

Print ISSN: 2233-4165 / Online ISSN 2233-5382
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.13106/jidb.2020.vol11.no1.7>

The Effects of Goal Orientation Consciousness versus Unconsciousness on Consumers' Choice Tendency

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Received: November 18, 2019 Revised: November 22, 2019 Accepted: November 24, 2019

Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed at exploring the product choice tendency differences between the consciousness and unconsciousness of goal orientation when product attributes is perceived to be compatible with the goal orientation. **Research design, data and methodology:** Empirical study used a 2 (goal conscious vs. unconscious) \times 3 (hedonic vs. performance vs. reliability attribute) between-subjects design and one control group. To verify hypotheses, χ^2 -test was conducted to 320 questionnaire data answered by undergraduate students of Jiangxi Normal University in China. **Results:** First, consumers under unconscious condition showed a higher product choice consistency based on compatibility between hedonic (performance) attribute of the product and their hedonic (performance) promotion goal-orientation than those under the conscious condition. Second, product choice effects of compatibility between reliability attribute of the product and prevention goal orientation were not significantly different between consumers' consciousness and unconsciousness of their prevention goal orientation. **Conclusions:** Marketers of 'under dog' should try to develop and deliver the product attributes different from the attributes of 'top dog.' And the 'top dog' marketers should help their customers to avoid the conflicts by developing the environment of inducing their goal orientation unconsciously. Brand marketers should always pay attention to the reliability attributes concerned with the prevention goal orientation.

Keywords: Compatibility, Consciousness, Goal Orientation, Self-Regulatory Focus, Unconsciousness.

JEL Classification Code: C83, L81, M31, P46.

1. Introduction

There have been many pieces of research about goal orientations. Goal orientation is a kind of individual disposition that can validate one's behaviors towards achieving goals. Goal orientation can be divided into learning goal orientation and performance goal orientation which could be adopted simultaneously by consumers (Dweck, 1986). Pintrich (2000) addressed the role of multiple goals, both learning and performance goals, and linked them to multiple outcomes of motivation. Goal orientation is seen as a motivation which can be used in the field of goal setting, learning, and adaptive behaviors in

leadership, and training (DeGeest & Brown, 2011). The goal orientation can also be a motivation for one's behaviors (Vandewalle, Nerstad, & Dysvik, 2019). Prevention-focused people tend to be far more likely to select the options with reliability-related products, whereas promotion-focused people are more likely to place relatively more weight on performance-related, or hedonic-related products (Bettman, 1979). Aaker and Lee (2001) tested the compatibility between products' message contents and consumers' self-regulation focus. Previous researches have worked on self-regulatory focus and goal-orientation; however, they have given little attention to exploring any difference of the compatibility between conscious and unconscious condition under which choice is undertaken. This article will examine the choice differences between the two conditions. We apply the three product attributes (hedonic attribute, performance attribute, and reliability attribute) to exploring the product choice tendency differences between the two conditions when each of the attributes is perceived to be

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compatible with consumers' self-regulatory focus in product choice.

In what follows, we first review the role of compatibility, goal orientation and self-regulatory focus in consumer choice, then the differences of goal pursuit between conscious and unconscious condition are also stated to develop hypotheses. In the experiment part, we test the differences of choice tendency between the two conditions, when product attributes are compatible with self-regulatory focus. Lastly, this article will discuss these experimental findings, and illustrate the contributes in view of both theory advancement and managerial implication, also find limitations for future research.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Compatibility

Compatibility has been explored as a possible reason for elicitation effects (Lichtenstein & Slovic 1971; Slovic & MacPhillamy 1974). That is, how individuals decide a question is determined by how the question is elicited. Tversky, Sattath, and Slovic (1988) applied compatibility to state that the weight of an attribute will be enhanced when the attribute is compatible with the response. Their findings manifested that compatibility plays an important role in decision making and choice. Also, they indicated that the character of an attribute may increase or decrease the compatibility with a given task. For example, compared with having a picnic, working hard before school tests can be more compatible with this given test, whereas sleeping well to keep a good state of mind seems to be more compatible than working hard in this situation. Compatibility is also seen as a function, by which consumers can evaluate the relationship between individual goals and the attributes triggering the choice for achieving the goals. Based on this view, Chernev (2004) found consumers' goal orientation effect on product attribute evaluation, and then came to the conclusion that attributes which are compatible with goal orientation get more weight in choice.

