

## Experiential Materialism? An Essay on the Development of Materialism from the Behavior of Publication Related to Experiential Consumption

### Materialismo Experiential? Um Ensaio sobre o Desenvolvimento do Materialismo a partir do Comportamento de Publicações Relacionadas ao Consumo Experiential

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**Purpose:** This essay aims to discuss the development of materialistic consumption of experience from the behavior of publications related to consumption on digital social networks. **Approach:** Extensive survey and analysis in the literature of topics related to materialism and its particularities, existing concepts for the consumption of experience and the implications of technology in consumer practices. **Results:** The materialism that was previously achieved by the material purchases exhibition in physical environments is currently made from virtual disclosures, which made any kind of purchase susceptible to this behavior development and giving signs of the constitution of what was sought to be called materialism experiential. **Academic contributions** - This essay may contribute to the development of new studies that seek to test and understand the relationships of specific materialism of social networks in different contexts and from the perspective of different areas of knowledge, to the point that it becomes possible to offer subsidies for new understandings about materialism and digital platforms as a transforming aspect of human behavior.

**Keywords:** Materialism; Consumption of experience; Social networks;

**Objetivo** – Este ensaio visa discutir o desenvolvimento do consumo materialista de experiência a partir do comportamento de publicações relacionadas ao consumo nas redes sociais digitais. **Abordagem** - Ampla pesquisa e análise da literatura de tópicos relacionados ao materialismo e suas particularidades, conceitos existentes para o consumo de experiência e implicações da tecnologia nas práticas do consumidor. **Resultados** - O materialismo anteriormente alcançado pela exposição de compras de materiais em ambientes físicos é atualmente realizado a partir de divulgações virtuais, o que tornou qualquer tipo de compra suscetível a esse desenvolvimento comportamental e dá sinais da constituição do que se busca denominar materialismo de experiência. **Contribuições acadêmicas** - Este ensaio pode contribuir para o desenvolvimento de novos estudos que busquem testar e entender as relações do materialismo específico das redes sociais em diferentes contextos e da perspectiva de diferentes áreas do conhecimento, a ponto de tornar possível oferecer subsídios por novos entendimentos sobre materialismo e plataformas digitais como um aspecto transformador do comportamento humano.

**Palavras-chave:** Materialismo; Consumo de experiência; Redes Sociais.

#### 1. Introduction

The Consumption has become a socially accepted and encouraged practice in modernity with individuals employing it for the purpose of attenuating feelings of ambiguity and inferiority, as well as to interact with other members of society (Lipovetsky, 2007; Bauman, 2008). It is also evident that the excessive valuation of goods and possessions precedes social, psychical and behavioral problems, which results in spending more money than intended by consumers when making their purchases (Belk, 1985). In this scenario, materialism represents one of the harms generated by exacerbated consumption

(Richins & Dawson, 1992).

Investigations of materialism have been carried out for some decades, pointing to antecedents and consequents which, for the most part, are summarized in problematic behaviors that are perpetuates in society (Richins, 2017). Therefore, materialism is defined as “the extent to which individuals attempt to engage in the construction and maintenance of the self through the acquisition and use of products, services, experiences, or relationships that are perceived to provide desirable symbolic value” (Shrum et al., 2013, p. 1180).

With the evolution of the social body and markets, it becomes evident that new factors may be related to this construct, making their understandings necessary (Richins, 2017). In this context, digital social networks represent at present, a new form of interaction and communication, spreading rapidly and having significant and exponential numbers of users. These platforms stimulate the generation of specific behaviors, such as the propagation of publications related to consumer practices which are used as a form of self-exposure and as a tool for maintaining relationships (Duan & Dholakia, 2018).

The display of consumption practices as well as materialism and its reasons for development can't be considered as new behavior. However, the breadth and frequency with they occur in social networks is noticeable because they intensify daily. Another relevant aspect is the type of consumption that is routinely exposed and the experiential consumption, referring to the purchases made for the purpose of consuming life experiences and which are essentially intangible and ephemeral (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003; Carter & Gilovich, 2012), that seems to gain notoriety and represent a substantial part of the content generated by users of social networks (Duan & Dholakia, 2018).

