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Beyond society's desire for a slowed-down temporal experience: Toward a nomological network of individuals' need-for deceleration

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Abstract

This study expands on past deceleration and slow consumption research by introducing and validating a measure of need-for-deceleration, an individual's motivational ability to engage in activities aimed at slowing down the perceived fast passage of time. Following initial scale development, two studies establish construct validity by placing need-for-deceleration into a nomological network. Results indicate that the measure correlated with, but was distinct from, variables involving negative affective states, such as state anxiety and neuroticism. Need-for-deceleration scores were not related to materialism, but negatively correlated with self-efficacy, life satisfaction, work-life balance, and conscientiousness. Correlations were positive with need-for-uniqueness, future time orientation, and susceptibility to normative influence. Need-for-deceleration was also associated with regulatory focus (positively with prevention, and negatively with promotion focus). To explore criterion validity, a third study establishes associations between need-for-deceleration and consumer lifestyle variables. Developing and validating the scale can help researching and managing products relating to the consumption of time, wellness, mindfulness, and simplicity.

KEYWORDS
life satisfaction, motivation, need-for-deceleration, personality architecture, self, well-being, work-life-balance

We are enslaved by speed and have all succumbed to the same insidious virus: Fast Life, which disrupts our habits, pervades the privacy of our homes and forces us to eat Fast Foods. (Slow Food International, 1989).

1 | INTRODUCTION

Social acceleration theory posits that humankind is being subjected to an ever-increasing pace in the material, social, and cultural sphere (Rosa, 2013). Consequences of this accelerated passage of time include individual experiences of elevated levels of stress, general anxiety and burnout (Santomauro et al., 2021). In response, growing numbers of people express a desire to slow down, triggering initiatives such as the slow movement (Petrini, 2003), voluntary simplicity (Shaw & Newholm, 2002), and anticonsumption (Lee, 2022). Consumer lifestyle consequences include an increased demand for activities involving mindfulness (Heitmann et al., 2011), body-mind health (Wittchen & Hoyer, 2001) and more work-life balance (Valcour, 2007). Taken together, these developments are reflective of people's need to slow down their lives and consumption, at least occasionally.

Need-for-deceleration as a formal concept traces back to the experience of excessive busyness and lack of free time (Bellezza et al., 2017). It captures the motivation to escape stress associated with today's multitasking, time-pressured and fast-paced culture, and to focus on the essentials of life (Tomlinson, 2007). Sociology research has established social acceleration (Rosa, 2013), and consumer research has started exploring individual motives and behaviors (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). At the individual level, need-for-deceleration thus refers to a person's desire for a slowed-down temporal experience, which can be achieved by changing (i.e., adopting and avoiding) consumption (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). This perspective ties in research suggesting individual differences in the perceived passage of time in domains such as services management (Erdogan et al., 2012), tourism (Oh et al., 2014), and health management (Sirois & Hirsch, 2015). However, while previous research suggests individual differences in the need to decelerate, conspicuously missing from the literature is a variable directly related to a person's desire for slowing down the passage of time. Specifically, no scale exists for measuring individual need-for-deceleration, keeping scholars and practitioners from researching consumer behavior related to social acceleration.

To develop and validate such a scale, our work disaggregates the societal perspective (Hsu & Elliott, 2014; Rosa, 2013) to examine individual differences in need-for-deceleration as they might stem from social and personal factors (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). We adopt a self-regulation perspective, specifically, personality architecture theory (Cervone, 2004) as an integrative framework (Kuhl et al., 2006), to systematically place need-for-deceleration in a nomological network (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). This network reflects the extent to which our focal concept correlates with and is distinct from other individual-level differences that represent commonly studied variables of scholarly and managerial relevance.

Developing and validating an individual need-for-deceleration measure should be of considerable value to both research and practice. For example, such a scale can help to more effectively design, communicate, and price products and services relating to wellness, mindfulness, and simplicity. The scale can aid market segmentation by differentiating consumer groups that vary in their response to products that save or consume time (e.g., digital devices, social media, convenience products, and transportation means). Health managers may find it useful for developing programs for improving work-life balance. This is the contribution of our study, which develops a need-for-deceleration scale (Study 1a, b, c), tests its discriminant and convergent validity within a nomological network of personality and life indices (Study 2a, b), and provides initial evidence for criterion validity and marketing relevance (Study 3). Figure 1 illustrates our research model and empirical studies.

2 | CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 | Individual differences in need-for-deceleration

Rooted in social acceleration theory (Hsu & Elliott, 2014; Rosa, 2013), consumer deceleration has been detailed by Husemann and Eckhardt (2019a). Employing an ethnographic approach, the study explored how consumers actively pursue and experience a slowed-down experience of time through pilgrimage of El Camino de Santiago (Way of Saint James) in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. As such, deceleration represents a slowed-down temporal experience, which can be achieved by reducing certain parameters per unit of time, such as distance traveled (embodied deceleration), technology used (technological deceleration), and the number of episodes experienced (episodic deceleration; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a).

Individual need-for-deceleration has been extracted from consumer narratives describing a desire to slow down in a fast-paced society (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). The concept captures a motivational ability for adaptive behavior (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a), hereby representing an individual difference (Leary & Hoyle, 2009), similar to need-for-uniqueness, need-for-cognition, and need-for-touch. While need-for-deceleration may increase within a society overall (Osbaldiston, 2013; Rosa, 2013), it should be experienced individually. Individual differences may occur due to divergent perceptions of time (Lupu & Rokka, 2022), material goods and luxury (Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021), other people (Casais & Sousa, 2020), spirituality (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b), people's bodies (Cova, 2021), their identity and self (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). Adopting Husemann and Eckardt's (2019a, p.1143) original definition, and extending it to include personal drivers in addition to social factors, we define need-for-deceleration as a person's motivational ability to engage in activities aimed at slowing down the perceived fast passage of time.

Practical relevance is given to the need-for-deceleration concept through the growth of deceleration initiatives, most notably, the Slow Movement (Petrini, 2003). Perhaps the most important initiative in the field, the Slow Movement presents a critique of societal acceleration (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010), but additionally stands for responsible consumption (Thompson & Kumar, 2021), mindfulness, and enjoyment (Heitmann et al., 2011). To date, the Slow movement includes Slow Food (Osbaldiston, 2013), Slow Tourism (Oh et al., 2014), Slow Cities (Bekar et al., 2015), Slow Fashion (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013), and Slow Brewing (Jones et al., 2003; Petrini, 2003).

2.2 | Personality architecture as a conceptual framework

To organize concepts in our nomological network, we adopt a self-regulation perspective (Kuhl et al., 2006); personality architecture

