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Article

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Ethical Consumption in the Digital Age: Analyzing Benefit Types, Temporal Distance, and Normative Factors for Gen Z

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates which message appeals more effectively induce consumers' ethical consumption by using combinations of self- or other-benefit appeals with future or present benefits and determines whether priming personal norms or social norms influences the effect.

Design/methodology/approach: To test the theoretically derived priori hypotheses concerning the role of benefit, temporal distance, norms, and ethical consumption message, this research presented three experiments (two-Way ANOVA). The first test showed no difference in ethical consumption between the self- and other-benefit appeal types. The second experiment tested the hypothesis that self-benefit and other-benefit appeals are more effective for present and future benefits, respectively. The final experiment assessed whether self-benefit and other-benefit appeals primed with personal and social norms, respectively, would be more effective.

Findings: Our results suggest that the appeal approach should be combined with either social or personal norms when the benefit is received to create more effective marketing messages when advertising ethical goods.

Research limitations/implications: Owing to the growing trend in ethical consumption, we are becoming more concerned about animal welfare and seeking ethical meat options.

Originality/value: This study promotes environmental sustainability, demonstrating that Method Products manufactures goods utilizing eco-friendly materials.

Keywords: Ethical consumption, Cultural difference, Social norms, Temporal distance

I. Introduction

Over the past few decades, there has been an increasing focus on not only making products more affordable but also ensuring they are ethically produced. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, coupled with environmental concerns (e.g., global warming),

scholars have highlighted the importance of ethical consumption. Retailers have increasingly adopted ethical strategies to enhance their reputation, differentiate themselves, and achieve economic goals (Nicholls, 2002). Examples of these strategies include labeling products as 'ethical' and offering opportunities for consumers to donate while making purchases. Consequently, numerous companies have claimed their products are ethical and expressed an interest in sustainability. The rise of consumer interest in ethical consumption has also been observed, with

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growing awareness of social responsibility and a tendency towards more ethical consumption patterns (Bray et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2015). Defined as consumer behavior influenced by ethical criteria, ethical consumption concerns both the individual and others; for example, "societal and animal welfare, as well as environmental concerns (Crane, 2001; Harrison et al., 2005, p. 2). " The increase in consumer interest in ethical consumption requires changes to environmental marketing messages.

For example, in South Korea, owing to the growing trend in ethical consumption, consumers are becoming more concerned about animal welfare and seeking ethical meat options. From the early 1990s to 2017, meat consumption in South Korea increased by 162%, with poultry consumption increasing by 155% compared to the 1991 average, which was more than double that of Organization for Economic Development (OECD) countries during the same period (OECD, 2018). Skyrocketing poultry consumption has led to an exponential increase in chicken food products, particularly spicy fried chicken served at restaurants with beer. While the number of chicken restaurants increased modestly from 22,529 in 2013 to 27,667 in 2020 (a 23% increase), sales grew substantially by approximately \$4.2 billion, representing a 121% increase compared to sales in 2013 (KOSIS, 2019; KOSAT, 2022). With the rise in demand for animal food sources, farmers in Korea need to raise more livestock, particularly for poultry and egg operations. However, due to high land prices and the desire to maximize profits, most poultry is raised in crowded conditions that contribute to the rapid spread of infectious diseases, such as avian influenza (AI).

To address this issue, consumers must share the social responsibility of supporting ethically raised livestock through ethical consumption. The extant research in the fields of interpersonal, environmental, and social communication aims to determine which messages are more effective in inducing consumer social responsibility and ethical consumption. To date, most studies investigating appeal type (e.g., self vs. other-benefit) have been conducted in the context of generating support for charities (e.g., White &

Peloza, 2009; Jin et al., 2021) and environmentally friendly consumption or ethical consumption behaviors (e.g., Green and Peloza, 2014; Kim et al., 2021). However, the conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the advertisement appeal type in encouraging ethical consumption are contradictory. For instance, the existing literature on ethical consumption presents contrasting findings on the effectiveness of self-benefit and other-benefit appeals. Some studies have demonstrated that self-benefit appeals are more effective in promoting ethical consumption (Cozzio et al., 2022; Ryoo et al., 2020; Yu & Han, 2021), whereas others have reported that other-benefit appeals yield greater success in increasing ethical consumption (Tan et al., 2022; Ekebas-Turedi et al., 2021). Moreover, the relationship between various types of benefit appeals and moderating factors, such as temporal distance and norms in ethical consumption, remains inadequately explored and understood. This presents an opportunity for further investigation into the nuances of benefit appeals and their efficacy in the context of ethical consumption. Therefore, we anticipate that our study will contribute to understanding the factors influencing consumers' decisions to engage in ethical consumption, bridging the gap between the efficacy of advertising strategies based on different appeals and ethical consumption behavior.

Our study was conducted in South Korea, which ranks in the highest risk category for future AI outbreaks (Chen et al., 2022). Given these concerns, Korean companies are becoming more committed to manufacturing environmentally friendly materials or producing food made from ethically raised livestock. For example, *Jadam Chicken*, a famous chicken franchise brand in South Korea, emphasizes that it only uses animal welfare-certified chicken in advertisements. However, given the lack of research on which advertisement appeal type is more effective in encouraging ethical consumption, this study aims to determine which messages are more effective at inducing consumer social responsibility and ethical consumption in South Korea (Fraser, 2019).

