



Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism amongst Teenagers

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ABSTRACT

The primary goal of the present study was to examine brand consciousness, social comparison, and materialism among teenagers. Three instruments are used. (1) Consumer style inventory by Sporel & Kendall (1986), (2) social comparison orientation developed by Gibbons & Buunk (1999), and (3) Materialism scale: developed by Richins and Dawson (1992). The sample of the current study contains (N=200). SPSS was used for the analysis of data. Descriptive statistics will be calculated to assess the mean, standard deviation, and frequencies of the variable. Pearson product-moment correlation will be used to find the relationship between Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison, and Materialism. Hierarchical Regression analysis will be used to find out the prediction. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between Brand Consciousness and Materialism. There is a significant positive relationship between social comparison and materialism. Brand Consciousness positively predicts materialism in teenagers. And social comparison positively predicts materialism amongst teenagers. The study will be beneficial to understand Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison, and Materialism, this study will guide us on how we improved our life without materialistic or branded products. This study will help psychologists to make social intervention techniques for helping people using social comparison in a worthy way.

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1. Introduction

Our youth is very conscious regarding their products, their material, and their dressings and about styles. So now a day it's very common issue regarding brands. Everyone wants to wear brands. Youth wants newly branded products just for fame. They want to inspire others from their branded products. So they compare themselves with others as well regarding their life styles. These things create materialistic views amongst youth. It's very important to work on it for a peaceful mind and worthy life styles. Clothes are simplest and easiest way to define someone's personality, their desires, hopes and their culture. Every person consciously and unconsciously makes different choices regarding their cloths and different products by showing their self-image toward world. This is all because of brand buying and showing their self-image toward world. people compare their life styles with friends, family and other persons around them. They satisfy themselves by comparing their life style with others with reference of perfect and goods. As Festinger's theory of social comparison hypothesized that people compare themselves within groups and in other face-to-face situations that's why comparison occurred (Richins, 1991; Richins & Dawson, 1992). Materialism becomes most common and current issue in teenagers regarding their life styles. Now day's teenagers want everything worthy so that they may show their values and success through materialistic products they are using. Regarding this study, materialism is discussed: possessions that defines as a set of attitudes that defines as defined to category of success, and it occupy a central part of life where possessions having

much role and believing that obtaining more goods will bring you more happiness. As we conceptualized Materialism it is: envy and lack of generosity, and personality trait encompassing possessiveness, (Belk, 1985).

1.1. Brand Consciousness

The word "Brand", supposed to be derived from Old word called "Brandr", and it means "to burn". It was very popular practice used as an identifying mark burned by heated iron or on livestock. In modern marketing, a brand is considered fame. It can be a symbol or name or both associated emotional attributes and tangible product or company. Brand consciousness is defined as having psychological phenomena having predisposition to prefer branded good and mental orientation in taking famous brand name product which are immensely famous and publicized (Kendall & Sproles, 1986). It is stated that "brands represent consumers' perceptions and wishes about a product and its performance – everything that an item or service means to consumers". Teenager's purchased branded products just because of representation of their logo and stamp. People who buy expensive and well-known brands are more likely to consider their status, infect for a good job, and many other factors, and are generally more helpful in fulfilling their requests than people who do not wear status products (Nelissen & Meijers, 2011).

1.2. Social Comparison

It is defined as the habit of comparing oneself, one's accomplishments, experiences, and circumstances to those of others (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). Our new generation is more prone toward Social Comparison. They compare their life styles, abilities and achievements with others. They compare their self with peers, family members, and the society in which they are living. as stress levels rise, social comparison orientation rises, and stress levels rise as a result of social comparison (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999; Warren & Rios, 2013) because when people started comparison then they compare their lives with others and it's became harder for them to maintaining satisfaction. Because they started thinking like their life is not satisfactory. Buunk and Gibbons (2006); Schneider and Schupp (2014) and they have nothing vulnerable in their lives. In stressful conditions, people's requirements increase when they are more socially compared (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). Hardiness, a psychological attribute that makes it easier to deal with stress, may be reduced when social comparison orientation is strong (Kobasa, Maddi, & Courington, 1981; Rasool, Parveen, Majid, & Rasool), social comparison is beneficial when it's comparison of some one's hardness, achievements, success and moral values. But it's became problematic when person started compare in well off, social status, materialism and other's life styles. Pressure and acculturative stress increased considerably among college students as social comparison propensity surged, according to (Warren & Rios, 2013). The social comparison theory was first proposed by psychologist Leon Festinger in 1954, who believed that people have an innate drive to compare themselves to others. People form a variety of judgments about themselves by comparing themselves to others or studying the self in relation to others. We engage in this comparison process, according to psychologist Leon Festinger, as a means of creating a benchmark by which we may accurately evaluate ourselves.

