



Unwrapping the Mystery: Exploring the Effects of Revealing Surprise Purchases

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Abstract

Title: Unwrapping the Mystery: Exploring the Effects of Revealing Surprise Purchases

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Mystery deals are gaining more popularity as a marketing strategy. When selling a mystery deal, companies deliberately limit the amount of information regarding their products or services intending to arouse consumer curiosity, capture their interest, and generate the desire to find out more about the offer through making a purchase. This study aims to investigate not only how curiosity, expectations, and evaluation of the product and other feelings of customers impact the buying process of a mystery product before the reveal of the mystery, but also in particular how these factors and feelings of the customers develop and influence each other through the buying process. Consequently, the influence of resolving the mystery on consumers' perceptions was also included and a significant part of this investigation. This study reveals that curiosity positively influences initial expectations and functional values before and after the reveal. The research also highlights a decline in product expectations and activity satisfaction post-reveal, urging caution for organizations using mystery deals as a marketing strategy. Importantly, positive activity satisfaction post-reveal enhances customer satisfaction and positively impacts brand perception, underscoring the long-term benefits of mystery box purchases.

Keywords: Mystery boxes, decision-making process, curiosity, uncertainty.

Sumário

Título: Desvendando o mistério: Explorando os efeitos da revelação de compras surpresa

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Os negócios mistério estão a ganhar cada vez mais popularidade como estratégia de marketing. Ao vender um negócio mistério, as empresas limitam deliberadamente a quantidade de informações sobre os seus produtos ou serviços com o objetivo de despertar a curiosidade do consumidor, captar o seu interesse e gerar o desejo de saber mais sobre a oferta por meio da compra. Este estudo tem como objetivo investigar não só como a curiosidade, as expectativas e a avaliação do produto e outros sentimentos dos clientes influenciam o processo de compra de um produto mistério antes da revelação do mistério, mas também em particular como esses fatores e sentimentos dos clientes se desenvolvem e influenciam mutuamente através do processo de compra. Consequentemente, a influência da resolução do mistério na percepção dos consumidores também foi incluída e foi parte significativa desta investigação. Este estudo revela que a curiosidade influencia positivamente as expectativas iniciais e os valores funcionais antes e depois da revelação. A pesquisa também destaca um declínio nas expectativas do produto e na satisfação das atividades pós-revelação, pedindo cautela às organizações que usam negócios mistério como estratégia de marketing. É importante ressaltar que a satisfação positiva com a atividade pós-revelação aumenta a satisfação do cliente e impacta positivamente a percepção da marca, ressaltando os benefícios de longo prazo das compras em caixas mistério.

Palavras-chave: Caixas mistério, processo de decisão, curiosidade, incerteza.

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List of Abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
b	Regression Coefficient
α	Cronbach's Alpha
H1	Hypothesis 1 (1-10 respectively)
M	Mean
MAX	Maximum Value
MC	Manipulation Check
MEDV	Mediator Variable
MIN	Minimum Value
MODV	Moderator Variable
n	Sample Size
OM	Outcome-Mediator
p	p-value
SD	Standard Deviation
TS	Thora Sauer

1 Introduction

Mystery and uncertainty are often considered aversive or unpleasant (Gneezy et al., 2006). According to the concept of risk aversion, individuals prefer a certain or riskless benefit over an identical benefit that involves uncertainty or risk. Typically, the inclusion of uncertainty regarding a benefit results in a decrease in its perceived attractiveness in comparison to other options (Kimball & Miles, 1993). Individuals find uncertainty uncomfortable and are therefore motivated to minimize those uncomfortable feelings (Schneider et al., 2017). Complementing the above, the concept of zero-risk bias describes people's tendency to choose circumstances in which they can entirely avoid risk and prefer total certainty, regardless of other factors. Zero-risk bias tends to increase risk aversion, resulting in avoidance behaviors (Schneider et al., 2017).

This is at odds with mystery boxes becoming very popular. Despite the before-described circumstances, mystery boxes have gained significant popularity among consumers and as a marketing tool (Hill et al., 2016). The increasingly popular sales strategy of mystery deals involves deliberately or purposefully withholding product details from consumers until after a purchase, to specifically arouse customers' curiosity and motivate purchases. This is an increasingly popular sales strategy which employs using undisclosed offers to entice consumers to buy their products, referred to as "mystery boxes" or "mystery deals", which denotes a widely used marketing approach applied by a variety of companies (Hill et al., 2016).

For instance, brands sell different, unknown products in a mystery box, such as the brand Glossy Box, which sends monthly packages with around five different previously unknown beauty products (Glossy Box, 2023). In the fast-food sector, chains like Starbucks, Chipotle, and McDonald's offer secret menus, which are very positively received by shoppers (Elementum, 2018). Airlines such as Lufthansa, Eurowings, or Air New Zealand also attract customers with mystery flights, blind booking, or travel arrangements, where the customer only finds out the destination after the booking (Lufthansa, 2023; Airnewzealand, 2020; Independent, 2021). Another example is the car rental company Sixt, which offers mystery car models for booking (Sixt, 2023). As one can observe, the popularity of mystery deals is rising across several sectors, product categories, countries, and cultural backgrounds. Companies often promote the mystery box as a special offer or even sell products that are otherwise not available, but the offers can sometimes be tailored to the needs of customers in advance. Lufthansa's surprise blind booking, for example, is described in detail on their website: In addition to the surprise that they promote

to sell, it is advertised that people who use the offer also save money compared to normal travelers from Lufthansa. On the website, one can see daily how much money people saved the day before by purchasing the deal. For example, an average of €164 per person was saved in one day. The buyer tailors the mystery travel destination by pre-selecting a travel theme. Options include cultural, natural, party, or shopping-focused trips. Before purchasing the ticket, Lufthansa only presents twelve cities matching the theme, from which one will be chosen as a post-purchase surprise for the customer (Lufthansa, 2023). Or the mystery box of the brand Myni, which contains only household cleaning products from limited editions (Myni, 2023). Thus, it is crucial to comprehend what variables may predict a consumer's affinity toward mystery products and, more importantly, the impact this new type of purchase decision might have on the consumer's attitude toward brands.

1.1 Problem Statement

Exploring the thrill of the unknown: How do pre-purchase curiosity and expectation shape consumer satisfaction post-purchase? This master's thesis examines the complex connections between various processes and emotions experienced by consumers during the entire journey of purchasing and opening a mystery box. This thesis strives to understand and investigate the impact of revealing surprise purchases and examines the effect of pre-purchase curiosity and expectations on customer emotions and processing before and after the purchase has been made.

The primary objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive explanation of the fascinating appeal of mystery purchases with special consideration to finding out more about how sustainable this appeal might be to consumers. Additionally, the potential risks for companies applying this strategy, in mystery deals, after the consumer resolved the mystery after the purchase will be explored more extensively. This study seeks to explore the interplay between factors such as curiosity and expectations that influence post-purchase satisfaction and attitudes. By doing so, significant insights and conclusions for firms interested in profiting from this marketing strategy will be offered, while also contributing to the existing understanding of consumer behavior in situations characterized by uncertainty and surprise.

To investigate the entire complex buying process experienced by the customer before and after the purchase and the reveal of a mystery deal, the research in this thesis was divided into three main areas of investigation. The thesis examines the influence of curiosity on consumers' initial expectations and perceived value before revealing the mystery product, as well as its effect on expectations and value after the reveal. The expectations and functional value regarding the

product, as well as the activity satisfaction of the consumers, will be compared before and after the reveal of the mystery box content. The consequences for the consumers of the reveal of the mystery products on expectations and functional value, activity satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and attitudes towards the brand will also be investigated. This leads to the following research questions:

RQ1: How does consumers' curiosity, as experienced during the purchase of a mystery box, influence their initial expectations and perceived value regarding the product before opening the box, and how does it affect these expectations and value after the reveal?

RQ2: How do activity satisfaction as well as expectations and functional value change regarding the product, comparing these values before the purchase to after the reveal of the mystery product?

RQ3: What are the consequential effects of the reveal of the mystery product regarding activity satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and attitudes towards the brand?

1.2 Managerial Relevance

A study by Menon and Soman (2002) revealed that the presence of an information gap, which triggers curiosity, can significantly impact consumer motivation to make a purchase as well as their willingness to learn about the advertised product. This highlights the potential strength of utilizing curiosity in marketing efforts.

In general, mystery boxes are an interesting approach as a marketing technique: Because of the emergence of mystery, an individual must engage in solving the mystery, by trying to figure out the unknown and thus also engages more with the brand in general. Kang and collaborators (2009) affirm this, as they found that individuals exhibit improved recall of information that they have expressed prior curiosity towards. Specifically, curiosity has been linked to heightened attention towards a question, which subsequently facilitates retention of the corresponding answer in memory (Kang et al., 2009).

Ruan and collaborators (2009) added to the body of scientific literature by contributing a new perspective on the value of uncertainty. These authors introduced the term "teasing effect" to describe the phenomenon where consumers proactively participate in uncertain activities due to the pleasure derived from hedonic experiences such as novelty, excitement, and amusement.

The increased interaction resulting from informative product communication enhances the development of favorable attitudes toward the product (Schlosser, 2003). Insufficient information regarding a product or marketing campaign can increase its mystery effect (Loewenstein, 1994). However, to fulfill their need for cognition, consumers tend to increase their purchase intentions (Taylor & Baker, 1994). The previous examples and statements illustrate in detail the potential that could arise from mystery deals and emphasize their importance in the marketing context.