We examine our hypotheses concerning the effectiveness of advertising appeal types in generating

ethical consumption using three laboratory experiments. First, we show which type of message (self-benefit vs. other-benefit) is more effective in increasing ethical consumption intentions (Study 1). Next, two experiments are conducted to examine the effects of benefit appeal type (self-benefit vs. other-benefit) on ethical consumption as well as the moderating roles of temporal distance (present vs. future) (Study 2). Finally, we explore the impact of norms (personal versus social) on ethical consumption (Study 3). This study is conducted in Korea to provide insights into appeal types in similar countries. Furthermore, it aims to demonstrate the limitations of applying the findings of appeal type research conducted in North America and Europe to the Korean context.

II. Literature Review

A. Ethical Consumption

One of the first definitions of ethical consumption (then referred to as "consumer social responsibility") was provided by Webster in 1975, who defined it as a customer who considers the public consequences of his/her private consumption or attempts to use his/her purchasing power to bring about social change (Webster, 1975). This definition was refined in 1995 as a consumer who purchases products or services with a positive (or less negative) impact on the environment or uses their purchasing power to express social concerns (Roberts, 1995). According to definitions of ethical consumption, many scholars have proposed ethical consumption as a conscious and deliberate choice to make certain consumption choices due to personal and moral beliefs (Crane & Matten, 2004, p. 290). Others characterize it as "conscientious consumption that takes into account health, society, and natural environment based on personal and moral beliefs" (Oh & Yoon, 2014, p. 279).

When faced with the dual but often conflicting desire to make both ethical and economic purchases, most buyers elect to purchase more economical products,

even if they are produced unethically. However, perhaps all consumers need is a nudge to encourage them to buy an ethical, albeit more expensive, product, which would, in turn, push producers to supply more ethically produced goods (Irwin, 2015). Numerous studies have focused on the attitude-behavior gaps in consumer purchase behavior toward companies that act unethically (Carranza et al., 2022; Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000; Folkes & Kamins, 1999; Roberts, 1996), particularly between ethical purchase intention and actual behavior (Kim & Lee, 2023; Park & Lin, 2020; Bray et al., 2011; Carrington, et al., 2010, 2014). For instance, the discrepancy between attitudes and behaviors in ethical consumption is prominently displayed among members of Generation Z. This cohort is particularly engaged in matters of environmental sustainability and often incorporates such concerns into their daily lives (Dabija & Bejan, 2017; Saarelainen, 2021). Despite their keen interest in environmentally friendly brands (Schroth, 2019), a notable gap persists between their attitudes and actions, with Generation Z exhibiting a propensity to express ecological concern rather than demonstrate it through behavior (Naderi & Steenburg, 2018).

Previous studies investigating the factors that influence ethical consumption found that ethical responsibility, self-identification, and altruism are positively associated with consumers' attitudes toward ethical consumption and ethical consumption intention (Oh & Yoon, 2014). In addition, psychosocial variables such as subjective norms, self-identity (Robinson & Smith, 2002), and socially accepted norms around environmental values (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006) were determined to be predictors of purchase intention for sustainable products. Thus, it is necessary to investigate which advertising messages (benefit appeal type and temporal distance), as well as norm type, are more effective at inducing consumer social responsibility and ethical consumption (Fraser, 2019).

B. Self-Benefit vs. Other-Benefit Appeals

The extant literature has investigated the effectiveness

of two common types of message appeals for encouraging prosocial behaviors in consumers: charitable donations and ethical consumption (e.g., Green & Peloza, 2014; Jäger & Weber, 2020; Kim et al., 2021; Ryoo et al., 2020; White & Peloza, 2009). Some researchers have found that self-benefit appeals can effectively generate greater ethical purchase intentions (Ryoo et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2015; Yu & Han, 2021). For example, when consumers feel socially excluded, self-benefit appeals are more effective in encouraging purchase intentions for eco-friendly products than other-benefit appeals (Yu & Han, 2021). Moreover, for highly materialistic consumers, self-benefit appeals are more successful in evoking positive attitudes and behaviors toward ethical products and campaigns (Ryoo et al., 2020). Holmes, Miller, and Lerner (2002) showed that consumers tend to engage in more prosocial behaviors when their assistance is followed by a self-benefit in the form of a product, even if it holds little appeal for them.

Several studies on generating support for donations have found that other-benefit appeals are more effective than self-benefit appeals (Baek et al., 2019; Fisher et al., 2008). For example, Baek et al. (2019) argued that other-benefit appeals are more effective than self-benefit appeals in stimulating charitable donations. In green advertising, other-benefit appeals are more effective for consumers who perceive that their actions can positively affect environmental issues. In contrast, self-benefit appeals are more effective for those who believe that their actions may not significantly affect environmental issues (Ekebas-Turedi et al., 2021). Other-benefit appeals are particularly useful in influencing prosocial activities, which can lead to greater ethical purchase intentions (Jäger & Weber, 2020; Peattie & Crane, 2005). Webb et al. (2008) assert that ethical consumption "is socially oriented and not self-centered."

Although previous studies have investigated which appeal types are more effective for prosocial behaviors, such as encouraging environmentally friendly or ethical consumption behaviors (e.g., Green & Peloza, 2014), the findings on the efficacy of these message appeals are inconsistent. Thus, we propose the following

research question:

RQ: Which appeal type (self- vs. other-benefit) is more effective in generating ethical consumption behaviors?

