# An Analysis of Materialistic Orientation in Organized Retail Outlets of Haryana

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## Abstract

Retailing is the largest component of the services sector in terms of contribution to GDP but in the present fastly changing business environment, it is a very much challenging task for the retailers to fulfill the needs and demands of their customers. The study becomes more significant and challenging since there is an imperative growing need to evaluate the true drivers of consumer's behaviours in the Indian retailing context. Keeping in view the association between the product we do not need and the feeling we deeply desire in the context of making impact on others and gaining acceptance, the current study examined the role of aspired materialistic values in buying behaviour. This paper is an attempt to study the materialistic orientation of People of Haryana in relation to some important demographic factors. Sample of the present study consist 600 persons within the age range from 22 to 60 years. Seven items were taken for this study from works of several researchers in this study. All the items were modified to suit the purpose of the study. Data in this study provides some information about consumers in Ambala Commissionaire who expressed that adherence to materialistic orientation in shopping helps in some benefits referring to reduced anxiety, increased self-esteem and positive emotional feelings. They remarked that they act in order to assuage negative inner feelings of self-esteem and self-worth.

**Keywords:** Materialism, Materialistic Orientation, Haryana

## Introduction

Retailing is the interface between the producer (manufacturer) and the individual consumer buying goods for personal consumption. This excludes direct link between the manufacturer and the institutional buyers, for example, the government and other bulk customers. A retailer is one who stocks the manufacturer's products and is indulged in the act of selling them to the individual consumer, at a margin of profit. Retailing is the last link which connects the individual consumer with the manufacturing and distribution chain. Retailing is the largest component of the services sector in terms of contribution to GDP. India's retailing boom has attained further dynamism, momentum, and vibrancy with international players experimenting in the Indian market and the country's existing giants are taking bold innovative steps to woo the consumers. At the same time, the early entrants are redefining their strategies to be competitive and suit the new market conditions.

In the present fastly changing business environment, it is a very much challenging task for the retailers to fulfill the needs and demands of their customers, who today have an important role to play in organized retailing. Organizations spend their lots of resources in order to understand this ever-growing buying behavior.

Admittedly, the Indian retail industry is witnessing far reaching changes in different geographical parts of the country. The modernization process started by large retailers has spread across the country. Even smaller and independent stores are upgrading in the terms of '*assortments'*, '*delivery'*, and '*ambience'*. The change is affecting an overall growth in income and consumption across the country, including the rural areas too. While customers are getting better prices and assortments, the impact of large format retailer in driving consumption on the part of the consumer is still limited to a large extent. The Indian retail industry will, however, take a long time and would require a continuous effort before the benefits of retailing reach the target group comprising the consumers, due to its own characteristics.

Earlier unorganized retail in the form of weekly market like Haat and Mela were the key shopping centers where Indian shoppers used to shop. Then kirana shops came into existence as solutions for the buying

needs of consumers. Now because of vast technological and socio-economical changes and opening up of largely foreign and fewer Indian retail centers, the country is witnessing the organized retail during the last few years. In such business conditions, it is quite challenging task for the retailers to satisfy the needs and demands of the customers, who have a greater role to play in organized retailing. Organizations spend their sufficient resources in order to understand this ever-growing complex buying behaviour.

An understanding of shopper retail format choice behaviour will enable retailers to segment their market and target specific groups with strategies premeditated to meet their retail needs. In the face of so many options, the choice of appropriate retail stores becomes an important topic for the customers, who are the real king in the entire process. In this context, the purpose of this research investigation is to make a detailed study on the effect of shopper's demographic as well as geographic dimensions in terms of format choice behaviour in the fast growing Indian food and grocery retailing. The study would contribute to the retail marketing literature providing empirical considerations when using consumer's ever changing demographics and geographic dimensions towards store format choice dimensions.

