

**A qualitative study of the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male
millennials**

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Research RESE8419

Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology

***I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Arts
Honours in Psychology degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own
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Education Institution for degree purposes.***

Word Count: 11196

Abstract

In today's consumer market, the dominance of the consumers has been gradually shifted to millennials. Therefore, understanding their attitudes toward materialism has become increasingly significant, as most of millennial individuals possess purchasing power which makes them a lucrative market segment. The purpose of this study is to help researchers better understand the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. The researcher seeks to use this information as a preventative measure rather than treating individuals based on the negative outcomes related to materialism such as decreases in one's happiness, personal well-being, and gratification with life. This research paper employs standardised open-ended interviews as the research instrument to achieve the research objectives. The sample consisted of five South African male millennials. Throughout the study, the findings have clearly revealed that motivation exists behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. It is found that materialism is influenced and stimulated by low self-esteem and success. However, materialism does not necessarily decrease well-being. The present study attempted to add to existing literature on the motivation of materialism in millennials by investigating the under-researched demographic variable being gender in this widely materialistic cohort.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Contextualisation

Materialism refers to the fundamental belief that material possessions are extremely valuable, and goods are obtained and used to delineate one's social status and contentment in life (Mandy, 2018). Consumption in a conspicuous manner has become preferable for young consumers. One of the most visible forms of material goods to purchase, is clothing, as it is continuously on public display (Mandy, 2018). Millennials are a group of approximately seventy million individuals born between the years of 1981 and 2000 (Chircu, 2019). Millennials are inclined to value and purchase far more clothing than is needed, and they place great importance on supposed status brands in an attempt to prove their wealth and success (Mandy, 2018). Irrespective of their young age, individuals of this generation are considered to be experienced consumers that do not think carefully about spending money on quality products (Chircu, 2019). They are inclined to overspend on leisure and recreational goods. Researchers believe that this population holds greater materialistic views in comparison to previous generations. They lean towards obtaining goods that will improve their status and popularity (Chircu, 2019). Millennials have been pulled into consumerism through socialisation, from a significantly younger age than the generations before them. This acculturation is due to the rapid progress in technology (Chircu, 2019).

Literature indicates that particular population groups are inclined to be more materialistic than others (Mandy, 2018). There has been some research examining gender differences in materialism and consumption patterns. Specifically, literature has suggested that men are more materialistic than women. Men have proved to possess more self-monitoring traits than women. Such traits influence consumer behaviour on items such as clothing because it is related to the level of importance in upholding a personal front through fashion, and this clothing can be used to express a particular image to others. Furthermore, young males place more significance on the conspicuousness of product use (Segal & Podoshen, 2013). Marketing professors, Marsha Richins and Scott Dawson, developed a scale that measures how much individuals believe possessions reveal success in life, how central materialism is to their needs and wants, and how much they consider prosperity and possessions to yield happiness (Kasser, 2002). These aspects have been extensively recognised in research, society has found itself accepting a

consumer culture where a large portion of the over-all population are wanting and purchasing products for non-utilitarian reasons (Mandy, 2018). Numerous consumers are entangled in the pursuit of happiness through the collection of more possessions at the expense of other significant values. Materialistic individuals, for instance, believe that material objects will improve their well-being, subsequently gaging their level of success according to their material possessions (Mandy, 2018).

1.2. Rationale

Today millennials are spending more money than before, however they do not appear to be any happier due to their spending. Studies have shown that materialism is negatively connected to individual well-being and life satisfaction and positively connected to psychological suffering (Helm, Serido, Ahn, Ligon & Shim, 2019). Millennials who value wealth and material possessions are considered to be less content compared to those who value the realities of human existence such as the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical characteristics of human life (Kasser, 2002). Materialism has become an essential part of consumers' economic pursuits and modern day living, with mostly negative consequences reported from materialists' existence (Duh, 2015). Economic psychologists, consumer researchers, sociologists and family psychologists are examining the precursors of materialism, however there is yet to be an agreement as to how the concept should be delineated and on what causes or predicts materialism (Duh, 2015). Detractors of materialism have frequently seen only negative results and criticised marketing behaviours for the enlargement of materialism, but considerable academic works and empirical reports state biological, social and psychological issues driving materialism (Duh, 2015). Females' greater importance for individuals and males' importance for possessions are providing researchers with the belief that males may be more materialistic than females (Duh, 2015). While biological factors play a part in predicting materialism, opinions on the development of materialistic values particularly in young adults are mostly founded on socialisation (Duh, 2015). The mass media such as television is stated to be playing a significant part in socialising consumers into materialism (Duh, 2015). Thus, this study seeks to explore the motivation behind millennial spending, specifically in males.

1.3. Problem Statement

Millennials are labelled as the largest and most lucrative consumer group for marketers and retailers, signifying about thirty-six per cent of the South African population in 2018 (De Klerk, 2020). This generation signifies a noticeable present and future market segment for a diversity of industries, comprising the fashion industry (De Klerk, 2020). Young individuals respect their selection of clothing as a significant matter as they believe they are being judged by others in society, therefore justifying young individuals' obsession with brands (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). This is verified by the assertion that young individuals show dedication to their peers by wearing socially accepted brands (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). Brands have considerable effect in forming and retaining a sense of individuality and attainment (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). Consumers purchase and use particular products as a way of improving their sense of self and portraying themselves to others with an appearance that is similar to what they have of themselves (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). Possessions can become the basis of individuality, as brands occasionally seem to produce a sense of self that individuals have not been able to derive from relationships (Gerhardt, 2010). Similarly, retail therapy, purchasing that is motivated by suffering, occasionally provides a sense of power and choice that is missing in everyday life (Rick, Pereira & Burson, 2014). Often, the only power many individuals ever experience is purchasing power (Gerhardt, 2010). Individuals who are highly focused on consumeristic values will have a lower state of mental well-being than individuals who do not value a materialistic lifestyle. The presence of increased materialistic values is linked with the decline of an individual's well-being, which can be linked to depression and even personality disorders such as narcissism (Kasser, 2002). A considerable amount of research has been conducted on materialism. Most of the research explains how materialism correlates with well-being. However, little is known of what causes or predicts materialism. Thus the problem that this study is concerned with is that materialism has become an essential part of consumers' economic activities and modern day living, with mostly negative consequences such as lower levels of life satisfaction and well-being.

1.4. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to help researchers better understand the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. The researcher seeks to use this information as a preventative measure rather than treating individuals based on the

negative outcomes related to materialism such as decreases in one's happiness, personal well-being, and gratification with life (Segev, Shoham & Gavish, 2015).

1.5. Research Question

What motivates male millennials to be materialistic?

1.6. Objectives

The objective of this research is to study motivation, specifically in studying the relationship between materialism and male millennials. The following research is explorative which aims to obtain the understanding of the motivation behind materialism in male millennials, to identify the concept of materialism and the consequences of materialism in male millennials, and to confirm the assumption that motivation exists behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of this study is made up of two theories; Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's self-determination theory (SDT), that build on and complement each other. These theories were both chosen as they give greater theoretical insight into the research problem. Individuals who are absorbed with materialistic values have lower personal well-being and psychological health than those who consider materialistic values comparatively insignificant (Kasser, 2002). Kasser (2002) has examined the influence of materialism on psychological needs, specifically one's needs for security, self-esteem, autonomy, competence and relatedness, and has found a negative association between these needs and materialistic values. Kasser (2002) proposes that pursuing materialistic goals does not fulfil these needs and consequently causes lower levels of well-being.

