Consuming As A Family: Modes of Intergenerational Influence On Young Adults
Banwari Mittal and Marla B. Royne

ABSTRACT

Parents inevitably shape their young children’s consumption during early years; does this influence endure as the offspring mature? We explore this phenomenon—known as Intergenerational Influence (IGI)—with survey data from 265 young adults and their parents for four product categories. Our specific focus is on two research questions: (1) By what modality is IGI transferred, and (2) does family relationship quality moderate IGI outcomes? Results show IGI to be present in differing degrees across products—more for utilitarian and, likewise, shared products, less for individually consumed and stylistic products. As to modality, we explore active indoctrination by parents versus passive learning by mere observation by the offspring, and find the latter to be the dominant mode. We also find a strong moderating role of family relationship quality (FRQ) so that all IGI outcomes are stronger among high FRQ than among low FRQ families. Of import to theory as well as practice, these findings confirm and extend current literature on IGI and suggest directions for future research.

Key Words: IGI, Intergenerational Influence, Influence Modality, Family Relationship Quality, Parental Influence, Modeling