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Emancipation from Affluenza: Leading Social Change in the Classroom

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EMANCIPATION FROM AFFLUENZA:
LEADING SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to determine if one's level of affluenza could be reduced through education and awareness. In particular, this study measured whether or not exposure to the benefits of community involvement, and the harm of overconsumption could alter the intentions that college students have regarding their behavior, as it pertains to materialism, consumption, and civic responsibility. The data were collected from college students in the form of pre-tests and post-tests utilizing an affluenza scale created for this research. Over the course of a semester, information and activities that elucidated the benefits of community involvement and the harm of overconsumption were integrated into the course curriculum. The post-test served to measure whether or not the curricular intervention altered attitudes and intentions regarding affluenza. Analysis data revealed that while individual statistical tests were not significant, some overall trends were evident, suggesting that the treatment may have influenced students to move further away from the ideals and attitudes associated with affluenza. Moreover, the affluenza scale was validated and refined. The results of this study have curricular applications for faculty and administrators at colleges and universities interested in implementing and carrying out a similar intervention, or implementing a program that focuses on reducing affluenza. Likewise, the findings offer sociological and social implications for faculty, activists, and community organizers interested in reducing consumption, wastefulness, materialistic attitudes, and those interested in encouraging civic responsibility, by offering additional insight into the issue of affluenza as well as means to begin to address it. Additionally, the Mattison Affluenza Scale itself can be utilized as a diagnostic tool, for instance as part of a needs assessment to determine where more programmatic attention

or changes are needed. The electronic version of this Dissertation is at OhioLink ETD Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd

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Chapter I: Introduction

I have been very interested in the social phenomenon of affluenza for nearly a decade. While a more detailed definition and examination of affluenza will follow, affluenza can be thought of as a modern-day version of the old axiom, keeping up with the Joneses, often resulting in debt, social isolation, the loss of natural resources, and tremendous waste. Some debate exists over who coined the term affluenza, yet it is nevertheless clear that this concept has evolved over the course of three decades and has slowly begun to seep into the public vernacular. While the term has only recently been popularized in common culture, the behavior and actions that constitute affluenza have existed since the end of World War II (Degraaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2005). Intensifying every decade thereafter, the damage wrought by affluenza is undeniable. This dissertation explores the social phenomenon of affluenza, its causes and effects. Additionally, this study reports the results of an intervention involving college students, designed with a goal of altering attitudes and intentions regarding affluenza.

Chapter I of this dissertation defines the social phenomenon of affluenza and explains why it is so problematic. Chapter II is an extensive review of the extant literature that pertains to affluenza, materialism, overconsumption and a decline in civic engagement. Chapter III outlines the intervention and the methodological process used to develop the intervention, and the theoretical support for these methods. Chapter IV consists of a detailed discussion of the results of the intervention, while Chapter V points out the implications of this research as well as its strengths and weaknesses.

Defining Affluenza

The earliest citation pertaining to affluenza dates to an October 25, 1979, column in the *Washington Post* written by Tom Shales (Shales, 1979). This first mention of affluenza refers to the people that novelist Ann Beattie often writes about in her short stories. For Beattie, affluenza is the condition that afflicts those individuals born into the upper middle class, but have become disenchanted with such social class trappings. In 1984, the term affluenza appeared in the May 15 edition of the *New York Times* (Goleman, 1984). In 1986, the January 28 edition of *Omni Magazine* used the term affluenza and suggested that it is an oddly American problem (*Omni*, 1986). A few years later, by 1991, the term affluenza had made appearances in both the *Times* (1990) and *Mother Jones* (Foster, 1991) magazines. A handful of years later, in 1997, in the *Additions Series of the Oxford English Dictionary,* the word affluenza appears, and is noted as a psychological malaise affecting younger, wealthy individuals with symptoms that include lack of motivation and feelings of isolation and guilt (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2011). Slowly, over the course of several decades affluenza morphed in meaning. By 1998, there was a PBS special and book titled *Affluenza* that defined this new social problem as an epidemic "rooted in the obsessive almost religious quest for economic expansion" brought on by the single-minded pursuit of more (Degraaf et al., 2005, p. 3). By 2007, two more books titled affluenza had reached the bookshelves (Hamilton & Denniss, 2005; James, 2007). Around this same time, in 2006 the *Macquaire Dictionary* based at the University of Sydney in Australia gave the word affluenza honorable mention in the word of the year contest, referring to it as the dissatisfaction that accompanies consumerism as a path to happiness (Macquarie Dictionary, 2006). Even Word Spy, an online guide to new words, acknowledged affluenza on July 8, 1998, indicating it was a severe form of materialism that resulted in overwork and debt in order to acquire more possessions (Word Spy, 1998). Finally, a quick Google search resulted in 3,540,000 references to affluenza, suggesting that word has indeed become quite common.

While always central to the definition of affluenza is the emphasis placed on wealth, it is clear that it is no longer an affliction of the wealthy. Affluenza is clearly visible even among the poor, conspicuously found among children and adults from families with meager means as well as in families living in gated communities (Magruder, 2007). As its definition evolved and expanded to include a wide swath of income levels, the term, as well as the social phenomenon of affluenza, grew in ubiquity. Catching my attention as a sociologist nearly a decade ago, I have spent a great deal of time thinking about, reading about, and writing about this social issue. Consequently, I have come to view affluenza as a social phenomenon that results in consumption for consumption's sake, and often for the purpose of displaying one's level of affluence or a perception of affluence one wishes to convey. More specifically, I define affluenza as a complex social problem causing many to use and consume excessively, meaning consuming well beyond what is needed and often beyond their means. Admittedly, it is a challenge to define what necessary consumption is, as it varies per person and by society. Using the definition of sustainable consumption that resulted from the 1994 Oslo Symposium, consumption becomes excessive when it begins to jeopardize the needs of future generations; however, even this definition leaves one wanting, creating a need for further exploration into and discussion of what constitutes excessive.

"Excessive" can be a fairly subjective term, and likely difficult for many to quantify. When exactly does something become excessive? Are those of us who write about the ills of affluenza proposing that we all take up a lifestyle similar to that of Gandhi? Of course, that is not the case. We cannot all live like Gandhi, and frankly it is not necessary to do so in order to combat affluenza. Conversely, we cannot all have 10 houses and drive Hummers. Kasser (2003), who has written a great deal about the effects of materialism, makes the point that materialism is relative, and that it is really a question of balance. "Materialistic values become unhealthy when they are highly important in comparison with other values for which we might strive" (p. 111). What I am proposing, and what others before me have proposed, is simply keeping our materialistic desires in check, and being more aware of the consequences such desires produce. This helps us maintain equilibrium in our lives, our communities, and our relationships—which in the end benefits us all.

I recognize that complete agreement on the definition of excessive, or what a reasonably comfortable lifestyle refers to, is not likely to occur. Disputes over such semantics notwithstanding, guidelines helping to demarcate each can be attempted. More importantly, it is my position that such an attempt must be made if we are to begin to truly reduce the effects of affluenza.

Just as there are varying degrees of excessive, there are also varying degrees of affluenza. I believe that most of us are affected by affluenza at some point in our life, at least to one degree or another. Many people may accept that money and possessions cannot buy happiness, yet because of the culture of consumerism most of us have succumbed, perhaps unconsciously, to cultural pressures, resulting in many of us having more than we truly need in order to be comfortable and content. Recognizing that a comfortable and content lifestyle is open to interpretation I offer the following as a general guideline. I define excessive as having twice the amount of any product that one needs to maintain a reasonably comfortable lifestyle. Though this is still rather subjective, and while many exceptions likely exist, it is a starting point to begin to think about how much one truly needs. For instance, a single person only needs one car; having two would be excessive. While it is possible having two cars is in some way needed, or the individual lives a simplistic lifestyle in every other way, this general guideline serves to establish a parameter, and invites one to think about how much they truly need. Another example could be something as simple as shoes. It is reasonable to assume that an individual might need eight pairs of shoes in various colors and styles in order to have the appropriate shoes to match their various outfits. In this instance, having eight pairs of shoes is the minimum to maintain their lifestyle; therefore having more than 16 pairs of shoes would be excessive. Of course, there are exceptions to these examples. In no way am I suggesting that just because one has more than they need that they are unsympathetic to the suffering in the world, or apathetic and uninvolved in their communities. I am certain there are many examples of wealthy individuals who are compassionate, generous, and astutely aware and mindful of the larger global community. I simply offer this guideline as a way to begin to think about our patterns of consumption, and to begin to reframe how we think about what we need.

There are other ways in which excess can manifest itself as well, such as when an individual buys an item despite having no use for its intended purpose. An example of this may be an individual who buys the top of the line bicycle but only uses it for leisure rides around town, even though the bike was designed for triathletes who ride hundreds of miles a week. While one may attempt to make an argument about the importance of buying quality, it must be remembered that there are varying degrees of quality. Likewise, one may protest, saying that how they spend their money is none of anyone's business. This is the very nature of affluenza, the desire to have things that we really do not need, or acquiring more than we need, and thinking that it is acceptable to do so. In the momentary excitement that comes with the purchase of a new cool toy or adornment, it seems as though many fail to consider the impact of their need to acquire. It is also true that many may not realize that the overuse of resources and the overabundance of material possessions can be detrimental. This is why affluenza is so harmful. A more detailed discussion of the harm that affluenza brings will be examined in the next section; however, since we are all citizens of the world, unnecessary consumption is our collective business, as it harms us all in a variety of ways.

Just as there will be debate over what constitutes excessive, there will be those who will take exception to the suggestion that they should limit purchases or cut back on the acquisition of items and goods. For many, such acquisition is the embodiment of the American Dream, thus there are those who will likely feel as though they are being asked to deny themselves the realization of the American Dream. It is my position that living in a way that is reasonably comfortable, without being excessive is not denying the American Dream to anyone, rather it is ensuring its availability to everyone, as well as sustaining the dream for future generations.

Finally, it is important to understand that affluenza is not just about environmental sustainability. Even if fully sustainable energy sources were found or created, and all waste and refuse could be disposed of in a way that did not harm the environment, affluenza would still be a problem. The obsession with consuming, of having more than what is needed, or having items that are not needed at all, is what often drives a wedge between an individual, their community, their family, and even their bank account. The desire to have more, and the misguided belief that it will somehow make us happier are what drive affluenza. Thus, this phenomenon is multi-faceted. It is not enough to slow our consumption so as to sustain the natural environment, we must slow our consumption to sustain, as well as restore, our health, our relationships, and our communities. Affluenza is more than simply being materialistic or caught up in the culture of conspicuous consumption, it reaches much further than this. The level of materialism and desire to consume is so voracious that the process of consuming too much, or stretching oneself too thin by working excessively in order to continue such levels of consumption harms relationships, communities, and bank accounts as well as individual and global health. It is not my intent for this dissertation to be an admonishment, but rather for it to serve as a warning, as these issues should be of concern to us all. Sadly, many remain uninformed, some of them perhaps willfully so.

While there will be those who will undoubtedly point out the shortcomings and failings of my work, I am not deterred. I am determined to bring this conversation to classrooms, to conferences, to my neighbors, colleagues, and friends in an attempt to lead important and necessary change.

What Harm Can It Cause Anyway?

The consequences of affluenza are far reaching, from failed relationships, to bankruptcies, personal apathy, social anxiety, the demise of communities, and the loss of life sustaining natural resources (Degraaf et al., 2005; Kasser, 2003). Therefore, there must be a heightened awareness to how real and how detrimental the effects borne of affluenza are. Likewise, the levy that we as individuals, families, communities, and the world pay as a consequence of our rabid consumption needs to be exposed.

The personal costs. Much like its namesake influenza, the social disease of affluenza spreads quickly and leaves those it afflicts feeling tired and weary. It also amplifies our desire to have material possessions, to gain for ourselves at the expense of others. Many yearn for what they see around them every day: fancy cars, new shoes, a bigger house, or the latest electronic gizmo or gadget. In startling numbers, many rack up debt on credit cards or take on extra shifts just to have that new toy, a bigger house or a closet full of cool clothes, but at a cost that is not always recognized.

Data from the Census Bureau also suggest yet other costs of affluenza. Credit card holders in the US had $680 billion in outstanding debt in 2000. By 2008, that number had grown to $976 billion (Census Bureau, 2011). There has clearly been a shift in our values from saving for the future to reveling in spending for the day. In the five decades from 1957 to 2007 the personal savings rate in the US went from around 10% to a negative 0.5% (Gardner, 2006). Now, more Americans declare personal bankruptcy each year than graduate from college, we work more hours than citizens of any other industrialized country, and 95% of Americans wish that they had more time to spend with family (Degraaf et al., 2005). By December 2008, consumers in the US had racked up some $988 billion in revolving credit (Dew, 2007). This kind of debt is not only detrimental to an individual's financial security; it is harmful to their relationships as well. Recent research shows that consumer debt "plays a powerful role in eroding the quality of married life" (Dew, 2007, p. 34). As a sociologist, I am aware that social problems are deeply complex. To say that affluenza is the sole cause of bankruptcy, the loss of savings, and increased work hours in the United States would be a stretch. These issues have been compounded by the fact that incomes in the United States have stagnated, the cost of home ownership has increased, and social service programs that provided a safety net for many have been largely dismantled– all the more reason for us to be aware of the costs of affluenza and begin to make changes in our lives (Woodside & McClam, 2011).

Further evidence of our decaying family life is found in the rapid decline in the importance of the family meal. In only twenty years, from 1978-98 the number of families that shared a family meal together was cut in half, attributable at least in some regard to our fast-paced lives that put work and personal gain ahead of all else (Putnam, 2000). There is no question that TV and other forms of video entertainment have played a role here too; however, TV, video games, and the general disconnection many have from family members and community are a part of the social problem of affluenza. According to Hamilton and Denniss (2005) this kind of disconnect "may lead to widespread but ill defined" anomie (p. 141). While some may only give minimal thought to our evolving dining habits, I believe it deserves a bit more deliberation. It is Putman (2000) who reminds us that historically for many societies the evening meal has been a "communal experience," so the fact that it has all but disappeared over the course of a single generation "is remarkable evidence of how rapidly our social connectedness has been changing" (Putnam, 2000, pp. 100-101).

Other aspects in which our social connectedness has changed are evident in our declining civic engagement, and loss of confidants and friends. A study conducted between 1985 and 2004 found that the average number of people with whom Americans can discuss important matters dropped by nearly one-third, from 2.94 people in 1985 to 2.08 in 2004 (American Sociological Association, 2006). This trend brings with it a decrease in the number of individuals available to provide one with support. "Hurricane Katrina showed how important these resources are, they make up the safety net of people who will help and support us, both in terms of routine tasks and also in extreme emergencies" (American Sociological Association, 2006, para. 23). The need to revitalize the human connections within our respective communities seems clear. The benefits are substantial. Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen (2003) drive this point home sharply by illuminating the following: the more neighbors one knows by name, the fewer crimes that neighborhood has. More strikingly yet, when a child is born in a state whose residents volunteer, vote, and spend time with friends, children are less likely to have a low birth-weight, to drop out of school, or to kill or be killed, when compared to another child, regardless of social class, in a state in which the residents do not engage in this kind of participatory citizenship (Putnam et al., 2003). All of this should make us wonder if the closet full of nice clothes, the latest shoes, and the island getaway that was charged to a credit card are worth the tradeoff. We can no longer remain oblivious that the demise of our communities, the increase in bankruptcies and failed relationships, as well as global environmental degradation are further intensified by our desire to consume, to have the right stuff in order to measure up.

The social phenomenon of affluenza harms us on a personal level in other ways as well. While many may see overconsumption as a way of showing off one's financial success, or as a marker of having obtained the good life, recent research casts doubt on this notion. Contrary to what many might believe, materialistic values are "a symptom of an underlying insecurity and a coping strategy taken on in an attempt to alleviate problems and satisfy needs" (Kasser, 2003, p. 42). Research points out that individuals with high levels of materialism are more likely to be unhappy and that materialistic values lead people to organize their lives in such a way that they often fail at satisfying their needs, thus contributing even more to ones sense of desolation (Kasser, 2003). Moreover, affluenza causes parents and families to suffer as well. With swollen expectations as to what constitutes the good life, as well as lower wages, and higher home ownership costs, it is quite common for both parents to work outside the home. With this additional stress of working, but also working to acquire in order to have the right things, "nerves are frayed and tempers boil" (Degraaf et al., 2005, p. 48). Not surprisingly the number of Americans saying that they always feel rushed tops 33% and two-thirds of those living in the United States want more balance in their lives (Schor, 1998, p. 113).

With all this debt, disconnection, stress, eroding communities, and unhappiness, what might this mean for our children, who have become all too consumed with consuming themselves? Consider Schor's (1998) comments about what happened in the 1980's as a consequence of our souped-up consumer culture: “Suburban high school students took on jobs, worked longer hours. Never mind falling asleep in class, doing poorly academically, or missing out on extracurriculars. Having money to spend at the mall had become more important” (p. 41). Study after study suggests that adults believe that children are becoming overly materialistic (Degraaf et al., 2005; Schor, 1998). Considering that “children account directly for an estimated $36 billion in sales annually” it is easy to make the leap that materialism is an emerging value among our nation’s youth (Goldberg, Gorn, Peracchio, & Bamossy, 2003, p. 278). While TV and movies likely contribute to their materialistic desires, no doubt that for many, they learn from their parent’s example (Schor, 1998). In fact, research by Goldberg et al. (2003) shows that “parents who are more materialistic tend to have children who are more materialistic” (p. 278).

What does the future hold for us as a society, for our children, when being a consumer is more important than being a citizen? James Kunstler, author of *The Geography of Nowhere* (1993), remarked in an interview, “We’ve mutated from citizens to consumers in the last sixty years. The trouble with being consumers is that consumers have no duties, responsibilities or obligations to their fellow consumers. Citizens do” (as cited in DeGraaf et al., 2005, p. 65). Our decaying sense of citizenship and the transferring of materialistic values to the future generation certainly suggest more reasons for a thorough understanding of the social disease of affluenza. Cultivating greater awareness and encouraging personal responsibility to those around us must occur if we are to begin to mitigate the consequences of this troubling social ill.

The global costs. On a more global scale affluenza is wreaking havoc as well. While it may be true that the United States is guilty of manufacturing the social ill of affluenza, this problem is not limited to the United States, and thus its consequences are far reaching, and potentially lasting. Kilbourne and Pickett (2008) point out, “The materialistic lifestyle is becoming a global phenomenon, and the number of individuals pursuing such a lifestyle is increasing exponentially. This in turn, has the potential to accelerate the associated negative consequences" (p. 886). These negative consequences go well beyond affecting level of happiness or the hours spent at work, or the time available to share with family, although these are certainly of concern. The consequences likely extend into the future by damaging the physical environment in ways that harm human health now and potentially for generations to come. According to the Millennium Eco-System Assessment, a United Nation's project, "Human Activity is putting such a strain on the natural function of the Earth that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted" (Millennium Eco-System Assessment, 2005). Similarly, Poritt (1984) argues that materialism in market societies is one of the root causes of environmental decline. And environmental decline harms us all in numerous ways. Considering that the following are only a few of the concerns that result due to overconsumption, it is easy to see why affluenza is a problem that touches us all. Vidal (2005) points out that malaria and dengue fever, once fairly isolated are beginning to spread with the intensifying climate changes. Additionally, lower yields of some crops have become more evident as a result of global warming. Some 1.1 billion people have no access to safe water and 2.6 billion lack appropriate and safe sanitation causing 1.8 million deaths a year, mostly among children under five (Vidal, 2005). These findings are further corroborated by the World Bank: in a press release in which analysts warn us about the precariousness of our position; unsafe water coupled with poor sanitation and hygiene as well as air pollution are not only killing people, but are also slowing economic development (Jellinek & Ebro, 2005). In addition, soil pollution, pesticides, hazardous waste and chemicals in food are significantly affecting health and economies. Warren Evans, the director for the World Bank's environment department offered this: “without a healthy and productive labour force we are not likely to have the economic growth needed to forge a pathway out of poverty” and sadly “it is poor people who are the first to suffer from a polluted environment” although none are immune to the environmental threats brought on by over consumption (Jellinek & Ebro, 2005, para. 2). Affluenza then harms us all in some very personal ways, such as level of happiness and financial instability but it also harms our health and the health of the planet that sustains us. To that end, we all need to be aware of and be mindful of affluenza and the ruin it brings.

In a United Nations study as reported in the UK’s Guardian, the world’s top firms have caused 2.2 trillion (US) dollars in environmental damage (Jowit, 2010). Most of this is in the emission of greenhouse gases but also contributing significantly are air pollution and the overuse of water (Jowit, 2010). The inhabitants of the earth are the victims of these harmful side effects from big business. These side effects do not just boil down to potentially poor health and loss of land; however, there are additional more immediate issues that even non-environmentalists may find compelling. If businesses are held accountable and required to pay for the damage they cause or if their actions are highly restricted in order to minimize damage to the environment, production costs will increase. For some, this would be the difference between seeing a profit and facing a loss, which in turn could potentially harm pension funds or even upset the global economy (Jowit, 2010). This may be why some turn a blind eye, not wanting to endanger the fiscal success that feeds their pension fund and fuels the global economy. But business as usual is no longer a reality as some companies are literally running out of the resources they need to operate. One such example is the loss of approximately 20,000 jobs and nearly a billion dollars in revenue for agricultural companies in California during 2009, because of the water shortage (Jowit, 2010).

The consequences of this social problem takes aim at all of us. Responsible behavior then, be it corporate or personal, should be something that all of us demand. Whether the impetus for demanding corporations to act responsible is out of a desire to protect the earth or to protect a pension fund, there is likely a tangible reason for everyone to insist upon changes. Similarly, holding individuals personally accountable for their behavior, primarily in the form of awareness, and conscientious consumerism, could be seen as a civic duty. We have laws and ordinances in place that ban things like leaf burning and loud parties so as not to cause harm to the environment, jeopardize those with respiratory problems, or disrupt one's sense of peace. How are these regulations so different from asking people to be aware of how their behavior and habits in regards to overconsumption affect those around them?

As previously established, affluenza harms us individually, and also harms our personal relationships, our families, our local communities, our children, and our collective futures. Likewise, it detracts from being involved locally and from being a part of community clubs and organizations. According to Putnam (2000), Americans have been "dropping out in droves" not only from local politics but also from organized community life (p. 64). There are of course detractors of Putnam's claims. Just one such instance is that of Skocpol (1996) who suggests that involvement in new types of organized community life have evolved, like parents congregating on the weekends at sporting events that their children are involved in. As a sociologist, I know that social change is often unplanned. One example of this is the surprising uptick in civil engagement, and an increased interest in politics among some groups following the tragedy of 9/11 (Sander & Putnam, 2010). More specifically, Sander and Putnam (2010) found this increased interest, and activity to be nearly exclusively among the young, and those considered to be the haves, and not the have-nots. Is this unexpected rise in activity among some young adults, coupled with social media like Facebook and Twitter, enough to re-stitch our torn communities, to mend our tattered commitment to civic engagement, and to heal the wounds produced from an era of selfish individualism as once epitomized by the saying; "It's all about me?" While the increased civic engagement among some of our nation's youth is encouraging, there is little evidence that virtual communities can replace real ones. "In a world where Facebook "friendship" can encompass people who have never actually met, we remain agnostic about whether Internet social entrepreneurs have found the right mix of virtual and real strands to replace traditional social ties" (Sander & Putnam, 2010, p. 15). Levine, (2004) agrees that, "over time a whole society may grow more disengaged or atomistic as a result of using computer networks" and he adds that there is really little if any civic or social benefit that comes from Internet use (p. 84). While virtual communities may not contribute significantly to countering affluenza, the recent Occupy protests may lend energy to this cause, and certainly seem to support the trend of increased awareness, and political involvement in young adults since 9/11. As in the past, as new movements emerge they may help to reinvigorate community life, as well as assist with overcoming the burdens so many have put on themselves in the pursuit of keeping up with the Joneses.

Other things can be done as well to reignite our commitment to a sense of shared community, to raise awareness about affluenza, and to cultivate conscientious consumerism. We must work together to begin to restore the balance between consumer and citizen, and to advocate for the return of participatory citizenship. This will not be an easy task, as clearly consumerism and individualism in the US have become increasingly important cultural norms.

What Is It That Makes Us Happy, Anyway?

At this point it is clear that wealth and material possessions are not the secret to finding happiness. Research suggests that focusing on intrinsic goals such as personal growth, lasting relationships, and community involvement produces a greater sense of life satisfaction and happiness (Niemiec, Ryan, & Deci, 2009). These recent findings support the work of Sonja Lyubomirsky, a professor of psychology at the University of California, Riverside. In her book, *The How of Happiness* (2007), Lyubomirsky points out that the pursuit and attainment of intrinsic goals is most associated with a greater sense of well-being. This research is further echoed in a two-part study pertaining to happiness among youth. In this work, Chaplin (2009) finds that people and pets as well as achievements were reported to be more important than material things in making youth happy. And yet, we remain materialistic. Might awareness and knowledge to the facts begin to alter this behavior? Is it possible to begin to create change by raising awareness, encouraging civility, modeling good citizenship, and leading others to become involved in their communities? The research proposed here will begin to answer this question.

Leading the Way for Needed Change

There is a small but swelling body of literature regarding the sense of human disconnect, the loss of community, and our overly ambitious pursuit of material possessions. In their discussions of this phenomenon, researchers like Putnam (2000) and Putnam et al. (2003) and Block (2008) offer ways to begin to counter this trend, largely by shifting the context within which we act. This includes acting in more personal ways, such as one on one with our friends and neighbors, and in small groups, but also by changing the atmosphere and culture of boardrooms and public space. Others, like Kunstler (1993) look at how the rapid construction of new housing developments as well as changes in zoning laws and the embrace of urban sprawl (disguised as needed development) have altered our landscape and consequently negatively impacted the human ecology of the United States. We have moved from a nation with main streets and clearly marked communities to a "landscape of scary places, the geography of nowhere that has simply ceased to be a credible human habitat" (Kunstler, 1993, p. 15). For Kunstler (1993), while over-simplified here, the answer lies in part with how we design, build, and grow our towns and living spaces. Kasser (2003) identifies three areas to focus on to bring change: personal, family/parenting, and societal. Personal change can occur, in part, by spending time reflecting and reevaluating materialistic needs, and changing activities such as going to the park instead of going to the mall. Parents and families can produce change by being better role models for their children, staying informed of what is being taught in the classroom, and working to change the activities that children are involved in. Kasser (2003) also suggests that societal change is possible by taking action such as regulating advertisements, supporting companies that value employees, family time, education, and the environment. We can also vote for candidates who recognize that wealth does not increase happiness. Finally, Schor (1998) offers nine principles to "help individuals, and the nation, get off the consumer escalator" (p. 144). These principles include things like making exclusivity uncool, learning to share, and becoming an educated consumer. Clearly then, people are thinking about, writing about, and even suggesting possible solutions to the problem of loss of community, of overly individualistic desires, and materialistic views.