2.2. Goal orientation and its functions

The definition of goal orientation varies with different definition type (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Past researches divided goal orientation into four types different from each other. As stated by Strage (1997), goal orientation can be considered as a mental framework in which the oriented components (faiths, targets, effects, perceptiveness) change according to the current environment, and therefore lead to

adaptive actions associated with the environment. VandeWalle, Brown, Cron, and, Slocum (1999) argued goal orientation as a trait that indicates the individual difference in behavior. Goal orientation is explained as the pursuit and adoption of specific goals in achievement-related situations (Jagacinski & Nicholls, 1984; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Later, DeShon, and Gillespie (2005) apply goal orientation to explain why people tend to get better.

Dweck (1986) and Ames and Archer (1987) echoed this view and proposed that goal orientation is divided into a two-dimensional construct: learning goal orientation and performance goal orientation. More specifically, people with a learning goal orientation are always inclined to develop their competence by acquiring new skills and controlling new situations, whereas people with a performance goal orientation intend to show and validate their competence for receiving judgments they want to get and avoiding negative judgments. That means, with different intentions, individuals will hold different goal orientations.

The reason why people choose one from those goals rather than the other is still a mystery until Payne and Beaubien (2007) mentioned that goal orientation has connections with the self-regulatory constructs, in which there are two types of regulatory orientations. One is the promotion focus. Individuals with promotion focus pay more attention to gains. That is, they make great efforts for either the presence of positive outcomes (gains) or absence of positive outcomes. The other type is prevention focus, concerning with minimizing negative outcomes (Brockner, Paruchuri, Idson, & Higgins, 2002; Freitas & Higgins, 2002; Higgins & Silberman, 1998; Idson, Liberman, & Higgins, 2000). For example, two students have the same goal of getting an "A" mark, and the student with promotion focus takes mark "A" as self-development, whereas the student with prevention focus regard mark "A" as his responsibility rather than self-development (Choi, Chen, & Kim, 2017). By means of the way used to pursue a goal which is compatible with self-regulatory focus, individuals gain additional utility (Higgins & Silberman, 1998; Higgins, 2000). Aaker and Lee (2001) proposed that the attitude towards product becomes stronger or reappear when individuals' self-regulatory focus is compatible with products' information content. In their research, fruit juice, with the function (message content) of supplying energy and reducing disease, was exposed to the promotion- and prevention-focused individuals, wherein the message will be pursued by people more often when it is compatible with individuals' self-regulatory focus: promotion-focused individuals are more convinced by the energy supply, whereas prevention-focused individuals are more convinced by the disease reduction.

The three attributes will be used in this article to induce

different goal-orientations: hedonic attribute, performance attribute, and reliability attribute. Then, we will shed light on each of them in detail as below.

2.2.1. Hedonic attributes and hedonic promotion goal orientation

The hedonic attribute is defined as the attribute of the product that has connections with experiential, sensory, or aesthetic fields of value. Consumers can feel pleasantness, fantasy, and fun through the hedonic attributes found in the product. So far, it can be concluded that hedonic attributes have several characteristics as follows: First, representing unexpectedness, novelty, fun, aesthetics, symbolizing “wants”, and serving pleasure-seeking goals (Higgins, 1997; Chernev, 2004). And all of them are intrinsic motivators through which users derive value from the process of performing the consumption activity itself. Second, they become motivators of representing an end in itself (Babin & Harris, 2011) and representing affective or emotional preferences of users (Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, & Wade-Benzoni, 1998). They are subjective, experiential. And they also become the motivator of serving pleasure-seeking goals (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Higgins, 1997; Chernev, 2004) and fulfilling promotional goals (Higgins, 1997). These findings support the opinion that attributes which are compatible with goal orientation of the individual tend to be more weighted in choice.

