

Peer, Parent, and Media Influences in Teen Apparel Shopping

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Recently developed normative versus informative interpersonal influence scales were modified and extended to explore interpersonal influences in teen apparel shopping. Three major influence sources were considered—peers, parents, and the media. Major findings indicated that teens receive significantly more parental influences during special shopping than ordinary shopping; parent- and media-informative influences exceed almost all others whereas media-normative influence is dominated by almost all other influences. These findings suggest that advertisers and marketers could avoid targeting teens with normative messages, since they are more likely to reach teens through informative messages specifically directed at their parents. Teen age, gender, family size, and gift money to teens were found to significantly affect the level and type of teen apparel shopping influences.

INTRODUCTION

Various aspects of teen behavior have attracted attention since the fifties, such as adolescent independence from parental control (Psathas 1957), peer pressure in teen choices (Brittain 1963), clothing behavior at school (Hamilton and Warden 1966), and teen money management (Hurt 1961). Since the seventies, adolescent behavior has been studied in the context of consumer learning and socialization (e.g., Churchill and Moschis 1979; Moore and Moschis 1981). Children's shopping behavior has also been explored (e.g., Grossbart, Carlson, and Walsh 1991; McNeal 1987; Ward,

Wackman, and Wartella 1977). Despite substantial and dramatically increased teen spending in recent years (Hall 1987; Stern 1985), teen shopping behavior has not received any significant attention by researchers. This study explores the interpersonal influences that affect teen decision-making in apparel shopping.

Consumer socialization research has identified three major sources of adolescent influences: peers, parents, and the media (e.g., Brittain 1963; Churchill and Moschis 1979; Moore and Moschis 1981; Robertson 1979). These influences have been studied singly or in pairs but not collectively. This research considers all three sources or agents of socialization in teen apparel shopping: *peers* (brother(s)/sister(s)/friend(s) at school or workplace), *parents* (father/mother/guardian), and the *media* (newspapers, TV, radio, and magazines). Teen apparel is assumed to include clothing, shoes, jewelry, and cosmetics (Graham and Hamdan 1988; Hall 1987). Teen apparel shopping is studied in relation to *ordinary* (regular, inexpensive wear) versus *special* (occasional, expensive wear) items.

NATURE OF INTERPERSONAL INFLUENCES

The concept of interpersonal influences is derived from two related research traditions: interpersonal influence susceptibility (e.g., Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989; Burnkrant and Cousineau 1975; Ward, Wackman, and Wartella 1977) and **consumer socialization** (e.g., Churchill and Moschis 1979; Moore and Moschis 1981; Moschis 1985).

In the first research tradition, scholars have investigated informational, value-expressive, and utilitarian (Burnkrant and Cousineau 1975) interpersonal influence susceptibility. Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel (1989) found the latter two to be quite similar and designated them as "normative." This study uses the two-dimensional model (informative/normative) for studying interpersonal influences in teen ap-

parel shopping. Informative influences help to guide consumers in product, brand, and store search, whereas normative influences direct and control evaluations, choices, and loyalties (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989).

In the second research tradition, consumer socialization is defined as "the process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning in the marketplace" (Ward 1980, p. 380). This socialization occurs mostly through overt interaction between teens and influence sources in regard to purchase, use, and disposal of goods and services (Ward, Wackman, and Wartella 1977). Consumer socialization research indicates that parents influence children and adolescents by letting them observe and imitate their behaviors, by interacting with them in their consumption, and by providing them with opportunities for guided consumption (Ward, Wackman, and Wartella 1977). Adolescents frequently communicate with their peers prior to making purchases in order to maintain group identity (Bearden and Randall 1990). This research does not directly deal with socialization. However, socialization literature does help to identify the dimensions and types of influences that peers, parents, and the media can have on teens.

Following these two research traditions, shopping-related teen influences are defined in this research note as the person- and situation-factors that affect teen shopping, such as product, brand and store opinions, market advice, and purchase values and norms available from peers, parents, and the media. These influences are received either passively by observing behavior or actively by seeking or receiving influences from significant others (Gatignon and Robertson 1985). Interpersonal influences develop attitudes, norms, values, and aspirations among adolescents in social settings such as the home, school, and workplace environments (e.g., Moschis 1985; Moschis and Churchill 1978). Evidence suggests that parental guidance helps adolescents learn rational consumer behaviors such as managing money and comparative shopping, and assessing price-quality relationships (Ward and Wackman 1973). Most family influences continue well into adulthood (Ward, Wackman, and Wartella 1977).

