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MEANINGFUL CONSUMPTION: A EUDAIMONIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE
CONSUMER PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING

by

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A DISSERTATION

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MEANINGFUL CONSUMPTION: A EUDAIMONIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE CONSUMER PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING

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University of Nebraska, 2019

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Prior research indicates that consumers often pursue happiness through the market and that their purchase choices can vary depending on how they define happiness. However, while prior research has tended to use a hedonic lens to frame happiness in terms of pleasure, the current investigation is one of the first to use a eudaimonic lens to frame happiness in terms of personal meaning or meaningfulness. The central goal of this dissertation, therefore, is to arrive at a stronger understanding of eudaimonic consumption. In this regard, findings from six experimental studies reveal that eudaimonic consumption differs from hedonic consumption on a variety of cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors. In conjunction with these findings, depth interviews conducted with a diverse sample of respondents help uncover a complex experience underlying eudaimonic consumption that is theorized to consist of three central processes: rejuvenation, expansion, and consolidation. Collectively, the results from this mixed-methods research design illustrate the usefulness of applying a eudaimonic perspective to marketing theory and practice. Specifically, such a eudaimonic lens broadens the disciplinary scope to include aspects that make consumption meaningful, enables a tripartite conceptualization of consumption value as being utilitarian, hedonic, and/or eudaimonic, and argues in favor of an organismic conceptualization of the self to better understand how eudaimonic consumption can impact, and is in turn impacted by, a consumer's sense of self. By doing so, a eudaimonic view enables a stronger understanding of the consumer pursuit of happiness as also involving a pursuit of meaningful consumption.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING

Money can't buy happiness, they say.

Then why are venture capitalists investing more than \$150 million into apps that are being designed to promote happiness and well-being among American consumers (Bell 2018)? How has a single app managed to raise over \$25 million (<https://www.crunchbase.com/organization/happify>) to support a business model that revolves around improving consumers' emotional health and well-being at the cost of \$6.95 to \$12.95 a month (Bell 2018)? Finally, even if it is an exaggeration, how come some have estimated the market for happiness and well-being to be worth \$750 billion dollars (Hartwell 2018)? Clearly, consumers are lining up to try and buy happiness, and marketers have not been slow to realize this.

This focus on happiness and well-being (the Merriam-Webster Dictionary refers to each in its definition of the other) is also one that is shared by the marketing discipline. This is evident, on one hand, from continuing calls for research on how well-being is shaped by market forces (Inman et al. 2018) and how consumers could maximize pleasure and happiness (Alba and Williams 2013), and on the other hand, from conceptual and empirical work that has looked at consumer well-being in terms of the purchase process (Lee et al. 2002; Sirgy et al. 2008), the impact of purchase decisions on happiness and well-being (Gilovich, Kumar, and Jampol 2015a, 2015b), and the impact of happiness on consumer choice (Mogilner, Aaker, and Kamvar 2011; Mogilner, Kamvar, and Aaker 2011).

Given this established academic and practitioner focus, it would be tempting to assume that, as a discipline, we agree on what happiness and well-being mean, and that our understanding of these concepts is complete. Recent research, however, leads us to question both these assumptions. Mogilner et al. (2011), for instance, point out that consumer research still lacks a detailed understanding of different forms of happiness. Other scholars, meanwhile, increasingly urge researchers within the discipline to recognize the distinction between pleasure-oriented and meaning-oriented forms of happiness, and to start focusing research efforts on understanding how consumption choices can help us flourish (Alba and Williams 2013; Schmitt, Brakus, and Zarantonello 2015). Thus, there is a need to recognize that happiness is not one thing but that it can come in different forms and that our current conceptualizations of happiness need to be expanded to account for this variety.

Consequently, through this dissertation I propose introducing an alternate perspective that attempts to address both the points made above by conceptualizing happiness and well-being in a way that can expand our current understanding on these topics. At the same time, it can also provide a relatively parsimonious account of how consumers' pursuit of happiness and well-being can involve factors in addition to fun and pleasure. Specifically, I argue in favor of analyzing consumption through a theoretical lens that goes beyond a hedonic focus and recognizes that happiness and well-being can also be understood through a eudaimonic focus.

The eudaimonic perspective is grounded in a growing body of scholarly work originating from the writings of Aristotle in his seminal work *Nicomachean Ethics* (4th Century B.C.E./1985) on what constitutes a good life. Drawing on philosophical differences between notions of a (hedonically) pleasant life and a (eudaimonically) meaningful life (Haybron 2000), several scholars started investigating this distinction

by looking at the psychological underpinnings of happiness and well-being. Well-being, as it turns out, is much more multi-dimensional than previously thought and necessitates going beyond a sole focus on hedonic aspects (Ryan and Deci 2001; Sirgy 2012). While the hedonic view of happiness and well-being gives primacy to pleasure, the presence of positive affect, and/or the absence of negative affect, the eudaimonic view considers aspects such as autonomy, relatedness, mastery, purpose, growth, engagement, virtue, and meaning, to name a few (see Ryan and Deci 2001; Lambert, Passmore, and Holder 2015; and Vitterso 2016 for a comprehensive overview). This dual perspective on happiness and well-being has garnered widespread conceptual and empirical support among academics and has resulted in a profusion of research on the topic, marked by a milestone-of-sorts in the recent publication of the *Handbook of Eudaimonic Well-Being* (Vitterso 2016).

When it comes to the marketing discipline, the hedonic perspective (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982) has had a considerable and unquestionably positive impact in terms of broadening our understanding to include multiple facets of consumption and product usage (see Alba and Williams 2013 for a review). However, hardly any work has taken a eudaimonic perspective barring rare exceptions (Percival Carter 2017; Percival Carter and Williams 2014; Pchelin and Howell 2014) despite a growing number of recent calls for doing so (Alba and Williams 2013; Gilovich et al. 2015b; Howell and Guevarra 2013; Schmitt et al. 2015).

Part of such neglect can be attributed to the conceptual and empirical complexity involved in researching eudaimonia as several viable approaches have been advanced (see Lambert et al. 2015 for a recent review) but, given that different approaches focus on different aspects of eudaimonia, no single theoretical perspective

can easily be considered as the best alternative (Vitterso 2016). Part of the neglect, however, is evident within the marketing discipline itself as research has either not separated pleasure-oriented happiness from meaning-oriented happiness (e.g. Bhattacharjee and Mogilner 2014) or has looked at different forms of happiness but still within a hedonic frame of reference (e.g. Mogilner et al. 2011). This is exacerbated by a broader lack of focus in general with some reviews highlighting how existing research has focused disproportionately more on consumption at a sensory level rather than at deeper levels, or on extraordinary and novel consumption experiences rather than on many other forms (Alba and Williams 2013; Caru and Cova 2003).

As I argue below, a systematic examination of the eudaimonic aspects of consumption can enrich current theoretical perspectives on consumption and also provide a clearer idea about the implications for marketing practice.

THEORETICAL RELEVANCE

When the marketing discipline incorporated a hedonic perspective on consumption more than three decades ago (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982), it set the course for a rich stream of research into “consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun” (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 132) that has generated several insights into the many ways consumers pursue pleasure (Alba and Williams 2013). I propose that it may be time to introduce a eudaimonic perspective – one that takes into account factors in addition to pleasure and fun –that can help us understand consumer choices in even greater detail.

The theoretical merit of a eudaimonic perspective is readily seen, on one hand, from a burgeoning volume of research on the topic in the psychology discipline (Ryan and Deci 2001; Ryff 1989; Seligman 2012; Waterman 1993) and, on the other hand, from the “paradigmatic shift” (Vorderer and Reinecke 2015, 447) in theories of entertainment and communication that have come about from incorporating a eudaimonic perspective in addition to a hedonic one (e.g. Oliver and Raney 2011; Rieger et al. 2014; Wirth, Hofer, and Schram 2012). Such work, coupled with other examples advocating a eudaimonic perspective on consumer-relevant topics such as leisure (Stebbins 2016), tourism (Sirgy and Uysal 2016), and personal projects (Little, Salmela-Aro, and Phillips 2017) further demonstrates the usefulness (and maybe even an imminent need) of introducing a eudaimonic perspective to research on happiness and well-being in the marketing discipline.

Thus, analogous to how the hedonic view eventually enriched the discipline (Alba and Williams 2013; Caru and Cova 2003), I argue that a eudaimonic perspective may provide a further way forward for marketing scholars by: (a) helping understand how consumption can be hedonic (oriented towards a happiness-as-fun perspective) as well as eudaimonic (oriented towards a happiness-as-meaningfulness perspective) in nature, and (b) expanding the scope of the discipline to focus on certain eudaimonic aspects of consumption experiences that are not systematically addressed by current theoretical perspectives. By doing so I also hope to build an argument for a prospective account of value whereby future research could conceptualize and operationalize a concept of eudaimonic value that could supplement the prevailing concepts of utilitarian value and hedonic value (Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994; Sanchez-Fernandes and Iniesta-Bonillo 2007; Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann 2003).

MANAGERIAL RELEVANCE

A eudaimonic lens can also be potentially useful to marketing practitioners as they move into an era of “Marketing 3.0” that aims to “[lift] the concept of marketing into the arena of human aspirations, values, and spirit” (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan 2010, 4). Specifically, it can do so by focussing on a more holistic view of the consumer rather than one that assumes the consumer to be primarily a logical problem-solver – the central critique of the information-processing perspective by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) – or primarily an emotional pleasure-seeker – a critique recently voiced by several scholars (Alba and Williams 2013; Howell and Guevarra 2013; Schmitt et al. 2015).

Given that consumers frequently seek happiness through their purchases (Mogilner et al. 2011), different views of happiness should be reflected in differences on at least some aspects of the consumption process. While Mogilner et al. (2011) do find some differences based on whether consumers define happiness as feelings of calmness or as feelings of excitement, the overall framework they use is still hedonic in nature as it focuses on positive affect. As already noted, however, research in other disciplines is already making explicit distinctions between hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives, and uncovering facts that highlight the practical applications of looking at the two perspectives separately. Recent findings highlight, for instance, the differences between hedonic and eudaimonic experiences of movies, entertainment, user experiences of interactive technology, and leisure pursuits (Mekler and Hornbaek 2016; Oliver and Bartsch 2011; Oliver and Raney 2011; Stebbins 2016). Thus, understanding the differences between hedonic and eudaimonic consumption

experiences could help provide a direction for marketing managers who aim to increase consumer happiness and well-being at each step of the customer journey (Lemon and Verhoef 2016).

RESEARCH PURPOSE AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In light of the preceding discussion, I pursued two major goals through this dissertation, namely: (a) to investigate and demonstrate how hedonic consumption experiences (involving a more pleasure-oriented experience of happiness) differ from eudaimonic consumption experiences (involving a more meaning-oriented experience of happiness), and (b) to explore eudaimonic consumption in much greater detail through consumers' personal accounts of purchases which they considered to be meaningful. By doing so I hoped to extend current understanding of the link between consumption and well-being, and illustrate how personal meaning/meaningfulness is a domain worthy of continued academic enquiry.

Given the discovery-oriented nature of this research, I used a mixed-methods approach (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007) combining both qualitative (depth interviews) and quantitative (experimental studies) methods. Some examples of prior work on related topics in marketing that have combined qualitative findings and quantitative data include research on experiential aspects of extended service experiences (Arnould and Price 1993), and the differences between experiential and material purchases (Carter and Gilovich 2012; Guevarra and Howell 2015). The overall research design was a convergent parallel design (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011) which involved parallel data collection and analysis of the qualitative and quantitative project components. Such an approach allowed for findings from a given

phase to shape and inform work in the other phase, if needed, and provided a degree of flexibility during the course of the project.

DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

The structure of the rest of the manuscript is laid out as follows:

Chapter 2 begins by providing an overview of the contributions and limitations of the current hedonic/experiential perspective. It then builds an argument for introducing a eudaimonic perspective to the marketing discipline by looking at certain parallels between present conditions and the context three decades ago when the hedonic/experiential perspective had been introduced. It concludes by detailing the theoretical support for the eudaimonic perspective and outlining some specific perspectives that are used in the quantitative and qualitative phases.

Chapters 3 and 4 provide the methodological and analytical details for the quantitative and qualitative phases respectively. Specifically, in chapter 3, I describe the data collection and findings from the six experimental studies that I conducted to investigate the differences between hedonic and eudaimonic consumption. In chapter 4, I describe similar details from the 21 depth interviews that I conducted to explore, in greater depth, the eudaimonic aspects of consumption.

Finally, chapter 5 includes a general discussion summarizing the findings from the qualitative and quantitative phases, along with theoretical contributions and managerial implications from this project, and some future research directions. The chapter concludes by reiterating the importance of a eudaimonic perspective on research in consumer behavior and marketing, and how it can inform our understanding of pursuing a life that is not only pleasurable but also meaningful.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

THE VALUE OF A NEW LENS:

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE HEDONIC/EXPERIENTIAL VIEW

It has been more than three and a half decades since research in consumer behavior and marketing first incorporated a hedonic lens to study the experiential aspects of consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). As articulated originally, “hedonic consumption” referred to “those facets of consumer behavior that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of one’s experience with products” (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982, 92). The “experiential view,” thus, was seen as encompassing the “steady flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun” (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 132) often involved in consumption. Positioned as it was originally, this hedonic/experiential perspective (I use both terms here given the overall similarity in the arguments of both seminal papers) did not seek to displace the then-prevalent information processing perspectives which viewed the consumer as a logical and rational decision-maker (e.g. Bettman 1979; Howard and Sheth 1969), but rather to “argue for an enlarged view” (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 139) that represented “an important extension of traditional consumer research and offer[ed] a complementary perspective for conceptualizing many otherwise neglected consumption phenomena” (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982, 100). Simply put, the hedonic/experiential perspective offered a new way of looking at the world of consumption and marketing that could incorporate an array of factors that had been overlooked until that point by scholars within the marketing discipline.

It would be safe to say that this perspective has had a significant impact on the discipline in many ways (see Alba and Williams 2013; Caru and Cova 2003; Gilovich and Kumar 2015; Lanier and Rader 2015 for comprehensive reviews). As of May 2018, Google Scholar lists over 8,300 citations for the Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) article and over 5,800 citations for the Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) article. In my view, however, three major contributions can be delineated in particular. Specifically, I believe that the hedonic/experiential perspective benefited marketing research and practice by: (a) broadening the scope of the discipline to focus on experiential aspects of consumption that had been comparatively neglected by earlier information-processing perspectives (Alba and Williams 2013; Arnould and Price 1993; Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello 2009; Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993), (b) leading to the recognition of experiences as a distinct form of consumption (Caru and Cova 2003; Lanier and Rader 2015; Pine and Gilmore 1998; Schmitt 1999) that have since then been also linked to several advantages beyond material purchases (Gilovich and Kumar 2015; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003), and finally, (c) paving the way for developing a concept of hedonic value that added to, and was distinct from, the concept of utilitarian value (Addis and Holbrook 2001; Babin et al. 1994; Sanchez-Fernandez and Iniesta-Bonillo 2007; Voss et al. 2003).

The hedonic/experiential perspective has, thus, played an important role in terms of informing marketing theory and shaping marketing practice. However, as I describe next, there are some limitations of this perspective in terms of its theoretical focus and scope that have increasingly been highlighted by recent research.

THE LIMITS OF VISION: CRITIQUES OF THE HEDONIC/EXPERIENTIAL VIEW

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) had themselves admitted that even though their original conceptualization of the hedonic/experiential perspective was ambitious and accounted for several factors, it was not all-inclusive. Recent work shows that this incompleteness continues to pose a challenge as a hedonic/experiential perspective cannot explain several examples of consumer decision-making. Alba and Williams (2013), for instance, point out that research within the field has yet to satisfactorily explain why consumers voluntarily pursue consumption experiences that are unpleasant (e.g. getting tattoos, running marathons) and/or effort-intensive (e.g. assembling furniture, knitting sweaters) as such choices run counter to the prevailing view that consumers seek happiness by maximizing pleasure. Encouragingly, recent research has begun looking at some such consumption contexts in terms of do-it-yourself activities (Norton, Mochon, and Ariely 2012) and participating in tough mudder competitions (Scott, Cayla, and Cova 2017).

A broader concern is the hedonic/experiential perspective's overarching focus on pleasure and fun given that it can curtail a consideration of several other factors that are relevant to consumer decision-making. Consumers frequently make consumption choices based on considerations other than pleasure, such as gaining expertise (LaTour and LaTour 2010), pursuing personal growth (Arnould and Price 1993; Celsi et al. 1993), and building relationships (Chan and Mogilner 2016; Schouten and McAlexander 1995) among others. In some extreme cases, consumers even pursue activities that either involve distinctly unpleasant hedonic experiences such as pain (Scott et al. 2017) or that carry as substantial a risk as death (Celsi et al.

1993). While such research has revealed newer insights into consumer behavior, the marketing discipline still lacks an integrative understanding given that such consumption behaviors cannot be accounted for by either the information-processing perspective (focused on functional benefits) or the hedonic/experiential perspective (focused on pleasure).

Finally, at a broader disciplinary level, there is a growing concern that marketing scholarship has tended to rely on a more circumscribed notion of happiness itself, as seen from a growing number of calls for research which are advocating for a more nuanced understanding of happiness. Some scholars, for instance, have demonstrated how happiness can be conceptualized as feelings of calmness versus feelings of excitement (Mogilner et al. 2011), while others have urged for a greater focus on understanding meaning-oriented happiness (Alba and Williams 2013; Schmitt et al. 2015).

Given this background, I can discern three specific factors (discussed in the next section) based on my review of the literature that make the need for a new theoretical perspective apparent.

TIME FOR A NEWER LENS?

Given the limitations described above, three parallels can be delineated between the conditions that facilitated the growth of a hedonic/experiential perspective more than three decades ago and current conditions that indicate the value of introducing a fresh perspective to the study of consumption.

The first parallel relates to the scope of a given theoretical lens. If the information-processing perspective was criticized for its view of the consumer as a

problem-solver who relied primarily on logic and rationality while making purchase decisions (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982), then the hedonic/experiential perspective can be criticized for its view of the consumer as a pleasure-seeker who relies primarily on emotions, fantasies, sensations, and fun in different consumption contexts (Alba and Williams 2013; Schmitt et al. 2015). However, as I have discussed in the previous section, consumers not only solve problems and/or pursue pleasure through their consumption choices but also aim for other things such as expertise, personal growth, and social relationships. Alba and Williams (2012, 7), for instance, argue for recognizing that “consumers’ goals may rise above mere indulgence and fun.” Thus, a perspective is needed that can view the consumer as a seeker of meaningful consumption with a focus on aspects of consumption other than solely rational and/or emotional ones.

The second parallel relates to the distinction between forms of consumption. As I have noted earlier, one of the contributions of the hedonic/experiential perspective was in delineating the notion of “experience” itself. Pine and Gilmore (1998, 97), in their discussion of the “experience economy,” critiqued earlier work for lumping experiences together with services despite several significant differences. As per their definition, “an experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event” (Pine and Gilmore 1998, 98). Furthermore, there was a difference not only in the nature of these market offerings, but also in the expected focus of the firm. Thus, commodities (e.g. iron ore) were fungible and had to be extracted from the environment, goods (e.g. furniture) were tangible and had to be manufactured, services (e.g. banking) were intangible and had to be delivered, and experiences were memorable and had to be staged.

By a similar token, current work in the discipline can be criticized for not recognizing the distinction between consumption which is oriented more toward the experience of fun, positive affect, and/or pleasure, and that which is oriented more toward the experience of, for instance, autonomy, mastery, purpose, and/or self-acceptance. While prior research does argue for recognizing the differences between ordinary and extraordinary experiences (Bhattacharjee and Mogilner 2014; Caru and Cova 2003) or between functional, anti-functional, structural, and anti-structural experiences (Lanier and Rader 2015), it is largely silent on the distinction between fun/pleasurable and meaningful consumption (see Keinan and Kivetz 2011 for a partial exception though their focus is only on novel and unusual consumption experiences). Research in other disciplines, however, is already uncovering useful differences between fun and meaningful experiences of entertainment (Oliver and Raney 2011; Rieger et al. 2014; Wirth et al. 2012), leisure (Stebbins 2016), and tourism (Kler and Tribe 2012; Matteucci 2013) – topics that are clearly related to consumption. Thus, a systematic examination of the differences between pleasurable/fun consumption and meaningful consumption is likely to result in a more fine-grained understanding of consumption itself.

The third, and final, parallel relates to the notion of value linked to consumption choices. If the utilitarian concept of value was limited by its primary focus on the functionality and efficiency of a product or consumption experience (Babin et al. 1994; Voss et al. 2003), then the hedonic concept of value is limited by its primary focus on the entertainment, excitement, and emotional potential of consumption (Sanchez-Fernandez and Iniesta-Bonillo 2007). Given the earlier discussion on how consumers often consume for reasons other than functionality or pleasure, research that can support the case for a more inclusive concept of value

would be more useful in understanding why consumers make certain purchase decisions.

Thus, a eudaimonic perspective (described below) can not only address the limitations of the hedonic/experiential perspective and advance a view of consumption that takes into account other factors that are relevant to consumers and their consumption choices, but also answer multiple calls for research that have advocated for theoretical and empirical enquiry into the eudaimonic aspects of consumption (Alba and Williams 2013; Gilovich et al. 2015b; Howell and Guevarra 2013; Schmitt et al. 2015).

THE VALUE OF A NEWER LENS:

THE POTENTIAL MERITS OF THE EUDAIMONIC VIEW

To be happy is something that most people consistently indicate as being one of their most important aims in life. This result has been substantiated in several international surveys in which happiness was rated as an extremely important life goal (Diener, Sapyta, and Suh 1998), surpassing other end goals such as success, intelligence, and material wealth (Diener and Oishi 2006). This view of happiness as a universal human motive has long been espoused by philosophers such as Pascal (1669/1995) and James (1902), though it can be traced as far back as to Aristotle and his writings in *Nicomachean Ethics* (4th Century B.C.E./1985). The idea of happiness, however, has defied easy description and a vast amount of scholarly work has brought to light a number of nuances that reveal an underlying complexity to what, at first glance, seems an intuitively simple concept. This has been especially evident in the rapid growth of research within positive psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi

2014) that has resulted in a profusion of constructs and theories related to happiness and well-being (Lambert et al. 2015).