2.2.2. Performance attributes and performance promotion goal orientation

The attributes that are associated with how well a product will perform a given task are defined as performance attributes. Performance is termed as the extent to which the primary characteristics of the product satisfy the expected needs of customers (Golder, Mitra, & Moorman, 2012). For instance, the freshness of seafood, the power of cars, and the memory size of a mobile phone can be considered as performance attributes. Furthermore, performance attributes can make out the level of expected outcomes. Product performance, such as customer service, ease of use, confidence, cost, and variety, could be approached by using satisfaction-rating scales to describe the performance level of the product (Chernev, 2004). The evaluation standard of product performance could be based on the satisfaction of consumers to the product. (Stayman, Alden, & Smith, 1992). Namely, the excellent performance of a product or service can lead to a high level of satisfaction, whereas the poor performance of product or service will give rise to dissatisfaction (Patterson, 1993).

Furthermore, performance attributes are far more likely to be associated with advancement, accomplishment, and achieving maximal goals. It is believed that performance attributes are more compatible with a promotion orientation.

Consumers have the tendency to choose the product with high-performance attributes because they need to make out the level of expected outcomes before making a wise purchase. In order to maximize the performance of products or services, marketers should manage the performance attributes (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zhang, 2014).

2.2.3. Reliability attributes and prevention goal orientation

Reliability is defined as a kind of measure of possibility that products or services will not malfunction or fail within a specified period (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Reliability attributes drive consumers deviate from uncertainty, physical risk (e.g., eating expired food), psychological risk, social risk or time risk (Tsiros & heilman, 2005). Consumers tend to pursue products or services with high reliability attributes, because those products or services always prevent consumers from uncertainty and defuse risks in using the products or services (Richins, 1994).

That is, reliability attributes are likely to be associated with safety, security, and the absence of negative outcomes. Reliability attributes can be equated with safety that prevents occurrence of errors or distractors which harm the effects of other attributes and cause a bad choice made by consumers (Stanciu & Hapenciuc, 2009). Therefore, the intention of consumers for choosing products with reliability attributes would be more compatible with a prevention goal orientation rather than promotion goal orientation.

Namely, reliability attributes tend to relatively receive attention weight by prevention-oriented goal because these features are more in line with the goal of self-regulation which aims at minimizing unexpected outcomes.

2.3. Goal conflicting

Consumers may be entangled with several goals (e.g., hedonic and performance) and think about the trade-off among those goals. Goal theory can be applied to illuminating how consumers will deal with those multiple and conflictive goals (Dhar & Simonson 1999; Fishbach & Dhar 2005; Haugtvedt, Herr, & Kardes, 2018). When consumers decide to choose products, they may prefer the products consistent with either focal goal or competing goal. That is, they would behave toward the focal goal or behave differently toward the competing goal. During this process, goal management is activated by consumers to confirm their steps toward the focal goal and evaluate whether the present situation is good enough to maintain the goal pursuit. (Laran & Janiszewski, 2008).

According to Dhar and Simonson (1999), consumers behave toward either the focal goal or competing goal, which can be regarded as a result of goal conflict.

Consumers behave to pursue a goal (e.g., focal or competing goal) because they recognize the value contained in pursuing the goal. However, consumers may experience value conflict wherein they need to evaluate which one is more important between the focal and the competing goal. According to the judgment about which goal is more valued, consumers behave to pursue a different goal. For example, disposable chopsticks bring consumers with both convenience and environmental problems; with this conflict, consumers may prefer disposable chopsticks or may not be capable of deciding which one (convenience and environmental problem) is more important to them. When facing those decisions, consumers evaluate not only the instant outcomes but also products' lasting impact (Nelson, 2004). Equally, compared with hedonic products, consumers may pay more attention to performance or reliability products even though their initial focal goal is something about hedonic.

