

“It’s a Matter of Perception”: Extraverts’ Tendency to Perceive Purchases as Experiences versus Material Objects Brings Them Greater Happiness

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Abstract

Past research has consistently shown that experiences advance happiness more than material objects (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). Interestingly, previous evidence also shows that planned experimental interventions leading consumers to perceive a purchase in experiential instead of material terms yield the same happiness benefit (e.g., Carter & Gilovich, 2012). The present research examines whether there are identifiable groups of people who have a natural propensity to perceive purchases more in one way versus the other—as experiences versus material objects; and whether this naturally-formed perception has the same positive effect on happiness. Evidence from three studies shows that extraverts are likely to perceive purchases in experiential versus material terms, and this has a positive impact on the happiness they derive from those purchases. We show that this result emerges from dispositional (trait extraversion) as well as experimentally induced extraversion (state extraversion).

Keywords: *extraversion; perception; happiness*

Track: Consumer Behaviour