Materialism is defined as a general focus on attaining material possessions and social renown, reflecting description of the person (Kasser, 2002). Schiffman et al. (2010) view materialism as a continuum value whereby individuals who tend towards being materialistic consider the acquisition of possessions as being central to their lives, a determinant of their happiness in life, and as a measure of their own success and that of others. Inglehart (1990) considered materialism as a chronic focus on lower order need for material impact over higher order needs, such as self-expression, belongingness, aesthetic satisfaction, and quality of life. More dimensions of materialism have been underlined by Richins and dawson (1992, p.304) who defined materialism as an individual value that places importance on possession on physical assets for gaining acceptance and classified it under three sub-headings: centrality, happiness, and success. Centrality refers to one's tendency to place assets in the center of their lives; success refers to whether the quality and quantity of assets are perceived as an indicator of achievement; and happiness is defined as the tendency to believe that physical assets are the main source of happiness. In the light of these definitions of materialism, the current study has used materialism as a global construct.

Materialism has been an important area of study. It is prominent in consumer behaviour research. It is individual difference variable viewed by some as a personality characteristic (Belk, 1985) and by others as a unique set of values (Kasser, 2002; Richins, 2004). A growing body of literature delineates the origins, antecedents, and consequences of materialistic impulses (Chan & Prendergast, 2007).

Keeping in view the association between the product we do not need and the feeling we deeply desire in the context of making impact on others and gaining acceptance, the current study also examined the role of aspired materialistic values in buying behaviour, across four commissionaires of Haryana. This has been done in the context of the relevant literature which has clearly revealed the salience of materialistic values in buying pattern.

The study becomes more significant and challenging since there is an imperative growing need to evaluate the true drivers of consumer's behaviours in the Indian retailing context. This is a *relatively* unchartered and unexplored research area in an Indian context especially with reference to Haryana state, where scant information concerning drivers of consumer behaviours is available. Towards this end the research and its outcome would be a significant contribution to the field of retail marketing behaviour literature in Indian retailing context.

**Aim and Objectives of the Study**

1. To see the differences among people living in different commissionaires of Haryana on the dimension of materialistic orientation.
2. To see the differences among males and females of Haryana on the dimension of materialistic orientation.
3. To see the differences among people belonging from different age groups of Haryana on the dimension of materialistic orientation.
4. To see the differences among people belonging from different income levels of Haryana on the dimension of materialistic orientation.
5. To see the differences among people belonging from different family structures of Haryana on the dimension of materialistic orientation.

**Method**

**Sample**

Sample of the present study consist 600 persons within the age range from 22 to 60 years. Out of these 277 wee belonging from 22 to 34 years of age group, 275 were from 35 to 49 years of age group and 48 were from 50 to 60 years of age group. Mean age of the whole sample is 36.20 with standard deviation of 8.48. Further sample was collected from four commissionaires (i.e. Ambala, Gurugram, Hisar and Rohtak).

Detailed description of sample is given below in table

| Total Sample 600 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ambala 150 | | Gurugram 150 | | Hisar 150 | | Rohtak 150 | |
| Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 |

Out of these 600 adult people 329 were belonging from Nuclear families and 271 were belonging from joint families. Further 203 persons were belonging from income group of below 3 lacks annual income, 204 were belonging from 3 to 5 lacks annual income, 138 were belonging from 5 to 10 lacks of annual income and 55 persons belonging from above 10 lacks annual income respectively.

**Tool Used in the Study**

Following items were used in this research to measure the variable of materialistic orientation

| 1 | **My life will be better if I own certain things from Shopping malls that I don't have.** |
|---|---|
| | Strongly Agree **/** Agree / Neutral **/** Disagree **/** Strongly Disagree |
| 2 | **The things I own from shopping malls say a lot about how well I'm doing in life.** |
| | Strongly Agree **/** Agree / Neutral **/** Disagree **/** Strongly Disagree |
| 3 | **I like to own things that impress people.** |
| | Strongly Agree **/** Agree / Neutral **/** Disagree **/** Strongly Disagree |
| 4 | **I admire people who own expensive things from shopping malls.** |
| | Strongly Agree **/** Agree / Neutral **/** Disagree **/** Strongly Disagree |
| 5 | **I like a lot of luxury in my life.** |
| | Strongly Agree **/** Agree / Neutral **/** Disagree **/** Strongly Disagree |
| 6 | **I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things from shopping malls.** |
| | Strongly Agree **/** Agree / Neutral **/** Disagree **/** Strongly Disagree |
| 7 | **I wouldn't be any happier if I owned nicer things from shopping malls.** |
| | Strongly Agree **/** Agree / Neutral **/** Disagree **/** Strongly Disagree |
| 8 | **I put more emphasis on material things than most people I know.** |
| | Strongly Agree **/** Agree / Neutral **/** Disagree **/** Strongly Disagree |

These items were taken from works of Richins (2004). Some of the items were modified to suit the purpose of the study.

