

The Desire for Consumption Knowledge

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Are consumers motivated to seek out experiences that enhance their appreciation within a product category—and if so, does their level of experiential expertise (or consumption knowledge) within a product category bias the types of experiences they value and pursue? These questions are central to the present research, which explores the premise that consumers value the accrual of consumption knowledge as a means of enhancing their hedonic appreciation of future consumption experiences in a product category. Four experiments demonstrate that a consumer's perceived level of experiential knowledge determines the types of novel consumption experiences that are sought within a product category. Specifically, novices seek a diverse set of experiences that broaden their consumption knowledge in a product category, whereas experts seek a focused set of experiences that deepen their consumption knowledge in a product category. Implications for current conceptualizations of both novelty seeking and consumption knowledge are discussed.

Variety's the very spice of life
That gives it all its flavor. We have run
Through ev'ry change that fancy at the loom
Exhausted has had genius to supply
And studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance a little used
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.
(William Cowper 1785)

It is ironic that Cowper's criticism of the meaningless pursuit of novel experiences has often been used to tout the benefits of variety. Cowper's fundamental insight was that novel consumption experiences often provide less utility

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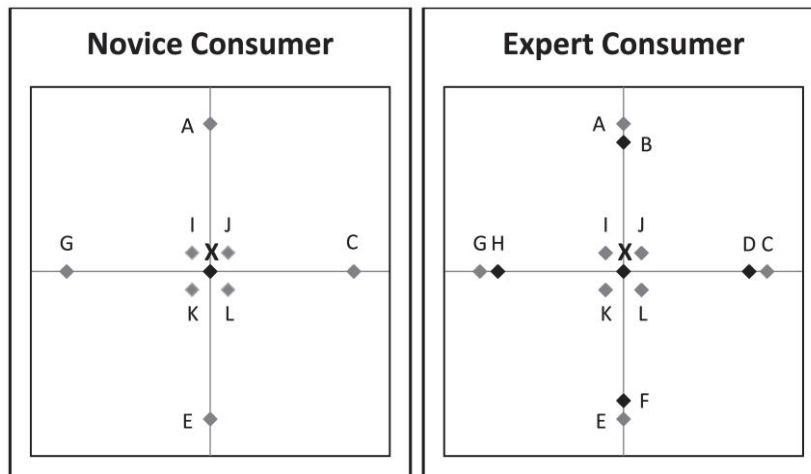
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than familiar, favored experiences, an observation that has received considerable empirical support (Begiri, Chase, and Bishka 2010; Keinan and Kivetz 2011; Pliner 1982; Rozin and Rozin 1981; Rozin and Schiller 1980). Consumers regularly try new wines, menu items, leisure activities, and social interactions. However, even though consumers find some of these novel consumption experiences pleasing, the majority of these experiences are not as good as the consumers' category-equivalent favorites. Thus, the question invariably surfaces: Why do people consume novel experiences? Indeed, beyond attenuating the negative consequences of satiation, one has to wonder what benefit the pursuit of novel experiences offers the consumer.

We argue that novel consumption experiences help build a consumer's *experiential consumption knowledge*. Consumers seek to build their experiential consumption knowledge because this knowledge has the potential to enhance their appreciation of future consumption experiences (Hoefler, Ariely, and West 2006). Moreover, we propose that the selection of a specific type of novel experience is a function of the consumer's current state of experiential knowledge. To illustrate, figure 1 shows a simple representation of the product class experiences of a novice and an expert consumer. The novice consumer has experienced one product in the product category (e.g., X) but has little knowledge about how to represent this experience (the consumer cannot yet represent dimensions 1 and 2). For this consumer, sampling from a diverse set of novel products (e.g., A, C, E, G) should create an opportunity to better represent future consumption experiences (i.e., add dimensional meaning to

FIGURE 1

CONSUMPTION EXPERIENCE OF A NOVICE AND AN EXPERT



NOTE.—Black diamonds are experienced products, and gray diamonds are novel products.

the experiences). Sampling from a clustered set of novel products (e.g., I, J, K, L) is less effective for enhancing the representation of future consumption experiences because these clustered experiences are difficult to differentiate from the prior experience (e.g., X) and from one another.

In contrast, the expert consumer has experienced five products in the product category (e.g., X, B, D, F, H). For this consumer, sampling from a diverse set of novel products (e.g., A, C, E, G) will not enhance the ability to represent future consumption experiences (i.e., the basic dimensionality of the experiences is already known). Sampling from a clustered set of novel products (e.g., I, J, K, L), preferably near an ideal point exemplar (X), should provide an opportunity for new dimensionality (e.g., a third dimension) to emerge.

The idea that increases in experiential consumption knowledge can enhance appreciation of future consumption experiences is not controversial (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). For example, prior experience with a diversity of food flavors, as opposed to a single food flavor, should allow a person to better appreciate the flavors of foods that are eaten on future occasions. Similar claims can be made about the consumption of any experiential good that is frequent, varied, and subjectively appreciated (e.g., wine appreciation, art appreciation, music appreciation). What is novel here is the prediction that consumers' perceptions about their experiential consumption knowledge strategically alter the desirability of different novel consumption experiences. Of course, this behavior is contingent on the motivation to enhance future consumption experiences, the belief that novel consumption experiences can enhance consumption knowledge, and the extent to which prior novel experiences have

enhanced the appreciation for current experiences: all are boundary conditions that are addressed in the general discussion.

Four experiments document how a consumer strategically selects novel consumption experiences. In experiment 1, we show that novices prefer a novel product experience that is more diverse (henceforth *breadth knowledge*), and experts prefer a novel product experience that is more clustered (henceforth *depth knowledge*; see fig. 1). Novices (experts) believe that the breadth (depth) experience will better enhance their appreciation of future consumption experiences. In experiment 2, we show that these preferences for breadth and depth consumption experiences are mediated by the desire for the type of consumption knowledge the experiences are anticipated to provide. In experiment 3, we provide further insight into the source of the breadth (depth) knowledge contained in a consumption experience. In experiment 4, we show that the moderating influence of a consumer's current level of consumption knowledge on the desire to expand one's breadth (depth) of experiential consumption knowledge depends on the motivation to better appreciate future consumption experiences.

CONSUMPTION KNOWLEDGE

The literature on consumer expertise is extensive, incorporating work on the learning of information, the cognitive representation of this learning (i.e., cognitive structure), access to this knowledge, and the use of this knowledge in problem solving and choice (see Alba and Hutchinson [1987] and Hutchinson and Eisenstein [2008] for reviews). Particularly relevant to our interests is the knowledge that

accrues about the sensory experience that accompanies consumption. For instance, a consumer with no prior consumption experience in a product category has little knowledge about the array of experiences available, the variability of these experiences, and the dimensions by which to evaluate and appreciate these experiences. As experience with a product category increases, however, the consumer can better appreciate the benefits of a consumption experience. For example, an oenophile can better appreciate the complexities of a fine wine, a gourmand can taste more flavors in a chef's signature dish, and a classical music aficionado can more fully appreciate the instrumentation in a master's concerto.

However, a series of assumptions are implicit to our claim that an oenophile, gourmand, and aficionado can more fully appreciate their respective consumption experiences. First, it is assumed that people can have experiential consumption knowledge. Second, it is assumed that this experiential consumption knowledge has structure and that the structure changes with additional consumption experience. Third, it is assumed that the changes in the structure of experiential consumption knowledge (e.g., more expertise) can enhance the appreciation of future consumption experiences. We provide support for each of these assumptions before discussing the hypothesis that consumers with different levels of consumption knowledge will select different types of novel consumption experiences in the expectation that these experiences will enhance their appreciation of future consumption experiences.

Experiential Knowledge

At the most fundamental level, consumers must be able to retain knowledge about consumption experiences. Indeed, brand preferences for experiential products (e.g., food, entertainment, services) could not exist without this knowledge. Yet, this knowledge could consist of nothing more than coarsely defined hedonic responses (e.g., "pleasant," "unpleasant"). Three findings suggest consumption knowledge is more extensive. First, Cowley and Janus (2004) show that more experience with a product category (juice) resulted in more refined consumption knowledge that was less susceptible to misinformation from advertising. Second, consumers develop an experiential consumption vocabulary as their experience grows (Latour and Latour 2010; West, Brown, and Hoch 1996). There would be no incentive for a consumer to develop a consumption vocabulary if there was no experiential knowledge that corresponded to the vocabulary. Third, Joy and Sherry (2003) show that consumers can develop consumption knowledge that is composed of embodied experiences. They show that art knowledge includes an experiential component that consists of embodied perceptions of balance, orientation, motion, and force.

