

# INTENTIONS FOR ENGAGING IN NOVEL EXPERIENCE: SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO MOTIVATIONAL AUTONOMY THROUGH A MIXED-METHODOLOGY APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

*Modern consumers are constantly craving novel experiences, which signify a broader shift toward experiential consumption where individuals value not just products or services, but the stories, meanings, hedonic benefits, emotions involved when seeking out experiential opportunities. Given the above growing trend, the current study explores the construct of Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience and investigates the underlying factors, such as autonomy, that drive individuals' intention to engage in such experiences. To accomplish the aim of the study, the methodology is structured in two parts. The first part (Study 1a, 1b, and 1c) focuses on the development of a measurement scale for the construct, including assessments of model fit, along with its convergent, discriminant and nomological validity, with the construct of autonomy incorporated to establish theoretical grounding. The second part (Study 2) analyzes secondary data from Airbnb, examining intentions for novel experience through the lens of the variables revolving around decisions, stimulation, and self-determination (autonomy). Together, the two parts of this mixed-methodology study offer an integrated perspective on understanding the intention to pursue novel experiences and conclude that autonomy is a key factor of consumers' motivation to engage in such experiences.*

**Keywords:** Experiential Consumption, Mixed Methodology, Scale Development, Self-Determination, Autonomy.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of experiential consumption has gained prominence in recent years, driven by consumers' growing interest in the experiential components of products and services. Various experiences, such as hobbies, sports, live events, travel, dining, and others, have become central to consumer lifestyles, signaling a shift from material acquisition to the pursuit of memorable and personally meaningful forms of consumption. More specifically, consumers continuously seek out novel experiences as a means of exploring new dimensions of personal meaning, relevance, memorability, etc. (e.g., Skavronskaya, Moyle, and Scott 2020, Pelletier and Collier 2018). As interest in experiential consumption continues to grow, especially in the exploration of novel experiences, this study centers on the theoretical development of the construct Intentions to Engage in Novel Experience within the context of experiential consumption. IN pursuit of this research objective, this study is structured into two parts and employs a mixed-methodology approach. Study 1 involves the development of a measurement scale, beginning with the definition of the construct that is proposed to ensure that it captures the construct's essential meaning from cognitive, behavioral, and motivational perspectives; next, scales are developed based on the theoretical dimensions of the construct, and three studies are conducted to examine the factorial

structure of the variable, as well as its reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. As a final step of Study 1, the nomological validity of intentions to engage in novel experience is assessed by incorporating it into a theoretical framework alongside the independent variable autonomy, a key variable in self-determination theory. The relationship between the construct and its antecedents is examined empirically. The results show that intentions to engage in novel experiences are positively associated with autonomy, which reflects a person's exercise of intrinsic motivation and self-directed behavior. In Study 2, further analysis was carried out to investigate how autonomy relates to two other variables, decisions (a type of behavioral activation) and stimulation (of novelty and excitement) which capture an individual's motivational drive to engage with new and unfamiliar activities that offer psychological benefits, thus reflects the central construct of intentions for engaging in novel experience.

## THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

The construct Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience pertain to an individual's desire to seek out new and unfamiliar experiences. In other words, Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience fall within the broader scope of intentions for experiential consumption, but specifically emphasize experiences that are novel, unfamiliar, unconventional, stimulating, exploratory, etc. To elucidate the underlying mechanism behind the intentions for novel experience, this study employs Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as a guiding framework. Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan 2012) contends that the optimal functioning and psychological well-being arise when three psychological needs are fulfilled: autonomy, which refers to acting with a sense of control over one's actions; competence, the need to feel capable and achieved; and relatedness, which refers to the feelings of emotional connection and social bonds (Deci and Ryan 2012). Among the three basic psychological needs, autonomy is guided by intrinsic interests and values rather than external forces to self-govern actions (Deci 1992, Deci and Ryan 2013). Moreover, behaviors are more self-directed and sustained when driven by autonomous motivation rather than controlled motivation (Deci and Ryan 1987).

The sense of autonomy underpins the intention to seek novel experiences, as individuals feel intrinsically motivated to explore new and unfamiliar things (Deci and Ryan 1985, Schmidhuber 2010). Previous studies proposed that the need to experience new and different things should be seen as a basic psychological need that fits within self-determination framework of human motivation, as intrinsic motivation emphasizes the desire to explore, achieve personal growth, realize self-actualization, seek a meaningful life, which can be supported through engaging in novel activities (González-Cutre et al. 2016). Prior research indicates a strong connection between experiential consumption and intrinsic motivation (Van Boven 2010). Since autonomy plays a key role in fostering intrinsic motivation (Dickinson 1995), it stands to reason that autonomy may also be strongly associated with intention to pursue experiential consumption. Furthermore, the intention for novel experiences reflects the underlying novelty need, which prior studies has found to predict intrinsic motivation and is positively associated with other self-determination needs such as autonomy (González-Cutre et al. 2016); individuals with elevated levels of need for autonomy tend to respond more positively to novel things as these provide greater freedom, flexibility, and opportunities for self-directed behavior (De Jonge et al. 2018). Integrating insights from the above literature, it becomes evident that autonomy acts as the psychological factor that enables individuals to actively pursue new and stimulating experiences.

To empirically investigate the relationship between autonomy and individuals' intentions to engage in novel experiences, this paper presents a series of two main studies with a mix-methods

approach. Study 1, which includes sub-studies 1a, 1b, and 1c, focuses on developing and validating a new measurement scale of intentions for novel experience, grounded in theoretical foundations and designed to reflect its cognitive, behavioral, and motivational dimensions. In Study 1a, the scale items are evaluated through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) along with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to uncover the underlying dimensions and model fit. Study 1b tests the scale's convergent and discriminant validity. Study 1c centers on examining the relationship between autonomy and intentions for novel experience within a nomological framework, which reflects the core theoretical focus of the paper to understand the motivational mechanism underpinning the novel experience seeking behavior, as proposed by Self-Determination Theory. Building on this, Study 2 further provides validation by testing the autonomy–novelty intention relationship using Airbnb data and text analysis.

## STUDY 1A

Building on the theoretical foundation, the concept of Intentions for Novel Experience refers to an individual's motivational inclination or desire to seek out new and unfamiliar experiences. The construct can be further specified as comprising cognitive, behavioral, and motivational components, capturing how individuals think about, act on, and are internally driven toward novel experiences. This definition also aligns with Bagozzi's proposition that intention formation includes cognitive processing, desire/wanting, as well as behavioral preparation (Bagozzi 1992) to more comprehensively capture how individuals cognitively engage with potential activities, are behaviorally prepared to act, and are internally driven to pursue new and unfamiliar experiences. Complementing Bagozzi's perspective, Self-Determination Theory offers insights into the motivational foundation of intentions. Though Self-Determination theory focuses on the motivational quality behind intention, it connects cognitive process (internalization of values, Grolnick et al. 1997, Deci et al. 1994), motivational states (intrinsic vs. extrinsic, Ryan and Deci 2020, Vallerand 2000), and behavioral regulation (the readiness, initiation, and persistence in action, Deci and Ryan 2012, Reeve et al. 2012). For example, when individuals internalize the reasons for their behavior (such as motivations), the reasons become part of their cognitive process, such as personal values, beliefs, and interests (Deci and Ryan 2012); also, this internalization guides self-directed action as it forms the foundation for behavioral regulation that is aligned with an individual's personal values and beliefs (e.g., Deci and Ryan 2000, Ryan and Deci 2006, Fishbein 1979).

Grounded in the preceding definition of the construct, the purpose of Study 1 was to create an initial scale to assess the construct. It follows a scale development process based on Hinkin's (1998) guidelines, with the goal of producing a 4- to 6-item scale which represents a manageable set of well-validated items after testing for reliability and validity (Hinkin 1998). A four-item scale was generated directly from the conceptual definition of intentions for engaging in novel experience, which was intended to reflect the main cognitive, behavioral, and motivational components such as seeking information about the new experiences, the willingness to act when new experiences arise, personal desire for novel experiences, and exploratory drive behind.

Data were collected from 169 American adults (82 females, 87 males; mean age = 24.1 years) via a Qualtrics consumer panel in the United States. The survey included items representing all four items of the scale. Participants reviewed the instructions and then rated each statement according to how much they agreed or disagreed that it described themselves using a seven-point Likert scale with endpoints labeled (“strongly disagree”) and 7 (“strongly agree”).

To begin with, the data analysis involved Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), utilizing principal component analysis selected for extraction and oblimin rotation applied to permit inter-factor relationships. The results presented in Tables 1 and 2 show that the four items measuring intentions for engaging in novel experience exhibited strong reliability ( $\alpha = 0.866$ ) and high factor loadings (all  $> .80$ ), accounting for 71.378% of the explained variance. These findings validate the four-item scale as both reliable and robust.

<b>Table 1</b>	
<b>ITEM-TO-TOTAL CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR THE SCALE</b>	
<b>Items - Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience</b>	<b>Item-to-total Correlation</b>
1	0.810
2	0.801
3	0.902
4	0.863

<b>Table 2</b>			
<b>EFA: FACTOR LOADINGS WITH EIGENVALUE AND EXPLAINED VARIANCE</b>			
<b>Items - Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience</b>	<b>FactorLoading</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	0.808	4.63	1.40
2	0.794	4.95	1.42
3	0.907	5.07	1.46
4	0.866	5.08	1.46

Note. Factor 1: Eigenvalue = 71.378. Explained Variance = 71.38%.

To confirm the one-factor structure and assess model adequacy, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed. The results aligned with the EFA outcomes and revealed a good fit for the proposed model ( $\chi^2 = 2.754$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .252$ ; TLI = 0.993; CFI = 0.998; NFI = 0.992; GFI = 0.992, RMSEA = .047) (Kenny, 2015). Overall, the results of both EFA and CFA affirm the support for the proposed factor structure with great model fit.

## STUDY 1B

Study 1b was designed to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the intentions for engaging in novel experience scale. A new dataset was collected through Qualtrics, a U.S.-based consumer panel provider. The sample consisted of 136 American adults (comprising 80 females, 56 males; with an average age of 24.40). After reviewing the survey instructions, participants evaluated the scale items using a seven-point Likert scale with endpoints labeled “strongly disagree” and 7 “strongly agree”, consistent with the procedure used in Study 1.

Convergent validity was assessed through multiple indicators. First, with a composite reliability (CR) of 0.836, the construct surpassed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.80 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Second, the average variance extracted (AVE) for the intentions for engaging in novel experience variable was 0.563, surpassing the 0.50 benchmark proposed by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). The above indicates that the scale items effectively converge on a single underlying construct, providing clear indication of convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was evaluated through comparing the construct of Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience with a related but distinct construct – Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)

(Zhang et al. 2020). Both Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience and FoMO involve a heightened sensitivity to opportunities for warding or stimulating experiences, and may result in similar exploratory behaviors, such as seeking new activities, constantly pursuing new opportunities, engaging in socially connected experiences, etc. Though both intentions for engaging in novel experience and FoMO stem from a self-determined desire (e.g., Zhang et al. 2020), an individual's intentions for novel experiences reflect a more autonomous, self-initiated engagement with novel experiences. Therefore, while the two constructs share conceptual overlap, they remain theoretically and contextually distinct.

To assess the discriminant validity between Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience and FoMO, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed using the combined set of items from both constructs. Following Zhang et al. (2020), FoMO was expected to load onto two distinct dimensions (personal and social), while Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience was loaded solely on the third, as Table 3 shows. The absence of significant cross-loadings between the two constructs further supports that Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience and FoMO, while related, are empirically distinct in structure.

<b>Table 3</b> <b>DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY OF INTENTIONS FOR ENGAGING IN NOVEL EXPERIENCE IN RELATION TO FOMO DIMENSIONS</b>				
No.	Scale Items	EFA Components		
		1	2	3
	<b>FoMO - Personal</b>			
1.	I feel anxious when I do not experience events/opportunities	<b>0.876</b>	-0.040	0.074
2.	I believe I am falling behind compared with others when I miss events/opportunities	<b>0.787</b>	-0.049	-0.002
3.	I feel anxious because I know something important or fun must happen when I miss events/opportunities	<b>0.859</b>	-0.060	-0.018
4.	I feel sad if I am not capable of participating in events due to constraints of other things	<b>0.840</b>	-0.031	-0.022
5.	I feel regretful of missing events/opportunities	<b>0.811</b>	-0.053	0.050
	<b>FoMO - Social</b>			
1.	I think my social groups view me as unimportant when I miss events/opportunities	0.004	<b>-0.900</b>	-0.018
2.	I think I do not fit insocial groups when I miss events/opportunities	0.083	<b>-0.876</b>	0.019
3.	I think I am excluded by my social groups when I miss events/opportunities	0.087	<b>-0.893</b>	-0.034
4.	I feel ignored/forgotten by my social groups when I miss events/opportunities	0.035	<b>-0.903</b>	0.023
	<b>Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experiences</b>			
1.	I would like to seek information about novel experiences	-0.158	-0.298	<b>0.729</b>
2.	I seize opportunities of experiencing new things	0.017	0.040	<b>0.870</b>
3.	Consuming new experiences is what I would like to do in my life	0.174	0.108	<b>0.829</b>
4.	I have exploratory motives of pursuing new experiences	0.142	0.139	<b>0.828</b>

## STUDY 1C

The objective of Study 1c is to empirically test the theoretical proposition introduced earlier, specifically the role of autonomy as a psychological driver underlying individuals' intentions to engage in novel experiences. A new sample of 143 American adults (69 females and 74 males, mean age = 24.75 years) obtained through a Qualtrics panel was recruited to participate in the

study. Participants completed both the Intentions for Engaging in Novel Experience scale and Self Determination Scale (Autonomy) (Vlachopoulos and Michailidou 2006, Zhang 2023).

