4.4 REACTION**

The analysis of the reaction element included the following issues: (1) achievement of gift-giving motivation; (2) feedback of recipient; and (3) gift usage of recipient.
Achievement. The sons stated that they were reasonably satisfied with the way in which their parents reacted to the gifts. For this reason, they tended to consider that their objectives were achieved.

Feedback. The sons said that while their parents were generally pleased with the gifts, their appreciation was expressed in a reserved manner. Since the sons were not in the habit of giving gifts on a regular basis, several mentioned that their parents frequently expressed a certain amount of surprise when they received gifts from them. In contrast to the parents' reaction to the daughters, the sons did not indicate that their mothers or fathers were concerned about their spending money on gifts for them.

Usage. Even though most sons mentioned that their parents used their gifts, a few sons said that they gave their parents lucky money on special occasions to make sure that they would be able to put their gifts to good use.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 17 year old gives a typical account of the reaction element in the family gift-giving process for the Sino-Vietnamese sons.

My mum, I think she's surprised because I'm not normally, not all of the time do I give gifts unless I have an amount of money and could buy her the things she wants. My Dad is probably surprised too. They don't show any emotion. Just a pat on the back and to say "thanks". But I think they're proud when I give them something.
4.3.4.5 SUMMARY

Overall, the analysis of the role of the Sino-Vietnamese sons has found that their gift-giving motivation is altruistic. Since they seek personal favour from their parents through gift-giving, their motivation is also considered to be agonistic. Because the sons seldom engage in ritual gift giving, they are not accustomed to select gifts for their parents. Most sons, however, are expressing their love and appreciation when they give gifts to their parents. Finally, since the parents tend to react positively during gift exchange, the sons are generally satisfied that their objectives are achieved.
CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS: STAGE TWO

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The following research question was the basis for the data that is presented in this chapter.

Assuming there are differences between family interaction styles, how do they shape the family gift-giving process in individualistic and collectivistic cultures?

In the second stage of the analysis, the focus was on the parent-child interaction within the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families. Thus, an attempt was made to identify the family interaction styles and to compare how they shaped family gift-giving behaviour within each culture. During the analysis, the McLeod and Chaffee (1972) model of family communication systems served as a guide. As previously mentioned, this model consists of two uncorrelated dimensions, i.e. socio-oriented and concept-oriented.

The socio-oriented dimension is indicated by the frequency of (or emphasis on) communication that is designed to produce deference and to foster harmony and pleasant social relationships in the family (McLeod & Chaffee 1972, p. 83). In other words, the socio-oriented dimension involves attempts on the part of the parents to use power to control the children.
The concept-oriented dimension is indicated by the frequency of communication that involves 'positive constraints to stimulate the child to develop his own views about the world, and to consider more than one side of an issue' (McLeod & Chaffee 1972, p. 83). In other words, the concept-oriented dimension involves attempts on the part of the parents to encourage the children to consider all the evidence before reaching a conclusion. Thus, the parents promote open discussions within the family and try to expose the children to different world views.

When these two dimensions are combined to form a two-by-two model, four distinct combinations are produced. Each of these combinations represents a different family type that is characterised by a specific parent-child interaction style, i.e. laissez-faire, protective, pluralistic and consensual.

Laissez-faire families are low on the socio- and concept-oriented dimensions. In these families, parent-child communication is infrequent. The parents infrequently require the children to defer. Also, the parents infrequently encourage the children to consider all the evidence before reaching a conclusion. That is, the parents infrequently promote open discussions within the family or try to expose the children to different world views. For these reasons, the model suggests that children in laissez-faire families tend to receive more influence from external sources, such as peer groups, than from their parents.
Protective families are high on the socio-oriented dimension and low on the concept-oriented dimension. In these families, the parents frequently require the children to defer. Also, the parents infrequently encourage the children to consider all the evidence before reaching a conclusion. That is, the parents infrequently promote open discussions within the family or try to expose the children to different world views. Since the parents do not allow the children to question their authority, the children do not learn how to consider counterarguments or to engage in debate. For these reasons, the model suggests that children in protective families are more susceptible to influence from external sources, such as persuasive promotional messages, than from their parents.

Pluralistic families are low on the socio-oriented dimension and high on the concept-oriented dimension. In these families, the parents infrequently require the children to defer. Also, the parents frequently encourage the children to consider all the evidence before reaching a conclusion. That is, the parents frequently promote open discussions within the family without accompanying constraints and try to expose the children to different world views. Thus, the children learn how to consider counterarguments and to engage in debate. For these reasons, the model suggests that since the parents in pluralistic families allow their children freedom of expression, the children are most likely to use their parents as role models when they become adults.

Finally, consensual families are high on both the socio- and concept-oriented dimensions. In these families, even though the parents frequently require the children to defer, they also frequently promote open discussions within the family and try to expose the children to
different world views. Since the parents are frequently communicating mixed messages to the children, the model suggests that the children may try to retreat from these conflicting pressures by engaging in escape television viewing. The model also suggests that in order to maintain a harmonious relationship with the parents, the children may learn the viewpoints of the parents and then adopt them.

5.2 FAMILY INTERACTION STYLES

In the interviews with the mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons in the eight Anglo-Celtic families, six families expressed consensual interaction styles, one family expressed a protective interaction style, and one family expressed a laissez-faire interaction style. There was no evidence to suggest that any of the families adopted a pluralistic interaction style, which is low on the socio-oriented dimension and high on the concept-oriented dimension. That is, none of the parents frequently promoted open communication and discussion in the family without accompanying constraints.

The following figure presents the distribution of the interaction styles for the Anglo-Celtic families, using the McLeod and Chaffee (1972) model.
In the interviews with the mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons in the eight Sino-Vietnamese families, six families expressed consensual interaction styles and two families expressed pluralistic interaction styles. There was no evidence to suggest that any of the families adopted a protective interaction style that is high on the socio-oriented dimension and low on the concept-oriented dimension or a laissez-faire interaction style that is low on both the socio- and concept-oriented dimensions. That is, all the families were high on the concept-oriented dimension in which the parents frequently encouraged their children to
consider all the evidence before reaching a conclusion. Thus, the parents frequently promoted open discussion within the family and tried to expose their children to different world views.

The following figure presents the distribution of the interaction styles for the Sino-Vietnamese families, using the McLeod and Chaffee (1972) model.

**DISTRIBUTION OF SINO-VIETNAMESE GIFT-GIVING FAMILY STYLES IN TERMS OF THE McLEOD AND CHAFFEE (1972) MODEL**

**SOCIO-ORIENTED COMMUNICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept-Oriented Communication</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Laissez-faire</td>
<td>Protective</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2 Sino-Vietnamese Families</td>
<td>6 Sino-Vietnamese Families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pluralistic</td>
<td>Consensual</td>
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5.2.1 CONSENSUAL FAMILY INTERACTION STYLE

Six of the Anglo-Celtic families and six of the Sino-Vietnamese families expressed a consensual interaction style. This style is high on both the socio- and concept-oriented dimensions. With regard to gift giving, the parents frequently required the children to defer to their views regarding suitable gifts. Also, the parents frequently encouraged the children to consider various gifts that they would like to receive and asked the children for gift suggestions. When the parents did not agree with the children's gift selections, a compromise was reached through negotiation, or other gifts were selected that the parents regarded as more suitable.

5.2.1.1 ROLE OF ANGLO MOTHER

The Anglo mothers in the consensual families stated that they were concerned about their children as persons and about the effectiveness of the children's interpersonal relationships, i.e. their self-esteem in relation to peer group pressure. The mothers were actively involved on a daily basis in their children's interests and activities and took the dominant gift-giving role in the family. But, the mothers said that even though they didn't necessarily agree with their children's gift requests, they frequently negotiated with them to achieve mutually satisfactory decisions. For example, the children sometimes contributed money towards more expensive gifts or relinquished one gift to get another. When the cost of the gift was shared or the gifts were clothes, the mothers indicated that the usual practice was to take the
children to the shops to help make the decision. Since the mothers often yielded to the children's gift requests, they were not inclined to use gifts for socialisation purposes.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic mothers in the consensual families.

> When the family went to Hawaii, my son wanted a pair of Reebok running shoes and so we decided we'd get him a pair of those when we were overseas. The gift was his choice but he did a bit of bartering with me before I made the final decision. It was going backwards and forwards and "Can I have these ones if I don't get that?", and I finally agreed. I ended up getting him a pair of pumps which were again dearer than the ones we were originally looking at. But they're half the price over there as they are here. And I have to say he's got his money's worth out of them and he's been more than happy with them.

The Anglo mothers in the consensual families stated that from an early age, the children were frequently encouraged to help select gifts for their parents. On these occasions, they were given the opportunity to express their individuality even though the parents expected the children to agree with their points of view. Because the young children were included during gift selection, the data suggested that they were more likely to develop agreeable attitudes towards gift giving when they became adolescents than the children in the laissez-faire or protective families.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the Anglo-Celtic mothers in the consensual families with regard to their children's gift-giving behaviour.
Well, the kids and my husband would probably go out shopping for my gift. They would go as a group. I don’t know whether they go out with anything in mind. It would be what they saw at the time that would seem appropriate. They would be expected to put some money towards it. But they generally buy things that I like. My husband would have to agree but they always pick something. A new cup or perfume. Personal type of gifts. And my husband doesn’t give them an exact price. No. It’s just what they saw and liked and he thought was okay.

5.2.1.2 ROLE OF SINO MOTHER

The Sino mothers in the consensual families indicated that they took the dominant role during gift selection. Even though the children sometimes accompanied them to the shops when gifts were purchased, the mothers said that they tended to exercise their power of veto if items were deemed to be too expensive or were considered to serve no useful purpose. For this reason, the gifts that they chose were based on their children’s needs and usually were of an educational nature. For example, computers, books and musical instruments were mentioned as suitable gifts. Also, the mothers sometimes gave gold jewellery to their children because gold signified a close relationship in the Chinese culture and was considered to be insurance for the future. Although Western gift-giving rituals were occasionally observed for the sake of the children, gifts were not necessarily given on the actual day of the occasion since the mothers preferred to wait until the items were reduced in price. But, Chinese New Year was always celebrated on the
actual day. At that time, lucky money was given, which was intended to be saved. The mothers also stated that they frequently gave gifts to reward or promote their children's academic performance.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Sino-Vietnamese mothers in the consensual families.

And when they get the lucky money, they put it in the bank. But we've taught them that this money isn't you and this money isn't me. It is all we can use together. They understand that. My son's lucky money is for when he goes to university because there is a lot of other expenses when he goes to uni. For example, he might need a car to go around and also he will need to pay for his books and fees. And by the time he goes, we will probably not have enough money to support him so he will be able to get some from his own account. And my daughter, she has been having a problem with her teeth and she is very worried about her appearance. She wants to save her lucky money so that when she needs the money to fix her teeth, then she will have it to use.

The Sino mothers in the consensual families indicated that when their children gave gifts to the parents, they were inexpensive items that they bought from their pocket money or that their parents bought for them directly or indirectly. But, because the parents were in control of most of the money in the family, the children usually found it more difficult to give gifts to their mothers and fathers.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the Sino-Vietnamese mothers in the consensual families with regard to their children's gift-giving behaviour.
They sometimes give us a gift on our birthdays or Mother's Day and Father's Day. We go together. We take them to the shop. My daughter buys a present but she doesn't tell me it is for my birthday. She makes a surprise for me because she buys something that doesn't cost much money and puts it in the shopping cart. I don't ask her what it is for because I don't notice or I think that sometimes it might be something that they are going to use. They don't choose anything too expensive because they know the parents keep the money. They buy the makeup, you know, or the lipstick. Just a little one. Sometimes a handkerchief. But they don't use their money because they don't take the money because when they buy something they must ask me. My children when they want to buy something, they must ask me or my husband before.

5.2.1.3 ROLE OF ANGLO FATHER

The Anglo fathers in the consensual families stated that because they wanted their gifts to satisfy the children's current needs, they frequently gave them a voice in gift decisions. Since the fathers, however, were rarely involved in gift shopping, they were more inclined to engage in gift discussions with their children before purchase. The fathers mentioned that if they disagreed with their children's gift suggestions during these discussions, it was sometimes necessary for them to use their power of veto. The fathers were more likely than the mothers to use gifts for socialisation purposes, i.e. they were inclined to select gifts to foster their children's interests in areas that they considered worthwhile, such as sports activities.
The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic fathers in the consensual families.

Well, my son, he wanted a bike last Christmas. A good mountain bike type thing to go to school and to ride with his mates and he's always wanted a really good bike with gears and things like that. And we took him around and he had a look at different bikes and he didn't actually pick one but he showed us the type of bikes he'd be interested in. And then my wife went back and got it. And my daughter, she's a bit young to get the type of bike that he did but because she's quite big for her age and, once again, she wanted to be more mobile around the area. So, yes, well we bought her a bike too. Same sort of process happened. She just pointed out a few bikes that she wanted. There's no use buying things that they don't want. I could have bought them a bike but it wouldn't have been the bike that they'd want.

The Anglo fathers in the consensual families said that they always took the younger children and sometimes the older children to the shops to help select gifts for the mothers. At those times, the primary function of the fathers was to give approval and offer suggestions. The fathers indicated that they frequently encouraged the children to express their individuality through gifts, but they ultimately expected the children to comply with their own gift selections.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the Anglo-Celtic fathers in the consensual families with regard to their children's gift-giving behaviour.
Well, the kids usually know what my wife wants and she usually tells me what she wants and I might say "Well, what about we get this, this and this?" and they think it's either a good idea or not a good idea even though I always have the last word. And my wife and the kids would probably do the same sort of thing for Christmas and my birthday.

5.2.1.4 ROLE OF SINO FATHER

The Sino fathers in the consensual families were seldom involved in the selection of tangible gifts for their children. Instead, they preferred to leave this task to the mothers. The fathers mentioned that they were primarily interested in encouraging their children's academic endeavours and training them to be good money managers. For this reason, they indicated that their main contribution was to reward their children with gifts of money for good school performances and to make sure that they were provided with the necessary educational tools, e.g. computers and books. While they always celebrated Chinese New Year by giving money to their children, the fathers were less inclined than the mothers to observe Western gift-giving rituals. But, when birthdays and Christmas were celebrated, the fathers preferred to take the entire family to dinner rather than to give individual gifts.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Sino-Vietnamese fathers in the consensual families.
I give them money to use during the year. That's what I give to them for gifts. They put in the bank the money, you know. It is to teach them how to save the money and how to use the money. If you have money, in the future if you want to do something you don't need straightaway to ask for the money. So we teach them how to save the money. I am teaching them that your own money you can always get easier and you don't need to ask for everything every time. But sometimes when they are younger, we keep the money for them. Sometimes we say no and sometimes we tell them to put in the bank. In the Chinese family, the parents always teach the children every day that if they don't need something, they should not buy it. Sometimes the children like a book maybe for their birthday but if it is not to help with their studies but just for enjoyment, I don't buy them that book. My method is to teach them that they must continue to learn more and more and more. Sometimes my son doesn't understand but I keep repeating and he will eventually understand.

The Sino fathers in the consensual families said that they discouraged the children from spending their money on gifts for them. They also mentioned that since the children were required to save their money and seek the permission of their parents before making most purchases, it was difficult for them to give gifts to their parents. For this reason, the children were inclined to give inexpensive gifts or hand made cards.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the Sino-Vietnamese fathers in the consensual families with regard to their children's gift-giving behaviour.
Maybe the daughter and son would make a birthday card but not buy a present for us. I want them to save their money. In our family it is not our way to buy gifts for one another. We don't select a special gift for a certain person. In most occasions, like if it was for my birthday, then we all go out to the restaurant. We would just all go out to have a good time. Well, to be clearer, we don't buy presents for particular occasions in our family. But if we know that we want a special item badly and always wanted it, then we would all try to get that person that item. But it would not necessarily be that person's birthday. That's what my daughter and son would do.

5.2.1.5 ROLE OF ANGLO DAUGHTER

The Anglo daughters in the consensual families said that when they gave gifts to their parents, they took a more active role in gift selection than their brothers. The daughters preferred to surprise their mothers and fathers rather than to ask for their suggestions. But, there were instances when the daughters sought the advice of their mothers with regard to gifts for their fathers.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 12 year old gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic daughters in the consensual families.

You see. Dad's harder than Mum because she's a woman and I sorta know more of what she'd like. And where it comes to her, you can always get her some makeup or something. But with Dad, you don't know what he likes and you sorta ask Mum or ask him or you get him some socks or look around the shops for something.
The Anglo daughters in the consensual families said that while their parents tried to grant most of their gift requests, they did not receive gifts that were considered to be unsuitable or too expensive. But, when the gifts were costly, the daughters mentioned that they sometimes obtained the agreement of their parents through negotiation. For example, they offered to contribute their own money towards the gifts. At those times, they accompanied their parents to the shops to make the selections. The daughters said that their parents were also inclined to let them help choose their gifts when they were items of clothing.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 19 year old reflects the typical sentiments of the Anglo-Celtic daughters in the consensual families with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of the parents.

_We all have turns in getting a big present each year for Christmas. So it was my turn to get a big present and I said I wanted a tape recorder. So we went to the shops together and I chose it. Mum and Dad just said "Here's the price, so choose what you want". So I chose the one I liked in the price range. But, if they didn't like me to have it, they would have said "Well, we really don't think you need a tape recorder but we'd rather you have something else for whatever reason". But they went along with what I wanted and they didn't hold back in any way to buy me a tape recorder._

5.2.1.6 ROLE OF SINO DAUGHTER

The Sino daughters in the consensual families said that they were encouraged by their fathers to save their money for the future rather than to spend it on gifts for them. For this reason, when the
daughters gave tangible gifts to their parents, they primarily gave them to their mothers to comply with the wishes of their fathers. But, they considered that they gave intangible gifts to both parents when they contributed money to the family or helped in the home beyond the usual household duties.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 21 year old gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Sino-Vietnamese daughters in the consensual families.

*I used to give my parents gifts, especially for Mother's Day and birthdays because my Mum deserves a lot and I wanted to surprise her. But that was only when I was about 8 or 9 or 10 that I bought her gifts and I had to ask Dad for the money. I tried to give my Dad gifts too but he didn't really want anything. He told me not to buy him anything so it's a bit hard. He wanted me to save my money and not spend it on him. I think that European type culture with birthdays and Mother's and Father's Day and Christmas and all the little bits in between, I think it's too materialistic anyway. You know how on television you've got big commercials fighting it out. I don't think that's right. That's probably why I feel Chinese among my Australian friends because they take Christmas and Mother's Day and Father's Day and birthdays really seriously and I just think that's not as serious as some of the other things I can do for the family.*

The Sino daughters in the consensual families said that when they received gifts from their parents, they mainly received lucky money or items that served useful purposes, primarily of an educational nature. When the daughters received lucky money, they were required to put it in the bank for future use and were only allowed to keep a small
portion for incidental purposes. For this reason, they had ample savings but remained financially dependent on their parents. Nevertheless, there was no indication that they disliked not having easy access to their money. In fact, the daughters frequently made derisive comments about the extravagant gifts and excessive freedom that the children were given in 'Australian' families.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 14 year old reflects the typical sentiments of the Sino-Vietnamese daughters in the consensual families with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of the parents.

Usually Mum tells us to put our lucky money in the bank so we put it in the bank. I got really angry at Dad when I was younger because when we bought this house, he used up my $200 from the bank. I saved it up for so long and he took it out and I only had a few cents left in there. And I wanted to know where my money had gone but he said it was for the house. And I didn't understand why he had to take my money. But now I understand. If he didn't, then we might not have had this house at all because he had to take a bit out of everyone. And now I'm saving back so if there's a time when Dad can't pay my school fees out of his own account, then I can always get some out. But he's been paying for it, and he told me I should leave that for when I'm older and need it for university. Basically the reason we get lucky money for gifts is just for the future. So it's for our education. We have to learn. It's not for us to go shopping. So gifts are always for a reason. They're not just for our own enjoyment usually. They're for our education. But if you don't work, that's more of a trap to you because you don't have anything to do with your life. So I study hard because I want to go to university.
5.2.1.7 ROLE OF ANGLO SON

The Anglo sons in the consensual families indicated that they were more active than their fathers during gift selection but less active than their sisters. When the siblings selected gifts together for each parent, the sons said that they tended to rely on their sisters, especially the older ones, to make the final decision. Nevertheless, a discussion usually took place between the siblings before a final decision was reached. But, even though the sons preferred not to ask their parents for gift suggestions except as a last resort, they sometimes found it necessary to seek their advice. Thus, the sons were not as inclined as the daughters to take the initiative during gift selection.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 17 year old gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic sons in the consensual families.

*It's just now that we've started thinking about what we can get Mum ourselves. Before Dad would sort of decide and he'd give us ideas and then we'd go out and buy them based on those ideas. Or we'd ask her ourselves what she would like. She might be talking and she'd say something like she might like that or something and we'd think about that. I think we try to think about it a bit and then if we can't come up with anything for Mum, we ask her. But if we all agree that we think it would be good, then we go and buy it without her knowing.*

When the Anglo sons in the consensual families described the manner in which the parents gave gifts to them, their accounts were consistent with those of the daughters. That is, the sons mentioned that they too
were inclined to give their parents hints and make suggestions. While their parents usually granted their requests, they too did not receive items that were considered to be unsuitable or overpriced. The sons said that during negotiations, they frequently agreed to relinquish one gift to obtain another or offered to contribute money towards the purchase. In this way, they were more likely to receive expensive gifts, e.g. name brands. When the sons offered to share in the cost, they invariably accompanied their parents to the shops to make the gift selection. Also, when they received clothes as gifts, the sons indicated that their parents frequently allowed them to make their own decisions within a specific price range.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 12 year old reflects the typical sentiments of the Anglo-Celtic sons in the consensual families with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of the parents.

