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Use of Product Reviews as Influenced by Family, Peers, and Online Social Networking Usage: A Look into Modern Consumer Socialization

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ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING USAGE:

A LOOK INTO MODERN CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION

by

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USE OF PRODUCT REVIEWS AS INFLUENCED BY FAMILY, PEERS, AND
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Consumer socialization developed interest from researchers in the latter half of the 1970's. Moschis and Churchill (1978) were the first to develop a formalized theoretical model indicating current sources of influence on young individuals when making purchasing decisions. Since the creation of the most used consumer socialization theoretical model was developed, technology has grown extensively through many realms.

Previous studies have demonstrated that the socialization agents of peers, family, and media continue to prove to be influential when analyzing consumer socialization outcomes (Bush et al., 1999; Mangleberg & Bristol, 1998; Nelson & McLeod, 2005). The consumer socialization framework also guides further research in the process of how consumers are socialized. Attitudes, or mental outcomes, and the intention to purchase, or behavioral outcomes, based on product reviews are measured. These two outcomes can be influenced by both antecedents (gender) and socialization processes through socialization agents, which are peer communication, familial communication, and online social networking usage.

Results of this study indicate that gender influences importance of familial communication and online social networking usage, as females tend to engage in more online and offline communication through these mediums. Gender, peer communication,

and online social networking usage were found to influence attitude toward product reviews on social networking websites. Online social networking usage and attitude were also found to affect purchase intention toward the product reviewed on online social networking websites. Not surprisingly, a more positive attitude toward products reviewed led to a higher intention to purchase based on product reviews available through online social networking websites.

This study is important due to the overwhelming need for policymakers, marketers, retailers, and researchers to understand what influences consumers in the e-commerce age to recognize purchasing norms. A greater understanding will allow for consumers to be reached more readily by marketers, for additional policies to be created to protect consumers and retailers alike, and will open a new realm for research for online consumer socialization.

Dedicated to my wonderful parents and sister

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Eighty percent of Americans are involved in social networking websites and used approximately 22.5% of their time spent on the web within these sites (Stambor, 2011). With this amount of consistent use, social networking sites are prime grounds for communication between peers and family members on a variety of topics. Thus far, researchers have been interested in the uses for social networking for individuals and businesses and the motivation for using the social medium, but no research has been done on how online social networking usage affect a modern individual's consumer socialization process.

Consumer socialization is defined as "the process by which young people develop consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes" (Moschis & Churchill, 1978, p.599). Socialization agents are the influences individuals endure, leading each to their own mental and behavioral consumption outcomes (Gregorio & Sung, 2010). Peers and family members have been considered prime socialization agents since the idea of consumer socialization has been researched. It is understandable due to the sheer amount of time an individual would spend in each of these groups. Adding the socialization agent of online social networking usage, in addition to peer and familial influences, is essential to understand the influence that social networking websites have on young people's consumption habits considering the increasing amount of time individuals spend on these sites (Brown, 2011). In a recent study conducted by Junco (2012), the average amount of time spent on Facebook by college students in a Northeastern university was 101.09 minutes per day. This same sample of students also reported that they checked Facebook an average of 5.75 times per day (Junco, 2012).

Before social networking sites, individuals turned to peers' and families' opinions when shopping in bricks-and-mortar stores (Barber, Dodd, & Kolyesnikova, 2009). Now with an online forum for discussing products and purchases, the socialization agents influencing the consumer socialization process may have changed. In a 2008 study regarding the use of social networking websites, 75% of participants routinely read comments and posted on another's personal profile (Espinoza, 2008). This common activity has led to a new communication style among people in which new experiences and comments are exchanged. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the consumer socialization framework needs to recognize online social networking usage as a socialization agent, along with peer and familial influences, and to what degree these agents affect attitude and intention to purchase goods reviewed online.

For the purpose of this study, social shopping will be defined as the inclusion of peers or family members in the decision process when purchasing products. Before these mental and behavioral outcomes ensue, however, antecedents and socialization processes intervene. Therefore, an additional purpose addressed in this study is to determine how gender (i.e., antecedent) affects the influence of socialization agents and both the mental and behavioral outcomes from products reviewed on social networking sites.

Research involving mental and behavioral outcomes of consumer socialization based on social networking sites, and the influence of peers and family, is important due to the escalating impact online social networking has on individuals, as well as e-commerce. Currently, 85% of retailers are participating in social media as many retailing websites incorporate social media within the presence of a social networking website or on their current website in hopes of attracting new customers from this channel

("Thought-leadership report", 2011). This study may demonstrate that individuals today are being socialized as consumers in a different method than in the past, thus leading to new marketing and research methods for people within those respective industries.

E-commerce businesses, researchers, and social networking executives would benefit from the results of this study. E-commerce businesses can integrate new trends that can affect how their websites conduct sales, such as incorporating a Facebook "Like" icon connecting the e-commerce brand to an individual's personal profile or finding additional ways to track comments about the company. The results of this study could also open many new questions for further research in the fields of e-commerce, merchandising, and communication. These inquiries will include finding additional influences beyond the scope of this study and the technological changes that will undoubtedly occur due to increased knowledge on modern influences of consumer socialization. Social networking executives need to anticipate new uses for the sites in order to further draw in consumers and in turn, counteract possible obsolescence.

Of additional concern, as pointed out by Benn (2004), as a child "learns to shop, it also learns to be a particular sort of child" (Benn, 2004, p.113). This statement leads to benefits potentially attained from parents and instructors of consumer education. Both of these groups would benefit from the results of this study by understanding what influences young peoples' consumerism skills and how they could possibly counteract negative consumer behaviors.

Definition of Terms

Attitude- An individual's personal perspective of a phenomenon.

Behavioral intention- The readiness to engage in a certain actions.

Behavioral Outcomes- Activities in which an individual engages as influenced from social structural variables and socialization agents.

Consumer Socialization- "The process by which young people develop consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes" (Moschis & Churchill, 1978, p.599).

Familial Influence- The impact family members have on similar mental and behavioral characteristics for an individual.

Mental Outcomes- Attitudes an individual gains from social structural variables and socialization agents.

Online Social Networking Product Reviews- Information pertaining to products in the retail marketplace as distributed through interactive social media websites.

Online Social Networking Sites- Websites encouraging communication between online community members.

Peer Influence- The impact friends have on similar mental and behavioral characteristics for an individual.

Social Shopping- The inclusion of peers or family members in the decision process when purchasing products.

Social Structural Variables - Variables (e.g., gender, race, education, income) that affect socialization agents or outcome behaviors directly or indirectly.

Socialization Agent- "a person or organization that has frequent contact with the learner, primacy over the individual, and control over rewards or punishments given to the learner" (Moschis & Churchill, 1978, p.600).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Consumer Socialization Theoretical Framework

The consumer socialization theoretical framework describes the interaction of personal and environmental causes on behavioral outcomes. This theory utilizes the three components of antecedents, socialization processes, and behavioral outcomes to determine pertinent relationships on consumer socialization. By analyzing these influences, we will gain a better understanding of what sources individuals use for information and what influences individuals endure in order to execute their roles as consumers within society (Gregorio & Sung, 2010).

Original Theory. Moschis and Churchill (1978) developed the consumer socialization theory by integrating both the cognitive development theory and the social learning theory, both of which hypothesize how humans typically learn. For the purpose of the consumer socialization model, simple overviews of each preceding theory indicate its aim. The cognitive development theory views learning as a cognitive-psychological development of adapting to the environment around oneself and emphasizes the interaction between individual and environmental factors. The social learning theory emphasizes sources of influence which "transfer norms, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors to the learner" (Moschis & Churchill, 1978). With these overviews in mind, a greater understanding of each preceding theory will provide greater insight into the complexity of each.

The cognitive development theory, developed by Piaget, analyzed the factors affecting modification in each individual's cognitive structure over time to allow for interactive actions to become known operations (Renner, Stafford, Lawson, McKinnon,

Friot, & Kellogg, 1976). This theory focuses on the active role each individual has on his or her development (Moschis, 1987). Piaget's (Renner et al., 1976) famously known stages to cognitive development break up known cognitive operations by age groupings indicating that a majority of individuals work through each stage at specific times within their lives. Wadsworth (1984), however, believes these stages should be viewed as a continuum due to an understanding that individuals work through each development stage at different ages and continually update what they view as the world around them (Wadsworth, 1984).

The social learning theory emphasizes outcomes influenced only by socialization agents. This theory does not take into account an individual's influence while the socialization agents contribute solely to the obtained attitudes and behaviors. Thus all attitudes and behaviors are learned and can be changed due to the socialization agent impact (Moschis, 1987).

Based on these two theories, the consumer socialization theory was created into a model which provides a flexible and alterable framework for the understanding of various antecedents and socialization processes on consumer socialization. According to Moschis and Churchill (1978), consumer socialization is defined as "the process by which young people develop consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes" (Moschis & Churchill, 1978, p.599). The three main components of the consumer socialization theory are antecedents, socialization processes, and behavioral outcomes. Antecedents of the consumer socialization model consist of social structural variables and age or lifecycle position (Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Social structural variables include social class, gender, and many other variables such as ethnicity, family size, and education level

(Bush et al., 1999; Moschis & Churchill, 1978). These antecedent variables directly and indirectly affect a learner and how they interact with socialization agents (Moschis & Churchill, 1978).

