

# Family Consumption Decisions: Literature Review and Extension

## —*The Psycho-Social Case of Single-Mother Families and Their Early Adolescent Daughters*

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Received: August 3, 2013

Accepted: September 6, 2013

Online Published: November 5, 2013

doi:10.5539/ijps.v5n4p26

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ijps.v5n4p26>

### Abstract

Studies of family consumption decisions have investigated children's relative influence in different stages of the buying process, mostly on products directly relevant to them or to the family as a whole but not on the influence of children on consumption of products that are used by their parents. In order to extend the existing literature, this paper suggests focusing on mothers - early adolescent daughters (10-15) – vicarious role model tri-directional relationships as drivers of consumption behaviors. Previous studies dealt with mothers and their adolescent daughters, 15-18 years old. However, according to the APA (2001), adolescents are generally defined as youth ages 10 to 18 years old. In addition, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2008), single-parent, mostly mothers, American households increased from 11 percent of all households in 1970 to 29 percent in 2007. As a result, it is necessary to research the relative influence of adolescent daughters in households which include the “traditional family” compared to single-mother families. Four different samples are required in order to research these paper propositions and the possible differences between adolescent daughter's ages (10-15 vs. 15-18) and their family unit structure (traditional families vs. single-mother families).

**Keywords:** adolescent daughters, traditional families, single-mother families

### 1. Introduction

Families are changing around the world. Sanik and Mauldin (1986) argued that one of the most striking changes that have occurred in the marriage pattern is the decline in households headed by married couples and the increase in households headed by single parents. A single-parent (or solo parent) is a parent, not living with a spouse or partner, who has most of the day-to-day responsibilities in raising the child or children. A single-parent is usually considered the primary caregiver, meaning the parent the children have residency with the majority of the time (Dowd, 1997). Wolf and Weinraub (1983) noted that in 1970 there were 234,000 single-parent families in the US; by 1979 the number increased to 902,000, representing a near quadrupling of the phenomenon. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2008), single-parent American households increased from 11 percent of all households in 1970 to 29 percent in 2007. This phenomenon may change the relative influence of adolescent daughters in the “new modern family”, compared to the “traditional family”. Wolf et al. (1983) found that single-parents tend to work longer hours and as a result their children receive less emotional and less parental support, which may lead to less parent-child open communication. Previous studies (Gavish, Shoham, & Ruvio, 2010; Ruvio, Gavish, & Shoham, 2013) researched the relationships between mothers and their adolescent daughters, ignoring this change in the families' structure. In addition, according to the APA (2001), adolescents are generally defined as youth ages 10 to 18 years old. Previous studies (Gavish et al., 2010; Ruvio et al., 2013) investigated the relationships between adolescent daughters (15-18) and their mothers, ignoring the early onset of the adolescence period today.

Bush and Martin (2000) noted that parents are regarded as role models for their children in consumption behavior. This view is based on the perception that parents serve as a primary source of information for their children because of their knowledge as well as their experience. However, in today's Western cultures the ever increasing emphasis on a youthfulness ideal may cause a shift in the source of role modeling, making children possible consumption role models for their parents, based upon their experiences. In their struggle to feel, look,

and behave in a youthful manner, parents might perceive their children as a source of information and as experts (Gavish et al., 2010). Weiss (2002, p. 35) noted that “The national fixation on youth is hardly a recent phenomenon. What’s different with the Boomers is how passionately they refuse to concede anything to age. While previous generations entered middle age without much fuss, many Boomers appear to be trying to create a new model of adulthood.” This phenomenon supports Barak’s (1987) cognitive age theory about the cognitive-chronological age gap. Combining these changes in consumer socialization, IGI, and family role modeling, adolescent daughters might serve as role models to their mothers in products that can make mothers’ look and feel younger. Hence, the relationship between adolescent daughters (10-18 years old) and their mothers deserves a new empirical test.

