

# The Influence of Purchase Motivation on Perceived Preference Uniqueness and Assortment Size Choice

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The present research examines how hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations influence consumers' perceptions of their product preferences and the resulting number of options they wish to consider when making a purchase. Across six studies, consumers choose to review larger assortments when their purchase motivation is hedonic rather than when their purchase motivation is utilitarian. This effect occurs because consumers with hedonic purchase motivations perceive their product preferences as highly unique compared to consumers with utilitarian purchase motivations. Higher perceived preference uniqueness increases the difficulty consumers anticipate in finding a preference-matching product, resulting in an expansion of the number of product alternatives to review. Further supporting the perceived preference uniqueness account, the documented effect is attenuated when product assortments are customized based on consumers' personal preferences and when a social similarity priming task is employed. These findings provide additional evidence on the distinction between hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations, their impact on perceived preference uniqueness, and their implications for consumer decision making via assortment size choice.

*Keywords:* hedonic, utilitarian, purchase motivation, perceived preference uniqueness, assortment size choice

Consumers' decisions to purchase a product are often driven by different motivations. Personal pleasures (i.e., hedonic motivations) trigger consumption in some cases and functional needs (i.e., utilitarian motivations) drive consumption in others—even when the product is the same (Botti and McGill 2011; Choi and Fishbach 2011; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Hirschman and Holbrook

1982; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). Because many motivations for a purchase are categorized as providing pleasure or fulfilling a need, understanding the process through which hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations influence consumer decision making is essential. In the present research, we explore how these two purchase motivations impact consumers' perceptions about the uniqueness of their product preferences and the subsequent effect on assortment size choice—that is, the first step of the consumer choice process (Chernev 2006; Goodman and Malkoc 2012; Kahn and Lehmann 1991).

Hedonic and utilitarian motivations for a purchase have different end goals: pleasure versus task fulfillment, respectively (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). Hedonic purchase motivations have been shown to increase available mental resources during choice (Choi and Fishbach 2011) and lead to a preference for more autonomous

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decisions (Botti and McGill 2011), compared to utilitarian purchase motivations. We extend upon this prior work on purchase motivations and find that consumers choose to engage in a wider alternative search for hedonic versus utilitarian purchases, because the pleasure-seeking end goal behind a hedonic purchase actually changes how consumers feel about their preferences and their ability to fulfill their purchase goal.

Specifically, we argue that the idiosyncratic nature of hedonic purchases (Carter and Gilovich 2010; Maimaran and Simonson 2011) leads consumers to believe that their product preferences for hedonically motivated purchases are inherently unique and different from the preferences of other consumers. In other words, consumers believe that what provides pleasure to them is unique and different from what provides pleasure to others. For example, the type of book that a consumer reads for pleasure and enjoyment feels unique to them compared to the types of books other people would enjoy reading. In contrast, utilitarian motivations are driven by need fulfillment (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998), which is typically common to all consumers. Hence, we propose that consumers with hedonic purchase motivations perceive their preferences for a particular product to be more unique and different from other consumers' preferences than consumers with a utilitarian purchase motivation. Furthermore, we maintain that a higher degree of perceived preference uniqueness, stemming from hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations, leads consumers to anticipate greater difficulty finding a product that matches their preferences, resulting in the decision to review a larger assortment of product alternatives. Across six studies, we find support for our thesis using different product categories, including books, songs, paint colors, and films.

Our focus on how hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations influence consumers' assortment size choices, via preference uniqueness, provides important theoretical and practical contributions. First, our work is the first to propose that consumers consider not only their preferences for a product when engaging in product search, but also their perceptions about the uniqueness of those preferences. Prior work on uniqueness has focused on the effect of need for uniqueness and differentiation on consumer variety seeking in product choices (i.e., choosing unique or different products; Chan, Berger, and Van Boven 2012; Lynn and Harris 1997; Simonson and Nowlis 2000; Snyder and Fromkin 1977; Tian, Bearden, and Hunter 2001). However, unlike in previous studies, it is not consumers' need for uniqueness but rather their perception that they have inherently unique preferences that lies at the center of our theoretical framework.

Second, we add to the literature on consumer decision making and hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations. Buying a product is typically described as a two-step process in which consumers first choose a product assortment

and then select a specific item from that assortment (Chernev 2006; Goodman and Malkoc 2012; Kahn and Lehmann 1991). The vast majority of the research done in the field of purchase motivation and assortment size has examined the second step, with limited attention to consumers' assortment choices (Chernev 2003; Diehl and Poyner 2010; Gourville and Soman 2005; Iyengar and Lepper 2000; Okada 2005; Sela, Berger, and Liu 2009). We find that hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations impact consumers' choice of how many options to review (i.e., assortment size). Hence, our research sheds light on this less understood, critical first step of the decision process of choosing a product assortment, which has direct downstream consequences on alternative evaluation and product choice, offering insights into consumer goal pursuit as well as product category management.

Third, we extend prior research investigating consumers' attraction to large versus small product assortments. Research has repeatedly shown that consumers predominantly prefer larger assortments (Aydinli, Gu, and Pham 2017; Baumol and Ide 1956; Broniarczyk 2008; Chernev, Böckenholt, and Goodman 2015; Hotelling 1929; Scheibehenne, Greifeneder, and Todd 2010), despite the effortful cost of evaluating them (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1993). Building on the limited work contradicting consumers' predominant preference for large assortments (Chernev 2006; Goodman and Malkoc 2012), our work shows that consumers may choose to review large or comparatively smaller product assortments for the same product purchase depending on the motivation behind the purchase.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. Next, we review the relevant literature on hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations and develop our theory regarding why these motivations influence consumers' perception of preference uniqueness and assortment size choices. We then describe our studies and present the results. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of our findings.

## CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

### Hedonic and Utilitarian Purchase Motivations

Products are often classified as hedonic and utilitarian (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Khan, Dhar, and Wertenbroch 2005). Hedonic products (e.g., a video game console, designer clothes) provide experiential satisfaction through fun, excitement, and pleasure, appealing to consumers' senses and emotions (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). In contrast, utilitarian products (e.g., a printer, a microwave) are more functional and help consumers accomplish practical tasks (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998).

Consumer choice varies with respect to these two types of products. Previous research has shown that when making a product choice, consumers value utilitarian products more highly than hedonic products. For instance, consumers prioritize functional attributes over hedonic attributes when choosing a product (Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan 2007). Also, when deciding between the two types of products, consumers prefer utilitarian products (e.g., a printer) to hedonic products (e.g., an MP3 player), as utilitarian products are relatively easier to justify (Sela et al. 2009). Because it is easier to justify utilitarian products than hedonic products, consumers also display a higher willingness to pay for the former (Okada 2005). However, interestingly, consumers seem to value hedonic products more than utilitarian products once they own both types of products and are asked to give up one of them (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000).

