

The Science of Happiness and Wellbeing
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Module No # 07
Lecture No # 37
Consumerism, Happiness and Wellbeing

Good morning friends in today's session we are going to focus on consumerism or the consumer happiness and well-being and here when we are talking about happiness and well-being we are no longer talking about them as a collective. We will focus on happiness separately we will focus on well-being separately as well. And the reason that we are going to do that is because in these sessions we are trying to gain insights. Consider this as a case study in the context of happiness.

Looking at different aspects of things like the business context like what context like the context of the leader like the context of engineering and sciences within the framework of happiness and well-being. Because you see that the moment we start looking at these aspects of things from the perspective of happiness and well-being some very interesting things emerge. And I am sure that you will find these aspects relevant and meaningful in the context of what we are doing?

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Concepts covered

- Consumer and happiness - issues
- Ethics in the context of consumers – example of ads
- Case studies – ads
- The road ahead – ads (for consumer) and ethicality of products and companies

So we will be briefly talking about the consumer and happiness the ethical aspect will come in the moment we talk about business contexts and we will also discuss briefly the reason. While the business context and even the context of the consumer is a very vast area as a case study

built primarily focus on advertising. As reflecting many of the issues that a consumer faces it is true that through advertisements we become aware of different products.

And then of course we buy those products right from the development of the product to the sale of the product the maintenance of the product all these things come within the framework of consumerism, consumer market, consumer behaviour or the consumer per se the consumption component per se. But as I said it is a vast area and the inside that we would be trying to gain would be to take up a small aspect of advertising which definitely has implications for the other areas as well.

We will take advertisement case studies and we will talk about towards the end the issue of ethicality of production companies and where does happiness and well-being framework fit into this. Because for information both in India and outside people who are working in this area and it has a significant output amount of relevance both in academic as well as commercial contexts.

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Context

Daniel Kahneman...	Edward Diener...
[happiness of instant utility]	[Subjective well-being]

- Does more money give more happiness?
- Do gifts make us happier? Lotteries?
- Choices and happiness? How many choices are good?
- What happens when I get what I want? Set point

So professor Mandal during his discussion has talked about different orientations to happiness and well-being prior, to that I have also discussed some of the concepts. If we take 2 examples of Daniel Kahneman's and Edward Diener's approach to understanding happiness we find that Diener's approach is more long term and Kahneman's focuses on instant utility.

When we are talking about consumer Kahneman's orientation to understanding happiness probably becomes more relevant this is the backdrop this is what will keep, in mind but will also address issues which have already been discussed by Professor Mandal earlier. Because

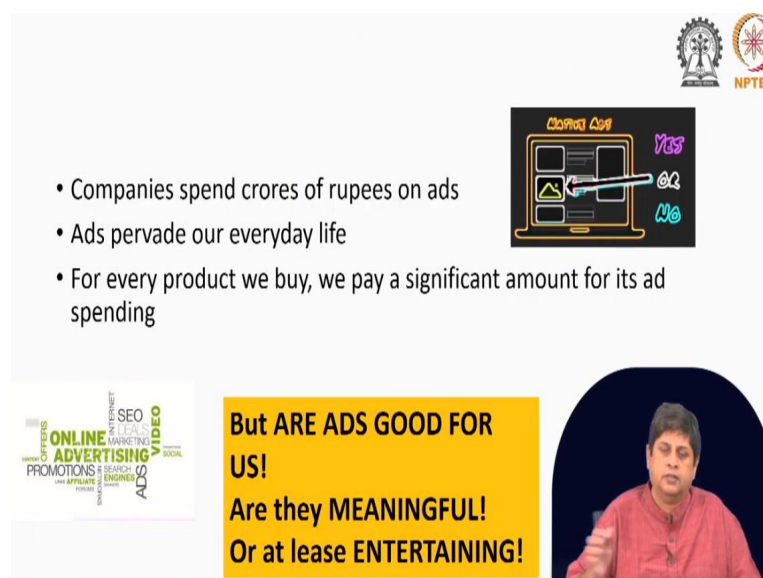
they are all linked directly with the consumer context so does money give more happiness because money is linked to the ability to purchase?

The answer is offly no there might be an instant utility in Kahneman 's term for a short period of time but then over a long period of time maybe it is not, so relevant. Do gifts make us happier? Again gifts are related to material concepts. And gifts very often our products or for that matter lotteries again we find that over a long period of time that is not the case. Choices and happiness the entire concept of a consumer always brings in significantly the element of choice so what is the relevance of choices?

But as again Professor Mandal might have, discussed with you and as I would like to point out if you have too many choices then you get confused what happens when I get what I want? Because you see that our needs are limited in order to survive whatever we need in our lives they are limited but our wants are unlimited. So when I get what I want that is not end of the and not the end of the story give a break of a few minutes hours days or, months new needs appear.

And the assumption that I will be happier when I get whatever I want is again falsified because there is the concept of set point where you see that you get used to the new thing. And then that becomes the natural or rather in COVID terms the new normal for you get used to that. So that is another thing that is relevant to the context so when we are talking about a consumer, context the forward points which are made here are relevant they come into play. And as we go ahead we will touch upon some of those things not necessarily all of them.

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The slide features the IIT Bombay and NPTEL logos in the top right corner. On the left, there is a word cloud with terms like 'ONLINE ADVERTISING', 'VIDEO', 'SEARCH', and 'PROMOTIONS'. In the center, a list of bullet points is displayed. To the right of the list is a graphic of a laptop with a hand cursor and the words 'Yes' and 'No' written next to it. At the bottom, there is a yellow text box with a question and a circular video inset of a man speaking.

- Companies spend crores of rupees on ads
- Ads pervade our everyday life
- For every product we buy, we pay a significant amount for its ad spending

But ARE ADS GOOD FOR US!
Are they MEANINGFUL!
Or at least ENTERTAINING!

As I told you a little earlier having created this context where I have tried to say then when we are talking about consumer happiness we are talking about more of instant gratification short term happiness. And the fact that a, consumer purchasing power depends on money. So if you have more money than you can buy more but that does not necessarily make you happier over a period of time.

For 2 reasons because maybe you have too many choices and you cannot decide which is not a very pleasant thing at the end of the day. And the other thing is that when you achieve what you wanted to you kind of get used to it and you want something more and so it is an endless process. If you are looking at these things especially in the context of material goods we are locating ourselves in a framework where happiness is generally short term.

But then there are exceptions in terms of a sense of satisfaction with something or recurring satisfaction with a particular kind of food or with a particular kind of product and all that. Or products which are good for us good for our health and in that sense are relevant to well-being those components are there. But we need to understand that we are primarily focused on the material aspect of things and the moment we focus on the material aspect of things where business profit and loss are involved the element of ethicality becomes problematic.

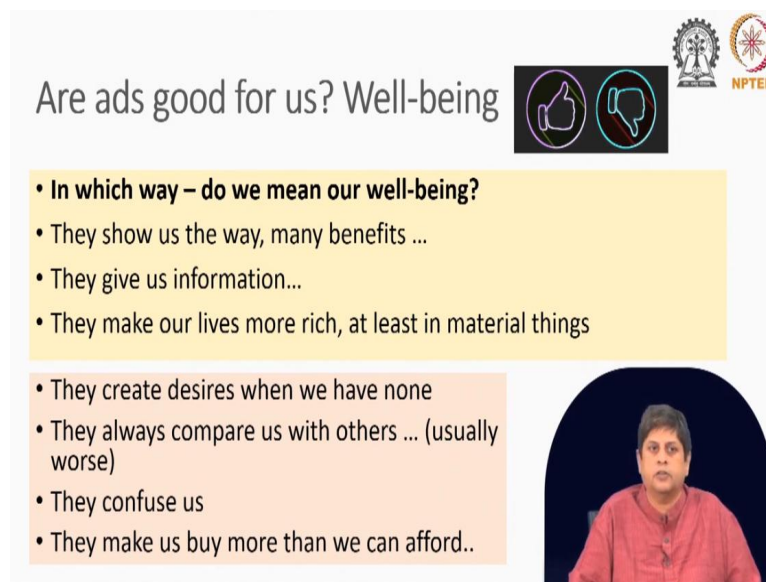
Because it is a choice that there are a, number of interesting things which come in good bad right wrong profitable and unprofitable very often these 3 concepts are not compatible with one another. And as we go ahead and look at these problems towards the end we will try to see if the errors there can be conceptualizations which; put the happiness and well-being framework as a dominant in the context of business.

You see that companies spend crores of rupees on ads are a part of our everyday life and for the ads that we see we indirectly knowingly are knowingly pay a lot of money. So in that sense you can say that we are purchasing ads indirectly now the thing is that when we are spending investing so much without our knowing about it on advertisements. It is very relevant to ask this question are they good for us are they, meaningful for us or at least entertaining.

If you look at the hierarchy you find that probably advertisements in general focus on the least ethical of the problems which is entertaining exciting attention-catching these are the aspects that they focus on. Meaningfulness if by accident or for whatever reasons it is compatible with

the product ideology then maybe yes good for us. Now that depends on, the kind of products that we are working with.



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Are ads good for us? Well-being

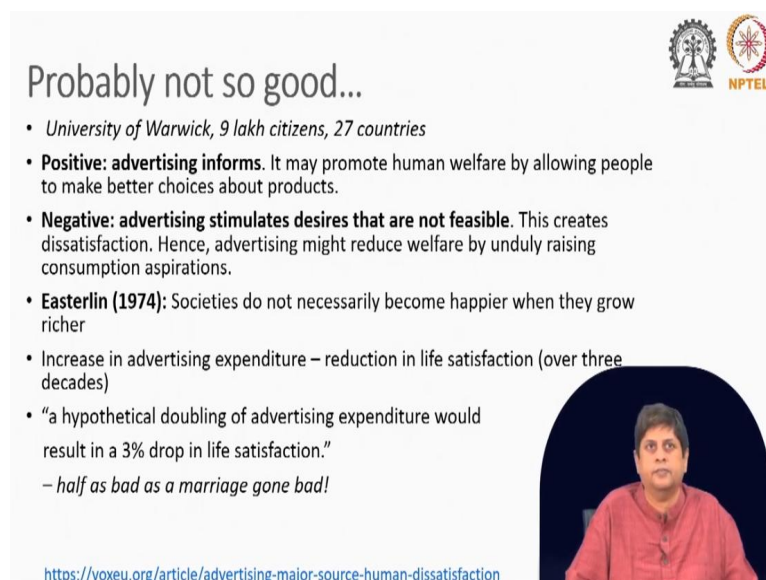
- In which way – do we mean our well-being?
- They show us the way, many benefits ...
- They give us information...
- They make our lives more rich, at least in material things

- They create desires when we have none
- They always compare us with others ... (usually worse)
- They confuse us
- They make us buy more than we can afford..





Ads that is a good for us this question raises concepts about well-being they would be good for us if they show us the way we benefit from things they give us information they make our lives more rich at least in material things. But on the other side they create desires when we earlier had no desires they always make comparisons which are, generally not good they confuse us and they make us buy more things than we can afford and very often also we end up buying things we do not need so that is where the reverse happens.

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Probably not so good...

