

“I expect to be moved!”

**Providing content knowledge to enhance expectations and emotions
in cultural experiences**

Abstract:

This research studies the role of theater play descriptions as a vehicle of content knowledge among visitors. It aims to understand how providing consumers with knowledge about the content of the play in advance enhances their expectations towards the play and primes anticipated emotions, which in turn affects visitors' overall theater experience. Using an exploratory qualitative and two quantitative field studies, our findings support that delivering content knowledge about a play has a direct influence on visitors' theater experience before (expectations, anticipated emotions, intention to attend the play) and an indirect influence after the play (affective reactions and satisfaction). However, findings show that a threshold needs to be respected, because if expectations are set too high, satisfaction decreases. The study's results provide further support for the use of detailed theater play descriptions to shape, guide and enhance visitors' theater experiences based on the priming paradigm initially developed in psychology research. Contrary to early research suggesting to separate marketing approaches from the cultural experience, we show that consumers' expectations and thus a customer-centric approach should not further be neglected.

Keywords: content knowledge, satisfaction, emotions, expectations, cultural experience

1. Introduction

Defying the rules of traditional marketing, cultural industries usually prioritize the cultural product over consumers' expectations. Marketing researchers even demonstrate that customer-centric approaches are unfavourable in the theater sector (Voss and Voss, 2000). The subjectivity of the cultural product, the primacy of the artist and the art project are among the criteria which differentiate cultural products from other products (Benghozi, 1995). Because of the primacy of the cultural product, consumers' expectations are given little credit by cultural institutions. For this reason communications towards potential theater visitors are mainly based on the intuition of communication managers (Bourgeon-Renault, 2000). As a consequence, generating consumer satisfaction becomes challenging in the cultural sector (Colbert and St-James, 2014; Troilo, Cito and Soscia, 2014). Therefore, in order to raise public awareness about their cultural work, cultural institutions deliver information about the artistic work using flyers, posters, Internet, etc. (Bourgeon-Renault, 2000). These communication means deliver content knowledge about a particular play. Generally, cultural institutions try to enrich these communication messages emotionally, hoping to prime or activate specific feelings of potential visitors. However, despite the amount of communication materials used by theaters, the expected results are not always convincing (Bourgeon-Renault, 2000). We thus aim to answer the following questions: How does providing content knowledge about a theater play, delivered by theater institutions through flyers, Internet posts, etc., impact visitors' satisfaction and affective reaction by creating cognitive expectations and priming visitors' affective expectations? We address these questions using a qualitative exploratory study and two quantitative field studies. Qualitative findings helped us to further define "content knowledge" and understand how spectators look for it and integrate it in their cultural experience. The second study analyzed the impact of content knowledge on consumers' experience before and after a theater play. Finally, the third study analyzed the influence of the type of content (affective vs. rational) and the design (short vs. long) of theater play descriptions.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Cultural experiences

Individuals attending art performances seek pleasurable experiences, which may be shaped as a result of information processing (Caldwell, 2001). Processing external information may be rational (i.e. conscious) or experiential (i.e. affect-laden; Epstein, 1994) and can create greater enjoyment and satisfaction with the cultural experience (Caldwell, 2001; Lee et al., 2008). According to Caldwell's consumption system model of buying-consuming experiences (2001), attending performing arts results from an interaction between behavioral triggers and constraints (e.g. age or experience), consumption motives (e.g. intellectual enrichment or escapism), and buying-consuming activities (e.g. experiencing events or socializing).

In service and marketing research, the generation of satisfaction through positive experiences has largely been studied (Mano and Oliver, 1993; Holbrook and Hirshman, 1982). Although the literature in the service industry has deeply been interested in the antecedents of satisfaction, the antecedents of theater satisfaction have scarcely been studied in the cultural

literature (Boerner, Moser, and Jobst, 2011). Traditionally, two approaches are used to study the concept of satisfaction in marketing (Homburg, Koschate and Hoyer, 2006) : a purely cognitive approach and a purely affective approach. Some researchers believe that satisfaction is a separate concept of affective reactions (e.g. Oliver, 1980; 1981; Swan et Trawick, 1981), while others prefer to define satisfaction as a purely affective response (e.g. Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer, 1999; Nyer, 1997). However, both approaches have strongly been criticized for not being exhaustive when taken separately (Homburg, Koschate and Hoyer, 2006). Although the model of the disconfirmation of expectations (Mano and Oliver, 1993) presented the major approach for studying satisfaction until the 90s, the inclusion of affective reactions has brought more credibility to the study of satisfaction and experiences and has therefore become a more common research approach. In this research, satisfaction is defined as a positive reaction resulting from a favorable appraisal of a consumption experience (Babin and Griffin, 1998). In the cultural sector, emotions have sparsely been studied, but play an important role in the evaluation of the experience, such as theater, exhibitions or musical performances (Boerner, Moser and Jobst, 2011). More recently, Moreno et al. (2015) showed that spectators in sports events who reported higher levels of emotions also reported greater satisfaction and future intentions.

