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Materialism and the Self

Kathleen Shirley Micken
Old Dominion University

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MATERIALISM AND THE SELF

by

Kathleen Shirley Micken
A. B. June 1971, College of William and Mary
M.B.A. May 1983, College of William and Mary

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Approved by:

John B. Ford, IV (Chairman)

Edward P. Markowski

Scott D. Roberts

William H. Wallace (Dean)

ABSTRACT

MATERIALISM AND THE SELF

Kathleen Shirley Micken
Old Dominion University, 1993
Director: Dr. John B. Ford, IV

Materialism has been called the most significant macro development in modern consumer behavior. Despite its importance, research about the construct is rather new. Two scales have been developed to measure materialism, one proposed by Belk, the other by Richins and Dawson.

The purpose of this dissertation is threefold. First, it extends the materialism research program by investigating the relationship between materialism and one's self concept. Hypotheses which drive the research posit that people who are more materialistic have lower self-esteem, are less likely to be self-actualized, are extrinsically rather than intrinsically motivated, and are likely to be high self-monitors. The second purpose is to assess the reliability and validity of the two scales. Third, the definition of materialism itself is addressed.

Data were collected via a questionnaire distributed to adults. Hypotheses were investigated with correlation analysis. The reliability of the two scales was assessed by calculating Coefficient Alphas and item-to-total statistics. Confirmatory factor analysis and the hypothesis tests were used in assessing validity. A profile of materialists was developed by analyzing the top and bottom terciles formed from scores on the Richins and Dawson scale.

All hypotheses were confirmed. People scoring high on the materialism scales were found to be less self-confident and to rely on the opinions of others. While materialism was equally distributed across categories of gender and ethnic background, materialists tended to be younger, to not have a college degree, and to have either relatively high or relatively low household incomes.

The Richins and Dawson scale was found to be the more reliable scale. Validity assessment also suggested that it may be superior to the Belk scale.

Finally, a distinction was drawn between materialism and other constructs such as consumerism and conspicuous consumption. The importance of the self-concept to an understanding of materialism and the resulting implications for the definition of materialism were explored.

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I now know why the acknowledgement page in dissertations reads as it so often does. While one person is listed as the author, the dissertation is not a product of that individual alone. It is a collaborative enterprise. I would, therefore, like to thank and acknowledge my many collaborators.

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD

Madonna sings about being “a material girl.” Andre Agassi tells viewers that “image is everything” in his promotion of Canon’s EOS Rebel camera. Marketers and advertisers are blamed for fostering pernicious materialism among consumers (e.g. Schudson 1984). America has been dubbed the “consumer society” and consumption motives have been identified as dominant in our culture. As early an observer of the United States as de Tocqueville noted, “I know of no country, indeed, where the love of money has taken stronger hold on the affections of men” (1961, p. 43). More recently, Arensberg and Niehoff (1980) suggested that materialism is a core American value. On a more global scale, Nava (1992) argues that materialism

has become a powerful and evocative symbol of contemporary capitalism and the modern Western world. Indeed, in the climate of 1991, faced by the crisis of the environment and the radical transformations in Eastern Europe, it is perhaps the most resonant symbol of all (p. 185).

Evidence such as this leads to Belk’s (1987b) pronouncement that materialism is the “dominant consumer ideology and the most significant macro development in modern consumer behavior” (p. 26). Is he right?

Various authors (e.g. Horowitz 1985; McCracken 1988; McKendrick,

Brewer, and Plumb 1983; Mukerji 1983) trace the origins of materialism and a consumer culture to the industrialized nations. Others (for example, Mason 1981) suggest that materialism, or conspicuous consumption, has almost always been present in some form or another and should be expected to be found in societies in the future. Regardless of its genesis and/or dispersion, whenever it is discussed materialism is routinely criticized as a bankrupt life style. As Miller points out, "Materialism has virtually no defenders" (1991, p. 130). For example, both Scitovsky (1976) and Leiss (1976) suggest that materialism carries with it the seeds of its own destruction, concluding that consumption is, by itself, ultimately unfulfilling. Others (e.g. Boorstin 1973, Durning 1991, Lasch 1979) have suggested that materialism, fostered by marketing (with advertising often cited as the primary culprit), is responsible for overconsumption, which in turn is leading to the depletion of the world's resources and pollution of the environment. Materialism is also said to result in the alienation of people from each other and from the real purpose of life (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Fromm 1947, 1956, 1976; Halton 1992; Rochberg-Halton 1986).

Materialism and Religion

These criticisms are not surprising, since "all major religions" include some exhortation for followers to forego earthly pleasures for the sake of rewards in the life hereafter (Belk 1985, p. 265). Historian Arnold Toynbee's research led him to the conclusion that, while the founders of the world's religions "disagreed with each other [about] the nature of the universe, the nature of the spiritual life, the nature of ultimate reality they all said with one voice that if we made material wealth our paramount aim, this would lead to disaster" (quoted in Wachtel 1983). In the Christian tradition it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew

19: 23–24). Modern day apologists have suggested that this parable was not meant to be as harsh as it sounds; that Jesus was only trying to make a point. After all, one really can't be expected to give up one's possessions, can one?! In its way, Martin Luther's rebellion against the Catholic church was antimaterialistic. He was opposed to several "materialistic" practices within the Catholic church, such as acquiring large tracts of land and impressive quantities of items fashioned from precious metals, as well as sometimes withholding absolution for sins unless lands were willed to the church (Williams 1991). He declared that it was not good works (doing good deeds, living a righteous life, making gifts to the church, purchasing indulgences) that saved one's soul, but rather faith (Luther 1517/1883).

Similar ideas are found in the Koran, the sacred writings of Islam, "But as for him who ... longs for wealth, and calls the good a lie, we will send him easily to difficulty! And his wealth shall not avail him when he falls down (into hell)!!" (Chapter of the Night). In Asian religions, the middle way is advocated. In the Buddhist tradition, "whoever in this world overcomes his selfish cravings, his sorrows fall away from him like drops of water from a lotus flower" (*Dhammapada*, 336). The *Bhagavad-Gita* admonishes adherents of Hinduism that the "person who lives completely free from desires, without longing ... attains peace" (II.71). A common thread seems to be the admonition inscribed at the Oracle of Delphi,¹ "Nothing in Excess." The premise is that it is okay to get enough, but more than "enough" is sinful, wasteful, and to be avoided.

Three exceptions to this general condemnation of materialism should be noted. The first is a religious tradition from Calvinism. John Calvin was a firm

¹ The oracle of Delphi was the spokeswoman for the god Apollo. Actually, "she" was one of three priestesses who resided at the temple at Delphi, Greece. She provided advice on politics, morality, law, and justice. This location is also referred to as the Oracle of Delphi (Durant 1939).

believer in the doctrine of predestination, the idea that one's salvation or damnation was fixed before s/he was born. Unlike some religious leaders of the time, especially the Catholic bishops, however, he "was well disposed toward business and finance" (Durant 1961, p. 335), since material success in this life was evidence of a heavenly reward in the next. The second example, as personified by some televangelists, might be labeled the "gospel of prosperity" (Barnhart 1988; Cardwell 1984). It is more recent but flows from the Calvinist perspective that earthly success is a reflection of God's pleasure. This movement is considered to be a reaction to the secularization of life in the United States, to the perceived decline of America's prestige and power in the world, as well as to a perceived decline in the standard of living (O'Guinn and Belk 1989). The explanation which has been offered by some televangelists is that if the U.S. would only return to a moral, Christian way of life, then God would once again reward the country with material bounty. As O'Guinn and Belk (1989) put it, "the consumption imperative of the New Right is that wealth and conspicuous consumption are not only acceptable, they are desirable as evidence of God's pleasure" (p. 229). They quote Jerry Falwell, a Baptist minister who not only founded Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, but also initiated a wide-reaching television program of evangelism, as saying that "Ownership of property is biblical. Competition in business is biblical. Ambitious and successful business management is clearly outlined as part of God's plan for His people" (p. 229). Thus the link between Protestantism and capitalism that Weber (1958) offered almost 100 years ago is still being promoted today. The third example is Mormonism, which seems to have successfully blended religion and materialism (Wright and Larsen 1992). Church leaders are selected, in part at least, on the basis of their material achievements. However, positive attitudes toward possessions and the consumption of material goods are tempered with cautions

about subordinating material goals to spiritual ones. Mormons may enjoy the materials-intensive society in which they live, but wealth should be used in the service of the church and the poor (Ozanne, Hill and Wright 1992).

The Spread of Materialism

That materialism is prevalent in industrialized nations, then, is not surprising. Belk (1988b; Ger and Belk 1993) reports that the consumer culture, and hence, materialism, is being emulated at an increasing rate in the Third World. There, however, the path to materialism is being reversed. In the West, a consumption ethic followed the development of wealth. In Third World countries, the consumption ethic is preceding wealth. Because of tourism (Buzzell 1968; Belk and Costa 1991; Leontiades 1986; Walters and Toyne 1989), the penetration of marketing messages via satellite television² (Clemens 1987, Eger 1987, Killough 1978), and other means, citizens of developing nations acquire a desire for products well before the products are available, or before the means to purchase them is at hand. For example, after the Berlin Wall fell, a study by Landor Associates (reported in *The Economist* 1990) ranked East European perceptions of 400 of the most famous Western brands. Rankings were based on familiarity and the esteem in which the brands were held. Overall, Eastern Europeans were familiar with the names of between 100 (by Russians) and 252 (by Hungarians) brands, many of which they had never even seen. Landor Associates concluded that its survey pointed to a "tremendous hankering after luxury and the more visible symbols of capitalism" (p. 71). This finding is

²O'Guinn, Lee, and Faber (1986) make the point that the pictorial mass media also "teaches" immigrants in the U.S. about the consumption ethic, instructing them on how and what to consume. They suggest that the media influence is so strong that it should be incorporated in models of acculturation.

consistent with Levitt's (1973) prediction that the same types of products would be desired by consumers everywhere: "everyone ... wants products and features that everybody else wants.... The same countries that ask the world to recognize and respect the individuality of their culture insist on the wholesale transfer to them of modern goods, services, and technologies" (p. 96, 99).

In the West, materialism has been linked to the Protestant Work Ethic (Weber 1958). But recent studies (e.g. Furnham and Muhiudeen 1984; Tallman, Marotz-Baden and Pindas 1983) suggest that the ethic is now stronger in developing countries (regardless of the dominant religion) and weaker in the post-industrial nations. One possible reason for this switch is that for citizens of industrialized nations, once wealth is achieved, the desire to achieve further is dampened (see Campbell 1987; Fox and Lears 1983; Horowitz 1980).

Materialism and Marketing

It would seem, then, that an understanding of materialism would be useful for domestic as well as for international consumer research. Nevertheless, within the marketing discipline the investigation of the phenomenon is relatively young. This is not surprising since the investigation of the wider field of possessions and ownership is itself of relatively recent interest. Furby's (1991) perspective on the broader issue of possessions is also appropriate for the more narrow focus on materialism.

We remain a long way from the ultimate goal: A thorough understanding of the nature of possession and ownership.... Yet there is hardly a more ubiquitous phenomenon in our daily lives than possession. The more we can understand about the many forms of, motivations for, and determinants of, possession and ownership, the more we will understand about many other aspects of human cognition, behavior, and attitudes" (p. 463).

Perhaps the greatest proponent of the study of materialism has been Belk

(1983, 1984, 1985; Ger and Belk 1990, 1993). His seminal *Journal of Consumer Research* (1985) article on materialism is one of the most cited articles from that journal (Cote, Leong, and Cote 1991). In it Belk identifies five issues related to materialism:

- whether materialism is a positive or negative trait
- whether marketing creates or exacerbates materialism
- whether materialism is an egoistic trait
- the impact of materialism on interpersonal relationships, and
- the relationship between materialism and positive self-identity.

Thus, Belk set the research agenda for materialism in the marketing discipline. However, he cautions that before such topics can be appropriately addressed, the nature of the phenomenon and its dimensions must be identified” (Ger and Belk 1990, p. 192). The work in this area is addressed next.

DEFINITIONS

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines materialism as “undue regard for worldly concerns.” Marketers, however, tend to expand the definition to include its impact on consumer attitudes and behaviors. Early researchers into the phenomenon, Ward and Wackman (1971), defined materialism as “an orientation which views material goods and money as important for personal happiness and social progress” (p. 422). This definition was adopted until Belk (1984) proposed an even more expanded one. He suggested that

materialism reflects the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person’s life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in life (p. 291).

Since then, most marketing researchers have adopted this definition. [While it is stated a bit differently, the definition employed by Richins and Dawson (1992) is consistent with Belk's: "materialism is a set of centrally held beliefs about the importance of possessions in one's life" (p. 308).]

There is an important distinction that should be emphasized here. A consumer society is not the same as a materialist society (Harris 1981). Schudson (1984) explains the difference, which is critical to this dissertation. It is important to "distinguish materialistic values—placing material above social or spiritual goals—from a materials-intensive way of life, which may use goods as means to other ends" (p. 143). When the term "materialist" appears in this dissertation, unless otherwise noted, it is used in the sense of Belk's and Richins and Dawson's definitions which are consistent with Schudson's distinction. A materialist is one who believes that "the ultimate goals of personal life can be fulfilled by things" (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981, p. ix). Possessions become the objects of desire and the ultimate goal. That we all live in a material world and like material things, that possessions carry social meaning, is not materialism.

Descriptions of a Materialist

Having defined materialism, the next step would be to provide a fuller description of a materialist. Materialism might be termed the "George Carlin" phenomenon—an emphasis on one's "stuff" (Carlin 1981).³ Not only are possessions important and central to one's existence (Belk 1984, 1985, 1988a; Richins 1987; Richins and Dawson 1990, 1992), but the processes of acquiring and

³ The comedian George Carlin does a routine about our possessions, our "stuff." He pokes fun at the importance we attach to our possessions: we have special places for them, we may even move so that we have a larger house in which to accommodate them, and when we travel we have to carry some of them with us.

maintaining them are also important. The focus then narrows to questions such as, when acquisitions are central, what other activities are “required”—and, conversely, because of time, energy, and resource constraints, what activities are limited or unattended? Some answers from the literature are discussed below.

Fournier and Richins (1991) solicited commonly-held conceptions of materialism and materialists from a sample of twenty-nine respondents (11 residents of a blue collar suburb, 11 airline travelers, and seven undergraduates) via an open-ended survey. Materialists were thought to be “possession-focused in thought, word, and deed.... [they] view the world through a lens focused only on possessions, and evaluate themselves and others in terms of what is owned” (p. 408). Important motivations for materialism were identified as “status display and self-affirmation through ownership of statused possessions,” as well as the “use [of] possessions” to connote success—the more you have, the more important you are (Fournier and Richins 1991, p. 408).

Ger and Belk (1993) also provide descriptions of a materialist based on focus group interviews of MBA students in the United States. The student conceptions are consistent with those reported by Fournier and Richins (1991). Materialists are characterized as selfish and self-indulgent, as being attached to things more than to people, and as evaluating themselves as well as others on the basis of material possessions.

Because of this possessions focus, being a materialist is a time- and attention-consuming orientation. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) speak of the considerable “psychic energy” which individuals invest in possessions. Leiss (1976) addresses the time-consuming nature in an example.

[O]ne who drapes the latest sartorial splendour over a properly deodorized frame, and then treats his locks with an old-fashioned pomade rather than the newest lacquer spray, will quickly learn what it really means to be an inattentive consumer. The point of all

this is quite simple: the fragmentation of needs requires on the individual's part a steadily more intensive effort to hold together his identity and personal integrity. In concrete terms this amounts to spending more and more time in consumption activities (p. 19).

One must not only acquire possessions, but acquire the "right" possessions and in the right combination.⁴ The acquisition must be timely (one cannot wear last year's fashion). Further, the acquisition must be cared for and, perhaps, even surrounded by companion possessions. Thus, the materialist is forced into a constant environmental scanning process. Accordingly, a materialist might be expected to be more media oriented, to belong to more social clubs or groups, and to spend more time shopping not only for goods, but also to keep abreast of what is available.

The results of the Fournier and Richins (1991) study support these ideas.

Materialists are described as continual information gatherers,

constantly scanning the environment for material offerings ...on the lookout for more ...figuring out what to acquire next ... reading catalogs and magazines, observing what others have acquired, visiting shops to see what is available. Always thinking about future purchases so that thinking about buying involves pleasure and happiness" (p. 410).

Accordingly, materialists are more likely to engage in behaviors such as ongoing search and shopping to prepare them for future acquisitions.

In many of these respects, the materialist exhibits characteristics of the opinion leader (Bloch and Richins 1983) or market maven⁵ (Feick and Price

⁴ A materialist must be certain to maintain a consistent set of goods which have what McCracken (1988) refers to as "Diederot unity." That is, certain goods "go together" by virtue of their correspondence with the same set of cultural categories. McCracken employs the example of the consistency of Rolex watches and BMWs for Yuppies. There is no inherent reason why these two products should carry similar cultural meaning, other than the influence of advertising and the fashion system which have attached similar cultural meanings to these objects.

⁵ Both opinion leaders and market mavens are thought to mediate the flow of information from mass media sources to individuals. They influence the (Continued on the next page.)

1987)—except that the materialist is an opinion follower. The views of others are more important than his/her own views, since the approval of others is critical. When the views of others take precedence, then some would say that the materialist lacks self-esteem and is not becoming self-actualized (Fromm 1976, Maslow 1950, 1970). Snyder (1987; Snyder and Gangestad 1986) has labeled this tendency to shape one's behavior to the views of others "self-monitoring."

Further the materialist cannot engage in these activities and do everything else as well. What, then, is likely to suffer? Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) provide one answer.

If things attract our attention excessively, there is not enough psychic energy left to cultivate the interaction with the rest of the world. The danger of focusing attention exclusively on a goal of physical consumption—or materialism—is that one does not attend enough to the cultivation of the self, to the relationship with others, or to the broader purposes that affect life (p. 53).

Additionally, life satisfaction and happiness are thought to be beyond the grasp (and reach) of materialists. Relationships with others, happiness, and cultivation of the self are each briefly addressed next.

Some (c.f., Fournier and Richins 1991; Fromm 1956, 1976; Ger and Belk 1993; Heilbroner 1956) have suggested that activities which build true relationships between people are neglected by materialists. It is a bit paradoxical that while materialists must understand and seek the opinions and approval of others, they may also allow personal relationships to suffer. A materialist must be a social individual. To learn "what's in" and to gain approval, the materialist must participate in socially visible activities, such as group memberships, having

⁵ (Continued from the previous page) opinions and choices of other individuals about products, political candidates, and ideas. The distinction between the two is that the influence of opinions leaders is thought to derive from their involvement with a particular product class, while market mavens have knowledge expertise and influence about the marketplace in general.

people over to one's house, etc. As Veblen (1899/1979) suggested, consumption must "concentrate upon the lines which are most patent to the observers whose good opinion is sought" (p. 112). A materialist, however, is likely to be interested in social connections as means (to gather information, to solicit praise, etc.) and not as ends in themselves. Two characteristics of materialists seem to flow from this consequence. First, materialists are more likely to be motivated by external factors such as the approval of others—extrinsic motivation—than by internal factors such as the enjoyment of a piece of sculpture or a game of golf for itself—intrinsic motivation. Secondly, materialists may be more likely than other people to be "self-monitoring" (Snyder 1979; Snyder and DeBono 1985). This term describes individuals who are attuned to the opinions of others and who mold their appearances and behavior to these opinions.

Materialists are also thought to be unhappy or dissatisfied. According to Veblen (1899/1979), an individual cannot simply purchase items and then sit back and receive the approbation of others. Standards keep rising and changing so that round after round of accumulation is fueled (p. 31). More recently, Brickman and Campbell (1971) make much the same point, calling the effect an "hedonic trap," greater and greater pleasures are necessary to maintain a constant level of satisfaction; hence, happiness is unobtainable. Eisert and Kahle (1983) suggest another reason for the unhappiness. They argue that social and emotional support which is found in close relationships with others is important for long-term physical and emotional health. Materialists neglect these relationships at the cost of unhappiness. In developing their scales to measure materialism, discussed below and in the next chapter, both Belk (1984, 1985) and Richins and Dawson (1990, 1992) address the correlation between materialism and happiness.

Finally, the cultivation of the self suffers. Self-esteem and self-actualization

are often cited as casualties of materialism. Bond (1992) explains that if one's life is directed only toward "pleasure or the accumulation of wealth, there is no hope of self-esteem" because the honor and recognition received from others will "ring hollow" (p. 165). In discussing self-actualization, Maslow (1950, 1970) reports that to be psychologically autonomous and self-determined, a person must be free of dependence on other people—which, as noted above, the materialist is not. Fromm (1976) offers another perspective on materialism's undesirable impact on the self. He speaks of the "marketing character," the phenomenon of experiencing oneself as a commodity to be exchanged on the "personality market." Pollay (1986) explains that the preoccupation with acquiring and owning goods has "a social effect of displacing affect from people to objects and an alienating effect where the self is perceived ... as an exchange commodity" (p. 25). This objectification (or reification) of people is a perspective offered by several writers in the postmodern tradition (c.f. Baudrillard 1988, Firat 1991). Instead of being able to say, "I am what I do," people are reduced to saying of themselves, "I am what I have," thus providing the direct link between the search for the self and the consumption process in industrial societies" (Kilbourne 1987, p. 229).

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND SCALE DEVELOPMENT

While there is agreement on the definition of materialism (and consensus about the characteristics/descriptions of a materialist), there is no clear agreement about how to measure the construct. Most acknowledge that materialism is a complex phenomenon, comprised of several dimensions. However, Belk (1984, 1985; Ger and Belk 1990, 1993) conceives of the dimensions

as being personality traits. Richins and Dawson (1990, 1992) argue that a value orientation is more accurate. In adopting this perspective, they are following the lead of Rokeach (1973) who defined a value as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end–state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end–state of existence” (p. 5). In other words, the acquisition of possessions is believed to be desirable in itself as well as an acceptable means of attaining other desired goals.

Each “party” has developed its own scale to measure the construct. Belk measures traits of possessiveness, envy, nongenerosity and preservation. Richins and Dawson measure three domains of materialism: the centrality of acquisitions in one’s life, whether acquisitions are used to define happiness, and whether they are used to define success. Each developer suggests that scores on the individual subscales as well as overall aggregated scores may be correlated with measures of attitudes and behaviors.

Because of its earlier appearance, Belk’s scale has been more widely used (see for example Dawson and Bamossy 1990; Ellis 1991; Hunt et al. 1990; Rudmin 1988; and Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). However, research which has investigated materialism using the two scales, indicates that the Richins and Dawson scale is the more reliable (Cole et al. 1992; Othman 1989); validity comparisons between the two scales has only been addressed tangentially. Specific discussions of the two scales are included in the next two chapters.

Measures of Materialism and Consumer Attitudes, Behaviors, and Motivations

Following Belk’s agenda, various researchers have investigated the relationship between materialism and considerations such as happiness, life satisfaction, and interpersonal relationships. This research addresses the issue of

the validity of the scales. Belk (1985) reports that, as expected, materialism correlates negatively with satisfaction in life. Other researchers have reported similar results. The Belk scale has also been used in assessing other issues as well. For example, Hunt et al. (1990) found moderate support for the hypothesis that materialism and external locus of control were correlated. A cross-cultural study by Dawson and Bamossy (1990) reported that the envy subscale had the highest correlation life satisfaction. In his own cross-cultural study (Ger and Belk 1990, 1993), Belk reports inconsistent results. The factor solutions are the not the same for samples from different countries. Scale reliability and validity also vary from one country to another.

Richins and Dawson (1992) found that relationships between their materialism measures and other constructs, such as life satisfaction, generally are in the directions hypothesized. For example, materialism correlates negatively with measures of voluntary simplicity, with satisfaction with family life, and with self-esteem.

In a study using the two scales, Cole et al. (1992) investigated materialism and three different measures of life satisfaction. Most correlations were statistically significant and were in the direction expected, for example the life satisfaction correlated negatively with materialism. However, they could not reproduce Belk's factor structure.

While materialism has been a topic of "report and discussion" for some years in various social science disciplines (Rudmin and Richins 1992), research is still in its relative infancy, as evidenced by the continuing scale development and exploratory research into connections between materialism and various consumer attitudes and behaviors. As noted above, initial research has probed the relationship between materialism and measures of life satisfaction. The relationship between materialism and the self, however, has not yet been

addressed directly. A number of articles, both empirical and conceptual, have been written about the relationship between people and their possessions,⁶ yet none were driven by considerations of materialism and the self.

THE PROPOSAL

What is the nature of identity in a consumer culture? More specifically, what is the nature of the materialist "self"? If people construct their "selves," at least in part, through their possessions, which have been given meaning by culture, then the task is to learn in what ways the materialist constructs him/herself that is different from the non-materialist. Lunt and Livingstone (1992) provide some guidelines.

The construction of personal identities draws on conventionally given class, gender, cultural and generational identities as well as on individual biographical and family experience. The identities which result reflect ... people's feelings of security, their notions of their needs and desires, ... their response to social influence and the way they conduct their social relationships. They give meaning to everyday economic activities and experiences. These diverse

⁶Certainly there has been much theorizing about the relationship between *possessions* and the self. However, research guided by hypotheses about *materialism* and the self have not been reported. Richins and Dawson (1990) administered a measure of self-monitoring to one of their samples, but the results were not discussed. In a personal communication (May 20, 1993) Richins said that the correlation between materialism, as measured by an early version of the Richins and Dawson scale, was moderately positive. In a later study (1992) self-esteem was measured, but it was not the focus of the research. Belk (1988a, 1989a) has written about possessions being an extension of the self, but did not directly address materialism and the self. In a cross-cultural study, Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) assessed the role that favorite possessions play in self definition. While they used a variation of the Belk materialism scale as part of their research, the relationship between materialism and the self was not at issue. Finally, Ball and Tasaki (1992) investigated attachment to possessions and the self. They also utilized a version of the Belk scale, but hypothesized (and found) that there was no relationship between attachment and materialism. The materialism consideration was not a major component of their study.

The one exception is Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton's (1981) work which investigated the interaction between people and the household objects they consider special. While materialism was a factor in this study, it was not the principal focus.

aspects of personal identity are constructed through responding to the challenge, opportunities and problems which modern consumer culture presents to the individual” (p. 24-25).

This dissertation investigated materialism by considering the impact of materialism on the self. Research into the aspects of materialism associated with the self concept has been advocated both by Belk (Ger and Belk 1993) and Richins and Dawson (1992), among others. The study specifically addressed hypotheses about materialism and self-esteem, self-actualization, self-monitoring, and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. Investigation of the hypotheses involved the use of both the Belk (Ger and Belk 1993) and Richins and Dawson (1992) materialism scales.⁶ Those scoring high on the two scales are hypothesized to be more self-monitoring individuals, extrinsically motivated, but with lower self-esteem and less self-actualization than those who score low. This study also moves forward the process of testing and refining the two materialism scales. Additionally, knowledge about the validity for the two scales—do the measures “behave as expected” (Churchill 1979)—has been advanced. Construct validity has been assessed first, by the investigation of materialism along with measures of the self constructs in a nomological network, and second, by assessing the convergent validity of the two scales. Finally, the definition of materialism is reassessed and an alternative conceptualization, based on the results of this study, is proposed.

Organization

Chapter Two presents a literature review of the topics of materialism and the self-concept. Historical reviews of these two topics as well as a consideration

⁶While several other studies have used the Belk scale, this study employs the most recent, unpublished version (Ger and Belk 1983), which reflects the revisions and refinements Belk has made in response to earlier test results.

of the role of possessions in self-definition are also included. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relationship between materialism and the self.

Specific research hypotheses are presented in Chapter Three, as is the research design. The instruments used to measure materialism and the four constructs of self-actualization, self-esteem, self-monitoring, and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation are discussed and defended.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of the data, tests of the hypotheses, a discussion of the reliability and validity of the two materialism scales, and develops a profile of materialists based on these results.

Chapter Five provides a discussion of the findings, drawing conclusions about the definition of materialism and about the applicability of the two scales. Additionally, implications for the marketing discipline, limitations of the research, and suggestions for future research are addressed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains discussions of research about materialism and about the self-concept. In so doing, it presents information about the historical development of each construct and empirical research in each area. The chapter begins with a consideration of materialism, then moves to discussions of the self, and ends with an investigation of the relationship between the two.

DEFINITIONAL CONCERNS

The general denunciation of materialism reported in the first chapter illustrated the negative connotations associated with it. Agreement about materialism, however, stops there. There seems to be no agreed upon definition or conceptualization of either materialism or of what it means to be a materialist. Even within academia, writers and researchers are not always careful to define terminology. When the terms "materialism" and "materialist" are used, they do not necessarily carry the same meaning from one author to another. The situation is both exacerbated and strengthened by the cross-disciplinary nature of the research. Different disciplines have different terminologies for the same idea. At the same time, however, different disciplines often use the *same* terminology to express diverse ideas. For example, to investigate "materialism," a researcher

should search for studies of “consumption,” “conspicuous consumption,” “consumerism,”¹ “ostentatious display,” and “material culture,” among others.

In an attempt to sort out the situation, several authors have presented thorough reviews of the history of consumerism in Western societies (e.g., Fox and Lears 1983; McCracken 1986; Mukerji 1986); others have elucidated the differences in perspectives across disciplines (e.g., Belk 1985; Fournier and Richins 1991; Rassuli and Hollander 1988; Richins and Dawson 1990 and 1991). Putting aside philosophical materialism, the idea that ultimately there is a material explanation for all phenomena (see e.g. Lange 1865/1925), there seem to be two general conceptualizations of materialism, one based in economic theory and the other in anthropological/sociological theory. Proponents of the first approach draw a distinction between using goods to satisfy “real” versus “false” needs. Adherents of the second perspective take a more holistic approach to the role of goods in society. The following discussion, which focuses on Western notions of materialism, elucidates the two views.

The Dichotomy of Needs Perspective

Economists assume that people are rational beings who purchase goods in order to maximize utility. Preferences enter this scenario in the form of indifference curves which illustrate the points at which goods are considered to be acceptable substitutes for one another. When consumers act to maximize utility, they are assumed to consume goods which meet their needs (Benton 1985; Hamilton 1989). Accordingly, one must look to need theory.

Perhaps the most famous theory is Maslow’s (1954) which posits a hierarchy with physiological and safety needs at the “bottom” and social and

¹Here, “consumerism” refers to living in a materials-intensive world, It is not synonymous with another use of “consumerism” which refers to protecting consumers’ rights and interests.

psychological needs at the "top." More recently, Hanna (1980) has proposed a classification of needs which may be satisfied through consumption activities. Yet this set, too, flows from physical safety "up" to personal growth. Given such conceptualizations, it is easy to understand why the purchase and use of physical goods to satisfy physical needs has been approved, but the purchase and use of physical goods to satisfy social and psychological needs has been considered inappropriate (c.f. Bell 1976; Fromm 1956, 1976; Galbraith 1958, 1974; Kilbourne 1987, 1991). As indicated in the first chapter, the general religious emphasis on self-restraint has also come down on the side of "enough" in terms of the satisfying of physical and safety needs (Belk 1983). Individuals are admonished to consume in moderation: enough, but not too much (Leiss 1976).

Inglehart (1981; Abramson and Inglehart 1987) utilizes this distinction among needs in his research on values. His use of the term "materialist," however, is distinctly different. For Inglehart, materialists generally live in countries which are still striving to satisfy their citizens' basic physical and safety needs. Materialists can also be found in post-industrial societies; however, they can be identified as those favoring social/political policies which emphasize economic growth and security. Post-Materialists, on the other hand, tend to live in post-industrial nations and favor "higher" quality-of-life goals such as environmentalism. They do not view "ever increasing GNP" as a laudable, primary goal. Roberts and Smith (1992) adopt this post-materialist perspective for their postmodern development continuum. Post-industrial societies are encouraged to take advantage of technology, but to continue to preserve individual tastes and cultural distinctions.

Most scholars who approach materialism from the dichotomy of needs perspective (real versus false or illusory needs), however, consider materialism to be an "over-emphasis," on physical goods with insufficient attention paid to

other objectives (e.g., Belk 1983, 1984, 1988a). This approach to materialism often carries moral overtones. For example, the English essayist and historian Thomas Carlyle warned against materialism, calling it the "Pig Philosophy" (Miller 1991). This perspective illustrates the problematic nature of increases in the standard of living (e.g., Horowitz 1985; Mason 1981). Leading comfortable, safe lives is judged to be good; but comfort, it is argued, should not become luxury and waste. The consumption of goods to satisfy "real" needs is acceptable. Consumption of goods for satisfaction beyond these basic needs is not. Wasteful spending and consumption are decried. One is reminded of President Bush's remark about Democrats in his 1992 state-of-the-union address: "they lie awake at night worried that someone else might be having a good time."

One of the most famous writers in this tradition was Thorstein Veblen, who after finishing a Ph.D. in philosophy returned to school to study economics (Murphey 1988). His work (1899/1979) on conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure has been enormously influential. Not only did Veblen coin the term "conspicuous consumption," but he connected it with the connotation of "conspicuous waste" and excessive expenditure on superfluities (p. 97-98) which characterizes this economic perspective. More recently, Bell (1976) expressed concern over trends in U.S. culture which he views as the necessary consequences of capitalism: Americans are becoming hedonistic, concerned with play, fun, display, and pleasure (xi - xii; 70). One has only to turn on the television and listen to politicians, preachers, and pundits decry the loss of "real" values to know that this concern for wasteful consumption is alive and well.

From such a perspective, materialists are often considered in a similarly negative light. A whole litany of bad traits are attributed to materialists (Fournier and Richins 1991), as detailed in the first chapter. For example, they are viewed as using goods to replace personal relationships or to compensate for bad or

nonexistent personal relationships; they are accused of “worshipping” things and of making a religion of materialism (Belk 1983, 1985). In fact, Christmas, in the United States, has been called the “National Festival of Consumption” (Boorstin 1973, p. 162), with Santa Claus as the supreme deity (Belk 1987a, 1989b). As an illustration of this last point, Shlien’s (1959) suggests that after Christ, Santa Claus is the most sacred folk hero in America, even though, as Belk (1987a) points out, the two represent almost polar opposites in societal values. “The miracles of Christ provided health and necessities while the miracles of Santa Claus provide toys and luxuries” (p. 91).

Belk’s definition of materialism is consistent with this economically driven perspective: materialism refers to “the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels ... possessions assume a central place in a person’s life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction” (1984, p. 291). Other researchers agree. Hunt et al. are even more biting in their characterization of materialism as “an orientation that equates symbols with substance and objects with essence” (1990, p. 1101).

The Social Science Perspective

In direct contrast, most anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and some consumer behavior scholars eschew the economic view (e.g., Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Horowitz 1985; Mason 1981; McCracken 1986, 1988; Schudson 1984). Instead, the consumption of goods is considered to fulfill a societal function. The role of goods in society is considered morally neutral. Several ideas are inherent in this perspective.

- Goods are one way we communicate with each other. As such, they help us categorize the world (McCracken 1986, 1988).
- Instead of replacing human relationships, goods and attendant

rituals, such as gift giving, often solidify them. Material goods often are used to express and meet higher-order needs and values (Rook 1985; Belk 1987b; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981).

- Materialism is always with us in some fashion or another because of the role it plays in society (Mason 1981). Consumption provides a way to make status visible.

According to Douglas and Isherwood (1979), this perspective puts materialism back into the wider social realm in which it belongs.

[T]he very idea of consumption itself has to be set back into the social process, not merely looked upon as a result or objective of work.... Goods, work, and consumption have been artificially abstracted out of the whole social scheme. The way the excision has been made damages the possibility of understanding these aspects of our lives (p. 4).

Schudson (1984) and Miller (1991) would agree both in substance and in implication.

In the tradition of Thorstein Veblen, sociologists and cultural critics have thought it clever and damning to show of some social behavior that its function is to display status rather than to serve "basic" needs. But this view implicitly accepts the puritanical prejudice, which neither Smith nor Marx succumbed to, that whatever is not a fundamental material need is superfluous. The assumption is that people care about status only because they are vain, foolish, economically irrational, or in Veblen's view, industrially unproductive. But that is not sociology, it is economic ideology (Schudson 1984, p. 134).

Thus, people use goods to say to themselves and to the world who they are. People ascribe meaning to goods to make material their intangible values. As McCracken said, "the premises of our existence are the premises of our existence" (1988, p. 132).² In other words, our homes, where we live, reflect the

²Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton make much the same point. "One of the most important psychological purposes of the home is that those (Continued on the next page)

basic assumptions about our lives. Or, as Joy and Dholakia (1991) put it, “people endow their homes with meaning and, in turn, use these meanings to define themselves” (p. 386). Belk (1985) agrees with this conceptualization, saying that since goods are one way in which we make the abstract concrete, they help define who we are. He further suggests that the use of goods and the attendant consumption rituals are often instrumental in meeting those needs and expressing values (Belk 1985; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Rook 1985). This perspective is amplified later in the discussion of the self and possessions.

A corollary to the social science view suggests that materialism is more likely to be present in more stratified, complex societies³ than in more traditional, less complex societies (Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Mason 1981; Triandis 1990). Advocates for this position argue that once institutions lost their hold over society, and as individuals became more mobile, new ways of identifying and separating people were needed. Tangible goods assumed that role. A brief discussion of this progression is presented next.

²(Continued from the previous page) objects that have shaped one’s personality and which are needed to express concretely those aspects of the self that one values are kept within it. Thus the home is not only a material shelter but also a shelter for those things that make life meaningful” (1981, p. 139).

George Carlin (1981) takes a more prosaic view: “A house is just a pile of stuff with a cover on it... That’s what your house is, a place to keep your stuff while you go out and get – – – more stuff!”

³In discussing cultural complexity, Triandis et al. (1988) distinguish among “extremely simple societies (e.g. the Mbuti Pygmies),” societies exhibiting “higher levels of complexity (e.g., the Romans, Aztecs, Chinese)” and “extremely complex cultures (e.g., modern industrial cultures)” (p. 324).

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is some agreement that the “history of materialism” mirrors the rise of the consumer society (e.g., Mason 1981; McCracken 1988; Mukerji 1983). From this history, however, different authors draw different conclusions. Marx and Veblen saw materialism as an evil of capitalism which required increasing consumption to fuel the economic engines.⁴ Still others, such as Inglehart (1981), connect materialism with times of economic want, and post-materialism with times of economic security. Finally, writers in the social science tradition suggest that materialism will always be present because of its integral role in negotiating social networks and relationships and in attaining and maintaining status goals. The form of materialism may shift with society, but it is always there.

The Meaning of Goods

Goods, possessions, have always had some meaning beyond the merely utilitarian for the people who owned and/or used them. Evidence for this position is provided by the existence of “grave goods,” or artifacts which are buried with the dead. Elliott (1990) notes that over 100,000 years ago, Neanderthals buried flowers, stone tools, and other simple objects with their dead. The much more elaborate grave goods of the ancient Egyptians are well known to us all. The thrust of this section is to illustrate how the meaning of goods has shifted over time and the impact of that shift on Western cultures and its implication for the study of materialism.

⁴This statement is not as contradictory as it sounds. Marx disliked capitalism because it forced the worker to sell their labor to capitalists who used that labor to enrich themselves and to increase their power over workers. However, he did not take the position that in conforming to the ways of the capitalist system, there was something wrong with the workers. He understood the uses of goods in such a system and admitted that needs were socially determined. Thus Marx damned the sin (capitalism) but not the sinner.

Before the 16th century, the family (and one's obligation to the feudal lord—or to those for whom one had feudal responsibility) was the repository of value and values (e.g., McCracken 1988). The family and the feudal system defined and sustained social stability. Meaning was passed from generation to generation within the family. Goods were purchased for the family corporation—an entity which existed before and which would exist after the life of any single individual. Goods represented the family's identity and honor, and an "important" family could be identified by its "old" goods (McCracken 1988).

Queen Elizabeth's government by consumption, however, altered the situation dramatically (McCracken 1988). She spent lavishly and she forced her nobles to leave their lands, to come to court, and to spend in a like manner. The meaning of goods began to shift. Whereas before special possessions which over time could acquire "patina" were prized, now items which were new and fashionable became desirable.