Experiential consumption is commonly associated with the reproduction of perceptions and emotions that determine well-being and happiness, becoming popular in society as it approaches the consumer identity construction (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). However, in addition to the behavioral changes derived from the propagation of social networks, authors such as Shrum et al. (2013) and Richins (2017) indicate that the beneficial properties of this consumption type may be changing for ostensive and banal purposes that are still minimally known in the literature.

According to Richins (2017), social network users present an excessive focus on their experiences' exhibition, ranging from the simplest and daily ones to those considered luxurious and extraordinary. This provokes discussions about how the experiential consumption and the spread of it in social platforms can be considered as defining forces of problematic behavior of consumption, mainly the indication of materialistic values and their negative effects.

Based on such inquiries and phenomena recently addressed in the literature, this theoretical essay aims to discuss the development of materialistic consumption of experience from the behavior of publications related to consumption on digital social networks. As a theoretical justification, the elaboration of this essay may contribute to the deepening of the themes discussed here, so that it is possible to start a discussion about the changes in consumer behavior due to technological advances and the social networks popularization, concerns the problematic consumer behavior development.

Moreover, it is believed to be necessary to discuss new stimulants of materialism, in order to inspire actions capable of mitigating the negative effects of this behavior on individuals. Therefore, this essay seeks to deepen the studies on materialism from conceptual discussions that can serve as a model for the development of studies that intensify the research on consumer practices and their relationship with digital platforms.

For this, this discussion is organized in five sections, besides the present introduction. In the first section, the general principles of materialism are presented and discussed. The second section refers to experiential consumption with the conceptualizations and characteristics of this acquisition type being pointed out. In the third section, brief explanations are made about consumption under the digital media influences. Subsequently, the themes presented are articulated. At last, final considerations for this study are presented.

## **2. Theoretical Review**

### **2.1. General principles of materialism**

From the Industrial Revolution, the consumption of the modern era became synonymous with the democratization of the access to mercantile goods (Lipovetsky, 2007), in which the consumption with a

view to the satisfaction of the basic individual needs ceased to be the prime reason for the occurrence of this activity, becoming a central factor of contemporary society (Lipovetsky, 2007; Bauman, 2008). The modern consumer determines what Bauman (2008) defines as the consumer society, which is shaped by a passion for material goods and a model of life based on essentially materialistic values (Lipovetsky, 2007).

Therefore, among the main definitions verified in the literature, there is materialism as an attitude (Moschis & Churchill, 1978), a personality trait (Belk, 1985), a value (Fournier & Richins, 1991; Richins & Dawson, 1992), an aspiration (Kasser & Ryan, 1993), among others. From a sociological perspective, for example, this phenomenon is described as the value directed to material things, competitiveness and the desire for wealth that are opposed to social and human well-being (Flouri, 1999). For economists, such a relationship between the individual and his economic goods is seen as desired and necessary, being consolidated from the satisfaction derived from the acquisition and possession of material goods (Richins & Rudmin, 1994).

For psychology, marketing and consumer behavior scholars, materialism is understood as a personality trait that is capable of determining two groups of individuals: those considered materialists, who are characterized by considering possessions as essential for the formation of their identities; and non-materialists, who classify possessions as secondary interest attributes (Belk, 1985).

There is also the understanding of materialism as a personal value, determined by the individual's set of central beliefs about the importance of acquisitions and possessions in their lives (Richins & Dawson, 1992). This description is widely disseminated and accepted in the scope of academic research, making it possible to study behaviors, values, effects and implications related to the referred phenomenon (Kasser, 2016), so this is the reason why it will be used as a guiding materialism concept in this essay.

The concepts proposed by Belk (1985) and Richins and Dawson (1992) differ due to the understanding that materialism can be established as an individual's behaviour, being intrinsically related to his/her personality traits. According to Richins (2017), materialism cannot be understood as a behavior or set of them, nor can it only be established as the unique desire for luxury or conspicuous goods. For the author, materialism does not represent a dichotomy where a society can be divided between those who are considered materialists and those who are not, but can be understood as a characteristic that presents itself to a lesser and greater degree in the lives of individuals over time (Richins, 2017). Despite the different approaches and directions given by scholars from different fields of knowledge, the high value for consumer goods is at the heart of materialism.

