The Effect of Parenting on Adolescent Susceptibility to Peer Influence: Mediating Role of Self-Esteem

Zhiyong Yang, The University of Texas at Arlington, USA
Ashesh Mukherjee, McGill University, Canada
Michel Laroche, Concordia University, Canada

Adolescents are often susceptible to the opinions of peers, such as their friends, activity partners and co-workers, when making consumption decisions in daily life. Based on the developmental psychology literature, we develop an integrative model of adolescent susceptibility to peer influence that includes parenting strategies (parental responsiveness and parental psychological control) as driver, adolescents’ self-esteem as mediator, and stage at adolescence as moderator of susceptibility to peer influence. The overarching finding in our studies is that responsive parenting decreases susceptibility by bolstering adolescents’ self-esteem, while psychologically controlling parenting increases susceptibility without influencing adolescents’ self-esteem. This is especially true for children at their mid- and late-adolescence stages. We validate our results using cross-sectional and longitudinal data, as well as data gathered from multiple informants within a family (i.e., father, mother, and adolescent).

[to cite]:

[url]:
http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/14239/volumes/v36/NA-36

[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/.
The Effect of Parenting on Adolescent Susceptibility to Peer Influence: Mediating Role of Self-Esteem

Zhiyong Yang, University of Texas at Arlington, USA
Michel Laroche, Concordia University, Canada
Ashesh Mukherjee, McGill University, Canada

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Individuals are often influenced by the opinions of peers, such as their friends, activity partners, and colleagues at work (Price and Feick 1984). This is especially true during adolescent years, a time when individuals are particularly sensitive to ideas and trends popular among their peers (Bachmann, John, and Rao 1993). Peer influence on adolescents has significant marketing and public policy implications, since many adolescent decisions ranging from brand choice to substance abuse are affected by the opinions of peers (Kandel 1996; Rose, Boush, and Friestad 1998; Wooten and Reed 2004). In fact, peers influence not just adolescents’ choices at the brand level, but also their attitudes towards retailers, amount of money spent shopping, and attitudes towards consumption in general (Batra, Homer, and Khale 2001; Mangleburg, Doney, and Bristol 2004). Peer influence is also viewed as one of the most important factors, if not the most important one, to affect adolescent smoking or other forms of consumer misbehaviors (Akers and Jensen 2006).

Acknowledging the important role peers play in individuals’ consumption-related decisions, previous research in marketing has validated the fundamental role of susceptibility to peer influence (SPI) and its powerful impact on consumer behavior, where SPI is defined as the tendency for individuals to look to standards from peers to develop their own motivations, attitudes, and behaviors (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989). Despite the vital role SPI plays in understanding consumer behavior, little research has been conducted to investigate the driving forces of susceptibility. This issue is important because knowing about the key antecedents of SPI allows researchers and practitioners to develop effective intervening strategies to alter individuals’ vulnerability to peer influence.

In the present research, we fill this gap through examining the effects of parenting strategies on SPI among adolescents. Specifically, we develop an integrative model of adolescent susceptibility to peer influence that includes parenting strategies (parental responsiveness and parental psychological control) as driver, adolescents’ self-esteem as mediator, and stage at adolescence as moderator of susceptibility to peer influence. This overarching finding in our studies is that responsive parenting decreases susceptibility by bolstering adolescents’ self-esteem, while psychologically controlling parenting increases susceptibility without influencing adolescents’ self-esteem. This is especially true for children at their mid- and late-adolescence stages. Notably, these results were observed in both cross-sectional (Studies 1 and 2) and longitudinal data (Study 3), as well as data from both adolescents and their parents. Implications of the results for improving the effectiveness of parent-oriented anti-smoking campaigns are discussed.

REFERENCES