Well, I'd probably have to say I like my new transformer toy the best. I got it for Christmas and it changes into three things. Well, I'd been wanting that one for about two years now. So I just said "Mum and Dad. I really want that for Christmas". But, I saw this tape before at the store with Mum. It's a Chipmunks tape and they're off a cartoon and I just think they sing really well. And I told Mum I wanted it. But she said it was too dear but we'd go home and talk to Dad but he told me he didn't think it was worth paying $25 for a tape. So Mum and Dad said that if I got the tape, it would be my whole Christmas present. And I kinda wanted them both equally except I knew that I couldn't get the Chipmunks because it was just too dear, and I wanted the transformer one for a long time. So I told them I wanted the transformer toy and so that's what I got.
5.2.1.8 ROLE OF SINO SON

The Sino sons in the consensual families were not active gift-givers but more involved than their fathers. They sometimes gave small gifts to their parents, especially the older sons who received money from the government to further their education. But, since their parents did not consider Western gift-giving rituals to be important, the sons did not always give gifts to their parents on these occasions. When birthdays or Mother's Day and Father's Day were observed, the younger sons mentioned that they frequently helped prepare a family meal for their parents, whereas the older sons said that they preferred to pay for their mothers and fathers to go out to dinner with the family.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 14 year old gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Sino-Vietnamese sons in the consensual families.

*Sometimes I'll give them Mother's Day and Father's Day presents and I might cook them breakfast or dinner or something but that's when we all do it because I don't cook very well. It depends really. Sometimes I can manage a cake from the packages. I can do that. But sometimes we forget their birthdays and we don't remember when it is and we don't really celebrate that. It's not important to them anyway. And my parents don't really care about Christmas either so if we don't get them anything, we just use the money to give each other things.*

The Sino sons in the consensual families indicated that their mothers were more involved in gift selections than any other family member. Since the gifts that the sons received were primarily meant to be shared
with their siblings, such as computers, stereos, and videos, lucky money was the main personal gift that they received from their parents. But, since they believed that their parents tried to give them everything that they needed, they did not necessarily regard all the items that they received as gifts.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 16 year old reflects the typical sentiments of the Sino-Vietnamese sons in the consensual families with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of the parents.

*Mum decides about gifts. Yeah, the main person I think is Mum. Mum likes to give us things. But Dad won't give out any gifts at all. Only Mum will give out. But I don't want things for me. I wanted a video, a video machine. But it wasn't for me. It was just for the family. If you want something, it's for the family. It's not personally. And my Dad would never buy a video. I wanted one for so long and he would never buy one. And then something turned him around and then he bought it. I think everybody had one before us for at least two years. Dad won't get something even though he likes something, he won't get it straightaway. I don't know. It's his financial problem probably. I don't know. It's also we're young and we have to study and things like that.*

5.2.2 PROTECTIVE FAMILY INTERACTION STYLE

One Anglo-Celtic family expressed a protective interaction style. This style is high on the socio-oriented dimension and low on the concept-oriented dimension. With regard to gift giving, the parents frequently required the children to defer to their views regarding suitable gifts.
Also, the parents infrequently encouraged the children to consider various gifts that they would like to receive or asked the children for gift suggestions. Thus, the children were frequently dissatisfied with their gifts. When the children gave gifts to the parents, one parent frequently selected the gifts for the other parent without involving the children in the decision-making process. The children were then expected to give the gifts to the parents even though they were not involved in gift selections.

5.2.2.1 ROLE OF ANGLO MOTHER

The Anglo mother in the protective family said that she expected her children to appreciate whatever they received without complaining. When they did not behave according to her expectations, the mother expressed disappointment. For example, she mentioned that her 15 year old son frequently bemoaned the fact that he only received one name brand on a gift-giving occasion.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic mother in the protective family.

"I don't know. I guess I sometimes rave on, so to speak, and talk to them about the way I feel or say "You don't have to have such and such" or "Isn't it good that you can use that board because it's as good as something with another name on it". I don't know. I don't know whether they understand or not. I think they often realise that certain gifts have cost quite a bit of money and I hope they would be disappointed and I hope that they would feel hurt or guilty if they did destroy them in any way or lost them. I would like to think..."
that there was a little bit of feeling of value of things. I don't think they put as much value on their things as I do. Thinking of the way they tend not to care for their bikes unless they're harped at. My 15 year old son tends not to put his good board away in the jacket he bought for it so it won't get scratched. It sits out there and the cover sits beside it. But my daughter looks after her flute. She usually appreciates and cares for her things. I think she probably appreciates her gifts and I think cares for them generally better than what the boys do.

The Anglo mother in the protective family indicated that the older children were not as considerate as the younger children when they gave gifts to their parents. Thus, the data suggested that by the time the children from the protective family reached adolescence, they were more likely to develop negative attitudes towards gift giving.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the Anglo-Celtic mother in the protective family with regard to her children's gift-giving behaviour.

Well, I suppose my daughter is thoughtful but my 15 year old is probably not so thoughtful. He wants to please. Yes, he wants to please but he's not so thoughtful. And my 12 year old, well as a gift-giver he has shown himself to be thoughtful. Some of his gifts are original. Interesting things. Sometimes he gives you surprises. They might be a bit creative, yes. And the 9 year old, well he loves to please. He loves to give gifts.
5.2.2.2 ROLE OF ANGLO FATHER

The Anglo father in the protective family indicated that he played as dominant a gift-giving role as the mother. The father said that he frequently made independent gift decisions that he believed were in the children's best interests. Thus, the data suggested that the father frequently used gifts as instruments of power for socialisation purposes.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic father in the protective family:

Well, all of them would have liked bikes younger but I told them that for their 8th birthdays, I'd get a bike. I've also told them they had to put in half for it. So as they were contributing towards it, it gave them time to do some part-time work or whatever to make some money. They'd do extra jobs around the yard or around the house. They'd go and do things for the neighbours but mostly it was extra work I had them do around the house and they just had to do it. They'd like to tell us what they want but it's usually too expensive. So normally they don't know what they're getting so I don't always get it right. There's always a temptation, I think, as a father to give them gifts that are a little bit old for them when they're younger. Well, I guess they are things that I found interesting, whether it be model boats or model airplanes or something like that. So sometimes it's a little early and either they're not interested or it's a little bit hard for them to put together if it's a model. At those times, usually what happens if they've got problems is that I sit down and do it so the model eventually gets built. But, usually I'm looking for something that they'll enjoy and also that will be useful, that will be good for them. Then, I expect them to look after it and that's not always the case.
The Anglo father in the protective family pointed out that even though the children were expected to earn money to buy gifts for themselves, he did not expect them to work and save to buy gifts for their parents. Instead, the parents frequently bought gifts for each other on the children's behalf. But, the father mentioned that since his daughter was employed part-time, she was in a better position than the sons to select gifts for the parents. Thus, the data suggested that the father was teaching the children to consider themselves but not to consider others during gift giving.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the Anglo-Celtic father in the protective family with regard to his children's gift-giving behaviour.

Well, we often buy the gifts for each other and they give them. I don't think my boys like to buy them. The enjoyment in giving gifts always seems to be in seeing the other person open them. At that point, they enjoy it. To see the other person open the gift and appreciate it. And my daughter is probably the most generous because she's earning an income and the boys only have their pocket money, so it's more difficult.

5.2.2.3 ROLE OF ANGLO DAUGHTER

The Anglo daughter in the protective family indicated that while she enjoyed giving gifts to her friends, she did not receive the same amount of enjoyment from giving gifts to her mother and father. Thus, the data
Chapter Five

suggested that the disagreeable aspects of gift giving within the protective family contributed to the daughter’s negative attitude when she gave gifts to her parents.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the 17 year old Anglo-Celtic daughter in the protective family.

I know I really like to give gifts. More to my friends than my family, I think. Mum and Dad appreciate it but it’s like they’ve got most things anyway. But when you give it to your friends, you don’t do it out of compulsion. You do it because you want to. Whereas with Mum and Dad, you give it to them because you know you have to. You want to because you love them and everything but it’s more out of a bit of compulsion. But with your friends, you give it to them because you really want to say thanks and I think it means a lot more because of that.

The Anglo daughter in the protective family mentioned that her parents were not inclined to grant her gift requests except when she contributed most of the money. For this reason, she was not always able to afford the gifts that she wanted.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the 17 year old Anglo-Celtic daughter in the protective family with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of her parents.

When I want something, I guess I speak to both of them. But mainly Dad because he’s got all the money. And if it’s more money, you go to Dad. And usually I’ll just talk about it first with Mum and she’ll say “Yes, it’s a good idea” or “We can’t really afford it” or whatever and then I go to Dad and try to butter him up. But, oh, no. It depends on if you
need it. Depends on how expensive it is and whatever. I said I'd really like a new organ. But he said if I wanted a new organ, then I'd have to pay for it. And I asked him would he like to pay a little bit towards a trip to Queensland at the end of the year when I finish high school and he said no and that if I go, I have to pay for it. Things that will be. I guess, of educational benefit, he'd pay for or things, you know, that I've partly saved for like my flute and stereo. But he won't just hand out money. Yeah, Mum and Dad still always have the last say.

5.2.2.4 ROLE OF ANGLO SON

The Anglo sons in the protective family expressed apathy towards gift giving. While the 15 year old son was more indifferent than the 12 year old son, both sons said that they were not particularly interested in giving gifts to their parents. Thus, the data indicated that since the parents frequently made the gift decisions without considering their children's gift suggestions, the sons were not motivated to participate.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the 15 year old Anglo-Celtic son in the protective family.

*Oh, I buy gifts for my folks about 50-50. Mum buys them and I buy them. But it's not all that important anyway. And sometimes all the children put in money and buy them gifts. My sister does most of the buying because she's got her own money. But she's got a job.*

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the 12 year old Anglo-Celtic son in the protective family.
When I give gifts, I just give Mum something. I just guess. Dad's too hard to buy for because all the things Dad likes and Dad appreciates, they're too expensive and I wouldn't be able to get them anyway.

The older Anglo son in the protective family expressed more resentment towards the behaviour of the parents than the younger Anglo son. But, both Anglo sons indicated that they were not satisfied with the manner in which their parents gave gifts.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the 15 year old Anglo-Celtic son in the protective family with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of his parents.

I've never got a gift from my folks that I really wanted that much. They're poories. They don't want to spend a lot of money. And I never get any say in it but I know Mum would be heaps better than my Dad. He gets just whatever he likes and it doesn't really matter who is wearing it or whatever as long as Dad likes it. But Mum makes sure that it looks good on whoever is getting it. whoever she is buying it for and whatever.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the 12 year old Anglo-Celtic son in the protective family with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of his parents.

Well, I needed a bike because you got a free bus pass until you were a certain age and then once you passed that age, you had to pay your own fare. And that year I had been getting a lift with the person across the road and I asked Dad if he could get me a bike so I could ride to school. But he didn't say anything. It was a surprise. So I didn't get to
decide on the kind of bike or anything. When I got it, it was a school day and I got the tags off it and had to pump up the tyres and I had to get it outside because Dad had brought it in and I went for a little ride before school. But Dad wouldn't let me ride it to school. He made me practice for about three weeks first.

5.2.3 LAISSEZ-FAIRE FAMILY INTERACTION STYLE

One Anglo-Celtic family expressed a laissez-faire interaction style. This style is low on both the socio- and concept-oriented dimensions. With regard to gift giving, the parents infrequently required the children to defer to their views regarding suitable gifts. Also, the parents infrequently encouraged the children to consider various gifts that they would like to receive or asked for gift suggestions. Instead, the children tended to give the mother gift orders with little negotiation on her part. Although this practice promoted independent behaviour, it did not always promote responsible behaviour. As a result, the children were inclined to be self-indulgent and materialistic. Furthermore, the evidence suggested that the family's interaction style had been permissive even when the children were younger, indicating that it was not influenced by the children's ages.

5.2.3.1 ROLE OF ANGLO MOTHER

The Anglo mother in the laissez-faire family said that since she enjoyed shopping, she satisfied her need to buy consumer goods by over-indulging her children, especially her daughter, instead of herself.
Thus, the data suggested that by giving to her children, she was able to engage in extravagant behaviour without feeling guilty. But, instead of personally selecting the gifts, she took orders and bought whatever her children said that they wanted.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic mother in the laissez-faire family.

My husband, well, he would rather leave everything up to me to go and choose the gift and try and think of something for everybody. But I'm with the kids more and I know what they want and he just sort of agrees with what I say. So I give the kids gifts that will make them happy. But my boys never spend their money. I guess they reckon Mum will just buy that if they say they really want it and they don't have to spend their money. And my daughter doesn't usually have much money to spend so I end up buying whatever she wants. It's my fault. I buy for her. I suppose. I buy through her instead of me now. you know. And I suppose I tend to perhaps maybe spend a little bit more on her than the boys because girls just seem to need more things than boys. I buy things for the boys too though. I do spend a lot on all of them.

The Anglo mother's self-concept in the laissez-faire family was found to be directly related to the monetary value of her personal possessions. Thus, the children's expensive gifts could be seen as enhancing her sense of self while also reinforcing her guilt.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the Anglo-Celtic mother in the laissez-faire family with regard to her children's gift-giving behaviour.
Well, last year the boys bought me a lovely gold heart necklace with a little pearl in the middle. They bought that together because it was a little expensive. And my daughter, she usually buys me lingerie. Nice camisoles and things like that. Yes, really they spend too much on me at Christmas. Sometimes I wonder where they get the money from to do it because sometimes I’d be happy with something smaller but they seem to go overboard. Sometimes I feel like saying, look you shouldn’t have. I would have just appreciated a box of chocolates or just something little but you get a lovely satin camisole and panties. They must think that I’ll just appreciate something like that. That I’d have to have something good like that. I don’t really know. I’m not that way really. But I say how lovely it is and it’s wonderful and everything and then I usually say that you shouldn’t have spent so much money on me. They say oh, no, no. It’s good. They like doing it. But when they were little, they used to make presents at school and they just think now they have to go out and buy something that’s expensive whereas you appreciate anything your children give you. I think, regardless of what it is. But I think it mostly all comes from me most probably because I’m at a stage in life where I like buying something nice when I go out. I don’t buy cheap. I want some nice perfume, I go and buy some nice perfume and I guess they see that when I go out and I say I bought some of this and I suppose they think they can’t give me anything that’s inferior to that.

5.2.3.2 ROLE OF ANGLO FATHER

The Anglo father in the laissez-faire family said that because of work commitments outside the home, he was not involved in selecting gifts for his children. He indicated, however, that since he provided the
money, he was making a significant contribution. That is, he gave his wife the money so that she was able to buy the gifts for the children.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic father in the laissez-faire family.

In my younger days or early married days when the kids were young, I wasn’t self-employed and I’d be home earlier and I had more time and I probably went out and we picked gifts together whereas now my wife goes and buys them. Some of the things I don’t see until the kids get them on Christmas morning. They may be explained to me what she has bought but sometimes I don’t see them. But, she always gets them what they want. In material things, my wife is overgenerous. And non-material things, she’s always trying to do things for the kids and me. I suppose, I usually work that much. I’m not at home all that much any more. I guess I should give work away and spend more time at home. But, you get into a situation where you’ve got to keep working so the family can have things. It’s very hard to run a business and do it all as well. So I can’t be around that much, so I leave the gifts to her.

The Anglo father in the laissez-faire family was able to point out his children’s level of generosity even though he was unable to recall the specific gifts that he had received from them. That is, he indicated that his sons were not generous gift-givers while his daughter was extremely generous.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the Anglo-Celtic father in the laissez-faire family with regard to his children’s gift-giving behaviour.
Terrible. I can't even remember what they've given me. Oh, let me see, they've given me tapes or disks or clothes and my daughter buys me books. Usually for birthdays we buy as a family. Christmas time they buy individually. Well, the kids limit themselves to a certain amount of money and they might get one present out of that money or might get two but it's got to be practical. They don't buy stuff that's not going to be used. If my daughter saw something she thought I'd really like, she'd probably buy it. But she has no budget sense at all. She gets $100 and she'll just use it, spend it until there's nothing left where the boys, they'll get it and they'll hoard it in their rooms until such time as they've got $100 and then they'll bank it. They might spend a little bit but they're shrewd with their money. I wouldn't say exactly mean but they watch where their money goes. They're not generous.

5.2.3.3 ROLE OF ANGLO DAUGHTER

The Anglo daughter in the laissez-faire family expressed an irresponsible, extravagant gift-giving behaviour. While she enjoyed buying gifts for her parents, she found it difficult to save money. For this reason, she frequently had to ask her brothers for 'loans'. The daughter also indicated that she was inclined to select trendy clothes as gifts for her mother and father even when she knew they would not like them. Thus, the data suggested that she was mainly buying gifts to please herself rather than her parents. At the same time, the data showed that the daughter was trying to socialise her parents to adopt more youthful self-concepts.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the 18 year old Anglo-Celtic daughter in the laissez-faire family.
My Mum is usually very shocked by all that I give her but not I mean shocked as in yuk shocked but as in how much money I spend. But I love giving really expensive gifts to my folks. But I'm not a good saver, so I usually borrow off my brothers to buy their gifts and then maybe I'll pay them back in a few months time or something. And Mum, well, Mum and me have completely different taste, especially in clothes. But I don't want to get her something that's going to make her look old because she's not old. She's just 40 and that's nothing. so I generally go for something that she wouldn't buy herself because she'd think it was too young for her but I'd think it would be okay so I'd get it for her. So I get her something to let her know what I'd like her to wear or do or something like that. And this year for Christmas I'm going to get Dad a denim shirt because I think Dad would look great in denim but Mum thinks definitely not and Dad doesn't think he'll look good in denim but I'm going to get him one anyway.

The Anglo daughter in the laissez-faire family indicated that because of the generosity of her parents, she had developed expensive tastes. Her self-indulgence, however, could also be seen as a direct result of having been given whatever she wanted without parental guidance.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the 18 year old Anglo-Celtic daughter in the laissez-faire family with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of her parents.

Well, I hardly ever see Dad 'cause he's always working but he's generous. You see, he tells Mum how much money they can spend on us at Christmas and birthdays and they really overspend on us. They say "Well, we can't afford much this year" but then we always get heaps. The floor is covered everywhere and so Dad gives all the money to Mum and so he shows his love by giving so much money and he
Just gets money to buy all the stuff and Mum shows love by buying things that she knows we like and that we said we wanted and stuff.

5.2.3.4 ROLE OF ANGLO SON

The Anglo sons in the laissez-faire family admitted that since they were more inclined to save money, they were not as generous as their sister. But, the sons mentioned that because they wanted to continue to receive gifts from their parents, they gave gifts to their mother and father that would be liked. Thus, the evidence suggested that the sons' gifts were given for opportunistic reasons rather than for socialisation purposes.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 16 year old gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic sons in the laissez-faire family.

If I buy them something good, then I know they'll return the favour. With presents it's what you give is what you get. So, I get quality stuff for them usually. I usually get what they want. If they want something that I think isn't good quality, I'll get it anyway because that's what they want. So generally I'm about the same as everyone else.

The Anglo sons in the laissez-faire family said that their parents gave them anything they wanted. For this reason, they tended to save their money and ask their mother to buy whatever they required. But, they
indicated that the need to save was not fostered by their parents. Instead, it was motivated by a desire to gain a competitive advantage over one another.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 16 year old reflects the typical sentiments of the Anglo-Celtic sons in the laissez-faire family with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of the parents.

If you ask for something, you'll get it. If you asked for something my folks didn't like, they'd give you a few looks but if you really wanted it, they'd get it for you anyway.

5.2.4 PLURALISTIC FAMILY INTERACTION STYLE

Two Sino-Vietnamese families expressed a pluralistic interaction style. This style is low on the socio-oriented dimension and high on the concept-oriented dimension. With regard to gift giving, the parents infrequently required the children to defer to their views regarding suitable gifts. Also, the parents frequently encouraged the children to consider various gifts that they would like to receive and asked the children for gift suggestions. Thus, the parents frequently promoted open communication and discussion of gift ideas in the family without accompanying constraints.

5.2.4.1 ROLE OF SINO MOTHER

Since the Sino mothers in the pluralistic families were receptive to various world views, they encouraged their children to move beyond
Chinese traditions by also considering Australian customs. For this reason, one mother was actively supporting Western gift-giving rituals within the family while the other mother was not discouraging these practices. If the children received lucky money from family or friends, they were not required to put it in the bank but were permitted to spend it. At those times, the children tended to talk to their mother or father about what they wanted to buy before they went to the shops by themselves to make the final purchase decisions. Sometimes, however, the children asked one of their parents to accompany them to the shops to obtain another opinion. While one mother said that she mainly gave money to her children so they could select their gifts, the other mother indicated that her daughter frequently made her own gift decisions.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Sino-Vietnamese mothers in the pluralistic families.

*When she gets the lucky money, she saves it for herself. She is not happy to put it in the bank. She likes to keep it for herself. It is not much. Under $100. No, she won’t put it in the bank. She says that if I put it in the bank you won’t take it out for me. So I let her keep it in her hands. Now we try to do it the way of Australia. And when we surprise her with a present, sometimes I make the decision and sometimes my husband decides. But my daughter she often chooses for herself. Next month it’s her birthday and she says she needs a book from the shop, and I said we’d get it for her. She already got an idea to get that book but I will go later to buy it for her birthday present. She told me but usually when she wants something she will tell her Daddy and he gets it for her. When her father promises her something, he will always keep his promises. But if our finances do not allow him to do it, he will do it later.*
The Sino mothers in the pluralistic families said that their children gave gifts on Mother's Day and Father's Day. One mother also received birthday gifts. On those occasions, the children usually gave more expensive gifts since they had access to their money for personal use. But, since the families regarded Christmas as an occasion for little children, gifts were not given to the parents.

The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the Sino-Vietnamese mothers in the pluralistic families with regard to their children's gift-giving behaviour.