This study's findings can provide managers with valuable insights into designing effective marketing strategies for these types of products. Moreover, the insights garnered from this study could offer guidance to managers contemplating whether to include mystery boxes in their offerings. By delving into the results, managers can gain a deeper understanding of how to optimize their approaches when promoting such items. It has the potential to inform managers about the possible risk of negative emotions that might arise after revealing the mystery product to the consumer. It may also emphasize the importance of tailoring these mystery deals to specific customer segments rather than a broad audience, considering that different segments may respond differently to offerings like these.

1.3 Academic Relevance

The results of the literature review show that none of the previous studies have examined in depth how pre-purchase curiosity and expectations caused by a mystery deal affect post-purchase consumer satisfaction. This study aims to fill that gap. Therefore, this is the first experimental study with a focus on post-purchase emotions like customer satisfaction or activity satisfaction after the reveal of the deal, regarding mystery boxes.

Prior research has not directed attention toward the impact of curiosity-related mechanisms on the consumer's evaluation of the object towards which their curiosity is directed. It must be added that, in general, not much research has been done on mysterious consumption. Most research focuses on the purchase process and the incentives for consumers to make such a purchase decision before buying a mystery product. Little research has been done on what happens after the surprise is resolved. To underline the importance of this work, it should be emphasized that the scientists who conducted research in this area pointed out that there is a need to close the knowledge gaps of the effects of curiosity after resolving the curiosity-inducing trigger and, again, after testing the mystery object (Daume, Hüttl-Maack, 2019, Laran et al., 2013).

Researchers suggest that further research should pay more attention to the possibility of disappointment among consumers who display initial enthusiasm towards promotional campaigns featuring uncertainty, leading to them feeling regret. This can affect how satisfied they are and whether they continue to be a loyal customer (Laran et al., 2013). This issue is going to be examined as part of my research in this thesis.

The crucial significance of conducting further study in this area to recognize all the opportunities as well as any potential risks involved in the implementation of this emerging marketing method is readily apparent.

1.4 Structure

To achieve the objective of this thesis, a survey-based experimental study was undertaken. This paper is organized as follows: After this introduction, which gives a brief overview of the content of this work and outlines the academic relevance and managerial relevance, this master's thesis will proceed with an extensive review of the existing literature that pertains to mystery boxes. This is accomplished by describing the main fields of investigation, outcomes, and theoretical frameworks examined through the relevant academic studies, and will therefore cover the topics: mystery boxes and surprise purchases, openness to experience, information gaps, adjusted expectations, curiosity, curiosity in the context of emotions, and curiosity's implications for consumer behavior. The different aspects of mystery shopping and mystery boxes are broken down and analyzed in such a way that, by the end of this literature review, the reader will have an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. Subsequently, the next section includes a methodology section, comprising an explanation of the research strategy and design, as well as a description of the participants and procedure. Following this, the findings will be presented, analyzed, and ultimately discussed. In the next part, the main conclusions will be drawn. Lastly, this study recognizes certain limitations and proposes potential ideas for future research.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Mystery Boxes and surprise purchase

The global mystery box market is experiencing significant growth in both its scale and reach. I will provide a deeper examination of the topic of mystery boxes, surprise purchases, and probabilistic sales strategies in this section. A mystery box is a form of a probabilistic sales strategy. Probabilistic or opaque selling is a business model where the practice involves marketers withholding the specific identity of a product up until the buyer has completed their payment process (Huang et al., 2014). That means, regarding mystery box selling, that the probabilistic selling strategy is combined with a probabilistic product inside the box. A probabilistic product comprises a set of several objects, and buyers have a possibility of receiving any item within the set based on probabilities (Fay & Xie, 2008).

More precisely, a mystery box, alternatively referred to as a blind box, surprise package, or lucky bag, is a package of a unique assortment of products that remain undisclosed to the customer until the point of purchase, so the purchase process is always combined with a surprise (Ding & Bhattacharya, 2023). Consequently, purchasers are required to pay a set amount for the package, lacking knowledge regarding the specific contents included inside. The exact composition of the objects enclosed within the box remains unknown until the moment of unsealing, following the finalization of the deal. The information regarding the content that the consumer has before the purchase varies (Ding & Bhattacharya, 2023). The buyer of a mystery box also often gets more discount on the products than with a normal purchase.

It is important to enhance firms' understanding regarding mystery boxes and how they are marketed and distributed and, in the end, perceived by customers, because there seem to be numerous potential advantages connected to organizations implementing an opaque selling strategy, making the method very attractive. Firstly, customers who receive mystery boxes are more likely to try new and varied items that they might not have purchased without. Second, discrepancies resulting from unpredictable demand and capacity constraints can be mitigated through Mystery box sales (Fay, 2008). Third, the strategic use of an opaque good has the potential to facilitate more precise segmentation of the customer base, hence enabling market expansion as well as softening price competition (Fay, 2008). Given the existence of customer heterogeneity, corporations are able to discriminate prices between consumers with varying preferences by using opaque selling strategies (Jiang, 2007). Another reason for the rising

popularity of the demand for mystery products has been boosted by the exponential growth of the e-commerce sector, along with evolving consumer preferences that prioritize individualized offerings and products (Ding & Bhattacharya, 2023). Selling a mystery box could be a possibility for companies to attract consumers with attractive but cost-efficient incentives (Goldsmith & On, 2010).

The phenomenon of mystery box shopping aligns well with contemporary consumers' inclination for convenience and hedonic shopping encounters (Huang & Yimin, 2014). When making purchasing decisions, consumers face the challenge of balancing a certain cost with the uncertain value of the goods being considered for purchase (Huang & Yimin, 2014). Both the purchasers and the sellers of mystery boxes are subject to potential risks. For instance, customers may be dissatisfied with the products, which may result in unfavorable reviews. The existing research indicates that the impact of uncertainty on customer behavior might manifest in both favorable and unfavorable outcomes (Ding & Bhattacharya, 2023), this is examined in more detail in the following parts of the literature review of this paper.

2.2 Openness to Experience

“Openness to Experiences, I’m fascinated by novelties” (Caprara et al., 1993).

Throughout the buying process of a mystery box, in which curiosity is expected to be an important factor (Hill, et al. 2016), assessing an individual's level of openness to experience may serve as a potential predictor of their curiosity. It is noteworthy that companies can obtain information on their consumers' openness to experience (Huang et al., 2012). Therefore, assessing the level of openness to experience would provide extremely valuable information for the companies and is of managerial relevance. If such openness to experience is indicative of curiosity toward mystery deals, then companies can direct their marketing efforts toward these individuals and target them specifically (Huang et al., 2012).

Individual differences and personality traits are responsible for disparities in consumers' values. The field of psychology considers personality traits as basic sources to comprehend human behavior (Costa & McCrae, 1992). They can also be used to gain a greater understanding of customer behavior in response to marketing efforts. Costa and McCrae's (1992) big-five model is frequently used in research related to personality theory. In my thesis, the dimension “openness to experience” of the Big Five personality traits is examined as potentially relevant to explaining the propensity towards mystery deals.

Individuals exhibiting high levels of openness trait are recognized as possessing intellectual curiosity, imaginative ability, adaptability, being broad-minded, and having a propensity for novel experiences (Digman, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1997; Erheim, et al., 2006). The concept of openness to experience pertains to an individual's willingness to embrace new ideas, exhibit acceptance of diverse values, display curiosity towards individuals of different backgrounds, and demonstrate a proclivity towards varying habits and lifestyles (Caprara et al., 1993). Individuals with high levels of openness also exhibit a greater propensity to engage in a wide range of experiences, as compared to individuals with low levels of openness. This observation holds true for both positive and negative experiences (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

2.3 Information Gaps

When a buyer sees a mystery box prior to purchase, certain information is withheld from them. However, the expected utility theory posits that information plays a crucial role in helping consumers make informed decisions by allowing them to compare the costs and benefits of various options (Harrison, 1994). If certain information is not available to consumers, they may be deprived of the ability to make informed decisions, resulting in unfavorable consumer responses. Based on this premise, this thesis will examine in depth why mystery deals are nevertheless of interest or even exciting to (some) consumers. The phenomenon of mystery appeal involves the creation of curiosity that stimulates the desire for knowledge (Hill, et al., 2016). Before exploring the role of curiosity in more detail, an outline of how curiosity emerges is given first: Loewenstein (1994) tried to explain that this effect of curiosity that stimulates the desire for more knowledge is generated by the existence of an information gap, in other words, by an intentional presentation of incomplete information while making people aware of the absence of information. Information gaps are instances where the presentation of stimuli elicits gaps in an individual's knowledge. Consequently, Loewenstein (1994) stated that customers may perceive the information provided as insufficient to evaluate a product, leading to a discrepancy between their existing and desired knowledge, creating such information gaps. Such discrepancies give rise to uncertainty in customers and stimulate curiosity. Nevertheless, curiosity is not solely evoked by the presence of an information gap. Rather, the absent information must hold at least the potential of having a certain level of interest or appeal. This state is characterized by a yearning for particular information (Loewenstein, 1994). The presence of such information gaps might provoke feelings of discontent (Loewenstein, 1994).

Information gaps can create curiosity-inducing triggers. In the context of marketing, they can be generated, for example by reducing the amount of information that is given (Hill et al. 2016; Swasy & Rethans, 1986) or by the existence of uncertainty concerning a specific outcome, frequently encountered during the reception of a gift or playing a lottery (Lee & Qiu 2009) and also through the process of gradually revealing information, known as stepwise information disclosure (Hill et al. 2016; Menon & Soman 2002; Ruan et al., 2018).