Structure

As consumers increase their knowledge in a product category, their representation of the knowledge becomes more

refined (Hughson and Boakes 2009; Nosofsky 1986; Solomon 1997). Refinement consists of a better differentiation of known features (Hughson and Boakes 2009; Nosofsky 1986) and the emergence of new features (Goldstone 1998; Schyns and Rodet 1997; Solomon 1997). Similar changes should occur with the representation of consumption knowledge (Hughson and Boakes 2009; Solomon 1997). For example, increased consumption knowledge about wine might allow a consumer to better differentiate wines on the dimensions of fruitiness (e.g., the level of fruitiness), while at the same time allowing new fruit flavors (e.g., apple, kiwi, melon, pineapple) or flavor dimensions (e.g., oak, grass, mineral) to emerge. The differentiation of stimulus properties should also allow a person to develop more finely tuned preferences (e.g., ideal points; Cooke et al. 2004).

Expertise Enhances Appreciation

Consumption knowledge leads to greater appreciation for experiences in the consumption domain. Investigations into art appreciation, for instance, suggest that the ability to classify and describe art increases with experience. This enhanced knowledge, in turn, allows a consumer to appreciate structure in the art (e.g., organization, style, content) and increases the overall aesthetic appreciation of the art (Leder et al. 2004). This aesthetic appreciation can be a fluency experience that accrues from a familiar structure, a feeling of knowing experience owing to structural similarity, or a reasoned interpretation that depends on declarative knowledge about the structure (Gordon and Holyoak 1983; Leder et al. 2004). The relationship between people's knowledge and the meaning they assign to the consumption experience is also critical to the appreciation of classical music (Brandt 2007), wine (Ballester et al. 2008), and poetry (Peskin 1998). In effect, consumption knowledge allows a consumer to derive more meaning from a specific consumption experience, which in turn increases appreciation (Jacobsen 2010).

THE DESIRE FOR CONSUMPTION KNOWLEDGE

The foregoing discussion suggests that consumers can benefit from increasing their knowledge about the consumption experiences afforded by a product category. This conclusion is consistent with the assumptions of dynamic utility maximization models (Meyer et al. 1997). Dynamic utility maximization is a process by which consumers recognize that the utility derived from future consumption experiences is contingent on prior experiences and adjust accordingly, as exemplified by the lower utility choices that characterize variety seeking (Ratner, Kahn, and Kahneman 1999; Simonson 1990). Consequently, consumers may choose a lower utility option, an unfamiliar option, or an option that is substantially different from a known favorite because these options provide information or establish a standard for evaluation (Meyer et al. 1997). Indeed, consumers may choose to sacrifice utility in the present to enhance utility in the future (Loewenstein and Prelec 1993). Consumers

may even go as far as to make choices so as to yield a managed set of preferences (Gibbs 1997).

We propose that there are occasions when consumers are motivated to increase their appreciation of future experiences in a product category. This motivation encourages consumers to enhance their consumption knowledge. An effective strategy for enhancing this consumption knowledge is to make the cognitive representation of a consumption experience more refined. As shown in figure 1, a person's (perceived) expertise should influence the type of novel experiences that are preferred (i.e., that are anticipated to be useful for enhancing experiential knowledge).

Novice consumers typically have a poor understanding of the range of experiences available within a domain. An increased appreciation for the breadth of consumption experiences should allow these consumers to (a) better isolate the dimensions that differentiate exemplars (Oakes and Spalding 1997), (b) identify other clusters of preferred products (Hoeffler et al. 2006), and (c) set standards for the evaluation and appreciation of specific exemplars (Tse and Wilton 1988). Thus, novice consumers should prefer to enhance their breadth of consumption knowledge in a product category by experiencing products that (a) are substantially different on a currently known dimension or (b) provide information on a unique dimension.

H1: Novice consumers should prefer novel breadth over novel depth consumption experiences within a product category.

Expert consumers should already have fairly broad consumption knowledge and, therefore, should be confident they can differentiate exemplars, identify preferred clusters of products, and accurately evaluate consumption experiences. As a consequence, expert consumers should view additional breadth consumption experiences as noninformative (e.g., redundant with the existing knowledge structure). Instead, experts should focus on developing a better understanding of the subtleties of consumption experience within a preferred cluster of products and, thus, allow new dimensions of experience to emerge. To the extent these new dimensions of experience emerge, future consumption experiences should be more richly represented, and the appreciation for these experiences should be enhanced. Thus, expert consumers should prefer to enhance their depth of consumption knowledge in a product category by experiencing products that (a) are similar to currently known favorites and (b) are likely to suggest new dimensions of experience.

H2: Expert consumers should prefer novel depth over novel breadth consumption experiences within a product category.

In summary, novices and experts seek to more richly represent consumption experiences (i.e., develop their consumption knowledge) and, consequently, enhance their appreciation of future consumption experiences. What differs

is the tactic for developing their consumption knowledge (i.e., consuming novel breadth vs. novel depth experiences).

EXPERIMENT 1

Experiment 1 consisted of two studies designed to show that novices (experts) prefer novel breadth (depth) consumption experiences because these experiences have the potential to enhance the appreciation of future consumption experiences. Experiment 1a asked participants to make a choice between novel vinaigrette salad dressings that offered either a breadth or a depth consumption experience. Consistent with hypotheses 1 and 2, we predicted that novices (experts) would prefer novel breadth (depth) consumption experiences. Experiment 1b presented participants with a novel breadth or depth consumption experience and assessed the extent to which novices and experts believed the experience would increase their appreciation of future consumption experiences. Consistent with our assumption, we expected that matching a novel consumption experience to a participant's level of expertise (i.e., novice breadth, expert depth) should result in an expectation of increased appreciation of future consumption.

We posit that the motivation to try novel consumption experiences, and acquire additional experiential consumption knowledge, is a consequence of subjective consumption knowledge (Beatty and Smith 1987). Consumers must perceive that their current level of consumption knowledge is insufficient, in a specific way (e.g., novices must perceive that they lack breadth knowledge, experts must perceive that they lack depth knowledge), in order to seek out novel experiences. Yet, the subjective perception of a consumption knowledge deficit must depend, to a large extent, on objective consumption expertise. Thus, experiment 1 measured both subjective and objective expertise. We anticipated parallel results across the two independent measures but included both measures because of the implicit assumption that objective consumption expertise is a source of subjective perceptions of consumption expertise.

Pretest

Italian salad dressings that offered a breadth (similar to product A in fig. 1) or depth (similar to product I in fig. 1) consumption experience were selected using a pretest ($N = 50$). When choosing the breadth option, we sought an Italian dressing flavor that was atypical. We chose Wishbone Superberry Italian because the description, "A new Italian dressing that offers a taste of berry and pomegranate," emphasized an uncommon flavor dimension for Italian dressings (e.g., fruit). When choosing the depth option, we sought an Italian dressing flavor that was typically Italian but still different. We chose Wishbone Robusto Italian because the description, "A new Italian dressing that offers a bolder, more robust taste," suggested an improvement on the prototypical style of Italian dressing.

Participants received a description of either Wishbone Superberry Italian or Wishbone Robusto Italian vinaigrette (ab-

sent the branding information). Participants were then asked to rate the extent to which consuming the vinaigrette would increase their breadth and depth of experiential consumption knowledge. Measures were developed on the basis of the reasoning presented in figure 1. To assess the extent to which the experience offered breadth knowledge, participants were asked, "How much would tasting this vinaigrette help you to understand the differences between various types of vinaigrettes?" "How much would tasting this vinaigrette help you to categorize new vinaigrettes within the broad types of vinaigrettes?" and "How much would tasting this vinaigrette increase your familiarity with the various types of vinaigrette?" Note that these measures emphasize the different subcategories of Italian dressings. To assess the extent to which the experience offered depth knowledge, participants were asked, "How much would tasting this vinaigrette help you to understand the similarities between vinaigrettes within your preferred type of vinaigrette?" "How much would tasting this vinaigrette help you to categorize new vinaigrettes within your preferred type of vinaigrette?" and "How much would tasting this vinaigrette increase your familiarity with the assortment of vinaigrettes available within your preferred type of vinaigrette?" Note that these measures emphasize a single dominant subcategory of Italian dressings. Responses were provided on 9-point scales anchored at "not at all"–"very much" and averaged across the breadth ($\alpha = .68$) and depth ($\alpha = .70$) items to create composite indexes of each construct. The order in which participants responded to the breadth or depth items was randomized.

