

In Defense of Happy Hedonism: Moving Beyond Materialism and its Negative Impact On Well-being

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Abstract

The present research studies happy hedonism, analyzing its relationship with consumer well-being. Study 1 (n = 138) asked participants to generate examples of “happy hedonism” from their own experience, in the form of statements (“items”) for a formal instrument. Content analysis of these crowd-sourced items led to a two-facet instrument: enjoyment of consumption independent of its market price, and enjoyment of shared consumption. Study 2 (n = 504) validated the instrument and facet structure vis-à-vis consumer materialism, and established its positive association with well-being. Findings suggest that people may enjoy owning and consuming objects or experiences without this negatively affecting their well-being. Our results also highlight the distinction between happy hedonism and consumer materialism. These findings are a first, small step towards re-appraising the phenomenon of happy hedonism and perhaps towards new theories on the role of consumption in improving people’s lives.

Keywords: *happy hedonism; well-being; materialism*

Track: Consumer Behaviour