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THE IMPACT OF PEER PRESSURE ON THE PURCHASING DECISIONS FACED BY COLLEGE STUDENTS FOR CLOTHING BRANDS

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ABSTRACT

1. Introduction

Overview of the influence of peer pressure on college students' purchasing decisions regarding clothing brands. Discussion on the prevalence of peer pressure and its impact on individuals' choices, especially among the youth demographic. Highlighting the susceptibility of college students to peer influence during the phase of identity formation and social integration.

2. Theoretical Framework

Introduction of the sociopsychological perspective adopted in the study. Explanation of theories such as social conformity, group dynamics, and consumer behavior used to analyze peer pressure's mechanisms in clothing brand preferences.

3. Methodology

Description of research methods utilized, including surveys, interviews, and observational studies. Explanation of how qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined to understand the motivations, social dynamics, and psychological processes driving college students' conformity to peer preferences in clothing brand selection.

4. Key findings

Presentation of significant findings highlighting the impact of peer pressure on college students' purchasing decisions. Discussion on how peers influence perceptions of brand identity, social status, and belongingness among college students.

5. Role of Social Media

Exploration of the role of social media platforms and online communities in amplifying peer influence. Analysis of how these platforms facilitate the spread of brand-related norms and trends among college students.

6. Implication of Marketers

Discussion on the implications of the findings for marketers and advertisers targeting youth consumer markets. Recommendations for developing effective strategies for brand positioning, communication, and engagement tailored to college students' social and psychological needs.

7. Conclusion

Summary of the research's contribution to understanding the interplay between peer dynamics, consumer behavior, and social identity formation. Final remarks on how peer pressure shapes clothing brand preferences among college students in contemporary society.

INTRODUCTION

Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by members of one's peer group in encouraging individuals to conform to certain behaviours, attitudes, or norms. This influence can be both positive and negative, as peers can either encourage constructive behaviours or push individuals to engage in activities that may go against their own values or better judgment.

Peer pressure is most commonly associated with adolescence, as individuals in this age group often seek approval and acceptance from their peers, making them susceptible to conforming to group expectations. However, peer pressure can affect people of all ages and in various social contexts. It's important for individuals to develop a strong sense of self-awareness and decision-making skills to resist negative peer pressure and make choices that align with their values and well-being.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a research, B. Bradford Brown (1982) discovered that women were subjected to greater peer pressure than men. Intense peer pressure also occurred in different areas for men and women. One of the most challenging things for an adolescent to deal with is peer pressure, which can have a significant impact. According to Brian Borsari and Kate B. Carey (2001), peer pressure and interpersonal dynamics have a significant role in college students' alcohol consumption. It may occur as a result of modelling, perceived societal norms, or direct influence. One of the causes of college students' excessive alcohol consumption is peer pressure.

Peer support and encouragement, both professional and personal, can have both beneficial and negative effects on a student's academic performance, according to Jessica M. Dennis, Jean S. Phinney, and Lizette Ivy Chuateco (2005). Bad grades can be the result of a lack of peer support. Students often drink more alcohol in an effort to gain social approval and prevent being negatively judged by their classmates. According to these individuals, drinking excessive amounts of alcohol is typical behaviour for college students (Crawford & Novak, 2007). Additionally, it was shown that some students choose to abstain from alcohol entirely or to cut back on their intake deliberately in order to lessen its harmful consequences.

Student's purchasing decisions, preferences, and behaviour are influenced by their peer group, according to research on children's consumer behaviour conducted in 1993 by Gwen Rae Bachmann, Deborah Roedder John, and Akshay R. Rao. Peer buy influence develops as kids move through the elementary school years; becoming older does not make this impact stronger, but getting older makes kids more susceptible to peer pressure on products that are visually appealing or conspicuous.

Nunes Rita Catela and Agante Luisa (2014) noted that a person's brand loyalty may be impacted by their peers. Children begin to recognise brands at a very young age, and as they become older, they also become more aware of current fashions and trends. Children are more impacted by what their classmates own than by their parents, who have less influence over what their kids wish to buy. On the other hand, it is also noted that, beyond a certain age, peer pressure ceases to play a role in influencing people's purchasing decisions.

According to research by Sneh S. Jhaveri and Sairaj M. Patki (2016), eating disorders are growing more common among young adults as they become more self-conscious about their bodies. It was discovered that peers encouraged people of both genders to reduce weight. Students who live apart from their parents are more susceptible to dieting peer pressure.

