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Consumer anticipation as a performative experience

Article

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CONSUMER ANTICIPATION AS A PERFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

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CONSUMER ANTICIPATION AS A PERFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

ABSTRACT:

Purpose

Little is known about anticipation processes that occur after commitment to a purchase has been made, but before consumption occurs. We add to knowledge and theory building about anticipation that occurs in this liminal phase by investigating the cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes which interact to influence post-consumption evaluations.

Design/methodology/approach

An abductive research approach used a phase-based research design using semi-structured interviews. We identify interactions between cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes that occur during anticipation and associate these with post-consumption outcomes.

Findings

Anticipation of a consumption experience, enacted through thoughts, emotions and actions, and undertaken with peers, is an experience *per se*, *independent from* and *inter-dependent with* the substantive experience, and contributes to performance of the substantive experience. We propose a framework in which anticipation – as a performative phenomenon – influences the overall evaluations of the substantive consumption experience in contexts of delayed consumption. The theoretical grounding of performativity makes a useful contribution through its linkage of thought processes to outcomes. We further locate our findings within the literature on attribution theory. By engaging in anticipation, informants perceived the locus of causality to be internal, and expressed pride in having anticipated if the subsequent experience was successful. By anticipating, informants perceived an ability to exert control

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over future events and felt ashamed of not having adequately anticipated if an experience was subsequently unsuccessful.

Originality

We provide a new lens by conceptualizing anticipation as a performative process and identify mechanisms by which anticipation is embedded in total consumption experience. Our study has important generalizable implications for contexts where mechanisms of performative anticipation may be a means for ameliorating uncertainty of future consumption experiences.

Keywords:

Anticipation, consumption experience, performativity.

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> 'Well,' said Pooh, 'what I like best,' and then he had to stop and think. Because although eating Honey was a very good thing to do, there was a moment just before you began to eat it which was better than when you were, but he didn't know what it was called.'
>
> Alan Alexander Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh, 1926

1. INTRODUCTION

We explore a phase of the consumption sequence which has received little attention – the anticipation which occurs after a purchase decision has been made, and before consumption takes place. A delay between decision and consumption provides consumers with opportunities to think about and to prepare their future consumption experience. A consumption experience is a "… multidimensional construct focusing on a customer's responses to a firm's offerings during the customer's purchase journey" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016, p.71). Consumption experiences can relate to any combination of goods and services and any type of contact between customers and producers (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Whatever the nature of future consumption experiences, marketers should be mindful of this liminal stage in the consumption sequence, when they may engage with customers through teaser ads, reminders and pre-consumption dialogues. Yet we have only limited theoretical framing of this phase. It has been suggested that encouraging consumers to anticipate future consumption is a desirable marketing tactic. In the context of new product launches, there is evidence that preannouncement and anticipation enhance the success of the launch of new or

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improved products (Lee and Colarelli O'Connor, 2003; Schatzel and Calantone, 2006). However, the effects of anticipation for consumers who are already committed to an established product is less clear. Therefore the contribution of this study is to improve our insights to the effects of anticipation on consumers' post-consumption evaluations, and the processes by which these effects are achieved.

The literature does not provide a clear theoretical framework for understanding the cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes which occur during this liminal phase, and the mechanisms by which these processes may influence subsequent evaluations of a consumption experience. During this phase consumers are potentially malleable and engagement between practitioners and consumers has potential to improve overall post-consumption evaluations. Yet there are potential contradictions in encouraging anticipation; between evoking savouring which adds to total pleasure; and raising expectations which results in dissatisfaction where expectations are unmet (e.g., Chan and Mukhopadhyay, 2010). It is also not always clear that the purpose of anticipation during this phase should be to directly evoke positive feelings about a forthcoming consumption experience, or to minimize fear and uncertainty (Fong *et al.,* 2020). Consumer researchers are curious about this anticipation phase and filling this gap in knowledge with robust underpinning theory would help practitioners (Chan and Mukhopadhyay, 2010).

We confine our theory building to anticipation which occurs *after* a purchase decision, but *before* the actual consumption begins. For consistency, we refer to this as the *post-decision/pre-consumption* phase. Additionally, we focus on consumption experiences that consumers perceive as being important and highly involving, thus standing out from routine or repeated consumption experiences which require less extensive information acquisition and extra preparation (Harrison and Beatty, 2011). Consumption experiences can be pleasant, (e.g., attending a concert), or unpleasant, (e.g., some medical operations). However,

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consumption is usually a volitional act, and consumers are more likely to choose pleasant rather than unpleasant consumption. Furthermore, anticipation behaviours differ depending on whether the anticipated event is unpleasant or pleasant (Hardisty and Weber, 2020; Loewenstein, 1987; Molouki *et al*., 2019). We therefore additionally limit our investigation to consumption contexts which consumers regard as pleasant rather than unpleasant.

Our research question can be summarized as:

> *In the context of important pleasant consumption experiences, what are the anticipation processes involved during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase and how do they contribute to the overall experience?*

From this, our study makes two important contributions. First, we build on the experience literature to propose that anticipation of a yet to be realized consumption experience, enacted through thoughts, emotions and actions, is an experience in its own right, independent from, and inter-dependent with the substantive experience. Second, we propose a theoretical framework founded in performativity for understanding how anticipation processes that occur during the liminal phase after commitment to consumption has been made, but before the consumption takes place, contributes to overall consumption experience.

Our paper is structured as follows. First, we review literature on consumer anticipation. Building on this, we address our two main aims with an abductive research approach. Data are collected in the context of a forthcoming important non-routine vacation. Data is then analysed using qualitative techniques. Consistent with the abductive approach that underpins our epistemological approach, we build an emergent theory by iteratively cross-checking our data with findings from the initial literature review and relevant literature not initially identified. We report on how this secondary review of literature led us to develop a theoretical framework of *performative anticipation* to explain how anticipatory processes involved in the

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liminal post-decision/pre-consumption phase contribute to overall experience. Finally, we offer recommendations for practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Where in the consumption sequence does anticipation arise?

Consumption takes place through several stages that typically includes pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase (De Keyser *et al.*, 2020; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016): the pre-purchase stage comprises consumers' behaviours before a purchase decision, and in traditional decision-making models, follows a sequence of need recognition, information search and evaluation (e.g., Engel *et al.,* 1968); the purchase stage relates to consumer decision, ordering and paying; post-purchase relates to actual consumption, but also to post-consumption evaluation and related actions (e.g., engagement in brand communities or return requests). Both traditional models of consumer decision-making (e.g., Engel *et al.*, 1968) and more contemporary customer journey models (e.g., De Keyser *et al.*, 2020; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016) are useful for understanding the consumption sequence. However, they tend to assume that actual consumption follows immediately after a purchase decision and disregard the anticipation period that may occur between purchase decision and consumption. Anticipation may occur at several stages during the consumption sequence: at the prepurchase phase, for instance when consumers are seeking information, and at the purchase phase, for instance when making a final decision (Vichiengior *et al.*, 2019). We focus on anticipation which occurs in contexts of delayed consumption, *i.e.,* where there is a delay between purchase decision and actual consumption.

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Research investigating delayed consumption has mostly focused on understanding whether a delay between decision and actual consumption is detrimental or beneficial. On the one hand, it has been acknowledged that waiting typically involves tension, frustration, and discomfort, suggesting that managers should try to eliminate waiting (Giebelhausen *et al*., 2011). On the other hand, Loewenstein's (1987) negative discount model posits that utility of a future consumption experience is negatively discounted with time and emphasizes that utility can derive from anticipating a future reward. It follows that consumers may intentionally create a delay between a commitment and consumption in order to savour the future beneficial outcomes (Loewenstein, 1987). A delay between decision and actual consumption has been found to increase consumption enjoyment of pleasurable products (Nowlis *et al*., 2004). A delay may also be understood as signaling quality, which results in increased purchase intention and satisfaction (Giebelhausen *et al*., 2011). Chan and Mukhopadhyay (2010) further investigated the negative discount model by investigating whether there was an optimal temporal separation between decision and actual consumption for this effect to be observed.

Figure I shows the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase phases of the customer sequence (De Keyser *et al*., 2020; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016) in which we have included a delay between purchase decision and actual consumption, (i.e., the post-decision/pre-consumption phase), and illustrates how we locate anticipation in the theoretical development of our study.

