

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research contributes to assess materialism in the context of wedding gift expectations. Materialism is defined as the tendency to place a relatively high level of importance on material possessions prior to spiritual matters. Materialism, as a value, can be measured in three subscales: (1) acquisition centrality, stating that materialists place possessions and their acquisition at the center of their lives, (2) acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, referring to that owning or acquiring the right possessions is a key to happiness, and (3) possession-defined success, meaning that success can be judged by the number and quality of accumulated possessions. In addition, the two dimensions of gift-reception, the sheer possession of something and the emotional experience that accompanies the reception of a gift, provide a link to assess materialism in the context of gift expectations.

One hundred people from the city of Guilin, Zhuhai or Shanghai with an intention of getting married between one month and one year were surveyed for the purpose of examining how importantly they view their possessions or acquisitions of wedding gifts and how much those possessions contribute to their expected happiness and success in life. The result indicates that the Chinese value of *Li* encourages people to be self-focused and materialistic. Possession has become a symbol of how people's lives are valuable and meaningful.

Key Words: *Gift-giving, Li, materialism, Yi*