EFFECTS OF PEER PRESSURE ON BUYING DECISION

1. Conformity: Humans have a natural tendency to conform to the behaviours and norms of their social groups. This conformity can extend to purchasing decisions, where individuals may feel pressure to buy certain products or brands simply because others in their peer group are doing so. This pressure to conform can be particularly strong in adolescence and young adulthood when fitting in with peers is often a primary concern.

2. Social Proof: Social proof is a psychological phenomenon where people assume the actions of others in an attempt to reflect correct behaviour for a given situation. In the context of purchasing decisions, seeing others within one's social circle buying or endorsing a product can serve as powerful social proof. Individuals may interpret the actions of their peers as a signal that the product is desirable, trustworthy, or of high quality, influencing their own decision to make a purchase.

3. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO): FOMO is the apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. In the realm of consumer behaviour, FOMO can drive individuals to make purchases to avoid feeling left out or excluded from experiences that their peers are enjoying. This fear of missing out on the benefits or satisfaction associated with a particular product can be a potent motivator for purchasing decisions.

4. Status and Identity: Products and brands often carry symbolic meanings that individuals use to communicate their social status, values, and identity to others. Peer pressure can influence purchase decisions by shaping perceptions of what products are associated with desirable social status or align with the identity of one's social group. Individuals may feel compelled to buy certain items to signal their affiliation with or aspiration towards a particular social group or lifestyle.

5. Influence on Preferences: Peer pressure can shape individuals' preferences and tastes by exposing them to the preferences of their peers. Through repeated exposure to the choices and opinions of others within their social circle, individuals may come to adopt similar preferences and perceptions of what is desirable or fashionable. This process of socialization can influence not only what products individuals choose to purchase but also how they perceive and evaluate those products.

6. Risk Reduction: When faced with uncertainty or ambiguity about a product, individuals may look to the purchasing decisions of their peers as a form of social proof and risk reduction. If a product has been positively endorsed or used by others within their social network, individuals may feel more confident in its quality, reliability, and suitability for their own needs. This reliance on peer recommendations can help individuals navigate the overwhelming array of choices in the marketplace and mitigate the perceived risks associated with making a poor purchasing decision.

COPING MECHANISM OF PEER PRESSURE

1. Assertiveness Skills: Developing assertiveness skills empowers college students to confidently express their own opinions, preferences, and boundaries in social situations. This includes saying "no" to peer pressure without feeling guilty or obligated to comply.
2. Support System: Having a trusted confidante or support system, such as close friends, family members, or mentors, can provide emotional support and guidance when facing peer pressure. Confiding in someone who respects their choices can bolster students' confidence in resisting unwanted influences.
3. Goal Setting and Prioritization: Setting clear goals and priorities helps college students stay focused on their long-term objectives and values, making it easier to resist peer pressure that conflicts with their personal goals. By prioritizing what is important to them, students can make decisions aligned with their aspirations rather than succumbing to external influences.
4. Critical Thinking Skills: Developing critical thinking skills enables students to evaluate the potential consequences of their actions and make informed decisions independently. By questioning assumptions, analysing information critically, and weighing the pros and cons, students can resist peer pressure and make rational choices.
5. Peer Selection and Social Circle: Choosing friends and peers who share similar values, interests, and goals can reduce susceptibility to negative peer pressure. Surrounding oneself with supportive and like-minded individuals fosters a positive peer environment where mutual respect and encouragement prevail.
6. Conflict Resolution Strategies: Learning effective conflict resolution strategies equips college students with the tools to navigate disagreements or conflicts arising from peer pressure assertively and constructively. This includes communication skills, negotiation techniques, and compromise when necessary.

OBJECTIVE

1. To examine how peer groups affect the buying decisions of college students.
2. To identify the motivations behind the buying decisions under the influence of peer pressure.
3. To analyse the types of products influenced by peer pressure among college students.
4. To examine the consequences of peer pressure on financial well being.
5. Exploring the coping mechanism and resilience strategies employed by college students.
6. To provide recommendations for intervention and support on buying decisions among the college students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:- The scope of study aims to explore the influence of peer pressure on college students' buying decisions regarding clothing brands.

SAMPLE DESIGN:- A sample design is a set strategy for selecting a sample from a certain population.

SAMPLING METHOD:- Since the population the study is infinite, simple random sampling method has been used for sample selection.

SAMPLE SIZE:- Sample size of 50 respondents is selected for the study.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS:- The data collected were analysed by percentage analysis and presented through tables and charts.

FINDINGS

1. 60.4% of the respondents are female: Out of all the respondents, around two- thirds are females.