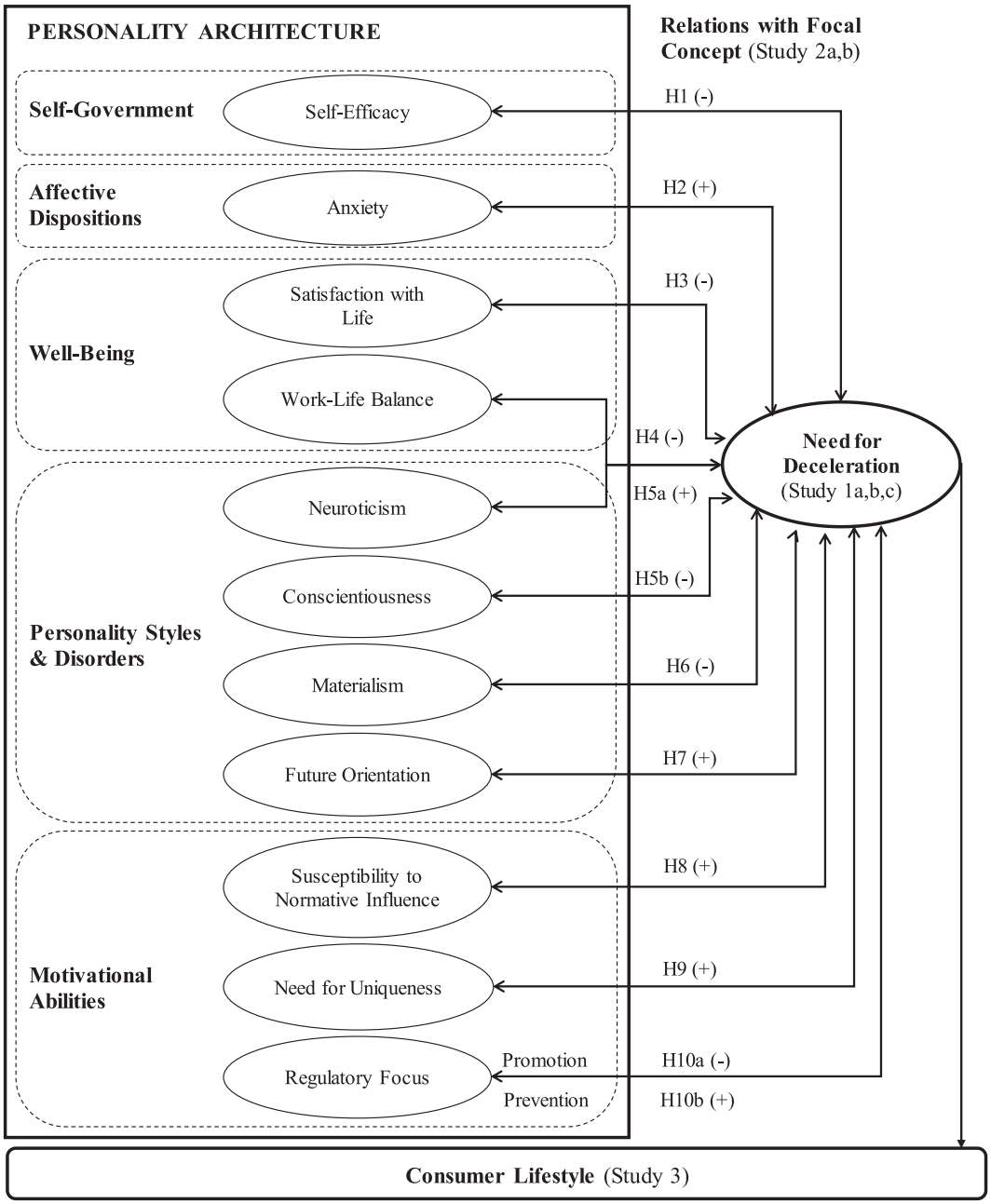

FIGURE 1 Research model and empirical studies.

presents an integrative theoretical framework (Cervone, 2004). This choice is consistent with our core proposition that need-for-deceleration captures a motivational ability to self-regulate behavior aimed at slowing down the perceived fast passage of time.

Theories of personality architecture organize the mental systems that shape a person's enduring, distinctive patterns of experience and action (Cervone, 2004). Unlike theories of personality structure, which focus on between-person taxonomic models, personality architecture centers on processes within the person (Cervone, 2004). Therefore, personality architecture theory is ideally suited for the study of self-regulation (Kuhl et al., 2006).

Self-regulation aids people in adapting to their environment. Effective self-regulation fosters health-promoting behaviors (Sirois & Hirsch, 2015), psychological well-being (Howell et al., 2010), job performance (Porath & Bateman, 2006), and consumer behavior (Vohs et al., 2008). To better understand human motivation and regulatory behavior, personality architecture theories integrate insights from cognitive science, motivation science, and personality psychology into a single framework (Cervone, 2004). The framework distinguishes between five main groups of personality characteristics: (1) self-government (volitional components relating to self-regulation, goal enactment, self-control, self-access, life stress and action control), (2) affective dispositions (affective and dispositional states,

including mood), (3) well-being (affective and physical states), (4) personality styles and disorders (cognitive-emotional styles affecting primary responses), and (5) motivational abilities (enactment of power, achievement and affiliation). From a self-regulation perspective, insights into the nomological network of need-for-deceleration should account for personality characteristics from all of those groups (Kuhl et al., 2006). Accordingly, we examine self-efficacy (self-government), anxiety (affective dispositions), satisfaction with life and work-life-balance (well-being), two of the big five of human personality (neuroticism and conscientiousness), materialism, future orientation (personality styles), need-for uniqueness, susceptibility to normative influence and regulatory focus (motivational abilities). These concepts were selected because they represent commonly studied variables of scholarly and managerial relevance most likely to overlap with or diverge from our focal concept.

2.3 | Self-Government: Self-efficacy

A major general functional area of self-government relates to self-efficacy (Kuhl et al., 2006), a person's "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1995, p. 2). Self-efficacy reflects the view that exercising control over one's own behavior is not a matter of willpower but of personal agency and the self-assurance to use it effectively (Bandura, 2000). Central to self-efficacy is a process where people compare their personal standards against actual performance, hereby evaluating how satisfied they are with the outcome of a specific action aimed at meeting standards. Ultimately, self-efficacy determines whether a behavior will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained (Bandura, 2000). The influence of self-efficacy on consumer thoughts, actions, and emotions is well documented (e.g., Machin et al., 2019).

We expect that individual need-for-deceleration will be negatively associated with general self-efficacy. This prediction draws from close correlations between general self-efficacy and time management, as people high in self-efficacy are better in organizing their lives (Afsaneh et al., 2019), and are generally more successful (Chen et al., 2001). High self-efficacy promotes individual awareness that one is responsible for one's destiny and that one can do what one wants to do (Kuijer & De Ridder, 2003). Such better time-management capabilities of high self-efficacy individuals should stand counter to perceptions of an increased passage of time. In contrast, individuals low in self-efficacy should be more likely to experience a faster passage of time due to their lack of time management skills, thereby increasing their need to decelerate.

Further support for this view comes from self-efficacy's role in well-being, as high levels of self-efficacy enable people to have self-confidence, self-respect and to be emotionally resilient (Singh et al., 2019). Self-efficacy increases life satisfaction and decreases loneliness (Caprara et al., 2020), and generally enables people to better cope with stressful situations and challenges (Gallagher et al., 2020). These properties of self-efficacy relating to well-being, regulation of stress, self-esteem, better physical condition, and better adaptation to the environment (Bandura, 1995) suggest a buffering capacity against the stressful experience of an accelerated passage of time and thus an elevated need to slow down.

Taken together, self-efficacy helps an individual to gain personal mastery while giving necessary strength to face adverse situations in life (Newman et al., 2019). Hence, high self-efficacy and the belief in one's ability to control events, should be negatively associated with a person's desire for slowing down the perceived excessive passage of time. Formally:

H1: Self-efficacy will be negatively related to need-for-deceleration.

2.4 | Affective dispositions: Anxiety

Relating need-for-deceleration to anxiety draws from the importance and global prevalence of generalized anxiety as a chronic disorder (Santomauro et al., 2021) along with the distortions in temporal experience commonly reported by people with anxiety disorders (Mioni et al., 2016). Diagnostic characteristics of anxiety include excessive worrying and hypervigilance over extended periods of time; consequences include reduced work productivity, social impairment, increased use of health care services, and higher rates of comorbidity (Wittchen & Hoyer, 2001). Linking anxiety with need-for-deceleration, highly anxious people tend to overestimate the passage of time (Sarigiannidis et al., 2020). According to the internal clock theory of time perception (Treisman et al., 1990), a person's internal clock is characterized as the subjectively experienced (rather than physically measured) time passage, which can be influenced by disorders (Blom et al., 2021). Disorder-specific arousal, as it is diagnostic for anxiety, can induce time distortion, leading to an inaccurate subjective estimate of time passage (Wearden, 2015). Anxiety thus distorts individual perception of time passage such that people feel that time is passing faster than normal (Mioni et al., 2016; Sarigiannidis et al., 2020). Integrating the capacity of general anxiety to induce perception of an accelerated passage of time with a perceived loss of control over the passage of time and the resulting need-for-deceleration as core characteristics of need-for-deceleration (Lupu & Rokka, 2022), we expect a positive association. Formally:

H2: Anxiety will be positively related to need-for-deceleration.

2.5 | Well-being

2.5.1 | Life satisfaction

Happiness is a critical goal for people around the world (Diener & Diener, 2009). In line with scholarly research (Diener et al., 1999),

periodical reports of happiness levels commonly utilize life satisfaction as a measure of happiness (Tsai, 2009), and as a key indicator of subjective well-being (Krasko et al., 2020).

Relating need-for-deceleration to life satisfaction accounts for the concept's importance to society (Tsai, 2009), people (Krasko et al., 2020), and marketing (see Erdogan et al., 2012, for a review), along with its role as an indicator of a person's capacity to deal with stress (Brand et al., 2010; Roche & Haar, 2013). Satisfaction can be broadly defined as one's affective and cognitive evaluation of a target (Schleicher et al., 2004). Life satisfaction is characterized by a prevalence of positive affect and an absence of negative affect (Kuppens et al., 2008). Important to the present context, life satisfaction correlates with reduced mortality (Chida & Steptoe, 2008), sounder sleep (Brand et al., 2010) and less burnout (Roche & Haar, 2013). These stress-related correlates of life satisfaction should be indicative of a negative association with need-for-deceleration, as consumers who are more satisfied with life should be less likely to experience life as excessively fast-paced and stressful (i.e., the negative affect), thereby exhibiting a lesser motivation to escape. Formally:

H3: Life satisfaction will be negatively related to need-for-deceleration.