Maslow theorised that motivation is multifaceted and that individuals are repeatedly motivated by one need or another and declared that these needs exist in a hierarchy. Maslow's hierarchy of needs records the following essential needs in order of their

influence: physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualisation (Saunders, Munro & Bore, 1998). Maslow predicted psychological characteristics such as better mental health, less anxiety, and greater self-esteem would be predictable in those individuals whose essential needs at each level was at least partially satisfied (Saunders et al., 1998).

Maslow's theory of motivation views self-esteem as a core motivator for materialism. Self-esteem is powered by genuine competence and accomplishment, and the gratitude of these qualities by other individuals (Segev et al., 2015). Self-esteem increases when these needs are satisfied and self-esteem decreases when these needs are dissatisfied, which leads to anxious behaviours (Segev et al., 2015). Reaching certain goals creates the feeling of confidence and competence, however it is not the case when individuals focus on reaching materialistic goals (Segev et al., 2015). Materialists are typified by low self-esteem, and they use materialistic achievements to increase their self-worth and gain the recognition of others (Segev et al., 2015). Appropriately, feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem drive materialism (Segev et al., 2015).

Individuals with a lower feeling of self-worth become materialistic because they are wedged in a boundless cycle of obtaining material goods in the hopes of compensating for the feelings of insecurity (Duh, 2015). A study examining the relationship between materialism and life satisfaction found that male respondents were more likely than female respondents to associate material possessions with contentment. Male respondents were more likely to feel that possessing material objects would increase their own contentment and that owning material objects would express to others who they are (Segal & Podoshen, 2013).

SDT is a comprehensive theory of human personality and motivation focused on how the individual interrelates with and depends on the social environment (Legault, 2017), this theory builds off Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. SDT delineates intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and outlines how these motivations affect situational responses in various areas. SDT is focused on the essential psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness and their essential part in self-determined motivation, well-being and development (Legault, 2017). Autonomy is perceiving that actions are permitted by one's integrated sense of self, competence is satisfied when preferred results are obtained

successfully, and relatedness is belongingness with others and the environment (Wang, Liu, Jiang & Song, 2017).

When individuals place importance on extrinsic motivations such as money and appearance, they are likely to disregard the intrinsic gratification of these psychological needs, leading to a decrease in well-being and an increase in psychological problems (Wang et al., 2017). Those with a materialistic orientation place less value on relationships, and they frequently worry excessively about their image. They are also less likely to do things because they are intrinsically stimulating but because they make the individual look good or feel better than others. These behaviours and values are not useful in establishing a truly satisfying and rewarding life (Kasser, 2002).

A wide study explored the significance of various generations of different kinds of life goals. The study revealed that younger generations, particularly the millennial generation, considered extrinsic values such as money and image as being among the more significant life goals. Younger generations are more likely than older generations to accept materialist values due to the effect of mass media (Aydin, 2019). Extrinsic values are typically materialistic, denoting they place huge significance on money as a means to success and contentment. Research in consumer behaviour has found that materialistic individuals observe consumption as a way to construct and depict themselves to others. Among university students, materialism in the shape of possessing goods is convincingly related to pursuing social status (Aydin, 2019).

2.2. Literature Review

Materialism is a significant concept that has gained substantial notice from marketing researchers, mostly because of its established influence on consumers' quality of life (Ekici et al., 2014). Appropriately, it is vital to comprehend how materialism arises. However, while comprehending how materialism arises and how it influences quality of life is vital in considering preventative actions against materialism, it is perhaps especially significant to comprehend the actual motives in developing materialistic attitudes (Ekici et al., 2014). Richins and Dawson have proposed, founded on values research, that materialistic individuals value their material possessions more favourably than they do other objectives in life (Ekici et al., 2014). Richins and Dawson abstracted materialism as an instrumental

value and clarified the motivation to obtain material things through three belief systems: acquisition centrality, happiness, and success (Ekici et al., 2014).

Materialists place possessions and their acquisition at the focus of their lives (Richins & Dawson, 1992). One of the reasons that possessions and their acquisition are so central to materialists is that they consider these vital to their gratification and well-being in life (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Materialists are inclined to assess their own and others' success by the amount and quality of possessions accrued (Richins & Dawson, 1992). The importance of possessions stems not merely from their ability to confer status but from their ability to project a desired self-perception and classify one as a participant in an imagined ideal life (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Materialists consider themselves as successful to the degree they can possess products that project these preferred appearances (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Materialism and clothing are openly connected; materialistic consumers purchase clothing as a sign of success and as a chance to show their social status (Mandy, 2018).

Consumption for social status connects to conspicuous consumption, where individuals are motivated to improve their social status by engaging in conspicuous consumption of products that express a particular message about the individual and their surrounding others (Mandy, 2018). Materialistic youth are, for instance, recognised to pay particular attention to the product selections of celebrities, as they have a desire to mimic them through their own consumption of these products in order to gain the same level of societal recognition (Mandy, 2018). Men appear to possess more self-monitoring traits than women (Segal & Podoshen, 2013). Self-monitoring traits can influence consumer behaviour concerning items such as clothing since it is related to the level of importance in upholding a personal front through fashion (Segal & Podoshen, 2013). This therefore corresponds to greater heights of materialism (Segal & Podoshen, 2013). Young males place more significance than women on the conspicuousness of product expenditure, which can lead to greater heights of materialism (Segal & Podoshen, 2013). Men are more materialistic and have a greater leaning toward external authorisation as presented through the apparent belief that material goods will bring them respect from others (Segal & Podoshen, 2013).

A study proposed that, for each dimension of Richins and Dawson's Material Values Scale, men were more materialistic than women (Mandy, 2018). The means for males

were considerably higher according to statistics, therefore it would seem that males have much greater materialistic inclination than females for acquisition centrality, happiness, and success (Mandy, 2018). Males appear considerably more motivated than females to regard the development of civilisation as a cause of mankind's material consumption, and the rise in individuals' consumption of goods eases to increase the level of civilisation (Mandy, 2018). Men appear considerably more motivated to consider valuable things as a means to acquire happiness, therefore highly regarding the possession of expensive things (Mandy, 2018). Results indicate that men are considerably more motivated to associate an individual's success and status with possessions (Mandy, 2018). The discovery that men are more strongly aimed towards materialistic consumption behaviour, is an indication of the considerable change that has occurred in recent times, with men becoming far more interested in their appearance and a greater tendency to adopt and favour a more materialistic lifestyle and connected consumer decisions (Mandy, 2018).

Researchers claim that materialism is a coping mechanism for individuals whose inherent needs and desire for safety, self-worth and belonging are not satisfied (Segev et al., 2015). Purchasing and the ownership of material possessions are considered tools that individuals use when the need for esteem and relationships are unsatisfied. In an effort to compensate for their faults, highly materialistic individuals use external stimulation as a diversion from the undesired consequences of self-examination which result in external sources of satisfaction (Segev et al., 2015). The society that millennials have been raised and socialised in is progressively materialistic and they were actively shopping at a younger age than the generations before them. The styles and obtainability of technology are continually altering and rising, making it easier and more ordinary for millennials to be subjected to consumerism than it was for any previous generation (Heugel, 2015).

