

Social and Peer Influences in College Choice

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Abstract : College is a high involvement decision making where students are expected to evaluate several college offerings before selecting a college or a course to study. However, even in high involvement product like college, students get influenced by opinion leaders and suffer from social contagion. This narrative style study, involving 98 first year students, was able to demonstrate that social contagion differs with regards to gender, ethnicity and personality. Recommendations from students with academically strong background would impact on the college choice of the undergraduate students and limit information search. Study was able to identify the incidence of anchoring heuristics amongst the students. Managerial implications with regards to design of marketing campaign follows at the end of the study.

Keywords : social contagion, opinion leaders, higher education, consumer behavior

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