Barak and Schiffman (1981) argued that maturing women seek reaffirmation of their self-concept of youthfulness as a normal, healthy, positive and acceptable image of aging. They recalibrate their inner age scale to make “youth” their most important value. As a result of this phenomenon, women tend to adopt consumption behavior patterns according to their younger cognitive age rather than according to their older chronological age. Integrating the youth ideal with lower cognitive ages may lead mothers to view their daughters (especially their adolescent daughters) as role models in certain consumption situations. Integrating the youthfulness phenomenon of mothers and the possible role modeling of adolescent daughters, the mother-daughter dyad may be a more realistic unit of analysis. Finally, vicarious role models, such as celebrities, can impact both mothers’ and their adolescent daughters’ consumption behaviors (Gavish et al., 2010).

The principal contribution of this paper is the posing of three important questions regarding consumer behavior: A) Whether early adolescent daughters (ages 10-15) serve as role models for their mothers in a different manner than adolescent daughters (ages 15-18); B) Whether mothers serve as role models for their early adolescent daughters (ages 10-15) in a different manner compared to adolescent daughters (ages 15-18); and finally C) Whether vicarious role models influence both mothers and their early adolescent daughters (ages 10-15) or adolescent daughters (ages 15-18) in consumption of expressive products (i.e., fashion and cosmetics). These questions should be analyzed in both traditional versus single-mother families.

## **2. Literature Review and Research Propositions**

### *2.1 Consumer Socialization*

This section begins by exploring the term socialization in its broad sense. It then investigates the more specific aspects of childhood consumer socialization. The term socialization refers to the process by which individuals learn to participate effectively in their social environment. Zigler and Child (1969, p. 474) defined the term “Socialization is a broad term for the whole process by which an individual develops, through transaction with other people, his specific patterns of socially relevant behaviors and experience.” Brim (1966) described it as the process by which individuals learn social rules and behaviors needed to participate effectively in society. As such, it helps individuals develop personal identities and assume new rules as they move through their life cycles. Socialization is guided by relatives, peers, religious institutions, and the mass media (Moore, Wilkie, & Alder, 2001) with relatives exerting the most powerful impact (Childers & Rao, 1992).

Similarly, in the consumer socialization sphere, children’s consumer socialization has been defined as “the process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning in the marketplace” (Ward, 1974, p. 2). Childhood consumer socialization studies have focused mainly on children’s learning about marketplace interaction, the processes by which learning takes place and the changes in content and learning processes that occur over time. In addition, children have the opportunity to learn consumer behaviors by observing their parents’ consumption practices within the family environment (Bandura, 1977; Bush et al., 2000; Heckler, Childers, & Arunachalem, 1989).

Consumer socialization agents have been perceived as influential because of their contact frequency with, importance to, or control over rewards and punishments given to consumers. Mowen (1993) suggested that consumer socialization is based on three components: background factors (e.g., socioeconomics, gender, age, and religion), socialization agents (parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and celebrities; Bush et al., 2000; Clark, Craig, & Bush, 2001; Mowen, 1993), and learning mechanisms (e.g., operant conditioning and modeling; Moschis & Moore, 1979). According to Lueg and Finny (2007), a major component of consumer socialization is the learning process that occurs between developing consumers (e.g., children and adolescents) and socialization agents (e.g., family members, peers, and mass media). In addition, Lueg et al. (2007) argued that agent – learner communication patterns tend to affect a variety of consumer behaviors. They noted that “consumer socialization addresses how individuals become consumers” (Lueg et al., 2007, p. 26). Similar to general socialization, this model also applies to children. In this case, parents play an important role, especially in providing information

on the rational aspects of consumption. Taeho (2005) suggested that parents influence adolescents by letting them observe and imitate their consuming behaviors, by interacting with them on their consumption, and by providing them with opportunities for guided consumption. However, the influence of parents is situation-specific. Its impact varies through the stages of the decision process, with various types of products, and with various personal characteristics, such as age, socioeconomic class, and gender of the child.

