

Presentation Matters: The Effect of Wrapping Neatness on Gift Attitudes

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The authors gratefully acknowledge Michelle van Solt for her assistance with data collection. We appreciate the insightful comments provided from the three anonymous reviewers, Maureen (Mimi) Morrin (Associate Editor), and Priya Raghubir (Editor). This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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Abstract

While gift-givers typically wrap gifts prior to presenting them, little is known about the effect of how the gift is wrapped on recipients' expectations and attitudes toward the gift inside. We propose that when recipients open a gift from a friend, they like it less when the giver has wrapped it neatly as opposed to sloppily and we draw on expectation disconfirmation theory to explain the effect. Specifically, recipients set higher (lower) expectations for neatly (sloppily)-wrapped gifts, making it harder (easier) for the gifts to meet these expectations, resulting in contrast effects that lead to less (more) positive attitudes toward the gifts once unwrapped. However, when the gift-giver is an acquaintance, there is ambiguity in the relationship status and wrapping neatness serves as a cue about the relationship rather than the gift itself. This leads to assimilation effects where the recipient likes the gift more when neatly wrapped. We assess these effects across three studies and find that they hold for desirable, neutral, and undesirable gifts, as well as with both hypothetical and real gifts.

Keywords: gifts, gift-giving, gift-wrap neatness, wrapping paper, expectation disconfirmation

“If you can’t wrap presents well, at least make it look like they put up a good fight.”– Unknown

While the art of gift-wrapping has been around for centuries, Hallmark is credited with creating the modern wrapping paper industry (Spencer, 2017). In the early 1900s, gifts were typically wrapped in tissue paper or brown paper, but in 1917, the Hall Brothers’ store in Kansas City ran out. Rather than turn away customers, they offered decorative paper intended for envelope lining as a replacement, and that was the beginning of wrapping paper, and Hallmark, as we know it. Today, Americans alone spend more than \$3.2 billion each year on wrapping (Husted, 2015), yet we know little about the effect of how gifts are wrapped on expectations or attitudes toward the gifts inside.

Many people intend to wrap their own gifts (3M, 2009) and may set out with the best intentions, but the outcome is not always as planned. A primary complaint about wrapping gifts is that the appearance is often not as attractive as the gift-wraper envisioned (Niggulis, 2016). Given our national expenditure on gift-wrapping, it is reasonable to surmise that recipients have come to expect neatly-wrapped gifts and will be disappointed with gifts that are not wrapped according to these high standards. We suggest, however, that while it may feel good to present a neatly-wrapped gift, recipients may actually like the gift inside more if it is wrapped sloppily.

Specifically, we posit that recipients will use the gift-wrapping neatness employed by the gift-giver as a cue about the gift inside and set higher expectations for gifts wrapped neatly rather than sloppily. When gifts are subsequently unwrapped, these prior expectations influence recipients’ evaluations of the actual gifts. When expectations are not met, disconfirmation occurs causing a contrast effect, with recipients liking gifts less (more) when a neatly (sloppily)-wrapped gift led to high (low) initial expectations. However, when recipients use the gift-wrapping neatness cue to make inferences about factors other than the gift, assimilation effects

may occur. We suggest that the closeness of the gift-giver/recipient relationship affects the use of the gift-wrapping neatness cue. For friends, the cue is used to make inferences about the gift and contrast effects hold. For acquaintances, there is ambiguity surrounding the relationship so the cue is instead used to make inferences about the relationship status. Thus, assimilation can occur with positive (negative) relationship inferences spilling over to the gift inside, leading recipients to like gifts more (less) when neatly (sloppily)-wrapped.

We contribute to the gift-giving literature by highlighting that even when the same wrapping paper and embellishments are used, how gift-givers wrap gifts (i.e., wrapping neatness) plays a role in setting recipient expectations and ultimately influences attitudes toward the gift inside.

Theoretical Background

Gifts and Gift-Giving

When choosing gifts, gift-givers make choices they believe will please the recipient; however, recipients are not always as satisfied as the giver anticipated (Paolacci, Straeter, & de Hooge, 2015). Gift-givers, for instance, incorrectly believe that the more money spent on a gift, the more it will be appreciated (Flynn & Adams, 2009). They also inaccurately believe it is better to give gifts that address recipients' interests instead of sentimental value (Givi & Galak, 2017). Gift-givers' inaccuracy may not stop at gift selection but may also extend to gift-presentation decisions.

The gift-giving literature continues to grow, yet the role of wrapping paper remains largely underexplored. Howard (1992) is the notable exception. He sets the foundation for the importance of wrapping paper by addressing the question of whether wrapped (vs. unwrapped) gifts lead recipients to have more favorable attitudes toward gift ownership. Howard finds that

recipients view wrapped gifts positively because wrapping paper elevates moods by activating memories of happy occasions. Building on this, our research highlights the importance of wrapping paper by showing that *how* the wrapping paper is used influences recipients' attitudes toward the gift inside.

Gift-giving involves a ritual presentation (Belk, 2005) that signals the gift-giver's feelings toward the recipient through both the gift itself and how it is presented (Camerer 1988). Gift recipients use available cues to evaluate gifts. For example, Raghubir (2004) found that consumers use information about a promotional gift's source when assessing its value and infer greater value for gifts from expensive rather than inexpensive brands. The use of such gift-related cues suggests that a gift's presentation can also serve as an important source of information.

It is unlikely that gift-givers would put in the effort and potentially the extra expense of gift-wrapping services if they did not believe doing so was important. This suggests that gift-givers expect assimilation effects to occur with neatly-wrapped gifts and wrap them neatly in an attempt to make the recipient like the gifts more. However, not all gift-givers wrap perfectly. Regardless of whether sloppy wrapping arises from a lack of time, ability, or other factors, it is important to understand how this visual cue affects recipients' attitudes.

Expectation Disconfirmation

People use available information to form expectations that will serve as reference points when evaluating products or experiences (Tse & Wilton, 1988). As Alba and Williams (2013, p. 6) note, "expectations [...] determine the extent to which consumers eventually enjoy their outcomes." When there is a discrepancy between expectations and product perceptions, expectation disconfirmation occurs and contrast effects emerge such that negative (positive)

contextual cues lead to positive (negative) evaluations (Schwarz & Bless, 2007). People experience satisfaction when expectations are exceeded (positive disconfirmation) and dissatisfaction when evaluations fall short of expectations (negative disconfirmation). In the context of gifts, Ruth, Otnes, & Brunel (1999) report that in order to avoid disappointment, recipients may lower gift-related expectations when receiving from someone known to give subpar gifts.

Influence of Visual Cues on Product Expectations, Value, and Usage

Visual cues from containers and packaging influence consumers' perceptions and interactions with the objects inside. Patrick, Atefi, and Hagtvedt (2017) find that unveiling products from opaque boxes compared to transparent boxes increases perceived product value while Deng and Srinivasan (2013) show that a package's visual cues influence consumption amounts. Such visual cues also play an important role in setting consumer expectations (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008). Alba and Williams (2013) find that consumers derive pleasure from a product's aesthetic features. When aesthetic qualities exceed expectations, consumers experience more excitement and become more loyal (Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2007). Consumers often rely on a package's aesthetic elements, such as font choice (Henderson, Giese, & Cote, 2004), shape (Raghubir & Greenleaf, 2006), and product image location (Deng & Kahn, 2009), to form expectations about the interior product. Just as consumers use packaging cues to form expectations about the product inside, we suggest that gift-recipients use gift-wrapping neatness as a visual cue to form expectations about the gift inside.

Study 1

Study 1 aims to provide evidence that how gifts are wrapped—neatly versus sloppily— influences recipients' gift-related attitudes. We use real, high-quality gifts that recipients find

either desirable or undesirable. Some gift-givers may choose to wrap gifts neatly, with the hope that it leads recipients to like the gifts more. We anticipate, however, that once unwrapped, recipients will like gifts that had been neatly-wrapped even less than their sloppily-wrapped counterparts, making this an ineffective gift-giving strategy.

Method

We recruited 180 university students who participated for extra credit (60.6% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 25.71$, $SD = 6.40$). The study used a 2 (wrapping neatness: neat vs. sloppy) \times 2 (gift desirability: desirable vs. undesirable) between-subjects design. Participants entered the lab one-by-one and an assistant handed them a gift to keep that was pretested to be either neatly- or sloppily-wrapped (see Figure 1).

