
Relevance of The Gift of The Magi with Gift-Giving Trend in Society

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Abstract. *The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze gift-giving aspects using an situational irony that contains inside the O. Henry's short story "The Gift of The Magi". This qualitative study is used to provide a deeper analysis of how the gift-giving trend is society by identify the main story, analyze the gift-giving aspects, create and conduct an small online survey to local society and at the end giving the results of the surveys. This to tells the other people how the gift-giving trend in today's society looked like now just like on the story.*

Keywords: *The Gift of The Magi, gift-giving aspects, society*

1. INTRODUCTION

In "The Gift of the Magi", O. Henry tells a moving story about love, selflessness, and what it means to truly give gifts. The story, which takes place around Christmas, centers on Jim and Della, a young couple who give up their most valuable items to give each other heartfelt presents. This timeless story has stood the test of time and come to represent unselfish love and the generosity of spirit. Given the story's continued relevance, it is worthwhile to investigate how the themes of the story relate to current trends in gift-giving.

Giving gifts is a custom that is heavily impacted by materialism and commercialism in today's culture. Spending by consumers spikes over the holidays in especially, when many people feel compelled to buy pricey or fashionable goods. This tendency stands in stark contrast to the altruism portrayed in "The Gift of the Magi," where a gift's true value is found in the love and sacrifice that went into giving it, rather than its cost. Analyzing this difference brings to light the constant conflict that exists between sincere displays of love and social norms.

Furthermore, the moral of the narrative keeps encouraging people to give gifts in a more thoughtful way. The concept of thoughtful, customized presents that express the giver's comprehension and gratitude for the recipient is becoming more and more popular. This change is consistent with the main idea of O. Henry's story, which is that the spirit of genuine gift-giving persists despite the commercialization of holidays. We can better understand the everlasting relevance of "The Gift of the Magi" in today's society by making comparisons between the story and contemporary customs.

2. THEORETICAL STUDIES

"The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry is famous for its use of situational irony. The gifts they buy for each other turn out to be useless, but the act of giving and the sacrifices made are what truly matter. This twist underscores the unpredictable nature of life and love.

O. Henry also explores the idea that the true value of a gift lies not in its material worth but in the love and thoughtfulness behind it. Jim and Della's gifts, though rendered impractical by their circumstances, symbolize their willingness to sacrifice their own happiness for each other's sake.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method that will be used is a qualitative analysis of O. Henry's short story "The Gift of The Magi". This journal will focus on identify a short story on The Gift of The Magi short story, and deep analyze the gift-giving aspects of the story into today's gift-giving trends era.

First, the study uses an in-depth identification of the short story, the writers read back the short story completely and discussed the setting, a main characters, and gift-giving aspects that will be used to create and conduct a small survey to local communities about gift-giving trends in today's era.

Second, the writers do create and conducted a small surveys to 20 random people becoming the correspondents in local society about gift giving trends in today's era via online surveys. After conducted a small surveys, later the result will be shown as an graphical image and all explained at discussion part.

With combining of these two methods, this will provide an overview of the trend of gift giving in the society based on the short story, whether it is still popular trend in society or not.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

"The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry is a touching Christmas story about a young married couple, Jim and Della, who are deeply in love but very poor. On Christmas Eve, each secretly sacrifices their most prized possession to buy a special gift for the other: Della sells her long, beautiful hair to buy a platinum fob chain for Jim's cherished watch, while Jim sells his watch to buy elegant combs for Della's hair. When they exchange gifts, they realize the irony that

their presents are now unusable, but they also understand that their love and willingness to sacrifice for each other are the greatest gifts of all.

Brief Introduction of Setting and Main Characters

a. Setting

Place: in a modest furnished rooms apartment in a city

Time: Christmas Eve

Atmosphere: The story highlighting the festive but financially strained atmosphere in which the young couple, Jim and Della Dillingham Young, live. Their humble home reflects their financial struggles, emphasizing the warmth and love they share despite their lack of material wealth. The setting underscores the themes of sacrifice and the true spirit of giving that define this classic Christmas tale.

b. The Main Characters

1) Della Dillingham Young

She is characterized by her deep affection for her husband and her willingness to sacrifice her most prized possession, long and beautiful hair, to buy a special Christmas gift for him. Della is resourceful and determined, as shown by her efforts to save money and her decision to sell her hair. Her actions demonstrate her selflessness and the depth of her love.

