

GENDER AS A MODERATOR OF ROLE MODEL INFLUENCE AND ADOLESCENTS' CONSUMER-RELATED BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS

KIRBY L.J. SHANNAHAN, Memorial University of Newfoundland
RACHELLE J. SHANNAHAN, Memorial University of Newfoundland
ALAN J. BUSH, University of Memphis
RICHARD A. ROCCO, DePaul University

The study explores gender as a moderator of the relationship between the influence of various role models and adolescents' consumer-related behavioral intentions. A quantitative survey of 175 adolescents was conducted measuring role model influence and behavioral intentions. The LISREL model showed that gender was a significant moderator of the relationship and indicated that mothers and entertainers had a more positive impact on adolescent females' behavioral intentions while fathers had a negative influence. Fathers and teachers had a more positive influence on adolescent males' behavioral intentions. By better understanding gender differences among adolescents, marketers can develop more meaningful marketing communications programs to appeal to and motivate an adolescent target audience.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are an influential consumer market segment since they are trendsetters not only for one another, but also for the population at large (Noble, Haytko and Phillips 2009; Paul 2001). Children and adults look to teens to identify and adopt the latest fashion. Even more, adolescents often influence family purchase decisions and parental expenditures (Flurry and Burns 2005; Kennedy 2001; Wang, Holloway, Beatty and Hill 2007). These technologically savvy consumers are likely to play an even greater role in family decision making because of their expertise in terms of Internet use and because of their interests (Kim, Yang and Lee 2009; Sutherland and Thompson 2003).

The adolescent consumer segment also deserves attention from marketers because of its potential buying power. Raised in a consumption-driven society, these young consumers have more money at their disposal than any teen group in history and directly contribute to \$600 billion worth of spending

each year (Morton 2002; Noble et al. 2009). Further, this group's distinctive buying habits are likely to continue as its members enter the high-spending years of young adulthood (Lee 2009; Neuborne 1999). This builds on Wolburg and Pokrywczynski (2001) who suggest that the adolescent market is receptive to new products and has great potential for becoming lifetime customers. Hsieh, Chiu and Lin (2006) reinforce this point in noting that "more than half the brands used in childhood continue to be used in adulthood" (p. 1079).

Adolescents are also an important target for social marketers who spend millions of dollars each year in attempts to inform and influence teens about critical issues and behaviors related to smoking, drinking, and obesity. Brennan and Binney (2010) note that while the use of social marketing is growing, there is still some doubt as to the efficacy of the "three common social marketing appeals – fear, guilt, and shame – in terms of their capacity to induce compliant behaviors" (p. 140). Identifying significant influencers of adolescents may aid social marketers in successfully reaching and communicating to this important and oftentimes vulnerable consumer segment.

While there has been growing interest in children's consumptive behavior since the 1980s, (Bao, Fern and Sheng 2007), there has been a renewed research interest in adolescents. Gavish, Shoham and Ruvio's (2010) recent investigation of consumption interactions of adolescent daughters, mothers, and vicarious role models suggest a bi-directional influence between adolescent daughters and mothers. While this study adds to the literature by qualitatively taking an integrative perspective on adolescents and role model influence, the authors call for future research in this important area with respect to brand loyalty and consumption. Moreover, the authors encourage research to examine the role model influence of "father-son dyads" (p. 51). This reinforces Hsieh et al. (2006) who note that "little research focuses on the influence of fathers on their children" (p. 1080). In response to Gavish et al. (2010) and following Hsieh et al. (2006) the present study includes the examination of mother-son, mother-daughter, father-son, and father-daughter role model influence by quantitatively investigating role model influence and adolescents' consumption-related activities such as word-of-mouth communication, brand loyalty, and brand switching by gender.

Gender is another consumer behavior research topic garnering renewed interest. Kolyesnikova, Dodd and Wilcox (2009) identify gender as a moderator of reciprocal consumer behavior for adult wine consumption. Other research uncovering differences between males and females includes viewing preferences for sports consumption (McDaniel, Lim and Mahan III 2007), the importance of core service (merchandise) quality relative to relational (interaction) quality (Babakus and Yavas 2008), information search (Barber, Dodd and Kolyesnikova 2009), and response to unfair prices (Maxwell, Lee, Anselstetter, Comer and Maxwell, 2009). Noteworthy is that this line of research tends to focus on adults.