Responses were submitted to paired *t*-tests to compare participants' anticipated type of knowledge acquisition separately for the breadth and depth experience. Consistent with expectations, the description of the Wishbone Superberry Italian vinaigrette was rated as significantly more likely to offer breadth ($M = 5.56$, $SD = 1.71$) as opposed to depth ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 2.12$) knowledge ($t(24) = 5.03$, $p < .001$). Conversely, the description of the Wishbone Robusto Italian vinaigrette was rated as significantly more likely to offer depth ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.66$) as opposed to breadth ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.83$) knowledge ($t(24) = -6.40$, $p < .001$).

Experiment 1a

Experiment 1a was designed to show that a person's level of subjective/objective consumption expertise influenced the desire to try a novel product that would provide a breadth or a depth consumption experience.

Participants and Design. One hundred four undergraduate business students participated in return for extra credit. The independent variables (subjective and objective experiential consumption knowledge about vinaigrettes) were measured. The dependent measure was a choice between the two types of vinaigrettes.

Procedure. Participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to understand consumers' desires for con-

suming different types of salad dressings. Participants were presented with two clear condiment cups, one containing a tablespoon of Wishbone Superberry Italian and the other containing a tablespoon of Wishbone Robusto Italian vinaigrette. Each cup was accompanied by the same descriptions used in the pretest. Participants were asked to indicate which dressing they would like to try, using a forced choice measure. To remain consistent with the cover story, participants were then asked to taste their selected product and rate the product on a series of items.

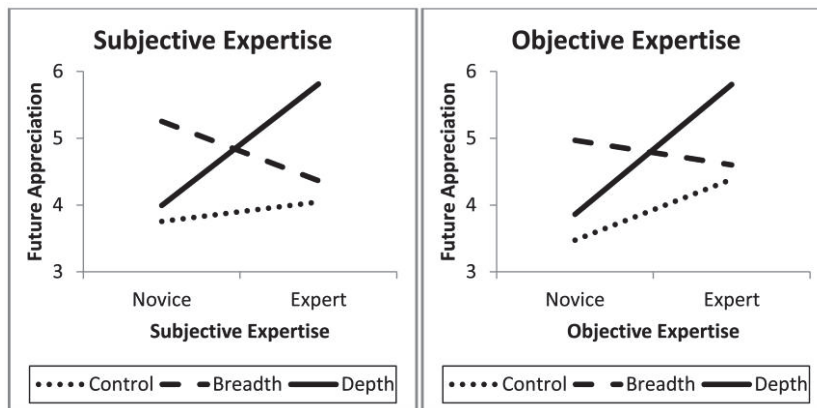
After the tasting, participants completed a questionnaire about their expertise with various products. Embedded within this questionnaire were the subjective and the objective expertise items for vinaigrettes. For subjective expertise, participants used 9-point scales to indicate their knowledge ("not knowledgeable at all"–"very knowledgeable"), expertise ("not much expertise at all"–"a lot of expertise"), information ("not much information at all"–"a lot of information"), and understanding ("not much understanding at all"–"a lot of understanding") of vinaigrettes. For objective expertise, participants used 9-point scales to indicate how many different varieties of vinaigrettes they had tried ("a small number"–"a large number"), how often they tried vinaigrettes ("rarely"–"frequently"), how frequently they ate vinaigrettes ("not often at all"–"very often"), and how often they used vinaigrettes ("rarely"–"frequently"). The objective expertise scale was used in lieu of an attempt to develop a scale measuring the dimensional representation of novices and experts (e.g., creamy, oily, sweet, salty, peppery, herby). It was assumed that consuming a greater variety of vinaigrettes, on more occasions, should result in more experiential knowledge (Park, Mothersbaugh, and Feick 1994). The ordering of the expertise measures was randomized.

Results. A varimax rotation of a principal component factor analysis of the objective and subjective expertise items revealed two dominant components. The first component (eigenvalue = 3.31) consisted of the four subjective expertise items (all loadings $> .83$; all other loadings $< .42$) and accounted for 41% of variance in responses. These items were averaged to form a composite index of subjective expertise ($\alpha = .93$). The second component (eigenvalue = 2.82) consisted of the four objective expertise items (all loadings $> .69$; all other loadings $< .36$) and accounted for 35% of variance in responses. These items were averaged to form a composite index of objective expertise ($\alpha = .86$). Consistent with prior research (Carlson et al. 2009), the two scales were significantly correlated ($r = .61$, $p < .001$).

The choice data were submitted to two logistic regressions, with subjective expertise (continuous, mean centered) and objective expertise (continuous, mean centered) as the predictor in each analysis, respectively. There was a significant main effect of subjective expertise ($\beta = .412$, Wald's $\chi^2 = 9.78$, $p < .01$; hereafter, all reported β are standardized) and objective expertise ($\beta = .357$, Wald's $\chi^2 = 9.26$, $p < .01$) on choice. To help better appreciate the results, the probability of selecting the depth vinaigrette was

FIGURE 2

RESULTS OF EXPERIMENT 1B



calculated for a participant at 1 standard deviation below/above the mean level of subjective expertise. At 1 standard deviation below the mean (novices), the probability of selecting the depth vinaigrette was .4, whereas at 1 standard deviation above the mean (experts) the probability of selecting the depth vinaigrette was .74. An analysis of objective expertise showed similar effects for novices (probability = .4) and experts (probability = .73).

Experiment 1b

Experiment 1b was designed to show that when novices (experts) experience a novel breadth (depth) consumption experience, novices (experts) rate the breadth (depth) experience as affording more appreciation for future consumption experiences in the product category.

Participants and Design. Three hundred fourteen undergraduate business students participated in return for extra credit. Participants were randomly assigned to taste a breadth (Wishbone Superberry Italian), depth (Wishbone Robusto Italian), or exemplar/control (Wishbone Italian) vinaigrette. The second independent variable (subjective and objective experiential knowledge about vinaigrettes) was measured. The dependent measure was the anticipated appreciation of the future consumption of vinaigrettes.

Procedure. Participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to understand consumers' desires for consuming different types of salad dressings. Participants were presented with a single clear condiment cup containing one tablespoon of Wishbone Superberry Italian (breadth experience), Wishbone Robusto Italian (depth experience), or Wishbone Italian (common exemplar experience). The breadth and depth samples were accompanied by the same product description as in experiment 1a, and the exemplar sample was described as "a new Italian dressing." Participants tasted the dressing and then indicated the extent to

which they would enjoy, find satisfaction in, and appreciate eating vinaigrettes in the future, on 9-point scales anchored from "not much at all" to "very much." Responses were averaged to form a composite index of the participant's expected future appreciation for vinaigrettes ($\alpha = .89$), with higher values indicating an expectation of greater future appreciation. Finally, participants completed the same subjective ($\alpha = .93$) and objective ($\alpha = .86$) expertise measures used in experiment 1a ($r = .57, p < .001$).

Results. The analysis revealed a significant experience type \times subjective expertise interaction ($\beta = .43, t(310) = 2.89, p = .001$). As illustrated in the left panel of figure 2, a spotlight analysis at ± 1 standard deviation from the subjective expertise mean (following the recommendations of Aiken and West 1991) revealed that novices anticipated more future appreciation after tasting the breadth product relative to either the depth product ($\beta = -.28, t(207) = -2.88, p = .001$) or the exemplar product ($\beta = .37, t(200) = 3.82, p < .001$), which did not differ from each other ($\beta = .09, t(217) = 1.06, p = .29$). Conversely, experts anticipated more future appreciation after tasting the depth product relative to either the breadth product ($\beta = .32, t(207) = 3.49, p = .001$) or the exemplar product ($\beta = .39, t(217) = 4.38, p < .001$), which did not differ from each other ($\beta = .08, t(200) = .80, p = .43$).

The objective expertise analysis replicated the subjective expertise analysis. There was a significant experience type \times objective expertise interaction ($\beta = .33, t(310) = 2.01, p < .05$). As illustrated in the right panel of figure 2, the objective expertise mean revealed that novices anticipated more future appreciation after tasting the breadth product relative to either the depth product ($\beta = -.24, t(207) = -2.50, p = .01$) or the product exemplar ($\beta = .37, t(200) = 3.93, p < .001$), which did not differ from each other ($\beta = .14, t(217) = 1.55, p = .12$). Conversely, experts anticipated more future appreciation after tasting the depth

product relative to either the breadth product ($\beta = .27$, $t(207) = 2.86$, $p = .001$) or the exemplar product ($\beta = .31$, $t(317) = 3.58$, $p < .001$), which did not differ from each other ($\beta = .05$, $t(200) = .53$, $p = .59$).

