

The meaning of happiness in consumer research: Results from an inductive exploratory pilot study

Associate Professor Elin Brandi Sørensen
University of Southern Denmark
Department of Entrepreneurship and Relationship Management
Universitetsparken 1
6000 Kolding
Denmark
eso@sam.sdu.dk
tel: 0045-65501363

and

Associate Professor Thyra Uth Thomsen
Copenhagen Business School
Department of Marketing
Solbjerg Plads 3
2000 Frederiksberg C
tt.marktg@cbs.dk
tel: 0045-38152100

Acknowledgement:

We would like to thank Associate Professor Rosa Illamas for valuable input and discussions

The meaning of happiness in consumer research: Results from an inductive exploratory pilot study

*"People who say money can't buy happiness,
obviously don't know where to shop"*
(Anonymous)

Abstract: In this study we investigate the meaning of happiness in a consumption context. We employ an inductive approach and present the results of an exploratory pilot study with eight consumers. The study is based on a Multi-Sensory-Sculpting (MSS) procedure in which we asked consumers to build sculptures that represent consumer happiness. Following the MSS guidelines, consumers were interviewed about the meanings of their sculpture in order to elicit embodied cognition about the topic at hand. In this paper we present the meanings of consumer happiness in the participants' accounts and discuss implications for consumer research. Further, we discuss the applicability of the MSS-procedure to the topic of consumer happiness, and how to optimize it for later studies on consumer happiness.

Key words: consumer research, consumer happiness, Multisensory Sculpting (MSS), pilot study

Introduction and objectives

Today, materialistic endeavors are important drivers for many people, i.e. 'keeping up with the Joneses'. In glittering magazines of interior design, cars, and lifestyle we witness high degrees of materialism. At the same time, public discourse seems to endorse the idea that being rich and having things do not necessarily equal happiness. Similarly, popular culture often shows how striving (too hard) for materialistic ideals renders people unhappy and that true values like friendship and love will always triumph over materialism. Thus, not surprisingly, some consumers strive to liberate themselves from materialism by following principles of simple living whether articulated as downshifting or as voluntary simplicity (Etzioni 1998; Gopaldas 2007; Shaw and Newholm 2002), finding satisfaction through nonmaterial aspects of life. But still we see consumers rush to the shopping malls. Perhaps, Baudrillard (1999) was right when he claimed that it is consumers' moral obligation to pursue happiness through consumption, even though this may not render them happy.

These tensions between materialism and happiness are mirrored in the social sciences as well. A common assumption behind many societies' striving for economic growth and wealth is the idea that it will make people happier and more satisfied. However, Easterlin (1974) suggested that this is only so up to a certain level; beyond this level the correlation evaporates. One of his explanations is the 'hedonic treadmill' according to which we have to keep on consuming just to maintain our levels of happiness, because our expectations increase with consumption. Easterlin's paradox has ever since provoked ongoing debate among researchers (Kahneman and Deaton 2010, Stevenson and Wolfers 2013).

Likewise, we also notice an increasing interest in the concept of happiness in consumer research. While the concept is still under-researched, a few studies have provided first insights. One

important finding, based on a review of prior empirical work in the adjacent field of affective forecasts (Wilson and Gilbert 2003), is that wealth beyond a certain point can indeed still make you happy – if you know how to spend your money (Dunn et al. 2011). If consumers know how to best pursue happiness, this is good news. However, a literature review on the topic reveals that the very concept of happiness is rarely discussed in consumer contexts. Typically consumer researchers employ a definition of subjective well-being (Diener 1984) and operationalize it by one particular aspect of well-being, e.g. life satisfaction, while this may not capture the multifaceted construct of well-being and happiness (Hudders and Pandelaere 2012). On this backdrop, we set out to investigate the meanings of happiness from a consumer perspective.