2.5.2 | Satisfaction with work-life balance

Related to overall life satisfaction is a person's satisfaction with work-life balance (Grawitch et al., 2013). We link the concept to need-for-deceleration for the same reasons: it is important to society and people, and a key indicator of a person's ability to handle stress (Shaw & Newholm, 2002). Work–life balance refers to the compatibility of one's work role with other life domains, especially family and leisure (Valcour, 2007). When people report high levels of work–life balance, they perceive their work life and nonwork life as overall compatible. Compatibility perceptions capture whether participation in one role inhibits or enhances one's ability to fulfill obligations in another role, as well as the extent to which resources expended in these roles are consistent with the relative value people place on them (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

Linking satisfaction with work-life balance with need-for-deceleration, research on voluntary simplicity and down-shifting shows that shifting time allotments from work to life (and vice versa) entails changes in happiness (Shaw & Newholm, 2002). Given that work–life interface perceptions include both negative (e.g., conflict, negative spillover) and positive (e.g., facilitation and positive spillover) exchanges (McNall et al., 2010), elevated levels of work-life satisfaction should be associated with lower levels of need-for-deceleration. In contrast, lower satisfaction levels should be associated with higher levels of need-for-deceleration. Paralleling the relation with life satisfaction, we expect a negative association between work-life balance and need-for-deceleration as an imbalance between the realms of work and nonwork should be more likely to come with elevated stress levels and perceptions of a lack of free time, hence motivating people to slow down and concentrate on the essentials of life:

H4: Satisfaction with work-life balance will be negatively related to need-for-deceleration.

2.6 | Personality styles

2.6.1 | Big five

Personality predispositions, such as the ones captured in the Big Five Model (McCrae & Costa, 1987), are commonly utilized by researchers as well as practitioners, highlighting their importance. For this reason, we examine two prominent traits that should associate with need-for-deceleration through the experience of and coping with stress (Armon et al., 2012). More specifically, individuals with certain personality traits may self-select into more stressful and time-pressured occupations (Alarcon et al., 2009), and may be predisposed to experience stressors more intensely, correlating with a higher need-for-deceleration.

Neuroticism, one of the big five factors of human personality (McCrae & Costa, 1987), is typically described as the disposition to interpret events negatively (Watson & Clark, 1984). Tracing back to neuroticism is an increased tendency to experience emotional exhaustion (Sosnowska et al., 2019) and burnout (Armon et al., 2012), a predisposition likely relating to elevated need-for-deceleration levels. In addition to impacting the experience of stress, neuroticism impairs coping with stressors (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007), possibly promoting the desire for a slowed-down experience. Formally:

H5a: Neuroticism will be positively related to need-for-deceleration.

Conflicting predictions can be made on the association between conscientiousness and need-for-deceleration. From a coping perspective, conscientiousness predisposes a person to handle stress more efficiently, suggesting conscientiousness serves as a protective factor from stress through its influence on coping strategy selection (Bartley & Roesch, 2011). For example, using more problem-focused coping, and thus experiencing more positive affect, individuals higher in conscientiousness report better health (Luo & Roberts, 2015). Conscientiousness may thus act as a buffer against the stressful experience of an accelerated passage of time, suggesting a negative association with need-for-deceleration.

In contrast, research on the experience of (rather than coping with) stress has linked conscientiousness with perception of an accelerated passage of time: With people high on conscientiousness the subjective experience of time is distorted such that "time seems to fly"; they are so fully focused on what they do that they forget everything else around them (Hancock et al., 2019). Arguably, such

experiences lead people to seek deceleration after extended periods of accelerated time passage, suggesting a positive association with need-for-deceleration. Further detailing the ambiguous relation, order and industriousness, two facets of conscientiousness, relate positively to the experience of stressors, whereas responsibility, a third facet, relates positively to greater confidence in one's ability to deal with stressors (Gartland et al., 2012). Taken together, we expect that the buffering capacity of conscientiousness in coping will offset or even overcome the accelerated passage of time and elevated levels of stress experienced by highly conscientious people, leading to an overall negative association with need-for-deceleration. Formally:

H5b: Conscientiousness will be negatively related to need-for-deceleration.

2.6.2 | Materialism

We link need-for-deceleration with materialism to account for its fundamental importance in society and marketing (Belk, 2020), and because materialism can manifest itself through the consumption of time (Michaelidou et al., 2022). A substantial body of research has focused on materialism (see Shrum et al., 2022, for a review), which has been theorized as an individual difference variable, specifically, the belief in the importance of possessions in life (Belk, 2020). Capturing a set of values, goals, and/or strivings (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Richins & Dawson, 1992) materialism can manifest itself through the acquisition of material goods (Shrum et al., 2022). Consumer culture research has extended this view to show that materialism can manifest itself through non-materialist activities that signal distance from material needs (Belk, 2020). Important to the present context, non-materialist activities include the consumption of time (Michaelidou et al., 2022). Materialism thereby includes valuing the consumption of temporal experiences as a way to signal status, build image, pursue happiness, and attain a sense of self-worth (Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021).

In line with the divergent materialism theorizing, we expect the association between materialism and need-for-deceleration may depend on an individual's viewpoint on materialistic versus non-materialistic (i.e., time) activities. With people valuing material possessions over nonmaterialistic ones (i.e., individuals scoring high on materialism according to its original conceptualization), the variable should negatively relate to need-for-deceleration. In contrast, we expect a positive correlation between need-for-deceleration and materialism with people who value time as an important way to signal status (i.e., the ones scoring high on materialism according to a dematerialized view). A person who believes that time is an important (nonmaterialistic) resource should thus be more likely to experience a higher need-for-deceleration as this desire is more consistent with conserving time as a valuable resource for deliberate spending. Formally:

H6: Materialism will be negatively related to need-for-deceleration.

2.6.3 | Future orientation

Need-for-deceleration should relate to future time orientation because (1) time has a fundamental meaning that varies among individuals and societies depending on their cultural background, education, religion and social class (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999), and (2) a person's perspective on time serves a self-regulatory purpose (Łowicki et al., 2018; Murrell & Mingrone, 1994). Temporal perspective is defined as an "often nonconscious process whereby the continual flow of personal and social experiences is assigned to temporal categories, or time frames, that help to give order, coherence, and meaning to those events" (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999, p. 1271). Temporal perspective can be reflected in a person's orientation towards the past, present or future (Usunier & Valette-Florence, 1994). Past-oriented people seek to maintain the status quo and tend to be more conservative, avoiding change (Usunier & Valette-Florence, 1994; Zimbardo & Boniwell, 2004) Present-orientated people live for the moment, are prone to become absorbed, focus more on achieving short-term goals, the immediate effects and consequences of an action, and act more impulsive (Murrell & Mingrone, 1994). Future-oriented individuals consider more temporally distant objectives, account more for anticipated future consequences of a decision, are less impulsive and less risk-taking (Bergadaa, 1990).

Temporal orientation and need-for-deceleration should be empirically associated through common self-regulatory purposes (Łowicki et al., 2018). Most notably, individuals with a future time orientation place more emphasis on success via goal-directed behavior, pay more attention to cues from their environment, and engage in activities to achieve these goals (Murrell & Mingrone, 1994). Impacting consumer behavior, a future orientation makes buyers more prudent (Karande & Merchant, 2012) and reduces their innovativeness (Pecot et al., 2018). At a more general level, future time orientation results in elevated well-being and higher resistance to demanding life situations (Burzynska & Stolarski, 2020).

Adopting a self-regulatory perspective suggests that need-for-deceleration should be positively associated with a future orientation as consumers who focus on temporally distant events and objectives should be more likely to experience present times as stressful, seeking ways to slow down to avoid becoming overwhelmed. This view is consistent with reports that people balance their time perspective in pursuit of having a good life, being well and having positive experiences (Zimbardo & Boniwell, 2004). Formally:

H7: Future time orientation will be positively related to need-for-deceleration.

