

**A Study about the Role of Benefits Congruity between Ethical Attributes and
Brands in Evaluation of Ethical and Sustainable Products**

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that drive consumer's decisions for ethical and sustainable products. The present study compares consumer ethical and sustainable product evaluations associated with brands and ethical attributes benefits congruity with those associated without such benefit congruity. More specifically, the study reveals that consumer evaluations of ethical and sustainable branded products become more favorable when a utilitarian (symbolic) brand is presented with a utilitarian (symbolic) ethical attribute. Furthermore, we found that brand social responsibility serves as a mediator in the relationship between benefits congruity and consumer evaluation. Resource synergy beliefs as an individual difference were also tested in this study.

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1. Introduction

Ethical and sustainable consumption has emerged as an increasingly significant consuming practice over the past decade, becoming main stream both in developed and developing countries around the world (Lewis & Potter, 2011). The proportion of people who had purchased or boycotted a product for ethical reasons rose to 27% in 2008, compared to 20% in 2003 (Turcotte, 2010). In the meanwhile, we could found that more and more retailers are actively involving in offering an increasing variety of store brand products with ethical attributes. Ethical attributes refer to attributes with positive social and environmental impact (Luchs et al., 2010). For example, one of Wal-Mart's stated goals is 'To sell products that sustain people and the environment' (Gleim et al., 2013). Marketers consistently increase their spending on development and promotion of sustainable and ethical products. According to a recent report from Verdantix, the amount of expenditure that U.S. companies will spend on social responsibility related projects will reach \$44 billion by the end of 2017. For instance, Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, General Mills and several major American packaged goods companies have joined forces for promoting more environmentally friendly product packaging (Mitchell et al., 2014). On the demand side, consumers report an increasing importance of ethical attributes. For example, a poll of 1003 Americans revealed that: almost 40% purchased a product in the same year for the social or political values of the company that produced it (Lewis, 2012). Similarly, according to a 2005 poll by Global Market Insight, 54% of online participants from 17 countries, including America, Japan and China, reported that they are willing to spend more money for various ethical reasons, such as environmentally friendly, fair trade, organic and anti-animal tests (Lewis, 2012). In the meanwhile, consumers demand for ethical and sustainable store brands is also increasing and the market share of private label brands shown a rapidly growth in the past decade (Tofighi and Bodur 2015). Above examples reflect the increased demand and potential for sustainable private label branded products and the need to understand the drivers of consumer choices of ethical products.

Since the fast development and rise importance of ethical and sustainable consumption, academic researchers have explored it from different perspectives. Some researchers found that

consumer evaluations toward a firm are positively related to social responsible activities, and social responsible firms improve their consumer satisfaction and gain their competitive advantages through social responsible involvement (Pivato et al., 2008; Luo & Bhattachary, 2006). Some demonstrated that perceived ethicality of a brand have positive impact on both brand trust and brand affect, and hence contribute to brand loyalty (Singh et al., 2012). More recently, researchers have investigated how consumers form ethical and sustainable product evaluations by examining the conceptual features of ethical attributes that the product delivered (Gershoff & Frels 2015). In addition, considering different natures of benefits that ethical attributes offered, benefits congruity (or incongruity) is another reference point for studying ethical consumption. Researchers also found that ethical attributes may associate with numerous social responsible issues such as eco-friendly practices, fair labor supporting activities, and humane animal's treatment (Luchs et al., 2010). These issues could reflect either utilitarian benefits or symbolic benefits which can be congruent with benefits that offered by product categories (Bodur et al., 2013).

However, in comparison to a large amount of studies that have contributed in exploring consumer tradeoff in traditional products research field, there is still limited literature focusing on ethical and sustainable consumption decision-making, especially at brand level discussion. Recent years, more and more researchers in this field noted that, although ethicality seems to be benefits for many consumers, ethical and sustainable activities not always led to positive consumers' responses. Previous researchers have looked into this issue from various directions: some found that price can be an important reference point. For example, Ngobo (2011) found that, unlike traditional consumption, lower prices and wider distribution made consumers less likely to buy ethical and sustainable household products. Some studies have focused on contextual factors such as the way information is accessed, how the choice is structured, and perceptions of whether the firm had intentionally set out to create a green product (Gershoff et al., 2015). For example, Newman et al. (2014) have revealed that consumers were less likely to purchase an ethical product when they perceive that the firm intentionally added an ethical attribute compared to when the same ethical attribute occurred unintentionally. Other researchers have examined the impact of brand-related factors and firm-related factors. For example, Torelli and colleagues (2012) revealed that communicating corporate social responsible information with consumers can backfire for certain luxury brands.

These prior studies are important for our understanding of ethical consumption's decision making; however, missing has been the connection among products, brands and retailers, which influence consumer perceptions in a less obvious way. In order to address this gap, the purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that drive consumer's decisions for ethical and sustainable products. In this study, we focus on two main questions: (1) How does the congruity (or incongruity) between ethical attributes and brand benefits affect consumer product evaluations? For example, are ethical attributes with benefits that are consistent with benefits offered by brand render ethical attributes more effective in improving product evaluations? (2) What are the drivers of consumer's product choice when buying ethical and sustainable products? In this context, the present research aims to investigate the impact of brand related-factors, such as brand social responsibility reputation and brand benefits, on consumer retailer choice for ethical consumption. Based on these objectives, dependent variables of interest are evaluations of ethical and sustainable store brands. Independent factors of interest are ethical attribute benefits, product-brand benefits, brand social responsibility and resource synergy beliefs.

The present study makes several contributions to current literature and practical implication of ethical and sustainable consumption in the following ways. From a theoretical standpoint, the present study investigates benefits congruity between an ethical attribute and a brand which different from the previous researches. We assumed that congruity between benefits delivered by a brand and benefits offered by an ethical attribute yield a positive impact on consumer responses to the product in question. For example, a utilitarian branded product will become more favorable to customers when it is associated with a utilitarian ethical attribute rather than a symbolic ethical attribute. We extended the current literature to a brand level by combining the consideration of values of a brand and benefits of ethical attribute. In doing so, we established the link between branding studies and product attributes studies in ethical and sustainable researching field. Besides, we also paid attention to the role of brand social responsibility in the relationship between benefits congruity and consumer perceptions of ethical and sustainable products, which is rarely studied in previous researches. Last but not least, we added resource synergy beliefs as an individual difference in our study and contributed to provide additional explanations of present findings. More specifically, we proposed that resource synergy beliefs may more or less affect the effectiveness of the positive impact of benefits congruity on consumers' product evaluations.

From a substantive standpoint, businesses aim to understand the mechanisms that lead consumers to buy ethical and sustainable products from specific brands; hence, it is important for marketing managers to find out what brand-related factors affect ethical and sustainable consumption behaviors. By studying benefits offered by brands and ethical attributes, this study tries to help marketing managers assess the fitness between existing ethical attributes and their brands and identify suitable new ethical attributes for their brands. In other words, this study provide retailers and brands with a referring point about the fitness between an ethical attribute and a brand, which can also be used to improve consumer's attitudes towards the branded product. Moreover, in addition to corporate social responsibility which is focused on firm's social responsible involvement, our study investigated the impact of brand social responsibility on consumers' attitudes towards the branded products. In doing so, it can offer retailers and firms important insights about the mechanism of how an specific ethical attribute transfer to actual positive consumers' responses through its impact on brand social responsibility.

In the following chapters, we will first go through literature review and several related hypotheses. After that, several pretests and one main experiment are carried out and the hypotheses are examined. In the last part of this article, we concluded the study with discussions of implications and suggestions for future researches.

2. Theoretical Background

The present literature review explores the research on benefits congruity between brands and product attributes in the context of ethical and sustainable consumption. This literature review begins with the concept of ethical and sustainable consumption and what factors affect consumers' responses to ethical and sustainable product and findings regarding to these factors; then the concept of benefits is discussed as well as the difference natures of benefits; next the theory of resource synergy beliefs as well as brand social responsibility are introduced. The present thesis focuses on the effect of benefits congruity/incongruity between brands and ethical attributes on consumer product evaluations. We then discuss the role of brand social responsibility and how consumer's resource synergy beliefs affect such effect. A discussion of the research hypotheses tested in this thesis follows.

2.1 Ethical and sustainable consumption

Ethical and sustainable consumption has become an increasingly significant consuming practice over the past decade. In the following section, we first introduce the meaning of ethical and sustainable consumption, and then review the factors that drive consumer's decisions for ethical and sustainable products and the role of the distribution channel (e.g., retailer) in consumer's decisions.

2.1.1 What is ethical and sustainable consumption?

Researches show that consumers are increasingly engaging in ethical and sustainable consumptions which have become a major concern for marketers in the 21st century (White et al. 2012). In order to study consumer behaviors linked with ethicality and sustainability, we should first understand the meaning of ethical and sustainable consumptions. Generally speaking, the term ethics refers to a set of moral norms, principles or values that guide people's judgment and behavior (Brunk 2012) and the term sustainability is defined as continuance without the sacrifice of environmental and human resources (Crittenden et al. 2011). The most widely used definition of sustainability is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future

generations to meet their own needs” from the 1987 Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. According to Huang and Rust (2011), sustainability is the triple bottom line of economic profitability, respect for the environment and social responsibility. Based on the definitions stated above, ethical and sustainable consumptions refer general to consumption that can meet the standards of ethics and moral norms and conduct in an eco-friendly and social responsible way. Through ethical and sustainable consumption, consumers translate their social and environmental concerns into expressed buying behavior (Davies et al. 2012; De Pelsmacker et al. 2005). In line with this definition, we could find a variety of examples of ethical and sustainable consumption in real market. For instance, consumers worldwide are more and more exposed to products that are claiming their responsibility for issues such as preventing consumption of scarce resources, protecting the natural environment, ensuring sustainable supply chain management, maintaining global economic (Crittenden et al. 2011).