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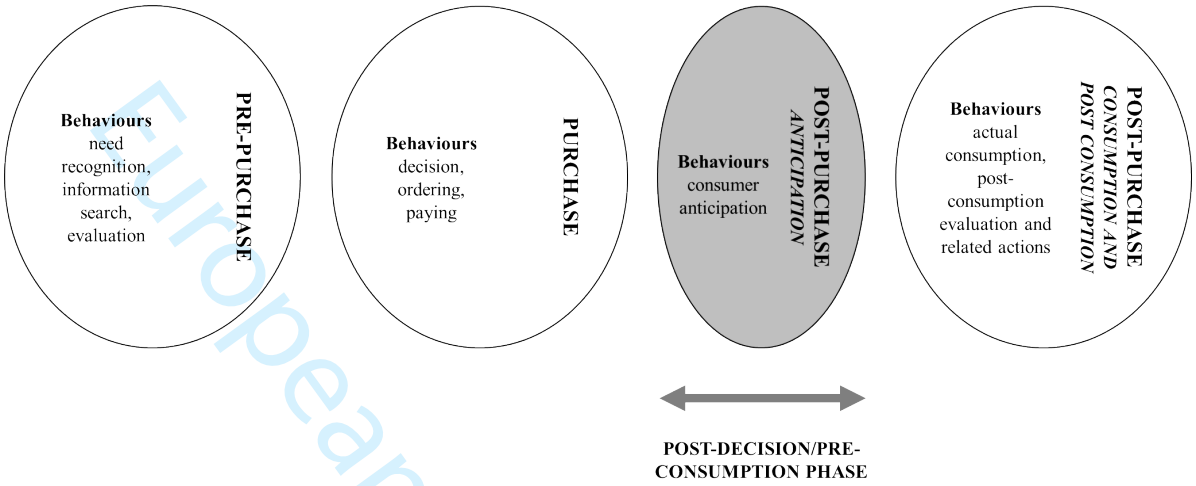
Figure I. Anticipation within the consumption sequence **as operationalized for this study**



Adapted from Lemon and Verhoef (2016) and De Keyser et al. (2020)

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2.2. Consumer anticipation involves cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes

A first stream of research associates consumer anticipation with a cognitive process (Vichiengior *et al.*, 2019). Initial consumer research in this field derives from Loewenstein's (1987) negative discount model and equates consumer anticipation with savouring (discussed further below). Loewenstein's work has led to extensive research in consumer behaviour that has validated the general applicability of the model (e.g., Bilgin and LeBoeuf, 2010; Chan and Mukhopadhyay, 2010; Chun *et al.*, 2017; Nowlis *et al.*, 2004). Subsequent research has identified other mental processes involved in consumer anticipation, including pre-factual thinking and planning (Dixon *et al.,* 2017; Harrison and Beatty, 2011; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009; Vichiengior *et al.,* 2019), imagery processing (MacInnis and Price, 1987; Krishnamurthy and Sujan,1999; Moore and Lee, 2012; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009), elaborating (Vichiengior *et al.,* 2019), and forming cognitive expectations and affective forecasts (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1993; Moore and Lee, 2012). To some researchers, anticipation is synonymous with expectations (Chhabra, 2017), others suggesting that forming expectations is only one of its components (Vichiengior *et al.,* 2019).

A second stream of research has investigated anticipation through the lens of emotions, suggesting anticipation of desirable goals triggers pleasurable emotions (Gilbert and Abdullah, 2002; Loewenstein, 1987). For example, people waiting for their vacation are happier than people not going on vacation (Gilbert and Abdullha, 2002). Anticipation has been attributed with creating hope about the prospect of a desired future event, with specific emotional facets including excitement, optimism, or relaxation (Baumgartner *et al.*, 2008). Conversely, anticipation has been associated with fear about the prospect of a future event, which may result in worry, anxiety, nervousness, or tension (Baumgartner *et al*., 2008). The literature identifies positive and negative emotions associated with anticipation, with fear and

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hope being the "prototypical categories of positive and negative anticipatory emotions" (Baumgartner *et al.*, 2008, p. 686).

A final stream of research takes a behavioural perspective by exploring consumers' roles in actively preparing during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009; Harrison and Beatty, 2011). For example, anticipating future consumption may involve searching for information or budgeting (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). Anticipation can also manifest as an active strategy to reduce the impact of problems and discomforts that may arise during consumption: when consumers identify potential problems that may occur, they experience anticipatory worry and engage in anticipatory behaviours, including gathering extra information and preparing (Harrison and Beatty, 2011).

2.3. The relationship between pre- and post-consumption stages

An important research stream has adopted a (dis)satisfaction approach to the relationship between pre- and post-consumption stages: Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) posits that (dis)satisfaction arises from discrepancy between pre-consumption expectations and subsequent perceptions of performance (Ashworth and Bourassa, 2020; Homburg *et al.,* 2006; Oliver, 1980). Citing EDT, Chan and Mukhopadhyay (2010, p.506) suggest that encouraging anticipation "may ironically not be the wisest strategy for marketers to follow" where expectations are raised which cannot be fulfilled. In a laboratory study of chocolate consumption, the authors (2010) suggest that anticipation led to an increased evaluation of the chocolate before tasting activity took place, generating higher expectations, but causing lower subsequent satisfaction.

A contrary view is that other mental processes involved in anticipation may decrease the likelihood of expectancy disconfirmation occurring. Consumption frequently requires

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preparatory activities to be undertaken prior to consumption taking place which may improve its performance (Chan and Mukhopadhyay, 2010). Anticipation may induce revision of cognitive expectations of outcomes and more realistic, elaborated thoughts about the forthcoming experience (Vichiengior *et al.*, 2019). Imagery processing pre-consumption has also been shown to positively influence satisfaction (MacInnis and Price, 1987).

Affective reactions during the post-consumption stage can also be studied through the lens of attributions, as consumers are likely to search for causes (*i.e.*, attributors) for the success or failure of their choices (Harvey *et al.,* 2014; Weiner, 2000). Attributional reasoning may trigger positive and/or negative emotions (Harvey *et al.,* 2014; Weiner, 1985). Consumers who have actively engaged in anticipatory behaviours may attribute the success or failure of their consumption to their behaviour during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase, and may feel positively (e.g., pride) or negatively (e.g., guilt) about their behaviour during this phase (Harvey *et al.,* 2014; Weiner, 1985). Furthermore, dissatisfaction is stronger where failure is attributed to external factors than to a consumer's own actions (internal attribution) (Van Raaij and Francken, 1984).

2.4. Summary of prior literature on anticipation and an initial model of consumer anticipation

Table I summarises previous literature on anticipation which informs our research. The table indicates (1) how prior work relates to cognitions, emotions or actions, and (2) to which stage in the consumption sequence the work relates. We specifically indicate whether prior work relates to the effects of anticipation (1) at the pre-consumption stage, (2) on actual consumption, and (3) on post-consumption evaluation.

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Table I. Summary of prior literature on consumer anticipation

	Consumer anticipation involves:			Provides a discussion of:		
	Cognitions	Emotions	Actions	the effect of **pre-consumption anticipation**	how **pre-consumption anticipation** informs **actual consumption**	how **pre-consumption anticipation** informs **post-consumption**
Loewenstein, 1987	savouring	pleasure		✓		
MacInnis and Price, 1987	imagery processing			✓		✓
Zeithaml *et al.*, 1993	cognitive expectations			✓		✓
Krishnamurthy and Sujan,1999	imagining			✓		
Gilbert and Abdullha, 2002		happiness		✓		
Nowlis *et al.*, 2004	savouring				✓	
Baumgartner *et al.*, 2008		anxiety, excitement, fear, hope, nervousness, optimism, relaxation, tension, worry				
Tynan and McKechnie, 2009	imagining, planning		budgeting, searching for information			
Bilgin and LeBoeuf, 2010	savouring			✓		
Chan and Mukhopadhyay, 2010				✓		✓
Harrison and Beatty, 2011	planning	worry	preparing, gathering information	✓		
Moore and Lee, 2012	imagery visualization, forming affective forecasts			✓		
Dixon *et al.,* 2017	planning, savouring, processing information				✓	✓
Chun *et al.*, 2017	savouring				✓	✓
Vichiengior *et al.*, 2019	imagery processing, elaborating, forming cognitive expectations and affective forecasts, pre-factual thinking, planning, savouring			✓	✓	✓
Current study	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Note 1: Some of the reviewed literature covers anticipation of both pleasant and unpleasant future events. Consistent with the focus of our research, we do not report findings related to the anticipation of unpleasant future events

Note 2: The current study is included in Table I to facilitate comparison between previous studies and the findings of our study (reported below).

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Diversity in approaches to anticipation is evident in Table I. Whereas some authors have equated anticipation with cognitive processes, others have investigated anticipation from the perspectives of emotions or of behaviours. Consequently, the literature fails to provide a universal definition of consumer anticipation. We observe first that authors tend to define anticipation from the perspective of their research focus: for instance, Loewenstein (1987) defines anticipation as a source of utility; Dixon *et al*. (2017, p. 948) define anticipation as a "forward-looking effect that gives customers some degree of control over an uncertain future by permitting imagined pleasure in the present". Some authors build on Loewenstein's (1987) work to simply equate anticipation with savouring (Bilgin and LeBoeuf, 2010), or the utility derived from temporal separation between choice and consumption (Chan and Mukhopadhyay, 2010). A broader view is offered by Vichiengior *et al.* (2019, p.132) who define consumer anticipation as "a mental process by which consumers consider the physical, experiential, social, emotional, or behavioural consumption outcomes that are expected to accrue to the self from a yet to be realized consumption decision or experience", though their definition does not take into consideration the emotional and behavioural aspects of consumer anticipation. They also discuss points of similarity and difference between the diverse mental processes involved in consumer anticipation. For instance, they argue that savouring and imagery processing may be future-oriented, but they may also involve the present and the past, whereas consumer anticipation is only future-oriented. Also, forming cognitive expectations and affective forecasts are both future-oriented mental processes, however cognitive expectations only consider the level of expected future functional product performance while affective forecasts only consider emotions expected to be experienced in the future. In short, "consumer anticipation is a combination of different mental processes but is not completely synonymous with any of them" (Vichiengior *et al*., 2019, P.136). In the same way of thinking, the anticipatory emotions and behaviours identified in prior literature

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might accompany consumer anticipation but are not synonymous with the concept of anticipation. For example, anticipation is not synonymous with hope, worry or information search. To summarize, our literature review suggests that consumer anticipation involves a combination of cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes. These different processes are all related to, but distinct from consumer anticipation.

Table I also shows that past research has either looked at only one of the processes involved in consumer anticipation, or disregarded the anticipation effect at later stages of the consumption sequence. Consequently, we lack an integrated framework which we address in our study. If findings from prior literature are insightful, they only provide understanding of the "parts" and fail to explain how these are inter-related and integrated, thus forming a "whole" (Mella and Gazzola, 2017). Integrative approaches consider the "whole" as characterized by emerging properties that are not found in its constitutive "parts", thus enabling theory elaboration, that has broader applicability than understanding. Limited research has so far paid attention to how the "parts" are inter-related (e.g., savouring and pleasure; Loewenstein, 1987; worrying and preparing / gathering information, Harrison and Beatty, 2011; imagery processing and satisfaction, MacInnis and Price, 1987). Thus, by adopting an integrative approach, we seek to explore how the processes involved in consumer anticipation function as integrated "parts" of a larger "whole", with the objective of getting an understanding of this "whole" process of consumer anticipation.

Based on our initial literature review, we propose a framework (Figure II) for understanding anticipation and its relationship to consumers' post-consumption feelings. First, for our study, we delineate anticipation as starting after a purchase decision has been made. Second, we view consumer anticipation as involving thoughts, actions, or emotions. Third, anticipation may evoke negative (e.g., dissatisfaction or guilt), or positive (e.g., satisfaction or pride) post-consumption feelings. We approach the post-consumption phase through the lens of emotions.

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In doing so, we emphasize affective aspects of satisfaction, in contrast to traditional EDT approaches which focus on its cognitive dimensions (Homburg *et al.,* 2006; Oliver, 1980). Our framework (Figure II) informs our methodology.

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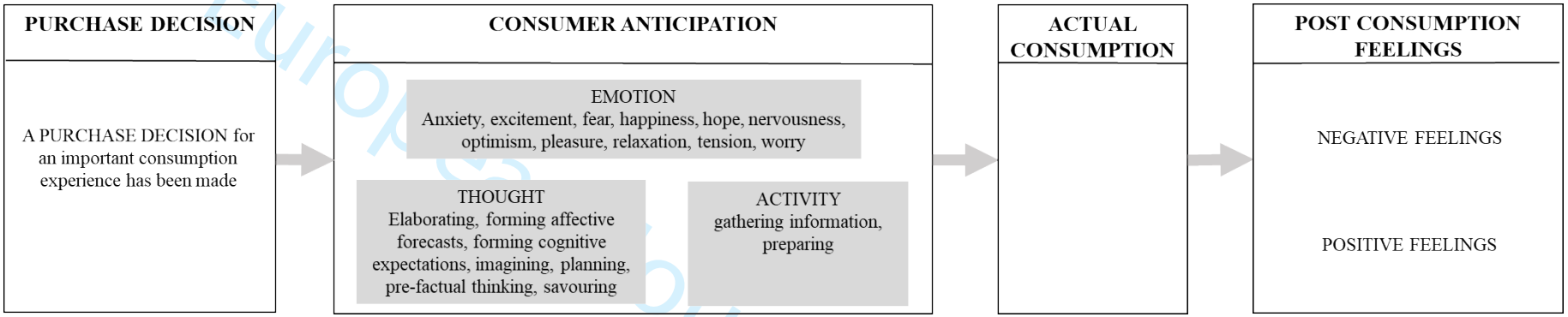
Figure II. An initial model of consumer anticipation



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3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

We address our research question using a qualitative approach, underpinned by an interpretivist philosophy. Specifically, our approach is informed by abductive reasoning, described by Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009, pp.5-6) as "...a hermeneutic process during which the researcher, as it were, eats into the empirical matter with the help of theoretical pre-conceptions, and also keeps developing and elaborating the theory". In an abductive approach, the original theoretical framework deriving from the review of the literature is modified as a result of unanticipated empirical findings and of theoretical insights gained during the process (Dubois and Gadde, 2002; Ketokivi and Choi, 2014). Theory elaboration requires in-depth investigation of the relationships among concepts and/or introduction of new concepts that were not identified in the initial literature review (Ketokivi and Choi, 2014). Abductive reasoning is a pragmatic approach to creating new knowledge with a four-stage process (De Brito and Van der Laan, 2010): (1) identifying the object requiring understanding, (2) matching this with theory and existing knowledge, (3) deriving new insights, and (4) proposing future theoretical directions based on these insights. Figure III details our abductive approach.

In line with our epistemological approach, we do not seek to test established theoretical frameworks for their ability to explain the anticipation processes involved during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase and how they contribute to the overall experience. Rather, we will iterate, during and after analysis of data, between findings from the initial literature review and possible theoretical frameworks not initially identified, to explain the observed phenomena. At that point we will critically review additional relevant literature.

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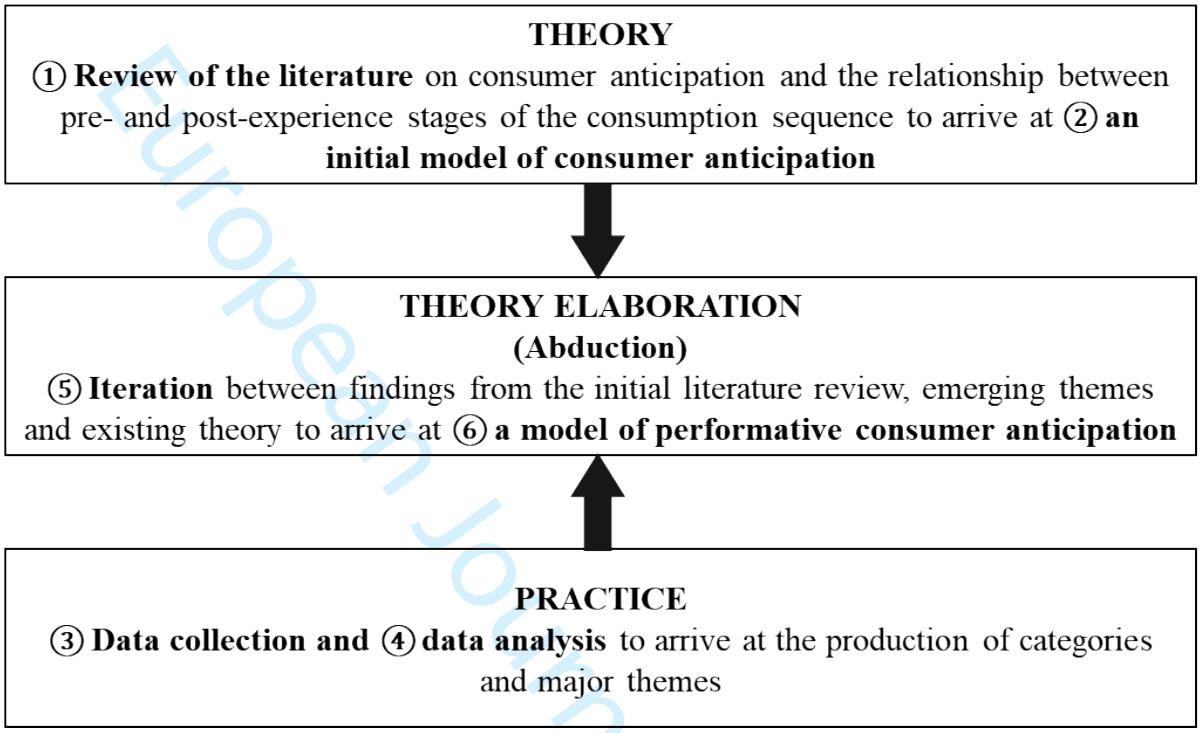
Figure III. Our abductive research approach



adapted from Ketokivi and Choi (2014)

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We explore consumer anticipation in the context of an important non-routine vacation and justify our choice of context for the following reasons. First, past research has shown that many of the processes involved in consumer anticipation identified in our literature review are likely to observed in the context of anticipation of vacation activities (e.g., imagery, MacInnis and Price, 1990; happiness, Gilbert and Abdullah, 2002; savouring, Mogilner *et al.*, 2008). Second, decisions regarding a future vacation are typically made long in advance and time provides consumers with the opportunity to engage in the cognitive and behavioural processes involved in anticipation (Vichiengior *et al*., 2019). Third, there is great variation in what can be experienced during a future non-routine vacation, based on personal preferences. This is associated with high levels of uncertainty and unpredictability which in turn triggers anticipation: when there is much to imagine, worry about and hope for, there is a greater likelihood of anticipatory processes being evoked (Vichiengior *et al*., 2019).

We address our research question using a two-stage methodology. We intervened after a decision regarding the vacation had been made, but before its occurrence (Stage 1). Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with informants currently anticipating a vacation. We intervened one week to six months before departure. We intervened again after the event (Stage 2). Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they focus on informants' expressions of their personal experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Figure IV depicts the data collection process.

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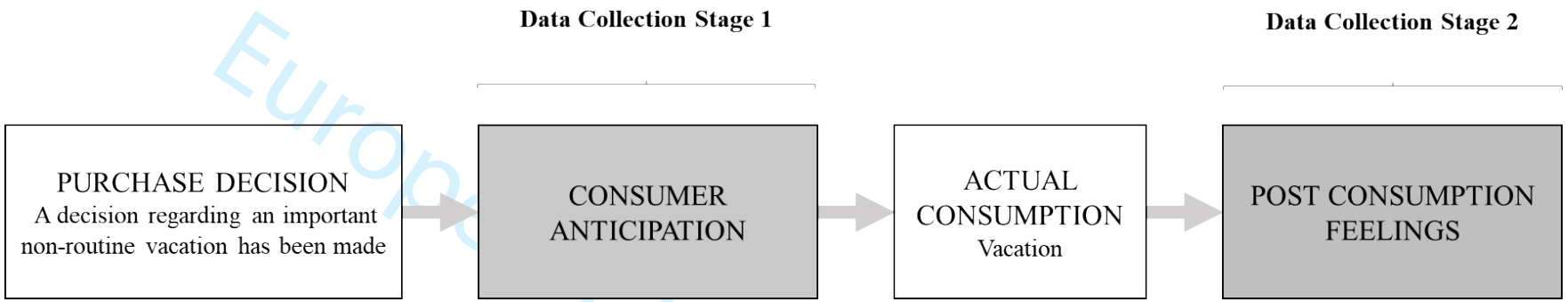
Figure IV. Data collection



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Interviews were conducted by the same interviewer to maintain consistency (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). They were conducted in Thailand with Thai consumers. Consumer research based on consumers originating in emergent economies remains more limited than for developed economies, and our study helps to redress this. Interviews were conducted in Thai. Throughout the data collection process, we followed qualitative research ethics guidelines (Matson-Barkat and Robert-Demontrond, 2018). When conducting the semi-structured interviews, the interviewer explained the research context to informants, and how their contribution would be used, and obtained informed consent. Finally, the anonymity of informants was respected, through the use of pseudonyms.

3.1. Data collection – Stage 1

Informants were recruited using a referral sampling technique. The technique involved identifying an initial set of informants meeting inclusion criteria, *i.e.,* anticipating a vacation, and then inviting them to refer at least one potential informant to the interviewer (Heckathorn, 2002). This referral technique is useful among Asian informants as it allows the researcher to gain trust and access to a network (Kriz *et al*., 2002). However, a risk with referral sampling is that the composition of the initial sets of informants biases the subsequent waves, so that its recruitment pattern is overrepresented in the sample (Erickson, 1979). Thus, the interviewer monitored the recommendation chain to ensure the sample was not skewed towards a particular group of friends/relatives, and to ensure its diversity in terms of gender, age, and vacation destination (Table II). Data were collected until a point of saturation, where new data was easily classified as a repetition of existing findings (Miles *et al.,* 2013), leading to a sample of 30 informants.

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Table II. Informants' profiles

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Destination
A.M.	33	Male	Japan
A.N.	34	Female	Japan
A.W.	37	Male	Japan
A.U.N.	39	Male	Italy
B.G.*	40	Male	Iceland
C.C.	18	Male	Europe
C.M.	35	Female	Thailand
C.P.	35	Female	Japan
C.R.	29	Female	Taiwan
D.I.*	29	Female	USA
G.F.	37	Female	Japan
G.K.	37	Female	Japan
J.D.	39	Female	Australia
J.O.	25	Male	USA
J.S.	27	Male	Korea
K.D.	27	Female	South Korea
K.G.	37	Male	Japan
K.N.	35	Female	England
M.K.	28	Female	Japan
M.W.	18	Female	Europe
P.I.	26	Male	Spain
P.R.	35	Female	Thailand
S.M.	38	Female	USA
S.R. (1)	32	Female	Netherlands
S.R. (2)	34	Male	Peru
T.W.	32	Female	Thailand
T.Y.	28	Female	Germany
W.S.	40	Male	Japan
L.D.	45	Female	France
V.N.	28	Female	Japan

* did not take part in the second stage of the study

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A flexible interview protocol guided discussion to evoke experience narration and enabled informants to raise new topics. Interviews started with a screening question about the importance of the vacation, and informants anticipating a vacation which they described as unimportant were removed from further participation. 27 of 30 informants were anticipating a vacation to a previously unvisited foreign destination. This is important as anticipation is likely to be greater if cognitive understanding of the destination is low, which is typical of foreign and/or unknown destinations (Van Raaij and Francken, 1984; Vichiengior *et al.,* 2019). Interviews continued with informants describing their future vacation (where they were planning to go, when, with whom, etc.). Informants were then asked, through open questions, to comment on their preparatory behaviours, thoughts and emotions emerging pre-departure. The interview ended with a question asking informants whether they would prefer to go on vacation immediately after they booked it or to have some time between booking and going. This final question aimed to encourage elaboration on the post-decision/pre-consumption phase on the part of the informants. Informants were then thanked for their time and availability. Interviews lasted between 15 and 48 minutes.

3.2. Data collection – Stage 2

Of 30 Stage 1 informants, 28 participated in Stage 2 (2 informants cancelled/postponed their vacation). The interview started with a close-ended question asking informants whether they remembered their pre-departure discussion with the interviewer. The aim of this first question was not to collect further information about the post-decision/pre-consumption phase but to make it salient in informants' minds. Informants were then asked through an open question to comment on their vacation. The interview continued with another open question asking

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informants to reflect on how they were feeling about it *here and now*. This *hic et nunc* focus is important because we were specifically interested in informants' current feelings, and not how they had felt at a previous stage in the consumption sequence. We did not ask informants directly about linkages between their post-consumption feelings and their previous post-decision/pre-consumption behaviours as this may have encouraged response based on biased reconsideration. Rather, we aimed to explore underlying linkages between informants' post-decision/pre-consumption and current (post-consumption) narratives. The interview ended with the same question as used in Stage 1, to ascertain whether informants would have preferred to go on vacation immediately after they booked it, or to have some time between booking and going. The objective of the question was to obtain further information – post-consumption – on how informants valued the post-decision/pre-consumption phase.

We intervened within 2 weeks following informants' return from vacation. We chose this time period because recent information is generally reported with less bias or inaccuracies, which is critical as we were interested in how informants implicitly connected their *current* feelings with the *previous* post-decision/pre-consumption phase. Interviews lasted between 10 and 45 minutes.

3.3. Data analysis

Data were analysed following Miles *et al.*'s (2013) guidelines. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated from Thai to English with back-translation to validate original transcripts. Using Nvivo software, a thematic analysis was undertaken, leading to identification of 1) important behavioural, cognitive, and emotional processes involved in consumer anticipation, and 2) how informants relate their post-consumption feelings to the post-decision/pre-consumption phase. Data were first coded independently, based on the

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authors' own analysis of the interview data. They were then iteratively analysed. At this stage, connections among the codes were identified, resulting in the production of categories and major themes. Web Appendices I and II present our coding process and emergent themes. Intercoder agreement was checked by comparing findings and discussing rival interpretations. A consensus was sought among the researchers before finalizing a thematic framework to be systematically applied to the data. Finally, invited informants provided feedback on the findings.

Regarding the second stage of our study, it is important to note that we were not interested in how informants had felt *during* their vacation but how they were feeling *now* that it had taken place. For this reason, S.R.(1)'s narrative – "Preparing for the trip was stressful because we didn't have much time. But the trip turned out to be good and it makes me feel good. It is like a good memory that we think about it and we can smile.*"*– was not retained in our analysis because it is unclear whether S.R.(1) refers to current or past feelings when saying "*it makes me feel good"*. The research approach was vigilant in recognizing a risk in consumer research that memories may be distorted (Braun-Latour *et al.,* 2006). Thus, we checked that the way informants were referring to the post-decision/pre-consumption phase was consistent with the data previously collected.

4. FINDINGS

Three main themes emerged from the analysis of the data collected in stage 1 (Web Appendix I) and in stage 2 (Web Appendix II):

1) Anticipation of a consumption experience encompasses rich combinations of actions, thoughts, and emotions, that can be shared with others

2) The motivation to anticipate a future consumption experience is to secure desired outcomes

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3) In the post-consumption phase, consumers experience positive or negative emotions that are determined by attribution of causes of success or failure.

4.1. Anticipation involves anticipatory actions, thoughts, and emotions, that can be shared with others

An emergent behavioural category is characterized by engagement in diverse anticipatory behaviours. Many informants reported that anticipatory behaviours involve information search, illustrated by L.D.:

"I have been looking for information about Paris, general information such as the weather, the areas, the transportations, must-see places, nice restaurants"

The importance of preparation is illustrated by S.R.(2), who reports undertaking physical exercises before going on vacation to Peru because he "*need(s) to get (his) body ready so that (he) will enjoy the trip* as *much as (he) should*." Some informants reported planning to purchase additional products to increase the likelihood of a successful trip. K.N., for instance, explains she plans "*to buy some guidebook to see what places (she) can visit*". She further explains, she "*needs to prepare … in advance, … it is 100% important*" because she will be "*travelling by (her)self and (she) do(es)n't want to get lost. It's a waste of time, money and also can be dangerous*."

The emergent category of cognition is characterized by learning and imagery processing. Most informants who reported having searched for information also stated that they had developed new knowledge, illustrated by D.I.:

"*I look for a lot of information….It's like my attention and involvement is a drive for acquiring more information. I keep learning new things*".

Informants are also involved in imagery processing, imagining their future experience and developing imagery of them in it, illustrated by A.M:

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"I imagine walking hands in hands with my wife, imagine that we will have fun over there and we will see something different from Thailand"

This confirms previous research in consumer anticipation (MacInnis and Price, 1987). Development of expectations and escapism are among pleasurable outcomes of mental imagery (Le Bel and Dubé, 1998) and observed in our transcripts: S.R.(2) notes expectation that his vacation destination "*must be beautiful*" and D.I. states that she has "*so many personal problems, friends, work, family but…imagining about the trip takes (her) away from these problems*."

Additionally, informants' discourse suggests that cognitive processes involved in anticipating a future consumption experience are biased. An attentional bias characterizes an effect of selective attention (Water and Feyerabend, 2000), illustrated by C.M.:

"It's strange though that I see more information about Chiangmai on TV right now. Maybe I am more drawn to it than usual".

An emergent category of affect is characterized by emotions felt while anticipating the forthcoming consumption experience. Some informants appear to derive excitement from the act of anticipating, mentioned by T.Y:

"I'm excited because I love the country. I am looking forward to it every day. It's not that I'm anxious but it's like I really want the day to come more quickly and I can wait".

Hope and happiness are other positive emotions associated with anticipation, explicitly mentioned by K.D. who hopes "*that things are going to go well*." and B.G. who is "*already happy just to think that (he is) going with her".*

In contrast to positive emotions, some informants reported experiencing worry when feeling lingering uncertainty about their future consumption experience, illustrated by S.R.(2) who worries

"*There (may be) nobody to receive (him) at the airport or (he) would miss that person*".

