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경영학석사학위논문

**Enhancing New Product Acceptance by  
Facilitating Cognitive Resolution of Incongruity and  
Affective Response of Excitement :**

**Focusing on the Comparison of Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal**

신제품의 스키마 불일치성에 대한 인지적 해결과 흥미감의 정서적  
반응을 통한 신제품 수용 증진 방안에 대한 연구 :  
**Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal**의 비교를 중심으로

2016년 2월

서울대학교 대학원  
경영학과 마케팅전공  
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## **ABSTRACT**

**Enhancing New Product Acceptance by  
Facilitating Cognitive Resolution of Incongruity and  
Affective Response of Excitement :  
Focusing on the Comparison of Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal**

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Companies frequently develop new products by adding novel attributes that provide new benefits to existing categories. Although new products can offer consumers great benefits than existing products, they have extremely low rates of success. This research investigates the challenge faced by new products that are different from existing products by conducting two experiments based on the theory of schema congruity effect. The differences in congruity between new products and existing product category schema may influence the nature of product evaluation process and thus product evaluations. New products that are

incongruent with their associated category schema are expected to receive greater attention and stimulate process that lead to more favorable evaluations relative to new products that are congruent.

The purpose of this study was to investigate an underlying mechanism of new product evaluation process and to examine the moderating role of type of benefit appeal on the relationship between new product congruity and both cognitive resolution and affective response that eventually lead to evaluations of new products. The author posits that consumers' acceptance of new products will increase when marketers use strategies that facilitate cognitive resolution of incongruity and affective response of excitement.

The results from two experiments indicate that cognitive resolution facilitates participants' ability to make sense of incongruent new products and leads to favorable product evaluations. And the results also suggest that affective response of excitement leads to favorable product evaluations, although the path from new product congruity to affective response of excitement was marginally significant. Furthermore, the results find the moderating role of type of benefit appeal on the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation, subsequently examining relationships between new product congruity, cognitive resolution of incongruity, affective response of excitement, and product evaluations.

The primary contribution of this study is to find a boundary condition of the “matching principle” such that utilitarian benefit facilitates cognitive process and hedonic benefit stimulates affective response. This research findings reveal that the interaction between new product congruity and hedonic benefit appeal increases cognitive resolution of incongruity, whereas the interaction between new product congruity and utilitarian benefit appeal decreases affective response of excitement. And both cognitive resolution of incongruity and affective response of excitement lead to more favorable product evaluation.

New products are different from existing products, because novel attributes are added or existing attributes are eliminated when they are developed. The process of cognitive resolution of incongruity requires cognitive resources, and hedonic benefit appeal stimulates cognitive process of resolving incongruity by facilitating cognitive flexibility. Thus, it is important for marketers to emphasize hedonic benefit appeal when they launch or promote new products.

This research findings can benefit researchers and practitioners by providing insights into mechanism underlying new product evaluation process and suggesting effective marketing strategies suitable for enhancing new products acceptance in the market. Limitations and future research ideas are also discussed.

**Key Words: new products, cognitive resolution of incongruity, affective response of excitement, type of benefit appeal, hedonic benefit, utilitarian benefit, product evaluation**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>II. THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
2.1 Schema-Congruity Effect and Product Evaluation .....	2
2.2 New Product Congruity and Cognitive Resolution .....	3
2.3 New Product Congruity and affective Response .....	4
2.4 Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal .....	7
<b>III. METHOD AND RESULTS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
3.1 Study I .....	12
3.2 Study II .....	17
<b>IV. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>V. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>APPENDIX A</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>STUDY 1 ADVERTISEMENT</b>	
<b>APPENDIX B</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>STUDY 2 ADVERTISEMENT</b>	



**REFERENCES ----- 35**

**ABSTRACT (KOREAN) ----- 43**

## LIST OF TABLES

[Table 1]	-----	15
[Table 2]	-----	21

## LIST OF FIGURES

[Figure 1]	-----	11
[Figure 2]	-----	16
[Figure 3]	-----	22
[Figure 4]	-----	23
[Figure 5]	-----	25

## I. INTRODUCTION

Companies frequently develop new products by adding novel attributes that provide new benefits to existing categories. While innovative new products can offer consumers great benefits than existing products, their success rate is extremely low. According to Gourville (2006), new product failure estimates range from 40% to 90%. The more new product is incongruent with the existing product category schema, the more likely is to fail in the market.

Prior research has found a relationship between greater product incongruity and lower acceptance, reporting that consumers are four times less likely to choose an extremely incongruent than an incrementally new product (Alexander et al. 2008). Wind and Mahajan (1997) shows the movement of research into how to increase acceptance of highly incongruent new products with the relationship between new product incongruity and new product failure.

Jhang et al. (2012) investigates the challenge faced by new products that are different from existing products by drawing on theory regarding the evaluation of schema incongruity. The level of congruity between incongruent new products and more general product category schema may influence the nature of product evaluation processing and thus product evaluations.

The goal of this research is to enhance an understanding of how to increase consumers' favorable evaluations of incongruent new products. New product incongruity can lead to conflicts with consumers'

expectations, and it is difficult for consumers to use existing category knowledge to understand the benefit that the new product provides (Hoeffler 2003; Jhang et al. 2012; Moreau et al. 2001).

Typically, the category schema examined in such research have been ones that carry strong affect so that the transfer of schema affect can be traced. This study attempts to investigate the underlying mechanism of new product evaluation process and to examine the moderating impacts of type of benefit appeal on new products evaluation process of both cognitive and affective routes.

The study results indicate that consumers' acceptance of incongruent new products will increase when firms use strategies that facilitate cognitive resolution of incongruity and affective response of excitement by emphasizing hedonic benefit appeal in the course of new product promotion.

## **II. THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS**

### **2.1 Schema-Congruity Effect and Product Evaluation**

According to Mandler (1982), the level of congruity between new products and their associated category schema may influence the nature of product evaluation processing and thus product evaluations. Interestingly, new products that are incongruent with their associated

category schema are expected to stimulate processing that leads to more favorable evaluation relative to new products that are congruent.

Congruent items conform to expectations and are not arousing, resulting in mildly positive, familiarity-based evaluations (e.g., Tesser 1978). In contrast, moderate incongruity is likely to evoke arousal as the consumer elaborates in order to resolve the incongruity, since moderate incongruent new products are assumed to share associations and connections with existing schema, ultimately leading to more favorable evaluations. Extremely incongruent products are likely to be difficult to resolve because existing schema knowledge does not apply due to the lack of resolution, leading to relatively negative evaluations.

Thus, we propose that increased new product congruity with the existing product category schema leads to relatively negative product evaluations.

H1: The new product congruent (vs. incongruent) with the existing product schema is likely to be evaluated less favorably.

## **2.2 New Product Congruity and Cognitive Resolution**

The level of congruity between new products and their associated category schema may influence the nature of product evaluation processing and thus product evaluations. When consumers might find it difficult to understand the benefit delivered by an attribute that is

extremely incongruent from their product category expectations, lack of understanding of relative benefit can lead to the low evaluations of extremely incongruent products (Jhang et al. 2012). However, consumers are likely to evaluate the new product more favorably when incongruity can be cognitively resolved (Noseworthy et al. 2014).

Thus, we posit that consumers will evaluate the new product positively as they understand the benefit delivered by the new product, and then cognitively resolved.

H2: The new product congruent with the existing product schema is likely to be cognitively resolved.

H3: As product incongruity is cognitively resolved, the product is likely to be evaluated positively.

### **2.3 New Product Congruity and Affective Response**

Schema-congruity theory explains information processing by categorizing and evaluating. People process information based on activated category, which are either confirmed or disconfirmed by the new information (Srull et al. 1985). In other words, some piece of new information, such as an advertisement (Stoltman 1991), activates a schema.

According to schema-congruity theory, consumers' reaction to the advertisement depends on whether the advertisement matches schema expectations (Heckler and Childers 1992).

However, the relationship between schema-congruity theory and emotion is more important. Mandler (1982) suggested that schema-congruity could lead to approach or avoidance behavior in consumers. He argued that congruent information is processed less elaborately than incongruent information and therefore creates positive feelings because the new stimulus fits established schema and is familiar.

However, congruent information is not as memorable as incongruent information because less processing is required, whereas incongruent stimulus leads to more elaborate processing. It can lead to negative feelings if the new information cannot be reconciled with previous schema. The best scenario to maximize cognitive processing and positive affect was moderate incongruity, which is different from established schema enough to be remembered, but not enough to create confusion or dissonance in the consumer.

Many researchers applied Mandler's theory in the consumer behavior and advertising fields. Prior researches found that new products that were moderately incongruent from their product class were evaluated more favorably on attitude scales (Myers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Stayman et al. 1992).

Maoz and Tybout (2002) reported that a positive evaluation of moderately incongruent options did not occur when task involvement

was low, such that flexible processing of information was unlikely. These results suggest that some amount of arousal is necessary to resolve incongruity.

Noseworthy et al. (2014) found that low arousal decreased preference for moderate incongruity. They suggested that evaluation for incongruent products are contingent upon a consumer's state of arousal.

The role of emotion is important in consumer behavior. Richins (1997) measured product-evoked emotions, including five positive emotions of joy, excitement, contentment, optimism, and peacefulness and the negative emotions of fear, anxiety, envy, and discontent.

Berlyne (1960) posited that arousal functions as an additive effect derived from an object's collative properties (e.g., novelty, complexity, incongruity), psychological properties (e.g., intensity, pitch, hue, brightness), and ecological properties (e.g., meaning, associations).

Among these emotions, "excitement" is positive emotion and likely to increase consumers' state of arousal (Posner et al. 2005). Thus, we hypothesize that

H4: As the new product is more congruent (vs. incongruent) with the existing product category schema, people are less likely to feel excitement.

H5: As people feel excitement, they are likely to evaluate the product more positively.



## **2.4 Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal**

“Utilitarian benefits” are considered as the functional, instrumental, and practical benefits of consumption offerings, whereas “hedonic benefits” are considered as their aesthetic, experiential, and enjoyment-related benefits (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Chitturi et al. 2007; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998).

In this research, we focus on the moderating role of type of benefit appeal (hedonic vs. utilitarian benefits) on the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation. That is, emphasis on hedonic or utilitarian benefits can affect differently on cognitive resolution of incongruity and affective response of excitement.

Designing a new product with hedonic or utilitarian features, for example, a soft drink with attributes like taste and flavor, versus health benefits like vitamins may be arguable. Whether a hedonic versus utilitarian soft drink is effective may depend on which benefits may influence consumers’ emotions and cognitions (Kemp and Kopp 2011; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982).

Prior research suggests that highlighting the hedonic benefits may appeal to consumers who are driven more by their emotions, highlighting utilitarian benefits may appeal to consumers who are driven more by their cognitions (Kemp and Kopp 2011; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). This ‘matching principle’ finds support in previous research (Edwards 1990; Laran and Tsiros 2013).

However, there’s no straightforward answer to this question. The

effectiveness of each strategy may also be affected by the evaluation context (Okada 2005), type of choices (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000), and how one processes information (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). This is a complex issue, and through the years, researchers have tried to identify the consumer-specific variables and contextual factors that may influence the effectiveness of each strategy.

However, despite significant research done on this issue, an important gap exists in the literature. Currently, there is a dearth in research that examines how new product congruity may affect such preference for hedonic versus utilitarian benefit appeal. There is no question on both cognitive and affective processing are important determinants of consumers' product evaluation. They affect various aspects of consumer behavior such as product and brand evaluations (Aaker and Lee 2006; Herzstein et al. 2007).

Mano and Oliver(1993) found that hedonic evaluations of the product were strongly related to arousal and positive affect, whereas utilitarian evaluations were negatively related to arousal. As noted by Holbrook et al. (1984), a significant portion of consumption behavior is motivated by hedonic enjoyment. The current study supports the recommendation that researchers studying new product should make it a practice to collect measures of affective response as well as cognitive responses to new product incongruity when trying to predict product evaluation, and that these responses may play different roles in attitude formation depending on type of benefit appeal or product type. Marketing practitioners as well would be benefit by measuring both cognitive and

affective responses to a new product test when trying to predict product evaluations.

Wang and Lee (2006) reports that higher order motivational goals (e.g., self-regulation) may indeed service lower order consumption goals in the context of product evaluation (e.g., in making choices between grape juice with energy versus antioxidant benefits). Chitturi, et al. (2008) shows how such higher order goals may warrant differential information processing (cognitive or affective response) for products with hedonic and utilitarian features. They suggests that hedonic versus utilitarian benefit appeal may affect consumers' product evaluation process.

Understanding the role of benefit appeal would help marketers better their new product development decisions, especially for products that may be presented in either a hedonic or utilitarian fashion. According to Jhang et al. (2012), cognitive flexibility enables people to make uncommon associations, link across categories, and hold multiple perspectives and information in mind (De Dreu et al. 2008; Isen 2001; Murray et al. 1990). Thus, it is likely that increased cognitive flexibility leads to more positive evaluations of an incongruent product by facilitating resolution. Jhang et al. (2012) also demonstrated that positive affect facilitates cognitive resolution of incongruity.