An important aspect of childhood consumer socialization research, which is similar to general socialization, is parent – child relationships. It refers to the impact of parent-child interaction and communication on purchase decisions (Beatty & Talpade, 1994; Carlson, Walsh, Laczniak, & Grossbart, 1988; Foxman, Tansuhaj, & Ekstrom, 1989; Palan & Wilkes, 1997; Ward, Wackman, & Wartella, 1977). Studies have found that specific consumer socialization practices (e.g., monitoring children’s media use and consumption) were related to patterns of parent-child interactions and communication processes. Moschis and Moore (1979), for example, focused mainly on the influence of family communication on childhood consumer socialization processes. They found that the family was important in teaching the rational aspects of consumption and that the amount of consumption communication in the family was related to how often adolescents performed socially desirable acts. According to Moschis (1988), parents may communicate and teach their children using two socialization mechanisms. First, a parent may communicate norms and expectations by performing certain acts. Second, parents as socialization agents may influence the consumption behavior of their children by reinforcement. Parents may reward (or punish) behaviors which are consistent (or inconsistent) with their expectations. Bristol and Mangleburg (2005) noted that since family communication patterns represent an important aspect of parental socialization of children, the character and quality of family relations present a role model for children to relate to social phenomena in general.

In sum, the literature suggests that childhood consumer socialization focuses on children’s development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to consumption behavior. Collectively, childhood consumer socialization research highlights the important role that parents play in their children’s consumer socialization. Finally, the underlying theme of family consumer socialization research is mainly uni-directional transmission of values, attitudes, purchase habits and brand preferences from parents to their children.

### *2.2 Intergenerational Influences (IGI)*

The term IGI refers to within-family transmission of information. The information can be political, religious, gender, and racial values / attitudes, consumption behavior and resources across generations (Childers et al., 1992; Moore & Berchmans, 1996, Moore, Wilkie, & Alder, 2001; Whitbeck & Gecas, 1988). Shah and Mittal (1997) noted that IGI can occur in either direction, forward or backward. Forward IGI involves the influence of parents on adult children, while backward IGI involves the reverse influence of children on parents. According to Moschis (1988), the theoretical and conceptual roots of IGI can be found in theories of socialization. Specifically, the development of consumption-related orientations and the specific role of parents as primary agents of socialization may be viewed in the context of a model of consumer socialization. However, consumer socialization within the family is limited to the influence of parents on children.

Shah et al. (1997) suggested a conceptual model of IGI. They defined relationships’ strength as “how well parents and children want to get along with each other and their mutual desire for a lasting relationship” (p. 57) and argued that if IGI is to occur (in either direction), the existence of a harmonious and mutually respectful relationship in the family across generations must be a prerequisite.

According to Shah et al. (1997), IGI will be stronger the more one generation perceives the other as an expert on the brand / product / store under consideration and the more one generation perceives the other as being similar in a product-relevant lifestyle. Lifestyle similarity can be reflected in actual or perceived attitude, preference and / or behavior congruence (Shah et al., 1997). Thus, a mother might perceive her adolescent daughter as an expert in new fashions.

In sum, IGI suggests parent ↔ child flows of influence compared to consumer socialization research, which has recognized mostly one-directional transmission of values, attitudes, purchase habits, and brand preferences from parents to their children. Since, IGI has focused mainly on relationships between parents and their adult children, bi-directional flows of influence should be recognized in family consumption decision-making models.

### *2.3 Role Models*

Role model was defined as “anyone an individual comes in contact with, directly or indirectly, who potentially can influence the individual decisions or behaviors” (Bush et al., 2000, p. 441). The roots of role modeling are based on social comparison theory. Social comparison was introduced by Festinger (1954) as a motivating force

in human behavior, suggesting that individuals need to compare themselves to others in order to judge the consequences of their behavior when physical evidence is unavailable. According to Moschis (1976, p. 237), “The motivation for social comparison leads the individual to choose reference groups to make such comparison.” Therefore, this theory supports the traditional approach suggesting that children regard their parents as role models.