Participants unwrapped the randomly-assigned gift—either an official Miami Heat or Orlando Magic mug. Several months earlier, participants completed informational surveys, including questions about whether they were fans of various sports teams. We only invited participants who identified as Miami Heat but *not* Orlando Magic fans; thus, the Miami Heat mug served as the desirable gift and the Orlando Magic mug served as the undesirable gift. A pretest confirmed that both mugs were of equally high quality, but the Miami Heat mug was significantly more desirable. Once unwrapped, participants indicated their attitudes toward the gift on five 9-point scale items (1 = dislike it very much/extremely unfavorable/undesirable/displeased/terrible to 9 = like it very much/extremely favorable/desirable/pleased/delighted). Items were averaged together to form a gift-attitude scale ($\alpha = .98$). Finally, participants rated the wrapping and answered demographic questions. See Methodological Details Appendix (MDA) for additional details.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

Results and Discussion

A pretest confirmed that the neatly-wrapped gift ($M = 8.18$, $SD = 1.32$) was seen as neater than the sloppily-wrapped gift ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.83$; $t(77) = 11.83$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.70$). Subsequent studies had similar pretest and manipulation check results.

A two-way ANOVA with wrapping neatness and gift desirability as the independent variables and gift-related attitudes as the dependent variable revealed significant main effects of wrapping neatness ($F(1, 176) = 8.24$, $p = .005$, $\eta^2 = .05$) and desirability ($F(1, 176) = 122.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .41$). As anticipated, there was no significant interaction ($p = .968$), indicating that wrapping neatness significantly affected attitudes regardless of gift desirability. Planned contrasts showed participants had more favorable attitudes toward sloppily- than neatly-wrapped gifts, regardless of whether gifts were undesirable ($M_{sloppy} = 4.92$, $SD = 1.74$ vs. $M_{neat} = 4.18$, $SD = 1.98$; $t(176) = -2.00$, $p = .047$; $d = .40$) or desirable ($M_{sloppy} = 7.82$, $SD = 1.30$ vs. $M_{neat} = 7.06$, $SD = 1.93$; $t(176) = -2.06$, $p = .041$; $d = .46$).

Finally, to test for potential mediators, we used Hayes' (2013) PROCESS Macro (model 4) to conduct a parallel mediation using three alternative variables (see Table 1 and MDA). Results suggest that while participants' own perceived wrapping ability did not influence actual gift-related attitudes, both stated expectation disconfirmation and pleasant surprise mediate the relationship between wrapping neatness and gift attitudes. This suggests both expectation disconfirmation and affect influence gift-related attitudes.

These results provide evidence that neat wrapping has a negative effect while sloppy wrapping has a positive effect on gift-related attitudes, regardless of gift desirability. Thus, wrapping gifts sloppily versus neatly can be a more effective gift-giving strategy.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

Study 2

Study 2 explores whether participants' expectations before unwrapping the gift match their attitudes after unwrapping the gift and the role of expectation disconfirmation as the process underlying the effect of wrapping neatness. We anticipate that recipients of sloppily (neatly)-wrapped gifts will experience positive (negative) expectation disconfirmation, leading to more (less) favorable gift-related attitudes. We include a control condition where participants imagine receiving an unwrapped gift to examine whether the act of unwrapping gifts still leads to more favorable attitudes (see Howard, 1992). To increase generalizability, we use a neutrally-desirable gift to examine whether wrapping gifts sloppily versus neatly remains an effective gift-giving strategy.

Method

Participants were 155 university students who participated for extra credit (42.6% female, $M_{age} = 19.98$, $SD = 2.25$). Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (wrapping: neat vs. sloppy vs. none). First, participants saw an image of a neatly- or sloppily-wrapped gift confirmed to be realistic in a pretest. Then, participants indicated their gift expectations before and actual gift attitudes after imagining opening the gift. Participants also inferred who wrapped the gift. The gift-wrapping neatness and attitude measures were the same as in study 1. Participants also completed a stated measure of expectation disconfirmation by indicating how well the gift matched their expectations (1 = far worse; 5 = matched; 9 = far exceeded). For the "no wrapping" condition, participants imagined receiving an unwrapped gift. Gift expectations and who wrapped it were not asked, as participants did not have any wrapping to use as a reference for forming expectations. In all conditions, the gift was JVC earbuds.

Participants indicated brand familiarity and previous ownership. Neither measure had significant differences between conditions in studies 2 or 3. See MDA for details.

Results and Discussion

In alignment with Diehl and Poynor (2010), we examined expectation disconfirmation using two measures (1) the change from gift expectations to actual gift attitudes and (2) participants' stated measure of expectation disconfirmation. Expectations in the neatly-wrapped condition ($M_{neat} = 7.69$, $SD = 1.04$) were significantly higher than in the sloppily-wrapped condition ($M_{sloppy} = 6.12$, $SD = 1.71$; $t(103) = 5.71$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.11$); however, actual attitudes were significantly lower in the neatly-wrapped condition ($M_{neat} = 5.80$, $SD = 1.82$) than in the sloppily-wrapped condition ($M_{sloppy} = 6.86$, $SD = 1.58$; $t(103) = -3.18$, $p = .002$, $d = .62$). See Figure 2.

[INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]

To evaluate whether wrapping neatness leads to a contrast effect, a 2×2 mixed ANCOVA was conducted with wrapping (1 = neat, 0 = sloppy) manipulated between subjects as the independent variable. The repeated measure of expectations and actual gift-related attitudes served as the repeated-measure dependent variable. Participants' gift-wraper inferences (1 = friend, 0 = someone else) was a covariate.

We find that wrapping neatness significantly influences who participants infer wrapped the gift (see MDA). However, the inferred gift-wraper did not significantly affect expectations or actual gift attitudes in either wrapping condition. Importantly, the interaction of wrapping neatness and the within-subject expectation/attitude measures was significant ($F(1, 102) = 34.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .26$; see Table 2), indicating that actual attitudes were improved in the sloppily-

wrapped ($F(1, 102) = 5.93, p = .017, \eta^2 = .06$) and worsened in the neatly-wrapped ($F(1, 102) = 41.37, p < .001, \eta^2 = .29$) conditions.

To assess that expectation disconfirmation underlies the effect of wrapping neatness on actual gift attitudes, we conducted a mediation analysis with PROCESS macro Model 4 (Hayes, 2013). Wrapping neatness was the independent variable, the measure of stated expectation disconfirmation was the mediator, and actual gift attitudes was the dependent variable.

Inferences regarding the gift-wrapper and gift expectations prior to unwrapping were included as control variables (see Figure 3). Results revealed that wrapping neatness had a significant effect on stated expectation disconfirmation ($b = -1.13, SE = .47, t(101) = -2.41, p = .018$), such that sloppily (neatly)-wrapped gifts lead to more positive (negative) disconfirmation (see Table 2). Next, the effect of expectation disconfirmation on actual attitudes was significant beyond the control variables' effects and the direct effect of wrapping neatness ($b = .50, SE = .07, t(100) = 6.69, p < .001$). Importantly, the indirect effect of wrapping neatness on actual gift attitudes through stated expectation disconfirmation was significant ($effect = -.56, SE = .30, 95\% CI [-1.186, -.020]$), indicating that neatly (sloppily)-wrapped gifts led to higher (lower) expectations that were more likely to be unmet (met), resulting in less (more) favorable attitudes toward the gift—a contrast effect.

[INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE]

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

We also explore Howard's (1992) findings that gift-wrapping, as opposed to no wrapping, leads to more favorable gift-related attitudes. Our results show that both neatly- ($M = 5.80, SD = 1.82$) and sloppily-wrapped gifts ($M = 6.86, SD = 1.58$) elicit significantly more favorable attitudes than unwrapped gifts ($M = 5.09, SD = 1.46; F(2, 152) = 15.03, p < .001, \eta^2 =$

.17). In concordance with Howard (1992), this suggests that regardless of wrapping neatness, wrapped gifts may elevate recipients' moods and positive affect, leading to more favorable gift-related attitudes relative to unwrapped gifts.

Together, study 2 results provide evidence that wrapping neatness affects recipients' gift-related expectations and attitudes. The higher (lower) expectations resulting from neat (sloppy) wrapping lead to less (more) positive gift-related attitudes. Consistent with Howard (1992), we find that wrapping, whether neat or sloppy, leads to more positive gift attitudes than no wrapping.