- *University of Warwick, 9 lakh citizens, 27 countries*
- **Positive: advertising informs.** It may promote human welfare by allowing people to make better choices about products.
- **Negative: advertising stimulates desires that are not feasible.** This creates dissatisfaction. Hence, advertising might reduce welfare by unduly raising consumption aspirations.
- **Easterlin (1974):** Societies do not necessarily become happier when they grow richer
- Increase in advertising expenditure – reduction in life satisfaction (over three decades)
- “a hypothetical doubling of advertising expenditure would result in a 3% drop in life satisfaction.”
– *half as bad as a marriage gone bad!*



<https://voxeu.org/article/advertising-major-source-human-dissatisfaction>

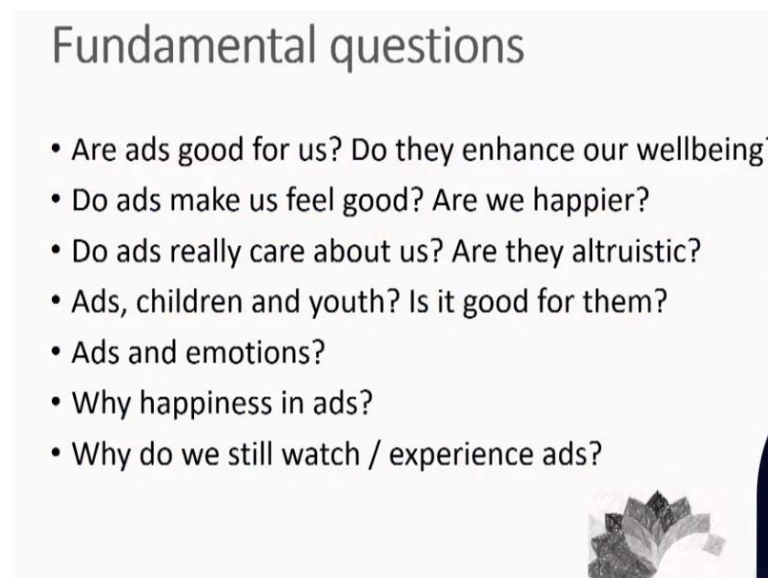
So in that particular context if you are looking also at advertisements and the way that they try to reach us the number of ads which focus on positivity has gradually shown an increase. But

then you see that when we are, looking at advertisements focus both on the positive as well as the negative. And there have been studies which say that if advertising investment goes up then it is going to affect us negatively.

So you see that because money is involved and I have shared with you the article details findings suggest that in certain ways advertising and the entire expenditure and advertising can be something, which can negatively affect us and make the quality of our life deteriorate. Friends what we I am trying to do is bring forward and draw attention to the fact that yes consumer and happiness are relevant and people talk about consumer happiness.

But if we start looking deeper into the things we realize that consumer happiness and well-being are not very easily associated they are problematically, linked to one another. We talked about this a little earlier that there is there is the good of ads there is the bad of ads.

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Fundamental questions

- Are ads good for us? Do they enhance our wellbeing?
- Do ads make us feel good? Are we happier?
- Do ads really care about us? Are they altruistic?
- Ads, children and youth? Is it good for them?
- Ads and emotions?
- Why happiness in ads?
- Why do we still watch / experience ads?

But the fundamental questions that we raised and we are going to take forward are do they enhance our well-being? Ads do they make us feel good if you are looking at the 2 questions they are very different questions. Right at the beginning of this talk I told you that, well-being and happiness have to be treated differently. Here in general ads are attractive there is the heuristic pleasure of watching something which is exciting positive or good it keeps us rooted just like an any other kind of entertainment.

So in that sense there is the feel good factor about advertising advertisements we might feel like watching again and again. But on the other hand the impact, of the ad on our lives is something that is problematic for instance you see a very attractive word which attracts you

towards say let us say car or whatever and then you realize that you do not have enough money to buy the car.

The moment of watching the ad is pleasurable the series of things that you see experience through your senses are attractive and pleasurable. But the moment the advertisement is over you realize that there is the absence of that thing which makes you crave for that thing and that is something which can be painful. Now that is good for the market that is good for the product but it is not necessarily good for you it might make you unhappy.

So you see that even at the level of happiness the experience of watching ad may be happy but the experience after watching ahead may be, unhappy. Because you feel generally ads are trying to create a sense of deficiency within you that this is something which you ought to have you do not have it. So the moment you realize that efficiency you feel sad about things. On the other hand a significant number of things which are advertised including cigarettes wine and other things are not necessarily good for you.

So that is where the, well-being element comes in and when you ask these questions a very fundamental ethical question that comes up is that do ads really care about us? Are they altruistic we talked about altruism we talked about pro-sociality a number of things do the people who make products for us? And who advertise those products really care for our well-being good health both mental and physical?

If you are talking, about children and youth and ads you find that a significant number of advertisements in fact the major part of advertisement are addressed to these people. How does it impact them there is again the question of ethicality and then of course ads and emotions and amongst the different kinds of emotions which are explored in ads happiness positive emotions are explored to a certain extent.

But these are, minor issues because generally ads do not influence us for a very long period of time in terms of the emotions they induce in us it is a short term thing. But the desires they live with us over a period of time probably are less impermanent in nature that a few examples indirectly.

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Do ads make us feel good? Happiness

- Bright colours, beautiful things
- Beautiful people, beautiful figures
- A world of delight, happiness and youth...

That is no country for
old men. The young

In one another's
arms, birds in the
trees,..

Sailing to Byzantium

- Are we beautiful people, can we ever become so?
- Are we rich people, can we get all these beautiful things?
- This is no place for old men... (Yeats)

In terms of the pleasure aspect that I was talking about bright colours, beautiful things, beautiful people, beautiful figures, world of delight happiness youth. This utopian world is something where nothing can go wrong is presented in an advertisement which is very distinctively absent in our real lives. You see that indirectly advertisements kind of tell you that by using their products you can become more beautiful and you can live in a beautiful world.

But the necessities of that would be material resources like, money and all that there are 2 distinctive material resources and health resources that advertisements generally address which can make people unhappy. I am reminded of WB Yeat's poem that this is no country for old men the young in one another's arms births in the trees creating an image of eternal youthfulness which advertisements very often do.

And in this beautiful world the people who are without, money and the people who are without youth feel lost. So then there is the negative aspect of advertisement in this particular way

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Advertising make us unhappy!

- Ads want to expose people to things that are available – that they *can have*
- But many people *can't have* what they want!
 - Relative status
 - Affordability
 - Present want vs. future want
- What we have makes us feel ordinary
- Knowing that happiness cannot be bought and being unhappy knowing that are two different things (objects of desire are often confused with objects of happiness)

Andrew Oswald
Warwick Univ

<https://hbr.org/2020/01/advertising-makes-us-unhappy>

The other way that advertisements can be negative is because they always as I told earlier make comparisons there are issues of affordability and the conflict between present wants and future wants. And the feeling that if we do not possess the things which are being, said in the advertisements then we are very ordinary people. So this is where things go wrong.

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Some view points

"Of course advertising can make you happy. It can also make you pensive, sad, frightened and even apprehensive. Good advertising should seek to change behaviour in a brand's favour and, arguably, ramping up the emotion dial is a powerful way of doing so.
Mel Cruickshank, chief executive, Wunderman

"Of course advertising makes us unhappy. There's too much of it; we can't screen it out and its premise is to promote extrinsic value – happiness being intrinsic. But to portray us as helpless absorbers of everything we're told rather underestimates the power of people to think for themselves.
Chief executive Jonathan Trimble, chief executive, 18 Feet & Rising

Psychologists would suggest that the formula to happiness consists of such elements as pleasure, engagement and meaning. Advertising often claims these as the fruits of its efforts. However, the true essence of advertising is to make you want more. It is designed to make you restless, leaving little room for contentment. Unfortunately, being happy with your lot is the true key to happiness.
Strategy chief, Omaid Hiwaizi, planning director, SapientNitro

<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/does-advertising-people-happy/1169637>



But then there have been studies they have in viewpoints which suggest that advertisements can make you happy as well as unhappy. So the viewpoints are presented here for your reference.