2.4. Moderation roles of conscious versus unconscious goal orientation in choosing product

Consciousness and unconsciousness have many connections to goal pursuit. There have been extensive researches about consciousness and unconsciousness during the process of pursuing goals (Chartrand & Bargh, 1996; Higgins, 1989). Stanovich and West (2000) put forward a theory of dual system that is related to people's judgment and decision-making. In the article, System I was quoted to represent intuitive processes, and System II was used to represent cogitative processes. This article concluded that the system I is fast, intuitive, automatic, and unconscious, while System II is slow, deliberate, controllable, and conscious. Consciousness is always apparent, but in contrast, unconsciousness is usually undetectable. Conscious thinking is composed of cognitive processes associated with goals or tasks that are the focus of one's conscious attention. Consciousness is a kind of control so that consumers can manipulate that process via volitional, top-down, executive processes (Krishna & Morrin, 2007; Lane & Scott, 2007; Pocheptsova, Dhar, & Baumeister, 2009).

However, unconscious thinking consists of cognitive processes associated with goals or tasks, but the conscious attention is directed elsewhere. Freud (1960) proposed that unconsciousness is a state of being "without consciousness". Unconsciousness is a kind of state which occurs when the ability to maintain an awareness of self and environment is lost. The unconsciousness refers to the mental processes in which individuals make themselves be unaware of self and environmental elements. Empirical evidence suggested that unconscious phenomena include automatic skills, subliminal perceptions, repressed feelings, thoughts, habits,

and automatic reactions, and possibly also complexes, desires, and hidden phobias.

When making a choice, people can be conscious or unconscious of an active goal. Based on the previous study of Laran, Janiszewski, and Salerno (2016), goal pursuit can be classified into two streams of thought: conscious goal pursuit and unconscious goal pursuit. Conscious goal pursuit occurs when consumers are aware of the goal, while unconscious goal pursuit occurs in the case of consumers not being aware of the goal, but still taking actions to achieve it.

When consciously pursuing goals, there will be a monitoring and an executive system in consumers' memory to monitor, evaluate, screen and coordinate various kinds of information among various choices, which should help them make the best choices to achieve their goals (Bettman, Luce & Payne, 1998). However, Chartrand and Bargh (1996) suggested that goals can be activated by peripheral cues in the case of an environment and then be pursued without the awareness consciousness. Laran, Janiszewski, and Salerno (2016) explored that, conscious goal pursuit should be characterized by increased accessibility of a focal goal and a competing goal, as well as a relatively more precise mapping of the alternatives to these goals.

In a circumstance of unconsciousness, goals can also be activated and chased. Unconsciousness consists of the processes that occur automatically in mind and are not available to introspect. Even though these processes exist well under the surface of the awareness of consciousness, they are theorized to exert an impact on behavior. The unconscious goal pursuit tends to identify alternatives that are consistent with the most accessible focal goals through the process of matching the alternatives' attributes with the focal goals without consciousness of competing goal. The alternatives will be more attractive to consumers after a match between the active focal goal and the attributes. (Ferguson & Bargh 2004; Moore, Ferguson & Chartrand 2011). Therefore, it can be concluded that unconscious goal pursuit makes it possible for consumer to easily identify alternatives that are consistent with the focal goal rather than the competing ones.

According to the theories reviewed above, the hypotheses about the effect differences between consciousness and unconsciousness of goal orientation on product attribute-based choice are proposed as follows:

H1: when the hedonic attribute of the product is compatible with consumers' goal orientation, the consumers who are not aware of their goal orientation will choose hedonic products more than those who are aware of their goal orientation.

H2: when the performance attribute of the product is compatible with consumers' goal orientation, the

consumers who are not aware of their goal orientation will choose performance products more than those who are aware of their goal orientation.

H3: when the reliability attribute of the product is compatible with consumers’ goal orientation, the consumers who are not aware of their goal orientation will choose reliability products more than those who are aware of their goal orientation.

3. Empirical Study

3.1. Research object selection

With the development of the economy, consumers begin to pay attention to the quality of food. Food hedonic becomes a crucial factor in food intake (Cabanac, 1985). Individuals consume foods according to their performance or hedonic value (Drewnowski & Hann, 1999). And quest towards dining has brought a challenge in the restaurant industry. Consumers are not only limited to the sight and taste of food, but also pay more attention to what they are eating, such as whether the food is safe, healthy, even organic. Besides, a pleasant dining atmosphere, entertainment experience in the catering process, and new flavor experiences have become the considerations for consumers to choose restaurants. The booming restaurant industry has made it more necessary to research the tendency of consumers to choose the restaurants which can provide a better dining experience.

