Full Length Research Paper

The impact of materialism on compulsive consumption in Pakistan

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The aim of this learning was to inspect the relationship between materialism and compulsive consumption and how materialism affects the consumer behavior in term of compulsive consumption. Materialism and compulsive consumption both are relevant to each other which increase the consumer materialistic approach. Questionnaires were administrated among the consumers of Pakistan. The character of this research was cross-sectional and co-relational. Data were collected via questionnaire and sample size was 100 consumers. Materialism and compulsive consumption were measured on the behalf of consumers. The research was narrow down for controlling the real essence of this research. Regarding this limitation the study is conducted on the consumer. Owning to the time span convenient sampling was used. On the practical level the present study helps entrepreneurs and marketers to consider these factors (defining success, acquisition of centrality and pursuit of happiness) when they are targeting consumers. The result indicated that the materialism as well as having direct impact on compulsive consumption also affects consumer behavior regarding consumption pattern.

Key words: Materialism, compulsive consumption, consumer behavior, Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Compulsive buying has an important area of study in consumer behavior research. There are a number of fundamental features familiar in different types of compulsive behaviors (Anderson and Brown, 1984; Miller, 1980; Russell, 1979). These take in bodily and/or mental dependence on the essence or movement, as well as frequent loss of managing regarding the behavior and consequent intervention with normal life functions. There are other common features include the presence of a drive, inclination or support to engage in the behavior; disagreement of the injurious consequences of ongoing the behavior; and repeated failure in efforts to control or adapt the behavior. The general meaning of compulsive behavior is often used as a coping with stress, avoiding demands and force or to overcome disagreeable emotions or situations. Habitually a lowered intelligence of self worth is present. Unreliable evidence and this preliminary research indicate that this distinctiveness is generally present in compulsive consumers. Materialism is defined as the significance a person affiliate to material belongings and the conviction that specific possessions are the new source of contentment. Materialism predict as desire, possessiveness, and acquisitiveness (Belk, 1985; Ger and Belk, 1996) put in a defense dimension that are the sign of success as begin central to life that are the source of happiness (Richins and Dawson, 1992). Materialism is commonly treated as bad impression on people. The people who belong to materialism are not as happy as those not in materialism (Richins and Dawson, 1992).

According to Wilson (1999) finding the parents are the main source for transferring the materialism to their children same as colleagues are influenced when 8 brands are near to people for its selection. In term of marketing prospective brands drive the materialism in the customer

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consumption. Brands increase the materialism levels in consumers spending (Klein, 1999; Pavitt, 2000).

While a society place powerful stress on individual economic accomplishment, people lead to build up extrinsic aspiration connecting fiscal goals, money-oriented assets, acquisition and achievement with social recognition (Kasser and Ray, 1993).

Eventually, self identity is able to be clear by extrinsic ownership and utilization: I am what I have and what I consume (Fromm, 1976). From definition, materialists view attainment of wealth and ownership as essential to their lives, essential for their cheerfulness and crucial in the definition of success (Richins and Dawson, 1992; Tybout and Artz, 1994).

Literature review

**Compulsive consumption**

When the term "compulsive consumption" is used, the meaning is type of consumer behavior (O'Guinn and Feber, 1989). Mostly compulsive behavior is used as a meaning of coping with anxiety, dodging demands and force or to rise above unlikable emotions or conditions (O'Guinn and Feber, 1989).

According to Shoham and Brenchic (2003), urges that the first step towards compulsion is unplanned purchases. There is a large proportion of unplanned buyer. During the shopping the buyer forgets its list of purchasing. Marketers and retailers use appealing display of product in shelves. Fascinating display of products is the main cause of unplanned purchases. Unplanned purchases leads to compulsive behavior.

Compulsive buying is more in males than females. Compulsive buyer generally tends to be young males. Compulsive buying behavior is absolutely associated with delight seeking tendencies (Saleem et al., 2010). Compulsive buying behavior as a dependent variable has a positive and strong correlation with materialism. Same as the determinant reactive aspect has stronger relationship with appeal product and lowest with post purchase guilt. Increase of one rating of perceive social status will cause the compulsive buying behavior to increase, it means that the relationship between public position and compulsive buying behavior is not very strong. In developing countries similar to India and Pakistan the social status especially in reference to family and class ties are so prepared and well defined that it may take ages for people to enhance social status (Jalees, 2007).