The purpose of the pilot study is twofold. First, we seek to explore the meanings of consumer happiness by means of a relatively new qualitative consumer research method - that is multi-sensory-sculpting (von Wallpach and Kreuzer 2013) - and discuss the implications of the findings for consumer research. Second, we seek to assess the applicability of this method to the somewhat abstract topic of consumer happiness, and we discuss how we may optimize or adapt the procedure for later studies of a larger scale.

Theoretical background and research question

In consumer research happiness appears to be a topic of increasing interest as - proved by a recent panel debate on consumption and happiness at the European Marketing Conference (EMAC 2015) and a special session at the ACR conference (Etkin 2014) on “What Makes People Happy? Antecedents and Consequences of Happiness”. In spite of this, the very concept and meaning of happiness is rarely discussed. A noticeable exception, though, is the work of Mogilner and her colleagues (Mogilner et al. 2011, Mogilner, et al. 2012, Bhattacharjee and Mogilner 2014). They suggest that various types of happiness exist and that the meaning of happiness shifts over the course of one’s lifetime (Mogilner et al. 2011). While they themselves investigate the prevalence of ‘excited-happiness’ and ‘calm-happiness’, they also suggest to investigate emotions like awe, joy, and nostalgia (Mogilner et al. 2012, p 441).

The scarcity of research on the nature of consumer happiness is surprising since happiness is the most frequent feeling consumers state to have towards objects with which they have an emotional attachment (Schultz et al. 1989). Love comes in second place (ibid.). But perhaps love is what Mogilner et al. (2011) call calm-happiness? Questions like this remain unanswered as long as the meaning of happiness from a consumer perspective is under-explored.

So it seems that the scarcity of research on happiness in consumption is not due to a lack of relevance. Some might suggest that it is rather due to the belief that possessions cannot lead to happiness since highly materialistic consumers have been found to be less happy than low materialistic consumers (cf. Hudders and Pandelaere 2012). However, materialistic people do see possessions as paths to personal happiness (Ahuvia and Wong 2002) and under certain circumstances consumers will actually experience a positive influence on their well-being even from materialistically oriented consumption (Shrum et al. 2013). Shrum et al. (ibid.) suggest that it depends on the consumer’s motives; i.e. if the motive for consumption is rooted in a wish to signal one’s identity to one self – rather than to others – the long term effect on well-being will be positive. This is in line with prior research, which shows that a materialistic value orientation can be linked to feelings of insecurity, stress, and low self-esteem (cf. Hudders and

Pandelaere2012) – in which case the self-signaling effect of consumption may help to counteract these feelings. In sum, research in consumer happiness indicates that money can indeed buy happiness, even though our understanding of what consumer happiness means remains limited. Following from this, the research question of this paper is:

RQ: How do consumers construct consumer happiness?

Our preliminary understanding of consumer happiness is based on the above cited consumer research and on positive psychology, which is a branch of psychology that has a particular focus on happiness and well-being (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000). According to positive psychology research people can increase their levels of happiness and well-being when they experience (1) positive emotions, (2) engagement, (3) positive relationships, (4) meaning in life, and (5) accomplishment (c.f. PERMA in Seligman 2011). Following from this, our preliminary conceptualization of ‘Consumer happiness’ would be the experience of these states by means of consumption activities. In fact, some of the examples described by Peterson (2006) in his seminal work on how to elicit engagement include consumption activities, as e.g. going to a restaurant with a food culture unknown to the participant (deploying ‘curiosity’) or participating in a challenging craftsman course (deploying ‘creativity’). Further, Mogilner et al. (2012) document how consumption can foster positive emotions that are closely linked to states of happiness. Other advice on how to foster happiness through consumption directs consumers towards the consumption of experiences rather than objects, towards consuming for others instead of self, towards consuming several small things rather than one big thing in order to avoid habituation (Dunn et al. 2011). Finally, as Shrum et al. (2013) suggest, consumption can also increase well-being if it allows consumers to enhance their self-image, which might also elicit positive emotions and/or meaning in life. While having this preliminary understanding of ‘Consumer happiness’ in mind, we chose to ‘bracket it’ (Spinelli 1989) in our inductive exploration of consumer happiness, which is described in the following.

