CONCEPTUALIZATION OF INCORPORATING SUBJECTIVE TASTE PREFERENCE, SUBJECTIVE PSYCHOMETRIC CONSTRUCTS, AND OBJECTIVE ALTERNATIVE ATTRIBUTES INTO CONSUMER CHOICE BEHAVIOR MODELS

YU-CHIN CHEN
Kao-Yuan University, Taiwan, ROC

Consumer choice behavior models have been extensively used to analyze individuals' choice behavior in a variety of fields such as marketing, economics, and transportation. Previous consumer behavior studies have been based on the assumption that consumer choice decisions depend on objective alternative attributes. However, it is not accurate to limit description of consumer subjective behavior to discrimination between good and bad objective alternative attributes. There are two other important factors, subjective taste preference and psychometric constructs, which should be considered as well.

Previously, many researchers have studied objective alternative attributes, subjective taste preference and psychometric constructs separately. Because a framework of integrated models had not been developed, these factors have been incorporated in very few studies. However, choice behavior is more accurately described and forecast by considering these factors, rather than just the one factor (McFadden, 1986).

In this article, a framework of an integrated model is described, composed of objective alternative attributes, subjective taste preference, and psychometric constructs (see Figure 1). This framework is constructed as follows: Subjective taste preference can be treated as unobserved individual heterogeneity in the

Yu-Chin Chen, Assistant Professor, Department of Information Management, Kao-Yuan University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, ROC.

Please address correspondence and reprint requests to: Yu-Chin Chen, Assistant Professor, Department of Information Management, Kao-Yuan University, No. 1821, Jhongshan Rd., Lujhu Township, Kaohsiung County 821, Taiwan, ROC. Phone: +886-7-6077777 ext 2412; Email: **ycchen@cc.kyu.edu.tw**

choice process (Ben-Akiva, Bolduc, & Bradley, 1993); psychometric constructs, such as consumer perceptions and attitudes, can be treated as latent variables of factor analysis or structural equation models (Muthen, 1984), because such latent variable models have considerable potential ability to combine together choice behavior and psychometric indicators; objective alternative attributes can be dealt with by economic utility in discrete choice models, which are derived from probability forms of chosen alternatives under an assumption of utility-maximizing behavior by the consumer.
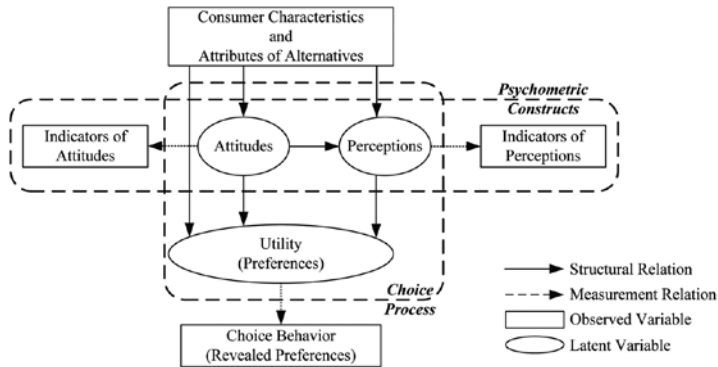

Figure 1. Framework of Integrated Choice Behavior Model.

The proposed integrated model has considerable potential for use in marketing applications because of its ability to combine market choice data and psychometric data into unified descriptions of behavior and market forecasts. It is evident that consumer behavior is complicated. The development of this model has been an attempt to improve the behavioral representation of previous models by integrating methods that capture unobserved heterogeneity in the choice process, and that explicitly model behavioral factors such as perceptions and attitudes. Although this framework may not be the only method for integrating these factors and more investigation is required, it is an excellent starting point for meaningful exploration of consumer behavior.

Keywords: consumer choice behavior model, objective alternative attribute, consumer attitudes, subjective taste preference.

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