Despite this common hedonic versus utilitarian dichotomy in the marketplace, most products have both hedonic and utilitarian attributes (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000) and can be used for either hedonic or utilitarian purposes depending on the consumer's motivation for the purchase. Hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations differ across multiple dimensions (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Khan et al. 2005; Pham 1998; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998; Trudel and Murray 2011). One dimension is the end goal of the purchase. Consumers engage in hedonic consumption for the resulting affective experience (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Pham 1998), whereas utilitarian consumption is driven by a desire to fulfill a need or accomplish a task (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). Previous studies have argued that hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations also differ with respect to internal and external drivers of purchase behavior. Because the affective gratification achieved from hedonic consumption is inherently rewarding, prior work has conceptualized hedonic consumption as a terminal goal in itself, with the pursuit of pleasure being intrinsically motivated (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Botti and McGill 2011; Khan et al. 2005). In contrast, because utilitarian consumption is not inherently rewarding but instrumental to the fulfillment of higher-level goals, utilitarian purchases are considered extrinsically motivated (Botti and McGill 2011; Kasser and Ryan 1996).

Furthermore, and more central to our theorizing, the evaluation processes of potential options for hedonically and utilitarian-motivated purchases are different. When choosing among hedonic products, consumers rely heavily on experienced feelings and emotions during search to justify whether a potential option fulfills their personal gratification goal (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Pham 1998). As a result, the evaluation process for a hedonic purchase is highly subjective and unique to the individual (Carter and Gilovich 2010; Maimaran and Simonson 2011). In contrast, the decision-making strategy for utilitarian-motivated

purchases is more rational and cognitively driven (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999). When making a utilitarian purchase, consumers typically assess available options on a more objective and external scale of functional attributes, compared to a hedonic purchase (Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994; Batra and Ahtola 1991).

Given the differential use of subjective feelings and emotions in the choice evaluation process between hedonically and utilitarian-motivated purchases, we argue that consumers have different motivation-specific preferences for a product, and their perceptions of those purchase preferences are influenced by the motivation behind their purchase, affecting the number of options they would like to review. Because consumers with hedonic purchase motivations rely more on their senses and emotions to evaluate potential options, the evaluation process is more self-focused and individual-specific, resulting in more idiosyncratic preferences compared to utilitarian-motivated purchases. This idiosyncratic nature of hedonic purchases leads consumers to have higher perceptions about how unique their purchase preferences are compared to utilitarian purchases, which we suggest drives assortment size choices. We elaborate on these perceptions of preference uniqueness and their effect on product assortment size decisions in the next section.

### Perceived Uniqueness of Preferences and Anticipated Difficulty in Preference Matching

Previous research has documented that consumer preferences are not fixed but constructed, and that preference construction and development depend on a given decision task (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1992; Slovic 1995; Tversky et al. 1988). In particular, motivations underlying a choice task can alter the weight and importance consumers place on the attributes of given options in a choice set, leading to varying preferences for the same set of items (Chartrand et al. 2008; Chernev 2004; Fischer et al. 1999). Based on the theory of constructed preferences, we propose that purchase motivations influence not only consumers' attribute-based preferences for a product but also how consumers think about their preferences for that particular product, specifically their thoughts regarding the perceived uniqueness of their preferences.

Because hedonic purchases are closely linked to one's senses and emotions, such purchases are considered highly idiosyncratic and personal (Carter and Gilovich 2010; Maimaran and Simonson 2011; Okada 2005). In contrast, consumers evaluate utilitarian purchases using more objective criteria with which they utilize a cognitive rather than emotional assessment method (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Carter and Gilovich 2010; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999). Hence, utilitarian purchases are not highly personal due to the objective (vs. affective)

manner of evaluation. Evidence suggests that people perceive their opinions to be more unique in contexts with high personal relevance than in contexts with low personal relevance (Campbell 1986). Accordingly, we argue that consumers with hedonic purchase motivations tend to perceive their product preferences as unique and different from others' preferences to a greater extent than consumers with utilitarian purchase motivations. That is, consumers perceive a product that provides them pleasure (i.e., hedonic motivation) as unique and different from the products that provide others pleasure, and conversely, a product that fulfills their task (i.e., utilitarian motivation) as less unique and more similar to the products that fulfill the same task for others. Moreover, for consumers with a utilitarian purchase motivation, the potential option that would fulfill one's purchase goal may be perceived as fairly substitutable compared to other available options (Goodman and Malkoc 2012; Ratneshwar and Shocker 1991), leading to a perception that one's preferences are not very unique.

Further, we maintain that consumers' perceptions about the uniqueness of their product preferences determine their expectations of difficulty in finding a preference-matching product. If one believes that everyone holds similar preferences for a particular type of product, one would anticipate having an easy time finding a product that matches these perceived widely held preferences. However, if one views one's product preferences as unique and different from those of others, one would anticipate having a more difficult time finding a product that matches those unique preferences. We further argue that anticipated difficulty in preference matching maps onto consumers' assortment size choices. Specifically, if consumers believe they would easily find a product matching their preferences, they can expect to find a product to fulfill their purchase goal by reviewing a small number of options. However, if consumers anticipate having a difficult time finding a product matching their preferences because their preferences are unique, they will review a larger number of alternatives to increase their likelihood of finding a preference-matching product (Baumol and Ide 1956; Hotelling 1929).

In sum, we hypothesize that consumers with hedonic purchase motivations exhibit higher perceived preference uniqueness and thus anticipate greater difficulty finding a preference-matching product than consumers with utilitarian purchase motivations, increasing the choice to review larger assortments compared to consumers with utilitarian purchase motivations.

## OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

Using different products and purchase scenarios, studies 1A and 1B provide initial support for the main effect of hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations on assortment size choice. Study 2 replicates the documented effect using

a consequential choice task. Study 3 shows that hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations alter consumers' perceptions of preference uniqueness, which, along with anticipated difficulty, mediate the effect of purchase motivation on assortment size choice. Study 4 provides process evidence of our preference uniqueness account by manipulating retailer knowledge of consumer preferences and the composition of provided product assortments. Lastly, study 5 provides additional process support for our proposed mechanism of perceived preference uniqueness by manipulating social comparative cues to moderate the effect of purchase motivation on assortment size choice.

Each study provides participants with either a utilitarian or hedonic motivation for the purchase of a product. Unlike prior research comparing purchases of hedonic and utilitarian products (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Okada 2005; Sela et al. 2009; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998), we keep the product category the same between utilitarian and hedonic purchase motivation scenarios. This approach is similar to that of Botti and McGill (2011). Because products contain aspects of both a utilitarian and hedonic nature (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000), we compare choices of the same target product and manipulate the motivation behind the purchase by focusing on the purchase end goal. Consistent with prior work on the motivations behind hedonic and utilitarian purchases (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Pham 1998; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998), we characterize hedonic purchase motivations as pleasure-seeking and utilitarian purchase motivations as task-driven. For robustness, we test our hypotheses using several product categories, including books, documentaries, songs, and paint colors. The results of related pretests and manipulation checks for all scenarios used in our studies can be found in the appendix.