Study 3

Study 3 examines whether the closeness of the gift-giver and recipient relationship (e.g., friend vs. acquaintance) affects whether gift-wrapping neatness leads to assimilation rather than the contrast seen in our previous studies. Assimilation (contrast) occurs when contextual cues have a positive (negative) relationship with evaluations (Meyers-Levy & Sternthal, 1993). We suggest that more ambiguity surrounds relationship status for acquaintances than for friends. Accordingly, pretests (see MDA) show that acquaintances use gift-wrapping neatness as a cue to infer how the gift-giver views the relationship more so than for setting expectations of the gift inside. However, for friends, the relationship is more established so rather than using the gift-wrapping neatness cue to evaluate the relationship, it is used to create expectations for the gift inside. Thus, with acquaintances, when gifts are wrapped neatly (sloppily), recipients use wrapping neatness as a cue that the gift-giver views their relationship as important (unimportant). With the focus for acquaintances being on gauging the relationship rather than on creating gift-related expectations, the positive (negative) relationship revelation spills over to the gift itself, which leads to an assimilation effect. Friends typically know where the relationship stands, so

wrapping neatness is used to create more gift-related expectations, which leads to the contrast effects seen in our previous studies.

Method

Participants were 261 adults on Amazon Mechanical Turk (49.43% female, $M_{age} = 36.97$, $SD = 12.87$). The study used a 2 (wrapping neatness: neat vs. sloppy) \times 2 (relationship: friend vs. acquaintance) between-subjects design. Participants imagined being at a party with a secret gift exchange. In the friend (acquaintance) condition, their secret gift-giver was a friend (acquaintance) who they (do not) know very well. Next, participants rated time and care spent wrapping the gift. The wrapping neatness images, gift presentation description, gift, and attitude measures were the same as in study 2.

Results and Discussion

A two-way ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of gift-giver/recipient relationship, but a moderately significant main effect of wrapping neatness on gift-related attitudes ($F(1, 257) = 3.76$, $p = .054$, $\eta^2 = .01$; see Table 3). Most importantly, there was a significant interaction of relationship and wrapping neatness ($F(1, 257) = 159.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .38$). Consistent with our earlier findings, participants in the friend condition had more favorable gift-related attitudes for sloppily-wrapped ($M = 6.53$, $SD = 1.46$) versus neatly-wrapped ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.64$) ($F(1, 257) = 57.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$) gifts. As expected, the opposite pattern emerged in the acquaintance condition. Gift-related attitudes were more favorable for neatly-wrapped ($M = 6.68$, $SD = 1.42$) versus sloppily-wrapped ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.83$) ($F(1, 257) = 105.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .29$) gifts. See Figure 4. Finally, perceived wrapping time and care were significantly higher for the neatly- versus sloppily-wrapped gifts but results of an ANCOVA

with these variables as covariates (see MDA) are similar to those of the previously reported ANOVA.

[INSERT TABLE 3 HERE]

[INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE]

These results demonstrate an important qualifier of sloppily-wrapped gifts—relationship closeness. Specifically, gift-related attitudes are more favorable when a friend (acquaintance) gives a sloppily (neatly)-wrapped gift. Thus, when giving friends gifts, a strategy of sloppily wrapping gifts may be beneficial; whereas when giving acquaintances gifts, neatly wrapping gifts may be better.

General Discussion

Three studies demonstrate that how gifts are wrapped influences recipients' attitudes toward the gifts. Recipients' gift-related attitudes were more positive when the gifts were wrapped sloppily versus neatly. This contrast effect holds for undesirable, neutral, and desirable gifts. We find evidence suggesting that the extent to which gift-related expectations are positively or negatively disconfirmed mediates this effect of wrapping neatness on gift attitudes. Furthermore, we demonstrate that this effect is contingent upon the relationship between the gift-giver and the recipient, such that the contrast effect holds when the gift-giver is a friend, while assimilation effects occur when the gift-giver is an acquaintance. Specifically, sloppily (neatly)-wrapped gifts have a positive effect on recipients' gift-related attitudes when the gift-giver is a friend (acquaintance). Initial findings suggest that, unlike friends, when gifts come from acquaintances, a spillover effect occurs in which wrapping neatness serves as a cue to the relationship's importance rather than to the gift inside.

Our research makes important contributions to the gift-giving literature. First, we demonstrate that while what is inside the box is important, so too is how the box is wrapped. That is, our research supports the importance of considering the aesthetic presentation of the gift-giving process when assessing recipients' gift-related responses. Second, our work extends the role of expectations derived from external cues, in our case visual cues, into the realm of gift-giving. Specifically, we find evidence that expectations mediate this effect such that recipients set higher (lower) expectations for neatly (sloppily)-wrapped gifts from friends, making it harder (easier) for the gift itself to meet or exceed these expectations, ultimately leading to lower (higher) attitudes toward the gift once unwrapped. Finally, although we find that wrapping neatness influences perceptions of who wrapped the gift, time spent, and care taken during wrapping, these factors do not significantly influence actual gift-related attitudes.

Our research also has practical implications. While we find that desirable gifts are still liked more than undesirable gifts regardless of wrapping neatness, across studies, we also see that recipients view undesirable, neutral, and desirable gifts more positively if friends wrapped the gifts sloppily rather than neatly. This suggests that gift-givers may not need to expend undue effort on the crispness of each fold and the symmetry of each loop of ribbon when preparing gifts.

From a managerial perspective, relationship closeness should be taken into account when deciding on wrapping neatness since sloppily-wrapped gifts positively affected friend's gift-related attitudes and negatively affected acquaintance's gift-related attitudes. This leads to our first avenue for future research—the gift-giver/recipient relationship in business settings. Companies typically have close relationships with some vendors, employees, and customers and distant relationships with others. It would be interesting to see whether the wrapping-neatness

cue is still used differently based on relationship closeness in business contexts. If the cue is used similarly, a company with close relationships can potentially promise too much with neat wrapping and may want to use sloppy wrapping or match wrapping neatness to the brand's image. Retailers also may not want to offer gift-wrapping services for less desirable or low-quality gifts if the gift will be associated with their brand name. For acquaintance-level relationships, neat wrapping may be the best default strategy regardless of what is inside. However, when the recipient is not focused on assessing relationship status, gift-related expectations may be created, making contrast effects likely to occur. For example, with promotions such as mystery grab bags where consumers choose the product sight unseen, a neatly-wrapped product may lead to more purchases but less favorable attitudes once the package is opened.

Another research avenue to consider is how a brand's image may influence which wrapping approach is best. For example, self-effacing brands may be better served using sloppy wrapping while self-enhancing brands may benefit from neat wrapping.

Further, while we find support that expectation disconfirmation is an important driver of how wrapping neatness influences gift-related attitudes, there are also other factors that can have an effect. For instance, replicating Howard (1992), we find more positivity toward wrapped versus unwrapped gifts, suggesting that elevated mood and positive affect are still factors. Unwrapping gifts that fall short of (exceed) expectations can be an unpleasant (pleasant) surprise, further suggesting affect's possible role. Other potential factors are the types of wrapping paper and embellishments used. Using extremely expensive or beautiful wrapping compared to cheap or tacky wrapping could potentially moderate or exacerbate the effects found.

While we examined relationship closeness at the acquaintance and friend levels, there are many other types of relationships. Future research could explore whether more distant relationships such as anonymous gift-givers or closer relationships such as romantic partners affect how gift-wrapping neatness cues are used. Similarly, relationship formality could play a role. Another potential path is gift-giver age. Would sloppy wrapping be viewed differently if a child versus an elderly person wrapped the gift? Also, we used sensibly priced gifts that would reasonably be given by a friend or acquaintance. Researchers could explore whether extremely expensive or inexpensive gifts influence the experience of expectation disconfirmation and whether there is an interactive effect between expense and relationship. Given the limited research on the role of gift-wrap on the gift-giving process, we hope that our work inspires further exploration and study.

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Table 1: Parallel mediation model for neatly-wrapped versus sloppily-wrapped gifts, Study 1.