Table 1: Classification of Restaurant Service Attributes

Hedonic Attributes	Taste of food, Size of indoor space, Interior decoration Outward appearance, Friendliness of employees, Comfortable seating Comfortable place to socialize, Atmosphere, Overall impression, User image
Performance Attributes	Speed of service, Healthy menu options, Variety of menu choices, Nutrition information for menu items, Special discounts, Coupons, Price, Location, Hours of operation Enough place for parking, Servers’ knowledge about menu
Reliability Attributes	Consistency of food quality, Consistency of service quality, Safety equipment, Employees’ appearance and costume, Cleanliness

Source: Choi and Kim (2012).

According to product attribute type of Chernev (2004), three types of restaurant service attribute could be recognized. Hedonic attributes related to the restaurant can be detected in the process of sensing and experiencing the restaurant. And performance attributes are associated with utilitarian aspect, whereas reliability attributes of the restaurant can be recognized based on safety or the tendency to avoid negative outcomes. Based on these three types, restaurant service attributes can be divided, as shown

in Table 1. The restaurant services will be used as a tool to verify the hypotheses in this article.

3.2. Preliminary Survey

Based on Table 1, we developed questionnaire in which the three types of restaurant service attribute and the meaning of each type of attributes there were, to check which attribute is the one that could most represent hedonic, performance, and reliability value respectively at restaurant service. The questions used are as followings. ‘Which attribute can most help you experience pleasure, fantasy, and fun at the time point of your visiting to a restaurant?’ ‘Which attribute can most help you conduct utilitarian consumption at the time point of your visiting to a restaurant?’ and ‘Which attribute can most help you experience a safety consumption or help you avoid negative outcomes at the time point of your visiting to a restaurant?’ We recruited 100 undergraduate students, and they participated in preliminary test. Finally, frequency analysis results showed that taste of food (86.7%) is considered as the most representative among the hedonic attributes, while speed of service (79.9%) is regarded as the most representative among performance attributes, and consistency of food quality (85.5%) is treated as the most representative among reliability attributes.

3.3. Empirical Study

3.3.1. Measurement, pretest and main survey

At this study, goal priming method was used as a cognition task by which participants can test their ability to recognize whether the string of letters is a word or not (Laran & Salerno, 2016). In unconscious goal condition, the task includes 10 target words for each goal orientation (e.g., hedonic: tasty, enjoy, pleasure, desserts, savor, flavor, indulge, delightful, delicious, cheerful; performance: various, choice, different, menu, manifold, diversiform, meal, multiple, set, multi-choice; reliability: safety, important, quality, good, consistency, avoid, negative, fresh, secure, crucial), and 5 neutral words, 5 non-words. In the case of both conscious goal orientation and control condition, in order to not activate a goal, 15 filler words are neutral (moon, walk, delay, below, woods, sun, sailboat, perpendicular, from, that, east, next, basic, easy, pin) and other 5 letter strings are non-words. However, in conscious condition, introduction sentence different among the three goal orientations is used to induce a goal orientation, which will be described at the part of explaining each goal orientation-related procedure.

Then participants at each condition were required to review a set of restaurants evaluated. The instruction stated

that each restaurant had been rated on a set of attributes such as taste of food, speed of service and consistency of food quality, using a 1 to 10 scale in which 1 (10) equaled a low (high) score. Restaurants A is perceived to be a hedonic attribute-weighting option by showing a high value (7) of hedonic attributes (taste of food), whereas Restaurants B is perceived as a performance attribute-weighting option by a high value (7) of performance attributes (speed of service). Besides, restaurant C becomes a reliability attribute-weighting option by a high value (7) of reliability attributes (consistency of food quality). Other two attributes ratings at each restaurant, A, B, C are showed as having a value 5.

