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Determining the Characteristics of the Socially Conscious Consumer

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This study finds that the socially conscious consumer can be distinguished by a variety of personality, attitude, and socioeconomic variables, although the relationships are rather weak. A measure of traditionally defined social responsibility was found to have no relationship to socially conscious consumer behavior.

As business responds to consumerism and other forces calling for more responsible marketing action, management must have a clear understanding of the characteristics of those consumers most likely to respond to appeals to their social consciousness. Likewise, public organizations seeking to stimulate and serve the public interest in social issues such as environmental protection need help in identifying the segments of the population most likely to support these causes. Underlying these questions of managerial tactics and strategy there is an interesting philosophical question whether cries for socially responsible marketing action are not premature if the socially responsible consumer is a minority of the total market.

The socially conscious consumer can be defined as a consumer who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social change. What psychological, social, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics describe the socially conscious consumer? To answer this question, researchers in this area must not only identify the determinants of socially conscious consumer behavior—the independent variables, but also must develop a meaningful measure of socially conscious consumer behavior—the dependent variable.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Research into the characteristics of the socially conscious consumer has tended to find that personality variables are better predictors than demographic and socioeconomic variables. This result is contrary to the usual result in studies of consumer behavior. Three empirical studies into the characteristics of the socially

conscious or socially responsible consumer have been reported.

Kassarjian (1971A) reported a study of consumer reaction to the advertising campaign which introduced Chevron's F-310 low-polluting gasoline into the Los Angeles marketing area. Greater awareness and receptivity of F-310 advertising was found among persons more concerned about air pollution. These people also indicated a strong willingness to pay two cents more per gallon for a pollution-free gasoline, but so did persons who did not score high on concern about air pollution. Persons more concerned about air pollution were *not* more likely to be owners of large cars or heavier users of gasoline. No clear relationship was found between concern about air pollution and car ownership. Likewise, there were no significant relationships between concern about air pollution (the dependent variable) and the socioeconomic and demographic variables tested including age (over or under 30), education, social class membership, estimated home value, occupation, sex, marital status, and political party preference. Kassarjian concluded that there was, therefore, no obvious way to segment the market for a low polluting gasoline except on the basis of attitudes toward air pollution.

In a study reported in 1972, Anderson and Cunningham hypothesized that consumers exhibiting a high degree of "social consciousness" would differ significantly from consumers who did not on selected demographic and sociopsychological attributes. The dependent variable was an index of general social responsibility rather than an actual measure of consumer behavior or consumer attitudes.

The Social Responsibility Scale (SR)

The scale used by Anderson and Cunningham was an eight-item scale originally developed by Berkowitz and Lutterman in a study of the characteristics of the traditional socially responsible person. Berkowitz and Lut-

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terman concluded that persons scoring high on the Social Responsibility Scale tended to be conservative and to embrace the traditional values of society. Respondents designated themselves as either middle class or working class, and middle class respondents consistently scored higher on the social responsibility scale. The so-called "high responsables" were better educated, scored low on a measure of alienation, tended to be highly involved in the community, and were more likely to contribute time and money to social causes. They also were more interested in local and national politics and were more informed about political issues and candidates. They did *not* feel powerless to influence the world around them. Among both middle class and working class respondents there was a tendency for high responsables to lean toward the Republican Party.

Returning now to the Anderson and Cunningham research, which used linear discriminant analysis with the Social Responsibility Scale as the *dependent* variable, it was found that sociopsychological variables were better discriminators than demographic variables, although the latter were also able to differentiate between high and low responsibility to some extent. The socially conscious consumer was said to be "a pre-middle age adult of relatively high occupational attainment and socioeconomic status . . . more cosmopolitan but less dogmatic, less conservative, less status conscious, less alienated, and less personally competent than his less socially conscious counterpart." The finding of a negative relationship with conservatism is opposite to the Berkowitz and Lutterman finding.

There are some interesting issues in the use of the Social Responsibility Scale as a dependent variable. It is not obvious that a person who scores high on the general Social Responsibility Scale will also behave in a socially responsible or socially conscious way in his consumer role. In fact, Anderson and Cunningham state the need for further research to determine whether consumption patterns are different between high and low scorers on the Social Responsibility Scale. Furthermore, the Social Responsibility Scale defines social responsibility in a rather specific (and perhaps outdated) way: acceptance of the norms of the community, involvement in community affairs, and identification with the Protestant work ethic. A socially conscious consumer, identified on the basis of specific behaviors such as recycling, might score low on the Social Responsibility Scale *if* such behavior were not consistent with and supported by locally accepted social norms.

The final research study to be reviewed is that of Kinnear and Taylor, with Ahmed as co-author on one paper. In their first study, Kinnear and Taylor tried to determine if ecological concern influences the dimensions of the consumer's perceptual map of detergent brands. Stressing that ecological concern must have a behavioral dimension (not just good intentions) and an attitudinal dimension (because some socially con-

scious behavior might occur unintentionally) the researchers developed their own ecological concern index based on six questions related to attitude and two questions related to behavior. The behavioral and attitude measures were found to be highly interrelated. It was found that buyers did perceive an ecological dimension to detergent brands although it was not the major dimension for most buyers. The higher the buyer's ecological concern, the more important the ecological dimension was in the buyer's perception of alternative brands and the greater the perceived similarity of brands that were ecologically nondestructive.

Using the same data base as the previous study, Kinnear, Taylor, and Ahmed attempted to extend and improve upon the Anderson and Cunningham use of the Social Responsibility Scale by incorporating behavioral and attitudinal measures relating to socially conscious purchasing patterns. Pointing out that the Social Responsibility Scale is a crude measure, Kinnear et al. aimed to be more precise and to get closer to actual behavior in the marketplace by using their own index of ecological concern as the dependent variable.

Ten predictor variables (including socioeconomic, personality, and attitude measures) were selected and these together explained about 28 percent of the variance in scores on the ecological concern index. The five variables with strongest predictive value were perceived consumer effectiveness (a measure of the extent to which the individual perceives he can be effective in pollution abatement); three personality variables, tolerance, understanding, and harm avoidance; and annual family income. *Tolerance* is a measure of openness to new ideas and *understanding* is a measure of desire to know how things work. *Harm avoidance* may measure the responsiveness of the individual to fear appeals but there was a negative correlation with ecological concern. The authors suggested that perhaps the person who is very concerned about pollution "tunes out" communications about pollution because he finds them distressing.

The general picture of the socially conscious consumer which emerges, then, is one of a well-educated and reasonably affluent middle class consumer who is well integrated into the local community. Although well adjusted to community norms, he is not a conformist and feels that he can influence the community and the general world in which he lives. In other words, he feels that he can do something to make the world better. Although these findings have not shown great strength and consistency, they do suggest that the socially conscious consumer has a profile similar to that of the classic "opinion leader."

THE SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT MODEL

What type of a person is likely to be willing to incur the trouble and expense involved in socially conscious

consumer behavior? Some propositions to guide research into the characteristics of the socially conscious consumer can be developed from this review of previous research and from further reflection on the problem. These are brought together in what we call "the social involvement model," which provides the hypotheses for our study.

As a starting point, the socially conscious consumer must be aware of the problem (say, air pollution or water pollution) and he must also be aware of opportunities to buy products and services which are responsive to the problem. Stated simply, he must be "informed," which suggests that he will be reasonably well educated. Second, he must perceive that it is within his power as an individual citizen to have a favorable influence on the problem situation. This suggests an individual who perceives himself as active, socially involved, and not alienated. Third, the socially conscious consumer will have attitudes toward social affairs and community involvement which are consistent with his behavior. In other words, he will score high on an index of social responsibility and he will be active within the community in social, political, and charitable causes. To summarize this social involvement model: the socially conscious consumer is a person who is in a good position in terms of income, education, and occupation to contribute to the community and his self-concept allows him to take an active role. He acts in a manner consistent with his attitudes, playing an active role not only in organized activities but also in his individual behavior as a consumer.