The hazardous effects of compulsive buying behavior confusion not only affect the consumer but also his friend, family, and colleague. In the regard, research conducted on negative consumption pattern such as compulsive buying disorder will contribute to as society well being. Consumers who are involved in compulsive buying behavior require special type of guideline and treatment to overcome their disorder.

Compulsive buying like many other consumer behavior occurs on a variety, founding compulsive buying ranges from non-compulsive, borderline compulsive, recreational compulsive and addicted buying. Actually the non-compulsive consumer is supposed to shop and spend mainly out of necessity, compulsive and addicted spenders mostly buy in order to relieve fretfulness, the recreational buyer use shopping on events to have fun, with the addicted spender being someone whose extreme buying behavior has created serious dysfunctions in their daily lives, as does any form of addiction (Edwards, 1993).

**Materialism**

The measurement of materialism has facilitated numerous investigations by consumer behavior. Materialism is a multi-dimensional concept which include not only traits, but attitudinal, behavioral and values components as well. So the material values can be measured with possessions valued as symbols of success, possessions as a source of pleasure, and beliefs that more possessions lead to happiness (Richins and Dawson, 1990). Success has taken as any positive outcome; it has a direct link with wealth and prestige (Oxford English Dictionary, 1971). Success mean the attainment of fame, wealth and power (Encarta English Dictionary, 1987). The definition of success depends on gender. The level of success differs from gender to gender. Mostly women define their success in term of balance and relationship. Men successes were more materialistic.

The acquisitions of centrality addresses to which extended ones take the possession as the center of one's life. Centrality is one of the facets of materialism which measures the material values (Richins and Dawson, 1990).

The research findings of Dutt (2006) revealed that the happiness is more affected by consumption than income. These findings do not different from the result that consumption and income have small effects on happiness. The finding should be considered in light of earlier research that shows materialistic individuals to be less happy with various aspects of their live than other people (Belk, 1985; Richins, 1987).

The research findings of Robets et al. (2003) indicated that the divorce is disrupted to adolescent’s family, that time he or she has more associated happiness with material possessions. The rational theory of addiction is based on their central property. Addiction consumption is compulsive. The feeling is without external cause in that there occurrence depends up past behavior. Consumers are not entirely aware of the easiness to leave because they have lack of information about the addictive properties of...
the substance. Consumption pattern depends upon the inborn addict properties of the substance plus the social environment and family of individual when they build their first consumption decision (Bose and Makris, 2010).

A negative relationship exists between materialism and life satisfaction (Belk, 1984; Dawson and Bamossy, 1991; Kau et al., 2000; Labarbera and Gurhan, 1997; Richins, 1987; Richans and Dawson, 1990, 1992; Sir Gy et al., 1995, 1998). The study highlights the negative effects of materialism in adults (Ryan and Dziurawiec, 2000).

The participant who have low social instability they have high level of materialism than those who have high social norms. When people are in self doubt disposition they are materialistic and feeling of uncertainty was persuading them. The materialism make favorable to some individuals by possession of define success and also increase the beliefs of materialism with the help of assets and accomplishment of life goals (Chang and Arkin, 2002).

Defining success

In materialism, the success means getting possession, status, and acquisition in one’s life. But most of the successful persons take the meaning of success in term of getting possession, status and acquisition. Actually the meaning of success is moral attributes in human personality. There are seven laws of success goal, education, good health, drive, resourcefulness, perseverance and help of God (Armstrong, 1961, 1968, 1972, 1974).

Acquisition of centrality

The meaning of centrality is importance in one’s life. Centrality is very high for men and women in spouse and parents role. Men show more centrality towards worker role and women show more centrality towards family roles. The fluctuation comes while assigning centrality to the roles. The roles are pervade with importance, then order the roles according to their centrality and these roles influence the individuals dignity, prestige and self esteem. There are many factors which effect centrality. Roles are made in relation to other roles. Spouse centrality has a positive impact on worker role satisfaction and there’s a positive effect of parent importance on spouse role satisfaction for women (Reitzes and Mutran, 2000).