_Last week my daughter got a very, very expensive nightdress for my Mother's Day present. Very expensive, I think. She and I went to shop when I picked her up from school and I said this is a very nice nightdress. And then when we went home she tried to ask me what size I was wearing and I didn't pay any attention. I just kept on. And she kept on asking and then she got her money and she went to the shop after school with her cousin and she got it for me. I just said it was a good nightdress but I didn't say that I needed it or nothing. And when it is her father's birthday, we go to Grace Brothers and get a card for her father. And we went half in his present. And sometimes she gets a nice bunch of flowers for my birthday._

5.2.4.2 ROLE OF SINO FATHER

The Sino fathers in the pluralistic families did not emphasise their children's education to such an extent that they discouraged their pursuing outside recreational activities. While one of the fathers mainly gave money to his children as gifts, it was given to show his
appreciation for their having helped in the family business rather than to reward them for their academic performance. On those occasions, the children were not required to save their money. Instead, they sometimes put their money in the bank and sometimes went to the shops to make personal selections. While one of the fathers frequently chose gifts for his children, he also gave them the opportunity to make their own gift selections. At those times, the gifts were not required to be for educational purposes.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Sino-Vietnamese fathers in the pluralistic families.

*If we remember, on Chinese New Year we put the red packet under the pillow on that evening. But sometimes we forget about the New Year’s one when we get too busy. It’s not easy, especially since the Chinese calendar is different than the Australian calendar. When I give my kids something, it may not seem all that important and so I sometimes might not think it is a gift. It is just something only. But on birthdays or Christmas, it’s a gift. And sometimes my daughter gives us some ideas about gifts.*

The Sino father in one of the pluralistic families mentioned that the children sometimes gave small gifts on Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. The Sino father in the other pluralistic family said that he did not always consider that the small items that his children gave to him throughout the year were gifts. But, when he received more expensive items from his older child on Father’s Day and for his birthday, he considered that they were gifts.
The following excerpt reflects the typical sentiments of the Sino-Vietnamese fathers in the pluralistic families with regard to their children's gift-giving behaviour.

Yes, my daughter is very thoughtful but maybe in an Australian way. You know, she likes to buy things for us that may not be something really useful or it might be quite costly or expensive.

5.2.4.3 ROLE OF SINO DAUGHTER

The Sino daughters in the pluralistic families considered gifts were tangible rather than intangible and primarily associated with Western gift-giving rituals. While the daughters in both families were inclined to give gifts on Mother’s Day and Father’s Day, the daughter in only one family gave gifts to both parents on birthdays. The daughter in the other family did not give birthday gifts because she did not know the birth dates of her parents. When gifts were selected, the daughters indicated that price was not as important as choosing appropriate gifts that their parents would like.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 13 year old gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Sino-Vietnamese daughters in the pluralistic families.

I get Mum and Dad gifts on birthdays and Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. I get what they like and what they talk about and the kind of fashion they go for and colours but then I think of a particular thing myself. Usually when I see something, I have it in my mind. So we talk about things
so I'll know what they like and then I usually can remember some of the things and I go to the shop and get that thing so I can surprise them. Or sometimes it's when I can't make my decision what to get, I go into the shops like probably jewellery shops and have a look but I have the idea of buying something about jewellery first. And no matter how expensive I'd get it for my parents if I can.

The Sino daughters in the pluralistic families primarily received gifts on their birthdays and at Christmas. When gifts were purchased, they frequently accompanied one of the parents to the shops to help make their gift selections. Although they mainly went with their mothers to choose their clothes, one daughter also went with her father to help select books and games. When one daughter occasionally received lucky money on Chinese New Year from her parents, she considered that it was more a tradition than a gift. The daughter in the other family said that she no longer received lucky money from her parents on Chinese New Year.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 19 year old reflects the typical sentiments of the Sino-Vietnamese daughters in the pluralistic families with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of the parents.

*Usually when I get gifts from my parents, they let me choose because they don't really know exactly what I like, you see. They don't know what games I like or what shows I like on television because it's a lot different in Australia for my age, you see, and so they let me choose because they know I like it so they won't choose alone because it could be a little bit wrong, you see, the present could be wrong. And if it's in clothes, I like my mother to help me choose the clothes. You know, what suits me. I choose but I like to get her opinion.*
5.2.4.4 ROLE OF SINO SON

The Sino sons in the pluralistic family said that since their parents did not consider that gift giving was important on special occasions, it was not the usual practice to give gifts to their parents. When they sometimes gave gifts on Mother's Day and Father's Day, it was willingly given rather than out of a sense of obligation.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 17 year old gives a typical account of the gift-giving behaviour of the Sino-Vietnamese sons in the pluralistic family.

Yeah, I usually give things to Mum and Dad for Mother's Day and Father's Day. I really don't know when their birthdays are. Yeah, Mother's Day and Father's Day especially. I always do. Something I know they'd like, that they maybe have told me. But I don't get anything for Christmas because I know it's not their religion and they don't really care. They'd more likely want something for Mother's Day and Father's Day than for Christmas. And to them, Easter is chocolate eggs. But sometimes I'd give it to my Mum but Dad doesn't like chocolate so I'd stay away from chocolate for him.

The Sino sons in the pluralistic family indicated that while their parents gave gifts of money for helping in the family business, they did not necessarily give tangible items as gifts on special occasions. Even though the sons could spend the money any way that they wanted, they still preferred to discuss what they wanted to buy with their parents before making their purchase decisions.
The following excerpt from an interview with a 15 year old reflects the typical sentiments of the Sino-Vietnamese sons in the pluralistic family with regard to the gift-giving behaviour of the parents.

*We're not really a gift-giving family. Mum and Dad usually give me the money so I can buy my own gifts. Or I'll tell them what I like so they'll get an idea of what I want to buy. If it's a CD, I'll just tell them I'm going to get a CD and they usually give me the money for it and they don't care really what type of CD it is. They know my taste in music and, yeah, it's that type of thing. But, sometimes I ask them to help me select my clothes. When we go together, I'll probably ask their opinion and we'll just work together to pick out the clothes.*
CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS: STAGE THREE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The following research question is the basis for the analysis that is presented in this chapter.

*Assuming there are differences between individual family roles and family interaction styles, how do they shape the family gift-giving process across individualistic and collectivistic cultures?*

When presenting the data in the following cross-cultural analysis, the roles of mothers, fathers, daughters and sons are compared and contrasted as they apply to the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction. The families are then analysed across roles and cultures in relation to the four gift-giving behaviour elements.

6.2 ROLE OF ANGLO AND SINO MOTHER

The Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese mothers generally play a similar gift-giving role in the family. That is, they are the main buyers of gifts. But, there are a number of differences between the mothers in the two cultures, which are highlighted in this section.
6.2.1 MOTIVATION

Justification. Both the Anglo and Sino mothers are motivated to give gifts that show their love and also benefit the children. But, their motives are based on different premises. The Anglo mothers want to give gifts that benefit their children by satisfying their short-term needs while the Sino mothers want to give gifts that benefit their children in the long term. That is, the Anglo mothers usually give gifts that are intended to enhance their children's self-esteem and status in relation to their peers, whereas the Sino mothers primarily give money to be saved and items to assist their children's education.

Significance. Both the Anglo and Sino mothers regard some of their children's gifts as more significant than others. But, they believe the gifts are significant for different reasons. The Anglo mothers regard birthday gifts that commemorate the individual and are lasting and memorable as most significant, whereas the Sino mothers regard gifts that contribute to the children's future well-being as most significant. That is, the Anglo mothers believe sentimental gifts of a personal nature are the most significant. The Sino mothers, on the other hand, think practical gifts are the most important, such as lucky money that is given on Chinese New Year to follow their cultural tradition.

Timing. Both the Anglo and Sino mothers are motivated to give gifts at various times of the year. But, the gifts are given at those times for different reasons. The Anglo mothers mainly time their gifts to coincide with special occasions, e.g. Christmas and birthdays, whereas the Sino mothers prefer to time their gifts according to their children's needs rather than in relation to Western gift-giving rituals. The only time
that the Sino mothers always give gifts to coincide with a special occasion is at Chinese New Year when lucky money is given to the children. Also, while the Anglo mothers are not inclined to give gifts as an incentive or to reward their children’s academic progress, the Sino mothers invariably give gifts for these reasons.

6.2.2 SELECTION

Involvement. Both the Anglo and Sino mothers are more involved in gift selection than the fathers. Yet, the Anglo mothers spend more time selecting gifts than the Sino mothers. Also, the Anglo mothers sometimes receive the assistance of the fathers, whereas the Sino mothers are solely responsible for gift selection.

Family Influences. Both the Anglo and Sino mothers believe that they are mainly influenced by their children during gift selection when the daughters and sons make gift suggestions. Nevertheless, the mothers in both cultures try to stay in control when gifts are selected. For example, the Anglo mothers seldom agree to give money as gifts and try to limit the number of name brand items that are given. The Sino mothers, however, do not agree on gifts unless they are considered useful, e.g. money, and reasonably priced. Still, the Anglo mothers seem to have less influence over their children because they are more likely to yield to their gift requests than the Sino mothers.

Promotional Influences. Both the Anglo and Sino mothers believe that even though their gift decisions are not influenced by sales staff, they are influenced by letterbox leaflets. Otherwise, the Anglo and Sino
mothers are influenced by different promotional messages. For example, the Anglo mothers believe that they are not influenced by television advertising except indirectly through their children's gift requests, whereas the Sino mothers believe that they are sometimes influenced by television and newspaper advertising. The Anglo mothers are not influenced by store promotions since gift decisions are usually made prior to point-of-sale. The Sino mothers, on the other hand, are sometimes influenced by store promotions, especially for items on sale, since their gift decisions are mainly made in the stores.

**Gift Attributes.** Both the Anglo and Sino mothers regard price and quality as the two main gift attributes even though they rank them differently. The Anglo mothers consider quality first and then price, especially in relation to name brands. The Sino mothers, however, consider price first even though they endeavour to give quality gifts. Also, the Anglo mothers do not regard money as a suitable gift, whereas the Sino mothers often give money to their children, particularly at Chinese New Year.

### 6.2.3 COMMUNICATION

**Presentation Messages.** Both the Anglo and Sino mothers try to communicate love to their children through gifts. But, their other gift-giving messages are different. The Anglo mothers are mainly telling the children that they support their need for self-gratification in the short term, whereas the Sino mothers are primarily telling their children to delay self-gratification for long-term benefits.
**Allocation Messages.** Both the Anglo and Sino mothers believe that they are impartial when they give gifts to the children. But, the manner in which they allocate gifts is different. The Anglo mothers give multiple gifts of approximately the same overall value to each child on special occasions, whereas the Sino mothers usually give single gifts of different values as their children's needs dictate during the year.

**Understanding of Messages.** Both the Anglo and Sino mothers are reasonably satisfied that their gift messages are understood and accepted by their children.

### 6.2.4 REACTION

**Achievement.** Both the Anglo and Sino mothers are usually satisfied that their objectives are achieved. But, on the few occasions when the children are not entirely satisfied with their gifts of clothes, the Anglo and Sino mothers react differently. That is, the Anglo mothers tend to blame themselves for not providing what is wanted, whereas the Sino mothers reprimand their children and insist that they wear the clothes.

**Feedback.** Both the Anglo and Sino mothers receive a fairly positive feedback from their children even though their daughters are more inclined to express their feelings than their sons.

**Usage.** Both the Anglo and Sino mothers think that the children use their gifts even though they are used differently. The Anglo children usually regard gifts as exclusively theirs to be consumed privately.
whereas the Sino children do not regard gifts as their sole possessions and tend to share them with their siblings.

6.3 ROLE OF ANGLO AND SINO FATHER

The Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese fathers generally play a similar gift-giving role in the family. That is, they are the main providers of financial resources for the gift purchases that are then made by the mothers. But, there are a number of differences between the fathers in the two cultures, which are highlighted in this section.

6.3.1 MOTIVATION

Justification. Both the Anglo and Sino fathers are motivated to give gifts that show their love and also benefit their children. But, their motives are based on different premises. That is, even though the fathers in both cultures give gifts to direct their children’s interests, the Anglo fathers stress short-term goals while the Sino fathers emphasise long-term goals.

Significance. Both the Anglo and Sino fathers regard useful gifts as the most significant. But, they are not in agreement on what constitutes useful gifts. For this reason, the gifts that the Anglo and Sino fathers designate as useful serve different purposes. The Anglo fathers mainly give gifts to be used to establish or develop the children’s areas of interest, whereas the Sino fathers mainly give gifts to be used for the children’s future university tuition and continuing
academic endeavours. For example, the Anglo fathers usually give sports equipment to improve their children's current athletic skills, whereas the Sino fathers primarily give money to be saved for university expenses or items to further their children's ongoing education, e.g. computers and books.

**Timing.** Both the Anglo and Sino fathers are motivated to give gifts at various times of the year. But, the gifts are given at those times for different reasons. The Anglo fathers time their gifts to coincide with special occasions, e.g. Christmas and birthdays, whereas the Sino fathers do not time their gifts to coincide with Western gift-giving rituals. Even though the Sino fathers always give lucky money on Chinese New Year, they give at other times of the year according to their children's needs. At those times, they do not necessarily regard the items as gifts. Also, the Anglo fathers are not inclined to give gifts to reward or encourage their children's academic endeavours, whereas the Sino fathers often give gifts for these purposes.

**6.3.2 SELECTION**

**Involvement.** Both the Anglo and Sino fathers are not as involved in gift giving as the mothers. But, the Anglo fathers are more involved than the Sino fathers.
**Family Influences.** Both the Anglo and Sino fathers are influenced by family members during gift selection. But, their influences come from different sources. The Anglo fathers are mainly influenced by the children, whereas the Sino fathers are mainly influenced by the mothers.

**Promotional Influences.** Both the Anglo and Sino fathers do not believe that advertising influences their gift decisions. But, the fathers in both cultures are sometimes influenced by sales staff.

**Gift Attributes.** Both the Anglo and Sino fathers consider price and usefulness as the two main gift attributes even though they rank them differently when material objects are purchased as gifts. At those times, the Anglo fathers consider usefulness before price, whereas the Sino fathers initially price first. But, the Sino fathers regard money as the best gift because of its usefulness. The Anglo fathers, on the other hand, regard money as an unsuitable gift because it lacks thought and effort.

### 6.3.3 COMMUNICATION

**Presentation Messages.** Both the Anglo and Sino fathers use gifts as socialisation instruments to impose their expectations on the children. But, they convey different socialisation messages through the gifts. The Anglo fathers are usually saying through tangible gifts that these items are worthwhile to use in order to achieve short-term goals. The Sino fathers, on the other hand, are trying to communicate two messages to their children through gifts. First, they are saying through...
lucky money that it is necessary to save for the future. Second, they are usually saying through tangible gifts that these items are helpful to use in order to achieve long-term goals.

**Allocation Messages.** Both the Anglo and Sino fathers try to treat their children equitably when gifts are given. But, the fathers in the two cultures allocate gifts differently. The Anglo fathers try not to show favouritism by giving gifts of the same value to each of their children on special occasions, whereas the Sino fathers give gifts according to needs. For this reason, the older children in the Sino-Vietnamese families sometimes receive gifts of greater value than the younger children.

**Understanding of Messages.** Both the Anglo and Sino fathers are reasonably satisfied that their children understand their gift-giving messages. But, the Sino fathers sometimes consider that it is necessary to repeat their messages to the younger children to make sure that they understand what is expected of them. The Anglo fathers, on the other hand, do not seem to consider that the same persistence is necessary.

### 6.3.4 REACTION

**Achievement.** Although the Anglo and Sino fathers believe that they usually achieve their objectives, the Anglo fathers seem to be more generally satisfied than the Sino fathers.
Feedback. Although the Anglo and Sino fathers think that their children appreciate their gifts, the Anglo fathers think that their children more openly express their feelings than the Sino fathers.

Usage. Both the Anglo and Sino fathers feel that their children put their gifts to good use but in different ways. The Anglo fathers state that their children use the gifts immediately and are not inclined to share them with their siblings. The Sino fathers, on the other hand, state that even though their children are inclined to share the tangible gifts with their siblings, usage is delayed with regard to lucky money that is mainly put in the bank for future purposes.

6.4 ROLE OF ANGLO AND SINO DAUGHTER

The Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese daughters generally play a similar gift-giving role in the family. That is, they take a more dominant role in gift giving than the sons. But, there are some differences between the daughters in the two cultures, which are highlighted in this section.

6.4.1 MOTIVATION

Justification. Both the Anglo and Sino daughters are mainly motivated to give gifts to their parents to show their love and appreciation.
Significance. Both the Anglo and Sino daughters consider that gifts are significant when they are surprises. The Anglo daughters, however, believe that surprises are significant because they show individuality and sensitivity. On the other hand, the Sino daughters believe that surprises are significant because they show that extra thought and effort has gone into the selection. Also, the Anglo daughters regard tangible gifts of sentimental value that are given on special occasions as especially significant, whereas the Sino daughters regard intangible gifts that are not linked to special occasions as significant. For example, when the Sino daughters go beyond their usual household duties by taking on extra responsibilities that are not required, they are voluntarily giving of themselves in an intangible way.

Timing. Both the Anglo and Sino daughters usually give gifts on Mother's Day but seldom give gifts on Father's Day. The Anglo daughters also give gifts to both parents on their birthdays and at Christmas, whereas the Sino daughters are inclined to give gifts on birthdays but seldom are motivated to give gifts at Christmas. Although the Sino daughters give intangible gifts to their parents at any time of the year, the Anglo daughters believe that they mainly give tangible gifts to their parents on special occasions.

6.4.2 SELECTION

Involvement. Both the Anglo and Sino daughters are more involved than the sons during gift selection. But, the Anglo daughters are more involved than the Sino daughters.
**Family Influences.** Both the Anglo and Sino daughters prefer not to ask their parents for gift suggestions since they want their gifts to be surprises. The Anglo and Sino daughters are also more influential than the sons when the siblings select gifts together to give to their parents. Even though the Anglo and Sino daughters find it difficult to give gifts to their fathers, the difficulty stems from different reasons and is, therefore, addressed differently. The Anglo daughters believe that the gifts that their fathers like are beyond their budget and so they tend to seek the influence of their mothers by asking them for gift ideas. The Sino daughters, on the other hand, know that their fathers do not want money to be spent on gifts for them and so they are influenced by the fathers to comply with their wishes. For this reason, they usually give intangible gifts to their fathers in which money is not an issue. For example, the daughters believe that when they perform well at school, they give their fathers more pleasure than when they give them material objects.

**Promotional Influences.** Both the Anglo and Sino daughters do not believe that advertising influences their gift decisions. But, because they usually make their final gift decisions in the stores, the daughters in both cultures tend to be influenced by point-of-sale promotions and sales staff.

**Gift Attributes.** Both the Anglo and Sino daughters regard price and quality as the two main gift attributes even though they rank them differently. The Anglo daughters consider that quality is more important than price, whereas the Sino daughters consider that price is
more important than quality. But, the Sino daughters are sometimes willing to buy more expensive items of better quality as gifts for their parents.

### 6.4.3 COMMUNICATION

**Presentation Messages.** Both the Anglo and Sino daughters are mainly trying to convey love and appreciation to their parents through the gifts. The Anglo daughters believe that these messages are more easily communicated through tangible gifts, whereas the Sino daughters believe that intangible gifts are better able to communicate the messages.

**Allocation Messages.** Both the Anglo and Sino daughters are more inclined to give gifts to their mothers than to their fathers. While the Anglo daughters are expressing some favouritism towards their mothers, the Sino daughters are complying with the wishes of their fathers rather than expressing partiality towards their mothers.

**Understanding of Messages.** When the Anglo daughters communicate messages through tangible gifts and the Sino daughters communicate messages through intangible gifts, they both believe that their parents understand their gift-giving messages. But, when the Sino daughters communicate messages through tangible gifts, they doubt that their parents always understand what they are trying to convey.
6.4.4 REACTION

Achievement. When the Anglo daughters give tangible gifts and the Sino daughters give intangible gifts to their parents, they both believe that they have achieved their objectives. But, when the Sino daughters give tangible gifts to their parents on special occasions, they are not altogether satisfied that their objectives are achieved.

Feedback. Both the Anglo and Sino daughters sometimes feel uncertain about the feedback that they receive from their parents. The Anglo daughters are not entirely convinced that their parents always like their gifts even though they express their appreciation. The Sino daughters, on the other hand, are not completely sure that their parents are always comfortable with the tangible gifts that they receive on special occasions since their parents are not inclined to express their feelings openly.

Usage. Both the Anglo and Sino daughters believe that their parents normally use their gifts. But, the Anglo daughters believe that their parents make a special effort to put their gifts to use, whereas the Sino daughters do not indicate that their parents are exerting themselves to the same extent.
6.5 ROLE OF ANGLO AND SINO SON

The Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese sons generally play a similar gift-giving role in the family. That is, they take a less dominant role in gift giving than the daughters. But, there are some differences between the sons in the two cultures, which are highlighted in this section.

6.5.1 MOTIVATION

**Justification.** In agreement with the daughters, both the Anglo and Sino sons are mainly motivated to give gifts to their parents to show their love and appreciation.

**Significance.** Both the Anglo and Sino sons regard gifts as significant when they are associated with special occasions. For the same reasons that the daughters state, the Anglo and Sino sons also state that they regard gifts as significant when they are given as surprises.

**Timing.** Both the Anglo and Sino sons time their gifts to coincide with special occasions even though the Anglo sons are more consistent in their gift giving at those times of the year than the Sino sons. When the sons give gifts on special occasions, the Anglo sons are prompted out of a sense of obligation. The Sino sons, on the other hand, are motivated to give gifts voluntarily on those occasions since their parents do not regard Western gift-giving rituals as important.
6.5.2 SELECTION

Involvement. Both the Anglo and Sino sons are not inclined to spend a lot of time and effort on gift selection. But, the Anglo sons are more involved in gift selection than the Sino sons.

Family Influences. Both the Anglo and Sino sons are influenced by the daughters, especially the older ones, when gifts are selected together for their parents. But, the sons in both cultures are not inclined to seek the influence of their mothers or fathers since they want their gifts to surprise their parents.

