

Materialism and Media Usage: To study the role of media in increasing materialism among youths with special reference to social media exposure.

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Abstract

Meticulous observations of the market across the planet reflect that Globalization of world markets has resulted in high levels of materialism in many places. Notably, social media amongst all media of advertising has a very loud and apparent impact on youth. In the current situation where elders are still holding on to with the television and banners, youth are exposing themselves to various social media websites. Wherein they are exposed to ads and pop-ups every single time they are active on one or the other social media website(s). These advertisements play a daunting role in influencing youngsters for making a purchase and drag them towards materialism, which is expressed in the form of initiating a purchase or creating arousal for purchase.

The study is focused on analysing the correlation between attitudes of youngsters towards advertisements, level of materialism and attraction of celebrities shown in the vivid advertisement. The study is conducted in Jalgaon region with the sample size of 174 students of the age group ranging from 20-25 years. The relationship between all variables was tested. The quantitative research method was adopted in this study, and a questionnaire was distributed through a google sheet. The findings revealed that all the three variables viz. i) attitude towards advertising ii) attraction to media celebrities and iii) materialism are positively correlated.

Materialism is the vital variable which influences youth to make purchase and marketers should leverage on this advantage in their business aspects. Youth as all we know is full of energy, enthusiast and has a dream to achieve something in life. Thus, in these situations materialism is one drive which can give them a way to get the things they want in real life. Celebrities can be their idol but the practicality should be shown in advertisements which will not harm youth's life.

Introduction:

In recent years, it is noted that Globalization of world markets has caused high levels of materialism in many places. In recent years, advertising has chosen many forms of media to influence people all over the world. Nowadays, not only adults but children are also having their choices of products and as we are well informed that India is a country of youth, they are one of the major influencers of any advertisement on any media. Hence, the marketers have got a huge opportunity in India to market their products using various medium.

Amongst all media of advertising, social media is one of them having a tremendous impact on youth. These days, not only younger generation but adult also see social media as the most flexible and compatible medium for advertising than television or other media. According to the State of Digital Advertising 2018 report from Adobe Digital Insights (ADI) that stands in stark contrast to older age groups, who overwhelmingly point to TV as their most relevant channel.

Social media is increasing its popularity by increasing youth influencers for purchase through online advertisements. The influence of social media has extended its scope beyond advertising. In the survey conducted last year, it was found that the youth believe on the recommendations given by people on social media more than television ads. And are easily convinced as well. Furthermore, a

latest analysis reveals that conversations on social media drive an estimated 12% of consumer sales in India.

In the current situation where elders are still stuck with the television and banners, youth are exposing themselves to various social media websites where they are exposed to ads whenever they log on.

These advertisements play a vital role in influencing youngsters for making purchase and materialism is the major factor which creates a desire for purchase.

Materialism

Materialism is defined differently in different situations. But in common sense, materialism is philosophical monism and is closely related to the psychology of individuals. "Materialism is the desire of possessing material things for someone who attaches a lot of importance to money and wants to possess everything he wants". It is the tendency of an individual to be more material than intellectual goals or values.

According to (Richins 1991), Materialism is a kind of individual's values highlighting importance of possessing material things. In many studies, the materialism is considered as negative aspect significant to materialist who wants to owe every material goods in their life to attain uniqueness, happiness, and success. Acquiring or possessing material things becomes the main goal of each and every materialist. They also believe strongly that having the ownership of the things they wanted is a way to attain happiness and well-being. Hence, Materialism is also defined as "the importance a person places on possessions and their acquisition as a necessary to reach the desired end stated including happiness" in the current study (Richins and Dawson 1992:307).

Social Media and Materialism

Social media is one of the major causes of materialistic thinking among youth. Advertisements are not only the one who plays a role but equally self-worth and the others worth also plays a vital role. All widespread social media channels have a way of displaying certain post and making it popular in no time. For Twitter it is "Re-tweets" and "favourites," for Instagram and Facebook it is "Likes." These figures play a huge role in evaluating self-worth and the worth of others. Whenever we post something on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, we are expecting big number of likes. Whether the post is regarding posting a social message or selfie. This shows that we judge Self-worth based on the behaviour of others and their likes or dislikes. We are beginning to equate the value of interactions on the internet to those in person, giving the amount of Re-tweets or likes we receive a measure of our worth. Therefore the more we receive, the better our self-esteem is because we can think of ourselves as popular. In one of the study conducted by The University of Pittsburgh and the Columbia Business School, Social media is the one of the reasons of decrease in self-control of the youth. Besides, people connected continuously with their friends through social media had higher self-esteem than those that did not. So, those that used the site to constantly keep in touch with friends felt better about themselves as individuals. Instead of caring about and maintaining meaningful relationships, we leave it up to social media to keep these relationships and rationalize it as staying "connected." In order to show affection, we comment heart eye emojis on friend's selfies or we "flirt" by cavorting all your crushes tweets or avoid confrontation by "sub-tweeting." All of this can relate back to the materialistic nature of the younger generations.

