

# Ethics, Materialism and Higher Education: The Dilemma between Career and Social Goals

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## Abstract

This article assesses the ways in which the shifting ethical perspectives of money-orientated learned individuals influence their approach towards family, career and societal bounds. For the purpose of this study, a descriptive study of 100 college students was undertaken at a leading university in north-western India by using self-administered questionnaires with stratified random sampling procedures. A principal component (factor) analysis using varimax rotation and K-means clustering were conducted. The findings indicated that consumption communicative senior poor students and lifestyle communicative young poor students have no materialistic career goals. A high prospect for integrated career and social development is a common expectation, providing the need to assess other variables affecting integrated career and social development. Ethnicity, academic discipline and gender are factors of perspective, incitement and prospects towards ethics, materialism and career and social goals. Social interaction in consumption or lifestyle also has a significant impact on materialistic career goals and integrated career and social development. By increasing communicativeness, the probability of having low materialistic career goals also increases. Materialistic career goals of students substantially

influence their integrated career and social development. Social groupings and institutional gatherings may devise new ways to inculcate social and academic ethics among their affiliates. Institutional change in instilling values in staff behaviour can result in positive outcomes and a social lifestyle.

**Keywords:** academic ethics, materialism, career goals, integral growth, social transformation

## Introduction

Some people think luxury is the opposite of poverty. It is not. It is the opposite of vulgarity. (Coco Chanel)<sup>1</sup>

Materialism is the general theory that the ultimate constituents of reality are material or physical bodies, elements or processes (Vitzthum 1996; Zalta 1995). An implication of materialism is that the diverse qualitative experiences we have are ultimately reducible to quantitative changes in objects or in our physiological functioning (Kanda 2015a, 2015b). Authors have measured materialism in different perspectives. Belk (1984) tried to measure materialism using constructs such as possessiveness, parsimoniousness and envy. Richins and Dawson (1992) emphasised the prevalence of values related to ownership. According to Belk (1983), the culture is defined as a culture of the majority and through their desires, shopping habits, status and envy triggers. Sirgy (1998) comments that materialism can lead to a human being's dissatisfaction. The perception of the value of objects by individuals is an issue that has been pointed out by Wiedmann, Hennigs and Siebels (2007). Studies on materialism and consumer behaviour have been conducted since the 1950s using several perspectives and found that many people spend their lives accumulating money and possessions in search for happiness (Caldas 2010), but that they are not able to create happiness in this way.

The Ethics Development Theory, also known as the philosophy of integral humanism, aims to appeal to a broad section of Indian society by presenting an indigenous economic model that puts the human being at centre stage (Awasthi 2017; Chatterji and Zsolnai 2016; MEA 2017; Mokshagundam 2018; Upadhyay 2014; Upadhyaya 2018). The philosophy of integral humanism opposes unbridled consumerism (Chatterji and Zsolnai 2016; Gandhi 2014; Ranjanikar n.d.; Juluri 2014) and advocates contentment rather than the ruthless pursuit of material wealth.

Regarding academic ethics, when the vast majority consider ethics they consider the way in which activities are resolved to be either right or wrong. The inquiries emanating from this intelligent procedure depend on the systematisation, support and use of different managing hypotheses (Deigh 2010). Numerous philosophies in Western culture are influenced by Aristotle's belief that equivalents ought to be treated as

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1 <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/159629-some-people-think-luxury-is-the-opposite-of-poverty-it>.

equivalents, Robert Nozick's perspectives on qualification (Bakaya 2006; Nozick 1981), John Rawls' (2003) accentuation on equity and decency, Alasdair Macintyre's equity (DeLong 2017), and numerous other philosophical contemplations and good lessons (Beauchamp and Childress 2001). It is exceptionally hard to discover great individuals with ethical values (Pabla 2011). It is the ideal opportunity to distinguish components and conditions that weaken ethical values (Pabla 2011), since academic integrity is the establishment whereupon understudies, personnel, and staff construct their educational and expert vocations. Scholarly integrity is the establishment for magnificence (Louder 2011).

Brătianu and Nistoreanu (2008) recorded the need for ethics in the higher education institutions: "For most understudies, the college is the foundation in which they figure out how to accept going from coaching and reliance of guardians to opportunity and self-sufficiency." Osipian's (2012) research of ethical debasement in higher education uncovered transgressions including higher education institutions. According to Robinson and Moulton (2005), ethical issues in higher education get little attention compared to ethical transgressions in business, governmental issues, and prescription.

Arnaud (2010) shows that there is a connection between the apparent ethical atmosphere and the ethical conduct of a worker. Cullen, Victor and Stephens (1989) stated that recognising the predominant ethical atmosphere of an association consists of the primary critical advance towards making an atmosphere that is suitable and successful. Martin and Cullen (2006) stated that there are different variables that could influence the ethical conduct of workers. Martin and Cullen (2006) supported future research on ethics in different associations.

Al-Omari (2012) opine that there were restricted investigations of the ethical atmosphere in higher education. Also, people in general anticipate that education will assume a role in the learning of values and ethics (Reimer, Paolitto, and Hersh 1986). Inside their obligations, pioneers in higher education confront every day circumstances where most choices hold ethical outcomes (Beckner 2004; Reimer, Paolitto, and Hersh 1986). Employees also have a noteworthy task to carry out in the ethical improvement of understudies (Chickering and Reisser 1993; Reimer, Paolitto, and Hersh 1986). That and understudies need to comprehend and figure out the way in which to manage ethical difficulties (Henle 2006).

