

A study on materialism and self-acceptance among the youth of Hisar (Haryana)

Kavita Bhambhu¹, Monika Bargujjar^{2*}, Prof. Rakesh Kumar Behmani³

ABSTRACT

Materialism being an important component in today's growing economy has been focused upon in this study. Researchers have studied and defined materialism as the importance of possessions in one's life or the attachment to worldly possessions. Self-acceptance is majorly a person's acceptance of his all aspects be it positive or negative. This research was aimed to study the variables of materialism and self-acceptance on the basis of gender and living area. The relationship between materialism and self-acceptance were also targeted for the study. Results show that on the selected sample, there are gender differences both on materialism and self-acceptance. However, no significant correlation was noted between materialism and self-acceptance.

Keywords: Youth, Economy, Materialism, Self-acceptance, Gender differences, Haryana

India is a developing country where majority of population is in young age. The consumption pattern of Indian youth shows that they are keen towards spending more and saving less. There is need for the youth to understand the difference between their needs and desires. Parents also play an important role in the development of materialistic virtues in an individual. They are inclined towards providing their children with enough facilities and resources, through which the children may turn out to be materialistic in their life. It is also important to find out the perception of the youth towards themselves and the way they accept themselves. It may be possible that individuals who are not able to accept themselves may tend to be more materialistic or vice-versa. Therefore, it is important to study the relationship between materialism and self-acceptance in India's youth. This research aims to understand the adolescents' self-acceptance towards materialism.

¹Post Graduate Diploma Holder, Department of Applied Psychology, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology, Hisar, Haryana (India)

²Senior Research Fellow- UGC, Department of Applied Psychology, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology, Hisar, Haryana (India)

³Professor, Department of Applied Psychology, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology, Hisar, Haryana (India).

**Responding Author*

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Materialism

Materialism was defined by Belk (1984) as “the importance a person attaches to material possessions and the belief that certain possessions are the primary source of happiness”. Materialism is an intensified aspect of consumption, which has obtained increased concentration recently (Srikant, 2013). Different definitions and approaches are related to materialism have been declared in the review article by Behmani and Bargujjar (2018). Ward and Wackman (1971) stated materialism as “an orientation emphasizing possession and money for personal happiness and social progress”. Belk (1984) stated that “materialism is the importance a person attaches to material possessions and the belief that certain possessions are the main source of happiness”. “Materialism is fixed of centrally held beliefs about the importance of possessions in one’s life” (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Kasser (2002) noted materialism to be a function of intrinsic and extrinsic goals. Csikzentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) defined two types of materialism: instrumental materialism and terminal materialism. Materialism has been considered as an important means for understanding oneself through acts of acquisition and possession of material goods (Dittmar, 1992; Solomon, 1983).

Therefore, materialism could be conceptualized as the value an individual places in material possessions, which has been studied and defined by a number of researchers in the field of psychology and economics.

Self-acceptance

Self-acceptance is a vital sign of mental health. Self-acceptance is positively related with the acceptance of others. Self-acceptance means a person’s acceptance of his all aspects be it positive or negative. One main facet of self-acceptance is the talent and readiness to let others tell one’s true self. Self-acceptance is the hopelessness to accept past error, actual or real.

Self-acceptance is a lifetime, never-ending task. Self-acceptance states to a person the degree of his fulfilment or happiness with himself. The accepting individual is likely to be accepting of others, which means regarding their rights and replying positively to them despite recognition of specific errors. Self-acceptance contains understanding about own self it is accurate though of subjective, alertness of person power and faults. It results in a person’s feeling about himself that he is of unique worth. The self-accepting person, alert of both his strengths and defect, values himself. The self-rejecting individual reflects himself of little worth and is likely to have other signs of maladjustment. In education and psychology, self-acceptance is important. An individual's feeling about himself that he is of "unique worth".

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Materialism

Materialism has been studied by various researchers in children and adolescents. It has been found that materialism rises in the middle to early adolescence years and then diminishes in late adolescence (Chaplin & John, 2007). In a study conducted on 175 youth (15-18 years), it was found that role models directly influence materialism and marketplace knowledge, where materialism was found to be greatly influenced by role models of teachers and athletes (Clark, Martin & Bush, 2001).

