

Perception of Materialism at Different Age levels

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Abstract

In the academic domains and marketing research, the concept of materialism paved its foot deep. Materialism has been conceptualized with positive and negative tendencies as it is both good and bad. The present paper aims to explore the age differences in the perception of materialism. The colleges, school students, and workers participated in this study. Surveys were completed by 800 participants in which 50% males and 50% females. This study contained eight age groups from 21 to 60 years old. Participants were selected through random sampling. Respondents performed on a new materialism scale. Previous studies have shown that there are age differences in the perception of materialism. It is not so high that makes a significant difference. This study found that there is a significant age contrast between different age groups. Males and females don't significantly differ in dimensions of materialism. The result also shows the positive relationship between four dimensions of the new materialism scale.

Keywords: perception, materialism, age levels, gender, random sampling, dimension.

Introduction

Parents, educators, and social scientists are very worried about the rising level of materialistic values among children and adolescents. According to Larsen et al. (1999), materialism is a wide, complex, and multi-facets phenomenon. This concept is widely studied by many scholars of different fields like marketing, consumer behavior, advertising, psychology, economics, and political science (Mannion&Caolan, 1995). Materialism is studied from different perspectives such as individual perspective and socio-cultural perspective (Hunt et al., 1996). It has been studied with different connotations such as positive, negative, and neutral (Micken& Roberts, 1999., Scott, 2009., Larsen et al., 1999). Analysts know moderately about how materialistic qualities create in youth and pre-adulthood.

Materialism has for some time been important to customer scientists; however, research has fixated on grown-up purchasers, not on youngsters or adolescents. In an examination led by Chaplin and John (2007), they accepted that self-esteem offer ascent to age contrast in materialism. They purposed that materialism rise from middle childhood to early immaturity and afterward diminish in late adulthood. They find out that raising self-esteem has the normal impact of lessening materialistic propensities, particularly among early and late adolescents.

What is materialism?

Materialism has a deep meaning rooted in the philosophy that refers to materialism as a concept that exists nothing but matter or goods and movement of its (Micken & Roberts, 1999, & Scott, 2009). Materialism has been defined by many researchers of different disciplines such as numerous financial analysts characterize materialism as a worth system that refers to “the pursuit of one’s material well-being” (Easterlin & Crimmins, 1991). As indicated by Belk (1984), materialism can be characterized as “the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions”. Sociologists define materialism from an individual perspective in which a person value material things and wants to take advantage of material things opposite to value human well-being (Beutel & Marini, 1995). Materialism also has been studied as a personality trait by Belk (1984). Richins and Dawson (1992) studied materialism from personal value systems and defined materialism as “the importance a person places on possessions and their acquisition as a necessary or desirable form of conduct to reach desired end states, including happiness”.

Richins and Dawson (1992) characterize materialism as procurement centrality, obtaining as the quest for satisfaction and ownership characterized achievement. As per the Oxford English Dictionary materialism is a "devotion to material desires and needs, to the neglect of spiritual matters; a way of opinion, tendency and life based entirely on material interests" (Roberts & Clement, 2007). Ward and Wackman (1971) described materialism as directional value by which an individual considers money and material goods the way for his social advancement and joy. A wider definition of materialism has been given by Inglehart (1981), as a political sociologist, "an economic orientation to life such as a structural or cultural variable or give priority to economic values that exceed other values for instance friendship, civil power, and freedom".

Literature Review**Gender difference in Materialism**

Moschis and Churchill (1978) directed an examination among teens between 12 to 18 years old, to take a gender at the association among people on their materialistic characteristics. The result revealed that male adolescents hold more grounded materialistic perspectives. The revelations suggested that gender may impact the acquisition of certain buyer capacities. In particular, male youths seemed to find out more materialistic things and hold more grounded materialistic perspectives and social inspirations for the utilization of things than their female partners.

Churchill and Moschis (1979) led an investigation among teenagers to analyze the connection between males and females and whether they contrasted in their materialistic worth. The outcome uncovered that males displayed more grounded expressive direction towards the utilization of goods (materialistic perspectives). Females showed a lower

materialistic direction. Moore and Moschis (1981) led an examination with young people to analyze family and companion correspondence, and whether gender had any impact on materialism. The outcomes demonstrated males had a more grounded direction towards materialistic attitudes when contrasted with females.

An examination conducted by Belk (1984) has anticipated and tested three dimensions of materialistic characteristics: “possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy”. Exploratory data relating these characteristics to gender, age, and prosperity were examined during the examination, and the scores on the possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy scales were analyzed for the relationship with gender. The outcomes demonstrated that while possessiveness and non-generosity scores didn't contrast among males and females, females were altogether less envious than males.

Achenreiner (1997) has conducted a study in which 300 children from different class grades like the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, and 10th and specific ages target were 8, 12, 16. In this study 5 –items materialism scale was used adapted from Richins (1987). The main finding of this study is that females have a low mean (13.35) than males. Males have a significantly higher mean (14.21) than females.

It gave the idea that males and females had extensively various assessments about the degree of materialistic qualities. In particular, youthful female grown-ups were found to have a more uplifting disposition towards materialistic qualities than their male partners. This was steady with an investigation by Cherrier and Munoz (2008) among shopping center benefactors which planned to value the distinctions and similarities among Arab and non-Arab buyers advancing together in a globalizing scene. Their discoveries showed that females had a more elevated level of individual materialism in contrast with male partners. This study supports the hypothesis which expressed that there are critical contrasts among gender on materialism.

Bindah and Othman (2012) led an examination and found that there is a critical contrast regarding gender and materialism. It gave the idea that youthful female grown-ups have a more inspirational attitude towards materialism than males.

Age difference in Materialism

Various studies have been conducted to concern with age difference in materialism. Moore and Moschis have conducted two studies, in the first study there were 784 participants included from sixth grade to twelve-grade school students and in this study six items scale used to measure materialism. In another study of these in which 601 respondents participated from middle school to senior high school and their age group was below 15 (younger adolescents), and above age 15 (older adolescents). They found in their study that age has strong power to predict materialistic value. Their findings also indicated that respondents below age 15 tended to be more materialistic values than to above age 15. Belk (1984) has studied materialism and proposed main three personality traits of materialism. He tested three traits as possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy. Using exploratory data, this study shows that traits were correlated with age. The findings of this study indicate that three traits are significantly

associated with the age of participants. The dimension envy has an exceptionally low negative relationship with age and non-generosity has a minor positive connection with age. The unmistakable diminishing in envy with age is might be expected to accomplish incredible material products with expanding age or might be because of giving less social significance to material objectives. Achenreiner(1997) included 300 children in his study from 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th and 10th-grade school students from age groups 8, 12, and 16 years old. This study indicates no age differences between different age groups. Materialism did not change for children between the ages of 8 to 16 years. In this study, the difference between different age groups is not significant. It might be that materialism change very minor with these age groups. Middle-aged people consider power and status as reasons for people who own material goods. Older people keep an older thing in the form of experiences and memento; they consider these things in the form of possessions. Previous studies indicate that egoistic materialistic value decreases as age advances. Old individuals care less for material things and feel more joyful than more youthful ones (Sheldon &Kasser, 2001). Evrard and Boff (1998) led an investigation and showed that there is a relationship between individual characteristics and materialistic values. They found that two-element of materialism acquisition and centrality decrease with age. It is also showed that with increasing age the value of materialism changed with some other values like family pleasures. There is also showed older persons have already acquired possession than to newcomer professionals. Kau et al. (2000) analyzed the level of materialistic inclination in different age groups. They utilized an example of college understudies gathering of 15 to 54 years of age. The discoveries demonstrate that individuals of various age bunches have a distinctive level of materialistic qualities. In this examination, the age gatherings of 15 to 19 years of age have a low materialistic inclination and the age gathering of 20 to 29 years of age have a more materialistic propensity. Flouri (2001) led an investigation with a test of 124 young adults in the gathering of 13-19 in the U.K. furthermore; discovered in their examination that materialism is adversely identified with age. Chaplin and John (2007) analyzed the age contrasts and its impact on materialism. The examination led to youngsters and youths in the age gathering of 8 to 18 years gatherings. This investigation depended on a reasonable model like the model anticipated by Kasser et al. (2004) which shows that materialism is created in two different ways: (1) one way is through experience that comes from insecurity feelings and second is social modals that encourage materialism. This study revealed age differences among children and adolescents for materialism. It specifies that the age group of 2 to 13 is more materialistic than the age group of 8 to 9 and was also found that the group of 16 to 18 was less materialistic than to age group of 12 to 13. This difference among children and adolescents for the level of materialism was found due to the level of self-esteem. Chan and Prendergast (2007) conducted a survey in which 281 adolescents aged from 11 to 20 in Hong Kong. They found in their study that age was not a critical factor for anticipating materialism. Ferle and Chan (2008) conducted a study on teenagers between the ages gathering of 13 to 19 years in Singapore. The number of subjects was 190. In this, it was found that old year adolescents have less materialistic values than young year adolescents. In this study, a 40 % variance of materialism is explained by age and influence of media personalities or peer groups. It is also shown that materialism decreased when age increased. In this examination, age is the main variable that shows the critical beta estimation of - 0.19 that is significant at 0.05. Wei and Talpade (2009) depicted two sorts of ages that are cognitive age and biological age and a comparison can be between these different ages on materialism. Cognitive age is characterized as” feel age” and chronological

age is defined as or expressed in months or days. It is shown in this study that cognitive age is positively related to materialism. In this way, age influences materialistic value. This research is also gained support by Gu and Hung (2009), in their study in which 15 to 19 age group of adolescents have a high level of materialistic values than to age group of 40 to 49 years olds they called it parent generation. This research shows that adolescent has a high level of materialistic value than to parent generation. There is a difference in the terms of social impact, materialistic centeredness, and knowing new things. Bindah and Othman (2012) discovered that subjects in the age gathering of "19 years of age and beneath" were altogether scoring higher on materialism build contrasted with those in the age gathering of "30 years of age or more". There are noteworthy contrasts between age and materialism. This outcome could likewise imply that as youthful grown-ups move to different phases of their lifecycle; they will in general be less materialistic in contrast with their more youthful partner.

Objectives:

1. To study the difference between different age group levels on the dimensions of the variable of materialism.
2. To study gender differences in the variables of materialism.

Hypotheses:

1. It is expected that there will be a significant age group difference in the variables of success, happiness, essentiality, and distinctiveness.
2. It is expected that there will be no differences between males and females on the variables of materialism.
3. It is expected that the dimensions of materialism will correlate with one another significantly.

Methodology**Sample**

Materialism amongst various age groups was examined through a conducted survey in Haryana. The target populations were college and university students and workers. The questionnaire was filled randomly by 800 participants. There were eight age-group levels range from 21 to 60. There were 50% males and 50% females in the sample. The data of these respondents were used for statistical analysis.

Instrument

The key build was evaluated utilizing recently distributed, multi-item (16 items) measures by Dung Trinh and Phau (2012). It is based on the theoretical approach of Richins and Dawson. This deliberates measure materialism through four measurements, including material success, material happiness, material essentiality, and material distinctiveness. It is a seven-point scale in which respondents concurred with the announcements (1=Strongly Disagree, to 7= Strongly Agree). The mean score created the proportion of materialism, with higher scores

exhibiting a more grounded endorsement of materialistic standards. This test hold coefficient alpha ranged from .849 to .910. This test holds Cronbach’s alpha value as .70 that provides proof for internal consistency of the test. This shows the significant reliability of the test.

Procedures

To smooth conduct of this research, new materialism scale was used to collect all data. All subjects met personally and their confidentiality remained safe. The subjects were selected randomly from Hisar district and their neighbor districts. Proper instructions were given to all subjects. All subjects filed questionnaire. All doubts of subjects were cleared. The results were presented in tabulated form and further statistics were implied with the help of SPSS.

Results

Descriptive Statistics revealed that the sample of the study consisted of 400 males and 400 females. Regarding age groups, 149 responders identified in 21-25 age group, 51 responders in 26-30 age group, 136 responders in 31-35 age group, 64 responders in 36-40 age group, 107 responders in 41-45 age group,93 responders in 46-50 age group, 125 respondents in 51-55 age group and 75 respondents in 56-60 age group.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics on the dimensions of materialism based on two gender groups

Variables	Male (N=400)		Female (N=400)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D
Success	12.43	5.37	12.43	5.46
Happiness	13.29	5.20	13.12	5.12
Essentiality	14.04	5.32	13.84	5.59
Distinctiveness	13.46	5.51	13.53	5.81

Table 1 shows the result of the mean score and S.D. score of males and females on the different dimensions of materialism. Descriptive statistics show that mean and S.D score for males on success as M= 12.43 and S.D. = 5.37, on Happiness as M= 13.29 and S.D. =5.20, on essentiality as M= 14.04 and S.D. = 5.32, on distinctiveness as M= 13.46 and S.D. = 5.51 respectively. Table 1 shows the mean and S.D. scores for females on four dimensions of materialism. Table 1 shows the mean and S.D. score on success as M= 12.43, S.D. = 5.46, on happiness as M=13.12, S.D. = 5.12, on essentiality as M= 13.84, S.D. = 5.59, on distinctiveness as M= 13.53, S.D. = 5.81 respectively.

Table 2

Comparison of males and females on tested variables

Variables	Males			Females			t- value	Significance
	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N		
Success	12.43	5.37	400	12.43	5.46	400	-.20	.984
Happiness	13.29	5.20	400	13.12	5.12	400	.45	.656
Essentiality	14.04	5.32	400	13.84	5.59	400	.57	.572
Distinctiveness	13.46	5.51	400	13.82	8.26	400	-.14	.891

Table 2 revealed an independent t-test score for males (400) and females (400) on four dimensions of materialism. The result shows the t-test value for four dimensions of materialism as success = -.20, happiness= .45, essentiality= .57, and distinctiveness =-.14. These four t-test values are not significant. This means that males' mean scores and females' mean scores are not significantly different. Therefore, hypothesis 2 states that “It is expected that there will be no differences between males and females on the variable of materialism” is accepted.

Table 3

One way ANOVA results for eight different age groups on Materialism (Success)

Variable	M	SD	N
21-25	11.82	5.03	149
26-30	11.55	4.66	51
31-35	11.96	4.44	136
36-40	11.09	4.41	64
41-45	13.44	6.57	107
46-50	14.97	6.66	93
51-55	12.27	5.51	125
56-60	11.91	4.41	75

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	971.674	7	138.811	4.903**
Within Groups	22424.265	792	28..313	
Total	146975.939	800		

** Significant at .01 level, *significant at p< .05 level

Table 3 reveals the result of one-way ANOVA on success (materialism) based on the eight age groups of respondents. It can be seen [F value = 4.903, p<.01] is significant at p<.01 level. Thus eight age groups of respondents are significantly different on the success dimension. The mean score of 36-40 age groups has scored

lowest while 46-50 age groups have scored highest on the is dimension. That means 46-50 age group participants have a high level of materialism. The mean score of 46-50 age group participants considers the gathering of material things as success in their life.

Fig. 4 Mean Difference between Eight Age Groups on Happiness (Materialism)

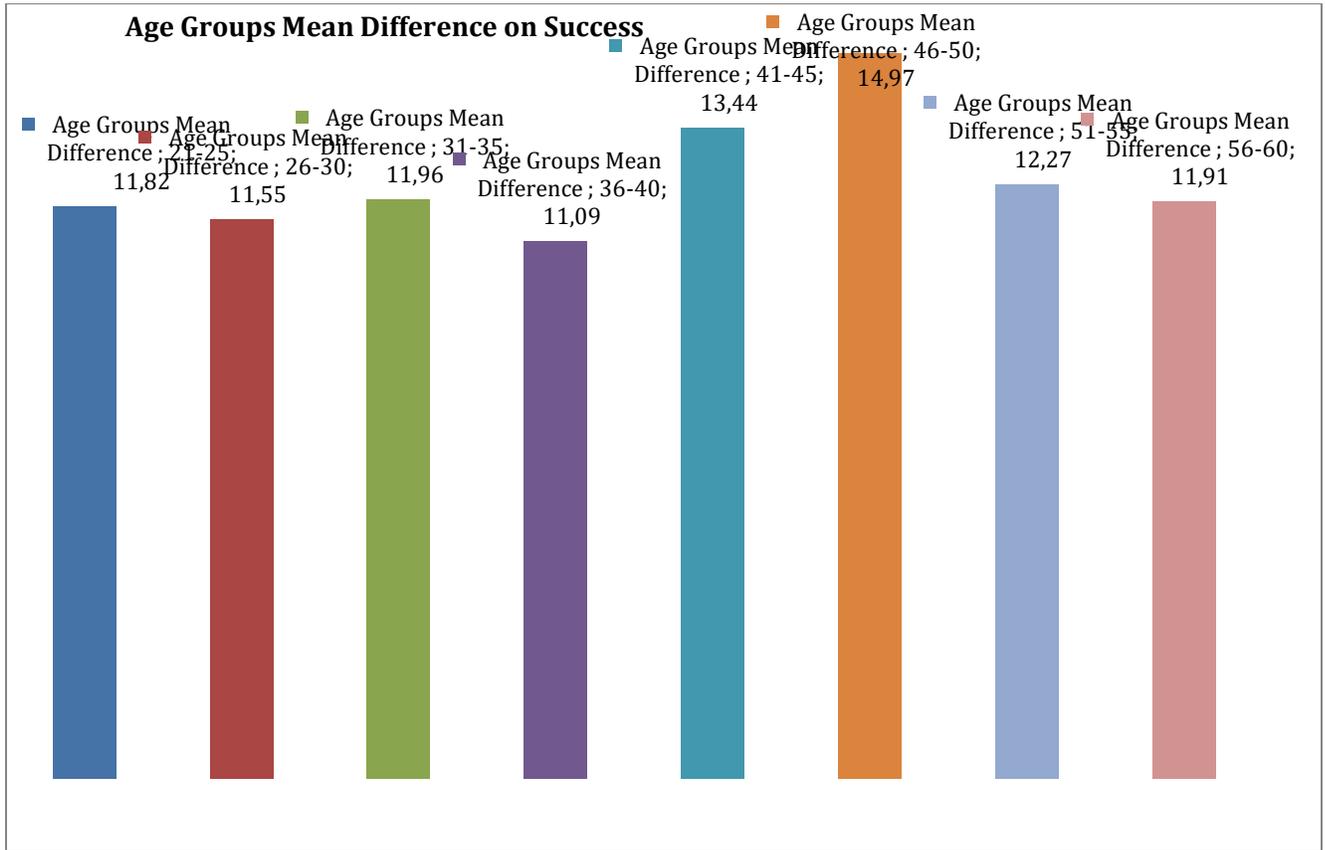


Table 4

One way ANOVA results for eight different age groups on Materialism (Happiness)

Variable	M	SD	N
21-25	13.89	4.65	149
26-30	12.47	4.66	51
31-35	12.52	4.44	136
36-40	13.12	4.51	64
41-45	13.73	5.91	107
46-50	15.28	6.24	93
51-55	12.34	5.18	125
56-60	11.77	4.95	75

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	837.821	7	119.689	4.646**
Within Groups	20403.148	792	25.762	
Total	1607665.000	800		

** Significant at .01 level, *significant at p< .05 level

Table 4 shows the result of one-way ANOVA on the happiness dimension of materialism based on eight different age groups. F value [F =4.646, p<.01] is significant at level .01. That means, eight groups based on age have a significant difference in the happiness dimension of materialism. Participants whose ages are 46-50 have the highest happiness. Participants whose ages are 56-60 have the lowest happiness.

Fig. 4 Mean Difference between Eight Age Groups on Happiness (Materialism)

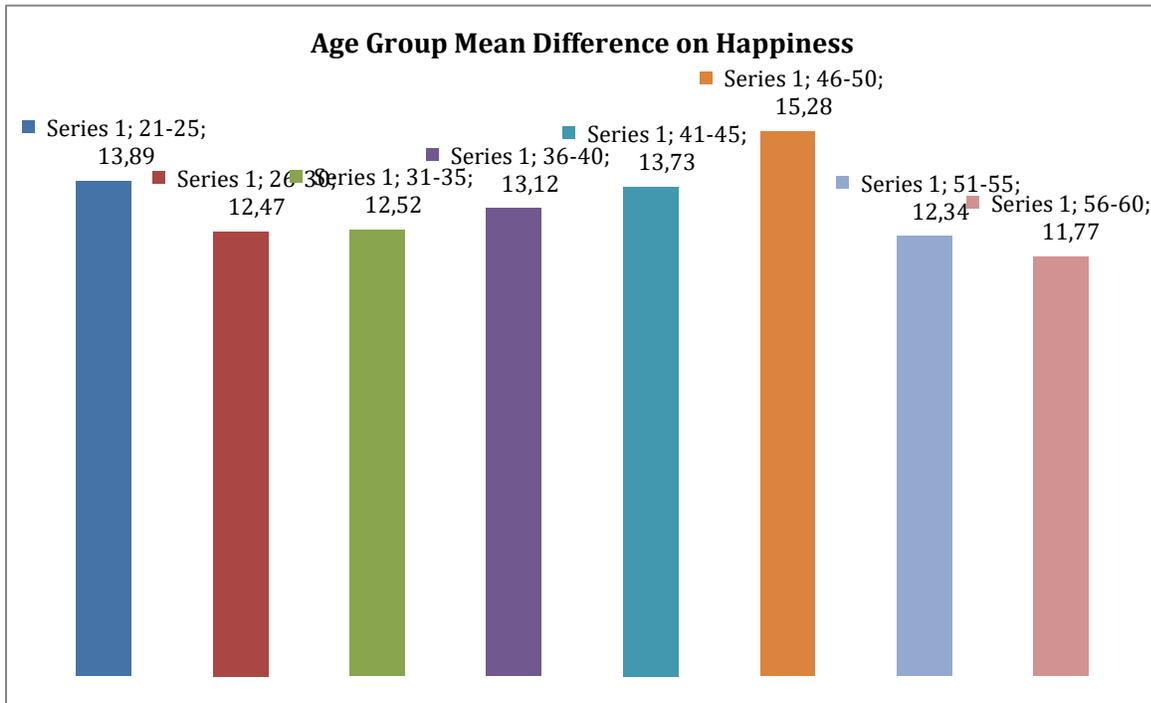


Table 5

One way ANOVA results for eight different age groups on Materialism (Essentiality)

