

# **Factoring for X: An Empirical Study of Generation X's Materialistic Attributes**

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## **Abstract**

Today's market includes a penetrating segment commonly known as Generation X. This controversially complex cohort promises to give marketers a run for their money. Disagreement surrounding the segment is vast, encompassing everything from attitudes to more complex issues of their consumer attributes. Are they self-centered, demanding brats or savvy, well-educated individuals? In general, Generation X resents the "X" designation, Baby Boomers don't understand them, and Generation Y resents having to follow them.

Utilizing Richins and Dawson's 1992 value-oriented materialism survey instrument, this research suggests that Generation X is not materialistic opposing Inglehart's Theory of Value Change.

Key Words: Materialism, Inglehart, Generation X, Consumer Values

## **Introduction**

Understanding consumer behavior in the marketplace has been a challenge for marketers throughout marketing literature. From careful dissection of the marketing environment to insight as to what motivates a consumer to make a purchase, studies have been performed in an attempt to comprehend the marketing process from both the buyer and seller perspectives. The continuously changing market environment presents challenges for marketers in terms of understanding the diverse market components and maintaining awareness of the ever-shifting consumer base.

Today's marketplace includes an emerging and potent segment commonly known as Generation X (Gen X), those born between 1960 and 1982 (Alch, 2000; Brown, Haviland, and Morris, 1997; Holtz, 1995; and Tulgan, 2000a). Gen X will become the dominant market segment by 2010 (Strutton, Pelton, and Ferrell, 1997). Studies have begun to identify this segment in terms of what characteristics and consumer traits depict the cohort. Although consistent with the attributes of Generation Y, the generation immediately following, and "netters or millennials," the current generation, Gen X is remarkably different from its predecessor, the "Baby-Boomer." Gen X has developed values based on scrutinizing its parents, as its parents fell victim to corporate downsizing, divorces, and a fast-paced, ever-changing technological environment (Fisher, 1999). These exposures helped shaped the generation's characteristics and values, causing controversy surrounding the X designation.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the consumer base of Generation X and develop a theoretical basis as to the extent of its materialism. This study builds upon the materialism aspect of Muncy and Eastman's 1998 study, which focused on the correlation of materialism and ethics among business school students. A diverse population of Gen X is utilized to gain a broader perspective as to the generation's materialistic values. The original Richins and Dawson 1992 Material Values Scale (MVS) is utilized rather than the scaled-down version introduced in 2004 to allow for a three-part article series exploring materialism, ethics, and their relation within a complex segment.

## **Background**

### Theoretical Background

Inglehart's theory states that the values an individual holds as an adult have been fashioned by socio-economic variables during one's childhood. That is, if one was raised during a time of material scarcity (as in before World War II), the person will be more materialistic than a child born during more affluent times when money is less of a concern and there is relative economic stability (Inglehart, 1977). Thus, the notion that materialism is generational is one perceived theory.

Generation X correlates with the Thirteeners, which are the thirteenth generation under the American flag and United States Constitution (Strutton, Pelton, and Ferrell, 1997). According to Inglehart's theory, this generation should be low in materialism because it experienced economic stability and a rise in economic conditions as it grew up. However, others believe that socio-economics alone are not entirely responsible

and add that life-changing events such as parental divorce and desire to enhance self-concept may also influence one's materialistic attributes (John, 2005; Roberts, Manolis, and Tanner, 2006). This study explores Inglehart's theory in that Gen X should be low in materialistic attributes.

### Possessions

Understanding consumer behavior and the driving force of materialism begins with an understanding of possessions. Possessions are the basis on which materialism is founded and are used to define who we are in the public and private eye. There are two types of possession meanings, public and private. Public meanings are those assigned by the outside observer, and private meanings are those meanings the owner places on the object. Materialists place more importance on items that are consumed publicly because materialists judge themselves and others by their possessions (Richins, 1994).

