

The Relationship Between Collectivism, Self-Integration, and Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence

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The objective was to explore the relationship between collectivism, self-integration, and consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. Consumer susceptibility has been defined as the need to identify with or enhance one's image in the opinion of significant others through the acquisition and use of products and brands.

A survey was developed that included scales to measure self-integration and consumer susceptibility. There are two aspects of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. The informational aspect includes the intention to gather information for purchase from others by asking opinions or observing others. The normative aspect is about the tendency to conform to the norms of friends or to the social groups that a person belongs to. There are three aspects of self-integration: self-identity, social-identity, and image-identity.

It was believed that college students have more opportunities to consume compared to other student groups in Taiwan. Hence, the survey was pretested with 70 college students in Taiwan. After item analysis, the survey was administered to 307 college students in Taiwan. The results showed that collectivism was positively related to both aspects of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (e.g., the informational and the normative aspect). Self-integration was partially related to consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. Only those who had formed an integrated personal identity would be less likely to be influenced by their significant others. Social-identity and image-identity were not related to consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence.

Implications include the following: those who aim to succeed in collectivist countries should place put more emphasis on interpersonal influence, and interpersonal influence was more important for those who were still trying to figure out "who they were internally" compared to those who had already formed an integrated self.

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