The inconsistent results of previous studies could be explained by moderating variables such as temporal distance (Jäger & Weber, 2020; Yang et al., 2015; Youn & Kim, 2016) and norms (Green & Peloza, 2014; White & Peloza, 2009), which impact the effectiveness of self- and other-benefit appeals (e.g., Baek et al., 2019; White & Peloza, 2009). Accordingly, this study focused on the moderating roles of temporal distance and norms.

C. Interaction between Benefit Type and Temporal Distance

Construal level theory proposes that things psychologically closest to us have a low-level, more concrete mental construal, whereas things that are further away from us are thought of as more abstract, high-level construals (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Studies have revealed that other-benefit and abstract appeals are more effective in generating green purchase intention than concrete appeals (Jäger & Weber, 2020; Yang et al., 2015); however, there appears to be no difference or a smaller effect between abstract and concrete appeals in self-benefit messages (Yang et al., 2015).

Thus, this study aims to demonstrate that messages that match the temporal distance with the appeal type will result in higher ethical consumption intention (Fraser, 2019). By definition, "others" are further from us psychologically than the "self," and message appeals that relate to a more distant future are psychologically further away from us than messages that emphasize receiving benefits in the present (Fraser, 2019). Since moral criteria are more likely to guide people's judgments of temporally distant rather than temporally close behaviors (Trope & Liberman, 2010), and because ethical purchases are

moral activities (Brinkmann, 2004), we frame ethical purchases more abstractly to emphasize that the benefits that will be received in the distant future are well aligned with the moral criteria that guide ethical purchases. Additionally, as the research takes place in Korea, a collectivist society where the individual is less important than the group (Travaglino & Moon, 2020), we expect that "other-benefit" messages will be better aligned with the Korean culture of our respondents than the "self-benefit" messages.

In addition, since a more concrete self-construal (e.g., granting an immediate benefit) is closer in terms of psychological distance, a self-benefit appeal results in a higher intention to consume ethically. In our research, we predict that ethically correct decisions will generally be guided by high-level, abstract construals (e.g., eating healthily or saving the planet) that influence purchases in the distant future. However, when it comes to decisions made in the near future, low-level construals (e.g., immediate benefits for the purchaser) will more significantly influence purchase decisions. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H₁:** Other (vs. self) benefits are more effective in generating ethical consumption behavior when the health benefit is anticipated to be received in the future (vs. present) than in the present (vs. future).

D. Interaction between Benefit Type and Personal vs. Social Norms

Norms can be divided into two types. The first is social norms, which are defined as positive or negative social sanctioning, such as social rewards from reference groups (e.g., family or friends) (Andorfer & Liebe, 2013). The other is personal norms, which are self-expectations regarding behavior backed by the anticipation of self-enhancement or self-deprecation (Schwartz & Fleishman, 1978). Personal norms are behavioral rules that induce feelings of moral obligation, such as anxiety and guilt, to perform

the behavior in question (Elster, 1989; Schwartz, 1977), and social norms are standards of behavior that are shared by other people and partly sustained by their approval and disapproval (Elster, 1989).

Impression management theory can explain ethical consumption in a collectivist society such as South Korea because individuals in such societies often place a high value on maintaining their reputation and image within the group (Goffman, 1959). Many of the ways people engage in impression management occur automatically, and people may not even be aware that they are doing it because they are overlearned, habitual, and unconscious (Fraser, 2019; Hogan, 1982; Hogan & Cheek, 1985; Schlenker, 1980). There are two ways in which the desire to maintain a positive image motivates individuals. First, in terms of social norms, because people try to control the impressions others form about them, they act in ways that seek to obtain others' approval (e.g., socially accepted norms around environmental values). Second, in terms of personal norms, because people may engage in behaviors to form and maintain their self-identity or desired self-concept, they control their behavior to gain and preserve their self-approval. Applying impression management theory to this study, we expect that two aspects (impression control and social norms) will generate greater ethical consumption intentions.

A review of the literature reveals that other-benefit appeals are more effective in increasing the intention to donate to individuals with strong impression management needs. When an individual possesses a heightened motivation to manage their impression, social motivation is likely to prevail as the primary driver of their consumption behavior (Zhang et al., 2019). Simultaneously, self-benefit appeals work better for those with weak impression management needs (Kim, 2014; White & Peloza, 2009). In addition, when individuals are influenced by social norms (i.e., the collective level of self), their likelihood of making more ethical choices increases (Szmigin et al., 2009), and they engage in more environmentally friendly behaviors (Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2011).

As stated previously, because people can engage in impression management subconsciously, we expect

that via personal priming, people will adjust their behavior to maintain their self-identification or self-concept. Ryoo et al. (2020) found that highly materialistic consumers were more likely to engage in ethical consumption practices when self-benefit appeals were activated, as opposed to other-benefit appeals. Since personal norms are derived from an individual's values, the outcomes resulting from these norms are contingent upon the individual's value system (Jung et al., 2016; Stern, 2000). Consequently, it is anticipated that self-benefit appeals will stimulate an individual's values, particularly when their personal norms are activated, thereby promoting ethical behavior.

Likewise, by employing social norm priming, we predict that people will subconsciously adjust their behavior to attempt to control others' impressions of them. Based on this, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H₂:** Self (vs. other)-benefit appeals are more effective in generating ethical consumption behavior when personal (vs. social) norms are activated than when social (vs. personal) norms are activated.