2.7 | Motivational abilities

2.7.1 | Susceptibility to normative influence

Linking need-for-deceleration with a consumer's susceptibility to normative influence builds on the notion that constant exposure and the tendency to conform to the expectations of others can be stressful (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence has been defined as "the need to identify or enhance one's image with significant others through the acquisition and use of products and brands, the willingness to conform to the expectations of others regarding purchase decisions and/or the tendency to learn about products and services by observing others and/or seeking information from others." (Bearden et al., 1989, p. 474). Originally conceived and conceptualized in social psychology (e.g., Deutsch & Gerard, 1955) a person's susceptibility to interpersonal influence has been adopted by consumer researchers as a pivotal concept in understanding interpersonal influence on consumer response to marketing cues (e.g., Orth & Kahle, 2008). Typically operationalized through Bearden et al.'s (1989) scale, the construct captures an enduring individual difference consisting of two dimensions, one informational and the other normative. Several consumer studies have treated normative and informational influence as separate constructs (e.g., Sen et al., 2001). Informational influence is indicated by a tendency to accept information from referent others as being indicative of reality (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Normative influence captures the tendency to conform to the expectations of others (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975), including the need to utilize products and brands to enhance one's social image (Bearden et al., 1989). The tendency to conform to the expectations of others (normative influence), should be positively correlated with need-for-deceleration as consumers may experience the multiple and multifaceted expectations of others as stressful, contributing to a lack of free time, and motivating them to escape today's multitasking, time-pressured and fast-paced culture:

H8: Susceptibility to normative influence will be positively related to need-for-deceleration.

2.7.2 | Need-for-uniqueness

The desire to distinguish oneself from others is a major motivator of consumer behavior (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). Need-for-deceleration should be associated with distinctiveness motivation because need-for-uniqueness integrates a number of divergent aspects (e.g., appearance, individual qualities, traits, and abilities; Vignoles et al., 2006), with deceleration presenting an alternative and distinctive form of consumption (Edensor, 2010; Heitmann et al., 2011; Oh et al., 2014; Osbaldiston, 2013).

People motivated by distinctiveness diverge from others in their consumption as they communicate their identity (Berger & Heath, 2007). In line with the view of products as extensions of people's selves (Belk, 1988) and as signals of their identity (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980), the motivation to pursue differentness varies across individuals, an idea captured in the consumer need-for-uniqueness construct (Tian et al., 2001). Need-for-uniqueness has been defined as "an individual's pursuit of differentness relative to others that is achieved through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one's personal and social identity" (Tian et al., 2001, p. 50.). Rooted in three dimensions (creative choice counter-conformity, unpopular choice counter-conformity, and avoidance of similarity), need-for-uniqueness has the capacity to predict a variety of consumer decisions (Ruvio et al., 2008).

Research on Slow Food, Slow Tourism, Slow Cities, and Slow Fashion shows that deceleration can be seen as an alternative form of consumption (Heitmann et al., 2011; Oh et al., 2014; Osbaldiston, 2013). Consumers acknowledge that deliberately decelerating presents a divergent form of consumption in that it poses "alternative modes of spending time, different pacing and pulses which critique normative, disciplinary rhythms and offer unconventional, sometimes utopian visions of different temporalities" (Edensor, 2010, p.16). Deceleration should thus appeal to people's need-for-uniqueness. Specifically, consumers high in need-for-uniqueness may view the deliberate and slow consumption of time as a means to express identity and self through counter-conformity and dissimilarity to others. This line of thought is consistent with the Slow Movement representing a critique of mainstream society (Heitmann et al., 2011) and the capacity of slowing down to aid consumers in restoring the self (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a).

Consumer need-for-uniqueness has been conceptualized along three dimensions (Tian et al., 2001): Referring to a person's ability to use products in creating a personal style and expressing self-image in an imaginative way, creative choice counter-conformity manifests itself by consumption selections that are likely to be valued as unique. Referring to a consumer's use of products that deviate from social norms, unpopular choice counter-conformity choices entail the risk of social disapproval but could still enhance self- and social-image. Avoidance of similarity, the third dimension reflects an effort to avoid using commonly adopted products. Given that the three dimensions trace back to a single latent construct (need-for-uniqueness), with empirical studies consistently reporting correlations between the three dimensions, we expect need-for-deceleration to uniformly and positively be associated with each of the dimensions. Arguably, a person's motivation to deliberately slow consumption of time may correspond, in part, with the desire to express identity and self through counter-conformity and lesser similarity to others. Formally:

H9: Need-for-uniqueness (creative choice, unpopular choice, avoidance of similarity) will be positively related to need-for-deceleration.

2.7.3 | Regulatory focus

Regulatory focus complements our self-regulatory perspective on need-for-deceleration. According to regulatory focus theory

(Higgins, 1997), people are endowed with two motivational systems, each tracing back to a set of unique fundamental needs. One system is rooted in individual needs for nurturance and growth, bringing about a focus on promotion. Such a focus motivates people to primarily pursue positive outcomes (i.e., gains). In contrast, the second system, rooted in needs for safety and security, entails a focus on prevention. A prevention focus motivates people to primarily concentrate on avoiding negative outcomes (i.e., losses). These two systems are independent (a person can be either strong or weak in both domains) and malleable (e.g., people tend to maintain a chronic regulatory focus, but it can also vary across situations). Through regulatory fit (Aaker & Lee, 2006), regulatory focus influences goal selection and pursuit (see Higgins et al., 2020, for a review), as well as preferences, actions and opinions (Haws et al., 2010).

We expect divergent associations between need-for-deceleration and the two regulatory systems based on previous work on regulatory focus and temporal distance (Pennington & Roese, 2003; Xu & Chen, 2020). Specifically, temporal distance aspects of regulatory focus may predispose individuals to differentially respond to threats (Chen et al., 2020; Kim, 2022; Kim & Kim, 2022). In general, promotion focus tends to predominate for temporally distant goals, whereas proximal goals are characterized by more balanced consideration of both promotion- and prevention-focused concerns (Pennington & Roese, 2003). Need-for-deceleration is often characterized by the desire for a fast relief from time pressure (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a). The stressful experience of accelerated time passage, as indicative for individuals high in need-for-deceleration, should relate to short-term goals typical for prevention focus. Conversely, consumers with a strong promotion focus aspire to achieve goals in the future and are prepared to accept higher risks to achieve these goals. With these goals in mind, they are less concerned about current barriers. Due to this emphasis on temporally distant goals, promotion focus should be negatively related to need-for-deceleration. This line of thought further ties in with reports that individuals tend to adopt more of a promotion focus when considering to actively approach a temporally distant event (compared to the event approaching them), especially when the event is positively valanced (Xu & Chen, 2020). However, when the event is negative, considering to actively approach it is more likely to evoke a prevention focus (Xu & Chen, 2020). Integrating research on temporal aspects of regulatory focus with need-for-deceleration studies thus suggests that need-for-deceleration should be negatively associated with promotion focus, in which one becomes sensitive to potential future gains in the environment (Higgins, 1997). In contrast, need-for-deceleration should be positively associated with a prevention focus because the need for slowing down the passage of time is more consistent with sensitivity to potential immediate losses in the environment (Higgins, 1997). Formally:

H10a: Promotion focus will be negatively related to need-for-deceleration.

H10b: Prevention focus will be positively related to need-for-deceleration.

3 | EMPIRICAL STUDIES

3.1 | Initial scale development (Study 1a, b, and c)

Closely adhering to established scale development procedures (Churchill, 1979), the quantitative measure for need-for-deceleration was formed in a five-step approach (see Table 1), grounded in theory and by combining qualitative and quantitative methods. All scale items were stated in a way to best capture the kinds of language people used to describe their own experiences of rapid time passages and their need to slow down. To increase construct variance and decrease measurement error variance, actual items were assessed using a 7-point Likert scale (7 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree; Churchill & Peter, 1984).

Drawing from extant research, the initial need-for-deceleration scale included fifteen items obtained from Husemann and Eckhardt (2019a) and other publications (i.e., Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021; Casais & Sousa, 2020; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019b; Lupu & Rokka, 2022; Osbaldiston, 2013; Petrini, 2003; Rosa, 2013). More specifically, a large number of items taken from the literature (Step 1) was reduced by having a group of advanced business students review, reduce and hone the item battery (Step 2) to come up with a more manageable number. All items obtained through Steps 1 and 2 were devised to capture important experiential and motivational phenomena characterizing a person's need-for-deceleration (e.g., the feeling that a moment of rest and reflection is needed, a perceived desire for slowing down, experiences of time rushing by, and an aversion to slow and boring activities).

TABLE 1 Scale development procedure.

Step	Purpose	Number of items
1	Assembling a literature-based pool of scale items (i.e., Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a; other publications).	15
2	Adjusting and reducing number of items with a group of advanced business students.	13
3	Study 1a: Further reducing the number of items: In-depth interviews with expert judges ($N = 11$); content analysis.	10
4	Study 1b ($N = 127$ students): Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) → Scale purification and reduction.	5
5	Study 1c ($N = 621$ consumers): CFA for further validation of the scale.	5

3.1.1 | Scale development Study 1a—depth interviews

In Step 3, the selection of measurement items was further informed by a series of in-depth interviews with 11 experts thought to be familiar with the concept of deceleration due to their professional background and life stage (i.e., digital detox counselor, priest, scholar, Slow Brewing founder, Slow City representative, Slow Food representative, pilgrimage manager, psychotherapist, student, yoga teacher, young mother). Using a semistructured format, the interviews lasted between 15 and 40 min ($M = 25$ min), and generated insights into definition and relevance of the concept.

