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A Scale for Measurement of the Perception of Conscious Buying Benefits

Uma Escala de Mensuração da Percepção de Benefícios Conscientes de Compra

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Abstract

This article aims to study the existence of a third dimension of benefits in offers arising from consumers' perception of conscious attributes. To this end, a multidimensional rating scale of attributes perceived in products is constructed and tested. A descriptive research with a quantitative approach was used, with a non-probabilistic sample of 521 individuals. The scale was tested with the support of Structural Equation Modeling to validate the three benefit dimensions. It was found that consumers in the sample recognize sustainable attributes in the products, which suggests the existence of a different consumer motivation than the recognized hedonic and utilitarian ones.

Keywords: Conscious consumption. Green consumption. Attribute Evaluation. Positioning. Segmentation.

Resumo

Este artigo tem o objetivo de estudar a existência de uma terceira dimensão de benefícios nas ofertas decorrente da percepção dos consumidores sobre atributos conscientes. Para tanto foi construída e testada uma escala multidimensional de avaliação de atributos percebidos nos produtos. Foi utilizada a pesquisa descritiva, com abordagem quantitativa, com amostra não probabilística de 521 indivíduos. A escala foi testada com suporte da Modelagem de Equações Estruturais para validar as três dimensões de benefícios. Descobriu-se que os consumidores da amostra reconhecem atributos sustentáveis nos produtos, sugerindo a existência de uma motivação de consumo diferente das reconhecidas hedônica e utilitária.

Palavras-Chave: Consumo consciente. Consumo verde. Avaliação de atributos. Posicionamento. Segmentação.

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1 Introduction

Beginning in the second half of the twentieth century, consumer studies adopted new perspectives with the inclusion of thoughts more consistent with human nature. These studies relativized the primarily rational and utilitarian approaches adopted at the beginning of the discipline (Abdel-Ghany, 2001). Marking this new paradigm is a study by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) who stressed the importance of a hedonic perspective on consumption reflected in experiential aspects. Their research also consolidated the idea of the hedonic and utilitarian duality of benefits. It follows from the assumption that the individual purchases a product to either solve a problem or gain pleasure from product consumption.

Although both hedonic and utilitarian dimensions represent distinct facets of benefits, in essence they reflect egocentric motivations of people seeking solutions to their problems and desires. From this perspective, products are evaluated according to the value perceived by consumers, i.e., the attributes that produce benefits for themselves compared to the costs associated with obtaining them. This traditional view of a consumer who only values returns for himself may be weakened by the maturation of a social conscience.

Emerging demands such as the fight for animal defense, the preservation of green areas and humanitarian causes, are consolidated in society for the sustainability of life on Earth. This reality gains fertile ground with the generational groups of those born in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries known as Generations Y and Z, respectively. Generational groups characterize people who have received similar environmental stimuli and thus would develop a similar way of interacting with the world. This includes the shared values that underlie a culture, a society, and the decisions and behaviors of the individual. Values with altruistic orientation can renew many of the established individualistic beliefs in society. The values also have weight in determining behavior.

If conscious values exist (a term henceforth used to refer to altruistic values), they would encourage consumers to adopt equally altruistic postures, assess the impact of their choices, and weigh them in consumer decisions. Thus, a natural question is whether this new generation of consumers would also have intrinsic motivations for conscious benefits. Would they be able to perceive attributes that produce results for others and not just for themselves? To what extent does the view of hedonic-utilitarian attributes address the emergence of conscious values?

Conscious terminal values have the capacity to motivate coherent instrumental consumer choices in addition to consumer needs and desires. Therefore, this may be an emerging factor for evaluating offer attributes. This study suggests that conscious terminal values, termed here altruistic wills, may need to be included into the traditional hedonic-utilitarian The term ‘altruistic wills’ is proposed because altruistic “refers to the idea of bringing advantages to others even at the expense of oneself” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019), and wills are “what someone wants” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). Therefore, this study uses the term “altruistic wills” to describe the motivational state of consuming something that may produce benefits to others.

