

Consumer Culture and Well-Being

Links over time

Why care about well-being?

“Mental health and psychological wellbeing are fundamental to broader health and wellbeing. Studies have shown that of those with mental health problems at age 26, half had first met criteria that identifies a psychiatric disorder by 15, and nearly 75% had done so by their late teens. In 2004, around 10% of 10 to 16-year-olds had a diagnosable mental health disorder ...and some have argued that the wider costs of mental health problems in the UK might be as high as £77 billion.”

Department of Health, 2009
Healthy Futures, Brighter Lives

Why care about well-being?

- ▶ Recent UNICEF report card for children's well-being
 - UK ranked 16th (of 27)
 - Previously LAST!

Why might consumer culture values be linked to well-being?

- ▶ Self Determination Theory predicts that pursuing these “**extrinsic**” values will not fulfil basic psychological needs, and thus lead to ill-being

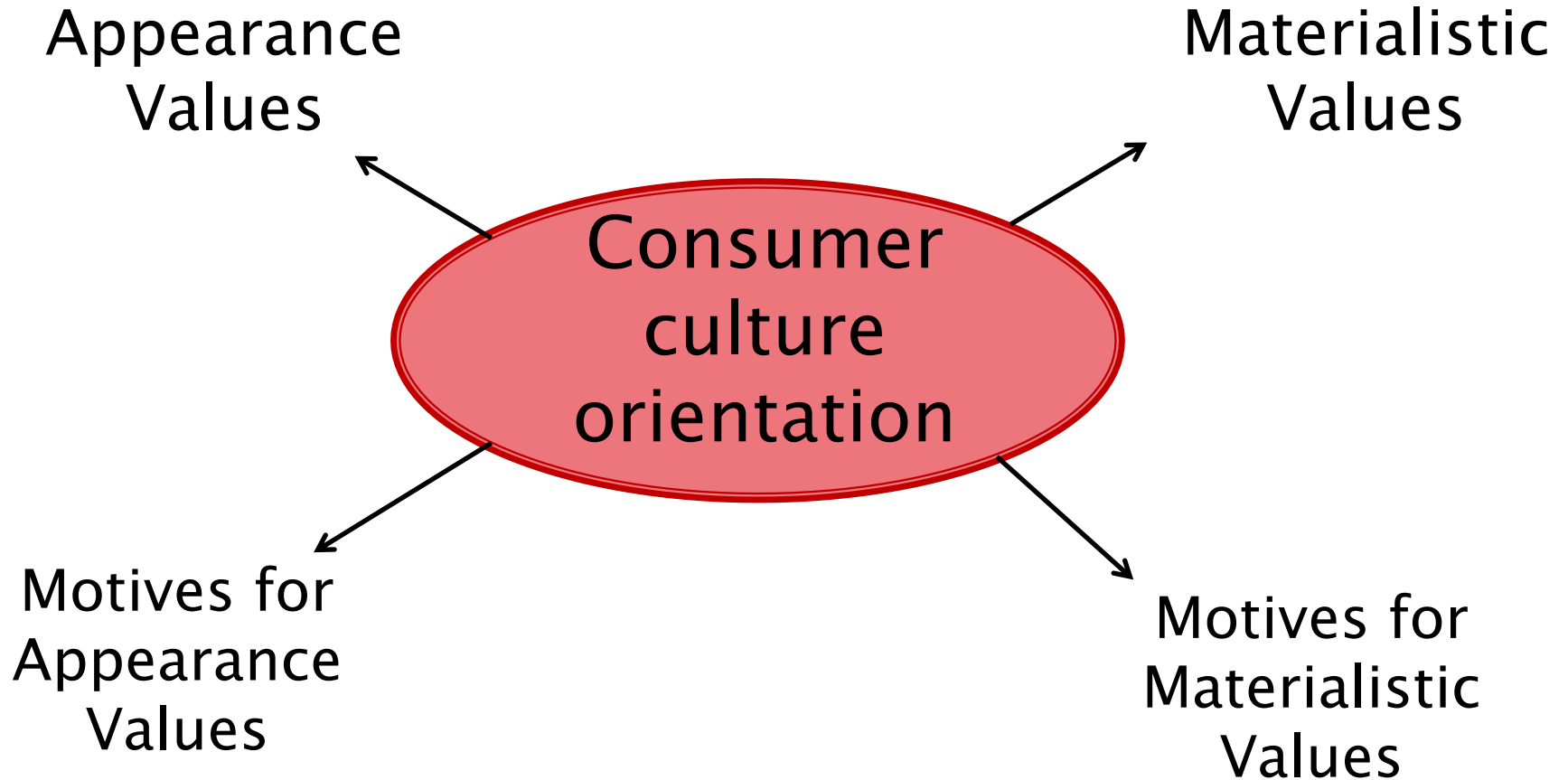


Why might consumer culture values be linked to well-being?

- ▶ Material goods and the perfect body are presented by the media as a solution to unhappiness
- ▶ Children experiencing ill-being may turn to consumer culture values in an attempt to reduce these feelings



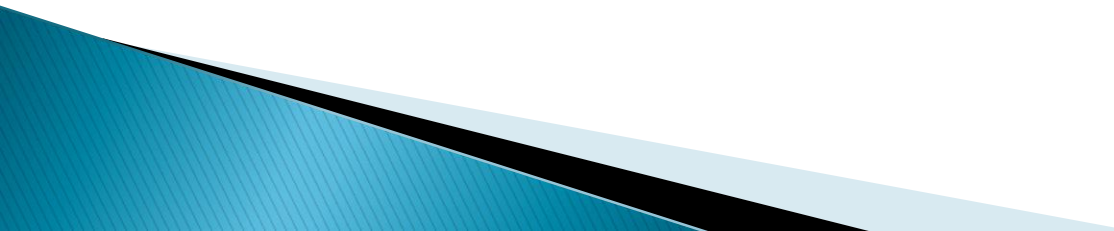
Consumer Culture Orientation



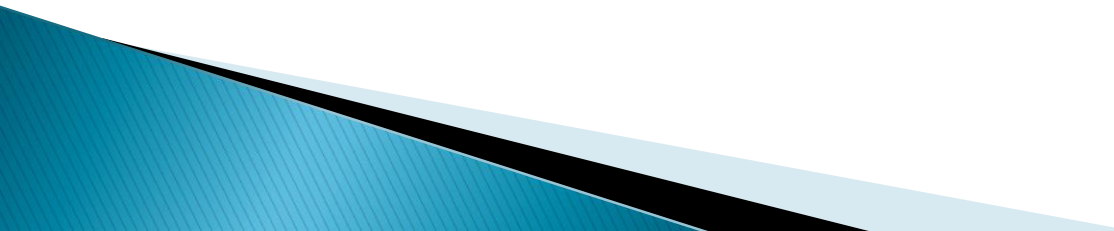
Research Questions

- ▶ How do consumer culture orientation and well-being change as children get older?
- ▶ In what way are consumer culture orientation and well-being linked in children?
 - Does one predict the other or is there a reciprocal relationship?
- ▶ Possible moderators?
 - Secure identity?
 - Gender?
 - School phase?

