

Buying Behavior: Gender and Socioeconomic Class Differences on Interpersonal Influence Susceptibility

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Abstract

The purpose of present study was to find out the gender and social class difference on interpersonal influence susceptibility on buying behavior. It was hypothesized that "Female buyers would be more susceptible on interpersonal influence as compare to male buyers. It was also hypothesized that "there would be significant difference between low, middle and high socioeconomic class buyers on susceptibility to interpersonal influences. Sample consisted of 135 (70 female and 65 male in which 51 from lower socioeconomic class, 47 from middle socioeconomic class and 37 were taken from high socioeconomic). The age range of the sample was between 21 to 40 years and education level was at least graduation. The sample was selected from Karachi. Personal data form was administered to gather the demographic information and to find out socioeconomic class. Then a Scale of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel, 1989)¹ was administered to measure interpersonal influence susceptibility on buying products. After scoring, T-Test and one way ANOVA was applied. The results indicate non significant difference among females and males, but significant difference between low, middle and high socioeconomic class buyers on susceptibility to interpersonal influence and that high socioeconomic class are comparatively more susceptible. Additional findings indicate specific differences in males, females on three socioeconomic classes and overall on different educational level.

Keywords: Interpersonal Influence susceptibility, buying behavior, social class, Socioeconomic Class

Introduction

An important determinant of an individual's behavior is other individuals' influence (Bearden et al., 1989); social influence is an important determinant of consumer behavior. This is reflected in models of consumer decision-making that incorporate social norms (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980)² and interpersonal considerations (Miniard and Cohen, 1981)³ as antecedents of behavioral intentions.

Consumer socialization is the process by which people develop consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Moschis and Churchill 1978)⁴. Various types of theories (e.g., developmental, social learning, social systems) have been used to explain consumer socialization over an individual's life cycle. Perhaps the most popular theory in communication and advertising research is the social learning model (Moschis and George 1976)⁵, which generally views socialization as an outcome of environmental forces applied to the individual (Bandura 1969)⁶. The individual is viewed as a passive participant in the learning process, and the development of beliefs and attitudes results from the interaction with others. The three main elements of that socialization theory are socialization agents, social structural variables, and outcomes. According to social learning theory, the socialization agents and other social structural variables are instrumental in shaping an individual's attitudes and behaviors (McLeod and O'Keefe 1972)⁷. The socialization agents transmit norms, attitudes, and behaviors to the individual and socialization is assumed to take place during the individual's interaction with the agents. Socialization agents may be any person, institution, or organization directly involved with the individual.

In the consumer behavior literature they include television advertising parents, school, and peers (Moschis and Churchill 1978)⁸. The social setting within which the interaction of individual and socialization agent takes place is the second important aspect of socialization. The social setting is often defined in terms of social structural variables such as gender, race, and family size (Moschis and Churchill 1978)⁸. The third major element of social learning theory is outcomes. The end result of the socialization process is the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors often referred to as outcomes or consumer skills.

The consumer socialization literature includes various activities related to purchasing and consumption as consumer skills (Moschis and Smith 1985)⁹, such as consumer activism, attitudes toward prices, materialism, and economic and social motivations. We used all three aspects of social learning theory in this study. Consumers may purchase products to conform with peer groups, in response to concerns of what others think of them (Bearden et al., 1989), or because others have provided credible information about a product (Cohen and Golden, 1972)¹⁰. People are susceptible to conformity in most areas of their lives. In fact, if an individual is willing to conform in one area, they are usually willing to conform in many areas (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989)¹¹.