Though gender has been a topic of interest in the child consumer socialization literature, there is much still to be learned (Gavish et al. 2010;

Hsieh et al. 2006; Noble et al. 2009). One topic that appears to be largely unexplored is gender's potential moderating effects on the relationship between role model influence and the behavioral intentions of adolescents. While past studies have examined the influence of role models on adolescents in general (Bush, Martin and Bush 2004; Bush, Smith and Martin 1999; Carlson, Walsh, Laczniak and Grossbart 1994; Clark, Martin and Bush 2001), none examine gender as a moderator of specific role model influence on behavioral intentions.

The purpose of this study is to explore gender as a moderator of role model influence for five common role models – mothers, fathers, teachers, entertainers, and athletes – on teens' behavioral intentions since previous research indicates they play a significant role in consumer socialization (Bush et al. 1999; Moschis and Churchill 1978; Ward 1974). Consumer socialization is important since it is through this process that behavioral intentions are formed and carried out. The question that remains is whether males and females differ with respect to how they are influenced by various role models. If gender does moderate the influence of particular role models on adolescents' consumer-related behavioral intentions, marketers can be more effective in selecting the appropriate role model(s) to appeal to and motivate an adolescent target audience.

Consumer Socialization and Role Model Influence

"Socialization theory is the most common ground for understanding how young consumers learn to shop" (Noble et al. 2009). Consumption-related attitudes, decisions, skills, and behaviors are shaped in part by role models through the consumer socialization process, which are then reflected in young consumers' behavioral intentions. The most popular theory of consumer socialization is the social learning model, which views socialization as an outcome of environmental forces, such as role model influence, applied to the individual. For this theory, the individual is a passive

participant in the learning process and the development of beliefs and attitudes result from interaction with others (Moschis 1978).

Consumer socialization emphasizes sources of influence, or socialization agents, who transmit attitudes, norms, motivations, and beliefs to the learner (Moschis and Churchill 1978). In the consumer behavior literature, these agents include role models like parents (Ward, Wackman and Wartella 1977), teachers and peers (Moschis and Churchill 1978), opinion leaders (including entertainers and athletes), and the mass media (Bush et al. 1999, Bush et al. 2004). This process produces consumer skills that in turn can impact behavioral intentions (Moschis 1978). Behavioral intentions, as an outcome of socialization, are of particular importance to marketers because they are related to the behaviors that consumers exhibit toward a given product or brand through word-of-mouth communication, brand loyalty, or switching behavior (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1996).

Social learning theory is often used to examine and explain the consumer decision making process of adolescents (Moschis and Churchill 1978). This theory proposes that individuals develop attitudes and behaviors through a variety of learning experiences as they interact with various influencers over time (King and Multon 1996). As models of attitudes, skills, and behavior, these influential others help shape the young consumer's consumption-related decisions and actions (Bandura 1977). Those having the greatest impact are often referred to as role models (Bandura 1977). Peers, parents, and the media have been studied in terms of their influence on the consumption behaviors of young consumers (Bush et al. 1999; Carlson, Grossbart and Walsh 1990; Carlson et al. 1994; Goodrich 2008; Keillor, Parker and Schaefer 1996; Martin and Bush 2000; O'Guinn and Shrum 1997).

While businesses have long relied on mass media appeals and scare tactics to influence adolescents, recent research has investigated more personal variables. For example, Thakor

and Goneau-Lessard's (2009) investigation of adolescents' skepticism toward advertising highlights the importance of normative peer influence and socio-oriented parental communication in shaping adolescents' perceptions. In the marketing of goods and services, more personal approaches, in the form of role models, are frequently used to appeal to adolescents to generate product interest and improve sales among this segment. Because the teen segment is so influential in its own right, of particular interest to marketing practitioners and researchers alike is the influence of various role models on teens' purchasing decisions, intentions, and, ultimately, behavior. Understanding how gender influences the impact that particular role models have on consumer-related behavioral intentions is of significant value to marketers who may be misallocating resources in trying to appeal to young male and female audiences with the same marketing communications.

