Marketing in the New Era: Investigating the Personality Antecedents of Materialism, Consumer Insecurity, and Consumer Loneliness

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Abstract

Purpose-By investigating the impact of personality antecedents on marketing influenced surface traits (i.e., Materialism, Consumer Loneliness and Consumer Insecurity), the current research tries to take a step forward in understanding the real impact marketing activities have on these surface traits.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Following a descriptive research methodology, data for the current study were collected from 174 respondents using standardized scales and hypotheses were tested using CFA and SEM analysis (AMOS (v23)).

Findings: Results confirm the existence of a significant relationship between surface traits and personality traits, substantiating the theory that certain personality traits are inherent to the risk of being associated with these surface traits, and therefore the real impact of marketing activities might be much lower.

Originality/Value: With marketing activities being criticized because of its negative impact on the society (which has been proved in the literature immensely), the current paper tries to give the debate a new perspective by studying the other antecedents (personality) of these 'negative consequences', in order to better understand the real effect of marketing activities.

Implications: Marketers can take into consideration the results of the current study and incorporate them while making advertising decisions so that marketing actions elicit a more positive reaction than negative ones.

Key Words: Materialism, Consumer Insecurity, Consumer Loneliness, Personality Traits, Surface Traits, Structural Equation Modelling

Paper Type: Research article.

1. Introduction

Marketing has for long been shadowed by the stigma of it being all about advertising and advertisers adversely influencing and manipulating the society's perception about real-world scenarios (Solomon, et. al., 2010). In the past, researchers have repeatedly reported a negative association of marketing activities with worsened levels of well-being of consumers which most commonly showed concern towards increasing levels of materialism (Ahuvia & Wong, 2002). Stemmed out of conceptualisations put forward by Belk (1985) and Richins (2004) consumer research in this area has associated materialism with several negative consequences like reduction in personal well-being (Abella, 2006), financial well-being (Dittmar, 2012), overall life satisfaction (Ahuvia & Wong, 2002) etc. Subsequently, recent research has also started citing traits like Consumer Insecurity (CI) (Zhou et. al., 2013) and Consumer Loneliness (CL) (Wang et al., 2012) as other major negative traits allegedly propagated by marketing activities, such as advertising. Research has also established a positive relationship between brand relationships and a consumer's sense of insecurity (Allen et. al., 2008) and has also reported that CL was a social needs gap which the consumers tried to fill with shopping but in turn experienced an even more increased degree of loneliness (Kang, 1996).

Therefore, plethora of literature stipulates and establishes the negative effects of traits like...
materialism, CI and CL on the well-being of consumers, almost all of which is attributed to marketers. However, psychology researchers have stated that the presence of personality antecedents could define an individual's susceptibility to certain traits that are helpful in explaining consistencies in surface behaviour (Mowen & Carlson, 2003; Otero-O-López, & Villardefrancos, 2013). Consumer research has recently started using this theoretical background to explain and better understand consumer behaviour. For example, studies have demonstrated a generally positive relationship between the five-factor model (McCrae & Costa, 2008) and psychographic variables like political consumer behaviour, impulsive buying behaviour (Husnain et. al., 2016), etc. Subsequently, this lead towards a proposition that there might be certain personality traits that contribute to the susceptibility of consumers to traits like materialism, CI, and CL. Furthermore, it is also contended that without including personality antecedents, any attempt to attribute the negative consequences solely to marketing efforts, would only result in a partial picture. Furthermore, a review of the literature did not indicate any study which studied multiple negative trait variables together (Zhou et al., 2013; Snyder & Newman, 2019). Therefore, the current research also contributes to the existing literature by studying the three dimensions i.e., materialism, CI and CL in tandem. The objective of the current work is, therefore to discuss the personality antecedents of the negative traits elicited by marketing actions to better understand their actual impact on consumers. The study intends to help marketers establish a balance between marketing and its social dimensions.

