Chapter 8
The Impact of Consumer Choice Goals on Inovativeness

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ABSTRACT

Consumer innovativeness is one of the most explored concepts in new product adoption literature. Nevertheless, the intention to adopt novelties, specifically in a product category domain, still needs exploration of what happened during the choice process. Consumers can build their decision about whether to adopt innovation based on their hierarchy of choice goals. The authors propose this hierarchy is driven by the regulatory focus system, based on promotion (justifiability and choice confidence) and prevention goals (anticipated regret and evaluation costs). In order to demonstrate this reasoning, the authors compared "most innovative" versus "less innovative" consumers, regarding their prevention and promotion goals. The most innovative ones demonstrated higher justifiability and choice confidence and showed more capabability of avoiding an anticipated choice regret when compared with the less innovative consumers. The differences explored in the analysis highlight the necessity of further understanding how consumers perform during the choice process of innovative products.

INTRODUCTION

People pursue their goals, beginning with some motivational orientation, some concerns or interests that provide energy and direct their actions toward the goals. The main basis of goal direct theory is that people approach pleasure and avoid pain (Higgins, 1997). For instance, in the consumption context, choices are an intrinsic part of the concernes consumers must deal in order to achieve their goals. Before buying products or services, consumers can read consumer-generated product reviews with a focus on expecting positive consumption outcomes. Consumers can also refer to

product reviews with an emphasis on preventing negative consumption outcomes such as dissatisfaction, and regret. These opposing consumption patterns illustrate the two distinct self-regulatory goals highlighted in regulatory focus theory (Higgins 1997; Kwon & Sung, 2012). The theory distinguishes between two major categories of desired goals: those that relate to attaining positive outcomes such as advancement, achievement, and aspirations (termed promotion goals), and those that relate to avoiding negative outcomes, such as responsabilities, obligations and security (termed prevention goals). According to this motivational theory, individuals with a promotion focus will regulate their behavior toward positive outcomes, and those with a prevention focus will regulate their behavior away from negative outcomes (Liberman, Molden, Idson & Higgins, 2001).

Several studies have explored the choice process topic of research (Chernev, 2006; Thompson, Hamilton & Rust, 2005; Scott & Nowlis, 2013) and specifically, some studies (Herzenstein, Posavac & Brakus, 2007; Alexander, Lynch Jr & Wang, 2008) emphasize that it is important to understand consumer's behavior that are more interested in trying new products and services. Bettman (Bettman, Luce & Payne, 1998) proposed that consumers usually have a set of goals, which are pursued during most of the choice situations. Furthermore, studies of the choice process must consider the choice goals in order to understand the heuristict strategies that consumers use to decide which product to buy (e.g. Payne, Bettman, 2007; Heitmann, Lehmann & Herrmann, 2007).

These goals may impact consumers' decisions and therefore, it has become relevant to understand how choice goals influence consumers' innovativeness, and how this relationship applies to the organizational strategy. In order to achieve this goal, an extension of a partial model, proposed by Heitmann, Lehmann and Hermann (2007) is suggested in this study, relating the innovativeness in a product category domain to the choice goals. The choice goals are analyzed from the self-regulation perspective (Higgins, 1997). The use of self-regulation approach to analyze innovation and decision processes, highlights the possibility of exploring how these two variables relate to each other in the consumer behavior context. The importance of Heitmann, Lehmann and Herrmann (2007)'s study to understand the choice goals, lays in the fact they have classified these goals according to the regulatory focus theory, which was proposed by Higgins (1997). Thus, there are goals, which are pursued in order to avoid negative consequences of the choice, and goals, which are pursued in order to achieve positive results of the choice process.

The use of the regulatory focus theory to study the innovation adoption process highlights the possibility of exploring how the two regulatory foci (promotion and prevention) are related to consumers' behavior. For instance, Herzenstein, Posavac and Brakus (2007) found that when risks associated with a new product are not specified to consumers, promotion-focused consumers state higher purchase intentions than prevention-focused consumers. Nevertheless, when the judgmental context makes the risks salient, prevention and promotion-focused participants are equally unlikely to purchase the product. Therefore, consumers with different choice goals orientation (prevention- and promotion-focused) will have different decisions regarding an innovation. That is what we are going to explore in this chapter.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Innovativeness

Innovation is an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by individuals (Rogers, 2003). A product will be considered an innovation only if it adds new features and benefits, and consumers are more likely to adopt it only if it is perceived as useful and important to their lives. In a study, Okada (2006) showed that consumers of current

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