However, it can be argued that mothers may also compare themselves to their adolescent daughters since Western cultures are increasingly adopting youthfulness and anti-aging values. Thus, since mothers aspire to look young, their tendency to make social comparisons with their adolescent daughters should increase (Saucier, 2004; Weiss, 2002; Zollo, 1995). Additionally, Foxman et al. (1989) noted that families are dynamic social groups in which parents and their children both teach and learn. Thus, the concept of social comparison is a useful addition to a model of bi-directional comparisons between mothers and their adolescent daughters. In addition, Clark et al. (2001) noted that individuals are exposed to behavioral models from which they can learn behaviors, attitudes, or skills. While models vary in their degree of influence on individuals, the most influential ones have been labeled *role models*.

Many individuals or groups can be potential consumption role models for adolescents (Bush et al., 2000). These include direct role models, such as parents (King & Multon, 1996) and teachers (Basow & Howe, 1980), and vicarious role models, such as television / movie stars (King et al., 1996) and athletes (Jones & Schumann, 2000; Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). Moreover, Garland, Charbonneau, & Hercus (2006) noted that celebrities, especially celebrity athletes, play a prominent role as product endorsers. Celebrities and athletes provide benefits that unknown endorsers cannot duplicate. They contribute to brand name recognition and transfer positive qualities to the brand. In other words, celebrities act as vicarious role models. Bredbenner, Murray, & Schlusel (2005) researched the idealized female body images in the media. They found that the media plays an important role in defining the “beautiful body”. Thus, the media and fashion models act as vicarious role models for many women as well as for their adolescent daughters.

Vicarious role models (e.g., entertainers) also affect positively adolescents’ level of marketplace knowledge (Bush & Craig, 2000; Clark et al., 2001). In addition, research that examined the influence of peers and celebrities on adolescents’ consumer behavior identified four clusters (Tárkányi, László, & Szechényi, 2006). One of those clusters, star-imitating consumers, represent adolescents that spend significantly more on hairdressers, fashion brands and cosmetics than others. Star-imitating adolescents paid attention to ads in which celebrities affirm the advantages of brands, whereas the adolescent girls avoided unfamiliar brands. They felt that advertised products would not assist them in becoming successful. Finally, Lockwood et al. (1997, p. 92) noted that “A superstar will become a source of inspiration or discouragement only if one compares oneself to this person.” Thus, superstars could or might serve as role models for adolescent daughters and for their mothers, as well.

In conclusion, vicarious role models may influence mothers’ and their adolescent daughters’ consumption behavior since they identify with the same vicarious role model and therefore want to emulate him. However, families provide the most important source of influence for its members. Therefore, I expect mothers and their adolescent daughters to influence each other more than vicarious role models.

In sum, this literature review combined three theoretical frameworks (i.e., consumer socialization, intergenerational influence and role modeling) into one proposed study. The purposes of this study are to assess and extend previous studies regarding the possible influence of adolescent daughters (10-18 years old) on their mothers with products that are relevant to their mothers only.

## 2.4 Research Propositions

### 2.4.1 The Relationships between Cognitive Age (Youthfulness vs. Oldfulness) and Locus of Fashion

Today, societies with a longstanding idealization of youthfulness pressure individuals to remain young (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995), including through consumption. Until the 1960s, individuals were expected to make the transition from adolescence to adulthood in one swift move. Lately, however, the transition has become more complex as ‘baby boomers’ reached middle age and, “by 2014, for the first time ever, there will be more old people than young” (Saucier, 2004, p. 420). While both genders experience the effects of aging and many men are dissatisfied with their appearance, Western cultural standards impact women more as they move through middle age and later.

The emphasis on female youth and beauty is apparent in advertising, television, movies, and print media. Women are constantly bombarded with visual images of young females and ads promising youthful looks.

Ageism seems to be much more prevalent in Western cultures and women tend to be more negatively influenced by the prejudice against older adults than men (Saucier, 2004). The media “reflects images of thinness and links them to symbols of prestige, happiness, love, and success for women” (Saucier, 2004, p. 421). It feeds the mass market with a steady diet of youth and sex, especially on television, where in 2001 only 24% of all female roles on prime time were played by women over 40. This under representation of older women reduces the age of potential role models for women, making young models an ideal they strive for (Saucier, 2004). Often, Western cultures encourage individuals to remain young looking. In addition, many people attempt to extend their youth and engage in youth culture type activities.