Consumer susceptibility is defined as the need to identify or enhance one's image with significant others through the acquisition and use of products and brands, the willingness to conform to the expectation of the others regarding purchase decision, and services by observing others and /or seek information from others. An important determinant of an individual's behavior is other's influence. Portrayals of products being consumed in social situations and the use of prominent/attractive spokespersons endorsing products is evident of this belief. Models used to explain consumer behaviors frequently include interpersonal influence. These models recognize that consumer behavior cannot be fully understood unless consideration is given to the effect of the interpersonal influence on development of attitudes, norms, values, aspirations and purchase behavior (Stafford and Cohanougher 1977)¹². Early researches (e.g. Allen 1965)¹³, which demonstrated that individuals differ in their responses to the social influences.

Susceptibility to interpersonal influence appears to be an important individual difference variable for study of consumer behavior, it unfortunately has been neglected as general trait in recent literature. However numerous researches recent articles from psychological and consumer researches have demonstrated the existence of manifest interpersonal influence upon individual differences in decision making process e.g., (Cohen and Golden 1972)¹⁴; Kasarjian and Robertson 1981¹⁵; Moscovici 1985¹⁶; Sherif 1935¹⁷). In consumer researches these studies include the effort of Ford and Ellis (1980)¹⁸, Moschis (1976)¹⁹, Stafford (1976)²⁰, and Witt and Bruce (1972)²¹. However, most of these investigated the tendencies to conform to group norms or to modify their judgment based upon other evaluation and did not address the various dimension to interpersonal influences operate in given situation. Only few studies address the dimension of susceptibility to interpersonal influence and its effect on decision making process. In this regards Deutsch and Gerard (1955)²², posited that interpersonal influence is manifested through either normative or informational influences.

Burnkrant and Cousineau (1975)²³ defined normative influence as the tendencies to conform the expectations of others. A consumer research has separated normative influence into value expressive utilitarian influences (Price, Feick, and Higie 1987)²⁴. Value expressiveness reflects the individual's desire to enhance self-image by association with reference group. Value expressiveness is motivated by the individual's desire to enhance or support his or her self concept through referent identification. Value expressive influence operate through the process of identification, which occur when an individual adopts a behavior or opinion of others because the behavior or opinion is associated with satisfying a self defining relationship (Pierce et al, 1987). Value expressive influence was found to vary across selection decisions of products that differed in consumption conspicuousness and of services that varied regarding consumer preference heterogeneity and referent coorientation (similarity). Utilitarian influences the other type of normative influences mentioned, is reflected in individuals attempt to comply with the expectation of others to achieve rewards or to avoid punishment, and it operate through process of compliance (Burnkrant and Cousineau 1975)²³. Compliance occurs when individuals conform to the expectation of others to gain rewards or to avoid punishments mediated by the others.

Deutsch and Gerard (1955)²⁵ defined informational influence as the tendency to accept information from others has evidence about reality. Informational influence may occur in two ways, individual may either search for information from knowledgeable others or make inferences based upon the observation of others (Park and Lessig 1977)²⁶. Informational influence operates through the process of internalization, which occurs if information from others increases the individual knowledge about some aspect of environment. Informational influence has been found to effect consumer decision process regarding product evaluations (Burnkrant and Cousineau 1975)²⁷; Cohen and Goldmen 1972)²⁸ and products/brand selections (Bearden and Etzel 1982; Park and Lessig 1977)²⁹. This extends into the realm of purchasing decisions, especially when the individuals are highly concerned with how others view their behavior (Bearden & Rose, 1990)³⁰. In a study by Chen-Yu and Seock (2002)³¹, both males and females were asked to complete a survey by answering questions about how they shop for clothing. For both male and female adolescents, conformity was found to be a significant motivation to purchase certain clothing (Chen-Yu & Seock, 2002)³¹.

In terms of influence, the societal reference groups that have the greater influence upon individuals are family and peers {including friends} (Mitra, Reiss and Capella 1999)³² and susceptibility to interpersonal influence from these persons (Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel 1989)³³. Malhotra and Galletta (1999)³⁴ suggest may significantly contribute to internalization of usage behaviors in the diffusion of online shopping. To access product and services, including the Internet, Rosen and Olshavsky (1987)³⁵ have found individuals turn to friends /peers who are seen as a significant contributing factor to its perceived usefulness.