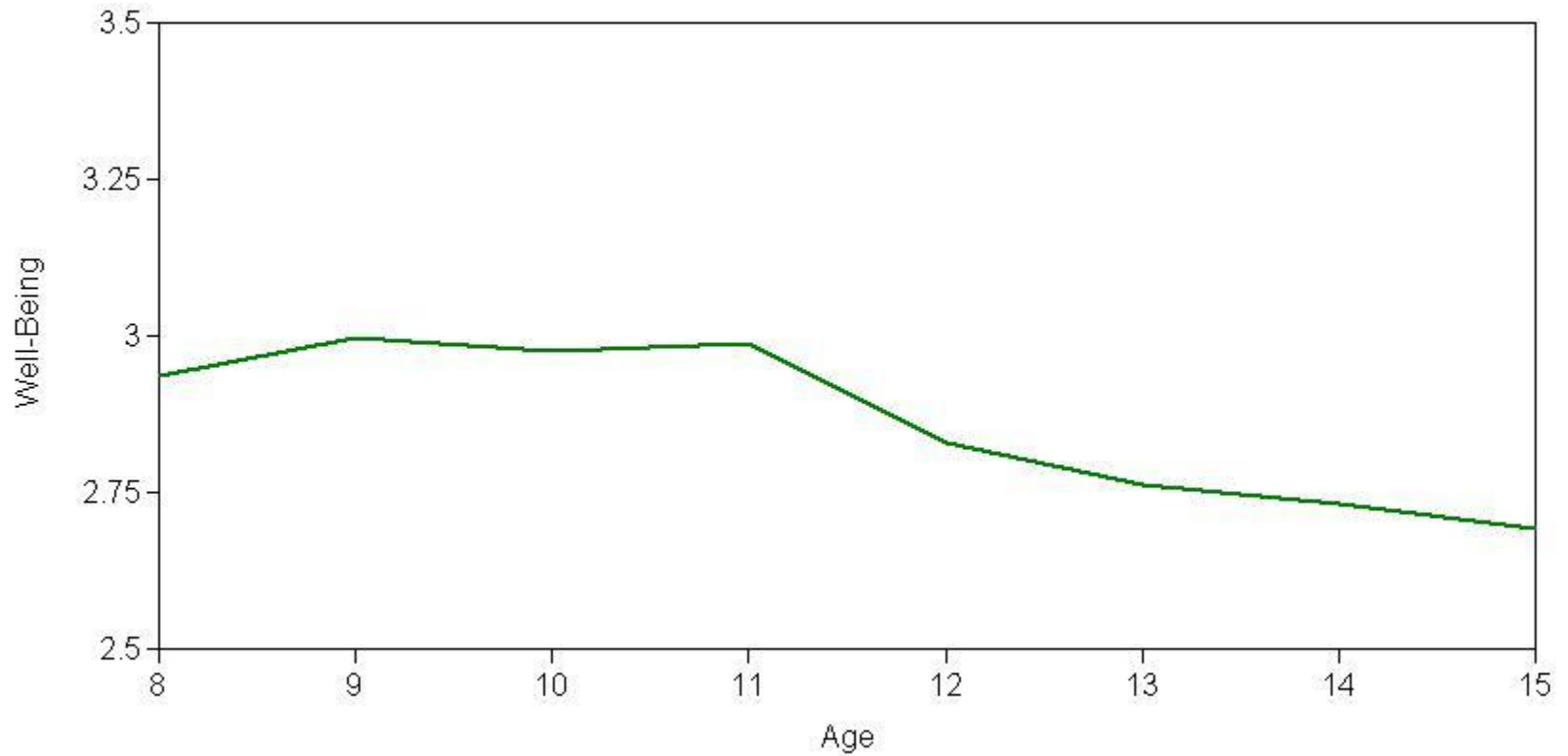
Our Research

- ▶ What was it?
 - Longitudinal research
 - The same children completed questionnaires over three school years
 - ▶ Who took part?
 - Over 1000 children, aged 8 to 15
 - 50% boys, 50% girls
 - Students from 6 schools: 3 primary, 3 secondary