	<i>Path a:</i>										<i>Path b:</i>										
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>				
	<i>Stated Expectation Disconfirmation</i>					<i>Pleasant Surprise</i>					<i>Own Wrapping Ability</i>					<i>Actual Gift Attitudes</i>					
<i>Wrapping Neatness</i>	-.91	.29	-3.11	177	.002	-.59	.29	-2.07	177	.040	-.36	.30	-1.23	177	.222	-.31	.19	-1.62	174	.108	
<i>Gift Desirability</i>	1.78	.29	6.12	177	<.001	2.06	.29	7.20	177	<.001	-.01	.30	-.04	177	.969	1.55	.21	7.27	174	<.001	
<i>Stated Expectation Disconfirmation</i>																.14	.07	2.10	174	.037	
<i>Pleasant Surprise</i>																.53	.07	7.58	174	<.001	
<i>Own Wrapping Ability</i>																-.01	.05	-.30	174	.761	
<i>Indirect Effect of Wrapping – TOTAL</i>																-.44	.19			-.812	-.051
<i>Indirect Effect of Wrapping – Stated Expectation Disconfirmation</i>																-.13	.08			-.293	-.001
<i>Indirect Effect of Wrapping – Pleasant Surprise</i>																-.31	.16			-.631	-.007
<i>Indirect Effect of Wrapping – Own Wrapping Ability</i>																.01	.02			-.040	.066

Variable Definitions:

Wrapping neatness = Participants received either a neatly- or sloppily-wrapped gift

Gift Desirability = Participants received a desirable or undesirable coffee mug

Stated Expectation Disconfirmation = To what extent did the gift match the expectations you had formed when it was still wrapped? The gift... [Is far worse than I expected (1), Matched my expectations (5), Is far better than I expected (9)]

Pleasant Surprise = After you unwrapped the box, to what extent were you unpleasantly or pleasantly surprised by the gift? [Very unpleasantly surprised (1) to Very pleasantly surprised (9)]

Own Wrapping Ability = Scale of perceived wrapping ability. The 3 items in the scale include: How would you rate your wrapping ability compared to other university students? [Well below average (1) to Well above average (9)], How confident do you feel about your ability to wrap gifts? [Not at all confident (1) to Extremely confident (9)], When you personally wrap a gift, how does the recipient typically respond to the wrapping? [Very displeased (1) to Very pleased (9)]

Table 2: Results of 2×2 mixed ANCOVA and mediation model for neatly-wrapped versus sloppily-wrapped gifts, Study 2.

	<i>2×2 Mixed ANCOVA</i>				<i>Mediation Analysis</i>											
	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	<i>Path a: Stated Expectation Disconfirmation</i>					<i>Path b: Actual Gift Attitudes</i>						
					<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
<i>Expectations-Actual Gift Attitudes (within)</i>	1.76	1, 102	.187	.02												
<i>Expectations-Actual Gift Attitudes (within)</i> <i>× Who Wrapped (between)</i>	< .001	1, 102	.988	< .001												
<i>Expectations-Actual Gift Attitudes (within)</i> <i>× Wrapping (between)</i>	34.99	1, 102	< .001	.26												
<i>Who Wrapped (between)</i>	.58	1, 102	.449	.01	.59	.48	1.24	101	.217	-.11	.36	-.32	100	.749		
<i>Wrapping (between)</i>	1.74	1, 102	.191	.02	-1.13	.47	-2.41	101	.018	-.72	.36	-2.01	100	.048		
<i>Expectations</i>					-.24	.13	-1.76	101	.082	.30	.10	3.00	100	.003		
<i>Expectation Disconfirmation</i>										.50	.07	6.69	100	< .001		
<i>Indirect Effect of Wrapping</i>										-.56	.30				-1.186	-.020

Table 3: Results of a 2 (wrapping neatness: neat vs. sloppy) \times 2 (relationship: friend vs. acquaintance) ANOVA, Study 3.

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Wrapping Neatness	3.76	1, 257	.054	.01
Relationship	1.42	1, 257	.234	.01
Wrapping Neatness \times Relationship	159.01	1, 257	< .001	.38

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Wrapped gift images seen by participants (studies 2 and 3). Wrapped gift given to participants (study 1) used the same wrapping paper and ribbon with a smaller, square box.

Figure 2. The effect of wrapping neatness on gift-related expectations before unwrapping the gift and actual gift-related attitudes after the gift is unwrapped (study 2). Inferences regarding who wrapped the gift (friend vs. someone else) was included as a covariate. Participants in the “no wrapping” condition were not asked about their expectations as they did not have any wrapping to use as a cue. Error bars denote ± 2 standard errors.

Figure 3. Expectation disconfirmation mediation model for sloppy versus neat wrapping (study 2). The dependent variable is the composite measure of actual gift attitudes after unwrapping. Expectations and inferences about who wrapped the gift were included as control variables. Path coefficients represent nonstandardized regression weights. * $p \leq .10$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure 4. The effect of wrapping neatness when the gift-giver is an acquaintance versus a friend on actual gift-related attitudes once the gift is unwrapped (study 3). Error bars denote ± 2 standard errors.

Figure 1: Studies 1-3.

Neatly-wrapped gift



Sloppily-wrapped gift



Figure 2: Study 2.

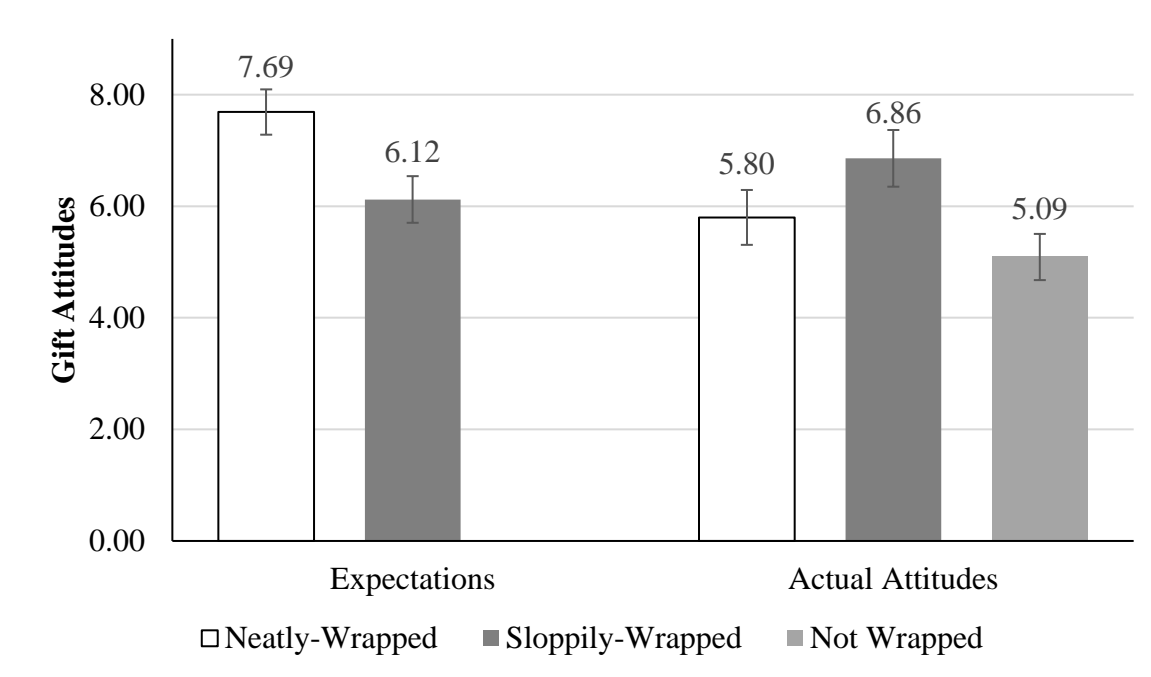


Figure 3: Study 2.