And at conscious hedonic promotion goal-orientation group, participants read ‘Your good friend will come to meet you. You want to choose a restaurant with delicious food and a good atmosphere, through which you and your friend could feel good with each other. Under the circumstance above, which restaurant would you like to choose among the three, A, B, C?’ wherein the choice is decided based on conscious hedonic promotion goal-orientation situation.

At conscious performance promotion goal-orientation group, participants read ‘You were told to have an important meeting after lunch, you want to choose a restaurant that is providing ordering easiness and convenience, by which you could make more time to prepare for the important meeting. Under the circumstance above, which restaurant would you like to choose among the three, A, B, C?’ wherein the choice is decided based on conscious performance promotion goal-orientation situation.

At conscious reliability prevention goal-orientation group, participants read ‘This weekend you will take your younger sister outside for enjoying food away from home. You want to choose a restaurant that serves trustworthy food, through which you and your younger sister could enjoy safe and healthy food. Under the circumstance above, which restaurant would you like to choose among the three, A, B, C?’ wherein the choice is decided based on conscious reliability prevention goal-orientation situation.

In unconscious goal and control condition, participants read ‘Please look over the various attributes and then indicate which restaurant you would choose among the three, A, B, C?’ wherein the choice is decided without consciousness of any goal orientation.

The English version of each questionnaire was translated in Chinese. To check any typo errors or sentence rightness in the questionnaires, pretest was conducted by thirty five graduate Chinese students. The questionnaires were revised according to the pretest results.

This study aimed at uncovering consumers' product choice differences between the conscious and unconscious situations when each type of attribute (hedonic, performance, and reliability attribute) is compatible with

their goal-orientation. Therefore, a 2 (goal pursuit state: conscious vs. unconscious) \times 3 (goal orientation type: hedonic vs. performance vs. reliability) between subjects' design was used. Besides, a control condition was added. The purpose of adding control condition was to check whether, in the base condition, the rate of the restaurant choice is equal among the three restaurants empathizing one type of the three kinds of attributes respectively (i.e., whether consumers have no preference difference among the three restaurants).

In the main survey, 350 undergraduate students of Jiangxi Normal University in China participated. To each of the seven groups consisting of the six experimental groups and one control group, 50 students were randomly assigned, respectively. We removed 30 participants who did not follow the cognition task. 320 questionnaires were used to verify our hypotheses, the final sample is shown in the following Table 2.

Table 2: Number of Each Experimental Group and Control Group

Goal Orientation Goal Pursuit State	hedonic (N)	Performance (N)	Reliability (N)
Conscious	45	49	43
Unconscious	47	45	44
Control	47		

4. Empirical investigation

4.1. Demographic Analysis Results

As shown in Table 3, female participants (N=177, 55.3%) were more than male participants (N=143, 44.7%). Furthermore, most participants (N=247, 77.2%) were 21-30 years old, under the age of 20 were 22.8% (N=73).

Table 3: Demographic Analysis Results

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	143	44.7
	Female	177	55.3
Age	Under 20 age	73	22.8
	21-30	247	77.2
Incomes	Under 3000	147	45.9
	3000-6000	125	39.1
	6000-9000	41	12.8
	Over 9000	7	2.2

As for income, 45.9% of them were under 3000CNY monthly, and 39.1% (N=125) of them were between 3000CNY and

6000CNY, 12.8% (N=41) of them were between 6000CNY and 9000CNY, and 2.2% (N=7) were over 9000CNY.

4.2. Results of Testing Hypotheses

To verifying hypotheses, we used χ^2 -test in Spss 22.0. The results are shown as Table 4. When hedonic attribute of the restaurant is compatible with participants' goal orientation, participants in unconscious goal condition (89.4%) were more likely to choose hedonic restaurant than participants in control condition (34%; $\chi^2(2)=30.5$, $p < .001$) and those in conscious goal condition (62.2%; $\chi^2(2)=9.3$, $p < .001$). Simultaneously, the participants in conscious goal condition are more likely to choose the performance (13.3%) and the reliability (24.4%) than those in unconscious goal orientation choose the performance (4.3%; $\chi^2(2)=9.3$, $p < .001$) and the reliability (6.4%; $\chi^2(2)=9.3$, $p < .001$). These comparisons give adequate supports for hypothesis 1.