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Previous research had suggested tension between positive and negative emotions experienced by consumers during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase (Baumgartner *et al.,* 2008). However, informants' discourse mostly comprised positive emotions and our findings corroborate previous research suggesting that anticipation can create feelings of well-being (Gilbert and Abdullah, 2002).

Anticipation can occur individually or be shared collectively. Most informants reported anticipating their forthcoming vacation with the friends and family with whom the vacation would be shared. When referring to a trip planned with his girlfriend, W.S. illustrates the social dimension of consumer anticipation:

"*She told me to prepare some warm clothes such a sweater, jacket, because it's going to be cold there during our visit. She also assigns me to look for places I want to see, restaurants I want to try, activities I want to do. Then we are going to share our opinions and make decision when we both have free time together*".

W.S. focuses on the behavioural aspect of shared anticipation, but the discourse of other informants suggests that thoughts and emotions can also be shared, as when S.R.(1) explains that she and her boyfriend "*imagine what the hotel (they) booked will be like*", and love "*talking about vacations*" because "*it makes (them) happy*", or when A.M. explains that he and his wife "*plan things together, … imagine and .. laugh*".

Although our emergent components of consumer anticipation - actions, thoughts, and emotions - have been noted in previous studies, their relationship to each other has received only limited attention. As illustrated here below, our informants' narratives indicate the inter-relatedness of these three components. For instance, S.R.(1) explains that, when she "*talk(s) about this trip"* with her boyfriend, it makes them "*think about previous trips",* which, in turn, make them "*not sad"*. This implies that talking with her boyfriend (action) evokes

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memories of past experience (thoughts) which trigger happiness (emotions). When referring to her trip to Koh Kood island with her boyfriend, P.M. says:

"*When I think about it, I smile every time. I know that I will be very happy. And it makes me happy but I also worry about any problems that can happen such as whether the journey will be nice because we have to leave Bangkok very early in the morning. We worry that we will make it on time for the ferry, will the traffic be bad because that is the long weekend and people travel a lot during that period. I was talking with my boyfriend that we may have to stay overnight in hotel close to the ferry pier. It's like we have second plan*".

Here, we observe that thinking of the future experience (thoughts) triggers a mix of happiness and worry (emotions) which in turn encourage planning (thoughts). Similarly, when D.I. reflects on the information she is looking for when preparing for her trip to Las Vegas, she says:

"I look for a lot of information, the more I find information, the more excitement I have. It's like my attention and involvement is a drive for acquiring more information. I keep learning new things….Searching for information and learning new things makes me so happy."

This illustrates that looking for information (action) creates both excitement (emotions) and learning (thoughts), which in turn trigger happiness (emotions).

Surprisingly, although savouring has been identified as inherent to anticipation (e.g., Elster and Loewenstein, 1992), it does not explicitly emerge from out informants' discourse. Consistent with an abductive approach, we iterated with existing theory and looked for a conceptual definition of savouring: Savouring is "a cognitive process involving awareness of current pleasure from a target-specific consumption experience" (Chun *et al.,* 2017, p. 97). Our informants' discourse suggests they are aware of the pleasure they derive from anticipating their future vacation, suggesting a process of savouring, although not explicitly referred to as such.

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4.2. The motivation to anticipate is to secure desired outcomes

It quickly became apparent during interviews and through the preliminary analysis phases that consumers were considering anticipation, and more precisely its behavioural component, as a means of maximizing the likelihood of positive outcomes. Some informants emphasized anticipation as a means of proactively ensuring their sought consumption experience was achieved, illustrated by L.D.:

"*I want to be prepared at maximum level so that my experience in Paris is at its best.*"

Through a similar process, others suggested that anticipation helps to minimize negative surprises, captured in C.R.'s narrative:

"*If I just go there without having anticipated anything,…the trip will not be as good as it should be.*"

This finding is consistent with previous evidence that consumers engage in anticipatory problem-solving behaviours to minimize problems that could occur during a future service encounter (Harrison and Beatty, 2011). It appeared therefore that informants were accepting to spend time and effort on the anticipatory behaviours described above, believing this was a pre-requisite for making their future consumption experience successful. Motivation to secure desired outcomes motivates consumer anticipation.

4.3. Anticipation as a source of retrospective attribution

In the second stage of the study, informants were asked to comment on their vacation after they had returned from it. Informants mostly felt very positive, illustrated by M.W.: "*It was the best trip I have ever done with my boyfriend. France, Belgium and the Netherlands they*

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were all beautiful and amazing". Some mentioned problems that arose during their vacation (discussed below), but these did not affect their overall positive evaluations.

Interestingly, our informants' discourse suggests establishment of causal relationships between their behaviour during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase, how successful they consider the outcomes to be, and how they feel about it. L.D.'s statement illustrates attribution of the success of her vacation to her actions during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase, noting pride in her preparation:

"I feel proud of course....For me, if I hadn't prepared well or learnt about travelling to Paris before I went there, I wouldn't have enjoyed this much."

On the other hand, V.N. attributes problems during her vacation to a lack of preparation:

"*We didn't visit all the places we wanted because we didn't have enough time. We lost time commuting, getting lost, taking the wrong train. I should have looked for more information about the public transports".*

Attributions of an outcome vary according to locus of causality and controllability (Weiner, 1985). Locus of causality refers to perceptions about whether an outcome was caused by an individual's own actions or external environmental factors (Harvey *et al.*, 2014). Our informants' discourse shows they perceive the success of their experience to be either linked to their prior actions (internal locus) – illustrated by L.D.'s quote above - or to external factors (external locus). W.S., for example, felt thankful to his girlfriend who "*had done a lot of homework before (they) went there"*. C.M., in contrast, blames the travel agency for lack of preparation which resulted in dissatisfaction:

"Like the information about itinerary, it wasn't clear at all. They just told us where we would go but didn't tell us what we should see."

Controllability refers to the degree to which the cause (sufficient or insufficient anticipation) of an outcome (successful or unsuccessful experience) is perceived as being controllable

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(Weiner, 1985). P.I. regretted not having looked *"carefully at the room (he) booked at the hostel. There were 20-30 beds in one bedroom", noting that he "didn't expect that. Normally, there are only 4-8 bunk beds in a room".* He relates this to insufficient effort put into preparing for the trip, implicitly recognizing that he could have controlled for that. This observation is consistent with literature depicting effort as being not only internal, but also subject to volitional control, and major achievements are determined by effort expenditure (Harvey *et al*. 2014; Weiner, 1985). Pre-consumption preparation requires effort. Committing effort to anticipating a successful future experience can be perceived as a means of exerting control over this process.

Finally, informants expressed emotions that can be directly linked to attributional reasoning. Some reported pride in telling how well they had anticipated their experience, therefore making it successful, illustrated by L.D. who "*feels proud of course*" because "*it was (her) first time being in Paris and (she) did it quite well. (She) prepared well and nothing bad happened".* Others express regret, due to their lack of preparatory effort, illustrated by S.M. who *"regret(s) also not to (have) plan(ned) some time to shop some souvenirs".* These findings are consistent with the literature that pride *versus* guilt-related affects are typically experienced when success *versus* failure is attributed to an intentional and controllable cause (e.g., sufficient *versus* insufficient efforts) (Harvey *et al*. 2014; Weiner, 1985).

4.5. Anticipation and its relationship to the construction of value

We noted above that anticipation can be a shared phenomenon involving thoughts and actions that results in emotions of excitement and happiness, and in new knowledge. These findings can be further interpreted through the lens of consumption value (e.g., Sheth *et al.,* 1991), implying that anticipation has its own utility. We found evidence of emotional value, referring

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to the ability of an experience to arouse feelings and affective states (Sheth *et al.*,1991), as captured in S.R.(1)'s narrative:

"This time is like an extension of the vacation itself. Instead of being excited at the vacation, now we have this time to be happy and to be excited as well. It makes me feel like the vacation is longer, it actually starts since we booked everything."

Secondly, we found evidence of social value, referring to the ability of an experience to encourage and nurture social interactions (Aubert-Gamet and Cova, 1999). Several informants reported enjoying anticipating their future experience with friends and family, for example, K.D.'s narrative suggests value derived from interacting with others while anticipating his vacation:

"But for plans and what to do, I prepare with my friends. It is fun to talk to my friends about the trip. We laugh and we also talk about the previous trips we did together. It is like reminiscing you know, it is funny to talk about some stupid things we did together."

Finally, experiences that arouse curiosity, provide novelty, and/or satisfy a desire for knowledge provide epistemic value (Pihlström and Brush, 2008; Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Some informants reported that acquiring new knowledge while preparing for their future vacation was pleasurable, suggesting epistemic value, illustrated by D.I.:

"I look for a lot of information, the more I find information, the more excitement I have. It's like my attention and involvement is a drive for acquiring more information. I keep learning new things, it's fun. This experience is very pleasant. It's fun, it's like you are studying your favorite subject, you will be so eager to learn. Searching for information and learning new things makes me so happy."

Furthermore, informants' discourse emphasizes the utilitarian dimension of anticipation when looking retrospectively at the post-decision/pre-consumption phase, either because it enabled

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planning and preparation - thus facilitating success of the experience - or because it contributed to making the entire experience more enjoyable, illustrated by T.W.:

"The trip would be boring without pre-trip moment. If I just go and take photos, it would be so boring. I prefer to have some plan and imagination before going. Going on holidays without pre-trip moment is like we go there without plans. I prefer to have some objectives, then try to achieve them during the vacation"

K.G. explicitly recognizes the utility of the post-decision/pre-consumption phase:

"I looked at some photos and general information about the places we were visiting so that we knew why we visited the places. At least I knew why we had to visit the places. We knew the value of the place and we had something we looked forward to. Some information told us to look at some specific things or areas and that made us to have an objective for each place. The pre-vacation moment was useful because it allowed us to be prepared and prevent some possible problems"

Informants did not explicitly highlight hedonic dimensions of the post-decision/pre-consumption phase when looking back. However, they are aware of it when looking forward, illustrated by J.D.(C):

"Now I want to go on holiday again. I like the excitement. I like preparing for trips, packing my bag. I love it. It makes me very happy. I really love packing my bags. Before going, I pack and unpack and pack again."