To assess nomological validity, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted with autonomy entered as the independent variable and intentions for engaging in novel experience as the outcome variable. The results revealed a significantly positive relationship between autonomy and intentions for engaging in novel experience ( $\beta = .515$ ,  $p < .001$ ), showing that higher autonomy level relates to greater intentions to pursue novel experiences. The model captured a significant share of variance in the dependent variable ( $R^2 = .515$ ,  $F(1, 141) = 50.988$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings reinforce the construct's nomological validity, as the observed relationship aligns with theoretical expectations drawn from self-determination theory.

## STUDY 2

Prior research highlights the value of mixed method studies as they enable researchers to combine multiple types of data to build a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon while improving the credibility and robustness of findings (e.g., Harrison and Reilly 2011). Given the advantages of employing a mixed-method approach, Study 2 utilizes secondary data to verify the relationship between autonomy and intentions for engaging in novel experience, in contrast to Study 1, which relies on primary data collected directly from respondents. In particular the dataset will be obtained from Airbnb. In recent years, the analysis of Airbnb data has seen growing attention in marketing field, as scholars employ varied research designs to explore marketing strategies, consumer behavior, underlying psychological dynamics, etc. (e.g., Roma et al. 2019, Lalicic and Weismayer 2018, Guttentag 2016). Particularly, the virtual experiences offered on Airbnb provide a contextually rich source of data as these experiences are designed to offer users access to novel, diverse, and unconventional activities from around the world. Consumers who choose to purchase these virtual experiences demonstrate self-endorsed motivation and personal interest, which makes this context particularly well-suited for testing the relationship between autonomy and intentions for engaging in novel experience.

Data was manually collected in April 2024 from user reviews of three popular types of digital experiences listed on Airbnb: a guided meditation session, a virtual magic show, and an instructional cooking class. These experiences were intentionally selected because they reflect a diverse range of experiential formats that engage different aspects of self-determination or motivations. Additionally, the variety among these experiences captures different forms of novelty and intrinsic motivation that consumers seek in digital experiential consumption. A total of 4,858 user reviews posted between 2021 and 2024 were extracted from the Airbnb website.

The next phase involved analyzing the comments with the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software (Pennebaker et al., 2007), which is an advanced text processing tool that breaks down text into individual words and assigns them to psychologically meaningful categories, such as emotional tone, cognitive processing, etc. and it has been extensively applied in marketing research (e.g., Burton et al. 2021). Three variables from multiple LIWC dictionaries were used: 1) the autonomy variable, extracted from the Self Determination linguistic dictionary (Oliver et al. 2008), which refers to one's inherent need to act with a sense of personal choice (Oliver et al. 2008, Deci and Ryan 2000); 2) the decisions variable, extracted from the Behavioral Activation linguistic dictionary, which describes a person's ability to plan and make good decisions about what activities to engage in (Burkhardt et al. 2021). The variable captures how individuals decide which experiences to pursue, thereby aligning closely with the construct of intentions for engaging in novel experience; and 3) the stimulation variable, extracted from the Personal Value linguistic

dictionary, which refers to the motivational goal of seeking novelty, excitement, or challenges (Ponizovskiy et al. 2020). As stimulation inherently involves a desire for novelty, it conceptually aligns with the construct of intentions for engaging in novel experience. Using LIWC, the comments were processed by calculating the percentage of words that matched categories from the three dictionaries mentioned above and then converted into numerical values suitable for the subsequent regression analysis.

A simple linear regression analysis was performed with autonomy as the predictor variable and decisions and stimulation as the outcome variables, respectively. The analysis showed a significantly positive association between autonomy and the decision variable ( $\beta = .270$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that the elevated levels of autonomy are associated with a greater tendency to make intentional choices about engaging in activities. The model significantly predicted the variance in the decision variable ( $R^2 = .133$ ,  $F(1, 4856) = 87.755$ ,  $p < .001$ ). A detailed report of linear regression analysis predicting the decisions variable is shown in Table 4.