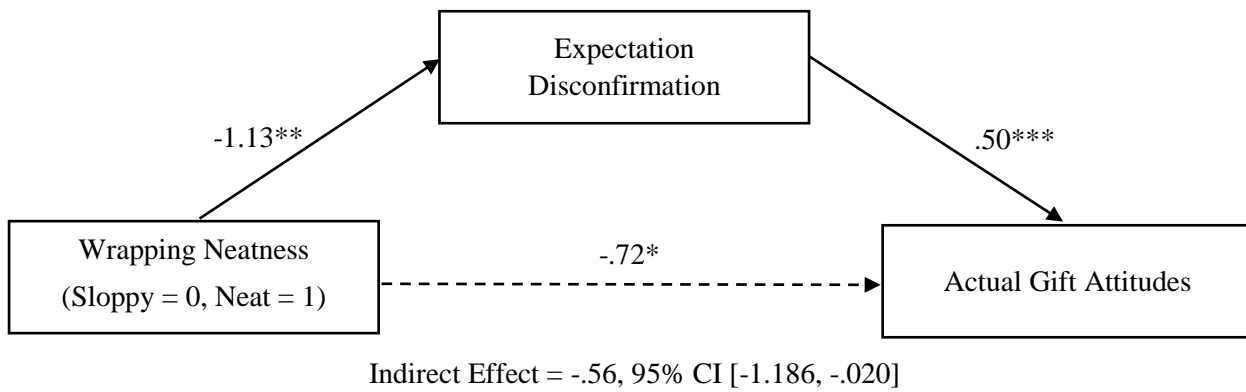
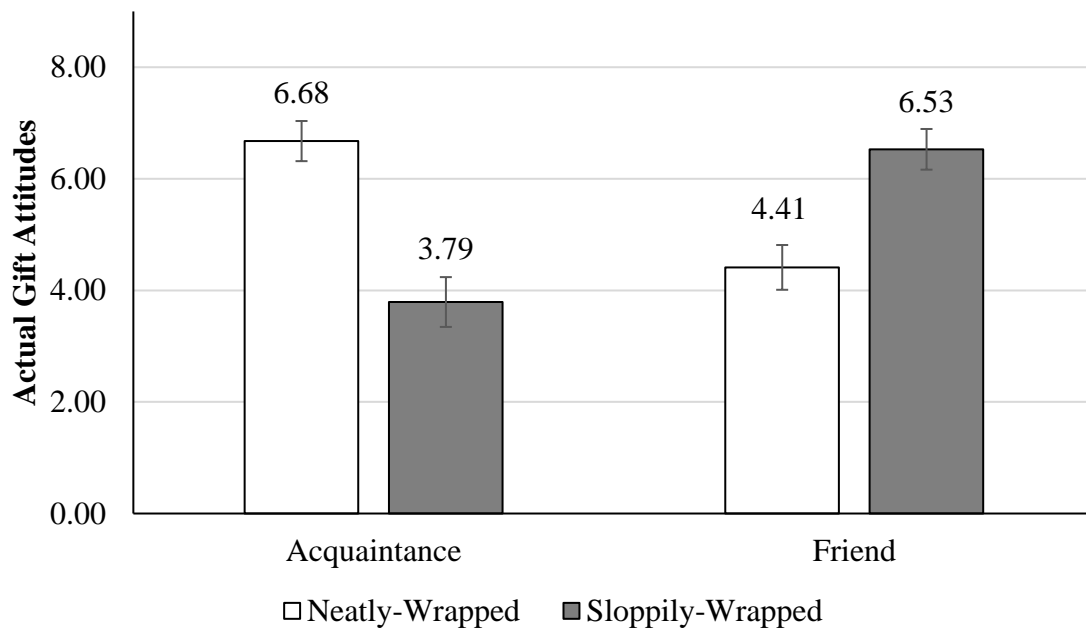


Figure 4: Study 3.



Methodological Details Appendix

This methodological details appendix is provided to give additional details about our work and serves as a supplement to our manuscript—Presentation Matters: The Effect of Wrapping Neatness on Gift Attitudes.

STUDY 1 PRETESTS AND MAIN STUDY

We conducted two pretests in preparation for study 1. A brief description including the questions asked and the results follow.

Pretest 1 for Study 1

Study 1 involved recruiting participants who were fans of the Miami Heat but *not* fans of the Orlando Magic, so an official Miami Heat mug served as the desirable gift whereas an official Orlando Magic mug served as the undesirable gift. Thus, a pretest was conducted to assess both quality and desirability perceptions for the two mugs.

Participants were 77 students on the same college campus where the main study was completed. Participants saw either the Miami Heat or the Orlando Magic mug, depending on randomly-assigned condition, and received the corresponding survey. A physical mug was shown in both conditions. When the survey was completed, the research assistant thanked the participant and collected both the mug and survey. Other than a warm smile and a sincere thank you, participants did not receive any compensation for participating in this pretest.

Participants read that there were no right or wrong answers and we were just interested in their honest opinions. They read instructions to pick up and look at the mug and then to answer the following questions when they were ready:

How would you describe the overall quality of this mug? [Very low quality (1) to Very high quality (9)]

How desirable is this mug? [Very undesirable (1) to Very desirable (9)]

Do you consider yourself a fan of the Miami Heat? [No / Yes]

Do you consider yourself a fan of the Orlando Magic? [No / Yes]

The order of the two fan-related questions varied by condition so participants could indicate fandom for the team associated with the mug they had just evaluated before responding to an unrelated team. Both mugs were rated as having equally high quality ($M_{Heat} = 7.77$ vs. $M_{Magic} = 7.58$; $p = .56$, $d = .13$), but the Miami Heat mug ($M = 7.59$) was more desirable than the Orlando Magic mug ($M = 4.42$; $t(75) = 7.24$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.66$).

Pretest 2 for Study 1

To ensure the wrapped gifts were seen as either neatly-wrapped or sloppily-wrapped, we conducted a pretest with 79 university students. The pretest consisted of a single factor with two cells (wrapping neatness: neat vs. sloppy), between-subjects design with participants randomly assigned to one of the two conditions.

First, participants saw an actual gift that was wrapped either neatly or sloppily, depending on condition. Then, they answered the following question to assess the wrapping.

How would you describe the way your gift is wrapped?

Sloppy (1) to Neat (9)

The results confirmed that the neatly-wrapped gift ($M = 8.18$, $SD = 1.32$) was seen as neater than the sloppily-wrapped gift ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.83$; $t(77) = 11.83$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.70$).

Study 1: Main Study Supplementary Materials and Findings

Study 1 Supplementary Materials

Study 1 had 180 university students who participated in exchange for extra credit. Participants arrived one-at-a-time. A research assistant greeted each participant, telling them that as a token of appreciation, they were receiving a gift. The research assistant also told participants that gift evaluations would help other researchers determine whether to use the item in the future. Participants carried their wrapped gift and a folder containing the surveys to a private office where they followed the instructions and completed the survey. When finished, they gave the survey folder to the research assistant and left with their mug. The study was listed as “Part 1” in the survey packet with the subsequent parts involving data collection for researchers working on unrelated projects.

First, participants were asked to get comfortable, unwrap and open the gift, and then turn the page to begin answering questions:

Please answer the following questions honestly. You will not offend us or hurt our feelings. We are interested in your honest opinions.

Please indicate how you feel about your mug:

Dislike it very much (1) to Like it very much (9)

Extremely unfavorable (1) to Extremely favorable (9)

Extremely undesirable (1) to Extremely desirable (9)

Extremely displeased (1) to Extremely pleased (9)

Terrible (1) to Delighted (9)

Participants also completed a stated measure of expectation disconfirmation in which the midpoint indicates expectation confirmation and values above (below) the midpoint indicate positive (negative) disconfirmation.

To what extent did the gift match the expectations you had formed when it was still wrapped? The gift... [Is far worse than I expected (1), Matched my expectations (5), Is far better than I expected (9)]

After you unwrapped the box, to what extent were you unpleasantly or pleasantly surprised by the gift? [Very unpleasantly surprised (1) to Very pleasantly surprised (9)]

How much do you think this mug cost? \$___

How would you describe the way your gift is wrapped? [*Manipulation check questions*]

Offensive (1) to Enjoyable (9)

Poor-looking (1) to Nice-looking (9)

Displeasing (1) to Pleasing (9)

Ugly (1) to Beautiful (9)

Unattractive (1) to Attractive (9)

Bad appearance (1) to Good appearance (9)

Please think about your own gift-wrapping abilities when answering each of the following questions. [*Perceived wrapping ability*]

How would you rate your wrapping ability compared to other university students? [Well below average (1) to Well above average (9)]

How confident do you feel about your ability to wrap gifts? [Not at all confident (1) to Extremely confident (9)]

When you personally wrap a gift, how does the recipient typically respond to the wrapping? [Very displeased (1) to Very pleased (9)]

You are now done with Part 1 of today's study. Please close this booklet, put it back in the folder, and begin Part 2 of today's study.

