



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](http://ScienceDirect)

## Australasian Marketing Journal

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/amj](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/amj)

## Consumption coping and life transitions: An integrative review

Sheau-Fen Yap \*, Sommer Kapitan

Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 21 September 2016

Revised 24 April 2017

Accepted 27 April 2017

Available online

## Keywords:

Life events  
 Consumption behaviour  
 Transitions  
 Coping  
 Stress

## ABSTRACT

Marketing scholars have devoted considerable effort to researching the impact of life transitions on consumption behaviour. However, prior literature on life events is broad and fragmented. This paper provides an up-to-date synthesis of past findings using an integrative review covering 116 articles on life events and consumption over the last 35 years. This critical review reveals important gaps in current knowledge, and puts forward avenues for future research that flow logically from the theoretical gaps identified, thereby contributing to extant literature on life events and consumption. The resulting framework of consumption coping provides an understanding of how consumer motivations build, grow, and alter as life events occur. The goal of the review is to stimulate the field to consider deeper contextual examination of the role of life events in acquisition, consumption, and disposal of material and experiential consumption opportunities.

© 2017 Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

How do consumers cope with life transitions? Although the literature has pointed to the impact of some life transitions and post-event consumption patterns, such as the way in which leisure activity consumption changes following marriage, divorce, and parenthood (Enberg et al., 2012), the field has yet to synthesize the broad range of studies that examine how people consume through and in reaction to salient life events from marriage, parenting and relocation to retirement and ageing. These events anchor consumption to the context in which the consumption occurs, allowing for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of consumer behaviour.

This paper begins with an integrative review of 35 years of literature to build a critical framework (Fig. 1) that allows researchers to study how individuals cope with life events via consumption opportunities. The goal of this framework of consumption coping during transitions is to motivate the field to consider deeper contextual examination of the role of life events in acquisition, consumption, and disposal of material and experiential consumption opportunities. This framework proposes that how an individual consumer copes with life course events – choosing either to approach the life event and related identity change or avoid the life event – is a key determinant to predicting the resulting changes in consumption.

Life events refer to circumstances that dramatically influence one's daily routines and priorities such as marriage, child birth, divorce and retirement (Luhmann et al., 2012). People initiate coping strategies to manage stress, solve problems and restore balance after

experiencing critical life events (Ong and Othman, 2007). Behavioural readjustments in response to stressful events can have profound implications for consumer behaviour: Coping actions can change consumers' perceptions of self, their consumption habits, and the symbolic meanings they draw from consumption objects (Lee et al., 2001). These changes in consumer behaviour can be triggered by a change in or a loss of a sense of self, role transitions, and stress, even when the life transition is a welcome one such as a job promotion (Luhmann et al., 2012). Understanding consumer coping behaviours thus influences the study of consumer choices and well-being.

Consumer researchers have endeavoured to disentangle how consumer behaviours function as coping mechanisms during the course of life transitions (Hopkins et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the scope of published literature on the impact of life events on consumer outcomes is fragmented and large, making it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from these past studies. Three initial conceptual reviews of life events narrowly focus on only one life event: marital dissolution (Fellerman and Debevec, 1992) or retirement (Heslop and Marshall, 1991; Schewe and Balazs, 1992). Although recent reviews cover a broader scope of life events, they focus only on outcomes for leisure consumption (Enberg et al., 2012; Kleiber et al., 2002). The time is ripe now for a consolidation of past evidence in the form of a comprehensive review.

This paper systematically reviews research on life events and consumption behaviour. The authors argue that key consumer behaviours can be better explained in the context of consumer life events and coping with transitions, from brand switching to shopping for vacations and increases in acquisition. That is because, as proposed in the critical framework (Fig. 1), stress from life events yields coping strategies and behavioural adjustments that are reflected in altered consumption patterns. The disruptions that occur

\* Corresponding author. Fax: +64 9921 9999.  
 E-mail address: [crystal.yap@aut.ac.nz](mailto:crystal.yap@aut.ac.nz) (S.-F. Yap).