In the present work, we investigate the cultural experience from both a cognitive and affective approach. Koenig-Lewis and Palmer (2014) have recently further demonstrated the importance of this dual approach in service research. On the one hand, the author demonstrate the impact of experienced emotions on satisfaction. On the other hand, they also include anticipated emotions in their model, which pertain to visitors' affective state before attending the play. (Koenig-Lewis and Palmer, 2014). Based on their model, our research postulates that emotions can be felt at different times of the experience, i.e. before (anticipated) and after (experienced) the play.

As presented earlier, expectations may also be more rational using standards of comparison (Woodruff et al., 1991). Standards are commonly shaped based on expectations, equity, experienced-based norms, desires and values, or ideals or promises (Woodruff et al., 1991). In the literature, Cowley, Farrell, and Edwarson (2005) suggested that expectations (e.g. expectation of enjoying) should have positive impacts on the evaluation of the experience and visitors' intention to revisit the theater. For the purpose of this study we oppose cognitive expectations (i.e. rational expectations using standards of comparison) to affective expectations (i.e. anticipated emotions). We hypothesize that both types of expectations influence visitors' theater experience.

Therefore, we assume that cognitive expectations, which should influence the experienced emotions and satisfaction (Koenig-Lewis and Palmer, 2014), can be influenced to some extent by the cultural institution by providing content knowledge about the play that is delivered to visitors. Moreover, these information carriers should not only create cognitive expectation, but also activate (or “prime”) anticipated emotions regarding the play. This research therefore dwells on the priming paradigm to explain the influence of theater play descriptions' on anticipated emotions.

2.2 Priming emotions using content knowledge

According to Caldwell's consumption system with attending performing arts (2001), consumers with little theater experience and little knowledge should experience less

enjoyment. Lee et al. (2008) showed that available information about an event, such as festivals, increases spectators' positive and negative emotions as well as their satisfaction.

Our research dwells on visitors' content knowledge about a specific play (i.e. description of the play), which may be conveyed by cultural institutions to potential visitors via flyers, websites, radio, local journals or peers. According to consumer research, subjective knowledge pertains to individuals' belief about how much they know about the product, while objective knowledge is seen as the type, amount and organisation of what they really have stored in memory (Brucks, 1985). In the context of this study, we focus on "content knowledge", i.e. visitors' belief about their possession of relevant information regarding a theater play gathered using aforementioned external sources. So far, content knowledge has been ignored by the literature, but may play a decisive role in the cultural experience. Indeed, communication means currently employed in the cultural sector do not follow any particular communication strategy (Bourgeon-Renault, 2000) and need further studies.

We suggest that information provided through flyers and other means of communication should play a priming role by activating anticipated emotions of potential theater visitors. According to psychology and neuroscience, the priming paradigm is based on the limited information processing capacities of the human brain, so that from all information bits that are processed every day, only a few of them are processed consciously (Mlodinow, 2012). Unconscious information processing not only creates implicit responses, but is predictive of individuals' subsequent behaviours (Calvert et al., 2014). The priming paradigm has emerged from activation theory, and is similar to the arousal theory which explains how mental arousal or activation of mental concepts motivates individuals to achieve a certain goal (Berlyne, 1949, 1967). According to Shen and Wyer Jr. (2008), priming, that is, activation of concepts, may be influenced by situational factors. In a print advertising context, Yi (1990) showed that priming may affect evaluation and brand attitude.

Based on our literature review, this research seeks to understand how affective expectations are primed through content knowledge provided through theater communication in cultural experiences. According to the priming paradigm, all information that is read by individuals about a play before attending it activates known affective concepts in the brain. Additional knowledge gained through reading play descriptions helps to contextualize the play using words, pictures and creates an imagined atmosphere before even attending the theater play. Thus, we expect this knowledge to influence visitors' anticipated emotions before attending the play.

Since the marketing literature on message framing suggests that information itself may be affective or rational (Cesario, Corker and Jelinek, 2013; Hartmann, Ibanez, and Sainz, 2005), we expect to find better results for affect-laden information. Although the effects due to this distinction are ambiguous in the marketing literature, we include both types of messages in our study due to their importance in the investigation of affective reactions. Consistent with previous research (Golden and Johnson, 1983; Goldberg and Gorn, 1987; Yoo and MacInnis, 2005), we define an affective message as a message designed to appeal to the emotions of the receiver using drama, mood, music and other strategies to elicit affective responses. The rational message is defined as a message designed to appeal to the rationality of the receiver using objective information describing the attributes or benefits of the piece (Yoo and MacInnis, 2005).

Moreover, we also expect the amount of information, that is, the length of the message to be relevant as suggested by Rothman et Salovey (1997). Although the authors claim that information needs to be treated with sufficient depth so that it can be integrated in the mental

representation of an individual, the impact of the amount of information on consumers' reaction is still unknown. Information quantity has been studied previously in marketing (e.g. Patton, 1981, 1984). Results show that consumers prefer brands that display greater quantity of information (Patton, 1984). We therefore expect a greater quantity of information to positively impact consumers' intention to attend the play.

3. Empirical studies

Three studies (one exploratory qualitative study and two quantitative studies) were conducted. We first carried out an exploratory study to understand the importance of content knowledge in theater experiences. These findings led us to conduct two further quantitative studies to (1) assess the importance of content knowledge in the theater experience, and (2) study the influence of four types of content knowledge (depending on the message's length and degree of affective arousal). All studies are outlined in the following sections.

3.1 Exploring content knowledge in theater experiences

Regarding the lack of understanding about the types of knowledge and their influence in the cultural industry, we primarily conducted a series of eight semi-structured interviews following the recommendations of Silverman (2013). The interview guide focused on theatrical experiences as perceived and experienced by informants. The content discussion dealt with the experience before (general expectations, emotions, information search and experience), during, and after the play (satisfaction, key success factors, quality, etc.). The interview guide included questions like: 'Why do you go to the theater? Tell me about your last experience at the theater. What did you expect when you read the play's descriptions? How did you feel about the play, before and after the play? etc.'

Results. This exploratory study helped us to (1) understand the concept of 'content knowledge' and (2) identify the importance of different types of play descriptions in visitors' experience with theater plays before and after the performance.

"Thanks to the Internet, I can get other viewers' opinion, may it be about theater plays, books, movies, or anything. And so, I already have an idea of what I will watch" (Verbatim 1: Benoit, Senior Auditor - IN04).

"It's a colleague who said: "This is good. There is a play that is played, I have invitations. It sounds not so bad". After that, I admit, I looked for critiques on the internet. These said a lot of good things about it. So I thought, why not. [...] For me, new technologies...I will use the Internet to get a first opinion before seeing a movie, before going to an event, before seeing a theater play. I go there to read information, maybe on discussion forums." (Verbatim 2: Beatrice, 49, secretary in the social sector - IN01).

Opening verbatim 1 and 2 show that individuals commonly search for and compile different sources of information to create their own opinion about a theater play. Based on their opinion, they decide if the play is interesting enough or not to attend it. More precisely, this information helps individuals to decide 'what they will watch' (Verbatim 1) or to 'get a first opinion' about the play (Verbatim 2). In other words, they accumulate knowledge on what to expect from a play. Analyzing all verbatim with more scrutiny shows that these expectations can be positive and push them to attend the play, or negative (often in the form of

stereotyping) preventing them to buy tickets. Regarding a particular theater play, positive as well as negative expectations are shaped on the basis of information conveyed via word-of-mouth (colleagues, family, etc.), through impressions gathered on the Internet (opinions, reviews, general information, etc.) or offline (in local journals, radio, posters, flyers, etc.; cf. Verbatim 1 and 2).

On the one hand, we observe that this additional or prior knowledge allows visitors to understand the subtleties of the performance and appreciate it even more. On the other hand, a lack of prior knowledge seems not to bring much satisfaction with the theater experience:

“I think many people who read books go to the theater because they will find plays that are adapted from books they have read. And the performance is another way of interpretation compared to the book. [...] For connoisseurs it must undoubtedly be fun. The interpretations of works, it must undoubtedly be fun but I'm not a connoisseur.” (Verbatim 3: Mark, 50, trainer and independent accountant - IN03).