From the first study on this theme (Ward & Wackman, 1972), materialism is understood as a mechanism used to obtain happiness and satisfaction with life and is still considered as a means to achieve success and social status. Consequently, materialism corresponds to a multidimensional construct, originated from three fundamental characteristics, namely: centrality, where possessions and wealth occupy a central point in the life of individuals; success, concerning the belief that personal success and the way other people judge it is essentially based on material possessions possessed; and happiness, concerning the understanding that the accumulation of goods and wealth provides happiness and life satisfaction (Richins & Dawson, 1992).

In this view, it can be seen that materialistic values make the acquisition of goods and possessions the main life goal of individuals, being made to achieve social well-being and happiness, generating perceptions of success and security (Richins & Dawson, 1992). According to Burroughs and Rindfleisch (2002, p. 349), materialism reflects on the subject's belief that "his well-being depends on the possession of objects," which makes consumer activities a means for the consumer to seek improvements in life. In addition, materialistic individuals tend to use their acquisitions as a way of obtaining privileged positions against their peers, since the signs inherent in consumer goods are considered as social markers, attenuating feelings of ambiguity and contributing to the identity construction (Segal & Podoshen, 2013).

However, in spite of the desire for greater well-being and happiness, materialistic values have been pointed out as triggers of contrary effects (Dittmar, Bond, Hurst & Kasser, 2014), becoming detrimental to the individual and society as the primary intention of consumption obfuscates the other objectives of the subject's personal development, transforming themselves into the life's purpose of consumers and triggering various social, behavioral, and psychic problems (Belk, 1985; Richins & Dawson,

1992).

The welfare resulting from the purchase is perceived by materialistic individuals soon after the purchase of the desired good. However, due to the greed for a greater volume of possessions and unviability of acquiring everything that is desired, levels of satisfaction tend to fall, resulting in negative self-evaluations and inferiority positioning having as consequence feelings such as anxiety and sadness (Dittmar et al., 2014). Likewise, personal relations, collective well-being, and social values considered as conductors of satisfaction and life improvement (Sheldon & Krieger, 2014) are renounced by materialistic people who believe that from the conquest of possessions worldly experiences will achieve success and happiness, mitigating the effects of satisfaction transmitters mentioned (Crusius & Mussweiler, 2012). The union of these factors configures unhappiness, discontentment with life, social isolation and less well-being, stimulating feelings such as ingratitude and envy that generating disorders such as depression and anxiety (Crusius & Mussweiler, 2012; Solom, Watkins, McCurrach & Scheibe, 2017).

Based on the problematic aspects of this behavior, some investigations clarify the need for other consumption options that can provide effective improvements to the social and psychological aspects of consumers (Caldas, 2010), focusing their efforts on purchase types that may stimulate well-being and happiness. In this sense, it makes evident the growth of experience consumption (Pelletier & Collier, 2018), detailed and discussed in the next section.

## **2.2. Experiential consumption: concepts and definitions**

Consumption from an experiential perspective initiates from the vision proposed by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), who define consumption as an acquisition process guided and driven by emotions that provide the generation of self-expression, fantasies, feelings and fun associated with consumption. Based on this understanding, consumption would not only be related to a tangible possession and whose sole intention is the practical utility of the purchased product, but also concerns the awakening of different perceptions and emotions that determine the consumer's well-being and happiness. (Varshenya & Das, 2017). In this context, several studies are aimed at understanding the effectiveness of the purchase practice for improving the lives of individuals, as well as seeking to recognize the motivations that trigger this act.

Among the products that are on the rise in the market, experiences stand out from their proximity to the consumer's self (Pelletier & Collier, 2018), giving rise to the concept determined by Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) as experiential purchases. Experiential purchases are made with the main objective of consuming life experiences, while material goods refer to purchases made with the fundamental intention of obtaining a tangible good as a return (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003).

The distinction between experiences and material goods is not easily made, and the intention behind the purchase is what differentiates material from experiential purchases (Carter & Gilovich, 2012; Schmitt, Joško Brakus & Zarantonello, 2015). For the authors, material consumption is carried out with the intention of obtaining possessions, usually involving objects such as jewelry, clothing and electronic devices, which have durability and tangibility as characteristics. In turn, experiential purchases are made for the purpose of gaining some life experience, are intangible and ephemeral, such as holidays, parties, dinners in restaurants, concerts, concerts and plays, and are stored in the memory of those who lived (Carter & Gilovich, 2012). Another definition for this type of purchase is proposed by Goodman, Malkoc and Stephenson (2016), who introduce experiential consumption as a means of symbolizing the importance of special moments in the subject's life, constituting a purchase that has as its main objective the creation of a remarkable experience.

Research on this theme points out that experiential consumption is positively related to a greater well-being perception and happiness (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003; Howell & Hill, 2009; Carter & Gilovich, 2012; Caprariello & Reis, 2013). This is because this kind of consumption stimulates the sociability of consumers, contributing to the strengthening of interpersonal relations and attenuating negative social comparisons (Howell & Hill, 2009; Caprariello & Reis, 2013; Gilovich, Kumar & Jampol, 2015). In addition, experiences have a uniqueness character, offering the consumer the perception of exclusivity and favoring the constitution and maintenance of their identity (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003; Carter & Gilovich, 2012; Gilovich, Kumar & Jampol, 2015).

In this perspective, Van Boven, Campbell and Gilovich (2010) clarify the importance of the experiential consumption for the individuals' life, denoting that the subjects are formed by the sum of the



experiences that they have. Thus, this type of purchase presents itself as a central aspect of human life, where what is experienced becomes more important than possessions (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). By understanding the social characteristics and identity formation attributed to consumer practices, it is eminently necessary that both through the acquisition of material goods and experiences, consumers can achieve the feelings projected at the moment prior to the purchase, so that the driving emotions of this process are met (Pelletier & Collier, 2018).

Authors such as Pine, Pine and Gilmore (1998) have already shown that, because of the intimate relationship between experiences and individual formation, emotional aspects and rewards become the main motivations for experiential demand and buying, a factor that promotes interpretation of this type of consumption as a positive purchase (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). As for the typologies of experiences capable of offering the desired bonuses, Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2013) classify them as ordinary or extraordinary, distinguishing them according to the frequency in which they occur in individual's life, both contributing to higher rates of satisfaction with life, well-being and self-knowledge.

Regardless of the classification into which the experience is included, it provides positive effects when considered by its holder to be a positive purchase, in which emotions and feelings occurring at the time of post-purchase are considered expected (Pelletier & Collier, 2018). Still according to the authors, when having contrary emotions, consumers can evaluate the experience negatively, then, use or consume more effective material goods to achieve well-being and happiness. Similarly, when experience consumption is performed, motivated to make good impressions or follow preselected consumption patterns, an experience is not conducive to being individual (Zhang, Howell & Caprariello, 2013).

By considering that purchase intentions determine the product's utility, material goods may allow an experience to occur, just as experimental activities may be intended or consumed for material goods (Guevarra & Howell, 2015). Schmitt, Joško Brakus and Zarantonello (2015) discuss that goods and experiences should not be analyzed as a purpose on a single continuum, proposing that any exhibition can be seen as a result of two values: the materialist, which the value of the good is based on material and experimental aspects; and the experimental, which the experimental values stand out (Schmitt, Joško Brakus & Zarantonello, 2015).

It is understood that what defines whether a purchase is considered materialistic is not the value of the good, but the intention behind the purchase, since an experimental purchase can become materialistic when it becomes ostensible, meaning that its sign is more important to the individual than its real utility (Carter & Gilovich, 2012). The elucidation made by Schmitt, Joško Brakus and Zarantonello (2015, p. 5), in which consumption is a "mixture of materialism and experience, and how these two dimensions manifests themselves in a specific purchase and consumption situation", corroborates this proposition. It is still necessary to understand how these values are jointly created and what conditions they potentialize (Schmitt, Joško Brakus & Zarantonello, 2015).