Gender
53 responses
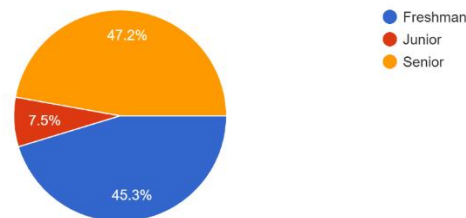
- Male
- Female

60.4%

39.6%
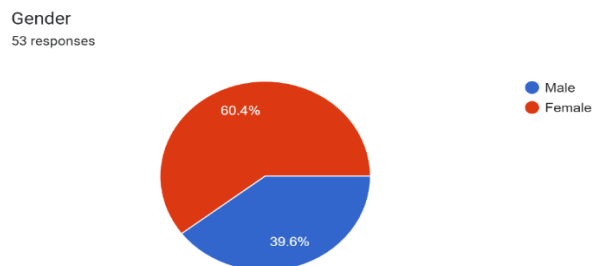
2. 79.2% of the respondents are between 18-20 years: Majority of the people surveyed are between 18-20 years.

Age group
53 responses
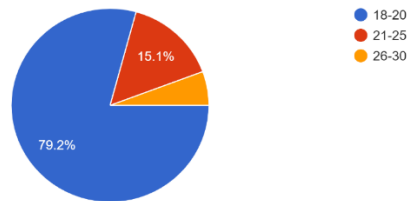
3. 47.2% of the respondents are senior: Out of all the respondents, almost half of the people are senior.


Year of Study
53 responses

4. 54.7% of the respondents believed that they purchase clothing items 1-2 times in a month: More than half of the respondents have a certain frequency of buying clothing items 1-2 time in a month.

1. How often do you purchase clothing items in a month?
53 responses
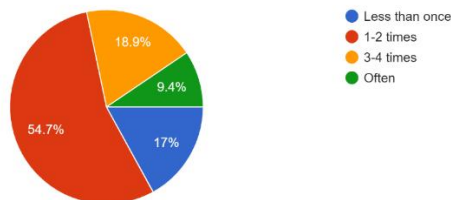
5. 43.4% of the respondents believed that they consider peer pressure as moderately influential in their clothing purchase decisions: Significant portion of the respondents considers peer pressure to have a moderate impact on their clothing choices.

2. How influential do you consider peer pressure in your clothing purchasing decisions?
53 responses
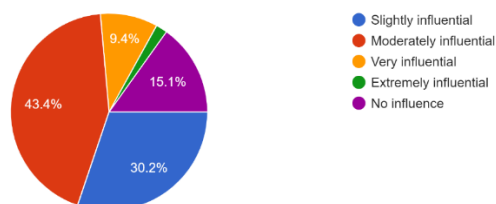
6. 49.1% of the respondents believed that they never brought a clothing item because their peer influenced them to do so: Majority of the respondents do not consider peer influence as a significant factor in their clothing purchasing decisions.

3. Have you ever brought a clothing item because your peer influenced you to do so?
53 responses
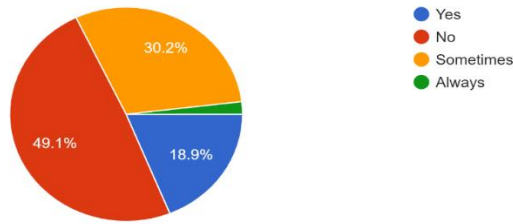
7. 66% of the respondents believed that they are neutral to purchase a clothing item if it is associated with a popular or trendy brand among their peers: Lack of strong consensus among the respondents have neutral regarding the influence of brand popularity or trendiness.

4. Are you more likely to purchase a clothing item if it is associated with a popular or trendy brand among your peers?
53 responses
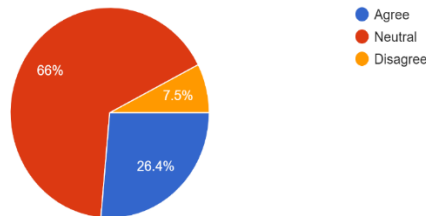
8. 43.4% of the respondents believed that they occasionally find themself buying clothing brands that their friends or peers recommended: This indicates that social factors, such as recommendation from peers, have a notable impact on consumer behaviour for buying clothing brand items.

5. How often do you find yourself buying clothing brands that your friends or peers recommend?
53 responses
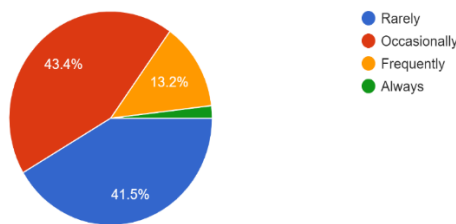
9. 56.6% of the respondents believed that personal style is the factor that influences, when making clothing purchase decisions: Majority of the respondents prioritize their own individual preferences, tastes and self-expression when selection clothing items.