2.1.2 Factors Affecting Ethical and Sustainable Consumption

Researchers have explored how consumers make their purchase decision among different conventional products and what factors affect consumer decisions (e.g., Bijmolt et al. 2005; Sethuraman and Srinivasan 2002). It is clear that many things will influence consumers’ decision making when buying ethical and sustainable products, but in this study we concern about the influences from brands, retailers and products.

Previous studies have studied the connection between branding and ethical and sustainable consumption. On one hand, some revealed that introducing an ethical and sustainable product could positively affect consumer attitudes toward a brand (Olsen et al. 2014; Torelli et al. 2012). In the marketplace, many brands are investing various resources and efforts in developing and promoting ethical and sustainable product to reinforce the brand identity, which refers to consumers’ most salient associations of a brand (Aaker 1997). Olsen and colleagues (2014) found that ethical and sustainable new product introductions can indeed improve brand attitude and that the brand influence the introduction of ethical and sustainable new products, which suggests that marketing managers could improve brand image by linking their brand to ethicality and sustainability. On the other hand, branding could affect consumer response to the marketing of the product (Keller 1993). There is evidence that branding could also affect consumers’ responses

to ethical and sustainable products. Take Torelli et al. (2012) study as an example, they have found that communicating the corporate social responsible information of a luxury brand would actually lead to a decline in the evaluation of the luxury brand.

Retailers that make ethical and sustainable products available to consumers also play an important role in the study of ethical and sustainable consumption. For example, according to food marketing literature, instead of increasing conventional assortment, retailers are benefit more from increasing ethical and sustainable assortment in terms of category margin and store revenues (Bezawada & Pauwels 2013). Besides, retailers' ethical and sustainable actions will also affect consumers' attitude towards their products (Gleim et al. 2013). Research argued that retailer's social responsible actions would cause harm to consumers' responses to their products if such actions were not consistent with the products offered and the actions that produced the products (Wagner et. al 2009). This is also known as "Greenwashing", which is commonly used to describe the actions of a company that claims to be social responsible, but actually engages in actions that are not social responsible (Gleim et al. 2013; Kangun, Carlson, and Grove 1991).

In sum, extant research points to the greater weighting of studying individual predictors (e.g., brand-related and product attribute-related factors) that affects consumer's behavior in ethical and sustainable consumption rather than the congruity/incongruity between these individual factors. We propose that the congruency between benefits of ethical attributes, products and brands will affect consumer's evaluation to the ethical and sustainable products. The role of benefit congruity is discussed next.

2.2 Benefits

Before we discuss benefits congruity effect, we first need to understand the meaning of benefits and the different natures of benefits. In this chapter, we will discuss previous research on benefits in terms of consumer behavior and the differences between utilitarian benefits and symbolic benefits.

2.2.1 What are benefits?

Benefits are the personal value consumers attach to the product or brand attributes (Keller 1993). In recent years, there has been a fertile amount of literature that exams consumer response to different benefits that attached to products and brands (e.g., Montaner et al. 2011; Chitturi et al. 2008). With matching benefits delivered by products and brands, consumers may achieve their consumption expectation, and brands may gain their consumers' loyalty (Chitturi et al. 2008). Consumers evaluate products generally through the benefits attached to the target products. In the context of ethical consumption, ethical attributes are attributes that reflect moral principles and social and environmental concerns such as usages of recycled materials, fair labor practices, humane treatment of animals and protection of environment (Luchs et al. 2010). Some prior work in marketing has shown that benefits of an ethical attribute contribute to improve consumers' product responses. For example, according to Bauer et al. (2013), consumers generally view organic attributes as a positive to a food product, and adding an ethical attribute to the product can increase their purchase intentions and their willingness to pay a price premium. However, research suggests that whether an ethical attribute is viewed positively or negatively is related to the nature of benefits such ethical attribute. For instance, according to Luchs et al. (2013), different from gentleness-related attributes, ethicality and sustainability does not enhance product preferences strength-related attributes when are valued. We will discuss different natures of benefits in the following section.

2.2.2 Distinguishing utilitarian and symbolic benefits

In order to study the congruity effect of benefits, it is necessary to understand different natures of benefits that products and brands are likely to provide. Consumers have certain benefit expectations from a brand (Porto et al. 2011) and these benefits could be utilitarian or symbolic (Montaner et al. 2011). For example, luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton, Tiffany & Co. and Gucci, communicate certain self-concepts with individuals, consumers' benefit expectations are more symbolic (Lee et al. 2015). Apart from a brand, benefits can be delivered by a product, an attribute and a retailer. In this study, we mainly focus on benefits offered by brands and ethical attributes.

Regarding to ethical and sustainable consumption area, ethical attributes can provide both utilitarian benefits and symbolic benefits (Bodur et al. 2013). Utilitarian benefits provide

primarily instrumental and functional value of the product (Chandon et al. 2000) and enhance consumers' perceptions of product quality or efficiency (Bodur et al. 2013). For example, containing natural ingredients or packaging with biodegradable materials which could be beneficial to health in the long run, using renewable wind energy which could lead to savings on heating and electricity expense (Hartmann and Ibanez 2006) are possible ways for manufacturers to add sustainable attributes with utilitarian benefits to their products. Consumers focus on utilitarian benefits when their attitude serves more a functional than social purpose and when the evaluative criteria are functional and linked with the product's or the brand's performance, quality (Lee et al. 2015; Shavitt et al. 1992)

Apart from functional value, consumers also buy products and brands for their symbolic benefits, and brands can be symbols and communicate meanings that define a consumer's self-concept (Escalas et al. 2005). As a way of self-expression, a consumer tends to have a favorable evaluation towards a product or brand when the product or brand reflects the consumer's self-identity (Lee et al. 2015). In the context of sustainable and ethical consumption, this kind of benefits caters to consumers' needs of communicating their care for social and environmental issues. For instance, some consumers would display their kindness and concern for animals by boycotting products tested on animals and supporting product without animal ingredients.

2.3 Benefits congruity

2.3.1 Benefits congruity effect

Generally speaking, when benefits related to a product/brand/ retailer and benefits of a product attribute are align, benefits congruity occurs. For example, when high school rings and hockey team car flags consist of an ethical attribute related to free child labor free, there exists benefits congruity between the symbolic product category and the symbolic ethical attribute (Bodur et al. 2013). There is evidence of consumers' preference towards benefits congruity in studies of consumer behavior. One of the examples of benefits congruity effect occurred in marketing promotion field. Chandon and colleagues (2000) have proved the importance of congruency between utilitarian and hedonic benefits of a sales promotion. They argued that

effectiveness of a marketing promotion is determined by different natures of the benefits it delivers, and the congruence these benefits have with the promoted product. In particular, they found that non-monetary promotions provide more hedonic benefits and fewer utilitarian benefits than monetary promotions and, therefore, are relatively more effective for hedonic products than for utilitarian products. The congruency frame work of sales promotion's effectiveness offers us empirical evidence to discuss similar positive effect that benefits congruency have on consumer's ethical product evaluations.

2.3.2 Benefits congruity effect in ethical and sustainable consumption

Previous researches have studied benefits congruity between product attribute and other product-related aspects and demonstrated that the benefits of an ethical attribute will interact with the benefit of the product in question, and such interaction then affect consumer product evaluations (e.g., Bodur et al. 2013; Luchs et al. 2010). Focusing on products with ethical attributes, Luchs et al. (2010) argues that product benefits interact with product sustainability to affect consumers' preference. By examining associations between gentleness-related (versus strength-related) product attributes and different levels of product ethicality, the authors found that sustainable products are more attractive when gentleness-related attributes such as safe and mild are emphasized. This study demonstrates that, in addition to the benefits offered by ethical attributes, the effectiveness of an ethical attribute influence consumer perceptions depends on the nature of benefits.

However, the study discussed above focus mainly on benefits congruency between attributes and product categories. In this study, we are going to extend the arguments to brand level of ethical and sustainable consumption. Precisely, we will focus on the benefits congruity between brands and ethical attributes, in order to study if there exists a similar positive benefits congruity effect on consumer's perceptions to ethical and sustainable products.

Although evidence of ethical attributes positively affecting consumers' product evaluations has been found in many studies (Bauer et al. 2013), some studies shown that ethical and sustainable message from products are not always doing good. For example, Torelli et al. (2012) argue that social responsible information of a self-enhancement brand cause a sense of

unease which negatively affect product evaluations. However, the benefits of offered by the ethical attributes and the brands have not been discussed. More precisely, the benefits offered by the ethical attribute and the brands are not always congruent. According to cue utilization theory consumers process information based on a combination of available intrinsic and extrinsic cues (Burnkrant 1978). When evaluating a branded product with ethical attributes, consumers can not only process extrinsic cues such as brand name, they can also make inferences on intrinsic information such as the cue of congruence or incongruence between that brand and the ethical attribute in question. The existing literature has implicitly suggested that social responsibility messages sent by a brand should be possibly congruent with the benefits delivered by the ethical attribute. For example, Wagner et al. (2009) found that branded product with inconsistent corporate social responsible information may suffer a drop on evaluation because of perceived hypocrisy. Besides, recent research related to studies of resource synergy beliefs also indicates that consumers are less likely to purchase a green product when they perceive that the firm intentionally made the product better for environment, given that the intended green enhancements lead consumers to assume that fewer resources are allocated for product quality (Newman, Gorlin & Dhar 2014). According to this finding, when evaluating a branded product with an incongruent ethical attribute, consumers would perceive fewer resources delivered to the key benefit that the brand aims to offer and, hence, they would have a less positive response to the product evaluation. According to above discussion, therefore, we predict that congruity between benefits offered by ethical attributes and brands improve consumer product evaluations through the ethical attribute. In the following discussion, we use “BEA congruity” to refer the benefit congruity between brands and ethical attributes.