According to the social learning theory, socialization agents influence a learner in developing norms, attitudes, and behaviors through socialization processes. According to Moschis and Churchill (1978), socialization agents "can be a person or organization that has frequent contact with the learner, primacy over the individual, and control over rewards or punishments given to the learner" (p.600). Here, the learner is a passive member in the learning process so that beliefs and attitudes result solely from interacting with socialization agents (Bush, Smith, & Martin, 1999). Socialization agents relevant to consumer socialization include parents, peers, mass media, and school (Moschis & Churchill, 1978).

Bush et al. (1999) and Moschis & Churchill (1978) also state that these socialization agents influence learners through modeling, reinforcement, and social interaction. The three influences (modeling, reinforcement, and social interaction) depicted from socialization agents can individually or collectively affect a learner. Modeling represents the need for imitation after the agent from the learner. Reinforcement provides either an award or punishment for certain cognitions or behavior. Ambiguously, social interaction is defined as a broad combination of modeling and reinforcement (Moschis & Churchill, 1978).

Outcomes based on the antecedents and socialization processes lead to cognitions and behaviors exhibited by the learner. Various social structural variables and age or life cycle position are hypothesized to effect socialization processes, as well as outcome

behaviors. Within the model, socialization agents are believed to influence outcome

variables such as purchasing and motivation for consumption (Moschis & Churchill,

1978). The original consumer socialization model developed by Moschis and Churchill

(1978) is available in Figure 2.1.

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┌──────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────┐
│ Antecedents  │        │ Socialization Processes │      │ Outcomes │
└──────────────┘        └─────────────────────────┘      └──────────┘

