Trait Aspects of Vanity: Measurement and Relevance to Consumer Behavior

RICHARD G. NETEMEYER
SCOT BURTON
DONALD R. LICHTENSTEIN*

In this article, trait aspects of vanity are defined and scales measuring these aspects are developed. Extensive validation procedures are employed, including assessing the relationships between the vanity scales and numerous consumer-related attitudes and behaviors. Five studies, encompassing seven samples, are reported. Studies related the vanity measures to various constructs and behaviors for samples that included individuals selected for *Who's Who in America,* players from a nationally ranked NCAA Division I football team, professional fashion models, and samples from the general population.

A dominant theme in Western culture pertains to vanity—a fixation on physical appearance and achievement of personal goals. Because vanity has contributed to, or is reflected in, the development of countless products and services, insights into the vanity construct have important marketing and consumer implications. Although it implicitly has been recognized as affecting many behaviors, very little has been reported in the consumer-behavior literature that explicitly measures or relates vanity per se to consumer-related behaviors. In this article, we provide conceptual definitions of four vanity-related traits, develop self-report measures of the traits, and extensively validate these measures. We then demonstrate the relevance of the traits to a number of consumer-related behaviors. Last, we offer a discussion with implications for future research.

CONSTRUCT DEFINITION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "vanity" has been used in numerous contexts. In formulating our definition of vanity, we scanned literature ranging from sociology and psychology to philosophy, as well as consumer behavior (e.g., Bloch and Richins 1992; Cash and Brown 1987; Lasch 1978; Lyman 1978; Solomon 1985, 1992). This literature search uncovered little in the way of formal definitions of vanity, but two recurring themes were evident: (1) vanity encompasses a physical appearance aspect, and (2) vanity encompasses an achievement aspect. Furthermore, these two themes incorporate both a concern for, and a positive (perhaps inflated) view of, one's physical appearance and personal achievements. We also looked at several dictionary definitions of vanity and they too expressed these same two basic themes (e.g., *Oxford English Dictionary* 1989; *Webster's College Dictionary* 1991). Thus, we view vanity as having four distinct trait components: (1) a concern for physical appearance, (2) a positive (and perhaps inflated) view of physical appearance, (3) a concern for achievement, and (4) a positive (and perhaps inflated) view of achievement. Formal definitions are as follows:

Physical vanity: an excessive concern for, and/or a positive (and perhaps inflated) view of, one's physical appearance.

Achievement vanity: an excessive concern for, and/or a positive (and perhaps inflated) view of, one's personal achievements.

Physical Vanity

In the past decade or so, both the popular and the academic press have been replete with books and articles relating to physical appearance and its impact on consumer demand for products and services. For example, the popular press reported that in 1992, 53 million Americans would go on a diet (of course, part of this is due to health concerns), and $36 billion would be spent on dieting programs and products (Silberner 1992). A

*Richard G. Netemeyer is associate professor of marketing, College of Business, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA70803. Scot Burton is associate professor of marketing at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Donald R. Lichtenstein is associate professor of marketing at the University of Colorado, Boulder. The authors would like to thank Terry Shimp for helpful comments on an earlier draft of the manuscript and Erin Hoag of the University of Colorado Athletic Department for assistance in data collection.

1986 Commerce Department survey reported that retail sales of female cosmetics exceeded $13 billion. A *Psychology Today* survey reported that 34 percent of men and 38 percent of women were dissatisfied with their overall physical appearance, and 45 percent of the women and about 33 percent of the men said they would consider having cosmetic surgery (Cash, Winstead, and Janda 1986). In fact, elective cosmetic surgery reportedly has risen from about 300,000 cases in 1981 to an estimated 1.5 million cases in 1988, and about 2 million American women have received breast implants, with 80 percent of these for cosmetic reasons only (Brownell 1991; Findlay 1989). Some negative consequences of physical vanity are also apparent. Despite repeated warnings from the medical community, an estimated 1 million Americans, half of them adolescents, use black market steroids to improve their physiques (Schrof 1992), and, while new cases of skin cancer have risen 50 percent from 1985 to 1990, approximately 29 percent of white Americans still intentionally suntan (Ralston 1992). These are but a few examples cited in the popular press relating to the emphasis on outward appearance.

A growing body of academic research has also been devoted to physical appearance and its effect on consumer behavior. It has been suggested that outward physical appearance is important for establishing and maintaining one's self-concept. This is supported by the proliferation of, and demand for, appearance-related products such as cosmetics and clothing (Solomon 1985, 1992). It has also been suggested that concern for physical attractiveness leads not only to positive consumption behaviors (e.g., exercising and healthier eating habits), but to negative behaviors as well (e.g., addictive behaviors, eating disorders, and numerous elective cosmetic surgeries; Bloch and Richins 1992; Hirschman 1992; Schouten 1991). In fact, clinical psychologists have long proposed a link between physical appearance and eating disorders (Cash and Brown 1987; Williamson et al. 1990). However, little has been done by consumer researchers in examining the relationships between psychological predispositions toward vanity, marketing practices, and body-altering behaviors.

Achievement Vanity

Both theoretical and empirical links between personal achievements and product consumption have been established as well. Using the VALS typology on data from a large-scale national survey, Mitchell (1983) classified 22 percent of respondents as "achievers" (those concerned with personal goals) and another 9 percent as "emulators" (those aspiring to be achievers). Another national classification, the list of values (LOV), found that about 16 percent of people surveyed endorsed "a sense of accomplishment" as the value most important to them (Kahle 1983). It has been suggested that these groups conspicuously consume to convey their success or status (Belk 1985; Solomon 1992).

Several other researchers believe that personal and career goals are strongly associated with consumer aspirations (Dholakia and Levy 1987; Mason 1981). Belk (1985) suggests that some individuals demonstrate and justify their drive for achievements through conspicuous consumption. Hirschman (1990) contends that a dominant theme in our culture is the documentation of personal achievement via consuming in a prescribed way (e.g., status is exemplified by "showing off" material possessions). Richins and Dawson (1992) also show evidence that materialism is used as a symbol of achievement.