However, with the different possibilities and methods of creating an information gap, it is important to consider that the extent of the information gap influences curiosity (Menon & Soman 2002). Curiosity can elicit positive and negative affective experiences and is observed to be most potent when the information gap is moderate and seems resolvable (Ganga et al. 2022). According to the findings of a study by Hill et al. (2016), it can be concluded that mystery appeals are effective stimuli in evoking curiosity. Additionally, mystery-based products and promotional campaigns that generate moderate information gaps are more likely to elicit higher levels of curiosity compared to those that create large information gaps (Hill et al. 2016).

Once the information gap is recognized, the induction of curiosity leads to heightened information-seeking behavior to solve the gap in knowledge (Menon, Soman, 2002) and leads to curiosity resolution processes (Noseworthy et al., 2014). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that individuals actively pursue incentives as recompense for their cognitive exertion (Wang & Huang, 2018).

After discussing what information gaps are and how they can evoke and influence curiosity, always in reference to marketing strategies, the next section will explain how customer expectations develop once the information gap is closed. In this case, especially with the focus on when a mystery has been solved.

2.4 Adjusted Expectations

Customer expectations vary in terms of types and levels. These expectations serve as benchmarks to measure the actual performance of a service or product (Oliver et al., 1987).

In the purchase process of a mystery deal, expectations are formed first about the product before the purchase and resolution of the mystery, while there is still a knowledge gap (Yi & La, 2004). Upon the provision of a product or service, customers undergo a learning process, which consequently leads to the modification of their expectations and the adjusted expectations

emerge (Yi & La, 2004). The concept of Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) has been put forth to help to better understand the formation of customer satisfaction. It posits that customer satisfaction arises from the interplay between initial expectations, perceived performance, and disconfirmation (Oliver et al., 1987; Lin & Lekhawipat, 2016). This dynamic process has significant implications for marketing outcomes, including enhanced reputation and customer loyalty (Oliver et al., 1987; Lin & Lekhawipat, 2016). Lin and Lekhawipat (2016) state, that the initial expectations play a crucial role in assessing customer satisfaction regarding their consumption experience, and additionally, post-purchase adjusted expectations are influenced by the level of customer satisfaction and the overall evaluation of the consumption experience.

After defining information gaps and explaining how they can evoke and influence curiosity, the next section will describe what part emotions play.

2.5 Emotions and Curiosity

The impact of emotions on decision-making processes has been well-documented in the scientific literature. Specifically, the emotion of curiosity has been found to drive actions aimed at reducing uncertainty, including the acquisition of goods and services (Jiang, 2007). This phenomenon is just one aspect of the larger consumer decision-making process, which is heavily influenced by emotions that are consistently present and able to guide behavior (Jiang, 2007).

When examining the emotional experiences of consumers during the process of purchasing a mystery product, it is crucial to differentiate between the pre-buy phase and the post-purchase phase, after the unveiling of the mystery goods.

Upon examination of previous research on affective outcomes, a consensus has emerged that curiosity elicits positive emotions, leading to positive emotions therefore create positive expectations. (Hill et al., 2016; Noordewier et al., 2017). Various studies have explored the importance of the effect of curiosity on attitudes toward advertised products, advertisements, or promotions. A research study, with a focus on advertisements that evoke curiosity by withholding certain information, has revealed that such advertising tactics lead to increased positive expectations among consumers toward the promoted product (Daume & Hüttl-Maak, 2020). When consumers are confronted with uncertainty regarding a positive event, such as winning a lucky draw without knowledge of the precise prize, they may encounter more intense

and enduring positive emotions (Lee & Qui, 2009). Uncertainty can even improve promotions. Based on the results of a previously conducted study, consumers are likely to react to retail promotions involving uncertain incentives with an expectation of receiving the best possible outcome as if it were certain (Goldsmith & Amir, 2010).

The preceding paragraph talks about the pre-purchase emotions, especially in the context of advertisements and mystery deals. After solving the mystery, when closing an information gap that was accompanied by curiosity, which can lead to a favorable hedonic encounter, it could be possible that it persists as a net positive outcome that outweighs any negative emotions and prospective unfavorable affective states (Ruan et al., 2018).

Therefore, individuals anticipate that information alone will fulfill their inquisitiveness and serve as a reward (Marvin & Shohamy, 2016). Both pleasurable exploration and satisfying curiosity are inherently rewarding and subsequently elicit positive emotions (Litman, 2005).

The setup of the buying process may also lead to additional positive emotions because individuals might perceive a sense of involvement and take pleasure in the problem-solving procedure, leading to feelings of enthusiasm (Kunter et al. 2008).

The influence of uncertainty appears to be linked to the enhanced optimism bias (Bracha & Brown, 2012). Bracha and Brown (2012) suggest that people have a natural inclination to overestimate the likelihood of positive or desirable events, while simultaneously underestimating the likelihood of negative or undesirable events.

2.5.1 Curiosity

As has emerged from previous investigations of the context of this dissertation, while exploring mystery deals, it cannot be overlooked that curiosity plays a vital role. In this section, a deeper focus on curiosity itself is to be placed:

Curiosity can be conceptualized as a psychological condition characterized by three fundamental elements: the acknowledgment of an existing gap in knowledge or information, the expectation that this gap can potentially be filled, and an inherent and self-driven impulse to actively seek its resolution (Pekrun, 2019).

Furthermore, Pekrun (2019) states that it is generally recognized that curiosity incorporates the intrinsic motivation of seeking a resolution of an information gap, without regard for any

pragmatic advantages derived from closing said information gap. To clarify, curiosity can be understood as the desire to resolve a knowledge deficit, with the act of obtaining closure as an intrinsic value. The desire to overcome an information gap for extrinsic purposes, such as passing an exam, does not necessarily rely on a feeling of curiosity.

Curiosity can even drive individuals to willingly expose themselves to discomforting and unpleasant circumstances to satisfy their curiosity (Litman & Spielberger, 2003). The affective state of curiosity can even be conceptualized as a motivator of behavior, as it stimulates processes that arise from the absence of desired knowledge (Litman & Spielberger, 2003). Hsee and Ruan (2016) undertook a series of controlled experiments, where participants voluntarily engaged in uncertain situations, while risking a negative outcome, such as experiencing electric shocks, when clicking a pen or hearing fingernails on a blackboard. Hsee and Ruan (2016) state, after conducting four different experiments in total, that humans have an inherent drive to reduce uncertainty.

Curiosity is also considered one of the multiple facets of openness (Huang et al., 2012). Based on our current understanding of the personality trait of openness to experience and curiosity, it is reasonable to hypothesize that it influences one's level of curiosity. Assessing if openness to experience predicts curiosity is an important factor to consider within the scope of this study. Because people with this personality trait are seen to accept new experiences easily, this research hypothesizes that:

H1: The presence of a high level of the personality trait openness to experience positively impacts an increased feeling of curiosity prior to the reveal of the mystery box's content.

2.5.2 Curiosity and Its Implications for Consumer Behavior

In recent years, scholars in the field of marketing research have demonstrated an increasing interest in the subject of curiosity and its potential outcomes. A particular area of focus has been on the effects of curiosity in capturing individuals' attention. A study by Iskman and collaborators (2016) aimed to investigate the consequences of curiosity on attentional allocation and subsequent affective experiences. Specifically, the effects of curiosity on incidental events and their influence on positive and negative focal activities were examined. Results indicated that, while curiosity enhances the enjoyment of negative focal activities, it decreases the

enjoyment of positive focal activities. These findings highlight the complex nature of curiosity and its potential consequences on affective experiences (Isikman et al., 2016).

Another study, by Menon and collaborators (2002), investigated the effects of curiosity on consumers' learning of brand and product information. The results indicate that an advertising strategy that generates curiosity leads to greater interest and learning compared to a strategy that simply provides detailed product information. Additionally, their study finds that generating curiosity improves the quality of information search, resulting in better recall and understanding of new product information (Menon et al., 2002). Based on their findings, they recommend a curiosity-based advertising strategy that highlights a gap in knowledge and provides curiosity-resolving information to consumers (Menon et al., 2002). This further emphasizes the importance of examining this topic more closely within the field of marketing.

Based on prior research, it has been found that individuals who engaged in shopping activities while actively under the influence of curiosity exhibited a higher motivation to shop (Hill et al. 2016). An information gap can lead to the higher perceived curiosity of consumers and the state of active curiosity fosters positive affective reactions and positive expectations which have a favorable influence on the decision to purchase a mystery deal (Daume & Hüttl-Maac 2020; Hill, et al. 2016). Individuals tend to develop their personal theories to account for missing information, leading to the formation of expectations, and, subsequently, they engage in searching for plausible resolutions (Daume & Hüttl-Maack, 2019). Comprehending the above, the assumption, which will be investigated more, is the following process: Individuals not only form expectations but also generate optimistic and elevated expectations, motivated by their curiosity (Daume & Hüttl-Maack, 2019) before buying a mystery product. The degree of consumers' curiosity during the pre-purchase phase might have the potential to affect both their expectations and emotions pre-purchase and subsequent satisfaction with the deal after the reveal of the mystery. The following Hypothesis was previously investigated by the previous study in a related context of Hill and coloborators (2016). But will also be tested in this experiment since there is only a limited amount of existing research in this area.

H2.1: High curiosity positively influences the initial expectations before the reveal of the mystery box's content.

H2.2: High curiosity positively influences functional values (price and value for money) before the reveal of the mystery box's content.

But what motivates individuals to “open a mystery box”? Opening a box and resolving uncertainty may provide temporary relief to individuals. Hsee and Ruan (2020) propose that the decision to open the box is contingent upon two factors: the expected resolution utility and the expected outcome utility. This model captures the fundamental reasons driving the decision-making process behind "opening the box" (Hsee & Ruan, 2020).

