



Television Advertising and Idealized Image of “Good Life” among Adolescents in Rural China

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Introduction

- Advertising presents unrealistic or idealized pictures of people and their lives.
- When audience engaged in social comparison with these images, they would feel unhappy, anxious and dissatisfied.



Introduction

- The influence of advertising is open to question when it comes to rural adolescents.
- There are 350 million young people under 18 with approximately three-fifths rural in China.



Research Questions

- Does the television advertising viewing have impact on upward social comparison with idealized images of “good life” portrayed in television advertising?
- Does this comparison lead to a lower evaluation of current living standards?



Literature Review

- According to social comparison theory, individuals have a need to evaluate themselves and they do so via comparison with others.
- The theory was expanded that the comparison also occur in the evaluation of circumstances.



Literature Review

- There were two directions for social comparison --- upward and downward.
- Numerous studies have demonstrated the negative effects of idealized male or female body images in mass media, especially in advertising.



Research Hypotheses

- H1: Viewing of television ads is positively related to social comparison with idealized images of “good life” portrayed in television advertising.
- H2: Social comparison with the idealized images of “good life” is negatively related to evaluation of standards of living.



Method

- A survey was conducted in Henan province in October 2006.
- The respondents were 401 rural adolescents attending two secondary schools.
- The structured questionnaire was self-administered.



Sample Profile

- 216 males, 185 females
- Age ranged from 12 to 17 years with a mean age of 14.6 years
- 11.3% single child



Sample Profile

- 72.4% family income from agriculture
- 1.8 television viewing hours per day
- More frequently watched local channels than national channels



Measures

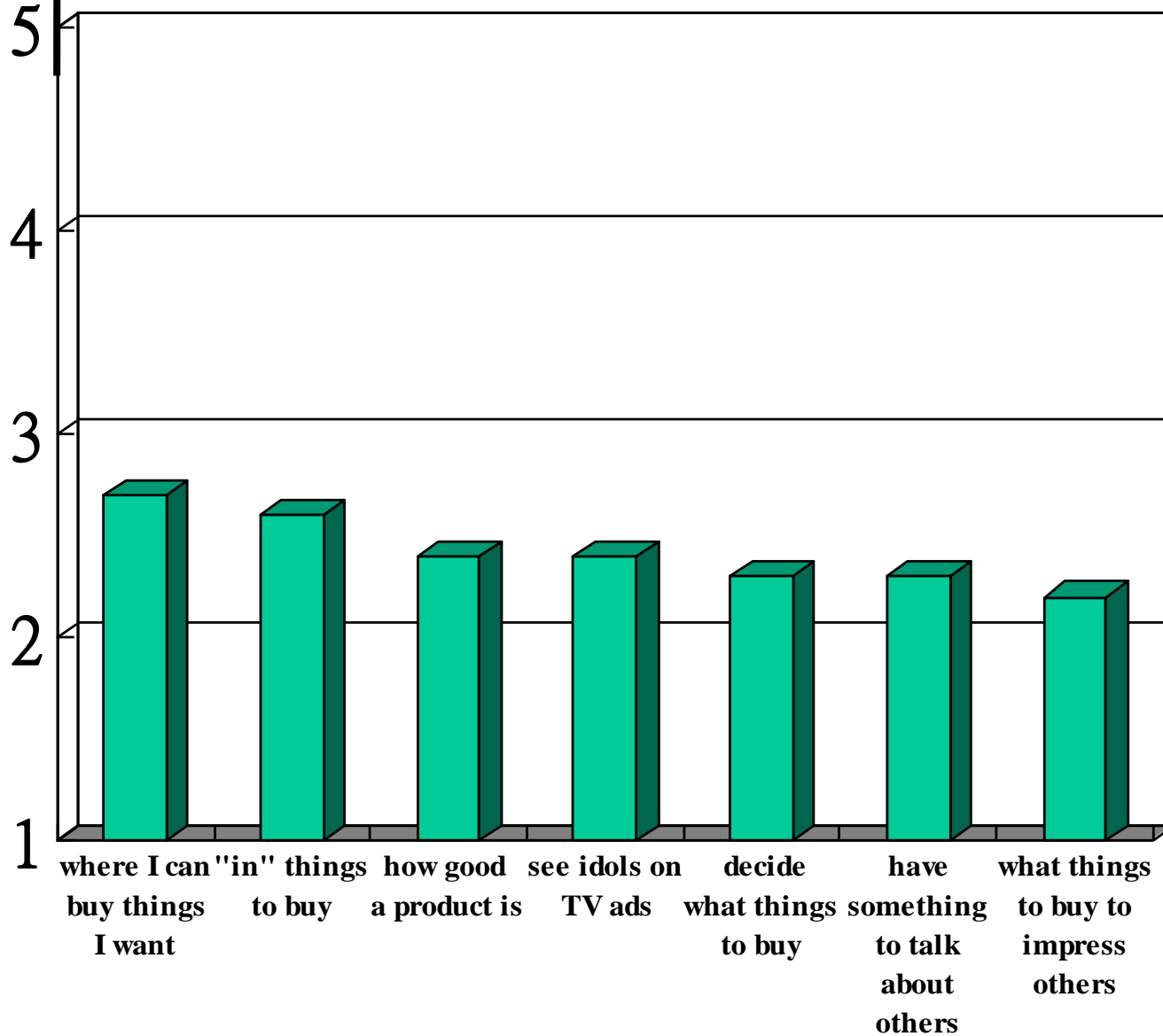
- Television advertising viewing 7 items
- Social comparison with idealized images of “good life” 7 items
- Evaluation of the standard of living 7 items