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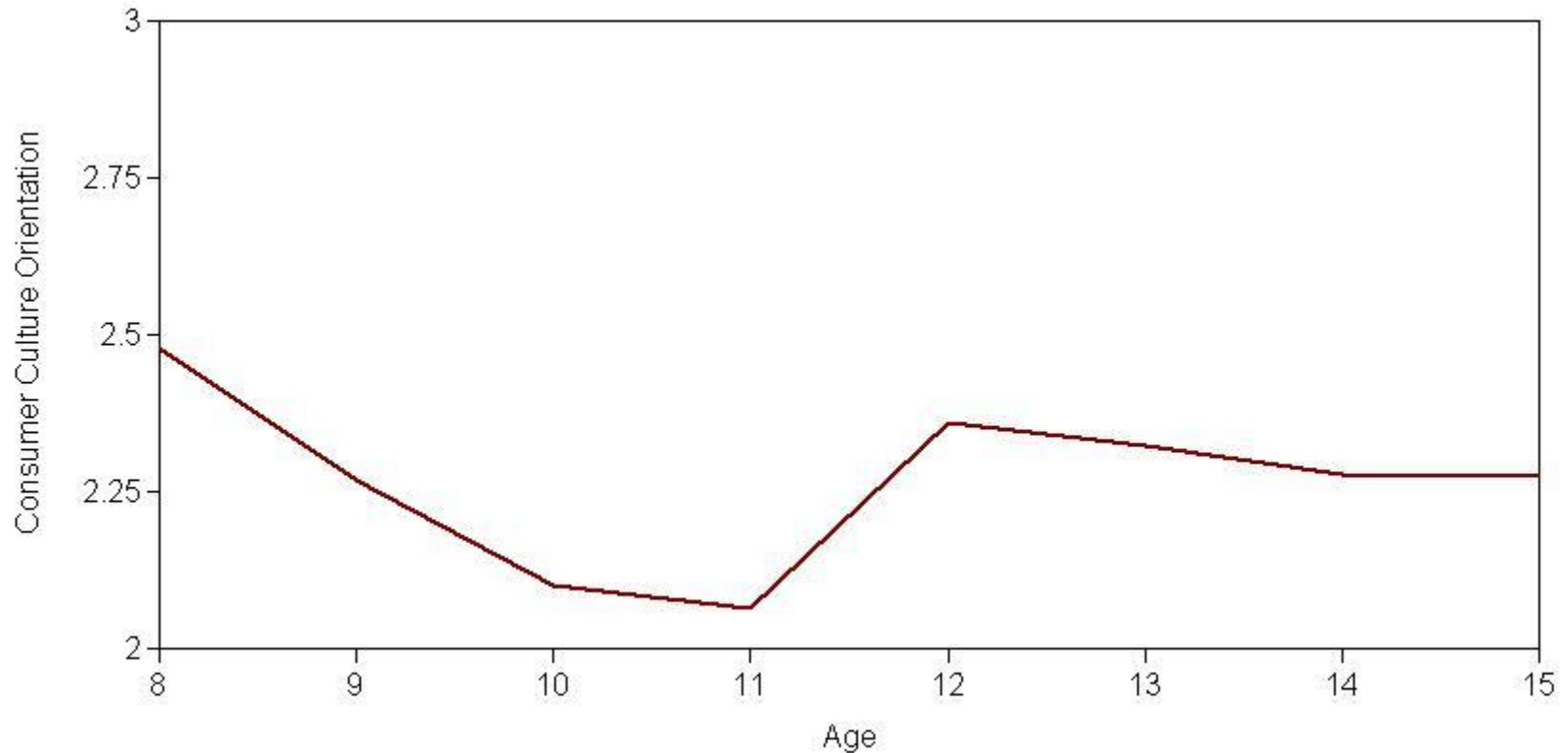
Developmental Trends

- ▶ We can use our data (which covers children from age 8 to 15) to plot a 'growth curve'
 - ▶ This shows how a particular variable changes as children develop
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Well-Being