2. Theory Building and Review of Literature

Several theories have been used to understand materialism, CI and CL. For example, the terror management theory (TMT), which states that the fear or anxiety of death activates cultural beliefs and values as a coping mechanism in an individual has been used in consumer research to explain that fear of death is what drives individuals to materialism (Rindfleisch, 2008). The Attachment theory (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2008) similarly asserts that, when a person fails to find a primary attachment in another person, he starts to rely on material possessions as his secondary attachment. Further, the self-determination theory has been used by some researchers like Pieters (2013) in order to explain the relationship between CI and materialism.

The current work draws heavily from TMT, self-determination theory, attachment theory and evolutionary psychology principles and trait theories (Mowen & Carlson, 2003), which state that the traits exhibited by a person are a summation of his predisposed personality and other situational factors; in order to explain the affect of CI, CL, and materialism on one another and to understand their underlying personality dimensions.

2.1 Conceptualisations

2.1.1 Five-Factor Model of Personality

Several studies over the past few decades have supported the five-factor model as being representative of a person's underlying personality dimensions (McCrae & Costa, 2008). This model presents with five independent variables i.e., agreeableness, extroversion, openness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness. The choice to use these dimensions for the current study was made based on works of Otero-O-López & Villardefrancos (2013) who have cited multiple works as unanimously consenting on the five-factor model being an exhaustive taxonomy of personality factors.

For the purpose of the present study, Openness has been defined as "the individual's openness to experience which reflects the degree of intellectual curiosity, creativity and a preference for novelty and variety a person has" (Freidman & Schustak, 2016). Conscientiousness has been defined as the "tendency to be organized and dependable, show self-discipline, act dutifully, aim for achievement, and prefer planned rather than spontaneous behaviour" (Barsouk, 2012). Extroversion has been defined as "energetic, urgency, assertiveness, sociability and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others, and talkativeness" (Freidman & Schustak, 2016). Agreeableness has been defined as "the tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and
2.1.2 Materialism
Several conceptualisations of materialism have been put forward by various researchers in the past. Kasser (2018) defined materialism as "a psychological construct reflecting the extent to which an individual believes that it is important to attain money, possessions, image, and status, relative to other aims in life". Richins in his works defined it as a collection of personal values i.e., "centrality", "happiness" and "success" (Richins, 2017). Richins' also opined that materialism wasn't a dichotomy and people could not be grouped into materialists and non-materialists (Richins, 2017), unlike Ingehart's (1977) bifurcation of materialists and post-materialists. The simplistic definition is what has been used to conceptualise materialism in the present study.

2.1.3 Consumer Loneliness (CL)
Loneliness can be defined as "an individual's subjective perception of deficiencies in his or her current level of social connection" (Weiss, 1973), "that motivates them to take actions to alleviate it" (Cacioppo et al. 2006). Consumer research has found evidence of a relationship between consumption and feelings of loneliness (Pieters, 2013; Snyder and Newman, 2019). The current conceptualisation defines loneliness to be a trait that can be predicted by personal and situational factors.

2.1.4 Consumer Insecurity (CI)
CI has been defined as "a generalized sense of uncertainty, vulnerability, and fear" (Zhou et. al., 2013) or as "a subjective perception or feeling about threat or risks out of control, such as sadness, sense of danger, uncertainty and anxiety and so on" (Bi et. al., 2016; Bi & Yin, 2017). The present study defines consumer insecurity in terms of subjective perception or feeling. Furthermore, in order to test the postulate that a certain set of personal factors are predisposed to the development of 'negative' traits, existing literature indicating the presence of a relationship between the five-factor model of personality and materialism, CI and CL were reviewed.