Method

Data collection: Multi-sensory-sculpting (MSS) is a relatively new qualitative method aimed at eliciting embodied (brand) knowledge, which is otherwise not necessarily directly available for conscious processing (von Wallpach and Kreuzer, 2013). Multi-sensory sculpting provides experience-based information about for example brands, products, or services that consumers have consciously and non-consciously sensed, touched, felt, moved, smelled, tasted, viewed, talked about, and/or heard of. Consumers store this information predominantly on a nonconscious level (Barsalou, 1999, Zaltman, 1997) and thus the MSS procedure provides insights beyond the scopes of traditional cognitive approaches to brands as largely consciously available abstract, stable, and verbal brand associations in semantic memory (e.g., Aaker 1991, Keller 1993). Based on the promises and the shortcomings of prior uni-sensory methods that addressed both non-conscious and conscious levels of brand knowledge, such as the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (Zaltman 1997), von Wallpach and Kreuzer (2013) sought to develop a method that would embrace all five senses (touch, taste, vision, audition and smell) to stimulate introspections and feelings, instead of relying mainly on the eyes and verbal expressions of their informants.

In short, the MSS procedure consists of the following steps (cf. von Wallpach and Kreuzer 2013):

- 1) *Toolkit exploration*: Informants are invited to familiarize themselves with the toolkit, which consists of various materials of different color, texture, shape, size, taste, smell, sound, etc. Examples are materials found in nature, spices, aromas, foods, plasticine, bells, pipes, and ipods with different melodies and sounds.
- 2) *Multi-sensory-sculpting*: Each informant is presented with a prompt and asked to build a sculpture. For example: “Please build a sculpture that represents what the brand means to you by using the materials available in this room”
- 3) *Interview*: Informants are interviewed about their sculpture by means of an in-depth interview, which includes non-directive grand-tour questions and prompts about the meanings of the single materials used, the meaning of their arrangement in the sculpture, and the relation of the sculpture and the brand.

We adapted this method to the research question at hand. MSS is developed with brand cognition in mind. However, we would argue that brand knowledge is not the only embodied cognition that can be elicited with the MSS procedure. Sometimes, consumers will anchor their experiences with a product class rather than a specific brand – as would probably be the case with fruits and vegetables that tend to be less ‘branded’. Also, consumers might anchor their experiences with a category of experiences rather than specific brands – as for instance exciting versus dull travel experiences. In line with this assumption, the MSS procedure has already been applied to abstract concepts like the German concept of ‘Heimat’, which refers to your daily experienced living environment (Kreuzer et al. 2015). Along those lines we expect consumers to be able to tap into their embodied knowledge on ‘consumer happiness’ even if this is not necessarily linked to a certain brand.

Therefore, we initiated a sculpting process with the following prompt: “*Using the materials you find on the table: Individually build a sculpture that represents your experience with the consumption of a product or service that brings you happiness.*”

The 8 participants were all students in an undergraduate qualitative methods class at a large Scandinavian Business School. Since the participants were not trained in in-depth interviewing (McCracken 1988), we developed a semi-structured interview guide which the participants could use as a starting point for their interviews. The interview guide was inspired by the non-directive grand-tour questions suggested in the MSS procedure (see above). Examples of questions were:

- Please describe what you built?
- Is it different from what you intended to build?
- What does this material express/mean to you?
- Did you miss any materials?
- How do the materials relate to each other?
- What does their arrangement mean to you?
- How do different aspects of the sculpture relate to your consumption experiences with the brand, product or service that brings you happiness?
- How did this experience bring you happiness?
- How would you describe the kind of happiness that it brings?

On top of this the sculptures served as autoelicitation tools (Heisley and Levy 1991), shaping further topics of conversation and questions for the interviews. After the sculpting procedure the students formed groups of two-three per group and interviewed each other with the interview guide at hand. The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Also, all sculptures were photographed. This amounted to 20 pages of transcripts and pictures.