Amidst all this complexity two major approaches to happiness and well-being have emerged – the hedonic view and the eudaimonic view – that have garnered a considerable degree of support among scholars (Deci and Ryan 2008; Ryan and Deci 2001; Vitterso 2016; Waterman 1993). This distinction is visible in several major theoretical accounts of happiness and well-being such as self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2001; Ryan, Huta, and Deci 2008), psychological well-being (Keyes 2007; Ryff 1989; Ryff and Singer 2008), personal expressiveness (Waterman 1993; Waterman, Schwartz, and Conti 2008), and Seligman's (2012) PERMA framework. Building on philosophical differences between different views of what constitutes a good life (Haybron 2000), hedonic perspectives are most commonly linked to pleasure, positive affect and/or the absence of negative affect, while eudaimonic perspectives encompass a much broader range of factors that include (but are not limited to) meaningfulness, full-functioning, virtue, engagement, relatedness, competence, purpose, self-acceptance, and self-realization (see Vitterso 2016 for a comprehensive account).

Not surprisingly, this has prompted some concerns related to conceptual ambiguity and operational difficulties in terms of theorizing and measuring eudaimonic variables (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, and King 2008; Proctor and Tweed 2016), given that eudaimonia can be conceptualized as an outcome (e.g. psychological well-being or personal expressiveness), as an individual difference variable (e.g. happiness orientation of eudaimonic motivation), or as an experience (e.g. personal projects or leisure activities) (Huta and Waterman 2014; Huta 2016). However, given the significant expansion that the eudaimonic view is bringing about in terms of our

theoretical understanding of factors that contribute towards leading a full life (e.g. Baumeister et al. 2013; Peterson, Park, and Seligman 2005; Ryff and Singer 2013), the usefulness of such a perspective to the study of consumers and their consumption experiences is likely to be high. Thus, while the nuances of eudaimonic perspectives can (and indeed, should) be a subject of scholarly debate, their relevance should no longer attract scepticism.

While there is some research in psychology that has looked at eudaimonic well-being in terms of purchase decisions (Pchelin and Howell 2014), there is currently a dearth of theoretical and empirical work within the marketing discipline that has adopted a eudaimonic perspective (see Percival Carter 2017; Percival Carter and Williams 2014 for exceptions). This gap in the literature is especially worthy of note given the growing number of recent calls that have actively argued for adopting a eudaimonic focus to differentiate pleasure-oriented happiness from meaning-oriented happiness, and to deepen our understanding of how purchases and consumption experiences can play a role in enhancing consumer well-being (Alba and Williams 2013; Gilovich et al. 2015b; Howell and Guevarra 2013; Schmitt et al. 2015). Moreover, as I already discussed in chapter 1, scholars in areas such as entertainment, leisure, and tourism are already applying eudaimonic perspectives to relevant topics within their discipline and unearthing interesting findings. The dissertation, thus, is an attempt to address this gap by taking a deeper look at meaningful consumption experiences across a broad range of consumption contexts. As I describe over the course of the next two chapters, moreover, I use two broad theoretical perspectives in this regard.

For the quantitative phase (chapter 3), I designed and conducted studies in line with the central difference between the two forms of consumption that has been

extensively discussed in prior research (Lambert et al. 2015; Vitterso 2016). Specifically, the difference revolves around hedonic consumption's focus on pleasure, fun, sensation etc. and eudaimonic consumption's focus on meaning, growth, self-realization etc. (Bauer 2016; Schmitt et al. 2015; Steger et al. 2008). This distinction was leveraged in most of the studies either through the hypotheses being tested and/or through the design of experimental manipulations themselves. As described later, this proved helpful in eliciting clearer insights into the differences between purchases that were more strongly associated with fun/pleasure (hedonic) and those that were more strongly linked to meaning (eudaimonic).

For the qualitative phase (chapter 4), I used Ryff's (1989) multi-dimensional framework of psychological well-being as a starting point. This framework specifies six aspects of eudaimonic well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose, and self-acceptance. Briefly, autonomy refers to the importance of being independent in guiding one's actions; environmental mastery refers to the sense of control people feel with regard to internal and external factors in order to create a conducive environment for themselves; personal growth encompasses feelings of personal development by facing new challenges; positive relationships comprise the sense of relatedness and empathy people feel in terms of their social relationships; purpose refers to a person's sense of direction; and self-acceptance indicates the degree to which the person likes and accepts the person she/he is in totality. This framework was especially useful as it encompasses several factors that, according to Alba and Williams (2013), the hedonic view is unable to either explain well or incorporate fully into consumer decision-making accounts. As described later, this framework was useful in initial stages to organize emergent

findings from the interviews and eventually in developing a theoretical perspective on eudaimonic consumption.

With this background, I now proceed to the next chapter which details the findings from the experimental studies that were conducted to investigate some possible differences between hedonic and eudaimonic consumption.

CHAPTER 3: A QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HEDONIC AND EUDAIMONIC CONSUMPTION

This chapter details the experimental studies that I conducted to test for differences between hedonic and eudaimonic consumption. The theoretical background, hypothesized results, methodological details, and data analyses for each study are discussed separately in the subsequent sub-sections.

All studies were IRB-approved and designed through the Qualtrics platform. Those conducted on Amazon Mechanical Turk (henceforth referred to as MTurk) had a token monetary incentive provided to respondents who answered the surveys. In accordance with IRB guidelines, screening questions were used for all surveys to ensure that all respondents were American citizens of at least 19 years of age. Further, multiple attention checks were used throughout each study and the analyses reported here are for the final sample of respondents who passed all attention checks. Lastly, to avoid order effects, studies utilizing more than one condition had respondents randomly allocated to each condition, and individual items for multi-item scales were also presented in a randomized order.

The sequence of studies, briefly, is as follows: Studies 1A, 1B, and 2 look at cognition-related differences between hedonic and eudaimonic consumption. While studies 1A and 1B look at the types of purchase people recall when asked to think about one which made them happy (with and without a time constraint), study 2 examines how hedonic and eudaimonic purchases differ in terms of difficulty of recall. Building on to that, studies 3 and 4 look at differences on psychological well-being between hedonic and eudaimonic purchases (study 3), and in a specific consumption context of material and experiential purchases (study 4). Study 3 also

looks for differences in feelings related to the experience of elevation. Finally, study 5 tries to replicate findings from prior research about the relationship between temporal orientations, and the experiences of happiness and meaning in one's life, while also providing a first step in examining how a certain type of temporal orientation can impact consumer preferences between a product framed in hedonic vs. eudaimonic terms.

STUDY 1A: THE HAPPINESS FROM PURCHASES AND DIFFERENCES IN DIFFICULTY OF RECALL

The purpose of this study was to examine which type of purchases people normally associate with happiness and whether difficulty of recall was linked to the levels of hedonia and eudaimonia experienced from the purchase.

Given that happiness can involve experiences of both hedonia and eudaimonia, I wanted to see what kind of purchases people recall from memory when asked to think about one which made them happy. Prior work has shown that eudaimonic experiences are cognitively more complex than hedonic experiences, requiring more effort on the part of the consumer (Bartsch and Hartmann 2017; Vitterso 2016). In line with this, I predicted that people will tend to recall purchases that were more hedonic than eudaimonic in nature. To further explore this tendency, I also decided to test whether there were differences in the nature of the recalled purchase between people who faced a time constraint during the recall task and those who did not.

Additionally, based on a combination of the findings from prior research (mentioned above) and my observations from the depth interviews, I also predicted

that the less a purchase was perceived to be hedonic, and the more it was perceived to be eudaimonic, the more difficult it would be for a consumer to recall.

Method

A sample of 105 respondents from across the United States between the ages of 23 and 73 ($M = 37$; 41% female; 69% Caucasian) was recruited on MTurk to participate in this study in exchange for \$0.50.

Respondents were randomly allocated to either an unconstrained condition or a time constrained condition. Respondents in each condition were asked to “think about a recent time you made a purchase that made you happy.” They were then asked to describe the purchase and the reasons it evoked that type of response within them. Respondents in the time-constrained condition, however, were also told beforehand that they would only get 60 seconds to provide a written response. They also saw a timer counting down from 60 seconds to 0, after which the survey automatically moved on to the next page. No such additional instruction or visible countdown was shown to the respondents in the unconstrained condition and they could take as much time as they liked to provide their written response.

After describing their purchase, respondents reported the extent to which their purchase was eudaimonic and hedonic on a set of face-valid items created on the basis of a review of literature and discussions with other marketing academics. Specifically, for eudaimonia, they indicated the extent to which the purchase was deeply meaningful to them, strongly resonated with their identity, and helped them pursue something they believed in (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree). For hedonia, they reported the extent to which their purchase was enjoyable and fun, pleasant and

pleasurable, and helped them pursue something that was pleasing to their senses (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree).

An exploratory factor analysis on these items with a varimax rotation confirmed the distinction between eudaimonia and hedonia as two distinct factors emerged (with eigenvalues > 1). All but one item (for hedonia: “This purchase helped me pursue something that was pleasing to my senses”) correctly loaded on their respective factors with factor loadings > 0.6 and cross-loadings < 0.4 , so the remaining five items were combined into two scales. The factor names, eigenvalues (λ), and reliabilities were as follows: (1) eudaimonia ($\lambda = 2.90$; $\alpha = .84$); and (2) hedonia ($\lambda = 1.40$; $\alpha = .85$).

Respondents also indicated how difficult it was to recall the purchase via three items adapted from Kyung, Menon, and Trope (2014). Specifically, they indicated the effort it took to recall the experience (1 = no effort, 9 = a lot of effort), the amount of thought it took to recall the experience (1 = no thought, 9 = a lot of thought), and how easy or difficult it was to recall the purchase (1 = very easy, 9 = very difficult). Responses to these questions were combined into a single measure for difficulty of recall ($\alpha = .84$).

Respondents also indicated their satisfaction with the purchase (1 = not at all satisfied, 7 = extremely satisfied), the likelihood of recommending the purchase to others (1 = not at all likely, 7 = extremely likely), and the likelihood of making a similar purchase in the future (1 = not at all likely, 7 = extremely likely). I also collected data on how much each purchase cost, how many months ago it was made, whether it was a one-time purchase or a regular one, whether respondents bought it for themselves or as a gift for someone else, and the extent to which they considered

the purchase to be material or experiential (1 = purely material, 7 = purely experiential).

Finally, as a manipulation check, all respondents indicated the perceived difficulty of recalling a purchase in the time they had (1 = very easy, 9 = very difficult).

Details regarding respondents' gender, age, race/ethnicity, annual household income, highest educational level completed, marital status, number of children living with them at present, and their fluency in the English language were collected as demographic variables.

Results and Discussion

The manipulation check confirmed that respondents in the time constrained condition found it more difficult to recall a purchase in the time they had ($M = 2.79$; $SD = 2.09$) than those in the unconstrained condition did ($M = 1.66$, $SD = 1.51$; $F(1, 103) = 10.04$, $p < .05$).

An examination of hedonia and eudaimonia scores showed that respondents in both conditions recalled purchases that were higher in hedonia than in eudaimonia. For the unconstrained group, the average value for hedonia was 8.22 ($SD = 1.01$) and for eudaimonia was 6.35 ($SD = 2.00$). For the time constrained group, the respective average values were 7.93 ($SD = 1.16$) and 5.72 ($SD = 1.85$). As a measure of the extent to which the purchase was perceived to be more hedonic than eudaimonic, a measure of net hedonia was calculated by subtracting the eudaimonia score for each purchase from its hedonia score. For those in the unconstrained condition, the average value for net hedonia ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 1.92$) was significantly different from 0 ($t(52) = 7.10$, $p < .001$). Similarly, for those in the time constrained condition, the average

value for net hedonia ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.93$) was also significantly different from 0 ($t(51) = 8.29$, $p < .001$).

The overall logic of this result also held when the hedonia and eudaimonia scores were examined separately. Prior to doing this, I checked for group differences on all other variables. While there were no differences between the two groups on any demographic variables or purchase aspects such as price, timing, frequency, recipient, experientiality, or likelihood of making a similar purchase (all $ps > .05$), there were some differences in terms of purchase outcomes. Specifically, respondents in the unconstrained condition reported: (a) greater satisfaction from their purchase ($M = 6.57$, $SD = .80$) than those in the time constrained condition ($M = 6.14$, $SD = 1.17$; $F(1, 103) = 4.88$, $p < .05$), and (b) greater likelihood of recommending their purchase to others ($M = 6.43$, $SD = .87$) than those in the timed condition ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 1.36$; $F(1, 103) = 11.09$, $p = .001$).

Consequently, I conducted a MANCOVA analysis to test for differences in perceived hedonia and eudaimonia while controlling for satisfaction and likelihood of recommendation. There was no significant overall effect for experimental condition (Wilk's lambda = .98, $p > .05$), showing that the nature of happiness experienced by respondents from their recalled purchases (in terms of both hedonia and eudaimonia) did not differ between the two groups. Thus, whether people faced a time constraint or not, they chose to self-select purchases that were relatively more hedonic when asked to recall a purchase that made them happy.

An examination of difficulty of recall with hedonia and eudaimonia confirmed the expected directions of their relationships. A regression analysis for difficulty of recall with the mean-centered values for hedonia and eudaimonia was overall significant ($F(2,102) = 14.73$, $p < .001$) and showed a negative effect of hedonia ($\beta =$

-.49, $t(102) = -5.41, p < .001$) and a positive effect of eudaimonia ($\beta = .19, t(102) = 2.06, p < .05$). Stated another way, the more a purchase was perceived to be hedonic, and the less it was perceived to be eudaimonic, the easier it was to recall.

STUDY 1B: REPLICATION AND A STRICTER TIME CONSTRAINT

The purpose of this study was to see whether the findings from study 1A could be replicated and whether any additional differences emerged under a more stringent time constraint (30 seconds, compared to 60 seconds in study 1A).

Method

A sample of 105 respondents from across the United States between the ages of 20 and 69 ($M = 38$; 49% female; 62% Caucasian) was recruited on MTurk to participate in this study in exchange for \$0.50.

The design of the study was identical to study 1A except that respondents in the time constrained condition were now told that they would only get 30 seconds to provide a written response and were shown a timer counting down from 30 seconds to 0. As before, no such additional instruction or visible countdown was shown to the respondents in the unconstrained condition and they could take as much time as they liked to provide their written response. All other measures were the same as those used in study 1A.

An exploratory factor analysis on the hedonia and eudaimonia items with a varimax rotation again revealed two distinct factors (with eigenvalues > 1). A minor difference from study 1A was that all items correctly loaded on their respective factors with factor loadings > 0.6 and cross-loadings < 0.4 , so the six items were

combined into two scales. The factor names, eigenvalues (λ), and reliabilities were as follows: (1) eudaimonia ($\lambda = 3.30$; $\alpha = .84$); and (2) hedonia ($\lambda = 1.44$; $\alpha = .89$). The distinction between eudaimonia and hedonia in the context of consumer purchases, thus, was further substantiated.

Results and Discussion

While the values for the manipulation check (perceived difficulty of recalling the purchase in the time provided) were directionally as expected, with the time constrained condition being perceived as more difficult ($M = 2.98$; $SD = 2.19$) than the unconstrained condition ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 2.18$), the difference was not significant ($F(1, 103) = 1.45$, $p > .05$). So, the results should be interpreted with caution.

An examination of hedonia and eudaimonia scores again showed that respondents in both conditions recalled purchases higher in hedonia than in eudaimonia. For the unconstrained group, the average value for hedonia was 7.67 ($SD = 1.52$) and for eudaimonia was 6.28 ($SD = 1.96$). For the time constrained group, the respective average values were 7.58 ($SD = 1.03$) and 6.12 ($SD = 1.77$). As before, a measure of net hedonia was calculated by subtracting the eudaimonia score for each purchase from its hedonia score. For those in the unconstrained condition, the average value for net hedonia ($M = 1.38$, $SD = 1.95$) was significantly different from 0 ($t(55) = 5.28$, $p < .001$). Similarly, for those in the time constrained condition, the average value for net hedonia ($M = 1.46$, $SD = 1.64$) was also significantly different from 0 ($t(48) = 6.23$, $p < .001$). These results also held when the data for both groups was analyzed as a whole. The average value for net hedonia for all respondents ($M = 1.42$, $SD = 1.81$) was still significantly different from 0 ($t(104) = 8.03$, $p < .001$).

Prior to examining hedonia and eudaimonia scores separately, I checked for group differences on all other variables. The only difference that emerged was in terms of the likelihood of making a similar purchase. Specifically, respondents in the unconstrained condition reported greater likelihood ($M = 6.14$, $SD = 1.21$) than those in the time constrained condition ($M = 5.65$, $SD = 1.30$; $F(1, 103) = 3.99$, $p < .05$). A subsequent MANCOVA analysis conducted to test for differences in perceived hedonia and eudaimonia while controlling for likelihood of making a similar purchase showed no significant overall effect for experimental condition (Wilk's lambda = .99, $p > .05$).

As in study 1A, a regression analysis for difficulty of recall with the mean-centered values for hedonia and eudaimonia was overall significant ($F(2,102) = 5.22$, $p < .05$) and showed a negative effect of hedonia ($\beta = -.29$, $t(102) = -2.82$, $p < .05$) and a positive effect of eudaimonia ($\beta = .26$, $t(102) = 2.56$, $p < .05$). Thus, the findings from study 1A were substantiated as purchases that were higher in hedonia and lower in eudaimonia were easier to recall.

STUDY 2: DIFFERENCES IN DIFFICULTY OF RECALL FOR HEDONIC AND EUDAIMONIC PURCHASES

The purpose of this study was to provide a stronger test for the findings in studies 1A and 1B by manipulating purchase type and looking at differences in difficulty of recall associated with primarily hedonic and primarily eudaimonic purchases. In line with findings from previous studies, I predicted that people will report greater difficulty when asked to recall a eudaimonic purchase than when asked to recall a hedonic purchase.

Method

A sample of 106 respondents from across the United States between the ages of 22 and 71 ($M = 39$; 38% female; 77% Caucasian) was recruited on MTurk to participate in this study in exchange for \$0.50.

Respondents were randomly allocated to either a hedonic purchase condition or a eudaimonic purchase condition. In the hedonic condition, they were told to “think about a recent time you made a purchase that gave you a strong sense of pleasure; something that either was extremely fun, enjoyable, and exciting, or it was highly pleasing to your senses at that time.” In the eudaimonic purchase condition, they were told to “think about a recent time you made a purchase that gave you a strong sense of meaningfulness; something that resonated with your identity, was personally important to you, gave you a feeling of personal growth, or helped you pursue something you believe in.” They were then asked to describe the purchase and the reasons it evoked that type of response within them.

Following the recall task, measures were collected related to difficulty of recall ($\alpha = .81$), purchase aspects, and purchase outcomes using the same scales as those used in studies 1A and 1B. Given that the task instructions could be potentially confusing, respondents also indicated how unusual they found the recall task instructions (1 = not at all unusual, 7 = extremely unusual), how difficult it was to think of a purchase as per the description (1 = not at all difficult, 7 = extremely difficult), and how confident they were of their purchase being representative of the type of purchase they had been asked to describe (1 = not at all confident, 7 = extremely confident). Responses to these questions were combined into a single measure for instructional difficulty ($\alpha = .78$).

Finally, as in prior studies, measures were collected for demographic variables. As a manipulation check, respondents reported the extent to which their purchase was eudaimonic ($\alpha = .78$) and hedonic ($\alpha = .87$) on the same sets of items that were used in studies 1A and 1B.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation checks confirmed that the recall task was successful in making respondents think of different types of purchases. Respondents in the hedonic purchase condition indicated higher levels of hedonia associated with their purchase ($M = 8.11$, $SD = 1.08$) than those in the eudaimonic purchase condition ($M = 7.49$, $SD = 1.55$; $F(1, 104) = 14.85$, $p < .001$). Analogously, those in the eudaimonic purchase condition indicated higher levels of eudaimonia associated with their purchase ($M = 7.49$, $SD = 1.39$) than those in the hedonic purchase condition ($M = 6.30$, $SD = 1.75$; $F(1, 104) = 5.82$, $p < .05$).

As predicted, an ANOVA analysis conducted to test for differences in difficulty of recall was significant ($F(1, 104) = 4.05$, $p < .05$). Respondents in the eudaimonic condition reported that they found it more difficult to recall a purchase ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 2.30$) than those in the hedonic condition ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 2.06$).

As a robustness check, I first looked at group differences on all other variables. The only difference that emerged was in terms of experientiality. Specifically, respondents in the hedonic purchase condition perceived their purchase to be more experiential ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 1.94$) than those in the eudaimonic purchase condition ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.85$; $t(104) = 2.80$, $p < .05$). While this result was surprising (especially given the findings from interviews wherein respondents focused a lot on experiential purchases as being more meaningful), it appears to be an

anomaly, especially given subsequent findings from studies 3 and 4 detailed later. Additionally, difficulty of recall was correlated with purchase satisfaction ($r = -.30, p < .05$) and purchase timing ($r = .19, p < .05$). So, these variables were controlled for in subsequent analyses.

Consequently, an ANCOVA analysis to test for differences in difficulty of recall (while controlling for the abovementioned variables) showed that the differences still held up: respondents in the eudaimonic condition reported greater difficulty of recall ($M = 3.88, SE = .26$) than those in the hedonic condition ($M = 2.93, SE = .26; F(1, 101) = 6.15, p < .05$). Thus, the combined results from studies 1A, 1B, and 2 support the idea that people tend to construe happiness in more hedonic terms (as seen from the self-selection of purchases that were more hedonic than eudaimonic), and that it is more difficult for people to recall meaningful purchases as compared to pleasurable ones.

STUDY 3: DIFFERENCES IN ELEVATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING FOR HEDONIC AND EUDAIMONIC PURCHASES

While the focus of studies 1A, 1B, and 2 was on cognition-related differences between hedonic and eudaimonic experiences from purchases, the focus of studies 3 and 4 was on differences between these experiences in the realm of emotion and well-being. The purpose of this study, in particular, was to examine differences in emotions linked to the experience of elevation and psychological well-being.

Prior research in disciplines such as psychology and communication has shown that a key affective aspect on which hedonia and eudaimonia differ is linked to elevation (Huta and Ryan 2010; Oliver and Raney 2011; Oliver et al. 2012).