2.2. Five-Factor Model of Personality and Materialism CI, And CL
There is evidence of a relationship between the five-factor model personality and materialism conceptualised byRichins (Shafer, 2000; Otero-Lopez, & Villardefrancos, 2013) and materialistic values have been found to be positively associated with neuroticism (Gornik-Durose, & Boro?, 2018). This conclusion was supported by Burroughs & Rindfleisch (2002) who supported the hypothesis that materialism has a negative relationship with traits like life satisfaction and happiness and a positive relationship with states like depression and neuroticism. Materialism has also been found to be negatively associated with openness (Troisi et al., 2006), and agreeableness (Bosnjak et. al., 2007). Therefore, based on the review of literature, it can be argued that different types of personalities predict the presence, or proneness of an individual, to materialism in consumers. Therefore, using the five-factor model of personality following hypotheses were proposed for the current study:

H$_1$ (a): There is a positive relationship between extroversion and materialism.
H$_1$ (b): There is a negative relationship between agreeableness and materialism.
H$_1$ (c): There is a negative relationship between conscientiousness and materialism.
H$_1$ (d): There is a positive relationship between neuroticism and materialism.
H$_1$ (e): There is a negative relationship between openness and materialism.

A similar review of the insecurity and loneliness literature indicated some psychological research on the impact of these two variables on human behaviour. For example, a study conducted by Abdellaou et al., (2018) reported that loneliness had a strong association with
neuroticism. However, due to a dearth of research in this area, the present study used self-
determination and attachment theory to draw postulates regarding CI and personality traits;
and terror management theory (TMT) for consumer insecurity and personality traits
respectively. Based on the self-determination and attachment theory the current research
presupposed that a person who fails to find satisfaction in the ‘primary’ attachments of his
life, will turn to material possessions to find satisfaction in these ‘secondary’ attachments,
leading a person high in loneliness levels to report high materialistic values as well. These
theories have been supported by other researchers who have established a relationship
between materialism, and CL (Pieters, 2013). Similarly, consumer research suggested that, in
accordance with TMT, people displaying higher levels of existential insecurity were reported
to have high materialism levels (Chang & Arkin, 2002) providing evidence of a relationship
between CI and materialism. Therefore, research is indicative of a relationship between
materialism, CI, and CI. Therefore, since the five-factor model of personality is related to
materialism, it is only logical to derive that CI and CL should also have a significant
relationship with these personality traits i.e., agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness,
neuroticism, and extroversion. Subsequently, hypotheses were proposed with respect to
CI, CL, and the five-factor personality dimensions as well. Therefore, it was hypothesised
that:

\[ H_2(a)/H_3(a): \text{There is a positive relationship between extroversion and CL/CI.} \]
\[ H_2(b)/H_3(b): \text{There is a negative relationship between agreeableness and CL/CI.} \]
\[ H_2(c)/H_3(c): \text{There is a negative relationship between conscientiousness and CL/CI.} \]
\[ H_2(d)/H_3(d): \text{There is a positive relationship between neuroticism and CL/CI.} \]
\[ H_2(e)/H_3(e): \text{There is a negative relationship between openness and CL/CI.} \]

3. Conceptual Model

The present study was undertaken with the objective of studying the relationship between
the five factor model of personality and materialism, CI and CL among the consumers. The
conceptual model and hypotheses of the study have been illustrated in Fig. 1.

![Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the study](Source: Author Calculations)
4. Research Methodology

Data for the study were collected from 174 individuals who were above the age of 17 from Chandigarh area. Chandigarh was chosen as the geographic region for the study based on judgement because of heterogeneity of its population. Approximately 67% of the city's population are migrants, of which about 30% and 5% move to the city for work and education respectively (Census, 2011). Therefore, appropriate heterogeneity of respondents could be targeted in a sample from Chandigarh. Secondly, respondents above the age of 17 were considered for the sample, as people less than 17 years of age do not engage in the purchase that is unadulterated by external factors (Ahuvia & Wong, 2002). Furthermore, since the total population of Chandigarh was recorded to be approximately 10,54,000 of which nearly 60% were above the age of 17 years (Census, 2011), the population size for the current study was equal to 6,32,400. Further, the confidence level and confidence interval for the current study were determined to be 95% and 6.93% respectively. Therefore, given the population size, confidence level, and confidence interval the sample size for the current study was calculated to be 196 (see Kadam, & Bhalerao, 2010 for sample size calculation formulae). Furthermore, since 22 of the questionnaires collected from 196 respondents were incomplete, they could not be used in study, which resulted in the final sample of 174 respondents. Further, the selection of respondents was done on the basis of the mall intercept technique.

Mall intercept technique is the methodology of collecting data, more prominently used by marketing researches in which a researcher intercepts a sample of people passing by at a shopping mall/area or park to ask if they would be willing to be a part of their research study (Rice & Hancock, 2005). Research indicates that this method of data collection yields a better response rate and quality than its counterparts like telephonic interviews (Bush & Hair, 1985) and online surveys (Rice & Hancock, 2005) making it a better choice of technique for data collection.

For this purpose Elante mall in Chandigarh was chosen. This was done majorly because of two reasons. Firstly, with a footfall of 38,000 on weekdays and 60,000 on weekends, the mall is marketed as "places to visit" in most of the tourist and travel sites, thus attracting diversified footfall (Chhabra, 2017). Secondly, it has an assortment of most popular brands and cuisines, because of which it is a favourite haunt with the locals as well. In the present study, data were collected over a week i.e., from ninth to sixteenth June 2019, from the respondents. The sampling instrument, which was a structured non disguised questionnaire, was developed using standardised scales for all the variables. Personality traits i.e., openness to experience, extroversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were measured using four-item scales (for each) adopted from Donnellan et al., 2006. Materialism was quantified using a nine item scale proposed by Richins (2004); CI was measured using a seventeen item scale adapted from works of Rindfleisch (2008) and CL was quantified using a ten item scale adapted from works of Pieters, (2013). A five-point Likert scale (i.e., how much you agree or disagree with; where "1 = strongly disagree", "5 = strongly agree") was used to record responses of the respondents.

4.1 Psychometric properties of the scales

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using AMOS version 22 to examine the convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs. To assess model fitness five practical fit indexes namely Chi Sq./df, CFI (comparative fit index), GFI (goodness of fit index), AGFI (adjusted goodness of fit index) and RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) were used. The statistics for model fit of CFA indicated that the model converged displaying model fit indexes from moderate to good (see Table 1, Model 1). However, modification indices indicated that model fit indices could be further improved by allowing covariance between some error terms (within the same variable). Subsequently, model 2 also converged and the modification indices were found to be moderate to good (Table 1, Model 2). Therefore, factor loadings of the various constructs were interpreted and items with low factor loadings (<0.40) i.e., one item (item 8) of the CI construct and two items (1 and 5), from the CL construct, were dropped. This resulted in adapted scales with sixteen and eight items to measure CI and CL respectively. As a result of these changes the model fit improved in terms...
of various model fit indices (Table 1, Model 3). Therefore, the revised measurement model was found to fit the data better, and the fit indices values of this model met or exceeded the standard values for a good model fit (see table 1). The internal consistency and reliability of the adapted scales were further measured using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. According to past researches, for the purpose of basic research, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.60 or higher is sufficient, but 0.50 was acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). It was found that a Cronbach's alpha value for all constructs was higher than 0.50 (see Table 1). To further test the psychometric properties of the scales, homoscedasticity of data was tested. The violation of homoscedasticity happens when the size of the error term differs across the values of an independent variable. Checking for this assumption is important since its violation can make significance tests unreliable. For this purpose, the Breusch-Pagan test was applied on the data, and it was found that the significance values of Breusch-Pagan tests were greater than 0.05 for all the three dependent variables i.e., materialism, CI and CL (see Table 2). Therefore, the null hypothesis that the data is homoscedastic was accepted, and no problem of heteroscedasticity of data was reported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chi Sq.</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Chi Sq./ df</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>259.05</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>.806</td>
<td>.889</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td>.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>230.06</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.852</td>
<td>.890</td>
<td>.876</td>
<td>.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td>203.03</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.916</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>.892</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.**

Results of CFA

**Source:** Author Calculations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Breusch-Pagan test (for homoscedasticity)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extroversion</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.817</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientious</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.829</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>.838</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Loneliness</td>
<td>.845</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Insecurity</td>
<td>.903</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Loneliness</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Insecurity</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.**

Reliability and Homoscedasticity Results

**Source:** Author Calculations

Following the reliability test, data were analysed using structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS (analysis of moment structure) version 22, the results of which are discussed in the following section.