Last, both physical and achievement vanity are important from a marketing practitioner's perspective. Consider the advertising industry. Numerous products are advertised on the basis of claims of enhancing one's appearance and/or the benefits associated with being considered physically attractive (Solomon 1985, 1992). Advertising themes are replete with achievement and status symbol consumption. For instance, the VALS- and LOV-inspired ads rely heavily on an entitlement-achievement theme of "you are successful—so you deserve it," and that "having and showing more" is a reflection of social status and achievement-related vanity (Hoch and Lowenstein 1991; Pollay 1986). Perhaps David Ogilvy summed it up best in *Ogilvy on Advertising* (1983, p. 7; emphasis in italics is added): "Meanwhile, most of the advertising techniques which worked when I wrote *Confessions of an Advertising Man,* still work today. Consumers still buy products whose advertising promises them value for the money, *beauty,* nutrition, relief from suffering, *social status,* and so on—ALL OVER THE WORLD." In sum, the relevance of vanity (as defined in the present study) to marketing academics and practitioners is quite evident.

This brief review of the literature suggests that vanity is intuitively related to a variety of behaviors. However, vanity itself (as previously defined) has not been measured, nor have links between vanity and consumer behavior been studied directly. The present research develops four scales to measure the different aspects of vanity (i.e., a concern for, and a positive [and perhaps inflated] view of, the physical and achievement components of vanity). The relevance of vanity is demonstrated by relating the scales to numerous constructs and consumer behaviors across a diverse set of samples.

SCALE DEVELOPMENT

Elicitation Procedure

Prior to item generation, an open-ended elicitation procedure was conducted to help ensure that our author-generated construct definitions were consistent with the general public's view of the constructs. A sample of 40 (half students and half nonstudents) responded to the following statement: "Please provide a brief description of the personality characteristics and behaviors

that you would associate with the words 'vain' or 'vanity.' Please be specific in providing attitudes, traits, and behaviors that you would consider reflective of 'vanity.'"

The traits and behaviors (and the number of respondents listing them) most commonly elicited were "concern for self advancement" (13), "physical appearance oriented" (13), "status oriented" (5), and "arrogant—stuck on themselves" (6). Thus, we felt that our definitions reflected the public's view of vanity.

Item Generation and Judgment

Based on the definitions of the four constructs, numerous Likert-type statements served as an initial pool of items. These items were either generated by the authors or culled from extant literature relating to body image, need for achievement, and the like. For the two physical-vanity traits, 77 items were generated by the authors and 18 items were taken from the Body Self-Relations Questionnaire (BSRQ; Cash et al. 1986). The BSRQ is a 69-item scale that assesses various aspects of body image and weight-related variables. The 18 items taken from the BSRQ were thought to reflect either concern for, or evaluation of, one's body. Three items that reflected a positive or inflated view of one's physical appeal were culled from the 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin and Terry 1988). Of the 98 items, approximately half were generated to reflect "excessive concern for physical appearance," and half were generated to reflect "a positive (and perhaps) inflated view of one's physical appearance." About one-third of the items were negatively worded.

One-hundred fifteen items were generated to reflect the two achievement-vanity traits. Approximately one-third of the items were negatively worded. Five items were culled (with slightly modified wording) from Bendig's (1964) Need for Achievement Scale, and the other 110 items were generated by the authors. Via author judgment, the total pool was reduced to 89 physical and 99 achievement items by eliminating items that reflected behavioral manifestations of the constructs. This pool of items was then judged for representativeness by two separate panels of marketing professors and Ph.D. students whose primary interest was consumer behavior. The judges were given the conceptual definitions of the constructs and then asked to rate each item as either "very applicable," "somewhat applicable," or "not applicable" to the construct definition. Items were retained if the judges consistently rated the item as at least "somewhat applicable." These judgment procedures resulted in the retention of 57 and 60 items for physical and achievement vanity, respectively. The authors then further trimmed the number of items to 50 and 50, respectively, by eliminating items with potentially ambiguous wording.

Purification: Studies 1 and 2

In the first study, two samples were collected to purify the scales and obtain preliminary estimates of reliability and validity. The first sample consisted of 145 students from a major state university, and the second sample consisted of 277 nonstudent adults. Both samples responded to identical questionnaires that contained the 100 items reflecting the vanity traits. (All items were scored on seven-point "strongly disagree"–"strongly agree" scales.) Included on the questionnaire were measures for preliminary validity checks (to be discussed later in the article), as well as demographic questions.

The responses to the 100 vanity items were subjected to principal components analyses. In the first analysis, no restrictions were placed on the number of components to be extracted. Although several components with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted, the scree plots indicated noticeable breaks after the first four components. For the student sample, the first four components accounted for 45 percent of the variance, with eigenvalues ranging from 5.07 to 20.83. For the nonstudent sample, the first four components accounted for 48 percent of the variance, with eigenvalues ranging from 4.66 to 25.71. A second analysis was then conducted where four components were extracted. The rotated factor pattern strongly indicated that items designed to reflect "physical concern," "physical view," "achievement concern," and "achievement view" loaded on their respective factors. After eliminating items with loadings below .60 (i.e., retaining 16 for physical concern, 17 for physical view, 14 for achievement concern, and 14 for achievement view), a third analysis was run. For the student sample, the four eigenvalues ranged from 3.61 to 14.60, accounting for 53 percent of the variance. For the nonstudent sample, the eigenvalues ranged from 3.84 to 18.27, accounting for 56 percent of the variance.

In the second purification study, the 16 physical-concern, 17 physical-view, 14 achievement-concern, and 14 achievement-view items were administered to new samples of students (n = 186) and nonstudent adults (n = 264). (Several other measures were also included in the questionnaire as validity checks.) The responses to the 61 vanity items were again subjected to a series of principal components analyses. For the student sample, the first four components accounted for 52 percent of the variance, with eigenvalues ranging from 2.64 to 16.97. For the nonstudent sample, the first four components accounted for 55 percent of the variance, with eigenvalues ranging from 3.75 to 17.02. We then eliminated items with loadings below .70 on a given factor (across both samples) and ran a third analysis. For the student sample, the four eigenvalues ranged from 1.65 to 8.75, accounting for 63 percent of the variance. For the nonstudent sample, the four components had eigenvalues ranging from 2.19 to 8.44, accounting

for 66 percent of the variance. In sum, from the analyses conducted across studies 1 and 2, seven items were retained for the physical-concern, physical-view, and achievement-view scales, respectively, and six items were retained for the achievement-concern scale (i.e., 27 items total).

