TO HAVE OR TO DO?
TWO ESSAYS ON MATERIAL AND EXPERIENTIAL PURCHASES

by

Yoonji Shim

B.A., Seoul National University, 2008
M.A., Seoul National University, 2011

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Business Administration)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

April, 2018

© Yoonji Shim, 2018
Abstract

Consumer researchers have documented that experiential purchases (i.e., those made with the primary intention of acquiring an experience) ultimately make consumers happier than do material purchases (i.e., those made with the primary intention of acquiring a tangible good or material possession; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Much of this research has focused on identifying the systematic differences between experiential and material purchases to understand why people drive greater benefits from acquiring an experience over a material possession (Caprariello and Reis 2013; Carter and Gilovich 2010; 2012; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). However, less is known about when consumers tend to shift preferences toward experiential as opposed to material purchases, and how consumers make choices when choosing among options that are viewed as being more experiential versus material in nature.

This dissertation is aimed at understanding situations in which consumers are particularly motivated to seek out experiential rather than material purchases and identifying a key factor that influences consumer choices between experiential and material purchases. Essay 1 investigates how thinking about one’s own death (i.e., mortality salience) influences consumer preferences for experiential versus material consumption. Specifically, I demonstrate that reminders of one’s own mortality lead consumers to seek to imbue their lives with a sense of meaning and to engage in more experiential than material consumption to fulfill their activated desire for meaning in response to mortality salience. In essay 2, I demonstrate that experiential (vs. material) consumption has the unique consequence of making consumers more attuned to the potential future affective consequences of their choice and more likely select options that are congruent
with their ideal affective states (i.e., the qualitative type of positive affect that they would ideally like to feel, such as excitement or peacefulness). This tendency is enhanced when consumers are particularly motivated to regulate their affective states in ways that are consistent with ideal affect. Further, I show that consumers are more satisfied with their purchases over time when their choices are made in accordance with their ideal affect when the choice domain is experiential (vs. material).
Lay Summary

Essay 1 demonstrates that when consumers think about the inevitability of their own death, they increase their preferences for engaging in experiential consumption (i.e., those made with the primary intention of acquiring an experience) rather than material consumption (i.e., those made with the primary intention of acquiring a tangible good). This effect is driven by the desire to search for meaningfulness. In essay 2, I highlight the affective nature of experiences, which largely influences the consumer choice tendency in experiential (vs. material) consumption. Specifically, I demonstrate that consumers choosing in experiential (vs. material) consumption are more likely to anticipate the future affective outcomes that they would like to derive from their choice. This, in turn, leads consumers to select options that are in line with the anticipated affective states that they would ideally want to feel (i.e., ideal affect) when people engage in experiential consumption but not in material consumption.
Preface

I am the primary author of the work presented in this Ph.D. dissertation. I was responsible for conducting the literature review, developing the hypotheses, designing the experiments, collecting the data, analyzing the data, and preparing the manuscript. Additional contributions for each chapter are described below.

1 Introduction

I am the primary author of this chapter, with intellectual contributions from Katherine White.

2 Essay 1: Embracing the Experiential: Reminders of Mortality Increase Consumer Preferences for Experiences over Material Goods

I am the first author of this manuscript. I designed the experiments, supervised data collection, conducted the analyses and prepared the manuscript. Katherine White assisted in designing the experiments and provided intellectual contributions.

3 Essay 2: Getting It Right: The Role of Ideal Affect in Guiding Experiential versus Material Consumption

I am the first author of this manuscript. I designed the experiments, supervised data collection, conducted the analyses and prepared the manuscript. Katherine White assisted in designing the experiments and provided intellectual contributions.
4 Limitations

I am the primary author of this chapter, with intellectual contributions from Katherine White.

5 Conclusion

I am the primary author of this chapter, with intellectual contributions from Katherine White.

The research presented in this dissertation was supported by Standard Research Grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to Dr. Katherine White.

Ethics approval for all experimental studies was obtained from UBC Office of Research Ethics Behavioural Review Board (Human Ethics) under the following certificates: Essay 1: H13-01690, Essay 2: H13-01684. To increase generalizability of the current dissertation research, I recruited participants from the student participant pool at UBC aged from 18 to 44 as well as from an Amazon Mechanical Turk online sample aged from 18 to 81. Sample size requirements for statistical power reflected the constraints available in the student participant pool as well as the expected variability associated with the novel effect covered in this thesis. As a result, the studies that used the student participant pool or the actual choice studies tended toward sample sizes of 30+ per cell, whereas those that used an Amazon Mechanical Turk online sample used sample sizes of 60+ per cell. Study participants who failed to finish a survey were excluded from the data analysis. In Essay 2, since I was particularly interested in (1) the discrepancy between participants’ actual and ideal affect (Study 4) and (2) how the congruence or incongruence between participants’ ideal affect and the affective experiences evoked by the purchase would influence consumers’ actual satisfaction (Study 5), participants who were neutral in terms of
valuation of HAP or LAP were excluded from the further analyses. All participants were debriefed upon completion.
Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ ii
Lay Summary ................................................................................................................................ iv
Preface ........................................................................................................................................ v
Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................ vi
List of Tables ................................................................................................................................ xiv
List of Figures ............................................................................................................................... xv
Acknowledgements ..................................................................................................................... xvi
Dedication ..................................................................................................................................... xviii

Chapter 1: Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
  1.1 Overview of the Dissertation ............................................................................................... 1

Chapter 2: Embracing the Experiential: Reminders of Mortality Increase Consumer
Preferences for Experiences over Material Goods ...................................................................... 4
  2.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 4
  2.2 Conceptual Background ..................................................................................................... 5
      2.2.1 Mortality Salience and the Search for Meaning ......................................................... 5
      2.2.2 Experiential (vs. Material) Consumption as a Source of Meaning ....................... 8
      2.2.3 The Role of Meaning-Seeking ................................................................................ 11
      2.2.4 The Current Research ............................................................................................ 12
  2.3 Empirical Investigation ....................................................................................................... 13
      2.3.1 Study 1a ................................................................................................................... 13
      2.3.1.1 Procedure ........................................................................................................... 13
2.3.6 Study 5 ........................................................................................................30
  2.3.6.1 Procedure ..............................................................................................31
  2.3.6.2 Results ..................................................................................................31
  2.3.6.3 Discussion .............................................................................................32
2.4 General Discussion .........................................................................................33
  2.4.1 Theoretical Implications .........................................................................33
  2.4.2 Practical Implications and Directions for Future Research .....................35

Chapter 3: Getting It Right: The Role of Ideal Affect in Guiding Experiential versus Material Consumption ..................................................................................................................38
  3.1 Introduction ..................................................................................................38
  3.2 Conceptual Background and Hypotheses Development ...............................39
    3.2.1 The Affective Nature of Experiential versus Material Option ..............40
    3.2.2 The Role of Affective Anticipation .........................................................42
    3.2.3 The Moderating Role of Motivation to Attain Ideal Affect .......................45
    3.2.4 The Effect of Choosing in Line with Ideal Affect on Satisfaction with Choice ..................................................................................................................46
    3.2.5 The Current Research ............................................................................48
  3.3 Empirical Investigation ................................................................................50
    3.3.1 Study 1 ...................................................................................................50
      3.3.1.1 Procedure ........................................................................................51
      3.3.1.2 Results ............................................................................................52
        3.3.1.2.1 Manipulation Check ....................................................................52
        3.3.1.2.2 Anticipated Affective Experiences from Purchase of the Camera ....52
3.3.5.2.2 Consumers’ Actual Satisfaction .......................................................... 70
3.3.5.3 Discussion .................................................................................................. 71
3.4 General Discussion .......................................................................................... 71
3.4.1 Theoretical Implications ............................................................................. 72
3.4.2 Practical Implications .................................................................................. 75
3.4.3 Future Research Directions ........................................................................ 76

Chapter 4: Limitations .......................................................................................... 79

Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks .......................................................................... 82

Chapter 6: Tables and Figures .............................................................................. 83

References ........................................................................................................... 101

Appendix: Experimental Materials .................................................................. 114

A.1 Essay 1, Pilot Study ......................................................................................... 114
A.2 Essay 1, Study 2: Material versus Experiential Manipulation ....................... 115
A.3 Essay 1, Study 4: Material versus Experiential Manipulation ....................... 116
A.4 Essay 2, Studies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5: The AVI Index (Tsai, Knutson, and Fung 2006) ... 117
A.5 Essay 2, Study 1: Experiential versus Material Manipulation ....................... 118
A.6 Essay 2, Study 2: Experiential versus Material Manipulation ....................... 120
A.7 Essay 2, Study 2 Pretest .................................................................................. 122
A.8 Essay 2, Study 3: Experiential versus Material Manipulation ....................... 123
A.9 Essay 2, Study 3 Painting Choice Stimuli ...................................................... 125
A.10  Essay 2, Study 3 Pretest .................................................................127
A.11  Essay 2, Study 4: HAP versus LAP Manipulation ..............................128
A.12  Essay 2, Study 4 Pretest ....................................................................129
A.13  Essay 2, Study 4: Experiential versus Material Manipulation ...............130
A.14  Essay 2, Study 4 Painting Choice Stimuli ...........................................132
A.15  Essay 2, Study 5 Instructions ..............................................................134
List of Tables

Table 1. Summary of Results (Essay 1: Studies 1a, 1b) .................................................................83
Table 2. Summary of Results (Essay 1: Study 2) ........................................................................84
Table 3. Summary of Means and Standard Deviations (Essay 1: Study 3) ...............................85
Table 4. Mediation Path Coefficients and Indirect Effects (Essay 1: Study 4) ..........................86
Table 5. Summary of Means and Standard Deviations (Essay 1: Study 5) ...............................87
Table 6. Mediation Path Coefficients and Indirect Effects (Essay 2: Study 3) ..........................88
Table 7. Summary of Means and Standard Deviations (Essay 2: Study 5) ...............................89
List of Figures

Figure 1. A Chalkboard Wall Created on the Outside of a Building (Essay 1, Study 1a) ………..90

Figure 2. The Effect of Mortality Salience on Consumer Choices of Experientially versus Materially Positioned Gift Cards (Essay 1, Study 2) ………………………………………………………………………………………………………..91

Figure 3. The Effect of Mortality Salience on Differences in Willingness To Pay for Experiential and Material Purchases (Essay 1, Study 3) ……………………………………………………………………………………………92

Figure 4. The Effect of Mortality Salience on Purchase Intentions for Experiential and Material Options (Essay 1, Study 4) ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………93

Figure 5. The Activated Desire for Meaning Mediates Meaning Mediates Effects of Mortality Salience (Essay 1, Study 4) …………………………………………………………………………………………………………94

Figure 6. The Effect of Mortality Salience on Differences in Willingness To Pay for Experiential and Material Purchases (Essay 1, Study 3) ……………………………………………………………………………………………95

Figure 7. The Role of Ideal Affect in Experiential versus Material Consumption (Essay 2, Study 2) …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………96

Figure 8. The Role of Ideal Affect in Experiential versus Material Consumption (Essay 2, Study 3) …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………97

Figure 9. Diagram of Moderated Mediation Model (Essay 2, Study 3) ………………………98

Figure 10. The Moderating Role of an Affective Discrepancy on the Effects of Ideal Affect as a Choice Criterion in Experiential versus Material Purchases (Essay 2, Study 4) ………..99

Figure 11. The Effect of Ideal Affect on Consumer Actual Satisfaction in Experiential versus Material Purchases (Essay 2, Study 5) ……………………………………………………………………………………………100
Acknowledgements

The years that I spent at UBC were the best and most fulfilling time of my life. I am extraordinarily lucky to have worked with such an amazing faculty, become colleagues and friends with such wonderful people, and accumulated such invaluable experiences in this beautiful city. First, I am extremely grateful to my advisor, Kate White, and committee members, Joey Hoegg, Dale Griffin, and Leaf Van Boven.

Kate, I will never be able to adequately thank you for everything that you have done for me over the last six years. You always believed in me and for that I am forever grateful. Thank you for devoting so much time and attention to me, for pushing me to be my best, and for always being available to me. I am extremely lucky to have you as my advisor, and I will never forget your care, encouragement, and guidance.

Joey, I am incredibly appreciative of all of your support and mentorship both professionally and personally. You were always brilliant, warm, fun, and supportive. Thank you for always giving me advice and cheering me up whenever I need help.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dale Griffin for his thoughtfulness and guidance. Meeting and talking with you always offered me invaluable insights. I also thank my other committee member, Leaf Van Boven, for his kindness and help throughout this process.
Thank you to everyone in the marketing division for all of their time and support. Special thanks to Darren Dahl for his guidance, mentorship, and support (+ tequila shots) throughout my PhD program. Thank you for being an excellent fun to hang out with outside work! I would like to thank Dave Hardisty for always being nice and helpful. Working with you exposed me to the new topic of research and was always fun. I am also grateful to Yann Cornil and Lisa Cavanaugh for their invaluable advice and guidance during my job talk practice.

Very special thanks to my fellow PhD students for their friendship and support. I am proud to be a part of the Sauder community and extremely happy to have these amazing friends throughout my PhD program. I am greatly thankful to Elaine Cho for her wonderful administrative support and immediate help. The financial support I received from the Sauder School of Business and the University of British Columbia is gratefully acknowledged.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my family members and friends who have supported me throughout the years. Special thanks are owed to my husband, Seongyu (Ryan), for his love, support, and understanding. You are the reasons I am here today. Thanks for walking beside me during this journey. I am also greatly indebted to my loving parents for their unconditional love and belief in me. Thank you to my mother for always supporting me and listening to me. Special thanks to my father for always trusting me to make the right decisions.
This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Seongyu Ko, and my parents.
Chapter 1: Introduction

A decade of research has focused on the differential benefits of acquiring experiences as opposed to material goods (Carter and Gilovich 2010, 2012; Dunn and Norton 2013; Gilovich and Kumar 2015; Nicolao, Irwin, and Goodman 2009; Rosenzweig and Gilovich 2012; Tully, Hershfield, and Meyvis 2015; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Much of this work suggests that experiential purchases often provide greater long-term happiness (Van Boven and Gilovich 2003), less regret (Rosenzweig and Gilovich 2012), and greater satisfaction (Carter and Gilovich 2010; Weidman and Dunn 2016) than material purchases do. Although many research efforts have been devoted to identifying key factors that might drive these hedonic benefits of experiences, little is currently known about when and why consumers particularly seek to consume one type over the other. My dissertation is focused on understanding when consumers are particularly motivated to shift their preferences toward experiential as opposed to material purchases, why consumers increase their preferences for experiential over material purchases, and how consumers make choices when engaging in experiential versus material purchases.

1.1 Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of eleven experimental studies across two essays. Essay 1 examines the effect of thinking about one’s own death (i.e., mortality salience) on consumer preferences for experiential versus material options. Specifically, this essay seeks to demonstrate that people express a greater desire to engage in experiential rather than material consumption (studies 1a, 1b), actually select relatively more experiential options (study 2) and indicate higher
willingness to pay (studies 3 and 5) and purchase intentions for experiential (vs. material) options (study 4) when mortality is salient (vs. not salient). I propose that mortality reminders activate a desire for meaning, which, in turn, leads to a preference for options that are relatively more experiential as opposed to material in nature. These effects are mediated by an activated desire for meaning (study 4). Furthermore, the observed effects are heightened among those high in an individual difference measure of the tendency (i.e., intrinsic value orientation) to seek out meaning (study 4). Finally, I provide additional evidence for the role of meaning-seeking in driving the observed effects, by examining the moderating role of meaning-fulfillment (study 5). In particular, the tendency to prefer experiential over material purchases in response to mortality salience is eliminated when people are given an opportunity to fulfill the desire for meaningfulness via an alternative route. Taken together, the results suggest that, in response to mortality threats, individuals will be relatively more likely to seek out experiences rather than material goods in order to search for meaning in their lives.

Essay 2 examines a key factor that distinguishes experiential from material consumption. Specifically, I propose that consumers making choices in experiential as opposed to material domains are more likely to anticipate the type of affect they would ideally like to feel associated with a given choice (study 1) and choose in accordance with ideal affect, the qualitative type of positive affect that they would ideally like to feel, such as excitement or peacefulness (studies 2, 3, 4). I find that this tendency is driven by an increased focus on the anticipated affective states that potentially could be derived from the choice (study 3). In addition, I show that this effect is enhanced when consumers are particularly motivated to regulate their affective states in ways that are consistent with ideal affect, and it is no longer observed when this affect-regulation goal
has been met (study 4). Finally, in a consequential choice study (study 5), I demonstrate that consumers are more satisfied with their purchases over time when their choices are made in accordance with their ideal affect when the choice domain is experiential (vs. material). When choices are not made in accordance with ideal affect, however, differences in satisfaction derived from experiential compared to material purchases are no longer observed.

The rest of the dissertation is structured as follows. I present essay 1 and essay 2 in turn. In each essay, I first introduce my research questions to be addressed. Next, I provide the relevant conceptual background and develop my hypotheses, with respect to the underlying processes and factors that moderate the effects. Then I report experimental studies that test the proposed hypotheses. I then conclude each essay, with a section that summarizes the findings of the studies, identifies important theoretical and managerial contributions, and highlights avenues for future research. Finally, I discuss the general limitations of my dissertation and provide concluding remarks.
Chapter 2: Embracing the Experiential: Reminders of Mortality Increase Consumer Preferences for Experiences over Material Goods

2.1 Introduction

And a moment came that stopped me on a dime,
... I went sky diving,
I went rocky mountain climbing,
I went 2.7 seconds on a bull name Fumanchu.
And I loved deeper,
And I spoke sweeter,
And I gave forgiveness I've been denying,
And he said someday I hope you get the chance,
To live like you were dying.

In this popular country music song, a man who knows he is going to die soon, makes the most of his last days by engaging in various experiential pursuits such as sky diving and mountain climbing. He further advises that people take the opportunity to live like they were dying because, in the face of his own impending death, he was finally able to live life to the fullest. Similar insights were portrayed by the film, The Bucket List (2007), which tells the story of two terminally ill men who find themselves sharing a hospital room at a crossroads in their lives and end up embarking on the adventure of a lifetime—spending their remaining days doing
everything they ever wanted to experience before they die. The current research sets out to demonstrate that, when reminded of the inevitability of their own eventual death, individuals do indeed tend to seek out pursuits that are relatively experiential (vs. material) in nature.

Drawing from anecdotal examples like these, the notion that people might be motivated to embrace experiences in response to reminders of death might seem to be fairly intuitive. However, existing research on the downstream consumer consequences of mortality salience largely finds that people tend to demonstrate materialistic tendencies when their own death is made salient (Arndt et al. 2004; Kasser and Sheldon 2000). In contrast to this past research, I propose that when people consider both material and experiential options, mortality salience will lead to a preference for experiential over material consumption. I argue that reminders of one’s own mortality will lead to the desire to imbue one’s life with a sense of meaning, and this activated desire for meaning will produce a systematic shift in consumer preferences toward experiential over material consumption.