Hirschman and Holbrook (1986) suggest that consumption results in value, but the perception of value can also lead to consumption. Our results provide a good illustration of this view as many informants recognize deriving utilitarian value from anticipating, but also recognize hedonic value associated with anticipating an upcoming consumption experience.

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5. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONSUMER ANTICIPATION AS A PERFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

Consistent with an abductive approach, we iterated between findings and extant literature, comparing our emergent themes to findings from our initial literature review and existing theory we had not initially identified. Building on major themes and relationships emerging from our data analysis, we first suggest that anticipation of a consumption experience is an experience *per se*, *independent from* and *inter-dependent with* the substantive experience. We further build on the concept of performativity to suggest that *anticipation* is performative, in the sense that consumers' thoughts and actions during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase influence the outcomes of the substantive consumption experience (Austin, 1975; Brisset, 2016; MacKenzie and Millo, 2003). This leads to the elaboration of a theoretical model of performative consumer anticipation in contexts of delayed consumption (Figure V).

5.1. Consumer anticipation as an experience independent from, and inter-dependent with the substantive experience

We build on the view that consumption experience is a multidimensional construct that involves thoughts, emotion, activity and value (Chaney *et al.,* 2018; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1986) to suggest that the *post-decision/pre-consumption* phase is not a mere waiting period but an experience *per se*. A universal definition of consumption experience remains elusive (Chaney *et al.,* 2018), some researchers conceptualizing experience as either only cognitive or only affective. Most researchers, however, recognize that an experience is a diverse phenomenon comprising behavioral, emotional and cognitive responses to all interactions with a consumption object (Chaney *et al.,* 2018; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Lemon and

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Verhoef, 2016; Singh and Söderlund, 2020). Two further important characteristics of consumption experiences are that they (1) have value, and (2) are highly subjective, due to situational factors interacting with the individual consumer (Dalmoro *et al.*, 2019; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1986; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Mathwick *et al.*, 2001; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). We propose that consumer anticipation is an experience *per se*, whose constitutive elements are actions, thoughts, emotions, and value, enabled by the specific opportunities of the consumption context and consumer motivation. First, consistent with Hirschman and Holbrook's (1986) Thoughts, Emotions, Activities, and Value model, we view consumption experience as resulting from mutually overlapping interrelationships between its constituent components of thoughts, emotions, actions and value, reflected in bi-dimensional arrows within our model (Figure V). Our findings suggest that consumer anticipation encompasses a rich combination of inter-related actions, thoughts, and emotions, supporting the view that value is both a driver and an outcome of these cognitions, emotions and behaviours. There has been inconsistency in how past research has linked consumer experience with value, value being seen as either the outcome of the experience, or its driver, or overlapping with it (Chaney *et al.*, 2018). Hirschman and Holbrook (1986) view value as a constitutive aspect of experience, being both its driver and its outcome. Consistent with this view, our informants recognize the value derived from having anticipated their vacation, but are also looking forward to deriving value from anticipating future similar consumption experiences. From this perspective, our results confirm Nowlis *et al.*'s (2004) view that the utility of consumption experience can be separated into the utility of the event itself and the utility of its anticipation. However, whereas the authors suggested that consumers are unaware of the positive effect of the waiting period on consumption enjoyment, we suggest they are fully cognizant of its importance and benefits.

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Second, opportunity for anticipation is created by situational factors that may facilitate or impede it. Time is a pre-requisite and variable situational factor between decision and consumption which may facilitate or inhibit anticipation. Other situational factors, including availability of information, provide opportunities for anticipation.

Third, the need to secure desired outcomes provides motivation for anticipating. Motivation refers also to the desire to savour the anticipation processes, and further motivation may be derived from a desire to savour with companions.

5.2. Anticipation as a performative phenomenon

Our data analysis indicates anticipatory activities having impacts on the subsequent substantive consumption experience. We relate our findings to theories of performativity to further suggest that consumer anticipation is a performative phenomenon.

The roots of performativity are attributed to Austin (1975) who analysed speech as a means of not only describing phenomena, but also framing them and influencing outcomes. An important attribute of performativity is the ability of language to influence behaviour rather than merely describe it. Performativity has found application beyond its initial context of language philosophy, for instance, gender is performative in the sense that gender identity can conform to expectations of gender roles (Butler, 1990). MacKenzie and Millo (2003) showed how option pricing theory had become mainstream not because of its empirical validation, but because actors in markets used it to set prices, and therefore the model became a self-fulfilling prophecy. A performative approach, which is oriented towards examining practices that perform particular phenomena, is now a recognized approach in the field of business research (O'Leary and Murphy, 2019).

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Marketing scholars have explored performativity from different perspectives. Performative power has been conceptualised as the extent to which market actors can shape a market. For example, Hietanen and Rokka (2015) have shown that market actors' engagement in a wide range of market practices performatively changes a market. In the context of brand building, Onyas and Ryan (2015) showed how an initial brand vision is collectively transformed into reality by actions from different stakeholders, including consumers, retailers, marketing professionals and producers. The concept of performative transformation has been extended to the context of the co-creation of a corporate brand identity (Kristal *et al*., 2020).

A performative lens has also been used to investigate individual behaviours. For example, Clarke and Mortimer (2013) identify self-gifting as a form of performative consumption because consumer's thoughts regarding self-gifts are both predictors and outcomes of actual behaviour. Specific attention has been paid to identity construction. In the context of consumers' ethnic subcultures, Peñaloza (1994) observed that consumer acculturation involves the performance of appropriate signs, tailored to specific consumption situations. In a similar context, Oswald (1998) used a performative perspective to explain how consumers move from one identity to another. In their investigation of the adoption of anonymous social networking sites, O'Leary and Murphy (2019) show that consumers' self-performances emerge as an effect of the discourses that govern the design of these sites, making the discourse a reality.

These studies suggest that the essence of performativity, in a consumption context, lies in a recognition that descriptions and inner thoughts have material effects through repetitive behaviours of market actors: a brand is both a predictor and outcome of repetitive actions that aim to enact it; the same logic applies to consumer identities. In our field of investigation, motivation to secure desired outcomes encourages consumers to engage in preparatory behaviours, to collect additional information, and to plan their future activities. In doing so,

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they develop images, expectations and plans. The development of images, expectations and plans encourages them to take action to ensure that they will come true, thus making them a self-fulfilling prophecy. In other words, images, expectations and plans developed during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase have material effects at the actual consumption phase through behaviours at the post-decision/pre-consumption and actual consumption phases: images, expectations and plans are not only a predictor of actual consumption, but also its outcomes.

Some of our informants explicitly mentioned that they sought to enact the plans developed during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase. We also found evidence of informants attributing the success of the overall experience to their preparations for it. By attributing success or failure to their behaviour during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase, they implicitly recognize that anticipation processes are closely linked to outcomes associated with the substantive consumption experience, thus highlighting the performative aspect of the post-decision/pre-consumption phase. This linkage occurs through anticipation raising expectations about the forthcoming consumption experience, allowing preparation for effective performance of it. Images, expectations and plans developed during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase do not merely describe a future experience but also shape it, which is the essence of performativity (Marti and Gond, 2018). In addition, while the performativity literature has identified the relation between thoughts and actions, it has, to the extent of our knowledge, overlooked the role of emotions. Our findings suggest that emotions play a pivotal role in performative processes; anticipatory thinking may evoke anticipatory emotions, fear and hope, that will further evoke anticipatory behaviors.

In conclusion, we propose anticipation as a performative phenomenon and introduce a conceptual framework for understanding the processes involved in the post-decision/pre-consumption phase. We define this as performative anticipation and Figure V summarizes its

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key components and processes: 1) consumer anticipation is an experience *per se* related to a yet to be realized consumption experience, whose constitutive elements are actions, thoughts, emotions, and value; 2) situational factors and the importance of the forthcoming consumption provide the opportunity and the motivation to anticipate it, resulting in efforts put into anticipating; 3) through performativity, consumers' anticipatory efforts to ensure a desirable outcome directly contribute to achievement of that outcome; 4) these efforts have also a direct effect on feelings experienced during the post-consumption phase, as pride and regret are likely to be experienced depending on whether consumers believe they have put sufficient effort into anticipation.

