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Alienation has interested philosophers and researchers for many years, but only recently has empirical study been directed toward consumer alienation from the marketplace. The author reports the development of a test to measure alienation from the marketplace based on psychometric principles. The findings suggest that a reliable and valid measure has been constructed. The consumer alienation scale was found to be unidimensional rather than consisting of identifiable subscales. In addition, areas for future research that will aid the marketing manager in applying knowledge of consumer alienation to decision making are discussed.

A Psychometric Development of a Test for Consumer Alienation from the Marketplace

Social thinkers since the times of Hegel, Marx, and Weber have been concerned with man's relationship to the society in which he lives. It appeared that as one's environment became more technical and complex, experiences of alienation became more common. Man was thought to experience feelings of separation from the social structure as well as from the self when required to interact within the social structure. Thus, one not only could lose a sense of identity with his surroundings, but also could experience the self as alien.

In recent years, sociologists have begun to make attempts to measure man's feelings of alienation. One of the few issues surrounding alienation on which nearly all sociologists agree is that "alienation is a psychological state of an individual" [12]. Its measurement is most always based on the "presence of certain attitudes and feelings" [48]. There is a tendency for each researcher to define and measure alienation according to his own standards. Nettler [41] defines the alienated person as "one who has been estranged from, made unfriendly toward, his society and culture it carries." Dean [14] bases his test construction on three dimensions or subscales: powerlessness, normlessness, and isolation. Together they

are thought to make up the "general syndrome" of alienation. Finally, Clark's [12] definition is centered on the "degree to which man feels powerless to achieve the role he had determined to be rightfully his in specific situations."

Though there are certain common elements in the many definitions and measures of social alienation, the construct should be developed and measured for use within a specific paradigm. Along these lines, Clark [12] wrote that a "more rewarding approach to the problem of measuring alienation might be the single unit approach, selecting for study those who we can establish to be involved in a single well-defined unit, for instance a social system."

Many researchers have followed such a direction. Blauner [5] and Zurcher et al. [58] investigated the alienating experiences of persons in different work environments. Political alienation, a rather popular topic, received attention from Dean [13] and Hornton and Thompson [26, 54], as well as a host of others. Hajda [24] considered the effect of alienation on student intellectuals. Alienation within a religious context also has been investigated to a great extent [15, 36, 44, 46]. Despite this definite evidence that sociologists have developed specific units of analysis for their studies, the problem of relevant scale construction remains. Many of these researchers have been content to use standard measures of social alienation instead of developing a test for the specific form of alienation in question.

Consumer alienation from the marketplace has been

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addressed mainly on a theoretical level. Fromm [19] sees the "marketing orientation" as the basis for all alienation. The fact that monetary value is placed on so many aspects of man's existence is to him the "hallmark" of alienation. He believes the economic system is responsible for the feelings of alienation that individuals experience as consumers. Johnson [27] views the marketplace as a "pseudo-world of products and service." Alienation occurs if individuals "fail to accept the doctrine of consumption" or "fail to find fulfillment in the offerings of the marketplace." In his definition, Johnson has included two very distinct aspects of consumer alienation, that which arises from the system and that which is a result of the self interacting within the system.

In Nettler's 1957 article on social alienation [41], he announced that the development of a test to measure alienation from the marketplace was in progress. Such a measure has never appeared. Alienation from the marketplace received negligible empirical attention until the 1970s. Pruden and Longman [45] investigated the relationships of social alienation (anomie), attitudes toward marketing practices, belief in government intervention in the marketplace, and ethnic origin. The results indicated that anomie is related to high belief in government intervention and negative attitudes toward marketing. Both blacks and Mexican-Americans had stronger feelings in this direction than did whites. Questions have been raised about the validity of using the Srole index of anomie as well as other methodological aspects of this study [33]. Nonetheless, it is one of the first attempts to gain empirical insight into the process of alienation and how it affects market-related variables.

