

Introduction

- Ward and Wackman (1971) define materialism as “an orientation emphasizing possessions and money for personal happiness and social progress” (p. 426).
- Escape theory (Donnelly, Ksendzova, Howell, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2016) explains materialistic people’s behaviour with six steps.
- The second step posits that materialists both see themselves as inadequate and engage in significant self-blame for personal shortcomings.
- Much of the research on materialism is correlational (Kasser et al., 2014; Donnelly et al., 2016; Dittmar, Bond, Hurst, & Kasser, 2014). Experimental research can help provide evidence of causality.

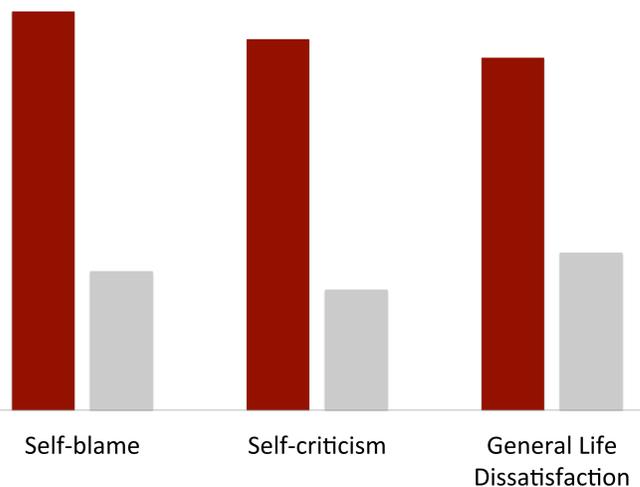
Hypotheses

In a pool of materialistic participants, those primed to experience self-blame will:

1. Demonstrate significant bias toward products high in materialistic value.
2. Display intensified materialistic tendencies.

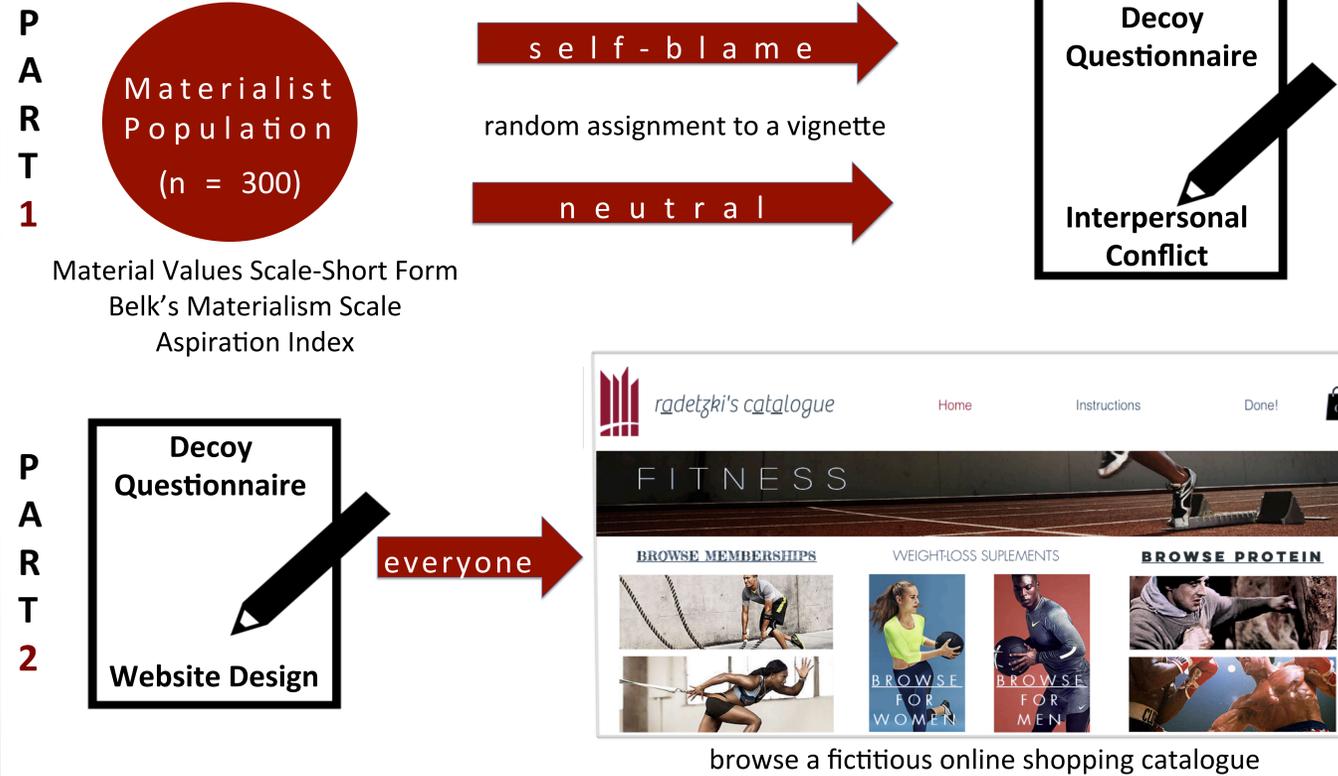
Materialists vs. Non-Materialists

■ Materialists ■ Non-Materialists



A visual example of certain wellbeing differences between materialists and non-materialists (Donnelly et al., 2016).

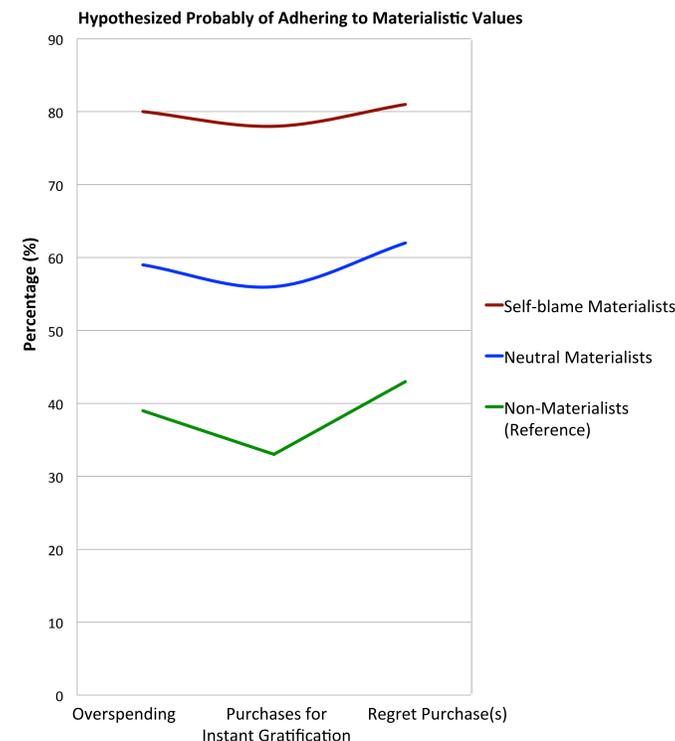
Methods



Expected Results

In a sample of participants with materialistic orientations, those primed with self-blame are expected to:

- Surpass a given budget of C\$5,000.00
- Regret purchases.
- Buy compulsively (e.g., check-out with more products).
- Purchase products aimed toward enhancing physical appearance, even if harming self or environment.
- Purchase products worn on-person or designed to be used publicly.
- Purchase products that ensure acceptance among the more *serious* consumers in that market.



Examples of expected consumer behaviour between materialists who are primed with self-blame, materialists who are not primed, and non-materialists.

Examples of Product Structure

High Materialistic Product

- Flashy with special features that signal status.
- Emphasis on social gains rather than function.
- Improves personal appearance in some way.
- Quality advertised as extension of consumer.

Low Materialistic Product

- Environmentally friendly.
- Built to last.
- Good for health (e.g., no artificial chemicals).
- Focus on function rather than prestige.

Implications

If the hypotheses are supported, the proposed study will:

- Enrich understandings of materialistic behaviour.
- Add experimental evidence for the causal role of self-blame in the maladaptive materialistic attitude toward wealth and material objects.
- Facilitate further research for methods of countering rising levels of materialism in a young generation of individuals.

Key References

- Dittmar, H., Bond, R., Hurst, M., & Kasser, T. (2014). The relationship between materialism and personal well-being: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 107*, 879-924. doi: 10.1037/a0037409
- Donnelly, G.E., Ksendzova, M., Howell, R.T., Vohs, K.D., & Baumeister, R.F. (2016). Buying to blunt negative feelings: Materialistic escape from the self. *Review of General Psychology, 20*, 272-316. doi: 10.1037/gpr0000078
- Kasser, T., Rosenblum, K., Sameroff, A., . . . & Hawks, S. (2014). Changes in materialism, changes in psychological well-being: Evidence from three longitudinal studies and an intervention experiment. *Motivation and Emotion, 38*, 1-22. doi: 10.1007/s11031-013-9371-4
- Ward, S. & Wackman, D. (1971). Family and media influences on adolescent consumer learning. *The American Behavioral Scientist, 14*, 415-426. doi: 10.1177/000276427101400315