**5. Results of Analysis**

In order to test the objective of the study, descriptive statistics the descriptive statistics were generated for a total of 174 respondents. The results highlighted that out of the total
respondents, 113 respondents (64.9 %) were males and 61 respondents were females. Additionally, of the total, 100 respondents (57.4 %) belonged to the age group of 20-24 followed by the age group of 24-29 which constituted 29.8 % of the respondents, whereas 22 respondents (12.6 %) reported being of the age 30-49 which appears to be skewed but was still moderately represent of the society since according to the 2011 census of India approximately 63 % population belonged to the age group of 15-59, of which approximately 39% belong to the age group 20-44. Otherwise, the sample reported sufficient heterogeneity to proceed with the analysis. Therefore, the current sample was used to test the hypotheses proposed for the study.

5.1 Results of the Structural Model
As previously mentioned, the second step was to assess the structural model which included the testing of the theoretical hypothesis (by way to path analysis) and the relationships between latent constructs provided through the employed SEM technique and the use of statistical package of AMOS version 22 (Figure 2). The results of SEM indicated that model 1 converged. The results of the proposed research model indicated a good fit (see Table 3). Further, all the hypothetical links of the model 1 were tested, and most paths were significant (see Table 4). An analysis of the regression p values indicated that the paths extroversion -> materialism (0.330), agreeableness -> materialism (-0.203), neuroticism -> materialism (0.353), agreeableness -> loneliness (-0.496), neuroticism -> loneliness (0.460), extroversion -> insecurity (0.390), agreeableness -> insecurity (-0.115), neuroticism -> insecurity (0.506), and openness-> insecurity (-.494), were significant (Table 4). Therefore, the results supported the hypotheses H1 (a), H1 (b), H1 (d), H2 (b), H2 (d), H3 (a), H3 (b), H3 (d) and H3 (e).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Fit Indices</th>
<th>Values Reported</th>
<th>Standard Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMIN/df</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>Less than 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>Closer to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGFI</td>
<td>.871</td>
<td>Closer to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.928</td>
<td>Closer to 1 but greater than or equal to 0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>Less than 0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author Calculations

Table 3. Model 1 (SEM) fit Indicators

Marketing in the New Era: Investigating the Personality Antecedents
5.2 Discussion of results

There can be some possible explanations as to why extroversion and neuroticism reported a positive, and agreeableness demonstrated a significant negative relationship with materialism, CI and CL. Past researchers have suggested that the mechanism through which this association gets up is social in nature (Atak, 2009). Lonely and insecure people may have less rewarding interactions with others and may have less extensive social networks from which they receive support. Therefore, agreeableness and openness may influence CI and CL negatively by allowing more effective use of social support as a coping strategy. Further, past research also suggested that extroverts were more sociable people, and generally bought things to seek approval of others and flaunted their belongings (Jackson & Scott, 2017). This can explain the positive relationship between extroversion and materialism. Furthermore, Chang and Arkin in a study reported that people high in neuroticism levels were moody and inclined towards making impulsive decisions (Chang & Arkin, 2002), and past research has often associated materialism with impulsive purchase and compulsive consumption, which can explain the positive significant relationship between neuroticism and materialism, found the present study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Standardised Regression Weights</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Hypothesis testing result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>extroversion -&gt; materialism</td>
<td>H1(a)</td>
<td>0.330</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreeableness -&gt; materialism</td>
<td>H1(b)</td>
<td>-0.203</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conscientiousness -&gt; materialism</td>
<td>H1(c)</td>
<td>0.320</td>
<td>0.452</td>
<td>not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuroticism -&gt; materialism</td>
<td>H1(d)</td>
<td>0.353</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>openness -&gt; materialism</td>
<td>H1(e)</td>
<td>-0.186</td>
<td>0.645</td>
<td>not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extroversion -&gt; CL</td>
<td>H2(a)</td>
<td>0.521</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreeableness -&gt; CL</td>
<td>H2(b)</td>
<td>-0.496</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conscientiousness -&gt; CL</td>
<td>H2(c)</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>0.368</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuroticism -&gt; CL</td>
<td>H2(d)</td>
<td>0.460</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>openness -&gt; CL</td>
<td>H2(e)</td>
<td>-0.297</td>
<td>0.567</td>
<td>not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extroversion -&gt; CL</td>
<td>H3(a)</td>
<td>0.393</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreeableness -&gt; CL</td>
<td>H3(b)</td>
<td>-0.496</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conscientiousness -&gt; CL</td>
<td>H3(c)</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>0.433</td>
<td>not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuroticism -&gt; CL</td>
<td>H3(d)</td>
<td>0.460</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>openness -&gt; CI</td>
<td>H3(e)</td>
<td>-0.297</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author Calculations