Originally conceptualized as an emotion that is “triggered by witnessing acts of human moral beauty or virtue” (Haidt 2000, 1), elevation was later operationalized as “meaningful affect” in the context of communication research (Oliver and Raney 2011; Oliver et al. 2012). These studies found that films which were perceived to be more meaningful by viewers were associated with higher levels of elevation/meaningful affect that were experienced as a result of watching such movies. This study extended that vein of research by looking at a broader scope of consumption categories than cinema alone. In line with prior work, I predicted that people asked to recall a eudaimonic purchase will report higher perceived levels of elevation than those asked to recall a hedonic purchase.

Similar to elevation, the concept of psychological well-being (henceforth referred to as PWB) has also long been held to be a key differentiator between the experience of hedonia and eudaimonia (Ryff 1989). While PWB has already been discussed in detail in chapter 2 as a theoretical framework which has often been used to study eudaimonia itself (Lambert et al. 2015; Ryff 1989; Ryff and Keyes 1995), the key aspect that was relevant to this study (and the next) was in terms of the dimensions that comprise PWB. Specifically, in this study I adapted items from the original PWB scale (Ryff 1989) to measure the different dimensions in the context of consumer purchases. As is subsequently reported, the items were successful in tapping into different dimensions and, therefore, were also used in study 4 to measure PWB. A secondary purpose served by this study, thus, was to provide a check regarding the validity of this multi-dimensional structure of PWB. And in line with prior work on the link between eudaimonia and PWB, I predicted that people asked to recall a eudaimonic purchase will report higher perceived levels on the PWB dimensions than those asked to recall a hedonic purchase.

A final ancillary purpose of this study was to test a mediation model between purchase type (hedonic or eudaimonic), PWB, and elevation, given some evidence from prior research regarding the link between well-being and affect. Fredrickson et al. (2015), for instance, showed that PWB mediates the link between positive affect and positive health outcomes. In line with this, I tested whether one or more dimensions of PWB mediate the link between purchase type and elevation.

Method

A sample of 100 respondents from across the United States between the ages of 23 and 72 ($M = 36$; 39% female; 71% Caucasian) was recruited on MTurk to participate in this study in exchange for \$0.75.

Respondents were randomly allocated to either a hedonic purchase condition or a eudaimonic purchase condition. The recall task instructions were the same as those used in study 2. After describing their purchase, respondents indicated how elevated they felt regarding their experience with it. Specifically, they indicated the extent to which the purchase made them feel touched, moved, emotional, compassionate, inspired, introspective, contemplative, and made them want to be a better person (1 = not at all, 7 = very much). The items to measure elevation were adapted from those used by Oliver and Raney (2011) and Oliver et al. (2012), given that their work was situated in a consumption context (that of cinema).

An exploratory factor analysis on these items with a varimax rotation revealed two distinct factors (with eigenvalues > 1). All but one item (“I felt inspired in response to this purchase”) had factor loadings > 0.6 and cross-loadings < 0.4 , so the remaining seven items were combined into two scales. The factor names, scale items, eigenvalues (λ), and reliabilities were as follows: (1) Emotionality (touched, moved,

emotional, compassionate; $\lambda = 4.95$; $\alpha = .91$); and (2) Introspection (introspective, contemplative, made me want to be a better person; $\lambda = 1.08$; $\alpha = .81$).

Respondents also indicated the extent of PWB they associated with the purchase. The items used for measuring PWB (detailed later) were based on Ryff's (1989) six dimensions of autonomy, mastery, growth, relatedness, purpose, and self-acceptance, and respondents had to indicate the extent of their agreement with each item (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Higher scores reflected higher perceived levels for each dimension regarding their experience with the purchase.

An initial exploratory factor analysis on these items with a varimax rotation showed four factors with eigenvalues > 1 . However, an examination of eigenvalues showed that a possible fifth factor could be extracted as its eigenvalue was close to 1 (.92). Re-running the factor analysis with a stipulation of five factors to be extracted resulted in distinct factors emerging. All but two items for autonomy ("This purchase helped me realize that being happy with myself was more important than seeking the approval of others" and "This purchase helped me gain confidence in my opinions, even if they were contrary to those of others") loaded on separate factors with factor loadings > 0.6 and cross-loadings < 0.4 , so the items were combined into five separate scales. These factors were in line with Ryff's (1989) PWB dimensions with the only exception being a factor (subsequently named 'Independence') that consisted of all items for mastery and one item for autonomy. The factor names, scale items, eigenvalues (λ), and reliabilities were as follows:

(1) Independence (This purchase made me feel independent, This purchase helped me feel in charge about one or more aspects in my life, This purchase helped me feel competent in my life, This purchase allowed me to handle all the

responsibilities that came with it, This purchase helped me do things in a way that was satisfying to me; $\lambda = .92$; $\alpha = .90$);

(2) Growth (This purchase allowed me to expand my horizons, This purchase helped me see the importance of having new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world, This purchase helped me gain insight into my life and learn more about myself, This purchase helped me learn, change, and grow; $\lambda = 1.20$; $\alpha = .91$);

(3) Relatedness (This purchase allowed me to relate to others in a meaningful way, This purchase helped me build or maintain satisfying, trusting relationships with others, This purchase made me more concerned about the welfare of other people, This purchase helped me sympathize with other people's problems, This purchase made me more capable of empathy, affection, and intimacy; $\lambda = 10.53$; $\alpha = .93$);

(4) Purpose (This purchase added to my sense of direction and purpose in life, This purchase gave me a better sense of what I'm trying to accomplish in life, This purchase allowed me to realize the importance of setting goals for myself and working to achieve them, This purchase made me feel that I was actively able to carry out the plans I had made for myself; $\lambda = 3.34$; $\alpha = .89$); and

(5) Self-acceptance (This purchase helped me feel more confident and positive about myself, This purchase helped me be proud of who I am and the life I lead, This purchase made me realize that, in my life overall, everything has worked out for the best, This purchase helped me feel good about who I am; $\lambda = 1.38$; $\alpha = .91$).

Additionally, respondents also indicated the extent to which the purchase added to their hedonic well-being (henceforth referred to as HWB) via items adapted from Guevarra and Howell (2015). Specifically, they indicated how much it

contributed to their happiness at the moment, their overall happiness, and their overall life satisfaction (1 = not at all, 7 = very much; $\alpha = .92$).

Finally, as in prior studies, measures were collected related to purchase aspects, purchase outcomes, and demographic variables. Manipulation checks used were the same as those in study 2 for eudaimonia ($\alpha = .85$) and hedonia ($\alpha = .86$).

Results and Discussion

Manipulation checks confirmed that the recall task was successful in making respondents think of different types of purchases. Respondents in the hedonic purchase condition indicated higher levels of hedonia associated with their purchase ($M = 7.85$, $SD = 1.38$) than those in the eudaimonic purchase condition ($M = 7.43$, $SD = 1.41$; $F(1, 98) = 2.65$, $p = .11$). Analogously, those in the eudaimonic purchase condition indicated higher levels of eudaimonia associated with their purchase ($M = 7.51$, $SD = 1.28$) than those in the hedonic purchase condition ($M = 6.52$, $SD = 1.81$; $F(1, 98) = 9.69$, $p < .05$).

A MANOVA analysis conducted to test for group differences in the dependent variables related to elevation and PWB was significant (Wilk's Lambda = .85, $p < .05$). Some findings were in line with expectations as respondents in the eudaimonic condition reported:

- (a) higher levels of purpose ($M = 5.62$, $SE = .21$) than those in the hedonic condition ($M = 4.70$, $SE = .19$; $F(1, 98) = 10.23$, $p < .05$); and
- (b) marginally higher levels of introspection ($M = 4.76$, $SE = .24$) than those in the hedonic condition ($M = 4.19$, $SE = .22$; $F(1, 98) = 3.09$, $p < .10$)

To further check for other possible underlying differences in the focal variables, I checked for group differences on all other variables. The only difference

that emerged was in terms of purchase timing. Specifically, respondents in the hedonic purchase condition recalled a purchase made more recently ($M = 2.34$ months ago, $SD = 2.14$) than those in the eudaimonic purchase condition ($M = 5.34$ months ago, $SD = 10.97$; $F(1, 98) = 3.95, p = .05$). A closer inspection of the data showed this difference primarily coming from three outliers within the eudaimonic purchase condition who had reflected on purchases from over two years ago. As all their other responses (including their written descriptions) were in line with expectations, their data were included in further analyses.

While none of the demographic variables and purchase price were correlated with any of the variables for elevation or PWB, there were significant correlations between HWB, purchase satisfaction, likelihood of recommendation, likelihood of making a similar purchase, and experientiality with one or more variables related to elevation and PWB.

Consequently, a follow-up MANCOVA analysis was conducted to test for group differences in the dependent variables related to elevation and PWB, while controlling for the abovementioned variables. The MANCOVA analysis was significant (Wilk's Lambda = .83, $p < .05$) and differences on an additional dimension of PWB emerged. Specifically, respondents in the eudaimonic condition reported:

- (a) higher levels of purpose ($M = 5.60, SE = .18$) than those in the hedonic condition ($M = 4.71, SE = .16$; $F(1, 91) = 12.55, p < .05$);
- (b) higher levels of self-acceptance ($M = 5.41, SE = .14$) than those in the hedonic condition ($M = 5.00, SE = .13$; $F(1, 91) = 4.32, p < .05$); and
- (c) marginally higher levels of introspection ($M = 4.74, SE = .44$) than those in the hedonic condition ($M = 4.21, SE = .20$; $F(1, 91) = 2.96, p < .10$)

While average values for emotionality, mastery, growth, and relatedness were in the correct direction (being higher for those in the eudaimonic purchase condition than for those in the hedonic purchase condition), group differences were not significant (all $ps > .05$). So, as a follow-up check, I examined the correlations for all dependent variables with the perceived levels of hedonia and eudaimonia experienced from the purchases (using the scores from the manipulation checks for this purpose).

Table 1 reports these values in addition to those calculated for the Steiger's Z-test which I used to contrast the relative strength of correlations. As can be seen, eudaimonia is positively correlated with all dependent variables while hedonia is correlated with only four of them. Additionally, the Steiger's Z-test values are significant for each of the dependent variables, showing that eudaimonia is also more strongly correlated with them than hedonia is.

Table 1
Correlations between Elevation and PWB Dimensions with Hedonia and
Eudaimonia

| <i>Purchase outcome</i> | Hedonia | Eudaimonia | Steiger's Z-test value | <i>p</i> -value |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Emotionality | 0.25 [*] | 0.48 ^{**} | -2.13 | < .05 |
| Introspection | 0.16 ^{ns} | 0.53 ^{**} | -3.41 | < .001 |
| Independence | 0.37 ^{**} | 0.60 ^{**} | -2.35 | < .05 |
| Growth | 0.23 [*] | 0.70 ^{**} | -4.85 | < .001 |
| Relatedness | 0.09 ^{ns} | 0.36 ^{**} | -2.35 | < .05 |
| Purpose | 0.10 ^{ns} | 0.70 ^{**} | -5.91 | < .001 |
| Self-acceptance | 0.40 ^{**} | 0.64 ^{**} | -2.55 | < .05 |

Note: For correlations: ^{ns} $p > 0.1$; ⁺ $p < .10$; ^{*} $p < .05$; ^{**} $p < .001$.

This study, therefore, provides evidence that the multi-dimensional structure of PWB makes theoretical and empirical sense from a marketing point of view, and shows how purchases can differ along one or more of these dimensions. Additionally, the level of introspection is also found to differ between hedonic and eudaimonic purchases.

Given significant group differences on introspection, I conducted a multiple mediation analysis with experimental group as the antecedent, introspection as the dependent variable, and all PWB dimensions entered simultaneously as potential mediators using the bootstrap mediation technique (Preacher and Hayes 2008). While the initial analysis did not show any significant results, I re-ran the analysis while including covariates (used in the previous MANCOVA analysis). This time, in contrast, results revealed a significant indirect effect through purpose (indirect effect = .294, standard error = .157, 95% CI [.0323, .6515]).

This finding provides some indication that eudaimonic purchases engender a sense of purpose which, in turn, is linked to an eventual feeling of introspection as a result of making that purchase. Thus, to the extent that they can provide consumers a clearer glimpse of their life trajectory, eudaimonic purchases help consumers reflect on their choices and make them want to be better people.

STUDY 4: DIFFERENCES IN PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING FOR MATERIAL AND EXPERIENTIAL PURCHASES

While study 3 provided support for looking at (and found some differences on) the distinct dimensions of PWB between hedonic and eudaimonic purchases, the purpose of this study was to examine possible differences in those dimensions

between a specific set of purchases: material and experiential. Not only has this distinction seen a wealth of research (see Gilovich et al. 2015a and 2015b for recent reviews), but it is also one which was frequently reflected in my depth interviews, namely in how respondents had largely focused on experiential purchases when asked about examples of spending money on something they considered to be personally meaningful.

Among other things, experiential purchases have been shown to make people happier than material purchases due to certain advantages. In contrast to material purchases, for instance, experiential purchases are more open to positive reinterpretation (especially relevant in the case of negative/unsatisfactory experiences), more central to one's identity, more likely to be shared with other people and foster stronger social relationships, and more fun to anticipate (Gilovich and Kumar 2015). Explicit analyses on well-being implications of experiential purchases, however, continue to be rare (see Guevarra and Howell 2015 for an exception). This gap, in conjunction with a recent finding highlighting the (somewhat non-intuitive) advantage of material purchases as markers of memorable events (Goodman et al. 2016), necessitates a closer look at the eudaimonic implications of experiential purchases. I argue that a major underlying difference between the two types of purchases lies in the degree to which they differentially impact PWB dimensions.

In line with prior research on the material-experiential continuum and my observations from the interviews, I predicted that people will report higher levels on PWB dimensions for experiential purchases than for material purchases.

Method

A sample of 188 respondents from across the United States between the ages of 22 and 72 ($M = 40$; 51% female; 74% Caucasian) was recruited on MTurk to participate in this study in exchange for \$0.75.

Respondents were randomly allocated to either an experiential purchase condition or a material purchase condition. Respondents in both conditions were provided definitions of material and experiential purchases similar to the ones used by Van Boven and Gilovich (2003). Specifically, they were told that a material purchase is one “that is made with the primary intention of acquiring a material good: A tangible object that is kept in one’s possession” while an experiential purchase is one “that is made with the primary intention of acquiring a life experience: An event or a series of events that one lives through.” In line with the condition they were allocated to, respondents were then asked to recall and describe either a significant material purchase or a significant experiential purchase made within the last year that cost between \$25 and \$1,000 (similar to instructions used by Guevarra and Howell (2015) in order to control for price and recency effects).

After describing their purchase, respondents indicated the extent to which they associated the purchase with each dimension of PWB on the same sets of items that were retained after the factor analyses in study 3. Measures were collected, thus, for independence ($\alpha = .86$), growth ($\alpha = .88$), relatedness ($\alpha = .85$), purpose ($\alpha = .82$), and self-acceptance ($\alpha = .87$). Hedonic well-being (HWB) was also measured using the same items as in study 3 ($\alpha = .90$). In line with prior work on material and experiential purchases (e.g. Carter and Gilovich 2012), a measure of trait materialism was also collected using Richins’ (2004) nine-item version of the material values scale (MVS) scale ($\alpha = .91$) in order to be controlled for if necessary.

Finally, as in prior studies, measures were collected related to purchase aspects, purchase outcomes, and demographic variables. A question regarding purchase experientiality (1 = purely material, 7 = purely experiential) served as the manipulation check.

Results and Discussion

The manipulation check confirmed that respondents in the experiential purchase condition recalled purchases that were more experiential ($M = 6.27$, $SD = 1.48$) than the ones recalled by those in the material purchase condition ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 1.57$; $F(1, 186) = 362.63$, $p < .001$).

A MANOVA analysis conducted to test for group differences in the dependent variables related to PWB was significant (Wilk's Lambda = .78, $p < .001$). As expected, respondents in the experiential purchase condition reported:

- (a) higher levels of growth ($M = 4.89$, $SE = .17$) than those in the material purchase condition ($M = 3.83$, $SE = .15$; $F(1, 186) = 21.88$, $p < .001$);
- (b) higher levels of relatedness ($M = 4.24$, $SE = .15$) than those in the material purchase condition ($M = 3.20$, $SE = .14$; $F(1, 186) = 24.96$, $p < .001$);
- (c) higher levels of purpose ($M = 4.69$, $SE = .15$) than those in the material purchase condition ($M = 4.26$, $SE = .15$; $F(1, 186) = 4.33$, $p < .05$); and
- (d) higher levels of self-acceptance ($M = 4.91$, $SE = .16$) than those in the material purchase condition ($M = 4.42$, $SE = .15$; $F(1, 186) = 5.02$, $p < .05$)

Interestingly, the average value for independence was higher for those in the material purchase condition ($M = 5.08$, $SE = .13$) than for those in the experiential purchase condition ($M = 4.94$, $SE = .14$), though the difference was not significant ($F(1, 186) = .59$, $p > .05$).

To further check for other possible underlying differences in the focal variables, I checked for group differences on all other variables. The only difference that emerged was in terms of ethnicity. Specifically, a greater proportion of respondents in the material purchase condition (80%) ended up being Caucasian than those in the experiential purchase condition (66%; $F(1, 186) = 4.90, p < .05$). Of the demographic variables, only education level was correlated with relatedness ($r = .17, p < .05$). However, there were significant correlations between HWB, materialism, purchase satisfaction, likelihood of recommendation, likelihood of making a similar purchase, and purchase price with one or more variables related to PWB.

Consequently, a follow-up MANCOVA analysis was conducted to test for group differences in the dependent variables, while controlling for the abovementioned variables. The MANCOVA analysis was significant (Wilk's Lambda = .79, $p < .001$) with a similar pattern of results as before, showing that the initial findings were robust and in line with expectations. Specifically, respondents in the experiential purchase condition reported:

- (a) higher levels of growth ($M = 4.87, SE = .15$) than those in the material purchase condition ($M = 3.85, SE = .13; F(1, 179) = 25.85, p < .001$);
- (b) higher levels of relatedness ($M = 4.21, SE = .14$) than those in the material purchase condition ($M = 3.23, SE = .13; F(1, 179) = 24.72, p < .001$);
- (c) higher levels of purpose ($M = 4.66, SE = .13$) than those in the material purchase condition ($M = 4.28, SE = .12; F(1, 179) = 4.82, p < .05$); and
- (d) higher levels of self-acceptance ($M = 4.90, SE = .13$) than those in the material purchase condition ($M = 4.43, SE = .12; F(1, 179) = 6.58, p < .05$)

Again, while the average value for independence was higher for those in the material purchase condition ($M = 5.08, SE = .12$) than for those in the experiential

purchase condition ($M = 4.94$, $SE = .13$), group differences were not significant $F(1, 179) = .63, p > .05$).

Experiential purchases, thus, were found to be more strongly linked to aspects of well-being than material purchases were. An additionally notable finding is that differences in the dimensions of PWB persisted even after controlling for HWB, further lending support to Ryff's (1989) conceptualization of PWB as being representative of the experience of eudaimonia. These results, thus, also provide additional support for findings from the qualitative phase given how the PWB dimensions represented relevant themes from the personal narratives of consumers on the aspects of purchases that made them meaningful.

STUDY 5: TEMPORAL ORIENTATIONS AND THEIR LINK TO HAPPINESS, MEANING, AND PRODUCT PREFERENCES

The common feature among all the previous studies was their focus on purchases that consumers had already made. Prior work within marketing has shown, however, that certain factors can impact consumer choices and attitudes for products that are framed using different interpretations of happiness. Mogilner et al. (2011), for instance, found that future-focused people tended to choose more exciting options while present-focused people tended to choose more calming options. This distinction, between happiness-as-excitement and happiness-as-calmness, is indeed theoretically and practically relevant, as seen from some recent work by Rodas et al. (2018), who use it to explore the link between specific emotional goals and the pursuit of happiness. Both these interpretations of happiness, however, still fall within a

hedonic realm and preclude any enquiry into differences that may exist within the context of the hedonia-eudaimonia distinction.

In terms of factors that could potentially impact consumer attitudes between products framed in hedonic versus eudaimonic terms, temporal orientation (the time period we focus on) emerged as a likely candidate. In their work on how people experience happiness and meaning (hedonia and eudaimonia respectively) as a part of one's life, Baumeister et al. (2013) found that there were several differences between the two which were linked to the time that people focus on. People who reported spending a lot of time thinking about the past, the future, or the past and the future (combined) were found to be less happy. Conversely, people who thought mostly about the present tended to be happier. Meaning, on the other hand, had marginal positive associations with thinking about the past or the future, but it had the strongest positive link with thinking about the past and future (combined).

Even within the realm of consumer research, prior work has shown how differences in time perceptions can impact consumer behavior, for instance by shifting preferences between products framed in calming vs. excited terms (Mogilner et al. 2011), or by affecting purchase intentions for products framed as ordinary vs. extraordinary (Bhattacharjee and Mogilner 2014). Given this background, the central purpose of this study is twofold: (a) to replicate the findings of Baumeister et al. (2013) regarding the link between different time perspectives and the experience of happiness and meaning, and (b) to examine whether there's a difference in attitudes toward, and anticipated satisfaction from, a product framed in hedonic vs. eudaimonic terms, and whether that is impacted by consumers' temporal orientations.

The product category chosen for this study was a (fictional) movie pass service as films can provide both hedonic and eudaimonic experiences to consumers

(Oliver and Raney 2011; Vorderer and Reinecke 2015; Wirth et al. 2012). Moreover, there is some evidence that certain genres of movies (comedy, action, and horror) are perceived to be fun (i.e. hedonic) while other genres (drama, documentary, and art house) are perceived to be meaningful (i.e. eudaimonic) by consumers (Percival Carter and Williams 2014). The study, therefore, uses these categories in its experimental manipulations for hedonic and eudaimonic framings for the movie pass.

Given the research mentioned above, however, there is mixed evidence for the impact of temporal orientation on consumer behavior in the context of the hedonic-eudaimonic distinction. For example, on the one hand, future-focused people tend to favor exciting product options (Mogilner et al. 2011) while on the other hand, future-oriented people tend to experience somewhat greater meaning in life (Baumeister et al. 2013). Thus, it is unclear whether future-focused people are likely to favor the hedonic movie pass (given that it is likely to be considered more exciting) or the eudaimonic movie pass (given that it is framed to be more meaningful). Thus, no definitive hypothesis is advanced regarding the effect of temporal orientation on product attitude, anticipated satisfaction, and anticipated product fit when a product is framed in hedonic vs. eudaimonic terms.