Two shopping situations are considered in studying interpersonal influences: 1) ordinary—those involving the purchase of less expensive everyday items such as casual clothing, inexpensive sneakers, and junk jewelry, and 2) special—those involving the purchase of expensive, occasional-wear teen apparel items such as formal clothing, dress shoes, and gold jewelry.

DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF INTERPERSONAL INFLUENCE SCALES

In order to assess the impact of the three sources of influence (peers, parents, and the media) and the two influence types (informative and normative), six Teen Interpersonal Influence (TII) scales were developed. The Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel (1989) interpersonal influence scale was closely followed with some extensions and modifications to reflect teen apparel shopping. Scale statements included in the TII instrument typically describe influences originating from peers, parents, and the media that are both normative and informative, and involve product, brand and

store search, and choices. Scale items were generated from teen shopping-related trade literature (e.g., Bodec 1981; Graham and Hamdan 1988; Hall 1987). Discussions and pre-tests with several teen groups resulted in ten scale items for each of the six TII scales.

Convenience samples of teen-age students from two comparable high schools were chosen to develop and validate the TII scales. One sample consisted of 134 students from a private school in suburban Philadelphia; the other consisted of 100 students from a public school in suburban Detroit. The students responded to each of the 60 influence statements for both "ordinary" and "special" shopping situations. A 5-point agreement/disagreement Likert scale was used for measuring responses to interpersonal influence statements. Relevant demographic items were also included in the questionnaire. A brief explanation of the research objectives and key terms preceded test administration.

Using Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, the two school samples were found to be statistically equivalent ($\alpha < 0.10$) on each of the six TII scale scores under both ordinary and special shopping contexts.

Cronbach alphas for each of the six TII scales for each school were consistently between 0.51 and 0.75 under both ordinary and special shopping contexts. These alphas are sufficiently high for exploratory research and scale development (Nunnally 1978). Given that the two samples are equivalent and therefore serve as replications, the alphas partially support convergent validity of the TII scales.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data analysis reported in the following pages is based on the combined sample ($N = 234$). Given the hypothesized underlying dimensions (six TII scales) in the data, a principal component factor analysis was executed. Several factor and reliability analyses were conducted until the hypothesized six TII scales resulted as presented in the Appendix. Items in each scale loaded significantly (>0.31 varimax-rotated factor loading) on the same factor, with no significant cross loadings. Factor loadings across both ordinary and special apparel shopping contexts were very similar, thus validating the ordinary/special shopping categorizations. The Appendix also presents scale item means and standard deviations under ordinary and special shopping situations. Significant differences between scale item means under ordinary and special shopping contexts emerge only in the case of the parent-normative and parent-informative TII scales.

Table 1 reports inter-TII-scale correlations. Given two influence types (informative/normative), three influence sources (peers/parents/media) and two apparel shopping occasions (ordinary/special), there are 66 correlation coefficients. Table 1 classifies the correlation coefficients into four groups. Nomological validity requires the condition that within-subject (intra-source) correlations be greater (in absolute value) than across-subject (inter-source) correlation coefficients (Peter and Churchill 1986). As is evident in Table 1, this condition is verified in relation to the TII scales. Compared to the correlations in the first and second groups which are across-subjects (inter-source), the intra-source/intra-type (fourth group) and intra-source/inter-type

TABLE 1
TII Scale Inter- and Intra-Correlations^a

Influence Source/Type	Apparel Shopping Occasion		(<i>_SPL.</i> / (<i>_ORD.</i>	(<i>_ORD.</i> / (<i>_SPL.</i>
	Ordinary	Special		
<i>Inter-Source/Inter-Type:^b</i>				
MEN PAI	.09	.03	.07 ^c	.03 ^d
PAI PEN	.12	.18	.09	.15
MEI PEN	.18	.18	.17	.11
MEI PAN	.26	.23	.22	.24
PAN PEI	.24	.26	.31	.21
MEN PEI	.38	.39	.37	.34
<i>Inter-Source/Intra-Type:^b</i>				
PAI PEI	.22	.22	.20	.21
MEI PAI	.23	.26	.22	.20
MEN PAN	.29	.23	.29	.25
PAN PEN	.29	.29	.30	.26
MEI PEI	.36	.39	.33	.34
MEN PEN	.45	.50	.46	.47
<i>Intra-Source/Inter-Type:^b</i>				
MEI MEN	.33	.32	.30	.31
PAI PAN	.53	.54	.37	.40
PEN PEI	.62	.58	.59	.55
<i>Intra-Source/Intra-Type:^b</i>				
PEN PEN			.88	.88
PEI PEI			.83	.83
PAN PAN			.72	.72
PAI PAI			.68	.68
MEN MEN			.85	.85
MEI MEI			.88	.88

^aAll Pearson correlation coefficients above 0.11 are significant at $p < 0.01$.

^bThe symbols represent the six TII scales:

PEN = PEER-NORMATIVE, PEI = PEER INFORMATIVE, PAN = PARENT-NORMATIVE, PAI = PARENT-INFORMATIVE, MEN = MEDIA-NORMATIVE, AND MEI = MEDIA-INFORMATIVE

^cCorrelation of (MEN) special with (PAI) ordinary; read other correlations in this column accordingly.

^dCorrelation of (MEN) ordinary with (PAI) special; read other correlations in this column accordingly.

TABLE 2
Means and Standard Deviations of TII Scales

TII Scale	Ordinary Shopping		Special Shopping		<i>t</i> value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Peer-Normative	2.05	0.660	2.10	0.660	-0.819
Peer-Informative	2.33	0.798	2.40	0.789	-0.954
Parent-Normative	1.95	0.732	2.38	0.877	-5.758 ^a
Parent-Informative	2.73	0.894	3.16	0.994	-4.920 ^a
Media-Normative	1.95	0.799	1.93	0.883	0.257
Media-Informative	2.59	1.133	2.71	1.164	-1.149

^a $p < 0.01$.

TABLE 3
**Patterns in Teen Apparel Shopping Influences:
Peer-, Parent-, and Media-Sources**

TII Scale Comparison	Situation	
	Ordinary <i>t</i> value	Special <i>t</i> value
Parent-informative vs. parent-normative	9.678 ^a	7.748 ^a
Parent-informative vs. peer-informative	5.024 ^a	8.645 ^a
Parent-informative vs. peer-normative	8.369 ^a	12.923 ^a
Parent-informative vs. media-informative	1.455	3.940 ^a
Media-informative vs. peer-normative	5.737 ^a	7.225 ^a
Media-informative vs. peer-informative	2.942 ^a	3.613 ^a
Media-informative vs. parent-informative	6.990 ^a	3.036 ^a
Media-informative vs. parent-normative	6.632 ^a	7.860 ^a
Media-normative vs. parent-informative	-9.162 ^a	-13.086 ^a
Media-normative vs. peer-informative	-4.476 ^a	-5.391 ^a
Media-normative vs. parent-normative	0.221	-5.542 ^a
Media-normative vs. peer-normative	-1.556	-1.537
Parent-normative vs. peer-informative	-4.877 ^a	0.512
Parent-normative vs. peer-normative	-1.871 ^a	4.660 ^a
Peer-informative vs. peer-normative	3.285 ^a	4.465 ^a

^a $p < 0.01$.

(third group) correlation coefficients are among the highest. These results partially support the nomological validity of the TII scales.

Table 2 reports significant differences in TII scale means between ordinary and special shopping contexts. Judged by *t* values, parent-normative and parent-informative influences on teens are significantly higher for special shopping ($t = 5.758$, $t = 4.920$) compared with ordinary shopping. By definition, special shopping implies more money, more social risk, and therefore more counsel and information-search. Higher parent (informative and normative) influences during special shopping are expected, especially if parents finance most of these apparel purchases.

Table 3 presents significant inter-TII-scale differences under both ordinary and special shopping situations. A major finding here is that parent-informative influence significantly exceeds all other teen interpersonal influences except media-informative under the ordinary shopping situation. This result is supported by related literature. Source credibility and consistency of influence have been found to be critical under both informative and normative influences (Mahajan, Muller, and Kerin 1984; Sternthal, Phillips, and Dholakia 1978). If parents are considered credible and consistent, then their informative and normative influences should be strong enough to surpass all peer and all media influences. However, the data support the dominance of parent-informative but not normative influences.