┌──────────────┐                                         ┌──────────┐
│Social structural│──────────────────────────────────►  │ Learning │
│  variables   │     ┌─────────────────────────┐        │properties│
└──────────────┘     │ Agent-learner relationships:│     └──────────┘
                     │   • Modeling            │
                     │   • Reinforcement       │
┌──────────────┐     │   • Social interaction  │
│Age or life cycle│  └─────────────────────────┘
│  position    │
└──────────────┘
```
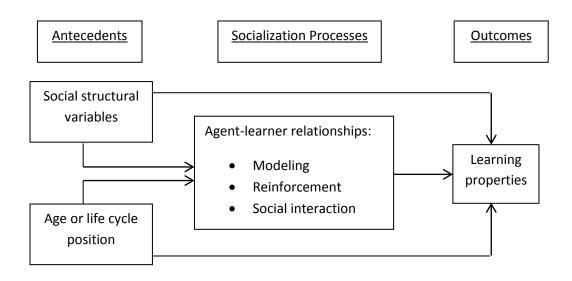
Figure 2.1. A Conceptual Model of Consumer Socialization

Application of Consumer Socialization Model. Applying the consumer

socialization model, Bush, Smith, and Martin (1999) examined how socialization

influences consumer attitudes toward advertising. Race, gender, mother's and father's

education level, and family structure were also utilized as social structural variables by

the way of antecedents. Bush et al. (1999) demonstrated that social structural variables,

such as race and gender, directly and indirectly affect attitudes toward advertising.

Results of the study indicate that there is a difference in how African Americans and

Caucasians develop attitudes toward advertising. African Americans are likely to hold a

more positive view toward advertising than the Caucasians participating in the study. Gender also affects attitude toward advertising due to the finding that women hold a more positive view.

Socialization agents identified in Bush et al.'s (1999) study included parental influence, social utility of ads, television viewing, and peer influences. These socialization agents tend to influence attitudes toward advertising (Bush et al., 1999). Both parental influence and peer influence showed a positive correlation with attitude toward advertisements (Bush et al., 1999).

In a recent study conducted by Gregorio and Sung (2010), another version of the consumer socialization model emerged. Their study aimed to determine the consumer socialization process on product placement attitude and behaviors. The adapted model utilizes gender, ethnicity, education, age, and income as social structural variables and peer influence and movie watching as socialization agents. Divergent from the two previously discussed models (Bush et al., 1999; Moschis & Churchill, 1978), outcomes were divided into mental outcomes and behavioral outcomes in Gregorio and Sung's study. Mental outcomes for this study focused on the general attitudes toward product placement. Behavioral outcomes consist of product placement behaviors exhibited by the learner (Gregorio & Sung, 2010).

According to Gregorio and Sung (2010), females hold a more positive attitude toward product placement in movies than males. Age also affected attitude toward product placement by showing that younger individuals pay more attention to these inadvertent advertisements. Individuals with lower educational achievement were also found to have a more positive attitude toward product placement. As a socialization

agent, peer influence in general, was found to have a positive relationship with product placement behaviors and attitudes toward product placement in movies, with Asian-Americans contributing to the most positive attitude of all ethnicities (Gregorio & Sung, 2010). The summary of previous studies utilizing the consumer socialization theory is presented in Table 2.1.

Conceptual Model of Consumer Socialization Utilizing Social Networking.
The consumer socialization theory was chosen for this study in order to gain perspective on how social structural variables (e.g., gender) influence consumers' socialization processes. By studying the socialization agents of peers, family members (e.g., parents), and online social networking usage, an understanding as to how such influences affect the mental outcomes of attitude and the behavioral outcome of intent-to-purchase will be gained. Results from this study will further enhance knowledge on the influences that guide consumers in today's marketplace, particularly young consumers.

Previous literature has focused on the use of the consumer socialization model for young consumers, which will also be true for this study (John, 1999; Gregorio & Sung, 2010). A young generation is utilized within these models due to the influences individuals have on consumer socialization during this period within their lifespan (Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Although many studies evaluate adolescents, it is believed that consumer socialization can occur as a young adult (Bush et al., 1999). Young adults tend to be more involved in socialization practices (Gregorio & Sung, 2010).

For this study, the consumer socialization theory was adapted from previous models to include online social networking usage as a socialization agent. Social networking sites (SNS) are considered websites that promote communication within its

Table 2.1

Theoretical Adaptations to Consumer Socialization Model

Reference	Social Structure Variables	Socialization Agents	Outcome	General Findings
Gregorio & Sung (2010)	Gender Age Ethnicity Education Income	Peer influence Mass Media: Movie Watching	Attitude toward product placement Product placement behaviors	Females hold a more positive attitude toward product placement than males Peer influence has a positive relationship with positive attitudes toward product placement and increases likelihood of conducting product placement behaviors
Bush, Smith & Martin (1999)	Race Gender	Parental influence Peer influence Mass media (Social utility of advertising and amount of television viewing)	Attitude toward advertising	African-Americans had more positive attitudes toward advertising than Caucasians Women had a more positive attitude toward advertisements than men Gender and race affect attitude toward advertising

Reference	Social Structure Variables	Socialization Agents	Outcome	General Findings
Nelson & McLeod (2005)	Exposure to media	Mass Media Parents Peers	Perceived Influence of Product Placement	Participants more influenced by parents and peers were more brand conscious
			Brand Consciousness Third Person Perception	Product placements were more apparent to brand conscious participants
				A belief was held that others were more influenced by socialization agents than themselves
				No difference in brand consciousness for gender
Smith & Moschis (1984)	Age Health Cognitive Age	Interaction with mass media	Attitude toward advertisements	Interaction with mass media is linked to age
				Mass media and health of participant is related
				A more favorable attitude was seen in those with lower cognitive age due to higher ability to interact with mass media

Reference	Social Structure Variables	Socialization Agents	Outcome	General Findings
Carlson & Grossbart (1988)	Mother's parenting style Child's consumption autonomy	Media exposure (or restriction of) Parent-child influence about consumption	Attitude of advertisements	Authoritarian and neglecting parenting style are less positive about ad Permissive and rigid controlling mothers do not integrate into consumer socialization due to parenting styles
Ozmete (2009)	Age Gender	Interaction between parents and adolescents Television advertisements	Attitude toward television advertisements	Age and gender affect parental interaction Males were more affected by advertisements Parental opinions affected attitude on product advertised
Lachance, Beaudoin & Robitaille (2003)	Gender	Parents Peers Television	Brand sensitivity	Parents demonstrate attraction toward brands Females are more brand sensitive than males Television use did not influence brand sensitivity Males were influenced more by peers

Reference	Social Structure Variables	Socialization Agents	Outcome	General Findings
Moscardelli (2005)	Gender Age Employment Socio-economic status	Parents Peers Television Internet	Attitude of skepticism toward advertisements	Peer pressure is a significant influence on attitude toward advertisements Television influenced individuals toward a positive attitude Internet was found to have a negative relationship toward attitude toward advertisements Internet and television combined contributed toward a positive relationship for attitude of skepticism
Mangleberg & Bristol (1998)	N/A	Parents Peers Television	Attitude of skepticism for television advertisements Marketplace knowledge	Skepticism toward advertisements is positively related to amount of t.v. watched Marketplace knowledge is positively related to skepticism Peers influence skeptical attitudes toward ads
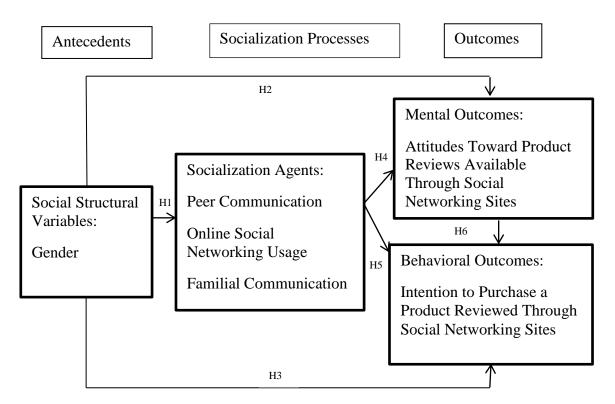
online context (Cusumano, 2011).   People are communicating with others differently, both online and offline, due to the overwhelming use of online social networking sites. Social networking is integrating into the lives of individuals in a huge way, as four out of five internet users are online social network users. The age group that visits these websites the most are between 18 and 34 years of age (Nielsen, 2011). This new socialization agent is also essential to study due to the knowledge that approximately 60% of multi-media users who search for information on products learned of the merchandise from a social networking site (Nielsen, 2011).

Socialization agents have also been adapted to further integrate peer and familial influences alongside the usage of online social networking sites. The only antecedent measured within this study is gender. Thus far, many studies have been able to determine stark gender differences when viewing attitude toward various forms of media (Bush et al., 1999; Gregorio & Sung, 2010; Ozmete, 2009), although not all studies demonstrated similar outcomes (Ozmete, 2009). When comparing the addition of online social networking usage, adaptations to the consumer socialization model can be seen in regard to increased specificity and further intricacy of outcomes (Gregorio & Sung, 2010; Bush et al., 1999; Moschis & Churchill, 1978).

The consumer socialization model is important in this study to understand how the socialization agents of peers, family, and online social networking usage affect consumer cognitions and behavior. Previous studies have demonstrated that these agents continue to prove to be influential when analyzing consumer socialization outcomes (Bush et al., 1999; Mangleberg & Bristol, 1998; Nelson & McLeod, 2005). In this study, attitudes on sharing information through social networking sites constitute the mental

outcomes in the theoretical model. Intent-to-purchase behavior based off of product

reviews on social networking sites will constitute as a behavioral outcome affected by the

socialization agents.

Within this study in regard to socialization processes' modeling, reinforcement,

and social interaction, all three components are considered to be implied due to the role

that parents, peers, and social networking websites play on consumer socialization, thus

not needing a specified relationship within the model.   An adapted framework is

demonstrated in Figure 2.2 to include the social networking aspect of socialization

agents.

Note: Adapted from Gregorio and Sung (2010), Bush et al., (1999), & Moschis and
Churchill (1978)

*Figure 2.2. Conceptual Model of Consumer Socialization and Purchasing Behaviors
through Social Networking Sites*

Social Structural Variable: Gender Differences

  Decision-Making Dissimilarities. In a study conducted by Nuttall and Tinson (2005), peer influences were detected from both males and females. In this qualitative study, individuals in their teens were asked questions about their favorite music. Questions regarding peers group and family influences were also asked. Results showed that males were found to be more aware for differing genres of music, thus indicating an awareness of variety. Females were more concerned about having similar tastes with their peer group than the males participating in the study. Both genders, however, were not able to choose a favorite type of music due to perceived peer influences (Nuttall & Tinson, 2005).

  Barber et al. (2009) also found that when females search for product information, they tend to turn to peers, family, and other personal contacts for information. In contrast, males tended to use impersonal and published material for their information searches. Males were also found to have a higher level of purchase confidence, higher feeling of subjective knowledge of the product, and a feeling of expertise when purchasing products (Barber et al., 2009). This research implies that males tend to not seek out help from others when deciding to purchase a product, while females do seek additional viewpoints.

  In regard to Generation Y's consumer habits, Pentecost and Andrews (2010) found that this age group tends to purchase products more often than any other previous generations and tend to impulsively make purchases. Within a one to three week period, females were found to buy fashion goods more frequently than males. Within a one year period, however, men were found to spend more on fashion products, demonstrating that

both genders purchase products regularly throughout the year, but at differing price levels. Females also had a greater tendency to be impulse shoppers and tend to have a more positive attitude toward fashion. Results showing differences in gender views involved participants from all generations (Pentecost & Andrews, 2010).

Online Decision-Making Dissimilarities. In regard to e-commerce in general, males tend to be more accepting of online retailing due to the task-orientation this medium provides to consumers as well as an inherent drive toward risk-taking. On the other hand, females are likely to be driven to e-commerce due to the compatibility the technology has to existing lifestyle and beliefs (van Slyke, Belanger, Johnson, & Hightower, 2010).