In the West, human beings are stuck in these cycles of boundless striving and dissatisfaction, attempting to continue with the increasingly intricate displays of consumption we see on television and on the internet (Gerhardt, 2010). Even in an affluent society, for example Iceland where the per capita gross domestic product in 2007 was sixty-three thousand eight hundred and thirty dollars, compared to forty-five thousand eight hundred and forty-five dollars in the United States, one would expect majority of the citizens to be able to sufficiently support themselves from their income (Duh, 2015). However, owing to materialism and unsecured loaning, Icelanders averagely are living way beyond their means. This caused consumer debt to increase to approximately two

hundred and fifty-five per cent of collective disposable income in 2008 as compared to one hundred and fifty-nine per cent in 2000 (Duh, 2015). In South Africa, it is reported that the amount of debt consumers owed as part of their income was seventy-five per cent in 2013 (Duh, 2015).

This is partially a natural feature of the human brain's dopamine reward systems, which are more active in response to unforeseen rewards than in attaining the same old things (Gerhardt, 2010). Even in the heart of material comfort and physical security that our ancestors could only dream of, we continue to behave as if we are disadvantaged and must compete with others to obtain as much as we can. The reason for this may be that although we have relative material profusion, we do not in fact have emotional profusion. Many individuals are devested of what really matters. Lacking emotional security, individuals seek security in material things (Gerhardt, 2010). This psychological meaning has been expounded by Tim Kasser. Kasser has developed a body of research which begins to demonstrate that there is a connection between the materialistic attitudes of the younger generations and their mental health. He has discovered that the more materialistic young individuals are, the less satisfying their relationships are. Kasser's research also presented that this was related to the early care obtained in their families. Young individuals mistake material well-being for psychological well-being (Gerhardt, 2010). Kasser used the Aspiration Index as the primary means of assessing participants' materialistic values.

The Aspiration Index presents individuals with a variety of possible goals they may have for the future and asks them to rate them on different kinds of dimensions. Individuals' materialistic value orientation is measured by the extent to which their expressed personal goals are highly oriented toward attaining possessions, attractiveness, and popularity (Kasser, 2002). University students concentrated on materialistic strivings stated low self-actualisation and rare experiences of positive emotions. In samples of university students with different ways of measuring materialistic values and well-being, results show a clear pattern of psychological and physical problems related to possessing wealth, popularity, and image as relatively important (Kasser, 2002). Compulsive buyers seem to be typified by one-sided mental perceptions of themselves and their environment, psychological and social instability, distortions in self-image and identity, social anxieties, and nervousness concerning life pursuits (Bani-Rshaid & Alghraibeh, 2017).

Each individual has a unique personality and set of traits made up of their thoughts, behaviour and feelings. Materialism and personality traits have been proven to be related (Mandy, 2018). In studies based on the five-factor model of personality positive correlations have been found between materialism and neuroticism and negative correlations between materialism and agreeableness. Numerous malicious personality traits were inspected in connection with materialism, but the personality trait which has obtained greatest notice was narcissism (Górník-Durose, 2019). With three decades of data from more than four hundred and seventy-five thousand college students in the United States, a meta-analysis performed for one study found that men were inclined to be more narcissistic than women (Grijalva et al., 2015). The influence of personality on well-being denotes that any association between phenomena, which are connected with personality, and well-being may be formed and altered by personality (Górník-Durose, 2019). Personality connects with essential regulatory mechanisms and signifies basic and comparatively secure characteristics of an individual that motivate particularised behaviour, attitudes and beliefs and are to certain degree biologically determined (Górník-Durose, 2019). Relations between values and well-being are due to the variance they both share with personality traits. This may be also the case for materialism (Górník-Durose, 2019).

Since the publication of the earliest studies presenting that materialism is negatively related to personal well-being, several more empirical studies have supported this finding. Dittmar, Bond, Hurst & Kasser (2014) reported a meta-analysis of this literature, examining seven hundred and forty-nine results from two hundred and fifty-eight independent samples including all parts of the populated world. A moderate negative correlation was found between materialism and well-being, but additional analyses presented that the dimension of this association varied in which materialism and well-being were each measured. Concerning materialism measures, correlations were greater for multidimensional scales such as the Material Values Scale and the Aspiration Index that measured the extensive collection of materialistic goals than for single-item scales. Concerning well-being, materialism had coherent, negative relations to a broad collection of well-being measures comprising self-image, affect, and both subjective and physical well-being (Kasser, 2016). In cases where considerable moderation was revealed, the results presented that the negative association between materialism and well-being deteriorated rather than vanished. Materialism had a rather delicate, but still considerably

negative, association with well-being in samples that were comparatively young and had numerous males (Kasser, 2016).

Materialists place considerable significance on their possessions as well as the acquisition of these possessions. Firstly, materialism can be considered as part of a system of personal values. The possessions one owns will delineate the way one lives and sets major personal goals. Values control an individual's attitude and social behaviour. Materialists pursue social status through their possessions and connect these possessions with their own contentment (Mandy, 2018), which was found predominantly in male millennials (Segal & Podoshen, 2013). Secondly, materialism can be considered as a coping mechanism. Purchasing and the ownership of material possessions are considered tools that individuals use when the need for safety and belonging are not satisfied (Segev et al., 2015). Purchasing of material possessions is easier for millennials compared to previous generations due to technology. Technology has also allowed millennials to be more exposed to products, leading to more consumerism (Heugel, 2015). Thirdly, materialism can also be considered as a personality trait. Studies show positive correlations between materialism and narcissism (Górník-Durose, 2019). Lastly, materialism is related to decreases in one's happiness, personal well-being and gratification with life. Considerable evidence shows that samples comprised of young males reported negative correlations between materialism and personal well-being (Kasser, 2016).

2.3. Conceptualisation

The following key terms are conceptualised: values; materialism; well-being; conspicuous consumption; and millennials.

Values-Abstract motivations that are internally rooted in an individual, and which help develop an individual's motivations and attitudes. Each human being's behaviour is verified by their main individual values that can be used to clarify their actions in particular situations (Mandy, 2018). Materialistic values fail to fulfil essential needs for security, self-esteem, autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Kasser, 2002).

Materialism-A system of personal values, with possessions and acquisitions as major personal goals that determine one's way of living (Segev et al., 2015). Placing

considerable significance on material possessions to delineate one's social status (Mandy, 2018). Materialists' possessions are at the focus of their lives due to a belief that material objects will bring them well-being and contentment (Segev et al., 2015).

Well-being-A four-dimensional structure that comprises self-actualisation, vitality, depression, and anxiety and is measured with the Aspiration Index, an instrument developed by Tim Kasser. The proposal that the pursuit of materialistic principles such as financial success, social recognition, and having the right image has a negative influence on well-being (Kasser, 2002).

Conspicuous consumption-Consumer gratification results from on-lookers' appreciation and respect (Mandy, 2018). The personal self is being expressed through possessions, and therefore more worth is placed on these products when consumed in the public eye (Mandy, 2018). Conspicuous consumption has become preferable for young consumers.

Millennials-The first generation to be considered technologically advanced. Growing up with rapidly progressing technology has given this generation its sense of immediacy and prompt satisfaction. They are more socially motivated to consume than previous generations and with this, surrounding issues are not as vital to their purchasing choices (Heugel, 2015).

