



Socialization Agents on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability with the moderating effect of Social Structures: Linking Consumer Vulnerability model with Social Learning Theory

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Abstract

Adolescents are regarded as a particularly vulnerable consumer category, because of the influence of socialization agents. Furthermore, the literature now in publication emphasizes how demographic characteristics including age, gender, family, and social background affect adolescents' perceptions of vulnerability. The most often used method among the set of theories used to quantify adolescent consumer vulnerability is the Consumer Vulnerability model, which was first presented by Baker et al. (2005). Although, the model of Consumer Vulnerability is used to explain the vulnerability in consumption context, it does not cover the social learning process and how observers are influenced by the behavior of agents. Within this backdrop, the aim of the present study is to develop a suitable mechanism to measure the impact of Socialization Agents on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability with particular focus on Social Structures as the moderating variable. In order to quantify the influence of socialization agents on adolescent consumer vulnerability, Social Learning Theory was connected with the Consumer Vulnerability Model through a systematic review of previous research articles published between 2005 and 2020. In the end, a conceptual framework was created with four social structural characteristics serving as the moderating variable, five socialization variables serving as the independent variable, and Adolescent consumer vulnerability serving as the dependent variable.

Keywords: *Socialization Agents, Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability, Consumer Vulnerability Model, Social Learning Theory*

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Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional period between dependent childhood and socially conscious independent life phase (Kennedy et al. 2019; Judi et al., 2013). Adolescence is defined by current scholars as the time between the ages of 10 and 20 (Harari and Eyal, 2019; Steinberg, 2002). Further, they participate in a variety of activities to display their social personalities (Padeniya et al., 2019; Truman and Elliott, 2019; Lueg et al., 2006). Adolescents are therefore considered a high-risk consumer category, according to consumer researchers (Kennedy et al., 2019; Pechmann et al.).

Further, it was highlighted that adolescents continuously involve in dangerous actions due to their poor care on vulnerability (Batat, 2012). Moreover, it was the view of Tufte (2003) that adolescents' experience of vulnerability is dependent on demographic factors such as; age, gender, family and social background. Further, marketers have identified that targeting adolescents is important, due to the fact that it generates instant and long-term profits (Lapierre et al., 2017). As a result of brand-specific advertising and promotional strategies of marketers, adolescents are in a powerless state and are considered as vulnerable consumers, with reference to marketing promotion (Nishadi, 2024; Spotswood & Nairn 2016; Cohen, 2000; Pollay & Colleagues, 1996).

Additionally, existing scholars suggested that socialization agents play a role in impacting adolescents purchasing decisions (Nishadi et al., 2024b; Padeniya et al 2019; Scully et al., 2012). As such, adolescents' consumption choices are influenced by

socialization agents including peers, parents, food advertisers, internet, retailers, schools and governments (Nishadi et al., 2024c, Kennedy et al., 2019; Padeniya et al., 2019; Truman and Elliott, 2019; Harari & Eyal, 2019; Somasiri & Chandralal, 2018; Chan et al., 2009).

Within this backdrop, the aim of the present study is to develop a suitable mechanism to measure the impact of Socialization Agents on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability with particular focus on Social Structures as the moderating variable.

Problem Identification and Research gaps

Consumer Vulnerability model introduced by Baker et al (2005) is the most often utilized approach among the collection of theories that were used to measure Consumer Vulnerability Mohammadbeigi et al., 2019; Chowdhury et al., 2018; Saranya et al., 2016; Powell et al., 2015; Fadhilah et al., 2013; Cotti & Teft, 2013).

Further, Consumer Vulnerability model holds that the vulnerability in consumption context is determined by Individual Characteristics, Individual States and External Conditions.

Although, the model of Consumer Vulnerability was used to explain the vulnerability in consumption context, it does not cover the social learning process and how observers are influenced by the behavior of agents. Further, the role of social structural variables on the direct relationship between Socialization Agents and Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability is also not covered within the consumer vulnerability model

Based on the above background information, it is obvious that a suitable mechanism is needed to fill

the non-availability of suitable theory to explain the relationship between Socialization Agents and Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability.

As such, the consumer vulnerability model was linked with social learning theory to measure the direct impact of socialization agents on adolescent consumer vulnerability. In addition to that, the moderating role of social structural variables on the direct relationship between the above two variables is also measured by linking the two theories.

Methods

Developing a conceptual framework to quantify the influence of socialization agents on adolescent consumer vulnerability while controlling for the moderating influence of social structural variables is the aim of this study. The arguments were constructed and the conceptual framework was created using McInnes's (2011) observations and Jakkola's (2020) suggestions. In essence, the paper is divided into two halves. First, the Consumer Vulnerability model developed by Baker et al., (2005) has been used to explain how socialization agents affect adolescent consumer vulnerability.

In order to explain the moderating effect of social structural variables on the relationship between socialization agents and adolescent consumer vulnerability, the Social Learning Theory was also connected to the Consumer Vulnerability model.

Application of Consumer Vulnerability Model

The Consumer Vulnerability Model, first presented by Baker et al., (2005), serves as the primary foundation for consumer vulnerability research. As a

result, the three components of individual states, individual traits, and external situations can be used to analyze the idea of consumer vulnerability. Additionally, the impact of advertising, channel members, and online context—all of which are regarded as socialization agents—was taken into consideration when explaining the susceptibility in the consumption context. Therefore, the following is an explanation of how Consumer Vulnerability is applied in relation to the current research.

Individual Characteristics

According to the findings of Baker et al., (2005) vulnerability in consumption decisions is determined by internal and external factors. In here, Internal elements can be identified in two ways as Individual characteristics and Individual states. Further, Baker et al (2005) revealed that Cognitive Age, under psychological reasons, falls under the Individual Characteristics of a consumer. Further, the transition is considered as an element of individual states, leading to Consumer Vulnerability.

When applying Baker et al., (2005) consumer vulnerability to the present study, respondents of the current study represents adolescent consumers, who are considered as a vulnerable customer group. In line with the vulnerability model, this particular customer group is transferred from kids to adolescence which is considered as a risky age. Moreover, the respondents of the study sample represent adolescents from age 10 – 19.

Individual States

As per the findings of Baker's model (2005), a person's performance and

involvement in a consumption situation is determined by the states of the individual including sorrow, conversion, and inspiration. Aligning with the insights of Consumer Vulnerability model (Baker et al., 2005) several other researchers also elaborated that adolescent buying power has increased due to independence during this liminal period (Kennedy et al., 2019; Sadachar et al., 2016).

Thus, it is apparent that adolescents' tendency to eat fast food is determined by their states, such as transition, independence, motivation and mood change (Mohammadbeigi et al., 2019; Chowdhury, 2018). As such, those elements of the consumer vulnerability model can be used to better explain the level of adolescent consumer vulnerability within the current study (Mohammadbeigi et al., 2019; Chowdhury, 2016; Saranya et al., 2016; Powell et al., 2015; Fadhillah et al., 2013; Cotti & Teft, 2013).

External Conditions

Baker et al. (2005), in their Consumer Vulnerability model, stated that consumers can be clustered grounded on Gender, Age, Race, Class, Education, Religion, Income, Ethnicity, Residence, Physical appearance, Physical abilities, sexual orientation and so forth. Further, it is evident that consumption of harmful products is correlated with Age of the respondent (Li et al., 2010), Social Class (Pechman et al., 2014), Gender (Dotson et al., 2005), Income (Bowman et al., 2004), Area of living (Newman et al., 2014) and Mothers' education and employment (Rydell et al., 2008; Bowman & Vineyard, 2014; Lenka & Vandana, 2015).

Thus, the current research considered the influence of the above social structural variables as an element of

the social structure, which plays a moderating role when determining adolescent consumer vulnerability.

Application of Social Learning Theory

Due to the fact that the Consumer Vulnerability model does not cover the process of social learning and the role of social structural variables on adolescent consumer vulnerability, Social Learning Theory was used within this study as an additional theory to explain the phenomenon. According to the findings of Social Learning Theory, consumers shape their pattern of behavior either through direct experience or by observing the behavior of other people (Bandura, 1971).

As mentioned in the Social Learning Theory, the socialization process is surrounded on three elements as Socialization Agents, Social Structural Variables, and Outcomes. (Bandura, 1971).

Although, the model of Consumer Vulnerability was used to explain the vulnerability in consumption context, it does not cover the social learning process and how observers are influenced by the behavior of agents. As such, the consumer vulnerability model was linked with social learning theory to measure the direct impact of socialization agents on adolescent consumer vulnerability. In addition to that, the moderating role of social structural variables on the direct relationship between the above two variables is also measured by linking the two theories. Further, the three elements namely; Socialization Agents, Social Structural Variables and Consequences discussed under Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971) provided the basis for developing Conceptual framework of the current

study.

Additionally, the four elements of social learning process (Bandura, 1971) and its influence on adolescent consumer vulnerability (Baker et al., 2005) can be identified as follows.

Attention

The act of attention starts from observing the behavior of agent by the recipient.

