

Study: Some moms 'doppelgang' their daughters' style

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How much do our children influence our consumption behavior? Much more than we thought.

A new study by a Temple University Fox School of Business professor finds that [teenage girls](#) have a strong influence on the products their mothers buy solely for personal use, as in [makeup](#) or clothing, and that mothers have a much stronger [tendency](#) to mimic their daughters' consumption behavior than vice versa.

"This finding provides initial support for the notion of reverse [socialization](#) and suggests that the impact [adolescents](#) have on their [parents](#) is much more profound than has been credited to them," Dr. Ayalla A. Ruvio, lead author and an assistant professor of marketing, writes in a forthcoming *Journal of Consumer Behavior* article.

This phenomenon - an intentional decision-making process of whom to mimic and how - produced a new term and inspired the article's title: the consumer doppelganger effect.

"It is not merely the mimicking act that is conscious," the researchers wrote of the consumer doppelganger effect. "The findings clearly indicate that the subjects intentionally choose the figure they want to emulate and report their inclination to mimic their consumption behavior."

The researchers analyzed whether teenage girls tend to emulate their mothers' consumption behavior or whether mothers mimic their daughters. The study, conducted through questionnaires, sampled 343 mother-daughter pairs, with an average age of 44 for the mothers and 16 for the daughters. The researchers found that if a mother is young at heart, has high fashion consciousness and views her daughter as a style expert, she will tend to doppelgang her daughter's consumption behavior.

However, even if the daughter has high interest in fashion and an older cognitive age - thinking she's older than she is - she still is less likely to view her mother as a consumer role model and to doppelgang her.

According to the researchers, the mother-daughter model is the first to test "bidirectional influence," or whether the consumer doppelganger effect can go both ways. Ruvio and her colleagues integrated "two streams of research," the study of mimicry and literature on role modeling, to demonstrate that "children affect their parents' consumption behavior with regard to the products that the parents themselves consume."

Provided by Temple University

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