

Introduction

- Being spontaneous or “living in-the-moment” has been linked with positive emotions such as happiness and joy (Lin and Epstein 2014) it has also been linked as a method to reverse a negative affective state (Gardner and Rook 1988). Spontaneity can provide a sudden rush of endorphins and act as a buffer for negative emotions (Lin and Epstein 2014).
- Alternatively, the further the future event or goal the greater the probability that individuals will form expectations, these expectations will then be used to evaluate the outcome (Foster et al. 1997, Rubie-Davies et al. 2006). The question we explore is how a positive expectation can impact the evaluation of the outcome.
- Prior work has examined the pleasure that can be elicited from anticipation. Anticipation precedes the event and we argue that it can be elicited by the expectation of the future event.
- When individuals act spontaneously they may lose out on creating positive expectations and subsequently the anticipation that leads to the future event. We ask,

Should we live in the moment?

Expectations towards future events

- Before an event occurs we form expectations on the type of experiences it will provide (Sanna and Turley 1996).
- A positive expectation has been shown to enhance the experience of a future event (Teas 1993) though if the experience was negative a positive expectation may compound the negative evaluation of the event (Rhee and Haunschild 2006).
- Initially the expectations we form are abstract but as the event becomes closer our expectations become more concrete (Liberman and Trope 1998), thus indicating that expectations may change over time.
- Expectations have largely been conceptualized as a cognitive evaluation of the future event, but we argue that this evaluation can lead to positive affect. This positive affect which we contend is anticipation will then impact evaluation of the event.

Anticipation

- We conceptualize anticipation based on the work of (Pezzulo 2008) as, an affective state that relies on a reference to the future.
- Anticipation has previously been shown as a motivator for future behaviors (Baumeister et al. 2007) it has also been shown that the pursuit of anticipation can overshadow the event to which one pursues (Weinstein 1980).
- Anticipation arises from the expectations of a future event. We argue that when the future event is positive then expectations of the event give rise to anticipation which mediates the relationship between expectations and evaluation of the event.

Methods

- Longitudinal analysis was used to evaluate changes in student anticipation over a period of time. Longitudinal analysis also evaluated the possibility of a relationship between expectation and anticipation.
- Mediation analysis tested the role of anticipation as a mediation variable linking expectation and experience.

Participants

- This study surveyed two sections of a Marketing Research class consisting of 36 undergraduate students. First, baseline data was gathered measuring expectations and student inclinations toward travel.
- A recurring survey was distributed weekly for 3 weeks leading up to University of Mary Washington Spring Break 2016 (February 27, 2016-March 6, 2016).
- A final survey to measure overall satisfaction of Spring Break was distributed after the students returned to campus.

Baseline Measures

- Baseline expectations were measured using a 9 item scale. The 9 items were expected excitement, expected fun, pleasantry, happiness, expected thrill, playfulness, enjoyableness, cheerfulness, and expected amusement. Each item measured along a 7-point Likert scale. Reliability testing revealed a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.902. With factor loadings, one factor explained 79.69% of the variance.

Recurring Measures

- Anticipation for each recurring survey was measured using a 4 item scale. The 4 items were how fun, relaxing, eventful, and entertaining the participant anticipated spring break will be. Each item measured along a 7-point Likert scale. Reliability testing revealed a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.778. With factor loading, one factor explained 74.51% of the variance.

Outcome Measures

- Evaluation of Spring Break 2016 used an 8 item scale. The 8 items were overall excitement, fun, pleasantry, thrill, happiness, playfulness, enjoyable, and overall amusement. Each item measured along a 7 point Likert scale. Reliability testing revealed a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.960. With factor loadings, one factor explained 79.23% of the variance.

Results

- Longitudinal analysis reveals there is a relationship between time and expectations. It was shown that individuals who begin with high expectations of an event will have a greater increase in positive anticipation over time. This higher positive anticipation will in turn lead to a better overall experience evaluation during Spring Break.

Dependent Variable: Anticipation

Coefficient	Estimate	t-Value	Significance
Intercept	5.178 (0.594)	8.72	< 0.001
Time	-0.586 (0.186)	-3.14	< 0.01
Expectations	0.153 (0.118)	1.30	0.203
Time*Expectations	0.105 (0.037)	2.88	< 0.01

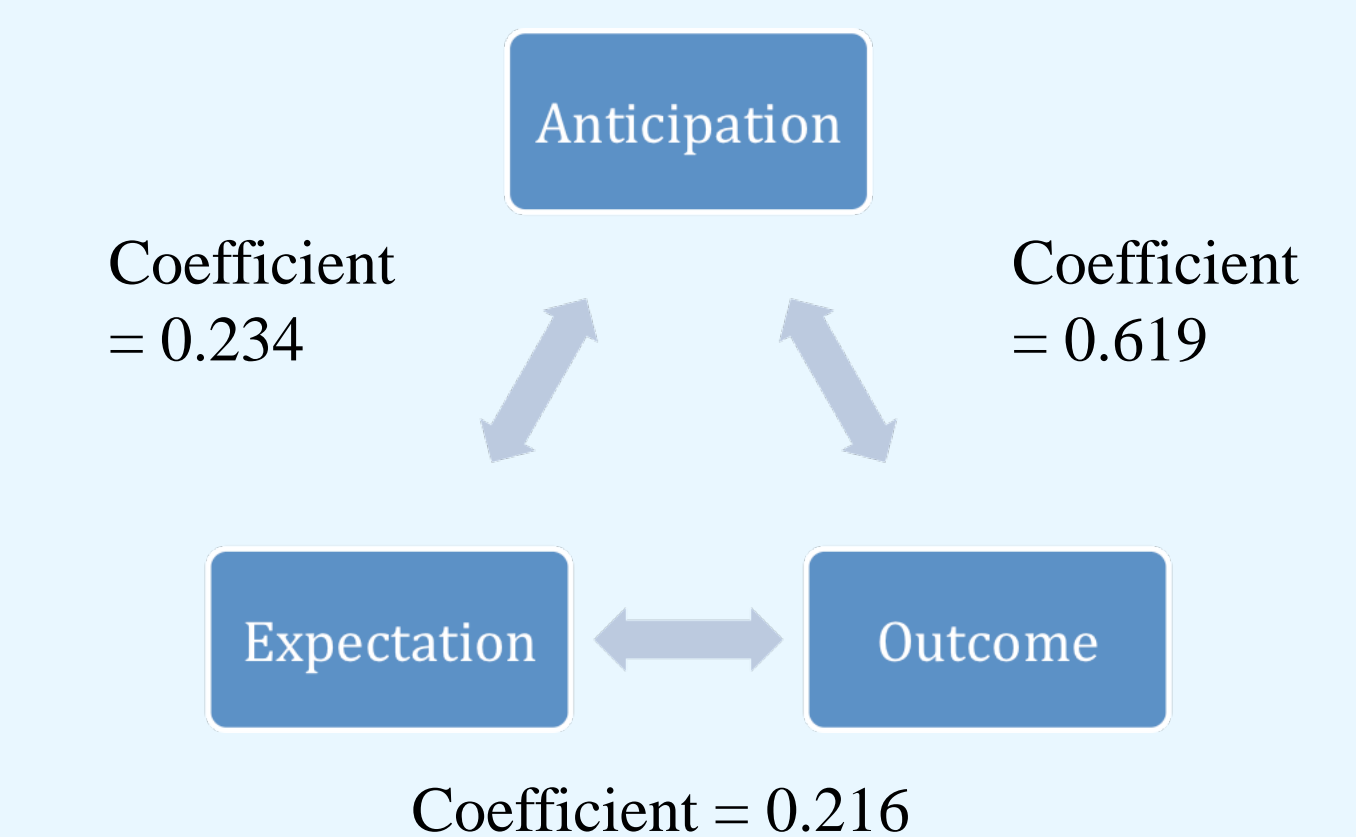
AIC = 187.4

Log likelihood = 181.4

(Standard error in parentheses)

Results

- Mediation Analysis were evaluated using methods by Hayes and Preacher (2011). Anticipation mediated the relationship between expectations and outcomes. It revealed an indirect effect of expectations on outcomes (LLCI = 0.108, ULCI = 0.395).



Discussion

Theoretical Contributions

- The sooner someone achieves a positive expectation concerning an event, their anticipation will grow positively and will then correlate to a more positive outcome after said trip occurs.
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Managerial Contributions

- According to this study’s results, businesses should focus their marketing efforts on consumer anticipation to improve overall perceived satisfaction of a service. In order to do so, we recommend businesses work to gain commitment from consumers first, then build anticipation during the time frame between consumer committal to an event and the event itself.
- Good marketing in this time frame is crucial to increase the mediation variable of positive anticipation, which in turn increases post-service overall consumer perceived satisfaction.

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