Dependent Variables

Earlier studies were criticized because they did not use measures of actual buyer behavior as dependent variables. To test the social involvement model, two dependent variables were developed, both of which measure actual behavior. The first variable, *Recycling (R)*, was a measure of whether the respondent subscribed to and actually used a commercial recycling service. This information was obtained from a local refuse collection contractor who offered his customers three types of service: regular trash collection plus recycling; recycling service only; trash collection only. Trash collection was charged for at the same rate with or without recycling but this contractor's fee was slightly higher than most others in the area. Each household customer account card was reviewed to determine whether each customer who requested recycling service was in fact using it—that is, was separating glass and paper as required for recycling.

The second dependent variable, the *Socially Conscious Consumer Index (SCC)*, was constructed by summing answers to eight questions which asked the respondent whether he or she had tried and used regularly three products: low lead or lead-free gasoline,

low phosphate detergent, and beverages in returnable bottles; and whether he or she:

- used a recycling service
- had disconnected his car's pollution control device if it had one
- reused paper grocery shopping bags
- had reduced usage of petroleum products and electricity during the Winter 1973-74 fuel shortage
- had ever refused to buy a product involved in a labor dispute

This dependent variable, SCC, could take on any integer value between 0 and 14; actual values for respondents ranged from 1 to 9 and were approximately normally distributed with a mode of 5 and a mean of 4.99. The items comprising SCC are obviously biased toward concern for ecological issues, a shortcoming of the variable as a general index of "socially conscious" consumer behavior.

In addition, the *Social Responsibility Index (SR)*, discussed earlier and developed mainly as an independent attitudinal variable, was treated as a dependent variable to examine the influence of personality, socioeconomic, and demographic variables on attitudes as these, in turn, influence actual behavior. Using SR as a dependent variable also permitted comparison with the results of Anderson and Cunningham.

Following the logic of the social involvement model, several independent variables were measured by the questionnaire, including attitudinal, personality, social activity, and socioeconomic and demographic variables. These variables were as follows:

Attitudinal Variables

Three variables were defined in an attempt to measure attitudes that could be consistent with and support socially conscious consumer behavior as suggested by the social involvement model:

Social Responsibility Index (SR)—The index developed by Berkowitz and Lutterman and used by Anderson and Cunningham, as explained above.

Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (CE)—This variable was measured by asking the respondents to indicate degree of agreement with two statements:

"It is futile for the individual consumer to do anything about pollution."

"When I buy products, I try to consider how my use of them will affect the environment and other consumers."

Perceived Power of Big Business (PB)—This variable was an attempt to measure attitudes toward business as an institution and asked for strength of agreement with the statement:

"Big business has too much power in this country."

Personality Variables

Several well-known personality scales were considered as sources of items to measure personality characteristics that could be related to social involvement. After consulting with several colleagues in psychology, four subscales of the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) were chosen. These four scales describe personal attributes which are consistent with the social involvement model:

1. *Dominance (Do)*—characteristic of an individual who is strong, dominant, influential, ascendant, able to take the initiative and to exercise leadership.
2. *Responsibility (Re)*—describes an individual who is conscientious, responsible, dependable, articulate about rules and orders, and who believes that life should be governed by reason.
3. *Socialization (So)*—a measure of degree of social maturity, integrity, and rectitude and of the extent to which social values are internalized and made useful in the life of the individual.
4. *Tolerance (To)*—characteristic of an individual who is permissive, accepting, and non-judgmental about other people's social beliefs and attitudes.

These four subscales (among 18 on the CPI) tend to be correlated with one another, as shown in Table 1. The correlations shown are based on studies involving more than nine thousand subjects.

Each of these scales is measured by between 30 and 60 or so items on the CPI, which has a total of 480 items. Several items are common to two or more scales. In the interest of brevity in the "personality" section of the questionnaire, it was arbitrarily decided to have only ten items to measure each personality characteristic. These items were selected from the subscales on the basis of judgment. Items which contributed two or more of the four subscales were used wherever possible. A

balance of positive and negative items was sought: that is, items which should be answered "true" and "false" in order to contribute to a scale. A total of 25 items was selected. Fifteen of these were items which contributed to two scales and ten items measured single characteristics. While use of arbitrarily chosen items from the CPI clearly raises questions about the validity of the chosen items, it is justified by the exploratory nature of the research and by the need for brevity in the questionnaire. Using a subset of the original subscale items also reduces the reliability of the measure; in general terms, the larger the number of items on the original subscale, the lower the reliability of the subset of ten items selected.

Social Activity Variables

The social involvement model suggests that the socially conscious consumer will be more involved in community affairs. To measure this, we asked respondents to list all community organizations to which they belonged or in which they participated or volunteered services. This variable, *Community Activities (CA)*, was measured by summing the organizations listed (after inspection for obviously unacceptable listings). While this simple counting is only a crude measure, there was no reasonable alternative that would not devote excessive attention to this item. Another activity variable, *Church Going (CG)*, was measured by asking "Are you a regular church goer?"

Socioeconomic and Demographic Variables

The only socioeconomic or demographic variable relevant for testing the social involvement model would appear to be *Education (E)*. In addition, however, data were collected about respondent's age, sex, marital status, occupation, income, and number and ages of cars owned.

In line with the social involvement model, and following the direction suggested by previous research, hypotheses were developed and tested relating three dependent variables (SCC, SR, and R) to the ten independent variables (SR, CE, PB, Do, Re, So, To, CA, CG, and E).

Data Collection Procedures

After careful pretesting, the final printed questionnaire, 60 items on six pages, was mailed to all household customers of the refuse collection service mentioned earlier in one New England community of about 7,000 total population. A single community was selected in order to control for the availability of products and services as necessary to construct the Socially Conscious Consumer Index (SCC) in reliable fashion. A total of 432 questionnaires was mailed out, each coded in the upper right hand corner to show which service the customer had contracted for and if it had been used.

TABLE 1
CORRELATION AMONG CPI SCALES

	Dominance	Responsibility	Socialization	Tolerance
Dominance		.35 .36	.11 .11	.25 .36
Responsibility			.45 .45	.51 .58
Socialization				.32 .35

Note: The upper figure in each pair is the correlation coefficient for males, the lower figure is for females.

Source: Edwin I. Megargee, *The California Psychological Inventory Handbook* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publishers, 1972), pp. 104-7.

About 40 percent of these customers subscribed to the recycling service; 60 percent did not. Of those subscribing, about 90 percent actually used the service. (Some respondents destroyed this code before returning the questionnaire.) A total of 231 usable questionnaires were returned by the cut-off date for a response rate of 53.5 percent. Female respondents were 69.6 percent, males 30.4 percent. There was no significant difference between the response rate of recyclers and non-recyclers although recyclers seemed to return their questionnaires somewhat more promptly.

The community chosen cannot be said to be a typical American town, because, like other small New England towns, the average age of the populace is higher than the national average. In addition, the nearby location of a major university and medical center make the population somewhat above average in education, occupational status, and the presence of retired persons. Ninety percent of our respondents had some college, seventy-seven percent were college graduates, and forty-eight percent had a master's degree or a doctorate. Sixty-three percent held professional positions. Average income was in the \$15,000 to \$25,000 range. This upscale bias reflects not only the nature of the community but also the newness of the trash contractor's service. He had been in business only a few years and most of his customers were undoubtedly newcomers to the town. Established citizens were reluctant to shift from their existing services. These newcomers reflect the educational and occupational characteristics of the more mobile segments of society. While sample bias is a serious problem, the problem is reduced to some extent by the fact that we are not trying to make predictions from the sample but to explain differences within the sample.

Questionnaires were edited and coded to create the variables described earlier. Analysis made use of statistical routines available in the program library of the Kiewit Computation Center at Dartmouth College, including a multiple regression package (MULTREG), a stepwise regression procedure (STEPREG), and a multiple discriminant analysis package (MDA). Data files were constructed in such a way that missing data could be handled by substituting average values for all respondents for the missing data for a particular respondent. The user could specify the maximum number of items unanswered before a respondent was removed from the data file. In the analysis which follows, a maximum of ten omissions was allowed (out of 60 items for each respondent). Four respondents had eleven or more omissions, so the following data analysis is based on 227 respondents.