Fashion consumer groups behave differently for uniqueness and centrality of visual product aesthetics (Workman and Caldwell, 2007).

Pursuit of happiness

The state of gladness and joy in oneself generally bring some outcome in one’s life. Actually gladness and joy are the fundament roots in the soul of the person who realized them. It depends on the person to what extend dependent on them. The things that keeps glad to a person, the things that he admire, appreciates, enjoys and feels grateful, these are the thing which keep him happy. If someone did not care, have interest in anything and did not appreciate good things of life, nothing could be remaining to make life happy. The state of happiness depends upon one’s life. The disciplines and restraint are the bottleneck to happiness (Dilman, 1982).

The literature review has discussed materialism and compulsive consumption from different aspects. Materialism most of the time discussed in psychology same as compulsive consumption in consumer behavior. The literature review shows that both variables are discussed separately. The relationship between materialism and compulsive consumption is not tested.

The second issue raised from the literature review is that the impact of materialism on compulsive consumption is not tested.

Significance

The significance of the present study is that this model of materialism and compulsive consumption is not tested in the world of research. The study is measuring the relationship between materialism and compulsive consumption. It also measures the impact of materialism on compulsive consumption. The present study is mainly involved with the impact of materialism on compulsive consumption in Pakistani consumer behavior. The study was to inspect the relationship between materialism and compulsive consumption and how materialism affects the consumer behavior in terms of compulsive consumption. The present study also helps entrepreneurs and marketers to consider these factors (defining success, acquisition of centrality and pursuit of happiness) when they are targeting consumers.

In the light of literature there are hypothesizes;

H1: Materialism and compulsive consumption have a significant positive relationship.
H2: Materialism and compulsive consumption have no significant positive relationship.

Research objectives

1) To study the material values how these values measure the materialism
2) To study the nature of relationship between materialism and compulsive consumption with respect to consumer behavior.
3) To study the impact of materialism on compulsive consumption in Pakistani consumer behavior.

Research question

1) Is there a relationship between materialism and
compulsive consumption?
2) How does Materialism affect Compulsive consumption?

Variables

The present study was based on two variables that are independent variable and dependent variable. The independent variable is materialism and dependent variable is compulsive consumption. This study will trace out the relationship between materialism and compulsive consumption.

Conceptual framework

The following theoretical model is developed for investigation.

![Conceptual framework diagram]

METHODOLOGY

There are two approaches for measuring the Materialism in individuals. One approach is to measure personality traits related to materialism (Belk, 1984, 1985). A second approach is to measure materialism based on its value conceptualization (Richins and Dawson, 1992).

Materialism as a trait

According to Belk (1984, 1985) individuality traits of 'envy', 'possessiveness' and 'non generosity' represent the material objects. Belk developed a scale that implies the presence of materialism via measures of personality traits like 'possessiveness', 'envy' and 'non generosity'.

Materialism as a value

Richins and Dawson (1990, 1992) developed a scale for measuring the materialism with respect to values. The scale developed by using of three components: 'acquisition centrality', 'Possession defined successes and 'acquisition as a pursuit of happiness'. Studies adopting Richin and Dawson (1990, 1992) Materialism scale due to strong Cronbach alphas.

Population and sample size

Non-probability random sampling method and convenience sampling has been used to represent the Universe. The primary data is obtained from questionnaires in Pakistan in which 100 questionnaires were selected in the year 2010. In the course of analysis, reliability statistics, correlation and regression statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA) has designed. The current study utilized the total student consumers of Islamabad. Consumers are justifiable population for this study in relation to compulsive consumption and materialism. It is more preferable to examine the generalized support to compulsive consumption originated in common place consumer population. The primary data was collected by using non probability sampling technique through adoptive questionnaire (Appendix). Convenience sampling was used to collect the primary data. The data was compiled by 100 questionnaires finally.

A five point scale (Likert type) was used to measure defining success (six items), acquisition of centrality (seven items) and acquisition as a purist of happiness (five items) enabling the respondents to take a neutral position. The source of the questionnaire is "Special possessions and the expression of material values" Marsha L.Richins, journal of consumer research. This questionnaire was adopted as it without reducing number of items against each material values. For measuring the compulsive consumption variable same point of scale (likert type) was used with fourteen items by Faber and O’Guinn’s (1992). The source of the questionnaire is "A clinical screener for compulsive buying" Journal of Consumer Research.