A second major finding is that media-informative influence exceeds all other influences except parent-informative under both ordinary and special shopping situations. But media-normative influence is exceeded by almost all other influences under both shopping situations. These two results suggest that informative media messages impact teens more than normative media messages.

TABLE 4
Socio-Demographic Correlates of Teen Apparel Influences: OLS Regression Beta Weights^a

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable				Model	
	Gender	Age	Family Size	Gift Money	F	R ²
<i>Ordinary Apparel Shopping</i>						
Peer Norm.						
Peer Inf.			.17		6.87	.03
Parent Norm.	-.21				10.20	.04
Parent Inf.						
Media Norm.	-.22				11.84	.05
Media Inf.	-.20			-.25	13.19	.10
<i>Special Apparel Shopping</i>						
Peer Norm.		-.20			9.59	.04
Peer Inf.			.18		7.48	.03
Parent Norm.	-.25	-.23			13.43	.10
Parent Inf.			.17	-.21	10.09	.08
Media Norm.	-.21				10.79	.04
Media Inf.			.18	-.25	13.58	.11

^aOnly those with significant ($p < .01$) t values are included.

1; female = 2), the consistently negative betas under gender in Table 4 indicate that teen boys receive more parent- and media-normative influences than teen girls under both ordinary and special shopping situations.

Family size also has significant explanatory power and correlates positively with peer-informative influence under both shopping situations, and also with parent- and media-informative influences under special shopping situation. The larger the family size, the more the influence received by teens. The next most explanatory variable is gift money received by teens for birthdays, holidays, and vacations. It is negatively related to media- and parent-normative influences as indicated in Table 4. The larger the gift of money received by teens, the lower the influence received during apparel shopping.

Lastly, as expected, teen apparel influences decrease with age, particularly in relation to peer- and parent-normative influences during special apparel shopping (Table 4). This finding is consistent if maturity level and drive for independence are factors that contribute to teens establishing their own norms, even though these norms may very often conform to group stereotypes. Trade literature on teens does affirm growing teen independence and maturity with age (Bodec 1981; Graham and Hamdan 1988).

Correlates of Interpersonal Influence

Several socio-demographic determinants of interpersonal influences and socialization, such as gender, age, birth-order, earned incomes, money gifts, and dual income homes have been investigated for children and adolescents. Parental influences were found to decrease with adolescent age (Moschis and Moore 1979; Moschis, Moore, and Stephens 1977). The level of influence was found to differ with gender, social class, and social risk of the products involved (Moschis, Moore, and Stephens 1977). Money-related variables such as parental allowances to teens, teen-earned income, and gift money to teens are also found to influence teen shopping (Hall 1987; Zollo 1989).

Following this literature, seven socio-demographic determinants of teen interpersonal influences were investigated in the study: gender, age, birth-order, family size, parental allowances to teens, teen-earned income, and gift money to teens. Since both schools were located in upper middle-class neighborhoods, social-class status, as reflected by parents' education and occupational levels, was considered similar and not included.

With each of the six TII scale scores as a dependent variable and the seven socio-demographics as independent variables, ordinary least square (OLS) regressions were run separately under ordinary and special shopping contexts. The results of these twelve regression runs are reported in Table 4. Parental allowances to teens, teen-earned income, and birth-order did not significantly determine the level or type of influence received, and are not included in Table 4.

Judged by relatively small R-square values, socio-demographic variables explain little variance in teen interpersonal influences. Based on significant betas ($p < 0.01$), gender emerges as a major factor explaining variance of three influence types under ordinary and two under special shopping situations. Entered as a nominal variable (male =

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research on the assessment of teen interpersonal influences during teen apparel shopping considered three sources of influence (peers, parents, and the media) collectively, under the recently explored informative/normative influence type dichotomies, and in the context of ordinary versus special apparel shopping situations.

However, the findings of this exploratory research should be interpreted within the limiting context of sample size ($N = 234$), sample space (two suburban schools from two large states), and time (the data were collected in 1990).