6. Specify the factor that influence you, when making clothing purchase decisions?
53 responses
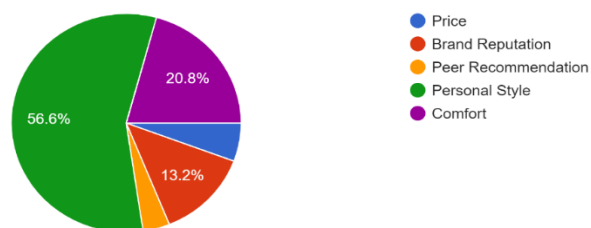
10. 49.1% of the respondents believed that peer pressure has no impact on their overall satisfaction with their clothing purchases: Majority of the respondents highlights autonomy and self-assurance of individuals in making fashion choices based on personal preference rather than succumbing to peer pressure.

7. Do you believe that peer pressure has a positive or negative impact on your overall satisfaction with your clothing purchases?
53 responses
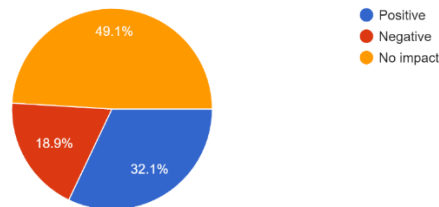
11. 49.1% of the respondents believed that social media plays a moderate role in amplifying peer pressure when it comes to clothing brand choices: It suggests that a sizeable portion of respondents recognizes the influence of social media in shaping buying behaviour in the clothing industry.

8. How much do you think social media plays a role in amplifying peer pressure when it comes to clothing brand choices?
53 responses
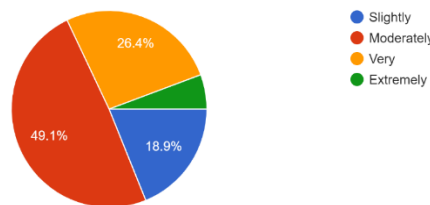
12. 49.1% of the respondents believed that financial pressure to keep up with the clothing choices of your peers has a neutral impact: It indicates that a significant portion of respondents perceives their financial situations as neither significantly burdened not relived by the need to match the clothing choices of their peers.

9. Do you feel financial pressure to keep up with the clothing choices of your peers?
53 responses
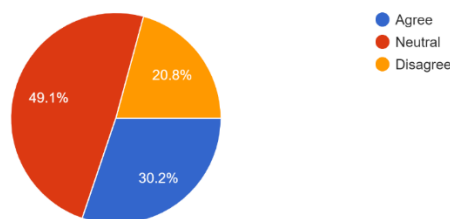
13. 50.9% of the respondents believed that they are loyal to a specific brand but not influenced by their peers: This suggests that a majority of respondents values brand loyalty and maintains allegiance to certain brands irrespective of external influences such as peer pressure.

10. Are you loyal to specific clothing brands, and if so, is this influenced by your peers?
53 responses
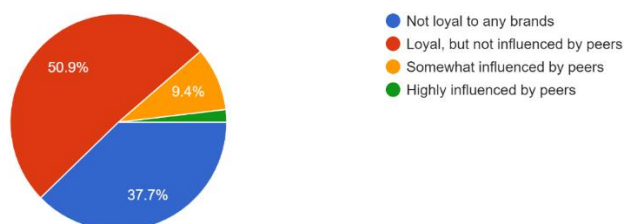
CONCLUSION

The impact of peer pressure on the purchasing decisions of college students regarding clothing brands is a multifaceted phenomenon that shapes the landscape of consumer behaviour in this demographic. College students, in their quest for social acceptance and belonging, are particularly susceptible to the influence of their peers when it comes to fashion choices. Social media platforms, serving as powerful channels for showcasing trends and endorsements, further amplify this influence, creating aspirational desires and setting standards for style among peers. However, amidst this influence, the role of individuality and personal preference cannot be overlooked. While some students may succumb to peer pressure and prioritize conformity, others assert their independence by staying loyal to specific brands or expressing their unique style preferences. Financial considerations also play a crucial role, with students navigating the balance between affordability and social acceptance.

In conclusion, while peer pressure undeniably impacts the clothing brand choices of college students, the interplay of factors such as brand loyalty, social media influence, financial constraints, and personal identity highlights the complexity of their decision-making process. Businesses targeting this demographic must recognize these nuances and tailor their strategies to resonate with the diverse needs, values, and preferences of college students, fostering brand loyalty while empowering individual expression.

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