Astin and Antonio (2004) studied the way in which the understudy connection with an establishment over many years influences its character. In what way do these staff pioneers settle ethical issues that Burns (2003) portrays as unavoidable? Here, Gbadamosi (2004) indicated significant intercorrelations among variables and limited construct validity for the examination misconduct scale, suggesting cheating behaviour, intervention and desperation as key factors. In this regard, Jenson and De Castell (2004) examined in depth the purchasing of technologically enabled plagiarism detection programs by higher education institutions in an effort to better understand underlying

assumptions about epistemology, learning and cognition in a digitally (re)mediated “knowledge economy”.

Carpenter et al. (2006) note that academic dishonesty has become a serious problem at the institutions of higher learning, particularly in engineering where, according to previous research, engineering undergraduates are among the most likely to cheat in college. Willinsky and Alperin (2011) regard the principles by which scholarly publications are disseminated and shared as a matter of academic ethics. Jordan (2013) comments that the intended goal of many empirical projects in academic ethics is to draw causal conclusions on what lead or not to academic integrity. Brown (2000) found moderately strong evidence that the level of participation in unethical academic practices by graduate business students increased over the period from 1993 to 1998. Other studies have covered longer periods, presenting implications for faculty and managers. Webber (1976) examines some of the common difficulties experienced by young specialists.

When discussing early frustration and dissatisfaction, reference is made to the early years of one’s first permanent job, which can be difficult. The young college graduate’s job expectations often exceed reality, eliciting feelings of underutilisation that can result in departure. Paradoxically, management’s attitudes and policies may promote this “immature behaviour”.

Taoussanidis and Antoniadou (2006) explain that the principles and practice of environmentally and socially sustainable engineering are in line with growing community expectations and the strengthening voice of civil society in engineering interventions. Giacalone, Jurkiewicz and Deckop (2008) test a refined materialism–post-materialism scale, concomitant with a measure of hope, towards the end of predicting ethics and social responsibility concerns in individuals. These perspectives are consistent with recommendations in previous research (Brechtin 1999; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 2003; Layman and Carmines 1997) and echoed by Inglehart and Welzel’s (2005) work. Related dispositions can be found within the context of positive organisational scholarship and positive psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000), and have been used to explain business ethics and social responsibility (Giacalone, Jurkiewicz, and Fry 2005). The results also demonstrate that predictors such as hope can help to extend the explanatory potential of an interactive materialist–post-materialist model to disciplines beyond political science and psychology (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 2003; Kasser 2002).

Bergman et al. (2014) investigate the relationships between narcissism, materialism, and environmental ethics in undergraduate business students and indicate that narcissism has an indirect effect on environmental ethics. Furthermore, Foster, Campbell and Twenge (2003) completed a study that indicated narcissism by world region, and Thoms (2008) comments that ethical integrity and moral culture are defined and ethical integrity, dilemmas and failures, and organisational moral culture are

examined. Harkavy (2006) supplements these comments with the following claims: (1) the goal for universities should be to contribute significantly to developing and sustaining democratic schools, communities, and societies; and (2) by working to realise that goal, democratic-minded academics can powerfully help American higher education in particular. Schmidt-Wilk, Heaton and Steingard (2000) attempted to emulate nineteenth-century physical sciences, the objectivity-seeking management education which relied on materialist world views and methods that hindered our study, and to experience the essentially spiritual foundation of our field. Drucker (1988) wrote, we “must animate all we do.”

Regarding career goals and social objectives, studies are conducted on perspectives such as adolescents’ career-related goals in social context, the role of personality, social support systems, and the social cognitive career theory (SCCT)<sup>2</sup> variables of self-efficacy, concepts of self-esteem and confidence are attributes that influence the power, the way in which identity motives drawn from experiences in graduate school relate to professional identification and career goals. Tynkkynen (2013) focused on adolescents’ career-related goals in social context. The lifespan model of motivation (Nurmi 2004; Salmela-Aro 2009; Salmela-Aro et al. 2009; Salmela-Aro, Savolainen, and Holopainen 2009; Salmela-Aro, Tolvanen, and Nurmi 2009) and the expectancy–value theory (Eccles et al. 1983; Jacobs and Eccles 2000; Wigfield, Tonks, and Klauda 2009) formed the theoretical framework for the study. The results showed that a negative parenting style such as guilt-inducing psychological control is related to lower parental educational aspirations for their child.

To extend the SCCT choice model, Rogers, Creed and Glendon (2008) tested the role of personality, social supports, and the SCCT variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals in explaining the career readiness actions of career planning and exploration. Powell (2009) summarises that concepts of self-esteem and confidence are attributes that influence the power of self or the identity of a person that is such as the ability to be successful in work. GRECO (2016) proposes that professional identification is an important precursor to the development of career goals. The stage 1 qualitative analysis in the study was used to (1) identify measures corresponding to four psychological motives (i.e. identity, control, meaning, and belonging), given by Ashforth and Johnson (2012) and Ashforth, Harrison and Corley (2008) as antecedents of identification, and (2) identify representative measures of career goals for graduate students. The responses from the stage 1 qualitative survey along with the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979) and the goal setting literature served as the basis for the development of the stage 2 quantitative survey assessing both short-term and long-term career goals in accordance with the study plan.

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2 The social cognitive career theory (SCCT) recognises the importance of individual differences and contextual influences in the career decision-making process.

