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UNDERSTANDING WHAT CONSUMERS VALUE ABOUT BRANDS: AN EXTENSION OF THE VALUE HIERARCHY FRAMEWORK

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Amy Stevenson Cathey
August, 1999

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter

Eleanor Stevenson Cathey

who was born on October 24, 1998.

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Abstract

This dissertation uses data from 60 personal, in-depth interviews to test a conceptual framework (called the Extended Value Hierarchy) for understanding the potential of branding to create consumer value. The overall purposes of this research are (1) to clarify and extend concepts presented in the literature related to specific aspects of consumer value that may be affected by branding and (2) to empirically compare the potential of two specific branding strategies (private label and national branding) to contribute to consumer value.

The study evaluates the merit of the Extended Value Hierarchy framework and compares consumer thoughts about national and private label brands in the same product category. The specific context examined is the most important aspects of the brand (chosen by the consumer) that are considered during the choice situation (e.g., decision to purchase a specific brand).

Participants in the study are loyal users of specified private label and national brands. Two different product categories were examined, which provided an opportunity for replication of findings. This dissertation also demonstrates a methodology for collecting consumer value information as it relates to branding. The development and use of this interviewing methodology, which is a variation of the laddering technique, are discussed.

The findings from this dissertation provide support for the constructs that differentiate the Extended Value Hiearchy framework from the traditional value hierarchy. The general structure of the traditional value hierarchy framework is also supported.

Several differences in terms of the content of what is valued between national and private label brand buyers were indicated. Specifically, the findings suggest the importance of price (in relation to brand performance on key product attributes) in creating value for private label buyers. In addition, the findings related to national brand buyers suggest that at

least one segment of consumers finds value in the symbolic aspects of the brand (created in part by marketing communications).

Very limited statistical differences in the overall structure of thoughts expressed by national and private label brand buyers were evident. This is in contrast to some of the marketing literature related to national and private label brands. This finding suggests opportunities for further clarification within marketing thought regarding the ways in which national and private buyers may differ in terms of the value dimensions they associate with a preferred brand.

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Chapter 1
Research Problem and Need for Research

Chapter Overview

Value has been characterized as the "defining concept" of the 1990s (Watts 1992, p. 14). As a result, marketers have shown great interest in better understanding how customer value can be better delivered and communicated (Mason 1992; Power 1991; Treacy and Wiersema 1992; Webster 1992; Woodruff 1997). This interest is driven in part by a recognition that understanding customer needs can be an enduring source of competitive advantage for a company (Woodruff 1997).

Because of this interest, there has been a great deal of progress in understanding the domain and nature of customer value (Parasuraman 1997). However, a number of important research questions remain unanswered. Of particular interest, given the decline in brand equity that has occurred over the last decade (Aaker 1996; Solomon 1996), is the issue of how a competitive advantage based on consumer[1] value can be created for an individual brand (Solomon 1996).

Understanding how brands provide value for consumers is of great interest to marketers who want to create a competitive advantage for their brands (Aaker 1996; Marketing Science Institute 1996). For example, as a focus on consumer value becomes the standard for greater numbers of companies, marketers must work hard to find ways of differentiating brands that make them stand out over the competition. When brands cannot be differentiated in ways that provide value for consumers, price becomes a key driver of consumer choice. This latter environment provides an appealing opportunity for private label (or low-price national) brands to push for additional market share (Abe 1995).

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[1] This dissertation differentiates between the terms "customer" and "consumer" value. "Customer" is commonly used in the literature to represent both industrial and individual end-users, while "consumer" refers only to individual end-users (e.g., Woodruff and Gardial 1996). Because this dissertation focuses on understanding value for individual end-users, the term "consumer value" is used.

Interestingly, some companies have used marketing strategies that emphasize specific elements of a brand (e.g., name, identity, personality) as a sustainable and effective means of brand differentiation. For example, the Body Shop's efforts to protect the environment, Nike's commercials with Michael Jordan, and Sears' reputation for standing behind its own products all represent marketing strategies which have contributed to brand differentiation and have the potential to deliver consumer value. Despite the existence of these and many other examples, little attention has been given to understanding consumer value specifically as it relates to branding (e.g., brand name, identity, personality).

The overall objective of this research is to advance understanding of consumer value that may be created by branding. This is accomplished by comparing consumer value associated with brands that use specific branding strategies. A total of sixty in-depth interviews were conducted, which provided the empirical basis for making these comparisons. To maximize potential differences in perceived value, two branding strategies were chosen that compete head to head in many of today's most visible brand situations. These strategies are national branding and private label branding. The specific context examined is the most important aspects of the brand (chosen by the consumer) that are considered during the choice situation (e.g., decision to purchase a specific brand).

The rise in popularity of private label brands, which in 1997 comprised 20.6% of units sold in U.S. supermarkets, is testing the ability of branded products to create and maintain consumer loyalty (*Supermarket Business* 1998a). As private label brands become increasingly positioned as products that offer similar quality at a lower cost, marketers of branded products are seeking ways to create competitive advantage that will allow their brands to retain price premiums (Aaker 1996; Mogelonsky 1993). The potential of private label brands to provide value for consumers is evidenced by a recent study, which found that 80% of grocery retailers surveyed believe that private label unit sales at their stores will grow between 11% and 50% over the next three years (*Supermarket Business* 1998b).

One potential advantage for marketers whose brands compete in these environments is understanding specifically how brand strategies (e.g., private label or national branding)

may affect consumer value. This understanding can assist the marketer in selecting a brand strategy that maximizes the potential of the brand to create valued consequences (i.e., what the product does for the consumer) and desired end states (the goals that a consumer uses a brand to achieve). Delivering value in the form of positive consequences and desired end states may be an important tool that can be used to build brand equity (Aaker 1991).

As a basis for undertaking research that examines the potential of brand strategies to contribute to consumer value, this chapter:

- Demonstrates that the need to better understand the value consumers associate with brands is a research problem worthy of further examination
- Reviews indicators that marketing knowledge in this area is incomplete
- Outlines the research objectives and questions that guides the study described in this dissertation
- Reviews the potential contributions of this research.

Definition of the Research Problem

In recent years, marketing thought has made considerable progress in broadening the domain of consumer value to include something more than attribute-based product evaluations and price/quality tradeoffs made by consumers (Parasuraman 1997; Woodruff 1997). Rather than thinking about value as it relates to product attributes (including price and quality), Woodruff and Gardial (1996) recommend identifying the consequences (i.e., what the product does for the consumer) that consumers consider in making value judgments. For example, knowing that consumers of a snack food product consider "feels good in my mouth" and "helps me stay healthy" to be important positive consequences of eating snack food may provide a manufacturer with important insights that can be used to improve (and possibly extend) its line of snack food products. Likewise, knowing that negative consequences, such as "makes me too full to eat dinner" or "makes my mouth dry all afternoon," reduce the value

consumers find in a snack food product may facilitate the development of products that minimize the negative effects of product use.

Understanding of the consequences that consumers consider in evaluating products has significantly improved the ability of businesses to deliver consumer value (Woodruff and Gardial 1996). With the discovery that consumers make trade-offs between a number of different consequences, marketers have made progress in understanding ways that they can better create value for those who use their products.[2] For example, one manufacturer of sports drinks used insights gained from an understanding of consequence trade-offs to develop a marketing strategy for better targeting heavy users of sports drink products (Pecorella, Plusker and Comstock 1993).

Despite the many insights it has provided to brand managers, the consumer value literature contains little discussion that specifically addresses consumer value that may be associated with branding (e.g., name, identity, personality). Most often, authors address value at the brand level by acknowledging that value may be examined at both the product category and brand levels and/or including examples that relate to product categories and brands (e.g., Woodruff and Gardial 1996; Woodruff 1997; Zietharnl 1988). Some exceptions to this pattern include Riezebos's (1994) examination of the effect of brand name on consumer value and Aaker's (1991, 1996) conceptualization of the potential of brand identity to contribute to consumer value. These exceptions are discussed further in Chapter 2. Because there has been little discussion or empirical testing that specifically examines value at the brand level, marketers may be limited in their understanding of the potential of branding to create consumer value.

The idea that brand marketing strategies may create consequences (benefits or sacrifices associated with product use) that effectively differentiate a brand is illustrated in several studies in the branding literature (e.g., McCracken 1993; Riezebos 1994). For example, McCracken's (1993) anthropological research regarding the cultural meanings of

[2] The term "products" is used in this dissertation to refer to both products and services.

brands suggests that brand associations that emerge from different brand strategies (in this case, associations related to specific brands of beer) have the potential to contribute to consumer value. In addition, Riezebos (1994) conducted a set of experiments that examined the effect of brand name on consumer value. This research indicates that brand name is one cue that consumers use when making value judgments about a specific brand. It also suggests that understanding how brand associations create consumer value may provide a critical source of competitive advantage for brand marketers.

The following examples provide additional evidence that branding, when developed so that it is consistent with consumer wants and needs, has the potential to create consumer value. In total, these examples suggest that additional investigation related to consumer evaluations of individual brands is warranted. Furthermore, they suggest the potential of branding to influence consumer thoughts and actions.

First, the Body Shop has successfully differentiated itself from other skin care companies in terms of its concern for the environment. The company's product mix, packaging, promotion, employee training, and public relations all consistently reinforce the idea that the organization is interested in preserving, maintaining, and replenishing important environmental resources. For some consumers, this strategy may create value because, in addition to performing well on attributes and consequences the consumer associates with the product category (i.e., skin care), the Body Shop brand provides an additional consequence, or source of value, not found in competing brands. In this case, using the Body Shop brand may reinforce a personal desire to support environmental causes. Thus, by introducing a positive consequence not normally associated with the product category, the Body Shop has created an created a competitive advantage that would be missed by competitors that only conducted market research to understand consumer value associated with the product category. This example suggests that a company interested in developing branding strategies to increase the potential of particular brand to deliver consumer value would need information about what consumers value about competing brands, its own brand, and the product category.

In another example, Nike has made a considerable investment in creating high-performance athletic shoes for basketball. This may be because, for example, consumers who are active basketball players evaluate athletic shoes (product category) based in part on "comfort." Comfortable shoes presumably provide benefits to the consumer, such as "not distracting me during my game" and "helping me focus on making that open shot." Nike wants to ensure that its shoes perform better than the competition in delivering "comfort." In addition to product development, however, Nike made significant investments in the early 1990s in developing a link in consumers' minds between the company and Michael Jordan. This is because Nike realized that, in addition to "comfort," many active basketball players may want athletic shoes that give them "confidence" when they are on the basketball court. This feeling may be an important competitive advantage because it can provide additional consequences such as "makes me work harder to get that extra shot" and "improves my game." As a result of its branding efforts, Nike has been successful in delivering both "comfort" and "confidence" to its target consumers, which in turn has given Nike a strong position in the marketplace. This example reinforces the idea, presented by Woodruff and Gardial (1996), that consumer value is typically made up of multiple dimensions (such as "comfort" and "confidence"). In addition, it suggests that a company interested in maximizing the value created by a brand should consider strategies that improve brand performance on existing value dimensions (such as a user's desire for comfort) as well as create new ones (such as a feeling of "confidence" when using the product).

In a third example, Hershey's uses a branding strategy that builds on the Hershey Foods Corporation's long-standing reputation for excellence in making chocolate by including the "Hershey" name as part of each brand name. As a result, most consumers realize that Hershey's cocoa, Hershey's kisses, and Hershey bars are manufactured by the same company. This strategy also has the potential to create value for consumers. For instance, a consumer may remember how the Hershey's chocolate milk he drank for breakfast "helped me give me energy for my day," and this brand association may cause him to expect that the Hershey's kiss that he eats in the afternoon will provide a mid-afternoon energy boost. In this

case, the consumer's evaluation of his experience when using the brand in one product category influenced his choice and expectations for the same brand, but in an entirely different product category. This example illustrates that, when examining consumer value at the brand level, value may be dependent on the combination of products (that a consumer is aware of or consumes) that carry a certain brand name.

Finally, a well-publicized example of a failure to recognize the potential of branding to affect consumer value is the decision to launch New Coke. In this case, the Coca-Cola Company conducted many tests to determine how New Coke compared with the original Coke on the basis of consequences associated with the soft drink product category. When considering the product category, the consequence of "tastes good" was most relevant to consumers. In considering how to better deliver the consequence of "tastes good," executives reviewed findings from blind taste tests, which indicated that New Coke was preferred to Pepsi by an average of 55% to 45% in 17 markets (Davis 1987). In addition to "tastes good", the consequences of "picks me up," and "refreshes me" were studied as part of the consumer tests which took place prior to New Coke's introduction. Because they focused primarily on the New Coke product (and did not broadly consider consequences that consumers might associate with the brand), the power of brand associations that were associated with the original Coca-Cola brand (such as "makes me feel like a kid again" and "reminds me of being an American") was underestimated in the decision to change the product. Interestingly, these key associations were created in part by long-standing branding strategies. Because they did not understand the potential effect that branding can have on consumer value, these Coca-Cola executives failed to recognize the disappointment and, in some cases, anger that consumers would feel when the original Coke was withdrawn from the market (Solomon 1996).

Taken together, the above examples suggest that branding has the potential to create consequences that are valued by consumers. In the first two examples (the Body Shop and Nike), the brand associations that seem to add value result from specific branding strategies that are implemented by the manufacturer or retailer. In the third example

(Hershey Foods), the brand association that contributes to value is a result of consumer efforts to categorize thoughts relative to the brand (Boush 1993). In the fourth example (Coke), a combination of manufacturer efforts and consumer categorizations contribute to the value that consumers associate with the brand.

In addition to suggesting the potential of branding to contribute to consumer value, these examples illustrate that further research in the area of understanding consumer value at the brand level is needed. In an effort to provide information that can contribute to marketing knowledge about the possible effects of branding on consumer value, this dissertation adopts the following purposes:

- To clarify and extend concepts presented in the literature that suggest specific aspects of consumer value that may be affected by branding
- To empirically compare the potential of two specific branding strategies (private label and national branding) to contribute to consumer value.

The knowledge about how brands create value for the consumer that was gained from the dissertation study is expected to serve as a basis for future theory development and testing. For instance, findings that support the potential of branding to contribute to consumer value would raise additional research questions, such as:

- What types of branding strategies have the greatest effect on consumer value?
- When are branding strategies more or less likely to affect value?

Although the study represents a springboard for future theory-building, the base of existing literature in the areas of consumer value and branding offers a strong conceptual foundation for beginning to examine consumer value specifically at the brand level. As a result, this dissertation first presents a conceptual framework that clarifies and extends ideas presented in the existing literature. The conceptual framework is used as a basis for a study that empirically assesses the potential of branding to deliver value to consumers.

This dissertation reviews relevant thought in the areas of consumer value and branding, summarizes insights related to the creation of consumer value at the brand level, and applies these insights in the context of private label and national brands. The next section clarifies and defines the scope of this research more fully. This is done by describing what is meant by two key terms: "value" and "brand."

Discussion of Key Terms

In order to clarify the scope of this research, some discussion of two key terms is needed. These terms -- "value" and "brand" -- form the basis for the definition of the research area described in this proposal, yet many definitions of both terms appear in the marketing literature. This section briefly summarizes perspectives related to each term and highlights a definition for each that is adopted in this dissertation. In addition, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between consumer value (which is the focus of this dissertation) and brand equity (which is an outcome discussed in the branding literature and is expected to be influenced by changes in consumer value).

Value

Value is widely recognized as a complex and multi-faceted construct (e.g., Burns 1993; Parasuraman 1997; Woodruff and Gardial 1996). For this reason, definitions of value have received considerable discussion, and a number of classifications of consumer value concepts have been presented (e.g., Burns 1993; Holbrook 1994; Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991; Woodruff 1997). Two authors that have carefully reviewed existing definitions of value are Burns (1993) and Woodruff (1997). Woodruff (1997) identifies the following commonalities in value concepts that have been presented in the literature:

- Value "is inherent in or linked through use to some product (p. 141)."
- Value "is something perceived by customers rather than objectively determined by a seller (p. 141)."

- Value "typically involves a trade-off between what the customer receives and what he or she gives up to acquire and use a product (p. 141)."

These commonalities in existing definitions of consumer value form the basis for the working definition that Woodruff later introduces. This is also the definition of value that guided the research for this dissertation. Woodruff (1997) defines value as follows:

> Customer value is a customer's perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer's goals and purposes in use situations (p. 142).

As described in Woodruff's definition, the construct of consumer value reflects a consumer's preference for and evaluation of a product or service. This evaluation is based on the consumer's understanding of product attributes[3] and the value these attributes provide.

The idea that attributes and consequences generated by a brand strategy may contribute to consumer value has been raised in the marketing literature (Aaker 1996; McCracken 1993; Riezebos 1994). In addition, the following examples suggest that brand associations that create points of brand differentiation for consumers have significant potential to affect consumer value. For instance, a couple may decide to purchase a luxury car because they believe that it will provide "a sense of prestige." They might consider

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[3] In this dissertation, the terms "attribute level brand association" and "product attribute" are used interchangeably. This is for two reasons:

- The term "attribute level brand association" is more understandable to readers who are familiar with the branding literature (in which the term "brand association" is commonly used to refer to consumer thoughts related to a brand), while the term "product attribute" is more understandable to readers familiar with the consumer value literature.
- The term "attribute level brand association" explicitly suggests to the reader a focus on many different types of product attributes (including those created through promotion, customer service, brand name, etc.) although the term "product attribute" has been broadly defined in the literature to include consumer thoughts related to all of these aspects of a brand (e.g., Woodruff and Gardial 1996).

several brands of luxury cars that they believe perform equally in providing "a sense of prestige." In the end, they may choose to purchase a Mercedes because, in addition to providing "a sense of prestige," they believe it performs better than other luxury cars on "feels good when I ride in it" (a point of differentiation for the Mercedes), which is important when the couple takes the family on long trips. In this case, the point of brand differentiation added value as well as provided the motivation to purchase. Alternatively, another couple may compare a Mercedes and a Honda Accord, two cars that they believe perform equally in "feeling good when I ride in it." This couple may purchase the Honda because of their desire for "understatement," an association on which they believe the Honda performs better than the Mercedes and which is important since the car will be parked in a downtown lot during most work days. In the case of the Mercedes purchase, the idea of "feeling good when I ride in the car" was a key factor in the decision, while in the case of the Honda purchase, the "understatement" of the car played an important role. Mercedes and Honda both used specific branding strategies (which were reinforced by image advertising) to differentiate their brands in the minds of these consumers.

Based on the above discussion, the value of a brand to a consumer can be conceptualized as including (1) the value created by thoughts where the consumer believes several brands in the product category perform equally and (2) the value created by consumer thoughts that suggest a point of differentiation for an individual brand. This relationship is summarized in Figure 1-1.

Interestingly, the literature relevant for review in this dissertation can be organized into the two categories depicted in Figure 1-1. By definition, research studies that examine consumer value associated with the product category (e.g., Gardial et. al. 1994) focus on gathering information about brand associations that are shared among multiple brands. This information includes everything in the shaded circle in the illustration above, but only a subset of the brand associations included in the unshaded circle. For example, some brand

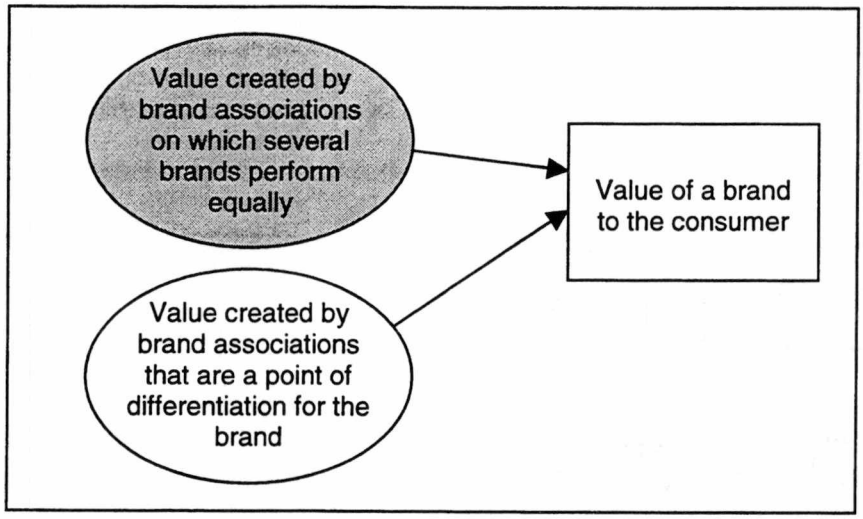


Figure 1-1. Components of the value of a brand to the consumer.

associations are shared among multiple brands; however, individual brands are perceived to perform differently (such as "a car that feels good when I ride it" from the Mercedes example above or "a sense of understatement" in the Honda example). These may be discussed in a study that focuses on the product category.

Associations that are not tied to other brands in a product category, such as the Body Shop's commitment to the environment (which is unique in the industry), prior experience with other products that bear the same brand name (such as Hershey's chocolate milk and Hershey's kisses), or a personal memory evoked by the brand (such as "the brand Mom always used"), may be less likely to emerge. This is because, when asked specifically about a product category, consumers tend to refer to attributes that are associated with the product category rather than associations that are evoked by the mention of a particular brand name (or other aspect of a brand's identity, such as brand image or personality). For example, advantages that consumers associate with a specific brand identity (e.g., Michael Jordan's close relationship with Nike) may not come to mind when the consumer is asked only about value associated with the product category (e.g., athletic shoes). It is anticipated that specific questions about a particular brand would be required to prompt discussion of consumer thoughts that are tied directly to branding.

In the few studies that have examined consumer value related to branding (e.g., Riezebos 1994), brand name has served as the primary point of entry for prompting consumer thoughts about a brand. This strategy, however, has fallen short in documenting the range of brand associations that a consumer may consider to be part of a brand's identity (Aaker 1991; 1996). One purpose of this research is to develop a methodology that facilitates the understanding of all of the brand associations represented in Figure 1-1.

Brand

The concept of branding is fundamental to much of marketing thought (Kotler 1991). Despite this, there is no single conceptual definition of the term "brand" that is commonly used. While perspectives on what makes up a brand are not quite as varied as those related to consumer value, discussions of branding can generally be classified according to one of two very different perspectives.

The company-based perspective suggests that the components of a brand can be categorized, listed, and defined by the company. Consider the following examples.

- A brand is a "name, a term, a symbol, or any other unique element of a product that identifies one firm's products and sets them apart from those of other producers (Solomon and Stuart 1997, p. 343)."
- A brand is a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Kotler 1991, p. 442)."
- A brand is "basically a name that refers to a the particular product of a particular manufacturer in a particular product category (Moore 1993, p. 33)."

The consumer-based perspective suggests that the components of a brand can be defined only by the consumer. While the company-based perspective focuses primarily on brand name as an identifier of the brand, the consumer-based perspective includes a broader

range of elements (such as brand identity, brand personality, etc.). This perspective places great emphasis on including any aspect of the brand that that consumer may find relevant in the definition of the brand offer. For instance, several quotes presented below strongly emphasize the idea that definition of "brand" should include all aspects of a brand (such as promotion, word of mouth, and the retail environment) as well as the tangible, or physical, product (product, packaging, price, etc.). Some examples of the consumer-based perspective are listed below.

- A brand "involves any aspects that the consumer attributes to it [the brand offering], beyond [and including] its tangible features (Farquhar 1989, p. 25)."
- A brand "belongs to the consumer [and exists in terms of consumer perceptions] ... the role of the company is to serve as the caretaker of the brand by creating, expanding, and preserving consumer loyalty (Schultz 1995, pp. 6-7)."
- A brand "such as Mr. Goodwrench is much like a 'box' in someone's [the consumer's] head [and the consumer chooses which ideas about a brand are included in the 'box'] (Aaker 1996, p. 10)."

Because it adopts the viewpoint of the consumer (rather than the brand marketer or manufacturer) in defining the brand offer, the second perspective appears most consistent with the objective of understanding consumer value that may be created by branding. Thus, the consumer-based perspective of the brand is the one adopted for this research. Farquhar's (1989) definition of a brand as involving "any aspects that the consumer attributes to it [the brand offering], beyond [and including] its tangible features" is the working definition of brand used in this dissertation.

Since it adopts the perspective that a brand is defined in the minds of individual consumers, this dissertation relies heavily on consumer brand associations as a source for understanding how value may be created. Brand associations are defined as any link to a brand that exists in a consumer's memory (Anderson 1983; Keller 1993; Wyer and Srull

1989). "Gets clothes clean," "comes in an orange box," and "reminds me of Mom" are all examples of brand associations that some consumers associate with Tide. These links may include any aspect of the brand that is relevant to the consumer and may be created by a variety of sources (such as advertising, choice of distribution channels, company publicity, or word of mouth). Brand associations also may be of varying strengths (i.e., Keller 1991, 1993). For example, a consumer may quickly make the association between long battery life and a mechanical bunny that "won't quit" (a strongly held association), but may have difficulty associating a specific brand name with the image of the bunny (a weakly held association).

Clearly, branding has the potential to create brand associations that may assist consumers in differentiating a brand from its competitors. As is consistent with Farquhar's (1989) definition, this dissertation focuses on the potential of all aspects of a brand (including promotion, customer service, and evoked associations in consumer memories, as well as tangible aspects of a product or service) to contribute to consumer value. In the dissertation study the issue of the strength of a brand association is only tangentially addressed, although it offers promise as an area for future research.

Relationship Between Consumer Value and Brand Equity

As stated earlier, understanding consumer value at the brand level has the potential to aid marketers in their efforts to build and maintain brand equity. In order to understand how consumer value can enhance (or detract from) brand equity, however, it is necessary to examine how the constructs of consumer value and brand equity differ and how they are related. This section defines brand equity and briefly discusses the relationship between brand equity and consumer value.

In his 1996 book, Aaker defines brand equity as "a set of assets (and liabilities) linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers (pp. 7-8)." This suggests that brand equity may include both the value of a brand to the consumer and the value of a brand to the firm (Riezebos 1994). This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1-2.

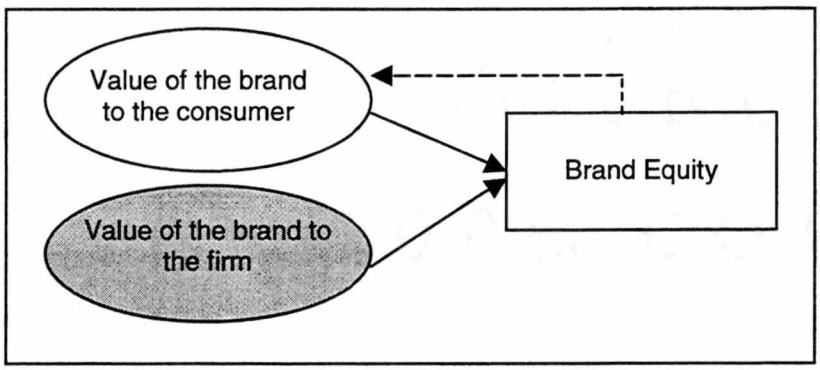


Figure 1-2. Components of brand equity.

In his book, *Managing Brand Equity*, Aaker (1991) discusses a number of factors that contribute to brand equity. He categorizes these factors as enhancing the value of the brand (1) from the point of view of the consumer and (2) from the point of view of the producer. This dissertation focuses on the value of the brand to the consumer (the unshaded circle in the figure above). The value of the brand to the consumer is especially important for understanding brand equity in that it represents consumer perceptions of brand worth, which in turn can influence market position as well as brand profitability (Biel 1993). The value of the brand to the firm (the shaded circle in the above figure) refers to brand assets (other than consumer value) that may help to maintain the viability of the brand, such as patents or distribution/franchise agreements.

As can be seen in the above illustration, consumer value is conceptualized as a significant contributor to brand equity (Aaker 1991, 1996; Kirmani and Ziethaml 1993). In fact, consumer value represents the portion of brand equity that exists in the mind of the consumer. Because of its contribution to brand equity, examining consumer value at the brand level has the potential to provide information that can help marketers successfully create a unique and profitable market position for their brands.

Although consumer value is most commonly conceptualized as a component of brand equity, it has been suggested that the relationship between these two constructs may be dynamic (as illustrated by the dotted arrow in Figure 1-2). This means that, in some

cases, brand equity may have the potential to enhance consumer value. Aaker (1991, 1996) highlights the dynamic nature of this relationship by suggesting that brand equity may contribute to consumer value in three specific ways:

- Facilitating interpretation/ processing of information
- Increasing confidence in the purchase decision
- Enhancing use satisfaction.

Again, this dissertation focuses only on consumer value as a component of brand equity; however, it is important to note that brand equity may influence consumer value as well.

Summary of Key Terms

This dissertation uses the following model of the relationship between brand associations, consumer value, and brand equity to organize the relevant literature and provide a basis for developing a conceptual framework for examining the potential of branding to create consumer value. The model, shown in Figure 1-3, illustrates the concepts that are included in the scope of the literature review. These are:

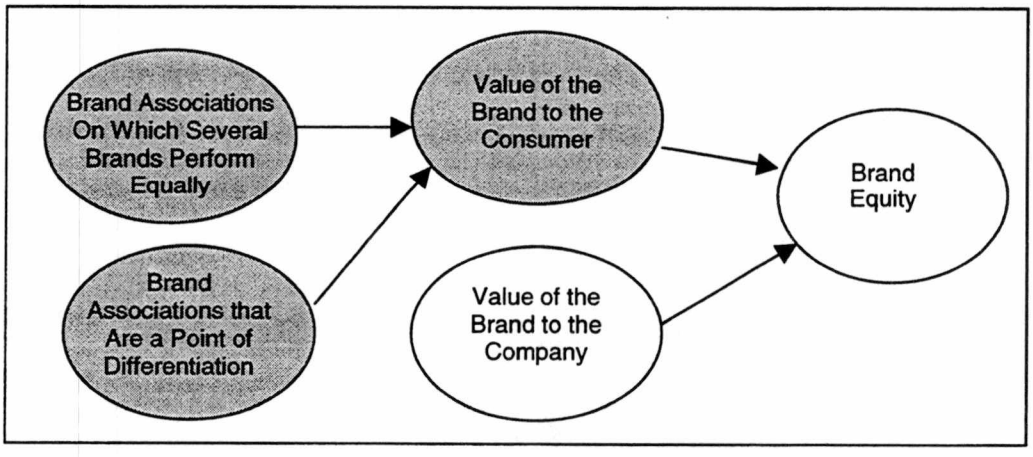


Figure 1-3. Relationship between brand associations, consumer value and brand equity.

- Brand associations on which several brands are considered to perform equally
- Brand associations that provide a point of brand differentiation
- Value of the brand to the consumer.

This dissertation does not explicitly examine value of the brand to the firm or brand equity.

Application of the Research Problem to National and Private Label Brand Situations

The introductory sections of this dissertation offer some rationale for further examination of the value to consumers that can be created by branding. For example, the discussion illustrates that branding strategies have significant potential to affect consumer thoughts about the value of a particular brand. Furthermore, although some of the concepts introduced in this chapter, such as celebrity spokespeople (Michael Jordan) and brand extensions (New Coke), have been extensively researched (e.g., Agrawal and Kamakura 1995; Aaker and Keller 1990), previous research tends to focus on the strength or memorability of brand associations (e.g., Keller 1991, 1993) and not on the potential of these brand associations to contribute to consumer value.

One context that is particularly appropriate for examining the way in which brand strategies can affect consumer thoughts about value is that of product categories in which national and private label brands compete head to head. Private label brands typically offer many of the same product attributes and consequences for the consumer as nationally branded products; however, private labels are generally supported by smaller marketing budgets than national brands. In addition, they are often sold at prices that are much lower than national brands. Because of these characteristics, private label and national brands offer a brand situation where consumer perceptions at the brand level appears to be maximally different.

This section further demonstrates the usefulness of this research by describing one marketing context -- product categories in which private label brands are rapidly gaining

market share -- where gaps in knowledge about the potential of brand strategies to affect consumer value are limiting the ability of manufacturers to effectively market their brands. This section will:

- Demonstrate that understanding the consumer value component of brand equity is becoming increasingly important for marketers, particularly marketers of nationally branded and private label products
- Illustrate that understanding the effect of branding on consumer thoughts about value has the potential to contribute to marketing knowledge.

In addition to providing some background on the recent growth in private label products, this section will describe three environmental factors that have contributed to the recent growth in private label brands. The discussion will highlight specific areas where a better understanding of the effects of branding on consumer value can help marketers develop competitive advantage, particularly in environments where consumers consider the product offerings (such as those offered by private label and national brands) to be similar.

Recent Growth in Private Label Brands

Private label brands are those brands that rely on the name of the retailer, rather than the manufacturer, as the basis for consumer associations related to a brand. Retailers can usually sell private label products more cheaply because they bypass manufacturer profit margins and have few advertising costs associated with private label brands (Hoch 1996). The shift in power from the manufacturer to the retailer that characterized the 1980s has created an environment where private label products, such as Sam's Cola or President's Choice groceries, are offered in a growing number of product categories (Mogelonsky 1995).

Understanding whether and to what extent branding contributes to consumer value may provide marketers of both private label and national brands with insights that can help them to better differentiate their products. For marketers of national brands, the emergence

of premium-quality private label brands is making it increasingly difficult to demonstrate the value of branded products over private label brands solely on the basis of product features. As a result, marketers of branded products are looking for new ways to effectively differentiate their brands. Understanding the attributes and consequences that consumers find relevant in evaluating brands may provide additional bases for differentiating a brand (that cannot be easily replicated by competitors) which can be used to enhance consumer value.

Interestingly, although private label brands are generally not marketed as heavily, marketers of these brands may benefit from knowledge about the potential of branding to create consumer value. In particular, consumers may hold brand associations related to private label products that are associated with the retailer through which they are distributed (Baugh and Davis 1989; Mogelonsky 1993). For example, in a study that examined consumer perceptions of designer and private label clothing, the researchers found that store image affected the ratings of styling characteristics of the private label shirts but not of the designer shirts (Baugh and Davis 1989). Retailers have a number of opportunities to develop strategies for private label brands that are based on brand associations that consumers hold regarding the retailer. For example, consider the following quote.

> [Retailers of private label brands have the opportunity to] translate store loyalty into brand loyalty. In essence, the store becomes the product. But a retailer can also stress high quality by guaranteeing customer satisfaction through such things as buy-back programs, in which a customer will be refunded if the store brand does not live up to expectations (Mogelonsky 1995, p. 37)."

Because they associate the brand and the retailer so closely, consumers who try one private label brand item are often more willing to try products in other product categories that bear that the same private label brand name (Private Label Manufacturing Association 1992). For example, a consumer who tries and likes Loblaw's President's Choice cookies is likely to

try other President's Choice products, such as flour or crackers. This suggests that it is essential for marketers of both national and private label brands to understand the extent to which consumers include thoughts about the manufacturer or retailer of a brand in their assessments of overall value.

Factors that Have Contributed to the Recent Growth of Private Label Brands

The recent popularity of private label brands, which accounted for $33.9 billion in supermarket sales in 1996 (Private Label Manufacturers Association 1997), has been attributed to two primary factors. First, consumer preferences are shifting toward simpler, less expensive products (Bansal 1998; Russell 1993; Solomon 1996). For example, the trend of returning to the "basics" in the 1990s is thought to have reaffirmed consumer interest in private label products, which are often priced lower and offer simpler combinations of product features than national brands (Solomon 1996). Private label products are thought to appeal to "value conscious" consumers (Burton, Lichtenstein, Netemeyer and Garretson 1998; Sellers 1991) by offering the opportunity to forgo "premium" benefits often attributed to branded products (Belch and Belch 1993). Furthermore, the continued decline in consumer loyalty to groups, organizations, and brands that is expected over the next decade may create even greater opportunity for private label brands to gain market share (Russell 1993; Zimmerman 1998).

The second factor that has contributed to the popularity of private label brands is that the quality of private label brands has been steadily increasing (Hoch 1996; *Supermarket Business* 1996, 1998a). In fact, research that compares private label and national brands suggests that many consumers believe that private label brands are significantly higher in quality than generic brands (Rosen 1984), and in some cases are rated as equal in quality to national brands (Food Marketing Institute 1994).

Although a quality gap between private label and national brands is still perceived to exist, the gap is narrowing fairly quickly. For example Greg Starzynski, Vice President of Retail Consumer Services for Nielsen North America, was recently quoted as saying:

"Consumers are becoming more accepting of private labels in higher price categories (Mogelonsky 1995)." In addition, some manufacturers are introducing private label brands that are designed to compete directly with national brands. These products are often priced similarly or even above national brands. The success of premium quality private label brands suggests that consumers may consider attributes of the brand other than price and quality when evaluating national and private label brands. The fact that several major manufacturers have recently introduced "lower price" national brands to compete with private label brands in many product categories is an indicator of the uncertainty on the part of national brand marketers that their higher-priced brands are effectively delivering superior consumer value.

Interestingly, the product categories in which private label brands have shown the greatest growth bear certain characteristics that may have provided a market opportunity for private label expansion. These characteristics are:

- Consumer focus on price as a means of differentiating brands
- An increase in brand switching
- A decline in consumer attention to marketing messages.

In total, these characteristics indicate that consumers may not be able to differentiate between brands in the same product category. Because they do not have a meaningful way of differentiating between brands, these consumers consider multiple brands in the product category (which are perceived to perform equally well on important attributes and consequences) to be acceptable.

Because they are typically priced lower than national brands, private label brands that compete in environments where all brands are perceived to perform equally only have to perform well on the attributes and consequences that are associated with the product category in order to be valued by consumers. In some cases, private label brands may even have an advantage over national brands because brand associations that consumers have relative to the retailer may enhance the value consumers associate with the private label

brand. In these instances, associations with the retailer may help to differentiate the private label brand (in a way that adds value) from nationally branded competitors.

The environmental characteristics that are contributing to the popularity of private label brands are discussed in more detail below.

Consumer focus on price as a means of differentiating brands. Consumers who cannot meaningfully differentiate between competing brands in a product category often focus on price as the differentiating factor. Marketers, on the other hand, have found that using price as the primary means of differentiating brands is at best a short-term brand strategy, with little gain (or even a loss) in brand equity over the long-term (Marshall 1996). This is because competitors can counter with price cuts that are equal or lower than those that were first introduced. In addition to lowering profits for the industry, continued price cutting further reinforces price as the defining feature that drives consumer choice.

The "cola wars," for example, have created an environment where a growing number of consumers buy based on price (i.e., which cola is on sale during a given week) rather than based on loyalty to a particular brand. This change in purchase behavior has significantly lowered profits for the top two competitors in the product category (Marshall 1996). A similar trend can be noted in the telecommunications (Coy 1996; Mills 1996), automotive (Gelsi and Matzer 1996), cereal (Pollack 1996), diaper (Sullivan 1996), and other industries.

In this type of environment, consumers are so price driven that the role of other marketing activities is weakened. This is particularly difficult for marketers because it reduces the avenues that they have available to develop other means of differentiating their brands. Procter and Gamble, for example, reacted to the declining effectiveness of its marketing activities when it announced in 1995 that it would cut marketing spending on promotional pricing and coupons to 20% or less of sales by the year 2000 (Neff and Sloan 1996). Instead, P & G initiated a program of "Every Day Value Prices" in an effort to remain cost competitive with private label brands that offer similar products (Narisetti 1996).

The focus on lowering prices, and the move away from marketing activities that are designed to differentiate brands, has in many cases led to the erosion of brand equity. In an

environment where brand equity is reduced, private label brands show even more promise for the future. To ward off a continued decline in brand equity, marketers are searching for new and meaningful ways to differentiate their brands that will reduce the focus on price. Because it provides information about many brand associations that may contribute to consumer value, the research described in this dissertation has the potential to assist marketers who are searching for ways to effectively differentiate brands.

An increase in brand switching. In addition to product categories where price is a focus, private label brands also tend to succeed in product categories where brand switching is common. Interestingly, consumers are becoming more likely to switch brands in a growing number of product classes. This is in part because, in highly competitive environments, companies often offer special premiums to attract consumers of competitive products. These offers, particularly in cases where little product differentiation is perceived, make brand switching very attractive to consumers. For example, AT&T and MCI routinely provide special offers to attract consumers from other long distance carriers.

One study found that in most surveys of consumer satisfaction, 85% of consumers claim to be satisfied, but still demonstrate a willingness to switch suppliers (Reese 1996). This increased likelihood to use a competitor's product means that marketers have relatively little time to demonstrate an advantage over competing products. In addition, marketers have fewer chances to build consumer value, which can contribute to brand equity. Finally, a high likelihood of switching means that the cost of a poorly performing product or communication "mistake," which may prompt consumers to form a negative association related to a product, can be very significant.

The literature on consumer value offers evidence that many, if not most, consumer histories related to product use include varying levels of satisfaction (Woodruff and Gardial 1996). Many consumers experience "trigger" events that can cause satisfaction levels to change (Woodruff and Gardial 1996). An important "trigger" for some consumers may be the trial of a new brand. Furthermore, many marketing communication scholars suggest that product experiences are an important way that consumers gather information about a brand

(Fortini-Campbell 1992; Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn 1994; Schultz 1995). In fact, brand experience tends to create stronger and more confidently held brand associations than do exposures to marketing communications (Fazio and Zanna 1981; Hertel 1982; Keller 1993).

These findings suggest that trial of a competing product has the potential to significantly change consumer assessments of value. By providing information about the effect of branding on consumer value, a research stream that builds on this dissertation research may aid marketers in selecting branding strategies that reduce consumer willingness to try competing brands. By reducing brand-switching behaviors, marketers in turn reduce opportunities for consumers to compare brands. This is important because, in many cases, the comparison makes it apparent to the consumer that multiple brands can perform well on valued attributes and consequences. After such a comparison, the potential of the existing brand strategy to continue to differentiate the brand is limited. For these and other reasons, brand-switching is of increasing concern to marketers (Morgan and Chekitan 1994; Neslin, Henderson and Deighton 1994; Grover and Srinivasan 1992).

A decrease in consumer attention to marketing messages. The third characteristic that is typically present in environments where private label brands have gained market share is that consumers are paying less attention to the marketing communication efforts that support the leading national brands. There are a number of reasons that have been suggested for the decline in attention to marketing communication efforts, including information overload (Nowak and Phelps 1994), proliferation of media choices (Brody 1994; Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn 1994), more sophisticated and demanding consumers (Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn 1994; Duncan and Caywood 1996; Nowak and Phelps 1994), and more competition for consumers' time and money (Duncan and Caywood 1996).

These influences are creating an environment where consumers are willing to listen to marketing communication programs only if they are relevant (Duncan and Caywood 1996; Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn 1994). In fact, some authors suggest that a primary

reason that consumers pay limited attention to the majority of marketing communication efforts is that they do not find them to be meaningful (Fortini-Campbell 1992; Lutz 1996; Thorson and Moore 1996). When consumers do not consider the marketing communication that supports a national brand to be meaningful, this creates an opportunity for private label brands (which are typically not supported as heavily by marketing communication efforts) to gain a strong presence in the market.

Understanding more about the effects of branding on consumer value may be a first step toward the development of marketing messages that are meaningful to consumers. For example, information about the consequences and desired end states that can be created by branding may help marketers develop communication efforts that have the potential to pique consumer interest. In addition, developing messages that create or reinforce valued brand associations may offer marketers new opportunities for brand differentiation.

Research Objectives

The overall objective of this research is to advance understanding of consumer value as it relates to branding (e.g., name, identity, personality). Given this scope, a number of conceptual and empirical objectives emerge. Conceptually, this dissertation:

- Integrates insights related to what consumers value about brands that emerge from (a) the literature on consumer value and (b) the literature on branding
- Extends thought related to consumer value by suggesting a conceptual framework that can be used as a basis for understanding the value for consumers that may be created by branding
- Gains insights from the literature about the effect of two specific brand strategies (e.g., private label and national branding) on consumer thoughts about value.

The empirical test undertaken in this dissertation:

- Demonstrates whether and to what extent branding strategies (such as national or private label branding) may contribute to overall consumer value
- Provides empirical evidence of differences in consumer thoughts about value (i.e., number and type of attribute level brand associations considered, number and type of consequences considered, etc.) that may be associated with national and private label brand strategies.

The above research objectives are accomplished by a review of the literature related to consumer value and branding, the development of a conceptual framework that integrates the two literatures, and the completion of a study designed to evaluate the usefulness of the conceptual framework. The empirical study consists of sixty in-depth interviews with consumers. It applies the newly developed conceptual framework and compares consumer value associated with national and private label brands that compete in the same product categories. The study also demonstrates a methodology (which is an extension of the laddering methodology) for examining consumer value as it relates to branding.

Research Questions

The research objectives suggest several interesting research questions. The following research questions are addressed in this dissertation:

- How should the conceptual frameworks and processes currently used to understand consumer value be modified to better understand consumer value that may be created by branding?
- How do consumers incorporate thoughts about an individual brand (including brand name, image, and personality) into their assessments of overall value?
- How might specific branding strategies (e.g., national and private label branding) influence consumer thoughts about value?

Specifically, the research context - comparisons of consumer value associated with private label and national brands - provides an empirical basis for examining the following additional research questions:

- How might the components of consumer value (i.e., type of attribute level brand associations, consequences, and desired end states) vary between loyal users of national versus private label brands?
- How might the complexity of consumer value (i.e., number of attribute level brand associations, consequences, and desired end states) vary between loyal users of national versus private label brands?

The specific context examined is the most important aspects of the brand (chosen by the consumer) that are considered during the choice situation (e.g., decision to purchase a specific brand).

Potential Contributions of this Research

Given the growing number of product categories in which private label brands are gaining market share (Private Label Manufacturers Association 1997), it is not surprising that marketers are seeking new strategies for delivering consumer value. In fact, the recent popularity of private label brands has contributed to an interest in research directed toward maintaining and increasing brand equity (Aaker and Biel 1993; Aaker 1996). To demonstrate the potential of the research described in this dissertation to contribute to marketing knowledge, this section discusses four specific research areas that may benefit from an understanding of the possible effects of branding on consumer value. These are:

- Integrated marketing communications
- Brand equity measurement
- Long-term brand-customer relationships

- Brand management.

Of course, this study represents only an initial step in understanding how branding might affect consumer value. Without question, the potential contributions discussed in this section will become much stronger and well-developed as a stream of research is begun. After each research area is briefly discussed, potential contributions of the research to marketing thought and practice are summarized.

Integrated Marketing Communications

One way that marketers are seeking to reverse declines in brand equity is by trying to implement marketing communication strategies that reach consumers more effectively. A small, but growing, body of literature suggests that this may be accomplished though the development of integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies (Davis 1993; Nowak and Phelps 1994; Schultz 1995, Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn 1994).

Because of its perceived link to positive behavioral outcomes, IMC has been the subject of much recent interest among both marketing academics and practitioners. Many definitions of IMC have been presented in the literature; however, no one definition is widely accepted. In a review of the IMC literature, Cathey and Schumann (1996) illustrate that most definitions of IMC include one or more of the following themes:

- Adoption of the consumer/ audience perspective
- Integration of messages and media
- Evaluation of outcomes.

Taken together, these themes suggest that IMC has the potential to significantly change the strategies that marketers employ to communicate with consumers. In addition, they illustrate the potential of understanding consumer value at the brand level to enhance marketer abilities to reach consumers through IMC. As an example, the theme of adoption of

the audience perspective suggests that communication should focus on beginning a dialogue with the communication receiver that is based on knowledge and understanding of that individual's needs, desires, preferences and response patterns. Likewise, the theme of integration of messages and media reflects an understanding that messages and media can be used strategically to enhance the value of branding to consumers. Finally, the theme of evaluation of outcomes underscores the importance of measures of assessment to demonstrate the effect of marketing communications on consumer value.

Although IMC provides an important step in helping marketers understand how to more effectively reach consumers, research in the area of IMC provides far less insight regarding the messages that consumers may find meaningful or compelling (Nowak and Phelps 1994). Understanding how brand associations (which can be developed or reinforced through marketing communications) can enhance (or detract from) the value consumers associate with a brand may provide insight regarding the content of information that should be included in IMC strategies.

In addition, marketers know little about how knowledge gained from marketing information is incorporated into consumer evaluations of a brand (Fortini-Campbell 1992; Gronstedt 1996). In fact, little is known about the accumulation of consumer brand associations over time (Keller 1991; Nowak and Phelps 1994; Thorson and Moore 1996) and across exposures that involve a variety of information sources (Keller 1996; Lutz 1996; Thorson and Moore 1996). Because it suggests specific attributes, consequences, and desired end states that consumers consider when evaluating a brand, information about consumer value at the brand level may provide a basis for developing IMC strategies that are based on consumer needs. In addition, it may provide an understanding of how brand knowledge gained from marketing activities can influence assessments of consumer value.

Findings from the research described in this dissertation are expected to be useful in suggesting strategies for integrating messages and media as well as providing guidelines for developing measures to evaluate consumer response to IMC. As an example, one research proposition that is tested states that loyal users of national brands will consider a greater

number of consequences when making value judgments than loyal users of private label brands. Findings that support this proposition would reinforce the idea that IMC can add value through the creation of valued brand associations for the consumer. In addition, these findings would suggest that consumer response to IMC might be measured in terms of its ability to create brand associations that add value.

Brand Equity Measurement

The recent literature suggests an urgent need for better measures to document the contributions of marketing activities to brand equity (Broadbent 1993; Duncan and Caywood 1996; Keller 1996; Nowak and Phelps 1994; Rossiter and Percy 1987). In addition, marketers are facing growing pressures to link expenditures to behavioral outcomes (Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn 1994; Thorson and Moore 1996).

Recent discussions in the marketing communication literature highlight a lack of agreement regarding how best to measure the contribution of marketing communication to brand equity (e.g., Duncan and Caywood 1996; Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn 1994). For example, some scholars recommend that marketers should move from traditional advertising communication models and their emphasis on mediating consumer response (e.g., brand awareness, knowledge, and attitudes) to behavior-oriented models that emphasize audience segmentation, customized persuasion, purchase incentives, and advertising accountability (Nelson 1991; Nowak and Phelps 1994; Rapp and Collins 1990). Given a low correlation between short-term marketing successes and loyalty over time (Lowenstein 1996), companies are very interested in learning more about how brand equity is developed and maintained (Reichheld 1996).

Examining a brand's Total Value Proposition (TVP) is one way that marketing scholars are attempting to identify the components of brand equity that represent the value of a brand to its consumers. The TVP is defined as all of the consequences that a consumer associates with a brand (Marketing Science Institute 1996). Knowing about more of the consequences that make up a brand's TVP can provide a richer understanding of consumer

value. Marketers can then develop strategies to either reinforce or change the way consumers think about the brand.

The consequences that make up the TVP may be created by a variety of marketing activities, including pricing, choice of distribution channels, communication strategies, and the product itself (Fortini-Campbell 1992; Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn 1994; Thorson and Moore 1996). As companies become more sophisticated in their efforts to integrate marketing activities, understanding the TVP offered by a brand will become even more crucial.

Although it was listed as a top research priority for the Marketing Science Institute for 1996-98, understanding the total value proposition offered by brands is still in the early stages of theory development. Understanding how brand strategies can contribute to consumer value may offer a basis for understanding the TVP that goes beyond what is currently known. In addition, this knowledge may suggest that further clarification or refinement of the TVP construct is needed.

Once the potential for brand strategies to contribute to consumer value is empirically supported, future research may address issues such as optimal conditions for implementing brand strategies that affect the TVP as well as the relative effectiveness of specific brand strategies in defining a brand's Total Value Proposition. Finally, the potential of specific brand strategies to deliver a specific value proposition across different product categories and use situations may be examined.

Understanding how branding can create value for consumers also has the potential to assist marketers in identifying brand associations that have the potential to build (or detract from) brand equity. This information can offer a basis for research that demonstrates how measures of brand equity may be developed based on the attributes and consequences that consumers find relevant in assessing value. Finally, understanding how brand associations contribute to value may open the door for further research on brand equity measurement that go beyond comparisons with other brands in the product category.

Long-term Brand-consumer Relationships

A third area in which information about the effect of branding on consumer value might benefit theory development and testing is long-term brand-consumer relationships (e.g., Aaker 1996; Dick and Basu 1994). In this area of research, several articles have called for more attention to issues such as relationship marketing (Bagozzi 1995; Peterson 1995; Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995), measuring the lifetime value of individual consumers (Marketing Science Institute 1996), and measuring customer-based brand equity (Keller 1993, 1996).

As companies move from a transaction-based to relationship-based approach in relating to consumers (Berry 1983, 1995; Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987), having information that will help marketers sustain brand differentiation is essential. Insights about how brands can create value for consumers are expected to provide a framework that can be used in developing more effective strategies for brand differentiation. In particular, knowing which brand associations hold meaning for consumers may contribute the development of strategic planning frameworks that will help marketers of both national and private label brands to maximize the value their brands provide. For example, these frameworks may identify strategies marketers can use to protect their brand should a competitor try to build (or attack) a brand association that is critical to their brand's performance in delivering value. Such a framework may greatly assist marketers in their efforts to build and maintain brand equity through long-term brand-consumer relationships.

Brand Management

Finally, the research described in this dissertation has the potential to contribute to marketing thought and practice in the area of brand management. In particular, because it suggests ways in which brands may be positioned to achieve competitive advantage, the research has the potential to advance knowledge related to brand strategy development. Table 1-1 reviews the three characteristics of environments conducive to private label brand growth (which were discussed earlier in this chapter) and identifies the potential contributions of this research to frameworks that can be used for developing brand strategy.

Table 1-1. Potential contributions of this research to brand strategy development.

	Marketing Issue	Potential Contribution of This Research
1	Consumer focus on price as a means of differentiating brands.	May suggest a need to understand attributes and consequences associated with the brand before developing or changing brand strategy; may provide evidence that information about valued attributes, consequences and desired end states can provide a basis (other than price) for differentiating a brand.
2	An increase in brand switching.	May suggest the need to understand the brand attributes, consequences and desired end states that consumers find unique or compelling relative to other brands in the product category.
3	A decrease in consumer attention to marketing messages.	May suggest that brand strategy (including marketing communication strategies) can create or reinforce brand associations that are included in consumer assessments of value.

This dissertation has significant potential to help marketers recognize the importance of using consumer value information to inform and guide decisions about brand strategy. For example, in an environment where price is the consumer's primary focus, marketers may begin to consider consumer value information as knowledge that can provide alternatives to price as a way of differentiating between competing brands. This dissertation provides examples of a variety of brand associations that may be used to differentiate a brand from its competitors, potentially helping build brand equity. Over the long-term, using information about consumer value as a basis for developing brand strategies is expected to reverse the recent erosion of brand equity (Power 1991).

In addition, findings from this dissertation may initiate a stream of research that can provide a foundation for reducing consumer interest in brand switching. By demonstrating that information about the consequences that consumers consider when evaluating a specific brand (as well as when evaluating competing brands) can suggest brand strategies that build on unique or compelling points of differentiation, this dissertation provides a platform for building brand strategies that increase consumer retention and ultimately may increase brand equity. This is especially important, given that the literature suggests that brand equity may be more difficult to maintain after a consumer tries a competing brand (Grover and Srinivasan 1992).

Finally, this dissertation demonstrates that information about specific brand associations that contribute to consumer value may have implications for the development of more effective marketing communication strategies. For example, understanding which attributes and consequences consumers consider to be important when evaluating a brand can provide marketers with insights about the message(s) that will be most important to convey via marketing communications. In addition, it is anticipated that a better understanding of what consumers value about brands might suggest combinations of brand associations that can be used in communicating the value of a brand to consumers.

In sum, the research described in this dissertation has the potential to provide information that will be helpful in developing marketing strategies that enable both private label and national brands to better compete. For example, knowing that Nike athletic shoe users may value the shoe more highly if it provides them with the confidence to "play basketball like Michael Jordan" may assist Nike in developing future brand strategies and even product improvements that will allow the company to sustain its competitive advantage. Alternatively, knowing that users of athletic shoes may consider "confidence" and "comfort" in their evaluations of athletic shoe performance may suggest alternative brand positioning opportunities for the marketer of a private label brand.

Summary of Potential Contributions to Marketing Thought

Although consumer value is expected to be highly dependent on the brand and product category, the conclusions about value related to national and private label brands which emerge from this research have the potential to contribute to future theory development and testing in the area of consumer value. Specifically, the research described in this dissertation has the potential to:

- Suggest a conceptual framework that clarifies and extends concepts presented in the literature and integrates marketing thought related to (a) consumer value and (b) branding

- Initiate a collection of empirical findings about what consumers value about their preferred brands
- Demonstrate the potential of branding to contribute to consumer value
- Provide a basis for future research related to the development of brand communication strategies and the potential of these strategies to differentiate brands in terms of consumer thoughts about value
- Suggest additional bases (i.e., the effectiveness of brand strategies that are designed to create consumer value) on which brand equity may be measured
- Suggest the potential of specific branding strategies to contribute to long-term brand-consumer relationships
- Provide input into conceptual frameworks that guide branding strategy development.

Summary of Potential Contributions to Marketing Practice

In addition to providing a basis for incorporating marketing thought related consumer value into branding research, this dissertation provides information that is expected to be useful for marketing practitioners. For example, it is proposed that consumer thoughts related to national brands are more complex and include consideration of more attribute level brand associations than consumer thoughts related to private label brands. In addition, the relative influence of the type of attribute level brand association and type of consequence are expected to differ. One research proposition (developed in Chapter 2) suggests that, because of the strong link between private label brands and the retailer, consumer value associated with private label brands is expected to include a greater proportion of thoughts about the brand as organization (Mogelonsky 1993). Support for this proposition (as well as the others that were tested in the empirical study) would provide an important basis for developing marketing strategies that reinforce or change consumer perceptions of national and private label brands.

Furthermore, this dissertation demonstrates a methodology for collecting information about the consumer value that may be created by branding. Marketers can use this methodology to collect information about the brand associations that are important to consumers of their own, as well as competing, brands. This information has the potential to benefit marketers in making the following kinds of strategic decisions:

- Identifying marketing strategies that can be used to differentiate a brand
- Developing brand strategies that reduce brand switching
- Developing brand communication strategies
- Developing measures of consumer value and satisfaction that are relevant for understanding the potential of branding to create value for consumers
- Building long-term brand-consumer relationships.

In addition to the contributions listed above, this research has the potential to provide the following benefits to marketing managers who are specifically interested in national and private label branding:

- Insights about similarities and differences in the content (or meaning) of what consumers value about national and private label brands
- Insights about the structure (i.e., type and complexity) of consumer thoughts related to national and private label brands.

Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the research area and highlights the importance of understanding as much as possible about the value for consumers that may be created by branding. In addition, the chapter delineates the research objectives and questions that are addressed by this study. Finally, it outlines some potential contributions of this research.