Gender Differences and Adolescent Consumer Behavior

Ward's (1974) early research on consumer socialization underlined the importance of understanding not only the significance of the youth market but also of understanding the role of gender on consumer behavior (Stevens, Lathrop and Bradish 2005), as gender is a universal marketing segmenting method (Putrevu 2001). In fact, many have identified differences between the genders in some important respects. For instance, young males and females differ with regards to consumer knowledge and purchasing patterns (Moschis 1985; Moschis and Churchill 1978; Moschis, Moore and Stephens 1977), risk perceptions (Smith and Rosenthal 1995) and with respect to processing and responding to marketing communications (Wolin 2003). Mangleburg, Grewal and Briston (1997) report differences between males and females concerning how consumer socialization agents affect product label use. Lachance, Beaudoin and Robitaille (2003) not only report gender differences among adolescent consumers with respect to how parents, peers, and television, as

socialization agents, impact brand sensitivity, but also call for more research on the consumer socialization of children.

While gender has been a topic of interest in the consumer socialization literature, its potential moderating effects on the relationship between role model influence and the behavioral intentions of adolescents appears to be largely unexplored. Studies focusing on adolescents exploring gender's potential moderating effects include Hsieh et al. (2006) and Thakor and Goneau-Lessard (2009). Hsieh et al. (2006) expected to find gender differences in their study of parental style influence on children's brand attitudes, but found no moderating effects, perhaps due to the young age of the sample (8-12 years old). Thakor and Goneau-Lessard (2009) examined the possible moderating effects of gender on adolescents' skepticism of social and commercial advertising, however, theirs was a study that involved ads that focused specifically on health-related behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and drinking and driving. While the authors proposed gender differences, none were found, though this, and the fact that gender did not moderate the effects of other study variables, may be indicative of the behaviors being too sensitive in nature to ferret out gender differences. However, Shim (1996) suggests that gender is a distinctive variable in predicting the influence of socialization agents and that, in assessing adolescent consumer skills, gender differences should be taken into consideration. Though Gavish et al.'s (2010) recent investigation of adolescent mother-daughter role model influence uncovered the bi-directional influence between mothers and their daughters, male adolescents were not studied in this endeavor. Explored in the present study is whether and to what extent gender moderates the influence of particular role models (mothers, fathers, teachers, entertainers and athletes) on adolescents' consumer-related behavioral intentions. The following research question is investigated:

RQ₁: Does gender moderate the relationship between role model influence and the

consumer-related behavioral intentions of adolescents?

Since gender differences are expected in adolescents concerning role model influence (Shim 1996), the additional following research question is investigated:

RQ₂: Does role model influence affect adolescent males and females differently concerning their consumer-related behavioral intentions?

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 (mean = 16.4) who were recruited from seven separate high schools and junior high schools in the mid-south area of the United States participated in this study. Fifty-three percent (94) of the 175 respondents were female. Sixty-two percent of all respondents were Caucasian, twenty-eight percent were African American, and ten percent were classified as other. Adolescents were the focus of this study because they are an important and influential market segment still in the learning stages of the consumer socialization process (Noble et al. 2009).

Measures

Existing scales were used to measure role model perceptions in general and how specific role models may influence a respondent's consumer-related behavioral intentions. Role model influence was assessed using an adapted version of the Rich (1997) role model scale. This seven-point, five-item Likert scale has anchors of strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (7). Each respondent completed the scale for *five different potential* role models – the respondent's mother, father, favorite teacher, favorite entertainer, and favorite athlete. The reliabilities of the five role model scales were as follows: mother ($\alpha=.94$); father ($\alpha=.97$); favorite teacher ($\alpha=.92$); favorite entertainer ($\alpha=.93$); and favorite athlete ($\alpha=.94$).

