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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Territorial, Class and Gender Based Differences of Materialistic Values and Happiness

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to measure the differences of materialistic values and happiness by class status, gender and territory. A total of 200 heads of families were randomly selected from Muzaffargarh and Multan city. It was explored that lower class respondents were happier than middle and upper class ($P < 0.05$); whereas, upper class respondents were more materialistic than middle and lower class ($P < 0.05$). However, no significant difference of materialistic values and happiness were found between rural and urban respondents ($P > 0.05$). Similarly, no significant difference of happiness were found between male and female respondents ($P > 0.05$); while, male respondents were more materialistic than females ($P < 0.05$). It was concluded that happiness is unequally distributed by class status in relation to materialistic values ($P < 0.001$).

INTRODUCTION

Materialistic values refer to a set of values, goals or expectancies relating to the acquisition of wealth and material goods (Kasser et al., 2004; Richins and Dawson, 1992). Several researches explored various correlates of materialistic values such as wellbeing (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000), self-esteem (Kernis et al., 2000), interpersonal relationships (Lyubomirsky and Ross, 1997) religiosity (Swinyard et al., 2001) and happiness in terms of life satisfaction (Belk, 1985; Richins and Dawson, 1992).

We have found scarcity of empirical studies regarding materialistic values in Pakistan whereas happiness was extensively studied focusing upon its subjective and objective measures (Ali and Haq, 2006; Matsubayashi et al., 1992). It provided the gap in the body of knowledge that led us to construct a conceptual framework of materialistic values and happiness in the context of Pakistan. For that purpose, we aimed to explore the difference of materialistic values among upper, lower and middle classes because the theory of materialistic values strongly firmed its varying extent among classes (Inglehart, 2015). Furthermore, the varying extents of materialistic values reflect the diversity of happiness extent. Therefore, we aimed to

examine that whether materialistic values and happiness have difference among classes and between rural and urban people. Additionally, apart from causal relation of materialistic values and happiness, we also intended to identify the association of these two variable because several researches have established their negative relationship Swinyard et al. (2001).

We also incorporated gender based materialistic values' preferences and happiness level in conceptual framework because of its relevance to sociocultural context that appeared to be gender discriminated in almost all aspects of Pakistan. Such contextual inequality directed us to deduce the in equal distribution of happiness, associating it with materialistic values. Hasan (2013) concluded that capabilities (e.g. autonomy) are the most stable predictor of happiness in Pakistan; whereas, regarding female autonomy, Ali and Haq (2006) found contrary results. Additionally, Farid et al. (2014) explored that females prefer relationships over materialistic values due to the economic super ordination of males that showed that distinctive sociocultural patterns of Pakistan than other western countries. Therefore, the present study being dissented from western researches' conjectures on happiness, assumed the gender based difference of happiness

owing to the varying extent of materialistic values' preferences.

Keeping in view the previous studies and our assumptions, we have developed some hypotheses which are as follow:

H_A: There is a difference of happiness and materialistic values among classes.

H_A: There is a difference of happiness and materialistic values between men and women.

H_A: There is a difference of happiness and materialistic values between rural and urban respondents.

H_A: Happiness and materialistic values are negatively correlated (Secondary hypothesis).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the study, we randomly selected 200 heads of families (male=118 and female=82) within the age group of 30 to above 70 from Muzaffargarh (n = 102) and Multan city (n = 98). The data was collected by using a questionnaire which was comprised of 56 questions. We used a modified form of Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) at Oxford University. The questionnaire was comprised of 29 items and ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree on six point like rt scale (Cronbach alpha, 78.6). On the other hand, materialistic values were measured through a self-administered questionnaire which was comprised of 10 items, ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree on five point like rt scale (Cronbach alpha, 77.8). We used socio-economic status (SES) to measure class status of the respondents. The indicators of socioeconomic status were taken from Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) 2011-12. A class interval of 16.3 (range 49) was constructed by accumulated scores of SES questionnaire which was resulted in three classes (i.e., lower, middle and upper) of the respondents. However, we incorporated both the continuous (Fig 3 and 4) and categorical (Fig 1 and 2) data of SES in the analysis according to their appropriate requirement.