In line with the evidence of the previous research (e.g., Jhang et al. 2012), it is likely that cognitive flexibility increases when hedonic benefits are highlighted. Labroo and Patrick (2009) argue that positive affect, by signaling that the environment is benign, might allow people

to broaden their perspectives and pay attention to “the big picture”. If this were the case, positive affect would facilitate cognitive resolution such that perceived incongruity would be lower in the positive than neutral or negative affect condition.

People tend to be promotion-focused when hedonic benefits are highlighted, while they tend to be prevention-focused when utilitarian benefits are highlighted (Roy and Ng 2012). When individuals are promotion-focused, they are more affectively driven (Pham and Avnet 2004), and then, their emotions are more likely positive than they are prevention-focused. Babin et al. (1994) report that people tend to think of enjoyment and excitement when consuming hedonic products.

Positive affect seems to facilitate cognitive resolution (Jhang et al. 2012). That is, cognitive flexibility plays a very important role in cognitive resolution of schema incongruity and positive emotions facilitate cognitive flexibility. Thus, it is likely that highlighted hedonic benefits increase cognitive flexibility. In line with the discussions with the above, we propose that cognitive resolution increases when hedonic benefits are emphasized.

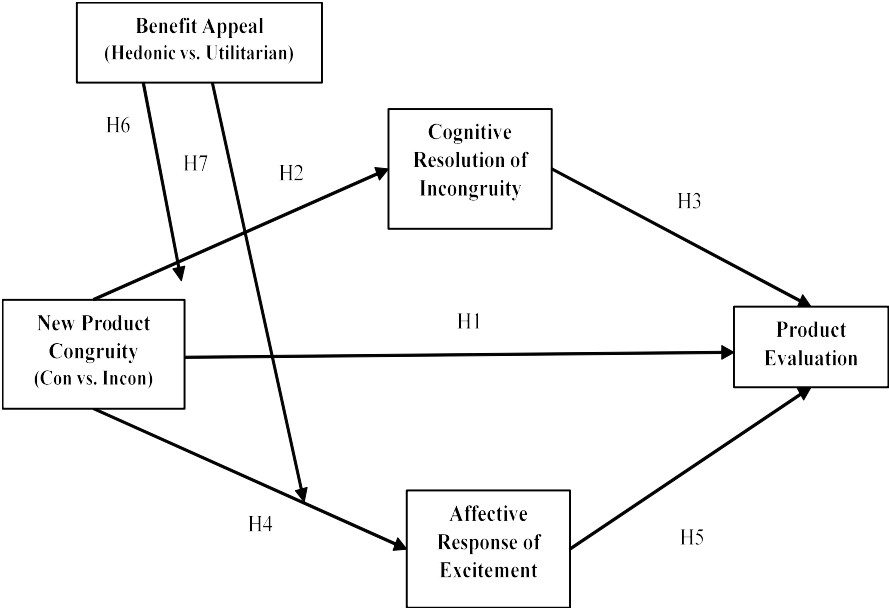
H6: Type of benefit appeal moderates the effect of new product congruity on cognitive resolution such that cognitive resolution increases when hedonic benefit is emphasized.

People tend to be prevention-focused when utilitarian benefits are highlighted (Roy and Ng 2012). When individuals are

prevention-focused, they are more likely to focus on the feeling of confidence and security rather than enjoyment and excitement (Chitturi et al. 2008). Thus, we propose H7 as follows.

H7: Type of benefit appeal moderates the effect of new product congruity on affective response such that excitement decreases when utilitarian benefit is emphasized.

**FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**



### III. METHOD AND RESULTS

#### 3.1 Study I

##### **Method**

The purpose of study 1 was to test the basic proposition that the level of new product congruity (incongruent vs. congruent) between new products and their associated category schema leads to different cognitive resolutions which eventually affects new product evaluations.

*Participants and Design.* Participants (N=74) completed an online survey via Amazon Mechanical Turk. Only participants who had an Amazon Mechanical Turk approval rate of 95% or higher and lived in the United States were permitted to participate. The survey took about 15 minutes to complete, and participants were compensated with \$1. The design was a between subjects design (congruity: incongruent vs. congruent).

*Procedure and Stimuli.* Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (incongruent vs. congruent condition) in between subjects design. The overall procedure to test the level of product congruity was adapted from Noseworthy et al. (2014). Participants were told that they would be taking part in a survey to collect information about differences in individual perception of products. The task was

informed as a pretest for an evaluation of new product concept. They were then presented with either congruent or incongruent new product advertisement.

The target product chosen for this study was soft drinks. The soft drink was chosen for this study because soft drinks have used as stimuli extensively in the congruity literature (Campbell and Goodstein 2001; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Noseworthy et al. 2011; Noseworthy et al. 2014; Stayman et al. 1992).

In this study, we used the advertisements from Noseworthy et al. (2014). Every attempt was made to make stimuli advertisements that were equivalent on all dimensions such as quantity, attributes, functionality, taste, price, and display of the new product except the level of visual congruity. We expected that highly congruent new product is likely to be evaluated unfavorably compared to incongruent new product.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Measures.***

*Perceived new product congruity* was measured by two 7-point items with higher numbers indicating higher congruity (1 to 7 scored - “very unique / not at all unique”, “unusual / usual”;  $\alpha = .93$  ; Campbell and Goodstein 2001).

*Cognitive resolution of incongruity* was also measured by two 7-point items with higher numbers indicating better cognitive resolution (1 to 7

scored - “make no sense at all / make sense very much”, “do not understand rationale at all / understand rationale very much”;  $\alpha = .88$ ; Jhang et al. 2012).

*Product evaluation* was measured by five 7-point items with higher numbers indicating more positive evaluation (1 to 7 scored - “bad / good,” “not at all desirable / very desirable”, “unattractive / attractive”, “negative / positive”, “do not like it at all / like it very much”;  $\alpha = .95$ ; Campbell and Goodstein 2001).

***New Product Congruity Manipulation Check.*** One-way ANOVA confirmed that participants perceived the congruent soft drink to be more typical ( $M_{\text{con}} = 5.62$ ,  $SD=1.28$ ) than the incongruent soft drink ( $M_{\text{incon}} = 2.73$ ,  $SD=1.53$  ;  $F(1, 72)= 76.07$ ,  $p= .00$ ). Thus, new product congruity manipulation was successful.

***New Product Congruity and Product Evaluation.*** One-way ANOVA revealed insignificant main effect ( $F(1, 72)= 1.08$ ,  $p= .30$ ) between new product congruity and product evaluation such that participants in the congruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{con}}= 4.67$ ,  $SD= 1.23$ ) did not make a favorable evaluation than incongruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{incon}}= 4.35$ ,  $SD= 1.40$ ).

***New Product Congruity and Cognitive Resolution.*** One-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect ( $F(1, 72)= 24.63$ ,  $p= .00$ ) between new product congruity and cognitive resolution such that participants in



the congruent soft drink condition ( $M_{con} = 5.82$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) showed higher cognitive resolution than in the incongruent soft drink condition ( $M_{incon} = 4.26$ ,  $SD = 1.54$ ).

**TABLE 1**  
**STUDY 1 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION TABLE**

	Independent Variables	
	Congruent(M= 5.62)	Incongruent(M=2.73)
Study 1 (n = 74):		
Dependent Measures		
Product Evaluation	4.67 (1.23)	4.35 (1.40)
Cognitive Resolution	5.82** (1.09)	4.26** (1.54)

Note: M=means, standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

\* : The differences between two means were significant at  $p < .05$ .

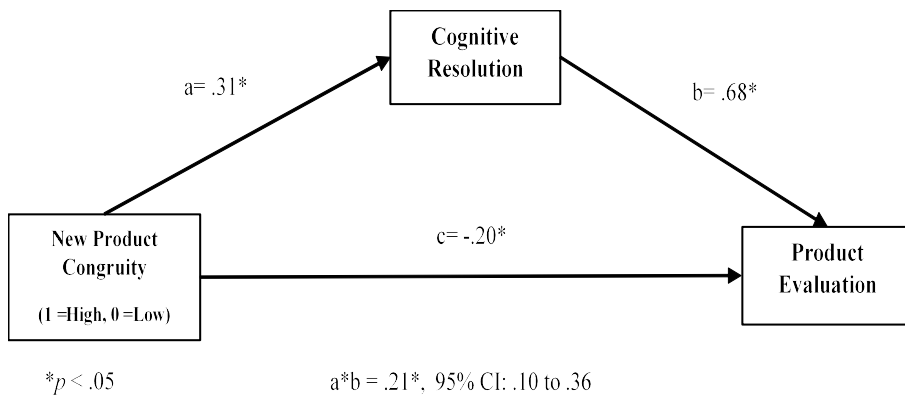
\*\* : The differences between two means were significant at  $p < .01$ .

***Cognitive Resolution as a Mediator.*** Primary interest of study 1 was whether cognitive resolution of incongruity mediated the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation; thus, a mediation analysis was conducted (Preacher and Hayes 2008).

The cognitive resolution of incongruity pathway from new product congruity to product evaluation was positive and significant, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero (indirect effect = .21; 95%

confidence interval: .10 to .36), which supports mediation. New product congruity had a significant effect on cognitive resolution ( $\beta = .31$ ;  $t = 3.38$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and an insignificant total effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = .009$ ;  $t = .09$ ,  $p = .10$ ). Cognitive resolution had a significant effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = .68$ ;  $t = 9.83$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was significant ( $\beta = -.20$ ;  $t = -4.35$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**FIGURE 2**  
**STUDY 1 BOOTSTRAPPING ANALYSIS : THE MEDIATING ROLE**  
**OF COGNITIVE RESOLUTION OF INCONGRUITY IN THE**  
**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW PRODUCT CONGRUITY AND**  
**PRODUCT EVALUATION (n=74)**



In study I, the manipulation of new product congruity was successful. And the results confirmed that indirect effect of cognitive resolution in the path from new product congruity to product evaluation was

positively significant. At the same time, direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was negatively significant. Total effect was insignificant overall.

This can be explained by the presence of several mediating paths that cancel each other out, and become noticeable when one of the cancelling mediators is controlled for. In study 2, to explore Mandler's (1982) notion that there is a affective response to incongruity that corresponds with changes in a person's affective state, a parallel mediation analysis was conducted by adding affective response as another mediating variable.

## **3.2 Study II**

### **Method**

The core objectives of study 2 were (1) to replicate the key results from study 1 with a larger sample, (2) to explore Mandler's (1982) notion that there is a affective response to incongruity that corresponds with changes in a person's affective state, and (3) to test critically whether varying type of benefit appeal (hedonic vs. utilitarian) alters new product evaluation process (cognitive resolution vs. affective response).

*Participants and Design.* Participants (N=140) completed an online

survey via Amazon Mechanical Turk. Only participants who had an Amazon Mechanical Turk approval rate of 95% or higher and lived in the United States were permitted to participate. The survey took about 15 minutes to complete, and participants were compensated with \$1. The design was a 2 (congruity: incongruent vs. congruent) x 2 (benefit appeal: hedonic vs. utilitarian) between subjects design.

***Procedure and Stimuli.*** Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions (incongruent x hedonic appeal vs. congruent x utilitarian appeal vs. incongruent x hedonic appeal vs. incongruent x utilitarian appeal condition) in between subject design. The overall procedure was as same as study 1.

In this study, we used the advertisements from Noseworthy et al. (2014) and added different benefit appeal description. To avoid confounding issue, every attempt was made to make stimuli advertisements that were equivalent on all dimensions such as quantity, attributes, functionality, taste, price, and display of the new product except the level of visual congruity (incongruent vs. congruent) and type of benefit appeal (utilitarian vs. hedonic).

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Measures.***

*Perceived new product congruity* was measured by three 7-point items with higher numbers indicating higher congruity (1 to 7 -

“atypical / typical”, “very unique/ not at all unique”, “unusual / usual”;  $\alpha = .91$  ; Campbell and Goodstein 2001; Jhang et al. 2012).

*Product evaluation* was measured by five 7-point items with higher numbers indicating more positive evaluation (1 to 7 scored - “bad / good,” “not at all desirable / very desirable”, “unattractive / attractive”, “negative / positive”, “do not like it at all / like it very much”;  $\alpha = .97$ ; Campbell and Goodstein 2001).

*Cognitive resolution of incongruity* was also measured by two 7-point items with higher numbers indicating better cognitive resolution (1 to 7 scored - “make no sense at all / make sense very much”, “do not understand rationale at all / understand rationale very much”;  $\alpha = .88$ ; Jhang et al. 2012).

*Affective response of excitement* was measured “After reading the description of Zija drink, I feel exciting.” (1=“not at all”, 7=“very much”; Chitturi et al. 2008).

*Hedonic vs. utilitarian benefit appeals* were also measured by ten bipolar 7-point items “The product is likely to be;” (“not sensuous / sensuous”, “not playful / playful”, “unpleasant / pleasant”, “unenjoyable / enjoyable”, “dull / exciting”, “not happy / happy”;  $\alpha$  for hedonic benefit; = .88; “impractical / practical”, “ineffective / effective”, “unhelpful / helpful”, “not functional / functional”,  $\alpha$  for utilitarian benefit = .89; Chitturi et al. 2008; Voss et al. 2003).

