

Effects of Altruistic Advertising on Consumers' Subjective Well-Being: A Downward Comparison

¹Mohsin Abbas Ghuman, ²Syed Afzal Mohsadi, ³Ayaz Ahmad,

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Subjective well-being (Life satisfaction), Materialism, Transpersonal gratitude, Social comparison theory, Female Consumers, Altruistic advertising

ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the impact of altruistic advertisements on subjective well-being, materialism, and transpersonal gratitude through downward social comparison. An experimental design testing two conditions i.e., Altruistic advertising vs control was adopted to gather responses from 147 young consumers. Single-stage cluster sampling technique has been used to collect data. The findings of the study show that young consumers after experiencing altruistic advertising are less materialistic, more satisfied with their lives, and score high on transpersonal gratitude. Also, transpersonal gratitude is found to be a positive predictor of subjective well-being and a negative predictor of materialism. Furthermore, materialism negatively but partially mediates the relationship between transpersonal gratitude and life satisfaction. Few studies have experimentally tested the impact of advertising on consumers through downward social comparison but none has studied this impact in terms of different nuances of advertising and their impact on materialism or subjective well-being. Furthermore, the role of transpersonal gratitude has been examined that is merely been studied in the existing literature. Marketers working in the field of advertising can improve the quality of advertising by taking into consideration the negative impact of advertising on consumers/viewers. Gratitude interventions can be utilized to mitigate the negative effects of advertising. Data was cross-sectional which does not account for any longitudinal effects of altruistic advertisement on the above-mentioned relationship. Secondly, our sample consisted of young girls only which may affect the overall generalizability of the results with respect to gender and age. Thirdly, in our experiment, we only examine the effects of altruistic advertisement whereas hedonic and functional advertisement groups have not taken into account.

INTRODUCTION

The role of advertisement in development subjective wellbeing among consumers is a field of great interest among researchers around the world. Normally an individual receives lots of advertising messages each day through various media sources. These messages may be informational with the goal to help individuals in their decision-making or emotional that trying

¹ PhD Scholar, Comsats University Islamabad (Wah Campus), Pakistan. Email: mohsin.nadal@yahoo.com (Corresponding Author)

² Assistant Professor, Comsats University (Abbottabad Campus), Pakistan. Email: afzalshah@cuiatd.edu.pk

³ Assistant Professor, Comsats University Islamabad (Wah Campus), Pakistan. Email: ayazciit@gmail.com

to provoke affect which may not necessarily related to product promoted but in either case, advertising may hinder or promote consumer overall well-being (Royne Stafford & Pounders, 2021). However this area is still understudied and calls for further research (Gilbert, Stafford, Sheinin, & Pounders, 2021; Royne Stafford & Taylor, 2022). As noted by Royne Stafford and Pounders (2021) that advertising can hinder or promote consumer wellbeing at the same time and in order to study this relationship in greater depth someone has to study different nuances of advertising and its effects on wellbeing. Advertising also links in promoting materialism among viewers (Ahmad & Mahfooz, 2019; Chao, 2019; Nairn & Oprea, 2020; Xu, 2020) nonetheless The literature calls for examining specific dimensions to better understand the media exposure, materialism and well-being (M. L. Richins, 2017). Future research ask the content creators and marketers should put more focus on how advertising can be utilized for the betterment of the society by minimizing the advertising impact on societal, environmental and cultural level (Gurrieri, Tuncay Zayer, & Coleman, 2022; Huh & Faber, 2022).

The advertising effect consumer through social comparison (Lou & Tse, 2020). It is social comparison by which a brief exposure to advertisement induces negative effects (Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). Chan and Zhang (2007) in the study on Chinese college Students describes that they watch advertisement with motivation also want to impersonate celebrities which promote materialistic values among them. This leads to life dis-satisfaction and increasing desire for more (Dittmar & Isham, 2022; M. L. Richins, 1995). However, major focus of advertising research in this area remained dedicated towards upward comparison (Gulas & McKeage, 2000; M. L. Richins, 2017; Tiggemann & Brown, 2018; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Trampe, A. Stapel, & W. Siero, 2011) and very little attention has been dedicated towards understanding the downward comparison. Role of social comparison in the relationship of advertising, materialism and consumer wellbeing should be further examined (Gilbert et al., 2021).