Behavioral intentions were measured using an adapted version of the Zeithaml et al. (1996) multidimensional measure, which includes the sub-dimensions word-of-mouth communications, brand loyalty, and switching behavior. Each respondent completed the seven-point, twelve-item scale, anchored by strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (7), which contains a variety of purchase and behavioral intention questions. The reliabilities for the three behavioral intention factors were as follows: word-of-mouth communications (three items, $\alpha=.90$); brand loyalty (three items, $\alpha=.85$); and switching behavior (six items, $\alpha=.91$). For this scale, the composite scores of each set of items were used, whereby the sums of scores were divided by the number of items comprising each of the measure's sub-dimensions and subsequently used in the structural model as indicators of behavioral intentions. Since behavioral intentions (consumer socialization) were not explicitly modeled as a higher-order construct, the use of composite scores to represent a partially aggregated model acknowledges the construct's multidimensional nature (Bagozzi and Heatherton 1994).

A LISREL model was developed to test the research questions. The measures for both scales (role model influence and behavioral intentions) were subjected to exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to address issues of dimensionality, convergent, and discriminant validity (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Joreskog and Sorbom 1993). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted using a maximum likelihood (ML) extraction with oblique rotation. Six factors (mother, father, favorite teacher, favorite entertainer, favorite athlete, and behavioral intentions) clearly emerged as expected with each of the items loading under its expected component with factor loading values of at least .76. This extraction led to 78.3 percent variance explained. The internal consistency reliability (coefficient alpha) of each measure (as indicated above) was above the commonly accepted threshold of .70 (Nunnally 1978).

Results of the confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8 (Joreskog and Sorbom 1993) and the sample covariance matrix as input indicated that each item loaded significantly on its respective underlying concept. A variety of fit indices were examined and, with the exception of the chi square test statistic (χ^2), the results indicated a relatively good fit of the measurement model ($\chi^2=564.81$, $df=335$, $p=.00$; *Root Mean Square Error of Approximation* [RMSEA] =.06; *Nonnormed Fit Index* [NNFI] =.94; *Comparative Fit Index* [CFI] =.94) (Bentler and Bonnett 1980; Hu and Bentler 1999; Joreskog and Sorbom 1993).

As shown in the Appendix, the magnitudes of the standardized loading estimates ranged from .79 to .97, and all loadings were significant (i.e., all *t-values* were larger than 2.00) (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). In addition to these loadings and the various model fit statistics, average variance extracted (AVE) was used to demonstrate convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker 1981). All AVE values were greater than .50, demonstrating convergence. Discriminant validity is present since the largest value for shared variance between all pairs of constructs (.32) is less than the lowest value for AVE (.69) (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

RESULTS

RQ₁: Does gender moderate the relationship between role model influence and the consumer-related behavioral intentions of adolescents?

After establishing the structure of the measurement model, ten indicators were used to measure the five separate latent role model constructs, with two indicators per construct. Since the constructs were measured with several items, the items were randomly divided into two or three indicator variables to enhance parsimony and facilitate model estimation for each construct (Pechmann, Zhao, Goldberg and Reibling 2003). However, prior to testing for the moderator, an analysis to confirm the measurement metric equivalency of the two

gender groups was conducted (Marsh and Hocevar 1985; Vandenberg and Lance 2000). Once measurement equivalence was confirmed, the structural model using LISREL 8 (Joreskog and Sorbom 1993) was tested with the male and female sample covariance matrices as input. The unweighted least squares (ULS) estimation approach was used. The model fit statistics collectively indicate that the proposed model fits the data very well ($\chi^2=53.7$, $df=98$, $p=.99$; $RMSEA=.00$; *Goodness of Fit Index [GFI]* =1.00; *NFI*=.96; and *CFI* =1.00) (Hu and Bentler 1999).