In addition, possessions express the basis of how personal values are developed. Possessions "must be reasonably tangible, but may include certain experiences (last year's vacation), tangible assets (money, contracts, monetary obligations and interests and land), owned symbols (name coat of arms, or title), and even other persons where some identification with a mastery or control over these persons exists (my employee, friend or child)" (Belk, 1985). Possessions are in essence an extension of one's self. Belk (1988) tells us that there are four types of possessions in our personal sense: (1) the body and body parts; (2) places and periods of time; (3) persons and pets; and (4) objects. In each of these categories, respondents identified with the possessions as an extension of themselves, further identifying who they are. Purchases have taken on personal and social meanings. The symbolism of the object reflects the purchaser, with gender being the most basic dimension. "People buy things not only for what they can do but also for what they mean" (Levy, 1959 p. 118). Possessions and how they are utilized to identify self change as the individual ages. During the infant and middle childhood stages, most identify with objects that symbolize their caregiver and security such as stuffed animals. The adolescent identifies with objects that require physical manipulation, and adults identify with objects that reflect the past. Possessions are, however, still a mirror image of the self at that stage in one's life (Kamptner, 1991).

When possessions and their acquisition become central to one's satisfaction and well-being in life, a person is considered a materialist (Belk, 1985; Richins and Rudman 1994). The materialist believes that these possessions will bring them happiness, and happiness has long been considered the single most important goal (Richins and Rudman, 1994; Ahuvia and Friedman, 1998).

### Concept of Materialism

According to Belk (1985), materialism is defined as, "The importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction." Possessions can be an expression of self-concept and can be used to express individualist attributes rather than merely the functional aspect of the product. Such factors as life experience may be influencers of the level of centrality. For instance, family structure is directly related to materialism, and the age of

an individual who experiences a change in family stability contributes to how possessions are perceived in terms of material centrality (Roberts, Manolis, and Tanner, 2006).

Richins (1994) states, "Materialism is a value that represents the individual's perspective regarding the role possessions should play in his/her life." Further elaboration explains, "... materialism describes an individual's real and desired relationship with economic goods. It is closely tied to the satisfaction one derives from the acquisition and possession of goods as it relates to the intensity and manner by which one peruses economic objectives" (Richins and Rudman, 1994). Richins and Dawson (1992) suggest that persons holding strong material values place possessions and their acquisition at the center of their lives. These individuals value possessions as a means of achieving happiness, and they use possessions as an indicator of their own and others' success. They further suggest that materialists are self-centered and are more apt to spend money on themselves versus family, friends, or civic organizations. Seeking extrinsic rewards rather than intrinsic in order to obtain happiness and express success is a typical characteristic of materialism. In this case, the individual is more reliant upon how their possessions are perceived than they are with how good the products make them feel. Wand and Wallendorf (2006) point out products with low potential for status signaling are not influenced by people's orientation to materialism, while products with high potential for status signaling are. For instance, driving a prestigious automobile such as a Jaguar or BMW is more for the "looks" rather than the innate feeling of content (Roberts and Clement, 2007). Thus, materialism appears to be very closely tied to possessions and their use in individualistic expression.

The issues surrounding materialism give rise to ethical behavior of materialists. Richins and Dawson (1992) point out several cases in which erratic moral judgments were made or crimes were committed in order to maintain or gain material possessions. Muncy and Eastman's 1998 study explored this correlation and discovered a negative correlation between them in business students. Further investigation into the correlation between materialism and ethical behavior is prudent.

## **Generation X**

### Defining Generation X – the Generation Span

Defining Gen X is as complicated as the generation itself. Some studies are firm that Gen X ended with the birth of the Net or Echo-Boom generation, those born between 1978 and 1997 (Alch, 2000). Others report that this generation continues to the 1980's (Brown, Haviland, and Morris, 1997). Still others insist that Gen Y, those born between 1978 and 1983, follows Gen X, and they further break down Gen X to exclude the Cusp years, those who were born from 1963-1964 (Tulgan, 2001a). Some categorize the beginning as early as 1960. Holtz (1995) declares that the defining moment of Gen X was the release of the first oral contraceptive in late 1960, which instantly ended the Baby Boomer Generation. The similar characteristics between Ys, Nets, Cuspers, and Xers have merged to the point that they often are used interchangeably with the synergy of Xers being predominantly used to depict all groups.

The Boomer Generation, amassing a total of 85 million, considerably outnumbers Generation X. Contingent upon actual start/stop dates, Gen X total consumer base ranges from 35 to 44 million (Alch, 2000; Hays, 199; Jennings, 2000; Schwartz, 1992). For the purpose of this study, Gen X is defined as people born between the years of 1965 and 1977, the core Gen Xers (Tulgan, 2001a). Tulgan (2001a) states, "I think the span of the generations must be getting shorter because of the acceleration of change."