Chapter 2 summarizes the marketing literature that is relevant for understanding consumer value that may be associated with an individual brand. First, the chapter provides a brief review of the consumer value literature. Next, it summarizes insights from research on branding that seem to be relevant to the study of consumer value at the brand level. Findings from both literatures are integrated in the form of a conceptual framework that can be used as a basis for examining and clarifying the types of associations that consumers find important when evaluating a specific brand. Finally, the application of this framework to the context of national and private label brands is discussed.

Chapter 3 focuses on research methodology. This chapter suggests operational definitions for the constructs to be examined, further describes the context for the research, reviews techniques that would be appropriate for evaluating the usefulness of the conceptual framework, outlines the process that was used to conduct the research study, and evaluates the quality of the data.

Chapter 4 reviews the research propositions and hypotheses that are tested in the dissertation study. It provides a demographic profile of the sample and describes the process by which the data was coded and analyzed. Finally, findings from the analyses are presented and briefly discussed.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of conceptual and methodological limitations of the study. The chapter also reviews implications of the findings presented in Chapter 4 and compares the findings with previous research that has been presented in the literature. Finally, directions for future research are presented.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter 2 is a literature review chapter that provides the foundation and justification for the conceptual framework and research propositions that guide the dissertation study. This chapter consists of four major sections:

- A review of the consumer value literature as it applies to branding
- A review of the branding literature as it relates to consumer value
- The development of a conceptual framework that integrates insights from the consumer value and branding literatures
- A discussion of the application of the framework to the context of national and private label brands.

In total, this chapter provides a discussion of nine insights from the literature which summarize the nature of consumer value at the brand level. These insights serve as the foundation for the development of the conceptual framework as well as the research propositions that are addressed in the dissertation study.

Review of the Consumer Value Literature

The consumer value literature makes an important contribution to marketing thought by suggesting that value can be created and delivered at both the brand and product category levels (Woodruff and Gardial 1996; Woodruff 1997). Despite this contribution, however, only limited discussion is provided about special issues which may affect the value created by branding (e.g., name, identity, branding). For example, comparisons with competing brands or prior experience with products in a different category that share a brand name may play a significant role in the delivery of value at the brand level. This dissertation considers consumer value specifically as it relates to branding. It integrates insights from the

consumer value and branding literatures to more precisely define and clarify issues that may affect the value a consumer associates with an individual brand. The challenges of this section are:

- To provide a comprehensive review of insights from the literature on consumer value that are applicable at the brand level
- To further define and clarify the range of attributes, consequences, and desired end states (also called value dimensions) that consumers may consider when evaluating specific brands.

The consumer value literature contains several thorough discussions regarding the nature of consumer value (e.g., Burns 1993; Woodruff 1997). This section differs from previous reviews of the literature in that it considers how commonalities in thought regarding consumer value may apply when examining the value associated with branded products. At the end of the discussion, a table summarizing the relationship between these insights and the types of value that have been identified in previous literature reviews is presented.

Value Is a Subjective Assessment Made by the Consumer

The literature on consumer value begins with the assumption that value is created by and resides with the consumer (Woodruff and Gardial 1996; Woodruff 1997). This perspective is important because it suggests that consumer value is dependent on individual needs and cannot be measured independently of the consumer. The idea that consumer value is subjective has face validity at the brand level. For example, common sense suggests that a University of Tennessee sweatshirt might be worth more to a University of Tennessee graduate than it would be to a graduate of another school. The consumer value perspective takes into account the idea that different consumers may value products differently, and thus can provide important insights for companies interested in building brand equity.

The consumer value perspective differs markedly from the perspective of economic value that has been presented in the literature. The economic perspective implies that the financial value, or "worth," of a brand can be objectively assigned (Ratchford 1975; Sheth, Newman and Gross 1991). The dominance of the economic perspective in discussions of value is believed to have limited theory development related to the value of brands to consumers (Keller 1993; Riezebos 1994). For example, Keller (1993) suggests that understanding the components of brand value from the consumer perspective can assist managers in making strategic decisions, such as product positioning or market segmentation, that will help to build brand equity. In addition, Riezebos (1994) notes that understanding "brand-added value" (increase in the likelihood of consumer purchase based on the attachment of the brand name) requires an understanding of how a brand is perceived by consumers. These examples suggest that the value a consumer associates with a brand is subjective.

Although this dissertation examines differences in value between consumers, it is important to note that consumer value may vary both within and between consumers. As an example, Gardial, Clemons, Woodruff, Schumann and Burns (1994) demonstrate that the value of a product is construed differently at the time of purchase than it is after product use. This study found that product attributes, such as "color" or "price", play a larger role during the purchase situation, while consequences, such as "comfortable" or "easy to use," are considered more often after product use. Changes in use situations, such as movement from purchase to consumption situations, are expected to affect the value of a brand to a consumer.

Sometimes, a consumer's assessment of value may change because a specific experience (called an occasion trigger) causes the consumer to reevaluate the product in the context of the recent experience (Woodruff and Gardial 1996; Woodruff, Schumann, Clemons, Burns and Gardial 1990). The recent experience may suggest changes in use situations that will enhance the value the consumer associates with the product. Alternatively, a negative experience (such as a product failure) can cause a continual

devaluing of the product that may result in brand or supplier switching (Woodruff and Gardial 1996; Woodruff, Schumann, Clemons, Burns and Gardial 1990).

Occasion triggers also have the potential to affect consumer value. The nature of these triggers at the brand level, however, is particularly intriguing. For example, viewing an ad, reading about an organizational change, or using a brand extension may all influence consumer value as it relates to a brand. Understanding the nature and type of occasion triggers that operate at the brand level is important, particularly when comparing the potential of brand strategies to contribute to consumer value. For example, this understanding may help explain why, in some cases, the trial of a private label brand reduces the loyalty a consumer feels for nationally branded products in the same product category (Private Label Manufacturers Association 1992).

Value Is Situation Specific

The consumer value literature also suggests that situation is fundamental to value creation. In fact, consumer value is considered to result from the coming together of a person and product in the context of a particular use situation (Gutman 1982; Holbrook and Corfman 1985; Woodruff and Gardial 1996; Ziethaml 1988). In the case of consumer value that is associated with branding, this means that what is valued about a brand may change when the use situation changes. In addition, it suggests that value cannot be accurately assessed without considering the person, brand, and use situation.

Although the importance of situation in determining individual behavior is well established in both social psychology and consumer behavior (Belk 1975; Sandel 1968; Sherif and Sherif 1956), the consumer value literature focuses primarily on a single type of situation, the use situation. Use situation refers specifically to the situational characteristics that apply at the "point in time or space (Belk 1975, p. 157)" when the consumer is actually using the brand.

Use situation is expected to play an important role in the creation of consumer value at the brand level. For example, a consumer may desire the style of a Brooks Brothers polo

shirt when going out to dinner (provides the benefit of "helps me look attractive"), but may prefer the comfort of an old polo shirt from Wal-Mart when mowing the lawn (provides the benefit of "feels good").

One reason that consumer value is expected to vary by situation is that consumers may assess the value of brands based on the brand's ability to help them achieve desired end states, or goals. The ability of brands to help consumers achieve desired end states is considered to be fundamental to assessments of value (Gutman 1982; Walker, Celsi and Olson 1986). In fact, means-end theory suggests that consumers may use knowledge structures linking brands to desired end states as a basis for processing information relative to solving problems, or making choices (Abelson 1981; Reynolds and Gutman 1988). Thus, in order to understand consumer value at the brand level, it is essential to understand the end states that a consumer uses a brand to achieve.

Walker and Olson (1991) describe the role of desired end states in affecting consumer choice of brand as follows:

> One of the central functions of marketing is to create, at least momentarily, a psychological relationship between consumers and a product or service. That is, marketing must persuade the consumer to associate the product or service with satisfying some benefit, goal, or value that is important to the consumer. By influencing the degree to which consumers perceive a product or service to be *self-relevant*, marketers can affect consumers' level of motivation to learn about, shop for, and ultimately buy the sponsored brand (p. 111).

Likewise, Gutman (1982) suggests that the means-end concept, which forms an important basis for understanding customer value (Woodruff and Gardial 1996), "offers marketing managers a way to position products by associating means (the physical aspects of products) with advertising that seeks to tie the consumption of products to the achievement of desired ends (valued [desired end] states) (p. 60)."

Value Is the Result of Trade-offs Made by a Consumer

Value is thought to result from the trade-offs a consumer makes to use a product (Holbrook 1994; Woodruff and Gardial 1996; Woodruff 1997; Zeithaml 1988). In many cases, the trade-offs that consumers are thought to make are tightly defined, such as trade-offs between price and quality (Ziethaml 1988). Woodruff and Gardial (1996) take a broader view of the trade-offs that consumers may make, suggesting that a range of benefits (positive experiences for the consumer) and sacrifices (costs to the consumer) may be relevant to a consumer when assessing value. Consideration of a range of benefits and sacrifices is evident at the brand level. For example, if a retailer is out of stock of Bayer aspirin, some consumers may drive to another store to purchase the brand because they trust the Bayer Company, the manufacturer. Here, the choice to drive to a distant store may represent a sacrifice of the consumer's time (a different trade-off than price), while a trust in the manufacturer may provide a benefit in addition to the quality of the product purchased. In another example, consumers may make the choice between buying a private label brand shirt, which can be worn with many different outfits, or an Anne Klein shirt, which they believe will make them look more sophisticated. In this case, a trade-off is occurring between two benefits ("helps expand my wardrobe" and "makes me look more attractive"), neither of which is adequately captured by the single construct of "quality."

The trade-offs consumers make that contribute to value are often conceptualized as occurring at the consequence level (Woodruff and Gardial 1996; Zeithaml 1988). For example, the choice between a private label brand or Anne Klein shirt is only meaningful to the extent that the brand makes a difference in the shirt's utility or its ability to enhance an individual's self esteem. Although the focus of the recent consumer value literature has been on the trade-offs of consequences, it is important to note that consumers may consider other types of brand associations, such as attributes and attribute performances, when evaluating a brand.

Understanding how consumers make trade-offs at the brand level can assist companies in developing brand strategies that deliver consequences not generally associated with the product category. For example, as discussed in Chapter 1, Coca-Cola may be perceived by consumers as providing consequences such as "makes me feel like a kid again" or "reminds me of being an American." Based on the furor that arose when the original Coke was replaced by New Coke, these consequences would seem to be a critical part of the value consumers associate with the Coca-Cola brand. However, these consequences are not necessarily associated with the soft drink product category. In other words, if Coke were not available, a consumer might not evaluate other soft drinks (such as private label soft drinks) based on their ability to "make me feel like a kid again." This example supports the idea that understanding the trade-offs that consumers make at the brand level may provide actionable information about the value of a brand to consumers.

Value May Involve Consequence Trade-offs that are Functional, Psycho-social, or Both

Although consumer value is generally considered to result from trade-offs, the nature of these trade-offs may vary (Burns 1993; Holbrook 1994; Woodruff and Gardial 1996). Burns (1993) identifies two types of consequences that may be relevant in consumer assessments of value, functional consequences and symbolic (or possession) consequences. Functional consequences are those aspects of "consumer perceptions of what they want to have happen (Woodruff and Gardial 1996, p. 54)" that relate to the utility of the product (such as "easy for me to use" or "keeps my family safe"). Symbolic, or possession, consequences are benefits and sacrifices associated with a product that are based on aspects of the product other than functional utility, such as self-expression (Walker and Olson 1991) or meaning (Levy 1959; McCracken 1986, 1988). Some examples of symbolic consequences which may be relevant for a consumer are "makes me look like a movie star" (self-expression) or "reminds me of an old friend" (meaning). The distinction between the functional and symbolic nature of consequences has also been characterized as a continuum ranging from intrinsic (symbolic) value to extrinsic (functional) value (Holbrook

and Corfman 1985; Holbrook 1994). These distinctions in the nature of value form the basis for a discussion of the various types of trade-offs that consumers may make in assessing the value of a brand.

Value in use. First, consumers may make trade-offs among a set of purely functional consequences. In this case, a brand would be evaluated solely on its ability to provide consequences that relate to its performance on key product attributes (Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991). For example, a consumer may evaluate Zest soap solely on its ability to provide consequences such as "leaves my skin clean," "available when I need it," and "lasts for a long time." Burns (1993) characterizes trade-offs among functional consequences as "value in use (p. 66)." Private label brands that are perceived by consumers to have similar product attributes (and attribute performances) as national brands in the same product category are considered to be similar in value-in-use.

As described in Chapter 1, many national brands are supported by marketing strategies that seek to differentiate the brand by creating a unique brand image. The section below describes the trade-offs made by a consumer when assessing the value of a brand based solely on image-related attributes (such as manufacturer reputation, advertising, or symbolic meaning). In most cases, however, consumers make trade-offs that include image-related and functional attributes (such as product, packaging features, warranty, price, etc.).

Possession value. For a few products, consumers make trade-offs of consequences that are purely symbolic, or psycho-social, in nature. Psycho-social consequences are conceptualized as higher order consequences that link product knowledge to self-knowledge (Walker and Olson 1991). For example, an individual may value a Christian Dior dress based on its performance in providing psycho-social consequences, such as "having the kind of dress a movie star would wear" or "making me feel pretty." Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) suggest two types of value that may emerge from the symbolic aspects of a product: social and emotional. Social value stems from trade-offs in which the basis for evaluation is how the brand represents the user to other people or contribute to self-expression. In the example above, "having the kind of dress a movie star would wear" may contribute to the

social value a consumer attributes to the Christian Dior brand. Emotional value emerges from trade-offs in which the enhancement of emotional well-being is the primary consideration. Continuing with the example above, "making me feel pretty" is a consequence that contributes to emotional value. The psycho-social consequences that contribute to emotional and social value are termed emotional and self-expressive consequences, respectively (Gutman 1982). Burns (1993) characterizes trade-offs among consequences that involve the symbolic nature of a product as "possession value (p. 72)."

Overall value. In many cases, trade-offs of consequences may involve all aspects of a brand, including functional, symbolic, and other aspects. For example, a consumer might evaluate an Saturn based on functional consequences, such as "safe for me to drive" and "helps me get where I need to go," as well as psycho-social consequences, such as "makes me look cool to my friends" and "fun to drive." To capture this kind of evaluative situation, Burns (1993) characterizes the summary judgment of value that a consumer makes as "overall value (p. 73)." Interestingly, the rise in popularity of private label brands suggests that an emphasis on trade-offs of functional consequences (value-in-use) may be occurring for many products.

Summary. To summarize, consumers may make trade-offs at the brand level that involve evaluations of consequences that are functional in nature, psycho-social in nature, or both. Table 2-1 summarizes the three different types of consequence trade-offs that consumers make when evaluating a brand.

Table 2-1. Summary of consequence trade-offs.

	Type of Consequences	Nature of Consumer Value
1	Functional consequences only	Value-in-use
2	Psycho-social consequences only	Possession value
3	Functional and psycho-social consequences	Overall value

Consumers Organize Thoughts about Value According to Levels of Abstraction

The literature on consumer value suggests that consumer thoughts related to use of a particular product or brand can be organized in a hierarchical form, called a value hierarchy (Gutman and Reynolds 1986; Woodruff and Gardial 1996). The value hierarchy framework serves as the foundation for this dissertation's examination of consumer value that may be created by branding. In particular, the value hierarchy illustrates how certain characteristics of a brand (brand associations) can create value (in the form of consequences) by helping consumers reach individual end states (related to their own personal goals).

The value hierarchy framework is based on means-end categorization theory (Gutman 1982), which suggests that (1) end states desired by the consumer play a dominant role in guiding choice patterns, and (2) that people cope with diversity of products and choices by grouping them into sets in order to reduce complexity. Means end chains are considered to be a theoretically robust conceptualization of the varying levels of abstraction that comprise a consumer's product, or brand, knowledge (Gutman 1982; Olson and Reynolds 1983; Reynolds and Gutman 1988; Reynolds and Whitlark 1995; Walker and Olson 1991). In addition, means-end theory has been supported as a usable framework for developing marketing communication strategies that are based on an understanding of consumer value (Gengler and Reynolds 1995; Reynolds and Gutman 1984, 1988; Reynolds and Craddock 1988; Reynolds, Cockle and Rochon 1990).

A complete means-end chain includes constructs that represent six levels of consumer knowledge, ranging from concrete knowledge of brand attributes to much more abstract knowledge of self. Figure 2-1 illustrates the six levels of knowledge that together comprise the means-end chain.

The value hierarchy represents a condensed version of the means-end chain shown above. Although the importance of all six levels of consumer knowledge is recognized (Reynolds and Gutman 1984, 1988; Reynolds and Whitlark 1995), the constructs representing the varying levels of knowledge are typically consolidated into three more

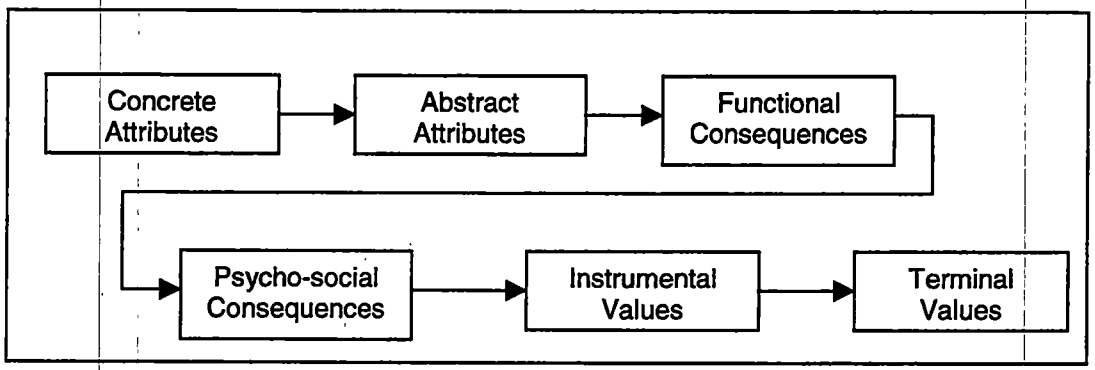


Figure 2-1. Means-end chain model.
Source: Adapted from Walker and Olson (1991).

general categories: attributes, consequences, and desired end states. Thus, the value hierarchy pictorially represents the consequences (benefits and sacrifices) and end states (goals) that attributes provide for the consumer (Reynolds and Gutman 1988). In addition, because value is thought to be created within a use situation, value hierarchies explicitly recognize the importance of placing consumers in the context of use situations in which they routinely use a product, or brand (Gutman 1982; Reynolds and Gutman 1988). The general framework representing a value hierarchy is illustrated in Figure 2-2.

As depicted in Figure 2-2, the value hierarchy is made up of three constructs, which vary in level of abstraction. The relationships between these constructs illustrate the linkages that consumers find in relating a brand and the consequences associated with using the brand to their own personal values, or goals (Gutman 1982; Woodruff and Gardial 1996). Each of the three constructs that make up the value hierarchy is discussed in more detail below.

Attributes. Product attributes represent the most concrete form of knowledge that a consumer holds relative to a brand (Bartels 1988; Burns 1993). They are perceived characteristics of the product itself and are typically more objectively identifiable than other constructs in the value hierarchy. Product attributes have also traditionally been the foundation for understanding brand knowledge (Burns 1993; Ratchford 1975).

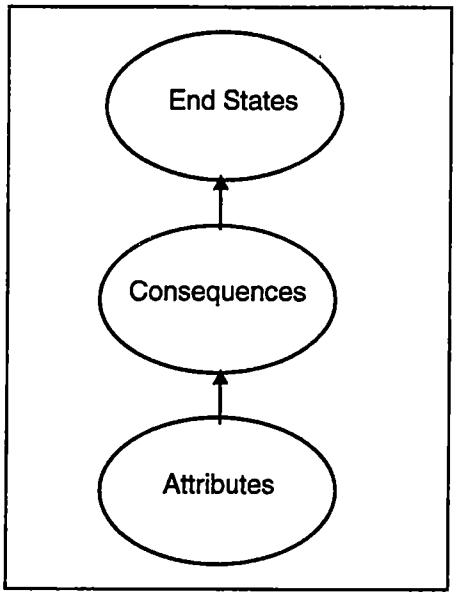


Figure 2-2. Value hierarchy.
Source: Adapted from Woodruff and Gardial (1996).

As shown in Figure 2-1, means-end theory recognizes the existence of two types of attributes, concrete attributes and abstract attributes. Concrete attributes tend to represent the physical aspects of a product. In addition, concrete attributes are measurable on some sort of physical scale (Myers and Shocker 1981). For example, the color, temperature, or sweetness of a cup of coffee would all be concrete attributes of the product. Abstract attributes, also known as pseudo-physical characteristics, are "objective in nature but not as measurable on a physical scale (Myers and Shocker 1981, p. 213)." Although not measurable, abstract attributes (such as the smell of a cup of coffee or the memory of the brand jingle from a television advertisement) are often part of the basis for a consumer's evaluation of a brand.

In addition, product attributes may be classified as either continuous and categorical. Continuous attributes are those on which brand delivered value varies along a continuous dimension. For example, the degree of "comfort" or "confidence" provided by a particular brand of athletic shoe may vary from high to low. Categorical attributes are those on which a

brand's delivered value is either in one category or another category, such as "an official sponsor of the Olympic games" or "not an official sponsor of the Olympic games." This same distinction applies to both attributes and consequences. Brand strategies can be designed to either position a brand as a particular point within a continuous attribute dimension (i.e., Charmin is squeezably soft) or promote a brand as providing a desired categorical attribute (i.e., Nike is the only brand of athletic shoe recommended by Michael Jordan).

Understanding the trade-offs consumers make among attributes is an area of research that has received considerable attention in the marketing literature (e.g., Bass and Talarzyk 1972; Cohen 1979; McAlister 1982) and forms the basis for the multi-attribute models that have been presented (e.g., Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). This research, however, has not yet incorporated a framework for classifying the types of attributes that comprise a brand's identity as more or less likely to create consumer value. Burns (1993) characterizes the result of trade-offs at the attribute level as "product value (p. 58)."

Means-end theory and the value hierarchy concept make important contributions to marketing thought by illustrating that trade-offs at the attribute level are important only to the extent that the attributes deliver consequences to consumers during use, which in turn facilitate (or impede) a consumer's ability to reach a desired end state. Means-end theory and the value hierarchy both underscore the need for understanding the trade-offs that consumers make in assessing value at the brand level.

When developing a framework that can be used to categorize types of product attributes which have the potential to deliver value at the brand level, several considerations emerge. First, an important purpose for identifying valued product attributes and assessing attribute performances is that this information provides a basis for understanding the consequences that consumers think are important. A framework that identifies various types of attributes should incorporate the idea that valued attributes are important in large part because of their linkages to valued consequences and desired end states.

Second, developing a categorization of product attributes that have the potential to deliver value suggests the need to identify attribute level brand associations that are formed during the use situation as well as brand associations that are created prior to the use situation and are stored in memory (such as messages from marketing communications). Based on consumer research related to memory-based judgments (Lynch and Srull 1982) and effects of prior knowledge on evaluation and choice (Bettman and Park 1980), at least some of the brand associations and consequences stored in memory may be activated during the use situation. If so, these consequences may have an important effect on the value judgments consumers make relative to the brand. Thus, brand associations stored in memory (and which are recalled or reinforced during the use situation) may have significant potential to contribute to the value consumers associate with a brand (Woodruff and Gardial 1996).

In sum, the inclusion of the concept of product attribute in the value hierarchy framework demonstrates the importance of connecting concrete knowledge about a product with more abstract knowledge that a consumer may hold relative to self. The challenge in developing a categorization that highlights the potential of several different types of product attributes to contribute to consumer value is ensuring that the types of brand associations included specifically reflect the range of brand associations that a consumer may hold, including those on which multiple brands are perceived to perform equally as well as those that are perceived as points of brand differentiation.

Consequences. Because they form the link between concrete product-related knowledge and more abstract self-knowledge, consequences are often the focus of efforts to identify and measure sources of consumer value (Woodruff and Gardial 1996; Woodruff 1997). In fact, value is often defined in terms of consequences, which highlight the relationship and meaning a product or service holds for the consumer. Woodruff and Gardial (1996), for example, define value as "the consumers' perception of what they want to have happen (i.e., the consequences) in a specific use situation, with the help of a product or service offering, in order to accomplish a desired purpose or goal (p. 54)."

As discussed earlier, consequences can take several forms, functional (related to the utility a product provides) or psycho-social (related to the intrinsic benefits a product may create for a consumer). In addition, psycho-social consequences can be classified into two types, emotional and self-expressive (Gutman 1982; Reynolds and Whitlark 1995; Valette-Florence and Rapacchi 1995). Based on this classification, the emergence of functional consequences suggests that consumers are making trade-offs related to value-in-use, while the emergence of psycho-social consequences suggests that consumers are making assessments of possession value.

Interestingly, the levels of abstraction concept (e.g., Reynolds and Gutman 1984; Reynolds and Craddock 1988; Walker and Olson 1991) defines functional consequences as lower-order consequences, which have the potential to create psycho-social consequences, or higher-order consequences, for a consumer. For example, drinking a milk shake may create functional consequences for a consumer such as "satisfies me," "refreshes me," or "makes my hunger go away." These consequences have the potential to create psycho-social consequences (emotional or self-expressive consequences). In this example, the functional consequences of "satisfies me" or "makes my hunger go away" may in turn create an emotional consequence for the consumer, such as "makes me feel good." The literature on the nature of consumer value reviewed earlier, however, suggests that value-in-use (involving trade-offs of functional consequences) and possession value (involving trade-offs of psycho-social consequences) may occur independently. For example, a consumer may evaluate a work of art only on the emotional consequences it creates, such as "makes me feel good" or "provides a pleasing aura in my room."

The suggestion that functional consequences are necessary for the creation of psycho-social consequences is contradictory to the notion that consumers may consider either (or both) functional or psycho-social consequences when evaluating a brand (Burns 1993; Holbrook 1994). When examining the value consumers associate with brands, one must consider that consequences may be created via a variety of brand associations. Interestingly, many brand associations created through exposure to image-related marketing

activities are intended to create psycho-social consequences. For example, as described in Chapter 1, Nike invests heavily in creating a link in the consumer's mind between the Nike brand and Michael Jordan. The intention is that an association with Michael Jordan provides direct benefits for the consumer, which may be emotional ("makes me feel like I am wearing the shoes Michael Jordan would wear") or self-expressive ("makes me look like a basketball star"). This lack of agreement in the literature about the structure of linkages between attributes and consequences that consumers find valuable suggests that further examination and clarification of the relationship between functional and psycho-social consequences is needed.

Although the categorization of psycho-social consequences as higher-order consequences may limit our understanding of the ways in which consumers evaluate a brand, the importance of consequences (both lower order and higher order) appears essential to the understanding of consumer value.

Desired end states. The most abstract level of knowledge captured by means-end theory represents the "ends," or desired end states, that consumers may use brands to help them achieve. As shown in Figure 2-1, means-end theory discriminates between two levels of desired end states, those representing instrumental and terminal values. This conceptualization of end states is based on the work of Rokeach (1968, 1973, 1979). Terminal values represent preferred end states related to human existence, such as happiness, freedom, or a world of beauty. In contrast, instrumental values represent modes of behavior that assist individuals in reaching their desired end states. Some examples of instrumental values are honest, courageous, imaginative, polite, etc.

Additional insight regarding how consumers relate products to desired end states is provided by the literature on self-schema. Self-schema theory (e.g., Epstein 1973; Marcus 1977, 1983) suggests that the desired end states that a consumer may use a brand to achieve are aspects of the consumer's activated self-schema. Thus, value is created to the extent that the consumer's brand knowledge can be linked to the consumer's self-knowledge (Walker and Olson 1991). A primary focus of laddering, a commonly used means of learning

about value, is connecting products to self (Gutman 1991). Thus, the literature suggests that value at the brand level may be linked to the brand's ability to help a consumer achieve desired end states (Gutman 1982; Walker, Celsi and Olson 1986).

Desired end states may apply to both the individual and the organization. Burns (1993) identifies three types of values, or desired end states, that may be relevant for understanding consumer value. These are personal values (which are salient to the individual), organizational values (which are salient to a group or organization) and role values (which are salient to an individual only to the extent that they occupy a certain position relative to another person, or play a certain role).

Understanding desired end states is important for the measurement of consumer value at the brand level because they provide insight into the standards consumers use in judging performance and the motivations that guide consumer behavior and judgments (Rokeach 1973, 1979). For example, a consumer may value the benefit of "makes me feel like a kid again" that is associated with Coke because it provides a "sense of security." This insight may assist marketers of Coke in developing other strategies that enhance the "sense of security" a Coke can provide. It is generally assumed that consumers value brands to the extent that the brand helps the consumer achieve desired end states (Gutman 1991; Woodruff and Gardial 1996).

Linkages. In addition to understanding the individual components of the means-end chain, or value hierarchy, the linkages between constructs also provide information that is fundamental to understanding consumer value (Gengler and Reynolds 1995; Reynolds and Gutman 1988). In fact, the paths by which consumers relate attributes, consequences, and desired end states may provide important information about the structure of the consumer's brand evaluations. This information can be used in the development of brand marketing strategies (Reynolds and Whitlark 1995).

For example, consider the benefits of identifying linkages between attributes and consequences. This type of linkage may relate a specific characteristic of the brand to a particular consequence (benefit or sacrifice) that the brand provides for a consumer. This

information may not always be intuitive. In a hypothetical example, suppose that a consumer value study discovered that many consumers associate the loudness of a Chevrolet Suburban's horn (attribute) with the ability to avoid accidents (consequence) provided by the automobile. Knowing that this linkage exists would provide a car manufacturer with very actionable information that could be used in designing future products. In addition, identifying attribute - consequence linkages can provide information that allows companies to identify groupings of attributes that work together to create a common consequence. For example, a soap manufacturer that recognizes how the attributes of "clean smell," "white color," and "easy to rinse off my skin" work together to create the consequence of "makes my skin clean" might have some important insights that would help in the design of brand extensions that may be valued by consumers.

Identifying specific linkages between consequences and end states is critical to understanding the effect of brand strategies on consumer value. These linkages highlight sources of meaning that the product may hold for a consumer (Gutman 1991; Olson and Reynolds 1983). In addition, although there is much to be learned about how to determine the strength of these linkages, knowledge of the attribute, consequence, desired end state relationships consumers use in evaluating a product has been shown to be useful in strategy development (Gengler and Reynolds 1995; Reynolds and Whitlark 1995; Valette-Florence and Rapacchi 1991). For instance, knowing that the consequence of "easy to maintain" (provided by using a Toro lawn mower) is linked to the desired end state of "a peaceful life" provides some important insights that can be used as a basis for introducing brand extensions and developing more effective communication strategies. The challenge for marketers is to differentiate their brands based on linkages that cannot be easily replicated by competing brands.

The branding literature reinforces the idea that the levels of abstraction concept may be relevant for understanding knowledge structures at the brand level. For example, Reynolds and Gutman (1987) and Reynolds and Whitlark (1995) suggest that the laddering technique may elicit insights that may be helpful in developing marketing communication

strategies for individual brands. In addition, brand researchers have suggested that attribute-consequence linkages are an important component of consumer value at the brand level (Olson and Reynolds 1983; Zaltman and Coulter 1985).

Value May Be Either Desired or Received

In describing the concept of consumer value, Woodruff (1997) distinguishes between desired value and received value. Desired value represents preferences for certain value dimensions (i.e., attributes, consequences, or desired end states) based on positive outcomes that the consumer associates with the value dimension. For example, a consumer may desire a real estate agent "who makes the process of buying a house easy" when purchasing a home. This desire is independent of the actual performance of any real estate agent who has helped the consumer. Received value, on the other hand, represents consumer evaluations of brand performances on key value dimensions. In the example above, an evaluation of a particular realtor on a continuum of "excellent" to "terrible" on "making the process of buying a house easy" is an example of received value. Desired value can provide a marketer with an outline of consumer expectations, while received value provides indicators of actual brand performance. The insights about the nature and structure of consumer value that are discussed in this section are applicable to both desired and received value; however, the ability to differentiate between and measure both types of consumer evaluations is critical (Woodruff 1997).

Relationship Between Insights and Types of Value Presented in the Literature

The six insights discussed above represent an important foundation for understanding consumer value at the brand level. In addition, these insights represent commonalities in marketing thought that exist within a diverse body of literature. Table 2-2 summarizes the relationship between the types of value presented in the marketing literature and the insights related to value at the brand level that were discussed in this section.

Table 2-2. Summary of the relationship between type of value and insights from the consumer value literature.

	Insight Related to Consumer Value at the Brand Level	Type of Value				
		Economic Value (Ratchford 1975)	Product Value (Burns 1993; Ziethaml 1988)	Value-in-Use (Burns 1993; Holbrook 1994; Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991)	Possession Value (Burns 1993; Holbrook 1994; Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991)	Overall Value (Burns 1993; Holbrook 1994; Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991; Woodruff 1997)
1	Value is a subjective assessment made by the consumer.		X	X	X	X
2	Value is situation specific.			X	X	X
3	Value is the result of trade-offs.	X	X	X	X	X
4	Value can involve trade-offs of consequences that are functional, psycho-social, or both.					X
5	Consumers organize thoughts about value according to varying levels of abstraction.			X	X	X
6	Value may be either desired or received.		X	X	X	X

Strategic Process for Determining Consumer Value

In order to extend thought related to consumer value, it is important to understand how the literature related to the nature and structure of consumer value fits in to a larger strategic process of value determination and measurement. Woodruff and Gardial (1996) propose a five step Customer Value Determination (CVD) Process that can be used for measuring consumer value. This methodology is illustrated in Figure 2-3.

The CVD process makes three important contributions to the consumer value literature. First, it relates the concepts of desired value (reflected by identification and prioritization of value dimensions) and received value (reflected by customer value and satisfaction measurements). Second, it suggests a framework whereby both quantitative and

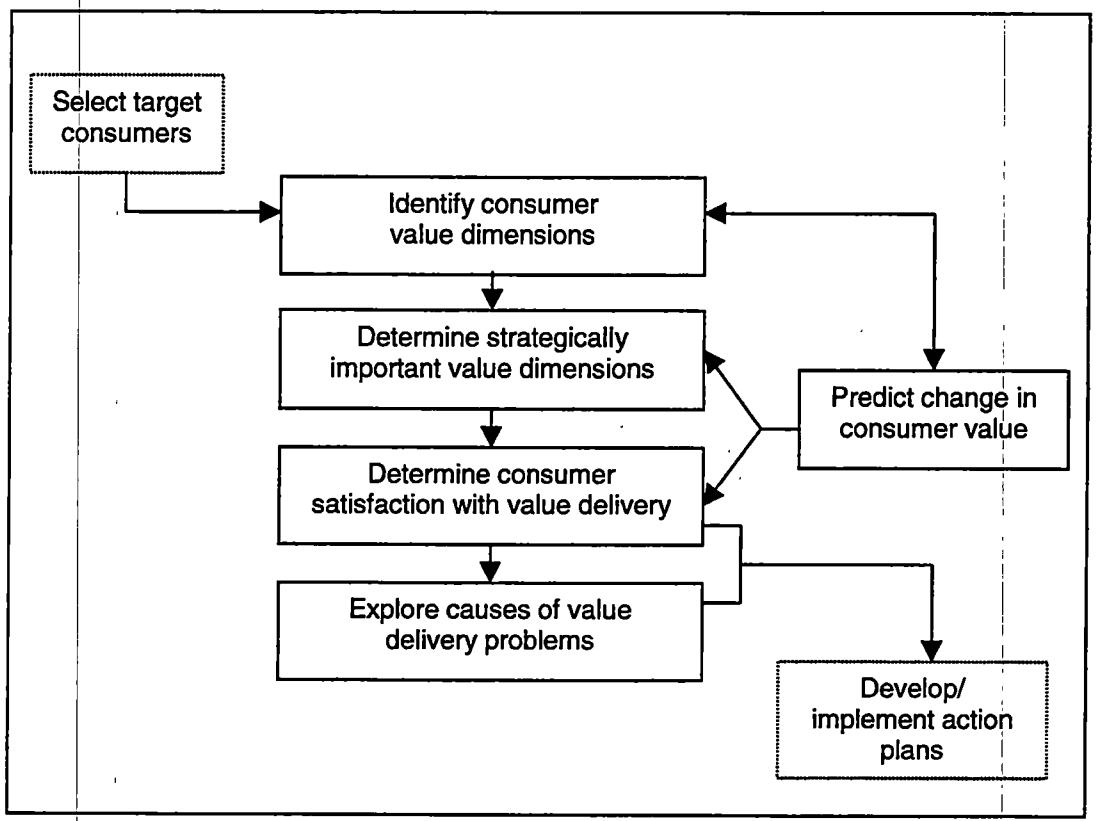


Figure 2-3. Customer value determination process.
Source: Woodruff and Gardial (1996).

qualitative techniques are used to provide an ongoing assessment of how consumers evaluate products over time. Third, the CVD process recognizes the potential for both continuous and categorical brand associations to contribute to consumer value. As the previous discussion suggests, when examining value at the brand level, it is important to understand brand associations that are associated with multiple brands in a product category (continuous associations) as well as brand associations that are unique to a particular brand in a product category (categorical associations). For example, a consumer may believe that Coca-Cola performs better than other soft drink brands on the consequence "makes me feel like a kid again (a continuous association)." Alternatively, a Coca-Cola employee may purchase Coke because "it is made by the company I work for (a categorical association)." In general, both continuous brand associations (associations where the performance of different brands or product categories is evaluated on a continuum) and categorical brand

associations (associations that are either present or absent in terms of consumer thoughts about the brand or product category) may occur at the product category and brand levels.

The discussion presented in this chapter suggests that marketing thought may not adequately reflect the potential of brand strategies to contribute to consumer value. For this reason, it is critical to further define and clarify the constructs that can be used to examine consumer value at the brand level. Gaps in marketing knowledge related to the value that is created by brand strategies may impair a marketer's ability to implement the CVD process effectively at the brand level. Because it focuses on understanding the specific value dimensions that comprise consumer thought about a preferred brand, the research described in this dissertation employs only the first step of the CVD process.

Summary of the Consumer Value Literature

This section has highlighted a number of insights found in the consumer value literature that are relevant to understanding consumer value as it relates to an individual brand. In addition, it has described a strategic process for understanding and measuring the value of brands to consumers. The insights discussed in this chapter, which are summarized in Table 2-3, provide useful guidance in developing a study that implements the first step of the Customer Value Determination Process with specific attention to issues that may affect consumer value at the brand level.

Table 2-3. Summary of insights from the consumer value literature.

	Insight Related to Consumer Value at the Brand Level
1	Value is a subjective assessment made by the consumer.
2	Value is situation specific.
3	Value is the result of trade-offs.
4	Value can involve trade-offs of consequences that are functional, psycho-social, or both.
5	Consumers organize thoughts about value according to varying levels of abstraction.
6	Value may be either desired or received.

In total, the consumer value literature presents an important conceptual foundation for examining the effect of brand strategies on consumer value. A significant contribution made by this literature is establishing the importance of the consumer, product, and use situation to the creation of value. In addition, this literature conceptualizes value as a construct that:

- Is multi-dimensional
- Varies in terms of level of abstraction and
- Involves trade-offs made by consumers.

Means-end theory provides additional contributions to the development of a study that examines the effect of specific brand strategies on consumer value. Perhaps its most notable contribution is providing a framework for defining the relationship between the attributes and consequences that are important to consumers in helping (or hindering) them in achieving desired end states, or goals. The adaption of the means-end framework to "capture the essence of consumer value (Woodruff 1997, p. 142)" provides an important conceptual foundation for understanding and measuring consumer value at the brand level.

These contributions of the literature reveal that marketing thought has already begun to address many questions that are specific to understanding consumer value as it relates to branding. Examples of these questions are:

- What are some of the things that consumers value about their use of particular brands?
- What is the role of situation in consumer valuation of a brand?
- How is consumer value at the brand level related to desired consequences and end states?
- How might consumer value at the brand level change over time?

Although this literature review reveals many conceptual contributions, it also highlights several issues (that can affect the value consumers attribute to a brand) on which further research is needed. In particular, the lack of a framework for specifying the different types of attribute level brand associations that have the potential create value may limit our understanding of the potential of brand strategies to create (or reinforce) attributes and consequences that are valued. Although current definitions include the potential for all types of attribute level brand associations to contribute to value, these definitions do not provide a framework for guiding the collection of information about the various types of attributes. The lack of a framework may be particularly important for marketers whose brands compete in environments where both product features and other brand marketing activities (such as image advertising, promotions, etc.) are expected to contribute to consumer value. For example, in the brand situation where private label and national brands compete head to head, marketers who do not know the effect of image-related marketing strategies (which are typically used more heavily for national than private label brands) on overall value are limited in their ability to make decisions about future marketing efforts, such as changes in promotion or brand pricing.

Second, although the consumer value literature recognizes the potential of brand associations that are created prior to as well as during use to create value in a particular use situation, few efforts have been made to document similarities and differences in how brand associations formed at different times can affect consumer value. As a result, the extent to which brand associations created prior to the use situation (also known as formative experiences) contribute to consumer value is not clear. This knowledge is particularly important to brand marketers since many promotional efforts focus on creating brand associations that are formed prior to use. Again, future research in this area may aid our understanding of the added value that national brands (which are supported by extensive marketing communication efforts) have the potential to provide for consumers.

Third, there are conflicting viewpoints presented in the consumer value literature regarding the nature of the linkage between emotional and self-expressive consequences

and attribute level brand associations. Means-end theory suggests that emotional and self-expressive consequences are linked to attributes indirectly through functional consequences (e.g., Gutman 1982; Reynolds and Gutman 1984), while other authors suggest that these constructs may be directly linked (e.g., Burns 1993; 1994). Future research in this area is of particular importance for understanding consumer value at the brand level since many brand marketing activities focus on building brand associations that can be directly linked to emotional and self-expressive consequences.

Thus, the literature review in this section has raised several interesting research questions that marketing thought related to consumer value cannot yet answer. These include:

- How can the conceptual frameworks and processes currently used to understand consumer value be modified to better understand consumer value that may be created by branding?
- How do consumers incorporate thoughts about an individual brand (including brand name, image, and personality) into their assessments of overall value?
- How might specific brand strategies (e.g., national and private label branding) influence consumer thoughts about value?

In total, the insights about consumer value that were introduced in this section suggest a solid foundation for examining the effect of specific brand strategies on consumer value. The unanswered research questions presented above, however, suggest opportunities for further research as well as the need for a conceptual framework that clarifies and defines specific ways in which brand strategies may contribute to consumer value. As a means to this end, the next section reviews the literature related to branding. Next, a conceptual framework is introduced that can be used for examining the value to consumers that may be created by branding.

Contributions of Branding Literature

Like the consumer value literature, the branding literature has much to offer that may enhance our understanding of the potential of brand strategies to affect consumer value. This literature is very relevant in that it demonstrates that brand strategies have significant potential to influence consumer preferences and purchase intentions (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble, and Donthu 1995) as well as evaluation of brand extensions (Broniarczyk and Alba 1994). This section reviews three potential contributions of the branding literature to an understanding of ways that brand strategies can affect consumer value. These are:

- Reinforcing the idea that brand associations created prior to use and held in consumer memories (i.e., formative experiences) may contribute to consumer value
- Introducing a categorization of types of attribute level brand associations that have the potential to create valued consequences
- Reinforcing the idea that brand associations can create emotional and self-expressive consequences for consumers independently of functional consequences.

Brand Associations Held in Memory May Contribute to Value

The value hierarchy framework described in the previous section is particularly useful for understanding consumer value because it links product attributes with the consequences and desired end states that a consumer uses the product to achieve. One issue not explicitly addressed by Reynolds and Gutman (1988) in presenting the value hierarchy framework, however, is the extent to which brand associations created prior to use may contribute to consumer value. Although at least one consumer value study has successfully demonstrated that brand associations created during early or initial use experiences (such as formative experiences) are linked to valued consequences and desired end states (Pecorella, Plusker, and Comstock 1993), there is far more evidence in the branding literature that brand

associations held in memory have the potential contribute to consumer assessments of value. To provide additional support for the potential of formative experiences to contribute to consumer value, this section reviews consumer research related to memory, including forms of memory and the process by which brand associations are stored and retrieved.

Forms of memory. Consumer research suggests that knowledge structures held in consumer memory can play a vital role in brand evaluation and judgments. In fact, Farquhar and Herr (1993) suggest that knowledge held in memory can affect the value consumers associate with a brand. Sherry and Schacter (1987) suggest that memory systems can be classified into one of two forms: declarative and procedural. Declarative memory systems support rapid learning which occurs within single trials and situations. For example, a person who has never seen snow may develop and store a number of memories related to snow in the context of one winter visit to Montana. Episodic memory systems, on the other hand, support gradual, incremental learning based on a number of different experiences. An example of an episodic memory system would be a person whose memories related to snow include a variety of experiences and associations, such as being present during a number of different snowfalls, reading about snowfalls in various locations, and hearing stories of other people's experiences in the snow.

Interestingly, in situations where brand associations are created during brand use, declarative memory systems are active in consumer assessments of value. In situations where brand associations are created prior to brand use and activated during the use situation, episodic memory systems play a much larger role. A number of scholars suggest that episodic memory systems are often used to support learning related to an individual brand (Alba, Hutchinson, and Lynch 1991; Keller 1993). In fact, the recent interest in integrated marketing communications is based on the idea that consumers accumulate knowledge about product, services, and brands gradually and across a number of exposures, including use experiences, marketing communications, word of mouth, etc. (Fortini-Campbell 1992, 1995; Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn 1994). In total, memory research suggests that brand associations held in both declarative and episodic memory systems have

the potential to contribute to brand value. It also suggests that understanding the brand associations that consumers hold in memory as well as brand associations that are created during use has the potential to assist marketers in developing strategies that support consumer learning about a particular brand.

In addition to classifying memory based on type of learning supported, the branding literature also suggests that memory can be classified based on an individual's recognition that the memory exists. Thus, the distinction is often made between explicit and implicit memory (Krishnan and Chakravarti 1993; Richardson-Klavehn and Bjork 1988; Roediger, Weldon and Challis 1989). Explicit memory occurs when the individual consciously remembers experiencing the stimulus through which the memory was created. For example, a consumer who remembers watching an advertisement that described Bounty as the "quicker picker upper" would be said to hold the brand association "quicker picker upper" in his or her explicit memory. Alternatively, brand associations that are accessed without the consumer's conscious knowledge are termed implicit memory. For example, a consumer who associates Bounty with "absorbancy" but cannot recall why may hold the brand association "quicker picker upper" in his or her implicit memory. Although consumers are best able to verbalize information about brand associations that are held in explicit memory, brand associations held in both explicit and implicit memory have the potential to contribute to consumer value.

Process by which brand associations are stored in memory. Because the spreading activation view (e.g., Collins and Loftus 1975) provides the most detailed account of memory structure (as a set of linked nodes) and because it most explicitly describes the nature of the relationship between explicit and implicit memory, this view of memory has received considerable attention in the branding literature. In particular, the spreading activation view of memory has formed the basis for conceptual development related to consumer-based brand equity (e.g., Keller 1993; Aaker 1996), which is considered to be influenced by consumer value.

The spreading activation memory model views semantic (or procedural) memory as a set of nodes, consisting of stored information, that are connected by links, which may vary in strength (Collins and Loftus 1975; Keller 1993). When memory is either encoded in or retrieved from a node in memory, this action may activate memory of information stored in linked nodes. For example, when a consumer sees a bottle of Heinz ketchup, this vision may stimulate remembering of other pieces of information related to Heinz ketchup, such as "thick" or "anticipation." When an individual is cued to remember information stored in one node, the strength of associations linked with that node determine the extent of memory retrieval (Collins and Loftus 1975; Raaijmakers and Shiffrin 1981; Ratcliff and McKoon 1988). Thus, the strength of the association between the activated node and the linked nodes of information guides the "spreading activation" memory process.

The spreading activation view of memory forms the basis for many discussions of consumer knowledge structures that appear in the branding literature. For instance, Keller (1993) conceptualizes brand knowledge as "consisting of a brand node in memory and to which a variety of associations are linked (p. 3)." This view of memory is relevant to understanding consumer value because it suggests that, in some cases, temporarily activated brand associations can affect evaluative judgments (Krishnan and Chakravarti 1993).

As stated earlier, research on branding suggests that knowledge held in memory can play an important role in brand judgments and, ultimately, brand choice (Alba, Hutchinson, and Lynch 1991; Bettman and Park 1980; Haugvedt, Leavitt, and Schneier 1993; Sujan 1985). This is partly because, in real world settings, all of the information needed to make judgments (or choices) rarely exists as stimuli in a particular situation (Lynch and Srull 1982). In cases such as these, the "ease with which information is retrieved from memory has important implications for subsequent decision outcomes (Haugvedt, Leavitt, and Schneier 1993, p. 250)." This viewpoint forms the basis for branding research in the areas of brand recall and recognition.

Although the consumer value literature goes beyond the idea of recall and recognition to suggest that valued brand associations must be related to consequences that are important to consumers, the idea that strongly held brand associations have a greater potential to contribute to consumer value is intriguing. In addition, this discussion of the spreading activation memory model suggests that brand associations may contribute to value through the creation of information that is stored in a unique set of nodes and linkages that can only be retrieved by an effort on the part of the consumer to access brand-related information. In brand situations where national and private label brands directly compete, knowledge about how brand associations formed prior to use as well as during use affect desired value may offer significant opportunities (particularly for manufacturers of nationally branded products) to increase the value to consumers that their brands provide.

Various Types of Brand Associations May Contribute to Value

In addition to reinforcing the idea that brand associations held in memory have the potential to contribute to consumer value, the literature on branding suggests that a variety of brand associations (created by many different sources) may be stored in consumer memories. Some examples of brand associations stored in memory that consumers may find relevant in assessing value include consequences of prior brand use (Bettman and Park 1980), brand name awareness (Keller 1993), and image perceptions derived from marketing communications (Biel 1993). Interestingly, the types of brand associations explored in the branding literature are similar to those that are presented as product attributes in the literature on consumer value. The branding literature, however, provides a basis for extending thought related to consumer value by suggesting a categorization of types of product attributes that have the potential to deliver value.

Several attempts have been made in the branding literature to identify the variety of brand associations that consumers hold in memory. This is a complex task, given that the nature and content of these associations may vary by consumer, brand and product category.

The two most common conceptualizations, brand image and brand identity, are discussed below.

Brand image. The concept of brand image is one way of characterizing the overall knowledge structure that consumers relate to a particular brand (Haugtvedt, Leavitt and Schneier 1993). Specifically, brand image is defined as "the cluster of attributes and associations that consumers connect to the brand name (Biel 1993, p. 71)."

Although it is a commonly used term, there are multiple conceptualizations presented in the literature regarding the specific types of brand associations that brand image is expected to include. For example, Biel (1993) suggests that brand image has three contributing sub-images:

- The image of the provider of a brand
- The image of a typical brand user, and
- The image of the product itself.

The relative contribution of each of these sub-images can vary by consumer, by brand, and by product category. An important contribution of this perspective is that the image of the manufacturer, or provider, of a brand can create brand associations that are relevant to consumers in making brand evaluations. Second, the introduction of type of user as a sub-image that contributes to brand image affirms the idea that a brand's character, or personality, can create brand associations that can affect brand evaluation. Finally, Biel acknowledges that image related to a product may include both "hard" and "soft" attributes. Hard attributes are those that represent functional aspects of the brand, while soft attributes relate less to the functionality of a product. Some examples of soft attributes include emotional associations (such as associating Hallmark with "caring enough to send the very best") and symbolic associations (such as associating Wells Fargo with the "spirit of the West").

Keller (1993) suggests an alternative characterization of brand image that discriminates between type of brand association held in memory. Keller suggests that brand image may include brand associations related to attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Attribute associations are considered to include both product attributes and non-product attributes (which he specifically defines as price, packaging, user imagery, and usage imagery). Benefits are conceptualized in a manner similar to that of the consumer value literature, including functional, experiential (similar to emotional), and symbolic (similar to self-expressive). The third component of Keller's conceptualization of brand image is attitude, which represents a consumer's overall evaluation of a brand (Keller 1993; Wilkie 1986). Keller (1993) suggests attitude is needed to understand brand image because since "it is difficult to specify correctly all of the relevant attributes and benefits, researchers building multi-attribute models of consumer preference have included a general component of attitude toward the brand that is not captured by the attribute and benefit values of the brand (p. 5)."

Interestingly, the elements in Keller's (1993) conceptualization of brand image can be related to the literature on consumer value. The concepts of attributes and benefits are very close to the concepts of product attributes and consequences (although consequences include both positive and negative associations) that make up the value hierarchy. The concept of attitude (which results from an evaluation based on the "goodness" or "badness" of attributes and benefits received) is similar to the concept of overall consumer satisfaction judgments (in which a consumer evaluates the usefulness of product attributes and consequences in helping achieve desired end states). Because they represent overall judgments of brand performance, both of these constructs relate most closely to received, rather than desired, value.

It is interesting that conceptualizations of brand image are more closely linked to received value than they are to desired value. In fact, brand image has been criticized as a tool for developing brand strategies because it is reactive in nature (Duncan and Caywood 1996). Aaker (1996) suggests a conceptualization of brand knowledge that is more proactive in nature than brand image. This concept is known as brand identity. Because it is not

limited to judgements of brand performance, brand identity may be related to both desired and received value.

Brand identity. In his recent book, *Building Strong Brands* (1996), Aaker proposes that marketers need to develop proactive strategies that allow for targeted positioning of a brand in a consumer's mind. He characterizes brand image as "how the brand is now perceived (p. 71)," but clearly differentiates this construct from brand identity, which he considers to be "what the organization wants the brand to stand for in the consumer's mind (p. 25)." Aaker (1996) notes several distinctions between brand image and brand identity. He suggests that brand image results from evaluative opinions or feelings that result from past exposures to the product and represents the sum of consumer thoughts (including attributes and attribute performances) about the brand as it currently exists. For example, a brand image study may reveal that a majority of consumers consider the Audi brand to be "unreliable," although this characteristic may not be desirable for either consumers or the manufacturer. All consumer thoughts about a brand are included in a brand's image, however, regardless of whether they have an effect on consumer decision-making or brand evaluations.

Alternatively, brand identity reflects "the associations that are aspired for the brand (p. 70)" and provides an indication of what the organization (or the consumer) wants the brand to be. In the above example, Audi may want its brand to be perceived as "reliable" instead of "unreliable" and consumers may want to purchase a car that is "reliable" as well. In addition, the study of brand identity includes only those brand associations that consumers find either "desirable" or "undesirable" and thus which have the potential to affect consumer value. Ideally, a brand's identity (as desired by the organization) and its image (as perceived by consumers) are consistent.

Aaker (1996) suggests a view of brand identity that includes four components:

- Brand as product
- Brand as organization

- Brand as person
- Brand as symbol.

These components, which represent different types of brand associations that can create consequences for the consumer, are illustrated in Figure 2-4.

In Aaker's conceptalization, the *brand as product* includes product features, perceptions of quality and value, consumer associations with the product category, and perceptions of use situations, or occasions, for which the product is appropriate. Thus, Aaker's (1996) conceptualization of the brand as product includes both hard and soft attributes as described by Keller (1993) and Biel (1993). In his view, attributes associated with the brand as product include the tangible set of features or conditions that consumers associate with a particular product or service offering. For example, a clean bed, friendly

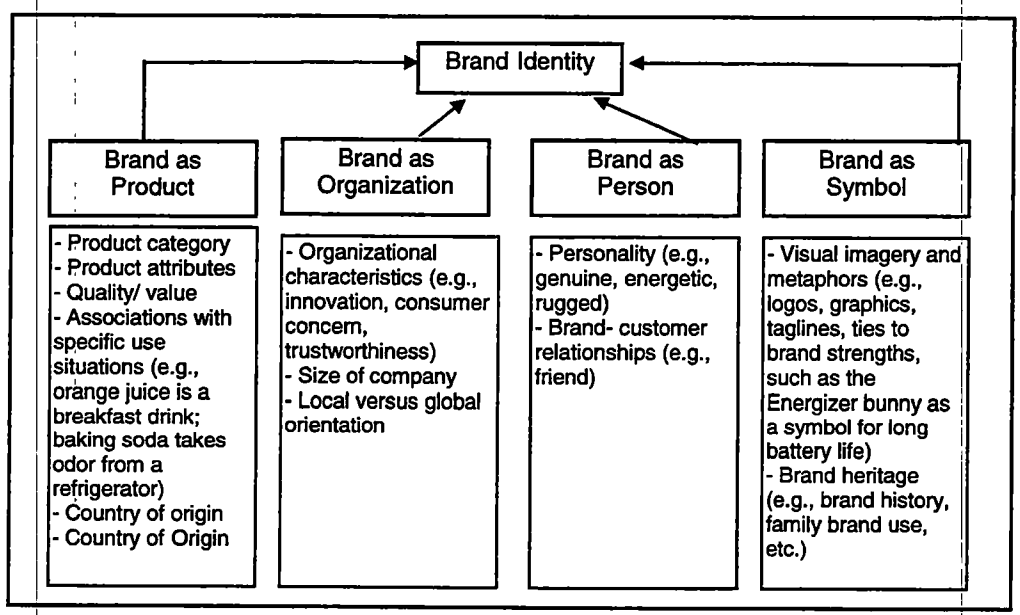


Figure 2-4. Brand identity.
Source: Adapted from Aaker (1996).

front desk personnel, and accurate billing are attributes consumers might associate with a hotel stay. Perceptions of quality and value refer specifically to quality/price trade-offs and suggest an overall assessment of the desirability of the brand, given the price. Associations with the product category reveal how consumers relate the brand to competing brands on the market, including brands with varying strategies (such as national and private label brands). Consumer associations with specific use situations provide information about when people think use of a brand is most appropriate. For example, milk may be appropriate to serve at breakfast, but not at a cocktail party. In order to develop brand strategies that have the potential to create consumer value, understanding perceptions of the brand as product is critical, particularly in product categories where multiple brands are perceived to be roughly equal in performance.

Brand as organization highlights the potential of the organization that provides a brand to affect consumer knowledge and evaluation of a brand. Like in Biel's (1993) description of image related to the provider of a brand, Aaker's (1996) idea of the brand as organization focuses on attributes of the organization rather than attributes of the product offering itself. In some cases, characteristics of the company that owns a brand may have the potential to affect the value a consumer assesses to a brand. For example, consumers of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream are often drawn by the company's well-publicized commitment to helping the environment as well as the taste of the company's ice cream (Donnelly 1995; Judge 1996). The company even maintains a database of people who would like to be contacted to act against legislation that would be detrimental to the environment (Raphel 1994). In this example, the value that consumers attribute to the Ben & Jerry's brand extends far beyond attributes, consequences, and desired end states related to the product, ice cream. Not considering the potential of the provider of the brand to contribute to value would cause the company to miss an important benefit consumers receive from using Ben & Jerry's products.