***New Product Congruity Manipulation Check.*** One-way ANOVA confirmed that participants perceived the congruent soft drink to be

more typical ( $M_{\text{con}} = 4.65$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ) than the incongruent soft drink ( $M_{\text{incon}} = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.48$  ;  $F(1, 138) = 28.82$ ,  $p = .00$ ). Thus, new product congruity manipulation was successful.

***Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal Manipulation Check.*** One-way ANOVA also confirmed that participants perceived the hedonic soft drink to be more hedonic ( $M_{\text{hedo}} = 4.75$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) than the utilitarian soft drink ( $M_{\text{util}} = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 1.39$  ;  $F(1, 138) = 75.61$ ,  $p = .00$ ).

***New Product Congruity and Product Evaluation.*** One-way ANOVA revealed insignificant main effect ( $F(1, 138) = .149$ ,  $p > .05$ ) between new product congruity and product evaluation such that participants in the congruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{con}} = 4.55$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ) did not make a favorable evaluation than incongruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{incon}} = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ).

***New Product Congruity and Cognitive Resolution.*** One-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect ( $F(1, 138) = 15.28$ ,  $p = .00$ ) between new product congruity and cognitive resolution such that participants in the congruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{con}} = 5.20$ ,  $SD = 1.78$ ) showed higher cognitive resolution than in the incongruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{incon}} = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ).

***New Product Congruity and Affective Response.*** One-way ANOVA revealed an insignificant main effect ( $F(1, 138) = .01$ ,  $p = .92$ ) between

new product congruity and affective response such that participants in the congruent soft drink condition ( $M_{con} = 2.79$ ,  $SD = 1.85$ ) did not show higher affective response of excitement than in the incongruent soft drink condition ( $M_{incon} = 2.82$ ,  $SD = 1.80$ ).

**TABLE 2**  
**STUDY 2 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION TABLE**

	Independent Variables	
	Congruent( $M=4.65$ )	Incongruent( $M=3.27$ )
Study 2 (n = 140):		
Dependent Measures		
Product Evaluation	4.55 (1.44)	4.44 (1.72)
Cognitive Resolution	5.20** (1.78)	4.21** (1.77)
Affective Response	2.79 (1.85)	2.82 (1.80)

Note: M=means, standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

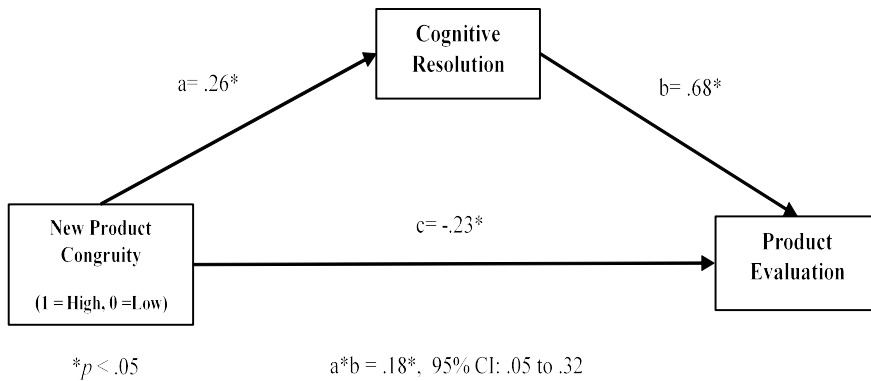
\* : The differences between two means were significant at  $p < .05$ .

\*\* : The differences between two means were significant at  $p < .01$ .

***Cognitive Resolution as a Mediator.*** The goal of study 2 was to replicate the key results from study 1 with a larger sample, and a mediation analysis was conducted (Preacher and Hayes 2008) to test cognitive resolution of incongruity mediated the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation.

**FIGURE 3**

**STUDY 2-1 BOOTSTRAPPING ANALYSIS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF COGNITIVE RESOLUTION OF INCONGRUITY IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW PRODUCT CONGRUITY AND PRODUCT EVALUATION (n=140)**

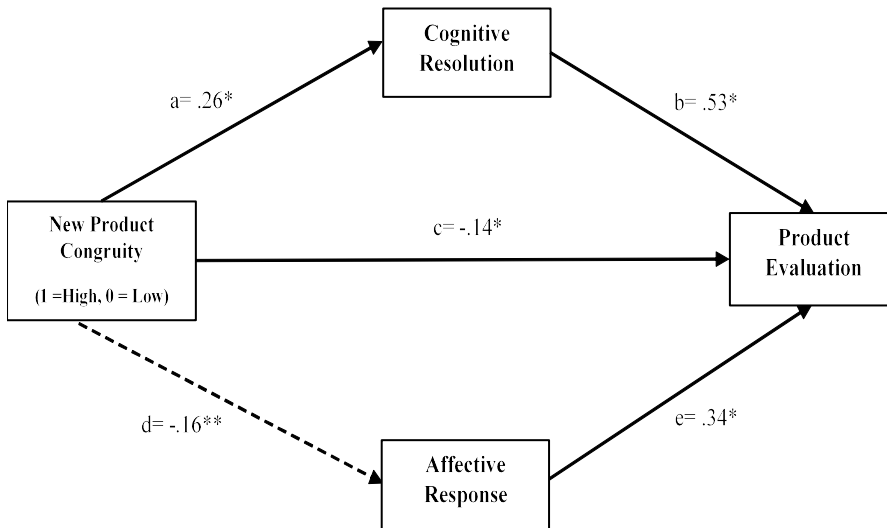


Cognitive resolution of incongruity pathway from new product congruity to product evaluation was positive and significant, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero (indirect effect = .18; 95% confidence interval: .05 to .32), which supports mediation. The new product congruity had a significant effect on cognitive resolution ( $\beta = .26$ ;  $t = 3.39$ ,  $p = .00$ ) and an insignificant total effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = -.058$ ;  $t = -.72$ ,  $p = .47$ ). Cognitive resolution had a significant effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = .68$ ;  $t = 9.95$ ,  $p = .00$ ). The direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was significant ( $\beta = -.23$ ;  $t = -3.66$ ,  $p = .00$ ).



FIGURE 4

STUDY 2-2 BOOTSTRAPPING ANALYSIS FOR PARALLEL MEDIATION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF COGNITIVE RESOLUTION AND AFFECTIVE RESPONSE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW PRODUCT CONGRUITY AND PRODUCT EVALUATION (n=140)



\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .10$

$a*b = .14$  95% CI: .04 to .26,  $d*e = -.06$  95% CI: -.12 to .007

*Cognitive Resolution and Affective Response as Parallel Mediators.*

Primary interest of study 2 was whether affective response of excitement mediated the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation; thus, a parallel mediation analysis was conducted

(Preacher and Hayes 2008).

Cognitive resolution of incongruity pathway from new product congruity to product evaluation was positive and significant, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero (indirect effect = .14; 95% confidence interval: .04 to .26), which supports mediation. The new product congruity had a significant effect on cognitive resolution ( $\beta = .26$ ;  $t = 3.39$ ,  $p = .00$ ) and an insignificant total effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = -.06$ ;  $t = -.72$ ,  $p = .47$ ). Cognitive resolution had a significant effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = .53$ ;  $t = 8.23$ ,  $p = .00$ ). The direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was significant ( $\beta = -.14$ ;  $t = -2.4$ ,  $p = .01$ ).

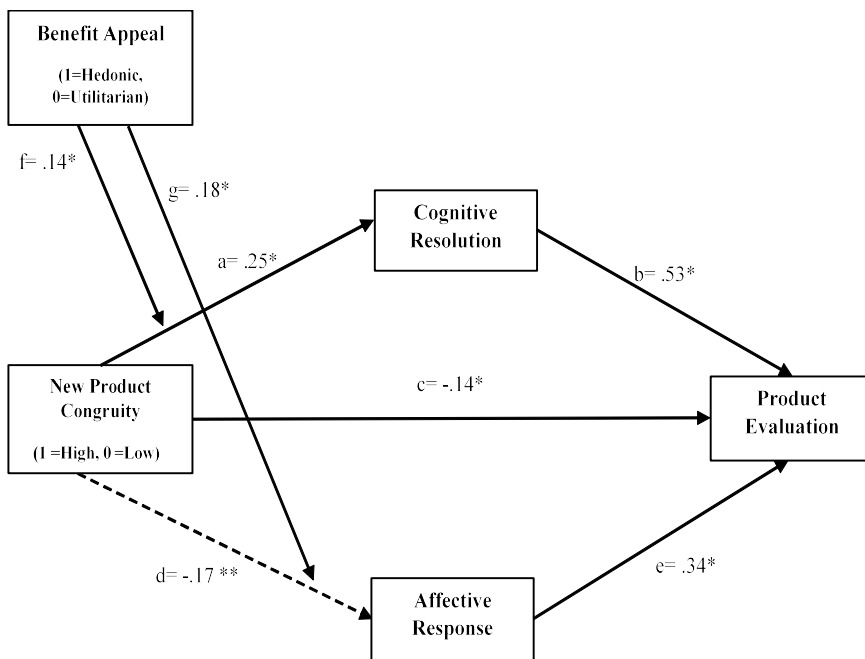
Affective response of excitement pathway from new product congruity to product evaluation was negative and insignificant, with a 95% confidence interval including zero (indirect effect =  $-.06$ ; 95% confidence interval:  $-.12$  to  $.007$ ), which does not support mediation.

The new product congruity had a marginally significant effect on affective response at  $p < .10$  level ( $\beta = -.16$ ;  $t = -1.76$ ,  $p = .08$ ), but an insignificant effect on affective response at  $p < .05$  level. And there was an insignificant total effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = -.06$ ,  $t = -.72$ ,  $p = .47$ ). The direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was significant ( $\beta = -.14$ ;  $t = -2.40$ ,  $p = .02$ ).

***Type of Benefit Appeal as a Moderator.*** The main purpose of study 2 was to test whether varying type of benefit appeal (hedonic vs. utilitarian benefit) alters new product evaluation process (cognitive

resolution vs. affective response). The moderated parallel mediation analysis was conducted (Preacher and Hayes 2008).

**FIGURE 5**  
**STUDY 2-3 BOOTSTRAPPING ANALYSIS FOR MODERATED PARALLEL MEDIATION: THE BENEFIT APPEAL MODERATING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF COGNITIVE RESOLUTION AND AFFECTIVE RESPONSE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW PRODUCT CONGRUITY AND PRODUCT EVALUATION (n=140)**



\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .10$        $a*b = .14$  95% CI: .04 to .26,  $d*e = -.06$  95% CI: -.12 to .007

The result indicated that interaction between new product congruity

and type of benefit appeal was significant. The bootstrap analysis was conducted to assess the indirect effect of new product congruity x type of benefit appeal (using PROCESS macro for SPSS; Preacher and Hayes 2008).

This revealed a positive ( $\beta = 1.4$ ) and significant mean indirect effect, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero (.08 to .41) at +1 SD from mean (hedonic benefit appeal). This bootstrap and spotlight analysis results indicates that the moderation by hedonic appeal of the residual direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation is mediated by cognitive resolution of incongruity.

The results also revealed a positive ( $\beta = 1.8$ ) and significant mean indirect effect, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero ( $-.24$  to  $-.06$ ) at  $-1$  SD from mean (utilitarian benefit appeal). This bootstrap and spotlight analysis result means that the moderation by utilitarian appeal of the residual direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation is mediated by affective response of excitement.

In study 2, the replication of study 1 with larger sample was successful. And the results confirmed that indirect effect of cognitive resolution of incongruity in the path from new product congruity to product evaluation was positively significant. At the same time, direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was negatively significant.

The moderated parallel mediation analysis with adding affective response of excitement as another mediating variable implied that

indirect effect of affective response was not significant at  $p < .05$  level, however, marginally and negatively significant at  $p < .10$  level.

A spotlight analysis to clarify interaction effects indicated that the interaction between new product congruity and hedonic appeal had significant effect on cognitive resolution of incongruity, and the interaction between new product congruity and utilitarian benefit had significant effect on affective response of excitement. Based on these results, theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Findings from this research help bridge an important gap in the literature. This work affords several important insights, particularly given the renewed interest in schema congruity theory over the last five years (Jhang et al. 2012; Krishna et al. 2010; Landwehr et al. 2013; Noseworthy et al. 2011; Noseworthy et al. 2014). The primary contribution of the study is to elaborate on the moderating role of type of benefit appeal on the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation, subsequently examining relationships between new product congruity, cognitive resolution of incongruity, affective response of excitement, and product evaluations.

Where the results may have particular theoretical relevance is in

reflecting on past work. Many of the boundary conditions of the schema congruity effect either did not require assumption or did not explicitly test if the participants failed to resolve the incongruity (e.g., Campbell and Goodstein 2001; Peracchio and Tybout 1996).

This research made a novel prediction and indeed find that because Mandler's fundamental assumption is correct, varying product benefit appeal can enhance or inhibit cognitive or affective processing and thus alter product evaluations. Importantly, this occurs without altering the resolution process.

