

Research Paper

Impact of Materialistic Value on Environmental Attitude of Young Adults in Indore City

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the relationship, impact, and predictive role of materialistic values on environmental attitudes among young adults in Indore City. In the context of rapid urbanization and growing consumer culture, understanding how value orientations influence environmental concern is of increasing importance. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from a purposively selected sample of 60 young adults aged 18–26 years from colleges and universities in Indore City. Materialistic values were measured using the Materialistic Value Scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992), while environmental attitudes were assessed through the Environmental Attitude Scale (EAS-TH) developed by Haseen Taj. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's product moment correlation, and simple linear regression analyses were used for data analysis. The results indicated that young adults exhibited a moderate level of materialistic values and a high to extremely high level of environmental attitudes. Correlation analysis revealed a negligible and non-significant relationship between materialistic values and environmental attitudes. Regression analysis further demonstrated that materialistic values did not have a significant impact on, nor did they significantly predict, environmental attitudes. The findings suggest that environmental attitudes among young adults may operate independently of materialistic value orientation and are likely shaped by factors such as education, environmental awareness, and socio-cultural influences. The study contributes context-specific empirical evidence from an Indian urban setting and highlights the need to explore alternative psychological and social determinants of environmental attitudes among youth.

Keywords: *Materialistic Values, Environmental Attitudes, Young Adults, Consumer Culture*

In recent decades, rapid economic growth and globalization have significantly transformed consumer lifestyles across urban India. Young adults are increasingly exposed to materialistic values through advertising, social media, and peer influences. *Materialism* refers to the importance individuals place on possessions and their acquisition to achieve happiness, success, and social status. While the pursuit of material goods may signal economic prosperity, it raises critical questions about how such value orientations shape concerns for the environment.

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Environmental attitudes represent an individual's beliefs, perceptions, and emotional responses toward environmental protection and sustainability. A positive environmental attitude typically motivates behaviors such as recycling, conservation, and support for eco-friendly policies. However, when personal values are skewed toward material success and consumption, environmental concerns may become deprioritized. For example, individuals who equate well-being with owning the latest products might be less inclined to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors, such as reducing waste or supporting conservation efforts.

Indore City, a rapidly urbanizing center in the state of Madhya Pradesh, provides a relevant context for studying these dynamics. Young adults in Indore are influenced by expanding consumer markets and media representations that often equate success with material acquisition. Exploring the relationship between materialistic values and environmental attitudes among this group helps illuminate how value orientations may shape environmental consciousness in urban India. This research offers insights for educators, policymakers, and environmental organizations seeking to foster sustainable attitudes among future generations.

Understanding the impact of materialistic values on environmental attitudes is significant for multiple reasons. First, young adults represent future consumers, policymakers, and leaders whose value orientations will shape environmental outcomes. Second, identifying value-based predictors of environmental attitudes can inform educational interventions and policy strategies aimed at fostering sustainable development. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine how materialistic values influence environmental attitudes among young adults in Indore City.

Conceptual Definitions of Variables

1. Materialistic Values

Materialistic values reflect the degree to which individuals consider material possessions and their acquisition as central to personal happiness, success, and social recognition. People high in materialism often see possessions as symbols of achievement and means to enhance self-image.

Key Dimensions of Materialism:

- **Possession Centrality:** The extent to which individuals view belongings as essential to their life and identity.
- **Success Orientation:** The belief that owning valuable items reflects personal success.
- **Happiness Beliefs:** The idea that acquiring material goods leads to increased life satisfaction.

Theoretical Basis: Materialism has been widely studied in consumer psychology. Researchers like Richins & Dawson (1992) conceptualized materialism as a value system that prioritizes wealth and possessions over other life domains. In such frameworks, materialism can influence attitudes, choices, and social behaviors. In the context of Indore's young adults, higher levels of materialism may be associated with greater emphasis on consumption and less emphasis on protecting environmental quality, suggesting a potential negative impact on environmental attitudes.

2. Environmental Attitudes

Environmental attitudes refer to an individual's evaluative judgments, beliefs, and feelings about environmental issues and the need for environmental protection. These attitudes reflect how much importance a person assigns to caring for the natural environment and supporting sustainable practices.

Components of Environmental Attitudes:

- **Cognitive Dimension:** Knowledge and beliefs about environmental issues (e.g., climate change, pollution).
- **Affective Dimension:** Emotional responses toward environmental problems (e.g., concern for nature).
- **Behavioural Intention:** Willingness to engage in pro-environmental actions (e.g., reducing waste, conserving resources).