The understanding of experiences as a cause of positive factors denotes signs of not being the only consequences of this type of consumption, emerging questions that seek to understand if experiences, with distinct characteristics and sometimes considered more beneficial than possessions, could become susceptible the previously observed dysfunctions in the consumption of material goods. Or, whether such a type of good could become a stimulant of consumer behavioral problems (Carter & Gilovich, 2012; Shrum et al., 2013; Zhan, Howell & Caprariello, 2013).

In this context, it seems pertinent to promote discussions that can subsidize theories that allow the understanding of the representations of experiential consumption in the life of the individuals.

### **2.3. Exposure and consumption in the digital age**

Researches aimed at understanding the role of social networks in everyday life begins to demonstrate the close and deepening relationship between consumption and new communication forms, especially in young consumers, who take digital environments to self-promotion (Chou & Edge, 2012; Vries & Kühne, 2015). Similarly, because of the large information flow and the presence of a significant number of people, social networks are used as a mechanism of entertainment and fun, to the point that its users consider such platforms as a means to satisfy their leisure demands, which could trigger the dissemination of behaviors of the most different activities performed by individuals (Sung, Lee, Kim & Choi, 2016; Zolkepli, Kamarulzaman & Kitchen, 2018).

The sharing of content related to possessions and experiences has become a widespread behavior

of consumers in the digital environment, and this practice seems to be due to the expression and self-promotion needs, as well as interaction with other people desire and wealth and status demonstrations (Duan & Dholakia, 2018). The consumer's attitude toward digital platforms is altered by the popularization of mobile access, which allows users to record and disseminate the activities they perform in real time (Belk, 2013); consequently, this behavior has significantly affected consumers' intentions and motivations (Belk, 2013; Borah & Tellis, 2016).

In this scenario, Duan and Dholakia (2018) call attention to the representation of publications in social networks, which seem to have the main utility of promoting the acquisition of material goods and experiences which is based mainly on excessively consumer values. This behavior may support the discussions and observations made by Bauman (2008), who pointed out that, based on the popularization of self-exposure behavior in the digital environment, new phenomena detrimental to users' well-being could emerge and be rapidly disseminated. The author also warned that the habit of building a social life mediated by digital technologies would not become an option, characterizing itself as an obligation of modern society (Bauman, 2008).

As a result of the spread of these platforms, a series of behaviors were actually triggered, which led to the emergence of psychosocial disorders already predicted by Bauman (2008) and considered by him as irreversible, even capable of stimulating the development of compulsive activities. Among the expansion of emotion resulting from the use of social networks, the incessant desire for sociability stands out. First, it is required to describe that such necessity is intrinsic to the individual, occurring during all the phases of human existence. Becoming part of a group and gaining social approval characterize themselves as significant external influencers for human behavior, making the choices of different areas of an individual's life based on social representations to which one wishes to portray (Lipovetsky, 2007).

If before the subjects socialized in different ways, at present, social networks dictate the rules and potentiate the forms of exposure and social interaction. These communication tools, developed to facilitate human relations and processes, now become potential pitfalls for individual well-being, predating psychological, behavioral and social harms. In the social media environment, users are directly exposed to bulky daily burdens of information and stimuli that awaken comparisons and feelings of impotence and inferiority.

Therefore, as routinely done in offline environments, several individuals choose to channel their social frustrations, now arising from what is verified by them in social networks, in consumption. In this way, the creation and dissemination of content related to consumption is a notorious and habitual activity in the digital environment, as previously described (Duan & Dholakia, 2018). In addition to the impacts caused by the need for social relationships and the presentation of the "inner self," another factor that influences the exponential use of social networks and the use of consumption practices as a mechanism to attenuate social anxiety, refers to the collection of standards conceived by the society. In this context, social networks are used as virtual shelves, whose purpose is the dissemination of users with the exchange of excessive personal information that results in the accentuated sharing of contents that illustrate the different activities of the individuals (Bauman, 2008; Duan & Dholakia, 2018).

