



The influence of advertising exposure on social media platforms on Saudi children's materialistic attitudes

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Abstract

In this new era, children form an attraction to materialism which shapes their perceptions of and attitudes to real-life values. With the rapid development of worldwide communication technologies, parents' concerns about their children's obsession with materialistic lifestyles have increased. Social media advertising is considered a hidden influencer that significantly affects children's consumption trends. This study aims to explore the effects of social media platform advertisements on Saudi children's materialistic attitudes. The sample included randomly selected children in Saudi Arabia aged 9 to 10 years of both sexes ($n_{boys}= 180$, $n_{girls}= 220$) who filled out a self-administered questionnaire. The results revealed a clearer picture of their materialistic tendencies than expected. They showed that there is a correlation between the amount of time children spend exposed to online commercial advertisements and materialistic attitudes. This negatively affects their self-confidence and self-acceptance. Most children believe that the better they look in photos posted on social media platforms wearing luxurious and expensive clothing brands, the more others will accept them. The results of our research have value for parents and policymakers by clarifying the impact of children's repeated exposure to social media platform advertising on their consumerist attitudes, which strengthens their materialism and negatively affects their psychological health.

Keywords: brands, consumers, purchasing, self-acceptance, wellbeing

1. Introduction

Saudi Arabia has recently witnessed a tremendous development of communications technology and an increase in the use of social media in all sectors of society, including among children and parents. The consumption of electronic devices in Saudi Arabia has increased massively, changing how humans communicate, learn, and entertain themselves (Allehyani & Mohandas, 2019; Author). Studies have shown that visual interaction, including posting and commenting on pictures and videos of themselves or others, is the most important social communication method used by children and adolescents (Nesi et al., 2018). Globalization has had a great impact on stimulating the media's role in increasing children's demand for online shopping (Kurniasanti et al., 2019; Neve & Trivedi, 2020; Author). In

addition, product marketing campaigns now use social media to influence customer purchasing decisions (Pomponio, 2020). Advertising, using stimuli that elicit desires to increase sales, is crucial in influencing customers to make purchases. To enhance marketing and increase the profit margins of brands, sellers contract with social media influencers to market products on their social media accounts (Kim et al., 2021a). This social transformation and changing lifestyles have affected consumer behaviors and fostered an increase in materialism.

Children are more vulnerable to advertising content than adults. Understanding content requires individuals to have the knowledge and skills to identify and examine hidden messages, which children may not have developed yet (De Veirman et al., 2019). De Veirman et al. (2019) clarified the immediate negative influence that marketing on social media has on consumption of unhealthy foods, snack and beverages by children. The agenda has been set for future researchers' examination of the impact of influencer marketing on children. Several studies have examined the direct effects of advertising on older children, who are generally perceived as more skilled consumers than younger ones (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2003; Kim et al., 2021b). That is, it has been thought that older children can critically analyze commercial messages, despite the intended effects of advertising on children's brand awareness, attitudes, and purchasing decisions (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2003). Media influencers have had remarkable success in social media marketing of brands that increases awareness and purchases of their products (Abidin, 2016; Schwemmer & Ziewiecki, 2018). Accordingly, such content is supported by companies during marketing campaigns. This helps define the goal of influencers with wide multimedia audience bases, to continuously present products online. Children have become a huge market sector as they function as both buyers and influencers regarding individual and household consumption of various products (Calvert, 2018; Vandana & Lenka, 2014). The impact of advertising on children's purchasing behavior cannot be overlooked, and it has a profound impact on families' decisions to consume products in all categories, regardless of their need for them. This can be Indeed, brand-related content created by influencers dramatically increases earnings for brands, which may lead some consumers to feel deceived by the lack of transparency about sponsorship (Kim et al., 2021b). Norin et al. (2024) asserted that advertising plays a significant role in shaping children's future consumer behaviors. This effect has the potential for advertising to reinforce materialistic values in children from an early age (Okditazeini et al., 2025). Parental monitoring is essential to raise children's awareness by increasing discussion of the need for products as their consumption increases. The current study focuses on children aged nine to ten years, who are highly exposed to advertisements on social media platforms, and it highlights their impact on children's materialistic attitudes. Notably, previous studies did not address the relationship between parental awareness and children's materialistic attitudes, which this study is addressing. The purpose of our review is threefold. First, it aims to reveal the type of social media most used by children in Saudi Arabia in which they are exposed to commercial advertising. Second, the study explores the types of product marketing most in demand and consumed by children of both sexes (boys and girls) and such advertising's influence on their attitudes. Third, our study examines the impact of advertising content on children's online purchasing behavior. Our paper reviews the limited existing literature on the role of advertising in influencing children's materialistic attitudes in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, it may enhance academic research regarding parenting strategies which ensure that children are protected as online consumers.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Parent-child relationships and materialism

The term “materialism” crosses multiple fields, such as sociology and economics. Economically, materialism refers to values held by individuals pursuing personal happiness through consumption (Vandana & Lenka, 2014). Sociologically, materialism is seen as an obsession by individuals with material things in a competitive world (Easterlin & Crimmins, 1991). Ward and Walkman (1971) defined materialism as an individual’s inclination to acquire material goods and consider money as a crucial factor in the realization of happiness and social progress. Similarly, later scholars like Chaplin and John (2007) emphasized that materialism is a dominant framework defining happiness and success in life. The media is one external factor that affects children’s materialistic views. Influencer marketing refers to advertisers making deals with influencers to promote products in exchange for money, free products, or exclusive invitations to events (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Parental attitudes to social media may lead children to imitate their attitudes and use of social media platforms for different purposes. Previous studies have exposed a strong association between materialistic parenting – the use of material goods to express love to their children or to modify their behavior via rewards or punishment – and materialism, as these parental approaches may have long-term effects on children in adulthood (Chaplin et al., 2019; Richins & Chaplin 2015; Priya & Annapoorni, 2022). This confirms that parental styles and relationships with their children influence children’s materialistic attitudes, starting from birth, because parents represent the first force in social influence, before that of peers and the media. Above and beyond imitation, parents also influence the buying behavior of their children by talking about brands in terms of product quality, necessity, and overall value. Parents must also ensure that information on social media about products is not misleading or redundant. Parents who deal with their children in materialistic ways, such as repeatedly rewarding them materially for academic or other success, risk their children acquiring these behaviors as a way of life in dealings with others.

Children’s product purchasing or consumption may be affected by their self- acceptance. Several scholars have found that peer acceptance has a direct influence on the volume of consumption, often due to advertisements circulating on social media platforms (De Veirman et al., 2019; Rodhain, 2006), and parents have a role in refusing to buy for their children when there is insufficient justification for a purchase (Rodhain, 2006). Children who dress like others, such as their peers or celebrities, are more easily accepted in their social environment than those who express their individuality without being influenced by others (Lachance et al., 2003). Blind imitation of fashion among children, whether of their peers or celebrities, is due to several factors. Meyer and Anderson (2000) indicated that children’s desire to feel they belong to a particular group, and their fear of being ridiculed for their appearance by their peers, explains their aspiration to dress similarly to others in the same group. Similarly, children who do not own a suitable set of famous brands are inappropriately insulted and harassed by their peers (Roper & La Nice, 2009). Furthermore, studies show a relationship between children’s fear of being ridiculed by their peers regarding brands and their self-confidence (Lovšin et al., 2014). In short, the buying behavior of children with low self-confidence is more likely to be influenced by their peers.