2.2 Conceptual Background

2.2.1 Mortality Salience and the Search for Meaning

Interest in the pursuit of meaning dates back at least to existential philosophers who claimed that one of the core aspects of human nature is the motivation to create the perception that one’s existence is significant and purposeful (Becker 1973; Frankl 1963; Sartre 1947). This insight that people have an innate drive to find meaning in their lives was further elaborated upon
by Terror Management Theory (TMT; Greenberg et al. 1986). TMT suggests that reminders of one’s own eventual death (i.e., mortality salience) create existential anxiety, leading people to endorse and adhere to their existing cultural worldviews (e.g., self-relevant beliefs, values, norms), which serve to buffer against the anxiety (Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski 1991). TMT research demonstrates that mortality salience leads to the endorsement of attitudes and behaviors that support one’s own beliefs and meaning structures, as well as the demonstration of defensive reactions to ideas that are counter to one’s own core values. These responses, often described as one way of searching for meaning in response to mortality salience, have collectively been referred to as forms of worldview defense (Greenberg et al. 1990; Jonas et al. 2002; McGregor 2006; Rosenblatt et al. 1989). Different manifestations of worldview defense have been observed, including negative evaluations of others who disconfirm (vs. confirm) one’s own core values (Greenberg et al. 1990; Rosenblatt et al. 1989), decreased helping toward targets who hold opposing (vs. similar) worldviews (Jonas et al. 2002), and aggression against those who contradict the dominant cultural worldview (McGregor 2006; refer to Burke, Martens, and Faucher 2009 for a comprehensive review and meta-analysis).

In addition, work in the consumer domain has shown that worldview defense in response to mortality salience can take the form of materialistic tendencies (Arndt et al. 2004; Kasser and Sheldon 2000; Mandel and Heine 1999; Rindfleisch and Burroughs 2004; Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Wong 2009). When their own death becomes salient, people show heightened interest in purchasing expensive or luxury brands, which may reinforce a consumer’s social status within a consumer-driven culture (Mandel and Heine 1999). Also, under conditions of mortality salience, individuals report higher expectations for their future salaries and exhibit a
greater desire to acquire resources (Kasser and Sheldon 2000). These findings have been taken to suggest that materialism (i.e., the relative importance the consumer places on the acquisition of material goods; Belk 1984) might represent a predominant cultural worldview in capitalist societies (Arndt et al. 2004) and that seeking out materialistic pursuits is one means of bolstering the belief that one is a worthy member of society (Kasser and Sheldon 2000).

On the other hand, other work suggests that mortality salience does not always trigger defensive worldview responses with an eye toward extrinsic goals (i.e., goals linked to the pursuit of externally focused desires such as financial gain, fame, or power; Cozzolino 2006; Cozzolino et al. 2004; Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004). Indeed, thoughts about death can, at times, lead to focusing on values linked to internal aspects of the self (i.e., autonomy and relatedness), as well as dimensions such as close connections with others and appreciation of life (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004). Moreover, research is beginning to reveal that the concept of mortality does not always lead to defensive reactions and can sometimes lead to more transcendent and positive forms of meaning-seeking including gratitude (Frias et al. 2011), charitable giving (Jonas et al. 2002), and other types of prosocial behavior (Hirschberger, Ein-Dor, and Almakias 2008). Such findings suggest that it is not always the case that people become defensive and predominantly seek extrinsic self-validation (e.g., materialistic pursuits) under mortality salience. People also can become motivated to seek out sources of meaning that relate to intrinsic goals.

Building on this, the current work proposes that increasing materialistic pursuits is not necessarily the preferred means of coping with mortality salience (e.g., Kasser and Sheldon 2000). Instead, I propose that one way of coping with existential anxiety involves the search for
ways to imbue one’s life with a sense of meaning. Indeed, one of the focal premises of TMT is that worldview defense largely stems from a desire to maintain and restore a sense of meaning (e.g., Arndt, Greenberg, and Cook 2002; Pyszczynski et al. 2006). TMT further proposes that people choose to restore meaning in ways that allow them to buffer the negative feelings related to the existential angst that is activated when thinking about the inevitability of death (Greenberg et al. 1990; Pyszczynski, Solomon, and Greenberg 2003). I build on this theorizing to suggest that there might be other, non-defensive, routes to meaning restoration in response to mortality salience such as seeking out options that are relatively more experiential than material in nature.

2.2.2 **Experiential (vs. Material) Consumption as a Source of Meaning**

The insight—that people have an innate drive to find meaning in their lives—was also extended by the Meaning Maintenance Model (MMM; Heine, Proulx, and Vohs 2006; Proulx and Heine 2006). The MMM highlights that when individuals’ existing meaning frameworks are disrupted (i.e., when threats to meaning occur), people respond to these disruptions by reaffirming the structures in order to regain their sense of meaning (i.e., meaning maintenance; Proulx and Heine 2006). While the current conceptualization is not inconsistent with the MMM, there are some important differences between the current theorizing and the theorizing forwarded by the MMM. What I refer to as meaning in the current essay is conceptually different from the construct of “meaning” that is highlighted by the MMM (Heine et al. 2006, 90), which refers to the expected relationships or associations that human beings construct and impose on their worlds (e.g., When playing cards, one expects red to be associated with diamonds, and black to be associated with clubs). The MMM predicts that any type of “unrelated” events (e.g., When
one is presented with black diamonds cards or red clubs cards) disrupts individuals’ sense of *global* meaning and subsequently leads people to engage in mental representations of expected relations to temporarily restore their meaning structures. Based on this assumption, the MMM proposes that mortality salience, which is *a threat to the relations between the self and the external world*, is one of many instantiations of threats to meaning (Proulx and Heine 2006). In this thesis, I contend that people have a desire for meaning beyond proclivity to connects things to other things in expected ways. I build on a theoretical conception of *eudaemonia* (Ryan and Deci 2001), which posits that meaningful pursuits are associated with actualizing one’s potential, having a strong sense of purpose, or pursuing intrinsic values and virtue (Ryff and Singer 2008; Waterman 1993; Waterman, Schwartz, and Conti 2008). My theorizing predicts that only mortality threats have the unique consequence of activating this type of desire for meaning (i.e., meaning in life) as thinking about the inevitability of death leads people to restore meaning in ways that allow them to buffer the negative feelings related to the existential anxiety. While the MMM predicts that different types of threat will all lead to meaning making responses, the current conceptualization suggests that only mortality salience will uniquely lead to the tendency to select experiential over material options. Taken together, I propose that mortality reminders will lead people to engage in more experiential than material consumption to fulfill their activated desire for meaning because experiential options are more likely to be a source of meaning for individuals.

There are good reasons to hypothesize that people would perceive experiences as more meaningful than material goods. First, compared to material purchases, experiential purchases are more important in forming, defining, and representing one’s *true self*, which refers to one’s
intrinsic sense of who one is (Carter and Gilovich 2012; Guevarra and Howell 2015; King et al. 2006; Schlegel et al. 2009). Second, compared to material options, experiences are more likely to facilitate social connections (Caprariello and Reis 2013; Howell and Hill 2009; Van Boven 2005). This component is likely to constitute a driving force for one’s sense of meaning, in that social relationships (e.g., family, friends, romantic partners) are primary sources of personal meaning in life (Baumeister 1991; Hicks, Schlegel, and King 2010; Mikulincer, Florian, and Hirschberger 2003).

To provide empirical evidence that experiential (vs. material) consumption can provide a sense of meaning, I also conducted a pilot study. Undergraduates \( n = 189 \) were given a definition of meaningfulness (adapted from Baumeister 1991) and were presented with four different pairs of purchases (from Tully et al. 2015; see appendix). Each pair included one experiential option (e.g., 5-day beach vacation) and one material option (e.g., an ultra-high-definition TV) that were matched on price. Then, for each option participants answered: “To what extent do you think this purchase would be meaningful to you?” (7-point scale: 1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much”). As expected, participants perceived experiential purchases as being significantly more meaningful \( M_{\text{experiential}} = 5.40, \ SD = 1.05 \) than material purchases \( M_{\text{material}} = 4.07, \ SD = 1.08; F(1, 188) = 151.27, p < .001 \). This provides preliminary evidence that people do indeed tend to consider experiences to be relatively more meaningful than material goods.

Drawing on past research and my pilot study, I propose that in response to mortality salience, individuals will be more likely to opt for choices that are relatively more experiential than material. One question that arises, however, is why is my prediction contrary to past
research findings? Some of this past research finds evidence of materialistic tendencies in response to mortality salience among those who were given only materialistic or self-serving options to choose from (Kasser and Sheldon 2000; Mandel and Heine 1999). In the current work, I posit that when material and experiential options are considered simultaneously, mortality salience will lead people to opt for experiential options. This methodological distinction is important because past research suggests that mortality salience increases adherence to salient norms and values (Gailliot et al. 2008). In much of past work, materialism as a value may have been made particularly salient in that it was the only option provided to participants to alleviate existential threats. Thus, I examine the comparative preferences for experiential versus material options in response to mortality salience by providing participants both experiential and material options. My key prediction is that when mortality is salient individuals will be more likely to prefer experiential over material options. In contrast, I predict that consumers not experiencing mortality salience will not show preferences for experiential over material options.

### 2.2.3 The Role of Meaning-Seeking

Stemming from the discussion above, I argue that reminders of one’s own mortality will lead to the selection of relatively more experiential (vs. material) options due to a desire to seek out meaning. I test for this proposed mechanism in various ways. First, I examine whether a reported desire to seek out meaning mediates the observed effect. Second, I use a moderation approach and predict that the observed effect will depend on the relative importance that individuals place on the search for meaning. I test this by looking at individual differences in the endorsement of intrinsic values (Kasser and Ryan 1996). According to Kasser and Ryan (1996),
extrinsic values are those that focus on external rewards (e.g., financial success, social recognition, appealing appearance), whereas intrinsic values focus on internal growth and self-actualization (e.g., self-acceptance, autonomy, true self-knowledge). Importantly, intrinsic values have been considered key resources that can provide individuals with a sense of meaning (Frankl 1963). Drawing on this, I posit that people who strongly endorse striving for intrinsic values will be more likely to search for meaning given the fact of their own mortality. Thus, I predict that the tendency to prefer relatively more experiential over material purchases in response to mortality salience will be heightened among those who are high in intrinsic value orientation.

Lastly, I demonstrate the role of meaning by testing a theoretically relevant boundary condition for the predicted effects. In particular, I examine whether or not the individual has had the opportunity to restore meaning through some other means. For example, if the individual has had the opportunity to fulfill the desire for meaning via an alternative route (e.g., recalling a past meaningful experience), this should satiate the desire to seek out meaning, and the tendency to prefer experiential over material purchases in response to mortality salience will be mitigated.

2.2.4 The Current Research

Across six studies, I demonstrate that when mortality is salient (vs. not salient), people are more likely to indicate a greater desire for experiences over material goods (studies 1a and 1b) and to actually select experiential options (study 2). Further, I show that people are more likely to indicate higher willingness to pay (WTP; studies 3 and 5) and higher purchase intentions for experiential (vs. material) options (study 4) under conditions of mortality salience.
I further provide evidence that the mechanism underlying this effect is a desire for meaning and show that the desire for meaning is heightened for those who strongly endorse intrinsic values (study 4). Finally, I demonstrate that the observed tendency is eliminated when people are given an opportunity to fulfill their desire for meaning via an alternative route (study 5).

2.3   Empirical Investigation

2.3.1   Study 1a

In my first two exploratory studies, I sought to provide some real-world evidence of the predicted effects. In study 1a, instead of using the writing task typically employed by terror management researchers (Arndt et al. 2002), I borrowed a method from a global art project, *Before I Die*, which invites people to reflect on their lives and share their personal aspirations in public space (www.beforeidie.cc). I set up my own version of the wall, invited people to write their responses on it, and then examined whether people expressed a greater desire for engaging in experiences than acquiring material goods when thoughts of their own death were activated.

2.3.1.1   Procedure

This field study was conducted at a large North American university (*n* = 227). I created a chalkboard wall on the outside of a building on campus, stenciled with the repeated sentence “Before I die, I want to ________.” As shown in figure 1, people walking by were invited to fill one of the blanks. Once the wall was full, the responses were photographed and transcribed for
coding purposes. The responses were then erased so that a new set of sentences could be written on the wall. All responses were coded independently by two trained coders, who were blind to the hypotheses. Using definitions from Van Boven and Gilovich (2003), the coders categorized each response as “experiential” or “material.” The coders were high in agreement and any disagreements were resolved via discussion (Cohen’s Kappa = .92, p < .001).

2.3.1.2 Results and Discussion

As predicted, people expressed a greater desire for engaging in experiences (e.g., go skydiving, ski in the Alps, climb Everest) than for acquiring material goods (e.g., get a Ferrari, buy all Apple devices, own a pool table) given thoughts of their own death ($M_{experiential} = 97.4\%$ vs. $M_{material} = 2.6\%$; $\chi^2 (1) = 203.63, p < .001$, see table 1). Using a real-world setting, study 1a provides initial non-causal evidence for the notion that mortality salience is more closely related to preferences for acquiring experiences than to preferences for acquiring material goods.

2.3.2 Study 1b

In study 1b, I adopt a different real-life approach to identifying consumer preferences for experiences over material goods in response to thinking about one’s own death—using a natural data source: Pinterest (www.pinterest.com). Pinterest is an online content-sharing platform that allows members to pin images, videos, and other objects to their pin boards for others to view. By doing a simple search, Pinterest users can easily explore and discover various pins, which are visual bookmarks, to see what others have found and saved to their boards. To test whether
people show greater preferences for experiences over material goods when thinking about their own death in a real-world online setting, I explore what people have pinned on Pinterest by using a keyword phrase: “Before I die.” Because one possibility is that people might be more likely to pin experiences than material goods, I compared the “before I die” posts to a random sample of Pinterest posts using no particular search terms.

2.3.2.1 Procedure

A research assistant used Pinterest Quick Search by typing in the keyword phrase “before I die” in the search box and randomly selecting 200 pin boards, which displayed a total of 2964 pins that people saved with an image. To make a comparison between the pins listed under “before I die” and general pins, a research assistant randomly selected 3019 pins without typing in any keywords. The pins were then coded as in study 1a (Cohen’s Kappa = .98, p < .001).

2.3.2.2 Results and Discussion

As anticipated, people posting a pin listed under “before I die” expressed a greater desire for engaging in experiences (e.g., go zip lining, stay in an ice hotel, float in the Dead Sea) than acquiring material goods (e.g., own a pearl necklace, have a luxurious bathroom, own a nice camera; $M_{\text{experiential}} = 95.7\%$ vs. $M_{\text{material}} = 4.3\%; \chi^2(1) = 2481.43, p < .001$, see table 1). However, the observed preferences for experiences over material goods were not found for the general pins. Rather, for the general pins, people tended to make more material than experiential
posts \((M_{\text{material}} = 67.3\% \text{ vs. } M_{\text{experiential}} = 32.7\%); \chi^2 (1) = 363.10, p < .001\). In sum, while, in general, people post more pins related to material goods versus experiences, this tendency is reversed when people are thinking of their own death. Although the results of my first two studies provide preliminary real-life evidence for my theorizing, in the studies that follow I employ more controlled research designs.

2.3.3 Study 2

In study 2, I provide more direct evidence regarding the causal effect of mortality salience on preferences for experiential over material consumption in a more controlled setting. In particular, I investigate the effect of mortality salience on consumers’ actual choices of experiential (vs. material) options. To examine this, I conduct a consequential choice study in which I ask participants to make a real choice between receiving a bookstore gift card or cash following mortality salience (vs. control). I hold the product category constant (e.g., gift card) and manipulate the degree to which it is positioned as being relatively more experiential versus material. I use this procedure because many purchases have both experiential and material elements, and this allows us to manipulate the nature of the product without varying the actual product itself (Carter and Gilovich 2010, 2012). I predict that participants who focus on thoughts about their own death will be more likely to choose a gift card rather than cash when a bookstore gift card is positioned as being experiential (vs. material) in nature. I predict that this tendency will not be observed among participants who think about a neutral topic.
2.3.3.1 Procedure

One hundred eighty-two undergraduate students (58.8% female, $M_{age} = 19.8$) participated in a 2 (mortality: salient vs. control) x 2 (gift card type: experiential vs. material) between-participants experimental design. Participants completed the study at individual computer terminals in groups of 4 per session. I first manipulated mortality salience (vs. control) using the writing task typically employed by previous researchers (Arndt et al. 2002). Specifically, I asked those participants in the mortality salience condition to focus on thoughts about their own death (i.e., “Imagine what your death might be like as vividly as you can” and “Describe the emotions that the thought of your own death creates in you”). In contrast, those participants in the control condition were asked to describe their last visit to the grocery store (i.e., “Think about a time in which you drove or walked to the grocery store” and “Describe when your last visit was, where you went, and what you bought”; see appendix).

After completing the writing task, participants were told that they could have a gift as a token of appreciation for their participation in the survey. Participants were then presented with two options—receiving a $10 bookstore gift card or $6 cash. These amounts were chosen based on a pretest suggesting that people would be equally satisfied with receiving either gift. In the experiential condition, a bookstore gift card was presented with a description that highlighted the experiential benefits of using the gift card: “Indigo gift cards—Find the perfect experience. Indigo has everything to fuel the interests of booklovers. With Indigo gift cards, uncover flawless experiences you can’t get anywhere else.” In the material condition, a bookstore gift card was presented with a description that highlighted the material benefits of using the gift card: “Indigo
gift cards—Find the perfect item. Indigo carries a wide variety of books, décor, accessories, toys, and style. With Indigo gift cards, uncover flawless finds you can’t get anywhere else” (see appendix). After viewing the gift card description, participants were asked to choose between receiving a gift card or converting a gift card to $6 cash. After making their choice, as a check for the type of threat, participants answered: “In the prior writing task, what were you asked to write about?” (1 = “the thought of your own death,” 2 = “your recent visit to go grocery shopping”). Also, participants answered: “To what extent did you consider that the writing task was threatening?” (7-point scale: 1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much”). Finally, all participants answered demographic questions.

2.3.3.2 Results

2.3.3.2.1 Manipulation Check

All participants correctly recalled what they wrote about in the writing task. Participants in the mortality salience condition indicated that the writing task was more threatening ($M_{\text{mortality}} = 2.88$, $SD = 1.54$), compared to those in the control condition ($M_{\text{control}} = 1.49$, $SD = 1.05$; $F(1, 180) = 46.52, p < .001$). I note that all of my manipulation checks for the morality manipulation were significant in all of the studies (see appendix). These are not discussed further.