Similarly, when performance attribute of the restaurant is compatible with participants' goal orientation, participants in unconscious condition (86.7%) were more willing to choose performance product than those in conscious condition (30%; $\chi^2(2)=9.4$, $p < .001$) and those in control condition (34%; $\chi^2(2)=26.8$, $p < .001$). Also, participants in conscious condition choose the hedonic product (26.5%) and the reliability (12.2%) more than participants in

unconscious condition choose the hedonic (4.4%; $\chi^2(2)=9.4$, $p < .001$) and the reliability (8.9%; $\chi^2(2)=9.3$, $p < .001$). These data give enough supports to hypothesis 2.

When reliability attribute of the restaurant is compatible with participants' goal orientation, even participants in control condition (31.9%) show obvious difference from the participants in conscious condition (79.1%; $\chi^2(2)=20.2$, $p < .001$) and the participants in unconscious condition (88.6%; $\chi^2(2)=30.4$, $p < .001$), but participants in conscious condition (79.1%) and those in unconscious condition (88.6%) did not differ in their choice rate ($\chi^2(2)=1.4$, $p > .05$). What's more, we can get a conclusion from these data that when participants have the goal of buying the product with reliability attribute, they will seldom pay attention to other attributes of the product. These results show difference from our hypothesis 3, which means the hypothesis 3 is rejected. This phenomenon can be explained as: compared with consumers avoiding the absence of positive outcomes (no gains), prevention goal-orientated consumers will pay more attention to the absence of negative outcomes (i.e., protection from threats, or non-losses) (Molden, Lee & Higgins, 2008). People with a prevention goal-orientation are always aimed at eliminating threats or risk rather than obtaining positive outcomes. That is, once consumers begin to concentrate on reducing unpleasant or risky experiences, they fasten on fixation to safer choices, which ensure reliability (Chernev, 2004; Higgins, 1997).

Table 4: Consumers' choice result based on different goal-orientation

Goal type	Sample(n)	Choice			Sum
		Restaurant A	Restaurant B	Restaurant C	
Hedonic goal-orientation					
Conscious	N (%)	28 (62.2)	6 (13.3)	11 (24.4)	45 (100)
Unconscious	N (%)	42 (89.4)	2 (4.3)	3 (6.4)	47 (100)
Performance goal-orientation					
Conscious	N (%)	13 (26.5)	30 (61.2)	6 (12.2)	49 (100)
Unconscious	N (%)	2 (4.4)	39 (86.7)	4 (8.9)	45 (100)
Reliability goal-orientation					
Conscious	N (%)	4 (9.3)	5 (11.6)	34 (79.1)	43 (100)
Unconscious	N (%)	2 (4.5)	3 (6.8)	39 (88.6)	44 (100)
Control	N (%)	16 (33.4)	16 (33.4)	15 (31.9)	47 (100)

5. General Discussion

5.1. Research Summary

Goal orientation's instruments was approached in view

of learning, avoidance, and improvement (VandeWalle, 1997; Pintrich, 2000). Moreover, goal orientation is applied to consumers' product preferences or choices (Chernev, 2004; Hassenzahl, Schöbel & Trautmann, 2008; Sett, 2014). Chernev (2004) involved self-regulation theory into goal-attribute compatibility hypothesis and concluded that outcomes of a goal consistent with self-regulation tend to

be more weighted. However, previous researches had explored only consumers' goal orientation under the circumstance of consciousness; that is, none of them reported whether consumers' goal orientation would show choice difference between goal-conscious and -unconscious condition.

The present research explored consumers' choice differences between the conscious and the unconscious condition when the product attribute is compatible with consumers' goal orientation.