Theoretical Basis: The New Environmental Paradigm and related models view environmental attitudes as a continuum from human-centred, utilitarian beliefs toward ecological worldviews that stress interdependence between humans and nature. Attitudes are often measured because they predict pro-environmental intentions and behaviours. Understanding environmental attitudes of young adults in Indore helps assess how value systems shape ecological consciousness. If materialistic young adults exhibit weaker environmental concern, this may highlight a need for value-based environmental education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Agovino, M., et al. (2019) – Agovino and colleagues investigated how materialistic values affect pro-environmental behaviour using survey data from a transitional economy. Their structural equation modelling results suggested that materialistic values don't strongly predict environmental concern but can influence specific types of behaviours when framed in terms of gain or hedonistic goals. The study highlights the complexity of materialism's role in environmental action and suggests that materialism is not always incompatible with certain pro-environmental behaviours.

Özdemir, N. (2020) – This study examined the relationship between ecological and materialistic values among future teachers. The analysis revealed that higher materialistic values can correlate with lower ecological worldviews, but the strength of this relationship varied based on demographic factors such as gender and educational background. These results support the idea that materialism may negatively influence environmental attitudes, though the relationship is nuanced and mediated by individual characteristics.

Wang, J. & Huo, Y. (2022) – This research focused on young adults in China to explore how materialistic values affect pro-environmental behaviour and identified nature connectedness as a significant mediator. Higher materialism predicted lower pro-environmental behaviour, but when nature connectedness increased, the negative impact lessened. This demonstrates that environmental connection can buffer adverse effects of materialistic values — a useful insight for studies of environmental attitudes in youth contexts.

Manchanda, R. (2024) – In an Indian context (though not limited to Indore), this study analysed relationships between materialism and green purchasing behaviour. It found that materialism tends to diminish environmentally responsible consumption patterns, especially in populations where eco-awareness is still developing. This research contributes to

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understanding how materialistic values a barrier to positive environmental attitudes among Indian young adults can be.

Mamun, A., Yang, M., Hayat, N., et al. (2025) – This recent study explored how environmental values, beliefs, norms, and green consumption intentions interrelate. Although not centred on materialism directly, it identified personal values as critical predictors of environmental attitudes and intentions toward green actions — implying that underlying value systems like materialism can shape environmental perspectives of young adults.

Rationale of the Study

In recent decades, rapid urbanization, economic growth, and increased exposure to consumer culture have strengthened materialistic values among young adults, particularly in developing urban centres like Indore City. While materialism emphasizes personal success, possessions, and consumption, environmental sustainability requires concern for ecological balance, conservation, and responsible resource use. These two value orientations often appear to be in conflict, making it important to examine their relationship. Young adulthood is a critical developmental stage during which values, attitudes, and lifestyle choices are actively formed and consolidated. Understanding how materialistic values influence environmental attitudes among young adults is therefore essential, as this group represents future consumers, decision-makers, and policymakers. Although international studies suggest that higher materialism may weaken pro-environmental attitudes, Indian research—especially city-specific empirical evidence—remains limited. Indore City, as a rapidly growing urban area with increasing consumerism alongside sustainability initiatives, provides a meaningful context to explore this relationship. Examining the impact of materialistic values on environmental attitudes among young adults in Indore can help identify value-based barriers to environmental concern and inform educational, psychological, and policy-level interventions aimed at promoting sustainable attitudes and behaviors. Thus, the present study seeks to contribute context-specific empirical evidence to the existing literature and enhance understanding of value-driven environmental attitudes in an urban Indian setting.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of materialistic values among young adults in Indore City.
2. To examine the level of environmental attitudes among young adults in Indore City.
3. To determine the relationship between materialistic values and environmental attitudes of young adults.
4. To examine the impact of materialistic values on environmental attitudes of young adults in Indore City.
5. To find out whether materialistic values significantly predict environmental attitudes among young adults.

Research Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses (H₀)

1. There is no significant relationship between materialistic values and environmental attitudes among young adults in Indore City.
2. Materialistic values do not have a significant impact on environmental attitudes of young adults in Indore City.

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3. Materialistic values do not significantly predict environmental attitudes among young adults.

Tools used

- **Materialistic Value Scale (MVS):** Based on: Richins & Dawson (1992), The Materialistic Value Scale used in the present research is adapted from the original scale developed by Richins and Dawson and consists of statements measuring centrality of possessions, success defined by acquisition, and happiness derived from material goods. Previous studies using this scale have reported **high internal consistency**, with **Cronbach's alpha values generally ranging from 0.70 to 0.88** across different samples. In the present study, the scale demonstrated acceptable reliability, indicating that the items consistently assess materialistic value orientation among respondents. The Materialistic Value Scale demonstrates **adequate construct and convergent validity**. Construct validity has been established through factor analytic studies confirming the multidimensional structure of materialism. Convergent validity is evidenced by positive correlations with consumerism, status consumption, and compulsive buying tendencies, while negative associations have been observed with life satisfaction and pro-environmental attitudes. The scale has been widely used in cross-cultural research, including Indian samples, supporting its applicability and validity for assessing materialistic values in diverse populations.
- **Environmental Attitude Scale (EAS-TH)** Developed by: Dr. Haseen Taj, The Environmental Attitude Scale (EAS-TH) developed by Haseen Taj is a standardized instrument designed to measure individuals' attitudes toward environmental issues. The scale demonstrates **high internal consistency and temporal stability**. The author reported **split-half reliability coefficients exceeding 0.80**, indicating strong internal reliability. Test–retest reliability conducted over a suitable time interval also yielded coefficients above **0.75**, reflecting satisfactory stability of environmental attitude scores over time. These reliability indices suggest that the scale consistently measures the construct of environmental attitude. The EAS-TH possesses **strong content and construct validity**. Content validity was ensured during the development stage through extensive review of environmental literature and consultation with subject matter experts. The scale items comprehensively cover major dimensions of environmental concern, conservation, pollution control, population issues, and sustainable development. Construct validity has been supported through empirical studies demonstrating meaningful relationships between environmental attitude scores and related psychological and social variables. Thus, the scale is considered a valid and reliable measure for assessing environmental attitudes among adolescents and adults in the Indian context.

Variables of the Study

1. **Independent Variable:** Materialistic Values: (Measured using the Materialistic Value Scale)
2. **Dependent Variable:** Environmental Attitude (Measured using Environmental Attitude Scale – EAS-TH)
3. **Control Variables:**
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Educational level

Sample:

Table 1 Sample Characteristics of the Study (N = 60)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	26	43%
	Female	34	57%
Place of Residence	Urban (Indore City)	60	100

Note: The sample consisted of young adult students from colleges and universities of Indore city.

Sampling Method: The study adopted a purposive sampling technique to select participants from various colleges and universities in Indore city. The method was suitable as the research specifically targeted young adults to examine the relationship between materialistic values and environmental attitudes.

Inclusion Criteria

- Age between 18 and 26 years
- Currently enrolled in undergraduate
- Ability and willingness to participate voluntarily

Exclusion Criteria

- Participants outside the specified age range
- Incomplete or inconsistently filled questionnaires

Procedure:

Permission was obtained from concerned institutions before data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their informed consent was taken. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured. The Materialistic Value Scale and the Environmental Attitude Scale (EAS-TH) were administered in group settings. Clear instructions were provided, and participants were requested to respond honestly. The average time taken to complete both tools was 20–25 minutes. After completion, responses were checked, scored, and prepared for statistical analysis.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Objective: To assess the level of materialistic values among young adults in Indore City.

Table 2 Descriptive Analysis of Materialistic Values (N = 60)

Statistic	Value
Mean	50.05
Median	51.00
Standard Deviation	9.80
Minimum Score	24
Maximum Score	73
25th Percentile	44.00
75th Percentile	56.25

Distribution of Materialistic Value Levels

Table 3

Level of Materialistic Values	Frequency	Percentage
Low	10	16.67%
Moderate	46	76.67%
High	4	6.66%
Total	60	100%

Discussion

The analysis reveals that the mean score ($M = 50.05$) indicates a moderate level of materialistic values among young adults in Indore City. A large majority of the respondents (76.67%) fall under the moderate level, suggesting that material possessions are valued but not excessively prioritized in their lives. A smaller proportion (16.67%) exhibits low materialistic orientation, while only 6.66% show a high level of materialistic values. The relatively low standard deviation ($SD = 9.80$) suggests **moderate variability** in materialistic values within the sample, indicating consistent attitudes among participants. Thus, the objective to assess the level of materialistic values among young adults in Indore City is fulfilled, and it can be concluded that young adults predominantly exhibit a moderate level of materialistic values.

Objective: To examine the level of environmental attitudes among young adults in Indore City.