“They [visitors] were all young people from North Africa, and so there was a great atmosphere in the room and it was more fun for them since they understood many references in the play which I didn't understand” (Verbatim 4: Benoit, Senior Auditor - IN04).

We observe, that informants who had no prior knowledge about a play also had little expectations regarding the performance of the content (e.g. because they were invited or had won tickets, IN04). As the person from interview 4 was not prepared to what he would see, he was little satisfied. According to informants, little satisfaction results from a lack of prior knowledge (*“It was not easy to follow and understand”*; Verbatim 5: Mark, IN03) or because the play does not match their 'tastes'.

Content knowledge, acquired through word-of-mouth, Internet and offline sources, seems thus to shape visitors' expectations. We observe that expectations regarding the play may be cognitive (e.g. intellectual, IN08; reflection and thought, IN07) or affective (e.g. excited, IN01; pleasure, IN06; fun, IN08).

Content knowledge about a specific play has been ignored by the literature so far, but plays a decisive role in the cultural experience. Based on the literature, this research seeks to understand the impact of content knowledge in cultural experiences. We expect this knowledge to positively influence visitors' experience before the play and after the play.

The following sections present the study's empirical findings. Study 1 seeks to better understand the impact of content knowledge (via the description of the play) before (on cognitive and affective expectations) and after the play (on satisfaction and emotions; H1-H8). Study 2 will firstly replicate a part of study 1 and secondly manipulate four types of content knowledge (short vs. long descriptions; affective vs. rational descriptions) in order to observe their effect on decision making (via cognitive expectations and anticipated emotions; H9-H14). To increase external validity, we perform one field study by recruiting visitors of a French Theater (Theater "La Virgule" in Tourcoing). We combine this study with the results of an experimental study to contribute to greater internal validity.

3.2 Study 1: The impact of content knowledge before and after the show

Aim. Study 1 tests the impact of content knowledge in two steps: (1) its impact on cognitive and affective expectations (before the play), and (2) its impact on emotional reaction and

satisfaction (after the play). For this first study, we focus on the impact of one specific source of communication, namely the theater play description available to visitors before the theater performance.

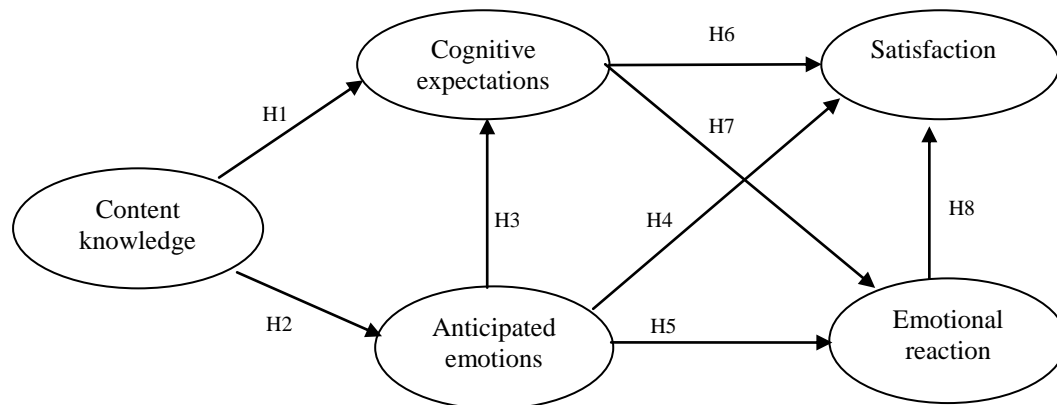


Figure 1: Conceptual model for study 1

Methodology. In collaboration with the theater “La Virgule” in Tourcoing, northern France, 221 visitors were recruited before the beginning of the theater play “Fumistes!”, which was performed from January 15 to January 31, 2015, six times a week. The play “Fumistes!”, which served as the study object was created by the company itself (“La Virgule”) and has never been played before. It is a humorous play based on texts written by authors of literary circles of the late nineteenth century. Data collection was conducted over a period of two and a half weeks. Respondents were recruited at the beginning of each performance (66% women and 34% men with a mean age of 52.9). The study was conducted using two questionnaires (one before and one after the performance). Both questionnaires were distributed at the entrance before the performance at the same time as the flyer describing the play. The audience was invited to browse the flyer carefully and then answer the first questionnaire before the beginning of the performance. After the play (90 minutes), visitors were invited to answer the second questionnaire and return it to the researcher at the exit of the theater room. Incomplete questionnaires (e.g. people who only answered the first questionnaire) were immediately discarded.