III. Methods

Study 1 tested whether ethical consumption differs between self- and other-benefit message types regardless of the temporal distance. Study 2 tested Hypothesis 1, in which a self-benefit appeal matched a health benefit to be received in the present vs. an other-benefit appeal matching a health benefit to be received in the future. Study 3 tests Hypothesis 2, in which we anticipate that consumers will exhibit a more positive purchase intention in response to other- and self-benefit appeals when the desire for social and personal norms is activated. The message statements of all experiments in this study are referred to in the Appendix.

A. Stimuli

Free-range eggs were chosen as the study object because they can have both a utilitarian appeal, that is, "They are good for me because they are healthier than eggs produced in cramped, factory-style henhouses," and a social identity appeal, that is, people purchase free-range eggs to alert others that they are part of the group of people concerned about the ethical treatment of animals (Bray & Ankeny, 2017). Because of their dual appeal, they were deemed suitable for this study: self-benefit appeals will be attractive to those with utilitarian attitudes and other-benefit appeals will be persuasive to those with social identity attitudes (Shavitt, 1990). We used a health message promoting the benefits received from eating free-range eggs because it is a common theme in advertising communications—to promote health and prevent health problems—and can have significant and measurable effects on consumers (Pechmann & Catlin, 2016). Additionally, health messages are commonly used in advertising schemes for free-range eggs.

For the advertisement, a professional graphic artist with expertise in the field of advertising created a cartoon-type graphic showing a happy chicken on a green farm field standing near a nest of eggs. The messages that accompany the advertisements vary according to the respective hypothesis. For the self-benefit appeal, the copy mentioned twice that the viewer would gain a health benefit from consuming free-range eggs, while the other-benefit appeal mentioned twice that "the community and the environment" would benefit from consuming free-range eggs. For the present case of temporal distance, the copy mentioned twice that the benefit would be received immediately, and for the future case of temporal distance, the copy mentioned twice that the health benefit would be received in the "future." All other conditions were identical (Fraser, 2019).

B. Manipulation Check

For the manipulation check (approved by the

Institutional Review Board), 30 subjects were shown one of two versions of an advertisement, with the copy stating that the benefit is for themselves (vs. community) with the temporal distance, present (vs. future). After viewing the advertisement, participants evaluated the self- and other-benefit appeals (Is this message for me? Is this for the community?) on a 7-point Likert scale. When exposed to the "self-benefit" message, the mean difference between the self and other benefits was (4.70 vs. 2.30), $t(29) = 9.12$, $p < .01$; and when exposed to the "other-benefit" message, the mean difference between the other- and self-benefits was (5.50 vs. 1.50), $t(29) = 17.49$, $p < .01$. Participants also judged the temporal distance to be significantly different. When exposed to the "present" message, the mean difference between the present and future was (4.60 vs. 2.40), $t(29) = 11.87$, $p < .01$, and when exposed to the "future" message, the mean difference between the present and future was (5.63 vs. 1.37), $t(29) = 21.27$, $p < .01$. Thus, the manipulations of the benefit type and temporal distance were successful.

C. Study 1

1. Experimental design and procedure

In Study 1, a convenience sample of 60 university students at a Korean university participated and were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: self-benefit or other-benefit. In the primary study, each participant viewing one of two distinct advertisements. The students were invited by a professor to participate in the survey, and as an incentive, bonus points were awarded as compensation for their involvement. First, they were asked to spend at least 30 seconds viewing the advertisement and reading its message. They were then asked to answer three questions about ethical consumption (e.g., When purchasing eggs, I will choose the product that contributes the least to environmental damage) on a 7-point Likert scale based on Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher's (2016) ethically minded consumer behavior scale.

2. Results and discussion

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between benefit type and ethical consumption in Study 1. The result was not significant, $F(1, 58) = .05$, $p = .83$, $\eta^2 = .001$ ($M(\text{self- vs. other-benefit}) = M(4.47 \text{ vs. } 4.53)$) (see Table 1).

Given that Korea is a collective society in which the group is more important than the individual, an other-benefit appeal should be better suited for generating support for ethical consumption. In this setting, individuals make purchasing decisions based on the desire to present themselves as socially responsible and environmentally conscious to others within the group. Although the other-benefit effect was slightly higher than that of the self-benefit, the effect was smaller than expected. This might be because the respondents were of university age, Generation Z: research has shown that younger people in collectivist societies have more individualistic tendencies than older people (Mishra, 1994; Trommsdorff et al., 2004; Yang & Lie, 2020). Therefore, further consideration is needed to determine whether emphasizing self- or other-benefit is more effective in generating ethical consumption.

D. Study 2

1. Experimental design and procedure

In Study 2, a convenience sample of 120 university students at a Korean university was randomly assigned to one of the four conditions in a 2 (appeal type: self-benefit vs. other-benefit) \times 2 (temporal distance:

Table 1. Study 1 ethical consumption between benefit type

Benefit	Mean	SD	t(118)
Self	4.47	1.18	.22
Other	4.53	1.14	
F (1, 58) = .05 p=.83, η^2 = .001			

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

present vs. future) between-subjects design. The students were invited by a professor to participate in the survey, and as an incentive, bonus points were awarded as compensation for their involvement. Each participant viewed one of the four advertisements. First, participants were instructed to spend at least 30 seconds viewing the advertisement and reading its message. They were then asked to answer three questions about ethical consumption (e.g., when purchasing eggs, I will choose the product that contributes the least to environmental damage) on a 7-point Likert scale based on Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher's (2016) ethically minded consumer behavior scale (Cronbach's $\alpha=.71$).

2. Results and discussion

For Study 2, we conducted a 2×2 between-subjects ANOVA with ethical consumption average as the dependent variable and benefit type (self-benefit/other-benefit) and temporal distance (present/future) as the independent variables. The results indicated a marginally significant main effect for benefit type, $F_{benefit}(1,116) = 3.35, p = .07, \eta^2 = .03$; a non-significant effect for temporal distance, $F_{time}(1,116) = 2.18, p = .14, \eta^2 = .02$; and a marginally significant benefit type by the temporal distance interaction, $F_{int}(1,116) = 3.57, p = .06, \eta^2 = .03$. Because the interaction between benefit types and temporal distance was significant, we additionally conducted separate contrast analyses to determine the differences between "temporal distance" (present vs. future) and self and others, respectively. To control for Type 1 errors across the two simple main effects, we set the alpha

for each at .025. The results indicated no significant difference between the temporal distance and self, $F(1, 116) = .09, p = .77$. However, there was a significant difference between the temporal distance and others, $F(1, 116) = 5.67, p = .02$ (see Table 2 or the profile plot in Figure 1 for more details). Thus, H1 is partially supported.

As anticipated, other-benefit appeals were more effective in generating ethical consumption behavior than self-benefit appeals when participants expected to receive health benefits in the future. This was expected because "others" are thought of in a high-level construal, which matches a health benefit (Fraser, 2019). However, there was no difference in self- and other-benefit appeals in generating ethical consumption behavior when health benefits were expected immediately (in the present). This could be explained by two factors. First, a message appealing to the "self" should be a low-level construal, but "health" may be thought of as a high-level construal; thus, the messages do

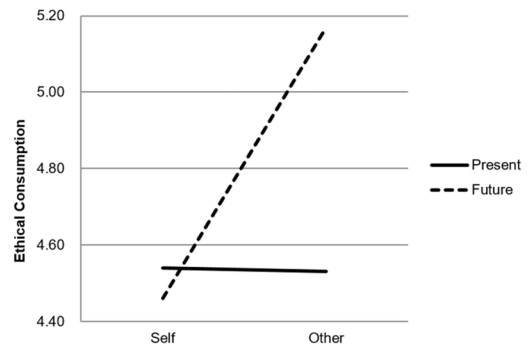


Figure 1. Benefit type x temporal distance

Table 2. Study 2 ethical consumption by benefit types (self-vs. other-benefit) x temporal distance (present vs. future)

		Temporal distance		Simple main effect	
		Present	Future	Contrast	F-value
Benefit types	Self	4.54	4.46	M (4.54-4.46)=.08	F(1,116) =.09
	Other	4.53	5.17	M (4.53-5.17)=-.64	F(1, 116)= 5.67**
$F_{benefit}(1,116) = 3.35^*, p = .07, \eta^2 = .03$		$F_{time}(1,116) = 2.18, p = .14, \eta^2 = .02$		$F_{int}(1, 116) = 3.57^*, p = .06, \eta^2 = .03$	

***p<.001, ** p<.05, *p<.1

not support each other (Fujita et al., 2006; MacGregor et al., 2014). In addition, although Day and Bartels (2004) found that research participants rated near events as more similar than distant future events, a health benefit to be received now and a health benefit to be received in the future are generally thought to be similar (Fraser, 2019). Regardless of when the benefit is to be received, there is no difference in the present or future benefit condition for self-benefit.

E. Study 3

Study 3 tests Hypothesis 2, which postulates that consumers will exhibit a more positive purchase intention in response to other- and self-benefit appeals when the desire for social and personal norms is activated. For norms to motivate direct action, they must first be activated. People who are dispositionally or temporally focused on normative considerations are more likely to act in norm-consistent ways (Cialdini et al., 1991).

Personal and social norms were activated through priming. Regardless of the processing goals during priming, it is possible to prime a norm by presenting adjectives to subjects while they are performing a task (De Cremer & van Dijk, 2008; Higgins & Bargh, 1987). The norm could be activated even when priming stimuli were presented subliminally during the task and the subjects were unaware of them (Bargh & Pietromonaco, 1982; Bargh & Pratto, 1986). When a personal norm is activated, a self-benefit appeal should be more effective than an other-benefit appeal because the subject is primed to think about what is best for themselves, not what is best for others. On the other hand, when the subject is primed for social norms, other-benefit appeals are more effective than self-benefit appeals because they think about "others" more than themselves (Fraser, 2019).

1. *Experimental design and procedure*

Following previous research that used priming (De

Cremer & Van Dijk, 2008; Hanel, 2010), the personal norm-primed group was instructed to imagine living in a society that valued the "group" over the "individual," but in which they were personally very independent; that is, they do what they think is right regardless of what the group thinks. They may purchase popular (or unpopular) products but do not care whether they are popular (or unpopular). Instead, their purchase decisions are based on what they personally believe is the best option. The study participants were then asked to write about the purchase they had made because, in their minds, it was the best choice. The social norm-primed group imagined being part of a group whose opinions were strongly valued. This group believes that protecting the environment is essential and tries to purchase "green" products that are ethically made, i.e., products designed and developed without animal testing. Participants in this group were then instructed to write about a purchase they thought would gain the group's approval.