2) Jim Dillingham Young

He works hard but earns a modest income, which reflects the couple's financial struggles. Jim is characterized by his love for Della and his willingness to part with his cherished gold watch, a family heirloom, to buy a set of elegant combs for Della's hair. Like Della, his sacrifice underscores the depth of his love and the theme of selfless giving.

3) Madame Sofronie

Sofronie in this story is a minor character in the story. She is the owner of the shop where Della sells her hair. She is described as a business-like woman, contrasting with Della's emotional and loving nature. Her role is crucial in facilitating Della's sacrifice.

c. Gift-giving Aspects

Gift-giving in "The Gift of the Magi" is central to its narrative and explores various aspects:

a) Selflessness

Both Jim and Della demonstrate selflessness in their approach to gift-giving. They each give up their most valuable possessions; Della with her hair, and Jim with his watch, to buy a meaningful gift for the other. Their willingness to sacrifice for the happiness of their partner highlights the selfless nature of true love.

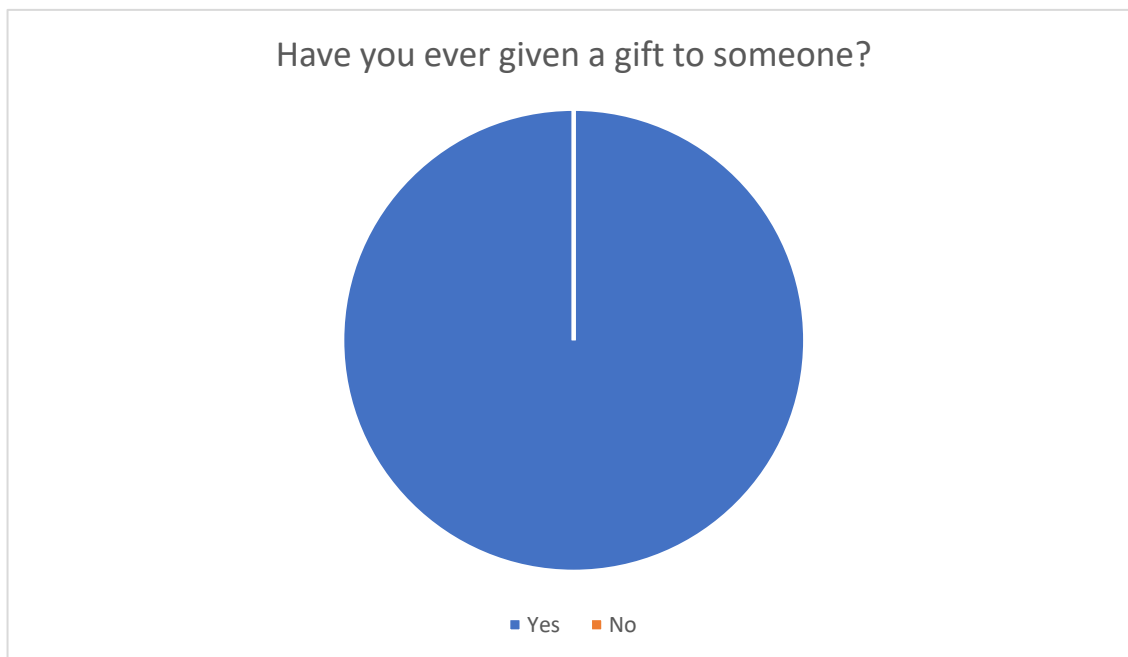
b) Love and Devotion

The gifts that Jim and Della give are symbols of their deep love and devotion. The act of giving, especially when it involves significant personal sacrifice, shows how much they care for each other. The gifts themselves, though ultimately rendered impractical, are less important than the love and thought behind them.

The Results of Small Surveys about Gift-giving Trends in Society

After writers conducted a small online survey to 20 correspondents by using Google Forms in 2 days period, the writers get the results that will be explained below:

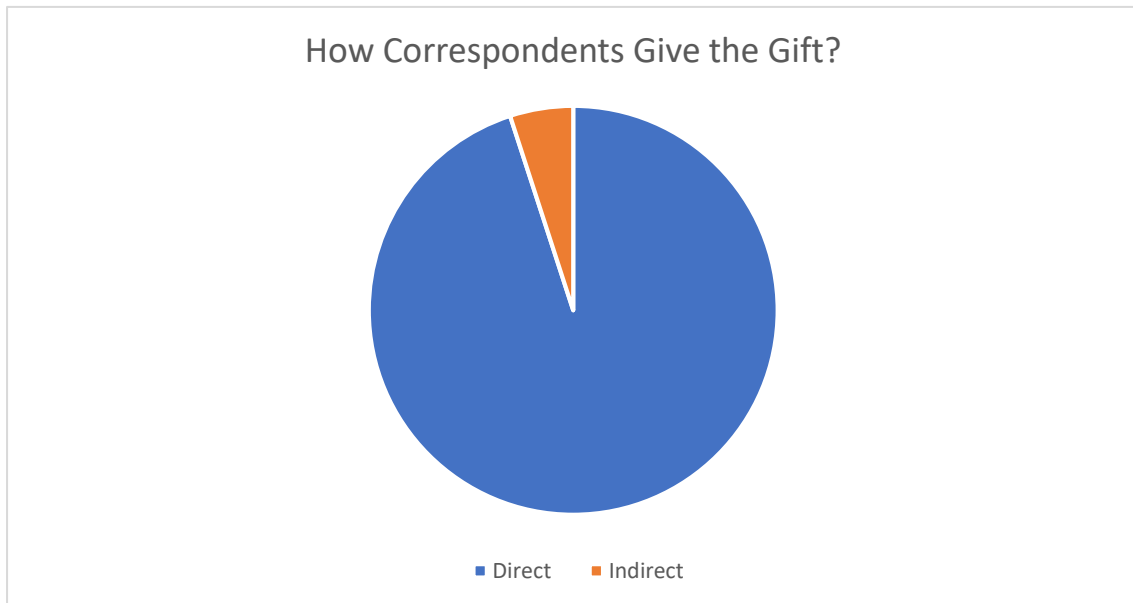
a. Correspondent Having an Gift-Giving to Someone



Picture 1. Graphic Chart of Correspondent Having an Gift-Giving to Someone Results

From the small online surveys that writers conducted, writers raise an first question on the surveys, that is “Have you ever given a gift to someone?” And the results is all correspondents (20 people) or 100% on them is have an giving gift to someone.

b. How the Correspondents Give the Gifts



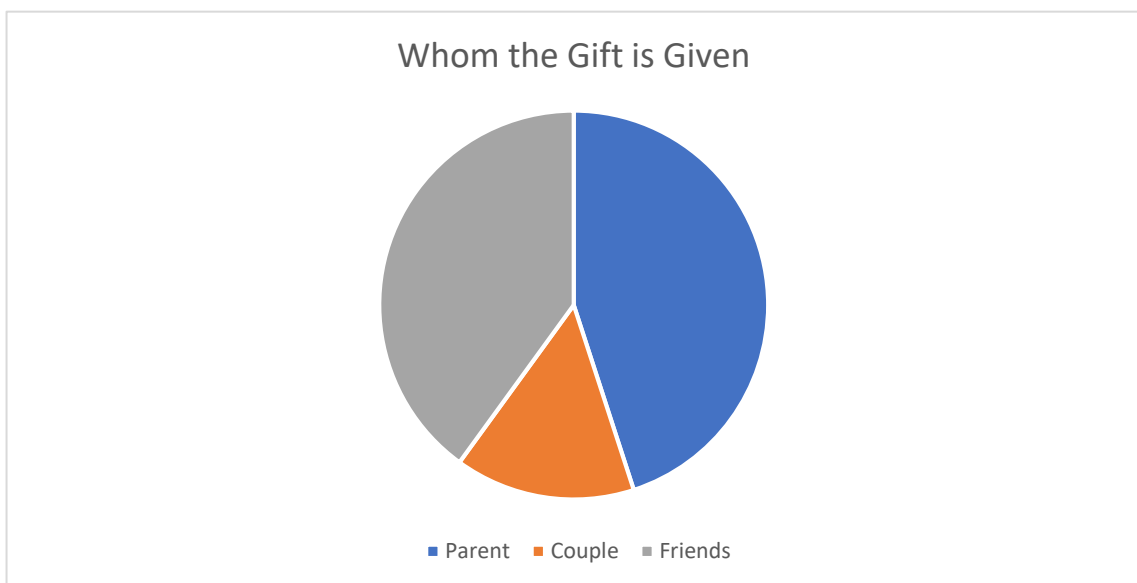
Picture 2. Graphic Chart of Correspondent Give the Gift Results

In the second survey’s question, writers raise an question “Do you give the gifts directly or indirectly?” and the result is:

- a. 19 correspondents (95%, showing on blue part) is give the gifts directly, and
- b. 1 correspondent (5%, showing on orange part) is give the gifts indirectly.