Brand as organization associations may involve the manufacturer (as in the Ben & Jerry's example above) or the retailer (as in the case of many private label brands, such as

Sam's Cola's tie with Wal-Mart). Because the literature suggests a strong association of retailer image with private label brands (e.g., Mogelonsky 1995), understanding the potential of brand as organization associations to influence consumer value may be relevant for marketers of national brands as well as private labels.

Brand as person suggests the potential of a brand to have its own personality in a consumer's mind (Aaker 1996). As an example, consumers may think of dancing and energy when they think of raisins. For many, this image was created by the dancing raisins that were a part of an extensive marketing communications campaign, which influenced the brand personality consumers typically associate with raisins. Brand personality has also been included in conceptualizations of brand image (e.g., Biel 1993).

Brand associations related to the brand as person have the potential to create several types of consequences for consumers. For example, the warm and caring personality of a Hallmark card may provide an emotional benefit. Or, drivers of a Mazda Miata might realize self-expressive benefits from driving a car that they identify as fun-loving and creative. In addition, a brand personality may form the basis for the relationship between the consumer and the brand. Many consumers consider the Craftsman brand to be "trustworthy" and "reliable" and therefore buy multiple tools that bear the name of this brand. As indicated by the Craftsman and Mazda examples, both national and private label brands have the potential to evoke brand as person associations in the mind of the consumer.

Finally, Aaker's conceptualization of the *brand as symbol* recognizes the potential of symbolic (and sometimes nonverbal) brand associations to create positive outcomes for consumers. This idea is shared by marketing scholars – "any organization whatsoever, in any industry, for any customer base, for profit or not-for-profit, governmental or private, consumer, industrial, or service, can benefit from using aesthetics (Schmitt and Simonson 1997, p. 4)" – and practitioners – "properly cared for, a brand can be a badge, an emblem, a global symbol that can bestow credibility and attract instant attention in a new country, a new category, or a new industry (Morris 1996, p. 74)."

The construct of brand as symbol comprises the graphical and visual components of a brand, such as brand name, logos, and/ or spokespeople. For example, the Nike swoosh is a graphic that is symbolically associated with Nike athletic shoes. Brand associations related to the brand as symbol have the potential to create value by providing self-expressive benefits for some consumers. In the above example related to Nike, associations related to the brand as symbol may reinforce the energy and athleticism that consumers associate with the brand. Brand associations related to the brand as symbol may also provide functional consequences by enhancing perceptions of brand performance (people may believe Energizer batteries last longer) or emotional consequences by creating positive feelings about a brand (using Allstate insurance makes people feel like they will be taken care of, since Allstate representatives are the "good hands" people). Because the symbolic components of a brand's identity (i.e., logo, packaging design, brand history) are often reinforced through the more extensive marketing strategies that support national brands, national brands are expected to have a higher ratio of brand as symbol associations (relative to other components of brand identity) than will private label brands. This research proposition is more fully developed later in this chapter.

Summary of brand identity. The literature suggests that brand associations related to the brand as organization ("the Body Shop is a company that cares about the environment"), brand as person ("Little Caesar's is a 'wild and crazy' place"), and brand as symbol ("I trust Allstate because they are the 'good hands' people") can be important drivers of consumer behavior (Belk 1988; Edell and Burke 1987; Schmitt and Simonson 1997; Solomon 1983). Interestingly, Aaker (1996) suggests that brand identity should create a "value proposition" for a consumer, which facilitates the functional, emotional, and self-expressive consequences offered by a brand. This line of thinking strongly underscores the importance of understanding how branding can create value (in the form of consequences) for consumers.

One benefit of using the components of brand identity as a basis for understanding the consequences and desired end states that consumer use brands to help them fulfill is that it may provide marketers with insights that can be used to develop brand strategies that have

the potential to create value. For example, companies have paid little attention "in the branding phase of marketing to how a symbol is strategically created; how the brand does what it does; how it conveys a positioning; how it provides tangible value; and how brands need to be managed on an everyday basis (Schmitt and Simonson 1997, p. 17)." As Aaker (1996) suggests, taking a broad view of the kinds of brand associations that may create consequences for consumers provides an opportunity for companies to proactively use brand marketing strategies to enhance the value of a brand. For example, Saturn considers all of its dealers and communication suppliers to be partners in the development of a brand identity based on the emotional consequence of "buying a car from someone you trust - a friend" (Moriarty 1994). Because of its commitment to delivering this benefit, the company has taken actions, such as replacing rather than recalling problem vehicles, to maintain and increase consumer loyalty (Serafin 1993). If Saturn had not had a clear understanding of the potential damage to the consequence of "dealing with someone who treats you like a friend" that would be created by negative associations of product performance (created by press, word of mouth, or the experience of going through the recall process), the company might have opted for a less relationship-oriented approach to handling complaints about vehicles that did not function properly.

The concept of brand identity, as conceptualized by Aaker (1991, 1996) makes an important contribution to marketing knowledge in that it provides a broad categorization of the types of attribute level brand associations that have the potential to affect consumer value. By specifying different types of brand associations, the categorization offers a foundation that marketers may use in considering the relative impact of specific types of associations on consumer value.

Aaker's conceptualization also has several limitations, however, which currently constrain its ability to serve as an operational model for assessing (or measuring) consumer value at the brand level. In particular, the constructs of brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol are defined broadly, so that the potential for overlap between constructs exists. For example, Aaker defines user imagery as a

component of the brand as product, but the potential exists for user imagery to influence brand as person and brand as symbol as well. Alternatively, certain characteristics of a brand's personality may be associated with the manufacturer as well as the product itself (for example, associations of Nestle as a "global brand"). Conceptually, Aaker's work offers an important guide for understanding the perspectives through which a consumer may view a brand; however, the constructs require further definition and clarification before this framework can be operationalized. In addition, Aaker's framework is based on a conceptual review of the branding literature and has not yet undergone modification based on the results of empirical testing. Thus, an empirical assessment of Aaker's conceptualization of brand identity may suggest the potential for further refinements to and/ or clarifications of the constructs described here.

Despite these limitations, Aaker's concept of brand identity that has been developed in the branding literature makes an important contribution to this dissertation study. Specifically, it provides a guide for understanding the types of brand associations that may be created by various brand strategies. In addition, it offers a categorization scheme that may be modified and used to examine the potential of brand strategies to affect consumer thoughts about brand value.

Emotional and Self-Expressive Consequences May Create Value Independently of Functional Consequences

Finally, the branding literature reinforces the idea (introduced in the consumer value literature) that psycho-social consequences (i.e., emotional and self-expressive consequences) that are created by an individual brand may be created both (1) as a result of and (2) independently of functional consequences. As discussed earlier in this chapter, some of the consumer value literature suggests that both value-in-use (which results from trade-offs of functional consequences) and possession value (which results from trade-offs in psycho-social consequences) can exist independently (Burns 1993; Holbrook 1994). Reynolds and Gutman (1984), on the other hand, conceptualize psycho-social consequences as higher-

order consequences, created only as a result of functional consequences. These differences in theoretical approachs suggest the need to examine the relationship between functional and psycho-social consequences in further detail.

Psycho-social consequences appear to be an important influence on consumer value at the brand level. For example, in their discussion of brand evaluations, Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis (1986) describe three types of brand concepts. These are:

- Functional brand concepts, which emphasize a brand's functional performance
- Symbolic brand concepts, which emphasize a brand's relationship with group members or self, and
- Experiential brand concepts, which emphasize the emotional, sensory, or fantasy aspects of a brand.

In addition, the framework depicted in Figure 2-5 illustrates that functional, emotional, and self-expressive consequences created by brands, as well as products, have the potential to influence the brand-consumer relationship.

This framework makes an important contribution to the literature by suggesting that functional, emotional, and self-expressive consequences all have the potential to contribute to consumer value. Although this framework is helpful in explaining the types of consequences that may contribute to consumer value, the figure presented above lacks the depth provided by thought in the area of consumer value. Specifically the above framework does not show (1) how the types of consequences illustrated in the figure are related to specific attribute level brand associations, (2) how the types of consequences illustrated in the figure can be related to each other, (3) how consequences are created for the consumer, and (4) how consequences are related to the desired end states that consumers use products to help them achieve.

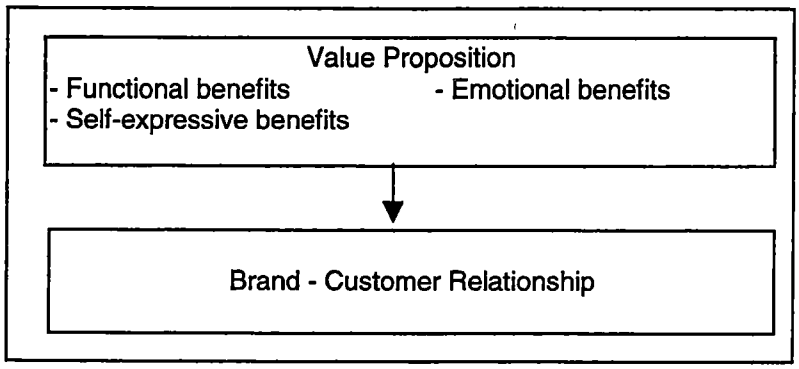


Figure 2-5. Value proposition.
Source: Adapted from Aaker (1996).

Although descriptions of the linkages between brand associations, consequences, and desired end states are less clear in the branding literature, there is evidence to support the importance of psycho-social consequences in consumer evaluation and choice (e.g., Isen 1993; McCracken 1993; Aaker and Keller 1990). Thus, the branding literature reinforces the idea that emotional and self-expressive attachments to a brand may occur independently from functional consequences (e.g., Aaker 1996; Kroeber-Riel 1986; McCracken 1993).

Emotional consequences. Social science research includes a number of studies on the role of emotion in individual evaluation and choice (Carnevale and Isen 1986; Isen 1993; Isen, Shalker, Clark and Karp 1978; Murray, Sujan, Hirt and Sujan 1990). Interestingly, there is evidence to suggest that brand loyalty is strongly related to emotional attachment (Kroeber-Riel 1986; McQueen, Foley and Deighton 1993).

The evidence suggested by empirical research is echoed in conventional wisdom. For example, Max Blackston, head of the Olgivy and Mather research and planning department, has been quoted as saying: "In an age when most products do the same thing, the emotional relationship is the only thing that gets people to pay a premium for a particular brand (Smothers 1993, p. 107)." Thus, the importance of emotional consequences for consumers is widely recognized.

The creation of emotional consequences is often associated with marketing communications (Aaker 1996). Therefore, the opportunity to show the linkage between the

creation of emotional consequences and consumer value has extensive implications for communication strategies that are designed to differentiate a brand. As is discussed later in this chapter, this dissertation specifically examines the linkages between attribute level brand associations and the emotional consequences that contribute to consumer value.

Self-expressive consequences. In addition, branding research suggests that self-expressive consequences may be reasons in and of themselves for consumers to use a particular brand. McCracken (1993), for example, suggests that "strong brands are storehouses of the meanings consumers use to define their actual and aspirational selves (p. 129)." Other literature suggests that a brand's personality has the potential to create self-expressive consequences for consumers (Aaker 1996). For example, self-congruency theory (e.g., Sirgy 1982) suggests that consumers seek brands with personalities that are consistent with (1) their own personality and/or (2) the personality to which they aspire. Thus, consumers use brands to define and fulfill their own sense of self (Batra, Lehmann, and Singh 1993; Belk 1988; Grubb and Grathwohl 1967).

Summary of Contributions of Branding Research

This section highlights three contributions that the branding literature makes to our understanding of consumer value at the brand level. Although these insights are also evident in the consumer value literature, the branding literature reinforces assertions, clarifies concepts, and in some cases, provides significant empirical support for these ideas.

A summary of insights from the literature on branding is included in Table 2-4. These contributions, along with the insights related to consumer value at the brand level that emerge from the consumer value literature, form a basis that can be used to examine the effect of brand strategies on consumer value.

Development of a Conceptual Framework

In total, the review of the consumer value and branding literatures suggest nine insights about the nature of consumer value at the brand level. These insights, which are

Table 2-4. Summary of insights from the branding literature.

	Insight Related to Consumer Value at the Brand Level
1	Brand associations held in memory have the potential to contribute to consumer value.
2	Various types of attribute level brand associations may contribute to consumer value.
3	Emotional and self-expressive consequences may be created independently of functional consequences.

summarized in Table 2-5, form the basis for the conceptual framework that is developed in this section.

The purpose of this section is to introduce a conceptual framework that (a) integrates marketing thought related to branding and consumer value and (b) can serve as a guide for learning more about consumer perceptions of brand value. After the framework is described, potential contributions to understanding consumer value at the brand level are discussed.

Description of the EVH Framework

The Extended Value Hierarchy (EVH) framework (depicted in Figure 2-6) integrates thought from the consumer value and branding literatures to describe and clarify ways in which specific brand strategies may affect overall consumer value. Like the traditional value hierarchy, the EVH framework consists of three general categories, which represent consumer knowledge of varying levels of abstraction. The categories are: (1) attribute level brand associations, (2) consequences, and (3) desired end states.

As conceptualized in the EVH framework, attribute level brand associations can be categorized into one of four different constructs. These four constructs are based on Aaker's (1996) conceptualization of brand identity and include the brand as product, brand as

Table 2-5. Summary of insights from the consumer value and branding literatures.

	Insight Related to Consumer Value at the Brand Level
1	Value is a subjective assessment made by the consumer.
2	Value is situation specific.
3	Value is the result of trade-offs.
4	Value can involve trade-offs of consequences that are functional, psycho-social, or both.
5	Consumers organize thoughts about value according to varying levels of abstraction.
6	Value can be either desired or received.
7	Brand associations held in memory have the potential to contribute to consumer value.
8	Various types of attribute level brand associations may contribute to consumer value.
9	Emotional and self-expressive consequences may be created independently of functional consequences.

organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol. Briefly, brand as product refers to product attributes that consumers associate with product features or the product category; brand as organization refers to characteristics of the manufacturer or retailer that consumers associate with a brand; brand as person refers to the image, or personality, that consumers perceive in a brand; and brand as symbol refers to the graphical, visual, and symbolic components that consumers perceive in a brand (Aaker 1996). Specific operational definitions of these constructs are provided in Chapter 3.

Defining the concept of product attribute as including four specific types of attribute level brand associations makes two contributions to marketing thought. First, it helps to ensure that attribute level brand associations that may be created or reinforced by brand marketing strategies (particularly brand as person and brand symbol) are operationally as well as conceptually included in studies of consumer value. Second, the categorization introduced in the EVH framework provides a mechanism for comparing the relative

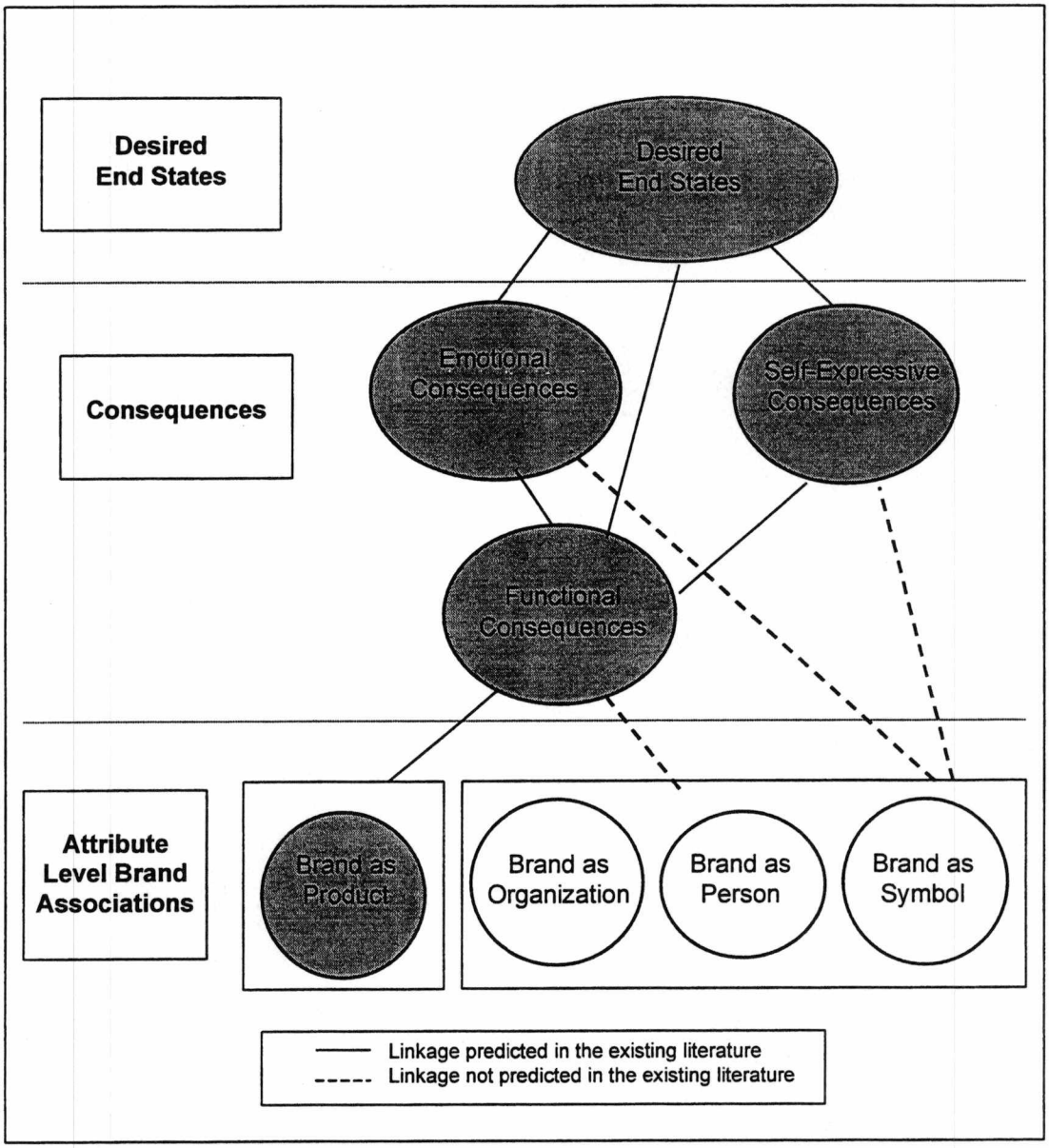


Figure 2-6. Extended value hierarchy.

effectiveness of different types of attribute level brand associations in creating desired consequences for consumers.

Although the EVH framework acknowledges that functional consequences have the potential to create higher order consequences that are emotional or self-expressive in nature, it also recognizes the potential of brand associations (except for the brand as product) to be linked directly to emotional and self-expressive consequences. Because brand as product associations are conceptualized as purely functional in nature, it is expected that "brand as product" associations would be linked to emotional or self-expressive consequences only indirectly (through the creation of functional consequences).[1]

The concept of desired end states represented in the EVH framework is the same as the one used in the traditional value hierarchy. Functional, emotional, and self-expressive consequences are all expected to be important to consumers to the extent that they help them achieve desired end states.

The shaded boxes in Figure 2-6 represent constructs that have received the greatest level of attention in the literature on consumer value. The unshaded boxes indicate concepts which have received less explicit attention, but which have significant potential to enhance the value consumers associate with individual brands. The dotted lines represent relationships between constructs that are examined in the research study.

As described earlier in this chapter, the branding literature stresses the importance of functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits to the creation of consumer value (Aaker 1996). The EVH framework, however, suggests that functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits are only one side of the equation. As described in the consumer value literature, there may be negative associations (i.e., sacrifices) required of the consumer in order to receive the benefits of a product or service. Therefore, the EVH illustrates the potential for both positive and negative associations by using the term "consequences"

[1] This expectation is empirically tested in research proposition #1.

(rather than Aaker's more narrow term "benefits") to describe the things that consumers use products to achieve. The idea that functional, emotional, and self-expressive consequences all have the potential to contribute to consumer value is strongly supported in the consumer value literature (Burns 1993; Walker and Olson 1991).

Finally, Figure 2-6 illustrates a number of possible "attribute-consequence-desired end state" (A-C-DES) linkages that consumers may consider when evaluating a brand. It is not expected that all linkages would be present for every brand, particularly since all brands may not provide functional, emotional, and self-expressive consequences. For example, a private label brand that is supported only minimally by marketing activities may be associated only with functional consequences emerging from thoughts about the "brand as product." In this case, only a few of the linkages depicted in Figure 2-6 would be relevant. In other cases (such as a brand supported by many different types of marketing activities), it is possible that more of the linkages included in the figure would be relevant for describing the range of thoughts (or value dimensions) that a consumer associates with a brand.

Potential Contributions of the Framework

The traditional value hierarchy framework (described earlier in this chapter) provides an important foundation for integrating the insights about value at the brand level that are listed in Table 2-5. Since the traditional value hierarchy is the basis for the EVH framework (depicted in Figure 2-6), the contributions of the traditional value hiearchy to marketing knowledge also define contributions of the EVH framework. In addition to its grounding in means-end theory (Gutman 1982), the value hierarchy framework has three characteristics that make it especially appropriate for examining the value that consumers attribute to individual brands. They are:

- The concept of product attributes is defined broadly, to include many types of attribute level brand associations (e.g., associations with particular endorsers, channels of distribution, types of user, etc.)
- The framework suggests that these attribute level brand associations can be used as a basis for learning about the consequences associated with a brand
- The hierarchy emphasizes the linkages between attribute level brand associations and the consequences and goals of interest to the consumer.

As described below, the traditional value hierarchy framework (see Figure 2-2) incorporates the first five insights about consumer value at the brand level that are included in Table 2-5. For example, the value hierarchy framework as developed in the literature acknowledges that consumer value may vary by consumer and by situation. Thus, it suggests that the attributes, consequences and desired end states that consumers may find relevant in assessing value are dependent on the individual and the use situation. In addition, the value hierarchy framework suggests that value results from trade-offs that consumers make between attributes, consequences and desired end states. It also recognizes that trade-offs between consequences may involve functional consequences, psycho-social consequences, or both. Futhermore, it is acceptable for examining both desired and received value. Finally, and most important, the value hierarchy framework is based on the idea that consumers organize knowledge according to varying levels of abstraction.

The conceptual framework presented in this dissertation further defines and clarifies concepts introduced in the value hierarchy framework to include the three insights about consumer value at the brand level that are supported by the branding literature. For this reason, the conceptual framework introduced in this dissertation is called the Extended Value Hierarchy (EVH) framework. The remainder of this section describes the extensions to the

traditional value hierarchy and suggests research propositions that can be used to evaluate the potential contributions of the EVH framework to marketing thought. These research propositions provide the basis for the research hypotheses that are introduced in Chapter 3.

Introducing a categorization of types of attribute level brand associations. As stated earlier, the EVH framework introduces a categorization of attribute level brand associations that consumers may consider when evaluating a brand. The review of the components of brand identity presented earlier demonstrates that many types of brand associations (including organizational attributes, brand personality, visual imagery, and others) may contribute to a consumer's evaluation of a brand. For example, brand associations that emerge from knowledge related to the brand as symbol (such as the Nike swoosh) may play a part in helping consumers feel "confident" in their athletic ability. This consequence may be linked to other consequences and end states that are important, such as "makes me work harder in my game," and "helps me win." The EVH framework uses Aaker's conceptualization of brand identity as a basis for categorizing the types of attribute level brand associations that have the potential to contribute to consumer value.

Of these four types of attribute level brand associations, brand as product associations are expected to be related to consequences in a manner that is different than the way the other three types of brand associations are linked. By definition, brand as product associations are expected to be functional in nature (Aaker 1996). Thus:

P1: Brand as product associations will be (a) directly linked to functional consequences and (b) not directly linked to emotional and self-expressive consequences that are considered by consumers during a brand use situation.

Reinforcing the idea that psycho-social consequences can be created independently of functional consequences. Because it explicitly includes four different types of attribute level brand associations, the Extended Value Hierarchy framework provides an opportunity for testing the idea (introduced in both the consumer value and branding literatures) that emotional and self-expressive consequences can be created independently of functional consequences. In the EVH framework, like in the conceptualizations of brand identity presented in the branding literature, value has the potential to emerge not only from functional consequences but from any number of consequences that consumers associate with a brand, including those that are emotional and self-expressive in nature. Therefore, the EVH framework suggests that emotional and self-expressive consequences can be created both in conjunction with and independently of functional consequences.

It is predicted that the value hierarchy concept is relevant for non-brand as product attributes. Hence:

P2: Brand associations for (a) brand as organization, (b) brand as person and (c) brand as symbol will be linked to evaluative consequences for consumers (which may be functional, emotional, or self-expressive) that are considered during a brand use situation.

Clarifying the potential of knowledge held in memory to influence consumer value. The branding literature strongly supports the idea that brand associations held in memory and activated in the use situation (e.g., formative experiences), as well as brand associations formed during use, have the potential to contribute to consumer value at the brand level (e.g., Farquhar and Herr 1993; Keller 1993). The brief summary of memory research presented in this dissertation, as well as consumer value research on formative experiences, suggests that the consequences that are relevant for a consumer in assessing value may be created in part

by brand associations that are activated in memory during the use situation, consistent with the spreading activation process. The EVH framework includes four constructs (brand as product, brand as person, brand as symbol, and brand as organization) that may include brand associations that consumers hold in memory. While it does not explicitly differentiate between brand associations held in memory and those created during brand use, the EVH framework recognizes the potential of both types of attribute level brand associations to affect consumer thoughts about the overall value of a brand.

Summary. In total, the categorization of attribute level brand associations introduced in the EVH framework provides opportunity for examination of (1) the types of brand associations that can provide consequences for the consumer, (2) the relationship between functional, emotional and self-expressive consequences, and (3) the potential of brand associations held in memory (which may be created by brand marketing strategies) to contribute to consumer value. In total, the EVH framework incorporates each of the nine insights from the marketing literature that have been reviewed in this chapter. The research propositions that are used to evaluate these contributions of the EVH framework are illustrated in Figure 2-7.

Application of the EVH Framework to National and Private Label Brand Situations

The context that was used for the study - private label and national brands - provides the opportunity to further advance marketing thought related to consumer value as perceived by loyal national and private label brand users. In particular, comparing consumer value associated with private label and national brands provides an initial basis for understanding the effect of level of marketing support on consumer value created by a brand.

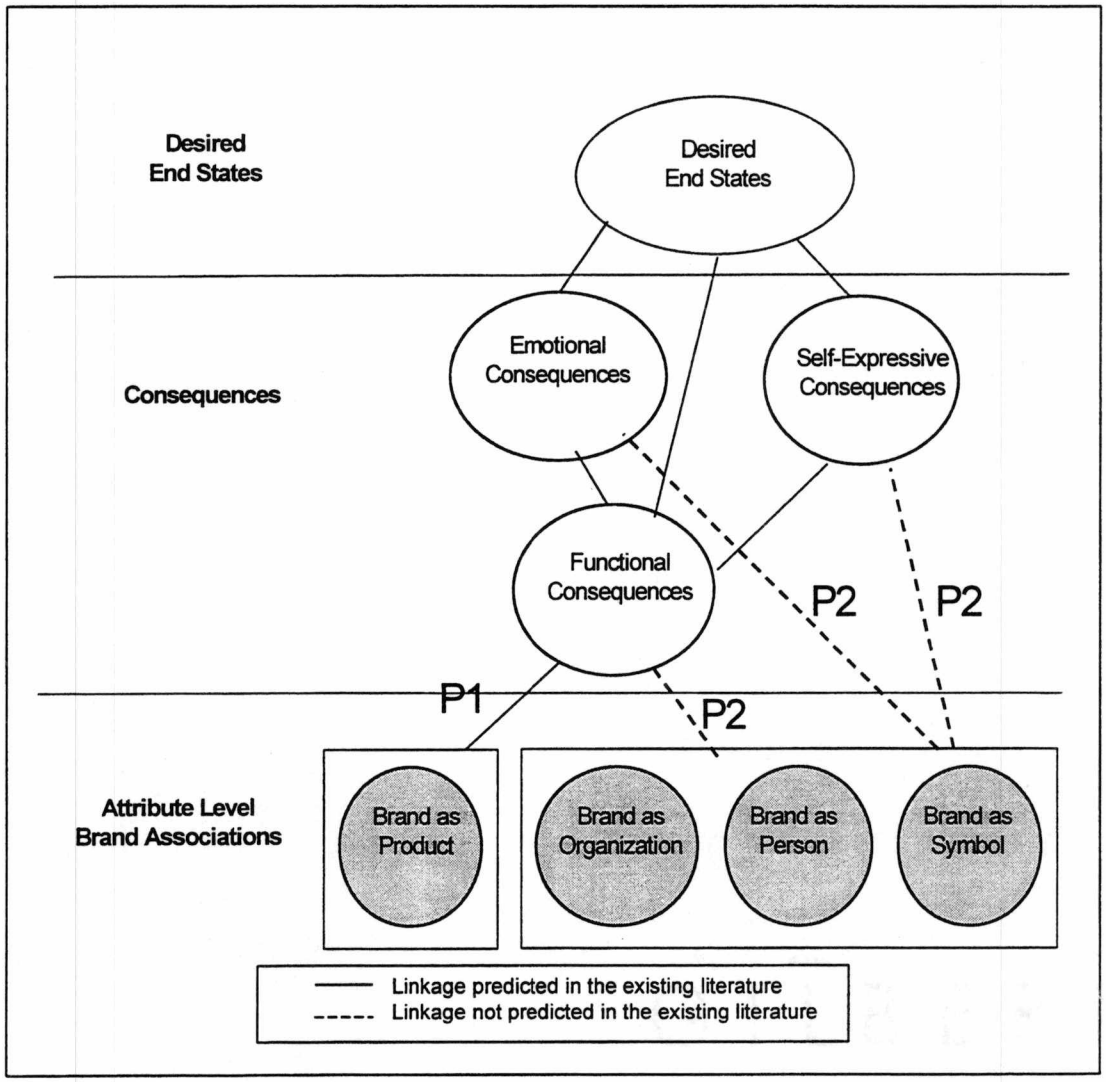


Figure 2-7. Summary of research propositions based on the EVH framework.

This is because private label brands typically receive less marketing support than do national brands (Mogelonsky 1995). Specifically, the comparison of value as perceived by national and private label brand users allow the examination of the following research questions:

- How might the components of consumer value (i.e., type of attribute level brand associations, consequences, desired end states) vary between loyal users of national versus private label brands?
- How might the complexity of consumer value (i.e., number of attribute level brand associations, consequences, desired end states) vary between loyal users of national versus private label brands?

The following discussion further describes each of the above research questions and suggests four additional research propositions that are tested in the study.

Content of Value Dimensions Considered

The application of the EVH framework to the context of national and private label brands offers a promising opportunity to test the potential of brand strategies to affect consumer thoughts about value. Private label brands are often supported with smaller marketing budgets than are national brands, which typically translates into lower retail prices for consumers (Halstead and Ward 1995; Reda 1995). Because of the differences in brand positioning (in terms of price, quality, and image), consumers might be expected to make different kinds of trade-offs (at all levels of the value hierarchy) when considering national versus private label brands (Mogelonsky 1995). Therefore, it is proposed that:

P3: There will be differences in the overall meaning of value, as shown by value hierarchies, between users of national brands and users of private label brands.

Figure 2-8 summarizes the test of this research proposition.

Number of Value Dimensions Considered

In addition to differences in the content of the value dimensions that consumers consider when evaluating national and private label brands, it is also expected that the number of value dimensions consumers use in making assessments of value may vary. Because national brands are typically supported by more extensive marketing communication strategies, consumers may have greater opportunity to develop brand associations related to a national brand. When an advertisement creates brand associations that are stored in memory, the exposure has the potential to contribute to consumer value, which in turn may increase brand equity (Keller 1987, 1991).

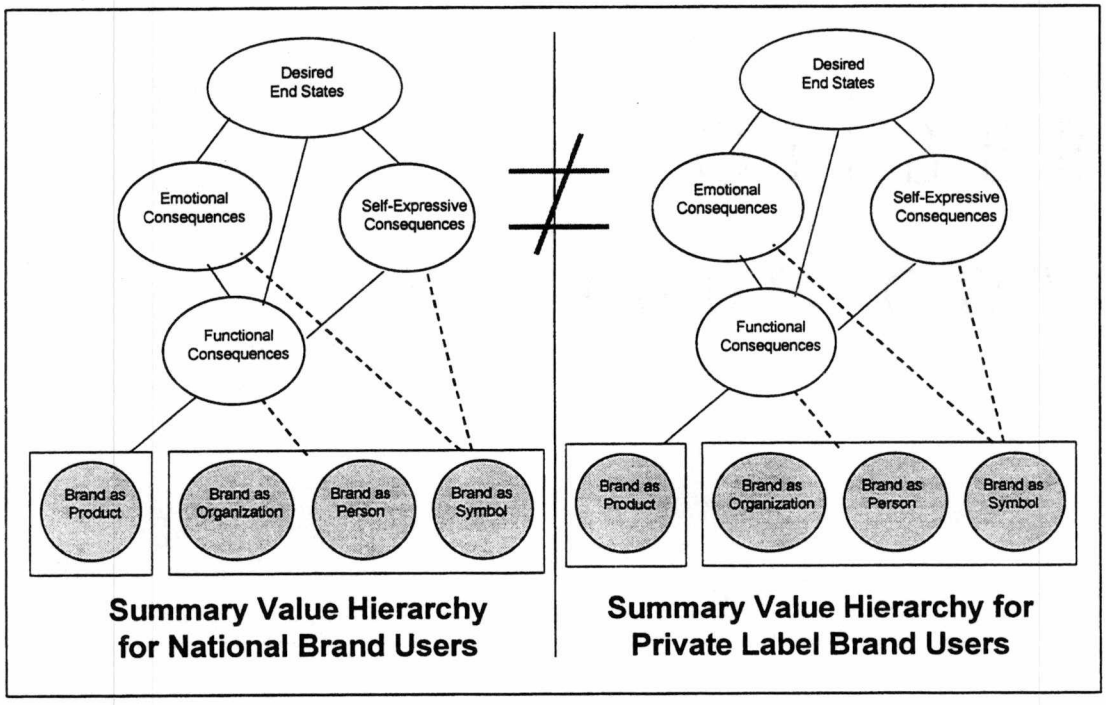


Figure 2-8. Summary of research proposition #3.

Marketing communications are considered to affect consumer value (and thus have the potential to influence brand equity) in two ways. First, it can influence brand attitude, which in turn can affect consumer preferences as well as the value of a brand to a consumer (Edell 1992; Edell and Moore 1993). Second, as described earlier in this chapter, marketing communications have the potential to influence consumer memory structures relative to a brand (Aaker 1991, 1996; Krishnan and Chakravarti 1993). When it creates relevant and highly accessible brand associations that are easily retrieved from consumer memories, marketing communications have the potential to influence desired value and thus brand equity.

Because many national brands are supported by marketing communication strategies that are designed to create brand associations (such as brand as person and brand as symbol) that are difficult to replicate (Aaker 1991, 1996), it is expected that consumers of national brands will associate a larger number of value dimensions (and linkages between value dimensions) with national brands than consumers of private label brands will associate with private label brands. Therefore, it is proposed that:

P4: The number of (a) attribute level brand associations, (b) consequences, (c) desired end states, (d) attribute level brand association-consequence linkages, and (e) consequence-desired end state linkages considered when assessing consumer value will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.

Figure 2-9 summarizes the test of this research proposition.

Type of Consequences Considered

In addition to being thought to increase the accessibility of brand associations (Keller 1987; 1991), marketing communications have also been linked with the creation of psycho-social benefits (or consequences) for consumers (Aaker 1991, 1996; Reynolds and Gutman

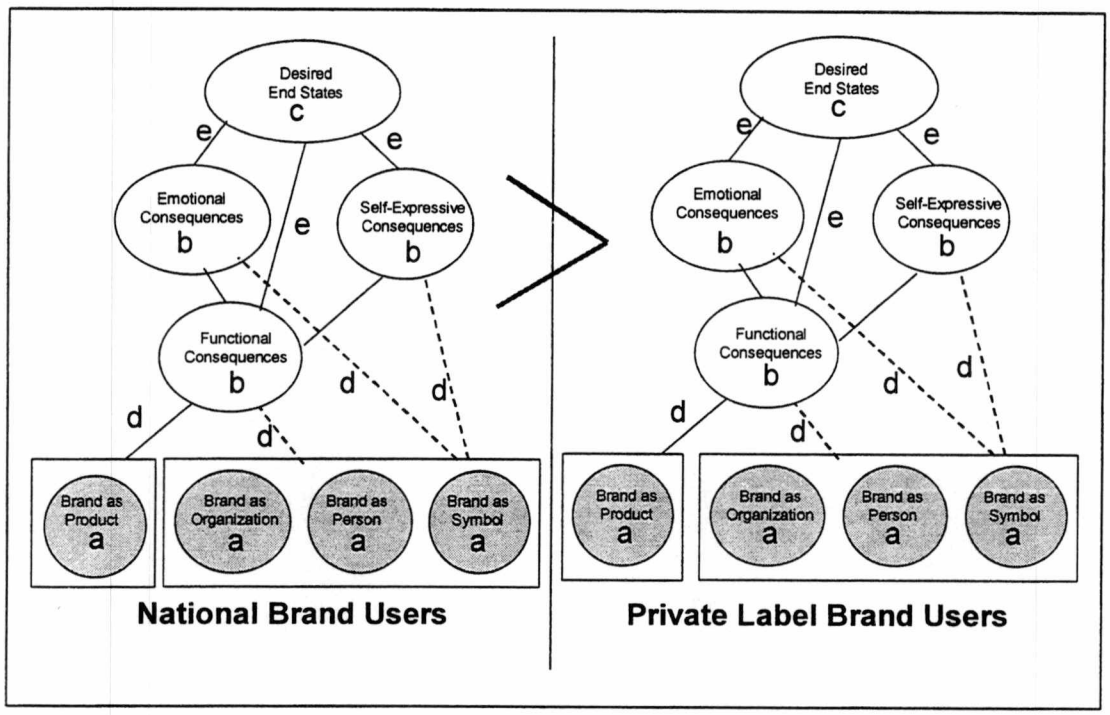


Figure 2-9. Summary of research proposition #4.

1984). For example, watching the Nike "Just Do It" ads may reinforce both emotional ("makes me feel like I can win my game") and self-expressive ("helps me show that I am a good athlete") consequences for a consumer.

Aaker (1996) suggests that the potential contributions of marketing communication to the development of psycho-social consequences is often underestimated. Aaker cites a study by Stuart Agres (1990) to support this assertion. Agres' study, which used a standardized commercial laboratory testing procedure, found that television commercials that included both an emotional and functional benefit in their messages had a significantly higher effectiveness score than commercials that only included a functional benefit.

Findings such as this suggest the importance of marketing communications (particularly those which help shape the psycho-social consequences consumers associate with a brand) to the formation of consumer value. Because national brands tend to be

supported by more advertising than private labels and because this advertising often focuses on the pyscho-social benefits created by a brand, it is anticipated that:

P5: The ratio of psycho-social (emotional and self-expressive) to functional consequences will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.

The test of this research proposition is illustrated in Figure 2-10.

Type of Attribute Level Brand Associations Considered

Applying the EVH framework in the context of national and private label brands also provides an opportunity to examine differences in the relative influence of the four types of

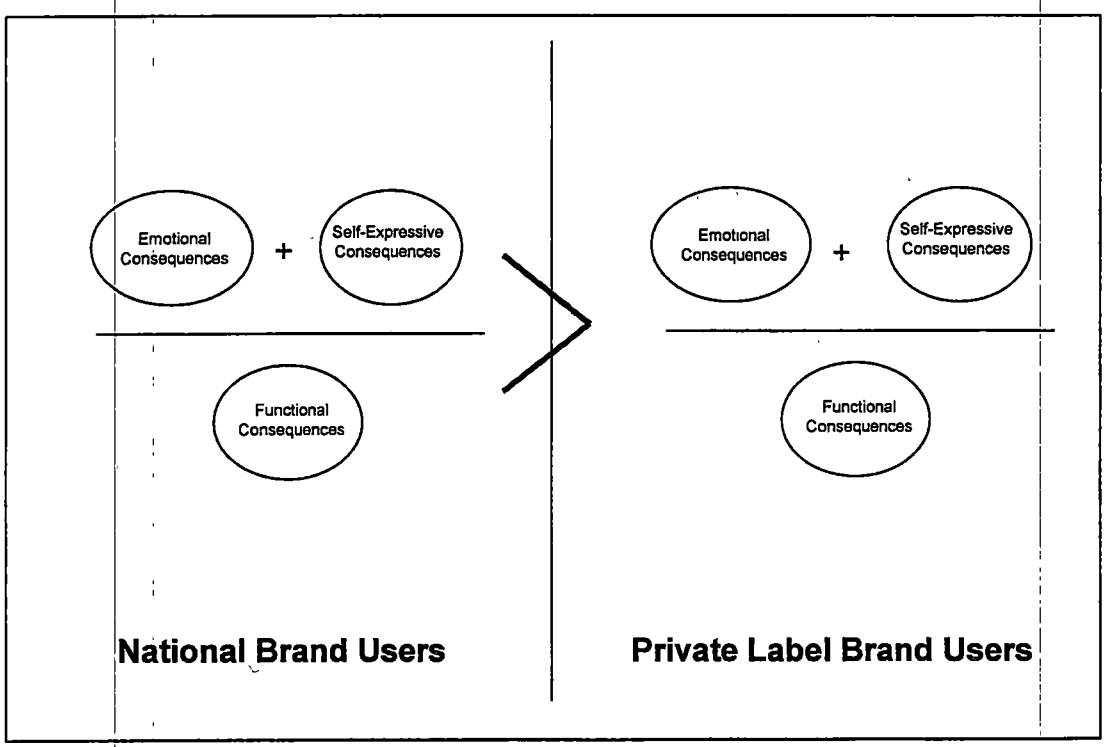


Figure 2-10. Summary of research proposition #5.

brand associations (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as symbol, and brand as person) on consumer value. The relative influence of these types of brand associations is expected to vary based on basic differences between private label and national brands. For example, because private label brands are associated heavily with the retailer of the brand, the influence of the brand as organization on consumer value associated with private label brands is expected to be stronger than for national brands. Alternatively, because national brands are typically supported by higher levels of marketing activity, the influence of associations related to the brand as symbol and brand as person are expected to be more prominent for national brands than for private label brands. These distinctions are discussed in more detail below.

Brand as product. Private label brands have traditionally been associated with lower levels of product quality than national brands (e.g., Dwyer 1995; Sivakumar 1995); however, this quality gap is perceived to be narrowing (Mogelonsky 1995; Halstead and Ward 1995). Increases in private label brand quality have contributed significantly to growth of the private label market (Private Label Manufacturers Association 1997).

Although this growth has been substantial, most consumers still prefer national over private label brands (Jap 1995). This may be in part because consumers often consider private label brands to be alternatives to national brands that compete based on function, or utility, alone (Mogelonsky 1995). In fact, the focus on product quality related to private label brands may be expected to cause consumers to consider more brand as product associations when evaluating private label brands. This study examines this expectation by testing the following research proposition:

P6a: The ratio of brand as product associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label brands than for national brands.

This research proposition is summarized in Figure 2-11.

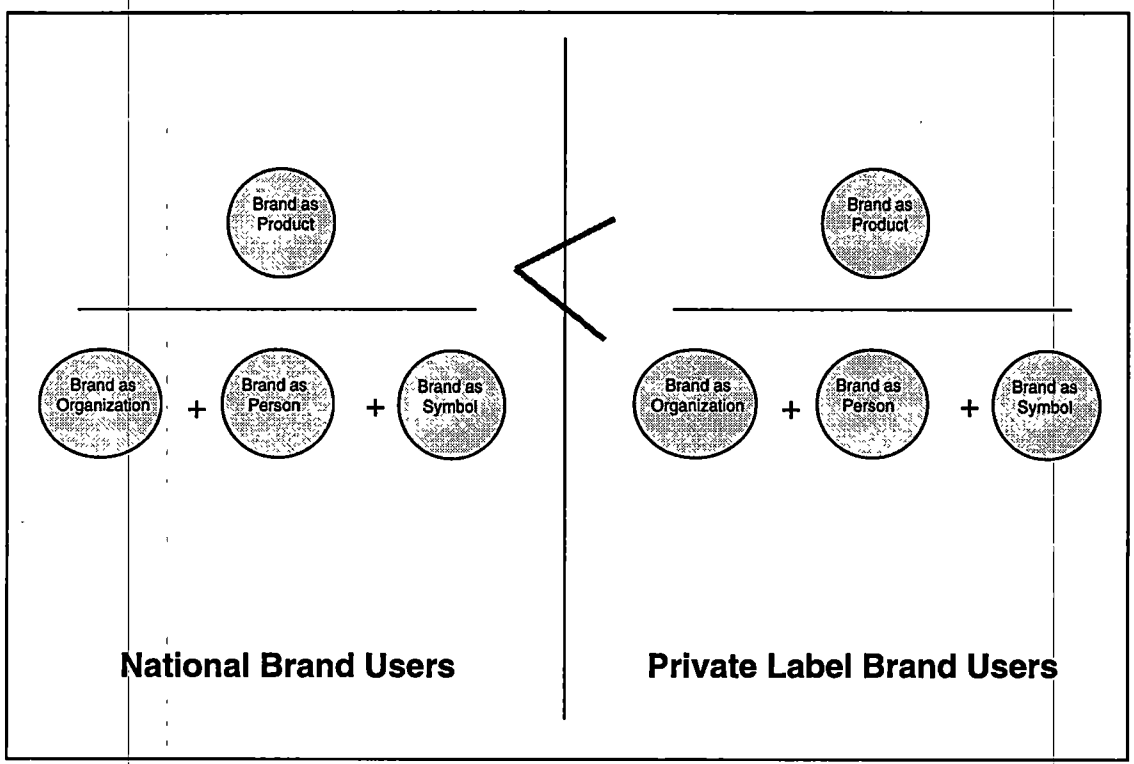


Figure 2-11. Summary of research proposition #6a.

Brand as organization. Most private label brands build name recognition that is "based on the reputation of the retailer whose name appears on the label (Mogelonsky 1995, p. 35)." In fact, many retailers are actively capitalizing on this association and increasing marketing support for their private label brands. Target, for example, uses upscale in-store displays such as the ones found in department stores to feature its private label brand (Stankevich 1996).

Both national and private label brands often rely on brand as organization associations, such as organizational reputation for quality or associations with service-oriented retailers, as opportunities to create consumer value. Because private label brands typically have less marketing support and thus may be associated with fewer brand as person and brand as symbol associations, it is expected that relative influence of brand as

organization would be greater for private label than for national brands. Therefore, it is proposed that:

P6b: The ratio of brand as organization associations to the sum of other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label brands than for national brands.

The test of this research proposition is similar to the test of proposition 6a and is illustrated in Figure 2-12.

Brand as person. As stated earlier, manufacturers of national brands often strive to create a brand personality that increases the value of their brand to consumers. These personalities may be based on product attributes, such as the "snap, crackle, and pop" of Rice Krispie's, or on elements of a marketing communications campaign, such as the "cares enough to send the very best" message of Hallmark cards. Because manufacturers of

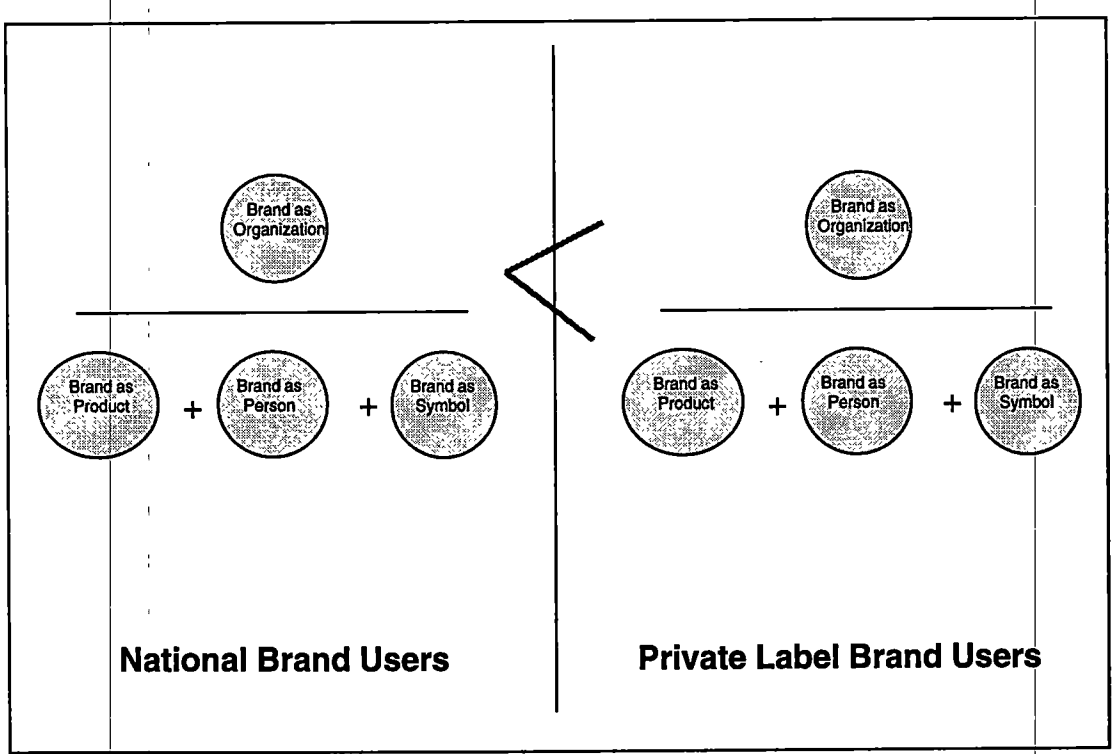


Figure 2-12. Summary of research proposition #6b.

private label brands typically do not make similar efforts, it is expected that the influence of brand as person would be greater for national brands than for private label brands. In addition, although consumers may transfer brand as person associations linked with the retailer to a private label brand, these are expected to include fewer brand as person associations than those of national brands, which benefit from brand as person associations created by retailers as well as by other marketing activities. Thus:

P6c: The ratio of brand as person associations to the sum of other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.

This research proposition is summarized in Figure 2-13.

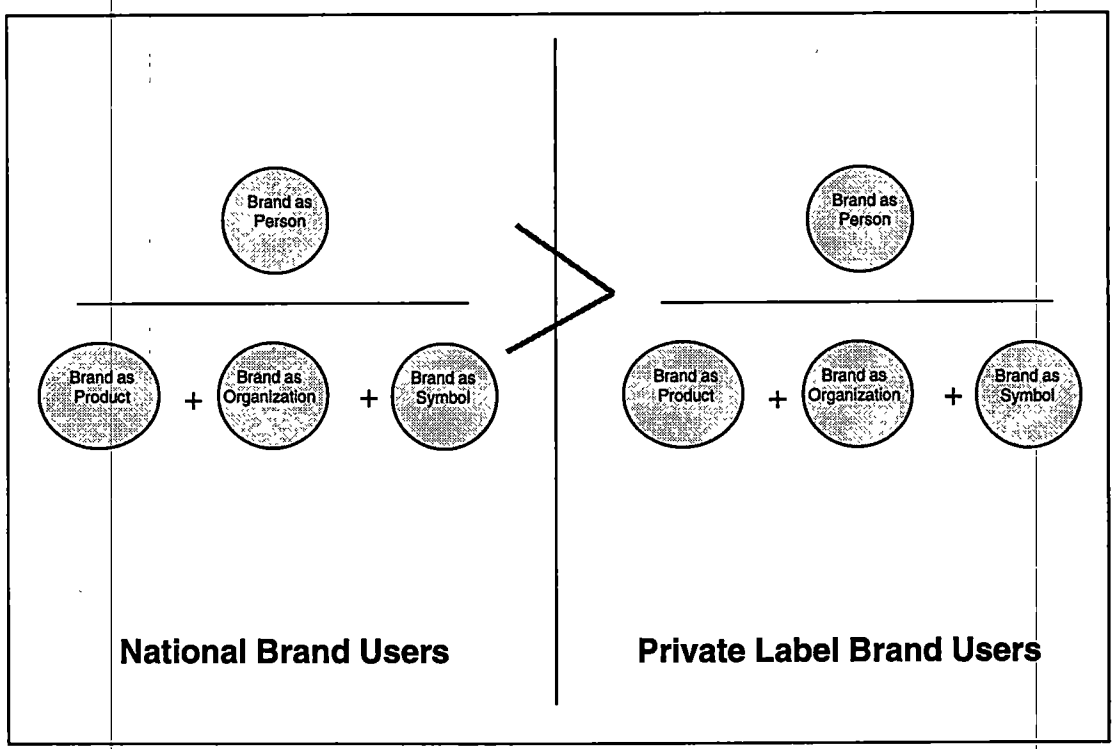


Figure 2-13. Summary of research proposition #6c.

Brand as symbol. The influence of brand associations related to the brand as symbol is expected to be similar to that of the brand as person. Brand as symbol associations are typically created by marketing efforts to build, maintain, or change a brand's personality. In some cases, symbolic associations may even help to reinforce brand personality (Aaker 1996). Although many private label brands do have distinctive logos, these graphics are designed primarily to increase recognizability within the store. National brand logos generally serve a dual purpose of increasing brand recognizability and reinforcing brand identity (Aaker 1991). Because of the greater focus of national brand marketing efforts on building brand associations related to the brand as symbol, it is expected that the influence of brand as symbol associations would be greater for national than for private label brands. Thus:

P6d: The ratio of brand as symbol associations to the sum of other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.

Again, this research proposition is summarized in Figure 2-14.

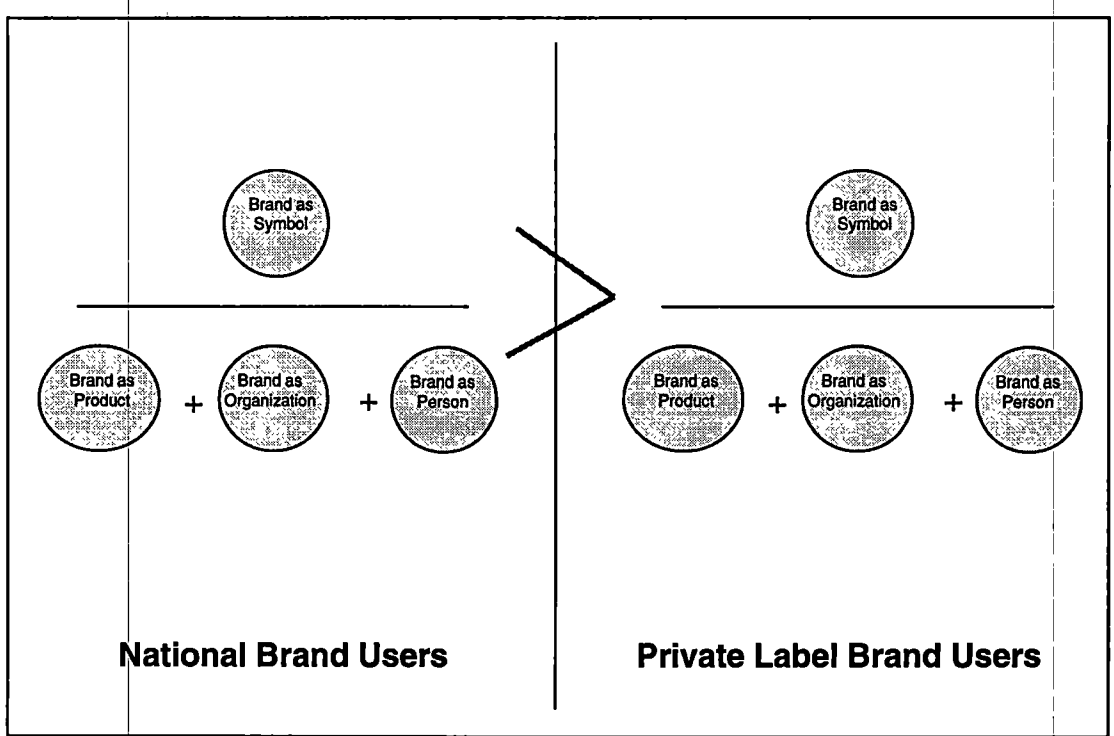


Figure 2-14. Summary of research proposition #6d.

Summary of Research Propositions Related to National and Private Label Brands

As evidenced by the previous discussion, evaluating the EVH framework in the context of product categories where national and private label brands directly compete offers a significant opportunity for understanding the potential of brand strategies to affect consumer value. Support for the research propositions presented in this section would confirm existing thought related to private label and national brands. Disconfirmation of any of the above propositions would suggest that the existing literature should be reexamined.

When considering the above research propositions, one caveat is needed. The basis for the development of the research propositions is that private label brands, while presumably comparable to national brands in product quality, receive less marketing support than do competing national brands. Although in most cases this is an appropriate assumption, the trend is toward less differentiation in terms of marketing for national and private label brands (Halstead and Ward 1995; Mogelonsky 1995). For example, in the case of national brands, manufacturers (such as Procter & Gamble and Kellogg's) are discounting prices and reducing promotion expenditures to remain competitive with private label brands (Berman 1994; Coeyman 1994; Liesse 1992). At the same time, manufacturers and retailers of upscale private label brands (such as Target and J.C. Penney) are developing aggressive marketing communication strategies for their private label products (Moukheiber 1993; Stankevich 1996; Underwood 1993). Taken together, these actions are narrowing the gap in consumer perceptions between national and private label brands. Table 2-6 summarizes the research questions and propositions related to private label and national brands that guide the research study.

Conclusion

This chapter suggests nine insights from the literature that can help to enhance our understanding of the potential of brand strategies to create consumer value. These insights:

- Provide a strong foundation for the development of a conceptual framework that can be used to examine consumer value at the brand level and

Table 2-6. Summary of research propositions suggested by the context of national and private label brands.