Hsee and Ruan (2020) explain, that Resolution utility refers to the satisfaction of resolving uncertainty and curiosity, while outcome utility refers to the overall utility, which could be positive, negative, or neutral, of the contents of a box once it is opened. In the context of a pen that may or may not deliver an electric shock, the expected resolution utility would be the anticipated pleasure of discovering whether the shock would occur or not (Hsee & Ruan, 2020). The expected outcome utility, in contrast, would be the anticipated pain of receiving a shock. These factors can also have implications for consumer behavior (Hsee & Ruan, 2020).

Activity satisfaction measures short-term customer satisfaction, so consumers tend to exhibit greater activity satisfaction when they feel positive emotions (Tang et al. 2022). As a result of the previous research, it is assumed that the activity satisfaction level related to the stage before the reveal of the mystery product must be high. Therefore, it is anticipated that in this experiment the pre-purchase activity satisfaction will be high. This assumption shall be examined through the formulation and testing of the following hypothesis:

H3.1: Curiosity leads to positive initial expectations before the reveal of the mystery box's content, which positively impacts activity satisfaction pre-reveal of the mystery box's content.

H3.2: Curiosity leads functional values (price and value for money) before the reveal of the mystery box's content, which positively impacts activity satisfaction pre-reveal of the mystery box's content.

Curiosity can lead individuals to prioritize the expected positive resolution utility over the negative outcome utility (e.g., finding out what is inside the box), which can outweigh the expected negative outcome utility (e.g., receiving a negative outcome/resolution), causing them to take action to resolve uncertainty (to open the box), as described by Strotz (1973) and Thaler and collaborators (1997). However, individuals tend to focus on immediate rather than longer-term consequences, leading them to weigh the immediate joy of resolution more heavily than the longer-term pain of the outcome (Strotz, 1973; Thaler et al., 1997). This behavior can be traced back to people's myopic nature. Myopic loss aversion refers to a phenomenon where individuals exhibit a greater sensitivity to losses than to gains, in combination with short-term

thinking (Strotz, 1973; Thaler et al., 1997). As a result, individuals may choose to open the box even if the pain of the outcome objectively outweighs the joy of resolution and despite the potential negative consequences. This behavior can lead them to overlook the potential pain of the outcome (Hsee & Ruan, 2020). The value of curiosity resolution is knowledge (Loewenstein, 1994). In situations where individuals exhibit curiosity, they may fail to consider the potential consequences of their actions and actively pursue missing information, resulting in adverse outcomes. As such, I propose:

H4.1 Positive initial expectations prior to the reveal of the mystery product are higher than after the reveal of the mystery box's content.

H4.2 Functional value (price and value for money) prior to the reveal of the mystery product are higher than after the reveal of the mystery box's content.

H5: Activity satisfaction pre-reveal is higher / more positive than post-reveal of the mystery box's content.

Yet, the previously conducted research could also be misleading. Mysterious consumption implies that something surprising happens. So, the expectation of a forthcoming surprise, coupled with the resulting curiosity, prompts individuals to indulge in wishful thinking regarding its characteristics (Lee & Qiu 2009). Sherif and collaborators (1958) explain that the consequences might be that the individual is deceived due to too high expectations and that the hedonic contrast effect occurs once the individual experiences the disclosure of the mystery product, resulting in a sense of dissatisfaction. The concept of hedonic contrast refers to the phenomenon wherein an individual's assessment of a particular product is influenced by their evaluation of other products assessed concurrently (Sherif et al., 1958). This effect can modify an individual's preference for a given product (Sherif et al., 1958). This is how the phenomenon of mystery consumption may result in unintended consequences because the initial predisposition for mystery products could be misleading. It is very important to know at which stage of the buying process of a mystery deal are specific emotions evoked. Based on the preceding research findings, it is important to additionally investigate the subsequent hypothesis.

H6: High curiosity before the reveal influences positive expectations and functional value (price and value for money) post-reveal of the mystery box's content.

Consumers who buy mystery deals are more likely to be motivated to buy because of their optimism and their positive expectation of getting the best possible alternative (Hill et al.,

2016). However, if the actual product does not meet expectations after purchase, it could lead to negative attitudes toward the brand and lower confidence in future mystery deals (Jiansheng et al., 2022). There is limited research on the effects of curiosity and activity satisfaction on consumers' post-resolution of the mystery box. To avoid the potential adverse impact of mystery deal, it is imperative to fully investigate each stage of the process to assess the persistence and sustainability of positive emotional states. As a consequence, the following two hypotheses have been developed, which will compare some of the items that were tested pre-reveal, this time after the opening and disclosure of the mystery box. Subsequent variables aim to investigate the consumers' feelings after the surprise in greater detail. Activity satisfaction, and customer satisfaction in the Process of Mystery Resolution will be explored:

H7: Positive activity satisfaction after the reveal of the content of the mystery box impacts high customer satisfaction after the reveal of the content of the mystery box.

Further, the influence of resolving mystery deals on consumers' brand perception will be investigated, in order to investigate whether positive emotions regarding these mystery deals apply to the broader and more permanent perception of consumers in this context. This leads to the final hypothesis:

H8: High customer satisfaction post-reveal of the content of the mystery box impacts brand perception positively.

2.6 Conceptual model

The conceptual model of the thesis' study starts by measuring the openness to experience, as that may be an predictor of curiosity, which will be measured afterwards. Then, consumers' expectations and activity satisfaction during the process of buying the mystery product will be measured; Consumers who display elevated levels of curiosity could, influenced by their curiosity, display more positive expectations towards the deal and hold a greater functional value towards the deal unrevealed mystery deal. Post-reveal of the mystery product, the expectations towards the product and the perceived value of the product, as well as activity satisfaction are investigated again. Afterwards Customer satisfaction and brand credibility will be measured.

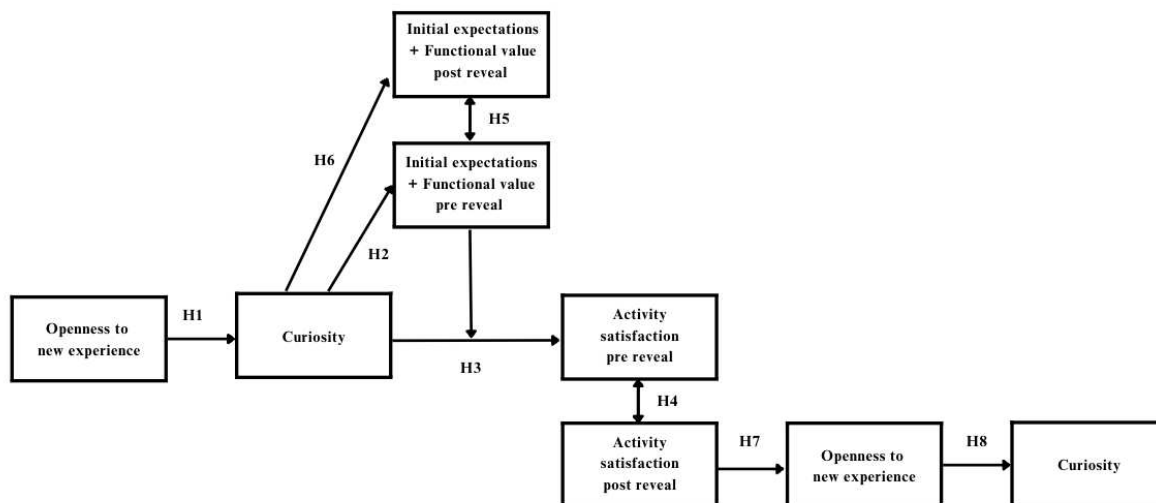


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

3 Methodology and Data Collection

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research strategy and design

This research aims to test how mystery deal resolution affects consumers post-purchase, especially regarding their level of satisfaction, emotions, and brand-consumer relationship. In addition to assessing the consumer's position after the reveal, an examination of the consumer's status prior to the reveal is also conducted to identify any variations.

A quantitative methodology with standardized questioning was utilized to accomplish the research objective. An experimental study was designed as it is widely recognized as the predominant approach for testing causality in hypothetical scenarios (Malhotra et al., 2017). The present investigation involved the utilization of Qualtrics, an online survey tool, to conduct an online study. Several factors contributed to the preference for conducting an online survey, with some of the main advantages being the ability to have control over the sampling process and survey logic, reduced administrative costs, and simplified data analysis (Evans & Mathurs, 2005).

3.1.2 Procedure

Upon reading and giving approval to the consent form, participants were asked how well they knew the brand KoRo, while they were also shown the logo of the brand for better recognition.

The questions were presented in a five-point Likert-scale format ranging from 1 (*Not well at all*) to 5 (*Extremely well*), also with the option to answer “I don't know the brand”. Sixty-one percent of the participants did not know the Brand KoRo at all. The study then employs the randomization method to assess the scale of openness to new experiences. The questions of the scale were presented to 50% of the participants at the beginning, immediately following the assessment of the brand knowledge of KoRo, or, for the other 50% of the participants, they were displayed in the end, just before the demographic questions, to prevent participants from being primed.

In the study, a purchase scenario was created, which participants should imagine using the provided information. Therefore, a product description was slightly adapted for the actual mystery product offered by the KoRo brand on their official website. The information gap condition was established by gradually revealing the product information, as well as adequate time to attempt to solve the curiosity, as recommended in a study conducted by Menon and Soman (2002). After the product is bought, information is provided to resolve the curiosity, in this case, the contents of the mystery box are revealed.