At the beginning of the experiment, a convenience sample of 120 university students at a Korean university was primed with personal or social norms. The students were invited by a professor to participate in the survey, and as an incentive, bonus points were awarded as compensation for their involvement. Each participant viewed one of the two advertisements, both of which used the same background image of a happy hen standing near a nest of eggs in a field. However, the number of advertisements varied according to the examined conditions. In the self-benefit appeal, the copy twice mentioned the health benefit that the viewer would receive from consuming free-range eggs, while the other-benefit appeal twice mentioned that "the community and the environment" would benefit from consuming free-range eggs. Participants were asked to spend at least 30s looking at the advertisement and reading the copy, after which they answered three questions on a 7-point Likert scale about ethical consumption based on Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher's (2016) ethically minded consumer behavior scale.

Table 3. Study 3 ethical consumption by benefit types (self-vs. other-benefit) x norm (personal vs. social)

		Norm		Simple main effect	
		Personal	Social	Contrast	F-value
Benefit types	Self	5.32	4.88	.44	F(1,116) = 2.57
	Other	4.54	5.14	-.60	F(1, 116) = 4.68**
$F_{benefit}(1,116) = 1.70$, $p = .20$, $r^2 = .01$		$F_{norm}(1,116) = .16$, $p = .70$, $r^2 = .01$		$F_{int}(1, 116) = 7.09^{***}$, $p = .009$, $r^2 = .06$	

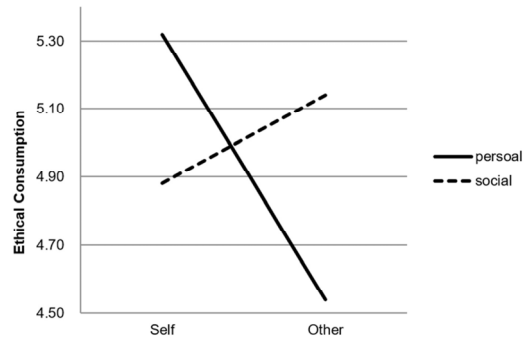
***p<.001, ** p<.05, *p<.1

2. Results and discussion

The results indicated that there were non-significant main effects for benefit type, $F_{benefit}(1,116) = 1.70$, $p = .20$, $r^2 < .01$; for priming received, $F_{norm}(1,116) = 0.16$, $p = .70$, $r^2 < .01$. However, there was a statistically significant interaction between the effects of benefit type and priming received $F_{int}(1, 116) = 7.09$, $p = .009$, partial $r^2 = .06$. There was a marginally significant difference between personal and social norms within the self-benefit, $F(1, 116) = 2.57$, $p = .11$, and there was also a significant difference for the other benefit $F(1, 116) = 4.68$, $p = .03$ (see Table 3 or the profile plot in Figure 2 for more details). Thus, H2 is supported.

The results of Study 3 showed that self-benefit appeals are more effective in generating ethical consumption behavior when personal norms are activated than when social norms are activated. However, other-benefit appeals are more effective in generating ethical consumption behavior when social norms are activated than when personal norms are activated (Fraser, 2019). That is, personal norm priming (making people think of the expectations they hold for themselves) supports self-benefit appeals and is more effective in generating ethical consumption behavior (Fraser, 2019). In contrast, social norm priming (making people think of the expectations that others have of themselves) supports other-benefit appeals and is more effective in generating ethical consumption behavior (Fraser, 2019).

These results are in line with those of previous studies that other-benefit appeals are more effective for individuals in a public accountability setting, whereas people are more likely to respond to self-

**Figure 2.** Benefit type x norms

benefit appeals in a private setting for environmentally friendly product advertising (Green & Peloza, 2014; White & Peloza, 2009). Moreover, when combined with public accountability, other-benefit appeals have a tendency to increase prosocial behaviors, such as decreasing meat consumption and getting flu shots (Pittman, 2020). This result can also be explained by impression management theory, which states that people try to control the impressions others form about them and act in ways that seek to gain others' approval. People often engage in behaviors to form and maintain their self-identity or desired self-concept and, therefore, will act in ways that will allow them to develop self-approval.

IV. Discussion

This study aimed to determine the conditions under which self-benefits are more effective than other

benefits (and vice versa) in increasing ethical purchase intention. Three laboratory experiments examined the effects of benefit appeal type (self-benefit vs. other-benefit) on ethical consumption (Study 1) as well as the moderating roles of temporal distance (present vs. future) (Study 2) and norms (personal vs. social) (Study 3).

Study 1 found no difference in ethical consumption between the self- and other-benefit appeals. Hofstede (1984) defined individualism as the relationship between the individual and the collective that prevails in a given society. People in highly individualistic societies think in terms of "I"—their identity is based on the individual and they have a self-orientation (Hofstede, 1984; Triandis, 1995). On the other hand, people in low-individualistic societies think in terms of "we,"—their identity is based on the social system and they have a collective orientation (Hofstede, 1984; Triandis, 1995). Korean society is characterized by a high degree of collective thinking (Hofstede Insights, 2018; Triandis, 1995). However, the lack of differences in ethical consumption between the self- and other-benefit appeals implies that younger people in collective societies have more individualistic tendencies. Therefore, further research is needed to investigate which benefit appeal is more effective in generating ethical consumption based on age differences.

Study 2 (H1) revealed that self-benefit and other-benefit appeals are more effective when the benefit received from the purchase is to be received in the present and future, respectively. Construal level theory, which explains how people think and act differently depending on psychological distance, claims that when there is little psychological distance, we think of things in low-level construals, focusing on the concrete details of an event, but when there is greater psychological distance, we think of things in high-level construals, focusing on the abstract and general aspects (Fraser, 2019). We predicted that because a self-benefit and a benefit to be received in the present are psychologically closer in distance than a benefit to be received in the future, a match between a self-benefit and a benefit to be received in the present would produce higher ethical purchase intentions

(Fraser, 2019). However, contrary to what we expected, for self-benefit, there was little difference if the benefit was to be received in the present vs. in the future, which match the findings of Jäger and Weber (2020) (Fraser, 2019). A possible explanation is that the stimulus—a health message—may be considered an abstract, high-level construal that better matches an other-benefit appeal. As anticipated, for other-benefit appeals, there was a significantly larger ethical purchase intention when the benefit was received in the future than in the present. This result was expected because an other-benefit message, which is a high-level construal, combined with a benefit received in the future, which is also a high-level construal, matches each other in terms of psychological distance, thus generating a higher ethical purchase intention (Fraser, 2019).

Study 3 (H2) found that self- and other-benefit appeals were more effective when matched with personal and social norm priming, respectively. When a personal norm is activated, the self-benefit appeal is more effective than the other-benefit appeal because the subject is primed to think about what is best for him/herself, not what is best for others. On the other hand, when the subject is primed for social norms, that is, thinking about "others and the reference group to which they belong," the other-benefit appeal was more effective because he/she was thinking about "others" more than he/she was thinking about him/herself.

A. Theoretical and practical implications

This study's results have several theoretical implications. First, although the extant literature has investigated the effects of benefit appeal types (self-benefit vs. other-benefit) in the context of environmentally friendly consumption or ethical consumption behaviors, little is known about the relationship between benefit appeal types and moderating variables (e.g., temporal distance and norms) in the context of ethical consumption. Given the contradictory results regarding the effects of benefit appeal types in previous research, this study theoretically contributes to extending the ethical consumption literature by investigating the interactions

between benefit appeal types (self-benefit vs. other-benefit) and moderating variables (temporal distance and norms). Second, this study applies theoretical frameworks to predict and explain the hypotheses: construal level theory (H1) and impression management theory (H2). Additionally, this study extends our understanding of the effects of message appeals on ethical consumption in the Korean context.

This study has several managerial implications for marketers and advertisers. Many companies are becoming more committed to protecting the environment. For instance, Patagonia Threads and Provisions encourages environmental sustainability, and Method Products manufacture products using environmentally friendly materials. In Korea, McDonald's advertising has been promoting local burgers featuring both a utilitarian appeal (locally sourced, eco-friendly patties made from pigs fed green tea) and a social appeal: "A taste of Korea discovered by McDonald's" (McDonald's, 2022). With the increased popularity of Korean culture and food, there could also be a corresponding increase in Korean-style chicken and beer and *chimaek*—a combination of the Korean word for fried chicken (*chi* from *chikin*) and beer (*maek* from *maekju*). The Korea Food Industry Development Association (KFIDA) has been actively trying to promote foreigners' consumption of chimaek since 2013, when Korea first held the annual "Daegu Chimaek Festival" in Daegu Metropolitan City, where tens of thousands of people gather to consume chicken and beer. Due to the increased poultry demand, farmers have had to increase production, often in less-than-ideal conditions (Shin, 2019). One benefit of ethically raised poultry is that farming practices and animal housing environments match the recommendations to help prevent the spread of AI, such as increased cage sizes and well-ventilated, dry conditions. Given the argument from Park (2018) that customers may tend to ethically consume more when they are affectively committed, marketers and advertisers could consider how to maximize the effectiveness of campaigns on ethical consumption using strategic message appeals, along with other factors that might improve customer satisfaction and trust, such as price fairness, green brand quality, and green

risk (Haryanto & Budiman, 2016). Although using self- and other-benefit appeals are common in advertising for green and ethical goods, the results of this research suggest that, rather than using random appeal types, using self or other benefits in specific combinations with when the benefit will be received and with personal or social norms can elicit higher purchase intentions. In particular, when using self-benefit appeals, benefits to be received in the present and future should result in similar purchase intentions. However, a future-oriented message will generate a higher ethical consumption intention when other-benefit appeals are employed. In addition, using personal or social norms in combination with self- or other-benefit appeals should support both types. For example, when using self-benefit appeals, priming personal norms should generate higher ethical consumption intentions, whereas when using other-benefit appeals, priming social norms should bring about higher ethical consumption intentions (Fraser, 2019).

B. Limitations

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, this research took place in South Korea, and as previous studies have shown, East Asians tend to conform to group norms more than Americans or Europeans (Kim & Markus, 1999). According to a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report on southeast Asia's growing meat demand, as income grows in the region, meat consumption and production also expand (Lee & Hansen, 2019). For example, the report projects that Thailand's poultry exports will increase by 59% over two decades (2018-2028) to reach 1.35 million tons. Thus, to better generalize the results of this study, it should be replicated with different groups that have a weaker tendency to conform to collective norms. Moreover, further research is needed to investigate cross-cultural differences and similarities in the acceptance of message appeals. Second, because the respondents belonged exclusively to Generation Z, the results may not be generalizable to the general

population. Therefore, follow-up studies should include a broader range of demographics (e.g., age and occupation) to verify the validity of these results. Finally, the message appealing to the "self" is presumed to be a low-level construal, but a message on "health" may be considered a high-level construal. Therefore, the messages do not support each other. Future research could employ a different message that is more concretely a low-level appeal (e.g., price or convenience) and a high-level appeal (e.g., community well-being). Moreover, given that purchasing products or services from social enterprises is usually regarded as ethical as well (Choi, 2021), future research might specifically consider the range and criteria of ethical consumption. In addition, Day and Bartels (2004) found that participants rated near events as more similar to distant future events. Therefore, a message appealing to the self should use a corresponding stimulus for low-level construals such as price or convenience.