Descriptive Statistics of Environmental Attitudes (N = 60)

Table 4

Statistic	Value
Mean	186.37
Median	190.00
Standard Deviation	22.55
Minimum Score	87
Maximum Score	226
25th Percentile	176.75
75th Percentile	200.00

Distribution of Environmental Attitude Levels

Table 5

Level of Environmental Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
Low	1	1.67%
Average	10	16.67%
Above Average	7	11.66%
High	26	43.33%
Extremely High	16	26.67%
Total	60	100%

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Discussion

The findings indicate that the mean environmental attitude score ($M = 186.37$) reflects a high level of environmental concern among young adults in Indore City. A substantial majority of respondents (70%) fall under the high and extremely high categories, suggesting strong awareness, sensitivity, and positive orientation toward environmental protection and sustainability. Only 1.67% of the participants demonstrated a low level of environmental attitude, while the remaining respondents exhibited average to above-average concern. The standard deviation ($SD = 22.55$) indicates moderate variability, reflecting meaningful individual differences in environmental attitudes within the sample. Thus, the objective to examine the level of environmental attitudes among young adults in Indore City is successfully achieved, and it can be concluded that young adults generally possess high to extremely high environmental attitudes, indicating a strong pro-environmental orientation.

Objective: To determine the relationship between materialistic values and environmental attitudes of young adults in Indore City.

Ho-There is no significant relationship between materialistic values and environmental attitudes among young adults in Indore City.

Descriptive Statistics (N = 60)

Table 6

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Materialistic Values	50.05	9.80	24	73
Environmental Attitudes	186.37	22.55	87	226

The mean scores indicate a moderate level of materialistic values and a generally high level of environmental attitudes among young adults.

Correlation Analysis

Test Used: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation

Table 7

Variables	r-value	p-value	Significance
Materialistic Values × Environmental Attitudes	0.008	0.954	Not Significant

Discussion

The Pearson correlation coefficient between materialistic values and environmental attitudes was $r = 0.008$, indicating a negligible and almost zero relationship between the two variables. The obtained p-value (0.954) is much higher than the 0.05 level of significance, suggesting that the correlation is not statistically significant. Since the obtained p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is 'fail to reject'. The findings of the present study reveal that **materialistic values do not significantly influence environmental attitudes** among young adults in Indore City. Despite variations in materialistic orientation, participants exhibited relatively positive environmental attitudes, suggesting that **concern for the environment may exist independently of material consumption values**. This result indicates that young adults may simultaneously engage in material pursuits while still holding favourable views toward environmental protection. Factors such as **education, environmental awareness programs, media influence, and social responsibility** may

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play a stronger role in shaping environmental attitudes than personal materialistic tendencies. The absence of a significant relationship also suggests that **materialism alone is not a sufficient predictor of environmental attitudes**, and other psychosocial variables such as **values, moral responsibility, ecological knowledge, and cultural norms** may be more influential. These findings are consistent with studies reporting **weak or non-significant associations** between materialism and environmental concern, particularly in urban and educated youth populations, where environmental awareness may be promoted through academic and social platforms. The study concludes that **materialistic values and environmental attitudes operate as independent constructs** among young adults in Indore City. The acceptance of the null hypothesis highlights the need for future research to explore **additional predictors of environmental attitudes**, such as environmental education, lifestyle practices, and pro-social values.

Objective

- To examine the impact of materialistic values on environmental attitudes of young adults in Indore City.
- **Ho-** Materialistic values do not have a significant impact on environmental attitudes of young adults in Indore City.

Regression Results Summary

Table 8

Statistic	Value
R	0.008
R ²	0.000
Adjusted R ²	-0.017
F-value	0.003
p-value	0.954

Regression Coefficients

Table 9

Predictor	B	Std. Error	t	p
Constant	186.01	9.52	19.54	0.001
Materialistic Values	0.03	0.52	0.06	0.954

Result & discussion

The regression analysis revealed that **materialistic values do not significantly predict environmental attitudes** among young adults in Indore City. The obtained **R² value of 0.000** indicates that materialistic values explain **less than 1% of the variance** in environmental attitudes. The regression coefficient for materialistic values (**$\beta = 0.03$**) was found to be statistically insignificant (**$p = 0.954$**), suggesting that changes in materialistic values do not lead to meaningful changes in environmental attitudes. The overall regression model was also **not statistically significant** (**$F = 0.003, p > 0.05$**), confirming that materialistic values fail to exert a predictive or causal impact on environmental attitudes in the studied sample. Since the obtained p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is 'fail to reject'. The findings of the present study indicate that **materialistic orientation is not a significant determinant of environmental attitudes** among young adults in Indore City. Although materialism is often assumed to conflict with pro-environmental values, the