H1. Brand and ethical attribute benefits congruity is positively related to consumer product evaluation. That is to say, a utilitarian (symbolic) branded product will be evaluated more favorable when presenting with a utilitarian (symbolic) ethical attribute than presenting with a symbolic (utilitarian) ethical attribute.

Apart from BEA congruity, benefits congruity between ethical attributes and product categories are also considered in this study. According to Bodur et al. (2013) an ethical attribute improve consumer evaluation when its benefits is congruent with product category benefits. Therefore, we assumed that the positive impact of the benefit congruity on consumer evaluation

will be amplified if benefits congruities occur among ethical attributes, brands and product categories. That is to say, compared to a single benefits congruity occur between an ethical attribute and a brand (an ethical attribute and the product category), if benefits related to the ethical attribute are consistent with not only the benefits provided by the brand but also the benefits offered by the product category, such benefit congruity may enhances consumer branded product evaluation to a greater extent.

H2: Compared to single benefits congruity between product category and ethical attribute or brand and ethical attribute, the improvement of consumer evaluation will be amplified when benefits congruities occur among ethical attributes, brands and product categories.

2.4 Resource synergy beliefs and benefits congruity

Resource synergy beliefs refer to consumers' beliefs about the synergy between the resources a firm devotes to their ethical and functional attributes (Gupta and Sen, 2013). Resource synergy beliefs impact the angle that a consumer evaluates an ethical attribute. According to Gupta and Sen (2013), consumers' resource synergy beliefs can be classified into two types: negative resource synergy beliefs and positive resource synergy beliefs.

Consumers who have negative resource synergy beliefs are more likely to review an ethical attribute from a purely moral perspective, which is independent to other functional attributes of the product. In other words, these consumers believe that less resource are devoted to functional attribute in order to give way to the ethical attribute (Friedman 1970). On the other hand, consumers who have positive resource synergy beliefs, on the other hand, will see an ethical attribute as the sign of superior functional features; that is, they believe that adding an ethical attribute is a way of a firm's effort to make a product better (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

We mentioned earlier in this chapter that a utilitarian ethical attribute is perceived to provide mainly instrumental and functional value of the product (Chandon et al. 2000). This nature of a utilitarian ethical attribute caters to the core concept of positive resource synergy beliefs, that is, when consumers regard an ethical attribute is a superior functional attribute, they will have

favorable evaluation to the firms' ethical and social responsible efforts (Gupta and Sen, 2013).

H3a: Compared to consumers who have positive resource synergy beliefs, consumers holding negative resource synergy beliefs have less favorable evaluation on a symbolic branded product with a symbolic ethical attribute.

H3b: Compared to a utilitarian branded product with a utilitarian ethical attribute, consumers holding negative resource synergy beliefs have less favorable evaluation on a symbolic branded product with a symbolic ethical attribute.

2.5 Social responsibility and benefits congruity

Brand social responsibility reflects consumers' social responsibility perceptions of the product brands (Grohmann & Bodur 2014). Brand social responsibility can be seen as a reference point for consumer evaluation of ethical products, especially in the context of benefits congruity. Social responsible brands are distinguished from their competitors and therefore positively affect consumer attitudes toward the brand and improve consumer evaluation (Pivato et al. 2008). The ethical and social responsible information delivered undertaken by brands could embed their products with a sense of goodness, ethicality and values in the minds of consumers (Gupta and Sen, 2013). Previous study suggests that inconsistent corporate social responsibility information, which happens when the firm's corporate social responsible statements come into conflict with observed behavior, will lead to perceived corporate hypocrisy (Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz 2009). When evaluating an ethical and social responsible product, the trust attributed to the firm offering that good or service is posited to have a direct impact on product evaluation (Gleim et al. 2013). Thus, incongruent social responsible information negatively affects consumer evaluations. Applying this finding to the level of branding, it assumes that social responsible message delivered by a product should, to some extent, be congruent with social responsible message carried by its brands. Thus, we propose that, in order to enhance consumer evaluations of products and brand social responsibility, the benefit of ethical attribute should be aligned with the key benefit delivered by the brand.

H4: Brand and ethical attribute benefits congruity is positively related to brand social responsibility.

3. Methodology

The main purpose of this study is to investigate whether consumer product evaluations are positively influenced by the congruity of the ethical attribute and brand benefits. We will also investigate the role of consumer resource synergy beliefs and brand's social responsibility. The congruity of ethical attribute benefits and the brand benefits were manipulated in the experiment. First of all, two pretests were launched to select suitable stimuli for the study.

3.1 Pretest

Two related pretests will be conducted (1) to identify retailers with that offer two categories of benefits and (2) to identify private label brands and national brands with two different categories of benefits in personal care and pharmaceutical product category. The product categories and related measures were adapted based on Bodur et al. (2013) and LeBoeuf & Simmons (2010). Both of the pretest participants were North American consumers recruited from online consumer panel providers (i.e., Qualtrics & Amazon mechanical Turk).

3.1.1 Pretest 1

The first pretest ($n = 91$, 51 % female, average age = 36) is conducted to help in the selection of retailers that mainly offer utilitarian or symbolic benefits. Participants were asked to answer questions about 4 out of 8 retailers, in terms of utilitarian and symbolic benefits, and their extent of familiarity of the retailers. Retailers included in the pretest were leading retailer brands that were selected based on statistics by online marketing reports (e.g., *Top 100 retailer 2015* from National Retailer Federation 2015; *Top 10 US retailers* from International Business Times 2014). Symbolic benefits were measured by a 7-point scale with eight items (e.g., “[retailer] helps me fit into important social situations,” Wilcox et al. 2009, $\alpha = .97$) and utilitarian benefits were measured a 7-point scale with five items (e.g., 1 = “impractical,” 7 = “practical,” Voss et al. 2003, $\alpha = .96$). According to the results, two department stores and two grocery stores were selected: Walmart, Target, Kroger and Wholefoods Market. Compared to Walmart ($M_{symbolic} = 2.10$), Target was perceived as providing more symbolic benefits ($M_{symbolic}=3.59$, $F(1, 83) =$

21.61, $p < .05$). As a preparation for the next pretest, participants were also asked familiarity questions about the store brands offered by each retailer.

3.1.2 Pretest 2

The second pretest ($n = 148$, 51.6 % female, average age = 37.27) was designed for private label brands selection. Similar to the retailer pretest, each participant was asked to answer questions about 4 brands in terms of utilitarian and symbolic benefits, and their extent of familiarity of the brands.

Based on the results, Equate by Walmart and Up&Up by Target were chosen as the private label stimuli from department store; on the other hand, we also selected two private brands from grocery stores as preparation of replication: Simple Truth by Kroger and 365 by Wholefoods Market. The reasons for choosing these store brands are (1) among other store brands owned by the aimed retailers, these brands offer both personal care and pharmaceutical products, and (2) they were perceived as offering either relatedly more utilitarian benefits and less symbolic benefits or relatedly more symbolic benefits and more utilitarian benefits comparing to their counterparts. Apart from the symbolic and utilitarian scale mentioned above, we also use comparative scales to measure these store brands' symbolic and utilitarian benefits.

3.2 Main study

560 North American consumers (56.7% female, age average=37.25) (See in **Table 1**) recruited from an online consumer panel provider (i.e., Qualtrics and Amazon mechanical Turk) have conducted the study. A full factorial mixed design was employed: 3 ethical attributes (symbolic, utilitarian and no ethical attribute)* 4 store brands (Equate by Walmart, Up&Up by Target, Simple Truth by Kroger and 365 by Wholefoods Market)*2 product categories (shampoo and cough syrup), with product category as the within-participants factor and ethical attribute as between-participants factor.

Table 1 Participant demographics

Demographics	Pretest 1	Pretest 2	Main Study
Mean Age	36.6	37.3	37.3
Gender			
Male	49%	47.3%	43.3%
Female	51%	52.7%	56.7%
Education			
Under high school	3.2%	.1%	.5%
High school or equivalent	7.5%	10.2%	12.1%
Some college	34.0%	32.4%	34.6%
Bachelor's degree	43.6%	45.3%	40.3%
Master's degree or higher	11.5%	11.5%	12.5%
Employment			
Student	7.5%	5.2%	5.7%
Employed	75.5%	80.3%	71.9%
Unemployed	10.6%	10.8%	16.7%
Retired	6.4%	4.7%	5.6%
Income			
Less than \$24,999	23.5%	28.1%	22.9%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	36.3%	33.8%	33.1%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	27.7%	31.8%	33.6%
\$100,000 or more	7.5%	8.7%	10.4%

At the beginning of the survey, participants were randomly assigned to one of 12 conditions in which they evaluated one shampoo product's description and one cough syrup product's description from only one brand out of 4 store brands. In order to improve authenticity, the products' descriptions were consisted of: product category, a product image, brand name, a functional description, utilitarian ethical attribute (or a symbolic ethical attribute or no ethical attribute) and price information. **Figure 1** is an example of product description of Equate's shampoo and cough syrup with symbolic ethical attributes that a participant evaluated in the study. All product images were presented in a format that text information was hardly identified from the product packages, but brand logos and product names were presented clearly. Price information of cough syrup and shampoo product remained constant and adapted from an average

price of all 4 brands' products. The functional descriptions of both product categories remained constant throughout different branded product descriptions. For example, the functional description of cough syrup product was always "Relieves coughs due to cold and minor bronchial irritations".