Dimensionality and Internal Consistency: Studies 1 and 2

The 27 items retained for the four vanity scales were subjected to confirmatory factor analyses via LISREL VII (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1989). A four-factor model representing the hypothesized correlated four-dimension structure was estimated for purposes of assessing discriminant validity and internal consistency. This procedure was carried out for each of the samples constituting studies 1 and 2.

For study 1, both student and nonstudent samples showed significant loadings for items to their respective factors. However, the overall fit of the four-factor model suffered because of items with extremely high correlations and error terms. Thus, the decision was made to further trim the scales by deleting the problematic items. This resulted in five items for the physical-concern, achievement-concern, and achievement-view scales, and six items for the physical-view scale (i.e., 21 items total). These items are presented in the appendix.[1]

Table 1 presents fit statistics and internal consistency estimates generated from the 21-item four-factor models. Taken as a whole, the fit statistics suggest adequate model fit for the four-dimension structure of the vanity scales. The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and the adjusted-goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) ranged from .820 to .868 and from .773 to .834, respectively. Although some of these GFI and AGFI values are marginal, both of these fit statistics may suffer from inconsistencies due to sampling characteristics. (See Bentler [1990] and Bollen [1989] for reviews pertaining to fit indices.) Thus, we also report two fit indices that have been viewed as robust to sampling characteristics, the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and Bentler's (1990) comparative fit index (CFI). Although there is some uncertainty about what TLI or CFI value is minimally required to conclude that a model is sufficient, values in the high .80 range and above have been noted as designating adequate fit (Bentler 1990; Bollen 1989). As Table 1 suggests, the models achieved this criterion, which indicated that the fit of the four-factor models was adequate.[2]

Evidence of internal consistency is provided by composite reliability (composite alpha), coefficient alpha, and variance extracted (VE) estimates. Composite reliability is a LISREL-generated estimate of internal consistency analogous to coefficient alpha (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Across the four scales, the two alpha estimates ranged from .800 to .917. The variance extracted estimates, which assess the amount of variance captured by a construct's measure relative to random measurement error, are also supportive of scale consistency. Variance extracted estimates of .50 or above indicate internal consistency among items in a scale (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Of the 16 VE estimates for studies 1 and 2, 14 are above .50, and the other two approach the .50 level. Lastly, for all four scales, all items had significant t-value loadings on their constructs ($p < .01$), and the individual item reliabilities (i.e., the square of the standardized loading for each item) ranged from .312 to .810 across the four studies.

Tests of discriminant validity were also performed on the four-factor model. First, the ϕ estimates (i.e., correlations among the four vanity scales) across samples ranged from .162 to .535, and all of these estimates were significantly less than one. Also, for any pair of factors, ϕ^2 was less than the average VE between the two factors. These two tests support the discriminant validity among the four vanity measures (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Fornell and Larcker 1981).

A second set of models also designed to assess the discriminant validity among the four vanity scales was estimated. Three-factor models were estimated and compared to the hypothesized four-factor model. The three-factor model combines the items of two scales into one overall factor (i.e., a correlation or ϕ constrained to be one between scales), and allows the other two factors to be separate but correlated. For example, combining the physical-concern and physical-view items such that they compose one factor, and allowing the achievement-concern and achievement-view items to load freely on their own respective factors represents a three-factor model. If the chi-square fit of the four-factor model is better than the fit of the three-factor model, evidence of discriminant validity among factors exists (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). This procedure was conducted for each possible pair of vanity scales (six total) across studies 1 and 2. For each test, the four-factor model was significantly better fitted than the

[1]The deletion of the problematic items was actually suggested by two of the reviewers. The authors are grateful for this suggestion.

[2]There is quite a bit of controversy as to what signifies an acceptable level of fit for confirmatory factor models (cf. Bentler 1990; Bollen 1989; McDonald and Marsh 1990). Cutoff levels for the TLI and CFI indices range from the high .80 to the .90 level and above. Still, these are "rules of thumb." As Bollen (1989) points out, there are many factors that will influence the cutoff level, and "selecting a rigid cutoff for the incremental fit indices is like selecting a minimum R^2 for a regression equation. Any value will be controversial" (p. 275). For our study 1 student sample, the TLI and CFI values were below that of the other samples. The most likely explanation for this is the cross-loadings between some of the achievement-concern items on the achievement-view factor (i.e., the first two achievement-concern items listed in the appendix exhibited modification indices that would significantly reduce the chi-square value). However, across all models and studies, no negative error variances, improper solutions, or "Heywood cases" were observed.

TABLE 1

DIMENSIONALITY AND INTERNAL CONSISTENCY OF THE VANITY SCALES

	Fit statistics					
	χ^2	*df*	GFI	AGFI	TLI	CFI
Study 1:						
Students	349.30	183	.820	.773	.877	.888
Nonstudents	440.35	183	.868	.834	.904	.917
Study 2:						
Students	332.68	183	.859	.822	.914	.926
Nonstudents	450.17	183	.859	.822	.905	.918

	Internal consistency					
	Students			Nonstudents		
	Composite α	Coefficient α	VE	Composite α	Coefficient α	VE
Study 1:						
Physical concern	.848	.859	.538	.862	.850	.564
Physical view	.880	.882	.553	.904	.900	.613
Achievement concern	.824	.800	.488	.844	.858	.524
Achievement view	.866	.840	.566	.850	.836	.535
Study 2:						
Physical concern	.839	.835	.518	.875	.871	.588
Physical view	.893	.892	.583	.917	.916	.650
Achievement concern	.810	.823	.470	.857	.860	.546
Achievement view	.881	.888	.598	.903	.883	.608

three-factor model ($p < .01$). Overall, the estimates from the three- and four-factor structures support modeling the vanity constructs as four correlated yet distinct scales.

Construct Validity: Study 1

As previously stated, a number of measures were included in studies 1 and 2 for validity purposes. For study 1, these measures included the 10-item "grandiosity" scale (Robbins and Patton 1985), the six-item factor measuring possessions as a "symbol of success" from Richins and Dawson's (1992) materialism scale, and a 10-item version of the Crowne-Marlowe social-desirability scale (Strahan and Gerbasi 1972). Two single-item measures were also included: "I have considered having cosmetic surgery" and "I would like to be a member of an exclusive country club." All measures were scored on seven-point Likert scales, and Cronbach alphas for the multi-item measures ranged from .72 to .91.

The grandiosity scale was designed to measure aspects of egocentrism where an individual possesses an inflated view of his/her physical, intellectual, and leadership attributes (Robbins and Patton 1985). Given that the vanity scales include aspects of concern for, and a positive (perhaps inflated) view of, one's physical appearance and achievements, positive correlations between the four vanity scales and grandiosity were predicted. As Table 2 suggests, this prediction was supported for both the student and nonstudent samples ($p < .01$).

A growing body of research suggests that people engage in consumption behaviors that indicate to others that they are successful (i.e., conspicuous consumption and/or materialism; Belk 1985; Mason 1981; Richins and Dawson 1992). Recently, the body itself has been viewed as an object of materialism where it takes on the quality of possession or ownership (Belk 1988; Richins 1991). Thus, it was predicted there would be positive correlations between the four vanity scales and Richins and Dawson's (1992) possessions as a symbol of success. Table 2 shows a pattern supportive of this prediction. Furthermore, achievement concern was more strongly related to "symbol of success" than the other vanity scales. This indicates that materialism could be considered a manifestation of concern for achievement. (For a statistical test between two correlations, these differences were significant for the nonstudent sample for all comparisons [the minimum *z*-value was 2.51]. These differences were not significant for the student sample.)

The two single-item measures, "consider surgery" and "country club," were also correlated with the vanity scales. It was expected that concern for physical appearance would be related to consideration of cosmetic surgery. Support was found for this prediction, as the

TABLE 2

CORRELATIONS AMONG VANITY SCALES AND RELATED CONSTRUCTS: STUDY 1

	Physical concern	Physical view	Achievement concern	Achievement view
Students:				
Physical concern	(.86)			
Physical view	.27	(.88)		
Achievement concern	.29	.19	(.80)	
Achievement view	.17	.25	.51	(.84)
Symbol of success	.34	.18	.45	.18
Grandiosity	.45	.39	.51	.44
Social desirability	−.14, NS	.07, NS	−.19	−.08, NS
Consider surgery	.17	−.23	.12, NS	−.02, NS
Country club	.23	−.01, NS	.38	.26
Nonstudents:				
Physical concern	(.85)			
Physical view	.38	(.90)		
Achievement concern	.32	.43	(.86)	
Achievement view	.21	.45	.52	(.84)
Symbol of success	.30	.36	.53	.27
Grandiosity	.36	.61	.62	.50
Social desirability	−.02, NS	−.15	−.26	.09, NS
Consider surgery	.21	.08, NS	.03, NS	−.06, NS
Country club	.24	.28	.47	.30

NOTE.—Except where noted by NS (not significant), all correlations were significant at the .05 or .01 level. Values in parentheses are coeffficient alpha internal consistency estimates.

correlations between physical concern and "consider surgery" were .17 and .21 ($p < .05$) for the student and nonstudent samples, respectively. It was also predicted that expressing a desire to be a member of an exclusive country club would be related to the achievement-vanity scales. Results in Table 2 support this prediction, and the correlation between achievement concern and desire to be in a country club was stronger than the correlation between achievement view and desire to be in a country club, which illustrated the conspicuous consumption manifestation of concern for achievement. (All of these differences were significant for the nonstudent sample [the minimum z-value was 2.35], but not for the student sample.)

Known-Group Validity and Social-Desirability Testing. Known-group validity basically asks, Are there groups of people that should have higher mean scores on a given trait than other groups? For study 1, we included two questions designed to assess known-group validity: "Have you ever had cosmetic surgery?" and "Are you a member of an exclusive country club?" It was predicted that individuals who had cosmetic surgery ($n = 17$) would score higher on physical concern than those who had not, and individuals belonging to an exclusive country club ($n = 71$) would score higher on achievement concern than those who did not. These predictions were supported. Those who had had cosmetic surgery ($\bar{X} = 26.41$, SD = 5.65) scored higher on physical concern than those who had not had cosmetic surgery ($\bar{X} = 22.57$, SD = 6.29; $t = 2.47$, $p < .01$), and those belonging to an exclusive country club ($\bar{X} = 21.85$, SD = 6.63) scored higher on achievement concern than those who did not ($\bar{X} = 19.87$, SD = 6.43; $t = 2.30$, $p < .05$).

An often ignored aspect of scale development is testing for social-desirability bias (DeVillis 1991). As can be seen from Table 2, the correlations between social desirability and the vanity scales were either low or nonsignificant, which suggests that the vanity scales are not likely to suffer from social-desirability bias.

Construct Validity: Study 2

A measure included for validity purposes in study 2 was the Narcissistic Personality Inventory. The NPI measures aspects of narcissism including a grandiose sense of self-importance, a preoccupation with unlimited power and success, self-brilliance and beauty, a sense of entitlement, and exploitation of others (American Psychiatric Association 1987). Raskin and Terry (1988) factor analyzed the NPI and concluded that the NPI items could be summed to form one overall "narcissism" construct—the NPI—or treated as interrelated factors of "authority," "self-sufficiency," "superiority," "exhibitionism," "exploitativeness," and "entitlement."

The 16-item scale measuring clothing as concern for personal appearance (i.e., "clothing concern"; Gurel and Gurel 1979), the six-item "public body consciousness" scale (Miller, Murphy, and Buss 1981), the 10-item "status concern" scale (Kaufman 1957), and several single-item and demographic measures were also included in study 2. The clothing-concern scale measures the degree to which people use clothes to enhance

their physical appearance (Gurel and Gurel 1979). The public-body-consciousness scale measures the degree to which people are aware of their physical features when out in public, and status concern measures the degree to which individuals are concerned with their social standing in the community. The two single-item measures of study 1, "consider surgery" and "country club," were also included in study 2, as well as a single item assessing "frequency of dieting" behavior. Last, female respondents answered a three-item measure of the "importance of cosmetics," a multi-item "cosmetics use index" adapted from Cash and Cash (1982), and a single item assessing the amount of "time spent in applying cosmetics" (per day). (Alphas for all multi-item measures ranged from .62 to .95.)

Given the nature of the NPI, positive correlations between the NPI, its factors, and the vanity scales were predicted. It was also felt that the achievement-vanity scales would correlate more strongly with the NPI factors than physical-vanity scales, because the NPI factors are more closely aligned with accomplishment than physical concerns (Raskin and Terry 1988). Table 3 presents these results. Across samples, the correlations of the NPI and its factors ranged from .20 to .58 with achievement concern and achievement view and from .02 to .55 with physical concern and physical view. Although most of the differences between correlations were not significant (i.e., the correlations between achievement vanity and the NPI factors were not statistically greater than the correlations between physical vanity and the NPI factors), the overall pattern of results does support the predictions.

Given the nature of the public-body-consciousness and clothing-concern scales, a positive correlation was predicted between these constructs and physical concern. Furthermore, on the basis of the "concern" nature of these variables, it was also predicted that physical concern would be more strongly correlated with these constructs than the other vanity scales. As Table 3 indicates, physical concern was correlated with public body consciousness and clothing concern, and these correlations were stronger than the correlations of public body consciousness and clothing concern with the other vanity constructs. (The smallest z-value for a difference between correlations across these comparisons was 2.06, $p < .05$.) It was also predicted that achievement concern would be more highly correlated with status concern than would the other vanity constructs. This prediction was generally supported. (The z-value for nonstudents was 1.72, $p < .05$; for students the z-value was not significant.) The "consider surgery" variable was modestly correlated with physical concern (.17 and .12 for the student and nonstudent samples), and achievement concern was significantly correlated with "country club" (.30 and .42).

It was predicted that physical concern would be positively correlated with the three cosmetic-related measures. Across student and nonstudent samples, this prediction was supported. Last, it was predicted that frequency of dieting would be positively correlated with physical concern and negatively correlated with physical view (i.e., those with a positive or inflated view of their physical appearance are less likely to feel a need to diet). Only weak support for this prediction was found, as the correlations between physical concern and frequency of dieting were .18 and .11 (not significant), and the correlations between physical view and frequency of dieting were −.08 (not significant) and −.25.

FURTHER VALIDATION AND RELEVANCE TO CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Who's Who Study

The first two studies were primarily concerned with developing the vanity scales. The next several studies are concerned with nomological and known-group validity. Given the concern and view traits of achievement vanity, we felt that a sample of high achievers would be useful in demonstrating known-group validity. Thus, we obtained the 1991 *Who's Who* directory for one state and mailed questionnaires with prepaid postage return envelopes to all those listed in the directory. Of 861 questionnaires mailed, 267 (31 percent) were completed and returned.

The questionnaire included the vanity scales, as well as a number of measures for validation purposes. Richins and Dawson's (1992) six-item "symbol of success" and seven-item "acquisition centrality" materialism scales were included, as well as Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer's (1993) six-item "price-based prestige sensitivity" scale. The acquisition-centrality materialism scale measures the extent to which acquiring material possessions is a driving force in one's life, and the price-based prestige-sensitivity scale measures the degree to which people purchase higher-priced brands as an outward sign of prestige. The 10-item status-concern scale (Kaufman 1957) and the LOV list of values (Kahle 1983) were also on the questionnaire. The most recent version of the LOV asks respondents to rank-order eight lifetime goals and values from most to least important (Kahle 1983). These goals and values are "a sense of belonging," "warm relationships with others," "self-fulfillment," "a sense of accomplishment," "being well respected by others," "fun and enjoyment in life," "security," and "self-respect." Last, several demographic questions were included on the questionnaire. (Cronbach alphas for the multi-item measures ranged from .78 to .87.)

The four-factor model of the vanity constructs was assessed first. The model showed adequate fit ($\chi^2 = 425.65$, $df = 183$, GFI = .863, AGFI = .827, TLI = .915, CFI = .927), and the internal consistency estimates (i.e., composite reliability and coefficient alpha) ranged from .840 to .916 across the four scales. The VE

TABLE 3

CORRELATIONS AMONG VANITY SCALES AND RELATED CONSTRUCTS: STUDY 2

	Physical concern	Physical view	Achievement concern	Achievement view
Students:				
Physical concern	(.83)			
Physical view	.32	(.89)		
Achievement concern	.44	.29	(.82)	
Achievement view	.17	.45	.49	(.89)
NPI	.25	.55	.52	.58
Authority	.14, NS	.38	.36	.48
Self-sufficiency	.05, NS	.30	.34	.56
Superiority	.30	.46	.41	.58
Exploitativeness	.08, NS	.38	.33	.36
Exhibitionism	.28	.43	.42	.29
Entitlement	.31	.37	.54	.42
Clothing concern	.47	.22	.28	.16
Public body consciousness	.49	.22	.31	.13, NS
Status concern	.32	.18	.41	.15
Consider surgery	.17	−.06, NS	.08, NS	−.04, NS
Country club	.29	.16	.30	.18
Importance of cosmetics	.32	−.20	.16, NS	.04, NS
Cosmetics use index	.21	−.14, NS	.16, NS	.04, NS
Time spent in applying cosmetics	.21	−.08, NS	.24	.05, NS
Frequency of dieting	.18	−.08, NS	.04, NS	.05, NS
Nonstudents:				
Physical concern	(.87)			
Physical view	.26	(.92)		
Achievement concern	.18	.33	(.86)	
Achievement view	.19	.34	.45	(.88)
NPI	.18	.53	.58	.47
Authority	.09, NS	.34	.44	.50
Self-sufficiency	.19	.33	.34	.41
Superiority	.22	.44	.45	.38
Exploitativeness	.02, NS	.38	.37	.37
Exhibitionism	.11, NS	.42	.51	.20
Entitlement	.22	.42	.58	.39
Clothing concern	.44	.11, NS	.14	.22
Public body consciousness	.59	.14	.14	.13
Status concern	.35	.39	.51	.30
Consider surgery	.12	.00, NS	−.14	−.05, NS
Country club	.23	.24	.42	.15
Importance of cosmetics	.39	−.04, NS	.17, NS	.06, NS
Cosmetics use index	.19	−.11, NS	.00, NS	.01, NS
Time spent in applying cosmetics	.16, NS	−.20	−.05, NS	−.12, NS
Frequency of dieting	.11, NS	−.25	−.09, NS	−.08, NS

NOTE.—Except where noted by NS (not significant), all correlations were significant at the .05 or .01 level. Values in parentheses are coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates.

estimates ranged from .516 to .658, and the correlations among the four scales ranged from .179 to .484. Last, the individual item reliabilities across the four factors ranged from .33 to .82.

Table 4 presents the correlations between the vanity scales and the validity-related constructs. As in the previous studies, it was predicted that materialism would be positively correlated with achievement concern, and this prediction was supported. The correlation between achievement concern and possessions as a symbol of success was .36, and the correlation between achievement concern and acquisition centrality was .26. Both achievement-vanity scales were related to status concern, with the correlation between achievement concern and status concern being the stronger of the two (.44 and .32, respectively). In light of what it measures, price-based prestige sensitivity was expected to be positively correlated with achievement concern, and this was the case (r = .27). Also, consistent with the results from studies 1 and 2, physical concern was positively correlated with "consider surgery," and achievement concern was positively correlated with "country club" (r = .28 and r = .16, respectively; $p < .05$).

It was predicted that achievement concern would be positively correlated with self-oriented values and negatively correlated with socially oriented values. The

TABLE 4

CORRELATIONS AMONG VANITY SCALES AND RELATED CONSTRUCTS: *WHO'S WHO* STUDY

	Physical concern	Physical view	Achievement concern	Achievement view
Physical concern	(.90)			
Physical view	.37	(.91)		
Achievement concern	.31	.15	(.84)	
Achievement view	.26	.32	.43	(.87)
Symbol of success	.37	.17	.36	.09, NS
Acquisition centrality	.24	.09, NS	.26	.08, NS
Status concern	.44	.24	.44	.32
Price-based prestige sensitivity	.29	.14	.27	.08, NS
Consider surgery	.28	.14	.05, NS	.03, NS
Country club	.36	.15	.16	.06, NS
LOV values:				
Self-fulfillment	.14	.19	.16	.10, NS
Sense of accomplishment	.14	.02, NS	.21	.09, NS
Being well respected by others	.15	−.03, NS	.17	.12, NS
Warm relationships with others	−.10, NS	−.01, NS	−.17	−.04, NS
Sense of belonging	−.10, NS	−.02, NS	−.12	−.11, NS
Fun and enjoyment in life	−.07, nS	.04, NS	−.10, NS	−.02, NS
Security	.03, NS	−.01, NS	−.03, NS	−.07, NS
Self-respect	−.14	−.11	−.04, NS	.04, NS

NOTE.—Correlations between the LOV values and the vanity scales are Spearman rank-order correlations. Except where noted by NS (not significant), all correlations were significant at the .05 or .01 level. Values in parentheses are coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates.

pattern of correlations in Table 4 supports this prediction. The strongest correlation was between achievement-concern and the LOV value of a sense of accomplishment ($r = .21$). There was also a significant positive correlation between achievement concern and being well respected and self-fulfillment (r's = .17 and .16, respectively). Table 4 also shows that achievement concern had significant *negative* relationships with more socially oriented values such as warm relationships with others and a sense of belonging.

Known-Group Validity. Given the *Who's Who* sample, we predicted that their achievement-vanity mean scores would be higher than the mean scores from more general or nonspecialized samples. (The appendix shows mean scores and standard deviations for the vanity scales across all of the studies.) To test this prediction, t-tests between the *Who's Who* and the samples of studies 1 and 2 were conducted. The mean score on the achievement-view scale for this sample was 26.25, a score significantly greater than the means for the study 1 and 2 nonstudent samples ($\bar{X}$ = 21.04 and 21.69, respectively) and student samples ($\bar{X}$ = 22.00 and 20.96). The t-values for these differences ranged from 7.83 to 9.76 ($p < .01$ for all).

The achievement-concern mean for the *Who's Who* sample (22.61) was also greater than the means for the nonstudent samples in study 1 ($\bar{X}$ = 19.26) and study 2 ($\bar{X}$ = 19.42; t-values = 6.03 and 5.80, respectively; $p < .01$). It is interesting to note that while the achievement-concern scores for the *Who's Who* sample were slightly higher than the means for the student samples composed of juniors and seniors enrolled in upper-division business courses (21.99 and 21.61, respectively, for studies 1 and 2), only the difference between the *Who's Who* sample and the study 2 student sample was significant ($t = 1.70$, $p < .05$). Perhaps because of its relative importance to both samples, concern for achievement becomes a less effective discriminator between junior- and senior-level business students who are preparing to launch their careers and achievement-oriented individuals well into their careers. That is, while the two samples differ with respect to achievement view because of differing career stages, both have high levels of concern for achievement.

Football Player Study

To further test nomological and known-group validity, 27 members from a nationally ranked NCAA Division I football team responded to a questionnaire administered during a study hall reserved for athletes. In addition to the vanity scales, the questionnaire included the NPI, the clothing-concern scale, the scale measuring possessions as a symbol of success, and the status-concern scale. (Cronbach alphas for the multi-item scales ranged from .70 to .92.) Table 5 shows the correlations between these measures and the vanity scales. As with study 2, the NPI and its factors were significantly correlated with the vanity scales, and in general, the achievement-vanity scales were more strongly related to the NPI than were the physical-vanity scales. The correlations between "symbol of success" and status concern and the vanity scales also revealed the expected

TABLE 5

CORRELATIONAL AND *t*-TEST RESULTS FOR THE VANITY SCALES AND RELATED CONSTRUCTS: FOOTBALL PLAYER STUDY

	Correlation			
	Physical concern	Physical view	Achievement concern	Achievement view
Physical concern	(.86)			
Physical view	.54	(.77)		
Achievement concern	.34	.31	(.78)	
Achievement view	.24	.16	.60	(.80)
NPI	.48	.35	.72	.56
Authority	.26	.14	.55	.52
Self-sufficiency	.51	.29	.60	.55
Superiority	.28	.27	.58	.50
Exploitativeness	.38	.30	.60	.49
Exhibitionism	.22	.23	.26	.05
Entitlement	.20	.30	.54	.34
Symbol of success	.42	.29	.50	.16
Status concern	.30	.18	.71	.37
Clothing concern	.54	.44	.25	.20

	t-Values from mean tests			
	Study 1		Study 2	
	Football players vs. students	Football players vs. nonstudents	Football players vs. students	Football players vs. nonstudents
Physical view	2.04	2.78	1.40, NS	3.51
Achievement view	1.00, NS	1.91	1.91	1.31, NS

NOTE.—Correlations less than ±.30 were (in general) not significant. Except where noted by NS (not significant), all *t*-values were significant at the .05 or .01 level. Values in parentheses are coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates.

pattern, a pattern similar to that found in studies 1 and 2. Last, clothing concern was correlated with the vanity scales, and as expected, clothing concern was more highly correlated with the physical-vanity than with the achievement-vanity measures. (Because of the small sample size, these differences between correlations were not significant.)