When the model's (socialization agent's) behavior is attractive or striking, observers are willing to absorb the same behavior pattern (Bandura, 1971). Likewise, the Adolescents observe the consumption behavior of Peers, Parents, TV Advertisements, Social Media Promotions and Promotional Strategies of Retailers. If the actions of any of the above model or socialization agents are attractive, Adolescents will notice those behaviors.

Further, existing researchers revealed that those adolescents' attitudes and behaviors are determined by socialization agents including Peers, Parents, Food Advertisers, Schools and Governments (Harari & Eyal, 2019; Nishadi et al., 2024a; Scully et al., 2012; Chan et al., 2009). Due to the fact that celebrities highly recommend and encourage to buy harmful products, adolescents are more vulnerable than adult consumer groups (Harari & Eyal, 2019; Mistry & Puthussery 2015).

Retention

According to Bandura (1971), learning through observation is highly impacted by the retention of knowledge. Observers will retain the necessary information of the observed behavior which can be further strengthened by repetitive exposure and pre-preparation (Bandura, 1971). When it comes to current study, adolescents are required

to remember the behavior of models (socialization agents). For that, they can use several techniques, such as use of social media, electronic devices, to keep the records.

Reproduction

During the stage of Reproduction, the observer should have the ability to replicate the observed behavior of models (Bandura, 1971). In here, the amount of observational learning is depended on the performance of the observers (Bandura, 1971). Further, the interaction between the learner (Adolescent consumer) and the model (Socialization Agent) will determine the amount of re-production (Gillan, 1993). Within the present study, the type of the interaction between the model (Socialization Agent) and the Observer (Adolescent) will determine the recallability of the observed behavior of models by the Adolescents. So, making a good rapport with each other is important to have a good learning process. According to existing scholars adolescents are aggressively focused by promotional messages and the degree of retaining those messages are higher because of friends' influence (Truman & Elliott, 2019). Further, it is revealed that due to advances in information and communication technology, adolescents exposure to retain information in social media is higher (Kennedy et al., 2019; Batat, 2012; Montgomery & Chester, 2009).

Motivation

The last necessary condition for the modeling process is motivation. This discusses that observers are required to demonstrate what they have learned through observed behavior (Bandura, 1971). Further, the performance will be depended on rewards or

punishments (Bandura, 1971). That means, positive outcomes will lead to performance while negative outcomes inhibit performance (Bandura, 1971). When applying into the current study, adolescents will consume harmful products, if they observe positive feedback of those consumptions from models of socialization agents. In contrast, they will not consume harmful products, whenever the observed behaviors are negative. Further, this theory highlight that a person is considered as an inactive member in the process of learning and attitudes and beliefs are formed based on the interpersonal interaction with others (Bandura, 1971).

Results

Grounded on the extant theories and previous research outcomes, the conceptual framework of the present study can be visually displayed as follows.

As mentioned in the Conceptual Framework, it was hypothesized that there is a positive influence from socialization agents on adolescent consumer vulnerability. Thus, the first five hypotheses were derived to measure the influence of independent variable (socialization agents) on the dependent variable. Additionally, subsequent four hypotheses were developed to measure the moderating role of Social Structures on the direct association among Socialization Agents and Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability.

Peer Pressure on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability

Adolescents' socially motivated purchases of risky goods are currently influenced by their peers (Harari and Eyal, 2019). Teenagers instinctively

adjust their eating patterns based on peer behavior (Yazbeck & Fortin, 2011). The evidence indicates that teens' use of risky items is associated with the behavior of their friends (Bruening et al., 2014). Fortin and Yazbeck (2011) claim that teenagers are persuaded to use more items that their peers consider to be risky. According to previous studies conducted in Sri Lanka, young consumers' and teenagers' conforming behavior is influenced by their peers on social media (Nishadi et al., 2024d; Yekbun & Piumi, 2021; Piumali&Rathnayaka, 2017). However, the impact of peer pressure on the vulnerability of teenage consumers has not yet been covered by the body of existing research.

H1: Peer Pressure positively influence on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability.

Parents Influence on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability

In the case of children and adolescents, parents are usually the most significant socializing agents since they serve as the primary role models and make decisions about household consumption from an early age (Harari and Eyal, 2019). Parents have become excellent role models for nutritional health, even though parental intervention in children's product choices has been extensively studied (Benton 2004) (Harari & Eyal, 2019). Parents seem to play a more important role in the aspects associated with teens' health and well-being (Camacho et al., 2010; Newman, Harrison & Dashiff, 2008).