2.3.3.2.2 Choices

As shown in figure 2, a significant interaction between mortality salience and gift card
type emerged ($\chi^2 (1) = 3.40, p < .05$). Participants who focused on thoughts about their own death (vs. control) were more likely to choose a gift card rather than cash when the gift card was positioned as being experiential versus material ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 62.7\%$ vs. $M_{\text{material}} = 42.1\%; \chi^2 (1) = 4.15, p < .05$). However, this tendency was not observed among participants who thought about grocery shopping ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 42.9\%$ vs. $M_{\text{material}} = 40.0\%; \chi^2 (1) = .06, p > .49$, see table 2).

2.3.3.3 Discussion

Using an experimental methodology with real implications for consumers, study 2 demonstrates that mortality salience leads to preferences for more experiential options. In the absence of mortality salience, however, no preferences for experiential options emerge. The results support my prediction that people indeed actually choose more gift cards (vs. cash) when their own mortality becomes salient, but this effect is observed only when the gift card is positioned to be experiential (vs. material) in nature.

2.3.4 Study 3

In study 3, I extend the findings of study 2 in two important ways. First, I examine the relation between mortality salience and preferences for experiences over material goods using participants’ reports of their own willingness to pay (WTP) for desired purchases that are experiential and material in nature. I use WTP as a measure because this has been shown to be a realistic proxy for actual consumer preferences (Barber et al. 2012; De Pelsmacker, Driesen, and Rayp 2005). In addition, I cast doubt on one potential alternative explanation for the results: That
other types of threat might also lead consumers to prefer experiential over material purchases. I compare the effects of mortality threat with two additional types of threats: social rejection threat (Molden et al. 2009) and physical threat (Arndt et al. 2002). Given that thoughts about death produce a unique type of existential anxiety that induces a desire for meaning (Greenberg et al. 1990), I theorize that only mortality salience will lead to a preference for experiential over material options.

2.3.4.1 Procedure

Three hundred ninety-three MTurk participants (51.1% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 37.0$) completed the study in exchange for monetary compensation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions: 1) mortality threat, 2) social rejection threat, 3) physical threat, and 4) no-threat (control) condition. Following previous research (Arndt et al. 2002), those participants in the mortality threat condition were asked to focus on thoughts about their own death (i.e., “Imagine what your death might be like as vividly as you can” and “Describe the emotions that the thought of your own death creates in you”). Those participants in the social threat condition were asked to think about social rejection (i.e., “Imagine what being socially excluded from an event might be like as vividly as you can” and “Describe the emotions that the thought of being purposefully left out of an important social event creates for you”). Participants in the physical threat condition were asked to think about dental pain (i.e., “Imagine what dental pain might be like as vividly as you can” and “Describe the emotions that the thought of going through dental pain creates for you”). In contrast, those participants in the control condition were asked to describe their last visit to the grocery store (i.e., “Think about a time in which you drove
or walked to the grocery store” and “Describe when your last visit was, where you went, and what you bought”; see appendix). After completing this task, participants were given definitions of experiential and material purchases (from Van Boven and Gilovich 2003) and asked to list three experiential and material purchases that they would like to make in the near future. Participants were then asked to indicate their WTP for each of the purchases. I randomized both the definitions of experiential and material purchases as well as the order of listing experiential and material purchases. I note that there were no order effects. Finally, all participants answered demographic questions.

2.3.4.2 Results

One participant who failed to indicate her WTP for experiential and material purchases was excluded from the analysis, leaving a final sample of three hundred ninety-two participants. For the analysis, participants’ WTP for the three experiential and the three material purchases were averaged. I performed a repeated-measures ANOVA with conditions as a between-participants factor and participants’ WTP for the experiential and material purchases as a within-participants factor. As predicted, a significant interaction emerged ($F(3, 388) = 3.99, p < .01$). As shown in table 3 and figure 3, participants who focused on thoughts about their own death indicated higher WTP for experiential than material purchases ($M_{\text{experiential}} = $466.11, SD = 1016.59; $M_{\text{material}} = $287.74, SD = 272.47), compared to those who thought of being socially excluded ($M_{\text{experiential}} = $227.20, SD = 274.49; $M_{\text{material}} = $358.85, SD = 573.60), those who focused on dental pain ($M_{\text{experiential}} = $249.62, SD = 388.15; $M_{\text{material}} = $404.37, SD = 758.92), and those who thought of grocery shopping ($M_{\text{experiential}} = $211.80, SD = 527.14; $M_{\text{material}} = $287.74, SD = 272.47).
One interesting question is whether participants in the mortality salience condition reported more intense levels of threat than those in the social rejection or dental pain conditions. Participants who had thought of their own death, going through dental pain, and being socially excluded indicated that the writing task was more threatening ($M_{\text{mortality}} = 2.86, \ SD = 1.67$; $M_{\text{social}} = 2.57, \ SD = 1.74$; $M_{\text{physical}} = 2.37, \ SD = 1.49$), compared to those who had thought of grocery shopping ($M_{\text{control}} = 1.47, \ SD = 1.05$; $F(3, 387) = 16.26, \ p < .001$). However, those participants in the mortality salience, social rejection, and dental pain conditions did not differ on the degree to which they considered the writing task to be threatening ($p > .11$).

### 2.3.4.3 Discussion

The results of study 3 demonstrate that when consumers thought about their own death they reported higher WTP for experiential than material consumption. Such preferences for experiences did not emerge in response to other qualitatively different types of threats. This provides direct evidence in support of my prediction that it is reminding people of their own mortality in particular that leads them to prefer experiential over material purchases. It is notable that reported levels of threat do not differ between the mortality salience, social rejection, and dental pain conditions. Thus, it appears that my results are not due to increased intensity of the threat, but to the nature of the threat that is induced by mortality salience.

Although I found supporting evidence for the impact of mortality salience on
preferences for relatively more experiential (than material) options in studies 2 and 3 (using a validated manipulation of morality salience), one question that arises is whether it is possible for mortality salience to become activated in less artificial, everyday consumer contexts. To address this, I recruited an independent group of participants \((n = 158)\) to replicate the findings by manipulating mortality salience using a different method: a short movie clip eliciting thoughts of mortality (vs. control; see appendix). In particular, participants in the mortality salience condition viewed a short documentary clip that reminds them of the limited amount of time left to spend with their family, while participants in the control condition saw a short movie clip about bighorn sheep (Heatherton et al. 1993). Participants then indicated their WTP for each of three experiential and three material purchases. Consistent with the results of study 3, those who watched the clip that evoked thoughts of their own mortality indicated higher WTP for experiential than material purchases \((M_{\text{experiential}} = 650.46, \text{SD} = 802.23; M_{\text{material}} = 301.95, \text{SD} = 232.51)\), compared to those who watched the clip about bighorn sheep \((M_{\text{experiential}} = 446.92, \text{SD} = 461.15; M_{\text{material}} = 430.13, \text{SD} = 1008.50; F(1, 156) = 4.85, p < .05)\). In sum, I replicated the finding that mortality salience leads to a preference for experiential over material consumption, with an alternative manipulation of mortality salience.

### 2.3.5 Study 4

In study 4, I have four main purposes. First, I wished to examine my predictions by employing a different dependent measure: purchase intentions. I predict that people who think of their own mortality (vs. a neutral topic) will indicate higher purchase intentions for a product when its experiential (vs. material) aspects are advertised. Second, I examine whether the
observed effect will be moderated by individual differences in the endorsement of intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) values (Kasser and Ryan 1996). Given that intrinsic values focus on internal growth and self-actualization, which are closely linked to a search for meaning, I posit that people who endorse striving for intrinsic values will be more likely to search for meaning in the shadow of their own mortality. Thus, I predict that the tendency to prefer relatively more experiential over material consumption in response to mortality salience will be heightened among those who are high in intrinsic value orientation.

Third, I explore the underlying mechanism of the observed effect. Recall that my conceptual framework proposes that the effect is driven by the desire to search for meaning. Specifically, I argue that reminders of one’s own mortality will lead people to seek to imbue their lives with a sense of meaning and to engage in more experiential than material consumption to fulfill their activated desire for meaning in response to mortality salience. I predict that people who think of their own death (vs. a neutral topic) will show an increased desire to seek out meaning. I further propose that reported desire for meaning will mediate the effects.

Lastly, I attempt to cast doubt on a potential alternative explanation for my findings. One possibility is that rather than activating a desire for meaning, thinking about one’s own death might simply activate a sense of time scarcity and it is this perceived time scarcity that leads to seeking out experiences. If that is the case, thinking about one’s own death might lead people to feel a need to engage in experiential pursuits sooner rather than later. To test for this alternative account, I also measure perceived time scarcity.
2.3.5.1 Procedure

Three hundred forty-one MTurk participants (47.0% female, $M_{age} = 37.9$) completed the study in exchange for monetary compensation. This was a 2 (mortality: salient vs. control) x 2 (type of options: experiential vs. material) mixed-design that used purchase type as a within-participants variable. Mortality salience was manipulated as in study 2. Afterward, participants completed a state measure of desire for meaning: “Right now I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful,” “Right now I am searching for something that makes my life feel significant,” and “Right now I am looking to find my life’s purpose” (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much so”; adapted from Steger et al. 2006). Also, I asked participants to rate the items measuring perceived time scarcity: “I do not have lots of time in which I can get things done,” “Time is slipping away,” and “Time is limited” (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much so”).

Participants were prompted to imagine that they are shopping for a new digital camera and were presented two advertisements: One positioned a digital camera on the basis of experiential elements and one positioned a digital camera on the basis of material elements. The copy of the experiential advertisement read, “Nikon Coolpix—The perfect experience. Nikon Coolpix captures special and unforgettable moments. With Nikon Coolpix, you get the perfect experience that you can’t get anywhere else”; the corresponding copy in the material condition read, “Canon PowerShot—The perfect item. Canon PowerShot incorporates a sensor which affords rich image detail and enhanced sensitivity. With Canon PowerShot, you get the perfect device that you can’t get anywhere else” (see appendix). I randomized both the brand of the camera (i.e., Nikon vs. Canon) as well as the position of the experiential and material
advertisements. I note that there were no order effects.

After viewing each advertisement, participants were asked to rate their purchase intentions toward each of the two advertised cameras: “How willing are you to buy this camera?,” “How likely are you to buy this camera?,” “To what extent do you think you like this camera?” (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much so”; adapted from White and Peloza 2009). Also, as a manipulation check for type of options, participants answered: “To what extent do you consider each of the advertisements to be experiential or material?” (1 = “experiential,” 7 = “material”). Participants then completed a series of filler measures. Afterward, participants indicated their agreement with questions measuring individual differences in the endorsement of intrinsic values (e.g., self-acceptance, true self-knowledge, autonomy): “At the end of your life, you will look back on your life as meaningful and complete,” “You will deal effectively with problems that come up in your life,” “You will help people in need” (1 = “not at all,” 5 = “very important”; Kasser and Ryan 1996). Finally, all participants answered demographic questions.

2.3.5.2 Results

2.3.5.2.1 Manipulation Check

Participants perceived the advertisement that highlighted the material (vs. experiential) aspects of the camera as relatively more material (vs. experiential) ($M_{\text{material}} = 5.02$, SD = 1.66; $M_{\text{experiential}} = 3.00$, SD = 1.75; $t(340) = 15.14$, $p < .001$).
2.3.5.2.2 Purchase Intentions

The three purchase intentions ratings for experiential ($\alpha = .91$) and material ($\alpha = .92$) options were averaged. I performed a repeated-measures ANOVA with mortality salience as a between-participants factor and type of options as a within-participants factor. As shown in figure 4, a significant interaction emerged ($F(1, 339) = 10.67, p < .05$). Planned contrasts revealed that, in the mortality salience condition, participants reported higher purchase intentions for the digital camera when the advertisement highlighted its experiential (vs. material) aspects ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 5.02$, $SD = 1.38$; $M_{\text{material}} = 4.31$, $SD = 1.63$; $F(1, 339) = 4.62, p < .05$). Differences in purchase intentions were not observed in the control condition ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 4.43$, $SD = 1.38$; $M_{\text{material}} = 4.37$, $SD = 1.48$; $F(1, 339) = .39, p > .53$).

2.3.5.2.3 Desire for Meaning as a Moderated Mediator

My proposed mechanism suggests that when mortality becomes salient, it activates a desire for meaning especially for those more attuned to endorsing intrinsic values, and this subsequently leads them to prefer experiential over material options, compared to those who are less intrinsically oriented. To test this prediction, I first averaged the ratings measuring the activated desire for meaning ($\alpha = .96$). Because I was dealing with repeated-measures data, I calculated a purchase intentions index by subtracting the average purchase intentions for the material option from the average purchase intentions for the experiential option (see White and Argo 2009 for a similar procedure). Also, I averaged the ratings measuring intrinsic value
orientation ($\alpha = .74$). I then conducted a moderated mediation model (model 7; Hayes 2013) with mortality (1 = salient; 0 = control) as the independent variable, purchase intentions as the dependent variable, desire for meaning as the mediating variable, and intrinsic value orientation as the moderating variable on the link between mortality salience and the activated desire for meaning (see figure 5).

First, as shown in table 4, I found a significant main effect of mortality salience (vs. control) on the index of purchase intentions ($b = .5614$, SE = .1921, $t = 2.92$, $p < .005$), indicating that participants who thought about their own death (vs. control) had higher purchase intentions for the experiential than the material option. Furthermore, there was a significant main effect of mortality salience (vs. control) on the activated desire for meaning ($b = 2.7203$, SE = 1.1038, $t = 2.46$, $p < .05$), demonstrating that participants in the mortality salience condition indicated greater desire for meaning, compared to those in the control condition. Further, I found a significant interaction between mortality salience and intrinsic value orientation on the activated desire for meaning ($b = .7470$, SE = .2632, $t = 2.84$, $p < .005$), indicating that people who strongly endorsed intrinsic values are more likely to search for meaning in the event of thinking about their own mortality. Finally, there was a marginally significant main effect of the activated desire for meaning on the purchase intentions ($b = .0996$, SE = .0543, $t = 1.84$, $p = .068$). Bootstrap estimates generated a 95% confidence interval around the indirect effect with zero falling outside the confidence interval ($b = .0744$, SE = .0555, 95% CI [.0040, .2516]), indicating that the mediating pathway is significant. Further, the conditional indirect effect of

---

1 To ensure that the manipulation of mortality salience did not influence the responses on intrinsic value orientation, I performed a one-way ANOVA on the intrinsic value orientation index. The analysis revealed no significant differences between the conditions ($F(1, 339) = 1.64$, $p > .20$).
mortality salience on the purchase intentions via the activated desire for meaning was particularly significant for those who put a high value on intrinsic factors ($M_{\text{intrinsic}} = 4.14, 95\% \text{ CI} [.0018, .7491]; +1 \text{ SD} = 4.87, 95\% \text{ CI} [.3834, 1.4547]; \text{a point estimate of the effect} = 4.14$).

### 2.3.5.2.4 Perceived Time Scarcity

I examined whether perceived time scarcity could account for the effect of mortality salience on preferences for experiential over material options. I first averaged the three items measuring perceived time scarcity ($\alpha = .76$). A one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences between the conditions ($F(1, 339) = .07, p > .79$). Those who thought about their own death did not indicate higher perceived time scarcity ($M_{\text{mortality}} = 4.66, \text{SD} = 1.47$), compared to those who thought about grocery shopping ($M_{\text{control}} = 4.62, \text{SD} = 1.27$). In addition, to test a possible concern that people more attuned to endorsing intrinsic values would be more likely to perceive time scarcity when they thought about their own death (vs. control), I performed a regression analysis with mortality (1 = salient; 0 = control), the index of intrinsic value orientation, and intrinsic value orientation multiplied by mortality as predictors on perceived time scarcity. As expected, this analysis revealed no significant interaction ($\beta = -.07, t(337) = -.21, p > .83$), such that participants more attuned to the intrinsic values did not indicate higher perceived time scarcity when thinking about their own death (vs. control). Taken together, these results cast doubt on the alternative account that perceptions of time scarcity drove preferences for experiences in response to mortality salience.
2.3.5.3 Discussion

The results of study 4 support the prediction that the tendency to report higher purchase intentions for experiential (vs. material) options in response to mortality salience is statistically mediated by a desire for meaning. Specifically, people who focus on thoughts about their own death (vs. a neutral topic) indicate higher purchase intentions for the digital camera positioned via experiential (vs. material) aspects, and this effect is driven by the increased desire for meaning. In addition, the moderation by intrinsic value orientation suggests that those more attuned to seeking out meaning are more likely to both indicate an increased desire for meaning and demonstrate a preference for experiential over material options in response to mortality salience. Further, I cast doubt on one alternative explanation for the effects by showing that people who focus on thoughts about their own death (vs. a neutral topic) do not indicate higher perceived time scarcity. Taking these together, it appears that seeking out experiential options may indeed serve as a means of imbuing one’s life with a sense of meaning in response to mortality salience.

2.3.6 Study 5

In my final study, I provide further evidence for the role of meaning in determining the effect of mortality salience on consumer preferences for experiential over material options. In particular, I investigate meaning-fulfillment as a moderator of the observed effects. My framework proposes that thinking of one’s own death activates a desire for meaning, and it is this desire for meaning that leads individuals to be more likely to prefer experiences over material
goods. Drawing on this, I theorize that engaging in an alternative task that allows for meaning-fulfillment should satiate the desire to seek out meaning in response to mortality salience.

2.3.6.1 Procedure

Two hundred thirty MTurk participants (49.6% female, $M_{age} = 36.1$) completed the study in exchange for monetary compensation. This was a 2 (mortality: salient vs. control) x 2 (meaning-fulfillment: yes vs. no) between-participants design. Mortality salience was manipulated as in study 2. Participants in the meaning-fulfillment condition were asked to describe a past experience that they felt was meaningful and to explain why the event was meaningful to them (i.e., “Think about an event that was meaningful to you and reflect on this event for a moment or two” and “Please describe what the experience was and why you think it was meaningful to you”; see appendix). Participants in the no meaning-fulfillment condition were not asked to describe any of their past meaningful experiences. Participants then were instructed to list three future experiential and material purchases that they would like to make and to indicate their WTP for each. Finally, all participants answered demographic questions.

2.3.6.2 Results

As in study 4, I calculated a WTP index by subtracting the average WTP of the three material purchases from the average WTP of the experiential purchases, such that higher scores indicated a preference for experiential over experiential options. I performed a mortality x meaning-fulfillment ANOVA on the WTP index. Neither a main effect of mortality ($F(1, 226)$
= .28, p > .60), nor a main effect of meaning-fulfillment ($F(1, 226) = .51, p > .47$) emerged. As shown in figure 6, however, I found a significant interaction between mortality salience and meaning-fulfillment ($F(1, 226) = 5.88, p < .05$). Planned contrast revealed that, when participants were not given the opportunity to recall their past meaningful experience, those who focused on thoughts of their own death reported higher WTP for experiential (vs. material) purchases ($M_{\text{mortality}} = $90.49, SD = 428.70), compared to those who thought about grocery shopping ($M_{\text{control}} = -$139.62, SD = 673.18; $F(1, 226) = 4.46, p < .05$, see table 5). When participants were given the opportunity to recall their past meaningful experience, however, the tendency to indicate higher WTP for experiential than material purchases in response to mortality salience was eliminated ($M_{\text{mortality}} = -$154.30, SD = 851.29; $M_{\text{control}} = -$6.00, SD = 183.17; $F(1, 226) = 1.76, p > .18$).

### 2.3.6.3 Discussion

Study 5 provides additional evidence supporting the role of meaning in determining the observed effect. Consistent with my earlier findings, when participants are not given the opportunity to recall their past meaningful experience, mortality salience (vs. a neutral topic) leads to higher WTP for experiential (vs. material) purchases. When individuals are given the opportunity to fulfill their desire for meaning via an alternative route (e.g., recall a past meaningful experience) following thoughts of their own death, however, the influence of mortality salience on preferences toward experiences is eliminated. Taken together, the results are supportive of the notion that the observed effect is driven by a desire for meaning.
2.4 General Discussion

The current work brings to light one of the key consumption domains in which mortality salience has a substantial influence: experiential versus material purchases. I demonstrate that reminding people of their own mortality increases preferences for experiences over material goods. In particular, I show that those under mortality salience indicate a greater desire for experiences than for material goods (studies 1a and 1b), and are more likely to actually select experiential options (study 2). Furthermore, people indicate higher WTP (studies 3 and 5) and higher purchase intentions for experiential (vs. material) options (study 4) under conditions of mortality salience. I provide converging evidence that the mechanism underlying this effect is an activated desire for meaning, and the observed effect is heightened among those who strongly endorse intrinsic values (study 4). Finally, I show that the tendency to prefer experiential over material purchases in response to mortality salience is eliminated when people are given an opportunity to fulfill their meaningfulness via an alternative route (study 5).

2.4.1 Theoretical Implications

The current research builds upon the existing literature on downstream consequences of mortality salience by demonstrating that, in response to reminders of their own death, individuals show a tendency to shift preferences toward experiences as opposed to material goods. I build on past work on the role of meaning as a carrier of mortality salience effects. Prior work on TMT shows that worldview defense largely stems from a desire to maintain and restore a sense of meaning (e.g., Arndt et al. 2002; Pyszczynski et al. 2006) and the current work highlights one
way in which people may seek out meaning is through experiential consumption. My findings also build on past work documenting materialistic tendencies in response to reminders of mortality (e.g., Arndt et al. 2004; Kasser and Sheldon 2000; Mandel and Heine 1999). I note that some of this past work finds preferences for material options by only giving participants the option to endorse materialistic views (e.g., Kasser and Sheldon 2000; Mandel and Heine 1999). In the current research, I offer people the opportunity to endorse experiential options alongside the opportunity to endorse material options. Giving people only one way to respond to mortality salience, then, might be artificially exaggerating the degree to which certain responses are spurred by mortality salience. Future work might profitably examine reactions to mortality salience by giving people more than one means of responding to these types of threats.

In addition, the current research extends existing literature on experiential versus material consumption (Carter and Gilovich 2010, 2012; Gilovich and Kumar 2015; Nicolao et al. 2009; Tully et al. 2015; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003) by highlighting an additional key difference between the two: experiences may be more likely than material goods to create meaning and be selected for this purpose. I further elucidate the important role of experiential consumption as a key source of meaning, demonstrating that one way of coping with existential anxiety is to search for ways in which to imbue one’s life with a sense of meaning, and that people engage in more experiential (vs. material) consumption to fulfill the activated desire for meaning.
2.4.2 Practical Implications and Directions for Future Research

From a managerial perspective, the current research offers several novel insights for marketing practice, especially in one of the most rapidly growing business domains: experiential purchases. For example, deal-of-the-day websites such as Groupon and LivingSocial have offered thousands of local activities (e.g., kayak rental, wine tasting experience), travel packages (e.g., cruise to the Caribbean), pastimes (e.g., photography, art courses), and beauty services (e.g., massages, spa). Most of time, these websites are trying to attract consumers by advertising their best possible promotion or deal in terms of lowering their price, but these low-price approaches have become commonplace and make little difference among online merchants. To make promotion plans more effective, the implications of the current research are that marketers might subtly highlight the fleeting nature of existence when promoting experiential options. For example, Microsoft promoted the XBox console with the tagline: “Life is short. Play More.” I make this suggestion with the caveat that such things should be done in subtle and/or humorous ways, so as not to lead to any defensive consumer reactions.

Indeed, it may be the case that marketing campaigns that directly trigger a fear of death would be viewed as particularly offensive (Das et al. 2014). Thus, great effort should be taken for marketers to find unobtrusive mortality reminders that can be embedded in promotion plans in a non-threatening manner in order to differentiate their experiential products from competitors. For example, YOLO, an acronym for "You Only Live Once" can serve as a gentle reminder of human finitude and the limited amount of time left to us. Indeed, this trending term started being used by marketers selling adventures especially for young travelers (e.g., “Youth is a limited-
time offer. Squeeze more out of yours with YOLO” by YOLO tours, G Adventures; www.gadventures.com). However, it is not yet clear whether this type of promotions with subtle mortality reminders (e.g., YOLO tours) is more effective in leading consumers to engage in those activities in a real consumption setting, compared to the prevalent promotions (e.g., Active tours). This could be explored by future research.

Future work also might investigate whether the observed effect would be found for material products that are highly associated with meaningfulness. Although my conceptual framework proposes that people would perceive experiences as more meaningful than material goods, some material products can be perceived as particularly meaningful. For example, symbolic products that signal group membership or solidarity (e.g., school spirit wristbands, baseball caps) can be employed as a means of fulfilling one’s desire for social connectedness, which is closely related to meaning (Baumeister et al. 2013; Deci and Ryan 2008). Thus, it would be possible that preferences for experiences over material goods following mortality salience will be mitigated in a situation in which people perceive material products as particularly meaningful to themselves. This possibility may be worth examining in future studies.

Lastly, another interesting question that remains is, what are the downstream implications of consumers engaging in experiential (vs. material) consumption in response to mortality salience? If people indeed cope with thoughts of their own mortality by consuming experiences (vs. material goods), people should feel less anxious about death after engaging in experiential (vs. material) consumption, as it will buffer them from death anxiety by fulfilling their activated desire for meaning. Future work could investigate this possibility. I hope that the
current research spurs other work examining the nuances of experiential consumption. I would like to summarize the takeaway from this research with a quote from Brazilian novelist Paulo Coelho on his Twitter account (@paulocoelho, 2012): “One day, you will wake up and there won’t be any more time to do the things you’ve always wanted. Do it now.
Chapter 3: Getting It Right: The Role of Ideal Affect in Guiding Experiential versus Material Consumption

3.1 Introduction

“People ask me, 'What is the use of climbing Mount Everest?' and my answer must at once be, 'It is of no use.' There is not the slightest prospect of any gain whatsoever. We shall not bring back a single bit of gold or silver, not a gem, nor any coal or iron... What we get from this adventure is just sheer joy. And joy is, after all, the end of life.”


As British mountaineer George Mallory noted, emotions can be the ultimate goal of experiential pursuits. His quote further points to the possibility that the affective benefits derived from experiences are perhaps qualitatively different and more meaningful than the benefits to be derived from material goods. Indeed, research has considered differences between experiential purchases (i.e., those made with the primary intention of acquiring an experience) and material purchases (i.e., those made with the primary intention of acquiring a tangible good or material possession), and has suggested that experiential pursuits ultimately leave consumers happier than do material pursuits (e.g., Carter and Gilovich 2010; Van Boven 2005; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). The current research highlights an additional factor that distinguishes experiential from material consumption and proposes that consumers making choices in experiential as opposed to material domains are more likely to choose in accordance with ideal affect (i.e., the qualitative type of positive affect that they would ideally like to feel, such as excitement or peacefulness). I
propose and find that the mechanism underlying these effects is the tendency for consumers to focus more on the anticipated affective states that would be derived from the choice when choosing in experiential versus material domains.

3.2 Conceptual Background and Hypotheses Development

Discussion of the dichotomy between *doing* and *having* dates back at least to Aristotle (trans. 1996) and Hume (1737), and was notably elaborated by Fromm (1976). These philosophers all suggested that people ought to place a higher value on experiences than the acquisition of material goods. Consumer researchers continue to ponder the differential benefits of acquiring experiences as opposed to material goods (Belk 1985; Carter and Gilovich 2010, 2012; Dunn and Norton 2013; Gilovich and Kumar 2015; Nicolao et al. 2009; Rosenzweig and Gilovich 2012; Sirgy 1998; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Much of this work suggests that those who endorse materialistic values tend to report lower levels of subjective well-being (Belk 1985; Richins and Dawson 1992) and that opting for material goods leads to decreased happiness and satisfaction compared to choosing experiential options (Carter and Gilovich 2010; Van Boven 2005; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Many research efforts have been devoted to uncovering systematic differences between experiential and material purchases that might drive these differences in ultimate satisfaction. For example, research has suggested that, compared to material purchases, experiential purchases are less likely to lead to social comparisons and other forms of comparative evaluation (Carter and Gilovich 2010; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). In addition, compared to material options, experiential choices are often more closely linked to the self-concept (Carter and Gilovich 2012), more prone to being re-construed in terms of positive
abstract, higher-level meanings (e.g., “becoming cultured”; Van Boven 2005; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003), and more likely to facilitate social connections (Caprariello and Reis 2013; Howell and Hill 2009; Van Boven, Campbell, and Gilovich 2010).

3.2.1 The Affective Nature of Experiential versus Material Options

Importantly, research has begun to suggest that experiential consumption is such that it leads to unique affective outcomes beyond general satisfaction. For example, recently, Kumar, Killingsworth, and Gilovich (2014) found that consumers tend to report more pleasant emotions when thinking about a possible future purchase of an experience rather than a material possession. I build on this work to highlight an additional affective distinction between the pursuit of experiential and material options. In particular, I suggest that consumers are more likely to anticipate the nature of the future affective states that might be derived from their choice when selecting among experiential versus material options. By “nature” of future affective states I refer to the fact that although, in general, people desire and seek out positive affective states (Elliot and Thrash 2002), the precise type of positive affect that people wish to attain can vary. Indeed, according to Tsai, Knutson, and Fung (2006), consumers can be motivated to pursue ideal affect, which refers to the qualitative nature of the positive affective states that people value, prefer, and ideally want to feel. According to Tsai and colleagues (2006; Tsai 2007), ideal affect can be categorized into two types: high-arousal positive affective states (HAP), which include excitement, enthusiasm, or elation; and low-arousal positive affective states (LAP), which include calmness, peacefulness, or serenity. Individual differences in ideal affect (i.e., differences in terms of valuation of HAP versus LAP) account for differences in mood-producing
behaviors such as choice of leisure activities and musical preferences. For example, while those who value HAP over LAP are more likely to prefer thrilling leisure activities and exciting music, those who value LAP over HAP prefer peaceful leisure activities and calm music (Tsai 2007).

The current research builds this notion of ideal affect to suggest that choosing in experiential (vs. material) domains leads consumers to be more likely to anticipate their potential future affective states, and in particular to consider the qualitative nature of affective states they would ideally like to experience. Because of this, I predict that when consumers choose in more experiential as opposed to material domains, they will be more likely to select options that are in line with their ideal affect. In support of this notion, previous authors have characterized the “experiential view” in part by its focus on feelings (Havlena and Holbrook 1986; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Kwortnik and Ross 2007). In addition, experiences are often consumed for the general positive emotions they engender, such as joy and pleasure (MacInnis, Patrick, and Park 2006). Drawing upon this past theorizing, I go further to suggest that experiences, more so than material goods, have the ability to increase the consumer’s focus on the nature of the potential future affective consequences of his or her choice. While past research has suggested that material and experiential pursuits are the two types of purchases that people make with the intention of advancing generally positive affect and happiness in life (e.g., Van Boven 2000; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003), I propose that people are better able to select the type of option that will create the “right” type of positive affect (i.e., ideal affect) when choosing in experiential as opposed to material domains. More formally, I hypothesize that:
**H1a:** Consumers are more likely to anticipate experiencing their ideal affective states from their given choice when selecting in experiential versus material domains.

**H1b:** Consumers are more likely to make choices that are congruent with their ideal affect when considering experiential versus material options.

3.2.2 **The Role of Affective Anticipation**

I further suggest that the tendency for consumers to be more likely to make selections that are in accordance with ideal affect in experiential (but not material) domains will be driven by *affective anticipation*. I define affective anticipation as the propensity to consider and anticipate the potential future affective states that might be derived from one’s choices. While this construct is related to the notion of affective forecasting, I see it as being conceptually distinct. Affective forecasting refers to the explicit prediction of one’s future affective state(s) and often focuses on the accuracy of such predictions (e.g., Buehler and McFarland 2001; Wilson and Gilbert 2003; Gilbert et al., 1998). In my research, I am interested in the degree to which people consider their possible future affective states when making a choice, rather than how accurate their predictions of these affective states are.

Past work suggests that when making decisions, people often anticipate how they will feel as a result of their selections and use such feelings (e.g., anticipated pleasure) as guides to choice (Loewenstein and Schkade 1999; Mellers and McGraw 2001; Mellers, Ritov, and
Schwartz 1999). I propose that, because experiences are closely associated with affective elements (Havlena and Holbrook 1986; Kwortnik and Ross 2007; MacInnis et al. 2006), people will be more likely to anticipate the potential future affective consequences of choice when choosing options in experiential (but not material) domains. I further suggest that it is this process of affective anticipation that will lead people to be more likely to select options that are consistent with their ideal affective states when selecting in experiential (vs. material) domains. Note that the anticipated affective states I refer here are conceptually different from anticipatory emotions (Baumgartner, Pieters, and Bagozzi 2008), which refer to currently experienced emotions because of the prospect of uncertain future events that have positive or negative consequences (e.g., hope or fear). Since my theorizing predicts that people making a choice in experiential (vs. material) consumption are more likely to anticipate potential affective outcomes, which will be derived from their choice, the anticipated affective states are conceptually close to anticipated emotions (Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Pieters 1998; Mellers and McGraw 2001), which refer to emotions that are expected to be experienced in the certain events do or do not occur (e.g., anticipated joy or regret). While research to date has demonstrated that choosing (Carter and Gilovich 2010; Van Boven 2005; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003) or thinking about (Kumar et al. 2014) experiential (vs. material) options can lead to more positive moods and emotions in general, no work to my knowledge has looked at how choosing experiential (vs. material) options might influence how people anticipate and use affective information in informing their choice. Nor has past work examined how consumers are differentially sensitive to the ideal affect when selecting in experiential (vs. material) consumption. Thus, I predict that:
**H2a:** Selecting in a product domain that is viewed as being more experiential (vs. material) in nature will increase affective anticipation.

**H2b:** Affective anticipation will mediate the tendency to choose options that are congruent with one’s own ideal affect in experiential as opposed to material domains.

Notably, although some past work has theorized that experiential consumption is more affective in nature than is material consumption (e.g., Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Kwortnik and Ross 2007), the notion that experiential options can increase affective anticipation has not been empirically tested. Given that I suggest that people will experience greater affective anticipation when selecting among experiential (vs. material) options, I conducted a preliminary pilot study to examine this possibility. Undergraduates \( n = 86 \) were asked to recall either a material or experiential purchase and were then asked to report on 7-point scales the degree to which they focused on the anticipation of affective states when making their purchase decision. In particular, they were asked the degree to which they thought about “How it would put me in the right kind of mood,” “How it would make me feel,” “How it would be something that I would enjoy” \((\alpha = .84)\). Participants in the experiential condition reported being relatively more likely to focus on the anticipation of potential future affective states when making their choice \((M_{\text{experiential}} = 5.95, SD = 1.24)\) than did those in the material condition \((M_{\text{material}} = 5.31, SD = 1.41; F(1, 85) = 4.72, p < .05)\). Thus, my pretest revealed that people do report higher levels of affective anticipation when making choices in experiential as opposed to material domains.
3.2.3 The Moderating Role of Motivation to Attain Ideal Affect

Thus far, I have argued that choosing in experiential (vs. material) domains heightens affective anticipation, which leads to decisions that are congruent with ideal affect. I further suggest that affective anticipation will only become relevant under conditions where the consumer is particularly motivated to attain their ideal affective state. Importantly, my theorizing predicts that the observed effects will be eliminated when the desire to attain ideal affect has already been fulfilled. In particular, I propose that the tendency to choose options that are congruent with ideal affect when selecting in experiential (vs. material) options will be particularly prominent among those who have a discrepancy between their currently experienced affect and their ideal affect. My prediction builds on work which has demonstrated that when the individual’s affective state is incongruent with their desired one, this leads to discrepancy-reducing behaviors that help to achieve the desired affect (Augustine et al. 2010; Hirt and McCrea 2000; Kampfe and Mitte 2009; Larsen 2000). This past research largely shows that such affect discrepancy-reducing endeavors are aimed at mood regulation more generally (i.e., with the goal of increasing positive [and decreasing negative] affect; Schwarz and Clore 1983).

I show that discrepancies can not only emerge in terms of a general desire for relatively more positive affect, but that discrepancies can also emerge in terms of type of positive affect that the consumer wishes to attain (i.e., ideal affect). I suggest that experiential (vs. material) purchases tend to increase affective anticipation of potential future affective states and that such sensitivity to affective consequences should make people more readily be aware of an affective
discrepancy if their current affect deviates from their ideal affect. Consequently, people choosing in experiential (vs. material) domains will be particularly motivated to make choices that are congruent with their ideal affect in a situation in which their current affect is incongruent from their ideal affect. When people are experiencing current affect that is congruent with their ideal affect, however, the motivation to attain ideal affect will be reduced and people will not differ in their tendency to choose options that are congruent with ideal affect across experiential versus material domains. In other words, I propose that the presence or absence of an affective discrepancy between current affect and ideal affect will moderate the tendency to choose options that are in line with ideal affect in experiential (vs. material) domains:

\[ \text{H3a: When individuals’ current affect is incongruent with the type of affective state that they would ideally like to have, they will be more likely to select options in line with ideal affect when choosing in experiential as opposed to material domains.} \]

\[ \text{H3b: When individuals’ current affect is congruent with the affective states that they would ideally like to have, the tendency to choose in line with ideal affect in experiential (vs. material) domains will be mitigated.} \]

3.2.4 The Effect of Choosing in Line with Ideal Affect on Satisfaction with Choice

So far, I have argued that consumers selecting options in experiential (vs. material) consumption are more likely to make a choice in a manner that aligns with ideal affect. I have further proposed that this tendency will be enhanced when consumers are particularly motivated
to regulate their affective states in ways that are consistent with ideal affect, and it will be no longer observed when this affect-regulation goal has been met. One interesting question that arises is what are the potential downstream consequences of choosing in ways that are congruent (or incongruent) with ideal affect when consumers make a choice in experiential (vs. material) domains? Given that past research has shown that experiential purchases often lead to greater satisfaction than material purchases (e.g., Van Boven and Gilovich 2003), I am particularly interested in how choosing in manners that are congruent with ideal affect might play a role in determining consumer post-purchase satisfaction. I propose that the tendency to choose options in line with ideal affect is one of the reasons why consumers report greater satisfaction with experiential (vs. material) consumption. In contrast, I expect that when consumers selecting more experiential (vs. material) options choose in a manner that is incongruent with their ideal affect, differences in satisfaction across experiential and material choices will be mitigated. Thus:

**H4a:** Consumers are more satisfied with their purchases over time when their choices are made in line with their ideal affect in experiential as opposed to material domains.