Analysis and Results

There were three dependent variables: the Socially Conscious Consumer Index (SCC), the Social Responsibility Scale (SR), and Recycling (R). Because R was

not a continuous variable, it could not be used to predict SCC or SR. But SCC could be used to predict both SR and R and SR could be used to predict both SCC and R. To avoid redundancy, the self-reported measure of whether the respondent used a recycling service was excluded from the calculation of SCC when it was used as an independent variable and R was the dependent variable.

Socially Conscious Consumer Index (SCC)

As described earlier, SCC was developed by simply summing the answers to a total of eight questions concerning shopping and purchasing behavior. These questions involved primarily ecological dimensions. An item analysis on the SCC scale showed correlation of each item with SCC as follows: use of recycling .63, purchase of beverages in returnable bottles .59, use of low-phosphate detergent .59, use of low-lead gasoline .55, boycott of products involved in labor disputes .46, reuse of shopping bags .36, disconnecting pollution controls .18, and reducing energy usage .02. A high correlation means that the item varied with SCC. A low correlation indicates little variability among respondents in their answers to this question. Virtually all respondents reported that they had not disconnected automobile pollution control devices and had seriously attempted to reduce energy usage during late 1973. There was no tendency for a single item or a few items to dominate the SCC score.

Using multiple regression analysis (MULTREG), it was possible to explain only about 30 percent of the variability in the Socially Conscious Consumer Index SCC, when all potential predictor variables were included in the regression equation. Of the nine independent variables hypothesized to influence SCC, only three proved to have a significant impact in the predicted direction:

Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (CE)
Dominance (Do)
Tolerance (To)

Each of these three was significant beyond the .05 level.

Three other variables not predicted to have a significant relationship did in fact prove to be significant at the .05 level: sex, Perceived Power of Big Business (PB), and income. Socially conscious consumers tended to be female, to agree that "big business has too much power in this country," and to have higher family incomes. The personality variable Socialization (So) came very close to being significant at the .10 level, but not quite. Interestingly, however, the direction of relationship was negative; socially conscious consumers tended to score low on this measure, suggesting that they show below average "social maturity, integrity, and rectitude" and that social values are *not* internalized and made useful in the life of the individual.

A stepwise regression procedure (STEPREG) was also used to analyze the influence of the independent variables on SCC. In this procedure the user specifies a minimum significance level above which variables are entered into the regression equation in order of their impact on the dependent variable. Significance level was set at 0.10. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 2. Five variables out of the six identified by MULTREG also proved to be significant in the STEPREG analysis: Do, CE, sex, income, and BP, in that order. These five variables explained only 15.5 percent of the variability in SCC, about the same degree of prediction as achieved with the MULTREG analysis. Tolerance (To) did not prove to be significant in the STEPREG analysis.

The social involvement model was, therefore, rather firmly rejected by the MULTREG and STEPREG analyses. There was little relationship between SCC and the Social Responsibility Index (SR), the personality variable Responsibility (Re), Community Activities (CA), Church Going (CG), and Education (E). The data do not support the argument that the socially conscious consumer is an active, highly involved, socially responsible, and better educated member of the community. On these five variables—SR, CG, Re, CA, and E—at least there are no differences among more and less socially conscious consumers.

To return to the positive results, the socially conscious consumer is dominant (Do) in the sense of being influential and able to assume initiative and exercise leadership; the individual may be tolerant (To) in the sense that he or she is permissive and accepting and does not judge other people's social beliefs and attitudes. The finding of a strong relationship between SCC and To is consistent with the finding of Kinnear et al. The Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (CE) measure was strongly related to SCC and this suggests that the socially conscious consumer feels strongly that he or she can do something about pollution and tries to consider the social impact of his or her purchases. That attitude is virtually inseparable from the very notion of a socially conscious consumer, so it is reassuring that the measure proved to be so strong.

The final regression model (based on the MULTREG analysis) used to predict SCC therefore contained seven

variables—CE, PB, Do, To, So, sex, and income. These seven variables together accounted for only 17 percent of the variance in SCC. This result is not particularly strong but the significance levels of CE (.01), and PB, Do, To, sex, and income (all .05 or below) are all encouraging.