The result of this research revealed boundary condition of the "matching principle" such that utilitarian benefit facilitates cognitive process and hedonic benefit stimulates affective response. This research findings indicate that the interaction between new product congruity and hedonic benefit appeal increases cognitive resolution of incongruity, whereas the interaction between new product congruity and utilitarian benefit appeal decreases affective response of excitement. And both cognitive resolution of incongruity and affective response of excitement lead to more favorable product evaluation.

This research findings can benefit marketers by suggesting effective marketing strategies suitable for new product acceptance in the course of product promotion. The result from study 1 implies that marketers should make a strategy to make moderately incongruent new products which can facilitate cognitive resolution of incongruity and lead to favorable product evaluation. This study result is exactly in line with Mandler's schema-congruity theory (Mandler 1982; Noseworthy et al.

2011; Jhang et al. 2012).

Though much work has done on product schema congruity, type of benefit appeal (hedonic vs. utilitarian benefit), cognitive processing, and affective response, most of these works have progressed fairly independently. However, this study made a new contribution with an attempt to analyse the relationship between those variables simultaneously.

The results from study 2 indicates that cognitive resolution facilitates consumers' ability to make sense of incongruent new products and also indicates that new product incongruity stimulates affective response of excitement. Furthermore, type of benefit appeal moderates on the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation process. The interaction between new product congruity and hedonic benefit appeal increases cognitive resolution of incongruity, whereas interaction between new product congruity and utilitarian benefit appeal decreases affective response of excitement.

Overall, it is important for marketers to emphasize hedonic benefit appeal when they launch and promote new products. The process of resolving new product incongruity requires cognitive resources, and hedonic benefit appeal stimulates cognitive processing by facilitating cognitive flexibility.

This research findings can benefit researchers and practitioners by providing insights into mechanism underlying new product evaluation process and suggesting effective marketing strategies suitable for enhancing new products acceptance in the market. Limitations and

future research ideas are also discussed.

## **V. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION**

A few limitations inherent in the research need to be mentioned. First, the use of the same soft drink product category in both studies may raise the question if our findings are extendable to other products. Theoretically, we believe the findings should be applicable across all products that possess both hedonic and utilitarian attributes or benefits. Nonetheless, it would be good for future research to examine if the finding is applicable to other product categories.

Second, in a typical consumption episode, consumers are unlikely to engage in such single-evaluation context. It would be interesting to examine how joint-evaluation context influences product evaluation process via cognitive and affective processing. Adding the joint-evaluation context of hedonic and utilitarian benefit options is quite essential to understanding new product positioning or brand extension.

Considering that majority of consumer goods are neither chosen nor consumed in isolation, future research may also measure both consumers choice of hedonic and utilitarian options in addition to product evaluation for joint evaluation context in order to contrast whether consumers' product choice is in agreement with their prior



attitude or not.

Third, while our findings provide novel insights into consumers' new product incongruity and type of benefit appeal (hedonic vs. utilitarian benefit), our discussion is limited to products with visual incongruity (e.g., a new shape of new soft drink bottle) are seemingly superficial when compared to conceptual alterations (e.g., change in what it means to be a soft drink).

Fourth, this research examines only with advertising context as the cue to facilitate new product congruity and type of benefit appeal. While we believe this is a very important cue, and advertising context is partially under marketer's control, it is likely that other contextual variables could affect processing. Future research could extend this work into areas like store display.

Fifth, field experiments, rather than lab or online based experiments, could manipulate context in a very realistic consumption setting enhancing the external validity of our findings.

APPENDIX A  
STUDY 1 ADVERTISEMENT

(CONGRUENT)

The advertisement for Zija The Zija Drink features a plastic bottle on the right side. The bottle is dark with a white label that has the Zija logo and the text 'zija'. The background is white with a dark grey banner at the top that says 'Benefits of Zija drink life in™'. The Zija logo is at the top left. A list of benefits is shown in a vertical stack of boxes on the left: '529 ml serving', 'Fully Carbonated', 'Thirst Quenching', 'Easy to Open', 'Taste Sweet', 'Best Served Cold', and 'Priced Competitively'. At the bottom, it says 'Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!'.

(INCONGRUENT)

The advertisement for Zija The Zija Drink features a soft drink pouch on the right side. The pouch is dark with a white label that has the Zija logo and the text 'zija'. The background is white with a dark grey banner at the top that says 'Benefits of Zija drink life in™'. The Zija logo is at the top left. A list of benefits is shown in a vertical stack of boxes on the left: '529 ml serving', 'Fully Carbonated', 'Thirst Quenching', 'Easy to Open', 'Taste Sweet', 'Best Served Cold', and 'Priced Competitively'. At the bottom, it says 'Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!'.

## APPENDIX B

### STUDY 2 ADVERTISEMENT

#### (CONGRUENT X HEDONIC BENEFIT APPEAL)

The advertisement features the Zija logo at the top left, with the tagline "The Zija Drink" in a cursive font. Below this is a dark banner with the text "Benefits of Zija" and "drink life in™". To the right of the banner is a clear plastic bottle of Zija drink. To the left of the bottle is a vertical list of benefits in white boxes with dark borders, connected by lines: "529 ml serving", "Fully Carbonated", "Thirst Quenching", "Easy to Open", "Taste Sweet", "Best Served Cold", and "Priced Competitively". At the bottom of the advertisement, it says "Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!".

Founded over half a century ago, this respected company is introducing a specially-formulated beverage.

This soft drink is thrilling for those people with a zest for life. The carbonation and tingle of the drink will perk up anyone's taste buds as well as give fun.

This drink is slightly sweet to the taste and amusing for those who need quenching thirst.

This drink maintains world-class taste while providing you a wealth of cheerful experience.

#### (INCONGRUENT X HEDONIC BENEFIT APPEAL)

The advertisement features the Zija logo at the top left, with the tagline "The Zija Drink" in a cursive font. Below this is a dark banner with the text "Benefits of Zija" and "drink life in™". To the right of the banner is a soft pack of Zija drink. To the left of the soft pack is a vertical list of benefits in white boxes with dark borders, connected by lines: "529 ml serving", "Fully Carbonated", "Thirst Quenching", "Easy to Open", "Taste Sweet", "Best Served Cold", and "Priced Competitively". At the bottom of the advertisement, it says "Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!".

Founded over half a century ago, this respected company is introducing a specially-formulated beverage.

This soft drink is thrilling for those people with a zest for life. The carbonation and tingle of the drink will perk up anyone's taste buds as well as give fun.

This drink is slightly sweet to the taste and amusing for those who need quenching thirst.

This drink maintains world-class taste while providing you a wealth of cheerful experience.

(CONGRUENT X UTILITARIAN BENEFIT APPEAL)

*zija The Zija Drink*  
Benefits of Zija drink life in™

- 529 ml serving
- Fully Carbonated
- Thirst Quenching
- Easy to Open
- Taste Sweet
- Best Served Cold
- Priced Competitively

Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!

Founded over half a century ago, this respected company is introducing a specially-formulated beverage.

This enhanced soft drink is beneficial for your health since it is fortified with extra vitamins and omega-3.

This drink is useful for those who need quenching thirst as well as considering health.

This drink would be necessary for fitness centers because it efficiently solves your thirst and fatigue.

(INCONGRUENT X UTILITARIAN BENEFIT APPEAL)

*zija The Zija Drink*  
Benefits of Zija drink life in™

- 529 ml serving
- Fully Carbonated
- Thirst Quenching
- Easy to Open
- Taste Sweet
- Best Served Cold
- Priced Competitively

Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!

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## 국문초록

# 신제품의 스키마 불일치성에 대한 인지적 해결과 흥미감의 정서적 반응을 통한 신제품 수용 증진 방안에 대한 연구 : **Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal** 의 비교를 중심으로

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신제품을 출시할 경우 신제품은 동일 카테고리 내의 기존 제품에 새로운 속성(attributes)과 혜택(benefits)을 첨가하거나 제거하여 출시되기 때문에 기존의 제품과 불일치할 수밖에 없는 숙명을 지닌다. 선행 연구들에 의하면 소비자들은 기존의 제품스키마와 완전히 일치하거나 완전히 불일치하는 제품보다는 기존의 제품 스키마에서 살짝 벗어난 제품에 더욱 긍정적인 평가를 한다.

본 연구에서는 기존 연구에서 밝힌 제품의 스키마 일치 효과(product schema-congruity effect)가 왜 나타나는지 그 언더라이징 메커니즘을 인지적 평가 과정과 정서적 평가 과정의 두 경로를 통해 밝혀 보았다. 즉, 신제품의 스키마 일치 수준이 제품에 대한 평가에 이르는 과정을 제품의 스키마 불일치성에 대한 인지적 해결 (cognitive resolution of

incongruity)과 흥미감의 정서적 반응 (affective response of excitement)을 통한 매개효과를 중심으로 살펴보았다. 또한 동일한 제품이라 할지라도 쾌락적 혹은 실용적 혜택과 같이 제품 혜택 소구의 유형에 따라 제품에 대한 평가가 달라질 수 있음에 대하여 알아보았다.

본 연구의 주요 분석 결과는 크게 세 부분으로 나누어 볼 수 있는데, 인지적 해결 과정, 정서적 반응과정, 그리고 제품 혜택 소구의 조절효과 부분으로 살펴 볼 수 있다.

먼저 인지적 평가 과정에 대한 주요 분석 결과는 다음과 같다. 첫째, 신제품이 동일 카테고리 내의 기존 제품스키마와 일치할수록 신제품에 대한 평가에 부정적 영향(-)을 미친다. 둘째, 신제품이 기존 제품스키마와 일치할수록 인지적 해결과정에 긍정적 영향(+)을 미친다. 셋째, 신제품의 스키마 불일치에 대한 인지적 해결이 활성화 될수록 신제품 평가에 긍정적 영향(+)을 미친다.

정서적 평가과정을 통한 주요 분석 결과는 다음과 같다. 첫째, 한계적으로 유의하기는 하였지만 신제품이 동일 카테고리 내 기존 제품스키마와 일치할수록 흥미감이라는 정서적 반응에 부정적(-) 영향을 미친다. 둘째, 흥미감은 제품 평가에 긍정적 영향(+)을 미친다.

마지막으로 신제품의 스키마 일치 수준이 제품 평가에 미치는 과정에서 혜택 소구 유형의 조절효과는 유의하였으며 그 결과는 다음과 같다. 쾌락적 혜택을 강조하여 소구할 경우 신제품과 기존제품의 스키마 일치수준이 높을수록 스키마 불일치에 대한 인지적

해결과정에 미치는 긍정적인 효과가 더욱 더 증가하였다. 반면에 실용적 혜택을 강조하여 소구 할 경우 기존의 제품과 스키마 일치수준이 높을수록 흥미감이라는 정서적 반응에 미치는 부정적 영향이 더욱 더 증가하였다.

따라서 신제품을 출시할 때에는 기존의 스키마와 너무 일치하지 않도록 반드시 인지적 해결이 가능하도록 스키마 불일치가 적절한 수준의 신제품을 출시하고 인지적 해결을 활성화 할 수 있도록 쾌락적 혜택을 강조해야 한다. 또한 실용적 혜택을 너무 부각시키지 않음으로써 흥미감이 감소하지 않도록 하는 방향으로 포지셔닝해야 한다. 즉, 기존의 제품 스키마에서 적절히 벗어나 흥미감을 유발하되 반드시 신제품의 스키마 불일치성에 대한 인지적 해결이 가능하게 출시하고 쾌락적 혜택을 소구하여 인지적 해결 과정을 촉진하는 것이 신제품의 수용을 증가 시킬 수 있는 방안이라고 볼 수 있다.

기존의 연구에서는 제품의 평가 과정에서 쾌락적 혜택은 정서적 반응을 촉진하고, 실용적 혜택은 인지적 반응을 촉진한다는 이른바 ‘쾌락 - 정서, 실용 - 인지의 대응원칙 (matching principle)’ 이 주를 이루었는데, 신제품의 경우 기존 제품과의 스키마 일치 수준 (the level of new product schema congruity)에 따라 강조된 제품혜택 소구 유형 (쾌락적 vs. 실용적 혜택) 과 제품 평가 과정 (인지적 vs. 정서적 과정) 의 상호작용 결과가 다르게 나올 수 있다는 경계 조건(boundary condition)을 발견했다는 점에 본 연구의 의의가

있다 .

마지막으로 연구 결과를 바탕으로 한 이론적, 실무적 시사점을 논의하였고, 연구의 한계점 및 향후 연구 방향을 제시하였다.

