

A Comparative Study of Customer Behaviors in Brand Image and Peer Pressure – the Case of S University

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to find out whether and to what extent do brand image and peer pressure influence the purchasing decision of coffee consumers by delivering questionnaires to students on S university. In particular, we focus on whether brand image and peer pressure can shift the purchasing decision for a person from not drinking coffee to having a cup of it. The main results of the study are twofold. First, brand image and peer pressure does not lead a person who does not drink coffee to buy coffee product. Second, there is a positive significantly correlation between brand image and peer pressure. This study plays a role for coffee companies to adapt their marketing strategies for developing potential market.

Keywords: Coffee Market, Consumer Behavior, Brand Image, Peer Pressure

INTRODUCTION

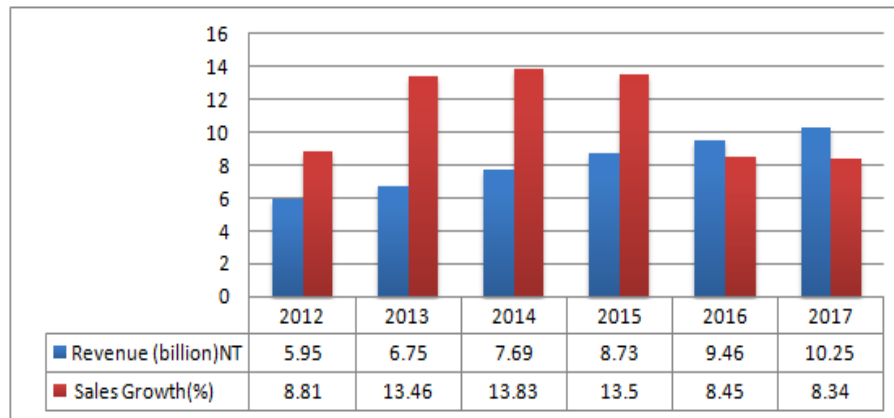
For better or worse, we all live in a world that is strongly affected by business strategies, including advertisements, products and stores. In addition, human beings are social animals, we all try to follow and imitate others behavior. It is like a germ in the air, infecting everyone to step into a myth. Therefore, every company is aiming the right market to develop potential customers is a crucial point that all care about (Berger, Matt, Steininger & Hess, 2015). Most of the research has studied on consumer behavior and discuss if the gender or brand image will affect their buying will. Studying of understanding the effect of reference group and peer pressure are few. This is necessary to know that what kind of condition will affect the market and persuade customers to buy. This is also important to understand if people are satisfied with their customer satisfaction and store experience, affecting an efficient word-of-mouth effect to make other potential customers. Positive word-to-mouth will become a vital point in this fierce battlefield. This study attempted to understand the effect of peer pressure, reference group and brand image. At the same time, limitation of the study will be showed in the end of this chapter.

In this generation, coffee has become an indispensable beverage in Taiwan. The size of

coffee market reached 600 billion cups of coffee worldwide (International Coffee Organization). The coffee market is a mature market with long history dated back to 19th century, the population of coffee drinkers are 5.4 million in Taiwan (Taiwan Coffee Association). You can see lots of different coffee shops on the street. Coffee as people is not a luxury expense anymore. However, as a famous brand in Taiwan, Starbucks, with a stylish and well-quality brand image in the Taiwanese market, there is a necessity to see how they enlarge their market and stimulate their sales number, making a suitable strategy to enhance the amount of people who is buying their products.

Facing the pressure about the constant changing marketing, how to keep their customers and attract more client has become a top problem for every brands. Talking about the coffee brand, there are plenty of brands in the marketing, such as 85°c, Starbucks and Donuts. To entire coffee marketing, it is a potentially commercial possibility in the future. As we can see on table 1, the revenue has constantly grown up in recent years, there is almost positive growths for every year. Therefore, to see which condition will affect their consumer behavior is important for this topic.

