The Impact of Companion on the Consumption Behavior of Students in China

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Abstract. This study investigates the influence of peers on the consumption patterns of Chinese adolescents, synthesizes the existing research, and suggests coping strategies that may assist adolescents in achieving consumption patterns that are healthier and more sustainable in the face of peer pressure. According to the results, the guidance and influence of peers play a significant role in the purchasing decisions of Chinese adolescents. Peer influence has both positive and negative effects on individuals' consuming behaviors, including value perception, affective experience, and the desire to repurchase; the effect of perceived peer trust, control, and allure on inconsistent judgments. Peer influence has a negative impact on the consuming activities of individuals, including their value perception, affective experience, and desire to repurchase. The most apparent manifestation of peer influence is an increase in consumption knowledge and assistance in the process of developing one's own unique consumption patterns. Students struggling with consumer psychology and motivation in higher education should be referred to school-based psychological counseling services in order to receive the necessary psychological intervention and assistance.

Keywords: Conspicuous consumption; companions' attitudes; sustainable consumption education; advice for businesses.

1. Introduction

In this era of globalization and social media, China's youth have emerged as one of the most influential forces propelling the market economy. Their demand for consumer goods and interest in market trends and brands are growing [1]. Peer influence plays a substantial role in directing and influencing the purchase decisions of Chinese adolescents. Companions have a substantial impact on Chinese culture. Family and social interactions are highly valued in Chinese culture, and peer groups are one of the primary sources of identity and social connections for adolescents. Young Chinese are frequently influenced by their peers' consumption beliefs and behaviors, which has a substantial effect on their consumption patterns.

Peer interaction and communication may stimulate the interest of young people in new items and encourage them to try new foods. Sharing experiences and receiving counsel from peers can also enhance young people's confidence and aid in decision-making [2]. For instance, if a particular brand or product is popular among a young person's circle of friends, they may be persuaded by their peers to purchase it. Positive peer pressure may encourage young people to engage in new forms of consumption and expand their consumption options. In contrast, peer comparisons and social pressure may contribute to overconsumption and the pursuit of luxury products. In the era of social media, young people frequently demonstrate their social status and worth by displaying expensive products and fashion trends. This objective may, to some extent, lure young people into the pitfall of consumerism, causing them to pursue vanity and superficial satisfaction at the expense of self-respect and long-term financial planning. Peer consumption behavior may also elicit comparisons and competitiveness in young people, causing them to follow new consumption trends and fashions while ignoring their own needs and reasonable spending [3]. This study will investigate the influence of peers on the consumption behavior of Chinese youth, synthesize prior research, and offer coping mechanisms to assist youth in achieving healthier and more sustainable consumption patterns while under the influence of peers.

2. The Explanation of Companion and Consumption Behavior

Peers are a group of individuals who share similar characteristics, such as age, interests, activities, values, and social standing. It is an informal group formed by the free choice of its members, with strong cohesion; a fundamentally equal connection; extensive communication on a variety of topics; its own subculture; and a strong, authoritative core figure. Peer groups primarily influence adolescents through sharing life experiences and knowledge, encouraging individual socialization, and influencing attitudes, values, and behaviors. Companions may aid adolescents in evaluating products, selecting stores and brands, expanding their knowledge of consumption, influencing their consumption behavior, and developing distinct consumption habits. Peer similarity and being exposed to one of the first social groups have a significant impact on adolescents' cognitive development, temperament, self-concept, and behavior. The peer group effect on an individual's consumption behavior may have both positive and negative consequences.

Consuming behavior refers to the actions and decisions individuals make when they purchase and use goods and services, including product and service selection, purchasing decisions, and consuming practices. Peer influence on adolescent consumption behavior is most evident in the form of increased consumption knowledge and assistance in establishing distinctive consumption patterns. Peer influence can be achieved through the dissemination of consumption knowledge and normative effects on consumption behavior. The shared retail environment and social consumption may also influence consumer behavior. Based on this information, it can be concluded that consumption behavior refers to the consumption behavior and decision-making of individuals, including their selection, purchase, and use of goods and services.