Known-Group Validity. Because these football players are from a high-visibility sport and a nationally ranked team, they are the object of much social adulation. They engage in activities to develop strong physiques (e.g., weight lifting, running), where a stronger physique may be viewed as an end in itself as well as a means to enhance athletic achievement. It was predicted that these factors would be manifested in higher mean scores on the physical- and achievement-view measures than those found in nonspecialized samples. Thus, we performed simple *t*-tests between the football player sample and the nonspecialized samples of studies 1 and 2 for the physical-view and achievement-view constructs. The results of the mean tests are shown at the bottom of Table 5. In all cases, the football player physical-view mean was greater than the nonspecialized sample physical-view means, and despite the small sample, three out of four of these differences were significant. Similarly, the football player achievement-view mean was greater than the nonspecialized sample means, and two of the four differences were significant. Collectively, these results show evidence of known-group validity for the physical- and achievement-view scales.

Fashion Model Study

For the physical-vanity scales, we felt that a group of people whose livelihood depends on their physical appearance would offer a strong test of nomological and known-group validity. Thus, we secured a sample of 43 female fashion models from a nationally known modeling agency. The questionnaire, which was administered to the models at an agency training center, included the four vanity scales, the two materialism scales, the clothing-concern scale, the public-body-consciousness scale, and an 11-item measure that assesses "social/media pressure to be thin and attractive." The questionnaire also included the importance-of-cosmetics measure, the cosmetics-use index, the measure of time spent in applying cosmetics, and single-item measures relating to frequency of dieting, consideration of cosmetic surgery, and "money spent on clothing" (per

TABLE 6

CORRELATIONAL AND *t*-TEST RESULTS FOR THE VANITY SCALES AND RELATED CONSTRUCTS: FASHION MODEL STUDY

	Correlation			
	Physical concern	Physical view	Achievement concern	Achievement view
Physical concern	(.87)			
Physical view	.02	(.89)		
Achievement concern	.53	.26	(.81)	
Achievement view	.39	.49	.68	(.77)
Symbol of success	.38	.37	.55	.43
Acquisition centrality	.41	.15	.45	.35
Public body consciousness	.60	.03	.35	.20
Clothing concern	.59	−.04	.51	.31
Social and media pressure to be thin and attractive	.12	.07	.21	.05
Frequency of dieting	.05	−.34	.03	−.15
Importance of cosmetics	.50	−.16	.34	.29
Cosmetics-use index	.37	−.16	.29	.27
Time spent in applying cosmetics	.35	.03	.37	.43
Money spent on clothing	.30	−.09	.17	.10
Consider surgery	.13	.04	.30	.20

	t-Values from mean tests			
	Study 1		Study 2	
	Fashion models vs. students	Fashion models vs. nonstudents	Fashion models vs. students	Fashion models vs. nonstudents
Physical concern	2.55	2.68	.96, NS	2.26
Physical view	4.14	5.01	3.51	5.77

NOTE.—Correlations less than ±.25 were (in general) not significant. Except where noted by NS (not significant), all *t*-values were significant at the .05 or .01 level. Values in parentheses are coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates.

month). Cronbach alphas for the multi-item measures ranged from .67 to .86.

Table 6 presents the results. As with the other studies, the materialism scales were correlated with the vanity measures, and "symbol of success" and "acquisition centrality" were more strongly correlated with achievement concern than with the other vanity scales. The public-body-consciousness and clothing-concern scales were (in general) related to physical concern, achievement concern, and achievement view, and as expected, public body consciousness and clothing concern were more strongly related to physical concern than to the other vanity scales. (However, because of the small sample size, these differences between correlations were not significant.) It was also hypothesized that social pressure to be thin and attractive would be related to physical concern. This prediction received only limited support.

With regard to the last five variables in Table 6, an interesting pattern of results emerged. As expected, physical concern was positively correlated with the three cosmetics-use variables, consideration of cosmetic surgery, and money spent on clothing. Further, physical view had small negative (or nonsignificant) correlations with these variables. It is interesting that these variables were positively correlated with the achievement-vanity scales. In retrospect, this pattern of correlations is not surprising. For fashion models, their career is their appearance. Given this connection between career achievements and appearance, the correlations between the achievement-vanity measures and the measures for cosmetics, money spent on clothing, and consideration of surgery are understandable. This point is further illustrated by the correlations among the four vanity scales. In relation to all other samples, the correlations between the achievement and physical-vanity measures were the strongest for the fashion model study.

Known-Group Validity. Relative to most groups of people, it seems safe to suggest that fashion models have a higher concern for, and a positive (and perhaps inflated) view of, their looks. It was therefore predicted that the fashion models would have higher mean scores on the physical-vanity constructs than the samples of studies 1 and 2. As the appendix shows, the physical-vanity mean scores were higher for the fashion model sample than for the four samples of studies 1 and 2, and seven of eight of these differences were significant.

Thus, for the physical-vanity scales, known-group validity was supported.[3]

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary and Implications

Scales measuring four related vanity traits were developed and extensively validated. Five studies demonstrated the importance and relevance of the vanity constructs to consumer behavior, and, more generally, to social behavior. Consumer-based constructs related to vanity included materialism, price-based prestige sensitivity, cosmetics-use behavior, clothing concern, and country club membership.

These behaviors and traits are very relevant to many marketplace activities. Given the proliferation of buying material goods just for the sake of having them, the link between the vanity constructs and materialism is viewed as important. Every year, sales of cosmetics and fashion apparel reach a multibillion dollar level (Solomon 1985, 1992). Thus, the importance of the links between physical vanity, clothing concern, and cosmetics attitudes and use are quite evident. Physical concern was also related to dieting behavior. Because sales of dieting-related products are expected to be more than $50 billion by 1995 (Stoffel 1989), the link between physical concern and dieting should be of interest to academic and practitioner consumer behaviorists.

The links between achievement and consumer behavior found in this research also reinforce the notion that achievement vanity has important implications for numerous consumer-behavior and marketing activities, such as advertising appeals and materialistic pursuits. Thus, the achievement-vanity scales should prove useful for studying consumption behavior. It seems reasonable to suggest that conspicuous consumption and materialism could be modeled as behavioral manifestations of achievement vanity.