Hilger [25] further studied alienation and the consumer. Her measure of social alienation was a combination of statements taken from Dean [14] and Middleton [37]. Each of the five statements was thought to tap a different dimension of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement [50]. The basis for her test of consumer alienation was much the same, 10 statements, two for each variant of alienation. Hilger made little attempt to establish the reliability and validity of her consumer alienation measure. Test-retest reliability was based on a convenience sample of 35 undergraduates. No information about the internal reliability of her measure was reported. Her attempt to test the validity of her indices was after the fact, presented as part of the final analysis.

Her study also included measures of consumer activity and belief in government intervention. The findings show that both high social and high consumer alienation lead to increasing levels of belief in government intervention and consumer activity. These relationships were stronger for low socioeconomic groups than for high socioeconomic consumers, a finding

similar to that of Pruden and Longman [45] based on ethnic origin.

The most recent study of consumer alienation [31] focused on powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness, and social isolation as they related to consumer dissatisfaction and desires for changes in the marketplace. Alienation, as measured by the four subscales, accounted for much of the variance in general measures of consumer discontent and in consumer support for change in the marketplace. With limitations of measurement in mind, Lambert [31] concluded "that alienation is a potentially fruitful area for further explorations aimed at attempting to gain better insights into and understanding of the factors that fuel discontent and consumerism." It is believed that alienation can help "identify basic sources of discontent" and can be a useful tool to "business in developing and directing affirmative actions and to mitigate the problems of consumerism" [32].

Following in the methodological tradition of other researchers and theoreticians [11, 29, 34], the author presents the psychometric development of a test to measure consumer alienation from the marketplace. The steps involved in generating items, assessing scale structure, and performing item reduction are discussed, as well as reliability and validity of the final measure.

METHOD

Generating Scale Items

The first step in scale construction is to define the domain of the construct to establish boundaries for the purpose of measurement. Once this step has been achieved, a collection of items or statements can be generated that reflects the universe of content to be measured [17]. For the investigation, the syndrome of alienation was conceptualized initially on the basis of the constructs of powerlessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement. Marketplace powerlessness is defined as feelings held by consumers that they are unable to help determine market practices, an inability to control the market environment or events within the marketplace. Normlessness within the market system is represented by a distrust of business and market practices, often manifested in unclear standards for buyer behavior. Social isolation from the marketplace is characterized by feelings of estrangement from the institutions, practices, and outputs of the commodity market system. Feelings of self-estrangement arise from an inability to identify with behavior traditionally associated with the consumption role. These definitions are based largely on the classical theory of Marx [35], Tönnies [55], Weber [57], and Durkheim [16]. In their definitions of the variants of alienation, social researchers as well as marketing researchers have departed from the early

theorists [12, 14, 25, 31, 32]. This discrepancy has contributed to great confusion in alienation study.¹ The definitions used in this study are believed to lend themselves to a clear discussion and ease of understanding.

On the basis of these definitions of the variants of consumer alienation from the marketplace, an initial item pool of 115 attitudinal statements was generated. Ideas for items came from three main sources: (1) collections of theoretical readings in the area of consumerism such as [1, 20], (2) empirical studies such as [3, 25, 45], and (3) the author. Each item was chosen to reflect a specific variant of consumer alienation. Approximately half the items were worded in a positive direction and half in a negative direction to prevent a response bias.

To begin reducing the number of items into a usable subset, a panel of 35 judges from an undergraduate marketing research class was used. Each person read several articles about the theoretical and empirical issues of both social and consumer alienation [14, 25, 33, 45, 50]. On the basis of the readings and the definitions of the components of consumer alienation, the judges were instructed to indicate all items that they thought would differentiate between an alienated and a nonalienated consumer. This task was done on a simple yes/no basis. According to Edwards [17] this procedure involves the assumption "that there will be a difference in the belief and disbelief systems" of the alienated and nonalienated consumers. Second, judges assigned each item to a subscale of either powerlessness, normlessness, social isolation, or self-estrangement. All items used for the next phase of the study had to meet two criteria: (1) 75% or more of the judges agreed the item would differentiate between alienated and nonalienated consumers and (2) 60% or more of the judges attributed the item to the same variant of consumer alienation. These criteria were decided upon subjectively by the author in the belief that they adequately reflected psychometric principles and standards for scale construction. After application of these standards 50 items remained usable for the next stage of the research, data collection.