3. The Impact of Peer Relationships on Conspicuous Consumption

Conspicuous consumption refers to the purchase of products or services with the primary purpose of demonstrating one's social status, wealth, talent, or achievement in order to attract the attention of others or obtain their acclaim and recognition. Individuals are frequently motivated by vanity when they attempt to enhance their self-esteem and confidence by displaying expensive products to attract the attention and admiration of others. Practicality is rarely the driving force behind extravagant expenditure. The quality and functionality of the product may not be the most important factors in the purchasing decision, but they must be acknowledged. The conspicuous consumption in the social interaction consumption of young adults often forms a consensus and standard. They will consume according to the standards of their peers, and even compare with each other. This kind of comparison behavior is to improve one's status, gain respect and recognition, and thus enhance interpersonal relationships. In the research [4] conducted by Yin Li, college students are the object of studying their consumption behavior influenced by their peers. College students are a distinct social group that is influenced by social and economic development; their consumer behavior and routines differ from those of other demographic groups. In their consuming behavior, there is a phenomenon referred to as "social interaction" consumption, which is primarily reflected in socializing through gift-giving, romantic consumption, and hosting guests for dinner. In addition, college students' consumption is dependent on familial assistance, they lack autonomy in understanding and planning, their shopping urges are difficult to control, and their saving habits are poor. This group is easily influenced by its peers, learns from one another in terms of social interaction and consumption, and is subject to comparison and pressure, with an emphasis on appearance and ostentation. In general, college students exhibit a high level of social contact consumption, a lack of autonomous knowledge and planning, and a propensity to be influenced by peer groups.

College students in eight cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an, Chengdu, Wuhan, Zhuhai, Harbin, and Hangzhou, are surveyed using a random sample and questionnaires are distributed to collect data. Using Stata software, Yin undertakes a comprehensive study of the numerous characteristics of college students' consumption and analyzes the probable variables that influence college students' consumption behavior. Based on survey data, the authors illustrate the fundamental

condition of college students' consumption and conduct a preliminary evaluation and analysis of the consumption behavior of social interaction.

Social interaction consumption accounts for roughly 20% of college students' overall consumption, according to the study's findings. College students engage in social interactions by exchanging gifts, consuming romantic relationships, and hosting dinner guests, which has become the most prevalent form of social interaction consumption. However, there are a number of issues associated with this type of consumption, including the impact of external comparison pressure and the lack of personal motivation. In terms of social contact consumption, college students lack comprehension of independence and cost-cutting, according to the survey. Conspicuous consumption behaviors such as giving gifts to each other and treating guests to dinner among college students can enhance friendship, stabilize romantic relationships and establish personal connections. This social effect will make college students more inclined to conspicuous consumption.

In the report for this research strategy, the research methodology and questionnaire design were not described in detail. Although the author describes conducting a survey of college students in eight locations using a random sample, neither the sampling method nor the sample selection procedure are specified. In addition, the paper does not describe the precise content and format of the questionnaire, so it is impossible to determine the validity and applicability of the survey questions. Due to the lack of a clear explanation of the material, the reader may be perplexed, and it is difficult to fully comprehend and evaluate the study's reliability and applicability.

Lin Liu, Shiyin Zhang, and Sangbing Qiu studied the adoption of Internet credit consumption among college students in China, and they found that conspicuous consumption contributes a lot to the reason behind this irrational behavior [5]. The research subjects are college students from various colleges and institutions in Changsha. The examples include pupils from a variety of grade levels and disciplines at a variety of college and university levels. Girls make up 50.57 percent of them, while men account for 49.43 percent. The survey results are exhaustive and random. Consequently, the object of study is distinguished by the representativeness of the sample of college students, which includes students from various institutions, grades, and disciplines.