### **3. Experiential materialism: a possible relationship**

The consumption based on material goods was to a great extent, experienced and stimulated, especially in the Western economies. However, from the understanding that the expressive stimuli of material consumption would result in psychological harm to the consumers, the consumption determined as experiential gained prominence being in a frank expansion in the market (Pelletier & Collier, 2018), since first positive results for consumer life (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003; Carter & Gilovich, 2012).

Equally, in the scope of social networks, the sharing of this type of purchase becomes more and more present, being pointed out in studies like those of Krasnova, Widjaja, Buxmann, Wenninger and Benbasat (2015) and Duan and Dholakia (2018). The authors mention that this happens because of the ease of recording the experiments, which can be done during they occur. Accordingly, experiences are viewed as more prudent by society, which would facilitate the spread of this type of consumption in both offline and online environments (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003; Duan & Dholakia, 2018).

However, because it is a type of premature conduct in the digital environment, it is still unknown what effects the behavior of experiential consumer publishing has had on consumers (Duan & Dholakia,

2018). Thus, after such expositions, it resumes the objective of this essay, whose purpose is to **discuss the development of materialistic consumption of experience from the behavior of publications related to consumption on digital social networks**. In this way, the following question is pointed out: **Can materialism in the digital age be classified as materialism of experiences?**

Initially, the relationship between experiential consumption and materialism is eminent. However, investigations into the reasons why such consumption would have harmful effects on consumers is still superficial. In this respect, Zhan, Howell and Caprariello (2013), indicate that the experience consumption, when performed as a means to maintain predetermined lifestyles or as a way of generating good impressions in social groups, reflects negative effects for the achievement of well-being and happiness. Likewise, when realized for ostensible purposes and for identity management, experiential consumption may present itself as a practice determined by essentially materialistic values (Carter & Gilovich, 2012; Shrum et al., 2013), pointing to support for the argumentation of the intrinsic relationship between experience and materialism.

Second, there are considerable points of intersection between the behavior of publication of content related to consumption in social networks and materialism, especially considering that materialistic values could be stimulated from the desire of self-promotion of the subjects in the social networks, often made through the dissemination of consumer practices (Chou & Edge, 2012; Vries & Kühne, 2015; Borah & Tellis, 2016).

Based on the literature, it becomes possible to ascertain that materialistic values have always been understood as synonymous with the acquisitions of material goods that are presented as sources of life improvement by generating perceptions of well-being, happiness, success and security (Richins & Dawson, 1992). It being understood that material goods and quantifiable values permeate the current consumer society.

Despite this common understanding, in the era of rapid access to information and ease of communication, a new kind of materialism-causing event seems to emerge. Consumption, which consists not only of utilitarian aspects but mainly of consolidating social relations, is embedded in the digital environment by strengthening the demonstration of wealth and status and satisfying the need for self-expression (Duan & Dholakia, 2018), effecting the initial questioning about the real relationship between materialism and digital social network environments.

Concerning the convergence between the materialism derived from experiential consumption, it is believed that in seeking the content production in a fast and attractive way, consumers use their experiences publication, exposing themselves and their daily activities. Consequently, it could give rise to a greater trend of materialistic development from experiential consumption, corroborating the propositions made by Duan and Dholakia (2018).

Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) reveal that the consumption of experience has a greater conversational value, which tends to provide more happiness to consumers than the consumption of material goods. Therefore, the consumption of experiential products facilitates the development of interpersonal relationships and conversations based on consumption, which, in addition to the characteristics of social approval, uniqueness and approximation of self-concept, makes explicit the reason why experience is treated as a topic of conversation on purchases and consumption, suggesting a social motivation to become so present in consumers' daily life (Bastos & Brucks, 2017). For this reason, it is considered that people choose to disclose their experiences more than their material acquisitions.

The experiential purchases have presented as antecedents of its accomplishment the conspicuous consumption and of status, being realized with a view to the reach of popularity. Social networks today portray an expressive environment of possibilities for the development of interpersonal relationships, where conceptions of space and place change and give rise to an intensive exchange of personal information.