Mesures. In questionnaire 1, after reading the flyer, participants responded to a 7-point Likert scale measuring subjective knowledge using 4 items (Cronbach's alpha = .791; M = 4.87; SD = 1.38; Smith and Park, 1992). Cognitive expectations were adapted from Kotler and Kotler (2000). The scale was composed of 2 items and measured on a 7-point Likert scale (Cronbach's Alpha = .762; M = 5.12; SD = 1.13). To measure affective expectations respondents rated 5 positive adjectives, (i.e. relaxed, enthusiastic, fun seduced, satisfied, and happy; Cronbach's alpha = .898; M = 5.24; SD = 0.98) and 4 negative adjectives, (i.e. stressed, disappointed, annoyed, and angry; Cronbach's alpha = .935; M = 2.14; SD = 1.35). Adjectives were adapted from the scale proposed by Laros and Steenkamp (2005) and Richins (1997), and were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The same measurement scale was used in questionnaire 2 to measure emotions felt after the play. For questionnaire 2, we measured, in addition to satisfaction, which was measured using 3 items (Cronbach's alpha = .963; M = 5.67; SD = 1.50; Cronin, Brady and Hult, 2009), positive emotions (Cronbach's alpha = .954; M = 5.57; SD = 1.69) and negative emotions (Cronbach's alpha = .895; M = 1.70; SD = 1.57). The questionnaire ended with some demographic questions (gender, age, occupation, and level of education).

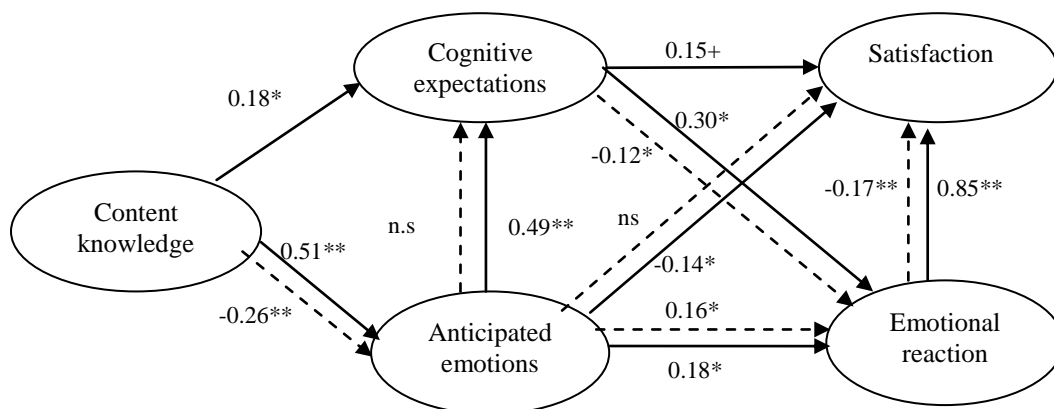
Results. To test the overall model, we performed structural equation modelling (AMOS 18) as a common approach for theory development and construct validation when studying the impact of attitudes and perceptions on behavior (Anderson and Gerbin 1988, Grapentine 2000). Confirmatory factor analyses using the measurements of content knowledge, cognitive and affective expectations, emotions and satisfaction, presented good indicators and a good model fit. Absolute indicators met the standard thresholds: CMIN/DF = 1.988; GFI = .826; AGFI = .791; RMSEA = .066; NFI = .886; TLI = .932; CFI = .939.

In order to validate our hypotheses, we tested our global model by separating positive from negative emotions. Results are presented in figure 2. Suggested relationships are globally significant and confirm our hypotheses (cf. table 1). Only the impact of negative emotions on cognitive expectations and satisfaction is not significant. In the marketing literature, Lee et al. (2008) found similar results. Their findings show a significant link of positive emotions, but no significant link of negative emotions on loyalty in a festival context. They explain this unexpected result by suggesting that consumers attending big events expect some degree of hassle and inconvenience.

From our results, we observe that content knowledge acquired from the description of the play not only creates cognitive expectations and anticipated emotions before the play, but also indirectly influences (through negative and positive anticipated emotions) satisfaction and emotions after the play. Results of this second study show that the more visitors acquire content knowledge about a play, the higher will be their expectations. Also, this knowledge increases anticipated positive emotions and decreases anticipated negative emotions. While anticipated emotions (positive or negative) influence positively experienced emotions during the play (positive or negative), satisfaction will be better only if anticipated positive emotions are less important. In other words, if consumers' affective expectations are too high, their satisfaction decreases.

Table I Supported hypotheses

Hypothesis	Supported
H1	Yes
H2	Yes
H3	Partially
H4	Partially
H5	Yes
H6	Yes
H7	Yes
H8	Yes



** $p < 0,01$; * $p < 0,05$; + $P < 0,10$. The path coefficients are the standardized Bs..
Dotted arrows indicate negative emotions and continuous arrows indicate positive emotions.

Figure 2: Results from Structural Equation Modelling

3.3 Study 2: The impact of affective and rational knowledge and information quantity

Aim. The second study first seeks to partly replicate the results of study 1. Then, it goes further by varying the type of knowledge conveyed through the description of the play (affective vs. rational content) and the message's length (short vs. long). Again, we test the impact of knowledge on cognitive and affective expectations. As a dependent variable, we test individuals' intention to attend the theater play (cf. figure 3). By opting for this research design, we test for potential biases of study 1 which would be related to the fact that the audience of 'La Virgule' already had planned to attend the play. This will also allow us to observe the impact of content knowledge on decision making and understand the effect of manipulating the message design (long vs. short) and its content (affective vs. rational).

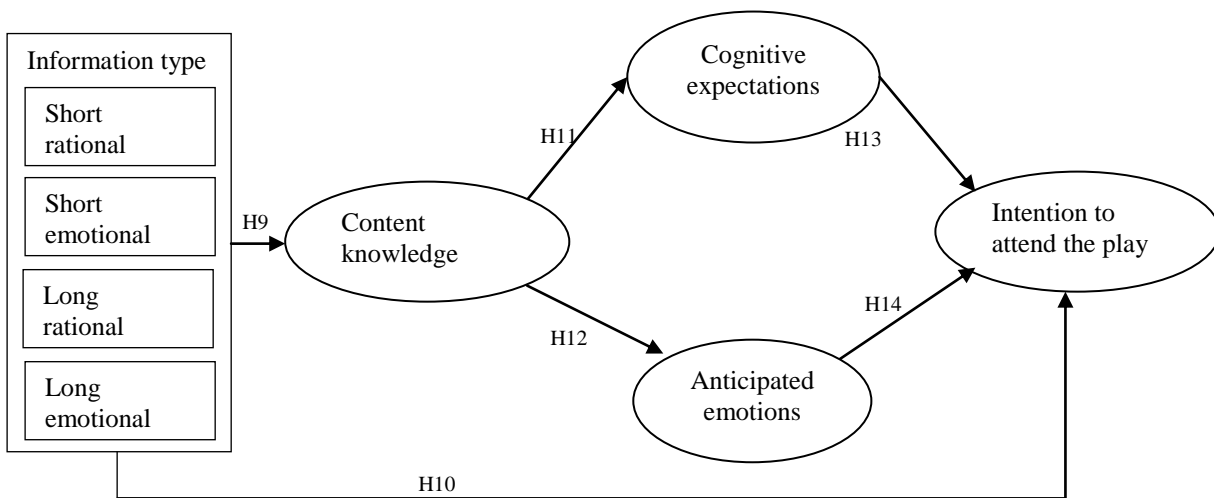


Figure 3: Conceptual model for study 2

Methodology. To contribute to a greater generalization of the results, we chose a less humorous play evoking mixed emotions for this last study. The play 'the man in the attic' is based on a real life story which happened during World War II. 151 panelists were recruited to participate in an online experiment distributed via Qualtrics (43% women and 57% men with a mean age of 37.5). To ensure a higher quality of responses, the questionnaire started with an attention check separating attentive from non attentive respondents (Oppenheimer, Meyvis and Davidenko, 2009; Paolacci, Chandler and Ipeirotis 2010). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions: (1) short affective, (2) short rational, (3) long affective, or (4) long rational theater play descriptions. Manipulations were carefully chosen by creating four descriptions of the same play. The short versions (126 words) consisted of a first common paragraph describing the play in an emotion-poor style, and a second paragraph which was manipulated in two ways. In the first case, the second paragraph was affect-laden (using words such as 'tragic, emotions, drama, desire or laugh'). It contained an artistic, color-rich blurred picture. In the second case, the manipulating paragraph contained rational words (e.g. learn, truth or real) and the same non-blurred image. The adjectives used in the manipulation were chosen based on the findings of the exploratory qualitative study. To keep the message length constant, both versions have been written so that both descriptions contained the same number of words. For the long version (202 words) two additional paragraphs were added to give more details about the theater play. They were written in a