In the present study, one way analysis of variance in alliance with post-hoc Duncan test was applied to measure the difference of materialistic values and happiness among classes i.e., lower, middle and upper. Whereas, gender and territory based differences were identified by applying two independent sample t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results showed that 18 percent of the respondents were belonged to the age group of 30-40 years and 54.5 percent of the respondents were belonged to the age group of 41-50 years (Table 1). It was identified that

Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents with respect to their demographic profile

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Age	30-40	36	18.0
	41-50	109	54.5
	51-60	43	21.5
	61-70	9	4.5
	Above 70	3	1.5
Gender	Male	118	59.0
	Female	82	41.0
Family structure	Joint family	105	52.5
	Nuclear family	95	47.5
Academic qualification	Primary	27	13.5
	Middle	31	15.5
	Metric	45	22.5
	Intermediate	31	15.5
	Graduation	24	12.0
	Master	38	19.0
	M.Phil.	4	2.0
Occupation	Government	58	29.0
	Semi government	5	2.5
	Private	137	68.5
Monthly Income	Below Rs. 5000/-	2	1.0
	Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 10000/.	24	12.0
	Rs. 10000/- to Rs. 15000	21	10.5
	Rs.15000/- to Rs. 20000/-	33	16.5
	Rs. 20000/- to Rs. 25000/-	31	15.5
	Above 25000/-	89	44.5

very small numbers of respondents have the age of more than 61 years. The number of male respondents (59%) was higher than female (41%) and most of them were living in joint family system (52%). Most of the respondents, secured metric certificate (45%), have private jobs (68.5%) and were earning above 25000 rupees per month (44.5%). It was also identified that least number of respondents were above the age of 70 (1.5%), working in semi-governmental sectors (2.5%), earning less than 5000 per month (1%) and have studied M. Phil (2%).

The results of one way analysis of variance are shown in Table 2. The table depicts that there is a significant mean difference of happiness and materialistic values among upper, middle and lower class people ($P < 0.05$). The result supported the findings of Easterlin (1973), Hagerty and Veenhoven (2003), Lucas and Schimmack (2009) and Taylor et al. (2006). Additionally, we applied post-hoc Duncan test (Fig 1 and 2) to explore the specified differences of selected variables among classes. The results revealed that lower class people were significantly happier than middle and upper class ($P < 0.05$) (Fig. 1). The results is contrary to the finding of Shahbaz and Aamir (2008).

Table 2: Class base difference of happiness and materialistic values

Variables		SS	DF	MS	F	P
Happiness	Between Groups	2724.161	2	1362.081	7.772	.001
	Within Groups	34523.119	197	175.244		
	Total	37247.280	199			
Materialistic values	Between Groups	1058.935	2	529.468	4.217	.016
	Within Groups	24733.685	197	125.552		
	Total	25792.620	199			

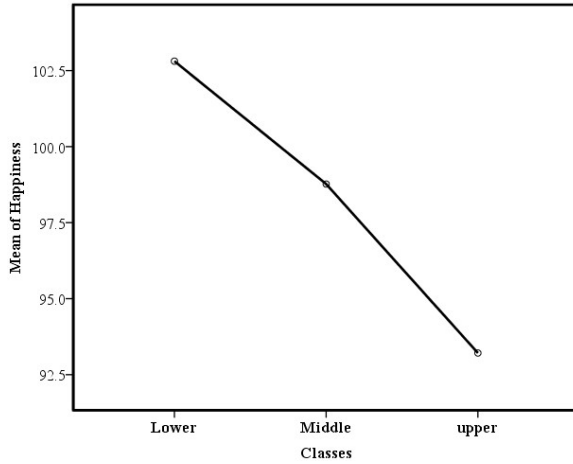


Fig. 1: Mean plot of happiness by class status

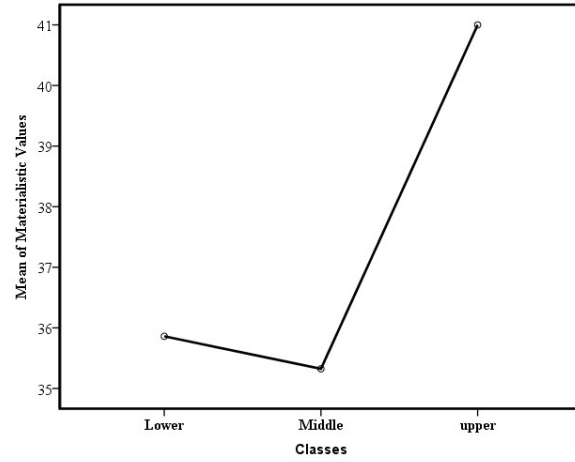


Fig. 2: Mean plot of materialistic values by class status

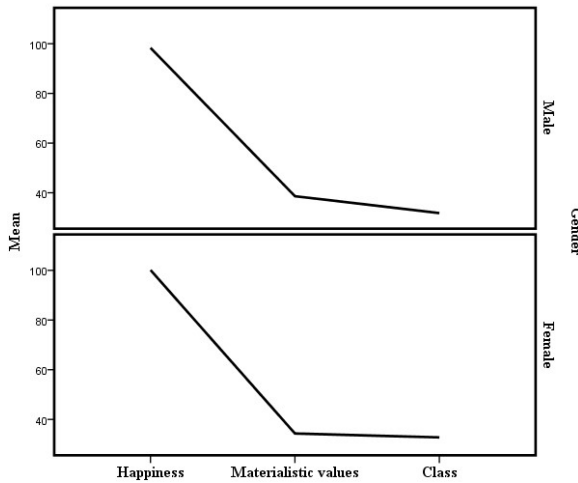


Fig. 3: Mean plot of happiness, materialistic values and socioeconomic status by gender