Promotional Influences. Both the Anglo and Sino sons believe that advertising does not influence their gift decisions. But, because they usually make their final gift decisions in the stores, the sons in both cultures tend to be influenced by point-of-sale promotions and sales staff.

Gift Attributes. Both the Anglo and Sino sons regard price and quality as the two main gift attributes even though they rank them differently. The Anglo sons consider quality before price, whereas the Sino sons consider price before quality.

6.5.3 COMMUNICATION

Presentation Messages. Both the Anglo and Sino sons want to express love and appreciation to their parents by giving gifts that are intended to be surprises. The Anglo sons try to select unique gifts that
express individuality and sensitivity, whereas the Sino sons try to make independent gift decisions that express extra thought and effort.

**Allocation Messages.** Both the Anglo and Sino sons try not to express partiality when they give gifts to their parents. The Anglo sons, however, tend to give gifts to both parents on a more frequent basis than the Sino sons. But, even though the Sino sons sometimes forget Father's Day and usually remember Mother's Day, they do not regard this oversight as a deliberate expression of favouritism towards their mothers.

**Understanding of Messages.** Both the Anglo and Sino sons believe that their parents understand what they were trying to communicate through gifts.

### 6.5.4 REACTION

**Achievement.** Both the Anglo and Sino sons believe that their parents are reasonably satisfied with their gifts. For this reason, they consider that their gift-giving objectives are usually achieved.

**Feedback.** Both the Anglo and Sino sons indicate that their parents are genuinely pleased with the gifts that they receive. But, the Anglo sons believe that their parents openly express their feelings. The Sino sons, on the other hand, believe that their parents are not inclined to express their feelings openly.
**Usage.** Both the Anglo and Sino sons believe that their parents put their gifts to good use.

### 6.6 ANGLO AND SINO FAMILIES ACROSS ROLES

In this section, the distinguishing characteristics of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families across roles are presented in relation to the four elements in the family gift-giving process, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction.

The following table presents the distinguishing gift-giving characteristics of the families in the two cultures.
### Distinguishing Gift-Giving Characteristics of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese Families Across Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GIFT-GIVING ELEMENTS:</th>
<th>Anglo-Celtic Families</th>
<th>Sino-Vietnamese Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. MOTIVATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>Short-term goals</td>
<td>Long-term goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>Prestige gifts</td>
<td>Practical gifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Birthday gifts</td>
<td>Lucky Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. SELECTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>High-priority</td>
<td>Low-Priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social and</td>
<td>Financial risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>psychological risks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Influences</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional Influences</td>
<td>Status Symbols</td>
<td>Sale Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift Attributes</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Money unsuitable</td>
<td>Money suitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Messages</td>
<td>Immediate self-</td>
<td>Delayed self-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gratification</td>
<td>gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation Messages</td>
<td>Multiple gifts</td>
<td>Single gifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mothers favoured</td>
<td>Eldest child favoured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Not always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. REACTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>More expressive</td>
<td>Less expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage</td>
<td>Often private</td>
<td>Often shared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


6.6.1 MOTIVATION

**Justification.** Within the Anglo and Sino families, gift giving is initiated for different reasons. Gifts in the Anglo families are primarily given to achieve short-term goals, i.e. to enhance the self-concept and status of the recipients. Gifts in the Sino families, on the other hand, are mainly given to achieve long-term goals, i.e. to assist the children's education or to save for the future.

**Significance.** Within the Anglo and Sino families, different gifts are considered to be important. The Anglo families tend to regard prestige gifts, e.g. name brands, as most important, especially on birthdays to honour the individual. The Sino families, on the other hand, tend to regard practical gifts as the most important, especially lucky money that they give to the children on Chinese New Year to honour their cultural tradition.

**Timing.** Within the Anglo and Sino families, gifts are timed differently. The Anglo families mainly time their gifts to correspond with special occasions, e.g. birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day and Father's Day. The Sino families, on the other hand, rarely time their gifts to coincide with Western gift-giving rituals even though they always observe Chinese New Year. Also, while the Anglo families are not inclined to give gifts to reward academic excellence, the Sino families always give gifts for this purpose.
6.6.2 SELECTION

**Involvement.** Overall, the Anglo families are generally more involved in the selection of gifts than the Sino families. The Anglo families usually regard gift giving as a high-priority activity that involves social and psychological risks. The Sino families, on the other hand, usually regard gift giving as a low-priority activity that mainly involves financial risks.

**Family Influences.** The Anglo families are primarily influenced by the children. The Sino families, on the other hand, are mainly influenced by the mothers, who control most of the gift giving in the families.

**Promotional Influences.** The Anglo families are particularly susceptible to promotions that emphasise the status value of items. The Sino families, on the other hand, are primarily influenced when sale merchandise is promoted.

**Gift Attributes.** The Anglo families regard quality, especially in association with name brands, as the most important gift attribute. The Sino families, on the other hand, regard price as the most important gift attribute. Also, while the Anglo families do not regard money as a suitable gift because it signifies a lack of thought, the Sino families always regard money as a suitable gifts because it is useful.
6.6.3 COMMUNICATION

**Presentation Messages.** The Anglo families mainly use gifts to communicate the need for immediate self-gratification. The Sino families, on the other hand, mainly use gifts to communicate the need for delayed self-gratification to achieve long-term goals.

**Allocation Messages.** The Anglo families give multiple gifts of the same value to each person on special occasions, whereas the Sino families give single gifts of different values as they are required. Also, the Anglo families usually give more gifts to the mothers, whereas the Sino families usually give more gifts to the older children, irrespective of gender.

**Understanding of Messages.** The members of the Anglo families are more certain that their gift-giving messages are generally understood than the members of the Sino families. For example, the Sino fathers sometimes consider that it is necessary to repeat messages to the children. Also, the Sino daughters are sometimes uncertain that their parents, especially their fathers, fully understand what they are trying to communicate when they give tangible gifts.

6.6.4 REACTION

**Achievement.** Everyone in the Anglo families are generally satisfied that their gift-giving objectives are achieved, whereas not everyone in the Sino families are always satisfied that their gift-giving objectives
are achieved. For example, the Sino daughters are sometimes disappointed with the response that they receive from their parents, especially their fathers.

**Feedback.** When gifts are received, the members of the Anglo families seem to express their feelings more openly than the members of the Sino families.

**Usage.** The Anglo families mainly use their gifts individually. The Sino families, on the other hand, often use their gifts collectively by sharing them with one another.
CHAPTER SEVEN

RESULTS: STAGE FOUR

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The following research question was the basis for the data that is presented in this chapter.

Assuming there are differences in the way families behave as consumers, how do they express themselves within and across individual family roles in individualistic and collectivistic cultures?

To address the research question, the fourth stage of the analysis involves shopping in general. That is, issues related to consumer behaviour are considered.

The families in the two cultures were analysed separately and then together. When presenting the data in the first part of the analysis, the roles of the mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons were compared and contrasted in relation to the consumer behaviour issues: (1) consumer motivation, (2) consumer involvement, (3) consumer influences, (4) product attributes, and (5) consumer reaction. The families were then analysed across roles and cultures as they applied to the five consumer behaviour issues.
Chapter Seven

The consumer motivation issue considered what the individuals were trying to achieve when they shopped in general. The consumer involvement issue considered the level of involvement of the individuals when they shopped in general. The consumer influences issue considered the influences by family, friends and promotions on the individuals when they shopped in general. The product attributes issue considered what the individuals regarded as the most important product attributes when they shopped in general. Finally, the consumer reaction issue considered why the individuals were satisfied or dissatisfied with their purchases when they shopped in general.

7.2 ROLE OF MOTHER

In this section, the role of mother in the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families was considered separately and then together. The analysis included the following consumer behaviour issues: (1) consumer motivation, (2) consumer involvement, (3) consumer influences, (4) product attributes, and (5) consumer reaction.

7.2.1 ROLE OF ANGLO MOTHER

7.2.1.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

The mothers stated that when they shopped, they were mainly motivated to buy groceries. Their motivation was derived from physiological needs. That is, they primarily shopped to provide the
essentials, e.g. food, for their families. All the mothers mentioned that when they shopped for other goods and services, especially clothes, they were motivated to enhance their self-concept and gain a sense of status. Although the tangible items that the mothers purchased were intended to satisfy their needs, they indicated that the services that the stores provided were also important to their sense of well-being.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer motivation for the Anglo-Celtic mothers.

*The main reason I go shopping is to buy necessities. But, shopping is wonderful to do when I've got the money to go and shop and buy whatever I like. It makes me feel really good to indulge myself once in a while and to get a little break. And it would be even better if there wasn't always the boring budget.*

7.2.1.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

The mothers said that they did most of the shopping in their families. When they bought groceries once a week, they preferred to shop by themselves while the children were at school and the fathers were at work. Since they mainly bought low-risk items at those times, the mothers usually were not as involved when they made these purchase decisions. When the mothers shopped for other goods and services for themselves and family members, they frequently made high-risk purchase decisions. For example, their better clothes involved social and psychological risks since these items were socially visible and were likely to affect their self-concept. To avoid these risks, the mothers
preferred to rely on name brands and to shop at expensive department stores. In this way, they were inclined to be brand and store loyal. Since the older children's clothes involved the same high risks, the mothers frequently allowed the children to be involved in these purchase decisions. But, when the mothers bought clothes for the younger children as well as everyday clothes for themselves and the fathers, the purchases involved less risk and were usually made at discount department stores.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer involvement for the Anglo-Celtic mothers.

*Most of my shopping is just grocery shopping every week. But I've never been one for Thursday night shopping or Saturday morning shopping or whatever and so the kids really don't go shopping with me very often. I mainly do the shopping while they're at school, so there's just no need to go at other times unless I've got a specific reason to go. And then my husband often stays home with the kids so I can go on my own. I go to K-Mart a fair bit. It's good for the younger children. But I enjoy going to places like Grace Brothers or David Jones. There's something about them that feels quality. I like their service. You know, you go to K-Mart and you line up at the checkout and at Grace Brothers and DJ's you go to a counter and are served. You feel different and more important in there. So if I'm buying something of quality, say for the girls. I go to Grace Brothers or David Jones because that would be more their style. And if I find what I want that I can afford, I buy it. I guess I can't see the sense in looking around and spending a lot of time, which I don't have.*
7.2.1.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES

The mothers said that while the children mainly influenced their purchases, they were sometimes influenced by their own mothers, sisters and friends. But, there was no evidence to suggest that they were greatly influenced by the fathers or sales staff. The mothers also mentioned that even though they were occasionally influenced by television advertising when items or services were promoted in their areas of interest, they were especially susceptible to direct mail leaflets.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer influences for the Anglo-Celtic mothers.

*I love the brochures that come 'cause it saves me actually having to go to the shops. But then when I see something in the brochures that had I not seen it, I wouldn't have wanted it or I wouldn't have bought it. It does affect me so that I'll go out and buy it whereas I wouldn't normally. I guess I'm a lot more naive about advertising. I'd say "Oh, look at that!" whereas my husband might see the underlying side of advertising. Sometimes when I've mulled over in my mind what would be a good quality one, I'll just go and check a few shops out and buy the one I want. But, say if I'm buying a stereo player and I wouldn't know so much about it, I'd check out a few shops and buy the best value. I'd still get a good quality one and a good price one which was suitable. And if the salesperson was very pushy, I'd walk out because I don't like high pressure. But I want somebody in the shop to be helpful to answer my questions and give me information that I need. I want somebody who knows the product. I guess I'm influenced by what people tell me. If other girls have been shopping and seen things, "This is a great store. They're cheap. I've seen something I think you would like". That would influence me. Family too*
would play a big part in that. Where my sisters shop and Mum. The kids influence me too when it comes to name brands. But, I think it’s important for them and their self-esteem so I think sometimes it’s better for me to go along with it than to fight it just to make a point. Because they need to be accepted, especially teenagers. Now that they’re older, they come with me anyway to help choose their things. So I follow them for their clothes but not for mine. Well, no, I must admit I always ask the kids if they like what I’m going to buy for myself. You know, if they think I’d look good in it and things like that.

7.2.1.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

The mothers mentioned that even though they were price conscious, they usually considered ‘quality’ before price. For this reason, they tried to buy name brand items that they believed were often superior in quality. At the same time, the mothers regarded name brands as status symbols. Even when they were unable to afford name brands for themselves, the mothers tried to buy these expensive items for the children, especially as gifts on special occasions. In this way, they were able to vicariously consume through the children. But, the mothers preferred to buy name brand clothes for themselves and the children when they were on sale. At those times, the mothers often made impulse purchases, which necessitated their frequently using layby or credit cards instead of cash.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the important product attributes for the Anglo-Celtic mothers.
I think that more expensive often is better. The kids especially feel that way. And often the trendy clothes for them are the dearer ones. I'm not a fanatical brand buyer but I tend to go for better quality things when I can, so I try to get brand names rather than a brand that I don't know. As for clothes, there would be a mixture. My better clothes would probably be brands but my everyday clothes would be K-Mart ones if I thought they were all suitable. I'm one of these shoppers if I go out and see something on sale that I think is lovely. I'll buy it on impulse and maybe put it on layby or use my credit card. I sometimes want to finish with the credit cards and cut them up. But they're very good and very handy at times. I always tell my kids that too. If they like it, they should put it on layby and I'll go fix it up later.

7.2.1.5 CONSUMER REACTION

The mothers were disappointed when they were unable to buy name brands for themselves or their children. At those times, the mothers regarded the less expensive items that they were able to buy as inferior and a source of dissatisfaction.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer reaction for the Anglo-Celtic mothers.

*It makes me frustrated sometimes that I can't always afford to get the best quality. I like to look good, so it makes me angry when I've got to settle for second best. I don't feel you should have to do that in life. But, unfortunately, money rules a big part of your life and that.*
in turn, is very materialistic. Other times, I can see that it doesn't really matter. The difference in quality doesn't always matter.

7.2.1.6 SUMMARY

The Anglo-Celtic mothers can be described as status-seeking consumers. The mothers mainly shop for groceries. At those times, they prefer to go to the stores alone when the children are in school and the fathers are at work. When the mothers shop for goods and services other than groceries, they prefer expensive products, e.g. name brand clothes, and personalised services. In this way, they endeavour to enhance their self-concept and gain a sense of status. While the purchase decisions of the mothers are sometimes influenced by word-of-mouth communication from their own mothers, sisters and friends, they are mainly influenced by the children. While television and newspaper advertisements also influence the mothers, they are especially susceptible to direct mail leaflets that advertise merchandise at reduced prices. Even though the mothers are price conscious, they generally consider 'quality' before price. Since they regard name brands as superior in quality, they try to buy them for the children even if they are unable to buy these expensive items for themselves. In this way, they are able to vicariously consume through their children. Also, the mothers prefer to buy name brands when they are on sale. When they do buy name brands, they frequently make impulse purchases and often use layby or credit cards instead of cash. Finally, when the mothers are unable to buy name brands for themselves and their children, they tend to be disappointed with their purchases.
7.2.2 ROLE OF SINO MOTHER

7.2.2.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

The mothers stated that they were mainly motivated to shop for groceries and household items. Their motivation was primarily based on physiological needs. That is, they shopped to provide the essentials for their families. But, when they occasionally shopped for other goods and services, the mothers said that they preferred to buy items for their families rather than for themselves.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer motivation for the Sino-Vietnamese mothers.

I don't buy much for myself. I only buy things for my children and husband and things for the house. I don't shop much for things for myself. So I buy mostly food and groceries and domestic stuff and sometimes clothes.

7.2.2.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

The mothers said that they did most of the shopping in their families. The major grocery purchases were made once a fortnight. The mothers indicated that even though they had the main responsibility for making the purchase decisions at those times, they preferred to shop with the family. While the mothers mainly made low-risk grocery purchases, they occasionally bought high-risk items. The mothers indicated that since they tried to avoid financial and performance risks at those times, they preferred to shop at familiar stores where they knew and trusted
the proprietors rather than at expensive department stores. The mothers also mentioned that they sometimes made purchases at large discount stores if the merchandise was considered to be reliable. But, since the older children tried to avoid social and psychological risks as well as financial risks when their clothes were purchased, the mothers said that they frequently allowed the children to be involved in these purchase decisions.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer involvement for the Sino-Vietnamese mothers.

*I'm the main shopper in the family. My husband hardly shops at all. I've never been to David Jones. But I've gone to Grace Brothers a few times when things were on sale and they were better quality. And I've been to K-Mart and Katies. But I normally shop where I know the owner. And I try to shop every other week because I don't have a lot of time.*

7.2.2.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES

The mothers said that while they preferred to rely on their own judgment, they were sometimes influenced by television and newspaper advertising as well as direct mail leaflets when sale merchandise was promoted. They did not believe that they were greatly affected by sales staff. The mothers also mentioned that they were rarely influenced by their friends. Even though they were sometimes influenced by the children, the mothers said that they seldom agreed to buy name brands when the children expressed an interest in these expensive items. Also,
when they went with the fathers to make major purchases, e.g. household appliances and cars, the mothers thought that they influenced the fathers more than the fathers influenced them.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer influences for the Sino-Vietnamese mothers.

*Sometimes when I find out about sales from the TV or newspaper, I go and have a look but I don't normally buy it every time. And I've bought bed sheets and linens from the pamphlets in the mail. I do look at them. Occasionally when some friends have told me about something that is good in a certain shop, I would go. But a lot of the time, I don't really agree with them because we have different tastes and like different colours. In the family we do give opinions to each other but it normally doesn't change my mind. I normally trust my own judgment on everything. Sometimes I get the kids something they want, something small and not expensive. But if it's something big, my husband and I both discuss it. We both have to like the same thing before we buy it. Sometimes even if I like it and he doesn't, he will buy it too. So my husband normally relies on me.*

**7.2.2.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES**

The mothers said that because they were mainly guided by price, they often bought merchandise on sale even though they tried to make sure that the products were good quality. When they bought on sale, the mothers paid cash instead of using layby or credit cards. When the mothers bought expensive name brands, they were mainly electrical goods for reliable performance rather than for prestige purposes. Since
the mothers regarded name brand clothes as often overpriced, not necessarily superior in quality, and not of particular importance to the children, they seldom purchased these items for themselves or other family members. They also preferred to buy expensive products overseas to avoid paying the high labour costs for Australian goods.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the important product attributes for the Sino-Vietnamese mothers.

I like quality but I will look at the price first to see if I can afford it. I try to get things on sale or ask my husband to buy them overseas to save on labour costs here. Sometimes the kids have said "Mum, this is a good brand. Please get us this" but I said it is expensive and we can't afford to get it. So they know about their family's situation and they understand. ... I'm pretty careful in spending money. For instance, if we need to buy something, well I'm thinking of food, if that particular food is not in season and it is very expensive, then I would rather go for a less expensive one but not necessarily the cheapest one. But instead of getting the best one which is not in season, I would go for the less expensive one. But I like to get Arnotts biscuits and 100 percent Just Juice. I don't buy home brands for those things. But like washing powders and toilet paper, you don't need to buy expensive ones. But in food, I like to get the better quality ones that I can afford. And electrical things, I go for a better brand to get better quality. So it depends. ... And I don't use credit cards or let my children use credit cards to buy what we can't afford. I tell them that only when they have money in their hand should they spend. If you spend by using cards, that means you are borrowing money and paying high interest to pay it back.
7.2.2.5 CONSUMER REACTION

The mothers were mainly satisfied when they bought quality goods and services at reasonable prices that performed well. Since they wanted to make sure that they got value for money, the mothers expressed disappointment if their purchases did not meet their expectations. When that happened, they believed that they had wasted their money. Consequently, they made an effort not to buy these goods and services again.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer reaction for the Sino-Vietnamese mothers.

*I buy things that the family needs. I don't go and just spend money for things that we don't really need. So if they don't work or they break easily, I won't buy those things again. I try to be careful because I don't want to waste money.*

7.2.2.6 SUMMARY

The Sino-Vietnamese mothers can be described as practical consumers. The mothers mainly shop for groceries. When the major grocery purchases are usually made once a fortnight, the mothers prefer to shop with the family even though they make most of the purchase decisions. When the mothers shop for high-risk items, they are more concerned with spending their money wisely on goods and services that perform well rather than attempting to gain personal prestige from material possessions. Although the mothers are sometimes persuaded
by advertisements for sale merchandise or agree with their children's suggestions, they are rarely influenced by their husbands, friends or sales staff. Instead, they prefer to rely on their own judgment when making purchase decisions. While the mothers consider price first, they also try to buy good quality items that are reliable. Since they do not regard name brand clothes as necessarily superior in quality or as items to enhance their self-concept, they seldom purchase these items for themselves or other family members. Because they want to make sure that they are not living beyond their means, they pay cash for everything and avoid layby and credit cards. Finally, the mothers are mainly disappointed with their purchases when they do not give value for money. At those times, they consider that they have wasted their money and make an effort not to buy these goods or services again.

7.2.3 CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

Overall, the cross-cultural analysis of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese mothers reveals that they are the main shoppers in their families. Both the Anglo and Sino mothers are mainly motivated to shop for groceries to satisfy the physiological needs of their families. Since the older children in both cultures try to avoid social and psychological risks when clothes are purchased, both the Anglo and Sino mothers usually allow the children to be involved in these purchase decisions. Even though the Anglo and Sino mothers are rarely influenced by the fathers or by sales staff, they are influenced by promotional messages and their children. Since both the Anglo and
Sino mothers are price conscious, they often buy items on sale. Yet, the data shows that there are a number of differences in the consumer behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese mothers.