Subsequently, the participants were presented with a particular scenario that required them to imagine themselves in the process of purchasing a mystery box online on a mystery box website from the brand KoRo. During the initial phase, after providing a brief definition of the concept of a mystery box, participants were presented with a product description that featured a limited amount of information accompanied by an image showing a sealed package with unspecified contents. The later following section “Product Choice and Presentation” provides a comprehensive explanation of the specific details and information presented concerning the product. Continuing, data regarding the curiosity of the consumers, the initial expectations, and their perception of the functional value and the activity satisfaction before the purchase of the box were gathered. In the next part of the survey, information about the same product as the initial exposure was provided, while also enhancing it with additional details. For example, images of the products were presented following a brief description, which provided comprehensive details regarding the product within a list of the products inside the box. Subsequently, the participants continued with their responses, in order to facilitate a

comparative analysis of pre-and post-revel observations, a series of questions about their emotions and the attributed value regarding the content of the mystery box, level of activity satisfaction, and emotions, all post-purchases were repeated. Afterward, questions were asked about the following set of assessments regarding their level of customer satisfaction as well as their perceptions of the brand. Before assessing the perceptions of the brand, a disclaimer was given, reading “Only a few questions remain!” to motivate participants. In addition, an attention test was included at the end of the questions asking for the brand perception, to detect any cases of unconscious and careless responders (Curran & Hauser, 2019). Ultimately, the respondents replied to basic demographic questions, like gender, age, current occupation, highest degree they have completed, and their nationality. Household income was not asked, as income has very different meanings among different nationalities. That is the reason why MacArthur's scale of subjective social (adult version) scale was used to assess the socioeconomic status of participants. Finally, the participants had the possibility to write any comments related to the study or the topic of the study in a blank text section. A note thanking participants and leaving my email address for future communication ended the study. Participants were unable to return to previous questions throughout the experiment, restricting them from changing their answers. This setup is particularly significant as the design of the study demands the participants to answer the questions separately, especially before the product is revealed.

3.1.3 Sampling Method

Participants' answers were gathered from volunteers for the study mentioned above in order to make causal conclusions concerning the topic under study. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling approach, was used to get the required data. Participants are therefore not chosen at random from the population, and as a result, the sample may not be fully representative. The benefit is that individuals can get reached quickly, cheaply, and without difficulty (Taherdoost, 2016).

3.1.4 Participants

In the study, 215 individuals participated. Utilizing the final, relevant sample size of 151 participants, after eleven participants were removed because they failed the attention check, and 53 participants were removed because they provided incomplete answers. It turned out that 57.9% of the participants were female. The mean age of the participants was 33.3 years, with a standard deviation of 14.14. Furthermore, most participants (36%) reported having obtained a

postgraduate degree as their highest level of education. In total 67% of the participants obtained an academic degree, meaning an undergraduate degree or higher. Most of the participants were working, employed, and self-employed (51%) and lived in Germany (80%).

For more demographic information see Appendix 2 and 3.

3.1.5 Product Choice and Presentation

First, while there exists a certain level of risk in acquiring unfamiliar products, the possibility of total loss was minimized as participants were guaranteed to get a product of comparable worth to the amount charged. As a result, the study did not possess the attributes typically associated with gambling (Fang & Mowen, 2009).

The design of the presentation of the mystery deal to the participants in the study was based on the structure of a study by the authors Hill and collaborators (2016) whose goal was to examine and optimize the effects of curiosity. Their article suggests that providing moderate, rather than minimal, information about a mystery product is more likely to elicit curiosity.

That is the reason why the study provided participants with product-related information while keeping the product's identity undisclosed. The given information was anticipated to produce a slight yet noteworthy information gap (Hill et. al, 2016). For this reason, the contents of the box is explained without saying exactly what products it contains, but enough that the consumer can develop some imagination.

The text on the website KoRo (2023) matched with these directions from Hill and collaborators (2016) and was therefore slightly adapted for this experiment, only cutting out insignificant information for this experience. Since it was an official online store, there was a lot of information that was irrelevant to the scope of the experiment, such as shipping time, product number, storage advice but also a very long text about the product, which had no new, relevant content, but would have exceeded the time frame of this experiment. Under conditions of moderated information, participants were presented with how many products they will get, with the description that it will be vegan, organic snacks, from the brands “selection”, disclaiming that the consumers will get “the brands' favorite items in a tasting sampler”. Alongside the description, a visual graphic displayed the package of how the products from the firm would be shipped, but without revealing the individual products or their packaging (Hill et al., 2016). The picture only showed the outside of the closed mystery surprise box. The choice was taken to

utilize a product category that is already well-established to minimize the probability of respondents primarily forming perceptions of novelty in these circumstances (Daume & Hüttl-Maack, 2020). They were also shown that the price of the box is €16,50, shipping included. In the end, they were explained that they will “not know any other details, such as the products’ type, color, or style”. For more detailed information about how the mystery deal was described, see Appendix 1.

The mystery snack box was chosen for the experiment because nearly everyone could consume snacks, so it was likely that many participants could relate to the products. Other products, such as Cosmetics, which are often offered in mystery boxes, were harder to use for the experiment since it was impossible to predict which participants would utilize which products at all. The study worked well since KoRo's snack box was vegan and organic, reducing consumer food restrictions. However, it is important to mention that no food product could have avoided all allergies or diets from participants, but KoRo's offer was nevertheless a good choice regarding this issue, because with this option multiple dietary restrictions, such as vegan or organic, could already be considered. Listed below are additional requirements that were considered when selecting the product: To avoid biases based on gender, a unisex product was selected. Also, the product should not have an extreme appearance or design because that might impact the responses of the participants. Additionally, to reduce the potential negative effects associated with well-established companies and subjective biases caused by brand preferences, it was preferred to choose a product from a somewhat less well-known brand. The KoRo box fulfilled all the requirements best, in comparison to other brands considered. For example, the surprise package from the company :Degusta was also included in the final selection. However, it was decided against. The box's contents were also surprise food products, while they sometimes included products from familiar brands. The concern was that only some people would recognize certain brands, so KoRo was considered consistent.

3.1.6 Variable Measurements

In the next part, the specific levels and items per variable will be presented from my study that was previously introduced. The full survey can be found in the Appendix 1.

Openness to new experience

To measure participants' openness to new experiences the factor Openness from the Big Five Inventory (BFI) from John and Srivastava (1999) scale, found in the *Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research* from Pervin and John (1999) was utilized. A minor change was implemented, replacing the term "ingenious" with "clever" in question three, to improve comprehension for individuals who are not English native speakers.

This scale included ten items, formulated as statements so participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement evaluating if the mentioned characteristics apply to them. Items seven and nine (7: "Prefers work that is routine" and 9: "Has few artistic interests") were reverse coded. The survey utilized a five-point scale, with a range from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*), as recommended in the source.

Brand Awareness

To evaluate participants' familiarity with the brand KoRo, the single question "How well do you know the brand KoRo?" was asked and presented in a scale format ranging from 1 (*not well at all*) to 5 (*extremely well*). With the additional option to respond with "I am not familiar with the brand." In addition to the question, a photo of the Logo from KoRo was shown.

Curiosity

To measure participants' feelings of curiosity in the context of the given scenario, I used a modification of the questions that Wang and Yanliu (2018) used in their survey for curiosity regarding a product ad or a TV show, using the two items that he adapted from Kang and collaborators (2009). Changes were applied to adapt the questions to be about the mystery product and the content of the box. The scale was presented in a seven-point scale format, as applied by Wang (2014), ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

Initial expectations and functional value (price/value for money) pre- and post-reveal

To assess the initial expectations concerning the mystery deal before the reveal of the products, a modification of the questions from Lin (2016) was used. The questions were changed to be about the mystery product and the mystery box's content and not about the surprise deals from a surprise deal website like in the original experiment (so "online store" was changed to "mystery box"). The scale was presented in a seven-point Likert-scale format ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

To evaluate the usefulness of the product in terms of its decreased perceived immediate and long-term costs and consequently evaluate its utility, the functional value (price/value for money) scale from Sweeney (2001) was taken, including all four items regarding the price, using a seven-point Likert-scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The minor change that was made was replacing the word “product” with “mystery box”.

After revealing the mystery product, both questions were asked again to reassess whether perceptions or feelings about the mystery product had changed after the unveiling. For this purpose, the future tense ("will contain..." or "I will...") of the questions was adapted to the present or past tense ("contains..." or "I received..."). The questions were also introduced with: “Now that you know what’s inside the box, please answer the questions again”.

Activity satisfaction pre- and post-reveal

To measure participants' activity satisfaction, the scale Tang (2022) was applied which he used for his experiment, adapted from Spreng and collaborators (1996) and Maxham and collaborators (2002). The items were not changed and a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*entirely disagree*) to 7 (*entirely*) was used, as in the original scale.

The same items were used again after the mystery products in the box were revealed, to reassess participants' activity satisfaction. Again, the tense was changed to the past tense.

Customer satisfaction post-reveal

The perceived customer satisfaction, after resolving the mystery was measured using a scale from Lin (2016) again. He used the scales in his experiment to explore how in which he explained that the measurement of customer satisfaction involved the utilization of measures that evaluate the emotional state of the consumer. The items were not changed, only the introductory question was adapted to ask how customers feel after resolving the mystery. A 7-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Brand credibility post-reveal

Brand credibility was assessed using a scale from Erdem and Swait (2001). The questions remained unchanged, only one question was not included in this survey (“You just can’t believe what ads say about this brand”), because it was not possible to ensure that the participants had seen sufficient advertising from the brand beforehand. A 7-point Likert scale was used, ranging

from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The last item was used as an attention check (Please leave this answer blank, to show, that you are paying attention) and was later excluded from the evaluation of the scale to assess the brand credibility.