**H4b:** When choices are not made in line with ideal affect, differences in satisfaction derived from experiential compared to material choices are no longer observed.

To examine the role that choosing a product in line with ideal affect plays in relatively more experiential (vs. material) consumption, I employ a consequential choice study. Using real-world purchases, I investigate whether consumers are likely to derive greater satisfaction over time when they make choices in accordance with (vs. not in accordance with) their ideal affect,
and whether the effect only emerges when the product category is experiential (vs. material).

3.2.5 The Current Research

The current research makes several contributions to the literature. First, building on work that has identified a number of key differences between experiential and material consumption (Carter and Gilovich 2010, 2012; Dunn and Norton 2013; Nicolao et al. 2009; Rosenzweig and Gilovich 2012; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003), I highlight an additional difference between experiences and material goods. In particular, I show that consumers are more likely to make choices that are guided by ideal affect when selecting among experiential as opposed to material options. Thus, the current work highlights that it is not the case that individuals only choose in ways that allows them to maximize general positive affect, as past work has shown (e.g., Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Instead, I highlight the important role of ideal affect and show that when people select experiential (vs. material) options, they are particularly attuned to the qualitative nature of their affective states and choose in accordance with the type of positive affect they would ideally like to experience, such as peacefulness (LAP) or excitement (HAP).

Second, I propose that the observed effects are driven by affective anticipation. Building upon previous research on affective forecasting which has demonstrated that choices are often based on the feelings one anticipates will arise from the choice (Loewenstein and Schkade 1999; March 1978; Mellers et al. 1999), I examine whether the choice domain is construed as being more experiential or material in nature can impact consumers’ anticipation of potential future affective outcomes. I predict that such affective anticipation, in turn, can drive choices that are
congruent with the consumer’s own ideal affect.

Third, I suggest that situational factors that increase or decrease the motivation to attain ideal affect, such as currently experienced mood states, can moderate the observed effects. I build upon past work that has demonstrated that people will often engage in affect regulation in ways that allow them to resolve discrepancies between actual and desired affective states. While past work shows that people often engage more generally in affect regulation, in ways that increase positive (and decrease negative) affect (e.g., Augustine and Larsen 2015; Kampfe and Mitte 2009; Larsen 2000), I show that people can also become motivated to regulate the precise qualitative nature of positive affect that they would like to feel. That is, people who select in more experiential (vs. material) domains in a situation where their current affect is incongruent with their ideal affect are more likely to make choices in line with their ideal affect. When the goal to achieve ideal affect has already been fulfilled, the tendency to select options that are in line with ideal affect among material (vs. material) options is no longer observed.

Finally, the current research builds on past work offering reasons why experiences might lead to greater satisfaction than material goods. In particular, I demonstrate that choosing options in a way that is consistent with ideal affect leads to greater reported satisfaction among those making more experiential as opposed to material purchases. However, I show that when people do not choose in a way that is congruent with ideal affect, the observed differences in satisfaction between experiential and material purchases are eliminated. Thus, I provide evidence that an additional driver of differences in reported satisfaction in experiential versus material domains may be the tendency to make selections that are consistent with the qualitative type of affect that
one would ideally like to experience.

In sum, I demonstrate that consumers are more likely to anticipate their future affective states (pilot study) and to anticipate the type of affect they would ideally like to feel associated with a given choice (study 1) when the domain is more experiential as opposed to material. Moreover, I predict and find that people are more likely to make selections that are congruent with their ideal affect when choosing among experiences as opposed to material goods (study 2). Further, I provide evidence that the mechanism underlying this effect is affective anticipation (study 3). The tendency to make selections in line with ideal affect in experiential (vs. material) domains is more prominent for those whose current affect is incongruent with their ideal affect and is mitigated when ideal affect has already been attained (study 4). Finally, using a study with consequential choices, I demonstrate that consumers are likely to derive greater satisfaction over time when they make choices in accordance with their ideal affect and that the effect only emerges in experiential (and not material) domains (study 5). When consumers do not make selections that are congruent with ideal affect, no differences in reported satisfaction across experiential and material purchases are observed.

3.3 Empirical Investigation

3.3.1 Study 1

In study 1, I examine whether people anticipate their ideal affect from their given choice when selecting in a product domain that is perceived to be relatively more experiential than
material. While my pretest provides evidence that people are more likely to generally think about their potential future affective states when choosing in experiential as opposed to material domains, in this study, I examine whether people report being particularly likely to anticipate their *ideal affective states* related to their choice in experiential domains. I predict that people will be more likely to anticipate future affective states associated with their chosen option that are in line with their ideal affect when selecting in experiential (vs. material) domains.

### 3.3.1.1 Procedure

Three hundred eighty-four undergraduate students participated in exchange for monetary compensation (64.3% female, $M_{age} = 21.7$). This was a 2 (Purchase Type: experiential vs. material) x continuous (ideal affect) design that varied purchase type between-participants. I first measured participants’ ideal affect using the affect valuation index (AVI; Tsai et al. 2006), asking them to indicate how much they would ideally like to feel each of HAP (excited, enthusiastic, elated, strong) and each of LAP (calm, peaceful, serene, relaxed) on a 5-point scale ($1 = \text{never; } 5 = \text{all the time}$). Participants were then randomly assigned to either the experiential or the material condition and were given a hypothetical scenario of purchasing a new digital camera. In the experiential condition, participants were asked to take a moment to think about experiential aspects of a new digital camera and to describe which aspects of a camera can be considered experiential, why they think of a camera as an experiential purchase, and how they can make good use of a camera as an experience (see appendix). In the material condition, participants were asked to take a moment to think about material aspects of a digital camera and to describe which aspects of a camera can be considered material, why they think of a camera as a material
object, and how they can make good use of a camera as a material good (see appendix).

Participants then viewed four different camera options (all priced the same), each with a brief product description. Participants were asked to choose which camera they would most like to purchase and indicate to what extent they anticipated experiencing the following emotions as a result of their choice: excited, enthusiastic, elated, strong (HAP) and serene, peaceful, relaxed, calm (LAP). As a manipulation check for purchase type participants answered: “To what extent did you consider the purchase of a digital camera to be experiential or material?” (7-point scale: 1 = experiential, 7 = material). Finally, all participants answered demographic questions.

3.3.1.2 Results

3.3.1.2.1 Manipulation Check

Participants who had thought about the material aspects of a camera perceived the product category to be relatively more material ($M_{\text{material}} = 4.01, \text{SD} = 1.67$), than did those who had thought about experiential aspects of a camera ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 3.67, \text{SD} = 1.69$; $F(1, 382) = 3.91, p < .05$). Thus my manipulation of purchase type was successful.

3.3.1.2.2 Anticipated Affective Experiences from Purchase of the Camera

Before the analyses, ideal-affect scores were first computed by subtracting the mean of the LAP scores ($\alpha = .80$) from the mean of the HAP scores ($\alpha = .72$). As the dependent measure, anticipated affective scores were calculated by subtracting the mean of the LAP scores ($\alpha = .86$)
from the mean of the HAP scores ($\alpha = .79$). If a score in this index is greater (less) than zero, this indicates that the participant anticipated HAP (LAP) relatively more than LAP (HAP). First, I performed a regression analysis with participants’ ideal-affect scores, purchase condition, ideal-affect scores multiplied by purchase condition, as predictors on anticipated affective experiences to test my prediction that consumers are more likely to anticipate affective experiences in line with their ideal affect when they consider the purchase of a camera as more experiential than material. As expected, this analysis revealed a significant interaction ($\beta = .14$, $t(380) = 1.97$, $p < .05$). Specifically, participants were likely to report anticipating emotions that were congruent with their own ideal affect in the experiential purchase condition ($\beta = .19$, $t(190) = 2.60$, $p < .05$), but not in the material purchase condition ($\beta = -.02$, $t(190) = -.24$, $p > .80$).

3.3.1.3 Discussion

The results of study 1 demonstrate that when consumers made a choice in an experiential domain they reported anticipating their desired type of emotions (i.e., ideal affect) linked to their given choice. Those who made a choice in a material domain, on the other hand, did not anticipate experiencing affective states in line with their ideal affect. Taken together, my pilot study and study 1 suggest that when choosing in experiential (vs. material) domains people are more likely to anticipate their potential future affective states, and, in particular, to anticipate affective states that are congruent with their own ideal affect associated with their given choice. In study 2, I examine whether people are more likely to actually make choices that are congruent with their ideal affect when choosing in experiential as opposed to material domains.
3.3.2 Study 2

In this study I present consumers with options that vary in terms of the degree to which they lead to LAP or HAP. I examine the prediction that people are more likely to make choices that are consistent with their ideal affect when they are considering experiential versus material options. More specifically, I anticipate that people who value HAP (LAP) over LAP (HAP) are more likely to choose options that evoke HAP (LAP) rather than LAP (HAP) when choosing in experiential as opposed to material domains.

3.3.2.1 Procedure

One hundred twenty-four undergraduate students completed the study in the lab in exchange for monetary compensation (64.2% female, M\text{age} = 24.6). This was a 2 (Purchase Type: experiential vs. material) x continuous (ideal affect) design that varied purchase type within-participants. I first measured participants’ ideal affect using the affect valuation index (AVI; Tsai et al. 2006). Participants were then asked to complete a choice task that was introduced as a survey ostensibly examining consumer preferences. The choice task depicted eight different choices. Four of the choices were made in experiential categories (e.g., summer activities, winter activities, exercise class, tour program) and four of the choices were made in material categories (e.g., painting, poster, shoes, book). In addition, each choice set included one HAP item and one LAP item (see appendix). For experiential purchases, the HAP items consisted of rafting, skiing, spinning, and a beer festival tour; and the LAP items consisted of reading a book on a boat, enjoying a hot spa, yoga, and a winery tour. For the material purchases, the HAP items consisted
of a vividly colored painting, a colorful poster, running shoes, and a fantasy book; and the LAP items consisted of a staid and muted painting, a landscape poster, slippers, and an educational book. All the materials were pretested to confirm that the items that were selected to produce HAP (LAP) evoked more HAP (LAP) (i.e., excited, enthusiastic, elated, strong) rather than LAP (HAP) (i.e., serene, peaceful, relaxed, calm; see appendix). I randomized both the order of the eight pairs as well as the position of the HAP and LAP items within each pair. Participants were asked to choose one of the two items (HAP or LAP) in each of the four experiential and the four material purchase choice sets. After making their choices, participants completed demographic questions.

3.3.2.2 Results

There were no effects of the order in which eight purchase pairs were presented, or of the order in which the HAP and LAP items were positioned within each pair (all $F < 1$). As in study 1, I computed participants’ ideal-affect scores by subtracting the mean of the LAP scores ($\alpha = .78$) from the mean of the HAP scores ($\alpha = .72$). As the dependent measure, I calculated the proportion of HAP choices made in both the experiential and material domains.

To test my key prediction that consumers would select options in line with their ideal affect when the product category was more experiential as opposed to material, I performed a repeated-measures ANOVA with purchase type as the within-subject variable and ideal affect as a continuous covariate variable predicting choice of HAP options. As shown in figure 7, this analysis revealed a significant interaction ($F(1,122) = 4.23, p < .05$). Follow-up regression
analyses showed that participants’ ideal affect was a significant predictor of experiential options \( (\beta = .21, t(122) = 2.42, p < .05) \), indicating that participants made choices in line with their ideal affect in experiential purchases. When considering material purchases, however, participants’ ideal affect did not predict their choices \( (\beta = .01, t(122) = .11, p > .91) \), indicating that ideal affect was not associated with the selection of material options.

### 3.3.2.3 Discussion

The results of study 2 demonstrate the key role that ideal affect plays in guiding choices of experiences as opposed to choices of material goods. Participants’ ideal affective states were predictive of their selections when the product category was experiential in nature, but not when it was material. Specifically, when choosing in experiential domains, participants were very sensitive to ideal affect: people who valued HAP over LAP were more likely to choose HAP options over LAP options. However, in material domains, participants were insensitive to ideal affect and did not make choices in accordance with their ideal affective states.

### 3.3.3 Study 3

The results of study 2 suggest that consumers are more likely to make selections that are in line with their ideal affective states when the product category is experiential versus material. Study 3 seeks to build on these findings by providing evidence for the proposed mechanism underlying the observed effects. In particular, I suggest that experiential (but not material) purchases heighten affective anticipation or the focus on potential future affective states that will
be derived from the choice. Because of this increased affective anticipation, consumers choosing in experiential domains are more likely to select options that are congruent with their ideal affect than are those choosing in material choice domains. To examine this, study 3 predicts that considering experiential versus material purchases will increase affective anticipation, or the propensity to consider the potential future affective states that might be derived from one’s choice.

In addition, to extend both the internal and external validity of my findings, study 3 uses a different manipulation of product type. One potential limitation of study 2 was that it utilized different products across the experiential and material conditions. Because of this, the experiential versus material options may have been perceived by participants as differing on some other dimension such as cost, time to consume, etc. In addition, although the options used to reflect experiential and material purchases in study 2 were pretested, this distinction might not have been straightforward for all participants (Carter and Gilovich 2012; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). For example, a painting, which was considered one of the material purchases in study 2, can be also viewed as an experiential purchase for some people who might tend to focus on experiential aspects of the item. Notably, although some purchases have both experiential and material elements, I contend that what is important is the consumer’s perception of the degree to which the choice option is relatively more experiential as opposed to material. Thus, in study 3 I manipulate the consumer’s perception of the relative nature of the purchase as being either more experiential or material in nature while holding the product category constant.
3.3.3.1 Procedure

Two hundred forty-one MTurk participants (58.3% female, \(M_{age} = 25.2\)) completed the study in exchange for monetary compensation. This was a 2 (Purchase Type: experiential vs. material) x continuous (ideal affect) design that varied purchase type between-participants. As in study 2, participants’ ideal affect was first measured with the AVI scale (Tsai et al. 2006). Participants then were randomly assigned to either the experiential or the material condition and given a hypothetical scenario of purchasing a new painting. Those in the experiential condition were asked to read an article, ostensibly from an art magazine, reporting that consumers generally think purchases of paintings are made with the primary intention of acquiring experiential benefits. They then were asked to focus on experiential aspects of paintings (i.e., “Describe which aspects of paintings can be considered experiential, why you think of paintings as experiences, and how you can make good use of paintings as experiences.”). Those in the material condition read an article reporting that consumers generally think purchases of paintings are made with the primary intention of acquiring a material good. They then were asked to focus on material aspects of paintings (i.e., “Describe which aspects of paintings can be considered material, why you think of paintings as material objects, and how you can make good use of paintings as material goods.”; see appendix).

Afterward, participants were then asked to imagine that they are at an art gallery considering the purchase of a new painting and rate three items to measure the focus on the anticipated affective states that would be derived from their choices. Specifically, they were asked the degree to which they would think about when deciding on the purchase of a painting:
“How the purchase of a painting would make me feel,” “How my painting choices could impact my feelings,” “How the purchase of a painting would be something that I would enjoy,” (completed on 7-point scales). Participants were then asked to complete a choice task depicting eight different pairs of paintings. Choices were presented to participants such that each choice consisted of one HAP painting and one LAP painting (see appendix). The HAP items consisted of vividly-colored and colorful paintings, whereas the LAP items consisted of staid and muted paintings (see appendix). All the materials were pretested and confirmed that the HAP (LAP) paintings evoked more HAP (LAP) (i.e., excited, enthusiastic, elated, strong) rather than LAP (HAP) (i.e., serene, peaceful, relaxed, calm). I randomized both the order of the eight pairs of paintings as well as the position of the HAP and LAP paintings within each pair. Participants were asked to choose one of the two items (HAP or LAP) that they would like to purchase in each of the eight pairs. As a check for the purchase type manipulation, participants were asked to answer: “To what extent did you consider the purchase of paintings as experiential or material?” (7-point scale: 1 = experiential, 7 = material). Finally, all participants completed demographic questions.

3.3.3.2 Results

3.3.3.2.1 Manipulation Check

Participants who had written about the material aspects of paintings perceived the purchase of a painting as relatively more material ($M_{\text{material}} = 3.87, SD = 1.66$) compared to those who had written about experiential aspects of paintings ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 3.17, SD = 1.46; F(1, 239)$)
= 12.00, \( p < .01 \)). Thus my manipulation of purchase type was successful.

### 3.3.3.2.2 Painting Choices

Participants’ ideal-affect scores were calculated by subtracting the mean of the LAP scores (\( \alpha = .86 \)) from the mean of the HAP scores (\( \alpha = .85 \)). As the dependent measure, I summed the number of HAP choices made and calculated the proportion of HAP choices. To test my prediction that consumers would select options more in line with their ideal affect when they considered the purchase of a painting to be more experiential than material, I performed a regression analysis with purchase type (1 = experiential; 0 = material), participants’ ideal-affect scores, and ideal-affect scores multiplied by purchase condition, as predictors on HAP painting choices. As expected, this analysis revealed a significant interaction (\( \beta = .31 \), \( t(237) = 3.37 \), \( p < .01 \)), such that participants relied more on their ideal affect when focusing on more experiential (vs. material) aspects of the purchase of a painting (see figure 8). Specifically, participants were more likely to select options in line with their ideal affect when they considered the purchase of a painting to be more experiential (\( \beta = .40 \), \( t(116) = 4.65 \), \( p < .001 \)) than material (\( \beta = -.05 \), \( t(121) = -.52 \), \( p > .60 \)).

### 3.3.3.2.3 Role of Affective Anticipation

My proposed mechanism suggests that when the choice domain is construed as being more experiential (vs. material), this increases consumers’ anticipation of the future affective states that might be derived from their selections. Such increased affective anticipation, in turn,
drives choices that are congruent with the consumer’s own ideal affect (HAP or LAP). To test this prediction, I first averaged the three rating items measuring affective anticipation to create an affective anticipation index ($\alpha = .75$). I then conducted a moderated mediation analysis (model 15; Hayes 2013) with purchase type (1 = experiential; 0 = material) as the independent variable, the HAP painting choices as the dependent variable, affective anticipation as the mediating variable, and participants’ ideal-affect scores as the moderating variable between affective anticipation and the painting choices as well as between the purchase type and the painting choices (see figure 9).