To sum up, there is an existing premise for this study. Studies on materialism and consumer behaviour have been conducted since the 1950s using several perspectives, such as luxury products, low-income consumers and specific populations. Still there is a lack of research that focuses on the exact phenomena of relationships between academics and materialism and resultant ethical development, especially in the assessed untouched region, since most studies were conducted in the US, with some studies in the Middle East, South East Asia and Africa. This study attempts to add to the research with the help of an effective survey in an empirically untouched region, assessing the ways in which the shifting ethical perspectives of money-orientated learned individuals affect their approach towards family, career and societal bounds.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

The study used an exploratory research design approach for its research accomplishment. The present study is a primary survey conducted from the various departments of a leading university in north-western India in 2017, representing the perceptions and attitudes of the typical college students at this university. The exploratory research design was chosen owing to feasibility and time limitation grounds. Furthermore, the institution chosen for the study purpose is regarded as the top institution in the whole region, in terms of rankings and accreditations, hence, it will serve well to assess the scenario of the standard colleges in the region.

### Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

The target population for this study consisted of registered undergraduate and postgraduate students of various departments of different faculties at a leading university in Punjab, north-western India, in 2017. There were 10 000 students in the mid-sized residential campus of the university (UGC n.d.). Our population of focus here for this survey, excluding MPhil and PhD students, is 9 132.

Earlier studies conducted on the subject matter used questionnaire-based surveys for their analysis and observations, and in some cases used a considerable sample (Carpenter et al. 2006; Gbadamosi 2004; Likitapiwat, Sereetrakul, and Wichadee 2015; Rogers, Creed, and Glendon 2008) and in other cases a small sample (Talpade and Talpade 2011; Webber 1976), hence, the sample size is appropriate to the requirements of the particular study.

In the primary survey, supplemented by a specialised conclusion, a total of 100 students were chosen as sampling unit elements for the purpose of this survey, using a stratified sampling technique. The reason for taking a sample of 100 from about 9 000 students is because of the difference in perceptions of business and students of other faculties. The total number of students from the Faculty of Economics and Business is about 1 000 and hence a sample of 50 students constituted 5 per cent of the concerned population. For the rest of the faculties, a sample of 50 constituted 0.62 per cent of the population.

Considering the time limitation and similarity of perceptions among non-business faculties, the foregoing sample was acceptable. As a whole, the sample is 1.1 per cent of the chosen population.

Accordingly, 50 forms were distributed among the business students, with the same number distributed among students of other faculties. Only those students who were willing to participate and who were aware of the research phenomenon were given the questionnaires to prevent any irregularities. For business students, the forms were given in the different faculties using the Bayesian approach of simple random sampling, whereas for other subjects, the forms were distributed at student activity centres at the university. Out of total 100 forms distributed among the students, 70 completed forms were received and were in accordance with the requirements for the study.

### Data Collection Instruments

Based on the instrument used in previous studies and feasibility, self-administered questionnaires, which included close-ended questions and open-ended responses, were used as the most feasible method for the survey. A self-administered questionnaire refers to a questionnaire that has been designed specifically to be completed by a respondent without the intervention of the researchers (for example, an interviewer) collecting the data. Close-ended questions are critical to collecting survey responses within a limited frame of options. Closed-ended questions are the foundation of all statistical analysis techniques applied.

### Measuring the Stimuli(s) of Materialism

Taking the foregoing review as a base point and considering the general phenomenon, indicators given in Table 1 have been used as a measure of the stimuli and impact of materialism.

**Table 1:** Various variables used as determinants of materialism

| S. No. | Variables         | Description  |
|--------|-------------------|--|
| 1.     | Income            | Income is the annual money inflow in the family as a subset of the study population and its impact on the materialistic behaviour as measured in the study. This variable has been measured using a question on annual family income, with options spread among ranges.  |
| 2.     | Personal expenses | Personal expenses are the regular monthly expenses of an individual consisting of their day-to-day expenses. These expenses vary based on the amount and kinds of expense made on luxuries or necessities. For a student, monthly pocket money has been considered in this regard. The impact on the materialistic behaviour had been measured in the study. This variable was measured using a question on monthly pocket money received from family, with options. |

| <b>S. No.</b> | <b>Variables</b>             | <b>Description</b>   |
|---------------|------------------------------|--|
| 3.            | Paternal occupation          | Paternal occupation is the level of the father's educational qualifications. It can have a relative impact on the individual's materialistic behaviour, given the influence of other reprehensive factors. This variable was measured using a question on the father's occupation, with options spread among ranges.   |
| 4.            | Shopping with friends        | Shopping with friends is concerned with the dimension group's shopping behaviour. Social groups have a great impact on our perceptions and actions towards a particular object or stimuli. Accordingly, it helps to determine the impact on individual materialistic behaviour and the resultant focus on career or social goals. This variable was measured using a question on the frequency of visits to shopping malls with friends, with options spread among relevant options.           |
| 5.            | Shopping with family         | Family is the most effective group that can influence an individual's social and moral persuasion towards an object or stimuli in existence. Shopping with family is again concerned with the dimension group's shopping behaviour. Accordingly, it helps to determine the impact on individual materialistic behaviour and the resultant focus on career or social goals. This variable was measured using a question on the frequency of visits to shopping malls with family, with options. |
| 6.            | Watching movies with friends | Spending time with friends moulds our social behaviour and, accordingly, we collectively develop a few group habits that shape or influence our personalities and perceptions. This variable was measured using a question on the frequency of watching movies with friends, with options spread among requisite ranges.   |
| 7.            | Watching movies with family  | Spending time with family enhances our family relations and, accordingly, inclines us more towards the family or societal goals. This variable was measured using a question on the frequency of watching movies with family, with options spread among few variations.  |
| 8.            | Eating out with friends      | This activity that lasts a few minutes or a few hours with friends again moulds our habits and social behaviour. This variable was measured using a question on the frequency of going for fast food or to a restaurant with friends, with options spread among ranges.  |
| 9.            | Eating out with family       | This activity that lasts a few minutes or a few hours with family enhances our family relations and, accordingly, inclines us more towards the family or societal goals. This variable was measured using a question on the frequency of going for fast food or to a restaurant with family, with options spread among relevant ranges.  |
| 10.           | Travelling with friends      | Travelling with friends is an extended activity that can last from a few days to weeks. It highly modifies our social  |