Youth demand new products, and for that, they put on efforts for that. Negative relation was found between materialism and liking for school and school performance (Goldberg, Gorn, Peracchio & Bamossy, 2003). Another finding supports that people who focus on money and

goods may experience feelings of insecurity, poorer interpersonal relationships and a low sense of self-esteem (Kasser & Kasser, 2001). Roberts and Clement (2007) studied the relationship between the three dimensions of materialism and eight dimensions of quality of life. It was found that overall materialism and happiness was negatively correlated to all the eight dimensions of quality of life. People who are highly materialistic are less satisfied with their 'life as a whole' and also with the 'specific life domains' as compared to those who were less materialistic (Ryan & Dziurawiec, 2001).

Many other writers give an acute assessment of the moral consequence of supporting materialism in society. Review of studies has shown that personality traits like narcissism, insecurity, impulsive behaviour, etc. are positively related to materialism. Individuals with high materialistic values experience a lower quality of life. These individuals have less life satisfaction and diminished well-being (Bargujjar & Behmani, 2018). Ashok Gopal and Rajesh Srinivasan, (2006), conducted a study on materialism and stated that it is rising in India. An individual engaged their savings towards ownership of material goods. Culture and social change faced by India, it shows an extreme level of materialism (Ghosh, 2012). The age group of 9 to 14 has been referred to as most liable to announcement and promotion because of their deep interest in new goods (Goldberg, Corn, Peracchio & Bamossy, 2003). The children age group of 9 to 14 are pointed by the market authorities as they want to buy and own objects. Materialism is also closely related to several psychological factors like well-being, self-esteem, happiness, life satisfaction, mental health, etc. (Behmani & Bargujjar, 2018a). In an Indian study, it has been seen that there are significant differences between males and females and males are merely inclined towards shopping from shopping malls as compared to females (Behmani & Bargujjar, 2018b).

Self-acceptance

Research has shown that individuals scoring high on self-acceptance are inclined towards accepting others, have the feeling of being accepted by others, which is actually similar to individuals with a low score on self-acceptance. Similarly, individuals scoring high on acceptance of others also feel accepted by others and are more prone to be accepted by others (Fey, 1955). In studying the relationship between work holism, self-acceptance, psychological well-being and physical symptoms, it was found that students who perceive their parental work holism as higher experienced lower self-acceptance, higher physical complaints and low psychological well-being (Chamberlin & Zhang, 2009). Individuals with a probability of high self-acceptance were linked with scoring high on self-actualization (Chan & Joseph, 2000).

In a study on psychological health, it was found that participants with severe mental health issues reported lower self-acceptance and self-esteem, high anxiety, depression and mental illness, as compared to general populations. This study also reported that self-esteem and self-acceptance are closely related terms but cannot be used interchangeably. Self-acceptance is linked more to general psychological well-being (MacInnes, 2006). Self-acceptance influences life satisfaction directly and indirectly (Choy & Moneta, 2002).

Materialism and Self-acceptance

While looking in the literature to find previous researches to analyse the relationship between materialism and self-acceptance, it was seen that no direct studies were reported. Materialism has been extensively studied with well-being but not with self-acceptance. However, self-acceptance has been quoted as a dimension of psychological well-being in various studies. After reviewing the literature, only a handful of studies has been found related to materialism

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and self-acceptance. Kasser and Ryan (1993) stated that, "those with low-security and sense of well-being may be more prone to view money as a means of self-enhancement". People who are intrinsically goal-oriented enjoy high self-esteem and supports less worth in material possessions to become happiness. Roberts and Pirog III (2000) reported that, women placed a high importance on the intrinsic goals of self-acceptance and affiliation than did men. The intrinsic goals mainly that of self-acceptance and community feelings are inversely related to compulsive buying.

Objectives

1. To study gender differences in the subjects on the dimensions of the variable of materialism and self-acceptance.
2. To study the difference based on living area (urban/rural) on the dimensions of the variable of materialism and self-acceptance.
3. To study the relationship between dimensions of materialism and self-acceptance.

Hypotheses

1. It is expected that there will be significant, gender difference on the variable of success, happiness, centrality
2. It is expected that there will be significant, gender difference on the variable of self-acceptance.
3. It is expected that there will be significant, the difference based on rural/urban on the variable of success, happiness, centrality.
4. It is expected that there will be significant, the difference based on rural/urban on the variable of self-acceptance.
5. It is expected that the dimensions of materialism will correlate with self-acceptance significantly.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

In our research, the sample was decided to be of 200 subjects. Data collection was targeted to be done from Hisar city. The total sample was distributed in further groups constituting of 100 males and 100 females. In which 50 males were from an urban background, 50 male from a rural background and 50 female from urban background 50 female from rural background. The age group of the subjects was restricted to 17-20 years. The data was collected using the purposive random sampling technique.

Students	Urban	Rural
Male	50	50
Female	50	50

Tools

Two types of scale are used in the research. The first scale is Material Value Scale by Richin and Dawson (1992), and the second scale is Dr. S.B. Kakkar Self-acceptance (1984).

1. Material Value Scale by Richin and Dawson (1992): In Richin and Dawson scales, there are 18 statements. It is compulsory that the subject response to each statement. . In this scale, there are three dimensions, namely: success, centrality and happiness. This test hold reliability as 0.77 to 0.85 the reliability of success dimension is 0.77, centrality dimension is 0.73 and happiness dimension is 0.75.

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2. Dr. S. B. Kakkar Self-acceptance Scale (1984) Dr. S. B. Kakkar self-acceptance scale measures satisfaction with self or personal worth. It is a unidimensional scale. There are 34 statements; their mode of response is true or false. The subject has to show their views with the statement in the form of 'true' or 'false'. If the subject feels that the statement is true, he would encircle the cell below true response. If the individual disagrees with a statement or feels that is not true in her/his case, he would encircle the cell below a false response. This test holds reliability as 0.86 and validity as 0.80.

Procedure

To conduct this research, a questionnaire was prepared in typing form in which Richin and Dawson (1992) materialism scale and Kakkar self-acceptance scale (1984) were combined. The subjects were selected randomly from colleges of Hisar. The subjects were met personally and questionnaire was provided to each subject and proper instruction was given, and they were told to answer each statement honestly. Confidentiality was ensured. The participant filled the questionnaire and asked any doubts that occurred. The questionnaires were collected back. The results were tabulated and further statistics were applied with the help of SPSS.

RESULTS

After tabulation and calculations, results were obtained which are tabulated as follows:

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the sample of the research on the two scales on the basis of gender (male and female)

Descriptive	Male		Female	
	Materialism	Self-acceptance	Materialism	Self-acceptance
N	100	100	100	100
Mean	53.39	14.14	54.14	15.55
SD	6.03	3.96	15.98	4.42

The results show that the mean score of males on the scale of materialism was 53.39 (N=100) and SD=6.03. Whereas mean females score on materialism was 54.14 (N=100) with SD=15.98.

Similarly, on self-acceptance scale male mean score was 14.14 (N=100) with SD=3.96. While the female mean score on self-acceptance was 15.55 (N=100) with SD=4.42.

Table 2 shows the t-test on the sample on the dimension of materialism (male and female)

	F	Significant	df	Level of significance
Success	21.74	.000	198	.01
Centrality	2.581	.110	198	NS
Happiness	11.72	.001	198	.01

The result shows that there are significant differences in males and females on the dimension of success $F=21.74$ ($df=198$) sig. at $p < 0.01$ level. No significant gender difference on the dimension of centrality $F=2.58$ ($df=198$). There are significant differences based on gender on the dimension of happiness $F=11.72$ ($df=198$) significant at $p < 0.01$ level. Therefore, hypothesis 1 of the study stating that "It is expected that there will be significant, gender difference on the variable of success, happiness, centrality and self-acceptance" is partially accepted, as significant gender differences are seen on the variable of success and happiness and not on centrality.

Table 3 shows the t-test results on the dimension of self-acceptance (male and female)

Self-acceptance	F	Significant	df	Level of significance
Self-acceptance	.805	.371	198	.01

The result shows that there is significant gender difference on self-acceptance $F=.080$ ($df=198$) sig at $p< 0.01$ level. Therefore, hypothesis 2 stating that “It is expected that there will be significant, gender difference on the variable of self-acceptance” is accepted.

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the sample of the research on the two scales on the basis of living area (urban and rural).

Descriptive	Urban		Rural	
	Materialism	Self-acceptance	Materialism	Self-acceptance
N	100	100	100	100
Mean	53.57	14.47	53.96	15.22
SD	15.49	4.00	7.20	4.47

The results show that the mean score of urban on the scale of materialism was 53.57 ($N=100$) and $SD=15.49$, whereas mean rural score on materialism was 53.96 ($N=100$) with $SD=7.20$.