These social changes lead to a reduction in *cognitive age*, which refers to *Feel-, Look-, Do- and Interest-Age* (Barak, 1987; Barak & Sciffman, 1981). The cognitive age concept is applicable to people of all ages, including young and middle-aged adults. According to Wilkes (1992), senior females’ actual ages exceed their cognitive ages. Barak and Rahtz (1999) suggested that perceived youth could be described in terms of the difference between chronological and cognitive ages. High scores indicate a higher sense of youthful identity. On the basis of the cognitive age approach, Wilkes (1992) found that women with younger cognitive ages manifested a higher fashion interest than those with older cognitive ages. Montepare and Lachman (1989) and Wilkes (1992) argued that women tended to adopt young-related characteristics (e.g., fashion interest) as an age denial mechanism. On the basis of the literature above, I propose the following proposition:

P<sub>1</sub>: The more mothers assign importance to youthfulness and anti-aging, the more mothers demonstrate high levels of locus of fashion.

Adolescent daughters tended to the opposite behavior since “the experience of an older age identity during adolescence would be consistent with the view that this life stage marks the transition from childhood to adulthood” (Montepare et al., 1989, p. 73). Stated differently, teenage girls might want to look older (higher cognitive age manifestation) than their chronological age. Montepare et al. (1989) noted that teenagers perceive themselves as older while older people perceive themselves as younger. In fact, adolescents “strive toward a self-definition as independent, autonomous, and self-reliant” (Montepare et al., 1989, p. 73). Shuv-Ami (2006) suggested that younger consumers (up to the age of 29) tend to perceive their image as older than they actually look while older consumers (above the age of 29) tend to perceive their image as looking younger. As a result, adolescent daughters who strive to look older may increase their use of eye-liner, make-up and other cosmetics and fashion accessories in order to look older. On the basis of the literature above, I propose the following proposition:

P<sub>2</sub>: The more adolescent daughters assign importance to oldfulness, the more adolescent daughters demonstrate high levels of locus of fashion.

#### 2.4.2 The Relationships between Cognitive Age and Perceived Expertise

Lueg, Ponder, Beatty, & Cappella (2006) noted that “generation Y (Gen Y), an age cohort consisting of 60 million people born between 1979 and 1994, is the largest consumer demographic group to exist in America since the ‘baby boomer’ generation.” Rafeedie, Godkin, Sean, & Swerdlow (2006) argued that about 20% of the US population is comprised of adolescents, a group that is known to have high purchasing power and consumer influence. Wilkes (1992) suggested that women with younger cognitive ages manifest higher fashion interest than those with older cognitive ages. In addition, Zollo (1995) noted that teenagers are trendsetters for expressive products (such as fashion and cosmetics) for each other and for the population at large (including their mothers). Combining the following literature findings this phenomenon is likely to create a bi-directional role modeling process (mother - adolescent) which is motivated by cultural changes and fueled by a youth ideal. On the basis of the literature above, I propose the following proposition:

P<sub>3</sub>: The more mothers assign importance to youthfulness and anti-aging, the more mothers perceive their adolescent daughters as experts in expressive products such as fashion and cosmetics.

Beaudoin and Lachance (2006) suggested that clothing brands appear to play an important role in creating the look that adolescents desire. Therefore, clothing brands play an important role in creating IGI (Shah et al., 1997). Moses (2000) confirmed that there are clothes that teens will not wear because they are not the “right” brand. In general, according to Zolo (1995), adolescents attach higher importance to fashion and physical appearance than others and tend to serve as trendsetters. This phenomenon strengthens the possibility that adolescent daughters will influence their mothers’ consumption behavior in expressive products (i.e., fashion items), especially when mothers consider fashion as important. On the other hand, women which tend to adopt an age denial mechanism, demonstrate high levels of fashion interest (Montepare et al., 1989; Wilkes, 1992) and therefore might be perceived by their adolescent daughters as experts on expressive products (i.e., fashion and cosmetics). On the

basis of the literature above, I propose the following proposition:

P<sub>4</sub>: The more mothers assign importance to youthfulness and anti-aging, the more mothers are perceived as experts in expressive products by their adolescent daughters.