Data analysis: The data was analyzed based on iterative readings of the material by two researchers. By means of the tacking back and forth model of the ‘hermeneutic circle’ (Thompson et al. 1994) commonly employed by qualitative researchers, commonalities and differences among research participants’ experiences and perspectives were found. The hermeneutic circle was applied both intratextually (i.e within one sculpting interview) and intertextually (i.e. themes emerging from one sculpting interview were compared with themes from other sculpting interviews). The results of this procedure are presented below.

Findings

The participants created very different sculptures. They were both different in their appearance and in their meaning. A list of what was sculpted is below in table 1.

Table 1. The sculptures and key meanings

Name (alias)	Sculpture	Key words mentioned in the interviews
Dorothy	Consumption of yoga and meditation	peaceful, smell, relaxation, sentimental, achievement, running versus stopping a little, love for life and yourself.
Ruth	An ice-cream and chocolate desert	simplicity, free of worries, comfortable, warm, sweet, pleasurable.
Sonita	An ‘Anthropology’ store	design, enjoying being there, shopping, experience, unique, out of the ordinary, novelty, nature, fun, therapeutic, certain feeling, atmosphere.
Sally	A natural sweater	natural, organic, beautiful, precious, growing, living, breathing, comfortable, nice to touch, taking care.
Anna	Being at a Christmas market	positive feeling, Christmas time, family, friends, senses, smell
Linda	Experiencing a facial cream	natural, good smell, sweet, exclusive, hygienic, smooth, practical, easy to use, taking care of myself
Amelia	Experiencing chocolate	taste, childhood, experience, favourite
Shane	Childhood memory of grandmothers village	nature, nice smell, freshness, beautiful,

The key words mentioned by the participants illustrate what they wanted their sculptures to convey. They used the material and arrangement in the sculpture to express these meanings. Since one of the participants, Shane, did not relate his sculpture to a consumption experience or good of any kind, his account is left out in the following analysis. See our methodological reflections about Shane’s sculpting process in the discussion.

Happiness comes from both objects and experiences

The participants sculptured various happy consumption experiences (for example doing yoga or being at Christmas market) and happy experiences that were tied more closely to consumption objects (for example a 'natural' sweater, an ice-cream desert, and a facial cream).

For instance, Dorothy thought of a consumption experience rather than a product. To Dorothy a



Exhibit 1: Dorothy's experience of Yoga

happy consumption experience is yoga and meditation, which she sculptured as presented in exhibit 1. The interviewer was puzzled about the link between yoga and consumption. However, when asked about why she would interpret yoga as consumption, Dorothy said: *"I'm consuming the service yoga and meditation to find relaxation, to find happiness in all areas of life and to be closer to the nature and myself"*.

She further explains: "The fur is an experience of having wings and being able to achieve a lot in life. [...] The honey is related to building, as the honey is the output from building bees. So it means that people who work with their mental skills can build up their peacefulness. [...] All the materials represent something and all combined it presents the balanced personality that you aim to achieve when doing yoga or meditation. That makes me really happy".

She further explains: "The fur is an experience of having wings and being able to achieve a lot in life. [...] The honey is related to building, as the honey is the output from building bees. So it means that people who work with their

Ruth, on the other hand, built this sculpture of experiencing a product - an ice-cream desert that



Exhibit 2: Ruth's ice cream desert

brings happiness (see exhibit 2). She explains as follows: *"It is an ice cream. We don't think of it much - we just buy it. That simplicity makes us happy"* (Ruth). Ruth further explains that the stones in the middle of the figure refer to consumers, who rest softly on the cotton, which refers to vanilla ice-cream. Ruth says: *"The stones are hard in nature, so they lie in the soft cotton. It's like 'we' are the stones but we lie comfortable on the cotton hence the*

experience is comfortable. The experience of consuming is reflected in the comfortable and happy feeling, free of worries".

Further, the sculpted objects and object-related experiences were sometimes unbranded like Ruth's ice-cream desert, but they could also be branded. For example, Sonita built an 'Anthropology' store, which has brought her happy consumption experiences, see exhibit 3.



Sonita describes her experience like this: *"I shop for fun, so this it is more a therapeutic thing for me. I normally go to stores where I enjoy being, it is an experience to me. I don't even have to buy something as long as I enjoy being there. That is enough to me, and how it is like in 'Anthropology'. [...] I enjoy nature but also shopping so the store 'Anthropology' really combines those things to me. [...] I enjoy the fact that they use rocks and leaves - things that are normally outside - and bring them inside; it's a very unique approach."*

Sonita further compares the shopping environments of other retailers such as Zara and H&M which bring differing levels of enjoyment and happiness to her, due to variations in interior, atmosphere and feelings this evokes.

Prior research states that experiences bring us relatively more happiness than material objects (van Boven and Gilovich 2003, Nicolau et al. 2009). As the above illustrates, however, these experiences can – to various degrees - be tied to certain objects and brands. This is in line with recent research on experiential products which are shown to provide similar levels of well-being as life experiences do (Guevarra and Howell 2014).

Happy consumer experiences occur in both individual and social settings

Prior research states that prosocial spending (spending money on others) provides more happiness than personal spending does (Dunn et al. 2008). This phenomenon is even believed to be a cultural universal (Aknin et al. 2013). Further, according to Caprariello and Reis (2012), this



is also true for social spending (spending money with others), regardless if the money is spent experientially or materially. However, as the sculptures illustrate, happiness is to be found in both individual and social settings. For example, Sally built a happy experience with a 'natural sweater' (see exhibit 4). This is an example of how consumer happiness can be triggered by personal and materially oriented spending. Sally says: *"It just makes me happy when I buy a wool sweater, because it is more sustainable and*

makes up with fast fashion. It's natural and nicer to touch and I know it is more sustainable than something made of plastic or polyester that I would throw away when it's no longer fashion".

Other accounts couch consumer happiness in a social setting. For example, Anna built the happy



Exhibit 5: Anna's Christmas market

social experience of a Christmas market (see exhibit 5). Anna explains: *"The heart I chose because Christmas is about family and you go to the Christmas markets with you friends and family I guess. [...] I just walked by the different things and chose the ones which reminded me of Christmas and the good feeling of being with friends and family. It included the stuff that felt, smelled and sounded like Christmas i.e. the bell."* To Anna the happy consumption experience

of being at a Christmas market is clearly linked to the fact that this is a shared and social consumption experience.

Happy consumer experiences are positive and worry free

Using their sculpture as trigger, all participants described 'consumption happiness' as residing exclusively in a positive domain characterized by positive attributes and evoking positive feelings. For example consumers used the following words to describe the meaning of their sculptures: comfortable, warm, sweet, pleasurable, peaceful, exclusive, beautiful, precious, unique, nice, fun, and therapeutic.



Exhibit 6: Linda's facial cream

On top of describing consumption happiness as residing in a positive domain, our participants also characterized it by the absence of the negative. Ruth, for instance, explicitly describes her happy consumption experience as 'free of worries'. Likewise Linda (see exhibit 6) built her experience with a facial crême, which brought her happiness partly due to the absence of 'being scary'. She says: *"The exclusiveness itself represents being able to take some time to be healthy and have some time for myself. And it makes me happy and makes me feel good because of the relation to nature. The fact that it is natural and good for my skin creates the feeling*

that it is not scary to put on my skin. It makes me feel good also after using the product". These findings are in line with prior research, which positions high levels of positive emotions and low levels of negative emotions as important ingredients of happiness and well-being (Diener et al. 1999, Fredrickson 2011).