Time passed. Society became more mobile, and city loyalties broke down. Now, instead of status being assessed by one's family relationships, the reliable way to assess status was through observation of an individual's possessions. Before, status had been ascribed; now, it was achieved.⁵ Individual identity and meaning were transferred from institutions, such as the family and feudal city, to goods. "This connection between consumption and individualism, largely wrought in the eighteenth century but begun ... in the sixteenth century, is one of the great cultural fusions of the modern world" (McCracken 1988, p. 20).

McCracken (1988) further suggests that this use of consumer goods 1) to express social and cultural values, as well as 2) to be instruments of change is a

⁵Though, as any consumer behavior or marketing text will point out, admission to the upper-upper class in the U.S. is inherited wealth from a socially prominent family. If wealth and position are earned in the current generation, then one is a member of the lower-upper class.

phenomenon unique to Western civilization. This meaning transfer is linked with the success of the industrial revolution. If goods had not taken on such importance, the industrial revolution might not have been so successful. Horowitz (1985) similarly traces the changes in thoughts of moralists who, originally aligned with the church, warned the working classes about over-reliance on worldly possessions. These same moralists, however, at the time of the industrial revolution, aligned with the industrialists and exhorted the working classes to consume (Horowitz 1985).

The industrial revolution, however, was not the only "revolution." McCracken (1988) suggests that the consumer revolution which preceded it and has continued after it "changed Western concepts of time, space, society, the individual, the family, and the state" (p. 3). The changed concept of the individual is discussed next.

Why Societies Became More Individualistic

A concurrent trend which facilitated the identity transfer from institutions to possessions was the shift from collectivistic to individualistic societies. Bell (1976) notes that "the fundamental assumption of modernity, the thread that has run through Western Civilization since the 16th Century, is that the social unit of society is not the group, the guild, the tribe, the city, but the person" (p. 16). Triandis (1990; Triandis et al. 1988) explains why. As society allowed more mobility and freedom to the individual, and as work became more specialized, societies became more complex in terms of social networks and opportunities available to the individual (or at least males). People were no longer likely to belong to and to be subject to the influence of just a few groups. Instead, people belonged to many different groups, and became less emotionally attached to them.

With greater specialization and complexity came greater conflict among the

norms of various groups. One way to avoid conflicts was migration, which also had the effect of reducing the control of the groups (Triandis 1990). Affluence also resulted in more individualism. Financial independence meant freedom to “do one’s own thing” and more freedom from group influences (Triandis 1990; Triandis et al. 1988).

The ascendancy of individualism in Europe after the 16th century, also signaled the diminished importance of demographic attributes for identity purposes (Baumeister 1986, 1987). Instead, “identity is defined by what one has: what I own, what experience I have had, what I have accomplished (e.g., my list of publications!)” (Triandis 1990, p. 82). Different values also became important. Pragmatism, human rights, freedom, competence, enjoyment, and pleasure are valued by individualistic but not collectivistic societies (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987, 1990). Thus was the groundwork for materialism laid.

Materialism and Individualism

As noted above, a common theme in accounts of the history of the meaning of goods is the shift in industrialized societies from the tyranny of institutions to the ascendancy of the individual. As long as institutions controlled meaning, loyalty was to groups (family, church, etc.) and meaning (and status distinctions) inhered in the groups (e.g., Douglas and Isherwood 1979; McCracken 1988). Once individuals broke free from reliance on group membership for meaning and status, however, these distinctions became more difficult to identify. Society required a new means of self expression and identification. Goods became the object of choice. The implication for materialism research may be illustrated by considering the differences between individualistic and collectivistic societies.

Foa and Foa (1974) identified six kinds of resources that humans exchange: love, status, services, money, information, and goods. The first three are

characteristic of traditional cultures (their terminology) where the emphasis is on people; the last three are characteristic of more modern complex cultures where the emphasis is on tasks (Triandis 1990; Triandis et al. 1988). Based on studies of three collectivist (Triandis' terminology) cultures (Indonesia, India, People's Republic of China) and two individualist cultures (US and France) Triandis (1990; Triandis et al. 1988) suggests that collectivists do a good job of exchanging love, status, and services, while individualists do well when exchanging information, money, and goods. Problems occur, however, when individualists try to exchange services, love, and status in intimate, face-to-face relationships. Accordingly, Triandis suggests that the defining attribute of individualism is not self-reliance, as is often thought. Rather, distance from ingroups, much emotional detachment from others, extreme lack of attention to the views of others, relatively little concern for family, and tendency toward competition are factors which define individualists.

Support for this position also comes from Hofstede (1984) who found that individualism accounted for most of the variance in a factor analysis of value data across cultures. He considered four value dimensions: power distance (the emotional dependence on more powerful people), how societies deal with the uncertainty of the future, individualism versus collectivism (the individual's dependence on the group), and masculinity versus femininity. Overall, Hofstede found that items measuring individualism and power distance, which correlated with individualism at $-.67$, combined on the first factor to account for 24 percent of the variance in values. Earlier, when Mezei (1974) factor analyzed the Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) values, he found that an individualistic—traditional dimension had strong explanatory power for the economic and community relations problems presented in the value survey.

It seems warranted, then, to hypothesize that individualists are more likely

to have trouble with relationships and to be more comfortable dealing with things (possessions), in short, to exhibit the tendencies which have been attributed to materialists. That individualism and materialism should be associated has already been explained by the historical analysis which links the rise of individualism with the rise of the consumer culture. However, while individualists may also be materialistic, all materialists may not be individualistic—especially since, as discussed in the first chapter, materialists are thought to be very attentive to the thoughts and ideas of others.

Thus far, the discussion has suggested that individualistic cultures are more likely to be materialistic and collectivist cultures less so. There is evidence, however, that this dichotomy is not necessarily true. For example, in investigating materialism cross-culturally, Ger and Belk (1990) found that the Turkish students, from a collectivistic culture, were much more materialistic than the U.S. or any of the European student groups who were from much more individualistic cultures. At the same time, the Turkish students exhibited lower levels of nongenerosity than any of the others. Ger and Belk (1990) suggest that the explanation for these results may be that materialism and collectivism are not polar opposites if the desire for material goods is extended to the family instead of the individual. They opine that the conceptualization of materialism might be thought of as desiring possessions for some unit. In some cultures the unit is the individual, in others, the family.

Now that historical and definitional concerns have been addressed, the next issue is how to conceptualize and measure materialism. Two intertwined streams of research will be reviewed. The first stream is the development of reliable, valid scales to measure materialism. The second is an investigation of the attitudes and behaviors which are consistent with a materialistic life-style.

MATERIALISM SCALES

Early Scale Development

Early measures of materialism truly are a “mixed bag.” They span the disciplines of political science, psychology, and marketing. No one theoretical conceptualization of materialism drives the research. As a result, each instrument addresses different aspects of materialism, with none taking into account the multidimensional nature of materialism discussed in the first chapter. Further, some measures are primarily concerned with societal rather than individual manifestations of materialism; others have been developed for children rather than adults. And, finally, reflecting the standards of different disciplines and different times, not all measures have been fully reported in the literature. Occasionally, only sample scale items have been made available. Nevertheless, a brief review of some of the more often noted instruments is warranted since they provide a prologue to the two measures developed within the marketing discipline which are the focus of this study.

Campbell. One of the early materialism scales was developed by Campbell (1966) as one of six scales to measure social attitudes. The scale assesses attitudes toward materialism in society with an eight-item, forced-choice format. This scale is presented in Figure 1. No research seems to have been reported about the use of this scale (Belk 1985; Robinson and Shaver 1973).

Inglehart. Another instrument which addresses social attitudes associated with materialism has been developed by Inglehart (1971, 1977, 1981). This value survey has been much praised for being one of the few value measures which is theory driven (Braithwaite and Scott 1991) and which has been subjected to longitudinal testing (Richins and Dawson 1992). Inglehart, and others, have been studying the social values and national goals held by citizens of European

Figure 1

Campbell's Materialism Scale

1. A. "A loaf of bread, a jug of wine..." this epitomizes all the material requirements for personal happiness.
B. "A loaf of bread and a jug of wine" may have been alright [sic] for someone who hasn't known anything else, but let's face it; in twentieth century America we approach happiness as the carpet gets thicker and the steaks *less* "rare." *
2. A. My philosophy is: to have or to have not is the question, and if I'm lucky enough to have, I'm going to enjoy it. *
B. To have wealth and material goods is not more conducive to happiness than to have debts and cancer.
3. A. An orderly, uncluttered house and a well-kept lawn will be important features of my future home. *
B. I'm frankly not really interested in how my physical surroundings will be disposed in my future home.
4. A. The joys which wealth and material possessions bring are superficial and short-term as compared to the *real* joys in life.
B. The only people who can say "money can't buy happiness" are those who never had a chance to try. *
5. A. A society that worships such extravagances as "golffmobiles" and all electric kitchens is indeed a "sick" society.
B. If things were such that everybody in the world had stereophonic record players and champagne, wars would probably be obsolete. *
6. A. To conjecture upon the size of one's starting salary when leaving college is a natural tendency on the part of a modern college student. *
B. A person with a "healthy" value system rarely if ever reflects on his future salary.
7. A. Neatness and physical appearance of my like-sexed friends are entirely accidental in terms of my associations.
B. Important determinants in my choice of like-sexed friends in my living group at college are physical attractiveness and stylishness of dress. *
8. A. A place for everything and everything in its place is a good maxim to abide by. *
B. Although cleanliness is important in material things, order, *per se*, bores me.

D. Campbell (1966). Unpublished papers, Department of Psychology, Northwestern University. Reported in John P. Robinson and Phillip R. Shaver (1974), *Measures of Social Psychological Attitudes*, Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research.

nations (primarily Germany), the United States, Canada, and Japan. Inglehart works from his thesis, first developed in the 1970s (Inglehart 1971), that the values held by citizens of industrialized nations are moving from materialism to post-materialism. This concept was shaped in large part by the needs hierarchy proposed by Maslow (Inglehart 1981, p. 881). That is, as nations advance economically, citizens no longer focus on developing a comfortable standard of living (materialistic goals). Instead, they direct their concern toward other social and political issues such as peace and the environment (post-materialistic goals).

Inglehart (1971, 1981) developed an instrument to measure materialism in which respondents are asked to order twelve goals (or values) from most to least important. This list of goals is presented in Figure 2. Materialistic goals include fighting crime and inflation, and maintaining a stable economy. Post-materialistic goals, on the other hand, are concerned with giving people more say in governmental decisions, making cities more beautiful, and moving toward a society where ideas count more than money.

As Richins and Dawson (1992) explain, the primary problem with using Inglehart's value survey to measure individual materialism is that the instrument focuses on social rather than individual goals. These goals are "not likely to have large influences on day-to-day consumption choices" (p. 306). Additionally, Inglehart's survey does not provide a measure of the "complex, multidimensional nature of materialism" (Richins and Dawson 1992, p. 306). Still, the measure is useful in that it does provide some assessment of attitudes toward money.

Ward and Wackman; Moschis and Churchill. In investigating the influence of the family and the media (specifically television commercials) on adolescent consumer learning, Ward and Wackman (1971) developed a six-item scale to measure materialistic attitudes. This scale was part of a larger overall set

Figure 2

Inglehart's Materialist and Post-Materialist Values

Maintain order in the nation. *

Give people more say in the decisions of the government.

Fight rising prices. *

Protect freedom of speech.

Maintain a high rate of economic growth. *

Make sure that this country has strong defense forces. *

Give people more say in how things are decided at work and in their community.

Try to make our cities and countryside more beautiful.

Maintain a stable economy. *

Fight against crime. *

Move toward a friendlier, less impersonal society.

Move toward a society where ideas count more than money.

* A materialistic value/goal.

Ronald Inglehart (1981), "Post-Materialism in an Environment of Insecurity," *American Political Science Review*, 75 (December), 880-900.

of thirteen measures (scales, indices, and open-ended questions) which were used to assess various factors influencing how adolescents learn to be consumers. In this research, materialism is defined as "an orientation which views material goods and money as important for personal happiness and social progress" (1971, p. 422). Only a representative item for each scale is provided. For the materialism scale the item is, "It's really true that money can buy happiness."

In their research program into the consumer socialization and learning of adolescents, Moschis and Churchill (1978), Churchill and Moschis (1979), and Moschis and Moore (1982) adopted the theoretical foundation and methodological approach initiated by Ward and Wackman. They expanded the research design to incorporate thirteen scales to measure variables such as materialism, knowledge of consumer affairs, television viewing, and peer communications about consumption. The materialism scale was the same as that used by Ward and Wackman. Unfortunately, no specific scale items were reported in this research either.

Yamauchi and Templer. In what would seem to be a more direct antecedent to the Belk and the Richins and Dawson scales, Yamauchi and Templer (1982) explored the relationship between money and psychology. Acknowledging that money is a dominant feature of modern life, they trace the interests of psychologists from Freud to Fromm in the relationship between money and human behavior. They lament, however, that this area is under-studied in psychology because of a lack of a standardized instrument for assessing "money behavior" (p. 522). To fill the void, they developed an instrument to measure attitudes toward money, the Money Attitude Scale (MAS). From a sample of 300 adults living in Los Angeles and Fresno, California, they generated 62 items which were reduced to four factors representing attitudes toward money. The scale is presented in Figure 3. While scale items

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Figure 3**

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address the use of money for power and prestige and address anxieties connected with having and spending money, they do not measure attitudes about possessions. The first factor measures the use of money to impress and influence others — money as an indicator of success. The second factor measures attitudes toward financial planning for the future. The third factor addresses attitudes toward money situations — are people suspicious and doubtful or trusting and accepting of situations involving money. The fourth and final factor measures whether or not money is a source of anxiety and worry. The advance provided by the MAS is the connection of money with prestige and status and the measure of individual attitudes which might be expected to correlate more directly with behavior. Still, however, the scale does not address possessions directly—and that is the focus of the two scales used in this study.

Others. More recently, Tashchian, Slama, and Tashchian (1984) developed a scale to measure social attitudes similar to the ones of interest to Inglehart (1971). Materialism is measured along with attitudes toward material growth and toward energy conservation. Finally, Richins and Dawson report (1992) that an additional scale which incorporates materialism is under development by Heslin, Johnson, and Black. While the overall focus of the work is on measuring spending versus saving, a six-item measure of materialism is included in their work (Richins and Dawson 1992).

Scale Development in Marketing

Recent work on developing materialism scales has been more focused and driven by theoretical considerations. It has proceeded with the assumption that materialism is a multidimensional construct which cannot be adequately assessed with single measures. Belk (1984, 1985) began the process. He offered a scale to measure the materialistic tendencies, or personality traits, of individuals,

by considering traits of possessiveness, nongenerosity, and envy. In later research Ger and Belk (1990, 1993) extended the scale to include a fourth trait of tangibility—now termed “preservation.” Richins and Dawson, however, while agreeing that materialism is a complex construct, conceive of it as a value. With this orientation they developed a scale (1990, 1992) which measures three domains of the value “materialism”: centrality of acquisitions, acquisitions leading to happiness, and acquisitions as definitions of success.

It may not be necessary to “take sides” on the trait/value debate, since personality traits are inextricably bound up with values (Braithwaite and Scott 1991; Kreitler and Kreitler 1990). An emphasis on values, though, does not carry with it the significant problems of personality and behavior research outlined by Kassarian and Sheffet (1981). They report that personality inventories relevant to consumer behavior are not readily available or applicable (too often they address deviant personality types), that the relationship between personality and specific consumer behaviors (such as product choice and/or use) has little theoretical justification, and finally, that only a few studies report statistically significant findings.

Further, Triandis (1990) suggests that measuring personality in conjunction with behavior may be difficult. He draws on Doi’s (1986) idea that people have a public and a private self. In collectivist societies, the public and private selves are kept quite separate and only the public self is “shown.” In more individualistic societies, the public and private selves are interrelated because the private self is allowed more expression; still, people may be concerned with doing the right thing. Thus, in either society, measuring personality is likely to be fraught with dangers if the interest is to try to determine behavior from personality. As part of the private self, personality is either totally hidden (collectivist societies) or partially hidden (individualistic societies).

Finally, Rokeach (1968) suggests that while personality factors will give rise to variations in individual value systems, cultural, institutional, and social factors “will nevertheless restrict such variations to a reasonably small number of dimensions” (p. 161). Consequently, the value orientation seems warranted. While each scale will be discussed below, a fuller discussion of the empirical tests and criticisms of each is presented in Chapter Three.

THE BELK MATERIALISM SCALE (1984, 1985; Ger and Belk 1990, 1993)

Belk conceives of materialism in two ways. First, he suggests that it is a complex second-order construct which can be measured via three correlated first-order constructs of possessiveness, “the inclination and tendency to retain control or ownership of one’s possessions” (Belk 1984); nongenerosity, “an unwillingness to give possessions to or share possessions with others” (Belk 1984); and envy, “a desire for others’ possessions ... [and resentment of] those who own the desired possessions” (Belk 1984). [A fourth subscale, tangibility, was added later; see page 42.] A second conceptualization is that materialism is a single-factor construct which may adequately be measured with the aggregation of the subscales (Belk 1985). Specific information about the reliability and validity of the overall scale and subscales is presented in Chapter Three. What is of interest here is how the scale has been used by other researchers to investigate materialism in various settings. While the focus of this dissertation is on materialism in the United States, research conducted outside the U.S. is included in this survey, in the interest of completeness.

Cross-cultural Measures of Materialism

Dawson and Bamossy (1990) suggest that differences in consumption

patterns between countries with different economic and cultural structures are to be expected. Of more interest, however, would be an investigation of differences in materialism between two countries which are relatively similar. For the study they selected the U.S. and the Netherlands. Because of differences in social, religious, and political structures, they expected materialism to be higher in The Netherlands. To investigate this hypothesis, the authors utilized Belk's materialism scales.

Both Dutch and American envy scales achieved adequate internal consistency (Alphas of .81 and .76, respectively). The Dutch nongenerosity scale indicated lower reliability (.46) than did the American (.63), while reliability of the Dutch possessiveness scale was higher (.68) than the American (.53). Overall aggregate materialism measures also were low (.61 for the Dutch sample and .62 for the American). Because of these initial results, the authors caution against drawing too strong a conclusion from the study.

More specifically, the results of ANOVA analysis indicated that the most significant differences in materialism between the two samples was in possessiveness. Respondents did not differ significantly on measures of envy, nongenerosity, or on overall aggregate measures of materialism. The authors also included measures of life satisfaction in their study. As reported by others, envy was the only materialism sub-construct which was strongly (and negatively) related to life satisfaction. Accordingly, Dawson and Bamossy conclude, "these differences in scale means perhaps challenge the unidimensionality of the summary materialism scale when conducting cross-cultural studies" (p. 183).

An interesting aspect of this study was in the explanation for the higher possessiveness of the Dutch sample. While the U.S. may have a throw-away society, the Dutch tend to hold on to their possessions longer. The authors report that garage sales and second-hand markets such as swap meets and flea markets

are virtually non-existent in the Netherlands. They conclude that "in a world of topped-off land fills, 'possessiveness' may not deserve the negative connotation often associated with 'materialism'" (Dawson and Bamossy 1990, p. 184).

Research by Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) and Rudmin (1988) suggests that Belk's materialism scales may be more appropriate for the United States than other cultures, especially those in developing nations. To remedy the situation, Belk sought to modify his scales to facilitate cross-cultural investigation of materialism (Ger and Belk 1990, 1993). In the 1990 study, factor analysis of data from university students in the U.S. and Turkey, as well as students from England, France and Germany attending an international institution in France, yielded four factors. In addition to the three previously established factors of possessiveness, nongenerosity, and envy, a fourth, which came to be called "tangibility" emerged. Tangibility is defined as "the conversion of experience into material form. Taking pictures during a vacation, keeping souvenirs, and taking slides of places visited and showing them to friends are examples" (Ger and Belk 1990, p. 186). Ger and Belk (1990) report that even with the revised scales, the result is "more reliable in the United States and Europe than in Turkey" (p. 188). Within Turkey, reliabilities are higher for students from Istanbul than from the countryside, reflecting the penetration of Western products and communications in the more cosmopolitan areas of the country.

Ger and Belk (1990) conclude that the expression of materialism is not consistent across cultures. For example, Turkish students were the most materialistic overall, being the most possessive, envious and tangibilizing, but yet the most generous. U.S. students "placed" second on envy and, along with England and France, on tangibility. They also were the most nongenerous. Among Europeans, German students were the least materialistic, scoring lowest on the envy, tangibility, and nongenerosity subscales.

In more recent cross-cultural research, Ger and Belk (1993) once again modified the scale after a series of focus group discussions in thirteen countries. Among other changes, the tangibility subscale was renamed "preservation, "the conversion of experience into material form" (Ger and Belk 1993). As before, findings of materialism varied from one country to another as did the reliability of the scale. Ger and Belk (1993) suggest that it is not surprising that there are trade offs to be made in pursuit of a truly international scale, since meanings of materialism seem to differ among countries. They conclude that while "the basic dimensions [of materialism] are relatively similar" across cultures, the "particular events arousing the issues of concern, or behaviors or feelings underlying the dimensions" differ (p. 10). Specific results from this study are presented in Chapter Three when this revised scale, which is used for this study, is discussed.

Materialism and Attachment to Possessions

Ball and Tasaki (1992) hypothesize that there is a difference between materialism, which refers to the importance of possessions generally, and attachment, which is centered on specific possessions owned to develop and maintain one's self-concept. Referring to Belk's scales of possessiveness, nongenerosity, and envy, they suggest that none of these "imply that materialistic people should use possession for the purpose of maintaining a concept of self and nonmaterialistic people should not" (Ball and Tasaki 1992, p. 160). Even though possessions are generally important to materialistic individuals, they are not expected to use all their possessions to support their self concept. And conversely, even nonmaterialists are expected to be attached to some of the things they own. Among their many hypotheses about attachment, the authors theorize that little relationship should be expected between

materialism and attachment. In the study, the authors used 16 of Belk's 24 items and added four of their own. Item analysis of the group of twenty suggested that only 16 should be retained. Cronbach Alpha for the overall 16-item scale was .76, roughly similar to Alphas of .66, .73, and .68 obtained by Belk with his original scale. As expected, attachment does not correlate with materialism.

THE RICHINS AND DAWSON SCALE (1990, 1992)

The initial Richins and Dawson scale was not reported until the 1989 Association for Consumer Research conference. This early seven-item scale has been used in some research, but results have not been widely reported. Where it has been employed, however, the results have been favorable. For example, Othman (1989) reports superior results with this scale than with Belk's. Cole et al. (1992) report similar findings, detailed above.

More recently, Richins and Dawson (1992) have undertaken extensive scale development efforts to develop and test a valid, reliable materialism scale. Like Belk's, the revised scale is built on the assumption that materialism is a multidimensional construct and ought to be measured accordingly. A review of the literature as well as the results an eleven-person focus group generated an initial pool of items which was refined and factor analyzed. Consistent with their theorizing, three subscales emerged. They measure the centrality of acquisitions in a person's life, the extent to which happiness is defined by acquisitions, and the extent to which success is defined by acquisitions.

While specific information about scale reliability and validity are presented in Chapter Three, it should be noted here that the early findings are quite positive. With these results, one might reasonably conclude that the Richins and

Dawson scale can confidently be adopted for further research.

Having addressed materialism, the discussion next turns to a consideration of the self, which is followed by a concluding section on materialism and the self.

THE SELF

In this section, the discuss turns to a consideration of the impact of materialism on a person's self identity, on selfhood. First, the term "self" is defined and then a brief history of how this definition of the self, in Western societies, came to be is presented. The historical discussion reveals that as culture changed, so did the concept of the self. Accordingly, the next topic is the role of culture in self definition. That discussion, in turn, provides a springboard for a more specific investigation of the role of possessions in self identity. Finally, the discussion turns to a consideration of materialism and the self. The relationship between materialism and each of four constructs is explored: self-esteem, self-actualization, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, and self-monitoring. These relationships later form the basis for the research hypotheses for this study.

What Is the Self?

It is always appropriate to begin with an understanding of the terminology—in this case, the "self." In 1982 Sirgy reviewed the consumer behavior literature which addressed the "self" and found it to be "fragmented, incoherent, and highly diffuse." Worse, much of the research seemed not to be guided by theory, and measures of the self which were used often had no theoretical basis. These conclusions are not unique to the consumer behavior field. In 1974 and again in 1979, Wylie evaluated psychological and sociological

studies of self-concept and self-esteem. She found that most of the self-concept measures "had been used only once or a few times, precluding evaluation of their adequacy and interpretation of the results of studies based on them" (Wylie 1989, p. 1). Further, of the fourteen instruments which had been subjected to more than one test, several were "judged to be seriously deficient [on psychometric criteria] and hence not to be recommended" (Wylie 1989, p. 1). In 1989, she again made a careful review of the more recent research in the two disciplines and came to the same dismal conclusions. After reviewing available literature on the reliability and convergent validity of various instruments, she was able to select only ten measures of the self-concept for recommendation (though two other measures under development also looked promising). The point here is that while there is a great deal of literature on the self, one must use caution in selecting from among it. Wylie herself explains that part of the problem "lies in the vague state of theorizing in the self-concept domain" (1989, p. 2), a problem not uncommon in social science research when we try to provide labels for processes which cannot be observed. As Cohen (1989) observes, labels are not explanations.

What is meant by the term "self"? Many researchers (c.f. Hill and Stamey 1990; Johnson 1985; Richins 1991; Sirgy 1982) reference Rosenberg's (1979, p. 7) definition of the self-concept as the "totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object." Within this framework, the self has often been treated as multidimensional. Belk (1988a) acknowledges that "the particular number of ... levels of self is an open question—Rappaport (1981) suggests that there are four levels of self, Atkin (1981) seven, and Feldman (1979) 11" (p. 152). For his own work, Belk (1988a) addresses four levels of the self, the individual (myself as my self), the family (myself as a member of my family), the community (myself as a community member), and the group (myself as a group member). The first of these is an individualistic conception of the self, the last

three collectivistic conceptions. Freud, of course, identified three aspects, the *ego*, the *id*, and the *super ego*. Allport (1961) suggested eight categories of the self, ranging from the self as knower, to the self as a fighter for ends, to the self as a cognitive processor. Sirgy (1982) identifies three dimensions of the self as being common to many researchers: the actual self (how a person perceives him/herself), the ideal self (how a person would like to perceive him/herself), and the social self (how a person presents him/herself to others). In other research, Sirgy (1980) has added an additional dimension of the ideal social self (how a person would like to present him/herself to others). More recently, Greenwald (1988) has suggested four facets of the self: the diffuse self, the public self, the private self, and the collective self. And Greene and Geddes (1988) have suggested that researchers should consider the self as "modular" with different modules (or what they call "nodes") being activated, or brought to the front, in different situations. Finally Sampson (1978) suggested "location of identity" as a way to cut across the various levels, facets, and selves which had been proposed by other researchers. He suggested that some people define themselves more in terms of externally located characteristics, while others employ more internally located characteristics in self identity.

In another tradition, formed mainly by the phenomenological psychologists, the self is thought of as the nucleus of a more general conceptual system. Here, the self is often referred to as the "self-system." Proponents of this perspective are Lecky (1969), Snygg and Combs (1949), but the best known is Carl Rogers (1951, 1961). Rogers' basic theory is that the individual is the center of a continually changing world of experience. For him, the self is "an organized, fluid, but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationship of the 'I' or the 'me,' together with values attached to these concepts" (1951, p. 498). All these theorists stress the unity of the self.

The question arises, then, of which perspective to adopt, a unidimensional or a multidimensional perspective? Gergen (1971) offers some rapprochement between the two perspectives.

The way in which we talk about a person's concept or view of himself suggests that we largely think of the self in the singular.... Yet ... if a person is asked to describe himself he will typically use a large number of different concepts.... Former President Lyndon Johnson once described himself as a "free man, an American, a United States Senator, a Democrat, a liberal, a conservative [sic], a Texan, a taxpayer, a rancher, and not as young as I used to be nor as old as I expect to be" (pp. 19 – 20).

Epstein (1980) continues with the thought that the "many selves are incorporated into a unified overall self-system" (p. 119). Further, while the self aims at overall consistency within the system, it never succeeds, for there will always be contradictory elements. Epstein (1980) concludes, "The argument of whether there is one self or there are many selves is, in a way, reminiscent of the older argument of whether intelligence is general or specific. The answer turned out to be that it is both" (p. 119).

Agreeing with Belk (1988a) that there is no agreement about the number of levels (or facets, or dimensions) of the self, this study will adopt a more global perspective suggested by Brewster Smith (1985) that most of these labels and conceptions are culture- and time-bound and may often reflect differences in disciplinary traditions and semantics rather than differences in concepts. He suggests that we might think of the "self" not as some concrete, substantive entity, but rather as the collection of the universal features of being a *person*. He cites reflexive self-awareness as both the primary feature of being human and that which warrants the term *selfhood*. He objects to terminology about the self which implies a "surgically or conceptually separable object of reference—other than the *person*." Actually, he also objects to the use of the word "self" in any way

other to “treat it as synonymous with the *person*” (p. 61). It is in this light that Baumeister (1986, 1987) is able to trace the history of “the self” from Medieval times to the present. It is in this tradition that Cushman (1990) can ponder “Why the Self Is Empty.” In fact, the authors noted above who address various dimensions of the self begin and end their discussions with the more global references to the “self.” It is this perspective which guides the work here. The investigation focuses on the materialist as a person, on materialism and selfhood.

What do we know, then, about the self? As Smith (1985) and others have said, the modern conception of selfhood is quite different from that of other eras. To put the discussion in perspective, a brief historical review of the self is presented next.

“How the Self Became a Problem” (Baumeister 1986, 1987)

Believing that the self is a social construction and hence an artifact of the culture in which it is created, various authors have tracked changes in the concept of self over time and from one culture to another. The investigation has been conducted using historical records as well as literature. The presentation here is limited to a discussion of the self in Western societies. While different authors draw their lines of demarcation at different dates and events in history, what follows is an attempt to draw them all together using the historical eras proposed by Baumeister (1986, 1987). The review begins with the early Greeks,⁶ then moves to Medieval Europe, then the “early modern” times of the 16th through 18th centuries. From there the more recent history of the Puritans, the Romantic era of the late 18th and early 19th century, the Victorian period (mid

⁶The discussion begins with the Greek civilization since it was, as Durant (1939) so eloquently puts it, “the bright morning of that Western civilization which, with all its kindred faults, is our nourishment and our life” (p. 671). Owens (1959) also traces “the beginnings of Western philosophy in the genuine sense” to the Greeks (p. 5).

and late 19th century), and then both the early and the late 20th century are addressed. What emerges from this journey is a recognition that our focus on the importance of the individual and on individual fulfillment (self-actualization) is a relatively recent phenomenon.

The Greeks. The discussion begins with a personal note. As a college student I took a number of courses on Greek history and literature. The professor often spoke about the Greek's psychology and their underdeveloped view of the self and self responsibility. Greek psychology explained the almost personal relationship the Greek heroes seemed to have with the gods. It also accounted for why there were so many gods. The early Greeks did not believe that an individual alone could accomplish much of anything. Whatever someone did, whether heroic or not, was accomplished with the aid and assistance of a god. Thus *The Iliad* begins with a feud between Achilles and Agamemnon, a quarrel which was not of their own making, but which was the "fault" of the god Apollo (Homer 1966). So also, one didn't get drunk, but rather Dionysus entered one's body! In reading about the self for this study, I once again came upon this concept—much to my delight, for I had not found any references to it, beyond class notes, since my college days. In discussing the stories of the Greek poets, Smith (1985) refers to the "constant intrusion" of the gods when some course of action was necessary. Morris (1972) agrees, citing the example of the Oedipus story in which the "personal character of Oedipus is really irrelevant to his misfortunes, which were decreed by fate irrespective of his own desires" (p. 4). Certainly the contemporary concept of self was not held by the Greeks.

Medieval Europe. Neither was it present in the late Medieval period when Christianity held sway and "self" was synonymous with "soul." Aries (1981) points out that in early Christian beliefs, salvation was collective. Weintraub (1978) provides further evidence of the collective conception of the self by noting

that during the Middle Ages the only autobiography he could find was by Petrarch (in the 14th century). The thrust of Petrarch's work, however, was to compare himself with others and not to discover his own individuality. Medieval people had clear guidelines from the church about self-fulfillment—which was to work toward salvation. And it was the same for everyone. Further, the social hierarchy was fixed. Nisbet (1973) notes that beliefs in this regard were influenced by St. Augustine who wrote that God had assigned each person a fixed place in society. This belief, coupled with the lack of a sense of an inner self, led medieval people to equate the person with his/her public, visible actions and appearances (Trilling 1971).

The Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries. By the 16th century, the beginnings of the modern era, a shift from a religious to a scientific view of the world had begun. People started believing in a separate self—but believed it to be hidden. Accordingly, they became obsessed with knowing the inner selves of others, with deception and pretense (Trilling 1971). One finds ample evidence of this interest in the plays of Shakespeare, which are rife with people not being whom they appear to be. During this time (from the 16th to the 18th centuries), Christianity began to lose its hold on society. According to MacIntyre (1981), morality was now just a set of rules, with no particular legitimatizing force behind it. Further, he suggests, the demise of traditional Christian morality brought with it an end to the view that a person was obligated to act according to his rank and station in life. With this increased social mobility, the implication for the self was that a person was “thought of as an individual prior to and apart from all roles” (MacIntyre 1981, p. 56). In examining the history of food, table manners, and household arrangements, Tuan (1982) notes that during this time individual chairs replaced benches for seating, mirrors were found in most

households for the first time, and private spaces and rooms started to become features of houses.

The Puritans. With Puritanism, the interest in knowing about the inner self shifted to an interest in knowing about one's own inner self. The doctrine of predestination helped foster this interest. "Puritans became self-conscious to an unprecedented degree" as they tried to learn if they were one of "the Elect" (Baumeister 1987, p. 165). For the Puritans, self-fulfillment came from good, honest hard work, with success in work often being taken as a sign that one was a member of the elect (Weber 1958).

The Romantic Era. Moving to the Romantic era, the individual ascended in importance. Emphasis was placed on each person's uniqueness and individual destiny. Secular notions of self-fulfillment on earth replaced heavenly salvation. During this time "personality (rather than social rank or roles) came to be increasingly regarded as a, even *the*, central aspect of the self" (Baumeister 1987, p. 166). Literary evidence for this fascination is found in biographies which began to focus more on personal information. The lives of artists, who were thought to live particularly rich inner lives (Altick 1965), were a specific fascination. In this period, conflict between the individual and society also came to be a theme of literature and politics (Trilling 1950). "Beginning with Rousseau and continuing throughout the Romantic period, the forms of society were blamed for personal nonfulfillment" (Baumeister 1987, p. 169).

The Victorian Era. In the Victorian era, the hidden self once again was of great interest. "Habits of self-scrutiny ... combined with impossibly high moral standards, forced Victorians to become self-deceptive" (Baumeister 1987, p. 166). The Victorians were quite concerned that the inner self might be involuntarily revealed, so they always had to be on their guard. The self, while still individual, was perceived as "deep, secret, instinct-driven, and potentially dangerous"

(Cushman 1990, p. 600). In the U.S. near the middle of the 19th century, transcendentalism emerged as a dominant literary and philosophical theme. In this perspective, society was regarded as a necessary evil. One had to “to it alone” for self-fulfillment. Thoreau was perhaps the archetypal example. (Baumeister 1986, 1987).

The Twentieth Century. By the early 20th century, however, alienation had become a dominant literary theme (Cushman 1990). The idea that a person could ever reach fulfillment in either this life or the next was rejected. These attitudes may have been produced, in part at least, by the industrial revolution. Baumeister (1987) explains that society was still viewed as blocking individual self-fulfillment. Industrialization had caused one’s economic livelihood to be even more dependent on society, so that fulfillment independent of society, as the transcendentalists had advocated, was not feasible.

In more contemporary times, post World War II, emphasis still is placed on the individual, and self-actualization is almost a societal goal.⁷ However, some writers have lamented that the total immersion of the individual in society, especially in a consumer culture (e.g. Fox and Lears 1983; Fromm 1955, 1976), may mean that the possibility for true individuality is vanishing. The “fragmented self” became a common term (c.f. Kilbourne 1987, 1991; Lasch 1979; Leiss 1976). And Cushman (1990) laments that the modern self is “empty” because of a loss of a sense of community and tradition—a theme also found in Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981), Rochberg-Halton (1986), and Halton (1992). Others, however, have suggested that people must find an accommodation with society (Klein 1964). Sampson (1988) reports that American society still remains committed to the idea of self-contained individualism as the

⁷As an illustration of societal interest in the individual and the self, Blascovich and Tomaka (1991) note that the state of California established a Commission on Self-Esteem.

way to realize personal freedom and independence, maintain socially responsible behavior, and allow people to achieve to the best of their potential.⁸

Psychologists use the term “indigenous psychology” (Cushman 1990; Sampson 1988) when they speak of a particular culture’s understanding of what is necessary to be truly human. What remains to be addressed, then, is a fuller consideration of culture’s role in self identity.

Culture and the Self

Descartes was wrong (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981). The mind and the body are not separate entities. In fact, they are inextricably linked. How is it that we know our “self”? We know about our “self” through an inferential process. Thus, Descartes was also right—when he said that he knew he existed because he could perceive himself thinking. Kant opined that Descartes really could not have inferred his existence from observing that he was thinking because to make that observation, he first had to exist! Nonetheless, Descartes made a valuable contribution in suggesting that we know about ourselves by drawing inferences from empirical evidence.

Working with the idea of inference, Kant (1929) explained that we can never know our “real” self, our “noumenal self”—but that we *can* know our phenomenological self. That is, I know myself by perceiving my own acts of perception. My self is not something I come to know in isolation. I come to know of my self in relation to the world which I perceive. Knowledge of my self is mediated over time by physical cues in the world.

So, if we know ourselves through our perceptions, what do we know about

⁸Sampson (1988), himself, however, doubts that these goals can be achieved unless society returns to a more collective form of individualism, which he terms “ensembled individualism.”

ourselves? We return to Descartes for an answer. A contemporary of Descartes, Gassendi, took him to task for thinking that a person's mind could be thought of as pure rationality: "Tell me frankly, do you not derive the very sound you utter in ... saying [I think, therefore I am] from the society in which you have lived? And, since the sounds you utter are derived from intercourse with other men, are not the meanings of sounds derived from the same source?" (Mumford 1970, p. 82). The answer to the question of what we know of ourselves is that we know of ourselves from our world and from our culture.

The culture in which we are raised sets the guidelines and parameters for our knowledge and our interest. What we know of our selves and of others is a constructive enterprise (e.g., Berger and Luckman 1967), constructed by the people and institutions of the culture in which we live. As one anthropologist points out, "Man can be characterized as an obsessive creator of meaning systems" (Barley 1989, p. 41). One of the meaning systems we create is our "selves."

As has been discussed, the notion of the uniqueness of each individual is a rather recent concept in the Western world. In the not too distant past, people's identity was tied to the groups to which they belonged. Identity was ascribed, being based on inherited position (Belk 1984; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Dittmar 1992). The rationale for the "tyranny" of the group is explained by Douglas and Isherwood (1979). When groups, such as the church and government, held the power, they could lay claim to taking the long view for the benefit of society (and for the benefit of the particular organization). Any single individual simply was incapable of making this same claim since individual lives are much shorter than institutional "lives." Accordingly, consumption could be proscribed to be carried out by and on behalf of the organization or group instead of the individual. Individual consumption was,

thereby, held to a minimum. Because consumption options were so restricted, objects were relatively unavailable for helping to define the individual self. In more recent times, however, when self identify is achieved, people came to be defined by what they have instead of their kinship (Dittmar 1992). Objects became important to persons for more than their functional uses.

What then is the relationship between the self and possessions? Perhaps the most widely quoted (c.f. Baumeister 1986, 1987; Belk 1988a; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Dittmar 1992; Lunt and Livingstone 1993; Rochberg-Halton 1986) description of this relationship is provided by William James.