When shopping online, a personal awareness of security influences online purchase intention and attitudes for males, but not for females. Males were also found to have a lower mean of perceived usefulness when purchasing online than females, thus declaring that buying online is not considered beneficial for male consumers. In contrast, females' online purchase intention and attitude were influenced by the perceived ease of purchasing online which received a lower mean score than males, indicating that females perceive online shopping to be more challenging than male consumers (Chiu, Lin, & Tang, 2005).

In a study conducted by Wang, Jackson, and Zhang (2011), gender moderated the relationship between online communication and online self-disclosure. Males in this study were found to enjoy communicating online anonymously, increasing self-disclosure. Females were found to have less inhibitions when discussing issues both online and offline when compared to males (Wang et al., 2011). However, due to the

nature of the current study at hand, females will most likely benefit more from communicating online with known individuals.

Previous research found that females are more likely to have a Facebook account than males (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Also, females spend an average of 5.5 hours per month on social networking sites, while males only spent an average of 3.9 hours per month. Females also shop, spend, and browse online retail sites more than males (Stambor, 2010). Interestingly, 61.1% of online sales for one month were attributed to females (Stambor, 2010). Seeking product reviews can be seen for both genders; however each has been found to search for different types of information. Females tend to hunt for product reviews on apparel products and books, while males search more for personal technology products (Richardson, 2011).

When deciding to adopt a new technology, in particular instant messaging, females tend to attribute more weight to social aspects while males are more concerned with the ability to complete tasks. Ease of use and others' acceptance within one's social circle in regard to instant messaging also drove females to accept the new technology (Ilie, van Slyke, Green, & Lou, 2005).

A call for future research on gender was deemed important by Moschis (1987) who suggested that gender difference will most likely have a direct influence on individuals in all parts of the life cycle (Moschis, 1987). Due to differences in gender, methods in which peers and family influence an individual and online social networking usage will be dissimilar. Also, attitude and purchase intention toward product reviews will most likely be different.

Socialization Agent: Peer Influence

Peer groups start at a young age and are considered important throughout life. A study conducted by Nuttall and Tinson (2005) measured adolescent peer influence on consuming music. It was found that individuals with low self-esteem are more susceptible to peer influences. However, individuals of both high and low self-esteem seek information from each other (Nuttall & Tinson, 2005).

When viewing influences, Shields (2009) researched whether peers or family members influence individuals to partake in gaming facilities, such as casinos. This research suggested that college-aged individuals, who are not yet able to gamble, are more influenced by their peers who use such facilities often. Those not yet of legal age to gamble were also found to spend twice the amount money on gaming. A more positive attitude toward gaming was also found for individuals who have peers that engage in gaming behavior. In contrast, of-age individuals tend to have a more positive attitude toward gaming when family members routinely engage in gaming behavior (Shields, 2009).

Communication with friends in an online context is seen at a growing rate. A study conducted by Pempek, Yermolayva, and Calvert (2009) discovered that a majority of college-aged students utilized Facebook as a communication tool to reach their friends from different geographical areas. Interestingly, few participants within this study viewed Facebook as a tool to form an identity, a usual marker of developing into an adult. However, the inclusion of media preferences, along with the "About Me" section, was used by many participants to fulfill this attribute of identity to be viewed by friends (Pempek et al., 2009). Interestingly, the number of Facebook friends do not relate to the

time spent on the site, use of communication features, or the personality dimension of extraversion (Ross, Orr, Sisic, Arseneault, Simmering, & Orr, 2009).

While interacting on Facebook, participants engage in a one-to-many communication style, like other mass media. However, unlike customary mass media, each individual is a creator of the content available on their own or other's wall/blog which extends the traditional outlook of current media reach. According to Pempek et al.'s (2009), more people "lurk" or observe others' profiles and comments without physically responding to those messages. Participants were also twice as likely to post messages on others' wall as opposed to sending private messages through the Facebook website (Pempek et al., 2009).

A study conducted by West, Lewis, and Currie (2009) found that computer-mediated communication, such as sites like Facebook, cause a distinct clash between public and private realms in which friends can communicate. Also, it was discovered that parents were generally not accepted as Facebook friends (West et al., 2009).

Socialization Agent: Familial Influence

Families today come in many forms, but many influences remain constant. Oswald (2003) found that there are two inclinations in relation to consumption that families demonstrate today. One is a pull toward fragmentation by consumer groups and personalized needs. The other pull is toward family togetherness (Oswald, 2003). These factors reiterate the importance that families continue to have on consumption practices.

Bravo, Fraj, and Martinez (2006) found that family influences have a causal relationship with patterns of consumption and routine purchasing of a specific brand. Cotte and Wood (2004) also found that a parent's innovativeness in regard to

consumption practices directly affects a child's innovativeness. Innovativeness was measured by usage of innovative products once an individual observed family members using the product. Thus, this study suggests that people are influenced directly by family members when viewing and utilizing products.

When considering branded apparel merchandise, parents were found to demonstrate differing degrees of attraction to branded apparel items. This finding was based off of young adults' viewpoints of their own parents' clothing consumption behaviors, thus indicating that young consumers are able to perceive certain consumption practices from their own family members (Lachance et al., 2003).

Goodrich and Mangleburg (2010) found that parental influences on purchase behavior of adolescents encompass two separate communication environments of high socio-oriented and high concept-oriented. High socio-oriented communication refers to a strict conformity and harmony between the parents and child, while high concept-oriented communication emphasizes open communication of feelings and ideas. The more concept-oriented a family is, the greater the influence on an adolescent (Goodrich & Mangleburg, 2010). In addition, Moscardelli (2005) found that as intensity of communication increases, a more skeptical attitude can be found toward advertising. In this regard, understanding communication patterns among family members can account for either a stronger or weaker relationship between parental and young adult's usage of social networking sites and product recommendations.

Socialization Agent: Online Social Networking Usage

According to Cusumano (2011), social networks are "new kinds of platforms that facilitate communication and offer new systems for texting and sending email as well as sharing files." These networks utilize different applications and databases. Online social networks can create a forum for users to share prices, the quality, and the overall opinions of a product or service (Karabell, 2011). Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2006) support the idea that Facebook members are using the site in order to find out more about the people in their offline groups.

Just Facebook alone has around 600 million members (Boutin, 2011). Due to the sheer amount of individuals on websites such as these, many have developed large groups of peers, as well as family members, to share information with (Clear, 2011). Valenzuela, Park, and Kee (2009) found that high intensity use of Facebook is related to a high life satisfaction and social trust. These high intensity users also tend to participate in civic events more often, thus indicating that users of social network communities tend to be social both online and off (Valenzuela et al., 2009).

The interactive nature of social networking sites facilitates knowledge to the consumer and creates value and loyalty to a retailer (Kim & Niehm, 2009). Fiore, Jin, and Kim (2005) found that interactive websites, especially with images, can create a stronger hedonic value in individuals. Since social networks are highly interactive, more browsing behavior may ensue and lead consumers to a retailer's Facebook page and further into the retailer's e-commerce website. Thus leading to Lin, Hu, Sheng, and Lee's (2010) discovery that the more individuals browse, the more purchases they will make.

Social networking sites exist to share ideas and comments (Karabell, 2011). A study conducted by Lieb (2011) found that just because social network users are talking about a brand, does not mean that consumers like the brand. Clear (2011) states that complaints spread like wildfire through social networks. One negative comment can cause a company to lose significant market share and damage their positive brand image. These public forums are breeding grounds for consumers to share their complaints and create a strong case for others to not purchase products or services from a specific company. When considering the company's perspective, the opportunity to counteract these complaints could potentially improve the company in the long term (Clear, 2011).

Mental Outcome: Attitude Toward Product Reviews

A study conducted by Dellarocas, Gao, and Narayan (2010) found that individuals felt inclined to comment on previous online reviews when further knowledge is gained about the discussion. Individuals in recent years have also been found to be more involved with reviews. The higher the popularity of a product, the more reviews will be posted (Dellarocas et al., 2010).

Prendergast, Ko, and Yuen (2010) found that a positive viewpoint of an online forum has a positive effect on the persuasiveness of the forum's comments. It is also found that a positive attitude increases the likelihood of an individual's purchase intention (Prendergast et al., 2010). Thus leading to the belief that the more positive persuasive comments are about a company or product, the more likely one will purchase a product discussed online.

Behavioral Outcome: Intention to Purchase

Hsiao, Lin, Wang, Lu, and Yu (2010) found that trustworthy product recommendations influence purchase intention on social shopping sites. It can thus be implied that intimate familial and peer recommendations for products will be considered more trustworthy and leads to more purchases. Chiang and Hsieh (2011) conducted a study focusing on blog interactivity and purchase intention, which discovered that a high level of interactivity on blogs, specialization, and popularity all steered consumers to a higher purchase intention.

Those containing a higher social presence, in the form of personal social networks, tend to have more confidence in "personalized recommender systems" (i.e. word of mouth) more readily, as trust between individuals is great (Choi, Lee, & Kim, 2009). Individuals creating user-generated content, such as posts on wall/blogs in Facebook, are viewed as opinion leaders regardless of professional affiliation. Trust of personal product reviews are also higher than information provided through other approaches (Cheong & Morrison, 2008).

Hypotheses

Previous research indicates that differences in gender will most likely occur for influences on socialization agents and outcomes. Also, socialization agents are believed to influence attitude toward product reviews and the intention to purchase products seen within product reviews. Based on the consumer socialization model describing socialization agents and mental and behavioral outcomes, the following hypotheses have been developed.

H1a: When making a purchase decision, peer communication will have a greater impact for females than males.

H1b: When making a purchase decision, family communication will have a greater impact for females than males.

H1c: Females will engage in communication within social networking websites more often than males.

H2: Females will have a more positive attitude toward products reviews available on social networking websites than males.

H3: Females will have a higher intention to purchase products reviewed on social networking sites than males.

H4a: Peer communication will positively influence the individual's attitude toward product reviews available on social networking sites.

H4b: Familial communication will positively influence the individual's attitude toward product reviews available on social networking sites.

H4c: Use of online social networking websites will positively influence the individual's attitude toward product reviews available on social networking sites.