Study 1 Supplementary Findings

Each participant received an actual gift that was wrapped either neatly or sloppily. Even though the same person wrapped each gift, we asked a more extensive set of manipulation check questions to ensure that any slight differences in wrapping presentation within conditions could be detected and to increase confidence that the conditions had been viewed in the intended manner. The six items loaded onto a single factor and were averaged together to form a single scale ($\alpha = .97$). As anticipated, the neatly-wrapped gift ($M = 7.66$, $SD = 1.56$) was perceived differently than the sloppily-wrapped gift ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.86$; $t(178) = 12.28$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.84$).

To ensure perceptions of one's own wrapping abilities did not differ based on condition, we asked three questions. The three items were averaged into a scale of perceived wrapping ability ($\alpha = .85$). Next, a 2 (wrapping neatness: neat vs. sloppy) \times 2 (gift desirability: desirable vs. undesirable) ANOVA revealed that wrapping neatness ($F(1, 176) = 1.49$, $p = .223$, $\eta^2 = .01$), the gift ($F(1, 176) = .002$, $p = .967$, $\eta^2 < .001$), and the interaction ($F(1, 176) = .009$, $p = .925$, $\eta^2 < .001$) had no significant effect on perceptions of their own wrapping ability. Thus, there were no significant difference in perceived wrapping ability based on condition.

Mediation. To test the mediating role of expectations, we used Hayes' (2013) PROCESS Macro (Model 4). See results summarized in Table 1. After controlling for the effect of gift

desirability (desirable vs. undesirable) ($b = 1.78$, $SE = .29$, $t(177) = 6.12$, $p < .001$), wrapping neatness had a significant negative effect on reports that the gift exceeded expectations ($b = -.91$, $SE = .29$, $t(177) = -3.11$, $p = .002$). Thus, sloppily-wrapped gifts exceeded expectations more so than neatly-wrapped gifts. Furthermore, as gifts exceeded expectations, gift-related attitudes improved ($b = .52$, $SE = .06$, $t(176) = 9.36$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect of wrapping neatness on gift-related attitudes was significant ($effect = -.47$, $SE = .16$, 95% CI [-.788, -.181]), indicating that perceived degree of expectation matching mediates the relationship between wrapping neatness and gift-related attitudes.

The same analysis was run individually for other potential mediators: pleasant surprise and participants' perceptions of their own wrapping abilities. These alternate mediators were included in separate mediation models. The results of these three individual analyses are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Separate mediation models for neatly-wrapped versus sloppily-wrapped gifts.

	<i>Path a:</i>					<i>Path b:</i>						
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
	<u><i>Stated Expectation Disconfirmation</i></u>					<u><i>Gift Attitudes</i></u>						
<i>Wrapping Neatness</i>	-.91	.29	-3.11	177	.002	-.28	.22	-1.29	176	.199		
<i>Gift Desirability</i>	1.78	.29	6.12	177	< .001	1.98	.23	8.41	176	< .001		
<i>Stated Expectation Disconfirmation</i>						.52	.06	9.36	176	< .001		
<i>Indirect Effect of Wrapping</i>						-.47	.16				-.785	-.179
	<u><i>Pleasant Surprise</i></u>					<u><i>Gift Attitudes</i></u>						
<i>Wrapping Neatness</i>	-.59	.29	-2.07	177	.040	-.37	.19	-1.97	176	.050		
<i>Gift Desirability</i>	2.06	.29	7.20	177	< .001	1.59	.21	7.45	176	< .001		
<i>Pleasant Surprise</i>						176	.05	12.87	176	< .001		
<i>Indirect Effect of Wrapping</i>						-.38	.18				-.733	-.015
	<u><i>Own Wrapping Ability</i></u>					<u><i>Gift Attitudes</i></u>						
<i>Wrapping Neatness</i>	-.36	.30	-1.23	177	.222	-.75	.26	-2.85	176	.005		
<i>Gift Desirability</i>	-.01	.30	-.04	177	.969	2.89	.26	11.08	176	< .001		
<i>Own Wrapping Ability</i>						.01	.07	.14	176	.890		
<i>Indirect Effect of Wrapping</i>						-.003	.03				-.070	.065

Findings for Exploratory Questions. We measured cost perceptions for exploratory reasons, with the intent to inform the design of a future study for a different project. The mugs retailed for \$11.99 and we explored whether participants in the undesirable condition would underestimate while those in the desirable condition would overestimate the gift's cost. We collapsed the cost question across wrapping neatness conditions and conducted a one-sample t-test to compare the average price estimate for the undesirable mug to the actual retail cost. Results revealed that participants' cost estimates ($M_{undesirable} = 11.28$, $SD = 6.31$) were not significantly different from the actual retail price of \$11.99 ($t(89) = -1.07$, $p = .287$). The same analysis for the desirable mug revealed that participants significantly overestimated the mug's cost in this condition ($M_{desirable} = 15.70$, $SD = 7.79$; $t(89) = 4.52$, $p < .009$).

Pretests for Study 2 and Study 3

We conducted three pretests in preparation for study 2 and study 3. A brief description including the questions asked and the results follow.

Pretest 1 for Study 2 and Study 3

In a pretest involving a number of product categories for an unrelated project, we found that desirability and attitudes toward headphone and earbud images vary substantially based on the brand. Given that we intended to test our proposed effect with undesirable (study 1), desirable (study 1), and neutral gifts (studies 2 and 3), we conducted a pretest to determine which brands were viewed as such. The pretest used nine different images—three each from Coby, JVC, and Bose brands. Participants read the following instructions, saw one of the nine randomly assigned brand images, and rated the product's desirability on an 11-point Likert scale:

Imagine someone is giving you [Coby/JVC/Bose] headphones as a gift. After carefully evaluating the following image, indicate how desirable or undesirable it would feel to you personally to receive this as a gift. [Extremely undesirable (1) to Extremely desirable (11)]

Average desirability ratings ranged from a low of $M = 4.64$ for one of the Coby brand images to a high of $M = 9.14$ for one of the Bose brand images. A pair of JVC earbuds (see Figure 1) with an average desirability that did not significantly differ from the midpoint of 6 was selected as the neutral desirability gift used in study 2 and study 3 ($M_{JVC2} = 6.56$; $t(26) = 1.07$, $p = .09$).

Figure 1: Gift Stimuli Used in Study 2 and Study 3

Study 2 and Study 3:
JVC Earbuds
(Neutral Desirability)



Pretest 2 for Study 2 and Study 3

To ensure the wrapped gift images were seen as either neatly-wrapped or sloppily-wrapped, we conducted a pretest with 100 participants recruited through MTurk; 12 were removed because they had non-US IP addresses, leaving a usable sample of 88. The pretest consisted of a single factor with two cells (wrapping neatness: neat vs. sloppy), between-subjects design with participants randomly assigned to one of the two conditions.

First, participants saw an image of a gift that was wrapped either neatly or sloppily, depending on condition. Then, they answered the following question to assess the wrapping.

How would you describe the way your gift is wrapped?

Sloppy (1) to Neat (9)

The results confirmed that the neatly-wrapped gift image ($M = 8.39$, $SD = 1.09$) is seen as more neat than the sloppily-wrapped gift image ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 2.10$; $t(86) = 13.41$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.82$).

Pretest 3 for Study 2 and Study 3

To ensure the gift-wrap manipulations were credible, we conducted a pretest to determine the proportion of participants who could imagine someone giving a gift that looked like the image of either the neatly- or sloppily-wrapped gift. The pretest consisted of a single factor with two cells (wrapping neatness: neat vs. sloppy), between-subjects design with participants randomly assigned to one of the two conditions. Of the 118 participants recruited through MTurk, we removed 13 due to non-US IP addresses, leaving a usable sample of 105 participants.

First, participants saw an image of either the neatly- or sloppily-wrapped gift, depending on condition. Then, they answered the following two questions, each on its own screen to assess the wrapping.

Can you imagine someone wrapping a gift like this? [Yes / No]

Findings indicate that 94.3% (50/53) of participants in the neatly-wrapped condition and 94.2% (49/52) in the sloppily-wrapped condition can imagine someone wrapping a gift in the respective manner. These percentages are significantly above chance (50%) for both the neatly- ($t(52) = 13.84$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.90$) and sloppily-wrapped ($t(51) = 13.55$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.88$) gifts. Since the majority of participants indicate that they can imagine someone wrapping a gift in this manner, we feel comfortable that the manipulations are both believable and likely to occur.