When the mothers shop for groceries, the Anglo mothers prefer to shop every week by themselves while the Sino mothers prefer to shop once a fortnight with the family. When high-risk purchases are made, the Anglo mothers are mainly buying for status while the Sino mothers are mainly buying for practical purposes. At those times, the Anglo mothers try to avoid social and psychological risks while the Sino mothers try to avoid financial and performance risks. To avoid these risks, the Anglo mothers tend to buy name brands and to shop at expensive stores while the Sino mothers prefer to shop at familiar stores where they know and trust the proprietors. The Anglo mothers are more influenced by their children than the Sino mothers. The Anglo mothers are also more influenced by advertising, relatives and friends than the Sino mothers. While the Anglo mothers put 'quality' first and then price, the Sino mothers put price first and then quality even though they try to buy good quality items on sale. While the Anglo mothers regard quality in relation to prestigious name brands, the Sino mothers regard quality in relation to reliable performance. The Anglo mothers frequently make impulse purchases when name brand clothes are on sale, whereas the Sino mothers are not as inclined to make impulse purchases and seldom buy name brand clothes even if they are on sale. The Anglo mothers often use layby or credit cards rather than cash, whereas the Sino mothers always use cash rather than layby or credit cards. Finally, the Anglo mothers are disappointed
if they cannot buy goods and services that enhance their self-concept, whereas the Sino mothers are disappointed if the goods and services that they buy do not give value for money.

7.3 ROLE OF FATHER

In this section, the role of father in the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families was considered separately and then together. The analysis included the following consumer behaviour issues: (1) consumer motivation, (2) consumer involvement, (3) consumer influences, (4) product attributes, and (5) consumer reaction.

7.3.1 ROLE OF ANGLO FATHER

7.3.1.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

The fathers stated that because they disliked shopping, they were usually motivated not to shop rather than to shop. Since the mothers provided most of their physiological needs, the fathers mainly shopped for luxury items, e.g. cars, and handyman products, e.g. tools. At those times, the fathers indicated that they were primarily motivated to enhance their self-concept, to gain group acceptance, or to feel a sense of personal satisfaction. The evidence also suggested that the fathers regarded the products as more important than the services surrounding the products.
The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer motivation for the Anglo-Celtic fathers.

*I hate shopping. I loathe it. Oh, I just can't stand going in shopping centres. I feel it's a great waste of time. I've never liked shopping. It's probably an attitude I've picked up from my father. Anyway, I suppose if you're working five days a week, you don't want to spend your leisure time walking around shopping centres, do you? ... But, I don't mind buying stuff for myself when I really want to fulfil a need, you know, like one of my goals is to buy a really good sound system and I'll really enjoy getting that.*

### 7.3.1.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

The fathers said that because they disliked shopping centres and regarded them as a waste of time, they shopped as little as possible. For this reason, they seldom went to the grocery stores and rarely bought their own clothes. Instead, the fathers made purchases on an infrequent basis, which usually involved high-risk items, e.g. stereo systems or computers. At those times, they preferred to investigate price and availability before going to the stores. While they were attempting to avoid financial risk, they were mainly trying to avoid the risk of wasting time by making sure that they were able to complete the sales transactions quickly.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer involvement for the Anglo-Celtic fathers.
When I go shopping, I know what I'm buying and I'll go straight to it. I've probably done a phone around to get the prices and where the availability is and I go bang and get it and get out of there. I prefer being on the beach or doing something active or fixing something up rather than walking around shopping centres looking for things that you don't know whether they're there or not. ... I suppose my wife is more impulsive than I am in terms of wanting things. And I'll go through trauma whether or not I should buy a new pair of trousers or not. So I put it off as long as I can and my wife buys a lot of my gear anyway.

7.3.1.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES

The fathers indicated that they had less influence on the purchase decisions of the family than the family had on their purchase decisions. Even though they tended not to pay a great deal of attention to advertising, the fathers said that they were sometimes influenced by promotional messages pertaining to their areas of interest. The fathers also believed that their purchase decisions were occasionally influenced by friends and sales staff.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer influences for the Anglo-Celtic fathers.

Advertising is a fact of life, isn't it really?! I mean, I'm influenced by advertising. When I see a new car ad on T.V., I think oh yeah it would be nice to own a new car and travel and oh, yeah it would be nice to fly away somewhere. I'm influenced by it. Not so much influenced by things where I have to go to a shopping centre but I am when it's things like a car that I'd like to have a look at.
Sometimes I'd ask a friend about cars too or furniture or maybe a household item. And I took the family with me when I bought a new car two years ago because I wanted the kids to put their input into it as well as my wife. And with a salesperson, I'd look for assistance if I'm not sure of something and I'll listen. I guess they influence me too.

7.3.1.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

The fathers said that while they wanted the products to be good quality at reasonable prices, they mainly wanted the products to be easily accessible. For this reason, they were more inclined to make their purchases at convenient locations than to engage in comparative shopping to get the best price. Furthermore, the fathers indicated that when they shopped, they were not as brand conscious as the mothers.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the important product attributes for the Anglo-Celtic fathers.

*I always ring around and make sure they've got whatever I want. And I don't always get the best price. It might be a bit more. If it was $10 dearer but I could buy it local than go across town, I'd buy it local. I won't drive all over the place to save a few dollars. And I'm not going to go to another shop to compare. Get in and get out. That's me. As long as it's what I'm after and it's a good price, that's all I'm really worried about.*
7.3.1.5 CONSUMER REACTION

The fathers said that if the goods and services fulfilled an existing need, they were generally satisfied. Thus, their level of satisfaction stemmed from the immediate benefits that they derived from the purchases.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer reaction for the Anglo-Celtic fathers.

Well, I buy a particular product because I think it might be reliable. And if it doesn’t work or doesn’t fulfil a need, I feel cheated. It makes me angry. I don’t have confidence in that company again. I’ve been told by the advertising or the sales person or somebody that it’s okay and when it’s not, I feel let down. But if it does what I want it to do and it costs a little more, I don’t care about the price. I’m happy.

7.3.1.6 SUMMARY

The Anglo-Celtic fathers can be described as reluctant consumers. Because they dislike shopping centres, they are not inclined to shop. They mainly buy high-risk luxury items, e.g. cars, or handyman products, e.g. tools, on an infrequent basis rather than food or clothes. Before the fathers go to the stores, they usually investigate price and availability. In this way, they try to complete the sales transactions as quickly as possible and avoid the risk of wasting time. While the fathers are affected by promotional messages that pertain to their areas of interest, they are sometimes influenced by family, friends and sales staff. Even though the fathers want quality goods at reasonable prices, their main consideration is to make their purchases at convenient
locations. Also, the fathers are not as brand conscious as the mothers. Finally, when the goods and services fulfil one of their existing needs, the fathers are generally satisfied with their purchases.

7.3.2 ROLE OF SINO FATHER

7.3.2.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

The fathers said that since they believed that the mothers were primarily responsible for the shopping in the families, they were not generally motivated to shop. When groceries and other essentials were purchased, the fathers mainly accompanied the mothers out of necessity. That is, the fathers were needed to drive the mothers to the shopping centre and carry the groceries. At those times, the mothers rather than the fathers tended to make the purchase decisions. When items other than groceries were purchased, the fathers were mainly motivated to shop for cars. Otherwise, they were usually not motivated to shop. Instead, they relied on the mothers to buy their clothes and to make most of the major purchase decisions, e.g. household appliances.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer motivation for the Sino-Vietnamese fathers.

Well, food shopping is a must so there's no choice and I have to go. But the food shopping is really my wife's job. She looks after the family and she is the housewife, so she has to do the home duty. I think she is very capable of doing that type of job. But, of course, I am the driver.
have to take her wherever she would like to go. So I go to the shops with my wife for food but she buys it and I carry it. And if you are talking about window shopping and just going around to see what's on special, no I don't like doing that. I only like to get what is very necessary, the essentials you can call it, and the rest are not necessary. The rest is my wife's job.

7.3.2.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

The fathers said that they were mainly involved in shopping when they took the mothers to the local shopping centre or sometimes to the Chinese shopping centre to buy the groceries once a fortnight. Nevertheless, the mothers rather than the fathers usually made these purchase decisions. When the fathers occasionally bought items, e.g., cars, they tended to be involved in high-risk purchase decisions. At these times, they tried to avoid financial and performance risks by making the decisions with the mothers. The only time that the fathers indicated that they shopped by themselves was if they went overseas and bought items that were requested by the family. Yet, they usually filled orders at those times rather than making their own purchase decisions.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer involvement for the Sino-Vietnamese fathers.

Going shopping is my wife's main duty, week after week, month after month, and year after year. So I believe she has gained a lot more experience doing the shopping. The main thing is that my wife doesn't drive a car which means that I am forced to go with her to drive. Normally, I'm free
during the weekend time but during the week it is very difficult to go. Normally, we do our food shopping once every two weeks. Every time we go we have to buy everything. We go to the local shopping centre most of the time but I take the family to the Chinese shopping centre about once a month. So I mainly follow her to the shopping centre but then I meet some friends in the shopping centre. So then I leave my wife alone and let her shop and I will sit down in the coffee shop and she does whatever she pleases and then she lets me know and I pick her up because I have to carry all the goods for her.

7.3.2.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES

The fathers believed that they had less influence on the family's purchase decisions than the family had on their purchase decisions. The fathers, however, said that because they had less shopping experience than the mothers, they considered that the mothers were their main source of influence in the families. With regard to influences outside the family, the fathers said that friends were their greatest source of influence even though they were sometimes influenced by advertising, especially promotions in the Chinese newspapers.

My wife is the one who makes the final decision even though I sometimes give her advice about what I think is the best buy, you know, the cheaper prices, better service and better quality. And, of course, she listens and sometimes she accepts my advice. But I don't normally influence her or the children. My wife knows more anyway because she has the right experience on that. She always thinks if we need the things or not and about the price. ... Once I wanted a car. I always liked the car but my wife told me it was
expensive but I told my wife I liked it and please let me have that car. I said that many times and so my wife went with me to buy the car because it was something I wanted and she didn't say "no" because she wanted to make me happy and I paid cash for the car. ... Because I work long hours, I have very little time to watch T.V. so to me whenever I've got some time left I prefer to read the Chinese newspaper. So I think those ads would be more influence to me. And I don't get influenced by brochures because my children say the brochures are cheating. Well, they say that most of the time they are out of date or old models and they just bring up the price and then put a slash to a new price. ... Sometimes I've heard from friends which shop has a sale on or which products are cheaper. And sometimes my wife or children see a sale on television and we go there.

7.3.2.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

The fathers said that even though quality was important, they considered price before quality most of the time. But, since the fathers regarded themselves as inexperienced shoppers, they mainly relied on the mothers to give them advice on the best prices.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the important product attributes for the Sino-Vietnamese fathers.

Whenever I go shopping with my wife, I look at the prices and quality but I watch the prices more. But I don't think that everything that is cheap I will buy. I think in my pocket how much I want to spend, you know. If everything you buy, you don't have money and you spend the money more. You think this one is cheap and the other one is
cheap and that is no good. It is important to save the money and to keep just enough to spend on what things you need. Sometimes if it is cheap you can buy but sometimes you don’t need to buy. The children don’t know much about the brands. The older ones know which brands are more dear. We say if you have enough money we buy. If not, we buy the normal ones. We know how much money we get and how we must spend. We must not spend too much. If everyone spends too dear, we couldn’t spread the money. We wouldn’t have enough money to go around.

7.3.2.5 CONSUMER REACTION

The fathers said that they were generally satisfied with the purchases when the mothers were involved in the decisions. But, the fathers were frequently disappointed when they made their own purchase decisions. At those times, their dissatisfaction reinforced their belief that they were inexperienced shoppers.

The following excerpt gives a typical account of the consumer reaction for the Sino-Vietnamese fathers.

Sometimes I buy toys for my young kids and the next day they break. So I say I won’t buy those toys again. I buy better toys next time. And sometimes I pick fruit at the shops and when we get home we find it is not good. So my wife is better at shopping. She has more experience.
7.3.2.6 SUMMARY

The Sino-Vietnamese fathers can be described as inexperienced consumers. They are not motivated to shop since they believe that the mothers are mainly responsible for the shopping in the family. When the fathers are involved in shopping, they primarily take the mothers to buy the groceries out of necessity. That is, they are needed to drive the mothers to the shopping centre and carry the groceries rather than to be involved in the purchase decisions. When the fathers buy high-risk items, e.g. cars, they try to avoid financial and performance risks by relying on the advice of the mothers. For this reason, the fathers are primarily influenced by the mothers even though they are occasionally influenced by their children, friends and newspaper advertising. Even though the fathers regard price as the most important product attribute, they depend on the mothers to advise them of the best prices. Finally, while the fathers are generally satisfied with the purchases that the mothers make, they are frequently dissatisfied with the purchases that they make. At those times, their dissatisfaction reinforces their belief that they are inexperienced shoppers.

7.3.3 CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

Overall, the cross-cultural analysis of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese fathers reveals that the fathers are not inclined to shop. Both the Anglo and Sino fathers rely on the mothers to buy the essentials as well as to buy most of the other goods and services. When the Anglo and Sino fathers occasionally make high-risk purchase decisions, the fathers in both cultures are sometimes influenced by
family, friends and advertising. Also, the Anglo and Sino fathers believe that their purchase decisions are more influenced by the family than the family’s purchase decisions are influenced by them. Yet, the data shows that there are a number of differences in the consumer behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese fathers.

Although the Anglo fathers are occasionally motivated to buy high-risk luxury items, the Sino fathers are seldom motivated to make these type of purchases. Although the Anglo fathers are rarely involved in grocery shopping, the Sino fathers are frequently involved in this activity. When high-risk items are purchased, the Anglo fathers make more independent purchase decisions than the Sino fathers. At those times, the Anglo fathers investigate price and availability before going to the stores. The Sino fathers, on the other hand, prefer to rely on the advice of the mothers instead of gathering information themselves. Also, the Anglo fathers are sometimes influenced by sales staff at point-of-sale, whereas the Sino fathers are mainly influenced by the mothers at point-of-sale. The Anglo fathers believe that quality and price are important even though their final decision is based on convenient location. The Sino fathers are more concerned with price than quality or convenient location. Finally, the Anglo fathers are usually satisfied with their purchases, whereas the Sino fathers are usually more satisfied with the purchases that the mothers make than with their own purchases.
7.4 ROLE OF DAUGHTER

In this section, the role of daughter in the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families was considered separately and then together. The analysis included the following consumer behaviour issues: (1) consumer motivation, (2) consumer involvement, (3) consumer influences, (4) product attributes, and (5) consumer reaction.

7.4.1 ROLE OF ANGLO DAUGHTER

7.4.1.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

The daughters said that while they occasionally shopped for other items, e.g. food and gifts, they were mainly motivated to shop for clothes. At those times, they primarily tried to buy fashionable clothes, e.g. name brands, that enhanced their self-concept and gave them a sense of status in relation to their peers. Thus, they were inclined to spend their money on themselves rather than to save it.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 12 year old gives a typical account of the consumer motivation for the Anglo-Celtic daughters.

*I love shopping for clothes. I just love to look but I don’t buy if it’s too expensive. I love going to the shops and having a look at all the things and thinking "Oh, yeah, I wish I had all of these". I’m interested in what my friends think about me. And I guess I’m more a brand name person.*
7.4.1.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

The daughters said that they frequently shopped for enjoyment even when they were unable to make purchases. The beginning of each season was one time when the daughters always tried to go to the stores to look at the latest fashions. While the older daughters sometimes went shopping by themselves or with friends, all of the daughters said that they frequently were accompanied by their mothers when they shopped for clothes. Since social and psychological risks were mainly associated with these purchases, the daughters tended to be brand and store loyal. In this way, they were attempting to avoid these risks when making purchase decisions. Because the daughters were often unable to afford as many name brands as they wanted, they were inclined to ask their parents to buy these expensive items as gifts for special occasions. Otherwise, the daughters waited until the name brands were on sale or bought imitation name brands at less expensive stores. Several of the daughters also mentioned that they sometimes bought used clothes at opportunity shops because this practice was the trend rather than to save money.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 15 year old gives a typical account of the consumer involvement for the Anglo-Celtic daughters.

My main clothes shopping is at the beginning of the seasons. So I go Winter shopping and Summer shopping. That sorta thing. And then sometimes Mum and I go in between times but not very often. And when we go in, we walk around all the shops and everything and look at things. Well, Mum likes to look nice and everything and she likes us to look nice too and be fairly fashionable. So I buy a fair bit of
name brand stuff too. But it has to be comfortable and fit well. So, yeah, Mum is always giving her own opinion and saying how much she wants to spend. Dad's a bit easier with money than Mum but he doesn't go shopping with me.

7.4.1.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES

The daughters said that their purchase decisions were mainly influenced by friends, television advertising and direct mail leaflets that promoted sale merchandise. Sometimes the daughters were also influenced by their mothers, especially in relation to the amount of money that they were allowed to spend. But, the daughters indicated that they were rarely influenced by their siblings or magazine advertising. Because the daughters frequently went to the stores to look at the fashions, point-of-sale promotional material was found to be an important source of influence.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 19 year old gives a typical account of the consumer influences for the Anglo-Celtic daughters.

If I see a lot of my friends with a nice dress on that I like, I'd like a dress similar. So it just gives me the idea. I don't want it to be better than them or anything or the same as them. I only like it because I think that the dress is nice and it gives me the idea of things that I'd like. So my friends influence me a fair bit or if I see an ad on TV and I like that particular dress that influences me. The look of something. I don't want to look like a dag in old-fashioned clothes. So I like things that are a bit fashionable. I like to have some clothes like that. And catalogues in the mail sometimes
influence me too. You know, if there's a sale on and if it looks nice, I might go in to have a look. You can get a better idea if you actually go in and look at all the shops.

7.4.1.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

The daughters said that they regarded 'quality' as more important than price. In fact, price only became an issue when their funds were limited. Since they often associated name brands with quality, the daughters tried to buy name brands whenever possible, especially when they were on sale. It was only when the daughters were unable to buy these expensive items that imitation name brands were purchased.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 13 year old gives a typical account of the important product attributes for the Anglo-Celtic daughters.

Mum usually knows what's the best brands and what's the best ones for the money. So I look for name brands that aren't too expensive. But they've got to be good. They've got to fit. And I have to like them. Then Mum will let me get them.

7.4.1.5 CONSUMER REACTION

The daughters said that they were generally satisfied with their purchases when they selected their own clothes instead of their mothers. But, the daughters indicated that they were especially satisfied with their purchases when they were able to buy name brands.
The following excerpt from an interview with a 14 year old gives a typical account of the consumer reaction for the Anglo-Celtic daughters.

Mum isn't allowed to buy any clothes for me without my being there. Everything she buys for me I just don't like. I totally hate it. I'm really fussy with clothes. I've had a lot of clothes that I've given away or that just hang in the wardrobe that I just won't wear. Well, she's got bad taste. But she's pretty understanding if you don't like it and she goes "All right then". But if I like something that I see, she sort of agrees with me. She's got different taste in clothes than what I wear. She wears other clothes. Well, I want to wear more fashionable clothes, not fashionable exactly but the kind of clothes my friends wear.

7.4.1.6 SUMMARY

The Anglo-Celtic daughters can be described as trendy consumers. They are mainly motivated to spend their money on fashionable clothes, especially name brands, in order to enhance their self-concept and gain a sense of status in relation to their peers. While the daughters often shop, they do not necessarily make purchases since their funds are usually limited. Instead, their shopping trips are frequently regarded as enjoyable experiences in which the daughters are able to gain a certain amount of satisfaction from looking at the latest fashions. While the purchases of the daughters are sometimes influenced by their mothers, they are rarely influenced by their siblings. The daughters are more likely to be influenced by friends than by their mothers or siblings. They are also more influenced by television advertising and direct mail leaflets than by magazine advertising. Since the daughters frequently
go to the stores, point-of-sale promotions are another significant influence. Because the daughters regard 'quality' as more important than price, they prefer to buy name brands, which they associate with quality. Finally, while the daughters are generally satisfied with their purchases when they select their own clothes, they are especially satisfied when they are able to buy name brands.

7.4.2 ROLE OF SINO DAUGHTER

7.4.2.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

The daughters said that even though they occasionally shopped for clothes, they mainly were motivated to shop for food with their parents. Nevertheless, whenever the daughters made purchases, they wanted the items to serve useful purposes. Otherwise, they preferred to save rather than to spend their money.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 12 year old gives a typical account of the consumer motivation for the Sino-Vietnamese daughters.

*I mainly just go with Mum and Dad to do the food shopping. So I mainly just go out shopping at the supermarket but then I may go around later to see what's nice in the shops. But, I mainly just buy things if I need them.*
7.4.2.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

The daughters said that they seldom had the need or opportunity to shop for clothes. Instead, they mainly shopped for food every few weeks with their parents and siblings. When the daughters occasionally shopped for clothes, their purchase decisions were primarily associated with financial risk and sometimes associated with social and psychological risks. But, rather than relying on store and brand loyalty, the daughters said that they tried to avoid financial risk by comparing prices at a number of stores before making their purchase decisions.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 14 year old gives a typical account of the consumer involvement for the Sino-Vietnamese daughters.

I don't shop all that much. I mainly always shop with my mother. Mainly it's for food. I get to choose food too. But when we shop for clothes, we go all the way around the shops and see what's nice and have a look around. And so when I see something that's really nice and then we just go in and I try it on or something. And sometimes Mum buys it for me.

7.4.2.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES

The daughters said that while their purchase decisions were occasionally influenced by friends and siblings, their mothers mainly influenced the manner in which they selected their clothes. That is, the daughters tended to buy less expensive items rather than name
brands. Also, the daughters said that while they were sometimes influenced by television advertising and direct mail leaflets that promoted sale merchandise, they were mainly influenced by promotional messages at point-of-sale.

The following excerpt from a 12 year old gives a typical account of the consumer influences for the Sino-Vietnamese daughters.