| S. No. | Variables                    | Description  |
|--------|------------------------------|--|
|        |                              | behaviour and, accordingly, we collectively develop a few longer staying group habits that shape or influence our personalities and perceptions. This has a lasting impact. This variable was measured using a question on the frequency of out-of-station visits with friends in the last year, with options spread among requisite options.  |
| 11.    | Travelling with family       | Travelling with family is again an extended activity that enhances our long-term family relations and, accordingly, inclines us more towards the family or societal goals in the long run. It is an impactful variable in shaping our relations and incline towards a complete life. This variable was measured using a question on the frequency of out-of-station visits with family in the last year, spread among options.   |
| 12.    | Family interactions          | Family interactions are an important factor shaping our family relations and social behaviour as a socially responsible cause. "The family that eats together stays long together." This variable was measured using a question on the frequency of interactions with family, with options spread among relevancies.   |
| 13.    | Paternal academic background | Paternal academic background helps to mould individuals' learned understandings and aesthetics of individuals' social behaviour. Combined with the maternal academic background, it is an impactful variable, shaping individuals' personalities and perceptions. This variable was measured using a question on the father's educational level, spread among options.   |
| 14.    | Consumption communication    | This variable was measured using a question on the frequency of communication with peers about consumption matters, with options spread among frequencies.   |
| 15.    | Age group background         | Age group background defines one's level of maturity among one's peer groupings. Although mental age is a different parameter from that of biological age, age is still viewed as an effective measure to determine the maturity of an individual and is somewhere positively related to one's materialistic mindset in one's initial years of career and education. This variable was measured using a question on the age bracket the respondent belongs to, with options. |

## Data Analysis

Cronbach's alpha to test reliability, principal component analysis (factor analysis) with varimax rotation to reduce dimensions and K-means clustering to apportion the respondent into specific clusters are the key techniques applied in an analysis. Reliability is observed up to acceptance level. The principal component analysis

interpreted the factors extracted. K-means clustering classified the students into three clusters, namely, “consumption communicative senior poor students”, “elite background senior rich students”, and “lifestyle communicative young poor students”, with the help of bar diagrams.

Cronbach’s alpha was used to test the reliability of the data inputs. Cronbach’s alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is how closely related items in a set are as a group. It is considered a measure of scale reliability. Kline (1999) noted that although the generally accepted value of 0.8 is appropriate for cognitive tests such as intelligence tests, for ability tests a cut-off point of 0.7 is more suitable. Values lower than 0.5 indicate an unreliable scale. In this study, the scale value is 0.683 which is closer to the acceptance level.

Principal component analysis (factor analysis) with varimax rotation is applied to the study to summarise the key factors underlying stimuli. Factor analysis represents a set of observed variables in items of several “common” factors plus a factor which is unique to each variable. These underlying dimensions are known as factors and are an uncorrelated orthogonal basis set. A varimax rotation is a change of coordinates used in the principal component analysis that maximises the sum of the variances of the squared loadings. All the coefficients will thus be either large or near zero, with a few midway values. To check the input before doing the factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett’s test of sphericity were applied. The KMO test can be used to calculate individual and numerous variables and represents the ratio of the squared correlation between variables to the squared partial correlation between variables. The KMO test statistic varies between 0 and 1. Kaiser and Rice (1974) recommend accepting values greater than 0.5. This measure indicates a highly significant correlation among the items of the constructs in the survey. The sample adequacy of 0.6 is considered acceptable. Bartlett’s test shows that the variables have a significant correlation between them and hence can be grouped.

In statistics, Bartlett’s test (see Snedecor and Cochran 1989) is used to test if K-samples are from populations with equal variances. In addition, factor loading is considered significant if the factors are  $> 0.50$  (Hair et al. 2010). In this study, items which are loaded under each factor are  $> 0.50$  and hence were accepted. To apportion the respondent into specific clusters, K-means clustering was applied. K-means clustering is a type of unsupervised learning, which is used with unlabelled data (i.e. data without defined categories or groups). The goal of this algorithm is to find groups in the data, with the number of groups represented by the variable K. The three-cluster solution is determined to be the most appropriate means to understand the attitudinal difference. Cluster analysis is used where students were classified into three clusters. All three clusters had a common characteristic, namely, the majority were female postgraduate students from semi-urban locality. Cluster 1, labelled as “consumption communicative senior poor students”, consists of 38 cases. Cluster 2, labelled as “elite background senior rich students”, consists of eight cases. Cluster 3, labelled as “lifestyle

communicative young poor students”, consists of 24 cases. Bar diagrams interpreted the variant level of materialistic goals and integrated development across clusters.