This paper investigates the existence of a third dimension of consumer benefits regarding sustainability attributes. For this purpose, a scale to gauge consumer perception load from offerings is proposed and tested for the three types of attributes (Hed-Uti-Con).

2 The Sustainability Issue

The emergence of sustainability as a recurring theme is a possible reflection of a hyper-consumerist scenario of the twentieth century (Prado, Silva, Junqueira, & Almeida, 2011), as well as the belief that the rapid pace of exploitation and use of natural resources will culminate in a collapse of the *status quo* of civilization. In the late twentieth century, this discourse is widely disseminated, affecting the socialization process of both Generation Y and Z (Verdú, 2015). Since socialization is the process in which a culture is learned and individual values are forged, it would be reasonable to inquire about the influence of sustainability ideals on the formation of these individuals. The trend toward sustainability is currently reflected in marketing theory with emerging approaches such as societal marketing, green marketing, environmental marketing, sustainable marketing, and holistic marketing (Belz & Peattie, 2009).

Despite the morally-correct conjecture that consumers should choose products with conscious attributes, this does not occur in most cases (Belz & Peattie, 2009; Braga & Silva, 2014; Braga , Dirceu, Satolo, Magalhães, Putti, & Braga, 2014; Frederico, Quevedo-Silva, & Freire, 2013; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008). Even though many company offers supposedly incorporate attributes linked to the green, or ecologically-conscious and active industry, Belz and Peattie (2009, p. 84) suggest that the major shift is yet to come, as there is a gap between ecologically-correct values and a behavior of coherent consumption (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008). This phenomenon would be known as an attitude-behavior gap and has several rational, psychological and functional explanations (Belz & Peattie, 2009). Among these possible explanations, and agreeing with the TPB (Ajzen, 1985), it would be reasonable for a person's incoherent behavior to be the result of incompatible implicit attitudes (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995) generating, for example, the report of attitudes that are actually mere rationalizations of behaviors not fully understood by individuals. This would occur in situations where there is not a true embodiment of values and beliefs aligned with conscious actions. Another possibility is an attitude resulting from normative influences that resulted in a compliance by submission (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). In both cases, incoherent attitudes towards conscious consumption (the one that occurs based on pro-environmental values) would be present, and these attitudes are a result of values and beliefs (Ajzen, 2001) that would not be aligned with this orientation either.

Is it possible that shared values about sustainability have become individual values guiding the creation of attitudes and beliefs in new generations? This question naturally leads to whether the attributes that organizations should incorporate into their offerings go beyond traditional hedonic and utilitarian ones. More specifically, do consumers currently evaluate offers from the conscious perspective?

3 The Relationship Between Values and Benefits

The term values, usually in the plural, refers to a set of rules or goals, conscious or not, of the subject of a social or cultural structure. They are important because they provide a way of understanding the behavior and decision making of individuals (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). A second specificity can also be considered when treating them as individual or personal values, and as shared or social values (McGregor, 2000). The former are largely the result of the shared values of a culture, since they are transmitted in the process of socialization to the individual. The second would be the references present in the social and cultural structure of a particular group (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). Shared values tend to be broader and more diffuse, while individual values are more determined and specific. It would be appropriate to assume that shared values change progressively as group members introduce new perspectives. But individual values are substantially perennial throughout one’s life.

Another common use of the word “value” is in the marketing concept of “offer value”, which is the quantified relationship between perceived benefits and costs of obtaining them. Despite being close to the logic of monetary measurement goes beyond this concept. The reason is that value is subjective to the individual, and even in many cases cannot be adequately quantified using numbers. Holbrook (1999, p. 5) states that consumer value is "an interactive experience of relativized preference". Thus, regarding consumer perception, marketing stimuli play a role in helping consumers to know and understand the attributes of the offer. Value has other meanings in different areas but these are beyond the scope of this paper.

Despite representing different variables, offer value and consumer values are connected. The value of the offer depends on the evaluative perspective of the consumer, which is influenced by their personal values. Consumer values are an indicator of what benefits are sought (Smith, 1999).