The tendency of dual role modeling between mothers and their adolescent daughters depends on the degree of their perceived resemblance (Holyoak & Thagard, 1989; Major, Sciacchitano, & Crocker, 1991). Mittal (1988) suggested a distinction between functional products which are bought primarily for their physical performance and expressive products which are consumed to fit one's personality and lifestyle and to make favorable social impressions. Shah et al. (1997, p. 58) argued that "since expressive products are appraised for their suitability with the desired personality, self-concept, and life-style, such appraisal benefits from observation of role models and inspirational referents". Therefore, there is a possibility that adolescent daughters, who strive to perceive themselves as older (oldfulness), may tend to increase their similarity with their mothers (i.e., mother's knowledge, experience, and maturity). On the basis of the literature above, I propose the following proposition:

P<sub>5</sub>: The more adolescent daughters assign importance to oldfulness, the more adolescent daughters perceive their mothers as experts in expressive products, such as fashion and cosmetics.

In addition, adolescents "strive toward a self-definition as independent, autonomous, and self-reliant" (Montepare et al., p. 73). Therefore, adolescent daughters, who strive to be perceived as old, demonstrate a high level of responsibility and mothers might feel that they can trust their adolescent daughters' opinion in a variety of issues. On the basis of the literature above I propose the following proposition:

P<sub>6</sub>: The more adolescent daughters assign importance to oldfulness, the more adolescent daughters are perceived as experts in expressive products by their mothers.

#### 2.4.3 The Relationships between Locus of Fashion and Perceived Expertise

Women who tend to adopt an age denial mechanism, demonstrate high levels of fashion interest (Montepare et al., 1989; Wilkes, 1992) and therefore might be perceived by their adolescent daughters as experts on expressive products (i.e., fashion and cosmetics). On the basis of the literature above, I propose the following proposition:

P<sub>7</sub>: The more mothers demonstrate high locus of fashion, the more mothers are perceived as experts in expressive products by their adolescent daughters.

Today, many people attempt to extend their youth and engage in youth culture activities (Armbrust, 2001; Saucier, 2004). As a result, adolescents may influence adult purchases when parents actively seek their counsel. They often know more than their parents about certain products, such as the latest brand of designer jeans and are often trendsetters for the population at large (Zollo, 1995). On the basis of the literature above, I propose the following proposition:

P<sub>8</sub>: The more adolescent daughters demonstrate high locus of fashion, the more adolescent daughters are perceived as experts in expressive products by their mothers.

#### 2.4.4 The Relationships between Perceived Expertise and Open-Purchase Communication

According to Shah et al. (1997), IGI will be stronger the more one generation perceives the other as an expert on the brand / product / store under consideration and the more one generation perceives the other as being similar in a product-relevant lifestyle. Lifestyle similarity can be reflected in actual or perceived attitude, preference and or behavior congruence or in desired attitude, preference and or behavior congruence (Shah et al., 1997). Thus, a mother might perceive the daughter to be an expert in new fashions.

In addition, such an impact will also be stronger for expressive more than for functional products. Teenagers are trendsetters for expressive products for each other and for the population at large. Adults often watch and ask teens for advice in order to identify what is "in" and teenagers know more than their parents about certain products, such as the latest brands of designer jeans (Zollo, 1995). On the Basis of the literature above, I propose the following propositions:

P<sub>9</sub>: The more mothers perceive their adolescent daughters as expert in expressive products, the more purchase communication occurs between mothers and their adolescent daughters.

P<sub>10</sub>: The more adolescent daughters perceive their mothers as expert in expressive products, the more purchase communication occurs between mothers and their adolescent daughters.