The apparent reason of increase in materialism from social media is the numerous advertisements a person sees whenever he log on. Apart from the advertisements, social media is just a different way we can accumulate meaningless things that make us feel like we are worth more. Based on the likes and reviews for the products which are not at all necessary for us we go for purchasing finding it more worthy from materialistic point of view. The stress of looking prettiest, funniest or most popular in the society definitely has something to do with the motive that our generation thinks much on these things. Nowadays because of the lack of meaningful relationships and conversation amongst us, we always need to prove ourselves to the world in the best possible way. Social media has given us an

outlet where we can hide behind a computer and edit our representation to others and tailor it to what we think other people like to see. In this situation younger generation really needs to learn about building a meaningful relationships and conversations to deal with the environment and eventually being disadvantageous to the society.

Literature Review

In the article, "Understanding Materialism among Youth" it is stated that the more materialistic youth tends to shop more and these individuals are more responsive to advertisements and promotional efforts. They are much more interested in buying new products. (Golberg, Gorn).

In one study, investigating the longitudinal relationship between television advertising exposure of children and materialism they bring into being that desire for purchasing advertised product is a facilitating variable. The researcher has taken sample size of 466 children of the age group from 8-11 years. The study was conducted in the interval of 2 within a year that is 12 months. The outcome of the research shows that advertising exposure is positively correct with materialism. This effect was wholly because of the increased desire amongst children to purchase the product. (Opre, Buijzen)

It is explicable that youth and children have special attachments to celebrities because they are in an evolution to adulthood. While transiting into adulthood children try to imitate media celebrities which help them to enhance their identity as a mature adult. (Erikson 1968). According to Caughey (1978, 1985, 1994), pubertals looks at media celebrities as their idealized self-images. They wish to have a alike personality qualities that are possessed by the media celebrities. Physical appearance, abilities, values and attitude are the main qualities which the youngsters try to imitate from the celebrities.

While research it was observed that adolescents are more convinced by media celebrities when it comes to selecting and switching brand (Martin and Bush 2000). This shows that adolescents like to purchase and used those products which are advertised by their favourite celebrity (Lafferty and Goldsmith 1999).

Hence, from the literature review, the researcher had found that the three major variables of the study are the level of materialism, attitudes towards advertising, and attraction to media celebrities. So, further study is based on analysing these three factors.

Objectives:

1. To study the role of materialism in advertising exposure amongst youths.
2. To study the variables of materialism having a major impact on the life of youth in reference to social media exposure.
3. To analyse the factors responsible for increasing materialistic value of advertised products amongst youth.

The hypothesis of the Study:

H1: Youth spending more time on social media will be more materialistic.

H2: Youth attracted towards celebrity endorsers on social media will be more materialistic.

Methodology:

In the current research, the researcher has used exploratory research design. The target population was youngsters of Jalgaon region. The age group was taken was 20-25 for the study. Random stratified sampling method was used for selecting samples. Sample size taken for the study was 200 students of the prescribed age group. The sample size was equally distributed for males and females. The structured questionnaire was prepared and distributed online through Whatsapp, Facebook and e-mail. Hence from 200 sample size, responses received were 174. So, further data analysis was done

for 174 students. Statistical tools used for analysis were standard deviation, correlation and regression. All the data was computed statistically using SPSS software.

Analysis

The structured questionnaire was designed in which three parts were made. The first part consists of questions which reflect responses regarding the level of materialism. In this part, three subscales were designed in the form of questions viz; the significance of acquisition, pursuit of happiness and definition of success. The students were asked to response these subscales by giving scores according to their priority.

The second part of the questionnaire was regarding knowing the attitude towards advertising. The students were asked questions by giving them statements having both favourable and unfavourable attitude towards advertising, people beliefs and emotions towards advertising shown on any social media, their involvement in social media, time spent on social media and evaluation of advertisements by reading reviews regarding any advertised products.