Content analysis of the recorded and transcribed data revealed that all respondents could easily relate to and detail need-for-deceleration, yielding a number of individual descriptions. Important, using participant feedback aided in shortening the scale to 10 items (see Table 2). Other responses (see Appendix A1 for verbatims) pointed at antecedents and consequences, differences between people, and variation over time. Important, when prompted to identify possible consequences, participants mentioned a diverse set of lifestyle activities and behaviors deemed suitable for satisfying the need-for-deceleration and slowing down.

In summary, Study 1a depth interviews corroborated the common experience and importance of need-for-deceleration, yielding a reduced scale. Moreover, interviewees identified cognitions and behaviors aimed at dealing with a high need-for-deceleration. Two subsequent quantitative studies (steps 4 and 5) further purified and validated the scale.

TABLE 2 Items of the need-for-deceleration scale.

Construct: Need-for-deceleration	Loading
1. I understand how to pause and enjoy the moment.	−0.038
2. I have enough time to think and reflect.	−0.166
3. I have a frequent desire for periods of peace and quiet.	0.607
4. I often experience the feeling that time flies by.	0.414
5. I regularly experience moments when time seems to stand still.	−0.040
6. I feel my life is rushing by.	0.606
7. I have a strong need for slowing down my life.	0.946
8. My need-for-deceleration is very high.	0.942
9. Having "little" to do is boring.	−0.338
10. "Slow" (Food, Travel, Brewing, etc.) is right up my alley.	0.420

Note: Factor loadings based on confirmatory factor analysis (Study 1b). Bold items denote the final 5-item need-for-deceleration scale.

3.1.2 | Scale development Studies 1b and 1c

For Study 1b, to refine and reduce the 10 item-scale, 133 consumers were recruited through social media. Data from six consumers were subsequently dropped due to failed attention checks ("Please mark "2" on this scale."; Litman et al., 2015), leaving a sample of $N = 127$ for analyses (57% females; mean age = 28.4 years, standard deviation [SD] = 10.7 years). Confirmatory factor analysis on all ten items indicated an insufficient fit of the model ($\chi^2(35) = 158.034$, CFI = 0.78, RMSEA = 0.17, $\alpha = 0.52$, AVE = 0.32; see Table 2). Given the unsatisfactory fit, we followed Gerbing and Anderson (1988), successively eliminating five items to obtain a better scale ($\chi^2(5) = 66.77$, CFI = 0.84, RMSEA = 0.31, $\alpha = 0.85$, AVE = 0.57).

Study 1c further validated this shorter scale with a second consumer sample ($N = 621$, 74% females, mean age = 23.4 years, SD = 9.5 years) recruited from a commercial panel. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated the five-item need-for-deceleration scale provided the best solution and a good fit ($\chi^2(5) = 179.535$, CFI = 0.891, RMSEA = 0.237, $\alpha = 0.827$, AVE = 0.534). Items and item-to-factor loadings are shown in Table 3. We take these findings to mean our measurement instrument is reliable and applicable, and employed the 5-item scale in subsequent studies to test its validity.

3.1.3 | Discussion of Study 1a, b, c findings

Setting out with a larger pool of items and reducing the battery to five items in a series of systematic steps, we developed a new and

TABLE 3 Key statistics for the 5-item need-for-deceleration scale.

Items	Factor loadings				
	Study 1b	Study 1c	Study 2a	Study 2b	Study 3
I have a strong need for slowing down my life.	0.601	0.515	0.592	0.903	0.903
I often experience the feeling that time flies by.	0412	0.456	0.616	0.496	0.767
I feel my life is rushing by.	0.606	0.560	0.712	0.630	0.758
I have a frequent desire for periods of peace and quiet.	0.953	0.963	0.680	0.518	0.793
My need for deceleration is very high.	0.938	0.910	0.713	0.910	0.912
Cronbach's alpha	0.854	0.827	0.794	0.839	0.886

Note: Factor loadings based on confirmatory factor analysis.

reliable measure of individual need-for-deceleration. To further validate the measure, two additional studies were designed to establish construct validity in a nomological network.

3.2 | Nomological network Study 2a—student sample

3.2.1 | Sample and measures

To test hypotheses and to map a nomological network, Study 2a employed an online survey of 199 students in Germany (21.9 years of mean age, 54.3% females). In exchange for course credit, participants completed established measures for general anxiety disorder (Spitzer et al., 2006), life satisfaction (Margolis et al., 2019), satisfaction with work-life balance (Valcour, 2007), materialism (Richins & Dawson, 1992), future time orientation (Usunier & Valette-Florence, 1994), susceptibility to normative influence (Bearden et al., 1989), consumer need-for-uniqueness (Ruvio et al., 2008), self-efficacy (Chen et al., 2001), age, and biological sex. Scale items were presented in randomized order.

Confirmatory factor analysis indicated an acceptable fit of the model fit ($\chi^2(1655) = 2588.055$, $\chi^2/df = 1.56$, CFI = 0.86, RMSEA = 0.05). In addition, the results (see Table 4) indicate discriminant validity as each construct's average variance extracted (AVE) exceeds the maximum of the squared correlations with all latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). To facilitate analyses, factor indices were obtained by mean-computing item scores.

3.2.2 | Hypotheses tests

Relations between need-for-deceleration and other constructs were examined by employing correlation analyses. The results (Table 5) indicate that need-for-deceleration correlates significantly and positively with anxiety ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$), future time orientation ($r = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$), and the creative choice dimension of need-for-uniqueness ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$). Positive but marginal correlations were found with susceptibility to normative influence ($r = 0.13$, $p < 0.10$) and similarity avoidance ($r = 0.14$, $p < 0.10$). Significant and negative correlations emerged with self-efficacy ($r = -0.24$, $p < 0.01$), life satisfaction ($r = -0.35$, $p < 0.01$), and satisfaction with work-life balance ($r = -0.36$, $p < 0.01$). Correlations with materialism and unpopular choice were nonsignificant ($p > 0.10$).

3.2.3 | Discussion of Study 2a findings

Data obtained in a survey with students provides initial insights into the nomological network of need-for-deceleration. Significant correlations in the predicted direction were found for all constructs, except materialism. To further validate these findings, another study was

TABLE 4 Convergent and discriminant validity.

Construct	Study 2a				Study 2b			
	α	AVE	r^2_{max}	F/L	α	AVE	r^2_{max}	F/L
Need-for-deceleration	0.794	0.443	0.293	yes	0.839	0.517	0.137	yes
Self-efficacy	0.898	0.530	0.315	yes	0.953	0.721	0.492	yes
Anxiety	0.880	0.523	0.293	yes	0.924	0.648	0.461	yes
Life satisfaction	0.865	0.521	0.315	yes	0.870	0.520	0.309	yes
Satisfaction with work-life balance	0.860	0.553	0.287	yes	0.951	0.795	0.276	yes
Big Five - Neuroticism					0.697	0.569	0.461	yes
Big Five - Conscientiousness					0.570	0.460	0.303	yes
Materialism	0.823	0.482	0.459	yes	0.864	0.556	0.515	yes
Future orientation	0.898	0.689	0.075	yes	0.931	0.773	0.264	yes
Susceptibility to normative influence	0.911	0.564	0.459	yes	0.953	0.723	0.515	yes
NfU - Creative choice	0.876	0.646	0.147	yes	0.920	0.748	0.435	yes
NfU - Unpopular choice	0.865	0.626	0.142	yes	0.936	0.790	0.435	yes
NfU - Avoidance of similarity	0.902	0.698	0.147	yes	0.925	0.760	0.189	yes
Promotion focus					0.807	0.522	0.492	yes
Prevention focus					0.783	0.649	0.264	yes

Note: Statistics are based on confirmatory factor analysis.

Abbreviations: α, Cronbach's alpha; AVE, average variance extracted; AVE > r^2_{max}, indicates discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981); NfU, need-for-uniqueness; r^2_{max}, highest squared correlation of this construct with all other constructs.

TABLE 5 Nomological network: Correlations with need-for-deceleration.