The study employs the questionnaire survey method and quantitative analysis strategy. The authors created an online credit survey questionnaire for college students and distributed it via online and offline channels to select colleges and universities in Changsha. There were 2,792 legitimate surveys returned in total. The primary purpose of the questionnaire survey is to examine and quantify the consumption psychology and behavior of college students, as well as their comprehension of the Internet credit platform and products. Concurrently, the authors performed statistical analysis on the questionnaire survey results. 64.37% of college students use or have used Internet consumer credit products such as Ant Huabei, Ant Jiebei, JD Baiao, Suning Finance, and others, according to the study data. According to the survey, the absence of funds is the primary reason why the majority of students prefer to use Internet credit.

According to the results of this survey, college students are increasingly utilizing Internet credit. In addition, the majority of students had a monthly disposable income between 1,000 and 1,500 yuan, and the majority of students use Internet credit to meet daily necessities such as food, clothing, and entertainment. The research also points out that college students are significantly influenced by their peers when making purchasing decisions. Some students use Internet credit to meet purchase demands and even borrow money to pay for love-related expenses, exhibiting a propensity for comparison and extravagant spending in their consumption patterns. The consumption patterns and values of peers will have a subtle influence on college students, leading to a lack of financial awareness and the inability to plan for the future, as well as an emphasis on immediate gratification through consumption. Therefore, college students' consumption behaviors and value formation are significantly influenced by their peers' consumption ideas and behavioral tendencies.

The study also contains some defects. College students from various Changsha colleges and universities served as the research's general survey sample; students from other regions or institutions were excluded. This may reduce the generalizability of the study's findings, as college students from

different locations and institutions may have different consumption and credit utilization patterns. In addition, the literature made no mention of the precise questionnaire design methodology or the content of the queries. This may have an effect on the completeness and accuracy of the survey data.

This section emphasizes the extent to which college students are influenced by their classmates with regard to the amount of social engagement they engage in. The data indicate that a sizeable proportion of young people lack both autonomous knowledge and the capacity to organize their consumption patterns.

4. The Influence of Peers' Attitudes on Consumption Behavior

Positive attitudes from companions have a positive impact on emotional experience after consumption. Specifically, peers' positive evaluation will increase individual satisfaction and happiness given by the product, implying that positive peer opinions can provide positive assessments of the product's value. Conversely, negative attitudes from peers have a negative impact on consumer behavior. Their inconsistent evaluation will reduce the individual's value cognition of the product and increase negative emotional experience. This means that negative peer reviews may lead to individuals' negative evaluations and experiences with products.

A study on this topic has been done by researchers from Shanghai University of Finance and Economics [6]. The study involved 212 MBA students, of which 91 were male and 76 were female. The average age of the individuals was 34.95 years, and their average monthly consumption was 3,748.5 yuan.

The researchers obtained information using a 20-question questionnaire. After removing non-compliant and absent samples, 167 valid samples were recovered. The content of the questionnaire includes individual characteristics, consumer behavior, and companionship, such as personality scores, consumption levels, companionship ties, etc. Utilizing a Level 7 rating table, the questionnaire was evaluated. The variables analyzed consist predominantly of the three characteristics of consumer product evaluation, affective experience, and repurchase intent. The average of two subjects is used to evaluate value cognition, the average of fourteen emotive responses is used to measure emotional experience, and a single subject is used to evaluate the willingness to purchase the item. Interpretable factors include product performance and delight advantages, social influence, and peer connections. The mean of the three projects is used to compute the efficiency and enjoyment benefits, while the mean of the two and three themes is used to calculate the social impact and partnership benefits. Using a multivariable regression model that aligned the four variables concurrently and permitted correlation, this study investigated the relationship between social impact and the willingness to purchase back. Each individual is susceptible to the variable's multinormal distribution. Comparing the deviation to the standard deviation of the information revealed that the overall model better fit the data.

According to the research, peers have a significant impact on individual product consumption processes and post-consumption behavior. People's cognition and repurchase intention of efficacy benefit products is largely influenced by their peers' product knowledge, whereas the degree of peer control and allure is largely influenced by their emotive experience with hedonic benefit products. A quadratic relationship exists between peer product knowledge, attractiveness, and peer relationship. Peers can influence consumers' actual perceived value and emotive experience of items, which in turn influences behaviors including repurchase intention and consumer satisfaction.