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present results suggest that **young adults may compartmentalize material aspirations and environmental concerns**. This lack of impact may be attributed to increased environmental awareness, educational exposure, and social discourse on sustainability, which may foster positive environmental attitudes irrespective of materialistic tendencies. Urban youth may adopt environmentally favourable attitudes due to academic curriculum, media influence, and civic responsibility, even while engaging in material consumption. The results further imply that **environmental attitudes are shaped by multiple factors**, such as environmental education, ethical values, peer influence, and socio-cultural norms, rather than materialistic values alone. This finding supports the view that **materialism is not a sufficient predictor of environmental concern**, especially among educated young adult populations. The study concludes that **materialistic values do not significantly influence or predict environmental attitudes** among young adults in Indore City. The acceptance of the null hypothesis highlights the importance of identifying **alternative psychological and social predictors** of environmental attitudes for future research.

Objective

- To find out whether materialistic values significantly predict environmental attitudes among young adults.
- Ho-Materialistic values do not significantly predict environmental attitudes among young adults.

Model Summary

Table 10

Statistic	Value
R	0.008
R ²	0.000
Adjusted R ²	-0.017
Standard Error of Estimate	22.55
F-value	0.003
p-value	0.954

Regression Coefficients

Table 11

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	t	p
Constant	186.01	9.52	19.54	0.001
Materialistic Values	0.03	0.52	0.06	0.954

Result and Discussion

The regression analysis revealed that **materialistic values failed to significantly predict environmental attitudes** among young adults. The **R² value of 0.000** indicates that materialistic values explain **virtually none of the variance** in environmental attitude scores. The regression coefficient for materialistic values (**B = 0.03**) was statistically insignificant (**p = 0.954**), indicating that an increase or decrease in materialistic values does not result in any meaningful change in environmental attitudes. Furthermore, the overall regression model was **not statistically significant** ($F = 0.003, p > 0.05$), confirming that materialistic values do not function as a significant predictor variable in this context. Since the obtained p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is 'fail to reject', Materialistic values do not significantly predict environmental attitudes among young adults.

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The findings of the present study demonstrate that **materialistic values do not serve as a significant predictor of environmental attitudes** among young adults. Although theoretical perspectives often suggest that materialism may undermine environmental concern, the current results indicate that **materialistic orientation alone is insufficient to explain environmental attitudes** in the studied population. This absence of predictive power suggests that young adults may develop environmental attitudes through **educational exposure, social norms, media influence, and environmental awareness initiatives**, rather than through personal material value systems. In urban academic settings, environmental responsibility may be internalized as a social or moral norm, operating independently of material aspirations. The findings also imply that environmental attitudes are **multidimensional constructs**, influenced by cognitive, ethical, and cultural factors. Materialistic values, being primarily consumption-oriented, may not directly translate into environmental disregard, particularly among educated youth who are exposed to sustainability discourse. The results align with empirical studies reporting **weak or non-significant predictive relationships** between materialism and environmental attitudes, especially in young adult and student samples, where environmental awareness may override value-based consumption tendencies. The study concludes that **materialistic values do not significantly predict environmental attitudes** among young adults. The acceptance of the null hypothesis highlights the need to explore **alternative predictors**, such as environmental knowledge, ecological values, moral responsibility, and pro-social orientation, to better understand the determinants of environmental attitudes.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that materialistic values do not have a significant relationship with, impact on, or predictive influence over environmental attitudes among young adults in Indore City. Despite living in an increasingly consumer-oriented urban environment, the participants demonstrated high levels of environmental concern, suggesting that environmental attitudes are not necessarily undermined by materialistic orientations. The acceptance of all null hypotheses indicates that materialistic values and environmental attitudes function as relatively independent constructs within the studied population. These findings imply that environmental attitudes among young adults are likely shaped by broader influences such as education, environmental awareness programs, media exposure, and social responsibility rather than personal material aspirations alone. The results highlight the multidimensional nature of environmental attitudes and emphasize the importance of integrating value-based environmental education and awareness initiatives to strengthen sustainable mindsets. Future research may benefit from examining additional predictors such as ecological values, moral responsibility, environmental knowledge, and lifestyle practices using larger and more diverse samples. Overall, the study provides meaningful insights into the value–attitude dynamics of urban Indian youth and contributes to the growing literature on materialism and environmental sustainability.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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