RESULTS AND ANALYSES

The current study aims to investigate the impact of materialism on compulsive consumption of universities student consumers in Pakistan. The data was first analyzed by using correlation then regression. Correlation was used to test the relationship between predictor variable (Materialism) and criterion variable (compulsive consumption). Regression was used to find out the impact of materialism on consumer compulsive consumption.

Reliability

The Cronbach’s alpha independent and dependent variables amounted to 0.716. Materialism measured with Richins and Dawson (1990, 1992) developed scale and compulsive consumption measured with Faber and O’Guinn’s (1992) developed scale. This research applied to consumers of Pakistan’s for measuring the impact of materialism on compulsive consumption (Table 1).

Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis has been carried out in order to study the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Correlation coefficient was computed to identify the significance of existing relationship between materialism and compulsive consumption. The results are shown in Table 2. The P value is less than 0.01, so test results are highly significant. As a result, the study rejected the null hypothesis. So the sample data support the alternate hypothesis and relationship between...
Table 1. Reliability statistics.

| Cronbach's alpha | Number of item |
|------------------|----------------|
| 0.718            | 32             |

Table 2. Correlations between compulsive consumption and materialism.

|                     | CC (Compulsive consumption) | M (Materialism) |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Pearson correlation |                            | 0.375(**)       |
| Sig. (2-tailed)     |                            | 0.000           |
| N                   | 100                         | 100             |

|                     | Pearson correlation | M (Materialism) |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.375(**)           | 1               |
| N                   | 100                 | 100             |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \( r_{MCC}(100) = 0.375; P<0.01 \)

Table 3. Model summary.

| Model | R     | \( R^2 \) | Adjusted \( R^2 \) | Change statistic |
|-------|-------|-----------|--------------------|------------------|
|       | 0.375<sup>a</sup> | 0.140     | 0.131              | \( \Delta R^2 \) | \( \Delta F \) | Sig. \( \Delta F \) |
|       | 0.140 | 0.131     | 0.140              | 15.182            | 0.45800          |

<sup>a</sup>Predictors: (Constant), M. <sup>b</sup>Dependent variable: CC

Regression analysis

The model summary (Table 3) of regression analysis of independent variable, dependent variables and R value of the table shows the correlation coefficient (r) of the analysis, which shows the strength of relationship between variables and dependent variable. The value of R is 0.375 which shows that materialism and compulsive consumption have strong relationship. R square (\( R^2 \)) shows that the amount of change in dependent variable due to independent variable, the value of \( R^2 \) is 0.140 which is equal to 14%. It means 14% change occurs in dependent variable due to independent variable and rest can be attributed to other factors. The adjusted \( R^2 \) value shows the successfulness of the model. The value of adjusted \( R^2 \) is 0.131 which means 13.1% of the variance in the dependent variable. Since the value of p is less than 0.01, the study can say that the overall impact of this independent variable is highly significant. Therefore, the study can generalize the results of sample to predict for the entire population (Table 4). The beta value shows the contribution of predictor valuable in the model. There is only one predictor variable that is materialism so the beta value is 0.375 that is equal to 37%. The changes in 0.375 standard deviations in predictor variable (Materialism) will consequence in a change of 0.375 standard deviations in criterion variable. If the value of beta is high, the impact factor of predictor variable (materialism) will greater on criterion variable (Compulsive consumption).

The results show that Materialism has significant relationship with compulsive consumption in consumer behavior of Pakistan and materialism has a positive relationship with compulsive consumption. The study reveals that materialism effects the compulsive consumption by consumer behavior to achieve the success, centrality and happiness.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Results of the study of relationship between materialism and compulsive consumption provide a realistic help to the argument that materialism has significant relationship with compulsive consumption in consumer behavior of Pakistan and materialism has a positive relationship with compulsive consumption. The relationship between materialism and compulsive consumption keep the consumer behavior in social mood. There are three elements which measure the materialism of individuals like defining
success, acquisition of centrality and pursuit of happiness. The finding shows that defining success is more involve in materialism when consumers are consuming on compulsive consumptions. In Consumer behavior compulsive consumption enhance the level of achieving success in with the help of materialism. Most of the respondents are agreed with this argument that they are getting success from compulsive consumption. Compulsive consumption maintains the materialistic approach in consumers.