Variable	M	SD	N
21-25	15.05	4.73	149
26-30	13.65	4.85	51
31-35	13.69	4.45	136
36-40	13.69	3.87	64
41-45	13.90	6.61	107
46-50	15.55	7.13	93
51-55	12.92	5.31	125
56-60	12.40	5.53	75

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	750.370	7	107.196	3.688**
Within Groups	23018.098	792	29.063	
Total	179311.000	800		

** Significant at .01 level, *significant at p< .05 level

Table 5 reveals the result of one-way ANOVA on the essentiality dimension of materialism based on eight different age groups. F value is significant [F= 3.688, p<.01]. That means different age groups are significantly different in the essentiality dimension of materialism. Participants whose age range is 46 to 50 have scored highest on this dimension while participants whose age is 56 to 60 have scored lowest on this dimension.

Fig. 4 Mean Difference between Eight Age Groups on Essentiality (Materialism)

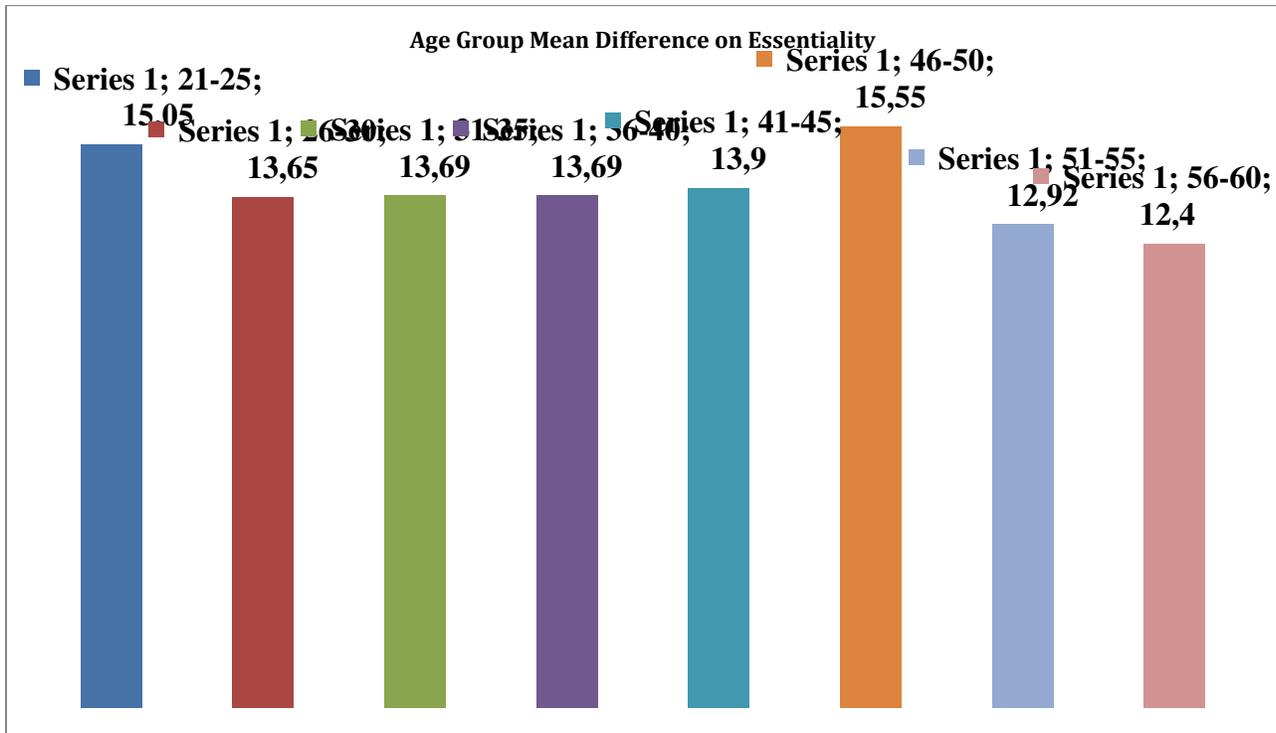


Table 6

One way ANOVA results for eight different age groups on Materialism (Distinctiveness)

Variable	M	SD	N
21-25	14.56	4.83	149
26-30	14.43	5.15	51
31-35	13.99	11.09	136
36-40	12.88	4.43	64
41-45	13.74	6.76	107
46-50	15.13	6.99	93
51-55	11.87	5.55	125
56-60	12.27	6.23	75

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	952.171	7	136.024	2.803**
Within Groups	38433.868	792	48.528	
Total	188253.000	800		

** Significant at .01 level, *significant at p< .05 level

Table 6 shows the results of one-way ANOVA on the distinctiveness dimension of materialism based on eight different age groups of participants. As can be seen F value [F =2.803, p<.01] is significant at the .01 level. Thus eight age groups of respondents are significantly different on the distinctiveness dimension. The mean score of 46-50 age groups has scored highest while 51-55 age groups have scored lowest on this dimension. That means 46-50 age group participants have a high level of materialism.

