

**WILLING TO WAIT FOR IT OR WASTE NO
TIME? HOW RELATIONSHIP STATUS AND
COGNITIVE RIGIDITY AFFECT WAITS
FOR SERVICE DELIVERY**

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Master of Philosophy (Marketing)

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations

Faculty of Business and Law

Queensland University of Technology

2022

Keywords

Marketing Research, Service Research, Field Theory, Sunk Costs, Anticipated Regret, Relationship Status, Partnered Consumer Behaviour, Relationships, Single Consumer Behaviour, Cancellation, Waiting, Waits for Service.

Abstract

Waits for service are an inevitable part of the service delivery process. Across three decades of research, the field has typically conceptualised waiting as a homogeneously negative experience for consumers without real exploration of the ways in which they could differ in their tolerance for it. This has left service providers without actionable information to use in segmenting customers according to their waiting tolerance. To provide a more nuanced understanding of this topic, waiting is examined from the perspective of Field Theory and Prospect Theory. Building on these theories, the variables of relationship status and cognitive rigidity are introduced to the field in order to examine how they impact cancellation as a response to waiting. Four experimental studies were conducted to explore the impacts of relationship status and cognitive rigidity on waiting, integrating field data and online experiment data from multiple service contexts, and using participants from multiple continents. The findings demonstrated that in comparison with consumers who are in relationships (i.e., partnered consumers), single consumers are more likely to cancel service requests if they have to wait. This occurs because partnered consumers have higher sensitivity towards sunk costs in consumption, whereas consumers who are single have lower sensitivity towards sunk costs. Further, it is demonstrated that high cognitive rigidity intensifies sensitivity to sunk costs, thus affecting cancellation. Service providers can use these findings when managing demand for their services, for example, by targeting singles in periods of low demand and partnered consumers in periods of high demand.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Frank Mathmann and Dominique Greer, for their mentorship in building my skills as a researcher, and for helping me complete this project. This undertaking would obviously have in no way been possible without you. My life will always be better due to my education as part of my PhD and for that I am sincerely grateful.

I would also like to thank my parents, sisters, and brothers-in-law for their support throughout my years spent doing this degree. I don't really have words to express the level of support offered by you, or my level of appreciation for it. But I am of course deeply grateful.

Thank you to my best friend, Liam, for sticking with me through this too. I won't lie, your enthusiasm for getting to call me 'Dr Crow' because it sounds like a Bond villain name was at multiple times my sole remaining source of motivation for finishing the PhD.

Thank you to my other best friend, Thuy. I know I've said this before, but I would not have survived this without you. The entire process of being an HDR student became much easier once you joined Frank's team of students. It was an honour to watch you grow and succeed as a researcher, and to learn from you. I know I became a much better researcher due to having you as a peer.

Finally, thank you to the wider support provided by the QUT AMPR faculty, including the wider community of HDR students, fellow tutors, internal reviewers, and all of the admin staff who helped me during my candidature. I especially acknowledge the support given to me through the QUT Business School Research Scholarship.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Reflecting conventional wisdom that “[n]o customer likes to wait” (Lamski, 2015), service providers are motivated to mitigate the negative effects of waiting for customers during service delivery. Disney, for example, has long been considered the world’s leader in wait management, investing around a billion dollars into reducing negative waiting outcomes in their parks in just the last decade alone (Kuang, 2015). The company employs a range of operational measures to manage waits for their customers, including allowing customers to book places in virtual queues to reduce wait times (Kuang, 2015; Prisco, 2019), strategically designs servicescapes to entertain guests while waiting (Debczak, 2020; Kuang, 2015; Prisco, 2019), and designs physical queues to prevent customers from prematurely leaving them before they get the services they originally wanted (Debczak, 2020; Prisco, 2019). This drive fits with the conventional wisdom that because no customer likes to wait, a service provider that fails to manage waits correctly will also fail to derive value from their customers, due to issues like missed opportunities to generate revenue when customers cancel. However, while most companies aim to reduce the negative impacts of waiting on their customers, they fail to anticipate that some customers are more tolerant of waiting than conventional wisdom would predict. In this way, real consumer waiting behaviour can differ significantly from what service providers and researchers expect it to be.

A prominent example of this is the popularity of restaurants on Valentine’s Day. Often argued to be the busiest day of the year for the restaurant industry (Open for Business, 2015), the surge in demand typically leads to extreme increases in wait times, with one-star reviews for restaurants on the day recounting issues such as 60-minute waits before entrees are brought to a table (Open for Business, 2015). In fact, service delivery is so poor that restaurant industry insiders often recommend against any contact with the restaurant sector on Valentine’s Day at all (Chen, 2013; Hoffman, 2019). Despite this, surveys regularly identify eating at a restaurant to be the most popular way of celebrating Valentine’s Day (Chen, 2013, n.p.; Relationships Australia, 2019). Therefore, if no customer likes to wait, and reducing wait times is a sensible billion-dollar investment for a company like Disney, why are customers so willing to endure long waits for service on Valentine’s Day? Could there be something about being in a relationship with another person that makes a customer more

likely to stay with a service provider if they have to wait for a service to be delivered to them?

While there have been three decades of research into the topic of waits for service (Hornik 1984; Maister, 1985), research has largely taken a one-size-fits-all approach to the topic and explored waiting as a homogenously negative experience for customers (Ryan et al., 2018). That is, the majority of research has focused on the negative aspects of waiting without considering differences among consumers that may attenuate them. Many studies, for example, have shown that waiting can reduce customer satisfaction (Davis & Heinke, 1998; Davis & Vollmann, 1990; Hensley & Sulek, 2007; Katz et al., 1991; Lee & Lambert, 2006), can lead to negative emotional responses for customers (Houston et al., 1998; Hui & Tse, 1996; Kim et al., 2016; Marquis et al., 1994; Taylor, 1995), poorer evaluations of service quality (Dube-Rioux et al., 1988; Houston et al. 1998; Hui & Tse, 1996; Katz et al., 1991; Taylor, 1995), and can lead to reduced repatronage of service providers after waiting (DeVries et al., 2018). Reducing these negative impacts has been a sensible focus for organisations as it is clearly important that wait times are reduced and their negative impacts are mitigated where service providers are able to do so. However, given these negative outcomes that waiting can have on customers, it is also important that waits are managed in accordance with variations among customers wherever possible. While the waiting literature has produced a significant body of research capable of providing information that can assist with managerial action aimed at reducing and mitigating waiting, it has largely neglected to conduct research that can assist service providers in managing waits according to customer traits.

While it has long been acknowledged that customer perceptions play an important role in shaping reactions to waiting (Maister, 1985), researchers have treated solutions to managing waiting largely as an operational issue, advising practitioners to change how they manage staff or servicescapes to improve customer reactions to waiting (Durrande-Moreau, 1999; Maister, 1985; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018). For example, managers are often advised to alter their atmospherics or processes, such as by playing music to reduce perceived wait times (Chebat et al., 1993) or asking customers to peruse menus (Maister, 1985) to distract them while they wait. However, there are two serious problems with this approach. Firstly, despite the popularity of these methods in the literature, some studies have shown that these operational solutions can actually do very little, or even nothing at all to mitigate the negative

consequences of waiting (Antonides et al., 2002; Butcher & Kayani, 2008; Durrande-Moreau, 1999; Katz et al., 1991; Smidts & Pruyn, 1994; Whiting & Donthu, 2009), and in some cases studies have shown they can even backfire, rendering the wait even more unpleasant (Chebat et al., 2010; Miller et al., 2008). This means that operational solutions may not really derive a return on investment for the service providers that employ them.

Secondly, by focusing too narrowly on these operational solutions, service researchers have neglected to take a customer-centric approach to managing waits for service. This is a serious failure because extant research shows that customer-centric strategies can outperform non-customer-centric strategies (Aksoy et al., 2008; Kumar et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2014; Shah et al., 2006). Moreover, customer segmentation is rightfully considered “one of the most important concepts in marketing” (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018, pg. 68). Following the logic of the importance of customer segmentation, it would be generally considered that no service provider can successfully serve every possible customer segment, and that all service providers therefore need to focus on serving the customer segments that are a good fit for their particular business (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018). However, despite its near ubiquitousness, and the value it could pose for service providers, this concept has not been applied to the study of waits for service. That is, because waiting is an inevitable part of service delivery, just as it is important for service providers to segment customers based on their fit for the company in other respects (e.g. income, location), it is also important that they segment customers based on their tolerance of waiting. This would allow a company to bring in the right customer for the wait it will inevitably have to manage on their customers’ behalf, and thereby support a reduction in negative waiting outcomes, like cancellation.

Unfortunately, however, the field has neglected to create an understanding of how customers differ in their reactions to waiting, and specifically has failed to examine which customers might be more or less tolerant of waiting. In doing so, the literature has failed to provide information that firms can use to craft a customer-centric approach to managing waits and segment their customers based on these potential differences. Indeed, with few exceptions (see Mattila & Hanks, 2012; Paines et al., 2016a; Yang et al., 2013), the customer’s perspective is largely absent from the literature on waiting (Paines et al., 2016a). A prominent early literature review in the literature refrained from classifying individual factors among customers as an important future research direction, even going so far as to state that individual factors experienced within customers were “of little interest to management”

(Durrande-Moreau, 1999, p.177) because these factors would be “hardly controllable by the manager” (Durrande-Moreau, 1999, p.176). Perhaps stemming from this early view in the literature, research on the effects of individual differences in shaping reactions to waiting is significantly understudied. Moreover, the idea that individual factors among customers are not controllable by managers and are of little interest to them is refutable, with research on individual difference variables having produced actionable research that can be used by practitioners to better segment and target their services to their customers based on their individual differences (Boshoff, 2012; Mathmann et al., 2017a; Mende & Bolton, 2011; Wijters et al., 2007).

This research argues that even if managers cannot control individual differences directly, they are still able to target and segment by different individual difference variables. Given the lack of previous work identifying individual difference variables that impact responses to waiting, waiting research has not produced actionable outcomes that can aid service providers with targeting and segmentation strategies to help them manage waits in their servicescapes. The importance of individual difference variables also fits with recent calls in the literature for researchers to re-centre the customer in the study of waiting in the service delivery context (Paines et al., 2016a). This call for research is significant because it questions the underlying assumption of the field that customers react to waiting in homogenous ways.

Considering the importance of generating a deeper understanding of the effects of individual differences on reactions to waiting for both academic research and for practitioners, the research presented here seeks to answer two questions. First, which individuals are likely to respond more or less negatively to waiting during service delivery? Second, what process drives these reactions? To answer these questions, the research presented here extends previous work that has examined waiting using Field Theory (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998). Key tenets of Field Theory hold that personal relationships and predispositions towards or against change significantly impact behaviour (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Lewin, 1939; Lewin, 1940a; Lewin, 1947a, 1947b). However, while past research on Field Theory has demonstrated the value of the theory in studying reactions to waiting (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998), that research has neglected to incorporate key ideas from Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) about the importance of romantic relationships and predispositions towards change in predicting reactions to waiting. Therefore, to extend on past research conducted from using Field Theory (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998), the work

presented here introduces the key individual difference variables of relationship status and cognitive rigidity to the literature on waits for service delivery. It is demonstrated that consumer reactions to waiting for service delivery, specifically a customer's likelihood of cancelling if they have to wait, changes based on whether the consumer is single or in a relationship. This is due to differences in sensitivity towards sunk costs, with partnered consumers shown to be more sensitive to sunk costs than single consumers. It is further shown that partnered consumers' heightened sensitivity to sunk costs increases their anticipated regret for cancellation after a wait, thereby decreasing the likelihood that they will choose to cancel. Moreover, it is demonstrated that the effect of relationship status on cancellation is intensified by consumers' levels of cognitive rigidity.

The research presented here generates novel theoretical contributions for the fields of consumer and service research with actionable implications for practitioners looking to better manage the impacts of waiting on their customers and businesses. This is because relationship status constitutes a highly accessible variable for practitioners to use in segmenting customers, crafting promotions, and managing service delivery or recovery efforts. Firstly, as discussed further in Chapter 2, while relationships are commonly believed to escalate in seriousness and interdependence as the relationship continues (Stanley et al., 2010; Lewin, 1940b), relationships are also conceptualised to significantly impact behaviour and decision-making at the point where a relationship is first established (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015; Kalmijin, 2003; Stanley, et al., 2010). Combined with conventions used in past marketing research on the topic in treating relationship status as a binary variable (Cavanaugh, 2014, 2016; Simpson et al., 2011), this means that the entire adult consumer population can be broadly divided into being single (i.e., single, separated, divorced, widowed) or partnered (i.e., dating, engaged, married, in a de-facto relationship). This means that data on relationship status constitutes a highly relevant variable for service providers to use in segmenting adult customers.

Secondly, tools developed by social media platforms further allow even small service providers to identify actual or proxy measures of relationship status among their customers (Karlson, 2021; Meta, 2022a; Meta, 2022b). These social media tools, which were largely developed after the most active periods of research in the waiting literature in the 1990s and early 2000s, represent a new way to make use of information on relationship status that would not otherwise have been viable during previous eras of research on waiting. Further,

promotions based on relationship status are commonplace (Cavanaugh, 2014) and thus typically accepted among consumers, meaning that they can be used to target and segment consumers based on their relationship status. This means that, in addition to its theoretical relevance in being able to examine both positive and negative responses to waiting, as well as assisting in re-centring the customer in the study of waits for service, relationship status has evolved as a nearly universally relevant and highly actionable variable that service providers can use to manage waiting.

Moreover, this research comes at a time where practitioner behaviour is increasingly underscoring the importance of relationship status as a segmentation variable for companies (Kislev, 2019; Verdon, 2021). Perhaps the largest example is Chinese Singles Day, which began as a celebration of bachelorhood and has now become the world's biggest annual shopping holiday (Harper, 2020). In addition to that, many companies such as IKEA and Whole Foods Market, are increasingly beginning to tailor offerings aimed at single consumers instead of assuming that their behaviours or needs are necessarily the same as partnered consumers (Kislev, 2019; Verdon, 2021). For example, IKEA's PS Collection features furniture aimed at singles who are expecting to live solo as opposed to those setting up for living with a partner and kids (Kislev, 2019; Krasny, 2014). Whole Foods Market, in addition to other food retailers, is increasingly altering product packaging and serving sizes to cater for people who are cooking for one as opposed to two or more (Kislev, 2019; Krasny, 2014; Verdon, 2021). Some online retailers are even starting to segment product offerings on their website using a tab for single shoppers to create a 'singles corner' featuring products suited to single life (Kislev, 2019; Krasny, 2014). However, where practitioners are leading by recognising the importance of segmenting customers based on relationship status, marketing researchers are lagging. Surprisingly little research has been conducted about how relationship status impacts consumer behaviour, despite repeated calls for investigation into the subject (Cavanaugh, 2016; Donthu, 2002; Simpson et al., 2012). Therefore, this research fills a gap in our understanding of the impact of relationships status on consumer behaviour.

But while it is clear that research on relationship status is increasingly relevant to the modern marketplace, why might being in a relationship be expected to increase a customer's tolerance for waiting? In order to answer this question, the research presented here firstly incorporates literature on Field Theory, which identifies relationship status as a variable that is highly likely to impact reactions to waiting. It further incorporates literature on Prospect

Theory and sunk costs to identify how relationship status should do so. In short, sunk cost effects (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980) and commitment in romantic relationships (Rusbult et al., 2010; Stanley, et al., 2010; Stanley & Markman, 1992) have been noted by previous literature to have significant conceptual similarities that likely enhance sensitivity towards sunk costs for people in relationships (Leahy, 2000; Rego et al., 2018). This sensitivity towards sunk costs impacts how partnered individuals make decisions about how to spend their time (Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001), manage their non-romantic relationships (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015; Musick & Bumpass, 2012; Kalmijn, 2003), and make consumer decisions in sequential choice contexts (Chen et al., 2016; Fishbach et al., 2011). Overall, across a range of domains, partnered individuals broadly demonstrate a tendency towards committing to an existing option and then continuing to maintain or escalate their commitment to that existing option, rather than switching away to a new one. Given that sensitivity to sunk costs has been shown to reduce negative reactions to waiting (Ulku et al., 2020), consumers in romantic relationships are therefore less likely to cancel a request for service if they have to wait when compared with singles.

By examining the impact of relationship status and cognitive rigidity on waits for service, this work extends past theoretical research that has been conducted using Field Theory (Lewin, 1942). This allows for the research presented here to make novel theoretical contributions concerning the importance of romantic relationships and predispositions towards change, which are major variables of interest to Field Theory but have been neglected in past research conducted from a field theoretical perspective in the waiting literature (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998; Hui et al., 1998). This further allows for the introduction of insights into how the negative impacts of waiting for service delivery can be managed through developing an understanding that customers do not react to waiting in homogenous ways and that some customers are more amenable to waiting than others. Importantly, this responds directly to calls for research that re-centres the consumer in the study of reactions to waits for services (Paines et al., 2016a). Finally, the theoretical focus allows the work presented here to respond to calls for research into how being single or in a relationship can affect consumer behaviour (Cavanaugh, 2016; Simpson et al., 2012), which is a call that has gone unanswered by the field of consumer research despite being a globally important segmentation variable for service providers.

Overview of Studies

Four studies are conducted to examine the impacts of relationship status and cognitive rigidity on reactions to waiting. To establish ecological validity for the project, Study 1 uses a sample of real hotel bookings and uses actual booking cancellations as the dependent variable. Study 1 demonstrates initial support for the moderating effect of wait time and relationship status on cancellation. Study 2 uses data conducted online with a role-playing restaurant scenario from a sample of United States residents from Amazon Mechanical Turk. Study 2 establishes replication for the interaction effect of waiting and relationship status on cancellation and identifies anticipated regret as the mediator of this effect. Study 3 is conducted using a sample drawn from Prolific and using an online scenario set at a bowling alley. Study 3 provides additional support for the moderating role of relationship status and wait time on cancellation. However, it further provides evidence for the role of cognitive rigidity in intensifying the impact of relationship status and wait time on cancellation. Finally, Study 4 is conducted online in a role-playing restaurant context, with data collected from a sample of United States residents on Clickworker. Study 4 is used to demonstrate additional support for the impact of cognitive rigidity, relationship status, and waiting time on reactions to waiting. A range of variables are controlled for across the studies, demonstrating robustness of the results.

Research Contributions

Theoretical Contributions

In identifying the effect of relationship status and cognitive rigidity on reactions to waiting, the research presented here therefore makes a number of theoretical contributions. As will be discussed in greater depth throughout the thesis, Field Theory is one of the dominant theoretical frameworks that has been used to study reactions to waiting in the literature (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998; Hui et al., 1998). However, past research that has examined waiting from the perspective of Field Theory has applied the theory superficially, neglecting to incorporate important aspects of Field Theory into past examinations of waiting (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998; Hui et al., 1998).

For example, Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) holds that the key social groups that a person belongs to, and particularly their marital status (Lewin, 1940b), should have an outsized impact on their behaviour (Lewin, 1940a). However, despite the significant importance that Field Theory places on social influences and marital status for understanding behaviour, no research in the waiting literature that has been conducted using Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) has ever investigated the impact that they have on reactions to waiting (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998). The work presented here therefore extends on past work in the waiting literature that has been conducted using Field Theory by incorporating an understanding of how the key social groups that a person belongs to, in this case operationalised as their relationship status, shapes their reactions to waits for service.

Second, the research presented here makes theoretical contributions by examining waits from the perspective of behavioural change. This is because Field Theory was created to study the factors that influence behavioural change (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Lewin, 1947b) but, as stated above, past work in the waiting literature neglected to incorporate a behavioural change perspective into the study of reactions to waiting (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998). The research presented here therefore extends on past research conducted using Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) by incorporating an understanding of individual differences in sensitivity to sunk cost effects, and individual differences in cognitive rigidity, into the study of waits for service.

This research further incorporates the perspective of behavioural change into the study of reactions to waits by linking negative reactions to waiting to the dependent variable of cancellation. This is an important contribution because past research has often assumed that customers will agree to a wait when it is required of them and did not allow for the possibility that consumers would change their behaviour to meet their goal of obtaining service by cancelling and going elsewhere if required to wait (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998). This constitutes a gap in the literature given Field Theory's strong focus on examining the ways in which people can change their behaviour when met with a barrier to a goal, such as by choosing to cancel a request for service if they realize they must wait. Therefore, by incorporating a behavioural change perspective into the study of waits for service, this research extends on past work that has been conducted using Field Theory in the waiting literature.

Finally, this research makes contributions to the study of sunk costs effects by identifying relationship status as an additional variable that influences sensitivity to sunk costs. Extant research has shown that people can differ in their likelihood of making decisions based on sunk cost effects (Parker & Fischhoff, 2005; Ronayne, 2021). A growing body of literature has therefore started to identify individual difference variables that affect sensitivity to sunk costs (Rogge, 2021; Strough et al., 2016). The research presented here therefore makes a significant theoretical contribution to this nascent body of literature by identifying relationship status as an additional variable that influences sensitivity to sunk costs.

Practical Contributions

In applying the study of relationship status to the study of waits for service, the research presented here also generates a number of important practical contributions. This is because it identifies relationship status as an accessible and low-cost individual difference variable that service providers can use to shape their practices throughout the demand-management and wait-management process. Data on relationship status can be accessed through national surveys (Census Bureau, 2020; Census, 2018), social media (Karlson, 2021; Meta, 2022a; Meta, 2022b), and through even rudimentary market research efforts. Using these methods, service providers can identify the relationship status of their customer base and identify whether they are operating in markets with numbers of singles or high numbers of partnered consumers. This can further enable them to use insights on relationship status developed in this thesis to manage demand and waits for service on their customers' behalf.

Service providers can for example use data on relationship status to anticipate the speed with which customers will demand they deliver their services and tailor their practices to meet those preferences. For example, a national restaurant chain might choose to adjust its policies on service delivery to be more careful about reducing wait times in markets with high numbers of singles, who are more likely than partnered consumers to cancel if they must wait. They might conversely prioritise performance on other service attributes, such as friendliness of staff, in areas with higher population of partnered customers.

Service providers can also use the information generated in this thesis to tailor their promotions based on whether customers are single or partnered. For example, service

providers could highlight romantic relationships in promotions at periods of high demand, as partnered consumers will likely have less negative responses to longer waits. Similarly, service providers could target promotions for off-peak periods at singles as they are likely to place a higher value on services delivered without lengthy waits. By tailoring their promotions to bring in partnered consumers during peak demand, and by bringing in single consumers during off-peak periods, service providers can ensure they target the right customer for the wait that they will have to offer them.

Service providers can moreover use the research presented here to tailor their service recovery efforts based on relationship status. That is, given that singles are more likely to cancel if they have to wait, providers should tailor their wait management processes to reduce the likelihood that singles will leave the premises before services can be delivered. In a restaurant context, for example, staff could focus on partially commencing the service interaction, such as by offering a free drink, or simply facilitating a wait at a bar where a customer can themselves order a drink. When managing waits for partnered consumers, on the other hand, service providers can use the information generated in this thesis to craft their service recovery efforts to emphasise that they value long-term relationships with the customer. By tailoring their strategies based on relationship status, service providers are likely to receive better results in for their efforts.

Structure of the thesis

The remainder of this thesis is composed of an additional 4 chapters. In Chapter 2, the waiting literature is reviewed, outlining common reactions to waiting, and contexts in which waiting is studied. It also presents a review of the small body of existing research that has explored cancellation after waiting, as well as the existing literature on individual differences in consumer responses to waiting.

Chapter 3 provides information on the theoretical perspectives used in the thesis. The chapter begins with a review of Field Theory, including its past use in the waiting literature and gaps present in extant research. A review of Prospect Theory, sunk cost effects, and the impact of relationship status and consumer decision-making is then presented. This allows for the development of a theoretical framework which explains how relationship status impacts

reactions to waiting through heightening or diminishing sensitivity to sunk costs. The chapter finishes by outlining hypotheses.

Chapter 4 covers methodological considerations before presenting information on data collection, analysis, and results for studies 1- 4. This includes an overview, method, results, and discussion for each study.

Finally, Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings presented in this thesis. This covers the theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and future research directions relevant for the research presented here.

Chapter 2: Literature on Waits for Service

Chapter 2 Introduction

The following chapter provides a review of relevant literature from the study of waits for service. This includes information regarding the definition of waits for service, as well as a review of common reactions to waiting, and the contexts in which waiting has been studied. It further presents an overview of the small body of existing research that has explored cancellation as a response to waiting, including the methodological considerations that have caused cancellation to be understudied in the waiting literature. It finally concludes with a review of the existing literature on individual differences in consumer responses to waiting, as well as a review of past research into relationship status. While the material provided in this section focuses on work that is relevant to the current research, it should be noted that summaries of broader work in the waiting literature can be read in Durrande-Moreau (1999) and Ryan et al. (2018).

Waiting and the Service Economy

Unlike with goods that can be stored in anticipation of periods of increased demand, services must typically be provided and consumed at the point which a consumer demands them (Dube-Rioux et al., 1988). While service providers can seek to manage both staff and demand to reduce delays, it is likely that the ability to completely eliminate waiting will simply be beyond the capacity of most service providers. This renders waits for services as an inevitable part of service delivery for customers and businesses. Given that the service sector comprises 75% of the economy in highly developed countries (Buckley & Majumdar, 2018), customers are likely to experience waits for service simply by virtue of the volume of service delivery they regularly access. Service providers therefore have a significant need for research that enables them to successfully manage waits for their customers.