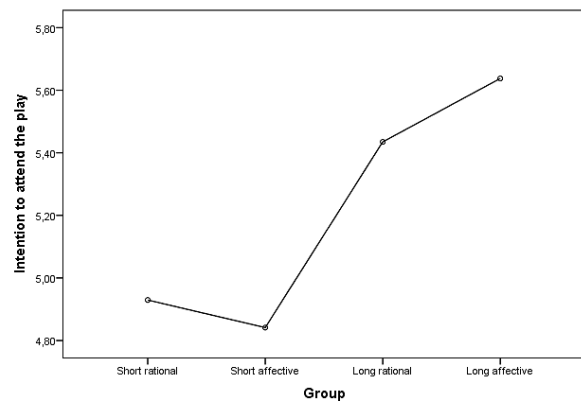
neutral (i.e. emotion-poor) style. The last paragraph contained the same manipulation as in the short version, that is, an affect-laden or rational paragraph. Random assignment to one of the four conditions was ensured using Qualtrics.

Measures. After reading the description, respondents answered a scale measuring their intention to attend the play (Cronbach's alpha = .97, M = 5.21, SD = 1.41). To ensure construct validity, we added manipulation checks. We asked respondents to rate the extent to which they perceived the message to be short and affective on 7-point Likert scales. Then, they answered the same scales as in study 1 about their anticipated positive emotions (Cronbach's alpha = .86; M = 4.9, SD = 1.263), their anticipated negative emotions (Cronbach's alpha = .84, M = 2.71, SD = 1.42), their cognitive expectations (Cronbach's alpha = .86, M = 5.30, SD = 1.34) and their subjective knowledge (Cronbach's alpha = .83, M = 5.14, SD = 1.03). Finally, we measured expertise as a control variable using 4 (i.e. general knowledge; Cronbach's alpha = .94, M = 4.20, SD = 1.51; N'Gobo and Aurier, 1999).

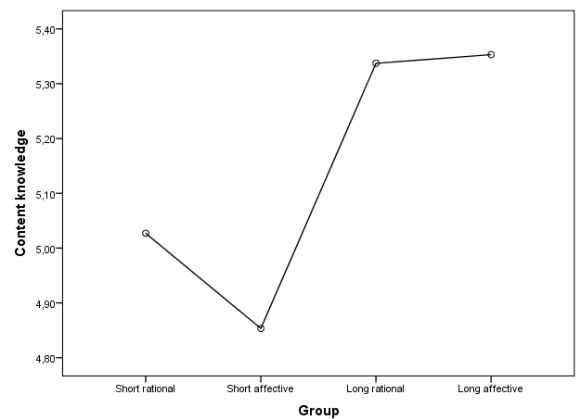
Results. To meet the study's objectives, we first performed regressions and mediation analyses. We then looked at the effects of manipulations using one-way ANOVAs. First, this study's results confirm the results found in study 1, demonstrating that an increase in individuals' content knowledge influences anticipated positive emotions ($\beta = .629, p < .01$), and cognitive expectations ($\beta = .902, p < .01$). Content knowledge has no

significant impact on negative emotions. In addition to these results, the findings indicate the impact of cognitive expectations ($\beta = .737, p < .01$), anticipated positive emotions ($\beta = .645, p < .01$), and anticipated negative emotions ($\beta = -.222, p < .01$) on individuals' intention to attend the play. For the mediation analysis we used Hayes' macro (Hayes, 2012; process model 4). We observed that the intention of attending the play was mediated by positive anticipated emotions ($a = .629, p < .01, b = .379; p < .01, c' = .638; p < .05$), negative anticipated emotions, and cognitive expectations ($a = .904; p < .01, b = 0.521, p < .01; c' = 0.407; p < .01$). We obtain an indirect effect of 0.238 for the mediation via anticipated positive emotions and 0.469 for the mediation via cognitive expectations.