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Paradigm

A paradigm explains a researcher's worldview which is the perspective, reasoning, school of thought, or set of beliefs that informs the significance or clarification of research data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The three main research paradigms consist of positivism, interpretivism and critical realism (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2018). For the purpose of this research study, an interpretivistic paradigm will be best suited, as it seeks to understand and explain significant social action and experiences (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2018).

Interpretivism involves the interpretation of human action, the way in which individuals make sense of the world around them, and observing reality as symbolic and constructed (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2018). In interpretivist studies, qualitative methods are used (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2018). This method makes an attempt to get into the head of the participants

being studied as it were, and to comprehend and explain what the participant is thinking or the significance he or she is creating of the setting (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The interpretivistic nature of the study, together with its qualitative methodological approach seeks to uncover the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. The researcher aims to obtain the understanding of the motivation behind materialism in male millennials. The study relies upon both the researcher and the human subjects as the instrument to measure phenomena.

3.2. Conceptual Approach

A qualitative methodology with a non-experimental research design will be employed in this study, to gain an in-depth understanding of the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. According to Aspers and Corte (2019), qualitative research is an iterative process in which better understanding to the scientific community is attained by making new meaningful distinctions ensuing from moving closer to the phenomenon studied thus, it would be best suited for this explorative study. The qualitative research methodology enables rich insight into human behaviour (Davis, 2018). Thus, the qualitative research methodology is best suited to answer the research questions. The subjective motivations will be investigated using qualitative data collection tools (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). The researcher expects to find what motivates male millennials to be materialistic and that there is a negative relationship between materialism and well-being.

3.3. Population

A population is the entire collection of individuals or objects from whom information is required (Pascoe, 2018). In qualitative research, the population may be smaller given that qualitative studies are theoretically related to smaller participant groups (Asiamah, Mensah & Oteng-Abayie, 2017). The target population is everybody or everything that falls within the population parameters which are characteristics that describe the population (Pascoe, 2018). The target population for this study consisted of all males in South Africa between the ages of twenty and thirty-nine. According to Chircu (2019), millennials were born between 1981 and 2000. This cohort of individuals were either studying part-time or full-time and/or working part-time or full-time. The accessible population concerns merely the section of the population that the researcher incorporates in the study (Pascoe, 2018). The accessible population for this study consisted of all males in Cape Town between the ages

of twenty and thirty-nine. The researcher resides in Cape Town and conducted a study using a convenience sample which consisted of participants that were most accessible therefore, the researcher chose participants who live in Cape Town. In qualitative research, the target population uses numerous standards which is methodically used to inspect the general population concerning the most qualified set of individuals and the accessible population is frequently lesser and is easier to sample, it does not need clustering and stratification to sample (Asiamah et al., 2017).

3.4. Sampling

The sample consisted of five males in Cape Town between the ages of twenty-three and thirty within a middle to high socioeconomic status (SES); studies say individuals within this bracket are more probable to have materialistic values and poorer buying behaviours. The reason for the connection may have to do with relative deprivation which is the lack of resources to maintain the diet, lifestyle, activities and facilities that an individual or group are familiarised with (Zhang, Howell & Howell, 2014). This cohort of individuals were working full-time as well as financially independent. Owing to the inclusion criteria, this sample of individuals would be able to reflect on more varied experiences of materialism. Qualitative research involves small samples which may not be illustrative of the wider population, it is seen as subjective, and the results are measured as biased by the researcher's own experiences or sentiments (Hammarberg, Kirkman & de Lacey, 2016). Non-probability sampling is employed when it is nearly unfeasible to verify who the absolute population is or when it is problematic in retrieving the whole population. Non-probability sampling methods are mainly used in qualitative studies (Pascoe, 2018). Non-probability sampling is not interested in obtaining exact population approximates of a specific characteristic (Howitt & Cramer, 2017). Non-probability sampling techniques consist of accidental sampling, convenience sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling and volunteer sampling (Pascoe, 2018). Convenience sampling consists entirely of components that we understand or that we are able to obtain sudden admission to. Convenience sampling are those that we already know, or have some form of contact with (Pascoe, 2018). Convenience sampling is sampling where members of the population that meet particular applied standards, such as simple accessibility, geographical proximity, obtainability at an absolute time, or the willingness to contribute are incorporated for the intention of the study (Etikan, 2016). The researcher conducted a convenience sample as it was easy to obtain participants for a telephonic in-

depth interview. The risk of bias was greater as each member of the population did not have an equal chance of being included in the sample. Obtained results were not generalisable to the entire population due to the sample size. However, the results obtained from the sample was merely to gain some sort of understanding of the motivation behind materialism in male millennials and was not to form a representative of the population. Qualitative methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, most frequently from the position of the participant. Qualitative research methods comprise in-depth interviews to comprehend a condition, experience, or event from a personal viewpoint (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Qualitative research entails the methodical collection, arrangement, account and clarification of written, spoken or graphic information. The specific method taken controls to a particular degree the standards used for assessing the quality of the report (Hammarberg et al., 2016).

3.5. Data Collection Method

Qualitative researchers frequently mention a 'whole-world experience', because they are absorbed in the complexity of human experience, comprising all the individual and subjective eccentricities that are typical of particularised experiences and significances connected with a specific occurrence (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2018). Qualitative data collection techniques consist of field research, focus groups and in-depth interviews (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2018). An in-depth interview is a qualitative data collection method that includes conducting concentrated individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their viewpoints on a specific thought, setting, or state (Boyce & Neale, 2006). In-depth interviews were applicable to this study as the sample consisted of five individuals. In-depth interviews are valuable when researchers desire specified information about an individual's ideas and behaviours or aspire to search new subjects in detail (Boyce & Neale, 2006). An in-depth interview was a suitable data collection method for this study as it inspired the objectives which aimed to obtain the understanding of the motivation behind materialism in male millennials, to identify the concept of materialism and the consequences of materialism in male millennials, and to confirm the assumption that motivation exists behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. In-depth interviews are frequently used to stipulate context to additional data, proposing a more complete image of what occurred and why (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Furthermore, an in-depth interview was a suitable data collection method for this study in relation to addressing the research question. Open-ended questions are employed alone or in

combination with additional interviewing methods to explore topics in depth, to understand processes, and to classify possible causes of observed correlations (Weller et al., 2018). Open-ended questions were appropriate as the purpose of this study was to help researchers better understand the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. Standardised, open-ended interviews concentrate on requesting unchanged flexible questions of all the interviewees. The data acquired can be examined more effortlessly and this arrangement also permits the researcher to contrast records of the sentiments and beliefs of the interviewees in a more methodical way (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2018). Standardised, open-ended interviews were applicable to this study as the researcher used qualitative content analysis to analyse the data which is one of the more time intensive data analysis methods.