In the complete study found that materialism effect the compulsive consumption by consumer behavior to achieve the success, centrality and happiness, when consumers are conscious about success, centrality and happiness leads to materialism and materialism leads to compulsive consumption. In this connection, H₁ hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the Null hypothesis is rejected.

From the study it is clear that a materialism having directly impact on compulsive consumption and also affects consumer behavior regarding consumption pattern.

Limitation and future research

The limitation of present study is limited sample size. In that sample size the student were selected from universities. The universities of twin city were taken for this research. The sample size for this research was limited due to short time span. The future research could be conducted related to materialism and compulsive consumption by increasing the geographical coverage. The sample size could be enhanced for further research. The consumer respondents could be taken from public and private employees companies for future research. Same population and sample size could be taken but the measuring scale of materialism by traits.

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Table 4. ANOVA.

| Model  | Sum of square | Df  | Mean square | F    | Sig. |
|--------|---------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Regression | 3.185         | 1   | 3.185       | 15.182 | 0.000(a) |
| Residual  | 19.508        | 93  | 0.210       |      |      |
| Total    | 22.692        | 94  |             |      |      |

Predictors: (Constant). M. b) Dependent variable: CC.

Table 5. Coefficients.

| Model       | Unstandardized coefficient | Standardized coefficient | t   | Sig. |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----|------|
| (Constant)  | 1.409                      | 0.402                    |     | 0.001|
| M           | 0.527                      | 0.135                    | 3.896 | 0.000|

a. Dependent variable: CC.
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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Dear Participants,

I am a student of MS (Marketing) at Mohammad Ali Jinnah University, Islamabad campus. I am conducting a research on “The Impact of Materialism on Compulsive consumption” as a partial Fulfillment of my Degree. Kindly fill up this information and return. Any information obtained for this purpose will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for academic purpose. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated in this regard.

| Age       | 15-20 | 21-25 | 26-30 | 31-35 | 36------ |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|

Gender:
- Male
- Female

Please circle the score which most closely corresponds with how you see your Materialism:

**Defining Success**

1) I admire people who own expensive home, cars and clothes.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

2) Some of the most important achievement in life includes acquiring material possessions.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

3) I don’t place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

4) The things I own say a lot about how well I am doing in life.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

5) I like to own things that impress people.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

6) I do not pay much attention to material objects other people own.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

**Acquisition centrality**

1) I usually buy only the things I need.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

2) I try to keep my life simple, as far as possession are concerned.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

3) The things I own are not all that important to me.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

4) I enjoy spending money on thing that is not practical.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

5) Buying thing gives me a lot of pleasure.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

6) I like a lot of luxury in my life.

   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree
7)  I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

### Pursuit of Happiness

1)  I have all the things I really need to enjoy life.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

2)  My life would be better if I owned certain things I do not have.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

3)  I wouldn’t be any happier if I owned nicer things.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

4)  I would be happier if I could afford to buy more things.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

5)  It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I cannot afford to buy all the things I would like.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

### Compulsive Consumption

1)  Bought things even though I could not afford them.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

2)  Felt others would be horrified if they knew of my spending habits.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

3)  If I have any money left at the end of pay period, I just have to spend it.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

4)  Made only the minimum payments on my credit cards.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

5)  Bought myself something in order to make myself feel better.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

6)  Wrote a check when I knew I didn’t have enough money in the bank to cover it.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

7)  Just wanted to buy things and didn’t care what I bought.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

8)  I often buy things simply because they are on sale.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

9)  Felt anxious or nervous on days I didn’t go shopping.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

10) Shopping is fun.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

11) Felt depressed after shopping.  
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
12) Bought something and when got home I wasn’t sure why I had bought it.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|

13) Went on a buying binge and was not able to stop.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|

14) I really believe that having more money would solve most of my problems.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|