

# **PARENTAL AND SIBLING IDENTIFICATION: A NEW THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE EFFECTS OF BIRTH ORDER, SEX CONGRUENCY AND ETHNICITY ON PURCHASE INFLUENCE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Previous literature operationalizes family as a household or comprehensive unit, with only part of its members being researched – primarily parents and children focusing on the influence of parents on the socialization of the children and their consumption behavior (Childers and Rao 1992; John 1999; Moore-Shay and Lutz 1988; Moschis 1978; Moschis and Churchill 1978; Moschis 1987; Ward 1974), on the influence of the family environment on socialization (Moore-Shay and Berchmans 1996; Moschis 1987), on spousal decision making (Chenting, Edward, and Keying 2003; Davis and Rigaux 1974; Ford, LaTour, and Henthorne 1995; Seymour and Lessne 1984; Webster 2000; Wilkes 1975) and the influence of the child on the parents (Selwyn 2004).

A *family* consists of two or more people, one of whom is the householder, related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing in the same housing unit. A *household* consists of all people who occupy a housing unit regardless of relationship. A household may consist of a person living alone or multiple unrelated individuals or families living together (Census.gov). The family unit is a socialization agent, along with peers, schools, organizations, advertising and mass media.

This paper has two objectives. First, to add to the existing consumer socialization literature by outlining new research propositions that disaggregate the family model into two units (parent-offspring and sibships), and evaluating their influence on each other's purchases. Second, the unique contribution of examining the moderating variables of sex congruency and birth order, to determine how they can affect the magnitude and direction of the influence in both units.

This paper also attempts to establish a theoretical framework that answers John's (1999) call for research regarding disaggregating the family unit by proposing a new family influence model that further breaks down the parental influence model, and seeks to extend the limited existing body of research on sibling influence on consumption behavior. Family influence models previously researched have neglected to include siblings as a source of influence on each other's purchases. This paper disaggregates the family into parents and siblings and proposes new avenues for research into sibling influence considering moderating variables. Further research and implications are discussed.

**References available upon request**