



## Materialism and brand engagement as shopping motivations

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of these two studies was to test hypothesized motivations thought to influence shopping activity. Surveys of U.S. student consumers ( $n$ 's=258 and 256) provided the data. The findings show that liking to shop is positively related to brand engagement in self-concept and to material values. Different dimensions of materialism appear to motivate shopping to different degrees and apparently account for the positive relationship between brand engagement and shopping. Separate analyses for men and women suggest that the genders are differently motivated to shop.

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### 1. Introduction

As long as there have been markets, people have shopped. Shopping is necessary for most consumers, but also serves as a major recreational activity for many (Danzinger, 2006; Eisenberg, 2009; Hine, 2002). Although the American Marketing Association website does not define shopping, the online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, a good surrogate for the general consensus, explains that "Shopping is the examining of goods or services from retailers with the intent to purchase at that time. Shopping is an activity of selection and/or purchase. In some contexts it is considered a leisure activity as well as an economic one." This definition is highly consistent with that in other dictionaries and is probably close to the meaning assigned to it by most consumers, who are also "shoppers." Shopping goods are defined by Kotler and Keller (2009, p. 320) as "goods that the consumer characteristically compares on such bases as suitability, quality, price, and style". Moreover, shopping is not restricted to visiting physical stores, but also includes non-store activities such as browsing through catalogs, on-line buying, and even m-commerce (Goldsmith and Flynn, 2005). We would propose that shopping is the intentional self-exposure of a consumer to products available for purchase.

Because the activity of shopping is so important to marketers and retailers of every stripe, shopping plays an important role in many theories of consumer behavior. Consequently, researchers have studied shopping behavior from a variety of perspectives, so there is a large body of scholarly literature on the topic. Much of this research is devoted to shopping from the perspectives of

information acquisition, decision making, and the influence of marketer controlled elements on the outcome. New research even examines the neurophysiology of shopping (Tan, 2008). Another topic in this field is the examination of individual differences in needs, wants, and motives for shopping. For example, Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) describe differences in specific *shopping styles* that influence shopping behavior, and Arnold and Reynolds (2003) describe different hedonic shopping motivations. Shopping enjoyment has received a good deal of attention in the literature. Recent work in that vein demonstrates that "bargain hunters" and "browsers" both may enjoy shopping but the browsers receive more hedonic rewards for their actions (Kim and Kim, 2008). Motivations for shopping can even be studied at the level of a type of product, medium, or segment (e.g., Cowart and Goldsmith, 2007). Studies of this sort show that shopping motives can be generally categorized as utilitarian, social, hedonic, experiential, and cognitive (Babin et al., 1994). The cognitive and emotional aspects of shopping have been combined into a theory of shopping stated as  $P=(N+F+A) \times E^2$ , where "P" is propensity to buy, "N" is need, "F" is features, "A" is affordability and "E" is emotions (Danzinger, 2006). While economic necessity forces nearly everyone to shop, for different consumers shopping portends anything from dreadful boredom to gleeful anticipation. It is thus advantageous for retailers in particular to gain insight into what drives the variation in attitudes toward shopping.

Explanations of shopping like the above describe largely conscious motivations. Most of these approaches assume that consumers are aware of and can describe why they shop. However, consumers shop for reasons of which they are probably not aware (Dichter, 1964; Miller, 1998; Tan, 2008). Some of these motivating factors are individual difference variables that can be described as personality trait-like concepts. In particular, two of these variables, brand engagement and materialism, which

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influence a variety of consumer behaviors, can be proposed to motivate consumers to shop.

Consumers sometimes incorporate brand images into their own self-concepts (Schembri et al., 2010; Walker, 2008), so that the brand unconsciously helps them become and express who they are and who they show to the world (Sprott et al., 2009). This concept of *Brand Engagement in Self-Concept* can be operationalized so that its role in influencing consumer behavior can be made explicit. *Materialism* is defined as a general focus on attaining material possessions and social renown, reflecting Kasser's (2002, p. 1) description. Wanting material goods is an obvious motivation for shopping, as this activity is inherent in acquiring such goods.

Although higher materialism is associated with spending and buying, how and whether it motivates shopping has not been ascertained, and neither has the association between brand engagement in self-concept and shopping been assessed. Thus, the purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between materialism and brand engagement in self-concept and overall consumer attitudes toward shopping. The two studies reported here are predicated on the hypotheses that positive attitudes toward shopping are related to increased levels of materialism and brand engagement in self-concept. The remainder of this paper presents a review of the relevant literature, hypotheses, the methods employed, and a discussion of the findings.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Shopping

The activity of shopping has many dimensions. Shopping varies in terms of who does the shopping, what people shop for, when they shop, where they shop, how they shop, and why they shop. Many studies offer answers to these questions. Our study concerns the last question. Because shopping as an activity has so many dimensions, a researcher must specify how it is being considered in order to limit the focus of any study. The current study focused on the relationships of unconscious motivations with shopping considered in the most general way, overall attitude toward shopping. There are several reasons for this choice. First, shoppers' choices of specific shopping venues or modes are influenced by different motives (such as involvement with a product category) that are limited to those venues or modes. Second, situational influences (e.g., shopping for self versus gift) affect specific shopping behaviors. Third, we focused on attitudes toward shopping instead of shopping behavior or frequency both because these would be difficult to measure reliably and validly and because many other variables influence actual shopping behavior (time, money, access, etc.) Finally, attitudes are good (but not perfect) predictors of behavior, but where behavior is molar, repeated, and aggregated, as it is with shopping, this relationship is stronger than if the behavior is a single instance (Epstein, 1979).

### 2.2. Brand engagement

Consumers can become engaged, that is, form emotional attachments to brands that they make part of their lives, with specific brands (Keller, 2001). Thus, brand engagement of this sort is highly desired by marketers as it leads to frequent consumption, loyalty, positive word-of-mouth. However, there is another sense in which we can talk about brand engagement. Brand engagement in self-concept (BESC) describes the general tendency of consumers to use brands to shape their identities and to express them to others. This global disposition or trait is an

important individual difference variable characterizing consumers. This form of brand engagement is important because it allows researchers to study this phenomenon in a general sense that is not limited to engagement with a specific brand.

Sprott et al. (2009, p. 9) define BESC as consumer "tendencies to include important brands as part of their self-concept." BESC portrays consumers along a continuum ranging from the low end, where consumers do not see brands as important elements of self-concept, to the high end where they identify with brands and have special bonds with them. Brand Engagement in Self-concept is a new and different way to think about consumers' relationships with brands. It does not describe brand personalities or an attitude toward brands so much as an individual difference variable on par with other personality-like concepts that are often used to explicate consumer behavior. BESC exists conceptually below the Big Five personality traits, which exist at the highest level of generality, and above more domain-specific traits such as opinion leadership for a product category (see Mowen and Voss, 2008).

Although no previous study has investigated the relationship between BESC and shopping, the description of BESC strongly suggests that consumers highly motivated to use brands to express their self-concepts should spend time and energy learning about brands and what they mean. Shopping is a primary way in which consumers can acquire this knowledge, and so our first hypothesis is that BESC is positively related to attitude toward shopping.

### 2.3. Materialism

The term "materialism" refers to how important material goods are to a person's life with the implication that materialistic people have an excessive concern for material objects. Materialism is a prominent individual difference variable viewed by some as a personality characteristic (Belk, 1985) and by others as a unique set of values (Kasser, 2002; Richins, 2004). In this study, materialism is defined as a general focus on attaining material possessions and social renown, reflecting Kasser's (2002, p. 1) description. Consumer psychologists are interested in materialism because it influences specific aspects of consumer behavior (Graham, 1999).

Materialism leads consumers to put a disproportionate amount of their resources into acquiring goods. A growing body of literature delineates the origins, antecedents, and consequences of these materialist impulses (e.g., Chan and Prendergast, 2007).

Our second hypothesis is that materialism is positively related to attitude toward shopping because shopping intimately involves consumers with the material goods they aspire to own. Shopping is one way they learn about new products they might want to own, and the activity of shopping for material goods gives pleasure to consumers (Danzinger, 2006; Eisenberg, 2009; Hine, 2002). We surmise that the more interested consumers are in possessing material goods, the more they will want to shop for them and the more positive their attitude toward shopping.

### 2.4. Gender differences in shopping

Our interest in motives for shopping also addresses the moderating influence of gender. Women are much more likely than men are to be studied for their shopping behavior; in fact, "men are all but absent in studies of shopping behavior" (Otnes and McGrath, 2001, p. 112). This focus in the literature likely is an artifact of traditional gender roles (Otnes and McGrath, 2001). Despite the lack of research on men, it is apparent that women are more likely to shop than are men (Benson, 1994; Danzinger,

2006; Hine, 2002) and seem to enjoy shopping more than men (Campbell, 1997; Fischer and Arnold, 1994). Moreover, they are likely to be motivated by different factors than are men as part of the general influence of gender on consumer behavior (Yang and Lester, 2005). For example, women have been shown to have different attitudes toward money and credit and towards expressing love and gaining success in the home, which affect shopping behavior (Ishida and Nosaka, 2007; Miller, 1998; Yang and Lester, 2005). Different shopping styles also characterize the sexes (Coward and Goldsmith, 2007; Knowledge@Wharton, 2007).

We propose that materialism, and brand engagement in self-concept motivate consumers to shop, but we feel that gender moderates these relationships. Women will be motivated to shop differently than men, but because we have no basis to propose specific moderating effects, this becomes a research question.

### 2.5. Age differences in shopping

Elderly consumers experience problems with store crowding, their own mobility, and service levels in stores but oddly enough, report an increase in shopping enjoyment (Meneely et al., 2009a; 2009b). Age has also been shown to have an impact on where consumers prefer to shop with older consumers opting for department stores and avoiding discounter and category killer stores (Carpenter and Balija, 2010). Age groups respond differentially to video display screens in retail spaces (Newman et al., 2007). Because previous studies do not describe how age differences influence the relationships between BESC, materialism, and shopping, we propose no hypotheses, but do investigate the potential role of age in our tests.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Study design

In order to enhance the scope and reliability of the findings, we conducted two studies. The first study collected data on attitude toward shopping, brand engagement in self-concept, and materialism. We operationalized the latter with a multi-dimensional scale developed by Kasser and Ryan (1993) and shown in Kasser (2002, p. 10). Termed the Aspiration Index (AI), it assesses how important to the participant are three life goals expressing materialistic values: social recognition, financial success, and physical attractiveness. We chose this scale because it is widely used to study material values and provides a unique view of these motivations. Moreover, it has not been used very often in studies of consumer behavior and its use can provide new insights into the influence of material values on shopping and buying. To assess the reliability of the findings, we conducted the second study using the same measures and adding a second operationalization of materialism, the Richins and Dawson (1992) scale that operationalizes materialism in three dimensions: success in life, happiness, and centrality. Thus, we replicate the findings from study one in study two and provide an additional evaluation of the influence of materialism on shopping.

### 3.2. Participants

The data for these studies were obtained through two surveys of U.S. undergraduate students at three universities. An online questionnaire service was used to construct the questionnaires. The students were offered extra credit for completing the surveys. They were emailed a consent form and the link. Although not representative of all shoppers, college students have a great deal of experience shopping and represent the shoppers of the future,

and so they should provide realistic data for the hypotheses tests (see Yarrow and O'Donnell, 2009, Ch. 2).

The sample size for study one was 258 consumers. The majority (157 or 61%) were women. Approximately 56% of U.S. college students are female, and so this proportion is realistic (Shin, 2005). The participants ranged in age from 19 to 62, with a mean of 21.9 years ( $SD=4.0$ ). The sample size for study two was 256 consumers, but in this instance, we obtained a more even balance between the genders (128 consumers of each gender). Their ages ranged from 19 to 55 years with a mean of 22.3 ( $SD=4.2$ ).

### 3.3. Measures

To operationalize the variables, we used published scales with the exception of the shopping measures, which were written to express interest, attitude, and skill in shopping. The items were presented in the online questionnaires and appear in Table 1.

We measured brand engagement in self-concept using the eight-item scale developed by Sprott et al. (2009). Sprott et al. (2009) reported an absence of gender differences for BESC and no relationship with age or social desirability response bias. It is also unrelated to a variety of other constructs such as self-esteem, self-deception, and sex-role. They report internal consistency ( $\alpha$ ) estimates around .9. Not only is BESC well grounded in consumer theory, for the first time it offers researchers a scale to measure the concept as an individual difference variable that permits empirical research into the antecedents and consequences of brand engagement.

There is no universally agreed upon measurement of materialism in the literature. We found at least eight multi-item scales designed to measure some aspect of materialism reported in the social science literature since 1978. We chose two of these to use in the present studies: the recently developed Aspiration Index described by Kasser (2002) and the 18-item Richins and Dawson (1992) Material Values Scale (MVS). We selected these scales because studies show that they have positive psychometric characteristics and because they represent different dimensions of materialism, thereby permitting a complex view of this consumer characteristic. Also, because they are widely used, the findings can be confidently integrated into the literature on materialism.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Preliminary analyses

Because the response formats for the three shopping items in study one did not contain the same number of response options owing to an error in managing the online questionnaire program, z-scores were computed for each item and summed to form an overall shopping score. This oversight was not repeated in the second study, where the three shopping items all used 7-point response formats, but it appears to have had no effect on the results, as the scale in both studies was unidimensional and had high internal consistency. The mean shopping score in study two (16.5) was significantly higher ( $z=13.3, p<.0005$ ) than the scale mid-point of 14, indicating that for this sample of consumers, like many of their generation, shopping is an enjoyable and important activity (see Yarrow and O'Donnell, 2009, p. 45).

After the data were cleaned, the BESC scale and the subscales from the materialism measures were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis. The results showed that each scale was unidimensional. Standardized regression coefficients for each item in both studies appear in Table 1. Internal consistency analysis was

**Table 1**  
Measures, standardized path coefficients, average variance extracted, and construct reliability.

Construct	Items	$\lambda_1/\lambda_2$	AVE <sub>1</sub> /AVE <sub>2</sub>	CR <sub>1</sub> /CR <sub>2</sub>
<b>Shopping (written for this study)</b>				
1. I like to shop (strongly disagree/strongly agree)		.80/.69	.46/.46	.71/.71
2. I think shopping is (very bad/very good)		.65/.74		
3. My skills as a shopper are (below average/above average)		.56/.59		
<b>Brand engagement in self-concept (Sprott et al., 2009)</b>				
1. I have a special bond with the brands that I like.		.73/.76	.54/.59	.90/.92
2. I consider my favorite brands to be a part of myself.		.84/.77		
3. I often feel a personal connection between by brands and me.		.72/.83		
4. Part of me is defined by important brands in my life.		.73/.74		
5. I feel as if I have a close personal connection with the brands I most prefer.		.78/.83		
6. I can identify with important brands in my life.		.73/.75		
7. There are links between the brands that I prefer and how I view myself.		.64/.69		
8. My favorite brands are an important indication of who I am.		.70/.75		
<b>Aspiration Index (Kasser, 2002)</b>				
How important is it to you that in the future that:				
<i>Social recognition</i>				
1. You will do something that brings you much recognition.		.61/.64	.53/.61	.84/.89
2. Your name will be known to many people.		.52/.68		
3. You will be admired by many people.		.85/.88		
4. You will be famous.		.87/.86		
5. Your name will appear frequently in the media.		.73/.83		
<i>Appealing appearance</i>				
1. You will successfully hide the signs of aging.		.72/.81	.53/.54	.85/.86
2. You will have people comment about how attractive you look.		.68/.80		
3. You will keep up with fashions in hair and clothing.		.69/.73		
4. You will achieve the “look” you’ve been after.		.77/.71		
5. Your image will be the one others find appealing.		.76/.62		
<i>Financial success</i>				
1. You will have a job with high social status.		.91/.89	.53/.56	.81/.83
2. You will have a job that pays well.		.55/.60		
3. You will be financially successful.		.83/.62		
4. You will have lots of expensive possessions.		.55/.83		
<b>Richins and Dawson Material Values Scale (Richins and Dawson, 1992)</b>				
<i>Defining success</i>				
1. I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes.		.73	.45	.83
2. Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions.		.55		
3. I don’t place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success. (R)		.71		
4. The things I own say a lot about how well I’m doing in life.		.68		
5. I like to own things that impress people.		.67		
6. I don’t pay much attention to the material objects other people own. (R)		.65		
<i>Acquisition centrality</i>				
1. I usually buy only the things I need. (R)		.53	.28	.69
2. I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned. (R)		.72		
3. The things I own aren’t all that important to me. (R)		.37		
4. I enjoy spending money on things that aren’t practical.		.46		
5. Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure.		.59		
6. I like a lot of luxury in my life.		.62		
7. I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know. (R)		.44		
<i>Pursuit of happiness</i>				
1. I have the things I really need to enjoy life. (R)		.44	.44	.79
2. My life would be better if I owned certain things I don’t have.		.77		
3. I wouldn’t be any happier if I owned nice things. (R)		.51		
4. I’d be happier if I could afford to buy more things.		.83		
5. It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can’t afford to buy all the things I’d like.		.67		

Note: R indicates a reverse coded item;  $\lambda$ =standardized regression weight; AVE=average variance extracted; CR=construct reliability.

performed by computing the average variance extracted and the construct reliability for each scale, and these results for each study also appear in Table 1. Coefficient alpha was also computed for each scale, and these appear in Table 2 along with the descriptive statistics for each summed scale. These results show that although the BESC and Aspiration Index measures had generally accepted levels of internal consistency, the Material Values Scale items, while having acceptable levels of coefficient alpha, did not meet these criteria in the CFA. This result is likely due to its mixture of positively and negatively worded items. Owing to these psychometric shortcomings in the MVS, the

results using this scale might be problematical. The subscales were computed by summing the item scores after appropriate reversals and the descriptive statistics for each variable appear in Table 2.

#### 4.2. Gender differences

We used *t*-tests to determine if the men and women shoppers differed in mean scores for any of the variables (see Table 3). There was no difference in mean age between the genders for



**Table 2**  
Descriptive statistics.

Variables	Study one (n=258)				Study two (n=256)			
	Range	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	Range	Mean	SD	$\alpha$
Age	19–62	21.9	4.0	.19–.55	22.3	4.2		
Shopping	–6.1 to 3.1	0.0	2.4	.70	7–21	16.5	3.0	.70
BESC	8–38	25.2	6.0	.90	8–40	23.3	6.7	.92
Social	5–34	20.7	5.5	.86	5–35	19.5	6.2	.89
Attractive	5–34	23.5	5.0	.84	5–35	23.7	5.6	.85
Financial	5–28	21.7	3.5	.81	4–28	20.6	3.9	.82
Success					6–30	17.5	4.5	.83
Happiness					5–24	15.4	3.8	.78
Centrality					7–31	20.3	4.3	.74

**Table 3**  
*t*-Tests of mean differences between men and women.

Variable	Study one (n=258)				Study two (n=256)			
	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i> <sup>a</sup>
<i>Age</i>								
Men	21.8 (2.7)				22.5 (4.2)			
Women	22.0 (4.7)	–.31	ns		22.2 (4.1)	.702	ns	
<i>Shopping</i>								
Men	–1.5 (2.2)				15.1 (2.8)			
Women	.93 (2.0)	–9.0	<.001	1.13	18.0 (2.4)	–8.9	<.001	1.11
<i>BESC</i>								
Men	25.2 (6.1)				24.2 (6.1)			
Women	25.2 (6.0)	–.01	ns		22.4 (7.1)	2.2	.029	.276
<i>Social</i>								
Men	20.8 (5.5)				20.3 (5.7)			
Women	20.7 (5.6)	.12	ns		18.8 (6.6)	2.0	.05	.251
<i>Attractive</i>								
Men	21.3 (5.2)				22.4 (5.4)			
Women	25.0 (4.4)	–6.3	<.001	.78	24.9 (5.6)	–3.5	<.001	.439
<i>Financial</i>								
Men	21.4 (4.1)				20.8 (3.8)			
Women	21.9 (3.1)	–1.2	ns		20.4 (4.0)	.98	ns	
<i>Success</i>								
Men					17.8 (4.0)			
Women					17.2 (5.0)	1.2	ns	
<i>Happiness</i>								
Men					15.9 (3.5)			
Women					15.0 (4.0)	2.1	.041	.264
<i>Centrality</i>								
Men					20.7(3.8)			
Women					19.8 (4.7)	1.7	.093	

<sup>a</sup> Cohen's *d*.

either study, but in both studies, as one might expect, women reported higher shopping scores than men did. In addition, as also might be expected, women scored higher on the attractiveness subscale of the Aspiration Index than did the men in both studies. Men scored higher than the women did on the brand engagement in self-concept scale in study two and on the social recognition dimension of the Aspiration Index in study two. Moreover, the genders differed on one additional dimension of materialism in study two. Men reported that material goods were more essential to their happiness than did the women. We did not hypothesize differences in materialism between men and women because although this generalization is sometimes made (Ryan and Dziurawiec, 2001), the evidence is far from consistent and gender differences might not be consistent across different dimensions of

materialism. The differences do suggest the wisdom of assessing relationships between shopping and BESC and materialism separately for men and women.

#### 4.3. Correlations

Table 4 contains the correlations between shopping measures and the other scales. Age was uncorrelated with shopping in study one and only weakly correlated in study two, so that it played no role in the subsequent analyses. These correlations support hypothesis one. In both studies, scores on the BESC are positively correlated with the liking to shop scores for both men and women, and to virtually the same degree. Thus, it seems that as consumers increasingly use brands to express their self-concepts, they like to shop more than if they are less inclined to do so.

Our second hypothesis is that material values predispose consumers to shop. The correlations in Table 4 largely support this hypothesis. Scores on both the materialism scales are positively correlated with shopping scores. The attractive appearance subscale of the AI shows the strongest relationship for both men and women in both studies, although the relationship might be stronger for men than for women. Although women might easily admit they shop to be improve their attractiveness (Yarrow and O'Donnell, 2009, p. 45 report that by far, clothes average well above everything else as the most favorite thing to shop for, both among men and women of all their Gen Y age groups), apparently men are similarly motivated. The social recognition subscale correlations are positive and significant only for men in study one, but are significant ( $p < .05$ ) in study two for both genders. Similarly, the results for the financial success subscale of the AI were positively correlated with shopping for men in both studies, but significant for women only in study two. Taken together, the results from the two samples for the Aspiration Index support hypothesis two. Apparently, when consumers aspire to social recognition, an attractive appearance, and financial success, they like to shop.

Scores on the three subscales of the MVS were positively and significantly correlated with the shopping scores for both genders in study two. These results also support hypothesis two. Examination of the individual subscales correlations suggests that material goods are signs of success, when they are essential to happiness, and when they are central to the life of an individual consumers like to shop.

#### 4.4. Regression analyses

To assess the multivariate relationships between liking to shop with BESC and the dimensions of materialism, we regressed the shopping scores on the independent variables separately for men and women. (Scatter plots did not suggest any non-linear relationships in the data.) These results appear in Table 5. In study one, the results show that although the overall regression equation was significant, only the attractiveness subscale was related to shopping for men. For women, in contrast, both the attractiveness subscale and the financial success subscale were significantly related to liking to shop, as was BESC. The negative direction for financial success and the absence of a significant relationship for social recognition, in contrast to the correlational findings, suggests that there is considerable overlap in the variance shared by the independent variables, so that their impact on shopping is not independent and additive, but somewhat redundant. That is, when the largest relationship, viz., attractiveness, is accounted for, the others become insignificant. This interpretation is supported by the low tolerance values (ranging from .38 to .758) in these analyses, suggesting that the independent variables share

large proportions of their variance with each other. It is also important to note that the adjusted  $R^2$  values, while not uncommonly low for social science research demonstrate that the equations leave a good deal of the variation in shopping motivations on the table.

In study two, only attractiveness appears to motivate the male shoppers, and not the female ones. Of the three MVS subscales, only the centrality of material goods to the individual's life seems to motivate shopping, and only for the women. This is puzzling given the consistent correlations and might be due to a unique aspect of this sample of women, but again, the tolerance values (ranging from .35 to .716) suggest that much of the variance in the independent variables is shared so that when the strongest relationship with the dependent variable is accounted for, there is little independent variance left for the other variables. This should not be surprising given that these variables are all dimensions of the same overall construct of materialism. In both groups, the presence of the materialism subscales seems to remove the relationship between BESC and shopping. This is apparently because materialism motivates both BESC and shopping. A separate analysis (not included) showed that BESC did not mediate the influence of materialism on shopping; its influence is accounted for by materialism, suggesting that it is as much a consequence of embracing a suite of material values as is shopping.

**Table 4**  
Correlations of shopping with independent variables.

	Study one (n=258)			Study two (n=256)		
	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women
Age	.02	.12	-.04	-.14*	-.09	-.19*
BESC	.27**	.34**	.29**	.16*	.27**	.25**
<i>Aspiration Index subscales</i>						
Social	.14*	.31**	.07	.13*	.22**	.23**
Attractive	.47**	.46**	.27**	.41**	.42**	.29**
Financial	.24**	.38**	.10	.25**	.42**	.22**
<i>Material values subscales</i>						
Success				.16*	.28**	.17*
Happiness				.13*	.21**	.23**
Centrality				.35**	.30**	.39**

\*  $p < .05$ .  
\*\*  $p < .01$ .

Thus, from the descriptive point of view, the hypotheses that materialism and BESC are positively related to liking to shop are supported; avid shoppers are more inclined than their less enthusiastic counterparts to use brands to express self-concept and to be more materialistic, but psychologically, materialism as the more general or global construct seems to drive BESC as well as shopping. None of the analyses yielded outliers (i.e., residuals larger than three standard deviations), and the residual plots showed that the assumption of constant variance was not violated.

**5. Discussion**

The purpose of the two studies described here was to test hypothesized relationships between brand engagement in self-concept and materialism with positive attitudes toward shopping. The results show that, as hypothesized, the more consumers see brands as a means of expressing self-concept the more they like shopping, a relationship not studied in prior literature. The findings also show that the more consumers embrace a suite of materialistic values, the more likely they are to like shopping. Prior research is also largely silent on this issue, although many of the descriptions of materialism and its consequences link market place behavior such as spending and buying to materialism. Finally, although not a specific objective of the studies, they replicate the positive relationship between materialism and BESC. Sprott et al. (2009) singled out materialism as a key antecedent of BESC. The present studies used an operationalization of materialism (Kasser, 2002) that was different than the one used by Sprott et al. to remove the possibility that mono-operational bias accounts for their findings. Although the evidence is correlational and not experimental, it appears that both viewing brands this way and being materialistic could motivate consumers to shop. Finally, the analyses show that although materialism is conceptualized and measured differently by different scholars, the different dimensions of materialism are related to shopping quite similarly for men and for women. In particular, being attractive and seeking financial success seems to motivate both men and women equally. Similarly, success, happiness, and the centrality of material goods seem to be characteristics of both men and women shoppers.

For consumer theory, the findings show that shopping is likely motivated by more than the obvious factors of social and hedonic

**Table 5**  
Regression results.

Independent variables	Men				Women			
	$\beta$	t	p	Part <sup>a</sup>	$\beta$	t	p	Part <sup>a</sup>
<i>Study one (n=257)</i>								
BESC	.140	1.31	.192	.117	<b>.261</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>.003</b>	<b>.228</b>
Social	-.057	-.465	.643	-.041	-.108	-1.08	.280	-.081
Attractive	<b>.321</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>.017</b>	<b>.215</b>	<b>.404</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.262</b>
Financial	.168	1.44	.153	.128	<b>-.251</b>	<b>-2.07</b>	<b>.041</b>	<b>-.155</b>
	(adj. $R^2 = .21, F_{(4, 96)} = 7.7, p < .001$ )				(adj. $R^2 = .13, F_{(4, 151)} = 6.8, p < .001$ )			
<i>Study two (n=256)</i>								
BESC	.084	.893	.373	.071	.080	.698	.486	.057
Social	-.081	-.783	.435	-.062	.002	.019	.985	.002
Attractive	<b>.286</b>	<b>2.12</b>	<b>.036</b>	<b>.169</b>	.131	1.01	.293	.087
Financial	.244	1.82	.072	.145	-.036	-.244	.808	-.020
Success	-.140	-1.08	.281	-.086	-.257	-1.86	.066	-.152
Happiness	-.020	-.183	.855	-.015	.142	1.30	.197	.107
Centrality	.172	1.76	.080	.141	<b>.393</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.276</b>
	(adj. $R^2 = .19, F_{(7, 120)} = 5.3, p < .001$ )				(adj. $R^2 = .14, F_{(4, 123)} = 4.1, p = .001$ )			

<sup>a</sup> The semi-partial coefficient shows the unique effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

pleasure. Consumers might easily say that they like to shop because they are bargain seekers, but they might not be aware of the extent to which other influences shape their shopping attitudes. Specifically, materialistic urges and the importance of brands seem to stimulate shopping enjoyment. The findings begin to complete a profile of the active shopper that includes additional psychological factors, even those that consumers are likely not very aware of. Until researchers pose these questions, how aware are consumers of their materialistic urges and do they buy brands to express their identity, would consumers spontaneously volunteer this information? We argue that these motives play an unacknowledged role in this aspect of consumer behavior. Consequently, we feel that additional study should be made of other factors that might motivate consumers to shop. These might include how much consumers use others as standards of comparison, how much they seek status through what they buy, or how they express their feelings of conformity or independence through shopping.

Managers can use the findings to help them develop more effective retailing strategies. If some consumers are especially motivated to shop by their engagement with brands, then this benefit can be highlighted in promotions striving to lure shoppers to specific stores and brands. Knowing that materialism is also related to shopping, retailers can emphasize the benefits resulting from acquiring material goods. Specifically, showing that shopping is a way to attain attractiveness and to demonstrate financial success might be a powerful way to motivate customers. Although these themes, especially the former, characterize many retail ads, the findings suggest that they will resonate with both men and women shoppers with materialistic tendencies.

Although the results are limited by the specific measures used, the convenience nature of the sample, and by the correlational data, the second study provides a partial replication of the initial findings, enhancing their reliability. Using two different operationalizations of materialism that result in similar findings also enhances our confidence in the conclusion. Future research could expand the generalizability of the results by gathering data from different groups of consumers and by using still other measures of the concepts. Studies can also try to delineate more precisely the elements of promotion that appear specifically to the materialistic motivations studied here. Which is more effective in motivating shoppers, the appeal to attractiveness or to financial success? What promotional elements signal these motives the best? Are there other important motives for shopping that are not covered by the standard treatments of this topic, and if so, what are they? Researchers are encouraged to look for additional concepts that describe unconscious consumer motivation, which can be operationalized validly and reliably, for testing. These efforts will provide us with a detailed picture of shopping and its diverse motivations.

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