Most of correspondents prefer to give gifts directly to the person to be gifted rather than indirectly to the person.

c. Whom the Correspondent Gives the Gift



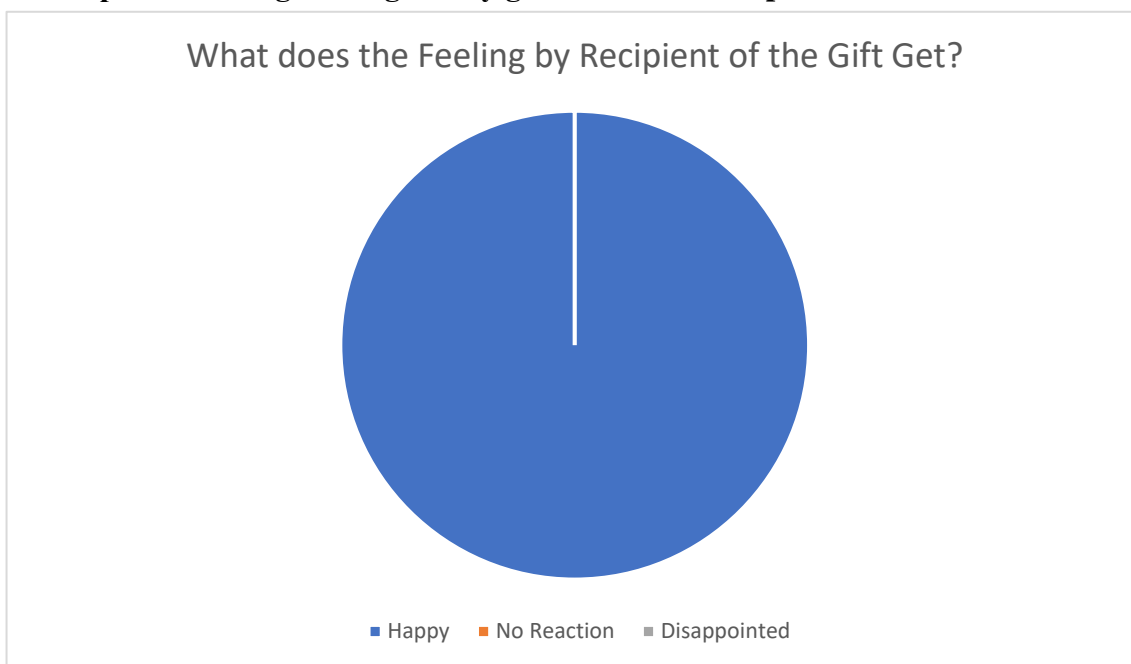
Picture 3. Graphic Chart of Whom the Gift is Given Results

On third survey’s question, writers raise an question “to whom the correspondent gives the gift?” and the result is:

- a. 9 correspondents (45%, showing on blue part) is the gift given to their parents,
- b. 8 correspondents (40%, showing on grey part) is the gift given to their friends, and
- c. 3 correspondents (15%, showing on orange part) is the gift given to their couples.

With these results, correspondent’s gifts going to parents and friends is the mostly given to, while the gifts going to couples are the least given to.

d. The recipient’s feeling of the gift they get from the correspondent



Picture 4. Graphic Chart of What does the Feeling by Recipient of the Gift Get Results

For the last survey’s question, writers raise an question “**What does the Feeling by Recipient of the Gift Get?**” and the result is is all recipient for the gift they got from correspondents (20 people) or 100% on them have an happy feelings.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that O. Henry’s short story “The Gift of The Magi” uses an situational irony, to tells the readers that regardless of the recipient, gifts have the power to bring joy and create lasting memories.

It is evident that gift-giving is not only a tradition, but also a meaningful way to express love and appreciation for those closest to us. By identifying the settings, characters, gift-giving

aspects and analyzing them in the small surveys that writers conducted, the act of giving and receiving gifts has a positive impact on people's emotions and relationships.

Therefore, it is important to continue to celebrate special occasions and holidays with the exchange of gifts to strengthen bonds and spread happiness. Overall, the act of giving and receiving gifts should be cherished and valued in our society to create an happiness and joy in our life.

"To give a special gift to a loved one, consider creating a memorable experience or associating the gift with a significant event in their life. Personalizing the gift and adding a surprise element can make it more enjoyable and exciting for the recipient. Sacrifice and effort put into the gift can also enhance its specialness and make it unforgettable." (Teresa, 2020)

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