3.2 Data Analysis and Results

3.2.1 Data Cleaning and Final Sample

The participants in the study were instructed to exercise caution and sincerity when providing answers to the survey. However, due to the implementation of online evaluation methods, it has become necessary to consider the potential presence of respondents who may demonstrate randomness or insufficient effort (Meade & Craig, 2012). To minimize this risk, an attention check was added, as Curran and Hauser recommend (2019). The participants were asked: “Please leave this answer blank, to show, that you are paying attention”. Eleven participants did not pass the attention check and their responses were excluded because they were inattentive.

The recommended minimum sample size for an experimental study to detect the mediated effect is a minimum of 148 (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007). In the uncleaned sample size data from 215 respondents was collected, to enhance the probability of obtaining significant results with this research. Of these, 151 were valid answers, subtracting the eleven excluded responses by failing the attention test and 53 who provided incomplete answers in the survey. Furthermore, items that were scored in reverse were recorded, and scales that consisted of numerous items were merged by calculating their means.

3.2.2 Scale Reliability

The reliability of all scales utilized in the present study was assessed using existing literature. However, a reliability analysis was performed to assess the Cronbach α of the scales. The computation of Cronbach's α is one frequently employed method for assessing internal consistency (Malhotra, 2017). According to Vale and collaborators (1997), Cronbach's α of 0.95 signifies a high level of consistency. In the case of utilizing scales as research instruments for group comparisons, Cronbach's α can have lower values compared to clinical scenarios. When comparing groups, values ranging from 0.7 to 0.8 for Cronbach's α are considered satisfactory (Vale et al., 1997).

The openness to new experience scale had ten items and displays the lowest Cronbach's α (.66). While it is still acceptable to utilize this scale, caution should be exercised when analyzing the data (Vale et al., 1997). The ninth item of the scale was reverse-coded and displayed in reversal relative to the other items, which may have caused confusion. This, however, is only speculation. Yet, if the ninth item was eliminated, Cronbach's α would be higher (.72).

Expectation pre (.914), activity satisfaction pre (.95), product quality post (.96), activity satisfaction post (.96), and customer satisfaction (.96) all have a Cronbach's α higher than .900, regarded as a remarkable coefficient (Vale et al., 1997). Only curiosity pre (.86) and attitude towards brand (.81) show a Cronbach's α higher than .800 which means that both are regarded as having a good coefficient (Vale et al., 1997).

The data demonstrates that there is no need to remove any items in order to enhance Cronbach's α . The reliability of the scales is given.

3.2.3 Hypothesis Testing

To assess the validity of the hypotheses proposed, a statistical analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 28.0. For more detailed information see Appendix 4.

H1: Hypothesis 1 predicted that a high level of the personality trait openness to experience would positively impact an increased feeling of curiosity prior to the reveal of the mystery box's content. To test H1, I ran a correlation analysis between the variables "openness to new experience" (MD = 3.84, SD = 0.48) and curiosity (MD = 3.70, SD = 1.63) to assess the strength and direction of the relationship. H1 is not supported, as the correlation between openness to experience and curiosity is very low ($r = 0.02$) and statistically non-significant, as the Pearson correlation coefficient p-value is higher than 0.05 ($p = 0.858$) and the Spearman correlation coefficient is higher than 0.5 ($\rho = 0.81$).

Hypotheses H2.1 and H2.2, state that high curiosity positively influences the initial expectations and functional values (price and value for money) before the reveal of the mystery box's content are supported. A regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variable curiosity and the dependent variables initial expectations and functional value (price and value for money) pre-reveal. The test was conducted twice, testing each dependent variable separately. Curiosity has a statistically significant positive effect on initial expectations with a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.411 ($p < .001$). Pre-functional value also

has a statistically significant positive effect on initial expectations with a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.549 ($p < 0.001$). Both predictors, curiosity, and pre-functional value, have a positive impact on initial expectations, suggesting that high curiosity leads to higher initial expectations and perceived functional value.

H3: A mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether curiosity mediates the relationship between initial expectations pre-reveal and activity satisfaction pre-reveal.

In Model 1, which included only curiosity as a predictor of activity Satisfaction, curiosity was found to be a significant predictor of activity Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.528$, $p < 0.001$). The model explained 33.7% of the variance in activity Satisfaction.

In Model 2, which included both curiosity and initial expectations as predictors of activity Satisfaction, both curiosity ($\beta = 0.208$, $p < 0.001$) and initial Expectations ($\beta = 0.717$, $p < 0.001$) were found to be significant predictors of activity Satisfaction. The model explained 56.5% of the variance in activity satisfaction.

H3 is accepted. In Model 2, when curiosity and initial expectations were considered together, they had a stronger influence on activity satisfaction compared to when curiosity was considered in isolation (Model 1). The inclusion of initial expectations significantly improved the model's ability to explain activity satisfaction. Therefore, both curiosity and initial expectations play important roles in influencing activity satisfaction, and they together explain a substantial portion of its variance.

In the following, the variables activity satisfaction as well as expectations and functional value were be compared with each other before and after the reveal of the mystery product:

H4: To test if initial expectations and functional value before the reveal of the mystery product are higher than after the reveal of the mystery box's content a paired t-test was conducted to compare initial expectations and functional value (price and value for money) pre-reveal with their post-reveal counterparts. The test was conducted twice, testing comparison for each variable and its counterpart separately.

H4.1: Positive initial expectations prior to the reveal of the mystery product are significantly higher than after the reveal of the mystery box's content, as indicated by a paired t-test, $t(145) = 2.28$, $p = 0.024$). The effect size (Cohen's d) suggests a moderate effect, with initial

expectations being higher by approximately 1.404 standard deviations before the reveal compared to after.

H4.2: Positive functional value (price and value for money) prior to the reveal of the mystery product is not significantly different from after the reveal of the mystery box's content, as indicated by a paired t-test, $t(145) = 0.49$, $p = 0.628$. The effect size (Cohen's d) is small, with the difference being approximately 1.192 standard deviations, suggesting that there is no meaningful difference in functional value before and after the reveal.

These results lead to the H4 being partially accepted, with initial expectations being higher than after the reveal of the mystery box's content, but no difference in terms of functional value.

H5 predicted that activity satisfaction pre-reveal is more positive than post-reveal of the mystery box's content. Similar to H4, a paired t-test was conducted to compare activity satisfaction pre-reveal with activity satisfaction post-reveal.

The paired t-test results indicate that there is no significant difference in activity satisfaction pre-reveal compared to post-reveal, as the p-value ($p = 0.150$) is greater than the conventional alpha level of 0.05. The paired t-test is, $t(144) = 1.45$, $p = 0.150$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected, suggesting that there is no statistically significant change in activity satisfaction before and after the reveal of the mystery box contents. The effect size (Cohen's d) suggests an effect, being approximately 1.186 standard deviations before the reveal compared to after.

H6.1 and H6.2: High curiosity influences positive expectations post-reveal of the mystery box's content and H6.2 High curiosity influences functional value post-reveal of the mystery box's content. To test H6.1 and H6.2, a regression analysis was conducted with curiosity as the independent variable and expectations and functional value (price and value for money) post-reveal" as the dependent variable. The test was conducted twice, testing the two dependent variables separately.

H6.1 that high curiosity influences positive expectations (price and value for money) post-reveal of the mystery box's content was accepted as curiosity had a significant positive effect on post-reveal expectations ($\beta = 0.380$, $p < 0.001$).

H6.2 that high curiosity influences functional value (price and value for money) post-reveal of the mystery box's content was accepted as curiosity had a significant positive effect on post-reveal functional value ($\beta = 0.476$, $p < 0.001$).

H6 was completely accepted.

H7 predicted that positive activity satisfaction after the reveal of the content of the mystery box leads to high customer satisfaction after the reveal of the content of the mystery box.

A regression analysis was conducted with activity satisfaction post-reveal as the independent variable and customer satisfaction post-reveal as the dependent variable. H7 was accepted as post-activity satisfaction had a significant positive effect on post-customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.860, p < 0.001$).

To test H8, the impact of high customer satisfaction post-reveal of the content of the mystery box on positive brand perception, a regression analysis with customer satisfaction post-reveal as the independent variable and attitudes towards brand post-reveal as the dependent variable was conducted.

The hypothesis that high customer satisfaction post-reveal of the content of the mystery box impacts brand perception positively was accepted as post-customer satisfaction had a significant positive effect on post-brand credibility ($\beta = 0.620, p < 0.001$).

4 Discussion

4.1 Summary of Research Findings

The primary objective of this dissertation was to investigate, in essence, how the interaction between curiosity and other factors influences the consumer experience in the context of mystery box purchases.

This study serves as a starting point for developing a more comprehensive understanding of the potential implications and consequences linked to the mystery box shopping process. Not only investigating the process prior to the product's reveal, but also places a specific focus on the post-reveal phase. The theoretical section of this thesis identified a gap in the existing research, which subsequently led to the formulation of ten hypotheses. These hypotheses were then tested through an experimental study.

H1 proposed to find a relationship between the personality trait openness to experience and the increased feeling of curiosity prior to the reveal of the mystery box's content. This hypothesis was rejected. This leads to the assumption that the personality trait openness to experience does

not influence curiosity regarding the mystery deal. Therefore, companies cannot be advised to target marketing efforts especially towards people who have a particularly high openness to experience or to address them specifically.

The two subsequent hypotheses focused on the question: what effect does curiosity have on the different tested variables involved in the buying process of a mystery deal? H2.1 and H2.2 were accepted as high curiosity positively influences initial expectations and functional values (price and value for money) prior to the unveiling of the mysterious box's contents. Previous studies have already explored similar hypotheses. For example, Hill and collaborators (2016) showed in their study that customers who engaged in shopping activities while actively experiencing curiosity had a heightened level of purchase motivation. In addition, it also confirms the results of Daume and collaborators (2019) that individuals create expectations and heightened expectations, driven by their curiosity prior to purchasing a mystery product. Therefore, this is not a new finding but rather serves as an additional validation of such types of hypotheses. This is important, however, because it has not been done often.