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Do ads really care for us?

- Government awareness campaigns
- Celebrating minority, empowering women





- Tempting us
- Making us feel inferior



By saying what I have said so far I have kind of created a negative picture of the entire consumer behaviour, the consumer scenario and there is a reason for that. This could be my personal viewpoint and I will try to sum it up as we go ahead. But the whole world of consumer products and the world getting through to us through the world of advertisement has many issues. In terms of what we have what we don't have, what we want what we desire but we cannot have.

It can also have various issues in terms of the, impact it has on a psychological which is something which might happen subliminally without our ever being aware of it slowly injected into my our minds. Because a certain kind of ethics a certain kind of value a certain kind of gender orientation attitude to life all these things certain kind of ethicality, morality all these things get reflected through advertisements.

Especially for the youth and, for the younger children but then there are of course positive sides because advertisement is an opportunity to create positive responses as well.

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Ads mostly care about ads...

NPTEL

Values!
Health!

Contradictory to what we are seeing right here cigarettes linked with sense of freedom sense of adventure a sense of glamour, drinking associated with feeling like a king emphasizing a particular kind of masculinity. So in terms of values and health, it raises questions within a particular socio-cultural framework.

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Ads, children and youth

- Young people, impressionable minds
- Values are learnt (but what values?)

NPTEL

https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https://3A%2F%2Fteamjimmyjoe.com%2F2015%2F02%2F32-vintage-ads-disturbingly-creepy-kids-products%2F&psig=AOvVaw3AVLZ-UmwVnQC0350B24Z&ust=1587728932403000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CA00jhxqFwoTKCcyfW9_ugCFQAAAAAAdAAAAABAD

And then of course advertisements about children the kind of junk food that are promoted for children or the kind of violence that is reflected about life through various kinds of advertisements these are also aspects that one looks at.

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Looking within - Ads and emotions

- Logical ads vs. persuasive ads (predictable irrationality)
- What dominant emotions do ads use?
- Positive ads vs negative ads



But then of course coming back to the interior of an advertisement in the sense that what the advertisement is able to do to us. Ads generally persuade our emotions ads in themselves are either, good, nor bad products in themselves are never either good or bad it all depends on how we use them? In the framework of advertisements have the tremendous power of affecting us emotionally and hence they have the ability to persuade us with a wide range of strategies.

Since they have the, ability to persuade us through a wide range of strategies they can be used very meaningfully ethically for the purpose of our happiness and well-being they can also be used negatively. I have shared with you glimpses of how it operates the various kinds of things that it does to us. But you see that in terms of emotions if you are looking within that framework also we can have advertisements which tell us to do what whatever we want either through positive advertising or through negative advertising.


And here is a very interesting paradox look at the 3 advertisements over here these are examples of what are known as negative advertisements. In other words when we see them we do not feel good so in terms of our happiness they are generally obviously make us unhappy or feel the unpleasant, emotions. But in terms of motivating us to do something what do they do they? probably lead in the direction of pro-sociality or our own building.

It is time to share UNICEF ad starts with negative emotions but gives you an opportunity to do something outside of the framework of the world of the advertising world in the real world which is meaningful. If you are looking at the smoking ad it is, definitely a jeering negative

advertisement which shows a man in a morgue or a woman in a morgue with the tag smoking kills of a cigarette box.

But in terms of its health this negative ad probably if hid it would lead towards our well being. So here is the interesting paradox that which makes us unhappy within the framework of the advertisement is something which will actually make us happy outside of it. Anywhere you look and you start looking at the elements of happiness and unhappiness these nuances these complexities would come in.