One other variable was strongly associated with SCC, and that is number of cars owned. This variable was highly correlated with income and should probably not be interpreted separately. Nonetheless, number of new cars was positively related to SCC, significant at the .10 level. It was not included in the final regression, however, because of the high correlation with income (.407).

The Social Responsibility Scale (SC)

As an independent variable, the Social Responsibility Scale (SR) was not helpful in predicting SCC, but we also treated SR as a dependent variable, attempting to replicate to some degree the research cited earlier. Results here were once again mixed, reflecting to some extent the results obtained in analyzing SCC. Variables which were strong predictors in one instance tended to be insignificant in the other, consistent with the lack of relationship between SCC and SR.

Respondents who scored high on the SR scale also scored high on Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (CE), on Responsibility (Re), and on Community Activities (CA). Similar results were obtained from MULTREG and STEPREG and the latter results are shown in Table 3. All of these variables were significant beyond the .01 level. Thus it is the socially *responsible* consumer (as defined by SR), not the socially *conscious* consumer (as defined by SCC), who is involved in community affairs and who has internalized, and whose life is influenced by, accepted social values. These findings lend some support to the argument considered earlier in the paper that the socially conscious consumer, as we have defined her (females provided 69.6 percent of the responses), is actually engaged in behavior that is somewhat counter to the norms of the community. The socially conscious consumer, as distinct from the socially responsible consumer, appears to be somewhat insensitive to social pressures (low So

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF STEPWISE REGRESSION ON THE SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS CONSUMER INDEX (SCC)

Variable (in Order of Importance)	Partial F on Each Variable	Significance of Partial F	R ² When This Variable is Added	F-value for Regression Equation*
Dominance (Do)	17.45	.0001	.072	17.45
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (CE)	8.65	.003	.106	13.35
Sex	6.52	.011	.132	11.29
Income	2.90	.086	.143	9.27
Perceived Power of Big Business (PB)	3.16	.073	.155	8.11

* Significant beyond the .0001 level.

scores) but also more accepting of the views of others (high To scores) and willing to exercise initiative (Do) based on a conviction that her own actions can make a difference (CE). Whereas the Socially Conscious Consumer Index (SCC) is perhaps measuring "modern" consumer values, the SR scale seems oriented toward "traditional" social values.

One other variable had a strong influence on SR in the MULTREG analysis, but it just missed the 0.10 level of significance: Consumers scoring high on the social responsibility scale were *less* likely to report that they intended their next car purchase to be an economy car. These "socially responsible" consumers, perhaps because they are more accepting of social norms and current values, apparently do not represent the major market for compacts and subcompacts.

Dominance (Do) also had a highly significant (.01) influence on SR when Responsibility (Re) was eliminated from the regression function in the MULTREG analysis. Because Re is the more logical variable to explain SR, given a choice between the two, the final MULTREG regression model chosen had four variables (CE, Re, CA, and next car purchase), which together explained 28 percent of the variance in SR. As shown in Table 3, the STEPREG model had only three variables (CE, Re, and CA) but accounted for the same variance, $R^2 = .271$.

Recycling (R)

Using multiple discriminant analysis (MDA), it proved possible to predict correctly whether a respondent was a recycler or not about two-thirds of the time. Because of small numbers in some of the classes of recyclers (e.g. those who subscribed to recycling only but did not actually use it, $n = 1$), this analysis was limited to only two classes of customers: (1) those who subscribed to both trash collection and recycling and actually used the recycling service ($n = 83$); and (2) those who were customers for trash collection only and did not subscribe to the recycling service ($n = 117$). Thus, this part of the analysis was performed on 200 respondents. The remaining 27 respondents were those who either destroyed the code on the questionnaire or had subscribed to the recycling service but were not using it.

Each of the following analyses was performed both

with and without SCC as an independent variable, for two reasons. First, because SCC had been used as a dependent variable, it seemed appropriate to analyze it separately. Second, because it had the strongest predictive power, it was useful to see what happened when SCC was removed from the discriminant function. All analyses except the last (5) are reported both with and without SCC. The chance level of correct assignment to each of the two groups (recycler and nonrecycler), an input called for by the MDA program, was set at .5.