First, as shown in table 6, I found a significant interaction between purchase type and ideal affect on the painting choices ($b = .1033, SE = .0456, t = 2.27, p = .05$), indicating that participants were more likely to select options in line with their ideal affect when they considered the purchase of a painting to be more experiential than material. Furthermore, there was a significant main effect of purchase type on affective anticipation ($b = 1.1115, SE = .1245, t = 8.93, p < .001$), indicating that participants in the experiential condition focused more on their anticipated future affective states, compared to those in the material condition. Finally, the procedures generated a 95% confidence interval around the indirect effect with zero falling outside the confidence interval ($b = .0444, SE = .0199, 95\% \text{ CI } = [.0083 \text{ to } .0878]$), indicating that the moderated mediating pathway was significant. These results confirmed that the observed effect of purchase type, in combination with participants’ ideal affect, on the painting choices was statistically mediated by participants’ affective anticipation.
3.3.3.3 Discussion

Study 3 replicates the finding that people choosing in experiential domains choose in a manner that is consistent with their ideal affect, while those choosing in material domains do not. The results of this study also provide evidence for the process underlying this effect. Participants who considered the purchase of a painting to be more experiential (vs. material) were more likely to anticipate the potential future affective states to be derived from the purchase. This increased affective anticipation, in turn, mediated the tendency for those selecting in experiential domains to select options that were congruent with their ideal affect.

3.3.4 Study 4

The previous studies provide converging evidence that consumers are more likely to make selections that are congruent with their ideal affective states when the purchase category is perceived to be experiential versus material in nature. In study 4, I examine what role the motivation to attain ideal affect has in influencing the observed tendency to make choices in line with ideal affect when selecting among experiential (vs. material) options. My conceptual framework holds that these differences in choices in experiential and material domains will only be observed when the motivation to attain ideal affect is present. When the motivation to attain ideal affect has been satiated, the observed effects will be mitigated. In particular, I suggest that when there is an affective discrepancy present this will lead individuals selecting in experiential (vs. material) domains to choose options in line with their ideal affect. When there is no affective discrepancy, the motivation to achieve ideal affect will be reduced, and the observed differences
between those in the experiential and material conditions will be mitigated.

### 3.3.4.1 Procedure

Three-hundred fifty MTurk participants (42.9% female, \(M_{age} = 35.2\)) completed the study in exchange for monetary compensation. This was a 2 (Current Affect: congruent vs. incongruent) x 2 (Purchase Type: experiential vs. material) x continuous (ideal affect) design that varied current affect and purchase type between-participants. As in study 3, participants’ ideal affect was first measured with the AVI scale (Tsai et al. 2006). Participants then were randomly assigned to either a current affect-congruent condition or a current affect-incongruent condition. Based on previous work which shows that mood states can be manipulated via music (Alpert and Alpert 1990; Erber, Wegner, and Therriault 1996), I asked participants in the congruent (incongruent) condition to listen to a piece of music that would put them in a current mood state that was either in accordance with (not in accordance with) their ideal affect. For example, in the congruent condition, I asked participants to listen to music that was congruent with their ideal affect (i.e., HAP people listened to music with a fast and rhythmic beat, which would make them feel emotions such as excitement and enthusiasm and LAP people listened to music with a slow and soft beat, which would make them feel emotions such as peacefulness and restfulness). In the incongruent conditions, participants listened to the type of music that would put them in a mood state that was incongruent with their ideal affect. Pretests confirmed that my manipulations were effective (see appendix). To ensure that participants had the time to really listen to the music, the study would not allow participants to progress in the survey until 40 seconds had passed. As check for the manipulation of current mood I asked participants to indicate to what
extent they felt HAP (excited, enthusiastic, elated, strong) and LAP (serene, peaceful, relaxed, calm).

After completing this task, participants were given a hypothetical scenario of purchasing a new painting. As in study 3, participants in the experiential condition were asked to focus on experiential aspects of paintings, whereas those in the material condition were asked to focus on material aspects of paintings. Participants were then asked to complete a choice task depicting five different pairs of paintings. They were asked to choose one of the two items (HAP or LAP) that they would like to purchase in each of the five pairs. Also, as a check for purchase type, I asked: “To what extent did you consider the purchase of paintings as experiential or material?” (7-point scale: 1 = experiential, 7 = material). All participants completed demographic questions.

3.3.4.2 Results

3.3.4.2.1 Manipulation Check

To ensure that participants indeed perceived the HAP (LAP) music as HAP (LAP), the music index was computed by subtracting the mean of the LAP music scores ($\alpha = .97$) from the mean of the HAP music scores ($\alpha = .88$). As anticipated, participants who had listened to the HAP music perceived the music as more HAP as opposed to LAP ($M_{\text{HAP-LAP}} = 1.52$, $SD = 1.69$), compared to those who had listened to the LAP music ($M_{\text{HAP-LAP}} = -2.59$, $SD = 1.52$; $F(1, 336) = 554.73, p < .01$). Thus my manipulation of music type appeared to be successful. In addition, participants who had thought about material aspects of a painting perceived the purchase of a
painting as more material ($M_{\text{material}} = 5.90$, $SD = .86$), compared to those who had thought about experiential aspects of a painting ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 2.11$, $SD = .90$; $F(1, 336) = 1565.03, p < .001$). Thus my manipulation of purchase type was successful.

### 3.3.4.2.2 Painting Choices

As in the previous studies, ideal-affect scores were first computed by subtracting the mean of the LAP scores ($\alpha = .92$) from the mean of the HAP scores ($\alpha = .90$). Since I was particularly interested in the discrepancy between participants’ actual and ideal affect, thirteen participants who were neutral in terms of valuation of HAP or LAP were excluded from the further analyses. As the dependent measure, I calculated the proportion of HAP choices. To test my prediction that consumers would select options more in line with their ideal affect when they considered the purchase of a painting to be more experiential than material, I performed a regression analysis with purchase condition (1 = experiential; 0 = material), participants’ ideal-affect scores, and ideal-affect scores multiplied by purchase condition, as predictors on painting choices. As expected, this analysis revealed a significant interaction, such that participants relied more on their ideal affect when focusing on more experiential (vs. material) aspects of the purchase of a painting ($\beta = .18$, $t(334) = 2.36, p < .05$). Follow-up regression analysis showed that participants were more likely to select options in line with their ideal affect when they considered the purchase of a painting to be more experiential ($\beta = .23$, $t(166) = 3.10, p < .05$) than material ($\beta = -.02$, $t(168) = -.25, p > .80$).

To test my key prediction that those experiencing a discrepancy between their current
and ideal affective states are more likely to make choices in accordance with their ideal affect when they consider the purchase of a painting to be more experiential than material, I performed a regression analyses of the painting choices on (i) purchase condition (1 = experiential; 0 = material), (ii) participants’ current affect (1 = incongruent; 0 = congruent), (iii) ideal affect, and (iv) all two-way and three-way interactions among purchase condition, participants’ current affect, and ideal affect. As predicted, a significant three-way interaction emerged ($\beta = .23$, $t(330) = 2.07$, $p < .001$). Specifically, participants whose current affect was incongruent with their ideal affect selected more options in line with their ideal affect when focusing on more experiential aspects ($\beta = .40$, $t(104) = 4.50$, $p < .001$) rather than material aspects of the purchase of a painting ($\beta = -.001$, $t(92) = -.01$, $p > .98$, see figure 10). When current affect is congruent with their ideal affect, however, participants’ ideal affect did not influence the selection of painting options when the purchase of a painting is considered neither experiential ($\beta = -.01$, $t(60) = -.08$, $p > .93$) nor material ($\beta = -.05$, $t(74) = -.40$, $p > .69$).

3.3.4.3 Discussion

The results of study 4 reveal that the tendency to make selections in line with ideal affect in experiential (vs. material) domains only emerged for those experiencing a discrepancy between their current affect and their ideal affect. That is, participants whose current mood state was incongruent with their ideal affect were more likely to select options that were congruent with their ideal affect when the purchase of a painting was construed as being experiential (but not as being material) in nature. This was not the case, however, for those whose current affective experience was congruent with their ideal affect. This suggests that the effect emerges
under conditions where the individual is motivated to attain ideal affect, but not under conditions where the goal of achieving ideal affect has already been attained.

### 3.3.5 Study 5

Thus far, I have argued that choosing in experiential (vs. material) domains heightens affective anticipation and leads to decisions that are congruent with ideal affect. I further suggest that this is driven by affective anticipation and that when the goal to attain ideal affect has been satiated, the observed differences in experiential and material domains are eliminated. One question that still remains is, what are the downstream implications of consumers choosing in ways that are congruent with ideal affect? In study 5, I employ a consequential choice study to investigate the potential downstream consequences of choosing in ways that are congruent (or incongruent) with ideal affect in experiential versus material domains. Given that past research has shown that experiential purchases often lead to greater satisfaction than material purchases (e.g., Van Boven and Gilovich 2003), I wished to examine what role choosing in ways that are congruent with ideal affect might play in determining consumer post-purchase satisfaction. Specifically, I propose that the tendency to choose in line with ideal affect is one of the reasons why individuals report greater satisfaction in experiential as opposed to material domains. I also anticipate that if those choosing in experiential domains choose in a manner that is not congruent with their ideal affect, differences in satisfaction across experiential and material choices will be mitigated.
3.3.5.1 Procedure

One-hundred fifty-four undergraduate students (59.2% female, M_age = 19.9) participated in a 2 (Ideal Affect Choice: congruent vs. incongruent) x 2 (Purchase Type: experiential vs. material) between-subjects design. Two days before participants were invited to the lab, I measured their ideal affect using the AVI scale (Tsai et al. 2006) via email in order to assign them to the current affect-congruent or affect-incongruent condition. Upon arrival to the lab, participants received a $10 gift card and were randomly assigned to either the experiential or the material condition. They were then asked to visit a local drug store to buy a real product using the gift card. Participants in the experiential condition were instructed to purchase an experiential product with the primary purpose of acquiring life experiences, and they were given examples of items that students commonly view as being experiential. Participants in the material condition were instructed to purchase a material product with the primary purpose of possessing goods, and they were given examples of items that students commonly view as being material (see appendix).

In addition, half the participants were assigned to the ideal affect-congruent choice condition and half were assigned to the ideal affect-incongruent choice condition. Those in the congruent condition were asked to purchase a product in accordance with their ideal affect. For example, based on the pre-measure of ideal affect, I asked participants who value HAP over LAP to purchase a product that would make them feel HAP such as excitement, elation, or enthusiasm, whereas I asked participants who value LAP over HAP to purchase a product that would make them feel LAP such as peacefulness, serenity, or restfulness. Those in the
incongruent condition were asked to purchase a product not in accordance with their ideal affect. All participants were instructed to come back to the lab with the product after purchase.

Participants completed a manipulation check item for purchase type: “To what extent did you think of the purchase as experiential or material?” (7-point scale: 1 = experiential, 7 = material). In addition, they completed a manipulation check for whether the product chosen was LAP or HAP: “High-arousal positive emotions include excitement, enthusiasm, or elation, whereas low-arousal positive emotions include peacefulness, serenity, or restfulness. Which type of emotion did you primarily consider when you were making a choice?”: 1 = low-arousal positive emotions, 7 = high arousal positive emotions). They were then asked to take the product home in order to actually use it. Five to ten days later, I asked participants to rate their satisfaction with the product via email: “To what extent were you satisfied with the product?”; “To what extent were you happy with the product?”; “To what extent did you like the product?” (7-point scale: 1 = not at all, 7 = very much so).

3.3.5.2 Results

Ideal-affect scores were calculated by subtracting the mean of the LAP scores (α = .81) from the mean of the HAP scores (α = .75). Since I was particularly interested in how the congruence or incongruence between participants’ ideal affect and affective experiences evoked by the purchase would influence consumers’ actual satisfaction, eight participants who were neutral in terms of valuation of HAP or LAP were excluded from the further analyses. Also, one participant who failed the congruent (vs. incongruent) manipulation check and one participant
who failed to report her actual satisfaction with the product were excluded, leaving a final sample of 124 participants.

3.3.5.2.1 Manipulation Check

Participants in the material condition more strongly perceived their purchase to be material as opposed to experiential ($M_{\text{material}} = 4.79$, $SD = 1.20$) than did those in the experiential condition ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 3.46$, $SD = 1.58$; $F(1, 142) = 32.21, p < .001$). Thus my manipulation of purchase type appeared to be successful.

3.3.5.2.2 Consumers’ Actual Satisfaction

First, the three satisfaction ratings were averaged ($\alpha = .92$). I performed an ideal affect x purchase type ANOVA on the reported satisfaction as a dependent variable. As shown in figure 11, I found a significant interaction between the ideal affect choice and the purchase type manipulation ($F(1, 140) = 5.52, p < .05$). I followed up with an analysis of planned contrasts. In the congruent condition, participants reported higher satisfaction with their purchase when the choice domain was experiential as opposed to material ($M_{\text{exp}} = 6.11$, $SD = .92$; $M_{\text{mat}} = 5.22$, $SD = 1.60$; $F(1, 140) = 8.70, p < .01$, see table 7). In the incongruent condition, however, the satisfaction that consumers derived from the experiential purchases was no longer observed ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 5.43$, $SD = 1.00$; $M_{\text{material}} = 5.47$, $SD = 1.28$; $F(1, 140) = .02, p > .90$).
3.3.5.3 Discussion

Using a methodology with real implications for consumers, study 5 demonstrates the distinct role that ideal affect plays in experiential versus material purchases in terms of satisfaction over time with the choice. When consumers chose in a way that was congruent with ideal affect, greater experienced satisfaction was reported in response to experiential as opposed to material purchases. However, when consumers chose in a way that was incongruent with ideal affect, the differences in experienced satisfaction were eliminated. This has key implications for consumer well-being, suggesting that choosing experiential options in a way that aligns with ideal affect is likely one of the drivers of consumers’ greater satisfaction related to experiences compared to material goods. Choosing experiential options in a manner that is incongruent with ideal affect leads consumers to be no more satisfied with experiential than material options.

3.4 General Discussion

The current research brings to light a previously unexplored difference between experiential and material purchases. In particular, I demonstrate that experiential (vs. material) options have the unique consequence of making consumers more attuned to the potential future affective consequences of their choice and more likely select options that are congruent with their ideal affective states. I show that the mechanism underlying the effect is affective anticipation. I do so by showing that people more generally anticipate their future affective (pilot study) and specifically anticipate their ideal affective states from their chosen option when the domain is experiential (but not material; study 1). Moreover, I demonstrate that affective
anticipation mediates the tendency to choose options that are in line with ideal affect in experiential versus material domains (study 3). Furthermore, the observed effects only emerge under conditions where the individual is motivated to attain ideal affect, but not under conditions where the goal of achieving ideal affect has already been attained (study 4). Finally, I show that consumers are more likely to derive greater satisfaction when they make choices in accordance with their ideal affect in experiential (vs. material) domains. When consumers do not make selections that are congruent with ideal affect, however, the greater satisfaction derived from experiential as opposed to material purchases is no longer observed (study 5).

3.4.1 Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, the current research contributes to consumer behavior and marketing literature in several ways. While previous work has shown that experiential (vs. material) options provide greater consumer satisfaction, I extend this existing research by demonstrating that the nature of experiential consumption results in unique affective consequences. Specifically, experiences, more so than material goods, lead consumers to be more attuned to the potential future affective consequences of their choice and to particularly focus on the qualitative nature of their potential future affective states. Importantly, the current work uncovers an exception to the claim that individuals selecting more experiential (vs. material) options only choose in ways that allow them to more generally maximize positive affect (e.g., Van Boven and Gilovich 2003), the exception being when people choose in ways that are in accordance with the specific type of positive affect that they would ideally like to experience.
Furthermore, the current work builds on recent findings on emotional intensity of experiential consumption (Chan and Mogilner 2017; Weidman and Dunn 2016). Chan and Mogilner (2017) examines emotions evoked during experiential (vs. material) gift consumption and shows that experiential gifts elicit more intense emotions than material gifts do. Similarly, Weidman and Dunn (2016) shows that experiential purchases sometimes provide more intense momentary happiness than material purchases do. Although these findings are closely related to my theoretical framework, their work primarily focused on single emotion such as happiness (Weidman and Dunn 2016) or only HAP emotions felt by gift recipients such as excitement, delightedness/cheerfulness, or enthusiasm (Chan and Mogilner 2017). That being said, although the past work finds that experiences tend to evoke more intense emotions than material goods do, it does not take into account any LAP emotions such as peacefulness or calmness. I extend this existing work by showing that experiences, more so than material goods, lead people to be more attuned to the potential future affective consequences of their choice and choose in ways that are in line with the specific type of positive affect (HAP or LAP) that they would ideally like to feel.

In addition, the present work builds on past research demonstrating qualitative differences in pursuit of happiness (Mogilner, Aaker, Kamvar 2012; Mogilner, Kamvar, and Aaker 2011). Mogilner and colleagues show that the types of happiness that people tend to desire are likely to shift over the course of one’s lifetime (2011) and temporal focus (2012). Specifically, whereas younger people or individuals focusing on the future are more likely to associate happiness with excitement, older people or individuals focusing on the present are more likely to associate positive affect with calm. Given the conceptual overlap between the two distinctions of happiness (excitement and calm) and ideal affect (HAP vs. LAP), one question
that arises is how my research differs from the existing work. While Mogilner et al. (2012) has looked at how preferences for happiness affect choices among those who were given only experiential products (tea, bottled water, music), it has not been shown how the definition of happiness would play a different role in choosing experiential versus material options. I contribute to this existing work by showing that consumers are more likely to anticipate the potential future affective consequences of their choice and choose options that are congruent with their ideal affect when perceiving the choice to be experiential (vs. material). Furthermore, I also show the potential downstream consequences of choosing in ways that are congruent (or incongruent) with ideal affect in experiential versus material consumption. Specifically, my findings show that choosing in a manner congruent with one’s own ideal affect leads to greater satisfaction with experiential as opposed to material purchases. When people do not choose in a way that is congruent with ideal affect, however, the differences in reported satisfaction between experiential and material choices are eliminated.

I also contribute to past work on affect regulation by showing that when the consumer is motivated to attain ideal affect (i.e., there is a discrepancy between current and ideal affect), the tendency to make choices in line with ideal affect is observed among those perceiving the choice to be more experiential (vs. material). However, when the motivation to attain ideal affect has already been resolved (i.e., there is no discrepancy between current and ideal affect), differences are mitigated in the tendency to make choices that are congruent with ideal affect among those perceiving the choice to be more experiential (vs. material). This extends the existing literature on affect regulation, which shows that individuals often become motivated to regulate affect with the straightforward goal of decreasing negative (and increasing positive) affect (Augustine et al.
2010; Larsen 2000). I show that affect-regulation efforts can, at times, be even more nuanced than this, and that people who experience discrepancies between different types of positive affect (e.g., a HAP person is in a LAP affective state) are more likely to choose options that resolve the discrepancy when the option is construed as being experiential (vs. material) in nature.