H2.1 measured curiosity influences and initial expectations, measured through questions asking participants if they expect an excellent deal and good products. H2.2 was used to measure the influence of curiosity on functional values, which Sweeney and collaborators (2001) describes as the usefulness obtained from the product because of the decrease in both its perceived immediate and future costs. This finding reaffirms that prior to the revelation of the surprise, customers hold heightened expectations of the products due to their curiosity. Hence, looking at the effects before the mystery resolution it could be reasonable for companies to employ mystery deals as a legitimate marketing approach.

H3 is only partially accepted, because only a part of the hypothesis can be adopted. When "Curiosity" and "Initial Expectations" were evaluated together, their impact on "Activity Satisfaction" was greater than when "Curiosity" was considered alone. The inclusion of "Initial Expectations" significantly enhanced the ability of the model to explain "Activity Satisfaction." When considering the complete purchasing process of the mystery deal, it is visible that curiosity has a significant effect on enhancing activity satisfaction. In general, can curiosity have in positive or negative influences, and it seems to be most potent when the information gap is moderate and seems possible to resolve (Ganga et al. 2022).

H6 was accepted as high curiosity influences positive expectations and functional value post-reveal (price and value for money) after the mysterious box's contents are revealed. In this

instance, the impact of curiosity was assessed after the mystery deal was resolved. Along with that, the consumers were conscious of the mystery box's contents and, consequently, the products. Emphasizing that, even after the reveal, under these circumstances' curiosity leads to an ongoing positive effect.

H4 is only partially accepted because only positive initial expectations prior to the reveal of the mystery product are significantly higher than expectations after the reveal. But positive functional value (price and value for money) prior to the reveal of the mystery product is not significantly different from after the reveal of the contents.

H5 is supported, as there is a significant difference in activity satisfaction pre-reveal compared to post-reveal of the mystery box contents. Activity satisfaction pre-reveal is higher before the reveal of the mystery product.

It is noticeable that both product expectations as well as activity satisfaction have declined throughout the course of the mystery deal purchasing process. It indicates the assumption that people focus on immediate consequences before the reveal instead of long-term consequences after the reveal, disregarding any potential discomfort associated with the result after the reveal (Hsee & Ruan, 2020). The discrepancy between what customers expect and the actual performance of a good might lead to a lower evaluation of the product (Anderson, 1973). High expectations might lead to negative consequences as the inherent predisposition towards mysterious products may result in misleading outcomes (Sherif & Hovland, 1958). This is an important finding, particularly for organizations seeking to employ mystery deals as a marketing strategy. It is important for managers to take into consideration the long-term effects following the reveal of the mystery deal, to mitigate the potential negative consequences of mystery deals.

What are the consequential effects of the reveal of the mystery product regarding the product, activity satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and attitudes towards the brand? This question was addressed in H7 and H8. H7 was accepted, and predicted that positive activity satisfaction after the reveal leads to high customer satisfaction after the reveal of the content of the mystery box. H8 is also supported, high customer satisfaction post-reveal of the content of the mystery box impacts brand perception positively. Showing that the long-term effects on the brand are positive. This is a positive outcome, as a characteristic of curiosity in relation to an information gap is that when being satisfied, curiosity has a propensity to cause feelings of disappointment

(Loewenstein, 1994). In the current case, the evaluations by consumers indicate a predominantly positive perception.

4.2 Academic and Managerial Implications

The current thesis provides findings that are applicable to both academic and management settings. Firstly, it is important to consider the academic implications of the given study. This study not solely provided support for prior research but also reaffirmed the importance of the entire buying process of a mystery deal, both before and after the reveal of a mystery. Focus was directed toward the potential development of disappointment within the buying process among consumers who initially displayed positive feelings toward mystery deals before the reveal. This was done aiming to close the existing research gap regarding this issue (Lara et al., 2013). This thesis affirms the necessity of approaching mystery deals with caution while acknowledging their potential negative effect. The findings of this study indicated that there was no observed consistency or improvement in either activity satisfaction or product expectations after the reveal of the mystery product.

Previous research shows that curiosity results to an increased desire for reward, which indicates that individuals anticipate receiving the information they are curious about (Kang et al., 2009, Wang et al., 2018). This research shows that regarding a mystery deal, customers generate positive expectations and values regarding the mystery product, beyond the goal of solely solving the curiosity. Customers in this experiment also expected the product to be valuable. This finding builds on the research of Daume and collaborators (2019) who had previously investigated this relationship but between curiosity triggers in fictional advertisements.

The research presented here mainly examined mystery deals, but the underlying conceptual structure may offer insights into the impact of curiosity combined with other marketing strategies. These strategies might also involve surprise elements, such as unexpected gifts or elements in advertisements, where the product is not yet revealed, and curiosity is strategically applied.

This thesis also provides valuable insights for marketers as well as businesses interested in implying mystery deals or other mystery strategies or intending to enter the market for mysterious goods and services. Multiple benefits can motivate companies to offer mystery deals. For example, to create a special purchase incentive through curiosity, therefore gaining consumers' attention and interest. Mystery deals can also help companies liquidate

inventories and get rid of products by their expiration date, which is sustainable, especially while not necessarily revealing the accessible final products. Nevertheless, negative effects must be carefully considered. Despite potential negative effects from dissatisfied customers, sending products to consumers who may not require them due to the mystery effect must be addressed for sustainability. This could result in a lot of waste. Product shipping may also be unsustainable. The attractiveness of a mystery deal depends also on the level of excitement that consumers want (Ganga et al., 2022).

4.3 Limitations and Future Research

The findings given in this study offer significant empirical support for the research hypotheses; yet, it is important to acknowledge that they are constrained by limitations, which will now be discussed. Subsequently, suggestions for future research will be provided.

Experimental studies have benefits when forecasting results in hypothetical settings but lack the authenticity of real-life situations. This experiment should be repeated in an authentic environment to simulate reality. Due to the characteristic of hypothetical assessment in online studies, the experimental setting omitted several essential characteristics of the product, such as the product's quality and flavor. The procedure of providing information in phases restricts individuals to get additional information only when shown. Therefore, it prevents the natural behavior of individuals who previously may have pursued additional information through videos and articles before deciding to buy the product.

In addition, in this thesis, consumers' purchase has occurred without spending their real money and their purchase intent afterwards was measured through self-report. If a proper purchasing process were to take place, dissatisfaction with non-preferred products and a sense of loss would likely be greater due to the feeling of a real loss. Furthermore, the number of Germans participating was very high. Hence, it is imperative to carry out the study using additional samples with other demographic features, for example, to comprehend the variations in these results among different continents and cultures.

This study has not yet identified the specific character traits that cause individuals to exhibit curiosity toward a mystery deal or to get enjoyment from the purchasing procedure associated with such a deal. This study has only found evidence to suggest that, within the specific situation examined, openness to experience does not result in increased curiosity. Further exploration can be conducted to determine which specific character traits contribute to this behavior.

5 Conclusion

In summary, this research contributed valuable insights into the dynamic relationship of curiosity, expectations, activity satisfaction, and brand perception in the context of mystery box purchases. The study offered a comprehensive analysis of the different variables as they developed during the consumer's journey, presenting significant implications for organizations that aim to employ mystery box marketing methods. This research significantly contributes to the comprehension of consumer behavior in contexts characterized by uncertainty and surprise, shedding light on the potential risks and rewards associated with mystery deals.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Introduction:

Thank you for participating in my survey! I, Thora Sauer, am conducting this experiment as part of my master's thesis for the Master in Management with a Specialization in Strategic Marketing at Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics. This study aims to gain insights into the effects of mystery shopping and explore the thrill of the unknown.

It will take about 10 minutes to complete. Please answer as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. There will be no way to link your answers to your identity. The data collected will be used for research purposes only. Your participation will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the decision-making process in the business context. You have the right to withdraw your participation. There are no known risks, discomforts, or adverse effects foreseeable for this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please email me (s-tsauer@ucp.pt). By continuing, you agree to participate.

Your help is highly appreciated!

Openness to new experience

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. Please select one of the following options to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

I see myself as someone who ...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree a little (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree a little (4)	Strongly agree (5)
... is original, comes up with new ideas. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... is curious about many different things. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... is clever, a deep thinker. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... has an active imagination. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... is inventive. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... values artistic, aesthetic experiences. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... prefers work that is routine. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... likes to reflect, play with ideas. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... has few artistic interests. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... is sophisticated in art, music, or literature. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Brand KoRo

How well do you know the brand Koro?

- I don't know the brand.
- (1) Not well at all.
- (2) Slightly well.
- (3) Moderately well.
- (4) Very well.
- (5) Extremely well.

Initial deal

Quick definition: A mystery box is a surprise box that you can buy for a fixed price without knowing what is inside.

Imagine that you are on a mystery box website and are ready to purchase a discovery snack box from the brand Koro, containing mystery products. At this time, you see that the products are packed in a mysterious box. From the packaging and the description of this mystery box, you only know that it contains: The brands' favorite items in a tasting sampler; 11 organic treats from the brands' selection; Purely vegan snacks; Something for everyone.

But you do not know any other details, such as the products' type, color, or style (as shown below).

The price for the box is €16,50 shipping is included.