Defining Waiting

A wait is universally agreed to constitute the delay experienced by a customer at “the time from which a customer is ready to receive the service until the time the service commences”

(Taylor, 1995, p.56; Yang et al., 2013). Research uses the terms ‘waiting’, ‘wait times’, and ‘delays’ interchangeably. Waits for services are typically conceptualised as being divided into stages based on the service delivery process (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989). A pre-service wait takes place before service delivery commences, such as when customers are waiting to board a plane, or when customers are waiting to be seated at a restaurant (Dube-Rioux, 1989; Maister, 1985). An in-service wait takes place while service delivery has been commenced but not completed, such as waiting for food to be served to customers in a restaurant, or to passengers while their flight is underway (Dube-Rioux, 1989). Finally, a post-service wait occurs when services have been delivered, such as passengers waiting to collect bags from luggage carousels in the terminal after their plane has landed, or when customers wait for the bill to be delivered to their table (Dube-Rioux, 1989; Maister, 1985).

While research has often attempted to examine which stage of service delivery will cause the most negative responses from customers or how responses can vary across stages (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hensley & Sulek, 2007; Yang et al., 2013), past research has demonstrated the importance of focusing on pre-service waits due to the significant impact on customers that pre-service waits can have. For example, past research conducted using Field Theory has found that pre-service waits that delay service delivery lead to more negative reactions to waiting than in-service waits (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998). Field Theory holds that this is because an individual is more motivated to achieve a goal when they are further away from it, and consequently experience a reduction in their drive to achieve their goal when they are closer to it (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998). Based on this premise, research has demonstrated that a customer is likely to react more negatively to a wait for service at the pre-service stage of waiting, as the goal of obtaining a service is further away during the pre-service wait than when compared to the in-service stage of waiting, at which time the customer will have already commenced service delivery (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998).

These findings based on Field Theory accord with, and are corroborated by, studies using other theoretical perspectives such as Maister’s Propositions on Waiting (Maister, 2005) or Attribution Theory (Taylor, 1994). Maister’s Propositions on Waiting, for example, state that a customer will respond less negatively to waiting after service has already commenced (Maister, 2005). Maister justifies this proposition broadly based on the idea that customers want to feel that they have been “entered into” (Maister, 2005, p.4) the system of service

delivery. Therefore, once service has commenced, they are comforted that the desired outcome of the service delivery is forthcoming, even if they must endure a wait for it.

Lastly, in research conducted in an actual restaurant setting, pre-service waits have been shown to be the only waiting stage that consistently impacts customer reactions to waiting (Hensley & Sulek, 2007). As noted by Hensley and Sulek (2007), even when customers must wait during the in-service stage, for example, they are typically already enjoying at least part of the service offering (i.e., sipping a drink while waiting for food to arrive). This may attenuate the otherwise negative experience of waiting for the service to be (fully) delivered. Consequently, the research presented here examines reactions to waiting in the context of pre-service waits, as the broad patterns present in past research show that pre-service waits are the most likely stage of waiting to cause negative reactions among customers.

Waiting Contexts

Waiting has been explored in multiple service contexts and operationalised in many different ways. This includes waiting for services while in physical service environments where the customer is present to request a service, such as the hospitality industry in restaurant settings (Dube Rioux et al., 1989, Hensley & Sulek, 2007), the education industry in classrooms (Dube-Rioux et al., 1991) and computer labs (Hui et al., 1998), and the transportation (Taylor, 1995; Diaz & Ruiz, 2002) and banking (Katz et al., 1991) industries. Waits have also been studied in contexts where at least some part of the customer's interaction with the service provider is mediated through technology. This has included waits while on the phone with service providers (Antonides et al., 2002), while ordering food on delivery apps (Xu et al., 2021), while downloading music (Chebat et al., 2010), and while websites load (Ryan & Valverde, 2006). The wide range of contexts in which waiting has been operationalised demonstrates that waiting is a phenomenon that affects service across the economy and different delivery channels.

Negative Waiting Outcomes

One foundational idea that has dominated the field since its inception (Hornik, 1984; Maister, 1985; Ryan et al., 2018) is that waits for service have negative outcomes for service providers

and customers. Early research in the literature started from the proposition that shopping is a high-cost activity during which customers actively consider the costs of spending their time as they would consider the costs of spending their money (Hornik, 1984). Other early work motivated the importance of studying waiting by claiming it is “frustrating, demoralizing, agonizing, aggravating, annoying, time consuming and incredibly expensive” for customers (Maister, 2005, p.1). Likely because of the assumption that waiting is a negative experience for customers and businesses, a clear majority of research in the literature has focused on examining the negative outcomes of waiting (Ryan et al., 2018).

Research to this end has shown that waits across all stages of the service delivery process have a range of negative impacts for customers and businesses. First, both perceived and actual wait time has been shown to negatively impact customer satisfaction (Davis & Heinke, 1998; Davis & Vollmann, 1990; Hensley & Sulek, 2007; Katz et al., 1991; Lee & Lambert, 2006). For example, Hensley and Sulek (2007) showed that pre-service waits reduce customer satisfaction in full-service restaurants. Second, a significant proportion of empirical research has found that waits negatively impact evaluations of service quality (Dube-Rioux et al., 1988; Houston et al. 1998; Hui & Tse, 1996; Katz et al., 1991; Taylor, 1995). For example, customers who experience negative affect due to their wait subsequently report poorer evaluations of service quality (Houston et al., 1998).

Studies have also shown that waiting can lead to a host of negative affective responses for customers, such as anxiety, uncertainty, and anger (Houston et al., 1998; Hui & Tse, 1996; Kim et al., 2016; Marquis et al., 1994; Taylor, 1995). Finally, waits have been shown to affect both customer intentions to engage in a range of behaviours and also actual behaviour (Butcher & Kayani, 2006; DeVries et al., 2018; Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hensley & Sulek, 2007). Waits, for example, can affect customer intentions to order more drinks or dessert at a restaurant, as well as intentions to tip or complain about service delivery (Butcher & Kayani, 2006). Waits can also affect whether customers intend to patronise a restaurant again in the future (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989).

These relationships extend to actual consumer behaviour, with delays having been shown to reduce tipping amounts and extend the time it takes for customers to return to restaurants after being made to wait during their previous instance of patronage (DeVries et al., 2018). Given the numerous ways in which waiting experiences negatively impact customers and that

these negative impacts on customers will have flow on effects for businesses, it is important for consumer research to identify ways of attenuating these negative impacts.

Positive Waiting Experiences

While the majority of work in the waiting literature has been conducted on the negative impacts of waits on customers and businesses, a small body of work has also examined the positive aspects of waiting for service providers who have been found to benefit from waits in some circumstances (Ryan et al., 2018). This research has shown that waits for services can function as signals of quality for customers in some circumstances, leading to higher purchase intentions, more actual purchases, and increased satisfaction (Giebelhausen et al., 2010; Koo & Fishbach, 2010; Kremer & Debo, 2016; Ulku et al. 2019).

For example, Kremer and Debo (2016) found that uninformed customers (i.e. tourists) infer quality from longer wait times when they are in the presence of informed customers (i.e. locals). Likewise, Giebelhausen et al. (2010) found that, in the absence of other signals, having to wait for services increases quality perceptions for those services, affecting both purchase intentions and customer satisfaction. Finally, Ulku et al. (2019) showed that actual consumption increases when customers spend time waiting in line. For example, customers purchase greater quantities of cupcakes or bid more for gift cards after waiting in longer lines before purchase. As will be discussed in more depth in future chapters, they specifically found that these effects were driven by sunk costs with individuals displaying heightened sensitivity to sunk costs in other domains also displaying sensitivity to sunk costs after waiting (Ulku et al, 2019).

Negative Waiting and Cancellation

Despite the small body of literature that has examined positive reactions to waiting, the majority of work in the waiting literature has still demonstrated that waiting typically leads to negative reactions for customers and service providers. However, one negative consequence of waiting that has been understudied in the literature is cancellation following a wait. This is unfortunate as cancellation is highly relevant to the field from a theoretical standpoint, and it

is also highly relevant to service providers from a practical standpoint, as it is likely to have outsized negative impacts on businesses. Firstly, as will be discussed in significant detail in Chapter 3, the failure to examine cancellation more thoroughly is particularly notable given the literature's previous use of Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) as a focal lens through which to examine waiting. Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) would propose that cancellation as a behavioural response would be a strong possibility in the face of a wait for service (Lindorfer, 2021), but this has not been explored in the waiting literature that has been conducted using Field Theory (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998; Hui et al., 1998).

Secondly, from a practical standpoint, cancellation is important because it will directly result in lost business and revenue for the service provider in both the short and long term, while other negative waiting outcomes may not necessarily result in this. For example, while a customer may develop negative affective responses during a wait, many customers who do this will still retain their request for service and ultimately generate financial value for the service provider. While a wait can lead to poor evaluations of service quality (Dube-Rioux et al., 1988; Houston et al. 1998), this can potentially be repaired with a successful attempt at service recovery as long as the customer remains with the service provider. Customers who may regret or be angry about specific instances of having to wait for a service may also still retain their relationship with a service provider over the long term (Voorhees et al., 2009). This shows that, while clearly suboptimal, service relationships can withstand some negative waiting outcomes in both the short and long term.

However, in contrast to many other dependent variables, cancellation is immediately consequential for the service provider, as it directly and immediately ends the service encounter. The service provider will likely be unable to derive any financial value from the customer if they cancel before the service is delivered. A customer who cancels will also likely have put themselves beyond the ability of a service provider to successfully carry out service recovery. Moreover, cancellations would significantly reduce return on investment for marketing efforts conducted by service providers, as funding would be spent on sourcing new customers, but then the value of the investment in sourcing them would go unrealised due to cancellation, ultimately meaning that waiting would incur a double cost. It is also logical that a customer who cancels a request for service based on a wait would be less likely

to return in future, meaning that cancellation is likely to end the service relationship in the long term.

However, despite its potential importance, only two recent studies in the waiting literature have examined cancellation as a negative response to waiting (De Vries et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2021). These studies show that longer wait times increase the likelihood that a customer leaves a queue that they have joined (De Vries et al., 2018) and that customers become less likely to cancel as they proceed further into an interaction with the service provider (i.e. they are more likely to cancel an order before food has been cooked than after it has been cooked) (Xu et al., 2021). Additional factors, such as individual difference variables, that might make cancellation more or less likely in response to waiting have not been investigated by the field.

The neglect of the literature to examine cancellation as a dependent variable may be in part due to the study designs and contexts selected by researchers early in the literature, which often made it difficult or impossible for data to be collected on cancellation. For example, some early studies were conducted in contexts which would make it highly unlikely for customers to cancel, such as waiting for flights at an airport (Taylor, 1995; Diaz & Ruiz, 2002) or waiting for public transport (Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999). Further, in contexts such as air travel, cancellation generally has a high cost to participants, rendering cancellation of a request for service typically unlikely in that context.

Moreover, these early studies often collected data using designs where customers would be recorded as commencing a wait at the point where they joined a queue for a transaction, but would only be approached to fill out surveys if they had completed or commenced the transaction they were waiting for (Jones & Peppiat, 1996; Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999; Davis & Vollmann, 1990; Katz et al., 1991; Hensley & Sulek, 2007). For example, in one such study (Jones & Peppiat, 1996), conducted in a fast-food restaurant setting, the authors noted that customers were asked to fill out surveys on their waiting experiences after receiving their food, and that the number of customers who left the line before being served were not recorded. Based on the way data was collected, customer reactions to waiting before leaving the line would therefore be omitted from the study, meaning that a key group of customers, those likely to go somewhere else instead of waiting, could not have had their responses to waiting represented in the findings (Jones & Peppiat, 1996). Besides fast food or restaurant settings (Davis & Vollmann, 1990; Hensley & Sulek, 2007), similar research designs were conducted in other contexts, such as participants waiting for public transport

who were not surveyed until they boarded a bus (Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999) and also in banking services, where participants were not surveyed until completing their transaction with a teller (Katz et al., 1991).

The likely reason for why these early designs failed to capture data on cancellation is that the field simply had other theoretical foci at the time. For example, early theoretical priorities for the field involved things like establishing which stage of waiting (pre-service, during-service, post-service) would most severely impact customers (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998), whether customers would correctly or incorrectly estimate wait times as they experienced them (Hornik, 1984; Smidts & Pruyn, 1994), or what operational interventions might be useful in managing waiting (Chebat et al., 1993; Maister, 1985). Given these priorities, it is likely that they simply did not need to collect data on cancellation, and could focus data collection on dependent variables that were easier to measure, such as customer satisfaction or evaluations of service quality. However, as will be discussed below, even the waiting literature which was conducted using Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) still failed to prioritise cancellation in their theoretical or methodological work, even though they would have had clear theoretical value in examining cancellation from the perspective of the theory.

Ultimately, these early theoretical priorities and their corresponding research designs can be argued to have contributed to a gap in the literature where data on cancellation, and on customers who would be likely to cancel, are broadly underrepresented in research findings. This constitutes an oversight for the waiting literature, as cancellation can be considered one of the most important potential negative responses to waiting that customers might demonstrate, and it also has clear theoretical value to the subset of the literature which examines waiting using Field Theory.

Thus, this research investigates cancellation as a key outcome of waiting. More specifically, cancellation is here conceptualised as the termination of an attempt to obtain service after the attempt has been initiated. While a customer can of course potentially cancel an attempt to obtain service for any number of reasons, in alignment with Field Theory (Lewin, 1942), cancellation is conceptualised as a behavioural response which can occur after a customer encounters a barrier to the goal of obtaining service. In this research, the barrier is conceptualised to take the form of a wait. In this way, cancellation can be viewed as an operationalisation of behavioural change in the face of a barrier to the goal of obtaining

service, which could ultimately allow a customer to source a different way to achieve their goal of obtaining service. These conceptualisations will be discussed in more detail in the section on Field Theory.

Differences in Consumer Responses to Waiting

While individual differences between consumers significantly shape reactions to waiting, these factors have gone understudied in the literature as it has traditionally failed to centre the consumer in the study of waiting (Paines et al., 2016a). For example, isolated research on individual factors such as affective commitment to the service provider (Voorhees et al., 2009), pre-service mood (Chebat et al., 1995), approach or avoidance strategies used while waiting (Miller et al., 2008), and culture (Paines et al., 2016b) have been examined by the field. Affective commitment to a service provider, for example, has been shown to attenuate negative reactions to waiting (Voorhees et al., 2009), which occurs because it decreases anger and regret associated with a wait.

However, while some research has explored how these individual factors affect reactions to waiting, most research studies show operational elements of the servicescape affect consumer responses to waiting (Durrande-Moreau, 1999). These aspects of the servicescape have been thought by the field to have greater relevance to service providers than individual characteristics possessed by customers because of the perception held early on in the literature that internal characteristics would not produce useful findings for practitioners as they would not be in the control of the service provider (Durrande-Moreau, 1999). However, this idea is highly questionable as research on individual characteristics has produced findings that can enable managers to better segment their customers and tailor their servicescapes based on their individual differences to better meet their individual preferences (Boshoff, 2012; Mathmann et al., 2017a; Mende & Bolton, 2011; Wijters et al., 2007).

Unfortunately, the role of individual difference variables among customers is understudied in relation to waiting, with only a handful of individual difference variables having been identified. (For a table comparing the number of articles conducted on individual difference variable to articles conducted on subjects other than individual difference variables, please

see Appendix A.) A small number of studies have examined the impact of time styles, or a person's attitude towards time, on waiting for services. For example, empirical research has shown that customers with an economic time style, or those who are future-oriented and place high monetary value on their time, experience more active impatience while waiting for services (Durrane-Moreau & Usunier, 1999). Similarly, Mattila and Hanks (2012) showed that when forced to wait in crowded service environments, customers who place a high monetary value on their time experience more regret for their choice of service provider than those who place a low monetary value on their time. Research has also been conducted into how individuals with evening circadian rhythms, whose internal day-night cycles result in peak energy towards the end of the afternoon and beginning of the evening, respond to delays. Although the research on this topic did not explore why this occurs, individuals with evening circadian rhythms have been found to have more emotional responses to an unexpected wait than those with morning circadian rhythms (Marquis et al., 1994).

Another individual difference variable that has been studied is prevention or promotion regulatory focus, which has been shown to impact affective responses and evaluations of service quality after delays (Yang et al., 2013). Those with a strong promotion focus, (i.e., those who seek gains) have stronger negative affective responses and poorer service quality evaluations after pre-process delays than in-process delays. Conversely, customers with a strong prevention focus, who therefore seek to avoid losses, have more negative affective responses and service quality evaluations after in-process delays than they do with pre-process delays (Yang et al., 2013).

Further, while gender was initially dismissed as being an important factor in shaping responses to waiting (Chebat et al., 2010), some recent research has contested this notion, showing that men and women can react differently to waiting when music is playing. For example, fast tempo music was found to reduce pleasure for women while they were waiting, and increase arousal for men while they were waiting, thereby rendering waits less acceptable for both men and women (Chebat et al., 2010). Other research has also shown that men can expect wait times to be longer than women expect them to be (Grewal et al., 2003).

Clearly, in comparison to research on operational factors, the field has failed to centre the consumer, and individual difference variables in particular, in the study of waits for service. As will be discussed below, given the theoretical focus of past research in the literature,

which was conducted from the perspective of Field Theory, a notable omission in the waiting literature is research examining the impact of relationship status on shaping reactions to waiting. This is because a central tenet of Field Theory is that relationships, and specifically romantic relationships, are a key driver of behaviour. However, past work on Field Theory in the waiting literature has neglected to include this key focus in its research. The work presented here therefore addresses the lack of research on individual differences in the literature by introducing relationship status to the study of waits for services. As such, it responds to calls re-centre the customer in the study of waits for service and how this can impact strategies service providers use to manage waits within their organisations (Paines et al., 2016a).

Further, while relationship status has been shown to impact consumer behaviour in many significant ways (Cavanaugh, 2014, 2016; Donthu & Gilliland, 2002; Simpson et al., 2012), as has been noted by multiple recent reviews into the topic, the study of relationship status has largely been ignored by the field of consumer research (Cavanaugh, 2016; Simpson et al., 2012). The work presented here also therefore responds to calls for research into how being in a relationship or being single can impact consumer behaviour (Cavanaugh, 2014, 2016; Donthu & Gilliland, 2002; Simpson et al., 2012).

Relationship Status

As will be discussed in more depth below, it is clear from both a Field Theoretical perspective and from a sunk cost perspective that relationship status is likely to have a large impact on the life space and therefore on behaviour. Given the importance of relationship status to the key theories that underpin this research, it is therefore important to define precisely what is meant by relationship status. Unfortunately, research on relationships in the marketing literature does not define relationship status or relationships (Cavanaugh, 2014, 2016; Simpson et al., 2011). Research in psychology and public health has historically studied relationships in the context of marriage (i.e., they examined marital status as opposed to relationship status). However, scholars broadened their conceptual focus following changes in relationship norms, when they were forced to acknowledge that important relationships existed outside of marriage (Barrett & Wellings, 2002; Smock, 2000). Thus,

fields such as psychology began to research partnered relationship categories other than marriage (Barrett & Wellings, 2002), particularly relationships with couples cohabiting before marriage or choosing not to marry at all.

However, romantic relationship status is sometimes conceptualised in ways that are misleading. For example, in some academic scholarship, research problematically conflates living alone with being single (Klinenberg, 2013). Further, some government data collection (including the U.S. and Australian censuses) conflate being unmarried with being single (United States Census Bureau 2020a; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011, 2020). There are even some instances of data collection considering a 'never-married' individual as belonging to the single category. Considering that these practices are still common, it is important that empirical research carefully defines and operationalises relationship status to get an accurate idea of its effect on reactions to waiting. Past empirical research has shown that defining and asking questions about relationship status can be difficult, because expectations among participants are not in line with those of academics (Barrett & Wellings, 2002).

Although research on relationship status in marketing does not offer a definition of the construct (Cavanaugh, 2014, 2016; Simpson et al., 2011), marketers broadly seek to examine whether or not the person is in some form of romantic partnership with another person, and how that might shape decision-making behaviour in the consumer context (Cavanaugh, 2014; Simpson et al., 2011). Past research, has for example used a binary classification for relationship status, identifying participants as either partnered or single (Cavanaugh, 2014). Therefore, following the focus of past research in marketing and psychology, relationship status is here defined by broadening the dictionary definition of marital status (i.e., 'the state of being married or not married' (Merriam-Webster, 2021) to identify relationship status as the state of being in a romantic partnership (partnered) or not being a romantic partnership (single).

While relationships are commonly considered to escalate in seriousness and interdependence as the relationship continues (Stanley et al., 2010; Lewin, 1940b), relationships are also conceptualised to significantly impact behaviour and decision-making at the point where a relationship is first established (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015; Kalmijin, 2003; Stanley, et al., 2010). For example, while common conceptualisations of romantic relationships argue that commitment increases as individuals commit time and other resources to the relationship

(Rusbult et al., 2010), even the early phases of dating also involve serious commitments when compared to singlehood. For example, research shows that people on average drop two people from their social circle when relationships form, as finding the time to commit to the romantic relationship must come from somewhere and is sourced from time previously committed to family and friends (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015). Further, work on romantic relationships and sunk costs show that the initial commitments of time that occur within newly formed relationships likely encourage further commitments of time when still dating (Coleman, 2009). Some research further argues that the emotional impacts of romantic relationships, such as states of obsession and psychological arousal, may be at their strongest at the very early phases of a relationship (Burton-Chellew and Dunbar, 2015; Fischer, 2006; Mizrahi, et al., 2022; O’Leary et al., Sheets, 2013). Therefore, while relationships are considered to escalate in terms of commitment over long-term time frames, even new relationships should be viewed as deeply impactful and as involving considerable commitments when compared to singlehood. As such, a binary conceptualisation of relationship status, as the state of being in a romantic partnership (partnered) or not being a romantic partnership (single), is appropriate for the research presented here. This means that even people in newly formed relationships make significant commitments of time and emotion to that relationship, even if that commitment of time happens over a short-term period.

As such, because relationships can be argued to be important regardless of stage, in defining relationship status this research seeks to include many possible categories of relationships. This research considers people as partnered if they are partnered but not cohabitating, partnered and cohabitating, engaged, or married. This research also seeks to include many possible categories of being single when conceptualising the single category, and consider people to be single if they are no longer in a relationship but living together, separated, widowed or divorced. In this way, the single categories mostly mirror the same categories used for those in relationships.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Chapter 3 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant theories that underpin the current research, providing a conceptual background to the hypotheses that are tested here. As will be discussed throughout this chapter, Field Theory is an appropriate theory to use in fulfilling the aims of the research presented here, as it has a history of being used in the waiting literature for the purpose of understanding how customers respond to barriers that they encounter when trying to reach their goals, such as when they must wait to obtain service (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998; Hui et al.). Field Theory further offers a strong focus on understanding how a customer's relationship status and their how predispositions towards or against change can impact their decision-making (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Lewin, 1940a; Lewin, 1940b; Lewin, 1947a, 1947b), meaning that Field Theory is likewise a highly appropriate theory to use in guiding research into how a customer's relationship status and cognitive rigidity may impact their response to having to wait.

Further, as will be discussed later in this chapter, while Field Theory clearly indicates that relationship status and cognitive rigidity should impact reactions to waiting, the superficial past use of the theory in the waiting literature means that it is not clear exactly how they would do this. As such, the research presented here also draws upon research on the study of Prospect Theory and sunk costs (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980). This is likewise an appropriate theory to use in addressing the aims of the thesis as the theory has a strong focus on exploring how past commitments impact decision-making, often in the context of change (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980).

The chapter begins with a review of Field Theory, including its past use in the waiting literature and gaps in past research. The chapter then provides a review of Prospect Theory and sunk cost effects, demonstrating that relationship status can impact sensitivity to sunk costs and that this can therefore impact cancellation in the face of a wait. Hypotheses are developed and presented at the end of the chapter.

Field Theory

The following section will outline the key tenets of Field Theory and its previous use in the waiting literature. It will also outline the key theoretical gaps in the literature that the research presented here seeks to fill.

As stated above, one key theoretical perspective that has been used in the waiting literature (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998) is Field Theory, which was proposed by psychologist Kurt Lewin in the 1920s and 1930s (Burnes & Cooke, 2012). Lewin developed Field Theory as a reaction to what he perceived as shortcomings in the dominant schools of thought in psychology at the time, which he felt did not place enough importance on the psychological experiences of individuals when seeking to understand behaviour (Burnes & Cooke, 2012). Field Theory was further developed as a theoretical framework to allow Lewin and his students to study changes in individual or group behaviour (Burnes & Cooke, 2012). Lewin's efforts in the creation of the theory and his seminal attempts to propagate an understanding of behaviour change earned him the reputation as the founding father of contemporary theories of planned change and change management (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Cummings et al., 2016), with his work having been broadly applied throughout the social sciences (Burnes, 2012).

Broadly, from the perspective of Field Theory, an understanding of human behaviour can only be achieved by evaluating an individual's 'life space'¹ which comprises both the environmental forces that impinge upon a person at a given point in time, as well as the psychological forces influencing them while in that environment (Burnes, 2012; Lindorfer,

¹ Note that Lewin used many interchangeable terms in order to refer to the life space. These included terms such as 'psychological environment', 'social field' or 'psychological field' (Burnes & Cooke, 2012). Following the convention of some sources (Burnes & Cooke, 2012), as Lewin most commonly used the term 'life space,' I have also used the term 'life space' in the research I present here.

2021). The basic premise of Field Theory can be represented using the following conceptual formula:

$$B = f(p, e)$$

According to this formula, behaviour (B) can be viewed as a function of a person (p) interacting with their environment (e), with the person's life space denoted by the combined elements of (p, e) (Burnes, 2012; Lewin, 1998).

Field Theory was a conceptual advance beyond psychological scholarship at the time because it rejected the then-popular notion that a person's behaviour was solely the result of discrete external stimuli (i.e., their environment) and that behaviour could therefore solely be understood through an examination of such stimuli (Burnes and Cook, 2012). Instead, Field Theory incorporated key tenets of Gestalt psychology as a foundation of the theory (Lindorfer, 2021) and sought to take a holistic approach to understanding behaviour. While a person's environment (e) would certainly impact behaviour, so would the person (p). In Field Theory, a person's behaviour cannot be understood without an examination of the psychological forces impacting their life space (Lewin, 1943).

Field Theory places an emphasis on a person's psychological (as opposed to objective) experience of a situation (Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Burnes & Cooke, 2012), meaning that different people can have different responses to environmental stimuli (Burnes & Cooke, 2012). Field Theory moreover maintains that behaviour depends upon the totality of the coexisting psychological forces that make up a person's life space (Lewin, 1942). That is, while it is of course impossible to minutely understand every single factor affecting a person at a given point in time, social scientists should endeavour to understand individuals and their behaviour from a holistic standpoint.

Lewin's conceptualisations of a person and their environment, as well as the ways these elements manifest in their behaviour, are all fairly broad. This means that these elements can be operationalised in a number of ways. For example, if religion was thought as constituting the person aspect of the equation (p), it could be operationalised as anything from religious identity, to a puritanical work ethic, to a person having an affective response to religious

symbols. Religion could also be operationalised as constituting a person's environment (e), with behaviour examined while taking place in a church or an online forum dedicated to atheism. It could moreover be conceptualised as a form of behaviour itself (B), with researchers using a field theoretical perspective to examine what might induce a person to act on the goal of converting to a certain religion or to choose a partner that shares their religious beliefs. Given that conceptualisations of a person and their environment within Field Theory are broad, it is important when taking this theoretical perspective to define how these elements are being operationalised.

Field Theory, Goal Setting, and Goal Pursuit

While Field Theory conceptualises behaviour in a range of ways, it perhaps most notably does so in relation to goal setting and pursuit. Field Theory holds that when individuals develop a need or desire, they develop a goal that would satisfy it (Lindorfer, 2021). A need or desire could be anything from an adult attempting to find shelter during a natural disaster to a child wishing to pick up a toy they have dropped. Moreover, when an individual has a goal, they feel a state of motivation that compels them to pursue the goal that would satisfy it (Lindorfer, 2021). This feeling of motivation lessens when a goal is closer to being achieved. Barriers, which could be anything from heavy rain preventing a person from reaching shelter in a storm, to the restraints of a highchair separating a child from their toy, can get in the way of an individual and their goal. In response, an individual might choose to persist through the barrier towards their individual goal, or the barrier might result in behavioural change towards something else (Lindorfer, 2021). What goals a person forms, how they pursue them, what barriers they might face, and how they respond to barriers they encounter, are all dependent on their life space, which is a combination of the person and their environment (Burnes & Cooke, 2012). Therefore, in Field Theory, nothing can be understood about behaviour without first understanding the life space.

Life Space

Field Theory's holistic attempt to comprise the wide-ranging forces that could affect a person's life space meant that, for Lewin, essentially anything could be theorised to impact it (Cartwright, 1951, xii; Lindorfer, 2021). Lewin wrote about a range of factors that would affect a person's life space (and consequently a person's behaviour) from history and

tradition (Lewin, 1942), to religion (Lewin, 1940a), to education (Lewin, 1936). He stressed that different factors affecting the life space were likely to have more potent effects for different people (Lindorfer, 2021). Religion, for example, would likely have a more potent impact on a religious person than a non-religious person. The theory also held that factors could affect a life space unconsciously (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Lewin, 1998), meaning a person did not need to be explicitly aware of the factors affecting their behaviour for them to do so.

However, while Lewin emphasised that a range of factors were capable of impacting a life space, one aspect that Lewin particularly emphasised as vital to the understanding of a life space were the social groups that a person belonged to. Indeed, he termed social groups a “fundamental determinant of the life space” (Lewin, 1940a, p.84), believing that “social influences enter every action of the individual,” (Lewin, 1939, p.869), ultimately impacting a person’s behaviour (Lewin, 1939) and goal setting (Lewin, 1942) from an early age (Lewin, 1939). Lewin viewed Field Theory’s approach to studying psychology as “instrumental” (Lewin, 1939, p.869) in demonstrating “the fundamental, direct, and wide-spread effect of social facts upon behaviour” (Lewin, 1939, p.869), which he generally viewed as a foundational part of the purpose of psychological science and his life’s work (Allport, 1948; Lewin, 1943).

The social world of an individual, as with much of Lewin’s work, was also loosely defined. For Lewin, this could mean anything from changes in whether a person feels they belong to a group (Lewin, 1939), to the immediate presence or absence of people in a situation (Lewin, 1939), praise within a social setting (Lewin, 1939), or their cultural relationships with their broader society (Lewin, 1939). However, one social influence that Lewin specifically asserted was “of prime importance” (Lewin, 1940b, p.93) to understanding the social influences impacting a life space was marriage (Lewin, 1940b).

For Lewin, marriage impacted every aspect of a person’s life, affecting “his entire physical and social existence,” (Lewin, 1940b, p.88). Lewin stated that “marriage usually has a high potency within the world of an individual or, as one may say, his life-space” (Lewin, 1940b, p.85). Broadly, Lewin believed that married life brought about a change in how individuals pursued goals when compared to unmarried life (Lewin, 1940b) because of a large degree of interdependence between spouses (Lewin, 1940b). This interdependence also brought about a

reduction in private activity, which he termed ‘free movement’ outside of the marriage (Lewin, 1940b, p.94). He further thought that while the sensitivity of each spouse to the other was “especially great in the early period of marriage” (Lewin, 1940b, p.101), the interdependence within a marriage started early but crucially grew more significant as spouses settled into their new, shared way of living (Lewin, 1940b).

Given that Lewin wrote at a time where there was little dating outside of marriage, he largely avoided the subject of how romantic relationships other than marriage could impact the life space. However, in his writings on marriage, he noted that “love has a natural tendency to be all-inclusive, to embrace the whole life of the other person, his past, present, and future” and that “it tends to sway all his activities” (Lewin, 1940b, p.94). He further noted that love, as opposed to marriage specifically, was a factor in reducing solo activity outside of the marriage (Lewin, 1940b). Moreover, as a psychologist seeking to demonstrate the effect of the social group on the life space, he wrote on the social aspect of marriage, rather than economic or legal aspects (Lewin, 1940b). Therefore, while Lewin wrote on marriage rather than other forms of relationships (e.g., unmarried people who might be cohabiting), Lewin’s views on the subject can be extrapolated to other forms of romantic relationships outside of marriage. Overall, in light of Lewin’s combined writings on marriage and love, it is clear that Field Theory would conceptualise a person’s relationship status as having a particularly potent effect on their life space, and subsequently on their behaviour in general.

Field Theory and Change

As noted above, Field Theory was developed by Lewin to create a framework that would allow him to understand and analyse human behavior. It was particularly focused on examining behaviour in relation to change, which Lewin believed individuals had a tendency to avoid (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Lewin, 1947b). Broadly, he theorised that behaviour took place in a state of what he termed ‘quasi-stationary equilibrium’, in which a status quo is conceptualised to exist at Time One, and for change to happen, something must impinge upon the life space of an individual to disrupt that equilibrium and drive change towards a new status quo at Time Two, which would establish a new equilibrium (Lewin, 1947a, 1947b). Field Theory’s ideas about goal setting and striving constituted the basis for this conceptualisation of change: a change in the life space during the status quo would create motivation to achieve a goal. Either striving to achieve the goal, or actually achieving the

goal itself, could establish a new status quo. Lewin held that people tended to want to retain the status quo, especially if their social environment influenced them towards doing so (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). Field Theory was thus occupied with the task of identifying and examining factors influencing the life space in order to understand what could create change (Burnes, 2012) and meant that Lewin's research often focused on identifying factors that could render individuals more or less receptive to change (Lewin, 1947a; 1947b).

Field Theory and Waiting

Field Theory has previously been used to study how customers respond to waiting (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998; Hui et al., 1998) and is one of the dominant theoretical frameworks in the study of waits for service. Broadly, research based on Field Theory has used its conceptualisations of goal setting as a basis for theorising that customers are trying to fulfil a need when they seek out a service, and that waits constitute a barrier to achieving a goal (Hui et al., 1998). Further, based on Field Theory, motivation should be stronger to achieve the goal when the goal is further away, and lessened when the goal is closer (Lindorfer, 2021). Therefore, waits should be worse for customers when they occur further away from a goal, as this constitutes a greater threat to goal completion than waits which occur closer to the goal being achieved (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998). Field Theory has therefore largely been used to examine which stages of waiting (pre-service, in-service, or post-service waiting) have the most significant impacts on customers (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989), showing that pre-service waits and post-service waits tend to be worse for customers when compared to in-service delays. Delays to service delivery cause more negative responses the further they are from the service being delivered as this constitutes a threat to goal achievement when motivation to achieve the goal is strong (Hui et al., 1998).

Field Theory has also been used as a conceptual model to incorporate an assortment of variables that had to date been prevalent in the waiting literature (Houston et al., 1998). While the variables in that conceptual model do not appear to have been chosen due to their relevance to Field Theory, the conceptual model proposed that service-related variables (such as an explanation of the wait, or whether the wait appeared to be due to a fault from the service provider) as well as customer-related variables (like perceived wait duration or the importance of the transaction to the customer) could come together to impact evaluations of service quality after waiting. The relevance of Field Theory to this model was that behaviour

in response to waiting was thought to be due to a combination of a person interacting with their environment, which was demonstrated in the paper.

While these studies that have used Field Theory have produced useful research findings, they can be argued to represent a superficial use of the theory. That is, they broadly use the concept of behaviour being determined by a person interacting with their environment (Houston et al., 1998), and of a person pursuing goals which can be met with barriers, and which can subsequently shape behaviour (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998). However, they do not incorporate any further ideas or concepts that are considered essential for Lewin's theory, particularly how a person's social group or social influences affect their life space and how they might consequently impact behaviour in relation to waiting. They neglect to explore how romantic relationships impact reactions to waiting. This is a significant omission in previous research, as social groups are considered by Field Theory to be especially potent factors that can affect the life space.

Further, previous waiting research (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998; Hui et al., 1998) was designed in a way that assumes individuals will agree to wait if they must in order to receive a service. That is, in each of these studies, participants are not given the ability to choose not to continue pursuing their existing goal, or to achieve their goal in another way (e.g., cancel their request for service and seek out a different service provider) if they meet a barrier (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998; Hui et al., 1998). However, Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) proposes that choosing to achieve their goal in another way is a possible (indeed likely) outcome if a person meets a barrier to their goal. This means that previous studies on waiting using Field Theory do not incorporate possible behavioural change by participants within their conceptual models, even though the field was created to study behavioural change. Moreover, they do not explore how factors might influence individuals to be more or less predisposed towards change in response to barriers, despite this being a key focus of Field Theory (Lewin, 1947a, 1947b).

Theoretical Extension on Past Research on Field Theory

The research presented in this thesis will therefore extend upon the previous research conducted using Field Theory in the waiting literature in three ways, each of which constitutes a theoretical contribution to the study of waits for service. First, this research will

extend previous research on waiting by examining how a person's social group, specifically their relationship status, impacts how they react to having to wait to obtain a service. This allows for a broad examination of how one of the key social groups a person belongs to (which are considered a fundamental part of their life space) impacts their pursuit of the goal of obtaining a service when they meet the barrier of having to wait.

Second, this research will investigate a person's likelihood of cancelling if they have to wait for a service. Thus, this research builds the possibility of behavioural change into its investigation of how a person's behaviour can change when they face a barrier to their goal of obtaining a service. This is a previously neglected area of investigation in the waiting literature based on Field Theory, and is generally understudied within the broader waiting literature. The neglect of the waiting literature to examine cancellation in the face of waiting, specifically with regard to changes in intended or actual behaviour, will be discussed further in the method section.

Finally, this research will investigate how a person's level of cognitive rigidity, which is a construct that shapes whether a person is more or less predisposed towards change, moderates the effect of relationship status on reactions to having to wait for service. This allows for an examination of how a construct that can make a person more or less predisposed to change impacts the way the social influences in their life space shapes behaviour when having a goal interrupted by a barrier.

Service Environment, the Lifespace, and Behaviour

Due to Field Theory's (Lewin, 1942) broad conceptualisations of its key concepts, it is important to define how this research fits within the broader frameworks of Field Theory. This research will operationalise the person side of the equation (p) by focusing on individual difference variables, and in particular by examining relationship status and cognitive rigidity. It will operationalise the environment part of the equation in the same way as past literature on waiting (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998), with the (e) being the servicescape and service-related factors that an individual seeks service in, such as having to wait for that

service at the point of receiving it. It will use the same operationalisation of goals and barriers that is used in past waiting literature based on Field Theory: customers are conceptualised to have a goal of obtaining service, with a wait for service constituting a barrier to that goal. This combination of a person's individual difference variables (p) and a wait for service in their environment (e) combines to construct their life space. The research presented here examines whether these factors in a person's life space therefore impacts their behaviour (B) in relation to cancellation, either real or intended, after their goal of obtaining service is impacted by the barrier of having to wait.

Field Theory, Prospect Theory, and Sunk Costs

As stated above, Field Theory is one of the dominant theoretical frameworks in the study of waits for service (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Houston et al., 1998; Hui et al., 1998). However, while the major tenets of Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) clearly indicate that the constructs of relationship status and cognitive rigidity should impact reactions to waiting, literature on Field Theory is not sufficiently detailed to indicate exactly how they should do so. Therefore, in order to develop hypotheses for how relationship status and cognitive rigidity affect reactions to waiting, the work presented here will further draw on additional research on sunk cost effects, which is itself based in Prospect Theory (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980), in the examination of waits for service that is presented here. This will allow the research to identify how relationship status and cognitive rigidity will impact reactions to waiting and will further allow for the generation of testable hypotheses concerning the two constructs.

Research on Prospect Theory and sunk costs constitute a useful approach to extend upon the theoretical framework developed using Field Theory for several reasons. This is because the two theories share foundational conceptualisations about how individuals make decisions and further share a focus on exploring how previous commitments have downstream impacts on decision-making. Both theories, for example, hold that people do not make choices in a vacuum and highlight the importance of examining the past behaviour and the attitudes of an individual in order to understand their decision-making (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980). The two theories notably share a specific focus in exploring how past commitments impact decision-making, often in the context of change. Field Theory,

for example, posits that entering a romantic partnership is a highly impactful choice that has a profound effect on the lifespace and decision-making of an individual (Lewin, 1940b). It further has a strong focus on examining why people might be more or less predisposed to change (Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Lewin, 1947b). As will be discussed in more depth below, Prospect Theory likewise has been used to examine how past commitments can have downstream effects on decision-making (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980). Particularly, through its application to sunk cost effects, it has been used to understand the ways in which previous commitments can cause individuals to avoid change by choosing to remain with an existing commitment in the face of suboptimal outcomes (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Goodfriend & Agnew, 2008; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Leahy, 2000; Rego et al., 2018; Thaler, 1980).

Unlike Field Theory, however, Prospect Theory and sunk cost effects have been widely researched in the modern era (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Goodfriend & Agnew, 2008; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Leahy, 2000; Rego et al., 2018; Thaler, 1980). Sunk cost effects have crucially been directly applied to the study of modern relationships (Goodfriend & Agnew, 2008; Leahy, 2000; Rego et al., 2018), as opposed to simply being applied to more dated conceptualisations of marriage, with sunk cost effects used to explore how relationship status can impact preferences for avoiding change in a range of contexts. Therefore, while Field Theory is a foundational theoretical perspective in the study of waits for service, and clearly indicates that relationship status and cognitive rigidity should impact reactions to waiting, the research presented here also incorporates insights from the literature on Prospect Theory and sunk cost effects to more directly identify how relationship status and cognitive rigidity will shape waiting responses. The incorporation of insights from Prospect Theory and sunk cost effects will therefore allow the research presented here to craft specific hypotheses in a manner that is conceptually compatible with the key tenets of Field Theory, and in a manner that shares a key focus on incorporating a behavioural change perspective into the study of reactions to waiting.

Prospect Theory and sunk costs

The following section will therefore outline the key tenets of Prospect Theory with a view to explaining the underlying principles of sunk cost effects in decision-making. It will also outline key findings from the literature on sunk costs, including key emotional drivers of

sunk cost effects, previous usage in the waiting literature, and the impacts of sunk costs effects on decision making for individuals of different relationship statuses.

As stated above, sunk cost effects are typically studied from the perspective of Prospect Theory (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980). Prospect Theory holds that choices are evaluated in comparison to a reference point, as opposed to being evaluated based purely on the utility of an expected potential outcome. This stands in opposition to principles derived from expected utility theory (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Thaler, 1980), which posit that people should only make decisions based on a calculation of outcomes that will occur in the future because costs generated in the past have already been incurred and will be incurred no matter what course of action is taken in the present.

Prospect Theory, however, holds that individuals do not make decisions in isolation, but do so in relation to past decisions on the matter which act as a reference point (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Thaler, 1980). That is, if at Time 1, a person invests money and loses money on that investment, their decision about how to invest money at Time 2 would not solely be made based on a calculation of how much money the investment would make from Time 2 and into the future. Instead, the decision on how to invest money at Time 2 would also be made in reference to how much the investment had already lost from Time 1. Moreover, Prospect Theory holds that evaluations of losses and gains are asymmetrical and that people are more sensitive to losses than they are to gains (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Thaler, 1980). This means that the pain of losing \$100 would be felt more intensely than the pleasure of gaining \$100. The consequences of this are that people who lose money at Time 1 can make decisions that might be considered irrational at Time 2, such as by escalating commitment to a failing investment, in an attempt to reverse the loss they incurred at Time 1.

It is important to note that these principles can be applied to the study of other forms of investments even though Thaler and other seminal researchers on Prospect Theory and sunk costs typically communicate their ideas using money as the focal example (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Thaler, 1980). This means that individuals also make decisions on investments of time, effort, or emotion based on past decisions which act as reference points. People are also likely to feel losses more intensely than gains for non-monetary investments as well. That is, if at Point 1, a person invests time into a project and feels they have spent that time without achieving a desirable outcome, their decision about how to invest their time at Point 2 would

not solely be made based on a calculation of how useful further investments of time would be at Point 2 and into the future. The decision on how to invest time at Point 2 would then also be made in reference to how much the investment of time had already been wasted from Point 1.

Following on from Prospect Theory, the sunk cost fallacy holds that an individual is likely to persist in a course of action when they have already committed resources of time, money, emotion, or effort into that action (Arkes & Blumer, 1985). This has wide-ranging impacts on individuals' consumer behaviour as it increases the likelihood that a person will persist with an existing choice when making decisions. For example, a consumer will be more likely to drive to a sports game during a snowstorm if they have paid for a ticket than if they received a ticket for free (Kwak & Park, 2012; Thaler, 1985). Further, an individual might continue to commit to a date with a person they are not really interested in because they spent time arranging the date (Coleman, 2009). An individual might also choose to persist in an unsatisfying romantic relationship because they have already committed time and effort to the relationship (Goodfriend & Agnew, 2008; Leahy, 2000; Rego et al., 2018).

Sunk costs are typically examined in contexts where the outcome of the investment is in some way sub-optimal, meaning that the sunk costs of previous investments into the action lead to a continued irrational escalation of commitment to the action, even though this will continue to lead to a sub-optimal outcome (Arkes & Blumer, 1985). Under these circumstances, the rational decision would be to prevent further losses by ceasing further investment. That is, it would be rational for a person to end a relationship they do not want even if they spent a long time committing to it, as continuing the relationship would waste even more time on a suboptimal outcome, throwing good time after bad.

Sunk cost effects have historically been studied from the perspective that all people are capable of making decisions based on sunk costs and that all people would do so at least some of the time (Ronayne, 2021). However, research has shown that individuals can differ in their likelihood of making decisions based on sunk costs (Parker & Fischhoff, 2005). In this way, research has posited that individuals can vary in their degree of sunk cost sensitivity, thereby varying in the extent to which they are likely to make decisions based on previous sunk costs (Sweis et al., 2018; Kazinka et al., 2021; Ronayne, 2021; Ulku et al., 2020). That is, despite sub optimal outcomes, a person who demonstrates high sunk cost

sensitivity would be more likely to remain with an existing commitment because they have already invested resources of time, money, emotion, or effort into it. Conversely, a person low on sunk cost sensitivity would be more capable of cancelling an existing commitment despite previous investments of time, money, emotion, or effort that they have made into it. Crucially, research has also shown that sunk cost sensitivity can transfer across domains, meaning that if a person is sensitive to sunk costs in one domain, they are also likely to be sensitive to sunk costs in others (Ronayne, 2021; Ulku et al., 2020).

Importantly, one key emotional driver of sunk costs is anticipated regret (Kwak & Park, 2012; Wong et al., 2006; Wong & Kwong, 2007). Regret is defined as an emotion that is felt “when realizing or imagining that our present situation would have been better, had we decided differently” (Zeelenberg, 1999, p.94). While much of regret is focused on retrospective evaluations of decisions, such as regretting the decision to purchase Stock A when Stock B appreciates more in value (Wong & Kwong, 2007), regret can also be prospective in nature. That is, consumers often look forward and imagine the regret they might feel based on the outcome of a decision they are about to make. This is referred to as ‘anticipated regret’.

As stated above, feelings of anticipated regret have been shown to be a key emotional driver of sunk costs in decision making. For example, work has shown that a consumer is more likely to attend a concert during a bad weather event if they have paid for a ticket than if they obtained a ticket for free, and that this is because consumers are more likely to anticipate that they will regret cancelling their concert attendance if they have paid for the ticket than if they did not (Kwak & Park, 2012). Similarly, in decision-making contexts, consumers are more likely to escalate commitment when they anticipate that they will regret withdrawing from the commitment (Wong & Kwong, 2007). The anticipated regret of ending an investment of time, money, or effort therefore has been shown to motivate consumers to continue sinking costs into a particular course of action, even if that course of action might lead to a suboptimal outcome. In this way, it is likely that a person who is highly sensitive to sunk costs would therefore be more likely to experience heightened anticipated regret at the prospect of ending a commitment of time, money, or effort into an existing investment. In comparison, a person who is low on sensitivity to sunk costs would likely experience reduced anticipated regret at the prospect of terminating an existing commitment regardless of sunk costs.

Sunk cost effects have broad implications for decision making and have been explored in a number of fields (Roth et al., 2015), including psychological literature (Kwak & Park, 2012), but have often been explored in business contexts. For example, the concept has been used to further understandings of decision-making in consumer investments (Soman & Cheema, 2001), organisational investments in R&D or venture capital pursuits (Guler, 2007; Manez et al., 2009), as well as consumer responses to pricing (Soman & Gourville, 2001). These findings show, for example, that individuals and organisations can have trouble terminating bad investments based on sunk costs (Guler, 2007).

Literature on sunk cost effects have also been studied in more specific contexts that are likely to have implications for the field of waiting. Firstly, sunk costs have been shown to have significant impacts on how customers adapt to changes in a marketplace (Kim & Lee, 2016; Polites & Karahanna, 2012). For example, sunk costs have been shown to reduce the likelihood that customers will adopt new products due to the increased psychological commitment that they motivate within consumers for existing products (Kim & Lee, 2016; Polites & Karahanna, 2012). Broadly, sunk costs are therefore theorised to be “a major barrier to change” (Leahy, 2000, p.357) because they inspire individuals who are sensitive to sunk costs to look “to the past for the reasons to maintain a course of action” (Leahy, 2000, p.357), rather than to adapt to a new course of action.

Secondly, sunk cost effects have also been shown to impact relationships, which as discussed above poses significant implications for decision-making in romantic relationships (Coleman, 2009; Goodfriend & Agnew, 2008; Leahy, 2000; Rego et al., 2018). For example, sensitivity to sunk costs is considered to be a contributing factor for why people will commit to dates with romantic interests (Coleman, 2009) and for why they will remain in relationships with them (Goodfriend & Agnew, 2008; Leahy, 2000; Rego et al., 2018). Sunk cost effects have also been shown to impact decision-making in the context of relationships with service providers (Ulku et al., 2020). As will be further discussed throughout this chapter, given that sensitivity to sunk costs can transfer from one domain to another (Ronayne, 2021; Ulku et al., 2020), these findings are likely to have significant implications for the field of waiting because the decision to retain or cancel a request for service in the face of a wait requires a customer to adapt to change within their relationship to a service provider.

Sunk Cost and Waiting

While the majority of the waiting literature has found that waits have negative outcomes for businesses and customers, a small portion of research has found that waits can lead to positive outcomes for service providers on some occasions. For example, Ulku et al. (2020) found that customers spent more for services after experiencing a long wait compared to when they experienced a short wait. They further demonstrated that sunk costs were the driver of these effects. Specifically, they showed that customers who demonstrated a tendency to make choices commensurate with sunk costs in other domains were also likely to spend more for a service after a long wait. That is, a consumer who would be more likely to double down on a bad investment after losing money on it would also be likely to spend more for a service after experiencing a long wait. This has significant implications for the impact of relationship status on reactions to waiting, because it shows that customers who are sensitive to commitments made in one context are likely to display the same sensitivity and affected decision-making towards commitments in other contexts, and this can specifically impact how consumers react to waits for service.

It should be noted however that the studies conducted by Ulku et al. (2020) contain the same overall design as many studies in the waiting literature, which did not allow for the capture of data on cancellation. As is common in the waiting literature, studies conducted by Ulku et al. (2020) were not designed in a way that allowed participants to cancel their request for a service or leave a queue if they considered a wait to be too long. Given this design, it is possible that consumers who are less sensitive to sunk costs might simply leave a queue before ordering, or otherwise cancel a request for service, if a wait is too long. This means that the findings by Ulku et al (2020) may have inadvertently oversampled consumers with higher sensitivity to sunk costs, which may have impacted their findings, and which creates a gap in the literature.

