

**ROLE OF SOCIAL PRESSURE AS A
KEY CONTRIBUTOR OF MATERIALISM
AND
RELATED STATUS CONSUMPTION**

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled '**Role of Social Pressure as a Key Contributor of Materialism and Related Status Consumption**' is a record of bonafide research carried out by Mr. Saju Eapen Thomas under my supervision and guidance in the School of Management Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Cochin University of Science and Technology and is worthy of consideration for the award of Ph.D. Degree of Cochin University of Science and Technology. No part of this work has been presented for any other degree from any other institution.

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I declare that the thesis, '**Role of Social Pressure as a Key Contributor of Materialism and Related Status Consumption**' is the record of bonafide research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. P. R. Wilson, Professor and Director, School of Management Studies, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kochi - 22.

I further declare that this thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma associateship or other similar title of recognition.

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Dedicated to my parents

THOMAS MATHEW

&

ELIZABETH THOMAS

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Abbreviations

CFI	-	Comparative Fit Index
CRISIL	-	Credit Rating and Information Services of India Ltd
IMRB	-	Indian Market Research Bureau
MBA	-	Master of Business Administration
OLM	-	Out Look Money (magazine)
RBI	-	Reserve Bank of India
RMR	-	Root Mean Square Residual
RMSEA	-	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
TV	-	Television
US	-	United States (of America)
TLI	-	Tucker-Lewis Index
NFI	-	Normal Fit Index
GFI	-	Goodness of Fit Index
AGFI	-	Adjusted Goodness Fit Index
IEA	-	International Energy Association
ICLEI	-	International Council for Local Energy Initiatives
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modeling
AMOS	-	Analysis of Moment Structures Software
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
IT	-	Information Technology
ITES	-	Information Technology Enabled Services
NVS	-	National Vital Statistics
ATSCI	-	Attention To Social Comparison Information
BC	-	Before Christ
RSES	-	Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale

SISE	-	Single Item Self Esteem Scale
CFA	-	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
EIU	-	Economic Intelligence Unit
BPO	-	Business Process Outsourcing
MVS	-	Materialism Value Scale
DSA	-	Direct Selling Agent
USD	-	United States Dollar
CD	-	Compact Disc
DF	-	Degree of Freedom

1.1	The Greed Factor and Excessive Consumption
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“Earth Provides to satisfy everyman’s need, but not everyman’s greed”

Mahatma Gandhi.

1.1 The Greed Factor and Excessive Consumption

“At resale stores I have seen brand new clothes with original price tag still hanging from the sleeve. Some children have so many toys that they stay frustrated, not knowing which one to pick up for their next amusement. Presumably sensible adults trade in perfectly good cars just to have something shinier and newer. Didn’t us once live productive normal lives, without all these gadgets” [Cunningham (2005)]. During late eighties, nearly forty four percent of the participants, who took part in a consumer survey conducted in the US, responded positively to the question *“My closets are filled with still*

unopened items” [Faber and O’Guinn (1988)]. Reading such excerpts does not greatly surprise us anymore; as such reports have become common now. For many people shopping has moved beyond something that caters to their needs and wants and has become a hobby [Cunningham (2005)], an activity that they engage in to satisfy their hedonistic or pleasure-seeking goals [Ramnathan and Menon(2006), O’Cass and McEween (2004), Faber and O’Guinn (1989)]. Others look at their new possession as something that fills a void in their lives [Belk (1985), Diener et al. (1993)].

Oxford dictionary (2007) defines ‘greed’, as ‘strong and selfish desire for wealth and power’. This selfish desire to have more than what others have, seems to be that which drives individuals into such high consumption habits and is considered to be the inherent characteristic of materialistic individuals [Belk (1984)]. This is the central theme of this research work. Consumption for the sake of consumption is an addictive phenomenon [Scott and Mowen (2007)] which seems to become the order of the day [Zinkhan (1994)]. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1978) have rightly elaborated the catastrophic dimensions that such behaviors can lead us into – “*Consumption for the sake of consumption becomes a fever that can consume all the potential energy to which it can gain access to*”. Such insatiable search for products without much consideration for its utility [O’Cass and McEween (2004)] will ultimately have a huge impact on the society [Kasser (2002), Roberts and Sepulveda (1999)], the environment, [Saunders and Munro (2000), Schwartz (1992, 1994, 1996) and Richins and Dawson (1992)] and also on the individual [Belk (1985), O’Guinn and Faber (1989), Faber and O’Guinn (1992), Ramnathan and Menon (2006); Atkinson and Birch (1970)]. Over-consumption has become a fundamental problem that is threatening the wellbeing of earth’s ecosystem [Oskamp (2000), Kasser (2002)].

1.2 Is High Consumption Culture Sustainable?

Many experts are of the opinion that such high consumption culture is something necessary, as it is based on the premise that the economy will prosper only if people buy more products and spend more money in consuming goods and services [Galbraith (1998), Heiskanen and Pantzar (1997), Fuchs and Lorek (2005)]. According to Cunningham (2005), *“if we were to put brakes on, what would happen to this robust market place? If factories had no demand for their product, they would have to lay off workers and the people would have lesser money in their pockets to fuel the system.”*

A normal consequence of such consumption is to accelerate the discarding of currently used products primarily by making them psychologically obsolete, before they actually wear out [Heiskanen and Pantzar (1997), Basalla (1988), Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981)]. The consumers are running out of space to store all the things they buy [Cunningham (2005), Balakrishna (2006), Healey (2008)] and in-turn manufacturers are churning out products that are less durable compromising on the quality aspects [Heiskanen and Pantzar (1997)]. Chronic purchasing of new goods with little attention for their real need [O’Cass and McEween (2004)] is generally considered as the true manifestation of materialism [Fournier and Richins (1991), Richins (1994); Wong (1997)]. Materialistic traits like greed, miserliness and envy would lead to human misery than happiness [Belk (1984)] and also to psychological deviations like compulsive consumption [Faber and O’Guinn (1988)]. In addition to this it would lead to quicker depletion of our scarce natural resources [Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1978)] and also the environmental degradation [Durning (1994)].

High consumption cultures is seen more across the most developed western countries [Durning (1994), Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1978)]. According to Kasser (2002), “*humans particularly in the western hemisphere are consuming resources at a pace that far outweighs earth’s ability to renew these resources and absorb the resultant wastes.*” As per the reports brought out by ‘Earthscan’, the rich upper class which comprises just one fifth of the global population accounts for four fifths of private consumption [Carley and Spapens (1998)]. When it comes to ownership of products, the distinction between the rich western nations and the rest of the world is even starker. The richest twenty percent owns 87% of the cars and 74% of the telephone connections. This rich group consumes 84% of all paper produced, 45% of all meat and fish consumed, and 58% of the total energy [Carley and Spapens (1998)].

According to IEA’s (International Energy Association), Key Energy Statistics (2010), more than half of the energy consumed since the ‘Industrial Revolution’ has occurred, in the last two decades. While the global population grew only by 5% during 2004 - 2008 period, the gross energy consumption increased by 10% (IEA report -2010), US being the largest consumer of world’s energy resources. Two regions that showed greatest growth in energy consumption during the 1980-2010 period, have been Asia and Eastern Europe. While the energy requirement of Eastern Europe is declining, Asia’s energy requirements are increasing with countries like India and China being the drivers of this growth (IEA Reports 2010). As per the estimates, China would replace the US as the largest energy consumer by 2010-11 [Global Energy Review (2009)].

Are the present levels of consumption sustainable? It has been an established fact that luxurious fast-paced lifestyles of the Western world do

create stress on our planet [Schumacher (1975)]. So, it is quite apparent that we do not have the resources to allow the entire earth's inhabitants to have the standard of living which Americans and the western world have taken for granted [Zinkhan (1994), Durning (1994), Meadows et al. (1992), Ryan and Flavin (1995)]. Moreover the energy requirements for maintaining the high comforts associated with the life styles of the developed world are causing faster depletion of our energy resources [Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1978)]. We should also note that creation of most of the products or services will involve some amount of depletion of resources from the larger pool or account [Morwedge et al.(2007)]. Further to this is the harm caused to the environment due to the pollution created during the production of these products [Durning (1994), Meadows et al. (1992), Ryan and Flavin (1995)]. Hence it becomes imperative, to be judicious with our consumption decisions.

As populous Asian nations such as China and India join the high consumption bandwagon [Park et al. (2008), Nueno and Quelch (1998), Ryan and Flavin (1995)], the rate of depletion of scarce resources and also deterioration to environment due to pollution reach critical levels. The aggressive penetration strategies supported by easy availability of debt is transforming the socio-cultural landscape of many nations including India, known for its tradition bound and collectivist societies [Chu (1989), Banerjee (2008), Corbu (2009)]. Increasing globalization tendencies in developing countries is fuelling a growing inclination among consumers in these markets to acquire luxury brands [Handa and Khare (2011)].

As Kasser (2002) rightly puts it, *“water, forests and clean air are all being used and polluted at rates far higher than those at which they are being replaced. Wastes from production are creating ozone layer depletion; while our biodiversity is shrinking, so is the total landmass”*.

1.3 High Consumption Life Styles: Impact on Individuals

This research work is more pertinent to the impact that the high consumption behavior has on individuals. When we look around, it is not very difficult to conclude that the replacement of many currently used products, whether it be mobile phones or cars or laptops, is not because the currently used product is failing to provide the required utility [Nueno and Quelch (1998)]. It happens more out of social compulsions borne out of hedonistic needs, related to fashion and prestige [Ramnathan and Menon (2006), O’Cass and McEween (2004)] and not based on any utility factor [O’Cass and McEween (2004)]. Such consumption for the sake of consumption can have larger deterrent effects on the individual who undertakes such behavior [Roberts and Sepulveda (1999), Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1978)].

Financial distress including debt trap [Koran et al. (2006), Faber and O’Guinn (1988)] can become the consequence of such consumption practice and such cases are being reported more and more frequently [Faber and O’Guinn (1988), Perry and Morris (2005)]. Behavioral deviations such as compulsive consumption could be the long term outcome of such high consumption habits [Belk (1985), O’Guinn and Faber (1989), Faber and O’Guinn (1992)]. Psychologically deviant behaviors such as shopaholism [Healey (2008)] binge eating or substance abuse including alcoholism and addiction to drugs (Koran et. al. (2006), Faber and O’Guinn (1988)], can also be traced to this.

The USA is the country most associated with the culture of consumption [Leary (2007), Kasser and Ryan (1993)], although there are ample evidences of this phenomena building up as a global phenomenon [Leary (2007)].

Researchers have focused on the mounting levels of consumer debt right from 1950s [Galbraith (1958), Raske (1979) and Rice (1979)]. Between 1950 and 1985, debt payment of disposable income grew from 10.5% to 23.9% [Faber and O’Guinn (1988)]. This has been growing ever since. The US household debt of annual disposable income was 127% at the end of 2007 as compared to just 77% in 1990 [economist.com (2008)]. This means that American households have spent more than their disposable income every year, starting from 1999 [economist.com (2008)]. Most households had twelve to thirteen credit cards, with forty percent of them having revolving credit outstanding [Zakaria (2008)]. In 2004, credit card revolving debt, which is a high cost debt, stood at \$735.3 billion, a 31% percent quantum increase compared to the figures in 1999. No wonder Americans over the age of fifty five are filing bankruptcy in greater numbers and at a rate faster than the population growth [Newton (2009)]. Personal bankruptcy filings in US doubled between 1994 and 2002 to more than 1.5 million [Golmant and Ulrich (2007)].

For more than one in twenty Americans, shopping is something darker than what it appears on the surface [Healey (2006), Koran et al. (2006)]. According to a study published in Oct 2006 in the American Journal of Psychiatry, close to 5.8% of the American Population suffer from disorders related to shopping habits [Koran et al. (2006)]. Psychiatrist, Timothy Fong, Director of Impulse Control of Disorders at the University of California, Los Angeles, states that he gets several calls from people who seek help in controlling their excessive shopping habits [Healey (2006)]. According to Dr. Fong, *“Shopaholism or excessive shopping habits has created deep-rooted problems for the individual. It’s not the lack of willpower that makes the truly addicted shopper unable to get out of his shopping urge, but it is more about his or her inability to control impulses, desires and behavior”* [Healey

(2006)]. Such excessive consumption behavior often leads to high levels of depression and anxiety [Koran et al. (2006), Roberts and Jones (2001)] and in many cases it has led to job losses, broken marriages and financial ruin [Healey (2006)].

1.4 Does Material Possessions Bring Happiness?

Advances in science and technology have helped in the invention and mass production of a range of products, created to make life more comfortable. Automobiles, air-conditioners, microwave-ovens, mobile telephony and modern day automobiles are all part of products created with the promise of making life more comfortable. Innovations in marketing and supply chain management have made these products easily available to consumers [Schmid (2010)]. The ownership of such goods coupled with the availability of a range of services aimed at providing entertainment and leisure should have made living a more pleasant experience for our generation. But the reality is very different from this [Zinkhan (1994)]. The present generation seems to be a victim of its own making [Kasser (2002)]. Trying to own and later upgrading to more recent versions of such products, seems to have become a never ending loop into which individuals are committing to [Atkinson and Birch (1970)].

Individuals are using their hard earned money more for providing their pleasure seeking desires and less for spiritual or pro-social needs [Manheim (2007)]. Such orientation to gratify material needs inclusive of acquisition of goods is leading people into unhappiness and despair [Mayers (2000)]. People seem to be struggling to garner enough money to have more and more of these possessions [Koran et al.(2003)] as it will make them appear more successful in the eyes of others [Belk (1985), Richins and Dawson (1992)]. Little do they realize that the pursuit of such items is creating in them a never ending desire for

more and more [Scott and Mowen (2007)]. These products which have been created to make life easier have become the means and end of life for many.

We are living in a time phase wherein a large part of the society desires goods for reasons related to novelty, status seeking etcetera [Achenreiner (1997), Churchill and Moschis (1979), Kwak et al. (2002)] which were traditionally considered as non-utilitarian [O’Cass and McEween (2004)]. A cursory introspection of the society around us will show us that most people replace their mobile phones or laptops or even their cars not because the current one has lost its utility, but more because the current model looks outdated in comparison with the latest releases.

Such acts are perpetuated in today’s society based on the notion that buying of such items will make them happy [Belk (1985), Richins and Dawson (1992)]. These are best expressed through the contents of many advertisement messages which in-turn tells us that “*happiness can be found at the mall, in the internet or in the catalogue*” [Kasser (2002)]. But the reality is that wealth and possessions do not make one happy and such pursuits will only end in building up more stress and hardships in one’s life [Kasser (2002), Diener et al. (1993), Brickman et al. (1978)].

If wealth and possession could bring in happiness most affluent people should be happier than their less affluent peers. Current empirical research shows otherwise [Allison (2009)]. It is established through research that affluent adolescents face greater levels of depression and anxiety [Luthar (2003); Luthar and D’Avanzo (1999)]. They have reduced subjective well being measures than their less affluent peers [Luthar and Becker (2002), Luther and Latendresse (2005)].

1.5 A Culture of High Consumption Spreading Across The Globe: Indian Scenario

With the advancement of globalization, a culture of high consumption is spreading across the globe [Leary (2007), Roberts and Sepuldeva (1999)]. America has always been seen as the most materialist nation and Americans have been consuming a large percentage of the global resources for meeting their high consumption patterns [Kasser (2002), Oskamp (2000)]. The much touted term American Dream, is just a euphemism for living in luxury [Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996)]. There is too much focus on possessions and such pursuits are creating a never ending desire for more [Scott (2009)].

The automatic question that will arise at this stage is that most of the facts mentioned so far are more pertinent to the western world and so what is the relevance of such observations for us in India. A study answering this question is highly relevant to India, as we are currently witnessing a transformation of the Indian consumer who was considered to be tradition bound and conservative [Khanna and Kasser (2001), Banerjee (2008), Kumar and Gupta (2003), Dumont (1970)], compared to his western counterpart.

Globalization, rising income levels, change in consumption patterns of upper and middle class and the increase in number of women in the work force makes India an attractive market for status and luxury products from international marketers [Handa and Khare (2011), Khare et al. (2012)]. Indian middle class is approximated at 60 million by 2010 [EIU, Viewswire (2006)] making India one of the largest consumer markets in the world. These changes in socio-economic factors have contributed to the growth of Indian luxury and status market which is growing at the rate of 25% annually. The Indian luxury market currently pegged at US\$3.5 billion in 2007 is projected to explode to US\$30billion size soon [Kearney (2007)].

There are many evidences in the literature that suggest that globalization is leading to materialism and has led to a steady demand for luxury items [Jacobs (1995), Wong and Ahuvia (1998)]. Ever since the opening up of global economy during the 1990's, we have been seeing a consumerist boom in India [DeMooj (1998), Handa and Khare (2011)]. This has been fuelled and sustained by the higher salaries earned by the employees in Software, Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) organizations belonging to the Information Technology (IT) and ITES (IT Enabled Services) industry sectors and Financial Services (Banking, Insurance and Non-Banking Financial sectors), which became the largest employer of India's urban youth.

The transformation is very evident once we consider the products we now buy in India as compared to the products we bought two decades back. According to a market research study conducted by 'Outlook Money' magazine and research agency 'Indicus Analytics', it was shown that the ownership of cars by Indian households has moved from 19.3% in 1998 to 40.3% in 2008. The growth of mobile phones is much steeper - 15% to 95% during the same period. PC's/Laptop consumption per household increased from 17.6% to 80% and the ownership of two wheelers moved from 44.7% to 67% during the 1998 to 2008 period [The OLM-Indicus Analytics – Spirit of Freedom Survey (2008)]. Another report by the leading Market Research Agency IMRB-Imprint, (2011) shows that the desire to own consumer electronics products and durables has grown dramatically. About 85% of people in urban areas now own a mobile phone. During the last five years (2005-2010 period), car ownership has grown by 37% and two wheelers by 27%.

Hidden behind this otherwise rosy picture is the fact that more and more Indians are taking high cost personal loans to fund their new consumption behavior [RBI – Trends and Progress of Banking in India (2010)]. It looks as

if the typical debt averse Indian middleclass individual has changed and is more and more leveraging debt to support their buying habits. The fact that causes alarm is that there is a steady degeneration in the asset quality of the retail loans [CRISIL Report, (August 2008)]. Accordingly, the segments that are most affected are personal loans, credit cards and auto-loans.

1.6 High Consumption Behaviors – The Causal Factors

To identify the reasons for such high consumption behavior, more specifically seen in the acquisition of status products, we looked into the literature to understand the contemporary theories on such behavior. Status goods are basically luxury or prestige products that confer and symbolize status for the individual who is in possession of the same [Kilsheimer (1993), Bagwell and Bernheim (1996), O’Cass and Frost (2002)]. Any detailed scrutiny about the reasons for such high consumption of status products leads us to the domain of materialism [Fournier and Richins (1991), Richins (1994); Wong (1997)]. Materialistic people believe that acquisition will bring them happiness, and possession in turn is considered as the sign of success [Belk (1984, 1985)]. Continued harboring of such beliefs eventually culminate in allowing acquisition and consumption of items, especially those that will fetch them prestige or status, as central to their lives [Richins and Dawson (1992)].

Studies conducted in this area have come out with the observation that most people who show such high propensity to consume, score high on materialism scales and low on self-esteem scales [Rassuli and Hollander (1986), Richins and Dawson (1992) and Richins (1991)]. This is where we have to consider the generally accepted notion that people become materialistic in their efforts to compensate for the feelings of insecurity and inadequacy [Kasser et al. (2004)].

Research has established that feelings of insecurity and inadequacy are generated in any individual due to the lack of self-esteem [Rosenberg (1989)]. People with low self-esteem may turn toward materialistic pursuits and values in an attempt to compensate for their low self-esteem [Kasser (2002), Richins and Dawson (1992)]. Feelings of inadequacies get developed during childhood that many a time leads people into high consumption habits [Kasser (2002), Cohen and Cohen (1996), Kasser et al. (1995), Inglehart (1971), Baumrind and Brown (1967)]. Family disruption and parental divorce are also considered as causes for psychologically deviant behaviors and depression in children as they grow up [Gilman et al. (2003)].

Very high rates of divorce are reported in the US. As per the US National Vital Statistics (2009) the marriage rate in the US is 6.8 per thousand of the population while divorce rate is 3.4 per thousand (NVS Report 2009). The proportion of children under the age of eighteen in households headed by a single female in the United States increased from 9% in 1959 to 22.4% in 1999 [US Bureau of the census (2001)] and there is higher incidence of poverty in such households [Gilman et al. (2003)]. These factors in turn contribute to low self-esteem and materialistic tendencies in the children as they move into adulthood, and they are indicative of the high consumption culture prevalent in the US.

The literature holds enough evidence to show that it is materialism in individuals that contributes to high consumption behaviors [Fournier and Richins (1991)]. Researchers have conceptualized materialism as a personal trait, as per materialistic trait theory [Belk (1984, 1985)] and as a value system, as per materialistic value theory [Richins and Dawson (1992)]. Though materialism as a subject has caught the attention of Kapila (700 BC), Chanakya (283-350 BC) and Marx in the middle of nineteenth century, it is only in the

recent past that serious empirical research has been initiated to understand the causative factors of materialism (Pannekoek (1942). Low self-esteem caused by peer influence is considered the key contributor to such consumption behavior during earlier days and now a higher attribution is given to media especially television advertising and television programs in general [Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003a), Williams et al. (2000), Shrum et al. (2005)].

1.7 Materialism and Self-esteem – Exploring the Linkage

The generally accepted notion is that people become materialistic to compensate for their feelings of insecurity and inadequacy [Kasser et al. (2004)]. They try and fill up the void in their lives by acquiring products and brands [Belk (1985), Diener et al. (1993)] and also tend to consider possessions as something that will fetch them happiness [Richins (2004), Kasser (2002), Meek (2007)]. There has been a spurt of research activities in the recent times to look into the contributors of materialistic tendencies [Meek (2007)].

Materialism as an escapism from inward feelings of inadequacy is where materialism finds its linkage to the concept of self-esteem [Rosenberg (1989)]. This materialism pathway proposition is supported by many [Inglehart (1971), Ahuvia and Wong (2002), Reindfleisch et al. (1997), Cohen and Cohen (1996), Kasser et al. (1995), Baumrind and Brown (1967)]. Almost all of these works trace the reasons for such feelings of insecurity and insufficiency to different childhood related factors. Childhood factors that cause low self-esteem are generally categorized under poor nurturing [Cohen and Cohen (1996)], parents being neglectful and adopting harsh disciplinary actions [Baumrind (1965, 1967)], economic deprivation [Kasser (2002)], broken homes and divorced parents [Bynum and Durm (1996), McCormick and Kennedy (2000)].

Kasser et al. (2004) came out with very revealing findings regarding different causative routes in the development of materialism. They suggested the existence of two pathways of materialism. The first is that people become materialistic as a way to compensate for their feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. The second pathway states that people through their socialization tend to have a strong desire for material goods. This happens through family, media and other people whom they interact with. They were of the opinion that the socialization pathway and insecurity-inadequacy pathway interact to create a materialistic orientation in any individual [Kasser et al. (2004)].

Kasser et al. (2004), would have suggested the existence of an alternate pathway, as they definitely would have felt the impact of certain social factors such as the effect of television media, influence of peers and social comparisons playing a developmental role in high consumption culture and hence materialism. They identified socialization pathway of materialism as a different set of factors that plays a major role in developing materialism in individuals as a result of high level of exposure to television programs and advertisements, together with the influence of other significant factors and social comparisons. But the authors [Kasser et al. (2004)] were of the opinion that these two pathways, insecurity-inadequacy pathway and socialization pathway interact in causing materialism in individuals.

There is not much empirical work in literature, related to the influence of socio-cultural factors such as peer group influence and susceptibility to social comparison in developing materialistic tendencies. Most of the work related to the socialization pathway is limited to the exposure to television viewing and television advertisements [Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003a, 2003b), Mishra and Mishra (2011), Harmon (2001)]. Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003a) proposed that exposure to advertising increases with higher rate of television

viewing and with this there is an increase in the desire for products that are being marketed on the pretext of enhancing beauty or happiness. Many people consider status products as products that enhance happiness as most materialists consider possessions as a route to happiness [Belk (1984, 1985)].

1.8 Rationale of this Study and Research Gap

Status consumption is believed to be closely related to materialism as materialists tend to buy status products with conspicuous value to impress others [Wong (1997) and Eastman et al. (1997)]. Status consumption can be defined as the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and also for others that form your social environment [Kilshemeir (1993)]. Hence it is not difficult to assume that people with low self-esteem will get into the consumption of status (or prestige) products as an act to overcome their feelings of inadequacy. Most luxury products fall under this categorization and the personality enhancers such as cosmetics and beauty products too.

The whole question arising here is on whether such accepted theories about self-esteem are applicable to India too. Indians are much more religious and culture oriented and hence they should be treated as different from their western counterparts [Dumont (1970), Mishra and Mishra (2011)]. Strong family ties are a part of the Indian social system. Needs of the children are well looked after in most families except may be in the case of the under-privileged class. Broken marriages and disrupted families are much lesser in India as compared to the west.

This research was undertaken primarily to understand whether the prevalence of high luxury or status consumption seen in Indian cities are caused

by similar factors as compared to what is observed in the west. The researchers first carried out primary studies among students undergoing professional post-graduate programs in management [Thomas and Wilson (2009, 2012)] and later among working executives [Thomas and Wilson (2011)], to understand the prevalence of such tendencies in our environment. In both these cases it was observed that there were clear evidences of status consumption among the respondents, without much concern for utility. 'Social Pressure' was seen as the key aspect leading to such buying behavior and Peer influence and social comparisons were observed as the two predominant factors contributing to such behavior. It was also observed that easy availability of finance was an important factor fuelling such purchases [Thomas and Wilson (2012)].

Later an exploratory work was taken up with MBA program students to check the incidence of low self-esteem generated because of childhood related factors [Thomas et al. (2011)]. The sample consisted of 203 final year students (who were present on the day when the schedule was distributed) from two leading Business Schools in Kochi. The results from the study showed that more than ninety percent of them had high self-esteem scores. The existence of high self-esteem levels can be justified as most of these students came from good family backgrounds, where their childhood needs were well taken care of, by their parents. This factor was established through this study. But contrary to the established beliefs, more than one third of the respondents who had high self-esteem were found to be materialistic. The study used the scales developed by Richins and Dawson (1992) and by Belk (1984) to measure materialism and self-esteem was checked using the scale by Rossenberg (1965). These findings tallied with the findings of Mishra and Mishra (2011) in substantiating the existence of materialistic values among individuals in

India. Ironically the interesting aspect about this phenomenon is that materialistic tendencies were found to co-exist with high self-esteem levels.

An attempt was also made to compare the results published by different researchers across the world, who have tried to empirically establish the link between low self-esteem and materialism in the recent past. Here again it was noticed that they could not achieve substantial evidence to prove that low self-esteem is the major causative factor of materialism. In a study by Mick (1996) where measurements were taken from two different samples saw the existence of practically very low, but significant negative correlations ($r = - 0.19, p < 0.01$ and $r = - 0.14, p < 0.05$). Studies by Chancellor (2003), found no-significant association ($r = - 0.12, p > 0.05$) between materialism and self-esteem. Recent studies by Meek (2007), showed the lack of existence of any significant relationship ($r = - 0.09, p > 0.05$) and Benmoyal-Bouzaglo and Moschis's (2010) study in France showed no significant correlation ($r = 0.039, p > 0.05$).

The findings from the exploratory study ($r = 0.004, p < .05$) and the results from a pilot study ($r = -0.104, p > .05$) taken up by this researcher matches with the findings from similar studies mentioned in the earlier paragraph. These findings actually dispute the views put forward by Banerjee (2008), that Indian society is generally averse to material values. The reason for this transformation can be attributed to a certain extent, to the larger penetration of global brands in India, because of globalization. It is similar to the statement by Venketesh (1994), "In India material values co-exist with spirituality", and it seems to explain better our environment compared to the notion that we are not materialistic.

1.9 Identification of Social Pressure Factors

As mentioned in the earlier section, results from the preliminary studies helped in understanding the role played by social pressure as a predominant factor in triggering status consumption and also the role of peer pressure and social comparisons in causing social pressure [Thomas and Wilson (2012)]. Further literature on socialization factors considered contributors of materialism were reviewed, and it was noticed that there existed evidences which indicated the role of socialization factors in causing social pressure and in turn leading individuals to high consumption habits and materialistic behavior.

The idea behind social pressure pathway is borrowed from the socialization pathway of materialism as proposed by Kasser et al. (2004). Socialization theories put forward that factors such as media including television, family, peers and social comparisons can act as contributors of materialism. Unlike socialization pathway, social pressure pathway is not associated with self esteem, and this remains as the major differentiating aspect.

Though most media channels play a major role in inducing consumption habits, visual media, especially television through its advertisements and programs play the most important role in the development of materialistic values. Many earlier works in this area have considered the effects of exposure to television in detail [Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003a), Gerbner et al. (1982, 2002)] and have already proved the role played by television in making people believe that what they see on television is the reality and thus inducing in them consumption related pressures [Moschis and Moore (1982), Signorielli and Morgan (1996)]. In view of this attitude to television is included as a social-pressure factor in this study.

Though seen as a socialization factor by many, family is not considered a contributor of materialism in this study, as review of literature has shown that the influence of family and family communications as negligible when compared to that by peers on post adolescents [Moschis and Churchill (1978), Meek (2007)]. Chan and Prendergast (2007) also have come out with substantial empirical evidences to show that family does not play any significant role on adults, in moulding their consumption habits.

There exists enough evidence to show that consumers spend more on purchasing status and luxury items when they use credit instruments or when there is easy availability of financing [Prelec and Simester (1998), Gourville and Soman (1998), Soman (2001), Sarangpani and Mamata (2008)]. Last few decades has seen dramatic increase in consumer lending and higher debt burden among individuals [Faber and O'Guinn (1988), Black and Morgan (1999), Canner et al. (1998, 1999), Lyons (2003)]. This greater reliance that individuals are showing to debt financing is bringing in them a cultural shift towards higher consumption behavior and associated financial distress [Nickerson et al. (2003)]. Such findings have led to the inclusion of attitude to debt as a social pressure factor which plays an enabler role in the development of materialism.

Literature shows that television channels across the world portray rich and affluent life-styles which cater more to the fantasies and desires of individual consumers [Shrum et al. (2003), Williams (1991)]. Internalization of such values by individuals makes them get into upward social comparisons with the rich and affluent class thus developing a craving for acquisition of those status material possessions [Ogden and Venkat (2001), Frank (2005), Royo (2007)]. Moreover in today's society, people make inferences of others on the basis of items they own and use [Belk (1980), Rosenfeld and Plax

(1977)]. This builds peer-pressure on individuals to buy and use such products which will fetch them social status [Calder and Burnkrant (1977), Solomon (1983)]. Such induced desire for more and more material items is bringing in a cultural shift towards higher consumption standards, driving individuals to have greater reliance on debt financing [Richins and Rudwin (1994), Lea et al. (1995)]. From this it can be suitably deduced that socialization factors such as attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt together cause social pressure in individuals which is ultimately making them materialistic.

1.10 Research Problem and Study Objectives

The materialism predominant in the western countries can be attributed to the internal factors such as low self-esteem. Even though an alternate socialization pathway theory exists, most experts believe that it is an interaction between the inadequacy pathway and socialization pathway that lead to the development of materialistic values in individuals. This can be categorized as the ‘push factor of materialism’ (as shown in fig. 4.6 in chapter 4). But the materialism experienced in Indian conditions, may not be fuelled by low self-esteem caused by childhood factors, it is due to socialization or externalized factors, which is the ‘pull factor of materialism’ [Thomas et al. (2011)].

Most studies carried out to substantiate the socialization pathway of materialism are limited to the area of exposure to television advertising as a causal factor of materialism. Practically very little empirical work exists linking other factors related to socialization with the development of materialistic tendencies. Through this study the researcher is trying to establish the role played by other factors contributing to materialism other than television viewing, namely, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt financing.

1.10.1 The Key Research Problems of the Study:

- 1) Is the materialism seen in our Indian environment, driven by factors other than low self-esteem?
- 2) If so, does -
 - a) The Internalization of values projected through television media,
 - b) Peer influence factors and
 - c) Upward social comparison- act as factors causing materialism.
- 3) Does positive attitude to debt or propensity to avail credit, play a major role in developing materialistic values?
- 4) Can these factors together be generalized as a different pathway of materialism caused by externalized factors which causes social pressure?

1.10.2 The Major Objectives of this Study:

Socialization pathway of materialism suggested by Kasser et al. (2004) states that the different socialization factors ultimately create a low self-esteem in individuals and it leads them to materialism. The root cause of materialism observed in India, known for its strong family ties, socio-cultural and religious values, may not be due to the interaction of internalized inadequacy-insecurity factors or external factors of socialization interacting to form low self-esteem, but can be due to the combined effect of the socialization factors leading to social pressure. This can explain why high self-esteem individuals also hold materialistic values.

Hence the objectives of the study are:

- 1) To understand the role of self-esteem as a contributor to materialism in Indian socio-cultural perspective.
- 2) To examine the effect of socialization factors such as attitude to television, peer influence, social comparison and attitude to debt as contributors of materialism.
- 3) To check the role of social pressure as moderator of socialization factors leading to materialistic tendencies.

Based on the above objectives, different hypotheses were formulated which are discussed in detail in chapter 4 (Theoretical Framework of this Study). The Fig. 1.1 below captures the summary of the hypotheses formulated for this study.

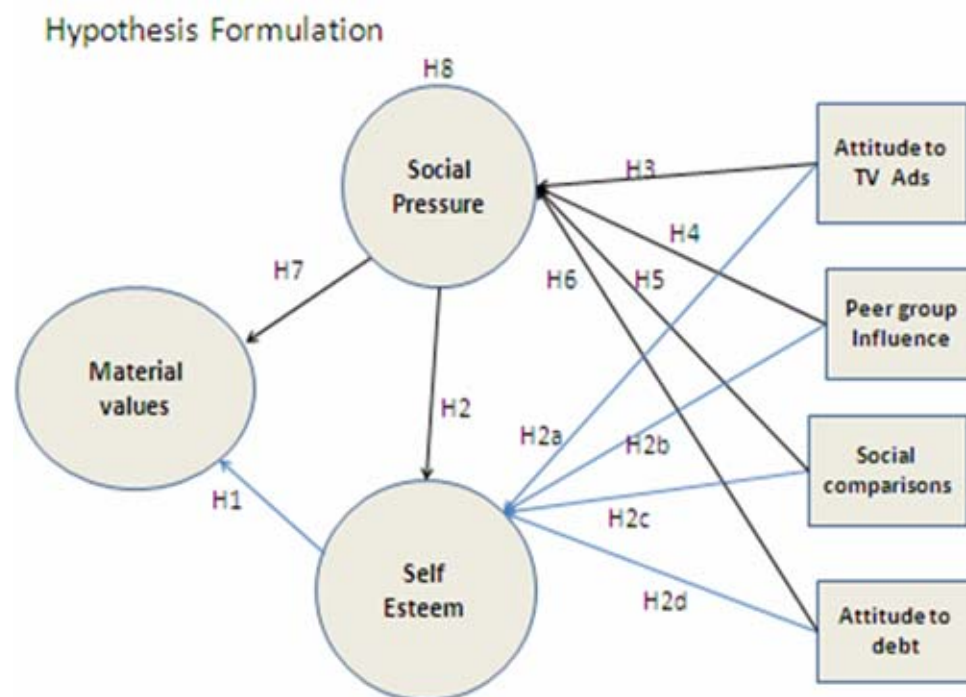


Fig.1.1. Summary of the Hypotheses Formulated

1.11 Methodology Adopted

1.11.1 Sampling Design

Population in this study is defined as “*executives working in the corporate sector in major cities in South India*”. Here executives mean persons working mostly in middle and lower level of management cadre. Corporate sector comprises companies in both public and private sector which are leading employers of professionally qualified youth. Major cities are the metros in south India namely Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi.

This study was carried out in three major cities in South India namely Kochi, Bangalore and Hyderabad and respondents were executives working in different corporate offices in these cities. Kochi was selected as it is a fast growing city known for its indulgent population. Moreover all the exploratory work was carried out in Kochi. From the other leading metro cities in South India namely Chennai (population 9 million), Bangalore (Population (8 million) and Hyderabad (7 million), Bangalore and Hyderabad were selected as these cities are more pronounced for their high consumption lifestyles [Mitra (2008)]. The younger executives were targeted as the younger age group is more susceptible to the influence of media and peers.

It is difficult to correctly estimate the total population size. Sample size estimation was carried out on the basis of the descriptive statistics of the materialism values observed during the pilot study. Mean and standard deviation for materialism were highest among the seven key variables of this study and hence this was taken for estimating the effective sample size. The sample size estimated with 95% confidence level was 416.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for this study. During the first stage the decision on the locations where the study is to be carried out was

made. Based on which we decided on the three cities mentioned earlier. Afterwards we selected fifteen companies each from these three cities. These companies were selected randomly from the sample frame comprising the list of companies which carried out placements in leading business schools in these cities. All these organizations were leading corporate entities and major employers of professionally qualified persons. As the researcher could not get required permissions from some of these organizations, questionnaire schedules were finally circulated only in thirty five organizations.

Though two hundred and eighty questionnaires were distributed in fourteen organizations in Kochi, the researcher could get back only 216 valid samples from this (77% return rate). Similarly two hundred and forty questionnaires were given to executives working in twelve organizations in Bangalore from which the researcher got back 191 valid samples (79.6% return rate). One hundred and eighty questionnaires were circulated among employees of nine organizations in Hyderabad and the researcher could get back only 136 valid samples (75.6% return rate). Thirteen questionnaires were discarded for being incomplete. This left us with 530 valid samples. During the course of data analysis seven more were discarded to contain the outliers observed.

1.11.2 Instruments Used

The study involved measurement of seven variables, materialism (material values), self-esteem, social pressure, attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt.

Self-esteem was measured using Rosenberg's (1965) scale and Richin's and Dawson's (1992) scale was used for measuring materialism. These two scales have been widely used and have been tested for construct validity in earlier

studies conducted in India. Attitude to Television was measured using a scale adapted from Rossiter's (1977) scale "Attitude to Television Advertising by Children". Peer Pressure was measured using an adapted scale from Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel's (1989) scale for measuring "Consumer Susceptibility for Interpersonal Influence". Social Comparison was measured using an adapted version of the scale from Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) scale for "Attention to Social Comparison Information" (ATSCI). Lastly, the attitude to debt scale was adapted from Lea et al. (1995) the scale for measuring "Consumer Attitude to Debt".

The scale for social pressure was specifically devised for this study from a large pool of items by factor analysis and reliability tests. A 33 item scale, for measuring social pressure and the four variables presumed as contributors to social pressure, was pretested in Kochi with a sample of 73 respondents. Based on the results the questionnaire was modified to the final form containing the 20 item scale.

1.11.3 Pilot Study

The schedule of questions developed was tested by distributing them to executives working in three organizations in Kochi and 48 filled responses were collected back and analyzed. The feedback received from this pilot study was used in finalizing the questionnaire. This pilot study helped us in confirming our premises that there is no significant correlation between self-esteem and materialism as shown earlier. It also indicated existence of significant association between materialism and social pressure.

1.11.4 Data Collection Process

For data collection, survey method was adopted as a fairly large quantity of data had to be collected. The samples totaled to 530, consisted of working

executives from 3 cities Kochi (210), Bangalore (188) and Hyderabad (132). Mean age was 30.55 (SD = 7.76) and 65% of the survey participants held professional qualifications.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections (appendix 1). The first section comprised questions on their attitude towards status products and to check the importance given to possessions and acquisition of material things. Measures of self-esteem were also included in this section. General information about the respondents was also collected through structured questions included in this section. Second section was structured to measure all the other major variables included in this study, such as material values, social pressure, and attitude to television media, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt.

Data analysis was carried out after testing for normalcy and after establishing reliability and validity of all the major variables. Statistical packages such as SPSS and AMOS were used for data analysis. Correlation and regression exercises were used to establish the relationship between the hypothesized variables and to develop models. Canonical discriminant analysis and confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modelling were used to test the social pressure model developed. ANOVA, t-tests were also used to support the major observations. A partial correlation testing was taken up to establish the moderating role of social pressure variable.

1.11.5 Flow Chart of Research Process

To gain better understanding of the methodology, the following flow chart, fig.1.2 is developed. It provides sequential order in which the research process has been undertaken.

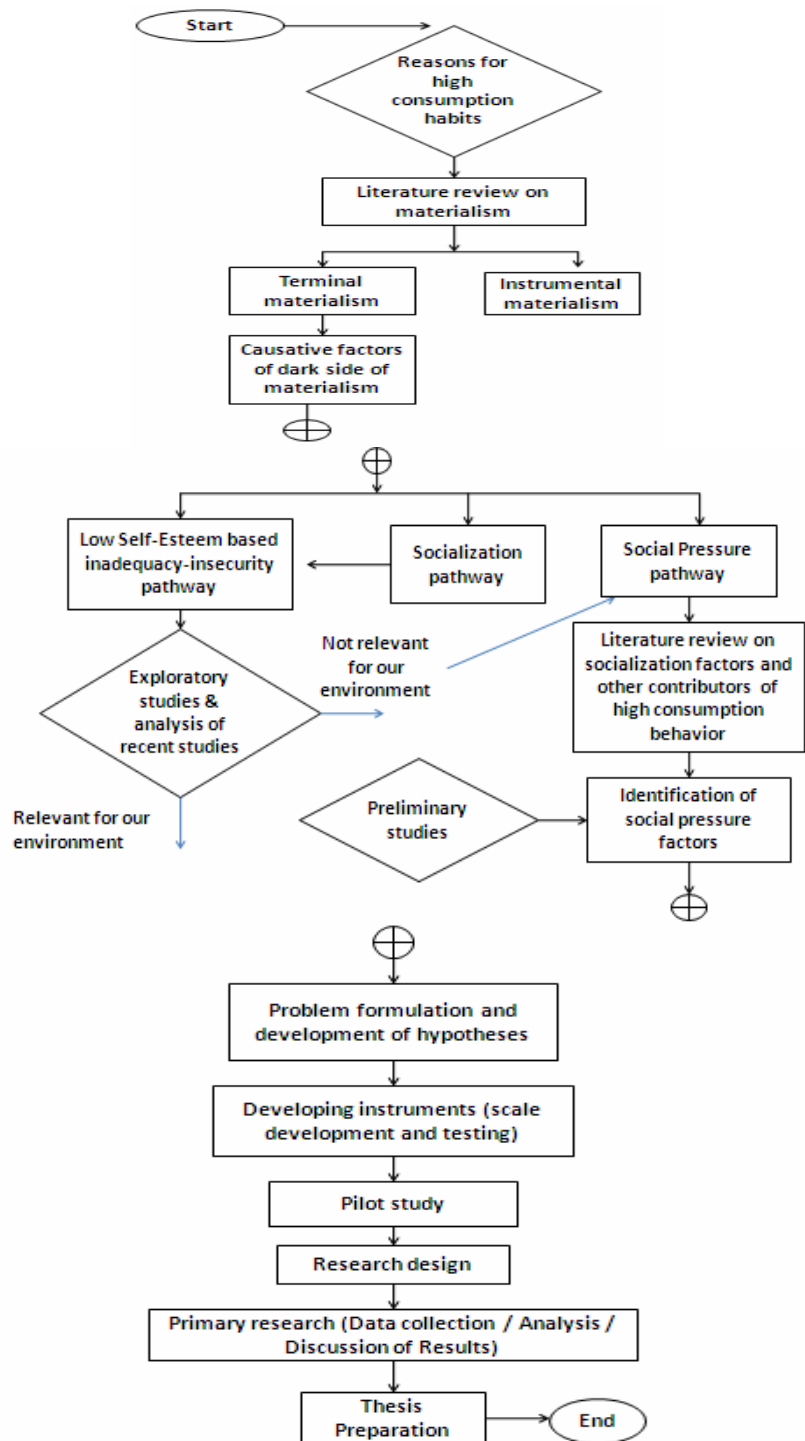


Fig: 1.2: Flow Chart of the Research Process

1.12 Structure of this Report

This thesis has two major parts and consists of seven chapters including this introductory chapter. The first part is based on the secondary data or the literature review organized in two chapters namely, chapters 2 and 3. Part-II contains the primary data based research designed to test the different hypotheses developed based on inferences from literature review and previous studies undertaken by these researchers.

Chapter 2 of the literature review part comprises two sections. The established theories and published works in the area of materialism are reviewed in the first section. The impact of media especially the role played by television in the development of materialism in individuals under the socialization pathway of materialism is dealt with here. In the second section concepts and theories of self-esteem are reviewed. Chapter 3 looks at all the socialization factors, such as peer influence, social comparison and attitude to debt, which are considered to be causal factors of materialism. And the fourth section is dedicated to the review of literature related to luxury and status consumption.

Part-II is a detailed description of this study particularly about the methodology adopted in the primary research, data analysis and results leading to the discussions of the results. Chapter-4 has a section dedicated to concepts and previous studies related to social pressure, followed by the gist of observations leading to the development of the hypothesis which is recorded as a separate section.

Chapter-5 contains the methodology part, followed by chapter-6 where the analysis and the results of the data analysis carried out are incorporated. Chapter-7 contains various discussions on the key results and observations coming out from this study.

Part I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Best Things in Life are Not Things

(Art Buchwald)

The literature review is divided into two chapters (chapter 2 and 3). Chapter 2 is further divided into two sections. In the first section the theories and conceptualizations related to materialism are considered. As our research is more pertinent to the factors that cause materialism, the inadequacy-insecurity pathway and socialization pathway of materialism are discussed in detail. The review of literature related to the role played by television media in causing materialism is included here. In the second part conceptualizations related to self-concept are discussed. These two concepts have been grouped together as they are considered as the two key factors that lead to high consumption lifestyles, according to the contemporary thinking.

Chapter-3 consists of literature review on factors related to socialization. The factors considered here are those factors which were accepted as factors of the alternate pathway to materialism by Kasser et al. (2004). This chapter is classified into four sub sections. Individual's attitude to television advertisements and studies on the effect of high exposure to television programs and advertisements is already discussed in chapter-2 and hence not included in this. Literature related to peer influence and group pressure is reviewed under section-1, while the literature reviews related to social comparison areas are included in section 2. Literature on the new dimension, namely the 'attitude to consumer finance and consumer debt' included as a contributor to social pressure and materialism is reviewed in section 3 and section 4 deals with the details of the review of studies in the area of status consumption.

MATERIALISM AND SELF - ESTEEM

Section I

Materialism

- 2.1 Concept of Materialism**
- 2.2 Instrumental Materialism versus Terminal Materialism (The Dark Side of Materialism)**
- 2.3 What Causes Materialism?**
- 2.4 Television Viewing and Materialism**
- 2.5 Summary of Literature Review on Materialism**

Section II

Self-Esteem

- 2.6 Concept of Self-esteem**
- 2.7 Childhood factors and Self-Esteem**
- 2.8 Self-Esteem and Materialism: Exploring the Linkages**
- 2.9 Summary of Literature Review on Self-Esteem**

Section I

MATERIALISM

2.1 Concept of Materialism

Even though materialism as a subject has caught the attention of Kapila (700 BC), Chanakya (283-350 BC) and Marx (middle of nineteenth century), it is only in the recent past that serious empirical research has been initiated to understand the causative factors of materialism [Pannekoek (1942)] In the recent past materialism has caught the attention and interest of philosophers, religious leaders, historians and more recently of psychologists, economists, anthropologists and marketers [Kasser and Ryan (1993), Inglehart (1981), Belk (1985), Richins and Dawson (1992), Mowen (2000)].

Larsen et al. (1999) developed a four quadrant model of materialistic conceptualizations. First quadrant is the 'epicurean perspective' which is of hedonistic orientation (material goods result in pleasure and hence they should be enjoyed). The second quadrant is the 'bourgeois perspective' (material comforts contribute to personal fulfillment and economic prosperity). Third is the 'religious perspective' (encourage resistance to material impulses). Lastly there is the 'critical perspective' which says that people acquire the desire for consumer goods and this does not lead to need fulfillment as is widely believed. They state that most conceptualizations in the psychological literature fit into the critical perspective.

Oxford English Dictionary (2007) defines materialism as "*a devotion to material needs and desires, leading to the neglect of spiritual matters. It is a way of life, opinion or tendency based entirely upon material interests*". Belk's (1984) definition of materialism: "*The consumer orientation known as*

materialism reflects the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in life" embodies the persistent belief that for consumers the acquisition of things will lead to greater happiness and satisfaction in life [Rassuli and Hollander (1986)]. Richins and Dawson (1992) definition – "*Materialism is the importance a person gives to his possession and their acquisition as a necessary or desirable form of behavior to reach end states such as happiness or an admired position in the society*" tallied with those by Belk (1984) and others.

Based on these modern viewpoints about materialism, the following two major conceptualizations of materialism find general acceptance [Fournier and Richins (1991), Meek (2007)]. They are Belk's (1985) view of materialism as a set of personality traits and Richins and Dawson's (1992) view of materialism as a value or value system.

Belk (1985) was of the opinion that people of high materialism attach their happiness to their possessions. He described materialism using the following three personality traits – possessiveness, non-generosity and envy. Ger and Belk (1996) added the new dimension of preservation, which is described as the tendency to conserve experiences and events in material form, such as collecting things or saving souvenirs. Richins and Dawson (1990) considered traits as something formed at an early age and remained relatively unchanged over a lifespan. Moreover Belk's theory of materialism as a trait, has not found the acceptance of others, based on the argument of changing goals and life satisfaction [Inglehart (1981), Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981), Henkoff (1989), Yankelovich (1981)].

Richins and Dawson (1992) tried to explain the concept based on the following three constructs: 'acquisition centrality' (acquiring material possessions the main focus of their lives), 'acquisition as the pursuit of happiness' (acquiring things will fetch them happiness and satisfaction in life) and 'possession defined success', (monitoring of achievements and successes by regularly comparing the quality of their possessions with what others have).

Diverging from the earlier view points on materialism, Inglehart (1981), came out with the 'scarcity hypothesis' and 'socialization' hypothesis. He believed that materialism stems directly from environmental factors as an internalization of economic instability or insecurity. This view point was supported by Kasser (2002) who, conceptualized materialism not as a value or trait, but as a mechanism adopted to compensate for unmet social needs. Failure to meet any of these needs leads to the development of materialism and ultimately to a poor overall life satisfaction. Seneca (2009) sees materialistic values [Richins and Dawson (1992)] as a result of the need deprivation as mentioned by Kasser (2002).

2.2 Instrumental materialism versus Terminal Materialism (The Dark Side of materialism)

There existed a consistent view, right from the early days, that materialism is inherently negative [Fromm (1976)]. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1978) propagated against such feelings of negativity that was getting attached to possessions and were of the view that all materialism need not be treated as negative. They classified materialism as, 'terminal materialism' and 'instrumental materialism'. Terminal materialism consists in desiring objects for the sake of possessing them. In contrast instrumental materialism consists in desiring and valuing an object because of the things it can do. Csikszentmihalyi (2000) is of the opinion that an artisan might value

his tools as a possession, looking at the utility that he derives from them. This is instrumental materialism.

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) further argued the evil side of materialism actually stems from the time and energy one spends in pursuit of these things. Belk and Pollay (1985) pointed at the evidences of both terminal and instrumental materialism in advertising themes, but mentioned that there was a clear trend by mid 1980's of terminal materialism based themes clearly eclipsing instrumental materialism based ones.

A number of researchers have looked at materialism from a value perspective and invariably almost all of them have noticed negative relationship between materialism and life satisfaction [Meek (2007), Burroughs and Reindfleisch (2002)]. Lower well being is resulted because they keep financial success as central to their lives, even over self-actualization needs and human relationships [Kasser and Ahuvia (2002), Kasser and Ryan (1993), Carver and Baird (1998) and Diener and Seligman (2004)]. In fact materialistic desires increase with increased income or purchasing power and thus neutralize the benefit of increased wealth [Easterlin (2001), Ah-Keng et al. (2000)]. There exists enough empirical evidences to show that materialism is inversely related to self-esteem [Richins and Dawson (1992)] and positively related to compulsive buying psychologically deviant behaviors and compulsive consumption habits [Faber and O'Guinn (1992), O'Guinn and Faber (1989)].

Most of the religious teachers and philosophers have affirmed that the joys of the intellect and spirit far exceed those of material possessions [Belk (1983)]. A large number of studies has examined the relationship between materialism and happiness or life satisfaction and all have shown a negative correlation between those constructs [Belk (1984, 1985), Dawson and Bamossy

(1991), Richins (1987), Richins and Dawson (1992), Sirgy et al. (1998), Fromm (1976), Biswas-Diener and Diener (2001), Fournier and Richins (1991)].

Diener and Seligman (2004) explored the relationship between wealth and income in life satisfaction and came out with the evidence to show that there is only minimal increase in one's happiness, once an individual's basic needs are met. Kasser and Ahuvia (2002), Ryan and Dziurawiec (2001) and Solberg et al. (2004) have confirmed the inverse relationship between materialism and life satisfaction. Wachtell and Blatt (1990) and Cole et al. (1992) used social comparison theory to explain the negative relationship between materialism and life satisfaction. The theory states that people compare themselves with reference groups and if the comparison is favorable they feel satisfied, if not they feel dissatisfied.

Nickerson et al. (2003) examined the negative effects of putting too high emphasis on financial goals. They used a longitudinal design to see if placing too high emphasis on financial success has any adverse effect on life satisfaction after a span of 30 years. These arguments matched with the findings of Prince and Manolis (2003), Cummins (2000) Meek (2007) Stutzer (2004) and Sirgy (1998). Easterlin (2001) argues contrary to the findings of Cummins (2000), that happiness generally remains constant over the life span as the income increases. Normally, as income increases, life satisfaction and happiness should also improve. But in reality this can be different, as with the increase in income, material expectations also increase, offsetting any benefits of the higher financial status. This model could well explain why happiness keep evading materialistic individuals, since their focus on materialistic goals always remain unmet.

2.3 What Causes Materialism?

Substantial amount of empirical work has taken place in the west and also in the developed countries which tried to identify the factors that are inherent in developing materialism. Based on these, two main theories or two pathways to materialism do exist [Kasser et al. (2004)]. The first pathway is about materialism developing out of the lack of need satisfaction especially during childhood, leading to feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. The second pathway is considered an outcome of exposure through socialization or media.

i) Insecurity and Inadequacy Pathway

This pathway of materialism is unquestionably linked to low self-esteem and there exists enough evidence to show that people with low self-esteem may turn towards materialistic goals [Rosenberg (1989), Kasser et al. (2004)]. It is also established by the work of Coopersmith (1981) that development of high or low self-esteem in a person is connected to an individual's childhood.

Inglehart (1977, 1981) argued that people who had financially unstable childhood would develop materialistic values as such individuals tend to crave for things which he had missed out during his early years. This argument found support in later works by Kasser et al. (1995), Ahuvia and Wong (2002). Inglehart's (1977) findings are well supported by Belk's (1985) conceptualization and not by the conceptualization of Richin's and Dawson (1992). But Chang and Arkins (2002) found that 'acquisition centrality subscales' of Richins and Dawsons (1992) as well as materialism value scale (MVS) was significantly predicted by the participants who were deprived of socio-economic status while growing up.

Rindfleisch et al. (1997) had hypothesized that family factors specifically parental influence, family environment and family structure

contribute to the child's material values. Meek (2009) and Roberts et al. (2003) have noted similar observations in their works. Other studies also have come to similar conclusions regarding the role of family environment and parenting as important factors in the development of materialism [Williams et al. (2000), Flouri (1999, 2001), Goldberg et al. (2003), Moore and Moschis (1981), Kasser et al. (1995)].

ii) **Socialization Pathway**

Socialization is considered to be an alternate pathway in creating strong desire for material goods. Kasser et al. (2004) believed that the inadequacy and insecurity pathway and the socialization pathway interact and the combined effect is supposed to lead individuals to materialistic tendencies. The concept of 'socialization' is considered to have evolved from consumer socialization. According to the conventional thinking, the socializing agents that affect this process are television, media, family, peers and social environment [Schiffman and Kanuk (2004), Meek (2009)].

Moschis and Churchill (1978) found that interaction with peers and television advertising, are significant contributors of materialism. Both these components teach people the expressive function related to consumption. John (1999) pointed out the role of social comparisons acting as a motivator for acquisition right from the time children can make out such inferences. Blumenfeld (1973) studied the development of materialistic values in children and found that children right from kindergarten days showed a desire for material goods for status. As they grow older, they desire for material goods to increase social contact. Goldberg et al. (2003) studied materialistic tendencies among teenagers and came out with the findings that children become materialistic and show drive for acquisition as they go through the evolutionary, self-centered stage of individual development. As they grow

older, they start to attach more meaning to possessions and desire to increase their means of acquiring these goods by aspiring for high paying jobs.

2.4 Television Viewing and Materialism

Television viewing and exposure to television advertising are the areas where considerable amount of work has been carried out to enumerate the causal role played by them in the development of materialistic values. It was Lippmann (1922) who first discovered the role played by media in defining our world, and discriminated between an individual's real environment and pseudo environment. He pointed out on how media effect makes people to vicariously try to reach that world the individual cannot personally reach. Studies by Gerbner and Gross (1976), Gerbner et al. (1982), Gerbner et al. (2002) analyzed television's accumulated long-term effects on its viewers and proved that commercial television cultivates those values and perspectives projected through mainstream television programs and advertisements.

Signorielli and Morgan (1996), Potter (1986) and Shrumm (2002) were of the view that heavy viewers of television internalize the central messages and perspectives of the reality projected through television. They were of the opinion that the 'cultivation' implied here is not just the stimulus-response model relationship typical to advertising messages, but a long-term, cumulative effect that exposure to television brings in. Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003a) based on a review of the literature of similar studies found significant evidences to conclude that advertising plays a significant role in the development of materialism. Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003b) later carried out an empirical exercise which confirmed their earlier findings that high exposure television advertising does induce materialism.

Moschis and Moore (1982) utilized a longitudinal design to study the effects of television advertising and came out with the findings that continued exposure to advertisements leads to increased materialism. Yoon (1995), Williams (1991) and Harmon (2001) all found supporting evidences to substantiate the notion that generally materialists hold positive attitude towards advertising. Schor (1998) added that heavy television viewing was correlated with spending more and saving less.

Richins (1996) pointed out that advertising where messages idealizing images of wealth and consumption are shown. Such communication will lead people to make social comparisons with the ideal images projected and in which the individual fall short of. This can create feelings of inadequacy which motivates the person to strive toward the ideal [Richins (1991)]. Secondly the idealization can force people to raise their reference points for living standards. Essentially the ideal images in advertising stimulate upward-social comparisons. Consumers normally buy products which matches with their self image [Clairborne and Sirgy (1990), Dolich (1969)], except when they have low self-esteem. Here they are more likely to be swayed by appeals to fantasy that portrays an ideal self [Sirgy et al. (1998)].

Faber and O'Guinn (1988) write in their work, *“since time is very limited for television programs or for commercials, information about a character's background or personality is often conveyed visually through the opulence of the setting they are placed in or by the style of their clothes or the products and brands used by them. While decoding this, automatically the association between possession and status is getting registered or reinforced. Therefore another outcome of mass mediated consumer socialization may be learning to assess and evaluate people on the basis of their possessions. This may eventually lead to a greater desire to have things in order to be positively evaluated by others”*.

Studies taken up by Chan (2003), Chan et al. (2006) and Chan and Prendergast (2008) in Hong Kong and China showed positive correlation between exposure to television and materialism. Mishra and Mishra (2011) conducted a study in 2011 in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, India with a sample of 252 youths and found that materialistic Indian consumers display more consumption innovation and a positive attitude towards television advertising.

All this shows that, there exists enough evidence to prove the link between television viewing or exposure to television advertising and the development of materialism.

2.5 Summary of Literature Review on Materialism

Based on this literature review activity, it can be stated that materialism is the importance a person gives to material possessions and the importance he or she attaches to the acquisition of such possessions as a major activity or major focus of his life. Most materialists get into high consumption habits, especially of status products, thinking that it would make them happy and provide them satisfaction. Research actually disproves this myth and points out that the materialistic individuals are more dissatisfied with their life in general and are less happy than their non-materialistic counterparts. This study is more aligned with Richins and Dawson's (1992) conceptualization of materialism, where it is seen more as a set of social values and it is the measurement of such values inherent in the individual that is undertaken using the scale developed by Richins and Dawson (1992).

The next primary focus through this secondary data search was to understand the factors that cause materialism. The generally accepted notion regarding the development of materialism among people attributes it to the feelings of inadequacy and insecurity which in turn causes low self-esteem in

people. Feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, primarily gets developed in children brought up under economic instability or deprivation where their needs are not well taken care of [Inglehart (1981)]. Other factors are disrupted family structure [Rindfleisch et al. (1997)] and lack of childhood nurturing [Williams et al. (2000)].

Kasser et al. (2004) suggested an alternate pathway for the development of materialism, which they termed as the socialization pathway. Their conceptualization of the new pathway was based on the research by many contemporary researchers. Socialization pathway shows that the combined effect of peer pressure and television advertising can lead people to high consumption habits and to create materialistic values in them [Moschis and Churchill (1978)]. John (1999) observed that social comparisons especially upward comparisons create desires to consume more and can cause materialism. Thus socialization pathway considered media especially television, family interactions and communications, peer pressure and social comparisons as factors that play a crucial role in the development of materialism in people.

As low self-esteem is considered one of the primary factors that lead to development of materialistic values in individuals, the next section will focus on the studies in this domain.

Section II

SELF - ESTEEM

2.6 Concept of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is another widely studied construct in Psychology and has caught the attention of researchers for more than one century [Leary (1999)]. Rosenberg (1989), one of the most cited researchers in the self-esteem domain is of the opinion that “*self-esteem is an individual’s attitude toward the self*”. Kaiser (1985) defined it as “*our feelings of self worth*” and Bukato and Daehler (1998) defined it as “*ones feelings of worth; the extent to which one senses that one’s attributes and actions are good, desired and valued*”.

American Psychologist, James (1890, 1906) revolutionized the way we think and speak about self. Avoiding the term ‘pride’, used in most works prior to 1890, he brought in the term self-esteem. James (1890) formulated self-esteem as a precise mathematical equation: “*Self-esteem = Success / Pretension*”. The theory of self-esteem got established through the works taken up in the early 1900’s. Katz (1998) considered self-esteem as a judgmental rating of the self. The individual has high self-worth when self-esteem is high and self-degrading or self-hate, when one has low self-esteem. Cooley (1902), Angell (1968), Coopersmith (1981) and, Mruk (1995) contributed greatly in extending James’s philosophy, that self is determined by the successful attributes of an individual and were of the opinion that self develops from the reflected views of others. Coopersmith (1981) believed that people who were successful and had effective defensive mechanism against anxiety would be prone to have high self-esteem. According to the author, a person’s value system and level of aspirations were important in defining what success is to him and concluded

that parental behavior was highly influential in the self-esteem development of children.

Rosenberg is accredited with the development of a measurement scale [Rosenberg (1965)], which is still the most used instrument to measure self-esteem. According to Rosenberg (1989), a person with high self-esteem is someone who has self respect and values his or her capabilities. Feelings of superiority and arrogance are not a part of high self-esteem characterized by him. Similarly, low self-esteem person is an individual who lacks self-respect and self-worth and holds a view about himself as an inadequate person. Rosenberg's proposition did recognize the impact of interpersonal and group acceptance factors on self-esteem, which is the central idea behind the socio-meter theory of self-esteem [Leary and Downs (1995), Leary (2004)].

'Socio-meter theory' used an evolutionary psychological framework to understand self-esteem where self-esteem is conceptualized as a complex system which is based on social or interpersonal acceptance or rejection [Leary (1999, 2004), Leary and Downs (1995), Leary and MacDonald (2003), Baumeister (1993)]. A more recent conceptualization of self-esteem comes from 'Terror Management Theory' where the drive to enhance, attain and maintain self-esteem is a critical part of the cultural anxiety buffer [Greenberg et al. (1995), Solomon et al. (1991), Pyszcznski et al. (2004)].

Another distinction prevalent in self-esteem research are the concepts of 'state self-esteem' and 'trait self-esteem' [Crocker and Wolfe (2001)]. Trait self-esteem is seen as a person's overall level of self-esteem that typically remains stable over a time period. State self-esteem is a person's self-esteem at any given moment and is affected by an individual's current mood and the environmental context. Deci and Ryan (1995) propagated the conceptualization

of ‘true self-esteem’ and ‘contingent self-esteem’. True self-esteem comes from the meeting of the core psychological needs autonomy, competence and relatedness. Beyond this, individuals try to attain external standards of success, achievement or acceptance by social groups, which lead them to develop contingent self-esteem.

Further we have the categorization of ‘global self-esteem’ and ‘domain-specific self-esteem’. Beliefs about oneself and the meaning a person attaches to those beliefs are critical to global self-esteem [Pelham and Swan (1989)]. Global self-esteem is what Rosenberg (1965) has typically identified with and it is about the overall or general picture of a person’s self-esteem. Domain-specific self-esteem refers to the feelings of self worth, which is more guided by group inclusions and values perceived by one’s peers [Kirkpatrick et al. (2002), Dutton and Brown (1997)].

2.7 Childhood Factors and Self-Esteem

Cohen and Cohen (1996) studied the effect that poor nurturing by parents can have on children as they grow up. Poor nurturing parenting style, adoption of too strict or harsh punishments as part of parenting and lack of structure and consistency in parenting lead to low self-esteem and materialism in the children as they grow up as these parental styles or practices do not meet children’s need for security and safety. Baumrind’s (1966, 1967, 1971) studies pioneered the role of parenting and its effects on later behavior of children, specifically related to parameters such as psycho-social adjustment, personality, school performance and self-esteem (Chancellor 2003). Based on her research, Baumrind (1965) had proposed the existence of three types of parenting styles – authoritarian, authoritative and permissive styles.

According to Baumrind (1965) authoritarian parents adopt a dictatorial style and often resort to harsh and strict disciplinarian standards in child rearing. Authoritative style chooses a more democratic mode, encourage verbal give-and-take and promote self expression and self assertion by children. Permissive parents do not provide any structure in their child upbringing and hence tend to be neglectful about the child's mental development [Hickman et al. (2000)].

Comparative studies carried out by Baumrind (1966, 1967, 1968 and 1971) and Baumrind and Black (1967)] showed that well adjusted, independent and assertive children came from parents who adopted authoritative style. Children who were less satisfied with themselves, more apprehensive and less sociable were found to have parents who adopted authoritarian style. There were children who lacked self control and self reliance to a much greater extent and they were from families who adapted permissive parenting styles. Recent research has shown that a clear positive relationship exists between parental nurturing and self worth which supports the assumption that authoritative parenting style leads to development of self-esteem [Furnham and Cheng (2000), Lamborn et al. (1991), Cheng and Furnham (2004), Ruiz et al. (2002), Demo et al. (1987), Hopkins and Klein (1995), Klein et al. (1996)].

Achenreiner (1997) also talks about the curvilinear relationship between self-esteem and materialism among children from 7 to 16 years and attributes this to the lack of self-esteem in them during this period. Self-esteem drops dramatically during early teens and builds back later. Findings of Robins et al. (2002) matched with the above observations. Similarly studies have established that child socialization and family related factors such as family integration [Yabiku et al. (1997)], family cohesion [Cooper et al. (1983)] and relationship

quality [Kashubeck and Christensen (1995)] were closely related to the development of self-esteem.

Lower self-esteem was noticed among children belonging to broken homes or divorced parents [(Bynum and Durm (1996), McCormick and Kennedy (2000)] and many such young adults were found to be more materialistic by Rindfleisch et al. (1997). Experts were of the opinion that it is the reduction in interpersonal factors, such as love and affection and not the availability of financial resources that contributed to the low self-esteem and materialistic tendencies. The children brought up in families that promote togetherness and share commonalities, experience strong interpersonal bonds which help them to compensate for any feeling of perceived insecurity, without the help of external reinforcements [DeGeode et al. (1979), Amato (2001), Amato and Keith (1991), Ganong and Coleman (1993) Burroughs and Reindfleisch (2002) Flouri (2001), Leary (2004) and Flouri (2004)].

Being raised in a disadvantaged socio-economic environment predicts high materialism for the youth [Abramson and Inglehart (1995), Cohen and Cohen (1996), Kasser and Ryan (1996), Kasser (2002)]. Children who remained deprived of many of the basic comforts, develop feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem tend to develop a craving for wealth and possessions, which they had missed during their childhood [Kasser (2002), Inglehart (1971)]. Socio-economic conditions that undermine the feelings of security in the early stage of one's life can cause insecure feelings during childhood and can lead to the development of low self-esteem. Kasser (2002) reviewed a number of studies effectively and concluded that individuals get oriented to materialistic values when they have experienced childhood family circumstances that do not help them feel secure.

2.8 Self-Esteem and Materialism: Exploring the Linkages

One belief that has gained wide acceptance among most contemporary researchers is the fact that individuals will start striving for material goods to counter the feelings of inadequacy and insecurity [Flouri (1999), Kasser (2002), Kasser et al. (2004) and Arndt et al. (2004)]. The literature shows that materialism and self-esteem are negatively related and people with low self-esteem would be more likely to be materialistic [Kasser (2002), Chang and Arkin (2002), Shroeder and Dugal (1995), Christopher and Schlenker (2004), Mick (1996)].

In marketing theory, self-esteem is seen as a factor closely associated with self concept [Sirgy (1992), Clairborne and Sirgy (1990)] and low self-esteem is said to be generated when there exists a gap between actual self and the ideal self [Schiffman and Kanuk (2004), Hawkins et al. (1998), Sirgy (1992)]. According to 'self awareness theory' put forward by Duval and Wicklund (1972), awareness of self is considered as an aversive state wherein actual self is often compared unfavorably to certain standards which are considered like ideal self. Social and cultural values deeply imbibed in such individuals will help them to reduce such discrepancies and regain their self-esteem [Duval and Wicklund (1972)]. The dissatisfaction born of the discrepancies between one's actual self and ideal self can lead one to the purchase of status products that will enhance self-esteem [Richins (1996), Duval and Wicklund (1972)].

Individuals with the low self-esteem developed in them through childhood factors etcetera find it difficult to meet with the discrepancies created by high ideal self levels. They would cultivate escapist attitudes such as alcoholism, drug abuse and overeating [Baumeister (1990), Heatherton and

Baumeister (1993)]. An alternative theory suggests that many individuals with low self-esteem get into less self destructive habits such as uncontrolled shopping, compulsive buying, excessive television viewing or high consumption of sweets [Moskalento et al. (2003), Faber and O'Guinn (1989)]. Earlier works in this area have conclusively linked low self-esteem to depression, anxiety and substance abuse [Mruk (1999)].

Review of recent empirical works did not give such conclusive evidences to show self esteem as the root cause of materialism. In a study by Mick (1996) where measurements were taken from two different samples saw the existence of practically very low, but significant negative correlations ($r = - 0.19, p < 0.01$ and $r = - 0.14, p < 0.05$). Studies by Chancellor (2003), found no-significant association ($r = - 0.12, p > 0.05$) between materialism and self-esteem. Recent studies by Meek (2007), showed the lack of existence of any significant relationship ($r = - 0.09, p > 0.05$) and Benmoyal-Bouzaglo and Moschis's (2010) study in France showed no significant correlation ($r = 0.039, p > 0.05$). The findings from the exploratory study ($r = 0.004, p < .05$) and the results from a pilot study ($r = -0.104, p >.05$) taken up by this researcher matches with the findings from similar studies mentioned in the earlier paragraph.

2.9 Summary of Literature Review on Self-Esteem

Self-esteem deals with the feelings of self worth [Kaiser (1985)] or it is an attitude to one's own self [Rosenberg (1989)]. Based on the review of a number of studies [James (1892), Cooley (1902), Coopersmith (1981), Rosenberg (1989), Harter (1990), Mruk (1995), DuBois et al. (1996), DuBois et al. (2000)] it can be concluded that high self-esteem gets developed by successful utilization of one's competencies and abilities while attaining one's goals. In contrast low self-esteem builds when people are neglected, belittled

and when they find it difficult to achieve what they targeted [Baumeister (1993)]. Cooley (1902) also introduced the thinking that one's perception of self, comes from the reflected view of what others have about him.

Some of the later works such as socio-meter theory [Leary (1999, 2004), Leary and Down (1995), Leary and MacDonald (2003)], global and domain-specific self-esteem theories [Dutton and Brown (1997)] and Self and Contingent self-esteem theories did support the success or achievement oriented theories prevalent earlier. They pointed at the role played by the acceptance or rejection by social groups and environmental factors [Crocker and Wolfe (2001), Kirkpatrick et al. (2002)] in the development of self-esteem.

Existing literature makes us believe that it is the child hood factors, related to unmet safety and sustenance needs that lead to low self-esteem and materialistic tendencies in any individual. Studies by Baumrind (1967, 1971) showed that authoritative and permissive styles of parenting create feeling of inadequacy and insecurity in children. Family environment and interactions [Cooper et al. (1983)], family structure [McCormick and Kennedy 2000), Abramson and Inglehart (1995), Cohen and Cohen (1996) and Kasser and Ryan (1996)] disadvantaged socio-economic environment which develop feelings of insecurity can all play a major role in the development of low self-esteem. Though most experts were of the opinion that low self-esteem led to materialism, review of some recent literature could not provide us with empirical evidences which could conclusively prove such linkages.

SOCIALIZATION FACTORS AS CONTRIBUTOR TO MATERIALISM

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- 3.2 Peer and Reference Group Influence
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Consumer Attitude to Debt and Consumer Finance

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Section IV

Status Consumption

- 3.13 Understanding Status Consumption
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3.1 Socialization Process

The conceptualization of social pressure considered here tally with the idea of socialization, which is considered an alternate pathway leading to materialism [Kasser et al. (2004)]. The term socialization actually finds its origin from consumer socialization. In the words of John (1999) “*Consumer*

socialization is the process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the market place”.

This involves three key aspects, as proposed by Viswanathan et al. (2000). It tells how a child or an individual develops consumer skills, how they develop consumption related preferences and how they develop a consumption related attitude developing a cognitive and affective orientation toward marketer's stimuli. Though early steps on socialization skills are learned from parents and other family members, television media advertising, peer group influence and social comparisons are factors that affect socialization in the later stages of life [Meek (2007)]. Moschis and Churchill (1978) observed that interaction with peers and advertising are significant contributors to materialism. John (1999) and Blumenfeld (1973) pointed out the role of social comparisons in the development of materialistic values.

In addition to these factors such as social comparison, peer group influence and influence of television media, another factor consumer's attitude debtplay a major role in socialization process. Many researchers have observed that materialistic individuals differ in their spending habits, specifically with respect to their saving behavior [Seneca (2009), Richins and Dawson (1992 Troisi et al. (2006), Watson (2003)]. Freinburg (1986) demonstrated how the availability of credit or usage of credit card increases one's willingness to spend. Literature gives enough evidence to show that easy availability of consumer as the primary reason for the high consumption culture prevailing among us [Hirschman (1979), Soman (2001), Soman and Cheema (2006), Adiksson and McFerrin (2005), Rao (2006), Narasimhan (2008), Sarangapani, and Mamatha (2008)]. Hence attitude to debt is being included in this study as one of the contributing factors to materialism.

Even though family plays a crucial role in providing the early lessons on consumer socialization to an individual, literature holds enough evidence to show that the peers play a much prominent role than family in molding a pre-adolescent decision [Meek (2007), Moschis and Churchill (1978), Chan and Prendegast (2007)]. Culture is another hidden factor that plays a crucial role in socialization factor. Materialism is seen as a cultural factor and it is measured as a value prevalent in the society by Richins and Dawson's (1992) materialism value scale. Plenty of research evidences are available to convince us that advertisements and television programs are a reflection of the prevailing culture or value system in any society [Pollay and Gallagher (1990), Han and Shavitt (1994), Gregory and Munch (1997), Taylor et al. (1997), Quarles and Jeffres (1983)].

In the light of this, further review of literature is limited to peer-group influence, social comparison and attitude debt. Theoretical constructs related to the status consumption is also explored here. The effect of television advertising and high incidence of television viewing in the development of materialism has been well discussed in Part I of this literature survey and hence is not being repeated here. This chapter is divided into three sections, the first section looks at literature in the area of peer group and interpersonal influence, the second deals with literature review on social comparisons and the third on the attitude to debt.

Section I

PEER PRESSURE

3.2 Peer and Reference Group Influence

The influential role played by peer groups or reference groups in molding an individual's behavior has found its place in literature for long. Hyman (1942) defined reference groups as those individuals or groups with which anybody compares himself with. Bearden and Etzel (1982) explained reference groups as '*actual social groups basically with whom an individual or group compare themselves*'. Assael (2005) pointed out that, peer groups play an extremely important influencing role in consumer behavior especially when we consider the face-to-face interaction groups, which has been endorsed by other academicians too [Schiffman and Kanuk (1997) Hawkins et al. (1998)].

Sheriff (1948), Merton and Rossi (1949) are among the early researchers to establish that individual's purchase behavior and other behavior are influenced by the groups they interact with. The study conducted by Asch (1956), is a widely cited work pointing out the role played by the peer groups in influencing individual decisions. In a similar study Venketesan (1966) observed that the confederate or naïve subjects (those who are influenced by the researchers) tend to make decisions which tally with that by the majority of the group. These studies brought in clear evidences of group pressure on the naïve subject to conform to group's norms.

Park and Lessig (1977) classified the different influences that peer groups play on their members as informational influence, utilitarian influence and value expressive influence. This finds support in the studies by Kelman

(1961) and Bearden et al. (1989). Informational influence is based on the desire to be informed while making product or brand decisions [Park and Lessig (1977)]. There are two ways how the consumers gain information from their reference groups, first by actively searching for information from opinion leaders and the second is by observation of the behavior of others [Laudon et al. (1993)]. Park and Lessig (1977) were of the opinion that utilitarian influence gets reflected when an individual belonging to a reference group attempts to comply with the wishes of the group so as to avoid punishment or receive a reward. The value expressive influence is reflected in the need for psychological association within the group. There are two forms of value expressive influence, first is to resemble the peer group and the second is to be responsive to the group's call due to the feelings for the group [Deutsch and Gerard (1955)].

3.3 Peer Pressure and Consumer Susceptibility

Bearden et al. (1989) defined consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence as *“the need to identify with or enhance one's image in the opinion of significant others through the acquisition and use of products and brands, the willingness to conform to the expectation of others regarding purchase decisions and / or the tendency to learn about products and services by observing others or seeking information from others”*. Many feel that the definition given by Bearden et al. (1989) reflects both the informational and normative influences [Deutsch and Gerard (1955), Kelman (1961), Burnkrunt and Consineau (1975), Park and Lessig (1977)]. Normative influence is thought to be either value expressive or utilitarian [Bearden et al. (1992)]. Stafford's (1966) finding that the extent of brand loyalty behavior within a group is more closely related to the behavior of the informal leader than to the

cohesiveness of the group are also factors that support the conclusions of Bearden et al. (1989).

The studies by Lewin (1965), Hansen (1969) and Venketesan (1966) on different types of groups indicated that group interaction is a strong influence in bringing changed attitudes and behavior in its individual members, even among those groups whose members were initially strangers. The reasons for allowing such group influence are based on the perceived benefits that one gains from such interactions. Informational influence works more towards gaining information on various kinds of products and services they need and also about the status acquired through such acquisitions which again is dependent on the circumstances [Deutsch and Gerard (1955), Burnkrunt and Consineau (1975), Park and Lessig (1977), Murphy and Cunningham (1978), Sridhar et al. (2010)]. Value expressiveness reflects the desire to enhance one's image in the eyes of the relevant referents [Bearden and Etzel (1982), Park and Lessig (1977)] and is about building a suitable identity [Kelman (1961)].

Utilitarian influence tells about the individual's attempt to comply with the expectations of the referents to achieve rewards or avoid sanctions [Bearden et. al. (1989)]. It may not be wrong to assume from this, that the individuals will choose their groups and interact with its members based on their perceptions on the net profits they gain from such interaction [Laudon et al. (1993), Murphy and Cunningham (1978)]. Thus it can also be inferred that consumers try to maximize the benefits that will accrue to them by being a member of any such group.

Bearden et al. (1989) believed that consumer susceptibility to reference group influence is a general trait that varies across individuals and they developed a scale to measure the individual susceptibility to reference group

influence. Calder and Burnkrant (1977) found that the influence that others have on consumer decision making is more pronounced in individuals who are more sensitive to the referents attribution, which they termed as attribution sensitivity. These findings tallied with the findings from McGuire (1968) and Kassarjain (1965). They found that the strength of the reference group influence varies based upon the products, groups and consumers.

3.4 How Peer and Aspiration Groups Influence Consumption Habits?

Social influences can happen only if there exist some social interaction or at least some opportunity for public scrutiny of the consumption process. For this, either the purchase or the usage process should happen in public view [Bearden and Etzel (1982)]. Studies by Bearden et al. (1989), Bourne (1957), O’Cass and Frost (2002) and Childers and Rao (1992) showed that the influence of peers varies based on the degree of conspicuousness involved in the product.

According to the most leading authors in the consumer behavior domain reference groups are generally classified into two on the basis of their level of contact - the primary groups and secondary groups [Hawkins et al. (1998), Laudon et al. (1993)]. The groups characterized by frequent interpersonal contacts are called primary groups, while groups characterized by limited interpersonal contacts are referred to as secondary groups [Hawkins et al. (1998)]. Parents, other family members and peers become a part of the normative referents as they provide norms, attitudes and values for the individuals through direct interaction [Childers and Rao (1992)]. Sports, film and other entertainment personalities or significant others turn out to be the comparative referents and they provide standards of achievement to which the individuals aspire for.

Aspiration reference groups do not have social interaction or direct contact with the referent and the learning is mostly media based or through direct observation of the behavior of the referent [Childers and Rao (1992), Cocanongher and Bruce (1971)]. Such aspiration reference groups also play a strong influence on individual behavior, as individuals frequently buy products thought to be used by the desired group in order to achieve symbolic membership in the group [Hawkins et al. (1998), Bearden et al. (1989), Cocanongher and Bruce (1971)]. Socially distant reference group's influence depends on how much observable is the consumption process as People make inferences about others based on the products they own or consume [Bearden and Etzel (1982), Belk (1980), Holman (1981a, 1981b), Rosenfeld and Plax (1977)]. More and more individuals are using products as a form of impression management to influence the attributions that others might make on them [Calder and Burnkrant (1977), Schenk and Holman (1980), Solomon (1983)]. This leads us to believe that aspiration reference groups play a major role in shaping the consumption habits of individuals.

Ford and Ellis (1980) through their research tried to establish how small informal groups influence the formation of brand loyalty. An in-store shopping behavior study conducted by Ford and Ellis (1980) indicated that when in a group, there were more changes in the shopping plans from the pre-determined one, than in the case of single shopping. It was also observed that people end up buying more and many un-planned items when they shop in groups as compared to shopping single. These studies confirm the belief on the role played by peers in influencing one's consumption behavior.

3.5 Summary of Literature Reviewed on Peer Pressure

Peers or reference groups are the actual social groups, with whom an individual or group interact with and compare themselves with [Bearden and

Etzel (1982)]. Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence is due to the need to identify with or enhance one's image in the opinion of significant others by the acquisition and use of products and brands which confirm to their expectation [Bearden et al. (1989)]. Park and Lessig (1977) classified peer group influence as informational influence, utilitarian influence and value-expressive influence. The utilitarian influence and value expressive influence are termed as normative influence.

Bearden et al. (1989) consider consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence as an individual's personal trait that varies across individuals. McGuire (1968), Kassarjan (1965) and Calder and Burnkrant (1977) all supported this. Based on these premises, Bearden et al. (1989) developed a scale to measure the consumer susceptibility to reference group influence. The degree of influence will vary according to the product class and is more prominent for status and luxury products which have higher conspicuous value [Childers and Rao (1992)]. So normative influence is more crucial for the premises of this study as those individuals who are highly susceptible to normative group influence buy products which they feel will fetch them the approval of people who are considered significant.

Ford and Ellis (1980) show that peer pressure do play a significant role in influencing shopping and purchasing patterns of their members. Lewin (1965), Venketesan (1966), Burnkrant and Cousineau (1975) showed that peer influence can bring changed attitudes and behaviors of individuals and can induce consumption of status products to conform to their attitude.

Section II

SOCIAL COMPARISON

3.6 The Concept of Social Comparison

Social comparison has evolved as an important concept especially in the study of how consumers process idealized advertising images and form self evaluation [Richins (1991), Gulas and McKeage (2000), Chan (2008)]. Social comparison theory, proposed by Festinger (1954), revolves around individual's need for self evaluation or a need to evaluate their opinions and abilities against stable sources of self reference. This finds support in the later research by James and Gerard (1967), Wood (1989) and Chan (2008). Since its formulation, social comparison theory has undergone many major revisions [Chan (2008)]. According to this social comparison usually occurs with an individual dissimilar to oneself [Martin and Kennedy (1993)] and in situations beyond face-to-face interactions and it is found that many female participants engage in social comparisons with the idealized images depicted in fashion and cosmetic advertisements [Richins (1991), Wheeler and Miyak (1992), Morrison et al. (2004)].

Social comparisons can happen both in upward and downward directions and the emotional consequences of social comparison depend on whether it is upward comparison or downward comparison that the person is engaging in [Schiffman and Kanuk (2004)]. Individuals, who engage in social comparison with remote referents such as celebrities or idealized media images, end up in building an inflated and unrealistically high estimation of the standard of living. The larger the gap between the individual's idealized and the actual standard of living the more the desire for materialistic possessions [Sirgy (1998), Ogden and Venkat (2001), Kasser (2002)].

O'Guinn and Shrum (1997) puts it rightly by stating that television and popular media such as films, advertisements and lifestyle magazines give a highly skewed picture of spending patterns portraying almost exclusively the rich and the upper middle class. Studies by Shrum et al. (1991), Morrison et al. (2004) and Chan (2008) comes out with evidences to support this finding and also observes that most often, these upward comparisons happen with celebrity personalities or vicarious models.

Yue and Cheng (2000) and Schultz et al. (1991) points out how celebrity or idol worship has become common among young people around the world. Chan (2008), Kahle and Homer (1985), Kamins (1990), Swann et al. (1992) categorized the influence celebrity endorsement has on young people's purchase decisions using the following three models 'source attractiveness model' 'match-up-hypothesis' and idealized self identity based model.

3.7 Social Comparison as a Driver of Materialism

Research studies by Ramnathan and McGill (2007) showed that many consumers who are attending a class, or participating in theme park rides or watching television with others, tend to copy the postures and mannerisms shown by other participants. Frederickson and Kahneman (1993), Gump and Kulik (1997) and Chartrand and Barg (1999) have mentioned of similar behavior among consumers in their studies. These studies prove beyond doubt that even without conscious efforts, molding of behavior happens in any group consumption situation.

Dusenberry (1952) in his book, 'Relative Income Hypothesis', asserts that people are satisfied with their levels of consumptions based on the comparisons between relative and absolute levels of consumption. Studies conducted by Frank (2005) and Royo (2007) showed that people do make upward comparisons in which they compare themselves with others who

consume more. Such comparative consumption leads to purchases and ownership of status goods [Hirsch (1976)]. Wachtel (1989) integrated the ideas of other researchers of his time and stated that “*our sense of contentment and satisfaction is not a simple result of any absolute level of what we acquire or achieve. It depends upon our frame of reference on what we attain compared to what we expected*”.

Wachtel (1989) stated that Americans individuals get into a relentless process of material pursuits mainly due to their living in a society where a sense of togetherness and community feeling has been vastly degraded. Wachtel (2003) delves into the intra-psychic dynamics and discusses how the focus on material possessions is further alienating people from more human sources of psychic nourishment. Reading this along with the tendency for upward comparison that many individuals get into, as put forward by Frank (2005) and Royo (2007), it can be conclusively stated that such individuals are heading for materialistic traps.

3.8 Psychology of Social Comparisons

In the words of Rochberg-Halton (1984), “*we and our inanimate environment are interacting with one another and they are not separate as we might believe. We actually extend ourselves into our inanimate environment. We are in-fact surrounded by things that dialogue with us about who we were, who we are, and how to become who we will be*”. He was referring to the process through which individuals develop self identity and this process starts during adolescence or late teens. Bloss (1967) in his book titled ‘Adolescent Passage’ wrote that the process of ‘individuation’ is what an adolescent endure with parental support as he moves from the childhood to adulthood. Tabin (1992) observed that teenagers use personal possessions to overcome the identity crisis.

She observed that girls who are moving away from home and going to college often take their stuffed animals with them. Rochberg-Halton (1984) supported the idea that adolescents may use their possessions to help assuage their unmet needs for nurturance, attention and autonomy. Flugel (1930) in his work, 'Psychology of clothes', indicates the importance that adolescents show towards clothing.

Large number of studies has come to the conclusion that most teenagers consider possessions or material objects as instruments to soothe their anxieties [Bloss (1967), Erickson (1968), Tolpin (1971), Rochberg-Halton (1984), Tabin (1982)]. Clarke (2007) in his dissertation summarizes the different meanings that object in the inanimate environment hold for teenagers. Accordingly some look at objects, as a connection with their family of origin [Tabin (1992), Tolpin (1971)], as an affiliation with their peer group [Erickson (1968)], as an identification with a role model and as an attempt to try on a new identity [Blos (1967), Searles (1960) and Seigler et al. (2003)]. Rochberg-Halton (1984) adds that teenagers use material objects as a means to express the affective states that they are learning to process and also as an extension of self.

Based on the works of Bloss (1967), Erickson (1968), Rochberg-Halton (1984) and Tabin (1992) one can find credence to the thought that adolescents and teenagers start using material objects through which they can extend and project their nascent sense of self. In the words of Erikson (1968), adulthood is reached after the individual has gone through the initial experiments with identity development and the process of identity development continues throughout adulthood. Studies on the personal possessions that people carry to their work environment has shown that people select and value those objects which they view as items which expresses their own identities [Augustin

(2004), Belk and Tian (2005), Clarke (2007)]. Josselson (1991) and Green and Adams-Price (1990) provide us with valid inferences on individuals adapting to materialistic objects or possessions as an attempt to project a positive or favorable identity.

Woodruff-Burton and Elliot (2005) came out with the view that the purchase of brands endorsed by idolized celebrities, takes place because of the need to compensate for the particular image that young people do not possess. Studies by Swann et al. (1992) and Erikson (1968) matches with the above findings. Thus we can suitably presume that materialistic values get inculcated in individuals because of an excessive concern for the approval of others driven by the identity crisis. These individuals get into social comparisons and try to build an identity favorable in the eyes of others by acquiring material possessions [Ryan (1995), Schroeder and Dugal (1995)].

3.9 Summary of Literature Reviewed on Social Comparison

Social comparison theory [Festinger (1954)] proposed that individuals have the need for self evaluation and they use references against which they assess their attitudes and opinions. This becomes the primary characteristic of the social comparison variable we are considering in this study. Social comparisons can be both upward and downward directions [Schiffman and Kanuk (2004)]. Upward comparisons with celebrities or idealized media images end up in building an inflated and unrealistically high estimation of the standard of living.

Though Festinger (1954) was of the view that comparisons usually occur within groups and in face-to-face situation, later studies have shown that on many instances, social comparisons occur with dissimilar individuals [Chan (2008), Martin and Kennedy (1993)] and with distant referents such as celebrities and models [Richins (1991)]. Kasser (2002) had opined that

individuals who engage in social comparisons with remote referents such as celebrities or idealized media images end up in setting up unrealistic standards of living. This leads to the development of larger than normal gap between idealized and actual living conditions, which can create urges towards getting into status consumption spree and materialism [Sirgy (1998), Ogden and Venkat (2001)].

Susceptibility of an individual to enter into social comparisons is the factor that is crucial to this study. Ramanathan and McGill (2007) through their studies have exposed the human tendency to mimic others around us. This leads us to the conclusion that in a society where people generally maintain high consumption habits, others also will be pressurized to follow suit. Frank (2005) and Royo (2007) showed that people who make upward comparisons end up in consuming more status products. Bloss (1967) asserts that it is the post adolescent identity crisis that makes people search for peer affiliations and upward social comparisons. Research work by Tabin (1992) and Rochberg-Halton (1984) supports this view point and through their studies reveal to us that during the post adolescent period, individuals get attached to material possessions mainly to overcome the identity crisis they face.

Section III

CONSUMER ATTITUDE TO DEBT AND CONSUMER FINANCE

3.10 Attitude to Debt as a Contributor to Materialism

Consumer finance basically refers to any kind of lending to customers by banks or other financial institutions and covers a wide range of activities including mortgage and housing loans, auto loans, personal loans, credit card financing and refinancing of different consumer purchases [Gupta and Agarwal (2003)]. Recently consumer finance assumed connotations of subprime lending in the US and elsewhere, as the financial services firms and banks started to change their policy to capitalize on the consumer boom and started to provide more consumer credit to customers with lower than perfect credit ratings [Lyons (2003), Black and Morgan (1999), Canner et al. (1998), Canner et al. (1999), Lindsay (1997), Adkisson and McFerrin (2005)]. In India too, post liberalization era saw rapid changes in the mindset of consumers. Estimates say that there are more than 450 million middle income customers earning between \$3000 to \$5000 a year who happened to be the prime target of consumer finance companies [Gupta and Agarwal (2003), Nair (2005)].

One major reason for the prevalence of consumerism is the easy availability of personal finance. We currently live in a situation where banks and financial institutions are after us to provide personal loans. Faber and O'Guinn (1988) revealed that between 1950 and 1985 US debt payments as a percentage of disposable income grew from 10.5% to 23.9%. The fact of the day is that along with the increase in the overall quanta of debt, there is also a greater increase in the number of people who are unable to keep pace with their debt. Studies by Raske (1979) and Mundis (1986) find supporting evidences towards this.

Lyons (2003) using a cross sectional data from the surveys collected between 1983 to 1998 period prove that debt levels rose dramatically between 1995 and 1998 primarily due to a shift from installment debt towards credit card and mortgage debt. Khan (2007) says that in 2004 an average American house hold carried USD 8000 in credit card debt and it was just USD 3000 in 1990. Khan also reports that revolving debt, especially credit card debt totaled to USD 73.5 billion in 2004, a quantum 31% increase in just five years. Golmant and Ulrich (2007) indicate that the bankruptcy filings in United States doubled between 1994 and 2002.

In India too most banks have appointed Direct Selling Agents (DSA's) for marketing credit cards and personal loans. These agents have contributed to the accelerated growth of personal finance components such as credit cards and personal loans [Rao (2006)]. According to Rao (2006) the credit card transactions which stood at 145.3 million generating Rs.269.51 million in 2003, grew to 243.3 million transactions in 2004, generating Rs.358.7 million worth business. One should note that credit cards entered India only in 1979, and there were 3 million cards in circulation at the end of two decades, by 1998-99 [Narasimhan (2008)]. The number of credit cards in India is said to have touched 9.5 million by 2004 [Sarangpani and Mamata (2008)]. By any rough estimates there were over 24.6 million cards in circulation by the year 2009, in India [Economic Times (2009)].

Narasimhan (2008) indicates that such exponential growth in credit cards in India is leading to numerous cases of default and also personal bankruptcies. The credit card debt outstanding with all banks amounted to almost Rupees 266 million by mid 2008. The Reserve Bank of India (R. B. I.) after studying the different customer complaints has developed a detailed guide line to various credit card issuing banks [Narasimhan (2008)].

3.11 Role of Credit Mechanisms in Triggering High Consumption and Financial Stress

Contemporary research by Richins and Rudmin (1994), Lea et al. (1995), Kasser and Ryan (1996), Schor (1998), Newton (2009) and Nickerson et al. (2003), indicates the cultural shift towards higher and higher standards of consumption which has become common today and the associated financial stress which is observable over a broad spectrum of income levels. They all feel that such situations have arisen partly due to the greater reliance that individuals show towards debt financing, to support their consumption habits. Kasser and Ryan (1993), Furnham and Argyle (1998) and Hobfall (1998) were supportive of this as indulging in such materialism driven consumption, leads to a range of emotional and psychological disorders. The work by Drentea (2000), Newton (2009) and Drentea and Lavrakas (2000) brings in clear evidence on the presence of a distress factor associated with higher credit card debt, as credit card debt accelerates over indebtedness due to higher interest accumulation.

Newton (2009) compares a number of studies related to the financial stress phenomenon and concludes that it is a combination of interactive forces at work in producing value structures and beliefs that favor external symbols of success over more intrinsically satisfying basic psychological goals that is causing such stress. O'Guinn and Faber (1987) opined that beyond the conventional reasons for credit problems such as slowdowns in economy, personal catastrophes or lack of financial skills to live within one's means, there exists the influence that mass media has on consumer socialization. Massive penetration of commercial media, especially television serials and commercials which glorify luxury and hedonistic lifestyles glamorizing materialism, can be considered the primary factors that lead to a high consumption culture and thus to increased debt [Faber et al. (1987), Cohen and Cohen (1996), Kasser and Kanner (2003) and Richins (1991, 1995)].

Research reports show that consumers are increasingly living beyond their incomes either to make both ends meet or in their desperate attempts to improve their living standards. Faber and O'Guinn (1988) and Ullman and Krasner (1969) finds such buying is often excessive, inappropriate and disruptive and can be considered to be compulsive when it results from compelling impulses or urges and is inappropriate and disruptive to their lives. Such consumers are quite naïve to personal finance and treat credit card as an alternate source of income or even as an indication of their future earning potential [Soman and Cheema (2002), Getter (2003)]. Research by Raske (1979) and Perry and Morris (2005) have come out with facts supporting the above findings.

Today a consumer can pay for his purchases using a range of payment tools. Researches by Hirschman (1979) and Feinberg (1986) are considered to be some of the earliest works in the payment mechanism area and they found out that in identical purchasing situations, those paying with credit cards spent more or were willing to spend more than those paying through cash. Prelec and Simester (1998), Cole (1998) and Tokunaga (1993) are researchers whose work brought in enough evidence to prove that credit card users overspend on a comparative basis with those who use cash transactions.

Heath and Soll (1996) came out with the proposal that consumers mentally budget their money to a number of items to which expenses are categorized to, such as food, clothing, rent, entertainment etcetera. Gourville and Soman (1998) were of the opinion that as the time separation between payment and consumption increases, the relevance of the effect of the past transaction in any new payment diminishes. This separation between consumption and payment happens in the case of credit cards as the payment gets initiated at a later date and maybe even a month away. Later work by Soman and Gourville (2001) noted that this dissociation between payments

and purchase, leads to weaker aversive feelings against the payment. It is also observed that when payments are made by cheque, consumers do remember the expenses as they write out the total amount in words and figures. Payments by credit card do not hold such salience and it results in weaker memory trace. Dickson and Sawyer (1990), Gourville (1998), Sterman (1989) and Soman (2001) came out with findings that most consumers are able to recall the items they have purchased recently using credit cards, but are unable to recall correctly the prices paid for these.

Hirschman (1979) and Feinberg (1986) came out with the finding that the customers who tend to purchase more are less concerned about the prices when they make payments using credit cards in comparison with payments by cash or by cheques. Experiments by Soman (2001) found out that those who had made a series of payments using credit card were more likely to make this additional purchase than those who made payments through cheques.

Garcia (1980) inferred that consumers may use the size of the available credit limit as heuristic in determining their future income potential and their propensity to use credit. Thus customers with large amount of credit limit were led to infer that they are going to have larger future income and display a larger propensity to spend than consumers with lower credit. Studies by Soman and Cheema (2002) and Norton (1993) observed that many novice users of credit card start to consider credit as an alternate source of income credit availability create higher propensity to spend.

3.12 Summary of Literature Reviewed on the Attitude to Debt

Consumer attitude to debt is concerned about an individual's propensity to avail credit facility offered by various financial institutions or marketers to fulfill his desire for consuming more or acquiring more status items. The

aggressive strategies by financial companies to target the marginal borrowers in the last two decades in-turn made credit easily available to such consumers in the United States and other western countries [Black and Morgan (1999), Canner et al. (1998), Canner et al. (1999), Lindsay (1997)]. Faber and O'Guinn (1988), Mundis (1986) and Lyons (2003) provide factual support to the fact that there has been a dramatic increase in consumer lending and higher debt burden among individuals.

There exists enough evidence to show that easy availability of loans makes the consumers spend more on purchasing status and luxury items in India also [Gupta and Agarwal (2003), Nair (2005)]. Rao (2006), Narasimhan (2008), Sarangpani and Mamata (2008) have shown that credit card availability and use has increased rapidly in India in the last three decades.

Prelec and Simester (1998), Hirschman (1979), Feinberg (1986), Gourville and Soman (1998) and Soman (2001) bring in enough evidences to support the view that consumers do spend more when they use credit instruments than when they pay by cash. This is because of the time separation between purchase and payment, which weakens the aversive feelings against the payment [Gourville and Soman (1998)]. Hirschman and Fienberg (1986) found that customers tend to purchase more and are not concerned about the price when they make payments using credit instruments.

Schor (1998) and Newton (2009) attribute the increase in household debt and related stress partly to the emergence of a consumerist and materialistic culture. Hence is not difficult to presume that, what is portrayed on television and the upward social comparisons lead people to spend beyond their limits.

Section IV

STATUS CONSUMPTION

3.13 Understanding Status Consumption

Norwegian American Economist and Sociologist, Veblen (1912) in his book 'Theory of Leisure Class', argues that it is not the actual accumulation of wealth, rather it is the indulgence of wealth by wasteful exhibition, that ultimately leads to conferring of status to individuals who get into such acts [Veblen (1912)]. Economists of the present day use the term 'Veblen Effects' to describe the situations where consumers exhibit a willingness to pay a higher price for a good, compared to a functionally equivalent good, as the considered good will bring in status to the buyer [Bagwell and Bernheim (1996)].

Kilsheimer (1993) defines the concept as "*Status consumption is defined as the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and also for the others that form his social environment*". In Marketing parlance these types of goods are referred to as 'Status Goods' or prestige goods, as they make an impression on others because of its symbolic value [O'Cass and Frost (2002)]. They surface through the prestige or luxury brands in highly visible categories which allows these products to overtly signal status to others [Dawson and Cavell (1986), Yang (2006)].

This concept of status goods and such prestige oriented consumption was highlighted by Hirsch (1976) under the categorization of 'positional goods'. Frank (1985) subscribed to this theory and added that the value of

positional goods is derived from the comparison to what is owned by others. So people who engage in status consumption are driven by social comparisons and also the need to show off or signal to others [O’Cass and Frost (2002), Packard (1959), Dawson and Cavell (1986)].

Oxford University press (2007) defines conspicuous consumption as “*the acquisition and display of expensive items in order as to get other’s attention on to their wealth or to suggest that one is wealthy*”. The term conspicuous consumption was introduced to us by Veblen (1912) to indicate the lavish spending habits, which was typical to the ‘nouveaux riches’. Prior research has built up the links between status consumption and conspicuous consumption [Bernheim (1994), Echikson (1994), Ferstman and Weiss (1992)] which points to the fact that the above concepts, status consumption and conspicuous consumption, do have significant overlapping and they are terms which are often used to convey the same meaning [Han et al. (2008), McCracken (1988), O’Shaughnessy (1922), Han et al. (2008)].

Based on a self-completion survey conducted by O’Cass and Mc’Eween (2008) the authors measured the respondent’s status consumption tendencies and the findings indicated that status consumption and conspicuous consumption are related factors but are independent constructs. They are empirically separate, yet related, which means that each construct is unique. Mason (1981) mentioned that conspicuous consumption do include activities for inflating the ego and also ostentatious display of wealth. Actually such effect occurs because of the signaling which leads to comparisons of the possession in terms of price, quantity and quality [Bagwell and Bernheim (1996)]. So it can be more or less deduced that status consumption leads to conspicuous consumption and signaling. O’Cass and McEween (2008) suggest that status consumption is related to a consumers’ desire to gain prestige from the status laden products

and brands, while conspicuous consumption deals with public display or consumption of such products or brands.

3.14 Status Consumption and Materialism

Research work by Nunes and Jhonson (2004) indicate that in the recent past a number of status brands which were initially positioned for the ultra-rich have started to move down with a range of products, to take advantage of the increase in affluence among the middle class segment of the society. These brands were not considered accessible to the middle strata of social classes earlier and it shows that the status seeking and conspicuous consumption oriented need shown by customer groups and identified the activities undertaken by such firms to induce conspicuousness and status value in their offerings [Passariello et al. (2008), Nunes and Jhonson (2004), O’Cass and McEween (2008)].

According to O’Cass and Mc’Eween (2008), consuming conspicuously cannot happen without the presence of others, who act as observers to whom the conspicuous consumer is engaging in signaling. They concluded that consumption of status products is oriented towards displaying one’s social image to others and their study showed that there exists the influence of people who are significant to them in the consumption of these products. Similar observations have been made by Shermach (1997) and Wong and Ahuvia (1998)].

Richins (1994) examined the types of possessions valued by consumers with high materialism scores and found that materialistic consumers placed higher emphasis on objects that created greater social visibility, which had higher estimated value and were coming under the classification of luxury goods. This finds support in the observations of Shroeder and Dugal (1995). Belk (1985) found that materialists tended to buy more luxury products. But

Yang (2006) points out that Belk in his conceptualization of materialism (trait theory), did look not only at consumption of status laden products but also at all kinds of material goods. But according to the measurement of materialism by Richins and Dawson (1992) status was closely linked with the component 'possession defined success'. This according to Yang (2006) gave rise to the feelings that status consumers are a subset of materialistic consumers, who place great importance on acquisition and possession of status products.

It was Wong (1997) who quelled this deviation in thinking. She asserted that materialism and status consumption are closely linked. She brought out her inference that the 'envy' factor in Ger and Belk's scale (1990) and 'success' factor in Richins and Dawson's scale (1992) are significantly correlated. Theorizing on this, she explains that any consumer envies visible but expensive products because only a few have them. In the mainstream capitalist culture, success is seen through the visible demonstration or ownership of luxury goods.

Eastman et al. (1997) explored the linkage between materialism and status consumption in the USA, Mexico and China and using Richins and Dawson's materialism scale and Kilsheimer's status consumption scale noticed that in the United States status consumption was significantly correlated with all the three factors (happiness, centrality and success) of Richins and Dawson's scale and with the overall materialism score. Highest correlation was noticed in the 'possession defined success' factor. Similar observations were found from their studies in China and Mexico.

Eastman et al. (1999) replicated the exercise to test their findings about the link between materialism and status consumption using their status consumption scale, with 253 American business students. They observed significant correlation existing between status consumption and materialism.

Kim (1998) tested 588 South Korean adolescents and Wan-Jusoh et al. (1999) studied sample of 239 students and validated the finding that materialism and status consumption are highly correlated factors. With such strong evidences we can confidently assert that materialism leads to status consumption.

3.15 Summary of the Literature Reviewed on Status Consumption

The concept status consumption has evolved from Veblen's (1912) 'Veblen Effect'. Hirsch (1976) categorized goods on the basis of the social status they impart to the few who own them and termed them as positional goods. Positional goods are items that are scarce, expensive and derive their value from the fact that they are not owned by many. Positional goods lose their value and the satisfaction derived from them if more people start owning them.

Packard (1959) observed that people often consumed status products to demonstrate a superior level of status both to themselves and to their friends. Study by Dawson and Cavell (1986) supported this theory. Kilsheimer (1993) defined status consumption as the motivational process through which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of those products that confer on them status. As status consumption is to gain status in the eyes of others, it is natural that people who engage in status consumption would be highly oriented to social comparison and also be driven by the need to show off or signal to others [O'cass and Frost (2002)].

Bernheim (1994), Echikson (1994) and Ferstman and Weiss (1992) were of the opinion that status consumption and conspicuous consumption are concepts which have significant overlap and are terms which are used to convey almost the same meaning. However studies by O'Cass and McEween

(2008) indicated that status consumption and conspicuous consumption are related terms but are independent constructs. This means that one who is seeking status value is distinctive from the one who is seeking conspicuous value. According to O’Cass and McEween (2008) status consumption is more related to a consumers desire to gain prestige from the status laden products while conspicuous consumption is related to the public display or consumption of such products.

High linkage has been established between materialism and acquisition and ownership of status products [Richins (1994), Shroeder and Dugal (1995)]. Studies conducted across many nations by Eastman et al. (1997), Kim (1998), Wan-Jusoh et al. (1999) have come to the conclusion that status consumption is highly correlated to ‘possession defined success’ factor of materialism. The studies by Eastman et al. (1997) provide us with enough factual evidences to prove that prevalence of a culture of high status consumption in any society is an external indicator of the existence of materialism.

Part II

PRIMARY RESEARCH

The following chapters are pertinent to the study taken up to test the various hypotheses formulated as an outcome of the literature review undertaken. These chapters discuss in detail the primary research process such as the methodology adopted, the analysis of the data collected, the results and major observations or findings. Discussions on the findings and major outcomes, limitations of the study and directions for future research are also included in this part of the thesis.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THIS STUDY

Section I

4.1 Social Pressure

4.2 Social Pressure to Consume

Section II

4.3 Gist of Observations and Rationale for this Study

4.4 Findings of the Exploratory Study

4.5 Social Pressure Pathway of Materialism

Section III

4.6 Development of Hypotheses

This chapter looks into the various conceptualizations related to ‘Social Pressure’ and moves on to develop various hypotheses of the study.

Section I

SOCIAL PRESSURE

4.1 Understanding Social Pressure

Pressure means the exertion of force upon a body by an external object [Random House, Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary (1999)]. The term social pressure is generally used in the context of societal influence on individuals to direct them towards a particular end or behavior. Social pressure as a concept has been studied in various domains mostly related to social psychology and

sociology [Garicano et al. (2005), Deborah (1994), Keunho (1994), Wallace et al. (2005); Stice et al. (2002)]. Though a few authors have used it as just another term for group influences on individuals [Leslie (2009)], for most authors it stands for the sum total of the various social influences that act on any individual.

Epley and Gilovich (1999) of Cornell University consider social pressure construct as a combination of all factors that bring in pressure on individuals to conform to opinions, attitudes or behaviors of others. This could produce strong feelings of internal conflict as many a time it would be against what one thinks is right. In case one does not conform to such norms, he may get ostracized by his peers and friends. Epley and Gilovich are of the opinion that deciding what is to be done often requires considerable deliberations weighing the costs of caving in to the pressure compared to facing the stigma of being shunned by the society. A meta-analysis by Wallace et al. (2005) showed how perceived is the social pressure and the perceived difficulty level weaken the relationship between attitudes and behavior.

Stice et al. (2002) looked at the adverse effects of social pressure to be thin, on young women and how such pressures induce body dissatisfaction. The above study draws evidences to the fact that the perceived pressure to be thin comes from media, especially television, family and peers [Cattarin and Thompson (1994), Field et al. (2001), Stice (2001), Stice and Whittenton (2002)]. Heinberg and Thompson (1995) and Levine and Smolak (1996), show us that the exposure to televised thin ideal images, results in more pronounced increase in body dissatisfaction because of the internalization of values projected through television. Stice et al. (2001) have found that it is such women who have internalized what is projected on television that are more susceptible to social comparison. This study by Stice et al. (2002) clearly bring

media and television, family, peer and social comparison as the contributors of social pressure on young women to be thin, compelling them to such behavior which makes them look thin.

4.2 Social Pressure to Consume

Social pressure to consume is the variable under consideration in this study and it is defined as the sum total of different societal pressures on an individual that drives him to high consumption behavior and materialistic tendencies. This study has identified four different constructs which act as major contributors of social pressure, namely internalization of what is projected through television media, interpersonal and peer group influence, upward social comparisons and attitude to debt or attitude towards availing credit.

The idea behind social pressure to consume is borrowed from the concepts of socialization pathway of materialism as put forward by Kasser et al. (2004). Though most media channels play an important role in consumer socialization we have limited our investigation to the role played by television as it is already established that television has a much larger impact than other media in perpetuation of materialistic values and high consumption culture. Addiction to television leads to the internalization or the cultivation of the belief that what they see on television is the reality [Gerbner and Gross (1976)].

Peer and family influence are the two other key factors of consumer socialization theory which influence consumption habits of individuals. Research by Churchil and Moschis (1979) and Moschis and Moore (1979) underscore the role played by family and family communication and in comparison with the effects that peer influence has on adults. According to

them beyond adolescence, the influence of television and peers is stronger in shaping consumption behavior than family factors. Chan and Prendergast (2007) support this theory as they could not find significant relationship between family communication and social comparison and materialism. This led us to consider only peer and interpersonal influence as the social pressure factor leading to materialism.

Social comparisons, especially with upward social classes, get enough evidence in literature as a contributor of materialism and high consumption behavior [Ogden and Venkat (2001)]. People with high social pressure have higher propensity to avail debt to conform to the societal values or to inculcate the behavior that is acceptable to them [Lea et al. (1995)]. So, attitude to debt also has been included along with the three items mentioned earlier as availability and propensity to use debt financing definitely plays an important role in supporting high consumption lifestyles.

Section II

4.3 Gist of Observations and Rationale for this Study

Fournier and Richins (1991), Richins (1994), and Wong (1997) have established that individuals who engage in excessive consumption habits have high materialistic values. Studies by Kasser (2002), Belk (1985) and Diener et al. (1993) showed that for many people acquiring new possessions is something that fills a void in their lives. Such feelings are caused by feelings of inadequacy and insecurity and the literature reviewed clearly points out that feelings of inadequacy and insecurity exist in individuals due to the lack of self-esteem (Rosenberg 1998). Kasser (2002), Chang and Arkin (2002), Shroeder and Dugal (1995) asserted that people with low self-esteem turn to materialistic goals to compensate the feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. But the pursuit of materialistic goals, instead of helping them to regain their self-esteem only leads to further lowering of their self-esteem levels. Thus the role of low self-esteem as a key moderator of materialism is well established and childhood related factors also play a major role in the development of high or low self-esteem [Coopersmith (1981)].

Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles [Baumrind (1966, 1967, 1971)], and non-intact family structure or broken homes [Bynum and Durn (1996)] help the development of low self-esteem in children from such backgrounds. Kasser (2002), Abramson and Inglehart (1995) and Cohen and Cohen (1996) recorded the link between disadvantaged socio-economic environment and low self-esteem development in children. Kasser (2002) provided enough evidence to the fact that children brought up in an environment where they were made to feel insecure developed materialistic tendencies. Based on these evidences it can be deduced that there are four

factors such as authoritarian or permissive parenting, non-intact family structure, growing up in economically deprived environment and also unmet safety or security needs during childhood that lead to low self-esteem as the child moves into adulthood. This is being captured through the schematic layouts shown below.

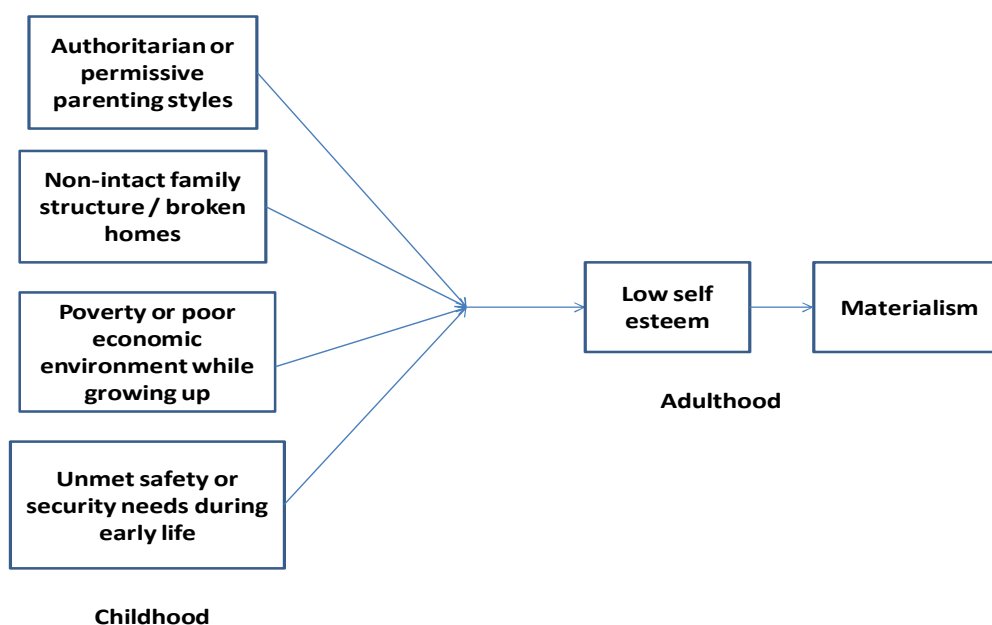


Fig. 4.1: Childhood Factors and Low Self-Esteem [source: Thomas et al. (2011)]

Kasser et al. (2004) conceptualized two different pathways of materialism of which the inadequacy-insecurity pathway is projected in the fig 4.1 above. The second pathway of materialism was the socialization pathway caused by the effect of media especially television, social factors such as the influence of the family, peers and social comparison with remote referents. While pronouncing this theory regarding the existence of alternate path-ways, Kasser et al. (2004) asserted that these two pathways interact, resulting in the development of materialistic tendencies. In turn it meant that people with low self-esteem are more influenced by media, peer pressure and other societal

forces. Fig. 4.2 given below is a pictorial representation of the alternate pathway theory discussed earlier.

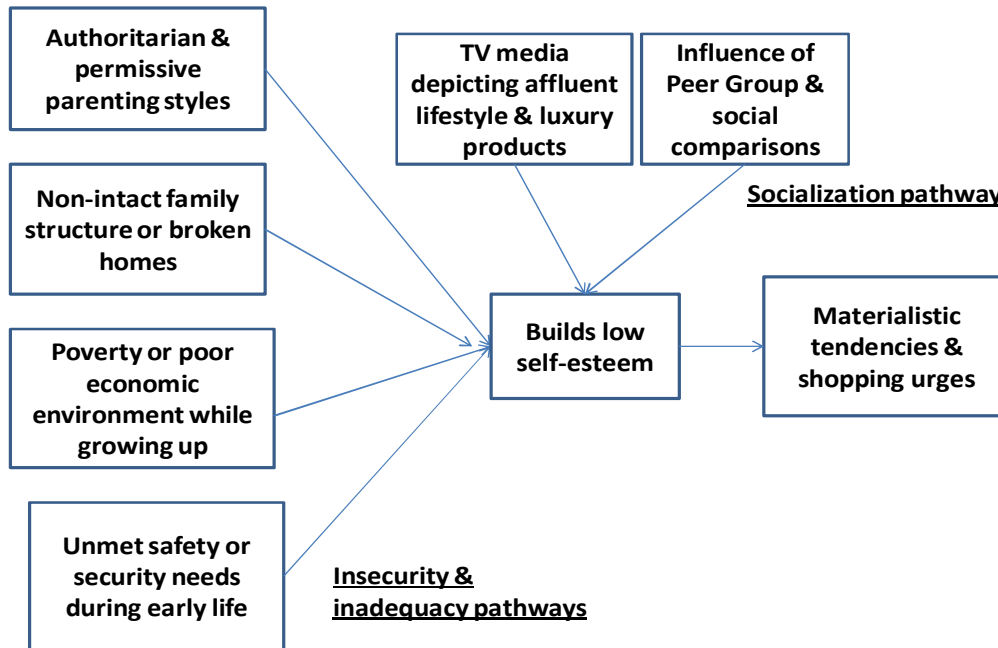


Fig. 4.2: Two Alternate Pathways of Materialism [Source: Thomas et al. (2011)]

The literature review on materialism has revealed to us that most materialistic persons get into acquisition and consumption of material possessions, especially status items [Richins (1994), Richins and Dawson (1992)]. The notion underlying behind such actions is that it fetches them esteem in the eyes of others and the belief that possessions make them happier [Belk (1985)]. There exists a large number of research outputs which tell us that most individuals who get into acquisition of material possessions thinking that it makes them more happy and contented find the opposite to be true. They find themselves more stressed and less satisfied with life in general [Kasser (2002), Diener et al. (1993)]. There is enough evidence to believe that many individuals who adapt to high consumption life styles end up in financial

distress and some even end up with psychologically deviant behaviors, like compulsive consumption habits [O’Guinn and Faber (1989), Faber and O’Guinn (1992)]. Fig. 4.3 below shows the forward linkages of the materialism layout indicating the negative facets connected with materialism.

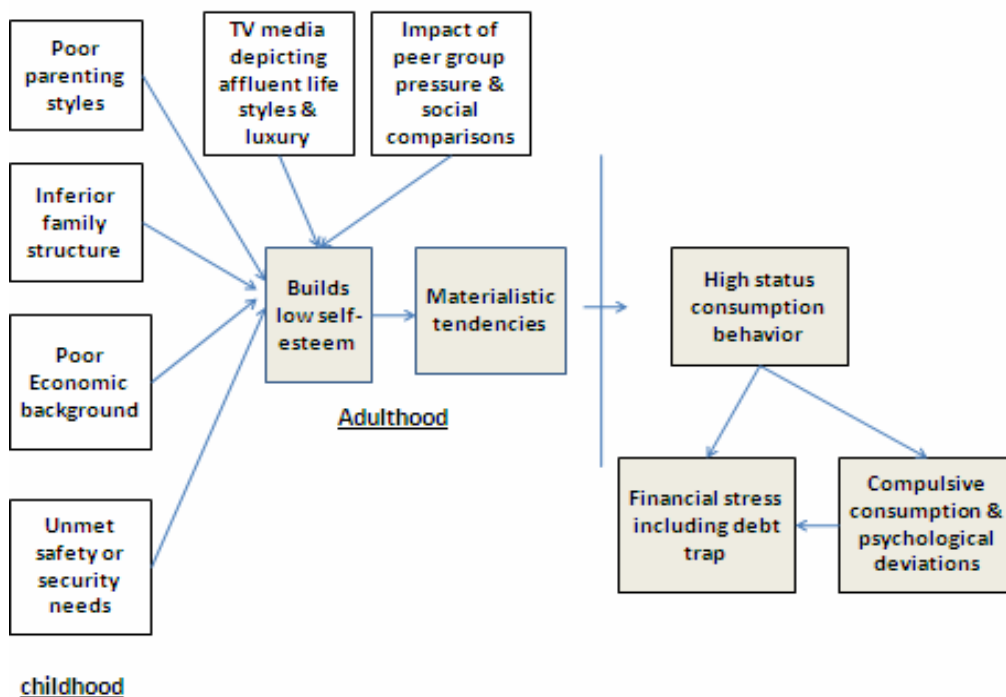


Fig. 4.3: Pathways of Materialism and Forward Linkages [Source: Thomas et al. (2011)]

4.4 Findings of the Exploratory Study

An exploratory study was undertaken by the author, prior to the main study [Thomas et al. (2011)], to ascertain the role of childhood factors and low self-esteem as causative factors of materialism in our environment, in India. The study was conducted with a sample of 203 post graduate students, who were in the final year of MBA program in two institutions in Kochi, selected randomly. Materialistic values of the respondents were measured using both Richins and Dawson’s scale and Belk’s scale, while self-esteem scores were measured using Rosenberg’s global self-esteem scale.

Richins and Dawson's materialism values scale showed a correlation of $r=0.004$ ($p < 0.05$) with self-esteem, which actually indicates that no significant relationship exists between the two constructs. Materialism values measured using Belk's materialism scale was not considered the reliability coefficient, Cronbach alpha value was only 0.468 for Belk's scale while the alpha value for Richins and Dawson scale was 0.701. Rosenberg's global self-esteem scale was used for measuring self-esteem scores and the scale had a 0.777 alpha reliability score. On further analysis, it was noted that most of the participants (203 post graduate students) had high self-esteem (mean = 30.5 and SD = 4.08; mean value being 75% of maximum) and had happy childhood where their needs were well looked after. All the four factors which were considered causative factors of low self-esteem had no significant negative association with self-esteem. Chancellor (2003) too in her thesis observed high self-esteem levels and she associated this to the positive childhood related factors such as parenting.

The results of a few studies carried out recently to evaluate the existence of any association between materialism and self-esteem constructs are listed below.

- Study by Mick (1996) on two different sample groups saw significant but low correlations ($r = - 0.19$, $p < 0.01$ and $r = - .14$, $p < 0.05$)
- Study by Chancellor (2003) showed no significant relationship ($r = - 0.12$, $p > 0.05$)
- Study by Meek (2007): showed lack of existence of any significant relationships ($r = - 0.09$, $p > 0.05$)
- Benmoyal-Bouzaglo and Moschis's (2010) study in France also showed lack of any significant correlation ($r = 0.039$, $p > 0.05$).

Similar results were observed during our pilot study with 48 executives in Kochi ($r = -0.104$, $p > 0.05$) which showed the lack of significant correlation between materialism values and self-esteem. This pilot study exercise too showed significant positive correlation between materialism and social pressure ($r = 0.597$, $p < 0.001$). Such results actually do bring in doubts about the role of low self-esteem as a contributor of materialism.

The results of some of the recent studies which used Rosenberg's self-esteem scale across many nations were analyzed and are given in the table-1 below. The mean value of the self-esteem scores expressed as percentage of the total score (maximum value) shows that it ranges from 49% to 85%. On comparing this to self-esteem scores obtained in our exploratory study, the mean value to maximum score of 75% can be treated as an indicator of prevalence of high self-esteem among our respondents. Hence it can be concluded that a large part of the sample considered in the exploratory study had high self-esteem.

Table 4.1: Comparisons of Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scores

Sl. no.	Country	Sample size (N)	Alpha Value	Mean	SD	Mean % of Maximum score	Author
1a.	Australia	51	0.8	19.6	4.0	49%	Barret et al. (1999)
1b.	-Do-	-Do-		22.5	5.2	56.25%	- Do-
2.	British Columbia	1782	0.78	20	3.0	50%	Richardson et al. (2009)
3.	Singapore	153	0.71	26.23	4.74	65.5%	Ang et al. (2006)
4.	Netherlands	140	0.85	33.97	6.4	67.9%	De-Bruin et al. (2008)
5.	Portugal	1763	0.845	31.57	4.9	78.9%	Vasconselos-Repos et al. (2011)
6.	USA	171	0.89	31.77	4.71	79.4%	Hayden et al. (2006)
7.	USA	192	0.88	32.2	5.0	80.5%	Meek (2009)
8.	USA	209	0.81	42.7	5.5	85%	Conseur et al. (2008)

Hofstede (1991) had noted that the culture prevalent in America and other western nations is more individualistic when compared to the collective cultures in Asian nations like India or Korea. Dumont (1970) showed this fundamental difference of Indians from their western counterparts in his book 'The Caste System and its Implications'. Family ties are still very deep in India and cases of divorce are of much low compared to western nations [Kumar and Gupta (2003)]. This can be the primary reason for having higher self-esteem scores among the considered sample population, while many of them had materialistic values.

The results from the exploratory study [Thomas et al. (2011)] showed that about thirty three percentage of the population are materialistic. This showed the co-existence of high self-esteem and materialistic values which is contrary to the conventional beliefs. This made us question the prevalent thinking on the causative factors behind materialistic tendencies as low self-esteem oriented and also the premise that in our environment, materialism may not be driven by such internalized factors related to childhood, but it might be a set of externalized factors which are called the pull factors.

Conventional thinking has considered low self-esteem as the cause of violence, crime and aggression. Baumeister et al. (1996) made an interdisciplinary review of evidences and came out with the finding that high self-esteem individuals also involve in such acts of aggression and violence. They found out that high esteem individuals involved in such acts as an outcome of their threatened egotism or when their highly favorable views about self are disputed. Jordan et al. (2003) made similar observations about high esteem individuals. The aim of this study too was to investigate and see whether such factors are behind the co-existence of materialistic values and high self-esteem.

Schlenker et al. (1990) found out that high self-esteem people tend to be egotistical when evaluative social pressure is on them and this motivate them

to make good impression on others. This leads them to such behaviors including consumption patterns which make them favorable in the eyes of others. High self-esteem people always tend to internalize success by raising their self ratings. Tesser et al. (2006) showed that social pressure increased conformity and this conformity was positively associated with self doubt. These recent research works support our thinking that people of high self-esteem can be materialistic.

4.5 Social Pressure Pathway of Materialism

Those findings prompted the researcher to look at a different model other than the insecurity - inadequacy pathway based model of materialism. The socialization pathway revealed to us that socialization factors such as media (especially television), peers, family and social comparison can be the causative factors of materialism [Kasser et al. (2004)]. Most studies taken up on socialization pathway were trying to establish the relationship between television viewing and materialistic values. Research by Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003a) showed that most heavy viewers of television held materialistic values and the literature review carried out indicates the existence of such relationships. Our literature study made us come to the following conclusions.

Television channels across the world portray rich and affluent lifestyles which caters more to the fantasies and desires of individuals [William (1991), Shrum et al. (2003)]. Internalization of such values projected through television [Moschis and Moore (1982)] makes large number of individuals, especially youngsters, to get into upward social comparisons [Frank (2005), Royo (2007)] which develops in them a higher penchant for acquiring more and more material possessions [Ogden and Venkat (2001), Kasser (2002)].

In today's society people make inferences of others based on the items they own and use [Belk (1980), Rosenfeld and Plax (1977)] and this naturally builds pressure on them, from their peers to buy and use such products which will provide them social status [Calder and Burnkrant (1977), Schenk and Holman (1980), Solomon (1983)]. This incessant desire for more and more material items brings in a cultural shift towards higher consumption standards and it leads many individuals to have greater reliance on debt financing [Richins and Rudwin (1994), Lea et al. (1995), Kasser and Ryan (1996), Nickerson et al. (2003)]. These inferences from literature clearly point out that media including television, peers, social comparisons and attitude to debt together cause social pressure on individuals and make them materialistic. Thus social pressure seems to be the cause that pushes high esteem individuals into materialism.

Attitude to television media, peer influence, social comparisons along with attitude to debt were considered to be the external factors that cause social pressure which finally create materialistic tendencies in individuals. These were together called 'social pressure' factors. The figure (fig. 4.4) below is an attempt to capture the new social pressure based pathway of materialism that is being suggested through this study. The shaded portions actually denote the broad areas which are being looked into through this study, based on which hypotheses are formulated.

In view of the findings from our exploratory study, the materialism model has been suitably modified to include the observed phenomenon of individuals with high self esteem but having high materialistic values. As the exploratory study has been carried out only in India, results obtained cannot be used for conclusively negating the inadequacy-insecurity and socialization pathways of materialism, believed to be cause of materialism in the western world. Instead it is

being proposed that materialism observed in Indian condition is not due to low self-esteem based pathways, rather it is caused by social pressure pathway.

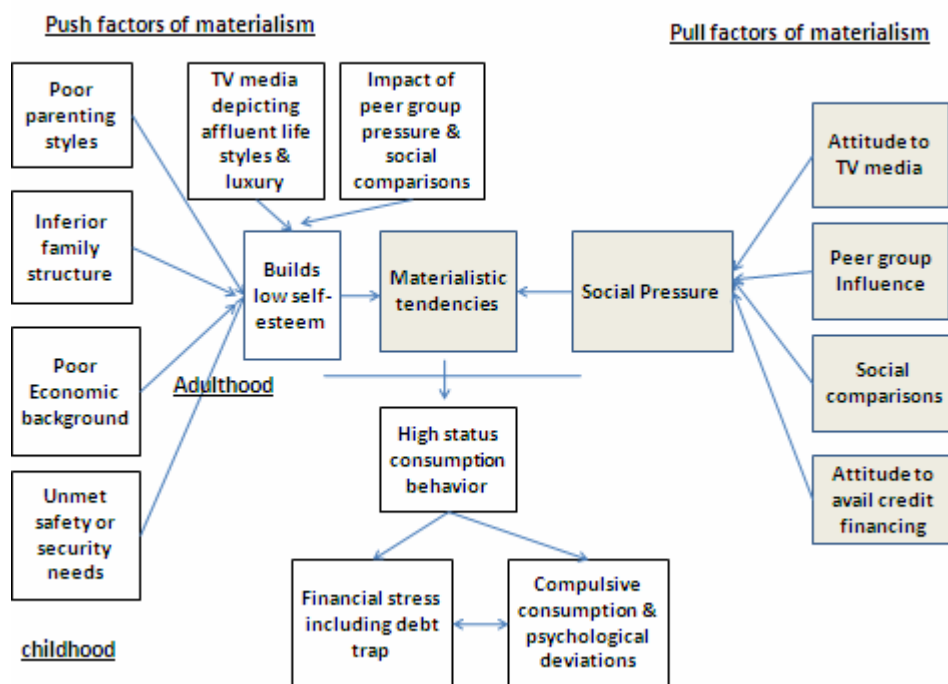


Fig. 4.4: The Push and Pull Factors of Materialism (Source: Thomas et al. 2011)

Parallels have been drawn from the Drive Theory and Incentive theories [Hull (1943)] used to understand the motivation process. Hull's Drive theory emphasizes how internal states of tension push people in certain directions. Incentive theory emphasizes how external stimuli pull people in certain directions. According to drive theory the source of motivation is within the individual and according to incentive theory the source of motivation lies outside the organism. Drive and incentive models of motivation are often contrasted as push versus pull theories. The self esteem based pathways are internal need driven and hence can be categorized as push oriented materialism. Social pressure pathway represents the pull factors that cause materialism.

Section III

4.6 Development of Hypotheses

Self-esteem and materialism: Based on the literature and the conventional thinking it can be assumed that there should be a negative relationship between materialism and self-esteem, or in other words low self-esteem and materialism scores of individuals should have strong negative correlation. The exploratory study undertaken earlier by these researchers [Thomas et al. (2011)] had put forward findings contrary to this and hence it is decided to cross check these findings.

Hypothesis 1: Material values and self-esteem are associated terms

Self-esteem and Social pressure: In the exploratory study prior to this study we found out the lack of any relationship between self-esteem and social pressure. We undertake to cross check this finding here again and hence these hypotheses.

Hypothesis 2 : There exists a relationship between self-esteem and social pressure to consume.

Hypothesis 2a : There exists a relationship between attitude to television media and self-esteem.

Hypothesis 2b : There exists a relationship between peer pressure and self-esteem.

Hypothesis 2c : There exists a relationship between social comparison and self-esteem.

Hypothesis 2d : There exists an association between attitude to debt and self-esteem.

Contributors of Social Pressure and Social Pressure: It was presumed that four factors listed here, such as internalization of values spread by television media (attitude to TV), interpersonal and peer influence (peer influence), upward social comparisons (social comparison) and attitude to debt act as contributors to social pressure. The terms given within the parenthesis represent the short form of how these factors are indicated in the methodology and results part of this thesis. This assumption has led us to the development of the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3 : Attitude to television is associated with social pressure to consume.

Hypothesis 4 : Peer influence is associated with social pressure to consume.

Hypothesis 5 : Upward social comparison is associated with social pressure to consume.

Hypothesis 6 : Attitude to debt is associated with social pressure to consume.

Materialism and Social pressure: In view of the observations from our exploratory work, it is being hypothesized that social pressure factors play a major contributor role in the development of materialism.

Hypothesis 7 : Material values are related to social pressure to consume.

Social Pressure as a moderator of materialism: The basic premise of this study is that materialistic values seen in our environment is not caused by insecurity-inadequacy pathway related to low self-esteem; rather it is a set of social factors that lead individuals with high self-esteem to be materialistic. The combined effect of these factors is termed as social pressure. This makes us to hypothesize as follows:

Hypothesis 8: Social Pressure to consume moderates the relationship between attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt and materialism.

The figure fig. 1.1 repeated below captures the hypotheses formulated.

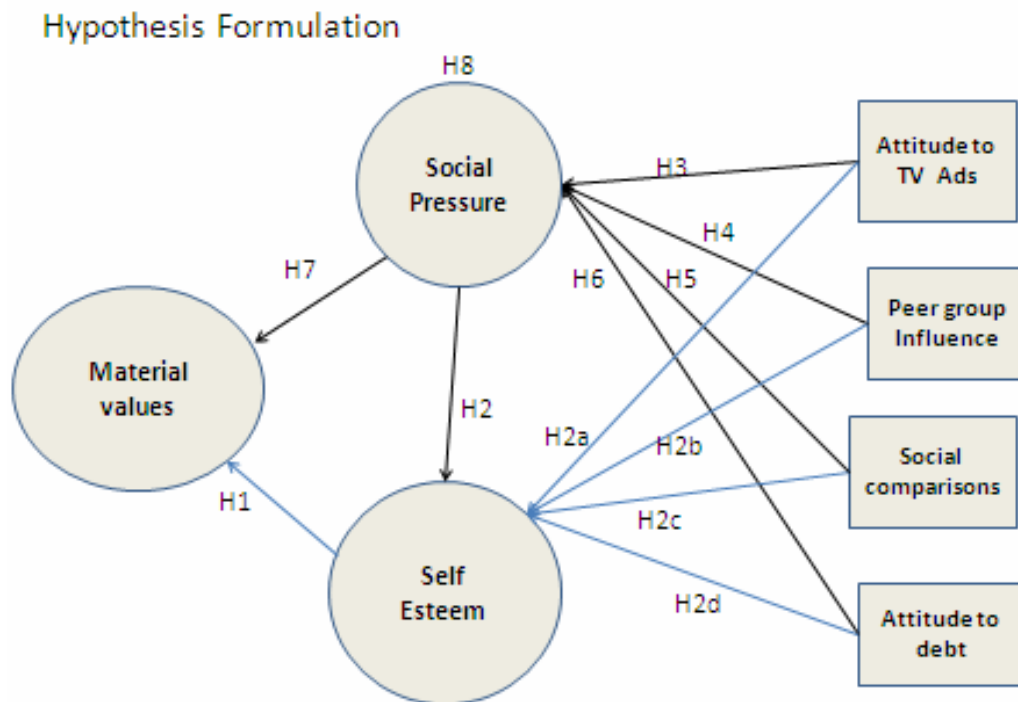


Fig. 4.5: Summary of Hypotheses Formulated

Chapter 5

METHODOLOGY

5.1	Sampling Design
5.2	Sampling Procedure
5.3	Why Survey Method is used?
5.4	The Profile of Respondents
5.5	Instruments
5.6	Developing a Scale for Measuring Social Pressure to Consume
5.7	Pilot Study
5.8	Data Analysis

This chapter deals with the methods and procedures followed in this study and looks at the profile of the participants. The survey method is adopted here as fairly large quanta of data had to be collected and this data was collected from three different geographical locations, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi. In this chapter, the advantages and limitations of adopting the survey method is briefly discussed. The profile of the participants, the sampling techniques used, measurement scales and the logic of using these measurement tools are also discussed here. Finally the statistical techniques to analyze the data collected too are discussed.

5.1 Sampling Design

Sampling is the process of selecting some units from a population of our interest area, so that by studying the sample, we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they are chosen [Gupta and Kapoor (1987)]. The first activity in any sampling process is to identify the population that is matching with the theoretical profile and is accessible for data collection.

Population in this study is defined as “*executives working in the corporate sector in major cities in South India*”. Here executives mean persons working mostly in middle and lower level of management cadre. Indian corporate sector has two main components- companies in government promoted or public sector and private sector. Private corporate sector comprises all non-government financial/non-financial corporate enterprises and co-operative institutions [Goyal (1988)]. A large number of such companies have pan India presence and many of them have multinational operations. Major cities specified in our definition are the metros in south India namely Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi. Younger executives were targeted during the study as younger age group is more susceptible to the influence of media and peers.

Though South India has a number of cities such as Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kochi, Coimbatore, Mysore, Vishakhapattanam, Thiruvananthapuram etcetera, we limited our study to Kochi, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Kochi is selected as it is a fast growing city known for an indulgent population. Moreover all the initial exploratory and pilot studies were carried out in Kochi. We had to make the choice of the other two places from among Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad as the study was decided to be limited to South India. These three cities are rather close in their population base with Chennai having a population of 9 million, Bangalore 8 million and Hyderabad having 7 million and are the most prominent business and commercial destinations in the southern part of our country [International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI 2011)]. Bangalore is considered to be one among the most prominent cities noted for high consumption lifestyles while Hyderabad is not far behind [Mitra (2008)]. Both these cities have a highly cosmopolitan

population. Chennai though a bigger city was not taken up as it had a comparatively more conservative and tradition bound life style.

In this study the total population size cannot be correctly estimated and hence it is difficult to conduct a fool proof probability sampling. So the sample size was estimated from the variance for materialism values measured using Richins and Dawson's scale ($m = 49.94$, $SD = 10.41$) which had the highest variance among the different variables under consideration. The sample size was estimated using the formula $n = (1.96 \times SD)^2 / H^2$, and it was estimated 95% confidence level and ± 1 accuracy level of materialism and the sample estimated value was 416.

5.2 Sampling Process

This study has adopted a survey method for data collection, using a structured questionnaire. The data was collected from the executives working in leading firms in the three metro cities in South India, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi. The firms included in the survey were selected randomly from the list of leading employers of youth who are engineers, MBAs and other qualified professionals. We have selected Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kochi as they happened to be the home for a large number of Information technology based companies and other new generation businesses.

We adopted a multi stage sampling procedure, first deciding on the geographical locations and then the organizations. During the first stage the decision on the locations where the study is to be carried out was made. Based on which we decided on the three cities mentioned earlier. Afterwards we selected fifteen companies each from these three cities. These companies were selected randomly from the sample frame comprising the list of companies which carried out placements in leading business schools in these cities.

Companies which carried out campus placements in leading business schools were taken as our sample frame as all these organizations were leading corporate entities and major employers of professionally qualified persons. The data was collected from the persons who were present on that particular day when the data collection activity was carried out.

Accessibility was an issue faced by this researcher as getting permission to collect data from many organizations in information technology (IT), banking and financial services, IT Enabled Services Sector (ITES) etcetera was quite procedural, circuitous and difficult. As the researcher could not get required permissions from some of these organizations, questionnaire schedules were finally circulated only in thirty five organizations. Questionnaires (see Annexure IV) were distributed to the employees present on a particular day and collected back after the completion on the same day. Only one or two organizations could be covered during a day. These questionnaires were cross checked for completeness and the correctness of their responses and only such response sheets were taken up for further analysis. Though two hundred and eighty questionnaires were distributed in fourteen organizations in Kochi, the researcher could get back only 216 valid samples from this (77% return rate). Similarly two hundred and forty questionnaires were given to executives working in twelve organizations in Bangalore from which the researcher got back 191 valid samples (79.6% return rate). One hundred and eighty questionnaires were circulated among employees of nine organizations in Hyderabad and the researcher could get back only 136 valid samples (75.6% return rate). Thirteen questionnaires were discarded for being incomplete. This left us with 530 valid samples.

5.3 Why Survey Method is used?

The survey method is one of the most common approaches used in social sciences, especially when it is required to evaluate empirically the interrelations of concepts sociological and psychological in origin. The major advantage of the survey method is that it allows social researchers to collect data on attitudinal and behavioral factors in order to investigate the existence of relationship between various sociological and psychological variables [Kerlinger and Lee (2000), Kinner and Taylor (1996)].

According to Kerlinger and Lee (2000), the survey research method enables the researchers to collect efficiently a great deal of information from a large population. This matches with our study requirements as we had to collect sample based data of a large population. Compared to experimental research method, survey method provides more realism and hence its external validity is higher [Roberts (1999)]. This method conforms to the specifications of scientific research as it is logical, deterministic and specific [Hart (1987)]

There exist a number of limitations to survey based methodology and one limitation pointed out by Kerlinger and Lee (2000) is the fact that social scientists do not have direct control over the independent variables because the manifestation of these variables cannot be manipulated. Hence the investigators cannot come to the conclusion that certain independent variable has caused changes in certain dependent variables even if there is statistically significant relation between these variables. There can be issues related to respondent selection and also the fact that there could be intervening variables which are not included in the questionnaire. Dillman (1991) points out the measurement errors happening and errors in the phrasing of the questionnaire.

In spite of all these limitations the survey method is often employed by researchers to test their causal models. According to Marsh (1982), a causal model can be tested by survey data, if the model is built on in-depth review of literature, a solid theory based out of rigorous thinking, logical clarity and argumentation. A linear structural equation modeling is being used to fit the different pre-constructed causal models to the marketing survey data with the help of tools like AMOS [Kwak et al. (2002), Randall et al. (2002), Tromsdorff (1984)].

The questionnaire for this study was formulated on the basis of logical reasoning that has evolved from the literature study taken up and also based on the feedback and results drawn from the exploratory work [Thomas et al. (2011), Thomas and Wilson (2011)]. As this study has intended to collect both attitudinal and factual data regarding consumption related beliefs, attitudes and associated psychological parameters, the survey method is the most appropriate. Another factor that favors survey method is the fact that the questionnaire used for this survey was too lengthy to be administered by either telephonic or personal interview.

5.4 The Profile of Respondents

Middle income group or the middle class are mostly the salaried employees popularly known in India as the 'service classes'. They have a regular income, which comes after tax deductions and also after the adjustments to take care of any loan based liabilities. This means that they have a certain fixed disposable income to meet their various needs throughout the month. Hence they are the most vulnerable group in terms of materialism and social pressure factors. Adopting a high consumption lifestyle can bring in financial strain much faster when compared to the rich lot.

As predominant section of working executives belongs to the middle class, by default the primary target group considered for this study is the middle income group. The focus was on the behavior of the professionally qualified and the well educated people from middle class backgrounds, who are employed in the executive cadre of leading organizations. The age of such executives can range from early twenties to late fifties. As far as possible we have tried to focus on the youth segment (20-40 age groups) as they are the most gullible to advertising messages and more susceptible to upward social comparisons and peer group influence [Yovovich (1995)]. Moreover we have seen a considerable increase in the salaries of this group in many new industry segments where these professionally qualified or well educated youth are finding employment. The organizations covered are mainly from sectors such as information Technology (IT) and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES), Advertising, Media, Entertainment and Telecom, Banking and Financial Sector, Consumer Goods Marketing and Sales.

To summarize, this study is based on 530 samples collected from Kochi (210; 40%), Bangalore (188; 35%) and Hyderabad (132; 25%). As mentioned earlier all respondents were working in the management cadre of leading organizations. 356 (67%) of the respondents were males and 174 were females. 57.2% of them were married and 62% of the married had their spouses also working. As envisaged in the study design to focus more on youth, 56.8% of the sample belonged to 20-30 age group and 31.5% belonged to the 30-40 age group. Only 11.7% belonged to the older groups (6.9 % in the 40-50 age group and 4.8% in the 50-60 age group). 65% of the target group had professional qualifications and among the rest 14% were post graduate degree holders and 21% were just graduates. Only 19% of the respondents

belonged to senior level positions while 81% of the respondents were having jobs at the middle (53.5%) and junior levels (27.5%).

5.5 Instruments

This study uses three different scales to measure the different constructs which are crucial to the conceptualizations proposed. Scaling is the process of measuring quantitative aspects of subjective or abstract concepts. It is the method of assigning numbers or symbols to some attitudes of an object (Kumar 2005). Scaling involves developing a continuum based on which measured objects are located.

One of the fundamental issues while developing or while using a scale is the question, how can one ensure that the scale is really measuring, what it is supposed to measure? This is largely determined by the question, which aspects of the situation or issue should be included in the scale when seeking to measure an attitude. Establishing the validity and reliability of the instrument is crucial in considering the effectiveness of any scale.

There are three types of validity. The first is content and face validity, which is primarily based on the logical link between the questions and the objectives of the study. Each question or item on the scale must have a logical link with the objective. The second is concurrent and predictive validity. When a scale is developed as an indicator of some observable criterion, the scale validity can be investigated by observing how good an indicator it is [Moser and Karlton (1989)]. The concurrent and predictive validity is established by suitable comparisons. It is usually possible to express predictive validity in terms of the correlation coefficient between the predicted status and criterion. Such a coefficient is called a validity coefficient.

The third is the construct validity which is a more sophisticated technique for establishing the validity of an instrument. It refers to the degree to which inferences can legitimately be made from the operationalizations in a study to the theoretical constructs on which these operationalizations are based. It is determined by ascertaining the contribution of each construct to the total variance observed in a phenomenon [Kumar (2005)].

The conventional psychometric theory distinguishes three types of reliability [Cronbach (1947), Guilford and Fruchter (1973)]. They are - 1) Alternate forms of reliability, 2) Internal consistency reliability (also known as ‘consistency’) and 3) Test-retest reliability (or stability). The alternate forms of reliability address the question whether alternative or other versions of tests produce equivalent results. The test-retest reliability considers the stability in the respondent’s attitude whether the respondents give different answers to the same question when administered over different occasions.

Internal consistency reliability is assessed by examining item-test correlation, where correlation of each individual item is tested with the total test score. An overall index of the internal consistency is provided by Cronbach’s alpha coefficient value [Cronbach (1951)] which is based on a weighted average of the item-test correlations. According to Nunnaly (1978) the minimum acceptable alpha level is 0.50. Churchill (1979) is of the opinion that the minimum requirement for such reliability is 0.60.

5.5.1 Measurement of Materialism – Richins and Dawson’s Scale

Based on the predominant usage in various international studies, the researcher considered the two major scales for measuring materialism. They are Richins and Dawson’s (1992) material value scale and Belk’s Materialism scale [Belk (1984), Ger and Belk (1990)]. Belk’s scale has been tested in the

United States, Turkey, France [Ger and Belk (1990)], Denmark, Romania [Ger and Belk (1999)], Niger [Wallendorf and Arnold (1988)] and Brazil [Evrard and Boff (1988)]. The problem with Belk's scale is that most studies failed to have high reliability in terms of Cronbach alpha coefficient, which was often below 0.60 for individual component scale, though overall score reached 0.60 [Yang (2006)].

Generally speaking Richins and Dawson's materialism value scale has achieved better reliability in comparison with Belk's materialism scale. This scale has been applied and tested in many countries and cultures including New Zealand [Watson (1998)], Brazil [Evrard and Boff (1998)], Thailand [Webster and Beatty(1997)], China [Eastman et al. (1997), Sirgy et al. (1998), Zhou et al. (2002)], Mexico [Eastman et al. (1997)], Turkey, Canada and Australia [Sirgy et al. (1998)]. Mick's (1996) two studies obtained a score of 0.88 and 0.85 for Richins and Dawson's overall scale. Shrum et al. (2003) reported the overall reliability as 0.84. Overall reliability score reported by Watson (1998) from New Zealand was 0.83 and in China the Zhou et al. (2000) recorded 0.68 values for the overall scale.

During the exploratory work undertaken [Thomas et al. (2011)] a comparative evaluation of these two scales was carried out. It was found that a higher reliability factor of Cronbach alpha value of 0.701 was noted for Richins and Dawson's scale as compared to the alpha value for Belk's scale, which was only 0.408. A very low correlation (Pearson correlation value 0.194, $p < 0.01$) between the materialism values measured using Richins and Dawson's material value scale and Belk's materialism scale too was observed.

Mishra and Mishra (2011) used both Richins and Dawson's (1992) and Belk's (1984) materialism scales in a survey conducted in Bhubaneswar and

Cuttack and found Cronbach alpha value of 0.641 for Richins and Dawson's scale while they got only 0.254 alpha value for Belk's scale. Findings from their study indicated that Richins and Dawson's scale exhibits more construct validity with Indian consumers. More over materialism as a social value is a finding having more congruence with the conceptualizations of this study. Considering all these factors, it was decided to use Richins and Dawson's scale for this study.

Richins and Dawson (1992) consider materialism a consumer value that becomes so central to individuals that it starts to control their lives. According to Richins (2004), material value scale is developed to measure "*the importance ascribed to the ownership and acquisition of material goods in achieving major life goals or desired states*". The scale consists of eighteen items and the items are scored on a five point Likert scale format from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' to measure the below listed three components of materialism.

The first scale 'possession defined success' has six items measuring the degree a person attaches to various possessions or material objects as indicators of success. The second scale consists of seven items dealing with 'acquisition centrality' which measure the focus an individual has towards consumption or how crucial is the acquisition behavior in an individual's life. The third scale, 'acquisition as the pursuit of happiness' has five items which measures the degree of the belief that consumption lead to happiness.

The material value score can range from 18 to 90 and higher scores indicate higher levels of materialism. According to the scale developers, this instrument can be appropriately used to examine the global conceptualization of materialism. Richins and Dawson (1990) used three samples of students (n = 448, 191 and 194) in the preliminary tests. Later they used four consumer samples (n = 144, 250, 235 and 205) for reliability and validity checks as part

of the scale development. Then a sample of 58 students was used to assess test – retest reliability.

During the scale development activity mentioned above, the reliability value alpha coefficients obtained from the sample of college students ranged from 0.74 to 0.78 for the ‘possession defined success’ factor, 0.71 to 0.75 for ‘acquisition centrality’ factor and 0.73 to 0.83 for ‘pursuit of happiness’ factor. The alpha coefficient for the overall scale ranged from 0.80 to 0.88. The test-retest reliability coefficient values, over a three week interval ($n = 58$), was 0.82; 0.82 and 0.86 for the success, centrality and happiness factors and 0.87 for the overall scale. The mean scores reported based on the scale development activity by the authors, Richins and Dawson (1992) were, 14.27 ($SD = 3.9$) for success factor, 19.47 ($SD = 4.07$) for centrality factor and 13.07 ($SD = 3.93$) for happiness component. The mean value reported for overall materialism score was 46.83 ($SD = 9.43$).

The alpha reliability coefficient obtained for this study for the overall materialism scale was 0.777. Individual component Cronbach alpha values were 0.739, 0.648 and 0.707 for success, centrality and happiness factors respectively. The mean value of scores were 17.31 ($SD = 4.41$) for success factor, 19.55 ($SD = 4.36$) for centrality factor and 14.58 ($SD = 3.85$) for happiness factor and 51.43 ($SD = 10.51$) for overall materialism score and all these results are well within acceptable limits.

5.5.2 Measurement of Self-Esteem – Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale

Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale (1965) is the most widely used measurement of self-esteem [Grey-Little et al. (1997)] which Rosenberg (1979) defined as one’s attitude toward the self. Though the scale was originally designed as a Guttman scale, it is now commonly scored as a Likert

scale and consists of ten statements regarding the feelings about one-self. Each of these ten statements is scored on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A global self-esteem score is derived by cumulating the scores on each item and the scores can range from 10 to 40. Rosenberg (1979) reported a test-retest reliability of $r = 0.85$.

Rosenberg's self-esteem (RSE) scale has been used more often than any other scale to measure self-esteem and the literature provides enough evidences for this [Mayhew and Lembers (1998), Kernis et al. (2000), Carlson et al. (2000)]. Reliability of Rosenberg's self-esteem scale has been adequately demonstrated in a number of studies. McCarthy and Hoge (1982) reported Cronbach alpha value of 0.77 for this scale. Robins et al. (2001) reported alpha coefficients of 0.88; Vispoel et al. (2001) got alpha coefficient value of 0.92 and Meek (2007) reported an alpha value of 0.88 while using Rosenberg Scale.

Robins et al. (2001) found that Rosenberg's self-esteem scale measures showed strong convergent validity with the Single Item Self-Esteem (SISE) scale across genders and ethnicities. They reported correlations ranging from 0.72 to 0.76 for these two scales during six administrations. Rosenberg's self-esteem scale has been correlated with Texas Social Behavior Inventory, but the correlations reported were slightly weaker as 0.58 and 0.62 [Robins et al. (2001)]. Bagley et al. (1997) come out with evidences to show acceptable construct validity for the scale. During the exploratory study conducted by this researcher too, a reliability value of 0.77 was obtained [Thomas et al. (2011)].

5.6 Developing a Scale for Measuring the Social Pressure to Consume

This study has identified four different factors which act as major contributors of social pressure to consume, namely internalization of what is projected through television media, interpersonal and peer group influence,

upward social comparisons and attitude to debt or attitude towards availing credit. The social pressure scale is a combination of the four different subscales. We have added a fifth component which is a measure of the level to which the individual will succumb to social pressure.

The first activity in this scale development task was to develop a large list from which a pre-test version of the scale can be developed. This large pool of fifty eight items have been basically drawn from Rossiter's (1977) scale for 'attitude toward television advertising' (10 items), Bearden et al. (1989) scale for 'consumer susceptibility for interpersonal influence' (12 items), Lennox and Wolfe's (1984) scale for 'attention to social comparison information' (ATSCI -13 items) and Lea and others (1995) scale for 'consumer attitudes to debt' (17 items). The remaining six items were statements which were indicators of social pressure taken from the scale used in the pilot study which showed scale validity. Finally a scale of 33 items was developed from this inventory which was put to test.

The pretesting of the 33 item scale was conducted on a sample comprising 73 working executives, having the mean age of 37 (SD 6.3) in Kochi. Findings from this pre-testing exercise were helpful in developing the twenty item social pressure scale which was used in this study.

5.6.1 Measurement of the Attitude towards Television Programs or Commercials

This study employed the seven item scale developed by Rossiter (1977) to check children's attitude to television advertising as a reference scale for developing this subscale. Different versions of this scale have been used in different studies to check the impact of television viewing in the development of materialism (Mishra and Mishra 2011). Rossiter (1977) reported a Cronbach

alpha value of 0.69 from the original test development activity and a test-retest reliability of $r = 0.67$. The original scale used a four point agreement scale with verbally and visually cued response boxes as it was designed for children.

Mishra and Mishra (2011) used this scale with a sample of 252 adults surveyed from the twin cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar and reported an alpha value of 0.434. Further investigation by them showed that item three of the Rossiter scale, “television commercials tell only the good things about a product, they do not tell you bad things”, had the lowest item-to-total correlations and on deleting this item, Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.502. As we noticed low reliability alpha values we included all the seven items in our developmental scale.

During the pretesting carried out by this researcher, the reliability alpha score reported for this seven item component scale was 0.625. On deeper analysis it was observed that there were four items which were giving lower correlations. These items were deleted, after finding that their ability to evaluate the susceptibility of the television viewer to internalize the values promoted in various programs or advertisements, to be low. It was earlier noted that television media has been observed to be biased in projecting a rich and affluent life style through its programs and advertisements. The revised scale, after deletion of the four items had an alpha value of 0.861.

The three items that were retained were

- “TV advertisements tell the truth”,
- “Most TV commercials are not very interesting and I don’t spend much time watching them” (reverse scored),
- “The products advertised on TV are the best products to buy”

All these items matched with our construct on whether customers do get into internalizing what is projected through the television media and are borrowed from Rossitter's (1977) scale. Item six of the scale used for test development namely, "you can always believe what the celebrities say about the products they endorse" was matching with the construct, but was dropped because of the low item-to-total correlation factor.

5.6.2 Measurement of Interpersonal and Peer Group Influence

The scale to measure consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence developed by Bearden et al. (1989) is a very popularly used scale and it is used as the basis for developing this component of the social pressure scale. Bearden et al. (1989) consider consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence as a general trait that varies across individuals. The construct is defined as the *"need to identify with or enhance one's image in the opinion of those people considered significant through the acquisition and use of products and brands, the willingness to conform to the expectation of others regarding purchase decisions and the tendency to learn about products or services by observing others or seeking information from others"* [Bearden et al. (1989)]. Burnkrant and Cousineau (1975) and Deutsch and Gerard (1955) reported that the above defined construct is multi dimensional as both normative (utilitarian and value expressive) influences and informational influences are given due consideration.

This scale consists of twelve items, each operationalized as a Likert seven point rating scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Eight items are based on normative influences while other four are based on informational influences. Bearden et. al. (1989) during the first administration of this scale with a sample of 220 adults got a Cronbach alpha value of 0.82 for the informational influence factor and 0.88 for normative factor. Test-retest

exercise was conducted on a sample of 35 subjects and alpha values of 0.75 and 0.79 were recorded for the two factors. The Validity measures carried out showed good correlation existing between these two factors and Social Comparison values were measured using (ATSCI) attitude to social comparison information scale.

Compared to informational influence, normative factors such as utilitarian influence and value expressive functions play a stronger influence in molding consumption behavior. Evidence for this can be found in the work by Calder and Burnkrant (1977), where they stated that individuals higher in susceptibility to normative influences end up in buying products which they feel will fetch approval of important referents. With this in mind we have given more importance to the normative items in the original scale by Bearden et al. (1989). From the informational influence section only the first item of Bearden's scale, "*I often consult other people to help me choose the best alternative available from a product class*", was retained. From the eight normative factor items, item eight, "*when buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think others will approve of*", was dropped as the author feels that this study is more concerned with consumption of status products. The information content of this item can be captured through the item "*if other people can see me using a product, I often purchase such brands which they expect me to buy*".

These seven items became the sub component for interpersonal and peer group influence in the 33 item social pressure scale for pretesting. On pretesting the alpha value observed was 0.610. Investigation showed that the two items, "*I rarely buy latest fashion items until I am sure that my friends approve of them*" and "*when buying products, I generally buy brands that I*

think others will approve of". On dropping these, the remaining five item scale had an alpha value of 0.79.

The following five items became the peer pressure sub-component scale for measuring susceptibility to interpersonal and peer influence.

- *I often consult other people to help me choose the best alternatives in any product class.*
- *If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy.*
- *I often try to identify with my friends and others by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase.*
- *If other people can see me using a product, then I will buy such brands which they expect me to buy.*
- *When I buy the same brands that my friends have, I feel closer to them.*

5.6.3 Measurement of Vulnerability to Social Comparison

Attention to social comparison information (ATSCI) scale was developed by Lennox and Wolfe (1984) to assess the extent to which one is aware of the reactions of others to one's behavior and how concerned or how sensitive is the individual to the nature of those reactions. These individuals give higher importance to what other people think about them and look for clues about the nature of other's reactions toward them. ATSCI is a thirteen item scale scored on a five point format ranging from "always false" to "always true". During the developmental exercise Lennox and Wolfe (1984) could establish its reliability with Cronbach alpha value of 0.83 (n = 224 students). Bearden and

Rose (1990) examined ATSCI using four student samples and reported alpha estimates of 0.85, 0.83, 0.88 and 0.89.

The social comparison related construct which we consider a contributor of materialism deals with “*the upward comparisons which the individuals do get into, and which instill in such people an urge for acquiring more material possessions, force them to engage in acquiring more material possessions and stir up a higher consumption behavior*” [Frank (2005), Royo (2007)]. Through this component scale we look for the vulnerability factor in individuals to enter into upward social comparison activity.

Attention to social comparison scale [Lennox and Wolfe (1984)] has a lot of commonalities in its construct with the susceptibility to interpersonal influence. So the author looked for items from the scale matching to attention to upward comparison in the scale and decided to borrow the following four items after minor adaptations. This four item scale became the ‘vulnerability to social comparison’ as a component of the 33 item test scale. On pre-testing this sub scale had a Cronbach alpha value of 0.731 for reliability.

These four items comprise the scale for measuring susceptibility to social comparison:

- “When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to others for clues
- “I regularly keep buying things that are of latest fashion”
- “I tend to pay a lot of attention to what others have and also what they wear”
- “I usually tend to adopt the lifestyles and behavior of others with whom I interact”.

5.6.4 Measurement of the Attitude to Debt

Lea et al. (1995) looked at the attitude to debt as “*a psychological variable that captures how consumers feel about debt and what they believe are the appropriate uses of debt*”. These general attitudes are said to have undergone a great change toward a greater acceptance of debt as a part of the consumer driven society. Attitude to debt scale by Lea et al. (1995) is a seventeen item scale that was scored on a seven point Likert format, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

Lea et al. (1995) did the scale development work by first formulating a 30 item scale which was pretested with a sample of 583 adult consumers in England. Based on this they developed the final scale in the present form of 17 items which was again tested with 464 adults. Cronbach alpha values for the developmental scale and the final scale from the mentioned tests were 0.83 and 0.77.

From this original scale, we took nine items with minor modifications, which after detailed introspection we felt would evaluate the consumer attitude towards availing debt or usage of credit instruments to pursue their materialistic intentions. Some items deleted from the original scale were mostly on the basis of the Indian cultural factors which were more conservative and tradition bound in comparison with the culture prevalent in western nations [Banerjee (2008), Banerjee and Miller (2004)]. As the targeted response group was more of young employees, the question related to borrowing to meet children’s needs also was deleted. Here the focus is more on the propensity of the consumer to resort to debt to fuel his high consumption oriented, acquisition needs.

Based on such analysis, the following nine items were shortlisted, “*It is a good idea to have something now and pay for it later*”, “*Being in debt is*

never a good thing”, “It is important to plan ahead before buying expensive items”, “It is very easy now to get credit cards or consumer finance to buy consumer durables”, “Borrowed Money should be repaid as early as possible”, “It is important to live within one’s means”, “Taking out a loan is a good thing because it allows you to enjoy life”, “Buying on credit has become very common these days” and “Using credit is an essential part of today’s life style”.

This nine item scale was included in the attitude to debt part of the 33 item social pressure scale for pretesting. Based on the pretest carried out on 73 working adults in Kochi, a reliability alpha value of 0.646 was recorded. Six items from this showed low item-to-total correlations. On dropping these items there was substantial improvement in the reliability factor with Cronbach alpha value of 0.85. These three items which became a part of the attitude to debt scale for this study are:

- *It is a good idea to have something now and pay for it later.*
- *There is nothing wrong about taking a loan as it allows you to enjoy life.*
- *Availing credit has become an essential part of today’s life style.*

5.6.5 Scale for Measuring Social Pressure to Consume

The scale is developed to measure the level of social pressure of the respondents. In this study the Social Pressure construct is the sum total of different societal pressures on an individual that drives him to high consumption behavior and materialistic tendencies. They are the attitude to television media, interpersonal and peer influence, upward social comparisons and attitude to debt or attitude towards availing credit. Based on this we had developed a 12 item scale which was used in the pilot study. We selected items which showed significant scale validity.

The six items included in the test scale of 33 items were, “*models that come in TV commercials are very beautiful and I wish I was like them*”, “*I am more concerned with the utility of a product and not much bothered whether it creates an impression on other people*”, “*I always voice my opinion even if it is against the opinion of the majority of the group members*”, To this we added three more items, “*I celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and such other events just because it is common practice*”, “*membership in prestigious clubs or social groups is important for a person like me*” and “*there is nothing wrong in borrowing money to celebrate festivals (Diwali / Ramzan / Navaratri / Christmas)*” as an indicator of social pressure. On pre-testing this scale, we got a reliability alpha value of 0.72. However, the item “*I always voice my opinion even if it is against the opinion of the majority of the group members*” was found to have low item-to-item correlation. On deletion of this item, the reliability alpha value improved to 0.80.

The five item scale used as the measure of social pressure to consume is:

- *Models that come in TV commercials are all beautiful and I wish I was like them.*
- *I am more concerned about the utility of a product and not much bothered whether it creates an impression on other people.*
- *I celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and such other events just because it is common practice.*
- *Membership in prestigious clubs or social groups is important for a person like me.*
- *There is nothing wrong in borrowing money to celebrate festivals (Diwali / Ramzan / Navaratri / Christmas).*

5.7 Pilot Study

To test the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted in Kochi with a sample consisting of 48 working executives, majority of them holding professional degrees. Mean age of the sample was 35.1 (SD 8.69) and mean income was Rs. 60,697.92 (SD 15,192.96). Through this exercise the author found out that the results were matching with the major presumptions developed on the basis of the earlier mentioned exploratory research activities which have led to this thesis. This pilot work helped in finalizing the questionnaire used in this study, by incorporating the required amendments based on the findings from the survey and the feedbacks collected from the respondents.

5.8 Data Analysis

The data collected from 530 respondents were analyzed with the help of statistical packages. Reliability alpha values were calculated through the multi item scales used in the study, such as Richins and Dawson's (1992) materialism scale, Rosenberg's (1995) self-esteem scale and the newly developed social pressure scale. As construct validity tests are carried out in Indian studies for self-esteem and materialism scales no validity tests were repeated. Item-wise 'Z test' was carried out for the 'social pressure' scale to ensure its validity [Marques de Sa` (2007)].

Pearson correlations were calculated to examine the relationship between materialism, self-esteem and social pressure [Chambers and Skinner (2003)]. Pearson correlations were also worked out between materialism, social pressure, television viewing, peer influence, social comparisons and attitude to credit. Confirmatory factor analysis with structural equation modeling was conducted for estimating the fitness of materialism and its factors with social pressure and its factors.

Confirmatory factor analysis is a type of structured equation modelling which deals specifically with measurement models for establishing relationship between observed measures and indicators such as test scores or scale values and also with latent variables or factors. A fundamental feature of confirmatory factor analysis is that it is hypothesis driven [Brown (2006)]. The researcher has to specify the number of factors and give an indication of the pattern of factor loading. He must have a firm prior sense, based on past evidence from literature and theory of factors that exist in the data. In this study the hypothesized model is shown in fig. 4.4, where we attempt to estimate the relationship between materialism and its component factors with materialism and its factors.

Further in many studies in the social research domain, the researchers need to have measures with good reliability and validity that are appropriate for the use across diverse population. Development of psychometrically sound measures is an expensive and time consuming process and often the researchers are constrained on both these factors. This forces them to use the existing measurement scales. But the major problem in using such measures is that such measures will have to be examined for their appropriateness with respect to the new population. Confirmatory factor analysis can be used in such a situation to examine whether the original structure of the measure works well with this new population [Brown (2006)].

6.1	Preliminary Analysis and Data Screening for Self-Esteem, Material Values and Social Pressure
6.2	Preliminary Analysis and Data Screening for Social Pressure Factors: Attitude to Television, Peer Pressure, Social Comparison and Attitude to Debt
6.3	Reliability and Validity of Scales Used
6.4	Hypothesis Testing
6.5	Testing of the Social Pressure – Materialism Model
6.6	Other Key Observations from This Study

6.1 Preliminary Analysis and Data Screening for Self-Esteem, Material Values and Social Pressure

Prior to the main analysis, measures of materialism or material values (Richins and Dawson's scale), self-esteem (Rosenberg's scale) and measures of social pressure to consume scale (which include social pressure scale and scale for social pressure factors considered in this study), were examined using several SPSS programs to explore data entry accuracy, missing data, means and standard deviations and the multivariate assumptions of normality and linearity. Items with data entry errors were discarded and in the final sample considered for this analysis, there were no items with missing values, on the scales of primary interest.

Assumptions of normality have to be examined for checking skewness and kurtosis in the variables measured, as many parametric tests require normally distributed variables. First, univariate and multivariate outliers were

examined by developing histograms and box-plots for the three key variables (Rosenberg, Richins and Dawson and social Pressure to consume scales).

Box-plots for the measurements of the three major variables of self-esteem, materialism and social pressure and a combined scale is shown in the figure 6.1 given below. These box-plots clearly indicate the existence of outliers which are to be corrected before we move on with any further analysis.

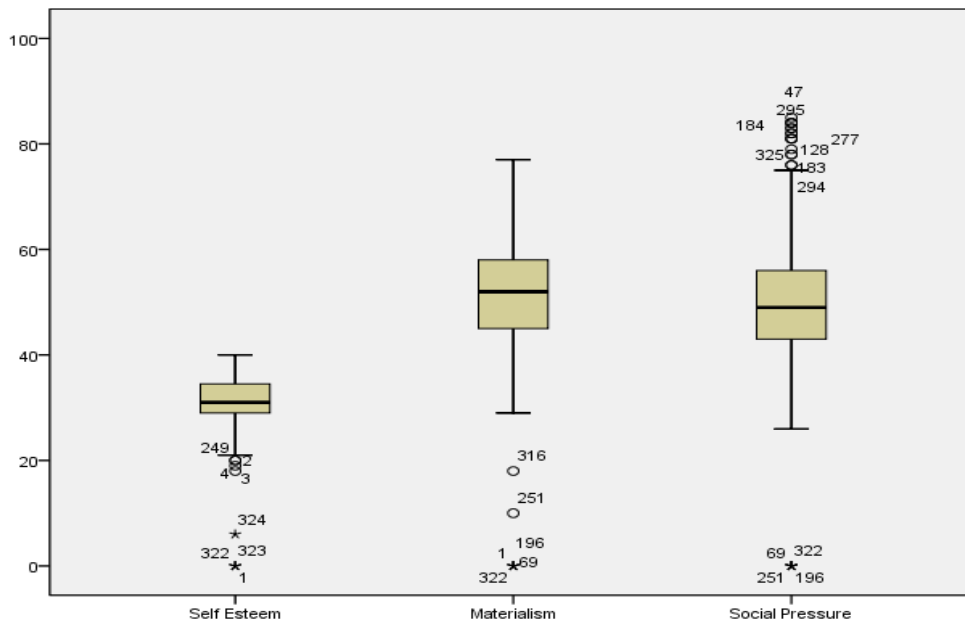


Fig. 6.1: Box-Plots for Major Variables before Adjustments

Multivariate outliers are defined as cases with extreme values on multiple variables. Mahalanobis distance (D^2) and Cook's distance are used to identify multivariate outliers. Cook's distance method used here identified suspect outliers by determining the amount of change that would occur in a model's regression coefficient if a particular case were deleted. Identified outliers, have been suitably adjusted by modifying their scores as outlined by

Tabachnick and Fidell (2005). Seven samples that were found to be incomplete with respect to our major variables were discarded. This reduced the final sample for this study to 523 (Bangalore = 188, Hyderabad = 126 and Kochi = 209).

Table 6.1 below gives the descriptive statistics for the three major variables in this study, which are self-esteem, material values and social pressure. Histograms and box plots have been developed separately for these three items and also for the four factors attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt which are proposed as contributors of social pressure.

Table 6.1: Descriptive Statistics for Self-Esteem, Material Values and Social Pressure

	Self-Esteem	Material Values	Social Pressure
Mean	31.61	51.97	11.28
Std. Deviation	3.90	9.25	2.66
Variance	15.23	85.51	7.06
Range	19.00	48.00	11.00
Minimum	21.00	29.00	6.00
Maximum	40.00	77.00	17.00
Maximum possible score	40.00	90.00	25.00
Mean % score	79.02%	57.74%	45.12%
Reliability – Cronbach Alpha	0.82	0.78	0.61

Reliability alpha values were first assessed for these three variables and as they were found to be above 0.60 the observations were taken as reliable.

From table 6.1 we can see that, Self-esteem (measured using Rosenberg's 10 item scale) was observed with a mean of 31.61 (SD = 3.90). The variance and range were found to be 15.23 and 19 which show that there is not much dispersion. Standard deviation value of 3.90 is also well within acceptable range.

Histogram and box-plot were developed for self-esteem measures as shown in figure 6.2. These were developed to check the normalcy of the distribution and to check the presence of outliers. The histogram shows that the distribution is almost normal and box-plot shows that there are no outliers. It also establishes that skewness and kurtosis are well within acceptable limits.

The maximum possible score from the Rosenberg's scale was 40 and the mean value obtained was 79% of the maximum score. Lowest recorded score was 21 (which is above the 50% mark) and highest was 40 which are indicative of the presence of higher self-esteem levels among the respondents. This is in conformance with the findings from the exploratory study which recorded higher self-esteem among the respondents. Literature reviewed has led to the presumption that higher self-esteem in our conditions can be due to better childhood related factors including better nurturing by parents and stronger family ties common to our society.

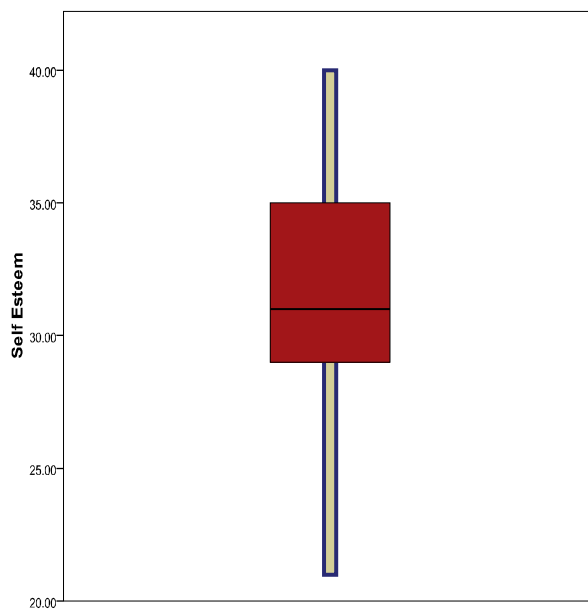
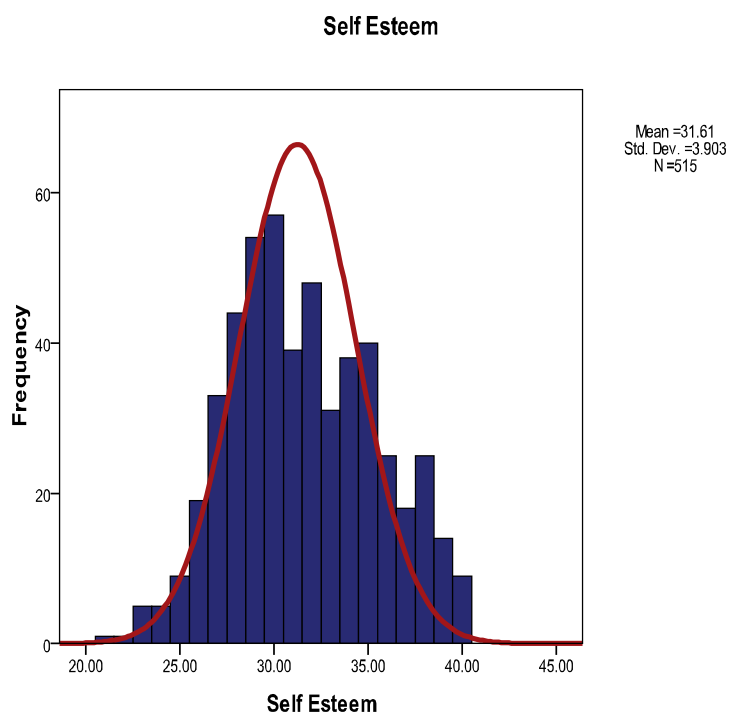


Fig 6.2: Histogram and Box-Plot for Self-Esteem Variable

Descriptive statistics for material values measured using Richins and Dawson's 18 item scale from table 6.1 show a mean = 51.97 and standard deviation = 9.25. The variance = 85.51 and range = 48.0 show that dispersion is well within acceptable limits. Standard deviation value of 9.25 is lower than 10.41 recorded during the exploratory study (M = 49.94).

Once again histogram and box-plots were developed to check the normalcy of the distribution and also to ensure that skew and kurtosis statistics are well within acceptable limits. In fig 6.3 the histogram plotted for the material values indicates that the distribution of the responses is more or less normal. Box-plot was developed with the measures recorded and from this we can see that there are no outliers now. This support the conclusion that dispersion of material values recorded are within acceptable limits.

The mean value of materialism obtained 51.97 was 57.74% of the maximum possible score. This indicates prevalence of materialistic tendencies among the population. Mean scores reported by Richins and Dawson during the scale development was 46.83 (SD = 9.43). The materialism values indicated in this study do tally with those reported at the time of scale development.

The lowest score recorded during this study was 29 and the highest recorded was 77. This indicates that the sample has an even spread which contain both people with low materialism and those with high materialistic tendencies. This seems to validate the findings from the literature review that traditional and material values co-exist in our environment.

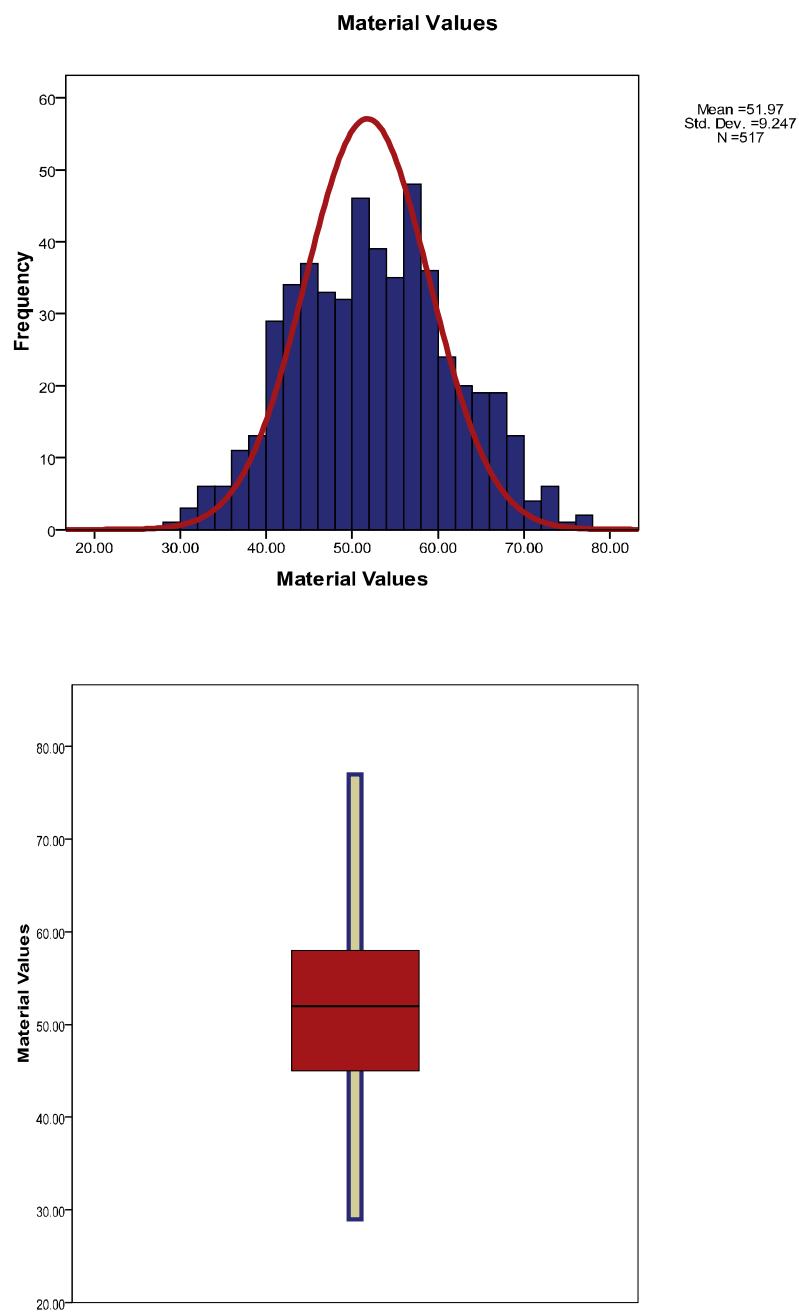


Fig. 6.3: Histogram and Box-Plot for Material Values Variable

From table 6.1 we can see that, Social Pressure (measured using social pressure to consume 5 item scale) was observed with a mean of 11.28 (SD = 2.66). The variance and range were found to be 7.06 and 11 which show that there is higher dispersion here compared to the earlier two variables.

As in earlier cases, histograms and box plots were developed for this variable too. The box-plot developed indicated that outliers were well contained and as such no outliers existed after they were adjusted for. Fig. 6.4 below shows the histogram and box-plot for social pressure. It can be noticed that the distribution is almost normal and so the skew statistics and kurtosis statistics should be well within acceptable limits. Considering the distributions of measures are almost normal, it can be assumed that the dispersion is within acceptable limits.

Maximum possible score possible for the social pressure scale is 25 and the mean value of 11.28 is 45% of the maximum score. This can be an indication that social pressure is comparatively lower than materialism. The lowest score recorded for social pressure was 6 while the highest recorded was 17. This is indicative of the fact that a significant percentage of the population is under medium to high social pressure. Based on the conclusions drawn from our literature review, it can be read that there is a significantly large population, who tend to cultivate the belief that what is shown on television is reality, who are susceptible to peer influence, who are susceptible to indulge in upward social comparisons and have higher attitude to avail credit to meet their shopping or acquisition urges. Another inference that can be drawn from these descriptive statistics is that the materialism scores of the population is higher when compared to social pressure scores.

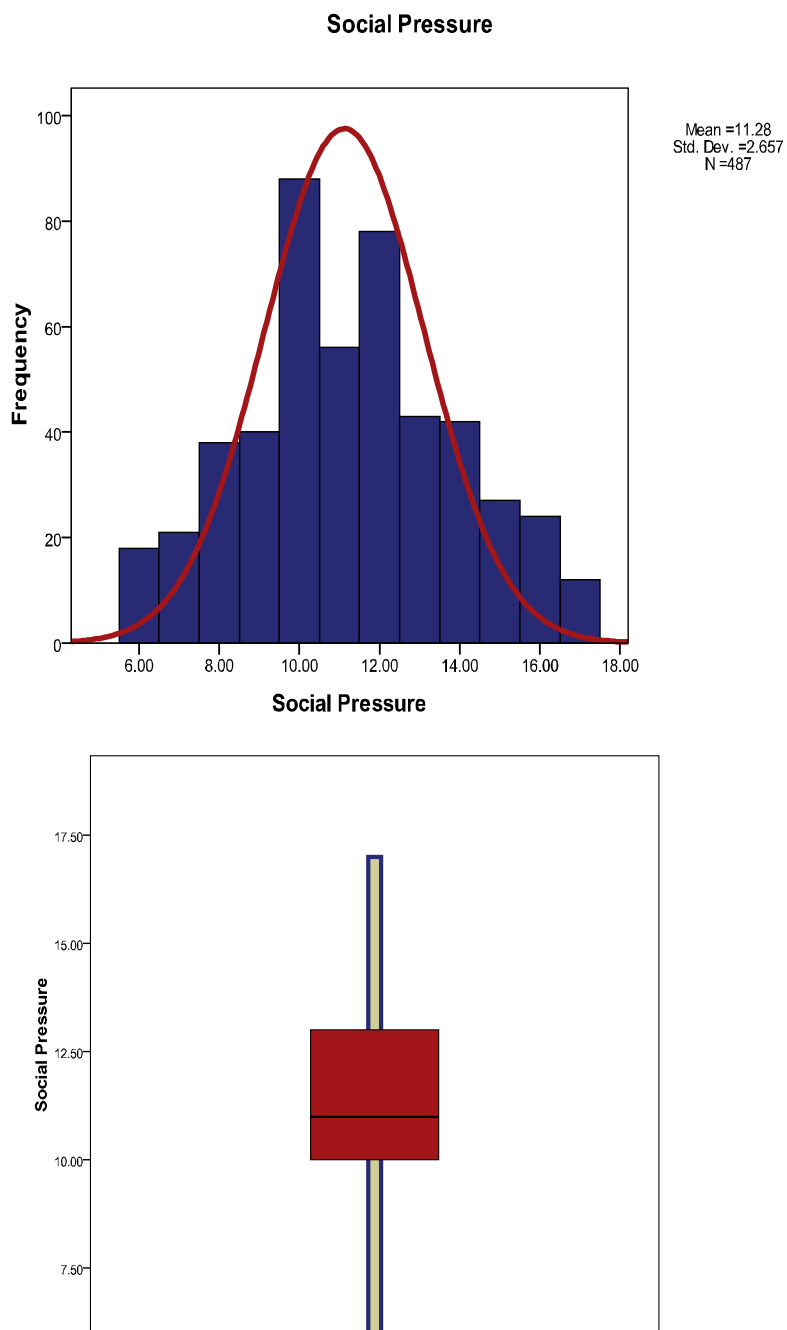


Fig. 6.4: Histogram and Box-Plot for Social Pressure Variable

6.2 Preliminary Analysis and Data Screening for Social Pressure Factors: Attitude to Television, Peer Pressure, Social Comparison and Attitude to Debt

The reliability, Cronbach alpha values were estimated for the four social pressure scales of attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt, along with the population parameters such as mean and standard deviations, variance and range values.

Alpha value for third item, 'attitude to television scale' obtained was only 0.396. It was noticed that with the deletion of the item "*Most TV commercials are not very interesting and I don't spend much time watching them*" (reverse scored), which had the lowest inter-item correlation, the reliability alpha values improved to 0.648. Based on this observation, it was decided to drop this item from further analysis.

Table 6.2: Descriptive Statistics for Social Pressure Factors

	Attitude to TV	Peer Pressure	Social Comparison	Attitude to Debt
Mean	3.97	12.82	10.70	8.08
Std. Deviation	1.41	3.48	2.77	2.60
Variance	1.99	12.08	7.68	6.76
Range	7.00	17.00	11.00	13.00
Minimum	1.00	5.00	5.00	2.00
Maximum	8.00	22.00	16.00	15.00
Maximum Possible Score	10	25	20	15
Mean % Score	39.73%	51.28%	53.5%	53.87%
Cronbach Alpha	0.648	0.784	0.694	0.657

Table 6.2 above gives the detailed statistics for the four factors, attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt that contribute to social pressure. Alpha values show that the measures are reliable.

The 'attitude to television' construct deals with the internalization of the values that is perpetuated by television through its advertisements and programs. The scale used here is adapted from Rossiter's scale and the measured values were observed with a mean = 3.97 (SD = 1.41). The observed variance was 1.99 and range = 7.00. Histogram and box-plot were developed to scrutinize the normalcy and presence of outliers. Fig. 6.5 below shows the histogram which clearly indicate that the distribution is almost normal and the box-plot which shows the absence of any outliers. Hence it can be inferred that the dispersion is well within normal limits.

Mean value is observed to be close to 40% of the maximum possible score. One inference from this can be that a majority of the population is not highly susceptible to the impact created by television advertising or programmes. One should also note that the highest score recorded was 80% of the maximum possible score. Further it can be observed from the histogram that there is a significantly large population having high scores. This point to the fact that there exists a section of the population who are susceptible to the media based cultivation hypothesis and hence impact of this variable need to be looked into in detail. Such people are prone to cultivation hypothesis or can be considered part of the group which will believe that what they see on television is reality.

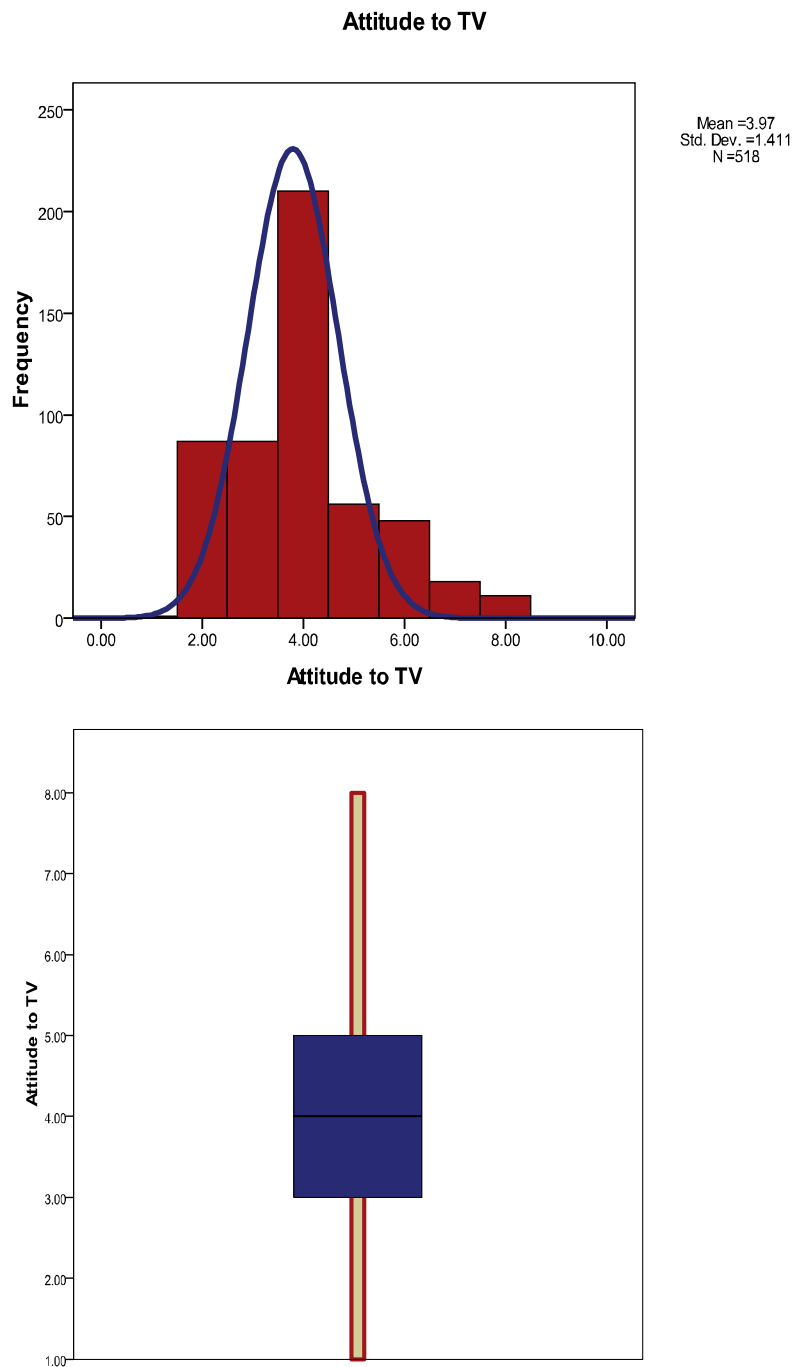


Fig. 6.5: Histogram and Box-Plot for Attitude to Television Variable

The construct 'Peer pressure' actually deals with the susceptibility of individual to interpersonal and peer group influence. A five item scale adapted from scale developed by Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel (1989) was used and a mean = 12.82 and standard deviation = 3.48 were observed. Variance = 12.08 and Range = 17 indicate controlled dispersion. To check on the normalcy and presence of outliers, histograms and box plot were developed.

Fig. 6.6 below shows the histograms and box-plot generated. Histogram indicates that the distribution is almost normal and the box-plot one does not indicate the presence of any outlier. Hence the distribution of measurements from this scale can be treated as normal and the dispersion of measures may be considered well within the acceptable limits.

Mean value of measures of peer pressure stood at 51% of the maximum possible score. This in normal conditions should indicate presence of people with low susceptibility and high susceptibility to peer influence in our population. Highest score earned by any respondent was almost 90% of the maximum score, which is indicative of very high susceptibility to interpersonal or peer group pressure.

A cursory analysis of the histogram shows presence of a significant population having high scores of peer group influence. This is an area of interest to this study as it primarily indicates the presence of a segment which are highly prone to influence from peers and whose consumption decisions are affected by their peers. Literature review taken up as part of this study clearly states that in today's world such segments of population can develop materialistic tendencies.

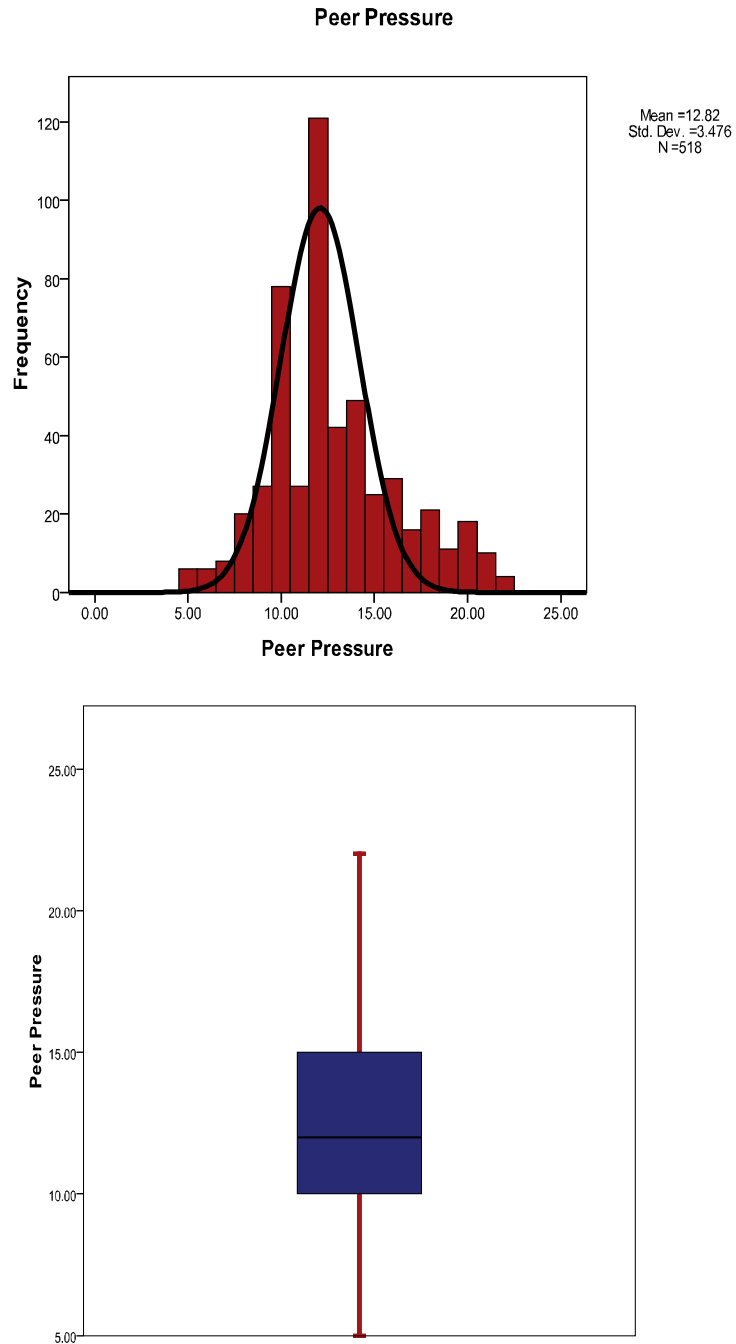


Fig. 6.6: Histogram and Box-Plot for Peer Pressure Variable

Social comparisons construct deals with the susceptibility or sensitiveness of individuals to get into upward comparisons which leads them into status consumption habits. The four item scale used for this study was adapted from the 'Attention to Social Comparison Information' developed by Lennox and Wolfe (1984). From table 6.2 it can be observed that for the measured values of social comparison mean was 10.7 and standard deviation = 2.77. Variance = 7.68 and range = 11.0 show that dispersion is well within limits. Here also we developed histogram and box plot to ensure normalcy and to check on the existence of outliers as shown in fig 6.7 below.

From the histogram it can be seen that the distribution of measures are almost normal and hence skew statistics and kurtosis statistics can be considered to be within allowable limits. This also indicates the dispersion of the measures is well within the acceptable limits. Box-plot clearly indicates the absence of any outlier. Mean value obtained here was 53.5% of the maximum value. By normal standards this indicates the presence of segments of population with upward social comparison tendencies.

Highest score recorded here was 80% of the maximum possible score while lowest was just 25%. The histogram in this case also shows the presence of a segment of population with high social comparison tendencies. As mentioned in chapter-5 (pages 164 and 165), the items of the scale were carefully developed to measure the vulnerability of the respondents to involve in upward social comparisons among the population. The results from the descriptive statistics show that such tendencies are prevalent among the population under consideration. Literature review has clearly indicated that such tendencies to compare with richer upper classes can be the cause of materialism.

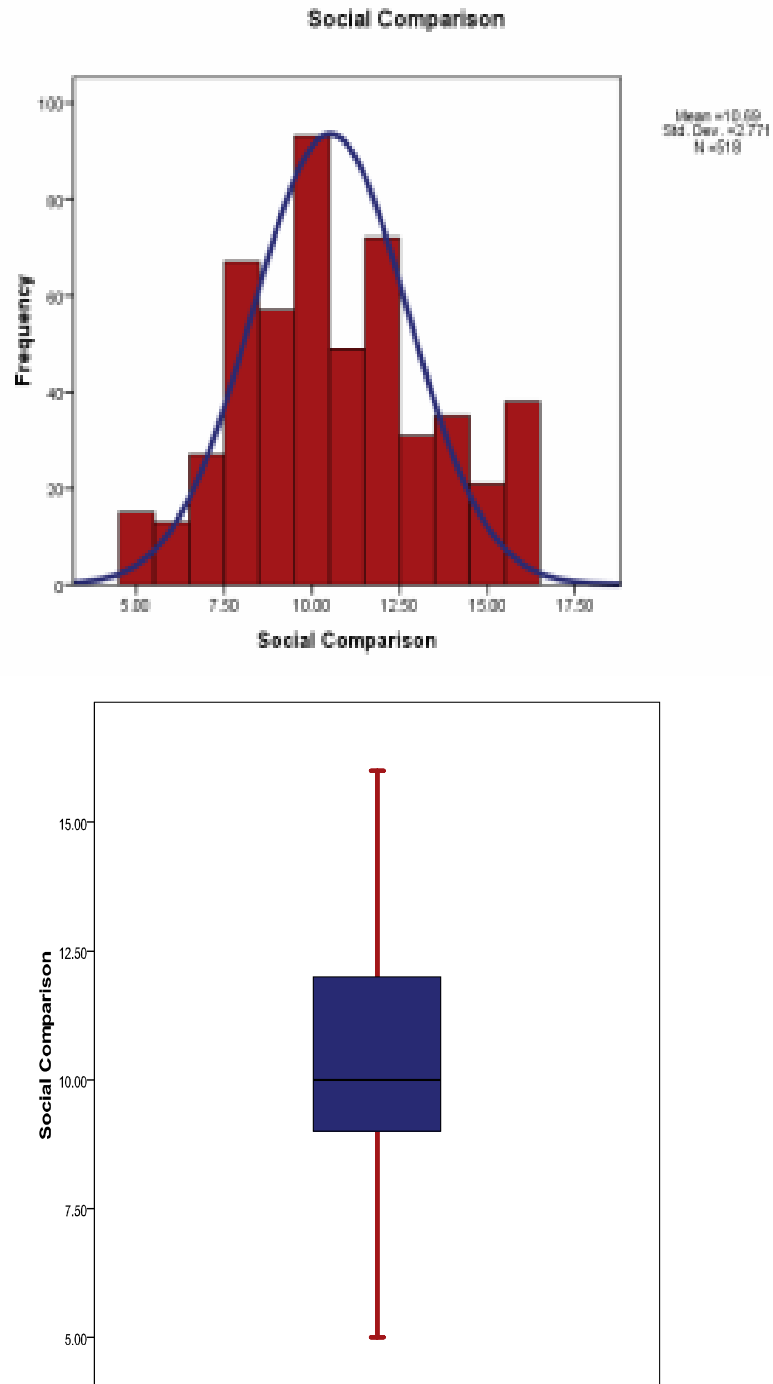


Fig. 6.7: Histogram and Box-Plot for Social Comparison Variable

The fourth component of the social pressure is the attitude to debt and it checks how consumers feel about debt and what they think are the appropriate uses of debt. The scale contained items which would measure the vulnerability of individuals to take to debt to meet their status consumption oriented needs. Leah, Webley and Walker's (1995) consumer attitude to debt scale was adapted and used in this study. The measure from this three item scale had the mean = 8.08 (SD = 2.60), variance = 6.76 and range = 13.00, which show that dispersion is within normal limits.

Histogram and Box-plots were developed for checking on the normalcy and to estimate the skew and kurtosis aspects of the distribution. Fig 6.8 shows the histogram and box-plot and the histogram confirms that the distribution can be considered normal. Box plot shows that the outliers are well contained. Hence it can be presumed that the dispersion of the measures of this variable is within the acceptable limits.

Mean recorded is close to 54% of the maximum value possible which as per normal conditions show the existence of segments of population who are medium to heavily susceptible to attitude to debt. The highest score recorded for this variable was 100% which supports our observation. Further a closer inspection of the histogram is indicative of the presence of people with medium to high attitude to debt scores. Such people will tend to take loans or avail finance options to support their desires created through television advertising or programs, peer influence or through upward social comparisons. Literature survey has come out with evidences to show that high attitude to debt can lead to development of high consumption behavior and materialism. The descriptive statistics of this study are indicative of this.

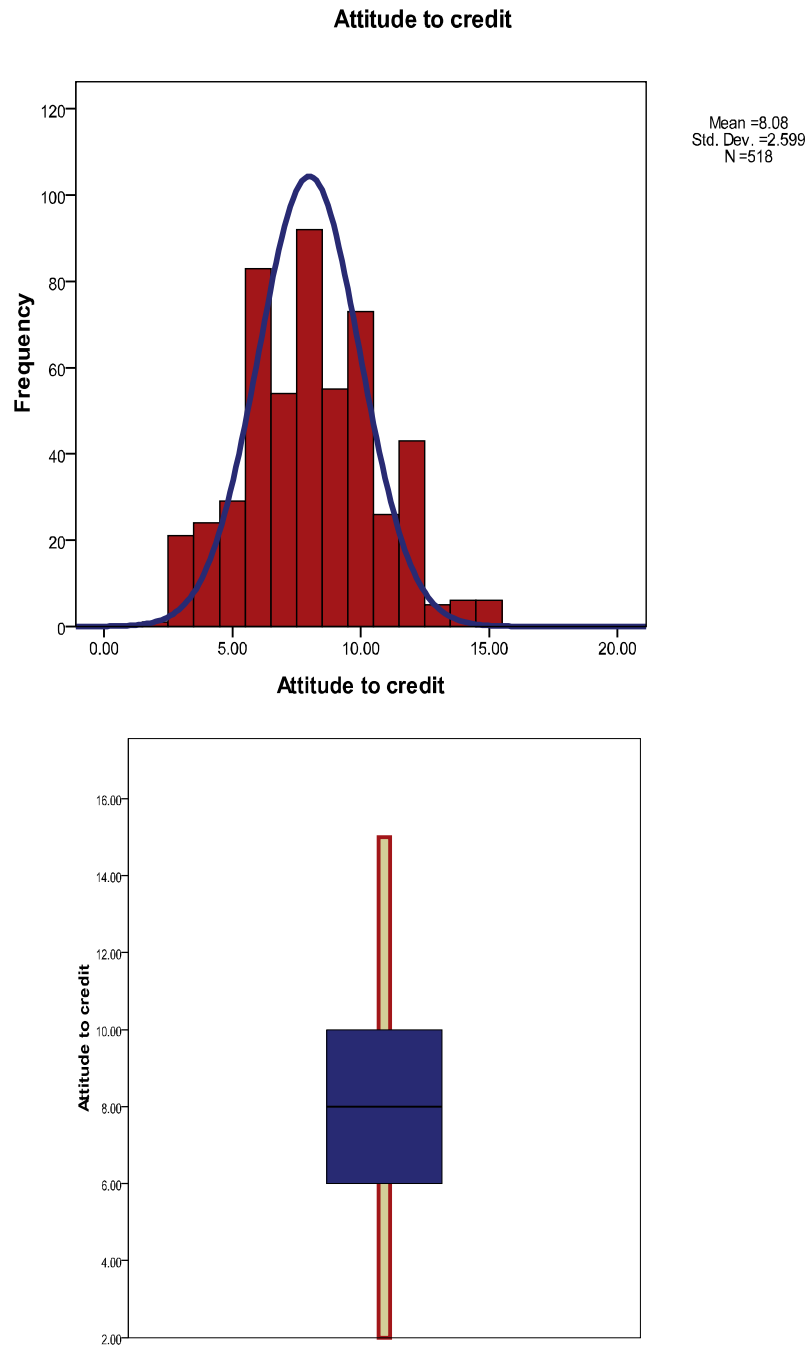


Fig. 6.8: Histogram and Box-Plot for Attitude to Debt Variable

6.3 Reliability and Validity of Scales Used

The reliability Cronbach alpha values were tested for all the seven variables and were found to be well above 0.60 level which is acceptable. These values are given in table 6.1 (self-esteem, materialism and social pressure) and in table 6.2 (attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt). Self-esteem scale had an alpha value of 0.823, while material values scale had an alpha value of 0.78. The factors of social pressure such as attitude to television media (0.65), peer pressure (0.78), social comparison (0.69) and attitude to debt (0.66) had Cronbach alpha values at greater than or equal to 0.65. Only in the case of the five item social pressure scale we had 0.61 alpha value as shown in table 6.3a below.

Table 6.3a: Social Pressure Scale Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
.605	.602	5

The alpha value for social pressure recorded was only 0.61 which is just the acceptable limit regarding reliability alpha value. Individual scale item to total scale correlations were considered to see if by deleting any item the overall reliability can be improved. Table 6.3b shows the inter-item reliability statistics and the impact on alpha value if any item is deleted. It can be noticed that only in the case of deletion of item 2 there was marginal improvement in the alpha value. In all other cases dropping of item will lead to a further fall in the reliability value. As there is no significant improvement in the alpha values if any item is deleted, it was decided to maintain all the five items.

Table 6.3b: Social Pressure Scale Item-Total Statistics

Item Description	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I want to be like models that come on TV	9.2428	8.234	.334	.123	.564
Less concerned about utility	9.3250	8.806	.241	.065	.606
I celebrate events because it's common practice	8.9006	7.695	.358	.156	.552
Membership in big clubs is important	9.2428	7.134	.485	.247	.481
Celebrating festivals using borrowed money	9.0478	7.268	.387	.161	.536

The inherent characteristic of materialism is that materialistic individuals are highly self oriented and are always concerned with their material possessions including money and financial security. They give high priority to acquiring money and material possessions [Richins (1994)]. In general such people are not concerned with things that can bring better welfare to society and others.

To confirm this trait, respondents were segregated into two groups, on the basis of their response to the question 'what they considered as most important to their life'. People who had indicated money, wealth, financial security or owning of status items were categorized as materialistic while

others who considered their family, welfare of society or professional growth as non-materialistic. A z-test was carried out to check whether there existed any significant differences between the materialism levels of the segregated materialists and non-materialists groups.

Table 6.4a: Group Statistics (Materialistic vs. Non Materialistic Groups)

Descriptive	Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Materialism	Non Materialistic	263	50.0532	9.14582	.56396
	Materialistic	175	54.6686	8.99897	.68026

It could be noticed from table 6.4a that materialistic group had higher scores of materialism (mean = 54.67, SD = 8.99), when compared to non-materialistic group (mean = 50.05, SD = 9.14)

Results of the Levenes test for equality of means carried out as shown in table 6.4b below, is found to be not significant ($p > 0.05$) and hence equal variance is assumed. The z test for equality of means is found to be significant ($z = -5.20$, $p < 0.05$). Thus it can be claimed that the mean for both the groups are significantly different. This confirms our presumption that materialistic people will give priority to money, wealth, financial security or owning of status items over family, welfare of society or professional achievements. Moreover it helps in confirming the content validity of measurements of materialism made using Richins and Dawson's material value scale for this study.

Table 6.4b: Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	z-test for Equality of Means							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
		Type	F	Sig.	Z	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
Descriptive												
	Equal variances assumed	.207	.650	-5.206	436	.000	-4.61534	.88651	-6.35771	-2.87297		
Materialism	Equal variances not assumed			-5.223	377.07	.000	-4.61534	.88363	-6.35279	-2.87789		

The validity of Rosenberg's self-esteem scale and Richins and Dawson's material value scale are well established. In view of this no further activity was taken up to check the construct validity of these scales. Construct validity for material value scale by Richins and Dawson have been carried out by Mishra and Mishra (2001) where they had established construct validity for the scale.

A scale validation test was carried out for the 20 item 'social pressure scale which includes measures for attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison, attitude to debt and social pressure. High and low score quartile groups for each item of the questionnaire were segregated and z-test coefficients and significance levels were estimated [Gupta and Kapoor (1987)]. Results as shown in table 6.5 below show significant variation between the high and low groups showing construct validity.

The scale validation test shows highly significant variance between the high and low quartile groups for all the twenty items. Mean and standard deviations were estimated for the high and low groups for all the items of the social pressure scale. Mean for the high quartile and low quartile for all the twenty items showed substantial variation in all the cases. z- tests were carried out to estimate whether these observed variations are statistically significant.

A detailed analysis of table 6.5 reveals that the variances observed for all the twenty items were found to be significant. Such observations in turn indicate the capability of the scale to measure the conceptualized construct by all of these items. Results of z-tests show that devised social pressure to consume scale is capable of discriminating the respondents based on their opinions into high and low quartiles.

Table 6.5: Scale Validation z-Test for Social Pressure to Consume Scale

QUESTION	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q1 (Attitude to television)	Lower	.9389	.24038	-33.407	<.001
	Higher	3.1679	.72486		
Q2 (Deleted)	Lower	1.3740	.59918	-44.458	<.001
	Higher	4.2519	.43578		
Q3 (Social Pressure)	Lower	1.0305	.34948	-41.660	<.001
	Higher	3.5802	.60706		
Q4(Attitude to television)	Lower	.9618	.19234	-28.125	<.001
	Higher	3.0153	.81321		
Q5 (Peer Pressure)	Lower	1.8092	.48221	-44.066	<.001
	Higher	4.4885	.50179		
Q6 (Peer Pressure)	Lower	1.0916	.40097	-41.747	<.001
	Higher	3.6794	.58530		
Q7 (Social Pressure)	Lower	.9542	.27351	-43.511	<.001
	Higher	3.5038	.61236		
Q8 (Peer Pressure)	Lower	1.4580	.58520	-39.455	<.001
	Higher	4.0305	.46308		
Q9(Peer Pressure)	Lower	1.3359	.57660	-31.750	<.001
	Higher	3.6870	.62121		
Q10 (Peer Pressure)	Lower	1.2824	.53024	-32.934	<.001
	Higher	3.7023	.65274		
Q11 (Social comparison)	Lower	1.6641	.61533	-39.762	<.001
	Higher	4.1679	.37525		
Q12 (Social comparison)	Lower	1.4809	.59937	-43.593	<.001
	Higher	4.1603	.36830		
Q13 (Social Pressure)	Lower	1.4198	.58117	-46.499	<.001
	Higher	4.1145	.31964		
Q14 (Social comparison)	Lower	1.3893	.57609	-45.925	<.001
	Higher	4.1908	.39447		
Q15 (Social comparison)	Lower	1.3511	.58076	-32.800	<.001
	Higher	3.7863	.62027		
Q16(Social Pressure)	Lower	.9466	.22576	-45.768	<.001
	Higher	3.7786	.67128		
Q17(Attitude to debt)	Lower	1.2214	.54477	-50.386	<.001
	Higher	4.0611	.34543		
Q18 (Social Pressure)	Lower	1.1145	.44100	-51.088	<.001
	Higher	4.1527	.51848		
Q19 (Attitude to debt)	Lower	1.2290	.50482	-55.273	<.001
	Higher	4.1145	.31964		
Q20 (Attitude to debt)	Lower	1.4733	.57282	-44.082	<.001
	Higher	4.3435	.47670		

Based on the evidences from the literature review, it was concluded that people with social pressure will be vulnerable to believe what they see on television as reality, will be more susceptible to peer pressure, will get into upward social comparisons and end up taking debt to support their high consumption habits [Lea et al. (1995)]. To evaluate this important aspect related to social pressure author of this study tried to find out the details regarding the ownership of credit cards and the number of people who maintained revolving credit.

It was found out that 62.5% of the population had credit cards but one out of every five card holder (21.4% of card owners) had revolving credit, which is a costly form of debt. Most credit card companies charge 2.5% to 3% interest per month on revolving credit. This will work out to 30% to 40% interest charges on annualized basis and that is why it is treated as a costly form of debt. As shown in Table 6.6a, the card owners (N=327) is segregated as those having or not having revolving credit.

Table 6.6a: Group Statistics of Revolving Credit among Credit Card Owners

Variable	Revolving Credit Balance	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social Pressure	Yes	70	12.2143	3.62716	.43353
	No	257	11.0856	2.93558	.18312

Mean and standard deviation of these two groups were estimated. Those individuals who had credit card with revolving credit had higher social pressure scores ($M = 12.14$, $SD = 3.62$) than those who did not hold revolving credit ($M = 11.09$, $SD = 2.94$), as can be noted from table 6.6a. Next task was to find out whether the observed variance between the means is significant or not.

The Levenes test for equality of means was carried out as shown in table 6.7b below and it was found to be significant ($F = 6.96$, $p < 0.05$); hence equal variance is not assumed. The z test for equality of means is also found to be significant ($z = 2.39$, $p < 0.05$). Hence it can be claimed that the means for both the groups are significantly different. This clearly supports our presumption that people with higher social pressure are more prone to take debt to meet their acquisition instincts and establishes the content validity for our scale for measuring social pressure.

According to premises of this study, social pressure is the sum total of different societal factors on an individual that drives him to high consumption behavior and materialistic tendencies. To support such incessant consumption oriented drives, people under social pressure will opt for credit or financing options. This led to the conclusion that social pressure created by the combined effect of attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt develop desires to engage in status consumption and such people tend to avail even costlier forms of debt to support their acquisition desires. Further it shows that the scale developed for this study is a valid tool to measure social pressure to consume.

Table 6.6b: Independent Samples Test

Variable	Variance Assumption	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Social Pressure	Equal variances assumed	6.965	.009	2.705	325	.007	1.12868	.41732	.30769	1.94967
	Equal variances not assumed			2.398	95,002	.018	1.12868	.47062	.19439	2.06297

6.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 states that there exists a relationship between material values and self-esteem. The results from our study presented in table - 6.7 show that there is no significant correlation existing between these variables ($r = -0.033$, $p > 0.05$) and hence this hypothesis is not supported.

Table 6.7: Correlations – Material Values with Self-Esteem

Variable	Descriptives	Self-Esteem	Material Values
Material Values	Pearson Correlation	-.033	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.455	
	N	513	519

To counter-check this finding we carried out a comparison between self-esteem and materialism values recorded in this study. Respondents were classified on the basis of their self-esteem scores as low, medium and high self-esteem groups and their materialism levels were compared (see Annexure II). It is observed that the materialism increased from low self-esteem group ($m = 32.00$, $SD = 11.14$), to medium self-esteem group ($m = 49.89$, $SD = 8.12$) and to high self-esteem group ($m = 51.69$, $SD = 10.10$). ANOVA test to evaluate the observed variance showed highly significant results ($F = 10.892$, $p < 0.001$) indicating the co-existence of high self-esteem and high materialistic values.

ANOVA results show the materialism values increasing as we move from low self-esteem group to middle self-esteem group and then to high self-esteem

group. Such results do indicate the existence of a positive correlation between self-esteem and materialism and ANOVA results were found to be significant. This is contrary to the findings presented in Table 6.7 where the correlation exercise showed a low negative correlation, which is not statistically significant. As the correlation analysis has shown no significant relationship between the two variables, similar results should have appeared in the case of ANOVA too.

Simpson's paradox or Yule-Simpson effect [Simpson (1951)] says such results are possible and are often encountered in social science and medical science statistics. Alternatively it is known as reversal paradox or amalgamation paradox. Paradoxes help to reveal underlying truth beneath the surface of what appears to be absurd. Simpson's paradox demonstrates what kinds of problems result on combining data from different groups. Consider the case were one is observing several groups and establishes correlation for each of these groups. Simpson's paradox says that if we combine all the groups together and look at the data in aggregate form, the correlation that one noticed before may reverse itself.

Similar results were observed during the exploratory and pilot studies undertaken by the author. Generally in our conditions the childhood parental nurturing is good and most of the physical and security needs are well taken care of. During the survey it was noticed that most of the respondents had happy memories of their childhood. This could have led them to have higher self-esteem. Strong family ties existing in our society could be another reason for the prevalence of high self-esteem as it is an indirect indication of childhood needs are being well looked after by adults.

As part of the study respondents were asked to list out what they considered most important to them, as answer to an open ended question. It was observed that a large number of respondents had indicated family as an

important factor in their lives and most of such respondents had high self-esteem ($M = 32.09$, $SD = 3.80$) when compared to those who did not consider family as that important to their lives ($M = 30.42$, $SD = 5.53$). A z-test was taken up to assess the significance of the observed variance which showed that the variance observed in the measures from these two groups were significant ($z = 4.020$, $p < 0.001$). This can be a major factor behind the existence of high self-esteem in the population considered. The results also support the premise that high self-esteem and materialistic values co-exist among our target population.

Hypotheses-2 looks at the existence of a relationship between self-esteem and social pressure. The results, as shown in Table 6.8 ($r = -0.260$, $p < 0.001$) clearly show that there is a significant, negative relationship existing between the measures of self-esteem and those of social pressure. Based on this finding, it can be said that hypothesis-2 is supported.

Table 6.8: Correlations – Self-Esteem with Social Pressure

Variable	Descriptive	Self-Esteem	Social Pressure
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.260**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	515	512

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This leads one to the inference that social pressure creates low self-esteem. As this study could not establish any relationship between materialism and low self-esteem, the study did not further pursue into the linkages between social pressure and low self-esteem.

To verify the next set of hypotheses formulated, correlations between the different variables included in the study were estimated. Table 6.9 below gives the correlation findings of major variables such as materialism, social pressure and self-esteem with factors of social pressure. A cursory analysis shows that the proposed social pressure factors such as attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt have higher correlation with social pressure in comparison with materialism and self-esteem.

Table 6.9: Summary of Correlations between Social Pressure, Material Values, Self-Esteem (dependent variables) with Attitude to TV, Peer pressure, Social Comparison and Attitude to Debt (independent variables)

Dependent Variables	Attitude to TV	Peer pressure	Social Comparison	Attitude to debt
Social Pressure (Pearson Correlation)	0.507***	0.571***	0.581***	0.468***
Material values (Pearson Correlation)	0.245***	0.379***	0.462***	0.296***
Self-esteem (Pearson Correlation)	-0.224***	-0.245***	-0.149**	-0.052

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*** Correlation significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

Hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d look at the existence of association between the four different factors of social pressure with self-esteem. From table 6.9 it can be understood that there exists significant negative relationship between self-esteem and attitude to television ($r = -0.224$, $p < 0.001$) and hence hypothesis 2a is supported.

It can be noted from table 6.9 that self-esteem holds a significant negative relationship with Peer pressure ($r = -0.245$, $p < 0.001$) and hence hypothesis 2b is supported.

Similarly self-esteem holds a significant negative association with social comparison ($r = -0.140$, $p < 0 .05$). Hence hypothesis 2c is also stand supported.

From table 6.9 it can be noted that hypothesis 2d is not supported as there exists no significant association between self-esteem and attitude to debt ($r = -0.052$, $p > .05$).

Based on these results it could be inferred that social pressure and its contributors like attitude to television, peer pressure and social comparisons have significant, negative but relatively weak association with self-esteem. These results are in line with the literature review on socialization factors included in this study. Kasser et al. (2004) had explicitly stated the role of socialization factors especially role of television in creation of media, peer pressure and social comparisons in development of materialism. They were of the opinion that these factors create low self-esteem in individuals which makes them develop materialistic values. However this is getting disproved as the study is unable to establish any significant relationship between low self-esteem and materialism.

Attitude to debt which is being considered for the first time as a contributor of materialism did not have any significant association with self-esteem. This strengthens our assumption that social pressure pathway is an alternate pathway dissociated from the currently accepted low self-esteem based pathways.

Next activity was to check the level of association between factors such as attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt (independent variables) which are suggested as contributors of social pressure (dependent variable) and their level of association with social pressure variable. The correlation coefficients for these factors are indicated in table 6.9 and these are premises tested through hypothesis 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Hypothesis 3 looks at the relationship between attitude to television media and social pressure. From table 6.9 one can see that there is significant positive correlation between television viewing and social pressure ($r = 0.507$, $p < 0.001$).

Hypothesis 4 predicts the relationship between interpersonal or peer influence and social pressure. This study reveals the existence of significant positive association between these two variables ($r = 0.571$, $p < .001$) as indicated in table 6.9.

Results from this study find evidence to support **hypothesis 5**, which deals with the existence of a relationship between social comparison and social pressure. Pearson correlation coefficient for this ($r = 0.581$, $p < 0.001$), indicates that social comparison has the highest association with social pressure.

Similar results were obtained for **hypothesis 6** which predicts a relationship between attitude to debt and social pressure and it stands supported, with Pearson correlation coefficient, $r = 0.468$ ($p < 0.001$).

Table 6.9 provide a comparative picture of the correlation of attitude to debt, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt to self-esteem, materialism and social pressure respectively. It can be noticed that the four social pressure factors mentioned above have higher level of correlation with social pressure to consume than with materialism or self-esteem. The

correlation coefficients of these four contributors of social pressure (attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt) with social pressure was 0.507, 0.571, 0.581 and 0.468 respectively and with materialism was 0.245, 0.379, 0.462 and 0.296. This show that the above four variables have larger positive impact on social pressure than on materialism.

To analyze further the extent of correlation, scatter plot diagrams were generated for the considered variables. These are shown in Fig. 6.9 below and it indicates linear relationship existing between the dependent variables like attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt with the independent variable social pressure. All the four correlation plots are more-or-less in the same direction showing unidirectional impact that these four variables have on social pressure. Scatter plots are clustered together without much dispersion which indicates the strength of the correlation. The scatter diagrams reinforce our findings that there exists strong correlation between attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt to social pressure.

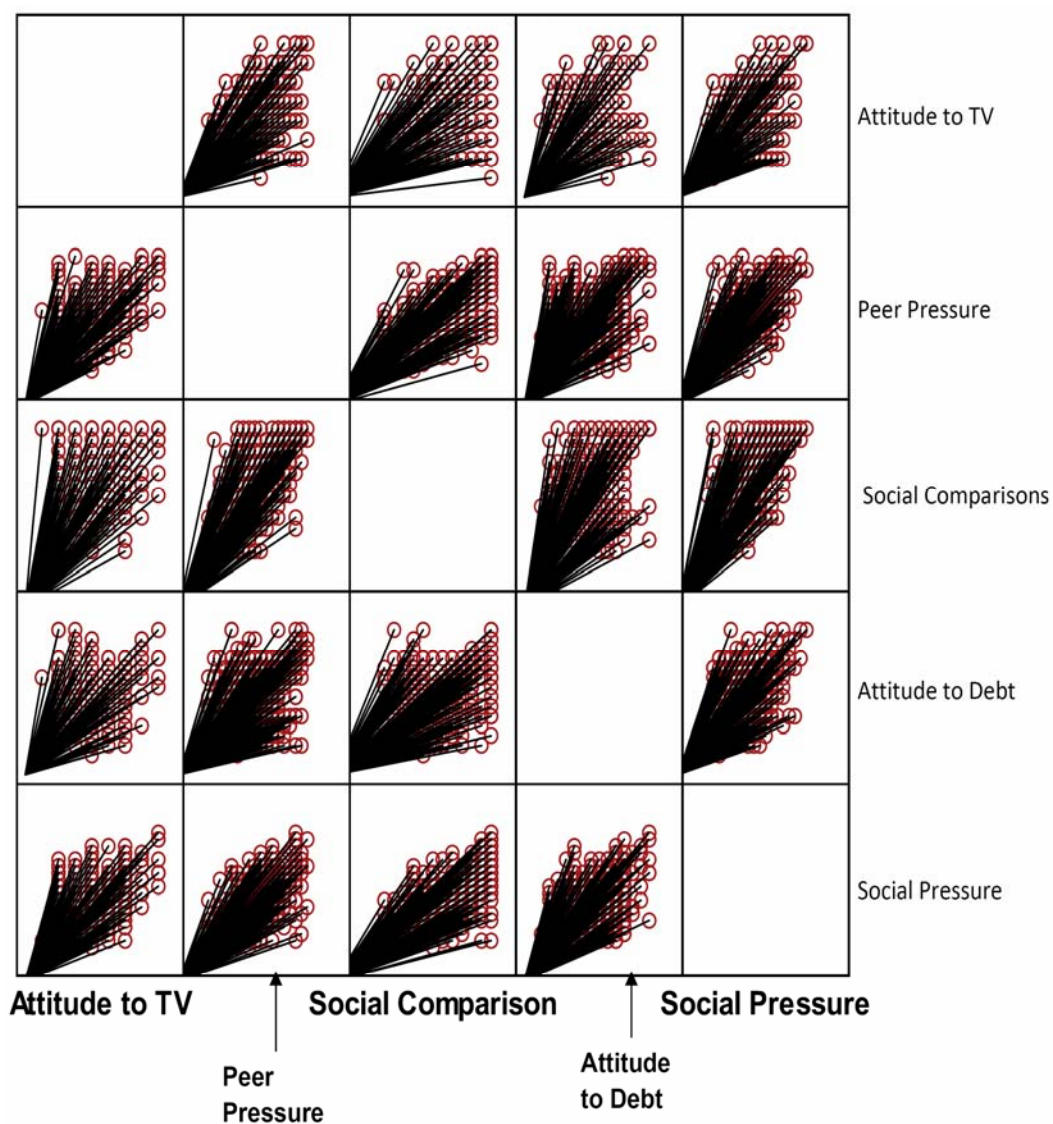


Fig. 6.9: Correlation Plots for Social Pressure and its Contributing Factors

As the next activity, partial regression plots were generated separately for attitude to television, peer pressure social comparison and attitude to debt against social pressure. These are shown as fig. 6.10a, 6.10b, 6.10c and 6.10d.

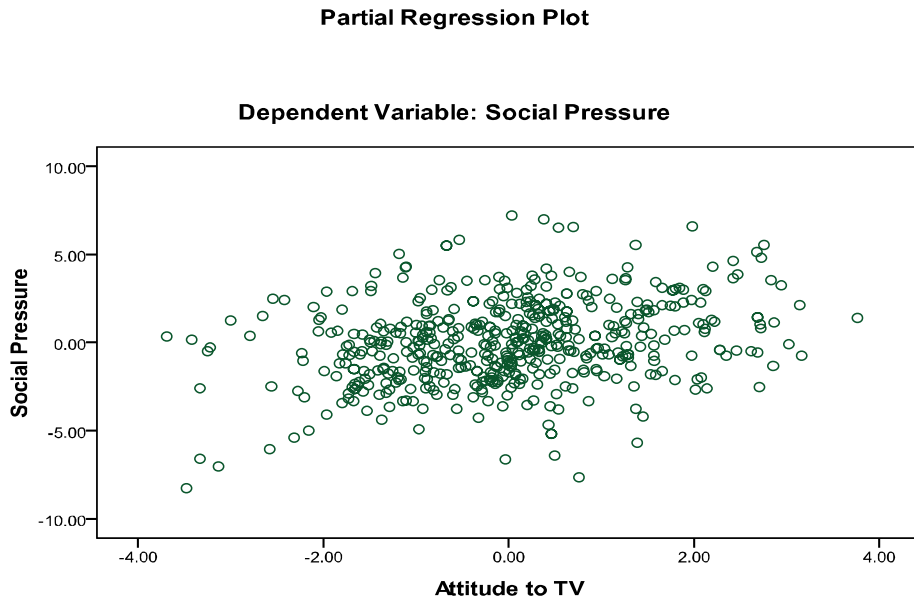


Fig. 6.10a: Partial Regression Plot (Attitude to TV and Social Pressure)

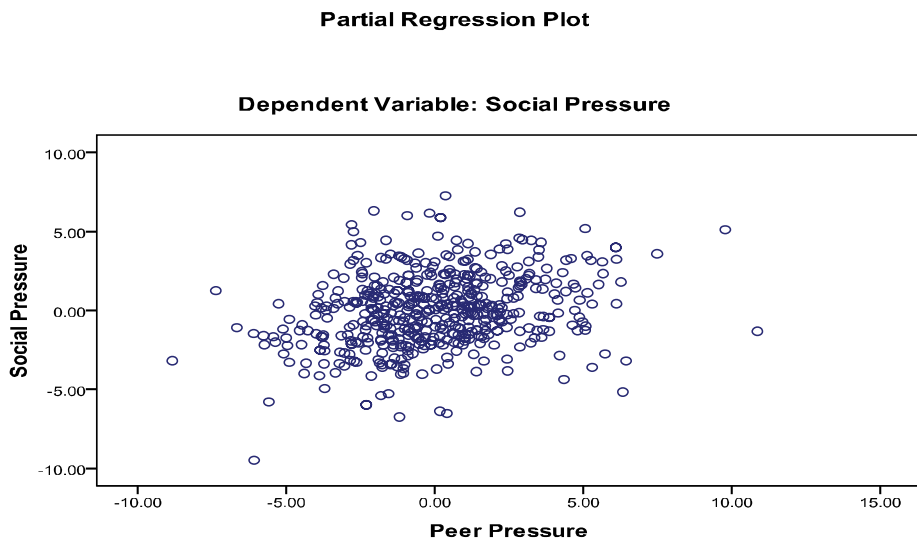


Fig. 6.10b: Partial Regression Plot (Peer Pressure and Social Pressure)

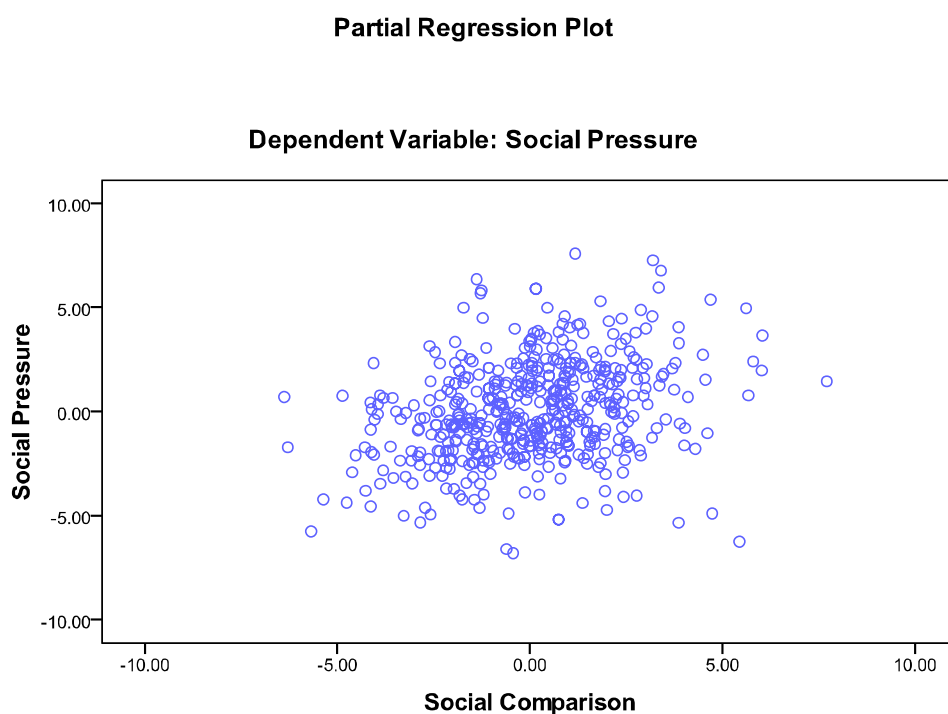


Fig. 6.10c: Partial Regression Plot (Social Comparison and Social Pressure)

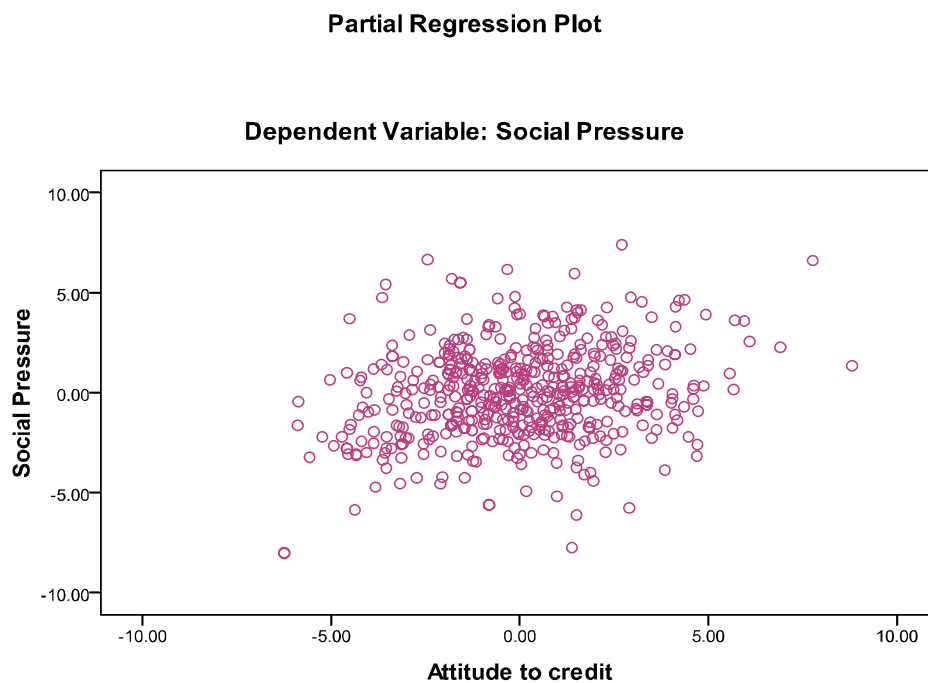


Fig. 6.10d: Partial Regression Plot (Attitude to Debt and Social Pressure)

Partial regression plots indicate linear relationship existing between each of the independent variables attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt with the dependent variable social pressure to consume. In consideration of these findings, an attempt was made to generate a model by linking independent variables (Attitude to Television, Peer Pressure, Social Comparison and Attitude to Debt) to the dependent variable Social Pressure through multiple regression analysis. These results are furnished in table 6.10.

Table 6.10: Multiple Regression Analysis of Social Pressure and Social Pressure Factors –

Model-1		Beta	't'	'p'
R²	0.498			
Adjusted R²	0.494			
ANOVA Results	F = 127.35 P < 0.001			
Independent variable				
(Constant)		1.149	2.422	.016
Attitude to TV		0.520	6.807	.000
Peer Pressure		0.236	6.348	.000
Social Comparisons		0.330	7.078	.000
Attitude to Debt		0.220	5.367	.000

Dependent Variable: Social Pressure

As linear relationships were confirmed between above mentioned independent variables and dependent variable social pressure during the partial regression, it was decided to develop a regression model with social pressure as the dependent variable and attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt as independent variables. From table 6.10 we

can note that the R^2 value was 0.498 and adjusted R^2 was 0.494. This means that the model is capable of explaining 50% of the variations in the dependent variable due to the changes in the independent variables.

The sum of squares of the regression (2566.026) is the part which could be explained by the regression equation out of the total sum of squares (5150.195). Residual sum of squares was estimated at 2584.169. ANOVA exercise was initiated to check on the significance of the variance observed which tells us on the significance of the regression model being created. ANOVA results show that the regression is significant with $F = 127.35$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.05$.

Beta values or the coefficients for the independent variables and the constant predictor value estimated are given in table 6.10. T-values were estimated for these to find out whether these estimates were statistically significant. It was observed that the constant in the equation and the coefficients are significant ($p < 0.05$). Based on this regression output, model 1 which predicts the relationship between dependent variable social pressure with independent variables mentioned earlier is formed. Standardized coefficient, beta value for attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt were found to be 0.233, 0.260, 0.290 and 0.181 respectively. Standardization of the coefficients is usually done to answer the question of which independent variables have greater effect on the dependent variable. This leads one to the conclusion that social comparisons followed by peer pressure will be the factors that will have greater impact on social pressure.

From the results of the regression exercise, social pressure can be predicted by the equation:

$$\text{Social Pressure} = 1.149 + 0.520 (\text{Attitude to TV}) + 0.236 (\text{Peer Pressure}) + 0.330 (\text{Social Comparison}) + 0.220 (\text{Attitude to debt}).$$

Scatterplot

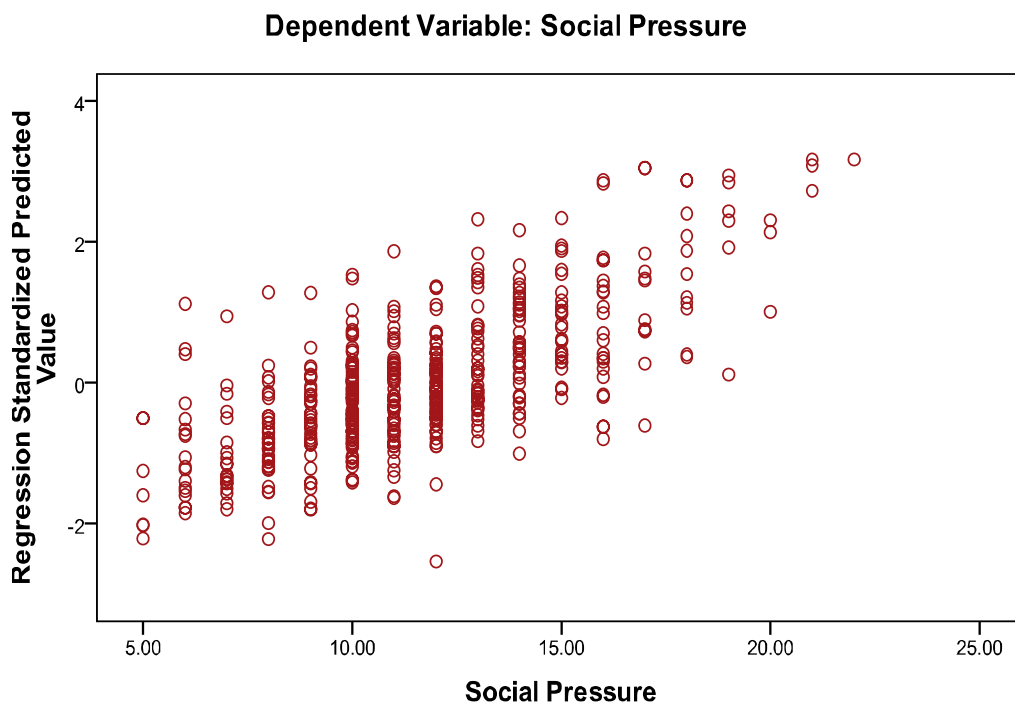


Fig. 6.11: Scatter Plot of Multiple Regression Based Predicted Value for Social Pressures and Actual Social Pressure Measures

For establishing the effectiveness of this model, scatter plots were developed by plotting regression model based predicted values of social pressure against actual measured values as shown in Fig. 6.11. The scatter diagram shows strong overlap between the predicted and actual social pressure values and linear relationship which in turn establishes the predictive capabilities of the regression model developed. These results from the study show that hypotheses 3, 4, 5 and 6 stand supported.

Fig 6.12 is a pictorial representation of the model that has evolved through this regression exercise.

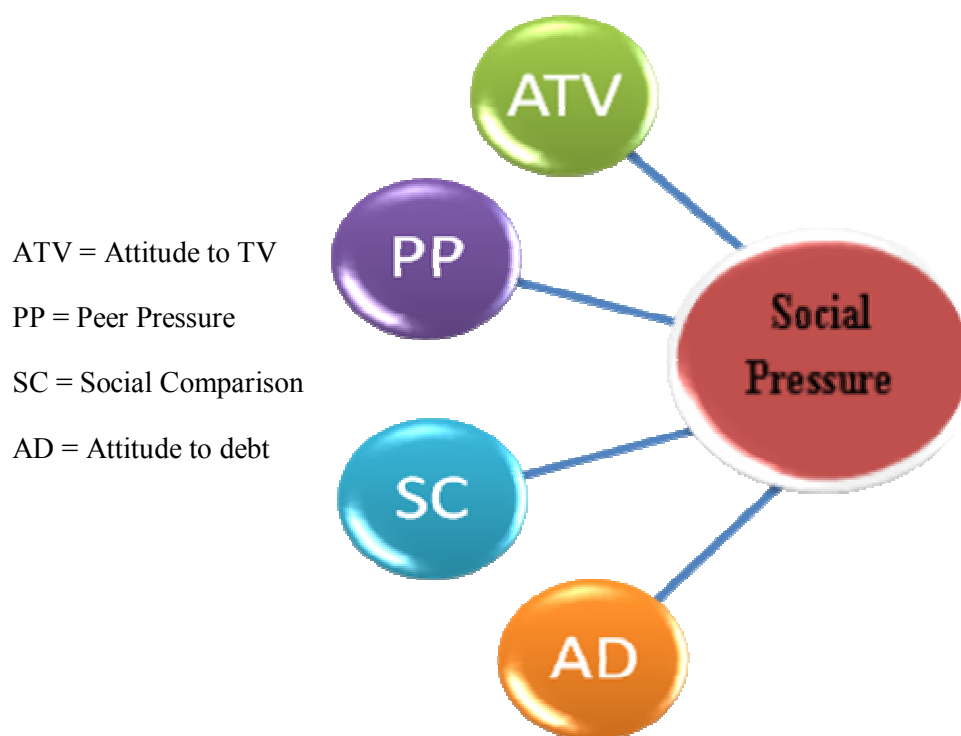


Fig. 6.12: Model 1- Attitude to TV, Peer Pressure, Social Comparison and Attitude to Debt as Contributors of Social Pressure

Hypothesis 7 suggests that there exists a relationship between material values and social pressure. Outcomes from this study as shown in table 6.11 below support this hypothesis, as there is a positive relationship between materialism scores and social pressure scores ($r = 0.464$) and the correlation is found to be significant at $p < .001$.

Table 6.11: Correlations – Material Values with Social Pressure

Variables	Descriptive	Material Values	Social Pressure
Materialism	Pearson Correlation	1	.464***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Social Pressure	Pearson Correlation	.464***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

***Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

Through model-1 we have already established that attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt act as independent variables that cause social pressure in individuals. The above correlation output indicates that the four contributor factors and social pressure can lead to development of materialism.

An attempt was made to build a second tire model linking social pressure (independent variable) and materialism (dependent variable). Table 6.12 given below give the details of the regression exercise carried out.

Table 6.12: Regression Analysis of Materialism - Social Pressure Model

Model-2		Beta	't'	'p'
R²	0.215			
Adjusted R²	0.214			
ANOVA Results	F = 141.60 P < .001			
(Constant)		36.014	26.015	.000
Social Pressure		1.376	11.900	.000

Dependent variable: Materialism

From table 6.12 we can find that social pressure alone is capable of explaining 21.5% of the variations taking place in materialism. Hence social pressure can be considered a moderating variable which acts as a strong link between other independent variables and materialism.

ANOVA results show significant variation ($df = 1$, $F = 141.6$ and $p < .001$) between regression (9749.305) and residual (35527.06) components, thus proving that the regression values are significant. Table 6.12 gives the values of both constant and coefficient for social pressure. T values are estimated for both these and were observed to be statistically significant.

Hence materialism can be represented by the following equation:

$$\text{Materialism} = 36.014 + 1.37(\text{Social Pressure}).$$

To gain better insights into the association between material values variable and social pressure variable, a scatter plot was generated (Fig 6.13) by plotting regression model-2 predicted values of materialism against the actual measures of materialism collected from the survey. There is predominant overlap of the plotted values and this leads one to inference that these two variables are positively associated. Scatter plot also indicate a linear relationship existing between materialism and social pressure and hence hypothesis 7 stands supported.

Scatterplot

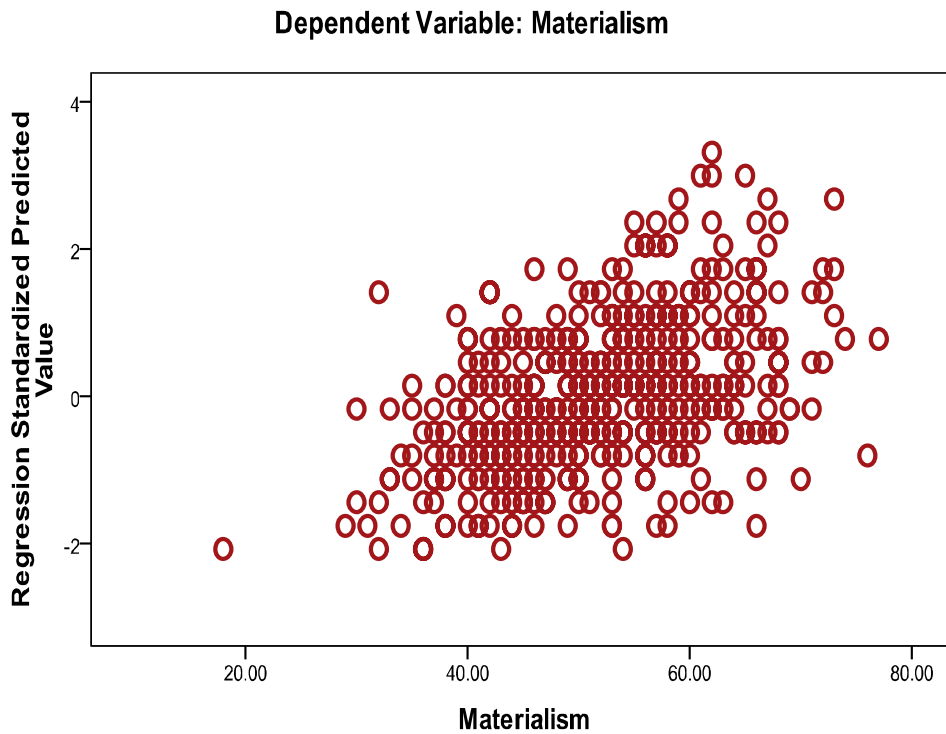
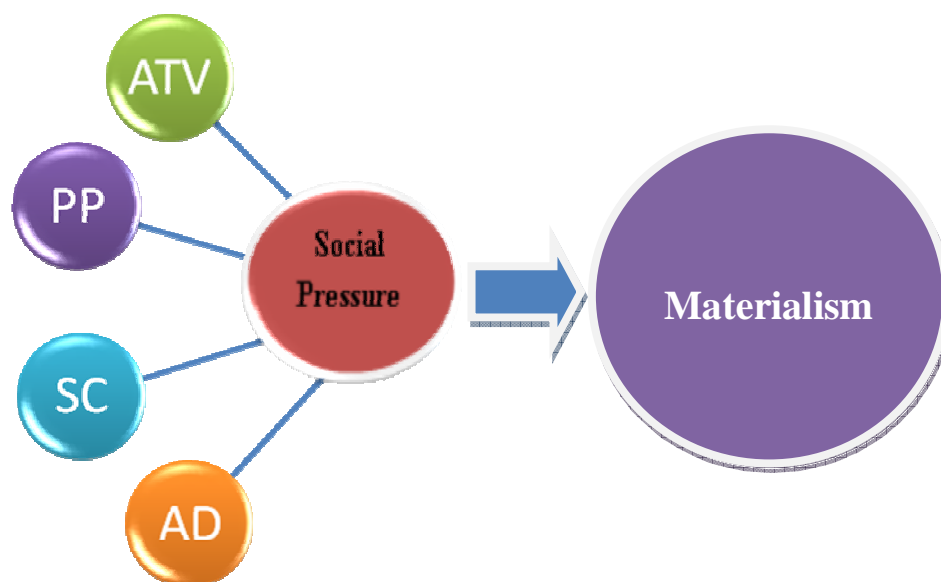


Fig. 6.13: Scatter plots for Regression Analysis (Social Pressure and Materialism)

Such findings lead to the development of Model 2, which summarizes the findings from results of hypotheses 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 and is schematically represented in fig 6.14 given below. Model 1 established the contributory role played by attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt in the development of social pressure to consume. The next level of regression analysis links social pressure to consume with materialism. Fig. 6.14 depicts the Materialism – Social Pressure model which depicts the moderating role played by social pressure on the above mentioned four contributory factors which can be expressed by the following model:

Materialism = 37.59 + 0.72 (Attitude to TV) + 0.32 (Peer Pressure) + 0.45 (Social Comparison) + 0.30 (Attitude to Debt).



ATV = Attitude television; PP = Peer Pressure; SC = Social Comparison; AD = Attitude to Debt

Fig. 6.14: Model 2- Social Pressure as Moderator of Material Values

In-order to make the proposed model acceptable, one has to establish the moderator role of social pressure as depicted in the model. This is envisaged in hypothesis-8 of this study and efforts were directed to build the necessary empirical evidences to support this.

Hypothesis 8 is formulated to ascertain whether social pressure plays a moderating role on factors like attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt in developing material values. To evaluate the moderation role of social pressure a partial correlation exercise is attempted.

Table 6.13: Correlation Matrix of Material Values with Social Pressure, Attitude to Television, Peer Pressure, Social Comparison and Attitude to Debt.

Variables	Descriptive	Material Values	Social Pressure	Social Comparison	Peer Pressure	Attitude to Debt	Attitude to TV
Materialism	Pearson Correlation	1	.464**	.462**	.379**	.296**	.245**
Social Pressure	Pearson Correlation	.464**	1	.581**	.571**	.410**	.460**
Social Comparison	Pearson Correlation	.462**	.581**	1	.618**	.339**	.298**
Peer Pressure	Pearson Correlation	.379**	.571**	.618**	1	.268**	.360**
Attitude to Debt	Pearson Correlation	.296**	.410**	.339**	.268**	1	.319**
Attitude to TV	Pearson Correlation	.245**	.460**	.298**	.360**	.319**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6.13 explains the correlation between independent variables like attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt, to dependent variable materialism. The coefficient of correlation was found to be positive for all cases, with social pressure ($r = 0.464$) having the highest correlation coefficient, followed by social comparison ($r = 0.462$), peer pressure ($r = 0.379$) and attitude to debt (0.296) and attitude to television (0.245) which is the lowest. It can be observed that all the correlations were very significant ($p < 0.001$).

To ascertain the moderator role, a partial correlation exercise was taken up and the social pressure variable was taken as the control variable for the partial correlation exercise. After controlling the social pressure values, correlations were again estimated for the attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt (independent variable) to materialism (dependent variable). Table 6.14 below explains the partial correlation matrix of all the other variables after keeping the effect of social pressure under control.

On controlling the effect of social pressure variable, the coefficient of the correlations for social comparison fell to $r = 0.267$. Similarly there was marked reduction in the values of correlation coefficients for peer pressure ($r = 0.156$), attitude to debt ($r = 0.017$) and also for attitude to television ($r = 0.108$). This leads us to the inference that the strength of the association between the above mentioned four contributors and materialism weakens in the absence of social pressure variable.

Table 6.14: Partial Correlation Matrix – Material Values with Attitude to TV, Peer Pressure, Social Comparison and Attitude to Debt after Suppressing Social Pressure Variable.

Control Variables	Variables and Descriptive		Material Values	Social Comparison	Peer Pressure	Attitude to Debt	Attitude to TV
Social Pressure	Materialism	Correlation	1.000	.267**	.156**	.017**	.108**
	Social Comparison	Correlation	.267**	1.000	.428**	.043**	.135**
	Peer Pressure	Correlation	.156**	.428**	1.000	.134**	.045**
	Attitude to Debt	Correlation	.017**	.043**	.134**	1.000	.091**
	Attitude to TV	Correlation	.108**	.135**	.045**	.091**	1.000
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

A comparative evaluation between correlation coefficients for social comparison, peer pressure, attitude to debt and attitude to television with materialism is shown in Table 6.14 and table 6.15 and continued through table 6.16. There was 42% drop in the value for social comparison and 58.8% drop in the case of correlation value for peer pressure. Marked fall in the association with materialism was found for the attitude to debt which fell by 94% while correlation coefficient for attitude to television fell by 56%.

Table 6.15: Comparison between Uncontrolled versus Controlled Correlation

Variable	Descriptive	Material Values	Social Pressure	Social Comparison	Peer Pressure	Attitude to Debt	Attitude to TV
Material Values	Pearson Correlation	1	0.464**	0.462**	0.379**	0.296**	0.245**
Material Values (with Social Pressure Controlled)	Correlation	1.000	Control	0.267**	0.156**	.017**	0.108**

From Table 6.16 it is clear that, when Social Pressure is controlled there is substantial fall in the correlation between dependent variable (materialism) and the independent variables (social pressure factors). The effect of attitude to debt on materialism was almost marginalized while the association of social comparison, peer pressure, attitude to television almost halved on controlling or suppressing the moderating effect of social pressure. This proves the moderating role played by social pressure which could increase or decrease the relationship between attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt with materialism.

In view of such findings we could accept the model 2 shown in fig. 6.20 which shows social pressure as a moderator of other contributing factors considered in this study namely television viewing, peer pressure, social-comparison and attitude to debt in developing materialism. This supports hypothesis-8 on which this study is initiated.

Table 6.17 given below shows the summary of the testing carried out on different hypotheses in this study.

Table 6.16: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Code	Statement of Hypotheses	Results
H1	Self-esteem and materialism are associated	Not Supported
H2	There is a relationship between self-esteem and social pressure	Supported
H2a	Attitude to television and self-esteem are associated	Supported
H2b	Peer Pressure and self-esteem are associated	Supported
H2c	Social comparison and self- esteem are associated	Supported
H2d	Attitude to Debt and self-esteem are associated	Not Supported
H3	Attitude to television and social pressure have a relationship	Supported
H4	Peer pressure and social pressure have a relationship	Supported
H5	Social comparisons and social pressure are related terms	Supported
H6	Attitude to debt has an association with social pressure	Supported
H7	Materialism and social pressure have a relationship.	Supported
H8	Social pressure plays a moderating role between attitude to television, social pressure, social comparisons, attitude to debt and materialism	Supported

6.5 Testing of the Social Pressure – Materialism Model

The model developed through this study is tested using a canonical discriminant analysis. The validity of the model was also confirmed using confirmatory path analysis using structural equation modelling. These activities are being described below.

6.5.1 Canonical Discriminant Functions – Predicting Materialism

Discriminant analysis is used to model the value of a dependent categorical variable based on its relationship to one or more predictors. Discriminant analysis builds a predictive model for group membership. The model comprises a discriminant function (or, for more than two groups, a set of discriminant functions) which is based on linear combinations of the predictor variables. Predictor variables included are those variables that provide the best discrimination between the groups. Table 6.17a shows the Eigen value of the discriminant function.

Table 6.17a: Canonical Discriminant Function - Eigen Values

Eigen values				
Function	Eigen value	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation
1	.291 ^a	100.0	100.0	.475

a. First 1 Canonical Discriminant functions were used in the analysis.

The Eigen value (0.291) indicates the proportion of variance explained. In this model only one canonical function is taken and thus the percentage of variance is 100. The canonical correlation (0.475) is the correlation between the discriminant scores and the levels of the dependent variable which was found to be positively correlated.

Table 6.17b: Canonical Discriminant Function - Wilk's Lambda

Wilks' Lambda				
Test of Function(s)	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	.775	131.126	5	.000

Wilks' Lambda (table 6.17b) is the ratio of within-groups sums of squares to the total sums of squares. This is the proportion of the total variance in the discriminant scores not explained by differences among groups. Here Wilks Lambda was found to be 0.775; $p < 0.01$ and it indicates that the group means do not appear to differ.

The 'Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients' given in table 6.17c indicate the un-standardized scores concerning the independent variables. It is the list of coefficients of the un-standardized discriminant equation.

Table 6.17c: Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function - Coefficients

Social Pressure	.388
Attitude to TV	.058
Peer Pressure	.144
Social Comparison	.522
Attitude to credit	.212

Here the predictor equation is as given below:

$$\text{Materialism} = 0.388 (\text{Social Pressure}) + 0.058 (\text{Attitude to Television}) + 0.144 (\text{Peer Pressure}) + 0.522 (\text{Social Comparison}) + 0.212 (\text{Attitude to Debt})$$

Those coefficients with large absolute values correspond to the variables with greater discriminating ability. Along with social pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt have the highest discriminating ability. Even by the regression model social comparison was observed to be the variable with highest impact among the four causative factors of social pressure.

Another way of interpreting discriminant analysis results is to describe each group in terms of its profile, using the group means of the predictor variables. These group means are called centroids. Functions at group centroid indicate the average discriminant score in the two groups. Table 6.17d

Table 6.17d: Functions at Group Centroids

Materialism Level	Function
	1
Low Materialism	-.553
High Materialism	.524
Un-standardized canonical discriminant functions evaluated at group means	

In this case it can be interpreted that, people with low materialism will have a mean value of -0.553, while people with high materialism will have a mean value of 0.524. Cases with scores closer to a centroid are predicted as belonging to that group. Fig 6.15 below is a pictorial representation of the centroids.

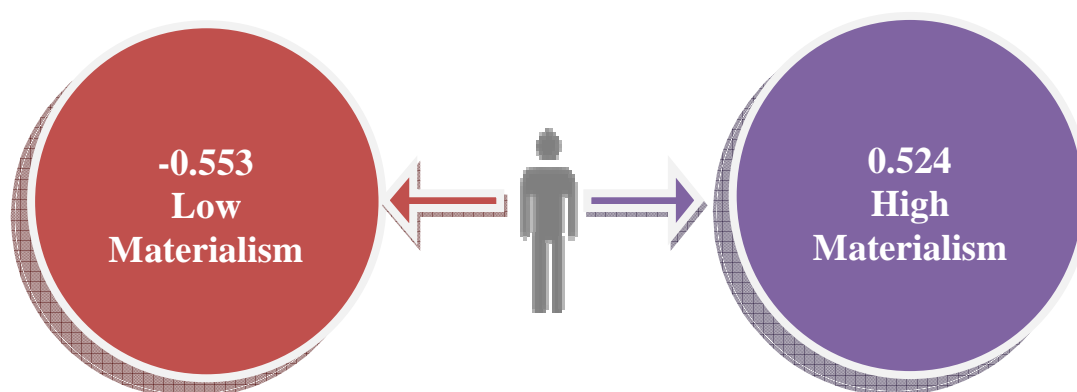


Fig. 6.15: Group Centroids – Low Materialism and High Materialism Groups

Finally, there is the classification phase. The classification table is simply a table in which the rows are the observed categories of the dependent and the columns are the predicted categories. Materialism values are predicted using the predictor equation formulated. These are then segregated as low materialism and high materialism groups. Fig 6.15 represents the centroid values which are nothing but the mean values of the high materialism and low materialism groups. Similarly the values of materialism estimated using the social pressure-materialism model were categorized as low and high materialism and listed against ‘original’ scores as shown in table 6.18.

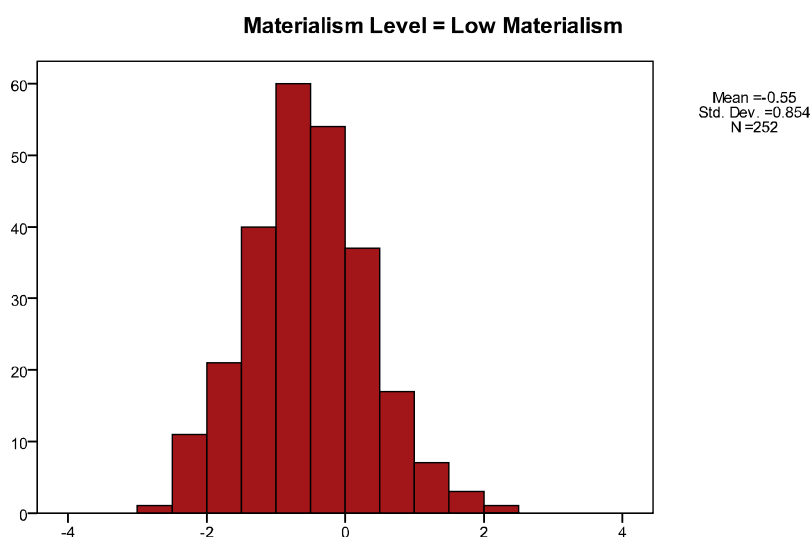
187 of the low materialism cases predicted using the discriminant predictor function matched with the original low materialism group. Similarly 175 of the high materialism group from the predicted group matched with those from the original group. Aggregating, it can be said that the discriminant function classified 70% of the original grouped cases correctly. This in turn highlights the ability of social pressure - materialism model developed through this study, to predict materialism and validate the major findings from this study.

Table 6.18: Classification of Results (Original versus Predicted)

Classification Results ^a					
		Materialism Level	Predicted Group Membership		Total
			Low Materialism	High Materialism	
Original	Count	Low Materialism	187	65	252
		High Materialism	91	175	266
	Total	278	240		
	%	Low Materialism	74.2	25.8	100.0
		High Materialism	34.2	65.8	100.0

a. 69.9% of the original grouped cases correctly classified.

Fig. 6.16a and Fig. 6.16b respectively represent the histograms of materialism levels for the low materialism group and high materialism group segregated by the discriminant function. From the histogram plots one can note that the distributions are almost normal.

**Fig. 6.16a: Histogram of Low Materialism Group**

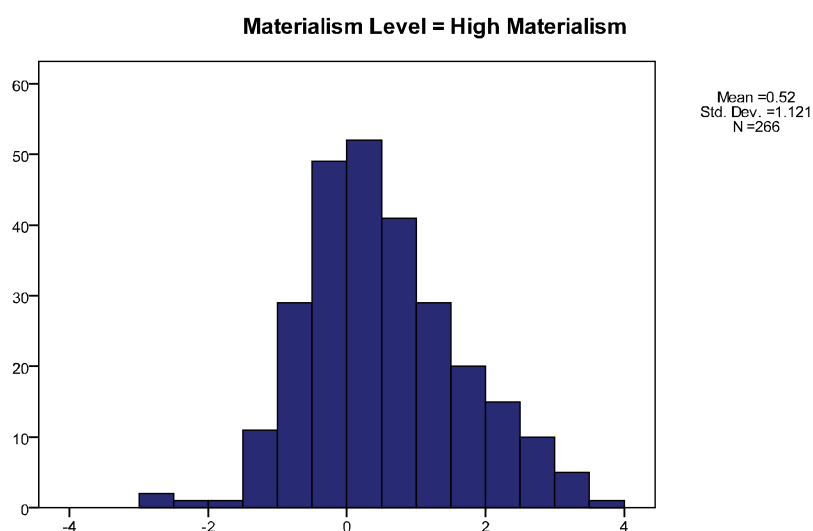


Fig. 6.16b: Histogram of High Materialism Group

6.5.2 Confirmatory Path Analysis for Materialism - Social Pressure Two Factor Model

Confirmatory path analysis is a type of structured equation modelling which deals specifically with measurement models or establishing relationship between observed measures and indicators such as test scores or scale values and also with latent variables or factors. A fundamental feature of confirmatory path analysis is that it is hypothesis driven. The researcher has to specify the number of factors and give an indication of the pattern of factor loading. For this the researcher must have a firm prior sense, based on past evidence from the literature and theory of factors that exist in the data. In this study the hypothesized model is shown in fig. 4.4, where we try to estimate the relation between social pressure and its contributing factors such as attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt with materialism and its component factors such as success, acquisition centrality and happiness.

Further in all studies in the social research domain, researchers need to have measures with good reliability and validity that are appropriate for the use across diverse population. Development of psychometrically sound measures is an expensive and time consuming process and often researchers are constrained on both these factors. This forces them to use existing measures, such as scales, but the major problem in using such measures is that such measures are to be examined for their appropriateness with respect to the new population. Confirmatory path analysis can be used in such a situation to examine whether the original structure of the measure works well with this new population.

Confirmatory path analysis was carried out in this study for both establishing the relationship between the measured values of social pressure and materialism and also to check on the validity of the instruments. Table 6.20 gives the details of model fit for the confirmatory factor analysis. Chi-square value of 21.286 with $P > 0.058$ is within the acceptable limit.

Table 6.19: CFA Model Fit for Materialism - Social Pressure - Two Factor Model

	Recommended Level of Fit	Model fit values
χ^2		21.286
DF		13
P	> 0.05	0.058
Normed χ^2	< 3	1.679
GFI	> 0.90	0.984
AGFI	> 0.91	0.965
NFI	> 0.92	0.960
TLI	> 0.95	0.973
CFI	> 0.94	0.983
RMR	< 0.8	0.319
RMSEA	< 0.05	0.042

Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.042 and is in the acceptable limits of < 0.05 [Hu and Bentler (1999), Thompson (2004)]. Root mean square residual (RMR) value obtained was 0.319 which is well within the < 0.8 limit [Hu and Bentler (1999)]. Comparative fit index (CFI) according to Hu and Bentler (1999), Thompson (2004) is recommended to be >0.95 and the value got from this exercise is 0.973 and hence acceptable. Hu and Bentler (1999) had stated that Tucker-Lewis index value in any confirmatory factor analysis should be > 0.95 and the value obtained in this exercise was 0.973. Normed fit index (NFI) should be above 0.95 [Thompson (2004)] and the value recorded here is 0.96 and hence within the acceptable limits.

Fig. 6.23 below shows the confirmatory factor analysis model developed using structural equation model.

One sided arrows represent factor loadings of the component factors and the two sided arrows represent the correlation factor. This is developed using Structural equation modeling which validates our proposed model.

Table 6.20: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
SIIA	<---	Success Factor	.698
SIIB	<---	Centrality Factor	.462
SIIC	<---	Happiness Factor	.355
SIID	<---	Attitude to TV	.449
SIIE	<---	Peer Pressure	.769
SIIF	<---	Social Comparison	.867
SIIG	<---	Attitude to Debt	.508

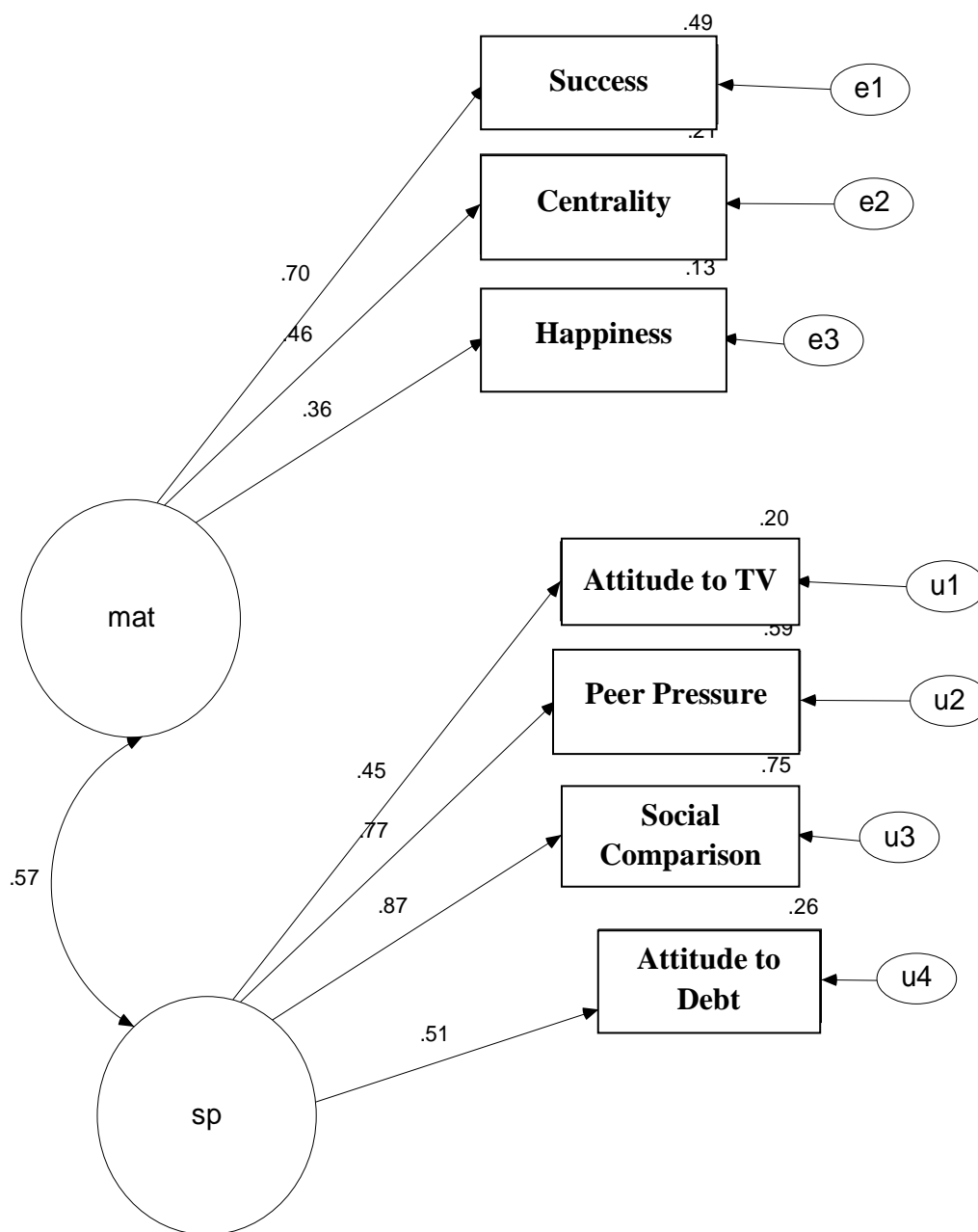


Fig. 6.17: - Materialism and Social Pressure Two Factor Model

This model confirms the association between materialism and social pressure ($r = 0.57$) as hypothesized in the beginning of this study. From table 6.21 we could see that social comparisons and peer pressure play a major role in the development of social pressure as they have higher regression factor loadings. Attitude to debt and attitude to television do play significant roles in the development of social pressure. Annexure-VI gives details of the estimations made for this structural equation modelling.

On the materialism side, it can be inferred that possession defined success is much more prominent than acquisition centrality or possession as source of happiness.

6.6 Other Key Observations from This Study

There exists the general notion that individuals from larger cities are more materialistic [Chan (2008)]. The one way ANOVA results (see Annexure III) showed that there is significant differences in the materialism levels ($F = 5.386$, $p < 0.05$) of the three cities considered for research, with Bangalore (Mean = 53.29, SD = 11.23) having higher levels than Hyderabad (M = 51.25, SD = 8.97) and Kochi (M = 49.86, SD = 10.49) and hence the hypothesis stands supported. One-way ANOVA (see Annexure IV) carried out showed significant variation for 'success' factor ($F = 3.830$, $P < .05$) with measures for Bangalore (M = 18.00, SD = 4.66) higher than Hyderabad (M = 17.09, SD = 3.81) and Kochi (M = 16.81, SD = 4.45).

Significant variations were observed in 'happiness' factor also ($F = 6.08$, $p < .001$) with Bangalore (M = 15.18, SD = 3.18) again having higher scores than Hyderabad (M = 14.83, SD = 3.63) and Kochi (M = 13.88, SD = 3.82). In the case of 'centrality' factor there was no significant variation.

However the assumption that social pressure levels are higher in larger cities, did not find statistically significant results ($F = 0.899, p > 0.05$). One way ANOVA showed significant variation existing between these geographical locations only for 'television viewing' component of social pressure. Here again Bangalore had higher measures ($M = 9.18, SD = 2.73$) compared to Hyderabad ($M = 8.96, SD = 2.56$) and followed by Kochi ($M = 8.38, SD = 2.49$).

It is generally believed that materialism level is higher in the younger age group when compared to the older age group. Results from this study showed that younger age groups had higher materialism. The materialistic scores of 20-30 age group ($M = 52.77, SD = 11.15$) was higher than 30-40 age group ($M = 50.48, SD = 9.73$) and the lowest was for 40-50 group ($M = 47.03, SD = 8.38$). One way ANOVA (see Annexure V) supported this observed variation ($F = 5.101, p < 0.01$).