STUDY 2 MAIN STUDY

Study 2: Main Study Supplementary Materials and Findings
Study 2 Supplementary Materials

Study 2 included 155 university students who participated for extra credit and were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (wrapping neatness: neat vs. sloppy vs. no wrapping). Below are the procedures used and questions asked:

On the first page, participants saw the following:

Wrapped conditions

Imagine that one of your friends has given you a gift. Your friend sets the gift on the table next to you and this is how it is wrapped. Take a moment to look at the gift box and how it is wrapped.

No wrapping condition

Imagine that one of your friends has given you a gift. Your friend sets the gift on the table next to you. The gift has not been wrapped.

Next, participants indicated their a priori expectations toward the wrapped gift and how much they thought the gift would cost.

Wrapped conditions

Please indicate how you expect you will feel about the gift inside:

Dislike it very much (1) to Like it very much (9)

Extremely unfavorable (1) to Extremely favorable (9)

Extremely undesirable (1) to Extremely desirable (9)

Extremely displeased (1) to Extremely pleased (9)

Terrible (1) to Delighted (9)

How much do you think the gift cost? \$_____

No wrapping condition

Not included

On the next page were the following instructions and the same gift-wrapped box seen earlier:

Wrapped conditions

Now, imagine that you are untying the ribbon, tearing open the wrapping paper, and opening the gift box...

No wrapping condition

Not included

On the next page, participants saw the following and the JVC earbuds image from Figure 1:

Wrapped conditions

...inside, you see that your friend got you JVC earbuds.

When you pick up the earbuds, they feel a bit heavy but have a decent build. They look pretty comfortable and will likely stay in place most of the time. You think that they will provide fairly decent sound quality.

No wrapping condition

You see that your friend got you JVC earbuds.

When you pick up the earbuds, they feel a bit heavy but have a decent build. They look pretty comfortable and will likely stay in place most of the time. You think that they will provide fairly decent sound quality.

On the next page, participants evaluated the gift by answering five questions:

All conditions

Please indicate how you feel about your JVC earbuds:

Dislike it very much (1) to Like it very much (9)

Extremely unfavorable (1) to Extremely favorable (9)

Extremely undesirable (1) to Extremely desirable (9)

Extremely displeased (1) to Extremely pleased (9)

Terrible (1) to Delighted (9)

On the next page, participants answered the following questions:

Wrapped conditions

Who do you think wrapped the gift? Please circle your answer.

The friend who gave me the gift

Someone at the store where my friend bought the gift

Someone else (please specify):

To what extent did the gift match the expectations you had formed when it was still wrapped? The gift... [Is far worse than I expected (1) to Matched my expectations (5) to Is far better than I expected (9)]

All conditions

Have you owned a JVC brand product before? [Yes / No]

Please indicate how familiar you are with the JVC brand [Not at all familiar (1) to Very familiar (9)]

Wrapped conditions

How would you rate the wrapping of this gift? [Ugly (1) to Beautiful (9)]

All conditions

How was your gift presented? Please circle your answer.

In blue wrapping paper with a ribbon

In brown packaging paper

Unwrapped

The study ended with demographic questions.

Study 2 Supplementary Findings

First, we confirmed that the neatly-wrapped gift ($M_{neat} = 8.39$, $SD = 1.02$) was perceived differently than the sloppily-wrapped gift ($M_{sloppy} = 4.69$, $SD = 1.97$; $t(103) = 12.18$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.36$).

We also examined and found that wrapping neatness influences participants' thoughts of who wrapped the gift ($\chi^2 = 20.41$, $p < .001$). In the neatly-wrapped condition, 55.56% ($n = 30$) of participants thought their friend wrapped the gift while 44.44% ($n = 24$) thought the store or someone else wrapped the gift. In the sloppily-wrapped condition, 94.12% ($n = 48$) of participants thought their friend wrapped the gift while 5.88% ($n = 3$) thought the store or someone else wrapped the gift. Importantly, however, there were no significant differences in either the neatly-wrapped condition or the sloppily-wrapped condition for a priori expectations or actual attitudes toward the gift as a function of who participants believed had wrapped the gift. For the neatly-wrapped condition, a priori expectations ($M_{friend} = 7.74$, $SD = 1.09$; $M_{other} = 7.63$, $SD = 0.99$; $t(52) = 0.40$, $p = .691$) and actual attitudes toward the gift ($M_{friend} = 5.83$, $SD = 2.03$; $M_{other} = 5.76$, $SD = 1.55$; $t(52) = .149$, $p = .882$) did not significantly differ based on whether participants believed the friend or someone else had wrapped the gift. Similarly, for the sloppily-wrapped condition, a priori expectations ($M_{friend} = 6.17$, $SD = 1.70$; $M_{other} = 5.40$, $SD = 2.09$; $t(49) = 0.75$, $p = .456$) and actual attitudes toward the gift ($M_{friend} = 6.91$, $SD = 1.49$; $M_{other} = 6.00$, $SD = 3.00$; $t(49) = .970$, $p = .337$) did not significantly differ based on whether the friend or someone else was believed to have wrapped the gift.

Next, we compared the means by condition to the midpoint of 5 for the stated expectation disconfirmation question using one-sample t-tests. Results revealed that participants' gift-related expectations were exceeded in the sloppily-wrapped condition ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.91$; $t(51) = 2.93$, $p = .005$) and not met in the neatly-wrapped condition ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.95$; $t(53) = 3.57$, $p < .001$).

Finally, we replicate the effects of Howard (1992), who finds that gift-wrapping (vs. no wrapping) leads to more favorable gift-related attitudes. An ANOVA comparing the neatly-wrapped, sloppily-wrapped, and not wrapped conditions shows that there was a significant difference among the three conditions ($F(2, 152) = 15.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$). Planned comparisons provide further insight, indicating that attitudes toward neatly-wrapped gifts ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.82$) were significantly higher than attitudes toward unwrapped gifts ($M = 5.09$, $SD =$

1.46; $t(152) = 2.21, p = .029, d = .43$). Attitudes toward sloppily-wrapped gifts ($M = 6.86, SD = 1.58$) were also significantly higher than those for unwrapped gifts ($t(152) = 5.44, p < .001, d = 1.16$). In concordance with Howard (1992), this offers support that regardless of wrapping neatness, wrapped gifts may elevate a recipient's mood and affect, resulting in more favorable gift-related attitudes than unwrapped gifts.

STUDY 3 PRETESTS AND MAIN STUDY

We completed two pretests in preparation for study 3. A brief description including the questions asked and the results follow.

Pretests for Study 3

Relationship Perceptions

We conducted two pretests to assess whether the relationship between the gift-giver and the gift-recipient will affect how the recipient uses gift-wrapping neatness as a cue. In the first pretest, 94 participants were recruited through MTurk; 12 were removed because they had non-US IP addresses, leaving a usable sample of 82. This pretest used a single factor (gift-giver: acquaintance vs. friend), between-subjects design. Participants were asked:

When somebody you know (don't know) really well—like a friend (acquaintance)—gives you a gift, the way the gift is presented tells you something about your relationship with the friend (acquaintance). [Completely disagree (1) to Completely agree (9)]

We conducted an independent-samples t-test to compare the means of the acquaintance and friend conditions. Participants in the acquaintance condition ($M_{acquaintance} = 6.55$) indicated a significantly higher level of agreement with the statement than did those in the friend condition ($M_{friend} = 4.25$; $t(80) = 4.68$, $p < .001$). This suggests that when a gift is given by an acquaintance, gift-wrapping neatness serves as a cue to the importance of the relationship to a greater extent than it does when given by a friend.

Gift Perceptions

In the second pretest, 100 participants were recruited through MTurk; 13 were removed because they had non-US IP addresses, leaving a usable sample of 87. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (acquaintance vs. friend) and were asked:

When somebody you know (don't know) really well—like a friend (acquaintance)—gives you a gift, the way the gift is presented tells you something about the gift inside. [Completely disagree (1) to Completely agree (9)]

We conducted an independent-samples t-test to compare the means of the acquaintance and friend conditions. Participants in the friend condition ($M_{friend} = 6.02$) indicated a significantly higher level of agreement with the statement than did those in the acquaintance condition ($M_{acquaintance} = 4.30$; $t(85) = 3.31$, $p < .001$). The results of the second pretest suggest that when a friend gives a gift, gift-wrapping neatness serves as a cue to the gift inside to a greater extent than it does when given by an acquaintance.