주요어 : 신제품, 스키마 불일치, 인지적 해결, 정서적 반응, 흥미감, 제품 혜택 소구, 쾌락적 혜택, 실용적 혜택, 제품 평가

학 번 : 2014-20423





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경영학석사학위논문

**Enhancing New Product Acceptance by  
Facilitating Cognitive Resolution of Incongruity and  
Affective Response of Excitement :**

**Focusing on the Comparison of Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal**

신제품의 스키마 불일치성에 대한 인지적 해결과 흥미감의 정서적  
반응을 통한 신제품 수용 증진 방안에 대한 연구 :  
**Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal**의 비교를 중심으로

2016년 2월

서울대학교 대학원  
경영학과 마케팅전공  
이 주 연

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지도교수 이 유 재

이 논문을 경영학석사학위논문으로 제출함

2016년 2월

서울대학교 대학원  
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이주연의 석사학위논문을 인준함

2016년 2월

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Enhancing New Product Acceptance by  
Facilitating Cognitive Resolution of Incongruity and  
Affective Response of Excitement :  
Focusing on the Comparison of Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal**

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Companies frequently develop new products by adding novel attributes that provide new benefits to existing categories. Although new products can offer consumers great benefits than existing products, they have extremely low rates of success. This research investigates the challenge faced by new products that are different from existing products by conducting two experiments based on the theory of schema congruity effect. The differences in congruity between new products and existing product category schema may influence the nature of product evaluation process and thus product evaluations. New products that are

incongruent with their associated category schema are expected to receive greater attention and stimulate process that lead to more favorable evaluations relative to new products that are congruent.

The purpose of this study was to investigate an underlying mechanism of new product evaluation process and to examine the moderating role of type of benefit appeal on the relationship between new product congruity and both cognitive resolution and affective response that eventually lead to evaluations of new products. The author posits that consumers' acceptance of new products will increase when marketers use strategies that facilitate cognitive resolution of incongruity and affective response of excitement.

The results from two experiments indicate that cognitive resolution facilitates participants' ability to make sense of incongruent new products and leads to favorable product evaluations. And the results also suggest that affective response of excitement leads to favorable product evaluations, although the path from new product congruity to affective response of excitement was marginally significant. Furthermore, the results find the moderating role of type of benefit appeal on the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation, subsequently examining relationships between new product congruity, cognitive resolution of incongruity, affective response of excitement, and product evaluations.

The primary contribution of this study is to find a boundary condition of the “matching principle” such that utilitarian benefit facilitates cognitive process and hedonic benefit stimulates affective response. This research findings reveal that the interaction between new product congruity and hedonic benefit appeal increases cognitive resolution of incongruity, whereas the interaction between new product congruity and utilitarian benefit appeal decreases affective response of excitement. And both cognitive resolution of incongruity and affective response of excitement lead to more favorable product evaluation.

New products are different from existing products, because novel attributes are added or existing attributes are eliminated when they are developed. The process of cognitive resolution of incongruity requires cognitive resources, and hedonic benefit appeal stimulates cognitive process of resolving incongruity by facilitating cognitive flexibility. Thus, it is important for marketers to emphasize hedonic benefit appeal when they launch or promote new products.

This research findings can benefit researchers and practitioners by providing insights into mechanism underlying new product evaluation process and suggesting effective marketing strategies suitable for enhancing new products acceptance in the market. Limitations and future research ideas are also discussed.

**Key Words: new products, cognitive resolution of incongruity, affective response of excitement, type of benefit appeal, hedonic benefit, utilitarian benefit, product evaluation**

**Student Number: 2014-20423**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>II. THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2.1 Schema-Congruity Effect and Product Evaluation</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2.2 New Product Congruity and Cognitive Resolution</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2.3 New Product Congruity and affective Response</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2.4 Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>III. METHOD AND RESULTS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>3.1 Study I</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>3.2 Study II</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>IV. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>V. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>APPENDIX A</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>STUDY 1 ADVERTISEMENT</b>	
<b>APPENDIX B</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>STUDY 2 ADVERTISEMENT</b>	



**REFERENCES ----- 35**

**ABSTRACT (KOREAN) ----- 43**

## LIST OF TABLES

[Table 1]	-----	15
[Table 2]	-----	21

## LIST OF FIGURES

[Figure 1]	-----	11
[Figure 2]	-----	16
[Figure 3]	-----	22
[Figure 4]	-----	23
[Figure 5]	-----	25

## I. INTRODUCTION

Companies frequently develop new products by adding novel attributes that provide new benefits to existing categories. While innovative new products can offer consumers great benefits than existing products, their success rate is extremely low. According to Gourville (2006), new product failure estimates range from 40% to 90%. The more new product is incongruent with the existing product category schema, the more likely is to fail in the market.

Prior research has found a relationship between greater product incongruity and lower acceptance, reporting that consumers are four times less likely to choose an extremely incongruent than an incrementally new product (Alexander et al. 2008). Wind and Mahajan (1997) shows the movement of research into how to increase acceptance of highly incongruent new products with the relationship between new product incongruity and new product failure.

Jhang et al. (2012) investigates the challenge faced by new products that are different from existing products by drawing on theory regarding the evaluation of schema incongruity. The level of congruity between incongruent new products and more general product category schema may influence the nature of product evaluation processing and thus product evaluations.

The goal of this research is to enhance an understanding of how to increase consumers' favorable evaluations of incongruent new products. New product incongruity can lead to conflicts with consumers'

expectations, and it is difficult for consumers to use existing category knowledge to understand the benefit that the new product provides (Hoeffler 2003; Jhang et al. 2012; Moreau et al. 2001).

Typically, the category schema examined in such research have been ones that carry strong affect so that the transfer of schema affect can be traced. This study attempts to investigate the underlying mechanism of new product evaluation process and to examine the moderating impacts of type of benefit appeal on new products evaluation process of both cognitive and affective routes.

The study results indicate that consumers' acceptance of incongruent new products will increase when firms use strategies that facilitate cognitive resolution of incongruity and affective response of excitement by emphasizing hedonic benefit appeal in the course of new product promotion.

## **II. THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS**

### **2.1 Schema-Congruity Effect and Product Evaluation**

According to Mandler (1982), the level of congruity between new products and their associated category schema may influence the nature of product evaluation processing and thus product evaluations. Interestingly, new products that are incongruent with their associated

category schema are expected to stimulate processing that leads to more favorable evaluation relative to new products that are congruent.

Congruent items conform to expectations and are not arousing, resulting in mildly positive, familiarity-based evaluations (e.g., Tesser 1978). In contrast, moderate incongruity is likely to evoke arousal as the consumer elaborates in order to resolve the incongruity, since moderate incongruent new products are assumed to share associations and connections with existing schema, ultimately leading to more favorable evaluations. Extremely incongruent products are likely to be difficult to resolve because existing schema knowledge does not apply due to the lack of resolution, leading to relatively negative evaluations.

Thus, we propose that increased new product congruity with the existing product category schema leads to relatively negative product evaluations.

H1: The new product congruent (vs. incongruent) with the existing product schema is likely to be evaluated less favorably.

## **2.2 New Product Congruity and Cognitive Resolution**

The level of congruity between new products and their associated category schema may influence the nature of product evaluation processing and thus product evaluations. When consumers might find it difficult to understand the benefit delivered by an attribute that is

extremely incongruent from their product category expectations, lack of understanding of relative benefit can lead to the low evaluations of extremely incongruent products (Jhang et al. 2012). However, consumers are likely to evaluate the new product more favorably when incongruity can be cognitively resolved (Noseworthy et al. 2014).

Thus, we posit that consumers will evaluate the new product positively as they understand the benefit delivered by the new product, and then cognitively resolved.

H2: The new product congruent with the existing product schema is likely to be cognitively resolved.

H3: As product incongruity is cognitively resolved, the product is likely to be evaluated positively.

### **2.3 New Product Congruity and Affective Response**

Schema-congruity theory explains information processing by categorizing and evaluating. People process information based on activated category, which are either confirmed or disconfirmed by the new information (Srull et al. 1985). In other words, some piece of new information, such as an advertisement (Stoltman 1991), activates a schema.

According to schema-congruity theory, consumers' reaction to the advertisement depends on whether the advertisement matches schema expectations (Heckler and Childers 1992).

However, the relationship between schema-congruity theory and emotion is more important. Mandler (1982) suggested that schema-congruity could lead to approach or avoidance behavior in consumers. He argued that congruent information is processed less elaborately than incongruent information and therefore creates positive feelings because the new stimulus fits established schema and is familiar.

However, congruent information is not as memorable as incongruent information because less processing is required, whereas incongruent stimulus leads to more elaborate processing. It can lead to negative feelings if the new information cannot be reconciled with previous schema. The best scenario to maximize cognitive processing and positive affect was moderate incongruity, which is different from established schema enough to be remembered, but not enough to create confusion or dissonance in the consumer.

Many researchers applied Mandler's theory in the consumer behavior and advertising fields. Prior researches found that new products that were moderately incongruent from their product class were evaluated more favorably on attitude scales (Myers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Stayman et al. 1992).

Maoz and Tybout (2002) reported that a positive evaluation of moderately incongruent options did not occur when task involvement

was low, such that flexible processing of information was unlikely. These results suggest that some amount of arousal is necessary to resolve incongruity.

Noseworthy et al. (2014) found that low arousal decreased preference for moderate incongruity. They suggested that evaluation for incongruent products are contingent upon a consumer's state of arousal.

The role of emotion is important in consumer behavior. Richins (1997) measured product-evoked emotions, including five positive emotions of joy, excitement, contentment, optimism, and peacefulness and the negative emotions of fear, anxiety, envy, and discontent.

Berlyne (1960) posited that arousal functions as an additive effect derived from an object's collative properties (e.g., novelty, complexity, incongruity), psychological properties (e.g., intensity, pitch, hue, brightness), and ecological properties (e.g., meaning, associations).

Among these emotions, "excitement" is positive emotion and likely to increase consumers' state of arousal (Posner et al. 2005). Thus, we hypothesize that

H4: As the new product is more congruent (vs. incongruent) with the existing product category schema, people are less likely to feel excitement.

H5: As people feel excitement, they are likely to evaluate the product more positively.



## **2.4 Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal**

“Utilitarian benefits” are considered as the functional, instrumental, and practical benefits of consumption offerings, whereas “hedonic benefits” are considered as their aesthetic, experiential, and enjoyment-related benefits (Batra and Ahtola 1991; Chitturi et al. 2007; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998).

In this research, we focus on the moderating role of type of benefit appeal (hedonic vs. utilitarian benefits) on the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation. That is, emphasis on hedonic or utilitarian benefits can affect differently on cognitive resolution of incongruity and affective response of excitement.

Designing a new product with hedonic or utilitarian features, for example, a soft drink with attributes like taste and flavor, versus health benefits like vitamins may be arguable. Whether a hedonic versus utilitarian soft drink is effective may depend on which benefits may influence consumers’ emotions and cognitions (Kemp and Kopp 2011; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982).

Prior research suggests that highlighting the hedonic benefits may appeal to consumers who are driven more by their emotions, highlighting utilitarian benefits may appeal to consumers who are driven more by their cognitions (Kemp and Kopp 2011; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). This ‘matching principle’ finds support in previous research (Edwards 1990; Laran and Tsiros 2013).

However, there’s no straightforward answer to this question. The

effectiveness of each strategy may also be affected by the evaluation context (Okada 2005), type of choices (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000), and how one processes information (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). This is a complex issue, and through the years, researchers have tried to identify the consumer-specific variables and contextual factors that may influence the effectiveness of each strategy.

However, despite significant research done on this issue, an important gap exists in the literature. Currently, there is a dearth in research that examines how new product congruity may affect such preference for hedonic versus utilitarian benefit appeal. There is no question on both cognitive and affective processing are important determinants of consumers' product evaluation. They affect various aspects of consumer behavior such as product and brand evaluations (Aaker and Lee 2006; Herzstein et al. 2007).

Mano and Oliver(1993) found that hedonic evaluations of the product were strongly related to arousal and positive affect, whereas utilitarian evaluations were negatively related to arousal. As noted by Holbrook et al. (1984), a significant portion of consumption behavior is motivated by hedonic enjoyment. The current study supports the recommendation that researchers studying new product should make it a practice to collect measures of affective response as well as cognitive responses to new product incongruity when trying to predict product evaluation, and that these responses may play different roles in attitude formation depending on type of benefit appeal or product type. Marketing practitioners as well would be benefit by measuring both cognitive and

affective responses to a new product test when trying to predict product evaluations.

Wang and Lee (2006) reports that higher order motivational goals (e.g., self-regulation) may indeed service lower order consumption goals in the context of product evaluation (e.g., in making choices between grape juice with energy versus antioxidant benefits). Chitturi, et al. (2008) shows how such higher order goals may warrant differential information processing (cognitive or affective response) for products with hedonic and utilitarian features. They suggests that hedonic versus utilitarian benefit appeal may affect consumers' product evaluation process.

Understanding the role of benefit appeal would help marketers better their new product development decisions, especially for products that may be presented in either a hedonic or utilitarian fashion. According to Jhang et al. (2012), cognitive flexibility enables people to make uncommon associations, link across categories, and hold multiple perspectives and information in mind (De Dreu et al. 2008; Isen 2001; Murray et al. 1990). Thus, it is likely that increased cognitive flexibility leads to more positive evaluations of an incongruent product by facilitating resolution. Jhang et al. (2012) also demonstrated that positive affect facilitates cognitive resolution of incongruity.

In line with the evidence of the previous research (e.g., Jhang et al. 2012), it is likely that cognitive flexibility increases when hedonic benefits are highlighted. Labroo and Patrick (2009) argue that positive affect, by signaling that the environment is benign, might allow people

to broaden their perspectives and pay attention to “the big picture”. If this were the case, positive affect would facilitate cognitive resolution such that perceived incongruity would be lower in the positive than neutral or negative affect condition.