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- In an information age – do they already know all there is to know?
- When you have to choose among 10 products which look more or less similar – what makes a difference?
- In our lives, we often do things that are desirable (but bad) rather than good (but not desirable)
- Humans are predictably irrational

Engage with the brand – remember it

- Emotions that work
 - Happiness – expand, relate
 - Pride - Onida, brand value
 - Anger – political campaigns, social media campaigns
 - fear – climate change, medical insurance



<https://stevens-tate.com/articles/emotional-advertising/>

So in an information age these questions come up all right and these emotions come up. I will not go into the details of it because I have touched upon the essential components that are indicated here earlier.

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The use of happiness in ads: why?

- The world has become a happier place (sic) – greater material good
- Between 2017 to 2019 – ads using happiness have gone up from 7% to 12%
- Warmth, amazement, all positive emotions on the rise

“the world has more reasons to be happier than ever before. In almost every way: poverty, literacy, health, freedom, and education are improving”.
Max Roser, Univ. of Oxford

<https://unruly.co/blog/article/2019/01/29/happiness-ads-insights/>

And studies suggest that we have the ability to influence, people if you remember when we talked about networking we talked about emotional contagion advertisements also have the capability of influencing us through positivity or negativity. And recent trends suggest that there is an increase in terms of user positive emotions in advertisements. So lets sum up what we have discussed so far briefly at the outset we said that when we are talking about, happiness and unhappiness within the context of consumers and advertising.

We are talking relatively of a short term framework or rather advertisements consumer products focus on transient things. But when we start looking at the larger picture we find that there are so many different implications some of them are short term some of them long term. For example getting tempted to buy a car by looking, at advertisement is a short term thing. The car maker selling you the car for them is a transient thing it is a short term thing because this we sell the car and they are happy you buy the car and you pay the EMI of the car for the next seven years now that is a long term long term issue and it can influence your happiness or unhappiness over a long period of time. So you see that different windows are, there and in these different windows depending on the implication of the product the relevance of the significance of happiness in short term or long term can be variable.

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Let's look at this Coke ads!

<https://keepvid.ch/en1/>

Open Happiness: Coce's global campaign with a series of ads in 2009

open a Coke, open happiness.

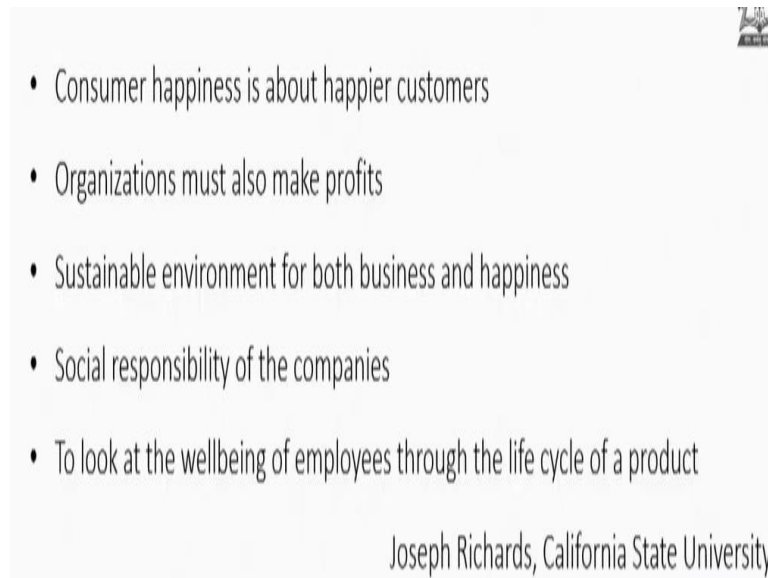
open happiness

The speaker is a man with short dark hair, wearing a red shirt, speaking from a circular inset at the bottom right of the slide.

So for instance there are other examples of highlighting the element of happiness in recent times in advertisement. Here is an example you can go to the website indicated and actually watch these advertisements but beyond the, world of advertising happiness I would put it this way. Not necessarily for happiness but to sell a product what is the relationship between consumer and happiness?