H5a: Peer communication will positively influence the individual's intention to purchase a product reviewed on social networking sites.

H5b: Familial communication will positively influence the individual's intention to purchase a product reviewed on social networking sites.

H5c: Use of online social networking websites will positively influence the individual's intention to purchase a product reviewed on social networking sites.

H6: Attitude toward product reviews available on social networking websites will

positively influence intention to purchase the product reviewed on social networking

websites.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Procedure

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln reviewed and accepted the proposal for research (Protocol Number: 20120112353 EX). The official acceptance letter is available in Appendix A.

An online survey was conducted with college students, due to their high usage of social networking sites ("Making brands our social media friends", 2010). One thousand and six hundred undergraduate students were randomly selected from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's email database. Recruits were from any college and either gender. Acceptance to obtain student emails was gained through the Office of Registration and Records, which is demonstrated in Appendix B.

A recruitment email including a survey link was sent to 1600 students. The recruitment email is available in Appendix C. The survey could be taken on any computer by using the URL link provided by the researcher. A consent form was available as a cover page for the online survey, which was electronically signed when the "I Accept" button was clicked. The electronic consent form is presented in Appendix D. The survey allowed respondents to quit at any time, without penalty from the researcher. After the online survey was completed, a thank you message appeared, thus concluding the respondents' survey. A second email aimed toward those who have not yet completed the survey was sent after one week from the initial email launch. A third reminder email was sent three days after the second email distribution. The reminder email is available for review in Appendix E. The survey was available through Qualtrics.com.

Respondents completed the survey on Qualtrics.com. This site has met SAS 70

Certification, has satisfied HIPAA privacy standards, and upholds Safe Harbor Privacy

Principles. Data were protected in real time and all accounts for individuals utilizing the

website required a password entrance. Information obtained from a user's computer while

on the Qualtrics website is not sold or made available to any third-party companies or

individuals. The survey data were encrypted (saved with numbers and abbreviations)

when submitted online (secured) and saved to the primary investigator's personal

computer. IP addresses and other forms of identification were not collected (Qualtrics,

2011). Due to the anonymity upheld by this study, the reminder email was sent to all

members of the sample, regardless of previous completion of the online survey.

Measurement of Variables

Survey questions consisted of 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree to 5-

strongly agree) questions measuring peer and family influence adapted from the

interpersonal influence scales by Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel (1989) and Bravo, Fraj,

and Martinez (2006). Bearden et al. (1989) developed scales to measure consumer

susceptibility based from interpersonal interactions. One hundred and sixty-six items

were originally collected from previous research studies and were consolidated after

being analyzed for implications and validity. Items were continually reduced after two

survey samples were obtained from college-aged respondents. The data were analyzed

and checked stringently for reliability and validity based on statistical analysis and

previous findings. Only items that demonstrated significance were included in the final

measurement tool available for future researchers. An additional five studies were also

conducted utilizing these scales, further demonstrating reliability and validity (Bearden et

al., 1989). Questions measuring peer and family influence include questions such as "I often consult my family for help to choose the best available alternative from a product" and "If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product." These questions are answered by degree of which a respondent agrees or disagrees with the question. Twelve questions measuring both family and peer influences were used within the survey for this study.

To measure online social networking usage, one question measuring how individuals utilize social networking sites was included within the questionnaire. A study conducted by Lehdonvirta and Rasanen (2011) measured the intensity of Facebook use and how it related to various facets of satisfaction, trust, participation, and engagement. The question adapted from Lehdonvirta and Rasanen's research encompasses the measure of usage in terms of sense of belonging to an online social networking site. The online social networking usage question entails "How strongly do you feel part of a social networking website?" (Lehdonvirta & Rasanen, 2011). One question measuring online social networking usage was utilized within this study.

The dependent variables, which are the attitude toward product reviews and purchase intention, were measured by using 7-point semantic differential scales. Respondents were asked to rate their feelings between two opposing terms, such as "Product reviews available online are effective versus ineffective." Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann (2003) developed a broadly-based scale to measure consumer attitude. Six studies were conducted to measure reliability, validity, and unidimensionality between items from previously published research. Previous research has argued that to develop attitude toward products, both hedonic and utilitarian motivations are taken into

account. Within the final measurement, five hedonic questions and five utilitarian

questions were utilized. Overall validity and reliability was found (Voss et al., 2003).

The semantic differential scales to measure purchase intention were selected from

Bruner and Hensel's (1994) work. Their book consolidated scales used within highly-

acclaimed journals with strong indications of reliability and validity. This scale was

chosen based on utilization within many studies measuring purchase intention within a

product-based context. Examples of questions measuring purchase intention include "To

what extent will you purchase the product(s) reviewed through social networking sites?

Uncertain versus certain." Nine questions were used within the survey to measure

purchase intention.

All variables were measured using the measurement tools available in Table 3.1.

Demographic characteristic questions, such as gender, age, income, and ethnicity were

also measured. The questionnaire that was given to respondents within this study is

available in Appendix F.

Table 3.1

Measurement of Variables

Measurement
1. *Familial influence* (Bearden et al., 1989; Bravo et al., 2006)

    I often consult my parents for help to choose the best available alternative from a product.
    To make sure I buy the right brand or product, I often observe what my parents are buying.
    If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my parents about the product.
    I frequently gather information from my parents about a product before I buy.
    If I want to buy like my parents, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy
    It is important that my parents like the products I buy.
    I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles until I am sure my parents approve of them.
    I often identify with my parents by purchasing the same brands and products they purchase.
    When buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think my parents will approve of.
    I like to know what/which brands and products make good impressions on my parents.
    If my parents can see me using a product, I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy.
    I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same brands and products that my parents purchase.

2. *Peer influence* (Bearden et al., 1989; Bravo et al., 2006)

    I often consult my friends for help to choose the best available alternative from a product.
    To make sure I buy the right brand or product, I often observe what my friends are buying.
    If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product.
    I frequently gather information from my friends about a product before I buy.
    If I want to buy like my friends, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy.
    It is important that my friends like the products I buy.
    I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles until I am sure my friends approve of them.
    I often identify with my friends by purchasing the same brands and products they purchase.
    When buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think my friends will approve of.
    I like to know what/which brands and products make good impressions on my friends.
    If my friends can see me using a product, I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy.
    I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same brands and products that my friends purchase.

Measurement

3. *Online social network usage* (Lehdonvirta & Rasanen, 2011)

   How strongly do you feel part of a social networking website?

4. *Attitude* (Voss et al., 2003)

   In your opinion, product reviews available through social networking sites are_____
   Effective/ineffective
   Helpful/unhelpful
   Functional/not functional
   Necessary/unnecessary
   Practical/impractical
   Not fun/fun
   Dull/exciting
   Not delightful/delightful
   Not thrilling/thrilling
   Unenjoyable/enjoyable

5. *Intention to purchase* (Bruner & Hensel, 1994)

   To what extent will you purchase the product(s) reviewed through social networking sites?
   Unlikely/likely
   Non-existent/existent
   Improbable/probable
   Impossible/possible
   Uncertain/certain
   Definitely would not use/definitely would use
   Not at all/very frequent
   No chance/certain chance
   Probably not/probably

Sample Characteristics

One thousand and six hundred invites were emailed to students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. A random sample was obtained from undergraduate students regardless of major or gender. After all invitation and recruitment emails were sent, 255 recruits responded leading to a 15.9% response rate. Thirty-seven surveys were unusable due to unfinished survey questions, thus a total of 218 useable responses were utilized for this study.

More females (65%) participated within the study than males (35%). A large range of ages responded from ages 18 to 51, but had a strong mean age of 20. Academic standing was also requested and 35.3% were seniors, which represented the largest percentage. Sophomores represented the second largest percentage at 29.8%. Caucasians also made up the majority of ethnicities (85%). Seventy-eight percent of respondents have an income of $10,000 or less, while the second largest grouping (12%) make $10,001 to $20,000. Demographic information is available in Table 3.2.

The University of Nebraska's student population differs slightly from the sample population for this study. Of all students at the university, males (54.13%) outnumber females (45.87%). Synonymous with the current study, a strong percentage (30%) of students were 19-20 years of age. Seniors represent 30.12% of the undergraduate student population, also the largest percentage of individuals' academic standing. Ethnicity of students was also found to be primarily Caucasian (83.6%), which is similar to the current study's sample population (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2011). Also within Table 3.2, the similarities and differences can be determined between the sample obtained for the current study and the overall population of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Table 3.2

Demographic Frequencies (N=218) and University Statistics

		Current Study Sample		University Population	
Variable	Categories	Frequencies	Percent	Frequencies	Percent
Age	18-25	199	78.1	18147	79.7
	26-35	16	6.4	990	14.5
	36 and over	2	.8	246	5.7
Gender	Male	77	35.3	10492	54.13
	Female	141	64.7	8891	45.87
Academic Standing	Freshman	24	11	4980	25.93
	Sophomore	65	29.8	3641	18.96
	Junior	52	23.9	4800	24.99
	Senior	77	35.3	5784	30.12
Ethnic Background	African American	5	2.3	456	2.35
	Asian or Pacific Islander	9	4.1	429	2.21
	Hispanic	10	4.6	750	3.87
	Native American or Alaskan Native	2	.9	67	.03
	Caucasian	186	85.3	16204	83.6
	Other	6	2.8	1477	7.62
Income	$10,000 or less	170	78		
	$10,001-$20,000	27	12.4		
	$20,001-$30,000	7	3.2		
	$30,001-$40,000	5	2.3		
	$40,001-$50,000	1	.5	N/A	N/A
	$50,001-$60,000	1	.5		
	$60,001-$70,000	0	0		
	$70,001 and over	7	3.2		

Method of Analysis

Data received from respondents was loaded into an SPSS file and was automatically coded for each question accordingly. No questions required reverse coding. The spreadsheet was uploaded into a statistical analysis program for examination. The SPSS program was then used to measure relationships between the variables in this study.

Hypotheses were examined using multiple regression analysis and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The MANOVA statistical method was used to determine the relationships among hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. This group of hypotheses measured gender differences between peer communication, familial communication, online social networking usage, attitude and intention. Multiple regression analysis was used to test hypotheses 4, 5, and 6. This group of hypotheses measured the relationships between the socialization agents (i.e. peer communication, familial communication, and online social networking usage) and outcome behaviors (i.e. attitude and intention).

