

ABSTRACT

Adolescents' influence in family consumption decisions is attracting growing research attention. Two theories, consumer socialization theory and power relational theory, have been reviewed in this study as they play important roles in studying adolescents' influence. The former views adolescents as a socializee and parents as a major socialization agent. Thus, adolescents' use of bilateral influence strategy and relative influence are outcomes of consumer socialization process that happens in certain social settings. The latter conceives parents and adolescents as two partners in an interdependent relationship. Thus, adolescents' use of bilateral influence strategy and relative influence are the exhibition of their strategic use and the result of power in family consumption decisions. Since adolescents are likely to use the consumption knowledge and skill learned from parents to solve the conflicts within as well as outside the family context, these two theories complement each other and could be integrated to study adolescents' influence in family consumption decisions. This theoretical integration will be applied in the thesis.

Based on the previous literature, a conceptual model was developed as a framework of the study. This model proposes to test the relationship among parental style,

perceived parental power, adolescents' use of bilateral influence strategy, and relative influence in family consumption decisions. Survey research was used for data collection from adolescent who were 12 to 15 years old in Macau. Multiple regressions were conducted to analyze the data.

Overall, the results were satisfactory. All the research hypotheses were supported by the empirical data. The results showed that there was significant effect among of the dependent variable (adolescents' relative influence), and independent variables (parental style, perceived parental power, and bilateral influence strategy), while controlling age, monthly spending money from parents, and number of siblings.

Thus, it appears that the integration of consumer socialization theory and power relational theory provides better explanation to adolescents' influence behavior than either theory does individually. Several findings were discussed and recommendation was given for the future study.