Secondly, ANOVAs were conducted on the basis of the intention to attend the play by comparing the four groups (short



Covariates : Gender = 1,57, Age = 37,5, Expertise = 4,2053



Covariates : Gender = 1,57, Age = 37,5, Expertise = 4,2053

Table II Supported hypotheses

Hypothesis	Supported
H9	Partially
H10	Partially

rational, short affective, long rational, and long affective). First,	H11	Yes
manipulation checks showed a significant difference in perceived	H12	Yes
message length ($p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .068$). By controlling for age,	H13	Yes
gender and level of expertise, we observe that respondents exposed	H14	Yes
to long descriptions had significantly more knowledge compared to		
individuals who read the short description ($p = .052$; $\eta^2 = .052$).		

They also have a significantly higher intention to attend the play ($p < .05$; $\eta^2 = .061$). However, we find no significant differences between the groups that were exposed to affective messages and the groups exposed to rational messages (cf. table 2).

4. General discussion and contributions

The results of this research confirm our hypotheses that delivering content knowledge about a play has a direct influence on visitors' theater experience before (cognitive expectations, anticipated emotions, intention to attend the play) and an indirect influence after the play (emotional reaction and satisfaction). Getting information about the play in advance increases their positive anticipated emotions and decreases negative anticipated emotions. We also observe that providing much information (i.e. message length) increases individuals' intention to attend the play. However, our findings suggest that there is a threshold to be respected. Indeed, in a cultural context, we find that if expectations are set too high, satisfaction decreases. In line with previous research, individuals forge expectations, thus a belief about future performances (Olson and Dover, 1979) as a result of information processing (LaTour and Peat, 1979) and promises made by the organizers (Woodruff et al., 1991). These comparison standards set the level of expectations or standards. The disconfirmation theory explains that if the performance meets or exceeds the level of standards, visitors are satisfied (Oliver, 1981). Conversely, if the performance does not manage to reach the comparison standard level, satisfaction will decrease, as suggested by Sherif and Hovlan (1961). Our results suggest not only that theories on product satisfaction apply to the service area but also show the contradictory role of information provided by theater organizations. Services are subjectively evaluated. Satisfaction and expectations are thus more difficult to control compared to product expectations. Indeed, we find that providing much information about the performance increases visitors' expectations (affective and cognitive) and also their intention to attend the play, but risk to reduce their satisfaction if standard levels are set too high.

Our results also highlight the relevance of affective priming in the evaluation of performance. Priming visitors' anticipated emotions increases their positive emotions felt during the play and reduces their negative emotions. According to the priming paradigm, by addressing these emotions in the descriptive flyers of the play before the performance, descriptive flyers not only activate but also enhance positive emotions, which in turn generates a better overall experience. These findings encourage marketing professionals to guide theater visitors through their theater experience. However, using rational or affective wording to increase one or the other type of expectation appears to be non significant. This result can be explained by the distinctive characteristic of the consumption of cultural products. Moreover, previous research finds similar nonsignificant differences and shows that affective as well as rational manipulated adverts both increase consumers' emotions and both conduct to better product evaluation (Yoo et MacInnis, 2005).

From a theoretical perspective, our results contribute to extend studies using a double approach to study satisfaction in the cultural and service literature (cognitive and affective reactions). We developed Koenig-Lewis and Palmer's (2014) model and contribute by

explaining how cognitive and affective expectations may be influenced by the cultural organization through descriptions of the play that create content knowledge. Even though visitors' expectations are not taken into account in the production of cultural products, our findings show that visitors' expectations are shaped through the communication delivered by the company.

From a managerial perspective our results provide not only information about the importance of effective theater communication in the way visitors' experience a play, but also how this information should be designed. Our results show that the affective or rational aspect of the message is less important compared to the amount of information conveyed. Organizations should provide content information about the event as the message length positively increases consumers' intention to attend the play. However, companies should carefully handle this information as they risk to increase consumers' expectations to a level that leads to a dissatisfaction with the performance. The play should therefore not be entirely revealed through previous communications to leave room for the performance to exceed consumers' expectations.

Limitations for this research pertain to the specificity of the cultural context. We suggest that future research may be conducted in the service industry to understand to what extent the delivery of content knowledge may influence the service experience. Moreover, different types of experiences evoke different types of emotions. Even though we changed the type of play in study 1 and 2, affective reactions are context specific and should be studied across different types of experiences (e.g. stressful situations evoking negative anticipated emotions). It would also be interesting for future studies to analyze potential thresholds that may exist when delivering information to visitors. How much information is needed to convince individuals to attend the play and how much information is too much and decreases satisfaction? Finally, our results showed that expectations positively impact satisfaction suggesting that the experience exceeded visitors' expectations. It would be interesting for further research to test situations in which the experience is worse than expected.

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