Chapter 4: Results

Consumer socialization while utilizing a technologically progressive medium has not been studied by any researchers in the past. The results of this study establish a framework for further investigation into modern influences that young people have while purchasing goods. Based on the results found, much insight can be gained on this subject matter.

Non-Response Bias

Similar to all survey research studies, a response from all individuals within the sample cannot be mandatory. Thus, nonresponse bias may exist if participants to a survey differ from non-participants regarding their responses to the survey questions (Fowler 2002). Previous research found that late participants are often similar to non-participants in terms of their characteristics (Armstrong & Overson, 1977). Therefore, a non-response bias was calculated using MANOVA to determine if individuals who responded quickly (i.e., the first 50 participants) to the survey had differing answers than those who responded at a later time (i.e., the last 50 participants). Results for this statistical test indicated that late participants do not differ from early participants in terms of their demographic and behavioral characteristics, $(F(8, 91)=1.767, p=.094)$. Thus, it was found that non-response bias does not exist in this study.

Reliability

Reliability was determined by Cronbach's alpha. Each variable was originally reliable, but a greater reliability was achieved by removing certain items. The peer communication and familial communication variables each contained 12 items. The seventh item was removed due to the item's low contribution to Cronbach's alpha. Once

removed, peer communication had a Cronbach's α = .899 and familial communication

had a Cronbach's α = .916. The attitude variable contained 10 items and once five items

were removed due to the low reliability, a Cronbach's α = .940 was achieved. A

Cronbach's α = .979 was determined for the intention variable, which contained nine

items. All items for each variable were averaged and statistical tests were completed.

Hypotheses Testing

All hypotheses were analyzed within the SPSS program utilizing either

MANOVA or multiple regression statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics regarding all

variables are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics for All Variables

Variable	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Peer Comm	Male	2.5348	.70664	77
	Female	2.6775	.72928	141
	Total	2.6130	.72206	218
Familial Comm	Male	2.5336	.81810	77
	Female	2.8008	.77069	141
	Total	2.7064	.79623	218
OSN Usage	Male	2.57	1.105	77
	Female	3.13	1.050	141
	Total	2.94	1.101	218
Attitude	Male	3.1740	1.50415	77
	Female	3.5801	1.35590	141
	Total	3.4367	1.41998	218
Intention	Male	2.8773	1.50541	77
	Female	2.7825	1.53879	141
	Total	2.8160	1.52429	218

Hypothesis 1 was tested by multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Gender was stated as the independent variable, while peer communication, family communication, and online social networking usage were dependent variables. The following sub-hypotheses were analyzed.

H1a: When making a purchase decision, peer communication will have a greater impact for females than males.

H1b: When making a purchase decision, family communication will have a greater impact for females than males.

H1c: Females will engage in communication within social networking websites more often than males.

The results showed the significant effect of gender for familial communication ($F(1,216)=5.728$, $p<.05$) and online social networking usage ($F(1,216)=13.804$, $p<.0001$). Mean scores for females [familial communication: M=2.801, SD=.771, online social networking usage: M=3.13, SD=1.05] were higher than those for males [familial communication: M=2.534, SD=.818, online social networking usage: M=2.57, SD=1.105]. However, the effect of gender on peer communication was not found to be significant. These statistics demonstrate that females are influenced by familial communication and online social networking usage more than males. Thus, H1b and H1c were supported. Statistics are available in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Hypothesis 1 Statistics

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Peer Communication	.728[a]	1	.728	1.398	.238
Familial Communication	3.554[b]	1	3.554	5.728	.018*
OSN Usage	15.804[c]	1	15.804	13.804	.000***

*Note. *p<.05, ***p<.0001*
[a]R^2=.006, Adjusted R^2=.002
[b]R^2=.026, Adjusted R^2=.021
[c]R^2=.060, Adjusted R^2=.056

Hypotheses 2 and 3 measured the effect of gender on attitude and purchase intention. Gender was tested as the independent variable, while attitude and intention were the dependent variables. Hypotheses 2 and 3 were analyzed by MANOVA.

H2: Females will have a more positive attitude toward products reviews available on social networking websites than males.

H3: Females will have a higher intention to purchase products reviewed on social networking sites than males.

Statistics for Hypotheses 2 and 3 are available in Table 4.3. Based on the results, gender was found to influence attitude ($F(1,216)$=4.133, $p<.05$), but did not have a significant influence on purchase intention. Attitude mean scores for female participants [M =3.58, SD =1.356] were higher than those for males [M =3.174, SD =1.504]. The results indicate that being female influences attitude toward products reviewed on social networking sites more than being male. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is supported and Hypothesis 3 is not supported.

Table 4.3

Hypothesis 2 and 3 Statistics

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Attitude	8.214[a]	1	8.214	4.133	.043*
Intention	.448[b]	1	.448	.192	.662

*Note. *p<.05*

Hypothesis 4 measured whether peer communication, familial communication, and online social networking usage influence attitude toward product reviews found on social networking sites. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis. Attitude was the dependent variable, while peer communication, familial communication and online social networking usage were the independent variables. The overarching multiple regression analysis demonstrated that the total variance was significant, as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Hypothesis 4 Statistics

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	47.260	3	15.753	8.638	.000***
Residual	390.287	214	1.824		
Total	437.546	217			

*Note. ***p<.0001*
R=.329, R^2=.108, Adjusted R^2=.096

Hypothesis 4 consists of three sub-hypotheses that contribute to the statement's overall significance. Each independent variable is measured alongside attitude to test for significance.

H4a: Peer communication will positively influence the individual's attitude toward

product reviews available on social networking sites.

H4b: Familial communication will positively influence the individual's attitude toward product reviews available on social networking sites.

H4c: Use of online social networking websites will positively influence the individual's attitude toward product reviews available on social networking sites.

Online social networking usage was found to have a significant effect on attitude (t=4.267, p<.0001). Peer communication and familial communication were not found to have an effect on attitude. As a result, online social networking usage positively influences an individual's attitude toward product reviews available on social networking sites. Thus, only H4c was supported. Statistics for each element is available in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Hypothesis 4A, 4B, and 4C Statistics

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Peer Communication	.062	.159	.032	.391	.696
Familial Communication	.189	.140	.106	1.346	.180
OSN Usage	.367	.086	.284	4.267	.000***

Note. ***p<.0001
Dependent variable: Attitude

Using multiple regression analysis, Hypothesis 5 measured whether peer communication, familial communication, and online social networking usage influence an individual's intention to purchase a product reviewed on social networking sites. Intention to purchase was the dependent variable, while peer communication, familial communication, and online social networking usage were the independent variables. The overall multiple regression results demonstrate overall significance, as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Hypothesis 5 Statistics

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	40.934	3	13.645	6.303	.000***
Residual	463.254	214	2.165		
Total	504.188	217			

Note. ***p<.0001
R=.285, R^2=.081, Adjusted R^2=.068

This hypothesis consists of three sub-hypotheses.

H5a: Peer communication will positively influence the individual's intention to purchase a product reviewed on social networking sites.

H5b: Familial communication will positively influence the individual's intention to purchase a product reviewed on social networking sites.

H5c: Use of online social networking websites will positively influence the individual's intention to purchase a product reviewed on social networking sites.

The effect of peer communication on purchase intention was found to be significant (t=2.169, p<.05), while the effect of familial communication was not significant. Online social networking usage was also found to be significant (t=2.220, p<.05). Thus, peer communication and online social networking usage positively influence an individual's intention to purchase a product reviewed on social networking sites. Therefore, H5a and H5c were supported. The results are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Hypothesis 5A, 5B, and 5C Statistics

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Peer Communication	.375	.173	.178	2.169	.031*
Familial Communication	.094	.153	.049	.616	.538
OSN Usage	.208	.094	.150	2.220	.027*

*Note. *p<.05*
Dependent variable: Intention

Hypothesis 6 predicting the relationship between attitude and purchase intention was tested using simple regression analysis. Attitude was the independent variable and intention to purchase was the dependent variable. Overarching Hypothesis 6 statistics are shown in Table 4.8.

H6: Attitude toward product reviews available on social networking websites will positively influence intention to purchase the product reviewed on social networking websites.

Table 4.8

Hypothesis 6 Statistics

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	226.848	1	226.848	176.675	.000***
Residual	227.340	216	1.284		
Total	504.188	217			

*Note. ***p<.0001*
R=.671, R^2=.450, Adjusted R^2=.447

According to the results presented in Table 4.9, the intention to purchase a product reviewed on social networking websites is influenced by attitude. This relationship was shown to be significant (t=13.292, p<.0001). The result indicates that

attitude toward product reviews on social networking sites does positively influence

intention to purchase the product reviewed. Thus, H6 is supported.

Table 4.9
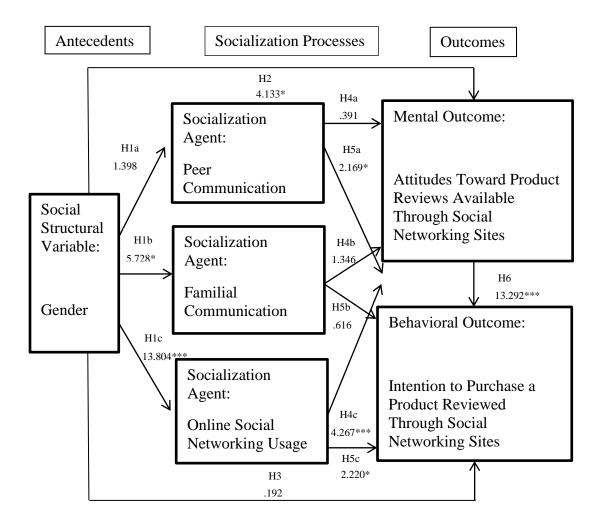
Hypothesis 6 Coefficient Statistics

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Attitude	.720	.054	.671	13.292	.000***

Note. ***p<.0001
Dependent variable: Intention

Figure 4.1 represents the statistical findings for this study. Significant findings

are denoted by an asterisk. Overall seven findings of significance were found, but all

findings have furthered the understanding of consumer socialization utilizing modern

technology.

Note. *p < .05, ***p < .0001

Figure 4.1. Results of Consumer Socialization and Purchasing Behaviors through Social

Networking Sites

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

No research has been conducted on the influence of modern technology toward consumer socialization. Thus, this study fills the gap by considering online social networking usage, alongside peer and familial communication, to determine modern consumer behavior of young adults. Thus, the purpose of this study was to test Moschis and Churchill's (1978) theory by comparing peers, family members, and online social networking usage to their attitude and intention to purchase products for young adults attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Discussion and Managerial Implications

Consumer socialization is still an influential aspect for all individuals' consumption behavior. The research reviewed led to the assumption that all three influences of peers, family members, and mass media would foster an impact over the consumption of products. A major strength when using consumer socialization framework is that many previous studies have found the theory to be reliable. The consumer socialization model for this study was utilized with the inclusion of online social networking usage in order to understand changes in how consumers are influenced to purchase products based on product reviews available on online social networking websites. No research has been conducted to determine if online social networking usage could be a viable media in which to include within the consumer socialization model.

Results of this study indicate that some influences upon consumer socialization are more prominent than others. The only antecedent variable observed in this study was gender. Gender was found to influence the socialization agents of online social networking usage and familial communication. Females are more likely to communicate