Therefore, the series of studies presented in this thesis builds on the work conducted on sunk costs in the waiting literature and uses it to synthesize conflicting findings from the literature on both the negative and positive reactions to waiting. It does so by exploring sensitivity to sunk costs, and its associated impact on anticipated regret about having to cancel a request for service, as an explanation for why some consumers might respond more positively or

more negatively to waits than others. That is, consumers who demonstrate heightened sensitivity to sunk costs would be likely to feel stronger anticipated regret for cancellation and would therefore be less likely to cancel in the face of a wait. For the service provider, this would constitute a more positive reaction to waiting on the part of the customer. Conversely, consumers who show reduced sensitivity to sunk costs would have lower anticipated regret for cancellation, rendering them more likely to cancel. For the service provider, this constitutes a negative reaction to waiting on the part of the customer.

Relationship Status and Sunk Costs

Why might partnered consumers show a higher sensitivity towards sunk costs than single consumers? As will be discussed throughout this section, the process of forming and committing to a relationship bares a high degree of similarities to sunk cost effects, and much of the time may actually be indistinguishable from them. That is, while successful relationships require many positive elements to form and to survive, leading models of commitment show that it is also not possible for people to sustain committed relationships unless they show a high degree of sensitivity towards sunk costs. In this way, because sustaining committed relationships requires an individual to make choices based on sunk costs, and because sunk cost sensitivity can transfer from one domain to another (Ronayne, 2021; Ulku et al., 2020), being in a relationship likely heightens sensitivity to sunk costs for partnered individuals in their broader decision making.

Firstly, there is a high degree of similarity between conceptualisations of sunk costs and conceptualisations of commitment within romantic relationships. For example, the Rusbult Investment Model of Relationships holds that commitment to a relationship depends on the level of investment that an individual puts into the relationship (Rusbult et al., 2011). That is, if an individual does not invest time, money, emotion or other resources into a relationship, they are unlikely to feel committed to it. This is notable as according to the Rusbult Investment Model, commitment to a relationship does not precede time or other resources invested into the relationship but actually follows the investment of such resources into the relationship (Rusbult et al., 2011). This means that sunk costs and commitments within romantic relationships are highly similar conceptually.

Further, some conceptualisations of commitment highlight the importance of constraints in preventing relationship dissolution (Stanley & Markman, 1992; Rhoades et al., 2010). These restraints could take the form of economic investments, shared friends, children, or even moral beliefs that a person must finish what they have started (Stanley, et al., 2010) and are believed to increase commitment to a relationship by increasing the cost of dissolution (Stanley & Markman, 1992). These investments are typically viewed as positive during periods of relationship satisfaction but can be viewed as constraining if or when relationship satisfaction decreases. Critically, these investments are believed to “reinforce the development, maintenance, or redevelopment of dedication” (Stanley et al., 2010, p. 245) to the relationship in the form of further investment in the relationship. In this way, the conceptualisations of previous investments into the relationship as leading to heightened commitment in suboptimal periods of the relationship once again bears significant similarities to conceptualisations of sunk costs.

As such, leading conceptualisations of commitment, where individuals are not believed to feel committed to a relationship until they have invested in it (Rusbult et al., 2010) and where relationship dissolution is considered undesirable because people make investments into their relationships such that the loss of previous investments would be considered too costly (Rusbult et al., 2010; Stanley & Markman, 1992), bear significant conceptual overlap with sunk cost effects. This is perhaps the reason why sunk costs have been used as a theoretical lens from which to explore motivations for remaining in unsatisfactory or even abusive relationships (Leahy, 2000; Rego et al., 2018). However, it is important to note that sunk cost effects are not only seen in relationships that might be considered bad but are also seen in relationships that would be considered good.

This is because even good relationships will still go through periods where the relationship may become temporarily unsatisfactory to one or more of the partners within them (Stanley et al., 2010). Within these periods, partners will have to continue to escalate their commitment to the relationship during these unsatisfactory moments in order for the relationship to survive. This means that when the current relationship at Time 2 is temporarily experienced as a suboptimal outcome of past investment into the relationship at Time 1, partners must continue to invest further time, money, emotion, and/or effort into the relationship in order for it to be repaired and eventually return to a satisfactory state. At that point, a partner may doubt that their additional investment will succeed in creating a

suboptimal outcome, may feel like they are throwing more good time, money, effort, and/or emotion after bad, and may not know that the outcome of their investment will be a positive as they are making it. This is indistinguishable from a sunk cost effect and demonstrates that even good relationships will sometimes require a heightened sensitivity to sunk costs in order for the relationship to survive and be sustained into the future. Therefore, partnered individuals need to be sensitive to sunk costs in order to sustain their romantic relationships regardless of the quality of the relationship, meaning that people in any committed relationship are likely to gain experience making decisions based on sunk costs.

Partnered Consumer Behaviour

As discussed above, sunk costs and relationship commitment are conceptually similar, and individuals in committed relationships must experience the act of making decisions based on sunk costs in order for their relationships to survive. Given the centrality of an individual's romantic relationship within their life as demonstrated by a range of research, but notably including the literature on Field Theory (Lewin, 1940b), and given extant findings showing that sunk cost sensitivity in one domain can transfer to others (Ulku et al., 2020), the experience of making decisions based on sunk costs in relationships therefore is likely to have broad-reaching impacts on how individuals make decisions across a range of domains.

Extant work from the consumer behaviour literature demonstrates this, showing that consumers make decisions based on their relationship status and do so in a range of ways that are consistent with sensitivity to sunk costs, or previous commitments. It is firstly understood that entering a relationship is likely to have a significant impact on how consumers make decisions (Simpson et al., 2012). For example, in the early stages of courtship, consumers are likely to make choices to demonstrate responsiveness to their partner's preferences instead of their own (Simpson et al., 2012). As the relationship progresses, they are likely to establish relationship norms concerning consumption that they jointly adhere to in future decision-making (Corfman & Lehman, 1987). Because they streamline their decision-making process to centre their relationships, partnered consumers can be viewed as being increasingly likely to make decisions based on their earlier commitments, therefore consuming in accordance with a sensitivity to sunk costs. In this way, relationship status can be a broad predictor of sensitivity to sunk costs in decision making.

This sensitivity further impacts how partnered individuals make decisions about how they spend their time. For example, extant research shows that a large majority of couples have joint lifestyles, meaning that they spend vacations, social time, and much of their leisure time with one another (Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001). This reflects a broader tendency to compromise on how each member of a couple spends time in a relationship so that they can spend it together. This constitutes a reduction in variety of how members of couples spend time within their joint lifestyle, meaning that they typically prioritise time spent together at the expense of time spent with or on other options. Broadly, this reveals that partnered individuals tend to make decisions about how they spend their time in ways that are deeply impacted by their past choices and commitments, as would be consistent with a heightened sensitivity to sunk costs.

This tendency can be observed to have an impact on how partnered individuals manage their social relationships outside of their romantic relationships, with partnered individuals having been found to spend their time with a less varied social network than singles (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015; Musick & Bumpass, 2012; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2015). For example, research has shown that entering a relationship leads to a significant decline in contact with friends, which progresses into increasingly reduced contact as the relationship continues (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015; Musick & Bumpass, 2012; Kalmijn, 2003). That is, in addition to becoming smaller, social networks among those in relationships are shown to become more overlapping, with couples increasingly sharing friends as they age (Kalmijn, 2003). While this research has been conducted in the realm of social relationships such as friendships, the fact that partnered individuals have smaller social networks compared to singles possibly indicates that they would also be more comfortable with committing to a smaller number of service relationships, rather than maximising the exploration of other options, as would be expected for singles.

The tendencies that partnered individuals have towards remaining with previous commitments in decision making, in a manner that would be consistent with sunk costs effects, have further been shown to extend to consumer choice. Specifically, literature on relationship status and sequential consumer choice show that signals relating to relationships can differentially affect consumer preferences for remaining with an existing option or choosing to switch to a new option. For example, literature shows that activating the concept of loyalty, or displaying long-term mating signals, increases preferences for choosing to

remain with an existing consumer choice when making a series of consumer decisions (Chen et al., 2016; Fishbach et al., 2011). This means that consumers who are exposed to long-term mating signals would be more likely to continue to choose the same choice of chocolate bar when selecting several chocolate bars in a row instead of switching to a different brand of chocolate bar (Chen et al., 2016; Fishbach et al., 2011). Therefore, partnered consumers' heightened sensitivity to sunk costs impacts and can be observed in their decision-making regarding how they spend their time, manage relationships, and make consumer decisions. Broadly, it can be demonstrated that partnered consumers have heightened tendencies to choose to remain with an existing choice, rather than choose to switch to another option.

While not directly related to relationship status, the above findings also fit with adjacent research on the role of anticipated regret and consumer choice (Bathae, 2013). Feelings of anticipated regret have been shown reduce switching behaviour, with higher anticipated regret having been shown to reduce the likelihood that customers will try new restaurants when choosing where to eat (Bathae, 2013). Therefore, considering that higher feelings of anticipated regret will reduce switching behaviour in consumer choice contexts (Bathae, 2013), and that partnered consumers would be more likely to experience anticipated regret at ending a commitment to an existing choice due to their high sensitivity to sunk costs, partnered consumers should be less likely to cancel a request for service if they have to wait.

Singles

In contrast to partnered consumers, single consumers have been shown to make decisions in a manner that demonstrates a low sensitivity to sunk costs. Similar to partnered individuals, this can be seen in research on how singles spend time, manage non-romantic social relationships, and in their consumer behaviour. Indeed, singles demonstrate behaviour that would be better characterised as a tendency to value the regular exploration of a high number of different options, rather than a tendency to commit and then persist in committing to an existing option, as would be commensurate with sunk cost effects.

Singles' reduced sensitivity to sunk costs can firstly be seen in how they spend their time and manage their non-romantic relationships. For example, singles have been shown to spend time on a wider variety of pastimes and with more varied social networks than partnered individuals (Cwikel et al., 2006; DePaulo, 2017; Kahn, McGill, & Bianchi, 2011; Klinenberg,

2013; Lee & Bhargava, 2004; Pepin et al., 2018; Musick & Bumpass, 2012; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2015). For instance, in comparison to people in relationships, singles have been found to spend more time volunteering (Cwikel et al., 2006; DePaulo, 2017), participating in civic life and public events (Klinenberg, 2013), and are more involved in hobbies such as music, dance, and art (Lee & Bhargava, 2004). This a pattern that is consistent with a tendency to explore different options, rather than commit and then escalate commitment to an existing option.

Singles have also generally been found to spend their time with a more varied social network than those in relationships (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015; Musick & Bumpass, 2012; Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2015), including spending time with larger overall networks of siblings, parents, friends, neighbours, and co-workers (Kahn, McGill, & Bianchi, 2011; Musick & Bumpass, 2012; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2015). Broadly, this reflects a tendency among singles to spend time on a varied set of pastimes and social contacts and reflects a clear difference when compared with partnered consumers, because it demonstrates that singles are not consuming based on past commitments to a previous choice. In this way, single consumers demonstrate a comparably low sensitivity to sunk costs in how they spend their time. That singles spend time in varied ways and maintain large networks of non-romantic relationships further possibly has implications for how they manage their service relationships. That is, it possibly increases the likelihood that singles will be more comfortable breaking a previous commitment to a service provider and trying a new one should that provider place an undue impact on their time in the form on a wait for service.

Extant research on how singles spend time and manage their non-romantic social relationships lastly accords with research that has investigated the psychological correlates of singlehood and single consumer behaviour, which has noted that singles are more likely than those in relationships to seek change when making consumption choices (Donthu & Gilliland, 2002). For example, past work has shown that singles score more highly on constructs such as variety seeking, impulsiveness, risk tolerance, and innovativeness than partnered consumers (Donthu & Gilliland, 2002). Broadly, each of these traits reflects a tendency to be more comfortable with switching away from an existing choice to trying another option.

This can be further seen in literature on consumer choice which has demonstrated that short-term mating signals increase consumer preference for switching away from an existing option, whereas being in a relationship does not (Chen et al., 2016; Donthu & Gilliland, 2002; Huang & Dong, 2018). Thus, when a consumer is exposed to short-term mating signals, they will be more likely to move away from an existing choice and select a different choice when making sequential choice decisions (such as selecting a KitKat bar after first choosing a Snickers). Therefore, single consumers broadly demonstrate a tendency to be comfortable with switching away from an existing option and trying a new one. This stands in contrast to the process of sunk costs, which requires continued escalation in commitment to an existing choice even if the outcome of the increased commitment is suboptimal.

These findings on relationship status and sequential choice are highly relevant to consumer decision-making in the contexts of waits for service. This is because a consumer who is deciding whether to wait for service must first have made the decision to access a service through a specific provider. When presented with the prospect of a wait, they must then decide whether the service is worth waiting for. In this way, deciding to retain a request for service with one service provider or go to another is very similar to how sequential consumer choice is explored. Based on the above studies, it is logical that because of their heightened sensitivity to sunk costs and increased tendencies towards consuming based on past commitments in consumer choice, partnered consumers may be more likely to anticipate that they would regret cancelling a request for service. This would therefore make partnered consumers more likely to retain a request for service with a provider in the face of a wait. Conversely, singles' low sensitivity to sunk costs and heightened tendencies towards trying other options might decrease their anticipated regret for cancellation. This would thereby increase their likelihood of switching away from a previously chosen service provider if remaining with that provider requires them to wait.

Hypothesis One

Given the conceptual similarities between sunk cost effects (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980) and commitment (Rusbult et al., 2010; Stanley, et al., 2010; Stanley & Markman, 1992), it is likely that people in relationships must experience the act of making decisions based on sunk costs in order for their relationships to survive. It

is further likely that this experience heightens their sensitivity towards sunk costs in other domains. These sensitivities to sunk costs can further be observed in how partnered individuals make decisions about how to spend their time (Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001), manage their non-romantic relationships (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015; Musick & Bumpass, 2012; Kalmijn, 2003), and make consumer decisions in sequential choice contexts (Chen et al., 2016; Fishbach et al., 2011). That is, partnered individuals broadly demonstrate a tendency towards committing to an existing option and then continuing to maintain or escalate their commitment to that existing option, rather than switching away to a new one.

Conversely, singles demonstrate a low sensitivity to sunk costs, which can also be seen in how they make decisions on how to spend their time (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015; Musick & Bumpass, 2012; Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2015), manage their non-romantic relationships (Kahn, McGill, & Bianchi, 2011; Musick & Bumpass, 2012; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2015), and in their consumer behaviour (Donthu & Gilliland, 2002) such as how they make decisions in sequential choice contexts (Chen et al., 2016; Donthu & Gilliland, 2002; Huang & Dong, 2018). Overall, single consumers demonstrate a sensitivity to the potential exploration of other options, which decreases their likelihood of remaining with an existing choice and increases their likelihood of switching away from an existing choice to a new one.

Considering that past research in the waiting literature has shown that heightened sensitivity to sunk costs can shape how consumers react to having to wait (Ulku et al., 2020), this research proposes that consumers will have different reactions to waits for service depending on their relationship status. For single consumers, their low sensitivity to sunk costs in consumption will likely increase their chances of cancellation if they have to wait for service. This is because their tendencies towards switching away from an existing option towards a new option would reduce their chances of remaining with a subpar choice in a situation where they can make a different decision. This will therefore make single consumers more likely to cancel a request for service if they must wait for it.

On the other hand, for consumers in relationships, their heightened sensitivity to sunk costs will likely act as a buffer against cancellation. Their sensitivity to sunk costs will therefore reduce their likelihood of cancelling a request for service in the presence of a long wait. In

comparison to consumers who are single, partnered consumers will therefore be less likely to cancel a request for service in the presence of a long wait. Stated formally:

H1: Consumers who are in a relationship (vs single) will be less likely to cancel a request for service if they must wait.

Hypothesis Two

Anticipated regret has been shown to be a key emotional driver behind sunk costs and continued commitment to a course of action (Kwak & Park, 2012; Wong et al., 2006; Wong & Kwong, 2007). Specifically, past research has shown that anticipated regret for ending an action makes people more likely to continue to commit to a course of action rather than end it (Kwak & Park, 2012; Wong et al., 2006; Wong & Kwong, 2007). Further, individuals are more likely to anticipate that they will regret ending an action when they have already sunk costs into that action than when they have not (Kwak & Park, 2012; Wong et al., 2006; Wong & Kwong, 2007). For example, a person may be more likely to commit more time to a project in the face of a negative outcome because their existing commitment of time leads them to anticipate that they would therefore regret ending the project (Wong et al., 2006).

In this way, considering the important role that anticipated regret has in driving people to persist with an existing commitment based on sunk costs, anticipated regret should also play a role in shaping how consumers respond to waits for service based on their relationship status. Following this, anticipated regret should mediate the effect of relationship status and wait time on cancellation. Specifically, it is likely that, due to their heightened sensitivity to sunk costs, partnered consumers will demonstrate higher anticipated regret at the prospect of cancellation in the presence of a long wait, compared with single consumers. Conversely, compared with partnered consumers, singles will demonstrate lower anticipated regret for cancellation in the presence of a long wait. Stated formally:

H2: The effect of relationship status on cancellation will be mediated by feelings of anticipated regret, such that consumers who are in a relationship (vs single) will demonstrate higher anticipated regret at the prospect of cancellation if they must wait.

Hypothesis Three

While the field of waiting has generally refrained from studying key individual difference variables, one particularly important construct that has been overlooked are trait-level differences in how consumers respond to change (Durrande-Moreau, 1999). This is a regrettable oversight as retaining a request for service in the presence of a long wait requires consumers to adjust to a new and unanticipated situation. Will a customer decline a request for service because the wait is too long, or will they retain their request for service and adjust to having to wait to receive it? Thus, it is important to consider how consumers respond to change when examining consumer reactions to waiting, especially when studying waiting from the perspective of Field Theory (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Lewin, 1947b) and Prospect Theory (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980), as both theories have a strong focus on examining why individuals choose to avoid or embrace change.

One way to examine behavioural change in the context of these theories is the level of cognitive rigidity possessed by a consumer. Previously used to study individuals' responses to organisational and technological change (Sun, 2021; Oreg, 2006), cognitive rigidity has been categorised as a reluctance on the part of a person to change their mind (Seo & Ray, 2019), which makes consumers "less willing and able to adjust to new situations" (Oreg, 2003, p.681). In this way, cognitive rigidity is likely to be a strong driver of sunk costs effects, which have also been shown to be a key reason why a person would resist change (Kim & Lee, 2016; Leahy, 2000; Polites & Karahanna, 2012).

Consumers high on cognitive rigidity have been found to resist innovation in terms of adopting mobile apps (Sun, 2021), oppose the implementation of new workplace information systems (Laumer et al., 2016), and resist the merger of units in an organisation (Oreg, 2006). Individuals high on cognitive rigidity have moreover been demonstrated to be high on habitual social networking site usage, which has been interpreted as evidence that high cognitive rigidity can be a driver of habitual behaviour (Seo & Ray, 2019). Thus, a consumer that is high on cognitive rigidity is likely to have a predisposition towards avoiding change and a diminished ability to adjust to new situations. By affecting how consumers adapt to or embrace change, cognitive rigidity is highly likely to impact whether a customer chooses to continue or discontinue a request for service if they must wait.

Based on past research (Laumer et al., 2016; Oreg, 2006; Seo & Ray, 2019; Sun, 2021), it is likely that higher cognitive rigidity will mean that consumers will demonstrate a reduced likelihood of changing their mind during the decision-making process when evaluating a wait for service. However, it should not be assumed that consumers who are high in cognitive rigidity will therefore simply be less likely to cancel a reservation in the presence of a long wait, as customers will bring their pre-existing sensitivities for sunk costs into their waiting experiences. Instead, because cognitive rigidity can significantly strengthen pre-existing tendencies in the face of adjustments to new situations (Seo & Ray, 2019; Sun, 2021), it is likely that high cognitive rigidity in the presence of a wait will instead act as an intensifier of consumers' existing tendencies towards either being more or less sensitive to sunk costs, thus shaping their responses to waiting.

Therefore, given their low sensitivity to sunk costs, single consumers who are high on cognitive rigidity will become more likely to cancel than partnered consumers in the presence of a wait. This is because their reduced sensitivity to sunk costs in decision-making, and therefore their increased likelihood of cancellation, will be intensified by their high cognitive rigidity. On the other hand, partnered consumers who are high in cognitive rigidity will become less likely to cancel in the presence of a wait when compared with single consumers. This is because their high cognitive rigidity will intensify their sensitivity to sunk costs in decision making, and therefore make them less likely to cancel a request for service in the presence of a long wait. Stated formally:

H3: As their levels of cognitive rigidity increase, partnered consumers (vs single) will become less likely to cancel a request for service if they must wait.

While these reactions to waiting should occur as waits get longer, this research does not make any predictions based on what exact length of wait, for example measured in minutes, would be necessary to cause these reactions in participants. This is because past research has operationalised waiting using a range of different wait times and contexts, and what is considered to be a long or longer wait is heavily dependent on different contexts. The outcomes hypothesised should moreover be robust whether waiting is measured or manipulated, and whether the wait conceptually corresponds to a shorter versus longer

operationalisation of waiting (i.e., continuous), or a no waiting versus some waiting (i.e., a binary) operationalisation of waiting.

Chapter 4: Methodology, Methods and Results

Chapter 4 Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the methodological considerations relevant to the current research before providing an empirical test of the developed hypotheses. The chapter begins with a discussion of the ontological and epistemological considerations of the research, as well as a discussion of methodological fit between the quantitative methodology and experimental research method that was employed. It next presents the empirical package for the current research, providing information on data collection, analysis, and results for each of the four studies. This includes an overview, method, results, and discussion for each study presented here.

Methodology

Theoretical Perspective and Methodological Fit

A theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance that informs a methodology (Crotty, 2020). The theoretical perspective of this program of research informs its methodology by “providing a context for the process and grounding its logic” (Crotty, 2020, p.3). Moreover, it is vital to ensure that a program of research has strong methodological fit or “internal consistency among elements of a research project” (Edmonson & McManus, 2007, p.115), because methodological fit is an overarching criterion for quality in research (Edmonson & McManus, 2007). As will be shown throughout this section, the research presented here has strong methodological fit between its internal elements, including its theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods, ensuring high quality in the research that is conducted.

Post-Positivism

Theorists hold that there are four broad theoretical perspectives in research: positivism, constructivism, critical theory, and realism (Healy & Perry, 2000). A theoretical perspective has a distinct ontology, which is a conceptualisation of what kind of reality exists to be investigated by a researcher (Healy & Perry, 2000). A theoretical perspective also has an

epistemology, which is a conceptualisation of the relationship between a researcher and reality, and which affects how reality can be known (Healy & Perry, 2000). Finally, a theoretical perspective has an appropriate methodology or methodologies, which are the practices researchers can use to investigate and develop knowledge about reality in research derived from a particular theoretical perspective (Healy & Perry, 2000).

This research is conducted from a post-positivist theoretical perspective. As indicated by its name, post-positivism stems from positivism, which ontologically is “a belief in a logically ordered, objective reality” (Babbie, 2015, p.43). Positivism further has an objectivist epistemology (Healy & Perry, 2000), holding that scientists can clearly understand this logical, objective reality through “scientific observation carried out by way of the scientific method” (Crotty, 2020, p.20). Under positivism, reality exists outside of a researcher, and the researcher can come to objectively understand it by using the scientific method (Babbie, 2015). Thus, when a researcher comes to a conclusion, that conclusion is considered to be objectively true (Healy & Perry, 2000). However, while positivism was a dominant theoretical perspective from the seventeenth century until the middle of the twentieth century (Babbie, 2015), some theorists have acknowledged that researchers are unable to meet the level of objectivity that positivism expects from its adherents (Babbie, 2015).

Post-positivism is an extension of positivism that seeks to correct for these issues, while adhering to key tenets of the philosophy. It departs from positivism by instead adhering to a critical realist ontology, meaning that reality is assumed to be real (as opposed to socially constructed) but human beings are believed to only be able to perceive reality in imperfect ways (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). For this reason, under post-positivism, scientists can attempt to know reality but “claims about reality must be subjected to the widest possible critical examination to facilitate apprehending reality as closely as possible (but never perfectly)” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110). Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are appropriate for research undertaken from a post-positivist perspective.

Methodology and Method

While both quantitative and qualitative methods are appropriate within the post-positivist paradigm, quantitative methods are most appropriate for this program of research for three primary reasons. First, theorists have specifically noted that methods involving experiments and the falsification of hypotheses are generally appropriate for post-positivist research

(Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Healy & Perry, 2000). Second, research in the waiting literature can be argued to fall under the category of Edmonson & McManus’s (2007) ‘Mature Theory Research’, which is most appropriately conducted using quantitative methods.

For example, Mature Theory Research is conducted to refine a large, existing body of work by “elaborating [on], clarifying, or challenging specific aspects of existing theories” (Edmonson & McManus, 2007, p.1159). This is completed by developing hypotheses based on logical arguments that build on prior work in a well-developed field (Edmonson & McManus, 2007). Therefore, in seeking to add an understanding of how relationship status shapes reactions to waiting to the field, and further examine how cognitive rigidity shapes the impact of relationships status on waiting, this research is consistent with the definition of Mature Theory Research. As outlined by Edmonson & McManus (2007), this can only be conducted using a quantitative methodology and related quantitative data collection methods, such as surveys or experiments. While Edmonson & McManus (2007) specifically wrote about methodological fit in the context of field survey research, the same principles also apply to research conducted in non-field settings. A table detailing Mature Theory Research has been provided below.

State of Prior Theory and Research	Nascent	Intermediate	Mature
Research questions	Open-ended inquiry about a phenomenon of interest	Proposed relationships between new and established constructs	Focused questions and/or hypotheses relating existing constructs
Type of data collected	Qualitative, initially open-ended data that need to be interpreted for meaning	Hybrid (both qualitative and quantitative)	Quantitative data; focused measures where extent or amount is meaningful
Illustrative methods for collecting data	Interviews; observations; obtaining documents or other material from field sites relevant to the phenomena of interest	Interviews; observations; surveys; obtaining material from field sites relevant to the phenomena of interest	Surveys; interviews or observations designed to be systematically coded and quantified; obtaining data from field sites that

			measure the extent or amount of salient constructs
Constructs and measures	Typically new constructs, few formal measures	Typically one or more new constructs and/or new measures	Typically relying heavily on existing constructs and measures
Goal of data analyses	Pattern identification	Preliminary or exploratory testing of new propositions and/or new constructs	Formal hypothesis testing
Data analysis methods	Thematic content analysis coding for evidence of constructs	Content analysis, exploratory statistics, and preliminary tests	Statistical inference, standard statistical analyses
Theoretical contribution	A suggestive theory, often an invitation for further work on the issue or set of issues opened up by the study	A provisional theory, often one that integrates previously separate bodies of work	A supported theory that may add specificity, new mechanisms, or new boundaries to existing theories

Source: Reproduced from Edmonson & McManus (2007)

Finally, experiments are an appropriate method for this research because of its use of Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) as its central theoretical perspective. Field Theory was known specifically for its use of experimental methods to test its propositions and hypotheses (Lewin, 1939). This stemmed particularly from Lewin’s advocacy for the importance of using experiments to demonstrate the impacts of “social facts upon behaviour” (Lewin, 1939, p.869), which he believed was crucial to fulfilling the mission of Field Theory. Therefore, the use of experiments to conduct research is arguably the most appropriate method for any research project conducting from a Field Theoretical perspective. Notable previous instances of Field Theory research in the waiting literature were also conducted using experiments (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998), such that the research presented here accords with past methods.

Therefore, in using a quantitative methodology, implemented using experiments, the research presented here has strong methodological fit for the type of mature theory research being conducted. It further accords with philosophical assumptions and methodology of research conducted within the post-positivist research paradigm. Overall, these elements have clear internal consistency, providing a strong foundation for the quality of the research program.

The following section will provide justifications for overarching design choices in regard to context and wait time operationalisations within the program of research. It will then outline how data were collected and analysed, as well as provide results, for each of the four studies that were conducted.

Research Design Considerations

Context

As discussed above in Chapter 2, waiting has been explored in multiple service contexts (i.e. hospitality, education, and tourism settings). It has also been operationalised in many different ways (including in-person and technologically mediated contexts). While some studies have speculated about potential differences in reactions to waiting that might stem from differences in service contexts or operationalisations² (Voorhees et al., 2009), these have not been addressed in any substantive way in the waiting literature (i.e., through literature reviews or meta-analyses). In light of the lack of clear conceptual guidance on this, and following the broad trends of past research, waiting will therefore be operationalised in both in-person and technologically mediated contexts, improving the robustness of the findings. To demonstrate generalisability, waiting will be researched in multiple service industries, specifically in the contexts of hotel bookings, restaurants, and in a bowling alley. These have been selected as they all constitute hedonic waiting contexts which, in comparison to waiting for an essential service such as a flight in an airport or for emergent medical care, will not prevent customers from cancelling due to the essential nature of the service context.

² One study showed that affective commitment to a service provider attenuated negative reactions to waiting, such as regret, in contexts where customers might have long term attachments to a service provider, like hairdressing (Voorhees et al., 2009).

Additionally, these contexts have been selected as they are relatively common contexts in which to experience a wait. A customer might, for example, experience a wait at a luxury service provider, such as waiting to commence service at an upscale spa facility or to test drive a Mercedes Benz. They might likewise experience a wait for an attraction that rarely occurs, such as for a famous travelling exhibition at an art museum. In these situations, the customer's reaction to the wait would be impacted by the luxury, novelty, or other form of perceived importance for the service that they are waiting for (Maister, 2005). Hotel bookings, restaurants, and bowling alleys are contexts in which customers receive services that they consider valuable, but which are more commonly experienced in everyday life. They are therefore unlikely to introduce confounds to the data collection based on perceived importance of the wait.

Moreover, these contexts are appropriate because they typically involve multi-stage waits for customers and allow the research presented here to identify and establish a scenario within a pre-service wait. In each of these cases, the wait is also conceptualised in accordance with the definition of waiting crafted by Taylor (1994), in that the customer is seeking to receive a service but is forced to endure a delay. For example, in the hotel booking context, the customer has requested a booking but has not had that booking immediately confirmed. In the restaurant context, the customer is ready to be seated at a table but is unable to immediately be seated. In the bowling alley context, the customer is ready to book a lane, but is forced to stand in line in a queue in order to make that booking.

Wait Times

In addition to the different contexts in which waits are operationalised, there are also many different ways of measuring or manipulating waiting in the literature. Some studies have measured waiting using real wait times in field settings (Jones & Peppiat, 1996; Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999; Davis & Vollmann, 1990; Katz et al., 1991; Hensley & Sulek, 2007). In these designs, researchers typically observe participants to measure their wait times using a stopwatch, and then either record dependent variable behaviour through continued observation or by asking participants to complete a survey (Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999; Jones & Peppiat, 1996). Other studies have measured wait times using data that

automatically captures how long customers wait, for example by calculating the time between an order being placed and an order being delivered via a food delivery app (De Vries et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2021).

In experimental research, studies tend to manipulate waiting using scenarios that ask participants to imagine they are waiting for a service and then provide some kind of information about how long a participant must wait in the scenario. These wait times are chosen by the researcher and differ depending on the experimental design and on the experimental condition. The wait times in experimental studies typically conceptually represent some form of a shorter wait versus longer wait design (e.g., a wait of 15 minutes in one condition versus a wait of 25 minutes in another) (Dubé-Rioux et al. 1989; Yang et al., 2013; Groth & Gilliland, 2006; Decker, 2018), although some experiments have been conducted using a shorter wait versus an indefinite wait design (Groth & Gilliland, 2006). As will be discussed in more depth below, shorter waits versus longer wait designs are common, but can be considered difficult to conduct because it is not generally clear what wait times are expected or acceptable to participants in different contexts.

Further, some experiments have also operationalised waiting based on an absent versus present wait design (Giebelhausen et al., 2011), for example comparing reactions to waiting in a no wait condition versus a 45-minute wait condition (Giebelhausen et al., 2011). Sometimes these experimental studies are designed using a wait absent versus an unspecified wait condition, operationalised using images of queues. This would mean that the total potential wait time would ultimately be unknown to the participant (Giebelhausen et al., 2011).

While these designs have been previously deployed, a no wait versus an uncertain wait time can confound manipulations of wait time because consumers may take no waiting as a proxy indication of low service quality. If a customer observes that there is no wait for service at a service provider, they may believe the lack of a wait is a symbol of low quality and choose to go elsewhere (Kremer and Debo, 2016). It should be noted that there is no clear consensus in the literature concerning this point, as the idea that waits are bad and that customers want short waits does continue to dominate within the literature without further qualification.

Overall, however, as with many other design trends in the study of waits for service, there has been no systematic debate or investigation about when each design might be more appropriate to investigate a specific research objective. Consequently, this research uses a mix of methods to measure and manipulate wait time. Study 1 uses real wait time measured within an online booking system, similar to that conducted in past studies using field data (De Vries et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2021). Studies 2, 3, and 4 use scenario-based manipulations of wait times, with specific wait times provided to participants as in past experimental studies (Dubé-Rioux et al. 1989; Yang et al., 2013; Groth & Gilliland, 2006; Decker, 2018), thereby avoiding problems using unspecified or uncertain wait times. Study 1 also provides results based on a no-wait versus some wait design, as they have been previously used in research on waiting. Therefore, findings should be robust to any potential issues regarding how waits are operationalised, as with multiple operationalisations, findings cannot be argued to be due to how waits were measured or manipulated. Specific choices concerning the length of wait times in these different operationalisations are presented below, detailing the specific wait times used in each study.

Overview of Studies

Four studies were conducted to test the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3. The first study was conducted using field data and was designed to test Hypothesis 1. To establish ecological validity for the project, Study 1 used a sample of real hotel bookings and used actual booking cancellations as the dependent variable. Study 2 then established replication for the interaction effect of waiting and relationship status on cancellation, retesting Hypothesis 1 and showing initial support for Hypothesis 2. Study 2 used data conducted online with a role-playing restaurant scenario from a sample of United States residents from Amazon Mechanical Turk. To shed further light on the mechanism behind the findings, Study 3 tested Hypothesis 3 but was conducted using a sample drawn from Prolific using an online scenario set at a bowling alley. Study 4 also tested Hypotheses 3 and was also conducted online with a role-playing restaurant context, with collected data from a sample of United States residents on Clickworker.

Study 1: Field Study

Data Source

Study 1 was conducted to test for the interaction effect of relationship status and wait time on cancellation. It used field data to improve ecological validity relative to that provided by online, scenario-based data collection (as is conducted in Studies 2 and 3). More specifically, analyses were conducted on a dataset of hotel bookings sourced from Kaggle (Mostipak, 2020), which was itself originally sourced from the journal ‘Data in Brief’ under a creative commons license (Antonio et al., 2019). The dataset comprised a series of bookings from a city hotel and resort hotel in Portugal ($n = 119,390$). To construct the dataset, data were extracted from the hotels’ Property Management Systems (PMS) databases (Antonio et al., 2019). It included data on bookings and cancellations from the 1st of July of 2015 to the 31st of August 2017 for two hotels (Antonio et al., 2019).

Relationship Status

For this study, a proxy for relationship status was created by calculating a dummy variable where 0 = bookings with only one adult, and 1 = bookings with two adults. Bookings without any adults (i.e. minors), and those with three or more adults were excluded from the calculation of the variable. This excluded 6683 bookings from the dataset, meaning that the overall sample size was 112 707, made up of 23 027 single adult bookings, and 89 680 two adult bookings.

While this variable was unlikely to be a perfect proxy of relationship status, as it is possible that some of the two adult bookings may be plutonic rather than romantic in nature, it still constituted a high-quality proxy variable for relationship status. First, bookings larger than two individuals were excluded from the variable, meaning that large family bookings or parties of multiple adults are unlikely to be included. Second, in research on service preferences among different demographics of hotel guests, couples have been shown to overwhelmingly comprise the majority of hotel bookings (Rhee & Yang, 2015; Brochado et al., 2019; Bacik et al., 2020; Hong et al., 2019). This means that those in romantic relationships are generally much more likely to be represented in hotel bookings than

plutonic travellers, which can be seen in prior research findings (Rhee & Yang, 2015; Brochado et al., 2019; Bacik et al., 2020; Hong et al., 2019). For example, a previous study of hotel preferences for different demographics, a majority of the sample were found to be couples (69.1%) (Brochado et al., 2019). In another study on hotel ratings, the sample comprised 221 couples, but only 46 instances of friends travelling together (Rhee & Yang, 2015). This further fits with research conducted on travellers who vacation with friends rather than partners, such as those on “girlfriend getaways” (Mirehie et al., 2018). This research shows that a majority of such travellers are typically in romantic relationships with partners who remain at home. For example, studies show that around 60% of travellers taking a ‘girlfriend getaway’ are either married or in a relationship, with industry reports putting the figure even higher (Mirehie et al., 2018).

Conversely, in samples of solo travellers, past research has found that a majority of solo travellers are single (Yang et al., 2018; Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006). Further, research has shown that solo travellers often report that they intend to stop travelling solo when they enter a romantic relationship (Yang et al., 2018), with past solo travellers having confirmed in academic research that they ceased travelling solo upon entering a romantic relationship (Yang et al., 2018). Not having a romantic partner has additionally been noted as being a strong motivation for travelling solo in the first place (Yang et al., 2018).

Thus, taken together, while there may be some bookings made up of plutonic friends or family travelling together, demographic trends in the industry and past research suggests that the majority are likely to be partnered (Rhee & Yang, 2015; Brochado et al., 2019; Bacik et al., 2020; Hong et al., 2019), and even those traveling with friends are likely to be in romantic relationships with partners who remain at home (Yang et al., 2018; Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006). Thus, this variable is an appropriate proxy for relationship status.

Waiting

There is limited empirical research to show a range of typical wait times for the confirmation of hotel bookings in any given market. This means that, as with other waiting contexts, the literature on waiting does not allow for a clear estimate of what a short, medium, or long wait would amount to in the context of waiting for a hotel booking. Further, estimates of typical confirmation times are likely to differ considerably based on the practices of different service

providers, meaning that there is likely to be a broad range of wait times experienced by customers. Due to this, wait times for the study were selected by identifying an upper limit for what a long wait time would likely be for receiving confirmation when making a hotel booking.

Hotels can often take longer to confirm a booking when the booking is made in advance, with one third party booking site noting that they aim to provide booking confirmations within a week of the booking being made, but that it can often take more time, especially when bookings are made further away from check-in (Snap Travel, 2021). Due to this, the upper limit for what might reasonably be experienced as a lengthy wait for a hotel booking will be significantly impacted by policies on how far customers can book in advance. Moreover, some hotels also have a policy to not confirm a booking until a certain amount of time until the check in date. The Meriton Suites, for example, does not confirm a booking until just under a year before check-in, meaning that a booking made approximately a year and one month in advance would have to wait one month before receiving confirmation for the booking (Meriton Group, 2021). Considering that major chains (e.g., the World of Hyatt, Club Accor, Omni Hotels and Resorts) often allow customers to make bookings around a year and one month in advance (Farley, 2018; Ganeles, 2017), a month of waiting for booking confirmation was selected as the upper limit for a wait time that might be typically expected for a hotel booking.

Two dummy variables on waiting were computed from the existing dataset waitlist variable, which was calculated in the original dataset “by subtracting the date the booking was confirmed to the customer from the date the booking entered on the PMS” (Antonio, et al., 2019, p.43). This variable therefore measured the number of days between requesting a booking and having it confirmed. Waits beyond 31 days (corresponding to a maximum wait of one month) were excluded from the calculation of the dummy waitlist variables. The first waitlist variable, Waitlist Continuous (X_1), was calculated by retaining the existing variable of days spent in the waitlist but excluding bookings retained in the waitlist for more than a month. The second waitlist variable, Waitlist Binary (X_2), was calculated by coding bookings as 0 if they spent 0 days in the wait list, and 1 if they spent any number of days in the wait list, again excluding bookings retained in the waitlist for more than a month. The waitlist variables therefore conceptually correspond to a shorter versus longer operationalisation of

waiting (i.e., a continuous), or a no wait versus some waiting (i.e., a binary) operationalisation of waiting.

Cancellation

The dependent variable of the study was obtained by using an existing cancellation variable from the original dataset. This measured actual cancellations of bookings (1 = cancelled or 0 = not cancelled).

Hypothesis Testing

A binary logistic regression was run using SPSS Version 27. In the first step of the analysis, Waitlist Continuous (X_1) was entered into the model as the independent variable, and the dummy variable for relationship status (0= single, 1 = relationship) was entered into the analysis as the moderating variable (M), with their interaction ($X*M$) also then added into the model. Cancellation (0 = not cancelled and 1= booking cancelled) was entered into the analysis as the dependent variable. As predicted, the two-way interaction between relationship status and wait time on cancellation was significant and negative ($\beta = -.028, p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.051, -.004]). The same model was run again with Waitlist Binary (X_2) as the independent variable, and the two-way interaction was also significant and negative ($\beta = -.966, p < 0.001$; 95% CI [-1.373, -.558]).

Therefore, relationship status was found to significantly moderate the effect of wait time on cancellation, with those in relationships being less likely to cancel in the presence of a wait of up to one month, whether measured as binary or continuous. Using field data, the findings of Study 1 thus provide initial support for H1, demonstrating that consumers who are partnered (vs single) are less likely to cancel a request for service in the presence of a wait.

Study 2: Experimental Study 1

Study 2 analysed data collected in an online experiment to replicate the initial support for Hypothesis 1 that was demonstrated in Study 1. It further allowed for a test of Hypothesis 2.

Study 2 addressed limitations for Study 1 regarding the proxy measure of relationship status by using a more precise measure of relationship status during data collection. Study 2 demonstrated support for Hypothesis 1 in a restaurant context, showing that findings are consistent across multiple service industries. It further allowed for a robustness check of the finding with regard to age and gender.

Data Collection

Wait Time Manipulation

In experimental studies on waiting set in a service context (Dubé-Rioux et al. 1989; Yang et al., 2013; Groth & Gilliland, 2006; Decker, 2018), researchers typically use a scenario developed by Dubé-Rioux et al. (1989) to experimentally manipulate wait time. In this scenario, participants are first told they are going out to dinner with a friend, and that they initially expect to wait for a certain amount of time (e.g., ten minutes). Next, participants are told that their wait will be a certain number of minutes longer than originally expected (e.g., an additional ten minutes), with the cumulative wait time then summarised for the participants (e.g. an overall wait time of 20 minutes for the table). The additional time varies to create the overall wait times examined in each study. In accordance with past research (Dubé-Rioux et al. 1989; Yang et al., 2013), Study 2 (and Studies 3 and 4) used this same scenario (or an adaptation of this scenario to fit the appropriate context). The wording can be seen below:

*You and your friend have decided to go out for dinner on Friday night. You have selected a moderately priced restaurant that you have patronized before. The food is great there. The restaurant does not take reservations. You arrive at the restaurant at 7 pm. The hostess greets you and asks you to have a seat in a waiting area. Based on your past experience, you expect that you may have to wait for about 10 minutes. After 10 minutes the hostess returns and informs you that your table will not be available for another 10 minutes. This will mean you have an overall wait time of **20 minutes**.*

However, Study 2 diverges from past research on the topic in two important ways. First, past studies that use this scenario have always assumed that customers will accept the additional wait when they are informed of it (Dubé-Rioux et al., 1989; Yang et al., 2013; Groth &

Gilliand, 2006; Decker, 2018). This is an oversight as it is possible that consumers will simply choose not to wait for a service when informed of a further delay. Therefore, in Study 2 (and Study 3), participants were given the opportunity to say how likely they would be to cancel and go somewhere else when presented with their additional wait time, instead of implicitly assuming that they would retain their request for service.

Moreover, previous experimental manipulations of waiting have used what appear to be arbitrary wait times, often without using pre-testing to evaluate the impact of the wait times selected for the study. They often refrain from presenting manipulation checks for conditions with different wait times. For example, Dube-Rioux et al. (1989) manipulated a 15-minute wait time in one condition, and a 25-minute wait time in another condition of the same study. It is not clear why those particular intervals were chosen, and pre-testing was not conducted to gauge to what extent participants judged a 15- or 25-minute wait time to differ from the other (Dube-Rioux, et al., 1989). Manipulation checks were also not reported for these conditions. While operationalisations usually correspond to a shorter versus longer waiting design, experimental studies in the literature have also selected wait times that vary wildly from those selected in other studies. As stated in Chapter 2, this meant that selecting wait times to study was not a straightforward process.

Further, in their research, Decker (2018) used 10 minutes as their short wait, and 60 minutes as their long wait. However, in their pre-test, they noted that participants indicated a range of responses for what they considered short wait times to be, with answers indicating anything from 2-30 minutes as a short wait time, and responses noting long wait times as anything from 10-120 minutes. In this case, it revealed that perceptions of the length of wait times are highly variable among participants, and also that what counts as a short wait for some participants also counts as a long wait for others. This study was also conducted in the context of in-service waits, meaning that participants were indicating how long they would wait for food after they had ordered it at a table. Field Theory suggests that participants would have a higher tolerance for in-service waits than pre-service waits (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989), meaning that these responses possibly reflect a greater tolerance for these longer wait times than if the study was set in the context of pre-service waits.

Finally, in one condition of their study, Groth and Gilliland (2006) manipulated an initial wait time of 20 minutes, and then an additional wait time of 30 minutes, compared with their

second condition, which featured an initial 20-minute wait time and then an additional wait time of uncertain length. The authors noted that the manipulation check for the study demonstrated that participants in both conditions believed the wait time was long.

Based on this past research, it is not clear what wait times would constitute a typical wait for a restaurant, which would therefore be common for participants to encounter in real life, or common for restaurants to have to manage during actual delays to service provision. Wait times would moreover vary between restaurants based on any number of factors (i.e., location, weekday vs. weekend trade, available competitors, events in the vicinity of the restaurant, popularity, staff availability, etc.) and would likely vary at different moments depending on those factors even for a single restaurant. Therefore, it is not possible to choose wait times for the study based purely on ecological validity.

Based on the lack of indication from past experimental research in the literature, and the lack of ability to select wait times based on considerations of ecological validity, it was not clear what specific wait times would be appropriate to select for the research presented here. Thus, waiting was operationalised continuously with wait times increasing by 5-minute increments for each wait condition, resulting in an overall potential wait time of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, or 60 minutes for participants to be seated at a table. This allowed for a wait time of 5 minutes, which is shorter than the 10-minute short wait time used by Decker (2018) and finishes at the 60-minute mark, which is the wait time Decker (2018) used for their long wait condition. This also meant that the study followed the same logic for the selection of wait times as in Study 1, in which an upper limit was identified for a lengthy wait which still might reasonably be experienced by a customer. That is, the 60-minute mark also comprises an upper limit for what a long wait time would likely be when waiting for a table, but which might still reasonably be experienced by customers when requesting one.

Likelihood of cancelling the reservation

The likelihood of cancelling the reservation was measured using a single-item scale adapted from Park & Jang (2014), who used the scale to examine the impact of delays on cancelling relationships with service providers in the tourism and hospitality sector. The item reads, 'How likely would you be to cancel your request for a table and leave the restaurant?'

Responses were recorded on a seven-point scale where 1 = Extremely unlikely and 7 = extremely likely).

While it is often argued that multi-item scales have better validity and reliability than single item scales (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007), a single-item scale was appropriate for this study. Multi-item scales are better at capturing information on multi-dimensional constructs (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007), such as overall evaluations of service quality, because additional items can capture additional information about complex concepts. However, single-item scales have been shown to be just as reliable as multi-item scales in instances where constructs are considered concrete (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007), such that adding additional items to a scale increases the risk of contaminating a measure of the focal construct through the inadvertent, simultaneous measure of other constructs (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007; Drolet & Morrison, 2001). Therefore, a single item from Park & Jang (2014) was used.

Perceived Wait Time

In Study 2, perceived wait time was measured using a single-item measure, ‘How much time do you believe you spent waiting for your table?’ (Jones & Peppiatt, 1996; Borges et al., 2015). Responses were recorded on a seven-point scale (1—I spent a short time; 7—I spent a long time).

Relationship Status

Following established practice, relationship status was measured by collecting categorical data on a range of relationship categories (Vogels & Anderson, 2020; ALSWH, 2019; Cavanaugh, 2014). Relationship subcategories were chosen to allow for the construction of the two broad categories of relationship status: being single or partnered. They were also chosen to capture nuances in relationship subcategories that have been impacted by changing social norms in past decades (Barrett & Wellings, 2002; Smock, 2000), such as couples cohabiting before marriage (Barrett & Wellings, 2002), and also to reflect the importance of relationships from the point of inception through any potential escalation of interdependence within relationships (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015; Kalmijin, 2003; Stanley, et al., 2010). Single subcategories mirrored couple subcategories. Specifically, the categories collected included single; de facto; engaged; married; in a relationship, but not living together; no

longer in a relationship, but living together; separated from partner; divorced from partner; other, please describe; I prefer not to answer) (Vogels & Anderson, 2020; ALSWH, 2019; Cavanaugh, 2014). To be responsive to changing norms regarding relationships (Barrett & Wellings, 2002; Liu & Umberson, 2008), the category of ‘Other, please describe,’ was included to ensure that any relationship category that was considered important to participants could be entered, even if not anticipated by researchers while constructing the survey. This would also allow for any change in relationship norms considered important to participants, but which may not have yet been reflected in empirical work to be included in the data collection.

Following Cavanaugh (2014), the research used a binary classification for relationship status, identifying participants as either partnered or single. A dummy variable was calculated where participants who indicated they belonged to any relationship category was coded as 1 = relationship, and participants indicating that they belonged to any non-relationship category was coded as single = 0. Those who selected ‘prefer not to answer’ were excluded, and those who had answered ‘other, please describe’ were manually added to either category as appropriate. For example, a participant declaring they were ‘in a relationship, unmarried, living together 15yrs’ was added to the couple’s category. A table of all ‘other, please describe’ responses can be found in Appendix B. As can be seen in the table, it was clear which relationship responses in the ‘other, please describe’ belonged to either the couple or single category.

Anticipated Regret

Data on anticipated regret of cancellation was collected using a two-item scale commonly used in the literature on sunk cost (Kwak & Park, 2012; Wong & Kwong, 2007). The measure captures data on how likely the participant would be to regret the decision to persist in a course of action and how likely they would be to regret withdrawing from a course of action. Items included “How likely would you be to regret it if you did not cancel your request for a table and leave the restaurant?” and “How likely would you be to regret cancelling your request for a table and leaving the restaurant?” Responses were recorded on a 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) scale. An index of anticipated regret of cancellation was calculated following Kwak & Park (2012) ($\alpha = .713$).

Gender

Participants were asked to indicate their gender, answering the question, “What is your gender?”, with responses provided for ‘Man’, ‘Woman’, ‘Other’, or ‘Prefer not to say’.

Age

Finally, participants were also asked to indicate their age.

Power Analyses

To ensure adequate power for the study, a power analysis was conducted using G*Power (α -levels at 0.05 and statistical power at 0.95) (Field, 2009). Analyses were calculated for a linear regression with an effect size of 0.15 (small), Type 1 error probability of 0.05, statistical power of 0.95, with two predictors (independent variable and moderating variable), resulting in a minimum necessary sample size of 107 participants.