A base model established the relationships and a best-case scenario in which the error variances were set free for both the behavioral intentions and role model composite indicators. As well, each predicted latent role model construct was allowed to correlate. In an effort to fully examine the impact of gender as a moderator on adolescent behavioral intentions, a role model from one of the groups was constrained prior to performing chi-square difference tests on each of the role models using the previously referenced base model (Hughes, Price and Marrs 1986). In all cases, the revised models deteriorated for each role model scenario, as indicated by increasing chi-square values. In particular, the chi-square differences with respect to mother (MOT) ($59.07-53.7=5.37$, $df=1$), father (FAT) ($82.27-53.7=28.67$, $df=1$), teacher (TEA) ($69.86-53.7=16.16$, $df=1$), and entertainer (ENT) ($63.21-53.7=9.51$, $df=1$) were all significant at the $\alpha=.05$ level based on $\chi^2(1)=3.84$ (Groebner, Shannon, Fry and Smith 2004). The chi-square difference for athlete (ATH) as a role model did not indicate a significant difference ($56.36-53.7=2.66$, $df=1$). *The results clearly show that gender is a significant moderator of role model influence on the consumer socialization of adolescents, as measured by behavioral intentions, for four of the five potential role model influencers examined.*

RQ₂: Does role model influence affect adolescent males and females differently concerning their behavioral intentions?

The results were further examined to determine which gender was more influenced by each of the four role models for which significant differences were observed. The standardized path coefficients found in the completely standardized common metric solutions indicated that teachers (TEA) as role models had a more positive influence on males than on females (male $g=.20$, female $g=.10$). Fathers (FAT) as role models had a more positive influence on males but a stronger negative influence on females (male $g=.04$, female $g=-.19$). Entertainers (ENT) (male $g=.23$, female $g=.24$) and mothers (MOT) (male $g=.02$, female $g=.35$) both had a stronger influence on females than on males, with mothers being the stronger influencer of the two (See Table 1 for a summary of the findings).

DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The goal of the present study was to assess the influence of various role models on adolescents' consumer-related behavioral intentions by investigating whether, and to what extent, the adolescents' gender moderates the relationship. The results reveal that gender does moderate the relationship in the quantitative model with one exception, athlete role model influence. Further, all relationships were positive, except in the case of fathers' negative role model influence on adolescent females' behavioral intentions.

While utilizing relatively stringent evaluation procedures, the proposed model was supported by the data and the covariance structure analysis allowed for an extended examination of the impact of the various role models on male versus female consumer-related behavioral intentions. The findings suggest that teachers and fathers have a significantly more positive influence on adolescent males' behavioral intentions than on females'. On the other hand, mothers and entertainers have a significantly more positive influence on adolescent females' behavioral intentions than on males'.

TABLE 1
Strength of role model influence on consumer-related behavioral intentions by gender.

Role Model	Influence Strength by Gender	Gender as a Moderator?
Mothers	male $g = .02$, female $g = .35$	Yes
Fathers	male $g = .04$, female $g = -.19$	Yes
Teachers	male $g = .20$, female $g = .10$	Yes
Entertainers	male $g = .23$, female $g = .24$	Yes
Athletes	male $g = .15$, female $g = .18$	No

In corroborating the qualitative findings of Gavish et al. (2010), this quantitative study showed a significant relationship between mothers and adolescent females' behavioral intentions. While the bi-directionality of the mother-daughter role model influence was not assessed, the findings indicate that mothers can be a powerful influence on their daughters when it comes to word-of-mouth communications about brands, brand loyalty and brand switching. That the role model influence of mothers was significant for both males and females is perhaps because "mothers are often the purchasing agents for the family" (Flurry and Burns 2005, p. 595). What is more, the results are consistent with Ward (1974) who notes that mothers, more than fathers, tend to hold discussions with their children and allow them to learn from their own experiences to teach them consumer skills. That mothers were more influential for females than for males is consistent with the finding that mothers and daughters tend to experience greater agreement than mothers and sons (Beatty and Talpade 1994; Saunders et al. 1973).