## Findings

This section presents key findings found from the study. It includes dimension reduction and cluster formation from the observations. Descriptive details of the sample observations are given in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Demographic information of the sample

| <b>Demographic variables</b> | <b>Characteristics</b>          | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Age group                    | 18–21 years                     | 47.1              |
|                              | 22–25 years                     | 48.6              |
|                              | 26–29 years                     | 2.9               |
|                              | Other, specify                  | 1.4               |
| Religious background         | Hinduism                        | 30.0              |
|                              | Sikhism                         | 70.0              |
| Gender                       | Male                            | 14.3              |
|                              | Female                          | 85.7              |
| Annual family income         | INR 100 000 or less             | 32.9              |
|                              | Between INR 100 001 and 300 000 | 44.3              |
|                              | Between INR 300 001 and 500 000 | 15.7              |
|                              | Between INR 700 001 and 900 000 | 2.9               |
|                              | Not specified                   | 4.3               |
| Residential locality         | Urban                           | 47.1              |
|                              | Semi-urban                      | 17.1              |
|                              | Rural                           | 35.7              |
| District jurisdiction        | Amritsar                        | 67.1              |
|                              | Bhatinda                        | 1.4               |
|                              | Faridkot                        | 1.4               |
|                              | Fazilka                         | 1.4               |
|                              | Gurdaspur                       | 1.4               |
|                              | Hoshiarpur                      | 1.4               |
|                              | Jalandhar                       | 2.9               |
|                              | Kangra                          | 2.9               |
|                              | Kapurthala                      | 1.4               |
|                              | Pathankot                       | 2.9               |
|                              | Tarn Taran                      | 15.7              |
|                              | Academic level                  | Undergraduate     |
| Postgraduate                 |                                 | 74.3              |
| Business students            | Yes                             | 60.0              |
|                              | No                              | 40.0              |

### Principal Component Analysis and Scale Reliability

Appropriateness of factor analysis is tested using two important measures. The first measure is the KMO test which gives the overall sampling adequacy (Kaiser 1970). In this study, the scales are within the acceptable range, i.e. 0.601, which falls within the acceptable limit and the composite reliability of all latent constructs exceed the proposed value of 0.5. Table 3 shows the results of the KMO's and Bartlett's test. The KMO measure indicates that the sample size is adequate. The other measurement is Bartlett's test of sphericity and its value was 230.937 and at 1 per cent level of significance as  $p < 0.001$ , which is fit to use.

**Table 3:** KMO's and Bartlett's test

|                               |                    |         |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| KMO test of sampling adequacy |                    | .601    |
| Bartlett's test of sphericity | Approx. chi-square | 230.937 |
|                               | Df                 | 105     |
|                               | Sig.               | .000    |

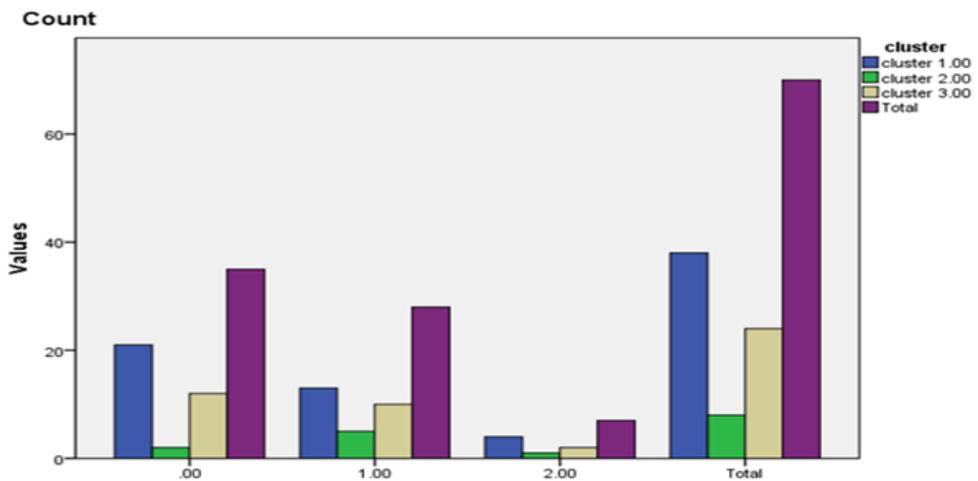
In the rotated factor matrix, the factors as given in Table 4 have been extracted with loading and indicated a significant influence.

**Table 4:** Factors interpreted using principal component analysis

| Factor and underlying variables    | Coefficient value | Variance (%) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| <b>1. Status and monetary flow</b> |                   | 12.895       |
| a. Income flow                     | 0.675             |              |
| b. Personal expenses               | 0.665             |              |
| c. Paternal occupation             | 0.652             |              |
| <b>2. Group shopping behaviour</b> |                   | 12.538       |
| a. Shopping with friends           | 0.778             |              |
| b. Shopping with family            | 0.743             |              |
| <b>3. Group lifestyle</b>          |                   | 12.262       |
| a. Watching movies with friends    | 0.734             |              |
| b. Watching movies with family     | 0.679             |              |
| c. Eating out with friends         | 0.597             |              |
| d. Eating out with family          | 0.509             |              |
| <b>4. Group recreation</b>         |                   | 10.527       |
| a. Travelling with friends         | 0.815             |              |
| b. Travelling with family          | 0.713             |              |
| <b>5. Family communication</b>     |                   | 9.842        |
| a. Family interactions             | 0.838             |              |
| <b>6. Personal background</b>      |                   | 9.008        |
| a. Paternal academic background    | 0.837             |              |
| b. Consumption communication       | 0.546             |              |
| c. Age group                       | 0.467             |              |
| <b>Total variance</b>              |                   | 67.073       |