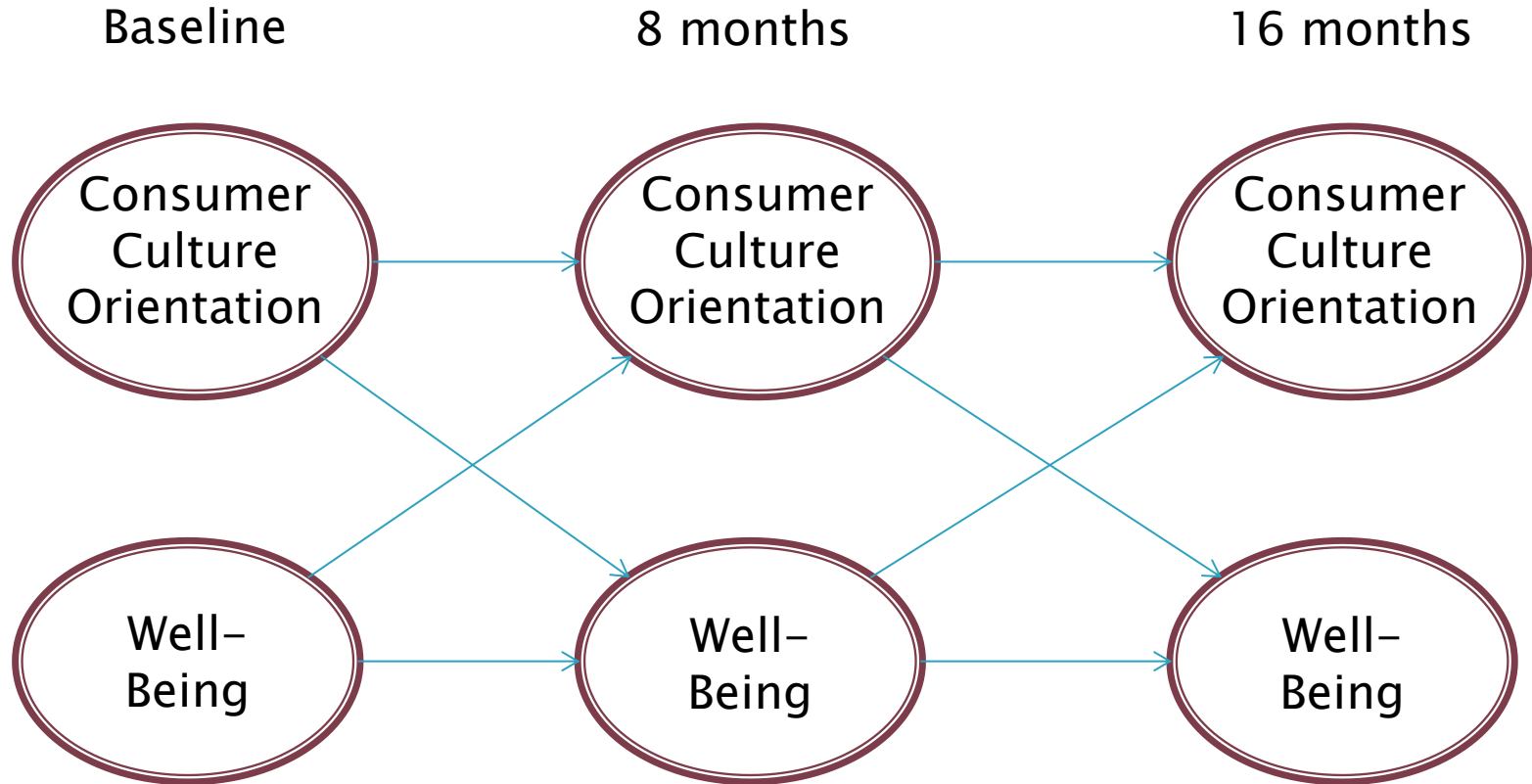
Consumer Culture Orientation



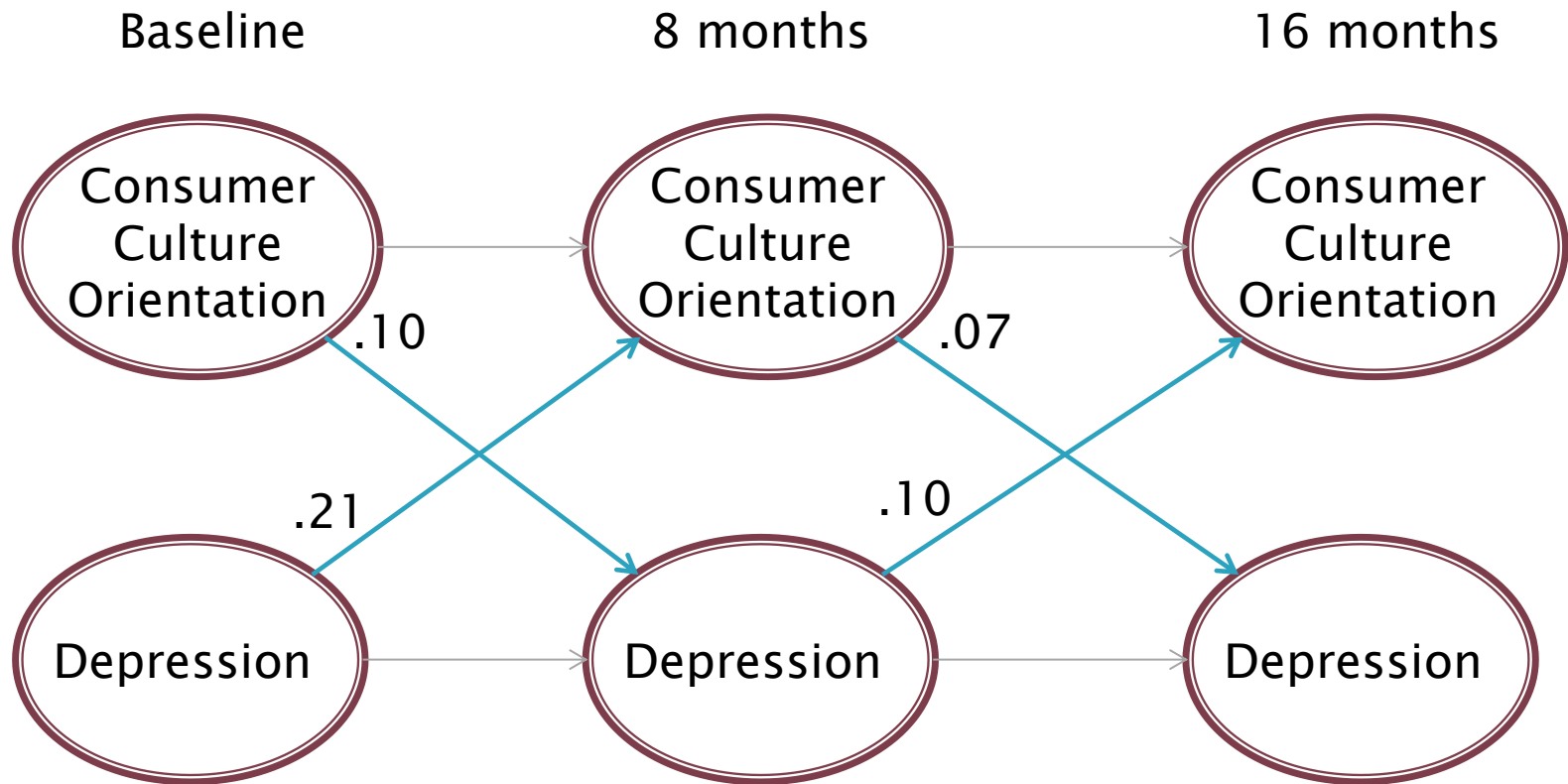
Depression and Body Esteem

- ▶ Focusing today on two elements of well-being
- ▶ Depression
 - Onset of major depressive disorder later in adolescence
 - Can identify individual differences much earlier
- ▶ Body Esteem
 - Predictor of disordered eating
 - Again, onset later, but individual differences present in younger age groups