#### 2.4.5 The Relationships between Open-Purchase Communication and the Similarity in Mothers and their Adolescent Daughters' Consumption Behavior

Studies showed that mothers have stronger communication qualities than fathers with their adolescent children

on consumption issues, suggesting that mothers might engage in more consumption interaction with their adolescents than would fathers (Palan, 1998). In addition, increased openness in communication within families leads to more learning and incorporates the parent-child flow of influence (Cotte & Wood, 2004). Francis and Burns (1992) noted that parents interact with their adolescents and are perceived as having an influence on the latter's clothing choices. However, openness in communication between mothers and their adolescent daughters may support adolescent daughters' autonomy in consumption and therefore dissimilarity with their mothers. As a result, I propose a bi-directional proposition based on the literature above:

P<sub>11</sub>: There is a relationship between family openness in communication and the level of similarity in consumption behavior of expressive products between mothers and their adolescent daughters.

#### 2.4.6 The Relationships between Role Models (Direct and Vicarious) and the Similarity in Mothers and their Adolescent Daughters' Consumption Behavior

Many individuals or groups can be potential consumption role models for adolescents (Bush et al., 2000). These include direct role models, such as parents (King et al., 1996), teachers (Basow et al., 1980), and vicarious role models, such as television / movie stars (King et al., 1996) and athletes (Jones & Schumann, 2000; Lockwood et al., 1997). Moreover, Garland et al. (2006) noted that celebrities, especially celebrity athletes, play a prominent role as product endorsers. Celebrities and athletes provide benefits that unknown endorsers cannot duplicate. They contribute to brand name recognition and transfer positive qualities to the brand. In other words, celebrities act as vicarious role models. Bredbenner et al. (2005) researched the idealized female body images in the media. They found that the media play an important role in defining the "beautiful body". Thus, the media and fashion models act as vicarious role models for many women as well as for their adolescent daughters.

Vicarious role models (e.g., entertainers) also affect positively adolescents' level of marketplace knowledge (Bush et al., 2000; Clark et al., 2001). In addition, research that examined the influence of peers and celebrities on adolescents' consumer behavior identified four clusters (Tárkányi et al., 2006). One of those clusters, star imitating consumers, represents adolescents that spend significantly more on hairdressers, fashion brands, and cosmetics than others. Star imitating adolescents paid attention to ads in which celebrities affirmed the advantages of brands, whereas they avoided unfamiliar brands. They felt that advertised products will assist them in becoming successful and attractive.

According to Lockwood et al. (1997, p. 92), "A superstar will become a source of inspiration or discouragement only if one compares oneself to this person. One is most likely to draw such comparisons between oneself and an outstanding other when the other is viewed as relevant to the self. These similarities are integrated and jointly affect the likelihood that one object, or in the case of social comparison, one person, will be mapped onto the other." Thus, superstars may serve as role models for adolescent daughters and for their mothers. Hence, mothers' and their adolescent daughters' consumption behavior might be more similar to one another as a result of adopting the same vicarious role models. Notably, mothers and daughters might use different vicarious role models (e.g., different fashion models or TV stars) and therefore in the following propositions (P<sub>12</sub>, and P<sub>13</sub>) I refer to general vicarious role models and do not restrict it to a specific vicarious role model. On the basis of the literature above, I propose the following propositions:

P<sub>12</sub>: There is a positive relationship between the extent to which vicarious role models are adopted by mothers and the similarity in consumption behavior of expressive products by mothers and their adolescent daughters.

P<sub>13</sub>: There is a positive relationship between the extent to which vicarious role models are adopted by adolescent daughters, and the similarity in consumption behavior of expressive products by mothers and their adolescent daughters.

Moschis (1985) argued that a family's (or more specifically parental) influence on consumption patterns and attitudes often overrides any other form of influence on adolescents' consumption behaviors. In addition, Basow et al. (1980) found that, in general, parents had a stronger influence on young adult behaviors more than any other group. Finally, Bush et al. (2000) suggested that parents, especially mothers, exert stronger influences on adolescents' purchase behavior more than vicarious role models. On the basis of the literature above, I propose the following proposition:

P<sub>14</sub>: There is a positive relationship between the extent to which mothers serve as role models for their adolescent daughters and their similarity in consumption behavior of expressive products.

In addition, since adolescents are a convenient noncommercial source of information for their parents, they influence them more than any other commercial source of information (Zollo, 1995). Saucier (2004) suggested that there is a positive relationship between mothers' goals to look young and the tendency to make social

comparisons with their adolescent daughters. On the basis of the literature above, I propose the following proposition:

P<sub>15</sub>: There is a positive relationship between the extent to which adolescent daughters serve as role models for their mothers and their similarity in consumption behavior of expressive products.

### 2.5 Proposed Samples

Four different convenience samples are required in order to research these 15 propositions and the possible differences between adolescent daughter's ages (10-15 vs. 15-18) and their family unit structure (traditional family vs. single-mother family).

Each sample will include 100 dyads of mothers and their adolescent daughters.

Sample 1 includes mothers and their adolescent daughters (15-18) from traditional families.

Sample 2 includes mothers and their early adolescent daughters (10-15) from traditional families.

Sample 3 includes single-mother families and their adolescent daughters (15-18).

Sample 4 includes single-mother families and their early adolescent daughters (10-15).

		Adolescent Daughter's Age	
Traditional Family	10-15	15-18	
Single –Mother Family	10-15	15-18	

Figure 1. The Proposed samples

### 2.6 Proposed Measures

*Purchase Communication*: refers to the extent of communication between mothers and their adolescent daughters regarding the purchasing process. The scale was developed by Bush et al. (1999). The scale is composed of five 7-point Likert-type items. The original reliability ( $\alpha$ ) was 0.72.

*Perceived Expertise*: refers to perceived skill or knowledge in a specific product context. The scale was developed by Doney and Cannon (1997) with three 5-point Likert-type items. The original reliability ( $\alpha$ ) was 0.79.

*Role Model*: refers to anyone an individual comes in contact with, directly or indirectly, who potentially can influence individual decisions or behaviors. Rich (1997) used a 5-item, 7-point Likert-type scale to measure the degree to which behavior on the part of a sales' manager is perceived as being consistent with the values espoused by the manager and the goals of the organization. The original reliability ( $\alpha$ ) was 0.96.

*Youthfulness*: refers to the freshness and vitality characteristic of a young person. The scale was developed by Guiot (2001). The scale includes three 5-point Likert-type items. The original reliability ( $\alpha$ ) was 0.73.

*Fashion Consciousness*: refers to the importance of being in fashion particularly in terms of dressing. The scale developed by Lumpkin and Darden (1982) includes seven 7-point Likert-type items. The original reliability ( $\alpha$ ) ranged 0.71-0.91.

## 3. Summary

This paper resulted in 15 propositions using three theoretical approaches (i.e., consumer socialization, IGI and role modeling) to study the relationships between mothers and their adolescent daughters, during periods of rapid changes in the range of adolescence ages and the family unit structure. Most studies of family consumption decision-making have assessed the relative influence of children at different stages of the buying process, emphasizing products directly relevant to them or to the family unit as a whole. In addition, previous studies dealt with mothers and their adolescent daughters, 15-18 years old but not with younger adolescent daughters

although adolescents are generally defined as youth aged 10 to 18 years old. Nevertheless, previous studies ignored the rapid changes in the family unit structure. As a result, it is necessary to research and extend the relative influence of early adolescent daughters in households which include the “traditional family” versus households which include a single-mother only, as suggested in this paper. Four different convenience samples are required in order to research these paper propositions and the possible differences between adolescent daughter’s ages (10-15 vs. 15-18) and their family unit structure (traditional families vs. single-mother families). Hence, using consumer socialization, IGI, and family role modeling to explain and extend the consumer socialization theory, is promising as well as interesting, from psychological and sociological perspectives.

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