In the following study, the researcher conducted a standardised, open-ended interview with five males, using a questionnaire in order to guide the interview. The questions developed for the interview were adopted from Richins and Dawson (1992) and Kasser (2002). However, the questions were designed and formulated based on the research objectives. The participants that matched the convenience sampling criteria were contacted via email to set up the interview and continued to use email to discuss any further details regarding the interview. All five of the participants that were contacted indicated willingness to participate in the interview. The interview was scheduled for a mutually convenient time and took place telephonically. Prior to the interview, participants received an information sheet regarding the nature and purpose of the research, as well as a consent form via email. Written consent was obtained for participation in the interview and for audio recording of the interview. Participants were required for one interview which was recorded. In order to obtain the interpretations of each participant's personal experiences, the interviews were facilitated by an interview schedule. The agenda for the interview incorporated a set of standardised, open-ended questions. Each participant answered eight of the same questions. The interview was on a one-on-one basis between the researcher and the participant. The interview was conducted telephonically to allow participants to explain their ideas in more detail and elaborate on their views in a more conversational manner. The open-ended interview allowed the participants the freedom to control the pace and subject matter of the interview. The purpose of the interview was to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and motivations of male millennials on materialism. The interview was to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The open-ended questions were to yield as much information about the phenomenon as possible in

the hopes of addressing the aims and objectives of the research. All interviews began with the researcher briefly explaining to the participants what was needed of them for the interview and whether they had any questions for the researcher. The participants were informed that the length of the interview would be between twenty to thirty minutes, depending of the individual. However, the interviews, on average, were only ten minutes. At the completion of the interview, the participants were thanked for participating in the study and reminded of the ethical obligations of the researcher. The researcher's reflections and impressions were documented in a journal at the completion of each interview. E-mails were exchanged with participants, if required, to clarify misunderstandings in the data and to check for validation of interpretation.

3.6. Data Analysis Method

Qualitative content analysis has been delineated as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of data through the methodical classification process of coding and distinguishing themes or patterns (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Qualitative content analysis was appropriate as the purpose of this study was to help researchers better understand the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. The process of qualitative content analysis frequently begins throughout the initial phases of data collection. To verify valid and reliable conclusions, qualitative content analysis concerns a set of methodical and transparent procedures for processing data (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Qualitative content analysis consists of eight steps: prepare the data; define the coding unit to be analysed; develop categories and a coding scheme or conceptual framework; test your coding scheme on a sample text; code all text; assess your coding consistency; draw conclusions from the coded data; and report on methods and findings (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2018).

The first step entails establishing and editing the raw material that the researcher saves into written text before the researcher can begin with the analysis (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2018). If the data originates from current texts, the selection of the content must be defended by what the researcher aspires to distinguish (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). All the questions from the interview guide were transcribed, the verbalisations were transcribed literally, and observations during the interview such as sounds, and pauses were transcribed. A complete transcript was the most useful as it inspired the research question and objectives. The researcher read and re-read all five interview transcripts. In order to

gain an in-depth understanding of the data, the researcher spent considerable time reading the transcripts and making notes in the margins of each answer.

The second step entails the essential coding component that the researcher aims to examine. The researcher inspects the text for an idea (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2018). Messages have to be unitised before it can be coded, and differences in the unit definition can influence coding decisions as well as the comparability of outcomes with other similar studies (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The unit of analysis was identified to be a portion of a line, a line and/or several lines which consisted of a phrase, an incomplete sentence, a complete sentence, or more than one sentence that communicated a message and was limited to a paragraph which represented a single theme or issue of relevance to the research question.

The third step entails classifying connected coding units simultaneously to develop categories of codes. In labelling the codes, the researcher ensured that the codes were exhaustive, there were sufficient groups to accommodate all the data; mutually exclusive, each code was separate; and specific, codes were clear and visible (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2018). To ensure the consistency of coding, the researcher acquires a coding manual, which typically contains category names, definitions or rules for allocating codes, and models (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Qualitative content analysis includes a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inferences and interpretation. This process uses inductive reasoning, by which themes and categories arise from the data through the researcher's thorough examination and continuous comparison (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). But qualitative content analysis does not need to exclude deductive reasoning. Generating ideas or variables from theory or previous literature is also useful for qualitative research, particularly at the beginning of data analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). This study was both deductive and inductive in nature. The researcher used work from Richins and Dawson (1992) and Kasser (2002) as the theoretical framework in order to focus on the research question. However, the researcher was open-minded in allowing themes or additional categories to emerge.

The fourth step entails assessing the lucidity and reliability of the researcher's class descriptions on a sample of the data (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2018). Coding sample text, checking coding consistency, and revising coding rules is an iterative process and continues until adequate coding consistency is attained (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

Particular coding rules were used in order to ensure consistency throughout this study. The researcher tested the codes that were designed to ensure it measured what it was supposed to measure. The researcher examined the sample that was selected for the analysis to ensure the different phrases or words that were part of a category had similar meaning and to validate that those phrases and words all belong to the same category.

The fifth step entails the cautious inspection of the data and taking note of all the pertinent and significant units. Types of coding comprise line-by-line coding, open or substantive coding, axial coding, selective coding, and thematic coding. The researcher used line-by-line coding in which the researcher factually read through parts of the text line by line while indicating particular words and phrases that were pertinent to the study (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2018). When adequate consistency has been attained, the coding rules are applied to the whole text. During the coding process, the researcher checks the coding recurrently, to prevent drifting into an unusual sense of what the codes denote (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The researcher examined the text, whereby all valuable, pertinent and potentially significant units of data were highlighted for additional categorisation. The researcher selected and placed pertinent and interpretable words or phrases from the participants responses and categorising recurring words or phrases into distinct categories. This process was repeated line by line and resulted in twenty-nine categories. The coding rules were applied by coding all the text in the same manner.

The sixth step entails rechecking the consistency with which the coding is managed (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2018). It is not reliable to suppose that, if a sample is coded in a consistent and dependable manner, the coding of the entire quantity of text is also consistent. Human coders are subject to exhaustion and are likely to make more errors as the coding continues. New codes may have been inserted since the initial consistency check. The coder's interpretation of the categories and coding rules may alter faintly over time, which may lead to greater inconsistency. Therefore, the researcher must recheck the coding consistency (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The coding consistency relied on the researcher as the sole human coder as this study was exploratory in nature which aimed to obtain the understanding of the motivation behind materialism in male millennials, to identify the concept of materialism and the consequences of materialism in male millennials, and to confirm the assumption that motivation exists behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials.

The seventh step entails the clarification of the themes classified. This step is also known as interpreting the data. Interpretation comprises three steps: the researcher is capable of clarifying the relations obtained; irrelevant information is respected and comprises all pertinent issues influencing the problem to prevent misleading interpretation (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2018). The researcher reaches conclusions and presents the reconstructions of significances resulting from the data. The researcher's actions include exploring the properties and aspects of categories, classifying associations between categories, uncovering patterns, and testing categories against the full range of data. This is a critical step in the analysis process, and its success relies almost solely on the researcher's cognitive abilities (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Six themes emerged from the twenty-nine categories which were labelled as *materialism and its negative connotation*, *insecurity and social compatibility as ingredients of materialism*, *marketing breeds materialism*, *materialism as a product of one's inner circle*, *materialism and the level of satisfaction is twofold*, and *materialism is business*.

The eighth step entails reporting on the process that the researcher uses in the coding, analysis and interpretation, as totally and honestly as possible (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2018). When posing qualitative content analysis results, the researcher must strive for a balance between description and interpretation. Description provides the readers with background and context. Interpretation provides the readers with personal and theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). This paper includes a balance of descriptive and interpretive information related to theories and literature outlined in the literature review.