*Sometimes if my friend has something or I see it on T.V., then sometimes I want it. But I try to forget about it because my parents always say that we see other people have it and we want it. But I'm really not influenced by name brands. I don't really like name brands. It just seems that the name sounds good but the things aren't really that good. Sometimes my friends might buy Reeboks and that because they think it's good because it's expensive and that. Well, I'm like my mother I guess. I don't really like buying things that are too expensive because it's not worth it.*

7.4.2.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

The daughters said that they regarded price as the most important product attribute even though quality was an important secondary consideration. Since they tended not to associate name brands with superior quality, the daughters rarely purchased these expensive items. In fact, the daughters believed that the main reason that name brands were expensive was because of image rather than excellent workmanship.
The following excerpt from an interview with a 17 year old gives a typical account of the important product attributes for the Sino-Vietnamese daughters.

*I think Australians are whatever is in fashion and is modern they go for it where Chinese look around and they look for the cheapest and that. Everyone in Australia buys dearer things because they taste better or they look prettiest. I’d buy the one that tastes okay and looks okay but is cheaper. I don’t want to spend too much on what is considered as useless things. Say that the tea leaf is cheaper. I’d buy it. But if it’s dearer and tastes nicer, I’d only buy a little of it for special occasions. So I’m a bit like my parents in wanting to get things that are cheap. I look for pretty things but then I’d look for cheap in them as well. So I’m a bit of both but more leaning towards the Chinese customs.*

**7.4.2.5 CONSUMER REACTION**

The daughters indicated that they were generally satisfied with their clothes purchases if they were able to make their own selections. But, when their clothes were selected by their mothers, they were not inclined to be as satisfied.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 16 year old gives a typical account of the consumer reaction for the Sino-Vietnamese daughters.

*Sometimes Mum buys me clothes that I don’t like. Something that’s fluorescent. I hate fluorescent colours. I tell her I don’t like it and I won’t wear it. So she doesn’t buy that thing again. Probably she’d buy it for someone else*
but not for me. I like clothes that I choose. So Mum lets me choose my clothes sometimes but she has to say that it's okay.

7.4.2.6 SUMMARY

The Sino-Vietnamese daughters can be described as careful consumers. That is, they prefer to save rather than to spend their money. The daughters are mainly motivated to shop for groceries. They seldom shop for high-risk items, e.g. clothes, unless they have specific needs. When the daughters purchase clothes, they are frequently accompanied by their mothers. At those times, they try to reduce financial risk by comparative shopping to get the best prices. While the daughters are sometimes influenced by their friends, television advertising and direct mail leaflets, one of their main sources of influence are promotional messages at point-of-sale. Also, the manner in which the daughters shop is primarily influenced by the mothers. For this reason, the daughters invariably consider price first even though they try to buy goods of acceptable quality. Since the daughters often think that name brand clothes are overpriced and not necessarily superior in quality, these expensive items are not usually purchased. Finally, while the daughters are satisfied with their purchases when they select their own clothes, they are not as satisfied when their mothers make the selections.
Overall, the cross-cultural analysis of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese daughters reveals that when personal purchases are made, the daughters mainly shop for clothes. On those occasions, the daughters in both cultures tend to make their decisions when they are in the stores rather than beforehand. For this reason, they are both susceptible to point-of-sale promotional material. While the Anglo and Sino daughters often shop with their mothers and are influenced by them, the daughters usually select their own clothes. Also, the purchase decisions of the Anglo and Sino daughters are sometimes influenced by friends, television advertising and direct mail leaflets. When the daughters in both cultures make their own clothes selections, they are generally more satisfied with their purchases than when their mothers make the clothes selections. Yet, the data shows that there are a number of differences in the consumer behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese daughters.

The Anglo daughters are motivated to spend rather than to save money, whereas the Sino daughters are motivated to do just the opposite. The Anglo daughters frequently shop for enjoyment without intending to make purchases. The Sino daughters, on the other hand, usually shop with the intention of making purchases for specific reasons. While the Anglo daughters rarely shop for groceries, the Sino daughters mainly shop for groceries. When the daughters shop for clothes, the Anglo daughters are mainly motivated to avoid social and psychological risks by buying name brands at fashionable stores. The Sino daughters, on the other hand, are mainly motivated to avoid financial risks by comparing prices at numerous stores. The Anglo daughters regard
'quality' as more important than price, whereas the Sino daughters regard price as more important than quality even though they try to buy items that are reasonable in quality. When considering quality, the Anglo daughters believe that name brands are usually superior while the Sino daughters believe that name brands are not necessarily superior. Finally, the Anglo daughters often are disappointed when they are unable to purchase name brands, whereas the Sino daughters are not dependent on name brands for their purchase satisfaction.

7.5 ROLE OF SON

In this section, the role of son in the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families was considered separately and then together. The analysis included the following consumer behaviour issues: (1) consumer motivation, (2) consumer involvement, (3) consumer influences, (4) product attributes, and (5) consumer reaction.

7.5.1 ROLE OF ANGLO SON

7.5.1.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

The sons said that they were primarily motivated to shop when they wanted to make purchases in their particular areas of interest. As they grew older, the items that they wanted to purchase changed according to their interests even though their motivation for shopping remained the same. Thus, their behaviour as consumers resembled their fathers
in that their purchases were mainly luxury items to indulge themselves. For this reason, while they enjoyed shopping, they were not usually motivated to buy essentials. Instead, they preferred to leave those type of purchases to their mothers or sisters. Even the clothes that they bought tended to reflect their preoccupations. Basic items that were essential to their wardrobe were often purchased by their mothers and sometimes their sisters. Because they liked to shop for themselves, the sons indicated that they spent more than they saved. If they saved, it was invariably prompted by the desire to buy luxury items within a relatively short period of time. To get money for their purchases, the sons were highly motivated to obtain part-time jobs as soon as possible. Also, their purchases were mainly name brands that were intended to project a certain image. In this way, the sons were trying to enhance their self-concept and to gain a sense of status in relation to their peers.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 17 year old gives a typical account of the consumer motivation for the Anglo-Celtic sons.

I tend to spend a lot of money. I know I spend a lot of money. I suppose. But I always know what I want. Mum always says that I'm good to shop with because I know exactly what I want. I suppose I would go for brands because I've been brought up with brands through Mum and so I sort of think quality and I'll pay the bit extra. I like to look nice. And I suppose I care about what people think of me.
The sons indicated that they shopped for themselves from an early age on a fairly regular basis. Low-risk items of an essential nature were of very little interest to them. Instead, they primarily purchased high-risk items. To avoid social and psychological risks associated with these purchases, the sons tended to be brand and store loyal. All of the sons indicated that they frequently shopped with their mothers for clothes until they entered university. At that time, the older sons mainly shopped by themselves or with their sisters and girlfriends when they purchased better clothes.

The following excerpt from an interview with another 17 year old gives a typical account of the consumer involvement for the Anglo-Celtic sons.

*I sometimes go out and look for bargains and things like that. There might be sales on and I might get that. But if there's something I want to buy, like a stereo, and I've had interest in shooting and things like that, I'll go out and look for them and not be afraid to pay top dollars for them. If it's something I want and something I've worked hard for and saved up for, I'm not afraid to go out and spend say over a $1000 for a stereo and the same thing for rifles and things like that. So I have spent a lot of money on large items, specific items. But otherwise like clothes and different things, even if I go shopping for food when I'm going away on trips, I always look for the small bargains to save a couple of cents in that area. But I might go and blow it, oh not really blow it all, but spend a heap on some items. So, I'm sort of in between. Say for example, if I've got a bit of money, I'll go out and buy something flash like Country Road and Jag. My older sister took me to her HSC graduation last year and I went out and bought myself a $300 suit and a $100 shirt and they were fairly top and*
expensive clothes and a good brand. So I sort of like to dress, if I'm going to get dressed up, in the top brands but I also, during the day, I just get dressed in daggy clothes, old surf club shirts and that's the sort of stuff I wear to uni.

7.5.1.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES

The sons said that they were mainly influenced by their friends when they bought name brands. They also mentioned that since sports activities featured prominently in their lives, sports figures often became role models during their early adolescence. At that time, the sports equipment that the star players used and the clothes that they wore served to influence their purchase decisions. If the sons enjoyed music, rock bands had a similar effect on their consumer behaviour. Since the sons frequently purchased magazines associated with their areas of interest, they were particularly susceptible to magazine advertising. While television advertising sometimes influenced their purchases, the sons found most promotional messages on television irrelevant. But, direct mail advertising occasionally prompted the sons to make purchases when items were on sale. Also, because they frequently decided on purchases after they were in the stores, point-of-sale promotions tended to affect their decisions. Since the sons often went shopping with their mothers, they were frequently influenced by them. For example, because the mothers also preferred name brands, they usually encouraged the sons to buy these expensive items even though peer group pressure initially motivated the sons to want name brands. While the mothers' influence on the sons continued throughout high school, the older sons indicated that their sisters or girlfriends seemed to play a more significant role in influencing their
purchase decisions for better clothes by the time that they entered university. Their fathers, on the other hand, were shadowy figures when it came to shopping. Nevertheless, the data revealed that the fathers indirectly influenced their sons by serving as role models. That is, most of the purchases of the sons and fathers were high-risk items that centered on their personal areas of interest.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 12 year old gives a typical account of the consumer influences for the Anglo-Celtic sons.

Oh, I don't get influenced for bad things, like cigarettes and that to do you harm, but sometimes I get influences. Like there's this really good rugby union player up in Kiama and like the way he does things, I tend to sometimes do them without noticing. I don't know, you kinda like them and just tend to copy them without knowing sometimes. You know, the way he dresses. These pants he always wears. I found myself buying them. I like them because he wears them, I suppose, I don't know. But I'm not really influenced by ads on television because the things I like, like bodyboarding, there's nothing on television about it. And Rugby Union, there's no ads about anything. Oh, except there might be an ad to go see a game but that's about all. But I spend a lot of my money on sports magazines and in them they've got stuff. There's a rugby union magazine that gives you things. It tells you about new equipment and that. And bodyboarding magazines have got a few pages with new products and that kinda tells you like what's good and what's bad. You need to know that because if you just go out and buy the first thing you see everybody tends to think that you're not a very good bodyboarder. And my friends sometimes give me advice but sometimes they try to influence me, like just say "Oh, you haven't got this type of wetsuit. Why don't you get one?" but that's about all though.
7.5.1.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

The sons said that 'quality' rather than price was their first consideration when making purchases. Since they associated name brands with quality, they preferred to have one name brand item than several less expensive items, e.g. imitation name brands. Also, there was no evidence to suggest that the sons outgrew their need for name brands. In fact, the older sons wanted name brands to the same extent as the younger sons. The only difference between the two age groups was that when the older sons could afford to buy name brands, they tended to buy less sports clothes and more dress clothes.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 20 year old gives a typical account of the important product attributes for the Anglo-Celtic sons.

When I was younger, I did a lot of surfing and the big brands were high value to me because I didn't get them because they were fairly expensive and I only occasionally on the sales would I get a pair of board shorts or a shirt or something like that and they were my pride and joy so I always respected them. Whereas some kids always get everything they want bought for them and they come down with the Billabong and Quicksilver and the whole works, where I only got the items occasionally. But I reckon for me and for most of my mates at school that period where you start settling down and start studying for your HSC, say mainly Year 12, and you have to go out in the workforce and you start looking at the dressy sort of clothes and you've got to look respectable and so it's not just surfy look. So I'd say it was 18, around that age group, when I started looking at my future. I knew I was going to finish school and I sort of got away from those little non-responsible
years sort of thing. A lot of them, say because they don't live off their Mum and Dad anymore, if they want something they have to go and buy it. I know you get occasional ones who still go out and buy all that sort of stuff but a lot of my mates that go to uni, they might buy one name brand shirt and just live in them. They just wear it and wear it if it's like a surfy shirt. But if they are going to go out, they look at nice dressy sort of name brand clothes. Yeah, you want quality. But they're top dollar so you only get a few at a time.

7.5.1.5 CONSUMER REACTION

The sons said that they were more satisfied with their clothes when they made the selections rather than their mothers. The sons were especially satisfied with their purchases when they were the name brands that were currently popular among their peers. Several sons also expressed a sense of satisfaction when they had saved towards a major purchase and earned some of the money themselves.

The following excerpt from an interview with another 12 year old gives a typical account of the consumer reaction for the Anglo-Celtic sons.

It depends on the quality of it. If it was more expensive and better quality, then I'd like it. It's just that they look good. They have good designs. They cost a lot and that's the problem. They only make them for about 20 bucks and sell them for $50. Just they look better mainly and everyone gets them. But then it would be better quality because it's more expensive. That figures. So that's when I'm happy with what I buy. The better brand ones.
Chapter Seven

7.5.1.6 SUMMARY

The Anglo-Celtic sons can be described as self-indulgent consumers. That is, they are mainly motivated to shop for luxury items to indulge themselves. For this reason, they are not usually motivated to buy essentials. The sons enjoy shopping on a fairly regular basis. Since they primarily purchase high-risk items, they tend to be brand and store loyal to avoid social and psychological risks. The sons are influenced by a number of sources. Their main influence for name brands is their friends. Also, the younger sons use sports figures as role models when buying clothes and equipment associated with that particular sport. Because they frequently read magazines that pertain to their areas of interest, magazine advertising is inclined to prompt their purchases. Television advertising, on the other hand, seldom influences the sons since the promotional messages usually do not pertain to their interests. Direct mail and point-of-sale material both influence their decisions, especially for items on sale. The mothers are inclined to be in collusion with the sons when expensive name brands are purchased. In this way, the mothers influence the sons by giving their approval during the decision-making process. But, the older sons are also influenced by their sisters and girlfriends when better clothes are purchased. The sons always consider 'quality' before price. Since they associate quality with name brands, they prefer to buy one name brand item and wear it continually rather than buy several less expensive items, e.g. imitation name brands. Finally, when they are able to make their own selections, especially name brand clothes, they are generally satisfied with their purchases.
7.5.2 ROLE OF SINO SON

7.5.2.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

The sons said that they were usually not motivated to shop. Instead, they preferred to leave most of the shopping, especially essentials, to their mothers and sisters. When they shopped, their purchases usually pertained to their areas of interest. But, since the sons were required to save most of their money and discouraged from obtaining part-time employment that might detract from their studies, they were often limited on funds. For this reason, they were usually forced to make purchases for specific purposes rather than to indulge themselves on a regular basis. The sons also indicated that even though they wanted to enhance their self-concept and gain a sense of status in relation to their peers, they were not unduly motivated to buy name brand clothes.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 14 year old gives a typical account of the consumer motivation for the Sino-Vietnamese sons.

I mainly buy food after school. Every week I get about $10 for pocket money. I try to save $5 and use the rest of the other $5. I've tried to get some famous brand names but I've got to have my Mum's permission even when I use my own money. I can only buy clothes when it's necessary. If there's a special occasion, then Mum takes me to buy things. So there has to be a purpose for buying. You have to need it and it has to be useful.
The sons indicated that they tended to shop on an infrequent basis according to their needs. Food was the only frequent purchase that the sons seemed to make for personal consumption. When high-risk items were purchased, the sons said that they usually shopped with their mothers. They mainly attempted to avoid social and psychological risks as well as financial risks when buying clothes. At those times, style was more important than expensive name brands. But, when they purchased shoes and electronic goods, the sons said that they mainly tried to avoid financial and performance risks. At those times, the sons tended to be brand loyal even though they were inclined to engage in comparative shopping to get the best price. Thus, they were not store loyal. When low-risk purchases were required, the sons frequently asked their mothers to buy the items on their behalf so that they would not have to go to the stores themselves.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 19 year old gives a typical account of the consumer involvement for the Sino-Vietnamese sons.

*I don't buy many things. Not even in a year. I hardly ever buy clothes. I hate shopping. When I go shopping, it's just not like just for 2 or 3 hours. It goes for the whole day and my Mum bargains a lot. And I don't like it. So, if my Mum tells me to go, I'll go. Sometimes she wants me to carry things for her. So, it takes an order from Mum for me to go shopping. It's only when you're small that you tend to go with your parents shopping. When you get older, you don't have to go so much. So my sisters go but I try to stay*
home. Before Mum goes shopping she asks me if I need something. And sometimes if I need something, I'll tell her and she'll get it for me and bring it home.

7.5.2.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES

The sons said that they were mainly influenced by their friends when they purchased clothes. But, when the sons were in the market for shoes and sports items, they said that television advertising sometimes influenced them. The sons also were occasionally influenced by direct mail brochures and point-of-sale material that promoted sale merchandise. Since they often bought magazines that pertained to their areas of interest, they mentioned that magazine advertising had prompted their purchases. While the sons were not usually influenced by their fathers for specific purchases, they were encouraged by their fathers to save rather than to spend money. Also, the sons were influenced by the mothers in relation to how much money to spend on specific items. The older sons said that their sisters or girlfriends sometimes influenced their clothes purchases.

The following excerpt from an interview with a 16 year old gives a typical account of the consumer influences for the Sino-Vietnamese sons.

I'm mainly influenced by my friends for clothes. Well, I see what they're wearing and if it looks good, I just buy it. If it looks good on them, it would probably look good on me. And advertising influences me a little with sporting things. I look at the brochures too. Yeah. I'll have a look at what's for sale. I'll just have a look. I think I might have bought
my tennis racket from the brochure. I like computer magazines. They're the only ones I read. There's this computer game, Dizzy, and it was rated really high so I bought that from the computer magazine.

7.5.2.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

The sons said that the purpose for their purchases dictated the level of importance that they placed on certain product attributes. When they bought clothes, they were more interested in style than in name brands. When they bought shoes and electronic equipment that were expected to perform well for a long period of time, they mainly bought name brand products and sometimes sacrificed price for quality. Nevertheless, the sons said that they still engaged in comparative shopping at that time. But, as the sons pointed out, they were saving money in the long term even if they had to spend more initially since these quality items did not need to be replaced as frequently as less expensive items.

The following excerpt from an interview with 16 year old gives a typical account of the important product attributes for the Sino-Vietnamese sons.

Well, when it comes to shoes, I'd choose name brands. But things like clothing, sometimes I choose name brands and sometimes I don't. It all depends on whether it looks good. So the style is more important than the brand name with clothes. But for electronic stuff I'd go for Sony and AWA because it's got a lot of features and it's made in Japan and so it's better quality. So I look around the shops and see
what the prices are for the brand I want and then I get the cheapest one I can find that's good quality. But it'll last longer, so that's important.

7.5.2.5 CONSUMER REACTION

The sons said that they were more satisfied with their purchases when they selected them rather than when they were selected by their mothers. For example, they were especially satisfied with their clothes purchases when they were the ones who had made the selections. The following excerpt from an interview with a 16 year old gives a typical account of the consumer reaction for the Sino-Vietnamese sons.

It's only been recently that I've been able to choose my clothing. Sometimes I never wore the clothes before. I just put them in my cupboard and sometimes I wore them but I put a jacket over them. Mum bought me a jumper once. I never wore it. I told her it looked like a girl's jumper. So my mother still decides for me. But she now asks me what I want when we go shopping. So it's much better now.

7.5.2.6 SUMMARY

The Sino-Vietnamese sons can be described as purposeful consumers. That is, the sons are not motivated to shop unless they have a specific purpose for their purchases. Since the sons are not inclined to shop on a frequent basis, they often ask their mothers to make purchases on their behalf for low-risk items. When high-risk items are purchased, the sons try to avoid performance risks when buying electronic goods.
and shoes. At those times, quality is more important than price. For this reason, they tend to be brand loyal even though they are not store loyal because they still try to find the best price for certain brands by engaging in comparative shopping. But, when clothes are purchased, they try to avoid social and psychological risks. At those times, they make an effort to find clothes that are stylish even though they are not necessarily name brands. While their friends influence their clothes purchases, television advertising influences their shoes and sports-related purchases. They are also influenced by magazine, direct mail and point-of-sale promotional messages. While the fathers mainly influence the sons to save rather than to spend money, the mothers influence the sons to stay within a certain price range for specific purchases. Finally, the sons are generally satisfied with their purchases when they make their own selections.

7.5.3 CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

Overall, the cross-cultural analysis of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese sons reveals that they are both primarily motivated to buy high-risk items. At those times, both the Anglo and Sino sons prefer to buy luxury items. The sons in both cultures also prefer to leave most of the essential purchases to their mothers or sisters. Both the Anglo and Sino sons tend to be influenced by their friends when clothes are purchased. Since the sons in both cultures are often accompanied by their mothers when they purchase clothes, they are prone to be influenced by them. But, the Anglo and Sino sons are not usually influenced by their fathers when making specific purchase decisions. When the older sons in both cultures buy better clothes, they are
sometimes influenced by their sisters or girlfriends. Both the Anglo and Sino sons are more influenced by magazine advertisements than television advertisements. Also, they are both influenced by direct mail brochures and point-of-sale promotions in relation to sale merchandise. Both the Anglo and Sino sons frequently consider quality more important than price when making purchases for high-risk items. When they are able to make their own selections, especially in relation to clothes, the Anglo and Sino sons tend to be more satisfied with their purchases. Yet, the data shows that there are some differences in the consumer behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese sons.

The Anglo sons usually are employed on a part-time basis from early adolescence, whereas the Sino sons are not encouraged to seek part-time employment that might detract from their studies. For this reason, the Anglo sons are in a better position than the Sino sons to buy luxury items more frequently. The Sino sons, on the other hand, are usually forced because of limited funds to make purchases for specific purposes rather than frequently to indulge themselves. The Anglo sons are usually inclined to spend money rather than to save money even though they sometimes save money for specific items. The Sino sons, on the other hand, are more inclined to save money than to spend money.

The Sino sons are not as highly motivated as the Anglo sons to buy name brands to enhance their self-concept and to gain a sense of status in relation to their peers. In particular, the Anglo sons prefer name brands when making clothes purchases while the Sino sons prefer style. The Anglo sons tend to buy more sports-related items than
the Sino sons, whereas the Sino sons tend to buy more electronic items than the Anglo sons. The Anglo sons are encouraged by their mothers to buy name brands, whereas the Sino sons are not encouraged by their mothers to buy name brands. Instead, the Sino sons are influenced by their mothers in relation to how much money to spend on purchases. The Anglo sons are indirectly influenced by the purchase behaviour of their fathers to buy luxury items in their area of interest while the Sino sons are not influenced by their fathers in this manner. The Sino sons are mainly influenced by their fathers to save rather than to spend. The Anglo sons, on the other hand, are not influenced to the same extent by their fathers to save money.