### Attributes

There is a great deal of controversy over the intellect, ethics, and other attributes of Gen X. The literature suggests a dual and opposite perspective of the complicated segment. Some depict a group of irrational, self-absorbed "brats," while others describe them as well-educated, self-reliant entrepreneurs with technical savvy. Opinions as well as observations range from extreme negativism and concern over the vitality of the generation to complete captivation over the complexities and intricacies of a generation that has endured childhood independency coupled with intense technological advances.

For instance, Brown, Haviland, and Morris, (1997) state, "We are known to have the lowest academic test scores and the highest rates of crime, suicide, and drug abuse of all generations." Gen X is unwilling to pay their dues. They want immediate gratification and success. Others interpret their visual aesthetics, backwards baseball caps, "grungy" clothes, and body piercing as a visual manifestation of hostility (Esklison and Wiley, 1999). The consensus of this view is that they exhibit outward hostility towards the previous generation.

On the other hand, this generation is noted for having very positive aspects as well. Gen X is composed of computer savvy, talented multi-taskers who can accomplish a day's work in half the time of their predecessors. Bruce Tulgan (2000b) states, "The facts about today's workforce reveal that millions upon millions of Xers are well-educated, successful young professionals doing important work in important places." Gen X is merely a product of their environment. Observing their parents' long-term employee dedication fall victim to downsizing helped shape their values. Gone are the days of living to work (Steigman, 1999). Gen X is concerned about a balance between work and personal time. They want challenging work but also want the flexibility to perform it on their own terms. Their lifestyle comes first, but they also want to be directly involved with the decision-making processes at work (HRFocus, 2000). Bruce Tulgan (2000b) suggests eight things that most Gen Xers are looking for in terms of employment: 1) performance based compensation; 2) flexible schedules; 3) flexible location; 4) marketable skills; 5) access to decision makers; 6) personal credit for results achieved; 7) clear area of responsibility; and 8) the chance for creative expression. They rank flex-time as their main desire when considering a company for employment, followed by responsibility from day one, team work, and life-long employment. There is a noted absence of monetary compensation as a driving force (Martin and Nkwocha, 2001). Fisher (1999) writes, "Show me the training; I'll stay for that. Show me new skills I can learn; I'll stay for that. Then leave me alone and let me do my job." This generation wants empowerment, empowerment to be creative, empowerment to make decisions, empowerment to be free (Kupperschmidt, 2000). This generation is self-reliant. Tulgan (2000a) reports that 61% of Gen Xers are saving for their own

retirement. Furthermore, a greater percentage of them believe in UFOs versus the reliability of social security being available when they retire. They do not depend on anyone for anything; Gen Xers will take care of themselves. As a whole, this generation is dissatisfied with their financial status, and they look for ways to increase their financial security (Mitchell, 1999).

There is a noted return to core family values. Family is factored into employment considerations and every aspect of their lives. According to Fisher (1999), most Gen Xers have been predominantly on their own, living mainly with only one natural parent. They are children born to a generational era that offered little in terms of empathy. Self-consumed “boomer” parents struggled through divorces, finding employment, changing social norms, political turmoil, and difficult economic times. The children were left to fend for themselves, figuring out what was good and bad, and what they determined as right and wrong. They developed values based upon the experiences they created out of boredom and necessity in order to survive themselves (Holtz, 1995). Tulgan (2000a) attributes their values and attitudes to their “latchkey” childhoods, children fending for themselves while parents worked.

Technology has taught Gen X to multi-task, thus becoming technologically savvy. This characteristic is attributed to being raised in the fast-paced technology age and playing everything from Atari to Nintendo. Gen X is accustomed to doing more than one task at a time and often become bored when they have only a few things to do either at home or in the workplace. Technology also is believed to be the driving force behind the impatience of the generation. They have become accustomed to instant gratification. Our forefathers thought it was great that a letter could make it across the country in less than one week. Today, if email does not transmit instantly or the instant messenger is not instantly responded to, people are beside themselves. The Gen X person would much rather watch the quicker version on TV than spend time reading the details in a newspaper or book. Although TV currently holds 62% of this generation’s attention, it is predicted that online media will have a dramatic effect on this percentage (Mitchell, 1999).

