

**BEST FRIENDS: EXPLORING RELATIONSHIP IMPACT ON JOINT CONSUMPTION
AN EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

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The rise of intense non-familial friendships, showcased in popular series like "Friends," underscores the increasing significance of non-familial relationships amid declining family ties (Roseneil, 2011). However, existing research predominantly centers on family or couple-based consumption, neglecting the unique dynamics of friend-based joint consumption. Yet, we consume differently when we are alone, as a couple, as a family or with friends. The underlying nature of the relationship may explain this, as its specific features have a direct influence on consumption (Banerji et al., 2020). It is therefore essential to take into account the characteristics of the friendship when studying the consumption of friends. Addressing this gap, our study focuses on "women's best friend dyads" among young women aged 18 to 30, aiming to unravel the influences of these friendships on consumption practices. To answer our research question: How do the specificities of the best friend relationship structure the joint consumption of friends? We first propose a literature review on the dynamics and characteristics of friendship and joint consumption, then we present our methodology and the results obtained, discuss our results and formulate research perspectives.

Dynamics and Characteristics of Best Friend Relationships: Friendship is a positive, stable, and reciprocal relationship (Bidart, 1991; Spencer et Pahl, 2006). Intimacy and shared activities contribute to its longevity and provide emotional and material resources (Feld, 1981; Albert et al., 2023; Hall, 2012). Closeness enhances the manifestation of expected attributes (Hruschka, 2010).

Joint Consumption/Collective Decision: Joint consumption, influenced by social presence (Argo, J., 2019) is relationship-focused and involves balanced preferences (Liu et al., 2019). Decisions among friends often concern services, leisure, and everyday goods (Decrop, Pecheux and Bauvin, 2007).

Our socio-anthropological approach employs qualitative methods: phenomenological interviews (33 participants) and consumption diaries with photo-elicitations (10 participants). Phenomenological interviews explore the experiences of the best friend relationship and joint consumption, while diaries document purchases in the presence of friends. Thematic analysis and interpretation phases provide detailed insights.

The results reveal that friendship and consumption intertwine anthropologically. Consumption practices appear embedded in relationships, emphasizing sociability over economic rationale. Symmetry, consensus, and relationship orientation characterize best friend consumption, with shared moments fostering a consumption framework. Financial equilibrium is achieved naturally, emphasizing the social dimension of consumption.

Female dyadic friendships create opportunities for consumption, emphasizing sociability over product-specific choices. Consumption becomes secondary, acting as a pretext for spending time together. The relationship's primacy influences decision-making, promoting homogeneity and avoiding conflicts. Differences in values are navigated through consensus, preserving the dyad's horizontal closeness.

Female dyadic friendships shape consumption, prioritizing the relationship over economic considerations. Marketing practitioners can leverage this by developing friendship-focused consumption opportunities in sectors like catering and leisure. The DIY trend offers potential for activities catering to intimate friend dyads. Limitations include the absence of both dyad perspectives and a focus solely on female friendships, suggesting avenues for future research on male friendships and "bromance."

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