CONCEPTUALIZING AND TESTING THE

MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF THE MATERIALISM CONSTRUCT:

CONCEPT EXPLICATION AND

PRELIMINARY SCALE DEVELOPMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the relevance of the study of materialism to mass communication research, reviews multiple conceptualizations of materialism from several disciplines, and conducts an analysis of materialism through the process of concept explication. Following a meaning analysis of materialism, a multi-dimensional conceptualization of a new construct, social materialism, is proposed. An operationalization of social materialism is tested in two separate studies, and through a series of factor analyses, a preliminary social materialism scale is proposed. The internal consistency, reliability, and predictive, retrospective, convergent, and discriminant validity of the social materialism scale are assessed via correlational analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Special attention is paid to the relationships found to exist between various forms of television use and the properly explicated concept of social materialism. The implications for this study are discussed, and future lines of research are outlined.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Explication of the Materialism Concept

Although materialism has been studied with increasing frequency in consumer

behavior and marketing research (e.g., Belk, 1985; Fournier & Richins, 1991;

Friedman, 1993; Mick, 1996; Richins & Rudmin, 1994), and the study of consumption

patterns in contemporary capitalist societies has elicited much critical discourse (e.g.,

Campbell, 1987; Holt, 2000; Schor, 1998), a body of empirical research in mass

communication scholarship is lacking that explores the link between media use and

materialist values. Comprehending value formation and change is vital to

understanding both contemporary American politics and the lives of individuals (Ball-

Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984). The current argument holds that as media are

central to the formation of values, materialism is not just a phenomenon worthy of

investigation by communication scholars, but a topic of general importance in the

study of the effects of the global commercial media system.

This work seeks to analyze current conceptualizations and operationalizations

of materialism in order to arrive at a new empirical definition. In the sections that

follow, the centrality of materialism for critical and political economy theories of

media influence is reviewed (Bajdikian, 2004; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Jhally,

2000; McChesney, 2000; McLuhan, 2000; Postman, 1988), along with the necessity of concept explication to the process of theory building (Chaffee, 1991).

The Centrality of Materialism to Theories of Media Influence

Critics from many disciplines assert that materialism is a central message of mass media (e.g., Jhally, 2000; McLuhan, 2000; Postman, 1988), however, the extent to which media use might be correlated with a comprehensive measure of materialism has not been explored. The general inability to pinpoint empirically a relationship between materialism and media use might be due in large part to the fact that a well-formulated measure of the former is lacking in the social sciences. In order to advance knowledge in the discipline through theory building and hypothesis testing, a systematic, comprehensive measure of materialism must first be developed and tested, and as such, the current study develops an appropriate measure of materialism through the process of concept explication.

The need for a measure of materialism is borne out through several critical-cultural lines of research. The reading of media texts from a critical perspective raises important questions concerning the role of mass communication in the process of defining what it means to be both a consumer and a citizen in today's society. Political economic theory, a socially critical approach to research, focuses on the relation between the economic structure, the dynamics of media industries, and the ideological content of media (Garnham, 1979; Golding & Murdock, 1996). The social critical viewpoint illuminates the current media environment as it relates to

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consumerist attitudes and behaviors by highlighting the fact that media institutions are part of the economic system and have close ties to the political system (see Gitlin, 1980; Garnham, 1979; Murdock & Golding, 1977). A sizable literature has emerged contending that the mass media serve consensual functions (e.g., Olien, Donohue, & Tichenor, 1995; Gerbner & Gross, 1976) and that the commercial media system "works to advance the cause of the global market and promote commercial values" (McChesney, 2000, p. 59).

Even over half a century ago, before television was to become the dominant medium of mass communication, Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) argued that advertiser support of the media industry resulted in media messages consistent with the goals of advertisers. They claimed that "big business finances the production and distribution of mass media. And, all intent aside, he who pays the piper generally calls the tune" (p. 503). Since then, the interdependency between the media system and the economic system has been explored in great depth by several critical scholars. For example, Gitlin (1980) applies the Gramscian idea of hegemony as a theoretical approach to news frames to assert that the production of news creates a specific power structure. Looking at the functions of hegemony in journalism, Gitlin explains that framing and gatekeeping judgments are driven by direct corporate and class interests. He writes, "the media elite want to honor the political-economic system as a whole; their very power and prestige deeply presuppose that system" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 258).

Gitlin's (1980) argument is that media seek symbiosis with the corporate system, an argument that is also detailed by Sklair (2001). Sklair argues that those who own and control the world's most significant economic resources, what he calls the transnational capitalist class, are in a position to further their interests and transmit the cultural ideology of consumerism. Sklair writes, "the consumerist visions of globalizing corporations, daily transmitted through the mass media . . . play a central role for the hegemonic agenda of the transnational capitalist class" (p. 288).

The illumination of the media system's promotion of commercial values is also made clear by Herman and Chomsky (1988), who argue that media serve the powerful interests that control and finance them. Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model features news filters that affect news choice, including the size, concentrated ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media and the condition in which advertising is the primary income source of the mass media. Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) argue that "television program content is closely tied to the goals of manufacturers and marketers because rather than TV programs being sold to viewers, viewer attention is sold to advertisers" (p. 198). Jhally (2000) also classifies media institutions as a delivery system for marketers and goes so far as to call advertising "the most powerful and sustained system of propaganda in human history" (p. 27). This is especially relevant to the study of materialism because some argue that advertising functions to impart the idea on audiences that products are the way to happiness (e.g., Jhally, 2000; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

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Critical arguments extend beyond the commercial impact of advertising, as it has been noted that not just advertising, but television programming itself is a source of consumption-related influence (e.g., Moschis & Churchill, 1978; Roedder-John, 1999; Wu, 1998). Bajdikian (2004) explores the consequences of corporate demands on television in detail, and specifies instances in which the censoring of information that could be offensive to advertisers has occurred. He provides evidence of the "insertion of corporate ideology and commercial themes in the nonadvertising portion of television programming" (p. 240).

In the realm of both television and movies there is an additional source of commercial influence known as product placement. Product placements are paid product messages aimed at influencing audiences via the planned and unobtrusive entry of a branded product into a television program or movie (Balasubramanian, 1994). In a content analysis, Avery and Ferraro (2000) found that in one week of prime-time network television programming, a total of 2,945 brand appearances occurred. It is safe to assume that messages composed of both commercial and noncommercial speech inextricably intertwined are especially prolific today as advertisers confront the fact that viewers are equipped with digital video recorders that allow them to skip through commercials.

If one agrees with McChesney (2000), Herman and Chomsky (1988), Bajdikian (2004), and the like, that consumerist or materialist messages are a consistent theme in the mass media, then there might be reason to assert that media are

transmitting dominant political and social values. There is a small, disconnected body

of research that examines the individual-level effects of consumerist media messages

on individuals, and academics have approached materialism from a number of broad

theoretical perspectives, such as consumer socialization (e.g., Moschis, 1987; Moschis

& Churchill, 1978), and theories of the construction of social reality such as

cultivation theory (e.g., Burroughs, Shrum, & Rindfleisch 2002; Carlson, 1993;

Harmon, 2001; Kwak, Zinkhan, & Dominick, 2002; O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Potter

1990; Richins, 1987; Sirgy et al., 1998). However, no connection between media use

and material values has emerged, a lack of empirical findings that can perhaps be

explained by the absence of a measurement device for such values.

The body of research documenting a link between various forms of media use

and materialism is reviewed in detail later in this chapter. Of most relevance at this

point is the fact that the research on materialism in the social scientific literature and

in mass communication scholarship in particular is fragmentary at best, as most

studies do not employ a uniform measure of materialist values. In many cases,

researchers are measuring a number of different conceptualizations of the concept.

In the face of so many claims of commercialism in critical and political

economy lines of research, it is unfathomable that a comprehensive measure of

materialism has not been developed. The current argument suggests that in order to

investigate empirically the claims of critical cultural theory and solve the problem of a

lack of empirical investigation of the effects of commercial media messages, quantitative research must begin with an explication of materialism.

Just as communication is a cross-level discipline, concerned with processes at individual, societal, and cultural levels (Ritchie & Price, 1991), the study of materialism exists at both micro-individual and macro-social levels. However, as the major theoretical mechanism of materialism will be identified and explicated at the individual level in this study, the corresponding research must call for micro-level analysis (Pan & McLeod, 1991). Although the claims of the critical-cultural theorists are largely macro-social in nature, it is also possible that the propositions of the critical-cultural theorists be validated empirically through research conducted at the individual level. Measurement of individual-level effects will allow for greatest complexity of the study of the concept of materialism.

In keeping with the multilevel nature of the communication discipline, the degree of media influence should be reflected in individual-level assessment of materialism and media use in this work, thus serving as a bridge between political economy scholarship and empirical media research. This study is a starting point from which a broader multi-level model of influence can take shape. The ultimate long-term goal of this line of inquiry is to study the relationship between media and materialism from a multi-level perspective, but the best point of empirical departure is at the individual level. Because the current work seeks to arrive at a new conceptualizations of materialism, the following section will demonstrate the

importance of following a systemic procedure of concept explication (Chaffee, 1991)

when arriving at the new definition and individual-level measure of materialism.

The Need for a Comprehensive Measure of Materialism through Concept Explication

There are two specific measurement problems that might explain the paucity of

research bearing out the claims of the political economic theorists. First, there are

multiple measures of materialism (to be reviewed in coming sections of this chapter).

Second, those measures that exist have not been constructed in the light of a true

explication (i.e., meaning analysis in combination with an empirical analysis).

Concept explication, the first step in acquiring scientific knowledge, is "the

process by which abstract concepts are systematically linked to observed variations in

those concepts in the 'real' world with appropriate methods" (McLeod et al., 1987, p.

7). As Chaffee (1996) explains, concept explication serves to strengthen the ties

between theory, observation, and research. Concept explication is not just a

component of theory building, it is an approach to theory building in which conceptual

definitions that are linked to operational definitions allow original research,

replication, and the extension of research findings. As Chaffee (1996) argues, when

following a systematic, scientific method, the process of a concept evolving and the

interplay between ideas and real-world phenomena (i.e., concept explication)

constitutes theory building.

Reynolds (1971) notes that in order to designate the subject matter of a

science, concepts must be the starting point. Reynolds further explains that "scientific

knowledge is impossible unless there is agreement about the meaning of a concept or statement" (p. 13). The necessity of the current study is that the concept of materialism in extant research lacks a single, comprehensive definition at both the conceptual and operational level. Reynolds points to the need for intersubjectivity, or agreement among scientists in the social sciences as to what exactly constitutes a concept, and Dubin (1978) holds that the most important feature of any scientific term used to indicate a concept is the degree of agreement about its meaning and the nature of the concept. An agreed upon abstract concept must be the starting point for describing the concrete events that social scientists study, a need this study seeks to address.

Because moving from conceptual definitions to operational definitions allows us to determine the existence of a theoretical concept in a concrete setting (Dubin, 1978), both theoretical and operational definitions are a necessary component of theorizing. This enforces Chaffee's (1996) point that concept explication, a systematic way of arriving at conceptual and operational definitions, is an approach to theory building. The explication of the concept of materialism must occur so that the concept can be useful in subsequent theory building and in order to fulfill the goal of gaining scientific knowledge. Thus, the method of concept explication employed in this study to arrive at a new conceptualization of materialism, constitutes theorizing.

Chaffee's (1991) concept explication begins with identification of the concept, followed by a literature search and careful processing of the relevant literature.

Meaning analysis then occurs, in which the concept is boiled down to its central elements and the lower-order concepts that constitute the higher-order concept are specified. After meaning analysis, the researcher arrives at an empirical definition, which is then operationalized. The operational definition is evaluated for reliability and validity and refined, from which point it can be employed in future research. This is the method utilized in the explication contained in the later sections of this chapter.

To review, although materialism is a central concept for several critical and political economy theories of media influence, there is little evidence pointing to even a moderate association between individual-level materialism and media use. The current study seeks to explicate the concept of materialism based on the argument that the lack of strong empirical findings concerning the relationship between media use and materialism is due in large part to the lack of a proper explication of materialism. Following Chaffee's (1991) call for concept explication, a central component of theory-building, the explication processes of meaning analysis and empirical analysis was undertaken in this study. The following section reviews the conceptualizations of materialism most frequently employed in social scientific research and other relevant literature in order to arrive at a new conceptual definition of materialism.

Meaning Analysis

The age-old concept of materialism, only in recent years appearing in social scientific and humanistic research (Fournier & Richins, 1991), suffers from a number of diverse conceptualizations. The remainder of this chapter reviews the literature on

materialism and consumption and, through the process of concept explication

(Chaffee, 1996) and meaning analysis, narrows down materialism to its core

theoretical elements. The conceptualization of materialism as a value is called into

question and it is suggested that a new term, "social materialism," might be a

promising way to highlight the similarities in the variety of usages of the term. The

constructs related to the new empirical definition of social materialism are then

explored.

Before proceeding to the literature review, the domain of the literature search

should be noted. The literature review began with a search of the electronic databases

of *ComAbstracts*, *PsychINFO*, and, from the *EBSCOhost* database, *Business Source*

Premier, *Econlit*, and *Sociological Collection*. In order to narrow the boundaries of

the current study, two classifications of literature were excluded. The first was

literature relevant to the phenomenon known as compulsive buying, which is a clinical

phenomenon that has been found to be a distinct measurement construct from

materialism (Dittmar, 2005). A second, broader classification of literature excluded

from the literature reviewed were those writings relevant to exclusively macro-social

manifestations of consumerism. Miles (1999) defines consumerism as "a psycho-

social expression of the intersection between the structural and the individual within

the realm of consumption. The consuming experience is psycho-social in the sense

that it represents a bridge that links the individual and society." (p. 5). Although

works relevant to consumption processes at the individual level were reviewed, the

aspects of consumerism relevant to large-scale social systems, that is, the institutional and cultural forms of consumerism, were excluded from the literature review.

Review of Definitions of Materialism

Originally, the philosophical use of the term materialism referred to the theory or belief that nothing exists except matter and its movements and later, more narrowly referred to the belief that mental phenomena were nothing more than, or are wholly caused by, the operation of material or physical agencies (Oxford English Dictionary). In common usage today materialism is defined as "the tendency to treat material possessions and physical comfort as more important or desirable than spiritual values; a way of life based on material interests" (Oxford English Dictionary). In theoretical usage and in empirical social scientific research, as the following paragraphs explain, "materialism" has come to imply not only something quite different than the denotative definition, but also a great number of things to a great number of writers.

Reviews of conceptualizations of materialism have been undertaken elsewhere (e.g., Fournier & Richins, 1991; Kilbourne, Grünhagen, & Foley, 2005). There are a number of definitions of materialism, the majority of which whose authors' did not conduct the process of explication (Chaffee, 1991) as outlined above.

Prior research has conceptualized materialism in several ways. One primary distinction that has been made is between a psychological versus a sociological conceptualization of materialism (Friedman, 1993). Definitions approaching materialism from a more psychological perspective include those of Holt's (1995).

This definition is closest to the original philosophical meaning of the term, as he defines materialism as "the consumption style that results when consumers perceive that value inheres in consumption objects rather than in experiences or other people" (p. 13). Other authors focus on the satisfaction derived from possessions in their definitions, such as Ahuvia (1992), who calls materialism "the love of money and the things that money can buy" (p. 188). Hendrickson and Morrisette (1992) define it as "the idea that people gain personal satisfaction from the ownership of tangible objects" (p. 128). Rassuli and Hollander (1986) conceptualize materialism more broadly as "a mind-set . . . an interest in getting and spending" (p. 10).

An example of a sociological conceptualization is that of Murkerji (1983), who defines materialism as "a cultural system in which material interests are not made subservient to other social goals" (p. 8). There is another sociologically-relevant conceptualization of materialism proposed by Ronald Inglehart (1977, 1997) in which the priorities of economic and physical security identify the materialist. It should be stated at the outset that Inglehart's work on a materialist-postmaterialist value shift is not unrelated to the general notion of materialism. Inglehart is a political sociologist who defines materialism beyond the bounds of consumer psychology, but because his conceptualization is one of macro-level sociopolitical materialism and postmaterialism, it will not be focused on here. An additional macro-level conceptualization of materialism is that of Kassiola (1990), whose "industrial materialism" is closely linked to the notion of competition and is part of a larger

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critique of the negative consequences of industrialization. Kassiola defines materialism as "the supreme or high-ranking industrial value held by most of industrial society's inhabitants to acquire the maximum possible amount—in an unlimited, ceaseless manner—of tangible material objects, articles, goods, commodities and so on . . . with prime social regard given to the production of such goods" (p. 112). Inglehart's (1977, 1997) theory of a postmaterialist value shift as well as Kassiola's (1990) concept of industrial materialism are concerned with macro-level *social* values. The definitions reviewed in detail below are more focused on *individual* values, as individual values are what the current work seeks to investigate.

Although the list of definitions above is in no way exhaustive, overall, it is clear that there is no widespread agreement on a single definition of materialism. With the exception of Inglehart's (1977, 1997) work, the conceptualizations above do not repeatedly appear in the literature. There are two conceptualizations that dominate empirical social scientific research. Graham (1999) reports that the most important definitions of materialism are those by Belk (1984) and Richins and Dawson (1992). Rather than rely on the separation between psychological and sociological conceptualizations of materialism, the classification of Ahuvia and Wong (2002) is helpful, as they divide the most popular academic conceptualizations of materialism into personality materialism, as operationalized by Belk (1984), and personal values materialism, attributed to Richins and Dawson (1992).

There are major conceptual differences between Belk's (1984) definition of materialism and Richins and Dawson's (1992) definition. Belk (1984, 1985) is credited with initiating a tradition of materialism study that has spurred a great deal of research. His work is based on the idea that materialism is a *personality trait* consisting of three subtraits. He defines materialism as a consumer orientation that "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 either directly as ends or indirectly (as means to ends)" (Belk, 1984, p. 291). The three traits associated with it are possessiveness, "the inclination and tendency to retain control or ownership of one's possessions"; nongenerosity, "an unwillingness to give possessions or to share possessions with others"; and envy, "displeasure and ill-will at the superiority of another person in happiness, success, reputation, or the possession of anything desirable" (Belk, 1984, p. 514).

The sum of the three traits of possessiveness, nongenerosity, and envy constitute Belk's measure of materialism. This personality trait conception of materialism has been criticized. For example, Richins and Dawson (1991) claim that materialism is not a matter of personality but rather has attitudinal, behavioral, and value components. Several researchers have reported low reliability for Belk's (1984) subscales (e.g., Ahuvia & Wong, 2002, Cole et al., 1992, Evrard & Boff, 1998;

Richins & Dawson, 1992), while others have noted that the three subtraits do not aggregate well into one measure (e.g., Ellis, 1992).

Richins and Dawson's (1992) measure, used most frequently by marketing scholars (e.g., Griffin, Babin, & Christensen, 2002; Kwak, Zinkhan, & French, 2001; Roberts, Manolis, & Tanner, 2003), views materialism as a system of personal values. Richins divides materialism into three parts: acquisition centrality, acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, and possession-defined success. The material values scale (MVS) contains eighteen items, measures that have shown acceptable levels of reliability and evidence of validity (e.g., Richins, 2004). Sinkovics and Holzmüller (2001) reviewed studies in the top journals in the fields of marketing, consumer behavior, and psychology, reporting that researchers relied on Richins and Dawson (1992) in seven out of ten studies. Because the MVS is by far the most frequently employed in empirical research today, the following section examines the Richins and Dawson (1992) conceptualization of materialism as a value. It is suggested that because such a value conceptualization is faulty, it is necessary to refine the construct of materialism in order for it to be useful to empirical research.

The Problem with Conceptualizing Materialism as a Value

Fournier and Richins (1991) arrived at their multi-dimensional conceptualization of materialism by integrating conceptions of materialism from consumer behavior, psychology, and economics and an exploratory study in which they asked twenty-nine respondents of different ages and backgrounds to identify

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defining characteristics of materialists. They suggest a *value* conceptualization of materialism. The value conceptualization is based on Rokeach's (1973) definition of 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). The major argument put forth in the following paragraphs is that the classification of materialism as a value is problematic. Later sections of this chapter will detail the way in which the MVS operationalization of materialism is not a desirable measure because its creators did not follow the process of concept explication.

A closer look at the reasoning of Fournier and Richins (1991) reveals a major weakness, as they present an inconsistent position as to whether materialism is a desirable end-state itself or a means to some other desirable end-state. Based on Rokeach's (1973) definition of a value and the fact that "a value has a transcendental quality to it, guiding actions, attitudes, judgments, and comparisons across specific objects and situations and beyond immediate goals to more ultimate goals" (Rokeach, 1973, p. 18), Fournier and Richins (1991) classify materialism as a value. Their reasoning is that: "the centrality of the pursuit of possessions, the number of behaviors and attitudes influenced by it, and materialism's role in guiding consumption choices . . . suggest that materialism is appropriately considered a value" (p. 411).

Under Rokeach's definition (1973), values represent "conceptions of the desirable" (p. 10). But Fournier and Richins (1991) state that "materialism

[conceptualized] as a value reflects the importance an individual places on acquisition of material possessions as an appropriate or necessary conduct *to reach desired end states* (p. 411, emphasis added). Analyzing the manner in which Fournier and Richins (1991) discuss materialism, it is clear that they believe it a *means* to such end-states, not an end-state itself. As another example, they write: "persons very high in materialism may believe that it is impossible for them *to achieve such desired end states as status recognition and happiness* unless they have sufficient, or the right kind of, possessions (p. 41, emphasis added). In this statement, status recognition and happiness are the desired end-states, a glaring inconsistency with the value conceptualization in which materialism itself would be considered the desirable end-state.

Is it materialism itself that is sought-after, or are the consequences that people seek in acquiring and possessing material objects desirable? When one considers the undesirability of being classified as a materialist, the answer seems clear. Schor (1998) reports that many Americans believe that "materialism is ruining the country, perverting our values, and damaging our children" (p. 84). Her research revealed that after drugs and crime, people see materialism as the most serious problem affecting American families. Moreover, Schor (1998) found a third-person effect with respect to materialism—while seventy percent of her sample described the average American as "very materialistic," only a mere eight percent felt that they were materialistic themselves. Stated another way, as Tatzel (2003) put it, it is a criticism, not a

compliment, to call someone materialistic. Clearly, many Americans do not consider materialism itself as desirable. In contrast to the negative nature of materialism, Rockeach's (1973) terminal values are all *positive* end-states of existence or states individuals strive toward such as "a world at peace" or "honest."

Thus, there are two reasons why the conceptualization of materialism as a value is faulty. The first is that materialism seems to be a *means* to some other end rather than an end in itself. The second reason why it is a mistake to speak of "materialistic values" is because values are conceptions of the desirable, and materialism is not considered a desirable or positive trait.

Kilbourn et al. (2005) consider Richins and Dawson's (1992) measure to be a measure of *attitudes* rather than values. Rokeach (1973) differentiates between an attitude and value: "an attitude refers to an organization of several beliefs around a specific object or situation. A value on the other hand, refers to a single belief of a very specific kind" (p. 18). Kilbourne et al. (2005) claim that Richins' measure is one of attitudes rather than values because it is situation specific. In keeping with Kilbourne et al. and in light of the weaknesses in Richins' and colleagues classification of materialism as a value, the current argument holds that the widely used material values scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992) is a measure of attitudes toward consumption rather than a true value labeled as materialism. Because the concept of "values" is already so inextricably linked to materialism in the literature, the following

section seeks to demonstrate that distinguishing means from end-states or ends is one way to arrive at a clearer conceptualization of materialism.

Applying the Means-End Chain Model to Materialism

Despite their value conceptualization of materialism, Richins and Dawson (1992) refer to materialism as a means to other ends such as happiness and social recognition. Similarly, Belk (1984) suggests that possessions provide satisfaction as ends *or* means to ends. Many authors speak of materialism as desire for possessions just for the sake of possessions. For example, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) claim "a habit of consumption can become an end in itself, feeding on its autonomous necessity to possess more things . . ." (p. 231). But the current argument suggests that there cannot be such a thing as "consumption for the sake of consumption" (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p. 231). It is posited that consumption of material objects is not an end in itself, but rather a means to other ends.

Beaglehole (1932) has argued that acquisitive behavior is a *means* to satisfy the more fundamental needs of the organism. He holds that the desire for property is not due to a biological instinct of property: "there is rather the drive of social impulses in this desire: the need for social recognition, to give and receive response; or there is the overwhelming need for personal security. . ." (p. 196). Similarly, Klineberg (1940) argues that the acquisition of property in humans is subordinate to some other motive, and because the desire for prestige is one of the most significant of the

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motives humans have, property serves as a means to the end of prestige. If the

acquisition of material objects is indeed subordinate to other motives, then

materialism cannot be an end in itself. The following is a discussion of how

materialism might be best conceptualized as a *means* to desired end-states.

The Means-Ends Chain Model

In order to arrive at the new conceptualization of materialism proposed in the

current work, the link between what are here classified as means, the acquisition and

use of material objects, and values, must first be explored. One attempt to apply

Rokeach's personal values perspective to consumer behavior is the means-end chain

model (Gutman, 1982). Principles from the means-end chain model will be applied in

the following discussion, as explaining how a product or service selection facilitates

the achievement of desired end-states will bring us closer to a clear idea of what the

nature of materialism is, if we decide not to classify it as a value. The following

section explains that distinguishing means from ends results in a conceptualization of

materialism entirely different from that of Richins and Dawson (1992).

Gutman's (1982) model is based on the assumption that values play a

dominant role in guiding consumption choices. The means-end chain model depicts

the way in which the attributes of products, called "means" by Gutman, are linked to

the valued end-states desired by consumers, called "ends." A central feature of

Gutman's (1982) means-end chain are consequences, which are physiological,

psychological, or sociological results that accrue either directly or indirectly to the

consumer as a result of consumption behavior. The central aspect of the model is that consumers chose products that produce desired consequences and minimize undesired consequences. In its simplest form, the means-end chain model looks like this:

Attributes of products (means) $\rightarrow$ Consequences $\rightarrow$ Values (ends)

To use McIntosh and Thynes' (2005) example, low fat food products (attribute/means) might be purchased for their slimming benefits (consequence), and ultimately, for achieving self-esteem (value/end).

There are several features of the means-end chain model that are applicable to the current argument. Gutman (1982) holds that the desired consequences of the purchase or use of a product derive from values. The assumption that purchase behavior is both value-driven and driven by markets is an assumption the current work shares. A second aspect of the means-end chain model is that consumers group products into product classes that will be instrumental in helping them achieve their desired consequences and ultimately, valued end-states. The choice of attributes or properties to be focused on in a product is thus influenced by values. Later, the specific attributes of a product the materialist focuses on will be explored. First, as it is argued here that the purchase and use of material objects is means to some end, the desired consequences or ends the materialist seeks will be explored.

The Desired Consequences of Acquiring Material Possessions

What ends might the acquisition and use of material objects serve? Before answering this question, it should be recognized that material objects fulfill a great

number of functions and play a host of roles in our lives. As Campbell (1995) explains, consumer goods fill a range of personal and social functions:

> they commonly serve to satisfy needs or indulge wants and desires. In addition they may serve to compensate the individual for feelings of inferiority, insecurity or loss, to symbolise achievement, success, or power. They also commonly serve to communicate social distinctions or reinforce relationships of superiority and inferiority between individuals or groups. They can also, on some occasions, express attitudes or states of mind, or communicate specific messages from one person to another. Finally they may be instrumental in creating the individual's sense of self or personal identity (p. 111).

Which of these functions of material objects constitute materialism? We can approach this question by first clarifying that objects have a dual nature. As Kassiola (1990) writes, "material commodities have a complex dual nature: physical in their material constitution and nonmaterial in their normative, symbolic function" (p. 149). Before determining which uses of material objects constitute materialism, the following paragraphs will differentiate between the different types of uses of objects.

Material goods have what are referred to in the literature as either instrumental, functional, or utilitarian functions, all of which convey essentially the same idea—that material objects might serve purely instrumental purposes in terms of their functional uses and by helping people exert direct control over the environment (Dittmar, 1992). Examples of this principal can be exemplified by tools or kitchen appliances.

The principle of utility is at the heart of neoclassical economic theory but not useful to social scientific investigation. As Ackerman (1997) explains, the standard

neoclassical economic theory of consumer behavior assumes that consumers come to the market with well-defined desires for goods and services and that those desires are not affected by social interactions, economic institutions, or the consumption choices or well-being of others. Dittmar (1992) points out that the neoclassical economic model of consumer behavior ignores the *social* value of material objects, as objects have symbolic functions and meanings. Belk (1991) too says possessions transcend utilitarian status, in many cases having intense symbolic meanings.

The field of marketing, well-aware of the symbolic functions that consumption objects fulfill, capitalizes on the notion that objects fulfill needs beyond those met by their functional uses (Pollay, 1986). Fowles (1976) asserts that the contrived messages of advertisers are designed to invoke the public's needs, many of which are psychological, and "promote purchasable gratification" (p. 73) of these psychological needs by linking the symbolic meanings of material objects to the fulfillment of such needs. Many of the motivational appeals made in mass advertising are appeals to needs that extend beyond the physiological needs of the organism—they are social in nature and for this reason relevant to the underpinnings of the current study.

Although perhaps easy to decode in the types of appeals advertisers make, it must be recognized that the distinction between functional or instrumental uses of material goods and the symbolic functions of objects is a difficult one to make, because "it is extremely difficult to disentangle the use-related function from the symbolic meanings in even the most practical objects" (Csikszentmihalyi &

Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p. 21). Or as Dittmar (1992) holds, "any simple instrumental-symbolic dichotomy would be misplaced, given that even functional, utilitarian aspects are also (at least potentially) symbolic and communicative" (p. 88).

Determining the extent to which something might be put to both functional and symbolic uses is not the goal here. Instead, I suggest a new conceptualization of materialism called *social materialism*, which focuses exclusively on the symbolic, communicative functions material goods fulfill.

Social materialism does focus on the symbolic functions of goods, but that is not to say that the only important use of objects is symbolic. In conceptualizing social materialism we need not go so far as Baudrillard (1988) to say that consumer goods take on the value of signs only and that consumption is not a material practice but exclusively "a systematic act of the manipulation of signs" (p. 22). I should be clear in stating that I do not believe the postmodern claim that goods are not tied to their functions or some defined need. However, I do contend that the use of goods to meet *physiological* needs is not part of social materialism.

To support this argument, let us return to the definitions of materialism discussed earlier. In their review of conceptualizations of materialism, Kilbourne et al. (2005) make a contention that is very important here. They say that what all the definitions of materialism that appear in the literature have in common is that "they reflect the use of consumption to achieve more than instrumental or functional value in the things purchased. Collectively, the definitions suggest that the individual seeks

a relationship with objects through which she or he is enhanced in some way"
(Kilbourne et al., 2005, p. 626). In agreement with this statement, I focus on the
symbolic, communicative functions of material objects in the explication of social
materialism conducted in the following sections of this chapter.

Recall that in Gutman's (1982) means-end chain model, consequences of
consuming an object might be physiological, psychological, or sociological. As social
materialism does not include the use of objects to meet purely physiological needs, the
focus in the current conceptualization of social materialism is on those psychological
and sociological functions material objects might serve. The following section
explores the psychosocial nature of material goods, suggesting that the newly
introduced concept of social materialism will benefit empirical social scientific
research because recognizing the psychological and sociological functions of material
objects is vital to understanding life in the consumer society.

Social Materialism Concept Explication

Many writers have asked whether it is true that modern consumers identify
themselves by the formula "I am = what I have and what I consume" (Fromm, 1976, p.
27). As we have seen, material objects transcend instrumental and utilitarian
functions, encompassing symbolic meanings (Dittmar, 1992).

Dittmar's (1992) symbolic-communicational model of possessions and identity
holds that material objects are mediators of identity between self and others. In other
words, material objects are used as a means of communicating who someone is or

would like to be both to others and to oneself. Dittmar's (1992) symbolic functions of material objects can be further divided into *categorical functions,* signifying the broad social categories and subcultures individuals belong to, and *self-expressive* functions, which concern the expression of individuals' uniqueness and personal qualities.

The conceptualization of materialism as social proposed here highlights the functions of objects not just as aides in self- and other-categorization, but also the general symbolic meanings of possessions. Based on the centrality of the social uses of material possessions, the current work proposes a definition for social materialism. *Social materialism is the belief that possessions of a certain nature acquired in a certain manner are means to desired end-states of existence*. This section describes the *nature* and *manner* of social materialist consumption, but first, the *symbolic uses* to which social materialists put their possessions. The symbolic uses will later be linked to the desirable end-states possessions serve as means to the social materialist.

The concept explication contained here is being conducted to arrive at both a conceptual and operational definition of social materialism. Richins and Dawson (1992) did draw upon relevant literature in formulating their three dimension conceptualization of materialism, however, the three dimensions they propose (acquisition centrality, the role of acquisition in the happiness, and the role of possessions in defining success), do not necessarily correspond to their measurement device. More explicitly, their scale items are in no way linked to their theoretical definition of materialism. For example, in Richins and Dawson's discussion of the

acquisition centrality dimension of materialism, they argue that materialists place possessions and their acquisition at the center of their lives. They cite literature backing the claim that consumption can be a goal that structures individuals' lives, but such scale items as "I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned" and "I usually buy only the things I need" are not linked to the literature they review. This is the case for the majority of the MVS scale items—while the *dimensions* of materialism that Richins and Dawson propose are supported with theoretical arguments, the authors do not make a case for the items that make up their measurement device.

The MVS is thus a scale that features measurement items that are not linked to Richins and Dawson's (1992) conceptual definition of materialism. This is the major criticism of the material values scale offered here. The goal of the current work is to actually follow the process of concept explication; to move systematically from meaning analysis (what has preceded from the outset of the concept explication section of this chapter and will continue in the explication of the dimensions of social materialism to follow) and empirical definition, to operationalization. The next section elaborates one dimension of social materialism, the *symbolic use* dimension.

Social Materialism Dimension I: Symbolic Use

In the *symbolic use* dimension of social materialism, it is proposed that material objects are used to categorize various aspects of an individual's own identity and the identities of others. The specifics of the way in which material objects are

used symbolically are explored below, here translated from theoretical elements of social materialism to operationalization as scale items in the social materialism measurement device.

Despite Belk's (1987) claim that materialism is the "dominant consumer ideology and the most significant development in modern consumer behavior" (p. 26), the body of research on materialism per se pales in comparison to the amount of research on consumption (see e.g., Campbell 1991; McCracken, 1990; Miller, 1987, for reviews of consumption research). The relationship between people and material goods, undoubtedly fundamental to the concept of materialism, is an area of inquiry that can be greatly informed by the examination of the body of consumption research. The symbolic uses of material objects explored here, and the style of consumption that constitutes the second dimension of social materialism, are thus greatly informed by consumption studies. Because the literature on consumption is so vast and varied, the list of symbolic uses and materialistic styles of consumption focused upon here portends in no way to be exhaustive. Those themes that consistently appeared in the communication, economics, marketing, philosophy, psychology, and sociology literature reviewed by the author are considered to be the central elements and the lower-order concepts of social materialism.

The first of the symbolic uses constitutive of social materialism is the use of material objects to demonstrate one's success or achievement. Hunt, Kernan, and Mitchell (1996) suggest that materialists perceive people in terms of possessions.

They suggest that the primary dimension of materialism is the use of commercial goods and services as vehicles for signaling individual accomplishment. Campbell (1995) too holds that material objects serve to symbolize success, along with Wong (1997), who says consumption might be used to reflect one's success and achievement. Drawing from this literature, the first measurement item reflecting this symbolic use is: 'The things I own do not say much about how well I am doing in life' (to be reverse-coded). A second, related but distinct item included in the social materialism scale is 'There are certain people I would like to trade places with because of what they own.'

The second of the symbolic uses constitutive of social materialism is the use of material objects to impress others. Holt (1995) explains that consumption objects are resources used to engage others, one case of which would be to impress others. Christopher et al. (2005) contend that materialism is related to a tendency to manage the impressions one makes on others. They assessed the types of impressions that materialistic people wish to convey by assessing self-presentational styles, concluding that material possessions are important to people who are concerned about the impressions others form of them. Thus, social materialists likely seek to impress others through consumption objects. Accordingly, the scale item reflective of this idea is: 'It is not important for me to own things that impress people' (reverse-coded).

The third of the symbolic uses constitutive of social materialism is the use of material objects to get some sort of reaction out of an audience. This is the idea of

"conspicuous consumption" so prevalent in modern discussions of consumption. The term dates back to Veblen, whose "Theory of the Leisure Class," first published in 1899, examined the emergence of metropolitan lifestyles at the turn of the century. Veblen explored how everyday objects lost their functional qualities and became objects of display. He claimed that "in order to gain and to hold the esteem of man it is not sufficient merely to possess wealth or power. The wealth or power must be put into evidence, for esteem is awarded only on evidence" (Veblen, 1899, p. 34). Veblen showed that the mere absence from work or possession of wealth was translated into highly exaggerated forms that Veblen termed "conspicuous consumption" and "conspicuous leisure" (Miller, 1987). In the use of material objects to gain audience reaction, Wong (1997) notes that today, often people equate materialism with conspicuous consumption "in which product satisfaction is derived from audience reaction rather than utility in use" (p. 197). The scale item reflective of these ideas is: 'I enjoy it when I get positive reactions to the things I own.'

The fourth of the symbolic uses constitutive of social materialism is the use of material objects to show status. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) contend that the most extensive studies of objects as signs of self have been done in connection with the status-giving role of things. Again Veblen is relevant here, as conspicuous consumption is thought of as the mechanism by which social status and distinctions are established. Attempting to bring Veblen up to date, Galbraith (1958) argues that people behave ostentatiously to achieve status recognition. Packard (1959)

has also argued that individuals consume products to demonstrate a superior level of status both to themselves and to their friends. Because material objects can be used as a demonstration of status and what one's subjective position in life is, it is posited that a fifth symbolic use constitutive of social materialism is the use of material objects to evaluate one's standard of living. As such, the next measurement item in the social materialism scale is 'I do not buy things to show people that I am better than someone else' (reverse-coded).

The next of the symbolic uses constitutive of social materialism is the use of material objects to gain social approval. This is the idea that one will be well-liked if he or she owns the right things. Dittmar (1992) explains that expression and maintenance of identity depend on the appraisals of others and that people form impressions of others form an 'observer' perspective. From this, one might infer that individuals who form impressions of others based on their possessions must also believe that they themselves are also being judged based on their own possessions. These individuals will thus seek social popularity based on the way in which it is believed that others are classifying and judging the material objects they own. The corresponding measurement item is: 'People will like me more if I own the right things.'

The next two of the symbolic uses indicative of social materialism seem contradictory but are in actuality not—the use of material objects to both demonstrate group affiliation and to differentiate oneself or to show distinction. Zinkhan and

Prenshaw (1994) note that products might promote feelings of group affiliation, particularly in the case of brand-name products, and Page (1992) holds that material objects might be used to denote belongingness to a particular group. At the same time, in a society where goods are mass produced, there is the desire to express one's individuality through material objects. For example, Baudrillard (1988) holds that, futilely of course, individuals buy goods solely to be different from others and that the only product image consumers want is one which is perfectly unique. In a somewhat similar vein, Leibenstein (1950) speaks of a "snob effect" in which commodities appear less desirable to consumers because others are buying them. As such, the next two measurement items in the social materialism scale are 'The types of things I purchase connect me to a group,' and 'It is not important for me to have things which are different from what everybody else has' (reverse-coded).

Now that the first dimension of social materialism, the *symbolic use* dimension, has been explicated, the *consumption style* that constitutes the second dimension of social materialism will be explored.

Social Materialism Dimension II: Consumption Style

We must now differentiate between what *types* of acquisition and uses of material goods indicate materialism, for not all people who use goods to reach desired end-states are materialists. Recall Holt's (1995) definition of materialism: "the *consumption style* that results when consumers perceive that value inheres in consumption objects rather than in experiences or other people" (p. 13, emphasis

added). Now also recall from the means-end chain model (Gutman, 1982) the role of product categories. Gutman (1982) argues that because 'ends' are few and 'means' are many, consumers' group products into categories or classes to reduce complexity of choice, thus creating arrays of products that will be instrumental in helping them achieve desired consequences. Furthermore, the choice of properties to be focused on in creating these categories is influenced by values. The current argument is that the *nature* and *manner* of consumption, collectively referred to here as a *consumption style*, is a second dimension of social materialism. The categories of objects developed below are intended to tap the categories of objects that social materialists seek in order to reach desired end-states. The next section will explicate the *nature* of the type of consumption indicative of social materialism and the *manner* in which this consumption occurs.

Nature Subdimension of the Consumption Style Dimension

Material objects used to fulfill social functions are hypothesized to have qualities that are attractive to the social materialist. The conceptualization of social materialism here posits that there are seven qualities the social materialist seeks in the material objects they acquire and use.

The first of the types of material objects sought-after in social materialism are luxury items. The preference for luxury over just function is not a new theme, but in the consumption literature dates back to even Veblen (1899) who was concerned with the lavish spending of the rich, often on items of great luxury. A second category of

related types of material objects sought-after in social materialism would be those items judged to be of high quality, hypothesized to be another category comprising the *nature* subdimension of the social materialist's consumption style. The corresponding social materialism scale items are 'I like a lot of luxury in my life' and 'People recognize that I buy only the best.'

The third of the types of material objects sought-after in social materialism are brand-name objects. As mentioned above, brand names are thought to be important because they allow product inferences and evaluations, and promote feelings of group affiliation (Zinkhan & Prenshaw, 1994). In their study of lay notions of materialism, Fournier and Richins (1991) found that 72 percent of their sample mentioned that a preference for prestigious brand names is a characteristic of a materialistic individual. The scale item reflective of this literature is: 'A nationally advertised brand is usually better than a generic brand.'

Along with preference for brand names, it is also hypothesized that the social materialist has a subjective idea of products that are the "right" type of things to own, a judgment based largely on taste. Bourdieu's (1984) examination of how consumption practices are a manifestation of taste demonstrated that what people like is largely linked to one's cultural capital or class, and that individuals have distinct notions of what material goods are "appropriate" to own and display. As such, the next social materialism scale item is: 'It is not important for me to own the right things' (reverse-coded).

Continuing in this vein, an additional type of material objects sought-after in social materialism would be those items judged to be fashionable or in-style. Simmel's (1904/1971) trickle-down theory was formulated precisely to explain changes in fashion. He argued that social groups forever seek to emulate the clothing patterns of the social superiors. It has been argued that Simmel was successful in showing that "acquisitiveness, the seemingly irrational change of fashions . . . and the obsessive interest in style, fashion and trends are all fueled by an underlying competition for social status and prestige" (Gabriel & Lang, 1995, p. 52). The corresponding scale item is 'It is not important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter based on the products I buy'(reverse-coded).

The next of the types of material objects sought-after in social materialism are those objects that are new on the market. It is hypothesized that the social materialist values items that are new and different or innovative. As Fromm (1976) explains, newness is important part of consumption—"one gets tired of the object and is eager to dispose of the old in order to buy the new model. The process from acquisition to transitory having and using, throwing away, and new acquisition constitutes the vicious circle of consumer-buying and today's motto could indeed be: 'New is beautiful!'" (p. 72). In keeping with this idea, the next social materialism scale item is: 'It is not important to me to buy new and different things' (reverse-coded).

The last of the types of material objects hypothesized to be sought-after in social materialism are goods that are thought to go together or complement one

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another. McCracken (1990) explains this phenomenon, called "Diderot unities," which stems from an essay by the great French thinker, Denis Diderot (1713-84). Diderot's "Regrets on parting with my dressing gown," told the story of how when he was given the gift of a magnificent scarlet robe and discarded his old robe, he became dissatisfied with all other items in his study for failing to live up to the splendor of the new item (Gabriel & Lang, 1995). McCracken (1990) argues that objects do not communicate in isolation but in concert with other objects, and that consumers are often motivated by an urge for consistency and completeness. As such, the last of the nature subdimension scale items is: 'I find that when I buy something nice I often purchase other things that go along with it.'

The type of objects and their attributes, here referred to as the *nature* of objects sought after by the social materialist, is only one of the components of the style of consumption indicative of social materialism. The following section explains how the *manner* in which material objects are acquired and used is a second component of the social materialist style of consumption.

Manner Subdimension of the Consumption Style Dimension

The *manner* subdimension of the social materialist style of consumption focuses on a specific type of acquisition—a way of consuming that is extremely other-oriented. The specific behaviors that constitute the *manner* subdimension are the purchasing of more than one needs, the acquisition of the maximum possible amount, acquisition in a competitive manner, consuming an amount relative to others, striving

to "keep up with the Joneses," and spending more than one's income can comfortably allow for.

It has been argued that spending has a comparative and competitive character (Schor, 1998). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that there is a competitive character to acquisition in social materialism, translated into the scale item 'I view buying things as a competitive act.' Related to this is the idea that consumers seek to "acquire the maximum possible amount—in an unlimited ceaseless manner" (Kassiola, 1990, p. 112). Veblen (1899) writes, "in any community where goods are held in severalty it is necessary, in order to his own peace of mind, that an individual should possess as large a portion of goods as others to whom he is accustomed to class himself; and it is extremely gratifying to possess something more than others" (p. 31). This idea has been translated into the social materialism scale item: 'I take pleasure from owning more objects than others like me.'

From the idea that possessing as much as possible is desirable to the social materialist follows yet another type of acquisition constitutive of social materialism— the purchase of goods beyond what one needs to survive. Two conceptually similar but distinct scale items reflective of this idea are included in the social materialism scale: 'I usually buy only the things I need' and 'I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned'(both reverse-coded).

Here what Pollay (1986) jocularly calls the "proverbial Joneses" comes into play, for the theme of "keeping up with the Joneses" appears in almost every

discussion of modern consumption. A more theoretical formulation is Duesenberry's (1949) demonstration or bandwagon effect, which holds that when households come into contact with the higher quality goods of reference groups, the impulse to buy them increases. This idea is expressed in the scale item: 'When it comes to owning things, I do not feel pressure to keep up with others like me'(reverse-coded).

When acquiring material objects competitively, one must have in mind some standard of comparison. As in when keeping up with the Joneses, the consumption style indicative of social materialism is hypothesized to be largely relative to an individual's reference groups. This applies to the amount and type of products consumed, as Tatzel (2003) writes, "it is not the absolute amount that seems to matter for well-being, but whether the amount is above or below some standard, with the standard based on social comparison, what one thinks one deserves, what one thinks one needs, and the like" (p. 411). Fournier and Richins (1991) argue that the materialistic individual's happiness is relative to what their reference group has; Schor (1998) also claims that people value their consumption relative to others. The scale item developed to reflect the idea that people consume relative to often better-off others is: 'I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them.'