Discussion

Experiment 1 demonstrated that novices (experts) prefer novel breadth (depth) consumption experiences because these experiences were anticipated to enhance the appreciation of future consumption experiences. Experiment 1a showed that novices (experts) preferred a novel experience that offered breadth (depth) experiential knowledge. Experiment 1b showed that when novices (experts) were forced to have a novel breadth (depth) consumption experience, this experience created a stronger expectation that future experiences would be more appreciated. Consumers, then, appear to have an implicit understanding of the value of different novel consumption experiences.

EXPERIMENT 2

Experiment 1 assessed consumers' preferences for a specific type of a consumption experience (experiment 1a) and the perceived value of this experience for appreciating future consumption experiences (experiment 1b). However, these experiments assume that the desire for a specific type of consumption knowledge was responsible for the preferences of the novices and experts. In experiment 2, we directly tested this assumption in three important ways. First, we incorporated a direct operationalization of the type of experiential knowledge available in order to clarify the extent to which consumers do in fact distinguish between breadth and depth experiences. Second, we assessed not only consumers' preference for breadth or depth consumption experiences but also the anticipated value of accruing either breadth or depth of knowledge from the experiences. Third, we manipulated (instead of measured) subjective knowledge to offer a stronger causal attribution about the consequences of experiential expertise. These procedural changes, tested over two experiments, allowed us to assess whether specific types of novel consumption experiences are selected because they are expected to enhance a specific type of consumption knowledge (e.g., breadth knowledge vs. depth knowledge).

Experiment 2a

Experiment 2a sought to demonstrate that an individual's perceived level of consumption expertise determines desire for a breadth or a depth experience when the knowledge value of the experiences is explicitly described.

Participants and Design. One hundred twenty Mechanical Turk participants were paid a nominal fee to participate. Participants were randomly assigned to either a novice or an expert knowledge condition before reporting their choice between a series of novel breadth and depth consumption experiences. Given the parallel results for the subjective and

objective expertise measures in experiment 1, we elected to focus on subjective (rather than objective) expertise in the remaining experiments.

Procedure. Participants were told they would be completing a study about music and, as such, were immediately asked to indicate their expertise about music. Specifically, participants indicated the extent to which they considered, defined, and labeled themselves as an expert on music. However, to vary subjective expertise, participants responded to these items on biased scales so as to alter their perceived expertise (Tormala and DeSensi 2008). Thus, in the novice condition, responses were provided on 5-point scales anchored at "do not consider myself an expert"–"somewhat consider myself an expert," "do not define myself as an expert"–"somewhat define myself as an expert," and "do not label myself as an expert"–"somewhat label myself as an expert." Conversely, in the expert condition, responses were provided on 5-point scales anchored at "somewhat consider myself an expert"–"definitely consider myself an expert," "somewhat define myself as an expert"–"definitely define myself as an expert," and "somewhat label myself as an expert"–"definitely label myself as an expert."

To assess the efficacy of the manipulation, we conducted a pretest ($N = 60$) in which participants were presented with this biased scale manipulation before indicating their subjective expertise of music on the same scale used in experiment 1 (knowledge: "not knowledgeable at all"–"very knowledgeable," expertise: "not much expertise at all"–"a lot of expertise," information: "not much information at all"–"a lot of information," and understanding: "not much understanding at all"–"a lot of understanding"; $\alpha = .96$). An analysis of participants' responses revealed a significant main effect of the biased scale manipulation ($t(58) = 7.02$, $p < .001$), such that novices ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.52$) reported significantly less subjective expertise than did experts ($M = 6.60$, $SD = 1.49$).

After the expertise manipulation, participants were told that people often have the opportunity to listen to, and thus experience, any type of music they want. Our intent was to better understand those preferences. We then presented participants with four music-related choices and asked them to indicate which alternative they would prefer to experience. Each of the four choices pitted a novel breadth experience against a novel depth experience, with breadth and depth defined by our operationalization of the constructs. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate whether they would prefer a novel experience consisting of (1) one or two songs from a variety of different music genres (breadth) versus a variety of songs from their preferred music genre (depth), (2) a selection of classic songs that defined a variety of different music genres (breadth) versus a selection of classic songs that defined their preferred music genre (depth), (3) a selection of songs that influenced a new music genre (breadth) versus a selection of songs that influenced the unique features of their preferred genre (depth), and (4) a selection of songs from an emerging genre of music (breadth) versus a selection of songs from an emerging group in their preferred

genre (depth). The choices themselves, as well as the order of the breadth and depth experiences within each pair, were counterbalanced, and responses were scored such that selecting a breadth experience was coded as 0, and selecting a depth experience was coded as 1. Responses were then averaged across the four choices to create a composite index of choice ($\alpha = .73$). Therefore, values on this choice index could range between 0 and 1.

Results. We submitted the choice index to a *t*-test, with expertise as the independent variable. Results indicated a significant main effect of expertise ($t(118) = 7.07, p < .001$). Consistent with expectations, the preferences of novices ($M = .22, SD = .30$) were significantly lower than chance ($t(59) = -7.40, p < .001$), whereas the preferences of experts ($M = .61, SD = .32$) were significantly greater than chance ($t(59) = 2.75, p < .01$). These findings suggest that novices were more likely to choose the breadth experience, whereas experts were more likely to choose the depth experience.

Experiments 2b and 2c

Experiments 2b and 2c were designed to offer converging evidence that novices (experts) desire breadth (depth) experiences because they want to enhance their breadth (depth) knowledge. Unlike experiment 2a, where participants were given a choice between breadth and depth experiences, participants in experiments 2b and 2c were asked to assess the appeal of the music-based breadth (experiment 2b) or depth (experiment 2c) experiences. Afterward, participants were asked whether they thought these experiences would enhance their breadth (depth) knowledge, heighten their consumption stimulation (Baumgartner and Steenkamp 1996; Raju 1980), bolster their social standing (Ratner and Kahn 2002), and further justify their existing preferences. We anticipated that the desire to enhance breadth (depth) knowledge would mediate the influence of expertise on the desire to have breadth (depth) experiences, independent of the other motivations for having novel experiences (e.g., stimulation, social standing, justification). In addition, the fact that the appeal of the breadth and depth experiences was assessed in separate experiments meant that participants were unlikely to be aware of the trade-off between listening to different/similar music, the implication being that all mediators should seem plausible to the participant.

Participants and Design. One hundred eighty Mechanical Turk participants were paid a nominal fee to participate. Participants were randomly assigned to a novice or expert condition in experiment 2b (assess the appeal of the music-based breadth experience) or experiment 2c (assess the appeal of the music-based depth experience). Ten participants indicated that they had not fully read the instructions or questions and were removed from the analysis (Oppenheimer, Meyvis, and Davidenko 2009). Consequently, 89 participants assessed the appeal of breadth consumption ex-

periences (experiment 2b), and 81 participants assessed the appeal of depth consumption experiences (experiment 2c).

Procedure. Participants were told they would be completing a study about music. Then, as in experiment 2a, the subjective expertise of the participants was manipulated using biased scales (Tormala and DeSensi 2008). Next, one-half of the participants were asked to assess the appeal of the four novel breadth music experiences (experiment 2b), and one-half of the participants were asked to assess the appeal of the four novel depth music experiences (experiment 2c; see experiment 2a for items). The appeal of the experiences was measured using a 9-point scale anchored at “would definitely not choose this experience”–“would definitely choose this experience.” Responses were averaged across the four breadth ($\alpha = .89$) and four depth ($\alpha = .77$) experiences to create composite indexes of the appeal of the experiences, with higher values indicating a greater willingness to try the experience.