## STUDY 1A

This study tests the effect of purchase motivation on consumers' product assortment size choices. Participants were provided with either a hedonic or utilitarian motivation for a book purchase and asked to choose between a small and a large assortment of books.

### Method

*Participants and Procedure.* One hundred twenty-six undergraduate business students at a large northeastern university (54% female) were randomly assigned to either a hedonic or utilitarian purchase motivation condition. Specifically, participants read one of the following scenarios depending on their assigned condition.

Imagine that you are currently taking a class at the business school. To relax and enjoy your free time outside of doing class work, you have decided to purchase a business-related

book to read for pleasure. [Hedonic purchase motivation condition]

Imagine that you are currently taking a class at the business school. For this class, you have to purchase a business-related book that you will have to read and then submit a report discussing the book's topic for a class assignment. [Utilitarian purchase motivation condition]

After reading the purchase motivation scenarios, participants were asked whether they would prefer to choose from a small (six options) or large (24 options) assortment of books when selecting a business-related book for their purchase. The use of six options versus 24 options as small and large assortment sizes, respectively, was based on the prevalence of these numbers in prior work investigating assortment size decisions (Goodman and Malkoc 2012; Iyengar and Lepper 2000).

## Results and Discussion

Supporting our hypothesis, we find that participants with a hedonic purchase motivation were more likely to choose the large assortment, relative to participants with a utilitarian purchase motivation ( $\chi^2(1) = 18.89, p < .001$ ). Sixty-five percent of participants in the hedonic purchase motivation condition preferred the large assortment, whereas only 27% of participants in the utilitarian purchase motivation condition preferred to choose from the large assortment when planning for their purchase. Overall, this study supports our hypothesis about the effect of hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations on assortment size choice. Additional replications of this main effect finding, using different products and purchase scenarios, can be found in the web appendix (see studies WA1–WA3).

### STUDY 1B

In the previous study, we demonstrated a significant effect of hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations on consumers' assortment size choices by highlighting the hedonic versus utilitarian end goals of a purchase scenario. However, one might be curious as to the precise effect of making a hedonic or utilitarian purchase motivation salient. Although consumers naturally categorize products as hedonic or utilitarian, products typically contain both hedonic and utilitarian aspects (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000). Thus, the purchase of the same product can be pursued with either a hedonic or utilitarian motivation depending on the focal purpose of the purchase (Botti and McGill 2011). In this study, we test how consumers behave in a nonspecified purchase motivation condition (i.e., a control condition). This allows us to compare our salient hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations against how consumers typically categorize and pursue a product purchase.

## Method

*Participants and Procedure.* Four hundred six US-based participants (52% female; mean age = 33 years), recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk, were randomly assigned to either a hedonic, utilitarian, or nonspecified purchase motivation condition. Participants were asked to imagine that they were taking a night class on American film and were looking to purchase a 30 minute documentary. They read one of the following scenarios depending on their assigned condition.

Imagine you are currently taking a night class on American film at a university. To relax and enjoy your free time outside of doing class work, you have decided to purchase a short 30 minute documentary to watch for pleasure. [Hedonic purchase motivation condition]

Imagine you are currently taking a night class on American film at a university. For this class, you have to purchase a short 30 minute documentary that you will have to watch and then submit a report discussing the film's topic for a class assignment. [Utilitarian purchase motivation condition]

Imagine you are currently taking a night class on American film at a university. You have decided to purchase a short 30 minute documentary to watch. [Nonspecified purchase motivation condition]

After reading the purchase scenarios, participants indicated their assortment size choice. Rather than measuring assortment size choice as a binary choice between a small and large assortment as in study 1A, we used a more organic measure of assortment size choice by asking participants to specify how many film options they would like to look over to make their purchase decision using a sliding scale from 1 to 50.

## Results and Discussion

Consistent with our previous result, we find that the average chosen assortment size is larger in the hedonic purchase motivation condition than in the utilitarian purchase motivation condition ( $M_H = 13.41, SD = 10.42$  vs.  $M_U = 11.04, SD = 7.45; p = .026$ ). The results also show that participants in the hedonic purchase motivation condition were willing to review larger assortments than those in the nonspecified motivation condition, albeit the difference between the two conditions was marginally significant ( $M_H = 13.41, SD = 10.42$  vs.  $M_{NS} = 11.59, SD = 8.16; p = .090$ ). There was, however, no significant difference in assortment size choice between the utilitarian purchase motivation and nonspecified motivation conditions ( $M_U = 11.04, SD = 7.45$  vs.  $M_{NS} = 11.59, SD = 8.16; p = .613$ ). These results suggest that consumers typically categorize documentaries as utilitarian and pursue them with a utilitarian motivation (see table A1 in the appendix for supporting manipulation-check results).

The results of this study also address lingering concerns over the nature of the hedonic and utilitarian manipulations we employ to test the hypothesized effects. We find that participants naturally consider the purchase of a documentary to be utilitarian, and when provided with a hedonic motive for purchasing the same product, they consequently increase the size of the assortment from which they would like to choose. Across our entire empirical package, we test for the effect of purchase motivation on assortment size choice using a multitude of product categories (books, songs, paint colors, and documentaries) that are naturally characterized as being more hedonic or more utilitarian to ensure the ecological validity of our research.

## STUDY 2

In this study, we seek to replicate our main effect with a different product and choice motivation and address concerns about whether hypothetical, scenario-based assortment decisions, like those utilized in studies 1A and 1B, accurately depict consumers' expectations of choosing from their indicated assortments. Accordingly, study 2 uses a hedonic versus utilitarian task-based manipulation to elicit real and consequential assortment size choices. We also account for the accuracy of these assortment decisions by measuring post-choice satisfaction. More specifically, we predicted that if consumers' assortment size choices under hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations reflect their accurate expectations of the subsequent choice process, then there should be no difference in post-choice satisfaction between purchase motivation conditions.

### Method

*Participants and Design.* One hundred fifty-one undergraduate students at a large northeastern university (56% female; average age = 19 years) were assigned to either a utilitarian or hedonic motivation condition. Both conditions involved listening to and evaluating music.

*Procedure.* Participants completed this study in the middle of a series of other unrelated studies. Each participant was assigned to a task that involved selecting a song and listening to it. In the utilitarian motivation condition, participants were told that they would have to pick a song to listen to and evaluate for a task in the current study. In the hedonic motivation condition, participants were told that they would pick a song to listen to and enjoy before moving on to the next study. The study was designed in such a way that participants in the utilitarian motivation condition actually selected and listened to a song as a part of the study task, while those in the hedonic motivation condition chose and listened to a song for pleasure unrelated to a task. Nevertheless, in both conditions,

participants completed the exact same task of selecting a song, listening to it, and evaluating it.

After reading the study description (to listen to a song as part of the study task or for enjoyment between studies), all participants were asked "how many songs you would like to look over to find a song to listen to for pleasure (this task)." Participants indicated how many songs they would like to review on a sliding scale from 2 to 24 options. After indicating their assortment size choice, participants were presented with an assortment of songs containing a number of songs equal to the amount they had previously indicated. Participants then chose one of the songs in the assortment and listened to a 45 second clip of the song they chose. After listening to the song clip, participants indicated their satisfaction (1 = Not at all satisfied, 7 = Very satisfied) with the assortment of songs they chose from as well as their satisfaction with the song they chose.

*Stimuli.* We presented participants with an assortment of song options equal to their indicated assortment size choice, with each option characterized by a CD album cover and small description. For example, if a participant indicated a preferred assortment size of 10 options, we subsequently provided them with a visual assortment of 10 song options. Each option was presented with the same size of album cover as well as six small lines of text to maintain a constant level of cognitive effort needed for evaluation. Participants were then told to pick a CD from the given assortment from which they would listen to a song. To construct our stimuli for this study, 24 CDs were selected from the following six musical genres: classical, country, indie, international, jazz, and soul (four CDs in each category). Depending on their selected assortment size, participants were presented with a random subset (equal to their assortment size choice) of the 24 CDs. All stimuli were presented in matrix form with three columns. Participants chose their final option by clicking on a CD/song stimulus from the displayed options. After making their selection, participants were provided with a 45 second sound clip of a song from the CD they picked.

### Results and Discussion

There was a significant effect of hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivation on assortment size choice for songs. As predicted, participants in the hedonic motivation condition chose a larger assortment of songs, on average, than those in the utilitarian motivation condition ( $M_H = 8.76$ ,  $SD = 7.03$  vs.  $M_U = 5.43$ ,  $SD = 5.62$ ;  $F(1, 149) = 10.31$ ,  $p = .002$ ). The results also confirmed there was no significant difference in satisfaction with either the assortment of songs participants chose from ( $M_U = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 1.83$  vs.  $M_H = 3.16$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ;  $F(1, 149) = .07$ ,  $p = .794$ ) or the song itself ( $M_U = 4.63$ ,  $SD = 1.81$  vs.  $M_H = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ;  $F(1, 149) = .02$ ,  $p = .902$ ) between

the two conditions. This suggests that participants' prechoice assortment decisions accurately reflect their expectations of making a product choice from that assortment.

Ultimately, study 2 provides additional evidence regarding the effect of purchase motivation on assortment size choice for a consequential decision, showing that consumers choose larger assortments for hedonically motivated choices than for utilitarian-motivated choices. Going forward, we examine whether purchase motivations alter consumers' perceptions of preference uniqueness and test whether this mechanism underlies the effect of purchase motivation on assortment size choice documented in studies 1A, 1B, and 2.

### STUDY 3

We argue that consumers with hedonic purchase motivations perceive their preferences as unique (compared to others' preferences) to a greater extent than consumers with utilitarian purchase motivations. As a result, consumers with hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations should anticipate greater difficulty finding a product that matches their preferences, resulting in a choice to review larger assortments. In this study, we measure both perceived preference uniqueness and anticipated difficulty in preference matching to evaluate the validity of our proposed sequential process model (purchase motivation → perceived preference uniqueness → anticipated difficulty in preference matching → assortment size choice).

#### Method

*Participants and Design.* Two hundred eighty-six US-based participants (55% female; mean age = 35 years), recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk, were assigned to either a utilitarian or hedonic purchase motivation condition in a car paint color purchase scenario. Immediately following the purchase scenario descriptions, participants' perceptions of preference uniqueness, anticipated difficulty in preference matching, and their assortment size choices were elicited.

*Procedure.* Participants were asked to imagine that they owned two cars: one they use for driving to work and commuting, and one they use to drive for pleasure on the weekends. Then, they read one of the following scenarios depending on their randomly assigned purchase motivation condition:

Your car that you only drive for pleasure, a Toyota SUV, needs a new paint job, and you want to paint it a new color.  
[Hedonic purchase motivation condition]

Your car that you only drive for work, a Toyota SUV, needs a new paint job, and you want to paint it a new color.  
[Utilitarian purchase motivation condition]

To hold participants' expectations about the car needing a paint job constant between conditions, all participants were told that the car they were planning to paint a new color was a Toyota SUV. We designed the scenarios for this study such that participants' perceptions of any paint color's ability to fulfill their purchase would be the same for both purchase motivation conditions. That is, any paint color imagined would serve the same purpose on the same vehicle in both conditions, dispelling any concerns that a particular product alternative would better fit one purchase motivation than the other.

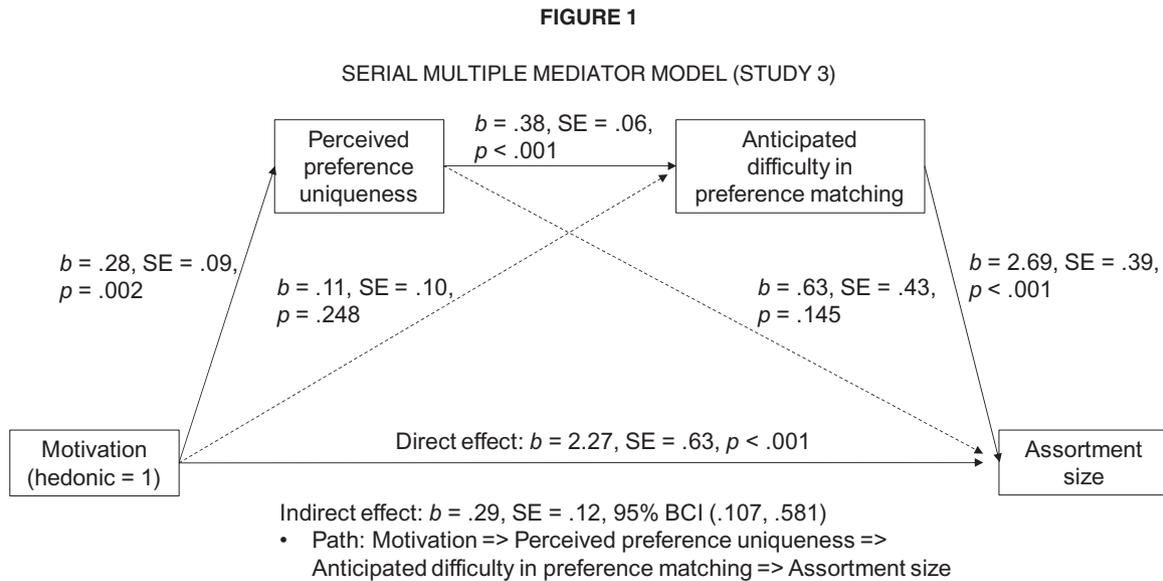
Following the paint color purchase scenarios, we measured participants' perceptions of preference uniqueness by their agreement with the following statement: "I believe my preferences for colors are unique and different from others' color preferences" on a seven-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). Participants then indicated their expectations of difficulty in preference matching by assessing how "difficult it would be to find a color that satisfies your goal" on a seven-point scale (1 = Not at all difficult, 7 = Very difficult). Finally, we measured participants' assortment size choices by asking them how many paint colors they would like to look over to make their purchase decision. Participants specified the number of color options they would like to review on a sliding scale from 1 to 50.

#### Results and Discussion

*Assortment Size Choice.* There was a significant difference in assortment size choice between the two purchase motivation conditions. As expected, participants in the hedonic purchase motivation condition chose a larger assortment of paint colors, on average, than those in the utilitarian purchase motivation condition ( $M_H = 17.42$ ,  $SD = 13.71$  vs.  $M_U = 11.34$ ,  $SD = 8.79$ ;  $F(1, 284) = 19.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

*Perceived Preference Uniqueness.* Supporting our thesis, results revealed a significant difference in perceived preference uniqueness between the two purchase motivation conditions. Participants in the hedonic purchase motivation condition perceived their preferences as more unique than those in the utilitarian purchase motivation condition ( $M_H = 4.26$ ,  $SD = 1.55$  vs.  $M_U = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 1.55$ ;  $F(1, 284) = 9.36$ ,  $p = .002$ ).

*Anticipated Difficulty.* Purchase motivation also had a significant effect on participants' anticipated difficulty in preference matching. Participants in the hedonic purchase motivation condition felt it would be more difficult to find a color satisfying their purchase than those in the utilitarian purchase motivation condition ( $M_H = 3.01$ ,  $SD = 1.79$  vs.  $M_U = 2.57$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ;  $F(1, 284) = 4.74$ ,  $p = .030$ ). Furthermore, perceived preference uniqueness had a positive and significant effect on anticipated difficulty in



preference matching ( $b = .38, SE = .06, p < .001$ ), suggesting that those with higher perceived preference uniqueness expect greater difficulty finding a product that matches their preferences.

**Mediation Analysis.** To confirm the mediating pathway from purchase motivation to perceived preference uniqueness to anticipated difficulty in preference matching to assortment size choice, we ran a serial multiple mediator analysis (Process model 6; Hayes 2013). Bootstrapping results confirmed a positive and significant indirect effect, verifying the full mediating pathway we proposed ( $b = .29; 95\% \text{ CI} = [.107, .581]$ ). The two other causal chains involving only perceived preference uniqueness or only anticipated difficulty in preference matching yielded confidence intervals containing zero (See figure 1).

We also conducted a test of the causal chain by reordering the two mediators and testing the following pathway: purchase motivation → anticipated difficulty in preference matching → perceived preference uniqueness → assortment size choice (Process model 6; Hayes 2013). However, the confidence interval for this alternative mediation model contains zero ( $b = .04; 95\% \text{ CI} = [-.001, .156]$ ). The detailed results for this alternative causal chain can be found in the appendix (figure A1). Thus, we conclude that the causal chain occurs only in the direction predicted by our theory. That is, a hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivation changes consumers' perceptions of preference uniqueness, affecting anticipated difficulty in preference matching, which ultimately drives assortment size choice. We also conducted the same alternative causal chain test in a replication of this mediation study using books (see study WA4 in the web appendix). We again

obtained consistent results, which show a significant causal path in the predicted direction ( $b = .13; 95\% \text{ CI} = [.049, .351]$ ) and an insignificant alternative causal path ( $b = .02; 95\% \text{ CI} = [-.024, .117]$ ).

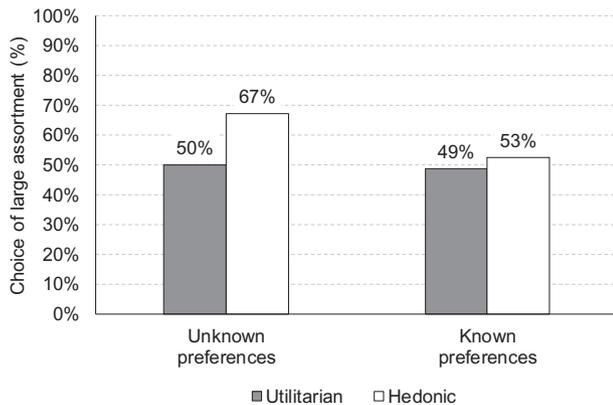
Overall, study 3 shows that consumers' perceptions about the uniqueness of their product preferences change depending on the motivation behind their purchase. This finding is critical in understanding why hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations lead consumers to choose larger assortments. The next study tests our process explanation of perceived preference uniqueness via a moderation analysis.

## STUDY 4

In study 4, we sought to test our process theory using a managerially relevant moderator: retailers' knowledge of their customers' preferences and customer-tailored assortments. Our theory and findings suggest that greater perceived preference uniqueness, driven by hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations, increases consumers' desire to look at an expanded number of alternatives because they feel they will have a difficult time finding an option matching their unique preferences. We further test this explanation by manipulating whether a retailer has knowledge of consumers' personal preferences and can therefore provide an assortment containing options that are highly likely to match consumers' preferences. If hedonically motivated consumers' choice of larger assortments is driven by perceptions of high preference uniqueness, then providing hedonically motivated participants with an assortment of options that incorporates their preferences should reduce

FIGURE 2

THE INTERACTIVE EFFECT OF PURCHASE MOTIVATION AND RETAILER PREFERENCE KNOWLEDGE ON ASSORTMENT SIZE CHOICE (STUDY 4)



their need to review a large number of options. This in turn should attenuate the documented positive effect of hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations on assortment size choice.

## Method

**Participants and Design.** Seven hundred forty-one US-based participants (56% female; mean age = 34 years), recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk, were randomly assigned to a condition in a 2 (motivation: hedonic vs. utilitarian)  $\times$  2 (preferences: unknown/control vs. known) between-subjects design. Participants read a book purchase scenario and then indicated their assortment size choice.

**Procedure.** Participants were told to imagine that they were taking a night class at a business school and looking to purchase a business-related book. Analogous to the scenario used in study 1A, participants in the utilitarian purchase motivation condition were asked to imagine that they were looking to purchase a business-related book to read for a class assignment, while those in the hedonic purchase motivation condition were asked to imagine they were looking to purchase a business-related book to read for pleasure. Subsequently, to manipulate retailer knowledge of the participant's purchase preferences, participants read one of the following:

You have decided to buy the book online. The online retailer can provide you with an assortment of books to review. [Unknown preferences—control condition]

You have decided to buy the book online. The online retailer gathers information from all of your prior purchases, and with that information, has an algorithm that accurately

identifies your preferences and provides you with an assortment of books that match your preferences. [Known preferences condition]

Participants then indicated whether they would like to review a small (six options) or large (24 options) assortment of books from this retailer.

## Results and Discussion

We ran a binary logistic regression of assortment size choice (Large assortment = 1, Small assortment = 0) on purchase motivation (Hedonic = 1, Utilitarian = 0), preference knowledge (Known = 1, Unknown/control = 0), and their interaction. Consistent with prior findings, the results revealed a positive and significant main effect of purchase motivation on assortment size choice ( $b = .44$ ,  $SE = .15$ ,  $\chi^2(1) = 8.89$ ,  $p = .003$ ). There was also a significant negative main effect of preference knowledge on assortment size choice ( $b = -.33$ ,  $SE = .15$ ,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.98$ ,  $p = .026$ ). More importantly, as predicted, there was a marginally significant negative interaction between purchase motivation and preference knowledge on assortment size choice ( $b = -.57$ ,  $SE = .30$ ,  $\chi^2(1) = 3.65$ ,  $p = .056$ ; See figure 2). Within the unknown preferences (control) condition, 67% of participants with a hedonic purchase motivation chose the large assortment, whereas only 50% of participants with a utilitarian purchase motivation chose the large assortment ( $\chi^2(1) = 11.72$ ,  $p = .001$ ). However, this difference between the two purchase motivation conditions was eliminated in the known preferences condition, in which 53% of participants with a hedonic motivation and 49% of participants with a utilitarian motivation chose the large assortment ( $\chi^2(1) = .54$ ,  $p = .461$ ). This lack of difference in chosen assortment size within the known preferences condition occurs because participants with a hedonic purchase motivation chose the large assortment less often in the known preferences condition than in the unknown preferences condition ( $\chi^2(1) = 8.57$ ,  $p = .003$ ). Chosen assortment size did not differ between utilitarian-motivated participants in the unknown and known preferences conditions ( $\chi^2(1) = .07$ ,  $p = .797$ ). These findings are consistent with our argument that a hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivation does not lead consumers to choose larger assortments when consumers believe the options they will see in an assortment have a high likelihood of matching their preferences.

Overall, study 4 shows that consumers' beliefs about whether a proposed product assortment incorporates their preferences influences the effect of purchase motivation on assortment size choice. This provides additional evidence on the relevance of perceived preference uniqueness in choosing product assortments under different purchase motivations.

## STUDY 5

Lastly, in study 5 we test the proposed underlying mechanism using a moderation analysis by manipulating participants' uniqueness perceptions using social comparative cues. If our theory based on perceived preference uniqueness holds true, highlighting the similarities between participants and other buyers of the same product should attenuate the documented effect of purchase motivation on assortment size choice. Specifically, we examine whether a perceived similarity manipulation (Kurt and Inman 2013; Menon, Kyung, and Agrawal 2009) decreases or eliminates the difference in assortment size choice between participants with hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations.

## Method

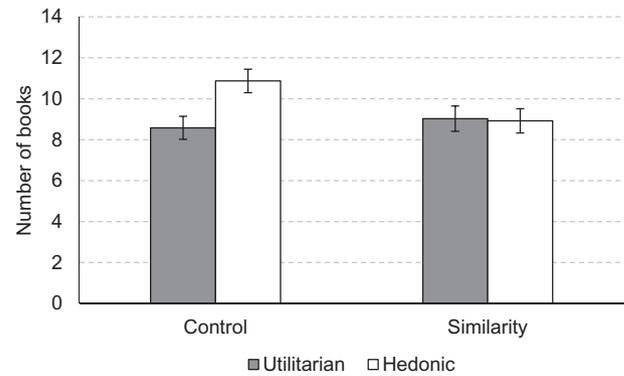
**Participants and Design.** Three hundred fifty-two US-based participants (61% female; mean age = 36 years), recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk, were randomly assigned to a condition in a 2 (motivation: hedonic vs. utilitarian)  $\times$  2 (similarity manipulation: similarity vs. control) between-subjects design. Participants read a book purchase scenario and completed a short task on perceived similarity (if assigned to the similarity condition) before indicating their assortment size choice.

**Procedure.** Depending on their randomly assigned condition, participants first read the same book purchase motivation scenarios employed in study 4. Subsequently, participants assigned to the similarity condition completed a task designed to underscore the similarities between the participant and other buyers of the same product. In the similarity task, participants were asked to write down "four ways in which you believe you are similar to the other students taking this night class." This perceived similarity task was adapted from prior work (Kurt and Inman 2013; Menon et al. 2009). Participants in the control condition were not given this task. Finally, participants indicated their assortment size choice by specifying the number of books they would like to review to make their decision on a sliding scale from 1 to 50.

A separate manipulation check conducted with participants from the same population ( $n = 123$ ; 52% female; mean age = 36 years) confirmed that the similarity manipulation was effective. After reading the same book purchase scenario and completing the similarity manipulation, participants indicated how similar they believed other students in the class were to themselves. We also measured how similar participants believed the book preferences of other students in the class were to their own book preferences. Both similarity measures were counterbalanced and measured on a seven-point scale (1 = Not at all similar, 7 = Very similar). As expected, participants in the similarity versus control condition perceived other students in the class to be more similar to themselves ( $M_S = 4.96$ ,

FIGURE 3

THE INTERACTIVE EFFECT OF PURCHASE MOTIVATION AND PERCEIVED SIMILARITY MANIPULATION ON ASSORTMENT SIZE CHOICE (STUDY 5)



NOTE.—ERROR BARS REPRESENT STANDARD ERRORS.

$SD = 1.18$  vs.  $M_C = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ,  $F(1, 121) = 7.47$ ,  $p = .007$ ) and to have more similar book preferences as themselves ( $M_S = 5.07$ ,  $SD = 1.24$  vs.  $M_C = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ,  $F(1, 121) = 14.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

## Results and Discussion

As predicted, the similarity manipulation had a significant interaction with purchase motivation ( $F(1, 348) = 4.17$ ,  $p = .042$ ). There was also a marginally significant main effect of purchase motivation ( $F(1, 348) = 3.46$ ,  $p = .064$ ), whereas the main effect of the similarity manipulation was not significant. Figure 3 depicts the documented interaction. Replicating our key finding, we find that participants in the control condition chose to review a larger assortment, on average, under a hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivation ( $M_{HC} = 10.87$ ,  $SD = 5.97$  vs.  $M_{UC} = 8.58$ ,  $SD = 4.60$ ;  $F(1, 348) = 8.12$ ,  $p = .005$ ). However, this difference in assortment size choice between the two purchase motivations is eliminated in the similarity condition ( $M_{HS} = 8.92$ ,  $SD = 5.51$  vs.  $M_{US} = 9.03$ ,  $SD = 5.87$ ;  $F(1, 348) = .02$ ,  $p = .901$ ). This is because highlighting the similarities between the participant and other buyers of the same product reduced assortment size significantly among hedonically motivated participants ( $F(1, 348) = 5.60$ ,  $p = .018$ ). There was no difference in assortment size between the control and similarity conditions among participants with a utilitarian purchase motivation ( $F(1, 348) = .29$ ,  $p = .594$ ).

Overall, consistent with the perceived preference uniqueness account, this study shows that when participants are asked to focus on how similar they are to other buyers of the same product, a hedonic versus utilitarian

purchase motivation does not lead to differences in assortment size choice.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations are prevalent in the marketplace, yet there is limited research on the role of these purchase motivations in consumer behavior (Botti and McGill 2011; Choi and Fishbach 2011). While the former motive is experiential in nature and reflects primarily consumers' desire to reward the self through the consumption of a particular purchase/service, the latter is instrumental and represents consumers' desire to satisfy their functional needs using the very same product/service. Focusing on the first step in the choice process—that is, choosing an assortment—the present research examines how hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations affect consumers' perceptions of preference uniqueness and, as a result, their assortment size choices. We find that consumers perceive their preferences as more unique (compared to others' preferences) under a hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivation. Greater perceived preference uniqueness for hedonic versus utilitarian purchases leads consumers to anticipate having greater difficulty finding a product to match their unique preferences, resulting in a desire to review a larger assortment of alternatives in the hopes of finding a preference-matching product.

While we find evidence that perceptions of preference uniqueness underlie the documented effect of purchase motivation on assortment size choice, we also tested a number of plausible alternative explanations. The results of our supplementary experiments did not support alternative mechanisms related to choice efficiency, choice autonomy, maximizing versus satisficing mindsets, goal importance, and goal specificity. See studies WA5–WA9 in the web appendix for a discussion of these alternative mechanism experiments.

### Implications for Research

Our research enhances the current understanding of the influence of consumers' preferences on the choice process. When engaging in a purchase decision, consumers not only focus on their absolute preferences but also consider their perceptions of how unique their preferences are relative to those of others. We introduce the concept of perceived preference uniqueness to the study of purchase motivations and consumers' prepurchase decision making, particularly their assortment size choices (Chernev 2006). We demonstrate that there is a positive link between perceived preference uniqueness and consumers' expectations of difficulty in finding a product matching their preferences. These two forces, influenced by a hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivation, sequentially affect the number of alternatives consumers are willing to review before they make a

purchase decision. Previous research on uniqueness has mainly focused on how consumers' desire for uniqueness shapes their product preferences and choice of unique or different products (Berger and Heath 2007; Chan et al. 2012; Irmak, Vallen, and Sen 2010; Simonson and Nowlis 2000; Wan, Xu, and Ding 2014). We add a new twist to this discussion by examining not consumers' needs or motives for uniqueness, but rather consumers' perceptions about the uniqueness of their preferences and how those perceptions affect subsequent decision making. Our research is also the first to show that hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations can alter consumers' perceptions of preference uniqueness.

Extant research on the hedonic-utilitarian construct in the consumer behavior literature has primarily investigated situational effects on consumers' choices among products with different levels of hedonic and utilitarian attributes (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Khan et al. 2005; Okada 2005; Sela et al. 2009; Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999). In the present research, we deviate from this tradition. We apply the hedonic-utilitarian dichotomy to consumers' purchase motivations rather than the product type. This examination is important because hedonic and utilitarian considerations shape many decisions consumers make for a given product (e.g., placing more emphasis on design-related features than safety-related features when buying a car). In that sense, our research is part of a separate, nascent literature focusing more on the aspects motivating the choice process rather than the choice itself (Botti and McGill 2011; Choi and Fishbach 2011).

Also, our findings further the understanding of consumers' attraction to larger (and in some cases smaller) assortments. To date, researchers have shown that consumers tend to prefer larger assortments when they focus more on the choice among assortments rather than available product options (Chernev 2006), when they buy in large quantities (Chernev 2008), when the attractiveness of the options under consideration is low (Chernev and Hamilton 2009), when the choice takes place here and now rather than at a distant time and location (Goodman and Malkoc 2012), and when they evaluate how much utility they actually experience from reviewing the assortment (Aydinli et al. 2017). We demonstrate that consumers' purchase motivation and perceptions of preference uniqueness also play an important role in determining the number of options they are willing to consider for their purchase.

Lastly, from a methodological standpoint, our asking of participants to numerically indicate their assortment size choices (in addition to asking them to indicate their choice between a small and a large assortment) is an important step forward. This approach is consistent with the notion that the latest advancements in product search tools provide consumers with a great deal of flexibility in selecting and customizing the portfolio of options they would like to consider prior to making a choice. We

encourage future research to utilize this assortment size measurement approach along with the traditional approach of asking participants to choose between assortments with preset sizes.

### Implications for Practice

Assortment size is an issue that is of great interest to marketers. Product category managers are interested in knowing how much variety to offer, advertising managers are interested in knowing how much variety to advertise, and retail managers are interested in knowing how much variety to carry. Our findings suggest that the importance of variety in offerings for a product category depends on the extent to which consumers believe they have unique preferences for a purchase in that particular category. One way to gauge consumers' perceptions of preference uniqueness, and thus their desire for a more varied and populous assortment, is to assess whether the purchase of a particular product is more strongly associated with hedonic versus utilitarian considerations. For instance, a store may be better off carrying a greater selection of flavored sparkling water and a smaller selection of flavored vitamin water (rather than vice versa). In parallel, a product can be advertised with a greater emphasis on hedonic or utilitarian aspects. If a firm chooses to emphasize the hedonic benefits of a particular product, offering a greater variety is likely to attract more customers. On the other hand, an emphasis on utilitarian aspects calls for a smaller category size.

Supermarkets often reconsider the variety of items they offer in each product category. Hoping to boost sales, managers sometimes reduce assortment sizes by cutting the lowest-selling items from a particular category (Boatwright and Nunes 2001; Sloot, Fok, and Verhoef 2006). Our results imply that this strategy may not prove to be successful with product categories that are more strongly associated with hedonic purchase motivations (e.g., chocolate, candy, and soda). Also, when deciding how much variety to carry, stores should pay attention to the extent to which their target customers embrace hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations. For instance, purchase motivations of consumers in a commercial/business area are more likely to be utilitarian as compared to those in a residential area. Thus, to attract more customers, stores located in a commercial/business area may consider carrying less variety than stores of a similar size located in a residential area. Further, offering more variety within a product category may help attract more customers for stores located in vacation and tourist attraction areas, as the target market for such stores is primarily concerned with hedonic purchase motivations.

### Limitations and Future Research

This research is not without limitations. First, we examine only one—albeit an important—dimension of prepurchase decision making, namely assortment size choice. Consumers' perceptions of preference uniqueness may influence other aspects of prepurchase decision making, such as choosing a shopping channel (i.e., online vs. offline shopping), planning for shopping time, deciding on shopping alone versus with others, and interacting with salespeople.

A fruitful avenue for future research is to investigate additional implications of consumers' perceived preference uniqueness.

Second, participants made their assortment size choices in a fairly isolated setting. Specifically, they did not have access to commonly used product search aids, such as customer ratings and product reviews. This follows the tradition in the literature. Nonetheless, one could argue that the absence of external information increases consumers' perceived difficulty in preference matching, leading to a greater attraction to larger assortments in general. Alternatively, it is also plausible that having more choices without having external aids to help screen them out may be overwhelming for consumers, leading to a greater attraction to smaller assortments. Whether and how these opposing effects manifest under hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations is an interesting question, yet out of the scope of the present research. Third, although we tested our hypothesis in different consumption contexts using various products, it is possible that our results may not be generalizable across all purchase situations. Future research should examine whether there are any particular contexts in which consumers do not perceive their preferences to be more unique (*vis-à-vis* others) under a hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivation.

Additionally, future research should further examine the role of emotions and cognition with respect to the effect of hedonic and utilitarian purchase motivations on assortment size. By manipulating whether consumers focus on feelings rather than reason and logic when reviewing product assortments, Aydinli et al. (2017) find that when focused on a feelings-based judgment process, consumers rate large assortments more favorably than small assortments and also report greater experience utility in reviewing the former than the latter. Relatedly, it would be interesting to test whether hedonic versus utilitarian purchase motivations and judgment processes (feelings vs. reason and logic) interact to influence consumers' assortment size choices. This question is particularly relevant for settings in which consumers do not know the composition of available product assortments until they actually visit a store.

Lastly, because we conducted our studies in the US, all study participants belong to a culture that highly values freedom of choice. In contrast, having more options is not

of great importance to many of those in non-Western cultures (Markus and Schwartz 2010). Additionally, those in less individualistic cultures may not show the same motivation for uniqueness among hedonic preferences that drives the effect of purchase motivation on assortment size choice. While our data do not allow us to test whether limiting the pool of participants to those who reside in the US introduces any systematic bias to our study, we believe whether and how culture moderates the documented link between purchase motivation and assortment size choice is a fruitful area for future research.

## Conclusion

A consumption episode can be triggered by a hedonic or a utilitarian motive. We demonstrate that whether consumers make their purchases under a hedonic or a utilitarian motivation affects the product search process by altering their perceptions of their preferences. Purchases intended to provide pleasure rather than fulfill a functional need increase perceived preference uniqueness, leading consumers to

anticipate greater difficulty finding a preference-matching product and to decide to review more product alternatives.

## DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION

Data collection for studies 1A (1/30/2015) and 2 (10/14/2016) by research assistants in the Boston University Questrom School of Business Behavioral Lab was supervised by the first author. Data collection for studies 1B (6/9/2017), 3 (1/9/2017), 4 (11/17/2017), and 5 (6/1/2017; post-test manipulation check: 2/23/2018) was conducted solely by the first author. In addition, due to the vast number of studies contained in the web appendix, for the sake of brevity we do not include the individual collection dates for those studies here, but data for all web appendix studies were collected by the three authors between 2014 and 2017. Lastly, the first author primarily analyzed the data for all six studies in the current article (plus all studies in the web appendix), but all authors discussed and reviewed the results.

## APPENDIX

### Purchase Scenario Pretest Results

The purchase motivation manipulations used in our studies were designed to highlight the hedonic and utilitarian end goals of a purchase. While hedonic purchase motivations emphasize the pleasure-seeking aspect of the purchase, utilitarian purchase motivations emphasize the task-driven aspect of the purchase. We pretested all scenarios to ensure the validity of our manipulations.

For each product category used in our studies, we asked pretest participants, who were assigned to either a hedonic or utilitarian purchase motivation condition, to indicate the extent to which the objective of their purchase relates to four dimensions—fun, pleasure, function, and practicality—on a seven-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). These four items were adapted from Voss et al.'s (2003) hedonic/utilitarian (HED/UT) scale, which measures dimensions of consumer attitudes toward product categories and brands. Fun and pleasure capture hedonic dimensions of a purchase, while function and practicality capture utilitarian dimensions of a purchase. For ease of interpretation, we reverse-coded participants' ratings of function and practicality, and averaged them with their ratings of fun and pleasure to create a single hedonic-utilitarian purchase objective scale, with higher values indicating a hedonic objective. We expected that the index score would be higher for hedonic purchase motivations than for utilitarian purchase motivations. As shown in table A1, the pretest results are consistent with our prediction and confirm the validity of our purchase motivation manipulations. Note that each pretest was run separately, using participants from the relevant subject pool.

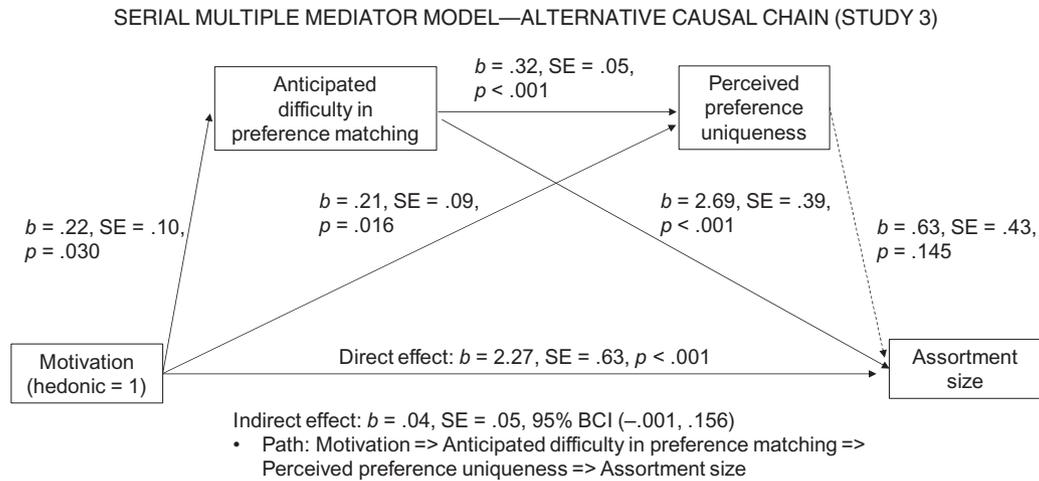
TABLE A1

PRETEST RESULTS FOR FIVE PRODUCT PURCHASE SCENARIOS (MEANS FOR THE HEDONIC-UTILITARIAN PURCHASE OBJECTIVE SCALE)

Product	N	Utilitarian	Hedonic	Nonspecified	F-statistic	p-value	Post hoc LSD (p-value)
Books	105	2.41 (1.01)	4.33 (1.44)		62.88	$p < .001$	
Documentaries	195	3.26 (.93)	4.97 (.93)	3.43 (.93)	62.77	$p < .001$	U versus H ( $p < .000$ ) U versus NS ( $p = .311$ ) H versus NS ( $p < .000$ )
Songs	25	4.17 (1.27)	4.80 (.87)		4.60	$p = .042$	
Car paint	101	4.00 (1.38)	4.95 (1.24)		13.04	$p < .001$	
CDs	99	3.40 (1.00)	5.00 (.94)		67.07	$p < .001$	

NOTE.—Table displays scale means for each condition. Standard deviations reported in parentheses.

FIGURE A1



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