Happy consumer experiences can tap into nostalgia

Nostalgia has been characterized as ‘sadness without an object’, as longing of a ‘golden age’ (Belk 1988, Stewart 1984), and as a ‘self-relevant and social emotion’ (Zhou et al. 2012). Thus it may seem surprising that some of our participants link nostalgic experiences to happiness. On the other hand, the concept of nostalgia was one of the concepts that pioneering happiness researchers suggested as relevant for the study of consumer happiness (Mogilner et al. 2012, p 441). In our accounts, nostalgia surfaced in several ways. For example, Dorothy says (see exhibit 1): *“It is about yoga, which brings me back to my hometown and the peacefulness I search for. Every day in life ‘you’ are running but this makes me stop a little”*. According to past consumer research, the most desirable feature of nostalgia is its capacity to reignite meaningful relationships and – as a result – a sense of (relational) self (Zhou et al. 2012, Belk 1988). This is also apparent in Amelia’s account in which she describes how chocolate brings her happiness



Exhibit 7: Amelia's chocolate

(see exhibit 7). On top of eliciting positive hedonic emotions, chocolate also brings her back to her childhood in which chocolate consumption was restricted by significant others. Mirroring herself in these past restrictions, she describes herself as someone who likes and happily consumes chocolate. Amelia puts it like this: *“I chose chocolate because that makes me happy and then built it up from there. So it was kind of happiness as the experience, then the product, and trying to explain the experience through the sculpture. [...] Back then I wasn't allowed to buy chocolate so that reminded me of my childhood. Then*

I chose the red straws because they reminded me of my childhood as well, and Duplo blocks in red of the same reason. Red was my favourite colour as a child.” Perhaps what we witness in this account are the effects known as the ‘hedonic treadmill’. Indulging in hedonic pleasures can make the happiness we draw from them in the future fade, and vice versa (Raghunathan and Irwin 2001). Therefore the restriction of chocolate in the past – the fact that it was not always available – could render Amelia’s present and future chocolate consumption comparatively more pleasurable to her.

Discussion

All in all we have demonstrated that the applied multisensory method is able to provide valuable insights into the nature of consumer happiness, which resonate well with prior research in the field. Also, our study taps into multisensory experiences of consumer happiness and confirms that it is a ‘dynamic and malleable’ concept (Mogilner et al. 2012). The MSS procedure applied (von Wallpach and Kreuzer 2013) proved as novel and inspiring multi-sensory method that addressed other senses than for instance depth interviewing. For example, when explaining the use of sea shells in her sculpture, Dorothy says: *“The shells remind me of the sea, the peacefulness, and relaxation from the water. But also the smell, that is very important. I can almost smell it from here”*. Actually, half of the participants mentioned smells, which in our experience as qualitative

researchers is unusual in traditional interview settings. This means that the goal of addressing multiple senses was clearly met. However, while the application of the MSS procedure to this exploratory study of consumption happiness had clear advantages, we also noticed some shortcomings. These shortcomings were mainly due to our adaptation of the procedure rather than the procedure itself as outlined by von Wallpach and Kreuzer (2013). The greatest shortcoming was the lack of in-depth interviewing training that the students had when they interviewed each other about the meaning of their sculpture. The original method uses trained researchers as interviewers, but given the preliminary and exploratory nature of this pilot-study, we let students interview each other based on a semi-structured interview guide. One of the consequences was that Shane missed the focus on consumption. Shane's interviewer used closed and leading questions and forgot to ask about the relevance of the sculpture in a consumption context. Moreover, in all interviews some obvious keywords were not dwelled upon and small bits of interesting memories were not unfolded. For these reasons the accounts do not meet the goal of redundancy (McCracken 1988), which leads us to suggest future research in the below section.

Conclusion and managerial implications

Our study shows how consumers construct consumption happiness in several different ways. According to them, happiness can come from both experiences and objects, which can be either branded or unbranded. Notably, even in experiential accounts of happiness, consumption objects can play a crucial role. Further, happy consumer experiences are couched in both individual and social settings. The experiences themselves are embedded in positively charged words, and interestingly also sometimes explicitly characterized by the absence of any negative. If we compare the results to Seligman's (2011) PERMA terminology, our participants mainly addressed experiences of positive emotions, while positive relationships and meaning in life were also addressed in terms of social experiences and experiences that linked to sense of self and contributing to the greater good by sustainable consumption. Notably, our study also shows that nostalgia can play a role in consumers' construction of consumption happiness, even though nostalgia is often characterized as a state of sadness and longing. In sum, our findings can inform brand managers and product developers on which multisensory product features and brand characteristics might ignite consumer happiness and thus render their products and services more attractive.