Apart from interpersonal influence, individuals can also gather information about an issue or innovation by the observing the experience and evaluation of a peer group member (Karahanna, Straub and Chervany 1999)³⁶. Such a vicarious absorption of the information experience is often a very effective information source to the individual (Bandura 1997). Risman points out that gender is more than the property of individuals and must be looked at from a multilevel perspective (Risman 1998)³⁷. Consistent with Risman's viewpoint, recent investigations have been emphasizing the importance of looking at how individuals fit into a broader social context and the influence this context has on their consumer responses (Briley and Wyer 2002³⁸; Grier and Desphandé 2001³⁹). Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel (1989)⁴⁰ have suggested that studies examining the differences in susceptibility to interpersonal influence based on **gender** and age be performed. The literature linking gender to susceptibility to influence is sparse informational approach with women. However, another study suggests that men tend to ask more questions of negotiation partners (Neu, Graham and Gilly 1988)⁴¹ implying susceptibility. On the other hand, several studies have suggested that in everyday interactions men reveal dominance and women submissiveness (Lakoff 1975)⁴², even through subtle verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Kimble, Yoshikawa and Zehr 1981)⁴³. It has also been posited that females are more open to influence from others and more dependent (Tedeschi, Schlenker and Bonoma 1973)⁴⁴.

Women stronger purchase motivations (Widgery and McGaugh 1991)⁴⁵. This suggests that women may be more susceptible to interpersonal influence. (Rose, G. M., Shoham, A., Kahle, L. R., & Batra, R. (1994)⁴⁶) The authors argue that clothing influences group identification, affiliation, and conformity. Keillor, B. D., Parker, R. S., & Schaefer, A. (1996)(American)⁴⁷ adolescents are influenced by their peers into buying branded clothes. Socialization in terms of norms, attitudes, motivations and behavior by parents and how these influence (Mexican) adolescents' preferences to buy clothes is also discussed. Thus, the effects of social influence and conformity are clearly evident in the purchasing of clothes through this study. Chen-Yu J.H., Seock Y-K (2002)⁴⁸ done a study and the purpose of this study was to examine adolescents' clothing shopping frequency, expenditure, purchase motivations, information sources, and store selection criteria and to determine the similarities and differences between male and female. For both genders, friends were the most important clothing information source, and price was the most important criterion for store selection. Significant differences were also found between genders. Female participants shopped significantly more often than males and had higher recreation clothing purchase motivation. Certain information sources, such as friends and magazines/books, had more influence over clothing purchase decisions made by females compared to males Journal article.

In 1967, air conditioners were found in only 3 per 100 Japanese households, by 1993, there were over 150 per 100 households, a fifty-fold increase in less than 30 years. In spite of dramatic improvements in technical efficiency, air conditioning is now driving peak energy loads in all the major urban areas of Japan, putting upward pressure on the dimensioning of energy supply. The air conditioner is one of a number of household appliances that have become indicators of success and well-being. The pressure to air condition is even more striking given the distaste which most Japanese consumers have for artificially cooled air, and the widespread notion that it is bad for your health. Research reported in Wilhite et al (1996)⁴⁹ revealed some of the symbolic dimensions of changing interpretations of comfort. Anecdotal evidence also indicates that some people are purchasing air conditioners as outward symbols to the world around them. For example, an older couple living in a traditional Japanese house expressed exasperation that their daughter (who had moved away from home) kept pressing them to buy an air conditioner, despite their insistence that they were comfortable in the summer heat, and concerned about the aesthetic damage that an air conditioner would cause.

Aware of her parents' objections, she continued to press ahead with the project, motivated by a desire to provide visual evidence to friends and neighbors. Finally, we have seen how symbols of modernity from the world around are directed inward at the household, signaling the social appropriateness of certain consumption practices. The key point here is that such symbols are not mutually exclusive, but are in fact closely coupled. Each is evolving individually, but each influencing and being influenced by the others. Pressure cooking is an example of a consumption pattern that has a low environmental impact and very positive symbolism, at least in Turkey.