As a between subject factor, ethical attributes were manipulated in the product descriptions by presenting a utilitarian (or a symbolic benefit) or not presenting any ethical attribute. Four ethical attribute descriptions used in this study were adapted from previous studies conducted by Bodur et al. (2013). Precisely, "Made with natural and eco-friendly ingredients" served as ethical attribute with utilitarian benefit, and "Supports the World Wildlife Fund" as ethical attribute with symbolic benefit in cough syrup product descriptions; "Preservative and Fragrance Free" and "Supports the American Cancer Society" served as ethical attributes with utilitarian and symbolic benefits, respectively, for shampoo products. Manipulation checks for ethical attribute benefits were conducted at the end of the survey.

Figure 1 An example of product description

Cough & Cold Syrup



Equate™ Brand (by Wal-mart)

Relieves coughs due to cold and minor bronchial irritations

Supports the World Wildlife Fund

\$5.66

Shampoo



Equate™ Brand (by Wal-mart)

Cleanses gently for daily use on all hair types

Supports the American Cancer Society

\$5.95

After the evaluation of a branded shampoo and same branded cough syrup products' descriptions, participants were asked to indicate their opinions of the dependent variables, namely: "How attractive is [branded product]?", "How appealing is [branded product]?" and "How likely are you to purchase [branded product]?" on three 1-100 scales from "extremely unattractive/unappealing/ unlikely" to "extremely attractive/appealing/likely".

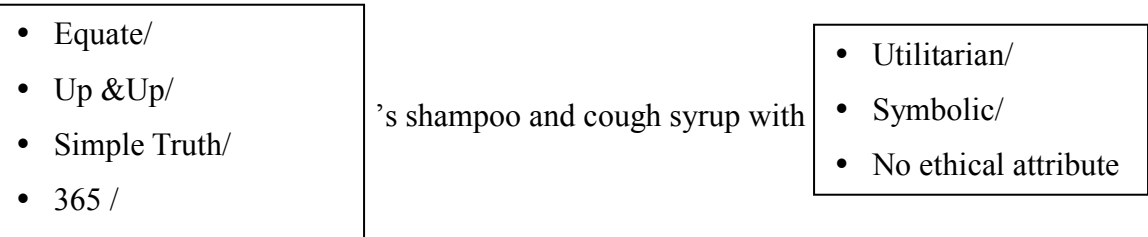
Second part of the survey is about individual opinions about social responsibility. Individual differences measurement in this part included, resource synergy beliefs, and brand social responsibility (four items including fair, humane, compassionate, and caring based on Bodur & Grohmann 2014). Resource synergy beliefs were measured by a five-item seven-point scale (e.g., "Companies that engage in socially responsible behavior often produce products that are inferior on performance," 1="strongly disagree", 7= "strongly agree", Gupta and Sen 2013, $\alpha=.95$). The importance and ethicality of ethical attribute and ethical attribute-retailer fitness were also measured. Besides, participants were asked to indicate their familiarity towards all the brands on a seven-point scale (1="Not at all familiar", 7= "Very familiar").

Last part of the survey was manipulation check for utilitarian or symbolic benefits offered by brands, retailers, ethical attributes and product categories. Symbolic benefits were measured by a 7-point scale with eight items (Wilcox et al. 2009) and utilitarian benefits were measured a 7-point scale with five items (Voss et al. 2003). Followed by an instructive text about meaning of utilitarian and symbolic benefits, a seven-point scale comparing utilitarian and symbolic benefit offered by the brands or retailers was adopted (e.g., "As a store brand, benefits offered by Equate are more utilitarian or more symbolic?"). Comparative versions of these scales were also used for measuring symbolic and utilitarian benefits between two retailers (e.g., "[retailer1] helps me fit into important social situations," versus "[retailer2] helps me fit into important social situations,"). We provide a summary of the measures and their sources in **Table 2**.

At the end of the survey, participants were asked to answer several questions about demographics such as age, gender and education level and so on.

Figure 2 Experiment procedure

1. Review one out of 12 conditions product's description:



2. Answer questions about dependent variables
3. Answer validation question and familiarity scale
4. Manipulation check of benefits offered by brands and retailers
5. Opinions about price, quality and social responsibility
6. Manipulation check of benefits offered by ethical attributes
7. Manipulation check of benefits offered by cough syrup and shampoo
8. Answer demographic questions

Table 2 The measurement items

Variables	Items	Scales
Brand social responsibility	Fair Humane Compassionate Caring	Bodur & Grohmann (2014)
Resource synergy beliefs	Socially responsible behavior by firms is often accompanied by inferior product offerings; When companies focus on CSR, the quality and performance of their products suffer; Companies that engage in socially responsible behavior often produce products that are inferior on performance; Products that are made in a socially responsible manner are often worse on important functional features such as performance than those that are not socially responsible; Resources devoted to social causes come at the expense of improved product performance.	Gupta & Sen (2013)
Symbolic benefits	[Product] reflects the kind of person I see myself to be. [Product] helps me communicate my self-identity. [Product] helps me express myself. [Product] helps me define myself. [Product] is a symbol of social status. [Product] helps me fit into important social situations. I like to be seen buying [Product]. I enjoy it when people know I am using [Product].	Wilcox et al. (2009)
Utilitarian benefits	Necessary Functional Effective Helpful Practical	Voss et al. (2003)

4. Result

Before testing the hypotheses, we conducted exploratory factor analyses for utilitarian benefit, symbolic benefit, resource synergy belief and brand social responsibility in order to check the unidimensionality of the aimed scales. We extracted factors with eigenvalues are greater than 1 and high total variance. According to the result, these scales extracted only one factor for each, hence, the unidimensionality of these scales are guaranteed. Regarding to internal consistency of the scales, we check the reliability of all scales used in the test: utilitarian benefit ($\alpha=.93$), symbolic benefit ($\alpha=.95$), resource synergy belief ($\alpha=.94$) and brand social responsibility ($\alpha=.95$); hence, the scales pass reliability tests as the Cronbach's alpha greater than .70 (Cronbach, 1970).

In order to confirm if our manipulation is successful, we check ANOVA results for brands' benefits. Comparing two department store brands the symbolic scale and the utilitarian scale of Equate and Up & Up, Up & Up ($M_{\text{symbolic}}=3.18$) was perceived as offering more symbolic benefits ($t(139) = -2.17, p < .05$) than Equate ($M_{\text{symbolic}}=2.85$). Equate ($M_{\text{utilitarian}}= 5.35$) was perceived as offering more utilitarian benefits than Up & Up ($M_{\text{utilitarian}}= 5.18$). Using comparative symbolic-utilitarian scale, Equate ($M_{\text{symbolic vs. utilitarian}}=2.77$) was also perceived more utilitarian and less symbolic ($t(139) =6.43, p < .01$) than Up&Up ($M_{\text{symbolic vs. utilitarian}}=1.24$). Comparing two grocery store brands Simple Truth and 365, Simple Truth ($M_{\text{utilitarian}}=5.17$) was perceived as offering more utilitarian benefits than 365 ($M_{\text{symbolic}}=4.96$). Using comparative symbolic-utilitarian scale, Simple Truth ($M_{\text{symbolic vs. utilitarian}}=1.36, t(139) =4.54, p < .01$) was also perceived more utilitarian and less symbolic than 365 ($M_{\text{symbolic vs. utilitarian}}=.10$). Regarding to ethical attributes of cough syrup (i.e., "Made with natural and eco-friendly ingredients" and "Supports the World Wildlife Fund"), utilitarian ethical attribute ($M_{\text{utilitarian}}= 5.18$) was associated with higher utilitarian benefits than symbolic ethical attributes ($M_{\text{utilitarian}}= 4.86; t(272) =3.58, p < .01$). Using comparative symbolic-utilitarian scale, cough syrup utilitarian ethical attribute ($M_{\text{symbolic vs. utilitarian}}=.05$) was also perceived more utilitarian and less symbolic ($t(278) =7.97, p < .01$) than cough syrup symbolic ethical attribute ($M_{\text{symbolic vs. utilitarian}}=-1.36$). Similarly, symbolic ethical attributes of shampoo (i.e., "Supports the American Cancer Society"; $M_{\text{symbolic}}=3.66$) was associated with higher symbolic benefits than utilitarian ethical attribute of shampoo (i.e.,

“Preservative and Fragrance Free”; $M_{\text{symbolic}}=3.39$, $t(272)=-5.17$, $\rho < .01$). Considering comparative symbolic-utilitarian scale, shampoo utilitarian ethical attribute ($M_{\text{symbolic vs. utilitarian}}=.97$) was also perceived more utilitarian and less symbolic ($t(275)=9.88$, $\rho < .01$) than shampoo symbolic ethical attribute ($M_{\text{symbolic vs. utilitarian}}=-1.25$). Finally, we checked benefits offered by cough syrup and shampoo. Cough syrup ($M_{\text{symbolic vs. utilitarian}}=2.62$) was also perceived more utilitarian and less symbolic ($t(838)=12.74$, $\rho < .01$) than shampoo ($M_{\text{symbolic vs. utilitarian}}=1.49$). Hence, based on the results above, the manipulations were successful.