After the appeal-of-experience measures, participants responded to five potential mediators. Each mediator referred directly to the four experiences that had just been rated. To assess participants' expectation that the experiences would enhance breadth knowledge and enhance depth knowledge, participants responded to the breadth ($\alpha = .90$) and depth ($\alpha = .85$) scales that were described in the pretest for experiment 1 but amended to relate to the product category of music. To assess participants' expectation that the experiences would heighten their level of stimulation, participants were asked: “How much would these experiences allow you to seek out changes in your music preferences?” “How much would these experiences allow you to increase your exploration of music?” and “How much would these experiences allow you to try something merely for the sake of novelty?” ($\alpha = .84$). To assess participants' expectation that the experiences would bolster their social standing, participants were asked, “How much would these experiences enhance your ability to have more informed conversations about music?” “How much would these experiences increase your confidence to interact with others about music?” and “How much would these experiences help you fit in with others?” ($\alpha = .88$). To assess participants' expectation that the experiences would further their preference justification, participants were asked, “How much would these experiences resolve any uncertainty in your preferred music genre?” “How much would these experiences increase your confidence in your particular music preferences?” and “How much would these experiences increase your ability to defend your particular music preferences?” ($\alpha = .88$). Note that responses to all items were provided on 9-point scales anchored at “not much at all”–“very much.” Additionally, items were averaged to form a composite index for each potential benefit. Finally, the three items for each composite were presented together, although the order in which each composite was presented to participants was randomized.

Results. Means and standard deviations for all indexes are presented in table 1. All indexes were submitted to a

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF EXPERIMENTS 2B AND 2C

Measure	Breadth experience		Depth experience	
	Novices	Experts	Novices	Experts
Experiential preference	7.10 (1.33)	6.18 (1.98)	6.37 (1.24)	7.31 (1.21)
Breadth of knowledge	7.18 (1.35)	6.30 (1.92)	6.25 (1.55)	6.61 (1.96)
Depth of knowledge	6.32 (1.57)	6.02 (1.65)	6.06 (1.40)	7.07 (1.29)
Optimal stimulation	6.56 (1.60)	5.95 (2.04)	6.51 (1.52)	6.00 (2.04)
Social interaction	5.76 (1.99)	5.38 (2.08)	5.58 (1.98)	5.41 (1.59)
Preference justification	6.89 (1.98)	5.56 (2.12)	5.76 (1.83)	6.14 (2.03)

NOTE.—Standard deviations are in parentheses.

two-way ANOVA, with perceived expertise as the independent variable.

When the type of consumption experiences available was breadth experiences (experiment 2b), novices ($M = 7.10$) rated the experiences more appealing than did experts ($M = 6.18$; $F(1, 87) = 6.56, p < .05$). With respect to the potential mediators, novices indicated that the experiences were more likely to enhance their breadth knowledge ($M_{\text{nov}} = 7.18, M_{\text{exp}} = 6.30$; $F(1, 87) = 5.99, p < .05$) but have no influence on their depth knowledge ($M_{\text{nov}} = 6.32, M_{\text{exp}} = 6.02$; $F(1, 87) = .75, p > .05$), level of stimulation ($M_{\text{nov}} = 6.56, M_{\text{exp}} = 5.95$; $F(1, 87) = 2.39, p > .05$), social standing ($M_{\text{nov}} = 5.76, M_{\text{exp}} = 5.38$; $F(1, 77) = .38, p > .05$), or preference justification ($M_{\text{nov}} = 6.89, M_{\text{exp}} = 5.56$; $F(1, 87) = .45, p > .05$).

To assess whether desire to enhance breadth knowledge mediated the relationship between expertise and the appeal of the breadth experiences, the INDIRECT macro was used (Hayes 2012; Preacher and Hayes 2008). Following the recommendations of Preacher and Hayes (2008), we used bootstrapping procedures to simultaneously compute a confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect of the mediators in a model that included (1) the desire to enhance breadth and depth knowledge and (2) all five mediators. In the first model, the CI for breadth knowledge (95% CI: $-.96$ to $-.06$) was significantly different from zero, but the CI for depth knowledge (95% CI: $-.28$ to $.05$) was not (see fig. 3 for path coefficients). In the second model, the CI for breadth knowledge (95% CI: -1.07 to $-.03$) was significantly different from zero, but the CIs for depth knowledge (95% CI: $-.30$ to $.04$), stimulation (95% CI: $-.42$ to $.07$), social standing (95% CI: $-.05$ to $.30$), and preference justification (95% CI: $-.23$ to $.06$) were not. Including all respondents in the model ($N = 93$) did not influence the results of the first model but made all CIs in the second model insignificant. We conclude that novices wanted breadth experiences because of their desire to enhance breadth knowledge, an influence that persisted after controlling for other potential mediating factors.

When the type of consumption experiences available was depth experiences (experiments 2c), experts ($M = 7.31$) rated the experiences more appealing than did novices ($M = 6.37$; $F(1, 79) = 11.99, p < .05$). With respect to the potential mediators, experts indicated that the experiences

were more likely to enhance their depth knowledge ($M_{\text{nov}} = 6.06, M_{\text{exp}} = 7.07$; $F(1, 79) = 11.38, p < .05$) but have no influence on their breadth knowledge ($M_{\text{nov}} = 6.25, M_{\text{exp}} = 6.61$; $F(1, 79) = .82, p > .05$), level of stimulation ($M_{\text{nov}} = 6.51, M_{\text{exp}} = 6.00$; $F(1, 79) = 1.65, p > .05$), social standing ($M_{\text{nov}} = 5.58, M_{\text{exp}} = 5.41$; $F(1, 79) = .18, p > .05$), or preference justification ($M_{\text{nov}} = 5.76, M_{\text{exp}} = 6.14$; $F(1, 79) = .77, p > .05$).

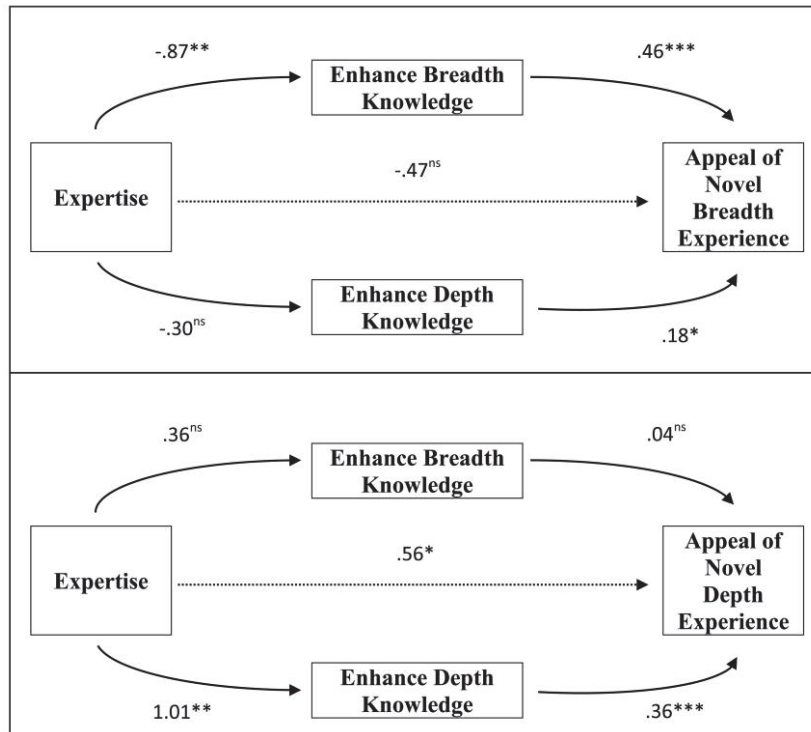
To assess whether desire to enhance depth knowledge mediated the relationship between expertise and the appeal of the depth experiences, the INDIRECT macro was used (Hayes 2012; Preacher and Hayes 2008). Models with two sets of mediators were run: (1) the desire to enhance breadth and depth knowledge and (2) all five mediators. In the first model, the CI for depth knowledge (95% CI: $.13$ to $.73$) was significantly different from zero, but the CI for breadth knowledge (95% CI: $-.04$ to $.21$) was not (see fig. 3 for path coefficients). In the second model, the CI for depth knowledge (95% CI: $.16$ to $.84$) was significantly different from zero, but the CIs for breadth knowledge (95% CI: $-.13$ to $.08$), stimulation (95% CI: $-.31$ to $.03$), social standing (95% CI: $-.06$ to $.15$), and preference justification (95% CI: $-.25$ to $.04$) were not. Including all respondents in the model ($N = 87$) did not influence the results of the first or the second model. We conclude that experts wanted depth experiences because of their desire to enhance depth knowledge, an influence that persisted after controlling for other potential mediating factors.

