

“Mixed Indulgences: Consumer Perceptions and Choice”

Mixed indulgences are mixtures that claim to simultaneously satisfy consumers' hedonic *and* utilitarian goals. Current research considers hedonic and utilitarian as either/or options in which pleasure and guilt are positively correlated. In contrast, this research shows that consumers perceive hedonic and utilitarian as independent constructs, further, they can de-link pleasure and guilt. Pleasantness and sin form two separate and simultaneous dimensions of the hedonic construct. This de-linking has implications for mixed indulgences which may be perceived to be equally pleasant though less sinful than pure indulgences. Despite this perception, mixed indulgences are *less* likely to be chosen relative to pure indulgences. A co-activation and arousal explanation is proposed. Pleasantness and sin are co-activated in indulgence, which elicits arousal. This arousal is desirable in the context of indulgence – consequently removing sin from a pure indulgence reduces the co-activation and arousal, and leads to lower choice for the mixed indulgence.