Fig. 4 Mean Difference between Eight Age Groups on Distinctiveness (Materialism)

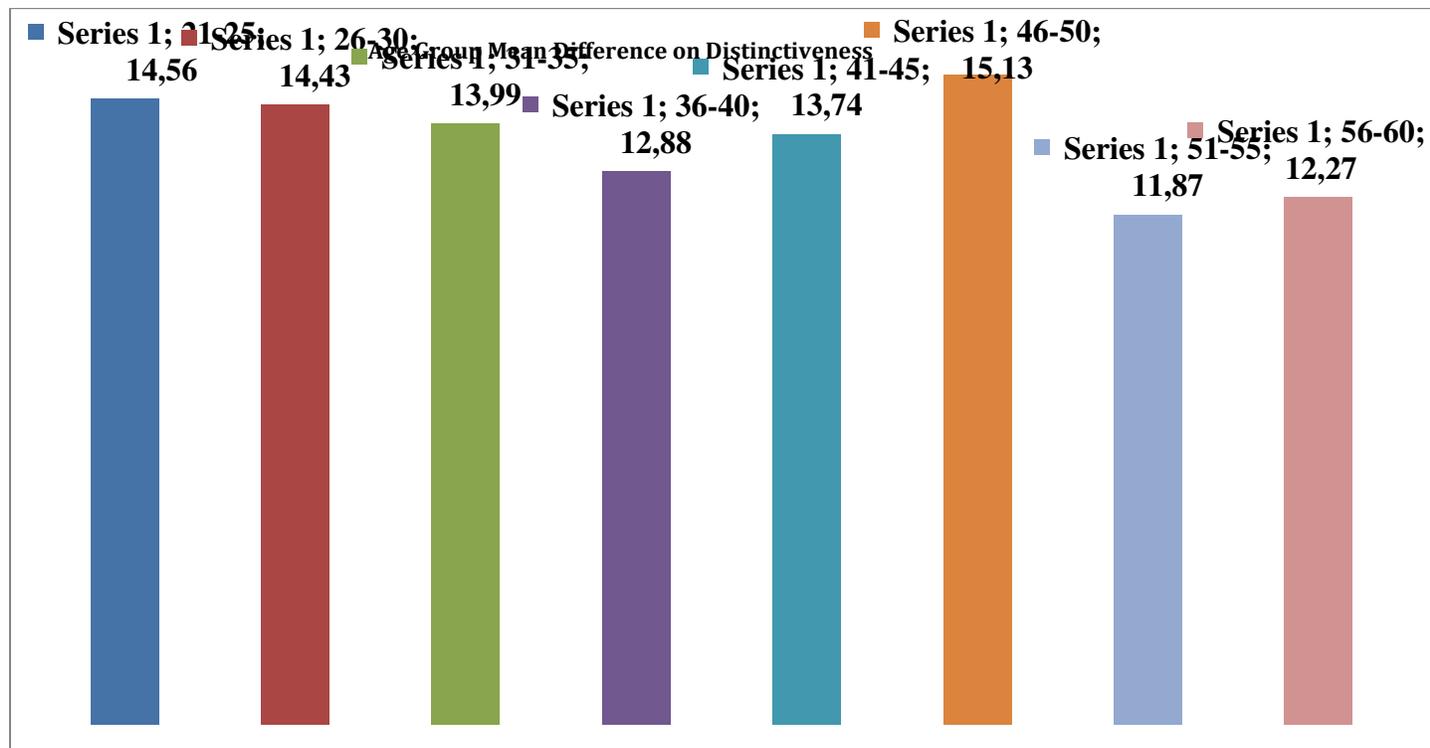


Table 7

Inter-correlation on the sample on the dimensions of materialism

	Success	Happiness	Essentiality	Distinctiveness
Success	1			
Happiness	.612**	1		
Essentiality	.539**	.656**	1	
Distinctiveness	.300**	.303**	.386**	1