To answer the above gaps, this study focus on the role of altruistic advertising appeals in promoting or hindering consumer wellbeing. Altruistic advertising appeal using collectivism, courtesy, charity and tradition approaches and focuses on social issues, pro social behaviors, morality and spirituality. The appeal is equally applied in commercial products and for social causes. This strategy helps to generate feelings among consumer having sympathy and empathy considerations. The literature indicates that altruism is positively effects wellbeing, happiness and overall life satisfaction (Becchetti, Corrado, & Conzo, 2016; Kahana et al., 2013; Post, 2005). Dodds, Jaud, and Melnyk (2021) concluded that spiritual and moral advertising can enhance eudemonic wellbeing of consumers. Representation from normal people is more in

altruistic advertising than other classes of advertising i.e., hedonic advertising (Hetsroni, 2000) so it provides the platform for the downward social comparison.

Gratitude is another dimension linked with altruistic advertising and downward social comparison (Nicuță & Constantin, 2021). Gratitude was discussed in eight different facets, A. M. Wood, Froh, and Geraghty (2010) said that positive social comparisons, focuses on the positive in current moment and a also focuses on what the person has, all are the aspects of gratitude. Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005) debated that instead of collecting more and more material possessions, people should be advised to acknowledge and appreciate what they have in their current lives. By increasing the gratitude interventions, well-being improve (Froh, Kashdan, Ozimkowski, & Miller, 2009; Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008). Chaplin, John, Rindfleisch, and Froh (2019) found that by increasing gratitude interventions, materialism decreases. It is very significant to study the role gratitude play in subjective wellbeing of youth (Kong, Yang, Yan, & Li, 2021). Future researcher must put more focus on experimentation and longitudinal studies rather than cross sectional studies only (Kong et al., 2021).

The main objective of this study is to examine the effects of altruistic advertising on materialism and subjective wellbeing through downward social comparison and role of transpersonal gratitude in this relationship. This study is design as experimental research in which experience induced questionnaires filled by the participants. Participants were randomly divided into two group i.e., experimental and control. In experimental condition, participants were shown altruistic commercials before filling up the questionnaire while in control condition participants were supposed to fill out the questionnaire directly without inducing any prior visual experience.

Literature review

Social Comparison Theory

In 1954, Festinger's coined the idea of social comparison theory. People always try to attain superiority and evade the feeling of being inferior to others (Festinger, 1954). Initially the theory highlighted the upward social comparison only as to how people evaluate their opinion and abilities with superior others on relevant domains. Afterwards Wills (1991) continue the work by adding downward social comparisons. He explained that individual also compare with inferior others for self enhancement motives while facing any threat to subjective wellbeing. Social comparison is “as process containing three facets (1) acquiring social information (seeking, encountering, or constructing); (2) evaluating the outcome of comparison in relation to the self (relevance and [dis]similarities); and (3) reacting to the evaluation of comparison information via cognitive, affective, or behavioral responses” (J. V. Wood, 1996). Where

upward social comparison results in envy, materialism and lower well-being (Markova & Azocar, 2021; McCarthy & Morina, 2020; M. L. Richins, 2017), the effect of downward social comparison are vice versa (Shen, 2013; Wills, 1991). Gratitude is another dimension linked with downward social comparison (Nicuță & Constantin, 2021). Positive social comparison is a facet of gratitude (A. M. Wood et al., 2010).

Altruistic Advertisement

Altruism is derived from a French word *autrui* which means “other people”. Basic idea behind this principal is concern for happiness of other human beings. it refers to a motivation to increase the welfare of other person (Millon, Lerner, & Weiner, 2003). Many advertisers use this kind of appeal both for promotion commercial products and for social causes. Mostly narratives or story telling is used in such kind of advertisement. People attitude is more positive toward charity when the advertisement appeals more altruistic motive (Leonhardt & Peterson, 2019). In another study Zhao (2012) reported a positive association between the degree to which the participants used numerous media sources like internet, TV news and newspapers to gather the information about some environmental issues and altruism.