Research Question	Research Proposition
How might the conceptual frameoworks and processes currently used to understand consumer value be modified to better understand consumer value that may be created by branding?	P1: Brand as product associations will be (a) directly linked to functional consequences and (b) not directly linked to emotional and self-expressive consequences that are considered by consumers during a brand use situation. P2: Brand associations for (a) brand as organization, (b) brand as person and (c) brand as symbol will be linked to evaluative consequences for consumers (which may be functional, emotional, and self-expressive) that are considered during a brand use situation.
How might the components of consumer value (i.e., type of attribute level brand associations, consequences, desired end states) vary between loyal users of national versus private label brands?	P3: There will be differences in the overall meaning of value, as shown by value hierarchies, between users of national brands and users of private label brands.
How might the complexity of consumer value (i.e., number of attribute level brand associations, consequences, desired end states) vary between loyal users of national versus private label brands?	P4: The number of (a) attribute level brand associations, (b) consequences, (c) desired end states, (d) attribute level brand association-consequence linkages, and (e) consequence-desired end state linkages considered when assessing consumer value will be higher for national brands than for private label brands. P5: The ratio of psycho-social (emotional and self-expressive) consequences to functional consequences will be higher for national brands than for private label brands. P6a: The ratio of brand as product associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label than national brands. P6b: The ratio of brand as organization associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label than national brands. P6c: The ratio of brand as person associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national than private label brands. P6d: The ratio of brand as symbol associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national than private label brands.

- Form the basis for the development of the research questions and propositions that guide the dissertation study.

The Extended Value Hierarchy framework (illustrated in Figure 2-6) integrates the insights that emerge from the literature review and provides a basis for learning about consumer value. The framework provides opportunity for examination of (1) the types of brand associations that can provide consequences for the consumer, (2) the relationship between functional, emotional and self-expressive consequences, and (3) the potential of brand associations held in memory (which may be created by brand marketing strategies) to contribute to consumer value.

The insights from the literature, as well as the EVH framework, suggest a number of interesting research questions. In particular, one might question the extent to which the EVH framework, when implemented, can contribute to marketing knowledge. Findings from the tests of research propositions 1 and 2 address this question. In addition, the context in which the EVH framework is applied - product categories in which national and private label brands directly compete - provides the opportunity for evaluating the effect of two specific brand strategies (e.g., national and private label branding) on overall consumer value. Findings from the tests of propositions 3-6 assist in this evaluation. The methodology for testing the research propositions presented in this chapter is described in detail in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3
Research Methodology

Introduction

Chapter 1 describes the importance of examining what consumers value about brands and of exploring the extent to which brand associations that are the result of specific brand strategies (such as private label or national branding) can create valued consequences for consumers. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature related to consumer value and research on branding. In total, the literature review illustrates that marketing thought does not currently contain a conceptual framework that allows marketers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effect of branding on consumer value. To that end, an Extended Value Hierarchy (EVH) framework is presented. This framework clarifies the concept of product attributes used in the existing framework, called the traditional value hierarchy, to include four types of attribute-level brand associations that may have the potential to create consequences that are valued by consumers. In addition, the EVH framework acknowledges the potential of attribute-level brand associations to create psycho-social consequences (emotional and self-expressive) independently of functional consequences and recognizes the potential of brand associations held in memory to contribute to consumer value.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe a research study that evaluates the usefulness of the EVH framework. The study involved sixty in-depth interviews with consumers who are loyal users of the "leading" national or private label brand in one of two product categories. Specifically, the chapter:

- Reviews the research propositions and hypotheses that are addressed
- Explains operational definitions for the constructs that are examined
- Describes the context for the research study
- Describes the methodology and the rationale for its selection
- Reviews contributions and limitations of the study
- Explains the criteria that are used to assess the overall quality of the data.

Research Propositions and Hypotheses

As stated in Chapter 1, this dissertation has two purposes:

- To clarify and extend concepts presented in the literature that suggest specific aspects of consumer value that may be affected by branding
- To empirically compare the potential of two specific branding strategies (private label and national branding) to contribute to consumer value.

The review of literature and the development of the EVH framework presented in the previous chapter, as well as the study that is discussed in this chapter, address the research questions that were introduced earlier in this dissertation. These research questions are:

- How should the conceptual frameworks and processes currently used to understand consumer value be modified to better understand consumer value that may be created by branding?
- How might the components of consumer value (i.e., type of attribute level brand associations, consequences, desired end states) vary between loyal users of national versus private label brands?
- How might the complexity of consumer value (i.e., number of attribute level brand associations, consequences, desired end states) vary between loyal users of national versus private label brands?

In addition, Chapter 2 suggests a number of research propositions that were specifically examined in the study. Table 3-1 provides a summary of these propositions. Table 3-1 also illustrates how the research propositions (where appropriate) are translated into research hypotheses.

Table 3-1. Research propositions and hypotheses.

	Research Proposition	Research Hypothesis
P1	Brand as product associations will be (a) directly linked to functional consequences and (b) not directly linked to emotional and self-expressive consequences that are considered by consumers during a brand use situation.	$H1_a$: (BAPr-FC) $\neq 0$* $H1_{b1}$: (BAPr-EC) = 0 $H1_{b2}$: (BAPr-SEC) = 0
P2	Brand associations for (a) brand as organization, (b) brand as person and (c) brand as symbol will be linked to evaluative consequences for consumers (which may be functional, emotional, or self-expressive) that are considered during a brand use situation.	$H2_{a1}$: (BAO-FC) $\neq 0$ $H2_{a2}$: (BAO-EC) $\neq 0$ $H2_{a3}$: (BAO-SEC) $\neq 0$ $H2_{b1}$: (BAPe-FC) $\neq 0$ $H2_{b2}$: (BAPe-EC) $\neq 0$ $H2_{b3}$: (BAPe-SEC) $\neq 0$ $H2_{c1}$: (BAS-FC) $\neq 0$ $H2_{c2}$: (BAS-EC) $\neq 0$ $H2_{c3}$: (BAS-SEC) $\neq 0$
P3	There will be differences in the overall meaning of value, as shown by value hierarchies, between users of national brands and users of private label brands.	This research question is tested qualitatively; thus no specific research hypotheses are suggested. The data for evaluating this research proposition are summary value hierarchies. The analysis examines the meaning of differences in value dimensions rather than number of differences.
P4	The number of (a) attribute level brand associations, (b) consequences, (c) desired end states, (d) attribute level brand association-consequence linkages, and (e) consequence-desired end state linkages considered when assessing consumer value will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.	$H4_{a1}$: $BAPr_{national} > BAPr_{private}$ ** $H4_{a2}$: $BAO_{national} > BAO_{private}$ $H4_{a3}$: $BAPe_{national} > BAPe_{private}$ $H4_{a4}$: $BAS_{national} > BAS_{private}$ $H4_{b1}$: $FC_{national} > FC_{private}$ $H4_{b2}$: $EC_{national} > EC_{private}$ $H4_{b3}$: $SEC_{national} > SEC_{private}$ $H4_c$: $DES_{national} > DES_{private}$ $H4_d$: $[(BAPr\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAPr\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAPr\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}SEC)_{national}] > [(BAPr\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAPr\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAPr\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}SEC)_{private}]$ $H4_e$: $(FC\text{-}DES)_{national} + (EC\text{-}DES)_{national} + (SEC\text{-}DES)_{national} > (FC\text{-}DES)_{private} + (EC\text{-}DES)_{private} + (SEC\text{-}DES)_{private}$
P5	The ratio of psycho-social (emotional and self-expressive) consequences to functional consequences will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.	$H7_a$: $EC_{national}/FC_{national} > EC_{private}/FC_{private}$ $H5_b$: $SEC_{national}/FC_{national} > SEC_{private}/FC_{private}$
P6	(a) The ratio of brand as product associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label than national brands. (b) The ratio of brand as organization associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label than national brands. (c) The ratio of brand as person associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national than private label brands. (d) The ratio of brand as symbol associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national than private label brands.	$H6_a$: $BAPr_{private}/(BAPr_{private} + BA0_{private} + BAPe_{private} + BAS_{private}) > BAPr_{national}/(BAPr_{national} + BA0_{national} + BAPe_{national} + BAS_{national})$ $H6_b$: $BAO_{private}/(BAPr_{private} + BA0_{private} + BAPe_{private} + BAS_{private}) > BAO_{national}/(BAPr_{national} + BA0_{national} + BAPe_{national} + BAS_{national})$ $H6_c$: $BAPe_{national}/(BAPr_{national} + BA0_{national} + BAPe_{national} + BAS_{national}) > BAPe_{private}/(BAPr_{private} + BA0_{private} + BAPe_{private} + BAS_{private})$ $H6_d$: $BAS_{national}/(BAPr_{national} + BA0_{national} + BAPe_{national} + BAS_{national}) > BAS_{private}/(BAPr_{private} + BA0_{private} + BAPe_{private} + BAS_{private})$

*(BAPr-FC) is read "linkages between brand as product associations and functional consequences".
** The subscripts "private" and "national" refer to private label and national brands, respectively.

Operational Definitions of Constructs that Were Examined

In total, the research propositions and hypotheses shown above provide a test of the EVH framework described in Chapter 2. The EVH framework is comprised of three types of constructs: desired end states, consequences, and attribute level brand associations. This section outlines the operational definitions that were used to represent the constructs in the EVH framework.

Desired End States

Because the construct of desired end states has been thoroughly described in the consumer value literature, the following instructions found in Woodruff and Gardial (1996) served as a guideline for identifying desired end states:

> [The identification of desired end states] should include any desired end states, values, purposes, or goals that the consumer wishes to achieve .... some end states are served relatively directly by the product; that is, product nutrition leads to 'good health,' family programs at the health and fitness center provide 'quality time with family,' and so forth. On the other hand, there are some instances where product consumption indirectly contributes to a desired end state. For example, a consumer may like to play basketball in a local league because it serves a goal of community involvement. In this case, consuming the sports beverage does not directly keep the user involved in community. However, sports beverages are a part of the activity (league basketball) that does achieve that desired end state, so there may be an indirect linkage in the consumer's mind. Both directly and indirectly served end states are important to capture (p. 211).

Of all of the constructs in the EVH framework, desired end states are the most enduring as well as the most broad and abstract in nature. In addition, desired end states "may be appropriate across any number of products or use situations (e.g., 'love my family,' 'harmony,' or 'peace of mind') (Woodruff and Gardial, pp. 213-214)."

Consequences

The idea that a product can create consequences for a consumer has also been presented in detail in the consumer value literature. Consequences can be operationalized as "outcomes that the user experienced as a result of buying, owning, using, or disposing of

the product or service (Woodruff and Gardial 1996, p. 211)." It should be noted that consequences can be positive or negative (with positive consequences occurring in the form of benefits, gains, or advantages and negative consequences occurring in the form of costs, problems, or frustrations). In addition, consequences occur in the context of particular use situations (e.g., getting dehydrated while playing in a basketball game). As shown in the EVH framework, consequences can be of three types:

- Functional
- Emotional
- Self-expressive.

Because several research hypotheses compare the number and nature of consumer thoughts about different types of consequences, it is important that the distinctions between types are very clear. The following guidelines were used to distinguish between types of consequences.

Functional consequences. Functional consequences are by definition outcomes that are directly related to the utility of using a product or service. For instance, "easy for me to use" or "keeps my family safe" are both examples of functional consequences. Because they relate to the utility of using a product or service, functional consequences are often directly linked to specific product attributes. For example, in the statement "the taste of Coke makes my mouth tingle," the consumer clearly links a specific brand as product association (the taste of Coke) with a functional outcome (makes my mouth tingle).

Emotional consequences. Sometimes, consumers speak about outcomes of using a product that relate to emotional well-being, rather than functional utility. These consequences are categorized as emotional consequences. They are most easily recognizable for their use of emotions or feelings as part of the description of the outcome. For example, "makes me feel good" and "frustrates me" can both be classified as emotional consequences.

Self-expressive consequences. Self-expressive consequences are outcomes that relate to how the consumer is seen by others or that contribute to an individual's power of self-expression. For example, two consequences of wearing a particular dress, "makes me seem more attractive" or "reminds me of something a movie star would wear," are both examples of self-expressive consequences. Self-expressive consequences are recognizable because they refer to changes (real or perceived) in the way that consumers believe that a third party might view them.

Attribute Level Brand Associations

The consumer value literature operationalizes attributes as:

> ... any attribute level features or characteristics that were used to describe the product or service. These would include physical characteristics (e.g., size, packaging, labeling, container type, ingredients, parts, or construction), service characteristics (e.g., delivery, service, availability, order processing, distribution, service provider helpfulness and demeanor, and efficiency), and even features of the "extended" product, including advertising, reputation, brand/company awareness, trade promotions, and the like (Woodruff and Gardial 1996, p. 211).

This discussion of attributes is distinctly different from the discussion of consequences presented above because attributes are tied directly to the product (although product is used in a broad sense to include more than just the physical product) and thus do not vary across use situations. The attributes that a consumer finds most important or relevant, however, may vary across use situations.

Because this dissertation draws from both the branding and consumer value literature, the terms "attribute level brand association" and "product attribute" are used interchangeably. As described earlier, the term "product attribute" is most commonly used in the consumer value literature, while the term " attribute level brand association" is more recognizable to those familiar with branding research. The latter term suggests a subset of thoughts that might be included in a branding study that examines "brand associations." "Brand association" is a term commonly used in the branding literature that defines consumer thoughts related to a brand, however, it does not differentiate between attributes and

consequences. The term "attribute level brand association" explicitly suggests a greater emphasis on associations related to the extended product (such as specific associations that result from exposure to promotional strategies, including advertising, in-store displays, brand name, etc.), although the term "product attribute" is operationalized in the consumer value literature to include all of these aspects of the brand.

The suggestions made by Woodruff and Gardial (1996) for distinguishing between attributes and consequences were applied in this research. Specifically, Woodruff and Gardial suggest that attributes are dimensions clearly associated with the product and thus do not vary across use situations. Consequences, on the other hand, may vary significantly across use situations.

Of course, once attributes are separated from consequences, the most critical step is categorizing attributes mentioned (where appropriate) as representing one of the four types of attribute level brand associations described in the EVH framework. As stated in Chapter 2, the categorization of attributes into the various types of attribute level brand associations that are presented in the EVH framework is an important contribution of this dissertation. The EVH framework depicts four types of attribute level brand associations:

- Brand as product
- Brand as organization
- Brand as person
- Brand as symbol.

Through pilot testing of the coding process, Aaker's initial definitions of attribute level brand associations (see Figure 3-1) were modified so that it was possible to easily classify an attribute level brand association into one of the four categories of brand associations listed above. As noted in Chapter 2, one of the limitations of Aaker's framework is that the categories as he defines them are not mutually exclusive. In order to use the framework as a basis for evaluating the effect of brand strategies on consumer value, it was necessary to

develop discrete categories into which the various attribute level brand associations mentioned by consumers could be classified.

The modifications to Aaker's initial definitions primarily involved clarifying concepts and providing examples and additional definitions that allowed coders to discriminate between categories. For example, Aaker's concept of "product attribute," which he lists as a component of the brand as product, was defined as specifically including physical product characteristics (such as "blue color," "comes in liquid and granular form," or "sweet taste"). By clearly deliniating the types of product attributes included in this component of the brand as product, it was possible for coders to easily these as recognize brand as product associations. Other brand as product associations include consumer thoughts about specific use situations for which a product is appropriate (e.g., "a morning drink") and thoughts about overall product quality (e.g., "a better made product than its competitors").

Similarly, any attribute level brand association that specifically refers to the manufacturer (or retailer) rather than the brand itself was defined as a brand as organization association. These references to the organization may be either objective (e.g., "a large

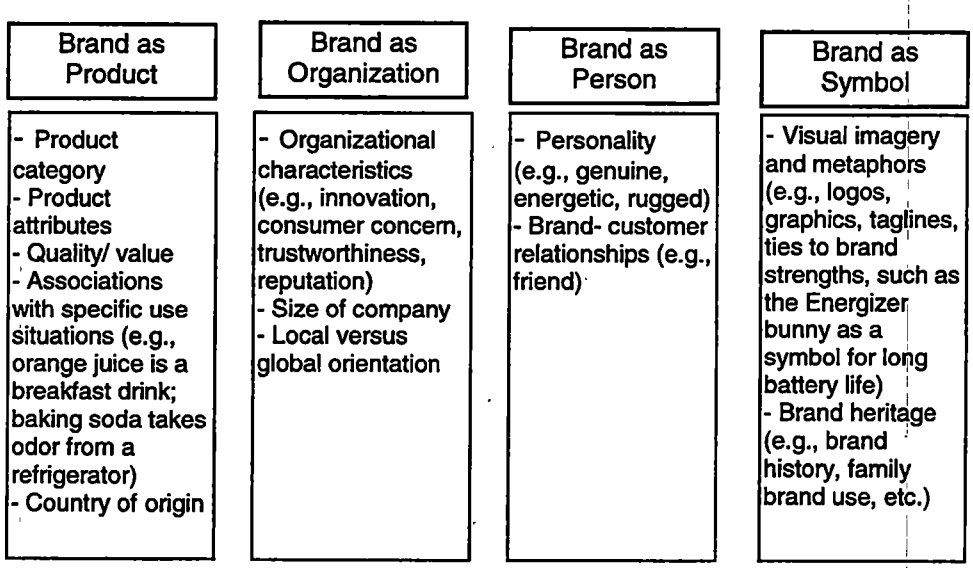


Figure 3-1. Aaker's definitions of attribute level brand associations.
Source: Adapted from Aaker (1996).

company") or subjective (e.g., "a reputable place to shop"). For example, both "a company that cares about its employees" and "clean store" were characteriized as brand as organization associations.

Because they are more subjective concepts than the brand associations just described, it was especially important to develop clear definitions for brand as person and brand as symbol associations. For this study, brand as person associations were defined as any attribute level brand association that referred to:

- A personality trait (such as "friendly" or "familiar")
- A demographic characteristic associated with the brand (such as "youthful" or "feminine"), or
- A lifestyle characteristic associated with the brand (such as "energetic" or "conservative").

In order to be defined as a brand as person characteristic, the personality description was defined as needing to refer to the brand itself, rather than a characteristic of a particular product attribute. For example, if a consumer prefers Kraft because the brand is "consistent" or "dependable," this association is classified as a brand as person association. If a consumer, however, refers to a specifc aspect of the product itself as consistent (such as "consistent taste" or "consistent texture"), the the association is classified as brand as product, because a product attribute is driving the thought expressed by the consumer.

Brand as symbol associations were perhaps the most difficult to operationally define because these associations are of a symbolic, rather than functional, nature. Brand as symbol associations were defined as falling into one of three categories:

- A characteristic of image-related brand promotion, including brand name, brand logo, tagline from a commercial (non-informational), or description of non-product elements of a commercial or advertisment
- Graphics or design elements related to the brand, promotions, or packaging

- Brand history or heritage, such as the length of time the brand has been in existence, brand promotions that have been phased out (e.g., the "Pepsi Challenge"), or family use of a brand (e.g., "my mother always used this brand").

It should be noted that only symbolic aspects of promotional efforts were included in the definition of brand as symbol associations. For example, if a consumer referred to a purely functional aspect of a product's package, such as "resealable top on packaging," this is noted as a brand as product association because the packaging adds to the functionality of the product. Alternatively, as is made clear by the definition above, references to package graphics or logos (such as "the Nike swoosh" or "legitimate package design") were classified as brand as symbol associations. This is because these brand associations add to a consumer's perceptions of the overall brand image, or identity. Likewise, if a consumer mentioned a commercial, or advertisement, that provided information about the product (such as "the commercials remind me that Kraft cheese is made with real milk"), this association was classified as a brand as product association. In this case, the commercial served as a cue for reinforcing consumer thoughts about a specific product attribute, healthy ingredients. If a consumer referred to a non-informational, or non-product based, aspect of a commercial's content (such as "involves the world in their commercials" or "sponsors Kraft Theater"), the association was classified as a brand as symbol association because, again, the promotional effort created or reinforced the consumer's perception of the brand's overall image. Table 3-2 illustrates the operational definitions that were used to distinguish between types of attribute level brand associations.

Summary

Some examples that illustrate the constructs included in the EVH framework are included in Table 3-3. These examples are the result of initial pilot testing of the framework.

Table 3-2. Operational definitions of attribute level brand associations.

The following guidelines were used for coding the four types of brand associations.

Brand as Product – Brand as Product associations are consumer thoughts that are specifically tied to characteristics or use of the product itself.

A brand association was coded as Brand as Product if the consumer mentioned:

- a characteristic of the physical product itself, including overall quality, price, and country of origin
- a characteristic of the product's packaging that is functional in nature (e.g., resealable top)
- a characteristic of a product promotion that provides information about the product itself or reinforces a perception currently held regarding product characteristics or performance
- a use situation or occasion in which use of the product is deemed appropriate or inappropriate.

Brand as Organization – Brand as Organization associations are consumer thoughts that are specifically tied to the manufacturer or retailer of the product.

A brand association was coded as Brand as Organization if the consumer mentioned:

- a characteristic of the brand manufacturer (e.g., an "international company")
- a characteristic of the brand retailer (e.g., "clean stores")
- a perception of the brand manufacturer (e.g., "a reputatable company")
- a perception of the brand retailer (e.g., "a store that is interested in keeping customers happy").

Brand as Person – Brand as Person associations recognize the ability of a brand to have a personality (including human characteristics) in the consumer's mind.

A brand association was coded as Brand as Person if the consumer mentioned:

- a personality trait associated with a brand, such as "it just seems like an easy-going brand"
- a demographic characteristic associated with the brand (e.g., age, gender, or social class), such as "a feminine brand" or "a youthful brand"
- a lifestyle characteristic associated with the brand (e.g., activities, interests, and opinions), such as "an energetic brand" or "a conservative brand"

Brand as Symbol – Brand as Symbol associations recognize the ability of a brand to symbolize concepts, represent meaning, or bring back memories to a consumer.

A brand association was coded as Brand as Symbol if the consumer mentioned:

- a characteristic of image-related brand promotion, such as brand logo, (non-informational) tagline, or description of non-product elements of a television commercial
- brand graphics (i.e., graphical elements of commercials, packaging, etc.)
- brand history or heritage (i.e., length of time the brand has been in existence, commercials which are no longer running, family use of a brand (i.e., "my mother always used this brand," etc.).

Table 3-3. Examples of constructs included in the EVH framework.

Construct	Sample Comment(s) from a Loyal Brand User
Brand as Product	"I liked the smell of Pantene." "Bud Light is the beer that tastes best to me." "Nike tennis shoes have good arch support."
Brand as Organization	"Coca-Cola's headquarters are in Atlanta, GA." "Budweiser sponsors the SAE-Budweiser boxing tournament every year." "Columbia House always has good prices."
Brand as Person	"I perceive it [Diet Coke] as a friendly brand." "To me Abercrombie and Fitch clothing has a relaxed look but at the same time it is sophisticated." "Coca-Cola is a caring brand .... "
Brand as Symbol	"Tide reminds me of washing clothes for my family when my kids were small. I like to use Tide because it reminds me of when my kids were here at home." "Coca-Cola represents America in my mind." "The Tide symbol is one of the most recognizable symbols for me personally in the entire grocery store. All the other detergents look to me like they are trying to copy the Tide symbol. Most of them use the same colors as Tide, the same style of logo, and usually the same container."
Functional Consequences	"With Tide my clothes would come fresh and clean." "With Pantene my hair stayed clean all day, and it began looking very healthy."
Emotional Consequences	"When I wear Nike tennis shoes I feel confident ...." "Diet Coke makes me happy." "When I do not have a Diet Coke I can get grumpy." "Tide connects me with my family."
Self-expressive Consequences	"I wish that the [Ralph Lauren] brand did not have that little horse on it though. I almost think that it is 'cheesy' to be flaunting around the Polo horse [brand as symbol] ... for everyone to see [self-expressive consequence]." "I wear Levi's because they are the 'in' jean to wear."
Desired End States	"[Having basketball shoes that provide comfort and support for my feet] are an investment in my health and well-being." "I give my kitten Nine Lives because it keeps her healthy, and *the doctors say I am a good mother to her.*"

Context Description

In designing a study that addressed the above research questions and provided a strong basis for evaluating the EVH framework, a number of context considerations emerged. First, it was important to find a context in which attribute level brand associations resulting from brand strategies were likely to influence consumer evaluation and preference. Second, it was important to test the framework in a context in which both functional as well as psycho-social consequences were relevant. Finally, a context in which consumers could easily assess and describe differences between brands was needed. Given these considerations and the pressing need to understand value at the brand level expressed by marketers of national and private label brands, the context of product categories in which national and private label brands directly compete was chosen.

Private label brands can be classified into two categories: (1) regular private label and (2) generic brands (Private Label Manufacturers Association 1997). Regular private label brands, also known as store brands, are typically of similar quality to branded products, but are labeled with a brand name that is associated exclusively with a particular retailer. Regular private label brands typically have packaging that is similar to that of nationally branded products, but are supported by marketing budgets that are significantly lower than national brands. Sam's Choice (distributed through Wal-Mart) and Craftsman (distributed by Sears) are both considered to be regular private label brands.

Generic brands are typically of lower quality and have more basic packaging than their nationally branded competitors. These brands are distributed exclusively through a particular retailer, but are typically supported with minimal marketing dollars. Because growth in the private label industry is occurring primarily in the area of regular private label brands, only users of this type of brand were included in this research. Thus, consumer value associated with a regular private label brand was compared with consumer value associated with a leading national brand in the same product category.

Given this context, several specific decisions were made which potentially affected the outcomes of this research. These are:

- Choice of product categories
- Choice of specific brands within the selected product categories
- Selection of brand consumers
- Choice of use situation
- Focus on desired or received value.

Choice of product categories. Perhaps the most important criteria for selection of the product categories of interest was that they provide a rich environment for addressing the research propositions introduced in Chapter 2 and the research hypothesis derived in this chapter. In order to maximize differences between brands product categories in which

private label dollar volume is high, but where a national brand also has high name recognition, were appropriate. Thus, it was important that there be a "leading" national and "leading" private label brand within each product category. For this study, "leading" brand was defined as a brand with greater than 20% of overall market share. Consumer packaged goods sold in supermarkets were selected because they tend to be:

- Frequently purchased
- A genre in which private labels are gaining market share
- An area where national brands are typically supported by strong promotional budgets while private label brands are not.

Given this general interest, Table 3-4 lists the top 20 product categories in which 1996 supermarket sales (by dollar volume) of private label brands were highest (Private Label Manufacturers Association 1997). These provided a starting point for selecting appropriate product categories.

Two similar product categories were chosen for investigation, one for an initial test of the EVH framework and the second for a replication of the test. Similar product categories were used because this condition was anticipated to provide the greatest opportunity for replication of the research findings.

Based on a review of the above table, the top two product categories with a "leading" national and "leading" private label brand were chosen. These are:

- Cheese (product category #1)
- Carbonated beverages. (product category #2).

Table 3-4. Top 20 private label categories by dollar volume – supermarkets.

	Product Category	Dollar Volume
1	Milk	$6.2 billion
2	Fresh Bread and Rolls	$1.9 billion
3	Cheese	$1.8 billion
4	Fresh Eggs	$1.6 billion
5	Ice Cream	$976 million
6	Carbonated Beverages	$856 million
7	Frozen Plain Vegetables	$740 million
8	Sugar	$689 million
9	Vegetables	$645 million
10	Juice – Refrigerated	$643 million
11	Cold Cereal	$531 million
12	Bottled Juices - Store Shelf	$480 million
13	Canned/ Bottled Fruit	$471 million
14	Cookies	$444 million
15	Juices – Frozen	$419 million
16	Chips and Snacks	$397 million
17	Luncheon Meats	$395 million
18	Food and Trash Bags	$392 million
19	Cups and Plates	$379 million
20	Diapers	$351 million
Source: Private Label Manufacturers Association 1997.		

To narrow the focus of the study, sub-categories within each product category were also selected. For cheese, shredded cheddar cheese was the product of interest. For carbonated beverages, the product category was limited to non-diet, caffeinated carbonated beverages.

Choice of specific brands within the selected product categories. The specific brands chosen for investigation were the "leading" national brand and "leading" private label brand in each product category for the retailer from which participants were recruited. It was verified with the retailer that the market share for each brand selected was 20% or greater. Kroger, a leading grocery chain, agreed to allow recruitment of participants in Knoxville area stores. As was expected, the Kroger-manufacturered private label brand was the brand selected for use in both product categories. For the shredded cheese product category, Kraft was used as the national brand of interest, while the Kroger brand was the private label brand of interest. For carbonated beverages, Coke Classic was the national brand of interest, and Big K Cola (manufactured by Kroger) was the private label brand of interest.

One criteria for brand selection that was considered desirable, but not required, was that the brands chosen represent different brand identity strategies (i.e., brand name is different from manufacturers name, such as "Crest;" brand name and manufacturers name are used, such as "Bravada by Oldsmobile;" or brand name is the same as the manufacturers name, such as "Kellogg's Corn Flakes"). It was originally anticipated that the national brands would have differering brand identity strategies; however, both Coke and Kraft use strategies where the brand name and the manufacturer name is the same. It was the private label brands (Kroger and Big K) that actually varied according to brand identity strategy.

Selection of brand consumers. In-store recruitment was used to identify prospective participants in the study. As stated earlier, all participants were recruited in Knoxville area Kroger grocery stores. Four Kroger stores were used, all of which were located within six miles of the university campus. The same four stores were used for each product category. Shoppers in the four Kroger stores selected were expected to represent a variety of demographic profiles (e.g., some urban, some suburban; a mix of ages and incomes, etc.).

Consumers who were observed purchasing a selected brand were asked a series of questions and, if they fit the profile for participation, were asked to participate in an interview being conducted as part of a university study. Consumers were screened based on:

- Brand loyalty
- Knowledge of brand manufacturer
- Age of participant.

Brand loyalty was operationalized in terms of frequency of purchase as a percentage of the time the consumer purchases a brand for that product category (Crimins 1993; Jacoby, Chestnut and Fisher 1978; Wansink and Ray 1993). Fifty percent is the percentage that is commonly used (Jacoby, Chestnut and Fisher 1978; Wansink and Ray 1993). Knowledge of the manufacturer was operationalized as ability to accurately name the company that makes the specified brand. This knowledge provided a validity check for the brand as organization

associations held by the consumer. Because the human subjects process requires a different application for non-adult interviews, this study included only consumers who were over 18 years of age. Table 3-5 illustrates the three screening questions that were used to screen prospective participants.

Choice of use situation. Because in-store recruitment was used as a way of selecting participants in the study, it was expected that the sample of shoppers who agreed to participate would be representative of the population of supermarket shoppers, specifically buyers of shredded cheese and soft drinks, respectively. The population of buyers of shredded cheese and soft drinks, however, is most likely not the same as the population of shredded cheese and soft drink users. Because the sample is a reflection of those who engage in frequent purchase situations relative to the selected product categories, the supermarket purchase situation was chosen as the use situation of interest.

Focus on desired or received value. Conceptually, it is possible to examine the effect of brand strategies on the value that is desired or received by the consumer. As stated in Chapter 2, desired value represents preferences for certain value dimensions (i.e., attributes, consequences, and desired end states) based on positive outcomes that the consumer associates with having the value dimension. Alternatively, received value represents consumer evaluations of product or brand performances on desired value dimensions. In

Table 3-5. Screening questions used to select consumers for participation.

Construct	Screening Question	Criteria for Selection
Brand loyalty	Thinking back over the [NAME OF PRODUCTS IN PRODUCT CATEGORY] that you have purchased in the past year, what percent of time have you purchased [name of selected brand]?	Purchase 50% or more of time
Knowledge of manufacturer	What is the company that manufacturers [NAME OF SELECTED BRAND]?	Accurate name of manufacturer
Age of participant	Are you currently over 18 years of age?	Must answer "yes"

short, desired value provides information about consumer expectations, while received value provides information about brand performance in meeting those expectations. Because it is most likely that branding strategies (such as national and private label branding) would affect perceived brand performance, this study focused on understanding the overall value received by consumers. Given the design of this study, examining the effect of branding strategies on desired value would have been very difficult. This is because loyal users of brands would have many thoughts about previously received value, which might confound thoughts about desired value. Future research offers the opportunity for examining the effect of branding strategies on desired value. The next section reviews considerations that were relevant in developing the research methodology.

Development of the Research Methodology

In order to evaluate the EVH framework, a methodology was developed that elicited information about the various types of brand associations that were included in the framework and enabled evaluation of the extent to which these brand associations were considered during consumer assessments of brand value. As would be expected, the choice of methodology for this study was dependent on the research questions presented in Chapter 2. In developing the methodology, two key decisions were made:

- The nature of the data collected (e.g., structured vs. unstructured)
- The nature of the data analysis process used (e.g., qualitative vs. quantitative).

Because consumer value is by definition a subjective concept, the collection of unstructured data (i.e., data that differs between consumers in terms of content) to evaluate the EVH framework has an important advantage. Using unstructured data allows the consumer to completely direct the number and type of attribute level brand associations that are discussed. For example, some consumers may bring up ten different attribute level brand associations when thinking about a specific brand, while others may consider only two

or three. Learning about attribute level brand associations via the collection of structured data (such as a survey or list format) would require the researcher to prompt the consumer regarding the content and number of brand associations that might be considered. Thus, using a less structured format for data collection allows the consumer to direct the content of the value dimensions that are discussed. This is important because it provides a record of consumer thoughts about value that is created with minimal demand effects. In addition, a potential contribution of the EVH framework is that it provides a categorization scheme, or structure, for organizing attribute level brand associations. Having an unbiased record of consumer thoughts about value adds credibility to the findings related to the structure of attribute level brand associations that emerge from this research. A disadvantage of using unstructured data is that the data may or may not be directly comparable across consumers. For example, if a value dimension is not mentioned by a consumer, it is unknown whether the value dimension is unimportant, or simply failed to come to the consumer' s mind. In addition, unstructured data is expensive to collect and time-consuming to code and analyze. Because of the importance of allowing the consumer to direct the content of the discussion of attribute level brand associations, an unstructured format for data collection was chosen for this study. Future studies may use structured or unstructured techniques for data collection.

As stated earlier, a primary purpose of this study was to test and evaluate the usefulness of the EVH framework. Thus, an analysis process that is conducive to theory testing was appropriate. In addition, as stated earlier, a primary contribution of the EVH framework is a categorization scheme that describes the structure (or types) of attribute level brand associations considered by consumers. For this study, the tests of the research hypotheses suggested the need for comparing consumers across product categories as well as across branding strategies. Since a specific categorization scheme was used, statistical comparisons that quantify similarities and differences between groups were needed. The discussion of research design presented later in this chapter outlines the coding and analysis process used for the study.

An alternative approach to this research area (consumer value as it relates to branding) would have been to use qualitative analyses to identify categories (or themes) that emerged from the data collected. This type of analysis would have allowed a rich understanding of various types of thoughts about brands that consumers consider when assessing value and would have likely led to future theory building. Because several conceptual frameworks related to brand value have already been proposed in the marketing literature (e.g., Gutman's 1982 levels of abstraction concept and Aaker's 1991 brand identity concept), however, this dissertation adopted the approach of theory testing. Future studies may be developed that focus on theory building or theory testing.

Technique for Data Collection

As described earlier, the data collected for this study were unstructured, allowing the consumer to direct the content of the brand associations discussed. Three methods have been presented in the literature as appropriate for better understanding the "salient themes, patterns, and categories in participants' meaning structures (p. 78)" as well as understanding how these patters are linked with each other (Marshall and Rossman 1989). These are:

- Participant observation (e.g., Blumer 1969)
- Focus group interviewing (e.g., Morgan 1988)
- In-depth interviewing (e.g., McCracken 1988b).

An important perspective presented in the literature and adopted by this dissertation is that consumer value results from a cognitive evaluation process. As described earlier in this dissertation, value is created in the *mind* of the consumer. Although an observational study might have provided important insights that could have been used to understand this cognitive process, the focus of observation is not on cognitive evaluation. Thus, observation was not the best technique by which to address the research questions presented in this dissertation.

In addition, the outcomes of a consumer's cognitive evaluation (the value dimensions) are presumed to be unique to the individual. Thought as well as empirical research clearly suggests that value dimensions differ across consumers (Gardial et. al. 1994; Reynolds and Gutman 1988; Woodruff and Gardial 1996). Because focus groups are best suited for understanding commonalities across multiple individuals, use of focus groups may not have provided the information necessary to identify differences in value across individuals.

As stated in Chapter 2, this dissertation focused only on the first step of the Customer Value Determination (CVD) process, which involves identifying attributes and consequences (called value dimensions) that are relevant to consumers when making assessments of value. Because the dissertation study emphasized identification of consumer value dimensions, a technique that was appropriate for this step in the CVD process was needed. In-depth interviewing techniques are well-suited for understanding participant meaning perspectives as well as exploring cognitive evaluation processes (McCracken 198b; Marshall and Rossman 1989). In addition, in-depth interviews are an established methodology within the consumer value literature (e.g., Reynolds and Gutman 1988; Woodruff and Gardial 1996).

This section first reviews in-depth interviewing techniques that are commonly used to identify desired value dimensions. Next, it evaluates these techniques based on their usefulness for the dissertation study.

In-depth Interviewing Techniques Used for Assessing Consumer Value

In general, identifying consumer value dimensions requires a measurement technique that encourages consumers to provide detailed information about what they value. This information may vary widely from consumer to consumer. Depth interview techniques "can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is known (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p. 19)."

The techniques described in this section are consistent with means-end theory and thus have the potential to be used for identifying value dimensions that consumers associate

with a brand. Table 3-6 provides a brief overview of the interviewing techniques that have been introduced in the consumer value literature. As is seen from this table, a variety of interviewing techniques may be used for identifying desired value dimensions. Each technique has strengths and weaknesses, which are summarized later in this section.

In total, these techniques have contributed greatly to our understanding of the knowledge structures that consumers use to assess value. For example, the sources cited in the table above clearly demonstrate the potential of these techniques to provide rich information about what consumers value. Furthermore, they provide support for the means-end chain and value hierarchy concepts as useful theoretical bases for understanding value. In addition, the existence of multiple techniques for learning about consumer value provides a significant opportunity for broadening marketing knowledge. Although few individual studies have employed triangulation of the methods listed above, comparing what is learned about consumer value across studies has the potential to offer additional important insights.

Table 3-7 summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the methods which have been used for identifying value dimensions.

Evaluation of the Usefulness of these Techniques for the Dissertation Study

While all of the interviewing techniques listed above have the potential to enhance understanding of consumer value at the brand level, the choice of technique for a single study is best determined based on the specific research questions to be addressed. Thus, in selecting the interviewing technique that was most appropriate to achieve the research objectives of this study, several important considerations were used.

First, the discussion presented in this chapter makes it clear that identifying desired end states, or values, that are important to consumers is fundamental to understanding consumer value. Reynolds and Gutman (1988) carefully review the limitations of both the Kelly Reperatory Grid and the Grey Benefit Chain in this area. These methods typically capture information about consumer knowledge structures that reach only the attribute (Kelly

Table 3-6. Description of interviewing techniques used to identify value dimensions.

Name of Method	Description Of Method	Theoretical Basis	Source	Knowledge Structure(s) (A-C-DES) Examined
Laddering	In-depth interview used to understand how consumers translate product attributes into meaningful associations with respect to self. Uses directed probes, such as "why is that important to you?" to determine linkages between key perceptual elements across the range of attributes, consequences, & values.	Means end theory (Gutman 1982)	Reynolds and Gutman (1988), Woodruff and Gardial (1996)	Attributes, Consequences, and Desired end states
Grand Tour	In-depth interview used to understand value hierarchies indirectly by exploring the consumer use experience. Uses directed probes, such as "what are you feeling at this point during your activity?" to learn about consequences & values relevant during use.	Means end theory (Gutman 1982)	Woodruff and Gardial (1996)	Attributes, Consequences, and Desired end states
Grey Benefit Chain	In-depth interview beginning with a product description including a specific product attribute. The consumer provides 2 benefits derived from the attribute & 2 benefits derived from each of the initial 2 benefits. Process is repeated, yielding a total of 14 benefits.	None, although means end theory offers a reasonable explanation (Gutman 1982)	Young and Feigin (1975)	Attributes, Consequences (benefits only)
Kelly Repertory Grid (Triadic Sorting)	Respondents state how 2 products in a set of 3 are similar and how they differ from a third product. Elicits distinctions made by an individual concerning perceived, meaningful differences between products.	Categorization theory (e.g,. Rosch 1978)	Kelly (1955)	Typically attributes only
Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET)	In-depth interview technique used to understand consumer images of brands, products, and companies, brand equity, product concepts and designs, etc. Consumers bring in photographic images which serve as a basis for guided conversation that uses a combination of Kelly Repertory Grid and laddering techniques to elicit constructs that can be organized into a summary mental map. Consumers can also create summary visual images and vignettes which can be used to assist in the creation of advertising design and copy.	Categorization theory (Rosch 1978); Means end theory (Gutman 1982; nonverbal communication (Birdwhistell 1970; metaphor elicitation (Lakoff and Johnson 1980)	Zaltman and Coulter (1995)	Attributes, Consequences, and Desired end states

Table 3-7. Strengths and weaknesses of techniques used to identify value dimensions.

Method	Strengths	Weaknesses
Laddering	* Provides understanding of how consumers translate the attributes of products into meaningful associations with respect to self * Structured interview which eases moderator's task, makes training easier * Reasonably short interview time frame (about 45 minutes to one hour) * Connections between attributes, consequences, and desired end states are explicitly made by the consumer * Relative strength of individual A-C-DES linkages can be determined	* Nature of probes ("why") can lead to respond fatigue, which may cause omission of some information * Respondents catch on to what interviewer is looking for; can lead to social desirability responses and the creation of linkages that don't really exist * Does not reveal much about how use situations and other activities influence the value consumers place on a product or service
Grand Tour	* Provides in-depth understanding of consumer use situations and use of a product or service within a given situation * Expected to yield more information about all levels of the value hierarchy as compared to laddering * Yields consumer insights related to product / service use; can help managers uncover strategic opportunties	* Interview requires significant amount of consumer time (usually one to two hours) * Requires more intensive training of interviewers because of lack of structure and need for probing * Connections between levels of the value hierarchy are rarely explicit and must be inferred from consumer responses
Grey Benefit Chain	* Identifies consumer brand associations at the attribute and benefit (consequence) levels * Distinguishes between type of benefit (functional, practical, emotional) provided to the consumer * Relatively easy cognitive task for the consumer – interview can be short (15-30 minutes)	* Does not illustrate how attributes and benefits related to personal values, desired end states * Only "physical" (brand as product) aspects of a product are used as a basis for questioning * No theoretical basis for technique
Kelly Repertory Grid (Triadic Sorting)	* Effective at eliciting bases by which consumers distinguish between products * Can be used to idenfity distinctions between attributes, consequences, and values (although primarily used to elicit attribute level distinctions) * Provides insight about how consumers make sense of large amounts of product-related information	* Typicially elicits distinctions based on physical (brand as product) aspects of a brand * No quantitative way of determining relevance of basis for distinction to the consumer
Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET)	* Taps nonverbal channels of communication in a manner that elicits consumer insights * Makes use of metaphors on the basis that they are fundamental to learning and communication * Generates core constructs and the reasonings that connect them to form mental models that represent consumer thinking about a brand * Provides visual as well as written data, which is helpful for the development of marketing communication strategies based on consumer needs	* Is not grounded in the use situation * Does not clearly describe linkages between attributes, consequences, and values * Requires extensive training of interviewers * Requires trained graphics imaging technicians * Requires a large amount of consumer's time (5 hours preparation plus 2 hour interview) * Analysis is labor intensive * Requires graphics imaging hardware and software * Does not provide quantitative estimates of the relative strengths of associations between constructs * Photographic images selected by consumers are limited to concepts they find familiar and thus could narrow the range of discussion * Does not provide estimates of percentage of larger population who believe a certain way

perceived to be superior (Reynolds and Gutman 1988; Woodruff and Gardial 1996; Zaltman and Coulter 1995).

Next, although it captures information about attributes, consequences, and desired end states, the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) is not often cited in the consumer value literature. One reason for this may be that these discussions of attributes, consequences, and desired end states are not grounded in the use situation. This limitation of the method seriously hampers its usefulness as basis for understanding consumer value. For this reason, and because of the extensive training and expensive equipment required to conduct the interviews, the ZMET did not seem to be the most appropriate method for beginning to examine consumer value as it relates to branding.

Given the above considerations, both the laddering and grand tour methods seemed to hold promise for exploring consumer value at the brand level. Laddering, however, offers the two strengths that made it preferred for the study described in this dissertation. First, laddering is a method which has received considerable attention in the literature (Gengler and Reynolds 1995; Reynolds and Gutman 1984, 1988; Reynolds and Whitlark 1995; Vallette-Florence and Rapacchi 1991). Because it is an established method for understanding consumer value, it is appropriate to use laddering as a basis for collecting data to evaluate the EVH framework. Second, and most importantly, laddering interviews are structured to ensure that the information elicited about attributes, consequences, and desired end states can be clearly related in the form of a value hierarchy. Thus, in laddering interviews, the connections between attributes, consequences, and desired end states are explicitly made by consumers (Woodruff and Gardial 1996). Being able to identify explicit linkages was necessary to evaluate the extent to which branding can create consequences in a particular use situation. In sum, the laddering technique offered the most potential to provide data that could be used to evaluate the EVH framework as well as make an assessment of the effects of national and private label brand strategies on overall consumer value. Since laddering is the technique that was selected for use in this dissertation study, a brief overview of this method is presented.

Overview of the Laddering Technique

As stated earlier, laddering is a well known technique based on the means-end framework (Gutman and Reynolds 1979; Reynolds and Gutman 1984, 1988). In addition, the laddering technique has been used "to develop effective communication strategies for many leading corporations, industry organizations, public service groups, and political candidates (Reynolds and Whitlark 1995, p. 9)."

A feature of the laddering technique that makes it particularly appropriate for the study of consumer value is its focus on the attributes, consequences, and end states that are important to a consumer, as well as its ability to represent the nature and strength of A-C-DES relationships (Gutman 1991). A particular strength of the laddering technique is its ability to reveal A-C-DES linkages that consumers may consider during brand evaluation.

Because of the extensive resources (in terms of time and cost) required to conduct laddering interviews, several modifications of the technique have been discussed in the literature. Gengler (1990), for example, proposed a method in which consumers used an interactive computer program to provide information about the strengths of A-C-DES linkages that were important to them. In this method, relevant attributes, consequences, and desired end states were determined a priori using focus groups. Walker and Olson (1991) also developed a technique in which consumers read a brief decision scenario and then completed a pencil-and-paper laddering task. The written responses were content analyzed for the purpose of identifying relevant attributes, consequences, and desired end states. In a similar method, Vallette-Florence and Rapacchi (1990) used a card-sorting task to get consumers to identify linkages between pre-determined attributes, consequences, and desired end states. In these cases, the modifications were deemed to yield information that is inferior to that provided by traditional laddering interviews (Gengler and Reynolds 1995). A recent study also applied the laddering methodology in a telephone survey format to understand consumer value related to recycling (Bagozzi and Dabholkar 1994). The telephone application was found to yield information about attributes, consequences and

desired end states; however, the shorter time frame which is often required for the telephone interviews suggests the need for a fairly narrowly defined scope for consumer comments. In addition, a telephone format may have limited consumer abilities to choose from lists of elicited associations, which was an essential part of this study.

Limitations of the Laddering Technique

As stated earlier, the laddering technique is based on the traditional value hierarchy framework described in Chapter 2. Because it uses the traditional value hierarchy as its basis, laddering has several limitations. First, and most importantly, laddering generally uses a global construct, called product attributes, as its basis for understanding the consequences that are relevant to consumers in making assessments of value. In order to provide a means of testing the EVH framework, the basis for eliciting attribute level associations must allow for identification of the four types of associations depicted in the framework. Secondly, laddering has been limited in its focus related to the relationship between functional and psycho-social consequences. In order to provide an adequate test of the EVH framework, the laddering technique was extended to encourage elicitation of direct linkages between brand associations and psycho-social consequences.

Pre-testing of Technique for Data Collection

In order to address the limitations of the laddering technique discussed above, it was necessary to address several issues through pre-testing. This was done for the purpose of adapting the laddering technique to be consistent with the constructs represented in the EVH framework. In total, 32 mini-interviews were conducted to address key issues. The mini-interviews lasted about 15 minutes each and involved the initial elicitation of attribute level brand associations, participant selection of important brand associations, and initial laddering probes. The interview was terminated once it became clear that the participant could (or could not) link the selected attribute level brand associations to consequences of brand use. Key findings from the pre-test interviews are summarized in this section. In total, this section

reviews the pre-testing that was conducted to refine the interview technique used in this study.

Evaluation of Existing Elicitation Techniques

The primary adaptation of the laddering methodology that was needed for this study was the development of an elicitation technique that could specifically capture the four types of attribute level brand associations (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) included in the EVH framework. Several different elicitation techniques for exploring consumer value have been suggested in the literature. These include triadic sorting (Kelly 1955; Reynolds and Gutman 1988), preferred brand (Reynolds and Gutman 1988), and specification of use situation or occasion (Reynolds and Gutman 1988; Woodruff and Gardial 1996). In addition, many studies in the branding literature simply use the brand name as a cue for generating brand associations related to value (e.g., Edell and Keller 1989; Keller 1987; Riezebos 1994). Table 3-8 briefly highlights the strengths and weaknesses of existing elicitation techniques.

From the table, it appears that no existing elicitation technique adequately captures all of the types of brand associations needed to evaluate the EVH framework. In particular, these techniques tend to view brand as a global construct, rather than discriminating between types of brand associations as does the EVH framework. This reinforces the idea that an existing elicitation technique needed to be modified and/ or refined to provide the information necessary to examine the various types of brand associations depicted in the EVH framework. Because this dissertation adopted a definition of consumer value that is based in brand use, an elicitation technique that specified use situation was selected.

Table 3-8. Strengths and weaknesses of elicitation techniques.

Elicitation Technique	Strengths	Weaknesses
Triadic Sorting	* May provide information about trade-offs consumers make between attribute level brand associations	* Tiring for the consumer * Reduces the number of attributes that can be covered during an interview
Product Attribute Elicitation	* Focuses primarily on product attributes * Simple for the consumer to understand	* May miss brand associations related to areas of brand identity other than brand as product
Brand Preference	* Allows flexibility to discuss the brand to which a consumer is most loyal * Simple for the consumer to understand	* Tends to use brand name as the primary cue for attribute elicitation * May miss brand associations related to some areas of brand identity
Use Situation / Occasion	* Allows flexibility to discuss the use situations or occasion with which a consumer is most familiar	* Tends to focus on brand associations created during use (as opposed to prior to use) as the primary cue for attribute elicitation
Brand Name	* Simple for the consumer to understand	* May miss some brand associations associated with brand identity, such as brand as organization

Pre-testing of Elicitation Techniques

Because of the need to make comparisons between the four types of attribute level brand associations shown in the EVH framework, it was essential that the elicitation technique used for this study prompt consumers to consider the possibility that brand associations of four different types may influence their evaluations of a particular brand. On the other hand, caution was taken so that the technique minimized the demand effects that could be created by prompting consumers to consider the different types of brand associations.

Table 3-9 illustrates the five elicitation techniques that were pre-tested, as well as the operationalization of each technique. Four mini-interviews per technique were conducted for each elicitation technique (a mini-interview involves only the elicitation questions and two to three laddering probes, the purpose of which was to ensure that an elicited attribute can be linked to consequences by the interview participant).

Table 3-9. Elicitation techniques pre-tested.

	Description of Elicitation Technique	Introduction Used for Testing Elicitation Technique
1	Brand name only	"Tell me about a national brand to which you are very loyal. What is that brand? OK, tell me about using [BRAND NAME]."
2	Separate question about each of the four types of attribute level brand associations (BAPr, BAO, BAPe, BAS)	BAPr – "Tell me about what the product [BRAND NAME] does for you?" BAO – "Tell me about what the manufacturer of [BRAND NAME] provides?" BAPe – "If [BRAND NAME] were a person, what kind of person would it be?" BAS – "Tell me about the graphics, visuals and history you associate with [BRAND NAME]?" (the order of the above questions is varied across interviews)
3	Visual (published advertisement) that suggests each of the four types of attribute level brand associations (BAPr, BAO, BAPe, BAS)	BAPr – picture of product in packaging BAO – picture that includes manufacturer name or label BAPe – picture that includes user imagery BAS – picture of brand logo and (if possible) indicator of brand heritage.
4	Combination of #2 and #3	Use of visual from #3 and corresponding verbal question from #2.
5	Review of all four types of brand associations (to give the participant an idea of possible associations), then an individual question about each type of brand association	Used visual of a circle divided into four quadrants; each quadrant is labeled with the name of one of the four types of attribute level brand associations. A brief description of the model is given, followed by the questions used in #2.

A summary of the brand associations elicited by the pilot tests is included in Table 3-10. In each cell, the number before the slash represents the total number of attribute level brand associations that were elicited. The number after the slash indicates the total number of attribute level brand associations that were selected as important by the interview participant.

The criteria used to evaluate alternative elicitation techniques were as follows:

- Number of attribute level brand associations elicited
- Ability of technique to elicit responses that included all four types of attribute level brand associations
- Ease of consumer understanding/ response
- Relative speed of elicitation.

Table 3-10 provides an indication of how well the elicitation techniques performed on the first two criteria. Table 3-11 summarizes how the various elicitation techniques ranked

Table 3-10. Summary of brand associations elicited during pilot testing.

Elicitation Technique	Number of Brand as Product Associations/ Important BAPr Associations	Number of Brand as Organization Associations/ Important BAO Associations	Number of Brand as Person Associations/ Important BAPe Associations	Number of Brand as Symbol Associations/ Important BAS Associations	Total Brand Associations
1	28/9	3/2	9/3	4/2	44/16
2	24/6	14/4	16/3	16/5	70/18
3	18/7	4/1	11/4	12/2	45/13
4	23/7	15/4	15/3	18/5	71/19
5	15/8	7/4	5/2	6/3	33/17

on all of the above criteria. For this table, a "1" indicates "good," a "2" indicates "average," and a "3" indicates "poor."

As seen in the above tables, asking individual questions about the four types of brand associations (such as in elicitation techniques #2, #4, and #5) helped to ensure that the four types of attribute level brand associations were considered by interview participants. Elicitation techniques #1 and #3 (using the brand name only and visual aid only as elicitation cues) were less effective than technique #2 in generating attributes which represented all four types of attribute level brand associations.

Elicitation technique #5 was found to be relatively difficult for consumers to understand. This is because consumers, in some cases, felt pressured to specifically place a brand association within a certain category in the framework. This task prompted a number of questions and slowed the speed of elicitation as well as ease of consumer response. As a result, the number of brand associations elicited was limited.

Based on Table 3-11, it appears that techniques #2 and #4 would both be appropriate for use in this study. During the pre-tests, however, an important additional selection criterion was discovered. This criterion is the ability of the elicitation technique to

Table 3-11. Ranking of alternative elicitation techniques.

Elicitation Technique	Number of Associations Elicited	Mix of Four Types of Associations Elicited	Ease of consumer response	Relative speed of elicitation	Average ranking across the four criteria
1	2	3	1	1	1.75
2	1	1	1	1	1
3	2	2	2	2	2
4	1	1	1	1	1
5	3	3	3	3	3

allow consumers to consider all of their thoughts and experiences about the brand when naming brand associations. Techniques #3 and #4 (which used a visual stimulus) were found to limit consumer responses to attributes that were present in the advertisement shown. In fact, for both of these techniques, six of the seven most frequently mentioned brand associations were obvious components of the advertisement used as the stimulus. This finding is consistent with the literature on cueing (e.g., Nicolas and Carbonnel 1996), which suggests that if individuals are provided with pictorial stimuli as cues, context effects are highly likely to emerge.

Based on the above findings, elicitation technique #2 (which asks four separate questions about the four types of attribute level brand associations) was chosen as most effective for this study.

Pre-testing of Least Important Consequences

Given that the selected elicitation technique specifically asked about the four types of attribute level brand associations depicted in the EVH framework, an important consideration in this study was to reduce demand effects created by the elicitation process. Several steps intended to reduce demand effects were taken, including:

- Stating up front in the interview that participants should feel free to say they have never had any thoughts about an issue and that they should feel free to pick any of the elicited brand associations as important
- Varying the order of the four elicitation questions

- Writing down the attribute level brand associations elicited in random order so that the consumer did not associate the selection of an attribute level brand association with the question that prompted its elicitation
- Reminding consumers that there are no right or wrong answers and that they should only consider attribute level brand associations that are important to them when selecting the attributes to be considered for the laddering portion of the interview
- Clearly specifying the purchase or use situation for the importance questions (e.g., "what are the five or so most important attributes that you consider when you are deciding which detergent to purchase?" or "what are the five or so most important attributes of [NAME OF BRAND] you consider when you are washing clothes for your family?").

In addition to these precautions, pre-testing was done to determine if there were noticeable differences when laddering on important versus non-important brand associations. The ability to recognize differences in value hierarchies between important and non-important attribute level brand associations was important because study participants were prompted to build value hierarchies based on the important attribute level brand associations they selected. Where differences in value hierarchies were observable, this provided a basis for evaluating whether or not study participants selected important brand associations and for demonstrating the extent to which demand effects created by the interviewer importance prompt were minimized.

Four mini-interviews were conducted for the purpose of understanding consumer response to the application of laddering questions to non-important consequences. In this case, a mini-interview included eliciation technique #2 as described above, followed by the question, "next, of all of the ideas about [NAME OF BRAND] we have discussed, could you pick up to five ideas that are LEAST important when deciding which detergent to purchase?"

The concept of "least important" ideas was selected to maximize potential differences in consumer value hierarchies. Initial laddering probes, such as "tell me what [NAME OF BRAND ASSOCIATION] does for you?," were used to understand how a consumer might link these ideas to consequences. As was expected, consumers had difficulty in making these linkages. Common responses included "what do you mean?," "it doesn't do anything for me," or "I don't really understand the question."

This finding suggests that interview participants in this research study would have had difficulty expressing attribute-consequence linkages if the attribute level brand association elicted was not important in the stated use situation. It also provided some additional confidence that the interviewing methodology was not creating strong demand effects (in terms of causing participants to elaborate on brand associations that were not actually important to them) among interview participants. For example, the pre-tests supported the idea that if an attribute level brand association was not important to a consumer, the value hierarchies related to the attribute would be less complex (and less complete) than the value hierarchies for very important attributes. This suggests that, even if the elicitation process prompted a consumer to list an attribute level brand association that was not really important in the use situation, linkages would be few (or none) in number.

Pre-testing for Ability to Separate Attribute Level Associations from Consequences

Finally, additional pre-testing was conducted to develop a process so that interviewers could adequately separate attribute level brand associations from consequence level brand associations that were mentioned during the elicitation phase of the interview. For example, because consumers do not typically discriminate between attributes and consequences, it would have been possible for an elicitation question (such as "tell me what you think of when you think of the product [BRAND NAME]") to elicit consequences (e.g., "it's a brand that makes my feet feel good") as well as attribute level brand associations (e.g., Nike shoes have cushioned innersoles"). For this reason, interviewers needed guidance regarding how to separate attribute level brand associations from consequences.

Eight mini-interviews were conducted to address this issue. Again, the mini-interviews involved elicitation technique #2 followed by selection of up to five important attribute level brand associations and initial probing on the chosen brand associations. In four mini-interviews, the interviewer laddered down (i.e., probed so that the participant was encouraged to talk about attribute level brand associations that helped to create a consequence) whenever a consequence level brand association was mentioned during elicitation. In the remaining four interviews, the interviewer laddered down only if a consequence was selected as one of the most important associations for follow-up.

Each technique for separating attributes and consequences had strengths and weaknesses. For example, probing whenever a consequence level association is mentioned slows down the elicitation process. On the other hand, it helps to ensure that all attribute level brand associations are given equal consideration during the selection of most important attributes step. Probing only on the brand associations selected as important make the elicitation stage faster and more consumer-driven; however, the mini-interviews showed that participants were very likely to choose any consequences that were listed as important. Mixing attribute level brand associations and consequences during the importance selection process was somewhat confusing to consumers and provided a disproportionate importance weighting to those attribute level brand associations that were linked to the consequences initially mentioned. Based on the results of these interviews, the elicitation section of the interview structure was modified to include an instruction to interviewers to "ladder down" on all brand associations (including both attribute level brand associations and consequences) mentioned during elicitation.

Research Design

This section describes in detail the process by which the EVH framework was evaluated. As stated earlier, the study compares brands with maximally different branding strategies (specifically, national and private label branding). The data for the study consisted

of 60 in-depth interviews with consumers using a modification of the laddering technique (Reynolds and Gutman 1988).

Participants in the study were loyal users of private label or national brands in two product categories. The study compared loyal users of a national brand with loyal users of a private label brand in the same product category. As stated earlier, the concept of loyal users was operationalized as those consumers who purchased a specific brand more than 50% of the time they made a purchase within the product category during the past year.

For replication purposes, private label and national brands in two similar product categories (shredded cheese and soft drinks) were compared. The sample was expected to reflect the demographic profile of adult supermarket shoppers who routinely purchase products in each product category.

Several reviews that cover in-depth interviewing suggest that sample size is less important than repetition of themes across consumers (e.g., Marshall and Rossman 1989, McCracken 1988b). Although it varies by research question, McCracken (1988b) suggests that repetition of themes generally occurs somewhere between 8-20 interviews. Because the research hypotheses were evaluated by using coding schemes that were set up *a priori*, it was important that a large enough number of interviews be conducted to provide an appropriate degree of confidence in this type of analysis. The basic research design for the study is illustrated in Table 3-12. Fifteen interviews per cell were conducted.

Table 3-12. Research design.

	Product Category #1	**Replication with Product Category #2**	***Total***
Private Label Brand Users	15	15	*30*
National Brand Users	15	15	*30*
Total	*30*	*30*	*60*

The research design enabled comparisons between national and private label brand purchasers with regard to specific characteristics of constructs in the EVH framework (such as number of attribute-consequence-desired end state linkages, number of desired end states, type of consequences, number of consequences, type of attribute level brand associations, and number of attribute level brand associations). In total, these comparisons provided a basis for testing the research hypotheses that were introduced at the beginning of this chapter. In addition, the research design provided the opportunity for replicating the research findings in a second product category similar in characteristics to the first. The opportunity for replication provided a basis for evaluating whether the comparisons made in the first study were typical of private label and national brand buyers and provided limited, but not conclusive, evidence of the applicability of the findings across product categories.

Process for Conducting the Research

In order to provide an appropriate test of the above research design, the following steps were employed:

- Recruiting participants
- Conducting interviews
- Transcribing interviews
- Coding interviews
- Analyzing the data.

This section details the process which was used for conducting each step of the research.

Recruiting Participants

In-store recruitment was used to select interview participants. This method for selecting participants involved in-store observation of consumers who were purchasing the brands selected for investigation. Upon observation of purchase, a researcher approached the consumer and briefly described the research effort and screening process. Three

screening questions were asked to determine if the consumer would be appropriate for inclusion in this study. These screening questions, discussed earlier in the chapter and included in Table 3-5, assessed brand loyalty, product knowledge, and age. If the criteria for participation were met and the individual was willing to participate in the study, then a personal interview was scheduled.

Each interview participant was provided a $50 cash incentive for participating in the study. It was anticipated that the demographic profile for the sample would mirror that of all loyal adult product supermarket purchasers for each brand selected. Adult users were defined as users over 18 years of age.

Conducting Interviews

The interviews were conducted in person at a location that was mutually convenient for the interviewer and participant. Typically, this was a small room (such as a conference room in the library or the University Center) on the university campus. The interviews included questions designed to provide an understanding of:

- The attribute level brand associations that consumers consider to be important in a specified use situation
- The ways in which important attribute level brand associations are linked to consequences and desired end states.

The interview included simple, straightforward questions, which were followed up with non-threatening probes, such as asking "what would happen if [NAME OF BRAND] was not available?" or "what does [NAME OF BRAND] help you accomplish?" The interview protocol used for this study is included in Table 3-13.

The interviews were audio-taped (with permission of the participant) and transcribed verbatim. Individual names were not linked with interview transcripts or statements. Because of the assurances of confidentiality of participation, no follow-up was made to the

Table 3-13. Interview protocol.

Section	Purpose	Question(s)
Introduction	To build rapport and explain the purpose of the study	No questions - interviewer provided background about the study and outlined guidelines for participation
Elicitation	To elicit a set of attribute level brand associations (with the potential to include BAPr, BAO, BAPe, and BAS) that consumers associate with a particular brand	BAP - "Tell me what you think of when you think of the product [BRAND NAME]? BAO - "Tell me what you think of when you think of the manufacturer of [BRAND NAME]? BAPe - "If [BRAND NAME] were a person, what kind of person would it be? BAS - "Tell me about the graphics, visuals and brand history you associate with [BRAND NAME]? THE ORDER OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS WERE VARIED ACROSS INTERVIEWS. CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS WERE ASKED UNTIL THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE BRAND ASSOCIATION WAS CLEAR. INTERVIEWERS LADDERED DOWN ON ALL ASSOCIATIONS UNTIL IT WAS CLEAR THAT ATTRIBUTE LEVEL BRAND ASSOCIATIONS WERE IDENTIFIED.
Selection of Important Attribute Level Brand Associations	To narrow down from the larger list of attribute level brand associations to a short list of up to 5 associations that have the potential to create value for the consumer	"Now, looking at the complete list of [NUMBER OF] brand associations you just told me about, I'd like you to pick out the five or so that are most important to you when you are in the grocery store purchasing this brand [NAME OF PREFERRED BRAND].
Laddering on 1st Attribute Level Brand Association	To understand more about the valued association, including how the association is related to consequences and desired end states	(1) "When you say [ASSOCIATION NAME], tell me a little more about the kinds of things you are thinking about?" (to obtain additional definition of the association) (2) "Now I think I have a better understanding of [ASSOCIATION NAME]. Next, can you tell me a little more about why [ASSOCIATION NAME] is important to you?" ... INTERVIEWER CONTINUED LADDERING AND PROBING FROM HERE TO GET CONSEQUENCES AND DESIRED END STATES (to understand the consumer's value hierarchy related to the association)
Repeat Laddering Exercise for 2nd - 5th Attribute Level Brand Associations	Same as above	Same as above
Other Stories Related to Use of National or Private Label Brands	To understand how the consumer views national and private label brands in a broader, less structured context	"Tell me about any stand out experiences you have had with a [NATIONAL/ PRIVATE LABEL] brand." THIS DATA WAS NOT ANALYZED FOR THE DISSERTATION STUDY.

individuals who participated. The incentive for participation ($50 in cash) was given at the conclusion of each interview. Participants did, however, have written documentation of individuals that they could contact (via the informed consent form) should they have any questions or require more information about the research.

The researcher as well as the interviewers who participated in this study had considerable experience in conducting laddering interviews. The researcher had conducted laddering interviews for several previous projects and personally conducted the 32 pilot interviews for this project. The other interviewers had conducted laddering interviews for previous projects and received additional training regarding the specific interviewing technique used for this study. While the interviewers were not aware of the specific research hypotheses, they understood the four types of attribute level brand associations, ways of differentiating between attribute level brand associations and consequences, and how to ladder down from consequences to understand key attribute level brand associations. In addition, the interviewers were familiar with the purposes of each section in the interview structure.

Transcribing Interviews

After each interview was conducted, it was transcribed by a professional transcriber. The transcriber was instructed to make a verbatim transcript of the interview, including exact wording as well as pauses, notations of laughter, etc. Each audio tape was identified only by a number, and all transcribers were asked to sign a confidentiality statement.

Coding Interviews

After the interviews were transcribed, each transcript was coded by two individuals, who then compared codes and reconciled any differences. The coding process is described in more detail in Chapter 4. The reliability of the coding process was measured by the percentage agreement between coders for each line on the intercoder agreement logs kept

for each interview. These inter-coder reliability measures provided a way of assessing confidence in the categorization of the brand associations discussed in the interviews.

Because the research hypotheses are very specific, the coding scheme used for this study was very tight, with specific information coded for each attribute level brand association that was selected as important by the consumer. The coding scheme for this study is illustrated in Figure 3-2.

A completed coding sheet (based on findings from a combination of mini-interviews conducted during the pre-testing) is illustrated in Figure 3-3. Once the coding was complete, each coding sheet was transferred to an SPSS spreadsheet. From the spreadsheet, the variables shown in Figure 3-4 were created for each interview. Interviews were also categorized into groups based on product category, type of brand strategy (e.g., national or private label), and interviewer.

The coding sheets also served as a basis for drawing value hierarchies for each individual interview. Value hierarchies for individual interviews were merged into a summary value hierarchy for each group of users using a computer software program developed by Dr. James Foggin at The University of Tennessee. Comparisons of the summary value hierarchies formed the basis for the evaluation of the research proposition that suggests that there are differences in the overall content (or meaning) of value.

The coders were all familiar with the value hierarchy concept and the concepts of attributes, consequences and desired end states. The coders received additional training on these concepts as well as training regarding operational definitions of all constructs included in the EVH framework. Again, the coders were knowledgeable about the concepts in the framework, but they did not know the specific research propositions that were tested.

Analyzing the Data

The data collected for this study was used in two different ways – to analyze the structure of the value dimensions discussed as well as to compare the content of the value

		Assoc.1	Assoc. 2	Assoc. 3	Assoc. 4	Assoc. 5
1	Association Name (word)					
2	Association Type (BAPr, BAO, BAPe, BAS)					
3	Linked to Consequence 1 (yes/ no)					
4	Consequence Name (word)					
5	Consequence Type (FC, EC, SEC)					
6	Type of A-C Linkage (BAPr-FC, etc.) - LIST ALL THAT APPLY					
7	Consequence - Consequence Linkage (yes/ no) - IF NO, GO TO LINE 15					
8	Consequence Name (word)					
9	Consequence Type (FC, EC, SEC)					
10	Type of C-C Linkage (FC-EC, etc.)					
11	Consequence – Consequence Linkage (yes/ no) - IF NO, GO TO LINE 21					
12	Consequence Name (word)					
13	Consequence Type (FC, EC, SEC)					
14	Type of C-C Linkage (FC-EC, etc.)					
15	Linked to Desired End State (yes/ no) - IF NO GO TO NEXT ASSOCIATION					
16	Desired End State Name (word)					
17	Name of C-DES Linkage (FC-DES, etc.)					
18	Linked to Desired End State (yes/ no) - IF NO GO TO NEXT ASSOCIATION					
19	Desired End State Name (word)					
20	Name of C-DES Linkage (FC-DES, etc.)					
21	Linked to Desired End State (yes/ no) - IF NO GO TO NEXT ASSOCIATION					
22	Desired End State Name (word)					
23	Name of C-DES Linkage (FC-DES, etc.)					

Figure 3-2. Blank coding sheet. Coders completed the above sheet for each interview.

		Assoc. 1	Assoc. 2	Assoc. 3	Assoc. 4	Assoc. 5
1	Association Name (word)	Fresh smell	Brand is fresh and springy	Orange color of package	Woman in ad reminds me of mom	Made by Procter & Gamble
2	Association Type (BAPr, BAO, BAPe, BAS)	BAPr	BAPe	BAS	BAS	BAO
3	Linked to Consequence 1 (yes/ no)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Consequence Name (word)	Makes clothes smell good	Makes me think my clothes will be clean	Makes me happier about doing laundry	Makes me feel like I'm buying something mom would	I know it is a quality product
5	Consequence Type (FC, EC, SEC)	FC	FC	EC	EC	FC
6	Type of A-C Linkage (BAPr-FC, etc.) – LIST ALL THAT APPLY	BAPr-FC	BAPe-FC	BAS-EC	BAS-EC	BAO-FC
7	Consequence – Consequence Linkage - IF NO, GO TO LINE 15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Consequence Name (word)	Makes me feel good	I am confident that Tide won't let me down	Makes me feel more worthwhile as a person	Shows my mother that I care about what she thinks	I don't have to worry about skin that breaks out
9	Consequence Type	EC	FC	EC	SEC	FC
10	Type of C-C Linkage	FC-EC	FC-FC	EC-EC	EC-SEC	FC-FC
11	Consequence – Consequence Linkage - IF NO, GO TO LINE 21	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Consequence Name (word)				Shows my mother that I love her	Can focus on other things in life
13	Consequence Type				SEC	FC
14	Type of C-C Linkage (FC-EC, etc.)				SEC-SEC	FC-FC
15	Linked to Desired End State - IF NO GO TO NEXT ASSOCIATION				Yes	Yes
16	Desired End State Name (word)				I am a good daughter	Can get ahead in my career
17	Name of C-DES Linkage (FC-DES, etc.)				SEC-DES	FC-DES
18	Linked to Desired End State - IF NO GO TO NEXT ASSOCIATION				No	Yes
19	Desired End State Name (word)					Will be a more successful
20	Name of Linkage (FC-DES, DES-DES, etc.)					DES-DES
21	Linked to Desired End State (yes/ no) - IF NO GO TO NEXT ASSOCIATION	Yes	Yes	Yes		
22	Desired End State Name (word)	I am a happier person	One less thing to worry about	I feel better about my life		
23	Name of Linkage (FC-DES, DES-DES etc.)	EC-DES	FC-DES	EC-DES		

Figure 3-3. Example of completed coding sheet.

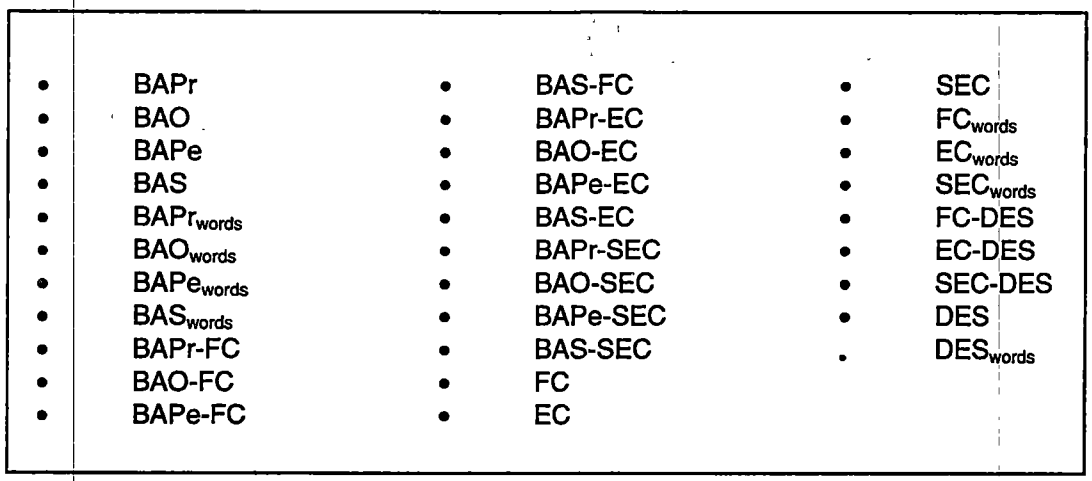


Figure 3-4. Variables created based on input from coding sheet.

dimensions. To analyze the structure of the value dimensions discussed, an SPSS spreadsheet was used. The spreadsheet consisted of categorical data that indicated the presence or absence of the various constructs in the EVH framework for each brand association discussed in the interviews. This spreadsheet included responses from 60 consumers (30 per product category). Five of the six research propositions were examined using the SPSS data.

To compare the content of important value dimensions, the summary value hierarchies created for each individual interview were used. A total of sixty individual consumer value hierarchies (30 per product category) were created. The value hierarchies formed a basis for evaluating research proposition #3, which suggests that there are differences in the overall meaning of value between consumer groups. To evaluate this proposition, summary value hierarchies were created for each consumer group interviewed (e.g., users of national brand #1, users of national brand #2, users of private label brand #1 and users of private label brand #2). Comparisons of the four summary value hierarchies were used to evaluate similarities and differences in meaning. The criteria used for comparing the summary value hierarchies are described in more detail in Table 3-14.

Table 3-14. Evaluation of research propositions.

	Research Proposition	Unit of Analysis	Research Hypotheses	Statistical Test
P1	Brand as product associations will be (a) directly linked with functional consequences and (b) not directly linked with emotional and self-expressive consequences that are considered by consumers during a brand use situation.	Consumer (n=30 per product category)	$H1_a$: (BAPr-FC) ≠ 0 $H1_{b1}$: (BAPr-EC)= 0 $H1_{b2}$: (BAPr-SEC) = 0	One sample t-test ($p< 0.05$ is the criterion for rejecting null hypothesis).
P2	Brand associations for (a) brand as organization, (b) brand as person and (c) brand as symbol will be linked to evaluative consequences for consumers (which may be functional, emotional, or self-expressive) that are considered during a brand use situation.	Consumer (n=30 per product category)	$H2_{a1}$: (BAO-FC) ≠ 0 $H2_{a2}$: (BAO-EC) ≠ 0 $H2_{a3}$: (BAO-SEC) ≠ 0 $H2_{b1}$: (BAPe-FC) ≠ 0 $H2_{b2}$: (BAPe-EC) ≠ 0 $H2_{b3}$: (BAPe-SEC) ≠ 0 $H2_{c1}$: (BAS-FC) ≠ 0 $H2_{c2}$: (BAS-EC) ≠ 0 $H2_{c3}$: (BAS-SEC) ≠ 0	One sample t-test ($p< 0.05$ is the criterion for rejecting null hypothesis).
P3	There will be differences in the overall meaning of value, as shown by value hierarchies, between users of national brands and users of private label brands.	Summary Value Hierarchy for each Consumer Group (2 brands in 2 product categories, n=4)	This research question was tested qualitatively; thus no specific research hypotheses were suggested. The analysis examined the meaning of differences in value dimensions.	Differences in the meaning of value hierarchies was evidenced by use of different value dimensions to form the value hierarchy and differences in the number and strength of linkages (strength is represented by the # of mentions, with a max. of one mention per value dimension per consumer).
P4	The number of (a) attribute level brand associations, (b) consequences, (c) desired end states, (d) attribute level brand association-consequence linkages, and (e) consequence-desired end state linkages considered when assessing consumer value will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.	Consumer (n=30 per product category, n=15 per brand)	$H4_{a1}$: $BAPr_{national} > BAPr_{private}$ $H4_{a2}$: $BAO_{national} > BAO_{private}$ $H4_{a3}$: $BAPe_{national} > BAPe_{private}$ $H4_{a4}$: $BAS_{national} > BAS_{private}$ $H4_{b1}$: $FC_{national} > FC_{private}$ $H4_{b2}$: $EC_{national} > EC_{private}$ $H4_{b3}$: $SEC_{national} > SEC_{private}$ $H4_c$: $DES_{national} > DES_{private}$ $H4_d$: $[(BAPr\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAPr\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAPr\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}SEC)_{national}] > [(BAPr\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAPr\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAPr\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}SEC)_{private}]$ $H4_e$: $(FC\text{-}DES)_{national} + (EC\text{-}DES)_{national} + (SEC\text{-}DES)_{national} > (FC\text{-}DES)_{private} + (EC\text{-}DES)_{private} + (SEC\text{-}DES)_{private}$	Independent samples t-tests ($p< 0.05$ is the criterion for rejecting null hypothesis).

Table 3-14 (continued).

	Research Proposition	Unit of Analysis	Research Hypotheses	Statistical Test
P5	The ratio of psycho-social (emotional and self-expressive) consequences to functional consequences will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.	Consumer (n=30 per product category, n=15 per brand)	$H5_a$: $EC_{national}$ /$FC_{national}$ > $EC_{private}$ / $FC_{private}$ $H5_b$: $SEC_{national}$ /$FC_{national}$ > $SEC_{private}$ / $FC_{private}$	Independent samples t-tests ($p< 0.05$ is the criterion for rejecting null hypothesis).
P6	(a) The ratio of brand as product associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label than national brands. (b) The ratio of brand as organization associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label than national brands. (c) The ratio of brand as person associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national than private label brands. (d) The ratio of brand as symbol associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national than private label brands.	Consumer (n=30 per product category, n=15 per brand)	$H6_a$: $BAPr_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$) > $BAPr_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$) $H6_b$: $BAO_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$) > $BAO_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$) $H6_c$: $BAPe_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$) > $BAPe_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$) $H6_d$: $BAS_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$) > $BAS_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$)	Independent samples t-tests ($p< 0.05$ is the criterion for rejecting null hypothesis).

For all analyses, the relevant data for the first product category (shredded cheese) were analyzed. Then, the analysis process was repeated using data for the second product category (soft drinks). The second analysis was conducted for the purpose of replicating findings from the first product category. The analysis procedures used for evaluating each research hypothesis are illustrated in Table 3-14 and discussed further in Chapter 4.

Assessing the Quality of the Data and Interpretations

The research design and methodology described in this chapter was developed to provide data that are trustworthy and offer a solid basis for evaluating the EVH framework. In addition, the data provide a basis for comparing the value dimensions discussed by national and private label brand buyers. This section outlines four criteria that can be used to assess the overall quality of the data, provides a rationale for use of these criteria, and describes steps taken in the research process to increase data quality. In total, the discussion supports the assumption that the data used in this study are sound.

Criteria Used for Evalution

In order to have confidence in the findings that will be presented in Chapter 4, one must assume that the data used in this study are "sound" (Marshall and Rossman 1989, p. 144) or have "truth value" (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p. 290). Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggest following four questions that should govern a researcher in evaluating findings derived from unstructured, or qualitative, data:

- How truthful are the particular findings of the study? By what criteria can we judge them?
- How applicable are these findings to another setting or group of people?
- How can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context?

- How can we be sure that the findings are reflective of the subjects and the inquiry itself rather than the product of the researcher's biases or prejudices?

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four constructs that summarize the above questions: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, respectively. These are the criteria by which the quality of the data used in this study is evaluated.

Rationale for Using Criteria for Assessing Qualitative Data

At first, this dissertation might appear to be a hybrid from a methodological standpoint because both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data are presented. The basic data set used for evaluating the research propositions and hypotheses, however, is essentially a set of sixty transcripts that provide a verbatim account of personal, in-depth interviews. As described earlier in the chapter, the interview data is unstructured, or qualitative, and was used as the basis for assessing all research propositions and hypotheses.

For the proposition that examines the content of what consumers value (proposition 3), summary ladders and summary value hierarchies that represent the linkages most commonly discussed by consumers in the interviews served as the basis for examining the content of what is valued by study participants. The ladders and value hierarchies summarized both the content of what was said, as well as the categorization (e.g., brand as product association, emotional consequence, etc.) for each value dimension. Clearly, the summary ladders and value hierarchies contained qualitative data.

For the remaining research propositions and hypotheses, the qualitative interview data was coded in such a way that it enabled the use of statistical analysis techniques. In this case, consumer thoughts mentioned in the interview transcripts were categorized according to the construct in the EVH framework they represented (using the coding process described earlier in this chapter). From the coding sheets, an SPSS spreadsheet was developed. The spreadsheet consisted of categorical data that indicate the presence or

absence of the various constructs in the EVH framework for each brand association discussed in the interviews.

Although the analysis used for examining some of the research propositions and hypotheses was quantitative (.e.g., involved statistical tests), the data used throughout this dissertation study were derived directly from the qualitative interview data. In addition, the purpose of the statistical tests was to describe the phenomenon of interest (consumer value that may be created by branding) as it exists rather than to predict relationships between the variables examined. For these reasons, it seems appropriate to assess the overall quality of the data using the criteria that govern qualitative research. As a note, where statistical tests were used, the data were examined to be sure that it met the assumptions required for use of the test. The extent to which the data met the assumptions required for the statistical tests used in the analysis is discussed in Chapter 4.

Evaluation of Data Quality

The above sections outline the criteria that are used for evaluating the quality of the data and review the rationale for using the selected criteria. In total, the constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability guide the evalution of data quality. This section describes how the quality of the data was evaluated for each criterion.

Credibility. First, the credibility of the data should be considered. In order for the findings from this study to be credible, the thoughts mentioned by consumers in the interviews (which served as a basis for the development of the summary ladders and SPSS spreadsheet) must appear to accurately represent the totality of thoughts that the consumers interviewed have about their preferred brand. For this to be so, one assumes that the consumers who participated in the study did not consciously withhold information (because of social desirability or other reasons) or unconsciously withhold information (because the right questions were not asked to prompt a certain set of consumer thoughts). As described earlier in this chapter, the study incorporates precautions to maximize the number of thoughts

expressed by the consumers who participated and minimize the likelihood that the interview participants would withhold information.

To minimize the possibility that consumers would consciously withhold information, the interviewers assured participants of the confidentiality of their comments and reinforced the idea that there are no right or wrong answers to the interview questions. So that participants would be assured that the study was in fact sponsored by the University, interviews were held on the university campus. In addition, the interviewer carefully explained the purpose of the study (e.g., to learn more about what consumers think about a specfic brand) and answered any questions that the participant might have before the interview started.

To minimize the possibility that consumers would unconsciously withhold information, the literature related to consumer thoughts about value and about branding was thoroughly reviewed (see Chapter 2) and used as the basis for the development of the interview prompts. Thus, the theoretical constructs and frameworks that have been presented in the literature guided the method for data collection. In addition, a pilot test was conducted to evaluate various interview prompts. The prompts which elicited the greatest number of consumer thoughts (as well as allowed consumers to consider the widest variety of attribute level brand associations) were selected for use in the study.

To increase the credibility of the process of data collection, three different interviewers (all of whom were experienced in customer value interviewing) conducted interviews for this study. This helped to ensure that the data collected was indeed an accurate representation of consumer thoughts and, as will be discussed in the section on confirmability, did not occur as a result of interviewer bias. For similar reasons, two or more individuals also participated in each step of the coding process.

To help ensure credibility in the organization of data during the coding process, the individual value hierarchies were reviewed after the coding process was completed and clarifications in terms were made as necessary so that the summary codes would provide an accurate representation of the individual interview data. For example, the summary code of

"taste/ flavor" was found to include consumer thoughts about "unique, sweet taste" in the national brand soft drink product category, but thoughts about "tastes as good as the national brand" in the private label brand soft drink product category. The labels included in the summary ladders and value hierarchies that were developed from the data (and are discussed in Chapter 4) reflect these adjustments and clarification.

These precautions help to increase the credibility of the data. To the extent that the data is considered to be credible, the findings from the study can be assumed to accurately represent thoughts that are common to the group of consumers who were interviewed.

Transferability. A desirable outcome from this study would be for the findings to be useful in understanding not just the group of consumers who were interviewed, but other groups of consumers as well. This is the essence of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) construct of transferability. To assess transferability, one must evaluate the extent to which the findings from this study can be used as a basis for understanding (1) thoughts of all consumers who prefer the brands examined in this study and (2) consumer thoughts related to national and/or private label brands in all product categories.

In order to assess whether the findings can be used to understand all consumers who prefer the brands examined in this study, it is necessary to determine the extent to which the consumers interviewed are representative of the population of consumers of the selected brands. A comparison between the sample of study participants and Knoxville supermarket shoppers is provided in Chapter 4, and as will be noted, there are some demographic differences between the consumers interviewed and the population of interest. Specifically, the sample of study participants was found to represent a more heavily female, younger, and more highly educated population than that of Knoxville area Kroger shoppers. This lessens the transferability of the findings, but does not eliminate their usefulness.

To evaluate the transferability of findings to private label and national brands not selected for examination in this study, one must assess the extent to which the product categories selected (shredded cheese and soft drinks) are representative of the population of product categories in general. Clearly, since both product categories represent food items

sold in grocery stores, it would not be reasonable to generalize beyond that population of product categories. The shredded cheese and soft drink product categories, although chosen because they were anticipated to be similar, were found to have somewhat different characteristics. This increases the likelihood that findings from the study would be transferable to other food product categories that are sold through grocery stores. For example, shredded cheese tends to be used as an ingredient, while soft drinks are a stand-alone product. Shredded cheese is also more likely to be privately consumed (e.g., at home with a family meal), while soft drinks may be publicly or privately consumed. As future research in conducted using additional product categories, the ability to draw conclusions that are transferable across product categories will further increase.

An additional way that this study was designed to increase the transferability of the findings is that the conceptual model that shaped the design of the interview prompts was developed using theoretical constructs and frameworks that have been proposed in the marketing literature. These constructs and frameworks were developed by researchers who considered their applicability in a variety of product categories. For example, the value hierarchy framework has been found to be useful in understanding customer and consumer behavior in consumer goods, consumer durables, business-to-business, and service industries (Woodruff and Gardial 1996). While it is impossible to know for sure if the consumer thoughts that form the data for this study are generalizable, the recurrence of common themes across consumers and the consistency of consumer thoughts with the levels of abstraction concept (Gutman 1982; Reynolds and Gutman 1984) introduced in the marketing literature support the transferabilty of the data.

Dependability. Third, one must assess the dependability of the data, or the extent to which the same consumer thoughts would be expressed if the study were repeated with the same consumers under the same conditions. The design of the study – with two different product categories being selected and analyzed separately – helps to increase the dependabilty of the data. Although different consumers were interviewed for each product category, the selection process and interview conditions were very similar. Thus, the extent

to which findings are consistent between the two product categories provides evidence to support the dependability of the data.

Also, the repetition of similar attribute level brand associations and linkages (as depicted in the EVH framework) provides further evidence of the dependibility of the data. As discussed earlier in the chapter, McCracken (1988b) suggests that repetition of themes generally occurs somewhere between 8-20 interviews. The number and complexity of the summary ladders that will be presented in the next chapter suggest that repetition of themes across consumers did occur and increases the dependability of the data.

Finally, careful efforts were made to ensure that the coding process was conducted in such a way that it increased the dependabilty of the data. As a measure of the dependability of the coding process, two coders independently reviewed each transcript and made the appropriate categorizations. Next, the two coders compared their category assignments. Where differences occurred, the coders provided rationales for their choices and came to a conclusion regarding the best classification for the construct. In cases where agreement could not be reached, a third coder reviewed both categorizations and served as a tie-breaker.

The primary researcher participated in some of the coding, however, a third coder participated in all of the reconciliation sessions where the primary researcher was involved. In these cases, for each difference in coding, the third coder reviewed both categorizations and served as a tie-breaker. This measure was undertaken to reduce the likelihood that the second coder would defer to the primary researcher in a disproportionate number of cases.

As part of the reconciliation process, coders kept a log of the number of assignments of each type on which they agreed without the need for additional discussion. A summary of these logs is provided in Chapter 4. As will be detailed in Chapter 4, the level of agreement between coders was 80% or higher for all constructs in the EVH framework. These results increase researcher confidence in the dependabilty of the data.

Confirmability. Fourth, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that one should consider the confirmability of the data, or the extent to which the data is free from the researcher's

personal biases. Several precautions were taken to minimize the introduction of researcher bias. First, as will be described in Chapter 4, two interviewers in addition to the researcher were used to collect the data, and the consistency of findings between the three interviewers was assessed. No noticiable differences were found in the content or structure of the interviews between interviewers.

Second, all categorization of consumer thoughts (i.e., assigning of thoughts as respresenting a construct in the Extended Value Hierarchy framework) was done by independent coders who were not familiar with the EVH framework. Finally, two coders participated in each step of the coding process and reconciled each code assigned. The intercoder agreement level was very high (81% or higher, as will be described in the next chapter).

Third, as described earlier, the conceptual framework and research method used in this study were developed based on the theoretical constructs, frameworks, and methodologies that have been established in the marketing literature. The development and implementation of a research process grounded in existing theory increases the confirmability of the data.

Overall Assessment of Data Quality

The previous discussion supports the idea that the data used in this study are reasonably credible, dependable and confirmable. Because the research design and methodology are grounded in the theoretical constructs and frameworks that have been presented in the marketing literature, the overall quality of the data is increased. Pilot testing, among other steps, was undertaken to increase the credibility of the data. The interviews did appear to include a wide range of thoughts presented by consumers, which provides some assurance of the credibilty of the data. The consistency, or dependabilty, of the data can be evaluated in part by the repetition of the themes across interviews. The complexity and number of summary ladders that will be presented in the next chapter provide support for the dependabilty of the data. Next, the use of independent coders helped to provide evidence of

the confirmability of the data. As will be described in the next chapter, a relatively high level of intercoder dependability was achieved.

The criterion upon which the study is weakest is the transferabilty of the data. Because the study design involved examination of only two product categories, and because the demographic profile of participants was somewhat different than that of the population of interest, transferablity of the findings from the study is somewhat limited. It is anticipated that future research will help to address this weakness.

Summary of Research Methodology

This chapter describes a research study that focused on the following research questions:

- How do consumers incorporate thoughts about an individual brand (including brand name, image, and personality) into their assessments of overall value?
- How might the content and structure of consumer value (i.e., number and type of attribute level brand associations, consequences, and desired end states considered) vary between loyal users of national versus private label brands?

Furthermore, four criteria for assessing the quality of the data are introduced and discussed.

In addition to addressing the above research questions, this study has several other interesting features. Specifically, the study demonstrates a new elicitation technique which prompts consumers to consider four specific types of attribute level brand associations. Additionally, the analysis process provides a comprehensive basis for comparing consumer value across brands and product categories. Finally, several criteria for comparing summary value hierarchies are introduced. These methodological considerations may suggest additional opportunities for building brands that can effectively sustain a competitive advantage in today's marketing environment.

While this study has the potential to make several contributions, it also has several limitations. Perhaps most importantly, this study attempts to demonstrate that consumer value created by branding can be quantified based on number and type of value dimensions considered. Such a premise is contradictory to other research that suggests that the nature and meaning of consumer value does not lend itself to summarization in the form of numerical evaluations (McCracken 1993; Schmitt and Simonson 1997). In addition, the choice of consumer packaged goods (as opposed to product categories with higher levels of consumer involvement) as the context for investigation may have limited the breadth of attributes and consequences that consumers considered. The evaluation of the EVH framework and the effect of branding on overall consumer value that is presented in Chapter 4 should be considered in light of these limitations.

Chapter 4
Analysis and Findings

Introduction

This chapter reviews the research propositions developed in Chapter 2. It also provides a demographic profile of the sample and describes the process by which the data (using the methodology described in Chapter 3) were coded and analyzed. Finally, findings from the analyses are presented. While each finding is briefly reviewed in this chapter, a discussion of the implications and future research directions is reserved for Chapter 5.

In total, the findings presented in this chapter provide encouragement that the EVH framework has merit and is worthy of further investigation. In fact, the data indicate empirical support for the majority of the linkages illustrated in the model. In addition, consumer thoughts related to private label and national brands are shown to differ in several interesting and important ways.

Review of Research Propositions and Techniques for Evaluation

Table 4-1 reviews the research propositions, hypotheses, and techniques for evaluation that have been previously developed. As illustrated below, hypotheses 1 and 2 suggest the need for quantitative tests of the linkages in the EVH framework; proposition 3 calls for a comparison of the content of consumer thoughts related to national and private label brands; and hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 focus on the structure of consumer thoughts related to national and private label brands. Each of these sets of research hypotheses required a slightly different process for examining the data. The data, as well as the coding and analysis processes, for the tests of each hypothesis are described in the following sections.

Table 4-1. Evaluation of research propositions.

	Research Proposition	Unit of Analysis	Research Hypotheses	Statistical Test
P1	Brand as product associations will be (a) directly linked with functional consequences and (b) not directly linked with emotional and self-expressive consequences that are considered by consumers during a brand use situation.	Consumer (n=30 per product category)	$H1_a$: (BAPr-FC) ≠ 0* $H1_{b1}$: (BAPr-EC) = 0 $H1_{b2}$: (BAPr-SEC) = 0	One sample t-test ($p < 0.05$ was the criterion for rejecting null hypothesis).
P2	Brand associations for (a) brand as organization, (b) brand as person and (c) brand as symbol will be linked to evaluative consequences for consumers (which may be functional, emotional, or self-expressive) that are considered during a brand use situation.	Consumer (n=30 per product category)	$H2_{a1}$: (BAO-FC) ≠ 0 $H2_{a2}$: (BAO-EC) ≠ 0 $H2_{a3}$: (BAO-SEC) ≠ 0 $H2_{b1}$: (BAPe-FC) ≠ 0 $H2_{b2}$: (BAPe-EC) ≠ 0 $H2_{b3}$: (BAPe-SEC) ≠ 0 $H2_{c1}$: (BAS-FC) ≠ 0 $H2_{c2}$: (BAS-EC) ≠ 0 $H2_{c3}$: (BAS-SEC) ≠ 0	One sample t-test ($p < 0.05$ was the criterion for rejecting null hypothesis).
P3	There will be differences in the overall meaning of value, as shown by value hierarchies, between users of national brands and users of private label brands.	Summary Value Hierarchy for Each Consumer Group (2 brands in 2 product categories, n=4)	This research question was tested qualitatively; thus no specific research hypotheses were suggested. The analysis examined the meaning of differences in value dimensions.	Differences in the meaning of value hierarchies were evidenced by use of different value dimensions to form the value hierarchy and differences in the number and strength of linkages (strength was represented by the # of mentions, with a max. of one mention per value dimension per consumer).
P4	The number of (a) attribute level brand associations, (b) consequences, (c) desired end states, (d) attribute level brand association-consequence linkages, and (e) consequence-desired end state linkages considered when assessing consumer value will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.	Consumer (n=30 per product category, n=15 per brand)	$H4_{a1}$: $BAPr_{national} > BAPr_{private}$** $H4_{a2}$: $BAO_{national} > BAO_{private}$ $H4_{a3}$: $BAPe_{national} > BAPe_{private}$ $H4_{a4}$: $BAS_{national} > BAS_{private}$ $H4_{b1}$: $FC_{national} > FC_{private}$ $H4_{b2}$: $EC_{national} > EC_{private}$ $H4_{b3}$: $SEC_{national} > SEC_{private}$ $H4_c$: $DES_{national} > DES_{private}$ $H4_d$: $[(BAPr\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAPr\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAPr\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}SEC)_{national}] > [(BAPr\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAPr\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAPr\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}SEC)_{private}]$ $H4_e$: $(FC\text{-}DES)_{national} + (EC\text{-}DES)_{national} + (SEC\text{-}DES)_{national} > (FC\text{-}DES)_{private} + (EC\text{-}DES)_{private} + (SEC\text{-}DES)_{private}$	Independent samples t-test ($p < 0.05$ was the criterion for rejecting null hypothesis).

Table 4-1 (continued).

	Research Proposition	Unit of Analysis	Research Hypotheses	Statistical Test
P5	The ratio of psycho-social (emotional and self-expressive) consequences to functional consequences will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.	Consumer (n=30 per product category, n=15 per brand)	$H5_a$: $EC_{national}$ /$FC_{national}$ > $EC_{private}$ / $FC_{private}$ $H5_b$: $SEC_{national}$ /$FC_{national}$ > $SEC_{private}$ / $FC_{private}$	Independent samples t-test ($p< 0.05$ was the criterion for rejecting null hypothesis).
P6	(a) The ratio of brand as product associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label than national brands. (b) The ratio of brand as organization associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label than national brands. (c) The ratio of brand as person associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national than private label brands. (d) The ratio of brand as symbol associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national than private label brands.	Consumer (n=30 per product category, n=15 per brand)	$H6_a$: $BAPr_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$) > $BAPr_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$) $H6_b$: $BAO_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$) > $BAO_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$) $H6_c$: $BAPe_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$) > $BAPe_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$) $H6_d$: $BAS_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$) > $BAS_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{pnvate}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$)	Independent samples t-test ($p< 0.05$ was the criterion for rejecting null hypothesis).

*(BAPr-FC) is read "linkages between brand as product associations and functional consequences".
** The subscripts "private" and "national" refer to private label and national brands, respectively.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

As described in Chapter 3, the trustworthiness of the findings from the hypothesis tests is in part dependent on the transferability of the findings (which emerged from a sample of the total population of interest) to the population of interest at large. The populations of interest are U.S. shredded cheese and soft drink buyers. Participants in this study were recruited in Kroger grocery stores in Knoxville, Tennessee (which is a medium-sized Southeastern city).

Demographic characteristics of study participants are described below. The characteristics of the selected sample are then compared with demographic information about Knoxville Kroger supermarket shoppers, a population which is used to approximate the populations of interest. Next, similarities and differences in demographic characteristics between brands (e.g., national and private label brand buyers) and product categories (e.g., shredded cheese and soft drink buyers) are presented and discussed.

Sample Characteristics

As noted in Chapter 3, each participant in the study was asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire at the conclusion of the laddering interview. Variables captured in the questionnaire include:

- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Income
- Loyalty to Brand Discussed in Interview
- % of Private Label Products to Total Grocery Products Purchased.

The demographic profiles provide a basis for evaluating the transferability of the findings to the total population of Knoxville Kroger supermarket shoppers and therefore to the population of U.S. supermarket shoppers at large.

Characteristics of the Overall Sample. Characteristics of the study participants as compared to Knoxville Kroger supermarket shoppers are illustrated in Table 4-2. The demographic information about Knoxville Kroger shoppers was provided by the Kroger Company. This data represents a composite of demographics from the sixteen Knoxville Kroger stores. Four of these sixteen stores (those located closest to the University) were used as a basis for recruiting the sample of study participants.

As illustrated in Tables 4-2 and 4-3, there are several significant differences between the sample and the estimates of the overall population of Knoxville Kroger shoppers. The two tables are needed because of the small sample size of consumers that participated in the study. For several variables (e.g., age, education, and income), chi-square tests on the data (using the response categories as collected) were not possible because of cell sizes for some cells that are less than five (which is a violation of an assumption necessary to conduct a chi-square test). In these cases, categories were combined to provide the necessary minimum sample size required for a statistical test. The combined categories, where used, are illustrated in Table 4-3.

The data indicate that members of the sample are more likely to be female, younger, more highly educated, and of slightly lower income than the estimates for the population of Knoxville Kroger supermarket shoppers. As a result, the transferability of this study is limited because the male, senior citizen, non-college educated, and higher income populations are underrepresented. Some possible explanations for the differences between the sample and population of interest are: (1) the study was sponsored by the university thus attracted more college students (who may have higher education but lower incomes) as participants and (2) recruiting occurred in geographic areas that were close to the university, which could be populated with younger, more highly educated individuals.

Table 4-2. Demographic characteristics of the overall sample compared to Knoxville supermarket shoppers.

		Sample of Study Participants	Knoxville Kroger Shoppers	Chi-square
Gender	Male	17 (28.3%)	44.92%	$\chi^2(1, n=60) = 6.672$ Asymp. Sig. = .01** **Sample and Population Are Different**
	Female	43 (71.7%)	55.08%	
	Total	60 (100%)	100%	
Age	18-19	2 (3.3%)	3.08%	Cell sizes for some cells are Less than five – combined categories are needed – see Table 4-3 for analysis
	20-29	29 (48.3%)	17.95%	
	30 – 39	15 (25.0%)	20.84%	
	40 – 49	6 (10.0%)	22.32%	
	50 – 59	5 (8.3%)	14.17%	
	60 – 69	2 (3.3%)	10.45%	
	70 or over	1 (1.7%)	11.19%	
	Total	60 (100%)	100%	
Highest Level of Education Achieved	Some high school	2 (3.3%)	18.44%	Cell sizes for some cells are less than five – combined categories are needed – see Table 4-3 for analysis
	Completed high school	7 (11.7%)	31.61%	
	Some college	23 (38.3%)	25.79%	
	Completed college	19 (31.7%)	11.07%	
	Graduate school	9 (15.0%)	13.09%	
	Total	60 (100%)	100%	
Household Income	Under $25,000	26 (43.3%)	32.70%	Cell sizes for some cells are less than five – combined categories are needed – see Table 4-3 for analysis
	$25,000-$39,999	16 (26.7%)	19.93%	
	$40,000-$59,999	8 (13.3%)	19.79%	
	$60,000-$74,999	4 (6.7%)	10.48%	
	$75,000-$99,999	3 (5.0%)	8.84%	
	Over $100,000	3 (5.0%)	8.26%	
	Total	60 (100%)	100%	
% of Times Purchased Preferred Brand within Selected Product Category	Mean %	82.1%	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
% of Private Label Brands Purchased	Mean %	43.0%	18.8%*	Not Applicable

*This statistic provided by the Private Label Manufacturing Association (1997). All other statistics provided by the Kroger Company (1998).
**Significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.10 or p-values between 0.90 and 0.95. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.10 and 0.90.

Table 4-3. Demographic characteristics of the overall sample compared to Knoxville supermarket shoppers (combined categories).

		Sample of Study Participants	Knoxville Kroger Shoppers	Chi-square
Age	18-29	31 (51.6%)	21.03%	$\chi^2(3, n=60) = 39.822$ Asymp. Sig. = .000* **Sample and Population Are Different**
	30 – 39	15 (25.0%)	20.84%	
	40 – 49	6 (10.0%)	22.32%	
	50 or over	8 (11.4%)	35.81%	
	Total	60 (100%)	100%	
Highest Level of Education Achieved	Some high school or completed high school	9 (15.0%)	50.05%	$\chi^2(3, n=60) = 41.548$ Asymp. Sig. = .000 **Sample and Population Are Different**
	Some college	23 (38.3%)	25.79%	
	Completed college	19 (31.7%)	11.07%	
	Graduate school	9 (15.0%)	13.09%	
	Total	60 (100%)	100%	
Household Income	Under $25,000	26 (43.3%)	32.70%	$\chi^2(3, n=60) = 7.296$ Asymp. Sig. = .063 **Sample and Population Are Marginally Different**
	$25,000-$39,999	16 (26.7%)	19.93%	
	$40,000-$59,999	8 (13.3%)	19.79%	
	$60,000 or over	10 (16.7%)	27.58%	
	Total	60 (100%)	100%	

*Significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.10 or p-values between 0.90 and 0.95. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.10 and 0.90.

Despite the differences between study participants and the estimates of demographics for Knoxville Kroger shoppers, the sample used for this study represents an important cross-section of supermarket purchasers. In this sense, the data collected provide a useful basis for examining consumer value at the brand level.

Demographic Comparisons Between National and Private Label Brand Buyers.

Tables 4-4 and 4-5 compare the demographic characteristics of national and private label brand buyers. The only significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between national and private label brand buyers that is observable relates to the highest level of education achieved. Interestingly, education levels in this sample are slightly higher for private label brand buyers. In addition, the sample of buyers of national brands tended to be somewhat more loyal to their preferred brand than were the sample of buyers of private label brands. As would be expected, the private label brand buyers in this sample tended to buy more private label products as a

Table 4-4. Comparison of national and private label brand buyers.

		National	Private Label	Chi-square
Gender	Male	10 (33.3%)	7 (23.3%)	$\chi^2(1, n=60) = .739$ Asymp. Sig. = .390* **Groups Not Different**
	Female	20 (66.7%)	23 (76.7%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
Age	18-19	2 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	Cell sizes for some cells are less than five – combined categories are needed – see Table 4-5 for analysis
	20-29	14 (46.7%)	15 (50.0%)	
	30 – 39	4 (13.3%)	11 (36.7%)	
	40 – 49	4 (13.3%)	2 (6.7%)	
	50 – 59	3 (10.0%)	2 (6.7%)	
	60 – 69	2 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	
	70 or over	1 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
Highest Level of Education Achieved	Some high school	1 (3.3%)	1 (3.3%)	Cell sizes for some cells are less than five – combined categories are needed – see Table 4-5 for analysis
	Completed high school	2 (6.7%)	5 (16.7%)	
	Some college	17 (56.7%)	6 (20.0%)	
	Completed college	6 (20.0%)	13 (43.3%)	
	Graduate school	4 (13.3%)	5 (16.7%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
Household Income	Under $25,000	13 (43.3%)	13 (43.3%)	Cell sizes for some cells are less than five – combined categories are needed – see Table 4-5 for analysis
	$25,000-$39,999	5 (16.7%)	11 (36.7%)	
	$40,000-$59,999	3 (10.0%)	5 (16.7%)	
	$60,000-$74,999	4 (13.3%)	0 (0.0)%	
	$75,000-$99,999	2 (6.7%)	1 (3.3%)	
	Over $100,000	3 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
% of Times Purchased Preferred Brand within Selected Product Category	Mean %	84.5%	79.7%	$\chi^2(10, n=60) = 6.485$ Asymp. Sig. = .075 **Groups Are Marginally Different**
% of Private Label Brands Purchased	Mean %	35.4%	50.6%	$\chi^2(19, n=60) = 26.676$ Asymp. Sig. = .082 **Groups Are Marginally Different**

*Significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.10 or p-values between 0.90 and 0.95. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.10 and 0.90.

Table 4-5. Comparison of national and private label brand buyers (combined categories).

		National	Private Label	Chi-square
Age	18-29	16 (53.4%)	15 (50.0%)	$\chi^2(1, n=60) = 0.067$ Asymp. Sig. = .796* **Groups Not Different**
	30 or over	14 (47.6%)	15 (50.0%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
Highest Level of Education Achieved	Some high school, completed high school or some college	20 (66.7%)	12 (40.0%)	$\chi^2(1, n=60) = 4.286$ Asymp. Sig. = .038 **Groups Are nt**
	Completed college or graduate schol	10 (33.3%)	18 (60.0%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
Household Income	Under $25,000	13 (43.3%)	13 (43.3%)	$\chi^2(2, n=60) = 4.250$ Asymp. Sig. = .119 **Groups Not Different**
	$25,000-$39,999	5 (16.7%)	11 (36.7%)	
	$40,000 or over	12 (40.0%)	6 (20.0%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	

*Significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.10 or p-values between 0.90 and 0.95. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.10 and 0.90.

percentage of their total grocery purchases than did the buyers of national brands. These latter two findings were marginally significant ($0.05<p<0.10$).

Demographic Comparisons Between Shredded Cheese and Soft Drink Users. Tables 4-6 and 4-7 compare demographic characteristics based on buyers of products in the product categories included in this study, shredded cheese and soft drinks. As might be expected, few differences in the sample demographics were observable across product categories. One difference that did appear in the sample was that education levels were significantly higher for buyers of shredded cheese than for soft drinks ($p=.010$).

Summary

Overall, the demographic characteristics of the sample are somewhat different than the demographics of Knoxville Kroger supermarket shoppers. Specifically, the sample of study participants represents a more heavily female, younger, more highly educated, and lower income population than that of Knoxville Kroger shoppers. Although findings from the study may not be transferable to the population of supermarket shoppers (even in the

Table 4-6. Comparison of soft drink and shredded cheese buyers.

		Shredded Cheese	Soft Drinks	Chi-square
Gender	Male	9 (30.0%)	8 (26.7%)	$\chi^2(1, n=60) = .082$ Asymp. Sig. = .774* **Groups Not Different**
	Female	21 (70.0%)	22 (73.3%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
Age	18-19	2 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	Cell sizes for some cells are less than five – combined categories are needed – see Table 4-7 for analysis
	20-29	17 (56.7%)	12 (40.0%)	
	30 – 39	5 (16.7%)	10 (33.3%)	
	40 – 49	4 (13.3%)	2 (6.7%)	
	50 – 59	1 (3.3%)	4 (13.3%)	
	60 – 69	1 (3.3%)	1 (3.3%)	
	70 or over	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.3%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
Highest Level of Education Achieved	Some high school	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.7%)	Cell sizes for some cells are less than five – combined categories are needed – see Table 4-7 for analysis
	Completed high school	0 (0.0%)	7 (23.3%)	
	Some college	11 (36.7%)	12 (40.0%)	
	Completed college	13 (43.3%)	6 (20.0%)	
	Graduate school	6 (20.0%)	3 (10.0%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
Household Income	Under $25,000	14 (46.7%)	12 (40.0%)	Cell sizes for some cells are less than five – combined categories are needed – see Table 4-7 for analysis
	$25,000-$39,999	6 (20.0%)	10 (33.3%)	
	$40,000-$59,999	3 (10.0%)	5 (16.7%)	
	$60,000-$74,999	3 (10.0%)	1 (3.3%)	
	$75,000-$99,999	1 (3.3%)	2 (6.7%)	
	Over $100,000	3 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
% of Times Purchased Preferred Brand within Selected Product Category	Mean %	81.6%	82.6%	$\chi^2(10, n=60) = 9.816$ Asymp. Sig. = .491 **Groups Not Different**
% of Private Label Brands Purchased	Mean %	41.1%	44.8%	$\chi^2(13, n=60) = 19.476$ Asymp. Sig. = .813 **Groups Not Different**

*Significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.10 or p-values between 0.90 and 0.95. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.10 and 0.90.

Table 4-7. Comparison of soft drink and shredded cheese buyers (combined categories).

		Shredded Cheese	Soft Drinks	Chi-square
Age	18-29	19 (63.4%)	12 (40.0%)	$\chi^2(2, n=60) = 3.533$ Asymp. Sig. = .171* **Groups Not Different**
	30 – 39	5 (16.7%)	10 (33.3%)	
	40 or over	6 (19.9%)	8 (26.7%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
Highest Level of Education Achieved	Some high school, completed high school, or some college	11 (36.7%)	21 (70%)	$\chi^2(1, n=60) = 6.696$ Asymp. Sig. = .010 **Groups Are Different**
	Completed college or graduate school	19 (63.3%)	9 (30.0%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	
Household Income	Under $25,000	14 (46.7%)	12 (40.0%)	$\chi^2(2, n=60) = 1.376$ Asymp. Sig. = .503 **Groups Not Different**
	$25,000-$39,999	6 (20.0%)	10 (33.3%)	
	$40,000 or over	10 (33.3%)	8 (26.7%)	
	Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	

*Significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.10 or p-values between 0.90 and 0.95. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.10 and 0.90.

Knoxville area), they are transferable to one segment of the population of supermarket shoppers. In addition, differences in demographics between cells (e.g., private label and national buyers; shredded cheese and soft drink buyers) are few, but in the directions expected.

Coding Process

As described in Chapter 3, the interviews conducted as part of this study were audiotaped and transcribed. The transcripts of the interviews comprised the raw data for the study. Before the analyses could be conducted, however, the raw data had to be coded to relate consumer comments to the EVH framework developed in Chapter 2.

Coding of the interviews occurred as a two-step process. The first step was to identify value dimensions discussed in the interviews and to categorize each value dimension according to its level in the consumer's value hierarchy (i.e., attribute level brand association, consequence, or desired end state). The definitions of these three constructs included in Chapter 3 were used as the basis for making the categorizations. Only attribute level brand associations selected as "important" by the consumer and the consequences and desired

end states directly linked to these brand associations were included in the coding process. Once agreement was reached on the value dimensions to include, as well as their level in the value hierarchy, two different coders reviewed the attribute level brand associations and consequences that were selected. These coders assigned each item to one of the sub-categories depicted in the EVH framework (i.e., brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, brand as symbol, functional consequence, emotional consequence, and self-expressive consequence). One purpose of the two-step coding process was to make coding more straightforward for the coders. A second purpose was to make the first step consistent with the coding process described in Woodruff and Gardial (1996).

Two coders reviewed each transcript in the first step of the coding process (assignment of attributes, consequences and desired end states), and two additional coders reviewed each transcript to complete the second step of the coding (assignment of specific constructs in the Extended Value Hierarchy framework). All of the coders participating in this study were familiar with the traditional value hierarchy and the theory which supports this concept. In addition, the coders who participated in the second step of the coding process attended a training session that introduced the constructs present in the EVH framework.

The training session for the coders did not review any of the research hypotheses. Thus, all coders for the second step were naïve regarding the specific objectives of this research. The primary researcher for this study did participate in the coding process, but only in the first step. The assigning of value dimensions to sub-categories in the EVH framework was done only by coders who were not familiar with the hypothesis tests.

Dependability in the Coding Process

As described in Chapter 3, to increase the dependability of the coding process, two coders independently reviewed each transcript and made the appropriate categorizations. Next, the two coders compared their category assignments. Where differences occurred, the coders provided rationales for their choices and came to a conclusion regarding the best

classification for the construct. In cases where agreement could not be reached, a third coder reviewed both categorizations and served as a tie-breaker.

The primary researcher participated in some of the coding, however, a third coder participated in all of the reconciliation sessions where the primary researcher was involved. In these cases, for each difference in coding, the third coder reviewed both categorizations and served as a tie-breaker. This measure was undertaken to reduce the likelihood that the second coder would defer to the primary researcher in a disproportionate number of cases.

As part of the reconciliation process, coders kept a log of the number of assignments of each type on which they agreed without the need for additional discussion. A summary of these logs is included in Table 4-8.

Results of the Coding

The coding process resulted in the assignment of codes (or categories) to the attribute level brand associations selected as "important" by the consumer, as well as the consequences and desired end states that were linked to each brand association. Table 4-9 illustrates the percentage of total attribute level brand associations, consequences and desired end states assigned to each sub-category represented in the EVH framework.

Table 4-8. Summary of intercoder agreement logs.

	Shredded Cheese	Soft Drinks	Overall
Step 1:			
Attribute Level Brand Associations	100% (120/120)	100% (110/110)	100% (230/230)
Consequences	81.0% (383/473)	86.0% (362/421)	83.3% (745/894)
Desired End States	85.6% (167/195)	88.1% (170/193)	86.9% (337/388)
Step 2:			
Brand as Product	91.4% (85/93)	95.0% (76/80)	93.1% (161/173)
Brand as Organization	100.0% (6/6)	91.7% (11/12)	94.4% (17/18)
Brand as Person	85.7% (6/7)	100.0% (5/5)	91.7% (11/12)
Brand as Symbol	78.6% (11/14)	84.6% (11/13)	81.5% (22/27)
Functional Consequence	91.8% (336/366)	92.6% (299/323)	92.2% (635/689)
Emotional Consequence	95.9% (93/97)	94.4% (85/90)	95.2% (178/187)
Self-expressive Consequence	90.0% (9/10)	87.5% (7/8)	88.9% (16/18)

Note: The percentages included in this table represent the number of codes on which the coders initially agreed (the numerator of the fraction in parentheses) in relation to the total number of codes eventually assigned to the category (the denominator of the fraction in parentheses).

Table 4-9. Results of the coding process.

	Product Category 1 (Shredded Cheese)	Product Category 2 (Soft Drinks)	Overall
Attribute Level Brand Associations	100% (120/120)	100% (110/110)	100% (230/230)
Brand as Product	77.5% (93/120)	72.7% (80/110)	75.2% (173/230)
Brand as Organization	5.0% (6/120)	10.9% (12/110)	7.8% (18/230)
Brand as Person	5.8% (7/120)	4.5% (5/110)	5.2% (12/230)
Brand as Symbol	11.7% (14/120)	11.8% (13/110)	11.7% (27/230)
Consequences	100% (473/473)	100% (421/421)	100% (894/894)
Functional Consequence	77.4% (366/473)	76.7% (323/421)	77.1% (689/894)
Emotional Consequence	20.5% (97/473)	21.4% (90/421)	20.9% (187/894)
Self-expressive Consequence	2.1% (10/473)	1.9% (8/421)	2.0% (18/894)
Desired End States	100% (195/195)	100% (193/193)	100% (388/388)

Note: The percentages included in this table represent the number of associations assigned to each sub-category (e.g., brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, brand as symbol, functional consequence, emotional consequence, and self-expressive consequence) as compared to the number of associations assigned to the total category (e.g., attribute level brand association, consequence or desired end state).

The table provides an interesting review of the proportion of consumer thoughts assigned to each of the categories included in the EVH framework. As illustrated by the percentages depicted in the table, brand as product associations (which comprise 75.2% of total attribute level brand associations) and functional consequences (which comprise 77.1% of total consequence associations) appear to dominate consumer thoughts. These are also the constructs that are most often discussed in the marketing literature. This finding is interesting and raises the question: was the dominance of brand as product associations and functional consequences a result of the product categories chosen for study (e.g., frequently purchased, low price, non-durable), the use situation used as the context for interview participants (e.g., product choice), or the fact that only the "most important" brand were discussed in the interviews? Future research using different contexts will address this question.

Notably, however, the extensions of the value hierarchy framework introduced in this dissertation (brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) comprise in total almost one-fourth (25%) of consumer thoughts about their preferred brand. Although no major differences in proportions were observable between product categories for most constructs, almost twice as many thoughts about the brand as organization appeared in the

soft drink product category as compared to the shredded cheese product category. The idea that certain types of brand associations may be more important for specific product categories provides an intriguing future research possibility.

Tests of Research Hypotheses Related to the Structure of the Extended Value Hierarchy Framework

Hypotheses 1 and 2 provide an empirical test of the linkages between the attribute level brand associations and consequences that are proposed in the EVH framework. As described in Chapter 2, linkages between four types of attribute level brand associations (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) and three types of consequences (functional, emotional, and symbolic consequences) are examined. This section reviews the analysis and findings related to these hypotheses.

Description of Data Used

For the tests of the EVH framework, the data used is the set of thoughts consumers in each product category have about their preferred brand. Each hypothesis is tested first for the shredded cheese product category. The soft drink product category is then used as an opportunity for replication. Overall findings (which include the combination of both product categories) are also presented. The overall findings provide limited, but not conclusive, evidence of the transferability of the findings across product categories.

Unit of Analysis. As described in Chapter 3, the data set used for this analysis consists of categorical data that indicates the presence or absence of the various constructs in the EVH framework for each brand association discussed in the interviews. Please recall that the data were coded so that it could be analyzed according to responses from individual consumers (for a total of 60 consumers, 30 per product category). Using the individual consumer as the unit of analysis provides a small sample size, but enables use of statistical tests (such as the independent samples t-test) that require interval data.

Variables Used. The following variables are used to test hypotheses 1 and 2:

- Brand as product association to functional consequence linkages (BAPr-FC)

- Brand as product association to emotional consequence linkages (BAPr-EC)
- Brand as product association to self-expressive consequence linkages (BAPr-SEC)
- Brand as organization association to functional consequence linkages (BAO-FC)
- Brand as organization association to emotional consequence linkages (BAO-EC)
- Brand as organization association to self-expressive consequence linkages (BAO-SEC)
- Brand as person association to functional consequence linkages (BAPe-FC)
- Brand as person association to emotional consequence linkages (BAPe-EC)
- Brand as person association to self-expressive consequence linkages (BAPe-SEC)
- Brand as symbol association to functional consequence linkages (BAS-FC)
- Brand as symbol association to emotional consequence linkages (BAS-EC)
- Brand as symbol association to self-expressive consequence linkages (BAS-SEC).

The number of observations of each variable that was found in this study is illustrated in Figure 4-1.

Assumptions Related to the Data. The statistical tests conducted to evaluate hypotheses 1 and 2 (the results of which are described below) require two assumptions about the data which are deserving of further discussion. These assumptions are:

- Assumption of normality
- Assumption of independence of observations.

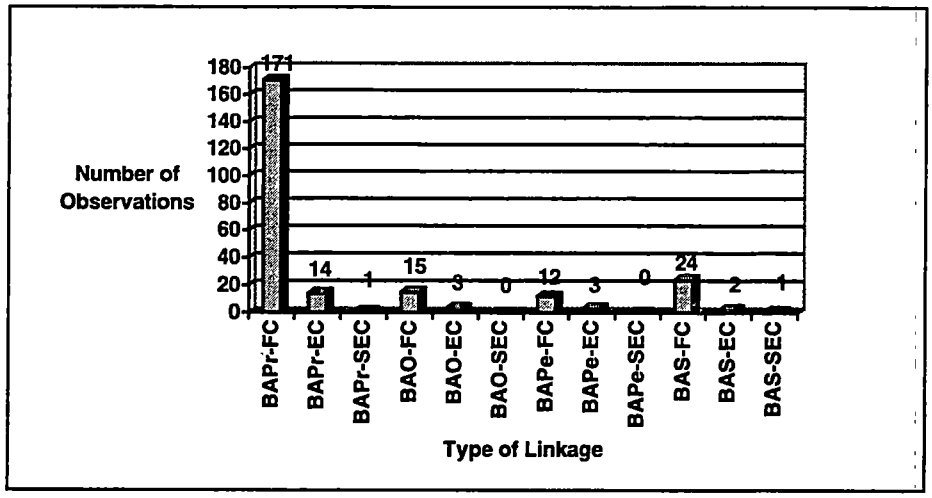


Figure 4-1. Hypotheses 1 and 2: Number of observations of variables examined.

T-tests using large samples assume that the mean of the sample (i.e., the observations included in the study) is normally distributed. In samples with over thirty observations per cell, the Central Limit Theorem (which states that when a random sample of *n* observations selected from a population is sufficiently large, then the sampling distribution of the mean will be approximately a normal distribution), the assumption of normality is considered reasonable. When a sample is made up of less than thirty observations, the assumption of normality described by the Central Limit Theorem can no longer be applied. In this case (which applies to the dissertation study), one can only assume normality if the population being sampled is normal or approximately normal. For this dissertation study, the populations being sampled (purchasers of shredded cheese and soft drinks) are assumed to have relative frequency distributions that are approximately normal.

For the assumption of normality of the population (stated above) to apply to the sample used in the study, a random sample of independent observations must be drawn. For the dissertation study, this means that the buyers of shredded cheese and soft drinks who chose to participate in the study were randomly selected from the population of shredded cheese and soft drink buyers in the grocery stores visited. Although some self-selection did occur since the participants in the study had to agree to take part, the researcher addressed

the assumption of normality by recruiting every person who was observed purchasing shredded cheese or soft drinks in specified stores during recruiting hours. Recruiting hours were varied to included weekdays and weekends, as well as day and evening hours. The assumption of indendence also means that the selection of any one particular participant in the study did not influence whether or not any other person participated. The researcher addressed this assumption by only allowing one person per household to participate in the study. In addition, only individuals who had received an information card directly from an in-store recruiter were granted an interview. Individuals who called and had heard about the study from a friend or relative were not allowed to participate.

Hypothesis 1: Brand as product associations will be (a) directly linked with functional consequences and (b) not directly linked with emotional and self-expressive consequences that are considered by consumers during a brand use situation.

Hypothesis 1 specifically examines the nature of the relationship between brand as product associations and the three types of consequences included in the EVH framework. To evaluate hypothesis 1, a one-sample t-test is used to compare the sample means to a constant (in this case, 0). Using a one-sample t-test is possible because, although the data are not normally distributed, the one-sample t-test is robust to violations of the assumption of normality (Ott 1993).

The one-sample t-test enables the evaluation of all three sub-hypotheses (except in the soft drink product category, where no brand as product to self-expressive consequence linkages were observed). As illustrated in Table 4-10, one-sample t-tests indicate that the mean for the observed number of brand as product association to functional consequence linkages is significantly different from zero. This finding provides support for sub-hypothesis 1a, which predicts that there is a direct linkage between brand as product associations and functional consequences.

Table 4-10. Hypothesis 1: One sample t-tests to compare means.

Research Hypothesis (R.H.) *(Null Hypothesis)*	Product Category 1 (Shredded Cheese)	Product Category 2 (Soft Drinks)	Overall
$H1_a$: (BAPr-FC) ≠ 0 *($H1_a$: (BAPr-FC) = 0)*	t(29, n=30) = 14.698 Sig. = .000* **R.H. Supported****	t (29, n=30) = 15.922 Sig. = .000 **R.H. Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 20.920 Sig. = .000 **R.H. Supported**
$H1_b$: (BAPr-EC) = 0 *($H1_b$: (BAPr-EC) = 0)*	t(29, n=30) = 2.693 Sig. = .012 **R.H. Not Supported; Difference From Zero Was Supported**	t(29, n=30) = 3.247 Sig. = .003 **R.H. Not Supported; Difference From Zero Was Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 4.328 Sig. = .000 **R.H. Not Supported; Difference From Zero Was Supported**
$H1_c$: (BAPr-SEC) = 0 *($H1_c$: (BAPr-SEC) = 0)*	t(29, n=30) = 1.00 Sig. = .326 **R.H. Not Supported**	Linkages observed = 0 NA **NA**	t(59, n=60) = 1.000 Sig. = .321 **R.H. Not Supported**

*Significance is indicated by p-values of less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95. Marginal significance is indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.10 or p-values between 0.90 and 0.95. No significance is indicated by p-values between 0.10 and 0.90.

The t-tests also indicate that the mean for the observed number of brand as product association to emotional consequence linkages is significantly different than zero. This finding is in contrast to the prediction made by sub-hypothesis 1b, which states that there is no direct linkage between brand as product associations and emotional consequences. Thus, sub-hypothesis 1b is not supported.

Interestingly, the data provide no support for sub-hypothesis 1c (which predicts that there is no direct linkage between brand as product associations and self-expressive consequences) in the shredded cheese product category. In the soft drink product category, the sub-hypothesis could not be tested because no direct linkages between brand as product associations and self-expressive consequences were observed in the study.

Hypothesis 2: Brand associations for (a) brand as organization, (b) brand as person and (c) brand as symbol will be linked to evaluative consequences (which may be functional, emotional, or self-expressive) that are considered during a brand use situation.

Hypothesis 2 examines the nature of the relationship between the three types of attribute level brand associations that represent extensions of the traditional value hierarchy framework (brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) and the consequences that consumers associate with a brand. Findings from the tests of hypothesis 2 are depicted in Table 4-11.

Table 4-11. Hypothesis 2: One sample t-tests to compare means.

Research Hypothesis (R.H.) *(Null Hypothesis)*	Product Category 1 (Shredded Cheese)	Product Category 2 (Soft Drinks)	Overall
$H2_{a1}$: (BAO-FC) ≠ 0 *($H2_{a1}$: (BAO-FC) = 0)*	t(29, n=30) = 1.980 Sig. = .057* **R.H. Marginally Supported**	t(29, n=30) = 3.808 Sig. = .001 **R.H. Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 4.086 Sig. = .000 **R.H. Supported**
$H2_{a2}$: (BAO-EC) ≠ 0 *($H2_{a2}$: (BAO-EC) = 0)*	t (29, n=30) = 1.000 Sig. = .326 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(29, n=30) = 1.439 Sig. = .161 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 1.762 Sig. = .083 **R.H. Marginally Supported**
$H2_{a3}$: (BAO-SEC) ≠ 0 *($H2_{a3}$: (BAO-SEC) = 0)*	Linkages observed = 0 NA **NA**	Linkages observed = 0 NA **NA**	Linkages observed =0 NA **NA**
$H2_{b1}$: (BAPe-FC) ≠ 0 *($H2_{b1}$: (BAPe-FC) = 0)*	t(29, n=30) = 2.971 Sig. = .006 **R.H. Supported**	T(29, n=30) = 2.408 Sig. = .023 **R.H. Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 3.841 Sig. = .000 **R.H. Supported**
$H2_{b2}$: (BAPe-EC) ≠ 0 *($H2_{b2}$: (BAPe-EC) = 0)*	t(29, n=30) = 1.439 Sig. = .161 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(29, n=30) = 1.000 Sig. = .326 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 1.762 Sig. = .083 **R.H. Marginally Supported**
$H2_{b3}$: (BAPe-SEC) ≠ 0 *($H2_{b3}$: (BAPe-SEC) = 0)*	Linkages observed = 0 **NA** **NA**	Linkages observed = 0 **NA** **NA**	Linkages observed = 0 NA **NA**
$H2_{c1}$: (BAS-FC) ≠ 0 *($H2_{c1}$: (BAS-FC) = 0)*	t(29, n=30) = 3.067 Sig. = .005 **R.H. Supported**	t(29, n=30) = 3.266 Sig. = .003 **R.H. Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 4.666 Sig. = .000 **R.H. Supported**
$H2_{c2}$: (BAS-EC) ≠ 0 *($H2_{c2}$: (BAS-EC) = 0)*	t(29, n=30) = 1.000 Sig. = .326 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(29, n=30) = 1.000 Sig. = .326 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 1.426 Sig. = .159 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H2_{c3}$: (BAS-SEC) ≠ 0 *($H2_{c3}$: (BAS-SEC) = 0)*	Linkages observed = 0 NA **NA**	t(29, n=30) = 1.000 Sig. = .326 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 1.000 Sig. = .321 **R.H. Not Supported**

*Significance is indicated by p-values of less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95. Marginal significance is indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.10 or p-values between 0.90 and 0.95. No significance is indicated by p-values between 0.10 and 0.90.

The one sample t-tests suggest that the means for the observed number of linkages between each of the three types of attribute level brand associations introduced in the Extended Value Hierarchy framework (brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) and functional consequences are significantly different than zero. These findings specifically support the three sub-hypotheses ($2a_1$, $2b_1$, and $2c_1$) that predict linkages between attribute level brand associations and functional consequences. The only qualification to the support for these sub-hypotheses is that, in the shredded cheese category, sub-hypothesis $2a_1$ (which predicts a direct linkage between brand as organization associations and functional consequences) was marginally supported.

In contrast, the t-tests provide little evidence of direct linkages between the attribute level brand associations introduced in the EVH framework and emotional consequences. For all of the product category-specific tests, the data do not support the research sub-hypotheses ($2a_2$, $2b_2$, and $2c_2$) that predict linkages between attribute level brand associations and emotional consequences. The only exceptions to this finding are found in the analyses that examine the overall data. First, in overall data, a linkage between brand as organization associations and emotional consequences was marginally supported. Second, the overall data provide marginal support for the existence of a linkage between brand as person associations and emotional consequences. These exceptions are interesting in that they suggest that, for sub-hypotheses $2a_2$ and $2b_2$, a larger sample size might have provided support within a particular product category.

The low number of observed linkages between attribute level brand associations and self-expressive consequences (2 linkages of 230 in the overall data) meant that two of the three sub-hypotheses related to self-expressive consequences ($2a_3$ and $2b_3$) could not be evaluated. Sub-hypothesis $2c_3$, which predicts a direct linkage between brand as symbol associations and self-expressive consequences, could only be tested for the soft drink product category. The findings from this test provide no support for the research hypothesis. The fact that only two linkages out of 230 (less than 1%) were observed in the overall data, however, suggest a low likelihood that support would have been found for the sub-

hypotheses that predict a relationship between attribute level brand assocations and self-expressive consequences, even if the sample size for this study had been larger.

Summary of Research Findings

In total, the findings from the tests of hypotheses 1 and 2 suggest support for the introduction of the EVH framework. The existence of linkages between the four types of attribute level brand associations (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) and functional consequences are supported by the data. Next, the data suggest the possibility of direct linkages between several attribute level brand associations and emotional consequences. For example, a direct linkage between brand as product associations and emotional consequences was found to exist. In addition, direct linkages between brand as organization associations and brand as person associations and emotional consequences received marginal support. Although most of the sub-hypotheses that predict a linkage between attribute level brand associations and self-expressive consequences could not be evaluated statistically, the small number of occurrences of attribute level brand association to self-expressive consequence linkages supports the conclusion that a direct linkage between these constructs does <u>not</u> exist. These findings suggest several interesting avenues for future research, which are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Test of Research Hypothesis that Examines the Content (or Meaning) of Consumer Value Hierarchies

An alternative way of examining consumer thoughts related to brand value is by focusing on the content (or meaning) of consumer thoughts as well as their structure. Woodruff and Gardial (1996) suggest value hierarchy analysis as one way of understanding the content (or meaning) of what consumers value. This section provides a description of how the data were organized, a review of the data analysis process (e.g., value hierarchy

analysis) that was used, and a discussion of the findings from the summary ladders and value hierarchies that were developed.

Description of Data Used

The raw data for the analysis of research proposition #3 (as noted in Chapter 3, because this research proposition is examined qualitatively, no specific research hypotheses were developed) consisted of the 60 individual interview transcripts from the in-depth interviews. To begin organizing the data, the content (or meaning) of what was said was carefully reviewed and a categorization (i.e., type of attribute level brand association or consequence) for each consumer thought related to an important attribute level brand association was assigned. Next, individual value hierarchies (that reflected the value dimensions chosen as important for the individual consumer) were drawn for each interview. The value hierarchies summarized both the content of what was said, as well as the categorization (e.g., brand as product association, emotional consequence, etc.) for each value dimension.

In addition, summary tables were developed that reflected the value dimensions discussed in each interview. The overall summary tables, which list all of the attribute level brand associations selected as important by interview participants, as well as the consequences and desired end states that were linked to these attribute level brand associations, are included in Appendices A, B, and C.

The summary tables provided a basis for creating a shorter list of summary codes, which are broad enough to allow categorization of similar concepts mentioned in the summary tables. For example, the consequences of "avoid health problems," "can eat healthy," and "can get my nutrients" were all classified under the summary code of "helps me stay healthy." Lists of the summary codes used for attribute level brand associations, consequences, and desired end states are included in Appendices D, E, and F, respectively.

As described in Woodruff and Gardial (1996), developing summary tables (which outline the key attributes, consequences, and desired end states discussed by consumers)

and summary codes can provide a logical basis for creating summary ladders and summary value hierarchies. Summary ladders and summary value hierarchies were used in this study to summarize the content of what consumers (in each product category) value about national and private label brands.

A summary ladder represents one chain of consumer thoughts about an attribute level brand association that was frequently mentioned in the interviews. It essentially represents a set of linked thoughts (that emerged from a discussion of one particular attribute level brand association) that was commonly described by individuals within a particular group of consumers. For this study, summary ladders were created for each attribute level brand association that was mentioned by four or more consumers in the interviews.

In contrast, a summary value hierarchy illustrates the entire set of value dimensions (including all of the attribute level brand associations commonly mentioned, as well as consequences and desired end states) that were most commonly expressed by a group of individuals. The summary value hierarchy represents the sum of all thoughts that a group of consumers appear to share about a product or brand.

As a note, summary ladders are presented as figures in this chapter to support the discussion related to proposition #3. The summary value hierarchies for each group of consumers interviewed (which essentially represent an alternative way of presenting the data included in the summary ladders) are included in Appendices G, H, I, and J. Since the data presented in the summary value hierarchies and the summary ladders are very similar, unless otherwise noted, the term "summary value hierarchies" is used to refer to the figures (which are summary ladders) as well as to Appendices G-J (which are summary value hierarchies).

Description of Analysis Process

As discussed above, summary tables were developed to identify all of the different attribute level brand associations, consequences, and desired end states discussed by participants in the study. Each attribute level brand association, consequence, and desired

end state is listed only once in the summary tables (included in Appendices A-C), regardless of how many times it was mentioned by consumers. The summary tables do, however, note the product category(ies) for which consumers mentioned each association. In total, 86 different attribute level brand associations, 391 different consequences, and 84 different desired end states were mentioned as important by the 60 consumers interviewed.

In addition to recording all of the value dimensions that study participants mentioned as important, the summary tables served as input into a more detailed coding process, which led to the development of the summary ladders and value hierarchies. As described above, the summary tables provided a basis for creating a shorter list of summary codes (see Appendices D-F). Again, the lists of summary codes included in the appendices indicate the product category(ies) for which consumers mentioned each association. In total, the value dimensions listed in the summary tables were collapsed into 27 summary codes for attribute level brand associations, 69 codes for consequences, and 22 codes for desired end states.

Once the list of summary codes was developed, each value dimension depicted in the individual value hierarchies was assigned a code. Then, the codes from the individual value hierarchies were entered into a computer program developed by Dr. James Foggin in the Department of Marketing, Logistics and Transportation at The University of Tennessee. The computer program aggregates the data from the individual value hierarchies to form summary ladders for groups of interest. This output from this program was used to develop the summary ladders and summary value hierarchies discussed in the next section.

As a check to increase the credibility of the data, after the summary ladders and value hierarchies were created, the individual hierarchies were qualitatively reviewed to provide additional detail regarding any nuances of meaning that may not be reflected by just viewing the summary codes. For example, for the private label brands, "taste/flavor" was defined by buyers as tasting the same as the leading national brand. For national brands, "taste/flavor" was described as a unique and positive aspect of the preferred brand. The additional definitions are reflected in the labeling of the constructs in each summary ladder and summary value hierarchy.

Proposition 3: There will be differences in the overall meaning of value, as shown by value hierarchies, between users of national brands and users of private label brands.

Like the analysis process for testing hypothesis 1 and 2, the data from product category 1 (shredded cheese) were analyzed first, with the data from product category 2 (soft drinks) being used as an opportunity for replication of findings. Because the literature suggests that there may be differences in the content (or meaning) of what is valued between users of national and private label brands, separate summary ladders and summary value hierarchies were developed for each group.

As noted earlier, the summary ladders and value hierarchies discussed in this section include only attribute level brand associations that were mentioned by at least four of the fifteen interviewees for the brand and product category of interest. The number of buyers who mentioned each attribute level brand association is represented by the italicized numbers below the association name in the summary figures. As described in Chapter 3, the summary value hierarchies can be evaluated by examining the content (or meaning) of the value dimensions included, the complexity (e.g., number of value dimensions) included in the value hierarchy table, and the relative strength (as represented by number of mentions) of the associations shown. Also as stated earlier, the summary ladders are represented in the figures presented in this section; the summary value hierarchies are included in Appendices G-J. For simplicity, and because the data presented in the summary ladders and summary value hierarchies are very similar, the term "summary value hierarchy" is used to refer to information presented in both the summary ladders and summary value hierarchies.

Figure 4-2 summarizes the number of each type of value dimension that is included in the summary hierarchies presented in the appendix. Value dimensions mentioned more than more than once by a group of consumers are only counted once in the numbers shown in the figure. The findings from this figure, as well as from the content of the value dimensions contained in the summary ladders and value hierarchies, are next reviewed.

Value Dimension	Shredded Cheese National Brand Buyers (Kraft)	Shredded Cheese Private Label Brand Buyers (Kroger)	Soft Drink National Brand Buyers (Coke)	Soft Drink Private Label Brand Buyers (Big K)	Total for All Consumer Groups
Brand as Product	5	3	2	4	14
Brand as Organization	0	0	0	1	1
Brand as Person	1	0	0	0	1
Brand as Symbol	2	0	2	0	4
Total Attribute Level Brand Associations	8	3	4	5	20
Functional Consequences	20	7	9	14	50
Emotional Consequences	6	2	8	7	23
Self-Expressive Consequences	0	0	0	0	0
Total Consequences	26	9	17	21	73
Desired End States	6	6	6	7	25
Total Number of Value Dimensions	40	18	27	33	118

Figure 4-2. Number of value dimensions included in the summary value hierarchies.

Summary Value Hierarchy for Shredded Cheese National Brand Buyers

Interestingly, the summary ladders and summary value hierarchy for shredded cheese national brand buyers are the most complex (in terms of total number of value dimensions, attribute level brand associations, total number of consequences, and number of functional consequences listed by consumers) of all of the summary value hierarchies. The most common ladders stemming from attribute level brand associations that were described by the fifteen loyal users of Kraft (the leading national brand of shredded cheese), as well as associated consequences and desired end states, are listed in Table 4-12.

Notably, the summary value hierarchy for shredded cheese national brand buyers (illustrated in Appendix G) includes 40 different value dimensions. This is significantly higher than the number of value dimensions included in the summary value hierarchy for any other consumer group. In comparison, the summary value hierarchy for shredded cheese private label brand buyers included only 18 different value dimensions. The national and private label brand summary value hierarchies for the soft drink product category included 27 and 33 value dimensions, respectively. The larger number of total value dimensions included in the

summary value hierarchy for Kraft was influenced primarily by larger numbers of attribute level brand associations and functional consequences that were discussed by consumers.

Specifically, the Kraft interviews yielded eight important attribute level brand associations:

- Tastes like real cheese (creamy, not dry) - BAPr
- Smooth texture - BAPr
- Price similar to other brands – BAPr
- Pre-shredded - BAPr
- Consistent/ dependable - BAPe
- Healthy ingredients - BAPr
- Brand is well-known - BAS
- Commercials/ ads/ coupons - BAS.

Of these eight associations, the majority (5) are brand as product associations. One (consistent/ dependable) is a brand as person association. This is the only brand as person association that was included in any of the summary value hierarchies. The remaining two associations are brand as symbol associations and refer to the promotions that have supported the Kraft brand as well as the brand's popularity, or image.

The inclusion of such a large number of common attribute level brand associations may at first indicate a higher number of total consumer thoughts about Kraft, as compared to the other brands studied. In fact, this is not the case. Overall, consumers expressed a similar number of total thoughts about each of the four brands of interest (see Table 4-9). Although more attribute level brand associations are included in the Kraft summary value hierarchy, most that are included are not very widely held across brand buyers. For example, six of the eight associations were deemed important by only four or five buyers (one-third or less of the total buyers interviewed). This finding suggests that there may be multiple segments of Kraft shredded cheese buyers represented in the sample. Some buyers, for

Table 4-12. Summary ladders for shredded cheese, national brand (Kraft).

Attribute Level Brand Association	Link 1	Link 2	Link 3	Link 4
Tastes like real cheese (creamy, not dry) *BAPr (9)*	Makes my meal taste better *FC*	Enjoy eating my meal *EC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*	
Smooth texture *BAPr (6)*	Looks more appealing *FC*	Makes my meal taste better *FC*	Enjoy eating my meal *EC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*
	Easier to eat/ digest *FC*	Feel better after eating *EC*	Stay healthy/ live longer *DES*	
Price similar to other brands/ good product for the money *BAPr (5)*	Stay within my grocery budget *FC*	Feel like I am being responsible *EC*	Sense of personal responsibily *DES*	
	Get what you want *FC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*		
	Save money in the long run *FC*			
Consistent/ dependable *BAPe (5)*	Know it will be good/ not afraid to buy brand *FC*	Don't have to think about it *FC*	Saves time *FC*	Makes life easier/ comfort *DES*
	Won't ruin my meal *FC*	Won't waste my money/ save money *FC*	Can buy other things with my money *FC*	
		Will be satisfied *FC*	Need fulfillment *DES*	
Pre-shredded *BAPr (5)*	More convenient/ less hassle *FC*	Not as stressed or frustrated *EC*	Enjoy eating more *EC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*
Brand is well-known *BAS (4)*	Means that the brand is good quality *FC*	Trust/rely on the brand *EC*	Comforts me/ less worry *EC*	Peace of mind *DES*
	Brand will be safe for me to eat *FC*	Won't create bad side effects *FC*	Stay healthy/ live longer *DES*	
Healthy ingredients *BAPr (4)*	Put good food in my body/ Avoid eating things that are bad for me *FC*	Helps me stay healthy *FC*	Stay healthy/ live longer *DES*	
		Feel good about what I am eating *EC*	Peace of mind *DES (7)*	
Commercials/ ads/ coupons *BAS (4)*	More familiar with the brand *FC*	Gives me something to trust/ rely on *EC*	Makes me more comfortable/ worry less *EC*	Peace of mind *DES*

instance, may consider superior performance on product attributes (e.g., brand as product associations, such as healthy ingredients or pricing similar to other brands) to provide the most value. Others may find more value in the idea that the brand is widely known and advertised.

The inclusion of two brand as symbol associations and one brand as person assocation in the summary value hierarchy suggests that marketing communications can create value, at least for a certain set of brand buyers. Notably, however, the primary consequences created by the advertising and promotion are that it seems to enhance brand familiarity and reinforce the idea that the brand is consistent, dependable, high quality and safe to use. These findings suggest opportunity for further investigation and are discussed further in Chapter 5.

In addition to including a large number of attribute level brand associations, the Kraft summary value hierarchy included considerably more functional consequences than did any other hierarchy. In total, 20 functional consequences were included. The next highest number of functional consequences in a single summary value hierarchy was found in the hierarchy for Big K Cola (which included 14 functional consequences). A possible explanation for the large number of functional consequences mentioned by Kraft buyers is the relatively large number of attribute level brand associations mentioned. It is logical that consumers who choose more attribute level brand associations as important would mention more consequences in a laddering interview. As is described in the discussion of attribute level brand associations mentioned in the Kraft interviews, it is interesting that (while plentiful in number) the functional consequences discussed were varied, but not necessarily widely held across consumers. This is a function of the fact that the attribute level brand associations that were discussed are not widely held among consumers.

Interestingly, the content of the functional consequences discussed by consumers is diverse. Consumers found value in the idea that Kraft shredded cheese "makes my meal taste better," "looks more appealing," is "more convenient," "is easier to digest," "is a good quality brand," and is a brand I am "not afraid to buy," just to name a few. While several of

these consequences appear in other summary value hierarchies, the ideas of "health" and "convenience" are included only in the shredded cheese national brand summary value hierarchy.

It is interesting that the number of emotional consequences (6) included in the Kraft summary value hierarchy was much higher than the number of emotional consequences (2) included in the private label brand shredded cheese value hierarchy. The ideas related to emotional consequences that were unique to the Kraft summary value hierarchy (as compared to the Kroger shredded cheese value hierarchy) were "feel good after eating," "feel like I am responsible," "feel good about what I am eating," "gives me something I can trust/ rely on" and "makes me more comfortable." Several of these ideas appeared in the value hierarchies for the soft drink product category and will be discussed later, however, the consequence of "feel good about what I am eating" appears to be unique to Kraft.

Finally, although the number of desired end states (6) included in the Kraft summary value hierarchy is similar to the number included in the summary value hierarchies for the other brands examined in this study, the content of the desired end states mentioned by consumers differs somewhat. One desired end state in particular is unique to the Kraft summary value hierarchy. This is the desired end state of "stay healthy"/ "live longer." Again, buyers of Kraft appear to value the health benefits of the product (this is particularly interesting since cheddar cheese, which is relatively high in saturated fat, is not universally perceived as a healthy food). Other desired end states that were valued by Kraft buyers were "happiness"/ "pleasure," "sense of personal responsibility," "peace of mind," "need fulfillment," and "makes life easier"/ "comfort." These are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Summary Value Hierarchy for Shredded Cheese Private Label Brand Buyers

As illustrated in Figure 4-2, the Kroger brand shredded cheese summary value hierarchy includes only 18 value dimensions, as compared to 40 value dimensions in the Kraft shredded cheese value hierarchy. One might first assume that this means Kroger brand shredded cheese buyers have fewer total thoughts about their preferred brand than do

Kraft buyers. In fact this is not the case, as similar total numbers of attribute level brand associations, consequences and desired end states were found for national and private label brand shredded cheese users. This suggests that consumer thoughts about Kroger brand shredded cheese were more consistent across consumers than thoughts about Kraft shredded cheese. In fact, the data provide an indication of this assertion. For example, 14 of 15 consumers interviewed mentioned "low price" as an important attribute level brand association in the choice situation.

Unlike the summary value hierarchy for national brand buyers, this summary value hierarchy includes only three common attribute level brand associations, all of which represent thoughts about the brand as product:

- Low price/ less expensive – BAPr
- Tastes as good as the national brand – BAPr
- Texture – BAPr.

In addition, the summary value hierarchy for Kroger shredded cheese buyers reflects a widely held focus on the brand's performance relative to specific product attributes, particularly price and taste. Overwhelmingly, buyers received value from the low price of Kroger shredded cheese, although comments from the interviews support the idea that low price alone is not sufficient, but must be accompanied with an acceptable level of brand performance in common use situations. Consider the following quotes:

> *"Well if the price is lower than most of the others first of all, that's the first half of it. The second half would be how I, my experience with the product itself when I used it. A lot of times I've paid less money for a house brand and found it to be just as good tasting and work in recipes as far as, you know, cooking and melting and things like that. Then, you know, then I'm going to return to that product (PD1)."*

> *"It's my money. I want it [the product I am buying] to be something that's gonna, you know, be perfect for what I want it for. I don't want to get something that's like, you know, okay but could be better. I don't think it's true that if you spend more it's better ... I just want it to be something good and I want to be happy with it. I want to have a pleasant experience when I go get the product and I don't want to be sorry that I spent the money (PC1)."*

Table 4-13. Summary ladders for shredded cheese, private label brand (Kroger).

Attribute Level Brand Association	Link 1	Link 2	Link 3	Link 4
Less expensive/ Low price *BAPr (14)*	Can save money *FC*	Can buy other things/ more things *FC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*	
		Can live within my budget *FC*	Sense of personal responsibility *DES*	
			Can accomplish my goals *FC*	Success in areas of my life that are important to me *DES*
	Don't feel I am being cheated/ feel that I was treated fairly *EC*	Sense of fairness/ equity *DES*		
Tastes as good as the national brand *BAPr (8)*	Makes my meal taste good *FC*	Enjoy eating my meal *EC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*	
			Need satisfaction/ fulfillment *DES*	
	Makes food taste better/ Does its job as an ingredient *FC*	Can feed my family/ survive *FC*	Good parent/ provider *DES*	
Texture *BAPr (4)*	Melts well *FC*	Makes my meal taste good *FC*	Enjoy eating my meal *EC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*

The inclusion of "tastes as good as the national brand" as an important brand association, which was mentioned by eight Kroger shredded cheese buyers, and "texture," which was mentioned by four consumers, provides additional evidence that price is not the only reason private label shredded cheese buyers purchase the brand they do. It is interesting that ideas of taste and texture were mentioned by much smaller numbers of consumers (8 and 4, respectively) than was price (which was mentioned by 14 consumers interviewed). This suggests that there may be different segments of consumers within the group of private label buyers interviewed: one which focuses specifically on price and one where consumers attempt to find a balance between price and indicators of product quality, such as taste or texture. The idea that there are different market segments within the population of private label brand buyers offers opportunity for future research and is discussed further in Chapter 5.

The relatively small number of consequences observed in the Kroger shredded cheese summary value hierarchy (as compared to the Kraft shredded cheese summary value hierarchy) lends additional support to the idea that the value created by Kroger shredded cheese is more consistent across consumers than is the value created by Kraft shredded cheese. Only seven functional consequences and two emotional consequences are included in the summary value hierarchy. One consequence that was unique to the Kroger shredded cheese summary value hierarchy (as compared to the Kraft hierarchy) was the ability of the "low price" to help consumers "save money" and thus "accomplish my goals." Interestingly, a similar line of thinking was apparent in the soft drink private label brand summary value hierarchy. In addition, the Kroger brand shredded cheese summary value hierarchy includes one of the few negatively phrased consequences that were mentioned by enough consumers to be included in a summary value hierarchy. This is "don't feel that I am being cheated." For a group of consumers, the "low price" of Kroger shredded cheese provided a valued assurance that the consumer was not being "cheated" when making his or her purchase. The existence of this consequence occurred in the context of discussion related to the taste

of Kroger brand shredded cheese. These consumers believed that "cheese is cheese (PA3, PC2, PA4, PD1)" and the value of the brand was reduced when manufactures or retailers would charge more simply for a national brand name. This finding reinforces the idea that there are sub-segments of private label brand users who have differing needs and who value different aspects of a brand.

Surprisingly, the number of desired end states included in the Kroger brand summary value hierarchy (6) is exactly the same as that of the Kraft summary value hierarchy. Three of these six desired end states appear in both of the summary value hierarchies. These are "happiness"/ "pleasure," "need satisfaction," and "sense of personal responsibility." These end states can be considered to be important overall for the shredded cheese product category. The remaining three desired end states are "be a good parent," "success in areas of my life that are important to me," and "sense of fairness and equity." Of these, "be a good parent" and "sense of fairness and equity" are found only in the Kroger brand summary value hierarchy. Thus, these end states were not mentioned as relating to any other brand examined in this study. The fact that two of six desired end states were unique to the Kroger brand suggests that this branding strategy (used in the shredded cheese product category) offers some interesting opportunities for brand differentiation.

Summary Value Hierarchy for Soft Drink National Brand Buyers

The soft drink product category was selected for investigation in part because common use situations for the product are somewhat different than those for shredded cheese. For example, shredded cheese is most often used as a cooking ingredient and the brand of choice is not always visible to individuals besides the cook. Alternatively, soft drinks are generally served directly from the container in which they are packaged or are consumed in public. In either case, choice of preferred brand tends to be more visible and more likely to be noticed by others. Findings from the summary ladders for soft drink national brand buyers are outlined in Table 4-14. Coca-Cola (or Coke) was used as the national brand of interest.

In several ways, the summary value hierarchy for Coke buyers is different from that of national brand buyers in the shredded cheese product category. For example, there are fewer total attribute level brand associations considered (4 as compared to 8), fewer brand as product associations (2 as compared to 5), fewer functional consequences (9 as compared to 20), and fewer total consequences (17 as compared to 26).

These differences are interesting and are discussed below; however, several intriguing similarities between the national brand summary value hierarchies in the two product categories examined in this study should first be noted. For example, while there are fewer brand as product associations (two rather than five) included in the summary value hierarchy, one of these associations (the unique, sweet taste of Coke) clearly provides a strong basis for the value that is provided by the brand. In fact, fifteen of the fifteen buyers interviewed mentioned the unique or sweet taste of Coke as an important driver of value. Taste was also the most commonly mentioned important attribute level brand association in the shredded cheese product category. It was mentioned by 9 of 15 consumers.

In addition, brand as symbol associations appeared only in the national brand value hierarchies and were present for both product categories. In fact, the specific brand as symbol associations included in the Coke summary value hierarchy are "commercials/ ads" and "brand image," which are the same two brand as symbol associations that appeared in the Kraft summary value hierarchy. Interestingly, the consequences related to "commercials"/ "ads" were similar for Coke and Kraft buyers. In both national brand summary value hierarchies, "commercials"/ "ads" provided the consequences of "something I can trust" and a feeling of security in buying the product.

Alternatively, the concept of "brand image" was important for different reasons for Kraft and Coke buyers. "Brand image" (specifically, knowing that the brand was the market leader) made Coke buyers more likely to "pay attention to the brand" and to "feel important" because they were able to consume the brand. Feeling important is linked to the desired end states of "pride in self" and "happiness"/ "pleasure." For Kraft buyers, "brand image" (specifically, a brand that was well-known) provided the consequences of ensuring that the

"brand is good quality," and the "brand is safe to use." As shown in the summary value hierachy, these consequences are related to the desired end states of "peace of mind" and "staying healthy," respectively.

The following quote highlights the contribution of Coke's brand image as the world's most popular soft drink:

> *"[Coke] has got to be the most popular soft drink in the world and that, you know, that influences other people ... because you know, you think, it has got to be better.... If I had a can of Coke and I had a can of Pepsi, and it's the same price, and I guess it's like, you know, supply and demand. There is more demand for Coke, so to most people's eyes – or to my eyes, the Coke is more valuable than the Pepsi.... It's kind of like, you know, the best of Knoxville ... if there is a best thing, you definitely have to try what the best is (CA1)."*

As shown in the summary value hierarchy for Coca-Cola, brand as symbol associations were mentioned by a relatively small number of consumers (five for "commercials/ ads" and four for "brand image"). This reinforces the finding from the shredded cheese national brand buyers that there may be a certain sub-segment of buyers who find more value in marketing communications than others.

At the consequence level, the summary value hierarchy for Coke indicates a different proportion of emotional to functional consequences than does the Kraft summary value hierarchy. In the Kraft summary value hierarchy, only 6 of 26 (or 23%) of all consequences included in the hierarchy were categorized as emotional consequences. In the Coca-Cola summary value hierarchy, 8 of 17 (or 47%) of all consequences included were emotional consequences. This clearly suggests that the number of emotional consequences considered by consumers varies across product categories. From the perspective of content, a portion of the emotional consequences considered varied between national brand buyers in the soft drink and shredded cheese product categories. Coke buyers, for example, more commonly mentioned emotional consequences related to lifting one's spirits, such as "rejuvenates me," "reminds me of being a kid," and "makes me feel secure." Kraft buyers, however, more commonly discussed emotional consequences that relate to self-worth, such as "feel like I am being responsible," "feel good about what I am eating." The summary value

Table 4-14. Summary ladders for soft drinks, national brand (Coke).

Attribute Level Brand Association	Link 1	Link 2	Link 3	Link 4
Unique, sweet taste *BAPr (15)*	Tastes good in my mouth *FC*	Simple pleasure/ enjoy drinking it *EC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*	
			Comfort/ contentment/ balance *DES*	
	Quenches my thirst *FC*	Energizes/ rejuvenates me *EC*	Success in areas of my life that are important to me *DES*	
	Gives me a pick me up *FC*	Can accomplish my goals *FC*	Success in areas of my life that are important to me *DES*	
	Gives me some variety *FC*	Feel better emotionally *EC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*	
	Reminds me of being a kid *EC*	Connect with past/ heritage *DES*		
Caffeine *BAPr (5)*	Keeps me awake/ gives me energy/ pick me up *FC*	Can pay attention/ accomplish my goals *FC*	Success in areas of my life that are important to me *DES*	
		Energizes/ rejuvenates me *EC*	Comfort/ contentment/ balance *DES*	
Commercials/ ads *BAS (5)*	Makes me notice/ pay attention to the brand *FC*	Gives me something I can trust/ rely on *EC*	Makes me feel secure *EC*	Peace of mind *DES*
	Can evaluate the company/ brand better *FC*	You get what you expect *FC*	Comforts me/ less worry *EC*	Peace of mind *DES*
Brand name/ image (most popular soft drink; market leader) *BAS (4)*	Know that the brand is high quality/ in demand *FC*	Makes me feel important/ wealthy/ special *EC*	Pride in self *DES*	
			Happiness/ pleasure *DES*	

hierarchies for both product categories included emotional consequences related to the enjoyment of consuming the product.

It is also interesting that the summary value hierarchy for Coca-Cola buyers includes only nine functional consequences. This may suggest that (1) Coke provides less value in terms of functional consequences for loyal consumers or (2) that the functional consequences provided by Coca-Cola were more consistent across consumers and thus fewer different functional consequences emerged. In fact, the summary ladders provide evidence of the latter explanation. As described earlier, the "unique, sweet taste" of Coke was the predominant attribute level brand association discussed by consumers. In fact, "unique, sweet taste" was chosen as important by all fifteen of the consumers interviewed. The attribute level brand association of "unique, sweet taste" is directly linked to five of the nine functional consequences included in the summary value hierarchy. Thus, these functional consequences were also predominant in the minds of many Coke buyers. In terms of content, the functional consequences mentioned by consumers differed considerably between shredded cheese and soft drink national brand buyers. In fact, none of the specific functional consequences included in the Coke summary value hierarchy were present in the Kraft summary value hierarchy. For example, Coca-Cola buyers talked about "gives me pick me up," "gives me some variety," and "can evaluate the company better." Kraft buyers talked about functional consequences such as "more convenient," "won't ruin my meal," and "stay within my grocery budget." Differences in the content of the functional consequences discussed would be expected given the differences in attribute level brand associations observed between these two groups.

The differences in the content of the attribute level brand associations and consequences considered by Coke and Kraft consumers are also evidenced by differences in the content of the desired end states included in the summary value hierarchies. Three of the six desired states included in each summary value hierarchy appear in both product categories. These are "happiness"/ "pleasure," "peace of mind, and ""comfort." The

remaining three desired end states mentioned by Coke buyers were "pride in self," "can connect with my past," and "success in areas of my life that are important." The first two of these did not appear in any of the other summary value hierarchies developed for this study. Thus, these appear to be unique to Coca-Cola.

The differences between the summary value hierarchies developed for Kraft and Coke buyers suggest that the value created by national branding may vary by product category. The next section reviews the summary value hierarchy for soft drink private label buyers and addresses the question: "does the value created by private label branding vary between product categories as well?"

Summary Value Hierarchy for Soft Drink Private Label Brand Buyers

The summary value hierarchy for private label soft drink buyers is much more complex than the one for private label shredded cheese buyers. Specifically, the summary value hierarchy for Big K buyers includes more total value dimensions (33 as compared to 18), more attribute level brand associations (5 as compared to 3), a brand as organization association, more functional consequences (14 as compared to 7), more emotional consequences (7 as compared to 2), and more total consequences (21 as compared to 9) than does the summary value hierarchy for Kroger brand shredded cheese buyers.

In terms of number of total value dimensions elicited, the Big K summary value hierarchy is actually more similar to the Kraft value hierarchy than it is to the other summary value hierarchy within its product category (e.g., the Coke summary value hierarchy) or the other summary value for a private label brand (e.g., the Kroger brand summary value hierarchy). The Big K summary value hierarchy includes a total of 33 value dimensions; the Kraft value hierarchy includes a total of 40 value dimensions. These are the summary value hierarchies with the largest number of value dimensions that were observed in this study. The complexity of the summary value hierarchy for Big K buyers was unexpected, in that research hypothesis 4 predicts more consumer thoughts about all value dimensions for national than for private label brands. The wide variation in the number of total value

dimensions considered by private label brand buyers suggests that the number of total value dimensions considered may be product category specific and not necessarily a function of branding strategy.

The summary value hierarchy for Big K buyers does contain the same emphasis on brand as product (particularly price) associations as the summary value hierarchy for Kroger shredded cheese (private label brand). The summary value hierarchy for Big K buyers in included in Table 4-15. As evidenced in the table, price (and related consequences, such as "save money" and "can buy more") appears to be a primary source of value for Big K buyers, with fourteen of fifteen of the interview participants mentioning it as important. As in the shredded cheese product category, however, the desire of private label buyers for low price apears to be tempered (for at least one segment of consumers) by brand performance on key product attributes. The specific product attributes of interest are somewhat broader than for shredded cheese and include not only "tastes as good as the name brand," but "good (sweet or citrusy) taste" and "caffeine" as well.

Interestingly, the idea of taste, or flavor, is described in both the Big K and Kroger value hierarchies as "tastes as good as the national brand." This is a very different idea related to taste than the taste, or flavor, descibed by buyers of national brands. For the national brand buyer, a particular taste (such as the "unique, sweet taste" associated with Coke and the "real cheese" taste associated with Kraft) is important. For the private label brand buyer, however, a specific standard for evaluating taste is introduced. This is the taste provided by the leading national brand. This suggests that private label products simply need to meet the standard set by the national brand, and that additional consumer value is not created (at least for the private label buyers interviewed in this study) by developing a private label product that performs better on specified attributes than the national brand. This idea is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Finally, an additional attribute level brand association was apparent for this group of consumers as compared to the private label buyers of shredded cheese. "Availability at Kroger," which is a thought about the brand as organization, was mentioned as important by

four the of the fifteen consumers interviewed. This was the only brand as organization association included in a summary value hierarchy. Consequences associated with "availability at Kroger" can be classified into two categories: (1) saving time and hassle and (2) providing a sense of trust and security in purchasing the brand. It is notable that the second category of consequences is similar to those provided by brand as symbol associations for the national brands.

It is also interesting that the summary value hierarchy for Big K includes many more emotional consequences than the Kroger brand summary value hierarchy (7 as compared to 2). This finding raises the possibilities that (1) Big K is simply a brand to which consumers are emotionally attached and/ or (2) private label consumers are more likely to associate their preferred brand with emotional consequences in the soft drink product category than in the shredded cheese product category. The content of the emotional consequences included in the Big K summary value hierarchy suggest that the latter explanation may be appropriate. For example, both the Coke and Big K summary value hierarchies include emotional consequences related to happiness (or enjoyment) as well as relaxation or rejuvenation. While the exact words vary slightly in some cases, the emotional concepts discussed by national and private label brand buyers in the soft drink product category are very similar. In addition, several functional consequences are included in both the Big K and Coca-Cola brand summary value hierarchies. For example, the functional consequences of "quenches my thirst" and "gives me a pick me up" are valued by both national and private label brand buyers. This discussion reinforces the idea that consumer value is product category specific. In this case, it appears that the product category has a more dominant effect on number and content of emotional consequences considered than does branding strategy (e.g., national versus private label brand).

The desired end states included in the two private label brand summary value hierarchies vary somewhat as well. Shared desired end states between Kroger and Big K buyers are "happiness"/ "pleasure," "success in areas of my life that are important to me," and

Table 4-15. Summary ladders for soft drinks, private label brand (Big K).

Attribute Level Brand Association	Link 1	Link 2	Link 3	Link 4
Low price *BAPr (14)*	Save money *FC*	Can use your money to buy other things *FC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*	
		Can live within my budget *FC*	Survival *DES*	
			Pride in self/ makes others proud of me *DES*	
	Can buy more/ don't run out *FC*	Makes home/ life a little nicer *FC*	Good person/ provider *DES*	
Tastes as good as the name brand (Coke) *BAPr (6)*	Know the brand is good quality *FC*	Feel more comfortable buying it/ less worry *EC*	Comfort/ contentment/ balance *DES*	
	Gives me energy/ picks me up *FC*	Can accomplish my goals *FC*	Success in the areas of life that are important to me *DES*	
	Can please others (kids, husband) *FC*	Less worry/ more convenient *EC*	Comfort/ contentment/ balance *DES*	
	Satisfies me *FC*	I enjoy my drink *EC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*	
Good taste (sweet, citrusy) *BAPr (5)*	Quenches my thirst *FC*	Makes me happy *EC*	Happiness/ pleasure *DES*	
	Cools me off/ refreshes me *FC*	Can accomplish my goals *FC*	Success in the areas of life that are important to me *DES*	
		Relaxes me *EC*	Comfort/ contentment/ balance *DES*	
Available at Kroger *BAO (4)*	Easy to find/ access *FC*	Gives me something I can trust/ rely on *EC*	Makes me feel secure *EC*	Peace of mind *DES*
		More convenient *FC*	Saves time/ less worry/ hassle *EC*	Comfort/ contentment/ balance *DES*
Caffeine *BAPr (4)*	Gives me energy/ pick me up *FC*	Can be more productive/ accomplish my goals *FC*	Success in the areas of life that are important to me *DES*	
		Energizes/ rejuvenates me *EC*	Pleasure/ happiness *DES*	

the concept of need satisfaction, or survival. The desired end states that appear in the Big K summary value hierarchy, but not the Kroger summary value hierarchy, are "comfort"/ "contentment"/ "balance," "peace of mind," and "pride in myself." Interestingly, these three desired end states are present in the Coca-Cola summary value hierarchy as well. This again suggests that several of the value dimensions identified in the soft drink product category may be product category specific. Further discussion of these findings, as well as more detail and interpretation of the similarities and differences noted here, can be found in Chapter 5.

Summary of Research Findings

The findings from the evaluation of the content (or meaning) of consumer thoughts about their preferred brands are generally consistent with the findings from the tests of hypotheses 1 and 2 discussed earlier. Both analyses suggest that the four different constructs included in the Extended Value Hierarchy (EVH) framework do exist. While brand as product associations were predominant in consumer thoughts about value, the three additional types of attribute level brand associations (brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) were each represented in at least one of the summary value hierarchies from the study.

In addition to providing evidence that the EVH framework has merit, the summary value hierarchies presented here suggest that there are several important differences in the content of what is valued by national and private label brand users. Specifically, the summary value hierarchies support the strong role of price (as balanced with brand performance on specific product attributes) in value creation for buyers of private label brands. Next, the summary value hierarchies for national brands suggest that at least one segment of national brand buyers receive value from the symbolic aspects of the brand, as created by advertising and promotions to enhance or reinforce brand image. The summary value hierarchies for the private label buyers interviewed in this study also indicate evidence that there are sub-segments of private label consumers who may have differing values. For

example, some private label consumers may buy almost solely on price, while others look for a balance between price and indicators of product quality.

The findings discussed in this section suggest differences in the content and structure of what is valued between national and private label brand buyers. Differences in the content of what is valued by consumers (in terms of both branding strategy and product category) were noted at the attribute level brand association, consequence, and desired end state levels. Differences in the structure of what is valued between national and private label brand buyers are statistically examined in the next section.

Tests of Research Hypotheses that Quantitatively Compare the Structure of What is Valued by National and Private Label Brand Buyers

In total, hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 provide a statistical basis for comparing the structure of thoughts expressed by national and private label brand buyers. Specifically, hypothesis 4 suggests that buyers of national brands will have more thoughts than buyers of private label brands related to each construct illustrated in the EVH framework. In addition, the hypothesis suggests that the total number of attribute level brand association to consequence linkages, as well as consequence to desired end state linkages, will be higher for buyers of national than private label brands. Hypothesis 5 proposes that the ratio of emotional and self-expressive consequences as compared to functional consequences will be higher for buyers of national brands than for buyers of private label brands. Finally, hypothesis 6 predicts several ways that the ratio of a particular type of attribute level brand association (when compared to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations) will differ between national and private label brand buyers. This section reviews the analysis and findings related to these hypotheses.

Description of Data Used

In order to compare thoughts generated by national and private label brand buyers, the set of thoughts that consumers in each product category have about their preferred brand

is used as data. These thoughts were extracted from the interview transcripts and categorized according to the construct in the EVH framework they represent (using the coding process described earlier in this chapter).

As in the analyses discussed previously, each hypothesis is tested first for the shredded cheese product category. The soft drink product category is then used as an opportunity for replication. In addition, overall findings (which include the combination of both product categories) are reported.

Unit of Analysis. As described in Chapter 3 and earlier in this chapter (in the discussion accompanying the analysis of hypotheses 1 and 2), the coding process provides only categorical data for each attribute level brand association. The categorical data can be aggregated, however, so that the interview participant (e.g., consumer) is used as the unit of analysis. Aggregating the data and using the consumer as the unit of analysis creates a data set of interval data, which enables the use of independent samples t-tests for evaluating the research hypotheses.

Variables Used. The data set used to test hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 (which compare buyers of national and private label brands) includes responses from a total of 60 consumers (30 per product category). Within each product category, fifteen consumers were loyal purchasers of a leading national brand and fifteen were loyal purchasers of a leading private label brand. In addition to the variables used for testing hypotheses 1 and 2, the following variables are of interest for testing hypotheses 4, 5, and 6:

- Total brand as product associations (TotBAPr)
- Total brand as organization associations (TotBAO)
- Total brand as person associations (TotBAPe)
- Total brand as symbol associations (TotBAS)
- Total brand as product + brand as organization + brand as person + brand as symbol associations (Total Associations)
- Total functional consequences (TotFC)

- Total emotional consequences (TotEC)
- Total self-expressive consequences (TotSEC)
- Total desired end states (TotDES)
- Total functional + emotional + self-expressive consequences (Total Consequences)
- Ratio of emotional consequences to functional consequences (TotEC/TotFC)
- Ratio of self-expressive consequences to functional consequences (TotSEC/ TotFC).

Figure 4-3 illustrates the number of observations of the variables listed above.

Assumptions Related to the Data. The statistical tests used to evaluate hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 were similar to those used to evaluated hypotheses 1 and 2. The primary difference is that the tests used for evaluating hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 enable comparions between groups (i.e., national and private label brand buyers) within each data set (i.e.,

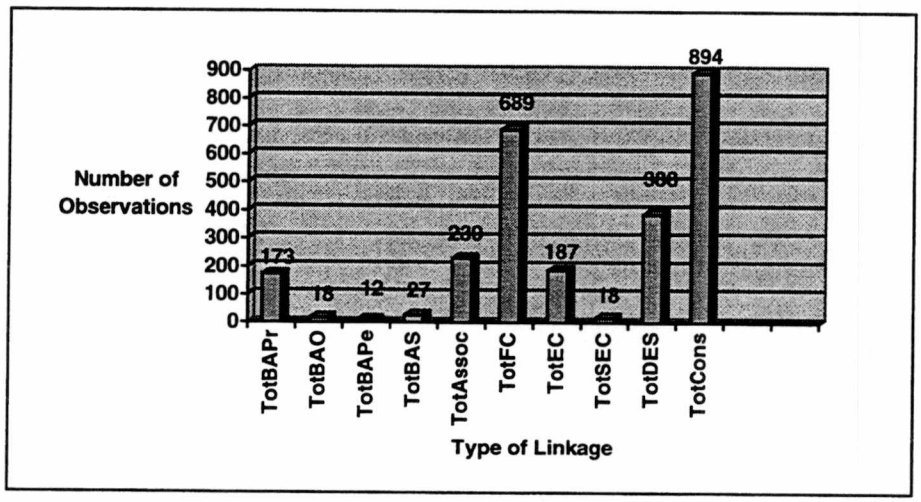


Figure 4-3. Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6: Number of observations of variables examined.

product category). Thus for evaluating hypotheses 4, 5 and 6, independent samples t-tests, rather than one-sample t-tests, are used.

These statistical tests require the following two assumptions about the data:

- Assumption of normality
- Assumption of indepedence of observations.

Each of the above assumptions are discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. As described earlier, the assumption of normality is assumed to be reasonable because the populations that are being sampled (purchasers of shredded cheese and soft drinks) are assumed to have relative frequency distributions that are approximately normal. The assumption of independence of observations is assumed to be reasonable because of precautions that the researcher took in recruiting participants for the study.