** Significant at .01 level, *significant at p< .05 level

Fig 5 Correlation between four dimensions of Materialism

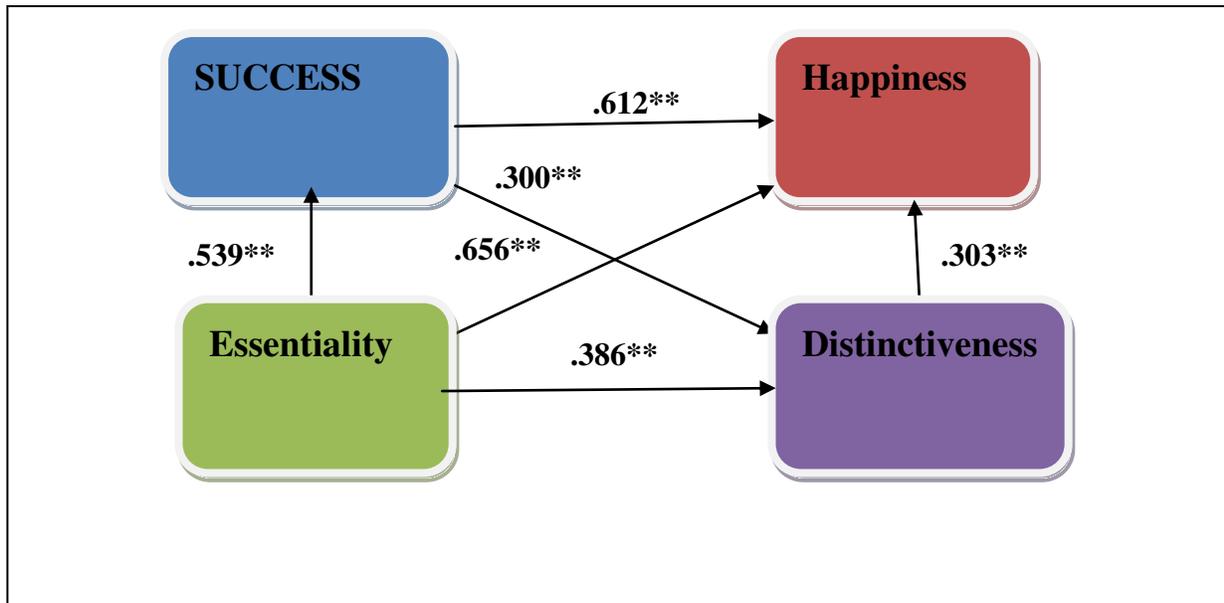


Table 7 shows that the success dimension of materialism is significantly and positively correlated with happiness ($r = .612$, significant at .01 level), essentiality ($r = .539$, significant at .01 level), and distinctiveness ($r = .300$, significant at .01 level). Happiness dimension is significantly and positively correlated with essentiality ($r = .656$, significant at .01 level) and distinctiveness ($r = .303$, significant at .01 level). Essentiality is significantly and positively correlated with distinctiveness ($r = .386$, significant at .01 level). All the dimensions of materialism are significantly and positively correlated with one another. Therefore, the hypothesis of the study stating that there will be a significant correlation between all dimensions of materialism is accepted.

Discussion

The present study was focused on studying materialism among eight age groups and two genders as male and female. The result of the study reveals that the mean score of males and the means score of females are not significantly differed from the four dimensions of materialism. That means males and females have the same level of materialism. The hypothesis stating that “It is expected that there will be no differences between males and females on the variable of materialism” is accepted based on study results. The result of gender difference of this study does not support previous findings like, Moschis and Churchill (1978) directed an examination between youth age vary from 12 to 18 olds, to analyze the connection among males and females and to know the contrast in their materialistic qualities. The outcome uncovered that male youths hold more grounded materialistic perspectives.

The outcome likewise shows that there is a critical age contrast between various eight age groups on four dimensions of materialism. In the previous studies, there isa significant age contrast between various age levels, like Gu and Hung (2009), in their study in which 15 to 19 age group of adolescents have a high level of materialistic values than to age group of 40 to 49 years olds they called it parent generation.

While studying correlation, the results of the present study show that there is a significant and positive correlation between the dimensions of materialism. The dimensions of materialism have a strong positive correlation with one another. The hypothesis stating “It is expected that the dimensions of materialism will correlate with one another significantly” is accepted.

Limitations

The present research was restricted to a small sample of 800 participants of Hisar district and other nearby districts, so the results of the study cannot be generalized to a big population. This study is limited to t-test, ANOVA, and correlation analysis that can't determine the causation for materialism. The study shows the age difference and male/female difference in the dimensions of materialism, other factors may have also been left out by the researcher. There is always a possibility of subject biasness and social desirability of response by participants that can influence the result of the study.

Future Directions

Materialism is a growing area of research in psychology. It requires the focus of research in India. It is required to take a different sample from other areas of India and from other countries to establish the findings of the study. The antecedents and consequents of materialism are required to study for its better understanding, so the people may be guided accordingly. It is required to focus on the study of predictive factors and determinants of materialism.

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