Additionally, it was found that the susceptibility of adolescent consumers should be the next area of study, followed by the influence of parents on

their children's product selections (Harari and Eyal, 2019; Saranya et al., 2016). Recent research indicates that in Sri Lanka, parents serve as the main socialization facilitators, educating their kids to consume goods from birth (Senevirathna et al., 2021; Yekbun & Piumi, 2021). The second hypothesis that was formulated using the previously provided material is as follows.

H2: Parents positively influence on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability.

Impact of TV Advertising on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability

Adolescents are vulnerable to bad advertising because of the complex and contradictory messages that slender models offer (Aruppillai & Phillip, 2015). It is concerning that advertising can mislead, especially when it results in subpar product choices (Nishadi et al., 2024c; Ekanayaka & Wijesinghe, 2021). Advertising is perceived as a source of misleading information that distracts children and adolescents from possible health hazards, especially when it comes to unhealthy food items like snacks, fast food, and sweets (Elliott, 2017). Advertisements commonly employ persuasive techniques and false promises to get children to buy products, even if many of them are of poor quality (e.g., Vilaro, Barnett, Watson, Merten, & Mathews, 2017).

Adolescents' leisure time has started to be consumed by television in most Asian countries (Mistry & Puthussery, 2015; Piumali & Rathnayaka, 2017). Despite their greater suspicion of product promotion, teenagers are more vulnerable to its detrimental effects than younger children (Fox & Hoy, 2019).

H3: TV Advertising positively influence on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability.

Impact of Internet on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability

While utilizing social media, kids and adolescents are exposed to a variety of product advertising, the majority of which are for dangerous goods. (Pauze and Kent, 2018). The way adolescents use media has evolved significantly in recent years (McDermott et al., 2008). They use social media more frequently (Kent et al., 2018) and watch less TV (Freeman et al., 2016). Additionally, it is disclosed that by 2018, the amount of time spent on digital media—which includes computers, tablets, and smartphones—had significantly increased. (Elliott and Truman, 2019). Young people use online social networks like Instagram to spread information about dangerous products, claim Piumali & Rathnayake (2017).

Though it is thought that new media may have a stronger effect on children, there is less data on the effects of new media product marketing (Kelly et al., 2015). Although it is well known that marketers use social media to target youth, no study has yet to measure how much time kids spend on these sites. Pauze and Kent (2018). The current study's fourth hypothesis was developed by carefully reviewing the literature mentioned above.

H4: Internet positively influence on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability.

Fast-food retailers' Pressure on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability

Due to its convenient availability and ready-to-use packaging, fast food consumption is higher among teenagers (Bohara et al., 2021). The

way adolescents interact with market participants, particularly salesmen, is directly impacted by their inability to make autonomous and self-assured decisions. Batat (2010). According to Grier et al. (2007), advertising and in-store promotions are crucial elements of fast-food marketing initiatives. Teenagers are the primary target of fast food chains' marketing campaigns (Nishadi et al., 2024b). Hastings et al. (2003) claim that children's food preferences and the things they frequently ask their parents to buy for them are influenced by fast food marketing.

Adolescents' consumption of fast food at restaurants is influenced by environmental cues and the amount of time they spend with friends (Bruening et al., 2014). However, it was noted that because cultural differences may yield different results, further study conducted in diverse locations should address the impact of retail stores on customer behavior (Bruening et al., 2014). Thus, the following is the derivation of the fifth hypothesis of the current investigation.

H5: Retailers positively influence on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability.

Moderating Effect of Family Income

The consumption expenditure structure for fast-moving products has currently displayed a diverse tendency, with different types of products accounting for varying percentages of overall expenditures throughout time (Jovanovic, 2016). Family income is a significant factor in determining the intake of dangerous items on a daily basis (Brakkeli 2021; Ren et al., 2019; Tafreschi 2015). Sri Lanka has a lower median family income of Rs. 53,333 in 2019 and an average household income of Rs. 76,414 per month, according to

the Department of Census and Statistics (2020). Nonetheless, Sri Lanka's average monthly spending on pointless goods increased between 2016 and 2019 (Department of Census and Statistics, 2020).

Furthermore, current researchers have pointed out that one of the main factors influencing Sri Lankan households' use of dangerous products is family wealth (Saraniya & Thevaranjan, 2015; Aruppilli & Phillip, 2015; Rathnayaka et al., 2014).