In addition to the assumptions noted above, the analysis related to hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 necessitated the use of the Bonferroni correction (Howell 1997). Briefly, the Bonferroni correction reduces the chances of Type I error in situations where a family of tests are conducted. For this dissertation, the Bonferroni correction is applied only where the same variable is included in multiple hypothesis tests. In cases where the Bonferroni correction is used (all sub-hypotheses in h4, h5, and h6), the alpha is divided by the number of within-variable hypothesis tests used.

Hypothesis 4: The number of (a) attribute level brand associations, (b) consequences, (c) desired end states, (d) attribute level brand association-consequence linkages, and (e) consequence-desired end state linkages considered when assessing consumer value will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.

Hypothesis 4 specifically compares buyers of national and private label brands, in terms of number of thoughts considered, for every construct in the EVH framework. In addition, it compares these groups in terms of total consequences and total desired end states considered. Table 4-16 illustrates findings related to this hypothesis.

As illustrated in Table 4-16, few of the hypothesized differences in the number of thoughts articulated by buyers of national and private label brands are empirically supported. In most cases, the analysis provides no support for the research hypotheses in either a single product category or the overall data. Findings from the analyses of the overall data are presented because this analysis (which combines data from the shredded cheese and soft drink product categories) uses a larger sample size (30 consumers rather than 15) and thus have more statistical power.

As stated above, for most variables, there is no indication of differences in the number of thoughts expressed by national versus private label brand buyers. One exception is marginal support in the overall data for the sub-hypothesis that consumers of national brands consider more brand as product ($h4a_1$) associations than do consumers of private label brands. In addition, sub-hypothesis $4b_3$ (which states that consumers of national brands will consider more self-expressive consequences than consumers of private label brands) would have been marginally supported in the soft drink product category if it had been written in the opposite direction. This finding suggests that the private label brand buyers interviewed in the soft drink product category considered more self-expressive consequences than did national brand buyers.

Perhaps the most notable finding from the tests of hypothesis 4 is partial support for the sub-hypotheses that consumers of national brands consider more desired end states and consequence to desired end state linkages (4c and 4e) in assessing brand value than do consumers of private label brands. Both of these sub-hypotheses are supported for the overall data. Interestingly, however, both hypotheses were strongly supported for the shredded cheese product category, and this support influenced the finding for the overall data. For the soft drink product category, both sub-hypotheses were specifically not supported, and the data provide evidence that differences between groups are in the opposite direction than was predicted. This is notable in that it indicates that, in some product categories (such as shredded cheese), consumers may hold a more explicit awareness of the national brand as directly linked to overall end states, or goals. In other

Table 4-16. Hypothesis 4: Independent samples t-tests to compare national and private label buyers.

Research Hypothesis (R.H.)	Product Category 1 (Shredded Cheese)	Product Category 2 (Soft Drinks)	Overall
$H4_{a1}$: $BAPr_{national} > BAPr_{private}$	t(28, n=30) = 2.010 Sig. = .054* **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = .888 Sig. = .382 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = 2.039 Sig. = .046 **R.H. Marginally Supported**
$H4_{a2}$: $BAO_{national} > BAO_{private}$	t(28, n=30) = 1.954 Sig. = .061 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = .647 Sig. = .523 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = 1.761 Sig. = .084 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H4_{a3}$: $BAPe_{national} > BAPe_{private}$	t(28, n=30) = -.048 Sig. = .962 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = -1.16 Sig. = .256 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = -.476 Sig. = .636 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H4_{a4}$: $BAS_{national} > BAS_{private}$	t(28, n=30) = -.165 Sig. = .870 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = -.870 Sig. = .392 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = -.764 Sig. = .448 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H4_{b1}$: $FC_{national} > FC_{private}$	t(28, n=30) = .679 Sig. = .502 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = .869 Sig. = .392 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = 1.116 Sig. = .269 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H4_{b2}$: $EC_{national} > EC_{private}$	t(28, n=30) = 635 Sig. = .530 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = .324 Sig. = .748 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = .680 Sig. = .499 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H4_{b3}$: $SEC_{national} > SEC_{private}$	t(28, n=30) = -.214 Sig. = .832 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = .021 Sig. = .983 **R.H. Not Supported; Support for R.H. in Opposite Direction**	t(58, n=60) = -.158 Sig. = .875 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H4_c$: $DES_{national} > DES_{private}$	t(28, n=30) = 4.472 Sig. = .000** **R.H. Supported**	t(28, n=30) = .042 Sig. = .967 **R.H. Not Supported; Marginal Support for R.H. in Opposite Direction**	t(58, n=60) = 2.815 Sig. = .007** **R.H. Supported**
$H4_d$: $[(BAPr\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAPr\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAPr\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}SEC)_{national}] > [(BAPr\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAPr\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAPr\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}SEC)_{private}]$	t(28, n=30) = .882 Sig. = .385 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = 1.057 Sig. = .299 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = 1.394 Sig. = .169 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H4_e$: $(FC\text{-}DES)_{national} + (EC\text{-}DES)_{national} + (SEC\text{-}DES)_{national} > (FC\text{-}DES)_{private} + (EC\text{-}DES)_{private} + (SEC\text{-}DES)_{private}$	t(28, n=30) = 4.472 Sig. = .000 **R.H. Supported**	t(28, n=30) = .042 Sig. = .967 **R.H. Not Supported; Marginal Support for R.H. in Opposite Direction**	t(58, n=60) = 2.815 Sig. = .007 **R.H. Supported**

*The Bonferroni correction (e.g., Howell 1997) was applied to all sub-hypotheses. The p-value of 0.05 was adjusted in all cases to reflect the fact that each variable is tested in two different sub-hypotheses. For this hypothesis, significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.025 or greater than 0.975. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.025 and 0.05 or p-values between 0.95 and 0.975. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.95.

product categories (such as soft drinks), private label brand buyers may find it easier to relate use of a particular brand to their overall goals.

Hypothesis 5: The ratio of psycho-social (emotional and self-expressive) consequences to functional consequences will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.

Hypothesis 5 compares the ratio of psycho-social consequences (e.g., emotional and self-expressive) to functional consequences for buyers of national and private label brands. Findings from the analyses related to hypothesis 5 are reviewed in Table 4-17. As noted in the table, the data provide no support for this research hypothesis, with the exception of partial support (in the soft drink product category) for sub-hypothesis 5b (which states that the ratio of self-expressive consequences to functional consequences will be higher for consumers of national than private label brands). The lack of overall support for hypothesis 5 is not surprising given that when hypothesis 4 was tested, there were no significant differences between national and private label brand buyers in terms of the total number of functional, emotional, or self-expressive consequences considered.

Table 4-17. Hypothesis 5: Independent samples t-tests to compare national and private label buyers.

Research Hypothesis (R.H.)	Product Category 1 (Shredded Cheese)	Product Category 2 (Soft Drinks)	Overall
$H5_a$: $EC_{national}$ /$FC_{national}$ > $EC_{private}$ / $FC_{private}$	t(25, n=30) = -.288 Sig. = .775* **R.H. Not Supported**	t(27, n=30) = -.528 Sig. = .602 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(54, n=60) = -.575 Sig. = .568 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H5_b$: $SEC_{national}$ /$FC_{national}$ > $SEC_{private}$ / $FC_{private}$	t(5, n=30) = -.637 Sig. = .552 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(2, n=30) = -5.858 Sig. = .028** **R.H. Marginally Supported**	t(9, n=60) = -1.210 Sig. = .257 **R.H. Not Supported**

*The Bonferroni correction (e.g., Howell 1997) was applied to all sub-hypotheses. The p-value of 0.05 was adjusted in all cases to reflect the fact that each variable is tested in two different sub-hypotheses. For this hypothesis, significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.025 or greater than 0.975. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.025 and 0.05 or p-values between 0.95 and 0.975. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.95.

Hypothesis 6: There will be differences between national and private label buyers related to the ratio of brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol associations to total attribute level brand associations.

Hypothesis 6 compares the ratio of each type of attribute level brand association considered to the total number of attribute level brand associations considered for national and private label brand users. Specifically, it suggests the following:

- The number of brand as product associations considered as compared to total brand associations considered will be higher for private label than for national brand buyers.
- The number of brand as organization associations considered as compared to total brand associations considered will be higher for private label than for national brand buyers.
- The number of brand as person associations considered as compared to total brand associations considered will be higher for national than for private label brand buyers.
- The number of brand as symbol associations considered as compared to total brand associations considered will be higher for national than for private label brand buyers.

Findings from the independent samples t-tests are reported in Table 4-18. As evident from the table, the data provide no support for research hypothesis 6. The lack of overall support for hypothesis 6 is not surprising given that limited differences in the raw number of the four types of attribute level brand associations were found in the test of hypothesis 4.

Summary of Research Findings

In total, the findings from the tests of hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 provide very limited support for differences in the structure of consumer thoughts between buyers of national and

private label brands. This suggests that, while national and private label brand buyers may have different priorities regarding the content of attribute level brand associations considered, the structure (in terms of total number of the various types of value dimensions mentioned) of the associations deemed important by consumers is similar across groups.

Independent samples t-tests provide limited evidence that buyers of national brands may consider more thoughts related to the brand as product and desired end states when evaluating their preferred brand, as proposed in hypothesis 4. Because the basic structure of consumer thoughts about preferred brands were so similar between national and private label brand buyers, it is not surprising that hypotheses 5 and 6 (which propose differences in ratios between specific types of consumer thoughts) were not supported.

Table 4-18. Hypothesis 6: Independent samples t-tests to compare national and private label buyers.

Research Hypothesis (R.H.)	Product Category 1 (Shredded Cheese)	Product Category 2 (Soft Drinks)	Overall
$H6_a$: $BAPr_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$) > $BAPr_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$)	t(28, n=30) = -.256 Sig. = .800* **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = 1.631 Sig. = .114 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = .702 Sig. = .485 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H6_b$: $BAO_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$) > $BAO_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$)	t(28, n=30) = .959 Sig. = .346 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = 1.981 Sig. = .942 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = 1.949 Sig. = .944 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H6_c$: $BAPe_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$) > $BAPe_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$)	t(28, n=30) = -1.424 Sig. = .165 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = .223 Sig. = .825 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = -.205 Sig. = .838 **R.H. Not Supported**
$H6_d$: $BAS_{national}$ / ($BAPr_{national}$ + $BA0_{national}$ + $BAPe_{national}$ + $BAS_{national}$) > $BAS_{private}$ / ($BAPr_{private}$ + $BA0_{private}$ + $BAPe_{private}$ + $BAS_{private}$)	t(28, n=30) = -1.071 Sig. = .293 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = 356 Sig. = .724 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = -.775 Sig. = .441 **R.H. Not Supported**

*The Bonferroni correction (e.g., Howell 1997) was applied to all sub-hypotheses. The p-value of 0.05 was adjusted in all cases to reflect the fact that each variable is tested in two different sub-hypotheses. For this hypothesis, significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.025 or greater than 0.975. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.025 and 0.05 or p-values between 0.95 and 0.975. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.95.

Summary of Analysis and Findings

This chapter reviews the analysis and findings related to the data collected for this dissertation study. The findings are encouraging in that they provide support for the constructs that differentiate the EVH framework from the traditional value hierarchy. Thus, the data suggest that the conceptual framework proposed in this dissertation does contribute to marketing knowledge.

The summary value hierarchies included in this chapter reveal several interesting differences in terms of the content of what is valued between national and private label brand buyers. Specifically, they suggest the importance of price (in relation to brand performance on key product attributes) in creating value for private label buyers and indicate there may be differences among groups (or sub-segments) of private label consumers regarding the specific role of price. In addition, the summary value hierarchies for national brand buyers suggest that at least one segment of consumers finds value in the symbolic aspects of the brand created in part by marketing communication efforts.

Notably, however, very limited statistical differences in the overall structure of thoughts expressed by national and private label brand buyers were evident from this study. This is in contrast to some of the marketing literature related to national and private label brands. This finding suggests opportunities for further clarification within marketing thought regarding the ways in which national and private buyers may differ in terms of the value dimensions they associate with their preferred brand. Implications of those findings are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 5
Discussion and Directions for Future Research

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research findings described in Chapter 4 and discusses these findings in the context of the consumer value and branding literature reviewed in Chapter 2. A discussion of how the findings support and diverge from the existing literature is provided, and implications of the findings for marketing thought are discussed. In addition, this chapter reviews limitations of the dissertation study as conducted and suggests directions for future research.

Review of Research Propositions and Findings

Table 5-1 summarizes the research findings reported in Chapter 4. It restates the research propositions and hypotheses that were developed in Chapters 2 and 3 and highlights key findings related to each. As described in Chapter 4, the findings illustrated in the table (particularly those related to hypotheses 1 and 2) provide empirical support for the existence of several different types of attribute level brand associations, as discussed in the consumer value and branding literatures and clarified in the EVH framework. In addition, these findings empirically support the existence of psycho-social (e.g., emotional and self-expressive) consequences as well as the role of psycho-social consequences in creating value for the consumer. The examination of the content (or meaning) of what is valued by consumers (as expressed by the consumer value hierarchies referenced in proposition 3) provides interesting insights related to similarities and differences between: (1) buyers of brands with different branding strategies (e.g., national and private label brands) and (2) buyers of brands with similar branding strategies in different product categories (e.g., national brand of shredded cheese and national brand of soft drinks). While the statistical tests that compared the structure of consumer thoughts about value for national and private label brand

Table 5-1. Summary of research findings.

	Research Proposition	Research Hypotheses	Findings from the Overall Data
P1	Brand as product associations will be (a) directly linked with functional consequences and (b) not directly linked with emotional and self-expressive consequences that are considered by consumers during a brand use situation.	$H1_a$: (BAPr-FC) ≠ 0 $H1_{b1}$: (BAPr-EC) = 0 $H1_{b2}$: (BAPr-SEC) = 0	$H1_a$: Supported $H1_{b1}$: Not supported; supported in the opposite direction $H1_{b2}$: Not supported (shreeded cheese product category only; not tested in the soft drink product category)
P2	Brand associations for (a) brand as organization, (b) brand as person and (c) brand as symbol will be linked to evaluative consequences for consumers (which may be functional, emotional, or self-expressive) that are considered during a brand use situation.	$H2_{a1}$: (BAO-FC) ≠ 0 $H2_{a2}$: (BAO-EC) ≠ 0 $H2_{a3}$: (BAO-SEC) ≠ 0 $H2_{b1}$: (BAPe-FC) ≠ 0 $H2_{b2}$: (BAPe-EC) ≠ 0 $H2_{b3}$: (BAPe-SEC) ≠ 0 $H2_{c1}$: (BAS-FC) ≠ 0 $H2_{c2}$: (BAS-EC) ≠ 0 $H2_{c3}$: (BAS-SEC) ≠ 0	$H2_{a1}$: Supported $H2_{a2}$: Marginally supported $H2_{a3}$: Not tested $H2_{b1}$:Supported $H2_{b2}$: Marginally supported $H2_{b3}$: Not tested $H2_{c1}$: Supported $H2_{c2}$: Not supported $H2_{c3}$: Not supported (soft drink product category only; not tested in the shredded cheese product category)
P3	There will be differences in the overall meaning of value, as shown by value hierarchies, between users of national brands and users of private label brands.	This research question was tested qualitatively; thus no specific research hypotheses were suggested. The analysis examined the meaning of differences in value dimensions.	Price plays a stronger role for private label brands; Advertising and promotion plays a strong role for one segment of national brand buyers. Consumer thoughts about Kraft shredded cheese (national brand) were more complex than thoughts about Coca-Cola soft drinks (national brand); thoughts about private label brands in both product categories were of a similar level of complexity.
P4	The number of (a) attribute level brand associations, (b) consequences, (c) desired end states, (d) attribute level brand association-consequence linkages, and (e) consequence-desired end state linkages considered when assessing consumer value will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.	$H4_{a1}$: $BAPr_{national} > BAPr_{private}$ $H4_{a2}$: $BAO_{national} > BAO_{private}$ $H4_{a3}$: $BAPe_{national} > BAPe_{private}$ $H4_{a4}$: $BAS_{national} > BAS_{private}$ $H4_{b1}$: $FC_{national} > FC_{private}$ $H4_{b2}$: $EC_{national} > EC_{private}$ $H4_{b3}$: $SEC_{national} > SEC_{private}$ $H4_c$: $DES_{national} > DES_{private}$	$H4_{a1}$: Marginally supported $H4_{a2}$: Not supported $H4_{a3}$: Not supported $H4_{a4}$: Not supported $H4_{b1}$: Not supported

Table 5-1 (continued).

P4		$H4_d$: $[(BAPr\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAPr\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAPr\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAO\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAPe\text{-}SEC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}FC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}EC)_{national} + (BAS\text{-}SEC)_{national}] > [(BAPr\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAPr\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAPr\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAO\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAPe\text{-}SEC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}FC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}EC)_{private} + (BAS\text{-}SEC)_{private}]$ $H4_e$: $(FC\text{-}DES)_{national} + (EC\text{-}DES)_{national} + (SEC\text{-}DES)_{national} > (FC\text{-}DES)_{private} + (EC\text{-}DES)_{private} + (SEC\text{-}DES)_{private}$	$H4_{b2}$: Not supported $H4_{b3}$: Not supported $H4_c$: Supported (shredded cheese product category only) $H4_d$: Not supported $H4_e$: Supported (shredded cheese product category only)
P5	The ratio of psycho-social (emotional and self-expressive) consequences to functional consequences will be higher for national brands than for private label brands.	$H5_a$: $EC_{national} / FC_{national} > EC_{private} / FC_{private}$ $H5_b$: $SEC_{national} / FC_{national} > SEC_{private} / FC_{private}$	$H5_a$: Not supported $H5_b$: Not supported
P6	(a) The ratio of brand as product associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label than national brands. (b) The ratio of brand as organization associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for private label than national brands. (c) The ratio of brand as person associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national than private label brands. (d) The ratio of brand as symbol associations to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations will be higher for national than private label brands.	$H6_a$: $BAPr_{private} / (BAPr_{private} + BA0_{private} + BAPe_{private} + BAS_{private}) > BAPr_{national} / (BAPr_{national} + BA0_{national} + BAPe_{national} + BAS_{national})$ $H6_b$: $BAO_{private} / (BAPr_{private} + BA0_{private} + BAPe_{private} + BAS_{private}) > BAO_{national} / (BAPr_{national} + BA0_{national} + BAPe_{national} + BAS_{national})$ $H6_c$: $BAPe_{national} / (BAPr_{national} + BA0_{national} + BAPe_{national} + BAS_{national}) > BAPe_{private} / (BAPr_{private} + BA0_{private} + BAPe_{private} + BAS_{private})$ $H6_d$: $BAS_{national} / (BAPr_{national} + BA0_{national} + BAPe_{national} + BAS_{national}) > BAS_{private} / (BAPr_{private} + BA0_{private} + BAPe_{private} + BAS_{private})$	$H6_a$: Not supported $H6_b$: Not supported $H6_c$: Not supported $H6_d$: Not supported

buyers (hypotheses 4, 5 and 6) provided little support for the research hypothesis, there is some limited directional support and encouragement for future research in this area. This chapter discusses the research findings illustrated in Table 5-1 in more detail.

Discussion of Research Findings Related to the Structure of the Extended Value Hierarchy Model

The first set of research hypotheses (hypotheses 1 and 2) relate specifically to the structure of what consumers value about brands, as illustrated by the Extended Value Hierarchy (EVH) framework. Essentially, these hypotheses test for the existence of the four types of attribute level brand associations included in the EVH framework. In addition, the hypotheses propose specific relationships between each type of attribute level brand association and functional as well as psycho-social (e.g., emotional and self-expressive) consequences. Support for hypotheses 1 and 2 would suggest that the EVH framework accurately describes the structure of consumer thoughts about brand value (at least for national and private label brand buyers in the shredded cheese and soft drink product categories), while a lack of support for these hypotheses might indicate either that: (1) the test of the framework as conducted was inadequate, (2) alterations in the EVH framework are needed, or (3) the associations/ relationships do not exist.

Summary of Findings Related to Hypotheses 1 and 2

In sum, the tests of hypotheses 1 and 2 provide support for the linkages between each of the proposed types of attribute level brand associations (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) and functional consequences. This finding is important because it supports the inclusion of all four types of attribute level brand associations in the EVH framework. This research provides support for the traditional customer value hierarchy concept as well.

In addition, the one sample t-test (which uses the individual consumer as the unit of analysis) suggests the existence of a direct linkage of brand as product to emotional

consequences (BAPr-EC). The t-test analyses provide marginal support for brand as organization to emotional consequence (BAO-EC) and brand as person to emotional consequence (BAPe-EC) linkages. Finally, the t-tests provided no support for the existence of a brand as symbol to emotional consequence (BAS-EC) linkage. This is an interesting finding since one might expect that brand as symbol associations (which include thoughts about brand image and history) would be likely to elicit emotional consequences for consumers. This finding is discussed in more detail later in this section.

Because of the small number of self-expressive consequences that were observed, many of the sub-hypotheses related to this construct could not be statistically tested. Two of the proposed linkages – brand as organization to self-expressive consequence (BAO-SEC) and brand as person to self-expressive consequence (BAPe-SEC) – could not be evaluated in either product category because there were no observations of the the linkages in the data. The remaining two linkages could only be tested in one of the two product categories examined. The linkages that could be examined statistically were brand as product to self-expressive consequence (shredded cheese product category only) and brand as symbol to self-expressive consequence (soft drink product category only). No support for the research hypothesis was found in these tests.

Discussion of Hypothesis 1

As stated in Chapter 4, hypothesis 1 specifically examines the nature of the relationship between brand as product associations (BAPr) and the three types of consequences included in the EVH framework (functional, emotional and self-expressive). Interestingly this dissertation provides strong empirical support for h1a, which proposes that brand as product associations are directly linked by consumers to functional consequences. This finding is important in that it reinforces the existing marketing literature. Both means-end theory (e.g., Gutman 1982) and later discussions of the consumer value hierarchy (e.g., Woodruff and Gardial 1996) have as their base the assumption that product attributes are directly linked to functional (or lower-order, as Gutman defines them) consequences. Since

many of the examples in these discussions of attribute to functional consequence linkages involve brand as product to functional consequence linkages, the finding that h1a is supported provides an empirical example to support existing discussions of consumer value.

H1b proposes that brand as product associations and emotional consequences are not directly related. This hypothesis was developed based on Gutman's (1982) reasoning that attributes are directly related to functional consequences, which are in turn linked to pyscho-social consequences (e.g., emotional and self-expressive consequences). According to Gutman's theory, attributes and emotional consequences can only be indirectly related. Functional consequences (which may be explicit or implicit in the mind of the consumer) will always intervene.

The t-test analysis related to h1b shows that the hypothesis is not supported, but there is evidence for the alternative research hypothesis ($p<.000$). Thus, this analysis suggests that a direct linkage of brand as product associations to emotional consequences does exist. The empirical finding from this dissertation can be explained according to Gutman's logic. Gutman would suggest that the direct linkages between brand as product and emotional consequences that were observed in this study are a result of consumers who hold implicit, rather than explicit, brand as product to emotional consequence linkages in memory. For example, the summary value hierarchy for private label buyers of shredded cheese depicts a brand as product association to emotional consequence linkage. This value hierarchy shows that the "low price" (BAPr) of Kroger shredded cheese is directly linked to the emotional consequence of "don't feel like I am being cheated/ feel that I was treated fairly." Gutman would suggest that there is an intervening functional consequence (such as "can save money") that may not have been directly mentioned by consumers but which moderates the realationship between the brand as product association and the emotional consequence.

From the study conducted in this dissertation, one cannot conclusively say whether brand as product associations and emotional consequences are directly related (as the empirical data indicate) or indirectly related through implicit functional consequences (as

means-end theory would suggest). This dissertation does, however, indicate the need for further research in this area. A difficulty with this line of research will be: how can one tell if a consequence is implicit in a consumer's mind or if it does not exist? This methodological question will need to be addressed before additional empirical testing can be conducted. Meanwhile, the existing marketing literature is neither proven nor disproven regarding the relationship between brand as product associations and emotional consequences.

The final part of hypothesis 1 (h1c) proposes that there is no direct relationship between brand as product associations and self-expressive consequences. Because of the small number of observations of direct linkages between brand as product associations and self-expressive consequences, this sub-hypothesis could only be statistically tested in the shredded cheese product category. Logic, however, would suggest that the appearance of only one brand as product association to self-expressive consequence linkage in a sample of 230 total brand association to consequence linkages means that the likelihood of a direct linkage between brand as product associations and self-expressive consequences existing is very small. This finding strongly supports the existing literature, including Gutman's (1982) discussion of means-end theory. Thus, from this dissertation and the marketing literature, a researcher would find little encouragement for pursuing research to show direct linkages between brand as product associations and self-expressive consequences.

Discussion of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 examines the nature of the relationship between the three types of consequences that represent extensions of the traditional value hierarchy model (brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) and the consequences that consumers associate with a brand. The hypothesis is broken down into three sub-hypotheses which examine brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol associations, respectively.

H2a focuses on the relationship between brand as organization associations and consequences. Specifically, it proposes that brand as organization associations will be

directly linked to the three types of consequences proposed in the EVH framework (functional, emotional, and self-expressive). With one exception, there is no support for any part of this sub-hypothesis.

The exception to the finding of no empirical support for this sub-hypothesis is product category-specific and suggests that, in the soft drink product category, a brand as organization to functional consequence linkage may exist. Interestingly, twice as many brand as organization to functional consequence linkages were observed in the soft drink product category as compared to the shredded cheese product category (ten as compared to five). It could be that people associate characteristics of the manufacturing or retail organization more with soft drinks (i.e., Coca-Cola as a manufacturer or Kroger as a retailer) than shredded cheese (i.e., Kraft as a manufacturer or Kroger as a retailer). Alternatively, since both product categories examined used the same private label brand (e.g., Kroger), it could be that the individual national brand names (e.g., Coca-Cola and Kraft) vary in the organizational attachments consumers associate with them. This supposition is formally examined in hypothesis 4 and is discussed in more detail later.

H2b proposes that there are linkages between brand as person associations and functional, emotional, and/or self-expressive consequences. This dissertation study provides no evidence to support this sub-hypothesis. In fact, only 15 brand as person to consequence linkages were observed in the entire study, including both product categories. These 15 linkages represent only 6.1% (15/246) of the total linkages observed in the study. Additionally, brand as person associations represent only 5.2% (12/230) of the total brand associations observed in the study. Given the small number of brand as person associations mentioned by consumers, it is not surprising that a statistically significant relationship between this construct and consequences was not found. The lack of support for this hypothesis is in contrast with the existing branding literature, which suggests that brand personality may cue functional benefits, elicit consumer feelings and emotions, and/or provide a vehicle so that consumers may express their own identities (Aaker 1996). The

contradiction between the findings of the study and the literature represents a possible avenue for future research.

H2c proposes a relationship between brand as symbol associations and functional, emotional, and self-expressive consequences. In constrast to the brand as person association to consequence linkages, brand as symbol association to consequence linkages represent 11% (27/246) of the total linkages observed. Brand as symbol associations represent 11.7% (27/230) of the total number of attribute level brand associations mentioned by consumers in the interviews. Perhaps because of the larger number of brand as symbol observations, a portion of this sub-hypothesis was empirically supported. Specifically, the brand as symbol association to functional consequence linkage was found to be statistically significant. This finding is important because it suggests that the symbolic aspects of a brand can create value for consumers, as represented by the consumer value hierarchy. It also provides empirical support for the existing marketing literature, which suggests a product or brand may have symbolic (or possession) value as well as functional value for consumers (Belk 1988; Burns 1993; Sheth, Newman and Gross 1991). Thus, this finding helps to integrate marketing thought related to consumer value and branding, one of the objectives of this dissertation.

Interestingly, the sub-hypotheses that relate specifically to the linkages between brand as organization and brand as person attribute level brand associations and emotional consequences ($H2_{a2}$, and $H2_{b2}$) were marginally supported by the empirical data.

This is consistent with the finding from hypothesis 1 that suggests that a brand as product to emotional consequence linkage may exist. The finding that there are may be direct linkages between brand as organization and brand as person attribute level brand associations and emotional consequences in inconsistent with the levels of abstraction concept (e.g., Reynolds and Gutman 1984; Reynolds and Craddock 1988; Walker and Olson 1991), which defines emotional consequences as higher-order consequences (resulting from functional consequences rather than from the attribute level brand association itself). This finding may be replicated or contradicted in future studies. Based on the empirical evidence

presented here, the EVH framework should retain the direct linkages beween brand as organization, and brand as person associations and emotional consequences. The value hierarchies described by consumers also support an indirect linkage (via functional consequences) between these attribute level brand associations and emotional consequences. These value hierarchies are described in more detail in the discussion of proposition 3.

Post Hoc Analysis Related to Hypothesis 2

In total, the findings from the evaluation of hypothesis 2 suggest that the constructs that were introduced in the EVH framework (brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) have the potential to create value for consumers. This is evident by the statistical support for the presence of individual linkages between these attribute level brand associations and functional as well as emotional consequences that was discussed above. The essence of this finding is that, in total, the attribute level brand associations other than the brand as product that were examined in this dissertation (e.g., brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) have the potential to contribute to consumer value.

A post hoc analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which the data support the presence of non-brand as product association to consequence linkages. This analysis was conducted in the same manner as the test of hypothesis 2, except the number of linkages involving brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol were combined to form a summary variable, called non-brand as product associations (NBAPr). The results of this analysis are shown in Table 5-2.

Interestingly, the combination of the individual types of brand associations provided additional statistical support for a direct linkage between these attribute level brand associations and emotional consequences. When evaluated individually, no support for this linkage was found in product category-specific data, and only marginal support for the hypothesis was present in the overall data. In the post hoc evaluation that uses the combined data, marginal support for the linkage between non-brand as product associations

Table 5-2. Post hoc analysis related to hypothesis 2: One sample t-tests to compare means of attribute level brand associations other than the brand as product.

Revised Research Hypothesis (R.H.) *(Null Hypothesis)*	Product Category 1 (Shredded Cheese)	Product Category 2 (Soft Drinks)	Overall
(NBAPr*-FC) ≠ 0 *(NBAPr-FC) = 0)*	t(29, n=30) = 5.757 Sig. = .000** **R.H. Supported**	t(29, n=30) = 5.757 Sig. = .000 **R.H. Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 8.211 Sig. = .000 **R.H. Supported**
(NBAPr-EC) ≠ 0 *(NBAPr-EC) = 0)*	t (29, n=30) = 1.795 Sig. = .083 **R.H. Marginally Supported**	t(29, n=30) = 1.795 Sig. = .083 **R.H. Marginally Supported**	t(59, n=60) = 2.560 Sig. = .013 **R.H. Supported**
(NBAPr-SEC) ≠ 0 *(NBAPr-SEC) = 0)*	Linkages observed = 0 NA **NA**	t(29, n=30) = 1.000 Sig. = .326 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(29, n=30) = 1.000 Sig. = .321 **R.H. Not Supported**

*NBAPr (which is an abbreviation for non-brand as product assocations) is a summary variable created for this analysis. NBAPr equals the sum of the brand as organization (BAO), brand as person (BAPe), and brand as symbol (BAS) associations observed.

**Significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.10 or p-values between 0.90 and 0.95. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.10 and 0.90.

and emotional consequences was found in both product categories and full support for the linkage was evident in the overall data. This analysis provides additional support for the need for future research that examines the possibility of a direct relationship between attribute level brand associations and emotional consequences.

Summary of Discussion and Directions for Future Research

In summary, the findings from the data analysis related to hypotheses 1 and 2 provide support for the constructs that are included in the EVH framework. Brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person and brand as symbol associations were each discussed by consumers as part of their totality of thoughts about a preferred brand. The fewest instances of thoughts observed were related to the brand as person, which might suggest that (1) brand as person associations provide less value (in the form of consequences) for consumers than other types of attribute level brand associations, (2) the product categories chosen do not lend themselves to brand as person associations, or (3) the interview prompt used to elicit brand as person associations was inadequate to elicit the

range of consumer thoughts about the brand as person. The latter explanations represent interesting areas for future research.

Another interesting finding related to the analyses of hypotheses 1 and 2 is that the data suggest there may be a direct linkage beween brand as product associations and emotional consequences. This linkage is illustrated by the bold dotted line in Figure 5-1. The potential existence of this linkage represents an intriguing avenue for future research, particularly since the marketing literature suggests that a direct linkage would not be present. In addition, marginal support (in the overall data) was found for direct linkages between brand as organization and brand as person associations and emotional consequences. A post hoc analysis revealed marginal support (for product categories) and support (in the overall data) for a direct linkage between attribute level brand associations other than the brand as product and emotional consequences (NBAPr-EC). These findings suggest that the direct linkages between the attribute level brand associations other than the brand as product and emotional consequences should be retained in the EVH framework.

Although the analysis of data related to hypotheses 1 and 2 supports the existence of the constructs in the EVH framework, several linkages depicted in the framework are not supported. Specifically, there were so few observations of self-expressive consequences that none of the linkages between attribute level brand associations and self-expressive consequences could be fully tested. The low number of observations of direct linkages between attribute level brand associations and self-expressive consequences found in this study, however, provide a logical (rather than a statistical) rationale for lack of support for the existence of these linkages. The lack of support for these linkages suggests the EVH framework should be modified so that these linkages are removed. This modification is reflected in Figure 5-1.

Figure 5-1 illustrates a modified Extended Value Hiearchy framework, which has been adjusted based on the empirical findings from this study. As can be seen from the figure, all of the original constructs have been retained. The linkages have been modified as discussed above. In its modified state, the Exended Value Hierarchy framework retains the

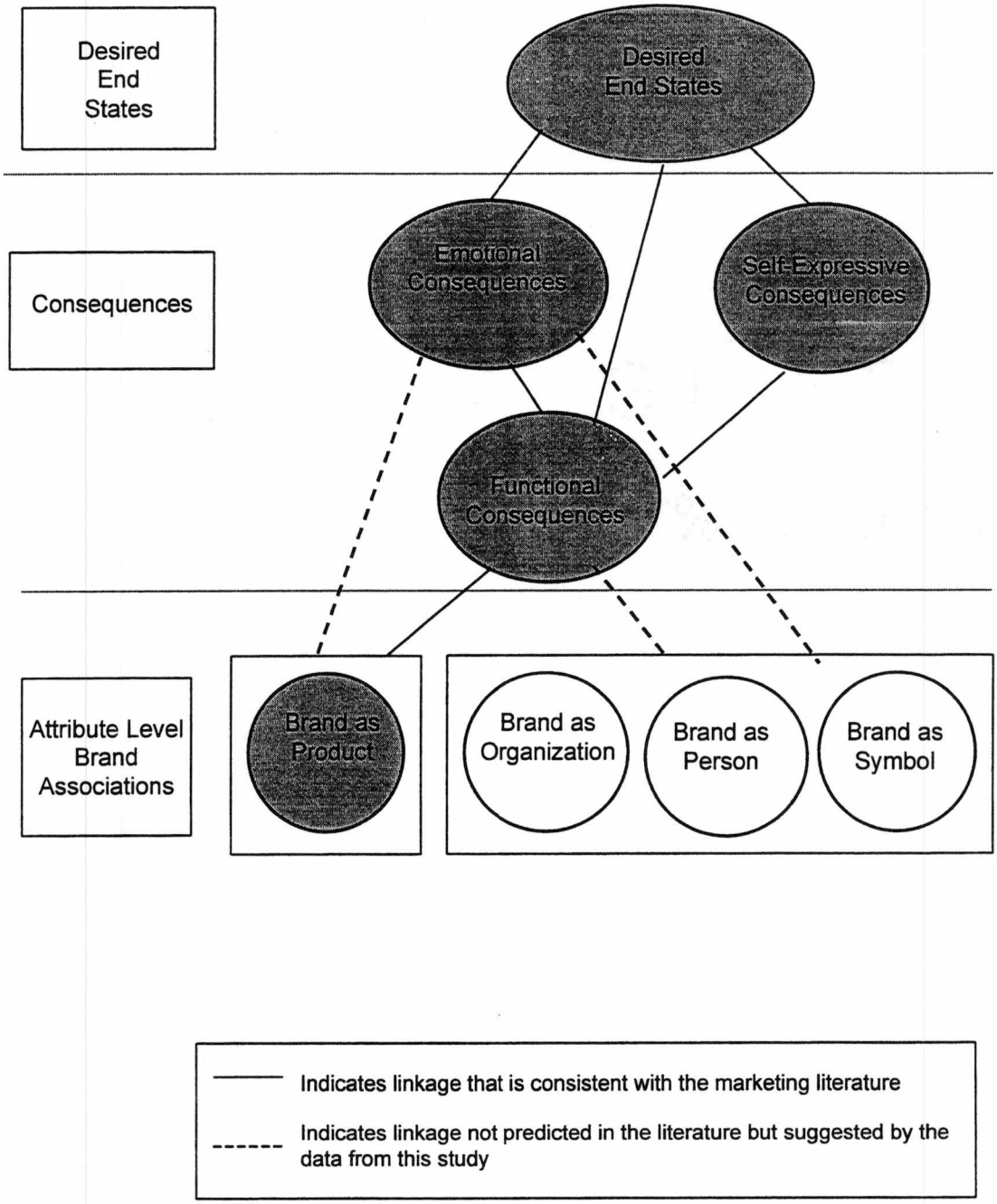


Figure 5-1. Modified extended value hierarchy.

three contributions to the literature that were discussed in Chapter 2. These are:

- Introducing a categorization of types of attribute level brand associations
- Reinforcing the idea that pyscho-social consequences can be created independently of functional consequences
- Clarifying the potential of knowledge held in memory to influence consumer value.

Evidence to suggest that the modified EVH framework clarifies the potential of knowledge held in memory to influence consumer value is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Discussion of Research Findings Related to the Content (or Meaning) of Consumer Value Hierarchies

Hypotheses 1 and 2 examined the structure of consumer value as it relates to preferred brands. Proposition 3 examines consumer value as it relates to preferred brands in an alternative way: by focusing on the content (or meaning) of what is valued as well as the structure. As described in Chapter 4, a value hierarchy analysis process was used for the analysis related to proposition 3. The value hierarchy analysis uses data from the consumer interviews as a basis for building summary ladders and value hierarchies, which reflect the content as well as the categorization (i.e., type of attribute level brand association or consequence) of consumer thoughts. This section reviews the findings from the summary value hierarchies and provides discussion of findings and directions for future research.

Summary of Findings Related to Proposition 3

A summary value hierarchy illustrates the most common value dimensions expressed by a group of individuals. In total, four summary value hierarchies were developed for this study: national brand buyers (shredded cheese), national brand buyers (soft drinks), private

label brand buyers (shredded cheese), and private label brand buyers (soft drinks). The summary value hierarchies are discussed in Chapter 4. For the shredded cheese product category, the Kraft (national) and Kroger (private label) brands were chosen for evaluation. For the soft drink product category, the Coca-Cola (national) and Big K (private label) brands were used.

Interestingly, the summary value hierarchy for shredded cheese national brand users is the most complex (in terms of total number of value dimensions, attribute level brand associations, total number of consequences, and number of functional consequences listed by consumers) of the summary value hierarchies. The summary value hierarchy included 40 total value dimensions, including eight attribute level brand associations, 26 consequences (20 functional and 6 emotional), and 6 desired end states.

The Kraft interviews yielded eight important attribute level brand associations:

- Tastes like real cheese (creamy, not dry) – BAPr
- Smooth texture – BAPr
- Price similar to other brands – BAPr
- Pre-shredded – BAPr
- Consistent/ dependable – BAPe
- Healthy ingredients – BAPr
- Brand is well-known – BAS
- Commercials/ ads/ coupons – BAS.

As stated earlier, the relatively large number of value dimensions that are included in the summary value hierarchy for Kraft buyers may at first indicate a higher number of total consumer thoughts about Kraft as compared to the other brands studied. In fact, however, this is not the case. Consumers listed a similar number of total thoughts about each of the four brands studied (see Table 4-9). This suggests that each individual consumer thought about Kraft is perhaps less widely held across consumers than the individual consumer

thoughts expressed about other brands in the study. It also suggests that there may be multiple segments of Kraft consumers who participated in this study.

The summary value hierarchy for the fifteen buyers of private label (Kroger brand) shredded cheese is quite different from the Kraft summary value hierarchy. When compared to the summary value hierarchy for national brand shredded cheese buyers, the summary value hierarchy for Kroger brand buyers includes fewer total value dimensions, fewer attribute level brand associations, fewer functional consequences, fewer emotional consequences, and fewer total consequences. Specifically, the private label brand value hierarchy for Kroger brand shredded cheese includes only three attribute level brand associations:

- Low price/ less expensive – BAPr
- Tastes as good as the national brand – BAPr
- Texture – BAPr.

As seen above, all of these attribute level brand associations represent consumer thoughts related to the brand as product. It is interesting that ideas of taste and texture were mentioned by much smaller numbers of consumers (8 and 4, respectively) than was price (which was mentioned by 14 consumers interviewed). This suggests that there may be different segments of consumers within the group of private label buyers interviewed: one which focuses specifically on price and one where consumers attempt to find a balance between price and indicators of product quality, such as taste or texture.

In total, the Kroger brand shredded cheese summary value hierarchy includes only 18 value dimensions, as compared to 40 value dimensions in the Kraft shredded cheese value hierarchy. One might first assume that this means Kroger brand shredded cheese buyers have fewer total thoughts about their preferred brand than do Kraft buyers. In fact this is not the case, as similar total numbers of attribute level brand associations, consequences and desired end states were found for national and private label brand shredded cheese

users. This suggests that consumer thoughts about Kroger brand shredded cheese were more consistent across consumers than thoughts about Kraft shredded cheese.

Finally, the number of desired end states included in the Kroger brand summary value hierarchy (6) is exactly the same as that of the Kraft summary value hierarchy. Three of these six desired end states appear in both of the summary value hierarchies. These are "happiness"/ "pleasure," "need satisfaction," and "sense of personal responsibility." These end states can be considered to be important overall for the shredded cheese product category. The remaining three desired end states are "be a good parent," "success in areas of my life that are important to me," and "sense of fairness and equity." Of these, "be a good parent" and "sense of fairness and equity" are found only in the Kroger brand summary value hierarchy. The fact that two of six desired end states were unique to the Kroger brand suggests that a private lablel branding strategy (used in the shredded cheese product category) offers opportunity for brand differentiation.

In terms of number of value dimensions included in the summary value hierarchies, the soft drink product category is somewhat different than the shredded cheese product category. For instance, the summary value hierarchy for Coke buyers is different from that of national brand buyers in the shredded cheese product category. For example, there are fewer total attribute level brand associations considered (4 as compared to 8), fewer brand as product associations (2 as compared to 5), fewer functional consequences (9 as compared to 20), and fewer total consequences (17 as compared to 26).

Two important similarities between national brand buyers, however, were noted. First, taste was an important driver of value both shredded cheese and soft drink national brand buyers. Second, both the Kraft and Coke summary value hierarchies included two brand as symbol associations. In total, the Coca-Cola summary value hierarchy includes the following four attribute level brand associations:

- Unique, sweet taste – BAPr
- Caffeine – BAPr

- Commercials/ ads – BAS
- Brand image (most popular soft drink; market leader) – BAS.

In terms of consequences, the summary value hierarchy for Coke indicates a different proportion of emotional to functional consequences than does the Kraft summary value hierarchy. In the Kraft summary value hierarchy, only 6 of 26 (or 23%) of all consequences included in the hierarchy were categorized as emotional consequences. In the Coca-Cola summary value hierarchy, 8 of 17 (or 47%) of all consequences included were emotional consequences. This clearly suggests that the number of emotional consequences considered by consumers varies across product categories.

It is also interesting that the summary value hierarchy for Coca-Cola buyers includes only nine functional consequences. This may suggest that (1) Coke provides less value in terms of functional consequences for loyal consumers or (2) that the functional consequences provided by Coca-Cola were more consistent across consumers and thus fewer different functional consequences emerged. In fact, the summary ladders provide evidence of the latter explanation.

The summary value hierarchy for private label soft drink buyers is much more complex than the one for private label shredded cheese buyers. Specifically, the summary value hierarchy for Big K buyers includes more total value dimensions (33 as compared to 18), more attribute level brand associations (5 as compared to 3), a brand as organization association, more functional consequences (14 as compared to 7), more emotional consequences (7 as compared to 2), and more total consequences (21 as compared to 9) than does the summary value hierarchy for Kroger brand shredded cheese buyers.

In terms of number of total value dimensions elicited, the Big K summary value hierarchy is actually more similar to the Kraft value hierarchy than it is to the other summary value hierarchy within its product category (e.g., the Coke summary value hierarchy) or the other summary value for a private label brand (e.g., the Kroger brand summary value

hierarchy). The Big K summary value hierarchy includes a total of 33 value dimensions; the Kraft value hierarchy includes a total of 40 value dimensions. These are the summary value hierarchies with the largest number of value dimensions that were observed in this study.

The private label summary value hierarchy for the soft drink product category actually includes the following five attribute level brand associations:

- Low price – BAPr
- Tastes as good as the name brand (Coke) – BAPr
- Good taste (sweet, citrusy) – BAPr
- Caffeine – BAPr
- Available at Kroger – BAO.

It is interesting that the summary value hierarchy for Big K includes many more emotional consequences than the Kroger brand summary value hierarchy (7 as compared to 2). This finding raises the possibilities that (1) Big K is simply a brand to which consumers are emotionally attached and/ or (2) private label consumers are more likely to associate their preferred brand with emotional consequences in the soft drink product category than in the shredded cheese product category. The content of the emotional consequences included in the Big K summary value hierarchy suggest that the latter explanation may be appropriate.

While the number of value dimensions included in the various summary value hierarchies differs across the product categories chosen for this study, the types of associations important to national brand buyers is surprisingly similar across the two product categories. For example, brand as product and brand as symbol associations were predominant for national brand users in both product categories. The main difference between product categories is that shredded cheese national brand buyers included a brand as person association ("consistent/ dependable") in the summary value hierarchy.

The types of associations common to private label brand buyers are also similar across product categories. In the case of private labels, however, brand as product

associations dominate the summary value hierarchies for both the shredded cheese and soft drink product categories. An interesting difference between product categories is that, in the soft drink product category, a brand as organization association ("available at Kroger") was mentioned by enough consumers to be included in the summary value hierarchy.

In addition to similarities in the types of attribute level brand associations that are mentioned most often, the content of what is deemed important (or valued) by consumers also appears to be similar across product categories. For example, price seems to play a stronger role in consumer valuation of private label brands for both product categories studied. In particular, low price is important. While the inclusion of other attribute level brand associations suggests that private label buyers do make trade-offs between price and other product features, low price itself seems to dominate the evaluation process. In fact, fourteen of the fifteen consumers interviewed in each product category mentioned low price as an important attribute associated with their preferred private label brand.

The content of what consumers value is also similar among national brand users in the shredded cheese and soft drink product categories. For both product categories, two similar brand as symbol associations emerged as part of the summary value hierarchies. First, the concept of brand image (including how well-known the brand is) was expressed by consumers as a concept that adds value to their preferred national brand. Commercials or advertisements were also mentioned in both product categories as a concept that creates value. These two brand as symbol associations were not as widely held as some other assocations (each of the brand as symbol associations was mentioned by only four or five of the fifteen consumers interviewed in each product category). Still, the inclusion of brand as symbol associations in the summary value hierarchies suggests that advertising and promotion can create value for at least one segment of consumers.

Discussion of Proposition 3

There are several ways in which the findings from the summary value hierarchies support the existing literature on consumer value. First, the general structure of the summary

value hierarchies reinforces several important frameworks that have been developed in the marketing literature. For example, the fact that the data from this study could be organized according to three general levels (attributes, consequences, and desired end states) supports means-end categorization theory (Gutman 1982), the levels of abstraction concept (Gutman 1982, Reynolds and Gutman 1988), and the traditional value hierarchy framework (Gutman and Reynolds 1986; Woodruff and Gardial 1996).

Next, the summary value hierarchies developed in this study reinforce the idea that value hierarchies may vary in complexity (Reynolds and Gutman 1988; Woodruff and Gardial 1996). In this study, complexity of consumer thoughts related to a brand can be evaluated in two ways. First, complexity is indicated by the number of means-end chains, or ladders, included in the summary value hierarchies. The four summary value hierarchies described in Chapter 4 range in terms of the number of means-end chains included. The least complex summary value hierarchy is the private label brand shredded cheese hierarchy, which includes only eight different ladders. In contrast, the national brand shredded cheese hierarchy and the private label brand soft drink value hierarchies each include fifteen different means-end chains.

Second, complexity of consumer thoughts related to a preferred brand is represented by the length of the ladders included in the summary value hierarchies. The means-end chains depicted in the summary value hierarchies range from two to five constructs in length. The shortest means-end chain in a summary value hierarchy occurs in the shredded cheese, national brand summary value hierarchy and involves only two value dimensions. This means-end chain relates "price similar to other brands" (a brand as product association) to "save money in the long run" (a functional consequence). In contrast, some means-end chains link five different consumer thoughts. For example, the shredded cheese, national brand value hierarchy also highlights the following set of linkages: "tastes like real cheese" (a brand as product association" to "looks more appealing" (a functional consequence) to "makes my meal taste better" (another functional consequence) to "enjoy eating my meal" (an emotional consequence) to "happiness/ pleasure" (a desired end state). Table 5-3 reviews

Table 5-3. Review of means-end chains in summary value hierarchies.

Summary Value Hierarchy	Number of Means-End Chains	Length of Means-End Chains				
		One Link	Two Links	Three Links	Four Links	Five Links
Shredded Cheese, National Brand	15	0	1	1	8	5
Shredded Cheese, Private Label Brand	8	0	0	1	5	2
Soft Drinks, National Brand	12	0	0	1	9	2
Soft Drinks, Private Label Brand	15	0	0	0	13	2
Total	**50**	**0**	**1**	**3**	**35**	**11**

the ladders included in the summary value hierarchies based on the number as well as length of the means-end chains.

The range in number as well as length of the means-end chains included in the summary value hierarchies also supports the brand identity literature (e.g., Aaker 1996; Biel 1993; Keller 1993), which suggests that consumers may have more or less complex thoughts related to a brand's identity. As a footnote, the branding literature maintains that complexity of consumer thoughts about a brand is not an indication of brand success in the marketplace (Aaker 1996). Brands with both simple (e.g., Morton salt) and complex (e.g., Marlboro cigarettes) brand identities have been successful.

In addition to supporting the existing marketing literature, the summary ladders and value hierarchies developed in this study reinforce the contributions of the Extended Value Hierarchy framework that were described in Chapter 2. First, while no one summary value hierarchy includes all four types of attribute level brand associations described in the EVH framework (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol), each of these constructs is represented in at least one summary value hierarchy. The inclusion of all four types of attribute level brand associations in the summary value hierarchies provides evidence of the usefulness of the EVH framework. In addition, this representation reinforces the idea that knowledge can be gained by integrating marketing thought in the areas of consumer value and branding.

Second, two of the four summary value hierarchies described in Chapter 4 depict direct linkages between an attribute level brand association and a psycho-social

consequence. Specifically, the shredded cheese private label brand hierarchy includes a direct linkage between "less expensive/ low price" (a brand as product association) and "don't feel like I am being cheated" (an emotional consequence). Also, the soft drink national brand value hierarchy includes a direct linkage between the "unique, sweet taste" of Coke (a brand as product association) and "reminds me of being a kid" (another emotional consequence). While these represent only two of the fifty means-end chains included in the summary value hierarchy, they do provide encouragement for research that might further evaluate the possibility of direct attribute level brand association to pycho-social consequence linkages.

Finally, the inclusion of consumer thoughts about a brand's image and commericals/ advertisements in the two national brand summary value hierarchies reinforce the idea suggested in the literature that consumer thoughts held in memory have the potential to create value during a specific purchase or use situation (Keller 1987, 1991). While this dissertation did not specifically measure the extent to which individual consumer thoughts were created prior to the use situation of interest, it seems likely that consumer thoughts about commercials and brand image were not created at the point of purchase, which was the use situation used for this study. This finding implies that, at least for national brands, consumer thoughts about the brand formed prior to purchase can influence the decision made at the point of sale. Future research may be directed toward identifying brand associations held in memory that have the potential to influence the value created in a particular use situation.

There are several interesting findings from proposition 3 that are surprising and contradict the existing literature. For instance, some aspects of the data (including the direct linkage between attribute level brand associations and emotional consequences that is included in three of the four summary value hierarchies) is in contrast to the more complex means-end chain model illustrated in Figure 2-1 and proposed by Walker and Olson (1991). The means-end chain model (as well as the discussions of consumer value that support the value hierarchy framework) recognizes a specific and ordered relationship between types of consequences. Specifically, it suggests that there are lower-order consequences (e.g.,

functional consequences) and higher-order consequences (e.g., psycho-social consequences). The summary value hierarchies developed for this study support the idea that attribute level brand associations can be directly linked to lower-order, or functional, consequences and indirectly linked to higher-order, or psycho-social, consequences; however, they also suggest that a direct linkage between attribute level brand associations and emotional consequences may exist. Furthermore, the very different numbers of value dimensions included in the Big K and Kroger brand summary value hierarchies (18 and 33, respectively) suggest that the structure of consumer thoughts about value at it relates to private label brands may be highly product-category specific.

In addition to evaluating the merit of the Extended Value Hierarchy framwork, one of the objectives of this research is to contribute to existing knowledge related to consumer purchases of national and private label brands. Specifically, it was suggested in Chapter 1 that this dissertation might provide the following benefits to managers who are interested in national and private label branding:

- Insights about similarities and differences in the content (or meaning) of what consumers value about national and private label brands
- Insights about the structure (i.e., type and complexity) of consumer thoughts related to national and private label brands.

In fact, the summary value hierarchies developed as part of the evaluation of proposition 3 provide some interesting insights related to similarities and differences in consumer thoughts related to national and private label brands. Consistent with the literature (e.g., Mogelonsky 1995), brand as product associations were found to dominate consumer thoughts in both the national and private label brand hierarchies. In addition, the summary value hierarchies revealed no patterns that might suggest differences in overall complexity of thoughts between national and private label brand users.

In terms of content, however, there appear to be some unique aspects to the national versus private label brand summary value hierarchies. As discussed earlier, low price appears to play a much larger role in the value created by private label as compared to national brands. This is consistent with the literature, which indicates that private label brands are typically supported by lower levels of marketing activity and thus use low price as an important point of differentiation (Ashley 1998; Private Label Manufacturers Association 1997). The summary value hierarchies also indicate, however, that consumers consider attributes other than low price when evaluating a private label brand. For example, the private label brand shredded cheese value hierarchy includes "texture" and "tastes as good as the national brand" as important attribute level brand associations. This finding is also consistent with the existing literature, which suggests that quality and price are both important to consumer evaluations of private label brands (Dwyer 1995; Halstead and Ward 1995).

Additionally, the role of "taste" in creating value was found to differ between national and private label brand consumers. Specifically, the idea of taste, or flavor, is described in both the Big K and Kroger value hierarchies as "tastes as good as the national brand." This is a very different idea related to taste than the taste, or flavor, descibed by buyers of national brands. For the national brand buyer, a particular taste (such as the "unique, sweet taste" associated with Coke and the "real cheese" taste associated with Kraft) is important. For the private label brand buyer, however, a specific standard (e.g., the taste provided by a nationally branded product) for evaluating taste is introduced. This finding suggests that private label products simply need to meet the standard set by the national brand, and that additional consumer value is not created (at least for the private label buyers interviewed in this study) by developing a private label product that performs better on specified attributes than the national brand. It should be noted that the code of "tastes as good as the national brand" does not indicate whether (1) the consumer finds the taste of the private label product to be different, but equally as good as, the national brand or (2) the consumer finds the taste of the private label product to be the same as the national brand. Additional investigation is needed to address this issue.

An important contribution of this study is that it provides empirical support for the stronger role of brand image and marketing communications in creating value for national brand buyers. Although the literature (e.g., Jap 1995, Mogelonsky 1995) suggests that national brands may be preferred because they offer benefits that go beyond product utility, little evidence has been provided to support this assertion. In fact, the growing popularity of private label brands (Private Label Manufacturing Association 1997) suggests that national brands may be limited in the value that they create, as compared to private label brands.

In addition to differences in the content of the summary value hierarchies between national and private label brand buyers, this study provides several interesting insights regarding the structure of what national and private label buyers might value. Interestingly, the only brand as organization association appearing in a summary value hierarchy appeared in a private label brand value hierarchy. This supports the idea presented in the literature (e.g., Mogelonsky 1995) that the role of the brand as organization association might be greater for private label than for national brands. The results of this study are mixed on this issue, however, because brand as organization associations do not appear in the private label brand summary value hierarchies for both product categories.

Another way that the structure of the national versus private label brand summary value hierarchies differ is that the role of the brand as symbol association appears greater for the national brand as compared to the private label brand. Both national brand summary value hierarchies include two brand as symbol associations, while the private label brand summary value hierarchies include none. Since national brands tend to be supported by greater levels of marketing activity, this finding is consistent with the brand identity literature (e.g., Aaker 1996; Biel 1993; Keller 1993), which suggests that identity-building brand marketing strategies can add value for consumers.

Surprisingly, the summary value hierarchies revealed mixed results for the role of brand as person associations in creating value for national brand buyers. Only one of the two national brand summary value hierarchies included a brand as person association, while neither of the private label brand summary value hierarchies included one. This is in contrast

with the brand personality literature (e.g., Aaker 1996), which suggests that brand as person associations should be present, particularly in cases (such as with the national brands examined in this study) where a brand is well-known, has a long-standing reputation, and supported by image-building marketing activities. The differences between national and private label brands suggested by the study overall are discussed later in this chapter.

Summary of Discussion and Directions for Future Research

In total, the evaluation of proposition 3 supports some of the findings from the tests of hypothesis 1 and 2, reinforces the need for a framework that integrates the consumer value and branding literatures (such as the modified EVH framework discussed earlier in this chapter), and provides empirical support for existing frameworks in the consumer value and branding literature. In addition, the summary value hierarchies developed as part of the analysis for proposition 3 provide empirical support for the idea that there are differences in thoughts about value between national and private label brand buyers.