Method

A sample of 152 respondents from across the United States between the ages of 20 and 69 ($M = 34$; 34% female; 69% Caucasian) was recruited on MTurk to participate in this study in exchange for \$0.75.

Respondents were told that the study consisted of two (ostensibly) unrelated surveys with the first one being conducted to assess consumer behavior and to better understand personal attitudes. They were then asked to provide ratings (1 = strongly

disagree, 7 = strongly agree) on measures for past orientation and future orientation (adapted from Usunier and Valette-Florence 1994), and present focus (adapted from Mogilner et al. 2011). Sample items and reliabilities for these scales were as follows: past orientation (“I think quite often about my life as it used to be”; $\alpha = .91$), future orientation (“I think a lot about what my life will be someday”; $\alpha = .92$), and present focus (“My mind often focuses on what is happening now”; $\alpha = .93$).

In order to replicate the findings of Baumeister et al. (2013), the same three items were used as in that study to measure whether people spend a lot of time thinking about (a) the past, (b) the present, and (c) the future (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Along with these, respondents also provided ratings (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) on two measures used by Baumeister et al. (2013) to measure overall happiness and meaningfulness in one’s life. Sample items and reliabilities for these scales were as follows: happiness index (“In general, I consider myself to be a happy person”; $\alpha = .96$), and meaningfulness index (“Taking all things together, I feel my life is meaningful”; $\alpha = .96$).

Respondents were then thanked for completing the first part of the study and told about the second part. The cover story for this survey stated that we were working with one of our partners and wanted to get consumers’ opinion regarding a new service that our partner was planning to introduce in the market. Respondents were told that they would be shown a description of the proposed service followed by the proposed logo (see appendix A), after which they would be asked to answer a few questions.

Following this, they were randomly allocated to either a hedonic condition or a eudaimonic condition. The overall scenario was the same for both conditions: respondents were told that a local movie theatre was planning to introduce a seasonal

movie pass (named “Movie Time”) that would be available for purchase. The pass would include access to two free tickets each month for movies belonging to a specific set of genres, along with priority booking privileges and free snack cash. Differences between the two conditions were manipulated by changing the brand message associated with the pass (“Add some fun to your life” in the hedonic condition vs. “Add some meaning to your life” in the eudaimonic condition) and the genres for which free tickets would be available. In line with Percival Carter and Williams’ findings (2014), the genres mentioned for the hedonic framing included comedy, action, and horror while those mentioned for the eudaimonic framing included drama, documentary, and art house.

Respondents were then asked to indicate their attitude toward the movie pass through a set of semantic differential items (1 = unfavorable, 9 = favorable; 1 = negative, 9 = positive; 1 = bad, 9 = good; $\alpha = .98$). They also indicated the degree of their anticipated satisfaction from personally using the pass (1 = not at all satisfied, 9 = extremely satisfied) and the anticipated product fit of the pass with their tastes (1 = not a good fit at all, 9 = an excellent fit).

Manipulation checks involved asking respondents for ratings (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) on two sets of items – hedonic (“The movies included in this pass are likely to be extremely fun for the customer” and “The movies included in this pass are going to bring a great sense of fun and pleasure for the customer”) and eudaimonic (“The movies included in this pass are likely to be extremely meaningful for the customer” and “The movies included in this pass are going to bring a great sense of learning and growth for the customer”). As the correlations between the respective items for hedonia ($r = .84$) and eudaimonia ($r = .79$) were significant (both $ps < .001$), they were averaged to form manipulation check scales.

Finally, as in prior studies, measures were collected related to demographic variables.

Results and Discussion

In line with the first aim, I examined partial correlations for each of the two indices of overall happiness and meaningfulness with the various temporal measures (while controlling for the other index). This ensured that the influence of happiness was corrected for all meaningfulness analyses, and that the influence of meaningfulness was corrected for all happiness analyses. The direction and significance levels of the correlations of the two indices with the three multi-item measures for past orientation, future orientation, and present focus were identical to those with the single-item measures used by Baumeister et al. (2013), so they're not reported for the sake of parsimony. Moreover, in addition to providing the correlation for each index with a combined measure of thinking about the past and future (created by summing the scores on these items) as done by the original authors, I also looked at the correlations with similarly combined measures of thinking about the past and present, the present and future, and the past, present, and future.

Table 2 summarizes the results of these analyses and several differences can be observed between people's orientations toward different time periods and their overall assessments of happiness and meaning in their lives. In terms of significant results, some findings replicated those of Baumeister et al. (2013), namely: (a) the negative relationship between thinking about the past and happiness, (b) the positive relationship between thinking about the present and happiness, (c) the positive relationship between thinking about the future and meaning, (d) the negative relationship between thinking about the past and future, and happiness, and (e) the

positive relationship between thinking about the past and future, and meaning. Some new findings included: (a) the positive relationship between thinking about the present and future, and meaning, and (b) the positive relationship between thinking about the past, present, and future, and meaning.

Table 2
Partial Correlations between Temporal Orientations,
Happiness, and Meaning

| <i>Thinking about</i> | Happiness | Meaning |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Past | -0.21 [*] | 0.09 ^{ns} |
| Present | 0.13 ⁺ | 0.08 ^{ns} |
| Future | -0.03 ^{ns} | 0.19 [*] |
| Past + Present | -0.09 ^{ns} | 0.12 ^{ns} |
| Present + Future | 0.06 ^{ns} | 0.19 [*] |
| Past + Future | -0.15 ⁺ | 0.17 [*] |
| Past + Present + Future | -0.08 ^{ns} | 0.18 |

Note: All reports are partial correlations, which corrected the influence of happiness for meaningfulness analyses and meaningfulness for happiness analyses. ^{ns} $p > 0.1$; ⁺ $p < .10$; ^{*} $p < .05$.

It is interesting to note that integrative thinking (about more than one period) is positively linked to the experience of meaning in one's life in three of the four cases (all three $ps < .05$). There's no such parallel link observable to the experience of happiness in one's life (the only significant relationship – with the combined measure for thinking about the past and future – is marginal and negative).

Regarding the second part, manipulation checks confirmed that the service offering was perceived differently by respondents in the two groups. Respondents in the hedonic condition perceived the pass to be more hedonic ($M = 5.80$, $SD = .98$) than those in the eudaimonic condition ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.65$; $F(1, 150) = 36.08$, $p < .001$), while those in the eudaimonic condition perceived their purchase to be more eudaimonic ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.60$) than those in the hedonic condition ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.70$; $F(1, 150) = 8.27$, $p < .05$).

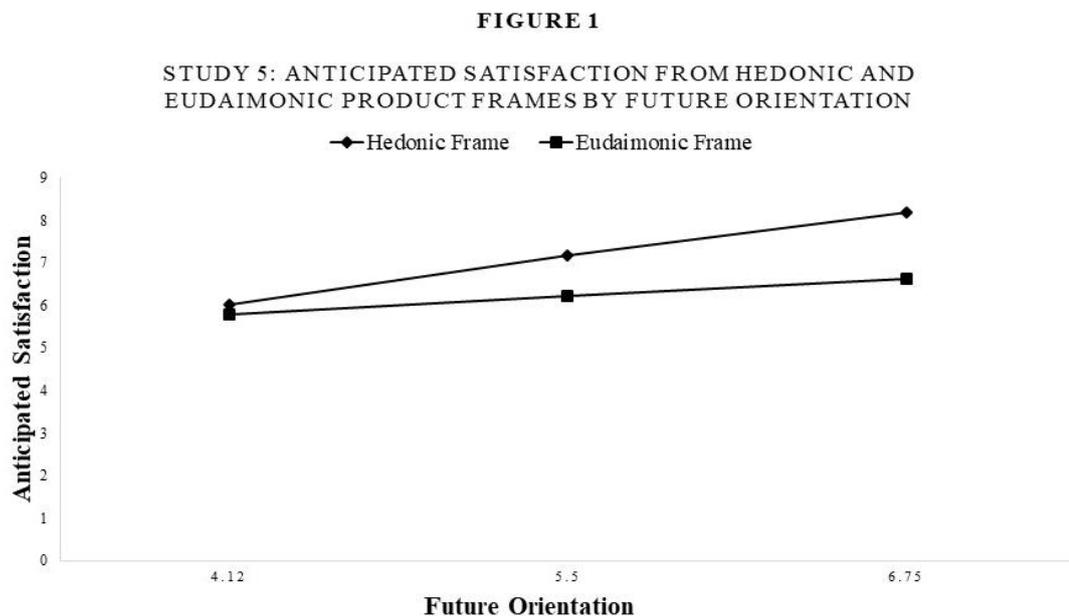
To examine the effect of temporal orientation on product attitude, anticipated satisfaction, and anticipated product fit when a product is framed in hedonic vs. eudaimonic terms, a series of MANOVA analyses were conducted to check for possible interaction effects between the experimental condition and each type of temporal orientation. Of these, a significant interaction effect was found for one case: the interaction including future orientation. Specifically, a MANOVA analysis showed an overall effect for the dependent variables depending on the experimental condition (Wilk's lambda = .93, $p < .05$). Results revealed a main effect of product framing on anticipated product fit ($F(1, 148) = 5.42$, $p < .05$), and main effects of future orientation on product attitude ($F(1, 148) = 20.64$, $p < .001$), anticipated satisfaction ($F(1, 148) = 26.93$, $p < .001$), and anticipated product fit ($F(1, 148) = 15.51$, $p < .001$). These effects were, however, qualified by a significant interaction between product framing and future orientation for both anticipated satisfaction ($F(1, 148) = 5.14$, $p < .001$) and anticipated product fit ($F(1, 148) = 9.17$, $p < .001$).

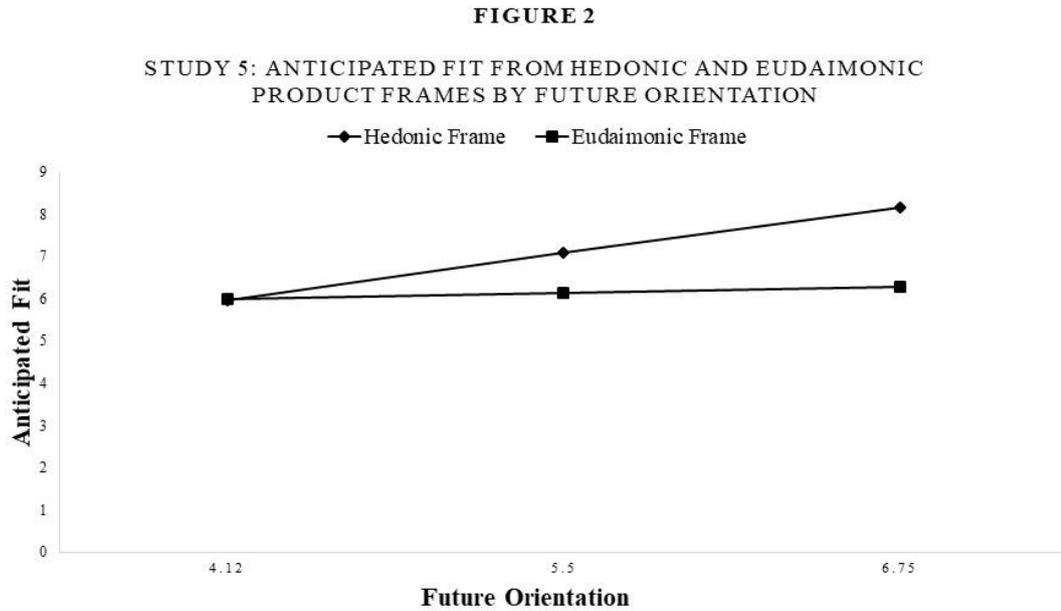
To probe these interactions further, I used the Johnson-Neyman technique through a PROCESS analysis (Hayes 2012; Johnson and Neyman 1936) to identify regions in the range of the moderating variable (future orientation in this case) where

the effect of product framing on the two dependent variables was significant. The results were as follows:

- (1) In the case of anticipated satisfaction, the Johnson-Neyman point for $p < .05$ occurred at a value of 4.83. This indicates that the hedonically-framed product was perceived to be higher in anticipated satisfaction than the eudaimonically-framed product for all values of future orientation above 4.83; and
- (2) In the case of anticipated product fit, the Johnson-Neyman point for $p < .05$ occurred at a value of 5.04. This indicates that the hedonically-framed product was perceived to be higher in anticipated product fit than the eudaimonically-framed product for all values of future orientation above 5.04.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the respective interaction effects for anticipated satisfaction and anticipated fit.





Stated another way, the greater the tendency among people to spend time thinking about the future and how their lives will be, the greater the satisfaction and fit they anticipate from a product that has been framed in hedonic terms. Given the scale mid-point for future orientation (i.e. 4), though, these differences are valid only for those consumers who have a higher-than-average tendency to focus on the future. This finding, therefore, is more consistent with Mogilner et al.'s (2011) work showing how future-oriented people prefer more exciting products, than it is with Baumeister et al.'s (2013) findings about how future-oriented people experience higher levels of meaning in their lives.

As a robustness check, I ran a MANCOVA analysis on the dependent variables while controlling for meaningfulness (given that future orientation was positively correlated with meaning in life). The MANCOVA analysis was marginally significant (Wilk's lambda = .96, $p < .10$), and the main effects were again qualified by a significant interaction between product framing and future orientation for both anticipated satisfaction ($F(1, 148) = 6.14, p < .05$) and anticipated product fit ($F(1, 148) = 10.58, p < .05$). A future orientation, thus, appears to be linked to a preference

for hedonic products over eudaimonic products, consistent with the findings of Mogilner et al. (2011). Part of the reason for this might relate to a sufficiency mindset wherein future-oriented people, who *already* experience meaning in their lives, simply don't feel an urgent need to add meaning via consumption and that, in turn, reduces their desire to pursue eudaimonically-framed products in favor of increasing demand for hedonically-framed products as they are more exciting.

THE QUANTITATIVE PHASE: A BRIEF SUMMARY

In what ways does eudaimonic consumption (centered on personal meaning) differ from hedonic consumption (centered on pleasure)? This was the central question guiding the quantitative phase of this dissertation. Given the studies and the results from them, we get a clearer idea of how the two forms of consumption are different on a multitude of factors.

In sum, the series of studies described in this chapter show that hedonic and eudaimonic purchases differ in several important aspects related to cognition, emotion, well-being, and certain aspects of purchase behavior. Eudaimonic purchases are found to be more difficult to recall than hedonic purchases, confirming (at least in part) findings from prior research showing that eudaimonia is a more complex cognitive experience than hedonia (Bartsch and Hartmann 2017; Vitterso 2016). Eudaimonic purchases are also perceived to be closely linked to experiences of meaningful affect and psychological well-being (PWB) in general and, in comparison with hedonic purchases, they appear to be more strongly linked to feelings of purpose, self-acceptance, and introspection in particular. These findings simultaneously support prior findings on the links between eudaimonia, meaningful affect, and PWB

(Oliver and Raney 2011; Oliver et al. 2012; Ryff 1989; Ryff and Keyes 1995) while breaking new ground in terms of showing their applicability across a wide variety of purchases. In the same vein, the findings make a valuable addition to prior literature on the hedonic superiority of experiential purchases over material purchases (Gilovich and Kumar 2015) by also illustrating their eudaimonic superiority on most of the PWB dimensions. Finally, integrative thinking about time appears to be tied to the experience of meaning in one's overall life, echoing the findings by Baumeister et al. (2013), and future-focused consumers, who also report greater meaning in life, are nevertheless found to prefer hedonically framed products. Further, the distinctions between hedonic and eudaimonic consumption were found to be relevant not only in the context of purchases already made in the past, but also in the context of products that consumers might purchase in the future.

Collectively, therefore, the findings highlight the importance of distinguishing hedonic consumption experiences from eudaimonic consumption experiences. As discussed later in chapter 5, this distinction can be especially useful in broadening the theoretical concept of value (derived from consumption) to include, in addition to utilitarian value and hedonic value (Babin et al. 1994; Holbrook 1999), an element of *eudaimonic value* that consumers can experience from their purchases. The findings, thus, also underscore the necessity of incorporating this distinction in marketing discourse as scholars move forward in analyzing the link between consumption, happiness, and meaningfulness. Furthermore, given that hedonic consumption has already been studied in rich detail (Alba and Williams 2013), a similar focus is urgently needed for eudaimonic consumption (Schmitt et al. 2015) to understand it in greater detail.

The next chapter, consequently, is a step in that very direction as it details the findings from the depth interviews that were conducted to explore, more deeply, the factors that underlie the experience of personal meaning or meaningfulness from purchases that consumers make over the course of their lives.

CHAPTER 4: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF EUDAIMONIC CONSUMPTION

As was mentioned in chapter 2, due to the multi-faceted nature of my research questions, I used a mixed-methods approach comprised of qualitative and quantitative phases conducted in parallel. While chapter 3 established the differences between hedonic and eudaimonic consumption on a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, a sharper focus on eudaimonic consumption itself was needed to better understand the nature of consumer experiences from personally meaningful purchases.

The focus of this chapter, therefore, is on the qualitative phase undertaken to explore eudaimonic consumption in greater detail. Specifically, I report the findings from 21 depth interviews that were conducted to gather consumer accounts of meaningful purchases. The depth interview methodology (McCracken 1988) has been used frequently in discovery-oriented marketing research, especially when exploring the interplay of consumption, self-concept, and well-being in the context of brand relationships (Fournier 1998), loved objects and activities (Ahuvia 2005), or identity-inspired consumer projects (Schau et al. 2009). Given a similar discovery-oriented focus for uncovering aspects of eudaimonic consumption, the depth interview methodology was, thus, particularly well-suited to this research phase.

This chapter is laid out in three sections as follows: I first describe methodological details pertaining to data collection and data analyses. This is followed by a detailed look at the findings from the interviews. Specifically, I discuss six themes that characterize the experiences from meaningful purchases, and four themes that characterize the attributes of either the purchases themselves or the

contexts in which they were frequently made and/or consumed. Based on these themes, I then propose a theoretical perspective on eudaimonic consumption in the final section. As I go on to discuss, eudaimonic consumption consists of three central processes, each comprising further sets of sub-processes, that underlie the experience of personal meaning from consumption experiences. The chapter then concludes with a brief summary of how such a perspective advances the extant discourse on the link between consumption and personal meaning.

METHOD

Data Collection

To ensure adequate variation in consumer narratives, I used a combination of convenience and snowball sampling to recruit respondents from personal contacts as well as from referrals by respondents themselves. All respondents were American residents above 19 years of age and, as table 3 shows, the final sample represents a broad cross-section in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and profession. All respondents were interviewed by me either in a face-to-face setting (in neutral locations such as my office or a coffee shop) or telephonically/via Skype. Interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, and were audio recorded and transcribed. The project was IRB-approved and all audio and text files were handled in line with IRB guidelines. Further, pseudonyms have been used instead of respondents' real names to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

Table 3
Respondent Details

| Name | Gender | Age | Ethnicity | Profession |
|------------|--------|-----|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Chris | Male | 31 | Caucasian | Student recruiter |
| Clara | Female | 76 | Caucasian | Housing manager |
| Clive | Male | 34 | Caucasian | Graduate student |
| Grant | Male | 30 | Hispanic | Massage therapist |
| Jacqueline | Female | 49 | Latin American | College professor |
| Karl | Male | 22 | Caucasian | Undergraduate student |
| Katie | Female | 60 | Caucasian | Entrepreneur/Self-employed |
| Lalita | Female | 67 | Asian | Vocational skill developer |
| Liz | Female | 55 | Caucasian | College professor |
| Norah | Female | 64 | Caucasian | Correspondent banker |
| Quentin | Male | 72 | Caucasian | School principal (retired) |
| Sabrina | Female | 60 | Caucasian | Teacher (retired) |
| Sadie | Female | 70 | Caucasian | Teacher (retired) |
| Smith | Male | 68 | Caucasian | Postal worker (retired) |
| Steve | Male | 35 | Caucasian | Educational administrator |
| Tamara | Female | 27 | Asian | Post-doctoral student |
| Tahaani | Female | 32 | Asian | Doctoral student |
| Thomas | Male | 78 | Caucasian | Economic consultant (retired) |
| Tracy | Female | 58 | Caucasian | Apparel store manager |
| York | Male | 42 | Caucasian | Nurse practitioner |
| Zamir | Male | 36 | Asian | Software Consultant |

A semi-structured interview guide (see appendix B) was developed with the central focus of eliciting detailed accounts about purchases that people considered meaningful. Probes were used at several points during the interviews to encourage respondents to articulate specific details and/or memories about what made the purchase(s) meaningful to them, and to explore whether and how it impacted their self-concept. Finally, in order to get an idea about the differences between the experience of eudaimonia and hedonia from consumption, a few questions were also included about hedonic purchases that were perceived to be relatively more fun/pleasurable (rather than meaningful), and about purchases or expenses that were considered to be neither fun nor meaningful.

Initial interviews showed that consumers were able to provide a wealth of detail regarding purchases that they considered meaningful. Given that that often took up a major share of the interview time (and rightfully so, as that was the central focus for this phase), discussions regarding hedonic purchases ended up being shorter in order to avoid respondent fatigue. Even with that constraint, though, I was able to collect examples of hedonic purchases from all respondents.

Respondents were encouraged to think of multiple examples of purchases that they considered to be meaningful. Moreover, in order to not limit responses, they had a fair degree of latitude to interpret what a 'purchase' consisted of. As can be seen from the questionnaire, the question was phrased to elicit examples of spending money on something that they considered to be meaningful. However, to ensure that they didn't interpret the question narrowly, respondents were also told that the purchase could be tangible or intangible, material or experiential, a good or a service. Such prompts were successful in eliciting substantive examples of different types of purchases. The only examples excluded from the analyses were instances of money

given as a part of tithing to the church or as charitable donations. Such examples were extremely rare (mentioned by only two respondents) and are more representative of charitable consumer behavior (Winterich, Mittal, and Aquino 2013). The focus for the current project, on the other hand, was on purchases that were more in line with traditional consumer behavior involving acquisition and consumption (Hoyer, MacInnis, and Peters 2017).