As shown in Table 4, the first analysis used all 17 dichotomous or continuously scaled variables. (It was necessary to exclude three nonscaled variables: marital status, occupation, and town.) This analysis showed seven variables to be significant: SCC (.01), SR (.05), CE (.01), To (.01), Re (.05), E (.01), and income (.01). In order of significance these variables are ranked as follows:

Socially Conscious Consumer Index (SCC)
Education (E)
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (CE)
Tolerance (To)
Income
Responsibility (Re)
Social Responsibility Scale (SR)

Therefore, of the nine variables hypothesized to be significant in determining R, five were significant (E, CE, To, Re, and S) and four were not (Do, So, CA, and CG). Two of the significant variables (SCC and income) were not included in our hypotheses.

The discriminant function using all 17 variables (1) correctly classified 72.5 percent of the respondents according to whether they recycled or not. The F-ratio on this discriminant function is significant beyond the .005 level, as are all subsequent functions reported. Removing SCC from the analysis (2), correct classifications dropped to 65 percent.

The next discriminant function (3) contained only the seven variables which had been significant in the first equation. The F-ratio improved substantially and the proportion of correct classifications came back up to 72 percent. When SCC is again dropped (4), the proportion of correct classifications dropped back to 0.675. Finally, a discriminant function was constructed (5) consisting of only the nine variables that had been

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF STEPWISE REGRESSION ON THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY SCALE (SR)

Variable (in Order of Importance)	Partial F on Each Variable	Significance of Partial F	R ² When This Variable is Added	F-value for Regression Equation*
Responsibility (Re)	39.55	.0001	.149	39.55
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (CE)	21.32	.0001	.223	32.22
Community Activities (CA)	14.56	.0003	.271	27.63

* Significant beyond the .0001 level.

TABLE 4
DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS ON RECYCLING (R)

Variable	F-Value	(Level of Significance; N.S. = Not Significant)				
	Degrees of Freedom:	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
	(1,198)	(17,182)	(16,183)	(7,192)	(6,193)	(9,190)
Socially Conscious Consumer Index (SCC)	27.27	.01	...	.01	...	...
Social Responsibility Scale (SR)	3.88	.05	.05	.05	.05	.05
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (CE)	15.83	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01
Perceived Power of Big Business (PB)	0.81	N.S.	N.S.	...	...	...
Dominance (Do)	2.01	N.S.	N.S.	...	...	N.S.
Tolerance (To)	8.09	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01
Socialization (So)	0.00	N.S.	N.S.	...	...	N.S.
Responsibility (Re)	4.29	.05	.05	.05	.01	.05
Community Activities (CA)	2.17	N.S.	N.S.	...	...	N.S.
Church Going (CG)	0.44	N.S.	N.S.	...	...	N.S.
Age	2.03	N.S.	N.S.	...	...	...
Sex	2.13	N.S.	N.S.	...	...	...
Education (E)	22.26	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01
Number of Cars Owned	0.13	N.S.	N.S.	...	...	...
Number of '73 and '74 Cars	0.01	N.S.	N.S.	...	...	...
Next Car—Economy	0.70	N.S.	N.S.	...	...	...
Income	6.91	.01	.01	.01	.01	...
F-Value for significance at .10 level	2.71					
F-Value for significance at .05 level	3.84					
F-Value for significance at .01 level	6.63					
Wilks' Lambda (λ)		.72	.78	.77	.83	.81
Generalized Correlation Ratio ($1 - \lambda$)		.28	.22	.23	.18	.19
Proportion of Correct Classifications		0.73	0.65	0.72	0.68	0.63
F-Ratio for Overall Discrimination		4.24	3.24	8.26	6.80	4.85

Note: A dotted line indicates that this variable was not included in that analysis whereas the presence of a level of significance (e.g., .01) or N.S. (not significant) indicates that this variable was included in that analysis. There are five separate analyses, one presented in each of the last five columns.

hypothesized to be significant, but only five of which were significant. This function correctly classified only 63 percent of the respondents.

DISCUSSION

Although R and SCC seem to be related, they obviously do not measure the same thing and it is not clear that one is a more valid measure of buyer behavior than the other. One might prefer SCC simply because it is based on a larger number of items in the questionnaire, but R is a better measure of actual behavior since it was based on observation.

