Parenting, Peer Influence, and Role Model on Compulsive Buying Tendencies of Early Adolescent Consumers

Chuanlan Liu, Louisiana State University
Robert Laird, University of New Orleans

This research focused on an important consumer group, early adolescent consumers who continue to be an increasing segment in the marketplace. A research model of compulsivity antecedents, parental solicitation, peer influence, and role modeling was developed and hypotheses pertaining to early adolescent consumers’ tendencies to buy compulsively were presented. The research model was calibrated on survey data collected through orally administered questionnaires via face-to-face interviews. A sample of 133 parent-child dyads were recruited in the summer after the adolescents had completed their sixth grade school year. Results show that early adolescents’ compulsive buying tendencies were mainly influenced by peer and role mode. Influence of parenting was mediated by peer influence.

[to cite]:


[url]:

http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/13613/volumes/v35/NA-35

[copyright notice]:

This work is copyrighted by The Association for Consumer Research. For permission to copy or use this work in whole or in part, please contact the Copyright Clearance Center at http://www.copyright.com/.
that is, the current composition of consumer confidence, and (3) revealing the significance for public policy makers to conduct longitudinal analyses to detect the dynamics of consumer confidence over time.

To develop our index that projects consumers’ perceived confidence, a secondary data analysis was undertaken. Factor analysis revealed that the total LSCCI can be divided into two sub-indexes: one sub-index that measures consumers’ present confidence (our Present Lifestyle Consumer Confidence Index; PLSCCI) and another sub-index that measures consumers’ future confidence (our Future Lifestyle Consumer Confidence Index; FLSCCI).

For our analyses, we calculated consumers’ confidence from 1997 until 2001, based on the data available from the DDB Needham Life Style Study. By doing so, we obtained several interesting and important preliminary results in respect to our cross-sectional, micro-level as well as our longitudinal analyses. These findings have important implications especially for public policy makers. Overall, we demonstrate that the regular screening of cross-sectional consumer confidence helps identify the undercurrents, that is, the momentum that takes place below the aggregated surface of the overall consumer confidence. As such, the segmenting variables as well as the problematic groups within a particular variable that constitute potential threats to the local economy can be identified. Further, to perform a regular screening over time helps chart the dynamics of those undercurrents. As such, consumer segments showing negative or highly fluctuating trends over time can be identified and addressed to avoid potential recessions, and instead strengthened to prompt economic recovery or stability. Hence, our proposed LSCCI helps discover challenging segments that (1) are low in consumer confidence in a particular year, (2) show a continuously decreasing level of consumer confidence, and (3) are very unstable over time. By discovering such challenging segments, public policy makers will be able to form preventive policy and are, to a certain extent, able to direct the local economy into the desired direction.

Selected References
understand more on compulsive buying. For instance, this group of consumers enables us to investigate compulsive buying at the early/ light stage and to identify different types of motivations for compulsive buying other than psychological tension.

For early adolescents the personal goal to establish an identity separate from parents or others may be a more salient drive to develop compulsive buying tendencies than reducing psychological tensions. Previous research found that peers’ influence on teenagers’ identity establishment is reflected through impacted teenagers’ consumption (Mangleburg, Doney, & Bristol, 2004). For instance, peer groups are voluntary in nature and are not directly responsible for monitoring teens’ actions, but peers may provide an early forum in which teens can try out various aspects of the social self. In terms of buying and consumption, studies have shown that communication with peers positively affects teens’ social motivation for consumption, materialistic values, and tendency to use peer preferences in making a product choice. Therefore, we propose that peer influence has significant impact on compulsive buying tendencies.

Another factor having significant impact on identity establishment may be role modeling. A role model for an adolescent can be anyone with whom the individual comes into contact, either directly or indirectly, who potentially can influence the adolescent’s decision or behaviors (Bandura, 1986). Parents are the “assigned” role modes for adolescent. However, most adolescents choose their own “vicarious” role models which can be television and movie stars, athletes, or even best friends, as opposed to the role models of parents. Role models may influence adolescents on adopting their own set of self-image, lifestyle, and consumption pattern, and therefore have influence on adolescents’ compulsive buying tendencies. Furthermore, parenting factors (e.g., parental solicitation, spending supervision) in this transitional stage may have significant influence on compulsive buying tendencies of early adolescent consumers. Specifically, parental solicitation may reduce adolescents’ psychological tension. However, parents’ over solicitation may create some psychological tension for adolescents and hence increase their compulsive buying tendencies. Supervision of spending helps adolescents to control spending, however, it may increase adolescents’ desire to be independent from parents and therefore, increase the degree of urge to buy.

The primary objectives of this exploratory study were to (1) estimate the incidence of compulsive buying in an early adolescent population, (2) investigate the impact of parenting factors (parental solicitation, spending supervision), role model, and peer influence on compulsive buying of pre-teens.

Data from the Baton Rouge Families and Teens Project (BRFTP) were used to test the hypothesized research model. The BRFTP sample includes 133 parent-child dyads that were recruited at the end of grade 6. The sample is 45% female and 64% of the adolescents live in a two-parent home. 42% of the adolescent are White, non-Hispanic, 48% are African-American, and 8% are Hispanic. Measures were derived from questionnaires administered verbally to the adolescents during a summer visit to each family’s home.

Because of the present study’s focus on adolescents, the 11-item adolescent Compulsive Buying Scale developed by d’Astous et al. (1990) was used. Higher scores on the Likert-type items were associated with higher levels of compulsive buying. The measure of role model influence was adopted from Martin and Bush’s research (Martin & Bush, 2000). The scale of susceptibility to normative peer influence was adopted from Mangleburg et al (2004). Two monitoring processes described and tested by Stattin and Kerr (2000) were used with slight modifications of the items to make them appropriate to early adolescents. Parental solicitation as measured with 5 items and supervision of spending were measure with 6 items.

Factor analysis on compulsive buying tendencies found that this construct was multidimensional. Three dimensions were identified: (a) urge to buy, (b) lack of impulse control, and (c) post purchase guilt. Path analysis results revealed significant and positive paths from urge to buy to lack of impulse control, and to post purchase guilt, paths from susceptibility to normative peer influence to the three dimensions of compulsive buying tendencies, paths from role models to susceptibility to normative peer influence, and urge to buy, and a path from supervision of spending to lack of impulse control. The paths from parental solicitation to the three dimensions of compulsive buying tendencies were not significant. However, there was a significant negative path from parental solicitation to susceptibility to normative peer influence. Results show that early adolescents’ compulsive buying tendencies are mainly influenced by peer and role mode. Influence of parenting is mediated by peer influence. These findings indicate that compulsive buying tendencies may be developed by the early adolescent stage. At early stage of compulsive buying tendency, purposive element such as identity establishment may be a more salient factor than psychological tension on moving this tendency toward the extreme point of the compulsive buying continuum.

References