Discussion

The findings across the two experiments are consistent with the findings of experiment 1; novices (experts) were more likely to choose a novel experience that offered the opportunity to accrue breadth (depth) experiential knowledge. Here, however, this difference was observed for experiences explicitly framed in a manner consistent with our definitions of breadth and depth. Indeed, expertise not only influenced consumers' choices between novel breadth and depth experiences (experiment 2a) but also influenced consumers' desire for a given experience on the basis of the value of the anticipated knowledge to be gained (experiments 2b and 2c). These findings, then, offer converging evidence that (1) consumers do in fact distinguish between

FIGURE 3

MEDIATION ANALYSES IN EXPERIMENTS 2B AND 2C



NOTE.—*Top*, Experiment 2b; *bottom*, experiment 2c; * is $p < .05$, ** is $p < .01$, *** is $p < .001$, and ns is not significant.

these different types of consumption knowledge, and (2) expertise alters the specific experiential knowledge consumers' desire.

Moreover, these effects were shown to be independent of consumers' desire to heighten their stimulation, bolster their social standing, or further justify their preferences. Of course, these findings do not discount these benefits as motivators of novelty seeking; they do, however, strengthen our confidence in the unique motivating role of the desire for consumption knowledge in choosing novel experiences.

Finally, we should note that the results of experiment 2 are especially interesting given prior work that suggests experts are less intrinsically motivated than novices to gain new information (Wood and Lynch 2002). With respect to consumption experience, however, novices and experts were both willing to increase their knowledge, although the type of knowledge they sought was different.

EXPERIMENT 3

In experiment 3, we sought to provide further evidence that consumption knowledge acquisition is a catalyst for trying novel consumption experiences. To provide this evi-

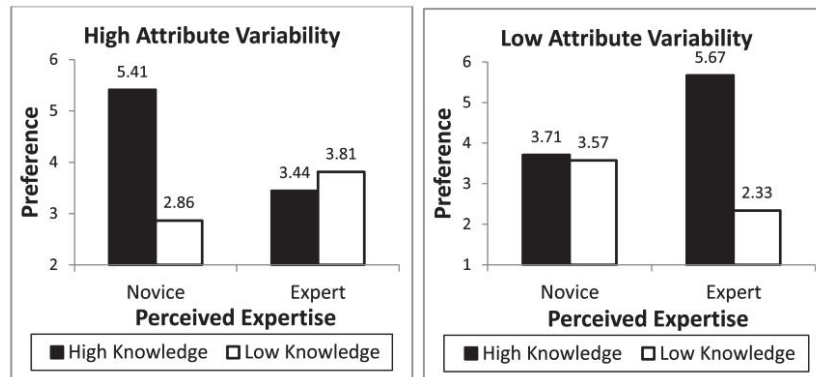
dence, we directly manipulated the perceived value of the experiential information provided by the breadth or depth experience. We predicted that novices (experts) should be sensitive to this value manipulation for novel breadth (depth), but not depth (breadth), experiences. Experiment 3 also provided an additional test of the assumption that novices consume novel products in order to gain a diversity of experience (i.e., breadth), whereas experts consume novel products in order to refine the representation of a narrow set of experiences (i.e., depth; see fig. 1). Consequently, we manipulated the variability of the critical experiential dimension offered by the novel product, anticipating that novices (experts) should be more willing to try a new product that offers significant knowledge on a high (low) variability dimension.

Method

Participants and Design. One hundred sixty undergraduate business students participated in return for extra credit. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (perceived expertise: novice or expert) by 2 (attribute var-

FIGURE 4

RESULTS OF EXPERIMENT 3



iability: high or low) by 2 (anticipated knowledge potential: high or low) between-participants factorial design.

Procedure. Participants were led to believe that the study was in collaboration with an independent marketing firm that was investigating consumers' opinions and preferences toward a new beer called Old Oxford that was currently available in 10 states and would soon be available locally. We then manipulated participants' subjective expertise. In the expert (novice) condition, participants were told that we were interested in their participation as "a considerable amount of market research has consistently shown college students, compared to the general population, have a substantial amount (base level) of knowledge about beer. Consequently, for the topic of beer, college students are an excellent population to test how individuals with relatively high (low) knowledge make evaluations."

The effectiveness of this subjective expertise manipulation was assessed in a separate pilot study ($N = 44$). Participants were given the expertise manipulation and subsequently asked to indicate how much expertise they had about beer on a 9-point scale anchored from 1 ("not much expertise at all") to 9 ("a lot of expertise"). As expected, participants in the expert condition ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 2.32$) reported having greater expertise about beer than did participants in the novice condition ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.80$; $t(42) = 2.57$, $p = .01$).

After this manipulation, all participants were then provided with background information about Old Oxford. This information described a fictitious attribute (i.e., the grain bill) and conveyed its supposed high level of importance to any beer recipe. Specifically, participants read: "The amount of each starch source in a beer recipe is called the 'grain bill.' The grain bill has consistently been shown to affect the 'quality and taste' of beer [quotes from a study reported by the *New York Times* in October 2009]. Indeed, this study reported that the grain bill was one of the most important components of a beer recipe."

Additional information was used to communicate the variability of the grain bill across beers as well as the potential knowledge that could be acquired by sampling Old Oxford. Specifically, in the high (low) variability condition, participants further read that the grain bill "is highly variable (consistent) across the multitude of beer options available to consumers. That includes beers produced both within the U.S. and internationally" and that "Old Oxford's grain bill remains quite different from (similar to) the blend used by the vast majority of other beers." Further, in the high (low) knowledge potential condition, participants were told Old Oxford's starch source consisted of a "highly novel and unusual (typical and common) blend of grains." After receiving this information, participants indicated their preference for Old Oxford (relative to their favorite beer). Participants were then debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Results

Product Preference. The product preference data were submitted to a three-way ANOVA, with perceived expertise, attribute type, and anticipated knowledge potential as independent variables. The results revealed a significant main effect of anticipated knowledge potential ($F(1, 152) = 10.89$, $p = .001$), such that participants generally viewed the high-knowledge product ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 2.85$) as more attractive than the low-knowledge product ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 2.50$). However, this main effect was qualified by the predicted perceived expertise by attribute type by anticipated product knowledge interaction ($F(1, 152) = 12.71$, $p < .001$). No other effects were significant (all $p > .31$). This three-way interaction is organized by attribute type (see fig. 4).

Under conditions of high attribute variability, the perceived expertise by anticipated product knowledge interaction was significant ($F(1, 152) = 7.03$, $p < .01$). As expected, novices found the product more attractive when it

was expected to provide high ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 2.87$) versus low ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 2.71$) knowledge on the high-variability attribute ($F(1, 152) = 10.39$, $p = .001$). Conversely, experts were insensitive to the high ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 2.58$) versus low ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 2.82$) knowledge manipulation on the high-variability attribute ($F < 1$).

Under conditions of low attribute variability, the perceived expertise by anticipated product knowledge interaction was significant ($F(1, 152) = 5.91$, $p < .05$). As expected, experts found the product to be more attractive when it was expected to provide high ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 2.77$) versus low ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.44$) knowledge on the low-variability attribute ($F(1, 152) = 11.66$, $p < .001$). Conversely, novices were insensitive to the high ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 2.69$) versus low ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 2.24$) knowledge manipulation on the low-variability attribute ($F < 1$).

Discussion

Experiment 3 demonstrated that natural facets of consumption experiences—such as attribute variability—can signal different types of knowledge acquisition opportunities. Specifically, when participants were led to believe that an attribute had high (low) variability and that there was valuable experiential knowledge to be gained from this variability, novices (experts) were more willing to try the product. This pattern suggests that the high (low) variability of the attribute signaled an opportunity to gain breadth (depth) consumption knowledge. Consistent with experiment 2, then, these findings provide further support that the desire for consumption knowledge is driving consumers' willingness to try novel products. Indeed, these data suggest that consumption knowledge can alter consumers' novelty seeking even when the knowledge benefits are conveyed through the framing of persuasive communications about the product.

EXPERIMENT 4

In experiment 4, we sought to confirm an implicit assumption of the first three experiments. Thus far, we have assumed that consumers are willing to vary their consumption experiences—and acquire consumption knowledge—because they are motivated to better appreciate future consumption experiences (see experiment 1). To provide direct support for this assumption, we explicitly manipulated consumers' motivation for novel consumption experiences. Specifically, we presented consumers with one of three types of consumption motivations in experiment 4: enhanced appreciation for future consumption experiences, social interaction, or preference justification. Our goal was to show that a preference for breadth or depth consumption knowledge varied by consumption motive, thus supporting the conclusion that the desire to enhance the appreciation of future consumption experiences is critical to our results.