6. Conclusion

To conclude, results of the current study were found to be in agreement with past studies which also indicated a positive relationship between neuroticism and materialism (Gornik-Durose & Boron, 2018). Furthermore, similar to literature, this study also reported a significant positive relationship between extroversion and materialism and loneliness. The magnitude of the relationships were also consistent with previous studies (Costa, 1991). However, the current results go beyond the simple correlational relationships reported in the literature. First, the novelty of the current study stems from the examination of three
negative traits (allegedly propagated by marketers) together. By proving the presence of a relationship between materialism, CI, CL and their underlying personality dimensions, the current study not only provides with antecedents of these traits, but also takes a step forward in the development of the proposition that marketing efforts cannot be single-handedly blamed for all that is wrong with the consumer society. A series of pre-dispositions, values, belief systems, situations, etc. determine the traits exhibited by a consumer, and only an explicit study of all of these variables can warrant a clear understanding of these negative traits, and their consequences. Therefore, exploring the underlying causes of these traits was as important as exploring the precise nature of the relationship between these three traits and their outcomes. The current research, thus, brings light to these issues by linking materialism, CI, and CL, allegedly developed and propagated by marketers, to the inherent or core traits of an individual. Secondly, both the loneliness and insecurity constructs have started to be used to estimate consumer behaviour, by consumer researchers. The current study laid groundwork for future researchers, by providing a new theoretical model of antecedents of these constructs. Future researchers must take the understanding of both CI and CL forward and explore the other situational antecedents that can predict CI and CL in a consumer. The current research has some policy implications as well. Marketers should take into consideration these results while selecting their target market of the stimuli they create. For example, since there is a negative relationship of materialism, CI and CL with agreeableness which means that less agreeable people are less prone to these traits and hence marketers should provide stimuli depicting less agreeable people as a central figure in order to positively influence the consumers. Furthermore, since there is a positive relationship between neuroticism and materialism, CI, and CL, the ad copy is advised to be designed such that it invokes calmer feelings in the consumer. Taking these steps will help marketers in regaining the ‘lost’ consumer trust.

7. Limitations of the study

However, like most studies, the current research is also not free from some methodological limitations. Firstly, as discussed the data collected were self-report data, the constraints of which have been discussed immensely in consumer research (Srivastava, 2001). Secondly, since the personality traits discussed were predisposed traits, and the basic question being tested was if they could predict traits like materialism, CI and CL, a longitudinal study might have provided more relevant results.

8. Scope for future research

Future researchers are advised to work on these structural limitations of the study. Further studies should also try to understand the influence of marketing activities on these traits i.e., materialism, CI, and CL free from the interaction of their underlying personality predictors, only then will research be able to find out the actual impact of marketing on consumers’ behaviours. Furthermore, further investigation is advised on the consequences of the traits of materialism, CI, and CL, in order to understand the true impact of these traits on the consumer society.

References


Marketing in the New Era: Investigating the Personality Antecedents