The Anglo sons always consider 'quality' before price in relation to name brands in order to project an image, whereas the Sino sons consider quality before price when buying name brand electronic goods and shoes to obtain long-term performance rather than to project an image. The Anglo sons tend to be brand and store loyal, whereas the Sino sons sometimes are brand loyal but are not usually store loyal. Instead, they prefer to engage in comparative shopping when buying name brand items in order to get the best price.

### 7.6 ANGLO AND SINO FAMILIES ACROSS ROLES

In this section, the distinguishing characteristics of the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families across roles are presented in relation to the five consumer behaviour issues, i.e. consumer motivation.
consumer involvement, consumer influences, product attributes, and consumer reaction. The following table presents the distinguishing consumer behaviour characteristics of the families in the two cultures.

## DISTINGUISHING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ANGLO-CELTIC AND SINO-VIETNAMESE FAMILIES ACROSS ROLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anglo-Celtic Families</th>
<th>Sino-Vietnamese Families</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ISSUES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. CONSUMER MOTIVATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To spend money</td>
<td>To save money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate self-gratification</td>
<td>Delayed self-gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term goals</td>
<td>Long-term goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury items</td>
<td>Practical items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expensive stores</td>
<td>Inexpensive stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve self-concept and status</td>
<td>To get value for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent shoppers</td>
<td>Infrequent shoppers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure shopping</td>
<td>Necessity shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular personal purchases</td>
<td>Irregular personal purchases</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial independence</td>
<td>Financial dependence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social and psychological risks</td>
<td>Financial and performance risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase name brands at expensive stores to avoid risks</td>
<td>Engage in comparative shopping to avoid risks</td>
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</tbody>
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DISTINGUISHING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ANGLO-CELTIC AND SINO-
VIETNAMESE FAMILIES ACROSS ROLES (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anglo-Celtic Families</th>
<th>Sino-Vietnamese Families</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. CONSUMER INFLUENCES</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. CONSUMER INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less family influences on personal purchases</td>
<td>More family influences on personal purchases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More external influences, e.g. friends and advertising</td>
<td>Less external influences, e.g. friends and advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual purchase decisions</td>
<td>Joint purchase decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children influence</td>
<td>Mothers influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status promotions</td>
<td>Sales promotions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **4. PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES** | **4. PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES** |
| 'Quality' first | Price first |
| Impulse buyers | Not impulse buyers |
| Often credit and layby | Rarely credit and layby |
| Sometimes cash | Primarily cash |

| **5. CONSUMER REACTION** | **5. CONSUMER REACTION** |
| Satisfaction when self-concept and status improved | Satisfaction when items performed well at reasonable prices |

**7.6.1 CONSUMER MOTIVATION**

As consumers, the Anglo families can be described as primarily motivated to spend money for immediate self-gratification. The individual family members try to achieve short-term goals for themselves. That is, they want to improve their status by purchasing
luxury items, e.g. name brand clothes, at expensive stores. The Sino families, on the other hand, can be described as consumers who are primarily motivated to save money and delay self-gratification. The individual family members try to work together to achieve long-term goals. That is, they want to make sure that their families are financially secure by spending their money on practical items, e.g. food and household goods, at stores that offer the best values. For this reason, the Sino families rarely, if ever, are motivated to shop at expensive stores for luxury items, e.g. name brand clothes.

7.6.2 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

Even though the Anglo families can be described as frequent shoppers, the mothers and daughters shop more frequently than the fathers and sons. Since all the family members tend to have easy access to their own money, they are able to indulge themselves on a regular basis by making personal purchases. In fact, even when they do not intend to make purchases, they sometimes shop for pleasure. Whenever high-risk items are purchased, e.g. clothes, the Anglo families often buy name brands at expensive stores, thus attempting to avoid social and psychological risks. The Sino families, on the other hand, can be described as infrequent shoppers. When purchases are made, they mainly buy low-risk necessities, e.g. groceries, on a fortnightly basis. Since the parents control the family resources for most purchases, the Sino children tend to be financially dependent. When the Sino children have personal funds, this money is not readily available for their immediate use. Instead, the money is intended to be saved for the future. For this reason, it is customary to make sure that the needs of
the family are satisfied before purchases are made for personal consumption. Whenever high-risk items are purchased, the Sino families are mainly interested in avoiding financial and performance risks by engaging in comparative shopping to get value for money. But, when the children buy clothes, they try to avoid social and psychological risks as well as financial risks, which tends to preclude the purchase of name brands. It should be emphasised that since the families in the two cultures are usually trying to avoid different types of risks, their strategies for risk avoidance tend to be different.

7.6.3 CONSUMER INFLUENCES

As consumers, the Anglo families can be described as more susceptible to external influences, e.g. friends and advertising, than to family influences. Thus, individual purchase decisions are frequently made without the assistance or influence of other family members. For example, the Anglo mothers usually prefer to go to the grocery stores alone. Also, when the Anglo mothers or fathers make major purchases for personal use, they are inclined to make their own decisions without consulting one another. When purchases are discussed within the Anglo families, especially between mothers and children, the decisions are mainly influenced by the children. With regard to promotional messages, the Anglo families are especially affected by advertisements for prestige goods and services. The Sino families, on the other hand, can be described as consumers who are mainly influenced by one another. That is, since most of their purchase decisions are made together, the advice of other family members is frequently sought. For example, the Sino mothers prefer to be accompanied by their families
when they go shopping for groceries. At those times, the mothers are able to have a significant impact on the children's consumer behaviour. Also, when high-risk items are purchased, the Sino fathers primarily rely on the advice of the mothers, who are the main source of influence in the families. With regard to promotional messages, the Sino families are primarily affected by advertisements that promote merchandise at reduced prices.

7.6.4 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

As consumers, the Anglo families can be described as more interested in 'quality' than price, especially in relation to name brand clothes that denote status. For this reason, they tend to be name brand loyal. Also, in order to buy as many of these expensive items as possible, the Anglo families tend to make impulse purchases when name brands are reduced in price. At those times, they use credit cards or layby when they are unable to pay cash. The Sino families, on the other hand, can be described as consumers who consider price first and, therefore, are not name brand loyal. When the Sino families occasionally buy name brands, the items are usually electronic goods rather than clothes. At those times, durability and superior performance are stressed rather than status. For this reason, they are inclined to engage in comparative shopping to get the best price. Also, the Sino families rarely make impulse purchases. Instead, they prefer to use cash rather than to rely on layby or credit cards.
7.6.5 CONSUMER REACTION

As consumers, the Anglo families can be described as reacting favourably to purchases, e.g. name brands, that improve their self-concept and status. Thus, these types of purchases satisfy their psychological and social needs. The Sino families, on the other hand, can be described as consumers who react favourably to purchases that are reasonably priced and perform well. Thus, these types of purchases satisfy their financial and performance needs.
CHAPTER EIGHT

RESULTS: STAGE FIVE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the final stage of the analysis. The following research question is the basis for the analysis that is presented in this chapter.

Assuming that family gift giving leads to consumer socialisation, how does the process express itself in individualistic and collectivistic cultures?

To address this research question, an attempt has been made to demonstrate the link between the gift-giving process and consumer socialisation in the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families. In the following analysis, the consumer socialising effects of gifts on both the children and parents in the two cultures are compared and contrasted in relation to the five consumer behaviour issues: (1) consumer motivation, (2) consumer involvement, (3) consumer influences, (4) product attributes, and (5) consumer reaction.
8.2 CONSUMER MOTIVATION

This section considers the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families separately. An attempt is made to explain how gift giving affects the way in which the parents and children in each culture are motivated to achieve certain objectives as consumers.

8.2.1 ANGLO-CELTIC FAMILIES

Within the Anglo families, both the parents and the children use gifts to socialise one another to regard material objects as the means to achieve immediate self-gratification. The socialising effects of gifts on consumer motivation are reciprocal between the parents and children.

Since the mothers have more contact with the children than the fathers during gift selection, they have the greatest opportunity to give and receive socialisation messages. When the children request name brand gifts, these items are repeatedly brought to the attention of the mothers. In this way, the children socialise the mothers to view name brands as the means to enhance their sense of self and status. The mothers also convey socialisation messages to the children when they yield to their gift requests. First, the mothers acknowledge the importance of name brands as status symbols, thus confirming the socialisation messages that the children are communicating to them and reinforcing these same messages that the children are receiving from other sources, i.e. friends and advertising. Second, by continuing to indulge the children with name brand gifts, the mothers are
socialising the children to be selfish, egocentric, and hedonistic consumers. That is, since the children usually receive whatever they want from their mothers, they are brought up to expect the same treatment from others. When they do not receive everything that they want, the children are motivated to turn inward and indulge themselves with self-gifts. As new name brands are always entering the market, the children never stop asking their parents for these items as gifts. In particular, the children frequently ask their mothers for the latest name brands or attempt to buy these expensive items for themselves between gift-giving occasions. Thus, the striving for short-term goals, i.e. immediate self-gratification, which is strengthened during gift giving, motivates the children as consumers to return frequently to the stores. Also, the mothers tend to be motivated to buy name brands, e.g. 'Reeboks' and 'Country Road', for themselves after they are made aware of these items through their children's gift requests. When the mothers are unable to buy name brands for their personal use, they continue to buy them for their children. In this way, the mothers attempt to vicariously consume through their children who, thus, become status symbols for the families.

Even though the fathers are not as actively involved in gift selection as the mothers, they are still inclined to use gifts to socialise their sons who they regard as extensions of themselves. That is, the fathers elaborate their identities by trying to select gifts for their sons that foster their own areas of interest, e.g. sports. When these gifts are incorporated into their sons' sense of self, they serve as consumer socialisation instruments. Thus, a number of sons indicate that gifts from their fathers have initially motivated their current interests even though their subsequent purchases and gift requests in these areas are
motivated by the influences of friends and advertising. Once a new area of interest has been triggered, the socialisation process changes direction. That is, the sons begin to socialise their fathers to regard certain name brands as essential in relation to these activities. For example, the fathers state that even though they used less prestigious surfboards when they were young, they have elected to give expensive, name brand surfboards to their sons for improved performance and peer group status. In this way, the fathers are able to enhance their own self-concept by vicariously participating in these activities through their sons. Furthermore, when the fathers do not give gifts to encourage certain activities, e.g. sports, the sons tend not to regard these activities as important. Since most of the major purchases of the sons pertain to their particular areas of interest, the decision of the fathers to omit gifts in certain areas as well as to include gifts in other areas convey powerful socialisation messages which affect the motivation of the sons as consumers.

8.2.2 SINO-VIETNAMESE FAMILIES

Within the Sino families, the parents use gifts to socialise the children to regard money rather than material objects as the means to achieve long-term goals for themselves and the family. As the parents repeatedly emphasise socialisation messages to the children, the parents rather than the children are found to be the main socialisers in the Sino families. Since the parents regard gifts of money as especially useful to achieve long-term goals, they always give lucky money to their children on Chinese New Year and sometimes for academic achievement. The children are then expected to save most of
the money for the future rather than to spend it. Thus, the socialisation messages that are transmitted through gifts have a direct impact on the motivation of the children as consumers. The children are socialised to work together with the parents for the benefit of everyone in the family rather than to make frequent personal purchases for immediate self-gratification. They are socialised to shop for others rather than themselves. They are also encouraged to shop together as a family for groceries on a fortnightly basis. When the children occasionally make personal purchases, they are expected to buy useful items at inexpensive stores rather than to purchase name brands.

8.3 CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

This section considers the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families separately. An attempt is made to explain how gift giving affects the consumer involvement of the parents and children in each culture.

8.3.1 ANGLO-CELTIC FAMILIES

Within the Anglo families, gift giving tends to be a high-priority activity, involving high-risk purchase decisions that are associated with social and psychological risks. When gifts are selected, the mothers and daughters are more involved than the fathers and sons, indicating that the parents socialise the children of the same gender through role modelling. Before gift purchases are made, the parents attempt to avoid risks by asking their children for gift suggestions and complying with most of their requests. Thus, the children as well as
the parents are often involved in the selection of the children’s gifts. By adopting this gift-giving practice, the parents inadvertently socialise the children to consider that their wishes are the most important in the families. In turn, this approach to gift-giving establishes a pattern of behaviour between the parents and children when they are involved in consumer decisions. That is, the children’s preferences continue to take precedence even if the parents have to make financial sacrifices in relation to their own purchases. For general shopping, the mothers and daughters are usually more involved as consumers than the fathers and sons.

8.3.2 SINO-VIETNAMESE FAMILIES

Within the Sino families, gift giving tends to be a low-priority activity that mainly involves financial risks. Because Western gift-giving rituals are not important to the parents, gifts associated with these special occasions are not given on a regular basis. Instead, the parents mainly give lucky money on Chinese New Year and material objects or money for academic excellence. At other times of the year, the parents tend to purchase items for the children according to their needs. When the parents occasionally give gifts on special occasions, e.g. birthdays, the mothers are inclined to purchase gifts quickly at reduced prices while the fathers prefer to give lucky money. The sons rarely give gifts to their parents. While the daughters sometimes do give gifts to their parents, they have to deal with opposition from their fathers who prefer that money be saved rather than spent on gifts for them. Thus, the children are socialised by both parents to regard the exchange of gifts as primarily a low-priority activity that mainly
involves financial risks. As consumers, the children tend to consider
general purchases in much the same manner as they have been
socialised by their parents to consider gift purchases. That is, the
children usually save their money and limit their purchases to
necessity items that are inexpensive. But, when they occasionally
make high-risk purchases, the children's behaviour as consumers is
similar to their parents. When they buy goods that are intended to
last, e.g. electronic goods, the children try to avoid financial and
performance risks by comparative shopping to obtain value for money.
Also, when they buy clothes, the children try to avoid social and
psychological risks as well as financial risks by shopping for style
rather than for expensive items with a name brand image.

8.4 CONSUMER INFLUENCES

This section considers the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families
separately. An attempt is made to explain how gift giving affects the
way in which the parents and children in each culture respond to
consumer influences from family, friends and promotions.

8.4.1 ANGLO-CELTIC FAMILIES

Within the Anglo families, the parents are mainly influenced by the
children's gift requests while the children are mainly influenced by
peers to make the gift requests. Both the parents and children are
also susceptible to advertisements that promote prestige items as
gifts. These influences work together during gift giving to socialise
both the parents and children to regard name brands as preferable status statements that benefit both parties in the exchange. The same sources that influence the parents and children during gift giving continue to influence their consumer decisions.

8.4.2 SINO-VIETNAMESE FAMILIES

Within the Sino families, the mothers are the main source of influence when general or gift purchases are made. Since the mothers are the primary gift-givers in the families, they are in a better position than the fathers to use gifts to socialise their children. During gift selection, the mothers sometimes take the children to the stores so that they can help make their gift purchases. Because the mothers try to buy gifts at reduced prices, they are especially susceptible to promotional messages for sale merchandise. When the children make gift suggestions, the mothers do not agree to buy the gifts unless they regard the items as useful and reasonably priced. Thus, the children are receiving socialisation messages by observing the manner in which the mothers purchase gifts and then incorporating these messages into their sense of self. As a result, the children learn to be discerning consumers.
8.5 PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

This section considers the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families separately. An attempt is made to explain how gift giving affects the way in which the parents and children in each culture regard product attributes.

8.5.1 ANGLO-CELTIC FAMILIES

Within the Anglo families, the children socialise the parents during gift giving to regard name brands as quality items. While the parents try to limit name brands to special gift-giving occasions, the children as well as the mothers are socialised to aspire for name brands throughout the year. In this way, name brands serve as the standard by which all comparable products are judged and, therefore, affect the way in which quality is viewed when consumer decisions are made. That is, price is often sacrificed for ‘quality’ name brand items.

8.5.2 SINO-VIETNAMESE FAMILIES

Within the Sino families, the parents socialise the children to save their money for the future. In this way, the parents affect the manner in which the children view product attributes as consumers. That is, the children consider price first for most of their purchases. When the children buy items that require quality performance, e.g. electronic goods, they try to get value for money by engaging in comparative shopping. While the children are aware of name brand
clothes, they seldom buy these expensive items. Instead, they are more inclined to buy items that are stylish but not as expensive as name brands.

8.6 CONSUMER REACTION

This section considers the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families separately. An attempt is made to explain how gift giving affects the way in which the parents and children in each culture react to their consumer purchases.

8.6.1 ANGLO-CELTIC FAMILIES

Within the Anglo families, satisfaction is linked to the fulfilment of short-term goals, i.e. enhanced sense of self and status. Since gifts are used to socialise the children and parents to regard name brands as the means to achieve these goals, they experience dissatisfaction and a diminished sense of self and status when they are unable to purchase prestigious products. When they cannot buy name brands, they often regard the products that they can afford to purchase as inferior in quality.
8.6.2 SINO-VIETNAMESE FAMILIES

Within the Sino families, satisfaction is linked to the fulfilment of long-term goals, e.g. academic achievements and financial security. As consumers, the children are socialised during gift giving to base purchase satisfaction on value for money and long-term benefits, i.e. reliable performance. For this reason, the children do not rely on status symbols, e.g. name brands, to give them a sense of fulfilment.

8.7 CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

This section considers the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families together. It compares and contrasts the consumer socialising effects of gifts on both the children and parents in the two cultures.

Even though socialisation messages are communicated during gift giving in both the Anglo and Sino families, the manner in which they are communicated and the effects that they have on consumer behaviour are different in the two cultures. The consumer socialisation messages within the Anglo families during gift giving tend to be reciprocal between the parents and children, whereas the consumer socialisation messages in the Sino families tend to be uni-directional from the parents to the children.

When gifts are given, the Anglo families stress short-term goals for immediate self-gratification through status symbols, e.g. name brands. In this way, the children and parents are motivated as consumers to shop for material objects to satisfy their immediate desires. Within the
Sino families, on the other hand, long-term goals are stressed for delayed self-gratification in which money gifts are primarily given and intended to be saved for the future. Thus, the children and parents are motivated as consumers to spend their money carefully on items that serve useful purposes.

The Anglo families regard gift giving as a high-priority activity that involves social and psychological risks, whereas the Sino families regard gift giving as a low-priority activity that mainly involves financial risks. As consumers, the Anglo families generally tend to be more involved than the Sino families in high-risk purchase decisions, involving social and psychological risks, throughout the year. When high-risk purchase decisions are made, the Sino families are mainly concerned with financial and performance risks.

The children are the main source of influence in the Anglo families during gift giving and for shopping in general. On the other hand, the mothers in the Sino families are the main source of influence at those times.

Since the Anglo families mainly view quality in relation to name brands, price tends to be given secondary consideration. The Sino families, however, are primarily interested in making sure that they always obtain the best price for their purchases.
Finally, the Anglo families link consumer satisfaction to name brand status symbols to achieve short-term goals. The Sino families, on the other hand, link consumer satisfaction with value for money to achieve long-term goals of academic excellence for the children and financial security for the families.
CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS IN TERMS OF PROPOSED MODEL

The objective of the study was to explore the process of family gift giving and establish its link with consumer socialisation in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Four assumptions that emanated from the theoretical concepts in the existing literature were made. The assumptions were used to generate a series of research questions. Since previous research has not considered most of the variables and concepts together or compared them across cultures, the study was essentially inductive and exploratory.

The first research question explored the assumption that the process of family gift giving, i.e. motivation, selection, communication and reaction, is shaped by individual family role. The results substantiated this assumption, indicating that the role of the individual as mother, father, daughter and son does make a difference in the manner in which gifts are exchanged.

The Anglo mothers can be characterised as compliant gift-givers. In an attempt to gain their children's love, the mothers tend to yield to their gift requests for prestigious name brand items. In this way, the mothers are supporting their children's need for immediate self-
gratification. They are also trying to enhance their children's and their own sense of self and status. By adopting this pattern of gift-giving behaviour, the mothers are communicating to the children that self-fulfilment can be found in material objects. The mothers are also telling the children that when they ask for something, they can expect to receive it.

The Sino mothers, on the other hand, can be characterised as instructive gift-givers. The mothers mainly want to give useful gifts to their children, especially if they are beneficial to their education or future security. In this way, the mothers use gifts to communicate the necessity to delay self-gratification for long-term goals. While the children sometimes make gift suggestions, the mothers do not necessarily comply with their requests unless they believe that the gifts serve useful purposes. Since the Sino mothers tend to maintain control during gift selection, they are inclined to be the main source of influence in the families.

The Anglo fathers can be characterised as directive gift-givers. In an attempt to achieve short-term goals, they tend to select gifts that are intended to direct their sons into areas that the fathers regard as worthwhile. Through gift selection, the fathers try to communicate to their sons that they consider specific areas of interest especially important to pursue. Also, the fathers sometimes try to direct their sons and daughters away from certain activities by refraining from giving gifts to them that are related to these activities, e.g. sports. Even though the fathers use gifts for these purposes, they are not involved on a regular basis in the selection of their children's gifts.
Instead, the fathers tend to relinquish responsibility to the mothers and frequently succumb to the pressures of the family members when gift decisions are made.

The Sino fathers, on the other hand, can be characterised as practical gift-givers. The fathers are seldom involved in selecting material objects as gifts for their children. Instead, they prefer to give lucky money on Chinese New Year and as rewards or incentives for academic achievement. In this way, they are trying to communicate the need for their children to pursue long-term goals by saving their money for the future and being diligent students.

The Anglo daughters can be characterised as energetic gift-givers. That is, the daughters put a lot of time and effort into the selection of gifts for their parents. Instead of asking for gift suggestions, the daughters prefer to surprise their parents with gifts that they regard as suitable. In this way, the daughters are trying to communicate their individuality as well as their sensitivity to the needs of their mothers and fathers.