The following items are examples of those used for the final questionnaire.

Powerlessness

Most companies are responsive to the demands of the consumers.

People are unable to help determine what products will be sold in the store.

Normlessness

Unethical practices are widespread throughout business.

Information provided by the manufacturer on a product is usually helpful in making a purchase decision.

Social isolation

It is difficult to identify with business practices today.

It is often difficult to understand the real meaning of most advertisements.

Self-estrangement

Shopping is usually a pleasant experience.

After making a purchase I often find myself wondering "why."

Six undergraduate students conducted five interviews each to serve as a pretest of the questionnaire. This step also gave the interviewers a chance to "perfect" the interviewing situation and thus to reduce interviewer bias. The pretest was an attempt to assess any ambiguities and difficulties respondents may have in understanding items. Pretest data were collected in three areas—predominantly white, black, and Mexican-American. After each interview respondents were asked to report any items for which they had encountered problems in understanding. On the basis of this feedback, revisions were made in the wording of several items. It was believed that the final version of the questionnaire could be used without difficulty for all levels of education, socioeconomic status, and ethnic origin.

Psychometric Development

To develop the psychometric test a stratified-by-area sample of census tracts of Austin, Texas (SMSA) [56] was used to collect data from approximately 400 respondents. Of these, 368 were used in the final analysis. The attrition was due to either extensive missing data (five or more attitudinal statements left blank) or obvious response bias (consistent usage of either the midpoint or endpoints of the scale). Quotas for each census tract were established according to the percentage of the total population residing within the tract. Interviewers were given a starting point of an intersection that was generated randomly. The corner of the intersection as well as the direction in which to walk also were established by a random process. Interviewers contacted every fourth house until the quota for the tract was filled. Every possible effort was made to match the ethnic origin of the interviewer with the predominant ethnic origin in each census tract. The sampling procedure provided a sample representative of the population in terms of percentage male and female, median age, mean and median family income, and percentage of black, white, and Mexican-American (Table 1).

¹For a discussion of the confusion surrounding the many definitions of alienation, see Neil K. Allison, *Consumer Alienation From the Marketplace: Scale Construction and Application*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1977, 16-19.

Table 1
COMPARISON OF SAMPLE AND POPULATION ON DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

	<i>Sample n = 368</i>	<i>Population Austin (SMSA)</i>
Percent male	51.1	48.9
Percent female	48.9	51.1
Percent single	37.7	43.97
Percent married	62.3	57.03
Percent white and other	75.6	72.6
Percent black	8.7	11.8
Percent Mexican-American	14.9	15.6
Median age	24.4 years	24.2 years
Mean number in household	3.21 people	2.98 people
Mean family income	\$9,076	\$9,180
Median family income	\$10,108	\$10,810

The questionnaire, totally self-administered, was made up of four sections: a measure of social alienation, the 50 attitudinal statements thought to reflect consumer alienation, a measure of belief in government intervention in the marketplace, and demographic data.

The social alienation measure consisted of Dean's [14] subscales of powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation as well as a fourth subscale to tap self-estrangement [7]. Reliability and validity of Dean's index of social alienation are reported in [38, 47]. Split-half reliabilities corrected by the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula for Dean's subscales have been reported as: powerlessness +.78, normlessness +.73, social isolation +.84, and total alienation scale +.78. Validity of the Dean measure is based on the scale's intercorrelations with education, occupation, income, the Srole index of anomia, and Netter's measure of alienation. Though correlations were found to be in the hypothesized direction, the low magnitude of relationships suggested more empirical research would be needed to validate the scale. Through extensive research application [6, 13, 15, 18] the reliability and validity of the Dean scale have come to be generally accepted. Evidence of the reliability and validity of Bonjean's self-estrangement scale based on empirical results can be found in [6, 22]. In total, 31 attitudinal statements measured social alienation. Belief in government intervention in the marketplace was made up of four attitudinal statements taken from [3]. These two scales as well as the 50 attitudinal statements for consumer alienation were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The demographic variables included sex, age, marital status, ethnic origin, number in household, and total family income.

