



Materialism lowers well-being: The mediating role of need for autonomy

presented by

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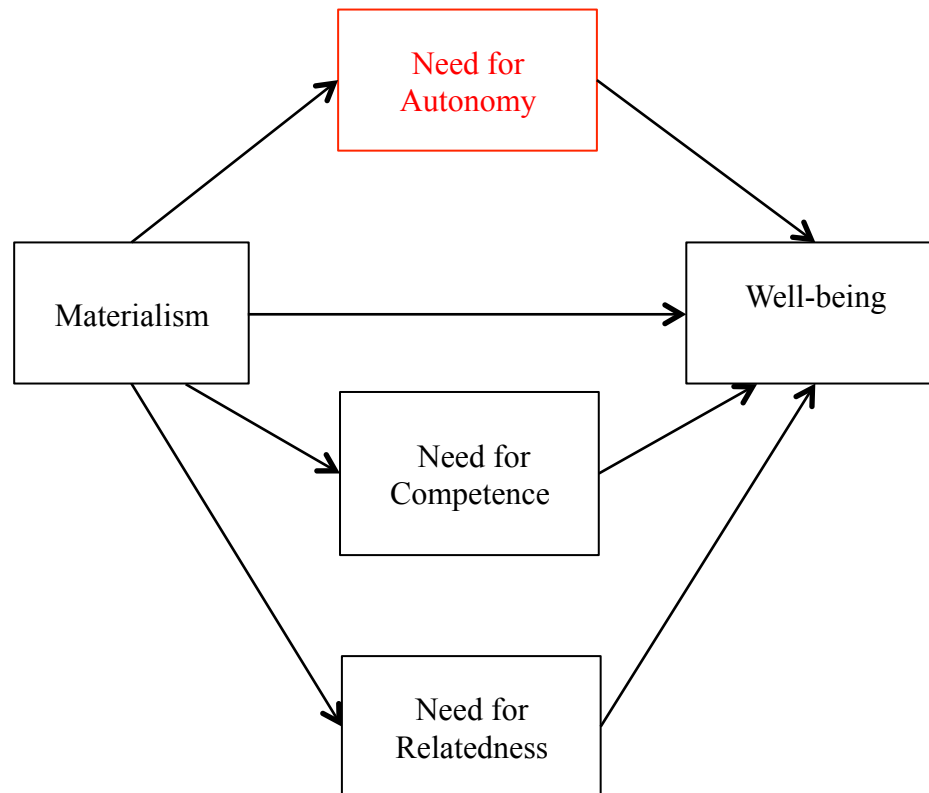
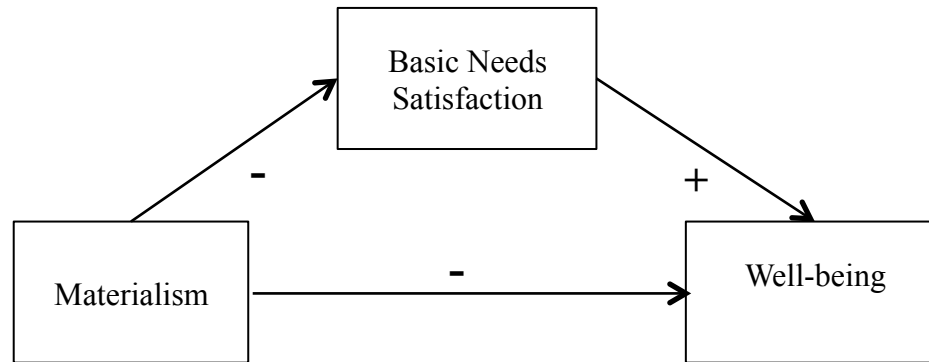
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INTRODUCTION

- **Materialistic values** are defined as pre occupation with material goods, money, financial success and status to the neglect of other matters.
- Materialistic values - related to
 - negative personal and societal outcomes (Richins & Dawson 1992)
 - reduced life satisfaction (Garoarsdittor et al., 2008)
 - reduced meaning in life (Kashdan & Breen, 2007)
 - lesser vitality (Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002)
- **SDT- SELF DETERMINATION THEORY** has explained the relationship between materialistic values and well-being.
 - Strong materialistic values orientation are unable to satisfy the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Kasser et al., 2013; Chen, Yao & Yan, 2013; Tsang, Carpenter, Roberts, Frisch & Carlsie, 2014)



Why look at the differential effects?

- Need satisfaction is a multi-dimensional construct (Sheldon & Hilpert, 2014)
- Wide array of SDT research has shown that needs get easier expression in certain environments/domains.
 - Need for relatedness was the most important predictor of attachment quality and relationship commitment among interaction partners as compared to autonomy and competence (LaGuardia, Ryan, Couchman, & Deci, 2000)
 - Participants in a relatedness prime condition showed highest intentions to volunteer as compared to those in autonomy or competence prime conditions (Pavey, Greitmeyer & Sparks, 2007).
 - Similarly, another study showed a strong relationship between satisfaction of the need for competence and job engagement. (Deci, Ryan, Gagne, Leone, Usunov, & Kornazheva, 2001)

Why only need for autonomy?

WHY not COMPETENCE AND RELATEDNESS?