Generally every benefit of an offer is aligned with some consumer value. Values will outline consumer beliefs and, therefore, acceptable attitudes and behaviors. They will set goals and ways to achieve those goals. Since values represent certain desired states of existence (Kahle, 1983; Rokeach, 1968; 1973), they possess a predictive power of behavior as grounds for decision-making analysis.

To understand the relationship between benefits and individual values is an effective way to comprehend the motivations of consumption, and the possible perception of the value of offering. Values in this case may be either instrumental values (acting) or terminal values (achieving) (Rokeach, 1979). The logic is that because individual values have a guiding role in the formation of beliefs, attitudes and, consequently, decisions and behaviors, they will also impact the measurement of benefits.

Assuming that conscious values already exist in society (Etzione, 2001), it is reasonable to infer that there are groups of consumers who would also value attributes corresponding to such benefits. If a product has pro-environmental attributes and is positioned and perceived as such, there is a strong indication that its consumer also has corresponding values.

4 Dimensions of Benefits

Despite the hedonic-utilitarian duality being consolidated in marketing (Costa, 2011; Fiore & Kim, 2007; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) with empirical validation (Batra & Athola, 1991; Costa, 2011; Crowley, Spangenberg, & Hughes, 1992 ; Spangenberg, Voss, & Crowley, 1997), other theoretical proposals also exist in the literature. Nelson (1970) and Darby and Karni (1973) showed that products have dimensions of attributes: research, experience, and credibility. Park, Jaworski and Macinnis (1986) state that the basic needs of consumers would be mirrored in the following dimensions: functional, symbolic and experiential. Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) propose five types of individual values that would guide all purchasing decisions: functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional. Alternatively, Churchill and Peter (2005) suggest the attributes are functional, social, personal and experimental.

In general, all these dimensions show aspects that represent direct benefits for the consumer. This suggests that the aspects may be framed in the traditional hedonic-utility dichotomy, or in subcategories of these two dimensions, since hedonic elements address factors related to an experiential or emotional return (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003), and utilitarian to aspects of efficiency, costs and results (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Kim, 2006).

Among the authors that investigated these issues, Holbrook (1999) identified possible factors that do not fit in a solely selfish benefit return in his categorizations of value sources (Table 1). This perspective was identified by an evaluation done by the authors of this paper, in the form of a qualitative exercise trying to allocate all the benefits in the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions. The utilitarian dimension received efficiency (convenience) and excellence (quality). The hedonist dimension receiced status (success, impression management), esteem (reputation, materialism, possession), play (fun), aesthetics (beauty) and spirituality (hope, ecstasy, sacredness, magic). However, one of Holbrook's sources, ethics (virtue, justice and morality), would not fit naturally in any of the two dimensions. This study provided evidence for the existence of a third dimension of benefits not centered in ego, linked to conscious values and benefits.

Table 1
Typology of Consumer Value

		Extrinsic	**Intrinsic**
Self-oriented	Active	Efficiency	Play
	Reactive	Excellence	Aesthetics
Other-oriented	Active	Status	Ethics
	Reactive	Esteem	Spirituality

Note. Source: Free translation of “Consumer Value: A Framework for Analysis and Research Holbrook”, of M. B. Holbrook, 1999, p.149.

Pro-environmental or sustainable attributes in the offerings imply an indirect and perhaps immeasurable consumer reward that does not fit the hedonic-utilitarian duality. These attributes would consciously satiate the consumer who has altruistic aspirations.

Considering the facts presented earlier, the research problem that guided this project is to assess whether consumers realize conscious benefits in products. The associated objective was to evaluate if there is an attribute dimension related to the conscious benefits in the offers.