Altruistic emotions and behaviors are positively related to wellbeing, happiness and overall life satisfaction (Becchetti et al., 2016; Kahana et al., 2013; Post, 2005). Moreover, altruism also have the relationship with social comparison. An experimental study on children by Masters (1971) described that the social comparison negatively affect altruism. However, it is worth mentioning, that social comparison theory was not fully developed at that time as the concept of downward social comparison was introduced later by wills (Wills, 1991). Song, Cramer, Park, and Technology (2019) in a cross cultural research of social comparison on Facebook revealed that US participants as compared to their Korean counterparts are more motivated by self enhancement and altruism and as a result are less fatigued and felt more positively after making social comparison. Zheng, Ruan, and Zheng (2021) argued that by putting focus on materialistic goal can hinder subjective wellbeing whereas relationship goals can enhance subjective wellbeing. In this study we want to apply the same psychology in context of advertising. For the said purpose altruistic advertising themes are being used as highlighted by prior researches (Hetsroni, 2000).

When an altruistic advertisement is shown, the viewer begins to link the ad character’s goals to its own goals. This provokes projection and role taking which may generate positive ad attitudes (Strayer, 1990). Hedonic advertising mostly used idealized media images and their main ad protagonists mostly address happy and satisfied life which result in upward social comparison. Whereas altruistic advertising mostly focuses on social issues, discussing day to

day problems. Representation of normal people is more in altruistic advertising than hedonic advertising. It is assumed these advertising provide its viewers the platform to downward social comparison. So by priming downward social comparison through altruistic advertisement, (H1) participants under experimental condition as compared to control condition;

- a) score lower on materialism
- b) Higher on life satisfaction
- c) Higher on transpersonal gratitude

Subjective Well-Being (Life satisfaction)

Edward Diener, Lucas, and Oishi (2002) defined subjective wellbeing as “a person’s cognitive and affective evaluation of his or her life. Subjective well-being includes domain satisfaction, emotional satisfaction and overall judgments of life satisfaction (Ed Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). So subjective wellbeing generally has three main components: judgments of life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect (Andrews & Withey, 1976). A person is supposed to have high subjective wellbeing if he has life satisfaction, experience more positive affect (e.g. optimism, joy) and less negative affect (e.g. sadness, anger) (Andrews & Withey, 1976).

These three components of subjective wellbeing are separate constructs. So anyone interested in studying subjective wellbeing, should have to access these separately (Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). Debate on the relationship between advertising and well-being is controversial (Atkin & Greenberg, 1980; Kim, Popova, Halpern-Felsher, & Ling, 2019) where many researchers found a negative association between advertisement and life satisfaction (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2003a, 2003b; Suzanna J Oprea, Buijzen, & Valkenburg, 2012) still as suggested by Michel, Sovinsky, Proto, and Oswald (2019) the that the relationship between advertising and subjective well-being is not well established and given very little attention. Royne Stafford and Pounders (2021) concluded that advertising can both hinder and promote consumer well-being so further research is required to explore the various nuances of advertising in relation to consumer well-being. Future research should focus on the effect of advertising on materialism and consumer well-being and should also investigate the role of social comparison in this relationship (Gilbert et al., 2021).

Transpersonal Gratitude

Gratitude is defined as the “recognition and acknowledgement and appreciation of an altruistic act” (R. A. E. M. E. McCullough, 2004). As per the conceptualization of many prior researchers, gratitude is an emotion that involves appreciating the other person helpful acts (M. E. McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001). Though this idea does not take into

consideration the full aspects of life which individual report as causes of their gratitude. A. M. Wood et al. (2010) conceptualized gratitude as a life orientation of acknowledging and appreciating the positive in life which others called transpersonal gratitude (Nicuță & Constantin, 2021). He argued that if gratitude simply means to appreciate other people noble acts with oneself or interpersonal thankfulness, a person having high gratitude may have reduced well-being as he will attribute his success upon the actions of another person rather than his own efforts. While discussing eight different aspects of gratitude, A. M. Wood et al. (2010) argued that positive social comparisons, focusing on the positive in current moment and a focus on what the person has all are aspects of gratitude. Whenever one sees other people who are worse than him with reference to blessings, he shows more gratitude. Hlava, Elfers, and Offringa (2014) developed transpersonal gratitude scale. The scale consist of four dimensions in which one dimension is related to the thankfulness to GOD or any divine presence. It is a validated scale and many researches since then use this scale including (Dixit & Sinha, 2021; Lantz, Stearns, McKay, & Nadorff, 2021; Thurackal, Corveleyn, & Dezutter, 2016; Tsang, Schnitker, Emmons, & Hill, 2021). Waller and Casidy (2021) noted that the areas of religion and spirituality in the context of advertising is highly under researched. Gross-Manos and Massarwi (2022) Stated that Material deprivation is associated with lower subjective wellbeing however religiosity and spirituality play a protective role in this association. Inner peace, satisfaction with current life major determinants of wellbeing in adolescents (Serie et al., 2021).

Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) argued that instead of collecting more and more material possessions, people should be advised to acknowledge what they have and appreciate their current lives. By increasing the gratitude interventions, well-being improve (Froh et al., 2009; Froh et al., 2008; Kong et al., 2021). Chaplin et al. (2019) found that by increasing gratitude interventions, materialism decreases. From the above literature we assume

Materialism

As per the definition of Oxford English Dictionary, materialism is “a tendency to consider material possession and physical comforts as more important than spiritual values” (Dictionary, 2017). It refer to attain greater wealth and money and goods in order to achieve happiness and to maintain status (Dittmar & Isham, 2022). Materialism is based on three constructs. First is acquisition centrality according to which the main goal of someone’s life is to acquire material possessions. Second is “acquisition as a pursuit to happiness” which means that happiness is associated with acquiring material things. Third is “possession defined success”, it refer to status co. materialistic people regularly compare their material possessions with what other

people have in order to evaluate their success (M. D. Richins, Scott, 1992; M. L. Richins & Dawson, 1992).

TV commercials may make people more materialistic by directing their attention towards consumption rather than other social institutions like cultural and social activities that promote more positivity (Schudson, 2013). Relationship between advertisement and materialism has been studied by many scholars in various age groups. Advertisement exposure has a positive longitudinal effect on materialism and this effect is fully mediated by purchasing desire for advertised product (Suzanna J. Oprea, Buijzen, van Reijmersdal, & Valkenburg, 2014). Heavy viewers are more prone to this effect (Chan & Cai, 2009). People with materialistic goals would become even more materialistic after the exposure of materialistic advertising. Advertising make us more materialistic by proposing solutions to social problems as people have stated to believe that they can buy happiness, love and success through purchase of material products only (Dunkeld, Wright, Banerjee, Easterbrook, & Slade, 2020; Torlak & Koc, 2007). Moreover, Materialism is negatively associated with general happiness, quality of life evaluations, Subjective well-being, life satisfaction, religious and family values and self-esteem (Belk, 1984; Dittmar & Isham, 2022; Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002; Moldes, Ku, & Marketing, 2020; M. D. Richins, Scott, 1992; Roberts & Clement, 2007). Moldes et al. (2020) also highlighted small to medium effect of priming materialism on wellbeing.