3.7. Trustworthiness

The purpose of qualitative research is to support interpretation of a specific phenomenon within a particular setting, and not to simplify results to a wider population therefore, different criteria is employed to verify trustworthiness of research findings (Koonin, 2018). Trustworthiness is divided into credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Koonin, 2018). Credibility refers to the assurance that can be located in the truth of the research findings. Credibility ascertains whether the research findings signify reasonable information pulled from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' initial opinions (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). To enhance credibility, the researcher selected male participants who were able to give a first-hand account of

materialism in the life of a millennial. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere facilitated by the researcher. The rich content of the interviews ensured that a satisfactory description was obtained of the male millennials' views on materialism. Transferability refers to the amount in which the results of qualitative research can be transmitted to additional contexts with other respondents. The researcher eases the transferability judgement by a possible user through thick description (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Transferability was increased through the use of a telephonic interview between the researcher and the participant. The researcher was able to observe the participants' behaviour and interpret their meaning of the phenomenon. Dependability refers to the constancy of findings over time. Dependability includes participants' assessment of the findings, clarification and references of the study such that all are verified by the data as obtained from participants of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Dependability was increased by having a standardised set of questions to ensure that the same domains were dealt with in all the interviews. The research process was reviewed and examined as well as the data analysis in order to ensure that the findings were consistent and could be repeated. Confirmability refers to the amount to which the findings of the research study could be corroborated by other researchers. Confirmability is affected with ascertaining that data and clarifications of the findings are not fabrications of the inquirer's resourcefulness, but clearly originated from the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). To establish confirmability, the researcher provided a transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of the research project to the development and reporting of findings, which highlighted every step of data analysis that was made in order to provide a rationale for the decisions made. The researcher made detailed notes as well as exchanged e-mails with a few of the participants to clarify misunderstandings in the data and to check for validation of interpretation to help establish that the research findings accurately portrayed participants' responses.

4. Findings and Interpretation of Findings

4.1. Presentation of Findings

Six themes emerged from the data collection phase: *materialism and its negative connotation, insecurity and social compatibility as ingredients of materialism, marketing breeds materialism, materialism as a product of one's inner circle, materialism and the level of satisfaction is twofold, and materialism is business*. The themes that stood out the

most were *insecurity and social compatibility as ingredients of materialism, materialism and the level of satisfaction is twofold, and materialism is business.*

Theme 1: Materialism and its negative connotation. Participants associated materialism with negative connotations. Participants referred to a materialistic society as the continuous desire for more, and a constant focus on image and money. According to participant one, a materialistic society is people living in a way that is not their own. This theme ties in with the research objective which is to identify the concept of materialism. This theme moreover ties in with the research question and problem. Participants stated that in society individuals try emulate one another which may explain the motivation behind materialism in male millennials. The contentment of purchasing a new item infrequently lasts long. It varies on comparing oneself to other individuals who are not as wealthy, and vanishes if one compares oneself to an individual who is wealthier. No matter how much one attempts to boost their self-esteem, their internal dissatisfaction recurs, generating new desires (Taylor, 2012). The first theme is consistent with Gerhardt (2010), who explains that even in the heart of material comfort and physical security that our ancestors could only dream of, we continue to behave as if we are disadvantaged and must compete with others to obtain as much as we can. In most western countries, material wealth is at an unsurpassed high, nonetheless studies have indicated that this increase in wealth has not increased individuals' general gratification levels. For many, particularly in western societies, consumption seems to be the preferred and most accepted way to attempt to be content and reach true life satisfaction (Mandy, 2018). To the contrary, an ever growing group of individuals have rejected this notion and are voluntarily accepting a non-materialistic way of life in an attempt to reach contentment (Mandy, 2018).

Theme 2: Insecurity and social compatibility as ingredients of materialism. Being insecure and fitting in were two frequently cited reasons for purchasing. Participants stated that purchasing stems from an insecurity and enables them to fit in with their environment. Participant three stated that feelings of being enough plays a huge part in materialism. The second theme is consistent with Segev et al. (2015), who claim that materialism is a coping mechanism for individuals whose inherent needs and desire for safety and self-worth are not satisfied. Purchasing and the ownership of material possessions are considered tools that individuals use when the need for esteem is unsatisfied. In an effort to compensate for their faults, highly materialistic individuals use external stimulation as a

diversion from the undesired consequences of self-examination which result in external sources of satisfaction (Segev et al., 2015). A study examining the relationship between materialism and life satisfaction found that male respondents were more likely than female respondents to associate material possessions with contentment. Male respondents were more likely to feel that possessing material objects would increase their own contentment and that owning material objects would express to others who they are (Segal & Podoshen, 2013). If low self-esteem is a predictor of materialism, experiences that induce feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem should be examined in order to obtain a deeper understanding of how materialistic values develop, particularly in male millennials.

Theme 3: Marketing breeds materialism. A commonly reported pattern amongst participants was the impact of advertising and social media on materialistic values. Participant two stated that individuals are constantly pushed products and it is done in a way to make you feel as though you should be purchasing these products. Participants reflected that individuals are constantly exposed to the highlight of one's life. Participant one stated that individuals are exposed to social media from a younger age than previous generations, they see their heroes living a certain way and purchasing certain things, and feel forced to do so themselves. The third theme makes reference to how materialistic youth are, for instance, recognised to pay particular attention to the product selections of celebrities as they have a desire to mimic them through their own consumption of these products in order to gain the same level of societal recognition (Mandy, 2018).

Theme 4: Materialism as a product of one's inner circle. All five participants stated that their peers are one of the greatest influences in consumer socialisation into materialism. Participant five mentioned that his friends influence him to purchase products as naturally, he compares himself to them and the purchases they make. The fourth theme is not consistent with literature based on the research. However, researchers consider peers as a source that provides information and role models for imitation, particularly young individuals. Young individuals learn materialistic attitudes from peers (Duh, 2015).

Theme 5: Materialism and the level of satisfaction is twofold. Participants mentioned that the level of satisfaction has two elements with regards to consumer behaviour. Participants explained how certain products make them happier than others such as when these products provide a lifetime of valuable experiences. Participant four related how feelings of accomplishment towards his own personal achievements contributed to his feelings of

satisfaction when purchasing certain products. However, when products do not hold any value, they are more likely to suffer buyer's remorse. The fifth theme is not consistent with material possessions having a limited ability to provide lasting satisfaction and happiness (Kasser, 2002).

Theme 6: Materialism is business. Three out of the five participants stated that certain materialistic objects are considered a business expensive and is the cost of doing business. Participants mentioned that their work environment dictates what they wear. The essence of this theme is reflected in participant three's interview in which he states that materialism is industry related. The sixth theme is consistent with literature based on the research. Men appear to possess more self-monitoring traits which can influence consumer behaviour concerning items such as clothing since it is related to the level of importance in upholding a personal front through fashion. Men are more materialistic and have a greater leaning toward external authorisation as presented through the apparent belief that material goods will bring them respect from others (Segal & Podoshen, 2013).