**Results and Discussion**

The results with respect to materialistic orientation, found in the current study are shown in Tables-1 to 10.

**Table-1**
**ANOVA Results for Commissionaires in the Context of Materialistic Orientation**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Level of Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Commissionaire | 1074.733 | 3 | 358.244 | 13.519 | .001 |
| Error | 15793.960 | 596 | 26.500 | | |
| Total | 423926.000 | 600 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 16868.693 | 599 | | | |

**Table-2**
**Mean Scores on Materialistic Orientation with respect to Commissionaires**

| City | Mean | Standard Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ambala | 28.3067 | 4.88931 | 150 |
| Gurugram | 25.4333 | 5.41613 | 150 |
| Hisar | 25.6267 | 5.05878 | 150 |
| Rohtak | 24.8200 | 5.21236 | 150 |

**Table-3**
**ANOVA Results for Gender in the Context of Materialistic Orientation**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Level of Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | 70.727 | 1 | 70.727 | 2.518 | .113 |
| Error | 16797.967 | 598 | 28.090 | | |
| Total | 423926.000 | 600 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 16868.693 | 599 | | | |

**Table-4**
**Mean Scores on Materialistic Orientation with respect to Gender**

| Gender | Mean | Standard Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 26.3900 | 5.14127 | 300 |
| Female | 25.7033 | 5.45416 | 300 |

**Table-5**
**ANOVA Results for Income Levels in the Context of Materialistic Orientation**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Level of Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Income | 156.427 | 3 | 52.142 | 1.860 | .135 |
| Error | 16712.267 | 596 | 28.041 | | |
| Total | 423926.000 | 600 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 16868.693 | 599 | | | |

**Table-6**
**Mean Scores on Materialistic Orientation with respect to Income Levels**

| Income Levels | Mean | Standard Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Below 3 Lacks | 26.6207 | 4.59864 | 203 |
| 3-5 Lacks | 25.6569 | 5.76125 | 204 |
| 5-10 Lacks | 25.5290 | 5.28210 | 138 |
| Above 10 Lacks | 26.6727 | 5.90058 | 55 |

**Table-7**
**ANOVA Results for Age differences in the Context of Materialistic Orientation**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Level of Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 64.283 | 2 | 32.142 | 1.142 | .320 |
| Error | 16804.410 | 597 | 28.148 | | |
| Total | 423926.000 | 600 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 16868.693 | 599 | | | |

**Table-8**
**Mean Scores on Materialistic Orientation with respect to Age Differences**

| Age | Mean | Standard Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| 22-34 Years | 26.1300 | 5.27550 | 277 |
| 35-49 Years | 26.1564 | 5.41702 | 275 |
| 50-60 Years | 24.9375 | 4.79985 | 48 |

**Table-9**
**ANOVA Results for Family Structure differences in the Context of Materialistic Orientation**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Level of Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Family Structure | 76.539 | 1 | 76.539 | 2.726 | .099 |
| Error | 16792.155 | 598 | 28.081 | | |
| Total | 423926.000 | 600 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 16868.693 | 599 | | | |

**Table-10**
**Mean Scores on Materialistic Orientation with respect to Family Structure**

| Family Structure | Mean | Standard Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nuclear | 26.3708 | 5.01606 | 329 |
| Joint | 25.6531 | 5.62382 | 271 |

An examination of tables 1 to 10 presented above reveals that only one F-value [F(3,596)=13.519,p<.001] referring to the effect of commissionaires in the context of the role of materialistic orientation and buying behaviour has emerged to be markedly significant (p<.001). The remaining F-values shown in tables 3 to 10 concerning the effect of gender, income, age and family structure have turned out to be non-significant.