H6: Family Income moderates the relationship between Socialization Agents and Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability

Moderating Effect of Mother's Employment

Numerous studies have connected women' full-time occupations to less nutritious eating conditions in the home, despite the fact that parental employment offers numerous health benefits for kids (Bauer et al., 2012). Additionally, Song et al. (2015) found that children of mothers with higher levels of education are substantially more likely than those of mothers with lower levels of education to consume western fast food. According to recent Sri Lankan research, families' consumption of fast food is significantly influenced by the mother's employment and educational attainment as well as their busy schedules (Saraniya & Thevaranjan, 2015, Jayawardana et al., 2014; Rasanthika & Gunawardhana 2013).

H7: Mother's Employment moderates the relationship between Socialization Agents and Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability

Moderating Effect of Area Structure

Fast food consumption in Asia is on the rise due to the expansion of fast food establishments in the region (Wu et al., 2021). According to Dun et al. (2022), the quantity of franchised fast food that teenagers eat is directly positively correlated with the existence of restaurants. This idea was corroborated by another study by Man et al. (2021), which found that adolescents from urban areas eat more fast food than adolescents from non-urban areas. The proximity of fast-food businesses to schools is one of the primary variables contributing to schoolchildren's increased consumption of franchised fast food (Bohra et al. 2021).

In Sri Lanka, urban areas spend between 60–75% of family income on food, compared to 25–30% in rural areas (Dawoodbhoy, 2018). Franchised fast-food restaurants like Pizza Hut, KFC, McDonald's, Burger King, and Domino's are extensively available even in rural Sri Lanka (Gunasingha & Cooray, 2020). Fast food is now increasingly prevalent in both rural and urban areas of the country as a result (Gunasingha & Cooray, 2020). Finally, Carel et al. (2022) underlined the need of investigating the moderating influence of area structure on fast-food intake.

H8: Area Structure moderates the relationship between Socialization Agents and Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability

Moderating Effect of Family Structure

Family structures can be characterized as either nuclear or extended (Stahlmann, 2020). In nuclear households, only the parents and kids reside in the same home. On the other hand, parents, kids, grandparents, uncles, and aunts make up an extended

family (Stahlmann, 2020). Previous studies on the fast-food sector have demonstrated a strong correlation between the consumption of fast food inside the family and the engagement of several family members (Rasouli et al., 2020; Akbay et al., 2007). Saraniya and Thevaranjan (2015) found that the amount of fast food consumed in Sri Lankan households is significantly influenced by the size of the family.

Because of this, the current study investigates whether family structure influences the relationship between socialization agents and teenage customers' susceptibility in Sri Lanka's fast food franchised market. Many studies have examined how family structure affects teenage fast food consumption, but few have examined how family structure influences the direct relationship between socialization agents and the vulnerability of teenage consumers (Stahlmann, 2020; Rasouli et al., 2020; Fiese & Schwartz, 2008). As a result, the following nine hypotheses were developed for this investigation.

H9: Family Structure moderates the relationship between Socialization Agents and Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to provide a conceptual framework to measure the impact of socialization agents on the vulnerability of adolescent consumers while accounting for the moderating effect of social structural variables. The conceptual framework and arguments were developed based on Jakkola's (2020) recommendations and McInnes's (2011) observations. The paper is essentially split in two parts. First, the impact of socialization agents

on adolescent consumer vulnerability has been explained by the Consumer Vulnerability model created by Baker et al., (2005). The Social Learning Theory was also linked to the Consumer vulnerability model to explain the moderating influence of social structural factors on the relationship between socialization agents and adolescent consumer vulnerability.

Research on consumer vulnerability is mostly based on the Consumer Vulnerability Model, which was initially introduced by Baker et al. (2005). Consequently, the concept of consumer vulnerability was examined using the three elements of individual states, individual characteristics, and external circumstances. Furthermore, in order to explain the vulnerability in the context of consumption, the influence of advertising, channel members, and online surroundings—all of which are thought of as socialization agents—was taken into account.

Based on the existing assumptions, Social Learning Theory was used in this study as a supplementary theory to explain the occurrence as the Consumer Vulnerability model does not address the social learning process or the impact of social structure elements on adolescent consumer vulnerability.

Conclusion

By critically analyzing the idea of adolescent consumer vulnerability from the standpoint of consumer socialization, this research article seeks to establish a conceptual framework. In order to tackle the idea of adolescent consumer vulnerability, the study starts with an understanding of consumer vulnerability. As a result, the larger

topic of consumer vulnerability has been investigated using the results of previous studies conducted over the last 15 years. The term "adolescent consumer vulnerability" is then defined in a number of ways. There was then a thorough discussion of the current research gaps on the relationship between socialization agents and adolescent consumer vulnerability, as well as the relationship between socialization agents and social structural variables.