People tend to be promotion-focused when hedonic benefits are highlighted, while they tend to be prevention-focused when utilitarian benefits are highlighted (Roy and Ng 2012). When individuals are promotion-focused, they are more affectively driven (Pham and Avnet 2004), and then, their emotions are more likely positive than they are prevention-focused. Babin et al. (1994) report that people tend to think of enjoyment and excitement when consuming hedonic products.

Positive affect seems to facilitate cognitive resolution (Jhang et al. 2012). That is, cognitive flexibility plays a very important role in cognitive resolution of schema incongruity and positive emotions facilitate cognitive flexibility. Thus, it is likely that highlighted hedonic benefits increase cognitive flexibility. In line with the discussions with the above, we propose that cognitive resolution increases when hedonic benefits are emphasized.

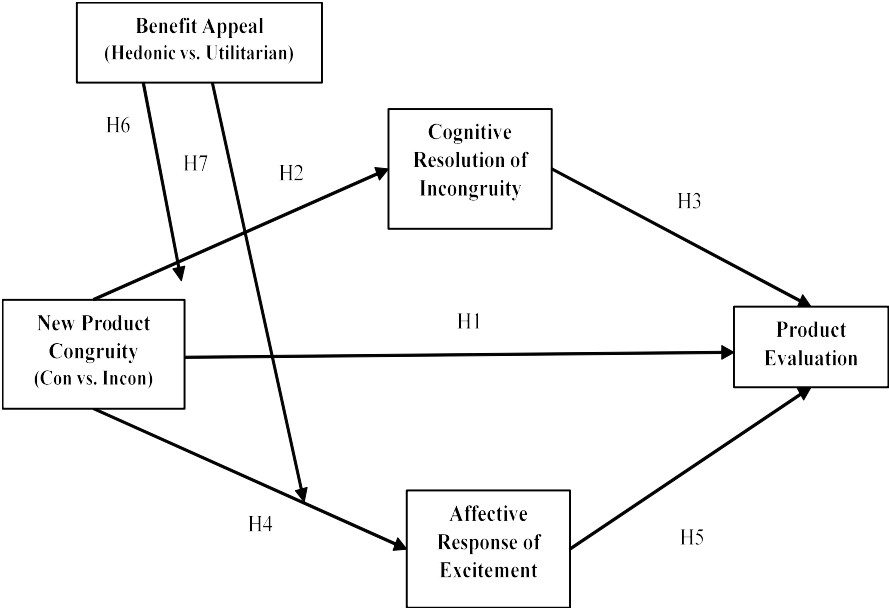
H6: Type of benefit appeal moderates the effect of new product congruity on cognitive resolution such that cognitive resolution increases when hedonic benefit is emphasized.

People tend to be prevention-focused when utilitarian benefits are highlighted (Roy and Ng 2012). When individuals are

prevention-focused, they are more likely to focus on the feeling of confidence and security rather than enjoyment and excitement (Chitturi et al. 2008). Thus, we propose H7 as follows.

H7: Type of benefit appeal moderates the effect of new product congruity on affective response such that excitement decreases when utilitarian benefit is emphasized.

**FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**



### III. METHOD AND RESULTS

#### 3.1 Study I

##### **Method**

The purpose of study 1 was to test the basic proposition that the level of new product congruity (incongruent vs. congruent) between new products and their associated category schema leads to different cognitive resolutions which eventually affects new product evaluations.

*Participants and Design.* Participants (N=74) completed an online survey via Amazon Mechanical Turk. Only participants who had an Amazon Mechanical Turk approval rate of 95% or higher and lived in the United States were permitted to participate. The survey took about 15 minutes to complete, and participants were compensated with \$1. The design was a between subjects design (congruity: incongruent vs. congruent).

*Procedure and Stimuli.* Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (incongruent vs. congruent condition) in between subjects design. The overall procedure to test the level of product congruity was adapted from Noseworthy et al. (2014). Participants were told that they would be taking part in a survey to collect information about differences in individual perception of products. The task was

informed as a pretest for an evaluation of new product concept. They were then presented with either congruent or incongruent new product advertisement.

The target product chosen for this study was soft drinks. The soft drink was chosen for this study because soft drinks have used as stimuli extensively in the congruity literature (Campbell and Goodstein 2001; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Noseworthy et al. 2011; Noseworthy et al. 2014; Stayman et al. 1992).

In this study, we used the advertisements from Noseworthy et al. (2014). Every attempt was made to make stimuli advertisements that were equivalent on all dimensions such as quantity, attributes, functionality, taste, price, and display of the new product except the level of visual congruity. We expected that highly congruent new product is likely to be evaluated unfavorably compared to incongruent new product.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Measures.***

*Perceived new product congruity* was measured by two 7-point items with higher numbers indicating higher congruity (1 to 7 scored - “very unique / not at all unique”, “unusual / usual”;  $\alpha = .93$  ; Campbell and Goodstein 2001).

*Cognitive resolution of incongruity* was also measured by two 7-point items with higher numbers indicating better cognitive resolution (1 to 7

scored - “make no sense at all / make sense very much”, “do not understand rationale at all / understand rationale very much”;  $\alpha = .88$ ; Jhang et al. 2012).

*Product evaluation* was measured by five 7-point items with higher numbers indicating more positive evaluation (1 to 7 scored - “bad / good,” “not at all desirable / very desirable”, “unattractive / attractive”, “negative / positive”, “do not like it at all / like it very much”;  $\alpha = .95$ ; Campbell and Goodstein 2001).

***New Product Congruity Manipulation Check.*** One-way ANOVA confirmed that participants perceived the congruent soft drink to be more typical ( $M_{\text{con}} = 5.62$ ,  $SD=1.28$ ) than the incongruent soft drink ( $M_{\text{incon}} = 2.73$ ,  $SD=1.53$  ;  $F(1, 72)= 76.07$ ,  $p= .00$ ). Thus, new product congruity manipulation was successful.

***New Product Congruity and Product Evaluation.*** One-way ANOVA revealed insignificant main effect ( $F(1, 72)= 1.08$ ,  $p= .30$ ) between new product congruity and product evaluation such that participants in the congruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{con}}= 4.67$ ,  $SD= 1.23$ ) did not make a favorable evaluation than incongruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{incon}}= 4.35$ ,  $SD= 1.40$ ).

***New Product Congruity and Cognitive Resolution.*** One-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect ( $F(1, 72)= 24.63$ ,  $p= .00$ ) between new product congruity and cognitive resolution such that participants in



the congruent soft drink condition ( $M_{con} = 5.82$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) showed higher cognitive resolution than in the incongruent soft drink condition ( $M_{incon} = 4.26$ ,  $SD = 1.54$ ).

**TABLE 1**  
**STUDY 1 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION TABLE**

	Independent Variables	
	Congruent( $M = 5.62$ )	Incongruent( $M = 2.73$ )
Study 1 (n = 74):		
Dependent Measures		
Product Evaluation	4.67 (1.23)	4.35 (1.40)
Cognitive Resolution	5.82** (1.09)	4.26** (1.54)

Note: M=means, standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

\* : The differences between two means were significant at  $p < .05$ .

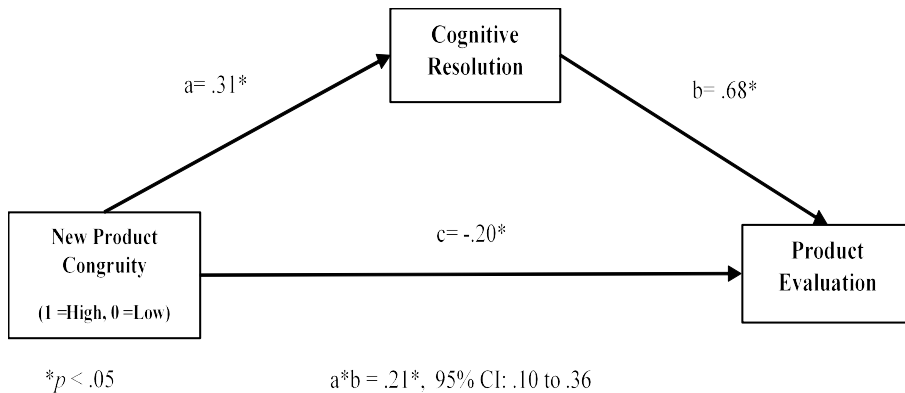
\*\* : The differences between two means were significant at  $p < .01$ .

***Cognitive Resolution as a Mediator.*** Primary interest of study 1 was whether cognitive resolution of incongruity mediated the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation; thus, a mediation analysis was conducted (Preacher and Hayes 2008).

The cognitive resolution of incongruity pathway from new product congruity to product evaluation was positive and significant, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero (indirect effect = .21; 95%

confidence interval: .10 to .36), which supports mediation. New product congruity had a significant effect on cognitive resolution ( $\beta = .31$ ;  $t = 3.38$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and an insignificant total effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = .009$ ;  $t = .09$ ,  $p = .10$ ). Cognitive resolution had a significant effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = .68$ ;  $t = 9.83$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was significant ( $\beta = -.20$ ;  $t = -4.35$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**FIGURE 2**  
**STUDY 1 BOOTSTRAPPING ANALYSIS : THE MEDIATING ROLE**  
**OF COGNITIVE RESOLUTION OF INCONGRUITY IN THE**  
**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW PRODUCT CONGRUITY AND**  
**PRODUCT EVALUATION (n=74)**



In study I, the manipulation of new product congruity was successful. And the results confirmed that indirect effect of cognitive resolution in the path from new product congruity to product evaluation was

positively significant. At the same time, direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was negatively significant. Total effect was insignificant overall.

This can be explained by the presence of several mediating paths that cancel each other out, and become noticeable when one of the cancelling mediators is controlled for. In study 2, to explore Mandler's (1982) notion that there is a affective response to incongruity that corresponds with changes in a person's affective state, a parallel mediation analysis was conducted by adding affective response as another mediating variable.

## **3.2 Study II**

### **Method**

The core objectives of study 2 were (1) to replicate the key results from study 1 with a larger sample, (2) to explore Mandler's (1982) notion that there is a affective response to incongruity that corresponds with changes in a person's affective state, and (3) to test critically whether varying type of benefit appeal (hedonic vs. utilitarian) alters new product evaluation process (cognitive resolution vs. affective response).

*Participants and Design.* Participants (N=140) completed an online

survey via Amazon Mechanical Turk. Only participants who had an Amazon Mechanical Turk approval rate of 95% or higher and lived in the United States were permitted to participate. The survey took about 15 minutes to complete, and participants were compensated with \$1. The design was a 2 (congruity: incongruent vs. congruent) x 2 (benefit appeal: hedonic vs. utilitarian) between subjects design.

***Procedure and Stimuli.*** Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions (incongruent x hedonic appeal vs. congruent x utilitarian appeal vs. incongruent x hedonic appeal vs. incongruent x utilitarian appeal condition) in between subject design. The overall procedure was as same as study 1.

In this study, we used the advertisements from Noseworthy et al. (2014) and added different benefit appeal description. To avoid confounding issue, every attempt was made to make stimuli advertisements that were equivalent on all dimensions such as quantity, attributes, functionality, taste, price, and display of the new product except the level of visual congruity (incongruent vs. congruent) and type of benefit appeal (utilitarian vs. hedonic).

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Measures.***

*Perceived new product congruity* was measured by three 7-point items with higher numbers indicating higher congruity (1 to 7 -

“atypical / typical”, “very unique/ not at all unique”, “unusual / usual”;  $\alpha = .91$  ; Campbell and Goodstein 2001; Jhang et al. 2012).

*Product evaluation* was measured by five 7-point items with higher numbers indicating more positive evaluation (1 to 7 scored - “bad / good,” “not at all desirable / very desirable”, “unattractive / attractive”, “negative / positive”, “do not like it at all / like it very much”;  $\alpha = .97$ ; Campbell and Goodstein 2001).

*Cognitive resolution of incongruity* was also measured by two 7-point items with higher numbers indicating better cognitive resolution (1 to 7 scored - “make no sense at all / make sense very much”, “do not understand rationale at all / understand rationale very much”;  $\alpha = .88$ ; Jhang et al. 2012).

*Affective response of excitement* was measured “After reading the description of Zija drink, I feel exciting.” (1=“not at all”, 7=“very much”; Chitturi et al. 2008).

*Hedonic vs. utilitarian benefit appeals* were also measured by ten bipolar 7-point items “The product is likely to be;” (“not sensuous / sensuous”, “not playful / playful”, “unpleasant / pleasant”, “unenjoyable / enjoyable”, “dull / exciting”, “not happy / happy”;  $\alpha$  for hedonic benefit; = .88; “impractical / practical”, “ineffective / effective”, “unhelpful / helpful”, “not functional / functional”,  $\alpha$  for utilitarian benefit = .89; Chitturi et al. 2008; Voss et al. 2003).