Limitations and future research

First of all, according to Mogilner et al. (2011) the meaning of consumption happiness varies over the course of one's lifetime. Therefore, a student population cannot give a full picture of the meanings of happiness in a consumption context. Further, some of the participants mentioned the toolkit as main inspiration for their sculptures. For example, Sonita comments on the overrepresentation of 'nature' things in the toolkit. She is drawn to it because it reminds her of a store she likes. Does this 'being drawn to' mean that the toolkit becomes too guiding? Sonita says: *"I first had a look at all the arrangements on the desk, the nature part really stood out and reminded of this store 'Anthropology', their layout everywhere is very shell, rocks, they use nature, and it's very different. It's a clothing and home decoration store but with a very nature atmosphere"*. Therefore, future research should include participants from various life stages. Also it should use

a well-balanced toolkit, and make sure that interviewers have the necessary interviewing skills in order to elicit ‘thick’ and varied consumer accounts of happiness.

References

- Aaker, D.A. (1991). *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name*. New York: the Free Press.
- Ahuvia, A. C. and N. Wong (2002). Personality and Values Based Materialism: their Relationship and Origins. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 12(4), 389–402.
- Aknin, L., C. Barrington-Leigh, E. Dunn, J. Helliwell, R. Biswas-Deiner, I. Kemeza, P. Nyende, C. Ashton-James, and M. Norton (2013). Prosocial Spending and Well-Being: Cross-Cultural Evidence for A Psychological Universal. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104(4), 635–652.
- Barsalou, L.W. (1999). Perceptual Symbol Systems. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 22, 577-660.
- Baudrillard, J. (1999). Consumer society. In L. Glickman (Ed.), *Consumer society in American history: A reader*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 33-56.
- Belk, R.W. (1988). Possessions and the Extended Self. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (September), 139-168.
- Bhattacharjee, A. and C. Mogilner (2014). Happiness from Ordinary and Extraordinary Experiences. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(June), 1-16.
- Caprariello, P. and H. Reis (2012). It’s the Company that Counts: Shared Experiences and Possessions Make People Happier than Experiences and Possessions Alone. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 40, 255-260.
- Dunn, E.W., L. Aknin, and M. Norton (2008). Spending Money on Others Promotes Happiness. *Science*, 319, 1687-1688.
- Dunn, E. W., D. T. Gilbert, and T.D. Wilson (2011). If Money Doesn’t Make You Happy, then You Are Probably Not Spending it Right. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 21, 115-125.
- Diener, E. (1984). Subjective Well-Being. *Psychological Bulletin*, 95, 542-575.
- Diener, E., E.M. Suh, R.E. Lucas, and H.L. Smith (1999). Subjective Well-Being: Three Decades of Progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 276–302.
- Easterlin, R.A. (1974). Does Economic Growth Improve the Human Lot? Some Empirical Evidence. In P.A. David and M.W. Reder (Eds.) *Nations and Households in Economic Growth: Essays in Honor of Moses Abramovitz*. New York: Academic Press inc. 89-125.
- EMAC (2015). Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy Conference, Leuven, Belgium, May 2015.
- Etkin J. (2014). What Makes People Happy? Antecedents and Consequences of Happiness. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 42, 53-58.
- Etzioni, A. (1998). Voluntary Simplicity: Characterization, Select Psychological Implications, and Societal Consequences. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 19, 619-643.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). the Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology: the Broaden-and-Build theory of Positive Emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56, 218–226.
- Gopaldas, A. (2007). Voluntary Simplicity, Downshifting, and the Market Mythology of Simple Living", in *European Advances in Consumer Research Volume 8*, Eds. Stefania

