

Example of essay on anthropology: the action of giving a gift

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



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Cultural expectations and meaning laden the tendency of giving a gift to another person. In fact, western culture debates the fact that gifts lack an attachment in the future where the recipient has an obligation to reciprocate and emulate the actions of the person who gave the gift in the first place. The assertion in western culture and many other cultures around the world is that gifts are symbolic of sincere appreciation and gratitude in light of the varying relationships that people have. In fact, the culture of giving and receiving gifts began early in the history of intercultural exchanges such as between the Hindu and the British.

For instance, the relationships between the British and the Indians in New England was marked by an occasional exchange of gifts in spite of the nature of the relationship between the two groups. It dates back as early as 1764, and the visitors understood that they had to reciprocate the gifts they received from the natives as a gesture of good manners. The “ Indian Gift” was one of the common phrases at the time to an extent that it was identified as a proverbial expression (Cronk, 1)

Critical Analysis of My Gift Giving Practices

I have developed a culture of giving gifts over the years. As much I may not do it regularly, gifts are an important part of my socio-economic circle. I have to plan for them in advance to ensure that I do not fail to give any to those who deserve them. I have developed a culture of begin by identifying those whom I have a close interpersonal relationship with such as friends, family, colleagues, mentors, and any others. After such evaluation, I mark important dates such as birthdays, holidays, religious, and other cultural celebrations that require me to show my appreciation, good wishes, and gratitude for the positive contribution they make in my life.

Culturally, I wait for important occasions and particular celebrations to give someone a gift. Most of my gifting practice is pre-meditated and planned on certain dates. I rarely buy gifts impromptu because I know when to expect to give them. For instance, I am aware when my siblings sit their exams and I often set aside contingency funds to get them a gift whenever they perform exceptionally. As such, I have developed a culture of giving gifts on time and at the time, that person expects to receive a gift.

I believe that they have more meaning and sentimental value when the person receives them in good time. As much as I have a rich culture of giving gifts, I do seem to reward every good act with a gift. For me, gifts are symbolic of significant events in one's life unlike in many other cultures where people reward several occurrences. Lastly, I do not have restrictions on the amount of money that I should spend on a gift. I often buy anything that I feel the person needs or deserves.

Critical Analysis of another Culture's Gifting Practices

Different cultures have different gifting practices. Taking the case of the Hindu for instance, gift are customary and perceived to be a sign of the friendship between different people. However, the Hindu believe that it is not necessary to give gifts upon the first meeting with a person. Moreover, most of the people are not advised to give expensive gifts to others unless they have a very close connection or relationship with the recipient. Moreover, the Hindu also have restrictions on the type of wrapping that should be used when delivering a gift. Bright colors such as green, yellow, and red have to be used as a sign of happiness and goodwill that comes with the gift (Bergquist and Ljungberg 12). They believe that black wrapping is dull and considered inauspicious. It is also important to note that the Hindu do not open their gifts in the presence of the person giving them. They also give gifts for the smallest gestures of kindness and humanity or friendship. For instance, one is expected to carry a gift whenever a Hindu invites them for dinner. The visitor may also carry gifts for the children in the family.

Discussion of the Cultural Implications of Each Perspective

Gift giving is an elemental component of the cultures. Different cultures have different conceptions and perspectives concerning the actions of gift giving. The conceptions or the elements of giving gifts portray certain significance on these cultures and the activities or beliefs of these cultures. For this reason, it is elemental that the implications or the analyses of the process of gift giving vary across cultures. The variations of these practices and the implications are fueled by the traditions and the beliefs of these cultures

(Bergquist and Ljungberg 12). Gift giving traditions and ceremonies are as far reaching and steady as the family units; as the fundamental customs of sustenance; as guidelines administering conduct and standards about the love of divinities, which run from neighborhood divine beings to the unamenable abstractions. Starting from the involved ceremonies of penance and the votive offerings found in old religions to the basic sharing of welcome and nourishment that portray the present, endowments are connected with numerous religious celebrations even today.

The culture of the gift-giving actions is ubiquitous because of its significance. It forms the foundation of the notions of generosity and hospitality; the development of the obligations and the anticipated fulfillment of those obligations. This aspect is at the heart of the families, the clans, the tribes, and the social contracts, which define the cultures and the societies. The transactions through the actions and the symbolic receiving and giving of gifts provides the social and cultural glue, which enhances or makes possible the alliances, loyalties, coalitions, and friendships upon which all the social organizations rest (Bergquist and Ljungberg 33). The capacity to establish and maintain the social organizations with incentives of working together give individuals in the societies and the cultures crucial evolutionary adaptations that enable them liberates themselves from various vicissitudes of the environments in which they live. For this reason, the actions of gift giving remain one of the most durable cultural and societal activities.

Thoughtful Insights

Gift giving is not only for the events but it is also an imperative part of social and cultural conduct that is elemental to reinforce connections and bonds between individuals. It has been an activity for many years. In prior social orders, bargaining may have been viewed as a type of gift giving or gift trade. Nevertheless, the individual giving the gifts as self-satisfaction and self-fulfillment gets the value. Gift giving sometimes confirms new identities. Individuals are their own innovative executives in the administration of importance (" Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective" 18). As in primitive societies, trade is an arrangement of implications included in the forming of both individual and social importance. Sharing things brings others into mutual connections, and into the broadened selves of individuals. There are three general inspirations a recipient may ascribe to a provider: standards, self-interest, and philanthropy. Contingent upon these elements, and the announcements the recipient sees the gifts makes concerning the donors, one, and their relationship, the beneficiary will feel fulfillment, commitment, and the desire to respond.

The typical estimation of gifts seems to overwhelm the monetary estimation of gifts, aside from conceivably for charitable giving. Moreover, advantages to the supplier and the harmoniousness of the items with the provider's self have a tendency to overwhelm gift buy, in spite of the fact that advantages to other and compatibility with the beneficiary's self are fairly essential in gift choices. Nevertheless, the more sacrificial the gift is seen to be by the beneficiary, the more the gift has a tendency to be compatible with the collector's mental self-view. Additionally, such gifts are frequently

incongruent with the supplier's mental self-view (" Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective" 25). Providers and collectors are consequently members in a procedure portrayed as " the administration of significance, albeit most members scarcely conceptualize the gift-giving actions in this design. As such, the actions of gift giving are elemental in the administration of the gifts offered or the processes of the gift giving itself because of the portrayal of the societal attachment and significance. It is essential across all cultures with different viewpoints concerning the concept of the gift giving because of the beliefs and customs of the societies. Culture shocks are sometimes experienced with reference to giving and receiving gifts.

Works Cited

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