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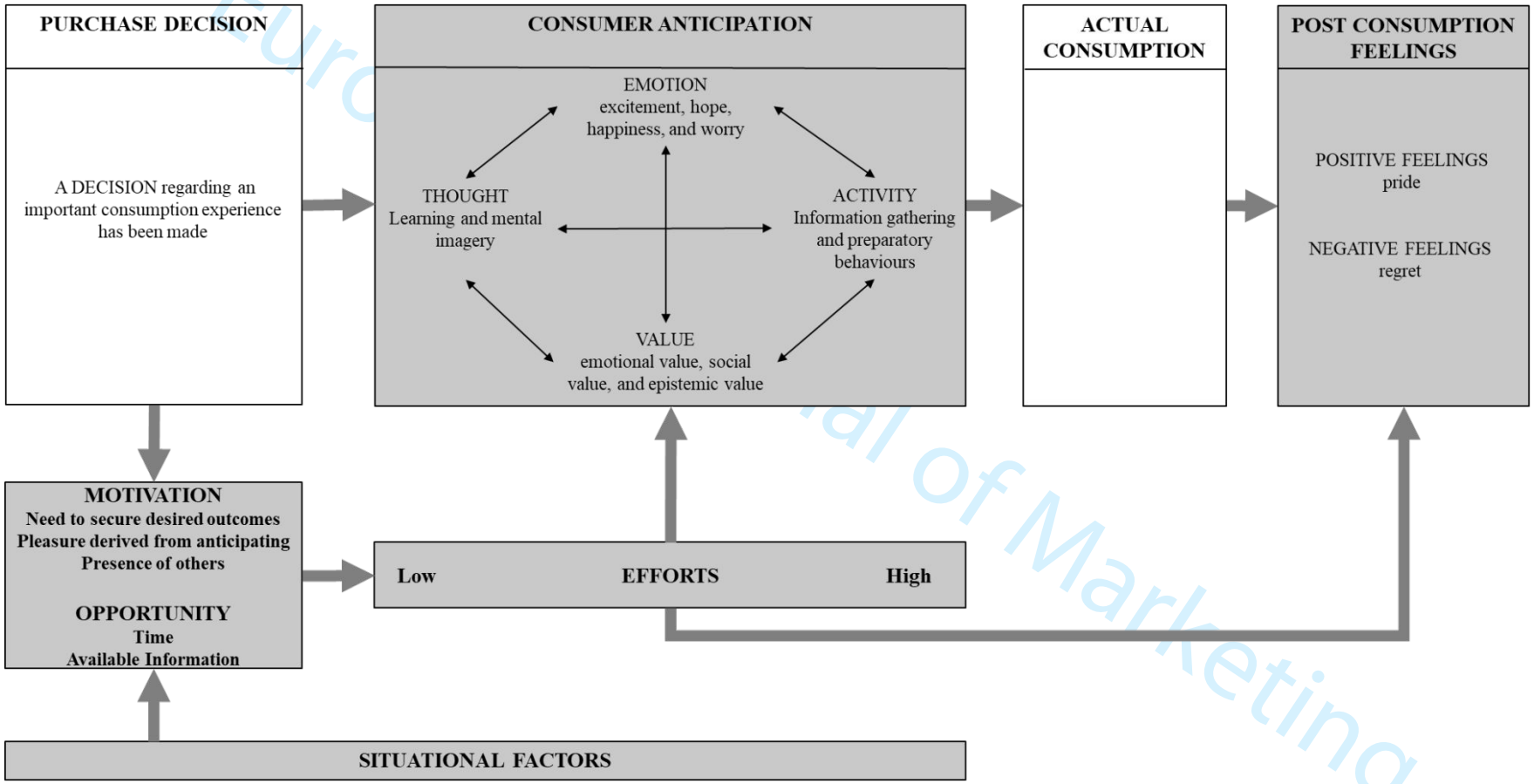
Figure V. A model of performative consumer anticipation



6. DISCUSSION

We began by noting a lack of theory to frame the liminal period between commitment to consumption, and consumption taking place. Consumer anticipation had been investigated in a fragmented way and an incomplete literature failed to provide a holistic understanding of this phase of anticipation. We discuss below our contributions to theory and practice.

6.1. Theoretical contribution

We have firstly proposed a theoretical framework founded in performativity for understanding how anticipation processes that occur post-commitment but pre-consumption contribute to performance of the overall consumption experience. In doing so, we have also contributed to the performativity literature by identifying anticipatory emotions as playing a pivotal role in performative processes. We believe our findings generalize beyond the specific context of our research. Using examples from our review of the performativity literature relating to marketing, we suggest that a consumer who is worried about not achieving their goal of an aspirational identity may adjust these goals so that the adjusted goals become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Similarly, a brand manager may worry that the identity being sought for a brand is not being created in target consumers' minds which may encourage him/her to pursue alternative strategies which become a self-fulfilling prophecy. In both cases, emotions may play a pivotal role in performative processes.

Second, we locate our findings within the literature on consumption experience. A consumption experience can be broadly viewed as the combination of actual or imagined interactions between customers and the brand/firm at different stages of the consumption sequence: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase (De Keyser *et al.*, 2020; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Most attention has been paid to purchase and actual consumption, leaving the

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pre-purchase and post-purchase stages less formalized (Chaney *et al.,* 2018). We make an important contribution by highlighting the importance of the post-decision/pre-consumption phase: this phase enables actual or imagined interactions between customers and the brand/firm and provides a consumption experience in its own right. In addition, little research considers the linkage between these different phases (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Voorhees *et al*., 2017), and we make another important contribution by identifying the performative aspect of consumer anticipation as a link between purchase and post-purchase stages in contexts of delayed consumption. In summary, our research responds to the need for an investigation of the "way consumers anticipate and imagine the possible scenarios of their consumption experience" and of "the articulation of this activity…and the post-experience evaluation" (Chaney *et al.,* 2018, p.411).

We further locate our findings within the literature on attribution theory (Weiner, 1985). By engaging in anticipation, informants perceived the locus of causality to be internal, and if the subsequent experience was successful, expressed pride in having anticipated. Through anticipation, informants perceived an ability to exert control over future events and felt ashamed of not having adequately anticipated if an experience was subsequently unsuccessful. Thus, we identify delayed consumption which occurs post-decision and pre-consumption as a context likely to trigger attributional reasoning and attribution-related emotions.

6.2. Management Implications

Our findings have implications for practitioners. First, we show that the *post-decision/pre-consumption* phase is an experience *per se*. Thus, marketing programmes should help

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consumers appreciate this phase as a substantive benefit in its own right. Sending reminder emails about a forthcoming consumption experience may evoke active anticipation through thinking and preparing; this could also take the form of communication highlighting the positive emotions felt while anticipating. Such actions would remind consumers not only of utilitarian value they can gain from actively anticipating forthcoming consumption experiences, but also its hedonic value. People who delay desirable outcomes may savour pleasurable anticipation (Loewenstein, 1987). However, consumers may perceive delay as frustrating and uncomfortable (Nowlis *et al.*,2004), therefore facilitating consumers to appreciate that anticipation of a consumption experience can be a source of pleasure could make waiting periods more pleasant and exciting.

Second, our findings highlight that consumer anticipation is performative. Marketing programmes should help consumers make images developed during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase come true because individuals tend to attribute success to internal causes and failure to external causes through attributional bias (Weiner, 1985). Consumers may therefore attribute the success of a consumption experience to how well they anticipated it but attribute its failure to how badly they were accompanied by the company during the post-decision/pre-consumption phase. Encouraging anticipation may not necessarily lead to higher evaluation of the provider, but insufficient encouragement may lead to lower evaluation. These recommendations should particularly apply to contexts where consumers' involvement during the *post-decision/pre-consumption* phase is not required because most important decisions have already been made, *e.g.,* purchase of a packaged tour, purchase of an apartment off-plan, and purchase of a car. In such contexts, the *post-decision/pre-consumption* phase may be a mere waiting period. By encouraging consumers to anticipate the forthcoming consumption experience, marketers may change this waiting period into an enjoyable and exciting consumption experience. In addition, even if such contexts do not

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require high levels of involvement by consumers, there are still some decisions to be made, *e.g.,* a future cruise passenger deciding which excursions to book, a future apartment owner choosing paints colours, and a future car owner reflecting on whether to subscribe to a maintenance contract. The more consumers are encouraged to invest time and energy in these decisions, the more likely they will anticipate the future consumption experience (e.g., through a knock-on effect, deciding on the excursion may trigger anticipation of the forthcoming cruise). Through a performative process, they will act in a way to make the anticipated consumption experience come true, thus decreasing the likelihood of them blaming the service provider for lack of support if the service fails to meet their expectations.

6.3. Limitations and future research

Our study is limited to an intangible service and it is plausible that anticipation processes may differ for tangible goods. However, we note that Service Dominant Logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2008) conceptualizes all products as providing essentially service-type benefits and we invite researchers to test our theory to establish its validity beyond pure service-specific consumption contexts. We also note that our study was confined to contexts of pleasant consumption, with the implied assumption that anticipation of an event to be enjoyed is theoretically and operationally mirrored in anticipation of events that are feared. Again, we invite researchers to test the generalisability of our findings to contexts of feared, unpleasant consumption.

We now discuss specific limitations of our study context to suggest further directions for future research.

A first specificity is that we studied one service context - vacation – however, a future vacation entails multiple possible futures and realities at the time of purchase decision-

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making. This was typical of our informants' reports. Future research may investigate if a performative effect is still observed in consumption contexts where there is less uncertainty and more predictability (e.g., a visit to a movie theatre).

Second, our research has focused on contexts of pleasant consumption. Past research suggests that anticipation behaviors differ as a function of whether the anticipated event is pleasant or unpleasant (Hardisty and Weber, 2020; Loewenstein, 1987; Molouki *et al.,* 2019). Our research has shown that anticipation triggers a combination of positive and negative emotions. However, our informants' discourse mostly comprised positive emotions. When the anticipated event is unpleasant, these mixed emotions tend to be more negative (Molouki *et al.,* 2019), which may trigger different types of thoughts and actions. Future research may therefore investigate the extent to which our proposed theory can be applied to future unpleasant consumption experiences.