***New Product Congruity Manipulation Check.*** One-way ANOVA confirmed that participants perceived the congruent soft drink to be

more typical ( $M_{\text{con}} = 4.65$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ) than the incongruent soft drink ( $M_{\text{incon}} = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.48$  ;  $F(1, 138) = 28.82$ ,  $p = .00$ ). Thus, new product congruity manipulation was successful.

***Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal Manipulation Check.*** One-way ANOVA also confirmed that participants perceived the hedonic soft drink to be more hedonic ( $M_{\text{hedo}} = 4.75$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) than the utilitarian soft drink ( $M_{\text{util}} = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 1.39$  ;  $F(1, 138) = 75.61$ ,  $p = .00$ ).

***New Product Congruity and Product Evaluation.*** One-way ANOVA revealed insignificant main effect ( $F(1, 138) = .149$ ,  $p > .05$ ) between new product congruity and product evaluation such that participants in the congruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{con}} = 4.55$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ) did not make a favorable evaluation than incongruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{incon}} = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ).

***New Product Congruity and Cognitive Resolution.*** One-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect ( $F(1, 138) = 15.28$ ,  $p = .00$ ) between new product congruity and cognitive resolution such that participants in the congruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{con}} = 5.20$ ,  $SD = 1.78$ ) showed higher cognitive resolution than in the incongruent soft drink condition ( $M_{\text{incon}} = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ).

***New Product Congruity and Affective Response.*** One-way ANOVA revealed an insignificant main effect ( $F(1, 138) = .01$ ,  $p = .92$ ) between

new product congruity and affective response such that participants in the congruent soft drink condition ( $M_{con} = 2.79$ ,  $SD = 1.85$ ) did not show higher affective response of excitement than in the incongruent soft drink condition ( $M_{incon} = 2.82$ ,  $SD = 1.80$ ).

**TABLE 2**  
**STUDY 2 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION TABLE**

	Independent Variables	
	Congruent( $M=4.65$ )	Incongruent( $M=3.27$ )
Study 2 (n = 140):		
Dependent Measures		
Product Evaluation	4.55 (1.44)	4.44 (1.72)
Cognitive Resolution	5.20** (1.78)	4.21** (1.77)
Affective Response	2.79 (1.85)	2.82 (1.80)

Note: M=means, standard deviations are reported in parentheses.

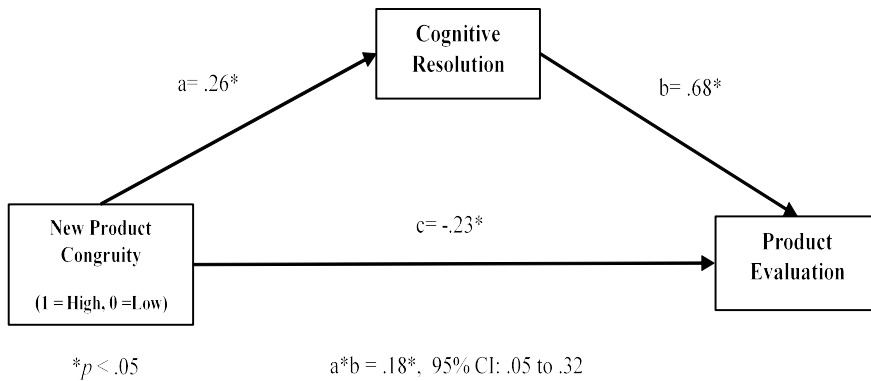
\* : The differences between two means were significant at  $p < .05$ .

\*\* : The differences between two means were significant at  $p < .01$ .

***Cognitive Resolution as a Mediator.*** The goal of study 2 was to replicate the key results from study 1 with a larger sample, and a mediation analysis was conducted (Preacher and Hayes 2008) to test cognitive resolution of incongruity mediated the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation.

**FIGURE 3**

**STUDY 2-1 BOOTSTRAPPING ANALYSIS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF COGNITIVE RESOLUTION OF INCONGRUITY IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW PRODUCT CONGRUITY AND PRODUCT EVALUATION (n=140)**

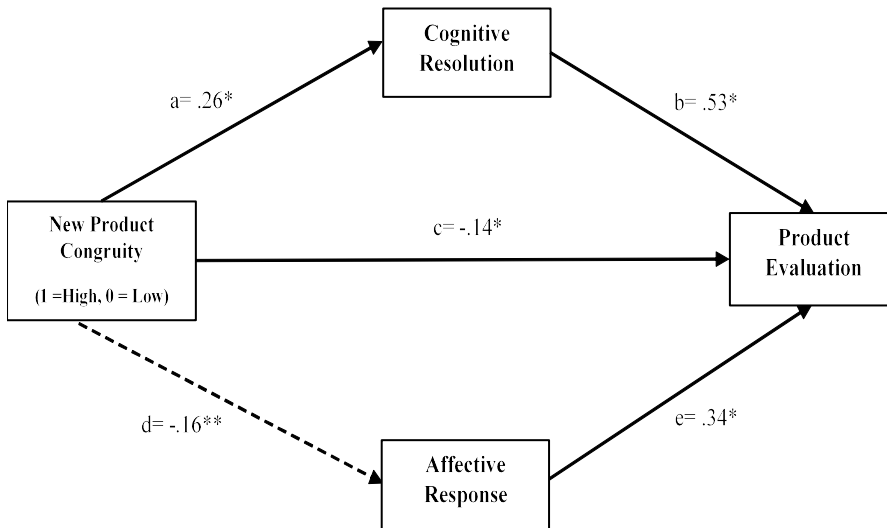


Cognitive resolution of incongruity pathway from new product congruity to product evaluation was positive and significant, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero (indirect effect = .18; 95% confidence interval: .05 to .32), which supports mediation. The new product congruity had a significant effect on cognitive resolution ( $\beta = .26$ ;  $t = 3.39$ ,  $p = .00$ ) and an insignificant total effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = -.058$ ;  $t = -.72$ ,  $p = .47$ ). Cognitive resolution had a significant effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = .68$ ;  $t = 9.95$ ,  $p = .00$ ). The direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was significant ( $\beta = -.23$ ;  $t = -3.66$ ,  $p = .00$ ).



FIGURE 4

STUDY 2-2 BOOTSTRAPPING ANALYSIS FOR PARALLEL MEDIATION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF COGNITIVE RESOLUTION AND AFFECTIVE RESPONSE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW PRODUCT CONGRUITY AND PRODUCT EVALUATION (n=140)



\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .10$

$a*b = .14$  95% CI: .04 to .26,  $d*e = -.06$  95% CI: -.12 to .007

*Cognitive Resolution and Affective Response as Parallel Mediators.*

Primary interest of study 2 was whether affective response of excitement mediated the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation; thus, a parallel mediation analysis was conducted

(Preacher and Hayes 2008).

Cognitive resolution of incongruity pathway from new product congruity to product evaluation was positive and significant, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero (indirect effect = .14; 95% confidence interval: .04 to .26), which supports mediation. The new product congruity had a significant effect on cognitive resolution ( $\beta = .26$ ;  $t = 3.39$ ,  $p = .00$ ) and an insignificant total effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = -.06$ ;  $t = -.72$ ,  $p = .47$ ). Cognitive resolution had a significant effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = .53$ ;  $t = 8.23$ ,  $p = .00$ ). The direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was significant ( $\beta = -.14$ ;  $t = -2.4$ ,  $p = .01$ ).

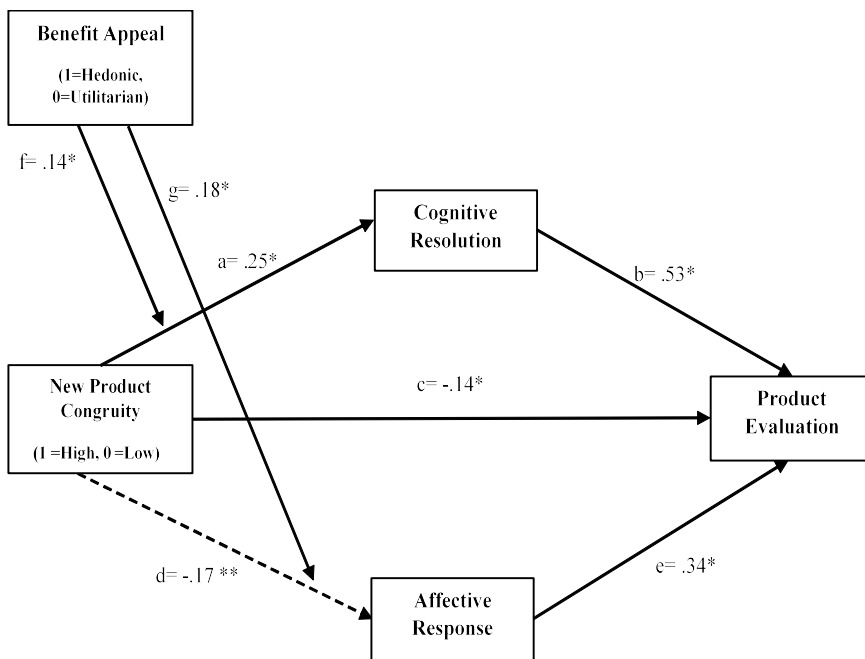
Affective response of excitement pathway from new product congruity to product evaluation was negative and insignificant, with a 95% confidence interval including zero (indirect effect =  $-.06$ ; 95% confidence interval:  $-.12$  to  $.007$ ), which does not support mediation.

The new product congruity had a marginally significant effect on affective response at  $p < .10$  level ( $\beta = -.16$ ;  $t = -1.76$ ,  $p = .08$ ), but an insignificant effect on affective response at  $p < .05$  level. And there was an insignificant total effect on product evaluation ( $\beta = -.06$ ,  $t = -.72$ ,  $p = .47$ ). The direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was significant ( $\beta = -.14$ ;  $t = -2.40$ ,  $p = .02$ ).

***Type of Benefit Appeal as a Moderator.*** The main purpose of study 2 was to test whether varying type of benefit appeal (hedonic vs. utilitarian benefit) alters new product evaluation process (cognitive

resolution vs. affective response). The moderated parallel mediation analysis was conducted (Preacher and Hayes 2008).

**FIGURE 5**  
**STUDY 2-3 BOOTSTRAPPING ANALYSIS FOR MODERATED PARALLEL MEDIATION: THE BENEFIT APPEAL MODERATING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF COGNITIVE RESOLUTION AND AFFECTIVE RESPONSE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW PRODUCT CONGRUITY AND PRODUCT EVALUATION (n=140)**



\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .10$        $a*b = .14$  95% CI: .04 to .26,  $d*e = -.06$  95% CI: -.12 to .007

The result indicated that interaction between new product congruity

and type of benefit appeal was significant. The bootstrap analysis was conducted to assess the indirect effect of new product congruity x type of benefit appeal (using PROCESS macro for SPSS; Preacher and Hayes 2008).

This revealed a positive ( $\beta = 1.4$ ) and significant mean indirect effect, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero (.08 to .41) at +1 SD from mean (hedonic benefit appeal). This bootstrap and spotlight analysis results indicates that the moderation by hedonic appeal of the residual direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation is mediated by cognitive resolution of incongruity.

The results also revealed a positive ( $\beta = 1.8$ ) and significant mean indirect effect, with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero ( $-.24$  to  $-.06$ ) at  $-1$  SD from mean (utilitarian benefit appeal). This bootstrap and spotlight analysis result means that the moderation by utilitarian appeal of the residual direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation is mediated by affective response of excitement.

In study 2, the replication of study 1 with larger sample was successful. And the results confirmed that indirect effect of cognitive resolution of incongruity in the path from new product congruity to product evaluation was positively significant. At the same time, direct effect of new product congruity on product evaluation was negatively significant.

The moderated parallel mediation analysis with adding affective response of excitement as another mediating variable implied that

indirect effect of affective response was not significant at  $p < .05$  level, however, marginally and negatively significant at  $p < .10$  level.

A spotlight analysis to clarify interaction effects indicated that the interaction between new product congruity and hedonic appeal had significant effect on cognitive resolution of incongruity, and the interaction between new product congruity and utilitarian benefit had significant effect on affective response of excitement. Based on these results, theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Findings from this research help bridge an important gap in the literature. This work affords several important insights, particularly given the renewed interest in schema congruity theory over the last five years (Jhang et al. 2012; Krishna et al. 2010; Landwehr et al. 2013; Noseworthy et al. 2011; Noseworthy et al. 2014). The primary contribution of the study is to elaborate on the moderating role of type of benefit appeal on the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation, subsequently examining relationships between new product congruity, cognitive resolution of incongruity, affective response of excitement, and product evaluations.

Where the results may have particular theoretical relevance is in

reflecting on past work. Many of the boundary conditions of the schema congruity effect either did not require assumption or did not explicitly test if the participants failed to resolve the incongruity (e.g., Campbell and Goodstein 2001; Peracchio and Tybout 1996).

This research made a novel prediction and indeed find that because Mandler's fundamental assumption is correct, varying product benefit appeal can enhance or inhibit cognitive or affective processing and thus alter product evaluations. Importantly, this occurs without altering the resolution process.