1.3. Materialism

Materialism is defining as through that means if you have blissful life then you must have materialistic products which shows that you are more successful in life and you have a distinguished status in society and you want you are more observed by others (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Teenagers are more prone toward materialism. They want materialistic products as their success identity and feel peace after getting these sorts of products. Materialism is associated with nationality and age, the other demographic like gender and education is not predictor of materialism (Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2009). globalization is promoting materialism and creates harmful consequences, because of possessions and focuses on temporary comforts of life (Bushra & Bilal, 2014). As teenagers were like materialistic products as sign of their well-off so they are more prone toward temporary comforts. Like they purchase branded and expensive products and after some time just because they thought, their model was old they changed them and purchased new one with and recent style. Kasser (2002) investigate that teenagers having more materialistic attitudes, have developed destructive behavior further. They are more prone toward alcoholism and smoking. Materialism also played major role in immoral values towards ethics and standards of society. Materialism is less prevalent among children whose family communicate in a notion-oriented manner and foster self-determination in their thinking (Moore & Moschis, 1981). Adolescents who spend less time talking to their parents about what they buy are more materialistic, according to a new study (Moore & Moschis, 1981).

Materialistic people who communicate with their peers on a regular basis (Moschis & Churchill Jr, 1978) and those who are more vulnerable to peer influence are also known to be more socially connected (Achenreiner, 1997).

1.4. Teenage

It is time period in which girls and boys move from childhood to adult hood mentally, physically, emotionally and socially. Age range for girls is 11- 18 years and for boys it's 12-18 years (Jersild, 1951). World Health Organization defines its age range is 10-19 years. According to WHO teenager age range is same as adolescents. This phase is known as storm and stress and person had to face many ups and downs in this phase.

1.5. Rationale of the Study

Teenagers use brands as quality criteria and they started represent it as a symbolic and conceptual meaning. They satisfy their lives and status by using a lot of brands. They compare their lives with others because of their products and things they use. That's why they become more brand conscious day by day. Excessive usage of brands and material products cause immoral behavior in teenagers. The awareness of foreign and local brands has developed materialistic attitude in them. And in this result, they are more dissatisfied from their lives. (Kasser, 2002) hypothesized that a person with high level of materialism has low self-esteem and also suffer from psychological health. Many times people buy expensive brands for just to overcome their low self-esteem. Researches also showed that people who are more brand conscious have low level of self-esteem. The current study aimed to find out the relationship of Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism among teenagers. Brand consciousness and Materialism is increasing in our society day by day even in lower middle class. Moreover, teenagers are more prone toward brands names and they developed association towards brands.

1.6. Objectives of the Study

- To find out relationship between Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism among Teenagers
- To find out prediction between Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism among Teenagers

1.7. Hypotheses of the Study

H1: There is likely to be positive relationship among Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism

H2: Brand Consciousness and Social Comparison predict Materialism among teenagers.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design & Data collection

A total of 200 teenagers, ranging in age from 15 to 19, were included in the study. The participants were selected by using randomized sampling technique. This study made use of a correlational research design in its methodology and G-Power analysis was used to determine the sample. Data was collected through formal permissions of institutes. After that formal questionnaires and demographic sheet with informed consent were provided to students. Researcher told them that they have right to withdraw if they were not interested in study. Questionnaires were provided to them and it took 15 to 20 minutes for filled that questionnaires. All ethical principles were followed throughout that procedure. And information of participants was kept confidential. To collect data *Scale of Materialism* Richins and Dawson (1992) Materialism scale, Brand Consciousness Consumer style inventory scale (Kendall & Sproles, 1986), Social comparison scale (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999).

2.2 Inclusion Criteria & Exclusion Criteria

- Teen agers with age range 15-19 were taken for this study.
- College students and school students were taken for this study.
- Students of private institutions were taken for study.
- As per designed questionnaire, students who did not purchased most of the things from brands were excluded from study.
- Any medical condition and the person having any psychological disorder were excluded from criteria.

2.3 Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic measures include age, gender, qualification, institute, family size, family system, siblings, religion, residence, occupation, nature of sponsored job, no of earners, no of dependent persons, and socio economic status.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic of Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=200)

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	89	44.5
Female	111	55.5
Age		
16	24	11.5
17	33	16.5
18	59	28.5
19	83	40.5
Education		
Metric	31	15.5
Intermediate	80	40.0
Bachelors	89	44.5
Institute		
School	31	15.5
College	80	40.0
University	89	44.5
Birth Order		
First born	58	29.0
Middle born	99	49.5
Last born	41	20.5
Nature of Job		
Public	37	18.5
Private	104	52.0
Residency		
Urban	152	76.0
Rural	47	23.5
Occupation		
Job	141	70.5
Business	59	29.5
Liked websites		
Instagram	93	46.5
Facebook	24	12.0
WhatsApp	81	40.5
Favorite Brand		
Keyseria	58	29.0
Saphire	22	11.0
Nishat	20	10.0
Sana Safinaz	13	6.5
J.	47	23.5
Others	40	20.0

Table 1 of demographic statistics showed that sample comprise of males 89 and females 111. and 23 were 16 years old, 33 were 17 years old, 57 were 18 years old, and 81 were 19 years old. 31 were having education in matriculation, 80 were having intermediate, 89 were having graduation. 58 were 1st born, 99 were middle born and, 41 were last born. And 152 were belonging to urban residency and 47 belonged to rural one. 93 of them frequently used Instagram. 24 were used Facebook and 81 were used WhatsApp as social media apps. 58 were liked keyseria brand, 22 were likes Saphire brand, 20 were liked nishat, 13 were liked sana safinaz, 47 were liked J., and 40 were liked some other brands.

2.4 Statistical Analysis

SPSS version 22 was used to conduct the statistical analysis of the data. The mean, standard deviation, and frequency of the variable were computed using descriptive statistics. Pearson product moment correlation was use to find relationship between Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism and Hierarchal Regression analysis was used to find out prediction among Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism.

3. Results

The aim of the present study was to explore the relationship between Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism. For the statistical examination of exploring the difference between groups on study variables SPSS-21 was used. Internal consistency of the instrument was analyzed through Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient. To determine the relationship between study variables, Pearson product moments was used. Hierarchical regression analysis was computed to check the brand Consciousness and Social Comparison as predictors of Materialism amongst teenagers.

Table 2: Reliability coefficient of Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism amongst Teenagers (N=200)

Scale	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's α
Brand Consciousness	18.80	5.40	7-35	.74
Social Comparison	30.41	11.02	11-86	.70
Materialism	41.02	12.69	15-75	.88

The scales employed in this study are listed in Table 1 by their psychometric properties. In terms of internal consistency, the Cronbach's alpha value for the Brand Consciousness Scale was 0.74. In terms of internal consistency, the Cronbach's alpha for Social Comparison was .70, which is considered good by most standards. An alpha rating of .88 on the Cronbach's alpha materialism scale implies strong internal consistency. Relationship between Brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism amongst Teenagers Pearson product moment correlation analysis was computed to evaluate the relationship between Brand Consciousness, social comparison and materialism in teenagers. Results revealed through analysis are described in table below.

Table 3: Correlation among Study Variables (N=200)

	N	M	SD	1	2	3
BC	200	18.80	5.40	1	.261***	.54***
SC	200	30.41	11.02		1	.40***
M	200	41.02	12.69			1

Note: BC =Brand Consciousness Scale, SC = Social Comparison Scale, M = Materialism Scale, n = sample size, M = mean, SD = standard deviation. *p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 3 shows correlation between brand Consciousness, Social Comparison and Materialism amongst teenagers. Table indicates that there is significant strong positive relationship between Brand Consciousness and Social Comparison ($p < .001$). Moreover, there is statistically significant positive strong relationship between Brand Consciousness and Materialism ($p < .001$). There is a significant strong positive relationship between social comparison and materialism. Multiple Regression Analysis: To investigate the role of prediction, a multiple regression analysis was used for Brand Consciousness and Social Comparison on Materialism amongst teenagers. The results revealed are presented in the following table.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Effect of Brand Consciousness and Social Comparison on Materialism Amongst Teenagers (N=200)

Model	R^2	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		t	P
		B	SE	B			
Brand Consciousness	.37	1.11	.138	.474		8.06	<.001
Social Comparison		.32	.068	.280		4.77	<.001

**P<.00

Two predictors were simultaneously entered into the model: brand consciousness and social comparison. Together, these predictors accounted for 37% of the variance in materialism amongst teenagers. Brand Consciousness ($\beta = .47$) positively predicts materialism in teenagers. And social comparison ($\beta = .28$) positively predicts materialism amongst teenagers. Independent Sample t-Test: To assess difference between job holders and business class on brand consciousness, social comparison and materialism, independent sample t-test was done. Analysis produce results that are describe in the table 5. Table 5 indicates that there is significant difference on Brand Consciousness among business man ($M = 17.23$, $SD = 4.10$) and regular job employees ($M = 19.30$, $SD = 4.41$), $t(198) = -3.08$, $p = .00$, social comparison among business

man(M=29.57, SD=8.67) and regular job employees (M=29.34, SD=8.84), $t=(198)=-.17$, $p=.86$ and materialism among business man (M=37.51, SD=8.24) and regular job employees (M=40.04, SD=8.24), $t=(196)=2.06$, $p=.04$.

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of Freelancers and Regular Job Employees on Achievement Motivation, Dispositional Optimism and Job Satisfaction (N=200)

Groups	Businessman		Regular job employees		t	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
BS	17.23	4.10	19.30	4.41	3.08	.00	0.48
SC	29.57	8.67	29.34	8.84	-.17	.86	0.02
M	37.51	6.66	40.04	8.24	2.06	.04	0.33

Note: AMS = Achievement Motives Scale, LOTr = Life Orientation Test Revised, JSS = Job Satisfaction Survey, n = sample size, M = mean, SD = standard deviation df=198, p=.00

Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviation and F-values for Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp (N=200)

Variables	Instagram		Facebook		WhatsApp		F	η^2	Post hoc
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD			
Bc	18.48	4.01	17.25	5.28	19.48	4.48	2.59	0.03	--
SC	28.68	9.54	33.16	9.21	29.13	7.55	1.72	0.02	2>3>1>4
M	40.26	7.81	36.37	6.32	39.09	8.30	1.58	0.02	--

*P < .05. **P < .01.

Table 6 shows mean, standard deviation and F-values for teenagers on all study variable including brand consciousness, social comparison and materialism. Results indicate significant mean difference on Instagram users on social comparison. Results are found non-significant on brand consciousness and materialism.

3.1 Summary of Results

According to frequency table, demographic statistics showed that sample comprise of males 89 and females 111. and 23 were 16 years old, 33 were 17 years old, 57 were 18 years old, and 81 were 19 years old. 31 were having education in matriculation, 80 were having intermediate, 89 were having graduation. 58 were 1st born, 99 were middle born and, 41 were last born. And 152 were belonging to urban residency and 59 belonged to rural one. 93 of them frequently used Instagram. 24 were used Facebook and 81 were used WhatsApp as social media apps. 58 were liked Keyseria brand, 22 were likes Sapphire brand, 20 were liked Nishat (Sarwar, Ali, Bhatti, & ur Rehman, 2021), 13 were liked Sana Safinaz, 47 were liked J., and 40 were liked some other brands. According to correlation results: negative relationship between Brand Consciousness and Social Comparison. Moreover, there is statistically significant positive relationship between Brand Consciousness and Materialism. There is a significant positive relationship between social comparison and materialism. As per regression analysis, Brand Consciousness, and Social Comparison predicted Materialism amongst teenagers. According to t test, people who belong from jobs were more brand conscious as compare to business mans. Moreover, people who use social media a lot were more socially compare themselves with others.

3.2 Discussion

It is observed that likers of brands have great impact on attitudes and behaviors of teenagers. As our first hypothesis states that there would be positive relationship between brand consciousness, social comparison and materialism. This study focuses on how brands effects socially and how it's leads toward materialism. As another study shows social comparison and materialism can lead brand addiction and leading toward compulsive buying of brand addiction (Mrad & Cui, 2017; Mrad & Cui, 2019). This study focuses on how brand addiction creates antecedent and social comparison and materialism are considered as consequences of brand addiction. As our results already discussed that brand consciousness and materialism is positively associated. So teenagers who are more brands conscious also be materialistic by their choices and opinions (Rahman & Idrees, 2019). As the previous researches already declared that materialism creates brand love: that leading to compulsive behavior of buying branded products example apple (Mourad, 2015). According to results, as brand conscious and materialism shows positive relationship so we can also say that brand lovers are materialistic in different manners regarding their life styles and their products they used. So people can buy their luxury homes, cars and clothes in love of brand addiction (Kim, Ko, Xu, & Han, 2012). As results our suggested:

that people who are belonged to job are more branding conscious and materialistic as compare to business class. Consumers engaged in private jobs also spent a large amount of money to meet their desires and concealed themselves through branded attire, even if they were employed in an average job (Asgar, Ahmadi, & Sayed Alinezhad, 2022). As results suggested people who spent their more time on social media apps were more socially compare themselves with others. That's why they became materialistic. As another study suggested that face book and social comparison is indirectly associated with each other in a mediating way (Ryan, Chester, Reece, & Xenos, 2014).

4. Conclusion

Brands became current topic and its affected people regarding their status and their wellbeing. Now average middle class and upper class also wants to purchase brands. Moreover, social media cites also affected in great manner. With these websites people are more likely to purchase these brands. Socio economic status plays a great role here. People who belong to jobs are more likely to purchased brands. And people who are not doing a very ideal job but an ordinary job were also wants branded products and spend monthly amount according to their status in every month.

4.1 Ethical Considerations

All research ethics such as informed consent, confidentiality, privacy and purpose of research gives by American Psychological Association was kept in mind before conducting research and Rapport was established by assuring them of the confidentiality of their personal information, written informed consent was taken from all the participants individually. The knowledge gap in this study is the need to comprehend the intricate interactions among materialism, social comparison, and brand consciousness among teens. To further understand the underlying causes, drives, and effects of these constructs, more study is needed. To get deeper insights, this investigation should include a wider range of participants, take into account various cultural and contextual elements, and use a mixed-methods approach. The corpus of information might also be expanded by looking into the efficacy of treatments and educational initiatives intended to lessen the detrimental impacts of materialism and brand consciousness on the wellbeing and consumption patterns of teens.

4.2 Limitations

The outcomes of this study may not be applicable to teenagers who do not fit within the precise age range, educational settings, or cultural situations studied. As this study depended on self-report measures, participants' replies may have been biased. They may have replied in a way that reflects social desirability or subjective impressions, which may have influenced the accuracy of the results. The use of participants from private institutions may restrict the findings' generalizability to youth attending public institutions. It might not accurately represent the experiences and viewpoints of a more diverse population. Relying just on questionnaires may limit the depth of understanding and neglect specific aspects of the research issue. Qualitative interviews or observations, for example, could provide richer insights.

4.3 Suggestions

Sample Diversity: Including teens from a wider range of socioeconomic statuses, cultural contexts, and educational settings would improve the generalizability of the results and offer a more thorough grasp of the subject. A mixed-methods approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of brand consciousness, social comparison, and materialism among teens by combining quantitative measurements, like as surveys, with qualitative interviews or observations. Studying individuals over an extended period of time would enable a longitudinal investigation of how these dimensions change over time and the discovery of potential causal linkages. **Comparative Analysis:** Examining the results across age groups would shed light on how materialism, social comparison, and brand consciousness evolve during adolescence and its ramifications.

1. Creating educational initiatives for teens that encourage critical thinking and media literacy might aid them in navigating brand-conscious situations and lessen their propensity for consumerism.
2. Parents may influence teens' consumption decisions and promote favorable attitudes towards products and material belongings by becoming involved.

3. Advocating for stronger restrictions on advertising to teens might lessen the detrimental effects of materialistic messaging and encourage more ethical advertising practices.
4. By promoting alternate viewpoints and ideals, good role models may counterbalance the effects of excessive brand consciousness and materialism by standing out as influencers who place a priority on things other than material possessions.

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