Data Analysis

Data consisted of interview transcripts which were analyzed using the NVivo 12 software. Analysis consisted of first reading and re-reading the transcripts in order to familiarize myself with the data. I then coded respondent accounts using a combination of two methods.

The first involved theory-driven coding in line with Belk, Fischer and Kozinets' (2013, 145) recommendation of using "the insights others have generated [to] inform your own." Based on respondent accounts, Ryff's (1989) six-dimensional framework of psychological well-being emerged as the most suitable theoretical perspective for this purpose. This framework, moreover, is strongly supported by prior research on eudaimonia (Lambert et al. 2015; Ryff 1989; Ryff and Keyes 1995) and has a more extensive scope than most other theoretical perspectives on this topic (Ryan and Deci 2001; Seligman 2012; Waterman 1993). Consequently, I generated codes and established thematic categories in line with that framework (autonomy, mastery, growth, relatedness, purpose, and self-acceptance) to describe the experiences from meaningful purchases.

However, while this coding approach worked well for experiential themes, it couldn't accommodate certain elements related to attributes of the purchases and/or

their contexts. These necessitated generating new codes and themes in line with Belk et al.'s (2013, 144) recommendation of “letting research questions influence the codes you consider” and avoiding the temptation of force-fitting data into prior categories. As a result, the themes that emerged from this second method (beauty, novelty, adventure, and tranquility) reflected a more inductive and data-driven coding approach.

Based on the experiential themes and attribute themes generated from the above methods, I developed a theoretical account of eudaimonic consumption as being comprised of three separate processes. This necessitated an iterative process of interpretation and theory building in the tradition of the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Spiggle 1994) wherein “the researcher simultaneously codes and analyses data in order to develop concepts” (Taylor and Bogdan 1984, 126) which are then refined and integrated into an explanatory whole. As I hope to show through subsequent sections, the overall analytical process not only grounds the findings in existing theory (thereby legitimizing them further), but also helps to arrive at a stronger theoretical understanding of eudaimonia in the context of consumption.

Finally, while I conducted the analyses myself, my advisor also read the interview transcripts as a robustness check and provided feedback on respondent accounts. The sample proved sufficient as the accounts were richly detailed (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). Moreover, in accordance with the data redundancy approach supported by Charmaz (2003) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), theoretical saturation was achieved as the thematic categories developed during the analyses were able to accommodate the data and no new themes were identified from additional data collection. With this background, I now turn to a detailed account of the findings that emerged from the interviews.

FINDINGS

When asked to recall purchases that were considered meaningful, respondents talked about a wide variety spanning multiple product categories. Consistent with prior literature on the many advantages of experiential purchases over material ones (Gilovich and Kumar 2015), most purchases were either purely experiential in nature (such as trips to Europe, concerts, and dining) or were experiential products (Guevarra and Howell 2015) with material and experiential elements (such as books, climbing equipment, and cars). The category mentioned by almost all respondents was travel, confirming Sirgy and Uysal's (2016) theorized connection between tourism and eudaimonia. However, several other examples surfaced ranging from books, DVDs, home-repair expenses, and gym memberships to Christmas gifts, dining out with friends, tattoos, and concert tickets.

Examples included purchases that were ordinary (having a cup of coffee with one's daughter at a local cafe), extraordinary (admiring a breath-taking view from the top of the Appalachian mountains), solitary (taking flying lessons as part of pilot training), social (riding ATVs on a beach with traveling companions at dawn), self-oriented (attending classes at the gym), other-oriented (buying gifts for one's grandchildren), expected (planning the logistics for a forthcoming cruise), and unexpected (deciding on the spur of the moment to change travel plans). Respondents, thus, spoke of many different meaningful purchases, thereby enabling a rich discussion of their various aspects, as described in the following two sections on experiential themes and attribute themes respectively.

Facets of Meaning: Understanding the Experiences from Meaningful Purchases

The usefulness of Ryff's (1989) six-dimensional framework – focusing on autonomy, mastery, growth, relatedness, purpose, and self-acceptance – became apparent fairly early on during data collection and analysis as a means of organizing emerging findings related to the experiences that respondents reported when asked about meaningful purchases. Consequently, these formed the basis for six parallel thematic categories which are discussed in this section.

Autonomy. Consumers often mentioned how certain purchases led them to realize and appreciate the high level of freedom or independence they had in terms of what they wanted to do or how they wanted to do it. In some cases, this sense of being in charge unfolded, and was realized, over the course of the purchase experience itself. For instance, Liz recalled the spontaneity of being able to decide what she wanted to do when, along with her son, she went to visit her daughter who was studying in Europe, and the three of them decided to do a short trip:

“We just kind of all decided what we wanted to do. We didn't have a set agenda. And so, we just visited interesting things as we happened upon them. Um... let's see...well, going to some of the museums in Paris was one thing. Canal rides in Amsterdam, and then a tour on the Seine in Paris...those were a couple of the things we really enjoyed. And those weren't planned in advance, no. We just decided we wanted to do it and walked up and bought our tickets.”

In other cases, this experience of autonomy was more a situational aspect of respondents' current circumstances that enabled them to subsequently spend money on things that were meaningful to them. Norah, who counted her

home and all expenses related to its beautification as meaningful, described her enjoyment of being a homeowner:

“I enjoy, you know, making my house a home, by decorating and just...being able to do whatever I want with my property. I just love walking into my house and seeing the things that I enjoy. I also like to decorate and landscape outside. I have a little courtyard, with a little... oh, it’s a little cart and a chair out there. I just love sitting out there in the summer, and I just enjoy being out there and knowing that this is my home and I can decorate it how I want.”

On a different but related note, a sense of independence also contributed to meaningfulness when people were able to make purchases for someone else’s enjoyment, especially if the other person lacked a similar sense of autonomy at that point in time due to her/his circumstances. Tracy, for instance, valued the fact that she could help her son (who did not make a lot of money) by buying gifts for his kids:

“I try to make his life better by buying his kids’ clothes. And, you know, we took a nice family vacation to a lake, all of us, last summer and we really had a good time together. And the kids enjoyed it. They were able to go out on a motorboat, and you know, just go to an amusement park, or just, be in a cabin together. And so, I really like to be able to give them experiences like that and memories like that. And, just help him with, you know, with the expense of raising children.”

In several different ways, thus, either realized during a purchase or appreciated as an enabler of subsequent purchases, the experience of autonomy was linked to instances of spending money which were perceived to be meaningful. This distinction mirrors Ryan and Deci’s (2001) discussion on how, while autonomy is an integral

component of their self-determination theory approach and of Ryff and Singer's (2008) eudaimonia approach, it differs in its theoretical role. For the former, autonomy is something that fosters well-being (in line with the enabler role) while for the latter, it is a component of well-being (experienced as a consequence of a purchase). What the interview findings illustrate, though, is that the experience of autonomy is linked to meaning in both cases and both merit consideration depending on the consumption context at hand.

Mastery. This theme was linked to the notion of competence, and how certain purchases or expenditures helped consumers master a skill or manage aspects of their environment or life. While this theme shares a focus on learning with the growth theme (discussed later), there is one clear point of difference. The learning associated with growth was more closely tied with newness, for instance when one was exposed to something new or had an experience for the first time. Mastery, on the other hand, involved experiences that helped consumers gain expertise in something with which they were already familiar (at least to a degree even if not intimately). Smith, for instance, recalled the many expenses he made when he was taking flying lessons in order to earn his pilot's license:

“I've spent money on flight books, learnin' how to fly, learnin' how to do compass. Now it's all on GPS. And it's so different, 'cause everything's on iPhones and computers, where in the past we had to connect with radar stations like, all across country. And switchin' networks to go from one beacon to another beacon, to learn how to fly across country, daytime and night time. And you had to watch for other airplanes out there too!”

A similar pride was also seen in accounts of purchases that were done in a more everyday context rather than in the service of pursuing a specialized skill. Sabrina, for instance, mentioned the money she spent on do-it-yourself (DIY) materials:

“DIY stuff. Doing stuff on my own. Learning about that. And going and doing it. And going ‘Oh! I did that! I DID that!’ Know what? There’s nothing that people wouldn’t be able to fix in their home if they just look into it a little bit. So, it gives you a lot of confidence. You aren’t gonna know it if you don’t try it.”

Along with specific skills and contexts such as flight navigation and DIY, respondents also reflected on instances where they experienced a more diffused, abstract sense of competence in relation to the larger purchase context. Zamir, for instance, talked about how mastering the rhythms of daily life in a different country made his trip more special:

“I was in Portugal for a bit and I got to stay there for about a month and a half. After a week or two I just had to...just live my life. Getting groceries, taking the subway...and that was a local thing. I’m just living there. I like that that way you get more experience than you do as a tourist, right? Now I know how that system works in a better way. And that experience, the different way of living? Everything was more...localized? I felt like one of the locals, I could experience everything as a local. I like that! How to live as a local in a different culture!”

Thus, gaining competence or acquiring mastery, either in the service of pursuing a particular skill or as a more generalized experience of adroitly managing

an array of different activities, was a key aspect that underlay different forms of meaningful purchases. The findings echo Alba and Hutchinson's (1987, 411) proposed idea of how consumer knowledge represents a combination of familiarity, tied to the number of experiences "accumulated by the consumer," and expertise, or the ability to perform different tasks successfully. However, while their discussion was more focused on cognitive aspects of consumer expertise, the findings discussed here highlight how familiarity and expertise can boost consumers' perceived sense of mastery, thereby making certain purchases more meaningful to them.

Growth. If judged in terms of sheer volume, then the theme of growth was rivalled only by that of relatedness (discussed later) as it was reflected in the vast majority of respondent accounts and across various purchase contexts. People recounted how, in several different ways, certain purchases helped them learn or experience something new, expand their horizons, inspire a feeling of continued development, or challenge the way they viewed the world. This broadening of one's perspectives, for instance, is illustrated in Quentin's memory of a trip he had taken long ago with his family:

"I went to Iran for the first time in 1971. And I took my wife and my son who was like 2 or 3 years old at that time. And most people I knew didn't know where Iran was. So, did it change me? It changed me because I had experiences. And it made me less afraid. And, you know, I was in Iran, and I was in Syria, and I was in Lebanon. I think a lot of people said 'Jeez! I'd never go to Iran,' or 'I'd never go to Syria,' or 'Where's Lebanon?' And so, it, it gave me a wider viewpoint. But it also gave me a self-confidence that 'Hey! I can go anyplace I want to.'"

In other cases, there was a distinct motivational focus or, to borrow from Dweck's (2015) phraseology, a growth mindset that guided purchase decisions. One example of this was seen through Tracy's continued purchase of books on topics of self-help or spirituality:

"It's that continual learning, continuing to better yourself. And I know I have friends who're perfectly happy to go home every night and sit in front of the TV. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy watching some shows too. But I also would prefer taking that hour a day and specifically reading [a new book], trying to understand something better, or...continuing to grow, versus just leaving my mind stagnant watching TV the whole time."

At times, though, this wish for discovering something new also stemmed, in part, from an explicit acknowledgement of the limits of one's general life context. Clara, for instance, valued her first experience of getting to travel outside her home country with her friend:

"I asked my husband if he wanted to go to Germany, and he said no. I said, 'Well I'm goin'!' (Laughs) So, bought the ticket and went with Kay and we just had a great time seeing different parts of the world. Especially because I'd never gone out of the United States. I mean, I'd been in Canada and Mexico, but never overseas. So, it was quite an experience. Just seein' another part of the world. You know, we're just in our little Nebraska. And anytime I can get out and see other parts, it's so important, so meaningful."

A final distinctive feature of growth experiences that set it apart from the other five themes was tied to what I term 'growing pains' (to borrow a colloquialism) or the

extent to which the purchase experiences necessitated stepping out of one's comfort zone. Katie, for instance, laughingly remembering how she got roped into an activity by a friend during a trip to a beach in California:

“We actually rented a couple ATV's and rode those on the beach, on the dunes. Well, one of the gals wanted to do that and the other 3 of us were not that interested in it. But, uh...I decided, ‘You know, what the heck! I've never done it before!’ And I think it was out of my box. I mean it was not something that I'd done...I was a little frightened of it! Being a new experience like that. But it turns out that it was probably the most memorable part of the trip for me, so I'm very glad I did it.”

Overall, people valued the growth and personal development that they experienced from certain purchases. The metaphorical broadening of perspectives or horizons made people feel enriched as a result of spending money on such purchases, even if they had to endure a little discomfort in the process. The findings, thus, show some similarities with entertainment research on how meaningful movies associated with personal growth are also accompanied by a higher degree of challenge in watching them (Bartsch and Hartmann 2015). Respondent accounts, however, showed that growth experiences could result from a vast variety of purchase categories and had a focal role to play in purchases being perceived as meaningful and memorable.

Relatedness. The old adage “No man is an island” was perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the largest number of examples which came from respondents reflected the close link between meaning and a sense of social connection. A number of purchases became meaningful to people because it helped them establish and/or maintain warm, satisfying relationships with others, and engendered feelings of empathy, intimacy, and affection toward others. In some cases, these feelings were so

powerful that they were able to invest even seemingly ordinary purchases with meaning. As Jacqueline candidly put it:

“Some of the best spent dollars in my life have been on cups of coffee. Not necessarily because it’s this fantastic coffee that I didn’t know about all this time! But because coffee has been the gateway to fantastic conversation.”

When asked for a specific example, she elaborated on a time when she had been away at a conference in Los Angeles and she heard from a friend who was having a life crisis of sorts. In order to speak to her, she went to a neighborhood coffee shop and ordered a fragrant cup of coffee while having a Skype call with her troubled friend:

“It takes me back now because I had to pay for the coffee. So, I am not naïve to [the fact that I was spending money on this experience], right? On the outside it sounds extravagant! Why are you paying for that if you can make coffee in your hotel room, right? Because what I was paying for was the connection, that moment of connection with my friend, in a moment where she needed me, or we needed each other. And that experience of being there in that space, that is relevant to me. That is something that I am...that I am willing to spend my money on, of course.”

While frequently mentioned in the context of friends, family members, or significant others, the experience of relatedness was not restricted to interactions involving loved ones; one could get a sense of belongingness even in a relatively more unfamiliar environment. This was illustrated by Clive, who considered his Work

Away trip to have been a meaningful use of his money, and his account of how his host helped him feel more a part of that particular corner of North Carolina:

“It was kinda cool ‘cause our host would take us around town. And so, we met the different coffee shop owners and restaurant owners and people who sold used clothes. And since everybody knew him in town, it was...you know, if you were just traveling on your own, you wouldn’t know people in the community. But since you basically have a chaperone, and people love him, they’re like ‘Oh this guy! He’s here!’ So, you get to interact in a much more natural way. And so, it’s...it’s a kind of avenue into the community that you wouldn’t normally have. So, it’s a more human interaction.”

Given that social connection necessarily involves building bonds with someone other than oneself, it was also not surprising that the theme of relatedness was often mentioned in the context of gift-giving. In a somewhat unique example of a purchase, Sadie reflected on how she “bought” a prayer as a gift for a friend:

“I went to a convent here, the Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters. They’re a cloistered contemplative order of Catholic nuns. And for a very small amount, they will pray for your intentions for your friend. So, you literally make a purchase! And it sounds a little funny that you’re buying prayers, but you’re mostly buying a beautiful card that the sisters put together, with the assurance that they will pray for that person. And when I gave that card to my friend who was about to have back surgery, it was enormously meaningful for her. She took it to the hospital with her. She had this card in her hospital room and she took a picture of it and sent it to me and said what great comfort it brought

her. She's a very devout Catholic, so it was very meaningful for her.”

Marketing research has long recognized the intersection of consumer behavior and social relationships, whether in the context of brand communities (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002; Muniz and O' Guinn 2001) or that of gift-giving (Chan and Mogilner 2017). However, while social connection has been linked to stronger hedonic evaluations of happiness in cases of experiential purchases (Gilovich and Kumar 2015), the findings also highlight that elements of relatedness are integral, in many cases, to the eudaimonic experience of meaning.

Purpose. Compared to the other thematic categories, the experience of purpose was a little harder to discern as it was often referred to indirectly and in more oblique terms. However, some instances provided a clearer glimpse into how certain purchases helped consumers gain a stronger sense of direction, made them appreciate the importance of having aims and goals that could orient their lives, and gave them a better idea about their purpose in life. The most direct example came from Sadie who was planning an overseas trip (and included it in her list of meaningful purchases even though it was going to be at a future date) because of reasons linked to her heritage:

“Cornwall, England is my place of destination because it is where my roots are. My ancestors were miners, and hard rock miners, and most of them came from Cornwall, England. So, it's genealogy related, ancestry related. I think it will give me a deep sense of my own roots. And I haven't purchased it yet, but I know that kind of purchase will make me feel very deeply fulfilled, like I've done something I've always wanted to do. It's just a deep sense of fulfilment, and purpose, life purpose, and spiritual discovery. Because for me, that's the most central goal of being here. (Laughs) You know, figuring out why am I

here, what am I supposed to be doing.”

Other cases showed how this sense of direction also emerged gradually over the course of a longer time span. Liz, for instance, considers the tuition cost of pursuing a graduate degree to be money well spent because it put her on a life and career trajectory that’s meaningful to her:

“The graduate work that I’ve done, and the degrees that I’ve earned, they have led me on a path [teaching at a particular community college] which I like. And it was not a direct line! ‘Cause I didn’t do the master’s and then say I’m gonna go teach for [that college] and apply for the job. But it definitely has shaped me into who I am as an individual and as an educator. I believe that if I had just, you know, gotten my bachelor’s degree, then I wouldn’t be the same kind of teacher that I am now.”

A more succinct summary came from Chris who viewed all expenses related to international travel as meaningful when he said:

“For me? I guess I’d have to say travel. It’s perhaps the most enriching thing in my life...helps me see more things and learn about the world. Through my trip to Brazil, all those years ago, it...I think it helped me discover who I was. And I think discovering who you are, and becoming who you’re meant to be, is important because it brings personal meaning.”

As one considers these accounts, it brings to mind that consumption, of course, is only one part of an individual’s life (Ahuvia 2005) and, especially in relation to the larger questions of life, cannot always yield all the answers. What these examples aim to show, though, is that purchases can still sometimes play a part in

clarifying our purpose(s) in life and more so when they resonate with those aspects of ourselves that we cherish and hold dear.

Self-Acceptance. The final theme linked to meaning refers to how certain purchases helped people to be more at peace with who they were. The experiences resulting from such purchases not only inspired a more positive attitude toward oneself but also allowed people to acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, and their good and bad qualities. In some cases, this was reflected in how a purchase helped a consumer embrace (and, in this following example, express) a fundamental part of one's identity. This was exemplified by Grant, an out gay man who is unabashed about his queer identity despite living in a more conservative state, and his recent, rather distinctive, birthday gift to himself:

“This tattoo! [he says, gleefully rolling up his sleeve to show me a tattoo of the popstar Madonna etched onto his upper bicep] This is me - I had to get it! Madonna has been a huge part of my life since my childhood. Her songs made me happy and proud about who I was. So, I knew I wanted to get this tattoo for my birthday. It's my way of telling people, ‘This is who I am!’”

In other cases, rather than the self-expressive potential of a purchase, it was the self-knowledge accompanying it which made it memorable. Tamara, when thinking about a backpacking trip through some parts of Europe during a break in her studies, reflected on some key moments of self-realization:

“I think it helped me kind of...figure out my need for balance. Because for me, sometimes I'm a little bit high stressed, high anxiety, so I want to do everything and have everything go according to plans. Because when I was traveling alone, I wanted to see as much as possible.

‘Cause I only had a short window to see it all. But (laughs) after the third or fourth time of this, it was so exhausting! And it came to the point where I was like, ‘I wanna just take a day! I’m gonna sit in a café all afternoon and just read a book, eat some cake, have some hot chocolate, or maybe even both!’ So, after traveling, I went from ‘Nonstop, go, go, go!’ to just ‘Sit, enjoy, relax,’ be in the moment, and just go at your own pace. I don’t have to see everything. No one’s ever gonna see everything in the whole wide world.”

In contrast to the more internalized self-realization described above, there were also some cases where the purchase experience had a much more direct impact on self-acceptance because the effects (as a result of making that purchase) were evident in a visible, more externalized sense. Karl, for instance, who pays a monthly membership fee to be part of a CrossFit gym and doesn’t mind the exhausting exercise regimen, said:

“It’s kinda nice having someone coach you and help you through. And [the coaches] also commend you a lot if you’re doing a good job. Even if you’re not doing a good job, they can, you know, encourage you. And that’s just a nice feeling to have. Knowing that you tried your best. So, it kinda makes me feel good about myself afterwards. Because I feel a lot better about myself when I exercise. And I kinda am startin’ to see results, so it’s kind of addicting to go all the time.”

These experiences of self-acceptance share some similarities with Waterman’s (1993; 2011) conceptualization of eudaimonia as personal expressiveness or self-discovery. His focus, however, was more on activities undertaken regularly by individuals that could help them develop their inner potential. While the example of

Cross Fit fits in readily with the activity conception, even the example of travel does so to a fair degree, given that the respondent reports how it changed her overall attitude toward herself as a traveller. The example of the tattoo, however, does not as it was a one-time purchase – a self-gift to mark a birthday – and not a recurring activity. Thus, these findings illustrate that self-acceptance can be experienced across a range of categories regardless of whether that involves a one-off purchase or a repurchase/recurring expense.

In all these myriad ways, thus, purchases become meaningful in the lives of consumers. Given the diversity in the nature of purchases mentioned, it should also be noted that it was fairly common for a single purchase to be linked to multiple themes simultaneously. While in some cases this happened as a result of the purchase involving multiple stages or parts, in others it happened simply because a specific purchase experience elicited a complex, layered experience.

The first case, thus, was more characteristic of an extended purchase encounter, to paraphrase Arnould and Price (1993), wherein a purchase comprised of several different phases. Clive's Work Away trip, for instance, provides a good example of this as it involved an extended stay in North Carolina during which he participated in a range of activities. In addition to his experience of relatedness (described earlier) with the local business owners and townsfolk as a result of him being chaperoned by his host during their free time, he also valued the autonomy he had during his day-to-day life there:

“So, you have more free time to explore and do, you know...whether it's adventure activities or even just hiking, you have a lot more freedom than you would in your everyday, Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 5:00 life.”

