



Mindful consumption: Its conception, measurement, and implications

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Abstract

Most traditional marketers avoid using mindful consumption (MC) despite fast-rising consumer mindfulness, MC-advocacy by trade magazines, and the success of tech-savvy, MC-oriented start-ups. We identify two gaps for this divergence—varying conceptions of MC and lack of a valid MC scale. Conception clarity and a valid MC scale are important for advancing managerial practice. We first integrate current, varying conceptions to identify three MC dimensions: Awareness, Caring, and Temperance. These signify awareness of self, society, and the environment (SSE), caring for the effects of consumption on SSE, and temperance in consumption. We then develop, refine, and validate the MC scale using 10 studies. We also assess the MC nomological network and scale robustness across genders, ages, occupations, and incomes. Marketers can use MC scale for product innovation, differentiation, and diversification. Policymakers can use this to nudge people towards MC-oriented sustainable behavior. This research opens multiple avenues for future research.

Keywords Mindful consumption · Awareness · Caring · Temperance · Mindfulness

Mindful consumption (MC) is the manifestation of mindfulness in consumer decision-making (Bahl et al., 2016). Rising interest in MC over last two decades is evident in doctoral studies (Armstrong, 2012; De wet, 2008; Gupta, 2019), and academic inquiries in the form of conceptual (Sheth et al., 2011), qualitative (Hunting & Conroy, 2018), and quantitative (Milne et al., 2020) articles. This resembles the growing emphasis on MC in practice-oriented articles (Clark, 2014; Kotler, 2021; Mitchell, 2019) as well as books (Badiner, 2002; Emerich, 2011; Turner, 2020). Some technology-driven marketers realize the importance of MC and maintain it at the core of their novel business models, enabling consumers to buy the product they need, when and however little they may need

it (Aronson, 2021). For example, start-ups, such as Rent the Runway and GoPuff, challenge traditional marketing techniques (e.g., discounts, bundling, and conditioning) that promote overconsumption (Kadioglu & Ozturk, 2022; Rosenberg, 2004). These marketers base their business models on MC to achieve over \$1 billion in market cap (Fromm, 2019).

Despite these trends, integrating mindfulness into marketing is tough for traditional marketers (Hagenbuch, 2022; Tiland, 2019), which is evident in never-ending discounts, click baits, and zero pricing manipulations (Fan et al., 2022; Mukherjee et al., 2022) for pushing excessive consumption. This divergence of traditional marketers to avoid MC despite the rise in consumer mindfulness, widespread reinforcements by marketing experts, and the success of MC-oriented new marketers is surprising. We examine the literature to identify the two important challenges that marketing practice faces to integrate MC in marketing strategies.

First, the existing literature shows fragmented conceptions of MC. Many expositions examine MC predominantly as awareness of self and others (Rosenberg, 2004; Bahl et al., 2016), and many others observe MC as temperance in consumption (Assadourian, 2009; Sheth et al., 2011). Still others consider caring for self and others to be important for MC (Milne et al., 2020; Sheth et al., 2011). Disjointedly, experimental studies equate MC with temperance (Gupta & Verma, 2020; Mason et al., 2016). These varying conceptions do not help in clarifying the relationships of MC with other marketing constructs and

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