Overall, the literature depicts Gen X as placing little value on material goods and a higher importance on intangibles such as time with family. Gen X wants goods and services that simplify their lives, thus allowing for additional free time to enjoy life (Mitchell, 1999). However, there is a mixed consensus as to their attributes, thus implying perhaps a bipolar perception in terms of ethical values. Gen X’s material desires appear to support Inglehart’s theory in that the possessions Gen X aspires to achieve are not self-centered but rather those contributing to the quality of life, leading the way to investigating Gen X’s materialistic and ethical levels and whether there is a correlation between the two. This study will explore how Gen X views material possessions in their life. Although Muncy and Eastman have performed a similar study of ethics and materialism, their focus was on the correlation and not the general levels of materialism. The authors point out the materialism scores obtained from their sample would probably not be representative of a diverse population of Gen X.

## **Research Question and Hypotheses**

This study seeks to answer one central question, whether or not Generation X is low in materialism, as Inglehart's theory suggests. The survey instrument utilized is the Richins and Dawson's 1992 value-oriented materialism survey instrument. Richins and Dawson (1992) point out that the literature suggests materialism is a mindset and collection of attitudes toward the importance of acquiring possessions during the span of one's life. Richins and Dawson identified three central themes that appeared repeatedly throughout materialism literature: centrality, pursuit of happiness, and possession-defined success. From these central themes, an 18 item, 5-point Likert scale, anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree respectfully, was developed and validated by Richins and Dawson to measure the construct of materialism as per the description in social sciences literature. Seven items measured for centrality, five for happiness, and six for success. From the research question and the three central themes for the construct of materialism, four related hypotheses are formulated.

- H1<sub>a</sub>:** Generation X is overall low in the centrality dimension of materialism.  $\mu \leq 1.25$
- H1<sub>b</sub>:** Generation X is overall low in the happiness dimension of materialism.  $\mu \leq 1.25$
- H1<sub>c</sub>:** Generation X is overall low in the success dimension of materialism.  $\mu \leq 1.25$
- H1<sub>d</sub>:** Generation X is low in overall materialism.  $\mu \leq 1.25$

## **Methodology**

### Operational Definitions

Materialism and its components will be measured by means and standard deviation. Results will be individually reported for each variable, evaluated by means and standard deviation, then combined and evaluated by the same method with respect to the construct of materialism. Low for each variable and for overall materialism is defined as a mean equal to or less than 1.25,  $p = .05$ . Above 1.25 is considered not low in materialistic attributes and tending towards high as the mean becomes higher. Means above 3.75 are considered high in materialistic attributes.

Generation X is defined as those people born from 1964 to 1978. According to Tulgan (2001b), this is considered the core of the cohort.

### Data Analysis and Strategy

A survey was administered to 221 Gen Xers. Prospective participants were asked to provide the year that they were born in order to ensure they were Generation X as defined by Tulgan (2001a). Diversity was assured by utilizing email distribution. Results were from a cross section of America as indicated by the demographic results and were from several different states. Of the 221 surveys administered, only 2 were unusable, rendering a usable  $n = 219$ .

The data was analyzed utilizing SPSS to determine the mean and standard deviation for each factor of the survey by the various demographics and as an overall score. Data with a .05 standard deviation is considered to be significant as in Richins and Dawkins (1998). The data was evaluated using two tests for normality, utilizing skewness and kurtosis coefficients. The first Z-test checked skewness and the second checked the kurtosis of the data for compatibility with the normality assumption. Additionally, a coefficient alpha was extracted and two factor analyses were performed.

## Results

### Reliability and Validity

The materialism scale proved reliable, alpha=.7929 with no covariance noted. However, if item 2 for centrality, "I try to keep my life simple as far as possessions are concerned," is removed, the alpha is increased to .8337. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was used to measure the sample for sampling adequacy and rendered significant results of .826. Additionally, factor analysis was performed and four factors were derived. This appears to be consistent with previous studies. Deriving four factors has been common in previous studies, as explained by Richins (2004), ". . . the three-factor materialism model proposed by Richins and Dawson (1992) does not always cleanly emerge in data analysis." (See Table 1)

	Components			
	1	2	3	4
S1	0.526	0.222	0.465	0.204
S2	0.471	0.339	0.483	0.263
S3	0.477	0.112	0.184	-0.592
S4	0.514	0.477	0.357	2.00E-02
S5	0.597	0.28	0.291	-0.183
S6R	0.576	-5.25E-02	-8.19E-04	-0.59
C1R	0.385	-0.648	0.183	4.44E-02
C2	-0.53	0.48	-5.15E-02	0.116
C3R	0.383	-0.172	-0.241	-0.202
C4	0.484	-0.471	0.193	0.284
C5	0.549	-0.416	-3.07E-03	-8.25E-02
C6	0.681	-0.206	-0.116	0.232
C7R	0.446	-0.22	5.19E-02	0.22
H1R	0.526	0.211	-0.472	0.175
H2	0.64	0.14	-0.291	0.192
H3R	0.427	0.275	-0.392	-2.01E-02
H4	0.683	0.234	-0.318	6.16E-02
H5	0.513	0.141	-0.271	2.81E-02

Table 1 Component Matrix

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a 4 components extracted \*S = Success, C = Centrality, and H = Happiness, R = Reversed Scored

Bartlett's test of Sphericity also rendered significant. Three variables fell below the required .05 communalities. Two of the variables measure centrality and the other

measures happiness. Four components explain 58.6% of the variance. These four factors have Eigen values of 5.058, 1.868, 1.480, and 1.1162. The rotated factor loading renders a clear picture of the pattern of loadings for each factor. The loadings are consistent with the Richins and Dawson's materialism scale variables. Although the fourth factor loads for success, only one of the loadings is significant and therefore the fourth factor is not considered in the evaluations. (See Table 2).

Component	1	2	3	4
1	0.605	0.53	0.456	0.382
2	0.32	-0.802	0.504	0.004
3	-0.703	0.154	0.69	0.078
4	0.193	0.229	0.249	-0.921

Table 2 Component Transformation Matrix  
 Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

#### Demographic Data of the Participants

The sample proved to be a diverse cross section of Generation X. Of the 219 usable surveys, 36.1% (n = 79) were males, and 63.9% (n = 140) were females. The income distribution represents a diverse sample: no answer 1.4% (n = 3), under \$10,000 = 5.5% (n = 12), \$10,000-20,000 10.5% (n = 23), \$20,001 - \$30,000 11.9% (n = 26), \$30,001 - \$40,000 16.0% (n = 35), \$40,001 - \$50,000 22.4% (n = 49), \$50,001 - \$60,000 11.0% (n = 24) and over \$60,000 21.5% (n = 47).

The average age of a respondent was 36 with a normal distribution. The demographic of education rendered only 2 non-responses. Of the 217 remaining survey responses, 200 had at least some college education, and 17 had some high school or were high school graduates. This result supports Tulgan's statement that the majority of Generation Xers are highly educated. Only 8.7% of the sample population did not have any college education.

The demographic of occupation rendered a noteworthy distribution. The majority of the participants, 44.3%, indicated they were performing in a professional capacity (n = 97). The next highest and distinguishable different segment of respondents was in the category of office worker, rendering 14.2% (n = 31). The remainder of the occupations rendered percentages ranging from 9.1 to .5, with the highest being college students, n = 20. This result also suggests support for the literature that indicates Generation X strives to perform in higher positions. Only 12.8% of the sample population is in distinct categories that can be considered non-

professional type positions. This percentage does not take into consideration the 9.1 who are classified as students or unemployed.

### Hypotheses Results

The sample failed to support any of the hypotheses set forth, and the results are significant at a higher confidence level than projected. Obtained means for each variable and the overall construct rendered an unimpressive proximity to neutral; centrality,  $M = 2.9889$ ,  $p < .0001$ ; happiness,  $M = 3.3068$ ,  $p < .0001$ ; success,  $M = 3.4313$ ,  $p < .0001$ ; and overall materialism,  $M = 3.2414$ ,  $p < .0001$  (See Table 3). These results are interesting, to say the least.

	t test	DF	Significance	Mean	95% Confidence	
					Difference	Lower
SUCCESS	49.29	217	0.000	2.1813	2.094	2.2685
CENTRALITY	50.69	217	0.000	1.7389	1.6712	1.8065
HAPPINES	40.96	218	0.000	2.0568	1.9579	2.1558
MATERIAL	57.34	216	0.000	1.9915	1.9231	2.06