The Empirical Self of each of us is all that he is tempted to call ... *me*. But it is clear that between what a man calls *me* and what he simply calls *mine* the line is difficult to draw. We feel and act about certain things that are ours very much as we feel and act about ourselves ... *In its widest possible sense, however, a man's Self is the sum total of what he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, ... his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account.... If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down.* (1890/1981, p. 279 – 280, emphases in the original).

James draws the link not only between the self and possessions, but also the link between evaluation of the self and possessions. The same position has been articulated more recently by Tuan (1980) who suggests that our "fragile sense of self needs support, and this we get by having and possessing things because, to a large degree, we are what we have and possess" (p. 472). This idea of the symbolic use of objects, of course, is not new with James or Tuan. As Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) point out, anthropologists have "accumulated incredibly detailed descriptions of the symbolic use of objects in a variety of cultures" (p. 26). Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) would concur.

[T]he research in ownership in a number of fields leads us to contend that attachment to objects as symbols of security, as

expressions of self-concept, and as signs of one's connection to or differentiation from other members of society is a usual and culturally universal function of consumption.... Although the meaning of self differs cross-culturally and varies in its link with individualism (Hsu 1985), the fact that these conceptions of self are expressed to some degree through objects seems to be universal (p. 532).

From a study of the meaning of possessions, Furby (1991) reports much the same conclusion. The research spanned three cultures and involved developmental interviews with people of five age levels in each culture. Two basic themes emerged. The first was that possessions were "linked to the experience of efficacy and a sense of personal control." The other "was an association between possessions and one's sense of self. Both the meaning of, and the motivation for, possession was frequently related to one's self concept" (1991, p. 459).

Yet another researcher reports similar findings.

Writings throughout the last century suggest that possessions play an important role in people's lives.... One of the recurrent themes in this literature is the notion of the relation between possessions and the self. These writings collectively suggest that personal possessions come to be symbols of, embodiments of, and indistinguishable from the self of the owner (Kamptner 1991, p. 210).

Anthropologists have well documented this link between possessions and the self in traditional societies. For example Beaglehole (1932) explained that possessions were thought to be imbued with the owner's spirit. To prevent contamination by the selves of others, possessions were not touched by other people and were often buried with the owner. The link was often made more obvious, and more public, by licking new possessions, by claiming ownership of objects by touching them or shedding blood on them.

The link is still with us today, as suggested by Barley, a British anthropologist who undertook an ethnographic study of his own country. He

makes the point that “it is, curiously, in the Western cultures, where people make very few of the things they own, that we nevertheless expect to be able to draw inferences about owners from their possessions.... We expect to be able to tell a great deal about the internal states of people by their faces, their clothes, the way they talk” (1989, p. 41 – 42).

What then can we say about the role of possessions in defining the self? Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg–Halton (1981) suggest that possessions help to express qualities of the self, provide signs of status, serve as symbols of social integration, and assist with socialization. Belk (1988a) develops a similar list. He says that possessions help provide a sense of self, help distinguish our self from others and from our environment, manage our identities, and help achieve a sense of self continuity. For these researchers, as well as for the others cited here, possessions fulfill these and many other functions. The common thread which binds them all together is the idea that possessions help provide meaning in our lives by being “objective manifestations of the self” (Belk 1988a, p. 159). How this association develops is considered next. Theoretical concerns are presented first, and then empirical evidence for the role of possessions in self definition is reviewed.

Possessions as Means of Acquiring and Expressing Identity

“We derive our self–concept from objects” (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988, p. 531). That is, we use possessions to say to others as well as to ourselves who we are (Belk 1988a; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg–Halton 1981; Levy 1981; McCracken 1986, 1988; Rook 1985). Because of this function of goods, Douglas and Isherwood (1979) contend that goods themselves are neutral, but their uses are social; they may be used as fences or bridges. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg–Halton (1981) make much the same point suggesting that while the

term “materialism conjures up images of crass self-centeredness, of mindless consumers buying needless things and devoting their lives to a shallow quest for the acquisition of money and possessions that will serve as status symbols, ... it is also apparent that goods can serve the ‘common good.’ Indeed, they are essential to it” because of their role in fashioning and communicating identity (p. 231).

Dittmar (1992) expands the idea by suggesting that the relationship of interest is not just between an individual and his/her possessions, but is a triadic relationship among the individual, the object (possession), and the other.⁹ We cannot use goods as an expression of our identity unless there is someone else out there to acknowledge the expression. Mead (1934) sets forth the argument for the importance of shared underlying conceptions of material possessions.

If we say, “This is my property, I shall control it,” that affirmation calls out a certain set of responses which must be the same in any community in which property exists. It involves an organised attitude ... which is common to all members of the community.... The man is appealing to his rights because he is able to take the attitude which everybody else in the group has with reference to property, thus arousing in himself the attitude of others (p. 161 – 162).

From a consumer behavior product-oriented perspective Hirschman (1981) suggests much the same thing, “consumers ... must have in common a shared conception of the product’s symbolic meaning. For example, driving a ‘prestige’ automobile will not serve as an effective symbol of one’s social status unless others ... share the driver’s belief that the automobile is indeed, prestigious” (p. 5). Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) also support the triangular

⁹Roberts and Dant (1991) offer an alternative perspective in their conception of a “personal fund” of resources which consumers allocate only to themselves. They suggest that some personal rituals and behaviors are for oneself exclusively and have no real social goal or outcome, such as reading a mystery novel. Their focus seems to be on behaviors, however, rather than goods.

relationship when they declare that “information about the self is not released through direct interaction between person and object but, instead, is mediated by the opinions of others” (p. 141).

Implicit in this view is the notion that possessions are a means of communication. Via possessions we communicate to ourselves and to others who we are, who we hope we are, and who we hope to become. This communicative role of goods is possible, of course, only because of a socially shared sense of meaning. Douglas and Isherwood (1979) conceive of goods being both the hardware and software of the social information system (p. 72). Because goods are the markers of cultural categories (see also McCracken 1986), they are an integral part of a live information system. The essential function of consumption, then, is its capacity to make sense of the world for us. In a sense, consumption is joint production, with our fellow consumers, of meaning, of values, of our universe (Douglas and Isherwood 1979, p. 4, 5, 10, 59–60, 62, 67).

Belk (1988a) extends these ideas with the thought that we not only use possessions to define ourselves, but that possessions can themselves alter our identity. This position was anticipated by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton. “In all cases where actual physical objects become associated with a particular quality of the self, it is difficult to know how far the thing simply reflects an already existing trait and to what extent it anticipates, or even generates, a previous nonexistent quality” (1981, p. 28). For example, feeling sophisticated when we get dressed up is a perception engendered more by the clothes we are wearing than by ourselves. An extension of this idea of presented by Schouten (1991) in his study of women and cosmetic surgery. He concludes that the surgery is symbolic consumption which people use to restore, repair, and in other ways deal with an unsatisfying self-concept.

Goods not only help define who we are, but also help differentiate us from

others—thereby establishing us as a unique individual. (Though, of course, there is an integrating aspect to this differentiation since other people are still required to acknowledge the differentiation (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981).) Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) found that people's favorite things enhanced self-expression and helped not only to differentiate the individual from society but also to integrate the individual within society.

On the other hand, we may use goods to signal, consciously or not, our association with a membership or aspirational group. Belk (1988a) provides a variety of examples to illustrate this point. By wearing Brooks Brothers suits and by decorating our house with antiques and/or antique reproduction furniture, we are saying to the world that we are a certain kind of person. Belk refers to research by Weisner and Weibel (1981) which demonstrates that families with different lifestyles and from different social classes live in different kinds of houses which are decorated in different styles.

This social construction of the self, to borrow a phrase from Berger and Luckman (1967), is true even of people who have few possessions. Hill and Stamey (1990) found that homeless people often dealt with the socially negative connotations of their condition by defining themselves as resourceful individuals who could live by their own abilities and did not need welfare or the help of social services. The meaning of "home" also is altered by the homeless. Additionally they found that these individuals often engage in meaningful work to bolster their self-concept. For example, many are involved in recycling and scavenging activities which they perceive to be beneficial not only for themselves but to society as well. Thus the homeless use the meanings of their own subculture to build and reinforce their identities.

Studies Investigating the Role of Possessions in our Lives

The evidence presented in this discussion of material objects and self-identity is extended by several studies which have specifically investigated the relationship.

General. Two studies, conducted with adults, have empirically investigated this relationship between possessions and the self. The earlier is reported by Prelinger (1959). In this study people were given a list of 160 items from eight different categories. Respondents were asked to rate each item on scale of 0 to 3 depending on the extent to which the item was "definitely a part of your own self." Of the eight categories, possessions were ranked fourth highest—though of non-body items, they were rated first. Body parts were considered closest to one's self (mean = 2.98), body-internal processes were next closest (mean=2.46), personally identifying characteristics such as age or name were next (mean=2.22), and then possessions and productions were rated (mean=1.57). Abstract ideas, other people, objects in the close physical environment, and the distant physical environment comprised the remaining categories in order of closeness to the self. In the second study, after repeatedly asking, "Who are you?" Gordon (1968) found that people often named material objects and possessions as elements of their selves.

Children and possessions. Some have turned to studies of children and possessions to bolster the theory that material objects are considered part of our selves. For example, in a longitudinal study in the UK of children, Newson and Newson (1976) conclude that having their own personal possessions was important for children to develop a sense of self. "A child's personal possessions, including first of all his name and his memories, but extending to the material objects that he can touch and hold and know to be his, establish him in his own identity and confirm him as a person in his own right" (p. 128).

Furby's studies of possessions reach similar conclusions. For example, Furby and Wilke (1982) report that more than 70 percent of the six-month old children studied had preferences for a specific object, even if they did not view it as separate from themselves.¹⁰ Furby (1980) hypothesizes that since every society tries to protect objects from the potentially destructive actions of children, children, to assert themselves, come to identify particularly with the objects to which they are allowed access. Accordingly, "possessions and self become intimately related" (p. 35). Furby concludes that "if the toddler were given unlimited access to everything, then the whole story might be different" (p. 36).

Not only are possessions inextricably part of our selves from the very beginning of life, they continue to be an important part of our self definition near the end of our lives as well.

Possessions and aging. While several studies (Belk 1985; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Kamptner 1991) have demonstrated that the types of possessions we are attached to and which we treasure change as we age, possessions are still important for maintaining a dignified sense of self. For example, Sherman and Newman (1977) report that when elderly people enter a nursing home, they may bring with them a favorite object or two to compensate for a feeling of a loss of status. They also report that elderly people who have cherished possessions, regardless of where they are living, are happier than those who do not. Dittmar (1992) hypothesizes that possessions may become especially important to the elderly who tend to lose other identity markers. For example, being retired, no longer being a full-time parent, and perhaps being less active in various organizations and groups, the elderly lose the forms of

¹⁰These objects, such as a blanket, a diaper, or a pillow, really serve as "part-self objects." That is, "although the object may be an extension of the self ..., it is nevertheless not yet a complete and autonomous object for the child" (Gulerce 1991, p. 194).

identity which they had in earlier years. Possessions, however, remain to reaffirm who they are. Along the same lines, McCracken (1987) reports that when people who enter a nursing home are forced to give up their possessions, their sense of identity tends to be eroded. Dittmar (1992) concurs, saying that in such situations, possessions help people maintain a sense of control and of social status.

Finally, Unruh (1983) extends the importance of possessions as a marker reporting that people like to leave some of their treasured possessions to their heirs as a means of preserving their identity "beyond the grave." Alternatively, some people desire to have special possessions buried with them. From a survey of morticians about contemporary grave goods, Elliott (1990) reports that possessions ranging from "typical items" such crucifixes, photographs, and jewelry to "unusual" items such as tennis rackets, golf clubs, and a set of wrenches have been buried with their owners. When asked for reasons why possessions were buried with a loved one, morticians responded that, among other reasons, people wanted to express who the deceased was and "to show how the person was different in life" (p. 610).

It is not just the elderly, however, who do not function well when their possessions are taken from them. This phenomenon seems to be common to people of all ages.

The self and loss of possessions. Dittmar (1992) explains the theory here. "If material possessions are constitutive parts of self, it follows that their unintentional loss should be experienced as a lessening of self" (p. 46). Fromm's (1976) expression of the point is more biting. "*If I am what I have and if what I have is lost, who then am I?* Nobody but a defeated, deflated, pathetic testimony to a wrong way of living" (pp. 96 – 97). Sometimes personal possessions are taken from people for the express purpose of lessening any sense of self uniqueness, as

in the military. At other times the loss of personal possessions is less voluntary, as when someone is the victim of burglary or natural disasters. Both situations are discussed next.

Goffman (1959, 1961) discusses the “stripping” process which occurs when people are institutionalized—in prisons, mental hospitals, boarding schools, monasteries, the military and the like. Everything personal is taken from the individuals involved. Then, they are dressed like everyone else, given the same living arrangements and the same possessions. The sense of an individual self, different from others, is stripped away. In its place, a sense of group identity is created by providing each person with a kind of standard identity kit (Belk 1988a). Accordingly, soldiers, boarding school students, and inmates wear uniforms which identify them as members of the group but separate them from people outside the institution. In a similar vein, Hill (1991) studied the lives of otherwise homeless women who were living in a shelter. He found that because the Sisters of Mercy who ran the shelter determined what possessions the women could acquire and keep, the women exhibited some of the same characteristics of the groups of people just described who had been “stripped” of their possessions.

A less voluntary loss of possessions occurs when a person is robbed or when a natural disaster destroys home and possessions. Several studies of burglary victims (c.f. Brown and Harris 1989; Paap 1981; Van den Bogaard and Wiegman 1991) report that people feel a sense of loss because of the stolen possessions, but they also feel as if they have been violated and a part of their selves has been taken away. In her study of police response to burglary, Stenross (1984) found that police are more diligent in pursuing crimes when certain kinds of possessions have been stolen (jewelry and sentimental items). She suggests that the police recognize that people suffer greater distress when possessions

“typically regarded as markers of the self” have been lost (1984, p. 389).

The same seems to be true when possessions are lost because of a fire, flood, or other natural disaster. Erickson (1976) reports that people who lost possessions because of a flood actually mourned that loss. McLeod (1984) found the same to be true of people whose possessions were lost in a mudslide. Belk (1988a) reports his own experiences with flood victims, saying that even six weeks after the disaster, people could not talk about the event and were still “in the early stages of grief,” (p. 142).

In a commentary on Belk’s article, “The Extended Self,” Cohen (1989) objects to the conclusion that emotional response to a loss of possessions is due to a “diminution of self” (p. 127). The emotional trauma might be explained by other factors, he suggests, such as the loss of ability to provide for one’s family, to a loss of trust in institutions (which perhaps did not protect home and possessions). Belk (1989a) does not respond to this specific argument in his reply. One might respond for him, that while possessions are linked with self identity, that position in no way excludes self identity being defined in other ways as well, such as thinking of oneself as a good provider. So, when Cohen objects that the emotions resulting from a loss might really reflect a sense of loss of abilities, it is still the sense of self which is diminished. Further, since possessions help define the self because of the meanings they carry, then house and property certainly can be taken for a material sign of one’s ability to provide for one’s family. And that ability certainly can be part of one’s self concept. It is not a very great leap to see that when the symbols of that ability are lost, the individual would feel some loss of self as well, whether one thinks he is mourning the loss of the material possessions or the loss of the meaning they carried.

A similar involuntary loss is the loss of one’s job. Yet even when one’s income is reduced, people still often try to continue the consumption of visible

symbols of identity. For example, Richins and Dawson (1992) report the case of a 30-year-old woman who refused to sell her Mercedes and mink coat even after her condominium was repossessed because the "loss in image and self-esteem would be too great" (p. 303). Similarly, in a study of steel workers who had been laid off, Roberts (1991) found that many continued to purchase visible products such as cars, trucks, vans, and horses, while they cut back on the types of food they ate and on entertainment.

It should be clear now that possessions play an important role in defining and communicating about the self. As Ball and Tasaki (1992) point out, however, that knowledge is not enough, since both materialistic and nonmaterialistic people use possessions to maintain a concept of self. The focus of this study is not the relationship between consumption and the self, but rather the more narrow topic of materialism and the self. That is the topic of the next section.

MATERIALISM AND THE SELF

The many researchers noted above would agree with Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981, p. ix) that the transactions between people and things is central to the human condition. In fact Douglas and Isherwood's (1979) basic thesis was that we should view consumption as properly belonging to the social process and to recognize that goods contribute to a rational life by providing, along with language and gesture, the channels of communication within a culture. If goods then are not "bad," where does that leave materialism? It may be useful to return to the definition of materialism which guides this study.

Materialism reflects the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide

the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in life (Belk 1984, p. 291).

With this definition, a materialist is one who goes beyond using possessions in the service of self identity, beyond using possessions for the meaning they convey about one's self to oneself and to others. Instead of focusing on the communicative role of the possessions, the materialist focuses solely on the possessions. In so doing, the materialist is cut off from engaging in other activities. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) draw this distinction quite clearly when they suggest that

[i]f things attract our attention excessively, there is not enough psychic energy left to cultivate the interaction with the rest of the world. The danger of focusing attention exclusively on a goal of physical consumption—or materialism—is that one does not attend enough to the cultivation of the self, to the relationship with others, or to the broader purposes that affect life (p. 53).

Their position is similar to that proposed by the economist Linder (1970). He suggested that acquiring and maintaining objects can easily fill up a person's time to the point that there is no time left even to use and enjoy the things one acquires. When that stage is reached, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton suggest that "the adaptive value of objects is reversed.... The former tool turns its master into a slave" (1981, p. 53). Belk (1988a) himself makes much the same point when he discusses pets as part of the extended self. "Although pets, like other objects that become part of the extended self, may be beneficial, they can also become harmful fetishes if too much of one's self and one's world is invested in them" (p. 156).

If this is true, then we need to know what the materialistic self is like. Belk and Richins and Dawson have developed scales to measure whether or not one is a materialist and have investigated correlations between materialism and life satisfaction. Other researchers have studied differences in materialism based on

gender, whether one is an expatriate or not, etc. But to date, no one has looked at the self of a materialist. Richins and Dawson (1992) call for further investigation of the self in this light. Dittmar (1992) explains the impact of such study is nothing less than “imperative for a more complete understanding of the consequences of our Western materialist, consumption-dominated societies” (p. 17).

For purposes of this study, four aspects of the self have been selected for study, self-esteem, self-actualization, self-monitoring, and intrinsic motivation. The rationale for these selections is addressed next.

Self-Esteem and Materialism

Self-esteem is often used as a global measure of self-worth. This perspective is strongly influenced by Rosenberg (1979) who defines a person having high self-esteem as an individual who considers himself to be a “person of worth,” who “appreciates his own merits” yet “recognizes his faults” (p. 54). A person with low self-esteem, on the other hand, “lacks respect for himself, considers himself unworthy, inadequate, or otherwise seriously deficient as a person” (p. 54).

Possessions and their meanings are available not only for describing who we are, but also for evaluating ourselves. Allport (1937) explains that we develop our identity, and hence gain self-esteem, in part, by acquiring a continuously expanding set of possessions which we regard as our own. Gecas (1982) and Scheier and Carver (1980) take the idea one step further by suggesting that a distinction can be drawn between self-conceptions (identities) and self-evaluations (such as self-esteem). According to Gecas (1982), “Identity focuses on the meanings comprising the self as an object, gives structure and content to the self-concept, and *anchors the self to social systems*. Self-esteem deals

with the evaluative and emotional dimensions of the self-concept" (emphasis added) (p. 4). Material possessions, then, serve as symbolic extensions of the self as well as concrete representations of self worth.

In fact, one of the common themes to emerge from Ger and Belk's (1993) focus group interviews in several countries was that materialists use possessions to improve their self-esteem. The irony is that in focusing just on possessions, materialists are, in effect, taking themselves out of the social system. This leaves them with only goods for determining self-esteem. Relationships and connections with others have effectively been shut out. This conclusion is supported by the research of Richins and Dawson (1992) in validating their scale. Using Kahle's (1983) List of Values, they found that people who scored high on materialism were more likely to value "financial security" and less likely to value "warm relationships with others" than those who scored low.

Not only have materialists shut themselves off from alternative means of evaluating themselves, but they have selected an evaluative yardstick which is flawed. As McCracken (1986, 1988) and others (Brickman and Campbell 1971; Fromm 1976; Lasch 1979; Leiss 1976; Lunt and Livingstone 1992; Wachtel 1983) have pointed out, a life focused solely on possessions ultimately will be unsatisfying because there will always be something new (and/or more) to acquire. Further, the categories of goods which signal success are always shifting. Hence, if self-esteem is assessed as James (1890/1981) proposed, as a ratio of successes to expectations, self-esteem is likely to be lower for materialists than for non-materialists because, for materialists, the ante is always being raised.

Bond (1992) reaches the same conclusion, but for a different reason. He theorizes that self-esteem should be lower for materialists since evaluations of self-worth are based on what they own and not what kind of person they are or what kind of life they have led. He argues that while material possessions can be

important contributors to feelings of well-being, possessions alone are not sufficient no matter how many one has.¹¹ Bond offers friendship, mutual affection, and striving to do something worthwhile—beyond simply striving for pleasure and wealth accumulation—as necessary ingredients for self-esteem.

That people use possessions to try to enhance self-esteem has been the subject of several research projects. Wicklund and Gollwitzer's (1982) study of symbolic self completion found that when collectors' self-esteem was low, they bolstered it by adding objects to their collection. Dawson and Bamossy (1991) found that one characteristic of successful expatriates was high self-esteem which allowed these individuals to detach from their "old" possessions when they moved to a new job in a different country. Along the same lines, Ertel et al. (1971, quoted in Dittmar 1992) demonstrated that when participants' self-esteem was experimentally lowered, they used valued objects to bolster their self-esteem. Beggan (1991) reports that to counter negative implications of failure, people used personal property to enhance feelings of self-worth. Finally, Jackson (1979) found that feelings of self-esteem were related to a ratio of possessions wanted to possessions actually owned. The point here is that when a sense of accomplishment, a sense of success can only—or primarily—be measured by outward, tangible signs (such as driving status automobile) instead of coming from an inner sense of having done well, satisfaction is unlikely, and so self-esteem is likely to suffer. This conclusion is supported by one of Richins and Dawson's studies (1992). For people in a large western city, the correlation between high scores on the materialism scale and high scores on the Rosenberg (1965) self-esteem scale were negative and statistically significant.

¹¹I am reminded of the bumper sticker, "He who dies with the most toys wins." Bond might respond that "he" may be the winner, but "he" will not have had a life filled with a sense of well-being. Bond might find the bumper stickers and tee shirts which proclaim, "He who dies with the most toys still dies" or "The best things in life aren't things," more to his liking.

Not only does self-esteem suffer when one is a materialist, but one is less likely to achieve self-actualization.

Self-Actualization and Materialism

While the term “self-actualization” was originated by the psychologist Goldstein (Maslow 1950), the term is closely connected with the writings and ideas of Abraham Maslow, who “did more to popularize it than any other single individual” (Welch, Tate, and Medieros 1987, p. ix). Maslow’s own definition of the concept is as follows:

self-actualization (SA), as yet a difficult syndrome to describe accurately, ... may be loosely described as the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities, potentialities, etc. Such people seem to be ... doing the best that they are capable of doing.... This connotes also either gratification past or present of the basic emotional needs for safety, belongingness, love, respect, and self-respect, and of the cognitive needs for knowledge and for understanding (1950, p. 12).

Researchers in the field acknowledge the difficulty even today of “pinning down” the concept. For example, after reviewing the writings of several authors, Crandall and Jones (1991) conclude that “there is still conceptual ‘fuzziness’ about what self-actualization is” (p. 340). And Weiss (1991) complains that self-actualization theory “appears to be in fragments with many seeming incongruous versions” (p. 268).

Nevertheless, definitions offered by others are consistent with Maslow’s initial conceptualization. For example, according to Shostrom (1976), author of two of the most widely used tests for self-actualization (Flett et al. 1991), the term refers to

an active process of being and becoming increasingly inner-directed and integrated at the levels of thinking, feeling, and bodily response. It is, therefore not an end point, but a process of

moving from normal manipulation toward growth, development, and the unfolding of human potential.

The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Psychology (Harré & Lamb, 1983, p. 559) offers a similar definition. "The inherent tendency towards self-fulfilment, self-expression and the attainment of autonomy from external forces. It is a process rather than an end state." It is the ideas contained in these definitions which are adopted for this research.

Even with these definitional difficulties, self-actualization remains an important contemporary concept. Baumeister (1986) opines that "self-actualization has become increasingly accepted by the general society as a legitimate and important aspect of life" (p. 163). However, the relationship between possessions and self-actualization is not a simple one. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) explain that if possessions reflect nothing more than ties with other people then we are unlikely to develop as individuals, and, hence, not become self-actualized.¹² At the other extreme, however, if we are not in possession of our self, if we are "possessed" by objects, then neither are we free to develop ourselves. This understanding of the lack of self development resulting from either not focusing enough or focusing too much on goods is also argued by Maslow.

The neurotic organism is one that lacks basic need satisfactions that can come only from other people. It is therefore more dependent on other people and is less autonomous and self-determined, i. e., more shaped by the nature of the environment and less shaped by its own intrinsic nature. Such relative independence of environment as is found in the healthy person does not of course, mean lack of commerce with it; it means only that in these contacts

¹²Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) explain that "most traditional peoples have emphasized the integrated or social self at the expense of personal uniqueness, whereas modern Western culture has tended to stress the differentiated, uniquely individual self. Thus runaway fragmentation is more of an actual possibility in our own culture" (p. 40).

the person's *ends* and his own nature are the primary determinants, and that the environment is primarily a means to the person's self-actualizing ends" (1970, p. 68).

Thus, it is true that people need goods for self definition and to differentiate them from other people. Yet an over-emphasis on goods to the exclusion of all else is equally as bad. In support of this idea, Richins and Dawson (1992) found that people scoring high on the materialism scale were less satisfied with their income or standard of living and with life as a whole. They tended to be more envious, as evidenced by a strong correlation between high scores on the Richins and Dawson materialism scale and high scores on Belk's (1984, 1985) envy sub-scale.

As Maslow (quoted above) suggests, the individual who is not becoming self-actualized is overly-dependent on other people. Rochberg-Halton (1986) draws the link among this dependence, becoming self-actualized, and materialism. "Those who pursue [materialism] most fervently have a goal of becoming a pure individual, yet they can never satisfactorily attain this goal because they are always dependent upon other people to appreciate their individuality and give them the status they so desperately want" (p. 181). This idea of an external instead of an internal focus leads to the next discussion of materialism and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation and Materialism

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have been defined in a number of ways. The discussion here begins with a brief review. One of the most often quoted sources in intrinsic motivation, Deci, has provided a variety of definitions. In 1972 he stated that intrinsic motivation referred to performing some activity solely for the pleasure of the activity. In 1973 he suggested that intrinsic motivation referred to engaging in behavior which is itself rewarding. He

provided a more expansive definition in 1980: a person's striving to be effective and competent when dealing with his/her environment (1980, p. 50). In 1985 he added the concepts of interest and emotion (Deci and Ryan 1985). These ideas are further explained below.

In addition to Deci's work, however, others have proposed definitions which are generally consistent, though the focus for the motivation is sometimes placed on the individual and sometimes on the task. For example, Florey (1969) said that a person is intrinsically motivated if he or she experiences pleasure and satisfaction with the activity itself. Similarly, McReynolds (1971) suggested that intrinsically motivated behaviors are those which are in themselves inherently appealing. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) offered that intrinsically motivated activities are those which are enjoyable in themselves, and for which the reward is the ongoing experience of enjoying the activity.

These conceptions of intrinsically motivated activity are contrasted with that which is extrinsically motivated. For example, McReynolds (1971) defines extrinsically motivated behavior as being focused on the end result and not the process. Koch (1956) describes extrinsic motivation as working or striving or doing something in order to reach a particular reward. And DeCharms (1968) refers to externally motivated individuals as "pawns," since they are dependent on others for their rewards.

In summary, then, we might agree with Mayo (1976) that intrinsic motivation is "derived from an interest inherent in the task performance itself" (p. 1), while extrinsic motivation is aimed at seeking a reward (or interest) outside the task or experience itself. This idea of interest in the task is not unique to Mayo. Deci and Ryan (1985) report that "when intrinsically motivated, one follows one's interests" (p. 12). Additionally, enjoyment and excitement are emotions which accompany intrinsically motivated behavior and which

represent the “rewards” of the behavior—though they are not rewards which are separate from the activity itself (Deci and Ryan 1985). With extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, the reward is beyond the activity or task; it may be social approval, money, or some material object. The enjoyment is not inherent in the activity, rather the enjoyment is in the reward.

Before proceeding further, the distinction between intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and locus of control should be made clear. According to Rotter (1966), who developed the construct, locus of control refers to the degree to which individuals judge the reinforcements they receive to be the result of their own efforts (or attributes) or the result of external forces (luck, fate, the actions of others). The former judgement is termed internal locus of control, the latter, external locus. While there are similarities between the locus and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation constructs, they are not the same. There may, however, be some similarities in the behavior of external locus individuals and individuals prone to extrinsic motivation. That is, these individuals would be expected to “possess the other-based reference system associated with high levels of materialism” (Hunt et al. 1990, p. 1102). In fact, Hunt et al. did find modest support for the link between materialism and locus of control.

Materialism and extrinsic motivation should also be linked. The materialist is concerned with owning and doing the “right things,” for it is possessions (broadly construed) which help define success and happiness. Further, the materialist is dependent on the approbation of others for these feelings of success and happiness. The possessions (or club memberships) are not rewarding in and of themselves. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) provide an example of this distinction. They talk about valuing a painting *only* because it was a wedding gift or because it fits with the room’s color scheme, or because it makes one look sophisticated, rather than valuing the painting for itself (p. 179).

The materialist's dependence on the opinions and attitudes of others also is consistent with extrinsic motivation. The materialist does not follow his/her own interests (as does an intrinsically motivated individual), but rather is constrained to select objects and activities which have received the stamp of approval from others. Deci (1980) explains that the notion that people are free to choose what to do and how to behave is implicit in the definition of intrinsic motivation. He draws the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the following way: "we infer intrinsic motivation for an activity when a person does the activity in the absence of a reward contingency or control (Deci and Ryan 1985, p. 34). [W]hen the motives are extrinsic, the decision involves selecting what extrinsic rewards to strive for and what behaviors to undertake in quest of the rewards" (1980a, p. 50). One of the aspects of materialism which emerged from Ger and Belk's (1993) U.S. focus group illustrates this difference quite nicely. Materialists were thought to view work "merely as a means of earning money rather than as an end and source of reward in itself" (p. 17). One person voiced the idea this way, "[T]here are a lot of people in law and medicine that are more interested in the financial, the money, the materialistic things they can gain from having that profession than saving lives or in winning lawsuits for justice" (p. 17).

The focus on the opinions of others which accompanies extrinsic motivation is also characteristic of people termed high self-monitors (Snyder 1987; Snyder and Gangestad 1986).

Self-Monitoring and Materialism

To begin this discussion, we turn once again to the work of William James (1890/1981). In addressing the social nature of the self, he speaks of each individual having multiple selves:

A man has as many social selves as there are individuals who

recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind.... [H]e has as many different social selves as there are distinct *groups* of persons about whose opinions he cares.... From this there results what practically is a division of the man into several selves (emphasis in the original; p. 294).

James provides the example of our acting differently with our family, with employers, and with close friends.

This perspective has been carried forward and adopted by psychologists, sociologists, and consumer behavior theorists today. Consistent with James, Goffman (1959, 1967) explains one reason for the different presentations of the self. In our social interaction we come to realize that different people interpret our actions differently. And so we try to control the self which we project to foster desired images in the eyes of others, "to maintain an image appropriate to the current situation and to secure a positive evaluation from the other person" (Goffman 1967, p. 38 – 39).

People who make a conscious attempt to vary their self–presentation have been termed "high self–monitors" (Snyder, 1987; Snyder and Gangestad 1986). Snyder draws the distinction between high and low self–monitors quite clearly.

The prototype of the high self–monitor is someone who is particularly sensitive to cues to the situational appropriateness of his or her social behavior and who uses these cues as guidelines for monitoring (that is, regulating and controlling) his or her expressive behavior and self–presentations. By contrast, the low self–monitor is less attentive to social information about situationally appropriate self–presentation and does not possess a highly developed repertoire of self–presentation skills. His or her expressive self–presentations seem ... to be controlled by inner attitudes, disposition, and values, rather than to be molded and shaped to fit the situation (1987, p. 14).

Snyder (1987) also makes clear that the distinction between low and high self–monitors should not be taken as a distinction between a desirable and an undesirable way of life. Rather he sees these two self–presentation styles as just

that, two different ways of behaving. He reports various studies which link self-monitoring with various professions. For example, professional actors, managers and mediators, and leaders all tend to be high self-monitors. Each of these professions require people to have good social and communication skills. Actors, of course, make their living by believably altering their presentation. In fact, Snyder (1987) reports that the one item on his scale which best distinguishes between high and low self-monitor is, "I would probably make a good actor."

But what about materialism and self-monitoring. As noted in Chapter One, materialists need to be continual information gatherers to keep abreast of the current meaning of goods so that they can acquire and display just the right goods (Fournier and Richins 1991). Materialists read "catalogs and magazines, observ[e] what others have acquired, visit shops to see what is available. [They are] always thinking about future purchases" (p. 410).

High self-monitors have been shown to have much the same characteristics. Snyder (1974) demonstrates that when given the opportunity, high self-monitors consult information about their peers' self-presentation more frequently and for longer periods of time than do low self-monitors. Other studies (Cheek and Brigs, Cheek and Busch, both unpublished, cited in Snyder 1987) conclude that high self-monitors place a high value on social aspects of identity, considering external identity characteristics, such as group membership, particularly important. Snyder and Cantor (1980) also found that high self-monitors were able to readily report the behaviors that would convey specific social images and the situations that would provide opportunities to play particular roles, even if they themselves did not take on those roles. Finally, Glick (unpublished, cited in Snyder 1987) found that high self-monitors are quite aware of the messages they project by their clothing and other personal items and that they tend to be avid readers of magazines and books geared to these

concerns. Consistent with these findings, is that of Hosch and Platz (1984) that high self-monitors are more accurate eyewitnesses than low self-monitors.

While there seems to be substantial overlap between materialism and high self-monitoring, then, not all high self-monitors would be expected to be materialists. Making that assumption would be to fall into the trap warned against by Douglas and Isherwood (1979) and others. High self-monitors are simply making full use of the social system in constructing their identities. However, the converse association may be assumed to be true, that materialists are likely to be high self-monitors. But what of self-monitoring and other constructs which are important to this study?

Snyder (1987) suggests that while self-monitoring does not correlate well with measures such as self-esteem, the need for approval, extroversion, locus of control, among others, there is some overlap with Riesman's (1969) inner- and other-directed social characters. Inner-directed people are guided by personal values and standards, as are low self-monitors; other-directed individuals are more attuned to the expectations and preferences of others, as are high self-monitors. However, Snyder (1987) suggests that the two concepts rely on different levels of analysis. Self-monitoring is an individual phenomenon while inner- and other-directedness is "defined at the level of social characters characteristic of entire nations, societies, cultures, and historical periods" (p. 28). However, the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation measure employed in this study is not the same as Riesman's social character types. Hence, the self-monitoring concept is expected to add to the understanding of materialists in ways which would not be expected of the other self measures.

CONCLUSION

Having reviewed the research on materialism and the self, this chapter has presented a number of areas which would provide fertile ground for the further investigation of materialism. Our understanding of the construct would be broadened if we could further understand the relationship between materialism and the self. The specific hypotheses which address this topic and the research design for the study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

This study proposes to examine materialism as an independent variable. The focus of the study is on the “materialistic self.” More specifically the study will investigate the impact of materialism on self-monitoring, self-esteem, self-actualization, and on extrinsic motivation. Hypotheses about these effects are presented below. Investigation of the hypotheses will involve the use of both the Belk (Ger and Belk 1993) and Richins and Dawson (1992) materialism scales. Additionally, the construct validity of the two scales will also be assessed.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Echoing the ideas of Daun (1983) and Riesman and Roseborough (1955), Fournier and Richins (1991) conclude that for the materialist, consumer products “engage values that are centrally-held, serve as a source of meaning, and provide structure for life’s goals and daily activities” (p. 404). Taking this conclusion as a base, a number of questions about the materialist lifestyle might be raised. Do people who value materialism work harder at behaviors connected with that value? Do they put more effort into materialism-related activities? For example, do they spend more time shopping? When they shop do they buy more frequently? Do they derive pleasure from the act of purchasing? In being influenced by the opinions of others about goods, are materialists similarly

influenced by the opinions of others about themselves? Are materialists more other- than inner-directed, more extrinsically than intrinsically motivated? Are their self-concepts tied more to the opinions of others than to their own opinions? Questions such as these have not yet been directly addressed in materialism research.¹ It is the purpose of this study to begin to find answers to the latter questions which address materialism and the self.

Psychological Constructs and Motivational Measures

What follows are the research hypotheses accompanied by brief discussions of why the specific motivations and psychological constructs would be expected from materialists. The first hypothesis deals with materialism and self-monitoring.

H1: Those scoring high on either materialism scale will also score high on the self-monitoring scale.

Rokeach (1973) suggests that values: 1) guide the presentation of the self to others, 2) guide our evaluation and judgment of ourselves and others, and 3) provide a means of comparing ourselves to others. More recently, in their extension of Rokeach's work, Kahle and Timmer (1983) also explain that values are important for self-description and impression management. For the materialist, the behavior which has been labeled "conspicuous consumption" (Fournier and Richins 1991; Mason 1981; Veblen 1899/1979) is a direct response to impression management and to the evaluation of the self and others.

¹Richins and Dawson (1990) report some initial interest in the self-esteem and self-monitoring ideas. However, scales to test these concepts were not administered to the entire sample, and specific results were not reported. This focus of their research seems not to have been continued (Richins and Dawson 1992).

Conspicuous consumption is defined as deriving product satisfaction from the reaction of others, instead of from the utility of the product itself (Fournier and Richins 1991; Veblen 1899/1979). Objects are valued for their ability to generate recognition or envy among others. Dawson and Bamossy (1991) explain that, “we seek to acquire and have those things which other people expect us to have, and value us having” (p. 380). Fournier and Richins (1991) lend support to this position by suggesting that possessions allow “estimates of one’s standing in relation to others and in relation to the values deemed most important in the culture”(p. 404). Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1986) concur:

people tend to compare their actual situation with a reference standard or norm... Happiness is measured by the ratio of what one has to what one thinks one ought to have in order to maintain self-esteem in the face of the normal consumption standards accepted by the society (p. 254).

This social comparison process is recognized by Marx who offers an example in *Wage, Labour and Capital*,

a house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are equally small it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But let a palace arise beside the little house, and it shrinks from a little house to a hut ... Our desires and pleasures spring from society: we measure them, therefore, by society and not by the objects which serve for their satisfaction. Because they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature (*Selected Works*, 1966, p. 163).

From their focus group discussions, Fournier and Richins (1991) report that materialists are thought to focus on socially-sanctioned goods and activities—golfing at the right country club, buying prestigious brand names or products known to be expensive, and purchasing trendy items.

In order to know what the appropriate activity is, to know what the status items are, one must be attuned to the opinions of others and pay particular attention to one’s “impression management.” People who are “sensitive to their

own expressive behavior" (Sampson 1978) are referred to as self-monitors. Such individuals are characterized as being very sensitive to social cues so that they might adapt and modify their behavior to be the "right person in the right place at the right time." In contrast, low self-monitoring individuals rely more on their own feelings and attitudes (Snyder 1979; Snyder and DeBono 1985). Thompson and Davis (1988) have tied self-monitoring to the way individuals use possessions as visual props in self-presentations. "[T]he furniture with which individuals surround themselves is an expression of their self-image and is intended to send messages about themselves to others" (p. 280). Belk (1988a) has also addressed the use of possessions in self identity. Accordingly, the first hypothesis suggests that self-monitoring individuals are expected to be more likely to be materialists than individuals who are not self-monitors.

Particular attention to external cues also has been related to the motivation for purchasing and using a product (Bell, Holbrook, and Solomon 1991). This relationship provides the connection to the second hypothesis which concerns materialism and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation.

H2: Those scoring high on either materialism scale will also score low on the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation scale (IE Index), thereby providing evidence of greater extrinsic than intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation refers to appreciating and enjoying an experience, an activity, or a product for its own sake. With extrinsic motivation, however, the experience, activity, or product serves as a means to some end, such as making a desired impression on others (Deci 1972, 1973; Deci and Ryan 1985; Florey 1969; Holbrook 1986a). Just as materialists would be expected to be self-monitors, they also would be expected to be more extrinsically motivated. As detailed above,

materialists are concerned with owning and doing the “right” things, of making decisions based on the opinions of others. These characteristics are very similar to the description of extrinsic motivation which is provided by Bell, Holbrook and Solomon (1991), “the correctness of choices is assumed to be externally verifiable, in that the purchase decisions made are believed to affect the probability of attaining future social goals” (p. 246).

If an individual pays particular attention to and acts on the wishes of others, that person may be self-confident and may not perceive her/himself to be competent (Philips and Lord 1980). Thus, the materialistic individual may have low self-esteem. This relationship comprises the third hypothesis.

H3: Those scoring high on either materialism scale will also score low on scales measuring self-esteem.

Rokeach (1973) suggests that values enable “us to maintain and enhance our self-esteem no matter how socially desirable or undesirable our motives, feelings, or actions may be... values serve to maintain and enhance self-esteem” (p. 13). Holding materialism as a value may be one way to bolster a lack of internal self-assurance. Fromm (1976) holds that insecurity and a need for superiority are connected with too great an emphasis on possessions. More recently, Fournier and Richins report that insecurity is an often mentioned characteristic of materialists. Berger and Luckmann (1964) explain why: “material objects ... must be called upon to testify to the individual’s worth” (p. 339). In an empirical study, Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1982) reported that male MBA students who had a lower chance of career success were *more* likely to own and wear status objects associated with successful businessmen, such as watches, suits, and briefcases, than were students who had a higher chance of career

success. Following the lead of James (1890/1981), Ger and Belk (1990, 1993) have suggested that low self-esteem may result from perceived or actual relative deprivation. That is, if we believe that having certain possessions and/or amounts of possessions are necessary—for whatever reason—and we see that others have those objects but we don't, then regardless of what and how much we do have, we will feel deprived and somehow "less" than those who do have these objects. Accordingly, one would expect materialists to have lower self-esteem than non-materialists. A similar relationship between materialism and self-actualization is expected; that is the fourth hypothesis.

H4: Those scoring high on either materialism scale will also score low on scales measuring self-actualization.

Kilbourne (1987, 1991) explains one perspective on the impact of using material goods to provide the "meaning of existence." Historically, the *person* has been important. The individual is the subject and products are the objects. However, with the "development of the symbolic value of products, the historical relationship is transposed" (1991, p. 451). By possessing some thing, its symbolic value attaches to the user. And in this process, the object has become the subject. Kilbourne provides an example. Everyone has tables; when a special table is purchased, others are invited to sit at it and to admire it. In this way the table reflects the purchaser's character and good taste. In effect, the table becomes the subject and confers status on its owner. The problem with this transposition, explains Kilbourne, is that the individual

reverts to the ontological status of 'object' ... thereby retarding the development of authenticity. In becoming an authentic individual, the person comes to realize that the locus of evaluation and control must be internal. The approval of others becomes less and less important (1991, p. 451-452).

Unfortunately for the materialist, the approval of others becomes more and more important—just the opposite of what is necessary for self-actualization (Maslow 1950). Instead of the reference point being “I am true to myself,” it is “I am what I possess,” or “I am as you desire me” (Moustakas 1956).

This perspective, while reflecting a decidedly postmodern perspective (Firat 1991),² is similar to that advanced by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) and Belk (1988a) that while using possessions to help define the self is not in and of itself bad, when the possessions become an obsession the individual is no longer in control. Further, in such a situation, as has been discussed in previous chapters, the opinions and attitudes of others become more important than one’s own. Again, the self has lost possession of itself and self-actualization is the casualty. This perspective is somewhat less cynical than that advanced by Kilbourne, but it is nonetheless pessimistic.

Validity Tests

While this research is designed to test four hypotheses about materialism and the self, its value is not limited to those tests. The study will also provide an assessment of the Belk and the Richins and Dawson materialism scales. The research is designed so that, with its conclusion, the validity of the two scales will have been addressed. As noted in the introduction, two types of construct

²Drawing on the work of Baudrillard (1975, 1988) and Jameson (1983) among others, Firat (1991) explains that postmodernism is a “new perspective on life” which is found primarily in Western cultures. It is a philosophical position which is in direct opposition to the modernist belief in progress and in the ability of humans to control nature through science. Postmodernists argue that people are controlled by the economic circumstances of their existence. People are no longer the essence of society; products have ascended in importance and humans live merely to “reproduce the simulated images for the products” (p. 74). Accordingly, we consume not to improve our lives, but rather for the spectacle, the experience, provided by the product(s). Marketing is seen as the facilitator of the postmodern culture, in which images and meanings are deliberately manipulated as are the people who purchase them.

validity—whether or not the scales are truly measuring materialism—will be assessed. The first, convergent validity, refers to the extent to which a measure correlates highly with other methods designed to measure the same construct (Churchill 1979). If both scales are indeed measuring materialism, then the correlation between the two should be highly positive and statistically significant. The second, nomological validity, refers to the extent to which a measure “correlates in theoretically predicted ways with measures of different but related constructs” (Malhotra 1993, p. 310). If the materialism scales are related to the self measures in the directions hypothesized, and the relationships are statistically significant, then this type of validity will have also been established. Finally, a scale cannot be valid if it is not reliable. Calculations of Coefficient Alpha for each of the scales and the subscales as well as confirmatory factor analysis will help establish the reliability of each scale.

SELECTION OF MEASURES

The materialism construct will be measured by the Belk and the Richins and Dawson scales. Following Bagozzi's (1984) rules of correspondence, when someone scores high on one of the scales, we may take the score as evidence that the person is materialistic. Bagozzi would caution, however, that the measure (the scales) is not the same as the theoretical construct, that we are only inferring the existence of the construct (materialism) from the empirical evidence (the scale score). This caution is not unique to Bagozzi. He is echoing the cautions offered by others such as Buzzell (1964) and Howard and Sheth (1969) in marketing, of Blalock (1962, 1964) in sociology, and of Izrik and Meyer (1987) in philosophy. Howard and Sheth (1969) make the point quite clearly:

We tend to hide behind the belief that operational definitions and measurements ensure that we have obtained the meanings that we want.... The important but subtle point is that we must have some knowledge of a construct ... other than that given by a specific and concrete set of operations in order to know whether the operations are adequate to the task in the first place. For the knowledge, we must go back to the meaning that we originally imposed when we formulated the abstraction (p. 6–7).

Accordingly, it is appropriate to consider the history of these measures.

The Belk Scale

Belk (1984, 1985; Ger and Belk 1993) proposed a multi-dimensional conceptualization of materialism. His scale is presented in Figure 4. With this use of the scale, the internal consistency of the subscales and the correlations among them are important reliability issues. In considering the subscales separately, Belk (1984) reports Coefficient Alphas of .68, .72, and .80 for the scales measuring possessiveness, nongenerosity, and envy, respectively, when scales were administered to a large sample of business students. When administered to a larger, more diverse sample (business students, secretaries, students at a religious institute, fraternity members, and blue collar workers), however, Alphas of .57 to .64 were reported for the three subscales. Correlations among the subscales, however, are not high. Reported subscale intercorrelations (Belk 1985) are: possessiveness and nongenerosity .25; possessiveness and envy .35; nongenerosity and envy .30. In a later cross-cultural study (Ger and Belk 1990), Alphas ranging from .42 to .69 were reported. This study, also included a fourth subscale to measure tangibility. While Churchill (1979) suggests that for basic research, Alphas of .60 are desirable; Nunnally (1978) established .70 as the benchmark. Thus the results reported for the Belk scale raise questions about its usefulness because of low internal consistency.

FIGURE 4
THE BELK MATERIALISM SCALE

Possessiveness Subscale

I get very upset if something is stolen from me, even if it has little monetary value.

I don't like to have anyone in my home when I'm not there.

I don't get particularly upset when I lose things. *

I am less likely than most people to lock things up.

Nongenerosity Subscale

I enjoy donating things for charity. *

I enjoy sharing what I have. *

I do not enjoy donating things to the needy.

- I don't like to lend things, even to good friends.

When friends do better than me in competition it usually makes me feel happy for them. *

I enjoy having people I like stay in my home. *

When friends have things I cannot afford it bothers me.

I worry about people taking my possessions.

I don't mind giving rides to those who don't have a car. *

Envy Subscale

I don't seem to get what is coming to me.

People who are very wealthy often feel they are too good to talk to average people.

If I have to choose between buying something for myself versus for someone I love,
I would prefer buying for myself.

I am bothered when I see people who buy anything they want.

There are certain people I would like to trade places with.

Preservation Subscale

I like to collect things.

I have a lot of souvenirs.

I tend to hang on to things I should probably throw out.

* Reverse scored items.

Güliz Ger and Russell W. Belk (1993), "Cross-Cultural Differences in Materialism," working paper, University of Utah.

Belk (1985) also suggests that materialism might be considered as a single-factor construct which may adequately be measured with the aggregation of the measurement scales. "The three oblique first-order factors reproduced the three subscales and produced a single second-order factor with an eigenvalue greater than one, accounting for just over 75 percent of shared variance" (p. 271). Further, Belk (1985) reports Alphas of .66 to .73 for the overall scale, and correlations between the aggregate scale (called "materialism") and the subscales of .35 for possessiveness and materialism, .41 for nongenerosity and materialism, and .48 for envy and materialism. He believes that this aggregated measure is "adequate to begin exploring ... [the] macro issues of consumer behavior" (p. 276) with respect to materialism.

As a test of nomological validity as well as an initial foray into macro consumer behavior issues, Belk investigated the correlations between overall materialism scores and measure of happiness and satisfaction in life. The correlations were expected to be negative. At significance levels of .001, he found that materialism and happiness correlate at $-.26$ and that materialism and life satisfaction correlate at $-.24$. He cautions, however, that these statistics are correlations only and do "not allow one to infer the direction of causality" (Belk 1985, p. 274). That is, one should not conclude from these results that materialist causes unhappiness, for it may be that materialism arises in response to dissatisfaction with life. Findings such as those reported by Belk (and anyone using correlational analysis) merely demonstrate the relationship between two constructs.

A second validity check involved testing the ability of the scale to discriminate among groups of consumers thought to differ on degrees of materialism. Using the groups noted above (blue collar workers, secretaries, business students, fraternity members, and students at a religious institute), Belk

(1985) found that, as hypothesized, the blue collar workers were the most materialistic,³ with a mean scale score of 74.1. The religious institute students were the least materialistic with a mean scale score of 70.6. These differences were significant at the .001 level.

As a final test of convergent validity, Belk (1985) undertook a three-generation study. Respondents were given a sentence completion task which addressed four purchase and consumption areas: spending and acquiring, saving and consuming, giving and receiving, and precipitating circumstances (to elicit purchase/consumption responses). While there were no a priori hypotheses because of the open-ended nature of the questions, Belk "thought that the responses would differ according to the materialistic traits of the respondent" (p. 272). Overall, those scoring high on the materialism scale did respond in ways which would be expected of a materialist. For example, those scoring high on the nongenerosity subscale more often indicated that they were more likely to buy a gift for themselves than those who scored low on the subscale. It was also true, however, that there were no predictable patterns to the responses. Sometimes statistically significant responses came from those scoring high on all three subscales as well as on the overall scale. More often, however, statistically significant differences in responses could be attributed to those scoring high only on some of the subscales, or some of the subscales and the overall materialism scale, or just the overall materialism scale.

A more recent test of convergent validity has been carried out in conjunction with Ger and Belk's (1993) cross-cultural studies. Respondents were asked to list five products which were important to them that they owned, five

³Earlier research by Best and Connolly (1976) and Chinoy (1955) had shown that blue collar workers were the most likely to engage in "compensatory consumption."

they wanted to buy, and five they felt badly about not owning. (Later, a cross-cultural panel of judges ranked the responses to these wish list questions from materialistic products to non-materialistic products.) Respondents were also presented with a list of twenty products, services, and experiences and were asked to indicate which they considered to be luxuries and which were necessities. Validity was assessed by correlations of the materialism scale scores with the proportions of items seen as necessities as well as the proportions of items considered to be materialistic. Ger and Belk (1993) found that materialism correlated positively with the proportion of items identified as necessities and with the proportion of materialistic items desired, but not with the proportion of materialistic items already owned. The authors conclude that these results are consistent with their conceptualization of materialism. The construct is not measured by what you have but is related to the strong desire for possessions.

When the subscales were considered, these same relationships held for the nongenerosity scale, but were just the reverse for envy and possessiveness, an unanticipated result. There was no relationship between these product measures and preservation. Thus, the validation tests were successful for the overall scale and for one of the subscales, but not for the other three. This finding is not too surprising given the low internal reliabilities for the subscales.

This same problem has been reported by other researchers who tested Belk's scale and who used it along with measures of other consumer attitudes and behaviors (c.f., Cole et al. 1992; Ellis 1991; Hunt et al. 1990; Richins and Dawson 1992). Most of the research, detailed below, concluded that the three subscales were not equally reliable. Because of this finding, there was general agreement that aggregating the subscale scores to arrive at an overall measure of materialism which can be used for research was not warranted. As for validity, Cole et al. (1992) report that no data other than Belk's has been provided.

Critiques and Tests of the Belk Scale

Working with an early version of the Belk scale, Ellis (1991) tested the two approaches to measuring materialism proposed by Belk (aggregating the scores into one and keeping the subscale scores separate) as well as a third alternative that materialism "is a composite construct composed, in part, of the three subscales. Such an interpretation does not require positive correlations among the component constructs" (p. 5). To investigate these three approaches, Ellis analyzed responses to Belk's scale using LISREL VII. Overall, "none of the tested models were acceptable from the point of view of generally accepted goodness of fit indicators" (p. 8). He concluded that, with the then current state of the scale, it would be a mistake to take the aggregate of the three subscale scores as a measure of materialism. He did not suggest, however, that the three-dimensional concept of materialism should be thrown out, since there might be "enough positively correlated factors that might be capturing some aspects of this higher-order materialism construct" (p. 6).

Ellis suggested that part of the problem of "fit" (of the data to the model) might be that, as then conceived, the three subscales did not provide unidimensional measures of their appropriate constructs. By removing selected items from the subscales, a better fit of the data to the model could be obtained. For the present, however, Ellis urged further refinement of the subscales and concluded with Belk that the use of the scales was "recommended for exploratory research only" (p. 8).

Richins and Dawson (1992) also reviewed 12 separate data collections using Belk's scales. They found Alphas of .09 to .81 for the individual subscales and Alphas of .48 to .73 for the aggregate scale. The reliability coefficients at the lower end are unacceptable (Churchill 1979; Nunnally 1978).

Cole et al. (1992) assessed both the reliability and validity of Belk's scale.

Their factor analysis resulted in nine (instead of three) initial factors accounting for 64.5 percent of the variance. Further, Alphas for the three subscales were low, confirming other reports of a lack of internal consistency (possessiveness .42, nongenerosity .30, envy .57). Finally, as tests of nomological validity, they found that the overall materialism scale, as well as the envy subscale, correlated relatively well with three measures of life satisfaction. The correlations were in the direction hypothesized—a negative relationship between materialism and life satisfaction. The final validity test was to ascertain convergent validity by correlating Belk’s scale with the Richins’ scale (1987).⁴ The correlation was positive (.489) and significant at the .01 level.

With the idea that materialists seek judgments of success, satisfaction, and status from others, Hunt et al. (1990) hypothesized that there should be a relationship between materialism and locus of control. Specifically, it would be expected “that external scorers would possess the other-based reference system associated with high levels of materialism ... largely because they are envious of others and only incidentally because of their possessiveness and nongenerosity” (Hunt et al. 1990, p. 1102). The results of this study indicated modest support for the hypothesis. Generally, as locus of control scores became more internal, materialism scores diminished, even when controlling for the sex of the respondents. The authors conclude that while the Belk scale is in need of further refinement and testing, their study does provide some evidence of nomological validity.

Hendrickson and Morrisette (1992) employed the scale in a study focused on lifestyle analysis. While they stress that their research program needs further

⁴The Richins scale employed in this study was an early version which contained seven items, mostly designed to measure happiness.

development, initial results indicate that materialism may not be an independent variable, but instead may be the result of the choice of a particular lifestyle. In analyzing the results, they found the low Alphas for the subscales: .47 for possessiveness, .39 for nongenerosity, and .56 for envy. As did other researchers, they also found that Alphas could be improved by removing items from various scales. Consequently they, too, concluded that the Belk scale required additional refinement.

Revisions to the Belk Scale

Following the advice of such researchers, Belk has continued to refine his materialism scale and to make it applicable for cross-cultural research (Ger and Belk 1990, 1993). The research has incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods and has stretched over thirteen countries. In the process, some of the items in the subscales have changed and an additional subscale has been added. Initially the new subscale was termed "tangibility"; most recently, however, it is called "preservation." These changes have maintained the "moderately satisfactory alpha levels" for the scale and its subscales (Ger and Belk 1993, p. 17) and have addressed the concern expressed by Ellis that the subscales did not positively correlate with the overall scale. Specifically, Ger and Belk (1993) report Coefficient Alpha of .62 for the new overall scale and Alphas of .66 for nongenerosity, .61 for possessiveness, .46 for envy, and .55 for preservation. Further, "the correlations of the materialism scale with the subscales are (omitting the subscale itself) 0.15, 0.19, 0.22, and 0.08 with nongenerosity, possessiveness, envy, and preservation, respectively—all statistically significant" (Ger and Belk 1993, p. 18)—except for India, Thailand, and Romania where none are significant. With these changes, the Belk scale has addressed some of the criticisms detailed above, thereby making it more warranted for research

purposes. That Belk himself is a strong presence in the marketing discipline also argues for inclusion of the scale in any study of materialism.

The Richins and Dawson Scale

The second materialism scale, proposed by Richins and Dawson (1992), also represents a multidimensional conceptualization of materialism. With this scale, however, three dimensions are hypothesized: the centrality of possessions in one's life, the use of possessions to define success, and the use of possessions to determine happiness. This scale is presented in Figure 5. With its publication in the December 1992 issue of the *Journal of Consumer Research*, the Richins and Dawson scale has only recently become generally available. For this reason, little reported research has used the full scale. What has been reported would lead one to assess it as a scale worthy of inclusion in a study of materialism. Richins and Dawson (1992) tested the scale in three different studies in four geographically distinct cities. They report Alphas for their subscales ranging from .71 to .75 for the centrality subscale; Alphas of from .74 to .78 for the success subscale; and Alphas of between .73 and .83 for the happiness factor. Because the three factors "normally act in concert with respect to external variables" (p. 20), the authors suggest that the subscale scores can be summed for an overall materialism measure. Single scale Alphas varied between .80 and .88.

To validate the scale, Richins and Dawson investigated the relationship between the scale and various behaviors and attitudes expected to correlate both positively and negatively with materialism. The first test utilized Kahle's (1983) List of Values. Overall, the mean materialism scores were significantly different for those ranking financial security, warm relationships with others, and a sense of accomplishment in their top three values and for those not ranking these among the top three. For a second test, respondents were asked about the level of

FIGURE 5
THE RICHINS AND DAWSON MATERIALISM SCALE

Happiness Subscale

- I have all the things I really need to enjoy life. *
- My life would be better if I owned certain things I don't have.
- I wouldn't be any happier if I owned nicer things. *
- I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things.
- It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can't afford to buy all the things I'd like.

Centrality Subscale

- I usually buy only the things I need. *
- I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned. *
- The things I own aren't all that important to me. *
- I enjoy spending money on things that aren't practical.
- Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure.
- I like a lot of luxury in my life.
- I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know. *

Success Subscale

- I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes.
- Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions.
- I don't place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success. *
- The things I own say a lot about how well I'm doing in life.
- I like to own things that impress people.
- I don't pay much attention to the material objects other people own. *

* Reverse scored items.

Marsha L. Richins and Scott Dawson (1992), "A Consumer Values Orientation for Materialism and Its Measurement: Scale Development and Validation," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19 (3), 303 – 316.

household income necessary to satisfy their needs. As expected, those scoring high on the materialism scale needed significantly more income than those scoring low. In the third test, self-centeredness was explored and found to correlate positively with materialism. Correlations with measures of voluntary simplicity, the fourth test, were not as successful, however. Finally, materialism was correlated with measures of life satisfaction and contentment. Materialism was negatively related to all five aspects of life measured on the Andrews and Withy (1976) Delighted-Terrible scale;⁵ it was positively correlated with Belk's (1985) envy subscale, and negatively correlated with Rosenberg's (1965) self-esteem scale. All of these relationships were statistically significant. These tests provide evidence of both convergent and nomological validity.

The only other known attempt to try to determine the validity of the Richins and Dawson scale is reported by Cole et al. (1992). As noted above, however, they used was an early seven-item measure directed mostly at happiness. Nevertheless, Cole et al. did find strong evidence of convergent validity (the correlation between the two materialism scales was .489 and significant at the .01 level). Further, correlations between the Richins (1987) scale and three measures of life satisfaction were all statistically significant at the .01 level and were negative, as expected—thereby suggesting nomological validity.

Two other studies which employed the Richins and Dawson scale have been reported. However, they did not address validity. Williams and Bryce (1992) investigated the relationship between materialism and care for others via behavioral measures of helpfulness and selfishness. While the hypotheses were

⁵This scale is comprised of one question asked twice, once before a list of other questions, and again after about a fifteen-to-twenty minute interval which is filled with the other questions. Respondents are asked to evaluate how they feel about their lives now (taking into account what has happened in the past year and what they expect of the future) using a seven point scale anchored with "Terrible" at one end and "Delighted" at the other.

not confirmed, the study is useful as a test of the materialism scale itself. After factor analysis, the authors obtained factor loadings similar to those reported by Richins and Dawson. The scale reliability measures were also consistent. The Alpha for success was .80; for happiness it was .76; .68 was calculated for centrality; and for the overall scale, the Alpha was .86.

McKeage (1992) used the Richins and Dawson scale along with a measure of self-gifts to assess the relationship between materialism and self-indulgence. She obtained a very dissimilar factor structure and so did not attempt any subscale analysis. However, Coefficient Alpha for the overall scale was .86.

While no "official" hypothesis about the two materialism scales is proposed, it is expected that the Richins and Dawson scale will continue to be the more reliable of the two. While it is the less tested scale, initial results suggest that it is more internally consistent. Further, the authors' initial work to establish validity is encouraging. Accordingly, the Richins and Dawson scale is expected to "match up" better with the self-concept measures employed in this study.

The Self-Monitoring Scale

The Self-Monitoring Scale, presented in Figure 6, developed by Snyder (1979) and modified by Snyder and Gangestad (1986) will be used to measure the self-monitoring construct. Snyder and Gangestad (1986) report a Coefficient Alpha of .70 for the new scale. They also suggest that the validity of the scale can be attested to from the research of others which correlated the previous scale with behaviors expected to be associated with self-monitoring—especially since the new version was developed in response to validity questions which arose in the use of the original version. This scale is the only one which purports to measure self-monitoring (Snyder and Gangestad 1986) and has been used by researchers in various disciplines. For example, Sampson (1978) used the scale in

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Figure 6**

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a study of personality and concepts of identity. Covey et al. (1989) used the scale in a study of dishonest behavior. In the communication field, Gudykunst (1985) investigated the impact of culture and self-monitoring on uncertainty reduction processes. Lindsey and Greene (1987) assessed the phenomenon of social knowledge using the scale.

The Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation Index (IE Index)

Intrinsic/extrinsic motivation will be measured by a modification of an index developed by Holbrook (1986a), and extended by Bell, Holbrook, and Solomon (1991). This scale is presented in Figure 7. Until Holbrook's index was developed, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation scales were developed either to measure the motivation of children or adolescents to do their school work (for example, Harter 1980, 1981) or to measure motivation of adults to perform some task (often their job). For example, *The Experience of Work* (Cook et al. 1981) is a compilation of scales relating to a variety of work-related behaviors and motivations. The eleven intrinsic/extrinsic scales which are included in the compendium all refer to satisfaction with work, to rewards from work, or to the value of work. Another set of intrinsic/extrinsic scales measure "intrinsic task interest"—motivation to perform a task based on whether or not some extrinsic reward (Wicker et al. 1990)—was available (see for example Mayo 1976). In a review of measures of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, Holbrook (1986a) concludes that he is "unaware of any competing instruments suitable for use in the context of consumer behavior" (p. 36).

Holbrook acknowledges (1986a; personal conversation, November 7, 1992) that his scale is in its very early stages of development. He admits to enjoying developing scales but not to refining them. "Some attempt was made to purify the ... IE index by removing weakly correlated items. However this approach

FIGURE 7
THE INTRINSIC/EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION INDEX

When I read a magazine, listen to the radio, or watch television, I always know what I expect to get out of it. *

When I take a walk I always like to have a specific destination. *

Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing. *

When I fix something or do chores around the house, I am just puttering around for the fun of it.

In playing cards, board games, or video games, winning matters less than how you play the game.

I would keep doing the things that I do for a living even if I won the lottery.

When I read a magazine, listen to the radio, or watch television, I just appreciate the experience on its own terms.

When I perform some creative activity such as writing, drawing, or playing a musical instrument, I set a goal for myself to try to achieve.*

When I engage in noncompetitive sports like skiing, jogging, or body-building, I tend to view the activity as an end in itself.

I would not throw a party or take someone out to dinner unless I expected to enjoy the companionship of the people involved.

When I perform some creative activity such as writing, drawing, or playing a musical instrument, I am aware that the process is inherently its own reward.

When I play a competitive sport such as tennis, golf, or ping pong, my primary motivation is to enjoy the game for its own sake.

* Reverse scored items

Adapted from Morris B. Holbrook (1986), "Aims, Concepts, and Methods for the Representation of Individual Differences in Esthetic Responses to Design Features," Unpublished manuscript, Graduate School of Business, Columbia University, New York, New York 10027.

produced only modest improvements and was therefore omitted for the sake of avoiding search bias" (Holbrook 1986 p. 26). Finally, Holbrook (1986b) suggests that the IE Index must be subjected to tests over time to determine its usefulness. Its inclusion in this study does just that.

The Self-Esteem Scale

Self-esteem will be measured using Rosenberg's (1965) self-esteem scale, presented in Figure 8. It is a short, ten-item scale which provides a global measure of self-esteem. This scale has been widely used and its psychometric properties have been well demonstrated (Blascovich and Tomaka 1991). Cronbach Alphas of .77 and .88 have been reported for the scale. Test-retest reliability is equally as good. Convergent validity has been demonstrated with various measures as has discriminant validity (Blascovich and Tomaka 1991).

The Self-Actualization Scale

Self-actualization will be measured by the Short Index of Self-Actualization (Jones and Crandall 1986, Crandall and Jones 1991) which is presented in Figure 9. Cronbach Alphas of between .63 and .68 (Flett et al. 1991) have been reported for the scale, and a twelve-day test-retest reliability of .69 has been achieved (Crandall and Jones 1991). Until this Short Index was developed, the two "best known measures of self-actualization" were Shostrom's Personal Orientation Inventory (POI; Shostrom 1964) and the Personal Orientation Dimensions (POD; Shostrom 1975) (Flett et al. 1991). However, the POI contains 150 forced-choice items and the POD consists of 260 such items, making them both time consuming and cumbersome to administer (Flett et al. 1991). The Short Index, which contains only 15 items, was developed for use when researchers wanted an overall measure of self-actualization—as is the case in this study. The Short

FIGURE 8
THE SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. *

I am able to do things as well as most other people.

I feel I do not have much to be proud of. *

I take a positive attitude toward myself.

On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

I wish I could have more respect for myself. *

I certainly feel useless at times. *

At times I think I am no good at all. *

* Reverse scored items.

Morris Rosenberg (1965), *Society and the Adolescent Self Image*, Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press.

FIGURE 9
THE SHORT INDEX OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION

I do not feel ashamed of any of my emotions.

I feel I must do what others expect of me. *

I believe that people are essentially good and can be trusted.

I feel free to be angry at those I love.

It is always necessary that others approve what I do. *

I don't accept my own weaknesses. *

I can like people without having to approve of them.

I fear failure. *

I avoid attempts to analyze and simplify complex domains. *

It is better to be yourself than to be popular.

I have no mission in life to which I feel especially dedicated. *

I can express my feelings even when they may result in undesirable consequences.

I do not feel responsible to help anybody. *

I am bothered by fears of being inadequate. *

I am loved because I give love.

* Reverse scored items.

Alvin Jones and Rick Crandall (1986), "Validation of a Short Index of Self-Actualization," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 12 (1), 63 – 73.

Index has been used by several researchers (Richard and Jex 1991; Schelle and Bonin 1989; Watson, Morris and Hood 1990), and Flett et al. (1991) conclude that "initial psychometric investigations have suggested that the increasing use of the scale is warranted" (p. 322).

SAMPLE DESIGN

Most materialism research has been conducted with homogeneous groups. For example, Moschis (1976, 1984), Moschis and Moore (1982) and Moschis and Churchill (1978) used middle school and high school adolescents. Ward and Wackman (1971) and Ward, Wackman and Wartells (1977) used elementary school children. In Belk's studies (1984, 1985), 80 percent of his sample were college students, though he did address small samples of secretaries (39) and machine shop workers (27). His more recent cross-cultural research (Ger and Belk 1993) has been conducted with graduate students, most of whom are enrolled in an MBA, or equivalent, program. Initial research by Richins and Dawson (1990) surveyed graduate and undergraduate students from three separate universities. Othman (1988) also employed a student sample for his dissertation, though he restricted his survey to students at one university. In their larger scale development study, however, Richins and Dawson (1992) utilized a heterogeneous sample of randomly-chosen residents of households in four cities.

This study also utilized a heterogeneous sample. A questionnaire, with the previously outlined materialism and attitude and behavior scales and demographic data questions, was administered to a stratified proportional random sample of the adult population in the Peninsula area of Southern

Virginia. The Peninsula is part of the larger Hampton Roads Metropolitan Statistical Area. Recently, the U.S. government expanded the MSA to include three additional counties, two in Virginia and one in North Carolina. This new MSA, now named the Norfolk–Virginia Beach–Newport News, VA–NC MSA, ranks as thirty–first in the nation with a population of 1.5 million people (*Daily Press*, August 25, 1992). The Peninsula itself is one of the fastest growing areas in the United States. With a five–year growth rate of 6.6 percent, it outstrips the U.S. as a whole (5 percent), the Commonwealth of Virginia (6 percent), and the state’s capital, Richmond (5.6 percent). More specifically, the sample was comprised of residents of Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and York County, Virginia. Respondents were selected so that the percentage of respondents from each city or county was equal to the proportion of Peninsula residents living in the city. Thirty–seven percent of the respondents were to be chosen at random from Hampton residents; 48 percent of the respondents were to be chosen at random from Newport News residents; 12 percent of the respondents were to be chosen at random from York County residents; three percent of the respondents were to be chosen at random from Poquoson residents.

A target sample size of 300 was established. Because the research hypotheses were tested with correlation analysis, the sample size was selected according to a statistical power analysis approach, advocated by Cohen (1988), which is appropriate when the significance of a product moment correlation coefficient is desired. While the significance level of a test refers to the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis if the null hypothesis is true (a type I error), the power of a test refers to the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis if it is false (avoiding a type II error). Thus, power is the flip side of significance; a low significance level and high power are desirable. For this research, because the hypotheses were tested with correlation analysis, sample size was determined

from the tables provided by Cohen (1988) for use in planning experiments which will employ correlation analysis. The table is presented in Table 1. To determine the sample size, the desired significance level, the minimum value of the correlation to be detected, and the desired power must all be specified. The rationale for each of these decisions is presented next.

First, a significance level of .05 was employed, assuming a one tailed test since the hypotheses suggested the direction of the relationship among the measures to be correlated. Second, since many of the scales employed in this research are still exploratory, and since this is social science research, detecting correlations as "low" as .20 would be desirable. This decision was made for two reasons. As detailed earlier in this chapter, most of the correlations of materialism scales with other measures, such as life satisfaction, were in the .20 to .30 range. Second, Cohen (1988) explains that "many relationships pursued in 'soft' behavioral science are of this order of magnitude" (p. 79). He quotes Thurstone as saying that "in psychology, we measure men by their shadows." That is, while there may be strong hypothetical relationships among theoretical constructs (such as materialism and self-esteem), a great deal of noise, "measurement unreliability, lack of fidelity to the construct," accompanies the attempt to operationalize the relationship.

This, in turn, will attenuate the correlation in the population between the constructs *as measured*. Thus if two constructs in theory ... can be expected to correlate .25, and the actual measurement of each is correlated .63 with its respective pure construct, the observed correlation between the two *fallible* measures of the construct would be reduced to $.25 (.63)(.63) = .10$. Since the above values are not unrealistic, it follows that often ... we are indeed seeking to reject null hypotheses ... when r [the correlation coefficient] is some value near .10 (p. 79).

Third, while a power of 80 is conventional (Cohen 1988, p. 100), for this type of

TABLE 1
SAMPLE SIZE TABLE

Power	$\alpha = .05$								
	.10	.20	.30	.40	.50	.60	.70	.80	.90
.25	97	24	12	8	6	4	4	3	3
.50	272	69	30	17	11	8	6	5	4
.60	361	91	40	22	14	10	7	5	4
.70	470	117	52	28	18	12	8	6	4
.75	537	134	59	32	20	13	9	7	5
.80	617	153	68	37	22	15	10	7	5
.85	717	178	78	43	26	17	12	8	6
.90	854	211	92	50	31	20	13	9	6
.95	1078	266	116	63	39	25	16	11	7
.99	1570	387	168	91	55	35	23	15	10

Jacob Cohen (1988), *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*, Second Edition, New York: Academic Press, p. 101.

research a power of 95 was selected to be consonant with the significance level of .05. With these decisions, the table indicates that a sample size of 266 is necessary.

DATA COLLECTION

Data for the study were collected via a questionnaire using the drop-off and pick-up methodology. The questionnaire contained the various scales detailed above as well as demographic questions to collect data about respondents' age, sex, occupation, income, education, and ethnic background. (A copy of the questionnaire is included in the Appendix.) In one way or another, each of these demographic variables has been hypothesized to relate to materialism. Thus it was important to use them to control for their possible confounding effects. Collection of the demographic information also made it possible to assess the goodness of fit between the population and the sample along demographic lines.

For the actual data collection, survey administrators were given the following instructions.

Go to the first address on the list. Knock on the door and ask the person who answers if he/she is 18 years of age or over. If so, ask for his/her participation in the survey. If the person agrees to participate, leave the survey. Go to the next address on the list. Once the surveys are distributed, go back to the first address and pick them up in sequence. If the person who answers the door is not over 18, ask if there is someone at home who is. If so, ask for that person's cooperation with the survey. If there is no one over 18, do not leave a survey. Go on to the next house/apartment on the street. If the individual who answers the door is unwilling to fill out the survey, thank him/her and go to the next house/apartment on the street. Repeat this procedure until you find someone on the

street who is willing to fill out the survey.

Because of safety considerations, survey administrators were told only to go into neighborhoods which were considered to be safe and not to administer surveys after dark. To capture individuals who work outside the home during the week, surveys were administered on weekends as well as on week days.

DATA ANALYSIS

To determine the compatibility of the sample with the population from which it was drawn, the Chi-square statistic was computed.

To compute scale and subscale scores, responses to the items for each scale were summed according to procedures established for each scale. Usually several items needed to be adjusted for reverse scoring.

To evaluate the two materialism scales, Cronbach's Alpha was computed as a measure of internal reliability of the scales. Correlations among and between the subscales and the overall scale were computed for each materialism scale. These results were then compared with those reported in other studies. Finally, confirmatory factor analysis was run to verify the factor structure of each scale which had been reported by the authors.

To evaluate the research hypotheses, scores for the self-monitoring, extrinsic/intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and self-actualization scales were computed and then correlated with the materialism scale and subscale scores.

If these correlations are in the directions hypothesized and are statistically significant (at the .05 level), then the study provides some measure of the construct validity of the scales. Weiss (1991) notes that while tests such as these, which make use of a "nomological network," can make a convincing case for the validity of the scale, construct validity cannot be demonstrated solely by this

technique (p. 283). Accordingly, convergent validity was also assessed by correlating the results for responses from the two materialism scales with responses to the four behavior/attitude scales.

Finally, to assess the differences between people scoring high and people scoring low on the materialism scales, cluster analysis was run. Because it did not provide conclusive results, respondents were grouped into terciles based on their scores on the Richins and Dawson scale and the top and bottom groups were analyzed for differences in the self measures as well as demographics.

The results of these analyses are reported in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis and interpretations of the findings of the study. It begins with a consideration of the data itself. Secondly, the two materialism scales are discussed, focusing on scale reliability and confirmatory factor analysis. Tests of the research hypotheses are addressed next, along with the construct validity of the two materialism scales. Finally, the data are analyzed with an eye toward developing a profile of materialists.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Of the 280 surveys which were obtained, 278 were usable. The other two contained so many unanswered items as to be useless. Thus, the 266 surveys necessary to allow for testing the significance of the correlations in the hypothesis tests, as described in the previous chapter, were obtained. The sample selection criteria and data collection procedures, described in Chapter Three, were designed to insure a stratified proportional random sample of residents living in the four jurisdictions which comprise the Virginia "Peninsula": Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and York County. Examination of the demographics of the survey respondents provides evidence that the goal of the sampling design was closely met. The Chi-square test which indicates that the difference between the target percentages and actual sample is not statistically

significant also supports this conclusion (see Table 2).

When further demographics are considered, however, statistically significant differences between sample and population are present for all categories except income. Table 3 presents the demographic data for both the sample and the Peninsula along with the results of the Chi-square tests. The data for the Peninsula population was obtained from the research department of the local newspaper, the *Daily Press*. All income levels are well represented in the sample (Chi-square = 3.827; $p = .281$). However, there are more females in the sample (62 percent) than in the population (52 percent). Younger respondents (the 18-to-34 age group) are over represented, while the 50 and over group is under represented. People with a high school education or less are under represented, while those with "some college" are over represented; college graduates are well matched between sample and population. When considering the ethnic background, African-Americans are under represented in the sample, but members of other ethnic groups (Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans, and "other") are over represented.

Three explanations may account for the differences between the sample and the population. First, the *Daily Press* data were based on a survey conducted in January and February 1992 by Belden Associates, and on information from the 1992 Survey of Buying Power. Surveys for this study were collected in February and March 1993. Given the rapid growth of population in the area—6.6 percent per year, as noted in Chapter Three—the demographics could have changed in the twelve months between the Belden survey and this one. Secondly, the Belden survey itself has a "sample tolerance of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points" (*Daily Press* 1993, p. 19). Third, it certainly must be considered that the original sampling methodology may have been flawed. It assured geographic proportionality, but it did not insure proportionality in other areas.

Table 2
Population Distribution: Sample and Peninsula
 (Each city's population as a percent of total)

City	Sample	Population	
Hampton	.33	.37	Chi-square = 3.537
Newport News	.48	.48	p = .316; df = 3
Poquoson	.04	.03	
York County	.15	.12	

Table 3
Demographics: Sample and Population

	Sample	Population	
Gender			
Female	61.9	52.0	Chi-square = 16.342 p = .000
Male	34.2	48.0	
No Answer	4.0		
Age			
18–34	54.3	40.0	Chi-square = 22.748 p = .000
35–49	32.4	36.0	
50+	13.3	24.0	
No Answer	1.1		
Household Income			
Less than \$25k	31.7	32.0	Chi-square = 3.827 p = .281
\$25–\$34.9k	19.1	19.0	
\$35–\$49.9k	22.3	22.0	
\$50k+	20.5	27.0	
No Answer	6.5		
Education			
Some High School	1.4	11.0	Chi-square = 163.044 p = .000
High School Graduate	17.6	37.0	
Some College	52.9	21.0	
College Grad +	27.4	30.0	
No Answer	0.7	1.0	
Occupation *			
Blue Collar	11.2	39.0	
White Collar	58.2	51.0	
Military	6.8	10.0	
Other	19.4		
No Answer	4.4		
Ethnic Background			
Black	14.7	28.0	Chi-square = 32.986 p = .000
White	76.3	68.0	
Other	8.3	4.0	
No Answer	1.8		

* Chi-square was not calculated for Occupation because of difficulties in comparing occupational categories.