Children of different sexes have different interests in the types of products they buy online, which helps determines their materialistic attitudes. Researchers agree about the different effects, based on sex, of patterns of materialism in commercial advertisements (Cowan & Avants, 1988; Buijzen & Maccoby, 1990; Valkenburg, 2003). However, boys are overall less compliant than girls with the demands of their parents (Cowan & Avants, 1988). Differences between boys and girls may partly explain the relationship between the

presentation of advertisements and consequent conflicts that arise between parents and children, mainly boys (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2003). To reduce the undesirable effects of advertising, parents should choose appropriate parenting patterns for their children to educate them regarding the value of rationalization to test the feasibility of consumption decisions. Furthermore, purchase decisions are complex processes affected by multiple factors. A previous study revealed that girls shop online more than boys and are more interested than boys in the color, price, and ease of maintenance of products (Lovšin et al., 2014). Meanwhile, boys make purchasing decisions based on brand more often than girls (Lovšin et al., 2014). Furthermore, other social activities for children are just as important as online shopping. Boys prefer watching their favorite video game lessons and being creative while playing, supporting their progression to higher levels and making them more skilled players (Treviño & Morton, 2019). Regardless of sex differences, parents should be prudent regarding the temptations of advertising and its effects on their children's insistence on purchasing certain products, and should implement appropriate behavior modification techniques.

2.3 Social media and materialism

Children have numerous choices of social media platforms. Young consumers extensively use popular social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, Snapchat, and WhatsApp for various purposes such as playing games, sharing photos and videos, chatting, exchanging information, reading blogs, and making friends (De Veirman et al., 2019; Zinna & Thanusri, 2018). The relationships between children's materialistic attitudes and their levels of social media use vary among age groups. In the Saudi context, WhatsApp and Snapchat are the most popular social media platforms among children aged six to seven years (Allehyani & Mohandas, 2019). Instagram photos and videos, along with YouTube videos, are crucial because they are very popular among social media consumers (Pomponio, 2020). Interestingly, a previous study reported that children actively use multiple social media channels – including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and WhatsApp – although those platforms expressly state age restrictions during account creation (Treviño & Morton, 2019). YouTube was found to be most popular with children, and their consumption of online content significantly impacted their purchases (Coyne et al., 2014; Treviño & Morton, 2019). Children also spend long hours watching YouTube videos where vloggers play their favorite games, review products, and comment on their peers' posts while playing (De Veirman et al., 2019). Children reported that they enjoy recording themselves playing games, telling stories, and posting them for their entertainment on YouTube (Treviño & Morton, 2019). Scholarly literature suggests that children have lower advertising literacy than adults (Núñez-Gómez et al., 2020). Excessive consumption of a product of a particular brand may create consumer loyalty, and the more a child consumes content regarding a brand on social media, the more they engage with it, likely building long-lasting loyalty and preference for that brand (Núñez-Gómez et al., 2020). Social networks with multiple interactive features allow children to share opinions and brand recommendations (Núñez-Gómez et al., 2020).

In the same vein, Bahatheg (2022) reported that YouTube is the most-used social media platform among children in Saudi Arabia because it is easily accessible for children and there is no need to sign up or create an account, as with other platforms. Admiring influencers who advertise on social media affects children's purchasing behaviors. Kardiner (1939) created the concept of "body image" to represent the mental image that individuals have of their bodies and the way in which they are presented. Cash et al. (2004) expanded the concept to include self-acceptance and attitudes to the body, involving thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors. Several scholars agree that children of both sexes are affected by stereotypical ideas about their physical appearance and bodies, which in turn affects their self-esteem

(Allehyani & Mohandas, 2019; Bahat heg, 2022; Eisenberg et al., 2005; Harriger et al., 2010; Harter, 2012; Von Soest et al., 2016; Wichstrom & Von Soest, 2016). Ibrahim et al. (2025) found that children's self-esteem and body image perceptions are heavily influenced by the social media influencers. In addition, researchers have shown that celebrities on social media who present commercial advertising have shifted Saudi children's attitudes towards an obsession with fame, and that the motive behind achieving fame is the pursuit of luxury and acceptance by others (Allehyani & Mohandas, 2019). Similarly, our research in the Saudi context has revealed that children are influenced by social media celebrities and the desire to become famous, which also impacts their behavior and physical satisfaction (Bahat heg, 2022). These findings acknowledge the negative effect which social media advertising has on children's materialistic attitudes and overall wellbeing.

Social media often lacks credibility and transparency, and inaccurately represents products to consumers (Pomponio, 2020). As children are vulnerable consumers, the hidden messages behind advertising need to be examined by adults. Parents should be aware of companies' advertising missions, which are more likely to generate sales through influencers who target younger users (Pomponio, 2020). Sharma (2011) argued that parents have a greater influence on the attitudes of children aged twelve and under to buying brands than their peers do. Nevertheless, this influence declines gradually during adolescence. As such, companies must consider the age groups of their followers, the relevance of the products to them, and the clarity and simplicity of their advertising content. Prior researchers have emphasized that media-supported materialism persists in children throughout their lives, although the influence of media decreases with age (Vandana & Lenka, 2014). A previous study showed that children in early childhood, aged two to seven years, are more susceptible to misinformation online because they have insufficient experience and knowledge to critically comprehend commercials (Roedder, 1981). As children grow and mature, their cognitive skills develop, enabling them to understand the persuasive intent behind commercials (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2003). Further, materialism and "conspicuous consumption" are related. For example, the possession of material goods is an indicator of individuals' wealth and a specific feature of apparent consumption associated with success and happiness, which significantly impacts the behavior of consumers (Öztek & Çengel, 2020). Conspicuous consumption may not apply to children under eight, but they are less aware of hidden messages in advertising campaigns, thus necessitating parental awareness of this matter. In sum, parents should help their children develop advertising literacy so they can understand and criticize the content of online advertising messages and their persuasive intentions. To our knowledge, few studies have investigated the influence of advertising content on children's materialistic attitudes. Based on the existing literature, these proposed research questions were formulated:

Question (Q1): *How do parent-child relationships contribute to children's materialistic attitudes?*

Question (Q2): *How do the contents of advertising on social media networks influence children's attitudes to materialism?*

Question (Q3): *To what extent do children's materialistic behaviors on social media affect their social life?*

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling

An explanatory research design was applied. Data were collected through an online self-administered questionnaire directed to investigate children's materialistic attitudes in the

Saudi context. The study target group included children in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Participants were selected randomly and a representative group of study participants was recruited from a bigger population representing the entire dataset, where each participant had an equal probability of being selected. Inclusion criteria were: (1) children who are usually active on social media platforms; and (2) who tend to buy their own products on websites. Four hundred children ($n_{boys} = 180$, $n_{girls} = 220$) aged between nine and ten years met these inclusion criteria. Before data collection, the researcher explained the objectives of the research to the participants, who then signed consent forms agreeing to voluntary participation. Participants were informed that their personal details would remain confidential to ensure privacy. Data were collected using a simple random sampling procedure.

3.2 Instrument and ethical procedure

In this study, the researchers developed a self-administered questionnaire after reviewing current literature, theoretical frameworks related to the study topic, and findings of experts in the field. This method is suitable for the current investigation as it assists researchers to collect information from respondents and answer the research questions. The questionnaire was designed to cover five main sections: demographic information, time children spend online, types of social media platforms, products children consume most online, and the role of advertising during online purchasing and activities in affecting children's materialistic attitudes. The questionnaire contained 16 statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e. always = 5, frequently = 4, sometimes = 3, rarely = 2, never = 1), which is commonly used to represent people's opinions and attitudes about a topic.

Prior to data collection, in the first stage, the questionnaire, research questions, and methodology were submitted to the committee in both Arabic (as the mother tongue of the local community) and English to be assessed and examined ethically by these specialized academics. In the next stage, the final evaluation was conducted by two experts on the Higher Committee for Scientific Research Ethics. Their assessments and recommendations were taken into account for the final version of the questionnaire. After obtaining final approval from the head of the University Ethics Committee (Ref. No. KSU-HE 22-549) and before commencing, the questionnaire was validated with an experimental group.

4. Results

The results summarized and analyzed include a description of the study variables and the sample's features. These variables involved five questions: (1) children's sex; (2) parents' level of education; (3) hours children spend viewing their favorite celebrity advertisements daily; (4) social media platforms children use most to view advertisements; and (5) types of products children purchase online. These questions were analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to study their statistics and frequencies.

The frequencies and percentages of each demographic characteristic were analyzed. The results revealed that parents who held bachelor's degrees (41.0%) outweighed both high school and higher degree graduates. Interestingly, results showed that girls used social media more frequently (55.5%) than boys (44.5%). Nearly half of the children ($n = 204$) frequently spent (51.0%) six or more hours daily viewing their favorite celebrity advertisements on social media, which was the highest percentage amongst the children.

The results showed that YouTube videos are the favorite platform among the children because YouTube is used most frequently to view advertisements (48.3%). Regarding the products most purchased online, video games were the favorite product (45.0%) among the children. Based on these results, we can reasonably predict that these children are likely to regard their favorite YouTube celebrities as trusted sources when making purchasing

decisions. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for parent-child relationship and materialism, which answers the research question: *How do parent-child relationships influence children's materialistic attitudes?* Interestingly, results revealed that children indicated that their parents express their love by purchasing their favorite products, which had the highest mean value ($M = 4.06$; $SD = 0.83$).

Table 1 Means and standard deviations for parent-child relationship and materialism

NO	Statement	M	SD	Rank
1	My parents..... express their love to me by buying my favorite products.	4.06	0.83	1
3	reward me with gifts if I act or behave well.	3.91	1.19	2
6	provide me with everything that my peers have.	3.91	1.19	2
5	give me approval before buying products.	3.80	1.42	4
4	buy products for me even if I do not need them.	3.79	1.42	5
2	allow me to select my favorite brands.	3.77	1.40	6
Overall		3.87	1.07	-

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play a role in forming children's materialistic attitudes because the results showed they tend to reward their children with gifts if they act or behave well, and that they believe it is important to provide their children with everything their peers have, which had a high mean value ($M = 3.91$; $SD = 1.19$). The overall assessment of this variable was rated with a mean of $M = 3.87$ and $SD = 1.07$, suggesting a high level of parental influence on the materialistic attitudes of their children.

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for children's attitudes to advertising content on social media networks, answering: *How do the contents of advertising on social media network influence children's attitudes to materialism?*

Table 2 Means and standard deviations for children's attitudes to the contents of advertising on social media networks

NO	Statement	M	SD	Rank
3	I trust the advertising content released by my favorite celebrity.	3.91	1.18	1
2	I prefer to look like my favorite celebrity who presents commercial advertising.	3.91	1.18	1
4	I prefer to dress like my favorite celebrity in their advertising.	3.91	1.18	1
1	I trust the quality of the product (video game, clothing, makeup, and so on) in commercial advertising.	3.90	1.18	1
5	I usually talk about the content of advertisements presented by my favorite celebrity at family mealtimes or during shared activities.	3.63	1.40	5
Overall		3.85	1.21	-

Results showed that children trust the advertising content released by their favorite celebrity, and this aspect had a high mean value ($M = 3.91$; $SD = 1.18$). Similarly, children stated that they prefer to look and dress like (body image) their favorite celebrity, and this aspect had a high mean value ($M = 3.91$; $SD = 1.18$). These results prove the power of influencers regarding children's appearance and self-acceptance. The overall assessment of this variable exhibited high levels of agreement in the study sample ($M = 3.85$; $SD = 1.21$).

Table 3 Means and standard deviations for children's materialistic behaviors on social media influencing their social life

NO	Statement	M	SD	Rank
2	I share new branded advertising posts with my peers via social media platforms.	3.90	1.18	1
3	I feel satisfied when I get 'likes' from others on their new posts.	3.90	1.18	1
4	I become more self-confident when my peers accept and like their new appearance.	3.90	1.19	1
1	I share branded video or photo purchase experiences with others.	3.89	1.19	4
Overall		3.89	1.18	4

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations for the question regarding peer influence on children's purchasing behavior through social media platforms: *To what extent do children's materialistic behaviors on social media affect their social life?* Notably, children were found to be more likely to share new branded advertising posts with their peers on social media and to feel satisfied and confident when their peers accept and like their new appearance; this aspect had a high mean value ($M = 3.90$; $SD = 1.18$). These results prove the influence of peers on children's materialistic attitudes. The overall assessment of this variable suggested a high level of agreement in the study sample ($M = 3.89$; $SD = 1.18$).

To show the statistical significance of the differences between the arithmetic averages, a five-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. As shown in Table 4, there are no statistically significant differences in materialistic attitudes according to the child's sex and the parents' level of education. However, there are statistically significant differences in materialistic attitudes according to the hours per day the child spends viewing their favorite celebrity's advertisements.

Table 4 Five-Way ANOVA for materialistic attitudes' effects on variables

Variables	Type IV Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Child's sex	0.218	1	0.218	0.583	0.446
Parents' level of education	0.114	2	0.057	0.152	0.859
The amount of time spent viewing advertisements per day	14.658	2	7.329	19.634	0.000
Social media platforms that often display advertisements	18.930	4	4.732	12.678	0.000
Type of products the children mostly asks to buy	33.134	5	6.627	17.752	0.000
Error	143.718	385	0.373		
Corrected Total	516.979	399			

Further analysis revealed that there are statistically significant differences in materialistic attitudes according to the types of social media platforms children view, as well as the products they mostly purchase. Scheffe's *post hoc* test indicates statistically significant differences according to the hours per day the child spends viewing advertisements. There were also statistically significant differences in materialistic attitudes according to the social media platforms the child most uses to view advertisements. Scheffe's *post hoc* test for multiple comparisons was applied. There were differences in the social media platforms children mostly used to view advertisements. The means for materialistic attitudes of those who used YouTube videos and WhatsApp differed significantly. Results revealed that WhatsApp had lower mean values ($M = 4.05$) than other platforms used by children. Similarly, there were significant differences in the mean values of materialistic attitudes for those who used YouTube videos ($M = 3.65$) compared with those using Instagram ($M = 4.89$). A significant difference was also found in the mean values of those who used YouTube videos compared to those using Snapchat ($M = 4.70$).

5. Discussion

Children are considered active users of the Internet, which satisfies their needs and desires to be accepted and admired by others. This outcome has resulted from their greater exposure to commercial advertisements on social media sites, which was found to be linked to materialism, affecting children's overall wellbeing. The findings of our study are meaningful contributions to the field of early childhood education which enrich the current literature on the influence of celebrities who present advertising content on social media platforms on children's materialistic attitudes and consumption levels. The main fundamental contribution of this research centers on the impact of advertising content as a critical factor influencing children's materialistic perceptions and attitudes. Surprisingly, results confirmed no statistically significant differences in materialistic attitudes according to the sex of the child. This result contradicted previous studies on the effect of the sex of children on materialistic attitudes related to commercial advertisements (Cowan & Avants, 1988; Buijzen & Maccoby, 1990; Valkenburg, 2003).

Surprisingly, children were found to trust advertising content on social media released by their favorite celebrity, which is a big wake-up call for parents regarding the huge impact of celebrities on children's materialistic attitudes. This result is in line with previous findings by Kim et al. (2021b) that brand-related content created by influencers significantly increases brands' profits, which may entrap vulnerable consumers like children into buying without checking the content's claims. This is in line with the findings of recent research that children have lower advertising literacy than adults (Núñez-Gómez et al., 2020). Consequently, parents should play a more active mediator role in raising children's awareness of advertising's real messages. Another relevant finding relates to type of social media platforms. YouTube was discovered to be the most popular social networking platform for children in Saudi Arabia. Children in our study most frequently viewed advertisements on YouTube, the first and largest platform. Furthermore, children were exposed most to advertising about video games, the most common favorite and most purchased products. These results are in line with previous studies by Treviño and Morton (2019) and Bahatheg (2022) which confirmed that young children use YouTube most frequently to follow their favorite celebrities' updates, which negatively affects their self-acceptance. Accordingly, these findings give a clear indication that the more children are exposed to advertising on social media, the more materialistic and the less self-accepting they become.