In a similar vein, he recalled yet another experience from that trip and how, by making him more aware of his own shortcomings, it facilitated a degree of self-acceptance:

“I think [the time] when I tried to build a fence. That was exciting! But maybe even when I was building the fence, I was kind of an asshole to my friends. ‘Cause I was just stressed with the work of building something. Um...and so, I learned that I don’t handle stress as well as I should. So, maybe I found out I wasn’t as relaxed as I thought I was. So, even putting yourself in the stressful situation made me aware that I wasn’t as good of a person as I thought. Which is helpful, you know? It gives you somethin’ to work on.”

The second case, on the other hand, was more consistent with the idea that a single purchase can provide meaning to a consumer in a variety of ways by facilitating a range of experiences (Schmitt et al. 2015). A particularly fitting example of this came from Jacqueline who described how, during her trip to Brazil, she found a local vendor selling a variety of fruits from a street cart. Even though she considered herself only partially fluent in Portuguese (which is the major language spoken in Brazil), she started visiting him several times every week as he would offer to sell her a different fruit each time:

“A new flavor, a new texture, a new color. And it was fantastic because that experience melds several of the things that we’ve been talking about. First, this notion of ‘Good morning, Mr. So-and-So! Ah, how are you today? So, what are you going to give me today?’ And then he would go ‘Oh, I have this fruit that’s just perfect for you! I think you will like it.’ And again, it was a narrative. The narrative of

myself. This person who takes a risk, and discovers something, right?

So, all those elements – a very new experience, a sense of accomplishment, a sense of connection, a sense of adventure. So, all those elements make that a worthwhile experience for myself.”

A single form of purchase (buying fruit), thus, was suffused with growth that came with the experience of trying new varieties of fruit, relatedness as the kinship developed between the respondent and the seller, mastery at the accomplishment of being able to converse with a local in a foreign language, and finally a feeling of self-acceptance at the improvement in one’s risk-taking capacities.

The kaleidoscopic nature of such experiences, therefore, serves to highlight the richness and complexity underlying meaningfulness in all these varied consumption contexts, and further justifies the need for careful and sustained enquiry into all aspects associated with such experiences. To this end, the next section attempts to extend this discussion by focusing on four themes – beauty, novelty, adventure, and tranquility – which describe the attributes of meaningful purchases themselves or the contexts in which they were often made and/or consumed. While the proposed separation is not perfect, given that all these could equally well be looked upon as experiences resulting from purchases, it is based on an observational rationale. Specifically, these themes reflect how respondents spoke of them as descriptive features of meaningful purchases or their consumption contexts, rather than as consequences arising from them. Thus, it was more common to hear statements worded as “It was a beautiful movie” or “The adventure of climbing,” rather than “Climbing led to an experience of adventure” or “The movie resulted in an experience of beauty.” The distinction, thus, is an attempt at preserving the respondents’ perspective regarding meaningful purchases.

Facilitators of Meaning: Understanding the Attributes of Meaningful Purchases and their Consumption Contexts

Certain themes showed up consistently across accounts as respondents used them to either describe meaningful purchases themselves or the contexts that were often reported in conjunction with them. While they were reported in several examples across different contexts, they were not a feature of every meaningful purchase. Thus, they can best be described as facilitators of meaning, that is, purchase/context attributes that can further aid the experience of meaning during a consumption experience but cannot guarantee it just by virtue of merely being present.

Beauty. While difficult to define, given that it is said to lie in the eyes of the beholder, beauty was often mentioned by respondents as something that resulted in a particular experience becoming meaningful. Clara, for instance, was rapturous while recalling her trip to Germany and Austria:

“I mean, the castles! Just everything about it; it’s so beautiful! And then we were down in the Bavarian area, so, you know, mountains everywhere. Oh, the castles, the mountains, the beautiful architecture. It was absolutely awesome. Everything! It was worth every penny I spent.”

Clive, on the other hand, arrived at the topic of beauty indirectly. His mention of a recent meaningful purchase being a movie ticket for a documentary led to a discussion that went beyond just movies as he ruminated:

“I think it’s meaningful in the sense that it enriches the heart. You know, if you experience art, you feel better afterwards. If you watch a

really good movie, or if you look at a beautiful painting, it nourishes you on some level. When you leave, you feel better than when you walked in the room. I feel like art provides...insight or understanding, or at the very least, a visual harmony. Your everyday life may be a bit more chaotic, or harder to understand. But art maybe synthesizes either emotion, a feeling, or it's just beautiful, and so we can appreciate its beauty.”

These examples are not easily accommodated by existing lines of research within marketing on topics related to beauty as they are neither reflective of product aesthetics (Bloch, Brunel, and Arnold 2003) nor cultural definitions of what is considered beautiful (Venkatesh and Meamber 2006). Indeed, such an individualized experience of beauty is perhaps closer to awe, a complex emotion combining moral, spiritual, and aesthetic dimensions (Keltner and Haidt 2003). Beauty, thus, may not only lie in the eye of the beholder but also end up making her life a little more meaningful.

Novelty. While newness has already been mentioned as a key aspect underlying growth the theme, some consumers also valued the idea of novelty in and of itself (and not necessarily always tied to a growth experience). Tracy, in recounting her trip to Aruba, said:

“We took a jeep tour over this part of the island that’s very rugged. You bounced all over the place! You know, I’ve never been on a jeep trip like that. I mean this jeep probably held 8 or 10 people. So that was a new experience. I wouldn’t choose to do it again, but it was...it was something, you know?”

This fascination for the new or the novel also extended to purchases that respondents planned to make in the future. Tamara, for instance, shared her wish to go for a unique type of gastronomic experience:

“There actually is this food experience in the city. It’s not even a restaurant, it’s in this guy’s house. And he makes really, really crazy food! I don’t know what the name [of that type of cooking] is, but, basically, they mess around with textures. So, you could be eating soup that’s crunchy, you know? Yeah, it kinda messes with your taste buds and your thought. Like you look at it and it’s not what you expect it to be when you eat it. I haven’t gotten to try it yet, but that’s something that I would consider a good purchase to...enhance life, try something new, something funky.”

It would be almost tautological to say that novelty is likely to be valued by consumers who are novelty-seeking or variety-seeking by nature (Hirschman 1980; Kahn 1995). Still, it was something worth noting in the context of meaningfulness given how often it was mentioned by respondents as being an attribute that made their purchase memorable.

Adventure. Along with tranquility (discussed next), the theme of adventure occupies the amorphous space between being a purchase attribute and being an experience. In terms of elements associated with it, though, it is (predictably) diametrically opposite to that of tranquility. Adventure, specifically, was inextricably tied to feelings of energy, excitement, passion, and spontaneity. Zamir, who used to be an avid rock climber and who counted all money spent on climbing equipment to be meaningful, recalled:

“For me, my bigger passion was climbing. I was a rock climber till two years back. And I had been travelling across the U.S. and climbing. And that was my fulfilling thing, I’d say. I liked the adventure part, I liked the adrenalin rush of it.”

Karl’s experience, meanwhile, was more illustrative of the adventure that comes from doing something spontaneously. A recent purchase that he considered meaningful was his trip to Chicago where he ended up exploring part of the city:

“I think it kinda shows off my curiosity, being adventurous. I went to Chicago this summer. And I went with a friend, but she was doing graduation stuff with one of her friends from high school. So, I took off by myself, the entire city by myself. To be carefree, not really having a plan of things, be adventurous, stuff like that. Get lost somewhere for fun. Try to find your way back. (Laughs)”

Excitement is already being investigated within the hedonic paradigm of consumption as a specific interpretation of happiness, especially when juxtaposed against the other interpretation, that of happiness as calmness (Mogilner et al. 2011). The point of interest here, though, is that the theme of adventure is also recalled as a component of meaningful purchases.

Tranquility. The final theme in this section relates to how certain memorable purchases were perceived by respondents to be closely linked to feelings of peace, relaxation, calmness, and serenity. In some cases, this was experienced in a more solitary context, when one was by oneself. Tracy, for instance, who considered the twenty-thousand-dollar expense involved in rebuilding an outdoor deck to be personally meaningful, said:

“The deck I had before was pretty nice too, it was just 20 years old. But, as I mentioned, I’ve lived here for a long time. So, I feel like I need to do what makes me happy when I’m here, and, you know, have a nice deck. There’re not neighbors that are right behind me or anything. So, that’s the other reason I like my deck so much. It’s kind of very peaceful and very quiet. I find a lot of solitude. Like, if I am by myself at night or whatever, I love to go out on my deck, because it’s just so peaceful to see the trees and it’s just real peaceful and quiet. So, it’s a really good solitude place to me.”

In other cases, such serenity could also be experienced in the company of others. Lalita, who had a vivid recollection of a family trip undertaken more than a decade ago, grew thoughtful as she recalled a specific experience where a particularly effortful climb was rewarded with utmost peace:

“I know there was this one temple for which we had to climb 300 or 350 steps. And the little one [her son] was really little, so we [she and her husband] had to carry him. We were taking turns. And it was quite a steep climb. But, in spite of that, once we were up there, it was so much peace. You know, you feel at peace with yourself and your surroundings. Outside of the daily drag and the daily rush of life. You know you just have to take time out and go to these places where you can feel the sanctuary or the peace.”

In addition to the research mentioned in the section on adventure, tranquility is also something that is just starting to see some scholarly work in relation to the marketplace (Otnes, Oh, and Mehta 2016). In conjunction with these findings, it could

well prove to be a promising field of enquiry in its relation to hedonic as well as eudaimonic aspects of consumer behavior.

INTERPRETATION AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Given the background of the themes discussed in the prior section, I now shift to a discussion of how they can be integrated. In contrast to the focus of the prior section on the immediate textures and contours of purchase experiences and their attributes, the focus of this section is on synthesis and theory-building. Specifically, it aims to move to a higher level of abstraction and provide a more processual account of what I term eudaimonic consumption.

Eudaimonic Consumption: A Theoretical Perspective on the Link between Consumption and Personal Meaning

I define eudaimonic consumption as those instances of consumption experiences that become, or are experienced as being, personally meaningful to consumers. I further propose that eudaimonic consumption is best understood through three central processes that underlie this experience of meaning: rejuvenation, expansion, and consolidation. Each of these is comprised of different sub-processes pertaining to distinct aspects that characterize the overall process. Rejuvenation, for instance, can occur through repair and/or through reconnection. Expansion, similarly, can be intellectual, pragmatic, and/or relational in form. Consolidation, finally, is best understood as a combination of two processes: crystallization and contextualization. While crystallization can proceed through self-creation and/or self-discovery, contextualization can take three distinct forms: temporal, spatial, and/or cosmic.

Naturally, a single purchase is unlikely to guarantee all these processes. I believe, however, that a purchase is unlikely to be perceived as meaningful in the absence of any of these processes. Most cases of eudaimonic consumption, thus, are likely to reflect them in varying degrees depending on the experiences from, and attributes of, a purchase. Furthermore, while these processes can occur as a result of goal-directed behavior, wherein consumers intentionally seek out certain types of experiences from their purchases, that may not always be the case. Some purchases might simply be serendipitous, wherein consumers end up experiencing one or more of these processes even in the absence of any specific expectations or intentions (regarding meaningfulness) on their part.

These processes are best understood as occurring in the context of, and directly impacting, a consumer's sense of self. Topics related to selfhood and/or identity have long fascinated marketing scholars who have studied them in diverse consumption contexts (Belk 1988; Schau et al. 2009; Scott et al. 2017). The proposed conceptualization of eudaimonic consumption adds to this body of work by focusing on how certain purchases become personally meaningful through their impact on the self. The term "self," in this case, is used as an umbrella term to denote who we are or who we perceive ourselves to be, in line with prior consumer research (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1988; Scott et al. 2017). It is, thus, not an attempt to undermine the conceptual complexity of defining the self (Leary and Tangney 2012), but simply a practical convenience that marketing scholars have used before.

Given this background, I now describe and discuss each process in detail. As these processes are conceptualized at a higher level of abstraction than the findings discussed earlier, I have paraphrased the purchase examples mentioned by respondents. This helps to illustrate each process concisely while still ensuring a focus

on the content of the process itself. The only section for which I use detailed respondent quotes is the one on contextualization given its complexity (discussed later) and, thus, a corresponding need (and advantage) of providing stronger evidence in its support.

Rejuvenation. The first notable aspect of eudaimonic consumption is that it is often regenerative in nature, capable of repairing or renewing certain aspects of our sense of self that are vulnerable to wear and tear in the ebb and flow of life. Such rejuvenation, moreover, may either be experienced in one's own sense of self or in one's shared sense of self with loved ones (Aron, Aron, and Smollan 1992).

The first route is consistent with a *repair* metaphor wherein a consumption experience allows consumers a temporary escape from their daily routines and affords them the time or space to recover from stressors which might be a normal part of their everyday lives. Clive, for instance, said that it was the chance of getting away from "your everyday, Monday through Friday, 9-to-5 life" that made travel the "most interesting time of the year" for him. Similarly, Lalita expressed the necessity to go "outside of the daily drag and daily rush of life" now and then to experience peace by travelling to peaceful locations. This escape, moreover, can involve going far away for extended periods, as seen from the many vacations and trips taken by respondents. It can, however, also be managed on a relatively smaller scale involving shorter periods, such as Tamara's investment in gym classes which let her "decompress and let all that crazy stress go."

The second route is consistent with a *reconnection* metaphor given that certain consumption experiences help consumers maintain and strengthen the ties they have with their loved ones. This was most commonly seen through examples of family reunion trips. Thomas, for instance, spoke at length about how these trips were

motivated by the intent to “maintain a close-knit family” by giving everyone a chance to see people whom they might not have met in over a year. Katie echoed this sentiment in talking about a recent family reunion in Iowa. She considers her relationships to be “strong bonds that began at birth” and felt that “to renew those [gives] a very deep sense of belonging and comfort.” Reconnection was also equally valid for ties of friendship, as illustrated by Clara who cherished her visit to Munich because she was able to visit her old classmate and “got to renew [the] acquaintance” with her friend.

In terms of experiential themes, rejuvenation often had an underlying component of *autonomy* that allowed consumers the luxury to get away from mundane routines in the pursuit of self-care and/or participate in consumption experiences with familiar loved ones. In some cases of repair, *self-acceptance* was also reflected as the short- or long-term escape helped consumers reach a place of being at ease with who they were. Reconnection, meanwhile, was usually accompanied by *relatedness* as it involved close others.

In terms of attribute themes, rejuvenation often occurred in consumption contexts marked by *tranquility* (especially for repair) and, in several cases, *beauty*. To the extent that these experiences often occurred in new contexts (e.g. a new travel destination or a new reunion venue), *novelty* also appeared to aid the process.

Expansion. The second key aspect of eudaimonic consumption is that it broadens our sense of self by incorporating new elements that were previously not a part of it. This can occur when we acquire knowledge about new topics that widen our intellectual horizons, when we learn new skills or refine old ones that help us push the boundaries of our practical capabilities, or when we form new relational ties with other people.

Intellectual expansion involves an increase in one's knowledge base as a result of a consumption experience, usually by virtue of learning something more about one or more topics. Such an improvement in knowledge, moreover, can result from a direct, first-hand consumption experience or from an indirect, second-hand consumption experience. The former was seen through Quentin's trip to India where he was amazed to learn how "[Indian] people would make drawings by their door to welcome people," and Lalita's vivid recollection of seeing "hundreds of penguins march out of the oceans...walking arm in arm by you to go to their boroughs [nests]," a highlight of her Melbourne trip. The latter was illustrated by consumers investing in good books depending on their interests. Thus, Tahaani's fondness for history and Tracy's interest in spirituality guided their respective purchases for that category.

Pragmatic expansion involves an improvement in one's practical capabilities as a result of a consumption experience, often as a result of learning new skills or becoming better at something with which one is more familiar. Examples of the former included Karl starting out with Cross Fit and Katie taking the plunge to ride an ATV on the beach for the first time. The latter was seen in examples of figuring out patterns of local life in another culture, as exemplified by Zamir in Portugal or Jacqueline in Brazil, and Sabrina's pride in becoming more capable at handling DIY projects on her own.

Relational expansion involves the formation of new relationships with other people as a result of a consumption experience. As in the case of reconnection discussed before, this can occur in the context of family members or friends. Thus, while Thomas enjoyed spending time with "new nephews and new nieces" during annual family reunions, Sadie spoke of the "enriching [new] friendships" she would make during meditation retreats that required her to travel to upstate New York from

Nebraska. In contrast to the relatively stronger ties forged in these cases, relation-oriented expansion can also occur through the formation of relatively weaker, more transient, ties with comparative strangers. While this was seen through Jacqueline's interaction with the fruit vendor in Brazil, another example came from Tamara who often engages in "random conversations with strangers" while travelling, a legacy from a memorable experience during her Europe trip where she struck up a conversation with her unknown hostel-mate who turned out to be a San Diego-based sous-chef, and the two ended up having an entertaining discussion about baking.

In terms of experiential themes, intellectual and pragmatic expansion were closely connected to: (a) *growth*, to the extent that they involved learning about new concepts or acquiring new skills respectively, and/or (b) *mastery*, to the extent that they involved improving one's knowledge regarding a topic or fine-tuning a particular skill respectively. Relational expansion was linked to *relatedness*, though more so for ties with close others than for those with strangers. Similar to rejuvenation, *autonomy* aided in all forms of expansion, though it could also be reciprocally impacted by intellectual and pragmatic expansion as improvements in knowledge and/or skills could confer a greater degree of independence on the consumer.

In terms of attribute themes, expansion was anchored in *novelty* given its focus on new concepts, new skills, and new people. Additionally, to the extent that mastering a skill was exciting, pragmatic expansion was sometimes mentioned in contexts marked by *adventure*.

Consolidation. The final distinctive aspect of eudaimonic consumption is harder to explicate than others as it is more complex than rejuvenation and expansion. I define it as a process of synthesis or integration whereby consumers' understanding of their sense of self grows deeper, richer, and more complex. This insightful

understanding emerges as a result of two component processes, one involving the development and strengthening of consumers' true selves (discussed next), and another involving a greater acknowledgement by consumers of their current position in life with respect to factors such as time, place, people, and the universe.

The concept of true self has been described as the subjective feeling of knowing who we really are (Schlegel et al. 2009; 2011). Additionally, the development of the true self can be understood as a process of self-creation and/or as one of self-discovery (Schlegel, Vess, and Arndt 2012). Briefly, the "self-creation metaphor" reflects a belief that individuals can construct a desired sense of self over time through deliberate choices from "among endless possibilities" (Schlegel et al. 2012, 972). The "self-discovery metaphor," in contrast, indicates a belief that "each person has an innate...real self" (Schlegel et al. 2012, 971) that she/he discovers or unearths over time through different experiences. These beliefs, moreover, may be endorsed simultaneously in varying degrees by a given individual and are not expected to be mutually exclusive.

Consequently, eudaimonic consumption is often characterized by *crystallization* or a solidification of a consumer's true self, analogous to how crystals form when atoms or molecules solidify into a structured form. In line with the prior discussion, this can occur either through purchases that are made intentionally with one or more specific goals in mind, or through purchases that result in revelatory experiences for consumers, thereby helping them learn more about themselves.

The first route is in line with the *self-creation* metaphor wherein a consumption experience is chosen because it is perceived to add to one's true self. Examples included Liz's decision to invest in her graduate education as it was important to her to "keep adding in pieces and continually growing," or Zamir's

purchases of climbing equipment which he viewed as “a purchase, a tool, a commodity” used by him “to create meaningful experiences.” Jacqueline considered her purchases to tell a story about her and who she is because, as she poetically put it, “narratives are constructed by what we do, what we think we do, and what we consume.”

The second route is in line with the *self-discovery* metaphor wherein a consumption experience resulted in an insight about a particular aspect of one’s true self. This was seen through Clive’s realization during the fence-building activity in North Carolina that he didn’t handle stress as well as he should, and that it was something he could work on. It was also seen through Karl’s spontaneous decision to set off on his own and explore Chicago as it “solidified the fact that I like to go and just...not have a plan sometimes.”

In terms of experiential themes, crystallization reflects elements of self-acceptance as consumers better understand themselves, and growth at the accompanying increase in self-knowledge. To a lesser extent, mastery was also observed as consumers worked on themselves to become better, though this was more evident in cases of self-creation where consumers chose purchases with that specific intent in mind.

In terms of attribute themes, no specific attribute appeared to be tied particularly closely with crystallization as a whole, though novelty was often a feature of those purchases which inspired self-discovery, given that they involved an unfamiliar experience for the consumer that could potentially afford revelatory insight(s).

Finally, eudaimonic consumption is also often characterized by the *contextualization* it brings about as consumers gain a clearer understanding of their

relative position with respect to elements that are much larger than themselves. In that sense, contextualization provides a sense of perspective as consumers acquire a greater sensitivity regarding the circumstances of their current life. Such insight, moreover, can occur as a result of consumers better understanding certain features of their current lives in relation to: (a) the passage of time, (b) the larger world of which they are a part, and finally, (c) for want of a better phrase, the grand scheme of things.

Temporal contextualization occurs when a consumption experience enables consumers to view time integratively and think beyond the present moment. This can happen when the frame of reference is proximal, that is, when certain purchases result in consumers realizing (or reflecting on) the interlinkages between the past, present, and probable future conditions of their own lives. In some cases, this realization resulted in a greater appreciation for the present, as seen from Liz's thoughts on her Europe trip with her kids:

"I had always wanted to travel abroad when I was younger, and sort of felt frustrated that I started my career and...that tied me down so that I couldn't [travel] when I was younger. But then I realized that I got to do that with my own children when they were grown up and so, that was a really meaningful experience for us."

In other cases, this realization was bittersweet as seen through Norah (who was more than happy at bearing the expenses of taking her grandchildren on trips), who poignantly noted:

"I have to smile, you know. It's kind of melancholy for me, because my kids are all grown up now and they have their own children. And, you know, we're not making those kinds of memories together anymore, we're making new memories. It just gives me a melancholy

feeling to think back to when they were young and, you know, depended on mom and dad, and we were so happy as a family... We had great times and great laughs, and it brought us a lot a joy and a lot of memories. But it's kinda sad knowing that we won't make memories like that anymore."