The Sino daughters, on the other hand, can be characterised as reticent gift-givers. Since Western gift-giving rituals are not important in Sino-Vietnamese families, the daughters do not necessarily give gifts on Western holidays. Also, because the fathers tend to discourage the daughters from giving gifts to them, the daughters are not inclined to give their fathers tangible gifts. Instead, the daughters prefer to give their parents intangible gifts, e.g. obtaining good school reports or taking on additional tasks beyond the usual household duties.
The Anglo sons can be characterised as conscientious gift-givers. The sons tend to feel obliged to give gifts to their parents on special occasions. They sometimes try to select appropriate gifts as surprises to express their individuality and thoughtfulness. However, since the sons rarely want to take the time and effort to select their own gifts, they frequently ask the daughters to make the gift selections for them.

The Sino sons, on the other hand, can be characterised as indifferent gift-givers. Since the parents do not encourage gift giving in the families, the sons do not generally give gifts to their parents. When gifts are given, the sons usually give small, inexpensive items or pay for celebration dinners that include the entire family. In this way, the sons are attempting to convey respect to their parents. Also, joint gifts from the siblings are occasionally given to each parent. When joint gifts are given, the sons often rely on the daughters to make the gift selections.

The second research question explored the assumption that the process of family gift giving, i.e. motivation, selection, communication and reaction, is shaped by family interaction style. The results substantiated this assumption, indicating that families do have distinct styles or mini-cultures that impact on their members' behaviour during gift giving.

The distribution of styles for the two cultures was found to be different. In both cultures, the majority of the families expressed a consensual interaction style. This style is characterised by the parents giving the children the opportunity to make gift suggestions even though the children are required to defer to the parents if these gifts are considered
to be unsuitable. Sometimes compromises are reached through negotiation or other gifts are selected that the parents regard as preferable.

The third research question explored the assumption that the process of family gift giving is shaped by culture. The findings substantiated this assumption, indicating that the two cultures differ on all the gift-giving elements, i.e. motivation, selection, communication, and reaction. Thus, the typical gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo-Celtic families is characterised by an emphasis on short-term goals, prestigious name brand items which are regarded as quality, and intense influence by the children on their parents' gift-giving decision making. On the other hand, the typical gift-giving behaviour of the Sino-Vietnamese families is characterised by an emphasis on long-term goals, practical gifts that are usually obtained at reduced prices, and intense influence by the mothers on the family gift-giving decision-making process.

The fourth and fifth research questions both explored the assumption that the family gift-giving process in individualistic and collectivistic cultures leads to consumer socialisation of both parents and children. As noted previously, the process of consumer socialisation cannot be investigated at a given point in time. For this reason, the fourth research question explored consumer behaviour issues, as expressions of consumer socialisation, since they can be examined at a given point in time. The fifth research question then explored the consumer behaviour issues in relation to the elements in the family gift-giving process. In this way, conclusions were drawn from the data that
Chapter Nine

partially substantiated the assumption that gift-giving has a socialising effect on the manner in which individuals behave as consumers. In particular, the Anglo parents and children socialise one another through gifts to regard consumer goods as important to their sense of self and status in the short term. On the other hand, the Sino parents socialise their children through gifts of lucky money to regard money as important to save to achieve benefits in the long term. Thus, the Sino children are encouraged by their parents to be frugal consumers and delay self-gratification.

It should be noted, however, that the model’s assumption was not entirely substantiated for both cultures. In the Anglo-Celtic families, the children and parents were found to be involved in the process of socialising one another as consumers through gift giving. But, in the Sino-Vietnamese families, the parents were found to be much more instrumental in socialising their children as consumers than the children were with regard to their parents. The consumer socialisation process in the collectivistic culture was, therefore, found to be unidirectional instead of two-directional during gift giving as the model assumed.

9.2 EXTENSION OF THE PROPOSED MODEL

As indicated before, the purpose of this study was to develop rather than test a model. For this reason, the study was limited in size and scope, keeping all major variables constant for the two cultures. Despite this attempt, the results indicated that there were variations within the variables. The results also indicated that there were
relationships between the variables that were not originally assumed. The variations and relationships of the major variables incorporated in the extended model are now presented.

EXTENSION OF THE PROPOSED MODEL OF THE FAMILY GIFT-GIVING PROCESS AND CONSUMER SOCIALISATION

In the following discussion, the links in the extended model are discussed according to the corresponding numbered arrows. As the data suggested, the manner in which family members behave in the gift-giving roles of mother, father, daughter and son relates to the
interaction style of the family (arrow 1). Thus, when the mother and father both play the dominant roles in the family during gift selection, the findings showed that the family interaction style is protective (individual family role affecting family interaction style). The link between individual family role and family interaction style goes in both directions because the data also suggested that family interaction style relates to the manner in which individual family members behave in their respective roles (arrow 2). Thus, when the family interaction style is protective, the findings showed that the roles of daughter and son as gift-givers are diminished in the family (family interaction style affecting individual family role). The findings from this study showed that culture makes a difference in relation to individual family role (arrow 3) and family interaction style (arrow 4). With regard to individual family role (arrow 3), the data indicated that Sino-Vietnamese mothers play a more influential role in the family during gift selection than Anglo-Celtic mothers. Thus, Sino-Vietnamese mothers frequently use their power of veto during gift selection, whereas Anglo-Celtic mothers frequently yield to their children's gift requests (culture affecting individual family role). With regard to family interaction style (arrow 4), the data indicated the distribution of styles for each culture is different. The Anglo-Celtic families are distributed between consensual, protective and laissez-faire styles that are mostly high on the socio-oriented dimension, whereas the Sino-Vietnamese families are distributed between consensual and pluralistic styles that are high on the concept-oriented dimension. This cultural distinction reflects the much greater emphasis among the traditional Sino-Vietnamese culture on the transmission of values through discussion and debate than is the case among the Anglo-Celtic Australian culture (culture affecting family interaction style).
The data has also highlighted the importance of the following variables and their effects on the original variables in the model.

**Socioeconomic Status (SES).** The present study attempted to control for SES by keeping the sample within the middle-class. Despite this attempt, there were variations within the chosen SES. That is, some of the families were upper middle-class while others were lower middle-class. The findings indicated that, especially for the Sino-Vietnamese, these differences in SES had a major impact on the manner in which the family members interacted as individuals (arrow 5) and on the overall family style (arrow 6). It is, therefore, proposed that the original gift-giving model, which was the basis for this study, should be extended to differentiate between the various levels of SES within the middle-class.

**Age of Children.** The present study attempted to control for the age of the children by selecting respondents who were in the adolescent stage of their life-cycle, i.e. between 12 to 21 years of age. Despite this attempt, variations were found in the children's gift-giving behaviour according to three distinct age groups, i.e. 12 to 14 years, 15 to 18 years, and 19 to 21 years. It is, therefore, proposed that the original gift-giving model, which was the basis for this study, should be extended to include age of children as a variable which affects individual family role (arrow 7).

**Gender of Children.** The present study indicated that there were variations in the behaviour of male and female children during family gift giving. It is, therefore, proposed that the original gift-giving model.
which was the basis for this study, should be extended to include the gender of the children as an additional variable affecting gift giving family role (arrow 8).

**Birth Order of Children.** The present study indicated that the birth order of the children affected their gift-giving behaviour. That is, the first child, especially a female child, was inclined to take a more dominant gift-giving role than the other children in the family. It is, therefore, proposed that the original gift-giving model, which was the basis for this study, should be extended to include the birth order of the children as an additional variable affecting gift-giving family role (arrow 9).

**Education of Parents.** The present study attempted to control for the education of the parents by ensuring that the mothers and fathers had both attended school until Year 10. Despite this attempt, there were variations with regard to education. That is, some of the parents had tertiary education while others had the minimum level of education. These differences in level of education were found to have a significant effect on the parents' gift-giving behaviour. In particular, the findings indicated that the Sino-Vietnamese families in which the parents had tertiary education were more likely to be pluralistic than consensual. It is, therefore, proposed that the original gift-giving model, which was the basis for this study, should be extended to include the education of the parents as an additional variable affecting both gift-giving family role (arrow 10) and gift-giving family style (arrow 11).
9.3 INTEGRATION OF RESULTS WITH PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The study's new model undoubtedly shares a number of assumptions with previous researchers. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, the proposed model has not been preceded by any other attempt to theoretically conceptualise the process of family gift giving or to establish its link with consumer socialisation in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Also, as far as the author is aware, the present study is the first to focus on the adolescent stage of the life cycle when investigating gift-giving behaviour in a family context. Most importantly, to the best of the author's knowledge, the present study has not been preceded by other empirical studies which explored the variables and concepts together. Consequently, even though other research findings can strengthen some of the model's assumptions, they cannot lend support to the findings. The findings are supported only by the data from the study itself. Yet, when the results of the present study are integrated with the existing literature, the findings not only support most of the studies in the field but also go beyond the existing research to offer a number of new insights.

First is the idea that gifts derive their meaning from the social context in which they are exchanged. This idea is rooted in much of the early literature on gift giving. Tribal cultures were the first context in which gift-giving practices were studied (Malinowski 1922, 1926; Mauss 1925; and Levi-Strauss 1949). Later, Belk (1979) emphasised the context of gift exchange by pointing out that gift giving varies according to the
types of: givers, gifts, recipients and situational conditions. Recent attention to cross-cultural research on gift giving can be seen as a further step in the continuing study of the concept in its social context. Thus, while many of the leading studies have explored gift-giving behaviour in Western societies (Schwartz 1967; Luschen 1972; Belk 1976, 1979, 1987; Caplow 1982, 1984; Sherry 1983, Cheal 1988), recent research has broadened the perspective to consider non-Western cultures (Johnson 1974, Befu 1980, Schieffelin 1980, Belk 1984, Hwang 1987, Green and Alden 1988, Yang 1989). The present cross-cultural analysis supports these previous studies, indicating that the manner in which gifts are exchanged does differ according to social context. Thus, the study found that when gifts were given in a family context, the Sino-Vietnamese culture emphasised group-based needs, i.e. family needs, while the Anglo-Celtic culture emphasised individual-based needs, i.e. personal needs.

Second is the altruism/agonism controversy. This issue is one of the most contentious themes in the literature on gift-giving behaviour. It was first described by Sherry (1983), who assumed that there are multiple motives for gift exchange that lie between altruism and agonism on a motivation continuum. An altruistic gift-giver attempts to maximise the pleasure of the recipient while an agonistic gift-giver attempts to maximise his/her own pleasure. Recently, Goodwin, Smith and Spiggle (1990) noted the distinction between voluntary and obligatory gifts in relation to consumer motivation. They found that when low self-interest exists, regardless of whether the gift is voluntary or obligatory, the motives tend to be altruistic. In contrast, when high self-interest exists, regardless of whether the gift is voluntary or obligatory, the motives tend to be agonistic. More recently, Belk and
Coon (1993) pointed out that gift-giving research should go beyond the present paradigms which assume that we give gifts only to get something in return. Instead, they recommended that other, less agonistic and more altruistic, paradigms should be considered to explain gift-giving behaviour. The findings from the present study lend support to this assertion, indicating that the agonistic assumption is indeed too simplistic to account for the complexity of processes that are involved in family gift giving. Thus, while the gift-giving motivation of the Anglo mothers may stem from a desire to make sure that their children will love them (the agonistic principle), they are also trying to help their children achieve successful social integration with their peers (the altruistic principle). Similarly, while the Sino-Vietnamese parents may be motivated to give gifts that will help secure their own financial future through their children (the agonistic principle), these same gifts are being given to make sure that the children's own future is secured (the altruistic principle).

Third is the issue of family roles and their affect on gift-giving behaviour. A number of researchers have established that women adopt the main gift-giving role in the family (Caplow 1982 and Cheal 1988). The present study supports these findings, indicating that the women in both the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families, i.e. mothers and daughters, carry out their nurturing role by taking a more dominant gift-giving role than the men, i.e. fathers and sons.

Fourth is the concept of family styles. This concept was first described by McLeod and Chaffee (1972), who differentiated between four distinct communication patterns that take place between parents and children within the family context. Two dimensions, i.e. socio- and concept-
oriented, have been combined to form a two-by-two model in which four family types are represented, i.e. laissez-faire, protective, pluralistic and consensual. Recently, Moschis (1987) based a series of propositions on the McLeod and Chaffee (1972) model in which he suggested differences in gift-giving and consumer behaviour in relation to socio-oriented and concept-oriented families. With regard to gift giving, Moschis (1987) suggested that since the giving of gifts is an obligation within the nuclear family, it will be more important in socio-oriented families where interpersonal relationships are highly valued than in concept-oriented families. With regard to consumer behaviour, Moschis (1987) suggested that socio-oriented families will tend to encourage the development of consumer needs and behaviours on the basis of their perceived effects on others, whereas concept-oriented families will tend to foster objective consumer behaviour. The present study supports the McLeod and Chaffee (1972) model, indicating that four family interaction styles are indeed reflected in four distinct gift-giving family styles. The study also supports the propositions of Moschis (1987). With regard to gift-giving, the socio-oriented families, i.e. Anglo-Celts, were generally found to give gifts to one another more frequently than the concept-oriented families, i.e. Sino-Vietnamese. With regard to consumer behaviour, the socio-oriented families, i.e. Anglo-Celts, were generally found to be materialistic consumers, favouring name brands because of their social significance. On the other hand, the concept-oriented families, i.e. Sino-Vietnamese, were generally found to take an objective stance as consumers, regarding price as their first consideration.
Fifth is the issue of the importance of the individualism/collectivism continuum as a dimension that determines gift-giving variations across cultures. This dimension has been indicated by many researchers (Johnson 1974, Befu 1980, Schieffelin 1980, Belk 1984, Hwang 1987, Green and Alden 1988, and Yang 1989). The present study lent further support to the previous research in that area, indicating that the distribution of family interaction styles for each culture is indeed different. The Anglo-Celtic families are distributed between consensual, protective and laissez-faire styles that are mostly high on the socio-oriented dimension. The Sino-Vietnamese families, on the other hand, are distributed between consensual and pluralistic styles that are high on the concept-oriented dimension. Also, the findings demonstrated that culture makes a difference even within the same family interaction style. Thus, when comparing the consensual families, which constitute the majority in both cultures, many differences were still found in the way in which family interaction style expresses itself in each culture.

Finally, there is the link between gift-giving behaviour and consumer socialisation. This link was initially proposed by Schwartz (1967) and Belk (1979). In particular, Schwartz and Belk assumed that parents tend to use gifts to socialise their children to be materialistic consumers. While the present study supported this assumption with regard to the Anglo-Celtic families, it did not support this assumption with regard to the Sino-Vietnamese families. Thus, the findings from this study show that even though the gift-giving behaviour of the Anglo parents fostered materialism in the children, the Sino parents were using gifts to socialise their children not to be materialistic consumers. Furthermore, Moschis (1987) and Ekstrom, Tansuhaj and Foxman (1987) recently assumed that consumer socialisation messages are
transmitted in both directions by parents and children. While the present study supports this assumption with regard to the Anglo-Celtic families, it does not support this assumption with regard to the Sino-Vietnamese families. Thus, the findings show that even though the parents and children in the Anglo-Celtic families use gifts to socialise one another as consumers, the parents rather than the children in the Sino-Vietnamese families use gifts to communicate socialisation messages.

9.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were certain limitations imposed on the study because of its major goals. As noted before, the empirical study was intended to substantiate a theoretical model in which most of the concepts and variables had not been previously described or studied together. It was, therefore, necessary to adopt an exploratory, inductive approach where hypotheses are developed rather than tested. For this reason, unavoidable restrictions were placed on the study with regard to the research method, the research instrument, and the sample.

**Method.** Because of the time constraints placed on the study, a cross-sectional method was used instead of a longitudinal method. That is, the families in the sample were studied once rather than continuously over a number of years. Since consumer socialisation is an ongoing process, a longitudinal method may have provided a better understanding than a cross-sectional method of the manner in which gifts are used over a period of time to socialise family members as consumers. On the other hand, the respondents may have become
sensitised to the research instrument if the longitudinal method had been used. To overcome any limitations to the study, the researcher explored the past, present and expected actions of the respondents as consumers and gift-givers. As previously mentioned, data was collected with regard to the elements in the family gift-giving process and the consumer behaviour issues. In turn, conclusions were drawn from the data about the way in which gifts were being used to socialise family members as consumers in the two cultures. Thus, the intention of the study was to serve as a building block towards the development of an overall model of the family gift-giving process and consumer socialisation in individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

**Instrument.** The instrument used for data collection in this study was the semi-structured in-depth interview. While the instrument was the most appropriate to use for exploring the model's assumptions, it imposed limitations on the sample size. The sample size, in turn, made tests of statistical significance unsuitable and precluded the establishment of statistical relationships between the concepts.

**Sample.** As indicated above, the choice of instrument limited the size of the sample, which, in turn, meant that the families in the sample had to be kept as similar to one another as possible. Only eight families from the Australian Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese subcultures were represented. The families were all traditional nuclear and of middle-class SES (socioeconomic status).
9.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As the previous sections indicated, the present study was limited in its size and scope. While the findings supported the major assumptions of the model, additional research could develop the concepts further. This section suggests the most important directions for further research emanating from this study.

**Family Type.** This study focused on the traditional nuclear family, consisting of both parents living together with their children. Further research should go beyond the traditional nuclear family to consider other types of families that have emerged in recent years. For example, the present design could be used on: (1) extended families that include parents and children and at least one of the grandparents; (2) one-parent families that include mothers or fathers with children, and (3) blended families that include parents with children from previous marriages.

**SES.** The present study concentrated on the middle-class SES because it represents the major segment of the chosen population. Further studies that involve Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese families could focus on the lower-class SES or the upper-class SES.

**Culture.** Cultures other than the two extremes of individualism and collectivism that were considered in this study could be explored. Since Israel and Japan scored in the middle of the individualism-collectivism continuum on Hofstede's (1980) Country Individualism Index (IDV), these cultures might be interesting choices for further investigation. Also, because the United States is the most individualistic country on
Hofstede's IDV other than Australia, the present design could be used in the United States to compare North American families from the dominant culture with families from the Sino-Vietnamese sub-culture.

**Education of Parents.** The present study required all parents to have attended school until at least Year 10. Future research could focus on parents with levels of education other than high school, including the two extremes of primary and tertiary education.

**Employment of Parents.** The present study concentrated on traditional nuclear families where the fathers were the main breadwinners and the mothers were mainly homemakers with or without part-time employment. Future research might consider selecting families in which the mothers and fathers have careers and both parents are significant sources of income in the families.

**Length of Residency.** The present study required that the Sino-Vietnamese respondents had lived in Australia for at least ten years since it was assumed that they would have gone through the acculturation process. In fact, all the Sino-Vietnamese families in the sample had lived in Australia for at least eleven years and no longer than sixteen years. Future research could consider focusing on families who have lived in Australia for less than ten years in order to compare the findings with this study.
9.6 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

As previously mentioned, the primary objective of the study was to develop a model that describes the process of family gift giving and establishes its link with consumer socialisation. Thus, an attempt was made to provide a theoretical basis for further research in the field. Yet, the results of the study also have important implications for marketing practitioners.

Even though the study focused on both the Anglo-Celtic and Sino-Vietnamese, the major contribution of the study to marketers is in its ability to highlight the differences between the two cultures for market segmentation purposes. In particular, the findings provide a window to the mind of the Sino-Vietnamese as gift-givers and consumers. Also, the findings give marketers insight into how gifts are used in the two cultures to socialise family members as consumers. The following proactive rather than reactive marketing strategies are suggested when selecting these segments as target markets.

**Advertising Message.** Marketers often use aspirational advertising in which a brand's prestigious image is conveyed. The study, however, found that while this type of message may be appropriate to use when targeting Anglo-Celtics, it is not appropriate to use when targeting Sino-Vietnamese. Thus, since Anglo-Celtics primarily want to gain immediate self-gratification by purchasing name brands to enhance their sense of self and status, aspirational advertising is appealing. On the other hand, Sino-Vietnamese are inclined to delay self-gratification by engaging in comparative shopping to get value for money instead of arbitrarily wanting to purchase name brands. Thus, the study suggests
that when marketers decide to target Sino-Vietnamese, promotional messages that convey financial benefits and reliability should be used. Furthermore, because Sino-Vietnamese mothers are usually not fluent in English, these messages should be communicated in Chinese as well as English in order to be effective.

**Media.** Marketers often select television advertising that is linked with point-of-sale material to communicate promotional messages. The study, however, found that while these types of media may be appropriate to use together when targeting Anglo-Celtics, they are not appropriate to use together when targeting Sino-Vietnamese. That is, Sino-Vietnamese usually work long hours and, thus, tend to watch less television than Anglo-Celtics. Instead, the study suggests that when marketers decide to target Sino-Vietnamese, direct-mail promotions linked with point-of-sale material should be used.

**Product Development.** Marketers often develop new products for their potential status appeal or 'me-too' products that are copies of existing name brands. The study, however, found that while these types of products are appropriate when targeting Anglo-Celtics, they are not appropriate when targeting Sino-Vietnamese. Instead, the study suggests that when marketers decide to target Sino-Vietnamese, budget lines of utilitarian products that offer reliable performance should be developed.

**Pricing.** Marketers often increase the price of products to convey 'quality' to consumers. The study, however, found that while expensive items connote quality to Anglo-Celtics, the amount that items cost does not connote quality to Sino-Vietnamese. Instead, the study
suggests that when marketers decide to target Sino-Vietnamese, competitive pricing strategies that offer value for money should be adopted.

**Distribution.** Marketers often distribute their products in prestigious stores. The study, however, found that while these stores are frequently patronised by Anglo-Celts, they are seldom, if ever, patronised by Sino-Vietnamese. Instead, the study suggests that when marketers decide to target Sino-Vietnamese, products should be distributed in less expensive stores that emphasise value for money rather than prestige.
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