Conceptual Model

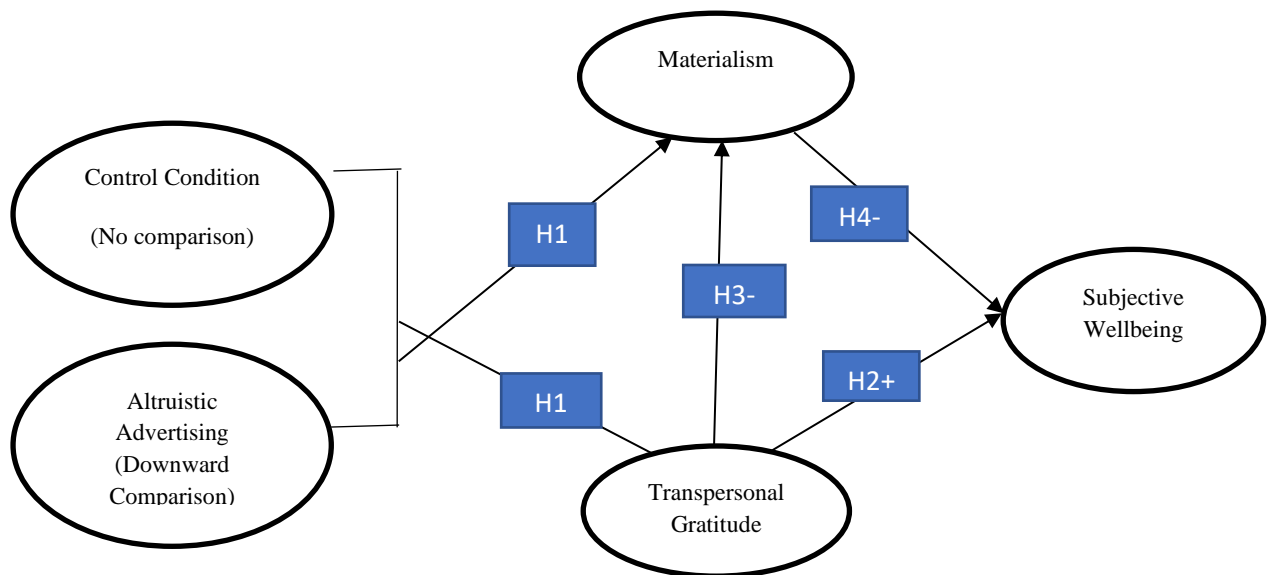


Figure 1: A Mediated Conceptual Model of Subjective Wellbeing (Author Developed)

Research Methodology

Design

The study has followed an experimental research design as numerous prior researchers adopt this method to measure the affect upward/downward social comparison (Chatard, Bocage-Barthélémy, Selimbegović, & Guimond, 2017; Clayton, Ridgway, & Hendrickse, 2017; Jin & Ryu, 2020; Moreno-Domínguez, Servián-Franco, Reyes del Paso, & Cepeda-Benito, 2019; Nicuță & Constantin, 2021; Tiggemann & Brown, 2018; Zheng, Baskin, & Peng, 2018). Participant were randomly assigned to altruistic advertising condition and control condition. Single stage cluster sampling technique is used to collect data. Pretest: only control group experimental design has been adopted.

Subjects

Literature indicates that majority of advertisement studies are conducted on youth and especially university students (Behal & Soni, 2018; Chan & Prendergast, 2007; Chia, 2010; Guillen-Royo, 2018; Jiang & Chia, 2009; Ribeiro Cardoso, Freitas, Simões, & Pereira Lopes, 2017; Tiggemann & Brown, 2018) because they are prone to low processing mechanism (Buijzen, Van Reijmersdal, & Owen, 2010; Livingstone & Helsper, 2006; Nairn & Fine, 2008) and put more faith on mass media and advertising to gain information about social norms and social functioning (Dittmar & Isham, 2022; Holland, 2015). It is the age group in which materialism is most evident and driving force in purchase decisions. Hence university students can be good respondents, as they share similar demographic as well as psychological characteristics. They also have weak self-definition & self-perception and more prone to external influences (Ashraf & Merunka, 2017). For the said research 147 females from Telecom girls' secondary school and college were selected. Participant were aged 19 to 22 years with education ranging from matriculation to FA/F.sc.

Stimulus material

For experimental intervention, four into advertisements (08 minutes) were selected because they have Altruistic themes such as the helping others, appreciating life in general & gratitude. The main brand shown in advertisement were McDonalds, HP printer, Dastak oil, Thai life insurance & Ahmed foods.

Measures

To access the subjective wellbeing, satisfaction with life scale has been used (Ed Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Subjective wellbeing life satisfaction scale (SWLS) is a promising tool in measuring the change in subjective wellbeing (Pavot & Diener, 2009). SWLS is an instrument intended to measure the cognitive component of subjective wellbeing. Since its development until recently, many major researchers use this scale to measure life satisfaction

(Dinh, Van Nguyen, Trinh, & Nguyen, 2022; Oh, Kang, & Kwon, 2020; Zhang, He, & Chen, 2022). The scale consist of five items rated from strongly disagree to strongly agree on Likert Scale. To access materialism, materialism value scale has been adopted (M. D. Richins, Scott, 1992). Scale consists of nine item focusing on three dimensions i.e., acquisition centrality, acquisition as a pursuit to happiness, possession defined success. Many recent researches adopt the scale to access materialism among participants (Gasiorowska, Folwarczny, & Otterbring, 2022; Özer, Özer, & Koçak, 2022; Pellegrino, Abe, & Shannon, 2022; Shek, Dou, Zhu, Li, & Tan, 2022). Hlava et al. (2014) developed transpersonal gratitude scale. The scale consist of four dimensions i.e., expression of gratitude, value of gratitude, transcendent gratitude & spiritual connection. It is a validated scale and many researches since then use this scale including (Dixit & Sinha, 2021; Lantz et al., 2021; Thurackal et al., 2016; Tsang et al., 2021). The questionnaire was first translated into Local language (Urdu) for better understanding and then pre-tested for reliability among 20 student. The Cronbach's Alpha for all three variable were above the desired limit. All the items were tested against the 07 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 7.