5 Methodology

This study has characteristics of a descriptive project using a quantitative method. Data collection was done through a survey, with closed questions in a self-completed form. It was applied electronically on the Qualtrics platform and in person with the printed form. Important steps were taken to improve instrument reliability such as scrambling and changing the valence of scale items, introducing descriptive questions at the end of the questionnaire, and using control and filtering questions. The form was tested for seven days and these tests identified the need for adjustments to terminology in the translated scales and question headers. The initial objective included the evaluation of six product categories, however only three were maintained to improve response rate.

Since the goal was to investigate the conscious benefit dimension, some products were tested with an intended positioning based on related attributes. Therefore, the choice was guided by the principle of having at least one option in the product category chosen with sustainable proposal. Two mobile phones, three cars and two batteries were used to test the scale. In each of these categories one of the products had sustainable intentions. The questions in the field form were structured with the photo and a small text with the characteristics as announced by the manufacturer. Respondents were instructed to analyze the figure and the text, and then respond to the scale.

Sampling was characterized as a convenience sampling, non-probabilistic design. These data were collected in late 2012 and early 2013. Invitations were sent by email with the link to the electronic form, and also published on a social network asking for volunteers to respond to it. Face-to-face applications (approximately 41% of cases) were performed in four educational institutions in the city of Curitiba (State of Paraná, South of Brazil), (OPET, UFPR and PUC) and in the metropolitan area (FAPI). Despite the low external validity that this type of sampling provides, it was consistent with the available resources for the study.

Another factor that motivated the adoption of this technique was the possibility of using additional filters in this technique to improve the quality of the collected data.

Regarding the sample size required to use Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) there is some divergence in the literature. Gorshuch (1983) and Kline (1979) suggest a sample of at least 100 cases for consistent constructs. Maccallum and Widaman (1999) suggest that at least 200 cases are needed. Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2009) suggest a ratio of 10 samples for every one variable would be reasonable. Based on this literature, it was decided to include a minimum of 200 cases.

Arising from the arguments of the theoretical review, the target population to be studied was that of the Generation Y, who were born between 1977 and 2000. The time of birth was the indicator of the group and was used as a selection criterion. Although Generation Z may also be representative of the phenomenon under consideration, a measurement of this group by the same method was deemed as inappropriate due to the age of the subjects at the time of collection.

6 Development of Con-Hed-Uti Scale Items

A number of potential scales were investigated from the literature (e.g. Batra and Ahtola (1991), Crowley, Spangenberg and Hughes (1992), Spangenberg, Voss and Crowley (1997) and Costa (2011)). The Voss, Spangenberg and Grohmann (2003) proposed scale was selected and used as a basis to construct the new instrument. The original scale is structured into ten items organized as a Osgood semantic differential divided between hedonic and utilitarian. This scale was chosen because of its substantial refinement and statistical stability compared with the others. The five proposed items (Table 2) were added for the conscious dimension. These terms emerged from a review of the subjects of sustainability and human needs, highlighting the works of Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (2008) and Max-Neef (1991).

Max-Neef (1991) characterizes nine classes of needs: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity, freedom. To construct the scale structure, an association was made between these dimensions and the prospects for attributes of a sustainable product according to Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (2008). The result of this process is shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Items used to create the indicators terms of conscious dimension

Consumer Basic Need related to sustainability	Adjectives for the scale (Osgood brand) [b]	
	Positive Valence	Negative Valence
Subsistence[a]	Natural	Artificial
Subsistence[a]	Secure	Insecure
Protection[a]	Resource saving	Resource waste
Protection[a]	Durable	Disposable
Identity[a]	Responsible	Irresponsible

Source: Adapted from a. "Human-Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflection", of M. E. Max-Neef, 1991; b. Prepared by the authors.

The choice of terms was determined based on a logic of interpratating the benefit to the consumer regarding the respective class of need, i.e. a sustainable attribute in the product that could satisfy it. As a result, the subsistence, protection and identity dimensions were used in reference to the theme to de development of new scale itens. The first column of Table 2 highlights the dimension of need that would motivate the consumer to seek a consistent benefit in a consumption. Subsequent columns present the terms of the scale that would be aligned with the assessment of product attributes in line with his need. In the process of generating items, the focus has always been on the perspective of what would be a benefit to the consumer, that is, an attribute that could resolve a tension present in the conscious domain.