Most importantly, parents have a great influence on their children's materialistic attitudes. The more parents encourage online consumption behavior in children, the more materialistic children become. In this case, results showed that parents express their love to children and reward them for acceptable behavior by purchasing their favorite products. These results are consistent with previous findings that confirm a strong association between materialistic parenting (use of material goods to express love to their children or to modify their behavior via rewards or punishment) and children's materialism, as these parental approaches may have a long-term effect on children in later life (Chaplin et al., 2019; Richins & Chaplin 2015). Accordingly, parents' role in minimizing the influence on children of social media and online consumption is crucial. As expected, in the case of peer influence on children's materialistic attitudes, children were found to be conscious of their appearance and body image, and to imitate their favorite celebrities. Significantly, children were more likely to share new branded advertising posts with their peers on social media because they feel more satisfied and confident when their peers accept and like their new appearance. These significant findings prove the influence of peers on children's materialistic attitudes. Consistent with this reasoning, higher levels of materialism are associated with higher levels of self-acceptance in children. This is consistent with previous findings that celebrities on

social media have a negative impact on Saudi children's attitudes to fame and increase children's desire to attract attention and to gain body image acceptance and the interest of others through a luxurious lifestyle (Allehyani & Mohandas, 2019; Bahatheg, 2022). Correlatively, advertising exposure is associated with children's obsession with their personal appearance through purchasing clothing, reflecting their excessive online consumption. Beyond that, our research came to an interesting conclusion about the positive association between advertising and materialism, which confirms the effect of advertising on children's tendency to desire acceptance by others. These results agreed with previous studies by Nairn and Oprea (2021) and Norin et al. (2024) which confirmed that belief in advertising was significantly correlated with children's materialistic attitudes. Overall, the excessive exposure to advertising on social media greatly impacts Saudi children's materialistic attitudes and wellbeing.

6. Conclusion

This study sought to broaden perspectives on children's media overexposure to materialistic lifestyles. We consider advertising content on social media to be one of the hidden influential factors that most parents are unaware of, and which has a long-term effect on children's materialistic attitudes. Nonetheless, the results of the present research offer new knowledge by directly addressing the effects of exposure to commercial advertising on children's materialistic attitudes, given that young children are vulnerable consumers. Despite the significance of these results, it is important to exercise caution because this research has a few limitations. The first limitation is the characteristics of the sample, which may decrease the applicability of these findings to other contexts. It is worth noting that the sample was chosen randomly and represents only one city in Saudi Arabia, and that results may differ from one city to another depending on the social and economic status of residents, and the extent of their consumption. To minimize this effect, a larger sample size is recommended to enhance generalizability. The quantitative approach is another limitation of the current study, and the results could be enriched by adopting additional qualitative research methods like interviews.

The implications of the study are as follows. Children with highly materialistic values may experience anxiety about peer satisfaction and acceptance which affects their wellbeing. Parents should increase their awareness of behaviors such as excessive interaction of their children with social media, or early symptoms of any psychological issues in their children. It would be helpful to procure immediate intervention from specialists who may be able to resolve problems. Based on the current study, children should develop their logical thinking skills for purchasing decision-making. Moreover, parents must intervene to stop their children from overusing social media and rationalizing the consumption of unnecessary products online. In sum, it may be useful for parents to determine whether materialism affects relationships with their children, even in the expression of feelings. Policymakers should institute civic education programs that aim to raise consumer awareness regarding purchasing online products. Like adults, children as active citizens should be helped to enrich their knowledge and skills to be well-informed consumers who have the ability to change their environments. These findings call for stricter regulations on advertising geared to young children. Our conclusions underscore the need for future research to examine parenting styles which guide children's effective use of social media in more nuanced ways. There is a need to enhance the awareness of parents regarding raising their children with care and love rather than materialism, which would positively affect their overall psychological wellbeing. Further research assessing the relationship between children's materialistic attitudes and their mental health will be critical.

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