Personality architecture group construct	Study 2a	Study 2b
Self-government		
Self-efficacy	−0.24***	−0.28***
Affective disposition		
Anxiety	0.49***	0.49***
Well-being		
Life satisfaction	−0.35***	−0.30***
Satisfaction with work-life balance	−0.36***	−0.35***
Personality styles and disorders		
Big Five: Neuroticism		0.27***
Big Five: Conscientiousness		−0.17***
Materialism	0.01	−0.02
Future time orientation	0.19***	0.12**
Motivational abilities		
Susceptibility to normative influence	0.13*	0.11*
Need-for-uniqueness: creative choice	0.15**	0.20***
Need-for-uniqueness: unpopular choice	0.09	0.17***
Need-for-uniqueness: avoidance of similarity	0.14*	0.21***
Regulatory focus: Promotion		−0.13**
Regulatory focus: Prevention		0.34**

Note: Pearson-product-moment-correlation. Level of significance: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

designed to be seated in a different context and with consumers rather than students. In addition, the new study included constructs (conscientiousness, neuroticism, and regulatory focus) that were previously omitted, to expand the nomological network.

3.3 | Nomological network Study 2b—consumer sample

3.3.1 | Sample and measures

Study 2b employed an online survey of 297 American consumers recruited through Prolific. Data from four consumers were subsequently dropped due to failed attention checks (Litman et al., 2015), leaving a final sample of $N = 293$ ($M = 36.3$ years, SD = 11.9 years; 56.7% female, 41.3% male, and 2.0% diverse).

Scales and measures were identical to the ones used in Study 2a and included general anxiety disorder (Spitzer et al., 2006), life satisfaction (Margolis et al., 2019), satisfaction with work-life balance (Valcour, 2007), materialism (Richins & Dawson, 1992), future time orientation (Usunier & Valette-Florence, 1994), susceptibility to normative influence (Bearden et al., 1989), consumer need-for-uniqueness (Ruvio et al., 2008), and self-efficacy (Chen et al., 2001). Established measures of the Big Five personality dimensions neuroticism and conscientiousness (Gosling et al., 2003), as well as regulatory focus (Haws et al., 2010) were obtained from the literature.

Confirmatory factor analysis indicated a good model fit ($\chi^2(2240) = 3935.405$, $\chi^2/df = 1.757$, CFI = 0.901, RMSEA = 0.051). Additional results indicated discriminant validity as each construct's AVE exceeded the maximum of the squared correlations with all latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Given these findings, factor indices were obtained by mean-computing item scores. Table 4 holds key statistics.

3.3.2 | Hypotheses tests

To examine the relations between need-for-deceleration and other constructs, we employed correlation analyses (see Table 5). As with Study 2a, need-for-deceleration correlated significantly and positively with anxiety ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$), neuroticism ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), future time orientation ($r = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$), and prevention focus ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, our focal construct correlated significantly and positively with all three dimensions of need-for-uniqueness, specifically, creative choice ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$), avoidance of similarity ($r = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$), and unpopular choice ($r = 0.17$, $p < 0.01$). Significant and negative correlations were found for self-efficacy ($r = -0.28$, $p < 0.01$), life satisfaction ($r = -0.30$, $p < 0.01$), satisfaction with work-life balance ($r = -0.35$, $p < 0.01$), conscientiousness ($r = -0.17$, $p < 0.01$), and promotion focus ($r = -0.13$, $p < 0.05$). While the correlation between need-for-deceleration and susceptibility to normative influence was marginal ($r = 0.11$, $p < 0.10$), the correlation with materialism was—again—nonsignificant.

Taken together, these findings support H1 (self-efficacy), H2 (anxiety), H3 (life satisfaction), H4 (satisfaction with work-life balance), H5a and H5b (Big Five: neuroticism, conscientiousness), H7 (future time orientation), H9 (need-for-uniqueness), and H10a and H10b (regulatory focus: promotion focus/prevention focus). Support for the correlation with susceptibility to normative influence (H8) was weak, and no support was found for the correlation between need-for-deceleration and materialism (H6).

3.3.3 | Discussion of Study 2b findings

The findings of Study 2b with American consumers were remarkably similar to the ones obtained in Study 2a with a sample of students in Germany. Together, they validate the five-item need-for-deceleration scale and place it into a nomological network of personality architecture concepts. The correlations found between need-for-deceleration and established consumer personality traits appear valid, helping researchers and practitioners to better understand need-for-deceleration as an individual difference variable. Acknowledging this evidence for the concept's discriminant validity, we move on to exploring criterion validity.

3.4 | Criterion validity—Study 3

3.4.1 | Sample and measures

To provide initial evidence for the marketing relevance of our scale, Study 3 employed a one-factorial (high vs. low need-for-deceleration) experiment, relating need-for-deceleration to consumer lifestyle. A prestudy ($N = 60$) aided in developing stimuli for manipulating a person's need-for-deceleration. After several rounds of iterations, two vignettes, each combined with a visual, were selected. One stimulus showed a cartoon image of a hamster running in a wheel and highlighted day-to-day situations where time rushes by ($M_{\text{need-for-deceleration}} = 4.78$). The other stimulus showed an image of a sloth lounging on a tree branch and a text describing a situation where time passes slowly ($M_{\text{need-for-deceleration}} = 4.18$).

Participants of the main study were 470 consumers in Germany (35.3 years of mean age, 83.5% females; 19% single-households, 42% 2-person households, and 38% in households of three people and more). They were recruited through social media and flyers posted in public places. Incentives included a chance to win one of twenty coupons valued between 10 and 20 Euros and valid with a retailer of their choice. Randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions, participants completed the 5-item need-for deceleration scale ($M = 5.13$, SD = 1.35, $\alpha = 0.89$; IFC > 0.76)[1] as well as a 42-item lifestyle battery composed of the food-related lifestyle scale (Grunert, 1995), augmented by activities deemed relevant for deceleration (Shaw & Newholm, 2002). Control variables included liking of the animal shown in the vignette and text comprehension.

To check our manipulation, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) yielded a significant effect of the treatments (coded 0 = time passes slowly and 1 = time passes fast) on the need-for-deceleration measure ($F(1, 447) = 4.75$, $p = 0.030$), in the presence of a significant effect of text comprehension ($F = 13.4$, $p = 0.001$) and a non-significant effect of animal liking ($F = 0.48$, $p = 0.488$). We take these findings to mean that the manipulation was successful.

3.4.2 | Lifestyle correlates

Relations between need-for-deceleration and lifestyle variables were examined by employing correlation analyses. The results (see Appendix Table A4) indicate that our focal variable correlates significantly with a number of managerially relevant lifestyle variables. Specifically, correlations were significant and positive with *checking prices* ($r = 0.22$, $p = 0.001$), *relying on advertisements* ($r = 0.21$, $p = 0.001$), *compensatory eating* ($r = 0.20$, $p = 0.001$), *being influenced by others* ($r = 0.19$, $p = 0.001$), *disliking shopping* ($r = 0.18$, $p = 0.001$), *snacking* ($r = 0.17$, $p = 0.001$), *on sale purchase* ($r = 0.16$, $p = 0.001$), *planned cooking* ($r = 0.12$, $p = 0.009$), *energy drink consumption* ($r = 0.12$, $p = 0.013$), *unwillingness to change habits* ($r = 0.11$, $p = 0.001$), *food-to-go/delivery* ($r = 0.11$, $p = 0.001$), *taste importance* ($r = 0.11$, $p = 0.018$), and *frozen/convenience foods* ($r = 0.11$, $p = 0.021$). Marginal correlations were found with *chatting while having a meal* ($r = 0.09$, $p = 0.059$), whereas the correlation with *cooking as a social act* was significant and negative ($r = -0.10$, $p = 0.034$). We take these findings to mean that our scale has criterion validity.

[1]Pooling samples from Studies 1a,b,c, 2a,b, and 3, and computing scale characteristics ($N = 1{,}688$) provided further evidence for reliability and validity (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.891$, $M = 4.35$, SD = 1.38, IFCs > 0.768).

4 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

This paper introduces need-for-deceleration as a novel construct capturing an individual's desire to escape the stress associated with today's multitasking, time-pressured and fast-paced culture. A three-partite study aids in developing a measure, a second study establishes discriminant validity in a nomological network with two divergent samples, and a final study provides initial evidence for criterion validity.

From a methodological perspective, our quantitative studies unanimously confirm the psychometric suitability of the new scale. Beyond initial scale development, the nomological network studies demonstrate that the five-item scale is unidimensional and internally consistent. Fornell-Larcker tests provide evidence for convergent and discriminant validity. Together, the studies place the construct in a nomological network of personality and life indices. Except for one, empirical correlations with conceptually related constructs emerge as hypothesized, thereby providing strong support for construct validity. Presenting an exception, the correlation with materialism did not reach statistical significance. Further noteworthy is the finding that the correlation with a person's future orientation was only marginally significant. Important, significant correlations were consistent across two country settings; even the magnitudes of relationships were very similar across the two culturally divergent samples. We take this cross-cultural replication of the nomological network as strong support for the scale's stability and generalizability.