There existed significant variation ($F = 6.227, p < 0.001$) between age groups in 'centrality' factor of materialism. Centrality scores of 20-30 age group ($M = 20.104, SD = 4.53$) was higher than the scores for the 30-40 group ($M = 19.27, SD = 4.22$) and 40-50 agers ($M = 17.86, SD = 3.22$). We could not find any significant variations in the 'success' measures across the different age groups.

The expectations of this researcher that the younger age group has higher social pressure, did not find any results that are significant. Among the four factors of social pressure, only measures of television viewing showed significant variation on ANOVA tests ($F = 2.828, p < 0.05$).

Earlier in this thesis (see table 6.6a) it was recorded that 27% of the credit card owners had maintained revolving credit. On detailed analysis it was noted that respondents who maintained revolving credit showed higher

‘acquisition centrality’ ($M = 20.56$, $SD = 4.58$) compared to those who did not ($M = 18.99$, $SD = 4.24$) and the z-test (see Annexure I) showed significant variation between the two ($z = 2.72$, $p = 0.01$). Acquisition centrality actually reflects frequent, indulgent shopping behavior. It was also observed that most of the credit card owners had higher ratings on ‘attitude towards debt’ scale ($M = 8.45$, $SD = 2.54$) over those who did not have credit card ($M = 7.53$, $SD = 2.79$) which was found to be significant ($z = 3.97$, $p < 0.001$). As expected, people who maintain revolving credit card debt had higher attitude to debt scores ($M = 9.14$, $SD = 2.81$) over those who did not have such loans against them ($M = 7.81$, $SD = 2.55$) and was found to have significant variance ($z = 3.783$, $p < 0.001$). Annexure-I gives details of the z – tests carried out.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1	Findings on the Association between Materialism and Self-Esteem
7.2	Findings on Social Pressure as a Contributor of Materialism
7.3	Establishing the Social Pressure Pathway of Materialism
7.4	Discussions on Materialism and Status Consumption
7.5	Discussions on Other Key Observations
7.6	Major Contributions of this Study
7.7	Limitations of this Study
7.8	Recommendations for Future Research
7.9	Conclusion

In this chapter, the observations from this study, significance of such observations and the implications of such findings are discussed. Attempts are made to provide reasonable explanations on these research outcomes. Finally the major contributions through this study, limitations related to this study and recommendations for future research are presented.

7.1 Findings on the Association between Materialism and Self-esteem

Primarily this study examined the relationship between materialism, self-esteem and social pressure. Strong association was observed between materialism and social pressure while no significant relationship could be established between materialism and self-esteem. Hence an attempt was made to identify the factors that cause social pressure and materialism. Though a large number of studies indicated that low self-esteem is the major causative factor of materialism, the preliminary studies taken up by this researcher could

not find out any substantial empirical evidence to support the existence of such relationships between materialism and self-esteem, and it was decided to test this again here.

The results of the correlation tests taken up as part of this study, between materialism and self-esteem showed that there exists no significant relationship between self-esteem and material values ($r = -.033$, $P > .05$). These results actually conform to the results from a number of studies carried out recently and these findings actually dispute the conventional belief that materialism is caused by low self-esteem. The claim that materialism is caused by a set of childhood factors that leads to low self-esteem, is also disputed.

The study is also indicative of the existence of higher self-esteem measures ($m = 31.61$, $SD = 3.90$) among the respondents. The mean value percentage of the maximum possible score was 79%, which clearly indicates the existence of high self-esteem among individuals, when compared to similar results from other studies across the world. A comparison on the materialism values of low self-esteem group ($m = 32.00$, $SD = 11.14$), medium self-esteem group ($m = 49.89$, $SD = 8.12$) and high self-esteem group ($m = 51.69$, $SD = 10.10$) with ANOVA values ($F = 10.89$, $p < .001$) showing high significance shows that materialism increases with self-esteem in our environment. This is contrary to the results from the correlation exercise which showed low negative but not significant relationship between materialism and self-esteem. Yule-Simpson effect or Simpson's paradox say that such reversal is possible when data from different groups are aggregated.

This leads us to the inference that it is the high self-esteem prevalent among the population that create the lack of association between materialism and self-esteem.

Existence of strong family links and the high importance given by individuals to their family are the major factors that could be attributed towards the existence of high self-esteem among individuals in our society. This was tested in the study and it was observed that people who gave importance to family had higher self-esteem ($M = 32.09$, $SD = 3.80$) compared to those who did not give such high priority to the family ($M = 30.42$, $SD = 5.53$). Further the materialism measured with a mean score of $M = 51.97$ and $SD = 9.25$, clearly indicated the existence of high materialism and the existence of pathways other than the low self-esteem linked pathways. Family links enhances self-esteem as it helps in building up the individual's confidence that the family is there for support during any adversities. The strong priority to one's family arises from the fact that the individual's needs were well taken care of when he was young. This matches with the findings of Banerjee (2008), Kumar and Gupta (2003)] that in India traditionally high priority is given by people to family relationships

7.2 Findings on Social Pressure as a Contributor of Materialism

In contrast to the findings on the lack of association between materialism and self-esteem, the study could establish a significant relationship existing between material values and social pressure ($r = 0.464$, $p < 0.001$). Significant relationships exist between social pressure and the four contributors of social pressure, considered for this study, such as the attitude to television ($r = 0.507$, $p < 0.001$), peer pressure ($r = 0.571$, $p < 0.001$), social comparison ($r = 0.581$, $p < 0.001$) and attitude to debt ($r = 0.468$, $p < 0.001$). Correlation scatter plots developed showed linear relationship existing between these four contributors and social pressure. Partial regression plots between these contributor

variables and social pressure also showed linear relationships confirming the premises set by the researcher.

A first stage regression analysis showed that 50% variations in social pressure can be explained by these four contributors. The regression model given below indicates that social pressure could be predicted by the equation: **Social Pressure = 1.149 + (0.520 Attitude to TV) + (0.236 Peer Pressure) + (0.330 Social Comparison) + (0.220 Attitude to Debt)**. Model predicted values were compared with actual measured values of social pressure and the scatter plots showed large significant linear overlap.

Based on these findings, one can draw inferences that attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt causes social pressure in individuals. The second stage of regression analysis attempting to establish a predictive model between social pressure and materialism showed that social pressure alone could predict 21.5% variation in materialism and that materialism can be predicted by the equation: **Material values = 36.014 + 1.37 (Social Pressure)**. Once again regression predicted values were compared with measured values of materialism and it confirmed the existence of linear association as predicted through the model.

Combining the output from these two regression exercises, the social pressure–materialism model as shown in fig 6.20 was developed. Accordingly, materialism can be predicted by the equation: **Material values = 37.59 + 0.72 (Attitude to TV) + 0.32 (Peer Pressure) + 0.45 (Social Comparison) + 0.30 (Attitude to Debt)**. This output indicates that materialism can be predicted by the combined effect of social pressure and its contributing factors.

The partial correlation exercise shows that when social pressure is controlled, the correlation coefficients of materialism (dependent variable)

with the contributors of social pressure (independent variables), showed substantial fall in the values, with a 94% marked fall in the coefficient for attitude to debt variable. Pearson correlation values for social comparison, peer pressure and attitude to television also fell by 42%, 59% and 56% respectively. Such substantial fall in the correlation coefficients clearly shows the impact of social pressure in the relationship between these four contributor variables and materialism. This proves that social pressure plays a moderating role between materialism and the factors such as attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt.

The model developed through regression analysis was tested first using a discriminant analysis. A discriminant function (Material values = 0.39 social pressure + 0.06 attitude to television + 0.14 peer pressure + 0.52 social comparison + 0.21 attitude to debt) was used to estimate the materialism in the respondents. Centroids were estimated for high and low materialism and based on the discriminant function estimates of material values the respondents were categorized as materialistic and non-materialistic. The 'social pressure-materialism Model' predictions for materialism were found to match with 70% of the classifications using the discriminant analysis proving the validity of the model developed in this study.

The confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modelling output, shown in fig 6.23 supports the social pressure – materialism model. Regression factor loadings obtained were 0.45 for attitude to television, 0.77 for peer pressure, 0.87 for social comparison and 0.51 for attitude to debt. According to this, social comparisons and peer pressure are the dominant factors in the development of social pressure and materialism in individuals. The prominence of possession defined success among materialism factors

[Richins and Dawson (1992)] indicates the status consumption behavior of the target population [Eastman et al. (1997)].

These outcomes are concrete enough to prove the hypothesis that attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparisons and attitude to debt play a causative role in development of social pressure. Hence this study also establishes the role of social pressure as an important factor in the development of materialistic values and also the moderating role played by social pressure.

7.3 Establishing the Social Pressure Pathway of Materialism

The question that is now pending for discussion is whether the study revealed a new pathway of materialism, different from the low self-esteem based pathways of materialism as proposed by Kasser et al. (2004).

The analysis of the data collected showed that there exists a negative correlation between social pressure and self-esteem ($r = -0.260$, $p < .01$). Attitude to television ($r = -0.224$, $p < .001$), peer pressure ($r = -0.245$, $p < .001$) and social comparison ($r = -0.149$, $p < .01$) were found to have significant negative correlation. Thus it can be stated that low self-esteem is generated by social pressure. The study also supports the established notion that internalization of values projected through television media, influence of peers and getting into upward social comparison lead to building materialism.

No significant association was observed between attitude to debt and self-esteem. Similarly, as it was observed while testing hypothesis-1, this study could not establish any significant relationship between materialism and low self-esteem. Though attitude to television, peer pressure and social comparison are found to cause low self-esteem, the findings are not conclusive

enough to come to the decision that low self-esteem cause materialism in our environment.

Looking at things from this perspective, it can be said that findings from this study are indicative of the existence of another pathway of materialism which is not linked to the currently believed self-esteem based pathway of materialism. It is the social pressure driven pathway of materialism caused by factors such as attitude to television, peer pressure and social comparison, which were common to the socialization pathway. Attitude to debt is an additional factor the role of which in the development of social pressure is established through this study and hence considered part of the social pressure pathway.

The substantial fall in the Pearson coefficients of the four social pressure contributors, during the partial correlation shows that social pressure actually moderates these variables. This makes us to conclude that the attitude to television, peer pressure, social comparison and attitude to debt causes social pressure which in turn drives individuals to materialism as envisaged in the model shown in fig. 6.14.

7.4 Discussions on Materialism and Status Consumption

The confirmatory path analysis indicates the prominence of ‘possession defined success’ with a regression factor loading of 0.698, in comparison to ‘acquisition centrality’ and ‘acquisition for pursuit of happiness’ with a regression factor loading of 0.46 and 0.36 respectively. The high dominance of ‘success’ factor in this study clearly indicates the incidence of status consumption involved in social pressure driven materialism. Supportive evidence for this can be seen in the studies by Wong (1997), Eastman et al. (1997, 1999), Kim (1998) and Wan-Jusoh et al. (2001) which establish the

strong association between status consumption and ‘success’ factor of materialism across many nations. Individuals in their attempt to fulfill their inherent need to appear successful in the eyes of others do get into buying of status related products. This matches with the findings of Packard (1959) and Dawson and Cavell (1986) that people consume products to demonstrate their superior status level. Thus people under social pressure end up being materialistic and indulge in high status consumption behavior.

The structural equation modelling shown in fig. 6.17 provides factual evidence to prove that social comparison and peer pressure (regression factor loadings of 0.87 and 0.77) play a larger influential role among the factors of social pressure in the development of materialism. The observed predominance of ‘success’ factor of materialism and the prominence of social comparison and peer pressure among the social pressure components can be easily linked. Belk (1980), Rosenfeld and Plax (1977) have established the fact that in today’s society people make inferences about others based on the products that they own. Upward social comparisons force people to compare what they own with what others own [Frank (1985)]. Studies by Calder and Burnkrant (1977), Schenk and Holman (1980) and Solomon (1983) have shown that more and more people buy such products which could fetch them the success tag. Thus it can be concluded that our target population do engage in high status consumption behavior driven by their materialistic need to appear successful in the eyes of their peers and others.

Works by Josselson (1991) and Clarke (2001) have proved that the influence by social comparison and peer pressure leads individuals to acquire and display status possession in-front of others and all such instances point towards an individual’s need to develop a favorable identity. Acquisition of products or brands endorsed by celebrities in the hope of gaining a favorable

identity is well established in the works by Woodruff-Burton and Elliot (2005), Swann et al. (1992) and Erickson (1968). Thus it can be deduced that social pressure creates 'possession defined success materialism' leading individuals to high status consumption behavior developing out of an individual's need for overcoming the identity crisis. The concept of second individuation process put forward by Bloss (1967) and studies by Rochberg-Halton (1984), Erickson (1968), Tabin (1992) and Bloss (1967) support this finding.

7.5 Discussions on Other Key Observations

An observation that came up during this study is that one out of every four credit card owner (27.2% of the sample) maintained revolving credit, a high cost debt instrument. Such respondents were found to be having significantly higher level of social pressure scores ($m = 12.14$, $SD = 3.62$) when compared to those who did not maintain revolving credit ($m = 11.09$, $SD = 2.94$). As anticipated all the credit card owners (51% of the sample population) had higher attitude to debt measures and those with revolving credit had higher attitude to debt scores ($M = 9.14$, $SD = 2.81$) over those who did not have such loans against them ($M = 7.81$, $SD = 2.55$) and it was found to have significant variance ($z = 3.783$, $p < 0.001$).

Those who maintained revolving debt showed significantly higher acquisition centrality ($M = 20.56$, $SD = 4.58$) compared to those who did not maintain any revolving credit ($M = 18.99$, $SD = 4.24$) and the z-test showed significant variation between the two ($z = 2.72$, $p = 0.01$). This more or less points out the fact that it is the indulgent shopping habits of these individuals that has led them to revolving credit card debt and is indicative of the financial trap they would fall into if they prolong with such behaviors. It should not be

forgotten that a large majority of our target group is professionally qualified people.

During the study, the author tried to check the notion that people from larger metropolitan cities are more materialistic. This observation by Chan (2008) was found to be true in our environment also. Among the three cities from where the data collection has been carried out, Bangalore (Mean = 53.29, SD = 11.23) had higher levels than Hyderabad (M = 51.25, SD = 8.97) and Kochi (M = 49.86, SD = 10.49). The one way ANOVA results showed that this observed variation in materialism values is statistically significant ($F = 5.386$, $p < 0.05$). This supports our premise regarding the role of identity crisis triggering social comparison in causing ‘success factor’ of materialism. The chances for an individual to feel the identity crisis is higher in bigger cities.

To tally this with our major observation on the prevalence of success factor of materialism among our target population, the researcher initiated a comparison of the measures for the success component of materialism values. ANOVA carried out showed significant variation for ‘success’ factor ($F = 3.830$, $P < .05$) with measures for Bangalore (M = 18.00, SD = 4.66) higher than Hyderabad (M = 17.09, SD = 3.81) and Kochi (M = 16.81, SD = 4.45). This supports our finding that people from larger cities are more materialistic as there is more pressure on them to prove that they are successful in comparison with others. This hints at the higher levels of status consumption that happen in larger cities.

This study could generate empirical evidence to support the general notion that materialistic tendencies are stronger among younger age group when compared to the older lot. Results from this study showed that younger age groups had higher materialism. Age-wise classification of

scores showed that 20-30 age group ($M = 52.77$, $SD = 11.15$) had higher scores than 30-40 age group ($M = 50.48$, $SD = 9.73$) and 40-50 group ($M = 47.03$, $SD = 8.38$). One way ANOVA supported this observed variation ($F = 5.101$, $p < 0.01$).

7.6 Major Contributions of this Study

- 1) The study could establish the role of ‘social pressure to consume’ as a contributor of materialism.
- 2) It identified factors such as attitude to television (internalization or believing what you see on television as reality), peer pressure (susceptibility to peer influence), social comparison (susceptibility to get into upward comparison with rich and affluent referents and celebrities) and attitude to credit (propensity to take consumer finance or credit facility to support one’s buying behavior) as contributors of social pressure.
- 3) The study also helped in establishing the role of social pressure in moderating the four contributors mentioned above in the formation of material values in individuals.
- 4) It also indicates the existence of a new pathway which is different from the currently established low self-esteem pathway of materialism. This work could prove that it is not low self-esteem triggered by a set of internal child hood factors or socialization factors that causes materialism, in our environment. Rather it is a set of external factors that causes materialism here. The need to overcome an identity crisis seems to be the factor that leads them to develop materialistic values. This is evident from the dominance of ‘success’ factor of materialism among our target population.

- 5) The effect of variables such as attitude to television, social comparison and peer pressure has been borrowed from the socialization pathway of materialism and has already been studied by many as a causative factor of materialism. But the body of literature practically carries very little evidence to show the link that attitude to debt has with materialism. Hence this study can be treated as a pioneering effort in establishing the role of attitude to debt as a causative factor of social pressure and materialism.
- 6) Practically very little empirical work has been carried out in the area related to materialism and high status consumption behavior in India. So this work may act as one of the early works which could trigger further research in the related areas and would help in building documentary support of facts related to the causative factors of materialism in India providing a documentary base for other studies initiated in this area.

7.7 Limitations of this Study

Several limitations exist with this current research study. First limitation can be related to the sampling process used. Multistage sampling was adopted for this study, first deciding on the geographical locations and then the organizations and the data was collected from the persons who were present on that particular day when data collection was carried out. This leaves us with the question whether all the strata or segments that comprise the selected target population has been included in the sample group selected.

Secondly there are the limitations that go along with the survey method. One shortfall while adopting the survey method is its inherent disability to control the influence of other environmental factors while trying to assess the

causative relationships. Attempts have been made to reduce this limitation by developing scatter diagrams and partial regression plots which could indicate the existence of linearity in observed relationships. Further we have used confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modeling where provisions for controlling the effects of such external factors are provided.

There could be various shortfalls related to the questionnaire in its design and structure. Though the questionnaire used has been developed by the researcher for this study, wherever possible, standardized and widely accepted instruments have been used. The questionnaire was lengthy which could have affected the accuracy in the answers provided by the respondents.

Further there could be issues related to the scales used in this study. Rosenberg's self-esteem scale and materialism scale by Richins and Dawson are already used in a large number of studies across the globe and have established their validity as instruments to measure the respective constructs. Further we have established the reliability factor of these scales in our study. However the same reliability may not go with the social pressure scale developed, though we have taken precautions to see that the scale is valid and reliable. One major drawback was that a test-retest reliability checking is not done for this instrument.

Based on the available studies in literature we have limited the social pressure components to television viewing, social comparison, peer pressure and attitude to debt. There could be other factors which play a role in the development of materialism and social pressure. Though movies and print media also could act as influencers in developing materialism, we have limited our work with the attitude to television as this is an area where there has been literature support available

Finally the timing of the data collection also could have its impact. The data was collected during October and November 2011. These months are typically festive periods in India when there is a general euphoric mood about shopping or consumption in general.

7.8 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should target on building more empirical evidence on the role of social pressure in triggering status consumption and high consumption behavior. Focus of this study was limited to establishing the relationship between materialism and social pressure and in identifying the contributors of social pressure and materialism. Though the existence of an alternate pathway of materialism driven by social pressure could be traced, the study could not check on the forward linkages to status consumption and compulsive consumption. This could be evaluated and illustrated through future research.

Future researches can attempt on improving the social pressure scale by initiating test-retest and also exercises to establish the validity and reliability of this instrument. Moreover the adaptability of the scale to other socio-cultural and national environments needs to be looked at.

This study was conducted primarily targeting educated or professionally qualified youth working as executives with some of the leading employers in South India. From the data collected it could be observed that most of the respondents belonged to the middle income groups. These groups place high emphasis on children's education and family's financial security. They generally take good care of their children and most of their basic level needs are well met. This study could be extended to the lower socio-economic groups where some of the children may be deprived of all those niceties that children from middle and upper classes have. A research targeting groups

from lower socio-economic backgrounds can ensure whether there is incidence of materialism caused by low self-esteem in our environment also.

Prominence of social comparison and peer pressure among the factors that cause social pressure leads to the belief that need to make up for an identity crisis that is leading people into developing materialistic values. This is another area where future research can focus on. The question to be probed is whether it is an underlying need to develop a favorable identity that is luring people into buying and having a conspicuous usage of status items. The answer would only substantiate the existence of social pressure route as an alternate route of materialism.

7.9 Conclusion

Though prior research had indicated the existence of materialism and associated high consumption behavior in our environment, much work has not been carried out to understand the reasons for such behavior in India. This study shows that materialism in our environment is not triggered by low self-esteem but a host of other factors more related to our socio cultural environment. So the most notable contribution of this study is that it has been able to empirically show the association between social pressure and materialism. The social pressure-materialism model outlined an alternate pathway of materialism which is not connected to the conventional low self-esteem pathway. Attitude to debt is a factor that has been included in addition to the socialization factors such as attitude to television, peer pressure and social comparison. No previous study has empirically traced a relationship between attitude to debt and materialism.

The proposed social pressure pathway of materialism could explain how different socialization factors interact and how the combined effect of such

interaction leads people to materialistic tendencies. This study has successfully built evidences to show such association and also to show the moderating role played by social pressure. It looked at materialism as a cultural value as envisaged by Richins and Dawson (1992). Banerjee (2008) had stated that in a collectivist society like that of India the identity of the individual depends on his or her social identity and status. This becomes evident from the findings of this study. Individuals are getting into social comparisons and status consumption as a means to build a favorable identity.

The predominance of ‘possession defined success’ among the components of materialism, is a clear indication of the existence of status consumption drives among such individuals. They believe that by acquiring status possessions, they would be seen as successful individuals by other people. Little do they realize that they are getting into an endless trap, where they have to endeavor continuously to maintain such status built through material objects. This finding gains credence as there exists higher levels of social comparison and peer pressure among the respondents. Individuals are on a constant search by comparing what they have with what others have, because they feel that not owning such things make them perceived as not successful.

The literature provides enough evidences to prove that it is the need to develop a favorable identity that motivates people to get into status consumption. This desire to build a positive identity eventually leads them to materialism. This study has been able to develop this premise which could be taken up by future research to build more substantial evidences to show the existence of the identity crisis driven social pressure pathway of materialism.



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ANNEXURES

Annexure -1

Details of 'z' Tests on Credit Card Ownership and Revolving Debt

Z - test for Ownership of credit cards and Social Pressure Components

	Owner ship of credit cards	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean % Score	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
TV and ADS	Yes	8.83	2.61	44.16	.219	.826
	No	8.78	2.62	43.91		
Peer Pressure	Yes	14.82	4.01	49.40	-.164	.870
	No	14.88	4.18	49.60		
Social Comparison	Yes	15.45	4.57	51.50	.326	.745
	No	15.32	4.49	51.07		
Attitude to credit	Yes	10.91	3.18	54.53	3.571	<.001
	No	9.86	3.55	49.28		

Z -test for Materialism Components with Revolving Credit Card Debt

Revolving Credit		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean % Score	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)
Success	Yes	17.66	5.26	58.87	.812	.417
	No	17.17	4.35	57.22		
Centrality	Yes	20.56	4.58	58.75	2.724	.007
	No	18.99	4.24	54.25		
Happiness	Yes	15.06	4.33	60.23	1.278	.202
	No	14.38	3.83	57.53		

ANOVA Tables for Self-Esteem and Materialism

Comparisons with respect to Self-esteem level – materialism

Self-esteem level		Materialism	Success	Centrality	Happiness
Low	Mean	32.00	10.50	11.67	9.83
	Mean % Score	35.56	35.00	33.33	39.33
	Std. Deviation	11.14	8.38	9.35	7.68
Medium	Mean	49.89	16.44	18.44	15.00
	Mean % Score	55.43	54.81	52.70	60.00
	Std. Deviation	8.12	4.77	3.43	2.35
High	Mean	51.69	17.40	19.66	14.62
	Mean % Score	57.43	58.01	56.17	58.50
	Std. Deviation	10.10	4.29	4.22	3.79
Total	Mean	51.43	17.31	19.55	14.58
	Mean % Score	57.14	57.69	55.85	58.30
	Std. Deviation	10.51	4.41	4.36	3.85

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Materialism	Between Groups	2319.566	2	1159.783	10.892	<.001
	Within Groups	55370.495	520	106.482		
	Total	57690.061	522			
	Total	7741.767	522			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) Self-esteem level	(J) Self-esteem level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Materialism	Low	Medium	-17.88889*	5.43859	.003	-30.6720	-5.1058
		High	-19.68504*	4.23752	.000	-29.6451	-9.7250
	Medium	Low	17.88889*	5.43859	.003	5.1058	30.6720
		High	-1.79615	3.47000	.863	-9.9522	6.3599
	High	Low	19.68504*	4.23752	.000	9.7250	29.6451
		Medium	1.79615	3.47000	.863	-6.3599	9.9522

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

ANOVA Table for Area-wise Analysis of Major Variables

Area-wise Variance of Materialism, Self-Esteem and Social Pressure

Area		Self-esteem	Materialism	Social Pressure
Bangalore	Mean	31.79	53.29	50.31
	Mean % score	79.47	59.21	50.31
	Std. Deviation	4.18	11.23	13.23
Hyderabad	Mean	30.91	51.25	48.63
	Mean % score	77.28	56.94	48.63
	Std. Deviation	4.86	8.97	9.80
Kochi	Mean	31.02	49.86	49.12
	Mean % score	77.56	55.40	49.12
	Std. Deviation	5.24	10.49	11.27
Total	Mean	31.27	51.43	49.43
	Mean % score	78.18	57.14	49.43
	Std. Deviation	4.80	10.51	11.70

One Way ANOVA Results

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self-esteem	Between Groups	78.550	2	39.275	1.711	.182
	Within Groups	11916.364	519	22.960		
	Total	11994.914	521			
Materialism	Between Groups	1170.803	2	585.401	5.386	.005
	Within Groups	56519.259	520	108.691		
	Total	57690.061	522			
Social Pressure	Between Groups	246.018	2	123.009	.899	.408
	Within Groups	71154.456	520	136.835		
	Total	71400.474	522			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) Area	(J) Area	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Materialism	Bangalore	Hyderabad	2.04652	1.20032	.204	-.7748	4.8678
		Kochi	3.43131*	1.04795	.003	.9682	5.8945
	Hyderabad	Bangalore	-2.04652	1.20032	.204	-4.8678	.7748
		Kochi	1.38479	1.17587	.467	-1.3790	4.1486
	Kochi	Bangalore	-3.43131*	1.04795	.003	-5.8945	-.9682
		Hyderabad	-1.38479	1.17587	.467	-4.1486	1.3790

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

ANOVA Tables for Area-wise Variation in Components of Materialism
Descriptive

Area		Success	Centrality	Happiness
Bangalore	Mean	18.00	20.12	15.18
	Mean % score	60.00	57.48	60.70
	Std. Deviation	4.66	4.71	3.92
Hyderabad	Mean	17.09	19.33	14.83
	Mean % score	56.96	55.22	59.33
	Std. Deviation	3.81	3.97	3.63
Kochi	Mean	16.81	19.17	13.88
	Mean % score	56.04	54.76	55.52
	Std. Deviation	4.45	4.23	3.82
Total	Mean	17.31	19.55	14.58
	Mean % score	57.69	55.85	58.30
	Std. Deviation	4.41	4.36	3.85

One-way ANOVA
ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Success	Between Groups	147.289	2	73.645	3.830	.022
	Within Groups	9997.762	520	19.226		
	Total	10145.052	522			
Centrality	Between Groups	97.379	2	48.690	2.573	.077
	Within Groups	9840.223	520	18.924		
	Total	9937.602	522			
Happiness	Between Groups	177.050	2	88.525	6.085	.002
	Within Groups	7564.717	520	14.548		
	Total	7741.767	522			

**Post Hoc Tests
Multiple Comparisons**

Tukey HSD							
Dependent Variable	(I) Area	(J) Area	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Success	Banglore	Hyderabad	.91270	.50484	.168	-.2739	2.0993
		Kerala	1.18660*	.44075	.020	.1506	2.2226
	Hyderabad	Banglore	-.91270	.50484	.168	-2.0993	.2739
		Kerala	.27390	.49455	.845	-.8885	1.4363
	Kochi	Banglore	-1.18660*	.44075	.020	-2.2226	-.1506
		Hyderabad	-.27390	.49455	.845	-1.4363	.8885
Centrality	Banglore	Hyderabad	.79162	.50084	.255	-.3856	1.9688
		Kerala	.94956	.43726	.077	-.0782	1.9773
	Hyderabad	Banglore	-.79162	.50084	.255	-1.9688	.3856
		Kerala	.15793	.49064	.944	-.9953	1.3112
	Kochi	Banglore	-.94956	.43726	.077	-1.9773	.0782
		Hyderabad	-.15793	.49064	.944	-1.3112	.9953
Happiness	Banglore	Hyderabad	.34220	.43913	.716	-.6900	1.3744
		Kerala	1.29515*	.38339	.002	.3940	2.1963
	Hyderabad	Banglore	-.34220	.43913	.716	-1.3744	.6900
		Kerala	.95295	.43019	.070	-.0582	1.9641
	Kochi	Banglore	-1.29515*	.38339	.002	-2.1963	-.3940
		Hyderabad	-.95295	.43019	.070	-1.9641	.0582

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

ANOVA Tables for Age-wise Variance of Materialism

Descriptive

Age group		Self-esteem	Materialism	Social Pressure
0-30	Mean	31.20	52.77	49.83
	Mean % score	77.99	58.63	49.83
	Std. Deviation	5.08	11.15	11.86
30-40	Mean	31.19	50.48	48.92
	Mean % score	77.98	56.09	48.92
	Std. Deviation	4.65	9.73	12.24
40-50	Mean	31.42	47.03	46.89
	Mean % score	78.54	52.25	46.89
	Std. Deviation	4.19	8.38	7.48
50-60	Mean	32.44	48.12	51.76
	Mean % score	81.10	53.47	51.76
	Std. Deviation	2.86	7.14	10.73
Total	Mean	31.27	51.43	49.43
	Mean % score	78.18	57.14	49.43
	Std. Deviation	4.80	10.51	11.70

One-way ANOVA

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self-esteem	Between Groups	37.575	3	12.525	.543	.653
	Within Groups	11957.339	518	23.084		
	Total	11994.914	521			
Materialism	Between Groups	1652.304	3	550.768	5.101	.002
	Within Groups	56037.758	519	107.973		
	Total	57690.061	522			
Social Pressure	Between Groups	458.800	3	152.933	1.119	.341
	Within Groups	70941.674	519	136.689		
	Total	71400.474	522			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Tukey HSD							
Dependent Variable	(I) Age group	(J) Age group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Materialism	20-30	30-40	2.28889	1.00892	.107	-.3115	4.8893
		40-50	5.73990*	1.83379	.010	1.0135	10.4663
		50-60	4.64768	2.16390	.140	-.9295	10.2248
	30-40	20-30	-2.28889	1.00892	.107	-4.8893	.3115
		40-50	3.45101	1.91144	.272	-1.4755	8.3775
		50-60	2.35879	2.23009	.715	-3.3890	8.1066
	40-50	20-30	-5.73990*	1.83379	.010	-10.4663	-1.0135
		30-40	-3.45101	1.91144	.272	-8.3775	1.4755
		50-60	-1.09222	2.70521	.978	-8.0645	5.8801
	50-60	20-30	-4.64768	2.16390	.140	-10.2248	.9295
		30-40	-2.35879	2.23009	.715	-8.1066	3.3890
		40-50	1.09222	2.70521	.978	-5.8801	8.0645

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Structural Equation Modeling - Tables
Covariances: (Group number 1 - Default model)

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
mat<-->	Sp	1.459	.275	5.311	***	

Correlations: (Group number 1 - Default model)

		Estimate
Mat	<-->	Sp .574

Factor Score Weights (Group number 1 - Default model)

	SIIG	SIIF	SIIE	SIID	SIIC	SIIB	SIIA
Sp	.037	.142	.088	.040	.007	.009	.021
Mat	.024	.093	.057	.026	.112	.145	.347

Total Effects (Group number 1 - Default model)

	sp	mat
SIIG	1.506	.000
SIIF	3.376	.000
SIIE	2.614	.000
SIID	1.000	.000
SIIC	.000	.470
SIIB	.000	.680
SIIA	.000	1.000

Standardized Total Effects (Group number 1 - Default model)

	sp	Mat
SIIG	.508	.000
SIIF	.867	.000
SIIE	.769	.000
SIID	.449	.000
SIIC	.000	.355
SIIB	.000	.462
SIIA	.000	.698

Direct Effects (Group number 1 - Default model)

	sp	mat
SIIG	1.506	.000
SIIF	3.376	.000
SIIE	2.614	.000
SIID	1.000	.000
SIIC	.000	.470
SIIB	.000	.680
SIIA	.000	1.000

Standardized Direct Effects (Group number 1 - Default model)

	sp	Mat
SIIG	.508	.000
SIIF	.867	.000
SIIE	.769	.000
SIID	.449	.000
SIIC	.000	.355
SIIB	.000	.462
SIIA	.000	.698

Indirect Effects (Group number 1 - Default model)

	sp	mat
SIIG	.000	.000
SIIF	.000	.000
SIIE	.000	.000
SIID	.000	.000
SIIC	.000	.000
SIIB	.000	.000
SIIA	.000	.000



Consumer Survey Questionnaire

Dear Sir / Madam

On the outset, let me thank you for sparing time to fill this questionnaire. This survey is being conducted as part of my doctoral research work at School of Management Studies, Cochin University of Science & Technology to understand consumer behavior in the context of Indian cultural values. You do not have to reveal your identity anywhere and any personal information sought through this questionnaire will be treated with absolute confidentiality. The survey is divided into **two** sections. Please read the directions given at the beginning of every section very carefully and then give your response.

You are requested to answer all questions, or else the response would become invalid. There is no right or wrong answer. An honest answer from your end would be highly appreciated.

Section I: Personal Data

Do not mention your name anywhere. Please put a tick mark in the box at the appropriate space or indicate in words/figures as is given.

1. Sex: Male Female **2. Marital status:** Married Single Divorced

3. Age: _____ years **4. Spouse working:** Yes No

5. Educational Qualification: _____

6. Your Current Position at Office: Senior Middle Junior

7. Approximate Indication of your Monthly Family income: Rs. _____

8. Place of Residence _____

9. Please indicate the products you own from the list given below:

Two wheeler Car Second Car I-pod / MP4
 Touch Screen Mobile Laptop LCD /LED TV Home Theater
 Membership in a premium club Branded Garments (Suits/Salwars/Shirts)
 I Pad Branded Accessories (Handbags/Shoes/Belts/Valets)
 Luxury Watches Luxury Pens

10. Do you have a house of your own (Put a tick Mark): Yes No

If Yes: Independent House Flat Villa

Mode of acquisition: Own funds Own cash + Loan Inherited from family

11. Have you ever taken loan for purchasing any of the following: (Put a tick Mark)

Car , Two Wheeler
 Personal luxury (Holiday trips, Club memberships etc.)
 Household durables (TV, Fridge, washing machine etc.)
 Personal accessories (Lap tops, Mobiles, I Pod etc.)
 Home improvement (Furniture, Interior decoration etc.)

12. Read the statements very carefully and indicate the extent of your disagreement or agreement with each of the statement by putting a tick mark in the appropriate box.

1	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2	I feel that I have a number of good qualities	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4	I am able to do things as well as most other people	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	I take a positive attitude toward myself	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8	I wish I could have more respect for myself	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	I certainly feel useless at times	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10	At times I think I am no good at all	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. Do you own credit cards Yes No

If Yes, number of Credit Cards you own: _____

14. Approx. monthly spending using credit card Rs. _____

15. Do you keep revolving credit balance in your card (more than one month credit period allowed)? Yes No

16. List three things you consider as most important to your life.

- a)
- b)
- c)

17. Please tell us how do you feel about your childhood (Please tick)

- Really wished it happened again
- It was OK
- I have good memories about our childhood
- I do not have very good memories about my childhood
- It was bad. I just do not want to be reminded of it.

Section II: Agreement – Disagreement Statements

Read the statements very carefully and indicate the extent of your disagreement or agreement with each of the statement by putting a tick mark in the right box.

1.	I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, clothes etc	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2.	Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring or buying material possessions.	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3.	I don't give much importance on the amount of material objects a person own as a sign of success	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4.	The things I own say a lot about how well I am doing in life	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5.	I like to own things that impress other people.	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6.	I don't pay much attention to the status products that others own	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7.	I usually buy only things that I need	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8.	I try to keep my life as simple as far as possessions are concerned.	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9.	The things that I own are not all that important to me	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.	I sometimes spend money on things that aren't very practical	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11.	Buying things give me a lot of pleasure	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
12.	I like a lot of luxury in my life	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
13.	I give less importance to material things when compared to others	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

14.	I have all the things I really need to enjoy life	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15.	My life would have been better if I owned certain things which I don't have presently	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
16.	I don't think I will be happier if I owned nicer things	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17.	I would be happier if I could afford to buy more things	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
18.	It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I couldn't buy all the things I would like to have.	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
19.	TV Advertisements tell the truth	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
20.	Most TV commercials are not very interesting; I don't spend much time watching them.	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
21.	Models that come in TV commercials are all beautiful and I wish I was like them	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
22.	The products advertised regularly on TV are always the best products to buy	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
23.	I often consult other people to help me choose the best alternative in any product class	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
24.	If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
25.	I am more concerned about the utility of a product and not much bothered whether it creates an impression on other people.	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
26.	I often try to identify with my friends & others by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
27.	If other people can see me using a product, then I will buy such brands which they expect me to buy	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

28.	When I buy the same brands that my friends have, I feel closer to them	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
29.	When I am Uncertain on how to act in a social situation, I look to others for clues	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
30.	I regularly keep buying things that are of latest fashion	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
31.	I celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and such other events just because it is the common practice	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
32.	I tend to pay a lot of attention to what others have and also what they wear	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
33.	I usually tend to adopt the lifestyles and behavior of others with whom I interact	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
34.	Membership in a prestigious club or social groups is important for a person like me	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
35.	It is a good idea to have something now and pay for it later	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
36.	There is nothing wrong in celebrating festivals (Diwali/Ramzan/ Navaratri/ X'mas/Onam) even if you have to borrow money	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
37.	There is nothing wrong about taking a loan as it allows you to enjoy life	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
38.	Availing credit has become an essential part of today's lifestyle	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Thank you very much for sparing your valuable time.

List of Organization from where data was collected

Location: Kochi

- 1) Ernst & Young
- 2) IBS
- 3) US Software
- 4) ICICI Securities
- 5) ACS-Xerox
- 6) TCS
- 7) Wipro
- 8) HDFC Ltd
- 9) Tata Tele Services
- 10) Union Bank
- 11) Manorama Vision
- 12) Kancor Industries
- 13) Vodafone
- 14) Asian paints

Location: Bangalore

- 1) O&M Advertising
- 2) BHEL
- 3) Infosys
- 4) Wipro
- 5) Rediffusion-Wunderman

- 6) Madison
- 7) Times-of-India
- 8) HDFC Bank
- 9) HSBC
- 10) Madura Garments
- 11) Thomson Reuters
- 12) Bharati Airtel

Location: Hyderabad

- 1) SBH
- 2) Reliance Big Entertainment
- 3) Axis bank
- 4) Deloitte Consulting
- 5) Godrej Industries
- 6) ICICI Bank
- 7) Cognizant
- 8) TCS
- 9) IBM