Pressure cookers are seen to be modern, practical, timesaving, and convenient, and have been widely used for over 30 years. Poorer families, who consume a lot of 'dry' foods (beans, lentils, chick peas), view the pressure cooker as an important functional device. The pressure cooker is significant not just in that it saves time, but also in that it is viewed as an efficient technological device and one that should be part of any modern kitchen. Mothers of married women are also very influential role models in Turkey. They subject to social pressure, from the media and from friends and neighbors, many middle class mothers buy pressure cookers for their married daughters.

Casual conversations, about which appliances are "a must", are also critical since even in poor areas, neighbors drop by to talk about the latest goods on the market and suggest which purchases their friends should make. Economic deprivation does not stop households from acquiring and showing off appliances such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, toasters, or dishwashers. Among the Turkish middle and upper classes, glass is viewed as a better quality material relative to tin or plastic jars, containers, or cups. Glass containers are also regarded as pleasing to the eye. Signs of being modern and Western are important especially in Turkey. Processed foods are associated with a sense of decency and self-respect that comes from not depriving ones family of the good life as seen on TV or as lived by ones more affluent neighbors. The recently urbanized middle classes in Turkey look down upon peasant soups, the home made qualities of which are, for different reasons, valued by the elite and the poor alike. More generally, the proliferation of meaning surrounding food is such that consumers have the opportunity to mix symbols of naturalness with those of social responsibility, assembling different elements together to form a personal bricolage of practice in a way which permits individuality whilst also offering a measure of social acceptability (Simmel, 1991)⁵⁰.

Socio-economic class - people having the same social or economic status; "the working class"; "an emerging professional class" Upper class, the class occupying the highest position in the social hierarchy, lower - the social class lowest in the social hierarchy and Middle class - the social class between the lower and upper classes. Resources and constraints' encompass all the ways in which particular life conditions can be differentiated by social class. Any condition that affects a person's place in society, shapes their opportunities, and colors their view of the world could be construed as a resource or constraint (Mayer and Buckley 1970)⁵¹. Underlying this broad admission is the understanding that all distinctive life conditions can be interpreted (albeit with varying degrees of influence) as resources or constraints, in that they have potential to influence and interact with each other in a holistic way. It will be argued that resources other than money constitute major contributors to the superior quality of life experienced by higher-class groups. The social classes of greatest interest to marketers are the lower middle and upper lower, since these accounts for most of the population and the purchasing power in a typical community.

A set of characteristics has been found to systematically differ by social class. They fall broadly within the following domains: 1) psychological domain, including norms and habits, abstract-level modes of thought, health knowledge, and behavioral intentions; 2) behavioral constraints, including economic resources and situation effects; 3) physical influences, including physiological stress, genetic dispositions, and environmental conditions. These modes of thought also tend to impact share of economic resources. Ability to pay for goods and services determines the material affluence of one's lifestyle. Modes of thought concentrated within the higher classes, including willingness to take on stressful challenges, achievement motivation, and focus on planning to attain future goals, can be construed as resources that better equip the individual for life's challenges. (Halson and Baron 1994)⁵² causes them to pursue and integrate knowledge that can constitute an advantageous tool in the new knowledge economy. Conversely, for lower-class individuals the tendency not to plan for future (Kohn et al. 1990)⁵³. Henry (1995)⁵⁴ found in higher-class subjects a strong focus on preference for rational logical thinking, and a high value placed on power of the intellect. These higher-class subjects described themselves as inquisitive and interested in new things, seeking to broaden their minds. Halson and Baron (1994)⁵² identified distinctive cognitive styles in problem solving and decision making, in that higher-class individuals tend to use a more elaborated, rational-analytic style.

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Conversely, for lower-class individuals the tendency not to plan for future growth will be self-perpetuating in that an individual must first set goals in order to achieve them; avoidance of stress and challenge impinges chances for stand-out achievement; need for stability perpetuates a lack of progress in one's position; salience of weaknesses limits one's perceived potential (Kohn et al. 1990)⁵⁶. The purpose of present study was to find out the gender and social class difference on interpersonal influence susceptibility on buying behavior.

The following hypotheses were formulated.

1. Female buyer would be more susceptible on interpersonal influence as compare to male buyer.
2. There would be significant difference between Low, Middle and High Socio Economic Class buyers on susceptibility to interpersonal influence.

Method

Sample

Sample of 135 consisting 70 female and 65 male in which 51 from lower socioeconomic class (including 25 male and 26 female), 47 from middle socioeconomic class (including 24 male and 23 female) and 37 were taken from high socioeconomic (including 16 male and 21 female), was selected general population of Karachi. The education level of the respondents was at least graduation and their age ranged between 21 to 40 years.

Socioeconomic class		Gender		Total	
		Male	Female		
High	37	16	21	42	135
Middle	47	24	23	47	
Low	51	25	26	51	

Material

Demographic form: It include the information regarding age, year of birth, gender, educational qualification, family structure, mother and father education and their occupation, number of family and earning member and monthly income as to find out socioeconomic class. Susceptibility scale: It measures consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. It include 12 items with 5 point rating scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Procedure

After approaching the purpose of the study was explained to each respondent, and with their consent first demographic information were explored through personal data form, which helped to determine the two independent variable gender and socioeconomic class. The three socioeconomic classes were measured through monthly income. This classification was done on the bases of statistical Bureau of Pakistan. Then Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence scale was administered in order to measure susceptibility on interpersonal influence on buying a product. The products category was only limited to home appliance.

Scoring and statistics

The socioeconomic class was measured through monthly income. The respondent with low socioeconomic class were considered those who have monthly income of below Rs 20,000, middle socioeconomic class were those with monthly income between Rs 21,000 to 40,000 and high socioeconomic class were those who have more than Rs 40,000 per month income. The items of susceptibility scale were scored on five point rating scale as "strongly disagree" was scored as 1 and "strongly agree" was scored as 5. Total score of each form was calculated. t test was applied to find out gender difference and one way ANOVA was applied to find out difference among the three socioeconomic classes on susceptibility to interpersonal influence on buying behavior. Additionally t test was also applied to find out specifically difference between females and males on susceptibility in each socioeconomic class and overall on different education level.

Results

Table 1
t-test showing mean difference in male and female score on interpersonal susceptibility

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
female	70	37.514	10.519	1.257
Male	65	36.723	8.008	0.993

T-Test of Equality of Means

Group	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. error Difference
Female -Male	0.489	133	26	0.791	1.618

*P>.05

Table 2

One way ANOVA showing mean difference in low, middle and high socioeconomic class score on interpersonal susceptibility

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Lower	51	33.745	6.581	.921
Middle	47	36.680	9.390	1.369
High	37	42.378	10.443	1.717
Total	135	37.133	9.368	.806

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1612.998	2	806.499	10.490	.000
Within Groups	10148.602	132	76.883		
Total	11761.600	134			