Additionally, previous research on the connection between socialization agents and adolescent consumer susceptibility is examined, compared, and critically assessed. Social structural variables and their practical implications are the focus of the discussion that follows. The application of pertinent ideas based on the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971) and the Consumer Vulnerability Model (Baker et al., 2005) is then covered in the concept paper. The final section of the chapter provides an explanation of the study's conceptual framework.

Future Research Directions

Future researchers can build on research findings in this area in a number of relevant ways. First, despite the literature's unmistakable evidence of the important role social structural factors play, further research is needed to fully comprehend the direct relationship between socialization agents and teenage consumer susceptibility. Religion, culture, and morals are additional social structural factors that must be taken into account. Future study may benefit from include culture and values as a new social structural variable as these factors affect how individuals consume.

Second, the scope of the research

needs to be expanded with more complex models that can include existing socialization agents that are relevant to teenage socialization as well as new socialization agents like the government and schools. Because the target response group is frequently exposed to schools, future study can look more closely at how the government and schools affect adolescents' consumption patterns.

Third, this study may only address one outcome variable brought about by socialization agents. Therefore, other consumer outcomes of socialization influence, such as materialism, impulsive buying, and pester power, should be examined in future research. Furthermore, future study should consider the potential positive effects of socializing agents, as the aforementioned ideas concentrate more on the topic of negative consumer outcomes.

Figures and Tables

Table 01: Summary of Key Research findings of Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability from Socialization Perspective.

Author/s	Year	Findings	Context
Dotson and Hyatt	2005	Irrational social impact, television importance, familial influence, shopping importance, and brand importance were identified as the five main elements influencing consumer socialization;	U.S.A.
Pechmann et al	2005	Two key traits of adolescent vulnerability were presented: impulsivity and self-consciousness.	Multiple contexts
Batat W.	2008	Five themes were used to illustrate how adolescents learned through online interactions. 1. Getting knowledge via "trial and error" 2. The ability to multitask 3. Mutual and observational learning 4. Self-experience-based learning 5. Education via online forums 6. Acquiring knowledge from various sources	French
Montgomery and Chester	2009	The six essential components of interactive media—personalization, peer-to-peer networking, engagement, immersion, and content creation—are representative of the manner in which this new digital culture is influencing and being influenced by young people.	Multiple contexts
Batat W.	2010	Identified two groups of young consumers who are particularly vulnerable to online transactions: 1. Information pollution 2. Enslavement. Misinformation and information abundance are two definitions of the first category, known as info-pollution. The second category is the enslavement of this digital generation, which is constantly connected to the virtual world via the Internet and is growing up in a highly technologically advanced environment.	European
Batat W.	2012	Six categories pertaining to young consumers' perceptions of vulnerability within their youth subculture were identified by the results: Impulsivity and self-consciousness, 2) the inability to make confident and independent decisions, 3) the inability to withstand peer pressure, 4) a lack of experience and knowledge, 5) the paradox of the digital society, and 6) the use of unstable online communities as a reliable source of information. Additionally, there are two ways to explain the vulnerability of adolescents as consumers. 1. Imposed Vulnerability (e.g., buying brands they cannot afford) 2. Deliberate Vulnerability (e.g., browsing porn websites is a desired behavior by demonstrating their independence and opposition to adults' rules).	European

Hill et al	2013	Online shopping enjoyment motivations, online shopping value motivations, online social motivations, online playfulness motivations, online discovery motivations, online escapism motivations, and online usefulness motivations are the five fundamental motivations and two shopping motivations that have been found to influence teenage online usage and shopping.	U.S.A.
Barber	2013	The results imply that Generation Y is more impacted than Generation X by normative forces (parents, friends, and the Internet). On the other hand, this study discovered that Generation X is influenced by the Internet, traditional media, and parents' instructive influences.	U.S.A
Spotwood and Nairn	2016	In the subject of consumer vulnerability, this study presents a novel perspective on childhood as a fluid, hybridized blend of structure and agency.	Multiple Contexts
Berg. L.	2018	To determine the factors influencing consumption habits in a digital context, a model was presented.	Norwegian
Batat and Jr. Tanner	2019	To explain the definitions, causes, and consequences of consumer vulnerability from an adolescent perspective, the Adolescent-Centric Vulnerability (ACV) paradigm was developed.	French

Table 02: Summary of Key findings relating to the five Socialization Agents.