<b>Table 4</b> <b>RESULTS FROM LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS PREDICTING DECISIONS AS THE OUTCOME VARIABLE</b>					
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standard Error	Beta Coefficients	t Stat	P-value
Constant	0.512	0.024	-	21.138	<0.001
Autonomy	0.27	0.029	0.133	9.368	<0.001

Similarly, when stimulation was entered as the outcome variable, the results also revealed a significant positive relationship with autonomy ( $\beta = .128$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The model significantly predicted the variance in the stimulation variable as well ( $R^2 = .035$ ,  $F(1, 4856) = 6.059$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This finding suggests that individuals with higher autonomy are more likely to pursue novelty and excitement, which is closely align with the intention to engage in experiential, particularly novel, experiences. A detailed report of linear regression analysis predicting the stimulation variable is shown in Table 5.

<b>Table 5</b> <b>RESULTS FROM LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS PREDICTING STIMULATION AS THE OUTCOME VARIABLE</b>					
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standard Error	Beta Coefficients	t Stat	P-value
Constant	0.805	0.044	-	18.374	<0.001
Autonomy	0.128	0.052	0.035	2.461	0.014

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present study examined the role of autonomy in shaping consumers' intentions to engage in novel experiences across both primary and secondary data contexts. Across two distinct datasets and methodological approaches, the findings support the proposition that autonomy is a significant motivational driver of intentions for engaging in novel experience. In the primary data, a new measurement scale was constructed to capture the construct of intentions for engaging in novel experience, with the scale's nomological validity confirmed by showing that autonomy was a significant antecedent. Individuals who are more autonomous reported a stronger intention to seek out novel experience, suggesting that the pursuit of novelty in experiential consumption is

driven by intrinsic motivations for self-exploration and growth. This finding was further reinforced through secondary data analysis using a large dataset of consumer reviews about Airbnb's virtual experiences. The analysis revealed that autonomy was associated with both decisions and stimulation (of novelty and excitement), which are conceptually and empirically tied to the intentions for engaging in novel experience. Together, the consistency across multiple data sources adds confidence that autonomy plays a key role in internally driving consumer engagement with novel experiences.

## **THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Regarding the theoretical implications, the relationship between autonomy and intentions for engaging in novel experience extends Self Determination Theory by illustrating how autonomy serves as a motivational force that drives individuals to actively pursue novel, unfamiliar, and exploratory experiences. While Self Determination Theory identifies autonomy as a core psychological need, much of the application has focused on general pursuit that fulfills the psychological needs. By linking the two constructs, this study situates autonomy within the context of experiential novelty-seeking and underscores autonomy's role in fueling not only engagement or persistence, but adventurousness, curiosity, etc. Thus, the results extend SDT's explanatory scope to encompass experience-based behavior tied to exploration. Furthermore, the results of this study also align with the view that novelty satisfies self-determined needs, particularly autonomy, by offering opportunities for freedom, flexibility, and self-directed exploration, as highlighted by González-Cutre et al. (2016) and De Jonge et al. (2018).

With regard to managerial implications, the findings of the current study highlight the importance of fostering environments that support consumer autonomy, especially when promoting novel experiences. For example, companies can enhance engagement by offering customizable options that emphasize freedom of choice and exploration. Given its relevance across both digital and in-store contexts, businesses can leverage consumers' desire for autonomy and novelty by offering the packages with multiple options for activities that empower consumers to explore and make choices. Moreover, new experiences that are framed as personally meaningful or centered on self-exploration can enhance consumers' sense of control, thereby strengthening autonomy-driven motivation to seek novelty. Although experience can also be considered as a form of product, companies can shift from traditional product-focused promotional messaging to experience-based engagement strategies that emphasize freedom of choice and self-directed exploration, which aligns more effectively with autonomy-driven intentions. In sum, leveraging the link between autonomy and novel experience-seeking enables companies to craft more personally relevant and meaningful value proposition that resonate with self-directed consumers.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

While the current study established a solid theoretical basis for the development of the construct intention to engage in novel experiences, several limitations should be noted. First, although the scale items are concise and theoretically grounded, the initial item pool was not derived from qualitative pretesting or exploratory interviews with consumers. While this does not undermine the construct's conceptual clarity, incorporating a qualitative phase in future work could enrich the scale's content validity. Second, the analysis of virtual experiences was based on a large dataset of consumer reviews from Airbnb; however, the range of experience categories included in the sample was somewhat limited. While this approach allowed for rigorous testing



within a specific context, it does restrict generalizability across diverse types of experiences. Future research could broaden the scope by including a wider variety of virtual and physical experience categories and examine whether autonomy plays a differentiated role across them. Finally, this study focused exclusively on autonomy as the core self-determination construct. Future studies should consider incorporating other key psychological needs from Self-Determination Theory, particularly competence and relatedness, to build a more comprehensive understanding of how different motivational drivers may interact to shape consumer behavior in experiential contexts.

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