4.2. Interpretation of Findings

The interviews with five participants highlighted the concept of materialism and its consequences and provided suggestions for what motivates male millennials to be materialistic. Their views are consistent with Richins and Dawson's (1992) Material Values Scale which states that materialists are inclined to assess their own and others' success by the amount and quality of possessions accrued. On the contrary, more individuals are redefining success in a respect that does not include wealth. Merely one in four Americans trust that wealth determines success, according to The LifeTwist study in 2013 (Partanen, 2016). Americans ranked their top five contributors to success, with eighty-five per cent saying that good health is vital. Additional contributors to success comprised having a good marriage or relationship, good management of personal finances, having a good work-life balance, and having an occupation or career you love (Partanen, 2016). Materialism has been operationalised as holding the belief that acquiring conspicuous goods is a major route to success (Cisek et al., 2014). Material possessions establish a rich source of information concerning others' individuality, and may successfully express one's actual and ideal self (Cisek et al., 2014). Many participants emphasised purchasing certain products portrays success. Participant two stated that the perceptions that potential customers or clients have are based on the car you drive and the clothes you wear

therefore society has become very focused on money and the best way to show money is to be flashy with clothes. Participants mentioned purchasing certain products creates a personal brand as well as a sense of equality with other individuals. Participant four stated that owning and having a certain product puts you and can put you on an equal playing field with the customer. The degree of consumer vulnerability to peer influence, the tendency to classify with or improve one's image in the view of peers through the acquisition and use of products and brands, will however rely on the consumer's self-confidence, self-monitoring and frequency of communication with peers concerning consumption matters (Duh, 2015). Individuals who lack self-confidence and have low self-esteem are more likely to be receptive to peer influence and as a consequence, they may adopt materialistic values. High self-monitors are more receptive to peer influence and more likely to be materialistic (Duh, 2015). This may be one of the reasons why participants highlighted one's inner circle as a motivator for materialism.

Feelings of insecurity and the need to fit in was reflected in one of the themes in the study. Many participants explicitly expressed that a product may be a barrier between the individual and a perception. This finding is consistent with past studies (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017; Segev et al., 2015) and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which views self-esteem as a core motivator for materialism. Feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem drive materialism (Segev et al., 2015). Millennials inevitably experience insecurities, frequently the consequence of comparing themselves to others. Identity, particularly in emerging adulthood, is delineated socially therefore identity formation requires comparison with others on the foundation of personal experiences and development through the life course (Johnson, 2017). The augmented reflexivity of modern life and of the millennial generation initiates comparison, and in this way, comparison is developed into the identity-formation and coming of age process of modern young adults and is a normal part of social life (Johnson, 2017). With the arrival and growth of social media in the twenty-first century and the degree to which it signifies the widening of social relations across time and space, and the mediated experience of reality, opportunities for comparison have radically increased as they become exposed to more information concerning other individuals without having to interact with them in person (Johnson, 2017). Findings from the study highlight that not all material goods that individuals buy make them unhappy. This is evident from the interview accounts. This is not concordant with the large body of studies from Kasser (2002; 2016), who explains that the presence of increased materialistic values is linked with the decline of an individual's well-being. Studies have provided evidence that

there is value in certain kinds of material purchases. In a study that was published in *Psychological Science*, researchers found that individuals were happier if they consumed objects that complemented their personality (Matz, Gladstone & Stillwell, 2016). The researchers examined bank transactions of more than six hundred individuals, all of whom anonymously completed a questionnaire concerning their personality type and life satisfaction. The happiest individuals in the study appeared to be the ones who consumed more on objects or services that were concurrent with their personality type. For instance, an extroverted individual would enjoy spending money at a bar or restaurant however, a more introverted individual is likely to be happier spending that kind of money on books (Matz et al., 2016). This was reflected in participant five's interview who stated that if a certain object is going to help him in a new activity, the feeling he experiences is good.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Research Question, Problem and Objectives Addressed

The findings of this study may contribute towards the understanding of the motivation behind materialism in male millennials. The study highlights the aspects of materialism, and how it shapes male millennials' purchasing decisions. Participants described materialism as a personal value that includes concern with material objects, competitiveness, and emphasis on money. The results have shown that there is a positively significant relationship between success and materialism among male millennials. Success is found to be a significant issue that affects male millennials' materialism, therefore businesses and marketers should influence status appeal in their advertising efforts to draw attention of this cohort of individuals. Moreover, these individuals are more likely to respect money as an instrument to gain social status (Mandy, 2018). In this study, insecurity was found to be the most significant variable in affecting male millennials' materialism. Based on the results obtained from this study, it is recognised that the relationship between lower well-being and materialism among male millennials is insignificant and negatively correlated. There are inconsistencies comparing the results from previous literature. In the studies carried out by Kasser (2002), he has concluded that the association between lower well-being and materialism is positively correlated. The possible explanation for the dissimilarities in results might be psychological characteristics such as personality (Matz et al., 2016). The findings from Matz et al. (2016) provide practical suggestions that the focus on external forms of gratification, and pursuit

of happiness through material possessions does not necessarily lead to dissatisfaction with one's life. These findings may provide a basis for a consolidated, and more universal definition of materialism. The present study's findings may lend support for the development of research concerning the relationship between materialism and well-being within the broader context of an individual's value system. The study further supports established findings on the assumption that motivation exists behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials (Segal & Podoshen, 2013; Mandy, 2018). A study conducted on money attitudes and materialism among millennial South Africans found that females greater interest in individuals and males' in possessions are providing researchers with the impression that males may be more materialistic than females. This possibility is justified through males' tendency to value intrinsic, instrumental functions of objects and females' tendency to value relationship-enhancing functions of objects (Duh, 2011). Males were more likely to be materialistic, while females presented a tendency to be compassionate and find purpose and meaning in life across social class subgroups (Duh, 2011). Males' results were more preoccupied with money, while females were more security-conscious, retentive and felt inadequate with how much money they possessed (Duh, 2011). The findings from this study have offered insight into the attitude of male millennials. Furthermore, it is evident that insecurity and success have an influence on the materialism among male millennials. Some of the relationships between success and insecurity, and materialism might cause compulsive buying, therefore, this may raise the concerns of ethicists. However, government is unlikely to provide guidance, as this is defying the goal to ease economic growth of the country.

5.2. Ethical Considerations

No data collection began until a request, to conduct the research, had been submitted and accepted by the ethics committee of the institution where the researcher was registered (Maree, 2020). All participants were required to provide written informed consent. Features such as the objectives, purpose and method of the research were clarified (Maree, 2020). All participants were notified that participation in the study was voluntary, they were notified about their right to withdraw at any stage should they request not to resume (Maree, 2020). Participants were ensured that their identity and their responses were considered confidential and that their responses were not obtainable to any unauthorised user. The identity of participants were under no conditions exposed to any persons that were or were not included in the research process. Participants were ensured anonymity;

that their names were not used at any stage. Participants' confidentiality was maintained throughout the research project (Maree, 2020).

5.3. Limitations

Limitations can be explained as restraints or boundaries in the research study that are out of the researcher's control, such as time, financial resources, and access to information (Enslin, 2018). The majority of articles up to this date focus on various aspects of materialism, and the relationship between materialism and the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism. Only a limited amount of effort has been devoted to the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. The study was limited by the time that the data was collected therefore, results only generalised to populations similar to that in this study. The limitations of the study are those features of design or methodology that obstructed or manipulated the interpretation of the findings from the research (Price & Murnan, 2004). It is important to note that interview data was a subjective reflection of followers' perspectives and experiences, rather than objective accounts of reality. It was possible that the views and perspectives of the researcher influenced either how the participants responded to the questions of the interview, or how the data was interpreted. The strategy to recruit participants may have inevitably resulted in some bias as the following research used a convenience sample therefore, the participants were not chosen by random. The limitations are the constraints on generalizability, applications to practice, or practicality of findings that are the result of the means in which the researcher originally chose to design the study or the method used to determine trustworthiness of the results of unexpected challenges that arose during the study (Price & Murnan, 2004). Sample size limitations only allowed for a limited generalisability for the researcher's findings. Due to the convenience of the sample, the findings in the present study were limited in the generalizability over varying age groups and regions. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, participants were interviewed telephonically rather than face-to-face in which the researcher may not have been able to observe the participants and interpret their responses appropriately.