with family members and get feedback from them when making a purchase decision than males. Similar to the current study's findings, Barber et al. (2009) found that females turn toward interpersonal communication, mostly family and friends, as sources of information when making decisions. The result of the current study also demonstrates that female consumers tend to utilize online social media more than male counterparts. This result is consistent with the recent research (Nielsen, 2011) highlighting that the most active users of online social networking websites are females aged 18 to 34 years old.

The current study also found that gender affects attitude, but not purchase intention. Females showed a more positive attitude toward product reviews on social networking sites than males. However, being a female did not influence the intention to purchase products reviewed on social networking sites. The results indicate that females have a more positive attitude toward product reviews on online social networking sites than males, but may not intend to purchase the product reviewed.

For retailers and companies who hope to gain revenue through electronic word-of-mouth on online social networking websites, an incentive may increase positive attitude and therefore, the intention to purchase. Possible incentives could include percent discounts, free shipping, loyalty club inducements, or free gift offers. Based on the results of this study, retailers should focus on providing incentives to females as they tend to contain a more positive attitude toward product reviews on online social networking websites and, as opinion leaders, tend to disseminate that information based on previous findings (Cheong & Morrision, 2010).

Incentives provided by retailers to females would be a beneficial marketing strategy. According to Nielsen (2011), females are heavier users of online social networking websites and are 53% more likely than the average adult to follow a favorite brand upon the social networking website. Barber et al. (2009) found that females tend to be more accepting of others' opinions than males. Since individuals who generate their own content on online media hubs are viewed as opinion leaders (Cheong & Morrison, 2010), females of typical college age would become the target for retailers in which to disseminate product information. Cheong and Morrison (2010) indicated that individuals reflect upon opinion leaders' attitudes, even if they do not agree with the leaders' comments.

The current study also found that online social networking usage has a significant effect on the attitude toward product reviews available on online social networking websites. Since individuals are already on social networking sites, their attitude is already more positive toward information available upon the site than those who do not utilize such services. Peer communication and familial communication were not found to have an effect on attitude of product reviews available on social networking websites. This finding contradicts many past studies that find peer communication and familial communication to have an effect on attitude toward outcome variables (Gregorio & Sung, 2010; Lachance et al., 2003; Mangleberg, 1998; Moscardelli, 2005; Nelson & McLeod, 2005; Ozmete, 2009). These findings could be due to the overwhelming sense of belonging that individuals feel as a part of the social media website. The medium is more easily accessible at varied times and places, which may have become the main consultant when choosing which products to potentially purchase.

In order to turn a positive attitude of product reviews into purchase intention, retailers must monitor reviews and correct any customer dissatisfaction posted on online social media. Electronic word-of-mouth travels through this channel quickly, so correction may increase satisfaction and purchase intention toward the product (Clear, 2011). As the results of this study indicate, attitude is influenced by online social networking usage so utilization of online social networking media is essential to create a strong positive attitude toward product reviews online.

Peer communication and online social networking usage were found to have a significant influence on an individual's purchase intention for a product reviewed on a social networking website. Expectedly, peers tend to influence the intention to purchase specific goods in order to fit in to specific peer groups (Nuttall & Tinson, 2005). Since users of online social networking websites tend to follow a brand, it is not surprising that these individuals are more likely to purchase products. Nielsen (2011) indicates that active members of online social networks are more likely to spend money on music, clothing, and offline events, such as attending sporting events, working out at a gym, and going on dates.

For increased intention to purchase, a business should include a referral to friends in order to gain a discount, free shipping, or to enter a contest through online social networking websites. This method would increase communication between friend networks and gain a higher usage of online social networking. Familial communication was not found to have a significant influence, so increasing interaction between those networks may not be beneficial for retailers.

Not surprisingly, a positive attitude toward product reviews available on a social networking site did influence the intention to purchase that product. This result is consistent with the previous study by Prendergast et al. (2010) indicating that a positive attitude toward a forum's comments increases the intention to purchase a product. Also discovered by a previous study was the idea that a product or forum of high popularity will gain more reviews, thus creating electronic word-of-mouth for retailers (Dellarocas et al., 2010). Consequently, creating a positive electronic word-of-mouth within a social networking site between peers will increase attitude and the likelihood that an individual will purchase the product. The "Like" function available on Facebook is one way for retailers to increase publicity for products. Another method of creating a positive attitude for potential purchasers would be to provide extensive information about the product easily accessible within the social networking website and provide timely online customer service. Customer services would include the answering of general inquires, technical support, location information, online tutorials, and additional links to helpful information.

Overall, influences were seen by gender, peer communication, online social networking usage, and attitude. Contradictory to previous findings (Carlson & Grossbart, 1988; Lachance et al., 2003; Moschis & Churchill, 1978; Nelson & McLeod, 2005; Ozmete, 2009), familial communication was not found to have an influence on attitude or purchase intention for products reviewed on social networking websites. This finding could be due to the age of individuals that responded to the online survey for this study. Individuals past the teenage age range may rely less on family members and more on peer networks once removed from the familial home. However, influences from family

members most likely still exist (Moschis, 1987), but were not able to be accurately determined by the respondents within this study.

General Implications

The results of this study will help existing e-commerce businesses understand the importance that online social networking increasingly has over potential customers. Social shopping through online social media has new implications and, due to its increased presence among a majority of retailers ("Thought-leadership report", 2011), is becoming more prevalent in e-commerce. Social networking executives will also benefit from this study by gaining a more in-depth understanding of the significance establishing click-through rates for e-commerce businesses. Once social networking sites start implementing such a strategy, great revenues can be gained without expense to their current social networking users.

Results of this study would spark entrepreneurs' interest as well. In order to be a successful business today, technology needs to be utilized to the highest extent. Small business owners should utilize online social networking in order to gain worldwide exposure of the brand, gain sales, communicate with customers, and create a strong network of other business owners, suppliers, and customers (Hamilton, 2012).

Policymakers and activists will also benefit from this study due to the extensive use of Facebook and other social networking sites for social protests and political activism. The top social media story of 2011 was the Facebook posts sparking the Tunisian Revolution. Many followers were gained and the revolt against tyranny spread through five Middle Eastern and African countries all due the access of Facebook

(Knowles, 2011). The influence of social media can clearly be seen in other political

situations as well.

Researchers would have utmost interest of this study. Fields with potential interest

of the research would include consumer behavior, information technology,

entrepreneurship, marketing, advertising, psychology, sociology, and family sciences.

Many other opportunities are available for further research on the subject of consumer

socialization that could be utilized within these fields. These additional opportunities

include additional or differing antecedent variables and socialization agents. An outline

of these prospects is available in the future study section.

Limitations

Although this study utilized a random sample of both genders, some limitations

must be considered. Within this study, a majority of respondents were female (64.7%)

and were of senior academic standing (35.3%). Results by Sax, Gilmartin, and Bryant

(2003) also demonstrate that women tend to respond to surveys at a much higher rate

than male respondents. A more diverse sample, however, may have exemplified

differing results.

The response rate for this study was not as high as some similar quantitative

studies. An incentive, such as a drawing for a gift certificate, may have enticed potential

respondents to participate. Having a lower response rate may not have created a

representative sample in which to draw accurate conclusions.

Accuracy of self-reporting information on thought processes, such as influences

that families or peers have on brands, precision of responses is always in question.

Respondents may not be able to accurately determine the influences which play a part in

their attitudes and purchase decisions. Embarrassment of the source of influence may have caused some individuals to under represent their feelings on the survey.

Future Study

Many areas for future research will be opened as extensions from this study. The most prevalent includes the use of additional demographic data, such as differing age ranges, income, education level, ethnicity, and geographic location. As different forms of technology are utilized differently by different generations, age would be the most effective form of determining influence on socialization agents and outcomes of the technological innovation. Depending upon the expense of the technological innovation chosen, income may be included within a new theoretical model to determine use among different salary tiers. For example, use of quick response (QR) codes that are only able to be read on newer mobile devices may only be available to those who can afford smart phones or tablet computers thus causing a rift between income levels.

Different ethnicities may use different forms of technology, have diverse uses for similar technologies, or respond to peers, family members, and technology usage in dissimilar ways. Similar to individuals of differing ethnicities, geographic location can also determine how technology is used, which technology is used, and how influential technology, peers, and family members are to attitude and purchase intention of products.

Different socialization agents can also be selected based on new technological innovations. Such technological innovations could include mobile commerce usage and quick response (QR) code usage. The socialization agents of peer and familial communication are considered the basis of consumer socialization agents (Moschis, 1987) and have been proven by previous studies to be influential (Lachance et al., 2003;

Nelson & McLeod, 2005). Additions to peer influence could also include extended

versus intimate peer impacts on consumption behavior. Despite the results of previous

studies, familial communication was not significant and as a consequence, a hybrid

theoretical model could be created focusing on only peer and technological socialization

agents. Another interesting topic would be adolescent influences on a family's online

consumption. These areas will further dwell upon relationships between individuals and

technology.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

January 23, 2012

Jennifer Johnson
Department of Textiles, Clothing and Design

Young Ha
Department of Textiles, Clothing and Design
221 HECO, UNL, 68583-0802

IRB Number: 20120112353

EX Project ID: 12353

Project Title: Use of product reviews as influenced by family, peers, and online social

networking: A look into modern consumer socialization

Dear Jennifer:

    This letter is to officially notify you of the approval of your project by the Institutional

Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board's opinion that you have

provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based

on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution's Federal Wide

Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR

46) and has been classified as Exempt Category 2. You are authorized to implement this study as

of the Date of Final Approval: 01/23/2012. 1. Please include the IRB approval number (IRB#

20120112353 EX) in the on-line consent documents. Please email a copy of these messages to

irb@unl.edu for our records. If you need to make changes to the messages please submit the

revised messages to the IRB for review and approval prior to using them. We wish to remind you

that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following

events within 48 hours of the event: * Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse

events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local

investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to

the research procedures; * Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved

protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur; * Any publication in the literature,

safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to

the risk/benefit ratio of the research; * Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data

privacy related to the subject or others; or * Any complaint of a subject that indicates an

unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff. This project should be

conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should

notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your

research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the

participants or others to the Board. If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at

472-6965.

Sincerely,

Becky R. Freeman, CIP for the IRB

Appendix B: Office of Registration and Records Approval Letter

Nebraska
Lincoln

STUDENT AFFAIRS
Registration and Records

January 17, 2012

Internal Review Board
ALEX West
312 N 14th
Lincoln, NE 68588 - 0415

Dear Committee Members,

The Office of Registration and Records has agreed to provide support to Jennifer Johnson and her thesis research "*Use of Product Reviews as Influenced by Family, Peers and Online Social Networking Usage: A Look into Modern Consumer Socialization*".

Based on her request we will produce a randomly selected sample of student e-mail addresses that match the population target of the study. No other identifying information will be provided and students will be invited to voluntarily participate in the study by filling out an on-line survey. The total number sampled will be approximately 1,600. Once the study is complete the e-mail addresses will be destroyed.

If you have any further questions, please contact Juan Carlos Gutierrez in my office at 402-472-2082.

Sincerely,

Earl W. Hawkey, Ph.D.
Director, Registration and Records

Appendix C: Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Jennifer Johnson and I am currently a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln working on my thesis. You have been selected to participate in an online research study about consumer behavior. The purpose of this study is to identify influences on attitudes and behaviors toward becoming an individualized consumer. Your participation in this study is instrumental to understanding new influences consumers have in modern times. The completion of the online survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

In addition, please understand that:

- You must be 19 years of age or older to participate
- Participation within this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- All of your responses will remain confidential and will be kept in a password protected file for one year after the study is complete
- The data collected from the survey will be only used for research objectives and will not be used for any other purposes
- There are no perceived risks or benefits for participants in completing this study
- By continuing with the survey, you consent to be a participant within this research study

If you decide to continue, please click on the following link:<>. If the link does not work, proceed by copying and pasting the link within the browser address bar. I greatly appreciate your input.

If you have any problems and questions, please email me at jennybeth.johnson@huskers.unl.edu. If you would like to speak with someone other than the researchers, please call the Research Compliance Services Office at 402-472-6929 or irb@unl.edu.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Johnson, Graduate Student
Dept. of Textiles, Clothing, and Design
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Tel: 701-212-8107
Email: jennybeth.johnson@huskers.unl.edu

Dr. Young Ha
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Textiles, Clothing, and Design
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Tel: 402-472-0289
Email: yha3@unl.edu

Appendix D: Electronic Consent Statement

Informed Consent Statement

<div align="right">IRB# 20120112353 EX</div>

Hello,

You have been selected to participate in an online research study about consumer behavior. The purpose of this study is to identify influences on attitudes and behaviors toward becoming an individualized consumer. Your participation in this study is instrumental to understanding new influences consumers have in modern times. The completion of the survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

Please understand that by continuing with the online survey, you have understood the following:

- You must be 19 years of age or older to participate
- Participation within this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- All of your responses will remain confidential and will be kept in a password protected file for one year after the study is complete
- The data collected from the survey will be only used for research objectives and will not be used for any other purposes
- There are no perceived risks or benefits for participants in completing this study
- By continuing with the survey, you consent to be a participant within this research study

Your input is greatly appreciated! Please be sure to print this page for your records.

If you have any problems and questions, please email me at jennybeth.johnson@huskers.unl.edu. If you would like to speak with someone other than the researchers, please call the Research Compliance Services Office at 402-472-6929 or irb@unl.edu.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Johnson, Graduate Student
Dept. of Textiles, Clothing, and Design
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Tel: 701-212-8107
Email: jennybeth.johnson@huskers.unl.edu

Dr. Young Ha
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Textiles, Clothing, and Design
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Tel: 402-472-0289
Email: yha3@unl.edu

Continue to Online Survey >>

Appendix E: Reminder Email

Hello,

My name is Jennifer Johnson and I am currently a University of Nebraska-Lincoln graduate student working on my thesis. A week ago, I emailed you the link to an online questionnaire seeking your response concerning your personal attitudes and behaviors regarding consumer behavior and online social networking. Your participation in this study is greatly needed to understand new influences consumers have in modern times. The completion of the online survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. If you have already completed the questionnaire regarding this study, please disregard this message and your input is greatly appreciated.

In addition, please understand that:

- You must be 19 years of age or older to participate
- Participation within this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- All of your responses will remain confidential and will be kept in a password protected file for one year after the study is complete
- The data collected from the survey will be only used for research objectives and will not be used for any other purposes
- There are no perceived risks or benefits for participants in completing this study
- By continuing with the survey, you consent to be a participant within this research study

If you would like to complete this survey, please follow this link: <https://unleducation.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_2tpVl6FmWWdVK3W >. If the link does not work, proceed by copying and pasting the link within the browser address bar or utilize one of the additional links at the bottom of this email.

If you have any problems and questions, please email me at jennybeth.johnson@huskers.unl.edu. If you would like to speak with someone other than the researchers, please call the Research Compliance Services Office at 402-472-6929 or irb@unl.edu.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Johnson, Graduate Student
Dept. of Textiles, Clothing, and Design
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Tel: 701-212-8107
Email: jennybeth.johnson@huskers.unl.edu

Dr. Young Ha
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Textiles, Clothing, and Design
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Tel: 402-472-0289
Email: yha3@unl.edu

Appendix F: Online Survey

1. How strongly do you feel part of a social networking website? [ONS Usage-Belonging]

	Not at all	Slightly a part of	Somewhat a part of	A part of	Very much a part of
	1	2	3	4	5

2. In your opinion, product reviews available through social networking sites are_____ [Attitude]

Ineffective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Effective
Unhelpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Helpful
Not functional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Functional
Unnecessary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Necessary
Impractical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Practical
Not fun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Fun
Dull	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Exciting
Not delightful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Delightful
Not thrilling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Thrilling
Unenjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Enjoyable

3. To what extent will you purchase the product(s) reviewed through social networking sites? [Intention]

Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likely
Non-existent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Existent
Improbable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Probable
Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible
Uncertain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Certain
Definitely would not use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Definitely would use
Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very frequent
No chance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Certain chance
Probably not	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Probably

4. What is your opinion of the following statements?   [Familial Influence]

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I often consult my family for help to choose the best available alternative from a product.	1	2	3	4	5
To make sure I buy the right brand or product, I often observe what my family members are buying.	1	2	3	4	5
If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my family about the product.	1	2	3	4	5
I frequently gather information from my family about a product before I buy.	1	2	3	4	5
If I want to buy like my family, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy.	1	2	3	4	5
It is important that my family like the products I buy.	1	2	3	4	5
I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles until I am sure my family approve of them.	1	2	3	4	5
I often identify with my family by purchasing the same brands and products they purchase.	1	2	3	4	5
When buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think my family will approve of.	1	2	3	4	5
I like to know what/which brands and products make good impressions on my family.	1	2	3	4	5

If my family can see me using a product, I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy.	1	2	3	4	5
I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same brands and products that my family members purchase.	1	2	3	4	5

5. Please indicate the response that best represents your opinions.   [Peer Influence]

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I often consult my friends for help to choose the best available alternative from a product.	1	2	3	4	5
To make sure I buy the right brand or product, I often observe what my friends are buying.	1	2	3	4	5
If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product.	1	2	3	4	5
I frequently gather information from my friends about a product before I buy.	1	2	3	4	5
If I want to buy like my friends, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy.	1	2	3	4	5
It is important that my friends like the products I buy.	1	2	3	4	5
I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles until I am sure my friends approve of them.	1	2	3	4	5
I often identify with my friends by purchasing the same brands and products they purchase.					

When buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think my friends will approve of.	1	2	3	4	5
I like to know what/which brands and products make good impressions on my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
If my friends can see me using a product, I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy.	1	2	3	4	5
I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same brands and products that my friends purchase.	1	2	3	4	5

6. What is your gender?   [Gender]

Male	Female
1	2

7. How old are you?   [Age]

[Open text field]

8. Where are you within your education?   [Education]

Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Graduate Student
1	2	3	4	5

9. What is your ethnicity?   [Ethnicity]

African American	Asian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Native American or Alaskan Native	Caucasian	Other
1	2	3	4	5	6

10. What is your current annual income?   [Income]

$10,000 or less	$10,001-$20,000	$20,001-$30,000	$30,001-$40,000	$40,001-$50,000	$50,001-$60,000	$60,001-$70,000	$70,001 and over
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8