With the successful manipulations, we first checked the correlations between attractiveness, appealing and purchase likelihood. As we could see in **Table 3**, $\text{Corr}(\text{attractiveness}, \text{appealing}) = .91$, $\text{Corr}(\text{attractiveness}, \text{purchase likelihood}) = .76$ and $\text{Corr}(\text{purchase likelihood}, \text{appealing}) = .78$, which means these three variables are highly correlated with one another. Thus, in order to simplify the analyses, an overall product evaluation variable was created as our dependent variable using the average of these three variables for the following analyses.

Table 3 Correlations between dependent variables

		Attractive	Appealing	Purchase likelihood
Attractive	Pearson Correlation	1	.910**	.760**
	Sig.		.000	.000
	N	560	560	560
Appealing	Pearson Correlation	.910**	1	.782**
	Sig.	.000		.000
	N	560	560	560
Purchase	Pearson Correlation	.760**	.782**	1
	Sig.	.000	.000	
	N	560	560	560

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

To test BEA congruity effect of department stores Wal-mart and Target, we conducted a mix ANOVA to see the full picture (i.e., main model) of our variables in questions. To do so, three variables, namely “Brand_benefit”, “EA_benefit” and “ProductType”, are created to represent different benefits of ethical attributes, brands and products respectively. Thus, we have two levels of “brand_benefit” (1=brand with symbolic benefits and -1=brand with utilitarian benefits) , two

level of “ProductType” (1= cough syrup and 2= shampoo), and three levels of the “EA_benefit” (which includes 0= no ethical attribute, 1=ethical attribute with symbolic benefits and -1=ethical attribute with utilitarian benefits). We then used “ProductType” as a within subject factor, “brand_benefit” and “EA_benefit” as between subject factors.

“OverallEvaluation_cs” and “OverallEvaluation_sh” represent the overall evaluation dependent variables as discussed above for cough syrup products and shampoo products, respectively.

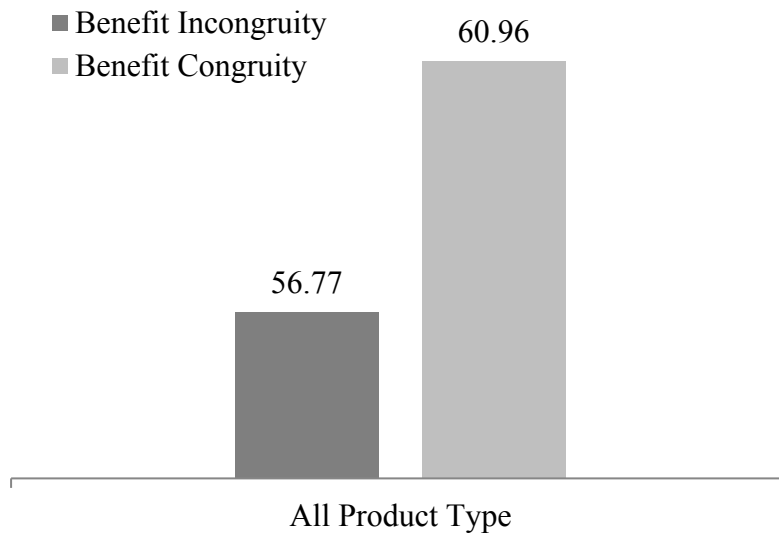
Table 4 shows the means of overall product evaluations in different benefits combinations.

Table 4 Means of overall evaluation

Brand_benefit	EA_benefit	Overall evaluation mean
Symbolic	Symbolic	62.81
Utilitarian	Utilitarian	59.11
Congruity mean		60.96
Symbolic	Utilitarian	58.71
Utilitarian	Symbolic	54.83
Incongruity mean		56.77

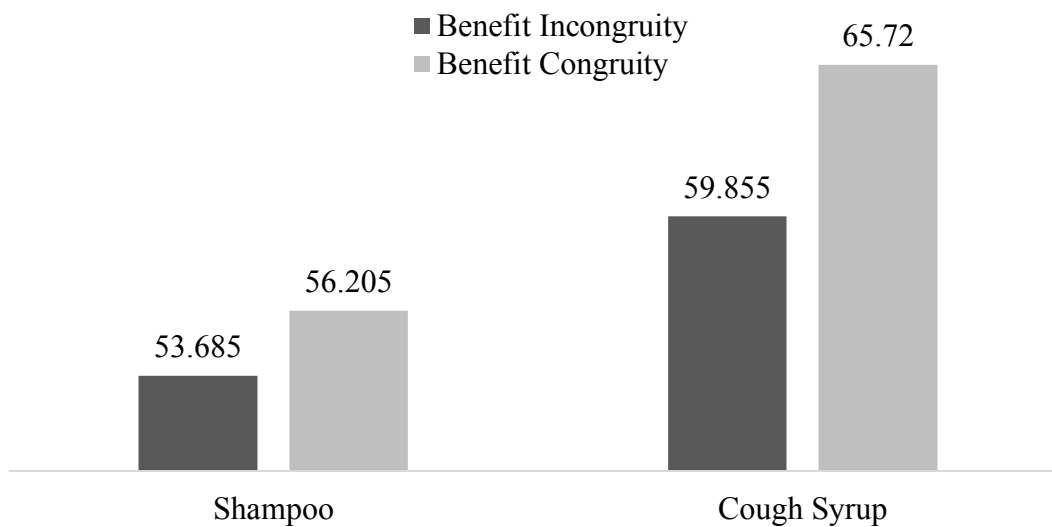
Consider both products’ overall evaluation, although the main effect of “brand_benefit” and “EA_benefit” were not significant separately, the interaction between “brand_benefit” and “EA_benefit” was significant as predicted ($F(2, 275) = 2.594, p < 0.1$). **Figure 3** shows that the average overall evaluations for benefit congruity or incongruity for both products. It is clearly that evaluation mean ($M_{\text{congruity}} = 60.96$) with BEA congruity are higher than the evaluation mean ($M_{\text{incongruity}} = 56.77$) with benefit incongruity between brands and ethical attributes; thus, H1 is supported.

Figure 3 Overall evaluation mean



After checking the full picture, we next look at how congruent benefits between ethical attributes and brands influence shampoo and cough syrup product evaluation. **Figure 4** compares overall evaluation means with benefit congruity versus incongruity between brand and ethical attribute.

Figure 4 Overall evaluation mean comparison



We created a congruity variable between brand benefits and ethical attribute benefits (1= congruity, including utilitarian brands with utilitarian ethical attributes and symbolic brands with symbolic ethical attributes; 0= incongruity, including utilitarian brands with symbolic ethical attributes and symbolic brands with utilitarian ethical attributes). With this variable as independent variable, we conducted regression analyses with the overall evaluation variable as dependent with data from participants who have reviewed product with utilitarian or symbolic ethical attributes. The analysis results for cough syrup and shampoo product showing in **Table 5**. As we can see, for cough syrup product, as we expected, BEA congruity significantly enhance product evaluation ($F(1,185), p=0.07$). That is to say, when comparing to cough syrup products with ethical attributes and brand benefits incongruity, cough syrup with the benefits congruity was evaluated more favorable and was more likely to be purchased. However, for shampoo, none of the dependent variable is significantly different between congruity and incongruity. Hence, H1 are supported by data of cough syrup.

Table 5 Means of overall evaluations

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Cough syrup overallEvaluation	Between Groups	1583.47	1	1583.47	3.13	.07
	Within Groups	93319.59	185	504.43		
	Total	94903.07	186			
Shampoo overallEvaluation	Between Groups	277.55	1	277.55	.45	.50
	Within Groups	113631.80	185	614.23		
	Total	113909.35	186			

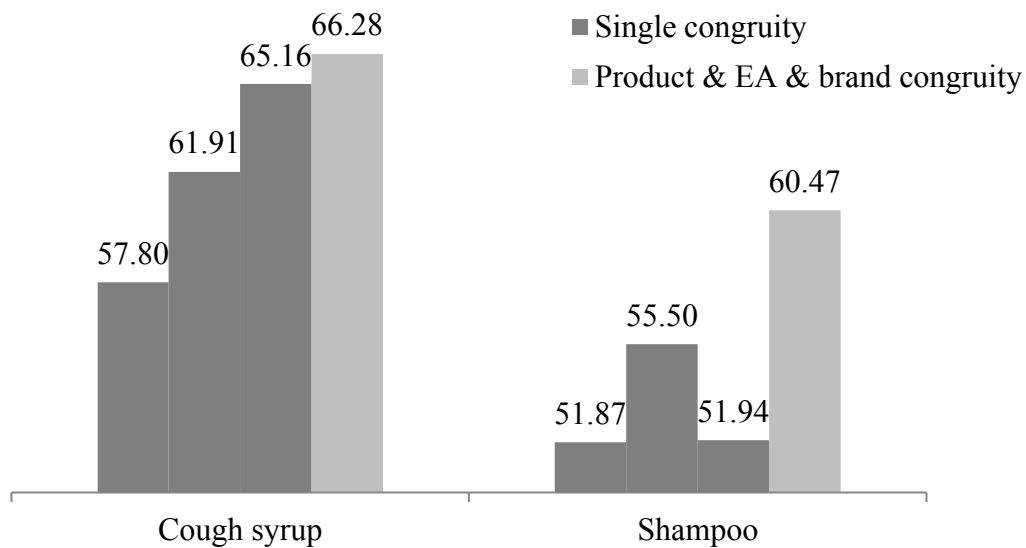
According to H2, we expected that branded products with both product category & ethical attribute benefits congruity and brand & ethical attribute benefits congruity are evaluated more favorable and more likely purchased by consumers in comparison to branded products with one benefits congruity type (i.e., either product category & ethical attribute benefits congruity or brand & ethical attribute benefits congruity). **Table 6** shows product type's within-subject effects on the overall product evaluations. As we can see, the main effect and two-way interactions of product type with the between-subjects were significant, but the three-way interactions among

“ProductType”, “EA_Benefit” and “Brand_benefit” were not significant, which means the product type does not show significantly difference in the interaction of “EA_benefit *Brand_benefit”. We then look closer at the comparison (see in **Figure 5**) between three-factor congruity and two-factor congruity, and found that although three-factor congruity leads to higher evaluation the gaps are not significantly large enough to conclude the validity of H2.