The symbolic ways in which a social materialist uses material objects and the style of consumption discussed above make up the theoretical model of the current study. The model and related constructs will be tested in the hypothesis section that follows.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Based on the meaning and theoretical bases of social materialism detailed above, the current study proposes a model comprised of 21 observable variables, 3 lower-order latent constructs, and 2 higher-order latent constructs. Figure 1 on the next page illustrates the hypothesized model.
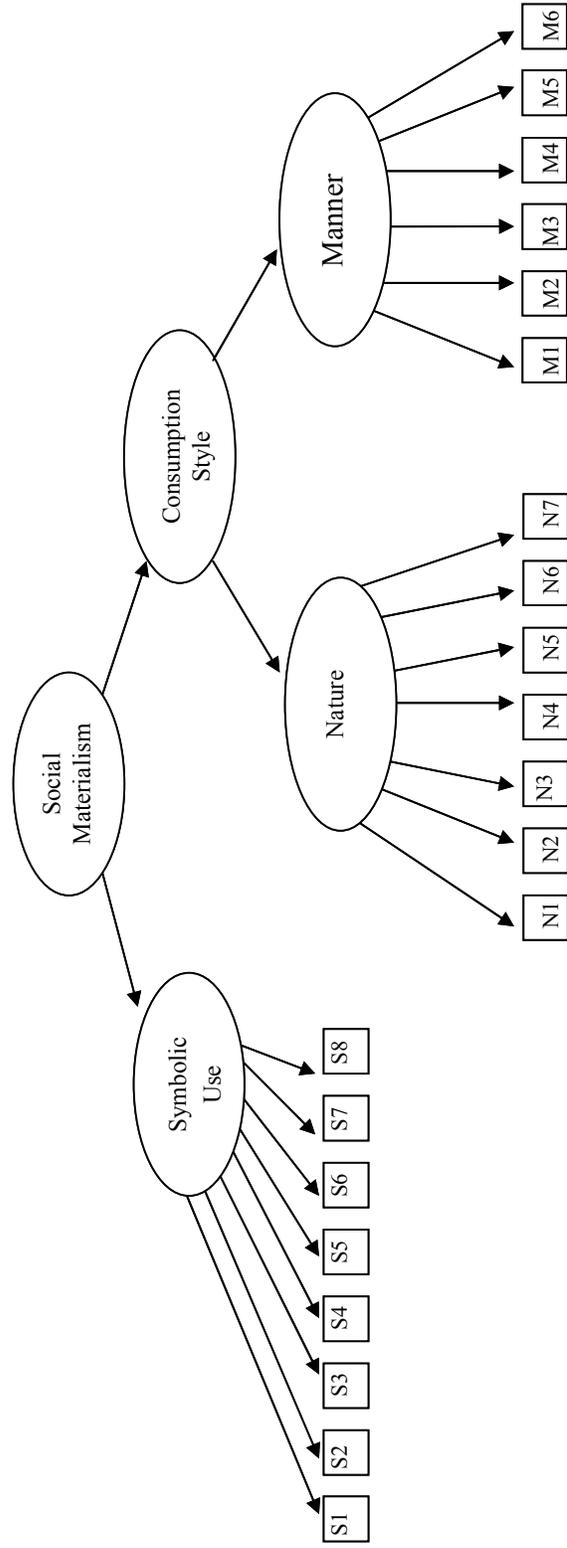
Figure 1. Model of Social Materialism.

Note. List of observable items in Appendix A.

It is important to note that each of the 21 observable variables in the hypothesized model are related to the literature reviewed above in the theoretical discussion of the dimensions of social materialism (see Appendix A for scale items). In other words, each of the items measured in the social materialism scale are theoretically grounded, because "the importance of theory in developing measures of latent constructs cannot be overstated" (Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003, p.7). An important part of concept explication is the assessment of whether data matches a posited theoretical definition through empirical analysis (Chaffee, 1991), and the assessment of reliability is essential to the processes of concept explication and scale development in particular (Netemeyer et al., 2003). Thus, the following research questions are offered:

RQ1: Does the hypothesized social materialism model fit the data?

RQ2: Is the hypothesized social materialism measurement model reliable?

Netemeyer et al. (2003) explain that theory is concerned with not just latent constructs but also with the validity of the measurement of the constructs as well. In order to assess the degree to which the social materialism measure actually measures the latent constructs it is intended to measure, the current study focuses on three types of validity: predictive, convergent, and discriminant validity. As determining validity is also fundamental to the process of concept explication (Chaffee, 1991), the remainder of this chapter focuses on the assessment of the construct validity of social materialism.

Construct Validation: Predictive Validity

Predictive validity concerns the ability of an operationalization of a concept to be able to properly predict an association between that concept and another variable. Of greatest theoretical interest to this particular type of validity are the relationships that exist between social materialism and various forms of media use. This area of the empirical analysis allows for a direct assessment of the major argument being put forward in the proposed study—if a better measure of materialism can be produced, then the relationships between various forms of media consumption and materialism will be enhanced. Correlational analysis was used to address the hypotheses in order to determine whether stronger associations between materialism and television-use were found in the present study relevant to extant research. In the section that follows one hypothesis related to television use, and a second hypothesis related to life satisfaction are offered in an attempt to assess the predictive validity of the social materialism scale.

Television Use and Social Materialism. To return to the context of mass communication, many researchers have used found positive relations between media exposure and a number of different operationalizations of either materialism or constructs that might be considered related to or facets of materialism. Burroughs, Shrum, and Rindfleisch (2002) hypothesized that heavy TV viewing leads to materialism, and found in a national survey that higher attention while viewing increases the effect of viewing on materialism.

Harmon (2001) also argued that exposure to commercial television leads to materialism in heavy viewers. He conducted a secondary analysis of a marketing dataset and General Social Survey data to find that the respondents who regarded having nice things as important and regarded a high income as important tended to be heavier television viewers.

Sirgy et al. (1998) posited that television viewing influences not only materialism but indirectly, dissatisfaction with standard of living and life satisfaction. They found that TV viewership was a predictor of materialism and that evaluation of standard of living was significantly and negatively related to TV viewership.

Some studies have studies have also looked at themes of perceptions of affluence in relation to television viewing (e.g., Fox & Philliber, 1978). Kwak, Zinkhan, and Dominick (2002) used cultivation theory to measure respondents' perceptions of a materialistic society. They found that heavy exposure to TV advertising was found to lead to a high degree of a perceived materialistic society view, claiming that "the audience's psychological perceptions of a materialistic-laden world view derived from heavy exposure to television commercials" (p. 83). O'Guinn and Shrum (1997) found estimates of prevalence of objects related to an affluent lifestyle were positively related to amount of television exposure. Beyond societal affluence, other cultivation studies have explored materialism-related constructs. For example, Carlson (1993) found different types of program viewing were significantly associated with support of capitalist values.

Harmon (2001) warned that a complicated interaction of factors might lead to materialistic values and that cultivation may be too simplistic a theory to understand the correlation between media use and materialism. Another approach to materialism research has looked at consumption-related views from a social comparison viewpoint. Richins (1995) used social comparison theory to argue that people engage in frequent comparison with idealized media images, which increases the desire for consumption.

Although not an explicit application of social comparison theory, Schor (1998) argued for the force of media in "comparative consumption." She claims that "television viewing results in an upscaling of desire, and that in turn leads people to buy—quite a bit more than they would if they didn't watch" (p. 82). Schor (1998) names her research the first statistical evidence tying television to spending. In a survey of employees of a large telecommunications company, she found that each additional hour of television watched per week reduced annual saving by $208, demonstrating that more television respondents watched, the more money they spent.

Another body of research looks at the potential impact of advertising. The research of Richins (1987) found that television exposure was correlated with materialism among consumers who found portrayals of consumers in commercials to be realistic. Yoon (1995) measured attitudes toward advertising in a student and adult sample to find that materialists had a more positive attitude to advertising. Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003) conducted a meta-analysis that focused on the relation

between advertising exposure and materialism, finding most studies showed positive relation between advertising and materialism in children.

This relation between advertising and materialism in children is vital for scholars of mass communication, as many claim that media and television in particular serve as agents of consumer socialization. There is a large body of research that claims that television is a source of consumer information (for a review of consumer socialization research, see Roedder-John, 1999). Ward and Wackman (1971) define consumer socialization as the "processes by which adolescents acquire skills and attitudes relating to the consumption of goods and services" (p. 415) and claim that television viewing behavior is one way in which children learn materialistic orientations. Churchill and Moschis (1979) developed a model of consumer socialization in which family, peers, and television are the major influences on consumer learning, finding empirical evidence that materialist values did increase with the amount of television viewing. In another study of adolescent consumer socialization, Moschis and Churchill (1978) used a social learning theory framework and found a significant positive relationship between amount of viewing and social motivations for consumption and materialistic attitudes.

The study of advertising is especially relevant to the study of social materialism, as ads focus on the socially desired consequences of consumption, not just concrete product attributes. Many argue that advertising functions to impart the idea on audiences that products are the way to happiness (e.g., Jhally, 2000; Kubey &

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Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Pollay, 1986). Others claim that images are biased to create certain impressions and present a picture of the way we would like to see ourselves (Belk & Pollay, 1985). Pollay (1986) argues that advertising channels our psychological needs and ambitions into consumption behaviors by romanticizing goods. As most of the empirical research reviewed is specifically concerned with the relation between television use and materialism, the current study will focus exclusively on the medium of television. Thus the following hypothesis is offered:

H1: Television use is positively related to social materialism.

Life Satisfaction and Social Materialism. A number of studies have found negative correlations between materialism and life satisfaction (see Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002, for a review). Richins (1995) agues that when individuals use idealized media images as sources of social comparison, the result is dissatisfaction with what one's life ought to be like. Sirgy et al. (1998) also argued that television viewing influences dissatisfaction with standard of living and life satisfaction, finding materialism a negative predictor of life satisfaction. Cole et al. (1992) found both Richins and Dawson's (1992) and Belk's (1984) conceptualizations of materialism to be negatively correlated with life satisfaction and Swinyard, Kau, and Phua (2001) found a significant negative relationship between life satisfaction and Richins' measure. Based on this research, the following hypothesis is offered:

H2: Life satisfaction is negatively related to social materialism.

The following sections explain convergent and discriminant validity, subcategories of construct validity that will also be assessed.

Construct Validation: Convergent Validity

A measure is said to have convergent validity if independent measures of the same construct converge or are highly correlated (Netemeyer et al., 2003). Spector (1992) explains that the ability to assess convergent validity is dependent upon the existence of alternative measures of the same construct. Because the conceptualization of social materialism in the current work is being offered for the first time, and because some of the measures from the social materialism scale are redundant with the Richins and Dawson (1992) scale, instead of using the MVS to assess convergent validity, two measures hypothesized to relate strongly with social materialism were measured: individualism-collectivism and money beliefs and behaviors.

Distinctness/Belonging. Many have argued that the construct of individualism-collectivism should be closely related to materialism. For example, Wong (1997) argues that individualism-collectivism should be related to materialism because:

> first, individualism has been characterized by emotional detachment from ingroups, primacy of personal goals over ingroup goals, competition and individual achievement. These values correspond to the goal of conspicuous consumption, which is the very 'public' nature of luxury consumption as a reflection of one's success and achievement. Second, collectivism has been described by the attributes of family integrity, self definition through social roles, hierarchical social structures, and strong ingroup/outgroup distinctions.

In a similar vein, these values could correspond to the primacy of personal relationships over 'things' and physical possessions (p. 199).

Wong (1997) found that levels of individualism had a direct, positive relationship to materialism as conceptualized by both Richins and Dawson (1992) and Belk (1984). Other researchers have used the individualism-collectivism construct in interpreting their results. For instance, Schaefer, Hermans, and Parker (2004) used individualism-collectivism as an explanation as to why Chinese teenagers were found to be less materialistic than American teens. As Mortenson (2005) notes, the concept of individualism-collectivism as a cultural-level variable is being increasing studied alongside the conceptually similar concepts of independent and interdependent self-construals. Rather than examining the broad cultural orientation of individualism-collectivism, the current study looks at self-construal, specifically, the need for distinctness/belonging, which measures individualistic- and collectivistic-related beliefs at the individual level (Mortenson, 2005). Ellis and Wittenbaum (2000) note, "individualistic cultures (i.e., from Europe and the United States) that advance individual achievement and responsibility encourage members to view themselves as largely independent from others" (p. 705). As individualism is related to the need for distinction, the following hypothesis is offered:

H3: The need for distinction is positively related to social materialism.

Money Beliefs and Behaviors. Because attitudes toward money and the spending of money are closely related to consumption, it might be conjectured that money beliefs and behaviors are related to social materialism. Research has shown

materialism as measured by the MVS to be positively related to debt and spending

tendencies (Watson, 1998; Watson, 2003), and that children's' scores on the MVS

were negatively related to the amount of parents' teaching about how to manage

money (Flouri, 1999). Based on such findings, the following hypothesis is offered:

H4: Preoccupation with money is positively related to social materialism.

Construct Validation: Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity requires that measures of different constructs relate only

modestly with one another (Spector, 1992). Two constructs were measured in order to

assess whether they are conceptually distinct from social materialism: right-wing

authoritarianism and need for cognition.

Right-Wing Authoritarianism. Altemeyer (1981) defines right-wing

authoritarianism as the covariation of three attitudinal clusters: authoritarian

submission (a high degree of submission to the authorities), authoritarian aggression

(a general aggressiveness, directed against various persons, which is perceived to be

sanctioned by established authorities), and conventionalism (a high degree of

adherence to the social conventions which are perceived to be endorsed by society).

In the interest of assessing discriminant validity, the following research question is

offered:

RQ3: Is right-wing authoritarianism related to social materialism?

Need for Cognition. Need for cognition is defined as "an individual's

tendency to engage in and enjoy effortful cognitive endeavors" (Cacioppo et al.,

1996). One study has addressed the relation between need for cognition and materialism, but used need for cognition as a substitute for respondents' elaboration while viewing television.

Some need for cognition studies have assessed constructs tangentially related to materialism. For example, Miller, Omens, and Delvadia (1991) found variations in need for cognition negatively related to scores on the self-monitoring subscale of an attention to social comparison cues scale. Berzonsky and Sullivan (1992) found need for cognition negatively related to the tendency to value factors such as attractiveness and popularity in one's identity. In order to assess the degree to which social materialism might be distinct from need for cognition, the following hypothesis is offered:

RQ4: Is need for cognition related to social materialism?

The next chapter describes the methods used to address these hypotheses and research questions.

Chapter 2

METHOD

Procedures

The empirical analysis portion of the study proceeded in two stages. In both Study 1 and Study 2, a questionnaire was filled out by students recruited from undergraduate communication courses at the University of Delaware in the spring semester of 2006. About half of the participants received extra credit for their participation and the other half received course credit. The gender breakdown for the sample was 68% female and 32% male. In Study 1, subjects ($N = 288$) completed a survey through the software package, SurveyMonkey, which consisted solely of the multi-dimensional operationalization for social materialism produced from the meaning analysis portion of the concept explication.

The empirical analyses for Study 1 began with a within-item analysis of the normality of each of the 21 observable items, including means, standard deviations, and skewness and kurtosis estimates. The second set of analyses was an assessment of zero-order correlations from item to item, which allowed for an initial basic assessment of relationships between the variables. Analysis then proceeded to the multivariate stage, where exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to determine whether the hypothesized factor structure was evident in the data. In the EFA

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analyses, the loadings for both the pattern and structure matrices were examined, as the pattern matrix allows for assessment of the internal loadings of an item on a particular factor and the structure matrix gives a better sense of the crossloadings for each item. In the final set of analyses for Study 1, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the three dimensions of social materialism and the broader social materialism scale.

Insights from the empirical data analysis from Study 1 were then employed to allow for a refinement of the operationalization of materialism. The refined operationalization, which consisted of the addition of nine new items, was employed in Study 2. Study 2 involved the creation, distribution, and analysis of a second cross-sectional survey through SurveyMonkey. The second survey was completed by the same sample of undergraduates who completed the Study 1 questionnaire ($N = 265$). Data collection for Study 2 occurred approximately three months after the collection of Study 1 data. The Study 2 questionnaire consisted of the refined materialism measures as well as the other variables discussed above in order to allow for the testing of the validity of the social materialism scale.

The analyses for Study 2 began with the same analyses as those performed in Study 1. First, a within-item analysis of the normality of each item was conducted, followed by assessment of zero-order correlations. Several EFAs were then run, with particular attention paid to the items which had low loadings in either the pattern or structure matrices. The items which had performed poorly in the EFAs (i.e., loaded

low on a factor and/or crossloaded on multiple factors) were discarded. Next, SEM-based confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the dimensionality of the various dimensions and the broader social materialism measure. The CFA s allowed for an assessment of whether the theoretical model fit the data, when an examination of fit indices revealed that the originally hypothesized model did not fit the data, the items that performed poorly in the CFAs were discarded. The model was respecified to arrive at a final social materialism measurement model.

Because the Study 2 measure was similar in operationalization to the Study 1 measure (i.e., there was minimal refinement of the measure across phases), test-retest reliability was assessed. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the three dimensions and the final social materialism scale. The last set of analyses was a series of correlational analyses, which were used to assess the predictive, convergent, and discriminant validity of the scale.

Measures

Social Materialism. Based on the concept explication of social materialism, a 21-item scale was created to measure the constructs related to social materialism (see Appendix A for scale items). Judgments were made on 7-point scales ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Distinctness/Belonging. As it has been argued that Hofsteade's (1980) individualism and collectivism measures, usually applied at the individual level and aggregated for measurement at the cultural level, is conceptually similar to scales

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measuring the need for distinctness/belonging, Mortenson et al.'s (2006) 24-item distinctness/belonging scale was employed. Judgments were made on 7-point scales ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Money Beliefs and Behaviors. The Furnham Money Beliefs and Behaviors Scale (MBBS, 1984) is a scale created to assess the meanings that money holds for different people. Christopher, Marek, and Carroll (2004) found that the 47-item MBBS scale factored into six distinct dimensions. Only those items measuring obsession with money and the need to spend to convey status to other people were used in the current study, a total of 18 items. Judgments were made on 7-point scales ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Life Satisfaction. Andrews and Withey's (1976) Delighted-Terrible (D-T) life satisfaction measure has been used in several studies related to materialism (e.g., Cole et al., 1992; Swinyard, Kau, & Phua, 2001; Sirgy et al., 1998).   The D-T scale is a 6-item scale that was used to assess respondents' satisfaction with life as a whole, amount of fun, income or standard of living, and relationships with friends. Judgments were made on 7-point scales ranging from 1 = *delighted* to 7 =*terrible*.

Right-Wing Authoritarianism. Research has documented the reliability and validity of the 24-item Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale (RWA, Altemeyer, 1981). Because the RWA was developed decades ago, a modified 23-item version (Webster, 2004) with updated language was employed in the current study. Judgments were made on 7-point scales ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Need for Cognition. The scaled down, 18-item short form of the Need for Cognition scale (NCS, Cacioppio, Petty, & Kao, 1984), has been found to possess the same factor structure and internal consistency as the original 34-item scale and as such was used in the current study, with judgments made on 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Television Use. As it has been argued that the best measure of media use is one that takes into account both attention and exposure (Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986), respondents were asked how many days a week they watch 10 genres of television programming (drama, sports, sitcoms, news, game shows, reality-based programs, talk shows, soap operas, news magazine shows, *The Daily Show*; 0 = *never*, 1 = *rarely*, 7 = *all the time*) and how much attention they paid to the television programming (0 = *no attention*, 1 = *little attention*, 7 = *very close attention*), along with a general measure of average number of hours of television viewed per day (0 = *less than one hour* to 5 = *5 or more hours)*. From responses to both types of television-use measures an exposure-attention index was formed.

Chapter 3

RESULTS

Study 1: Initial Data Collection

Preliminary Analyses

Frequency analysis examined the distribution of responses across the rating

scale for each of the 21 social materialism items. For each variable, the entire range

of the seven-point Likert scale was used (i.e., 1-7). Descriptive statistics are reported

in Table 1 (Appendix B contains a list of abbreviated item labels and their

corresponding measurement items). Means ranged from a low of $M = 2.41$ to a high

of $M = 5.68$, indicating a good amount of variance in the portion of the scale used.

Examination of individual item distributions did not indicate any marked deviations

from normality, with the exception of the item 'I enjoy it when I get positive reactions

to the things I own,' ($M = 5.68$, $SD = .910$). In addition, only one item ('There are

certain people I would like to trade places with because of what they own') had a

kurtosis value above ± 1, all other items had acceptable skewness and kurtosis

estimates.

Zero-Order Correlations

Correlations between the items within the three first-order factors, the second-

order factor, and the third-order factor were assessed and are reported in Table 2.

Among the seven items in the *Nature* subdimension, all items were found to be

significantly correlated ($p < .01$, 2-tailed), ranging from $r = .188$ to $r = .472$. In the

Manner subdimension, the item 'I view buying things as a competitive act' was not

correlated with two of the other *Manner* items ('I usually buy only the things I need'

and 'I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned'). All other

Manner items were significantly positively correlated ($p < .01$), with correlations

ranging from $r = .202$ to $r = .643$. Twenty-two of the 28 correlations between the

Symbolic Use items were significant at the $p < .01$ level, and three correlations were

significant at the $p < .05$ level. The item 'I enjoy it when I get positive reactions to the

things I own' did not have a significant relationship with two other items ('I do not

buy things to show people that I am better than someone else' and 'People will like

me more if I own the right things'). Also, the item 'It is not important for me to have

things which are different from what everybody else has' was found to not be

correlated with the item 'The types of things I purchase connect me to a group.'

Overall, the zero-order correlations between the *Symbolic Use* items were significant

but lower than expected (ranging from $r = .133$ to $r = .541$). This points to the fact

that each of the *Symbolic Use* measurement items tapped a distinct use of material

goods, with not much overlap in the social materialist uses of goods that the eight

Symbolic Use items measured.

Correlations were examined between the 13 items comprising the second-order

factor, *Consumption Style* (*Nature* and *Manner* combined). Correlations across the

Nature and *Manner* items ranged from $r = .158$ to $r = .525$ ($p < .01$). The lowest

correlation occurred between the *Manner* item, 'I view buying things as a competitive act,' and the *Nature* item 'It is not important to me to own the right things,' and 'I view buying things as a competitive act' also failed to correlate significantly with one other *Nature* item ('I like a lot of luxury in my life'). The lack of a strong relationship between the *Nature* and *Manner* items suggests that while related, the *Nature* and *Manner* items measured distinct aspects of the social materialist style of consumption.

When comparing the *Consumption Style* items with the *Symbolic Use* items, correlations significant at the $p < .01$ level between the *Symbolic Use* items and *Nature* items ranged from $r = .158$ to $r = .468$, and correlations between the *Symbolic Use* items and *Manner* items ranged from $r = .157$ to $r = .467$. Five of the *Symbolic Use* items were not significantly correlated with one or more of the other *Consumption Style* measures. Generally, the strength of association between the *Nature* and *Manner* items were stronger than the associations between the *Symbolic Use* and the *Consumption Style* items, supporting the idea from the theoretical model that the *Nature* and *Manner* items group together, while the *Symbolic Use* items are conceptually distinct.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

A series of EFAs using the maximum likelihood method of extraction with direct oblimin rotation was conducted to explore the structure of the three first-order factors, the second-order factor of *Consumption Style*, and the third-order factor of

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social materialism. The factor structure of the *Nature* items was the most clear, with a single articulated factor (eigenvalue = 2.91). This factor accounted for 42.57% of the variance. Abbreviated item content and factor loadings are shown in Table 3 (Appendix C contains a list of abbreviated item content with corresponding measurement items). Four items had decent loadings on this factor (above 0.6), while three items had lower loadings (in the 0.4 range). The lower loadings for three of the seven *Nature* items speaks to a potential weakness in these three *Nature* dimension measurement items.

The EFA for the *Manner* items suggested the presence of two meaningful factors that together accounted for 64.26% of the variance in the item set. Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 2.6 and accounted for 43.42% of the variance, and factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 1.25 and accounted for 20.85% of the variance (see Tables 4 and 5). Analysis of the pattern matrix loadings indicated that of the first factor, two items, 'I usually buy only the things I need' and 'I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned' had very high factor loadings (i.e., above 0.7), while 'I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them' had a much weaker loading on this factor (.336). The second factor of the *Manner* items was comprised of three items that seemed to convey the idea that social materialist acquisition is a competitive act, although the pattern matrix loading for the item 'I do not feel pressure to keep up with others like me' on this factor was low (.378). The correlation between the two *Manner* factors was $r = .404$ ($p < .01$). The moderate size of the correlation between

the two factors that emerged from the *Manner* items points to a uniqueness in the

constructs being measured, that is, there was not much overlap between what the two

factors assessed.

The EFA for the eight *Symbolic Use* items showed the presence of two factors

upon examination of the eigenvalues (2.84, and 1.14, see Tables 6 and 7); however,

the two-factor solution was less clear upon examination of the scree plot and factor

loadings. The pattern matrix loadings for two items in factor 1 ('The things I own do

not say much about how well I am doing in life' and 'The types of things I purchase

connect me to a group') were very low (.339 and .285, respectively). Two items in the

second factor also had low loadings ('It is not important for me to have things which

are different from what everybody else has' and 'There are certain people I would like

to trade places with because of what they own'). Examination of the factor loadings

from the structure matrix further revealed that three items from the first factor cross-

loaded with the second factor (the factor loadings for the items that cross-loaded

ranged from .378 to .602). The two articulated *Symbolic Use* factors had a significant

positive correlation, $r = .412$ ($p < .01$).

The EFA for the second-order factor, *Consumption Style* (*Nature* and *Manner*,

13 items total), suggested the presence of two meaningful factors that together

accounted for 47.47% of the variance in the item set. Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of

4.70 and accounted for 36.17% of the variance, and factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 1.47

and accounted for 11.3% of the variance (see Tables 8 and 9). Out of the 13 possible

Consumption Style items, four of the seven items in factor 1 were *Nature* items, and three of the six items in the second factor were *Manner* items. The two factors were moderately correlated at $r = .564$, suggesting that some of the items overlap conceptually and that the two factors were indeed conceptually similar. As with the EFA for the *Manner* dimension, of the first factor, two items, 'I usually buy only the things I need' and 'I try to keep my life simple,' had high factor loadings (above 0.8). Examination of the structure matrix loadings revealed that three of the items cross-loaded, a further indicator that the two subdimensions of the *Consumption Style* dimension are related.

In order to assess whether the theoretical factor structure of the entire social materialism scale was evident in the data, an EFA was conducted for all 21 of the social materialism items. Examination of the eigenvalues revealed five factors, each with eigenvalues greater than 1 (ranging from 6.44 to 1.12, see Tables 10-12). The scree plot, however, was not as clear in showing these five factors. The pattern matrix revealed that seven out of 21 of the items loaded on the third factor, with six out of seven of the *Nature* items grouped together in this factor. One *Use* item grouped with the six *Nature* items in the third factor. With the exception of the two "simplicity" items from the *Manner* dimension which made up factor 1, the remainder of the items grouped with little conceptual similarity. In general, the *Manner* and *Symbolic Use* did not group together as expected. Five out of five items in factor 2 were *Use* items,

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three out of four items in factor 4 were *Manner* items, and factor 5 contained one

Manner and two *Use* items.

Reliability Assessment of Theoretical Constructs

The reliability of the three first-order factors, the second-order factor, and the

third-order factor were assessed with Cronbach's alpha. All were found to have

satisfactory reliability levels. For the seven *Nature* items, $\alpha = .772$, for the six

Manner items, $\alpha = .734$, and for the eight *Symbolic Use* items, $\alpha = .723$. The 13

Consumption Style items together had a value of $\alpha = .848$. For all 21 items, the scale

was found to be highly reliable ($\alpha = .880$). All items were retained for further

analysis, as it was found that the reliability of the scales and subscales would not be

improved if any of the items were deleted (with one exception in the *Symbolic Use*

dimension that would have improved the reliability by a negligible amount).

In sum, the results from the first round of data collection showed that on a per-

item basis, the measurement properties of the 21 social materialism items were

satisfactory. Individual item distributions were normal and there was a good amount

of variance in the scale. However, when the items were examined as a group, the

factor structure from the theoretical model did not emerge as hypothesized. The factor

analysis showed that the items in the *Nature* dimension performed well, with all seven

or six out of seven items grouping together in the factor analyses for both the *Nature*

dimension and the entire 21-item scale. The *Manner* and *Symbolic Use* items did not

group together as clearly. In the case of both the six *Manner* items and eight *Symbolic*

Use items, two factors emerged. In the EFA for all 21 items, the *Manner* items were

scattered throughout, loading on a number of different factors. The *Symbolic Use*

items were correlated at low levels, suggesting distinctness in the constructs measured.

Further obscuring the structure of the *Symbolic Use* items, the EFA showed the

Symbolic Use items grouped together unclearly as either one factor or two. The fact

that the *Manner* and *Symbolic Use* factors did not emerge from the data as

theoretically conceived pointed to a need for refinement in the measurement items in

these dimensions.

Preliminary Scale Refinement

Based on the results of the EFAs and in accordance with the principle of

measure refinement inherent in the process of concept explication, the social

materialism measurement items were refined and new items were added to the scale in

order to determine whether the hypothesized theoretical factor structure was evident in

a second round of data collection. From the EFA for all 21 of the items, new items

were added to the first factor that emerged, which was comprised of the two items, 'I

usually buy only the things I need' and 'I try to keep my life simple, as far as

possessions are concerned.' These items were judged to be conceptually similar,

demonstrating the idea that social materialists do not seek simplicity in terms of

possession ownership, as a result, three new items were added for the second round of

data collection that conveyed related ideas ('I am bothered when I see people buy

anything they want,' 'When I have the opportunity to make something myself, I would

rather make it than buy it,' and 'I always consider the practical usefulness of a product before I buy it').

The results of the EFA for the six *Manner* items had shown two factors, the second of which was made up of items that seemed to convey the idea that social materialist acquisition is a competitive act. Two new, related items were added for the second round of data collection ('I often compare my possessions with those of other people like me' and 'I never feel jealous when one of my friends gets something which is new or ahead of the latest trends').

From the EFA for the eight *Symbolic Use* items, a theoretical distinction emerged for the second factor. The items in this factor seemed to convey the idea that social materialists are concerned with the display of their possessions. Four new items were added for the second round of data collection that communicated this idea ('When I buy something new, I look forward to how people will react when they see me with it,' 'I am not too concerned with buying things which I think will cause others to think well of me,' 'When I buy something new, I often can't wait for my friends and other people to see me with it,' and 'I am not too concerned with owning things that impress other people'). In addition to the new items added, all 21 of the original social materialism items were retained as part of the questionnaire for the second round of data collection.

Study 2

Preliminary Analyses

With the addition of nine new items for the second round of data collection, the same set of analyses were conducted a second time, with the new measures included in the analyses for a total of 30 items. The Study 2 questionnaire also included the measures used to assess construct validity—television use, life satisfaction, distinctness/belonging, money beliefs, right-wing authoritarianism, and need for cognition. The analyses for Study 2 began with a frequency analysis examining the distribution of responses across the rating scale for each of the 30 social materialism items. For 29 of the 30 items, the entire range of the seven-point Likert scale was used (i.e., 1-7, the exception was the item 'I enjoy it when I get positive reactions to the things I own,' which had a low value of 2). Descriptive statistics are reported in Table 13. Means ranged from a low of $M = 2.87$ to a high of $M = 5.44$, again indicating a good amount of variance in the portion of the scale used. Individual item distributions did not indicate any marked deviations from normality, with the exception of the item 'I enjoy it when I get positive reactions to the things I own,' ($M = 5.44$, $SD = .976$), which had a similarly problematic distribution in the first round of data collection. Only one item ('I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them) had a kurtosis value above ± 1, all other items had acceptable skewness and kurtosis estimates. This replicated the findings from Study 1 that that on a per-item basis, the measurement properties of the 30 social materialism items were satisfactory.

Zero-Order Correlations

Assessment of item-to-item correlations for the original 21 social materialism items showed that from Study 1 of the study to Study 2, each of the 21 items was significantly positively correlated ($p < .01$, 2-tailed) with itself. The range of correlations for the *Nature* items was $r = .419$ to $r = .681$, for the *Manner* items was $r = .473$ to $r = .589$, and for the *Symbolic Use* items was $r = .412$ to $r = .632$. This range of correlations is a bit lower but close to the standard for test-retest correlations, which Allen (2003) puts at .6.

Correlations between the items within the three first-order factors, the second-order factor, and the third-order factor were again assessed, with the addition of the nine new items, and are reported in Table 14. Among the seven items in the *Nature* subdimension, as in Study 1, all items were found to be significantly positively correlated ($p < .01$), ranging from $r = .203$ to $r = .537$. In the *Manner* subdimension, which had five items added from Study 1 to Study 2, significant ($p < .01$) correlations ranged from $r = .189$ to $r = .685$. Two of the new items ('I never feel jealous when one of my friends gets something which is new or ahead of the latest trends' and 'I am bothered when I see people buy anything they want') were not significantly correlated with three or more of the other *Manner* items, and the item 'I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them' from Study 1 failed to correlate with several of the other *Manner* items.

In the *Symbolic Use* subdimension, which had four items added from Study 1 to Study 2, significant ($p < .01$) correlations ranged from $r = .163$ to $r = .699$. The item from Study 1, 'I enjoy it when I get positive reactions to the things I own' did not have a significant relationship with three other Study 1 items ('The things I own do not say much about how well I am doing in life,' 'I do not buy things to show people that I am better than someone else,' and 'People will like me more if I own the right things').

Correlations were examined between the 23 items comprising the second-order factor, *Consumption Style* (*Nature* and *Manner* combined). Correlations across the *Nature* and *Manner* items ranged from $r = .162$ to $r = .509$ ($p < .01$). The items 'I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them' and 'A nationally advertised brand is usually better than a generic brand' were not significantly correlated. 'I find that when I buy something nice I often purchase other things that go along with it' was not correlated with three of the new *Manner* items. Additionally, the two new *Manner* items, 'I never feel jealous when one of my friends gets something which is new or ahead of the latest trends' and 'I am bothered when I see people buy anything they want' performed poorly, both failing to correlate with four or more of the *Nature* items. Overall, because the range of correlations across the *Consumption Style* items was similar to the range of correlations within the *Nature* and *Manner* dimensions, there is reason to believe that the *Nature* and *Manner* items together constitute one

single first-order factor rather than two separate first-order factors joining to form a second-order factor.

When comparing the *Consumption Style* items with the *Symbolic Use* items, correlations significant at the *p* < .01 level between the *Symbolic Use* items and *Nature* items ranged from *r* = .164 to *r* = .497, and correlations between the *Symbolic Use* items and *Manner* items ranged from *r* = .161 to *r* = .576. The fact that the correlations between the *Symbolic Use* items and *Nature* items are slightly lower than the correlations between the *Symbolic Use* items and *Manner* items suggests that the *Use* items are more distinct from the *Nature* items than they are from the *Manner* items. The *Symbolic Use* item 'I enjoy it when I get positive reactions to the things I own' failed to retain significant correlations with one *Nature* item and three *Manner* items, and the item 'People will like me more if I own the right things' failed to retain significant correlations with six of the *Manner* items.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Several additional EFAs using the maximum likelihood method of extraction with direct oblimin rotation were conducted to explore the structure of both the original the three first-order factors, the second-order factor, and the third-order factor of social materialism, and the factors with the nine new items added. From Study 1 to Study 2, for the original 21 items, the factor structure of lower-order factors remained similar, whereas in the analyses of the higher-order factors, the factor structures did not replicate as clearly. More specifically, the original seven *Nature* items remained

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one factor (eigenvalue = 3.27, variance accounted for = 46.65%, see Table 15), with the items 'A nationally advertised brand is usually better than a generic brand' and 'I find that when I buy something nice I often purchase other things that go along with it' loading lowest on the single articulated factor.

As in Study 1, the six original *Manner* items grouped into two factors. Analysis of the pattern matrix loadings indicated that of the first factor, once again, two items, 'I usually buy only the things I need' and 'I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned' had very high factor loadings (i.e., above 0.7). In Study 2 as in Study 1, the items 'I view buying things as a competitive act' and 'I take pleasure from owning more objects than other people like me' grouped together in the same factor, along with another item that loaded lower (.367) on this factor ('I do not feel pressure to keep up with other people like me'). In Study 2, the structure matrix revealed that the final of the *Manner* items, 'I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them' cross-loaded, suggesting that the item did not conceptually fit well with a specific grouping of the other *Manner* items.

The EFA for the original eight *Symbolic Use* items showed that the items again grouped as two factors as they had in Study 1. The item 'There are certain people I would like to trade places with because of what they own' again loaded low (.339) on the second factor. Two items, 'People will like me more if I own the right things' and 'I do not buy things to show people that I am better than someone else,' remained

grouped together in Study 2 as in Study 1. The remainder of the items in the *Symbolic Use* items did not group in the same patterns as they had in Study 1.

The EFA for the original items comprising the second-order factor, *Consumption Style* (*Nature* and *Manner*, 13 items total), suggested the presence of three factors in Study 2 rather than the two factors the items had grouped into in Study 1, however, examination the scree plot and eigenvalues seemed to point to the *Consumption Style* items grouping into just one or two factors, not three. The most clear similarity from Study 1 to Study 2 was the fact that most of the *Nature* items (five out of seven) hung together well in factor 1.

The EFA from Study 2 for all 21 of the social materialism items again showed the presence of five factors. Several items loaded on different factors than they had in Study 1; however, a few similarities emerged. For example, five of the *Nature* items were in the same factor (in Study 1, six of the *Nature* items had grouped together). The two "simplicity" items had from the *Manner* dimension made up their own factor once again. Although five of the *Use* items grouped together in Study 1, in Study 2, the Use items were scattered throughout several factors. Because in Study 2 the 21 items formed several dimensions, most with little conceptual similarity across the items, there was reason to believe that discarding some of the items might improve the factor structure of the social materialism scale as a whole.

Before eliminating any items from further analysis, more EFAs were run with the nine new items from the second round of data collection. The analyses began with

the examination of the lower-order factors of social materialism. As mentioned above,

the *Nature* items, to which no new items were added from Study 1 to Study 2,

remained a single factor. With the addition of the new *Manner* items, the EFA

showed the presence of four factors (eigenvalues = 3.37, 1.76, 1.10, 1.04, see Tables

16-18), when in Study 1 with the six original *Manner* items, only two factors had

emerged. The new item 'I always consider the practical usefulness of a product before

I buy it' grouped with the two original items, 'I usually buy only the things I need'

and 'I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned.' Two items that

hung together in the EFA for the original *Manner* items, 'I view buying things as a

competitive act' and 'I take pleasure from owning more than others like me,' now had

an additional, new item group with them, 'I often compare my possessions with those

of other people like me.' The item 'I frequently buy things when I cannot afford

them' also loaded on this factor, with both a low loading (.339), and also cross-loading

on another factor. 'I feel pressure to keep up with others like me' and the new item 'I

never feel jealous when a friend gets something which is new or ahead of the latest

trends' formed their own factor, but the latter loaded low (.457 relative to the former

item's loading of .744). Two new items, 'When I have the opportunity to make

something myself, I would rather make it than buy it' and 'I am bothered when I see

people buy anything they want,' formed the last factor, with loadings of .539 and .299,

respectively. The presence of four factors with the new *Manner* items pointed to the

fact that adding the four new items only complicated the factor structure, making it

desirable to later discern whether the *Manner* dimension could be improved by discarding some of the items.

The EFAs for the new *Symbolic Use* items showed the presence of three factors (eigenvalues = 4.57, 1.40, 1.04, percent of variance accounted for 38.09, 11.65, 8.64%, see Tables 19-21), when in Study 2, the eight original *Use* items had formed two factors. The items that loaded strongest on Factor 1 were 'It is not important for me to own things that impress people' and 'Things I own do not say much about how well I am doing in life,' two items that had also been in the same factor in the EFA for original eight *Use* items. Two new items, 'When I buy something new, I look forward to how people will react when they see me with it' and 'When I buy something new, I often can't wait for other people to see me with it' grouped together in factor 2. The original items, 'I do not buy things to show that I am better than someone else' and 'People will like me more if I own the right things' grouped together as they had in Study 1, only this time without any other items in that factor. Three items had poor loadings or cross-loaded in not just the EFA for the original *Use* items, but for a second time in the EFA with the new items added. These items were 'It is not important for me to have things which are different from what everybody else has,' 'The types of things I purchase connect me to a group,' and 'There are certain people I would like to trade places with based on what they own.'

Before proceeding to factor analyses for the higher-order factors, the decision was made to discard the items that had consistently performed poorly in Study 1 and

Study 2. Although the possibility of later omitting additional items was left open, items excluded at this stage were discarded permanently from the social materialism scale. Beginning with the seven *Nature* items, two items were discarded. They were 'A nationally advertised brand is usually better than a generic brand' and 'I find that when I buy something nice I often purchase other things that go along with it.' Both items had loaded low on the single *Nature* factor in the EFAs for both Study 1 and Study 2. These two items had also loaded low on the EFA for all 21 original items in Study 1.

For the 11 possible *Manner* items, the decision was made to discard four items. 'I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them' had consistently performed poorly, loading low in the EFA for the *Manner* items in Study 1, was slightly kurtodic in Study 2, and had failed to correlate with several of the other *Manner* items in Study 2. The item 'I never feel jealous when one of my friends gets something which is new or ahead of the latest trends' was discarded because it had not been significantly correlated with three of the other *Manner* items in Study 2, failed to correlate with four of the *Nature* items in the Study 2 EFA for the *Consumption Style* items, and had loaded low (.457) in a two-item factor in the EFA for the *Manner* items in Study 2. Also discarded was the item, 'I am bothered when I see people buy anything they want,' because it was not significantly correlated with six of the other Study 2 *Manner* items, failed to correlate with six of the *Nature* items in the Study 2 correlations, and loaded at a low .299 with only other item in the EFA for the *Manner* items. The final

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discarded *Manner* item, 'When I have the opportunity to make something myself, I would rather make it than buy it,' had loaded very low (.299) with one other item as the last of four factors in the EFA for the Study 2 *Manner* items.

In the *Symbolic Use* dimension, out of 12 possible items, five were discarded. The item 'I enjoy it when I get positive reactions to the things I own,' was discarded because it was the only item that did not use the entire rage of the seven-point Likert scale in Study 2, had a similarly problematic distribution in Study 1, failed to correlate with three other *Symbolic Use* items in Study 2, and also failed to retain significant correlations with one *Nature* item and three *Manner* items. The next item to be discarded, 'The types of things I purchase connect me to a group' had a low loading of .285 in the Study 1 EFA for the original *Symbolic Use* items, and in the Study 2 EFA with the new *Use* items added, cross-loaded on all three of the factors that emerged. Additionally, in Study 2, this item failed to correlate with another *Use* item, 'It is not important for me to have things which are different from what everybody else has,' which was the next *Use* item to be discarded. This item had loaded low (.368) on the second of two factors in the Study 1 EFA for the original *Use* item, and equally importantly, the item was conceptually similar to a retained *Nature* item. The next *Use* item to be discarded, 'There are certain people I would like to trade places with because of what they own,' had been found to be kurtodic in Study 1, and in the Study 2 EFA for the *Symbolic Use* items, had a loaded low (.358). The final *Use* item to be discarded was, 'I am not too concerned with owning things that impress other people,'

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which was similarly worded and conveyed the same idea as one other retained *Use* item.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with Items Retained

With a total of 11 items omitted from the social materialism scale, this left a possible 5 *Nature* items, 7 *Manner* items, and 7 *Symbolic Use* items, for a total of 19 remaining items (see Appendix D for the remaining items). A series of EFAs were next run with the 19 items that were retained, for the three first-order factors, the second-order factor, and the third-order factor. As in Study 1 and the initial analysis for Study 2, the *Nature* items, remained a single articulated factor (eigenvalue = 2.81). This factor accounted for 56.11% of the variance. Abbreviated item content and factor loadings are shown in Table 22. Four items had decent loadings on this factor (above 0.6), while the item 'I like a lot of luxury in my life' loaded lowest at .550.

The EFA for the seven retained *Manner* items suggested the presence of two meaningful factors that together accounted for 64.17% of the variance in the item set. Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 2.84 and accounted for 40.60% of the variance, factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 1.65 and accounted for 23.56% of the variance (see Tables 23 and 24). Factor 1 was made up of the items, 'I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned,' 'I usually buy only the things I need,' and 'I always consider the practical usefulness of a product before I buy it,' three items that seemed to convey a similar theme, referred to above as a "simplicity" theme. The second factor had a similarly impressive theoretical consistency, as it was made up of the

items, 'I take pleasure from owning more than others like me,' 'I view buying things as a competitive act,' and 'I compare my possessions with others like me'—all items that seemed to convey the idea that the social materialist views consumption as a type of competition or game. The structure matrix loadings revealed that a fourth item in this factor ('I feel pressure to keep up with others like me') had cross-loaded on both *Manner* factors.

The EFA for the seven retained *Symbolic Use* items, showed the presence of two factors upon examination of the eigenvalues (3.19, 1.10) accounting for 45.62% and 15.76% of the variance (see Tables 25 and 26). The first factor was made up of the items, 'When I buy something new, I look forward to how people will react when they see me with it' and 'When I buy something new, I often can't wait for other people to see me with it.' These two items convey the same idea, that the social materialist is concerned with the display of their possessions and the reactions they get from this display. Five items made up the second factor, conceptually, all of these items seemed to convey the idea that the social materialist uses possessions to show status and impress others. The items that had loaded on the two factors that emerged from EFA for the seven retained *Symbolic Use* item did so relatively cleanly, that is, the structure matrix revealed little cross-loading across the items. The two factors were moderately correlated at $r = .464$ ($p < .01$), suggesting that the two groupings of *Use* items were in some way conceptually similar.

The EFA for the 12 retained *Consumption Style* items revealed the presence of two factors (eigenvalues = 4.99, 1.77, percent of variance accounted for 41.57, 14.75%, see Tables 27 and 28). In the first factor, which contained the simplicity items, the *Nature* item 'It is important to me to buy new and different things' also loaded on this factor, a glaring conceptual inconsistency. This mingling of *Manner* and *Nature* occurred again, with three other *Nature* items loading low (in the .4 range) on the first factor. The second factor was made up of four *Manner* items, those that conveyed the idea that social materialist consumption is a comparative process, with one *Nature* item loading on this factor ('People recognize that I buy only the best'), which theoretically could be considered to convey a similar idea, that receiving recognition is important to the social materialist. The two factors were correlated at r = .530 ($p < .01$), hinting again at the fact that perhaps the *Nature* items and the *Manner* items constitute a first-order factor, difficult to separate from one another.

The EFA for all 19 of the retained social materialism items revealed the presence of three factors (eigenvalues = 7.23, 2.26, 1.33, percent of variance accounted for = 38.06, 11.92, 7.00%, see Tables 29-31). Factor 1 was made up of three *Manner,* two *Use*, and one *Nature* item, however, examination of the conceptual idea conveyed by these seven item revealed a theoretical consistency—this factor was a combination of the items that made up the "competition" dimension and "comparative process" dimensions mentioned above. Factor 2 contained the simplicity items from the *Manner* dimension, along with four *Nature* items and two

Use items. Factor 3 contained the two *Use* items referred to above as the "display and reactions" items. A third item from the *Manner* dimension loaded on this factor, but had cross-loaded with the first factor. Once the reliability of the various subscales for the 19 retained items were assessed, it was time to return to a theoretical analysis of the conceptual patterns that had emerged from the EFAs for the 19 retained items before Confirmatory Factor Analysis could take place.

Reliability Assessment of Theoretical Constructs

With the new items that were retained, minus the eleven discarded items, the reliabilities for the 19 retained items were as follows: *Nature*, $\alpha = .803$, *Manner* items, $\alpha = .751$, *Symbolic Use* items, $\alpha = .798$, *Consumption Style*, $\alpha = .868$, and for all 19 retained items, $\alpha = .906$. It is noteworthy that the reliabilities for the 19 Study 2 items are higher than they had been with the 21 Study 1 items, despite the fact that in the version of the social materialism scale that came out of the Study 2 data, there were actually fewer items then there had been in Study 1. The refined 19-item scale was thus representative of better reliability than the Study 1 scale.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Based on the theorizing in the concept explication portion of the current work, the original theoretical model was tested with structural equation modeling (SEM). More specifically, using LISREL 8.5 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993), a measurement model that specified the hypothesized relations of the observed variables to the underlying latent constructs was tested with SEM-based confirmatory factor analysis

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(CFA) using maximum-likelihood parameter estimation. In keeping with the items retained from the EFAs detailed above, this model consisted of 19 observable variables, 3 lower-order latent constructs (*Nature*, *Manner*, and *Symbolic Use*), and 2 higher-order latent constructs (*Consumption Style* and social materialism). In response to the first research question, the model did not so much as even compute—the hypothesized theoretical model in its original form did not fit the data.

Two other confirmatory factor analyses using the 19 retained items were conducted to explore whether any of the original hypothesized dimensions held. First, a three-factor model was estimated, which represented the three latent constructs of *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Use*, and the higher-order latent construct of social materialism (same as Figure 4 below, except with 19 items [five *Nature*, seven *Manner*, seven *Use*]). Second, a two-factor model representing the two latent constructs of *Consumption Style* (*Nature* plus *Manner*) and the higher-order latent construct of social materialism was estimated (see Figure 2 on the next page). Finally, a one-factor model representing the single latent construct of social materialism was examined (see Figure 3 below).
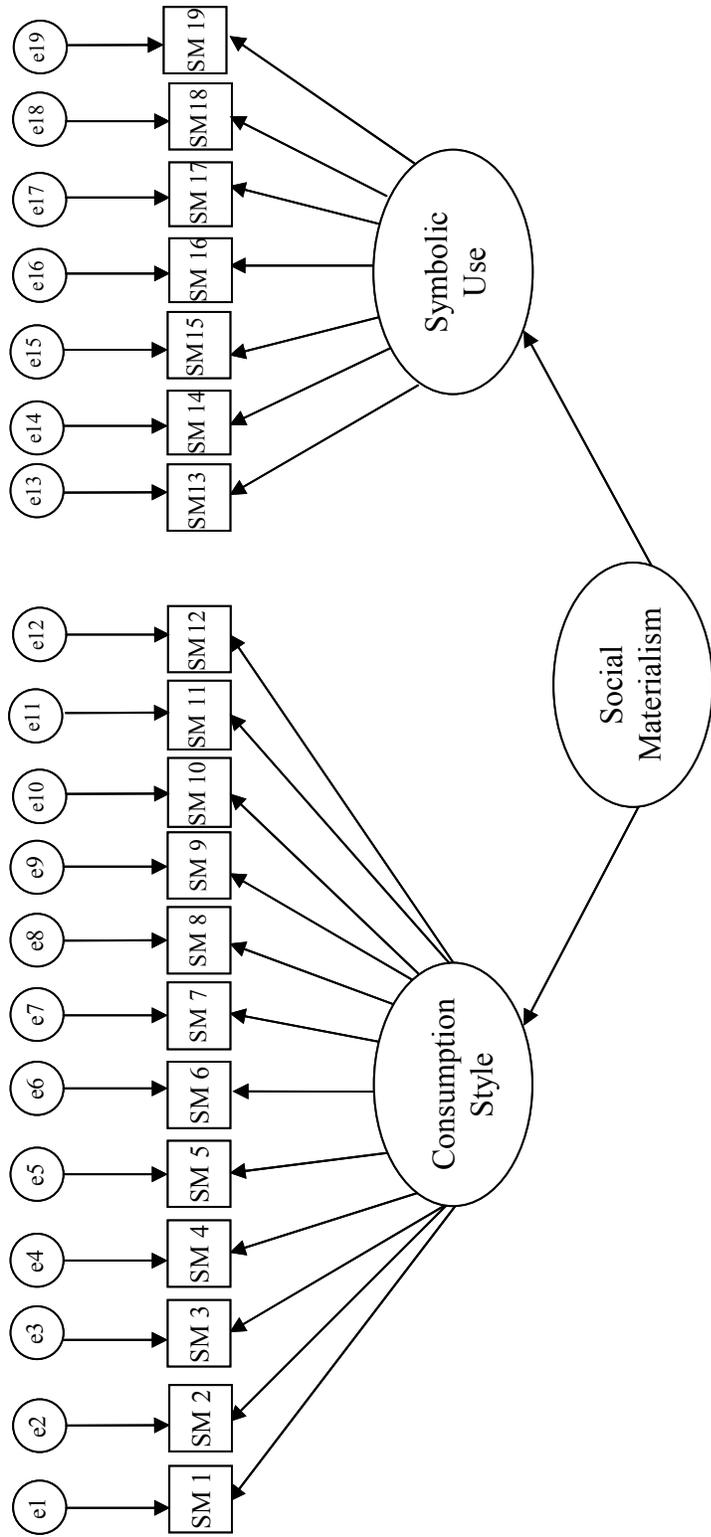
Figure 2. 19-item, Two-Factor Social Materialism Model
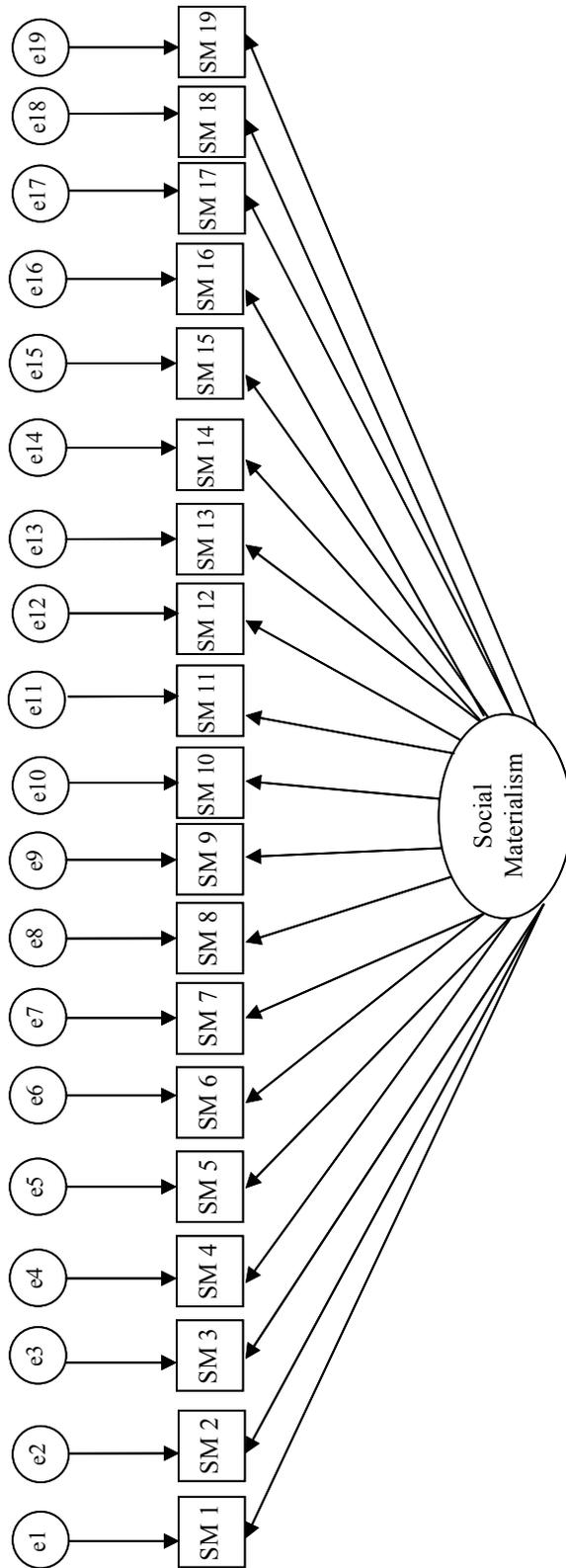
Figure 3. 19-item, One-Factor Social Materialism Model.

Table 32 presents the χ^2 estimates, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and standardized root mean residual (SRMR) for each of the three 19-item models. The performance of the models was assessed across a number of different retention criteria. Based on the recommendations of Holbert and Stephenson (2002), the following criteria were used to judge the closeness of fit of the model to the data: RMSEA $\approx$ 0.06; CFI > 0.95; SRMR $\approx$ .09. The χ^2 values were used to compare competing models.

The fit indices show that none of the three 19-item models fit well. In the case of the three-factor model (χ^2 = 810.46, p < .01; df = 149; RMSEA = 0.15; CFI = 0.70; SRMR = 0.10), the two-factor model (χ^2 = 837.63, p < .01; df = 151; RMSEA = 0.15; CFI = 0.69; SRMR = 0.10), and the one-factor model (χ^2 = 850.10, p < .01; df = 152; RMSEA = 0.15; CFI = 0.69; SRMR = 0.10), the RMSEA values were above the recommended cutoff value of around 0.06 and the SRMR values were above the acceptable level of around .09.

Respecification of Model

When a theoretical model does not fit the data, a process of respecification is undertaken to obtain a model that produces an adequate fit with the data (Holbert & Stephenson, 2002). A combination of theoretical insight and empirical rationale via the LaGrange Multiplier (LM) test was used to respecify the posited measurement model in this study (Jöreskog, 1993). Focus was given to three sets of paths. One, the open Lambda-Y paths that reflect the factor loadings leading from latent variables to

observable variables. A small factor loading indicates a poor connection between the

latent variable and a given observable variable. Two, the fixed Lambda-Y paths that

reflect potential cross loadings. Significant, but fixed cross-loading paths will

produced poor fit statistics given that the program is revealing that the cross-loading

paths should be free.   Three, the Theta-Ep paths that reflect the covariance of error

terms between observable variables. Significant Theta-Eps for variables that connect

to different observable variables is problematic. Significant Theta-Eps for observable

variables within a given latent construct is not as problematic, but indicates that the

two observable variables serve as functional equivalents in the model. A combination

of these problematic paths were assessed along side the core theoretical rational for

the proposed social materialism index to refine the model structure to produce a model

that fit the data well. After the model structure was refined and items that had

performed poorly in the CFAs had been discarded, a total of 11 items remained (see

Appendix E for the final remaining items). In the *Nature* dimension, four items

remained, in the *Manner* dimension, three items remained, and in the *Symbolic Use*

dimension four items remained.

Final Social Materialism Model

Figure 4 on the next page illustrates the final measurement model, which

consisted of 11 items, 3 lower-order latent constructs and one second-order factor of

social materialism.
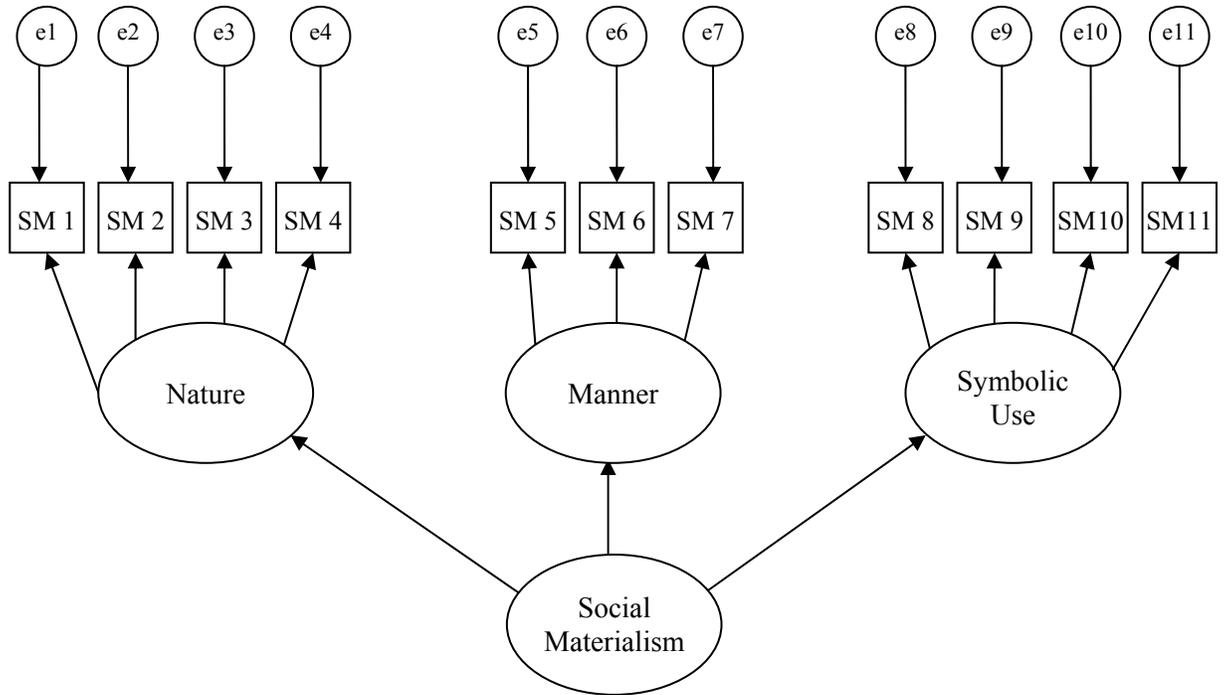
Figure 4. Measurement Model for Social Materialism.

The same set of CFA analyses were run for the 11-item models as had been

run for the 19-item models. First, to confirm the dimensionality of the 11-item three-

factor model, the CFA factor loadings for two other possible 11-item theoretical

models were examined for comparison purposes. The first alternative model to be

tested was an 11-item, two-factor model (*Consumption Style* and *Symbolic Use*, see

Table 34). The second alternative model to be tested was an 11-item, one-factor

model (see Table 35). The loadings for both alternative models were equally as strong

as the loadings for the three-factor model (i.e., near or above 0.7), however, when

returning to the comparison of model fits, the fit indices had shown the two-factor

model and one-factor model were poorer fits than the three-factor model. Overall, the

CFAs confirmed the idea from the concept explication theorizing, that social

materialism is a higher-order latent construct that consists of the three underlying

latent constructs of *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Symbolic Use*.

Table 33 presents the χ^2 estimates, root mean square error of approximation

(RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and standardized root mean squared residual

(SRMR) for each of the three 11-item CFA models. The fit indices revealed that the

11-item, three-factor model was the best fit of the models tested. A χ^2-difference test

showed that both the two-factor and one-factor model were poorer fits than the three-

factor model. With respect to the two-factor model ($df = 43$, χ^2 value $= 115.50$, $p <$

.01), a two degrees of freedom difference from the three-factor model yielded a 27.44

gain in the χ^2 value, well above the corresponding critical χ^2-difference value of 7.38,

indicating a much poorer fit for the two-factor model than the three-factor model. The

same was true of the one-factor model ($df = 44$, χ^2 value $= 116.50$, $p < .01$), where a

three degrees of freedom difference yielded a 28.44 increase in the χ^2 value, above the

corresponding critical χ^2 value of 9.35. The one-factor model was thus another

inferior fit relative to the three-factor model.

The χ^2-difference test confirmed the idea from the concept explication

theorizing portion of the current work, that *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Symbolic Use* are

three distinct underlying latent constructs that together form a higher-order latent

construct of social materialism. The results showed that the *Nature* dimension

correlated with the *Manner* dimension with a coefficient if $r = .80$ ($p < .01$), and

correlated with a coefficient of $r = .90$ ($p < .01$) with the *Use* dimension. The *Manner*

and *Use* dimensions were correlated at $r = .88$ ($p < .01$). Figure 5 below presents the

factor loadings (λ) for the 11-item, three-factor social materialism model. All items

had strong loadings (i.e., near or above 0.7).
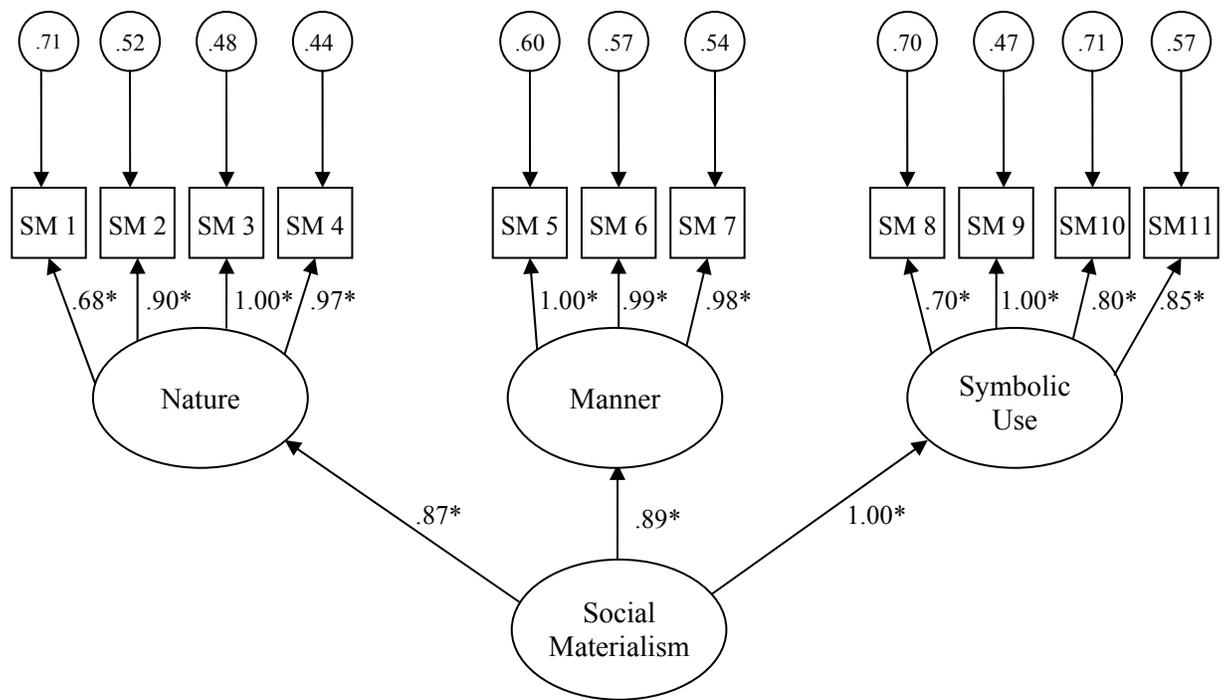
Figure 5. Final Social Materialism Measurement Model.

Note.*$p < .01$. Unstandardized path coefficients reported.

Reliability Assessment and Zero-Order Correlations for Final Model

The reliability of the final 11 items divided into the three first-order factors and the single second-order factor of social materialism were assessed with Cronbach's alpha. All were found to have adequate reliability levels. For the final four *Nature* items, $\alpha = .769$, for the three *Manner* items, $\alpha = .697$, and for the four *Symbolic Use* items, $\alpha = .705$. The 11 items together had a reliability of $\alpha = .874$. Thus, in response to the second research question, the social materialism measurement model, in both its preliminary form and final form as the 11-item model, was found to be reliable.

The correlations across the three first-order factors and the single second-order factor of social materialism are presented in Table 36. Correlations between the *Nature* indices and *Manner* indices were lower than both the correlations across *Nature* and *Use* indices and across the *Manner* and *Use* indices. The lower correlation between *Nature* and *Manner* indices suggested that a *Consumption Style* dimension that is a combination of *Nature* and *Manner* items, did not exist. Rather, consistent with the three-dimension conceptualization of social materialism confirmed by the CFA results, *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Use* are three conceptually distinct first-order latent factors, forming a single higher-order latent construct of social materialism.

Construct Validation: Predictive Validity

Television Use. In order to properly finish the process of concept explication, the predictive, convergent, and discriminant validity of the social materialism

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construct were tested with correlational analyses (see Table 37 for correlations between the social materialism index and indices for the measures of construct validation). Beginning with predictive validity, correlations between several television use measures and the social materialism scale and subscales for the *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Symbolic Use* dimensions were examined. For all of the tests of construct validity, the decision was made to examine correlations between the indices for *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Symbolic Use*, along with the index for all 11 social materialism items. This was done because the hypotheses that had been offered spoke to social materialism as a whole, but the CFAs had confirmed that *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Use* were unique dimensions. As such, it was desirable to assess whether the correlations between the indices for *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Use* and the various indices for the validity measures actually replicated the correlations between the broader social materialism index and the indices for the validity measures.

The first of the television use variables examined was a measure of average hours of television viewed a day. The correlations between hours of television viewed with the four social materialism indices were all positive and significant (*Nature, r =* .131, *p* < .05; *Manner, r =* .123, *p* < .05; *Use, r =* .172, *p* < .01; social materialism *r =* .163, *p* < .01), however these correlations were quite small. As one of the major goals of Study 2 was to determine the extent to which television use might be correlated with the social materialism measure, a number of other television use measures that took into account both exposure and attention were also examined. These attention

and exposure measures were genre-specific, that is, for each of ten genres of programming attention and exposure were measured and indices were created.

With respect to just the television exposure measure, an index of exposure to the ten different genres of programming had a reliability of $\alpha = .658$. The alpha for this measure would not be expected to be high, as different individuals watch different types of programs, i.e., functional alternatives. Just as with the hours of television viewed measure, correlations with the social materialism indices were all significant but small in magnitude (*Nature, r* = .151, *p* < .05; *Manner, r* = .205, *p* < .01; *Use, r* = .161, *p* < .01; social materialism, *r* = .195, *p* < .01). The same was true of the television attention index (attention to the ten genres, $\alpha = .720$) to an even greater extent, where only the *Symbolic Use* index was correlated with attention to the ten genres (*r* = .123, *p* < .05). Finally, for the 20-item index of exposure and attention to the ten genres combined ($\alpha = .811$), three of the social materialism indices retained significant positive correlations with the attention/exposure index (*Manner, r* = .163, *p* < .01; *Use, r* = .156, *p* < .05, social materialism *r* = .160, *p* < .01). The overall pattern had shown the attention and exposure measures did not correlate highly with the social materialism measures, and there was no clear pattern in any of the three subscales correlating to a greater extent than the index for the 11 social materialism measures combined.

The next set of correlational analyses sought to determine whether correlations would be any higher between the social materialism measures and each of the genres

considered individually. Because there was only two measures for each genre (one attention and one exposure measure), correlations between attention and exposure were utilized rather than an index. Correlations for each of the ten genres that took into account respondents' exposure and attention were consistently high from genre to genre, in other words, those individuals who watched a particular type of programming frequently also paid close attention to the program when they watched (the exposure and attention correlations were: drama, $r = .746$; sports, $r = .832$; sitcoms, $r = .715$; news, $r = .61$; game shows, $r = .70$; reality-based programs, $r = .767$; talk shows, $r = .716$; soap operas, $r = .728$; news magazine shows, $r = .687$; *The Daily Show*, $r = .771$).

When correlations were examined between the genre-specific combined attention/exposure measures and the social materialism measure, the exposure and attention measure for five out of the ten genres was significantly positively correlated with one or more of the social materialism measures. More specifically, the five genres that were significantly positively correlated with the 11-item social materialism index were: drama ($r = .123, p < .05$); reality-based programs ($r = .221, p < .01$); talk shows ($r = .188, p < .01$); soap operas ($r = .177, p < .01$); and news magazine shows ($r = .236, p < .01$). These five genres of drama, reality-based programs, talk shows, soap operas, and new magazine shows were also in most instances correlated with the *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Use* subscales, albeit in each case correlated with a smaller magnitude than they had with the overall social materialism index. The exceptions

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were the correlations between talk shows and the *Nature* index, ($r = .204$, $p < .01$) and news magazines and the *Manner* index ($r = .252$, $p < .01$), which were correlations of a larger magnitude than the correlations with the overall social materialism index.

Significant correlations were not found for the sports, sitcoms, news, game shows, and *The Daily Show* attention/exposure measures. The exposure measures for these genres also failed to correlate with any of the social materialism indices, where as with respect to genres of drama, reality-based programs, talk shows, soap operas, and news magazine shows, the exposure measure was in each case significantly positively correlated with the overall social materialism index.

Overall, the results showed that the relationship between television use and social materialism was genre-specific, with half the genres retaining significant correlations. Those types of programs do seem to have something in common in terms of their subject matter—dramas, reality-based programs, talk shows, soap operas, and news magazine shows all feature either glamorized lifestyles or the lifestyles of celebrities. In terms of the general television use measure of average number of hours viewed per day, correlations between hours of television viewed with the four social materialism indices were all positive and significant. The results showed that it is exposure to television, and not attention, which is empirically related to social materialism. Thus, there is partial support for *H1*, that television use is positively related to social materialism. Exposure is positively related to social materialism, as are a number of genre-specific measures. This provides support for the predictive

validity of the social materialism measure, as the operationalization was able to properly predict an association between social materialism and certain television use measures.

Life Satisfaction. The second measure used to assess the predictive validity of the social materialism measure was a life satisfaction index ($\alpha = .831$). The results showed that none of the social materialism subscales or the 11-item index were significantly correlated. Thus, *H2* is not supported. These results should be interpreted with caution, however, as the association between overall life satisfaction and social materialism is likely to be influenced by a third variable. For example, there was a significant ($p < .01$) correlation of $r = .255$ between the life satisfaction index and class, with members of the higher social classes exhibiting higher levels of life satisfaction.

Overall, the predictive validity of the social materialism measure assessed in the current work is only partially satisfactory. The operationalization of social materialism here was able to properly predict an association between social materialism and some genres of television use, along with some exposure measures. The operationalization of social materialism was not able to predict life satisfaction.

Construct Validation: Convergent Validity

Because a measure is said to have convergent validity if independent measures of the same construct converge or are highly correlated (Netemeyer et al., 2003), the convergent validity of the social materialism measure was first assessed through

examination of the correlation between the social materialism index and the Richins and Dawson (1992) MVS (α = .877). The two measures were significantly positively correlated at r =.787 (p < .01), a finding to be expected, considering that some of the social materialism measurement items and Richins and Dawson's measures overlap. Additionally, there is theoretical consistently between some of the social materialism measures and the Richins and Dawson (1992) conceptualization of materialism. When just the eight items unique to the social materialism scale were correlated with the 13 items unique to the MVS, the correlation remained high at r = .649 (p < .01). In the assessment of convergent validity, two other measures were hypothesized to relate strongly with social materialism: distinctness/belonging and money beliefs and behaviors.

Distinctness/Belonging. Examination of correlations with a distinctness/belonging index (α = .783) showed that the social materialism subscales and overall index all failed to retain significant correlations with the distinctness/belonging index, offering no support for *H3*. The need for distinctness was not positively related to social materialism. The convergent validity of the social materialism measure is thus weak in this area. Again, results must be interpreted with caution, as Mortenson et al. (2006) report that the needs for distinctness and belonging are not mutually exclusive, with individuals exhibiting varying levels of each need depending on the situation.

Money Beliefs and Behaviors. Examination of correlations between the social

materialism measures and a money beliefs and behaviors index ($\alpha = .873$) revealed

that the social materialism measure had strong convergent validity in this area. The

correlations between preoccupation with money and all three social materialism

subscales were all significant and positive (*Nature, r* = .308, *p* < .01; *Manner, r* =

.453, *p* < .01; *Use, r* = .317, *p* < .01), and the correlation with the 11-item social

materialism index was even higher, at *r* = .405 (*p* < .01). This provides support for

H4, preoccupation with money was positively related to social materialism.

Overall, the convergent validity of the social materialism scale is partially

satisfactory. Although there was no correlation between social materialism and the

need for distinctness, there were moderate to strong significant correlations with two

measures that are much more conceptually similar—the Richins and Dawson (1992)

materialism measure and preoccupation with money.

Construct Validation: Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity of the social materialism measure was assessed via

correlational analyses with two separate measures of constructs that have not yet been

studied in conjunction with materialism—right-wing authoritarianism and need for

cognition.

Right-Wing Authoritarianism. Examinations of correlations between a right-

wing authoritarianism index ($\alpha = .774$) and social materialism showed that some of

the social materialism measures were correlated with authoritarianism (*Manner, r* =

.124, *p* < .05 and *Use, r* = .149, *p* < .05). Correlations between the *Nature* subscale

and the 11-item social materialism index were not significant. In response to *RQ3*,

right-wing authoritarianism is related to some aspects of social materialism,

specifically, the *Manner* and *Use* subscales had small correlations with right-wing

authoritarianism. This shows that the *Nature* subscale and 11-item scale perform best

in this case, exhibiting the greatest discriminant validity.

 Need for Cognition. The correlations between the need for cognition index (α

= .896) and three of the social materialism measures revealed a relationship between

certain subscales of social materialism and need for cognition (*Manner, r* = -.187, *p* <

.01; *Use, r* = -.148, *p* < .05; social materialism, *r* = .161, *p* < .01). Only the *Nature*

subscale was not correlated with need for cognition, demonstrating that the *Nature*

subscale had the best discriminant validity in this case. Significant correlations were,

however, small in magnitude. In response to *RQ4*, need for cognition is related to

some aspects of social materialism, but correlations between the two variables were

small. These results show that the discriminant validity of the overall social

materialism measure is adequate when assessed with the variable of need for

cognition.

 To summarize the results of the tests of construct validity for social

materialism, much work needs to be done to establish the validity of the

operationalization. The predictive validity of the social materialism measure was

partially satisfactory, with the operationalization able to properly predict associations

with exposure to five specific genres of television programming and hours of television viewed. The operationalization of social materialism was not able to predict life satisfaction, limiting the predictive validity of the measure. The convergent validity of the social materialism scale was also only partially satisfactory. There was no correlation between social materialism and the need for distinctness, however, the moderate to strong significant correlations with two measures conceptually similar to social materialism, the Richins and Dawson (1992) materialism measure and preoccupation with money, showed evidence of the construct's convergent validity. When considered alongside right-wing authoritarianism and need for cognition, the discriminant validity of the construct is acceptable, especially for the *Nature* subscale and overall social materialism scale. There is much more room for future research to determine the extent to which the social materialism measure actually measures social materialism and not some other construct.

Table 1

Study 1 Descriptive Statistics for Social Materialism Items

Scale item	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Luxury	5.15	1.279	-.872	.907
2. New and different	4.68	1.343	-.521	-.228
3. Advertised brand	4.14	1.443	-.330	-.332
4. Trendsetter	3.65	1.582	.053	-.902
5. Go along with it	4.40	1.432	-.576	-.355
6. Right things	4.31	1.339	-.172	-.322
7. Only the best	3.20	1.501	.280	-.940
8. Only things need	4.41	1.584	-.264	-.816
9. Keep life simple	4.45	1.495	-.317	-.569
10. Competitive act	2.68	1.581	.905	.013
11. Pleasure own more	2.58	1.484	.750	-.392
12. Pressure keep up	3.65	1.579	-.045	-.969
13. Cannot afford them	3.14	1.707	.374	-.977
14. How well I'm doing	4.00	1.291	-.175	-.028
15. Impress people	3.79	1.405	-.052	-.817
16. Positive reactions	5.68	.910	-.289	.066
17. Better than someone	2.41	1.396	.887	.093
18. Like me more	2.53	1.460	.682	-.449
19. Connect me to group	3.88	1.566	-.316	-.796
20. Have different things	4.06	1.420	.088	-.618
21. Trade places	3.88	1.866	-.196	-1.148

Note. For each variable, the low value is 1 and the high value is 7. SE of skewness for all 21 items = .144. SE of kurtosis for all 21 items = .286.

Table 2

Study 1 Intercorrelations Between Social Materialism Scale Items

Scale item	1	2	3	4
1. Luxury	—	.400**	.188**	.251**
2. New and different		—	.202**	.451**
3. Advertised brand			—	.259**
4. Trendsetter				—
5. Go along with it				
6. Right things				
7. Only the best				
8. Only things need				
9. Keep life simple				
10. Competitive act				
11. Pleasure own more				
12. Pressure keep up				
13. Cannot afford them				
14. How well I'm doing				
15. Impress people				
16. Positive reactions				
17. Better than someone				
18. Like me more				
19. Connect me to group				
20. Have different things				
21. Trade places				

Note.*p<.05. **p<.01 (2-tailed). Table continues on next 5 pages.

Table 2 Continued

Scale item	5	6	7	8
1. Luxury	.249**	.329**	.284**	.260**
2. New and different	.280**	.462**	.318**	.505**
3. Advertised brand	.279**	.300**	.395**	.236**
4. Trendsetter	.297**	.425**	.472**	.311**
5. Go along with it	—	.304**	.336**	.237**
6. Right things		—	.377**	.357**
7. Only the best			—	.238**
8. Only things need				—
9. Keep life simple				
10. Competitive act				
11. Pleasure own more				
12. Pressure keep up				
13. Cannot afford them				
14. How well I'm doing				
15. Impress people				
16. Positive reactions				
17. Better than someone				
18. Like me more				
19. Connect me to group				
20. Have different things				
21. Trade places				

Table 2 Continued

Scale item	9	10	11	12
1. Luxury	.384**	.090	.237**	.212**
2. New and different	.525**	.160**	.244**	.323**
3. Advertised brand	.220**	.216**	.372**	.370**
4. Trendsetter	.406**	.287**	.306**	.338**
5. Go along with it	.248**	.221**	.219**	.348**
6. Right things	.470**	.158**	.261**	.338**
7. Only the best	.339**	.316**	.427**	.292**
8. Only things need	.643**	.075	.202**	.398**
9. Keep life simple	—	.102	.309**	.339**
10. Competitive act		—	.513**	.321**
11. Pleasure own more			—	.409**
12. Pressure keep up				—
13. Cannot afford them				
14. How well I'm doing				
15. Impress people				
16. Positive reactions				
17. Better than someone				
18. Like me more				
19. Connect me to group				
20. Have different things				
21. Trade places				

Table 2 Continued

Scale item	13	14	15	16
1. Luxury	.199**	.197**	.298**	.279**
2. New and different	.323**	.278**	.411**	.382**
3. Advertised brand	.068	.237**	.365**	.151*
4. Trendsetter	.305**	.270**	.384**	.186**
5. Go along with it	.220**	.206**	.235**	.125*
6. Right things	.222**	.271**	.468**	.225**
7. Only the best	.274**	.344**	.417**	.140*
8. Only things need	.333**	.320**	.363**	.198**
9. Keep life simple	.306**	.386**	.464**	.249**
10. Competitive act	.238**	.047	.218**	.064
11. Pleasure own more	.227**	.221**	.401**	.150*
12. Pressure keep up	.311**	.235**	.467**	.282**
13. Cannot afford them	—	.086	.325**	.187**
14. How well I'm doing		—	.447**	.129*
15. Impress people			—	.275**
16. Positive reactions				—
17. Better than someone				
18. Like me more				
19. Connect me to group				
20. Have different things				
21. Trade places				

Table 2 Continued

Scale item	17	18	19	20
1. Luxury	.232**	.158**	.204**	.138*
2. New and different	.224**	.180**	.115	.331**
3. Advertised brand	.268**	.230**	.130*	.105
4. Trendsetter	.264**	.179**	.103	.319**
5. Go along with it	.223**	.181**	.205**	.003
6. Right things	.232**	.194**	.152**	.172**
7. Only the best	.369**	.269**	.188**	.279**
8. Only things need	.157**	.108	.027	.286**
9. Keep life simple	.263**	.197**	.141*	.324**
10. Competitive act	.351**	.263**	.142*	.089
11. Pleasure own more	.517**	.431**	.283**	.211**
12. Pressure keep up	.281**	.365**	.302**	.187**
13. Cannot afford them	.253**	.121*	.056	.205**
14. How well I'm doing	.338**	.273**	.302**	.247**
15. Impress people	.485**	.360**	.237**	.293**
16. Positive reactions	.043	.063	.221**	.241**
17. Better than someone	—	.541**	.283**	.182**
18. Like me more		—	.360**	.233**
19. Connect me to group			—	.097
20. Have different things				—
21. Trade places				

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Table 2 Continued

Scale item	21
1. Luxury	.250**
2. New and different	.202**
3. Advertised brand	.143*
4. Trendsetter	.104
5. Go along with it	.129*
6. Right things	.221**
7. Only the best	.137*
8. Only things need	.157**
9. Keep life simple	.248**
10. Competitive act	.161**
11. Pleasure own more	.277**
12. Pressure keep up	.386**
13. Cannot afford them	.286**
14. How well I'm doing	.117*
15. Impress people	.293**
16. Positive reactions	.200**
17. Better than someone	.165**
18. Like me more	.232**
19. Connect me to group	.260**
20. Have different things	.133*
21. Trade places	—

Table 3

Study 1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Loadings for Nature Items

Item	Factor 1
Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	658
It is important for me to own the right things	653
People recognize that I buy only the best	633
Important to buy new and different things . . .	633
Purchase things that go along with it . . .	486
I like a lot of luxury in my life	484
A nationally advertised brand is usually better . . .	454
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	2.98 (42.59%)

Table 4

Study 1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Pattern Matrix Loadings for Manner Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
I usually buy only the things I need	.943	.154
I try to keep my life simple . . .	.725	.014
I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them	.336	.207
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	2.6 (43.42%)	
I view buying things as a competitive act	.099	.727
I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.069	.725
I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.359	.378
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.25 (20.85%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, *r* = .404, *p* < .01 (2-tailed).

Table 5

Study 1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Structure Matrix Loadings for Manner Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
I usually buy only the things I need	.883	.211
I try to keep my life simple . . .	.731	.295
I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them	.416	.338
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	2.60 (43.42%)	
I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.350	.752
I view buying things as a competitive act	.183	.689
I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.505	.517
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.25 (20.85%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, $r = .404$, $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 6

Study 1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Pattern Matrix Loadings for Symbolic Use Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
Buy things to show that I am better . . .	.871	.118
People will like me more if I own the right things	.653	.012
Important for me to own things that impress people	.433	.408
Things I own say much about how well I am doing . . .	.339	.286
The things I purchase connect me to a group	.285	.251
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	2.84 (35.53%)	
I enjoy it when I get positive reactions . . .	.166	.623
Important to have things which are different . . .	.113	.368
There are people I would like to trade places with . . .	.117	.337
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.14 (14.2%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, $r = .412$, $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 7

Study 1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Structure Matrix Loadings for Symbolic Use Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
Buy things to show that I am better . . .	.818	.271
People will like me more if I own the right things	.658	.303
Important for me to own things that impress people	.616	.602
Things I own say much about how well I am doing . . .	.467	.437
The things I purchase connect me to a group	.397	.378
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	2.84 (35.53%)	
I enjoy it when I get positive reactions . . .	.112	.549
Important to have things which are different . . .	.277	.418
There are people I would like to trade places with . . .	.268	.390
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.14 (14.2%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, $r = .412$, $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 8

Study 1 EFA Pattern Matrix Loadings for Consumption Style Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
(M) I try to keep my life simple . . .	.846	.090
(M) I usually buy only the things I need	.811	.151
(N) Important to buy new and different things . . .	.687	.018
(N) It is important for me to own the right things	.515	.156
(N) I like a lot of luxury in my life	.430	.083
(N) Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	.386	.326
(M) I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them	.337	.178
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	4.7 (36.17%)	
(M) I view buying things as a competitive act	.182	.728
(M) I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.018	.697
(N) People recognize that I buy only the best	.205	.512
(N) A nationally advertised brand is usually better . . .	.120	.435
(M) I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.294	.396
(N) Purchase things that go along with it . . .	.230	.306
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.47 (11.3%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, $r = .564$, $p < .01$ (2-tailed). Nature dimension items marked with an (N), Manner dimension items marked with an (M).

Table 9

Study 1 EFA Structure Matrix Loadings for Consumption Style Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
(M) I try to keep my life simple . . .	.801	.342
(M) I usually buy only the things I need	.734	.263
(N) Important to buy new and different things . . .	.696	.369
(N) It is important for me to own the right things	.593	.418
(N) Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	.552	.523
(N) I like a lot of luxury in my life	.473	.303
(M) I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them	.427	.349
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	4.7 (36.17%)	
(M) I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.373	.706
(M) I view buying things as a competitive act	.189	.635
(N) People recognize that I buy only the best	.466	.617
(M) I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.496	.546
(N) A nationally advertised brand is usually better . . .	.342	.497
(N) Purchase things that go along with it . . .	.386	.423
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.47 (11.3%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, $r = .564$, $p < .01$ (2-tailed). Nature dimension items marked with an (N), Manner dimension items marked with an (M).

Table 10

Study 1 EFA Pattern Matrix Loadings for All 21 Social Materialism Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
(M) I usually buy only the things I need	1.085	.045
(M) I try to keep my life simple . . .	.483	.106
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	6.44 (30.65%)	
(U) Buy things to show that I am better . . .	.015	.653
(U) People will like me more if I own the right things	.009	.629
(U) Things I own say much about how well I am doing	.173	.486
(U) The types of things I purchase connect me to a group	.096	.419
(U) Important for me to own things that impress people	.117	.386
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.87 (8.93%)

Note. Nature dimension items marked with an (N), Manner dimension items marked with an (M), Symbolic Use dimension items marked with a (U). Table continues on next page.

Table 10 Continued

Item	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
(N) Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	.678	.171	.051
(N) People recognize that I buy only the best	.559	.207	.115
(N) It is important for me to own the right things	.517	.023	.149
(N) Important to buy new and different things . . .	.482	.044	.183
(N) I like a lot of luxury in my life	.336	.071	.241
(U) Important to have things which are different . . .	.266	.053	.021
(N) Purchase things that go along with it . . .	.255	.173	.105
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	1.28 (6.07%)		
(M) I view buying things as a competitive act	.113	.683	.002
(M) I take pleasure from owning more than others. .	.099	.487	.064
(M) I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them	.179	.219	.162
(N) A nationally advertised brand is usually better . . .	.194	.197	.032
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.22 (5.82%)	
(U) There are people I would like to trade places with . . .	.072	.107	.534
(U) I enjoy it when I get positive reactions . . .	.240	.078	.452
(M) I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.023	.292	.407
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)			1.12 (35%)

Note. Nature dimension items marked with an (N), Manner dimension items marked with an (M), Symbolic Use dimension items marked with a (U).

Table 11

Study 1 EFA Structure Matrix Loadings for All 21 Social Materialism Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
(M) I usually buy only the things I need	.989	.162
(M) I try to keep my life simple . . .	.693	.327
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	6.44 (30.65%)	
(U) Buy things to show that I am better . . .	.220	.725
(U) People will like me more if I own the right things	.166	.674
(U) Things I own say much about how well I am doing . . .	.374	.522
(U) The types of things I purchase connect me to a group	.085	.469
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.87 (8.93%)

Note. Nature dimension items marked with an (N), Manner dimension items marked with an (M), Symbolic Use dimension items marked with a (U). Loadings for only Factor 1 and Factor 2 shown. Table continues on next page.

Table 11 Continued

Item	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
(N) Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	.691	.307	.200
(N) Important to buy new and different things . . .	.657	.106	.407
(N) It is important for me to own the right things	.626	.142	.362
(N) People recognize that I buy only the best	.621	.373	.158
(U) Important for me to own things that impress people	.590	.226	.422
(N) I like a lot of luxury in my life	.455	.071	.381
(U) Important to have things which are different . . .	.391	.068	.190
(N) Purchase things that go along with it . . .	.389	.270	.258
(M) I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them	.378	.289	.306
(N) A nationally advertised brand is usually better . . .	.373	.314	.126
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	1.28 (6.07%)		
(M) I view buying things as a competitive act	.266	.718	.151
(M) I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.387	.623	.293
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.22 (5.82%)	
(M) I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.382	.421	.571
(U) There are people I would like to trade places with . . .	.194	.210	.568
(U) I enjoy it when I get positive reactions . . .	.346	.021	.496
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)			1.12 (35%)

Note. Loadings for only Factor 3, 4, and 5 shown.

Table 12

Factor Correlation Matrix for Factors Extracted from EFA for all 21 Social Materialism Items

Factor	1	2	3	4	5
1	—	.297**	.618**	.215**	.394**
2		—	.505**	.451**	.405**
3			—	.468**	.538**
4				—	.380**
5					—

Note. $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 13

Study 2 Descriptive Statistics for Social Materialism Items

Scale item	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Luxury	4.89	1.280	-.442	-.153
2. New and different	4.40	1.308	-.158	-.478
3. Advertised brand	4.16	1.413	-.138	-.806
4. Trendsetter	3.75	1.414	.172	-.614
5. Go along with it	4.34	1.227	-.573	-.124
6. Right things	4.24	1.312	-.181	-.439
7. Only the best	3.32	1.390	.247	-.693
8. Only things need	4.30	1.482	-.249	-.695
9. Keep life simple	4.37	1.367	-.316	-.566
10. Competitive act	2.87	1.506	.462	-.897
11. Pleasure own more	2.98	1.469	.386	-.761
12. Pressure keep up	3.71	1.398	-.047	-.623
13. Cannot afford them	3.30	1.583	.204	-1.061
14. How well I'm doing	3.97	1.235	-.241	-.310
15. Impress people	3.69	1.332	-.076	-.708
16. Positive reactions	5.44	.976	-.428	.328
17. Better than someone	2.69	1.363	.649	-.275
18. Like me more	2.93	1.381	.573	-.361
19. Connect me to group	3.96	1.408	-.293	-.616

Note. For each variable, the low value is 1 and the high value is 7, with the exception of "positive reactions" which had a low value of 2 . SE of skewness for all 30 items = .150. SE of kurtosis for all 30 items = .298. Table continues on next page.

Table 13 Continued

Scale item	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
20. Have different things	.99	1.333	.156	-.685
21. Trade places	3.91	1.752	-.178	-.972
22. Look forward to reaction	4.41	4.122	-.484	-.196
23. Think well of me	3.39	1.257	.194	-.496
24. Can't wait to be seen	4.33	1.402	-.400	-.286
25. Compare	3.66	1.350	-.059	-.698
26. Jealous	4.09	1.372	-.251	-.515
27. Bothered buy anything	3.30	1.549	.675	-.231
28. Make it myself	4.14	1.583	-.186	-.636
29. Practicality	3.59	1.363	.269	-.378
30. New impress people	3.51	1.262	.147	-.304

Table 14

Study 2 Intercorrelations Between Social Materialism Scale Items

Scale item	1	2	3	4
1. Luxury	—	.371**	.320**	.388**
2. New and different		—	.216**	.505**
3. Advertised brand			—	.244**
4. Trendsetter				—
5. Go along with it				
6. Right things				
7. Only the best				
8. Only things need				
9. Keep life simple				
10. Competitive act				
11. Pleasure own more				
12. Pressure keep up				
13. Cannot afford them				
14. How well I'm doing				
15. Impress people				
16. Positive reactions				
17. Better than someone				
18. Like me more				
19. Connect me to group				
20. Have different things				
21. Trade places				

Note.*p < .05. **p<.01 (2-tailed). Table continues on next 15 pages.

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	1	2	3	4
22. Look to reaction				
23. Think well of me				
24. Can't wait to be seen				
25. Compare				
26. Jealous				
27. Bothered buy anything				
28. Make it myself				
29. Practicality				
30. New impress people				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	5	6	7	8
1. Luxury	.374**	.409**	.380**	.397**
2. New and different	.267**	.537**	.400**	.462**
3. Advertised brand	.203**	.320**	.379**	.223**
4. Trendsetter	.331**	.515**	.514**	.448**
5. Go along with it		.302**	.336**	.288**
6. Right things		—	.473**	.384**
7. Only the best			—	.251**
8. Only things need				—
9. Keep life simple				
10. Competitive act				
11. Pleasure own more				
12. Pressure keep up				
13. Cannot afford them				
14. How well I'm doing				
15. Impress people				
16. Positive reactions				
17. Better than someone				
18. Like me more				
19. Connect me to group				
20. Have different things				
21. Trade places				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	5	6	7	8
22. Look to reaction				
23. Think well of me				
24. Can't wait to be seen				
25. Compare				
26. Jealous				
27. Bothered buy anything				
28. Make it myself				
29. Practicality				
30. New impress people				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	9	10	11	12
1. Luxury	.478**	.214**	.321**	.215**
2. New and different	.509**	.139*	.293**	.409**
3. Advertised brand	.309**	.174**	.348**	.324**
4. Trendsetter	.479**	.361**	.375**	.484**
5. Go along with it	.379**	.135*	.206**	.200**
6. Right things	.428**	.275**	.380**	.430**
7. Only the best	.317**	.468**	.549**	.383**
8. Only things need	.685**	.065	.179**	.336**
9. Keep life simple	—	.110	.234**	.323**
10. Competitive act		—	.631**	.291**
11. Pleasure own more			—	.402**
12. Pressure keep up				—
13. Cannot afford them				
14. How well I'm doing				
15. Impress people				
16. Positive reactions				
17. Better than someone				
18. Like me more				
19. Connect me to group				
20. Have different things				
21. Trade places				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	9	10	11	12
22. Look to reaction				
23. Think well of me				
24. Can't wait to be seen				
25. Compare				
26. Jealous				
27. Bothered buy anything				
28. Make it myself				
29. Practicality				
30. New impress people				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	13	14	15	16
1. Luxury	.172**	.321**	.388**	.307**
2. New and different	.200**	.393**	.491**	.180**
3. Advertised brand	.111**	.146*	.282**	.139*
4. Trendsetter	.276**	.369**	.465**	.149*
5. Go along with it	.268**	.206**	.236**	.249**
6. Right things	.144*	.462**	.491**	.219**
7. Only the best	.280**	.285**	.441**	.108
8. Only things need	.261**	.364**	.406**	.232**
9. Keep life simple	.240**	.441**	.433**	.232**
10. Competitive act	.339**	.241**	.280**	-.002
11. Pleasure own more	.288**	.265**	.447**	.105
12. Pressure keep up	.215**	.305**	.475**	.178**
13. Cannot afford them	—	.025	.164**	-.016
14. How well I'm doing		—	.451**	.107
15. Impress people			—	.198**
16. Positive reactions				—
17. Better than someone				
18. Like me more				
19. Connect me to group				
20. Have different things				
21. Trade places				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	13	14	15	16
22. Look to reaction				
23. Think well of me				
24. Can't wait to be seen				
25. Compare				
26. Jealous				
27. Bothered buy anything				
28. Make it myself				
29. Practicality				
30. New impress people				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	17	18	19	20
1. Luxury	.199**	.068	.252**	.164**
2. New and different	.267**	.121*	.300**	.370**
3. Advertised brand	.157*	.212**	.205**	.097
4. Trendsetter	.374**	.311**	.364**	.342**
5. Go along with it	.182**	.075**	.268**	.192**
6. Right things	.330**	.271**	.329**	.274**
7. Only the best	.426**	.421**	.328**	.290**
8. Only things need	.203**	-.030	.191**	.224**
9. Keep life simple	.205**	-.016	.247**	.264**
10. Competitive act	.398**	.460**	.303**	.141*
11. Pleasure own more	.558**	.457**	.325**	.180**
12. Pressure keep up	.397**	.372**	.345**	.291**
13. Cannot afford them	.188**	.213**	.161**	.181**
14. How well I'm doing	.299**	.236**	.320**	.163**
15. Impress people	.407**	.305**	.339**	.322**
16. Positive reactions	-.030	.021	.172**	.202**
17. Better than someone	—	.449**	.260**	.163**
18. Like me more		—	.402**	.187**
19. Connect me to group			—	.165**
20. Have different things				—
21. Trade places				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	17	18	19	20
22. Look to reaction				
23. Think well of me				
24. Can't wait to be seen				
25. Compare				
26. Jealous				
27. Bothered buy anything				
28. Make it myself				
29. Practicality				
30. New impress people				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	21	22	23	24
1. Luxury	.282**	.179**	.249**	.156*
2. New and different	.284**	.277**	.323**	.256**
3. Advertised brand	.266**	.277**	.223**	.258**
4. Trendsetter	.180**	.324**	.437**	.260**
5. Go along with it	.147*	.237**	.210**	.223**
6. Right things	.190**	.292**	.408**	.315**
7. Only the best	.278**	.300**	.361**	.344**
8. Only things need	.065	.206**	.271**	.202**
9. Keep life simple	.196**	.188**	.293**	.229**
10. Competitive act	.165**	.209**	.370**	.252**
11. Pleasure own more	.304**	.309**	.456**	.342**
12. Pressure keep up	.286**	.389**	.433**	.391**
13. Cannot afford them	.259**	.099	.230**	.128*
14. How well I'm doing	.149*	.185**	.387**	.233**
15. Impress people	.169**	.359**	.457**	.410**
16. Positive reactions	.151*	.395**	.128*	.334**
17. Better than someone	.267**	.266**	.513**	.262**
18. Like me more	.263**	.244**	.344**	.298**
19. Connect me to group	.238**	.356**	.287**	.310**
20. Have different things	.120	.214**	.269**	.270**
21. Trade places	—	.339**	.277**	.349**

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	21	22	23	24
22. Look to reaction		—	.427**	.699**
23. Think well of me			—	.369**
24. Can't wait to be seen				—
25. Compare				
26. Jealous				
27. Bothered buy anything				
28. Make it myself				
29. Practicality				
30. New impress people				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	25	26	27	28
1. Luxury	.315**	.112	-.073	.260**
2. New and different	.332**	.177**	.033	.240**
3. Advertised brand	.308**	.084	-.193**	.318**
4. Trendsetter	.358**	.169**	.092	.254**
5. Go along with it	.259**	.089	.022	.089
6. Right things	.420**	.179**	-.024	.244**
7. Only the best	.451**	.117	.050	.302**
8. Only things need	.189**	.018	.090	.265**
9. Keep life simple	.227**	.087	.031	.297**
10. Competitive act	.396**	.133*	-.058	.159**
11. Pleasure own more	.487**	.161**	-.070	.296**
12. Pressure keep up	.414**	.350**	-.032	.323**
13. Cannot afford them	.230**	.050	-.148*	.097
14. How well I'm doing	.306**	.178**	.121*	.198**
15. Impress people	.456**	.163**	-.036	.315**
16. Positive reactions	.227**	.136*	-.132*	.068
17. Better than someone	.411**	.196**	-.064	.236**
18. Like me more	.454**	.108	-.036	.100
19. Connect me to group	.420**	.133*	-.030	.194**
20. Have different things	.274**	.108	-.096	.116
21. Trade places	.382**	.268**	-.206**	.196**

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	25	26	27	28
22. Look to reaction	.521**	.143*	-.193**	.118
23. Think well of me	.424**	.172**	-.060	.275**
24. Can't wait to be seen	.576**	.147*	-.175**	.215**
25. Compare	—	.167**	-.137*	.240**
26. Jealous		—	-.069	.116
27. Bothered buy anything			—	.137*
28. Make it myself				—
29. Practicality				
30. New impress people				

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	29	30
1. Luxury	.234**	.292**
2. New and different	.320**	.444**
3. Advertised brand	.162**	.266**
4. Trendsetter	.300**	.506**
5. Go along with it	.208**	.261**
6. Right things	.206**	.497**
7. Only the best	.234**	.485**
8. Only things need	.427**	.349**
9. Keep life simple	.474**	.325**
10. Competitive act	-.045	.329**
11. Pleasure own more	.162**	.491**
12. Pressure keep up	.230**	.479**
13. Cannot afford them	.231**	.211**
14. How well I'm doing	.246**	.441**
15. Impress people	.238**	.604**
16. Positive reactions	.056	.201**
17. Better than someone	.216**	.543**
18. Like me more	-.012	.445**
19. Connect me to group	.033	.393**
20. Have different things	.143*	.373**
21. Trade places	.150*	.312**

Table 14 Continued

Scale item	29	30
22. Look to reaction	.108	.453**
23. Think well of me	.207**	.613**
24. Can't wait to be seen	.189**	.512**
25. Compare	.126*	.509**
26. Jealous	.074	.263**
27. Bothered buy anything	.141*	-.059
28. Make it myself	.364**	.347**
29. Practicality	—	.262**
30. New impress people		—

Table 15

Study 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Loadings for Nature Items

Item	Factor 1
It is important for me to own the right things	.727
Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	.717
People recognize that I buy only the best	.677
Important to buy new and different things . . .	.661
I like a lot of luxury in my life	.582
Purchase things that go along with it . . .	.468
A nationally advertised brand is usually better . . .	.432
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	3.27 (46.65%)

Table 16

Study 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Pattern Matrix Loadings for Manner Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
I view buying things as a competitive act	.845	.086
I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.789	.033
*I compare my possessions with others like me . . .	.421	.047
I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them	.339	.271
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	3.37 (30.63%)	
I usually buy only the things I need	.070	.821
I try to keep my life simple . . .	.020	.808
*I always consider the practical usefulness of a product . . .	.020	.409
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.76 (15.99%)

Note. Items added for Study 2 are asterisked. Loadings for only Factor 1 and Factor 2 shown. Table continues on next page.

Table 16 Continued

Item	Factor 3	Factor 4
I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.744	.027
*I feel jealous when friend gets something new . . .	.457	.029
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	1.10 (10.06%)	
*I would rather make it than buy it . . .	.182	.539
*Bothered when people buy anything they want . . .	.077	.299
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.04 (9.49%)

Note. Items added for Study 2 are asterisked. Loadings for only Factor 3 and Factor 4 shown.

Table 17

Study 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Structure Matrix Loadings for Manner Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.804	.257
I view buying things as a competitive act	.802	.120
*I compare my possessions with others like me . . .	.552	.251
I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them	.405	.329
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	3.37 (30.63%)	
I try to keep my life simple . . .	.253	.832
I usually buy only the things I need	.195	.818
*I always consider the practical usefulness of a product . . .	.099	.542
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.76 (15.99%)

Note. Items added for Study 2 are asterisked. Loadings for only Factor 1 and Factor 2 shown. Table continues on next page.

Table 17 Continued

Item	Factor 3	Factor 4
I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.812	.129
*I feel jealous when friend gets something new . . .	.434	.002
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	1.10 (10.06%)	
*I would rather make it than buy it . . .	.334	.557
*Bothered when people buy anything they want . . .	.079	.296
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.04 (9.49%)

Note. Items added for Study 2 are asterisked. Loadings for only Factor 3 and Factor 4 shown.

Table 18

Factor Correlation Matrix for Factors Extracted from Study 2 Manner Items

Factor	1	2	3	4
1	—	.271**	.374**	.085
2		—	.279**	.317**
3			—	.140*
4				—

Note. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01 (2-tailed).

Table 19

Study 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Pattern Matrix Loadings for Symbolic Use Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Important for me to own things that impress people	.713	.030	.028
*Concerned with owning things that impress . . .	.649	.141	.244
Things I own say much about how well I am doing	598	.104	.061
Important to have things which are different . . .	.453	.045	.090
*Buy things which cause others to think well of me	.396	.188	.334
The things I purchase connect me to a group	.266	.226	.133
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	4.57 (38.09%)		
*I look forward to how people will react . . .	.094	.946	038
*Can't wait for other people to see me with it . . .	.129	.711	.002
I enjoy it when I get positive reactions . . .	.157	.416	.311
There are people I would like to trade places with	.012	.358	.236
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.40 (11.65%)	
Buy things to show that I am better . . .	.241	.043	.646
People will like me more if I own the right things	.215	.104	.419
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)			1.04 (8.64%)

Note. Items added for Study 2 are asterisked.

Table 20

Study 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Structure Matrix Loadings for Symbolic Use Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
*Concerned with owning things that impress . . .	.816	.548	.504
Important for me to own things that impress people	.741	.434	.291
*Buy things which cause others to think well of me	.622	.470	.511
Things I own say much about how well I am doing	.562	.241	.257
Important to have things which are different . . .	.446	.282	.082
The things I purchase connect me to a group	.440	.398	.269
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	4.57 (38.09%)		
*I look forward to how people will react . . .	.449	.901	.175
*Can't wait for other people to see me with it . . .	.526	.783	.172
I enjoy it when I get positive reactions . . .	.278	.448	.180
There are people I would like to trade places with	.273	.394	.296
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.40 (11.65%)	
Buy things to show that I am better . . .	.498	.294	.741
People will like me more if I own the right things	.424	.300	.515
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.04 (8.64%)	

Note. Items added for Study 2 are asterisked.

Table 21

Factor Correlation Matrix for Factors Extracted from Study 2 Symbolic Use Items

Factor	1	2	3
1	—	.531**	.581**
2		—	.349**
3			—

Note. $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 22

Study 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Loadings for 5 Retained Nature Items

Item	Factor 1
It is important for me to own the right things	.736
Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	.730
Important to buy new and different things . . .	.686
People recognize that I buy only the best	.653
I like a lot of luxury in my life	.550
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	2.81 (56.11%)

Table 23

Study 2 EFA Pattern Matrix Loadings for 7 Retained Manner Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
I try to keep my life simple . . .	.831	.035
I usually buy only the things I need	.813	.017
I always consider the practical usefulness of a product . . .	.561	.021
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	2.84 (40.60%)	
I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.013	.854
I view buying things as a competitive act	.156	.776
I compare my possessions with others like me . . .	.086	.559
I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.276	.407
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.65 (23.56%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, $r = .279$, $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 24

Study 2 EFA Structure Matrix Loadings for 7 Retained Manner Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
I try to keep my life simple . . .	.842	.289
I usually buy only the things I need	.807	.231
I always consider the practical usefulness of a product . . .	.555	.151
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	2.84 (40.60%)	
I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.248	.850
I view buying things as a competitive act	.081	.729
I compare my possessions with others like me . . .	.257	.585
I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.401	.492
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.65 (23.56%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, $r = .279$, $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 25

Study 2 EFA Pattern Matrix Loadings for 7 Retained Symbolic Use Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
I look forward to how people will react . . .	.995	.068
Can't wait for other people to see me with it . . .	.670	.127
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	3.19 (45.62%)	
Buy things to show that I am better . . .	.053	.710
Buy things which cause others to think well of me	.149	.631
Important for me to own things that impress people	.101	.603
Things I own say much about how well I am doing	.017	.575
People will like me more if I own the right things	.069	.522
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.10 (15.76%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, $r = .464$, $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Table 26

Study 2 EFA Structure Matrix Loadings for 7 Retained Symbolic Use Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
I look forward to how people will react . . .	.960	.442
Can't wait for other people to see me with it . . .	.735	.472
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	3.19 (45.62%)	
Buy things to show that I am better . . .	.473	.707
Buy things which cause others to think well of me	.311	.683
Important for me to own things that impress people	.410	.655
Things I own say much about how well I am doing	.227	.540
People will like me more if I own the right things	.285	.531
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.10 (15.76%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, *r* = .464, *p* < .01 (2-tailed).

Table 27

Study 2 EFA Pattern Matrix Loadings for 12 Retained Consumption Style Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
(M) I try to keep my life simple . . .	.851	.053
(M) I usually buy only the things I need	.824	.106
(N) Important to buy new and different things . . .	.578	.188
(M) I always consider the practical usefulness of a product	.572	.086
(N) Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	.464	.386
(N) I like a lot of luxury in my life	.449	.225
(N) It is important for me to own the right things	.414	.385
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	4.99 (41.57%)	
(M) I view buying things as a competitive act	.205	.801
(M) I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.037	.799
(N) People recognize that I buy only the best	.166	.644
(M) I compare my possessions with others like me . . .	.081	.590
(M) I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.290	.408
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.77 (14.75%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, $r = .530$, $p < .01$. Nature dimension items marked with an (N), Manner dimension items marked with an (M).

Table 28

Study 2 EFA Structure Matrix Loadings for 12 Retained Consumption Style Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
(M) I try to keep my life simple . . .	.829	.302
(M) I usually buy only the things I need	.780	.238
(N) Important to buy new and different things . . .	.656	.429
(M) I always consider the practical usefulness of a product	.625	.580
(N) Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	.575	.557
(N) I like a lot of luxury in my life	.542	.412
(N) It is important for me to own the right things	.536	.153
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	4.99 (41.57%)	
(M) I view buying things as a competitive act	.297	.784
(M) I take pleasure from owning more than others. . .	.130	.715
(N) People recognize that I buy only the best	.435	.713
(M) I compare my possessions with others like me . . .	.328	.624
(M) I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.461	.529
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		1.77 (14.75%)

Note. The two articulated factors retain a statistically significant correlation, $r = .530$, $p < .01$ (2-tailed). Nature dimension items marked with an (N), Manner dimension items marked with an (M).

Table 29

Study 2 EFA Pattern Matrix Loadings for All 19 Retained Social Materialism Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
(M) I view buying things as a competitive act	.755	.067	.040
(M) I take pleasure from owning more than others	.729	.078	.036
(U) People will like me more if I own the right things	.682	.193	.114
(U) Buy things to show that I am better . . .	.597	.120	.023
(N) People recognize that I buy only the best	.545	.250	.050
(U) Buy things which cause others to think well of me	.378	.213	.224
(M) I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.286	.282	.245
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	7.23 (38.06%)		
(M) I try to keep my life simple . . .	.131	.881	.016
(M) I usually buy only the things I need	.175	.822	.018
(N) Important to buy new and different things . . .	.080	.615	.070
(M) I always consider the practical usefulness of a product	.122	.550	.034
(N) I like a lot of luxury in my life	.153	.532	.057
(N) Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	.325	.520	.013
(N) It is important for me to own the right things	.281	.474	.081
(U) Things I own say much about how well I am doing . . .	.194	.470	.012
(U) Important for me to own things that impress people	.267	.426	.201
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		2.26 (11.92%)	

Note. Nature dimension items marked with an (N), Manner dimension items marked with an (M), Symbolic Use dimension items marked with a (U). Table continues on next page.

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Table 29 Continued

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
(U) Can't wait for other people to see me with it . . .	.054	.022	.893
(U) I look forward to how people will react . . .	.060	.013	.844
(M) I compare my possessions with others like me . . .	.349	.038	.491
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)			1.33 (7.00%)

Table 30

Study 2 EFA Structure Matrix Loadings for All 19 Social Materialism Items

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
(M) I view buying things as a competitive act	.775	.359	.425
(M) I take pleasure from owning more than others	.711	.194	.305
(U) People will like me more if I own the right things	.668	.102	.374
(U) Buy things to show that I am better . . .	.661	.469	.416
(N) People recognize that I buy only the best	.652	.348	.363
(U) Buy things which cause others to think well of me	.566	.439	.493
(M) I feel pressure to keep up with others . . .	.509	.482	.495
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)	7.23 (38.06%)		
(M) I try to keep my life simple . . .	.183	.827	.265
(M) I usually buy only the things I need	.134	.765	.254
(N) Important to buy new and different things . . .	.339	.671	.350
(M) I always consider the practical usefulness of a product	.522	.644	.376
(N) I like a lot of luxury in my life	.494	.609	.405
(N) Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter . . .	.522	.603	.499
(N) It is important for me to own the right things	.320	.565	.226
(U) Things I own say much about how well I am doing . . .	.372	.545	.291
(U) Important for me to own things that impress people	.096	.519	.190
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)		2.26 (11.92%)	

Note. Nature dimension items marked with an (N), Manner dimension items marked with an (M), Symbolic Use dimension items marked with a (U). Table continues on next page.

Table 30 Continued

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
(U) Can't wait for other people to see me with it . . .	.376	.308	.858
(U) I look forward to how people will react . . .	.350	.296	.810
(M) I compare my possessions with others like me . . .	.604	.358	.677
Eigenvalue (variance accounted for)			1.33 (7.00%)

Table 31

Factor Correlation Matrix for Factors Extracted from EFA for all 19 Retained Items

Factor	1	2	3
1	—	.554**	.571**
2		—	.440**
3			—

Note. *p* < .01 (2-tailed).

Table 32

Fit Indices and Model Comparisons of the 19-item Social Materialism Scale

Model	χ^2	*df*	χ^2_{diff}	*df* $_{diff}$	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Three-factor model[a]	810.46*	149			0.15	0.70	0.10
Two-factor model[b]	837.63*	151	27.17	2	0.15	0.69	0.10
One-factor model[c]	850.10*	152	39.64	3	0.15	0.69	0.10

Note. RMSEA= root mean square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root mean squared residual.
* $p < .01$
[a] Three first-order factor model: Nature, Manner, Use
[b] Consumption Style, Use
[c] Social Materialism

Table 33

Fit Indices and Model Comparisons of the 11-item Social Materialism Scale

Model	χ^2	*df*	χ^2_{diff}	*df* $_{diff}$	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Three-factor model[a]	88.06*	41			0.07	0.95	0.05
Two-factor model[b]	115.50*	43	27.44	2	0.09	0.93	0.05
One-factor model[c]	116.50*	44	28.44	3	0.09	0.93	0.05

Note. RMSEA= root mean square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root mean squared residual.
* $p < .01$
[a] Nature, Manner, Use
[b] Consumption Style, Use
[c] Social Materialism

Table 34

CFA Factor Loadings (λ) for the 11-item, Two-factor Social Materialism Model

	Consumption Style	Use
I like a lot of luxury in my life	0.67 (0.09)	
Important to buy new and different things	0.87 (0.09)	
Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter	1.00	
It is important for me to own the right things	0.96 (0.09)	
I take pleasure from owning more than others	0.90 (0.10)	
I feel pressure to keep up with others	0.93 (0.10)	
I compare my possessions with others like me	0.88 (0.09)	
Things I own say much about how well I am doing		0.72 (0.08)
Important for me to own things that impress people		1.00
I look forward to how people will react		0.75 (0.10)
Buy things which cause others to think well of me		0.83 (0. 08)

Table 35

CFA Factor Loadings (λ) for the 11-item, One-factor Social Materialism Model

	Social Materialism
I like a lot of luxury in my life	0.67 (0.09)
Important to buy new and different things	0.87 (0.09)
Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter	0.99 (0.10)
It is important for me to own the right things	0.96 (0.09)
I take pleasure from owning more than others	0.91 (0.10)
I feel pressure to keep up with others	0.93 (0.09)
I compare my possessions with others like me	0.88 (0.09)
Things I own say much about how well I am doing	0.72 (0.08)
Important for me to own things that impress people	1.00
I look forward to how people will react	0.76 (0.10)
Buy things which cause others to think well of me	0.83 (0. 08)

Table 36

Zero-Order Correlation Matrix for Dimensions from Final 11 Social Materialism Items

Factor	Nature	Manner	Use	Social Materialism
Nature	—	.596**	.652**	.871**
Manner		—	.693**	.856**
Use			—	.895**
Social Materialism				—

Note. *p* < .01 (2-tailed).

Table 37

Study 2 Correlation Matrix for Construct Validation Measures

Measure	1	2	3	4
1. Social Materialism Index	—	.163**	-.046	.037
2. TV Hours		—	.102	-.018
3. Life Satisfaction			—	-.214**
4. Distinctness/Belonging				—
5. Money Beliefs				
6. Authoritarianism				
7. Need for Cognition				

Note.*p < .05. **p<.01 (2-tailed). Table continues on next page.

Table 37 Continued

Measure	5	6	7
1. Social Materialism Index	.405**	.114	-.161**
2. TV Hours	.195**	.139	-.128*
3. Life Satisfaction	.310**	.003	-.215**
4. Distinctness/Belonging	-.716**	.114	-.099
5. Money Beliefs	—	.349**	-.157*
6. Authoritarianism		—	-.238**
7. Need for Cognition			—

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

Materialism is a phenomenon paramount to political economic and critical

theories and is even considered by some to be at the foundation of the state's

legitimacy (i.e., Kassiola, 1990). In spite of such contentions, much of the body of

research on materialism remains critical rather than empirical in nature. The study of

the impact of advertising and media messages is imperative for those social scientists

concerned with media effects in the commercially-owned media environment. The

current work has analyzed conceptualizations and operationalizations of materialism

in the literature in order to arrive at a new empirical definition of materialism through

the systematic process of concept explication (Chaffee, 1991).

The major focus of this work has been the explication of a new term, social

materialism, and its operationalization as a latent social-pyshcological construct. It

has been argued that this new construct of social materialism, defined as the belief that

possessions of a certain nature acquired in a certain manner are means to desired end-

states of existence, is necessary due to the fact that the conceptualization of

materialism as a value in extant literature is faulty. It was suggested that materialism

might be best conceptualized as a means to desired end-states of existence. As such,

the definition proposed here focuses exclusively on the symbolic, communicative

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functions that material goods fulfill, serving as a means for individuals to arrive at desired end-states.

Theoretically, it has been argued that social materialism consists of two primary dimensions, *Symbolic Use* and *Consumption Style*. In the *Symbolic Use* dimension of social materialism, material objects are used to categorize various aspects of an individual's own identity and the identities of others. The *Consumption Style* of social materialism is a set of types of acquisition and uses of material goods further divided into products of a certain *Nature* consumed in a certain *Manner*. That is, material objects used to fulfill social functions are of a particular nature, having specific qualities that are attractive to the social materialist. The manner in which these material objects are acquired is an extremely other-oriented way of consuming.

The empirical study presented here tested this operationalization, with the results showing that the original model did not work as theorized. More specifically, the *Nature* and *Manner* measurement items did not combine to form the dimension of *Consumption Style*. However, the alternative model that surfaced is not far from the original theoretical conceptualization. In the final measurement model, still a multidimensional conceptualization, social materialism is a higher-order latent construct that consists of the three underlying latent constructs of *Nature, Manner,* and *Symbolic Use*.

In order to arrive at the final measurement model, two separate studies were conducted. A number of different Likert-type measurement items were tested, with

items added and discarded along the way based on their psychometric measurement properties. Preliminary analyses from Study 1 and Study 2 showed that the measurement properties of each of the individual social materialism items were satisfactory. However, when the items from Study 1 were examined as a group using the technique of Exploratory Factor Analysis, the factor structure from the theoretical model did not emerge as hypothesized. The factor analyses from Study 1 showed that the items in the *Nature* dimension performed well, but the *Manner* and *Symbolic Use* items did not, with the items from these factors emerging as two factors each rather than one as hypothesized.

The preliminary EFA results pointed to a need for refinement in the measurement items in the *Manner* and *Symbolic Use* dimensions. Just as called-for by the systematic process of concept explication, the measures were refined, with new items added to the scale in order to determine whether the hypothesized theoretical factor structure was evident in a second round of data collection. In Study 2, several additional EFAs were conducted to explore the structure of the hypothesized factors. As in Study 1, the *Manner* items and *Symbolic Use* items grouped into two factors, providing reason to believe that discarding more of the items might improve the factor structure of the social materialism scale as a whole.

Once the items that had performed poorly in Study 2 were discarded, several confirmatory measurement models were tested. The original theoretical model that had been comprised of observable variables making up three lower-order latent

constructs, and two higher-order latent constructs was disconfirmed with the CFAs,
just as it had been with the Study 1 EFAs. As such, more items that had performed
poorly in the CFAs were discarded. This left a total of 11 items (four *Nature* items,
three *Manner* items, and three *Symbolic Use* items). Two 11-item, alternative models
were tested: a two-factor model (*Consumption style* and *Symbolic Use*) and a one-
factor model (social materialism). Fit indices showed that the alternative theoretical
models were poorer fits than the three-factor model (*Nature*, *Manner*, and *Use*).

In sum, the final measurement model consisted of 11 items: three lower-order
latent constructs and one second-order factor of social materialism. The final model
thus confirmed the idea from the concept explication theorizing portion of the current
work, that *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Symbolic Use* are three distinct underlying latent
constructs that together form a higher-order latent construct of social materialism. All
of the final 11 measurement items had strong loadings on their respective factors and
the final 11 items together had a reliability of $\alpha = .874$, indicating that the final
measurement model performed well.

The hypotheses offered in the current work sought foremost to determine the
extent to which television use might be correlated with a comprehensive measure of
materialism. The results showed that the relationship between television use and
social materialism was genre-specific, with half the genres of programming examined
retaining significant correlations with social materialism (drama, reality-based
programs, talk shows, soap operas, and news magazine shows). Correlations between

hours of television viewed with the four social materialism indices were all positive and significant. The results showed that it is exposure to television, and not attention, which is empirically related to social materialism. This is an interesting finding, as it seems to point to the idea that with simply exposure to television, and not attention, respondents also hold social materialist attitudes.

The results of the tests of construct validity for social materialism showed that the validity of the operationalization is questionable. In spite of this, as this was the first study on the new construct of social materialism, the validity was in many ways satisfactory. The operationalization of social materialism was able to properly predict associations with exposure to five specific genres of television programming and hours of television viewed. The significant correlations with two measures conceptually similar to social materialism, the Richins and Dawson (1992) materialism measure and preoccupation with money, demonstrated evidence of the construct's convergent validity. When considered alongside the variables of right-wing authoritarianism and need for cognition, the discriminant validity of the construct was also nearly adequate. What must be kept in mind is that the 11-item social materialism scale, understatedly, quite nascent, should be adjusted in terms of the individual measurement items and dimensionality before construct validity is further assessed.

Retrospectively, it is easy to see that the current study would have greatly benefited from a much larger initial item pool. The social materialism scale presented

here contains items that were constructed so that each item in the initial item pool represented a *unique* theoretical construct. The number of items that were available to draw from in the scale refinement portion of the factor analyses was small, and as a result, when the items that had performed poorly were discarded, only a limited number of items remained. As in the general process of scale development, it was possible to start with one of the proposed theoretical facets of social materialism and create *multiple* measures intended to measure that construct. This was not done, and as such, is a weakness in the design of the study. However, the advantage of the three-factor structure that was confirmed in the CFA portion of the analysis is that future research can now utilize the three-factor structure as a starting point from which to add to the scale by creating new items that are reflective of the theoretical dimensions of *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Symbolic Use*.

The scale at 11 items is incomplete, and the addition of more items in the future would likely improve not just the psychometric properties of the scale, but also the strength of association between social materialism and other variables such as media use. An additional weakness of the final 11 items is that a number of them are reverse-worded, contributing to the desirability of adding more items to the scale.

Though the operationalization of social materialism needs more work before it can be considered a solid measure, there are several strengths to the new conceptualization of social materialism. A major goal of the current study was to take social class out of the social materialism scale by assuring to the greatest extent

possible that the scale did not measure lower-order needs. As Gabriel and Lang (1995) point out, it is remarkable that in a time in which studies of poverty and deprivation abound, "so many commentaries on consumption simply chose to turn a blind eye on the hardships experienced by a increasing numbers and consumers, both in developed countries and the Third World" (p. 80). The Richins and Dawson (1992) scale has five items that make up a dimension of how possessions are related to happiness—items such as 'I have all the things I really need to enjoy life' and 'I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things.' The social materialism scale offered here is alternatively concerned with what role material goods play in individuals' lives once their lower-order needs are already met—indeed, that is partially why the conceptualization offered here is one of *social* materialism and not just "materialism" in the sense of the denotative definition of the word.

An additional strength of the conceptualization of social materialism presented here is that it was conceived and the scale items were selected with the guiding principle in mind that many individual-level beliefs that are thought of as essential elements of materialism are actually *outcomes* of materialism. To continue with the example of the concept of happiness, scale items that conveyed the idea that in purchase there is happiness were left out of the item pool. For example, the MVS scale contains the item 'Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure.' The idea here is quite dissimilar—I contend that the fact that individuals experience pleasure in

acquisition is not materialism; rather, it is an outcome of materialism. Other outcomes of social materialism are an additional area for future research to investigate.

The social materialism construct and the two studies presented here upon which it is predicated rely on a couple of different assumptions. One assumption built into the design of the study is not that individuals think to themselves when they make a purchase, "I take pleasure from owning more objects than others like me," rather, the assumption is that when prompted to reflect on such a statement on a questionnaire, individuals can self-report whether they hold such attitudes or engage in such behaviors. Accordingly, in response to the ontological question of the extent to which human beings make real choices, I hold that people have free will and make choices, and that they plan their purchase behavior to meet future goals.

There is an even larger assumption that this study makes. I should be clear in stating that the current study does *not* assume a passive audience, and it does not make this assumption in two ways: the advertising industry and corporations do not completely control our lives, and the media industry does not exert direct influence on our lives. With respect to the latter, stated in terms of the discipline of mass communication, the current study does not endorse the "sociologically naïve" (Morley, 1995, p. 298) hypodermic model of media influence. What is argued here is largely consistent with a theory known as media system dependency theory, which "does not share the mass society view that the media are powerful because individuals are isolated, without group bonds" (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p. 308), but, at the

same time, holds that individuals are not entirely free to construct their own media systems because there are *constraints* on the message content choices they can make. In the words of Morley (1995), "the power of viewers to reinterpret meanings is hardly equivalent to the discursive power of centralised media institutions to construct the texts which the viewer then interprets" (p. 213). This viewpoint allows the powerful audience of the uses and gratifications approach to media studies to coexist with the powerful media view that political economy and critical theories assert.

The convenience sample used in the current study and the general lack of diversity in the sample not only limits the generalizability of the findings, it also serves as an explanation for what the study results were and possibly what the study failed to show. No significant correlation between gender and social materialism emerged, however, the sample was heavily female (68%). More important to interpretation of the results was the fact that self-reports indicated that only 13 individuals in the sample ($N = 265$) considered themselves members of the working or lower class, 62 individuals were members of the middle class, and a full 72% of the sample reported themselves as upper or upper-middle class. A phenomenon such as social materialism that is so closely tied to income must be studied in a diverse sample. As an illustration of this point, there was a significant positive correlation of $r = .178$ ($p < .01$) between class and the index for the 11-item social materialism measure, with members of the higher social classes exhibiting higher levels of social materialism.

The lack of a strong correlation between television use and social materialism can perhaps be explained by what was *not* measured in the current study. As the aim here was to conduct preliminary analyses for scale development, focus was on scale development and not on the testing of a model of hypothesized relationships between television use and social materialism. That is to say, no "conditional" variables were taken into account here; mediation and moderation were not tested for. As McLeod and Reeves (1980) explain, it is necessary to look at both mediation and moderation for a complete perspective on any phenomenon, an idea at the heart of the O-S-O-R model of media effects. Although media effects are certainly conditional on a host of variables, the current study did not set out to measure such variables. Such is an undertaking for future research.

An additional consideration in the interpretation of the results reported here is the issue of socially desirable responding. Materialism is considered by some to be representative of the "dark side" of human behavior, making the data subject to response bias (Mick, 1996). Although Richins and Dawson (1992) did not find social desirability bias a problem in the data collected in their scale development and validation study, Mick (1996) has reported that respondents tend to underreport materialism-related attitudes and behaviors. Social desirability is especially relevant to social materialism because the social materialist is one who is quite concerned with the impressions others have of him or her.

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As the political economy and critical theories assert, commercially-owned media convey an innumerable amount of commercial messages. Precisely how many and what forms do these messages take? Clearly there is a need for content analyses in this area. Before positing that media messages are related to social materialism, there is a need for empirical analysis to examine the number and types of messages and appeals related to materialism. It is astonishing that this has yet not been done, perhaps because commercialism is so ubiquitous that is thought to be unnecessary. But content analysis is necessary before the hypothesis that media influences social materialist attitudes and behaviors can be proven. There has been an extremely small number of content analysis of materialistic appeals in print ads, (i.e., Belk & Polly, 1985) but these studies are outdated and need to be conducted anew in an age where advertising has become part of the fabric of media messages beyond commercials per se.

What are the desired end-states a social materialist uses material object to attain? Happiness? Social recognition? This is an area for future research to explore. Because the data collected was cross-sectional and not experimental, this has left the ever-elusive question of causality unanswered. Although the social materialism operationalization was able to predict certain types of television use, the question of causal ordering remains unanswered. Does social materialism influence television use patterns or does the use of various media effect changes in social materialist attitudes

and behaviors? Subsequent research might examine a reciprocal causation model of television viewing and materialism.

There are several theories of communication which might be able to benefit from a properly explicated social materialism scale. For example, as argued by Richins (1995), social comparison theory is especially relevant to the study of materialistic attitudes and behaviors, as individuals often use idealized media images as a source of comparison. One possible avenue of future study might be whether social comparison with not just media images but also reference group members affects social materialist attitudes and behaviors. An additional area where social materialism has theoretical relevance is that of diffusion of innovations theory, where the spread of ideas, technical information, and behaviors within a social system occurs when people adopt ideas through communication and influence (Rogers, 1995). The probability of an individual adopting a particular innovation, be it in fashion or in any other realm of material goods, is certainly relevant to the study social materialism. Other theories can benefit from a social materialism scale, as alluded to above, another example is cultivation theory, an area of research quite relevant to the adoption of dominant cultural values. Even the uses and gratifications paradigm of research is applicable to social materialism, as it might be interesting to examine whether social materialists expose themselves to certain types of media messages with particular motivations, perhaps different than those who expose themselves to media messages for different reasons.

This study represents a small but noteworthy step forward in an area of research that crosses disciplinary boundaries and creates an advancement in the mass communication literature on the importance of the process of explication. According to Chaffee (1991), concept explication is a systematic way of improving conceptualization through research. If it is indeed true that "making a concept explicit is . . . a purpose of all discourses on communication concepts" (Chaffee, 1991, p. vii), then the time is ripe for mass communication scholars to devote more research to developing measures that follow this process. As Rubin and Perse (1994) explain, there are a number of inconsistencies and difficulties encountered when developing and employing measures in mass communication. Examples include such variables as "source credibility" and "perceived realism" of media messages, both examples of "the lack of consistent scale development and application in mass communication" (Rubin & Perse, 1994, p. 50). This is not to say that some measures in extant social scientific research have not been sufficiently developed and refined, as there are numerous solid conceptualizations and operationalizations of latent social-psychological constructs across all academic disciplines. But the need to review and reassess the state of measurement that extends to all of the social sciences is especially relevant to mass communication, where many measures are developed and used with less attention paid to the basics fundamental to scientific knowledge (i.e., concept explication). The issue is not just one of measurement, rather, science must begin with conceptual definition or "the words we use to describe and discuss

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communication are mere words—no improvement over mere numbers" (Chaffee, 1991, p. 1).

The concept of social materialism was born in the meaning analysis portion of the explication presented above and by no means should end with the work presented here, as explication is an ongoing process that rarely ends with completion of a single study (Chaffee, 1991). Much more research is required before the social materialism measurement scale can be considered complete, and even then, the operationalization must be reevaluated relative to its intended theoretical meaning. What is important to note is that the process of concept explication involves a constant interplay between theoretical and empirical analysis. This study has made progress in twice moving from a meaning analysis to empirical analysis—first in for Study 1, then again in Study 2. Though a slow process, progress has been made in conceptualizing and operationalizing social materialism. Several more times must meaning analysis and empirical analysis occur. Only then can the relationship between social materialism and other concepts such as television use be properly investigated.

Beyond the significance of conceptualization and measurement to the discipline of mass communication, this study raises an additional issue central to media-studies but largely left empirically unexplored, that of the inherently multi-level nature of the discipline. In communication as in other disciplines, studies relevant at individual, societal, and cultural levels remain largely focused on micro-individual processes (McLeod & Blumler, 1987). The rationale for the current study relies on

the claims of critical-cultural theorists, some of which are empirically backed, but, as McLeod and Blumler (1987) note, macro-level inquiry relevant to larger social systems and institutions such as the media system are often neglected in empirical research.

The idea of macro-level inquiry raises yet another issue of utmost importance, that of interdisciplinary exchange. From the contention that "communication science without a macro component would be impoverished and seriously incomplete" (McLeod & Blumler, 1987, p. 277), follows the necessity of a type of thinking and research so global that it would require the expertise of scholars from several disciplines. As demonstrated in the literature reviewed above, the issue of materialism can be found in discourse emanating from such diverse fields as economics, marketing, philosophy, psychology, and sociology, some of which are clearly relevant to the study of mass communication phenomena in social system terms. The lack of cohesion in the use of the term "materialism" in theory and research in these disciplines, is striking, and as such, the concept of social materialism has been introduced in an attempt to improve the variance in the usage of the word.

Concept explication is thus of insurmountable value, in a time where academic inquiry explores countless phenomena in great depth, yet the progress of scientific knowledge is impeded by a lack of exchange between disciplines and inconsistency in the meaning of the terms that make up the vocabularies of scientists. And just as Kuhn (1970) noted, when the parties in a debate employ the same terms but to them

attach different meanings, the much-undesired end result can only be that "communication is inevitably partial" (p. 198). For empirically-based communication research to thoroughly explore media-relevant phenomena, it must begin first with thorough explication of its concepts, in a way that systematically relates theory that crosses disciplinary boundaries with research.

Appendix A

INITIAL 21 SCALE ITEMS FOR SOCIAL MATERIALISM SCALE

Nature Subdimension

I like a lot of luxury in my life.*

It is not important to me to buy new and different things. (R)**

A nationally advertised brand is usually better than a generic brand.**

It is not important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter based on the products I

buy. (R)

I find that when I buy something nice I often purchase other things that go

along with it.

It is not important for me to own the right things. (R)

People recognize that I buy only the best.

Manner Subdimension

I usually buy only the things I need. (R)*

I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned. (R)*

Note. Judgments were made on 7-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Appendix continues on next page.
(R) Reverse coded
* Items from Richins and Dawson (1992)
** Items from the 1999 DDB Needham Life Style Study

I view buying things as a competitive act.

I take pleasure from owning more objects than others like me.

When it comes to owning things, I do not feel pressure to keep up with others

like me. (R)

I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them. **

Symbolic Use Subdimension

The things I own do not say much about how well I am doing in life. (R)*

It is not important for me to own things that impress people. (R)*

I enjoy it when I get positive reactions to the things I own.

I do not buy things to show people that I am better than someone else. (R)

People will like me more if I own the right things.***

The types of things I purchase connect me to a group.

It is not important for me to have things which are different from what

everybody else has. (R)

There are certain people I would like to trade places with because of what they

own.

Note. (R) Reverse coded
* Items from Richins and Dawson (1992)
** Items from the 1999 DDB Needham Life Style Study
*** Item from Schaefer, Hermans, and Parker (2004)

Appendix B

ABBREVIATED ITEMS FROM DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS TABLES AND CORRELATION MATRICIES WITH CORRESPONDING MEASUREMENT ITEMS

STUDY 1

1. Luxury: I like a lot of luxury in my life.

2. New and different: It is not important to me to buy new and different things.

3. Advertised brand: A nationally advertised brand is usually better than a generic

   brand.

4. Trendsetter: It is not important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter based on the

   products I buy.

5. Go along with it: I find that when I buy something nice I often purchase other

   things that go along with it.

6. Right things: It is not important for me to own the right things.

7. Only the best: People recognize that I buy only the best.

8. Only things need: I usually buy only the things I need.

9. Keep life simple: I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned.

10. Competitive act: I view buying things as a competitive act.

Note. Appendix continues on next two pages.

11. Pleasure own more: I take pleasure from owning more objects than others like me.

12. Pressure keep up: When it comes to owning things, I do not feel pressure to keep up with others like me.

13. Cannot afford them: I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them.

14. How well I'm doing: The things I own do not say much about how well I am doing in life.

15. Impress people: It is not important for me to own things that impress people.

16. Positive reactions: I enjoy it when I get positive reactions to the things I own.

17. Better than someone: I do not buy things to show people that I am better than someone else.

18. Like me more: People will like me more if I own the right things.

19. Connect me to group: The types of things I purchase connect me to a group.

20. Have different things: It is not important for me to have things which are different from what everybody else has.

21. Trade places: There are certain people I would like to trade places with because of what they own.

ITEMS ADDED FOR STUDY 2

22. Look to reaction: When I buy something new, I look forward to how people will react when they see me with it.

23. Think well of me: I am not too concerned with buying things which I think will cause others to think well of me.

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24. Can't wait to be seen: When I buy something new, I often can't wait for my

     friends and other people to see me with it.

25. Compare: I often compare my possessions with those of other people like me.

26. Jealous: I never feel jealous when one of my friends gets something which is new

     or ahead of the latest trends.

27. Bothered buy anything: I am bothered when I see people buy anything they want.

28. Make it myself: When I have the opportunity to make something myself, I would

     rather make it than buy it.

29. Practicality: I always consider the practical usefulness of a product before I buy it.

30. New impress people: I am not too concerned with owning things that impress

     other people.

Appendix C

**ABBREVIATED ITEM CONTENT FROM FACTOR ANALYSES TABLES
WITH CORRESPONDING MEASUREMENT ITEMS**

Nature

It is important for me to own the right things: It is not important for me to own the

right things.

Important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter: It is not important for me to be viewed

as a trendsetter based on the products I buy.

People recognize that I buy only the best: People recognize that I buy only the best.

Important to buy new and different things: It is not important to me to buy new and

different things.

I like a lot of luxury in my life: I like a lot of luxury in my life.

Purchase things that go along with it: I find that when I buy something nice I often

purchase other things that go along with it.

A nationally advertised brand is usually better: A nationally advertised brand is

usually better than a generic brand.

Manner

I view buying things as a competitive act: I view buying things as a competitive act.

Note. Appendix continues on next three pages.

I take pleasure from owning more than others: I take pleasure from owning more

  objects than others like me.

I frequently buy things when I cannot afford them: I frequently buy things when I

  cannot afford them.

I usually buy only the things I need: I usually buy only the things I need.

I try to keep my life simple: I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are

  concerned.

I feel pressure to keep up with others: When it comes to owning things, I do not feel

  pressure to keep up with others like me.

Symbolic Use

Important for me to own things that impress people: It is not important for me to own

  things that impress people.

Things I own say much about how well I am doing: The things I own do not say

  much about how well I am doing in life.

Important to have things which are different: It is not important for me to have things

  which are different from what everybody else has.

The things I purchase connect me to a group: The types of things I purchase connect

  me to a group.

I enjoy it when I get positive reactions: I enjoy it when I get positive reactions to the

  things I own.

There are people I would like to trade places with: There are certain people I would like to trade places with because of what they own.

Buy things to show that I am better: I do not buy things to show people that I am better than someone else.

People will like me more if I own the right things: People will like me more if I own the right things.

Manner items added for Study 2:

I compare my possessions with others like me: I often compare my possessions with those of other people like me.

I always consider the practical usefulness of a product: I always consider the practical usefulness of a product before I buy it.

I feel jealous when friend gets something new: I never feel jealous when one of my friends gets something which is new or ahead of the latest trends.

I would rather make it than buy it: When I have the opportunity to make something myself, I would rather make it than buy it.

Bothered when people buy anything they want: I am bothered when I see people buy anything they want.

Symbolic Use items added for Study 2:

Buy things which cause others to think well of me: I am not too concerned with buying things which I think will cause others to think well of me.

Concerned with owning things that impress: I am not too concerned with owning

    things that impress other people.

I look forward to how people will react: When I buy something new, I look forward

    to how people will react when they see me with it.

Can't wait for other people to see me with it: When I buy something new, I often

    can't wait for my friends and other people to see me with it.

Appendix D

19 SOCIAL MATERIALISM SCALE ITEMS REMAINING AFTER FIRST ROUND OF ELIMINATING ITEMS

Nature Subdimension

I like a lot of luxury in my life.

It is not important to me to buy new and different things.

It is not important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter based on the products. I

buy.

It is not important for me to own the right things.

People recognize that I buy only the best.

Manner Subdimension

I usually buy only the things I need.

I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned.

I view buying things as a competitive act.

I take pleasure from owning more objects than others like me.

When it comes to owning things, I do not feel pressure to keep up with others

like me.

I often compare my possessions with those of other people like me.

Note. Appendix continues on next page.

I always consider the practical usefulness of a product before I buy it.

Use Subdimension

The things I own do not say much about how well I am doing in life.

It is not important for me to own things that impress people.

I do not buy things to show people that I am better than someone else.

People will like me more if I own the right things.

When I buy something new, I look forward to how people will react when they

see me with it.

I am not too concerned with buying things which I think will cause others to

think well of me.

When I buy something new, I often can't wait for my friends and other people

to see me with it.

Appendix E

FINAL 11-ITEM SOCIAL MATERIALSIM SCLAE

Nature Subdimension

I like a lot of luxury in my life.*

It is not important to me to buy new and different things. (R)**

It is not important for me to be viewed as a trendsetter based on the products I

buy. (R)

It is not important for me to own the right things. (R)

Manner Subdimension

I take pleasure from owning more objects than others like me.

When it comes to owning things, I do not feel pressure to keep up with others

like me. (R)

I often compare my possessions with those of other people like me.

Use Subdimension

The things I own do not say much about how well I am doing in life. (R)*

It is not important for me to own things that impress people. (R)*

Note. Appendix continues on next page.
 (R) Reverse coded.
* Items from Richins and Dawson (1992)
** Item from the 1999 DDB Needham Life Style Study

When I buy something new, I look forward to how people will react when they

see me with it.

I am not too concerned with buying things which I think will cause others to

think well of me. (R)

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