## K-Means Clustering

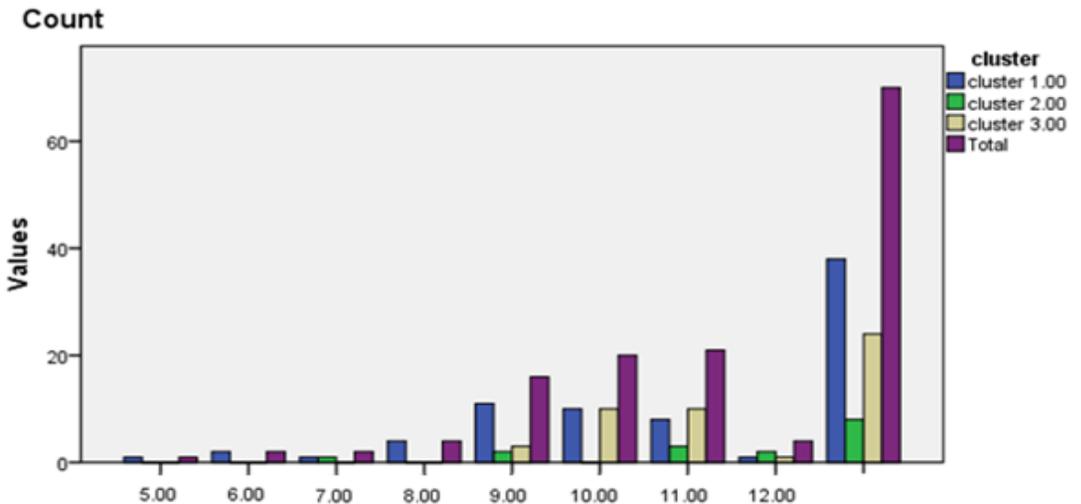
Discussing the earlier theory in brief, the unethical behaviour of CEOs may be traced to the lack of courses in ethics and social responsibility in our education system (Pereira 2006). Materialism and life satisfaction are not related. Age was found negatively related to materialism. Educational level had a negative impact on life satisfaction of immigrant Hispanic males (Talpade and Talpade 2011). Happiness and comfort are interconnected and represent human goals. Young consumers are associated with the belief that status, differentiation and materialism are significantly connected. A culture without integrity cannot survive (Keller 2000). Discussing academic values is important to establish a “cohesive element” for more heterogeneous systems of higher education (Sadlak n.d.). Accordingly, by using the cluster analysis, the results were obtained and are shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Bar diagram depicting level of materialistic goals across observed clusters

As shown in Figure 1, cluster 1, “consumption communicative senior poor students”, the largest cluster, had the highest number of respondents observed not having materialistic career goals, followed by rest of the respondents who mostly had a moderate level of materialistic career goals. Cluster 2, “elite background senior rich students”, the smallest cluster, had the highest number of respondents observed having a moderate level of materialistic career goals, followed by rest of the respondents who mostly had no materialistic career goals. Cluster 3, “lifestyle communicative young poor students”, similar to cluster 1, had the highest number of respondents observed having no materialistic career goals, followed by rest of the respondents who mostly had a moderate level of materialistic career goals. From the given results, social interaction, whether regarding consumption or lifestyle, has been observed as having a significant impact on the existence of materialistic career goals in the sample. It can be said for the observed properties that with increasing communicativeness the probability of having low materialistic career goals increases.

The levels of integrated development across the clusters are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Bar diagram depicting level of integrated development across clusters

As shown in Figure 2, cluster 1, “consumption communicative senior poor students”, the largest cluster, has higher prospects for integrated career and social development, with most of the cases standing at a level of 9, 10 or 11, out of an overall 12. Cluster 2, “elite background senior rich students”, the smallest cluster, also has high prospects for integrated career and social development, with most of the cases standing at a level of 9, 11 or 12, out of an overall 12, providing the need to assess some other variables that might have influenced the derivation of integrated career and social development. Cluster 3, “lifestyle communicative young poor students”, similar to cluster 1, has higher prospects for integrated career and social development, with most of the cases standing at a level of 10 or 11, out of an overall 12. In whole, social interaction has been observed as influencing the prospective integrated career and social development of the sample to an extent.

### Other Findings

Based on the findings of previous studies, it was expected that students easily lose sight of personal responsibility for being honest, the integrity of their personal relationships, and the maintenance of trustworthy communities (Vojak 2006). When testing the foregoing, based on the test of normality, only variables regarding interaction with family and friends and integrity were qualified; all four variables observed  $t$ -values higher than the critical values, hence the foregoing has been rejected, and it has been observed that students have integrity in their relationships, and that they maintain trustworthy communities (Turcios-Cotto and Milan 2013). The expectations about higher education may differ in frequency and meaning, based on racial or ethnic

differences. Youths from disadvantaged segments were less likely to picture themselves attending higher education; they were more likely to pursue social goals, such as starting their own family. When testing the foregoing using the test of difference (chi-square), religion, residential locality, and father educational level as a basis, it was found that there is a variation in the respondents prospering to pursue career goals based on ethnicity, hence the foregoing is accepted.

Furthermore, business students attending a Jesuit university have lesser love of money than those attending a state university, but higher materialistic envy (Burns and Gupta 2014). Regarding the foregoing, it was found that business students are more focused on materialistic career goals (PG 42.1% and UG 40.0%) than other students (35.3%). When adding the factor of being focused solely on oneself, other subjects students have been observed as being more focused towards materialistic career goals (17.6%) than the sampled business students (PG 7.9% and UG 6.7%). The chi-square value is observed as 1.528, with a  $p$ -value of 0.822, which is much lower than the critical value; hence, the foregoing is accepted as a whole, with partial variation.