As shown in <Table 4>, compared with consumers under the conscious condition, those under unconscious condition showed a higher choice consistency (except reliability product) with their goal-orientation, that is, conscious consumers are more likely to behave in view of other competing goals. As we discussed before in theoretical background, consumers can have several goals at same time, and they may hesitate at making the final decision (Fishbach & Dhar 2005). With those explicit motivations, consumers can have a conscious evaluation about assessing product attribute to satisfy some goal (Keeney & Raiffa, 1993; Liberman & Chaiken, 1991; Miller & Tesser, 1986). For example, individuals want to have delicious food for lunch, but he also has another goal of eating safety. Then a restaurant with more safety and less delicious food would be a better choice.

However, for unconscious consumers, they do not even know they have an exact goal, wherein they can have only a matching process between the active goal and the attribute of product (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Moore, Ferguson & Chartrand, 2011), what's more, as stated in previous research, unconscious goal pursuit cannot activate any other goal that compete with the focal goal (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003; Chartrand, Huber & Tanner, 2008). That is, goal conflict only occurs in conscious condition but not in unconscious condition. As a result, unconscious consumers can easily identify the choices that are consistent with their goal-orientation.

But, when it comes to reliability attribute products, there is no significant difference in the choice for the reliability products between conscious and unconscious consumers. That is, goal conflict seems to not exist in conscious consumers' choice based on reliability attributes. Based on this results, it's easy to understand why both conscious and unconscious consumers choose reliability attribute products rather than those with hedonic or performance products.

5.1. Implications and limitations

Past studies about consumers' choice tendency under different choice goal orientation types had not given much attention to the choice differences between the conscious goal pursuit condition and the unconscious goal pursuit

condition. This article analyzed the effects of goal orientation type on consumers' choice tendency in conscious goal pursuit condition and unconscious goal pursuit condition respectively. The different choice tendency found in this research will contribute to the advancement of goal orientation theory.

There could also be many managerial implications. Based on our study, we know the effects of goal orientations on consumers' choice tendency become different between the conscious and the unconscious goal orientation. When consumers are aware of their goal orientation, the goal conflict effects on how they will behave in the future there could be. Therefore, first, marketers of 'under doing' should try to utilize the effect of goal conflict by developing and delivering the product attributes different from those of 'top dog'. Second, the 'top dog' marketers should make efforts for their customers to sense the environment of inducing their goal orientation unconsciously to avoid the conflicts. Third, brand marketers should always pay attention to their choice tendency based on reliability prevention goal orientation. Consumers are likely to put reliability in the first place when making choice, regardless of whether they are aware of their goal orientation or not. Therefore, the marketers should link reliability attribute to their product whenever their customers make choice decision.

Even there are theoretical and managerial implications like the above from this study, some limitations there are also. First, conscious awareness is not always together with deliberation characterized as the consideration of options over a certain decision time (Putsis & Srinivasan, 1994). There could be a deliberation with little or minimal awareness through which mental control and effort might be lacked (Fishbach, Friedman, & Kruglanski, 2003). And every consciously accessible goal orientation is not controllable (Wegner 1994). Therefore, it is necessary that the consciousness of goal orientation is to be more reviewed in the respect of its controllability. Second, the conscious can be dissociated from top-down attention (Koch & Tsuchiya, 2007). The logic of priming research should consider such dissociation based on the differences between perception and conscious awareness (Merikle et al., 2001). Future research is necessary to explore perceptual differences between the conscious and the unconscious. Third, intrusive casual thoughts which could take place at the time of making decision might lead consumers to either conscious or unconscious contents different from each other. The process of the casual thoughts' effects on the content differences could be experienced as uncontrollable (Whitmer & Banich, 2007; Huang & Bargh, 2014). The uncontrollable process should be explored in future research. Fourth, goal-directed behavior can be triggered in a bottom-up way, wherein specific aspects of the

environment exposed to consumers can be sensed either consciously or unconsciously (Berger, Meredith, & Wheeler, 2008). And other features such as rewards (Hwang & Jung, 2018), social media exposing sensory attributes to consumers (Hooda & Ankur, 2018) and lay theory characterizing their traits (Choi, Wang, & Chen, 2018) could effect on the goal-directed behavior. When behaviors are taken place in the bottom-up way, the other variables can be taken into account.

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