Table 6 Within-subjects effects

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ProductType	1	13247.015	58.988	.000
ProductType * EA_Benefit	2	738.456	3.288	.039
ProductType * Brand_benefit	1	615.427	2.740	.099
ProductType * EA_Benefit * Brand_benefit	2	157.115	.700	.498
Error(ProductType)	275	224.573		

Figure 5 Overall evaluation mean



We also did a replication on the two grocery stores, namely Kroger and Wholefood market, to see if the results are similar to those of the department stores. According to the results, the main effects of “brand_benefit” ($F(2, 281) = 2.691, \rho = 0.7$) and “EA_benefit” ($F(1, 281) = 3.566,$

$\rho=0.6$) are significant; however, the interaction of “brand_benefit” and “EA_benefit” become insignificant ($F(2, 281) = .473, \rho = 0.62$) when retailers type change from department stores to grocery stores. Thus, H1 is not supported by the data of grocery stores. Similarly, the interaction between “ProductType”, “EA_Benefit” and “Brand_benefit” were not significant either ($F(2, 281) = .464, \rho = .63$), which means H2 is also unsupported by the data of grocery stores.

According to Gupta and Sen (2013), higher scores on the scales of resource synergy belief reflected more negative resource synergy beliefs whereas lower scores reflected more positive resource synergy beliefs. In order to examine the role of resource synergy beliefs in the relationship between benefits congruity and product evaluations, we added it into the main model by creating a new variable “RSB_HL” in which $RSB_HL = 1$ when the scores of resource synergy beliefs (+1 SD) and $RSB_HL = -1$ when the scores of resource synergy beliefs (-1 SD). **Figure 6** shows the overall evaluations with symbolic benefit congruity between ethical attributes and brands. It is clear that H3a was not supported by the data of shampoo product since the average overall evaluation with positive resource synergy beliefs was less than its counterpart with negative resource synergy beliefs which is opposite to the prediction of H3a. Then, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to test whether the data of cough syrup supports the hypothesis. Unfortunately, the result showed that the average overall evaluation with positive resource synergy beliefs was not significantly greater than its counterpart with negative resource synergy beliefs ($\rho = .39$). Similarly, to test H3b, **Figure 7** shows the overall evaluations with negative resource synergy beliefs (SS congruity refers to symbolic BEA congruity and UU congruity refers to utilitarian BEA congruity). Two one-way ANOVA was conducted to test whether the average overall evaluation with a symbolic benefit congruity was significantly less than its counterpart with a utilitarian benefit congruity, and the results was also insignificant.

Figure 6 Overall evaluation mean comparison

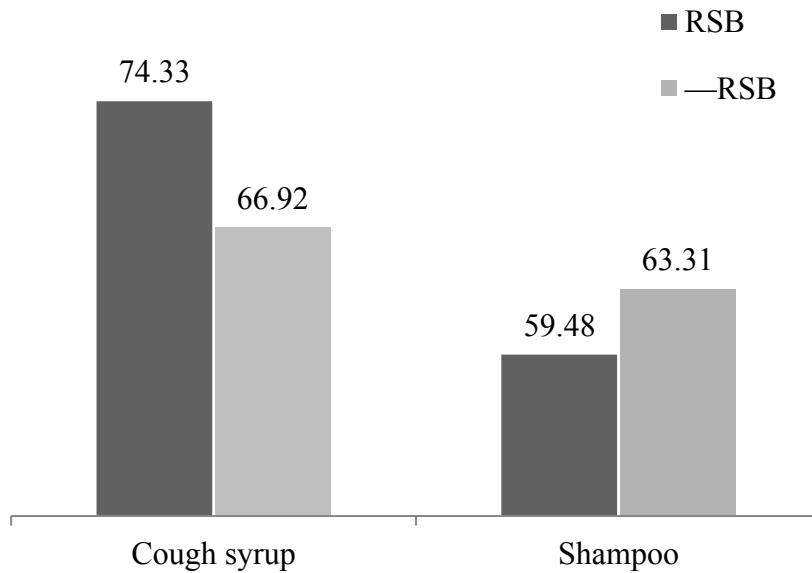
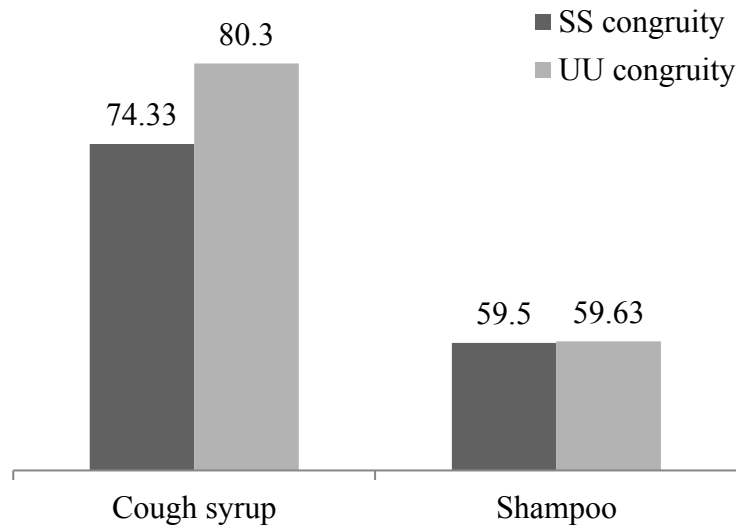


Figure 7 Overall evaluation mean with negative resource synergy beliefs



However, we did find that when the higher the scores of resource synergy beliefs the lower the overall evaluations are. A regression analysis was conducted with resource synergy beliefs and the benefits congruity variable as independent variables, and the overall evaluation as dependent variable for all subjects (See in **Table 7**).

Table 7

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
OverallEvaluation	RSB_c	-.81	.47	-.06	-1.72	.086
	Brand&EA Congruity	3.24	1.58	.08	2.05	.041

Referring to the **Table 7**, the overall product evaluation ($b = -.81$, $\rho < .1$) decrease when score of resource synergy beliefs increase; that is to say, negative resource synergy beliefs are negatively related to product evaluations and these results are consistent with the previous researches discussed in the literature review. Also, this result indicates that resource synergy beliefs significantly affect the evaluations of a symbolic benefit-congruent product in a negative way, which means consumers with more positive resource synergy beliefs will have more favorable evaluations on a symbolic benefit-congruent ethical product.

To test Hypothesis 4, we conducted an ANOVA with brand social responsibility (BSR) as dependent and benefits congruity between ethical attribute and brand as independent variable for all subjects. Based on the result, the mean of brand social responsibility enhanced when brand and ethical attribute benefits changed from incongruity (Brand& EA Congruity=0, $M=4.65$) to congruity (Brand& EA Congruity=1, $M=4.94$) as referring to **Table 8**. Besides, we also did a regression between these two variable, and the result also suggested that BEA congruity is positively related to brand social responsibility ($b = .28$, $\rho < .05$); thus, H4 is supported by our data.

Table 8

	Brand & EA Congruity	Mean	F	Sig.
BSR	0	4.65	(F1,548)= 5.977	.015
	1	4.94		

We conducted a regression analysis on overall product evaluation with brand social responsibility (BSR) as independent variable. Based on the results (see in **Table 9**), we found that brand social responsibility is positive related to overall product evaluation ($b=6.15$, $p<.01$).

Table 9

Regression Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
BSR	6.15	.46	.449	13.364	.00

With the positive association between BSR, benefits congruity and product evaluations, we want to check if brand social reasonability serves as a mediated role between the relationship between the BEA congruity effect and product evaluations. To test this assumption, we put both BSR and benefits congruity variable between an ethical attribute and the brand in the regression models with overall product evaluation as dependent. Based on the results, we found that, in this model, BSR was significant, whereas congruity variable became insignificant after BSR being added. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the results above indicate that brand social responsibility is a mediator which helps benefits congruity process its influences on overall product evaluations(see in **Figure 8**).

Figure 8 BSR moderated role

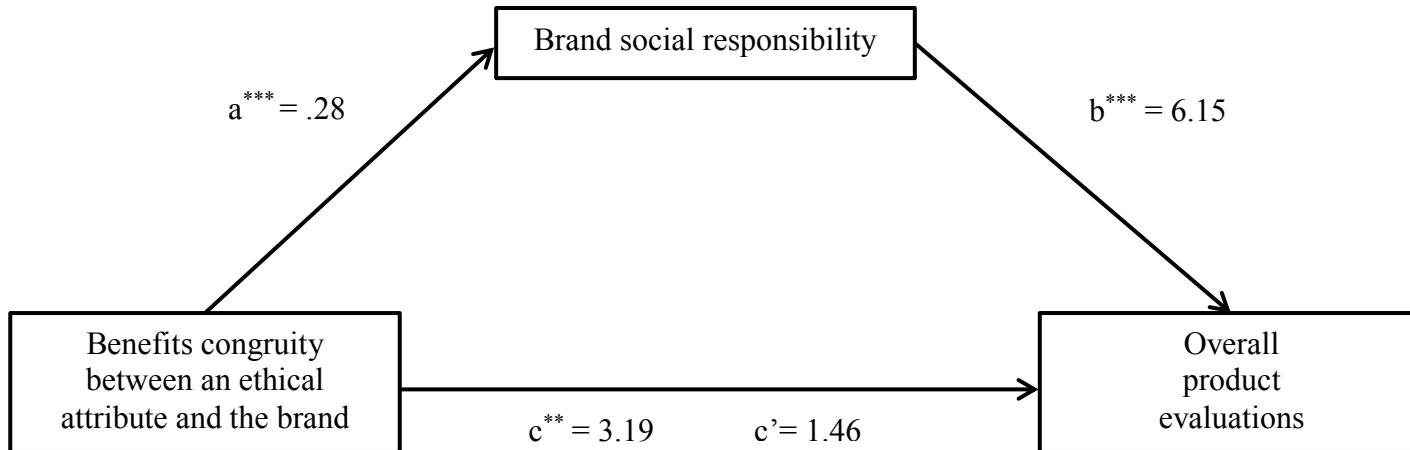


Figure 5 a*** represent the positive impact of benefits congruity on brand social responsibility; b*** represent the positive impact of brand social responsibility on the overall product evaluation; c*** represent the positive impact of BEA congruity on the overall product evaluation; c' represent the positive impact of benefits congruity on the overall product evaluation, after brand social responsibility being added as another independent variable; One asterisk * represents $p < .1$, two asterisk ** represents $p < .05$, and three asterisk *** represents $p < .01$

5. Discussion

The present study compares consumer ethical and sustainable product evaluations associated with brands and ethical attributes benefits congruity with those associated without such benefits congruity. With the analyses above, we found supports for our hypotheses. More specifically, the study reveals that, for utilitarian product category (i.e., cough syrup), consumer evaluations as well as their purchase intention of ethical and sustainable branded products become more favorable when a utilitarian (symbolic) brand is presented with a utilitarian (symbolic) ethical attribute.

5.1 Theoretical contribution

Our findings provide several insights to current literature of benefits congruity, brand social responsibility and resource synergy beliefs in ethical and sustainable consumption.

First of all, this study is an extension of benefits congruity researches in ethical and sustainable product brand level, which can help us better understand consumers decision making when purchasing ethical and sustainable branded products. In current study, we associated real brands' evidence to prove that the benefits congruity between an ethical attribute and the brand could positively affect consumers' responses for utilitarian product categories, and consumers' evaluations and purchase intention will reach the most positive effect when benefits of the product category (both utilitarian and symbolic products) is also congruent. These findings provide supportive evidence of positive benefits congruity effect on consumer evaluations. Besides, these findings serve not only as a support for the previous studies about benefits congruity between product attributes and product categories (e.g., Bodur et al. 2013; Luchs et al. 2010), but also as a further explore in the field of benefits congruity and ethical and sustainable branding researches. By studying brands' values and ethical attributes' benefits together, our findings suggested that congruity between the two levels' benefits may serve as an indicator of fitness between a brands and an ethical attribute.

Besides, the findings of present study contribute to both the study of brand social responsibility in the area of retailing as well as the current literature about the link between brand social responsibility and benefits congruity effect. Although social responsibility of the firm's level (i.e., corporate social responsibility) has been discussed by marketing researchers for years, and prior researches have established associations between such social responsibility and consumer's responses (e.g., Kang et al., 2014; Wagner et al., 2009), brand social responsibility which is specially focusing on a brand level's social responsible involvement is introduced in recent year (Grohmann & Bodur, 2014), and has limited literature. Hence, the current study contributes to fill this researching gap. Last but not least, consider multiple private label brands are launched by a same large retailer, the retailer's brand image and corporate social responsibility may have an impact on consumers' attitude towards its stores brands. There is a need to differentiate brand's social responsibility and retailer's social responsibility when studying ethical and sustainable store brands' consumption; thus, this study may help making up for current literature's deficiencies by studying brand social responsibility of retailers' store brands which increasingly introduce ethical attributes to their products.

5.2 Practical contribution

This study suggested that consumer product evaluations are affected by associations and benefits congruity between brand and ethical attributes and that such impact have important implications for branding and retailing.

In real marketing practices, both private label and global brands usually introduce ethical attributes to their products to elicit favorable responses from their consumers and to differentiate from competitors. The results of this study found the positive consequents of product evaluations and purchase intention when a benefit-congruent ethical and sustainable attributes is added to the branded product. Furthermore, we used real private label brands in the study in order to help us better understand the role of ethical attributes in consumer's decision-making process of ethical and sustainable consumption. We believe that the present findings have potentially important implications for retailers and marketing managers.

The contribution to marketing management is twofold. First of all, our findings revealed that natures of benefits that delivered by ethical attributes and brands have important influence on consumer product evaluations and purchasing decisions. In today's competitive markets where retailers increasingly involve in ethical and sustainable consumption, our findings suggested that, in addition to cost considerations, retailers should understand the primary benefits that their brands are offering before introducing new ethical and sustainable stores brands to consumers. The present study demonstrated that benefits congruity can be considered as a matching indicator between an ethical attribute and a brand, which may affect consumer's attitudes towards the branded product. That is to say, a store brand can be more successful when having a benefit-congruent ethical attribute. For example, when retailers are to consider introducing an ethical and sustainable departments' stores private brands, it is better to consider establishing a benefits congruent brand's image and providing a benefits congruent ethical attribute as well. In doing so, consumers may perceived relatively higher degree of consistency and lower degree of disfluency, and hence gain brand's favorability.

Moreover, although retailers' social responsible reputation may possibly affect consumer attitudes towards their store brands, retailers should understand that brand social responsibility of a store brand is different from corporate social responsibility of the retailer that carried such store brand. According to our results, benefits congruity between an ethical attribute and a brand has an positive impact on consumers' product evaluations through brand social responsibility; that is to say, when adding a benefit-congruent ethical attribute to the store branded product, brand social responsibility increase and then enhance consumers' product evaluations. Thus, retailers can raise their store brands' social responsibility by operating ethical attributes, and finally have their store brands' product evaluations improved.

6. Limitation and future research

Though the study has both theoretical and practical implications as stated above, several limitations exist and should be considered by future researchers.

The first limitation in this study is the types of benefits we used. We only discussed two types of benefits, namely symbolic benefits and utilitarian benefits. We choose these two benefits because they are mostly discussed in current literature and are relatively easier to differentiate in real retailers and brands selections. However, other benefit types such as hedonic benefits were also considered in previous studies (Chitturi et al., 2008). Other benefit types should also be considered in future study about benefits congruity ethical consumption. Similarly, in order to compare the differences between congruity and incongruity effect of symbolic and utilitarian benefits, we focused on branded product with one ethical attribute. In other words, branded products that offer multiple attributes have not been discussed in the present study. However, in real marketing place, there are many cases that one product is offering several ethical attributes which deliver different types of benefits. For example, a fragrance free shampoo supporting wildlife funding. Considering such more complex conditions, our study offered exploratory findings for future researchers.

Secondly, the current literature also suggests that benefits congruity between retailers and brands possibly improve consumer evaluations. Branding and brand management principle can be applied to retail brands (Ailawadi and Keller, 2004). Not only brands and products deliver benefits to consumers, retailers could also provide benefits by impressive brand image, customized store atmosphere and effective portfolio selection and so on. That is to say, benefits provided by retailers also can be either primarily utilitarian or symbolic. According to Gupta and Sen (2013), the ethical and social responsible information delivered undertaken by retailers could embed their store brand products with a sense of goodness, ethicality and values in the minds of consumers. Previous study suggests that inconsistent corporate social responsibility information, which happens when the firm's corporate social responsibility statements come into conflict with observed behavior, will lead to perceived corporate hypocrisy and, hence, negatively affect consumer evaluation towards the firm (Wagner, Lutz, and Weitz 2009). Applying this finding to

the field of retailers' brands, it assumes that social responsible message delivered by a retailer should, to some extent, be congruent with social responsible message carried by its store brands. However, in our experimental design, we choose private label brands that have congruent benefits with their retailers through our pretests. For example, Equate was perceived more utilitarian and less symbolic comparing to Up&Up, and, similarly, Walmart was perceived more utilitarian and less symbolic comparing to Target. As a result, benefits congruity between retailers and brands should also be considered in future study. For example, in the same retailer, we consider several store brands which primarily deliver different types of benefits.

Thirdly, price-related issues have long been accepted as one of the important facets that are associated with ethical and sustainable consumption (Gleim et al. 2013; Osterhus 1997; Lynn and Oldenquist 1986). As we noted, price may also possibly leverage the effect of an ethical attribute on consumers' product evaluations in real marketing place; however, we only used one price level for all condition in our study design for the sake of control variable. If it is possible, future researchers should also compared benefits congruity effect under conditions with different price level.