While this body of literature exists, and while ideas are suggested as to how to counter this trend, there is no real tangible movement afoot. I have yet to find a bona fide experiment that puts these suggestions into practice, and measures whether or not the desired change occurs. The need to restructure, rebuild, and revitalize the human community is very real, and I believe it is a movement waiting to happen. With the recent economic disaster, many have been forced to reevaluate their priorities, and in doing so have set the stage for this budding movement to blossom. The time is now to move beyond offering suggestions, and into taking action. Can intentions and attitudes about materialism, consumption, and community involvement be changed? That is the focus of this research, as well as my intent.

Positionality

I have seen this disconnect from community, and a longing for material possessions among the students at the college where I taught in Illinois, and I see it among the students I now teach in Colorado. Students admit to chatting online with complete strangers while not always knowing their neighbors. They twitter and text to keep their friends informed of their comings and goings, yet they lack the desire to meet others outside of their established group, or to get involved in their community. Assigned group work in class was frequently met with a groan; experiential learning caused great anxiety for them, while their apathy toward campus and community issues was palpable. I taught in a very rural part of Illinois, among the corn and bean fields, and the once active factories that are now empty or whose production has slowed to a trickle, undoubtedly a working-class community. And yet, most students there identified themselves as middle class, and they wanted the middle class trappings. The latest fashions, the coolest phones, the brand name backpacks, the $150.00 running shoes, only used to walk to and from class. Like so many others, they are caught up in the cycle; they are overwhelmingly individualistic, materialistic, and as one student told me when a class discussion focused on solutions to homelessness that she was, “going to get me mine, they can get their own.” I have wanted to change this trend, to find a way to begin to reverse its effects on our youth, and perhaps by doing so begin to curb affluenza, thus changing the potential direction of our future. That is the goal of this work.

Moving Forward

In the chapter that follows, I will summarize the existing research that explores affluenza, and its components, such as consumption, consumerism, and materialism. More importantly, I will point out the shortcomings of the extant research, and the questions left unanswered, thus demonstrating the need for further research in a new direction. Additionally, I will explore the literature that examines and suggests how to begin to change or alter human intentions and behavior. From this foundation, I explain, as detailed in Chapter III, my study that was aimed at altering intentions and behavior as it pertains to affluenza. In brief, I designed a pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was given to two specific groups of sociology students (a control group and a treatment group) at the college where I teach, in order to measure their existing level of affluenza. Throughout the course of the semester, in the treatment group the students were given readings and assignments and participated in experiential learning aimed at increasing their awareness of the issues brought on by affluenza. This curricular intervention utilizes the reasoned action approach to predicting and changing behavior. In the making for over 45 years, the basic assumptions of the reasoned action theory "have stood the test of time," and offer a solid framework for my proposed research (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 399). A post-test followed these activities toward the end of the semester among both the treatment and control groups to measure whether or not the intervention was successful in increasing awareness and knowledge about affluenza, as well as changing intentions, and thus potentially altering behavior associated with the phenomenon.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

What follows constitutes a two-part review of the literature. First, I searched and reviewed studies regarding the effects of affluenza on quality of life, happiness, and overall well-being. This subset of affluenza literature was selected primarily for two reasons.

First, it is vital that the connection between materialism and happiness is well understood so it can be articulated in a way that it serves as a motivating tool for change. While affluenza affects many other aspects of social life, as well as the natural world, as has been well established here, individual happiness seems likely the biggest motivator for many to rethink their views and activities regarding affluenza. Quite simply, who doesn't want to be happy? Helping others to understand that feelings of self-doubt, anxiety, and unhappiness could be the result of the glorification of material products, and consumer culture is an important step in recognizing the need for change. Secondly, it is my premise that those who have researched the connection between materialism and unhappiness may have unique insight, and be able to offer important suggestions as a result of their findings as to how to counter this social epidemic. Hence, the first part of this chapter reviews the literature pertinent to how materialism affects overall quality of life, and presents a discussion of the insights gleaned from this research. In the second part of this chapter, I discuss and review the theories pertaining to altering or changing behavior. The goals of this chapter are:

1) To summarize and critique the existing studies on affluenza to corroborate theory that affluenza is negatively correlated with quality of life.

2) To provide an overview the extant literature and demonstrate that the bulk of the research on this topic has focused primarily on the harmful effects of affluenza with no real mechanism developed or recommended to counter this phenomenon.

3) To establish that there is a need for further research on this topic that takes a new direction, specifically that research is needed on ways to counter the social phenomenon of affluenza.

4) To review the theories that relate to altering and changing human social behavior in order to establish a foundation for my research.

Methodological Landscape

What follows is a discussion of the literature reviewed, beginning with those studies that examine the connection between happiness and affluenza in general or broad terms. This is followed by a review of the studies that consider mediating factors between materialism and happiness, as well as those studies that look at some of causes of materialism, and how materialism is used as a coping strategy. Finally, I review the studies that deal with materialism and happiness as it relates to children, adolescents, and college students, as this is the population that most closely parallels the convenient sample utilized in my own research.

Materialism and happiness. One of the earliest writings that attempted to conceptualize and measure materialism, which was then used to link materialism to levels of happiness, was by Russell Belk in 1985. For Belk (1985), materialism is a collection of personality traits, which include envy, non-generosity, and possessiveness. Later, a fourth trait of preservation was added (Ger & Belk, 1990). Other such attempts to conceptualize and measure materialism were developed by Richins and Dawson (1992), who describe materialism as a value rather than a behavior or an aspect of one's personality.

While differing considerably, these two scales offered some insights into the process of developing my own affluenza scale. More importantly, however, they strengthened my resolve to create a scale that did more than just measure materialism. There is no reason to recreate the wheel, especially if the wheel does not function in the manner that is needed. What is needed is a scale that reaches beyond just the materialistic component affluenza. Nonetheless, I am grateful for the work of Belk, Ger, Richins, and Dawson, as they helped to establish that there was a need to measure materialism, and developed a mechanism to do so. Moreover, these scales have been used in subsequent research linking materialism to well-being and happiness, a premise that is important in my own work.

Roberts and Clement (2007) considered the relationship between materialism and quality of life and not surprisingly found “that materialism and quality of life when both are measured as a whole are negatively correlated” (p. 87). More specifically, however, they looked at three domains of materialism—possession-defined success, acquisition centrality, and acquisition as the pursuit of happiness—and considered their relationship to the eight-domains of overall quality of life, which include the components of family, friends, health, enjoyment, job, money, self, and residence. The results of this study found that the happiness dimension of materialism was negatively related to all eight of the quality of life domains. The success element was negatively related to six of the eight quality of life domains, while the centrality dimension was negatively related to five of the eight. Christopher, Kuo, Abraham, Noel, and Linz (2004) also studied the relationship between materialism and well-being, and they too found materialism to be “directly correlated with negative affect and inversely related to positive affect” (p. 469). Additionally, Christopher et al. (2004) controlled for social support to see if it would change the relationship between materialism and happiness. They conclude that even when controlling for social support, materialism was still related to negative affect, or negative psychological well-being; however, the strength of the relationship between materialism and positive psychological well-being was “significantly reduced when controlling for social support” (p. 468). What these findings offer is that materialism seems to be more highly associated with a poor psychological well-being than it is with the absence of a positive psychological state. Therefore, I felt that it was important while developing the scale to measure affluenza, that it should include some method to measure one’s level of depression. Ultimately, I settled on using several items from the Depression, Anxiety Stress Scale-21 or (DASS-21). The DASS-21 is reliable, as well as applicable for both clinical and research purposes (Norton, 2007).

Adding to this body of evidence are two cross-cultural studies. One study lends support to the link between materialism and unhappiness in the United States, while the other demonstrates that the relationship between materialism and unhappiness not isolated to the United States. In 1991, Dawson and Bamossy studied the relationship between materialism and life satisfaction among expatriate Americans living in the Netherlands, and then compared the results to US citizens living on US soil, and Dutch citizens in the Netherlands. Their findings provide "support for the negative relationship between materialism and life satisfaction" in that the American sample "did show a significant relationship between materialism and life satisfaction, but the expatriate Americans and Dutch samples did not" (p. 379). What these findings suggest, among other things, is that here in the United States many have accepted the culture of rabid consumerism resulting in acquiring those things "which other people expect us to have," however, once outside of the United States, at least in this instance, the social pressure to consume seems to have been minimized, thus materialism becomes less important, and the relationship between materialism and happiness becomes insignificant. In 2001, Ryan and Dziurawiec studied materialism and its relationship to life satisfaction in Australia. Using a sample of 162 Australian adults the findings concluded that individuals with high levels of materialism were less satisfied "with their life as a whole" than less materialistic people (p. 193). Similarly, high levels of materialism were "negatively related to place of residence, accomplishments, and health and physical condition" (p. 193).

Apparent in these findings is a clear link between level of materialism and degree of happiness. This is important and useful information that serves as the bedrock for my work.

While there are many reasons why people may be motivated to reconsider, and perhaps alter their behavior, the research described above certainly offers a valid reason for many of us to assess our beliefs, and behavior in regard to our patterns of consumption, and our views on the importance of material possessions.

Why Are We Materialistic Anyway?

Friends and family. Ahuvia and Wong (2002) found materialism to be linked to formative experiences. More specifically, their research "supported the connection between felt formative deprivation and personality materialism" (p. 399). Ahuvia and Wong used previously established models of materialism, specifically Belk's construct of materialism, which includes "a collection of three personality traits: envy, non-generosity and possessiveness" to create their construct of personality materialism (p. 390). Further adding to the literature that suggests a connection between formative experiences, family, and degree of materialism is a study by Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Denton (1997) which found "considerable evidence" that young adults with divorced or separated parents had higher levels of compulsive buying, as well as favoring a higher income over personal relations (p. 320). Flouri (1999) found both maternal materialism and peer influence to positively affect the degree of materialism among adolescents. More specifically, Flouri found that "adolescents' materialism was reliably predicated from their mothers' materialism scores, and from maternal attitudes indicating socio-oriented parental styles"; additionally, Flouri found "that materialism is related to peer influence" (p. 720). Our youth, however, are not alone in being swayed by their peers. Chan and Prendergast (2007) found that among adolescents in Hong Kong materialism is promoted through peer influence and social comparison to both peers and media figures. Similar to these findings, particularly Flouri's study regarding the power of peer pressure, is research by Rose and DeJesus (2007) that suggests that individuals who have a strong need to belong may be predisposed to higher levels of materialism. Their research also suggests that low self-monitors, or those who are not concerned with being socially accepted are less susceptible to the social pressure of buying and consuming. Christopher and Schlenker (2004) also found that fear of rejection, or more specifically the fear of being negatively evaluated, was positively associated with materialism.

While not explicit, these studies are important as they provide insight into ways in which materialistic behavior can be offset. Understanding which individuals are more predisposed to materialism, and why they are predisposed, is valuable information. Certainly we cannot reach all of those who are susceptible to peer pressure, have materialistic parents, or hail from broken homes or fear rejection; however, armed with this information we can better isolate or narrow the focus of future attempts to reduce materialism to these targeted populations. Likewise, understanding the factors that may lead to higher levels of materialism allows researchers, such as myself, to develop more effective intervention strategies.

I'll buy anything you advertise on TV. Marsha Richins (1987), a Marketing professor at the University of Missouri, set out to examine the relationship between media exposure and materialism. Her sample of 252 questionnaires included an equal number of men and women, and ages. While she found attention to advertising to be unrelated to materialism, there was a correlation between the hours spent viewing TV among those consumers who viewed commercial portrayals of consumers as realistic, and materialism. While the results are correlations these are still "provocative findings" as they show the power of the media when one perceives what they see or hear to be real (p. 355). Likewise, Harmon (2001) tested television use and whether or not it cultivates materialism. While "tenuous at best" he did find a link between TV viewing and materialism (p. 415), however, he makes the point that the lack of a strong link should not be used "to argue for minimal or no overall effects from television viewing"; instead they should be seen as "tantalizing clues about the role of television in the cultivation of materialist values" (p. 416). Adding to this body of research on the power of the media and materialistic behavior is a study by Jennifer Good (2007) of Brock University. Like others before her, Good in a national random mail-in survey sample of 1000, as well as a sample of 1000 random members of a national environmental organization, found a link between television and materialism, as well as a link between television viewing and apathy for the environment. This is quite important as it supports previous assertions that affluenza harms us in many ways, including a disconnection from, and perhaps even disrespect for the physical environment. The results of this study show "a positive main effect relationship between television viewing and a lack of concern for the natural environment" (p. 377). There is it seems, "a very high price that we all pay" as a result of our "often uncritical love of television—and the materialism that television fosters" (p. 377).

If materialism doesn't make us happy, what does it do? Materialism harms the environment, keeps us from volunteering, and causes us to borrow instead of save (Briggs, Landry, & Wood, 2007; Kilbourne & Pickett, 2008; Watson, 2003). In short, materialism makes us awfully good consumers, but rather poor citizens. In 2008, in a national phone survey of 237 people, Kilbourne and Picket of Clemson University found materialism to have a negative effect on environmental beliefs, "and these beliefs then positively affect environmental concern and environmentally responsible behaviors" (p. 885). Another important and encouraging find was that this study supported the link between "elevated levels of concern" and "the desire for behavior changes" (p. 891). This is good news for someone interested in altering people's behavior, at least as far as materialistic habits are concerned. It seems plausible that as level of concern for any particular social issue increases, a desired behavioral change may follow. Interestingly, Briggs et al. (2007) found "non-materialistic teens appear more likely to volunteer than their more materialistic peers" (p. 41). While this was mediated to some extent by the actual volunteer task another very important point was brought to light. This study also suggests that volunteering "provides individuals with an avenue through which they may express and reinforce their values" (p. 34). This is good news, as it implies that non-materialistic teenagers who volunteer are likely to continue on in that vein, as their episodes of volunteering will likely strengthen their non-materialistic value set. If a means is found to begin to reduce materialism among the most susceptible teens, and opportunities and invitations[1] to volunteer for all teens are increased, might we begin to cut a trail leading away from a future otherwise filled with materialistic, disconnected, and environmentally unfriendly adults?

Was it not borrowing money for things that were out of our reach that got us into economic trouble in the first place? People borrowed, banks borrowed, our nation borrowed, and now we have this staggering debt hampering individuals as well as the nation, and arguably the globe. When did it become acceptable, even commonplace to borrow for luxuries? While the Federal Housing Administration's (FHA) emergence in 1934 may have changed the way we bought homes in that we could borrow more money over a longer period of time, the borrowing craze did not begin then. It would be another 40 years or so before advances in computer technology changed banking and the proliferation of credit cards quickly followed (Richardson, 1974). Not surprisingly, in his research of 233 random surveys from both urbanized as well as non-urbanized areas of Pennsylvania, Watson (2003) found that more materialistic people viewed themselves not only as spenders but that they were also more inclined to borrow.

[1] Teens are over three times more likely to volunteer when they are directly asked or invited to do so, as compared to volunteers being solicited via the media (Briggs et al., 2007).

Specifically, Watson found that individuals high in materialism had more credit cards, were more likely to carry debt on their credit cards, pay finance charges as a result of that debt, and make use of installment credit. Likewise, Watson (2003) also found that "people with high levels of materialism have more favorable attitudes toward borrowing money to make luxury purchases" such as boats, swimming pools, or jewelry (p. 733). Conversely, people with low levels of materialism could be characterized as savers, investing in mutual funds, as well as stocks and bonds (Watson, 2003). The implications of these findings could be far reaching in several ways. First, if affluenza cannot be slowed might it mean are we likely to continue to be a nation living in debt, and on the edge? On the other hand, if our materialistic urges can be reduced might we also reduce our debt, as individuals as well as a nation, while we increase our savings, and a sense of future stability? While many of us likely make use of credit cards, as well as aspire to have a few nice luxuries in our life, what is wrong with saving in order to afford them instead of borrowing to buy them now? Pointing out the long-term issues, both personal and financial, of borrowing too much, too often, and the benefits that come with saving and investing may encourage some to develop healthier spending and saving habits in the future.

Experiential or material? What kinds of purchases make us most happy? In two separate and recent studies, both of which compare material and experiential purchases, it appears people find greater satisfaction when purchasing an experience versus a material product (Carter & Gilovich, 2010; Nicolao, Irwin, & Goodman, 2009). In a culture where clothing, cars, and houses are supposed to be indicators of success, these material items pale in comparison when measured against experiences like a vacation with our family, or a night out with our friends, at least when it comes to making us happy.

In a study of college students by Carter and Gilovich (2010) they find experiential purchases are easier to make, less likely to result in buyer's remorse, and contribute more significantly to our overall well-being. But, as Carter and Gilovich reveal, it is the material purchases that people tend to agonize over, later regret ,or become dissatisfied with, and they are the purchases people are more likely to compare to the purchases of others, feeding regret and rumination. Consider this: "knowing one could have had a better product is more disturbing when it is a material product"; or this: "comparisons loom larger in evaluations of material possessions than in evaluations of experiences" (Carter & Gilovich, 2010, p. 154). Similarly, "even initially satisfying material purchases are likely to deteriorate over time," whereas "an experience often becomes even more positive over time as it is embellished in memory" (p. 158). Experiential purchases encourage connection and companionship; they also "strengthen the bonds of friendship" (p. 158). Thus, it would seem wise to spend whatever disposable income one has available to purchase an experience, even if it is a weekend camping trip with old friends, instead of a material product. And yet, in our consumer world, it is material products that many dream about, work to obtain, and it is material products that serve to reflect our success, accomplishments and even our status. This seems to be contrary to what is truly in our best interest and it also reveals the tremendous power that culture wields over all of us. I am reminded of my own childhood and the buzz that followed the return to school after the Christmas holidays. The question everybody asked was what others had received for Christmas. Perhaps the better question, and the question we should encourage our progeny to ask is, what did you do while on break?

Research by Nicolao et al. (2009) also supports that "experiences lead to greater happiness than material purchases" at least for positive purchases (p. 196). Additionally, they posit that positive experiences live on in memories, thus they "lend themselves to even more positive reinterpretations over time as the negative aspects of them fade" (p. 197). Conversely, negative experiential purchases may bring about greater disappointment than negative material purchases. Their results clearly suggest that "on average the most happiness obtained through purchasing is likely to be obtained through experiential purchases that turn out well" (p. 196). While social scientists may continue to explore and debate how and why it is that experiential purchases bring us greater happiness, it seems quite clear that they do. What seems less debatable and far clearer is the obvious inconsistency between what people believe will bring them happiness and what actually makes them happy. Nicolao et al. (2009) ask why, when it comes to making purchases that we think will make us happy, we "guess wrong so often" (p. 197)? Indeed. This is yet another reminder of the power of consumer culture and its ability to manipulate us to act in a manner that is not always in our best interest. Supporting these findings are Millar and Thomas (2009), whose research found that "both high and low materialists associated experiential purchases with high levels of happiness" (p. 702). Materialists, however, were happier with material purchases than with creative activity. Millar and Thomas suggest that perhaps materialists collect experiences much like they collect objects. Nonetheless, since experiential purchases tend to produce greater levels of happiness then it may motivate future behavior. If purchasing experiences like vacations or trips to an amusement park are spent with family and friends, and if those ties are strengthened as a result, then it might lead to changes in values. Kasser (2003) reminds us that while our behavior is often rooted in our values, "we can nonetheless change our behavior before we change our values" (p. 103). In fact, Kasser suggests that by engaging in more "intrinsically oriented" activities such as volunteering, playing with our children, or spending time with our spouse, we may alter our values as these activities result in "the healthier part of your value system" being strengthened (p. 104).

So if it is not in our best interest, why do we continue to act in our materialistic ways? Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Wong (2009) help to answer this question as their research expands our "understanding of the consequences of materialism"; specifically, their findings suggest that name brand products provide a means for materialistic individuals to cope (p. 9). Moreover, throughout their research "the idea that brand connections provide consumers with a sense of security is a recurrent theme" (p. 2), and "materialistic individuals form self and communal brand connections as a means of assuaging existential insecurity" (p. 9). Kashdan and Breen (2007) offer another coping strategy used by materialists. Their research supports not only the idea that materialistic values result in diminished well-being, less autonomy, connection, and gratitude, but also the theory that materialistic people avoid experiences that may result in them being negatively evaluated. Seeking to escape or avoid events or situations that may cause them to fall short of what is expected, materialistic people narrow their attention to the "immediate environmental stimuli (material possessions)," which may result in "cognitive destruction, or a shift towards less meaningful and less integrated forms of thinking" (Kashdan & Breen, 2007, p. 525). This study sheds light on why materialistic people are less happy. Worried about what others may think of them, and avoiding unpleasant situations only "moves individuals further away from the elements that lead to fulfilling lives," including meaningful relationships, a sense of freedom, and control and choice over actions (p. 525). It seems as though this is one vicious cycle. Some individuals who are highly materialistic use purchases as a means to cope, and as such they reinforce their materialistic ways. This only serves to create a new coping mechanism for some, that being a chronic avoidance of the kinds of situations and experiences that may challenge them to grow in healthier, non-materialistic ways. Experiential avoidance "disrupts positive experiences and events in everyday life" (p. 523) and delays movement toward "personally meaningful goals" (p. 534). This research adds to the list of reasons why a method capable of interrupting this cycle is needed. Leading the next generation away from the toxicity of materialism not only makes life better for us all; it also encourages personal growth, and self-actualization, which is one of the core responsibilities of any faculty member anywhere, regardless of subject discipline.

As evidenced here, the elements of culture can woo adults who supposedly possess better impulse control and restraint into making purchases they do not need. What then might be the effect of culture's power on our youth, and what does that mean for our collective futures?

Affluenza and adolescents—what might the future hold? Bombarded with commercials and advertisements from many different directions all suggesting that trendy fashions and expensive toys are solutions to finding happiness, today's youth seem destined to be hopelessly materialistic. Over $1 billion is spent every year on advertising to children, and even more is spent on promotions and packaging that target youth (Goldberg et al., 2003). Not surprisingly "American tween and teens have emerged as the most brand-oriented, consumer-involved, and materialist generation in history" (Schor, 1998, p. 13). Materialistic youth tend to shop more, save less, and have more negative views about school, and their performance in school is less than that of their non-materialistic peers (Goldberg et al., 2003). But what are the future ramifications for those who do not like school, and whose school performance is questionable? The issue of materialism among our nation's youth is a troubling one. While they might be the most materialistic generation, not all of them are materialistic. Chaplin and John (2007) identified the existence of age differences in materialism, specifically that materialism increases from middle childhood to early adolescence, and then begins to decline during late adolescence. This is good news. If an intervention aimed at reducing materialism occurs at the later stage in adolescence, corresponding with the decline that Chaplin and John's research found, then might the targets of the intervention be more primed to hear the message? As an individual's level of materialism decreases they may be more open to hearing about the consequences of materialism, and the value that comes with a non-materialistic lifestyle. Trying to convince a 12 year old that they do not need what everyone else has seems like a lot of work that will likely bring few results. Focusing on the age group that is most open to hearing and considering the message seems far more prudent.

While our nation's children are arguably the most materialistic of any generation, there is some good news. Chaplin (2009) found that material items are not necessarily what make children the happiest. In her research of 300 participants ranging in age from 8 to 18, Chaplin finds that people and pets as well as achievements are reported to be more important than material things in making youth happy. Worthy of noting, among the 7th and 8th graders, is the fact that material things were second only to people and pets. Yet this trend is not continued among the 11th and 12th graders, where people and pets take the number two spot, achievements are ranked most important, and sports ranked third. Material items take next to last place, outranking hobbies in importance. Additionally, Chaplin's research consisted of having study participants create a happiness collage, and similar results were found with only one minor difference, the eldest group listed material items third instead of fourth, as in the first part of the study. This research is important in part because there are limited studies regarding what makes children happy, but more so because of the implication that we as a society, but particularly as teachers and parents, may need to do more to assist children in building and maintaining healthy relationships. As a researcher interested in combating affluenza, this insight is crucial.

Despite these worrisome trends, it is nevertheless encouraging to know that youth elsewhere around the globe are not quite as materialistic as children here in the United States. In a 2006 study on Hungarian youth, Piko found that even in this post-socialist country, youth rated healthy behaviors like diet control and refraining from smoking to be more important contributions to their level of life happiness than materialism. Piko further noted that while materialistic success (meaning material possessions are a sign of success) is positively related to youth's life satisfaction, material happiness (meaning that happiness depends on materialistic possessions) was negatively related. Most important to the youth in this study, and likely in stark contrast to youth in the United States, was their perceived health. Unlike Chaplin (2009), Piko did not look at how people and animals contribute to happiness but she did consider other factors influencing happiness such as healthy behaviors, academic achievement, and physical activity. Of course, different studies look at and consider different things. Nonetheless, what I find to be particularly striking as well as hopeful in both of these studies is that materialism was not the primary indicator of happiness in either.

What both the Chaplin (2009) and Piko (2006) studies suggest is that there may be some mechanisms to minimalize materialistic behaviors from pervading the next generation. By encouraging a healthy lifestyle as well as healthy relationships among our youth, it may in turn increase their level of happiness. If so, then perhaps the importance of staying healthy, maintaining connections and valuing relationships will follow them into adulthood, relegating materialistic values to a lower rung of importance, and thus combating one element of affluenza.

While both heartening and worrisome news about the materialistic values of our youth can be found in the literature, what still needs to be explored is what the research has found regarding materialism among college students, or the effects of materialism on this age group. Kasser and Ahuvia (2002) studied business students in Singapore, and found not surprisingly that those with strong materialist values also reported low self-esteem, vitality, and contentment, but higher levels of anxiety, unhappiness, and psychical symptomology. This study is important for two specific reasons; first it shows that the negative consequences of materialistic values are not isolated to the United States. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, this study focused on business students enrolled in a business school, the kind of "environment, which should encourage materialistic values" and in a country "which emphasizes public face" (p. 139). It would seem that the relationship of values to well-being should be contingent on the values that correspond with one's social and cultural norms, thus "materialistic values should relate to high well-being in Singaporean business students," but that is not what the data found (p. 139). Even in an environment that embraces materialism, materialism still produces discontent. The negative consequences brought on by affluenza are not unique to the United States. Forging a path leading away from affluenza, from a preoccupation with having, accumulating, shopping, and comparing ourselves to those who have more would not only benefit the United States, but could help others take a similar path away from discontent, and toward a healthier, more stable future.

Finally, Roberts and Jones (2001) studied credit card habits among college students and found that 55% got their first credit card as freshmen, while 25% of college students used credit cards while still in high school. Perhaps as many as 80% of college students have a credit card, and 20% of those may have as many as four or more credit cards (Ritzer, 1995; TERI, 1998). Such early use of credit cards among a population that still displays quite a bit of irresponsible behavior leads to further issues, which according Roberts and Jones includes not only poor grades and depression, but dropping out of college all together and even poor credit report scores that can "inhibit their ability to secure a job or attend graduate school" (p. 232). Not only do credit cards among college students often produce the issues mentioned above, credit card use tends to spur on compulsive buying, and such behavior has detrimental consequences for all of us, as well as the physical environment (Roberts & Jones, 2001). The relationship between colleges, students, and credit cards is complex. Many colleges not only allow the marking of credit cards on campus, they also allow students to charge their tuition and fees. As colleges are somewhat culpable in perpetuating these issues, it should be incumbent on them to attempt to provide incoming students with awareness and training programs regarding responsible use of credit cards.

What this literature review imparts is the definitive link between materialism and unhappiness, the issues facing adolescents as well as college students in regard to credit card usage, peer pressure, and the toll of worrying about being rejected. This review of the literature also sheds light on some of the causes of materialism, who is more susceptible to developing such unhealthy traits, as well as the link between TV viewing, and lack of concern for the environment. This analysis also points out some important considerations for my intervention, such as including in the intervention the promotion of a healthy life style, the value of interpersonal relationships, a discussion of what types of purchases make us most happy, and the benefits associated with volunteering as well as saving for a purchase versus borrowing for one. Additionally, as evidenced by the literature herein, materialistic tendencies begin to decline in late adolescence, thus the population more capable of truly hearing and heeding the message of an affluenza intervention may in fact be college-aged young adults. Finally, this literature review provides additional support for the importance of increasing the awareness of just how dangerous affluenza is to all of us, as Kilbourne and Pickett (2008) found elevated levels of concern tends to increase ones desire to change their behavior.

The benefits of experiential and service learning. As the intervention for this research included the requirement of service learning or experiential learning hours, it is important to review the literature relevant to service learning, and highlight the benefits associated with such. Service learning or experiential learning seems particularly important for the understanding and development of one's sociological imagination, a central concept in any introductory sociology course. Beyond the relevancy to sociology, service learning produces many other worthwhile benefits. It is an effective tool that helps students connect to the subject matter at a greater depth than through reading and lecture alone (Wright, 2000). It also helps in addressing the various learning styles among students and "combines abstract, concrete, reflective and active learning" (Wright, 2000, p. 117). More importantly, service learning promotes problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and provides opportunities for students to synthesize class and real world information (Mooney &Edwards, 2001; Roehlkepartain, 2007). Moreover, a longitudinal study with a national sample of 22, 236 college undergraduates found service learning to benefit academic performance, self-efficacy, leadership, and interpersonal skills, as well as affecting values other values such as an increase in racial understanding (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Roehlkepartain, 2007). Research by Roehlkepartain (2007) supported the findings from the longitudinal study referenced above, and further found service learning enhanced the ability to work in teams, the ability to plan more effectively, as well as increasing an interest among the students in furthering their education.

For these reasons, and for the fact that students will be exposed first-hand to some of the consequences of affluenza, primarily the overabundance of material possessions, service learning was integral to this study.

Directions for the Future

While still somewhat new as a research topic, there is nevertheless a good bit of exploration into some of the components of affluenza, particularly materialism and its relationship to our overall happiness. Yet affluenza is bigger than this. It goes beyond whether or not our materialistic ways deter our happiness. It is also the kind of social phenomenon that harms our environment, encourages an extreme of excess resulting in deadly deprivation for some, and usurps the resources from future generations. While many of us fight the battle of the bulge or can no longer park in our garages because they are too full of stuff, one fifth of the world goes without basic necessities and “lives in extreme poverty slowing dying of hunger and disease” (Degraaff et al., 2005, p. 88). While it seems clear from the research examined here that materialism fails to make us happy and quite clearly our overconsumption harms others around the globe, we continue to consume. Why this is the case needs to be further explored.

Even though I am encouraged by the fact that some research indicates that children still find greater meaning in their connections, there is still cause for alarm. A 2004 survey of incoming UCLA students showed that students ranked becoming very well off financially as more important than any other goal (Degraff et al., 2005). Perhaps if youth were encouraged to hold onto and value those connections we could begin to stem the tide, at least among some. Finding ways to do that and enlightening teachers, parents, and adults in general to see the benefits of this could prove to be a rather big challenge. I wonder, after having reviewed this literature, if most truly know the peril we are causing others as well as ourselves?

It seems that one direction that research still needs to go is to explore whether or not those who consume more than they need understand the extreme consequences of their actions. Further, might this understanding then curb their materialistic appetite? I find that using affluenza as a teaching tool is powerful in helping to cultivate a global perspective and civic mindedness among students. Class discussions certainly suggest that as students begin to understand the interconnectedness of our world they are better able to weigh the consequences of their actions and consequently they indicate a desire to begin to change. Yet, I have no idea if this follows them through the rest of their college years or into their professional lives. Action to address the harmful effects of affluenza is needed. I believe the research herein makes that clear, if for no other reason than to address the issue of human happiness and life satisfaction. How we go about taking action that is effective is the burning question, one that needs to be answered and answered quickly. It seems one important area where new research is needed is to assess consumer's level of materialism, their understanding of the consequences of their behavior, and whether being enlightened to the harmful effects of affluenza encourages them to slow their consumption of goods. This is the goal of this dissertation. I recognize that for many people material possessions such as their car, their house, and their clothes represent a level of success, and are in some instances an outward expression of their personality and public persona. Therefore, asking people to reduce their consumption, and to think differently about materialism is likely to be an uphill battle. Moreover, consumer culture runs deep in the United States, and has been linked to our sense of individualism and the American Dream. That is why this collection of literature associating materialism with lower levels of happiness is so important to my proposed work. Without it, convincing others to think differently about consumerism and material possessions would be much harder to sell. Armed with this information, I have a bit of leverage when attempting to encourage folks to reconsider whether or not money does in fact buy happiness.

Preparing for Battle

While the specifics of the methodology used for in my research will be discussed in detail in the proceeding chapter, I wish to integrate highlights of it here. By doing so, the application of theory to the steps of my research is made clearer. In very brief terms, I carried out a curricular intervention among a class of college students with the aim being to alter their behavior as it pertains to affluenza. The intervention was a two-pronged approach. First, it served to raise awareness about affluenza's many ill effects. Secondly, in light of recent research highlighting the benefits of intrinsic goals, it exposed the benefits associated with community involvement, personal growth, and maintaining healthy relationships (Kasser, 2003). By approaching this issue on various levels, the intervention had a greater chance of affecting behavioral change.

The Reasoned Action Theory. Briefly stated, the Reasoned Action Theory posits that human social behavior is based on what a particular behavior's consequence may be, as well as the demands of the social environment, and the perceived ability or control to actually carrying out the behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). In other words, one may reap some sort of reward for a particular behavior, like feeling good about themselves by donating blood through the Red Cross, they may see that behavior as needed, even encouraged by their social environment, but because of the time frame of the blood drive or medication that they take, they are not able to participate. These three elements, which are identified as behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs, are important when working to alter social behavior. They work together to fashion one's attitude about a particular behavior. While not wanting to over-simplify a rather detailed theory, a brief summary is this: the more favorable the attitude one has about a behavior, then the stronger their intention is to perform that particular behavior. And, the stronger the intent, “the more likely it is that the behavior will be carried out” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 21). It is beliefs and attitudes working together that provide “the foundation for intentions and actions” (p. 399). Of course, actual skills and abilities play a role here too. One may have a positive attitude about a particular behavior, and may intend fully on carrying out that behavior, but lack the requisite skill or ability to do so. In order to alter behavior then, changes must be made to the behavioral, normative, and control beliefs held by an individual.

Learning Theory and Motivation Theory. Not wanting to rely solely on Fishbein and Ajzen’s (2010) Theory of Reasoned Action, I felt it important to consider other theories. Interestingly, as I begin to look through the literature I found that other theories also offered some insights into changing behavior and realized that Fishbein and Ajzen’s Reasoned Action approach is seemingly built on some of the key components of Social Learning Theory as well as Motivation Theory. Thus, it was important to look more closely at these two theories in particular to see what guidance they could offer in the planning and implementation of this intervention. In short, what Social Learning Theory suggests is that we learn by observing models in our social environment, therefore our learning occurs through “imitation and modeling” (Weiss, 1978, p. 711). Characteristics of the individual modeling a behavior, such as their status, power, and attractiveness, may result in a more favorable impression, which could influence the extent to which they are imitated (Weiss, 1978). This coincides to some degree with the concept of subjective norms, found within the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). A subjective norm is a person’s “perception that important others prescribe, desire, or expect the performance or nonperformance of a specific behavior” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 131). While we may learn by observing and imitating, we seem to be more heavily influenced by those regarded as having a higher status, or are otherwise held in high esteem.

Beyond learning through observing the actions and behaviors of others, humans also learn what the particular consequences are of any given action or behavior. As a result, humans not only imitate behavior, we specifically attempt to imitate the behaviors that produce the most desirable consequences while avoiding those that generate negative outcomes (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). In other words, behavior is reinforced by the consequences it produces. This idea is found within the Theory of Reasoned Action as well, particularly in regard to the concept of injunctive norms. Injunctive norms motivate people to behave in certain ways not only because a social agent might model a particular behavior, but also because the social agent is believed to have the ability to punish or reward behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). This certainly helps to explain the cycle of affluenza, in that having the right kind of car, clothes, or electronics for example, is often rewarded or reinforced with positive attention, social acceptance, or even adoration. Likewise, not having the right stuff may result in teasing, ostracizing, or even avoidance, compelling individuals to follow the lead of those around them. While these theories can help explain the proliferation of affluenza, can they help in reversing this trend?

Packaging the information and empowering people to change. The discussion thus far has focused primarily on the modeling of new behavior. What still needs to be discussed is how the presentation of new information might also bring change. In the Reasoned Action Approach, beliefs reflect the information people have that is relevant to a particular behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Therefore, exposing people to new information may alter existing beliefs or create new ones, thus altering behavior. Of course, that depends to some extent on whether or not the new information is accepted. Research in the field of persuasive communications suggests that new information is more readily accepted when it is bolstered by supportive evidence (Stiff & Mongeau, 2003). Beyond supportive evidence, the new information must be presented clearly and hold the interest of those receiving the information. “Thus, when message receivers are highly involved in the topic, message characteristics such as strength of supporting evidence and argument quality should influence attitude change” (Stiff & Mongeau, 2003, p. 132). Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) also recognize that new information can produce change; “Thus, exposure to new information about the possible consequences of engaging in a behavior may be expected to produce changes in people’s attitudes toward performing that behavior, changes consistent with the nature of the new information” (p. 316). This certainly provides some hope that new information, presented effectively about the harmful effects of affluenza could potentially alter people’s attitudes and behaviors regarding consumption and consumerism.

Since an underlying premise for the Theory of Reasoned Action, Social Learning Theory, and Motivation Theory is that we engage in behavior for which there is positive reinforcement, might the introduction of a new behavior that is reinforced intrinsically be of benefit? As previously noted, recent research by Niemiec et al. (2009) certainly suggests that intrinsic goals increase life satisfaction, well-being, and happiness. Thus, might an intervention that introduces the benefits of civic engagement and provides opportunities for students to engage in such generate the intrinsic rewards needed to result in continued community involvement? And, if so, as one becomes more fulfilled and happy with their life as a result, might this reduce their materialistic tendencies? Kasser’s (2003) quantitative research with predominately college students in the United States and Singapore supports this notion. In fact, Kasser encourages his readers to engage in new “intrinsically oriented behaviors” and suggests that if they do, two important things are likely to occur (p. 104). Kasser predicts the following: First you will have more experiences that satisfy your needs. Thus, your happiness and well-being should rise. Secondly, by having such experiences, you will probably begin to see the value of intrinsic pursuits. As such, the healthier part of your value system will be strengthened, and the importance of materialism should begin to wane (p. 104).

The human connection. What the literature suggests as an important step in this intervention is to acquaint the students with the rewards that come from community involvement. Equally important to the intervention was to address the concern that some people with materialistic values tend to see other people "as a means to their own materialistic ends" (Kasser, 2003, p. 66). Therefore, the intervention attempted to challenge the view that it is acceptable to see other people as objects to be used, or that people are the sum of their possessions. Is it possible to change how materialistic individuals come to see and think about others? Fortunately, Social Learning Theory offers some hope that such change can occur via the imitative processes. "Stable changes in the values of individuals can occur as a result of their observation of models expressing attitudes towards various objects and preferences among classes of outcomes (Weiss, 1978, p. 712).

What I believe was helpful in getting the students to see others, as real people and not objects, was the assigned viewing of several videos. These videos included some startling, although brief, imagery of the human deprivation wrought by affluenza. Visual images of this sort are important as human suffering moves beyond being simply two words strung together that references unknown people elsewhere in the world. Such images help people begin to see that human suffering means that a real human being is suffering. It puts a human face on the issue and evokes emotion. Research supports the importance of visual imagery; "The impact of images often surpasses that which can be communicated with words" (Green, 1990, p. 20). Perhaps, the old cliché that "seeing is believing" may hold some merit in this case.

It is also my contention that the service-learning component of the intervention helped the students begin to see themselves and others based on their merit, and not wealth. Coming to the realization that giving back to one's community and making a difference in the lives of others is possible through a donation of time and not of money is an important realization. This experience may have help some of students appreciate that even without having money, they have worth and are capable of important contributions. If they see this in themselves, perhaps they can begin to recognize it in others.

Bringing It Together

This review of the literature is quite compelling regarding the harmful effects of affluenza and its components. Equally evident from this review is the lack of research into how to counter this social trend. Additionally, the review of the literature provided insight into the style and methods used to study affluenza. While I was able to glean a great deal of information from this review, several things are noteworthy. First, this review exposed me to the Belk (1985), Belk and Ger (1990), and Richins and Dawson (1992) scales of materialism, all of which were useful guides for my methodological approach. Secondly, it helped to solidify one of the underlying questions that drove my research: Do people really know how destructive their patterns of consumption are, and if they were made aware, might they change? This is of course was my goal, to raise awareness and expose the harmful effects of affluenza with the hope of changing behavior.

By investigating and summarizing the various theories regarding changing behavior, I was able to more strategically plan and carry out this intervention. While a more detailed discussion of this curricular intervention will follow in the proceeding chapter, what seems apparent from this review on theories regarding behavioral change are three key points. First, new information must be presented in various forms, including visual images, and done so in a compelling manner with strong supporting evidence in order to truly confront and alter existing attitudes and beliefs. Secondly, since humans often model behavior that they view as favorable, it is important to introduce new and attractive alternatives to the many existing models that hold out consumerism and consumption as favorable. Finally, new behaviors that can be positively reinforced need to be introduced so that they may, over time, begin to replace the old behavior associated with materialistic pursuits.

In the chapter that follows, I will outline in detail the curricular intervention, as well as the methodological steps, such as conducting a focus group, administering a survey, and utilizing SPSS for statistical analysis, that were utilized in this undertaking.

Chapter III: Methodology

While I have spent a great deal of time thinking about, reading about, and writing about affluenza, I recognize that not everyone shares my understanding of this phenomenon. Likewise, I also recognize that one can become somewhat myopic when spending a great deal of time focusing on a particular subject. The proverbial adage of not being able to see the forest for the trees can at times be an issue for any researcher. Seeking new input, and fresh eyes with which to approach this topic, as well as having a genuine interest in how others think about, understand, and respond to the social issue of affluenza, prior to implementing my dissertation research, as part of an Individual Learning Achievement for the Antioch Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program, I planned and conducted a focus group. First utilized in the 1920s, focus groups differ from interviews or questionnaires as the interaction among participants is key, and often constitute the place wherein meaning can be uncovered (Kitzinger, 1994). The decision to conduct a focus group was made in part because such a methodology would begin to reveal how affluenza manifests itself in others as well as how people think, talk, and share ideas about this social phenomenon. Additionally, beyond the goal of gaining insight into the unique and various manifestations of affluenza, I hoped that a focus group would uncover recurring themes or ideas that could be useful in the creation of an affluenza scale. As Grudens-Schuck, Allen, and Larson (2004), who compiled the Iowa State University Methodology Brief on Focus Group Fundamentals, point out, focus groups help the researcher to see the meaning behind the facts and produce insight into an issue that other research methods cannot. Gaining such insight and meaning is essential if one is to build a scale that represents the essence of affluenza in a way that allows others to recognize it, and assess it.

One of the noted strengths of focus groups is that it allows for synergy and spontaneity, thus generating new ideas and perspectives that help develop a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being explored (Grudens-Schuck et al., 2004). This was certainly the case in the focus group that I conducted. Hearing others speak about how they see affluenza in themselves and in others permitted me to view affluenza with a fresh set of eyes. Not only did it reinforce for me what I had already come to understand about the nature of affluenza, but it also created new pathways for me to explore this social phenomenon.

Focus Group Process

Organizing a focus group is likely more work intensive than many may think. It is not a matter of simply sitting down with a group and discussing an issue or concern. While one goes into such an endeavor with a general topic area to be discussed, the particulars that the researcher wishes the members of the focus group to consider and talk about must be narrowed down. Grudens-Schuck et al. (2004) suggest that a focus group session should be limited to 60 to 90 minutes. Thus, care must be given into preparing an outline of questions that as precisely as possible directs the conversation to key aspects of the phenomenon being studied. Other preparations involve recruiting individuals to participate in the focus group, handling the appropriate logistics such as room reservations, and seeking approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to carry out research with human subjects. Likewise, an informed consent form must be created and approved by the IRB as well. These preliminary steps are time consuming, but are requirements that must be met. Conducting the focus group session and then extrapolating meaning from the discussion of the focus group requires time as well as patience.

I was fortunate that during the Fall 2010 semester, I taught an honors section of Introduction to Sociology that was in a blended or hybrid format, meaning that part of the class was held online. With the appropriate approval, I was able to utilize this class of 9 students as my focus group. This saved me tremendous time in not having to recruit members or go through the steps of finding and reserving a meeting space. It was also appropriate in the sense that affluenza is of sociological interest and therefore it was not a misuse of class time. Finally, since focus groups should "consist of people of similar characteristics" this small class of all white honors students from working to middle-class backgrounds met this criterion, creating a very convenient pre-made focus group for me to utilize (Grudens-Schuck et al., 2004, p. 2).

Since this class was blended it allowed me to complete some of the necessary preliminary work with the class ahead of time via our online sessions. Specifically, once I narrowed down five items directed at various aspects of affluenza, I was able to post those items and encourage the students to begin to respond. Their responses allowed me to further narrow down the direction of the focus group session. Based on discussions with my project mentor, Dr. Carol Baron, the plan was to create a list of items aimed at providing new or deeper insights into affluenza. Recognizing that I would not have time to hold numerous focus group sessions, it was decided that the initial items would be posted in the online format of the class, and the items that triggered the most responses or discussion should be the questions utilized in the focus group session. In the online session, students were asked to respond to two or three of the items of their choosing. Item one generated the most discussion, while items two and three produced an equal amount of discussion and only slightly less than question one. The items were:

1) How do you see affluenza manifest itself in your life and in the life of those around you?
2) What aspects of culture do you think affluenza is most attributable to? In other words is it deeply entrenched in our values, beliefs, norms, etc.

3) If you see affluenza in yourself when did you begin to develop these feelings of wanting "the right stuff" and where did those ideas come from?

Since these items generated the most interest in the online session they were the three items that I took to the focus group for further examination; however, due to time constraints only items one and three were discussed.

The focus group session began by asking the first question and allowing each student to respond fully before moving on. While the session was recorded and later transcribed, I also jotted down recurring ideas or themes worthy of further exploration. It should be noted that in the process of answering question one, the student that began the focus group discussion also answered question three. These items fit together well and since there were no noted issues, I asked the rest of the group to proceed in this manner. Following completion of the first question, we returned to some of the main themes and ideas that were generated. This was done for clarification, further explanation, and evaluation such as ranking items by importance. For instance, brand name clothing and having cool toys came up repeatedly in the first round of questions, so I asked the group to rank the importance of these items. The students unanimously concurred that as a child, toys are most important in terms of fitting in or being cool, but in middle school and high school toys take a back seat to brand name clothing. After high school, or during adulthood, toys (such as cars or boats) become most important again, while clothing becomes less important. The focus group proceeded in this way until all the reoccurring themes and ideas had been discussed and ranked.

While I certainly had some advantages in the process like having a class to utilize as a focus group, I was also disadvantaged in some ways. The class only met for 50 minutes, but as indicated previously the ideal time of a focus group is 60 to 90 minutes. It is also preferable to hold several focus group sessions. This was just not feasible considering my class schedule; however, as previously noted, I was able to meet online with the students in a preliminary session. Further, it was my impression that because I knew the students well and because of their existing comfort level with each other as classmates, this worked primarily to my advantage. There were, however, some drawbacks to this arrangement. Because of their comfort level with me and with each other, there was little hesitation to begin the dialogue, to ask questions, and to follow up with each other, much like a healthy classroom discussion. On the other hand, because they were classmates and would see each other again, there may have been some holding back so as to not diminish their standing or reputation. Nonetheless, I believe that the advantages well outweighed the disadvantages in this case.

During the process of facilitating the focus group, I quickly surmised that the skill needed for such a task should not be trivialized. Maintaining focus, while simultaneously allowing for spontaneity in order for new ideas and insight to be uncovered takes some work. When the conversation strays too far from topic or if an individual begins to monopolize the dialogue, the researcher must redirect the focus. Likewise, if there are members of the focus group that are not fully engaged, the researcher has to work to draw them into the conversation. All the while, the facilitator needs to take notes, keep track of time, and work to ensure that the energy and flow of the discussion remains healthy.

This was the first focus group that I facilitated and I undoubtedly made some mistakes. Specifically, there were a few individuals that I should have redirected more quickly instead of allowing them to wander in the conversation as far as they did. There were also a couple of individuals that were overly quiet and would nod in response to a question or a comment made by a peer, but would not add their own additional comments or thoughts. I should have pursued their insights more aggressively. Overall, the focus group was successful in numerous ways. Not only was I able to begin to view affluenza from a new perspective, the focus group session also generated many items for the creation of the scale, as I will discuss shortly. I was encouraged by the fact that the students readily admitted the influence of affluenza in their own lives. Most encouraging, however, was their genuine desire to begin to alter how they think about possessions and material accumulation.

Focus Group Insights

As a consequence of the focus group session over 30 items were generated for the proposed scale. Some of the scale items, particularly the items pertaining to stress and depression, were adapted from the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale or the DASS21; however, the remaining items were by-and-large produced from the comments, insights, and thoughts from the members of the focus group. This was in keeping with the overall expected outcome of a focus group session. As Abell, Springer, and Kamata, (2009) point out, focus groups “provide opportunities for brain storming potential terms and phrases that can be used later in developing meaningful items” (p. 29). Some examples of meaningful scale items that resulted from the focus group include the following: One member of the focus group talked about getting dressed in the morning as a high school student and worrying about how his choice of clothing might affect the outcome of the day. “If you didn’t have the right clothes that’s what really scared you. You had to wake up in the morning and put your clothes on and it always scared the crap out of me—am I going to be made fun or something today?” From this question and response alone I generated several items for the scale such as:

- It makes me feel better about myself to have what everybody else has.
- I worry about not fitting in if I do not have the right stuff.

Another example from the focus group that helped in the creation of items for the scale dealt with the accumulation of possessions. As one individual, a non-traditional student with several children remarked, “I thought we had to have more. If I bought one box of Legos I’d have to buy two, because if he [her son] was happy with one box then he’ll be even happier with two.” This same student went on to remark how quickly the house can get cluttered when you have so much stuff but only limited space. From these ideas I came up with the following scale items:

- I have far more things than what I need.
- Whoever has the most toys wins.
- I am in need of more storage space.
- My storage spaces (garage, attic, cupboards, etc.) are nearly completely filled.

As illustrated above, six items for the scale were generated from essentially three comments and less than two minutes of conversation. The process thus proved to be immensely productive.

Additionally, I was able to glean new insight into how our desire to fit in, a characteristic of affluenza, moves beyond the material and into managing one’s image or perception in non-material ways. I believe that affluenza includes impression management, that it is a form of posturing, and that we often cave into the pressures of affluenza at a tremendous cost to ourselves. During the focus group session the students talked about how “some kids would shred up their jeans to make it look like they bought them that way, because it’s cool.” From this idea about damaging our property in order to look cool, another student shared a story about a summer camp he went to as a youth. During one summer there was a camper who could not navigate the rope swing over the river. He tried unsuccessfully numerous times, climbing up the rope, swinging across river and hitting a tree full on. Wanting to prove himself, he continued trying until he could no longer physically get back up on the rope. Beyond bruises and abrasions this particular camper suffered broken ribs, all in attempt to achieve the appropriate image. When I asked the students what this sort of behavior was about, their response was, "We just want to be accepted." The desire to fit in is strong. While I have long believed that people submit to affluenza at great costs, this sampling from the focus group shows just how far some are willing to go, how much they are willing to suffer in order to fit in to be like everybody else. If individuals will allow their physical being to be pummeled, why wouldn't they allow their bank accounts, their relationships, and their communities to take a beating as well? It seems that for some it is worth it, as long as in the end, they fit in.

Lastly, I'll share an insight regarding the loss of community, the sense of isolation, and the inability to be your true self as consequences of the desire to be accepted. One of the students talked about a party he went to in high school that was held out in the middle of a secluded cornfield, a well-known party setting for the local high school students. While he said someone must have invited him, he remembers just walking around and not really talking to anyone but being there simply because it was the place to be and the place to be seen. It was not about socializing, connecting, meeting new people, and making new friends. It was about being in the right place with the right people, even if you did not know each other's names.

On a more positive note, I asked the focus group if this intense desire to have the right stuff, to look the part, or be seen with the right people was still as strong for them now as it was in high school. Their response was a resounding no. For most of them it appears that attending college helped to spark change. When I asked why this was, their responses ranged from, "You start to realize who you are," to the importance of finding "a peer group that accepts you as is." According to one student. "I'm much happier now that I don't have to worry about it [having the right stuff]." Another student commented that as a poor college student, buying food was more of a priority than clothes. For him, wanting the right stuff quickly took a back seat to wanting to eat. Finally, the student who felt in her first years of motherhood that buying more Legos meant being a good mom said this: “I try to explain to my kids you don’t have to go to the Aeropostale store to get an Aeropostale shirt. You can go to Goodwill and get the exact same one and no one will know the difference.”

For me, the success of this focus group goes beyond the new insights into affluenza and the creation of scale items. This focus group also offered hope, an important ingredient to be sure, in the recipe for change.