3.4.2 Practical Implications

From a managerial perspective, I provide insight for marketing practice, especially in one of the fastest-growing domains of consumer spending: experiential purchases. For example, LivingSocial, a deal-of-the-day website that offers a wide range of local experiences, travel packages, products, and services in various cities, has created a platform for merchants promoting more experiential (vs. material) options. Merchants selling similar products and experiences on this platform are trying to devise innovative and effective ways to price and promote their products in the face of heavy competition. The current research points to the need to highlight the nature of the affective benefits derived from experiential (vs. material) options in marketing practice. Given the affective nature of experiential options, if one wanted to differentiate a company’s products from competitors, it would be key to understand target consumers’ ideal-affect states and to develop promotion plans emphasizing the qualitative nature of the positive affective experiences that consumers can derive from this particular experience. For example, in some product categories consumers are likely to be seeking specific types of positive affect (e.g., LAP for spa services, HAP for rock concerts). Marketers would do well to make salient the ideal quality of emotions for experiential pursuits, while at the same time emphasizing their experiential nature. One example of conveying the emotional benefits of
 experiential pursuits involves employing video narratives which provide customers with a vicarious sense of the quality of potential emotions. The “This is Egypt” promotional campaign (http://www.egypt.travel) could be a great example of understanding how video narratives can activate experiential elements of the product.

3.4.3 Future Research Directions

There are many future research opportunities linked to the role of ideal affect in experiential versus material purchases. First, the current research mainly focuses on how the consumer’s ideal affect influences choice in experiential versus material domains, based on the well-grounded assumption that people desire and seek out positive affective states (Elliot and Thrash 2002). Notably, however, people do sometimes consume experiences known to elicit negative affective states. For example, people often view horror movies to experience fear and tension, engage in extreme sports to feel terror of lives at risk, and play electronic games featuring brutality and violence to experience repulsion and disgust. Also, people often watch tragic movies, read heavyhearted books, and listen to sad music to sink into melancholy and feel gloomy. Building on the current research, future work could examine whether people also select options that will create negative affective states that are in line with their ideal affect.

One interesting question that still remains is why consumers do not derive greater satisfaction from their material purchases when choosing in ways that are congruent with ideal affect (study 5). Given that material purchases are mainly made with the intention of ownership (Van Boven and Gilovich 2003) and tend to physically persist over time (Carter and Gilovich
2012; Tully et al. 2015), I posit that affective benefits might not be a key driver of consumer satisfaction with material goods. Rather, consumers might place a higher value on functional factors (i.e., performance, durability, and design) when purchasing material as opposed to experiential goods. Data from my lab support this possibility. In particular, people were asked to recall either a material or experiential purchase and describe in open-ended format the reasons underlying their choice. Those in the material condition were significantly more likely to mention functional factors ($M_{\text{material}} = 39.4\%, SD = .22$) than those in the experiential condition ($M_{\text{experiential}} = 14.5\%, SD = .17$; $\chi^2 = 34.52, p < .05$). Because of this focus on functional factors, choosing in line with ideal affect might have less influence on consumer satisfaction with material goods. Future research could investigate this possibility.

Another promising direction for future research might be to examine situations in which consumers make decisions for others. As consumers, we frequently purchase gifts for our family members, friends, or acquaintances, anticipating how our choices would make the recipients feel. Given that the ultimate purpose of gift-giving is mainly to increase the happiness of the recipient (Belk and Coon 1993), it makes intuitive sense that desired affective outcomes can be sought as a key concern in gift-giving situations. Therefore, it is worth investigating how people anticipate affective outcomes for others when they select gifts. Specifically, future work might examine if gift-givers choose in a way that allows them to derive the qualitative nature of affective states that they anticipate their recipients experiencing from their gifts, and if they are more likely to choose in accordance with the type of positive affect they would like their recipients to feel when they select in more experiential (vs. material) gift domains.
The current research also provides key suggestions for maximizing happiness for gift recipients. Studies have shown that experiential gifts make recipients happier than material gifts do (Goodman and Lim 2015), and experiential gifts are more socially connecting than material gifts (Chan and Mogilner 2017). Despite the benefits of experiential gifts, however, Goodman and Lim (2015) demonstrated that gift-givers tend to prefer a more material (vs. experiential) gift and also believe that material gifts will bring their recipients just much happiness as experiential gifts. More interestingly, the authors showed that consumers tend to give material gifts because they do not have the necessary preference knowledge of socially distant recipients to find appropriate experiential gifts, which tend to be more unique and more identity-relevant than material gifts. Given that findings from study 5 showed that consumer actual satisfaction was more likely to be influenced by the level of congruence between individuals’ ideal affect and the affective states elicited by the choice in experiential compared to material purchases, this might also be relevant when purchasing for others. It may be the case that choosing gifts that are congruent with the gift recipient’ ideal affect might lead to higher satisfaction, particularly with more experiential as opposed to material gifts. Taken together, I hope that the current research highlights an important nuance in how people make choices in experiential versus material domains and that this work inspires future work examining how consumers can make choices for themselves and others that best maximize happiness.
Chapter 4: Limitations

The current dissertation does have limitations that must be noted. One limitation of my dissertation research is the conceptual overlap between the experiential-material classification and the hedonic-utilitarian dichotomy. One question that arises is whether the experiential-material classification is simply another way of describing hedonic versus utilitarian options. Despite some degree of conceptual overlap between the two distinctions, I suggest that the hedonic-utilitarian typology does not fully map onto nor capture all dimensions of the experiential-material typology. Indeed, previous researchers have suggested that these are distinct categories (Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Although it may sometimes be true that experiential options are more hedonic and material options can be more utilitarian, this is not invariably the case. Indeed, past research shows that participants reported a higher frequency of momentary happiness in response to material rather than experiential purchases (Weidman and Dunn 2016) and only sometimes reported more intense happiness after experiential consumption. Moreover, there are many cases where experiences are consumed for utilitarian purposes (e.g., taking online language courses to get a new job in a foreign country, taking part in a fitness boot camp to lose weight for medical reasons) and material goods are consumed for hedonic benefits (e.g., luxury goods such as designer clothes and sport cars). Also, hedonic options are typically pursued for their immediate benefits, which co-occur with the act of consumption (Khan, Dhar, and Wertenbroch 2005). For example, eating a piece of decadent chocolate is pleasant in and of itself, and the benefits typically stop being experienced after it has been consumed. Although experiences are generally ephemeral and consumed in a single time period (Shu and Gneezy 2010), experiences also provide lasting utility through the memories they create (Van Boven and
Taken together, I believe that experiential (vs. material) consumption is distinct from the hedonic-utilitarian dichotomy. Data from the lab (n = 124) support my conjecture. I framed the product (i.e., a notebook) as being experiential or material via a marketing communication by highlighting its experiential or material aspects while holding the product category constant. The pretests on the stimuli revealed that the experiential advertisement was viewed as being more experiential than the material advertisement (p < .05). Importantly, the experiential and material advertisements did not differ in terms of the hedonic versus utilitarian dimension (p > .38). This provides empirical evidence that I was able to successfully manipulate the experiential–material dimension independently of the hedonic–utilitarian dimension.

Another limitation of my dissertation research is that the distinction between experiential and material consumption is not always clear-cut. That is, products can have both material and experiential elements and consumers’ views of these elements are somewhat malleable. The existence of the fuzzy boundary might complicate research on this topic, but it also offers an opportunity to frame the purchase one way or the other while holding its category constant. Indeed, I demonstrate that the same type of product such as a book store gift card (essay 1), a camera, and a painting (essay 2) can be viewed as being relatively more experiential versus material. This provides insight for marketing practice—consumers can be encouraged through marketing communications to construe many products (such as cameras, paintings, books, phones, etc.) as being either more experiential or more material in nature. Given that perceiving the purchase as an experience will increase a focus on affective factors (essay 2), it is likely that consumers will be more prone to make their decision in line with their ideal affect, and that they will ultimately be more satisfied with their final choice if they focus on experiential aspects of a...
purchase. Therefore, marketers can take advantage of the fuzzy boundary between experiential and material consumption by leading potential consumers to construe prototypically material products in experiential terms, which predicts subsequent satisfaction over time.

Finally, limitations on the generalizability of the results should be noted. Although I did recruit study participants of various age groups from the student participant pool as well as from an online sample in an attempt to improve generalizability of my findings, I had a limited set of participants who were mostly from North America. Thus, the constraints on generality (COG; Simons, Shoda, and Lidsay 2017) need to be articulated to identify target populations and better understand the observed findings. The results reported in my dissertation research might hold only for individuals who are relatively young and live in North America. In addition, previous research has demonstrated the cross-cultural differences in reactions in response to mortality salience (Maheswaran and Agrawal 2004; Ma-Kellams and Blascovich 2012; Norenzayan et al. 2009) and preferences for ideal affect (Tsai et al. 2006). Thus, future research could examine whether there are distinct patterns of results, depending on cultural characteristics (e.g., cognitive styles, individualism-collectivism, religion) of study participants. I call on future researchers to extend my findings by testing the framework of the current research and any boundary conditions of the observed findings among participants across cultures.
Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks

In sum, this dissertation provides additional insights into the nature of experiential and material consumption. In particular, I delve into understanding the conditions under which consumers are particularly motivated to engage in experiential versus material consumption and highlight an important nuance in how people make choices in experiential versus material domains. Through eleven empirical studies, the current research examines a key factor (i.e., mortality salience) that produces a systematic shift in preferences toward experiential over material consumption and further explores the affective nature of experiential (vs. material) consumption, which drives the tendency of choosing experiential (vs. material) options in a way that aligns with the anticipated affective states to potentially be derived from the choice. In essay 1, I demonstrate that reminders of one’s own mortality lead to the desire to imbue one’s life with a sense of meaning, and this activated desire for meaning produces a systematic shift in consumer preferences toward experiential over material consumption. Further in essay 2, I show that consumers making choices in experiential as opposed to material purchases are more likely to choose in accordance with their ideal affect, and this effect is driven by affective anticipation. Both essays make theoretical contributions to established literature streams on uncovering the systematic differences in experiential versus material purchases. I hope this dissertation provides important implications for consumer-welling as well as marketing practice, and that this research inspires future work investigating the intricacies of experiential versus material consumption.
Chapter 6: Tables and Figures

6.1 Tables

Table 1. Summary of Results (Essay 1: Studies 1a, 1b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study 1a ((n = 227))</th>
<th>Experiential</th>
<th>Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>97.4%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study 1b</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before I Die ((n = 2964))</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Keywords ((n = 3019))</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Summary of Results (Essay 1: Study 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gift Card Condition</th>
<th>Mortality</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gift Card</td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experientially-Framed</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materially-Framed</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3. Summary of Means and Standard Deviations (Essay 1: Study 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mortality</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Dental</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WTP for Experiential</strong></td>
<td>$466.11</td>
<td>$227.20</td>
<td>$249.62</td>
<td>$211.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1016.59)</td>
<td>(274.49)</td>
<td>(388.15)</td>
<td>(527.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WTP for Material</strong></td>
<td>$287.74</td>
<td>$358.85</td>
<td>$404.37</td>
<td>$320.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(272.47)</td>
<td>(573.60)</td>
<td>(758.92)</td>
<td>(595.50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Mediation Path Coefficients and Indirect Effects (Essay 1: Study 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path Coefficients</th>
<th>Indirect Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To Activated Desire for Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β (SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality Salience</td>
<td>2.72 (1.10)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality Salience x Intrinsic Orientation</td>
<td>.75 (.26)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activated Desire for Meaning (ADM)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS x IO - ADM - PI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Significance at: *p < .05, **p < .01; MS = Mortality Salience, IO = Intrinsic Orientation, ADM = Activated Desire for Meaning, PI= Purchase Intentions; the data analyzed through bootstrapped analysis (Hayes 2012 – model 7) with 1,000 iterations.
Table 5. Summary of Means and Standard Deviations (Essay 1: Study 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mortality</th>
<th></th>
<th>Control</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meaning-Fulfillment</td>
<td>No Meaning-Fulfillment</td>
<td>Meaning-Fulfillment</td>
<td>No Meaning-Fulfillment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTP Index</td>
<td>-$154.30</td>
<td>$90.49</td>
<td>-$6.00</td>
<td>-$139.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential - Material</td>
<td>(851.29)</td>
<td>(428.70)</td>
<td>(183.17)</td>
<td>(673.18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Mediation Path Coefficients and Indirect Effects (Essay 2: Study 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path Coefficients</th>
<th>Indirect Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Affective Anticipation</td>
<td>To HAP Painting Choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>β (SE)</td>
<td>β (SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Type (PT)</td>
<td>1.11 (.12)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Anticipation (AA)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Anticipation x Ideal Affect (IA)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Type (PT) x Ideal Affect</td>
<td>.10 (.05)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT - AA x IA – HAP</td>
<td>.04 (.02)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Significance at: *p < .05, **p < .001; PT = Purchase Type, AA = Affective Anticipation, IA = Ideal Affect, HAP = HAP Painting Choices; the data analyzed through bootstrapped analysis (Hayes 2012 – model 15) with 1,000 iterations.
Table 7. Summary of Means and Standard Deviations (Essay 2: Study 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase Condition</th>
<th>Choice Condition</th>
<th>IA Congruent</th>
<th>IA Incongruent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.11 (.92)</td>
<td>5.43 (1.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.22 (1.60)</td>
<td>5.47 (1.28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2 Figures

Figure 1. A Chalkboard Wall Created on the Outside of a Building (Essay 1, Study 1a)
Figure 2. The Effect of Mortality Salience on Consumer Choices of Experientially versus Materially Positioned Gift Cards (Essay 1, Study 2)
Figure 3. The Effect of Mortality Salience on Differences in Willingness To Pay for Experiential and Material Purchases (Essay 1, Study 3)
Figure 4. The Effect of Mortality Salience on Purchase Intentions for Experiential and Material Options (Essay 1, Study 4)
Figure 5. The Activated Desire for Meaning Mediate Effects of Mortality Salience on Purchase Intentions (Essay 1, Study 4)
Figure 6. The Moderating Role of Meaning-Fulfillment on The Effect of Mortality Salience on Preferences for Experiential over Material Purchases (Essay 1, Study 5)
Figure 7. The Role of Ideal Affect in Experiential versus Material Consumption (Essay 2, Study 2)

Note. HAP and LAP groups were categorized based on ideal-affect scores (i.e., +1SD, -1SD).
Figure 8. The Role of Ideal Affect in Experiential versus Material Consumption (Essay 2, Study 3)

Note. HAP and LAP groups were categorized based on ideal-affect scores (i.e., +1SD, -1SD).
Figure 9. Diagram of Moderated Mediation Model (Essay 2, Study 3)
Figure 10. The Moderating Role of an Affective Discrepancy on The Effects of Ideal Affect as a Choice Criterion in Experiential versus Material Purchases (Essay 2, Study 4)

Note. HAP and LAP groups were categorized based on ideal-affect scores (i.e., +1SD, -1SD).
Figure 11. The Effect of Ideal Affect on Consumer Actual Satisfaction in Experiential versus Material Purchases (Essay 2, Study 5)
References


Consequences of the Need for Self-Esteem: A Terror Management Theory,” in Roy F.
Baumeister (ed.), *Public Self and Private Self* (pp. 189–212). New York: Springer.

Greenberg, Jeff, Tom Pyszczynski, Sheldon Solomon, Abram Rosenblatt, Mitchell Veeder, Shari
Kirkland, and Deborah Lyon (1990), “Evidence for Terror Management II: The Effect of
Mortality Salience on Reactions to Those Who Threaten or Bolster the Cultural

Guevarra, Darwin A. and Ryan T. Howell (2015), “To Have in order to Do: Exploring the Effects
of Consuming Experiential Products on Well-Being, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*,
25 (1), 28–41.

Havlena, William J. and Morris B. Holbrook (1986), “The Varieties of Consumption Experience:
Comparing Two Typologies of Emotion in Consumer Behavior,” *Journal of Consumer


*Journal of Personality*, 61, 49–61.


Mikulincer, Mario, Victor Florian, and Gilad Hirschberger (2003), “The Existential Function of


Pyszczynski, Tom, Sheldon Solomon, and Jeff Greenberg (2003), “In the Wake of 9/11: Rising


Ryff, Carol D. and Burton H. Singer (2008), “Know Thyself and Become What You Are: A


Waterman, Alan S., Seth J. Schwartz, and Regina Conti (2008), “The Implications of Two Conceptions of Happiness (Hedonic Enjoyment and Eudaimonia) for the Understanding
of Intrinsic Motivation,” *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9, 41–79.


Appendix: Experimental Materials

A.1 Essay 1, Pilot Study

1. Please assume that the two purchase options presented below cost the same amount of money. To what extent do you think this purchase would be meaningful to you?

A new top-of-the-line ultra-high definition TV (M) (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much”)
5-day beach vacation (E) (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much”)

2. Please assume that the two purchase options presented below cost the same amount of money. To what extent do you think this purchase would be meaningful to you?

Keurig coffee machine (M) (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much”)
Front row tickets to an arts performance of your choice (E) (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much”)

3. Please assume that the two purchase options presented below cost the same amount of money. To what extent do you think this purchase would be meaningful to you?

Leather jacket (M) (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much”)
Dinner at a Michelin star (high end) restaurant (E) (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much”)

4. Please assume that the two purchase options presented below cost the same amount of money. To what extent do you think this purchase would be meaningful to you?

New backpack (M) (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much”)
Dinner cruise (E) (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “very much”)
A.2 Essay 1, Study 2: Material versus Experiential Manipulation

Material Condition

**Indigo Gift cards— Find the *perfect* item!**

Get a $10 Indigo Gift card!

Indigo carries a wide variety of books, décor, accessories, toys, and style. With Indigo gift cards, *uncover flawless finds* you can’t get anywhere else.

Visit indigo.ca and shop our selection of books, music, and DVDs -- *beautiful items* for your home, mind, and soul.

Experiential Condition

**Indigo Gift cards— Find the *perfect* experience!**

Get a $10 Indigo Gift card!

Indigo has everything to fuel the interests of booklovers. With Indigo gift cards, *uncover flawless experiences* you can’t get anywhere else.

Visit indigo.ca and shop our selection of books, music, and DVDs -- *beautiful experiences* for your home, mind, and soul.
A.3 Essay 1, Study 4: Material versus Experiential Manipulation

Material Condition

Nikon COOLPIX— The perfect item!

Get Nikon Coolpix!

Nikon Coolpix incorporates a sensor which affords rich image detail and enhanced sensitivity. With Nikon Coolpix, you get the perfect device that you can’t get anywhere else.

The suggested retail price ranges from $256.95.

Experiential Condition

Nikon COOLPIX— The perfect experience!

Experience Nikon Coolpix!

Nikon Coolpix captures special and unforgettable moments which will last forever. With Nikon Coolpix, you get the perfect experience that you can’t get anywhere else.