Analysis & Results

Participants were equally divided and assigned to various groups (experiment vs control). The three variables Transpersonal Gratitude, Materialism and Life satisfaction were first tested for reliability through Cronbach's alpha which were 0.895, 0.833 & 0.798 respectively. One way ANOVA show that F- value of all three variables remained significant as shown in Table – 1. Further descriptive analysis revealed that after viewing the advertisement participant score less on materialism (Mean Experiment = 3.7081 versus Mean Control = 4.9545) more on transpersonal gratitude (Mean Experiment = 5.8458 versus Mean Control = 4.7101) and life satisfaction (Mean Experiment = 5.512 versus Mean Control = 4.0222) as assumed (**H1**) Table-2.

Table – 1 ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Materialism	Between Groups	57.983	1	57.983	63.027	.000
	Within Groups	133.398	145	0.920		
	Total	191.381	146			
Life Satisfaction	Between Groups	81.53	1	81.530	112.222	.000
	Within Groups	105.344	145	0.727		
	Total	186.874	146			
Transpersonal Gratitude	Between Groups	47.386	1	47.386	123.409	.000
	Within Groups	55.677	145	0.384		
	Total	103.063	146			

Table – 2 Descriptive

		N	Mean	SD	SE
Materialism	Experiment	75	3.7081	1.02631	0.11851
	Control	72	4.9645	0.88375	0.10415
	Total	147	4.3235	1.14491	0.09443
	Model			0.95916	0.07911
				Fixed Effects	0.62831
				Random Effects	0.09058
Life Satisfaction	Experiment	75	5.5120	0.78447	0.09058
	Control	72	4.0222	0.91778	0.10816
	Total	147	4.7823	1.13135	0.09331
	Model			0.85235	0.07030
				Fixed Effects	0.74504
				Random Effects	0.06501
Transpersonal Gratitude	Experiment	75	5.8458	0.5630	0.06501
	Control	72	4.7101	0.67366	0.07939
	Total	147	5.2895	0.84019	0.06930
	Model			0.61966	0.05111
				Fixed Effects	0.5680
				Random Effects	

Mediation Analysis

For the mediation analysis, Andrew & Hayes process 4.1 has been followed. In the step 1 of the model, the regression of Transpersonal Gratitude on Life Satisfaction was significant, $b = 1.2130$, $t=24.9824$, $p<.001$ which reflect that transpersonal gratitude is positive predictor of Life satisfaction (H2). In Step 2 regression of Transpersonal Gratitude on mediator variable Materialism was also significant with $b= -1.0097$, $t=-13.2857$, $p<.001$ which showed that transpersonal gratitude is negative predictor of materialism (H3). In step 3 we observed that the regression of mediator Materialism, if controlling for transpersonal Gratitude was significant with $b=-.2410$, $t=-4.8873$, $p<.001$ which concluded that materialism negatively mediates the relationship between transpersonal gratitude and life satisfaction (H4). However, Step 4 showed that the regression of independent variable Transpersonal Gratitude, if controlling for the mediator remain significant predictor of life satisfaction with $b=.9697$ $t=14.4316$, $p<.001$ which showed that the above mentioned mediation is partial. Partial mediation was further confirmed through the analysis of total effect and direct effect.

Table-3

Y = LS, X = TG, M = M

Sample Size: 147

OUTCOME VARIABLE: M

Model Summary

R	R-Sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.7409	.5490	.5953	176.5089	1.0000	145.000	.0000
Model						
	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	9.6643	.4070	23.7452	.0000	8.8598	10.4687
TG	-1.0097	.0760	-13.2857	.0000	-1.1599	-.8595

OUTCOME VARIABLE: LS**Model Summary**

R	R-Sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.9156	.8383	.2098	373.2570	2.0000	144.0000	.0000
Model						
	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	.6950	.5343	1.3009	.1954	-.3610	1.7511
TG	.9697	.0672	14.4316	.0000	.8369	1.1025
M	-.2410	.0493	-4.8873	.0000	-.3384	-.1435

OUTCOME VARIABLE: LS**Model Summary**

R	R-Sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.9008	.8115	.2430	624.1208	1.0000	145.0000	.0000
Model						
	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-1.6339	.2600	-6.2835	.0000	-2.1478	-1.1200
TG	1.2130	.0486	24.9824	.0000	1.1170	1.3090

Total Effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c' cs
1.2130	.0486	24.9824	.0000	1.1170	1.3090	.9008

Direct Effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c' cs
.9697	.0672	14.4316	.0000	.8369	1.1025	.7201

Indirect Effect of X on Y

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
M	.2433	.0519	.1523	.3581

Completely standardized indirect Effect of X on Y

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
M	.1807	.0367	.1155	.2603

Discussion

Youth is continually bombarded with advertisements on a daily basis. Along with promotion of product and services, these advertisement leave many unintentional effects on its viewers especially children and youth as they are in the process of identity development and put more faith on mass media to gain information about social norms and social functioning (Holland, 2015). In this study we try to extend the knowledge that Individuals compare themselves with the images presented in advertisements (Lou & Tse, 2020) and this influence their perceptions regarding how their lives should be with reference to material possessions (M. L. Richins, 2017; Tiggemann & Brown, 2018; Trampe et al., 2011). We assumed that altruistic advertising provide the platform for downward social comparison by focusing more on spiritual as the main protagonists in these kind of advertising are normal people (Dodds et al., 2021). Our main hypothesis was that after viewing altruistic advertisement, participants feel more gratitude, lower materialism and enhanced subjective wellbeing (Life-satisfaction). As expected, results confirmed that participants in the experiment group were less materialistic, more satisfied with

their lives and feeling more gratitude. The results are in line with many prior researches in which different social comparison states through advertisement effect viewers differently (Lou & Tse, 2020; Moreno-Domínguez et al., 2019). Furthermore the study showed that downward social comparison related with transpersonal gratitude (Nicuță & Constantin, 2021) which in turn enhance life satisfaction (Gottlieb & Froh, 2019; Jackowska, Brown, Ronaldson, & Steptoe, 2016; Jans-Beken, Lataster, Peels, Lechner, & Jacobs, 2018; Kong et al., 2021).

The results have significant importance for various marketers working in the field of advertising in improving the quality of advertising content by taking into consideration the negative impact of advertising on consumer/viewers especially children and adolescents. Many researches have already put emphasis on the scrutiny of marketing practices and media content to mitigate the negative effects and to represent more socially responsible media (Behal & Soni, 2018; Selvanayagam & Rehman, 2019). Furthermore, our study is in line with Chaplin et al. (2019) that Gratitude interventions can be helpful in decreasing materialism and enhancing subjective wellbeing.

Further mediation analysis revealed that transpersonal gratitude impacted subjective wellbeing (life-satisfaction) positively and materialism negatively which results in the acceptance of H2 & H3. As far as H4 is concerned, that materialism negatively mediates the relationship between transpersonal gratitude and subjective wellbeing (life-satisfaction), our results show support that materialism partially mediates the above mentioned relationship.

Conclusion, limitations & Future Directions

Prior advertising studies have discussed the downward social comparison domain but most of studies only limited to negative affects like stress, body dissatisfaction and anxiety. However this study is first of its kind to examine the effect of downward social comparison on life-satisfaction, materialism and transpersonal gratitude through advertisement. Results indicate that after the exposure of altruistic advertising, participants showing more gratitude, more satisfied with their current lives and less materialistic. Moreover, transpersonal gratitude is helpful in mitigating the negative effects of materialism on life satisfaction. This study is helpful for marketers working in the field of advertising. Quality of advertising can be improved by taking into consideration the negative impact of advertising on consumer/viewers. Gratitude interventions can be utilized to mitigate the negative these effects of advertising.

Similar to previous researches, this study has few limitations. First of all the data collected from participants is cross sectional which does not account for any longitudinal effects of altruistic advertisement on the above mentioned relationship. Secondly, our sample was consisted of young girls only which may affect the overall generalizability of the results with

respect to gender and age. Thirdly, in our experiment we only examine the effects of altruistic advertisement whereas hedonic and functional advertisement groups have not taken into account. Future research should consider the replication of this relationship in any longitudinal setting. Moreover, results can be generalized using different samples with respect to age and gender. In addition future studies should consider to study this relationship across all advertisement group including hedonic, functional & altruistic to make a clearer picture of the results.

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