*P<. 05

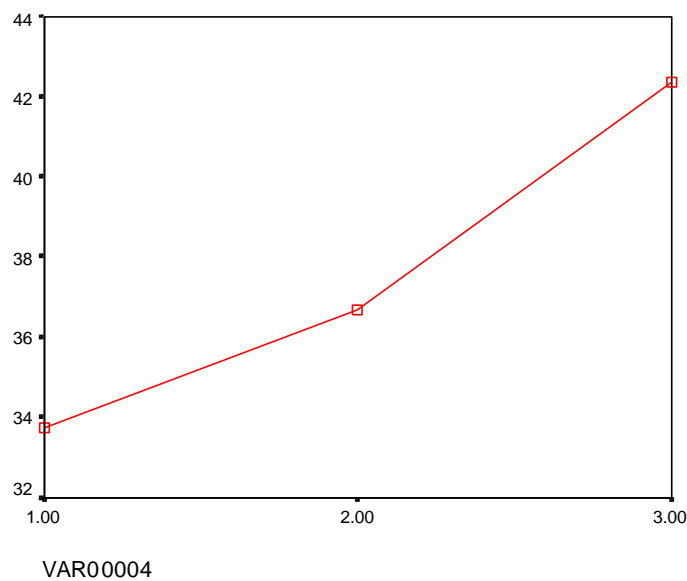
Post Hoc Tests shows multiple comparisons among three socioeconomic classes

	Variable	Variable	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Turkey HSD	Lower	Middle	-2.9358	1.7729	.222
		High	-8.6333	1.8935	.000*
	Middle	Lower	2.9358	1.7729	.222
		High	-5.6975	1.9271	.009*
	High	Lower	8.6333	1.8935	.000*
		Middle	5.6975	1.9271	.009*

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Graph a

Variance 1 (susceptibility)
Variance 2 (Socioeconomic classes)



Graph b

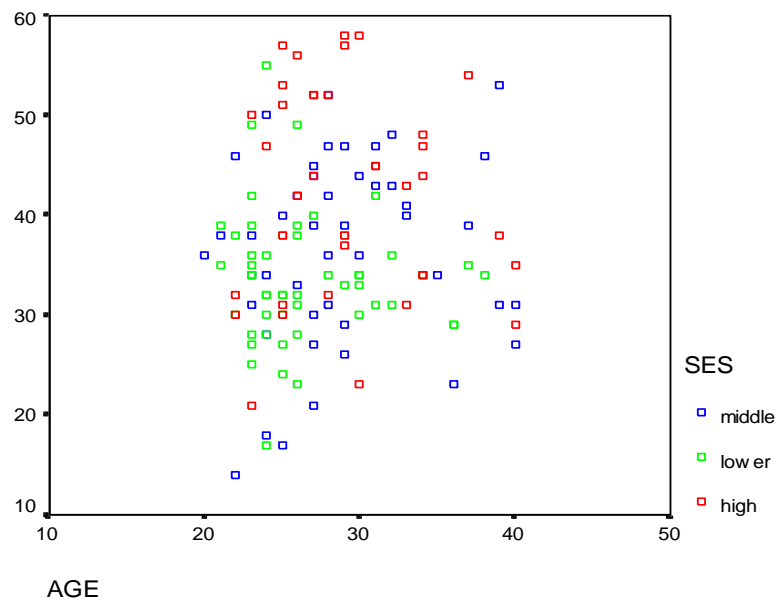


Table 3

Female (differences in socioeconomic classes)

t test showing mean difference in Socioeconomic classes score on interpersonal susceptibility

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Lower	26	32.769	6.445	1.264
Middle	23	36.913	10.211	2.129
High	21	44.047	11.859	2.582

T-Test of Equality of Means

Group	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. error Difference
Lower - Middle	-1.719	47	0.092	-4.143	2.41
Middle - High	-2.144	42	0.038	-7.134	3.328
Lower - High	-4.115	45	0	-11.278	2.714

Table 4

Male (differences in socioeconomic classes)

t test showing mean difference in Socioeconomic classes score on interpersonal susceptibility

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Lower	25	34.761	6.697	1.339
Middle	24	36.458	8.747	1.785
High	16	40.187	8.076	2.019

T-Test of Equality of Means

Group	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. error Difference
Lower - Middle	-0.765	47	0.448	-1.769	2.22
Middle - High	-1.361	38	0.181	-3.729	2.739
Lower - High	-2.241	27.749	0.033*	-5.427	2.423

*P<. 05

Table 5

(General differences education categories)

t test showing mean difference in educational categories score on interpersonal susceptibility

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Bachelor	53	37.755	7.785	1.069
Master	74	37.324	10.558	1.227
Post Master	8	31.251	4.951	1.751

T-Test of Equality of Means

	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. error E
Bachelor -Master	0.252	125	0.802	0.43	1.71
Master - P.Master	2.842	15.228	0.012*	6.074	2.137
Bachelor -P.Master	3.04	12.633	0.101*	6.193	2.037

*P<. 05

Graph c

Variance 8 (Education categories)

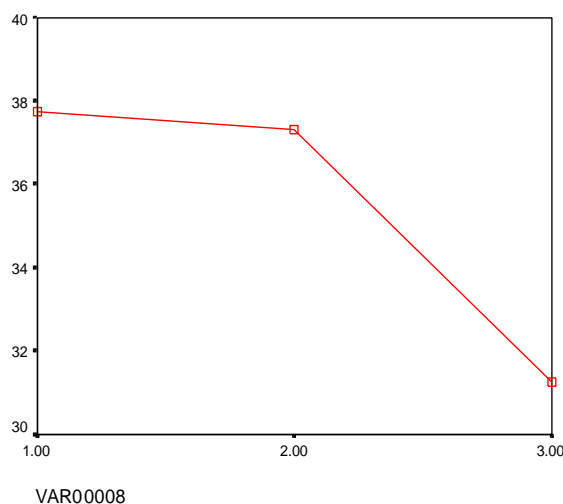


Table 6

Graduation education level (Overall differences in the three socioeconomic classes)

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Lower	21	35.7143	5.47853	1.195
Middle	18	37.1667	9.61157	2.265
High	14	41.5714	7.25	1.937

T-Test for Equality of Means

Group	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. error Difference
Lower - Middle	-0.59	37	0.55	-1.452	2.46
Middle - High	-1.478	29.986	0.15	-4.404	2.981
Lower - High	-2.722	33	0.01*	-5.857	2.151

*P<. 05

Master education level (Overall differences in the three socioeconomic classes)

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Lower	27	32.518	7.324	1.409
Middle	27	36.444	9.68	1.863
High	20	45	11.434	2.556

T-Test for Equality of Means

Group	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. error Difference
Lower - Middle	-1.68	52	0.099	-3.925	2.336
Middle - High	-2.773	45	0.008*	-8.555	3.085
Lower - High	-4.557	45	0*		2.738

*P<. 05

Post master education level (Overall differences in the three socioeconomic classes)

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Lower	3	31	3.605	2.08
Middle	2	35.5	3.363	4.5
High	3	28.666	4.932	2.84

T-Test for Equality of Means

Group	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. error Difference
Lower - Middle	-1.047	3	0.372	-4.5	4.297
Middle - High	1.373	3	0.263	6.8333	4.967
Lower - High	0.661	4	0.544	2.3333	3.527

*P<. 05

Discussion

The result shown in table 1 indicates that there is no significant difference ($t= 0.48, df=133, P>.05$) between male and female to interpersonal susceptibility. This indicates that males and females are almost equally susceptible to interpersonal influence while buying home appliance products. The reason lying in the fact that both are equally affected by the environmental (i.e. social) forces and gender difference is least important in this interplay. Secondly being high involvement products both the gender takes equally interest while purchasing and the marketing strategies are made in such a way that they target both the gender. Thirdly as we are family oriented society so most of the time purchasing home appliances is a family decision so again only gender becomes less important in this case. Results of table 2 shows that there is significant difference ($P<. 05$) between lower, middle and high socioeconomic class in susceptibility to interpersonal influence, which shows that each group are susceptible to interpersonal influence on buying behavior at different levels. While analyzing the difference, there is a significance difference among lower-high and middle-high socioeconomic group, but there is no significant difference in middle-lower group for susceptibility.