Re-Assessing: emotions post-purchase:

Using a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), please indicate how you feel after looking at the mystery products:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I received good products in this mystery box. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Purchasing this mystery box provided an excellent deal. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buying this mystery box was a good decision. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, buying this mystery box was a pleasing shopping experience. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Re Assessing: Activity satisfaction

Using a scale from 1 (entirely disagree) to 7 (entirely agree), please indicate how you feel about this activity (buying the mystery box) after the products have been revealed:

	Entirely disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	entirely agree (7)
It was the right choice to take part in this activity. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My overall evaluation of this activity is very good. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I am very satisfied with this activity. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Customer satisfaction

Using a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), please assess how you feel after resolving the mystery:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I feel satisfied. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel pleased. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel contented. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel delighted. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Brand credibility (BCR)

Only a few questions remain! Please use a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) to assess how you feel about a brand selling you this mystery box:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
This brand delivers on what it promises. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand's product claims are believable. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My experiences with this brand make me wary of their claims. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand has a name you can trust. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This brand reminds me of someone who is competent and knows what he/she is doing. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please leave this answer blank, to show, that you are paying attention.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographics

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say.
- Other _____

How old are you?

Socio economic Status

Think of a ladder as representing where people stand in your country. At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off – those who have the most money, the most education, and the most respected jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off – those who have the least money, least education, the least respected jobs, or no job.

The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top; the lower you are, the closer you are to the people at the very bottom. Where would you place yourself on this ladder?

- 10 Top of the rung.
- 9
- 8
- 7
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 Very bottom of the rung.

What is your current occupation?

- Student
- Student-Worker
- Employed
- Self-employed
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Other _____

What is the highest degree you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School Degree
- Undergraduate Degree (bachelor's degree or equivalent)
- Postgraduate Degree (master's degree or equivalent)
- Doctoral Degree
- Other _____

Appendix 2: Study Overview

Study Sample Size: Statistics

	Gender	Occupation	Education	Nationality = German or non German
Mean	1.58	5.59	1.33	1.20
Std. Deviation	.496	4.514	.472	.401
Skewness	-.322	-.040	.725	1.516
Std. Error of Skewness	.205	.197	.197	.205

Appendix 3: Study Demographic Characteristics

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	59	39.1	42.1	42.1
	Female and others	81	53.6	57.9	100.0
	Total	140	92.7	100.0	
Missing	System	11	7.3		
Total		151	100.0		

Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not working/ no fulltime	74	49.0	49.0	49.0
	Employed	77	51.0	51.0	100.0

	Total	151	100.0	100.0	
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Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	university degree	101	66.9	66.9	66.9
	other/ non academics	50	33.1	33.1	100.0
	Total	151	100.0	100.0	

Nationality German and non-German

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	German	112	74.2	80.0	80.0
	other	28	18.5	20.0	100.0
	Total	140	92.7	100.0	
Missing	System	11	7.3		
Total		151	100.0		

Appendix 4: Hypotheses Test

H1: Correlations of personality trait openness to experience and the feeling of curiosity.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Openness	3.84	.476	147
Curiosity	3.70	1.623	151

Correlations

		Openness	Curiosity
Openness	Pearson Correlation	1	.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.858
	N	147	147
Curiosity	Pearson Correlation	.015	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.858	
	N	147	151

H2: H2.1: Regression, curiosity influences initial expectations.

Table 8: *Descriptive Statistics*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Initial expectations	4.58	1.226	151
Curiosity	3.70	1.623	151

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38.040	1	38.040	30.218	<.001b
	Residual	187.569	149	1.259		
	Total	225.608	150			

a. Dependent Variable: Initial expectations

b. Predictors: (Constant), Curiosity

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.430	.228		15.042	<.001	2.980	3.881
	Curiosity	.310	.056	.411	5.497	<.001	.199	.422

a. Dependent Variable: Initial expectations

H2.2: Regression, curiosity, and functional values (price and value for money)

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
pre_functional_value	4.26	1.218	151
Curiosity	3.70	1.623	151

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	78.422	1	78.422	81.077	<.001 ^b
	Residual	144.121	149	.967		
	Total	222.542	150			

a. Dependent Variable: pre_functional_value_average

b. Predictors: (Constant), Curiosity_average

Coefficients^a

<i>Coefficients^a</i>							
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	

		B		Coefficient s			95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
							Std. Error	Beta
1	(Constant)	2.612	.200		13.068	<.001	2.217	3.007
	Curiosity_a verage	.446	.049	.594	9.004	<.001	.348	.543

a. Dependent Variable: pre_functional_value_average

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	110.127	1	110.127	75.878	<.001 ^b
	Residual	216.253	149	1.451		
	Total	326.380	150			
2	Regression	160.205	2	80.102	71.341	<.001 ^c
	Residual	166.175	148	1.123		
	Total	326.380	150			

a. Dependent Variable: pre_Activity satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Curiosity

c. Predictors: (Constant), Curiosity, Initial expectations

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error				Beta	Lower Bound
1	(Constant)	2.299	.245		9.391	<.001	1.816	2.783
	Curiosity	.528	.061	.581	8.711	<.001	.408	.648

2	(Constant)	.527	.342		1.542	.125	-.148	1.202
	Curiosity	.368	.058	.404	6.288	<.001	.252	.483
	Initial_expectations	.517	.077	.430	6.678	<.001	.364	.670

a. Dependent Variable: pre_Activity_satisfaction_average

H3:

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	110.127	1	110.127	75.878	<.001 ^b
	Residual	216.253	149	1.451		
	Total	326.380	150			
2	Regression	184.274	2	92.137	95.959	<.001 ^c
	Residual	142.105	148	.960		
	Total	326.380	150			

a. Dependent Variable: pre_Activity_satisfaction_average

b. Predictors: (Constant), Curiosity_average

c. Predictors: (Constant), Curiosity_average, pre_functional_value_average

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.299	.245		9.391	<.001	1.816	2.783

	Curiosity_average	.528	.061	.581	8.711	<.001	.408	.648
2	(Constant)	.426	.292		1.459	.147	-.151	1.002
	Curiosity_average	.208	.061	.229	3.402	<.001	.087	.329
	pre_functional_value_average	.717	.082	.592	8.788	<.001	.556	.879

H4: Pre and post comparison Initial Expectations and functional value

Pre-Post (Initial Expectations)

Variable	Pre		Post		t(145)	p	r	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD				
Initial Expectations	4.60	1.22	4.34	1.46	2.28	.024	.46***	.189

Pre-Post (Functional Value)

Variable	Pre		Post		t(145)	p	r	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD				
Functional Value	4.28	1.20	4.24	1.50	.486	.628	.63***	.040

H5: Pre-Post activity satisfaction

Pre-Post activity satisfaction

Variable	Pre		Post		t(144)	p	r	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD				
Activity Satisfaction	4.27	1.46	4.13	1.56	1.44	.150	.69***	.120

H6: Regression: high curiosity influences positive expectations (price and value for money) post-reveal.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	44.831	1	44.831	24.238	<.001 ^b

	Residual	266.349	144	1.850		
	Total	311.180	145			

Dependent Variable: post_expectations_average

Predictors: (Constant), Curiosity_average

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.058	.283		10.808	<.001	2.499	3.617
	Curiosity_average	.342	.070	.380	4.923	<.001	.205	.480

a. Dependent Variable: post_expectations_average

H7: Regression: Activity satisfaction after the reveal of the mystery box leads to high customer satisfaction.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	229.434	1	229.434	402.520	<.001 ^b
	Residual	80.939	142	.570		
	Total	310.373	143			
2	Regression	237.488	2	118.744	229.716	<.001 ^c
	Residual	72.885	141	.517		
	Total	310.373	143			

- a. Dependent Variable: post_Customer_satisfaction
 b. Predictors: (Constant), post_Activity_satisfaction
 c. Predictors: (Constant), post_Activity_satisfaction_average, post_expectations_average

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error				Beta	Lower Bound
1	(Constant)	.804	.177		4.534	<.001	.453	1.154
	post_Activity_satisfaction_average	.806	.040	.860	20.063	<.001	.726	.885
2	(Constant)	.477	.188		2.534	.012	.105	.848
	post_Activity_satisfaction_average	.590	.067	.630	8.846	<.001	.458	.722
	post_expectations_average	.281	.071	.281	3.947	<.001	.140	.422

- a. Dependent Variable: post_Customer_satisfaction

Excluded Variables^a

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
						Tolerance
1	post_expectations_average	.281 ^b	3.947	<.001	.315	.329

- a. Dependent Variable: post_Customer_satisfaction_average
 b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), post_Activity_satisfaction_average

H8: Regression: Regression: Customer satisfaction post-reveal of the content of the mystery box impacts brand perception.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	58.319	1	58.319	86.260	<.001 ^b

	Residual	93.299	138	.676		
	Total	151.618	139			

Dependent Variable: post_Brand_credibility_average

Predictors: (Constant), post_Customer_satisfaction_average

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.762	.206		13.437	<.001	2.356	3.169
	post_Customer_satisfaction_average	.434	.047	.620	9.288	<.001	.342	.527

a. Dependent Variable: post_Brand_credibility_average

Appendix 5: Cronbachs Alpha

Name	Cronbachs Alpha	Cronbachs Alpha standardisierte Items	Anzahl der Items
openness	,falsch	,654	10
Curiosity pre	,857	,858	2

2	,861	,862	4
Expectation pre 2	,869	,869	4
Expectation pre together	,914	,915	8
Activity satisfaction pre	,948	,948	3
product quality post 1	,922	,923	4
product quality post 2	,935	,936	4
product quality post 1+2	,957	,957	8
Activity satisfaction post	,961	,961	3
Customer satisfaction post	,962	,963	4
attitude towards brand post	,809	,813	5