It is an uneasy relationship as we have already seen it is an unequitable bad situation in the sense that probably the product makers as well as the ad maker are not really very deeply concerned about our well-being and happiness. They want to make us happy so that they can sell there is always an ulterior motive behind whether they want to make us happy or unhappy.

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- Consumer happiness is about happier customers
- Organizations must also make profits
- Sustainable environment for both business and happiness
- Social responsibility of the companies
- To look at the wellbeing of employees through the life cycle of a product

Joseph Richards, California State University

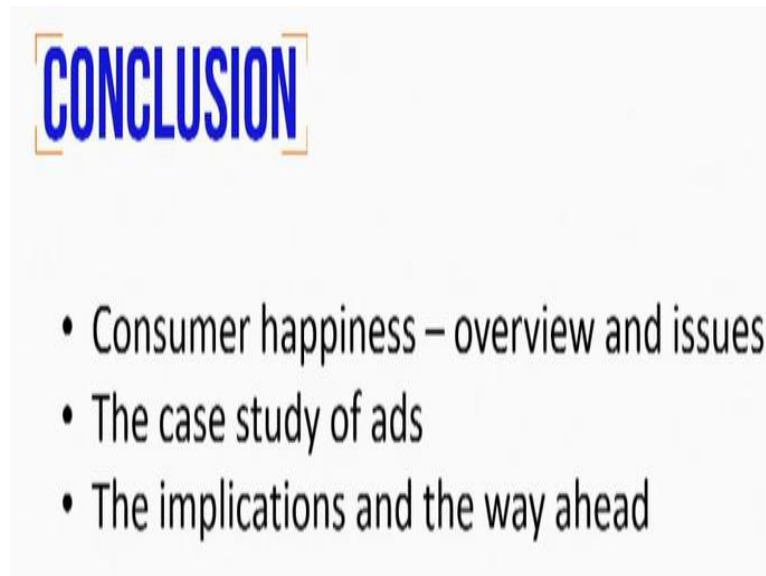
And hence we need to look at a framework and one of my colleagues Joseph Richards from California state university works on consumers was looking at a framework which I found very relevant and I would like to share. That you see that now there needs to be shift in the larger frame of things. Because we have already seen 3 examples of advertisement that is not the case to focusing with the focusing on the happier customer.

But not necessarily a transient short-term happiness but a more sustainable long term happiness there is this element that organizations must make profit but also they have the responsibility of treating sustainable environment for, both business and happiness. And hence it is a part of the social responsibility of the companies and one of the other interesting things that come with the discussion with him is that.

You see that the accountability of the ad maker or the accountability of the person who creates the product generally is believed to be till the moment the product is sold. But the product has an entire life cycle, it has repairs and finally it has to be disposed of this is the entire lifespan of the product. The accountability in the context of consumers or towards consumers for the companies should extend to the entire life cycle.

A sustainable environment both for human beings as well as for the world one; which focuses on ethicality doing business ethically. These are significant components which are coming in, a big way today within the framework of theory and hopefully will translate meaningfully to practice in the context of this entire discussion of consumer and happiness. I hope that this debate is something which I have been able to bring forward with the example of advertisements to you.

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And I have been hopefully been able to share with you the implications and the way forward which is an ethical, sustainable orientation towards creating products advertising them and selling them which keep in mind both the happiness as well as developing of the consumer. But then of course the entire thing seems very utopian may happen may not happen but at least initial steps. In those directions are being taken in the frontiers of research and theorization and applications in the field of consumer behaviour and happiness and well-being.

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The references are given in the text many of the images are taken from Google. And I hope that this will be a food for thought towards the end of all this core end of this course which will set you thinking of how to explore happiness and well-being in other contexts apart from the world of consumers that we talked about. Workplace and various other places public spaces, different kinds of physical environments and so on and so forth thank you very much.