Area of Vulnerability	Author/s and Year	Empirical findings
1. Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability and Peer Pressure	Batat, W., & Tanner, J.F. Jr. (2019).	1. Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability was explained using the ACV framework.
	Crosnoe and McNeely (2008)	2. Since peer relationships are essential to adolescence, they are essential to comprehending the range of behaviours displayed by teenagers.
	Fortin and Yazbeck (2015)	3. The findings indicate that among teenagers in the same school network, there are minor but favourable peer effects on fast food consumption.
	McCoy et al (2017)	4. Conflicting findings about how gender affects a person's vulnerability to harmful peer pressure. In the context of taking risks, 46% of the analysed research indicated that men were more sensitive to peer pressure, whereas 46% did not find any gender differences.

	Miller (2004)	5. When an adolescent is particularly vulnerable to peer pressure, the delinquent peer effect on self-reported delinquency is exacerbated.
	Tome and Matos (2012)	6. Teenagers' risky behaviours are directly influenced by their peers.
2. Parents' Influence on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability	Chan (2010)	1. Parents were also thought to be the best people to encourage them to consume a healthy diet.
	Fox and Hoy (2019)	2. The social media posts made by their parents put children at risk.
	Gilmour et al (2020)	3. When deciding whether or not to eat fast food, adolescents look to their parents for guidance more than their peer group.
	Rydell et al (2008)	4. According to the respondents, consuming fast food is a means of interacting with friends and family.
3. TV Advertising on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability	Beaudon (2014)	1. Future studies will also take into account the impact of media efforts and interpersonal communication in discouraging the intake of unhealthy foods. It can be an instance of relative influence in relation to interpersonal communication.
	Elliott, C. (2017)	2. Although food marketing is vulnerable, teenagers were opposed to a ban on food marketing, framing food marketing as a way to meet their consumer needs.
	Harris et al (2020)	3. Compared to younger children, adolescents may be considerably more susceptible to the marketing temptations of junk food.
	Lapierre and Rozendaal (2019)	4. Because they lack the developmental competencies to properly understand and protect themselves from advertising communications, children and adolescents are an audience that is inherently vulnerable.
	Lapierre et al (2017)	5. Due to the pervasiveness of advertising to children and adolescents, scholars who examine its impact express serious worries about the practice, particularly in relation to eating habits, family strife, marketing strategies, and the audience's potential susceptibility.
	Nairn and Berthon (2005)	6. Advertising has an impact on segments of adolescents dependent on their attitudes and values.

		7. Impulsiveness and Self-consciousness were introduced as two important characteristics of Adolescent Vulnerability.
4. Online Consumer Vulnerability	Barber, N.A. (2013)	1. According to the results, Generation Y is more impacted by normative factors (parents, friends, and the Internet) than Generation X.
	Batat, W. (2008).	2. Teens are more than just consumers of advertising. They learn how to consume media, their peers, and their own experiences.
	Batat, W. (2010),	3. Adolescents are more at risk than adults because of their increased online exposure.
	Batat, W. (2012),	4. Young consumers were shown to be vulnerable in six categories.
	Berg, L.(2018)	5. The internet behaviors of young people, including sharing selfies and following blogs, lead to overconsumption and harm to consumers.
	Hill et al (2013)	6. Two shopping motivations and five fundamental motivations are identified by the study as impacting teenage internet shopping and usage.
	Josephine et al (2006)	7. The millennial consumer will be impacted by the combination of gaming and mobile technologies.
	Karacic and Oreskovic (2017)	8. Adolescents' degree of Internet addiction is closely linked to their mental health and overall quality of life.
	Kenneday et al (2019)	9. Children are more susceptible than adults when they are online
	Kuss and Griffiths (2012)	10. Children and teenagers may be more susceptible to gaming addiction than other demographics because of how alluring games are to them.
	Montgomery and Chester (2009)	11. It was determined that there are six essential characteristics of interactive media: content production, peer-to-peer networking, personalization, engagement, immersion, and ubiquitous connectivity.
	Niankara et al (2020)	12. Youth interest in ecosystem services and sustainability was greatly influenced by all three indicators of digital media consumption, as seen by increased visits to ecological websites, news blogs, and websites with broad scientific content.