In contrast to the qualitative findings of Gavish et al. (2010), this quantitative study indicated a strong positive relationship between entertainers and adolescent females' behavioral intentions. These differences may be attributed to the nature of the study (in-depth interviews versus anonymous surveys) and/or cultural differences. In fact, Gavish et al. (2010) note that the lack of significant findings for celebrities may be due to the fact that,

"imitating celebrities was perceived as a weakness" (p. 48). The results of the present study do make sense given Noble et al.'s (2009) phenomenological investigation of the antecedents/motivations of American college age consumers' purchasing and patronage behavior which revealed the subjects of that study to be "very focused on the styles celebrities wear" (p. 626). A future research opportunity to further understand the influence of entertainers exists since marketers often rely on celebrity endorsers to for marketing campaigns.

A key finding of interest is the direction of the role model influence of fathers in that father role model influence on behavioral intentions revealed results in the opposite direction for the genders, with females being more strongly, though negatively, influenced. This may be explained by prior research that has found parents to be more responsive to same-sex children (Ackock and Bengston 1978; Baumrind 1971; Margolin and Patterson 1975; Noller 1980). For example, fathers typically have more paternal involvement with sons, and may therefore be more influential for them. Further, males tend to perceive their relationship with their fathers as more supportive than do females (Furman and Buhrmester 1992). While all of this suggests gender plays a significant role in the relationship between parental influence and children's behavioral intentions, Lachance et al. (2003) note that little is known about the role of fathers as consumer socialization agents – its nature or importance. Though Carlson and

Grossbart (1988) state that maternal effects dominate children's socialization, Lee and Collins (2000) did find father-daughter and mother-son coalitions. The present study's results, like those of Hsieh et al. (2006), suggest that the socialization practices of fathers and mothers may be different. More studies, therefore, "are necessary for investigating the parental influences among parent-child dyads" (Hsieh et al. 2006, p. 1084). Since "parents play distinctive roles in their children's development" (Bao et al. 2007, p. 673), and given that "for marketers, an awareness of parental influence is very important, because they may be able to influence children's attitudes toward the brand by marketing to adults (parents)" (Hsieh et al. 2006, p. 1084), there is still much to learn in exploring parental-child influence. Further, though the findings provide additional insight into adolescent males in revealing that fathers can be powerful influencers of their sons' word-of-mouth communications about brands, brand loyalty and brand switching behavior, the bi-directionality of influence was not assessed. An additional future research opportunity exists to study this important dyad.

LIMITATIONS

A key study limitation study is the exclusion of peers as a role model group of interest. As an imperative part of an adolescent's social context (Brown 1990), peer groups are a significant socializing force during adolescence (Hay and Ashman 2003). A recent study by Lee (2009) identifies peer influence to be the top predictor of adolescents' green purchase behavior. Further, Thakor and Goneau-Lessard (2009) showed peer influence to play a significant role in adolescents' skepticism of advertising. In fact, evidence suggests that peer influence becomes stronger as teens mature. Though younger children tend to acquire consumer norms through observations of their parents, adolescents and teenagers are likely to look to their friends for models of acceptable consumption behavior (Goodrich 2008; Shiffman and Kanuk 2004). The present study

can therefore be extended to include peers as potential roles models.

Another limitation is the implicit presumption of a traditional family household. U.S. Census data, for instance, suggest that traditional families have declined as other household types have emerged. These new households include single parent households resulting from rising divorce rates. Hill and Rodgers (1964) suggest that events such as a divorce or birth can alter the role relationships in a family and transition the family into a new phase of the family lifecycle, potentially impacting a child's socialization process. Further, as children develop parents are the ones who teach their children consumer skills, consumption-related preferences, and consumption-related attitudes (Hawkins, Best and Coney 2004). However, this study did not consider the potential influence of family structure when examining the differences among the respondents. It may, therefore, be important to examine the potential differences in consumer socialization among teenagers with nontraditional family structures such as married parents with stay-at-home fathers, dual-income working parents, single parents due to divorce or death, and same sex parents. Belch and Willis (2001) report that the changing structure of American households has resulted in changes in the family decision-making process such that females have gained more influence in most consumer decision-making, while that of men has decreased. Further, Roberts, Manolis and Tanner (2006) suggest family structure directly influences adolescent compulsive buying behavior. Future studies should, therefore, test for any effects based on differences in family structure. Knowledge of, and closer attention to, household structure may enhance the understanding of how various role models influence teens' behavioral intentions given the father role model's unexpected negative influence on female behavioral intentions. Additional limiting factors include the absence of measurement of family communication or level of parent-child interaction as family communication is a fundamental part of, and parent-child interactions play a critical role in,

consumer socialization (Bakir, Rose and Shoham 2006; Kim et al. 2009).