Understanding Scale Construction

Affluenza, as previously discussed, is a deeply rooted social phenomenon with a wide array of tentacles burrowing deeply into the fabric of US culture, as well as abroad. This particular social problem has been of great interest for me for many years due to its complex nature and the many social issues it produces. Affluenza is more than simply being materialistic or caught up in the culture of conspicuous consumption, although these are certainly pieces of it. Affluenza reaches much further than this. The level of materialism and desire to consume is so voracious that the process of consuming too much, or stretching oneself too thin by working excessively in order to continue such levels of consumption, harms relationships, communities, and bank accounts as well as individual and global health.

There is a fairly robust body of research on materialism, including several noted materialism scales, such as Belk (1984) and Richins and Dawson (1992). Several books with the title of affluenza have also been written by such authors as Degraaf et al. (2005) and James (2007) that offer an affluenza checklist of sorts, allowing readers to assess whether they have been inflicted with affluenza with a simple yes or no response to 10 or 15 questions. These checklists may encourage one to reflect and think about whether or not they might be afflicted with affluenza, but they do not appear to be psychometrically sound. Nowhere in the James (2007) or Degraaf et al. (2005) books is there an explanation or discussion into the process of the creation and testing of these checklists. Likewise, I have yet to find in the literature a scale that measures the many components of affluenza. What is needed is a scale that measures the whole of affluenza and not just materialism or consumption. It is imperative that there be such a scale so it can be determined if efforts to mediate affluenza are successful. Such a scale could measure affluenza levels both before and after a curricular intervention, thus guiding and informing the work of change.

Survey/Scale Construction

Prior to this dissertation work, during my Individual Learning Achievement, I also worked on developing an affluenza scale. The first step, as any first step in research, was to conduct a thorough review of the literature. Even though I have been reading and writing about affluenza for several years and have acquainted myself with a great deal of the existing literature, I still spent time reviewing what new material I could find. There were two areas of particular interest: First, I wanted to review the literature that pertained to the construction or revision of scales measuring social phenomena related to affluenza, such as materialism or consumption. The findings of the articles discussing the processes used in constructing or revising scales of this nature are located in the “Matrix of Articles with Scale Develop and Revision” which is attached as Appendix B. Additionally, in my literature review, I sought out as many varied definitions of affluenza that I could find. This was in keeping with Clark and Watson’s (1995) recommendation that the review should include all past attempts at conceptualizing the construct. Additionally, the Barbuto and Wheeler article from 2006 on scale development and construct clarification provided some good insights and inspiration. Barbuto and Wheeler scoured the literature for the many and varied definitions of servant leadership, which was the focus of their scale. From the definitions found in the literature, they came up with 11 characteristics of servant leadership and then developed five to seven items for each of the characteristics. Taking a page from their playbook, I proceeded in a similar manner. Below, I detail the various definitions of affluenza found in the literature, and the 11 characteristics those definitions produced.

The earliest citing of affluenza in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1979 refers to affluenza in this way: “A psychological malaise supposedly affecting (especially young) wealthy people, symptoms of which include a lack of motivation, feelings of guilt, and a sense of isolation” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011). In May of 1984, the *New York Times* used the word affluenza to refer to the many problems associated with wealth (Goleman, 1984). In 2006, the Macquarie Dictionary, based at the University of Sydney, defined affluenza as, “The dissatisfaction that accompanies consumerism as a path to happiness.” James (2007) referred to affluenza as a “set of values” that increases our vulnerability to emotional distress by placing a high value on “acquiring money and possessions, looking good in the eyes of others, and wanting to be famous” (p. vii). The PBS television special, *Affluenza*, based on the book by Degraaf et al. (2005) offers a three-part definition, “The bloated, sluggish and unfulfilled feeling that results from efforts to keep up with the Joneses. 2. An epidemic of stress, overwork, waste and indebtedness caused by dogged pursuit of the American Dream. 3. An unsustainable addiction to economic growth” (NPR.org). Finally, Word Spy adds to these definitions with this entry, “An extreme form of materialism in which consumers overwork and accumulate high levels of debt to purchase more goods” (1998). The 11 characteristics of affluenza produced from this search include: Depression, Stress, Materialism, Consumerism, Desire for Fame, Over

Work, Indebtedness, Isolation, Sense of Emptiness, Accumulation of Goods/Possessions, and Wastefulness. These 11 characteristics were then paired with characteristics that were similar in nature, resulting in five total categories. Since the literature suggests five to seven sample items per characteristic, and since I combined characteristics into like categories, I generated 6 to 12 items for each category.

The items for the first category, which focuses on depression and stress, were adapted from the 1995 Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS21). For the remaining four categories, the items were produced in large part from the focus group session, held in November 2010. The remaining items were generated from the literature. The final survey for the initial scale development, the result of several iterations, consists of 58 items and is attached as Appendix C. The ultimate goal was to collect data using this newly constructed survey, and then through factor analysis identify which items on the survey would be appropriate to include on the affluenza scale.

Survey Implementation

As with all research involving human subjects, IRB approval was sought and granted for this study. The surveys were administered to students in various programs at the community college where I teach. These programs included certificate and applied associate degree courses like automotive technology, electronics and electricity, and criminal justice courses. Data were also collected from students in general education courses, specifically students in sociology and anthropology courses. Not wanting to affect the responses of the students, I was intentionally somewhat vague in my explanation for the purpose of the research. Prior to distributing the survey I explained to the students that faculty must take part in professional development of one sort or another, be it going to conferences, taking classes, or conducting research. Thus, I had decided to do some research. More specifically, I told them that as a sociologist I was particularly interested in social and cultural attitudes and that I wanted to get their input in this regard via completion of the survey. This explanation sufficed, and while students had the option of not completing the survey, no one opted out. In total, 283 surveys were completed. The surveys were color coded so that if desired, future research could be conducted looking at how students in electronics, for instance, compared to students taking general education courses. The surveys for the criminal justice students were printed on white paper, orange was used for the general education courses, green for automotive, and yellow was used for the students enrolled in electronics/electricity courses.

Initial Data Analysis for Scale Construction

Upon completion of the data collection process, the data were entered into SPSS, and an electronic meeting was scheduled and held with Dr. Carol Baron, committee member, and research methods professor. With her assistance and knowledge of SPPS and statistics, I was able to fairly quickly run various statistical analyses including bivariate correlation and factor analysis. The objective was twofold: First, I wanted to scrutinize the data, looking for trends, patterns, and significance. Secondly, this initial appointment with Dr. Baron also served to better acquaint me with the use of SPSS and to get me to think more deeply about the data, the items in the survey, and the process in general. The initial step was to run bivariate correlation to ensure that all items were correlated with at least one other item, using the minimal standard threshold of a correlation of at least .30 (Field, 2009). Most items correlated with several other items, but any items that did not correlate with at least one other item at the minimal threshold were discarded, as it was clear that they were not a part of the overarching construct. This resulted in 9 items in total being discarded. The second step was to run Principal Component Analysis

(PCA). Any item that did not have a factor loading correlation of at least .40 (+ or -) was discarded, as it was not considered to be strong enough to be considered an identifiable component of affluenza. Several iterations of PCA followed until all remaining items loaded at .40 (+ or -) one component. Overall, 14 items s were eliminated as a result of this process. While no final decisions were made regarding which items would be used in the final scale, by running the data through SPSS and discussing the steps and findings in detail with Dr. Baron, I gained a better sense of the overall process as well as new insight into survey, item, and scale construction.

This first utilization of SPSS on the surveys/data collected was primarily to familiarize me with the process. On the advice of Dr. Baron, I spent time over the next few days thinking about the data and the survey items and after more thought and examination concluded that there were questions on the survey that should be discarded. I found eight items in particular that were either bad questions in that they were poorly worded or they were unlikely to be applicable to college students. For instance, "I never work weekends or evenings," is not a good item for college students. In all likelihood, weekends or evenings are when they are most available to work. Additionally, "I never worry about my utilities being shut-off," is also minimally applicable. While many students certainly live on their own, the vast majority are likely still be supported by their family in some kind of way, thus they may not be the ones worrying about the utilities being turned off, or even aware that such action has been threatened. "I'm at work more than I'm at home," is also a poor question for this group. A positive response to this might be more a reflection that the student is not home very often, not that they are at work for long hours. "I have several close friends that I can honestly share with," was also on my list of items to discard. What I was trying to determine, but believe I failed in doing so, was whether or not people have a large, robust circle of friends, or a limited group with whom they can share. Research in the last few years has shown that for many people, their circle of close friends has been shrinking (Smith-Lovin & Wilson, 2006). I would argue that this decline in the number of confidants is occurring as one of the many consequences of affluenza. Perhaps what might have been better to ask would have been a question along the lines of, “I would like my close circle of friends to be larger” or “I’ve lost touch with several close friends during the last few years.” It is possible that questions of this sort may have more accurately measured or inquired into what it was that I was seeking.

In the next PCA runs, nine items were eliminated that did not meet the correlation standard of .30 or higher and an additional eight items were dropped that I felt were weak or poor items. This left 41 items at the start of the session. Since bivariate correlation had already determined that the remaining items were part of the over-arching construct, the next step was to run PCA. The standard factor-loading cut off point of .40 (+/-) was used, and any item that did not meet this criterion was eliminated (Stevens, 2002). Likewise, any item that loaded on more than one component was also eliminated, as that would indicate that components that had shared items were not independent of each other. The following steps outline the process that was followed.

- Run PCA with varimax rotation.
- Any item that did not meet the factor loading criteria of .40 +/- as described above was eliminated from the data set.
- Several iterations of factor analysis followed until all remaining items had a factor loading correlation of +/- .40 and did not load on more than one component.

As a result of this process, 10 items were left that loaded on four components or sub-scales, but only two of those sub-scales had three or more items in them. This also resulted in the Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) sampling adequacy score to fall below .700. While acceptable, it is not preferable. Hoping to increase the KMO, another 28 surveys were administered to students enrolled in the electronics/electricity courses, as this group still had the most students available that had not been part of the previous sampling. Following completion of this second data collection process:

- The additional 28 surveys were loaded into SPSS.
- Bivariate correlation followed to ensure that all the items being utilized were part of the larger, overarching construct.
- Any item that did not meet the minimal threshold of a .30 correlation was eliminated (Field, 2009).
- Two items were eliminated as they failed to meet the minimal correlation threshold.

At this point, a total of 19 items had been eliminated either as a result of bivariate correlation, or as a consequence of being determined to be a weak or poor question. This left 39 items or items in total to be further analyzed for use in the scale that would be administered as the pre- and post-test.

This was followed by bivariate correlation as well as numerous iterations of factor analysis with the intent to carefully examine the sub-scales or components that emerged from the factor analysis process. In order to ensure that the final scale would best represent the social phenomenon of affluenza, several iterations using various cut off points (ranging from 3.5 to 4.5 +/-) for the loadings followed. Particular consideration was given to the depth and strength of each component or subscale that emerged. Ultimately, I chose a cut off score of .45(+/ -). This decision was based on sample size considerations and the fact that a higher cut-off score would result in a greater number of items being included in the final scale, thus serving to further stabilize the scale, adding to its ability to accurately measure affluenza. The following steps outline the process that was followed. The process began with 39 items out of the original 58.

As a means of a quick review, eight items were deemed weak or a poor question, and a total of 11 items were eliminated via the process of bivariate correlation.

I settled on the remaining 30 items to be a part of the pre-test and post-test. The remaining 30 items have a KMO of .766 and they explain 60% of the variance (see Table 3.1), and are spread across nine components, or what can be thought of as sub-scales of affluenza (see Table 3.3). Each of these components represents a specific area within the phenomenon of affluenza. Component One, *Fitting In,* pertains to the right kinds of things, fitting in, and being popular. Component Two, *Well-Being,* relates to the overall level of personal well-being, which often suffers among materialistic individuals. This component includes items such as having a hard time relaxing, or having little to look forward to. Component Three, *Disconnected and Community,* relates to lack of community connections, and the sense that something is missing in their life. Component Four, *Recycle and Reuse*, addresses the importance that one gives to recycling, conserving energy, or finding ways to reuse items. Component Five, *Storage Spaces,* addresses how full one's storage spaces are, and whether or not more storage area is needed. Component Six, *Cool Toys,* pertains to the importance one places on having the right kind of toys such as cars and home video equipment. This component includes items like, "Whoever has the most toys wins" and "My electronics/appliances are the envy of my friends." Component Seven, *Trendsetter and Noticed,* is about the importance placed on being noticed or being identified as a trendsetter. Component Eight, *Shop and Accumulate,* is not only about whether or not one likes to shop, but also if one buys goods they do not really need and if they have accumulated more than is necessary. This component includes items like, "I have far more than what I need" and "I like to shop." Finally Component Nine, *Debt and Worry,* relates not only to how much one worries about their debit, but also if they are working extra hours or extra shifts specifically to pay down that debt.

Table 3.1

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	4.815	16.051	16.051	2.645	8.815	8.815
2	3.046	10.155	26.206	2.346	7.819	16.635
3	2.064	6.881	33.087	2.215	7.384	24.019
4	2.047	6.823	39.910	2.009	6.695	30.714
5	1.451	4.838	44.748	1.951	6.503	37.217
6	1.319	4.398	49.146	1.853	6.178	43.395
7	1.210	4.033	53.179	1.828	6.093	49.488
8	1.075	3.585	56.764	1.726	5.753	55.241
9	1.044	3.480	60.244	1.501	5.003	**60.244**

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

With this process completed, and the original 58 items reduced to 30, I still did not feel as though the 30-item scale would completely measure all that I wanted to consider and include for my dissertation research. Further exploration into the Reasoned Action Theory suggested to me that there is a need for my research to include questions that measure intent. To that end, I added four more items to be used on the post-test. Note, however, that these items are not a part of the Mattison Affluenza Scale but were included on the post-test solely to provide insight into whether or not the treatment affected intentions. Those items are:

- I intend to become more involved in my community via local activities or volunteering.
- I will make it a point to become better acquainted with my neighbors.
- I plan to be more conscientious about my purchases and financial expenditures.
- I intend to be more thoughtful about how my actions affect others.

These four items targeted several of the key components of affluenza, as well as helped to establish whether or not the curricular intervention had a measure of success. As pointed out earlier in this dissertation, intent is a good measure of whether or not a desired behavior or activity will be followed through on, in fact, the stronger the intent, "the more likely it is that the behavior will be carried out" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 21). Additionally, these four items may be correlated to some of the other components of affluenza, and if so, by changing attitudes or intent in one of the components of affluenza, it may produce a change in one of the other components. For instance, item one (I intend to become more involved in my community) not only attempts to measure whether or not the curricular intervention affected how one views the importance of volunteering or community involvement, it may also affect how one responds to the items in component two, which deals with overall well-being. Since the introduction of new activities such as volunteering is likely to boost one's sense of well-being, as people become more involved, or even intend to be more involved in their communities, and seek connections with their neighbors, there may be a corresponding change in their overall level of well-being. Based on the theory of Reasoned Action, and the research that links activities such as volunteering and community involvement with increased life satisfaction, and materialistic pursuits with decreased happiness, I view these four items as important to my research.

Study Design

This quasi-experimental study relies heavily on the data collected from the pre-tests and post-tests that included my Affluenza Scale that I developed during my learning achievement work. It also includes some qualitative data. The qualitative data come from three different sources: reactions papers to the experiential learning assignment, two reflective writing assignments, and the end of semester course evaluation designed specifically for this study. The qualitative data are helpful in that they provide depth to the findings in the way of personal insights and comments. Also used in this design are the feedback and comments from a colleague's classroom observations. I invited my colleague who also serves as the sociology department lead to observe my classes as a means of ensuring that the treatment was not being overly emphasized, and that my interactions with the various classes involved in this study were consistent.

The Intervention

The target audience of this quasi-experiment consisted of students at the community college where I teach. This is an important element in this intervention. First, it can be reasonably assumed that most college students have an interest in learning, and that most are motivated to do the course work in order to receive an acceptable grade in the class. Secondly, many of the students are still in their formative years, so their beliefs, values, attitudes, and behavior are still being shaped and solidified. Even for non-traditional students returning to school after their teens or early 20s, many come in search of new career opportunities, or to better their lives for themselves and their children. As such, many are highly motivated learners and open to learning and growing (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992). Given the characteristics of the audience it seems plausible that the message of the intervention was more likely to be received and deliberated on, than if it were targeted to a sample of the general population. Not only was there a captive audience, and one that is motivated to learn, but also many of the individuals are malleable in terms of their beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors.

Since the ultimate goal of the intervention was to change behavior then presenting new information, modeling appropriate behavior, and providing opportunities to engage in new activities that are rewarding must all work together in a concerted effort to alter individual beliefs and attitudes. Before the intervention could take place however, existing beliefs and attitudes were measured in order to find out if the attempt at altering them had been successful. Thus, the process occurred in this order, the pre-test, followed by the intervention, followed by the post-test. The intervention was fully integrated into the class curriculum over the course of several weeks. By blending the intervention in slowly, and tying it in with relevant course material, it was less likely to appear as an obvious intervention. The pre-test was given during week four of the semester, and the intervention began the following week and was integrated throughout the next 9 to 10 weeks. The post-test was given during week 13 to see if the intervention produced changes in individual beliefs and attitudes. The pre-test and post-test utilized for this research were the products of the methods ILA completed during year three of this Ph.D. program as described above. While the details of the intervention follow, a side-by-side weekly comparison of the treatment sections and the base-line sections can be found in Appendix B. As this side-by side outline demonstrates, the difference between the sections receiving the treatment and those that did not consist of three specific readings, three video selections, and two written assignments. While experiential learning is required of all students, discussion relevant to those experiences in the sections receiving the treatment will specifically reference the assigned readings and videos included in the treatment. For instance, I began discussion on their experiential learning by asking how the quantity and quality of merchandise in the resale shops reflect the consumer culture in the United States, and how this impacts others around the world. Discussions also centered on how their experience made them feel, why volunteering and being involved locally is important, and what new friendships or social connections they made while volunteering. Comparatively, discussion relating to experiential learning in the other sections will be less specific, and more general in nature. For example, I asked the non-treatment sections how their experiential learning relates to sociology, and what course ideas, themes, and concepts are applicable to their service-learning experience.

The sample. As discussed above the sample for this quasi-experiment, were college students. The students ranged in age from 18 to 60 and beyond; however, most of the students fell in the more typical college age range of 18-23 as shown in Table 3.2 below. The demographics at the college where I teach are such that the majority of the students are white, although there are students that are Native American, Asian, Hispanic, and African American. As with most colleges and universities there are slightly more females than males, and most come from a variety of working- and middle-class homes, although some come from underprivileged homes. A good number of the students are employed at least part time, although some manage to take classes along with working full time. As with many institutions of higher learning, there are a fair amount of single parents taking classes at the college—predominantly single mothers; most of the students, however, are unmarried and without children.

Table 3.2

Sample Demographics

Demographic	Treatment #	Treatment %	Control #	Control %
Age Group				
Under 21	14	38.9	16	44.4
21-25	14	38.9	11	30.6
26-30	4	11.1	6	16.7
31-35	0	0	1	2.8
36-45	2	5.6	1	2.8
46-55	1	2.8	1	2.8
56 and over	1	2.8	0	0
Gender				
Female	18	50	22	61.1
Male	18	50	14	38.9
Trans				
Race				
White	31	86.1	29	80.6
Hispanic	2	5.6	4	11.1
Native American	2	5.6	1	2.8
Asian	1	2.8	1	2.8
African American	0	0	0	0
Other				
Years of College				
Less than one	9	25	11	30.6
One	5	13.9	9	25
Two	14	38.9	9	25
Three	3	8.3	4	11.1
Four	3	8.3	0	0
Have degree	1	2.8	3	8.3
Other	1	2.8	0	0

An issue with using this convenience sample, and an issue for all quasi-experimental designs regardless of it being a convenience sample or not, is that there is no true way to measure the many different cultural, personal, and religious differences between the treatment groups and the baseline groups that may have affected their response to the pre-test and post-test, as well as to the treatment itself. I have taught long enough to know that one class can vary significantly from another class, particularly in terms of attitude, and level of class participation; however, I have been teaching at the community college level for over a decade, and while I know that differences do exist, the basic demographics (age, gender ratio, social class, religious backgrounds) are fairly consistent. Additionally, the reality of community colleges is that students are in fact drawn from the same community, and thus likely have more commonalities than students attending a larger 4-year college or university. While it is not possible to eliminate all concern of potential internal validity threats, it is relatively safe to say that there are no significant differences among students in any two introductory to sociology courses at the same college that would make any one class uniquely special from another to the extent that it influenced the outcome of this quasi-experiment. Additionally, the threat of treatment diffusion was relatively low. While it is true that the treatment sections read and viewed several different articles and videos than the non-treatment sections, the intervention was well integrated into the course material, and related to the weekly topics as detailed in the course syllabus. For instance, a video clip from *Food Inc*. that deals with large-scale farming was shown in class when discussing the effects and outcomes of the Industrial Revolution. The tie-in to class material kept the intervention well hidden, thus keeping student suspicion of the treatment to a minimum. Additionally, the bulk of the readings, discussion, and assignments were the same in the treatment sections as compared to the non-treatment sections. Even if students in the treatment course did discuss their particular class with a student in a non-treatment course, the overlap between the two sections would be quickly obvious, thereby significantly reducing the potential for treatment diffusion.

Positioning within the intervention. In my present position as an instructor at a community college, I teach five sociology sections per semester. In the spring semester of 2012, in which I collected data, four of the five sections I taught were Introduction to Sociology. Two of those sections, selected at random, received the enhanced curriculum, which is explained in detail below. The other two sections represent the traditional curriculum or baseline, from which the two sections that received the treatment were measured. In order reduce any potential researcher bias numerous safeguards were put into place. The first of these safeguards is metacognition, or the process of thinking about my own thinking in regard to how I interact with students. This process occurred by maintaining a daily journal for each of my classes. The journal detailed my interactions with the students as well as the discussion areas incorporated in each class. This journal also included my reflections and observations of my own behavior and attitudes, as well as any comments I made that could represent the delivery of unintentional implicit messages regarding affluenza. Further, as previously mentioned, a colleague observed each of the four sections of Introduction to Sociology courses that I taught during spring 2012 semester. By having a colleague observe these sections, then discussing her observations with me, an additional check or safeguard was been added to reduce potential researcher bias. Finally, the students took part in an end of the semester course evaluation (see Appendix D) allowing them to comment on the strengths and weakness of the course, as well as indicate what their most memorable and powerful learning experiences were. While more significant change regarding attitudes and intentions about affluenza is hoped for among those students that received the enhanced curriculum, I wanted this to be the result of the treatment, and not the unintentional consequences of my behavior or interactions. Thus, these safeguards were established to reduce potential researcher bias, and to allow for triangulation and cross verification of the findings.

In the Introduction to Sociology courses, as one would expect, discussions include how cultural norms and values differ cross culturally. In light of such, the intervention was easily integrated into the course material when we compared and contrasted norms and values in the United States to elsewhere around the globe. This served as a good lead-in to explorations and discussions of how other societies see us as a result of our norms and values. Beyond this, the intervention included readings, discussion, lecture, video, and assigned service-learning activities. [2] There are several reasons for this multi-dimensional approach. First, I wanted to use various teaching strategies to target the many different learning styles. Secondly, as already discussed, I wanted to inform and educate students on the issues regarding overconsumption, as well as provide an opportunity for them to experience the potential effects of community involvement via service learning.

It seemed prudent to include a service-learning project for several reasons. First, the research on service learning and its strengths is quite compelling. While not an exhaustive list, the benefits include a sense of belonging by working in teams, an increase in communication skills, self-confidence and leadership traits, as well as moral development, a reduction in prejudice and stereotyping, and a positive impact on learning and retention (Eyler, Giles, Jr., Stenson, & Gray, 2001). Moreover, I wanted this intervention to be more than just exposure to information. I also wanted this to result in the students engaging in an altruistic activity that required them to take action, to experience important social phenomenon first hand, and to

[2] For the purpose of this research, service learning refers to more than just logging volunteer hours at a local charity. In brief, the assigned service learning hours will require the application of course material, personal reflection on the hours spent working as well as sharing what was learned from the experience with others. Students will also be expected to utilize course concepts to discuss possible solutions to the issues associated with affluenza.

behave in ways that may be new to many of them. As noted earlier in this paper, research tells us that individuals who are more community and civic minded are happier than those who are materialistic (Kasser, 2003). Therefore, by exposing students not only to the many negative consequences of consumption, but also introducing an activity that may increase their sense of self and the value of altruism, the benefits of this intervention may have been enhanced and its effect prolonged.

It was important that the intervention illuminate the pathway to civic engagement, particularly civic engagement that allows students to apply class concepts that relate to affluenza, but that was also likely to foster within the students a sense of accomplishment, and pride for making a needed contribution.

Before the intervention is discussed in detail, the following table (Table 3.3) has been included to demonstrate which behaviors of affluenza were targeted, how they correspond to the components in the scale used for the pre-and post-tests, as well as the intervention strategy utilized, and the corresponding theoretical support for this strategy. It is important to point out that this table corresponds to the 9 components or subscales within the affluenza scale that was created for the pre-test and post-test. As I will discuss in more detail later, after gathering the data for this intervention and running factor analysis on those data, only 8 sub-scales or components were identified. While it is important to note this difference, and it will be discussed in Chapter IV in more detail, the change from 9 to 8 components really was predominately the result of one of those components (cool toys) being absorbed into the component of fitting in. While brief, this table establishes in simplistic terms the steps involved in the intervention. It also prepares the reader to better understand the more detailed discussion of the intervention that follows.

Table 3.3

Targeted affluenza behaviors and corresponding assignments

Affluenza Behavior	**Correlating scale component /s**	**Intervention**	**Supporting Research**	**Videos and readings**
Mindless consumption	Component 5 & 8 Storage spaces are full; buy things that aren't needed and have more than is necessary.	Assigned reading and viewing of videos, class discussion, personal reflection	Fishbein and Ajzen The introduction of new information can alter behavioral norms	Excerpt from the video affluenza and read R. Lee's article "Christmas in the Kalahari" and Conklin & Graham's "The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Eco-Politics"
Wastefulness & Indebtedness	Components 4 and 9: Rarely recycle, reuse, conserve, and worry over debt and bills.	Assigned reading and viewing of videos, class discussion, personal reflection	Fishbein and Ajzen The introduction of new information can alter behavioral norms	Chapter Two of Kasser's *The High Price of Materialism* Excerpts from the videos *The Story of Stuff* and *Food Inc.*
Lack of Civic Involvement	Component 2 & 3 Depression & Anxiety, Loss of community and disconnection from family and friends.	Service-learning, class discussion on the benefits of community involvement personal reflection	Social learning theory supports that if behavior is rewarded it is often repeated. Research by Deci (2009) and Lyubomirsky (2007) on the benefit of intrinsic rewards. Theory of Reasoned Action exposure to new social norms may alter normative beliefs. Demonstrating the ease of civic involvement affects control beliefs.	
Measuring success by material possession	Components 1, 2 & 7 Being popular and having the right stuff, depression, being a trendsetter and being noticed.	Service-learning, class discussion, personal reflection	Theory of Reasoned Action exposure to new social norms may alter normative beliefs.	
People as objects or as the sum of their possessions	Component 6; having the latest and coolest items/gadgets "Whoever has the most toys, wins"	Service-learning, class discussion personal reflection	Theory of Reasoned Action exposure to new social norms may alter normative beliefs.	Reread initial statement written about how over consumption affects individuals

The service learning component. As with most communities, there are numerous outreach and not-for-profit organizations in the local area where I live and teach capable of providing a valuable learning experience to college students. Many of these organizations, like countless other not-for-profits, are in constant need of volunteers. A short list of community-based resale shops was provided for the students enrolled in the treatment sections. This list included Family Thrift, ARC Thrift Stores (of which there were several in the greater metro area), Goodwill (several different local outlets) and The Action Center Clothing Bank. A handout with the various names, addresses, and phone numbers of these locations were given to the students at the start of the semester. It was made clear that this was not an exhaustive list of locations, and if they knew of other resale shops that were more conveniently located for them, or associated with a church in their community, that those locations would be acceptable as well. The importance of service learning was discussed, and I made it known that five hours of service learning was a requirement in all of my classes.

The intent of this particular assignment for the treatment class to work at a resale shop was to offer students a chance to see the loads of clothes and household goods that are donated, dropped off, and sometimes dumped, by the members of the local community. In other words, they had the chance to see the consequence of overconsumption, the leftovers that people toss aside to make room for more. Having worked rather extensively with resale shops in the past, my experience has been that most resale shops receive a wide variety of items in terms of the quality of the donations, but it is not at all uncommon for donations to include clothes with tags still on them, shoes that have hardly been worn, nearly new furniture pieces, and pots and pans and kitchenware all in good repair. While it is true that these items are going for a good cause, it is also true that many of these items were donated as they are being replaced with new items. Hence the perpetuating cycle of affluenza—money spent, natural resources used, trash generated, and numerous lives affected in some kind of way. The sheer number of donations that come in can cause one to ponder just how much we as a society purchase, only later to discard. It also leaves one wondering just how much ends up in a landfill somewhere. If the resale shop is a reflection of the quantity that gets donated, what might be the quantity left by the curb for the trash collectors, and what are consequences that our household waste, and wastefulness as a society in general, produces? These are the kinds of questions that I hoped would be raised by the students as a result of this particular component of the intervention.

It is my premise that classroom discussion and assignments, as well as the assigned videos and readings, helped provide deeper insight into these issues for the students. Consider the following from a student's reflection paper on their service-learning hours: "Throughout the night I could not stop thinking about our first homework assignment, trying to imagine who made all the thousands of items coming into the ARC." Moreover, I believe that the intervention helped students find answers for some things they observed. Most of the students commented on the amount of perfectly good items coming into the resale shops, and a good number of those students commented about how planned obsolescence, which is discussed in *The Story of Stuff* video, helped to explain what they saw. Consider this excerpt from a student's reflection paper: "There were perfectly good items coming in, some even still with tags, this just shows our need for material possessions in America, just throw-out what is dated. Planned obsolescence can really be seen at thrift stores." Similarly, I believe that such discussions and information from the readings helped to illuminate potential solutions, or at least partial solutions, for the identified problems. Many students commented on the need for more awareness, for new role models that talk about, and live a life with less emphasis on material possessions. One student commented, "What if cool was only buying clothes from resale shops and never buying any item new?" I am of the position that this intervention gave the students' a deeper understanding of the issue of consumption, and the global consequences it produces, and to some extent it helped the students generate viable answers to some of the issues. This is fundamentally important as it empowers the students to think and act on their own insights and their newly generated knowledge. Freire (1998) reminds us that this is what good teaching should be about. Teaching is not simply about the transfer of knowledge; rather teaching should be about creating possibilities for "the production or construction of knowledge" (p. 30). Likewise, Sinclair (2007) sees teachers and leaders as having a similar role in creating spaces that allow individuals to learn and then act on their own behalf. Sinclair notes that good teachers and leaders should encourage the process through which individuals empower themselves to think, to understand, and to act, and that it is fundamental that teachers and leaders find ways to "support people's efforts to understand and act in their world differently" (p. 37). This, of course, was the very point of this intervention. The ultimate goal is that the students come to understand their world differently, and then to act differently as a consequence. All teachers, all classrooms, should work to create the kinds of experiences where students come to see themselves as "social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, creative persons; dreamers of possible utopias" (Freire, 1998, p. 45). While Freire's words refer to the classroom experience in general, they are especially applicable to this particular intervention. The potential for change is real when students come to see themselves as transformative agents, who think about and then create new ways of being and acting in the world.

In the control or baseline sections the service learning assignment was to work at a homeless shelter, a soup kitchen, or food bank. While I want all of the students enrolled in Introduction to Sociology to have similar experiences, I did not want the students in the control course to have the same exact service learning experience as those in the treatment course. As with the treatment sections, I provided a handout for the students of the local food banks, homeless shelters, and soup kitchens where service learning hours could be logged. This list included: Byers Place, Mountain Resource Center, Carpenter's Cupboard, and the Arvada Community Food Bank. A few exceptions were granted, for instance, one student was involved in a church service project that made and distributed burritos for homeless youth on several different Sundays over the course of the semester. As this was clearly related to the assignment, his request to make use of this experience for his service learning was approved.

While a more detailed discussion of the experiences had by the students as part of their service-learning will occur in the following chapter, I think it is important to note here, at least briefly, that I was pleased with the class discussions related to the service-learning project. The intensity of the discussions was impressive. Students seemed eager to share their experiences, to talk about what they saw, and how it made them feel. Many students, who rarely shared in class discussions throughout the semester, were more readily willing to share about their service-learning hours. Finally, as means of demonstrating the effectiveness of this service-learning assignment, at least for some, one student commented about how he and his girlfriend went to the mall and that she found a $300.00 pair of jeans for $150.00 and bragged to him what a good deal she had found. The student then commented that he encouraged her to come with him to the resale shop where he had logged his hours. At the resale shop he found a brand new pair of Levi's that fit him perfectly for $8.00. He concluded his story by asking the class, "So who got the better deal?" Indeed. It is my impression that learning occurred for many students as a consequence of this assignment, and for some making use of the resale shop instead of the mall is a change in behavior—an important step in the right direction.

Introducing new information. The intervention also included reading material, and several videos and video clips. All the readings and videos assigned as part of the intervention were well integrated into the course and assigned or viewed when relevant to lecture material. For instance, the clip of video *Food Inc.,* which deals with the mass production of food, was shown during our discussions on the Industrial Revolution, which highlights how farms went from small family farms to large cooperate forms. The article “The Shifting Middle Ground,” which addresses environmental issues among indigenous Amazonian Indians, was assigned during our discussions on race and ethnicity, and allowed us to touch on the issue of environmental racism at home and abroad. It was hoped that this reading would further develop the students’ understanding of global issues that are affected by decisions and policies elsewhere around the globe. Additionally, it was hoped that it would increase their awareness and practice of thinking globally, particularly in regard to consumption.

Before any of the reading that was a part of the intervention was assigned, I led students in a discussion in which they identified some of the cultural norms and values in the United States. I have been doing this for many years now, and without exception students have always brought up the value that we as a society place on money and material possessions. This year this discussion was no different. This of course allowed for an easy segue to the beginning of the intervention. Before assigning the readings and videos that were a part of the intervention, I asked students to think about the various consequences of materialism via a short reflection paper in which the students summarized their thoughts on this topic. This paper served as a record of their early reflections regarding affluenza and the issues resulting from overconsumption. For many, this may have been the first time they even considered that there are consequences to materialistic behavior. I believe this was an important mark on the road map charting their journey as learners. Copies of this assignment were maintained in my office, as the original papers were returned to the students. A similar assignment occurred toward the end of the semester, and copies of those were maintained as well so that comparisons could be made, and changes in attitudes noted. While a more detailed discussion of these findings will occur later, I will say here that it was a pleasure to read and note the new insights the students had gained over the course of the semester.

Not wanting to overdo the integration of the intervention material the assigned reading was not overwhelming. There were three specific readings in the treatment course that varied from the control sections. First, the students in the treatment class read the article "Eating Christmas in the Kalahari" to demonstrate cultural differences about boasting, bragging, and self-aggrandizing in order to help them understand that our culture varies widely from others in terms of self-promotion. The students were also assigned the article "The Shifting Middle Ground" as well as Chapter Two of Kasser's book *The High Price of Materialism* (2003). The assigned chapter from Kasser's book was relatively short in length, only 18 pages, but it discusses issues related to personal well-being brought on by materialism. Additionally, it briefly addresses some cross-cultural findings on how materialism affects others around the globe, which makes this particular reading assignment even more relevant to sociology. Since the treatment class had these three readings assigned to them, I reduced their other assigned reading by three articles. In all the sections of Introduction to Sociology courses that I teach, I use a reader, or an edited collection of articles or excerpts from books, that I assign weekly readings from. The treatment section was assigned three less readings from the reader as they were scheduled to read the three different readings discussed above. Following each of the assigned readings that were a part of the treatment or intervention, class discussions occurred that encouraged the students to reflect on how materialism affects them on a personal level. Moreover, students were asked to consider, and then share their thoughts on, what these particular cultural norms and values of consumption might mean for us as a society. This was important in order for the students to begin to grasp that materialism is a cultural value, and a behavioral norm that many of them have subscribed to unknowingly, likely affecting them in ways they perhaps had not considered. Once this first level of learning occurs, allowing students to begin to see and think about materialism in a new way, it was my hope that they might be more willing to consider how materialism in the United States affects others around the globe.

In addition to the readings for the treatment sections, the treatment classes were assigned to view three short videos. The first of these videos was a 10-minute clip from the film *Food Inc.* as previously mentioned that focused on the issue of corporate farming and the consequences for our health, and the health of the animals that are slaughtered. Similarly, to follow that up, a 10-minute section from the film *Affluenza,* produced by Bullfrog Films (1997) was also shown in class. This particular video clip is easily located on YouTube under the heading of Global Pandemic IV. It includes excerpts of interviews from Juliet Schor of Boston College, and David Korten who taught at both Stanford and Harvard Business schools. What was particularly important about this section of video is that it features Dr. Korten discussing his realization that our high consumption economy cannot, and should not, be reproduced around the world as it causes serious harm to individuals, societies, and the environment. Moreover, the video also showed some rather graphic images of the human deprivation that results at least in part because of affluenza. For many of the students, this may have been the initial introduction into the far-reaching and painfully distressing, human, environmental, and social consequences of affluenza.

After the short segment from *Food Inc.* and *Affluenza* was viewed and digested over the course of a couple of class periods, via class discussion and reflection, students were assigned to watch and consider the 20-minute documentary by Annie Leonard tilted, *The Story of Stuff* (2007). Produced by Free Range Studios, and readily available on the Internet in numerous locations for easy viewing, this film details the various problems associated with the consumption of "stuff." It also explores the many facets and overlapping issues associated with consumption, the very issues that have been discussed thus far in this paper that are attributable to affluenza. Particularly, this film lays out how consumerism is linked to a wide array of global concerns such as environmental problems, social justice issues, and declining levels of happiness. This film was assigned for students to watch outside of class time, but it was noted that the questions for the weekly quiz would come from the film, thus hopefully enticing most students to view it. After the weekly quiz was given that included questions from the Annie Leonard film, class discussion and reflection of the film followed. I believe that students did in fact benefit from the viewing of these films as I had numerous students tell me that they rented *Food Inc*. in order to watch in its entirety and in some instances mentioned that they watched it with their family. Others commented that they watched *The Story Of Stuff* several times because it "was so interesting", and the clip from *Affluenza* was referenced numerous times throughout the semester as a means of pointing out the connection we share to others around the globe.

Since the students were assigned to write about their understanding of materialism and how it affects us as individuals, and as a society early in the semester, it was interesting to see the noticeable changes, at least for some, in the their ideas or views of materialism toward the end of the semester after the intervention had concluded. I asked the students to look back at their earlier reflection paper about materialism and then to think about their learning journey, to consider how new ideas can promote change, and to write a second reflection paper how they view materialism and its effects on the individual and society. Of course, I was mindful of not giving away the intervention. Therefore, the conversations were couched in the larger discussion of how other societies around the globe might see us, how different cultures view materialism, and how cultural values shift and change over time. I also told the students that as an instructor, it was of benefit to me to see how their learning and understanding may have shifted or grown over the semester, thus assisting in keeping the intervention less noticeable.

Barriers to change—changing existing behavior. Since one of the best predictors of future behavior is past behavior, it is easy to see how changing mindless consumption and wastefulness will be a challenge to overcome (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Considering that the preliminary research that was part of the methods ILA suggested that students were rather materialistic and wasteful, it is safe to assume that these past behaviors are relatively well established; however, I contend that one of the strengths of this intervention is that it is directed at college students who are likely more open to learning. Moreover, my role as an instructor may provide me with what French and Raven (1959) referred to as "expert power." In short, this means that students may be more willing to hear what I have to say because of my knowledge and expertise. Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) also support this idea: "people may model their behavior on those of others because they view these others as experts or because they want to be like them" (p. 132). While this does not guarantee success, it is a strength that this particular intervention offers by focusing on college students; however, it is similarly true that just because students are enrolled in the class does not mean that they will complete the assignments, which are obviously important to a successful intervention. Some very good students might also be absent on key days of lecture or discussion. This is why the various pieces of the intervention were introduced over the course of several weeks, and in various ways so that the assignments and discussions reached, and to appealed to as many students and learning styles as possible.

The instrument. The instrument included the 30 Affluenza Scale items, and the 4 intention items based on the Theory of Reasoned Action that were added to the post-test to measure if students intended to become more involved in their community, more conscientious of their purchases, and more likely to volunteer. This survey was administered to a total of 82 students for the pre-test, and 74 students for the post-test. The students ranged in age from under 21 to over 56, however, most of them were between the ages of 18-25. Slightly more than half of the students were female, and most were white (see Table 3.2). The scale was copied on one page, front to back, and the students were instructed that they could use either pen or pencil, but to make sure to complete both sides.

Data Analysis

Having thoroughly explored the social phenomenon of affluenza, as well as the theories regarding changing intentions and social behavior, what remains to be discussed is the outcome of the intervention. As discussed, a pre-test/post-test was utilized in four sections of Introduction to Sociology courses; however, only two of those sections received the treatment of the enhanced curriculum. The goal was to determine if the treatment altered in any measureable way attitudes and intentions for behavior, and if this change can be attributed to the enhanced curriculum, and not the consequence of the learning that occurs in a general Introduction to Sociology course. As such, utilizing both t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was the most suitable way to scrutinize the data. The paired-sample t-test allowed me to compare means and determine if any significant change occurred from pre-test to post-test within the control group. The independent-samples t-test allowed me to measure the pre-test means, and post-test means between the control and treatment groups. While the t-test showed no significant changes, the 2x2 repeated measures ANOVA being a more sensitive test served to help validate the findings from the t-test.

Time frame and data collection process. Upon successful completion of the proposal hearing in January of 2012, the IRB application was submitted. This was a bit time consuming as I had to first submit the IRB application to Antioch University with a letter from the Vice-President of Instruction at the college were I teach indicating that the college supported my research process, and that they were aware that students enrolled at the college would be utilized in this research. Once the approved IRB was returned from Antioch University, I had to submit it to the wider community college system in which I teach for approval from their IRB committee. All told, this took about four weeks. Immediately upon final IRB approval from the community college system, the data collection process began with the pre-test. This was in early February, or roughly three-and-a-half weeks into the spring 2012 semester.

Pre-test preparation. As indicated previously I had four sections of Introduction to Sociology that were a part of this research process. I made copies of the surveys for each class on different colored paper so that I could distinguish the two control groups and two treatment groups from each other. For instance, my 9:30 am treatment group was copied on blue paper, whereas my 4:00 pm treatment group was copied on yellow paper. Similarly, the two control classes were copied on different colored paper as well. While not necessary, this did help in keeping the process a bit more organized.

Before giving the pre-test to the students I explained that I was conducting research as a means of professional development. I further explained that faculty must have some means of professional development, be it attending conferences, taking additional classes, or doing research, and I kindly asked for their participation. I explained that this was optional, but that their input was valued, and that all surveys would be completely anonymous. In all of my classes this process was followed, and all of the students seemed genuinely happy to participate. I made it a point to tell them how much I appreciated their time and input, and many nodded with approval. I got the sense that some of them were pleased that they were being asked for their input. The informed consent form was distributed first, and once completed the surveys were distributed with ample time being given for the students to complete them. The 30-item pre-test and the 34-item post-test can be found as Appendix C of this dissertation.

The intervention begins. Once the pre-test was given, the introduction of the intervention material commenced, occurring over the course of the following 9 to 10 weeks depending on the particular section, concluding with the post-test in late April. In some instances the intervention lasted 10 weeks as faculty in-service day affected the Tuesday/Thursday sections of Introduction to Sociology, putting them behind the Monday/Wednesday sections by a day. As I have discussed, the intervention was well integrated into the course material. There were no noticeable incongruities or questions from the students that suggested the placement of the readings or the timing of the videos confused them. Further, my colleague and Sociology Department Lead, Professor Sally Stablein, observed all four of my Introductory to Sociology courses at various points throughout the semester. While I will discuss her observations in more detail later on, she noted no differences in my interactions with students, or in the way that course material was presented.

Post-test data collection. The post-test followed the conclusion of the intervention by a few weeks. This was done intentionally so that there was a bit of distance between the end of the intervention and the post-test. Much as with the pre-test, I made color-coded copies for each section, and asked again for the students' participation on the post-test in the same manner that I did for the pre-test. Interestingly, a good number of the students did not remember taking a pre-test but were more than happy to complete the survey and be a part of the research process. As with the pre-test the informed consent was distributed first, followed by the post-test with ample time being given for completion.

Conclusion

Analysis of the data began once the post-test had been collected, and the data entered successfully into SPSS. The following chapter discusses the findings of this research in detail, focusing specifically on my three research questions:

1) Does the scale created for this research project possess strong psychometric properties by soundly measuring the construct of interest?
2) Can attitudes about materialism and conspicuous consumption be altered through education and awareness?
3) Might a noted change in attitudes about materialism and consumption lead to a change in intentions regarding future behaviors?

Chapter IV: Data Analysis

Preparing the Data

Over the course of a 15-week semester, 82 students in 4 classes of Introduction to Sociology took a pre-test and 74 students took a post-test. Two of the four classes combined to make the treatment group, the other two classes combined to make the control group. In total, 40 pre-tests were collected from the control group, and 42 pre-tests from the treatment group. The post-test included 38 from the control group, and 36 from the treatment group. Attrition, such as students either dropping the class or simply no longer attending the class, explains the differences in numbers between the pre-test and post-tests for both the control and treatment sections.

Upon initial completion of the data collection process, the pre-tests and post-tests for each student were associated or matched together based on demographic information on each survey. In order to maintain anonymity I did not want the students to use their student ID number, or any other number such as telephone or social security that could potentially identify the student by name; however, as noted previously, I did use color-coded surveys for each of the individual classes, and I asked general demographic information such as age, number of years in college, gender, and racial identification. While a rather laborious task, I was able to sort through the pre-test and post-test for each section and successfully match up the pre-test to the corresponding student's post-test via the demographic information on the survey thereby maintaining anonymity. This process was successful for all but 6 of the surveys. In some instances, the match could not be made because the demographic information had not been completed. Additionally, I was able to determine which pre-tests belonged to students who had dropped the course, thus having no corresponding post-test. Again, this was done based on the demographic information on the survey, and my knowledge of the demographics of the students who had dropped or withdrawn.

Scale Validation

Once the pre-tests and post-tests were appropriately associated with each other and entered into SPSS the analysis process began. The initial step was to validate the Affluenza Scale, constructed over the course of a year and a half, beginning with a focus group in the fall semester of 2010. During spring semester of 2011, 310 students completed the original survey consisting of 58 items. From there, the 58 items were reduced (as discussed in Chapter III) to 30 items, which were used in the final survey; however, in order to test the strength of the scale, the original 310 surveys with only the 30 items used in the final survey were combined with the new data set that including the pre-tests collected spring semester 2012. Including the post-test responses would have resulted in two responses from the same respondent. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and scale reliability followed. The steps involved in this process are outlined below. Worthy of note, after the final iteration of factor analysis only 8 components and 25 items remained, down from the 9 components and 30 items that followed factor analysis when using only the original 310 surveys. The steps below outline the process that was followed.

1) Three iterations of principal component analysis with varimax rotation occurred with five items in total being discarded.
2) In the first iteration the item "I have nothing to look forward to" was discarded as it loaded at .45(+ or -) on two separate components.
3) In the second iteration the items "I only buy certain brand names" and "I prefer to go unnoticed" were discarded as they both loaded at .45 (+ or -) on more than one component.
4) In the third and final iteration the items "I am highly involved in community organizations" and "I would never shop at Kmart" failed to load at .45(+ or -) on any component and thus were eliminated leaving 25 items in eight components.
5) Following factor analysis, scale reliability was performed on the remaining eight components. The table below illustrates the results of this analysis.

6) Component means were calculated by averaging response scores across the items in each component.

7) Overall reliability (.756) for the scale was calculated based on all 25 items that loaded on a component.

Table 4.1

Scale Reliability

Component	Mean	Cronbach's Alpha
Well Being	3.877	.644
Fitting In	4.352	.704
Trendsetter / Noticed	3.804	.666
Debt / Worry	3.802	.478
Disconnected / Community	4.019	.686
Recycle / Reuse	4.023	.619
Shop & Accumulate	3.299	.522
Storage Space	3.787	.811

The eight components identified here differ only slightly from the nine components that were generated from the initial set of data (see p. 64). The only single component missing here is the component previously titled Cool Toys (also see p. 64), which in this analysis merged with the component titled Fitting In. This is not an unusual change, and in fact is rather intuitive as often it is the cool toys that one has that can help them to fit in. Likewise, another change from the Fitting In component occurred as well. This change pertains to the item "Being popular is important to me," which is now a part of the Trendsetter and Noticed component instead of the Fitting In component. Again, this change does not seem out of place, as being popular is clearly related to being a trendsetter and wanting to be noticed.

Overall the changes noted above suggest a stronger scale than what was originally developed and this 25-item version of the scale should be used in the future. While higher Cronbach Alpha scores would have been desirable on some components, there is still useful information to be gleaned from these findings. The two components that did have a Cronbach

Alpha score above a .700 were Fitting In with a Cronbach Alpha of .704 and Storage Spaces component with a score of .811. These scores reflect a high degree of internal consistency, or that the items in these components are closely related, and appropriately measure the intended construct. It has been my contention that our desire to fit in, and to have the right stuff drives us to consume and accumulate far more than we need, filling up our garages and other such storage spaces. Thus, it is good to have a scale that reliably measures the importance that one places on fitting in, as well the degree to which their storage spaces are filled. While the remaining components in the scale had Cronbach Alpha scores of less than .700, they too tell a story. The Disconnected and Community component, intended to measure if one feels disconnected from themselves, their friends and family, and their neighbors, had a score of .686 falling just short of the preferred cut off score of .700 (Nunnaly, 1978). Nonetheless, this component is still fairly reliable in measuring the intended construct. Similarly, the Trendsetter and Noticed component with a Cronbach Alpha of .666, should still be considered reliable in measuring the degree to which people wish to be seen as trendsetters, or to be noticed in general. The Cronbach Alpha score of .644 for the Well-Being component was somewhat of a surprise as those items were adapted from the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21), which is a well-known and utilized screening tool for depression, stress, and anxiety; however, since this component was adapted from only three of the 21 items that comprise the DASS-21, it is not surprising that using such a small subset resulted in the loss of internal consistency.

The Cronbach Alpha scores for the remaining components, Recycle and Reuse (.619), Shop and Accumulate (.522), and Debt and Worry (.478) are not as high as expected, but in the case of former two, are still relatively consistent. While I recommend some refinement, I believe that the overall internal consistency of this scale (.756) is more than sufficient for purposes of this research as well as for future research of this sort. Some suggestions that I would offer would be that the Debt and Worry component be tested again on a different population, as it is possible that the typical college students, many of whom live at home or in a dorm-like setting, may not have to worry about paying bills or paying down debt in the same way that a full-time worker with a home or family may worry. The Shop and Accumulate component may consist of poorly worded items that affect its ability to appropriately measure the intended construct. For instance, "I often buy things I really don't need" could be reworded to better capture the intended construct, that affluenza causes people to mistake wanting an item for needing one. Rewording the question in this manner, "I often buy things because I want them, not because I need them," or "I often buy things because it is too good of a deal to pass up even if I don't really need it," might help better represent this component and increase its internal consistency. Finally, the component of Reuse and Recycle has several items that could be reworded. For instance, "I find ways to reuse old items" might be too broad. By adding some examples to the question it may have helped the student think of specific instances where they do reuse old items, such as reusing their notebook from last semester, or giving a pair of jeans to a younger sibling.

Overall I am pleased that the scale created for this research demonstrates the level of reliability that it does. While some components are in need of additional work and testing, it is a solid beginning on which to build.

Preliminary Results

Descriptive statistics. Following the process of scale validation came the step of running descriptive statistics to compare the preliminary findings of the pre-test and post-test, both within the treatment and control groups as well as between the treatment and control groups. Table 4.3 below illustrates the findings from this process. The descriptive statistics were run only on the

25 items that remained following PCA. The second reason is that the 25 items analyzed during the descriptive statistics process represent a refined version of the scale. Any future use of this affluenza scale should be based on the 25-item scale validated above.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics for Affluenza Scale Items [2]

Items by Scale components	**Control Pre-test**		**Control Post-test**		**Treatment Pre-test**		**Treatment Post-test**	
	MEAN	**SD**	**MEAN**	**SD**	**MEAN**	**SD**	**MEAN**	**SD**
Well-Being Component								
Difficult to work up initiative **WB**	3.725	1.154	3.736	1.369	3.523	1.234	3.685	1.347
Often get agitated **WB**	3.920	1.118	3.657	1.361	3.690	1.315	4.022	1.207
Difficult to relax **WB**	4.375	1.274	3.842	1.385	4.214	1.297	3.978	1.341
Well-Being COMPONENT AVERAGES	*4.006*	*1.182*	*3.745*	*1.371*	*3.809*	*1.282*	*3.895*	*1.298*
Shop and Accumulate Component								
I like to shop **SA**	2.975	1.476	3.000	1.506	2.857	1.601	3.423	1.591
Have more than needed **SA**	3.275	1.377	3.218	1.416	3.238	1.461	2.833	1.444
I often buy things I really don't need **SA**	3.350	1.528	3.236	1.217	3.404	1.449	3.510	1.461
Shop and Accumulate COMPONENT AVERAGES	*3.200*	*1.460*	*3.151*	*1.379*	*3.166*	*1.503*	*3.255*	*1.498*
Fitting In Component								
I feel better when I have what everybody else has **FI**	4.350	1.231	4.394	1.151	4.619	1.080	4.792	0.786

[2] The possible scale responses were 1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-somewhat agree, 4-somewhat disagree, 5-disagree, 6-strongly disagree.

I worry about fitting in w/o the right stuff **FI**	4.925	0.916	4.868	0.843	4.881	1.172	5.193	0.668
I like or would like having the coolest car on the block **FI**	2.975	1.310	3.210	1.473	3.571	1.640	4.040	1.709
Whoever has the most toys wins **FI**	5.150	0.863	5.192	1.008	5.119	1.086	5.194	0.950
My electronics / appliances are the envy of my friends **FI**	4.575	1.034	4.558	1.149	4.785	1.024	4.527	1.156
Fitting In COMPONENT AVERAGES	*4.395*	*1.070*	*4.444*	*1.124*	*4.595*	*1.200*	*4.749*	*1.053*
Trendsetter and Noticed Component								
Being popular is important to me **TSN**	4.575	1.278	4.500	1.156	4.023	1.258	4.427	1.225
I like it when people notice me **TSN**	3.075	1.047	3.131	1.277	2.666	0.979	2.998	1.218
I like being a trendsetter **TSN**	3.450	1.131	3.710	3.271	3.563	1.397	3.906	1.156
Trendsetter and Noticed COMPONENT AVERAGES	*3.700*	*1.152*	*3.780*	*1.901*	*3.417*	*1.211*	*3.777*	*1.199*
Debt and Worry Component								
I Worry about having enough money to pay bills **DW**	2.420	1.278	2.657	1.419	2.166	1.480	2.428	1.626
I take on extra shifts to pay down debt **DW**	3.400	1.581	3.636	1.527	3.738	1.578	3.583	1.679
Debt and Worry COMPONENT AVERAGES	*2.910*	*1.429*	*3.146*	*1.473*	*2.952*	*1.529*	*3.005*	*1.652*

Disconnected and Community Component								
I know most of my neighbors by first name **DC**	3.700	1.471	3.528	1.635	3.404	1.739	3.555	1.714
I am disconnected from family and friends **DC**	5.018	1.121	4.802	1.226	4.559	1.431	4.576	1.358
Despite accomplishments I still feel empty **DC**	4.305	1.417	4.380	1.279	4.095	1.736	4.117	1.429
I feel like something is missing in my life **DC**	3.750	1.445	3.744	1.421	3.404	1.697	3.694	1.489
Disconnected and community COMPONENT AVERAGES	*4.193*	*1.363*	*4.113*	*1.390*	*3.865*	*1.650*	*3.985*	*1.497*
Reuse and Recycle Component								
I find ways to conserve **RR**	4.075	1.308	4.005	1.230	4.071	1.313	4.305	1.237
I find ways to reuse items **RR**	3.500	0.669	3.500	0.687	3.500	0.653	3.500	0.707
I never recycle **RR**	4.225	1.493	4.236	1.532	4.309	1.759	4.285	1.595
Reuse and Recycle COMPONENT AVERAGES	3.934	*1.156*	3.913	*1.149*	*3.960*	*1.241*	*4.030*	1.179
Storage Space Component								
My storage spaces are nearly filled	3.700	1.471	3.721	1.463	3.571	1.727	4.222	1.605
I am in need of more storage space **SS**	4.125	1.470	4.003	1.433	3.952	1.759	3.833	1.483
Storage space COMPONENT	*3.912*	*1.4705*	*3.862*	*1.448*	*3.761*	*1.743*	*4.027*	*1.544*

AVERAGES								

A more detailed discussion of the table above will occur in the paragraphs that follow; however, I wish to point out that while some clear trends are noticeable in Table 4.2, as well as throughout the rest of the data, there was only one statistically significant change. This can be found in Table 4.6 below and occurred among the control group in regard to the question of well-being (sig =.043). In this instance this component went down from 4.0473 to 3.7254 representing a move toward being more likely to agree that they often get agitated, as well as agreeing that it is difficult to relax or to have things to look forward to. Considering that the post-test was given at the end of the semester shortly before final exam week, it is not all that surprising that this shift was noted. It is completely possible that this particular group of students had a harder time working up initiative, or staying motivated later on in the semester, which certainly could have affected their responses to questions pertaining to their well-being.

Regarding the table above, while data analyses show that none of the changes noted were significant, save for the exception discussed above, this information is still worthy of consideration. What strikes me at first glance is that the pre-tests in both the control and treatment groups are very similar, both on responses to individual questions, as well as to the component averages. This suggests that the groups were comparable to each other, which created an ideal setting for this research process. Also noticeable was that neither the treatment nor control group demonstrated a high degree of affluenza based on their responses to the pre-test. For instance, the control group averaged 4.006 on the Well-Being component on the pre-test, while the treatment group averaged 3.809 on the same component during the pre-test, on a 6-point Likert scale with one being strongly agree, and 6 being strongly disagree. In essence, both groups are indicating that they tend to disagree that they have difficultly working up initiative, tend to disagree that they are likely to get agitated, or that they have a hard time relaxing. In short, they tend to disagree that their well-being is negatively affected, contrary to what one would expect of individuals with a high degree of affluenza. On the Shop and Accumulate component, both groups scored in between somewhat agreeing, and somewhat disagreeing, though they lean more toward disagreeing that they like to shop, buy things they do not need, or that they have more than needed. The average scores on the pre-test for this component were 3.200 for the control group, and 3.166 on the treatment group. What is interesting with this component is that on the post-test the treatment group score went up (from 3.166 to 3.255) reflecting that they were less likely to enjoy shopping, less likely to have more than they need, or buy unneeded items than they were when they took the pre-test. Thus, they were even less likely to display characteristics of affluenza, which suggests that the intervention may have been somewhat effective. On this same component among the control group the post-test score went down (from 3.200 to 3.015) suggesting that they were somewhat more likely to enjoy shopping, have more than they need, and buy unneeded items, than they were when they took the pre-test.

In the Fitting In component both the control and treatment group scores suggest they both groups were far less concerned about fitting in than I had anticipated. The average score for the control group was 4.395, therefore somewhat disagreeing that having what others have makes them feel better, or that they worry about fitting in without the right stuff. In the case of the treatment group, the average component score was 4.595. On the post-test, the control and treatment groups increased slightly from 4.395 to 4.444 and from 4.595 4.749 respectively, suggesting that by the end of the semester both groups were slightly less concerned about fitting in. While this is good news, it is in contrast to what I had expected, and is not consistent with the literature reviewed for this dissertation. This trend continues for the rest of the components in the affluenza scale with only one minor exception, and that is they do exhibit some concern over debts, and paying bills on time, which could simply be explained by the tough economic times, and may not be at all attributable to affluenza. The remaining four components play out similarly, in that there is no strong suggestion of affluenza traits for either the control or treatment group; however, in each of the four remaining components the post-test scores go up slightly for the treatment group, suggesting even less inclination toward affluenza following the intervention. Conversely, among the control group three of the four remaining average component scores (disconnected from family and friends, recycle/reuse habits, and need of storage space) go down slightly which suggests a slightly stronger inclination toward affluenza.

In sum, all eight components for the treatment section have slightly elevated averages on the post-test as compared to the pretest, suggesting a potential move further away from affluenza characteristics; however, among the control group five of the eight components averages decreased slightly or moved toward characteristics associated with affluenza. While not conclusive, what the descriptive statistics suggest is that the treatment group was more likely than the control group to move away from the ideas, habits, and values associated with affluenza.

The eight components, comprised of 25 items, have a KMO of .741 and explain 60.53% of the total variance (see Table 4.4 below). This is up just slightly from the 60.24% total variance explained by the original nine component 30-item scale utilized for the pre-test and post-test (see p. 64).

Table 4.3

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.245	16.982	16.982	2.234	8.935	8.935
2	2.431	9.724	26.705	2.223	8.892	17.826
3	1.851	7.404	34.109	2.166	8.664	26.491
4	1.738	6.950	41.059	1.900	7.600	34.091
5	1.383	5.531	46.590	1.859	7.436	41.527
6	1.243	4.970	51.560	1.829	7.318	48.844
7	1.206	4.824	56.383	1.506	6.025	54.869
8	1.035	4.141	60.525	1.414	5.655	**60.525**

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Following this data analysis process a closer look at the data collected on the 30 items on the pre-test and post-test occurred via statistical analyses, specifically independent t-tests, paired t-tests, and a mixed method 2x2 ANOVA. The results of these analyses are in the tables that follow. The goal was to determine if the treatment produced statistically significant changes. T-test and ANOVA statistics show that the differences between the treatment and control groups are not statistically significant for any subscale. The results indicate that the trends noted in the descriptive statistics earlier are not statistically significant. This is not too surprising considering that the pre-test indicated the likelihood of a ceiling effect, meaning that neither the control or treatment groups demonstrated high levels of affluenza to begin with. Perhaps among students with an elevated affluenza score a greater change may have been noted. Additionally, the treatment itself was relatively small, only three different readings, three partial video clips, and a slightly different experiential learning assignment, as well as a somewhat altered reflective writing assignment. Moreover, the treatment only occurred over the course of about ten weeks, and only during one semester. While the results may be modest they are encouraging, and represent a step in the right direction. With very few exceptions the data show the treatment group shifting away from materialistic values, and toward greater personal responsibility and awareness of how individual actions can affect others elsewhere.

Table 4.4

Treatment and Control Independent Samples Pre-Test t-Test Results [3]

Components	**Pre-test mean**	**Pre-test mean**	**t-Test for Equality of Means**	
	Control	**Treatment**	**T**	**Sig (2-tailed)**
Well Being	4.0473	3.8431	.908	.367
Shop and Accumulate	3.2549	3.1667	.350	.727
Trendsetter/Noticed	3.7647	3.4656	1.483	.143
Debt/Worry	2.9559	2.9118	.145	.885
Disconnected/Community	4.2868	3.8571	1.551	.126
Recycle/Reuse	3.9314	4.1872	-.952	.345
Storage Spaces	4.0000	3.8971	.288	.774
Fitting In	4.5000	4.6412	-.782	.437

As demonstrated in Table 4.4 there are no significant differences ($p < .05$) between the pre-test scores for either the control or treatment groups. Thus, there is no evidence of inequality between these two groups. In short, this quasi-experiment was conducted from a relatively equal starting point, an important detail when comparing and contrasting the results of a post-test.

[3] There are no statistically significant findings.

Table 4.5

Control Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean Scores

Component	**Pre-test Mean**	**Post-test Mean**	**Differences in Mean**
Well-Being	4.0473	3.7254	0.3219
Shop and Accumulate	3.2549	3.0882	0.1667
Trendsetter/Noticed	3.7647	3.7452	0.0195
Debt/Worry	2.9559	3.0735	-0.1176
Disconnected/Community	4.2868	4.1765	0.1103
Recycle/Reuse	3.9314	4.0294	-0.098
Storage Spaces	4.000	3.7941	0.2059
Fitting In	4.500	4.4176	0.0824

As shown above, there were only moderate changes for the Control Group from pre-test to post-test and most of those changes were in a negative direction and only one of which (Well-Being) was a significant change as shown in Table 4.6 below and marked in bold. None of the other changes were significant, and most changes as stated earlier were negative. For instance, the category "Fitting In" went from 4.5000 to 4.4176 on a Likert scale where 1 meant strongly agree and 6 was strongly disagree. In other words, they moved closer to agreeing that having the right stuff was important in order to fit in, or agreeing that they wanted what everyone else had. The two components that had a positive change in direction on the post-test were Debt and Worry (2.9559 to 3.0735) and Recycle and Reuse (3.9314 to 4.0294). In the case of the component, Debt and Worry, students moved further away from agreeing that they worried about debt, and they were more likely to disagree that they never reused old items or recycled. Perhaps by the end of the semester and the arrival of financial aid refund checks, worry over debt had begun to level off. In the case of the Recycle and Reuse component, it is entirely possible that the content of an Introduction to Sociology course could increase awareness of global environmental issues thus affecting attitudes about recycling and reusing old items. Another possible explanation for such changes could simply be student attrition. For instance, those students who were most worried about money and debt may have withdrawn from the class to take on more hours at work. Whatever the reason, the trend here is still noticeable. For the most part the control group does not shift away from ideas or attitudes associated with affluenza.

Table 4.6

Paired Sample t-Test Results for the Control Group Pre-Test to Post-Test Mean Scores

Control Group	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. 2-tailed
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
COMPONENT	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Well-Being pre & post	.3216	.89257	.15307	.01043	.63329	2.13	33	**.043**
Shop and accumulate pre & post	.1667	1.0092	.17308	-.18547	.51880	.963	33	.343
Trendsetter/Noticed pre & post	.0191	.95682	.16409	-.31434	.35336	.119	33	.906
Debt and Worry Pre & post	11765	1.08752	.18651	-.49710	.26181	-.631	33	.533
Disconnected /Community pre & post	.1109	.71040	.12183	-.13758	.35816	.905	33	.372
Recycle / Reuse pre & post	-9804	1.09338	.18751	-.47954	.28346	-.523	33	.605
Storage Spaces pre & post	.2058	1.53306	.26292	-.32903	.74079	.783	33	.439
Fitting In pre & post	.0825	.80471	.13801	-.19842	.36313	.597	33	.555

Table 4.7

Treatment Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Component	**Pre-test Mean**	**Post-test Mean**	**Differences in Mean**
Well-Being	3.8431	3.8333	0.0098
Shop and Accumulate	3.1667	3.1275	0.0392
Trendsetter/Noticed	3.4656	3.7647	-0.2990
Debt/Worry	2.9118	3.000	-0.0882
Disconnected/Community	3.9133	3.9597	-0.0465
Recycle/Reuse	4.1872	4.3431	-0.1559
Storage Spaces	3.8971	3.9118	-0.0147
Fitting In	4.6412	4.7647	-0.1235

Table 4.7 above represents an important finding from this research project. In all but two of the components a move away from traits and characteristics associated with affluenza is noted. A similar trend was found and discussed in the descriptive statistics section. With the exception of the components Well-Being and Shop and Accumulate in the table above, which moved from 3.8431 to 3.8333 and 3.1667 to 3.1275 respectively, the rest of the components moved in an upward manner or closer to a stance of disagreeing with the items in the survey. As the mean score increases it demonstrates a move further away from the various behaviors and attitudes associated with affluenza. For instance, after the post-test the students were more likely to disagree that fitting in was important, or that being a trendsetter mattered to them. They were also more likely to disagree that they were disconnected from family and friends, or that they needed additional storage. The largest change was in the Trendsetter and Noticed component, from 3.47 to 3.76. As Table 4.8 demonstrates, however, none of the changes in component scores for the treatment group was significant at $p<.05$.

Table 4.8

Paired Sample t-Test Results for the Treatment Group Pre-Test to Post-Test

Treatment Group / COMPONENT	Paired Differences: Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference: Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig. 2-tailed
Well-Being pre and post	.00980	.74979	.12859	-.25181	.27142	.076	33	.940
Shop and accumulate pre & post	.03922	1.04693	.17955	-.32607	.40451	.218	33	.828
Trendsetter/Noticed pre & post	-.29912	1.06348	.18238	-.67018	.07195	-1.640	33	.110
Debt and Worry Pre & post	-.08824	1.28199	.21986	-.53554	.35907	-.401	33	.691
Disconnected /Community pre & post	-.04636	1.07858	.18776	-.42881	.33608	-.247	33	.807
Recycle / Reuse pre & post	-.15598	1.13144	.19404	-.55076	.23880	-.804	33	.427
Storage Spaces pre & post	-.01471	1.97133	.33808	-.70254	.67312	-.043	33	.966
Fitting In pre & post	-.12353	.82391	.14130	-.41100	.16395	-.874	33	.388

Beyond the running the t-tests as above, a 2x2 repeated measure ANOVA was also utilized as it is a more sensitive test to verify that there were indeed no significant differences in the post-test scores between the control and treatment groups. As above, no significant differences at $p<.05$ were found. The results to these ANOVAs are below inTables 4.9 and 4.10. Table 4.9, or the Between Subjects Effects, measures the differences between the treatment and control group scores, whereas Table 4.10, Within Subject Contrasts, measures individual differences on the pre-test and post-test. `

Table 4.9

Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Component	F ratio	Sig
Well-being	0.49	0.83
Shop and Accumulate	0.26	0.61
Trendsetter/Noticed	0.63	0.43
Debt/Worry	0.05	0.08
Disconnected/Community	1.39	0.24
Recycle/Reuse	1.82	0.18
Storage Spaces	0.01	0.90
Fitting In	2.41	0.13

Table 4.10

Tests of Within-Subject Contrasts

Component	F ratio	Sig Sore
Well-being	2.44	0.12
Shop and Accumulate	0.14	0.26
Trendsetter/Noticed	1.69	0.20
Debt/Worry	0.01	0.92
Disconnected/Community	0.50	0.48
Recycle/Reuse	0.46	0.83
Storage Spaces	0.42	0.52
Fitting In	1.09	0.30

In addition to the various statistical analyses described above, I also measured the overall affluenza score for each group based on the responses to the affluenza scale. Again, the affluenza scale was set up using a Likert scale of 1 through 6, with 1 being, strongly agree, and 6 being, strongly disagree. An overall average of the responses to each of the 30 items on the scale was computed, and then an overall average response to the scale for each group was computed. As seen below in Table 4.11, the treatment group's overall affluenza score is slightly higher (that is, more removed from affluenza traits) on the post-test (4.0) than the control group's overall score (3.90) on the post-test, and the treatment group moved 1.5 points from pre-test to post-test while the control group barely moved at all. Again, while not statistically significant, these findings certainly add strength to the overall trend that has been discussed throughout this group.

Table 4.11

Overall Score on Affluenza Scale

Average affluenza score	**Control Group**	**Treatment Group**
Pre-Test	3.92	3.85
Post-Test	3.90	4.0

1=strongly agree 2=agree 3=somewhat agree 4=somewhat disagree 5=disagree 6=strongly disagree

In Table 4.12 below, the items measuring intention based on the theory of reasoned action are explored. In three of the four items the treatment group show lower scores, or were more likely to agree with the questions asked. This too is in keeping with the trend that the treatment group displays fewer characteristics or attitudes associated with affluenza. In the case of the third item, “I intend to plan my purchases more carefully” the difference between the control group and treatment group is most noticeable at 2.41 to 2.06, respectively.

It is only in the fourth item, “I will be more thoughtful of how my actions affect others” that the control group scored lower than the treatment group, or were more likely than the treatment group to agree with this question (1.7941 to 1.8529). Also worthy of note is that this item has the lowest mean score for both the treatment and control groups.

Table 4.12

Intent to Change

Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
I Intend to be more involved in my community	Control	34	2.9118	1.05508	.18094
	Treatment	34	**2.8529**	1.13170	.19409
I plan become better acquainted with my neighbors	Control	34	3.0588	1.17914	.20222
	Treatment	34	**2.8824**	1.06642	.18289
I intend to plan my purchases more carefully	Control	34	2.4118	.85697	.14697
	Treatment	34	**2.0588**	.91920	.15764
I will be more thoughtful of how my actions affect others	Control	34	**1.7941**	.68664	.11776
	Treatment	34	1.8529	.74396	.12759

Table 4.13 below shows the results of the t-test for the four items regarding intent. None of the observed differences were statistically significant at $p < .05$ (equal variances assumed).

Table 4.13

Additional Post-Test Questions

Additional Post-Test Questions based on the Theory of Reasoned Action	**t-test for Equality of Means**						
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	T	**df**	**Sig. 2-tailed**	**Mean Diff**	**Std. Error Diff**	**Lower**	**Upper**
I Intend to be more involved in my community	.222	66	.825	.05882	.26535	-.47096	.58861
	.222	65.678	.825	.05882	.26535	-.47101	.58866
I plan to become better acquainted with my neighbors	.647	66	.520	.17647	.27266	-.36791	.72085
	.647	65.345	.520	.17647	.27266	-.36801	.72095
I intend to plan my purchases more carefully	1.638	66	**.106**	.35294	.21552	-.07737	.78325
	1.638	65.678	**.106**	.35294	.21552	-.07741	.78329
I will be more thoughtful of how my actions affect others	-.339	66	.736	-.05882	.17363	-.40548	.28783
	-.339	65.580	.736	-.05882	.17363	-.40552	.28787

Tables 4.14 and 4.15 below show the results of the end of semester supplemental course evaluation. This course evaluation is separate from the student evaluation of instruction, which is the formal course evaluation used by the college. This particular measurement tool I created as a mechanism to assess the overall learning experiences in both the treatment and control groups. This was used in part to ensure that both groups had a similar learning experience, and that I did not overly emphasize the issue of affluenza in the treatment group, which would have

affected the outcome of the results. The data indicate that both groups had a very similar educational experience. Not surprisingly, the treatment group had a slightly higher percentage than the control group in the strongly agree category on three of the five categories, specifically that the course helped them rethink some assumptions about social life (53% to 45%), that learning assists in developing a broader understanding of the social world and how to interact in that world (56% to 52%), and that they have a greater appreciation of how their choices and actions affect others (56% to 49%). While these differences are modest, the results are in keeping with the trend previously discussed and are the kind of results hoped for. Certainly the goal of the treatment was to help generate some cognitive shifts as well as changes in assumptions. In both groups, 76% indicated that the course material made them think about how their life is connected to others around the globe. This of course would be an expected outcome in any sociology class. The control group scored higher than the treatment group (85% to 79.4%) on the question regarding my desire as their instructor to really want them to learn, understand, and use course material. Again, the difference is not much, but this result helps to verify that I was not overly attentive to the treatment group. In all, these tables reinforce that the learning experience for both groups was quite similar and predominately positive. These data also suggest that desired outcomes were achieved.

Table 4.14

End of Semester Supplemental Course Evaluation—Treatment Section

Treatment Section							
End of Semester Supplemental Course Evaluation	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Totals**
The course material made me think about how my life is connected to others around the globe	**26** **76%**	**7** **21%**	**1** **3%**	0	0	0	34
This course made me rethink some of my assumptions about social life.	**18** **53%**	**12** **35%**	**3** **9%**	**1** **3%**	0	0	34
Learning about new things, and developing a broader understanding of the social world has altered how I think about, and interact in the world.	**19** **56%**	**11** **32%**	**4** **12%**	0	0	0	34
This instructor seemed to really want me to learn, understand, and use the material presented in this course.	**27** **79.4%**	**7** **20.5%**	0	0	0	0	34
This course helped me develop a better appreciation of how my choices, and actions, affect others.	**19** **56%**	**11** **32%**	**3** **9%**	**1** **3%**	0	0	34

Table 4.15

End of Semester Supplemental Course Evaluation—Control Section

Control Section							
End of Semester Supplemental Course Evaluation	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Totals**
The course material made me think about how my life is connected to others around the globe	**25** **76%**	**8** **24%**					33
This course made me rethink some of my assumptions about social life.	**15** **45%**	**17** **52%**	**1** **3%**				33
Learning about new things, and developing a broader understanding of the social world has altered how I think about, and interact in the world.	**17** **52%**	**13** **39%**	**3** **9%**				33
This instructor seemed to really want me to learn, understand, and use the material presented in this course.	**28** **85%**	**5** **15%**					33
This course helped me develop a better appreciation of how my choices, and actions, affect others.	**16** **49%**	**15** **45%**	**2** **6%**				33

Included on both supplemental course evaluations were two open-ended questions, listed below. What follows is a discussion of the responses to those questions.

> The most powerful learning experience/s from this class included?
> My most memorable learning experience/s from this class included?

Treatment section response. In the treatment class there were seven comments related specifically to the service learning as either being the most memorable or most powerful learning experience or both. Some of those comments included:

"The service learning put me outside of my comfort zone."

"My time at the ARC (resale shop) was the most memorable."

"The experiential learning was the most powerful."

"Working at the thrift store made me more aware of consumerism issue."

I am not at all surprised that the service-learning component was a powerful or memorable experience. This is exactly the purpose of service learning, to provide an opportunity for students to do something new or different, often taking them outside their comfort zone while applying course concepts with the intent of engendering growth. The following excerpts from several treatment group service-learning response essays demonstrate the benefit of this experience. "Spending my six hours at the ARC (resale shop) was humbling. It made me think, how long before people realize that being materialistic does not make them happy or content?" Several students commented on the beauty myth, and how this lends itself to women being affected by materialism in ways that they had not before considered. "The majority of clothing was for women, taking up three times as much room as the area for the men's clothing. This indicates that women, even lower class women, are still falling prey to the beauty myth where they literally buy into what society thinks is beautiful." Another student echoed this comment with this: "The vast majority of clothes were women's and most were not worn out. It really speaks to the beauty myth that women are sold." These two comments really show how students are able to apply sociological concepts to their service learning experience. These reflections also show that the students are becoming more aware of the complexity of affluenza. Finally, a fourth student writes this, "After watching the video 'The Story of Stuff ' and doing my service learning hours, it really makes you question the sanity of a system that allows for people to amass such glorious amounts of what eventually becomes trash, while many others suffer in terrible need, need that most of us could never fathom." I am grateful that for some the experiential learning or service-learning component was so powerful or memorable. That is, of course, the intent. It seems evident by the students' comments, some of which were shared here, that learning has occurred, and that a new, and growing awareness about the ills of materialism has begun to bloom.

Among the treatment group there were three comments made in the two open-ended questions that related to the videos shown as part of the treatment. While several other videos unrelated to the treatment were shown, I have focused specifically on those comments regarding videos that were either part of the treatment, or comments made about all of the videos in general. Those comments were:

> "Food Inc. was powerful."
>
> "The Story of Stuff and the discussion it generated was the most memorable."
>
> "The various videos were sometimes hard to watch but [we] need exposure to these issues."

In addition to the comments about the videos made on the course evaluation, many students commented about the video *The Story of Stuff* in their second reflective essay when they were asked to consider how materialism affects the individual and society. Similarly, comments about the video segment of *Affluenza* and the segment of *Food Inc.* that were shown in class were also made throughout the semester. In fact, several students were inspired by these videos and selected for their course research paper, topics related to the global issues brought on by materialism, while others wrote about corporate farming and agri-business. I have always believed that videos can be a powerful teaching tool; it seems by these responses that for many that is the case.

Also noted in the open-ended questions of the course evaluation were other comments relevant to the issue of affluenza, as well as other comments that reflected a positive outcome from the treatment. Samples of those comments are below.

> “Understanding how the people who make my stuff are connected to me was most powerful.”
>
> “How much waste affects the planet.”
>
> “That you took the time to learn all our names.”
>
> “To be aware of how my actions affect people across the world.”
>
> “Learning about how deeply embedded a lot of our social values in society are.”
>
> “This course challenged some of my beliefs.”

Of course it is good to know that students developed a keener awareness of how connected they are to others around the globe, the global effects of waste, and that social values are often deeply rooted in society, thus hard to change. The comment pertaining to the attention given to learning all the students’ names is also of note. I have argued throughout this dissertation that there is a lack of community or a sense of belonging in our country. I believe that this comment reflects the sense of disconnection that many feel, and the gratitude that some have when the fissure is bridged by something as simple as learning a person’s name. I am of the position that in the past it would have been unlikely for a student to report that the most powerful learning experience in a class was that their college instructor took the time to learn everyone’s name. Thus this comment reflects two things, it speaks to the erosion of community and personal connection, as well as the desire that some have for a greater sense of connection and more genuine interaction.

Control group responses. Much like in the treatment group, the control group also had seven individuals indicate that the service-learning component was either the most powerful learning experience, or the most memorable experience. This of course further serves to support that the learning experience for both the control and treatment sections were similar. Some of those comments included:

"I will remember the things I learned during service learning."

"I enjoyed the hands-on / service learning education."

"The soup kitchen was a powerful learning experience."

I am grateful that for some, the experiential learning or service-learning component was so powerful or memorable. Of course, this is the intent. In the control section the service-learning hours were to be logged at either a soup kitchen or a food pantry. In an essay response to her service learning hours one student remarked that at first she was angry that I was assigning this she wrote, "Come on, I'm a single mom, I work, I go to school full time, I don't have time for this. It isn't fair." She ends her essay by sharing a story of an elderly man who came to the food pantry just before closing. She helped him pack up his items in a paper bag and he went on his way. A few minutes later she left for the day, and noted that it had started raining. As she drove away she saw the gentleman walking home in the rain, carrying his groceries she had just packed up for him. She wrote, "I started to cry. I realized that requiring this assignment wasn't unfair—I had just been complaining, it is his situation that is unfair." This reflection demonstrates the power of service learning and the growth that can occur when learning is tied to experience.

This particular class did not watch the videos related to affluenza. The only videos shown in this class were related to the issue of Race and Racism. There was only one comment about these videos and that was that the video on the Residential Schools that Native Americans were sent to was very powerful. Finally, on the open-ended questions there were two comments that related in general to the issue of affluenza. They included:

"I love knowing how connected I am to others around the world."

"It is interesting how culture, population and the environment are related to everything."

While these comments are general in nature, and reflect learning that one would hope would come from an introductory Sociology course, they do suggest a wider understanding of the many connections we all share, and as a result could affect choices, attitudes, and future decisions.

In sum, the responses to both the open-ended questions and survey that was a part of the course evaluation demonstrate that the learning experience was quite similar for both groups, that learning clearly occurred, and the responses by members of the treatment group further support that the treatment had a positive effect.

Reflective essays. Students in both the treatment and control sections wrote two reflective essays. In the case of the treatment group, they were asked to write about the effects of materialism on the individual and society. This assignment served as a means of further evaluating the effectiveness of the treatment. The first essay was written in February, the second essay in April. A copy of the first essay was kept in my office so that the two could be compared. On the second essay, which was written after the final piece of the treatment, there are several clear trends present. First, as mentioned above, the video *The Story of Stuff* came up quite often. One student wrote that the video *The Story of Stuff* helped him better understand the many issues stemming from materialism, but that the video also gave him hope. "This video shows that others are out there trying to make a change. We are not just all drones. I'm more aware that there is change coming, and people are working to bring on that change." Other students commented on how course material related to the issue of affluenza. Some discussed how materialism could very well lead to deviance and crime such as dealing drugs or stealing in order to have what everyone else has. One student wrote, "This [materialism] can create crime because those who can't purchase the right stuff, or were never given the opportunity for a good job or education may steal in order to get it." Many others commented on the issue of social class and social inequality. For instance one student wrote, "I understand now how status affects us as consumers and causes over consuming." Another student wrote, "My overall sentiments are the same in this essay as the first but today I am able to connect consumerism with social inequality and other social issues, as well as concepts from my International Relations class." Still others talked about how easily we as a society can be influenced. "How easily society can be manipulated to buy a product is a scary thing to see. What if what is cool to society today, hurts us in the future?" Clearly this student has come to see the role of the media in perpetuating the issue of affluenza. Additionally, his comment shows his awareness that we should question and consider our actions before rushing to join the crowd.

There are many other powerful pieces in the student's reflection papers. I wish to share a few more that reflect a new way of thinking, and a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding materialism and consumption.

> I believe now more than ever that it is completely unnecessary to be such a consumption based society. The speed at which we buy and discard products is unsustainable and ridiculous.
>
> Before, I thought consumerism was about how people wanted material items, but now I think of consumerism as a socially and environmentally degenerative disease on Earth.
>
> Many individuals believe that things show our status, this keeps us from focusing on the important things in life. Instead of raising our kids, we work two jobs and substitute things for our time.

> We watch videos and sit in lecture where we see the symptoms of the disease of consumerism. It is gaining footholds and is beginning to fester in individuals as well as in society.
>
> I used to think there was nothing wrong with shopping for clothes every 2 weeks until I realized how much it affects people across the world. We need to think about what is necessary and not about what is cool.
>
> While my standpoint on consumerism is about the same as it was in my first essay, I now realize where the ideas come from and how it can snowball into a gigantic issue if it is not dealt with right away. We realized too late that it has gone too far. The benefits don't outweigh the problems it causes.
>
> I still feel the same way I did in my initial essay, but the difference is that my passion and desire to change it, and do something about these issues grows more and more.

To say that I am impressed with the student's responses would be an understatement. Of course I am pleased that the treatment had a positive effect. More importantly, however, I am proud of the students, and the level of reflection and growth shown throughout their essays. For those who teach this is surely understood. My pride does not come from a sense of successful teaching. In fact, it has nothing to do with me, or with teaching. Rather, it is about the students, and the work they did over the course of the semester that produced such important and noticeable growth.

The final piece. Beyond the surveys, the reflective essays, service-learning, and course evaluations there was one last piece put into place to help corroborate that my interactions, and lectures in both the treatment and control groups were balanced, and that I did not unduly influence the treatment group regarding the issue of affluenza. As previously mentioned, I had a colleague sit in on all my classes to observe my teaching style and interaction with students. Her personal comments to me, as well as her written evaluation of her observations clearly indicate that she noted no differences in how I interacted with students, or in the manner that I presented information. Comments from her written evaluation include the following;

> Merri started each class with a quiz on the subject that she was lecturing on. Afterwards she went over the answers to the quiz, which was of benefit to the students. Merri's classes were well organized and her delivery of course material was effective. I saw no differences from class to class in organization, mode of delivery, or how Merri interacted with students.
>
> Merri showed respect for the students and their opinions. She called the students by name and seemed to have a friendly relationship with them. This shows that she values their opinions and respects the students in her classes. This style of interaction was apparent in all of Merri's courses.
>
> Merri was effective in communicating with the students. They participated eagerly and had many things to say about the subject material being presented. In some instances, their comments were in opposition to the information she was presenting. However, she always handled these situations well, and gave the students something to think about. In addition, students clearly felt safe about offering opposing views. They were allowed their voice, and shown respect by Merri. This was observed in all of her classes.

This additional input from Professor Stablein is reassuring. While the results from the course evaluations certainly demonstrated that both the treatment and control sections had a similar learning experience, it is of benefit to have the insights of a third party. I am confident that the information that I presented regarding affluenza was within the parameters of the designed treatment. Further, a review of my daily journals logging information about class discussion and student interaction shows no major differences from one class to another. I found that often the questions that come up in one class surfaced in the others. There was one question, however, that came up in the treatment section following the pre-test that did not come up in any of the other classes. The question was in regard to the well-being items on the survey. The items on the affluenza scale regarding well-being were modeled from the DASS-21, and as such are somewhat common questions. A student who had recently begun the process of enlisting in the military had taken a series of tests, and on those tests were also questions from the DASS-21. He wanted to know what those questions were about, specifically the questions like "I often find myself getting agitated", or "I often feel as though I have nothing to look forward to," because he had seen them recently on tests he had taken. Obviously, I felt it was important to respond honestly, so I simply stated that they measure depression and anxiety. He was satisfied with that answer and asked no further follow-up questions. This was the only question that came up over the semester regarding the survey or the questions on it.

Data analysis summary. The first step in this process was to create an affluenza scale and then validate it. This was accomplished by the creation of the Mattison Affluenza Scale. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there are several components of the scale that need further work but it is a solid beginning. The various statistical analyses showed several key points. First, the pre-test scores indicated that the treatment and control groups were roughly equivalent from the beginning in regard to attitudes about affluenza. This is important as it means there was a solid baseline from which to measure the treatment effect. Second, there was no statistical difference between pre-test and post-test mean scores on any of the Affluenza Scale subscales for either the Treatment or Control groups. Additionally, the analyses show a clear trend among the treatment group in that pre-test and post-test mean scores showed they moved further away from attitudes and characteristics associated with affluenza. Further, the four additional post-test items designed to measure intention showed that the treatment group had lower scores on three of the four items, suggesting they were more likely to agree that they intended become more involved in their community, better acquainted with their neighbors, and thoughtful and conscientious about their actions and purchases. More specifically on the items, I intend to plan purchases more carefully, I intend to get to know my neighbors better, and I intend be more involved in my community the treatment group average responses were in the range of 2.85 to 2.05, with 1 being strongly agree, 2 being agree, and 3 being somewhat agree. Whereas the control group averages ranged from 2.91 to 2.41 on these same items. Again, while not statistically significant these findings are in keeping with the trend that has been noticed that the treatment group mean scores appear to be moving away from affluenza.

While the results may not be statistically significant, there is the suggestion based on the trends that emerged during the analysis process that the intervention had some positive treatment effect. Of course, without statistically significant differences between treatment and control group means, we do not have solid evidence that the treatment had the desired effect. Yet the trends based on improved mean scores for the treatment group allow one to deduce that the some positive changes may have occurred.

The end of semester course evaluation results were reassuring as both the treatment and control groups report a similar learning experience, meaning that the treatment was not unduly emphasized, and that it was well integrated into course material. This was further corroborated by my colleague's observations of my courses, and my journal entries. Finally, the open-ended questions on the end of semester evaluations, along with the reflective essays, and written responses to the service-learning all reinforce that the treatment was effective.

Chapter V: Discussion and Future Directions

Tracing its origins to only a few short decades ago, the word affluenza has become more widely used and acknowledged throughout the world. Likewise, the harm that affluenza causes has also been more readily considered, researched, and written about. As I discussed in Chapter I, many scholars such as Kasser (Kasser, 2003; Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002), and Schor (1998), among others, have written about these issues, and have suggested ways in which individuals and society can work to reduce our fixation on consumption, and restore balance in our lives and in our communities. Until now, at least to the best of my knowledge, no one has carried out an experiment to see if attitudes, actions, and intentions regarding materialism could be changed, and if new, healthier behaviors could be encouraged. Building on the research and suggestions of those who came before me, and utilizing Fishbein and Ajzen's Theory of Reasoned Action (2010), I have spent the last two years planning, developing, carrying-out, and statistically analyzing the results of such an experiment. Fueled by a desire to minimize the damage wrought by affluenza, as well as to attempt to alter the materialistic and selfish attitudes that are all too prevalent among the college students that I teach, I began planning this project. The first step was to create a scale to measure one's level of affluenza. This was a far more challenging and intricate process than I could have ever imagined. Once this measurement tool had been designed and refined, a curricular intervention was first planned, then approved, then carried out, followed by statistical analyses. The hard work, moments of disillusionment, and the many hours devoted to carrying this project to fruition brought hopeful results. In the pages that follow, I will outline the successes and shortcomings of this project, as well as respond to the questions and issues that I introduced in Chapter I. Finally, I will consider the work and research that is still needed to continue to make progress, and offer suggestions for future study.

Successes and Shortcomings

While the effect of the treatment may not have been statistically significant, clear trends have emerged from this research suggesting that attitudes regarding materialism can be changed, and intentions to become more involved in one's community affected. While I cannot be certain that the differences noted between the control and treatment group can be explained by the intervention, it seems probable that the intervention had some effect on altering intention and attitudes among the students in the treatment section. Consider the following excerpts from students in the treatment section regarding their experience working at a thrift store or reflecting on consumption and materialism. It seems obvious that the treatment resulted in some serious reflection and thought. "I don't even want to think about how much people waste, myself included." "The majority of clothes were in good shape and really cheap like $7.00 for a pair of jeans—7 bucks, you can't beat it." While this student does not specifically indicate he would shop at a resale store, or that he would be more mindful of future purchases, the seed has clearly been planted. Another student said this in regard to his experience at the thrift store. "A family of about 10 was checking out at the register and had a few pieces of clothing for everyone, and I noticed that it [the total] was about how much I had paid at Kohl's for a small amount of clothes for myself a week ago." While there are no explicit comments from students indicating that they were going to be more mindful of their purchases, or more conscientious in their consumption habits, it certainly appears that at least for some an awakening occurred. Overall, I believe that the treatment was effective in helping students come to understand that people matter far more than things. Consider this final excerpt from a reflective writing assignment by a student in the treatment class: "Consumerism robs people. It robs us of our time, money, thoughts, even sometimes our ability to do great things as humans. It robs us of our value." It is this kind of awareness that is needed. When individuals begin to value people before the trappings of success, then being noticed or aspiring to be a trendsetter becomes less important.

While it would be wonderful to see rapid and monumental change, as a sociologist I know all too well how slow social change can come. Finding the right formula to bring on social change is always hard, and no one formula works for all groups in all instances. Thus an important first step has been taken with modest success, serving as a beginning point for future work. There is still a great deal of work to be done, and more research is needed. Hindsight allows for important observations, and it would be my hope that my mistakes and failings might illuminate a clearer path for future researchers.

Recommendations

The 25-item Affluenza Scale (see p. 89) that represents a refined version of the scale that I used to collect my data needs some further refinement but in all the scale is quite reliable and should be considered ready to use. Two of the scale's eight components had a Cronbach Alpha score of .70 or higher, and scale had an overall reliability of .756. Suggestions as to how to improve upon the internal validity of this scale are discussed in Chapter IV. In addition to my suggestions there, I would recommend that the reliability of this scale be tested on a random adult population, and not just college students. While a treatment to address the issues of affluenza is certainly more easily done as a curricular intervention, it does not need to be limited in this way, and as such ensuring the scale's reliability with the general population is important.

Another recommendation I have for those using a pre-test and post-test design in which results will be compared, is to add a mechanism by which the surveys can be quickly associated. In my case, wanting to maintain anonymity I obviously did not ask the students to give their name, nor did I want to ask for a social security number or phone number as this could potentially identify them. In retrospect, I think asking the students to indicate their mother's maiden name, or their grandmother's first name, or some other indiscriminate but personal information might have been be a good way to link the pre-tests and post-tests together without compromising the anonymity of the survey. This would have saved me many hours of sorting through the surveys, and I would strongly encourage others utilizing a pre-test and post-test design to make use of such a way of linking pre-test to post-test.

The end of semester course evaluation was a helpful tool as well, and I would highly recommend that any future research projects making use of this design include it. Not only did it help to triangulate the findings, but it also provided insight and support for the teaching strategies used. Giving students an opportunity to comment on their most meaningful and powerful learning experiences is very telling. These responses varied, but overall I was deeply impressed with their comments. I recognize fully, however, the likely effect of social desirability on their responses and comments. Despite my best efforts to conceal the treatment, and to have an outside observer help verify my neutrality, it is still impossible to make the scale invulnerable to perceived socially desirable responses and attitudes. Nonetheless, it was refreshing to see that the college students in both the treatment and control groups indicated that they agreed, or strongly agreed, that they would be more mindful of how their actions affect others. As their instructor, as a sociologist, and as a human sharing this planet I am both pleased and grateful for this result. Recognizing the significance of being a mindful and aware citizen is an important awakening, and it is this kind of awareness that is needed. When individuals begin to value people before the trappings of success, then being noticed or aspiring to be a trendsetter becomes less important. I believe that this shift could lead to other important changes as well. As things become less important, and people more important, then it is reasonable to assume that one's commitment to family and their neighbors, as well as to their community, might also increase. This of course is of benefit to everyone. As individuals reap the benefits of close family ties and the rewards of community involvement they are more likely to continue to live a life that supports and rewards them in this way—keeping them from looking for happiness at the shopping mall.

Based on responses on the course evaluation, as well as comments made throughout the semester during class discussion, and in their reflective writing pieces, it seems that the videos and experiential learning were the most powerful components of the intervention; however, there were a handful of comments pertaining to the readings suggesting that the reading assignments helped them to apply course concepts and ideas from class discussion to people and places outside of the United States. If I were to conduct this research again, I would only make some minor changes to the reading assignments, and that would be contingent on finding other articles better suited for this project and for a sociology course. Of course, new documentaries are made, new articles are published, and so the door needs to remain open for changes to the actual components of the intervention. I would strongly recommend careful deliberation before changing any of the components used in the treatment, and I further suggest that the treatment provide insight into how affluenza manifests itself on a local, national, and international level. Doing so assists the students in drawing parallels from their life to others elsewhere. The experiential learning piece of the intervention is critical. While I am not familiar with any other experience besides a resale shop where students would be exposed to the volume of clothes and household items that are a part of the cycle of affluenza, they may exist. Such a substitution, if one is available, would be suitable, but it is key that the students have such an experience.

Connecting My Research to Past Findings

As evident by the research presented in Chapters I and II, affluenza harms individuals, societies, and the planet. From the discussions and written work in the classes involved in this research it seems the students agreed. While it may not have been a topic most gave much consideration to before the class discussions, once the topic was introduced and the students were asked to reflect on this issue, the floodgates came down. As is so often the case with teaching, once students are able to make a personal connection to course material, and their input and voice is encouraged and respected, tremendous growth can occur. We live in a society where we are bombarded with media messages, and a culture that promotes individualistic attitudes. As such, many have never taken the time to stop and consider the messages they receive from the media, or how our culture perpetuates a cycle of wanting and waste. As I pointed out in Chapter I, Kasser (2003) suggests that spending time reflecting on, and reevaluating our own materialistic assumptions and attitudes could lead to personal change. It seems that this is in fact the case. Not only was this evident on the post-test, and written assignments among the treatment group, but also in class discussion. One such discussion centered on iPhones and the student making the point made a comment that people will take their cell phone out of their pocket feigning that they were checking the time, or for messages, but really it was about showing off their latest purchase. Another student followed this comment up by saying that even though I do not allow phones to be on in class, almost everyone had their phone sitting out on the desk, turned off, but visible, and that this too was a way of displaying or comparing their latest or newest gadget. Once the idea of affluenza was presented, and students were asked to reflect, they began to see signs and symptoms of this social ill quite readily. Not only did they begin to see how affluenza manifests itself in daily life, they also commented on the need to be more conscientious about their own actions and purchases. This was clear not only in their written work but also in class discussion. Hence, awareness and reflection opens the door for some to begin to examine their own believes and attitudes, which is the road that leads to change.

Beyond reflection, Kasser (2003) also suggested that new activities might help promote important change, and that adults could offer themselves as more conscientious role models. The experiential learning component of the treatment which for many students was a new activity, certainly seemed to produce some change as evident by the comments on the end of semester evaluation, as well as noted in the response essays to the service-learning hours that the students logged. Kasser's suggestion that adults could be more conscientious role models is also an idea shared by the theory of reasoned action, which I addressed earlier in this paper. In what Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) refer to as injunctive norms, people can be motivated to behave in certain ways when a respected social agent models a particular behavior. This is why it is so important that faculty demonstrate through their actions as well as through their words, the importance of being an informed and participatory citizen. Additionally, faculty must promote respectful interaction and cultivate a space where everyone is allowed a voice. While not all students will be interested in the subject matter, most students will respond to being treated with respect. If we hold our standards high and engender a respectful culture within the classroom we can become that respected social agent or role model that introduces new ideas as well as encourages new behavior. The classroom should certainly be about more than just the dissemination of knowledge; it should also be a place where the tools needed to engage in life-long learning are honed. I have yet to see anyone truly learn without being open to it. This willingness to consider new ideas, ideas that may challenge previous assumptions, and require personal growth must be approached with respect, as well as allow room for dissent. When this balance is obtained it often opens the door to learning. This is why our actions and behavior in the classroom are so important. We must be impeccable in word and in deed, not only to be a role model with the ability to influence, but to help establish within our students the skills of respectful interaction, personal reflection, and the courage necessary for new exploration. Without this, I am doubtful that such an intervention would be as successful. Existing assumptions cannot be challenged all at once, and new behaviors cannot be taught in a day. We can, however, work to create an optimum learning environment in the classroom, and be conscientious role models thereby being most effective as agents of change in the classroom.

As I discussed above, it is essential that as role models we hold high the importance of being an educated consumer and an informed citizen. Surely, many would agree that an educated and informed citizenry are central to a healthy society. Likewise, being educated and well-versed consumers benefits the individual, and arguably the larger economic system. Schor (1998) suggested that being an educated consumer was one way to begin to derail the "consumer escalator" (p. 144). The findings of this research certainly support this premise. As students began to connect the dots between where the things they buy come from, who makes them, and the various human rights and environmental issues that are so often a part of this equation, they took notice. Again, this was evident in class discussions and in the students' written work. Moreover, as they considered the amount of waste that is generated by planned obsolescence, the loss of natural resources, and the spread of human suffering that are consequences of our voracious consumer appetite, some began to revaluate how they spend, and the reasons why. Others were able to make sense of past experiences when they began to consider that our individual actions at home have consequences abroad. One student, a US Marine Corps veteran who had been deployed on several occasions, remarked that the class helped him make sense of some of the comments that he had heard from local people in the places he had been. He specifically made note of how people in the Philippines were angry that the United States takes whatever it wants, and then uses poor countries for their dumping sites. Interestingly, this same student saw the irony that also exists, that many around the globe want to be like us, and yet they dislike the things we do. This of course shows the power of media, the worldwide media promoting US-style consumerism, and selling the myth that more is better. More important yet, this also demonstrates the power of learning, and the value of being an informed citizen. This particular veteran that I mentioned above is planning on returning to the military as an officer. He told me once after lecture that the things he learned in class will assist him in his role as a young platoon leader, especially in helping those in his charge be more understanding of the various attitudes that many around the world express about the United States.

One idea that several different students mentioned as a means to address the issues brought on by affluenza was to make having the latest fashions uncool, or to make shopping at resale shops the new norm. This idea is not new. As I mentioned in Chapter I, Schor (1998) suggested that making exclusivity uncool would be one way in which we could slow down our materialistic tendencies. Making exclusivity uncool goes beyond just dethroning exclusive clothes, or clubs as the epitome of success. From my standpoint, it is also a means to reduce individualism. One of the driving forces of affluenza is highly individualistic behavior that results in many not giving thought to how their actions may affect their family, or their community. If we were to downplay exclusivity, and encourage a stronger sense of community so that decisions were made in the interest of one's community, family, or the environment, then exclusivity would no longer be so highly sought after. Likewise, I believe that encouraging the use of resale shops, or free-cycle sites where people sell or give away unwanted items, is one way to aid in reducing exclusivity and overt individualism. Certainly, even if more of us took up shopping at resale shops there would still be trends, and a myriad of styles, but there would also be less emphasis on having the latest fashion or gadget, as they simply would not be as readily available. If, as the students suggested, cool meant outfitting ourselves with only what we need, and doing so in a way that was economically and environmentally beneficial, then exclusivity and overt individualism would begin to shrink in importance, creating room for a greater sense of community to blossom.

Finally, in Chapter I I outlined the three specific questions that this research would address. I achieved some level of success with each of them. The scale has been created, refined, and validated. While more work is needed, there is now a tool in place to measure an individual's level of affluenza. Secondly, while the intervention did not produce statistically significant results, there were clearly evident and hopeful trends suggesting that materialistic attitudes can be addressed. Moreover, a trend was also noted among the treatment section regarding future intentions to plan purchases more carefully, become better acquainted with their neighbors, and become more involved in their community. Of course, I would have liked the results to be statistically significant, however, it does appear that a ceiling effect was present: that is, because students exhibited relatively low levels of affluenza to begin with, there was not as much room for change to occur. Moreover, the treatment itself was a relatively small dose. Perhaps increasing both the duration and intensity of the treatment would increase the possibility of a statistically significant finding. As I indicated earlier, there is no one sure-fire method to bring on social change. What may work in one setting, may not work in another. Thus, alternative strategies to boost the educational intervention must be developed and implemented.

Perhaps one such strategy would be to test the effects of offering tax breaks or other such incentives for individuals or families who increase their yearly savings rate, or who reduce household expenditures as well as household waste, or for those who volunteer in their communities. Another possibility would be to find participants willing to take part in a study where they put their television in the closet for three months, and spend more time outside, as well as only buying those items truly needed. While only anecdotal, I have heard from many that once they turned the TV off, and got more involved with their children and families, they saved more, played more, and were happier. If this is true, then implementing and carrying out such experiments could be very beneficial in reaching those that may be unaffected by an educational intervention, or not in an educational setting where they would be exposed to a curricular intervention.

While alternative strategies are needed in order to take on the issue of overconsumption from a variety of angles, there are other ways in which the present treatment could be improved. Since the results of this study seemed to suggest that the students were quite affected by the experiential learning component, then adding to the experiential learning piece might be one way of increasing the strength of the treatment dose. I would suggest including a more involved and intense experiential learning assignment that takes the students to a variety of settings. Increasing the number of hours spent working at a resale shop, as well as adding in work at a food pantry, soup kitchen, or homeless shelter would provide a glimpse into the local suffering that occurs. Additionally, adding service-learning hours that take the students to a location like a country club or some other elite group would further help expose the excess that some have, juxtaposed with the need and suffering of those at the homeless shelters, or at the soup kitchen. I would further suggest seeking out popular role models, either local celebrities or better-known celebrities who have embraced a lifestyle that promotes simple living, and denounces blatant over consumption. The importance of what Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) refer to as injunctive norms should not be overlooked, and could be beneficial addition to the intervention. In the case of injunctive norms, people can be motivated in some instances by social agents. This can occur for a variety of reasons, including the expert or referent power they hold. In the case of expert power they comply because of the knowledge and expertise the social agent has, whereas in the case of referent power, it is because they identify with the social agent and may want to be like them (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Perhaps then inviting guest speakers to class in the case of local heroes, or through videos in the case of the latter, another mechanism of change could be capitalized on, adding to the overall quantity and quality of the treatment dose. Recognizably, it would take some work to find the appropriate role models that could serve in this role, but the payoff could be quite large.

Beyond the ceiling effect, and the relative modest dose of treatment, there are perhaps other explanations as to why both the control and treatment groups demonstrated a lower level of affluenza than I had anticipated. While the research suggests that college students are slightly less likely to be materialistic in comparison to high school students, the rather low levels of affluenza demonstrated by the responses to the scale was still unexpected. I certainly am not complaining that lower than expected levels of affluenza were found, but it does create a situation where there is less room for change. I have several ideas as to why the students involved in this study presented with relatively low affluenza scores. I teach at a community college nestled in the foothills of Colorado's Rocky Mountains, where people seem more in-tune with the environment. The more one embraces activities beyond shopping, and values the land and other people, the less likely they will suffer from affluenza. The people of Colorado are the leanest and fittest in the nation (Peters-Smith, 2012). They hike, climb, run, bike, ski, snowshoe, hunt, fish, raft, kayak, and camp with an enthusiasm I have witnessed nowhere else, not even in my home state of Michigan—which is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise. These are people who love the outdoors, who value the natural resources they are surrounded by, and who flock here in droves. In 2011, Colorado ranked fifth among US states in terms of domestic migration, far surpassing its neighbors, New Mexico and Arizona, both of which offer a similar natural environment (Svaldi, 2012). Perhaps the people that Colorado attracts are less materialistic, as well as more inclined to be citizens than consumers. In addition to the close connection many in Colorado have with the environment, the college where I teach is a mere 20 miles or so from Boulder, which is routinely heralded as a liberal mecca, and affectionately referred to by locals as, "The Boulder Bubble"—a haven unto itself. Others refer to Boulder, either jokingly or in disgust as, "The People's Republic." Regardless of one's political leanings, Boulder is clearly recognized as a liberal bastion. According to *Forbes*, Boulder, Colorado, is the most educated city in the United Sates; it is home to prestigious academics as well as world-class athletes (Zumbrun, 2008). It is not hard to imagine that Boulder's influence could easily stretch some 20 miles, affecting how others nearby come to see and understand the world in which they live. While I cannot be certain that this helps to explain the lower affluenza scores found here, I am very curious how college students elsewhere, such as in Miami or Los Angeles, may compare.

While the affluenza scores here were lower than expected, that does not mean that affluenza is not present, or that there is no room for improvement. Affluenza is too deeply rooted in our culture, and its symptoms are too ubiquitous to assume that treatment is not needed everywhere throughout the United States. Regardless of the lower affluenza scores, I believe that the intervention was of benefit to the students, and helped many begin to think in a more holistic way. Additionally, the lower than expected affluenza scores found here do offer some additional insights, and suggest areas for future research. Might it be that affluenza is less prevalent in geographical areas that have higher levels of education, or attract serious outdoor enthusiasts, or some kind of combination of education and outdoor physical sport? I fully suspect there is a link between education and affluenza, but it would be interesting to pursue that research. Moreover, in areas where the center of activity is not a shopping mall, but the outdoors, and where a sense of community and commitment to others is high, like it is among rock and ice climbers and white-water rafters, might then shopping and other materialistic pursuits become less significant? Again, I would be interested in seeing how college students in other parts of the nation compare, and if any parallels can be drawn to the level and type of education, or the degree and style of outdoor activities in those regions. If so, then finding ways to entice those specific outdoor activities while promoting education would be another way that the issue of affluenza could be addressed.

Implications and Future Directions

When I first began this research journey I could not help but think about the writing across the curriculum initiative that flowered in the 1980s, just as I was returning home from the military and pursuing a university degree in earnest. This pedagogical approach emphasized the instruction and practice of writing in various courses, not just composition courses, as a way to help students learn and retain information better, while developing their critical thinking and writing skills. Likewise, I was also reminded of an international studies program at a college where I used to teach, which encouraged faculty in all disciplines to add an international module to their classes to enhance global awareness. This particular program was also connected to a global studies certificate, available to students who completed enough courses that had the approved international module imbedded within them. If we can write across the curriculum, and insert with relatively minimal effort an international module into courses, then why not consider implementing a treatment aimed at reducing affluenza, and increasing participatory citizenship on a larger scale? The template is already in place, and the treatment design has been tested. Undoubtedly, there would need to be appropriate revisions in order for the treatment to be unobtrusively included in a math course, or a religion class, but it certainly is something that could be done. I would further argue that it is something that needs to be done. I am reminded of the words of one of the students in the treatment course who wrote, “We only realize it has gone too far, when it is too late.” The good news is that it is not too late, yet. We can create and stimulate change. It has been my position for the last several years, in light of the larger global economic recession, that many are more willing now than any time in the recent past to reevaluate how they spend, and why. It is imperative that this window of opportunity not be missed.

Continued testing and revision of the Mattison Affluenza Scale can and should be ongoing, thus there is no reason for other researchers interested in this topic to wait before planning and carrying-out a curricular intervention as described here. It is important that future research take place in a variety of geographical locations, and among community college students as well as university students. Likewise, finding a venue to test and implement such an intervention with non-college students would be advisable. Perhaps such venues could be a debt-counseling program, a continuing education class, or even part of a new-employee orientation program in any industry or business. I must do my part as well, presenting at conferences, encouraging colleagues to include such an intervention in their courses, and of course I must continue to implement and carryout such interventions in my own classes as well.

As I mentioned above, due to the global economic and social issues of the last few years, more people are likely to reconsider and evaluate their spending, as well as their role in society. We have a window of opportunity that may not come our way again. Capitalizing on this unique time frame is imperative.

Networking among those carrying out such an experiment is also necessary in order to ensure the appropriate revisions and updates to the scale are shared, as well as any adaptations made to the treatment itself. Keeping information readily available on how others outside the discipline of sociology modify the treatment to best fit their respective courses benefits prospective researchers. Likewise, there must be a concerted effort to ensure that the findings are readily shared and distributed in order to provide further support for this work, as well as means of encouraging others to take on such a project. Those interested in this research topic, even if they are not in a position to carry out a study such as this, can work to enlist colleagues who are capable of implementing such an intervention.

Conclusion

It seems we often return to our roots. At the start of this Ph.D. program an emphasis on the importance and practice of reflection was stressed. I find that I have now come full circle, returning not only to the roots of this program, but also to my roots as a child who grew up on a farm in Northern Michigan. Not too long ago while driving home from work a song from the 1970s came on, and it caused me to reflect on my childhood, prompting a memory of where some of my desire to change our patterns of consumption might have come from. As farmers, my parents loved the land; they cared for it, and respected it. I inherited this trait from them, and it remains with me today. Even as a five year old, I was capable of being affected by reports of nature, and our natural resources being harmed by humans taking too much, far more than their share, and caring too little. While barely old enough to remember, I do have some recollection of the news reports about the impending death of Lake Erie. In particular, I remember the outcry when in 1969 the Cuyahoga River, one of Lake Erie's main contributories, caught on fire; sadly it was only one of several river fires in Michigan (Harteg, 2010). It was challenge as a five year old, growing up in rural Northern Michigan surrounded by forests of virgin timber to comprehend how a river could burn. It is still a challenge for me to understand how this kind of irresponsible dumping and pollution into our water supply could ever have been allowed to happen in the first place. Yet it did, and this event touched me, as it did so many others. The news about Lake Erie and its certain demise continued to make headlines, and was the topic of conversation over the next decade or so, even while scientists worked to find a way to save the lake.

Meanwhile, in the 1970s the California band, *The Eagles* came into prominence. Buried on the *Hotel California* album was a song that resonated with me, and even as a young 12 year old I was able to connect the message of the song with the images I remembered seeing on the television of Lake Erie. One line in particular really seemed to get to heart of the matter, then and now: "There is no more new frontier, we have got to make it here, we satisfy our endless needs and justify our bloody deeds" (Henley, 1977). Indeed, there is no more new frontier, and we must find a way to illuminate the damage that our endless needs cause, as well as to find a method to alter such irresponsible social and environmental behavior. As I have indicated many times throughout this dissertation, affluenza is an extraordinarily complex social problem. There is no single solution, no vaccination to help eradicate this social phenomenon. Now, however, there is a measurement tool, and an intervention prototype that can be used to begin to address this issue.

The Lessons of Lake Erie

Proving nearly everyone wrong, Lake Erie did not die. No longer in imminent danger, the lake survives some 40 years on, and it did so due to increased awareness and a resolve to alter human behavior and actions. I am well aware of the slow, evolutionary process of change. While sometimes rapid and sweeping change occurs, most often social change comes slowly, creeping in over the course of decades. As a result, it is easy to grow tired; to become doubtful that the change we want will come. We must not give up—change is possible. Lake Erie taught us that. On the verge of death with little in the way of hope for survival, Lake Erie was resurrected. This gives me hope that with a concerted effort, affluenza can, and will be slowed. This is the small victory that I hope to win for humanity.

APPENDIX

Appendix A

Matrix of articles with scale construction or revision

Author/ Citation Article	Relevance Usefulness to this learning achievement	Synopsis / Findings	Methodology/ Statistics utilized	CC *
Belk, Richard Materialism : Trait Aspects of Living in the Material World. 1985 Journal of Consumer Research 12, 265-280.	Significant: This article provided insight into sub-scale and item construction, sample size, test-retest reliability and the process of coding.	Materialism is neglected as a macro-behavior issue. Three sub-traits of materialism envy, non-generosity and possessiveness are presented and tested. Findings suggest more research is needed that focuses on issues with macro-consumer behavior. .	Two separate studies; the first to reanalyze early data from Belk to establish reliability and validity of the 24-item materialism scale of which the test-retest reliability was acceptable at .68. The second study investigated generational differences in materialism. A sample of 338 were administered the survey using a 5-pont Likert scale. A sentence-completion task was also administered and coded.	No
Belk, Richard Three scales to measure constructs related to materialism : Reliability, Validity, and Relationships to Measures of Happiness. 1984 Advances in Consumer Research. 11, 291-297	Significant: in that this was the first major scale developed to measure materialism. Includes a discussion on why measuring materialism is important. Also provides insight into the process to process of scale item creation.	Three measures of materialistic traits as suggested by the literature are proposed, measured & tested. The traits being: non-generosity, possessiveness, and envy. Good reliability, good convergent validity, marginal discriminant validity and very good criterion validity. Envy and generosity and to some extent possessiveness found to be negatively related to happiness.	30 to 35 items were generated for the three constructs used with a 5-point Likert scale in a pretest with sample of n=237. Based on factor analysis, item-total correlations, and measures of internal consistency 7 to 9 items were selected for each category. Internal consistency measured using Chronbach's Coefficient Alpha and consistency over time was measured through test-retest correlations both of which indicate acceptable reliability. A second sample of n=338 was administered the test twice and the 2nd time provided additional input using photographs to help examine convergent and discriminant validity. Criterion validity among known groups (5 different groups compared) found overall reliability and validity encouraging.	No
Bottoml	Good: This article	Examines and refines J.	Data collected from two samples	Yes

ey, Paul, Nairn, Agnes, Kasser, Tim, Ferguson, Yuan and Ormrod, Johanne. Measuring Childhood Materialism: Refining and Validating Schor's Consumer Involvement Scale2010 Psychology and Marketing 27(7), 717-739.	was important primarily for three reasons. It discusses the issues involved in adult-centric scales and the process used to adapt an adult scale to a younger population. It also explains the process used to examine Schor's scale. Finally, this has a cross-cultural piece providing insight into conducting research abroad.	Schor's (2004) Consumer Involvement Scale to be used with children. Such scales tend to be adult-centric but results of this work suggest that Schor's scale will be useful in studying materialism in children.	of children in the US sample ages ranged from 11-15 with n=142 and in the UK n=557 with ages ranging form 9-13. Schor's 16-item 4-pint Likert scale was used. Global self-esteem was measured using Rosenberg's 10-item scale. Confirmatory Factory Analysis was used CFI=.87. Convergent and discriminant validity were examined AVE .41 was low. Poorly performing items discarded and AVE increased to .59.	
Dufrene, R An evaluation of a patient satisfaction survey: *Dufrane Cont.* validity and reliability 2000 Evaluation and Program Planning 23, 293-300.	Moderate: Not really related to materialism/Affluenza. However, insight into the use of Likert Scales and Factor Analysis.	Evaluation of a medical centers external patient satisfaction survey. Results showed that this survey compared well to three other existing surveys with physician and nursing care being vital categories in patient satisfaction.	45 item survey with 5 and 3 point Likert type scales. 7 items were open-ended. Factor analysis of 25 of the original 45 items to identify latent common factors. Varimax and Oblimin rotations completed.	No
Ger G. & Belk, R.	Good: Discusses the process of	Modify existing scales (i.e. Belk) to see if they can be	Convenience sample of university students from the US, France and	Yes

Measuring and comparing materialism cross-culturally 1990 Advances in Consumer Research. 17, 186-192.	modifying the Belk Materialism scale for the purpose of cross-cultural study.	utilized to measure materialism in places outside the US. Existing scale found to be more reliable in the US and Europe than in the Turkey. Materialism does not have to be individually oriented.	Turkey. With students in French university being French as well as English and German.	
Goldberg. M. Gorn, G. Peracchio. L. and Bamossy, G. Understanding Materialism Among Youth 2003 Journal of Consumer Psychology 3 (13), 278-288.	Good: Makes use of both the Belk and Richins & Dawson's materialism scales. Good procedural description of scale development steps.	Created a Youth Materialism Scale (YMS) Findings suggest that more materialistic youth tend to shop more and save less. Modest negative Relation between Materialism and liking for school and school performance.	A description of materialism from the literature provided to 12 mothers and 16 teachers of tweens asking them to indicate whether these would be understood by tweens and if they reflected a materialistic orientation. Focus groups held and 19 items resulted and used in a pre-test sample. Created a YMS of 10 items using a 4-pt Likert scale. 540 parents and 996 tweens completed the survey.	No
Griffin, M. Babin, B. and Christensen, F. A cross-ultural investigation of the materialism construct Assessing *Griffen, M. et. al. cont*, the Richins and Dawson's materialism scale in Denmark, France and Russia 2004 Journal of Business	Fair: While this article is relevant in that it makes use of the two prominent materialism scales its focus is predominately on the adapting the scales for use in cross-cultural studies.	Tests Richins and Dawson's scale among western and eastern Europe. A reduced version of this scale is fairly well suited for Denmark but does not do well in France or Russia suggesting a new scale is likely needed for cross-cultural studies.	Translation equivalence established through a multi-step process. Convenience samples utilized. Danish sample n=147, French n=102 and Russian n=103. Validation of scale first among each group, then confirmatory factory analysis then covariance matrices were computed to estimate relevant measurement models.	Yes

Research 57, 893-900				
Manolis, C & Roberts J. Compulsive buying. Does it matter how it's measured? 2008 Journal of Economic Psychology 29, 555-576.	Very Useful: This article has a table that shows all the studies (16 in total) that have made use of the Faber and O'Guinn and the Edwards's compulsive buying scales. Includes reliability and validity of these scales. Great for providing some additional resources.	Compare and contrast validity and reliability of two compulsive buying (CB) scales. The two scales compared suggest each captures different dimensions of CB.	Confirmatory factor analysis Internal validity and reliability tests of convergent, discriminant, predictive, nomological and construct validity	No
Mick, D. Are Studies of Dark Side Variables Confounde d by Socially Desirable Responding ? The case of Materialism . 1996 Journal of Consumer Research 23.106-119.	Excellent: This article considers the effects of socially desirable responses when measuring materialism. This has important implications for those interested in attempting to measure this construct.	Explores the role of socially desirable responding (SDR) in regards to materialism and CB. Found that both are affected by SDR	Simple and Partial correlations between content variables and hierarchical regression analysis. Used surveys and followed up with interviews with a smaller subset of survey respondents	No
Richins, M & Dawson S. A consumer Values Orientation for Materialism and Its Measureme nt: Scale Developme nt and Validation 199Journal of	Excellent: The development of several scales is explained and results reported. Further, discussion on the different types of materialism: instrumental and terminal. Also points to some weaknesses in the original Belk materialism scale.	Reviews the construct and measurement of Materialism and concludes that materialism is aptly conceptualized as a consumer value. In part, results indicate that individuals high in materialism desired higher incomes, emphasized financial security more, preferred to spend money on themselves than on others, less satisfied with their life.	Exploratory research open-ended questions asking the values and attitudes of materialistic people given to a convenience sample of 11 adult consumers. Frequently used descriptions were converted into items. Characterizations of materialistic people from the literature also used and some items from earlier studies were adapted. In total 120 items were generated. Item refinement and validation tests followed. Exploratory factor	No

Consumer Research 19, 303-316.			analysis, reliability assessment and social desirability followed and 30 items were retained. From this additional factor analysis and reliability performed with 18 items remaining that behaved consistently and possess adequate reliability.	

*** Cross-cultural**

Appendix B

Side-by-Side Comparison of Courses Receiving Treatment and the Baseline Courses

Week of Semester	Week of Intervention	Treatment Class	Baseline Class
3	**1**	Pre-test, Reading: Eating Christmas in the Kalahari available as PDF online at: http://windward.hawaii.edu/facstaff/dagrossa-p/articles/eatingchristmas.pdf Begin service-learning hours	Pre-test Begin service-learning
4	**2**	Writing: Reflections on how consumerism affects the individual and society	Writing: Reflection on the socialization process and the active agents of socialization in your life
5	**3**	Videos; View excerpts from Food Inc. and Affluenza (shown in class)	
6	**4**	Reading: CH2 of Kasser's The High Price Materialism (numerous copies on reserve in the library)	
7	**5**	Video: assigned viewing of the Story of Stuff (readily available on You Tube)	
8	**6**	Reading: An excerpt from "The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Eco-Politics (numerous copies on reserve in the library)	
12	**10**	Writing assignment: similar to week 2 reflections on how consumerism affects the individual and society) upon completion of this assignment the students will be asked to compare their reflections from week 2 with the most recent reflections, and to comment on the change from their first reflection. Copies of the first assignment will have been kept and will be distributed as a means of comparison	Writing assignment: Reflection on the gender socialization process and agents of gender socialization in your life
14	**12**	Service learning hours to be completed and short reflection paper of their experiences due	Service learning hours to be completed and short reflection paper of their experiences due
15	**13**	Post-test	Post-test
16	**14**	Student evaluation of course	Student evaluation of course

Appendix C

Pre-Test and Post-Test / Affluenza Scale © Merri Mattison 2012

The following survey is part of an on-going social science study. Sociologists are interested in better understanding the world around them. This includes the interactions and connections that people have with each other as well as with the material and non-material aspects of their culture. The intent of this research project is to explore these connections and interactions so that they can be better understood. Your honest responses will provide important insight into this process. This is a completely anonymous survey and while the data may be used in later publications, it will be done so without any personal or identifying information. Please take this opportunity to reflect on your own experiences and give careful consideration to your responses. There are no right or wrong responses only truthful ones.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If you so choose, you may opt out at any time by not submitting the survey. Should you have questions about this survey, or the research process, please contact Colleen Jorgensen VP of Instruction at (303) 914-6241.

PRE-TEST

For each of the statements below, please circle the response that represents how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. It is difficult to work up the initiative to do things.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
2. I often find myself getting agitated.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
3. I find it difficult to relax.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
4. I often feel that I have nothing to look forward to.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
5. I like to shop.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
6. Being popular is important to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
7. I often buy things I really do not need.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
8. I never recycle.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
9. I prefer to go unnoticed.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

10.It makes me feel better about myself to have what everbyody else has.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
11. I would never shop at Kmart.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
12. I worry about fitting in without having the right stuff.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
13. I only buy certain name brands.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
For each of the statements below, please circle the response that represents how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement.	**STRONGLY AGREE**	**AGREE**	**SOMEWHAT AGREE**	**SOMEWHAT DISAGREE**	**DISAGREE**	**STRONGLY DISAGREE**
14. I like it when people notice me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
15. I like being a trendsetter.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
16. I like or would like having the coolest car on the block.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
17. I worry about having enough money to pay for my credit card(s), tuition, rent, car payment, etc.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
18. My electronics and appliances are the envy of my friends.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
19. I take on extra shifts at work to help pay down my debt.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
20. I know most of my neighbors by their first name.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
21. I am disconnected from family and friends.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
22. Despite my accomplishments I still feel empty.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
23. I often feel like something important in my life is missing.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
24. I am highly involved in community organizations.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
25. I try to find ways to reuse old items.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
26. I find ways to conserve energy.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
27. My storage spaces (garage, attic, cupboards, etc.) are nearly completely filled.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
28. I am in need of more storage space.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
29. I have far more things than what I need.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
30. Whoever has the most toys wins.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

Student Characteristics **(Please check the boxes below that best describe you.)**

Gender	Age Group	Race	Years of College
❑ Female	❑ Under 21	❑ White	❑ Less than one
❑ Male	❑ 21 to 25	❑ Hispanic	❑ One
❑Transgendered	❑ 26 to 30	❑ Native American	❑ Two
❑ Other	❑ 31 to 35	❑ Asian	❑ Three
	❑ 36 to 45	❑ African American	❑ Four
	❑ 46 to 55	❑ Other	❑ Already have a degree
	❑ 56 Plus		❑ Other

Appendix D

The following survey is part of an on-going social science study. Sociologists are interested in better understanding the world around them. This includes the interactions and connections that people have with each other as well as with the material and non-material aspects of their culture. The intent of this research project is to explore these connections and interactions so that they can be better understood. Your honest responses will provide important insight into this process. This is a completely anonymous survey and while the data may be used in later publications, it will be done so without any personal or identifying information. Please take this opportunity to reflect on your own experiences and give careful consideration to your responses. There are no right or wrong responses only truthful ones.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If you so choose, you may opt out at any time by not submitting the survey. Should you have questions about this survey, or the research process, please contact Colleen Jorgensen VP of Instruction at (303) 914-6241.

PPOST-TEST

For each of the statements below, please circle the response that represents how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. It is difficult to work up the initiative to do things.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
2. I often find myself getting agitated.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
3. I find it difficult to relax.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
4. I often feel that I have nothing to look forward to.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
5. I like to shop.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
6. Being popular is important to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
7. I often buy things I really do not need.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
8. I never recycle.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
9. I prefer to go unnoticed.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
10.It makes me feel better about myself to have what everybody else has.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
11. I would never shop at Kmart.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
12. I worry about fitting in without having the right stuff.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
13. I only buy certain name brands.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

14. I like it when people notice me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
15. I like being a trendsetter	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
16. I like or would like having the coolest car on the block.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
17. I worry about having enough money to pay for my credit card(s), tuition, rent, car payment, etc.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
For each of the statements below, please circle the response that represents how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement.	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
18. My electronics and appliances are the envy of my friends.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
19. I take on extra shifts at work to help pay down my debt.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
20. I know most of my neighbors by their first name.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
21. I am disconnected from family and friends.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
22. Despite my accomplishments I still feel empty.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
23. I often feel like something important in my life is missing.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
24. I am highly involved in community organizations.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
25. I try to find ways to reuse old items.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
26. I find ways to conserve energy.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
27. My storage spaces (garage, attic, cupboards, etc.) are nearly completely filled.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
28. I am in need of more storage space.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
29. I have far more things than what I need.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
30. Whoever has the most toys wins.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
31. I intend to become more involved in my community via local activities or volunteering.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
32. I will make it a point to become better acquainted with my neighbors.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
33. I plan to be more conscientious about my purchases and financial expenditures.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

34. I intend to be more thoughtful about how my actions affect others.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

Student Characteristics (Please check the boxes below that best describe you.)			
Gender	**Age**	**Race**	**Years of College**
❑ Female	❑	❑ White	❑ Less than one
❑ Male	❑ 21	❑	❑ One
❑Transgendered	❑ 26	❑ Native	❑ Two
❑ Other	❑ 31	❑ Asian	❑ Three
	❑ 36	❑	❑ Four
	❑ 46	❑ Other	❑ Already have a degree
	❑ 56		❑ Other

Appendix E

Mattison Affluenza Scale/Final Version © 2012

For each of the statements below, please circle the response that represents how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. It is difficult to work up the initiative to do things.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
2. I often find myself getting agitated.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
3. I find it difficult to relax.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
4. I like to shop.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
5. Being popular is important to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
6. I often buy things I really do not need.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
7. I never recycle.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
8.It makes me feel better about myself to have what everbyody else has.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
9. I worry about fitting in without having the right stuff.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
10. I like it when people notice me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
11. I like being a trendsetter.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
12. I like or would like having the coolest car on the block.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
13. I worry about having enough money to pay for my credit card(s), tuition, rent, car payment, etc.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
14. My electronics and appliances are the envy of my friends.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
15. I take on extra shifts at work to help pay down my debt.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
16. I know most of my neighbors by their first name.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
17. I am disconnected from family and friends.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
18. Despite my accomplishments I still feel empty.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
19. I often feel like something important in my life is missing.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
20. I try to find ways to reuse old items.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
21. I find ways to conserve energy.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

22. My storage spaces (garage, attic, cupboards, etc.) are nearly completely filled.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
23. I am in need of more storage space.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
24. I have far more things than what I need.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
25. Whoever has the most toys wins.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

Appendix E

Student Course Evaluation/ Mattison/Spring 2012 SOC 101

For each of the statements below, please circle the response that represents how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
1) The course material made me think about how my life is connected to others around the globe.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
2) This course made me rethink some of my assumptions about social life.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
3) Learning about new things, and developing a broader understanding of the social world has altered how I think about, and interact in the world.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
4) This instructor seemed to really want me to learn, understand, and use the material presented in this course.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
5) This course helped me develop a better appreciation of how my choices, and actions, affect others.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

6) The most powerful learning experience/s from this class included?

7) My most memorable learning experience/s from this class included?

Appendix F

Survey Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. It is difficult to work up the initiative to do things		.589							
2. I often find myself getting agitated		.810							
3. I find it difficult to relax		.777							
4. I often feel that I have nothing to look forward to		.657							
5. I like to shop								.687	
6. Being popular is important to me	.581								
7. I often buy things I really don't need								.716	
8. I never recycle				.619					
9. I prefer to go unnoticed							.749		
10. It makes me feel better about myself to have what everybody else has	.586								
11. I would never shop for clothes at Kmart	.603								
12. I worry about fitting in without having the right stuff	.642								
13. I only buy certain brand names	.612								
14. I like it when people notice me							.733		
15. I like being a trendsetter							.646		
16. I like or would like having the coolest car on the block						.523			
17. I worry about having enough money to pay for my credit card(s), tuition, rent, car payment, etc.									.749
18. My electronics/appliances are the envy of my friends						.639			
19. I take on extra shifts at work to help pay down my debt									.791
20. I know most of my neighbors by their first name			.600						
21. I am disconnected from family and friends			.684						
22. Despite my accomplishments I still feel empty			.698						
23. I often feel like something important is missing in life			.703						
24. I am highly involved in community organizations				.629					
25. I try to find ways to reuse old items				.689					
26. I find ways to conserve energy				.671					
27. My storage spaces (attic, garage, cupboards, etc.) are filled					.873				
28. I am in need more storage space					.857				
29. I have far more things than I need								.500	
30. Whoever has the most toys wins						.741			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations

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