These results show that recycling behavior is related to some degree to both the SCC index and to the SR scale, but we have seen that SCC and SR appear to measure two very distinct phenomena. The two variables significant in predicting both SCC and R are Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (CE) and Tolerance (To). Our data do not offer any obvious explanation for the fact that E was so strong in predicting R but not significant in impact on SCC, although it was hypothesized that it would influence both.

Recycling as a specific behavior may be interpreted as a type of consumer behavior that is acceptable to, or common among, both the "modern" socially conscious consumer and the "traditional" socially responsible con-

sumer. If those two types of consumers are, in fact, different then recycling may be somewhat of an exception because it is acceptable to both. In contrast, using lead-free gasoline or boycotting certain products might be acceptable to the socially conscious consumer but unacceptable to the socially responsible consumer.

The strength of CE in all three cases is impressive, as is the influence of To for both SCC and R, and the influence of Re on both R and SR. The socially conscious consumer and the recycler both show an openness to other persons' views. All three of these types of respondents feel that they can influence the environment, and other people, with their purchases. Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (CE) was the only predictor significant for all three dependent variables.

Conclusions and Implications

The social involvement model is not generally supported by the foregoing analysis. The socially conscious consumer is not the "pillar of the community" who scores high on measures of social responsibility and engages in a wide assortment of community activities. Rather, he, or more likely *she*, is willing to engage in purchase behavior that may not be "popularly accepted" but is nonetheless consistent with her own standards of responsibility. At the same time, she is

less ready to judge the values and actions of others. She tends to think business has too much power, and she tends to have higher household income than her less socially conscious counterpart. We might characterize the socially conscious consumer, then, as a member of the upper middle class "counterculture," but one who operates at a rather low key. This interpretation is consistent with the findings of Hustad and Pessemier concerning attitudes toward business.

Marketers, public officials, and leaders of community organizations who want to attract the socially conscious consumer to their products, services, or causes, clearly have a complicated and difficult task. First, the variables examined here explain only a small part of the total variability of the behavioral measures used (SCC, SR, and R). Second, those who score high on "social responsibility," the community leaders (and probably the opinion leaders), are not going to be overly sympathetic to appeals to alter their purchase behavior in "socially conscious" directions, especially those related to environmental improvement. (What we have seen in these data is probably indicative of the widespread public resistance to banning nonreturnable bottles, for example, and the slow response of the public to appeals to reduce energy usage.) Third, personality and attitude measures tended to be somewhat better predictors than socioeconomic and demographic variables, but personality and attitude variables do not easily lead to segmentation strategy. Socioeconomic and demographic differences would be much easier to make operational.

The relative strength of sociopsychological measures seen in this study fits the pattern established in previous research on the socially conscious consumer. This result is interesting in its own right as part of the growing and evolving mosaic that is our understanding of buyer behavior.

Finally, without being overly critical of the Anderson and Cunningham study cited frequently in this paper, attention should be drawn to the lack of a strong relationship between the Social Responsibility Scale (SR) and the behavioral measures developed in this study. We found SR somewhat related to R but not to SCC. Anderson and Cunningham had assumed that SR would be a surrogate for a behavioral measure, which now appears to be questionable, although they correctly identified the need for research on that relationship. It seems likely that the Berkowitz and Lutterman Social Responsibility Index may be outdated, defining "social responsibility" in a too traditional fashion. There is the possibility that a different scale, one developed to reflect

current social values, would show a stronger relationship with the behavioral measures.

In studies of buyer behavior we have become accustomed to seeing relatively weak R^2 's and other measures of association. It would be naive to expect one or a few imperfect measures—of personality, attitude, or whatever—to predict accurately something as complex as buyer behavior. But we are always uncertain whether our measures are inaccurate and therefore weak, or our theories are invalid. Clearly, we must work hard for improvements on both fronts. The results reported here suggest that the social involvement model was inadequate as an explanatory framework for understanding socially conscious consumer behavior. Perhaps future research could productively test an antithetical model: the disenchanted and asocial but confident consumer.

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