However, there are some limitations as well. First, this study contains a relatively small sample size of 167 effective samples, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, because MBA students are the subject of this study, the research findings may have limited applicability and cannot reflect the characteristics and consumption patterns of other groups of individuals. In addition, although this study references current research in scale selection, it does not provide comprehensive information about the scale and the particular verification outcomes, which may impact the reliability and validity of the research findings.

What will happen if the attitudes of companions have a conflict? Generally, this will lead to a negative influence on the consumer. Yongbin Ma shows the result by doing research [7]. Among the research objects are 74 first-year marketing students at a university and the study objects of a prosperous commercial street in a global city. The distribution of gender among first-year undergraduates is 44.6% male and 55.4% female, with an average age of 38.30 years and a consumption level of 1829.51 yuan.

The study consists of two phases: a pre-test and a survey. In the pre-test phase, clothing, a product that is frequently purchased by individual consumers and has both functional and hedonic benefits, is chosen as the test object based on the opinions of first-year marketing majors at a university. During the research phase, data collection on a busy commercial street was conducted via street interception. Respondents were asked to recall a situation in which they were influenced by their peers during the consumption of a product and to describe in detail a situation in which their peers' opinions were inconsistent with their own. There are a total of 189 valid samples of men and women who aspire to receive positive feedback from their colleagues while ingesting products. Individuals perceive two distinct levels of trust, influence, and attraction from their peers: large and small.

The study concluded that inconsistent peer evaluations have a negative effect on individual consumer behavior, including value cognition, affective experience, and intention to repurchase; the influence of individual perceived peer trust, control, and attraction on inconsistent evaluations. There are multiple moderating effects; the magnitude of the moderating effect is influenced by the quality of product benefits; this explains the inconsistency of satisfaction in predicting repurchase intent from the perspective of social influence.

There are two main shortcomings of this study. Although the research subjects were asked to recall the consumption process of the product rather than the peer influence in the purchase process, it did not provide a comparative analysis of the recall and observation data, nor did it mention the validity and consistency of the data. Moreover, in the model comparison and fitting test, only the deviation and information standard deviation are used to judge whether the fitting is good or bad, and other commonly used fitting indicators are not mentioned, such as the chi-square test, root mean square error, etc., which may It will affect the accurate evaluation of the model fitting effect.

This part mainly talks about the attitudes of companions from two different perspectives. First, Peers can influence consumers' actual perceived value and emotional experience of products, which in turn influences behaviors such as intention to repurchase and consumer satisfaction. Second, inconsistent peer evaluations have negative effects on consumer behavior, including value perception, affective experience, and intention to repurchase. These evaluations are influenced by perceived peer trust, control, and attraction, with product benefits influencing satisfaction and social influence.

5. Discussion and Suggestion

The environment has a substantial impact on consumer behavior, and many decisions are made unconsciously in response to subtle environmental cues. Instead of engaging in cognitive information processing, individuals prefer to respond reflexively to stimuli that activate specific responses [8]. Consequently, research on peer influence on adolescent consumption behavior must also consider the characteristics and unique concerns of peer influence on adolescent consumption behavior, such as the impact of impulsive purchasing, comparison, and evident self. College students should budget their living expenses, acquire money management skills, and prioritize permissible and planned spending. In order to achieve a balance between social interaction and consuming ability, participants in social interaction consumption should consider their own economic resources. Convergence in peer-group consumption behavior may improve members' attitudes, but it can also lead to naive comparisons and consumption at all costs. Therefore, institutions and families should take the necessary measures to help children develop healthy consumption behaviors. Incorporate scientific consumption education into the campus culture development track, increase college students' consumption behavior guidance and value standardization, and enhance the scientificity and precision

of consumption [9]. Frequent seminars should be hosted by full-time instructors or specialists to promote and instruct students on proper consumption practices, and to assist students in developing these practices. College students with weak consumption psychology and motivation should receive psychological intervention and guidance through the use of psychological counseling services in schools. The home environment should help college students develop proper consumption ideas, and parents should focus on establishing proper consumption ideas and saving behaviors. establish a healthy consumption environment and encourage the entire community to work together to establish a respectable consumption environment for college students in order to assist them in forming a proper consumption philosophy.