Scale Structure

The first stage of analysis was to validate empirically the theoretical structure of consumer alienation. According to Nunnally [43], factor analysis should be

used to test the hypothetical structure of an attitudinal domain. Because scale items were selected originally to reflect powerlessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement, factors representing each of these variants of alienation were expected to emerge.

Varimax rotations were used with the assumption that the underlying dimensions of consumer alienation were unrelated to one another. In order not to under or over factor analyze the structure and miss a meaningful and interpretable factor structure, rotations of six-, five-, four-, three-, and two-factor solutions were computed. Both the five- and six-factor solutions failed to produce meaningful structures having no items loading highly on either the fifth or sixth factors.

The four-factor structure appeared to be the most interpretable analysis. The extracted factors and the item loadings are shown in Table 2. Factor 1 consists of probusiness items, factor 2 appears to be a self-component or how the individual interacts with the marketplace, and factors 3 and 4 are both antibusiness factors. None of the four factors can be interpreted clearly along the lines of the theoretical structure; for example, factor 1 consists of both powerlessness and normlessness items and factor 3 has evidence of normlessness and social isolation. In general, factors 1, 3, and 4 make up an evaluative aspect and factor 2 a self-component. The total variance explained is only 38%, with the first factor accounting for 58% of the explained variance. Only 21 items load to a high degree on one of the four factors and many items load to a sizable degree on more than one factor. In general the factor analysis does not support the validity of the theoretical structure as operationalized by the 50 items.

To test whether or not the alienation scale actually consisted of only two factors, an evaluative and self-component, a two-factor structure was analyzed (Table 3). As shown in the table, when reduced to only two factors the evaluative and self-components did not remain as pure stable factors. Factor 1 is

Table 2
FACTOR ANALYSIS WITH VARIMAX ROTATION: FOUR-FACTOR STRUCTURE

Item number	Item loadings			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
1	.60 ²	-.01	.29	.02
2	.02	.25	.51 ²	.15
3	-.07	-.10	-.03	.60 ²
4	.01	.00	.21	.59 ²
5	.35	-.04	.39	.04
6	-.09	.56 ²	.04	.02
7	-.08	.27	.08	.33
8	.53 ²	.06	.15	.04
9	.19	.08	.49	.23
10	.04	.09	.15	.42
11	.18	.20	.41	.11
12	.37	.16	-.10	-.14
13	-.29	.29	-.33	.46
14	.43	.12	.02	-.11
15	.27	.05	.42	.20
16	.24	-.33	-.09	.12
17	.05	.40	.30	.00
18	.05	.60 ²	-.00	.05
19	.09	.16	-.23	.30
20	.27	.12	.61 ²	-.04
21	.54 ²	-.05	.20	.13
22	.01	.00	.24	.37
23	-.11	-.07	.25	.29
24	.05	.48	.17	.10
25	.58 ²	.11	-.04	.05
26	.18	.29	.39	.11
27	.12	.19	.33	.38
28	.09	.15	.33	.35
29	.17	.20	.63 ²	.16
30	.03	.44	.33	.14
31	.20	.34	.46	.12
32	.33	.15	.53 ²	.21
33	.13	.22	.48	-.03
34	.09	.60 ²	.27	.01
35	.26	-.05	.17	-.20
36	.04	.13	.57 ²	-.00
37	.35	.18	.59 ²	.12
38	.09	.50 ²	.19	.08
39	.05	.10	.49	-.25
40	.11	.28	.49	.13
41	.25	.11	.07	-.34
42	.32	.20	.52 ²	.20
43	.10	.48	.19	-.21
44	.57 ²	-.15	.34	.04
45	.24	.46	.32	.11
46	.60 ²	-.07	.27	-.06
47	.02	.27	.53 ²	-.04
48	.48	-.06	.35	-.06
49	.53 ²	-.01	.41	-.03
50	.44	.15	.06	-.12

²Items loading .50 or higher.

made up predominantly of antibusiness items and factor 2 reflects a probusiness attitude, and together they lead to one general evaluative factor.