- Goal achievement and efficacy- promote satisfaction of competence needs
- Experiential purchases foster social relationships- promote satisfaction of relatedness needs

Hypothesis and Study structure

- The need for autonomy will mediate the negative relationship between materialism and well-being
- Study 1- Correlational study – preliminary support for our multiple mediation model
- Study 2- Experiment- Additional support for our model

Study 1



Measures

Materialistic Values

- Materialistic Values Scale

Well Being

- Satisfaction With Life Scale
- Self Actualization Scale
- Basic Psychological Needs Scale



Sample Characteristics

N = 230

Females = 60.7%

Mean age= 26.5 years

70% Chinese

20.2% Indians

4.8% Malays

4.5% other races

RESULTS

	Mean	SD	A	B	C	D	E	F
A. Materialism	50.43	10.56						
B. Life satisfaction	22.95	5.51	-.26**	(.85)				
C. Self-actualization	40.84	4.67	-.38**	.33**	(.63)			
D. Autonomy	4.55	0.79	-.29**	.41**	.61**	(.72)		
E. Competence	4.53	0.88	-.32**	.41**	.53**	.70**	(.73)	
F. Relatedness	4.88	0.87	-.23**	.35**	.48**	.66**	.65**	(.82)

Well-being indicator	Total effect of domain	Direct effect of domain	Mediation by autonomy need			Mediation by competence need			Mediation by relatedness need			Total R ²
	c	c'	a ₁	b ₁	a ₁ xb ₁	a ₂	b ₂	a ₂ xb ₂	a ₃	b ₃	a ₃ xb ₃	
Life satisfaction	-.13 ^{***}	-.06 [*]	-.02 ^{**}	1.40 [*]	-.03 [*]	-.03 ^{**}	ns	ns	-.02 ^{**}	ns	ns	.26 ^{**}
Self-actualisation	-.16 ^{***}	-.08 ^{**}	-.02 ^{**}	2.54 ^{***}	-.05 ^{**}	-.03 ^{**}	ns	ns	-.01 ^{**}	ns	ns	.37 ^{**}

Study 2

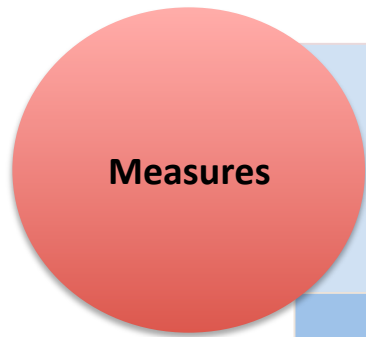
Consumer Cue condition: 19 Pictures of luxury material goods
Neutral Control Condition: 19 Pictures of mundane products

ATTITUDE GIORGIO ARMANI



The new fragrance for men





Measures

Well Being

Subjective vitality scale
Positive and Negative Affect scale

Needs Satisfaction

- Basic Psychological Needs Scale



Sample Characteristics

N = 82

Females = 68.9%

Mean age= 21.5 years

70% Chinese

20.2% Indians

4.8% Malays

4.5% other races

RESULTS- Study 2

Dependent Measure	Consumer Cue		Neutral Control		Comparison	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Autonomy	4.49	0.72	4.85	0.86	-2.03 (79)	.05
Competence	4.63	0.73	4.55	0.92	0.45 (78)	.65
Relatedness	4.99	0.73	5.25	0.84	-1.52 (79)	.13
Positive Affect	28.09	7.41	27.41	8.11	0.29 (80)	.76
Negative Affect	16.50	3.87	14.39	5.40	2.09 (80)	.04
Vitality	3.79	1.10	3.88	0.99	-0.40 (80)	.69
Valence of pictures	3.77	0.33	3.13	0.41	7.63 (80)	.00

DISCUSSION

- When people are focused on materialistic pursuits, they experience a loss of autonomy
- Core features of being materialistic are incompatible with autonomy:
 - Extrinsic in nature, external standards of status, fame and identity
 - Upward social comparisons
 - Thus, a sense of inherent choice and will is often lost.
- Needs for competence and relatedness are not readily compromised
 - Materialistic pursuits promote a sense of competence and relatedness:
 - Personal goals achievement theory
 - Multiple opportunities for social engagement
 - Fame, popularity, social identity
 - Thus, competence and relatedness needs are met in the short run.
- Differential effect on positive and negative affect
 - Materialistic pursuits may particularly encourage negative affectivity:
 - Upward social comparisons
 - Mounting discontent with one's current standing
 - Thus, greater negative affect is experienced.

IMPLICATIONS- Where does Positive Psychology Fit in?

- i. Positive psychology as an applied field is rooted in developing tools and interventions that might enhance psychological well-being.
- ii. Possible action levers for interventions designed to build resilience to materialism.
- iii. Autonomy-supportive environments can be assessed for their capability in bringing about changes in materialistic values and aspirations towards healthier values and belief systems.
- iv. TAKE HOME MESSAGE:
 - Materialistic values are harmful for our well-being
 - Materialistic values thwart the basic psychological need for autonomy
 - Light at the end of the tunnel!!

LIMITATIONS

- i. Uncertain whether short term deficits in emotional well-being translate into long-term changes in general well-being
- ii. Self reports may be affected by social desirability
- iii. Homogenous sample

THANK YOU

