

Psychological Impact of Materialism on the Social and Cultural Lives of Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract:- The pursuit of material things in a legitimate way is acceptable. However, observation has shown that the manner in which the youths go about it has psychological impact, hence, the objectives of this study were to: Investigate the psychological impact of materialism on the social and cultural lives of male and female Christian youths in Kaduna State. Two objectives with related questions and null hypotheses were formulated as guide. The theory of Operant Conditioning was chosen, a brief definition of materialism examined and few literatures of scholars that are directly related to the topic were reviewed. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for population of 2,634,188 Christian youths. A total sample of 704 respondents were sampled. They were given vetted copies of thirty-three item statements questionnaire to fill. Statistic Package of Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the returned useable 524 copies. The two null hypotheses were retained. The respondents accepted the statements of 28 items and rejected that of 5. Consequently, the paper concludes that materialism has negative psychological impact on the social and cultural lives of the Christian youths. Materialists do not become opinion leaders, self-esteem repairers and identity constructors. They are rejected by their families as stress buffers. Thus it is recommended that societal and cultural standards be observed in the pursuit of money or material things; they (males and females) should avoid competition of riches but work hard, be dedicated and determined not engage in criminality; they (singles and the married) should contented and manage the available properly.

Keywords: *psychological, impact, social, cultural, Christian, youth, kaduna, Nigeria.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Every human being is born with capacity and tendency to succeed in life. Hence, the imperative to satisfy one's psychological needs through acquisition of material things. However, the means to acquire such possession must be in accordance with societal and cultural standards to avoid unnecessary criticism. In Nigeria, everyone watches one another and observes the procedures of acquiring all material possession. This action becomes necessary because of the rumour or believes or confession that some people use human sacrifice to become rich. Ritual activities abound and proven in the society. For instance, a poor man loses his wife or child and suddenly becomes rich without any

physical effort. The general conclusion of the relations, friends and neighbours would be suspicion. There would be tremendous pressure and accusation to face throughout the days of the person's living. This implies that the newly rich status, despite the money and possession, has to battle with his or her state of mind. Psychologically, the person experience neglect from those around, which poses a great challenge. Hence, the need to unravel the psychological impact materialism on the social and cultural lives of the Christian youths.

A. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

- Investigate the psychological impact materialism on the social and cultural lives of male and female Christian youths in Kaduna State.
- Assess the psychological impact materialism on the social and cultural lives of single and married Christian youths in Kaduna State.

B. Research Questions

- What are the psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives of male and female Christian youths in Kaduna State?
- What are the psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives of single and married Christian youths in Kaduna State?

C. Hypotheses

To guide this study, two null hypotheses were formulated:

- **Ho1:** There is no significant difference between the opinions of male and female respondents on the psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives of Christian youths in Kaduna State
- **Ho2:** There is no significant difference between the opinions of single and married respondents on the psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives of Christian youths in Kaduna State.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory chosen by the researcher for the study is Operant Conditioning. Moschis, Ong, Mathur, Yamashita, and Benmoyal-Bouzaglo (2011) are of the view that this theory was propounded by B.F. Skinner in the year 1938. Skinner believes that if certain behaviour is followed by an event in an environment that brings satisfaction to the individual, then there is the probability of same behaviour reoccurring in future. It involved the modification of

behaviour through the use of reinforcement. There are two categories of reinforcements; positive reinforcement, which is referred to as reward and it usually brings pleasure or satisfaction to the individual while negative reinforcement or aversive stimuli or punishment or sanction brings pain or unhappiness to the individual.

The theory is mainly concern with learning a role and to become successful. It is the desire of everyone not to lack the basic needs provided by nature. They learn it from their interactions in the society. They acquire virtues and vices from parents, family members, peers, religious institutions, schools and the print and electronic mass media. Therefore, they learn to be materialistic without considering the consequences attached.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

It is pertinent to briefly define materialism and review literature of scholars that are directly related to the topic under this heading. Materialism is not a simple dichotomy (materialist and non-materialist), but as a continuum from low to high (Richins, 2017). Meaning that the degree of materialism varies depending on who is involved and how desperately in need. Emphatically, Górnik-Durose(2020) posits that the term “materialism” in psychology relates to people’s desire to acquire and possess material assets. To achieve this, some taken jobs, change job, have additional source of income, indulge in cultism and so forth just to get the good things of life.

