

Chaplin, Lan Nguyen, Ronald P. Hill, and Deborah Roedder John (2014), "Poverty and Materialism: A Look at Impoverished Versus Affluent Children", *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 33 (1), 78-92.

### **Abstract**

Concerns about materialism have been elevated to a public policy issue, with consumer activists and social scientists calling for restrictions on marketing to children. A recent UNICEF report on the welfare of children suggests that those from low-income families may be particularly vulnerable to marketing efforts. The current research provides a first glimpse into the consumer values of impoverished children. Personal interviews conducted with 177 children and adolescents from impoverished and affluent families reveal differences in materialistic values. Although younger children (ages 8–10 years) from poor families exhibit similar levels of materialism to their more affluent peers, when they reach adolescence (ages 11–13 years) and beyond (ages 16–17 years), impoverished youth are more materialistic than their wealthier counterparts. Further analysis shows that this difference is associated with lower self-esteem among impoverished teens. The authors discuss the implications of these findings, including public policy solutions aimed at reducing low-income children's vulnerability to developing materialistic values that undermine their well-being.

Keywords: children, adolescents, materialism, poverty, public policy