

Title: Consequences of Consumerist Culture: Development of Hedonic Happiness and Materialistic Attitude

Presenter: Felicia Irawan, Pasadena City College

Mentor: Brian Gonzalez

Consumerism links consumption with emotional happiness. It is commonly believed one's happiness level will rise along with increasing purchases of luxury goods. Defined by *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, consumerism is a "belief system that promotes [the] consumption of material goods and services among a large segment of the population" ("Consumerism" 2008). Consumerist culture, with norms that value immediate acquired satisfaction by consumption, forms a method for some to pursue individual happiness. However, it only leads to hedonic happiness due to the vague perception of mental satisfaction, and eventually drives an unhealthy materialistic attitude. In her book *The How of Happiness*, psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky describes happiness as an experience "combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile". Happiness also separates into hedonic happiness and eudaimonic happiness (Haybron 2019). Hedonic happiness comes from a temporary feeling of supremacy, occurs when people maintain a sense of high self-esteem, and is associated with doubts and insecurities. Eudaimonic happiness is a sense of oneness and the pleasure of self-transcendence. People receive contentedness from others' achievements and self-giving. Research has shown life satisfaction does not directly correlate with financial success and increased consumption. Consumerist culture only brings people a short-term excitement of superiority (Dittmar et al. 2014), which will quickly diminish without continued purchases of luxurious items, and will gradually cause emergence of negative materialistic values in life (DeAngelis 2010). To achieve eudaimonic happiness, people should find their passion and live a purposeful life instead of focusing on material consumption.

Works Cited

- "Consumerism." International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, edited by William A. Darity, Jr., 2nd ed., vol. 2, Macmillan Reference USA, 2008, pp. 104-105. Gale Ebooks, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX3045300443/GVRL?u=pasa19871&sid=GVRL&xid=c7eb5328>. Accessed 13 Nov. 2019.
- DeAngelis, Tori. "Consumerism May Be Linked to Mental and Emotional Problems." Consumerism, edited by Roman Espejo, Greenhaven Press, 2010. Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/EJ3010642208/OVIC?u=pasa19871&sid=OVIC&xid=0de4ad87>. Accessed 19 Nov. 2019. Orig. published as "Consumerism and Its Discontents," APA Monitor, vol. 35, 2004, p. 52.
- Dittmar, Helga, et al. "The Relationship between Materialism and Personal Well-Being: A Meta-Analysis." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 107, no. 5, Nov. 2014, pp. 879–924. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1037/a0037409.
- Haybron, Dan, "Happiness", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), forthcoming URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/happiness/>.
- Lyubomirsky, S. The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want. 2018. New York: Penguin Press.