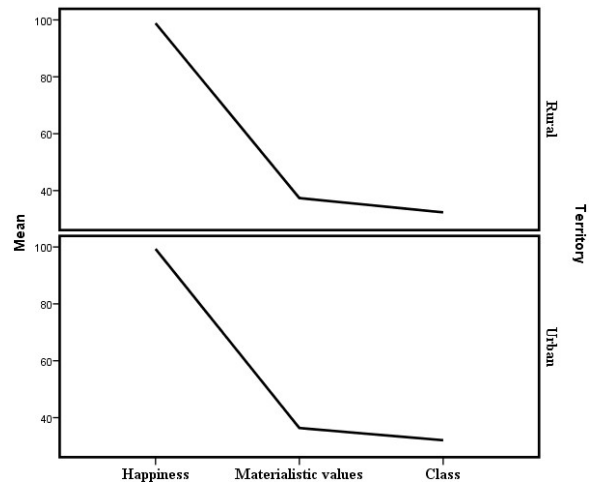


Fig. 4: Mean plot of happiness, materialistic values and socioeconomic status by territory

In the present study, the class status was constructed on material possessions and per month income. In fact, the material possessions depend upon income. However, Easterlin (1995) found that income does not explain the happiness status. Thus, the result of lower class happiness could be validated being independent to the income because to detect the relationship between class status and happiness was secondary objective of the study. However, we have explored that happiness (M=99.06, SD=13.681) and materialistic values

(M=36.87, SD=11.385) have significant negative correlation ($r=-.242$, $P=.001$). The result is consistent with several other studies (Belk, 1985; Richins and Dawson, 1992).

In case of materialistic values, we found that upper class people have significant greater mean than middle and lower class ($P<0.05$) (Fig. 2). This explains the higher level of materialism in upper class. The inference supported the findings of Chang and Arkin (2002).

Table 3: Gender based difference of happiness and relationship material

Variables	Gender	M	SD	t	P-value
Happiness	Male	98.32	13.100	-0.915	0.361
	Female	100.12	14.492		
Materialistic values	Male	38.64	10.458	2.67	0.008
	Female	34.33	12.221		

Table 3 depicts that mean difference of happiness and materialistic values between male and female respondents. The table shows that there is no significant difference of happiness between males and females ($P > .05$). However, male respondents have greater mean of materialistic values than females ($P < .05$) and have almost equal socioeconomic status (See Fig. 3). The result regarding higher materialistic values in males is consistent with the findings of Goldberg et al. (2003); whereas, regarding happiness, the results were contrary to the study of Ali and Haq (2006) and Inglehart (2002). Although, Ali and Haq (2006) grounded their study on the axiom of contrary cultural orientation of Pakistan from western society, as we have claimed, but they used secondary data to analyze happiness and same is the case in the study of Inglehart (2002). However, we preferred to use primary data that corroborate the validity of gross root level reality. Nevertheless the insignificant difference of happiness, female mean values is higher than male. In this case, our finding supported the study of Gerdtham and Johannesson (2001) and Hartog and Oosterbeek (1998). We also computed mean difference of the same variables between rural and urban respondents (Fig. 4). The result revealed that there is no significant difference of happiness and materialistic values between people belong to rural and urban territories ($P > 0.05$). The results were contrary to the finding of several eastern and western studies on happiness (Easterlin et al., 2011; Jiang et al., 2012). However, it is consistent with the findings of Veenhoven (1994). The finding regarding materialistic values is also contrary to the finding of Easterlin et al. (2011) and Wang et al. (2009). The major reason of contrary results was the distinctive measurement of happiness and materialistic values in the present study. Several studies preferred subjective wellbeing indicators to measure happiness whereas we used the Oxford happiness questionnaire which directly address the variable. However, we used self-administered questionnaire of materialistic values whereas other studies preferred material possessions as indicators of materialistic values.

Conclusion

The findings of the study directed us to conclude that happiness existed independent to socioeconomic status whereas the accumulation of wealth made people more materialistic. Moreover, men tended to be more

materialistic than women while gender did not determine happiness status. Overall, Rural and urban people have no difference in materialistic values and happiness. Additionally, being consistent with previous studies, it was explored that happiness is negatively associated with materialistic values.

Authors' contributions

All researchers contributed equally in the present research at each step of the study.

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