Final study limitations include the use of a convenience sample and the measurement of behavioral intentions versus actual behavior giving rise to the potential for self-generated validity effects (Chandon, Morwitz and Reinartz 2005). The generalizability of this study could have been enhanced by gathering behavioral data from a control group that did not answer the survey and by including multiple indirect measures of behavioral intentions that the survey does not influence. Limitations with respect to causality also apply. This study does not indicate that casual relationships exist among the study variables. Nevertheless, the overriding goal of the study was to explore the possibility of gender as a moderator of the relationship between various role model influences and adolescents' consumer-related behavioral intentions. Despite the noted study limitations, the study has demonstrated the importance of gender with respect to role model influence.

CONCLUSION

This study extends the present literature by focusing on gender differences among teens given their differential responses to various role model influences within the consumer socialization process. These findings also have important managerial implications. The results suggest that attention to gender differences is important for marketing managers utilizing role models in their marketing communications efforts to target young consumers. Marketing managers may wish to carefully consider their selection of an advertising spokesperson when targeting along the demographic lines of age and gender. For instance, the use of entertainers may have a more significant influence on adolescent females' behavioral intentions than on males'. Marketing managers may also wish to reconsider utilizing athlete spokespersons if they are segmenting teens along gender lines since in this study, favorite athletes as role models did not significantly differentially

influence males' or females' behavioral intentions.

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APPENDIX A
Confirmatory factor analysis (ULS) of items and measurement
properties of the role model influence scale

Scale Items*	Standardized Loadings	t-values
Role Model Influence – Mother (MOT) (a=.94)		
Provides a good model for me to follow	.91	15.53
Leads by example	.87	14.46
Sets a positive example for others to follow	.93	16.12
Exhibits the kind of work ethic and behavior that I try to imitate	.81	12.83
Acts as a role model for me	.93	16.18
Role Model Influence – Father (FAT) (a=.97)		
Provides a good model for me to follow	.97	17.42
Leads by example	.90	15.33
Sets a positive example for others to follow	.96	17.26
Exhibits the kind of work ethic and behavior that I try to imitate	.93	16.25
Acts as a role model for me	.95	16.96
Role Model Influence – Favorite Teacher (TEA) (a=.92)		
Provides a good model for me to follow	.86	14.05
Leads by example	.86	14.00
Sets a positive example for others to follow	.85	13.80
Exhibits the kind of work ethic and behavior that I try to imitate	.87	14.14
Acts as a role model for me	.79	12.15
Role Model Influence – Favorite Entertainer (ENT) (a=.93)		
Provides a good model for me to follow	.89	14.94
Leads by example	.90	15.01
Sets a positive example for others to follow	.88	14.60
Exhibits the kind of work ethic and behavior that I try to imitate	.79	12.43
Acts as a role model for me	.82	13.00
Model Influence – Favorite Athlete (ATH) (a=.94)		
Provides a good model for me to follow	.90	15.23
Leads by example	.93	15.95
Sets a positive example for others to follow	.88	14.71
Exhibits the kind of work ethic and behavior that I try to imitate	.82	13.09
Acts as a role model for me	.82	12.96
Behavioral Intentions**		
Word-of-Mouth Communications (WOM) (a=.90)	.89	14.18
Brand Loyalty (BRALOY) (a=.85)	.84	13.12
Switching (SWITCH) (a=.91)	.83	12.84

* Each item is measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) (Rich 1997).
All loadings are significant at the .01 level or better.

** Based on composite scores derived from the original 12-item scale (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1996).