The vanity scales were significantly related to (yet distinct from) narcissism and grandiosity.[4] Social-psychological research has shown that individuals who score high on narcissism and grandiosity are more socially aggressive, hostile, manipulative of others, suspicious of others, and neurotic (Raskin and Terry 1988; Robbins and Patton 1985). Given the correlations between the vanity scales and narcissism and grandiosity, high levels of concern for achievement and appearance may have negative social consequences. These negative social consequences can manifest themselves in negative consumer behaviors. Studying possible "dark side" consequences of a very high concern for achievement (e.g., unethical behaviors to get "to the top") should be of interest to researchers and expand the domain of consumer research.

Future Studies

We clearly live in a consumption-oriented society. This notion is constantly reinforced by marketers who advertise products that promote achievement status and physical appearance with attractive spokespeople and models. These advertising and media images appeal to the vanity traits we have delineated, and many researchers feel that these images of wealth and physical perfection are likely to be unattainable for the general populace (Pollay 1986; Richins 1991). Relevant questions surrounding our research include (1) Does the consumption-oriented society we live in promote things like vanity to the point that consumers engage in unhealthy or addictive behaviors? and if so, (2) Do advertisers and marketers in general have a social responsibility related to the promotion of vanity? Some authors would answer yes to these questions (Peterson 1987; Striegel-Moore, Silberstein, and Rodin 1986), and research directly addressing these questions is clearly of interest. For example, recent studies in consumer behavior and clinical psychology suggest that an overconcern for physical appearance and the "perfect body" images projected by some of the media (i.e., fashion magazines, television shows, and commercials), influence young women to engage in unhealthy eating habits that can lead to anorexia nervosa and bulimia (Bloch and Richins 1992; Brownell 1991; Crandall 1988; Striegel-Moore et al. 1986; Williamson et al. 1990). Thus, studies assessing the potential impact of vanity and the media on the development of eating disorders is of interest.

Various other research areas related to the vanity constructs should also be fruitful. Studying groups based on age, gender, and culture seems appropriate. For example, at what age does attention and concern for physical appearance emerge? In a study of 1,000 adolescents, Guber (1987) found that as early as twelve years old, girls want to be thin and attractive and boys want to be muscular. This attention to physical appearance may go back even further, to early childhood. Some suggest that television may teach children, particularly little girls, a desire for thinness, beauty, and

[3]As suggested by one of the reviewers, another study assessing known-group validity was conducted. A sample that was posited to score low on the achievement-vanity scales was surveyed. The sample consisted of 20 males at a shelter for the homeless. (A monetary donation was made to the shelter and each respondent was also paid for his participation.) The mean scores for this sample on the achievement-concern and achievement-view scales were 17.05 (SD = 5.93) and 15.25 (SD = 5.68), respectively. Group t-tests showed that these two mean scores were lower (as predicted) than the corresponding mean scores for the other seven samples in the study, and 13 of 14 of the differences were significant at the .05 level, supporting known group validity.

[4]For studies 1 and 2 and *Who's Who*, discriminant validity among the vanity scales, grandiosity, the NPI factors, public body consciousness, and status concern was assessed. Procedures similar to those used to assess the discriminant validity among the four vanity scales were used (i.e., comparing the fit of a hypothesized factor structure to a competing structure, comparing variance extracted estimates to the parameter estimate between two scales [ϕ^2], and assessing whether ϕ is less than one). Across all tests and studies, discriminant validity was supported.

TABLE A1

MEANS (SDs) FOR VANITY SCALES ACROSS STUDIES

	Physical concern	Physical view	Achievement concern	Achievement view
Study 1: students	22.72 (6.09)	22.19 (6.52)	21.99 (5.88)	22.00 (5.52)
Study 1: nonstudents	22.73 (6.42)	21.39 (7.79)	19.26 (6.81)	21.04 (5.93)
Study 2: students	24.46 (5.37)	22.97 (6.93)	21.61 (6.16)	20.96 (6.20)
Study 2: nonstudents	23.16 (5.84)	20.60 (7.08)	19.42 (6.50)	21.69 (6.00)
Who's Who	21.90 (6.27)	20.80 (6.71)	22.61 (6.03)	26.25 (4.68)
Football	21.31 (6.16)	24.62 (5.70)	22.75 (5.98)	23.14 (5.63)
Models	25.44 (6.08)	26.90 (6.49)	23.14 (6.37)	22.93 (4.73)

NOTE.—All vanity items are scored on seven-point "strongly disagree"–"strongly agree" scales.

youth, and this could translate into concerns and perceptions pertaining to physical appearance (Federal Trade Commission 1978; Schwartz and Markham 1985).

As for gender, an interesting question is, Do the vanity measures relate differentially for males versus females? It has been suggested that women's orientation to achievement is more heavily tied to their physical appearance than men's (i.e., a woman's physical appearance may be viewed as an instrument of career achievement in a man's world; Striegel-Moore et al. 1986). In fact, one study reports that many women felt that being good-looking was a form of accomplishment, and 61 percent of them said that looking attractive made them feel more successful in their careers.

Studies could assess the prevalence of vanity in Western versus Eastern cultures. Some empirical evidence suggests that Western societies like the United States value beauty and physical appearance more than Eastern cultures like those of China and India (e.g., Schwartz and Bilskey 1987). These same studies suggest that Western cultures are more success or achievement oriented than their Eastern counterparts. Research assessing the cross-cultural applicability of the vanity scales and mean differences across cultures on these scales should be of interest.

APPENDIX

Items Comprising the Vanity Scales

Physical-Concern Items

1. The way I look is extremely important to me.
2. I am very concerned about my appearance.
3. I would feel embarrassed if I was around people and did not look my best.
4. Looking my best is worth the effort.
5. It is important that I always look good.

Physical-View Items

1. People notice how attractive I am.
2. My looks are very appealing to others.
3. People are envious of my good looks.
4. I am a very good-looking individual.
5. My body is sexually appealing.
6. I have the type of body that people want to look at.

Achievement-Concern Items

1. Professional achievements are an obsession with me.
2. I want others to look up to me because of my accomplishments.
3. I am more concerned with professional success than most people I know.
4. Achieving greater success than my peers is important to me.
5. I want my achievements to be recognized by others.

Achievement-View Items

1. In a professional sense, I am a very successful person.
2. My achievements are highly regarded by others.
3. I am an accomplished person.
4. I am a good example of professional success.
5. Others wish they were as successful as me.

Mean scores and standard deviations for the vanity scales across all of the studies are shown in Table A1.

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