4.1 | Implications for theory

Our study offers a number of contributions to marketing theory. First, we find the personality architecture framework (Cervone, 2004) helpful for understanding the need-for-deceleration's nomological network. In the empirical studies, significant correlations emerged with constructs belonging to all five main groups within personality architecture. The strongest relationships emerged in the affective disposition group (with anxiety: $r_{S2a} = 0.49$, $r_{S2b} = 0.49$) and in the well-being group (with life satisfaction: $r_{S2a} = -0.35$, $r_{S2b} = -0.30$; and satisfaction with work-life balance: $r_{S2a} = -0.36$, $r_{S2b} = -0.35$). As theorized, the individual need to slow down comes with high levels of anxiety and dissatisfaction. Further, within the group of self-government, both studies reveal a strong negative correlation with self-efficacy ($r_{S2a} = -0.24$, $r_{S2b} = -0.28$), indicating that

need-for-deceleration is accompanied by feelings of being powerless and ineffective.

In the fourth group, motivational abilities, a set of variables correlated with need-for-deceleration, but associations were weaker. As expected, need-for-deceleration correlated positively with a person's susceptibility to normative influence. Further consistent with expectations, need-for-deceleration was significantly associated with the two dimensions of regulatory focus, correlating positively with prevention focus and negatively with promotion focus. Correlations with the three subdimensions of need-for-uniqueness were positive, as hypothesized, except for the unpopular choice subscale, which did not reach statistical significance with the German sample. Possibly, higher levels of individualism in the United States (relative to German society; Hofstede et al., 2010) promote a more positive and significant association with need-for-deceleration in the United States, but not Germany.

With regard to personality styles, the fifth and last group, results are less clear. In line with expectations, neuroticism correlates positively and conscientiousness correlates negatively with need-for-deceleration. Unexpectedly, the positive correlation with future orientation was only marginally significant. Arguably, need-for-deceleration represents a desire to change one's life situation in the future. It cannot be excluded, however, that this desire is accompanied by beliefs that the situation cannot be changed. Such a negative perspective on one's ability to impact future situations may dilute need-for-deceleration's generally positive relationship with future orientation.

Perhaps the most surprising finding is the nonsignificant relationship between need-for-deceleration and materialism. Because an accelerated life usually goes along with higher levels of consumption at a faster pace (Bergadaa, 1990), a link between materialism and need-for-deceleration appears plausible, if not likely. Yet, divergent predictions can be made regarding the direction of the association between both concepts. On one hand, consumerism and materialism may evoke stressful feelings, which in turn reduce consumer well-being (Dittmar et al., 2014). On the other hand, materialistic consumers tend to believe that consumption creates identity and gives meaning to their life (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002). The association between materialism and need-for-deceleration thus appears ambivalent, possibly explaining the nonsignificant relationships found in our studies. To better disentangle the relationship, it may be worthwhile to adopt a multidimensional perspective on materialism. For example, Richins and Dawson (1992) distinguish between the materialism dimensions of success, centrality, and happiness; Belk (1984) distinguishes between possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy. A more fine-grained analysis of the relationship between need-for-deceleration and specific dimensions might help to further detail the nomological network.

Our study contributes to the development and validation of a novel individual measure of need-for-deceleration. It hereby adds to social acceleration theory (Hsu & Elliott, 2014; Rosa, 2013), specifically, Husemann & Eckhardt's (2019a) initial study on consumer deceleration. Qualitative research (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a) suggested that individuals vary in their subjective need-for-deceleration; the social acceleration within a society should thus exert divergent effects on consumers depending on their individual needs. Employing consumer samples and surveys, the present study, for the first time, provides quantitative evidence for consumers' need-for-deceleration, embedded in a nomological network of personality and life indices. Equipped with this knowledge, the new scale will hopefully enable scholars to explore antecedents, consequences and boundary conditions for need-for-deceleration.

4.2 | Managerial implications

Our findings have implications for marketers who promote products related to the passage of time. Our study, for the first time, introduces a measure for quantitatively assessing individual need-for-deceleration. Doing so is important as the new insights provided by our study enable marketers across a number of contexts (e.g., beyond the slow movement) to better tailor products and communications to target audiences. Including need-for-deceleration as a new variable in psychology and marketing will assist in better understanding activities such as market segmentation, product/service design, communication, and pricing.

First, using the need-for-deceleration scale enables marketers to identify consumers who long for deceleration and who may be more open to products with a capacity to slow down their lives (i.e., slow tourism, slow food, etc.). Conversely, our study helps marketers to identify consumers prone to avoiding products that accelerate their lives (e.g., digital self-optimization gadgets). Identifying both types of consumers thus empowers market research to explore more in depth what offerings correspond to a consumer segment. Given that alternative consumption styles, including the slow movement, voluntary simplicity, minimalism or down-shifting are on the rise, obtaining such insights will better prepare marketers for the future.

Second, the nomological network centered on need-for-deceleration offers guidance for marketers on how to better address consumer segments that long for deceleration. Our study shows that consumers high in need-for-deceleration are additionally characterized by above-average levels of anxiety and low levels of life satisfaction. Remarkably, these consumers also strive to be unique, while simultaneously exhibiting higher levels of susceptibility to normative influence. To enhance effectiveness, marketers should adopt an integrative perspective on these characteristics when designing products and reflect them in their communication campaigns.

Finally, our findings should appeal to consumer policy makers. The associations found in the nomological network show that consumers high in need-for-deceleration also exhibit low self-efficacy. This correlation may be one of the reasons why they want to escape the accelerated societal pace and why they wish to slow down their lives. Campaigns to empower these consumers might help to alleviate their anxieties and life dissatisfaction. For example,

educating consumers could help them to improve their self-management skills and regain control over their lives including consumption. Extant research shows that empowerment can boost consumer well-being (Balderjahn et al., 2020). Empowerment may thus provide a way to decrease elevated (and possibly unhealthy) levels of need-for-deceleration, enabling people to participate and survive in ever accelerating societies.

4.3 | Limitations and further research

This study has a number of limitations, opening avenues for future research. First, while the measure of need-for-deceleration has been validated in two countries, more research is needed to establish the scale's suitability across a larger number of more diverse societies and settings. Grounded in a societal acceleration (Hsu & Elliott, 2014; Rosa, 2013), a person's need-for-deceleration is shaped by society and culture. While some cultural differences exist between Germany and the US (Hofstede et al., 2010), both countries represent Western, industrialized, democratic societies with fast-paced life styles, high levels of achievement motivation, and intensive consumption. Given these similarities, future studies should test the scale's cross-cultural robustness and measurement equivalence in emerging and Non-Western countries.

Second, it would be worthwhile to link the psychometric measure of need-for-deceleration with physiological indicators to further validate the scale. Our findings show need-for-deceleration to correlate with anxiety and life dissatisfaction indices. We would thus expect similar correlations with physiological indicators of stress, such as blood pressure and heart rate. Relatedly, researchers may find it beneficial to test dynamic variations over time as reflected in physiological indicators. However, our employment of multiple studies, some of them in a more controlled context and others in more real-world contexts should enhance reader confidence in the measure's ecological validity.

Third, we suggest to extend our work by analyzing how contextual variables shape a person's individual need-for-deceleration including effects on consumption. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic, through lockdowns, traveling restrictions, social distancing, home office and home schooling, forced people to slow down. Such a forced deceleration evoked divergent reactions among people, as evidenced by media reports. While some people experienced the mandated deceleration as stressful, others considered it a relief. Individual differences in need-for-deceleration may explain such divergent reactions.

Fourth, marketing researchers could use our measure to examine effects of a person's need-for-deceleration on a variety of shopping and consumption behaviors. We expect a number of diverse consumption domains to be amenable to need-for-deceleration effects. Researchers may wish to initially focus on products likely preferred by consumers with high levels of need-for-deceleration, such as offers that promise deceleration, relaxation, or gaining meaning in life (e.g., yoga, forest bathing, spa, DIY, digital detox, slow tourism). However, future research may also find it beneficial to identify products avoided by consumers with high levels of need-for-deceleration. A fundamental and rewarding research area will thus be to explore temporal dynamics and to investigate how initially high levels of a person's need-for-deceleration relate to a subsequently decelerated lifestyle due to changes in consumption behavior. Will high levels of need-for-deceleration lead to subsequently decelerated life styles and more conscious consumption patterns? Will the achieved (lower level) of deceleration be temporally stable? And what contextual variables, such as working conditions, the social environment, or role expectations shape this process?

