

Hill, Ronald Paul, Kelly D. Martin and **Lan Nguyen Chaplin** (2012), "A Tale of Two Marketplaces: Consumption Restriction, Social Comparison, and Life Satisfaction", *Marketing Letters*, 23 (3), 731-744.

Abstract

Analysis with reports from more than 56,000 consumers across 38 countries reveals that social comparison (upward/downward) moderates the relationship between consumption restriction and life satisfaction. Specifically, insufficient access to goods and services combined with the likelihood of making upward social comparisons lowers life satisfaction—this negative consequence also is exacerbated by poverty. Most studies focus on wealthier consumers given importance of material abundance to affluent lifestyles; this investigation suggests that materialism also influences lives of impoverished consumers. Challenging our conventional wisdom, these results reveal that social comparisons are significantly more powerful determinants of life satisfaction for people in much poorer, developing societies than for people in more affluent societies. Specifically, compared to their affluent counterparts, impoverished consumers experience greater decreases in life satisfaction when their access to goods and services is lower than others within their societies.

Keywords: Life satisfaction, global consumption, poverty and restriction, hierarchical linear models