The first attributes suggested as possible benefits are related to subsistence. This group of basic needs would be associated with demands such as equilibrium, shelter and health (Max-Neef, 1991). Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (2008) highlight the consumer search for natural, and organic products, distancing themselves from products considered industrialized, artificial, insecure, or uncertain. The possible link between the basic need and these attributes arises in the items: natural - artificial and secure - insecure.

Another facet that has been met is that of protection. It highlights the aspirations, e.g. for autonomy, balance, care, adaptability, solidarity (Max-Neef, 1991). Here the need to maximize resources, aiming for efficiency and longevity representing a longer life cycle, would be understood as a feature of sustainable products (Pickett-Baker, & Ozaki, 2008). Two other terms follow: resource saving - resource waste, durable - disposable.

Finally, the basic need for identity, closely related to the activities of the reference group (Max-Neef, 1991), from it emanates the last quality of attributes of a socio-ecological product: responsible-irresponsible.

7 Findings

Once all data was collected, a total of 650 cases, including eletronic and in person surveys, were included in the Qualtrics database. Quality control procedured identified a few fill in errors resulting in the elimation of 129 cases. This was performed in an eletroic spreadsheet. Generation Y cases were further selected to perform the validation using the question designed to test the fill-in attention, these cases also were verified for missing values on the scale, after these procedures 271 cases remained.

This Database was imported into SPSS V. 18 to run an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and begin the scale test. The method chosen for data treatment was exclude cases listwise, since later the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) will not accept cases with missing values. The extraction parameter from the Principal Components was used because it is a popular method when the sample used is understood as the population itself (Field, 2009). The number of dimensions to perform the test was not determined prior to analysis.

The Correlation matrix indicated that all pairs of variables were correlated with $p < 0.05$. No additional cases were excluded from the database. In the correlation table, no value above 0.9 was produced, thus eliminating the risk of a data singularity problem (Field, 2009). The commonality table did not present any value below 0.49, with several values between 0.5 and 0.7. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test produced a KMO value (105) = 0.884, $p < 0.000$, which is considered good (Field, 2009). Bartlett's test obtained an X^2 (105) = 1440.007, significant at $p < 0.000$, indicating that the R-matrix was not an identity matrix.

Both the component matrix and the matrix rotated by the Varimax method with Kaizer normalization demonstrated the existence of four dimensions. The total variance explained by the eigenvalues also suggested four dimensions with 62.013% of the total variance. The screenplot chart visual inspection indicated the existence of three dimensions. The rotated component matrix automatically divided the indicators into four dimensions. The five predicted indicators for the conscious dimension were divided into two dimensions. One of them partially charged in the utilitarian dimension. Only two factors had unexpected loads in other dimensions, but with low correlations. One of the utility factors did not show a loading above the established cutoff range of 0.4. The other indicators properly loaded in their dimensions as expected. Loads of some of the variables revealed signs that they could be eliminated. However, it was preferred to keep them for further investigation at CFA.

According to Field (2009, p. 561), CFA is ideal for “testing hypotheses about latent variable structures and their relationships.” Thus, after obtaining the dimensions with the EFA, the third dimension was evaluated in AMOS by CFA using the same basis. CFA uses structural equation modeling to test the model's ability to respond homogeneously to different data (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009).

The reference for model adjustment was the parameters stipulated by Hair et al. (2009). In this process, some variables were excluded. The final model with its constructs and correlations can be seen in Figure 1.

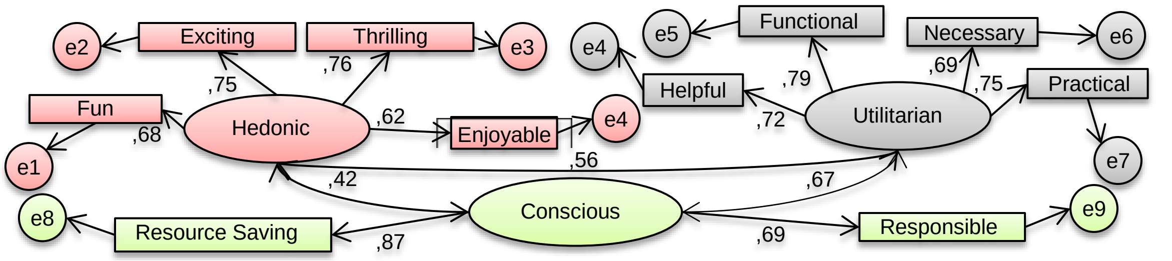

Figure 1 - Structural Model Elaborated in AMOS with Respective Loadings
Note. The figure has been redrawn from the original AMOS output. Prepared by the authors.

The model met the minimum requirements of all adjustment indicators after excluding five factors [X^2 (32) = 41.293, p = 0.126, CFI = 0.990, GFI = 0.972, AGFI = 0.952, RMSEA = 0.033]. With the stable model, it is important to test for discriminant, convergent validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2009; Fornell, & Larcker, 1981).

Reliability was given by the Composite Reliability Coefficient (CRC) and the convergent validity with the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) by the method of Fornell and Larcker (1981). Discriminant validity was obtained by comparing the square of the correlation coefficients with the extracted mean variance (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) (Table 3).

Table 3
Model Validity Indicator Summaries

	Hedonic	Conscious	Utilitarian
AVE (> 0,5)[b]	0,50	0,18[a]	0,31[a]
		0,62	0,45[a]
			0,5415
CCR (>0,7)[b]	0,80	0,76	0,83

Note. Source: a. Discriminant validity should be less than the AVE. b. According to “Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error”, of C. Fornell and D. Larcker, Journal of Marketing Research, 1981, 39-50. Prepared by the authors. Source: Prepared by the authors.

This result supported the hypothesis of the existence of a third benefits dimension, the conscious dimension, for the studied sample. This result suggests that the perceived benefits can be understood as a continuum between three forces acting together, as graphically depicted in Figure 2. The value perception of the product to the consumer can be linked to the set of three dimensions.

The result of the evaluation of the products used in this study demonstrates the perception that the sample had about each benefit dimension. The loadings were consistent with the intended positioning of the brands. They were calculated by the arithmetic means of the model indicators for each dimension, according to Table 4. Products that represented sustainability values (Prius car, Bluearth mobile phone and Avant Eco battery) obtained higher averages in the conscious dimension than the others evaluated.

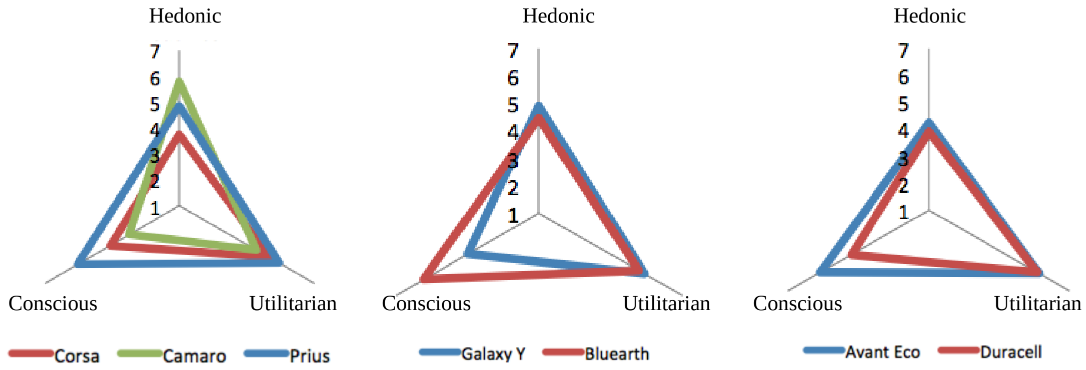

Figure 2 – Evaluation of benefit dimensions from study products
Note. The scores of each dimension were calculated as the average of the condensed scores received by the products in the respective dimension in the study. Scores of items not validated in CFA were excluded. Source: Prepared by the authors.

Another interesting observation was that the other loadings were also consistent with the characteristics of the products. The utilitarian dimension proved to be the one of least differentiation. Acually it proved to be the one with the highest parity between products. Hedonic was relevant in the case of vehicles, demonstrating the distance between a super-sports vehicle (Camaro) and another basic vehicle (Corsa). The Conscious dimension also deserves attention as it illucidates the distance between the highly-polluting sports car and the hybrid car. In the cell phones and batteries category, the Conscious dimension was a source of potential differentiation points for a positioning strategy. For the two other dimensions, the respondents evaluated the products with great similarity.

All three dimensions correspond to both the traditional perspective of judgment held by most consumers, and those considered to be conscious. These results have implications for both strategic and operational organizations. The definition of attributes that represent the three perspectives affect the value perceived by consumers and should be considered to structure the intended positioning. Thus the attributes must be carefully analyzed and chosen to be added to the product. These definitions will also impact both internal processes and relationships with various stakeholders.

Table 4
Proposed Items to Evaluate the Multidimensionality of Perceived Benefits

Dimention	**Adjectives for Osgood type scale**	
	Positive Valence	**Negative Valence**
Hedonic [a.]	Fun	Not Fun
	Exciting	Dull
	Thrilling	Not thrilling
	Enjoyable	Unenjoyable
Utilitarian [a.]	Functional	Not functional

Dimention	Adjectives for Osgood type scale	
	Positive Valence	**Negative Valence**
	Necessary	Unneccessary
	Practical	Impractical
	Helpful	Unhelpful
Conscious [b.]	Resource saving	Resource Waste
	Responsible	Irresponsible

Note. Source: a. Adapted from "Measuring the Hedonic and Utilitarian Dimensions of Consumer Attitude", of K. Voss, S. Spangenberg e B. Grohmann, Journal of Marketing Research, 2003, XL (August), 310-321. b. Prepared by the authors.

8 Final Thoughts

The study provides a new perspective of the consolidated hedonic-utilitarian view, inferring that consumers also have altruistic motivations that can be reflected in purchasing decisions. The quantitative analysis produced evidence to support the hypothesis of a third dimension of benefits in the products. This result suggests the existence of conscious individual values in the studied sample. As a consequence, attributes of the same nature in the offerings, which would feed instrumental values, were identified by the subjects and could impact on the consumption assessment. This consideration becomes relevant to organizations as customers choose offers based on perceived value, which is directly linked to the benefits sought and the cost of accessing them.

The main theoretical contribution of the study is the proposal of a conscious benefit measurement scale with empirical test. It converges previous value studies with product attribute assessment surveys. The existence of the dimension represents the reflection of changes in society associated with its core values and beliefs.

The practical contribution materializes in a measuring instrument capable of assessing consumers' perception of the attributes of an offer, including a sustainable perspective. Products, and the benefits they provide, are crucial components in evaluating offer value. This shows the importance of understanding the weight of the new dimension in a society that incorporates conscious values as instrumental.

9 Limitations and Suggestions for New Studies

One of the issues that needs to be developed in other studies is the altruistic behavior of the human being. Are there specific aspects or situations in which consciousness is not aimed at self-affirmation and psychological well-being? Could such situations camouflage the true goals in the conscious consumption option as a way of just feeling good about one's own conscience, creating a positive self-image? The next step for further investigation of the construct could be through causal studies, for example testing relationships of self-esteem from the perspective of consumption.

Regarding the methodology, the sample size and type of sampling were weak aspects of the project, mainly due to the use of AMOS and its normality assumptions. Using a larger sample size and changing the sampling to a probabilistic method should contribute to the increase of external validity. The primary data collection method may have produced bias because it was self-filled. A new sample would strengthen the results of the CFA model test, contributing to scale validation. Future studies may increase internal validity by selecting a consumer group with similar degree of involvement in the product category to be evaluated.

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