To further investigate the dimensionality of consumer alienation each item was assigned to a subscale based on the judges' original pattern of consensus. An alpha coefficient which reflects the homogeneity or internal consistency of a group of scale items [43] was computed for the four subscales and for all 50

items treated as one undimensional scale. The alpha coefficient for the 50-item scale was +.8576 whereas the alpha coefficients for all four subscales were below +.50. It appeared that the construct of alienation was more homogeneous when treated as one overall syndrome than when broken down into variants of powerlessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement.

The foregoing evidence indicated that consumer

Table 3
FACTOR ANALYSIS WITH VARIMAX ROTATION:
TWO-FACTOR STRUCTURE

Item number	Item loadings	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
1	.19	.02 ³
2	.55 ³	.12
3	.14	-.17
4	.35	-.04
5	.24	.45
6	.40	-.21
7	.36	-.19
8	.15	.47
9	.46	.28
10	.32	-.03
11	.44	.24
12	-.01	.25
13	.16	-.55 ³
14	.06	.35
15	.39	.33
16	-.23	.21
17	.46	.06
18	.40	-.11
19	.07	-.13
20	.45	.46
21	.15	.51 ³
22	.30	.02
23	.22	-.04
24	.46	-.03
25	.08	.41
26	.49	.21
27	.49	.10
28	.45	.09
29	.60 ³	.31
30	.56 ³	.01
31	.58 ³	.24
32	.52 ³	.41
33	.44	.26
34	.57 ³	.03
35	-.00	.35
36	.45	.24
37	.55 ³	.46
38	.48	.00
39	.38	.23
40	.56 ³	.19
41	-.01	.28
42	.55 ³	.38
43	.35	.09
44	.14	.65 ³
45	.55 ³	.18
46	.10	.65 ³
47	.49	.17
48	.16	.58 ³
49	.25	.63
50	.09	.37

³Items loading .50 or higher.

alienation should be reconceptualized as a unidimensional construct. Consumer alienation from the marketplace thus was redefined as feelings of separation from the norms and values of the marketplace. Such a state includes a lack of acceptance of or identification with market institutions, practices, and outputs as well

as feelings of separation from the self when one is involved in the consumption role. The marketplace encompasses all institutions engaged in the distribution of goods and services to the consumer as well as all facilitating agencies. This definition of the marketplace includes the entire spectrum of channels of distribution from the producer to the seller as well as any support services such as advertising and credit.

The revised definition of consumer alienation represents a very significant departure from classical alienation theory and measurement. According to the early empiricists [14, 37, 39] as well as the limited marketing application [25, 31, 32, 45], alienation consists of several distinct components such as powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement. However, the assumption that alienation is one general construct does not totally preclude the existence of the separate variants of alienation. They are considered to be underlying constructs rather than discrete, measurable subscales. Such an approach reflects the findings of this study with respect to the dimensionality of consumer alienation at this point in time as well as the previous findings of Struening and Richardson [51], Neal and Rettig [40], and Burbach [8].

Reliability of the Consumer Alienation Index

The reliability of a measure, or the degree to which an individual's test score is repeatable on the same test on different occasions, or with different equivalent tests, or under varying conditions, is the major concept underlying the assessment of measurement error [2]. In general terms, a test's reliability is the extent to which individual differences in test scores are due to "true" differences in the psychological trait or attitude being measured rather than the degree to which these differences can be attributed to random reasons or measurement error.

A major source of measurement error is the sampling of test items. According to the domain sampling theory [43], error can occur because of an inadequate sampling of the domain or the inclusion of items that are not relevant or part of the construct being scaled. If a test does not completely sample the entire domain, which is often the case, then all scores are only estimates of a "true" score. This type of unreliability is known as content sampling error and can be estimated by developing alternate forms to measure the same construct. Assurance of this type of reliability is beyond the scope of a measure in its initial development such as the consumer alienation index [43].

Error caused by items that are included and are not relevant to the domain will affect the internal consistency of a measure. If internal consistency is high and all items are part of the same domain, then this should be reflected in high correlations between each item and the total score on the test. Poor internal

consistency would be manifested in low item-to-total-score correlations and is an indication of measurement error.

This theory of internal consistency and measurement error was used to evaluate the 50 attitudinal statements to measure consumer alienation. The goal was to generate the subset of items that would measure consumer alienation most consistently. Item-to-total-score correlations were computed and items with low correlations were removed to increase the overall consistency.

Internal consistency also can be measured by an alpha coefficient, the mean of all possible split-half reliability coefficients. An alpha coefficient which reflects the homogeneity of a group of scale items was used as a tool to decide when to stop removing items. The highest alpha coefficient, +.8802, was found for 35 items (see Appendix). A length of 40 items yielded an alpha of +.8747 and a length of 30 items produced an alpha of +.8703; thus, either an increase or a decrease in length lowered the alpha coefficient. An alpha of this magnitude far exceeds Nunnally's [43] criterion for acceptable internal consistency in test development of +.50 to +.60. To ensure that all levels of socioeconomic status and all ethnic groups were contributing to the test's internal consistency, alpha coefficients for the 35-item scale by subgroups were computed (Table 4). The maximum difference, +.0274, was not believed to be a great enough deviation to consider the group to be contributing to the test's unreliability.

Another type of reliability that gives additional insight into the potential value of a psychological measure is test-retest reliability. It addresses the question of how stable or reproducible test scores are over a period of time [23]. A test-retest coefficient was obtained from a convenience sample of 123 graduate business students. They were administered

the 35-item tests with a three-week time interval. The resultant test-retest reliability coefficient was .75. A correlation of this size is evidence of temporal stability of the consumer alienation index. Nunnally [43] cautions that care must be taken in interpreting test-retest reliability because of the influence the first testing situation can have on the second. The extent that responses are remembered during the second testing situation and the degree to which an individual repeats his work habits allow for respondent bias.

Validity of the Consumer Alienation Scale

Several different types of validity can be assessed. In general, validity is concerned with whether a test does what it was intended to do or measures what it is supposed to be measuring [43]. For psychological traits validity is a matter of degree rather than an all-or-none characteristic. Moreover, it must be evaluated over time and various situations, especially in the case of the construct validity of a newly developed test. At best, only insight into the construct validity of the consumer alienation scale can be reported at this time. The measure is still in a developmental stage and only through its future use and application will its validity be thoroughly explored.

From the literature on social alienation theory and application and the limited studies in consumer alienation, the following hypotheses were developed.

- H₁: Consumer alienation from the marketplace will be related positively to social alienation.
- H₂: Consumer alienation from the marketplace will be related positively to belief in government intervention in the marketplace.
- H₃: With control for income level, minority subjects (black and Mexican-American) will have higher average consumer alienation scores than white subjects.
- H₄: With control for ethnic origin, consumer alienation from the marketplace will decrease as income level increases.

Table 4
ALPHA COEFFICIENTS FOR 35-ITEM INDEX BY
SUBGROUPS

Group	Alpha coefficient
Sample	.8802
Ethnic origin	
White	.8868
Black	.9319
Mexican-American	.8528
Income level	
Less than \$4,000	.8870
\$4,000 to 7,999	.8682
\$8,000 to 11,999	.9142
\$12,000 to 15,999	.8882
\$16,000 or more	.9108

The marketplace is a pervasive segment of the modern social system. Each person's everyday life touches on some aspect of the marketplace. In experiencing general social alienation, one would undoubtedly also suffer from some degree of consumer alienation from the marketplace. The correlation between the two measures of alienation, .61 ($p \leq .001$), supports the first hypothesis. People who suffer from high social alienation also tend to be alienated from the marketplace. Though not surrogate measures, consumer alienation and social alienation were found to be significantly related, yielding some evidence for the construct validity of the consumer alienation index. This evidence depends on the validity of the Dean and Bonjean scales.

When a person experiences feelings of estrangement or separation from an aspect of the social system

Table 5
ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE: CONSUMER ALIENATION BY ETHNIC ORIGIN, CONTROL FOR INCOME

<i>Source</i>	<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>Degrees of freedom</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig. of F</i>
Income	5866.216	1	5866.216	17.223	.001
Ethnic origin	2848.489	2	1424.245	4.182	.016
Explained	8714.705	3	2904.902	8.529	.001
Residual	119211.083	350	340.603		

<i>Adjusted group means, 35-item index</i>	
White	108.67
Black	112.20
Mexican-American	116.84

and must still interact with it, as is the case with the marketplace, it is reasonable to postulate that these feelings of alienation would be accompanied by a desire for a "powerful other" to represent the interests of the alienated individual. A relevant "other" that could intervene in the marketplace on behalf of alienated consumers is the government. This contention not only seems logical but has been supported by previous research [25, 31, 45]. The correlation between the index of consumer alienation and the belief in government intervention scale was $+ .45$ ($p \leq .001$), a magnitude great enough to support the second hypothesis. Future research in this area should evaluate the relationship of consumer alienation with alternative "powerful others" such as consumer groups.

The consumerism literature has devoted much attention to the inadequacies of the marketplace in serving minority and low income consumers [4, 10, 21, 28, 52, 53]. Market practices such as price differentials to ghetto consumers and inferior product offerings

and service to the poor and others can serve as a strong source of estrangement. If an institution fails to fulfill a person's needs and expectations while sufficiently serving those of others around that person, a reasonable response undoubtedly would be alienation. As predicted by hypotheses three and four, this is indeed the case. An analysis of covariance for ethnic origin and consumer alienation with control for level of income supported the notion that blacks and Mexican-Americans suffered from more alienation than whites (Table 5). Similarly, the analysis of covariance for income and consumer alienation with control for ethnic origin was in the predicted direction; low income consumers are more alienated than high income consumers (Table 6). The finding that the consumer alienation scale is operating as expected is evidence of additional construct validity.

A more thorough test of the validity of the scale could be achieved by means of a multitrait, multimethod matrix [9]. Such a procedure requires two indepen-

Table 6
ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE: CONSUMER ALIENATION BY INCOME, CONTROL FOR ETHNIC ORIGIN
(WHITE OR NONWHITE)

<i>Source</i>	<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>Degrees of freedom</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig. of F</i>
Ethnic origin	64.041	1	69.041	.190	.663
Income	7856.201	4	1964.050	5.399	.001
Explained	7925.242	5	1585.048	4.357	.001
Residual	127323.309	350	303.781		

<i>Adjusted group means, 35-item index</i>	
Less than \$4,000	115.45
\$4,000 to 7,999	114.36
\$8,000 to 11,999	114.46
\$12,000 to 15,999	105.92
\$16,000 or more	104.51

dent measures of the variable in question; optimally one should be a paper and pencil test and the other a behavioral or other type of index. In view of the state of development of the consumer alienation measure, it may be quite some time before this approach can be used.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings suggest that a reliable and valid unidimensional measure of consumer alienation has been constructed. More work must be done in the future to validate the test, assess its reliability over time, and establish norms for different subgroups in the population.

One may note a similarity between the consumer alienation index and Lundstrom and Lamont's [34] consumer discontent scale. The major differentiation between these two indices is that the alienation index includes items that reflect the self and how it relates to the marketplace. Although self-estrangement was not found to be a separate variant of consumer alienation, it is one of the underlying dimensions of this scale. The importance of this construct is evidenced by Seeman [49]. He considers it the essence or "master theme" of alienation. Items 5, 12, 16, 17, and 26 of the alienation index are examples of items that differentiate between the two measures. Of secondary importance is the difference in length of the two scales, Lundstrom's being rather long, allowing for a significant fatigue factor in respondents.

One must raise the question of what the practical significance of such a measure will be for the marketing manager and decision maker. Before it can be answered definitively, one must investigate further the relationship of consumer alienation with consumerist activity, belief in government intervention in the marketplace, and basic marketing behaviors. The last point is one of the most important areas for future research. To be able to use the construct for decision making, one first must know how alienated and nonalienated people differ in their processing, evaluation, and use of marketing information, inputs, and outputs. The real impact for business will come not just from understanding the consumption behavior of the alienated person, but from understanding what has brought him to this state and what can be done to change his perception of the marketplace. Research into consumer experiences and action in reference to specific product categories and industries should provide additional useful knowledge. An example is a study now in progress by the author. It will investigate the effects of product failure on consumer activism and alienation from the marketplace within the automobile industry. An attempt will be made to evaluate the ability to segment the marketplace on the basis of feelings of consumer alienation for sources of influence and determinant attributes for an automobile purchase decision.

If business continues to meet consumers' physical needs but fails the consumer psychologically, it stands to face increasing demands for change and restructure. Such an approach only fulfills half the marketing concept as defined by Kotler [30]. Lambert and Kniffen [32] not only cite evidence that should alarm the free enterprise system to the effects of increasing alienation, but also pose some suggestions that can be of help to business in trying to reach the alienated segment. "A typology [such as alienation] that aids in identifying basic sources of discontent" can help in actions to "mitigate" this discontent. Furthermore, "it holds considerable promise for assisting business in employing a strategy of positive action rather than reaction" in dealing with the alienated consumer.

APPENDIX

CONSUMER ALIENATION SCALE

- *1. Most companies are responsive to the demands of the consumer.
2. It seems wasteful for so many companies to produce the same basic products.
3. Unethical practices are widespread throughout business.
4. Stores do not care why people buy their products just as long as they make a profit.
- *5. Shopping is usually a pleasant experience.
6. People are unable to help determine what products will be sold in the store.
7. Advertising and promotional costs unnecessarily raise the price the consumer has to pay for a product.
8. What a product claims to do and what it actually does are two different things.
9. Mass production has done away with unique products.
10. Misrepresentation of product features is just something we have to live with.
11. Harmful characteristics of a product are often kept from the consumer.
12. It is embarrassing to bring a purchase back to the store.
13. I tend to spend more than I should just to impress my friends with how much I have.
14. Even with so much advertising it is difficult to know what brand is best.
15. A sale is not really a bargain but a way to draw people into the store.
16. It is difficult to identify with current trends and fads in fashion.
17. I often feel guilty for buying so many unnecessary products.
18. Most brands are the same with just different names and labels.
19. A product will usually break down as soon as the warranty is up.
20. Business is responsible for unnecessarily depleting our natural resources.
21. It is difficult to identify with business practices today.
22. One must be willing to tolerate poor service from most stores.
23. It is difficult to know what store has the best buy.
24. Business's prime objective is to make money rather than satisfy the consumer.
25. I often feel frustrated when I fail to find what I want in the store.
26. After making a purchase, I often find myself wondering "why."
27. It is hard to understand why some brands are twice as expensive as others.
28. It is not unusual to find out that business has lied to the public.
29. Buying beyond one's means is justifiable through the use of credit.

30. It is often difficult to understand the real meaning of most advertisements.
31. Products are designed to wear out long before they should.
- *32. Most claims of product quality are true.
33. I am often dissatisfied with a recent purchase.
34. The wide variety of competing products makes intelligent buying decisions more difficult.
- *35. Advertisements usually present a true picture of the product.

*Reverse scale these items.

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