Such contextualization, however, can also happen when the frame of reference is distal, that is, when certain purchases result in a more empathetic and/or sympathetic understanding of people belonging to a different time period. An example of this came from Katie who took a trip to Butte, a mining town in Montana, and remembered her foray down a mine shaft:

"And we were walking through the mines, and it's totally pitch-black dark there if you don't have the helmet lights on. So, it gave you a feeling – I mean it's nowhere near what those men lived through – but it did give you just an inkling of what it was like to be down there. You can read about history...but to actually be put into an experience like that? It gives it a whole different twist, a whole different element of realization...For the men, you know? Knowing that they're leaving their families at dawn and not getting back till after dark, and not knowing if they're even gonna come out alive."

Another example was provided by Quentin who, during a trip to Chile, was enraptured by "a beautiful, amazing sculpture of this albatross" that turned out to be a commemorative marker of a tragic event:

"The sense of the statue; it's just an amazing sculpture. And the person who made it [had done so] to remember all the sailors who had been killed trying to get around from the Atlantic to the Pacific. And, I don't

know, it was just very emotional. (Pause) You know, some people talk about how your experiences in life are more important than the things you have. And that's certainly the case of that experience."

The key aspect of temporal contextualization was, thus, time, in the context of either one's own lifespan and/or the lives of others from a different time.

Spatial contextualization occurs when a consumption experience results in a heightened awareness among consumers that they are a part of a much larger world. This can happen through a *geographic* route wherein certain purchases result in a greater sensitization due to certain aspects of the location of the consumption experience. Such locations, moreover, could be domestic (i.e. in the consumers' country-of-origin), as seen from Smith's account of why he found his flying lessons to be meaningful:

"Because it's beautiful out there when you fly over a corn field, and the soybean fields, and see the farmers out on the land [who are] cultivating it. It kinda touched my heart. You fly from Lincoln to Grand Island or Pawnee, you see the expanse of this state, and you feel just thankful that you're alive, you know? And it made me feel a lot better. Because you see the expanse of territory, from one end of the state to another. And how that experience...makes you appreciate life. Because you're flyin' above the university and you're flyin' out east, or you're flyin' west, and you see the expanse, between I-80, you see the farmland, you see people out in the fields farmin'. And it gives you a sense of worth."

In other cases, such experiences were more sobering in nature, as seen through Clive's travels in the less-frequented parts of North Carolina:

“I guess I was surprised. At how... poor some of the towns were. And it made me more aware of the disconnect between what’s happening in [Washington] D.C. in politics, and what’s happening in the south. I mean, most small towns that you travel through, it seemed like half the businesses were shuttered. And I didn’t...I didn’t know that it was that bad. I didn’t know that, economically, the south is significantly different in terms of how it’s been affected recently, [compared to] the Midwest and the west coast and the east coast. So, that was eye opening.”

Locations, however, could also be international, as in the case of Tamara who said:

“When I was in Europe, I kind of felt that I could travel just a couple hours, and I’m in a different country. I mean, you have to know a completely different language, they have a different currency. When you’re traveling outside the U.S., you feel kind of more encompassed in the rest of the world.”

Such contextualization, however, can also happen through a *sociocultural* route wherein certain purchases result in a greater sensitization due to certain aspects of the people whom they encounter during the consumption experience. This can happen in the context of people belonging to one’s own culture, as seen in the case of Karl who, in speaking of his general fondness for spending on travel, mentioned:

“I’ve seen the ways of life on the east coast. I grew up in the Midwest, I’ve seen the southwest, and the west coast, and...how people are so different. And it just kinda makes you...think about how other people are brought up and how other people have lived life. And it makes you

take things [fewer things] for granted. ‘Cause you kinda understand different backgrounds and everything. Like the diversity of thought. Kinda helps you understand where other people are coming from.”

This can also, however, happen in a context involving people from a different culture. In some cases, the realization involved may be anchored in the fact that the consumer is a member of the dominant culture. Steve, a Caucasian Nebraska native, gave the example of a recent movie which he found meaningful. Titled *Beatriz at Dinner*, the movie is a scathing depiction of the chasm between the haves and have-nots in American society. As he said, the movie made him “feel richer as a result of the perspectives it exposed me to” regarding inequalities based on income, class, gender, and ethnicity.

In other cases, the sensitization involved may be tied to the consumers’ experience(s) of being part of a minority group. As an American in Europe (when he had gone there for a trip), Thomas recalled:

“Our culture in America, as you know by now, is very fluid and...kind of wild in fact. I didn’t experience that when I went to Europe because those cultures are much more traditional. But yet those people provide such a solid sense of who they are and where they’re going, because of their cultural history. I think that we don’t have it here; it’s different. And I think it’s, it’s valuable to, to see that and understand how that might factor into who you, who I am, and how I interact with where, with my life.”

Spatial contextualization, thus, was based on a stronger understanding of one’s current position in life (including the advantages and disadvantages that came with it), in terms of both geographic location and sociocultural membership.

Finally, *cosmic* contextualization, perhaps the most amorphous process in terms of definition, can best be described as occurring when a consumption experience provides a rare flash of insight that allows consumers to get a glimpse of their relative position in the entirety of things. Such experiences are consistent with theoretical accounts of complex concepts such as awe (Keltner and Haidt 2003; Rudd, Hildebrand, and Vohs 2018; Rudd, Vohs, and Aaker 2012) or wisdom (Luchs and Mick 2018; Mick, Bateman, and Lutz 2009), and represent an implicit or explicit acknowledgement on the part of consumers that they are just one part of a complex universe that transcends them.

Examples of such contextualization, while rare, were extremely illuminating and they mostly came, unsurprisingly, from the accounts of older respondents. Quentin, who had several experiences throughout his Chile trip which “made the planet, that I live on, bigger than it had been before,” recounted a particular example regarding a major planetary threat:

“There was a place we got off the boat and, maybe a quarter mile away, we could see a glacier. And the guide said, ‘The glacier used to come up to where we’re standing.’ And, you know, if you have that kind of experience, it makes climate change real.”

On a related note, he also mentioned how he has been giving tours to other people who come to watch the annual Sandhill Crane migration in Nebraska “so that people who maybe have never experienced that before...can experience that too.” As he reflected:

“Again, it goes back to the planet. Because here are these birds who probably predate humans, and they have this rhythm, and we know when they’re gonna come. And there’s a rhythm to the earth that, you

know, most people driving down Interstate-80 don't understand, or they've never experienced. And maybe, if they can experience it, maybe may say, 'Whoa! This is somethin' I've never even thought about!'"

In contrast to Quentin's experiences in nature, Tracy was able to find a glimmer of personal enlightenment among the leaves of a book that she bought:

"Well, you should pick it up and read it! It's very interesting, 'cause [the author] talks about [how] the universe is unfolding exactly the way it's s'posed to. We all have ups and downs in our lives and, you know, [it's about] how you handle them. I think that books like that teach you that...everything happens the way it's going to happen, and the universe is unfolding, and you have to adapt to it. So, it's more the surrender; that you just have to surrender. And that always give me peace of mind, the understanding, how to deal with life's situations."

A final example, from Sadie who regularly bought DVDs or the rights to streaming videos on meditation and mindfulness for a group she teaches, involved a brush with nothing less than divinity:

"We listen to the teachers who are usually published authors and writers, theologians, and spiritual teachers. So, when I purchase those kinds of things, I feel substantially content, that this is what I'm supposed to do. It kind of aligns with what I feel is my calling. Well, it deepens each and every individual's sense of the spiritual dimension, sense of God, sense of themselves. As it relates to God, the universe, other people, compassion, self-compassion, compassion for others. So, it's almost like it's sort of making everybody's little world a little

better. And, you grow in respect for the world as a whole, and the family of man that we're a part of. It becomes much more universal.”

In terms of experiential themes, contextualization was the same as crystallization in its links to *growth* and *self-acceptance*, given that it involves a general increase in understanding regarding one's relative position against larger elements. Cosmic contextualization, in particular, also showed links to *purpose* as people talked of discovering their direction in life.

In terms of attribute themes, the only ones that could be linked directly to a process were *beauty* and *tranquility* in relation to cosmic contextualization, given that a rare flash of insight was much more likely to occur when the surrounding environment, in which the consumption experience took place, was marked by beauty and serenity.

Eudaimonic consumption, thus, can be seen as a composite of three distinct processes that provide a theoretical account of how certain consumption experiences become meaningful by helping consumers rejuvenate certain aspects of themselves, expand their boundaries, and/or achieve synthesis regarding their true selves, and their selves in relation to the larger tapestries of time, place, and the cosmos. The next (and final) section provides a brief overview of how this theoretical account contributes to existing research within the marketing discipline on the intersection of consumption and personal meaning.

THE QUALITATIVE PHASE: A BRIEF SUMMARY

What makes purchases, or more generally, consumption experiences personally meaningful? This was the central question guiding the qualitative phase of

this dissertation. Given the interviews and the findings, we are now better equipped to try and formulate an answer to that deceptively simple question.

Consumption experiences become meaningful when they impact our sense of self in three overarching ways: rejuvenation, expansion, and consolidation. The impact could be regenerative, by helping consumers heal from the many strains and stressors that are a feature of everyday life, or by enabling them to renew and strengthen treasured relationships with others who are close to them. It could be expansionary, by allowing consumers to broaden their intellectual horizons, by helping them hone their practical capabilities, or by aiding them in forming new ties with others. It could, finally, be integrative, by helping consumers develop a stronger idea of their true self concept, or by sensitizing them to their relative position in the greater scheme of things. As discussed later in chapter 5, this account also makes it possible to advance a particular conceptualization of the self in relation to consumption – namely, the organismic self – that, compared to other conceptualizations advanced in prior research, is better able to provide a theoretical account of eudaimonic consumer behavior.

The account of eudaimonic consumption, thus, is an account of the experience of personal meaning as a result of certain consumption experiences. While the concept of meaning had been proposed early in the history of marketing research, it was initially either framed solely in the context of one's material possessions (Belk 1988) or was focused more on the symbolic meaning of advertised products (McCracken 1987). Over time, however, a line of research developed that was focused on the link between consumption and personal meaning, that is, purchases that consumers considered intrinsically meaningful in their lives. Such purchases, moreover, could be made either for oneself (Ahuvia 2005; Schau et al. 2009; Scott et

al. 2017) or as gifts for others (Belk and Coon 1993; Chan and Mogilner 2017; Shery 1983). While this stream of research continues to yield rich insights, it has often been limited either due to a focus on niche consumer segments (Schau et al. 2009; Scott et al. 2017) or by virtue of considering only a specific set of purchases (Ahuvia 2005; Chan and Mogilner 2017). While such limitations are understandable given issues of research scope, they also preclude a more complete understanding of the link between consumption and personal meaning. Consequently, a holistic perspective on meaningful consumption, one that is applicable to a variety of consumer segments, life stages, and purchase categories, has remained lacking in marketing discourse.

As illustrated in this chapter, the present research has aimed to address this gap by capturing a variety of accounts from a diverse sample of consumers on meaningful purchases (bought for oneself or as gifts) across many different categories of goods, services, and experiences. The themes and the processual perspective generated from those accounts represent, to the best of my knowledge, the first attempt at providing a holistic account of eudaimonic consumption. By doing so, this research also answers multiple calls from within the marketing discipline on the links between consumption, meaning, happiness, and well-being (Ahuvia 2005; Alba and Williams 2013; Inman et al. 2018; Schmitt et al. 2015), and, therefore, provides a valuable addition to this stream of research within the larger marketing discourse.

Given the combined accounts of the quantitative and qualitative phases, the next chapter summarizes the results from this program of mixed-methods research and illustrates how the findings contribute to marketing theory and practice, and how they open new avenues for future marketing research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This dissertation started out as an attempt to understand whether and how consumption was linked to meaningful happiness. As noted in chapter 1, two central questions guided the overall research:

- (a) In what ways does consumption associated with meaningful happiness (eudaimonic consumption) differ from that which is associated with pleasurable happiness (hedonic consumption)?
- (b) What are the different aspects underlying the complex consumption experience(s) that result in certain purchases becoming personally meaningful to the consumers who make them?

These questions, in turn, shaped the design and conduct of the quantitative and qualitative phases respectively, the details of which have been covered in the prior two chapters. This chapter focuses on summarizing (and comparing) the findings from the two phases in order to better bring out the theoretical contributions and managerial implications stemming from this dissertation. The chapter also notes the research limitations involved and how future research efforts can attempt to address them.

The remaining chapter, thus, is organized into the following five sections: I first compare findings from the two phases to illustrate points of convergence and divergence between them. In the next section I go on to discuss how this dissertation adds to current marketing discourse, which is then followed by a section on the implications for marketing practice based on the findings. I then note some limitations of the present research design and discuss some future avenues which can address these to further extend this program of research. A brief final section, outlining the

central advantages of a eudaimonic perspective on consumer behavior and marketing, concludes this chapter and the dissertation as a whole.

MIXING METHODS: COMPARING FINDINGS FROM QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE PHASES

As the overall research design involved conducting the quantitative and qualitative phases in parallel, it was essentially similar to a convergent parallel mixed-methods design (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). The advantage of using this particular form of mixed-methods research was borne out over the course of the research as each phase had some impact on the other. Examples include how observations from initial depth interviews – regarding how respondents appeared to take much longer in coming up with meaningful purchases than fun purchases – shaped the design for studies 1A, 1B and 2. Conversely, the descriptive purchase accounts, provided as part of the recall tasks in initial experimental studies, further supported using Ryff's (1989) framework for coding interviews as I could discern similar themes even among the shorter descriptions reported in studies. In terms of findings from each phase, moreover, certain points of convergence and divergence emerge that merit a brief discussion.

If we first consider cases wherein findings from both phases reinforce each other, then there are several examples that are worthy of note. Studies 1A, 1B, and 2 helped establish the cognitive challenge experienced in recalling meaningful purchases, something that was hypothesized based on interview observations and prior theorizing regarding the nature of hedonia and eudaimonia. Studies 3 and 4, in contrast, showed convergent findings with the interviews in terms of the experiences

associated with eudaimonic consumption. Study 3 was able to demonstrate the robustness of the thematic codes based on Ryff's (1989) framework as the factor structure replicated all but one dimension (independence, which represented a combination of autonomy and mastery) associated with meaningful purchases. Study 3 also showed that meaningful affect appeared to consist of elements of emotionality and introspection. Introspection, in particular, shares clear parallels with the crystallization process that was theorized based on the interviews. Specifically, given how eudaimonic consumption was linked to feelings of introspection, contemplation, and wanting to be a better person (in terms of the scale items that loaded on to the introspection factor), elements of crystallization are reflected in the focus on introspective thinking (self-discovery) and a wish to improve oneself (self-creation). In as much as that introspective thinking can also be about oneself in relation to larger themes, it is also reflective of contextualization. This is further supported by purpose mediating the link between meaningful purchases and introspection, given that purpose is an element that is theorized to underlie experiences of both crystallization and contextualization. Study 4, in comparison, established the eudaimonic advantage of experiential purchases over material purchases, a finding that was consistent with many interview respondents recalling purely or partially experiential purchases in response to the interview prompts. Finally, findings from study 5 regarding the positive association between integrative thinking (beyond just the present) and meaning in life are a direct reflection of the process of temporal contextualization.

If we now look at divergent findings, then there are two cases where results across the two phases didn't fully match each other. The first, already referenced above, relates to how autonomy and mastery are seen as distinct experiences in the interviews but they 'collapse' into a single factor (independence) in study 3.

Inspection of item wordings yields a partial answer to this seeming contradiction as the items indicate an overall sense of freedom with the consumer feeling more capable and competent as a result of making a purchase. Given that a single purchase is often linked to several different experiences simultaneously (as was noted in chapter 4), future research could try to further disentangle autonomy and mastery by looking at finer distinctions between them. The second example, more a non-result than a divergent finding, involves the absence of a significant effect for a eudaimonic product framing on behavioral variables (attitude, anticipated satisfaction, and anticipated fit). Simply stated, while consumers who thought of time integratively did experience more meaning in life, they didn't exhibit a stronger preference for a product framed in more meaning-oriented terms. This might be due to the nature of the particular product category chosen (i.e. a movie pass) and is, thus, something which future research could explore for different product types.

While these observations certainly merit continued research to resolve their underlying contradictions, they don't take away from the rich corpus of findings that have emerged as a result of the combined application of quantitative and qualitative methods to a complex and multi-faceted research question. Collectively, the findings from this dissertation not only highlight the necessity of separating eudaimonic consumption from hedonic consumption when it comes to questions of happiness and well-being among consumers, but also emphasize the importance of studying eudaimonic consumption as a standalone topic owing to its theoretical richness and complexity. As is discussed in the next section, these findings can contribute to marketing theory in several ways.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO MARKETING THEORY

This dissertation joins a growing body of work within the marketing discipline that has begun to challenge commonly accepted ideas of what happiness is within the larger context of consumer behavior (Alba and Williams 2013; Mogilner et al. 2011; Percival Carter and Williams 2014; Rodas et al. 2018). Prior research, however, has either explored happiness within the overall hedonic paradigm of happiness being synonymous with pleasure or fun (Mogilner et al. 2011; Rodas et al. 2018), or only looked at a single aspect of eudaimonic consumption such as variety-seeking (Percival Carter and Williams 2014). By undertaking a mixed-methods approach to investigate the ways in which eudaimonic consumption differs from hedonic consumption, and how eudaimonic consumption represents a complex process of purchases becoming personally meaningful, the present research is perhaps the first attempt to comprehensively study the experience of eudaimonia within a diverse range of consumption contexts. Consequently, it makes a variety of theoretical contributions to marketing discourse.

First, it breaks new ground in understanding the link between consumption and well-being, thereby answering several calls for research urging for a deeper understanding of the topic in general (Inman et al. 2018), and of the link between consumption and meaningful happiness in particular (Alba and Williams 2013; Schmitt et al. 2015). As discussed in the previous section, there are a number of convergent findings across the two methodologically different phases which collectively constitute a strong body of evidence that eudaimonic consumption is not only different from hedonic consumption, but also sufficiently complex to merit continued academic enquiry. The dissertation, thus, establishes the importance of

studying eudaimonic consumption in relation to the larger research contexts of happiness and consumer well-being.

Second, as shown through chapters 3 and 4, the dissertation extends current discourse in two major streams of marketing research: the relative superiority of experiential purchases over material ones (Gilovich et al. 2015a; 2015b), and the link between consumption and personal meaning (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1988). While a wealth of research has demonstrated the many hedonic payoffs from experiential purchases (Gilovich and Kumar 2015; Gilovich et al. 2015a; 2015b), the present research demonstrates several eudaimonic payoffs that simultaneously reflect and build on to prior findings regarding the positive impact of experiential purchases on the self (Carter and Gilovich 2012; Guevarra and Howell 2015). Similarly, findings from the qualitative phase in particular help push the boundaries of current discourse on how consumers pursue meaning through their possessions, activities, and other consumption choices (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1988; Schau et al. 2009; Scott et al. 2017).

Third, the dissertation can be viewed as taking the first step toward a set of prospective contributions that a program of research on eudaimonic consumption can make to marketing theory. Specifically, the findings provide an initial glimpse of how research on this topic can help uncover new insights regarding two broad theoretical domains: value from consumption (Babin et al. 1994; Holbrook 1999), and the self in relation to consumption (Belk 1988; Scott et al. 2017).

Eudaimonic Value from Consumption

The notion of value is central to the very definition of marketing (<https://www.ama.org/the-definition-of-marketing/>) and is, therefore, integral to the discipline itself. While value can be looked at in a variety of ways (Holbrook 1999;

Sanchez-Fernandes and Iniesta-Bonillo 2007), I argue that a theoretical account of eudaimonic value can be advanced based on the findings from present research.

Analogous to how utilitarian value and hedonic value are respectively associated with task completion and entertainment/fun (Babin et al. 1994), eudaimonic value is associated with the personal meaning that consumers derive from their purchase(s). Furthermore, the operationalizations of PWB (used in studies 3 and 4) provide an initial step in measuring eudaimonic value, though future research could explore whether they could be aggregated into higher-order constructs such as the three processes (and their respective sub-processes) theorized based on the qualitative findings.

I argue that consumer value from a purchase can be conceptualized as a tripartite combination of: (a) utilitarian value in terms of its functional benefits, (b) hedonic value in terms of the pleasure and fun that it entails, and (c) eudaimonic value in terms of the experience of meaningfulness that it brings to the consumer(s). Therefore, analogous to how a two-dimensional framing (involving utility and pleasure) underlies hedonic and utilitarian aspects of value (Babin et al. 1994) and product benefits (Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan 2007), a three-dimensional perspective integrates a utilitarian focus on function, a hedonic focus on pleasure and/or fun, and a eudaimonic focus on meaningfulness. As a corollary, products (including goods and services) and experiences themselves can be classified as being utilitarian, hedonic, or eudaimonic (or different combinations thereof) based on the relative extent of the different values which consumers perceive when regarding them.

Findings from the two research phases showed how meaningful purchases were often perceived to be high in both hedonia and eudaimonia, thereby illustrating the usefulness of viewing a given purchase as a combination of hedonic and

eudaimonic value (while utilitarian value wasn't always explicitly measured it was implicit across respondent accounts). It was also observed how certain purchase (or expense) categories were often mentioned in conjunction with certain prompts or questions. Expenses such as rent, utility bills, and/or taxes were viewed as primarily utilitarian in that they were considered to be necessary but neither fun nor meaningful. Purchases regarding comfort food, or going out for a drink or a movie with friends, in contrast, were often categorized as being primarily hedonic in that they provided some moments of fleeting fun (and were implicitly assumed to be useful in providing a break) but weren't deeply meaningful per se. Finally, vacations and trips were often cited as being primarily meaningful as they had a deep impact on consumers and ended up being extremely memorable. Importantly, while such travel provided a break and was associated with pleasure (thereby being utilitarian and hedonic to an extent respectively), it was the dominant characterization of the purchase as being meaningful which made it eudaimonic in the eyes of the consumer. The utility of this three-pronged perspective is also evident when looking at examples of purchases which were mentioned as being meaningful but not pleasurable, such as rock-climbing or Cross Fit training. The fact that respondents counted these experiences as meaningful even in the absence of pleasure shows that meaning needs to be considered separately from emotional pleasure, a finding consistent with observations regarding consumers' voluntary pursuit of painful experiences (Scott et al. 2017) and sad films (Oliver 1993).

The above discussion also shows how the perception of value can be more subjective, based on the individual consumption experience(s) of a consumer, or more objective, based on their categorization by a majority of consumers as being primarily utilitarian, hedonic, or eudaimonic. An illustration of the former is how a visit to an

amusement park, for instance, may be perceived by one consumer to be largely hedonic because it was fun-filled and exciting, and by another to be largely eudaimonic because it was a memorable bonding experience with her/his loved ones. An example of the latter is how a category like travel is generally held to be primarily eudaimonic while a category like fast food is considered to be primarily hedonic. The usefulness of the tripartite perspective, therefore, is evident in how it can easily accommodate both cases and provide a flexible framework to study the value from consumption regardless of whether that value is perceived subjectively based on consumers' personal experiences or whether it is perceived more objectively as being linked to a specific product, experience, category, or industry.

Given the sheer variety of ways in which marketing scholars have studied the value concept (Sanchez-Fernandes and Iniesta-Bonillo 2007), this tripartite perspective is, of course, one among many others with which it shares some points of similarity. Elements of growth, expansion, or contextualization, for instance, reflect Sheth, Newman, and Gross' (1991a; 1991b) discussion on epistemic value regarding a desire for knowledge motivated by curiosity or novelty-seeking behavior. Similarly, in line with Holbrook's (1999) comprehensive typology of perceived value, eudaimonic purchases spanned the continuum from extrinsic (used as a means to pursue a goal) to intrinsic (prized for their own sake), self-oriented (bought for oneself) to other-oriented (bought for someone else), and active (involving the user manipulating an object) to reactive (involving the user being affected by the object). Illustrative examples of eudaimonic purchases for these would include Cross Fit training (extrinsic), travel (intrinsic), investment in graduate education (self-oriented), gifts for grandchildren (other-oriented), DIY repair (active), and the awe experienced from seeing a glacier (reactive).

The tripartite perspective, thus, is broadly consistent with existing accounts of value from consumption and doesn't seek to replace them. Its central contribution, in contrast to these accounts, lies in the fact that it is able to provide a clearer separation between utilitarian, hedonic, and eudaimonic benefits experienced by consumers in relation to a wide variety of purchases. By doing so, such a perspective provides a stronger theoretical basis than others to conceptualize and operationalize meaning-oriented happiness from consumption (Schmitt et al. 2015), while simultaneously highlighting how the existing utilitarian-hedonic distinction needs to be expanded into a prospective utilitarian-hedonic-eudaimonic triad.

Eudaimonic Consumption and the Organismic Self

Several marketing scholars have studied the link between consumer behavior and the self, and their work has resulted in a rich discourse on how consumers use a variety of marketplace resources to construct a sense of self (Arnould and Thompson 2005), and how aspects of self-concept impact purchase behavior (Sirgy 1982). Based on my findings from the qualitative phase in particular, I propose the usefulness of a specific perspective – the organismic self – that is consistent with eudaimonic consumption. Specifically, it helps us to better understand the impact of eudaimonic consumption on the development of the self, and the reciprocal impact of the self on the pursuit of eudaimonic consumption.

To do so, I first provide a brief overview of five conceptualizations utilized in prior research with respect to the link between consumption and the self. These are, in chronological order, the extended self (Belk 1988), the empty self (Cushman 1990), the fragmented self (Firat and Venkatesh 1995), the narrative self (Ahuvia 2005), and the saturated self (Scott et al. 2017). These five conceptualizations, while

not the only ones referred to in prior research, represent the few attempts at theorizing the link between consumption and the entirety of the self, rather than a specific aspect of the self. Given a similar focus for the present research, understanding these perspectives helps ground my findings in existing discourse and illustrates how my conceptualization adds to it.

Briefly, Belk (1988) argued that material possessions reflect the identity of their owner and serve to extend a consumer's sense of self to the extent that the consumer regards them as a part of herself/himself. Cushman (1990), however, took a deeply pessimistic view of consumption as he believed that the post-World War II self had become empty and needed a constant stream of consumer products in a Sisyphean attempt to fill it up and construct a unique sense of identity. Firat and Venkatesh (1995), in contrast, claimed that postmodern consumers had a fragmented sense of self that necessitated multiple consumption experiences in a bid to negotiate multiple identities within themselves. Such fragmentation, far from being problematic and confusing, was argued to be liberating as it freed consumers to make purchase decisions based on several fluid identities rather than a singular, rigid one. Ahuvia (2005), however, doubted such a utopian conceptualization and showed how certain instances of consumption were, in fact, instrumental in helping consumers resolve conflicts between their competing identities to construct a coherent narrative for their sense of self. In contrast to Ahuvia's (2005) focus on loved objects and activities, Scott et al. (2017) showed how even an extraordinarily painful and unpleasant activity (tough mudder competitions) could be used in the continual construction of a sense of self, at least for a specific group of consumers (knowledge workers) who had become saturated with the boredom, worries, and constraints of their mundane lives.

Despite varying degrees of (dis)agreement between the scholars who conceptualized these different interpretations, the conceptualizations themselves represent important advances in establishing the links between consumer behavior and the self. Given this background, I propose that a specific conceptualization of the self, termed the organismic self, is especially relevant in the context of eudaimonic consumption.

An organismic perspective regarding the self is, by itself, not new and dates back to Goldstein's (1939) holistic view of people as complex human organisms who should be studied in the totality of their behaviors and the environments that they are a part of. This perspective was hugely impactful as it inspired a number of influential theorists and was reflected in their accounts of developmental psychology (Werner 1948), cognitive development (Piaget 1977), self-actualization (Maslow 1968), and full functioning (Rogers 1961). Furthermore, the organismic perspective continues to be relevant, especially in the study of eudaimonia, as seen from the overall frameworks of self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 2004; Ryan and Deci 2000), social well-being (Keyes 1998), and psychological well-being (Ryff 1989; Ryff and Singer 2008).

I argue that such an organismic account of the self is integral in understanding how consumers pursue eudaimonic consumption and how such consumption, in turn, shapes them. Based on the processes conceptualized in chapter 4 in particular, I argue that the self is best viewed as a living entity, akin to an organism, that is capable of rejuvenation, expansion, and consolidation (within itself and with its outer environment) as a result of eudaimonic consumption. As already discussed earlier, these processes can come about either as a result of motivated pursuits to acquire certain consumption experiences to add to one's sense of self or as a result of

serendipitous purchases that yield insights about the nature of one's self. In either case, eudaimonic consumption has a developmental impact on the self which, in turn, can spur the consumer on to seek (or at least be open to experiences from) other meaningful purchases. Furthermore, unless the consumer's personal circumstances and overall environment are severely limiting, eudaimonic consumption can potentially establish a virtuous circle wherein consumers engage in a recursive process of gaining insights from meaningful purchases and these insights, in turn, fuel demand for other meaningful purchases, which would lead to newer insights and so on ad infinitum. The strongest evidence in support of this comes from the sheer diversity of respondents and purchase categories across the quantitative and qualitative phases. Eudaimonic consumption, thus, appears to transcend boundaries of age, gender, ethnicity, income, and other demographic factors as consumers across the board are able to experience personal meaning or meaningfulness from a range of purchase types.

An organismic lens is, of course, not without its limitations as it is more applicable in analyzing eudaimonic consumption than in studying utilitarian consumption (focused on functional value) and/or hedonic consumption (focused on pleasure). It also assumes a base level of material well-being (Sirgy 2012) and choice availability from among multiple consumption alternatives, along with a eudaimonic motivation (Huta and Ryan 2010) on the part of the consumer to continue making meaningful purchases. While the first two are environmental factors that would determine whether a consumer can engage in eudaimonic consumption, the last one is a personal factor that would determine whether s/he even wants to do so. In the absence of one or more of these factors, however, consumers might be unable to sustain a regular stream of eudaimonic consumption which is integral to the virtuous

circle described earlier. Given that consumers might be rendered vulnerable due to a variety of situational and environmental constraints (Baker, Gentry, and Rittenburg 2005), and/or be guided more by hedonic motivations than eudaimonic ones (Huta and Ryan 2010), an organismic lens, in those cases, would be insufficient in understanding the experience of personal meaning from consumption.

Despite these limitations, however, an organismic lens can be extremely useful, as seen from the fact that it is able to incorporate the theoretical perspectives discussed earlier while simultaneously resolving some contradictions between them. Given that eudaimonic consumption can result from a variety of purchases that may differ in form or in the level of challenge associated with them, the organismic self can experience personal meaning from material possessions (Belk 1988), loved objects and activities (Ahuvia 2005), and/or painful experiences (Scott et al. 2017). Such purchases, moreover, could help consumers rejuvenate their sense of self by enabling them to escape the drudgery of their regular lives (Scott et al. 2017), or expand their sense of self by allowing them to master specific skills to better manage their environment (Belk 1988). Furthermore, while a fusillade of frivolous purchases may be unable to fill up a consumer's empty self (Cushman 1990), a steady diet of eudaimonic consumption may help her/him to build a solid sense of self either through intentional purchase decisions (self-creation) and/or through unexpected consumption experiences (self-discovery). Moreover, to the extent that some consumers may be happy with their fragmented selves (Firat and Venkatesh 1995), eudaimonic consumption offers a variety of avenues through which they can pursue personal meaning with regard to any or all of their multiple identities. And finally, to the extent that other consumers may not be as happy with such fragmentation and may actively wish to resolve identity conflicts (Ahuvia 2005), eudaimonic consumption

can help them facilitate an internal crystallization of their true selves or an external contextualization with their environmental elements to provide a stronger sense of synthesis.

Given the background of these contributions that a eudaimonic perspective can make to marketing theory, I now turn to the implications of such a view for marketing practice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING PRACTICE

Given the burgeoning market for happiness and well-being (Hartwell 2018), marketing practitioners are likely to benefit from a clearer understanding of how consumers pursue and/or experience such well-being during different stages of the customer journey (Lemon and Verhoef 2016). While there is a rich stream of research looking at consumers' hedonic pursuits (Alba and Williams 2013) and the finer distinctions between different forms of hedonic happiness (Mogilner et al. 2011), a eudaimonic perspective (such as the one advanced by this dissertation) can also prove to be significantly useful for marketing practice.

Based on the findings from studies 1A, 1B, and 2, for instance, we can see that a consumer is more likely to recall a primarily hedonic purchase when asked to think of something that made her/him happy, and that eudaimonic purchases are harder to recall than hedonic purchases in general. This is consistent with recent work showing how the experiences of hedonia and eudaimonia are neurologically different, with hedonia being linked to a faster, more heuristic mode of decision-making and eudaimonia being linked to slower, more intentional mode (Kahneman 2011). Given prior findings regarding how ease-of-retrieval can influence judgments (Menon and

Raghubir 2003; Schwarz et al. 1991; Tversky and Kahneman 1973), it is likely that consumers may evaluate past hedonic consumption experiences more positively, even though they experience greater meaning from past eudaimonic ones, simply because the former were easier to recall. While this is not necessarily a bad thing in itself, it may result in situations wherein a larger share of discretionary spending ends up being funneled toward primarily hedonic purchases (which often provide fleeting happiness) rather than primarily eudaimonic purchases (which usually provide enduring happiness). This implies that, at a macro level, marketers in categories and/or industries which are frequently associated with eudaimonic consumption (e.g. tourism, cinema, publishing, hobby-related activities, health food, etc.) may need to invest more resources in building stronger brand awareness (Hoyer and Brown 1990; Oh 2000) to ensure easier brand recall by consumers. This would help such marketers to not lose market share (in the overall market for happiness and well-being) to marketers who work in relatively more hedonic categories and/or industries (e.g. fast food, gambling, apparel, bars, etc.). Marketers in eudaimonic categories and/or industries could also invest in establishing strong loyalty programs (Lewis 2004; Liu 2007; Oliver 1999) which, at a more micro level, would allow them to aid ease of recall simply by sending regular reminders to consumers regarding upcoming promotions or new consumption alternatives.

In comparison with these findings, the results from studies 3 and 4 (in conjunction with the findings from the interviews) show how the experience of eudaimonia or personal meaningfulness is anchored in a diverse array of component elements (e.g. autonomy, tranquility, introspection, and/or crystallization, to name a few). I argue that these elements can equally well be viewed as eudaimonic levers which marketing practitioners can use to increase the chances that a particular

purchase is perceived as being more meaningful to one or more groups of consumers. While this may not be feasible for some elements (a marketer could never guarantee that a purchase would produce insightful flashes of purpose or contextualization, for instance), it may be more practicable regarding others. A fitting example of this comes from the 2016 launch of Airbnb Experiences comprised of experiential travel-related activities which are “designed and led by inspiring locals” wherein guests can immerse themselves in “each host’s unique world” and share in the “hobbies, skills, and expertise” of those local hosts (<https://www.airbnb.com/host/experiences>). Even a cursory look at the main webpage reveals a staggering variety of available experiences ranging from snorkeling, guided hikes, and surfing to culture walks, scavenger hunts, and comedy shows (<https://www.airbnb.com/s/experiences>). For consumers, such experiences reflect varying degrees of (among other elements) autonomy regarding the choice of the activity itself, beauty in terms of the location, and relational expansion based on the new connections you might make with other consumers during the experience. To the extent, thus, that marketers have the resources and/or latitude to incorporate one or more elements from among the array of eudaimonic levers at their disposal, they should do so during the product or service development process (Alam 2002; Alam and Perry 2002; Leonard-Barton 1992; Veryzer 1998) to create eudaimonic market offerings.

On a different note, findings from study 5 provide some initial indications of how different consumer segments are likely to react to products that are framed in hedonic or eudaimonic terms. Specifically, a hedonic framing is indicated to be more effective for consumers who are predisposed to spend a lot of time thinking about the future, while no differences are observed between hedonic and eudaimonic framing for consumers who don’t do so. These findings, to an extent, are in the same vein as

those of Mogilner et al. (2011), who show that product choice is affected by differential interpretations of happiness. While future research could (and should) explore cases wherein a eudaimonic framing is found to be more impactful, the present research indicates that marketers could adjust message framing in line with consumers' temporal perspective (provided that they're able to access such information with consumers' consent). Specifically, while framing a product in hedonic terms is likely to appeal to consumers who are high in future orientation, marketers have a choice regarding product framing for those who are low in future orientation, given that a hedonic or a eudaimonic frame is likely to be equally attractive. Following a differential framing strategy, therefore, might help improve consumer perceptions for upcoming market offerings, especially those that can provide both hedonic and eudaimonic value.

As can be seen from this section and the prior one, the theoretical contributions and managerial implications stemming from this dissertation also simultaneously raise several interesting questions which future research could explore. The next section, after commenting on the limitations of the present research design, provides an overview of some potential avenues through which future research on eudaimonic consumption and/or eudaimonic marketing could progress.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

As with all research, this dissertation had certain limitations based on its theoretical and methodological scope that are discussed below.

In terms of theoretical aims, this research focused on eudaimonic consumption as a whole in an attempt to arrive at an initial understanding of how it differs from

hedonic consumption and what the experience of eudaimonic consumption entails. Such an approach necessarily involved eschewing a comprehensive understanding of all the minutiae involved in different instances of eudaimonic consumption in favor of a broad, more overarching focus on eudaimonic consumption as a whole. While using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches across the two research phases helped partially alleviate this concern, a more detail-oriented approach of looking at each specific facet of eudaimonic consumption (discussed in earlier sections and chapters) is suggested for future research.

In terms of research methodology, a common limitation shared by both research phases was its consideration of only American consumers though a substantial degree of variation was sought (and achieved) in each phase in terms of several demographic variables, thereby increasing the generalizability of the findings. Still, the sample for the qualitative phase included mostly middle-class American residents while the samples for the quantitative phase were composed of only those respondents who were fluent in the use of online platforms such as Mturk. The variety of purchases mentioned by respondents in both phases, however, again testifies to the greater generalizability of the findings. Mturk, moreover, has been shown to be reliable for providing representative consumer samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling 2011; Goodman, Cryder, and Cheema 2013). Future research, however, should involve consumers from other cultures and from other groups (such as vulnerable consumers) to identify similarities and differences regarding their experiences of eudaimonic consumption. And in addition to purchase recall tasks and hypothetical scenario-based manipulations, future research should also utilize experimental designs involving more sophisticated manipulations and real-life behavioral variables (e.g. product choice from among actual products), such as those

used by Mogilner et al. (2011). Finally, an obvious methodological direction for future research would be to use different types of research methodologies such as ethnographies, focus groups, case studies, surveys, etc. in an attempt to provide a convergent set of findings that can better illuminate the conceptual and empirical complexity of eudaimonic consumption.

In addition to the directions mentioned above, there are several areas for future research that can be postulated based on the earlier sections of this chapter. Research would be needed, for instance, to develop and test scales to measure eudaimonic value from consumption, to illustrate the workings of the organismic self in different eudaimonic consumption contexts, to understand how eudaimonic levers may be employed by marketers, or to explore differences between hedonically and eudaimonically motivated consumers regarding their purchase decisions.

While these ideas represent only a subset of those which can be explored in the continued attempt to understand the link between consumption and “a wonderful life” (Gilovich et al. 2015a, 152), the variety of these ideas attests to the usefulness of a eudaimonic lens in expanding the horizons of research in consumer behavior and marketing, a thought echoed in the next and final section of this dissertation.

CONCLUSION

I began this dissertation by noting that there is a billion-dollar market for happiness which is attracting consumers and marketers alike (Bell 2018; Hartwell 2018). Happiness, however, cannot be easily reduced to a simple concept and is best understood through two interpretations: hedonic and eudaimonic. Hedonic happiness, which involves looking at happiness in terms of pleasure, was established early in

marketing discourse and has continued to be influential in directing academic enquiry (Alba and Williams 2013; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). In contrast, eudaimonic happiness, which involves looking at happiness in terms of meaning, has amassed considerable scholarly support in psychological and entertainment research (Vitterso 2016; Vorderer and Reinecke 2015) but remains curiously absent from marketing discourse. Recent examples showed, however, that marketing scholars were not only starting to realize this gap but also issuing calls for research on understanding meaning-oriented happiness from consumption (Alba and Williams 2013; Schmitt et al. 2015). This dissertation is an example of taking an initial step in that precise direction as it aimed to first differentiate eudaimonic consumption from hedonic consumption and then explicate the processes involved in eudaimonic consumption. The findings generated from this research provide support for adopting a eudaimonic perspective in looking at consumer behavior and marketing.

The Eudaimonic View of Consumer Behavior and Marketing

I mentioned in chapter 2 that the hedonic/experiential view (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982) fundamentally impacted research in marketing and consumer behavior by virtue of three central contributions that stemmed from the hedonic/experiential lens. Briefly, they included: (a) a focus on hedonic/experiential aspects of consumption such as fun, pleasure, and entertainment, (b) a recognition that experiences are a distinctive form of consumption which are different from commodities, goods, and services, and (c) a novel conceptualization of hedonic value as opposed to prevailing notions of utilitarian value. By the same token, I hope that the entire preceding discussion (in this chapter and the previous ones)

illustrates the necessity and usefulness of adopting a eudaimonic view of consumer behavior and marketing. As described in the prior sections, such a view:

- (a) broadens the scope of the discipline by providing an integrative lens to focus on eudaimonic aspects of consumption including, at the granular level, autonomy, mastery, growth, relatedness, purpose, self-acceptance, beauty, novelty, adventure, and tranquility, and, at a more abstract level, rejuvenation (through repair and reconnection), expansion (intellectual, pragmatic, and relational), and consolidation via crystallization (through self-creation and self-discovery) and contextualization (temporal, spatial, and cosmic);
- (b) enables a tripartite conceptualization of value from consumption being a combination of utilitarian, hedonic, and eudaimonic elements, and of certain purchase categories being seen as primarily utilitarian, hedonic, or eudaimonic;
- (c) argues in favor of an organismic conceptualization of the self to better understand how eudaimonic consumption and a consumer's sense of self have recursive and reciprocal effects on each other, leading to a virtuous circle of personally meaningful consumption experiences sustained by an organismic self that is capable of regeneration, growth, and integration; and finally,
- (d) provides a set of eudaimonic levers to marketing practitioners who can use them to increase the probability that consumption experiences are perceived as being personally meaningful by consumers.

Given these theoretical contributions and managerial implications, therefore, a program of research focusing on specific aspects of eudaimonia is likely to yield rich insights which could benefit consumers, scholars, and practitioners alike.

And, in doing so, it would also represent a step forward in understanding eudaimonic consumption and how it can help us craft a rich, fulfilling, memorable, and meaningful life.

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APPENDIX A: EXPERIMENTAL STIMULI USED FOR STUDY 5

Comedy

Action



Horror

**Add some FUN
to your Life.**

Drama

Documentary



Art House

**Add some MEANING
to your Life.**

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE DEPTH INTERVIEW

Thank you for agreeing for this interview! I appreciate you taking the time to help me in my research and I'm looking forward to hearing your thoughts. Before we begin let me reassure you that our discussion will remain completely confidential. If you have no objection, I will record our interview so that I can transcribe it later. But I won't disclose your personal identity to anyone as I will use a pseudonym instead of your real name. So, please feel comfortable in speaking freely, especially as there are no wrong answers to any of the questions.

As part of my dissertation research, I'm trying to understand how people think about the ways they spend their money and I wanted to hear your perspective on this topic.

- I'd like to start by asking you about some examples from your own life when you spent money on something that you consider to be meaningful.
 - What all did you enjoy about that purchase?
 - What all did you not enjoy about that purchase?
 - Is there any particular memory about that purchase which stands out?
 - What makes it meaningful to you? How do you think/feel about it?
- What other examples of such purchases can you think of which stand out in your memory?
 - (I'll ask for details regarding the purchase)
- Now I'd like to start by asking you about some examples from your own life when you spent money on something that you consider to be fun or pleasurable, but not meaningful.
 - What all did you enjoy about that purchase?
 - What al did you not enjoy about that purchase?
 - Is there any particular memory about that purchase which stands out?
 - What makes it pleasurable to you? How do you think/feel about it?
- Are there any meaningful purchases that were not fun/pleasurable? What do you think about such purchases?
- Are there any purchases that were neither meaningful nor fun/pleasurable? What do you think about such purchases?
- Do you think your consumption choices have played a role in making you who you are? If yes, how so?

Thank you, this was very helpful! I really appreciate you taking the time to help me with my research. If you would like to discuss more about this topic, please feel free to reach out to me anytime. All thoughts are more than welcome!

Thank you again.