The third part was consisting of the statements regarding the attraction of celebrities endorsed for advertisements. The students had to response the statements in five point likert scale.

The reliability test was done using Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 1. Reliability Test

Scale	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Materialism	18	.794
Attitude towards Advertisement	10	.681
The attraction of celebrities endorsed	7	.821

Testing the hypothesis

Pearson's coefficient of correlation was used to test the relationship of all the variables, i.e; materialism, attitude towards advertisement and attraction to celebrities endorsed. From the test it was seen that attitudes towards advertising and the level of materialism ($r = .149$) has no significant relationship. But there was a significant correlation between youth spending time on social media and level of materialism ($r = .237$). Meanwhile, attraction to media celebrities was highly correlated with the level of materialism ($r = .408$). It proved that social media had a significant impact on youth's attitudes towards advertising, attraction to media celebrities, and materialism.

Therefore, for hypothesis no.1 it was proved that Youth spending more time on social media will be more materialistic. Hence, rejecting the null hypothesis (H0), alternate hypothesis (H1) was accepted.

And in case of second hypothesis also it was proved that Youth attracted towards celebrity endorsers on social media will be more materialistic. Hence, rejecting null hypothesis (H0), alternate hypothesis (H1) was accepted.

Table 2. Analysis of Correlation between Materialism, Attitudes towards Advertising, and Attraction to Media Celebrities

	Attitude towards Advertisement	Level of Materialism	Attraction to celebrities endorsed	Time spent on social media
Attitude towards Advertisement	----			
Level of Materialism	.237	----		
Attraction to celebrities endorsed	.149	.408	----	
Time spent on social media	.154	-.168	-.010	----

N=174

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results:

From the above conducted study and analysis, it was seen that there is not direct relationship between using social media and attitude towards advertising. The motives for watching advertise was not deeply considered. But, the two dimensions were observed commonly, viz; seeking product information and seeking attention in society (social motives). Hence, it was observed that the students who come under social motives, they are highly influenced by advertisements and there materialistic value is increased for luxurious products.

As there is a rise in the consumption of the internet, other media like television are losing dominance. According to the study, 82.5% of youngsters are connected with the internet through computers, mobile phones as they consider it a very flexible medium for seeking any information. Youth spends there huge time on the internet, connecting to social media and hence, time consumption has an indirect relationship in increasing materialistic value.

The current research proved a significant relationship between the attraction of celebrities endorsed and an increase in the level of materialism. It indicates that youngsters are more attracted to the glamorous lifestyle of celebrities. They are fascinated with the idealised picture of celebrities portrayed in advertisements. Self-enrichment is one of the main motives of youth behind the purchase of the advertised products.

In this study, age and gender had no impact on the level of materialism. While research it was noted that monthly household income do not play much role in building a materialism of any product. It is just the difference, that some are more influenced compare to other in case of being materialistic.

Scope for Further Studies

The current study has effectively showed that the indirect correlation between attitude towards advertising and materialism is because of the attraction of celebrities endorsed in advertisements. The factors studied in this research are very limited. The research can be extended studying factors like types of advertisements influencing youngsters, the most popular social media site and it's consumption pattern, factors related to advertisements and online shopping.

This is only small scale research focusing Jalgaon region. Further the research can be extended for a whole state or country. This research does not give any explanation regarding the relation between

income level and materialism, which can be studied further. Media usage is not studied in depth. Apart from quantitative work, the study can be a focus on qualitative aspects also to see the motivation and social motives comparison, the status of individuals or lifestyle of individuals and materialism. The study can also be further expanded by investigating another two variables that are age and the life experience and its impact on materialism.

Conclusion

The research reveals that there is indirect correlation between attitude towards advertisements and materialism, all the three variables namely attitude towards advertising, attraction to media celebrities and materialism are positively correlated. It states that the huge consumption of internet and usage of social media affects the level of materialism amongst the youth. Materialism is a concept which can be seen in negative way much more comparing it's positive side, but if the marketers use this concept in a positive aspect then through increasing materialistic values, marketers can increase their scope of expansion for any products they deal with. Youth as all we know is full of energy, enthusiast and has a dream to achieve something in life. Thus, in these situations materialism is one drive which can give them a way to get the things they want in real life. Celebrities can be their idol but the practicality should be shown in advertisements which will not harm youth's life.

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