In view of significant F-value for commissionaires, the mean scores on expressed materialistic orientation in buying behaviour were computed separately for four commissionaires. The mean materialistic orientation scores for Ambala, Gurugram, Hisar and Rohtak were found to be 28.31, 25.43, 25.63, and 24.28 respectively. The application of Schaffe's test to the mean scores revealed that the Ambala commissionaire was markedly higher from the viewpoint of consumer's materialistic orientation in buying. There was no significant difference in the mean scores of Gurugram, Hisar and Rohtak commissionaires. In another words, the consumers belonging to Ambala commissionaires used the act of purchasing in malls as a means of bolstering self esteem, enhancing interpersonal relations, as well as receiving a high emotional lift from performing the buying behaviour in shopping malls.

Although the present data do not provide and definite reason for the higher mean scores of Ambala commissionaires in the context of material orientation in buying behaviour, few plausible explanations could be given:

Materialism has been linked to low self-esteem, dissatisfaction with one's life and an insatiable desire for higher (Richins & Dawson, 1992). It has been suggested that material possessions serve as surrogates for inadequate or non-satisfying interpersonal relationships: individuals who are more materialistic place a higher emphasis on possessions than on interpersonal relationships. As a culture, we have moved away from seeking 'usefulness' and 'quality' in what we buy, and moved instead towards asking material goods to regulate our emotions, improve our social status, make impact on others, and transform us into our ideal selves. Although this assertion is true for different cultures, it has some element of insecurity and feelings of less well-being, accompanied with deprivation. It seems to be truer of Ambala where powerful new venues in the form of shopping malls are rare, and more recent. As a consequence consumer's buying behaviour in Ambala commissionaire is relatively more dominated by materialistic orientation.

According to the marketing research, materialistic values have three sides referring to acquiring material positions as a sign of success, placing material objects in the centre of life and acquiring material things as a means of being happy through possession of a key for life satisfaction and well-being. It is significant to emphasize that the consumers in Ambala Commissionaire in comparison to the consumers in other commissionaires were also found to be higher on impulsive buying. At the scale of culture and communities, impulsive buying or over shopping is an extreme manifestation of our materialism which leaks away social coherence. Materially oriented people show a demonstrated detachment from a civic concerns and activities. Additional research, however, can be conducted to examine the psychological profile (e.g., emptiness, depression, anxiety, loneliness, anger, helplessness) of consumers exhibiting higher materialistic orientation.

Admittedly, more additional research is called for examining the psychological profile of materialistically oriented consumers. Kasser's (2002) research suggests that materialistically oriented consumers as opposed to their less-materialistic counterparts report more insecurity and less happiness. There materialistic yearnings seem to overwhelm their desire for healthy social interactions. They more frequently exhibit unusual thoughts and behaviours, isolate themselves socially, and ascribe malevolent intentions to others. Such analysis would help in explaining higher materialistic orientation of consumers in Ambala commissionaire. Data provides some information about consumers in Ambala Commissionaire who expressed that adherence to materialistic orientation in shopping helps in some benefits referring to reduced anxiety, increased self-esteem and positive emotional feelings. They remarked that they act in order to assuage negative inner feelings of self-esteem and self-worth.

Admittedly, more additional research is called for in this direction. Should we encourage people to begin adopting intrinsic values self-acceptance and personal growth, close interpersonal relationships, and contributions to the community and the planet? Beyond doubt, materialistically oriented spenders, too, need help because they seem to be operating at the lowest level.

**Conclusion**

This study is an effort to study materialistic orientation of consumers of Haryana. There are clear differences of persons living in different commissionaires on this dimension of materialistic values. Further there are no differences found among groups formed on the bases of age, gender, income levels and family structure. Consumers belonging to Ambala commissionaires used the act of purchasing in malls as a means of bolstering self esteem, enhancing interpersonal relations, as well as receiving a high emotional lift from performing the buying behaviour in shopping malls. More additional research is called for examining the psychological profile of materialistically oriented consumers.

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