However, additional participants were collected to ensure that enough participants would be allocated to each wait time condition so that an attempt could be made to ensure the appropriateness of design in future wait time manipulations. To this end, the sample size was calculated to allow for 25 participants to be allocated to each of the waiting conditions, for a sample size of 300 participants. This was then further increased to allow for the potential of poor-quality data to be removed in the data cleaning process. Ultimately, a total sample of 337 participants were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk for the study.

Data Cleaning

As an attention check measure, a question was included in the survey asking participants to write a multi-sentence review for the restaurant based on the scenario that they had just experienced. As part of the data cleaning process, 64 responses were omitted from the analysis if participants met criteria for having provided a low-effort or no-effort response on this attention check question. Specifically, respondents were omitted from the analysis if they had copied and pasted text from the internet as their response, responded with gibberish (“80

IAM VERY LIKEIY THIS”), did not reference the restaurant or scenario (“Very good treat”; “Hotel is good and supply is good”); or had entered one or two word responses (“good feel”; “nothing”). Responses were also omitted if they reviewed the survey rather than the restaurant (“this survey is good experience”; “very well this study”). As stated above, following these procedures, 64 respondents (18.66% of participants) were excluded from the analysis. All other responses were retained. Importantly, results remained significant and did not change direction regardless of whether these responses were included or excluded from the dataset. The full list of deleted responses are presented in Table 4 of Appendix B.

Manipulation Check

A linear regression was conducted to test the effect of waiting condition on perceived wait time. The result was significant ($\beta = .358$ $p = <.001$), showing that as wait time increased, participants became more likely to perceive their wait time as longer. The manipulation was therefore considered successful.

Main Effects

Firstly, the main effect of wait condition on cancellation was explored using a linear regression. Commensurate with past literature, participants indicated a higher intention to cancel as wait times increased ($\beta = .436$ $p = <.001$).

Curvilinear Effects

While no studies in the waiting literature have to date examined curvilinear effects of wait time on reactions to waiting, it is conceivable that wait times may have curvilinear as opposed to linear effects on a dependent variable capturing reactions to waiting. As such, a quadratic regression was also run, entering the independent variable Wait Condition (X) on the first step of a regression model, and entering the independent variable squared (X^2) in the second step, with Intentions to Cancel entered as the dependent variable (Y). Following Aiken and West (1991), a significant curvilinear relationship would be indicated by a significant incremental contribution of the squared term to the model, but no such significant

effects were found ($\Delta R^2 = .006, p > .05$). As such, curvilinear relationships were not explored further.

Hypothesis Testing

Moderation (Model 1)

To test the potential interaction effect of relationship status and waiting on cancellation, the Process Macro for SPSS was used to conduct a moderated linear regression (Model 1, Hayes, 2018). In the first step of the analysis, the main effect of wait condition (X) was entered as the independent variable, with the main effect of relationships status (W) (0= single, 1= relationship), and their interaction (X*M) also estimated. The likelihood of cancellation was entered as the dependent variable (Y) (Mean = 4.314, SD = 2.230). As predicted, the two-way interaction between relationship status and wait time on cancellation was significant and negative ($\beta = -.130, p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.252, -.007]), with partnered consumers less likely to cancel than single consumers (single $\beta = .510, p < 0.001$; 95% CI [.420, .602]; partnered $\beta = .380, p < 0.001$; 95% CI [.300, .461]).

Therefore, providing further support to H1, relationship status was found to significantly moderate the effect of wait time on cancellation. This means that singles are more likely to cancel a request for service if they must wait, whereas partnered individuals are less likely to cancel (see Figure 1).

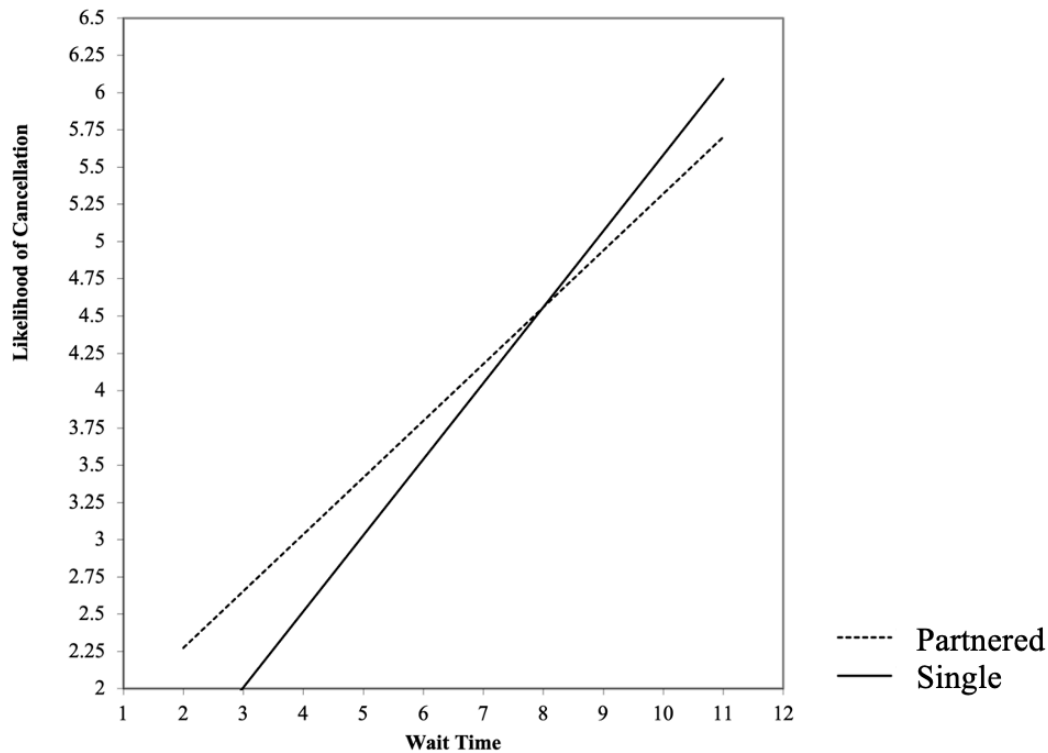


Figure 1. Study 2: Relationship Status and Waiting on Cancellation

Previous findings in the waiting literature have shown that gender can shape reactions to waiting. Model 1 was run again while controlling for the effect of gender. The results held, showing that relationship status significantly moderated the effect of waiting time on cancellation while controlling for gender ($\beta = -.130, p < 0.05; 95\% \text{ CI } [-.253, -.007]$).

Further, given that it is possible that people will be more likely to be in a relationship as they get older, Model 1 was rerun to control for age. Results showed that relationship status significantly moderated the effect of waiting time on cancellation even with age as a control variable ($\beta = -.128, p < 0.05; 95\% \text{ CI } [-.251, -.005]$).

Mediation (Model 8)

Next, to test hypothesis 2, mediation through anticipated regret of cancellation was analysed using Hayes Process Model 8 (Hayes, 2018). Wait condition was entered as the independent variable (X) for the analysis, relationship status (0 =single, 1 = partnered) was entered as the moderator (W), and anticipated regret was entered as the mediator (M), with likelihood of cancellation again entered as the dependent variable (Y).

A significant interaction effect of wait condition and relationship status on anticipated regret of cancellation was found ($\beta = .128$, $SE = 0.054$, $t = 2.345$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI: [0.020, .234]). Specifically, partnered consumers ($\beta = -.251$, $SE = 0.360$, $t = -7.020$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI: [-.321, -.180]) showed they were more likely than single consumers ($\beta = -.378$, $SE = 0.409$, $t = -9.245$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI: [-.460, -.298]) to anticipate that they would regret cancelling in the face of a wait.

Anticipated regret exerted a significant and negative effect on cancellation ($\beta = -.788$, $SE = 0.051$, $t = -15.337$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI: [-.888, -.686]), showing that participants were less likely to cancel as they experienced more anticipated regret about cancellation. Further, the interaction effect of wait condition and relationship status became insignificant when accounting for anticipated regret ($\beta = -.028$, $SE = 0.046$, $t = -.630$, $p > 0.1$, 95% CI: [-.119, .062]). In support of H2, the conditional indirect effect of wait condition on likelihood of cancellation through anticipated regret was significant (Index = -.100; $SE = 0.040$, 95% CI: [-.180, -.024]); singles: $\beta = 0.297$, $SE = 0.032$, 95% CI: [.237, .360]; couples: $\beta = 0.197$, $SE = 0.031$, 95% CI: [.138, .259].

The Model 8 was also run again to control for the separate effects of age and gender. The direction of effects and significance levels did not change when controlling for age (Index = -.103; $SE = 0.040$, 95% CI: [-.183, -.028]) or gender (Index = -.099; $SE = 0.040$, 95% CI: [-.180, -.023]) demonstrating further robustness of the findings.

In conclusion, Study 2 demonstrated that singles were more likely than partnered consumers to cancel in the face of a wait. This was further shown to be mediated by feelings of anticipated regret, with partnered consumers showing higher anticipated regret at the prospect of cancellation than single consumers. Further, support for both H1 and H2 was shown to be robust when controlling for age and gender.

Study 3: Cognitive Rigidity

Study 3 again analysed data collected in an online experiment, allowing for additional replication of support for Hypothesis 1. However, it further allowed for an initial test of Hypothesis 3 which considers the role of cognitive rigidity in shaping the impact of relationship status and wait times on cancellation. The experiment was this time set in a

bowling alley, furthering the generalisability of the research by extending the findings to an additional hedonic waiting context. Finally, it allowed for the control of multiple variables of interest to the waiting literature, including parenthood, impatience, perceived quality of the service provider, economic time styles, as well as regulatory mode orientations, which further demonstrated the robustness of the findings.

Power Analyses

To achieve adequate power for the study, a power analysis was conducted using G*Power (α -levels at 0.05 and statistical power at 0.95) (Field, 2009). Analyses were calculated for a linear regression with an effect size of 0.6 (large), Type 1 error probability of 0.05, statistical power of 0.95, with three predictors (an independent variable, a moderating variable, and a control variable), resulting in a minimum necessary sample size of 31 participants to reach statistical power. However, based on trends from recent publications in A* journals (Lowe & Haws, 2017), additional participants were collected to ensure that there would be an adequate number of participants for each waiting condition, with the number set at 40 participants per condition based on past studies (Lowe & Haws, 2017).

Further, given the data quality issues experienced in Study 2 (and which have become increasingly common and severe for Amazon Mechanical Turk (Kennedy et al., 2020), the sample for Study 3 was instead sourced through Prolific which is known to be a source of high-quality data compared with competitors such as Mechanical Turk (Peer et al., 2021). As the study was designed with 7 waiting conditions, and it had been determined to have 40 participants per condition, this required for the collection of 280 participants overall. Collection was designed so as to further allow for a buffer of an additional 20 participants in case it was required to remove some unusable responses. The buffer was set at 20 as Prolific is known to provide high quality data compared to competitors such as Mechanical Turk. Ultimately, this resulted in a sample of 300 participants.

Data Cleaning

Data cleaning was once again conducted following the procedure used in Study 2. Participants were asked to leave a multi-sentence review for the restaurant as an attention check measure. Based on responses to this question, low or no-effort responders were excluded from the analysis, specifically based on providing two-word responses (“Fast

service”; “waited 30min”). Participants would have again been excluded if their responses were gibberish, referenced the survey, or if they did not reference the scenario, but no additional responses met those exclusion criteria. Therefore, following this procedure, 2 participants were excluded, both of which are included in Table 5 in Appendix B. All other responses were retained for the analysis. Results of all hypothesis tests held regardless of whether low effort responses were retained or removed from the analysis, and with two exceptions, results of the control variable tests also held regardless of whether responses were excluded or retained for the analysis.

Data Collection

Data were collected for Study 3 using a sample of 298 participants drawn from the US Prolific userbase. Study 3 used a similar scenario and manipulation from Study 2 (Dubé-Rioux et al., 1989; Yang et al., 2013). However, while Study 3 operationalised waiting continuously as in Study 2, the number of potential wait times was reduced due to the high number of wait conditions in the study, meaning that participants were randomly allocated to a wait time of 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, or 60 minutes to be seated at a table in a restaurant. Relationship status (ALSWH, 2019, Cavanaugh, 2014) and intentions to cancel (Park & Jang, 2014) were measured as described in Study 2. Further, the addition of a wait time of zero minutes allowed us to include data from an effective ‘no wait’ condition, meaning that experimental manipulations presented in this thesis cover both low wait and no wait scenarios within their manipulated wait times.

Scenario

The scenario used for Study 3 was closely adapted from the scenario used in Study 2 but was set in a bowling alley rather than a restaurant. A bowling alley was chosen as the context for this study because it is also a hedonic service and offers a multi-stage waiting process to its customers. To ensure consistency with Study 2, and to ensure the wait would be viewed as a pre-service wait, it was made clear to participants that they had not already booked a lane when they were informed of the additional wait time.

*Imagine that you and your friend have decided to go bowling on a Friday night. You have been there before. It is reasonably priced, and the atmosphere is great. They do not take reservations in advance, so you join the queue to book a lane. Based on experience, you expect to have to wait 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, you reach the front of the queue. Before you book a lane, the cashier informs you that there will be an additional wait of 10 minutes before you can start bowling. This means you will have an overall wait time of **20 minutes**.*

Data Collection

Besides relationship status and likelihood of cancelling the reservation, which were measured as in the previous study, remaining measures were further added to the study or adapted to suit its changed context.

Perceived Wait Time

Perceived wait time was measured using the same single-item measure as in Study 2 but was adapted to reflect the context. The item read ‘How much time do you believe you spent waiting to start bowling?’ (Jones & Peppiatt, 1996; Borges et al., 2015). Responses were recorded on a seven-point scale (1—I spent a short time; 7—I spent a long time).

Cognitive Rigidity

Cognitive rigidity was measured using the cognitive rigidity subscale of the Resistance To Change scale (Laumer et al., 2016; Oreg, 2003; Seo & Ray, 2019; Talke & Heidenreich, 2013; Yang, 2021). The measure comprised four items, including “Once I’ve come to a conclusion, I’m not likely to change my mind” and “I don’t change my mind easily”. It was measured on a six-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree ($\alpha = .822$).

Active Impatience

Active impatience was measured using a scale from past work by Durrande-Moreau & Usumier (1999). The three-item scale was adapted to suit the context of the bowling alley and included items such as “I was looking to start bowling as soon as possible” and “I was

concerned about being able to start bowling”. Responses were again measured on a seven-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree ($\alpha = .760$)

Perception of Quality

Perceptions of quality was measured using a single item measure (Gielbelhausen et al, 2011). The item was written as, “I believe this bowling alley would be:” with answers recorded on a 9-point scale where 1 = low quality and 9 = high quality.

Regulatory Focus Questionnaire

Regulatory focus was measured using the 11-item regulatory focus questionnaire (Higgins et al., 2001). The measure included items such as “Compared to most people, are you typically unable to get what you want out of life?” and “Do you often do well at different things that you try?” Responses were recorded on a scale of 1-5 with exact labels varying based on the specific question. Responses were used to compute a participant’s promotion ($\alpha = .665$) and prevention ($\alpha = .824$) orientations.

Economic Time Style

Economic Time Style was measured using the economic time subscale of the broader Time Styles Scale (Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999). This was done as while there are other subscales, these were not found to significantly impact reactions to waiting in past research and therefore data was not collected for them in the present study. Items included “I enjoy following a schedule” and “I like to have a definite schedule and stick to it”. Responses were recorded on a seven-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree ($\alpha = .925$)

Parenthood

Finally, following Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2020), participants were asked to indicate if they were parents. This was done using the single item, “Are you a parent?” and a binary response of “Yes” or “No”.

Manipulation Check

To begin with, a linear regression was conducted to test the effect of waiting condition on perceived wait time. The result was significant ($\beta = .796$ $p = <.001$), demonstrating that as wait time increased, participants became more likely to perceive their wait time as longer. The manipulation was considered successful.

Hypothesis Testing (H1)

To test the interaction effect of relationship status and waiting on cancellation, the Process Macro for SPSS was again used to conduct a moderated linear regression (Model 1, Hayes, 2018). In the first step of the analysis, the main effect of wait condition (X) was entered as the independent variable, with the main effect of relationships status (M) (0= single, 1= relationship), and their interaction (X*M) also estimated. The likelihood of cancellation was entered as the dependent variable (Y) (Mean = 3.38, SD = 2.121).

As predicted, the two-way interaction between relationship status and wait time on cancellation was significant and negative ($\beta = -.248$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.440, -.056]). Therefore, relationship status was found to significantly moderate the effect of wait time on cancellation, with singles more likely to cancel than partnered consumers (single $\beta = .780$ $p < 0.001$; 95% CI [.640, .920]; partnered $\beta = .531$ $p < 0.001$; 95% CI [.400, .664]), again supporting H1. This demonstrates that partnered individuals are less likely to cancel a request for service in the face of a long wait, whereas singles are more likely to cancel (see Figure 2).

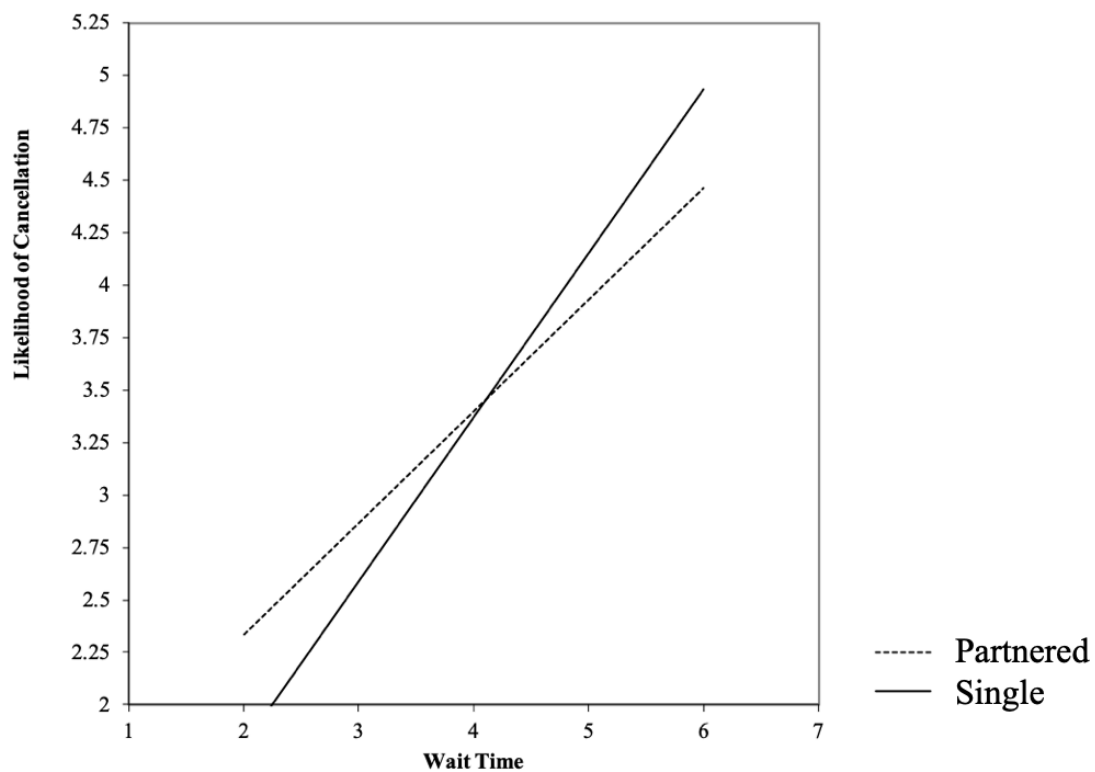


Figure 2. Study 3: Relationship Status and Waiting on Cancellation

Control Variables H1

Previous findings in the waiting literature have shown that active impatience (Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999), perceived quality of the service provider (Giebelhausen et al, 2011), economic time styles (Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999), and prevention or promotion orientations (Higgins et al., 2001) can all affect a customer’s reactions to waiting. Multiple Model 1s were run again, each separately controlling for the effect of the above variables. The results held in all cases, showing that relationship status significantly moderated the effect of wait time on cancellation while controlling for parenthood ($\beta = -.248$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.440, -.055]) active impatience ($\beta = -.214$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.404, -.025]), perceived quality ($\beta = -.228$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.415, -.042]), economic time styles ($\beta = -.255$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.448, -.061]), prevention ($\beta = -.260$, $p < 0.01$; 95% CI [-.453, -.067]), or promotion orientations ($\beta = -.247$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.439, -.055]). This shows that not only does relationship status moderate the impact of waiting on cancellation, but that the

finding is robust to the effect of a range of factors that have previously been shown to impact reactions to waiting.

Hypothesis Testing (H3)

A moderated moderation analysis was conducted to examine Hypothesis 3, using the Hayes PROCESS Macro for SPSS (Model 3; Hayes, 2018). For this analysis, wait time was entered as the independent variable (X), relationship status (0= single, 1= relationship) was entered as the primary moderator (W), cognitive rigidity was entered as the secondary moderator (Z), and intentions to cancel was entered as the dependent variable (Y). As expected, a significant three-way interaction effect was found ($\beta = -.227, p < 0.05; 95\% \text{ CI } [-.445, -.004]$).

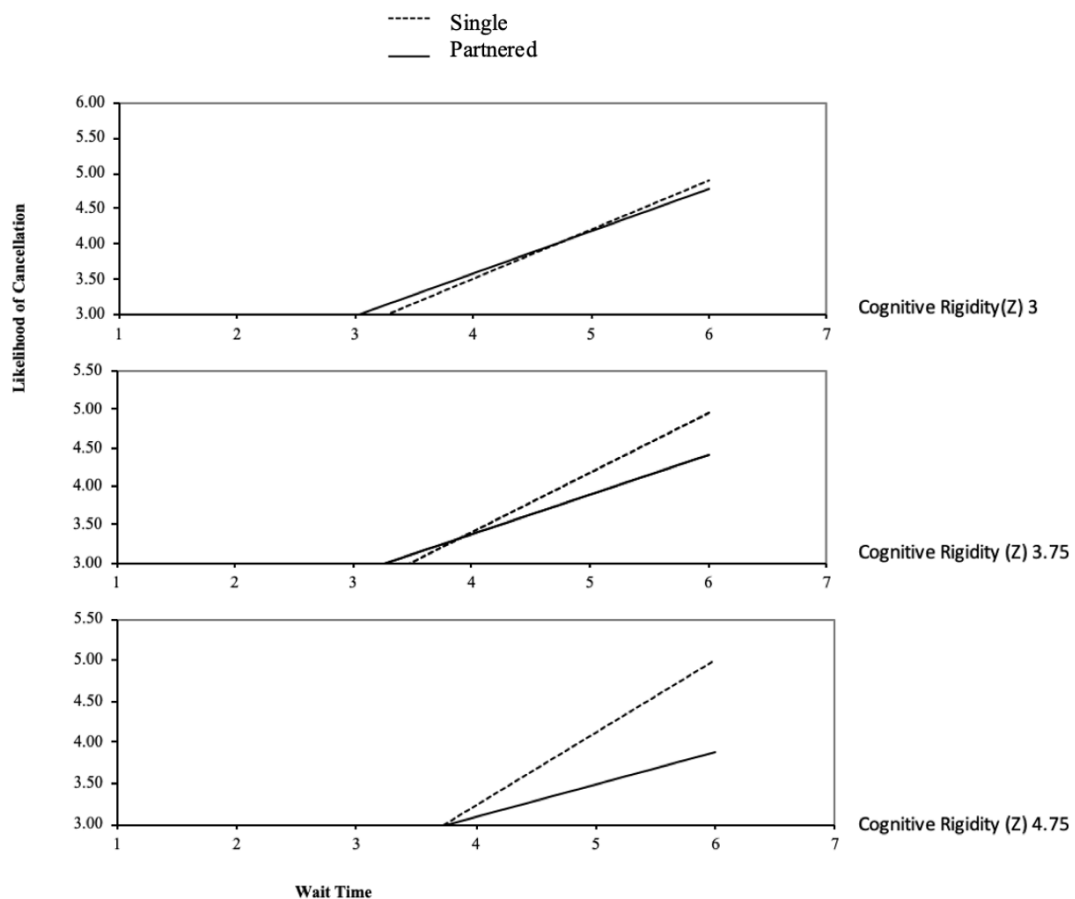


Figure 3. Study 3: Cognitive Rigidity, Relationship Status, and Waiting on Cancellation

As depicted above, high cognitive rigidity decreases partnered (vs. single) consumers' intentions to cancel after a longer wait time. On the other hand, high cognitive rigidity increases singles' intentions to cancel after a longer wait time. Hypotheses 3 was therefore supported.

A Johnson-Neymann (J-N) analysis was run to further investigate these interaction effects. The J-N technique is used to identify the value of a moderating variable at which the ratio of the moderated effect to its standard error is equal to the critical t-score (Hayes, 2018). The effect of wait time and relationship status on intentions to cancel transitioned from non-significance to significance at a cognitive rigidity score of 3.474 ($\beta = -.201$, $SE = 0.102$, $t = -1.968$, $p = 0.05$). This demonstrates that partnered consumers were less likely to cancel after waiting when they had higher levels of cognitive rigidity.

Control Variables (H3)

Again, additional Model 3s were run with each model separately controlling for the above control variables. The results held in all cases, showing that relationship status significantly moderated the effect of waiting time on cancellation while controlling for parenthood ($\beta = -.227$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.450, -.004]), active impatience ($\beta = -.221$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.440, -.001]), perceived quality ($\beta = -.236$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.452, -.020]), economic time style³ ($\beta = -.227$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.450, -.003]), prevention ($\beta = -.225$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.448, -.002]) and promotion orientations ($\beta = -.226$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.459, -.003]). This shows that not only do relationship status and cognitive rigidity moderate the impact of waiting on cancellation, but the finding is robust to the effect of a range of factors previously explored in the waiting literature.