The result of this research revealed boundary condition of the "matching principle" such that utilitarian benefit facilitates cognitive process and hedonic benefit stimulates affective response. This research findings indicate that the interaction between new product congruity and hedonic benefit appeal increases cognitive resolution of incongruity, whereas the interaction between new product congruity and utilitarian benefit appeal decreases affective response of excitement. And both cognitive resolution of incongruity and affective response of excitement lead to more favorable product evaluation.

This research findings can benefit marketers by suggesting effective marketing strategies suitable for new product acceptance in the course of product promotion. The result from study 1 implies that marketers should make a strategy to make moderately incongruent new products which can facilitate cognitive resolution of incongruity and lead to favorable product evaluation. This study result is exactly in line with Mandler's schema-congruity theory (Mandler 1982; Noseworthy et al.

2011; Jhang et al. 2012).

Though much work has done on product schema congruity, type of benefit appeal (hedonic vs. utilitarian benefit), cognitive processing, and affective response, most of these works have progressed fairly independently. However, this study made a new contribution with an attempt to analyse the relationship between those variables simultaneously.

The results from study 2 indicates that cognitive resolution facilitates consumers' ability to make sense of incongruent new products and also indicates that new product incongruity stimulates affective response of excitement. Furthermore, type of benefit appeal moderates on the relationship between new product congruity and product evaluation process. The interaction between new product congruity and hedonic benefit appeal increases cognitive resolution of incongruity, whereas interaction between new product congruity and utilitarian benefit appeal decreases affective response of excitement.

Overall, it is important for marketers to emphasize hedonic benefit appeal when they launch and promote new products. The process of resolving new product incongruity requires cognitive resources, and hedonic benefit appeal stimulates cognitive processing by facilitating cognitive flexibility.

This research findings can benefit researchers and practitioners by providing insights into mechanism underlying new product evaluation process and suggesting effective marketing strategies suitable for enhancing new products acceptance in the market. Limitations and

future research ideas are also discussed.

## **V. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION**

A few limitations inherent in the research need to be mentioned. First, the use of the same soft drink product category in both studies may raise the question if our findings are extendable to other products. Theoretically, we believe the findings should be applicable across all products that possess both hedonic and utilitarian attributes or benefits. Nonetheless, it would be good for future research to examine if the finding is applicable to other product categories.

Second, in a typical consumption episode, consumers are unlikely to engage in such single-evaluation context. It would be interesting to examine how joint-evaluation context influences product evaluation process via cognitive and affective processing. Adding the joint-evaluation context of hedonic and utilitarian benefit options is quite essential to understanding new product positioning or brand extension.

Considering that majority of consumer goods are neither chosen nor consumed in isolation, future research may also measure both consumers choice of hedonic and utilitarian options in addition to product evaluation for joint evaluation context in order to contrast whether consumers' product choice is in agreement with their prior



attitude or not.

Third, while our findings provide novel insights into consumers' new product incongruity and type of benefit appeal (hedonic vs. utilitarian benefit), our discussion is limited to products with visual incongruity (e.g., a new shape of new soft drink bottle) are seemingly superficial when compared to conceptual alterations (e.g., change in what it means to be a soft drink).

Fourth, this research examines only with advertising context as the cue to facilitate new product congruity and type of benefit appeal. While we believe this is a very important cue, and advertising context is partially under marketer's control, it is likely that other contextual variables could affect processing. Future research could extend this work into areas like store display.

Fifth, field experiments, rather than lab or online based experiments, could manipulate context in a very realistic consumption setting enhancing the external validity of our findings.

APPENDIX A  
STUDY 1 ADVERTISEMENT

(CONGRUENT)

*zija The Zija Drink*  
Benefits of Zija drink life in™

- 529 ml serving
- Fully Carbonated
- Thirst Quenching
- Easy to Open
- Taste Sweet
- Best Served Cold
- Priced Competitively

Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!

The advertisement features a plastic bottle of Zija The Zija Drink on the right. On the left, a list of seven benefits is presented in a staggered, overlapping layout. The benefits are: 529 ml serving, Fully Carbonated, Thirst Quenching, Easy to Open, Taste Sweet, Best Served Cold, and Priced Competitively. The text 'Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!' is located at the bottom left of the advertisement.

(INCONGRUENT)

*zija The Zija Drink*  
Benefits of Zija drink life in™

- 529 ml serving
- Fully Carbonated
- Thirst Quenching
- Easy to Open
- Taste Sweet
- Best Served Cold
- Priced Competitively

Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!

The advertisement features a soft drink pouch of Zija The Zija Drink on the right. On the left, a list of seven benefits is presented in a staggered, overlapping layout, identical to the congruent version. The benefits are: 529 ml serving, Fully Carbonated, Thirst Quenching, Easy to Open, Taste Sweet, Best Served Cold, and Priced Competitively. The text 'Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!' is located at the bottom left of the advertisement.

## APPENDIX B

### STUDY 2 ADVERTISEMENT

#### (CONGRUENT X HEDONIC BENEFIT APPEAL)

The advertisement features the Zija logo at the top left, with the tagline "The Zija Drink" in a cursive font. Below the logo is a dark banner with the text "Benefits of Zija" and "drink life in™" in white. To the right of the banner is a clear plastic bottle of Zija drink. To the left of the bottle is a vertical list of benefits in white boxes with black text: "529 ml serving", "Fully Carbonated", "Thirst Quenching", "Easy to Open", "Taste Sweet", "Best Served Cold", and "Priced Competitively". At the bottom of the advertisement, it says "Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!".

Founded over half a century ago, this respected company is introducing a specially-formulated beverage.

This soft drink is thrilling for those people with a zest for life. The carbonation and tingle of the drink will perk up anyone's taste buds as well as give fun.

This drink is slightly sweet to the taste and amusing for those who need quenching thirst.

This drink maintains world-class taste while providing you a wealth of cheerful experience.

#### (INCONGRUENT X HEDONIC BENEFIT APPEAL)

The advertisement features the Zija logo at the top left, with the tagline "The Zija Drink" in a cursive font. Below the logo is a dark banner with the text "Benefits of Zija" and "drink life in™" in white. To the right of the banner is a soft pack of Zija drink. To the left of the soft pack is a vertical list of benefits in white boxes with black text: "529 ml serving", "Fully Carbonated", "Thirst Quenching", "Easy to Open", "Taste Sweet", "Best Served Cold", and "Priced Competitively". At the bottom of the advertisement, it says "Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!".

Founded over half a century ago, this respected company is introducing a specially-formulated beverage.

This soft drink is thrilling for those people with a zest for life. The carbonation and tingle of the drink will perk up anyone's taste buds as well as give fun.

This drink is slightly sweet to the taste and amusing for those who need quenching thirst.

This drink maintains world-class taste while providing you a wealth of cheerful experience.

(CONGRUENT X UTILITARIAN BENEFIT APPEAL)



**zija** *The Zija Drink*  
Benefits of Zija drink life in™

- 529 ml serving
- Fully Carbonated
- Thirst Quenching
- Easy to Open
- Taste Sweet
- Best Served Cold
- Priced Competitively

Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!

Founded over half a century ago, this respected company is introducing a specially-formulated beverage.

This enhanced soft drink is beneficial for your health since it is fortified with extra vitamins and omega-3.

This drink is useful for those who need quenching thirst as well as considering health.

This drink would be necessary for fitness centers because it efficiently solves your thirst and fatigue.

(INCONGRUENT X UTILITARIAN BENEFIT APPEAL)



**zija** *The Zija Drink*  
Benefits of Zija drink life in™

- 529 ml serving
- Fully Carbonated
- Thirst Quenching
- Easy to Open
- Taste Sweet
- Best Served Cold
- Priced Competitively

Coming Soon to Convenience Store Near You!!!

Founded over half a century ago, this respected company is introducing a specially-formulated beverage.

This enhanced soft drink is beneficial for your health since it is fortified with extra vitamins and omega-3.

This drink is useful for those who need quenching thirst as well as considering health.

This drink would be necessary for fitness centers because it efficiently solves your thirst and fatigue.

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## 국문초록

# 신제품의 스키마 불일치성에 대한 인지적 해결과 흥미감의 정서적 반응을 통한 신제품 수용 증진 방안에 대한 연구 : **Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Benefit Appeal** 의 비교를 중심으로

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신제품을 출시할 경우 신제품은 동일 카테고리 내의 기존 제품에 새로운 속성(attributes)과 혜택(benefits)을 첨가하거나 제거하여 출시되기 때문에 기존의 제품과 불일치할 수밖에 없는 숙명을 지닌다. 선행 연구들에 의하면 소비자들은 기존의 제품스키마와 완전히 일치하거나 완전히 불일치하는 제품보다는 기존의 제품 스키마에서 살짝 벗어난 제품에 더욱 긍정적인 평가를 한다.

본 연구에서는 기존 연구에서 밝힌 제품의 스키마 일치 효과(product schema-congruity effect)가 왜 나타나는지 그 언더라이징 메커니즘을 인지적 평가 과정과 정서적 평가 과정의 두 경로를 통해 밝혀 보았다. 즉, 신제품의 스키마 일치 수준이 제품에 대한 평가에 이르는 과정을 제품의 스키마 불일치성에 대한 인지적 해결 (cognitive resolution of

incongruity)과 흥미감의 정서적 반응 (affective response of excitement)을 통한 매개효과를 중심으로 살펴보았다. 또한 동일한 제품이라 할지라도 쾌락적 혹은 실용적 혜택과 같이 제품 혜택 소구의 유형에 따라 제품에 대한 평가가 달라질 수 있음에 대하여 알아보았다.

본 연구의 주요 분석 결과는 크게 세 부분으로 나누어 볼 수 있는데, 인지적 해결 과정, 정서적 반응과정, 그리고 제품 혜택 소구의 조절효과 부분으로 살펴 볼 수 있다.

먼저 인지적 평가 과정에 대한 주요 분석 결과는 다음과 같다. 첫째, 신제품이 동일 카테고리 내의 기존 제품스키마와 일치할수록 신제품에 대한 평가에 부정적 영향(-)을 미친다. 둘째, 신제품이 기존 제품스키마와 일치할수록 인지적 해결과정에 긍정적 영향(+)을 미친다. 셋째, 신제품의 스키마 불일치에 대한 인지적 해결이 활성화 될수록 신제품 평가에 긍정적 영향(+)을 미친다.

정서적 평가과정을 통한 주요 분석 결과는 다음과 같다. 첫째, 한계적으로 유의하기는 하였지만 신제품이 동일 카테고리 내 기존 제품스키마와 일치할수록 흥미감이라는 정서적 반응에 부정적(-) 영향을 미친다. 둘째, 흥미감은 제품 평가에 긍정적 영향(+)을 미친다.

마지막으로 신제품의 스키마 일치 수준이 제품 평가에 미치는 과정에서 혜택 소구 유형의 조절효과는 유의하였으며 그 결과는 다음과 같다. 쾌락적 혜택을 강조하여 소구할 경우 신제품과 기존제품의 스키마 일치수준이 높을수록 스키마 불일치에 대한 인지적

해결과정에 미치는 긍정적인 효과가 더욱 더 증가하였다. 반면에 실용적 혜택을 강조하여 소구 할 경우 기존의 제품과 스키마 일치수준이 높을수록 흥미감이라는 정서적 반응에 미치는 부정적 영향이 더욱 더 증가하였다.

따라서 신제품을 출시할 때에는 기존의 스키마와 너무 일치하지 않도록 반드시 인지적 해결이 가능하도록 스키마 불일치가 적절한 수준의 신제품을 출시하고 인지적 해결을 활성화 할 수 있도록 쾌락적 혜택을 강조해야 한다. 또한 실용적 혜택을 너무 부각시키지 않음으로써 흥미감이 감소하지 않도록 하는 방향으로 포지셔닝해야 한다. 즉, 기존의 제품 스키마에서 적절히 벗어나 흥미감을 유발하되 반드시 신제품의 스키마 불일치성에 대한 인지적 해결이 가능하게 출시하고 쾌락적 혜택을 소구하여 인지적 해결 과정을 촉진하는 것이 신제품의 수용을 증가 시킬 수 있는 방안이라고 볼 수 있다.

기존의 연구에서는 제품의 평가 과정에서 쾌락적 혜택은 정서적 반응을 촉진하고, 실용적 혜택은 인지적 반응을 촉진한다는 이른바 ‘쾌락 - 정서, 실용 - 인지의 대응원칙 (matching principle)’ 이 주를 이루었는데, 신제품의 경우 기존 제품과의 스키마 일치 수준 (the level of new product schema congruity)에 따라 강조된 제품혜택 소구 유형 (쾌락적 vs. 실용적 혜택) 과 제품 평가 과정 (인지적 vs. 정서적 과정) 의 상호작용 결과가 다르게 나올 수 있다는 경계 조건(boundary condition)을 발견했다는 점에 본 연구의 의의가

있다 .

마지막으로 연구 결과를 바탕으로 한 이론적, 실무적 시사점을 논의하였고, 연구의 한계점 및 향후 연구 방향을 제시하였다.

주요어 : 신제품, 스키마 불일치, 인지적 해결, 정서적 반응, 흥미감, 제품 혜택 소구, 쾌락적 혜택, 실용적 혜택, 제품 평가

학 번 : 2 0 1 4 - 2 0 4 2 3