The few selected are reviewed literature chronologically in ascending order. The first one is that of Monbiot (2014). Monbiot postulates that materialists buy more stuff or goods than others. That buying more stuff is associated with depression, anxiety and broken relationships. The reasons for these conclusions are obvious impact on the individuals, which are socially destructive and self-destructive because owning more doesnot bring happiness. This implies that the material pursuit of self-esteem ironically reduces self-esteem. They become disoriented and even distressed. Hence, they lack empathy and engagement with others. Monbiot reports that research conducted over the past few years seems to show causation. For example, a series of studies published in the Journal of Motivation and Emotion in July showed that as people become more materialistic, their wellbeing (good relationships, autonomy, sense of purpose and the rest) diminishes. As they become less materialistic, it rises. Specifically, at the ages of both 18 and 30, materialistic people were more susceptible to disorders. But if in that period they became less materialistic, they became happier. There is also no difference between rich and poor: the poor can be as susceptible to materialism as the rich. It is a general social affliction, visited upon the people by government policy, corporate strategy, the collapse of communities and civic life, and the acquiescence in a system that is eating people from the inside out.

Basically, the pursuit of material things or money could be motivated by what one sees on daily basis. Sidhu and Foo (2015) state that intrinsically motivated behaviours, however, are borne from universalistic values and refer to values which focus on “self-transcendence. Values which endorse “self-transcendence” encourage behaviours that seek self-development and greater connection with others, otherwise described as ‘growth tendencies. If materialistic values do not lead to behaviours which allow a person to achieve their ‘growth tendencies’ but universalistic values do. It is possible that having both materialistic and universalistic values may moderate the negative impact observed in the materialism/wellbeing relationship. A person’s value system influences the way in which they seek to achieve their needs and materialistic values appear unable to achieve basic psychological needs. From this, three predictions can be made: (1) People who have high rates of materialistic values will have unmet psychological needs; (2) The use of materialistic values to meet the said needs creates a vicious circle as a person is unable to meet their needs and therefore becomes increasingly materialistic as a solution; (3) Values which encourage intrinsically motivated behaviour, such as those endorsed by universalism, are needed to achieve basic psychological needs.

To properly take care of one’s psychological needs, the action could result in either positive or negative outcome. On a positive note, Duh (2015) mentions happiness, self-esteem, money attitudes, becoming trendsetters and opinion leaders, self-esteem repairers and identity constructors, family stress buffers, private and public self-indicators, provider of a sense of belonging; and satisfier of the need of uniqueness. Negatively, it becomes a source of unhappiness, lower self-actualization, self-discrepancies; and insecurity. However, investigating relationships between materialism and various personality traits is not a novelty in psychological research. Data concerning the connections between materialism and extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness were not consistent across studies (Watson, 2015).

Donnelly, Ksendzova, Howell, Vohs and Baumeister (2016) suggests that the possible processes that cause unsuccessful pursuits of happiness and satisfaction through the possession of tangible objects are driven by the urge to escape from aversive self-awareness. Similarly, Locke (2016) explains that the more highly people endorsed materialistic values, the more they experienced unpleasant emotions, depression and anxiety, the more they report physical health problems, such as stomachaches and headaches, and the less they experienced pleasant emotions and felt satisfied with their lives. Individuals who self-report highly valuing materialism will respond to a lack of autonomy, competence and relation to others with increased materialistic behaviours, which counter intuitively, depresses their ability to meet these basic needs (Schneider, 2016).

To become materialistic is a choice based on determination. The use of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to determine well-being provides a conceptual framework to understand the possible antecedents of positive and negative well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Self-determination theory posits that, alongside basic physical needs, positive psychological wellbeing requires the meeting of basic psychological needs, which according to Wang, Liu, Jiang, and Song (2017) brings happiness. It termed these needs ‘growth tendencies’ and have been identified as; a sense of autonomy over behaviours and goals, competence through learning and mastering new skills and connection to other people through social relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Wang, Liu, Tan, & Zheng, 2017). Growth tendencies, according to self-determination theory, are achieved through intrinsically motivated behaviours, behaviours which are internally motivated and allow for spiritual growth and development (Richins, 2017). Materialistic values, which drive a person to achieve wealth and status, result in purely extrinsically motivated behaviours (Richins, 2017).