Existing research further states that teenagers who have high materialistic values may be experiencing reduced well-being because their needs are not satisfied. Teenagers who communicate more frequently with their peers about consumption matters are likely to develop more materialistic values. Peers with higher social status can lead to irresponsible purchases. Consumption is just a way to stand out in the group (Likitapiwat, Sereetrakul, and Wichadee 2015). When testing the foregoing, it was found that students with high materialistic career goals are experiencing reduced well-being than the rest of the students. The chi-square value is 2.060, with a  $p$ -value of 0.357, which is less than the critical value, hence, the foregoing is accepted. Furthermore, the  $t$ -test value is 15.353, with a  $p$ -value of .000, hence, the foregoing is rejected. Only 7.1 per cent of the respondents supported the proposition that “materialistic success is a means to stand out in the group”. Some earlier research believes that male and female respondents have similar views on business ethics. Senior year business students show more interest and knowledge about business ethics than junior students (Wong and Wong 2016). When comparing the means for various aspects of morale, all values have bigger mean values in the case of male respondents. Furthermore, regarding the preferred method of enhancing morale, more male respondents think that introducing an academic curriculum is enough to meet the needs. More female respondents indicated that social projects, class discussions and assignments are preferred methods of introducing ethics, hence, gender is observed as a matter of variation, and the foregoing is rejected.

## Discussion

Values used to be an integrated part of our overall development. With the pressures of present-day life in the race for money and materialistic success, the focus of students is also shifting from an ethical socially integrated development to materially focused development. The present-day materialistic society seeks a practical approach, in which

personal, social and community responsibilities are often not met. Individuals get addicted to their personal materialistic goals and sometimes even leave behind their own peace of mind. Many higher education institutions are taking initiatives by adding values in their curriculum, but an integrated social development model must be based on the way in which we learn about what is right or wrong, and responsibly promote honesty (Kanda 2015a, 2015b). It may add to the value formation among the academic fraternity, but whether the mere introduction of values to the curriculum and taking lectures would improve the situation is queried. It is all about the effective design and an integrated implementation of the change motives that effect the values instilled into an individual (Iscan and Senemoglu 2009).

In the present study, it has been observed that students have integrity in their relationships, and that they maintain trustworthy communities. The finding is in contrast to that of Vojak (2006) which states that students easily lose sight of personal responsibility for being honest, the integrity of their personal relationships, and the maintenance of trustworthy communities. It implies that we may need not indulge much in looking for alternatives to expand but to retain those good values in the coming phases of life and to conduct new research on the measures to retain such positive indulging stimulus, as it is linked to attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers (Bland, Church, and Luo 2014; Skilbeck and Connell 2003).

The findings support those by Turcios-Cotto and Milan (2013), which reported that the expectations about higher education differ in frequency and meaning based on racial or ethnic differences. Youths from disadvantaged communities were less likely to picture themselves attending higher education; they were more likely to pursue social goals, such as starting their own family. Such social goals are virtuous when referring to retaining good values. Regarding career and materialistic goals, individuals need to pursue these goals in accordance with their needs. In this regard, GRECO (2016) proposes that professional identification be regarded as an important precursor to the development of career goals. Tynkkynen (2013) showed that a negative parenting style such as guilt-inducing psychological control is related to lower parental educational aspirations for children. To encourage racial and ethnic groups towards pursuing careers and education, institutions and local community organisations may organise more systematically designed and audience-focused awareness and training workshops. Appointing representative racial or ethnic educators for the concerned regional parts may also help to improvise education and career enticement (De Brey et al. 2019).

The findings slightly support those by Burns and Gupta (2014) that business students were more focused on materialistic career goals than other students, but when adding the factor of being focused solely on oneself, other subjects students have been observed as being more focused towards materialistic career goals (17.6%) than that of the sampled business students. We need to study the underlying stimuli that cause materialism, as discussed below. It may again have been linked to attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers, as suggested by authors such as Bland, Church and Luo

(2014) and Skilbeck and Connell (2003). The findings support those by Likitapiwat, Sereetrakul and Wichadee (2015), which reported that students with high materialistic career goals experience reduced well-being than the rest of the students. It implies that we do need to look after our social needs too, and that, according to Maslow, we can achieve both career and social goals if they are balanced (Uysal, Aydemir, and Genc 2017).

According to Likitapiwat, Sereetrakul and Wichadee (2015), only a few respondents supported the proposition that “materialistic success is a means to stand out in the group”. This study reported the same finding. We also need to look for initiatives to retain such viewpoints. Some of the earlier research believes that both male and female students have similar views on business ethics. Senior-year business students show more interest and knowledge about business ethics than junior-year students, hence, again institutions need to design their humanistic educational approach according to the needs and ethnicities of the target audience group, to best meet the sought-after requirements.

When comparing the various aspects of morale (Wong and Wong 2016), all values are bigger in the case of the male respondents, hence, there is substantial variation in the views of male and female respondents. Furthermore, in the case of the preferred method of enhancing morale, more male respondents think that introducing an academic curriculum is enough to meet the needs. More female respondents reported that the social projects, class discussions and assignments are preferred methods of introducing ethics, hence, gender is observed as a matter of variation here. Institutions therefore need to design their humanistic education approach according to the needs and ethnicities of the target audience group, to best meet the sought-after requirements.

According to Likitapiwat, Sereetrakul and Wichadee (2015), six factors, namely, status and monetary flow, group shopping behaviour, group lifestyle, group recreation, family communication, and personality background were reported and jointly explained the majority of the variations. These variations were a result of the partially explorative analysis. Materialism is explained by the calculated factors and explains further the ethical development. Correlation and covariance are only observed intra-factors not inter-factors. Communities and institutions need to focus on these factors while taking initiatives to purify the current social picture of materialism and development. It is linked with attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers (Bland, Church, and Luo 2014; Skilbeck and Connell 2003).

Accordance to Likitapiwat, Sereetrakul and Wichadee (2015), students were classified into three clusters, namely, consumption communicative senior poor students, elite background senior rich students, and lifestyle communicative young poor students. All three clusters shared the common characteristic of having as the majority female postgraduate students from semi-urban locality. In support of Likitapiwat, Sereetrakul and Wichadee (2015), consumption and lifestyle have a relative impact on materialism

among students for the selected sample, hence, families, social communities and colleges need to take strong action to develop ideal individual characters. Effective design and an integrated implementation of the change motives instil the values into individuals (Iskan and Senemoglu 2009). Powell (2009) summarises concepts of self-esteem and confidence as attributes that influence the power of self or identity of a person such as one's ability to be successful in work.

In contradiction to the finding by Wong and Wong (2016), this study found a less significant impact of the level of higher education and other family-related factors on materialism in the life of college students. This finding is an optimistic fact to learn about the population. Other dimensions causing stress and materialism may be explored in consumption communicative senior poor students, the largest cluster, which had the highest number of respondents who reported not having materialistic career goals, followed by the rest of the respondents who had a moderate level of materialistic career goals. Elite background senior rich students, the smallest cluster, had the highest number of respondents who reported having a moderate level of materialistic career goals, followed by the rest of the respondents who had no materialistic career goals. Lifestyle communicative young poor students had the highest number of respondents who reported having no materialistic career goals, followed by the rest of the respondents who had moderate career goals. Communication should be combined with materialism; hence, all the stakeholders need to focus on maintaining more positive communication in communities.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The value of the study lies in ascertaining the psychographic aspects of a standard college student, and contributes towards integrated career and social development of students in the sampled region. The study is useful for the institutions and society at large in the region to understand the negative stimulus contributing towards the enhancement of sole materialistic career goals in educated youths, and to learn in which way to preserve values to ensure long-term ethical growth. As reported in the findings, students have integrity in their relationships. The results present an overall positive picture of the existence of values and integrated career and social development. Students have integrity in their relationships and they maintain trustworthy communities.

Consumption communicative senior poor students and lifestyle communicative young poor students have no materialistic career goals and have higher prospects for integrated career and social development. On the other hand, elite background senior rich students have a moderate level of materialistic career goals. All three clusters have high prospects for integrated career and social development, and provide the need to assess other variables that may had an impact on the derivation of integrated career and social development. Here it must be noted that there is a variation in the respondents who want to pursue social goals based on ethnicity. Academic faculty was reported as a matter of variation on motivation towards materialistic career goals. Furthermore, gender is a matter of variation for perspectives towards ethics. Consumption and lifestyle have a

relative impact on materialism among students. Social interaction was reported as having a significant impact on the materialistic career goals in the sample and therefore affect the prospective integrated career and social development of the sample to an extent. It can be said for the observed properties that with the increasing communicativeness the probability of having low materialistic career goals increases.

Sirgy (1998) comments that materialism can lead to human beings' dissatisfaction because they have expectations related to their experiences associated with affection and cognition. Materialistic career goals in students were reported as substantially influencing their integrated career and social development. Students with high materialistic career goals were reported as experiencing reduced well-being than the rest of the students. Materialism was reportedly explained by status and monetary flow, group shopping behaviour, group lifestyle, group recreation, family communication, and personality background, according to the study results. These factors may be studied in more depth in future studies to bring more insightful findings.

Students from different ethnicities, especially those belonging to economically and socially disadvantaged communities, should be the core focus when designing policies and programmes for human resource development, taking into consideration the development of key aspects of ethical development of budding learned social citizens who contribute to the growth of society and the economy. We need to focus on the aspects divulging the fraternity of a particular academic discipline more towards materialism. Gender-based aspects in this regard may be further investigated to design impactful strategies. Materialism is explained by status and monetary flow, group shopping behaviour, group lifestyle, group recreation, family communication, and personality background; hence these factors should be considered when designing institutional strategies. As students with high materialistic career goals were reported as experiencing reduced well-being than the rest of the students, they should work towards a balance between their personal and future professional life. Professional development workshops at institutions, which include the personal development aspects, are recommended.

Consumption and lifestyle were reported as having a relative impact on the materialism among students, hence, they need to choose what expenses and lifestyle they need. This decision will help them improve their personal well-being and reduce their regular expenditure. Social interaction was reported as having a significant impact on the materialistic career goals in the sample and influencing the prospective integrated career and social development. In this regard, Sirgy (1998), Sirgy, Dong-Jin et al. (1998) and Sirgy, Dong-Jin, Kosenko, et al. (1998) comment that materialism can lead to human beings' dissatisfaction because they can have expectations related to their experiences associated with affection and cognition. Again, students will need to assess their needs. They need to focus more on the developmental aspects, rather than focusing on the consumption and lifestyle of their peer groups. Furthermore, family, faculty members and peer groups can help to develop positive communication habits. The findings

suggest that with the increasing communicativeness, the probability of having low materialistic career goals increases. Again, family, faculty members and peer groups play important roles when developing positive communication habits.

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