Fifth, while this study has embedded need-for-deceleration in a nomological network, thereby validating the measure, it has neither hypothesized or empirically tested causal relationships. By applying the scale, scholars may find it beneficial to develop and test more advanced conceptual models to better understand specific aspects of consumer behavior. Given that need-for-deceleration opens a rather new field of research (starting with Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019a), more research on antecedents of the concept is needed. In line with conditional process modeling, marketing researchers could develop models including both antecedents and consequences to better understand how need-for-deceleration affects consumption behavior, and what mediating and moderating variables are involved.

Finally, it can be argued that additional variables should be included in the nomological network. Arguably, there is a number of concepts that has been omitted from our study, despite possible linkages with need-for-deceleration. Exploring associations with other variables in the personality architecture groups appears a worthwhile endeavor to enhance understanding of the concept. Our study presents a first step in that direction.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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APPENDIX A1: QUESTIONS PRESENTED TO STUDY 1A PARTICIPANTS

1. Have you even experienced a "need-for-deceleration"? Is it relevant to you?
2. How does a "need-for-deceleration" manifest itself to you?
3. What does your "need-for-deceleration" depend on? What is the significance of individual differences (e.g. demographic characteristics such as occupation, age, …)?
4. What are the consequences of a high "need-for-deceleration"? Does it influence your (consumer) behavior (e.g. special activities or special consumption to slow down)?
5. How do you feel about the statement "The Corona pandemic has had a positive effect in that life has slowed down."?
6. Please take a look at the draft scale with possible items intended to assess a person's need-for-deceleration. In your opinion: Are the items useful? Can you think of additional items?

APPENDIX A2

Table A2

TABLE A2 Study 1a interviewees.

Interview number	Position
1	Yoga teacher, student
2	Pastor
3	Employee of feinheimisch kiel (Slow Food)
4	Employee of slow city hersbruck
5	Psychotherapist
6	Digital detox expert
7	Doctoral candidate on the topic of Slow Tourism
8	Student, consumer
9	Single mother, working
10	Pilgrimage pastor
11	Founder/CEO of slow brewing

Note: Due to the lockdown in place during the study, interviews were conducted online. Interviewees were identified as experts by searching the internet and were contacted by e-mail.

APPENDIX A3

Table A3

TABLE A3 Verbatims from depth interviews (Study 1a).

References to the concept's existence:
Yoga teacher: "Yes, I do know and feel the need to slow down. Since I work as a yoga teacher […], I am often faced with deceleration. Therefore, the topic is highly relevant for me."
Doctoral student on the topic Slow Tourism: "I personally perceive this need increasingly in my circle of acquaintances/relatives."
Pilgrim Pastor: "The need-for-deceleration is very familiar to me, both professionally and privately. Many people who come to the pilgrimage center reveal a deep need for slowing down and living more consciously. […] So you notice that I consider the need-for-deceleration to be deeply relevant."
Managing director, slow brewing: "Both privately and professionally, I have no need to slow down."
Doctoral student (Slow Tourism): "increased need for recreation, often satisfied through tourism and leisure activities"
Managing director, slow brewing: "When you are overworked all the time, that's not good and it makes you sick."
Pilgrim Pastor: "When I feel that somehow everything gets too much."
References to variation between individuals and over time:
Community of food producers and restaurateurs Representative: "However, it certainly depends very much on one's personality, one's own ideas, socialization and other factors, how strongly one feels this need or not."
References to influencers:
Psychotherapist: "Deadlines and time pressure are common causes."
Parish priest: "I can answer that in one sentence: It depends on my schedule."
Employee of slow city: "It depends on the workload, family, worries, social contacts and private commitment."
References to consequences:
Pilgrim Pastor: "More nature time, more conscious exercise, walk more than drive, sit down for a meal and take your time, switch off your mobile phone, do just one thing at a time, but do it consciously."
Doctoral student (Slow Tourism): "increasing openness to offers such as slow travel, responsible travel, etc."
Yoga teacher: "Special activities such as excursions into nature, […] other travel […] get a higher value. Even "simple" things take on a different meaning if they contribute to deceleration […]. The need for good food is also a part of deceleration."

TABLE A3 (Continued)

References to the concept's existence:
Managing director, slow brewing: "The term "slow" is important to me, especially for food. It's incredible, how "slow" has such an eminent meaning in the food industry: With beer, wine, cheese, bread (fermentation or maturing); "slow" is even relevant in making pasta, that's incredible, isn't it?"
Employee of slow city: "Deceleration means that I need less in terms of consumption."
Psychotherapist: "Those who consistently decelerate their lives […] will also automatically consume less and do it more consciously."
Digital detox expert: "Definitely. People are actively looking for ways to slow down, and these are being integrated into leisure time."
Doctoral student (Slow Tourism): "People increasingly want to actively remove the topic "stress" from their lives. I know some people, for example, […] who take advantage of offers related to deceleration in their free time (spa treatments, yoga courses, mindfulness training, etc.)".
Parish priest: "It doesn't influence my consumer behavior in general, I don't know where… I didn't buy another car or anything. […] I go diving, that's my hobby, to slow down. It's noticeable in the hobbies. I do Pilates. […] But it doesn't go so far as to really influence my consumer behavior, I don't go that far."

APPENDIX A4

Table A4

TABLE A4 Correlations between consumer need-for-deceleration and lifestyle

	Consumer lifestyle variable	*r*	*p*
Ways of shopping	Information from advertising helps me to make better buying decisions.	**0.21**	0.001
	I am influenced by what others say about products.	**0.19**	0.001
	I dislike shopping.	**0.18**	0.001
	I watch for ads and take advantage to buy what's on sale.	**0.16**	0.001
	I like buying food products in specialty stores where I can get expert advice.	0.06	0.248
	When shopping, I make unplanned purchases.	0.05	0.343
	To me product information is of high importance.	0.02	0.611
	Before I go shopping, I make a list of everything I need.	0.02	0.749
Quality aspects	I always check prices, even for small items.	**0.22**	0.001
	Taste is most important to me.	**0.11**	0.018
	To me, the naturalness of the food I buy is an important quality.	0.06	0.213
	In preparing meals I use fresh ingredients whenever possible.	0.05	0.337
	I like to try new foods that I have never tasted before.	0.02	0.637
	I always buy organic products if I have the opportunity.	−0.01	0.944
	I am willing to pay more for organic food.	−0.02	0.665
Cooking methods	Cooking needs to be planned in advance.	**0.12**	0.009
	I use frozen/convenience foods for at least one meal a day.	**0.11**	0.021
	I have better ways to spend my time than doing shopping and cooking.	0.06	0.223
	I consider the kitchen to be a women's domain.	0.06	0.229
	My family always helps in the kitchen.	0.02	0.661
	I like to try out new recipes.	0.01	0.836
	I take time to cook.	−0.05	0.299
Consumption situations	In our house, snacking has taken over and replaced set eating time.	**0.17**	0.001
	Going out for meals is a regular part of my eating habits.	−0.01	0.766
Purchasing motives	I dislike anything that might change my eating habits.	**0.11**	0.020

(Continues)

TABLE A4 (Continued)

	Consumer lifestyle variable	*r*	*p*
	I like to have a chat while having a meal.	0.09	0.059
	Eating to me is a matter of involving all senses.	0.06	0.206
	We often get together with friends to enjoy an easy-to-cook casual meal.	0.04	0.418
	I am an excellent cook.	−0.01	0.761
Other lifestyle variables	Comfort eating	**0.20**	0.001
	Consuming energy drinks	**0.12**	0.013
	Buying food-to-go or have it delivered.	**0.11**	0.018
	Cooking with friends/family	**0.10**	0.034
	Drinking "relaxation tea"	0.07	0.125
	Consuming liquid meals	0.07	0.146
	Physical exercise	0.07	0.152
	Diffusing "relaxation scents"	0.06	0.197
	Digital detox	0.05	0.335
	Using "relaxation" additives to my bathtub	0.04	0.459
	Going out for a walk	0.04	0.463
	Routines	0.02	0.713
	Yoga/meditation.	−0.02	0.738

Note: 7-point Likert scales were used for: Shopping scripts, Higher order product attributes, Meal preparation scripts, Usage situations, Desired consequences. A dichotomous scale was used for Additional activities/lifestyle variables. Variables are listed in order of descending r. Significant correlations in bold.

Manipulation coded 0 = Time passes slowly, 1 = Time passes quickly.