Table 1. The Revenue of Starbucks



From Common Wealth Magazine

According to American Marketing Association, AMA, the brand is defined as a name, design, symbol, sign or the use of their combination. It has been used to distinguish their own service or product which is different from their competitors. The factors that influence the purchasing incentive for consumers include brand image, the image and the peer pressure. In modern society, many products, especially aimed to young people, are often built as a way to take a straight line to popularity. They establish an image to their products which mean fashion and popular. Young people might think this product can make them more fashionable and perfect, and have a great status in their public relation circle. For example, Starbucks coffee is more expensive than other brands, it may express an information that their customers are all affordable to their price, they only care about the quality instead of money. Price has a special role to play while choosing product about a brand. In this case, we can see the brand building is so important that can affect customer behavior.

BACKGROUND

Many research had indicated that the customer between 18 to 24 are easier to be influenced by fashion (Ogden-Barne, 2011), which means that the fashion image in their mind is very important on consumer intention. Although the young consumer doesn't have too much extra money to afford this behavior, their consumer power cannot be ignored. The population of customer of college student has rose to 71 million, besides, the amount they spent in total is 105 billion (Valentine & Powers, 2013). Current research indicated that the college students plays an important role on potential

market and future one. (Valentine & Powers, 2013). Some studies reveal that the behavior of young college student is special at online stores (Arnaudovska, 2010; Valentine & Powers, 2013). When customers are making a consumer behavior, they prefer to buy a famous or national brand which they feel more familiar with them. (Carpenter & Brosdahl, 2011; Ogden-Barne, 2011). Many studies have indicated that there is specific relationship between consumer habits and brand commitment.

Traylor (1981) has indicated that when the customers are buying some low-involvement products, they have a strong brand commitment, because they frequently buy some cheap products. The customers with highly brand loyalty will buy a specific brand over and over to decrease the purchasing risk, and the advertisement and market strategy is hard to influence them (Jin & Koh, 1999). On the other hand, about the high-involvement product, brand becomes an important factor for the buying intention (Traylor, 1981). Both of brand commitment and brand loyalty are important about the consumer behavior in marketing (Jin & Koh, 1999).

The congruency prediction indicated that the consumers will be affected before they purchase the products if their images are similar between product and consumer (Douglas, George, Field & Lawrence, 1970). Consumers will choose the brand which the image is similar as their self-image. Gloria and Chalip (2013) indicated that the consumer actually defines their self-image after they purchased the product. Moreover, some consumers will change their self-image to fit the brand image after they bought the product. Besides, when consumer is going to

describe themselves, they probably take a reference of the product they have (Sommers, 1963).

However, this self-image congruity prediction was denied because they consider the process is too simple, it is controversial that consumer may do the opposite behavior in purchasing procedure (Green, Arun & Vithala, 1969; Hughes & Guerrero, 1971). Sometimes, consumers don't want the purchase to reflect their information too much if their self-image is not positive enough.

Brand Consciousness

For those people who really cares brands, price will not be concerned in the first place. The key point is whether it can help themselves to be more attractive and steal the spotlight or not. People's opinion and self-esteem are important on adolescents brand consciousness, it influences the motivations and loyalty on luxury products (Giovannini, Xu, & Thomas, 2015). Brand consciousness has different level on male and female. Mohtar and Abbas (2014) indicated that females are affected much stronger than males by fashion and society. Male adolescent tends to have a spontaneous consumer behavior, they prefer use social media to evaluate brands.

That's the reason why those company need to design different market strategies by gender in order to satisfy different preference.

When kids start to identify their favorite brand, they will persuade their parents to purchase those products for them (Salim & Praven, 2013). Adolescents will talk about brands with their peers and family about what they bought. If brand can adjust their price in every range, it can stimulate more sales number (Giovannini et al, 2015). There are different aspects for those people who fascinates branded products in the society. People think they are more arrogant, wasting money and skin-deep. Because the branded products are usually more expensive than other products. Therefore, the young people who use them will normally considered as a leader, with more opinion fashion intention.

Peer Influence

In case the consumer is not loyal for some specific brand, the peer influence will probably affect the decision if they keep with the brand or change it (Sahay, 2010). As we know, young people are talkative with their peer group. If a brand is strongly recommended and acceptable for his or her friends, young people may take

their suggestions and change their consumer behavior. In a study on the teenager's consumer behavior, Martin and Bush (2000) found young people will prefer to choose cheaper products than following friends' advice to keep loyal to higher priced brands. On the other hand, sometime, brand will use consumers' attachments in brand commitment to make them sacrifice their financial in order to obtain it.

By the rising of teens population, the purchasing power has been seen recently (Setlow, 2000). In 1998, adolescents and their parents spent approximately 141 billion (Brazil, 1999). Some studies have indicated that adults in groups can spend more money than they go shopping by themselves (Borges, Chabet & Babin, 2010; Sommer Wynes, & Brinkley, 1992). Therefore, the same effect will happen on teen consumers. Teens prefer to go shopping with friends, and its influence can bring more benefits to those sellers (Tootelian & Gaedeke, 1992). However, we look forward to figuring out why peers enjoy being together with friends on shop.

Peer Influence in Reference Group

According to the consumer behavior, a reference group is very important because it deliver and create individual thinking and sense for some specific products and brands. With these chances, they can compare their own mindset by attitude and behavior with the group (Lessig & Park, 1978; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Moreover, reference group can help people distinguish what kinds of product they are eager to purchase or not. (Bristol & Mangleburg, 2005; Shim, 1996). Besides, information processing, purchasing decisions and consumer behavior are also influenced by reference group. (Bearden, 1989; Childers & Rao, 1992; Lachance, Beaudion & Robitaille, 2003). Consumer scholars have discovered that how peers, family and media resources affect young people's consumer behavior on clothing (Lachance, et al, 2003); how family and friends affect different commodities and buying decision-making. (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Childers & Rao, 1992); how peers affect adolescent 's buying decisions. (Mangleburg & Doney & Bristol 2004).

Peer influence is usually explained as the level that friends can influence their attitude, thinking and behavior (Bristol & Mangleburg, 2005). Moreover, the past studies indicated that the peer influence will have different level's affection on different products (Bachmann, John & Rao, 1993; Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Childer &

Rao, 1992).

Reference Group

There are various careers in this society, people all have their hobby and faith. Therefore, they are belonged to different groups. As a member in the group, a same consensus should be had for each of them. They wear familiar clothing and purchase products from a same brand. On the other hand, except accepting information from groups, message can be conveyed by social media conveniently. An aspirational group usually has no connection with customers, but they have critical effect in this aspect. Coca-cola had an unexpected downturn in China market, because of a failure commercial advertisement (Du, Yu, & Zhao, 2009). A pop singer was invited as a celebrity for Coca-Cola, however, Chinese consumer started to refuse supporting this singer because he has some issues about his gender. This strategy not only brings them a serious trouble but also strongly damage their influence in young teenagers. In the other words, a good reference group can promote purchase intention, but a terrible one could hurt their reputation.

When it goes to motivating behavior change, there are nothing can be more powerful than the opinion from your peers. Based on the perspective of consumer behavior, reference group can offer lots of important proves because they deliver individual awareness of some brands. Giving them chances to compare their own idea and attitude with groups. Reference group also classified those products which are attractive or not attractive. (Bristol & Mangleburg, 2005; Shim, 1996). Normally, people will define peer influence as a reflection of individual image, such as attitude, action and thoughts. (Bristol & Mangleburg, 2005). Besides, scholars on consumer behavior have figured out consequence about how reference group affect a new consumer pattern. (Subramanian & Subramanian, 1995). Moreover, how peers and families to affect their brands' buying decisions, (Childers & Rao, 1992) and how peers affect young adults retailing attitudes and buying decision. (Mangleburg et al., 2004).

The participants are randomly picked inside Southern Taiwan University. There are 273 questionnaires in total, valid questionnaires are 260. After we recovered questionnaires, running descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, factor analysis, correlation analysis and independent samples T-test.

This paper aims to analyze the students' consumer behavior about brand image and peer pressure in Starbucks.

More specifically, this study was intended to address the following three purposes:

- To analyze whether brand image will affect students' consumer behavior, making a person who don't drink coffee to try to buy coffee products.
- To analyze whether peer pressure will affect students' consumer behavior, making a person who don't drink coffee to try to buy coffee products.
- To analyze whether brand image and peer pressure are significantly positive correlation.

College students are appropriate participants in this study because they tend to purchase on their own and use their own money. Therefore, it is very important for companies to understand behavior of college students and further adjust the sales strategy for the future market.

DATA

The questionnaire includes 10 items for measuring the involvement in coffee, 19 items for brand image and another 19 items for peer influence. We use 5-point Likert scale that a rating of 1 means "Strongly Disagree" and a rating of 5 means "Strongly Agree." The sample was limited by demographic variables of social status (college students), product categories (only beverage products) and age (all are from 18-24). We issued 273 questionnaires to our college students by snowball sampling. Invalid samples had been eliminated, resulting in 260 useful samples.

The Basic Information

The collected samples show the basic information as Table 2.

Table 2 shows that 38.5% are age 19, the greatest group in the samples and age 18 is second largest group that takes 23.8%.

Cronbach's α

In this research, we take the test of Cronbach's α to examine the internal consistency and stability. Table 3 shows that the Cronbach's α for brand image and peer pressure is 0.832 and 0.85 respectively, which implies a good internal consistency.

Table2. Descriptive Information of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18	62	23.8	23.8	23.8
19	100	38.5	38.5	62.3
20	48	18.5	18.5	80.8
21	25	9.6	9.6	90.4
Over 22	25	9.6	9.6	100.0
total	260	100.0	100.0	

Table3. The Result of Cronbache’s α in Brand Image and Peer Pressure

Brand image		Peer pressure	
Factor	Validity	Factor	Validity
	Cronbache’s α		Cronbache’s α
Validity of brand image	0.832	Validity of peer pressure	0.85

Factor Analysis of Brand Image and Peer Pressure

To examine if the correlation between brand image and peer pressure is available for factor analysis, we run the data in KMO and Barlett’s test first. The KMO test for brand image is 0.836, which is greater than 0.6, and Barlett’s test is significant as well. Total variance explained is 54.497. Moreover, the result of KMO test in peer pressure is 0.807, being greater than 0.6, and Barlett’s test is significant as well. Total variance explained is 64.568. If the KMO value is greater than 0.6, then the data is suitable for factor analysis. Barlett’s test aims to check if those correlation coefficient is significant or not and a significant Barlett’s test can prove correlation coefficient is available for factor analysis, using principal components extraction, varimax, eigenvalue needs to be

greater than one and the factor loading needs to be greater than 0.4 so as to set up the standard to run factor analysis. Choosing what factors meet the standard after variable deduction.

Correlation Coefficient

We combine the brand factors from B1 to B19 to create TOTB and combine factors from P1 to P19 to establish TOTP to examine the analysis of correlation. Table 4 shows that the correlation coefficient between drinking coffee or not and TOTB (Brand image) is 0.018, which is not significant. Besides, the correlation coefficient between drinking coffee or not and TOTP is -0.012, which is not significant either. However, the correlation coefficient between TOTB and TOTP is 0.758, which is significant. To sum up, TOTB and TOTP show a significant positive correlation.

Table4. Correlation Coefficient

Correlation				
		Drink coffee or not	TOTB	TOTP
Drink coffee or not	Pearson Correlation	1	0.18	-0.12
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.771	.846
	N	260	260	260
TOTB	Pearson Correlation	.018	1	.758
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.771		.000
	N	260	260	260
TOTP	Pearson Correlation	-.012	.758	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.846	.000	
	N	260	260	260

Brand awareness and reference group

In brand image, factor 1, brand awareness has the greatest percentage of variance, 25.94. In peer pressure, factor 1, reference group has the greatest percentage of variance, 29.18. Therefore, we analyze brand awareness and reference

group in correlation coefficient, turns out that the Pearson Correlation is .672, (between 0.7 to 0.99 means highly correlated) so it means moderately correlated. (Pearson correlation coefficient will be between -1 to plus +1) Thus, a good reference group can enhance the brand awareness from consumers.

Table5. Correlations Between Brand Awareness and Reference Group

Correlations			
		Brand Awareness	Reference Group
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.672**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	260	260
Reference Group	Pearson Correlation	.672**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	260	260

Independent Samples t Test

We separate gender to male and female, comparing which group is much easier to be affected in consumer behavior by brand image and peer pressure.

As a result, both results of Sig. (two-tailed) are greater than 0.05. Thus, there is no significant correlation between male and female in this research within brand image and peer pressure.

Table6. Independent Samples t Test in Gender, Brand Image and Peer Pressure

		F	Sig.	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
TOTB	Equal variances assumed	1.849	.175	1.204	.230
	Equal variances not assumed			1.116	.266
TOTP	Equal variances assumed	5.756	.017	-.073	.942
	Equal variances not assumed			-.064	.949

The ANOVA Test

An ANOVA test is a statistic way to see whether the results of survey are significant or not. Moreover, we can say that we use this way to reject the null hypothesis or accept alternate hypothesis. To find out if there is a difference between groups.

We run ANOVA to see whether there is a significant difference between TOTB (brand image in total) and TOTP (peer pressure in total) in 0.1 significant standard. As results, Sig of TOTB is 0.065, Sig of TOTP is 0.094. The numbers are all smaller than the standard which is 0.1 in this analysis. There is a significant difference between two of them.

Table7. The ANOVA Test of Major

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
TOTB	Between Groups	3	167.095	2.436	.065
	Within Groups	256	68.591		
	Total	259			
TOTP	Between Groups	3	176.230	2.150	.094
	Within Groups	253	81.975		
	Total	256			

We use ANOVA to see whether there is a significant difference between TOTB (brand image in total) and TOTP (peer pressure in total) in monthly disposable income, setting significant standard as 0.1 instead of 0.05. As

results, Sig of TOTB is 0.345, Sig of TOTP is 0.067. The numbers of TOTP achieved the standard which is 0.1 in this analysis. There is a significant difference of peer pressure in monthly disposable income (TWD).

Table8. The ANOVA Test of Monthly Disposable Income (TWD)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
TOTB	Between Groups	3	77.383	1.111	.345
	Within Groups	256	69.642		
	Total	259			
TOTP	Between Groups	3	196.971	2.410	.067
	Within Groups	253	81.729		
	Total	256			

CONCLUSION

The research aims to find out whether brand image and peer pressure affect consumer

behavior from not buying coffee to having a cup of it. The research shows that a good brand image and peer pressure do not change the choice of people from not buying coffee to

buying coffee. However, the relationship of the brand image and peer pressure shows a strong positive correlation. Thus, a good brand image leads people to convince their peers to buy the products of same brand. Besides, there is no significant correlation in brand image and peer pressure between male consumers and female ones. However, even peer influence plays an important role in consumer behavior, but it will not make consumer to purchase the items they don't need.

The research contributes to the extant literature by studying the purchase ability of adolescents since relatively numerous researches focused on the consumer behavior of adults. Valentine and Powers (2013) indicated that the college students play an important role on potential market and future one. Moreover, many researches had indicated that the customer between 18 to 24 are easier to be influenced by fashion. (Ogden-Barne, 2011), which means that the fashion image in their mind is very important on adolescents' consuming intention. If the product makes a fashionable image for their own brand, it can bring more benefit to the teenagers.

What kind of element in brand image will make people advise their peer to buy their products. Besides, most subjects in this research are unmarried, it will be interesting to check if the peer influence affects them differently when they are married. If the family influence will affect their consumer behavior more than peer pressure. Last, all the subjects in this research are students, they have limited monthly income, which means they tend to spend their money more carefully. After they graduate from university and find a full-time job with stable salary., having more independent sense on expenses. Will the stable income will affect their consuming principle, making them more willing to try different brands instead of taking peers' suggestion. Pending the future research to discuss more.

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