To conclude, Study 3 demonstrated additional support for Hypothesis 1, showing that single consumers are more likely to cancel in the face of a wait than partnered consumers. It further demonstrated initial support for Hypotheses 3. This was demonstrated in an additional

³ Note that when raw data was used without excluding low quality responses as described above, the Model 3s run to control for economic time styles ($\beta = -.222$, $p = 0.051$; 95% CI [-.444, .001]) and promotion orientations ($\beta = -.221$, $p = 0.051$; 95% CI [-.443, .001]) became marginally insignificant. All other analyses for Hypotheses 1 and 2, with or without all other control variables, were significant regardless of whether low quality data was included or excluded from the analysis.

hedonic waiting context and showed that findings were robust to a range of control variables that have previously been explored in the waiting literature.

Study 4: Cognitive Rigidity Replication

Study 4 also analysed data collected in an online experiment, using the same measure of relationship status as in Studies 2 and 3, and the same scenario as in Study 2. This provided for an additional test of Hypothesis 3, showing further support for the role of cognitive rigidity in shaping how relationship status impacts cancellation during a pre-service wait. It also provided further robustness checks in regard to affective commitment to the service provider.

Data Collection

Data were collected for Study 4 using a sample of 290 participants drawn from the US Clickworker userbase. Study 4 used the same scenario and manipulation from Study 2 (Dubé-Rioux et al., 1989; Yang et al., 2013). However, while Study 4 operationalised waiting continuously as in Study 2 and Study 3, the number of potential wait times was reduced due to the high number of wait conditions in the study, meaning that participants were randomly allocated to a wait time of 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, or 60 minutes to be seated at a table in a restaurant. Relationship status (ALSWH, 2019, Cavanaugh, 2014), intentions to cancel (Park & Jang, 2014), and cognitive rigidity (Laumer et al., 2016) were measured as described in Study 2 and Study 3.

Perceived Wait Time

For Study 4, perceived wait time was measured using the Extended Perceived Wait Time scale, which is a four-item measure (Voorhees et al., 2009). Using this measure, participants were asked to identify how they would characterise their wait overall, with responses on an 11-point scale. This was worded from '1 – Brief to 11 – Lengthy'. 1- Short to 11 - Long; 1 - Unacceptable to 11 – Acceptable; 1 Reasonable to 11 – Unreasonable ($\alpha = .924$).

Cognitive Rigidity

Cognitive rigidity was again measured using the cognitive rigidity subscale of the Resistance To Change scale (Laumer et al., 2016; Oreg, 2003; Seo & Ray, 2019; Talke & Heidenreich, 2013; Yang, 2021). The scale originally had a low measure of internal consistency ($\alpha = .580$). One item, “I often change my mind”, was dropped as it had a low item-to-total correlation (-.001). Once dropped, the scale achieved better reliability ($\alpha = .758$). The results of the hypothesis testing remained significant regardless of whether this item was included or dropped from the scale, meaning that results of the hypothesis tests for Study 4 were not dependent on this item’s inclusion or exclusion.

Affective Commitment

As discussed above, research has shown that affective commitment to a service provider can attenuate negative reactions to waiting (Voorhees et al., 2009), for example by decreasing anger associated with a wait. Affective commitment to the service provider was therefore measured using a three-item scale adapted from Jones et al. (2010). The items were ‘The restaurant has a great deal of personal meaning to me,’ ‘I would be happy to spend the rest of my night at the restaurant,’ and, ‘I feel a strong sense of belonging to the restaurant’. Responses were scored on a seven-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree ($\alpha = .850$).

Power Analyses

A power analysis was conducted using G*Power (α -levels at 0.05 and statistical power at 0.95) (Field, 2009). This was calculated for a linear regression with an effect size of 0.6 (large), Type 1 error probability of 0.05, statistical power of 0.95, with three predictors (an independent variable, a moderating variable, and a control variable), resulting in a minimum necessary sample size of 31 participants to reach statistical power. However, given that we again had a high number of conditions, additional participants were collected to ensure we had an adequate number of participants per waiting conditions. In line with past studies, we collected 40 participants per conditions, bringing the number to 240.

Further, given the data quality issues experienced in Study 2 which necessitated a switch away from MTurk (Kennedy et al., 2020), but also due to the comparatively high prices of Prolific (Prolific, 2022), the sample for Study 3 was instead sourced through Clickworker. The platform is an additional Mechanical Turk competitor that allows researchers to source samples from their user base (Clickworker, 2022) and represents a compromise between higher quality than MTurk, with lower prices than Prolific. Further, due to the pre-existing data quality issues with Study 2 and the new method of sourcing a sample with a data collection service of unknown quality, the sample size was again inflated to deal with potential attrition from the sample due to possible data quality issues. Ultimately, a sample of 287 participants was sourced from the Clickworker participant pool.

Data Cleaning

Following the same procedure used in Study 1, participants were asked to leave a multi-sentence review for the restaurant as an attention check measure. Based on responses to this question, low or no-effort responders were excluded from the analysis. Once again, responses were excluded if they included gibberish (“Nice & comfortable. I,m always like this”), included one or two word responses (“none”; “no comment”), referenced the survey (“I think is good servey”; “Hi how are you im like clickworker job”) or if they did not reference the scenario (“kfc”). Following these procedures, 14 participants were excluded, all of which are included in Table 6 in Appendix B. All other responses were retained for the analysis. Once again, results of the hypothesis tests held regardless of whether low effort responses were retained or removed from the analysis.

Manipulation checks

As a manipulation check, a linear regression was conducted to test the effect of waiting condition on perceived wait time. The result was significant ($\beta = .1.108$, $p = <.001$), showing that as wait time increased, participants perceived the wait as longer. The manipulation was considered successful.

Hypothesis Testing

A moderated moderation analysis was conducted to examine Hypothesis 3, using the Hayes PROCESS Macro for SPSS (Model 3; Hayes, 2018). In the analysis, wait time was entered as the independent variable (X), relationship status (0= single, 1= relationship) was entered as

the primary moderator (W), cognitive rigidity was entered as the secondary moderator (Z), and intentions to cancel was entered as the dependent variable (Y) (Mean = 3.798, SD = 2.196). As expected, a significant three-way interaction effect was found ($\beta = -.286, p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.515, -.057])⁴. Findings were graphed below.

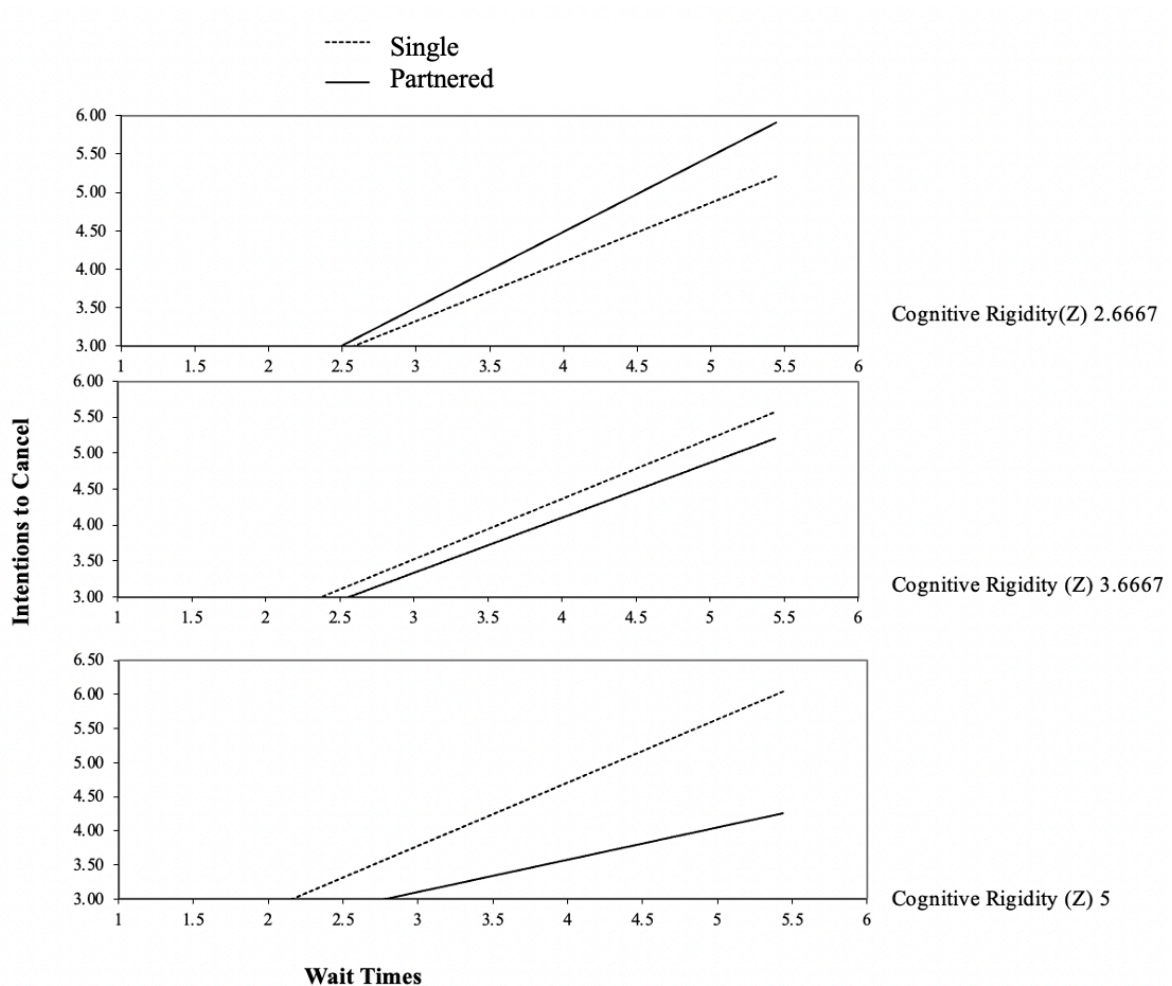


Figure 4. Study 4: Cognitive Rigidity, Relationship Status, and Waiting on Cancellation

⁴ As stated above, and as an indicator of robustness, findings remained significant regardless of whether low effort responses were included in or excluded from the data. They further remained significant regardless of whether the analysis was conducted with the original cognitive rigidity scale ($\alpha = .580$) or with the scale item dropped ($\alpha = .758$). For example, findings of the above Model 3 remained significant with low effort responses included in the data but with the cleaned cognitive rigidity scale ($\beta = -.245; p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.471; -.019]). They also remained significant removing low effort responses and using the noisy cognitive rigidity scale ($\beta = -.352; p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.638; -.066]).

For those in relationships, it appears that high cognitive rigidity decreases intentions to cancel after a longer wait time. Conversely, it appears that for singles, high cognitive rigidity increases intentions to cancel after a longer wait time. Thus, Hypotheses 3 was supported.

A Johnson-Neymann (J-N) analysis was run to further investigate these interaction effects. The interactive effect of wait time and relationship status on intentions to cancel transitioned from non-significance to significance at a cognitive rigidity score of 4.356 ($\beta = -.269$, $SE = 0.137$, $t = -1.969$, $p = 0.05$). This demonstrates that partnered consumers were less likely to cancel after waiting when they had higher levels of cognitive rigidity.

Affective Commitment

As stated above, previous findings in the waiting literature have shown that affective commitment to the service provider can shape reactions to waiting (Voorhees et al., 2009). The above Model 3 was therefore rerun to control for affective commitment. The results once again held ($\beta = -.272$, $p < 0.05$; 95% CI [-.498, -.044]), showing that relationship status and cognitive rigidity significantly moderated the effect of waiting time on cancellation while controlling for affective commitment to the service provider.

Conclusion

Overall, Studies 1 to 4 demonstrated that singles are more likely than partnered consumers to cancel a reservation if they must wait. This effect is mediated by participants' feelings of anticipated regret for cancellation, with partnered consumers demonstrating higher anticipated regret for cancellation than single consumers and thus a lower likelihood of cancelling their request for service. Further, these findings were also shown to be driven by participants' levels of cognitive rigidity, with partnered consumers high in cognitive rigidity shown to be less likely to cancel compared with single consumers high on cognitive rigidity, who were more likely to cancel. This was demonstrated on a combination of field and online experiment data and also in a range of hedonic waiting contexts, including real hotel bookings, as well as online restaurant and bowling scenarios. The findings were moreover shown to be robust to the control variables of age, gender, parenthood, perceived quality of

the service provider, affective commitment to the service provider, impatience, economic time styles, and regulatory mode orientations.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter 5 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings presented in this thesis. The chapter begins with an overview of the theoretical contributions made by the current research, as well as practical implications. It then covers limitations and future research directions before offering a final conclusion.

Discussion

To date, prior research has largely adopted a one-size-fits-all approach to the study of how consumers respond to waits for services (Durrande-Moreau, 1999; Paines et al., 2016a). Most research has assumed that all consumers react homogeneously to waiting, without seriously considering how individual differences among consumers might shape reactions to having to wait (Durrande-Moreau, 1999; Paines et al., 2016a). Moreover, as is clear from actual consumer behaviour in service contexts, such as the popularity of restaurants on Valentine's Day (Chen, 2013, n.p.; Hoffman, 2019; Open for Business, 2015), existing research has not fully considered how real-world consumer behaviour demonstrates that some consumers are more amenable than others to waiting for service. Therefore, by expanding on past work conducted from the perspective of Field Theory (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998) and Prospect Theory (Arkes & Blumer, 1985; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980), this research applies an understanding of relationship status and cognitive rigidity to the study of how consumers react to waiting to generate a more nuanced understanding of the topic.

Specifically, the research shows that consumers will respond to waits for services differently based on whether they are single or partnered due to differing sensitivities to sunk costs. Specifically, partnered consumers were shown to be less likely to cancel requests for service in the presence of a wait than consumers who are single. Following extant work from the sunk cost literature, this effect was shown to be mediated by anticipated regret for cancellation, with partnered consumers found to be higher in anticipated regret for

cancellation than singles. The research further demonstrates that partnered consumers who are high in cognitive rigidity are less likely to cancel in the face of a long wait when compared to single consumers, who were conversely more likely to cancel when high in cognitive rigidity.

Four studies were conducted to demonstrate these effects, integrating field and online survey data, using actual and self-report measures of reactions to waiting. These studies investigated consumer responses to waiting in hotel, bowling alley, and restaurant contexts. First, the research used data from real hotel reservations to show that bookings made up of single adults were more likely to be cancelled after a wait for confirmation of the booking than bookings made with two adults. Second, the research used data from an online experiment conducted using Amazon Mechanical Turk to show that consumers who were single were more likely to intend to cancel a request for a table when they had to wait compared with consumers who were in a relationship. This study further demonstrated that the effect of relationship status and wait time on cancellation was mediated by participants' anticipated regret for cancellation, with partnered consumers showing higher levels of anticipated regret for cancellation after a long wait than single consumers. Third, data collected from a second online study, with a sample from Prolific, was used to demonstrate additional support for the effect of relationship status and wait time on cancellation. It subsequently demonstrated the moderating impacts of cognitive rigidity, relationship status, and wait time on cancellation. This showed that high levels of cognitive rigidity made partnered consumers less likely to cancel and made single consumers more likely to cancel. Finally, a third online study, with a sample collected from Clickworker, demonstrated additional support for the effects of cognitive rigidity, relationship status, and wait time on cancellation. Across the four studies presented in this research, findings were shown to be robust regardless of age, gender, parenthood, perceptions of quality for the service provider, affective commitment to the service provider, economic time styles, and regulatory mode orientations.

It is argued that these findings are driven by differences in sensitivity to sunk costs. When compared with single consumers, partnered consumers have been shown to consume in a manner that prioritises remaining with existing commitments across a range of domains, such as in how they spend their time, manage non-romantic relationships, and make consumer choices. This sensitivity to sunk costs makes partnered individuals more likely to commit to an existing option and continue to escalate commitment to an existing option, rather than

switch away to a new one. In the context of waits for service, their heightened sensitivity to sunk costs increases their anticipated regret at the prospect of cancelling a request for service, which acts as a buffer against cancellation.

Conversely, singles demonstrate a reduced sensitivity towards sunk costs in how they spend time, manage non-romantic relationships, and make consumer choices. In a waiting context, this comparatively low sensitivity to sunk costs decreases their anticipated regret for cancelling a request for service, making singles more likely than partnered consumers to cancel if they have to wait.

It is further argued that cognitive rigidity differentially affects how single and partnered consumers respond to waiting because it acts an intensifier of these pre-existing sensitivities to sunk costs in consumption. This means that singles become more likely to cancel as their levels of cognitive rigidity increase. Partnered consumers in turn become less likely to cancel as their levels of cognitive rigidity increase.

In producing these findings, the research presented here responds to calls to re-centre the consumer in the study of waits for service delivery (Paines et al., 2016a). It also responds to repeated, but surprisingly unheeded, calls for research into how being in a relationship affects consumer behaviour (Cavanaugh, 2016; Donthu & Gilliland, 2002; Simpson et al., 2012). This is a significantly understudied topic in the fields of consumer and services research (Cavanaugh, 2016; Donthu & Gilliland, 2002; Simpson et al., 2012) and an area of research that has oddly failed to provide insights despite practitioners increasingly segmenting their products and services based on relationship status (Kislev, 2019; Verdon, 2021).

These contributions are particularly important because much research has previously identified individual difference characteristics as unimportant for the study of reactions to waiting based on the incorrect assumption that they could not generate insights that would be actionable for managers (Durrande-Moreau, 1999). The research presented here takes an opposing stance to this view, presenting findings based on individual differences that service providers can use in managing reactions to waiting, as is further discussed below.

Theoretical Implications

Finally, this research makes multiple theoretical contributions to the waiting literature by extending past work that examined waiting from the perspective of Field Theory (Lewin, 1942). First, it adds to existing research on Field Theory and waiting by examining how the key social groups a person belongs to, in this case operationalised as their relationship status, impact how they react when they are required to wait for service. This is an important theoretical contribution because Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) posits that a person's key social groups, and particularly their marital status (Lewin, 1940b), should have an outsized effect on their behaviour (Lewin, 1940a). However, no research previously conducted using Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) in the waiting literature has investigated the outsized impact that person's social group has on behaviour (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998), meaning that key concepts from the overarching theory were never applied to the field.

Second, in linking negative reactions to waiting to the dependent variable of cancellation, further contributions have been made to the study of waits for service using Field Theory (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998) by incorporating the possibility of behavioural change in the face of a barrier to a goal (i.e., the goal of obtaining service). This is a contribution that extends past research that has used Field Theory in the waiting literature, as past research assumed that customers would wait for service if it was required to achieve their original goal. This past research did not allow consumers change their behaviour and meet their goal by obtaining service elsewhere if required to wait (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998). Thus, this research also contributes more broadly to the waiting literature, which has generally neglected the study of cancellation in the face of waiting, despite its strong theoretical and practical relevance (De Vries et al., 2018; Diaz & Ruiz, 2002; Taylor, 1995; Ulku et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2021).

This research also extends past research conducted using Field Theory (Lewin, 1942) by incorporating an understanding of the factors that can make a person predisposed to change into investigations of behavioural change in the face of waiting. This research examined how a person's level of cognitive rigidity shapes how relationship status can impact a person's reactions to waiting. This is an especially relevant contribution to work on waiting conducted from a Field Theoretical perspective, because the theory was created to study the factors that

influence behavioural change (Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Lewin, 1947b) and past work in the waiting literature neglected to incorporate this behavioural change into empirical work (Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hui et al., 1998). In seeking to address each of these gaps in the literature, this research has demonstrated that a person's key social groups and predispositions towards or against change significantly affects how they respond to a barrier to the goal of obtaining service. It has further demonstrated that waiting can lead to behavioural change in the form of cancelling a request for service if a person has to wait. In generating these findings, this research therefore further contributes to the literature on cancellation of service requests (Guo, 2009; Xie & Gerstner, 2007) by exploring how relationship status and predispositions to change broadly impact the likelihood of cancellation, in this case within the context of a wait.

Finally, the research presented here contributes to the burgeoning literature on individual differences in the study of sunk costs. Past work has shown that people can differ in their decision-making competence, with some people more likely to make decisions based on sunk costs than others (Parker & Fischhoff, 2005; Ronayne, 2021). A growing body of literature has started to identify individual difference variables that affect sensitivity to sunk costs. Recent work, for example, has shown that older people have lower sunk cost sensitivity than younger people (Strough et al., 2016) and that neurotypical people have higher sunk cost sensitivity than neurodivergent people (Rogge, 2021). The research presented here contributes to this body of literature by identifying relationship status as an additional variable that influences sensitivity to sunk costs.

Implications for Practice

Data on relationship status is widely available and accessing it is a relatively simple process even for small service providers. National surveys such as the US and British censuses collect data on marital status and make such data publicly available at a granular level (Census Bureau, 2020; Census, 2018). Based on these surveys, members of the public can freely access information that identifies how many people belong to a particular relationship status at the city and even at the postcode level (Census Bureau, 2020; Census, 2018). For example,

using publicly available data, it would be easy to identify areas with high numbers of singles, such as Washington DC, where 71% of the population is single (Badger, 2015). Conversely it can be easy to identify areas with high numbers of partnered consumers, such as in one suburb of Salt Lake City, Utah, where 74% of residents are married (Kopf, 2017).

Social media data on relationship status is also relatively easy to collect, for example with Facebook and Instagram providing simple methods for service providers to identify the relationship status of their followers and to target posts to audiences based on relationship status (Karlson, 2021; Meta, 2022a; Meta, 2022b). Service providers can also conduct their own market research on their customers, for example, by asking for their relationship status in feedback surveys or when customers sign up for membership programs. In this way, data on relationship status can be widely accessed by service providers at low cost and with relative ease. They can therefore use data on relationship status in targeting and segmenting their customers. This is important as by supplying information on how to tailor delivery based on relationship status, these findings offer a novel and customer-centric approach to managing waits for service.

First, information on relationship status can enable service providers to more accurately anticipate the severity of demand for their services, and to tailor service delivery so that they can satisfactorily meet that demand. Specifically, using data on relationship status, service providers can develop a clearer picture of how quickly their customers will expect them to deliver their services, and how quickly or often the provider might lose customers if they start to anticipate that waits will become too long. Practically speaking, service providers will have to focus on delivering service more quickly in markets with high proportions of singles than in markets with high proportions of couples. This is because service providers will experience more cancellations in markets with more singles, as single customers are more likely to cancel requests for service more often if they must wait. The negative consequences of long waits for service providers, such as missed revenue, will therefore likely be worse in markets with high proportions of singles than in markets with high proportions of partnered consumers.

Following this, a chain restaurant, for example, might choose to adjust policies on service delivery to be more stringent about reducing wait times in areas with a high single population, but prioritise performance on other service attributes, such as friendliness of staff,

in areas with higher numbers of partnered customers. This information may be especially important for small service providers who may not have the financial resources to perform well across all aspects of service delivery, and may therefore have to make difficult choices about where to allocate resources. In areas with high numbers of partnered consumers, a smaller service provider, who might not have the staffing resources to significantly reduce wait times, could prioritise attempts to build long-term relationships with their customers despite slower service delivery, as partnered consumers would likely respond well to this given on their tendencies to value commitment in consumer choice.

On top of anticipating customer demand, service providers must further attempt to influence that demand so that they can manage their available service capacity in optimal ways (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018). For example, service providers commonly ramp up promotions for their services during off-peak periods when capacity is likely to go unused. They also typically cease or significantly reduce promotions during peak periods where organic demand can already overwhelm capacity and lead to declines in service quality (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018). The research presented here shows that service providers would likely have better results in shaping demand for their services if they tailor their promotions based on relationship status.

Specifically, service providers who anticipate that they will be delivering longer waits at periods of peak demand should consider highlighting romantic relationships in promotions relating to them. By doing this, they can bring in customers who are in relationships and who are likely to therefore have less negative responses to longer waits. Similarly, service providers should consider targeting promotions for off-peak periods at singles, such as by framing early-bird specials, or other dedicated off-peak campaigns, as suited to consumers living a fast-paced single life and who do not want to wait for service. By bringing in single consumers during off-peak periods, and by bringing in partnered consumers during peak demand, service providers can ensure they target the right customer for the wait that they will have to offer them despite fluctuations in demand. Further, not only is data on relationship status readily available to service providers, as stated above, but messaging based on relationship status is commonplace in the modern marketplace (Cavanaugh, 2014) and is therefore generally accepted among consumers. This means that promotions based on relationship status should be accessible for all service providers.

Finally, to adequately manage waits for their customers, service providers must engage in service recovery efforts when waits become too long. The research presented here has implications for how service providers should conduct service recovery efforts. First, providers should tailor their responses to focus on reducing the likelihood that singles will leave the premises before they can be entered into the service delivery process. For example, in a restaurant context, and where truthful, service staff could be directed to emphasise that the customer does not have much longer to wait and that service will be provided quickly once seated. They might further be directed to focus on partially commencing the service interaction, such as by offering a free drink, or simply facilitating a wait at a bar where a customer can themselves order a drink. This would move single customers from the pre-service phase to the in-service phase, in which all customers should be less likely to cancel.

Second, while partnered consumers would be less likely to cancel if they have to wait when compared with singles, service providers should still not neglect them in service recovery efforts. However, for partnered consumers, it may be more useful for service providers to craft service recovery efforts based on the value that partnered consumers place on existing commitments and the long-term relationships they are therefore likely to seek with service providers. For example, service staff could provide verbal affirmations that the customer's ongoing patronage is valued or could provide vouchers for discounts during future visits to apologise for the wait.