	Youn (2009)	13. Factors influencing adolescents' privacy concerns in an online setting were determined.
Retailers' influence on Adolescent Consumer Vulnerability	Grier and Davis (2013)	1. Body weight associations with proximity to a fast-food restaurant from school are higher in urban areas than rural areas.
	Lueg et al (2006)	2. Involvement with a channel and agent has a major influence on adolescents' shopping intention.
	Thyne et al (2019)	3. Retailers are actively targeting vulnerable adolescents through various promotional strategies.
More than one socialization agents	Dotson and Hyatt (2005)	1. Irrational social impact, the significance of media, familial influence, shopping relevance, and brand importance were identified as the five main elements influencing consumer socialization
	Lenka and Vandana (2015)	2. It has been discovered that interpersonal agents, such family and peer groups, have greater influence than environmental agents, like retail establishments and television commercials.
	Mason et al (2013)	3. Risky behavior frequently results from a sequence of decisions that can be interpreted as identity formation and lifestyle experimentation rather than a single decision.
	Ozdogan and Atlantis (2010)	4. Through individual evaluations, parent-child co-viewing of commercials can change how the kids interpret them.
	Roberts et al (2008)	5. Peer normative influence has a comparatively greater impact on materialism and compulsive buying than does parental informational influence.
	Shin et al (2019)	6. Adolescents' attitudes and actions about app-based mobile advertising are influenced by their parents, peers, and media consumption.
	Spotwood and Nairn (2016)	7. The field of consumer vulnerability was introduced to a new sociology of childhood.

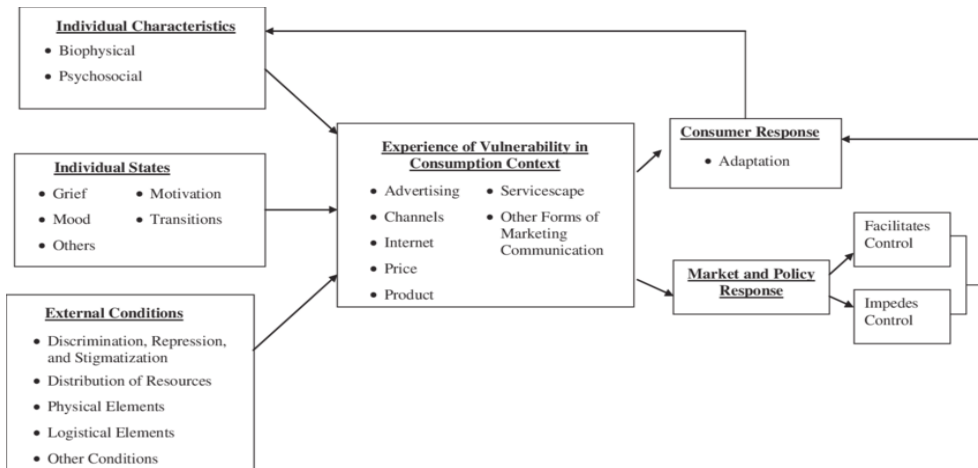


Figure 1 : Consumer Vulnerability Model

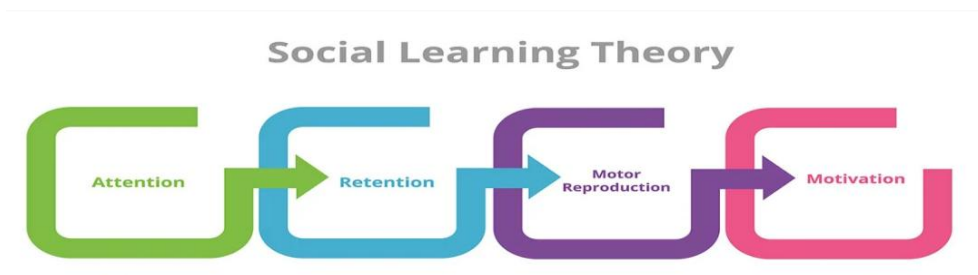


Figure 2 : Elements of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971)

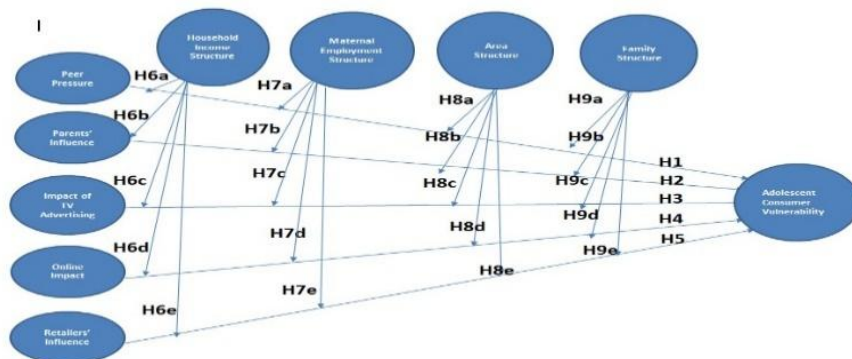


Figure 3 : Proposed Conceptual Framework

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