Major findings of this research include: a) teens receive significantly more informative and normative influences from parents during special shopping than ordinary shopping; b) except for media-informative influence under ordinary shopping situation, parent-informative influence exceeds all other influences in both shopping situations; c) apart from parent-informative influence, media-informative influence dominates all other influences; d) media-normative influence is dominated by almost all other influences. The last two findings suggest that informative media messages impact teens more than normative media messages. The last three findings combined suggest that advertisers and marketers should avoid targeting teens with normative messages, since they are more likely to reach teens through informative messages specifically directed at their parents.

In general, socio-demographic variables explain little variance in teen interpersonal influences. Major findings regarding socio-demographic determinants include: a) parental allowances to teens, teen-earned incomes, and birth-order do not determine the level or type of influence received; b) teen boys receive more parent- and media-normative influences than teen girls for both ordinary and

special shopping situations; c) the larger the family, the more influence received by teens; d) the larger the gift money received by teens, the lower the influence received; and e) teen apparel influences decrease with age. All these findings need to be investigated further. More extensive research across more representative teen groups is needed for this endeavor.

Further research should also assess teen influences in relation to product involvement. Susceptibility to interpersonal influences could be proportional to one's involvement with the products/services that one plans to purchase. The level of influences received could also vary with the stage of the purchase process. During the earlier stages teens might receive more informative influences and during the later stages of the purchase process more normative influences (Gatignon and Robertson 1985), suggesting that pre-purchase advertising to teens could be more informative, whereas point-of-sale promotions could be more normative.

APPENDIX TII Scales, Item Means, and Standard Deviations

Interpersonal Influence Scale	Situation				<i>p</i> ^a
	Ordinary		Special		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<i>Peer-Normative (PEN) Scale</i>					
I rarely purchase the latest products until I am sure my peers approve of them.	2.28	1.07	2.58	1.18	.01
It is important that my peers approve of the store where I buy.	1.84	1.09	1.99	1.17	
Am very loyal to stores where my peers shop.	2.53	1.15	2.51	1.14	
If I want to be like my peers, I always buy the brands they buy.	2.05	1.18	1.99	1.17	
I work long hours and save to afford the things my friends buy.	2.30	1.28	2.26	1.26	
I achieve a sense of belonging by buying the same brands my peers buy.	1.63	0.94	1.72	1.00	
My peers very much influence the choice of my shopping friends.	1.71	1.12	1.67	1.08	
<i>Peer-Informative (PEI) Scale</i>					
I regularly ask my friends regarding the latest fads and fashions.	2.73	1.38	2.76	1.32	
I always talk to friends about prices and quality before I buy.	2.53	1.22	2.62	1.27	
To make sure I buy the right product, I often watch my friends buy.	2.13	1.14	2.10	1.33	
My siblings always talk to me about the ads before I buy anything.	1.91	1.09	2.13	1.24	

(continued)

APPENDIX (Continued)

Interpersonal Influence Scale	Situation				<i>p</i> ^a
	Ordinary		Special		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<i>Parent-Normative (PAN) Scale</i>					
I always follow my parents' decisions by buying the same products & brands.	1.69	0.92	1.97	1.11	.01
My parents accompany me when I purchase.	2.30	1.17	2.94	1.37	.01
What, where, and which brand I buy are very much determined by my parents.	2.04	1.11	2.35	1.30	.01
I always shop with my parents.	2.11	1.16	2.66	1.36	.01
My parents decide all my shopping needs.	1.63	0.99	1.97	1.23	.01
<i>Parent-Informative (PAI) Scale</i>					
I never buy any new product until my parents and I have discussed it.	1.94	1.20	2.48	1.42	.01
When I do not understand prices and quality I consult my parents.	3.49	1.25	3.68	1.22	
I often discuss my purchase plans with my parents.	2.76	1.28	3.32	1.31	.01
<i>Media-Normative (MEN) Scale</i>					
I buy only those products/brands that are advertised on TV, radio & teen magazines.	2.03	1.15	2.04	1.20	
Radio & TV ads determine my brand loyalties.	2.30	1.19	2.25	1.17	
I continue buying the same brands as long as my favorite rock stars endorse them.	1.51	1.02	1.50	1.01	
<i>Media-Informative (MEI) Scale</i>					
I always consult the media to determine the best buys.	2.67	1.35	2.73	1.40	
I always look at the ads before I buy.	2.50	1.36	2.70	1.40	

^aSignificance of the difference of ordinary vs. special means test.

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