As high socioeconomic class have more resources and are status oriented and they pursue for quality products and thus collect more information or seek guidance from those around them, which makes them vulnerable to susceptibility. Resources and constraints' encompass all the ways in which particular life conditions can be differentiated by social class. Any condition that affects a person's place in society, shapes their opportunities, and colors their view of the world could be construed as a resource or constraint (Mayer and Buckley 1970)⁵⁷. Underlying this broad admission is the understanding that all distinctive life conditions can be interpreted (albeit with varying degrees of influence) as resources or constraints, in that they have potential to influence and interact with each other in a holistic way. It will be argued that resources other than money constitute major contributors to the superior quality of life experienced by higher-class groups. Henry (1995)⁵⁸ found in higher-class subjects a strong focus on preference for rational logical thinking, and a high value placed on power of the intellect. These higher-class subjects described themselves as inquisitive and interested in new things, seeking to broaden their minds.

Halson and Baron (1994)⁵⁹ identified distinctive cognitive styles in problem solving and decision-making, in that higher-class individuals tend to use a more elaborated, rational-analytic style. Ability to pay for goods and services determines the material affluence of one's lifestyle. Modes of thought concentrated within the higher classes, including willingness to take on stressful challenges, achievement motivation, and focus on planning to attain future goals, can be construed as resources that better equip the individual for life's challenges. (Halson and Baron 1994)⁵⁹ causes them to pursue and integrate knowledge that can constitute an advantageous tool in the new knowledge economy. Comparatively lower socioeconomic class has tendency not to plan for future (Kohn et al. 1990)⁶⁰, and limited social interaction so mainly purchase product on the basis of utility and resources and seek less information which might makes them less susceptible than other socioeconomic class. Table 3 results indicate that females have significant difference among the three socioeconomic classes for the interpersonal influence susceptibility, thus again signifying the contribution of socioeconomic factors among females for interpersonal influence.

Table 4 results indicate that there is only significant difference between males in lower to high socioeconomic class for the interpersonal influence susceptibility, shows that male of low and middle socioeconomic class are almost equally susceptible but difference counts when the gap between the classes increase. Combining both tables 3&4 reflects that gender difference is not playing active role rather socioeconomic status is more significant one. Table 5 results indicate that there is significant difference between respondents having education master-postmaster and bachelor-to postmaster to the interpersonal influence susceptibility, reflects that there is significant difference for susceptibility with increase in education. Table 6 results indicate that there is only significant difference of individuals with graduation education when proceeding from lower-high socioeconomic class. This again depicts the importance of socioeconomic class over education. In addition results indicate that individuals differs with master education in lower-high, and middle-high socioeconomic class for interpersonal influence susceptibility. Individuals with postmaster education in each socioeconomic class dose not differ for the interpersonal influence susceptibility, thus socioeconomic class is less important than education while being at this level of education.

It is recommended for future researches that data should be in larger in size, more than one product category should be included, variables like age, marital status, family structure personality traits of the customer, decision making process and characteristic of decision maker and domain of susceptibility should be considered.

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Appendix

Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence Scale

*While buying any of the home appliances, how much the following statement relates to you. Below are a number of statements. There is no right or wrong answers to this questionnaire; Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement as follows: where **strongly disagree=1 Disagree=2 Neutral=3 Agree=4 strongly agree=5***

1. Often consult people to help choose the best alternative available from a product class.

1	2	3	4	5
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2. If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy.

1	2	3	4	5
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3. It is important that others like the products and brands I buy.

1	2	3	4	5
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4. To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles until I am sure my friends approve them.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

6. I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase.

1	2	3	4	5
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7. If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. When buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think other will approve of.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

9. I like to know what brands and products make good impressions on others.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. I frequently gather information from friends or family about a product before I buy.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11. If other people can see using a product, I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy.

1	2	3	4	5
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12. I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products and brands that others purchase.

1	2	3	4	5
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