It should be noted, however, that concerns for justice are prevalent among consumers when they wait. That is, consumers who are in line for something are highly attentive to signals that other customers are being allowed or invited to skip the line ahead of them (Baker & Cameron, 1996). Service providers should not attempt to manage demand in a way that constitutes discrimination based on relationship status, especially once a period of waiting has already begun. While it might not be possible for providers to tailor service recovery efforts based on relationship status when these efforts are conducted in front of other customers, based on the recommendations provided above, providers could tailor policies on service recovery towards emphasising speed of service or emphasising the value of long-term relationships with customers based on whether they are operating in a market with a high number of singles or a high number of partnered consumers.

Overall, these findings should also be taken as a word of caution for service providers, as it constitutes further evidence that both single and partnered consumers are sensitive to their relationship status in their consumption behaviour. Service providers should attempt to be mindful about what signals their servicescapes and promotions are sending regarding relationship status. This is because managers may inadvertently be sending signals that are negatively impacting some customers without realising it. This is especially important for service providers because signalling regarding relationship status may possibly result in lost business. Unchecked signals relating to relationships may also be a potential source of discomfort (Cavanaugh, 2014). Service providers are therefore recommended to conduct an audit of their servicescapes to identify how signals relating to relationship status and single or couples in their target market may be interacting with their businesses.

Finally, a recommendation for service providers is to simply take the singles market into account when considering their service offerings. While estimates vary, and data is less clear in the Australian context than the American context (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020), singles likely make up around 30% of American adults (Brown, 2020) or around one hundred million American consumers. Further, people are on average marrying later in life compared to previous generations (Rabin, 2018; United States Census Bureau, 2020b), and a larger proportion of Americans are simply choosing to remain single for significant proportions of their life, for example with around half of singles reporting that they are not looking to change their relationship status (Brown, 2020). In this way, single consumers represent a significant market and are likely to become more important and not less important to service providers over time.

This is an important consideration regarding the practices of some service providers. On cruise ships, for example, solo travellers are sometimes forced to pay what is referred to as a 'single supplement', which is an extra fee for making a booking as a single traveller designed to make up for revenue the company would have received if a couple had booked instead (Rosenbloom, 2003). While partnered consumers make up a majority of the market, it is still unwise for service providers to ignore or to discriminate against 30% of the potential marketplace. Practitioners should follow the lead of companies like IKEA and Whole Foods Market, which are increasingly considering the needs of both single and partnered consumers and adjusting their product lines and services to respect the differences and needs of both groups (Kislev, 2019; Verdon, 2021).

Limitations

The key limitation of the research presented here is that it is correlational in nature. As such, this research cannot empirically rule out the potential systematic effect of a latent variable or variables that may otherwise explain these findings (Rutz & Watson, 2019). To address these issues, research conducted to further the topic would theoretically need to manipulate relationship status to rule out the potential of any latent variables in impacting reactions to waiting (Crano et al., 2014).

First, it would not be possible to manipulate relationship status itself, as it would be impossible to randomly assign people to real relationships or end real relationships for the purpose of a study. This would mean that any research aiming for a randomised manipulation involving relationships would only be able to randomly manipulate a proxy of relationship status, which is different from manipulating relationship status itself (Simmons et al., 2011). The only close example of this from previous research would be from Cavanaugh (2014), who manipulated relationship reminders through greeting cards and advertisements to examine how reminders of relationships impact feelings of deservingness. However, reminders of relationships are still not the same as being in a relationship or being single. Therefore, manipulating a proxy to address the impacts of potential latent variables would still potentially fail to rule out potential latent variables related to relationships (Rutz & Watson, 2019). Should this proxy be employed, or other proxies for relationship status be developed, these issues will likely remain as a limitation.

Second, given that manipulations would be unlikely to succeed in ruling out issues with latent variables, it is likely that the best avenue for addressing this limitation would be a longitudinal study (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010). For this to work, it would likely need to be conducted on a very large sample of consumers with data on responses to hypothetical waiting scenarios, such as those in the research presented here, but collected at two points in time. Responses to waiting at Time 1 could then be compared with responses at Time 2 for consumers who entered or dissolved a relationship in the intervening period. However, considering that the sample would need to be large to account for most participants' relationship status remaining unchanged during the intervening period, as well as participant

attrition which would be expected from a longitudinal study (Ahern & Le Brocque, 2005), conducting such a study would require considerable financial resources. It would also be unclear from past research about how long the gap between Time 1 and 2 would need to be. While it can be argued that couples in the initial phase of dating are likely to be highly pre-occupied with their new relationship, it is likely that people exiting relationships may take some time to adjust to being single. Lastly, even if a longitudinal study was to be conducted successfully, it would still only be quasi-experimental in nature in that it would still be lacking in randomisation (Crano et al., 2014). This would mean that such a study would still have limited additional theoretical value in comparison with correlational data.

It should be acknowledged that the lived experiences of being single and of being partnered will vary immensely for anyone of any relationship status. The lived experiences of people in relationships will be impacted by many factors, such as relationship stage, individual investment in the relationship (which may differ for each member of the couple in the relationship), the presence of children or other dependents, and many other factors such as income, race, class, geographic location, sexual orientation, culture, and changing relationship norms. Single life is further likely to be highly different for individuals depending on whether a person is single by choice, single because they are unable to find a partner, or whether they are single based on divorce or the death of a spouse. And, as with those in relationships, single life will also be affected by whether they have dependents, and any of the additional factors such as income, race, class, sexual orientation, culture, or changing relationships norms.

As such, considering the significant variation in lived experiences for people of any relationship status, it should be noted that this research does not claim that being in a relationship or being single will affect people uniformly. However, it is clear from past research that relationships require a significant degree of commitment, which occurs through the investment of time and other resources, for the relationship to survive and to develop (Stanley et al., 2010). It is also clear that people in relationships increasingly come to overlap in terms of their social networks and the ways in which they spend their time (Burton-Chellew & Dunbar, 2015; Chen et al., 2016; Cwikel et al., 2006; DePaulo, 2017; Fishbach et al., 2011; Huang & Dong, 2018; Musick & Bumpass, 2012; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2015; Simpson et al., 2012), and that this further impacts their consumer decision-making (Chen et al., 2016; Donthu & Gilliland, 2002; Huang & Dong, 2018). It is further clear that leading

models of commitment within romantic relationships and conceptualisations of how sunk costs impact decision-making have significant overlap. As such, while relationships and single life will differ for individuals based on lived experiences, the broad differences regarding sensitivity to sunk costs between the two relationship categories should exist and shape behaviour regardless of these variations in lived experiences. Moreover, those with high cognitive rigidity should still experience an intensification of tendencies towards sunk costs despite variations based in lived experiences, as a predisposition towards or against change should still impact behaviour regardless of factors such as class, race etc.

It has been noted in the research presented here that the waiting literature has traditionally had a narrow theoretical focus, for example by prioritising research into how to manage waits from an operational standpoint instead of examining how customers can shape their own responses. While the research conducted here sought to correct for this by taking a customer-centric approach to the study of waits, it has nonetheless replicated some of the narrow theoretical scope present in the literature by failing to consider the role of culture in shaping reactions to waiting.

This is unfortunate given that culture has been shown to influence how people value time and how they expect time to be managed (Paines et al., 2016b). For example, different countries are considered to operate at different paces than others, with some countries seen as moving faster, placing higher importance on punctuality, and having different rules about how time should be managed (Paines et al., 2016b). This can impact a range of daily behaviours such as how quickly people believe tasks should be completed, as well as the personal use of watches, clocks, to-do lists, and calendars to monitor and capitalise on investments of time in daily life (Paines et al., 2016b). Given that the research presented here examines waiting from a sunk cost perspective, it foundationally operates on the assumption that customers treat time like an investment, that they consider investments of time as valuable, and see long waits as a negative experience that should be avoided. Cultural differences in how people value and expect time to be managed should therefore impact whether customers respond to waits in a manner consistent with sunk cost effects. In this way, it is likely that the work presented here would be true in a Western context but may not translate to other cultures, particularly to cultures who place a high cultural value on having a slower pace in life.

One limitation that is also worth acknowledging is that research on the construct of cognitive rigidity is evolving and multiple disciplines have crafted measures in order to examine it and its related constructs. Future research might seek to replicate these results using different measures for generalisability purposes, such as through the use of the ‘cognitive flexibility scale’ (Martin & Rubin, 1995) as an alternate measure.

Future Research

The findings presented here also highlight important avenues to be explored in future research. Firstly, research should continue to explore the interplay of relationship status and sunk cost effects on decision making. For example, research on loyalty programs has been plagued by questions on why and how they can successfully be conducted (Henderson et al., 2011; Kang et al., 2015), with a significant body of work even debating whether they are useful in promoting customer retention at all (Leenheer et al., 2007). The findings presented here suggest that customer loyalty programs should be more effective when targeting consumers in relationships. It further suggests that customer loyalty programs should be less effective when targeting singles. Future research should investigate this, as incorporating an understanding of relationship status into the literature on loyalty programs may increase effectiveness for practitioners and may significantly improve theoretical understandings of why these programs can succeed or fail.

Further, high cognitive rigidity was found to amplify existing tendencies on the part of consumers in responding to waiting, building on past research showing that consumers who are high in cognitive rigidity have tendencies to resist adjusting to new situations in new ways (Laumer et al., 2016; Oreg, 2006; Seo & Ray, 2019; Sun, 2021). Due to this, if customers high in cognitive rigidity attempt to patronise a new service provider, it is likely that they will want to become a repeat customer should the experience go well. Consumers high in cognitive rigidity are therefore likely over-represented generally among repeat customers and may constitute a market segment with high levels of customer equity. Despite this, cognitive rigidity has largely been overlooked by market researchers. Future research should therefore examine how cognitive rigidity shapes experiences in the service context, and particularly explore how high cognitive rigidity consumers respond to service failure.

Further study of high cognitive rigidity consumers will likely develop insights that will allow service providers to successfully cater to an important and overlooked consumer segment.

Additionally, the results presented here present important avenues of potential research on relationships and individual differences that would be relevant beyond the contexts of service research or consumer behaviour. That is, because cognitive rigidity was found to intensify existing tendencies in decision-making both for single and partnered individuals, it is likely that these findings would have important implications for the understanding of problem solving in or related to romantic relationships in psychological research contexts. For example, future research should explore whether individuals high on cognitive rigidity are more likely to repeat existing patterns in problem-solving within their relationships even when they are not successful. This would be an important topic to pursue as failure to adjust to new situations in relationships would logically lead to a higher likelihood of relationship dissolution.

Moreover, there is extant work indicating that choice-overload in dating apps can inspire a 'rejection-mindset' in app users, rendering them less likely to engage with the dating profiles immediately available to them, so that they can continue to evaluate other, potentially better profiles (Pronk & Denissen, 2019). It is possible that cognitive rigidity and its impact on reduced commitment in singles may amplify these tendencies, thus decreasing the odds of singles entering new relationships even when they desire to do so and are presented with a dating market that should otherwise facilitate this. Therefore, further research into cognitive rigidity's impact on decision-making in relationships should be conducted as a pathway to facilitating better insights on relationship formation or dissolution.

Finally, the work conducted in this thesis contributes to the study of waits for service and it is self-evident therefore that it should have been conducted in service contexts. However, considering current global geopolitical issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic (Henrich et al., 2022), war in Ukraine (Henrich et al., 2022), climate change (Leslie, 2022), and rising political movements valuing economic nationalism over globalisation (Shih, 2020), global supply chains are under significant levels of stress and disruption. This means that products and commodities are facing long and often indeterminable waits for delivery. Moreover, these disruptions are also taking place against the backdrop of the normalisation of online retailing for even basic consumer goods, where reliability and speed in product delivery are

likely to be valued by consumers. However, no work has ever explored whether the principles and findings of the literature on waits for service apply to waits for product delivery, or how global factors such as culture might shape reactions to product waits. Considering that fragmentation and disruption of supply chains are likely to become more common in the future even when pandemic disruption dissipates (Leslie, 2022), it is imperative that work is conducted to examine if findings from the field of waits for service also apply to product waits and can provide practitioners with insights into how waits can be managed.

Conclusion

Waits for service are an inevitable part of the service delivery process. Across three decades of research, the field has typically conceptualised waiting as a homogeneously negative experience for consumers without real exploration of the ways in which they could differ in their tolerance for it. This has left service providers without actionable information to use in segmenting customers according to their waiting tolerance. To address this gap in knowledge, waiting is examined from the perspective of Field Theory and Prospect Theory. Building on these theories, the variables of relationship status and cognitive rigidity are introduced to the field in order to examine how they impact cancellation as a response to waiting. Four experimental studies were conducted to explore the impacts of relationship status and cognitive rigidity on waiting, integrating field data and online experiment data from multiple service contexts, and using participants from multiple continents. The findings demonstrated that in comparison with consumers who are in relationships (i.e., partnered consumers), single consumers are more likely to cancel service requests if they have to wait. This occurs because partnered consumers have higher sensitivity towards sunk costs in consumption, whereas consumers who are single have lower sensitivity towards sunk costs. Further, it is demonstrated that high cognitive rigidity intensifies sensitivity to sunk costs in consumption, thus affecting cancellation. Service providers can use these findings when managing demand for their services, for instance, by targeting singles in periods of low demand and partnered consumers in periods of high demand.

Appendix A

Literature Review Table Contrasting Articles on Individual Difference with Articles That Do Not Examine Individual Difference Variables

Waiting Papers on Individual Difference Variables.

Chebat et al., 2010; Durrande-Moreau & Usnier, 1999; Grewal et al., 2003; Marquis et al., 1994; Mattila & Hanks, 2012; Miller et al., 2008; Paimes et al., 2016a; Yang et al., 2013; Voorhees et al., 2009.

Waiting Papers That Do Not Examine Individual Difference Variables

Areni & Grantham, 2009; Baker & Cameron, 1996; Bielen & Demoulin, 2007; Bitner et al., 1990; Butcher & Heffernan, 2006; Butcher & Kayani, 2008; Cameron et al., 2003; Daz & Ruz, 2002; Chebat et al., 1995; Chebat et al., 1993; Davis, 1991; Davis & Heinke, 1998; Davis & Vollmann, 1990; Dellaert & Khan, 1999; De Vries et al., 2018; Dickson et al., 2005; Durrande-Moreau, 1999; Dube-Rioux et al., 1989; Hensley & Sulek, 2007; Hornik, 1984; Houston & Wenger, 1998; Hui & Dule, 1997; Hui & Tse, 1996; Hui & Zhou, 1996; Jones & Peppiatt, 1996; Katz et al., 1991; Kim et al., 2016; Kumar et al., 1997; Larson, 1987; Leclerc et al., 1995; Lee & Lambert., 2006; Maister, 1985; McDougall & Levesque, 1999; Nowlis et al., 2004; Pruyn & Smidts, 1998; Pruyn & Smidts, 1999; Rafaeli et al., 2002; Riel et al., 2012; Schmitt et al., 1992; Taylor, 1995; Taylor & Claxton, 1994; Tom & Lucey, 1995; Ülkü et al, 2020; Zhou & Soman, 2008.

Appendix B

Relationship Variable Calculation Tables

Table 1

Study 2 Participants Manually Added to a Relationship Category

	Relationship Status Indicated by Participant	Coding Response
1.	Relationship and living together	Added to the couple relationship category.
2.	widowed	Added to the single relationship category.

Table 2

Study 3 Participants Manually Added to a Relationship Category

	Relationship Status Indicated by Participant	Coding Response
1.	In a relationship, living together	Added to the couple relationship category.
2.	In a relationship and living together	Added to the couple relationship category.
3.	Widowed	Added to the single relationship category.
4.	in a relationship and living together	Added to the couple relationship category.
5.	In a relationship, living together. I'm not sure what de facto means? But there isn't an	Added to the couple relationship category.

	option for relationship, living with.	
6.	Partnered and living together	Added to the couple relationship category.
7.	Widowed	Added to the single relationship category.
8.	Widowed	Added to the single relationship category.

Table 3

Study 4 Participants Manually Added to a Relationship Category

	Relationship Status Indicated by Participant	Coding Response
1.	In a relationship and living together.	Added to the couple relationship category.
2.	Widowed	Added to the single relationship category.
3.	Living with partner	Added to the couple relationship category.
4.	living with partner	Added to the couple relationship category.
5.	living with partner	Added to the couple relationship category.
6.	4	Excluded from relationship variable.
7.	In a relationship, unmarried, living together 15yrs.	Added to the couple relationship category.
8.	Living together	Added to the couple relationship category.

9.	Widow	Added to the single relationship category.
10.	domestic partnership	Added to the couple relationship category.

Appendix C

Omitted Participant Response Information

Table 4

Study 2 Omitted Participant Responses

	Participant Response on Review Question (Verbatim)
1.	is a business that prepares and serves food and drinks to customers. Meals are generally served and eaten on the premises, but many restaurants also offer take-out and food delivery services.
2.	I'm looking at unit 111. There's a code for the condensate pan, the float switch, I'm checking that now to make sure there's nothing wrong with that. Then when I left the sort of float up, back down, pull it up seems to be working properly. The next step, I believe would be to blow it down and see if that takes care of the issue.
3.	Irrespective for the attender.
4.	Learn how to ask your customers to get more reviews, better ratings, and ... Online customer reviews do wonders for your business. ... If you're trying to get more reviews, you'll want to optimize exactly when you ... Message templates and examples
5.	Learn how to ask your customers to get more reviews, better ratings, and more sales. ... Online customer reviews do wonders for your business. ... If you're trying to get more reviews, you'll want to optimize exactly when you ... Subject line templates and examples ... To help us, please take a moment to leave your feedback.
6.	Where do business owners struggle? Brainstorming how to ask for the review in the text. There's a valid fear of not knowing what to say. At

	the very least, you could simply say, "Review us on Google." You don't want to come off as scripted or formal, and it can be tricky to determine an appropriate tone for your customers to ask for feedback.
7.	Always get permission before sending a review request. Ask at the peak of your customer's happiness with your service. Let your customer know that you're asking for a "favor" Let your customer know how long this will take.
8.	great experience of this time.
9.	Nothing.
10.	that is the good
11.	Where do business owners struggle? Brainstorming how to ask for the review in the text. There's a valid fear of not knowing what to say. At the very least, you could simply say, "Review us on Google." You don't want to come off as scripted or formal, and it can be tricky to determine an appropriate tone for your customers to ask for feedback.
12.	Ask at the peak of your customer's happiness with your service
13.	good feel
14.	good quality food is important services provide must needed communication in english
15.	i feel little tension
16.	night restaurant
17.	Very good treat.
18.	good
19.	GOOD
20.	good survey
21.	Good survey
22.	it would be too much. because this is bad. it is awfully taskful and requires a lot of work. Which means it can be underpaid hence being bad. you can't get a lot of things if you do that
23.	Where do business owners struggle? Brainstorming how to ask for the review in the text. There's a valid fear of not knowing what to say. At the very least, you could simply say, "Review us on Google." You don't

	want to come off as scripted or formal, and it can be tricky to determine an appropriate tone for your customers to ask for feedback.
24.	That is good and look great.
25.	very like product
26.	very well this study
27.	You and your friend have decided to go out for dinner on Friday night. You have selected a moderately priced restaurant that you have patronized before. The food is great there. The restaurant does not take reservations. You arrive at the restaurant at 7 pm. The hostess greets you and asks you to have a seat in a waiting area. Based on your past experience, you expect that you may have to wait for about 10 minutes.
28.	80 IAM VERY LIKEIY THIS
29.	I like this kind of moment
30.	Nice
31.	Provide useful, constructive feedback. Talk about a range of elements, including customer service. Be detailed, specific, and honest. Leave out links and personal information. Keep it civil and friendly. They might ask why, but you don't need to answer. You can laugh to keep things light, while not answering them. Look forward to seeing them next time. Thank them for coming in and for being regulars, my favorite customers Urge them to enjoy the rest of their day and hope to see them again soon
32.	Talk about a range of elements, including customer service. Be detailed, specific, and honest. Leave out links and personal information. Keep it civil and friendly.
33.	Utilize Equipment Properly Do Pay Attention to Your Section Do Be Friendly To Your Guests Do Write Things Down. ... Do Know the Menu. ...

	<p>Do Keep Up With The Pace</p> <p>Do Always Smile</p> <p>Do Prioritize Guests Properly</p> <p>They might ask why, but you don't need to answer. You can laugh to keep things light, while not answering them. Look forward to seeing them next time. Thank them for coming in and for being regulars, my favorite customers.</p>
34.	I like that kind of moment
35.	<p>Provide useful, constructive feedback.</p> <p>Talk about a range of elements, including customer service.</p> <p>Be detailed, specific, and honest.</p> <p>Leave out links and personal information.</p> <p>Keep it civil and friendly.</p> <p>Feel free to update your review if needed.</p> <p>Check you've got the right domain name or company.</p>
36.	<p>They might ask why, but you don't need to answer. You can laugh to keep things light, while not answering them. Look forward to seeing them next time. Thank them for coming in and for being regulars, "my favourite customers!" Urge them to enjoy the rest of their day and hope to see them again soon</p>
37.	very like restaurant paragraph
38.	<p>Generally, queue management problems are trade off's situation between cost of time spent in waiting v/s cost of additional capacity or machinery</p> <p>Customer frustration due to long wait times is a typical problem in the ...</p> <p>It could very well be that the long wait time at your restaurant is due to its ... In fact, nowadays, it often doesn't end until a review is posted online. so i want better service</p>
39.	good
40.	GOOD
41.	Present the survey along with the bill so that customers can fill it in at the end of their meal.
42.	Set up an email list by collecting business cards or asking customers to sign up for a loyalty program when they visit. .

43.	The all restaurant was so develop of the country. but restaurant was very bad.
44.	this survey is good experience
45.	very well this study
46.	Always get permission before sending a review request. Ask at the peak of your customer's happiness with your service. Let your customer know that you're asking for a “favor” Let your customer know how long this will take.
47.	good
48.	GOOD
49.	GOOD HAPPY TO TAKE THIS SURVEY.
50.	Here are more tips to remember when asking for online reviews. ... If you have a business, you may be wondering how you can get more online reviews. ... Email Templates & Company Communication Makes Everything Easier .
51.	It's kind of like their experience diary
52.	Always get permission before sending a review request. Ask at the peak of your customer's happiness with your service. Let your customer know that you're asking for a “favor”
53.	Customer is very impartand clean placeis impartand f00d quality is very impartand. Beautiful place inrestarent bilding very teasty foods
54.	very interesting online
55.	You and your friend have decided to go out for dinner on Friday night. You have selected a moderately priced restaurant that you have patronized before. The food is great there. The restaurant does not take reservations. You arrive at the restaurant at 7 pm. The hostess greets you and asks you to have a seat in a waiting area. Based on your past experience,
56.	GOOD
57.	Hotel is good and supply is good

58.	<p>Many consumers today don't want to just browse in-store or wait around to be served. They're often looking to get in, get out, and move on with their busy day.</p> <p>As result, efficiency has never been more crucial to a successful restaurant operation. Keep the customer waiting, and just like that, you could end up with a bad review.i feel little pressure</p>
59.	<p>Where do business owners struggle? Brainstorming how to ask for the review in the text. There's a valid fear of not knowing what to say. At the very least, you could simply say, "Review us on Google." You don't want to come off as scripted or formal, and it can be tricky to determine an appropriate tone for your customers to ask for feedback.</p>
60.	<p>Restaurants have been reopened for quite some time in several cities. Below, you'll see five mistakes you're making when going out to a restaurant. Then as a server and I'm making the least amount of money I could imagine.</p>
61.	<p>Always get permission before sending a review request.</p> <p>Ask at the peak of your customer's happiness with your service.</p> <p>Let your customer know that you're asking for a "favor"</p> <p>Let your customer know how long this will take.</p>
62.	<p>Greeting your customers: You need to instruct your staff to greet your customers as they enter your restaurant so that they will feel welcomed.</p>
63.	<p>very like and very useful</p>
64.	<p>Where do business owners struggle? Brainstorming how to ask for the review in the text. There's a valid fear of not knowing what to say. At the very least, you could simply say, "Review us on Google." You don't want to come off as scripted or formal, and it can be tricky to determine an appropriate tone for your customers to ask for feedback.</p>

Note. As outlined in the method section, responses were discarded based on answers to an attention check question asking them to write a multi-sentence online review for their restaurant experience. Respondents were omitted from the analysis if they had copied and pasted text from the internet as their response, did not reference the restaurant or scenario,

had entered one- or two-word responses, or reviewed the survey rather than the restaurant. I.e., responses were omitted if they did not follow instructions.

Table 5

Study 3 Omitted Participant Responses

1.	Fast service!
2.	Waited 30min

Note. Again, as outlined in the method section, responses were discarded based on answers to an attention check question asking them to write a multi-sentence online review for their service experience at a bowling alley. Respondents were omitted from the analysis if they had copied and pasted text from the internet as their response, did not reference the bowling alley or scenario, had entered one- or two-word responses, or reviewed the survey rather than the restaurant. I.e., responses were omitted if they did not follow instructions.

Table 6

Study 4 Omitted Participant Responses

1.	None
2.	In the box below
3.	None
4.	none
5.	None
6.	None
7.	It's alright
8.	i don't have any opinion on that restaurant
9.	Nice & comfortable. I,m always like this.
10.	No comment

11.	kfc
12.	Please give me my code, thanks .
13.	I think is good servey
14.	Hi how are you im like clickworker job

Note. Again, as outlined in the method section, responses were discarded based on answers to an attention check question asking them to write a multi-sentence online review for their restaurant experience. Respondents were omitted from the analysis if they had copied and pasted text from the internet as their response, did not reference the restaurant or scenario, had entered one- or two-word responses, or reviewed the survey rather than the restaurant. I.e. responses were omitted if they did not follow instructions.

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