5.4. Heuristic Value

In addition to practical implications, the present study moreover contributed to existing literature. This study contributed to the current understanding of the motivation behind the

prevalence of materialism in millennials. The present study attempted to add to existing literature on the motivation of materialism in millennials by investigating the under-researched demographic variable being gender in this widely materialistic cohort. This study is contributing to a new focus on psychology as materialism has grown substantially over the past decades and continues to grow in the way that consumerism and marketing push products therefore, this research is adding value to the subject. Materialistic trends among youth are increasing gradually, and according to one research individuals in the United States shop twice than that of fifty-five years ago, and they have more luxuries and more money but nevertheless their desire or longing for products is increasing rapidly. Consumer culture has influenced societies, and it forms the modern capitalism not only in the west but moreover in collectivist societies (Masood, Musarrat & Mazahir, 2016). The results appear to authenticate that of Segev et al. (2015). According to Segev et al. (2015), materialism results from feelings of insecurity. Susceptibility to peer influence was favourably correlated to materialism, suggesting that insecure male millennials who seek acceptance of his peers are more likely to become materialistic. Furthermore, the effects of susceptibility to peer influence were mediated by additional variables, namely attitude to advertising and social media. A higher susceptibility to influence translates therefore into male millennials trusting advertising more and aspiring to the lifestyle of others portrayed in social media, which in turn increases materialism (Johnson, 2017). The research makes a significant contribution to this area, suggesting that both an increased trust in advertising and an aspiration to the lifestyles of others on social media function as two means through which susceptibility to influence causes greater materialism in male millennials. In order to conduct a better study in the future, suitable developments and solutions must be undertaken to overcome the limitations as stated earlier. Researchers should devote a lengthier period in collecting data as to obtain a larger quantity of responses. Although a larger sample size frequently requires more time and funds, however, a large sample size improves the accuracy of findings, which in turn provides better results. In the future researches concerning the motivation of materialism in male millennials, additional demographic profiles such as ethnic group and educational level can be taken into consideration in establishing the research framework as various demographic profiles might provide dissimilar responses and reflect dissimilar attitudes toward materialism due to dissimilarities in culture, beliefs, reasoning, experiences, knowledge and needs.

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7. Annexures

7.1. Annexure A: Consent Form



Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Caitlin Raeburn and I am a student at Varsity College Cape Town. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Johrine Cronjé about the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. The researcher seeks to use this information as a preventative measure rather than treating individuals based on the negative outcomes related to materialism such as decreases in one's happiness, personal well-being, and gratification with life. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of gaining insight into what establishes male millennials' consumer attitudes and purchase intention which will help researchers obtain a better understanding of why there is a negative relationship between materialism and well-being. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because I am interested in conducting a qualitative study of the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to conduct a telephonic in-depth interview using standardised, open-ended questions. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your personal experiences of materialism in the life of a male millennial. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.
Do I have to participate in the study?
• Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary; • If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so; • Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
Will my identity be protected?
I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Varsity College Cape Town, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the

findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.
What will happen to the information that participants provide?
Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Bachelor of Arts Honours Psychology degree. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.
What happens if I have more questions about the study?
Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate. You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed. My contact details are as follows: Caitlin Raeburn The contact details of my supervisor are as follows: Johrine Cronjé

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Caitlin Raeburn about the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. The researcher seeks to use this information as a preventative measure rather than treating individuals based on the negative outcomes related to materialism such as decreases in one's happiness, personal well-being, and gratification with life. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:	
• I agree to be interviewed for this research.	
• My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.	
• My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.	
• I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.	
• I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.	
Signature	Date

7.2. Annexure B: Consent Form for Audio or Video Recording



Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow Caitlin Raeburn to audio record my interviews as part of the research about understanding the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. The researcher seeks to use this information as a preventative measure rather than treating individuals based on the negative outcomes related to materialism such as decreases in one's happiness, personal well-being, and gratification with life. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private. • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer. • Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

7.3. Annexure C: Questionnaire

1. What does it mean to you to be living in a materialistic society?
2. Why do you think some people are concerned with material possessions or are money-oriented and others are not?
3. How have the media, especially social media, influenced you to be a consumerist?
4. What other factors in your life influence you to purchase consumer products?
5. In your opinion, what is the difference between being acquisitive and shopping excessively?
6. What sort of feeling do you get when you purchase a materialistic object? Such as the level and duration of satisfaction.
7. Who influences you to purchase consumer products and why?
8. How does your lifestyle drive your desire for material possessions?



30 June 2020

Student name: Caitlin Raeburn

Student number: 17598141

Campus: Varsity College Cape Town

Re: Approval of Honours in Psychology Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

Supervisor: Johrine Cronje

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC): Dr Marizanne Grundlingh

7.5. Annexure E: Final Research Report Summary Document Table

A qualitative study of the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials

Research Purpose	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors	Literature Review-Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
The purpose of this study was to help researchers better understand the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials.	What motivates male millennials to be materialistic?	Today millennials are spending more money than before, however they do not appear to be any happier due to the spending.	Marsha Richns & Scott Dawson Sue Gerhardt Tim Kasser	Theme 1: Motivation and materialism Theme 2: Richns and Dawson's Material Values Scale Theme 3: Male millennials and conspicuous consumption	Paradigm Interpretivism Epistemology An understanding of the motivation behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials. Ontology Materialism in male millennials socially constructed.	Qualitative	Telephone in depth interviews with standardised, open ended questions.	All participants were required to provide written informed consent. All participants were notified that participation in the study was voluntary.	Insecurity and success have an influence on the materialism among male millennials. The relationship between lower wellbeing and materialism among male millennials is significant and negatively correlated.	In the future researches concerning the motivation of materialism in male millennials, additional demographic profiles such as ethnic group and educational level can be taken into consideration in establishing the research framework as various demographic profiles might provide different responses and reflect different attitudes towards materialism due to different cultures, beliefs, reasons, experiences, knowledge and needs.
						Population Parameters Amaes in South Africa between the ages of twenty and thirty nine.				
Research Problem	Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories	Theme 4: Material possessions and unmet needs	Axiology	Sampling	Data Analysis Method	Limitations	Key Contribution	
The presence of increased materialistic values linked with the decline of and values we being, which can be linked to depression and even personality disorders such as narcissism.	To obtain the understanding of the motivation behind materialism in male millennials.	Values Materialism Wellbeing Conspicuous consumption Millennials	Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's self-determination theory	Theme 5: Kasser's Aspirational Index Theme 6: Materialism as a personality trait Theme 7: Materialism and wellbeing	The assumption that motivation exists behind the prevalence of materialism in male millennials.	Non-probability Sampling Method Convenience Sampling Size 5 males	Unit of Analysis People Data Analysis Method Qualitative Content Analysis	Only a limited amount of effort has been devoted to the motivation of materialism in male millennials.	The present study attempted to add to existing literature on the motivation of materialism in male millennials by investigating the under-researched demographic variable being gender in this study materialistic cohort.	