In conclusion, given the increase in consumers' interest in ethical consumption, marketers and advertisers should create effective advertisements to promote ethical consumption. This study provides valuable findings that present strategies for promoting ethical consumption. Thus, we expect that our findings will provide insights into the creation of effective advertisements to enhance consumers' ethical consumption behaviors.

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Appendix

Message Statements of Experiments

Study 1: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance (Self x Near)

For the sake of your current health, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field! Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit your current health.

Study 1: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance (Self x Far)

For the sake of your future health, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field! Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit your future health.

Study 1: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance (Other x Near)

For the health of our community, which we are currently part of, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field! Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit the current health of our community, which we are a part of.

Study 1: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance (Other x Far)

For the future, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field for the health of our community, which we are part of together! Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit the future health of our community, which we are part of together.

Study 2: Benefit Type x Norm Type (Self x Personal)

Priming Personal Norms - You live in a society that values the group over the individual. However, you are personally very independent. You can do what you believe is right regardless of what the group thinks. You may choose to buy popular or trendy products, but you don't care about the fact that they are popular or trendy. Instead, you purchase those products because you believe they are the best choice for yourself.

For the sake of your health, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field! Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit your personal health.

Study 2: Benefit Type x Norm Type (Self x Social)

Priming Social Norms - You belong to a group of family and friends whom you value greatly. This group considers the environment to be highly important and strives to purchase only ethically made "eco-friendly" products.

For the sake of your health, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field! Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit your personal health.

Study 2: Benefit Type x Norm Type (Other x Personal)

Priming Personal Norms - You live in a society that values the group over the individual. However, you are personally very independent. You can do what you believe is right regardless of what the group thinks. You may choose to buy popular or trendy products, but you don't care about the fact that they are popular or trendy. Instead, you purchase those products because you believe they are the best choice for yourself.

For the health of our community, which we are part of together, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field! Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit the health of our community, which we are part of together.

Study 2: Benefit Type x Norm Type (Other x Social)

Priming Social Norms - You belong to a group of family and friends whom you value greatly. This group considers the environment to be highly important and strives to purchase only ethically made "eco-friendly" products.

For the health of our community, which we are part of together, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field! Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit the health of our community, which we are part of together.

Study 3: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance x Norm Type (Self x Near x Personal)

Priming Personal Norms - You live in a society that values the group over the individual. However, you are personally very independent. You can do what you believe is right regardless of what the group thinks. You may choose to buy popular or trendy products, but you don't care about the fact that they are popular or trendy. Instead, you purchase those products because you believe they are the best choice for yourself.

For the sake of your current health, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field!

Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit your current health.

Study 3: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance x Norm Type (Self x Far x Personal)

Priming Personal Norms - You live in a society that values the group over the individual. However, you are personally very independent. You can do what you believe is right regardless of what the group thinks. You may choose to buy popular or trendy products, but you don't care about the fact that they are popular or trendy. Instead, you purchase those products because you believe they are the best choice for yourself.

For the sake of your future health, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field!

Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit your future health.

Study 3: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance x Norm Type (Other x Near x Personal)

Priming Personal Norms - You live in a society that values the group over the individual. However, you are personally very independent. You can do what you believe is right regardless of what the group thinks. You may choose to buy popular or trendy products, but you don't care about the fact that they are popular or trendy. Instead, you purchase those products because you believe they are the best choice for yourself.

For the health of our community, which we are part of together, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field!

Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit the current health of our community, which we are part of together.

Study 3: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance x Norm Type (Other x Far x Personal)

Priming Personal Norms - You live in a society that values the group over the individual. However, you are personally very independent. You can do what you believe is right regardless of what the group thinks. You may choose to buy popular or trendy products, but you don't care about the fact that they are popular or trendy. Instead, you purchase those products because you believe they are the best choice for yourself.

For the sake of our future and the health of our community, which we are part of together, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field!

Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit the future health of our community, which we are part of together.

Study 3: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance x Norm Type (Self x Near x Social)

Priming Social Norms - You belong to a group of family and friends whom you value greatly. This group considers the environment to be highly important and strives to purchase only ethically made "eco-friendly" products.

For the sake of your current health, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field!

Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit your current health.

Study 3: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance x Norm Type (Self x Far x Social)

Priming Social Norms - You belong to a group of family and friends whom you value greatly. This group considers the environment to be highly important and strives to purchase only ethically made "eco-friendly" products.

For the sake of your future health, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field!

Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit your future health.

Study 3: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance x Norm Type (Other x Near x Social)

Priming Social Norms - You belong to a group of family and friends whom you value greatly. This group considers the environment to be highly important and strives to purchase only ethically made "eco-friendly" products.

For the sake of the current health of our community, which we are part of together, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field!

Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit the current health of our community, which we are part of together.

Study 3: Benefit Type x Temporal Distance x Norm Type (Other x Far x Social)

Priming Social Norms - You belong to a group of family and friends whom you value greatly. This group considers the environment to be highly important and strives to purchase only ethically made "eco-friendly" products.

For the sake of our future and the health of our community, which we are part of together, choose eggs laid by freely roaming chickens in a field!

Consuming eggs from chickens freely roaming in a field will benefit the future health of our community, which we are part of together.