Third, our data is drawn largely from one culture, and further research may seek replication in cultures where time orientation may differ. It is well established that Asian consumers are characterized as polychronic-oriented cultures, with a more external locus-of-control compared to US and European monochronic-oriented cultures typified by internal locus of control (Shiraev and Levy, 2004). This may have implications for the performativity of anticipation processes. There may also be differences in attributed importance and sought experiences between cultures (Ponsignon *et al.*, 2017). In the same vein, the interview sample is skewed toward young adults, with only 3 informants over 40. Age differences in future orientation have been observed among young people, adolescents being more present-oriented than young adults (Steinberg *et al.,* 2009). Such differences, however, are not observed among adults (Laureiro-Martinez *et al*., 2017). The over-representation of young adults in our sample should therefore not be an issue.

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Our research has only considered anticipation which occurs after decision and before consumption. However, it is likely that performative anticipation may also occur during the earlier stages within the decision-making process before decision (Vichiengior *et al*., 2019). For complex services, further performative effects may be observed during consumption. In our study context, this may include the anticipation of supplementary activities (such as short excursions and activities) for which commitment only occurs after arrival on vacation and entail a delay between commitment and consumption.

We started this paper by observing that consumer anticipation has been investigated in a fragmented way and argued that understanding of consumer anticipation would benefit from a more holistic approach. Future research may go back to the fragments, such as to identify, for example, which processes involved in consumer anticipation have more performative power, or to challenge past results.

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Web Appendix I. Coding process and emerging themes (Stage 1)

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Initial Codes	Categories	Theme
1. Information search Illustrative original transcript: "*I have seen posts that review information about Taiwan. The reviewers show places they visited. Actually when I first knew that I was going to Taiwan, I actually had a plan about the trip because I didn't know that my friends would organize everything for me. I looked for information about the South of Taiwan because I'm going to visit my friends there and also some information about Taipei. The reviews were about other towns, not just Taipei. Most reviewers show Taiwan for its food, its café, its building. But this guy shows Taiwan about its nature, such as small rivers, seas, mountains, lots of trees." C.R*	1. Anticipatory behaviours (1, 2, 3, 4)	1. Anticipation of a consumption experience involves anticipatory behaviours, cognitions, and emotions (1, 2, 3), that can be shared with others (4)
2. Preparing clothes Illustrative original transcript: "*Yes, yes. I have to be ready. Especially I come from a tropical country but it's very cold there on the mountains. First of all, clothes have to be suitable, if we don't prepare winter clothes, the trip will turn out very bad. Not only quality of the clothes, colors have to be nice as well. We have to wear colorful clothes to contrast with the whiteness of the snow. Glasses, helmets are also important. For example, there are many ski glasses out there but those who ski often know that each country has different ski conditions, therefore different types of glasses are needed. Glasses for sun protection, wind protection, or ski protection. Because when we climb up the mountain where the sun is very close, we need glasses that protect our eyes from the sun." A.N*		
3. Purchases Illustrative original transcript: "*I also bought a new luggage because I plan to do a lot of shopping. The luggage I have is too small…. I also bought a new pair of walking shoes because one of my friend told me that the best way to explore Paris is by walking. She suggested that I should wear comfortable shoes because I would walk a lot in Paris." L.D.*		
4. Exercising Illustrative original transcript: "*I do more exercise and do some hiking. To be able to enjoy skiing, you have to be healthy and your legs have to be strong If I don't do any exercise, I'll get tired very easily. I have a son, this is important that I'm fit enough. Imagine if he falls out or he breaks his leg when I am already down the hill, I will need to walk up the mountain with my ski to help him. In brief, I have to be strong." S.M.*		

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5. Learning

Illustrative original transcript: "*We learnt that "coffee shop" in Amsterdam may mean a coffee shop where you can also smoke Marijuana, we have to be careful about that. We also learnt that we must not take photos in the RedHight district but I think it is common sense. It is useful these information." S.R.(1)*

6. Imagining

Illustrative original transcript: "*I have a picture in my mind of what it should be like from photos in magazines, TV, social medias and also from the experiences of other people who have been there before. I also imagine myself being there but still the picture is not clear because I have never been there yet." S.R. (2)*

7. Paying Attention

Illustrative original transcript: "*I think I always think about this trip even subconsciously so when I hear anything about these contries I'll listen to them more. Or when I see winter clothes I want to try them and I think about this trip. Normally I don't care much about clothes or traveling gadgets, I'm not interested in those things but now it seems that I'm more interested and attracted to these. It makes me think about the trip. When I hear the news I stop and listen to them." C.C.*

2. Cognitive processes (5,6,7)

8. Worry

Illustrative original transcript: "*First, I had to get the visa. I was so worried that they wouldn't approve my visa. I am 40 years old and single, the Embassy could think that I have some hidden agenda (laugh), for example to get married with someone, or to do something illegal. I had bought plane ticket, if they didn't approved my visa it means that I paid for nothing." L.D.*

9. Hope

Illustrative original transcript: "*I hope that things are going to go well, like we going to get through the immigration, our bags won't get lost, the hotel is booked correctly, something standard like every trip you know. We do our best now and we will see whatever happens, it happens." K.P.*

10. Happiness

Illustrative original transcript: "*I love telling people that I am going to France. First, I'm proud of myself. Second, I feel happy every time I talk about or even think about the trip. It is strange because I want it to come very quickly, but I know that once it starts, it is going to end. I enjoy this waiting moment. It makes me happy and excited. It allows me to think about something else, not just routine work and activities." L.D..*

3. Emotions (8, 9, 10,11)

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11. Excitement Illustrative original transcript: "*This anticipation moment is very fun and exciting. Preparing things, searching for information, waiting for it to happen, trying to find solutions about transportation, learning new things that I haven't known before, this is exciting." C.U.*		
12. Sharing Illustrative original transcript: "*We look at the map on google map about how to get to the hotel we have booked. We read trip advisor about what we can see, what we can do there. We will need to think about what to bring there and what to buy, but I keep it for later. I don't want to do everything all at once. I want to keep it as activity between me and my boyfriend". S.R. (1)*	4. Anticipating with peers (12)	
13. Minimize the risk of negative outcomes Illustrative original transcript: "*If I have anticipated well about the trip, I know how the trip will turn out, I know what the consequences of different actions are. If something goes wrong, at least I won't be very surprised, at least I'm mentally prepared. For example, if there is a storm, at least I have anticipated and prepared for that. If I just go there without having anticipated anything, when something unexpected happens, I may be shocked. And the trip will be not as good as it should be." C.R.*	5. Consumer Motivation (13,14)	2. The motivation to anticipate a future consumption experience is to secure desired outcomes (5)
14. Maximize the likelihood of positive outcomes Illustrative original transcript: "*I have been looking for information about Paris, general information such as the weather, the areas, the transportations, must-see places, and nice restaurants. …. I ask my friends who have been there about what I have to be careful about, what to do, what not to do. I want to be prepared at maximum level so that my experience in Paris is at its best. … I may have only one chance in my life to go there so I want it to be the best experience." L.D.*		

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Web Appendix II. Coding process and emerging theme (Stage 2)

Initial Codes	Categories	Theme
1. Attribution for success Illustrative original transcript: "*The weather was super cold. Apparently, it was colder than usual. But fortunately, I was informed by my friends and the information that I saw about how severe the weather could be. So I prepared a lot of warm clothes, thank god. If I hadn't prepared that, the trip would have been a nightmare. Also, as I told you, I invested in a pair of good walking shoes and I didn't regret it. I walked so much over there. If I hadn't had those shoes, my feet would have been destroyed.*" L.D. 2. Attribution for failure Illustrative original transcript: "*I was a bit disappointed because we didn't visit all the places we wanted because we didn't have enough time. We lost time commuting, getting lost, taking the wrong train. I should have looked for more information about the public transports*". V.N. 3. External cause Illustrative original transcript: "*Yes, I remember my wife was so bossy about the trip and how we planned for things and I felt grateful for that. … I have to thank my wife actually. She was the one preparing the most for the trip…. The trip went well also because of her.*" A.M. 4. Internal cause Illustrative original transcript: "*We searched for some important information before we went, we planned for things, and mapped out where we wanted to go. All the trip we have done has been nice also because of our preparation. .... I mean we prepared well for the trip and the fact that we didn't get lost and we could make to all the places we wanted to go was partly because of our good preparation.*" K.D.	1. Attributional reasoning (1,2) 2. Locus of causality (3,4)	Due to attributional reasoning (1), consumers experience specific positive or negative emotions (4) according to the perceived cause of success or failure (2, 3)

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5. Effort Illustrative original transcript: "*I took it too easy. I was so chilled about preparation. I didn't have much information. What I did was only save some photos of the places I wanted to go I found on Instragram in my mobile. … The first day we were so tired that we chose the closest car park without considering the parking fare. We were charged for the car park many thousand Baht for the first night. … After learning the lesson, we were looking for other car parks on the 2nd and 3rd day. It was not easy because we couldn't speak Japanese. We found the cheapest car park but everything was written in Japanese. We had no idea but well it was the cheapest. We tried everything on the spot. I didn't look for information about it at all. Last time we parked in the hotel, so this time we didn't prepare much. We made a big mistake, it cost so much money." G.K.*	3. Controllability (5)
6. Pride Illustrative original transcript: "*Warm clothes that I prepared. It is true that I read information from the website but I knew that I had to be careful and prepare more than what they said. This helped me not to suffer from the coldness … . I feel proud of myself. I was impressed of myself of preparing well and I didn't have to worry about the future trip." M.K.*	4. Attribution dependent emotions (6, 7)
7. Regret Illustrative original transcript: "*I regret not to be more careful about planning. If I had thought carefully, I would have booked a hotel in Tokyo on the first night. I would not have booked the hotel in Osaka for 3 nights. At the time we booked , we thought that it would be easier to stay in one hotel for the whole trip so that we didn't have to move our luggage and it would be convenient for us not to move. When we booked the hotel, we didn't know what we wanted to do or where we wanted to go in Tokyo." G.K.*	

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