Zhang and Hawk (2019) expound the fact that individuals with higher interdependent self-construal emphasize interpersonal connection more, and that materialistic values are more self-oriented, together might contribute to the possibility that individuals differ in employing materialistic values as a coping strategy for low self-esteem. Under self-threat conditions, those who endorse interdependence more would probably be less likely to indicate their uniqueness, while those whose self-definition is less interdependent might express their “self” through material possessions. Indeed, an integral analysis and comparison between lower-interdependent individuals (i.e., Westerners) and higher-interdependent individuals (i.e., Easterners) concluded that highly interdependent individuals experience more social motives (e.g., conformity). However, Fu and Liu (2019) sum up the bottom line is that materialism leads to lower happiness

IV. METHODOLOGY

The research covered Kaduna State of Nigeria which has multiethnic culture but homogeneous. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs), 3,945 Churches, and 2,634,188 youths (CAN, 2020). The sampled LGAs were; Makarfi, Sabon-Gari, Soba, and Zaria (Northern-Senatorial District); Chikun, Kajuru, and Kaduna-South (Central-Senatorial District); and Jema’a, Jaba, Kaura, and Sanga (Southern-Senatorial District). In each of the eleven LGAs, 4 churches (2 in rural whose population is more than twenty and 2 in urban areas) were sampled. Readily available method of sampling after prior notice (through announcement of the nature and date for the distribution of instrument in the churches) was used to sample 4 single males and 4 married males from each church; and 4 single females 4 married female Christian youths from both rural and urban locations. This gives us a total of 352 males (176 single and 176 married) and 352 females (176 single and 176 married) Christian youths.

A validated copy of questionnaire divided into two parts. Part “A” consists of two (2) items which required the bio-data of the respondents while Part B” consists of items which covered questions on four scale ranking: Strongly Agree (SA) 4 Agree (A) 3 Disagree (D) 2 Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 was administered to 704 respondents. The bench mark for accepting an item is 2.5 and above, while rejection is below 2.5. Data collected were analysed with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

V. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Seven hundred and four copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents. Six hundred and thirty-three copies were returned but one hundred and nine were not used as a result of mutilation; wrong, none and double entries. Percentages were used in presenting the demographic data for the study as in tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	250	47.71
Female	274	52.29
Total	524	100

Equal number of copies of questionnaire was given to both males and females. From the useable copies of the retrieved questionnaire, female participants (274) were greater than that of the males (250) as shown in table 1. However, the analysis was not number comparative. Hence, the view or opinion of each respondent counts. Therefore, a balanced decision is reached regarding to the psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives.

Table 2: Marital status of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	288	54.96
Married	236	45.04
Total	524	100

The psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives of Christian youth was jointly examined by 250 male and 274 female in addition to 288 single and 236 married respondents as reflected in tables 1 and 2. In the study, there were more single participants than their married counterpart. This is also a true reflection of most churches. There were more singles in the churches than the married ones which could be attributed to economic realities in the nation. Meanwhile, balanced view was obtained.

Table 3: Psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives

SN	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Depression	147	297	22	58	3.02
2	Anxiety	168	270	22	64	3.03
3	broken relationships	102	297	33	92	2.78
4	socially destructive	68	434	22	00	3.09
5	self-destructive	68	403	22	31	2.97
6	owning more not bring happiness	247	189	68	20	3.27
7	pursuit of self-esteem ironically reduces self-esteem	33	434	33	24	2.91
8	become disoriented	68	324	68	64	2.76
9	lack of empathy and engagement with others.	22	434	68	00	2.91
10	self-development	91	324	102	18	2.97
11	greater connection or growth tendencies	22	297	102	103	2.45
12	have unmet psychological needs	68	403	33	20	2.99
13	becomes increasingly materialistic	68	324	68	64	2.76
14	Happiness	33	324	68	99	2.56
15	self-esteem	68	403	22	31	2.97
16	money attitudes	68	403	11	42	2.95
17	becoming trendsetters	22	465	22	15	2.94
18	become opinion leaders	11	270	168	75	2.41
19	self-esteem repairers	22	189	102	211	2.04
20	identity constructors	33	270	85	136	2.28
21	family stress buffers	33	324	85	82	2.48
22	private and public self – indicators	22	403	85	14	2.72
23	provider of a sense of belonging	66	403	33	22	2.98
24	satisfier of the need of uniqueness	155	270	85	14	2.98
25	becomes a source of unhappiness	264	147	102	11	3.27
26	lower self-actualization	260	168	85	11	3.19
27	self-discrepancies	148	324	33	11	3.13
28	Insecurity	126	324	33	41	3.02
29	experienced unpleasant emotions	88	403	33	00	3.10
30	reported physical health problems more such as stomach-aches and headaches	77	403	33	11	3.04
31	feeling of less satisfaction with their lives.	126	324	33	41	3.02
32	depresses their ability to meet these basic needs	85	403	22	14	3.07
33	leads to lower happiness	68	403	33	23	3.00
Cumulative mean = 89.39/33		=	2.71			

The thirty-three item statements of table 3 are the answers to research questions one and two. They constitute the impact but the responses vary between the variables under discussion and among items. The mean scores obtained ranges from 2.04 (item 19) to 3.27 (items 6 and 25) with cumulative of 2.71. Two conclusions are drawn: one is that, the respondents disagreed with 5 items (11, 18, 19, 20 and 21), which were below the bench mark of 2.5; and two is that they agreed with the remaining 28 items that were

above the bench mark of 2.5. In summary, the respondent accepted the statements of 28 items and rejected that of 5.

A. Results of hypotheses

Hypothesis one says “there is no significant difference between the opinions of male and female respondents on the psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives of Christian youths in Kaduna State”. The result is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Psychological impact by gender

Variable	number	Mean	Std.dev	St. err	Df	t-cri	t-cal	Sig (p)
Male	250	1.65	1.380	.125	522	1.96	1.314	0.83
Female	274	2.05	1.431	.103				

The result of independent t-test statistics of table 4 reveals that there is no significant difference between the opinions of male and female respondents on the psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives. From the table, the calculated p value of 0.83 is greater than the 0.05 alpha levels of significance while the t-calculated value of 1.314 is less than the t-critical value of

1.96 at 522 degree of freedom. This implies that the hypothesis is retained.

Hypothesis two says “there is no significant difference between the opinions of single and married respondents on psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives of single and married Christian youths in Kaduna State”. The result of this test is presented in Tables 5.

Table 5: Psychological impact by marital status

Variable	number	Mean	Std.dev	St. err	Df	t-cri	t-cal	Sig (p)
Single	288	2.20	1.444	.112	522	1.96	1.309	0.78
Married	236	1.160	3.375	.120				

The result of independent t-test statistics of table 5 reveals that there is no significant difference between the opinions of single and married respondents on the psychological impacts of materialism on the social and cultural lives. From the table, the calculated p value of 0.78 is greater than the 0.05 alpha levels of significance while the t-calculated value of 1.375 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 522 degree of freedom. This implies that the hypothesis is retained.

B. Discussions

Cumulatively, there was general agreement and disagreement between male and female respondents on the statement items of table 3. This was same decision of both single and married ones too. This means that many perceptions, reports, claims, postulations and studies of Monbiot (2014) and Locke (2016) in items 1 and 2; Monbiot (2014) in items 3 to 9; Sidhu and Foo (2015) in items 10, 12 and 13; Duh (2015) in items 14 to 17 and 22 to 28; Locke (2016) in items 29 to 31; Schneider, 2016) in item 32; and Fu and Liu (2019) in item 33 were affirmed in this study. All the identified items of table 3 were accepted to be the psychological impact of materialism on the lives of the Christian youths in Kaduna State.

However, those of Sidhu and Foo (2015) in item 11; and Duh (2015) in items 18 to 21 were not applicable in the Nigerian context. This is unique contributions to the study. In the African traditional society at large and Kaduna state in particular, one who becomes rich or materialistic does not feel happy psychologically and acknowledged to have no greater connection or growth tendencies as in items. One does not become an opinion leader as in item 18 but mocked and despised. The person can never be seen as self-esteem repairers (item 19) talk less of been term identity constructors (item 20). Finally, the immediate families reject him or her as their family stress buffers (item 21). These five items proved that materialism has negative psychological impact on the Christian youths. No matter the amount of money or possession one acquires in the society, he or she become a problem to self, friends, relations and society, which in turn affect his or her psychology especially when dubious means were used.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Acquisition of riches and possessions are interpreted differently even in a legitimate way. Questions are asked as to how and when the money and materials are acquired. Failure to get satisfactory response does not go well with the materialist. Most acquired possessions are linked to rituals. Therefore, transparent, legal or legitimate means could have positive psychological effect on the lives of Christian youths. Hence, the paper recommends that:

- Those pursuing money and or material things should take note of the social and cultural standards of how, why and when to acquire them in order to avoid unnecessary criticism, and maintenance of biblical standard.
- They (males and females) Christian youths should avoid competition for riches through criminality. Hard work, dedication and determination to succeed should be the watch word in order to have rest of mind and peace.
- They (singles and the married) Christian youths should embrace the virtue of contentment. Be satisfied and manage properly all that is available at their disposals.

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