Table 3 Means Testing

### **Anaylsis And Discussion**

The results failed to support the hypotheses, thus suggesting nonsupport of Inglehart's theory that those born during economically stable times will be low in materialism. A closer examination of the data in regard to demographics did not render notable differences in means between age, income, education, occupation, or gender. As a matter of fact, when analyzed by gender, there was less than a .1 difference in all variables. It is important to note that Gen X rendered results at the median of the scale  $\pm .4$ , with success being the highest. This tends to follow the literature that Gen Xers results-driven and want success in their lives. While not indicating materialistic values, the generation does place most of its purchase decisions on items that indicate what status level they have achieved, which, according to Belk is materialistic symbolism.

Centrality, being close to the median, could be interpreted as the generation placing little value on their belongings; they do not hold items as part of their value system. While a materialistic person will hold on to possessions, this generation is more apt to toss them aside for the new and improved version, raising an issue of belongings being less of what a person is and more of a function of what they want. For instance, a home may no longer be an expression of one's values but rather a functional building to house the family; selling and moving to a new location for better amenities to enhance the quality of living and outward sign of status prevails over keeping the "family home." Gen X is not driven by acquiring possessions or commanding over them and they do not have an issue with giving them up for something new and improved. Perhaps this is a value learned by watching their parents lose jobs and possessions during divorces.

Although the study does not suggest support, it does add to the body of knowledge surrounding Gen X. The practical implications of this study are two-fold. First, according to this study, Generation X reflects neither high nor low materialism; therefore, possessions are not important to them, nor is how their peers perceive possessions, thus implying a noted move from extrinsic to intrinsic materialist values. From a marketing perspective, brand image may give way to a more practical or cost-effective purchase that satisfies the individual desires. But a product can not rest on its laurels as the generation holds no reservations about discarding items. Apparently, Gen X is less concerned with the “Jones” than its predecessor, the Boomer.

Because the generation appears not to be possession driven, it would behoove practitioners to further understand what the generation deems key success indicators and build product lines central to those themes. Perhaps their pursuits to acquire possessions will take a practical approach and be more centered on long-term family desires rather than extravagant impulse purchases.

The study also has academic implications. The grueling task of market segmentation and target market identification is an art that requires detailed information of the prospective consumer. The study adds to the body of knowledge by identifying Generation X and their attributes. Academics can use this information and continue to create a better depiction of the generation's characteristics, thereby further benefiting the managerial implications of the information. As practitioners move into an era that is based on consumer loyalty and customer satisfaction as a means of survival, knowledge of that consumer will pave the way to a more successful marketing mix.

## Conclusion

In summary, the hypotheses set forth for materialism did not appear to be supported by the data. Generation X is not low in materialism, and the results are significant at a higher confidence level than initially set. These results suggests that Inglehart's theory does not stand true when utilizing the Richins and Dawson scale for measuring materialism for a generation born during sound and stable economic times, that perhaps other social implications may act as moderators to socio-economic conditions. It demonstrates that the same results may be obtained by utilizing a convenience sample or a diverse sampling of Generation X. The study thus opens doors for future research, while forming a firm foundation in the understanding of the diverse and complex Generation X. As this penetrating consumer base replaces the “Baby Boomers,” a better understanding of Gen X by marketers will prove most prudent.

### Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of this study. The breakdown of the demographics was a limitation. The choices of “some high school” and then “some college” failed to indicate those with high school diplomas. The instrument also merged “unemployed” and “student” together. This combination makes the assumption that these two populations would have similar attributes and characteristics. However, there are distinct differences between these two groups, and they therefore should be considered as separate demographics. Correcting these issues may render materialistic differences amongst the demographics, thus helping to form a detailed portrayal of the generation.

### Recommendations for Future Research

It would be prudent and efficacious to administer this study again to Generation X as they enter their mature life stage. This effort would allow a look at how materialism changes through the life stages and build on the theory that materialism declines with age. Administering the survey instrument to "Baby Boomers" now would provide a comparative basis in the future.

It also would be interesting to perform a similar study on Generation Y and compare their material standards to Generation X. A comparison between the two studies would prove most advantageous for marketers in the new millennium.



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