The last limitations of this study relates to the measurement of utilitarian and symbolic retailers and brands. As mentioned in the results, although the scales are validate in terms of unidimensionality and internal consistency, the utilitarian and symbolic scales that we used are adopted from prior studies in which product categories and product attributes were the items that being measured; that is, they are not originally designed for retailers and brands measuring, and this nature of scales can yield uncertainty and affect the results. Thus, it is better to build scales specifically for retailers and brands measuring in future researches.

7. Conclusion

Along with the rapid and important growth of ethical and sustainable consumption, marketing managers and researchers should pay special attention to this phenomenon. The findings reported in this thesis provide valuable theoretical and managerial insights for branding and retailing. We investigated benefits congruity effect on consumer ethical and sustainable product evaluations and revealed that natures of benefits that delivered by ethical attributes and brands have important influence on consumer product evaluations and purchasing decisions. Despite its limitations, the study offer several insights to current literature of benefits congruity, brand social responsibility and resource synergy beliefs in ethical and sustainable consumption. It demonstrates that consumer evaluations of ethical and sustainable branded products become more favorable when a utilitarian (symbolic) brand is presented with a utilitarian (symbolic) ethical attribute.

APPENDIX Survey Sample

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey. This survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect your thoughts and opinions about some brands that you may be familiar with in your daily life.

Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If you have any question, please contact the researcher through: retailer.study@gmail.com. The present research aims to investigate the impact of retailer and brand related-factors on consumer choice for daily consumption. In total, participation in this study will take 10 minutes. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form. The information gathered will be anonymous. We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study. It is purely your decision to participate in this research. If you do participate, you can stop at any time.

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

- Agree
- Disagree

Questions

Part 1

Please read the following product descriptions carefully and answer the questions about the product and brand.

Cough & Cold Syrup



Equate™ Brand (by Wal-mart)

Relieves coughs due to cold and minor bronchial irritations

Made with natural and eco-friendly ingredients

\$5.95

Q1 On a scale of 1-100, how attractive is Equate cough syrup?

Please indicate your response by moving the slider to the number on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

[1=extremely unattractive, and 100= extremely attractive]

Q2 On a scale of 1-100, how appealing is Equate cough syrup?

Please indicate your response by moving the slider to the number on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

[1=extremely unappealing, and 100= extremely appealing]

Q3 On a scale of 1-100, how likely are you to purchase Equate cough syrup

Please indicate your response by moving the slider to the number on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

[1=extremely unlikely, and 100= extremely likely]

Q4 How would you evaluate the Equate cough syrup?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unfavorable:Favorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bad:Good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative:Positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 Please answer the following question. Evaluating the Equate cough syrup was ...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very easy: Very difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Very simple: Very complex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 On a scale of 1-7, how would you evaluate the taste of Equate cough syrup?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bad:Good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfavorable:Favorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not informative about quality:Informative about quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not related to effectiveness:Related to effectiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 Please indicate how descriptive the following adjectives are of Equate (by Wal-mart).

	Not at all descriptive 1	2	3	4	5	6	Very descriptive 7
Fair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compassionate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humane	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Caring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q8 On a scale of 1-7, how would you evaluate the price of Equate cough syrup?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Low Price:High Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Less than I expected:More than I expected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 On a scale of 1-7, how would you rate the overall quality of Equate cough syrup?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Low Quality:High Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10 How certain are you in your evaluation of the quality of Equate cough syrup?
[1= Not at all certain, and 7= Very certain]

Q11 How confident are you in your evaluation of the quality of Equate cough syrup?
[1= Not at all confident, and 7= Very confident]

Q12 How does the following attribute influence the quality of the Equate cough syrup?

	Decreases Quality 1	2	3	Neither 4	5	6	Increases Quality 7
Made with natural and eco-friendly ingredients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	Neither 4	5	6	Strongly agree 7
1) The attribute made with natural and eco-friendly ingredients reflects what the Equate brand stands for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) The attribute made with natural and eco-friendly ingredients is consistent with the Equate brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please read the following product descriptions carefully and answer the questions about the product and brand.

Shampoo



Equate™ Brand (by Wal-mart)

Cleanses gently for daily use on all hair types

Preservative and Fragrance Free

\$5.95

Q14 On a scale of 1-100, how attractive is Equate shampoo?

Please indicate your response by moving the slider to the number on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

[1=extremely unattractive, and 100= extremely attractive]

Q15 On a scale of 1-100, how appealing is Equate shampoo?

Please indicate your response by moving the slider to the number on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

[1=extremely unappealing, and 100= extremely appealing]

Q16 On a scale of 1-100, how likely are you to purchase Equate shampoo?

Please indicate your response by moving the slider to the number on the scale that best reflects your opinion.

[1=extremely unlikely, and 100= extremely likely]

Q17 How would you evaluate the Equate shampoo?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unfavorable:Favorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bad:Good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative:Positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q18 Please answer the following question. Evaluating the Equate shampoo was ...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very easy: Very difficult	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Very simple: Very complex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q19 Please indicate how descriptive the following adjectives are of Equate (by Wal-mart).

	Not at all descriptive 1	2	3	4	5	6	Very descriptive 7
Fair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compassionate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humane	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Caring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20 On a scale of 1-7, how would you evaluate the price of Equate shampoo?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Low Price:High Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Less than I expected:More than I expected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q21 On a scale of 1-7, how would you rate the overall quality of Equate shampoo?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Low Quality:High Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q22 How certain are you in your evaluation of the quality of Equate shampoo?
[1= Not at all certain, and 7= Very certain]

Q23 How confident are you in your evaluation of the quality of Equate shampoo?
[1= Not at all confident, and 7= Very confident]

Q24 How does the following attribute influence the quality of the Equate shampoo?

	Decreases Quality 1	2	3	Neither 4	5	6	Increases Quality 7
Preservative and fragrance free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q25 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	Neither 4	5	6	Strongly agree 7
The attribute preservative and fragrance free reflects what the Equate brand stands for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The attribute preservative and fragrance free is consistent with the Equate brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 2

On average, how often do you use each of the following brands per year?

[0= Never and 9= All of the time]

- _____ Equate (by Wal-mart)
- _____ Up&Up (by Target)
- _____ Simple Truth (by Kroger)
- _____ Safeway Care (by Safeway)
- _____ Pantene
- _____ Triaminic
- _____ 365 (by Whole Foods Market)

Q576 Please indicate your familiarity with each of the brands below:

	Not at all Familiar	Unfamiliar	Somewhat Unfamiliar	Neither Familiar nor Unfamiliar	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
Simple truth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Up & Up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Triaminic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pantene	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
365	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q609 Have you ever tasted any of the following cough syrup brands ? Please choose yes or no from the dropdown menu for each brand.

	Yes	No
Equate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Up&Up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Simple Truth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safeway Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tiaminic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
365	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q628 Please rate how important are the following product attributes to you.

	Not at all Important 1	2	3	Neither 4	5	6	Very Important 7
Made with natural and eco-friendly ingredients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Preservative and Fragrance Free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supports the World Wildlife Fund	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supports the American Cancer Society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q629 Please rate how ethical you think the following product attributes are?

	Not at all Ethical 1	2	3	Neither 4	5	6	Very Ethical 7
Made with natural and eco-friendly ingredients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preservative and Fragrance Free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supports the World Wildlife Fund	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supports the American Cancer Society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q630 Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

[1=Strongly disagree, and 7= Strongly agree]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Socially responsible behavior by firms is often accompanied by inferior product offerings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When companies focus on social responsibility, the quality and performance of their products suffer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Companies that engage in socially responsible behavior often produce products that are inferior on performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Products that are made in a socially responsible manner are often worse on important functional features such as performance than those that are not socially responsible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resources devoted to social causes come at the expense of improved product performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q631 Please indicate your involvement in social responsibility and sustainability issues\ in consumption.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unimportant to me:Important to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Means nothing to me:Means a lot to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personally irrelevant to me:Personally relevant to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does not matter to me:Matters to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Of no concern to me:Of concern to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not involving:Involving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not interesting to me:Interesting to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q632 Here, we would like to know your impressions about a business organization's responsibilities in general. A business should ...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
help solve social problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
participate in the management of public affairs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
allocate some of their resources to philanthropic activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
play a role in our society that goes beyond the mere generation of profits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
be committed to well-defined ethics principles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
avoid compromising ethical standards in order to achieve corporate goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ensure that the respect of ethical principles has priority over economic performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
permit ethical concerns to negatively affect economic performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q636 On a scale of 1-7, how would you evaluate the fit between “Made with natural and eco-friendly ingredients” and Equate cough syrup?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unrepresentative:Representative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low Fit:High Fit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inconsistent:Consistent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Atypical:Typical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q637 On a scale of 1-7, how would you evaluate the fit between "Preservative and Fragrance Free” and Equate shampoo?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unrepresentative:Representative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low Fit:High Fit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inconsistent:Consistent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Atypical:Typical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q638 In your opinion, how relevant is the following attribute to Equate cough syrup?
[1=Not at all relevant and 7= Very relevant]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Made with natural and eco-friendly ingredients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q639 In your opinion, how relevant is the following attribute to Equate shampoo?
[1=Not at all relevant and 7= Very relevant]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Preservative and Fragrance Free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 3

Q721 What is your age?

Q722 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q723 What is your educational level?

- Under high school
- High school or equivalent
- Some college
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or higher

Q724 What is your present employment status?

- Student
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired

Q725 What is your annual household income? (in U.S. dollars)

- Less than \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 or more

Thank you!

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