The suggested retail price ranges from $256.95.
A.4 Essay 2, Studies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5: The AVI Index (Tsai, Knutson, and Fung 2006)

Listed below are a number of words that describe feelings. Some of the feelings are very similar to each other, whereas others are very different from each other. Read each word and then rate how often you would ideally like to have that feeling over the course of a typical week, using the following scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>A small amount of the time</td>
<td>Half the time</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>All the time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over the course of a typical week, I would **IDEALLY** like to feel:

- enthusiastic _____
- astonished _____
- nervous _____
- dull _____
- quiet _____
- relaxed _____
- excited _____
- surprised _____
- elated _____
- sleepy _____
- still _____
- lonely _____
- strong _____
- passive _____
- content _____
- sluggish _____
- inactive _____
- sad _____
- euphoric _____
- fearful _____
- happy _____
- idle _____
- calm _____
- unhappy _____
- aroused _____
- hostile _____
- satisfied _____
- at rest _____
- peaceful _____
- serene _____
A.5 Essay 2, Study 1: Experiential versus Material Manipulation

Experiential Condition

Imagine that you are now at an electronics store to purchase a new digital camera.

After comparing several cameras, you are now considering the four different cameras displayed on the next screen seriously on your purchase decision. Before choosing a camera, please take a few moments to think about what the experience of taking pictures with a new camera would be like, how fun it would be to spend your free time with a new camera, and how well it would fit with your leisure activities.

Please assume that these four cameras cost the same amount of money.

If you were going to select one camera, which one would you most like to purchase? (camera A/camera B/camera C/camera D)

Now, please answer the following question.

How much do you anticipate you would experience the following emotions from purchasing this camera? (1= not at all, 7= very much)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>enthusiastic</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excited</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elated</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peaceful</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relaxed</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serene</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calm</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Material Condition

Imagine that you are now at an electronics store to purchase a new digital camera.

After comparing several cameras, you are now considering the four different cameras displayed on the next screen seriously on your purchase decision. Before choosing a camera, please take a few moments to think about what the camera would be like (weight, color, and design), how functional it would be, and how well it would go with your other electronic gadgets.

Please assume that these four cameras cost the same amount of money.

If you were going to select one camera, which one would you most like to purchase?
(camera A/camera B/camera C/camera D)

Now, please answer the following question.

How much do you anticipate you would experience the following emotions from purchasing this camera? (1= not at all, 7= very much)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>enthusiastic</th>
<th>excited</th>
<th>strong</th>
<th>elated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>peaceful</th>
<th>relaxed</th>
<th>serene</th>
<th>calm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A.6 Essay 2, Study 2: Experiential versus Material Consumption

Which activity would you like to do in summer?

Summer Activity HAP LAP
[Experiential 1]

Which activity would you like to do in winter?

Winter Activity HAP LAP
[Experiential 2]

Which one-day tour package would you like to do?

Tour Program HAP LAP
[Experiential 3]

Which group exercise class would you like to do?

Group Exercise HAP LAP
[Experiential 4]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material 1</th>
<th>Material 2</th>
<th>Material 3</th>
<th>Material 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAP</td>
<td>HAP</td>
<td>HAP</td>
<td>HAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAP</td>
<td>LAP</td>
<td>LAP</td>
<td>LAP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A.7 Essay 2, Study 2 Pretest

To examine if every HAP (LAP) item in the eight pairs indeed induces HAP (LAP), I conducted a pretest by recruiting an independent sample (n = 55). For experiential purchases, the HAP items consisted of rafting, skiing, spinning, and beer festival tour and the LAP items consisted of reading a book on a boat, enjoying hot spa, yoga, and winery tour. For the material purchases, the HAP items consisted of a vivid colored painting, a colorful poster, runners, and a fantasy book and the LAP items consisted of a staid colored painting, a landscape poster, slippers, and an education book. Participants were shown a set of stimuli, which consisted of the eight HAP and the eight LAP items from the choice task. The items were presented on a screen one at a time in random order. While observing each item, participants were asked to indicate to what extent they would feel the following emotions if they purchase a given item on a 7-point scale (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “absolutely”): the four HAP (e.g. excited, enthusiastic, elated, strong) and the four LAP items (e.g. serene, peaceful, relaxed, calm). For the analysis, I created the HAP-LAP index by subtracting the mean of the four LAP scores from the mean of the four HAP scores. If a score on this index is greater (less) than zero, this indicates that the item is more likely to evoke HAP (LAP) over LAP (HAP). The result showed that the HAP-LAP index scores for the eight HAP items were all positive and those of the eight LAP items were all negative, confirming that items that were selected to produce HAP (LAP) properly reflected the expected HAP (LAP). In addition, the HAP and LAP items in all 8 pairs were significantly different from one another, all ps < .01. Lastly, I asked participants to indicate to what extent it would be desirable if they purchase a given item on a 7-point scale (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “absolutely”). The results showed that the HAP and LAP items in the eight pairs were equally desirable all ps >.05.
A.8 Essay 2, Study 3: Experiential versus Material Manipulation

**Experiential Condition**

Recent research on consumer art perception shows that people generally think purchases of paintings are made with the primary intention of acquiring experiential benefits. That is, most consumers perceive paintings as something that one experiences on a day-to-day basis.

In this study, we are interested in how consumers go about making purchase decisions regarding art. We will present you a hypothetical consumption scenario, where you are purchasing a new painting. To increase the realism of this scenario, we would like you to consider paintings as experiences, in just the same way as consumers generally tend to perceive them.

From now, please take a moment to think about experiential aspects of paintings. In the space provided below, please specifically describe which aspects of paintings can be considered experiential, why you think of paintings as experiences, and how you can make good use of paintings as experiences.

Now, imagine that you are at an art gallery and are considering the purchase of a new painting. After careful consideration, you have narrowed down your choice options to a few paintings.

On the next screen, a series of pairs of paintings will be displayed. For each pair, please choose the one option that you would be most likely to purchase. For each pair of options, please assume that both paintings cost the same price.

Before choosing a painting, please take a few moments to think about what it would be like to experience this painting. For example, think about what the experience of enjoying a new painting would be like, how it would feel to spend your free time with a new painting, and how well it would fit with your leisure activities.
Material Condition

Recent research on consumer art perception shows that people generally think purchases of paintings are made with the primary intention of acquiring a material good. That is, most consumers perceive paintings as a tangible object that is kept in one's possession.

In this study, we are interested in how consumers go about making purchase decisions regarding art. We will present you a hypothetical consumption scenario, where you are purchasing a new painting. To increase the realism of this scenario, we would like you to consider paintings as material objects, in just the same way as consumers generally tend perceive them.

From now, please take a moment to think about material aspects of paintings. In the space provided below, please specifically describe which aspects of paintings can be considered material, why you think of paintings as material objects, and how you can make good use of paintings as material goods.

Now, imagine that you are at an art gallery and are considering the purchase of a new painting. After careful consideration, you have narrowed down your choice options to a few paintings.

On the next screen, a series of pairs of paintings will be displayed. For each pair, please choose the one option that you would be most likely to purchase. For each pair of options, please assume that both paintings cost the same price.

Before choosing a painting, please take a few moments to think about what it would be like to own this art object. For example, think about what the painting would be like (size, color, composition), how functional it would be to decorate your house, and how well it would go with your other furniture.
A.9 Essay 2, Study 3 Painting Choice Stimuli

Which painting would you like to purchase?
Pair 1

Which painting would you like to purchase?
Pair 2

Which painting would you like to purchase?
Pair 3

Which painting would you like to purchase?
Pair 4
Which painting would you like to purchase?

Pair 5  HAP

LAP

Which painting would you like to purchase?

Pair 6  HAP

LAP

Which painting would you like to purchase?

Pair 7  HAP

LAP

Which painting would you like to purchase?

Pair 8  HAP

LAP
A.10 Essay 2, Study 3 Pretest

I conducted a pretest to examine if every HAP (LAP) paintings in each pair indeed induces HAP (LAP) by recruiting an independent group of students (n = 200). Participants were shown a set of stimuli, consisting of the eight HAP and eight LAP paintings from the choice task. The paintings were presented on the computer screen one at a time in random order. While observing each painting, participants were asked to indicate to what extent they would feel the following emotions if they purchase a given painting on a 7-point scale (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “absolutely”): the four HAP items (e.g. excited, enthusiastic, elated, strong) and the four LAP items (e.g. serene, peaceful, relaxed, calm). For the analysis, I created the HAP-LAP index by subtracting the mean of the four LAP scores from the mean of the four HAP scores. Scores that are greater (less) than zero on this index indicate that the painting is more likely to evoke HAP (LAP) over LAP (HAP). The result showed that the HAP-LAP index scores for the eight HAP paintings were all positive and those of the eight LAP paintings were all negative, confirming that paintings selected to produce HAP (LAP) properly evoked the expected HAP (LAP). In addition, the HAP and LAP paintings in each of the eight pairs were significantly different from one another, all ps < .01, but they were equally desirable all ps > .05.
A.11 Essay 2, Study 4: HAP versus LAP Manipulation

**HAP Condition**

In this study, we are interested in consumer music preferences. On the next screen, we will ask you to listen to music and answer a couple of questions about the music played. Click the blue link below and open the file to turn on music.

**HAP MUSIC**

Please answer the questions below while listening to music. You can stop the music and proceed to the next screen after 40 seconds.

Below is a list of words that describe different feelings and emotions.

Please indicate the extent to which you feel each emotion while listening to the music (1= not at all, 7= very much).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>enthusiastic</th>
<th>excited</th>
<th>strong</th>
<th>elated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>peaceful</td>
<td>relaxed</td>
<td>serene</td>
<td>calm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LAP Condition**

In this study, we are interested in consumer music preferences. On the next screen, we will ask you to listen to music and answer a couple of questions about the music played. Click the blue link below and open the file to turn on music.

**LAP MUSIC**

Please answer the questions below while listening to music. You can stop the music and proceed to the next screen after 40 seconds.

Below is a list of words that describe different feelings and emotions.

Please indicate the extent to which you feel each emotion while listening to the music (1= not at all, 7= very much).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>enthusiastic</th>
<th>excited</th>
<th>strong</th>
<th>elated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>peaceful</td>
<td>relaxed</td>
<td>serene</td>
<td>calm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I conducted a pretest to examine if HAP (LAP) music indeed induces HAP (LAP) by recruiting an independent group of people (n = 49). Participants were randomly assigned to either a HAP music condition or a LAP music condition. While participants in the HAP music condition were asked to listen to a piece of music with a fast and rhythmic beat (Tong Poo by Fox Capture Plan) for 30 seconds, those in the LAP music condition were asked to listen to a piece of music with a slow and soft beat (Forest by Yuhki Kuramoto) for 30 seconds. While listening to music, participants were asked to indicate to what extent they feel each emotion on a 7-point scale (1 = “not at all,” 7 = “absolutely”): the four HAP items (e.g. excited, enthusiastic, elated, strong) and the four LAP items (e.g. serene, peaceful, relaxed, calm). For the analysis, I created the HAP-LAP index by subtracting the mean of the four LAP scores from the mean of the four HAP scores. Scores that are greater (less) than zero on this index indicate that the music is more likely to evoke HAP (LAP) over LAP (HAP). The result showed that the HAP-LAP index score for the HAP music was positive (M = 2.37, SD = 1.71), and that of the LAP music was negative (M = -2.04, SD = 1.47), confirming that the music selected to produce HAP (LAP) properly evoked the expected HAP (LAP) (t(48) = 13.66, p < .001). In addition, I asked participants to indicate to what extent they think the music sounds familiar to them. The result showed that the HAP and LAP music were equally unfamiliar (M_{HAP} = 2.65, SD = 1.61; M_{LAP} = 2.94, SD = 1.73; t(48) = -.83, p > .40).
A.13 Essay 2, Study 4: Experiential versus Material Manipulation

Experiential Condition

Recent research on consumer art perception shows that people generally think purchases of paintings are made with the primary intention of acquiring experiential benefits. That is, most consumers perceive paintings as something that one experiences on a day-to-day basis.

In this study, we are interested in how consumers go about making purchase decisions regarding art. We will present you a hypothetical consumption scenario, where you are purchasing a new painting. To increase the realism of this scenario, we would like you to consider paintings as experiences, in just the same way as consumers generally tend perceive them.

From now, please take a moment to think about experiential aspects of paintings. In the space provided below, please specifically describe which aspects of paintings can be considered experiential, why you think of paintings as experiences, and how you can make good use of paintings as experiences.

Now, imagine that you are at an art gallery and are considering the purchase of a new painting. After careful consideration, you have narrowed down your choice options to a few paintings.

On the next screen, a series of pairs of paintings will be displayed. For each pair, please choose the one option that you would be most likely to purchase. For each pair of options, please assume that both paintings cost the same price.

Before choosing a painting, please take a few moments to think about what it would be like to experience this painting. For example, think about what the experience of enjoying a new painting would be like, how it would feel to spend your free time with a new painting, and how well it would fit with your leisure activities.
**Material Condition**

Recent research on consumer art perception shows that people generally think purchases of paintings are made with the primary intention of acquiring a material good. That is, most consumers perceive paintings as a tangible object that is kept in one's possession.

In this study, we are interested in how consumers go about making purchase decisions regarding art. We will present you a hypothetical consumption scenario, where you are purchasing a new painting. To increase the realism of this scenario, we would like you to consider paintings as material objects, in just the same way as consumers generally tend to perceive them.

From now, please take a moment to think about material aspects of paintings. In the space provided below, please specifically describe which aspects of paintings can be considered material, why you think of paintings as material objects, and how you can make good use of paintings as material goods.

Now, imagine that you are at an art gallery and are considering the purchase of a new painting. After careful consideration, you have narrowed down your choice options to a few paintings.

On the next screen, a series of pairs of paintings will be displayed. For each pair, please choose the one option that you would be most likely to purchase. For each pair of options, please assume that both paintings cost the same price.

Before choosing a painting, please take a few moments to think about what it would be like to own this art object. For example, think about what the painting would be like (size, color, composition), how functional it would be to decorate your house, and how well it would go with your other furniture.
A.14  Essay 2, Study 4 Painting Choice Stimuli

Which painting would you like to purchase?
Pair 1  HAP  LAP

Which painting would you like to purchase?
Pair 2  HAP  LAP

Which painting would you like to purchase?
Pair 3  HAP  LAP

Which painting would you like to purchase?
Pair 4  HAP  LAP
Which painting would you like to purchase?

Pair 5  

HAP  

LAP
A.15 Essay 2, Study 5 Instructions

Experiential/HAP condition

In this study, you will be given a $10 gift card and asked to buy an actual product at a local drug store located on campus.

What To Buy?
For the purposes of this study, we would like you to purchase an “experiential product”, which costs around $10.

The primary intention of purchasing an experiential product is to have experience with the product and spend your time using it. Below are the examples of experiential products that you can purchase at the store. You can freely choose any product that you consider an experiential product.

e.g.) Entertainment: magazines, books, Yoga DVDs
       Gift cards: iTunes, Starbucks, Tim Horton’s
       Body products: body mist, body wash

How To Choose?
When making a choice, you need to buy an experiential product that would allow you to feel “high-arousal positive emotions”: excitement, enthusiasm, or elation.

At the time of making a choice, please keep in mind to find a product that you would experience exciting emotions when you are using the product.

How To Pay?
Please use a $10 gift card when you make a payment. Please do not forget to get a receipt. You can buy a product which costs more than $10, but you should pay for the extra cost.

Please bring a product with a receipt to the lab when you complete the purchase. You will be asked to answer 1-minute survey when you are back. After completing the survey, you can take the product home.
**Experiential/LAP condition**

In this study, you will be given a $10 gift card and asked to buy an actual product at a local drug store located on campus.

**What To Buy?**
For the purposes of this study, we would like you to purchase an “experiential product”, which costs around $10.

The primary intention of purchasing an experiential product is to have experience with the product and spend your time using it. Below are the examples of experiential products that you can purchase at the store. You can freely choose any product that you consider an experiential product.

e.g.) Entertainment: magazines, books, Yoga DVDs
    Gift cards: iTunes, Starbucks, Tim Horton’s
    Body products: body mist, body wash

**How To Choose?**
When making a choice, you need to buy an experiential product that would allow you to feel low-arousal positive emotions: peacefulness, serenity, or restfulness.

At the time of making a choice, please keep in mind to find a product that you would experience peaceful emotions when you are using the product.

**How To Pay?**
Please use a $10 gift card when you make a payment. Please do not forget to get a receipt. You can buy a product which costs more than $10, but you should pay for the extra cost.

Please bring a product with a receipt to the lab when you complete the purchase. You will be asked to answer 1-minute survey when you are back. After completing the survey, you can take the product home.
Material/HAP condition

In this study, you will be given a $10 gift card and asked to buy an actual product at a local drug store located on campus.

What To Buy?
For the purposes of this study, we would like you to purchase a “material product”, which costs around $10.

The primary intention of purchasing a material product is to acquire a material good and keep in your possession. Below are the examples of material products that you can purchase at the store. You can freely choose any product that you consider a material product.

e.g.) Miscellaneous products: socks, comb, picture frame, makeup bags, passport cover, earphones, candle, accessories (earrings)
    Stationary: USB memory sticks, batteries, pens, notebooks
    Hygiene products: toothbrush, floss, razor, shaving cream

How To Choose?
When making a choice, you need to buy a material product that would allow you to feel high-arousal positive emotions: excitement, enthusiasm, or elation.

At the time of making a choice, please keep in mind to find a product that you would experience exciting emotions when you are using the product.

How To Pay?
Please use a $10 gift card when you make a payment. Please do not forget to get a receipt. You can buy a product which costs more than $10, but you should pay for the extra cost.

Please bring a product with a receipt to the lab when you complete the purchase. You will be asked to answer 1-minute survey when you are back. After completing the survey, you can take the product home.
Material/LAP condition

In this study, you will be given a $10 gift card and asked to buy an actual product at a local drug store located on campus.

What To Buy?
For the purposes of this study, we would like you to purchase a “material product”, which costs around $10.

The primary intention of purchasing a material product is to acquire a material good and keep in your possession. Below are the examples of material products that you can purchase at the store. You can freely choose any product that you consider a material product.

e.g.) Miscellaneous products: socks, comb, picture frame, makeup bags, passport cover, earphones, candle, accessories (earrings)
Stationary: USB memory sticks, batteries, pens, notebooks
Hygiene products: toothbrush, floss, razor, shaving cream

How To Choose?
When making a choice, you need to buy a material product that would allow you to feel low-arousal positive emotions: peacefulness, serenity, or restfulness.

At the time of making a choice, please keep in mind to find a product that you would experience peaceful emotions when you are using the product.

How To Pay?
Please use a $10 gift card when you make a payment. Please do not forget to get a receipt. You can buy a product which costs more than $10, but you should pay for the extra cost.

Please bring a product with a receipt to the lab when you complete the purchase. You will be asked to answer 1-minute survey when you are back. After completing the survey, you can take the product home.