Similarly, on self-acceptance scale urban mean score was 14.47 ($N=100$) with $SD=4.00$ while the rural mean score on self-acceptance was 15.22 ($N=100$) with $SD=4.47$.

Table 5 shows the t-test on the sample on the dimension of materialism (urban and rural)

	F	Significant	df	Level of significance
Success	.001	.976	198	Not significant
Centrality	3.99	.047	198	Not significant
Happiness	29.0	.000	198	Not significant

The result show that the dimensions of success $F= .001$ ($df= 198$), centrality $F=3.99$ ($df=198$) and happiness $F= 29.0$ ($df=198$) are not significant. This means that there is no significant difference on the basis of living area i.e. urban and rural subjects. The hypothesis 3 stating that “It is expected that there will be significant, the difference on the basis of rural/urban on the variable of success, happiness, centrality” is rejected.

Table 6 shows the t-test on the sample on the dimension of self-acceptance (urban and rural)

	F	Significant	df	Level of significance
Self-acceptance	1.91	.168	198	Not significant

Also, no significant differences were found on the variable of self-acceptance $F=1.91(df=198)$ in urban and rural subjects. Hypothesis 4 stating that “It is expected that there will be significant, the difference on the basis of rural/urban on the variable of self-acceptance.” is also rejected.

Table 7 shows the inter-correlation on the sample on the dimensions of materialism and self-acceptance.

	Success	Centrality	Happiness	Self-acceptance
Success	1	-.095	-.043	-.089
Centrality	-.095	1	.000	.077
Happiness	-.043	.000	1	-.023
Self-acceptance	-.089	.077	-.023	1

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From the table no. 7, it can be seen that the variable of success is negatively correlated with centrality $r = -.095$, happiness $r = -.043$ and with self-acceptance $r = -.089$. However, none of the correlation is significant.

The variable of centrality is negligibly correlated with happiness $r = 0.000$, and positive correlated with self-acceptance $r = .077$. However, none of the above-mentioned correlation is significant.

Happiness is also seen to be negative correlated with self-acceptance $r = -.023$, which is not significant.

Hypothesis 5 stating that “It is expected that dimensions of materialism will correlate with self-acceptance significantly” is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The present research was aimed at studying materialism and self-acceptance among late adolescents from different genders and living areas. The results of the research show that females are more materialistic and depict higher self-acceptance as compared to males. While studying materialism it was found that significant gender differences exist on the dimension of success and happiness, whereas, no significant gender differences were noted on the dimension of centrality. The findings are also supported by the study conducted by Kamineni (2005) and by Ryan and Dziurawiec (2000), depicting difference among males and females. However, the results of the present research are contrasting with their finding, as they reported that males are more materialistic than females. Windsich and MacDermott (2009), also reported that males are more materialistic than females. The contrasting results may have occurred due to differences in culture.

Also, significant gender differences were reported on the variable of self-acceptance. Therefore, it can be stated that males and female have noticeable differences in term of accepting themselves and in depicting materialistic characteristics. Further, results showed that the subjects from rural background were slightly higher on materialism, as compared to those from urban background. However, no significant differences were noticed in the dimensions of materialism among the participants from urban and rural background. No significant differences were reported on self-acceptance on the basis of background.

While studying correlation it was seen that no significant correlation was found between the dimensions of materialism and self-acceptance. On the basis of present sample, it can be concluded that materialism shares no relation with self-acceptance. the materialistic characteristics of an individual has nothing to do with the traits of self-acceptance. A person may be materialistic enough and may have/not have self-accepting nature.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the present study reported the occurrence of significant gender differences in materialism as well as self-acceptance.

Limitations

The present study was conducted on a small sample of 200 students collected only from the Hisar district of Haryana, hence the results cannot be generalized to a wider population. Relationship between self-acceptance and materialism is focused in this study, other possible interactions may have been left out by the researcher.

Future Directions

Materialism is emerging as a new field in psychology which requires the attention of researchers of India. More efforts and researches are required to develop models for prevalence of materialism in various age groups. Correlational studies can be conducted along with determining the antecedents and consequents of materialism for its better understanding, so that the youth may be guided accordingly.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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