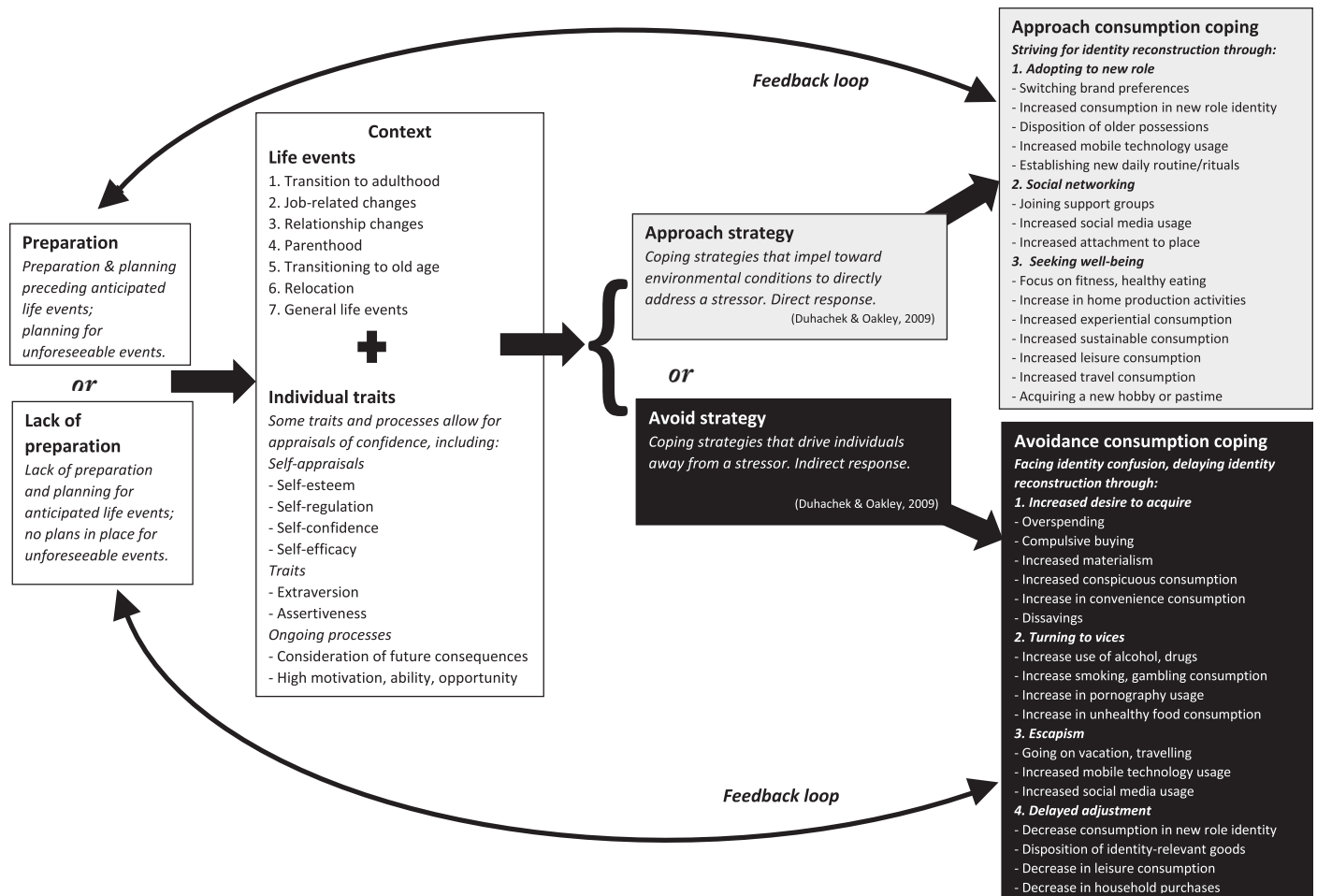


Fig. 1. The consumption coping process.

during periods of life transitions, even for welcomed transitions such as marriage and the arrival of a child, can create emotional distress that impacts individuals' physical and psychological well-being (Enberg et al., 2012; Mathur et al., 1999). Whether a consumer feels the life event is goal relevant, and if so, if it is congruent or incongruent with goals, can collude with personality traits (Duhachek and Iacobucci, 2005; Mathur et al., 1999) to determine the type of consumer coping response adopted, from strategies for approaching the life change (such as consuming more healthful food and purchasing identity-relevant brands) to strategies that avoid the source of stress (e.g., increased use and acquisition of alcohol, taking a vacation to escape).

## 2. Method

The authors first turn to an integrative review to synthesize past streams of life transitions research. An integrative review allows a more rigorous selection and evaluation of articles (Torraco, 2005). Searches included articles (published between 1980 and 2016) written in English, but no limits were applied for country or population of interest. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of life events research, a broad range of databases focused on marketing, psychology, and consumer behaviour were included: ABI/INFORM Complete (ProQuest), Business Source Complete (EBSCO), Emerald Fulltext, Scopus, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, PsycINFO, and ScienceDirect. The references listed on those retrieved articles were also searched for other potentially relevant studies. Furthermore, key relevant marketing journals were also searched to ensure

that articles in the marketing discipline are covered comprehensively. To promote quality control, the authors focused only on scholarly works including published, peer-reviewed journal articles while books, book chapters, conference proceedings, dissertations, working papers, and any other unpublished works were excluded. Empirical studies that employed either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method approaches were considered. In line with the research objective, only articles focusing on the association between a life event and coping responses and/or consumption changes were selected.

Internal life events which most people experience in their life span were of chief interest. This paper focused on events that require more adjustment during transitions and categorized them into seven major groups: (1) transition to adulthood; (2) job related; (3) relationship related; (4) parenthood; (5) transition to old age; (6) moving; and (7) a category that examines research on general life events from each of the above categories and their impact on consumption outcomes. External life events which originate from experience with an event such as economic crisis, natural disaster, war and health crises were excluded from this review to allow for a focus on life course stages as a context variable that any consumer might reasonably face.

In line with the research objective and to ensure relevance, only articles focusing on the association between at least one life event (listed above) and consumption behavioural changes and coping responses were selected. Boolean search was used to search for articles containing relevant the following keywords: *life event*, *life transition*, *role transition*, *life transitory situations*, *life-change events*, *life*

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات