



ELSEVIER

Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

SCIENCE @ DIRECT®

Personality and Individual Differences 37 (2004) 463–470

PERSONALITY AND  
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

[www.elsevier.com/locate/paid](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/paid)

## Materialism and affective well-being: the role of social support ☆

Andrew N. Christopher \*, S. Victoria Kuo, Kristen M. Abraham,  
Leonard W. Noel, Heather E. Linz

*Department of Psychology, Albion College, KC #4779, 611 E. Porter Street, Albion, MI 49224, USA*

Received 24 March 2003; received in revised form 21 August 2003; accepted 15 September 2003

Available online 7 November 2003

### Abstract

To test the hypothesis that the established relationship between materialism and psychological well-being would be eliminated or significantly attenuated when controlling for social support, 159 American college students completed the Richins and Dawson (1992) materialism scale, the Cohen and Hoberman (1983) Interpersonal Support Evaluation List, and the Brief Measures of Positive and Negative Affect (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Two hierarchical multiple regressions found support for this hypothesis with respect to positive affect, but not with respect to negative affect. We discuss our results in relation to research on social support and to research that has explored reasons why materialism is related to lower levels of psychological well-being. Future research directions are also discussed.

© 2003 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* Materialism; Well-being; Social support; Happiness; Affect

### 1. Introduction

Some people pursue material possessions to augment their personal security and intrapsychic well-being. It is perhaps ironic, then, that previous research (e.g., Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002; Richins & Dawson, 1992; Wachtel & Blatt, 1990) has strongly suggested that highly materialistic people are not as psychologically healthy as less materialistic people. Materialism is the “importance a person attaches to worldly possessions” (Belk, 1984, p. 291). The current research attempted to

☆ Portions of this research were presented at the 14th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, New Orleans, LA.

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1-517-629-0740; fax: +1-517-629-0407.

E-mail address: [achristopher@albion.edu](mailto:achristopher@albion.edu) (A.N. Christopher).

further understand why an individual's emphasis on material possessions is related to psychological well-being by examining if this relationship is eliminated or significantly attenuated when controlling for an individual's level of perceived social support.

A plethora of studies has suggested that materialism is inversely related to psychological well-being. For example, materialism has been found to correlate inversely with positive affect (e.g., Christopher & Schlenker, *in press*), happiness (e.g., Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002), self-actualization (e.g., Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002), self-esteem (e.g., Richins & Dawson, 1992), subjective well-being (e.g., LaBarbera & Gürhan, 1997), and life satisfaction (e.g., Ryan & Dziurowiec, 2001). In addition, materialism has been correlated directly with negative affect (e.g., Christopher & Schlenker, *in press*), anxiety (e.g., Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002), social anxiety (e.g., Schroeder & Dugal, 1995), proportion of time spent unhappy (e.g., Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002), and depression (e.g., Wachtel & Blatt, 1990). Thus, it appears that the link between materialism and psychological well-being is highly reliable.

In a program of research, Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996, 2001) have demonstrated that there are two types of goals for which one can strive, and these goals are associated with different psychological outcomes. Specifically, Kasser and Ryan have demonstrated that intrinsic goals (e.g., striving for affiliation with others) are associated with higher levels of well-being, whereas extrinsic goals (e.g., striving for financial success) are associated with lower levels of well-being. These differential outcomes exist because the latter goals are not satisfying in and of themselves; rather, they lead to other outcomes, such as praise from other people. Kasser (2002) argued that materialistic people, with their focus on possessions, are less psychologically healthy because they lack focus on more intrinsic needs, such as affiliations with other people.

Compared with literature on the relationship between materialism and psychological well-being, empirical research is less extensive on the relationship between materialism and social support. The extant research tends to suggest, however, that materialists will have lower levels of social support than less materialistic individuals. For instance, in the initial validation of their 18-item materialism scale, Richins and Dawson (1992) found that, when asked to rank-order different values, highly materialistic people were less likely to value relationships than less materialistic people. They also found that materialistic individuals were less satisfied with their family lives and friends than were less materialistic individuals. If indeed materialistic people are unsatisfied with their friends and family, perhaps they more so than less materialistic people perceive that such individuals are less supportive (see also Clarke & Micken, 2002).

In two experimental studies, Chang and Arkin (2002) found that people made to doubt themselves or to experience anomie expressed greater materialistic values than people not so influenced. Chang and Arkin concluded that general insecurity may be an antecedent of materialistic values. To the extent that insecurity may arise through a lack of social support, it would seem that there should indeed be a relationship between social support and materialism. For example, Kasser, Ryan, Zax, and Sameroff (1995) found that among adolescents, materialistic values tend to be held by those with less nurturing mothers, thus suggesting the importance of interpersonal variables in relation to materialism. Buttressing the potential importance of interpersonal considerations, Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Denton (1997) found that "young adults reared in disrupted families are more materialistic and exhibit higher levels of compulsive consumption than young adults reared in intact families" (p. 312). McAlexander, Schouten, and Roberts (1993) suggested that material possessions may serve to compensate for the emptiness

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات