CHAPTER VIII
LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND SUMMARY

The aim of the present research was to explore the role of self-esteem, social anxiety, locus of control and vanity in the relationship of peer pressure and materialism. The sample for the study comprised of adolescents in the age range of 16-18 years which are the late adolescent years. For the present research, around 2000 adolescents from Government schools of Chandigarh were contacted after taking permission from the concerned authorities. Out of these, around 800 who met the inclusion criteria were identified. 330 adolescents were shortlisted for the present research to keep an extra sample by taking the drop outs (not being interested to participate anymore, not feeling well, prolonged absence from school and incomplete questionnaires) into consideration. Thus, the final sample comprised of 300 adolescents with equal number of males and females (150 each). The sample was further divided into two socio-economic status groups namely low socio-economic status group and middle socio-economic status group (75 adolescents in each group respectively).

The sample was administered the Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), Vanity Scale (Neteyemer et al., 1995), Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (La Greca and Lopez, 1998), Youth Materialism Scale (Goldberg et al., 2003) and Peer Pressure Questionnaire (Saini and Singh, 2010).

Correlation analysis was applied to assess the inter-relationship of all the variables viz. peer pressure, self-esteem, social anxiety, locus of control, vanity and materialism. Hierarchical moderated regression analysis was used to identify the significant moderators in the relationship of peer pressure and materialism. The 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted with 2 levels of gender (male and female adolescents) and 2 levels of SES (low and middle SES adolescents) and the t-test was applied to explore the gender differences and SES differences on peer pressure, self-esteem, social anxiety, locus of control, vanity and materialism between various groups.

Hypotheses

1. It was expected that there would be a positive relationship between peer pressure and materialism (H1a), social anxiety and materialism (H1b); locus of control and materialism (H1c); materialism and vanity viz. physical vanity
(H1d) and achievement vanity (H1e); peer pressure and social anxiety (H1f); peer pressure and locus of control (H1g); peer pressure and vanity viz. physical vanity (H1h) and achievement vanity (H1i); social anxiety and locus of control (H1j); locus of control and vanity viz. physical vanity (H1k) and achievement vanity (H1l); social anxiety and vanity viz. physical vanity (H1m) and achievement vanity (H1n) in all the groups.

2. It was expected that there would be negative relationship between self-esteem and materialism (H2a); peer pressure and self-esteem (H2b); self-esteem and social anxiety (H2c); self-esteem and locus of control (H2d); self-esteem and vanity viz. physical vanity (H2e) and achievement vanity (H2f) in all the groups.

3. It was expected that self-esteem (H3a); social anxiety (H3b); locus of control (H3c) and vanity viz. physical vanity (H3d) and achievement vanity (H3e) would emerge as a moderator in the relationship of peer pressure and materialism in all the groups.

4. It was expected that gender differences would exist in materialism (H4a); peer pressure (H4b); self-esteem (H4c); social anxiety (H4d); locus of control (H4e); and vanity viz. physical vanity (H4f) and achievement vanity (H4g) among adolescents.

5. It was expected that socio-economic status differences would emerge in materialism (H5a); peer pressure (H5b); self-esteem (H5c); social anxiety (H5d); locus of control (H5e); and vanity viz. physical vanity (H5f) and achievement vanity (H5g) among adolescents.

**Limitations**

No research is comprehensive in itself. Thus, the present investigation also had few limitations. Firstly, the present study was entirely quantitative in nature with much reliance on self-report measures and these types of measures may bring in social desirability. Future studies can be done with the aim to get deeper insights using qualitative as well as mixed methods.

Secondly, the study was limited to the adolescents in the age group 16-18 years which are the late adolescent years. Thus, future studies comparing late adolescents with the adults can be conducted in order to understand the factors affecting materialism at a later stage. As the concept of materialism takes an altered version in
the adulthood, the comparative analysis can be made taking age as an important factor. Also, longitudinal studies should be conducted to understand the developmental changes in materialism and if there will be a change in the moderators in the relationship of peer pressure and materialism over ages.

Thirdly, the present sample approximates the urban adolescent population of Chandigarh only, further in-depth investigations are needed in order to get a better and a bigger picture. A study making comparisons with the rural adolescents will provide further analysis on how the varied backgrounds influence materialism. Thus, this comparison is likely to reveal some interesting findings on the issue of materialism.

Fourthly, the role of media, particularly the social media could not be included in determining materialistic tendencies among adolescents. The relationship between peer pressure and materialism could have been better explored if variable of media had been studied as it may contribute to the rise of materialism among adolescents.

**Major Findings**

1. Significant positive correlations were found between peer pressure and materialism in all the groups except low SES female adolescents.
2. Significant positive correlations were found between social anxiety and materialism in all groups except female adolescents, low SES female adolescents and middle SES female adolescents.
3. No significant correlations were found between locus of control and materialism among all the groups.
4. Significant positive correlations between physical vanity and materialism were found only in the total sample of adolescents, male adolescents group and middle SES male adolescents.
5. Significant positive correlations between achievement vanity and materialism emerged only in male adolescents group and low SES male adolescents.
6. Significant positive correlations between peer pressure and social anxiety came in the total sample of adolescents, male adolescents group, low SES males and middle SES male adolescents.
7. In the present research, no significant positive correlations between peer pressure and locus of control were found.
8. Significant positive correlations between peer pressure and physical vanity emerged in total sample of adolescents, male adolescents and female adolescents.

9. Significant positive correlations between social anxiety and locus of control emerged in all the groups except low SES male adolescents.

10. Significant positive correlations between locus of control and physical vanity emerged only in middle SES male adolescents.

11. Significant positive relationships between social anxiety and physical vanity emerged only in total sample of adolescents, male adolescents and middle SES male adolescents.

12. Significant correlations have been found between social anxiety and achievement vanity in total sample of adolescents, male adolescents and low SES male adolescents.

13. Significant negative correlation between self-esteem and materialism among all groups except middle SES male adolescents.

14. Significant negative correlation was found between self-esteem and peer pressure in all groups except low SES female adolescents and middle SES male adolescents.

15. No significant correlations emerged between self-esteem and social anxiety in all the groups.

16. Positive correlations were found between self-esteem and locus of control in the total sample of adolescents, male adolescents and low SES male adolescents.

17. No significant negative relationship was found between self-esteem and physical vanity among all the groups. Rather a significant positive relationship was found between self-esteem and physical vanity in low SES male adolescents.

18. Self-esteem, social anxiety, locus of control and achievement vanity did not emerge as a moderator in the relationship between peer pressure and materialism among all the groups. However, physical vanity emerged as a moderator between peer pressure and materialism in the female adolescents group and low SES female adolescents.

19. No significant gender differences emerged on self-esteem, locus of control, physical vanity, achievement vanity and materialism.
20. Male adolescents were found to be high on both peer pressure and social anxiety as compared to female adolescents.

21. Low SES female adolescents were high on materialism, peer pressure, locus of control and physical vanity as compared to middle SES female adolescents. No significant SES differences emerged on self-esteem and social anxiety.

22. In case of low SES male and middle SES male adolescents, no significant SES differences emerged on materialism, peer pressure, self-esteem, social anxiety, locus of control and physical vanity.

23. Significant main effect of SES emerged for achievement vanity. When gender was clubbed for considering low and middle SES adolescents, it was found that low SES adolescents were high on achievement vanity as compared to middle SES adolescents.

**Implications and Suggestions**

In a developing country like India, where consumerism and globalization is rising, materialism in adolescents is a topic of increasing attention among marketers, parents, educators, consumer activists, and government regulators. This empirical study throws light on the moderators in the relationship between peer pressure and materialism among adolescents. The findings of the present study hold important implications for advertisers, marketers and media activists.

The concerns about materialism and high levels of brand dependency in adolescents are intriguing, particularly when low-income adolescents are concerned. An average common person in India experiences heightened uncertainty due to economic insecurities and social burdens of maintaining a normal and acceptable standard of living. In addition, peer pressure to match latest consumption trends leads to more troubles, especially for low-income adolescents, who are extremely vulnerable to societal concerns.

The adolescents engage in materialistic pursuits to restore their self-esteem and to feel at par with their peers. They are in a constant fear of negative evaluation by others, resulting in more materialism in them. There is a strong pressure to look good and to attain more and more possessions. The desires to possess the latest, trendy and luxurious brands, is likely to increase the inclination of low-income adolescents’ involvement in violent activities and crimes.
This is a matter of distress for parents, educators, public policy officials, consumer researchers as well as brand manufacturers who have some kind of influence in developing the consumption patterns of the adolescents.

Thus, educating adolescents is one way of reducing the sense of deprivation and rejection in them. Proper counselling, therapies, educational interventions at the school level can help adolescents become more aware in bringing about behavioural changes. Social interaction skill workshops are needed to reduce anxiety and social distress in adolescents. Efforts should focus on reducing materialism in the adolescents by enhancing self-esteem by aiming for healthy social development in adolescents.

Furthermore, the present study highlighted the role of physical vanity in the relationship of peer pressure and materialism implying that Indian adolescents are more concerned with attractiveness, especially in case of females belonging to low SES. Adolescents try to develop a unique style to rise above the standards of their peer group and focus on appearance evaluation that results in materialistic tendencies.

In addition, the present findings have relevance for application in higher school settings. Helping adolescents cope with peer pressure begins in the school set-up. If the parents discourage their children's independence and individuality, the child begins to make decisions based on the opinions of his peers. Therefore, providing fair and flexible value systems, modelling positive behaviour patterns, social activities and encouraging formation of peer groups can make peer pressure a positive force.

Intervention strategies need to be implemented for coping with unwanted peer pressure. Peer leader programs can be helpful in which the school authorities can train student peer leaders to participate in counselling, support groups, drug or violence prevention programs. Thus, the reduction of susceptibility to peer pressure should be one of the main focus of recent adolescent interventions.

Thus, it can be concluded that materialism is often an outward manifestation of deeper unmet psychological need, insecurities and peer pressure. Thus, effective interventions that contribute to reducing materialism should be taken up by focusing on the fundamental inadequacies.