On the other hand, these investigations may have a role in marketing management. To begin with, businesses should recognize the significant influence of peers in the individual consumption process and implement peer-group-based strategies to meet the psychological expectations of teenagers' consumption and expand the market for teenagers' products. Second, during the product design phase, organizations should employ various strategies based on the efficacy and hedonic benefits of the product. To satisfy consumers' demands for efficacy, businesses must guarantee the quality of products with effective benefits. Companies can create a positive group consumption environment for products with hedonic benefits and encourage consumers to consume with their preferred companions [10]. In the product marketing phase for items with advantages and benefits, companies may first allow a select group of individuals with a favorable perception of the product or opinion leaders to use and be satisfied with the product prior to marketing it to other groups [11]. Companies may encourage the most attractive members of a peer group to use hedonic benefit products first, and if they are satisfied with the product, they may then allow others to use it to provide a positive emotional experience. In order to effectively control the influence of peers, firms may also permit individuals in the beginning stages of a relationship or in a healthy relationship to experience and acquire products based on their hedonic preferences. Enterprises should strive to reduce inconsistent peer evaluations during the product consumption process, implement different marketing strategies based on different peer influence methods, precisely identify the peer influence methods perceived by individual consumers, practice effective customer relationship management, and employ a variety of techniques to make consumers feel better. Consumers actively develop and consume goods and services based on their relationship patterns, enabling them to participate in the creation and consumption of hedonic products and co-creating value with businesses. Likewise, merchants must adhere to corporate ethics and honesty, and they should not beguile or deceive young people into mindless consumption. They should embrace the social responsibility of aiding the development of an appropriate consumer mindset in young people.

Future research should investigate the interaction between adolescent consumption characteristics and social influence to better comprehend the influence of peers on adolescent consumption behavior and the interaction between consumer behavior and social environment during the transition period. It should be emphasized that a high-quality experimental design is essential for addressing the research challenges of peer influence on adolescent consumption behavior and that variables must be adequately controlled throughout the experiment to ensure the validity of the results. This is a disadvantage shared by a number of contemporary investigations.

6. Conclusion

In the era of globalization and social media, the influence of China's youth in the market economy has grown, as their demand for consumption goods and interest in market trends have increased. Peer influence is crucial in guiding and influencing the purchasing decisions of Chinese adolescents. In Chinese culture, family and social contacts are highly valued, and peer groups are one of the most important sources of identity and social connections for adolescents. Peer interaction and conversation may increase interest in new products, encourage the consumption of novel foods, and enhance self-assurance. Positive peer pressure may encourage adolescents to attempt new items and

expand their consumption options. On the other hand, peer comparisons and societal pressure may lead to excessive consumption and the desire for luxury products.

Students today demonstrate their social status and worth by displaying expensive items and fashion trends, enticing them into consumerism. Peer consumption behavior may also inspire comparisons and competition, causing individuals to follow new consumption trends and styles without regard for their own needs and appropriate expenditure. This study investigates the influence of peers on Chinese adolescent consumption behavior, synthesizes existing research, and proposes coping strategies to help youth develop healthier and more sustainable consumption behaviors despite peer pressure.

The environment has a significant impact on consumer behavior, and research on peer influence on adolescent consumption behavior must account for the peculiarities and special problems of peer influence. Institutions and families should incorporate scientific consumption education, increased consumption behavior advice, and psychological intervention and counseling. The home environment should be conducive to the formation of correct consumption ideas, and parents should prioritize the formation of correct consumption ideas and saving habits.

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