The first motivation was a desire to better appreciate future consumption experiences. We anticipated that this motivation would result in novices (experts) preferring novel

consumption experiences that enhanced their breadth (depth) of knowledge, as has been shown in prior experiments. The second motivation was social interaction. We anticipated that a social interaction motive would encourage consumers to expand their breadth of consumption knowledge. Given that experiential learning is consequential for social competence/skill (McCrae 1996; Wolf et al. 2009), we reasoned that consumers would seek to expand the breadth of their consumption knowledge so as to be able to best demonstrate a social aptitude toward the greatest number of individuals. The third motivation was preference justification. We anticipated that a preference justification motive would encourage consumers to expand their depth of consumption knowledge. Given that greater complexity of information has been shown to increase evaluative certainty (Fabrigar et al. 2006), we reasoned that consumers would seek to expand the depth of their consumption knowledge so as to be able to reduce any uncertainty stemming from the need to justify their preferences.

Method

Participants and Design. One hundred thirty-five undergraduate business students participated in return for extra credit. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (perceived expertise: novice or expert) by 2 (consumption knowledge: breadth or depth) by 3 (consumption motivation: appreciation for future consumption, social interaction, or preference justification) between-participants factorial design.

Procedure. Participants were led to believe the study was in collaboration with an independent marketing research firm investigating consumers' opinions and preferences toward a new beer called New Haven. Similar to experiment 3, participants were further informed that the beer was currently available in 10 states and would soon be available locally. After this background information, participants were exposed to the same subjective expertise manipulation as in experiment 3.

To manipulate the opportunity for consumption knowledge, participants were then presented with an advertisement ostensibly for a New Zealand beer called New Haven. The advertisement positioned New Haven as a source of either breadth or depth of knowledge. In the breadth-focused condition, participants received an ad stating that New Haven was "just different" than other beers. The just-different manipulation was meant to suggest that the beer was substantially different on a meaningful consumption dimension and, thus, could provide consumption information valued by novices (i.e., expand knowledge). In effect, the ad was meant to suggest the beer was like product A, C, G, or E in figure 1. In the depth-focused condition, participants received an ad stating that New Haven was "just better" than other beers. The just-better manipulation suggested that the beer was similar to generally preferred beers and, thus, could provide consumption information valued by experts (i.e., enrich

knowledge). In effect, the ad was meant to suggest that the beer was like product I, J, K, or L in figure 1.

The effectiveness of the consumption knowledge manipulation was assessed in a separate pilot study ($N = 70$). Participants received either the “It’s just different” or “It’s just better” advertisement before being asked to rate the extent to which consuming the beer would increase their breadth and depth of consumption knowledge. Participants responded to the same breadth ($\alpha = .89$) and depth ($\alpha = .89$) scales used in experiments 1 and 2b but amended to relate to the product category of beer. Responses were submitted to paired t -tests to compare participants’ anticipated knowledge acquisition separately for the breadth and depth experience. Consistent with expectations, the it’s-just-different advertisement was rated as significantly more likely to offer breadth ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 1.76$) as opposed to depth ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 2.08$) of knowledge ($t(38) = 3.64$, $p = .001$). Conversely, the it’s-just-better advertisement was rated as significantly more likely to offer depth ($M = 6.42$, $SD = 1.59$) as opposed to breadth ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 1.88$) of knowledge ($t(30) = -3.50$, $p = .001$).

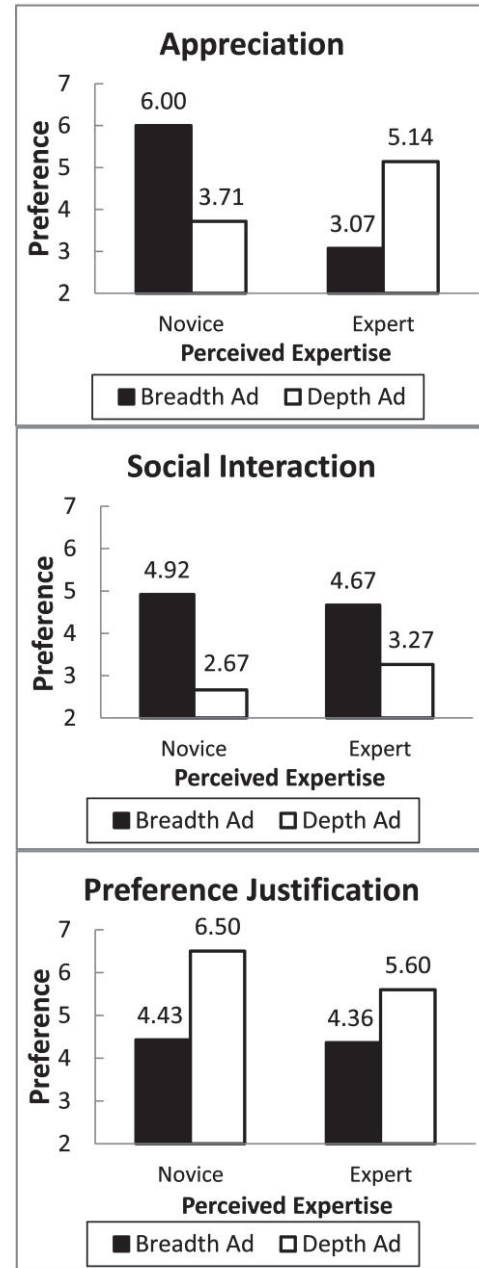
After reading the advertisement, participants were asked to respond to one of three scenarios that were intended to vary the participants’ consumption motive. At the outset of the scenarios, participants were told, “You are at a party and decide to have a beer. The cooler contains a variety of familiar beers, including your favorite beer. The cooler also contains New Haven beer.” In the appreciation-for-future-consumption-motive condition, the scenario also stated, “Thus, you have an opportunity to enjoy your favorite beer or learn more about beer so that you can better appreciate the taste of beer.” In the social-interaction-motive condition, the scenario also stated, “Thus, you have an opportunity to enjoy your favorite beer or learn more about beer so that you can have more informed conversations about the taste of beer.” In the preference-justification condition, the scenario also stated, “Thus, you have an opportunity to enjoy your favorite beer or learn more about beer so that you can resolve any uncertainty in your tastes in beer.” Then, participants indicated their preference for New Haven (relative to their favorite beer) using a 9-point semantic differential anchored at 1 (“definitely choose my favorite beer”) to 9 (“definitely choose New Haven”). Afterward, participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Results

Product Preference. The data were submitted to a three-way ANOVA, with perceived expertise, consumption knowledge, and consumption motivation as independent variables. Results revealed a significant main effect of consumption motive ($F(2, 123) = 3.54$, $p = .03$) that was qualified by a significant consumption motive by consumption knowledge interaction ($F(2, 123) = 5.92$, $p < .01$). Additionally, the results revealed a marginal perceived expertise by consumption knowledge interaction ($F(1, 123) = 3.15$, $p < .08$) in a pattern consistent with experiment 2. These effects, however, were qualified by a significant perceived expertise

FIGURE 5

RESULTS OF EXPERIMENT 4



by consumption knowledge by consumption motivation interaction ($F(2, 123) = 3.47$, $p < .05$). No other effects were significant (all $F < 1$). This three-way interaction is organized by consumption motive (see fig. 5).

When participants were motivated by the appreciation for future consumption, the perceived expertise by consumption knowledge interaction was significant ($F(2, 123) = 9.55$, p

< .001). As expected, novices were significantly more likely to choose New Haven when the beer was described as offering breadth ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.71$), as opposed to depth ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 2.56$), consumption knowledge ($F(1, 123) = 4.29$, $p = .01$). Conversely, experts were significantly more likely to choose New Haven when the beer was described as offering depth ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 2.71$), as opposed to breadth ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 2.16$), consumption knowledge ($F(1, 123) = 5.58$, $p < .01$).

When participants were motivated by social interaction, they were significantly more likely to choose New Haven when it was described as offering breadth ($M = 4.81$, $SD = 2.32$), as opposed to depth ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 2.10$), consumption knowledge ($F(1, 123) = 6.47$, $p = .001$). No other effects were significant (all $F < 1$). When participants were motivated by preference justification, they were significantly more likely to choose New Haven when it was described as offering depth ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 2.63$), as opposed to breadth ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 2.18$), consumption knowledge ($F(1, 123) = 5.25$, $p < .01$). No other effects were significant (all $F < 1$).

Discussion

The findings of experiment 4 demonstrated that consumers' motivations for trying novel products determined the type of consumption knowledge that was valued. When motivated by an appreciation for future consumption experiences, novices preferred novel consumption experiences that enhanced their breadth of knowledge, whereas experts preferred novel consumption experiences that enhanced their depth of knowledge. When motivated by social interaction, novices and experts preferred novel consumption experiences that enhanced their breadth of knowledge. When motivated by preference justification, novices and experts preferred novel consumption experiences that enhanced their depth of knowledge.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Four experiments provide evidence that consumers try novel consumption experiences to build their experiential consumption knowledge, knowledge they believe will enhance their appreciation of future consumption experiences. In support of this argument, novice (expert) consumers selected consumption experiences that provided breadth (depth) consumption knowledge (experiment 1a). A novice's (expert's) preference for breadth (depth) consumption knowledge was a consequence of wanting to better appreciate future consumption experiences (experiment 1b, experiment 4). Novice (expert) consumers were shown to place more value on acquiring breadth (depth) knowledge (experiment 2). Finally, the anticipation of valuable breadth (depth) knowledge was shown to be a function of the variability (refinement) of the attribute that defined the consumption experience (experiment 3). Collectively, the results show that consumers strategically pursued novel consump-

tion experiences that help develop their consumption knowledge (Beverland and Farrelly 2010).

New Directions

Strategic Novelty Seeking. Consumers are not indiscriminate in their choice of novel experiences. Consumers, for instance, have been shown to strategically make consumption choices that protect special memories (Zauberman, Ratner, and Kim 2009) as well as diversify their collection of memories (Ratner et al. 1999). The four experiments presented here complement this research, as participants strategically made consumption choices on the basis of both the actual (experiment 1) and the anticipated (experiments 2–4) acquisition of consumption knowledge. More specifically, participants acquired knowledge that enhanced their existing consumption expertise. These findings suggest that novelty seeking can be a selective process (Meyer et al. 1997). That is, our participants were not indiscriminately seeking novelty as a means of reducing product satiation (McAlister 1982), meeting an optimal level of stimulation (Baumgartner and Steenkamp 1996; Raju 1980) or variety (Van Trijp, Hoyer, and Inman 1996), or fulfilling a need to change decision strategies (Drolet 2002)—each of these consumption motives could have been satisfied by any novel experience. To the contrary, our participants selectively sought out new experiences as a means of achieving specific consumption motives (e.g., appreciation for future consumption experiences, social interaction, preference justification). Thus, future research should consider how other characteristics of novel consumption experiences (e.g., distinctiveness, complexity, availability) interface with consumption motives to influence the desirability of these experiences.

Managing Consumption Knowledge Acquisition Goals. A novice's or expert's preference for different types of consumption knowledge should be viewed as a tendency, not a doctrine. Novices may prefer breadth consumption knowledge, but depth consumption knowledge is still a useful way to enhance appreciation for the small subset of products that are regularly consumed in a category. Experts may prefer depth consumption knowledge, but breadth consumption experiences will allow the expert to find other ideal points within the product category (Lee, Sudhir, and Steckel 2002). Thus, an interesting research issue is identifying the moderators that discourage novices and experts from following their consumption knowledge acquisition tendencies. To illustrate, consider the following three possibilities.

First, negative feedback on the consequences of acquiring consumption knowledge may encourage consumers to shift knowledge acquisition strategies (Hoeffler et al. 2006). Learning theory and goal systems theory both predict that consumers will change their choices when feedback about the consequences of those choices is not positive (Van Osselaer and Janiszewski 2012). Thus, if a novice selects a series of novel breadth experiences and finds that appreciation for the consumption in the product category is not being enhanced, the novice may assess whether acquiring

depth consumption knowledge is useful. Similarly, if an expert selects a series of depth experiences and finds no improvement in appreciation for consumption experiences, the expert may seek out some products that offer a novel breadth experience. In this case, the breadth experiences would not enhance appreciation for the current favorites, but they would provide an opportunity to identify additional favorites (i.e., new ideal points).

Second, choice set novelty may encourage novices (experts) to choose depth (breadth) experiences. Choice set novelty occurs when all of the options in a choice set are unfamiliar. To illustrate, consider a consumer with low expertise in wine but high expertise in American beers. The consumer relocates to France, where the array of available wines and beers includes many European options but few American options. In this situation, the individual may initially attempt to locate a new favorite wine by selecting wines that have grape profiles that are similar to a prior favorite (e.g., find a decent Shiraz). As a wine novice, then, the increased risk of achieving a positive consumption outcome encourages the search for an option that is similar to a prior favorite and, consequently, generates depth consumption knowledge. Conversely, the same individual may initially sample a wide variety of beers in an attempt to map the new alternatives onto an existing knowledge structure and, thus, identify potential areas for appreciation (breadth knowledge).

Finally, contextual novelty may encourage novices (experts) to choose depth (breadth) experiences. To illustrate, consider a novice (expert) wine drinker who is asked to select a wine to pair with novel Asian cuisine. In this context, an attempt to gather certain types of consumption knowledge will be nondiagnostic. To the extent the novice understands that the novel flavors of the food will lessen the diagnosticity of a breadth experience, the novice may choose to consume a favorite wine. Consuming a favorite wine will allow the novice to make inferences about the influence of the context (i.e., food flavors) on the consumption experience. Thus, the novel context is allowing consumption knowledge to emerge about the favorite (i.e., depth knowledge). Conversely, an expert may believe a novel context makes it difficult to refine appreciation for a given favorite (i.e., the context-product interaction is anticipated to be too large relative to the stored representation of consumption experiences). Thus, the expert may gain more diagnostic knowledge by sampling products that may become new ideal points (i.e., products that are appropriate for the novel contexts). As a consequence, the expert chooses a breadth experience.

Short-Term versus Long-Term Utility Maximization. Research shows that consumers make short-term choices that fail to maximize the utility of a consumption experience (Ratner et al. 1999; Simonson 1990). Our research is consistent with this conclusion. In the last two experiments, participants were asked to assess the appeal of the novel product relative to their favorite. A proportion of consumers (i.e., consumers who selected a scale value above the midpoint) indicated that the acquisition of consumption knowledge had greater

utility than temporary hedonic maximization. Although the proportion of consumers willing to forgo temporary hedonic maximization in favor of consumption knowledge was low (ranging from 43% to 48% when the type of information available was beneficial), it is meaningful because we document a new motivation for doing so; participants were willing to abandon a short-term hedonic maximization goal when presented with a novel consumption experience that met their desire for a specific type of consumption knowledge. This long-term approach to utility maximization is at odds with a considerable amount of research documenting impulsive behavior, hyperbolic discounting, and need to experience immediate gratification. Understanding when and why consumers adopt this longer-term view of utility maximization is an opportunity for future research (Meyer et al. 1997).

It has been argued that consumers are being suboptimal when they fail to maximize happiness via their choices (Hsee and Hastie 2006). This perspective has led to a plethora of research documenting the biases that lead to suboptimal decisions, with many of these biases involving an improper prediction about a forthcoming consumption experience. For example, an impact bias involves overestimating the benefits of an experience, a projection bias involves the failure to understand the state that will accompany the experience, a memory bias puts too much emphasis on peak-end experiences or unusual experiences stored in memory, and a belief bias encourages the incorrect weighting of the benefits that will be experienced (Hsee and Hastie 2006). However, when these processes lead to a poor forecast of the utility of an experience, it could be a bias that is due, in part, to the study of domains in which participants have limited consumption expertise. That is, when there is a suboptimal choice among potential experiences, it may be that these biases are masquerading for an underlying motivation to develop consumption knowledge. Ironically, then, suboptimal short-term behavior may not be a bias. Instead, it may be necessary to provide the experiences that will result in a greater appreciation of consumption experiences, which in turn will facilitate long-term happiness from consumption choices (Gibbs 1997). In short, hedonically suboptimal choices may be the only means by which consumers can ultimately gain optimal happiness.

Conclusion

In contrast to Cowper's observation about the consequences of consuming novel experiences—and the empirical evidence in support of his observation—the pursuit of novel experiences can be beneficial. The purpose of the present work was to document that there is a unique benefit to be gained from novel consumption experiences—namely, consumption knowledge. Our findings show that consumers gain utility from the consumption knowledge accumulated across experiences. This anticipated utility leads consumers to selectively value novel consumption experiences that enhance their expertise. We hope this work encourages re-

searchers and marketers alike to consider the value consumers place on novel consumption experiences.

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