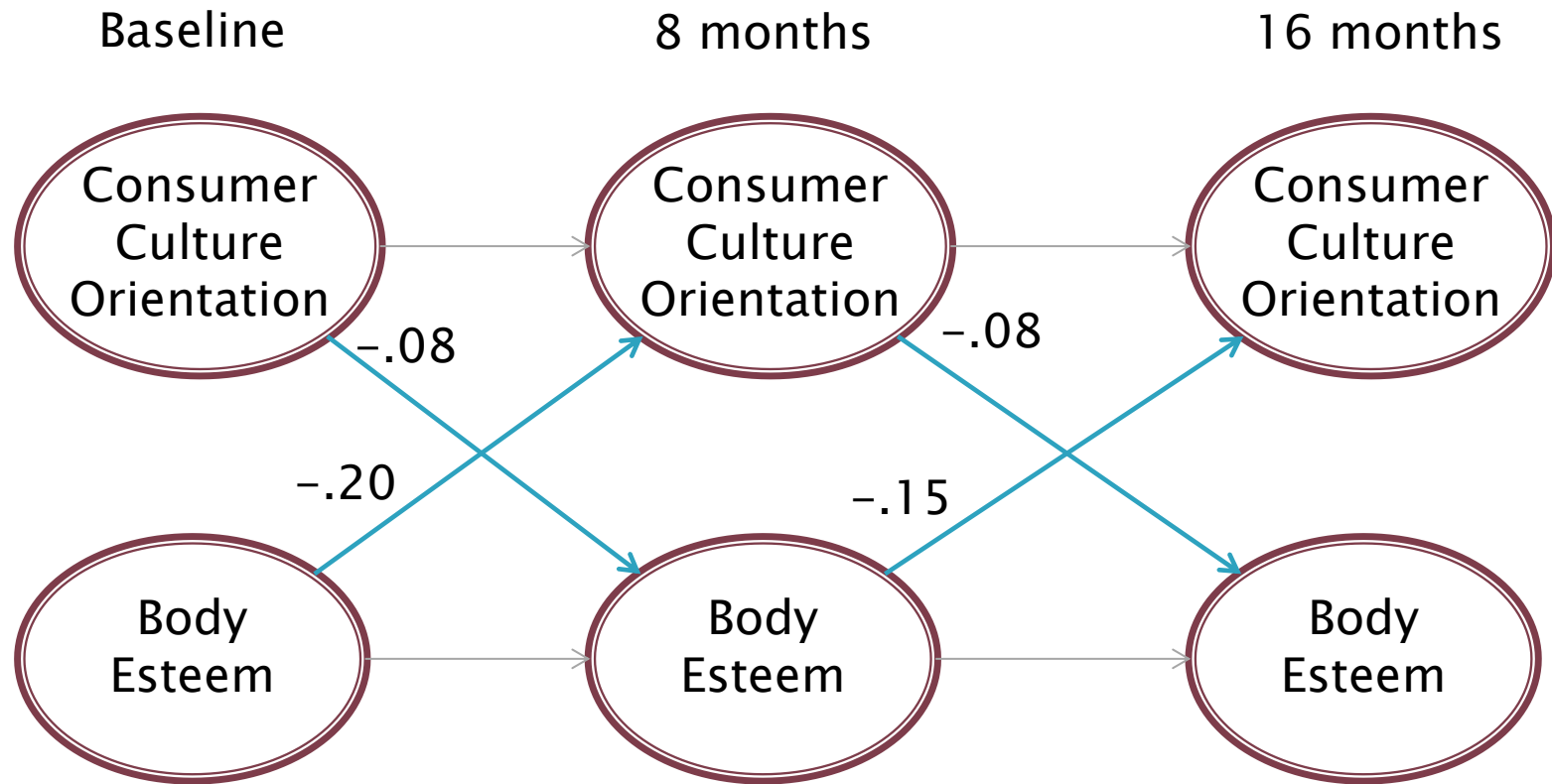
Basic Idea



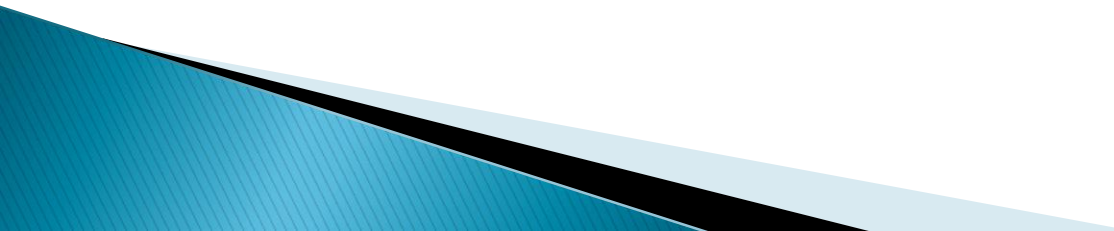
Depression and Consumer Culture



Body Esteem and Consumer Culture



Conclusions

- ▶ **Bidirectional** links between consumer culture orientation and well-being
 - ▶ This results in a “**vicious cycle**” for children with low well-being
 - ▶ These links are present for both genders, and for primary and secondary school children
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Future Analysis

- ▶ We can also plot how well-being and consumer culture orientation affect each other over time
 - Are initial WB and initial CCO related?
 - Does initial WB affect how children's CCO changes over time?
 - Does initial CCO affect how children's WB changes over time?