Taken together, these two pretests suggest that when the gift-giver is an acquaintance, wrapping neatness serves as a cue about the relationship between the giver and the recipient. On the other hand, when the gift-giver is a friend, wrapping neatness serves as a cue for forming expectations about the gift inside.

Study 3: Main Study Supplementary Materials and Findings

Study 3 Supplementary Materials

In study 3, 302 participants were recruited through MTurk; 41 were removed because they had non-US IP addresses, leaving a usable sample of 261 participants. They participated in exchange for nominal payment and were randomly assigned to one of four conditions using a 2 (wrapping neatness: neat vs. sloppy) x 2 (relationship: acquaintance vs. friend) design. Below are the procedures used and questions asked:

On the first page, participants saw the following:

Acquaintance conditions

Imagine you go to a party with a secret gift exchange. Your "Secret Gift-Giver" turns out to be an **acquaintance** that you do not know very well...

Friend conditions

Imagine you go to a party with a secret gift exchange. Your "Secret Gift-Giver" turns out to be your best **friend** that you know very well...

On the second page, participants indicated how well they know their gift-giver.

How well do you know your "Secret Gift-Giver?" [Do not know at all (1) to Know very well (9)]

On the next page, participants were asked to imagine they received the gift and they were shown either the image of the neatly- or the sloppily-wrapped gift, depending on condition.

On the following page, participants answered several questions about the wrapped gift.

How would you rate the wrapping of this gift? [Ugly (1) to Beautiful (9)]

How much care was devoted to the wrapping of this gift? [No care at all (1) to Very much care (9)]

How much time do you think it took to wrap this gift? [Very little time (1) to A very long time (9)]

The next page had the following instructions and the same gift-wrapped box seen earlier:

Now, imagine you are removing the wrapping paper and opening the gift box...

On the next page, participants read the following and saw the JVC earbuds from Figure 1:

...inside, you see that you got JVC earbuds.

When you pick up the earbuds, they feel a bit heavy but have a decent build. They look pretty comfortable and will likely stay in place most of the time. You think that they will provide fairly decent sound quality.

On the next page, participants evaluated the gift by answering the same five gift-attitude questions used in study 2.

On the final page, participants indicated whether they had previously owned a JVC product and indicated their brand familiarity using the same questions as in study 2.

The study ended with demographic questions.

Study 3 Supplementary Findings

First, we confirmed that the neatly-wrapped gift ($M_{neat} = 7.75, SD = 1.37$) was perceived differently than the sloppily-wrapped gift ($M_{sloppy} = 3.67, SD = 1.76; t(259) = 20.88, p < .001, d = 2.59$). Next, as expected, participants in the friend condition indicated that they knew the gift-giver better than did those in the acquaintance condition ($M_{friend} = 8.18, SD = 1.77; M_{acquaintance} = 3.29, SD = 1.98; t(259) = 21.05, p < .001, d = 2.60$).

Additionally, within the sloppily-wrapped condition, participants who imagined receiving the gift from a friend had more favorable attitudes toward the gift once unwrapped ($M_{friend} = 6.53, SD = 1.46$) than did participants who imagined receiving the gift from an acquaintance ($M_{acquaintance} = 3.79, SD = 1.83; F(1, 257) = 95.64, p < .001, \eta^2 = .27$). Conversely, within the neatly-wrapped condition, participants who imagined receiving the gift from a friend had less favorable attitudes toward the gift once unwrapped ($M_{friend} = 4.41, SD = 1.64$) than did those who imagined receiving it from an acquaintance ($M_{acquaintance} = 6.68, SD = 1.43; F(1, 257) = 64.92, p < .001, \eta^2 = .20$).

We then assessed perceptions of time spent and care taken to wrap the gift. Wrapping neatness significantly influenced perceptions of time ($M_{neat} = 6.59, SD = 1.68; M_{sloppy} = 3.24, SD = 1.77; t(259) = 15.67, p < .001, d = 1.94$) and care ($M_{neat} = 7.96, SD = 1.23; M_{sloppy} = 3.69, SD = 1.89; t(259) = 21.65, p < .001, d = 2.68$) devoted to wrapping the gift. Specifically, when the gift was wrapped neatly rather than sloppily, participants inferred that more time and care had been dedicated to gift-wrapping.

Finally, we ran a 2 (wrapping neatness: neat vs. sloppy) \times 2 (relationship: acquaintance vs. friend) ANCOVA, with time and care included as covariates. Results revealed a moderately significant main effect of perceived care dedicated to wrapping ($F(1, 255) = 3.81, p = .052, \eta^2 = .015$) on gift attitudes. Neither estimated time spent wrapping ($F(1, 255) = .01, p = .932, \eta^2 = .000$), wrapping neatness ($F(1, 255) = 1.02, p = .313, \eta^2 = .004$), nor the gift-giver relationship ($F(1, 255) = .88, p = .349, \eta^2 = .003$) had significant main effects on gift attitudes. However, consistent with the ANOVA analysis reported in the main document, the interaction of wrapping neatness and gift-giver/recipient relationship continued to have a significant effect on gift attitudes ($F(1, 255) = 161.33, p < .001, \eta^2 = .388$; see Figure 2) even when the time and care covariates were included in the analysis.

Finally, participants in the friend condition had more favorable gift attitudes for sloppily-wrapped ($M = 6.86, SE = .233$) versus neatly-wrapped ($M = 4.03, SE = .24; F(1, 255) = 54.92, p < .001, \eta^2 = .18$) gifts. As expected, the opposite pattern emerged in the acquaintance condition. Gift attitudes were more favorable for neatly-wrapped ($M = 6.34, SE = .24$) versus sloppily-wrapped gifts ($M = 4.18, SE = .24; F(1, 255) = 31.30, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$) among acquaintances.

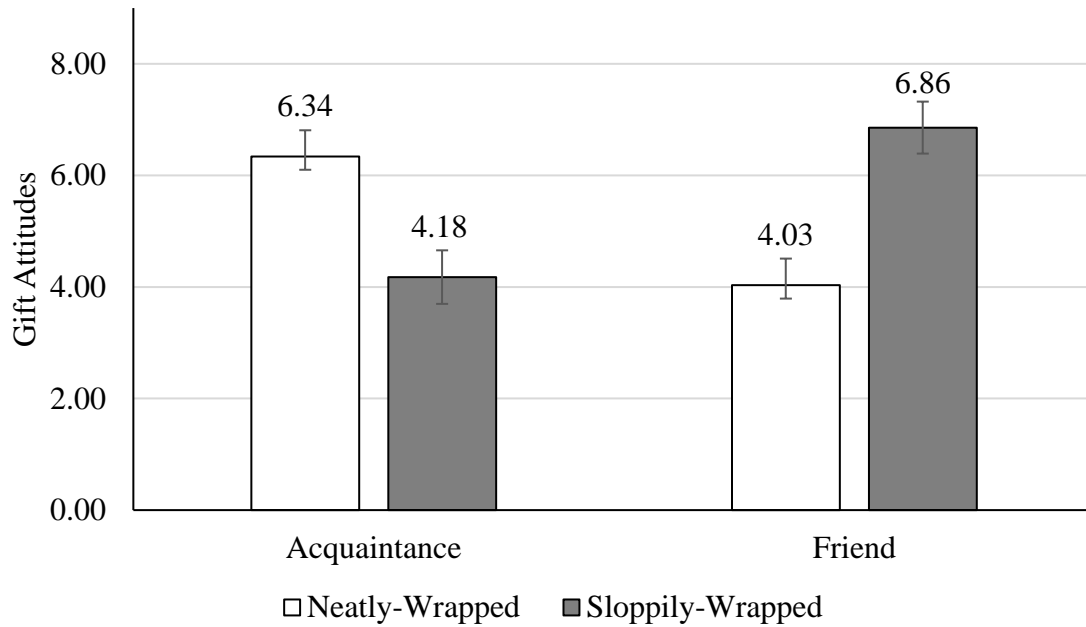


Figure 2. The effect of wrapping neatness (neat vs. sloppy) and gift-giver relationship (acquaintance vs. friend) on gift attitudes (study 3). Perceived care and time dedicated to wrapping the gift were included as covariates. Error bars denote ± 2 standard errors

REFERENCES

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