While the drop-off-and-pick-up method did result in the desired proportional geographic stratification of the sample, it may have also resulted in the under- and over-representation in other areas. Women may have been more inclined to comply with a request to fill out the survey. They may also be the individual most likely to answer the door; the instructions were to enlist the cooperation of whoever came to the door, if that person were 18 years of age or over. The difference in education levels may be accounted for in three ways. First, people with "some high school" may not have been willing to admit to not having a diploma (since the drop-off and pick-up was a less anonymous data collection procedure). Secondly, people who have attended some of the private business colleges may have checked "some college." Third, those with less than a high school education or only a high school diploma tend to either be older and/or live in areas considered to be unsafe. The under representation of older people may have simultaneously led to an under representation of those without a high school degree. Similarly, not having the survey administrators go into unsafe areas may have similarly biased the education results. The differences in "ethnic background" may be reflective of the current controversy over racial and ethnic terminology. A recent study into the ethnic identity of Peninsula residents (Petersen 1993) reports that not all who consider themselves black believe that the term "African-American" describes them well. Because of multi-racial backgrounds, because country-of-origin may be the Caribbean basin, some who consider themselves black may not have checked "African-American" on the survey, preferring another category such as Hispanic or "Other."

After acknowledging these discrepancies, an important question remains unanswered. Do these differences between sample and population cause a loss of confidence in the study's conclusions? Had the objective of the research been to derive population estimates of personality traits, attitudes, or values, then the

difference between sample and population would have been of strong concern. The purpose of this research, however, was to test hypotheses about materialism and measures of the self. The correlation analyses are not dependent on the match between sample and population. Further, as reported below, the match between this study's results and those reported by the authors of the two materialism and the four self scales are quite similar in most areas. Correlations between the materialism scales and the demographic variables are similar to those reported by the scales' authors. Additionally, Coefficient Alphas, scale means, standard deviations and ranges for almost all of the materialism and self scales are consistent with those reported in other studies. These consistencies lead one to have confidence in the hypotheses tests and conclusions of this study.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

After correcting the responses for the reverse scored items, means, standard deviations, and ranges were calculated for the six scales. These measures were then compared with those reported by the scales' authors and/or other researchers. The calculations resulting from this study's data generally are consistent with those from other studies. The results and comparisons with other research are reported in Tables 4 and 5.

To assess the "fit" of the data to the assumptions of the various analytical techniques and statistical tests employed in this study, the data were examined for normality and for homoscedasticity (equal variances). As the information in Table 6 indicates, the normality assumption is met for all six scales. In every case, skewness, which measures the "degree to which a distribution of cases approximates a normal curve" (Nie et al. 1975, p. 184), and kurtosis, which

Table 4
Materialism Scales
Comparison of Results

Richins and Dawson Scale
(Journal of Consumer Research, December 1992, p. 303–316)

Scale	Mean		Std. Dev.		Range		Alpha	
	Study	R&D*	Study	R&D*	Study	R&D**	Study	R&D
Overall scale	50.8	46.8	10.1	9.4	23–77	20-84	.83	.80-.88
Happiness	14.2	13.1	4.3	3.9	5–24	5–25	.74	.73-.83
Centrality	21.5	19.6	4.1	4.1	8–32	9–33	.64	.71-.75
Success	15.5	14.3	4.1	3.9	6–27	6–30	.68	.74-.78

* Average of three surveys

** Actual range over the three surveys

Belk Scale
(Working Paper 1993 — USA sample only)

Scale	Mean		Std. Dev.		Range		Alpha	
	Study	Belk	Study	Belk	Study	Belk	Study	Belk
Overall scale	56.8	61.1	8.6	NA	30–80	NA	.66	.62
Possessiveness	14.5	14.0	2.8	NA	6–20	NA	.38	.61
Nongenerosity	19.1	22.7	4.9	NA	9–32	NA	.64	.66
Envy	12.4	14.2	3.4	NA	5–21	NA	.50	.46
Preservation	10.8	10.1	2.9	NA	3–15	NA	.65	.55

Table 5
Self Scales
Comparison of Results

Scale	Mean		Std. Dev.		Range		Alpha	
	Study	Other*	Study	Other	Study	Other	Study	Other
Self-Esteem	34.1	NA	5.1	NA	17-40	NA	.83	.77-.88
Self-Actualization	62.2	44.2	9.1	7.3	35-87	NA	.68	.63-.68
Self-Monitoring	65.6	NA	15.2	NA	28-112	NA	.78	.70-.79
Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation	53.4	NA	7.8	NA	32-76	NA	.41	.68-.74

* For Self-Esteem scale, "Other" results are those reported by Dobson, et al. (1979), Fleming and Courtney (1987), and Richins and Dawson (1992).

For Self-Actualization, Crandall and Jones (1991), Flett et al. (1991), and McLeod and Vodanovich (1991).

For Self-Monitoring, Synder and Gangstead (1986), Bell, Holbrook and Solomon (1991).

For Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation, Holbrook (1986), Bell, Holbrook and Solomon (1991).

Table 6
Tests for Normality

	<u>Skewness</u>	<u>Kurtosis</u>
Richins and Dawson Scale	-.0314	-.2299
Belk Scale	-.1900	-.0447
Self-Esteem Scale	-.9571	.4609
Self-Actualization Scale	.1357	-.0053
Self-Monitoring Scale	.2039	-.1072
IE Index	-.1542	.0493

NOTES:

Skewness is a "statistic to determine the degree to which a distribution of cases approximates a normal curve, since it measures deviation from symmetry" (Nie et al. 1975, P. 184). Values near zero indicate a symmetrical bell-shaped curve. Positive values indicate that cases are clustered more to the left of the mean, with the most extreme values on the right. Negative values indicate clustering to the right.

Kurtosis is a "measure of the relative peakedness or flatness of a curve defined by the distribution of cases" (Nie et al. 1975, p. 185). Values near zero indicate a normal distribution. Positive values are indicative of a more peaked (narrow) distribution than normal. Negative values indicate a flatter, more elongated, distribution of cases.

measures the “relative peakedness or flatness of a curve as defined by the distribution of cases” (Nie et al. 1975, p. 185), are close to zero, indicating a close to normal distribution. To test the homogeneity of variance assumption, residual plots were examined for the association between each of the materialism scales and the self scales. The plots are presented in Table 7. There seems to be no gross violation of this assumption either. The knowledge that the data conform to acceptable standards allowed the analysis to proceed.

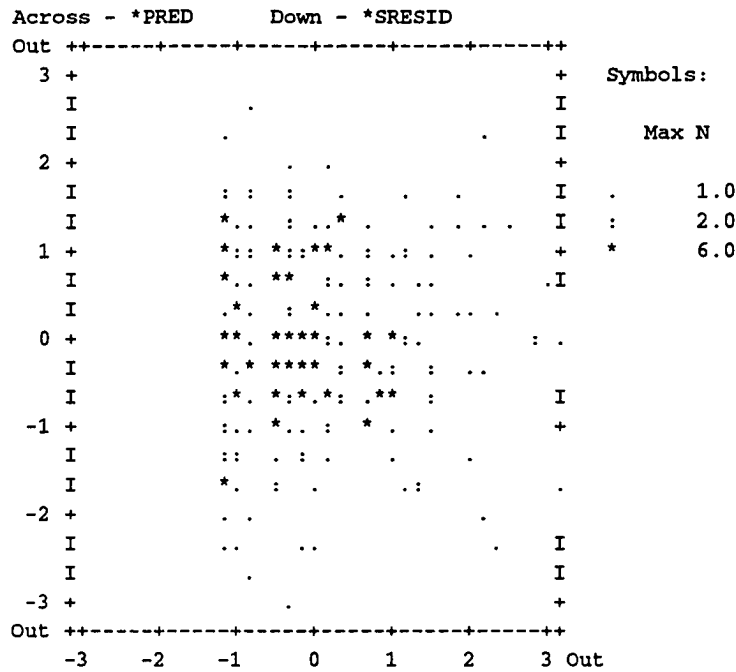
The final general assessment was to explore the relationships between demographics and the materialism measures. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run to assess the differences in mean materialism scores for the demographic categories of gender, age, education, household income, and ethnic background. Because of unequal sample sizes, the “regression” or “unique” option for calculating sums of squares was selected (Neter, Wasserman, and Kutner 1985; *SPSS–X User’s Guide* 1988). In the initial ANOVA calculations, interactions could not be computed because too many cells were empty. Some combinations of demographic categories, or treatments, were not represented. To deal with this problem, categories were combined for some variables. As a result, two-way interactions could be calculated. Consistent with computations by Belk (1985; Ger and Belk 1990, 1993) and Richins and Dawson (1992), correlation analysis was also run for the overall scales and subscales with education, age, gender, and household income. For both types of analysis, a significance level of .05 was used, unless otherwise noted.

The Richins and Dawson Scale

ANOVA. For the Richins and Dawson scale, Analysis of Variance indicated two significant interactions. The first was between the ethnic background and sex ($F=2.337$; significance = .099) of the respondents. The second

**Table 7
Residual Plots**

The Belk Scale (Y) and Self-Esteem Scale (X)



The Belk Scale (Y) and the Self-Actualization Scale (X)

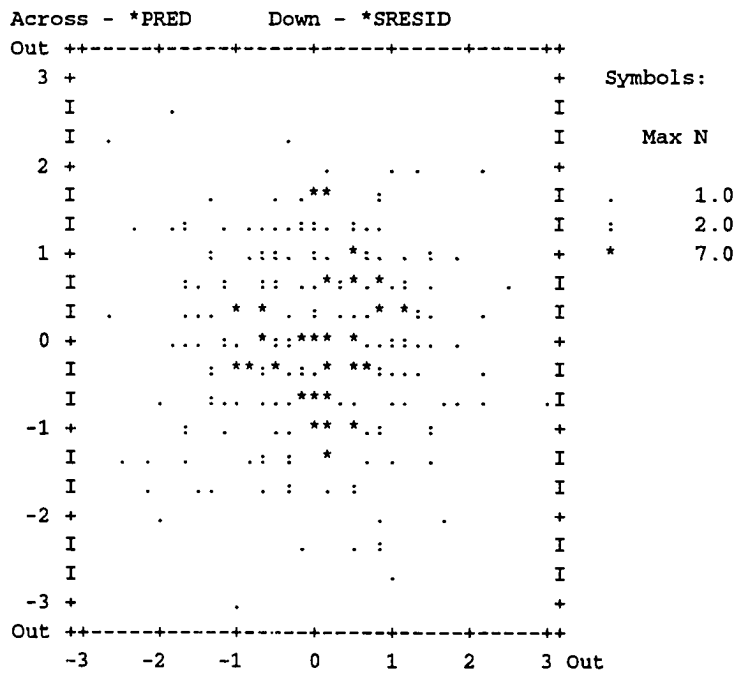
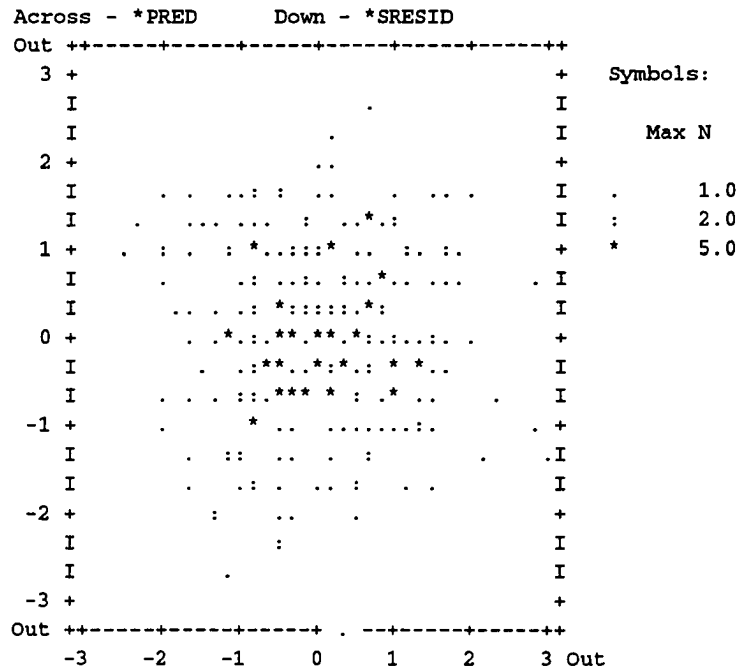


Table 7 (Continued) Residual Plots

The Belk Scale (Y) and the Self-Monitoring Scale (X)



The Belk Scale (Y) and the IE Index (X)

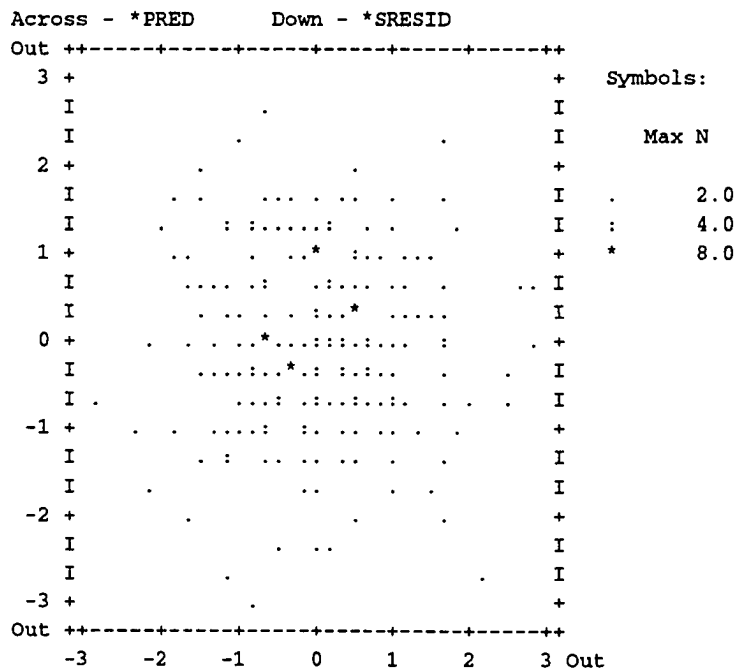
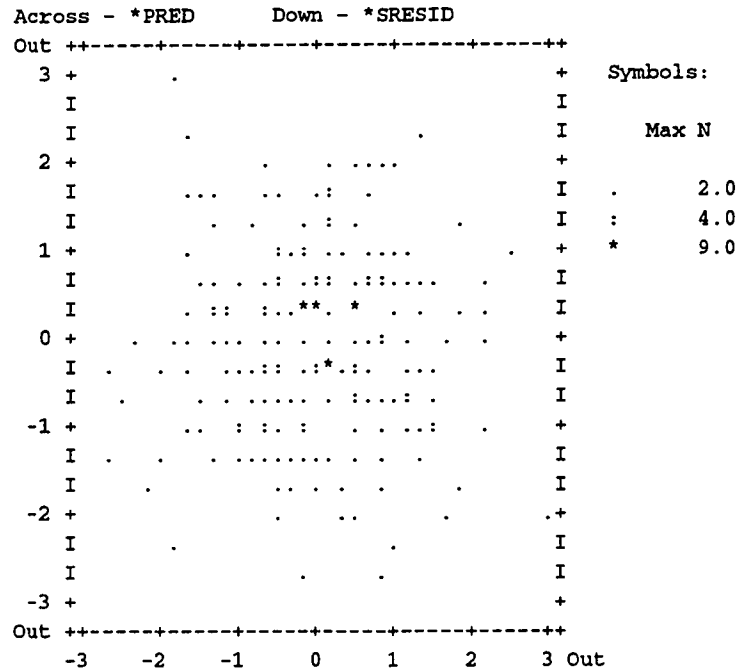


Table 7 (Continued) Residual Plots

The Richins and Dawson Scale (Y) and The Self-Actualization Scale (X)



The Richins and Dawson Scale (Y) and the Self-Monitoring Scale (X)

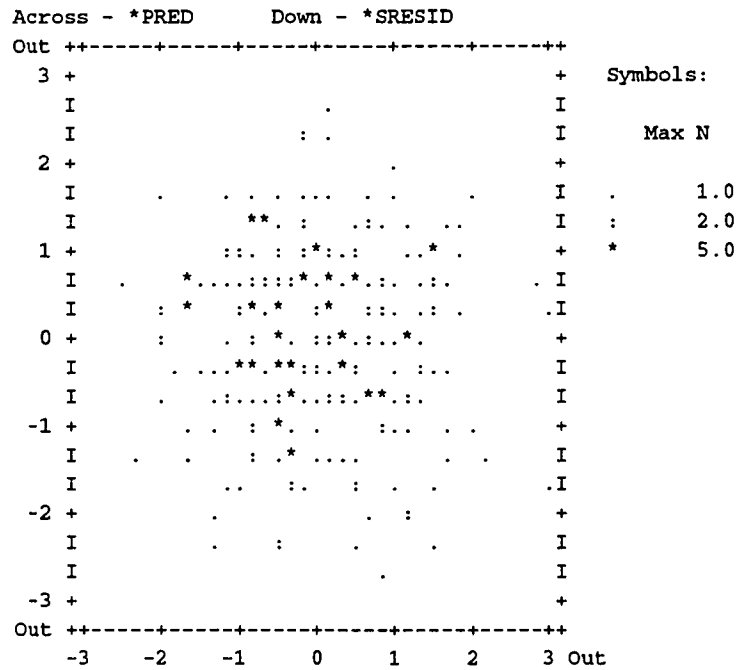
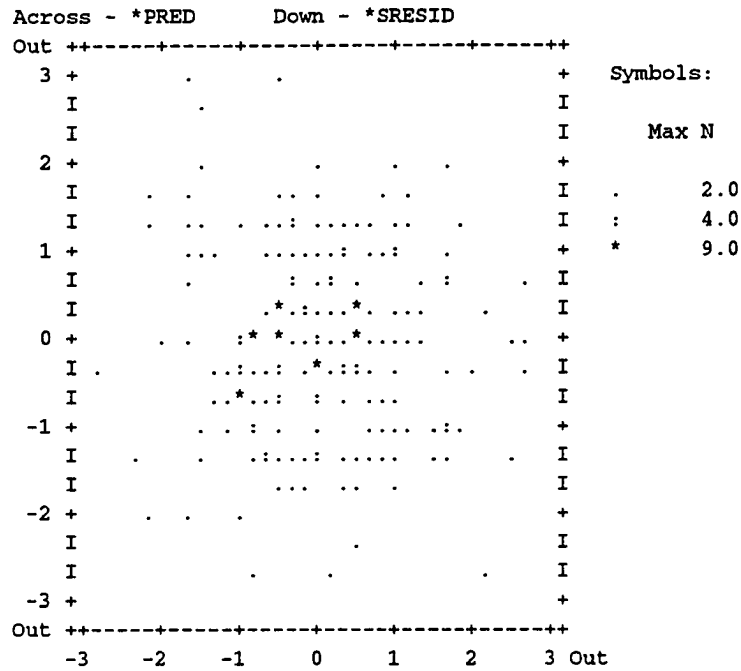


Table 7 (Continued) Residual Plots

The Richins and Dawson Scale (Y) and The IE Index (X)



was between the education level and sex of the respondents ($F=3.43$; significance = .034). Table 8 presents the ANOVA table. The ethnic/sex interaction was investigated, even though it is not significant at the .05 level ($p = .099$). The Tukey multiple was selected for evaluating the comparisons since it is appropriate when doing all comparisons. Further, when sample sizes are unequal, Tukey is conservative (Neter, Wasserman, and Kutner 1985). A significance level of .10 was selected for this because of the significance level of the F statistic. Ethnic background was measured at three levels (black, white and other); sex was measured at two levels (female and male). After calculating the difference in mean materialism scores for all fifteen possible comparisons, only those between black females and other males, between black males and white females, and between black males and other males were large enough to not contain zero in the confidence interval. The result of the comparisons was that none of these were significant, an occurrence which, while unusual, is not unlikely (Markowski, personal communication, July 22, 1993). This result is also consistent with other research reports of either no relationship or an inconsistent relationship between materialism and gender.

To investigate the interaction between education and sex, a similar procedure was followed, except that a significance level of .05 was used, since the F statistics was significant at $p = .034$. Education was measured at three levels (high school degree or less, some college, college degree or more). For six comparisons, the difference in mean materialism scores, when averaged over age, household income and ethnic background, was large enough for zero not to be in the confidence interval. The following pairs were selected: high school females versus high school males, high school males versus college grad females, high school males versus college grad males, some college females versus college grad females, some college females versus college grad males, and some college

Table 8
ANOVA Table: Richins and Dawson Scale and
Selected Demographic Variables

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Main Effects	1288.793	10	128.879	1.271	.249
Ethnic background	322.407	2	161.203	1.590	.207
Education	181.506	2	90.753	.895	.410
Age	536.707	2	268.353	2.647	.074
Sex	31.896	1	31.896	.315	.576
Household Income	489.922	3	163.307	1.611	.188
2-Way Interactions	3675.371	39	94.240	.930	.593
Ethnic Educ	104.228	4	26.057	.257	.905
Ethnic Age	340.259	4	85.065	.839	.502
Ethnic Sex	473.770	2	236.885	2.337	.099
Ethnic Income	795.531	6	132.588	1.308	.256
Educ Age	312.256	4	78.064	.770	.546
Educ Sex	695.320	2	347.660	3.430	.034
Educ Income	198.027	6	33.004	.326	.923
Age Sex	110.052	2	55.026	.543	.582
Age Income	525.204	6	87.534	.864	.523
Sex Income	130.537	3	43.51	.429	.732
Explained	6002.815	49	122.506	1.209	.187
Residual	18549.494	183	101.363		
Total	24552.309	232	105.829		

278 cases were processed.

45 cases (16.2 pct) were missing.

Due to empty cells or a singular matrix, higher order interactions have been suppressed.

males versus college graduate males. Of the six, the only comparison which was statistically significant was that between males having a high school degree or less and males with an undergraduate degree or higher. When averaged over the other demographic variables included in the analysis, "high school males" have mean materialism scores 7.8 points higher than "college graduate males" with an error of no more than 7.47 points and a significance level of .05. This result is consistent with Belk's (1985) hypothesis and finding that blue collar workers were more materialistic than any of the other groups he surveyed. Of course, not all those with a high school degree or less are blue collar workers. But they are more likely to be than are college graduates.

The only main effect which was significant was age ($F=2.647$; $p = .074$). Since age was not part of either two-way interaction, it makes sense to investigate it separately. The Bonferroni multiple was selected since the number of comparisons was equal to the number of treatments (age was measured at three levels). Also, Bonferroni is exact for unequal sample sizes (Neter, Wasserman, and Kutner 1985). Because of the significance level of the F statistic, a significance level of .10 was selected for the calculations. The results were that, when averaged over sex, ethnic background, and education and income levels, 18-to-34 year olds had mean materialism scores which were 3.92 points higher than 35-to-49 year olds, with an error of no more than 2.77 points. Further, 18-to-34 year olds had mean materialism scores which were 4.34 points higher than those 50 years of age and older, with an error of no more than 3.98 points. The contrast between the youngest group and the two other age groups, indicates that the youngest age group had mean materialism scores which were 4.13 points higher than the average mean materialism score of the two older age groups, with an error of no more than .41 points.

This finding is consistent with reports from other materialism researchers.

Using the data from three of their four surveys, Richins and Dawson (1992) report that the age correlation was the only one which was not “quite low” and for which there was a discernible pattern. The median correlation between the overall scale and age was $-.19$, indicating that as people age, they tend to become less materialistic. Belk (1985; Ger and Belk 1993) has reported a similar relationship. However, in a study of lifestyles, Hendrickson and Morrisett (1992) found a positive correlation of the overall materialism scale with age.

Correlations. The correlation analysis in this study, as reported in Table 9, results in much the same conclusions.¹ The correlation between age and the overall scale is $-.22$, and is the only demographic variable to significantly correlate with materialism. A statistically significant correlation is also present between age and each of the three subscales. The only other statistically significant correlations are between income and the happiness subscale ($-.15$; $p=.018$), and education and happiness ($-.11$; $p=.065$).

The Belk scale

ANOVA. For the Belk scale, as a result of Analysis of Variance, the only significant difference in mean materialism score was for the gender variable, and that was only significant at $p = .085$ (see Table 10). To investigate the nature of the difference, the comparison between female and male mean materialism scores was evaluated using the Bonferroni multiple (since the number of comparisons was small and sample sizes were unequal). A significance level of $.10$ was also used because of the significance of the F statistic reported above. The result of the comparison was that, when averaged over age, ethnic background,

¹Except for age, all correlations are Pearson product-moment correlations. For age, correlations are point biserial correlations—which SPSSX automatically computes when comparing a continuous and a dichotomous variable (Guilford and Fruchter 1978).

Table 9
Correlations of Materialism Scales with Demographics

Richins and Dawson Scale

	Educ.	Age	Gender*	Income
Overall Scale	-.1005 (.100)	-.2190 (.000)	.0062 (.921)	-.0655 (.297)
Happiness	-.1116 (.065)	-.2281 (.000)	.0562 (.362)	-.1477 (.018)
Centrality	-.0701 (.250)	-.2275 (.000)	-.0622 (.316)	.0124 (.843)
Success	-.0621 (.305)	-.1271 (.036)	.0248 (.687)	-.0587 (.347)

Belk Scale

	Educ.	Age	Gender*	Income
Overall Scale	-.0292 (.633)	-.1221 (.045)	.1913 (.002)	-.0730 (.245)
Possessiveness	-.0108 (.859)	-.0617 (.310)	.0206 (.738)	-.1014 (.103)
Nongenerosity	.0074 (.903)	-.0740 (.224)	.1903 (.002)	-.0076 (.903)
Envy	-.0361 (.553)	-.1950 (.001)	.1923 (.002)	-.1127 (.071)
Preservation	-.0956 (.114)	.0695 (.253)	-.0284 (.645)	.0182 (.772)

* Correlations for gender are point biserial correlations; all others are Pearson product-moment correlations.

Table 10
ANOVA Table: Belk Scale and
Selected Demographic Variables

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Main Effects	977.175	10	97.718	1.333	.216
Ethnic background	309.667	2	154.833	2.111	.124
Education	114.183	2	57.092	.779	.461
Age	50.093	2	25.047	.342	.711
Sex	219.352	1	219.352	2.991	.085
Household Income	283.260	3	94.420	1.288	.280
2-Way Interactions	3084.466	39	79.089	1.079	.360
Ethnic Educ	249.236	4	62.309	.850	.495
Ehtnic Age	87.670	4	21.917	.299	.878
Ethnic Sex	55.724	2	27.862	.380	.684
Ethnic Income	475.259	6	79.210	1.080	.376
Educ Age	127.490	4	31.873	.435	.783
Educ Sex	218.108	2	109.054	1.487	.229
Educ Income	281.028	6	46.838	.639	.699
Age Sex	191.318	2	95.659	1.304	.274
Age Income	183.874	6	30.646	.418	.867
Sex Income	267.264	3	89.088	1.215	.306
Explained	4037.057	49	82.389	1.124	.288
Residual	13493.067	184	73.332		
Total	17530.124	233	75.237		

278 cases were processed.

44 cases (15.8 pct) were missing.

Due to empty cells or a singular matrix, higher order interactions have been suppressed.

education and income levels, female mean materialism scores were 3.42 points lower than the mean materialism scores for males, with an error of no more than 1.81 points. This conclusion is consistent with some materialism studies but not others. As detailed in the next paragraph, conclusions about materialism and gender are mixed.

Correlations. Correlation analysis of the Belk scale with the education, age, gender, and income variables also supports the gender difference, as reported in Table 9. And while neither Richins and Dawson (1992) nor Belk (1985; Ger and Belk 1990, 1993) have found a *consistent* relationship between materialism and gender, Ger and Belk (1993) did find some significant differences by gender for some of the subscales. Women scored higher than men on possessiveness and preservation, while men scored higher than women on envy. In this study, the differences between men and women were on the traits of envy and nongenerosity as well as materialism overall. Additionally, age correlated with materialism. The statistically significant age correlations are with the overall scale ($-.12$; $p = .045$) and the envy ($-.19$; $p = .001$) subscale. These results are consistent with the findings reported by Richins and Dawson. Finally, there is one other significant correlation of income with envy ($-.11$; $p = .071$).

RELIABILITY ASSESSMENT

As noted earlier, several of the scales used in this study are in their formative stages. One contribution of this study is to provide further tests of them. After correcting the responses for the reverse scored items, Coefficient Alphas were calculated for the six scales. These results were then compared with those reported by the scales' authors and/or other researchers and found to be

quite similar. The results and comparative figures are reported in Tables 4 and 5.

The Richins and Dawson Scale

For the Richins and Dawson scale and subscales, Chronbach Alphas calculated in this study were generally consistent with those reported by its authors (Richins and Dawson 1992). The overall scale Alpha was .83; the happiness subscale had an Alpha of .74; for centrality, the Alpha was .64; for success it was .68. These last two are below the threshold established by Nunnally (1978) of .70. They are, however, below the Alphas found by Richins and Dawson (1992) of .71 to .75 for the centrality subscale and .74 to .78 for the success subscale. To determine if any of the reliability coefficients might be improved with the deletion of any of the scale items, item-to-total correlations were calculated as well as scale Alphas with the removal of each item on an item by item basis. For neither the overall materialism scale nor for any of the subscales could the Alphas be improved. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 11. As a result of this reliability analysis, one can have confidence in further analysis with the overall materialism scale, but should use caution when dealing with the subscales.

The Belk Scale

For the Belk scale and subscales, while the results of this study are generally consistent with those reported by the author (Ger and Belk 1993, USA sample only), the reliability coefficients are much lower and fall into unacceptable ranges. In this study, the overall scale Alpha was .66, compared with .62 reported by Ger and Belk (1993, USA sample only). Alphas for the subscales were .64 for nongenerosity (.66, Ger and Belk), .50 for envy (.46, Ger and Belk), .65 for preservation (.55, Ger and Belk), and .38 for possessiveness (.61,

Table 11
Item-to-Total Statistics
Richins and Dawson Scale

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance If Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted
Happier if could buy more	47.6176	97.4621	.5126	.4178	.8191
Don't pay attention to other's goods *	48.4926	103.0184	.3708	.2690	.8267
Achievements = acquiring goods	48.8860	101.4002	.4041	.2385	.8252
Better life if own certain goods	48.3824	97.1005	.5368	.4327	.8178
Enjoy buying non-practical items	48.3676	102.8754	.3160	.1866	.8298
Goods = how well I'm doing	48.5625	101.9001	.3608	.2472	.8275
Try to keep my life simple *	48.4265	102.8433	.3761	.2857	.8265
Like to own impressive things	48.5625	96.5274	.5804	.3861	.8154
Buying things gives me pleasure	47.5882	101.2837	.4648	.2615	.8225
Have all I need to enjoy life *	48.9154	101.4209	.3685	.2848	.8272
Usually buy only what I need *	48.2757	103.2779	.2847	.2422	.8317
Admire owners of expensive items	48.3897	98.6225	.5302	.3947	.8187
Don't emphasize goods as signs of success *	48.6875	101.5145	.4215	.2797	.8243
No happier if owned nicer things *	48.5000	99.9262	.4145	.2344	.8247
I like a lot of luxury in life	47.9890	98.9999	.4876	.3711	.8207
Things I own ≠ important *	47.6801	102.0265	.3219	.1567	.8300
Emphasize material things less *	48.4449	103.6722	.3575	.2241	.8273
Am bothered when can't afford to buy what I like	48.2941	98.5036	.5123	.3508	.8194

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS 18 ITEMS; ALPHA = .8324

* Reverse scored items

Table 11 (Continued)
Item-to-Total Statistics
Richins and Dawson Scale

Happiness Subscale

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance If Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted
Happier if could buy more	10.6232	11.6539	.5787	.3646	.6616
Better life if owned certain goods	11.3877	11.8092	.5665	.3467	.6668
Have all I need to enjoy life *	11.9239	13.1033	.4196	.1820	.7221
No happier if owned nicer things *	11.5000	12.8400	.4266	.1848	.7206
Am bothered when can't afford to buy what I like	11.2899	12.5702	.5151	.2700	.6877

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS 5 ITEMS; ALPHA = .7382

* Reverse scored items

Centrality Subscale

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance If Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted
Enjoy buying non-practical items	18.6813	15.5488	.2857	.1249	.6237
Try to keep my life simple *	18.7473	15.3513	.3945	.1780	.5906
Buying things gives me pleasure	17.9084	15.5835	.3749	.1591	.5966
Usually buy only what I need *	18.5934	14.3819	.4064	.1942	.5839
Like lot of luxury in my life	18.3114	14.3549	.4351	.1996	.5746
Things I own ≠ important *	18.0000	15.4559	.2601	.0967	.6346
Emphasize material things less *	18.7692	16.1635	.3135	.1237	.6138

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS 7 ITEMS; ALPHA = .6394

* Reverse scored items

Table 11 (Continued)
Item-to-Total Statistics
Richins and Dawson Scale

	Success Subscale				
	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance If Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted
Don't pay attention to other's goods *	12.8051	14.1430	.2648	.0916	.6770
Achievements = acquiring goods	13.2130	12.9508	.3769	.1556	.6436
Goods = how well I'm doing	12.8917	12.3795	.4278	.1896	.6260
Like to own impressive things	12.8881	11.8026	.4781	.2512	.6069
Admire owners of expensive items	12.7256	12.3882	.4499	.2360	.6183
Don't emphasize goods as signs of success *	13.0036	12.8152	.4285	.1922	.6265

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS 6 ITEMS; ALPHA = .6755

* Reverse scored items

Ger and Belk). As noted before, Churchill (1979) has suggested that .60 is a minimal requirement for scale reliability; Nunnally (1978) has stated that .70 is the minimum acceptable level. Belk himself reports that the reliability levels associated with his scale and subscales are "moderately satisfactory," but suggests that in using a single scale for international research there is a trade off between reliability and cross-cultural adaptability (Ger and Belk 1993, p. 9).

It may be instructive, at this point, to recall the inconsistencies reported in Chapter Three between Belk's own findings and those who have used his scale in other research. That this study also found inconsistent results, therefore, is not unusual. However, one must use caution when comparing across studies. The scale employed here is the latest version and is somewhat different from that used by other researchers. At least four different versions of the Belk scale have been reported in the literature.

To determine if any of the reliability coefficients might be improved with the deletion of any of the scale items, item-to-total correlations were calculated as well as scale Alphas with the removal of each item on an item by item basis. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 12. For only two of the subscales could the Alphas be slightly improved. For example, if two of the preservation subscale items were removed, the overall scale Alpha could be raised: from .66 to .67 by removal of "I like to collect things" or from .66 to .68 by removing "I have a lot of souvenirs." Neither of these improvements is significant enough to warrant removal of the items. The reliability of the preservation subscale can be raised from .65 to .67 if the item "I tend to hang on to things I should probably throw out" is removed. As before, the alteration of the scale does not seem to be warranted. The results of the reliability tests cast doubt on the advisability of further analysis with either the overall materialism scale or the subscales. Nunnally (1978) explains that scales with a Coefficient

Table 12
Item-to-Total Statistics
The Belk Scale

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance If Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted
Upset when something is stolen	52.5351	68.6867	.2336	.1642	.6520
Enjoy having friends in my home *	54.8708	69.8240	.1701	.1888	.6581
Don't like to lend things	54.4022	65.6487	.3405	.3232	.6397
Happy for friends when they do well *	54.4170	68.8736	.2170	.1763	.6536
Worry about possessions being taken	54.3063	64.8577	.3732	.2149	.6355
Don't mind giving rides to the car-less*	54.6310	67.2930	.3113	.2226	.6442
Bothered when friends have things I cannot afford	54.8672	67.6786	.3326	.2423	.6434
Don't enjoy donating to needy	55.1255	68.6138	.2172	.1355	.6536
Would like to trade places w/ some	54.3764	65.4060	.3281	.2424	.6407
Don't like anyone in my home if I'm not there	53.4059	66.5532	.2574	.1881	.6494
Don't get what is coming to me	54.5793	67.3705	.2998	.2487	.6453
If have to choose, will buy for myself instead of for loved one	54.9926	66.9333	.3185	.1934	.6432
Bothered when others buy what want	54.2214	66.4471	.2767	.2125	.6470
Enjoy sharing what I have *	54.8893	67.4470	.3822	.3588	.6401
Not upset when lose things *	53.1845	70.1436	.1212	.1021	.6639
Wealthy people feel are too good to talk with average people	53.5867	69.0434	.1721	.1275	.6587
Keep things should throw out	52.9705	69.1991	.1491	.2139	.6618
Enjoy donating to charity *	54.8745	67.1101	.3590	.3576	.6406
Have lots of souvenirs	53.3358	71.6757	.0247	.3417	.6761
Less likely to lock up *	53.6273	69.5087	.1403	.1262	.6624
Like to collect things	53.4059	70.6939	.0734	.3145	.6704

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS 21 ITEMS; ALPHA = .6627

* Reverse scored items

Table 12 (Continued)
Item-to-Total Statistics
The Belk Scale

Possessiveness Subscale

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance If Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted
Upset when something is stolen	10.2428	5.7554	.2093	.0510	.3169
Don't like anyone in my home if I'm not there	11.1014	5.1097	.1762	.0354	.3566
Not upset when lose things *	10.9022	5.3831	.2126	.0544	.3103
Less likely to lock things up *	11.3406	5.1490	.2342	.0551	.2855

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS 4 ITEMS; ALPHA = .3824

* Reverse scored items

Nongenerosity Subscale

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance If Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted
Enjoy having friends in my home *	17.1387	20.0906	.2707	.1114	.6237
Don't like to lend things	16.6606	18.5547	.3424	.1965	.6073
Happy for friends when they do well *	16.6788	20.1895	.2436	.1340	.6302
Worry about possessions being taken	16.5730	18.9196	.2925	.1197	.6214
Don't mind giving rides to the car-less *	16.8869	19.1630	.3566	.1731	.6037
Bothered when friends have things I cannot afford	17.1423	20.3863	.2714	.1399	.6232
Don't enjoy donating to needy	17.3978	20.6434	.1780	.0740	.6462
Enjoy sharing what I have *	17.1460	18.9603	.4906	.2911	.5786
Enjoy donating to charity *	17.1350	18.5861	.4867	.3078	.5756

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS 9 ITEMS; ALPHA = .6405

* Reverse scored items

Table 12 (Continued)
Item-to-Total Statistics
The Belk Scale

Envy Subscale

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance If Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted
Would like to trade places w/ some	9.9055	7.7793	.3120	.1197	.4213
Don't get what is coming to me	10.1345	8.2629	.3616	.1342	.3962
If I have to choose, will buy for myself instead of for loved one	10.5345	9.0672	.2141	.0738	.4832
Bothered when others buy what want	9.7600	8.1174	.2677	.0821	.4528
Wealthy people feel are too good to talk with average people	9.1345	8.6570	.2280	.0770	.4770

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS 5 ITEMS; ALPHA = .5029

* Reverse scored items

Preservation Subscale

	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance If Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted
Keep things should throw out	6.9529	4.7287	.3752	.1522	.6661
Have lots of souvenirs	7.3116	3.9316	.5511	.3135	.4257
Like to collect things	7.3659	4.3201	.4649	.2571	.5493

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS 3 ITEMS; ALPHA = .6511

* Reverse scored items

Alpha of less than .70 should be further examined because the low Alpha indicates that sufficient measurement error remains in the scale to call its use into question. The items in the scale may not be clearly written or they may not all be sampling the content of the same construct (p. 230). In either case, the scale warrants further refinement and testing.

The Self Scales

The descriptive statistics and reliability calculations for three of the self scales were consistent with previous studies (the results are reported in Table 5). This finding lends credibility to this study and provides confidence in the tests of the hypotheses.

The one self scale for which results were not similar is the Intrinsic/ Extrinsic Motivation Index (IE Index). As discussed in the previous chapter, Holbrook (1986a) acknowledges the exploratory nature of his scale. Further, a modified version of the index was used in this research because several items in the original scale duplicated items in the materialism, self-monitoring, and self-actualization scales. When those items are put back in, the reliability coefficient improves from .41 to .50. While this is a good measure of improvement, several problems remain. First, an Alpha of .50 is below that advocated for either basic or applied research (Churchill 1979; Nunnally 1978). Second, if the reliability coefficient is improved with the addition of items from scales measuring other constructs, the validity of the scale is called into question. For these reasons, the work with this scale is considered to be purely exploratory at this time. While further results are discussed, no conclusions are drawn about measures of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and materialism.

Except for the IE Index, the self scales have been widely employed by researchers. As detailed in Chapter Three, the self-monitoring scale has been

used in studies of dishonest behavior (Covey et al. 1989), of personality (Sampson 1978), and of culture (Gudykunst 1985). Richins and Dawson (1992) used the self-esteem scale, as have many other researchers (Blascovich and Tomaka 1991). The short index of self-actualization is a newer scale, but has been successfully employed in several personality studies (c.f., Richard and Jex 1991; Schelle and Bonin 1989; Watson, Morris and Hood 1990). The materialism scales, however, are still undergoing refinement and testing. One of the purposes of this study was to provide a further test of the two scales. The next section addresses the relationships among the overall materialism scales and their subscales as well as the scales' factor structures.

CONVERGENT VALIDITY ASSESSMENT

As a test of convergent validity, the correlation between the two scales was calculated. The relatively high correlation (.4691; $p = .000$) is evidence of convergent validity. That the correlation is not closer to 1.00 indicates that the two scales are not tapping exactly the same construct in the same way. One way to understand this idea is to calculate the square of the correlation coefficient, since it provides a measure of the amount of variation in one scale which is accounted for by the variation in the other (Cohen 1988; Nunnally 1978). In this case, the square of the correlation coefficient is .22, indicating that 22 percent of the variation in the Belk scale is explained by the variation in the Richins and Dawson scale and vice versa. This result is to be expected since, as noted in Chapter Two, Belk conceives of materialism as a personality trait and Richins and Dawson approach materialism as a value. Put another way, Belk measures materialism indirectly, while Richins and Dawson measure it directly.

Correlations among the subscales further support the differences between the two measures. Richins and Dawson developed items to measure the importance of possessions in a person's life (how central possessions are) and the role of possessions in determining happiness and success. Belk developed items to measure an individual's willingness to share what s/he has with others (nongenerosity), an individual's reaction to others who have more (envy), a tendency to control or retain ownership of one's possessions (possessiveness), and a desire to collect and hold onto tangible possessions (preservation). As Table 13 shows, there is not a great deal of overlap among these seven dimensions of materialism. Half of the correlations among subscales are less than .20, indicating that the variation in one subscale explains less than four percent of the variation in the other. The low correlations between possessiveness and the three Richins and Dawson subscales could simply be a function of the low internal consistency of the possessiveness subscale (.38). The low, and non-significant, correlations between preservation and two of the three Richins and Dawson subscales could reflect the fact that preservation is not measured in the Richins and Dawson scale—though aspects of preservation are implied in the centrality concept as indicated by the correlation analysis.

Two Belk subscales, however, do correlate positively (and significantly) with two of the Richins and Dawson subscales. Correlation analysis indicates that the more a person defines happiness and success by her/his possessions, the more that person is nongenerous and envious of others. This sense of this conclusion can be illustrated by examining the individual/collective dichotomy present in the relationship between two other variables with which the reader may be more familiar, freedom and equality. In his longitudinal study of value hierarchies in the United States from 1968 to 1981, Rokeach (1973; Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach 1989) found that while freedom ("independence, free choice") was

Table 13
Correlations Among Subscales

<u>Belk</u>	<u>Richins and Dawson</u>			Overall
	Happiness	Centrality	Success	Scale
Possessiveness	.1587 (.004)	.1388 (.011)	.2061 (.000)	.2143 (.000)
Nongenerosity	.3331 (.000)	.1413 (.010)	.3657 (.000)	.3821 (.000)
Envy	.4199 (.000)	.1370 (.012)	.3317 (.000)	.3517 (.000)
Preservation	.0518 (.196)	.2188 (.000)	.0282 (.321)	.1318 (.015)
Overall Scale	.4260 (.000)	.2537 (.000)	.4140 (.000)	.4691 (.000)

consistently ranked as the third most desired value, equality moved from ranking seventh in 1968 to fourth in 1971 to twelfth in both 1974 and 1981. The explanation for the relative positions of the two values was that as *individual* freedom became more important, freedom for "me" came at the expense of freedom for "thee." Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach conclude that in choosing me-centered "pursuits of freedom, comfort, achievement, and excitement," the value of equality declined (1989 p. 783). A similar difference between collective and personal orientation is reflected in the results of this study. If one requires possessions (and, sometimes, more possessions) to feel happy and successful, then that same person is not likely to give away or share those possessions (lest happiness and success be somehow diminished). That person is, however, likely to be envious of those who have more since his/her own happiness and success are diminished by not having as much as someone else.

Thus, the two measures are tapping some similar aspects of materialism. Yet it is also clear that, as expected, the two scales address different dimensions. Analysis of the factor structures of the scales further supports this conclusion.

CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Data from this study were factor analyzed to determine if the factors found by Belk and by Richins and Dawson could be replicated. In neither case were the factor structures the same as those reported by the scales' authors. Before investigating each scale separately, general "assumptions" about factor analysis need to be addressed.

A first condition for successful factor analysis is that, at a minimum, there should be five cases for each variable in the analysis (Nunnally 1978). There were

278 respondents in this study. Thus, for the Richins and Dawson scale, which has 18 items, three times the minimum number of cases were available for the analysis. Since the Belk scale has 21 items, two and one-half times the minimum number were available. Thus, both scales meet this criterion.

The main assumption of factor analysis, that the data are factorable, is not well met for the Belk scale, however. Evidence for this conclusion comes from a test for sampling adequacy as well as from examination of the correlation matrix. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is an index for “comparing the magnitudes of the observed correlation coefficients [among the variables in the factor analysis] to the magnitudes of the partial correlation coefficients” (Norusis 1990, p. 162). If the variables have any factors in common, the partial correlation coefficients should be relatively small, since the partial correlation coefficient measures what is “left” after the common variation is partialled out. Kaiser (1974) has devised an alliterative characterization for the KMO measure. He suggests that results in the .90s are marvelous; those in the .80s are meritorious; measures in the .70s are middling; those in the .60s are mediocre; and those in the .50s are miserable. According to this progression, one could characterize the KMO measure for the Richins and Dawson scale (.84742) as “meritorious,” but the measure for the Belk scale (.70875) as “middling” at best.

Examination of the correlation matrix provides specific information about the problems with factor analysis of the Belk scale. Tabachnick and Fidell (1989) caution that “factor analysis is exquisitely sensitive to the sizes of correlations” (p. 602) and that if no correlations exceed .30, the use of factor analysis is questionable. A look at the matrix of correlations among the items for the Belk scale reveals that only five are .30 or better (Table 14). For the Richins and Dawson scale, however, 29 correlations are .30 or better (see Table 15)—and there

Table 14
Correlation Matrix
The Belk Scale

	V3	V7	V9	V11	V12	V15	V17	V18	V20	V21	V22	V23
V3	1.00000											
V7	-.04452	1.00000										
V9	.20614	.22681	1.00000									
V11	-.01038	.09809	.02635	1.00000								
V12	.20901	.11689	.25185	.04085	1.00000							
V15	.01716	.10727	.29660	.19261	.19339	1.00000						
V17	.12013	.02132	.12028	.24474	.23185	.09627	1.00000					
V18	-.02398	.15395	.03970	.04496	.09277	.08941	.01081	1.00000				
V20	.10578	-.00002	-.03047	.19108	.14073	.10089	.26210	.21261	1.00000			
V21	.10092	.13990	.26125	.00931	.28608	.16926	.11669	.11291	.04840	1.00000		
V22	.00643	.20565	.00542	.07853	.10505	.00477	.22056	.13880	.28336	.15882	1.00000	
V23	.03940	.11732	.22232	.15587	.20492	.20644	.25968	.16123	.22491	.08232	.15625	1.00000
V25	.17254	-.04367	.10236	.17404	.18143	.12790	.26151	.05499	.12874	.03558	.21998	.13107
V26	.05947	.25123	<u>.36343</u>	.16148	.17816	.29123	.22230	.13822	.21485	.07920	.18804	.24826
V28	.18820	-.03129	-.00511	-.01021	.09271	.00654	.03561	-.00982	.04721	.07336	.00027	-.02853
V29	.10503	-.03184	.04896	-.03078	.13430	.02652	.04463	.10758	.17867	.01683	.20190	.01660
V32	.12225	-.01040	.04290	-.00084	.05586	.00448	.01137	.00760	.05723	.03464	-.00411	.02717
V33	.03136	.18801	.18001	.28535	.14309	<u>.31969</u>	.24273	.23708	.23174	.18902	.24209	.17187
V34	-.01012	-.13424	-.05213	-.01786	-.06277	-.00757	-.09332	.01759	.02360	-.08742	-.00448	-.07666
V36	.12085	.10288	.22503	.03288	.15022	.09649	.02599	.06498	-.01199	.16568	-.00805	.11297
V37	.11206	-.08533	.01422	.02111	-.04412	-.01955	-.00237	-.02991	.06269	-.07672	.01709	-.04472
V25	1.00000											
V26	.16755	1.00000										
V28	.05979	-.06098	1.00000									
V29	.19356	.14597	-.00722	1.00000								
V32	.10685	-.09933	.18763	-.01470	1.00000							
V33	.09396	<u>.43191</u>	.03242	.02895	-.07929	1.00000						
V34	.00329	-.12373	.04757	.02102	<u>.36062</u>	-.14271	1.00000					
V36	-.03511	.12257	.12481	.02516	-.10542	.08671	-.11800	1.00000				
V37	-.05634	-.10505	.09029	.04562	.27539	-.15575	<u>.50512</u>	-.08730	1.00000			

Table 15
Correlation Matrix
The Richins and Dawson Scale

	V2	V4	V5	V6	V8	V10	V13	V14	V16	V19	V24	V27
V2	1.00000											
V4	.11684	1.00000										
V5	.23812	.10604	1.00000									
V6	.53130	.15029	.34247	1.00000								
V8	.21660	.08610	.15425	.17641	1.00000							
V10	.16185	.18643	.27486	.21857	.18153	1.00000						
V13	.15262	.37025	.07883	.13091	.18718	.13274	1.00000					
V14	.35536	.25468	.30381	.42016	.27426	.28781	.24662	1.00000				
V16	.28522	.21104	.24927	.30105	.23037	.19822	.15424	.35741	1.00000			
V19	.31136	.09146	.28732	.33539	.02748	.08550	.21360	.25034	.13470	1.00000		
V24	.06190	.20432	.01802	.08014	.23851	-.00245	.33754	.16100	.19932	.01488	1.00000	
V27	.38226	.14105	.27356	.26986	.18195	.29714	.12031	.41704	.36743	.29429	.17655	1.00000
V30	.26140	.21778	.25954	.19967	.07654	.33612	.18668	.26233	.19597	.25636	.10143	.30198
V31	.34653	.21666	.14715	.34026	.17866	.09325	.13967	.25699	.15680	.24463	.18250	.21237
V35	.25652	.16632	.18972	.32506	.25351	.20659	.25512	.41010	.30785	.11306	.28706	.42558
V38	.16454	.26511	.14670	.16434	.04627	.21353	.17786	.19669	.22190	.11734	.12092	.16524
V39	.08818	.35054	.17841	.18304	.05606	.18490	.24151	.25026	.16946	.08159	.22336	.17967
V40	.43450	.16709	.26746	.39527	.20456	.14061	.19356	.26886	.27819	.34692	.17401	.33938
V30	1.00000											
V31	.22083	1.00000										
V35	.08016	.18595	1.00000									
V38	.20524	.18769	.17495	1.00000								
V39	.26801	.15412	.21690	.20946	1.00000							
V40	.25930	.31446	.35660	.09906	.14388	1.00000						
V33												
V34												
V36												
V37												
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V42												
V43												
V44												
V45												
V46												
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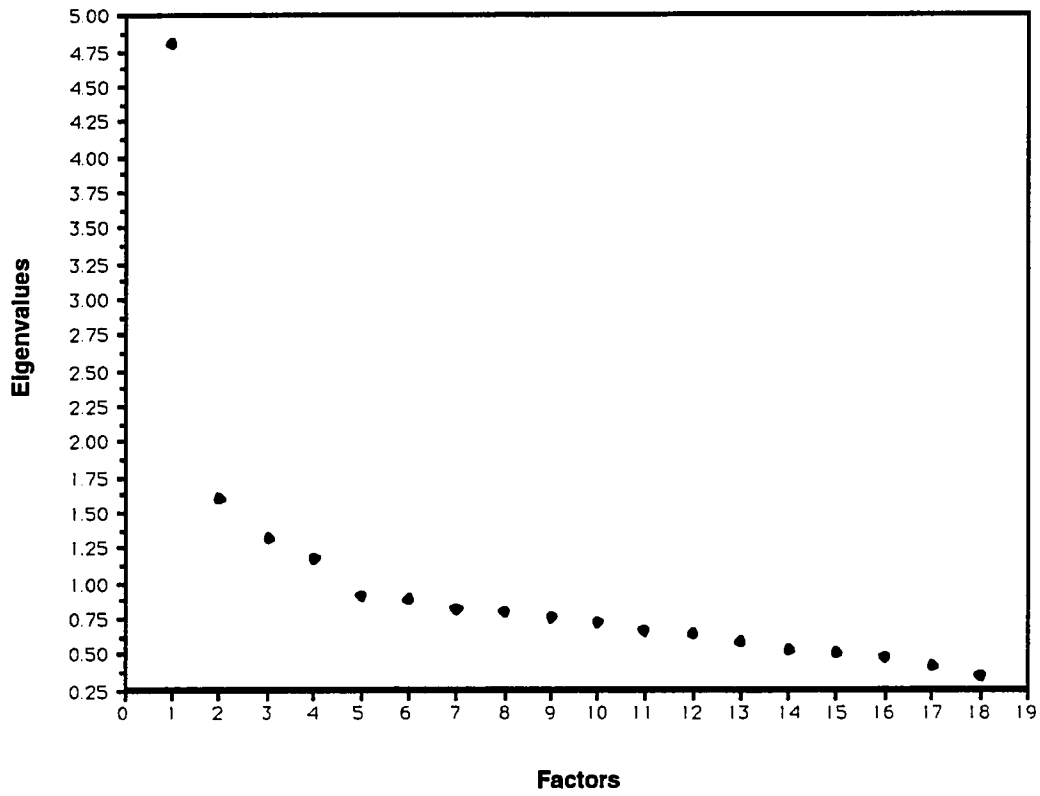
are four fewer items in this scale, resulting in fewer correlations. With this information, one would expect the confirmatory factor analysis to be more successful for the Richins and Dawson scale, and it was.

The Richins and Dawson Scale

For the Richins and Dawson scale, three, four and five factors are possible (see Table 16 for scree plot and eigenvalues), though the four factor solution seems optimal. The first four factors have eigenvalues greater than one, accounting for 49.5 percent of the variation in the data. More importantly, the four factor solution is the “cleanest” of the three because of the pattern of factor loadings as well as the interpretation of the factors. Tables 17 through 19 present the three, four, and five-factor matrices. A discussion of each solution and the rationale for the four factor solution are presented next.

The three and five factor solutions. The three factor solution, while more closely mirroring the structure suggested by Richins and Dawson (1992), does not exactly reproduce the factors they identified. The only “clean” factor is centrality, comprised of four items. However, the three other centrality items are spread between the other two factors. Interestingly, factor analysis by Williams and Bryce (1992) yielded the same result. They discovered “some instability” in the centrality scale, with two items loading on the success scale and one on the happiness scale. Investigation of the four and five factor solutions reveals that, except for the placement of two items, the *structures* are almost identical. (Of course, the number of factors and the percent of variation in the data which is explained are not the same.) One centrality item becomes a single-item factor; one other centrality item is moved from one factor to another. In terms of variation explained, the fifth factor accounts for an additional 5.1 percent. In terms of understanding, however, the knowledge of the materialism construct is

Table 16
Scree Plot and Eigenvalues
The Richins and Dawson Scale



Factor	Eigenvalue	% of Var	Cum. %
1	4.809	26.7	26.7
2	1.602	8.9	35.6
3	1.318	7.3	42.9
4	1.179	6.6	49.5
5	.914	5.1	54.6

Table 17
Richins and Dawson Scale — Factor Analysis
Three Factor Solution

	Factor		
	1	2	3
Happiness (with) (Pleasure from) Possessions			
I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things. (H)	.7249	-.0049	.1449
My life would be better if I owned certain things I don't have. (H)	.7104	.0726	.1328
It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can't afford to buy all the things I'd like. (H)	.6206	.0281	.2744
I have all the things I really need to enjoy life. * (H)	.5802	.1334	-.1063
I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes. (S)	.5795	.1802	.2288
Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions. (S)	.5505	.2533	-.1106
I like to own things that impress people. (S)	.5294	.2801	.3154
I wouldn't be any happier if I owned nicer things. * (H)	.4342	.1400	.2246
Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure. (C)	.4111	.1954	.3442
Success			
I don't pay much attention to the material objects other people own. * (S)	.0056	.6589	.2808
I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know. * (C)	.0484	.6405	.2003
I don't place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success. * (S)	.3811	.5629	-.1365
The things I own aren't all that important to me. * (C)	.1388	.5470	.0596
The things I own say a lot about how well I'm doing in life. (S)	.3259	.4858	-.0825
Centrality			
I usually buy only the things I need. * (C)	-.0622	.1767	.7315
I like a lot of luxury in my life. (C)	.3772	.0865	.5862
I enjoy spending money on things that aren't practical. (C)	.2506	-.0750	.5472
I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned. * (C)	.0233	.4377	.4937

* Reverse scored items.
(H) Original Happiness Subscale Item
(S) Original Success Subscale Item
(C) Original Centrality Subscale Item

Table 18
Richins and Dawson Scale — Factor Analysis
Four Factor Solution

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Happiness				
I have all the things I really need to enjoy life. * (H)	.7011	-.1238	.0999	.1439
I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things. (H)	.6934	.2562	-.0242	.1731
It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can't afford to buy all the things I'd like. (H)	.6439	.2992	.0949	.0553
My life would be better if I owned certain things I don't have. (H)	.6438	.2576	.0189	.2454
I wouldn't be any happier if I owned nicer things. * (H)	.5947	.0988	.2682	-.0634
Pleasure of Acquisition(s)				
I like a lot of luxury in my life. (C)	.1764	.6930	.1533	.1191
I enjoy spending money on things that aren't practical. (C)	.0630	.6606	.0161	.0092
Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure. (C)	.1640	.5122	.1243	.3197
I usually buy only the things I need. * (C)	.0254	.5012	.4922	-.3027
I like to own things that impress people. (S)	.3042	.4725	.1902	.3818
I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes. (S)	.3162	.4564	.0437	.4195
Centrality				
I don't pay much attention to the material objects other people own. * (S)	.0825	.0527	.7245	.1296
I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned. * (C)	.1635	.2241	.6508	-.1158
I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know. * (C)	.0256	.0748	.6154	.2630
The things I own aren't all that important to me. * (C)	.0788	.0176	.4509	.3349
Success				
The things I own say a lot about how well I'm doing in life. (S)	-.0505	.1915	.1219	.7277
Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions. (S)	.3151	.1316	-.0053	.5494
I don't place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success. * (S)	.2927	-.0907	.3531	.5133

* Reverse scored items.

(H) Original Happiness Subscale Item; (C) Original Centrality Subscale Item

(S) Original Success Subscale Item

Table 19
Richins and Dawson Scale — Factor Analysis
Five Factor Solution

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Happiness					
I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things. (H)	.7059	.2740	.1277	-.0762	.1191
My life would be better if I owned certain things I don't have. (H)	.6571	.2852	.1750	-.0784	.1981
I have all the things I really need to enjoy life. * (H)	.6425	-.1523	.3560	.2014	-.2021
I wouldn't be any happier if I owned nicer things. * (H)	.6287	.0819	-.1109	.1554	.3192
It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can't afford to buy all the things I'd like. (H)	.6219	.2704	.1599	.1943	-.1064
Pleasure of Acquisition(s)					
I like a lot of luxury in my life. (C)	.1813	.6853	.0801	.1865	.0766
I enjoy spending money on things that aren't practical. (C)	.0629	.6438	.0063	.1365	-.1047
Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure. (C)	.1775	.5469	.1961	.0098	.2728
I like to own things that impress people. (S)	.2914	.4953	.3426	.1175	.1931
I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes. (S)	.2839	.4821	.4324	.0473	.0056
Success					
The things I own say a lot about how well I'm doing in life. (S)	-.0958	.2635	.6795	-.0284	.2342
I don't place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success. * (S)	.2234	-.0779	.6389	.2689	.1243
Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions. (S)	.2628	.1759	.5957	-.0446	-.0103
Centrality					
I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned. * (C)	.1199	.1324	.0937	.7583	.0173
I usually buy only the things I need. * (C)	.0220	.4103	-.1945	.6327	.0034
I don't pay much attention to the material objects other people own. * (S)	.0786	.0241	.1345	.5370	.5027
I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know. * (C)	-.0007	.0601	.2998	.4704	.3742
Factor 5					
The things I own aren't all that important to me. * (C)	.1208	.0660	.1183	.0683	.7584

* Reverse scored items.

(H) Original Happiness Subscale Item; (C) Original Centrality Subscale Item

(S) Original Success Subscale Item

not enhanced. The discussion of the four factor solution explains why.

The four factor solution. With four-factors, 49.5 percent of the variation in the data is explained. After varimax rotation, all the happiness items loaded on the first factor. Three of the success items loaded on the fourth factor; factors two and three were a combination of success and centrality items. While both of these latter factors were dominated by centrality items, factor two contained items which addressed the process of acquiring possessions, and factor three contained items reflecting the importance of those possession in one's life (which is how Richins and Dawson define centrality). The presence of the additional factor (factor two)—entitled pleasure from acquisition—is warranted by theory and may not be occasioned just by this particular data set. For instance, Campbell (1987) theorized that in a “high level” consumer culture, in which people have what they need, the pursuit of acquisitions is as important, if not more important, than the actual possessions themselves. Further, Fournier and Richins (1991) found that acquiring and caring for possessions are activities common to materialists. Materialists are happy and active shoppers: “visiting shops to see what is available. Always thinking about future purchases so that thinking about buying involves pleasure and happiness” (p. 410).

At first glance, this four factor solution does not appear to be a clean one. Several items have loadings of .3 or better on more than one factor. However, Nunnally (1978) cautions against “over interpreting the meaning of small factor loadings, e.g. those below .40” (p. 434). Thus if loadings of .4 or greater are considered, only two items have cross loadings, and the evaluation of the four-factor solution is improved.

Richins indicates that as “long as the overall Alpha is reasonable,” she is not overly concerned with the variations in the scale structure since factor analysis is “notoriously prone” to variations with different samples (personal

communication, May 25, 1993). While Nunnally (1978) supports that conclusion, the factors should be stable across similar data sets. In their *Journal of Consumer Research* article, Richins and Dawson (1992) present the factor analysis which was derived from only one of their four samples. So, indeed, the differences in factor structure between this study and theirs could be explained by differences in data sets. As Table 20 illustrates, there are statistically significant differences between the samples. Theirs contained more older respondents, more college graduates, and more males. For a reliable, valid scale, however, when samples are similar, differences in factor structures should not be a frequent occurrence.

The finding of four instead of three factors has a number of implications, assuming that it is not just an artifact of the data set. As noted above, there is theoretical support for the notion that materialists enjoy the process of acquiring possessions and that they admire and like to own impressive items. On the other hand, it might be argued that in a consumption oriented society, for many people, shopping is simply an enjoyable activity. Further, since it has already been established that in Western societies people use possessions to cement their self identities, then noticing, admiring, and enjoying shopping for possessions may not necessarily be a sign of materialism. It may simply be reflective of a certain amount of status consciousness. If these last two points are true, then the scale might be improved by omitting the items on the "pleasure in acquisition(s)" factor, since they measure a dimension which is not necessarily materialism.²

²As a quick test of this idea, the six "pleasure of acquisition" items were removed from the scale. On a reliability basis, the removal was not an improvement. The overall scale Alpha remained a respectable .77 and Alpha for the happiness subscale was .74, again quite acceptable. Alphas for the two remaining subscales, however, fell to unacceptable levels: .58 for centrality and .54 for success. These results indicate that further research is required. As a final check, factor analysis of the reduced scale was run. Indeed, the three factors which had been hypothesized did emerge cleanly, accounting for 50 percent of the variation in the data. However, similar results might not be obtained with other data sets. That is a subject for future research.

Table 20
Comparison of Samples
This Study and the Richins and Dawson Study

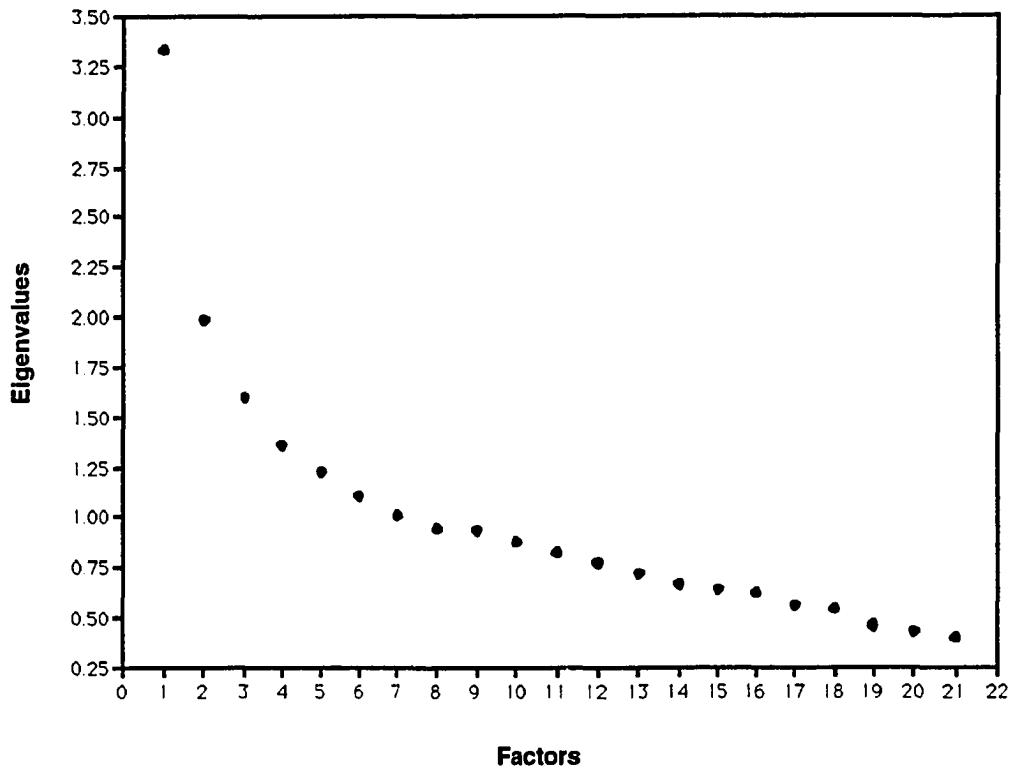
	This Study's Sample	Richins & Dawson Sample	
Gender			
Female	61.9	55.6	Chi-square = 7.363 p = .007
Male	34.2	43.2	
No Answer	4.0	1.2	
Age			
18–34	54.3	16.8	Chi-square = 306.049 p = .000
35–49	32.4	39.5	
50+	13.3	43.5	
No Answer	1.1	0.8	
Household Income			
Less than \$25k	31.7	39.6	Chi-square = 6.086 p = .108
\$25–\$34.9k	19.1	16.8	
\$35–\$49.9k	22.3	24.4	
\$50k+	20.5	16.8	
No Answer	6.5	2.4	
Education			
High School or less	19.0	22.4	Chi-square = 23.913 p = .000
Some College	52.9	38.0	
College Grad +	27.4	37.2	
No Answer	0.7	2.4	

The Belk Scale

While Belk has suggested that four personality traits of possessiveness, nongenerosity, envy and preservation (tangibility) incline one toward materialism, factor analysis in this study did not suggest the same four facets. Instead, the results suggest that three through eight factors are possible (see Table 21 for scree plot and eigenvalues). When an eight factor solution was requested, however, varimax failed to converge in 24 iterations. Table 22 through Table 26 present the three through seven factor matrices. Before discussing the alternative solutions, the four factor structure will be addressed.

The four factor solution. Because the Belk scale is comprised of four subscales, factor analysis was run with four factors being specified. The resulting structure is presented in Table 23. Consistent with Belk (1984, 1985; Ger and Belk 1990, 1993) nongenerosity was the first factor to emerge, indicating that it accounts for the greatest proportion of variation in the data. Of course, this result is what one would expect, since the nongenerosity subscale contains nine of the 21 items in the scale. Nunnally's (1978) caution about not ascribing too much importance to the first factor if the scale is constructed so that more of its items measure factor one—type constructs is worth remembering. The only clean factor, however, is preservation, on which the three intended items load. This result is not surprising since the Alpha for this subscale is the largest of the four, .65. The envy and nongenerosity subscales are composed primarily of the "right" items, though there is some mix between the two. Again, knowledge of the internal consistency of these two subscales helps explain the results. Belk acknowledges that the nongenerosity subscale generally has been the "most internally consistent factor" (personal communication, May 7, 1993). Its Alpha is .64; the Alpha for envy is .50. The possessiveness subscale, however, is a mixture of possessiveness and nongenerosity items—again to be expected from the Alpha of

Table 21
Scree Plot and Eigenvalues
The Belk Scale



Factor	Eigenvalue	% of Var	Cum. %
1	3.325	15.8	15.8
2	1.979	9.4	25.3
3	1.598	7.6	32.9
4	1.356	6.5	39.3
5	1.229	5.9	45.2
6	1.108	5.3	50.5
7	1.008	4.8	55.3

.38 which was found in this study for that subscale.

What is to be made of the mix of items among the factors? Certainly factor analysis is not an exact analytical technique and should be interpreted using the numerical results as well as an understanding of the concepts involved. The four factor solution, however, only accounts for 39.3 percent of the variation in the data, while other factor solutions explain more than 50 percent of the variation. In Ger and Belk's most recent cross-cultural study (1993), the four factors account for 28 percent of the variance for the overall sample. Specific information for different countries is not available. Another consideration is the nature of the construct being measured by this scale—personality traits. Since personality is quite variable across individuals, a scale which measures a variety of personality traits might also be expected to be variable. Additionally, factor analysis looks for commonalities. If there is not much similarity in the personalities of the people being sampled, more factors rather than fewer would be expected. As noted at the beginning of this section, the correlations among the items in the Belk scale are quite low, with only four being above .30. Thus there would appear to be few commonalities among the items.

Belk may have consistently found four factors, partly because he has consistently used student samples. In fact, he admits to desiring a homogeneous sample to smooth out differences (Ger and Belk 1993). This study's design, however, called for a more heterogeneous sample in an attempt to reflect the adult population. Nunnally (1978) issues a strong caution about sample composition. He suggests that if a scale's factors are to be interpreted solely for people with a particular characteristic, such as a given age range, then the sample should be homogeneous with respect to that characteristic. If, however, the factors are intended to be generalized across more heterogeneous groups, as with the materialism scales, then the sample should be similarly heterogeneous.

Table 22
Belk Scale: Three Factor Solution

	Factor		
	1	2	3
Selfishness (Nongenerosity and Envy)			
There are certain people I would like to trade places with. (E)	.6532	-.0674	.1134
I don't seem to get what is coming to me. (E)	.5845	-.0351	-.0124
When friends have things I cannot afford, it bothers me. (NG)	.5441	.1490	.0257
I enjoy donating things for charity. * (NG)	.5298	.2750	-.2845
I enjoy sharing what I have. * (NG)	.4890	.3720	-.2475
When friends do better than me in competition it usually makes me feel happy for them.* (NG)	.4739	-.0087	-.0701
I am bothered when I see people who buy anything they want. (E)	.4555	.0953	.1744
If I have to choose between buying something for myself versus for someone I love, I would prefer buying for myself. (E)	.4259	.2703	-.0639
I do not enjoy donating things to the needy. (NG)	.3572	.0701	-.0721
People who are very wealthy often feel they are too good to talk to average people. (E)	.3174	.0086	.1336
Possessiveness and Worry over Loss			
I don't like to lend things, even to good friends. (NG)	.0561	.7164	.0199
I worry about people taking my possessions. (NG)	.2209	.5513	.1195
I don't like to have anyone in my home when I'm not there. (P)	.0644	.5448	-.0064
I am less likely than most people to lock things up. * (P)	-.1161	.5331	-.1105
I don't mind giving rides to those who don't have a car. * (NG)	.2687	.4263	-.0579
I get very upset if something is stolen from me, even if it has little monetary value. (P)	.0302	.4134	.3716
I enjoy having people I like stay in my home. * (NG)	.1526	.3182	-.2617
Preservation/Collecting			
I like to collect things. (Pr)	.0346	-.1136	.6969
I have a lot of souvenirs. (Pr)	.0236	-.1979	.6917
I tend to hang on to things I should probably throw out. (Pr)	.0478	.0542	.6648
I don't particularly get upset when I lose things. * (P)	-.0584	.2489	.3657

* Reverse scored items.

(NG) Original Nongenerosity Subscale Item; (E) Original Envy Subscale Item

(P) Original Possessiveness Subscale Item; (Pr) Original Preservation Subscale Item

Table 23
Belk Scale: Four Factor Solution

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Nongenerosity				
I enjoy donating things for charity. * (NG)	.6433	.2104	.0694	-.1597
I enjoy sharing what I have. * (NG)	.6156	.1865	.1818	-.1487
I don't mind giving rides to those who don't have a car. * (NG)	.5521	-.0534	.2598	.0782
I enjoy having people I like stay in my home. * (NG)	.5128	-.1821	.1305	-.1007
If I have to choose between buying something for myself versus for someone I love, I would prefer buying for myself. (E)	.4376	.2309	.1530	-.0104
When friends do better than me in competition it usually makes me feel happy for them.* (NG)	.4375	.2334	-.1401	.0494
I do not enjoy donating things to the needy. (NG)	.4013	.1276	-.0535	.0405
Envy				
I am bothered when I see people who buy anything they want. (E)	.0222	.6016	.1527	.0229
There are certain people I would like to trade places with. (E)	.2830	.5920	-.1086	.1082
When friends have things I cannot afford, it bothers me. (NG)	.2230	.5567	.1269	-.0562
I don't seem to get what is coming to me. (E)	.2767	.5224	-.0895	-.0214
People who are very wealthy often feel they are too good to talk to average people. (E)	-.0606	.4765	.0756	-.0032
Possessiveness				
I don't like to lend things, even to good friends. (NG)	.3937	-.1326	.6168	.0458
I worry about people taking my possessions. (NG)	.1396	.2825	.5649	-.0177
I get very upset if something is stolen from me, even if it has little monetary value. (P)	-.2132	.3049	.5594	.1361
I am less likely than most people to lock things up. * (P)	.1013	-.1164	.5077	-.1780
I don't like to have anyone in my home when I'm not there. (P)	.2063	.0173	.5056	-.0577
I don't particularly get upset when I lose things. * (P)	-.2059	.1419	.3722	.2142
Preservation				
I like to collect things. (Pr)	-.0140	-.0529	-.1419	.8075
I have a lot of souvenirs. (Pr)	-.0311	-.0035	-.0439	.7728
I tend to hang on to things I should probably throw out. (Pr)	-.0372	.0604	.1357	.6784

* Reverse scored items.

(NG) Original Nongenerosity Subscale Item; (E) Original Envy Subscale Item

(P) Original Possessiveness Subscale Item; (Pr) Original Preservation Subscale Item

Differences in age, sex, education, and the like can result in different factors emerging from the analysis. Thus, one should expect that the factors which are produced from Belk's student samples would not be the same as those produced when the sample is more heterogeneous. Hence, the results being discussed here are what one might expect. Similarly, the nine-factor solution reported by Cole et al. (1992) from a survey of adults in a large midwestern city is not surprising.

The three factor solution. Of the remaining possible solutions, the six factor structure is the most interpretable. Before discussing it, reasons for rejecting the others will be addressed. The three factor solution, presented in Table 22 is quite appealing numerically, with no items having cross loadings of .4 or greater. However, the three factors account for only 32.9 percent of the variation in the data. More importantly, their interpretation is not intuitively appealing. Factor one is a mix of nongenerosity and envy items, suggesting selfishness, since the items which load here deal with not liking to share things or not wanting to give to charity or to the needy. Factor two is a mix of nongenerosity and possessiveness items. They would appear to tap ideas of both possessiveness and concern for loss of possessions. Finally, the three preservation items and one possessiveness item load on the third factor. Conceptually, personality traits of selfishness, possessiveness, and preservation seem to be too broad for a measure of materialism. The finer distinctions which appear in the six factor solution are preferable.

The five factor solution. The five factor solution, presented in Table 24, is an improvement over the three and four factor structures. However, it too, contains factors which are a mixture of items from the original subscales. Nongenerosity items load on four of the factors, possessiveness items load on two, and envy items load on three. Except for the factor with the three preservation items, the factors are not as interpretable as in the six factor

Table 24
Belk Scale: Five Factor Solution

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Selfishness/Me-Centered					
When friends do better than me in competition it usually makes me feel happy for them.* (NG)	.6749	-.1883	.0289	-.0668	.0463
I enjoy donating things for charity.* (NG)	.5969	.2023	-.1445	.2285	-.1429
I enjoy sharing what I have.* (NG)	.5505	.3063	-.1308	.2129	-.1009
I don't mind giving rides to those who don't have a car.* (NG)	.5505	.3293	.0962	-.1319	-.0807
When friends have things I cannot afford, it bothers me. (NG)	.5302	-.0525	-.0972	.1640	.4233
If I have to choose between buying something for myself versus for someone I love, I would prefer buying for myself. (E)	.4823	.1764	-.0098	.1364	.0499
Worry over Possession Loss					
I don't like to lend things, even to good friends.(NG)	.2873	.6725	.0753	-.1234	.0390
I don't like to have anyone in my home when I'm not there. (P)	.0325	.5749	-.0322	.1536	.0574
I am less likely than most people to lock things up.* (P)	-.0103	.5355	-.1563	-.0652	.0737
I worry about people taking my possessions. (NG)	.1577	.4873	-.0208	.1857	.3538
Preservation					
I have a lot of souvenirs. (Pr)	-.0570	-.1352	.8092	.0307	-.0591
I like to collect things. (Pr)	-.0339	-.0779	.7695	.0178	.0400
I tend to hang on to things I probably should throw out. (Pr)	.0026	.0522	.6703	.0036	.1782
Envy					
I don't seem to get what is coming to me. (E)	.1676	.0067	-.0218	.6967	.0009
People who are very wealthy often feel they are too good to talk to average people. (E)	-.1245	.0614	-.0139	.5880	.2097
There are certain people I would like to trade places with. (E)	.3519	-.1193	.0879	.5443	.1502
I do not enjoy donating things to the needs. (NG)	.0948	.1939	.0755	.5155	-.3194
Factor Five					
I get very upset if something is stolen from me, even if it has little monetary value. (P)	-.0365	.3172	.1073	.0311	.6015
I am bothered when I see people who buy anything they want. (E)	.3063	-.0618	-.0227	.2534	.5125
I enjoy having people I like stay in my home.* (NG)	.1814	.4129	-.0482	.1782	-.4235
I don't particularly get upset when I lose things.* (P)	-.1043	.2058	.1966	-.0182	.3946

* Reverse scored items.

(NG) Original Nongenerosity Subscale Item; (E) Original Envy Subscale Item

(P) Original Possessiveness Subscale Item; (Pr) Original Preservation Subscale Item

solution—though some of them do hint at it. For example, factor one contains items which indicate a self-centered orientation and factor two contains items which address worry over loss of possessions. The fifth factor, however, also seems to address the same concern—as indicated by cross loadings of two items on the second and fifth factors. Hence, this solution can also be rejected.

The six and seven factor solutions. Tables 25 and 26 present the six and seven factor structures. The common feature of both solutions is that the nine nongenerosity items do not form a single factor. They are dispersed among four factors in the six factor solution and among five factors in the seven factor solution. This situation would appear to suggest that nongenerosity may not be a single construct in people's minds.

More specifically, in the six factor solution, nongenerosity is divided into three dimensions. The first deals with sharing with others (with scale items such as lending possessions, giving rides to those without transportation, and generally sharing what one has). The second face of nongenerosity seems to be selfishness, or a "me versus thee" mentality (with statements of not rejoicing in others' good fortunes, not donating to charity, and buying things for oneself instead of for others loading on this factor). Third, nongenerosity seems to manifest itself in an almost siege mentality (items suggest not liking to have friends stay in one's home, not helping out the needy, and feeling that one generally doesn't get what one deserves from society).

The remaining three factors are quite separate from nongenerosity. The preservation factor remains intact, as before. Two envy items load on the sixth factor (being envious, even jealous, of the wealthy and of people who seem to be able to buy what they want). And, finally, the possessiveness items load together. This last factor might be more accurately termed a "worry over loss of possessions" rather than the "desire to retain control or ownership of the

Table 25
Belk Scale: Six Factor Solution

	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Factor 1 (Nongenerosity—not sharing)						
I don't like to lend things, even to good friends. (NG)	.739	-.083	.037	.328	-.053	.101
I don't mind giving rides to those who don't have a car. * (NG)	.638	.227	.065	.049	.016	-.102
I enjoy sharing what I have. * (NG)	.615	.256	-.152	-.029	.228	.193
Factor 2 (Nongenerosity—selfishness)						
When friends have things I cannot afford, it bothers me. (NG)	.081	.672	-.069	.152	-.037	.153
When friends do better than me in competition it usually makes me feel happy for them.* (NG)	.174	.657	.032	-.123	.021	-.249
There are certain people I would like to trade places with. (E)	-.087	.512	-.109	.016	.388	.249
I enjoy donating things for charity. * (NG)	.341	.448	-.170	.068	.404	-.119
If I have to choose between buying something for myself versus for someone I love, I would prefer buying for myself. (E)	.347	.365	-.019	.078	.149	.049
Factor 3 (Preservation)						
I have a lot of souvenirs. (Pr)	-.004	-.084	.813	-.155	.018	.025
I like to collect things. (Pr)	.010	-.038	.776	-.059	-.028	.050
I tend to hang on to things I should probably throw out. (Pr)	-.046	.075	.674	.196	-.009	-.038
Factor 4 (Possessiveness—worry over loss)						
I don't particularly get upset when I lose things. * (P)	-.302	.164	.202	.602	-.003	-.167
I don't like to have anyone in my home when I'm not there. (P)	.176	-.030	-.064	.548	.287	-.033
I get very upset if something is stolen from me, even if it has little monetary value. (P)	.039	.113	.129	.538	-.248	.313
I worry about people taking my possessions. (NG)	.258	.148	-.024	.511	.055	.264
I am less likely than most people to lock things up. * (P)	.205	-.102	-.186	.494	.071	-.098
Factor 5 (nongenerosity—siege mentality)						
I do not enjoy donating things to the needy. (NG)	.054	.017	.048	.040	.666	.051
I don't seem to get what is coming to me. (E)	-.081	.273	-.012	-.025	.561	.356
I enjoy having people I like stay in my home. * (NG)	.343	-.097	-.101	-.018	.499	-.169
Factor 6 (Envy—jealousy)						
People who are very wealthy often feel they are too good to talk to average people. (E)	.042	-.065	.016	-.018	.164	.768
I am bothered when I see people who buy anything they want. (E)	.086	.451	.021	.085	-.152	.485

* Reverse scored items.

(NG) Original Nongenerosity Subscale Item; (E) Original Envy Subscale Item

(P) Original Possessiveness Subscale Item; (Pr) Original Preservation Subscale Item

Table 26
Belk Scale: Seven Factor Solution

	Factor						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Factor 1 (Nongenerosity)							
I don't mind giving rides to those who don't have a car. * (NG)	.702	.054	.041	.047	.002	.061	-.094
I don't like to lend things, even to good friends. (NG)	.654	.056	.024	-.253	.369	.142	.177
I enjoy sharing what I have. * (NG)	.653	-.151	-.167	.228	.097	-.096	.158
If I have to choose between buying something for myself versus for someone I love, I would prefer buying for myself. (E)	.380	-.015	.300	.166	.148	-.010	-.068
Factor 2 (Preservation)							
I have a lot of souvenirs. (Pr)	-.006	.812	-.101	.046	-.118	-.071	.049
I like to collect things. (Pr)	.022	.769	-.047	.025	-.117	.029	.061
I tend to hang on to things I should probably throw out. (Pr)	-.084	.682	.144	-.051	.177	.133	-.107
Factor 3 (Envy)							
When friends have things I cannot afford, it bothers me. (NG)	.137	-.065	.708	.101	.074	.065	-.148
I am bothered when I see people who buy anything they want. (E)	.102	.030	.657	-.017	-.027	.032	.241
Factor 4 (Nongenerosity and Envy)							
I do not enjoy donating things to the needy. (NG)	.126	.025	-.204	.658	.167	.036	.118
There are certain people I would like to trade places with. (E)	.069	.076	.344	.629	-.105	.101	.075
I enjoy donating things for charity. * (NG)	.459	-.191	.157	.479	.111	.429	-.204
I don't seem to get what is coming to me. (E)	-.126	.014	.383	.479	.398	-.200	.183
Factor 5 (Home)							
I don't like to have anyone in my home when I'm not there. (P)	.081	-.047	.070	.035	.654	.258	-.026
I enjoy having people I like stay in my home. * (NG)	.223	-.063	-.112	.166	.629	-.213	-.119
I worry about people taking my possessions. (NG)	.214	-.017	.323	-.036	.403	.317	.191
Factor 6 (Possessiveness)							
I don't particularly get upset when I lose things. * (P)	-.181	-.148	.037	.146	.032	.701	.189
I get very upset if something is stolen from me, even if it has little monetary value. (P)	.085	.102	.259	-.135	.008	.571	.268
I am less likely than most people to lock things up. *(P)	.277	-.228	-.237	.075	.116	.533	.047
Factor 7 (Jealousy)							
People who are very wealthy often feel they are too good to talk to average people. (E)	.056	.009	.134	.254	-.098	.022	.771
When friends do better than me in competition it usually makes me feel happy for them.* (NG)	.329	.011	.361	.249	-.207	-.029	-.452

* Reverse scored items.

(NG) Original Nongenerosity Subscale Item; (E) Original Envy Subscale Item

(P) Original Possessiveness Subscale Item; (Pr) Original Preservation Subscale Item

possessions” as Belk (1985) suggests. This factor includes items which address emotional distress over actual and anticipated losses, as well as an item concerned with locking things up. The stray nongenerosity item which loads on this factor seems particularly relevant: “I worry about people taking my possessions.” Thus, the six factor solution, which accounts for 50.5 percent of the variation in the data, seems to offer the tightest solution in terms of the personality traits which are being measured.

While the seven factor solution would appear to be optimal, it is not as interpretable as the six factor solution. The nongenerosity items load on five of the factors, but not according to a clear pattern. The envy subscale items are scattered among five factors, again not in any discernible pattern. Additionally, possessiveness subscale items load on two factors instead of loading together. The preservation items, however, continue to preserve their independence.

One common feature of both the six and seven factor solutions is the pairing of nongenerosity and envy. Belk distinguishes between the two traits saying that nongenerosity is an unwillingness to give or share possessions with others (Belk 1985), while envy is displeasure with another’s superiority in happiness, success, reputation or possessions (Schoeck 1966, as quoted in Belk 1985). The pairing of items from these two subscales suggests either that the distinction drawn in the research is not one made by people in everyday life or that the items are not written in a way that makes the distinction obvious. In either case it certainly can be imagined that one might be unwilling to share possessions because of not wanting to increase the success or good fortune of another. Hence nongenerosity and envy may be intertwined.

Decisions about the appropriate factor structure for the Belk scale, of course, cannot be made solely on the results of this study. While additional testing is required, the results reported here are not unusual. As already

mentioned, Cole et al. (1992) identified nine factors when they analyzed a large, diverse, non-student sample. Results such as these tend to confirm the need to test the scale on samples other than student populations.³

Having assessed the reliability, the convergent validity, and the factor structures of the two materialism scales, the discussion now turns to a consideration of the specific research hypotheses for the study. In addition to providing pleasing results, the success of these hypotheses contributes to the nomological validity of the materialism measures.

TESTS OF HYPOTHESES

In addition to providing a further test of the two materialism scales, this study was designed to augment the discipline's understanding of materialism by considering the nature of the materialistic self. Four constructs were selected for consideration: self-esteem, a global measure of self evaluation; self-actualization, a measure of how well an individual is fulfilling his/her potential; self-monitoring, a life-style decision regarding attention paid to the values and expectations of others versus those of one's self; and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, a measure of engaging in activities and buying products for the pleasure inherent in them or for some reason external to the activity or item. It was hypothesized that the materialistic individual would have lower self-esteem, be less self-actualized, be more likely to be self-monitoring, and

³Ger and Belk (1993) are correct in saying that the use of student populations reduces the variability in the sample and the attendant influence of that variability on scale development and testing. However, the use of a homogeneous sample can lead to other problems as this section has pointed out. Further, while Richins and Dawson used students in studies aimed at scale development, the final testing was accomplished through surveys of adults in four different cities. Ger and Belk (1993) suggest that one of the next steps in the materialism research program should be to test the Belk scale with non-student adult populations.

indicate that extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation was the reason for engaging in various activities.

Correlation analysis was selected as the technique most consistent with the materialism research "tradition"—as well as with the social science tradition. Cohen (1988) notes that behavioral scientists frequently employ "correlational analysis as an investigative tool in both pure and applied studies" (p. 75), primarily because it allows for measures of association without making assumptions about causality. Belk (1985) and Richins and Dawson (1992) have cautioned that at this point we do not know if materialism is an antecedent or consequent of considerations such as life satisfaction. In addition to the correlations, however, this analysis extends the research on materialism by developing a profile of those who score high on the materialism scales.

As each research question is examined, it will become clear that the correlations were all in the direction hypothesized and were all statistically significant at the .01 level or better. Thus the four hypotheses were confirmed—though the caution noted above about the intrinsic/extrinsic scale bears repeating. The results of the correlation analyses are presented in Table 27. After the hypothesis tests are discussed, scale validity will be assessed. Finally, profiles of high and low materialists are developed.

Hypothesis One: Materialism and Self-Monitoring

The first research hypothesis was that individuals who were more materialistic would also be high self-monitors. The correlation between the Richins and Dawson scale and the self-monitoring scale was .3956 ($p = .000$); the correlation between Belk's scale and self-monitoring was .1826 ($p = .001$). Using either measure of materialism, the correlation analysis demonstrates that as materialism scores increase, indicating a more materialistic person,

Table 27
Tests of Hypotheses

Scale	Correlation	
	R&D	Belk
Self-Esteem	-.1364**	-.2109*
Self-Actualization	-.3400*	-.4674*
Self-Monitoring	.3956*	.1826***
Intrinsic/Extrinsic	-.3198*	-.3382*
Belk Scale	.4691*	

* Correlation significant at $p = .000$

** Correlation significant at $p = .012$

*** Correlation significant at $p = .001$

self-monitoring scores also increase, indicating a more self-monitoring individual. This is the direction which was hypothesized because self-monitors are expected to be scanning the environment, looking for cues about how to behave and how to express themselves, about how to manage their self-presentations. Since possessions often provide those cues in our society, and since materialists are also expected to be focused on possessions, the two measures were expected to be positively and significantly correlated.

That the correlation between materialism and self-monitoring is more pronounced for the Richins and Dawson scale (.39) than for the Belk scale (.18) is consistent with the self-monitoring construct. Self-monitoring is not a personality trait, one of many which an individual may have. Rather, according to Snyder (1987), self-monitoring reflects a lifestyle choice, which is more consistent with the value orientation adopted by Richins and Dawson. Snyder explains that the differences in lifestyles may be accounted for by the different conceptions of self held by high versus low self-monitors:

High self-monitors ask, "Who does this situation want me to be and how can I be that person?" whereas low self-monitors want to know, "Who am I and how can I be me in this situation?" Researchers have found that these two characteristic interpersonal orientations are accompanied by differing conceptions of self—a pragmatic sense of self for high self-monitors and a principled sense of self for low self-monitors.... [P]eople structure the circumstances of their lives to maximize the fit between their self-conceptions and their social behavior (1987, pp. 31-32).

Thus, in being pragmatic, high self-monitors consider "externally located identity characteristics particularly important" (Snyder 1987, p. 48). In response to the "Who Are You" twenty-questions test, they respond with statements such as, "I am a post office worker; I am quarterback of my school's football team." In general, they respond with answers that reflect the roles they play. In order to

play the roles correctly, self-monitors are also avid readers of magazines and books which focus on fashion and appearance. They have been found to be more likely to select furniture and decorations for both home and office "according to their strategic value in controlling the images they project in social situations" (Snyder 1987, p. 63). In general, high self-monitors display the characteristics and concerns which have also been attributed to materialists.

Low self-monitors, on the other hand, in being principled selves, march to their own internal drummer. They consider internally located aspects of identity, such as emotions and feelings, to be more important. When asked, "Who are you?" they respond with statements such as, "I am friendly; I am a liberal." While possessions might be employed to convey these images, low self-monitors, like low materialists are not expected to place strong emphasis on possessions because they are external to the self.

Hypothesis Two: Materialism and Intrinsic/Extrinsic Motivation

The second research hypothesis dealt with the relationship between materialism and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. As noted above, the IE Index is suspect, so results are reported with caution. The correlation between the Richins and Dawson scale and the IE Index was $-.3189$ ($p = .000$); the correlation between the Belk scale and the IE Index was $-.3382$ ($p = .000$). Using either measure of materialism, the correlation analysis demonstrates that as materialism scores increase, intrinsic motivation (indicated by the score on the IE Index) decreases. This is the direction which was hypothesized because materialists value possessions for what those possessions will say about them (signs of success) or do for them (provide happiness, etc.). In either case, the possessions are not valued for themselves and, hence, the motivation to acquire them is extrinsic rather than intrinsic. Accordingly, the two measures were

expected to be negatively and significantly correlated; and they are.

That both measures correlated well with the IE Index indicates that the external orientation has some explanatory power with regard to materialism, and vice versa. This conclusion is consistent with that which was tested in the first hypothesis about self-monitoring. Materialists do have an external orientation and seem to be motivated by extrinsic factors. Calculating the square of the correlations, one can see that slightly more than ten percent of the variation in materialism can be explained by the variation in intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. For social science research, this conclusion is rather significant (Cohen 1988; Nunnally 1978). However, because of the reliability problems with the IE Index, confidence in this conclusion is not strong.

Hypothesis Three: Materialism and Self-Esteem

The third hypothesis was that individuals with high scores on either materialism scale would have low scores on the self-esteem scale. The correlation between the Richins and Dawson scale and the self-esteem scale was $-.1364$ ($p = .012$); the correlation between the Belk scale and self-esteem was $-.2109$ ($p = .000$). Using either measure of materialism, the correlation analysis demonstrates that as materialism scores increase, indicating a more materialistic person, self-esteem scores decrease, indicating an individual with less self-esteem. This is the direction which was hypothesized.

As discussed in Chapter Two, self-esteem is an overall measure of a person's confidence in him/herself. The research and theory suggested that people with high self-esteem are not expected to rely on outward signs of success and competence as much as individuals with lower self-esteem. And, as the tests of the first two hypotheses have demonstrated, people scoring higher on the materialism scales do rely on external indicators more than low scorers do. The

point is illustrated by the remarks of a participant in one of the Ger and Belk (1993) focus groups: "If [people] need *something* to feel like *someone*, then ... they're trying to substitute a material thing for something that should be from within" (p. 17). Across all cultures, people generally agreed that the use of possessions as a primary means to increasing or enhancing self-esteem stemmed from negative feelings about one's self. Further, as Bond (1992) theorized, the respect from others which comes as a result of possessions alone is thought to be "false" respect and thus is devalued, resulting in lower self-esteem. The materialist, who places all hopes for happiness and success on possessions, is more likely to feel this "false" respect than not. Hence the correlation between materialism and self-esteem was expected to be negative and significant, and the hypothesis was confirmed.

That the correlation was higher with the Belk scale than with the Richins and Dawson scale may be explained by both the Belk scale and the self-esteem scales being personality measures. Both are more direct measures of the self than is the Richins and Dawson scale—even though the latter scale is a more direct measure of materialism.

Hypothesis Four: Materialism and Self-Actualization

The fourth hypothesis was that individuals with high scores on either materialism scale would have low scores on the self-actualization scale. The correlation between the Richins and Dawson scale and the self-actualization scale was $-.3400$ ($p = .000$); the correlation between the Belk scale and self-actualization was $-.4674$ ($p = .000$). Using either measure of materialism, the correlation analysis demonstrates that as materialism scores increase, indicating a more materialistic person, self-actualization scores decrease, indicating a less self-actualized individual. Once again, the result is in the direction hypothesized.

Maslow (1950) provides an explanation for the negative relationship. Someone who is moving toward self-actualization is also becoming an autonomous individual, free from the influence of external forces. As previously discussed, a materialist is beholden to external forces. Hence, the correlation between materialism and self-actualization was expected to be negative and significant. In this study it was.

As before, the higher correlation with self-actualization and the Belk scale might be explained by the two measures being designed as psychological measures, whereas the Richins and Dawson scale was designed to measure one's orientation toward the value of materialism. However, in either case, the relationship between materialism and self-actualization is relatively strong—for social science research. Once again, calculating the square of the correlation coefficient, one learns that variation in self-actualization explains 11.5 percent of the variation in materialism as measured by the Richins and Dawson scale (and vice versa). For the Belk measure of materialism, 21.8 percent of its variation is explained by variation in self-actualization (and vice versa).

Overall, all four hypotheses were confirmed, though the caution about the second hypothesis must again be noted. While some of the correlations were "low" in an absolute sense, from the standpoint of social science research, the correlations between measures were quite acceptable. Because so much of human behavior and motivation is variable and not likely to be captured in a single scale, that correlations of .34, of .39, and of .47 were obtained is indeed pleasing, since, as explained above, such correlations translate into explanations of between 11 percent and 22 percent of the variation in the measures. As Nunnally (1978) reports from a review of studies in psychology, "the average of all correlations reported ... is less than .40" (p. 143). More recently, Cohen (1988) suggests that coefficients in the .00 to .60 range may be expected, with most

falling in the lower half of that range (p. 80). The confidence in these findings is enhanced by the strong theoretical links among the constructs which were tapped by the scales and materialism.

Assessing Construct Validity

Not only does the correlation analysis provide evidence to confirm the hypotheses, but it also provides evidence of two aspects of construct validity: nomological and convergent. As mentioned before, nomological validity refers to the "extent to which [a] scale correlates in theoretically predicted ways with measures of different but related constructs" (Malhotra 1993, p. 310). Convergent validity, on the other hand, refers to the "extent to which the scale correlates positively with other measures of the same construct" (Malhotra 1993, p. 310). The four self measures were all predicted to correlate in specific directions with the materialism measures. With these hypotheses being confirmed, further nodes were added to a nomological network, consisting of materialism and other constructs which are systematically related to it. Earlier research which correlated materialism with life satisfaction, with sets of products, with sets of values, etc., had already begun to build this network. That both measures of materialism correlated in the same directions with the four self measures is evidence for convergent validity.

Having confirmed the hypotheses, and having provided evidence of the validity of the two scales, analysis next proceeded to building a profile of materialists.

PROFILING MATERIALISTS

Belk (1984, 1985), Ger and Belk (1990, 1993) and Fournier and Richins (1991) began this process with focus group interviews which sought insight into descriptions of a materialist. Additionally, Belk has concluded that materialists are less likely to be happy with their lives, are more likely to be younger, and to be blue collar rather than white collar workers. Richins and Dawson (1992) corroborated some of these findings by providing evidence that materialists are more likely to be young than old, and by demonstrating that materialists are less satisfied with their lives. Neither of these research programs, however, have attempted a more specific profile of a materialist. Such a description would be quite useful for marketing practitioners and researchers alike. With the success of the hypothesis tests, additional information about materialists can be added to what is already known, thereby providing a deeper understanding of materialists.

In developing a profile, only the Richins and Dawson scale was used. For the reasons discussed above, this scale seems to be the more reliable and the more consistent across data sets. Reliability considerations also restrict the analysis to three of the self scales, omitting the IE Index.

Cluster Analysis.

To develop a profile, cluster analysis was run using the rotated factor scores derived from the four-factor solution which was suggested by this study. Not only did four factors provide a more interpretable solution than three factors, but it also was a "cleaner" structure. The Quick Cluster option in SPSSX was used since it employs a nonhierarchical iterative method for partitioning the clusters. Nonhierarchical methods are thought to be superior to hierarchical methods

when the number of observations is large, as in this study, and when nonrandom starting points are used, as with Quick Cluster (Hair, Anderson and Tatham 1987; Punj and Stewart 1983).

Two, three, four, and five cluster solutions were examined to determine if distinct clusters might be developed. It was thought, however, that either a two- or three-cluster solution would be optimal. A two-cluster solution might represent materialists versus nonmaterialists; a three-cluster solution might represent high, medium, and low materialists. The two cluster solution was rejected because t-tests of mean scores of the self measures indicated that there were no significant differences between the two clusters. Standard deviations for each cluster were also quite high for the four self measures. The four and five cluster solutions were rejected because each contained clusters with a small number of cases. In the four cluster solution, one cluster had nine members. In the five cluster solution, one cluster also had nine members while another had eleven. Hence, the three cluster solution was further investigated—especially since using three clusters is consistent with Richins and Dawson's (1992) groupings of respondents into three categories for some of their analyses. Cluster centers, distance between clusters, cluster memberships, and F-tests for cluster means for the three-cluster solution are presented in Table 28.

To develop a profile of each cluster, ANOVA was run for the Richins and Dawson materialism scale as well as for the self-esteem, self-actualization, and self-monitoring scales. The results indicate that the only significant differences on mean scale scores among the three clusters were for self-esteem ($F = 2.67$; $p = .071$) and self-actualization ($F = 2.362$; $p = .096$). Even though neither main effect was significant at the .05 level used in this research, comparisons were investigated to learn what insight might be found. The Bonferroni method was used because of the small number of comparisons and because of unequal

Table 28
Three Cluster Solution

Final Cluster Centers

Cluster	Factor Scores 1	Factor Scores 2	Factor Scores 3	Factor Scores 4
1	.5047	-.8266	-.0355	.5657
2	.7242	.4659	-1.3219	-.9184
3	-.3579	.3559	.2024	-.1600

F-Test for Cluster Centers

	Factor Scores 1	Factor Scores 2	Factor Scores 3	Factor Scores 4
F	33.9342	59.6806	28.2615	50.8106
Sig of F	.000	.000	.000	.000

Number of Cases in Each Cluster

Cluster	Number of Cases
1	84
2	23
3	165

Distance Between Cluster Centers

Cluster	1	2	3
1	.0000		
2	2.3614	.0000	
3	1.6510	2.0203	.0000

sample sizes (Neter, Wasserman and Kutner 1985). In neither case, however, were there significant differences between any two clusters, even at the .10 level of significance. For self-esteem, the contrast between the second cluster (with the lowest mean scale score) and the other two clusters (with higher mean scale scores) was significant only at the .16 level. For self-actualization, the contrast between the second cluster (with the highest mean scale score) and the other two clusters (with lower mean scale scores) was significant only at the .11 level. With this information, the interpretability and usefulness of the three clusters was called into question. When Chi-square tests were run to determine if there were significant differences among the clusters on demographic data, much the same conclusion was reached. There were no significant differences on the basis of ethnic background, education level, age, or gender. The only statistically significant difference was for income level. With this final evidence, the three cluster solution was also rejected.

Tercile Analysis

An alternative approach to developing an understanding of materialists versus nonmaterialists, however, was suggested by the work of Richins and Dawson (1992). For some of their analyses, they divided respondents into terciles based on their materialism scores and the top and bottom terciles were compared. (As mentioned above, however, no profile of materialists were developed as a result of the analyses.) The same analysis was conducted here using the overall scale score instead of individually analyzing the subscales. Three reasons support this decision. First, Richins and Dawson (1992) report that the "factors [the subscales] normally act in concert with respect to external variables" (p. 310). Secondly, Carver (1989) notes that using a summed scale is preferred for reasons of parsimony and clarity of communication— especially

when the subscales are considered to be measures of various manifestations (happiness, success, and centrality) of the underlying construct (materialism). He concludes that “the higher level of information (i. e., the consistent relation of the multifaceted [summed] construct to many outcome variables) is more important than the lower level [subscale] information” (p. 580). Finally, as discussed above, the reliability coefficient for the overall scale was clearly in the acceptable range (.83), but it was not for two of the subscales (the Alpha for centrality was .62; for success it was .68)—thereby arguing for use of the overall scale.

Respondents were apportioned into three groups, with break points at the top, middle, and lower thirds of the materialism scale scores. The bottom tercile, low materialists, had 88 members; the top tercile, high materialists, had 98 members; the middle tercile had 85 members. The analysis which follows, compares the top (high materialists) and bottom (low materialists) groups.

The first part of the investigation was to run t-tests to evaluate differences in mean scale scores between the two groups for the materialism scales and three of the self scales. As the information in Table 29 illustrates, in every case the differences were statistically significant at the .05 level or better and were in the direction suggested by the research hypotheses. Low materialists had lower mean self-esteem, self-actualization, and self-monitoring scores. They also scored lower on the Belk materialism scale.⁴ Additionally, once the respondents were partitioned into terciles, the standard deviations for the scale scores were more in line with what might be expected than was true with the cluster analysis.

The second part of the investigation dealt with the demographic data. Because the data was categorical (see the survey in Appendix A), the Chi-Square

⁴They also had lower scores on the Richins and Dawson materialism scale, which, of course, was to be expected. The t-test indicated that the difference in mean scale scores between the two groups was statistically significant.

Table 29
T-Tests of Scale Means for Bottom and Top Terciles
Group 1 = Bottom Tercile = Low Materialists
Group 2 = Top Tercile = High Materialists

Self-Esteem Scale

Group	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Prob.
1	88	34.8182	5.236	1.97	.051
2	98	33.3980	4.542		

Self-Actualization Scale

Group	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Prob.
1	88	65.9659	9.902	4.87	.000
2	98	59.4898	7.996		

Self-Monitoring Scale

Group	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Prob.
1	87	57.8506	13.288	-6.56	.000
2	97	71.0412	13.957		

Belk Scale

Group	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Prob.
1	87	52.7931	9.494	-5.72	.000
2	96	60.1354	7.651		

Richins and Dawson Scale

Group	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Prob.
1	88	39.6591	5.330	-28.22	.000
2	98	61.3367	5.119		

test for significant differences was used. The “collapsed” categories which were used for the earlier ANOVA analysis were kept for this analysis to avoid having categories with fewer than five members. While there were no significant differences between the two terciles for ethnic background or gender (consistent with prior research), there were significant differences on the other variables. Table 30 presents this information.

The Profile

What, then, can be said about high versus low materialists? First, materialism cuts across gender and ethnic categories. High and low materialists are to be found among women and men, be they Asian, Black, Caucasian, Hispanic, or Native American. Secondly, high materialists tend to be younger than older, not to have a college degree (though they may have attended college at some point), and to have either relatively high or relatively low household incomes. In terms of the self, based on this study, high materialists are less likely to feel good about themselves as evidenced by lower self-esteem scores. Because they are less likely to be self-actualized and more likely to be self-monitoring, high materialists are more susceptible to the influences of outside forces than low materialists. Their lower self-esteem also contributes to this susceptibility. Because of their sensitivity to external influences (other people, advertisers, and products themselves), they may also be more aware of and may care more about fashions and fads, and are more concerned with outward expressions of themselves and others. They also would be expected to be more likely to judge others on the basis of external factors, since this is how they often judge themselves. Further implications of these differences are discussed in the next chapter.

Table 30
Demographic Differences Between Bottom and Top Terciles

Bottom Tercile = Low Materialists
Top Tercile = High Materialists

	Low Materialists Percentage	High Materialists Percentage	
Gender			
Female	45.2	54.8	
Male	46.9	53.1	p = .8311
Age			
18–34	35.0	65.0	
35–49	59.6	40.4	p = .0012
50+	66.7	33.3	
Household Income			
Less than \$25k	35.5	64.5	
\$25–\$35k	60.5	39.5	p = .0814
\$35–\$50k	50.0	50.0	
\$50k+	40.0	60.0	
Education			
High School or Less	44.1	55.9	
Some College	41.5	58.5	p = .0305
College Grad +	66.7	33.3	
Ethnic Background			
Black	41.4	58.6	
White	47.5	52.5	p = .7318
Other	53.3	46.7	

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the relationship between materialism and four self concept measures. Four hypotheses were proposed and all were confirmed (with the caveat, of course, about the IE Index). Further, the study continues to show that the Richins and Dawson scale is to be preferred over the Belk scale because of higher reliability and better factor stability (especially for adult populations). At this point, however, it cannot be said that the Richins and Dawson scale is more valid. The hypotheses which were tested provided measures of construct and nomological validity. That is, they measured whether the materialism scales performed as expected within a network of other related constructs. Since correlations with the self measures were significant and in the direction hypothesized for both scales, validity was established for both. The validity issue is further discussed in the next chapter along with a discussion of the implications and limitations of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

This chapter begins with a summary of the research findings. It then moves to a consideration of the theoretical contributions of the research. Next, potential practical implications, tempered by the limitations of the study, are addressed. Finally, directions for future research which flow from the study are enumerated.

INTRODUCTION

The thrust of this dissertation may be best understood in terms of a discussion of the necessary and sufficient conditions for materialism. According to Ger and Belk (1990), necessary conditions are "some bare minimum of economic means and communication as to available goods and how other people ... live and consume, and a sense of affordability (I can also buy this) ..." (p. 191). Mukerji (1983) shares this perspective when she notes that "[o]nly in early modern Europe did materialism begin to spread through a large section of the population.... Even those people outside the ruling elite were increasingly able to buy objects and value their accumulation and use" (p. 9). But what about the sufficient conditions? Ger and Belk (1990) suggest that comparison "of one's own means and possessions with those of others above oneself will push one

towards materialism.... [This comparison] may be related to a latent sense of relative deprivation, esteem/dignity ... and the desire to self-actualize and assert power" (p. 191) Since we all probably feel deprived at one time or another, and since we all are interested in dignity, self-esteem, self-actualization, and, perhaps, power, this list seems to stop short of truly being an explanation. The question still unanswered is, "why do some people decide they are satisfied with 'enough' and others still want more?" This dissertation investigates the hypothesis that that distinction might be found in each individual's self-concept. People with higher self-esteem, who are more self-actualized, who are low self-monitors, and who are intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated are those more likely to be happy with their lot in life, to be satisfied with "enough." Lacking self-esteem, not becoming self-actualized, being a high self-monitor, and being more extrinsically motivated, therefore, are hypothesized to be sufficient conditions to push one towards materialism. This may be true because the materialist relies on goods to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in his/her life.

Because materialism research is in its relative infancy, these theoretical concerns merit attention. There is no agreement about issues such as the definition of materialism and how to operationalize the construct for research purposes. Discussions and possible resolutions of both issues are presented next.

DEFINITIONAL CONCERNS

With Veblen's (1899/1979) attack on conspicuous consumption, with the religious proscription against worldly things, with the dire predictions of people concerned about the environment, who warn of the social and environmental

evils of overconsumption, objects (goods, possessions) have acquired the label "bad." In reaction, anthropologists and other social scientists have reminded us of the communicative role of objects and of their necessary functions in holding together the fabric of society (Douglas and Isherwood 1979). Goods in and of themselves are not bad. Further, owning, possessing, and using goods are not bad activities. In fact such actions are necessary to our very survival as individuals and as members of society. What is needed in the face of all of this is a clear definition of materialism. As Howard and Sheth (1969) note, one function of a good theory is demarcation, to set one construct apart from all others.

The study of materialism, however, like the study of other aspects of marketing, is hampered by semantics. Terms which have specific meanings in the discipline have come into common, everyday usage and thereby have taken on other connotations. For example, the word *marketing* often is used as a synonym for *sales* when it appears in an advertisement for employment. *Attitude* refers to a specific construct which is different from the meaning of the word in the contemporary phrase of someone "having an attitude." Similarly, materialism sometimes is taken to refer to excessive consumption. Yet a materialist, in the sense of this study, need not necessarily overconsume. Materialism is often associated solely with negative traits and behaviors. Yet, as Ger and Belk (1993) and Fournier and Richins (1991) suggest, materialism may be freedom-enhancing and may motivate an individual to achieve.

The study of materialism is also complicated by hidden agendas. Some critics of materialism really seem to be objecting to capitalism (c.f., Fromm 1976; Kilbourne 1987, 1991). Others criticize the increasing spread of commercial values and institutions such as advertising (c.f. Galbraith 1958; Halton 1992; Pollay 1986, 1992). Trends toward individualism, self-centeredness, and away from a sense of community are also denounced (c.f., Boorstin 1973; Halton 1992;

Mukerji 1983; Rochberg-Halton 1986; Wachtel 1983), as are attitudes which are not environmentally conscious (c.f. Galbraith 1958; Leiss 1976). Finally, some critics simply seem not to like popular culture. As George Will writes, "Contempt for consumer culture is generally an affectation of comfortable people addicted to the pleasures of condescension" (quoted in Rotzoll 1992, p. 208). Whatever the reason, the term "materialism" and its many synonyms have been used in different contexts and to advance many different causes and theories. The following discussions represent an attempt to sort through the semantics to arrive at a conclusion about the meaning of materialism.

What Materialism Is Not

Perhaps it would be useful to begin with a consideration of what materialism is *not*. Materialism is not consumerism; it is not conspicuous consumption; neither is it the same as material culture.

Consumerism. The term *consumerism* is often employed in social science disciplines, especially anthropology, sociology, and social psychology. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it is the "name given to a doctrine advocating a continual increase in the consumption of goods as a basis for a sound economy" (1989, p. 802). While consumerism may lead people to live beyond their means, potentially leading to financial ruin; while consumerism may lead to an overconsumption of resources, thereby depleting natural resources and leading to ruin of another type, neither of these occurrences are what writers such as Belk and Richins and Dawson mean by materialism. Consumerism is more closely synonymous with living a materials-intensive existence. Yet living in a world of goods is not in and of itself materialism. It is for this reason that Bond (1992) can spend hundreds of dollars acquiring the latest in audio and video technology, yet still not be a materialist. He may be a consumerist, but he is not a materialist.

Conspicuous consumption. Along the same lines, *conspicuous consumption* is not materialism. Rochberg–Halton (1986) draws the distinction.

[While w]e nowadays in America call a “materialist” someone who lives for the self–centered pleasure of status prestige derived from material wealth, it remains true that not only is some level of material existence inescapable, but that material goods can act as genuine *materials* for the cultivation of their possessions. (p. 180).

The prestige factor that Rochberg–Halton mentions is central to conspicuous consumption, a term coined by Veblen (1899/1979). According to Veblen, “conspicuous consumption of valuable goods is a means of reputability to the gentleman of leisure” (p. 75). Additionally, there “must be an expenditure on superfluities,” and, “[i]n order to be reputable, it [the expenditure] must be wasteful” (p. 96). Mason (1981) updates the concept when he suggests that conspicuous consumption refers to “ostentatious display of wealth, motivated by a desire to impress others with the ability to pay particularly high prices for prestige products” (p. viii). Thus, the dominant motive behind conspicuous consumption is the desire for status (Mason 1981).

This motivation illustrates the first distinction between conspicuous consumption and materialism. While the desire for status and prestige may be part of the motivation behind materialism, it is not dominant. As Belk’s (1984) definition clearly indicates, with materialism, possessions assume a central place in one’s life and represent “the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in life” (p. 291). A materialist’s may be motivated to acquire in order to achieve prestige, but acquiring possessions may also be motivated by the desire for happiness, for comfort, safety, or security, among others. This is the point which Schudson (1984) and Douglas and Isherwood (1979) made earlier. Consumption serves a variety of purposes, only one of which is status.

The second distinction between the two terms comes from the requirement

inherent in conspicuous consumption for the economic means to engage in it. Mason (1981) explains that even though people of all economic classes may desire to consume conspicuously, economics determines if it can be undertaken and to what extent. While there are examples of people foregoing “necessities” to maintain a particular level of consumption, such as the unemployed steel workers buying a new car (Roberts 1991), economic circumstances still are important. Materialism, however, is not tied to spending on superfluities and conspicuous waste. A poor person with very few possessions can be a materialist, depending on how central possessions are in his/her life.

Material culture. Another term which often appears in the literature is “material culture,” yet this concept also is separate from materialism. *A New Dictionary of the Social Sciences* discusses material culture: “artifacts are included as the ‘embodiment’ of culture, although they are more usually regarded as its products. Sometimes anthropologists distinguish artifacts as *material culture*” (1979, p. 45). Thus while the concept of material culture certainly is linked with materialism, the terms are not synonymous.

That we live in a material world, that we use material goods, among other things, for self-identify and to signify our relationships with others as well as our distinctions from others, and that we often communicate via the medium of goods are “givens” in a modern industrial society. These facts are true for everyone. Yet we do not expect everyone to be a materialist. Hence, what is required is a means of distinguishing between living in a materials-intensive world and being a materialist.

What Materialism Might Be

One approach to making that distinction would seem to lie in an understanding of people’s motivations for possessing objects. If goods are

desired and possessed as an end in themselves, then that is materialism. If, on the other hand, goods are desired and possessed to further some other end—good or bad—then that is not materialism. This idea was first suggested by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) and later expanded by Rochberg-Halton (1986). Following the lead of Rokeach (1973), who distinguished between terminal and instrumental values, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981; Rochberg-Halton 1986) suggest that if someone desires possessions for the possessions themselves, then that is an example of terminal materialism and is to be abhorred. If, on the other hand, the person views the goods as the means to achieving some other end, such as a life goal or furthering some personal value, then that is instrumental materialism and is not as undesirable. As Richins and Dawson (1992) ask, however, how is one to distinguish between these two forms? Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton provide no clear guidelines. In fact, they seem to contradict themselves when they decry using possessions to achieve status, which they identify as terminal materialism, yet that is an example of using goods for some other end. Richins and Dawson (1992) conclude that “except in extreme cases, it may be difficult to determine whether the conditions for instrumental materialism are being met” since the “classification as instrumental or terminal appears to rest on a value judgment” (p. 305). Consequently, we are still left with the problem of a useful definition for materialism.

Since many researchers quote Belk’s (1984) definition, and since it was employed in this research, it merits consideration next. Belk defines materialism as reflecting the “importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person’s life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in life” (1984, p. 291). While this definition provides a good

theoretical base, it does not offer guidance for interpreting what it means. As has already been noted, in industrialized societies, almost everyone considers some goods to be important (cars for transportation, labor saving devices for efficiency, clothing for comfort and self-expression, etc.). According to this definition, then, by living in a materials-intensive world, we all are materialists. Yet we are not all "high" materialists, for it is only "at the highest levels of materialism" where goods themselves are expected to provide life satisfaction. Perhaps, then, the distinction to be drawn is not *between* materialism and something else, but rather lies *within* materialism itself. Perhaps what is important is to distinguish between high materialists and the rest of us. This approach leads to the conceptualization of materialism proposed by Richins and Dawson (1992).

What Materialism Probably Is

According to Richins and Dawson, materialism is best thought of as a value with high materialists ranking materialism near the top of their value hierarchy.¹ This approach is conceptually appealing because, as Rokeach (1973; Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach 1989) has suggested, differences in attitudes and behaviors may be accounted for not by the differences in people's values, but rather by the differences in their value rankings. According to Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach (1989), values are beliefs about desirable means and ends of action and serve as standards or criteria of conduct. That is, values are beliefs about important life goals as well as beliefs about appropriate behaviors to attain those goals. As such, values transcend specific instances; they guide actions, attitudes, and judgements across a variety of situations, objects, places, and people (Rokeach 1973). Further, values are organized in a hierarchical system (Rokeach 1973). The

¹Richins and Dawson are not the only ones to think of materialism as a value. Belk (1987b), himself, adopted this perspective for a content analysis of material values in the comics.

hierarchy concept is important because it is the most central values, the higher ranked ones, which usually guide decision making and behaviors (Williams 1968).

If materialism is a value, then acquiring material goods is a desirable goal. Further, acquiring material possessions is appropriate conduct to reach other desired goals. Fournier and Richins (1991) provide an example to illustrate the beliefs of those who rank materialism near the top of their value hierarchy. Such people “may believe that it is impossible for them to achieve such desired end-states as status recognition or happiness unless they have sufficient, or the right kind of, possessions” (p. 411). Further, high materialists would be expected to rank materialism above other goals in their value hierarchy. Richins and Dawson (1992) demonstrated that high materialists ranked “financial security” higher than low materialists did; low materialists ranked “warm relationships with others” higher than high materialists did.

Thus, if materialism is defined as a value, the relationship of materialism to other attitudes and behaviors, even demographics, falls into place. The understanding of why, while we all live in a materials-intensive society, some people are high materialists and others are not is made clear. Materialism may be a societal value, but some place it high in their value hierarchy and some rank it lower. While everyone desires material goods, different attitudes and behaviors would be expected from those ranking materialism high than from those who rank it low (or lower). The age differences in materialism which have been reported in this research, as well as other studies, can also be explained by the suggestion that younger people rank materialism higher in their value hierarchies than do older people. One reason for this progression might be that when one is younger, and has fewer things, possessions receive more of one’s psychic energy. As a person grows older and acquires possessions, attention is

focused on other matters. Similarly, when a person is younger, s/he is still building her/his own identity. To the extent that material objects contribute to that process, the person may be more or less materialistic. As one grows older, the process of self construction may receive less attention. The gender differences in materialism which have been reported by some researchers could similarly be explained.

While it would seem, then, that the value perspective is not only the most useful, but also the most consistent with explanations of behavior and attitudes, there seems to be no general agreement about the definition of materialism. This situation is not surprising given the almost pre-paradigmatic state of materialism research. This state is exemplified in the literature by the lack of a standard, tested and validated measure of materialism. American social science researchers generally have used the Belk scale—though the Richins and Dawson scale is beginning to be used, now that it is more widely available. In the UK, while researchers may refer to these scales, they have employed their own sets of questions to assess the role of possessions in peoples' lives. Yet none of these scales has yet been subjected to continual refinement. This statement is not meant as a criticism; it is simply a fact arising from the relative newness of the research. Hence there may be room for yet one more approach to materialism, which is suggested by this dissertation.

An Alternative Conceptualization of Materialism

In proposing an alternative approach to defining materialism, it would be appropriate to "return to our roots." That is, to return to the philosophical school which gave the construct its name. According to philosophical materialism, nothing exists, is real except for matter and its movements, which can be observed (Lange 1865/1925). Perhaps materialists are those who take this notion

to heart today. The explanation is as follows.

Several themes have been repeated in the course of this dissertation. One of the more prominent ones is that people use material objects to construct their self identities and to assess the identities of others. The explanation for this seemingly universal aspect of human nature comes from the philosophers Descartes, Kant, and Hume, all of whom suggested that knowledge about oneself, like knowledge of the world, is inferential. James (1890/1981) appropriated this tradition for his now famous statement that the distinction between "me" and "mine" is difficult to make. People learn about themselves as they observe themselves using, owning, and acquiring possessions. As Solomon (1983) notes, material objects are "a potent information source from which to draw inferences" about oneself and others (p. 322). "As the self is dressed, it is simultaneously addressed" (Stone 1962, p. 102).

Hume, however, cautioned that conclusions from inferential knowledge (inductive reasoning) can never be certain. Yet what people would most like to be certain of is themselves, who they are! Thus, in an attempt to fix identity, people may come to rely on material objects simply because they are material. Such a tendency is well documented in other aspects of human behavior, such as ritual behavior and in ways of dealing with the sacred. Douglas and Isherwood (1979) explain that the most effective rituals, those which have a strong intention to fix meaning, are set up with material things (p. 65).² Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1989) note that in an attempt to understand "the sacred," we objectify it. That is, by representing the sacred in a physical object, "the sacred is concretized" (p. 7). For example, elaborate rituals surround the raising and

²Of course, the irony is that the meaning of goods continually shifts, and one must keep up with those shifts, but that is for another discussion.

lowering of the American flag, which is a concrete representation of our country's ideals. The strong negative reaction to the work of an artist who put the flag on the floor for people to walk on may be taken as evidence that the flag is, indeed, a sacred symbol.

So far, then, in this conceptualization of materialism it has been posited that people construct their identities, in part at least, with the aid of material objects. An explanation for reliance on these objects has also been developed. The conclusion is that materialism may be thought of as an orientation not so much to the external as to the concrete and the certain. This conceptualization of materialism is analogous to the distinction between visualizers and verbalizers. Visualizers are more receptive to and more easily remember information presented in a visual format. Verbalizers, on the other hand, are more attracted to the written or spoken word than to pictorial presentations.

Thus it may be for materialists and non-materialists. A (high) materialist may have a preference for certainty—a preference which finds reflection in concrete representations of the self, of others, and of relationships (or distinctions) between the self and others. Other signs, such as emotions and ideas, can be ambiguous and ephemeral. Therefore, they are subject to misinterpretation. Material possessions, on the other hand, evoke constant responses over time (within a community of shared meaning) and can be more permanent (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981). The reason for this preference may be found in a less confident self arising from low self-esteem and from being less self-actualized. In discussing the relationship between products and human behavior, Solomon (1983) draws a similar conclusion. When people are uncertain about or uncomfortable with their role, he suggests that they are more likely to use goods to establish their position. Specifically, he contends that “confidence in one’s ability to meet role demands may determine the degree to

which one must rely upon material symbols to convince others and oneself of this ability" (p. 326). When people don't have an internal force to guide them, they tend to rely on external cues which can be validated by others. Solomon provides two examples. The first is young males who appropriate "macho" products to "bolster developing and fragile masculine self-concepts" (p. 325). The other example is members of the lower upper class who demonstrate their status with the purchase of ostentatious homes, luxury cars, and designer clothes—consumption which is eschewed by the more confident upper upper class. In both instances, material objects are used to "stand for" the desired self-concept. In both instances this use of goods is successful when other people recognize the objects' meaning and impute it to the individuals in question.

Being a high self-monitor is also consistent with this preference for the concrete. By definition a high self-monitor assesses the physical cues in the social marketplace and determines his/her own behavior accordingly (Snyder 1987). Non-materialists (or low materialists), on the other hand, may be more tolerant of ambiguity and consequently may not require as much material evidence. Again, higher self-esteem and self-actualization would lead to a more confident self. The concept of a low self-monitor is consistent with this idea of a non (low) materialist marching to and feeling comfortable with an inner drummer.

Overall, then, it might be said that in the search for certainty, materialists have taken the construction of identity too far. Not being confident selves, they continue to rely on and require the feedback from other people which comes from others' interpretations of one's possessions. While some people wean themselves from this need for external validation, materialists do not. "This apparent attempt to use the acquisition of material goods to buoy self-image ... seems notably materialistic" (Belk 1985, p. 272).

This conclusion is not meant to be pejorative, but rather is a statement of

condition. A low materialist is not “better” than a high materialist. High materialists do not necessarily neglect their relationships with other people or neglect spiritual matters in favor of material concerns. Rather the distinction is that high materialists prefer concrete representations of relationships to enhance feelings of certainty. Obviously, some materialists may neglect their family and friends, but so may low materialists. Nothing inherent in this definition makes a materialist a loathsome creature.

Whether this conceptualization of materialism will be helpful can only be determined by further research. At this point what can be said is that the proposed conceptualization is consistent with definitions which have been suggested by others (see Table 31 for a summary). The value of the approach suggested here is that it provides an explanation for the materialistic orientations, values, and personalities suggested by other researchers. For example, people with a less confident self, who desire concrete representations of who they are, would be expected to rank materialism high in their value hierarchies.

Resolution of the definitional issue, however, still leaves open the question of how to operationalize the construct. Two scales are available. What we know about the relative merits of each is discussed next.

MEASUREMENT CONCERNS

Nunnally (1978), among others, has proposed that measures, such as scales, should be judged on two criteria: reliability and validity. Reliability refers to “the extent to which measurement error is slight ... the extent to which measurements are repeatable” (p. 191). Validity goes beyond looking for errors and is concerned with whether a measurement “does what it is intended to do” (Nunnally 1978, p.

Table 31 Definitions of Materialism

Ward and Wackman (1971)	Materialism is an orientation which views material goods and money as important for personal happiness and social progress (p. 422).
Mukerji (1983)	Materialism is ... a cultural system in which material interests are not made subservient to other social goals and material self-interest is preeminent (p. 8).
Belk (1984)	Materialism reflects the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in life (p. 291).
Rochberg-Halton (1986)	[W]e nowadays in America call a "materialist" someone who lives for the self-centered pleasure of status prestige derived from material wealth (p. 180).
Russuli and Hollander (1986)	Materialism is a mind-set ... an interest in getting and spending that results from the <i>perception</i> of possibilities for acquiring large sets of desirable goods and services, and the perception that others are generally also so engaged (p.10).
Hunt, et al. (1990)	In the extreme, materialism is an orientation that equates symbols with substance and objects with essence (p. 1101).
Richins and Dawson (1992)	Materialism is a value that guides people's choices and conduct in a variety of situations, including, but not limited to, consumption arenas (p. 307). Materialism is a set of centrally held beliefs about the importance of possessions in one's life" (p. 308).
Ger and Belk (1993)	A consumption-based orientation to satisfaction-seeking (p. 1).
Micken (1993)	Materialism is an preference for certainty reflected in the accumulation of concrete meaning-fixers.

86)—in this case, measure materialism. By their nature, both criteria require assessment over time by different researchers in different settings. This is especially true of validity, since it “usually is a matter of degree rather than an all-or-none property, and validation is an unending process. New evidence may suggest modifications of an existing measure or the development of a new and better approach to measuring the attribute in question” (Nunnally 1978, p. 87). The reliability and validity of the Belk and the Richins and Dawson scales will be summarized next.

Reliability

As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, the Richins and Dawson scale is the more reliable. Coefficient Alphas for each of the subscales and for the overall scale are within the acceptable range established by Nunnally (1978) and Churchill (1979). Richins and Dawson (1992) report that test–retest reliability had similarly acceptable results. These same statements, however, cannot be made for the Belk scale. Only two of the four subscales and the overall scale itself have Coefficient Alphas between .60 and .70. While these Alphas might be judged by Churchill (1979) to be acceptable for basic research, they would not be by Nunnally (1978). Indeed, Belk himself refers to the Alphas as “moderately acceptable.” He suggests, however, a willingness to trade some reliability for cross-cultural applicability. The acceptability of such an exchange to the discipline given the availability of a more reliable instrument remains to be seen. No information about test–retest reliability is available for the Belk scale. On the criterion of reliability, then, the Richins and Dawson scale is judged to be better.

Reliability tests alone, however, are insufficient. A scale could reliably be measuring nonsense! Validity assessment helps to determine whether the scales are in fact measuring materialism. That establishing validity is indeed an

incremental process, as Nunnally (1978) has suggested, is illustrated in the following discussion.

Content (Face) Validity

The weakest form of validity is content or face validity which refers to a “rational appeal to the carefulness with which a domain of content has been sampled and placed in the form of a good test” (Nunnally 1978, p. 110). In making this assessment, it should first be noted that both scales are indirect measures of materialism, since *materialism* itself is a theoretical construct (Bagozzi 1984). The Richins and Dawson scale assesses materialism by considering if and to what extent a person uses goods as indicators of happiness and success, and by assessing how central goods are in that person’s life. Of course, the scale does not directly measure how central possessions are, or if goods are used to determine happiness and success. What it provides are responses to scale items, and we make the assumption that high numbers are indicative of these attitudes and motivations. Still, the scale is designed to measure three dimensions of materialism.

The Belk scale, on the other hand, is a doubly indirect measure. It assesses four personality traits: possessiveness (concerned about retaining control/ownership of possessions), nongenerosity, envy (of the possessions as well as successes of others), and preservation (preserving experiences in tangible ways). As above, these traits are not directly measured. The second area of “indirectness” is the assumption that people with these traits are more inclined to be materialistic. Thus, the Belk scale is an indirect measure of the construct itself and employs indirect measures of personality traits in the process.

Perhaps more importantly, however, in measuring personality traits, the Belk scale is not true to Belk’s definition of materialism—that at the highest levels

of materialism, "possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction" (Belk 1984, p. 291). While centrality of goods is implied by the personality measures, deriving happiness and satisfaction from goods are not.

In assessing to the general issue of content validity, then, the Richins and Dawson scale appears to come closer to measuring materialism. The Belk scale focuses on whether there is a personality type that is more prone to materialism and concludes that people who are less generous, who are envious of others' possessions and possessive of their own, are materialistic. However, an envious person would not necessarily seem to be a materialist, neither would a selfish person necessarily be materialistic. Further, the scale provides no means of assessing the role of possessions in one's life, which is what Belk's definition of materialism would seem to require.

The more rigorous validity assessment, however, is concerned with construct validity, which is a closer examination of the relationship between the scale and the theory which underlies it. Construct validity can be established via convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Convergent validity assesses how well one measure of a construct positively correlates with other measures of the same construct. In this research, the correlation between the Richins and Dawson and the Belk scales was .4691 ($p = .000$) and correlations among the subscales were positive and statistically significant (see Table 13). That the values of the correlations were not high, reflects the differences in approaches to materialism (value versus personality trait). Thus, for both scales, convergent validity can be established.

Discriminant validity, "the extent to which a measure does not correlate

with other constructs from which it is supposed to differ" (Malhotra 1993, p. 310) was not addressed in this study. However, the discussion above, which distinguishes materialism from living in a materials-intensive world, gets at this issue.

Nomological Validity

Nomological validity, however, was directly assessed with the tests of the research hypotheses. As noted before, nomological validity refers to a process of building a network of relationships between the construct of interest and other constructs which "sensible theories" would suggest are systematically related to it (Nunnally 1978, p. 103). In this study self-esteem, self-actualization, and intrinsic motivation were hypothesized to correlate negatively with materialism, while self-monitoring was hypothesized to correlate positively. For all four self measures, the correlations with both materialism scales were statistically significant ($p = .01$ or better) and were in the direction hypothesized, thereby providing evidence for the nomological validity of both scales.

However, as Nunnally (1978) has warned, construct validity cannot be established unequivocally by this means, for the correlations do not "prove" all the hypotheses on which the correlation tests rest. That is, we have hypothesized:

1. that materialism and self-esteem correlate negatively,
2. that the Rosenberg (1965) scale is a measure of the self-esteem construct,
3. that the Belk scale is a measure of the materialism construct, and
4. that scores on the self-esteem scale will correlate negatively with scores on the Belk scale.

Demonstrating the truth of the fourth hypothesis still leaves much unproven. For example, the measures of materialism and self-esteem may be faulty. If that is the case, then the correlation between the two measures certainly still exists, but

it does not offer evidence of the relationship between materialism and self-esteem which was suggested in the first hypothesis. The measures of materialism and self-esteem might be correlated not because of a direct relationship between the two, but rather because their relationship is mediated by some other construct. Simon (1954) refers to this situation as a spurious correlation. And there is some reason to believe that such may be the case with the Belk scale, as discussed next.

Spurious correlation. The Belk scale measures materialism indirectly by measuring personality traits. For this reason alone, some researchers have objected to its use (e.g. Cole et al. 1992; Williams 1992). However, the scale may be objected to on other grounds—that several items may be measures of individualism not materialism. In a cross-cultural study of individualism and collectivism, Triandis et al. (1988) sought to develop an operational definition of individualism which was appropriate for the United States. Several of their findings are relevant here.

One of their primary determinations was that, paradoxically, people living in an individualistic culture, such as the U.S., had to be more attuned to the attitudes and behaviors of others than people in collectivistic cultures. The explanation is that in collectivist cultures one is almost born a member of various ingroups; one need not work at becoming accepted. A person in an individualist culture, on the other hand, generally is not born with many ingroup memberships and must work to become accepted into and retain ingroup membership. The flip side, however, is that because of the almost a priori ingroup acceptance in collectivist cultures, people have close ingroup relationships. In individualist cultures, on the other hand, the distance between the individual and ingroup is much greater. One final factor, competition, needs to be added to the situation. In collectivist cultures, ingroups compete with

outgroups, but people compete as ingroup members and not as individuals. In individualistic cultures, however, individuals compete with other individuals.

Three consequences relevant to the Belk materialism scale emerge from these ideas. First, in collectivist cultures individuals take pride in the achievements and successes of other ingroup members. In individualistic cultures, however, personal achievement and success as a result of competition with other individuals is prized. Second, in collectivist cultures not only are honor and success shared, but so are other items such as money. In fact one way that Triandis et al. (1988) measured concern for an ingroup was with a "lending money to ingroup members" scenario. The third consequence is a repeat of the fact that in individualist cultures people often are emotionally detached from ingroups. The implication for the Belk scale is that all but three of the nongenerosity subscale items and one of the envy subscale items measure characteristics which would be expected of someone living in an individualist culture. Statements about sharing one's possessions and lending them to friends, about having people stay at one's home, about friends doing well, and about buying for oneself instead of a loved one all would seem to measure an individualistic orientation. This situation, of course, raises the question of construct validity. What is being measured, individualism or materialism?

If these items are removed from the scale, nongenerosity is measured by just two items which address donating things to charity and one item which expresses concern over people taking one's possessions. None of these items necessarily seem to be connected to materialism. The charity items may be related more to measures of income, social class, or religion. Concern over theft of possessions may be related to where one lives and perceptions of the crime rate in society. Of course, these same concerns might be addressed to all the possessiveness subscale items which deal with loss of possessions.

For reasons such as these, Nunnally (1978) cautions against taking correlation tests as evidence of nomological validity unless the truth of some of the hypotheses is very evident. Certainly this research, as well as some others, has been able to demonstrate statistically significant correlations between the two materialism scales and measures of other constructs (life satisfaction, self-esteem, self-actualization, etc.). And, by using scales which have been validated by previous research (such as the self-esteem, self-actualization, and self-monitoring scales), the hypotheses that these scales are measures of their respective constructs is warranted. However, similar hypotheses about the relationship between materialism and the two scales under investigation are not well established. In fact, the hypothesis for the Belk scale is much in question. Hence, the conclusion from this lengthy discussion is that, at this point, the Richins and Dawson scale appears to better meet the validity criteria.

Social Desirability

Before leaving this section, one additional test, social desirability, merits consideration. Because of materialism's negative image, social desirability may have a potentially confounding impact. The Richins and Dawson scale was tested with items from the Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scale (Crowne and Marlowe 1960). Correlations with this measure were low, indicating that social desirability bias was not a problem (Richins and Dawson 1992). The Belk scale, however, has not been so tested. Certainly some of the items about donating to charity or not being happy at another's success might be susceptible to social desirability influences.

Thus a number of important theoretical implications can be concluded from the research. The definition of materialism has been clarified. An explanation for why a person may be a materialist has been suggested by the conclusions about

the materialistic self. Further evidence that the Richins and Dawson scale is the more reliable and more valid scale has been provided. Possible reasons for the problems with the Belk scale (lack of sufficiently high correlations among the items, the double indirect measure, and the influence of individualism, or other constructs, as possible mediating factors between personality and materialism) have been suggested. That the results are not more clear cut and precise is testimony to what Bagozzi and Yi (1988) refer to as the "fickleness of theories dealing with social science phenomena and the evolutionary nature of knowledge" (p. 93). Nonetheless, several practical implications are suggested by the research.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The materialist's search for external validation of the self suggests several intriguing possibilities for marketing practitioners. The following ideas are not offered as recommendations. They are suggested as avenues for future consideration when the knowledge of materialism has advanced.

Advertising

Drawing from the finding that high materialists are also high self-monitors, high materialists are expected to pay close attention to the symbols and behaviors required in the situations in which they find, or expect to find, themselves. This high level of concern for appearances and for the reaction of others may manifest itself in behavior which has been termed "social comparison" (Richins 1992). Thus, high materialists are expected to be receptive to information about fashion and about desirable products and brands. They are

expected to be constantly scanning the environment for information, reading magazines, shopping, paying attention to advertising. These activities make high materialists a high involvement segment. It may also make them a more readily influenced segment if the right appeals are used.

High materialists were also found to have low self-esteem. Further, research by others has suggested that people may try to bolster low self-esteem via goods. If this is the case, then high materialists will also be susceptible to appeals which suggest that buying a particular brand demonstrates "how smart you are," or that using a certain brand is "the right thing to do." Messages which show successful people purchasing and owning the brand also should be successful strategies with this segment. The appeal that using the product will make "you feel good about yourself" also should be a successful strategy. Marketers may also find that materialists are particularly loyal to brands which meet their self-esteem needs. Along the same lines, sales personnel might be encouraged to maintain contact with their clients after the sale to reinforce the "smart" purchase decision and brand or store loyalty.

The low self-esteem may have another social comparison implication. High materialists may be more susceptible to the idealized images portrayed in advertising. Accordingly, advertising would be expected to reinforce the high materialists' drive to acquire more of the desired goods (which they perceive will bring their lives more in line with the images portrayed).

The low degree of self-actualization suggests that high materialists have an other-based reference system. Their sense of accomplishment, success, and satisfaction is anchored in external signs. Consequently, high materialists would be likely to respond positively to messages which suggest that a product/brand would bring satisfaction and would be an indication of one's accomplishments.

That high materialists tend to be younger may have an impact on the

models used in advertising, on the music, and on the settings which are selected. Certainly if people are looking for validation of their “selves,” then all these aspects of a marketing communication must be authentic.

That high materialists tend not to have a college degree, and that some have a relatively low household income, has a similar implication. Coleman (1983) has suggested that middle-Americans strive to be like and to emulate upper-Americans. However, such is not the case with working-Americans. Once again, the appeals of accomplishment, success, and satisfaction must be set in surroundings which will ring true for the target. It would be a mistake to assume that a high materialist wishes to emulate a Donald Trump (at his peak).

Segmentation

The importance of physical objects for materialists may be useful for segmentation strategies. Marketers could expect to find materialists in the “heavy half”—the people who account for the greatest percent of the purchases of a product. High materialists may also be good targets for high prestige or high fashion products which are socially visible. Their possible role as opinion leaders would also make them a worthy segment.

Product Design and Benefits

If it is true that high materialists prefer certainty and the concrete, then marketers may find that written guarantees of quality and of satisfaction may be attractive. If the display of possessions is important to high materialists as signs of success and accomplishment, then to attract materialists, product design, color, and packaging should receive attention. A product with style, which is offered in fashionable colors, should be more attractive to high materialists. Marketers may also want to offer more functional models to low materialists.

Retailing

Implications for the retailer may be that store image and atmospheric must be well planned to attract high materialists who are sensitive to cues in the marketplace. Store "packaging" can be as important as product packaging. It is suggested that a high materialist would not be likely to shop at a store whose image was not consistent with the materialist's own desired self-image. Additionally, Schiffman and Kanuk (1991) report that female shoppers with high self-confidence are more likely to feel comfortable shopping at off-price stores, while female shoppers with less self-confidence may not. The "smart shopper" appeal offered by many off-price stores may help overcome this feeling.

LIMITATIONS

This research was begun in full knowledge of potential limitations occasioned by the pre-paradigmatic nature of the study of materialism and the exploratory nature of the materialism scales being employed. If materialism research is to advance, however, then studies such as this one are necessary. Thus, for example, even though inspection of the correlation matrix suggested that factor analysis of the Belk scale might not be successful, the analysis was still attempted. Indeed, the results were indeterminate.

A second limitation is the nature of the sample. As discussed in Chapter Four, in some areas the sample was not representative of the population of the four Virginia cities which comprise the "Peninsula." Various reasons from a flawed sampling methodology to shifting population demographics were proposed to explain the difference. The importance of this difference, however, is

mitigated by the results of this study which often replicated those reported by others (scale Alphas, means, and standard deviations, correlations of scales with demographic characteristics, etc.). The potential impact of the difference seems to have been limited to the factor analysis results which are quite sensitive to differences in samples. Thus while one might wish for, and next time plan more carefully for, a more representative sample, it does not seem to have negatively affected the conclusions. It should also be noted that no attempt was made to derive population estimates from the sample.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Because materialism research is a relatively new field, much remains to be discovered. Before research is carried too far, however, some basic issues require attention. For that reason this section is divided into two. First basic issues are addressed, then the more wide-ranging ones are presented.

Fundamental Research

If we all use goods to bolster and communicate about our selves, then how does the materialist use goods differently? In investigating the nature of the materialistic self this study is a start along that path. This study found strong correlations between materialism and low self-esteem, lack of self-actualization, and higher self-monitoring. These all suggest that the materialistic self is a less self-assured, less confident self. Nunnally (1978) suggests that when measures which are thought to be related to a construct correlate well with the construct, "this should encourage investigators to keep working with the specified domain of observables and should encourage continued investigation of theories relating

that construct to others" (p. 102). The first recommendation, then, is that research which investigates materialism and the self should be continued.

Second, research on the two materialism scales must be continued. This is especially true for the Richins and Dawson scale which is the more reliable and which seems to be the more valid. With its recent publication, additional studies should be forthcoming. If the reliability questions about the Belk scale can be sorted out, then the validity issues can be addressed (for reliability is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for validity). One productive direction might be to investigate the relationship between the Belk scale and other constructs which might mediate the relationship between the Belk scale and materialism.

Individualism was suggested here as one such possibility.

Third, conceptual work with the definition of the materialism construct should be continued. This work certainly will be informed by the various research projects, but it should not be delayed because of the importance of demarcation to theory development. At this juncture, it appears that the value orientation to materialism would be the most productive. If so, then research which furthers our understanding of values as well as measurement of values is necessary. Quantitative techniques for comparing value systems (instead of single values), such as the one proposed by Kamakura and Mazzon (1991) offer interesting and fruitful pathways.

Additional Research Suggestions

A variety of other projects spring from this research. Because of its newness, materialism is fertile ground for research. Some of the many potential projects are briefly presented next along with the rationale for each.

Materialism and emulation. This study did not test how a less confident materialistic self uses goods in ways which are different from the more confident

self. One approach to investigating this difference is suggested by the categories in the original VALS typology. The outer directed group was comprised of achievers, who were “into” conspicuous consumption; emulators, who wanted to be achievers; and belongers, who were traditionalists. It might be hypothesized that materialists are emulators. Rassuli and Hollander (1986) define emulation as “the desire to copy some respected other(s) in a superordinate class, fashion leaders, or others.... [it involves] an ability to fantasize oneself absorbing some of the status of the model” (p. 12). This definition is consistent with the VALS description: emulators copy achievers, but really do not “get it right”; they tend to go overboard with fads and fashion—or to come to them belatedly, once the world had moved on to something else.

In Ger and Belk’s (1990) Turkish focus group interviews, this idea of materialists being emulators was explored. A new term “kro” has come into the language to refer to people who “identify with what they consume ... they display their new wealth with no regard to subtlety and refined tastes” (p. 22). Further, these people are seen as engaging in “foolish emulation of others’ consumption choices” (p. 22). The emulation–materialism connection was also suggested in Ger and Belk’s (1990) earlier cross–cultural article. They noted that as people in emerging cultures developed desires for the comforts and goods of the industrialized nations, the incidence of materialism increased. They speculated that the emulation desire ran deeper than a general interest in acquiring products seen in advertisements. It stemmed from a desire to be like people in “winning” cultures. Hence, they found that materialism was greatest in Turkey (whose citizens were members of a vanquished Ottoman empire), and greater in the U.S. (whose citizens looked to Europe for much of their cultural heritage) than in Western European countries (whose citizens already had a strong cultural heritage).

Materialism and the adoption process. A second hypothesis which flows from this same idea would be to investigate materialism and the adoption process. It has already been observed that materialists exhibit behaviors characteristic of opinion leaders, but that they are more likely to be opinion followers. Are materialists, then, early adopters, or do they tend to be members of the early majority? If materialists are early adopters, do they also function as opinion leaders? If so, when, where, and how?

A final research project which fits this program is whether materialism be "product–category specific," just as opinion leaders are product–category specific. That is, can a person be a materialist in some areas but not in others? We might expect the answer to be "yes." Fournier and Richins (1991) have suggested that the ways in which materialism manifests itself might depend on the other central values a high materialist has: "For instance, a materialist valuing status would try to acquire status signifiers; a materialist valuing recreation might acquire a portfolio of leisure products such as skis, scuba equipment, and the like" (p. 411). Thus, while materialism, itself, may not be product–category specific, the way it manifests itself may be.

Materialism and self identity. Other research might focus on the role of goods in self identity. If the self is a social construction, then the task is to learn in what ways the materialist constructs him/herself that is different from the non-materialist. How does a person select from among all the possible choices those things, experiences, references, and meanings which make up the self? William James provides direction. He suggests that we attend to what is of interest to us. "Millions of items in the outward order are present to my senses which never properly enter into my experience. Why? Because they have no *interest* for me. *My experience is what I agree to attend to.* Only those items which I *notice* shape my mind—without selective interest, experience is an utter chaos"

(1890, p. 402). This idea of interest, however, begs the question. We are still left with no specific means for determining what is of interest and what is not—and how these interests develop.

Of course, there are the usual suspects of culture, family, reference groups, etc. which influence the individual. These influences, however, are too broad to be specifically useful in the question of what separates high from low materialists. Valuable insight could be gained from research which would ascertain the sorts of things that are of interest to the high materialist but which are not of interest to the low materialist. Perhaps after an initial study, which would assess materialism, researchers could go back for personal interviews with people in each group (high, medium and low). The purpose would be to see how the houses were furnished, how the people were dressed, to learn how they made decisions about purchases (what, how often, etc.). Of course such a study would be confounded by numerous items (income, etc.), which probably could be controlled. There is precedent for this sort of study. Belk has often asked people to note which items on a list are necessities and which are luxuries as a way of distinguishing between the goods of high and low materialists.

A related study might investigate when the use of goods for self identity is constructive and when it is no longer constructive. What determines the line of demarcation? The answer to this question may facilitate a deeper understanding of materialism.

A final self identity project flows from the idea that high materialists prefer certainty and the concrete. A study of materialism and dogmatism and or authoritarianism might be warranted. Like the materialist, a highly dogmatic person is not comfortable with the unfamiliar and unknown (Rokeach 1960).

FINAL THOUGHTS

It would be a grave mistake if readers of this research were to conclude that because there are serious questions about the reliability and validity of the Belk scale, that his work with materialism should be dismissed. At almost every turn, the ideas and hypothesis proposed by Belk have been important guides to this work. The connections among disciplines and the resulting insight into consumer behavior, which his articles make, are also reflected in this study. Deshpande (1983) makes an interesting and telling point about the importance of not confusing the logic of discovery with the logic of verification. While it is not my wish to engage in the qualitative/quantitative debate, I do want to emphasize that good ideas and insights should not be rejected because of methodological problems which attend their operationalization. Put more prosaically, let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater.

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CONSUMER SURVEY

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. We are interested in your opinions and ideas about possessions, other people, and yourself. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential.

In each section contains a number of statements which represent commonly held opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. You will probably disagree with some of the statements and agree with others. We are interested in the *extent* to which you agree or disagree.

SECTION I

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by circling the number at the end of each sentence. The numbers and their meaning are indicated below.

- If you *agree strongly*, circle 5
- If you *agree somewhat*, circle 4
- If you *neither agree nor disagree*, circle 3
- If you *disagree somewhat*, circle 2
- If you *disagree strongly*, circle 1

First impressions are usually best. Give your opinion on every statement. If you find the numbers do not adequately indicate your own opinion, use the one which is closest to the way you feel.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things.	1	2	3	4	5
I get very upset if something is stolen from me, even if it has little monetary value.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't pay much attention to the material objects other people own.	1	2	3	4	5
Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions.	1	2	3	4	5
My life would be better if I owned certain things I don't have.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy having people I like stay in my home.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy spending money on things that aren't practical.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't like to lend things, even to good friends.	1	2	3	4	5
The things I own say a lot about how well I'm doing in life.	1	2	3	4	5
When friends do better than me in competition it usually makes me feel happy for them.	1	2	3	4	5
I worry about people taking my possessions.	1	2	3	4	5
I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I like to own things that impress people.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't mind giving rides to those who don't have a car.	1	2	3	4	5
Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure.	1	2	3	4	5
When friends have things I cannot afford it bothers me.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not enjoy donating things to the needy.	1	2	3	4	5
I have all the things I really need to enjoy life.	1	2	3	4	5
There are certain people I would like to trade places with.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't like to have anyone in my home when I'm not there.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't seem to get what is coming to me.	1	2	3	4	5
If I have to choose between buying something for myself versus for someone I love, I would prefer buying for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
I usually buy only the things I need.	1	2	3	4	5
I am bothered when I see people who buy anything they want.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy sharing what I have.	1	2	3	4	5
I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't get particularly upset when I lose things.	1	2	3	4	5
People who are very wealthy often feel they are too good to talk to average people.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success.	1	2	3	4	5
I wouldn't be any happier if I owned nicer things.	1	2	3	4	5
I tend to hang on to things I should probably throw out.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy donating things for charity.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a number of souvenirs.	1	2	3	4	5
I like a lot of luxury in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
I am less likely than most people to lock things up.	1	2	3	4	5
I like to collect things.	1	2	3	4	5
The things I own aren't all that important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know.	1	2	3	4	5
It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can't afford to buy all the things I'd like.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION II

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by circling the number at the end of each sentence. The numbers and their meaning are indicated below.

- If you *agree strongly*, circle 6
- If you *agree somewhat*, circle 5
- If you *agree slightly*, circle 4
- If you *disagree slightly*, circle 3
- If you *disagree somewhat*, circle 2
- If you *disagree strongly*, circle 1

First impressions are usually best. Give your opinion on every statement. If you find the numbers do not adequately indicate your own opinion, use the one which is closest to the way you feel.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
I do not feel ashamed of any of my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I must do what others expect of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I believe that people are essentially good and can be trusted.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel free to be angry at those I love.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is always necessary that others approve what I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I don't accept my own weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can like people without having to approve of them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I fear failure.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I avoid attempts to analyze and simplify complex domains.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is better to be yourself than to be popular.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have no mission in life to which I feel especially dedicated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can express my feelings even when they may result in undesirable consequences.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I do not feel responsible to help anybody.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am bothered by fears of being inadequate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am loved because I give love.	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION III

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by circling the number at the end of each sentence. The numbers and their meaning are indicated below.

If you *agree strongly*, circle 7

If you *agree somewhat*, circle 6

If you *agree slightly*, circle 5

If you *neither agree nor disagree*, circle 4

If you *disagree slightly*, circle 3

If you *disagree somewhat*, circle 2

If you *disagree strongly*, circle 1

First impressions are usually best. Give your opinion on every statement. If you find the numbers do not adequately indicate your own opinion, use the one which is closest to the way you feel.

	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree						
When I read a magazine, listen to the radio, or watch television, I always know what I expect to get out of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
?When I take a walk I always like to have a specific destination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I fix something or do chores around the house, I am just puttering around for the fun of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In playing cards, board games, or video games, winning matters less than how you play the game.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would probably make a good actor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would keep doing the things that I do for a living even if I won the lottery.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In a group of people I am rarely the center of attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I read a magazine, listen to the radio, or watch television, I just appreciate the experience on its own terms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I perform some creative activity such as writing, drawing, or playing a musical instrument, I set a goal for myself to try to achieve.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I engage in noncompetitive sports like skiing, jogging, or body-building, I tend to view the activity as an end in itself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		
I am not particularly good at making other people like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not throw a party or take someone out to dinner unless I expected to enjoy the companionship of the people involved.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'm not always the person I appear to be.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone or win their favor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have considered being an entertainer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I perform some creative activity such as writing, drawing, or playing a musical instrument, I am aware that the process is inherently its own reward.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At a party I let others keep the jokes and stories going.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I play a competitive sport such as tennis, golf, or ping pong, my primary motivation is to enjoy the game for its own sake.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel a bit awkward in public and do not show up quite as well as I should.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION IV

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by circling the number at the end of each sentence. The numbers and their meaning are indicated below.

If you *agree strongly*, circle 4

If you *disagree somewhat*, circle 2

If you *agree somewhat*, circle 3

If you *disagree strongly*, circle 1

First impressions are usually best. Give your opinion on every statement. If you find the numbers do not adequately indicate your own opinion, use the one which is closest to the way you feel.

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.	1	2	3	4
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	1	2	3	4
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	1	2	3	4

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1	2	3	4
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	1	2	3	4
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	1	2	3	4
I certainly feel useless at times.	1	2	3	4
At times I think I am no good at all.	1	2	3	4

SECTION V

Finally, we would like some information about you. This information will be used for research purposes only and will not be used to identify you in any way. Please put an "X" in the appropriate space.

Occupation: What is your job?

Which category does it best fit?

Clerical _____

Managerial _____

Military _____

Professional _____

Sales _____

Skilled Labor _____

Other _____

Education:

Some high school _____

Some college _____

Graduate work _____

High school grad _____

College graduate _____

Graduate degree _____

Age:

18 to 24 _____

35 to 49 _____

65 + _____

25 to 34 _____

50 to 64 _____

Sex: Female _____ Male _____

Ethnic Background:

African-American _____

Asian _____

Caucasian _____

Hispanic _____

Native American _____

Other _____

Household Income:

Under 15,000 _____

15,001 to 24,999 _____

25,000 to 34,999 _____

35,000 to 49,999 _____

50,000 to 74,999 _____

75,000 + _____

Thank you for participating in this survey!

The Survey Administrator will be back shortly to pick up the survey.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Kathleen Shirley Micken

Personal Information

Born in Lawrence, Kansas, October 3, 1949.

Educational Background

A. B. in Philosophy, College of William and Mary, 1971

M.B.A., College of William and Mary, 1983

D.B.A. in Marketing, Old Dominion University, 1993

Publications

Kathleen S. Micken and Patrick H. Micken (1993), "Debating Values: An Idea Revitalized," *CEDA Yearbook*, 15, 54–71.

Kathleen S. Micken (1992), "Materialism Research: Suggestions for New Directions," in *Meaning, Measure and Morality of Materialism*, eds. F. Rudmin and M. Richins, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 121–125.

Kathleen S. Micken (1992), "Problem Recognition: The Synergy of a Multi-Method Approach" in *Developments in Marketing Science*, Vol XV, ed. V. L. Crittenden, Chestnut Hill, MA: Academy of Marketing Science, 48 – 52.

Kathleen S. Micken and William J. Lundstrom (1992), "Orientation and Practice of Materialism: A Two Group Study," in *Proceedings of the 1992 Association of Marketing Theory & Practice Annual Meeting*, ed. R. J. Good, 339 – 345.

Dianne Eppler, Tony Henthorne, Michael LaTour, and Kathleen Micken (1992), "Victims' Rights, Fear Appeals and Arousal," *AMA Summer Educators' Conference Proceedings*.

Professional Background

Instructor of Marketing, Department of Management, Marketing and MIS, College of Business and Economics, Christopher Newport University, 1992 – present

Instructor of Marketing, Department of Marketing, College of Business and Public Administration, Old Dominion University, 1984 – 1989

Coordinator, Acquisitions Department, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, 1983–1984

Principal, KSM Consultants, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1978–1983

Coordinator, Donor Research, College of William and Mary, 1975–1978

Honors and Awards

Outstanding Doctoral Student Award 1991 – 1992, College of Business and Public Administration, Old Dominion University

Virginia Department of World Trade Fellowship in International Business, 1990-1991

Excellence in Teaching Award 1985 – 1986, College of Business and Public Administration, Old Dominion University