In addition, it is noticeable in these places the stimulation to luxurious consumption patterns being verified the spread of lifestyles that were previously less exposed. Based on this context, it is believed that the behaviors experienced in social networks may positively influence the desire for consumption practices and values that encourage excessive consumption, to the extent that it is possible for the development of materialism as a consequence of the incisive dissemination of experiences on the social networks.

The initial reflections presented in this article make it possible to start research agendas,

especially in Brazilian studies and carried out in other emerging countries, which highlight the relationships between the topics discussed and the impacts that new digital technologies have on consumption disorders. This is because, as pointed out in investigations such as that of Shukla (2010), consumers in emerging countries present a strong tendency towards overt consumption phenomena, such as conspicuous and materialistic consumption, in which the other people's perception about what they perceive is consumed shows itself as a priority in view of the utilitarian value of its acquisitions, which ends up representing the need for studies that investigate how such societies have been altered due to consumption in the digital age.

Thus, some suggestions are given next: Initially, despite the components presented by this study as potential developers of materialistic values from experiential consumption, it is necessary to understand the antecedents and environmental influences related to the experiential materialism proposed. Previous studies have examined materialism as a consequence of interpersonal influence (Karabati & Cemalcilar, 2010), sociodemographic variables (Zaman, Shah & Hasnu, 2016), among other factors, making it pertinent to investigate how such factors may be related to materialism development based on experiential consumption.

In addition, further research can analyze how cultural and economic factors tend to potentiate materialistic experience consumption and possible consequences of consumption changes through the use of social networking sites, as a significant part of the studies on the subject has been conducted in economically developed countries, which present considerable differences when compared to the culture of those countries recognized as emerging.

The following words are the final considerations of this study.

#### **4. Final considerations**

In the Consumer Behavior field and related areas to this discipline, a diversity of studies is presented with a view to understanding the materialism phenomenon in different contexts and spaces, building an understanding on how such a construct has changed the society life in what is consumption practices. However, despite of the popularization of the research on this subject, Richins (2017) points the need for discussions that examine how and what contemporary events that influence materialism and which can be seen as potential stimulants for the mutations of this behavior.

Thus, this essay found in this gap of knowledge the space for its development, demonstrating itself as a possibility for discussions little accomplished in Brazilian marketing studies. In this essay, an attempt was made to draw an approximation among materialism, the experience consumption and the behavior of dissemination of consumption practices in social networks, presenting a look at the triggering of a materialism type essentially derived from the digital environment. From the literature review, the relationships proposed here can be presented and better delineated with some findings being pointed out.

At first, it is possible to see the connections among the concepts discussed, showing that it is possible to understand that because of the social networks specificities and buying motivations. The experience consumption can be understood as a promoting aspect of materialism today. The subjects' preoccupation with social relationships, the lifestyles maintenance and the well-being achievement and happiness have determined the consumption practices as a mechanism for managing such needs and the experience consumption has been understood as artifice facilitator the achievement of the benefits desired by consumers.

It happens that along with the consumption, the adhesion to the social networks has also propitiated the individuals' social desires satisfaction, who appropriate the specificities of these means to present themselves to their peers through the activities that they experience. However, because of motivators such as self-promotion and conspicuous consumption, it is understood that social media can be used to achieve materialistic purposes from experiential purchases, since this purchase type is more easily displayed and stored in these environments.

Based on the arguments and theoretical reviews of the topics addressed, it is believed that the materialistic consumption of experience had its characteristics changed due to the breadth and motivations of using social networking sites, in which users start to have their social needs potentialized. Under strong influence of characteristics and factors inherent to the consumer society, these desires are met through the disclosure of their purchasing activities. Previously, material goods provided consumers



with the possibility of formulating and maintaining their identities, as well as building interpersonal relationships. However, nowadays, the easy and immediate display of individual experiences seems to set the tone of the consumption practices used as a means of self-promotion. Thus, materialistic subjects appear to change or equalize their consumption preferences, considering that they have been using their social networks to materialize the consumption of experience.

Therefore, it is proposed here a conduction of empirical investigations that can test and understand the relationships of specific materialism of social networks in different contexts and from the perspective of different knowledge areas, to the point that it becomes possible to offer subsidies for new understandings about materialism and digital platforms as a transformative human behavior aspect.

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