- Borghini, Mary Ann McGrath, and Celestine, Duluth, MN : Association For Consumer Research, 291-292.
- Guevarra, D.A. and R.T. Howell (2014). To Have in Order to Do: Exploring the Effects of Consuming Experiential Products on Well-Being. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25(1), 28–41.
- Heisley, D. and S. Levy (1991). Autodriving: A Photoelicitation Technique. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18, 257-272.
- Hudders, L. and M. Pandelaere (2012). The Silver Lining of Materialism: The Impact of Luxury Consumption on Subjective Well-Being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 13, 411–437.
- Kahneman, D. and A. Deaton (2010). High income Improves Evaluation of Life But Not Emotional Well-Being. In: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 107(38), 16489-16493.
- Keller, K.L. (1993). Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1-22.
- Kreuzer, M., Von Wallpach, S. & Mühlbacher, H. (2015). Heimat - Anchor in a Globalized World. *Proceedings of the International Marketing Trends Conference 2015*, Paris, France.
- Mccracken, G. (1988). *The Long interview*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Mogilner, C., J. Aaker, and S. D. Kamvar (2012). How Happiness Affects Choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29, 449-443.
- Mogilner, C., S. D. Kamvar, and J. Aaker (2011). The Shifting Meaning of Happiness. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2(4) 395-402.
- Nicolau, L., J. R. Irwin, and J.K. Goodman (2009). Happiness For Sale: Do Experiential Purchases Make Consumers Happier than Material Purchases? *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(2), 188-198.
- Peterson, C. (2006). *A Primer in Positive Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Raghunathan, R. and J.R. Irwin (2001). Walking the Hedonic Product Treadmill: Default Contrast and Mood-Based Assimilation in Judgments of Predicted Happiness with a Target Product. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28(3), 355-368.
- Shrum, L. J., N. Wong, F. Arif, S.K. Chugani, A. Gunz, T.M. Lowrey, A. Nairn, M. Pandelaere, S.M. Ross, A. Ruvio, K. Scott, and J. Sundie (2013). Reconceptualizing Materialism As Identity Goal Pursuits: Functions, Processes, and Consequences. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(8), 1179–1185.
- Schultz, S.E., R.E. Kleine HI, and J.B. Kernan (1989). These are a few of my Favorite Things': Toward an Explication of Attachment as a Consumer Behavior Construct. In *Advances in Consumer Research*, 16, Ed. Thomas Srull, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 359-366.
- Seligman, M.E.P (2011). *Flourish: A Visionary new Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*. New York: Free Press.
- Seligman, M.E.P. and M. Csikszentmihalyi (2000). Positive Psychology. An Introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 5-14.
- Shaw, D. and T. Newholm (2002). Voluntary Simplicity and the Ethics of Consumption. *Psychology & Marketing*, 19, 167-185.
- Spinelli, E. (1989). *An introduction to Phenomenological Psychology*. London: Sage Publications.
- Stevenson, B., and J. Wolfers (2013). Subjective Well-Being and Income: Is there any Evidence of Satiation? *American Economic Review*, 103(3), 598-604.

- Stewart, S. (1984). *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Collection*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins.
- Thompson, C.J., H.R. Pollio, and W.B. Locander (1994). The Spoken and the Unspoken: A Hermeneutic Approach to Understanding the Cultural Viewpoints that Underlie Consumers' Expressed Meanings. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(December), 432-452.
- Van Boven, L. and T. Gilovich (2003). To Do or to Have? That is the Question. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(6), 1193-1202.
- Von Wallpach, S. and M. Kreuzer (2013). Multi-Sensory Sculpting (MSS): Eliciting Embodied Brand Knowledge via Multi-Sensory Metaphors. *Journal of Business Research*. 66(9), 1325-1331.
- Wilson, T. D. and D.T. Gilbert (2003). Affective Forecasting. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 35.345-411.
- Zaltman, G. (1997). Rethinking Market Research: Putting People Back in. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34, 424-437.
- Zhou, X., T. Wildschut, C. Sedikides, K. Shi, and C. Feng (2012). Nostalgia: The Gift That Keeps on Giving. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(1), 39-50.