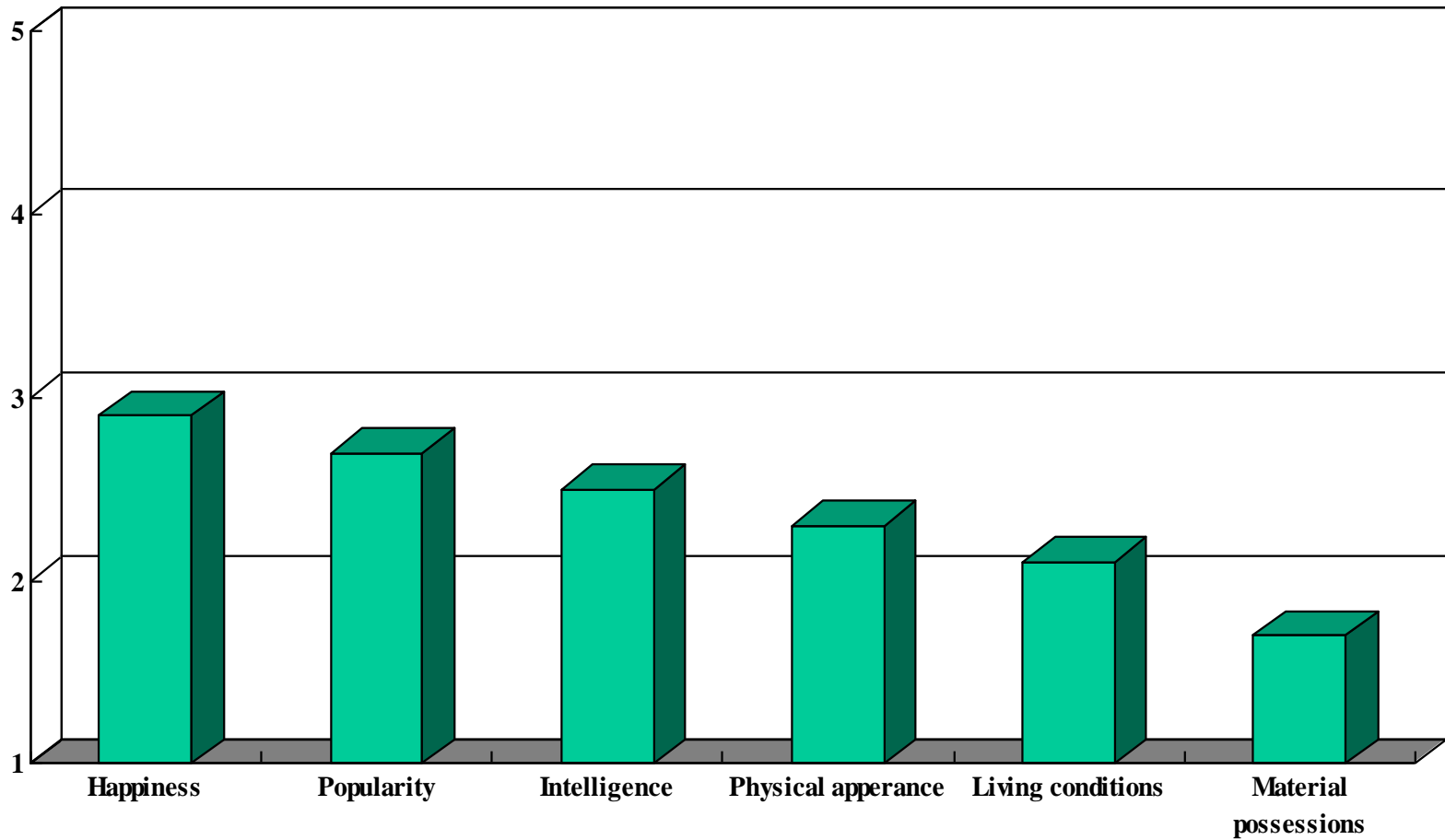
Findings

- The mean of television advertising viewing was 2.4 (SD=0.6).
- The mean of social comparison with idealized image of “good life” was 2.4 (SD=0.8).
- The mean of evaluation of the standard of living was 2.8 (SD=0.6).

Findings



Findings





Findings

- H1 was supported ($r=0.47$, $p<0.01$)
- H2 was rejected ($r=-0.03$, $p>0.05$)



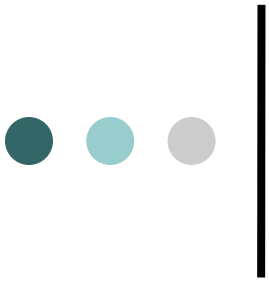
Discussion

- Television advertising triggers upward social comparison.
- Motivations of viewing television advertising
- Social comparison with idealized images and evaluation of the standard of living



Limitations

- Convenience sample
- Focus on television advertising
- Only two effects caused by television advertising



○ THANKS! Q&A