The design of this study and the findings related to proposition 3, however, raise several interesting questions that should be addressed in future research projects. As discussed earlier, there are mixed results regarding the roles of brand as organization and brand as person associations in creating value for national and private label brand buyers. Next, the study is not conclusive regarding the potential of brand associations held in memory to influence the value consumers attribute to a preferred brand. These issues and opportunities for future research will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Discussion of Research Findings that Compare the Structure of What is Valued by National and Private Label Brand Buyers

The above discussion draws several conclusions regarding differences in the structure of the summary value hierarchies for national and private label brand buyers. Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 also compare the structure of consumer thoughts related to national

or private label brands; however, these hypotheses examine all value dimensions mentioned as important by the consumers interviewed, not just the ones included in the summary value hierarchies. This section summarizes findings related to hypotheses 4-6 and discusses findings as well as opportunities for future research.

Summary of Findings Related to Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6

In total, hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 compare the structure of thoughts expressed by national and private label brand buyers. Hypothesis 4 suggests that buyers of national brands will have more thoughts than buyers of private label brands related to each construct illustrated in the EVH framework. In addition, it suggests that the total number of attribute level brand association to consequence linkages, as well as consequence to desired end state linkages, will be higher for buyers of national than private label brands. Hypothesis 5 compares the ratio of emotional and self-expressive consequences to functional consequences for buyers of national and private label brands. Specifically, it proposes that the ratio of emotional and self-expressive consequences to functional consequences will be higher for buyers of national than private label brands. Finally, hypothesis 6 predicts several ways that the ratio of a particular type of atribute level brand association (when compared to the sum of the other attribute level brand associations) will differ between buyers of national versus private label brands.

As detailed in Chapter 4, the data provides limited support for hypothesis 4. Specifically, the combined data (which includes data from both the shredded cheese and soft drink product categories) indicate marginal support for sub-hypothesis $4a_1$, which states that buyers of national brands will have more thoughts about the brand as product than buyers of private label brands.

In the t-test analyses that compare consumer thoughts about desired end states, h4c and h4e were supported. These sub-hypotheses state that buyers of national brands will have more thoughts about desired end states (h4c) and consequence to desired end state

linkages (h4e) than buyers of private label brands. For the remaining five sub-hypotheses ($h4a_4$, $h4b_1$, $h4b_2$, $h4b_3$, and h4d), the data provide no support for the predictions made in the dissertation.

The data also provide no support for the predictions made in hypothesis 5, which compare the ratio of emotional and self-expressive to functional consequences expressed by national and private label brand buyers. As explained in Chapter 4, the lack of support for this hypothesis is not surprising given that, when hypothesis 4 was tested, there were no differences between national and private label brand buyers in terms of the total number of functional, emotional, and self-expressive consequences considered.

Finally, the data provide no empirical support for the predictions made by hypothesis 6. Again, the lack of overall support for hypothesis 6 is not surprising given that limited differences in the raw number of the four types of attribute level brand associations (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) were found in the test of hypothesis 4. The findings related to hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 are discussed in more detail later in this section.

Discussion of Hypothesis 4

Although the support for hypothesis 4 found in the study is limited, the findings that are evident from the data are interesting. First the data suggest that, for one of the four constructs in the EVH framework, there are limited differences in the number of thoughts mentioned by buyers of national brands as compared to buyers of private label brands. Specifically, the overall data provides marginal support for the idea that national brand buyers express more thoughts about the brand as product (when considering their preferred brand) than do private label brand buyers.

This finding is consistent with the branding literature, which implies that consumers of national brands will have more thoughts in general about their preferred brand than consumers of private label brands. For example, since national brands are generally supported by larger marketing communication budgets than private label brands (e.g.,

Mogelonsky 1995), it is assumed that consumers of a national brand will be exposed to more communications that promote their preferred brand. The branding literature suggests that marketing communications can influence the value of a brand to a consumer through brand attitude (Edell 1992; Edell and Moore 1993) and/or through changes in consumer memory structures relative to the brand (Aaker 1991, 1996; Krisnan and Chakravarti 1993). The basis for hypothesis 4 is that, because they are exposed to more marketing communications efforts related to their preferred brand, consumers of national brands will have more complex memory structures (as evidenced by more thoughts expressed in consumer value interviews) related to their preferred brand than consumers of private label brands. The findings related to hypothesis 4 are not as conclusive as expected and suggest the need to further examine this line of thinking.

It is notable and interesting that the findings related to this hypothesis were much weaker than expected. As described in Chapter 4, the one finding outlined above is evident only in the overall data. This may be due to the relatively small number of interviews conducted as part of the study, which means that only a small number of observations of each type of attribute level brand association could be analyzed. Alternatively, the weak support could be a function of the two product categories chosen for examination. Finally, the lack of support could be an artifact of the interview method, as the same interview time frame and structure was used for both buyers of national and private label brands.

It is interesting that, for the sub-hypothesis that was marginally supported in the overall data, the product category that contributed most to the support was the shredded cheese product category. In fact, the finding for the shredded cheese product category mirrored the finding for the overall data. In addition, no support for any part of hypothesis 4 was found in the soft drink product category. These findings suggest that the number of thoughts about a preferred brand may be dominated more by the product category of interest than by the branding strategy. This finding is consistent with the results from the analysis of proposition 3, which was based on the summary value hierarchies.

It is also notable that no differences were apparent in the number of thoughts related to the brand as symbol that were expressed by national and private label brand buyers. This is especially interesting since the summary value hierarchies developed as part of the evaluation of proposition 3 include greater numbers of thoughts about the brand as symbol in the hierarchies for buyers of national brands. This suggests that, for national brand buyers, thoughts about the brand as symbol may be more consistent than they would for private label brand buyers (thus, brand as symbol thoughts would be more likely to be included in the summary value hierarchies for national brand buyers). This contradiction within the data suggests an important opportunity for future research.

Perhaps the most conclusive findings related to hypothesis 4 are the support for the sub-hypotheses that buyers of national brands consider more desired end state and consequence to desired end state linkages than do buyers of private label brands. Unlike the sub-hypotheses related to attribute level brand associations, the sub-hypotheses related to desired end states ($h4_c$ and $h4_e$) were supported for both the shredded cheese and soft drink product categories, as well as in the overall data. The findings related to desired end states are consistent with the line of thinking introduced in the branding literature, that the larger marketing communication budgets that typically support national brands have the potential to influence consumer value and/ or brand equity. One object of marketing communications can be to show consumers how a product relates to personal end states, motivations, or goals (Kotler 1991). Thus, one can assume that if consumers are exposed to more marketing communications that promote their preferred brand, they may potentially find it easier to link the preferred brand to end states, or goals, and may be more readily able to discuss desired end states in consumer value interviews. The idea that marketing communications may influence a consumer's ability to link a product to desired end states also represents an interesting avenue for future research.

Post Hoc Analysis Related to Hypothesis 4

As a note, a post hoc analysis was conducted that combined the three types of attribute levl brand associations other than the brand as product that were examined in this study (e.g., brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) and compared the means of the combined variable between private label and national brand users in each product category. Table 5-4 illustrates the results from this analysis. As depicted in the table, using the combined variable as the basis for the analysis provides marginal support for the idea that attribute level brand associations other than the brand as product are more prevalent in the minds of national brand buyers than in the minds of private label brand buyers. This support is only found, however, in the overall data. This finding is not supported by the data in either product category. Thus, while this analysis provides some support for differences in the number of associations other than the brand as product that were considered by national versus private label brand buyers, the support is very limited. Again, although evidence for differences in the number of associations other than the brand as product that were considered by national as compared to private label brand buyers may be weak, there is evidence from the analysis of the summary value hierarchies discussed earlier that the content of the associations considered vary by branding strategy as well as product category. Thus, the most interesting avenue for future reseach is to further investigate

Table 5-4. Post hoc analysis related to hypothesis 4a: Independent sample t-tests to compare means of attribute level brand associations other than the brand as product.

Revised Research Hypothesis (R.H.)	Product Category 1 (Shredded Cheese)	Product Category 2 (Soft Drinks)	Overall
$NBAPr_{national} > NBAPr_{private}$*	t(28, n=30) = 1.525 Sig. = .148** **R.H. Not Supported**	t(28, n=30) = 0.968 Sig. = .349 **R.H. Not Supported**	t(58, n=60) = 1.803 Sig. = .081 **R.H. Marginally Supported**

*NBAPr (which is an abbreviation for non-brand as product assocations) is a summary variable created for this analysis. NBAPr equals the sum of the brand as organization (BAO), brand as person (BAPe), and brand as symbol (BAS) associations observed.

**Significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values of less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95. Marginally significant differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.05 and 0.10 or p-values between 0.90 and 0.95. No differences between groups are indicated by p-values between 0.10 and 0.90.

differences in the content of what is valued by national and private label brand users rather than the number of various types of value dimensions considered.

Discussion of Hypothesis 5

The data provide no support for the predictions made in hypothesis 5, which compares the ratio of pyscho-social (i.e., emotional and self-expressive) to functional consequences for buyers of national and private label brands. As explained in Chapter 4, the lack of support for this hypothesis is not surprising given that, when hypothesis 4 was tested, there were no differences between national and private label brand buyers in terms of the total number of functional, emotional, and self-expressive consequences considered.

The lack of support for hypothesis 5 is noteworthy in that it contradicts the line of thinking from the branding literature that is discussed in the previous section. Why, for example, would there be evidence of more complex thoughts held by national brand buyers related to attribute level brand associations and desired end states, but not for consequences? The literature (e.g., Aaker 1991, 1996; Edell and Moore 1993) implies that the greater levels of marketing communications activity that is associated with national brands would influence consumer thoughts about consequences as well as attribute level brand associations and end states. In fact, a potential role of marketing communications is to communicate to the consumer the benefits of using a particular product, or brand (Kotler 1991).

A possible reason for the lack of difference between national and private label brand buyers in terms of number of consequences considered is that the study has a sample size that is too small for differences to be apparent. This is possible, but given the fact that no differences were found even in the overall data (which is the combination of the shredded cheese and soft drink product category data), it is unlikely that a larger sample size would have made a difference in this research. Alternatively, the lack of difference between national and private label brand buyers in terms of ratio (and number) of consequences considered may not be a functional of method, but may suggest the need for additional

conceptual consideration and study. It may be that brand use and experience (which is common to loyal buyers of both national and private label brands) is a more important determinant of number of consequences considered than is marketing communications. Thirdly, there may be similar numbers of consequence level thoughts between national and private label brand buyers, but the content of the thoughts may be markedly different. In fact, the analysis related to proposition 3 strongly supports this theory. An understanding of how the content and structure of national and private label brand buyer thoughts about value differ represents an important contribution of this research and provides an intriguing avenue for future study.

Discussion of Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 compares national and private label brand buyers based on the ratio of each type of attribute level brand association considered to the total number of attribute level brand associations considered. The data provide no empirical support for the predictions made by hypothesis 6. Again, the lack of overall support for hypothesis 6 is not surprising given that limited differences in the raw number of the four types of attribute level brand associations (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) were found in the test of hypothesis 4.

Summary of Discussion and Directions for Future Research

In total, the findings related to hypotheses 4, 5 and 6, which compare buyers of national and private label brands, provide only limited support for the research hypotheses. The primary exceptions are the findings related to hypothesis 4, which suggest that buyers of national brands consider more brand as product, desired end state, and consequence to desired end state linkages than do buyers of private label brands. These findings are important in that they suggest that the EVH framework may be a useful tool for comparing consumers of national and private label brands. Beyond that, the data provide no support for the research hypotheses that were proposed.

The lack of support for these hypotheses, however, offers some potential opportunities for future research. For example, the lack of support for the idea that consumers of national brands would have more thoughts related to consequences than would consumers of private label brands suggests the need for further investigation. Although the idea that the content of consequence level thoughts about value differs between national and private label brand buyers, the question arises as to whether the lack of support for the sub-hypotheses that compare the number of consequences considered is a function of the method or context (e.g., situation and product category) chosen for this particular study. If so, future research could provide empirical support for the research hypotheses proposed in this dissertation. If not, future investigation about how consequences are created could clarify and provide additional detail to extend conceptual frameworks that have been presented in the literature. It is hoped that future research will provide additional data that can be used for evaluating the merit of hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 and which may further clarify similarities and differences between consumers of national and private label brands.

Contributions of the Study and Directions for Future Research

The previous sections discuss the findings from this dissertation study in the context of the existing marketing literature. This discussion suggests several potential contributions of the dissertation to marketing knowledge. For example, the finding that supports a direct linkage between brand as product associations and emotional consequences is inconsistent with the existing literature related to means-end theory. This inconsistency indicates the need for further investigation, which could reconcile the empirical finding from this study with marketing thought. This section reviews potential contributions of the study and suggests related directions for future research.

Contributions Related to the Structure of What Consumers Value about Brands

The findings from the evaluation of the EVH framework (as described in hypotheses 1 and 2) provide several interesting new insights that may be of value to marketing thought.

First, the support for the existence of the four attribute level constructs included in the EVH framework (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) suggests that one contribution of this study is the development of the EVH framework itself. The benefit of including the EVH framework as a part of the body of marketing thought is that it provides a conceptual framework that can be used for understanding the effect of specific branding strategies (such as private label or national branding) on consumer value. The EVH framework allows for comparison of the attribute level brand associations created by various brand strategies in more detail than existing frameworks for understanding consumer value.

Because the EVH framework includes four different types of attribute level brand associations, it clarifies and defines the construct of product attributes in greater detail than is typcially done in the consumer value literature. In addition, by explicitly including three types of attribute level brand associations that may not be directly related to product features (e.g., brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol), the EVH framework underscores and clarifies the potential of brand associations that are not related to the product (or service) itself to create value for consumers. Since approximately one-fourth (25%) of the attribute level brand associations mentioned as important in this study were related to the brand as organization, brand as person and brand as symbol, the clarification of these constructs (in part via studies that test the EVH framework in different product categories) may offer marketers an important framework for better understanding the role of attribute level brand associations other than the brand as product in creating consumer value.

Next, the dissertation study provides empirical support for the idea that both brand as product and other types of attribute level brand associations may be directly linked to emotional consequences in the minds of consumers. While this finding may be explained in the context of existing marketing thought (e.g., Holbrook 1994), the empirical data stand in contrast to the outcome that means end theory would predict (as described earlier, means end theory predicts only an indirect relationship between attributes and emotional consequences). This suggests that future research and examination of attribute level brand association to emotional consequence linkages is needed. This research could help

determine whether the result of this study is because functional consequences were implicit (but not directly expressed) in the attribute level brand association to emotional consequence relationships discussed by consumers or because direct brand as product association to emotional consequence linkages may be present in consumer value hierarchies.

In total, the evaluation of hypotheses 1 and 2 directed the development of the modified EVH framework depicted in Figure 5-1. This framework also represents a potential contribution of this study to the marketing literature. The modified EVH framework was created based on the empirical findings from this study. It suggests two intriguing avenues for future research.

First, based on the results of this study, a direct relationship between attribute level brand associations and emotional consequences is suggested. The EVH framework is consistent with this finding. The study, however, provided little evidence of direct attribute level brand association to self-expressive consequence linkages. This is in contrast to the relatationship suggested by the EVH framework. Thus, the modified EVH framework does not include any direct attribute level brand association to self-expressive consequence linkages. It should be noted, however, that the small number of self-expressive consequences elicited in the study could be a function of the research method or context (including situation and product category) chosen, rather than a limitation of the EVH framework. Future research opportunities include the need for the development of a set of interview prompts which better elicit self-expressive consequences as well as the need to examine the content of self-expressive consequences in consumer value hierarchies which involve other product categories and contexts.

Second, the modified EVH framework offers the opportunity for evaluating the relative potential of the four types of attribute level brand associations included in the model to create consequences that are valued by consumers. For example, in this study only a small number of brand as person association to consequence linkages were found. It would be interesting to determine whether this finding is because brand as person associations are simply less likely to create valued consequences for consumers or because the design of the study or the

choice of product category limited the number of brand as person association to consequence linkages that were elicited.

Contributions Related to the Content of What Consumers Value about Brands

While the summary value hierarchies created as part of the evaluation of proposition 3 offer a number of interesting insights, three appear to be important enough to represent potential contributions to the marketing literature. First, the summary value hierarchies for the two private label brands examined in the study clearly indicate that "low price" plays a strong role in creating value for private label brand buyers. While price is not the only attribute level brand assocation considered by private label brand buyers, it was mentioned as important by 28 of the 30 private label brand buyers interviewed for this study. This finding suggests the need for further research related to the role of price in purchase decision-making for private label brand buyers. For example, it raises the question: under what conditions is price more or less important to private label brand buyers?

In addition, the role of price appears to vary across private label brand buyers, with some buyers being more focused on price as the primary buying criterion and some looking for a balance between price and other indicators of product quality, such as taste or texture. The idea that there may be sub-segments of private label consumers who have differing needs is an important contribution of this research. This finding is a timely one, particularly given the broad range of private label brands that are on the market today. The private label market is expanding to include upscale products (which perform as well as or even better than the national brands on certain product attributes) as well as products with more limited attribute performances (e.g., generic brands) (Hoch 1996; Mogelonsky 1995). The ability to target this variety of private label branded products based on consumer needs may provide an important advantage for private label brand marketers. In addition, the segment of private label brand consumers who value a balance between price and attribute performance may represent an attractive potential market for some nationally branded products.

The second major finding related to the content of what consumers value about brands is that brand as symbol associations (particularly commercials and advertisements and brand image) appear to play an important role in value creation for at least one segment of national brand buyers. For both product categories studied in this dissertation, brand as symbol associations were present in the summary value hierarchies for national brand buyers. This finding is interesting in that it provides emprical support for the claim that marketing communications that focus on the symbolic aspects of a brand have the potential to create consumer value. Of course, the findings from this study represent only a small step in understanding the potential of brand as symbol associations to create value for consumers. Further research is needed to determine more about the kinds of consumers who are more likely to link brand as symbol associations with valued consequences. In addition, additional research is needed to investigate the conditions (i.e., types of product categories, levels of consumer knowledge about the category, etc.) under which brand as symbol associations are most likely to create value.

Finally, the third major finding is that the number and content of the value dimensions included in the summary value hierachies for each group of consumers vary by brand strategy and by product category. Although not examined in this study, it is anticipated that the number of value dimensions included in the hierachies would vary by research context (or use situation) and by market segment as well.

The variation in number of total value dimensions included in the summary value hierarchies (which range from 18 to 40) suggests that the consistency of consumer thoughts about a brand may be dependent on branding strategy as well as product category. In addition, the range in terms of total number of value dimensions considered by consumers may be a result of the effectiveness (rather than the type) of the brand strategies selected for investigation. For example, a possible explanation for the less complex summary value hierarchies for Kroger and Coca-Cola buyers is that the implementation of the branding strategies used by these companies are more effective (and thus creates greater consistency of consumer thoughts) than the strategies of the other companies examined in this study.

Alternatively, the differences in the complexity of the summary value hierarchies developed in this study could be an artifact of the product categories chosen. Future research that evaluates the potential of branding to contribute to consumer value might examine the role of branding strategy effectiveness and/ or product category in defining consumer value as a way of addressing this issue.

Contributions Related to National versus Private Label Brand Buyers

As described in Chapter 1, one objective of this dissertation was to provide empirical evidence of differences in consumer thoughts about value (i.e., number and type of attribute level brand associations considered, number of consequences considered, etc.) that may be associated with national and private label branding strategies. The discussion presented in this section demonstrates how the dissertation has accomplished this objective.

First, this dissertation provides empirical evidence that the complexity of consumer thoughts about value is not necessary dependent on branding strategy. The complexity of consumer thoughts related to a brand was evaluated in two ways. First, complexity was indicated by the number of means-end chains, or ladders, included in the summary value hierarchies. Second, complexity of consumer thoughts related to a preferred brand was represented by the length of the ladders included in the summary value hierarchies. The means-end chains depicted in the summary value hierarchies range from two to five constructs in length. Third, complexity was indicated by the number of occurrences of each contruct illustrated in the EVH framework in a summary value hierarchy. The four summary value hierarchies developed for this study revealed no clear patterns that might suggest differences in overall complexity of thoughts between national and private label brand users. In addition, the findings from the test of hypothesis 4 suggested limited differences in the number of value dimensions considered by national versus private label brand consumers.

In general, the finding that the complexity of consumer thoughts about a preferred brand may vary by branding strategy, product category, or other factors is important because it suggests that developing a set of general guidelines for when to use particular branding

strategies may not be possible or appropriate. Instead, a contingency framework for understanding the conditions under which branding strategies are more or less likely to contribute to consumer value appears to be needed. Building such a framework offers an important direction for future research.

Second, the dissertation provides empirical evidence that non-brand as product associations have the potential to contribute to consumer value for both national and private label brand users. As noted earlier, the three types of attribute level brand associations other than the brand as product that were examined in this study (brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol) all appeared in at least one summary value hierarchy. In addition, a post hoc analysis that evaluated differences in the mean number of occurrences of non-brand as product associations between national and private label brand buyers provided marginal support that national brand consumers consider more brand as product associations than do private label brand consumers.

Third, there appear to be some unique aspects to the national versus private label brand summary value hierarchies in terms of content. For example, low price appears to play a much larger role in the value created by private label as compared to national brands, although there is evidence to suggest that, even among private label buyers, the predominance of price as a decision criteria varies across individuals. This suggests that there are multiple segments of private label brand users, one for whom price is very important and one for whom price is balanced with considerations of product attribute performance.

Additionally, the role of "taste" in creating value was found to differ between national and private label brand consumers. Specifically, the idea of taste, or flavor, is described in both the Big K and Kroger value hierarchies as "tastes as good as the national brand." This finding may be of importance to brand marketers because itsuggests that private label products simply need to meet the standard set by the national brand, and that additional consumer value is not created (at least for the private label buyers interviewed in this study) by developing a private label product that performs better on specified attributes than the national brand.

Another important contribution of this study is that it provides empirical support for the stronger role of brand image and marketing communications in creating value for national brand buyers. The findings from the summary value hierarchies indicate that the role of the brand as symbol association appears greater for the national as compared to the private label brand. This finding suggests that identity-building brand marketing strategies can add value for consumers.

Next, the findings discussed in this section suggest differences in the content and structure of what is valued between national and private label brand buyers. Differences in the content of what is valued by consumers (in terms of both branding strategy and product category) were noted at attribute level brand association, consequence, and desired end state levels. In terms of structure, the data indicate that buyers of national brands mentioned more brand as product and brand as organization associations as important in evaluating their preferred brand than did buyers of private label brands. This finding is important because it provides empirical evidence to support the assertion, made in the branding literature (Aaker 1991, 1996; Edell 1992; Edell and Moore 1993), that marketing communications (which typically support national brands) have characteristics that can add to brand value. It is interesting, however, that there was no difference in the number of brand as person or brand as symbol associations (which may also be created by marketing communications) between buyers of national and private label brands.

The data also indicate that buyers of national brands may consider more desired end state and consequence to desired end state linkages than do buyers of private label brands. This raises the question of whether the number of desired end states considered is really greater or whether exposure to brand marketing communications (which are assumed to more heavily support the national brands examined in this study) or the choice of product categories examined in this study simply make it easier for some consumers to mentally link consequences to desired end states. In other words, does this finding suggest the need for reevaluating theory or method? Future research is also needed to explore the extent to

which this finding is applicable to other product categories, particularly those where marketing communications efforts tend to be more informational in nature.

Surprisingly, the data indicate no difference in the number of consequences considered by national and private label brand buyers. This finding is inconsistent with the existing literature and counter-intuitive, given the findings related to attribute level brand associations and desired end states that are discussed above. Why would national brand buyers consider greater numbers of attribute level brand associations and desired end states than private label brand buyers, but consider the same number of consequences? A possible explanation is that the number of attribute level brand associations and desired end states consumers consider may be more heavily influenced by marketing communications, while the number of consequences consumers consider may be more heavily influenced by brand use or experience. Alternatively, the lack of difference in number of consequences considered could be a result of the sample size used in this study. It should be noted, however, that this finding applies only to the number of consequences considered by national versus private label brand buyers. The content of the consequences considered was found to differ considerably between these groups.

Summary of Contributions

In total, this dissertation makes a number of potential contributions to the literature. In addition to introducing the EVH framework, the dissertation offers several interesting insights about users of national and private label brands. The potential contributions of the study and related directions for future research are summarized in Table 5-5.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

As can be noted from the discussion above, this dissertation has the potential to make several contributions to the marketing literature. The value of these contributions must be balanced, however, against limitations that are inherent in the design of the study and the way in which the research was conducted. This section reviews limitations associated with

Table 5-5. Summary of contributions and directions for future research.

Contribution of the Study	Additional Research Questions Raised	Suggested Direction(s) for Future Research
Development of and emprical support for the constructs included in the EVH framework.	How useful is the EVH framework for understanding the effect of brand strategies on consumer value? To what product categories is the EVH framework applicable?	Additional research that compares consumer thoughts about value for brands with differing brand strategies. Additional research that examines product categories other than the ones included in this study.
Clarification of types of attribute level brand associations that have the potential to create value for consumers.	To what extent are the attribute level brand associations depicted in the EVH framework useful for categorizing consumer thoughts about brands?	Examination of attribute level brand associations mentioned by consumers to determine if additional types of attribute level brand associations exist and/or if associations included in the EVH framework should be eliminated.
Empirical support for a direct linkage between brand as product associations and emotional consequences.	What is the relationship (direct, indirect, or both) between brand as product associations and emotional consequences?	Further examination and clarification of the relationship between brand as product associations and emotional consequences.
Introduction of the modified EVH framework.	What is the potential for attribute level brand associations to be directly linked to psycho-social consequences? What is the relative potential of brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person and brand as symbol associations to create valued consequences for consumers?	Further examination and clarification of the potential of attribute level brand associations to directly create psycho-social consequences. Examination of relative impact of various attribute level brand association to consequence linkages on consumer value, satisfaction, and/or brand equity.
Suggests the strong role of "low price" as a driver of value for private label brand buyers.	How do private label brand buyers make the trade-offs between price and other attribute level brand associations? Under what conditions is price more or less important to private label buyers?	Further examination of price versus benefit trade-offs made by private label brand buyers. Additional research on what is valued by private label brand buyers using different brands and product categories.
Suggests the strong role of "tastes as good as the national brand" as a driver of value for private label brand buyers.	How do private label brand buyers define "tastes as good as"? To what extent is value created bya private label brand than performs better than the leading national brand?	Further examination of taste as defined and assessed by private label brand buyers. Additional research on what is valued by private label brand buyers using different brands and product categories.
Suggests that the role of the brand as symbol is stronger for one segment of buyers of national brands than for buyers of private label brands.	For which segments of national brand buyers are brand as symbol associations most important? Under what conditions are brand as symbol associations more or less important to national brand buyers?	Further examination of the construct of brand as symbol; additional research to identify consumers who are more likely to link brand as symbol associations with valued consequences. Additional research on what is valued by national brand buyers using different brands and product categories.

Table 5-5 (continued).

Contribution of the Study	Additional Research Questions Raised	Suggested Direction(s) for Future Research
Suggests that national brand buyers, as compared to private label brand buyers, have more thoughts related to the brand as product, brand as organization, and brand as person.	Why don't national brand consumers consider more thoughts related to the brand as symbol when compared to private label brand consumers? To what extent does this finding apply to other brands and product categories?	Further examination of the construct of brand as symbol; additional research that examines the role of the brand as symbol in creating value for national and private label brand users. Additional research that examines brands and product categories other than the ones included in this study.
Suggests that national brand buyers, as compared to private label brand buyers, have more thoughts related to desired end states and consequence to desired end state linkages.	To what extent do marketing communciations (that typically support national brands) help consumers link attribute level brand associations and consequences to desired end states? To what extent does this finding apply to other brands and product categories?	Further examination of the construct of desired end states as well as the role of marketing communications in creating desired end states. Additional research that examines brands and product categories other than the ones included in this study.
Indicates no differences in the number of consequences considered by national and private label brand buyers.	Why does the relative number of consequences considered by national versus private label brand buyers not vary in the same way that the number of attribute level brand associations and desired end states considered vary? To what extent does this finding apply to other brands and product categories?	Further study related to how consequences are created for consumers (i.e., relative influence of brand use versus marketing communications). Additional research that examines brands and product categories other than the ones included in this study.

the study and suggests opportunities for addressing these shortcomings through future research. Specifically, the section reviews limitations related to the test of the EVH framework, the sample of consumers interviewed, the choice of product categories examined, and the interviewing method.

Limitations Related to the Test of the EVH Framework

Essentially, this dissertation study provides a quantitative test of a conceptual framework that is based on existing marketing theory. The EVH framework was developed based on ideas drawn from the consumer value and branding literatures. The framework addresses research questions that are raised in or can be inferred from the literature, such as:

- Can consumer thoughts about value be categorized according to the constructs included in the EVH framework?
- Is additional knowledge gained by developing the concept of product attributes in detail so that four different categories of attribute level brand associations (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person and brand as symbol) can be examined?

What is the nature of the relationship (i.e., direct, indirect, or both) between attribute level brand associations and the different types of consequences included in the EVH framework (functional, emotional and self-expressive)?

The nature of the development of the EVH framework assumes that existing theory provides an adequate framework for understanding consumer value that may be created by brand strategies. Because of the way in which it was developed, there are some questions the EVH framework cannot answer, such as:

- Do the categories of attribute level brand associations depicted in the framework represent the totality of different attribute level thoughts that consumers have about preferred brands?

- Are there particular themes, or lines of thinking, that are common to consumers when talking about their preferred brands?
- To what extent do consumers mention outcomes of brand strategies when talking about the value created by a preferred brand?

An alternative way of addressing the general research question of how consumer value can be understood as it relates to brands would be a qualitative examination of consumer thoughts about value. These thoughts would then serve as the basis for developing theory (including a categorization scheme) rather than being used as a basis for evaluating a pre-conceived conceptual framework, as was done in this study. Since this study was designed specifically to provide an opportunity for evaluating the Extended Value Hierarchy framework, future research might address questions such as:

- Is the EVH framework the best model to use for understanding consumer value at the brand level?
- Are there themes in the interview data not brought out by the EVH framework?
- How do consumers talk about the value of preferred brands when unprompted by questions that are designed to elicit various types of attribute level brand associations?

Limitations Related to the Sample

As discussed in Chapter 4, the demographic characteristics of the study participants differed somewhat from the characteristics of the population of Knoxville Kroger supermarket shoppers. Specifically, the sample of study participants represents a more heavily female, younger, more highly educated, and lower income population than that of Knoxville Kroger shoppers. The differences between the general characteristics of the sample and the population of supermarket shoppers does not take away from the usefulness of this research in evaluating the EVH framework. They do, however, limit the transferability of the findings to

the larger population of supermarket shoppers, even in the local area. In addition, the limitations of the sample make it difficult to assess the applicability of the study to other brands and product categories.

The design of the sample selection process also limits the transferability of the study. Because recruiting of interview participants took place in a supermarket setting, the population of consumers studied was limited to loyal buyers, rather than users, of the brands of interest. To fully assess the merit of the EVH framework as well as to draw conclusions about the value created by national and private label brand strategies, research that focuses on users as well as buyers is needed.

Finally, the small sample size that was part of the design of this study created an unexpected limitation. Although a total of 60 consumers were interviewed for the study, the interviews yielded a very small number of brand as person associations (12) and attribute level brand association to self-expressive consequence linkages (1) as part of the consumer value hierarchies. Because of the small number of observations of these constructs, the sub-hypotheses related to brand as person associations and self-expressive consequences were difficult or impossible to evaluate.

Limitations Related to the Context Chosen for the Research

The findings from the research study are also limited because of the context chosen for the research. Specifically, the study focused on specific product categories (shredded cheese and soft drinks), a specific use situation (product choice), and on a subset of all attribute level brand associations considered by the consumer (those which were selected as most important). These limitations are discussed below.

First, two closely related product categories (shredded cheese and soft drinks) were chosen as the setting for understanding how brand strategies can create value for consumers. These product categories were chosen because they are the top two product categories for private label supermarket sales where the product category also includes a

"leading" national brand. "Leading" national brand is defined in this study as a national brand with greater than 20% of overall market share.

The product categories chosen for the study were intended to be similar, so that the second product category would provide a good setting for replication of the research findings from the first product category. Although expected to be similar, there are some interesting differences between the product categories which were noticed as consumers discussed purchase and use experiences during the interviews. For example shredded cheese tends to be used as an ingredient and is consumed privately, while soft drinks tend to be used as a stand-alone product and are consumed both publicly and privately. In addition, shredded cheese is a perishable item and tends to be purchased weekly, while soft drinks are non-perishable and are more likely to be purchased in bulk when on sale.

In addition, the product categories chosen for investigation were low in consumer involvement. It is anticipated non-brand as product associations might be even more important to consumers for high involvement products. The limitations created by the choice of product categories raise the question: was this a good setting for evaluating the potential of branding to create consumer value? Future research that examines additional product categories will help to address this question.

Next, a specific use situation (product choice) was used as the context for helping consumers talk about their preferred brand. Since consumer value is dependent on the use situation (Woodruff and Gardial 1996), it is likely that the attribute level brand associations that were selected as most important (and which were then discussed in the interviews) would vary by use situation.

According to the consumer value literature, consumer value is created in large part during the use experience (Burns 1993; Woodruff and Gardial 1996). Thus, one would expect that only a portion of the thoughts that are important to a consumer about a brand would be selected as most important in the purchase situation. Future research that examines additional use situations is needed to better understand how the findings from this

study (such as the strong representation of brand as product associations and functional consequences) vary across use situations.

Finally, after the elicitation phase of the interview, consumers were asked to choose the attribute level brand associations that were most important to them in making the decision to purchase their preferred brand. Only the attribute level brand associations chosen as most important were further discussed in the interview (this decision was made as a part of the research design to reduce the time that consumers were asked to spend in an interview). There is some evidence from this study that basing the laddering portion of the interview on the most important attribute level brand associations changed the proportion of the different types of attribute level brand associations that were discussed. Figure 5-2 relates the number of each type of attribute level brand association elicited to the number of attribute level brand associations chosen as most important by consumers. As evidenced from the figure, a much greater percentage of the brand as product associations elicited were chosen as important. It should be noted that the number of brand associations elicited is strongly influenced by the fact that the interviews prompted elicitations of all four types. Despite this limitation, however, the graph below suggests the need for examining consumer thoughts about attribute level brand associations other than those selected as most important.

Limitations of the Interviewing Method

In addition to the limitations discussed above, the interviewing method may have also constrained the ability of the study to address the issue of what consumers value about preferred brands. Although a pilot test was conducted which included 32 mini-interviews, the interviews prompts that were used to elicit consumer thoughts about attribute level brand associations were newly developed for this dissertation. One assumes that the prompts used to elicit consumer thoughts were non-leading and comprehensive; however, there is always opportunity for improvement. Future research in the area of method might address alternative ways to prompt consumers to talk about the attribute level brand associations, consequences, and desired end states that are important when evaluating a preferred brand.

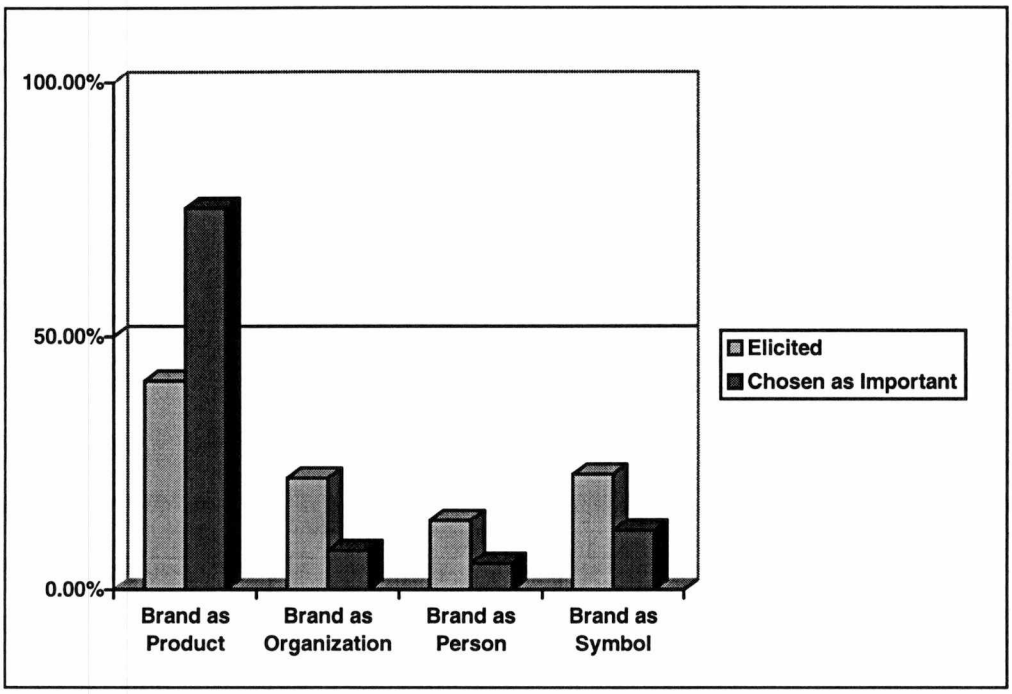


Figure 5-2. Comparision of attribute level brand associations elicited with those chosen as most important by consumers.

In addition, future research might focus on evaluating whether consumers are including the totality of their thoughts about a particular brand in the interview discussions. If the interviewing method used in this dissertation is to contribute to marketing knowledge, a greater understanding is needed of the extent to which consumers are consciously or unconsciously withholding information about important attribute level brand associations and/or related linkages when talking about their preferred brands.

In addition, the interviewing method may have been a contributing factor to the weak support found for hypotheses 4, 5 and 6. The same interview structure and time frame was used for both buyers of national and private label brands, which may have prompted similar numbers of value dimensions to be discussed by each consumer who was interviewed.

Summary of Limitations

This section has reviewed some of the limitations of the study, which should be considered when evaluating its contribution to marketing knowledge. These limitations inhibit the transferability of the findings to a broader population of consumers as well as the applicability of the findings to other brands and product categories. In general, conducting additional interviews that include a more representative sample of consumers and preferred brands in more product categories would allow more definitive and specific conclusions to be drawn. Table 5-6 summarizes the limitatations discussed in this section and outlines specific directions for future research and investigation.

Priorities for Future Research

The previous discussion suggests a number of opportunities for future research, all of which build on knowledge gained from conducting this study. In fact, the role of branding in creating consumer value is complex and requires much further examination. Because the findings from this study suggest many avenues for additional investigation, it seems necessary to suggest a set of research priorities, or areas where the greatest advantage can be gained from further theory development and testing. This section highlights four areas for further investigation that appear to have the greatest potential for contributing to marketing thought.

Further Examination of the Four Types of Attribute Level Brand Associations

The first area of research that seems to be a priority, based on the findings from this study, is further examination and refinement of the four categories of attribute level brand associations suggested by the EVH framework (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person and brand as symbol). The elaboration of the types of attribute level brand associations that may contribute to consumer value is an important element of this research. Since the findings from the study support the four categories of attribute level brand

Table 5-6. Summary of limitations and directions for future research.

Limitation of the Study	Proposed Adjustments to Minimize Limitation	Suggested Direction(s) for Future Research
EVH framework is based on theory rather than an empirical examination of consumer thoughts about value.	Address the issue of how brand strategies affect consumer value with a focus on theory building rather than theory testing.	Qualitative research that examines consumer thoughts about value without attempting to categorize thoughts according to a previously developed conceptual model.
Sample demographics somewhat different than population demographics.	Screen participants according to demographic characteristics when selecting the sample.	Research involving additional interviews with sample of consumers that is more representative of the population of interest.
Study focuses on buyers rather than users.	Change recruiting location away from the supermarket setting, so that a balance of users, buyers, and buyer/ users are recruited for the study.	Research involving additional interviews that focus on brand use rather than brand purchase (or choice) and involve a representative sample of brand users.
Small sample size.	Increase sample size and select brands which are expected to elicit a variety of types of attribute level brand associations and consequences from consumers.	Further research/ consumer value interviews which can be combined with the data from this study to begin building a database of interviews that focus on understanding consumer thoughts about brand value.
Product categories chosen for investigation have somewhat different characteristics, which limits the opportunity for replication of findings.	Select product categories that are similar with respect to consumer purchase patterns, public versus private consumption, and popular use situations.	Further research that includes an examination of additional product categories.
Context of study limited to the most important consequences for consumers during the product choice situation	Select additional use situations and ways of selecting attribute level brand associations for discussion for future research.	Further research that includes an examination of additional contexts.
Interview prompts were developed as part of this dissertation and have undergone limited testing and evaluation.	Conduct additional testing and evaluation of interview prompts.	Further examination of alternative interview prompts; additional research that uses and evaluates the interviewing method used in this study.

associations included in the EVH framework, further investigation and clarification in this area seems appropriate.

In particular, it would be interesting to understand more about the nature, source, and relative strength (e.g., strongly versus weakly held) of the different types of attribute level associations included in the EVH framework, as well as the timing of association development (e.g., prior to versus during use). Conceptual and operational definitions for each type of association are included in the dissertation; however, additional clarification would be useful. Given the small number of brand as person associations observed in the study, a worthwhile direction for further research is determining how better to encourage consumers to talk about brand as person associations.

Next, understanding more about the source of the different types of brand associations would be useful in developing frameworks that could aid marketers in developing specific brand strategies. Future research should address such questions as: what kinds of marketing activities are more or less likely to create each specific type of attribute level brand association? Are certain types of brand associations more likely to be created by multiple exposures to a single source or by multiple sources? Because the summary value hierarchies indicated that some national brand buyers found brand as symbol associations to be important in creating value, a promising direction in this stream of research is to examine the role of marketing communications in creating brand as symbol associations.

Also, in order to guide the development of frameworks related to brand management, a greater understanding of the relative strength (i.e., strongly vs. weakly held in consumer memories) of the various types of associations would be advantageous. For instance, are brand associations that are more strongly held by consumers more likely to contribute to consumer value? Do certain types of attribute level brand associations tend to be more strongly held than others? Additional knowledge about the relative impact of the different types of attribute level brand associations on consumer value would assist marketing practitioners in developing the brand strategies that would utilize their resources most effectively.

Finally, this dissertation did not specifically investigate the timing of brand association development (e.g., prior to use, during use, etc.); however, the literature (e.g., Aaker 1996; Pecorella, Plusker and Comstock 1993) suggests that brand associations created both prior to and during use may affect the value a consumer associates with a product or brand. Brand associations that are created prior to a particular use situation often result from memorable situations (also called formative experiences) in which the product or brand or interest may have been present. Formative experiences may include being in a situation where the brand was used as well as being exposed to a particular brand marketing communication effort, such as a commercial or advertisement. Because perceptions of the brand as organization, brand as person and brand as symbol may be more likely to be formed prior to product use (Aaker 1991, 1996), the categorization of attribute level brand associations developed in this dissertation would be much more effective if one knew:

- The extent to which formative experiences contribute to consumer value
- The conditions under which a formative experience is most likely to affect value.

Further Examination of the Conditions Under Which Brand Strategies Can Affect Consumer Value

In addition to providing more detail related to the categorization of attribute level brand associations presented in the EVH framework, future research is also need to examine the situations and conditions under which brand strategies are more or less likely to influence consumer value. This dissertation focuses only on one particular set of conditions, purchase behavior of loyal buyers of a national and private label brand in two food-related product categories. Also, only the attribute level brand associations that were selected as "most important" by the interview partiicpants were discussed.

As described earlier, additional research is needed to increase the transferability of the research findings to a broader group of consumers, brands, and product categories.

Specifically, future studies might investigate the role of brand strategies in influencing consumer value across:

- Situations (e.g., use, purchase, etc.)
- Types of users (e.g., loyal users, occasional users, former users, etc.)
- Brands (e.g., market leader, market follower, etc.), and
- Product categories (e.g., publicly consumed goods, privately consumed goods, etc.)
- Segments of consumers (those who are focused primarily on price, those for whom price is less important, etc.).

Further Integration of the EVH Framework with Customer Value Theory

The Extended Value Hierarchy (EVH) framework was developed based on a review of the consumer value and branding literatures. It is intended to represent an extension of existing customer value theory. As such, and now that the framework has received initial empirical support, additional research is needed to show that the EVH framework is consistent with existing theory.

A possible avenue of investigation in this area is examining the role of brand strategies in contributing to desired (rather than received) value. As described in Chapter 2, consumer value may be either desired or received. Desired value represents preferences for certain value dimensions (i.e., attributes, consequences, and desired end states) based on positive outcomes that the consumer associates with the value dimensions. In contrast, received value represents consumer evaluations of brand performances on key value dimensions (Woodruff 1997). This dissertation has focused on understanding the role of brand strategies in contributing to received value, but it is possible that brand strategies may affect desired value as well.

Another way that future research can more closely integrate the EVH framework with existing customer value theory is by examining the relationship between the four types of

attribute level brand associations included in the framework, their contributions to consumer value, and desired outcomes for the marketer (e.g., increased brand equity, loyalty, etc.). This area of research has the potential to extend existing theory and to better explain the role of branding in creating value for corporations as well as the consumer. For example, if the EVH framework can be used as a point of entry for understanding how brand associations, consumer value, and other outcome variables (such as brand equity and consumer loyalty) are linked, this would be a valuable contribution to marketing thought. In addition, the interviewing method used in this study may represent an alternative to traditional laddering interviews for initiating the customer value determination process described in Woodruff and Gardial (1996).

Theory-Building Research

Finally, the approach taken in this dissertation study and in the directions for future research discussed above is that of theory testing. In other words, for this study, the EVH framework (which was based on existing theory and developed prior to the collection of data) guided the research questions and hypotheses. An alternative way of addressing research questions regarding the role of brand strategies in creating consumer value would be to set aside marketing theory and use the consumer interviews as the basis for understanding how people talk about the brands that they value. In this scenario, conclusions about the role of brand strategies in contributing to consumer value would emerge from the data (rather than being driven by theory and research propositions). This approach could then be used to build theory related to the role of branding in creating customer value. Although the constructs included in the EVH framework were supported by the interview data, it would be interesting and useful to examine consumer value at the brand level from a qualitative, or theory building, perspective. This line of research has the potential to contribute to marketing thought by introducing new themes and perspectives that may extend marketing thought related to the role of brand strategies in creating consumer value. In addition, the findings

from a theory-building approach may suggest possibilities for improving the interviewing method used in this study.

Summary of Research Priorities

The findings from this dissertation offer numerous interesting avenues for future research. This section combines and organizes these many options for future knowledge development into four major research streams, or priorities. Table 5-7 summarizes the research priorities that are discussed above.

Summary of Discussion Chapter and Conclusion

In total, this chapter summarizes findings from the dissertation study and discusses these findings in the context of the consumer value and branding literatures. The discussion that is presented highlights several potential contributions of the research to marketing thought. In addition, limitations of the study are noted and discussed.

Table 5-7. Summary of research priorities.

Description of Proposed Research	Potential Contribution(s) To Be Made by the Additional Study
Further examination and refinement of the four categories of attribute level brand associations suggested by the EVH framework (brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person and brand as symbol).	Enhance understanding of the nature, source, and relative strength (e.g., strongly versus weakly held) of attribute level brand associations, as well as the timing of association development (e.g., prior to versus during use).
Further examination of the situations and conditions under which brand strategies are more or less likely to affect consumer value.	Provide understanding of the role of brand strategies in influencing consumer value across various situations (e.g., use versus purchase), types of users (e.g., loyal versus not so loyal), brands (e.g., market leader versus follower), and product categories (e.g., public versus private goods). Increase transferability of research findings to a broader group of consumers, brands, and product categories.
Research that further integrates the EVH framework with customer value theory.	Understanding of the effect of brand strategies on desired (rather than received) value. Understanding how brand strategies can enhance consumer value to achieve desired outcomes for the marketer (e.g., increased brand equity, loyalty, etc.).
Theory-building research which would examine consumer value related to preferred brands from a qualitative perspective.	Introduction of new themes and perspectives that may extend marketing thought related to the role of brand strategies in creating consumer value.

Overall, the contributions of the study (such as the development and testing of the EVH framework and the insights regarding buyers of national and private label brands) suggest that this research met its objectives, which are outlined in Chapter 1. The bulk of the limitations are a result of study design (and were anticipated) rather than being a result of implementation. Thus, addressing the limitations of the study will require further research and investigation.

As might be expected, the findings presented in this dissertation suggest several interesting directions for future research. Those that are priorities are listed below:

- Further examination and refinement of the constructs in the EVH framework
- Further examination of the situations and conditions under which brand strategies may affect consumer value
- Further integration of the EVH framework with existing customer value theory
- Theory-building research which would examine what consumers value about brands from a qualitative perspective.

Additional research that examines consumer value as it relates to branding has the potential to further the contributions made by this study. First, it may underscore the importance of understanding the value that consumers associate with preferred brands. In addition, it may provide direction to marketers who are charged with developing brand strategies that enhance consumer value, build consumer loyalty, and/ or increase brand equity. In serving as the springboard for these lines of furture research, this dissertation has achieved one of its most important original goals.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Summary table of attribute level brand associations.

Assoc'n Number	Shredded Cheese	Soft Drinks	Content of Attribute Level Brand Association
101		X	Caffeine
102		X	No caffeine
103		X	Sweet taste
104		X	Bubbly taste
105		X	Strong taste
106		X	Taste
107		X	Unique taste
108		X	Sassafras taste
109		X	Good taste
110		X	Citrus taste
111		X	Smooth taste
112	X	X	Tastes the same as leading national brand
113		X	Taste is not syrupy
114	X	X	Consistent taste
115	X		Tastes like real cheese
116	X		Creamy taste
117	X		Sharp taste
118	X	X	Competitive price
119	X	X	Price
120	X	X	Low price
121	X	X	Price is lower than leading national brand
122	X	X	Frequent price promotions (sales, coupons)
123	X	X	More expensive
124	X	X	Consistent price
125		X	Acid/carbonation
126	X		Color
127	X		Best overall product
128		X	Comes in glass bottles
129		X	Comes in cans
130		X	Comes in 2 liter bottles
131	X		Cheddar cheesy smell
132	X	X	Consistency (product quality)
133	X	X	Consistent package
134		X	Diet product / low or no fat
135	X		Expiration date
136	X		Fine shred or texture
137	X		Thick shred or texture
138	X		Texture of product
139	X		Stringy texture
140	X		Smooth texture
141	X		Not dry in texture
142	X		Pre-shredded
143	X		Flavor selection
144	X		Fresh product
145		X	Not enough carbonation
146	X		Greasy (store brand)
147	X		Have herbs and seasonings in bag

148	X		Healthy ingredients (milk, less oil, natural)
149	X		Consistent ingredients
150	X		No moisture in the package
151	X		No dust in bag
152	X		Resealable bag
153	X	X	Size of package
154	X	X	Variety of flavors
201		X	Nice company employees
202		X	Available at Kroger
203	X	X	Clean store
204	X	X	Store guarantees the product
205	X	X	Company name is familiar
206	X	X	Company provides jobs for the Knoxville area
207	X		Large chain
208		X	Never heard anything bad about the company
209		X	Well-managed company
301	X	X	Brand is concerned about me
302	X	X	Brand is consistent/ dependable
303	X	X	Brand is familiar
304	X		Brand is honest presentation of what it is
305		X	Brand is successful
401	X	X	Brand name is well-known
402	X	X	Commercials are everywhere
403	X		Commercial with little girl
404		X	Commercials show people drinking Coke
405		X	Involve the world in their commercials
406	X		Kraft Theater
407	X	X	Recognizable symbol and trademark
408		X	Color of the Coke trucks
409	X		Colors on package as good as other brands
410	X		Dark colors on the package
411	X	X	Familiar packaging
412	X	X	Good package design
413	X	X	Legitimate packaging / logo
414	X	X	Packaging doesn't look cheap
415		X	Leader in soft drinks
416		X	My grandmother only buys Coke
417	X	X	What I grew up eating / drinking
418		X	Ritual of drinking at work

Note: Attribute level brand associations coded in the 100's represent brand as product associations; codes in the 200's represent brand as organization associations; codes in the 300's represent brand as person associations; and codes in the 400's represent brand as symbol associations.

Appendix B. Summary table of consequence level brand associations.

Assoc'n Number	Shredded Cheese	Soft Drinks	Content of Consequence Level Brand Association
1001		X	Am ready for work the next day
1002	X	X	Avoid health problems
1003	X	X	Better for your body
1004		X	Big relief
1005		X	Breaks the monotony of driving
1006	X		Brings out the flavor of the food
1007		X	Builds commaraderie with other drinkers
1008		X	Burns as it goes down
1009	X	X	Buy a little more of it
1010	X	X	Can accomplish my plan for the day
1011	X		Can avoid eating oil
1012	X		Can be attentive with my learning
1013	X		Can be creative
1014	X	X	Can buy clothes
1015	X	X	Can buy more (bigger quantities)
1016	X	X	Can buy more dolls
1017		X	Can buy on my lunch break
1018	X	X	Can buy other things (Cokes or groceries)
1019	X	X	Can buy something for the house
1020	X	X	Can buy something for the kids
1021	X	X	Can buy things other than food
1022		X	Can concentrate better
1023	X	X	Can cut corners
1024		X	Can do all my errands there
1025	X	X	Can do better at my job
1026		X	Can drink more of it
1027	X		Can eat healthy
1028	X		Can eat more
1029	X	X	Can enjoy something different
1030	X		Can feed a family of five on my budget
1031	X	X	Can feed my family
1032	X	X	Can find it in a rush
1033	X	X	Can find it in a strange city
1034	X	X	Can find something that fits my need
1035		X	Can get a tan
1036	X	X	Can get in and out of store quickly
1037		X	Can get more done at work
1038	X		Can get my nutrients
1039	X	X	Can get on with my day
1040	X	X	Can get something extra for my children
1041		X	Can get teeth fixed
1042		X	Can get twice as much for the same price
1043		X	Can give you bad side effects
1044		X	Can go about my job/ get through my day
1045		X	Can go golfing
1046		X	Can go to garage sales
1047		X	Can go to Wal-Mart

1048		X	Can handle the kids
1049	X	X	Can have extra money in my pocket
1050		X	Can have it in my refrigerator
1051		X	Can keep the cans in my office/ not refrigerator
1052		X	Can keep your job
1053	X	X	Can make it to the next payday
1054	X		Can make more meals with cheese
1055	X	X	Can make my car and mortgage payments
1056		X	Can make my stomach cramp
1057	X		Can offset growing appetites in my family
1058	X	X	Can pay off debt
1059	X		Can pick a size that won't go stale
1060	X		Can pick the cheese that goes best with my meal
1061		X	Can please everyone in my house
1062	X		Can promise quality to my clients
1064	X		Can really taste the cheese
1065		X	Can recycle them
1066	X		Can rely on my ingredients to be right
1067	X		Can reseal bag when you don't use it all
1068	X		Can see ingredients more easily
1069		X	Can sleep longer
1070		X	Can spend a relaxing evening with my husband
1071	X		Can stay in business
1072		X	Can stay out in the sun longer
1073		X	Can stop smoking
1074	X	X	Can take advantage of sales
1075	X		Can talk to them while they are stocking shelves
1076	X		Can taste all the flavors in the dish
1077	X	X	Can tell they put time into their advertising
1078	X	X	Can try something different
1079	X		Can use my skills as a cook
1080	X	X	Can watch my weight
1081	X	X	Can wear bathing suits
1082		X	Catches your eye
1083	X		Cheese doesn't dry up
1084	X		Cheese doesn't go bad
1085	X		Cheese is more appealing
1086	X		Cheese is not stuck together in a lump
1087	X		Cheese melts better
1088		X	Conserve my energy
1089		X	Cools me off
1090		X	Do your part for the world
1091	X		Does its job as an ingredient
1092		X	Doesn't burn your nose
1093	X		Doesn't clog your arteries
1094	X		Doesn't detract from the meal
1095		X	Doesn't fizz
1096		X	Doesn't give you heartburn

1097	X	X	Doesn't go on your hips
1098		X	Doesn't have an aftertaste
1099	X		Doesn't leave me still wanting something else
1100	X		Doesn't mess up my day
1101	X		Doesn't sink into the pizza sauce
1102	X		Doesn't stand out on my food
1103	X		Doesn't taste as good
1104	X		Doesn't taste like an imitation
1105	X		Don't buy food in store that I don't need to
1106		X	Don't drink as much
1107	X		Don't feel bad physically after I eat
1108		X	Don't feel well physically
1109		X	Don't get a headache
1110		X	Don't get as tired
1111		X	Don't get edgy
1112	X	X	Don't get sick
1113		X	Don't get stomach cramps after drinking it
1114	X	X	Don't get your money's worth
1115	X		Don't have extra cheese left over
1116		X	Don't have to brush my teeth
1117	X		Don't have to change my grocery routine
1118	X	X	Don't have to cut back in other areas
1119	X		Don't have to get out the cheese shredder
1120	X		Don't have to go to another store
1121		X	Don't have to go to the store as much
1122	X	X	Don't have to guess whether product will be good
1123	X		Don't have to put it in Tupperware
1124	X		Don't have to take it back
1125	X		Don't have to tell guests they are having a different meal
1126		X	Don't have to tell kids they can't have it
1127	X		Don't have to think about buying different cheeses
1128	X		Don't have to wait as long for meal to cook
1129	X	X	Don't lose money on it
1130	X		Don't risk having a bad meal
1131		X	Don't run out
1132		X	Don't snap at my kids
1133	X	X	Don't waste money
1134	X		Don't waste my time buying something bad
1135	X	X	Don't waste time on routine things
1136	X		Easier for my daughter to help me cook
1137	X		Easier to digest
1138	X		Easier to get it to spread out
1139	X		Easier to get the taste out of your mouth
1140	X		Easier to make dinner for my family
1141	X		Easy to chew
1142		X	Easy to take to work
1143	X		Eat less
1144	X		Eliminates a step for you

1145	X		Food is more appealing
1146	X		Food is more satisfying
1147	X		Food tastes good
1148		X	Fulfills a craving
1149	X		Get full more quickly
1150	X	X	Get out of the store more quickly
1151	X	X	Get value for my money
1152	X	X	Get what you expect when you are buying
1153	X	X	Get what you want
1154	X	X	Give up some taste for the private label
1155		X	Gives me a break in the morning
1156		X	Gives me a citrusy feeling in my mouth
1157		X	Gives me a filling sensation
1158		X	Gives me a pick me up/ energy
1159	X		Gives me milk substitutes
1160	X		Gives me variety
1161		X	Goes down smoothly
1162	X		Goes well with the dishes I am making
1163		X	Good for my environment/ community
1164	X		Have dollars to give my child lunch money
1165	X		Have done my job to keep me safe
1166	X		Have to dab pizza with a paper towel
1167	X		Helps me stay healthy
1168		X	Helps me wind down (after work)
1169	X		Helps me keep my costs down for clients
1170	X		Helps my numbers for my business
1171	X	X	Helps me look better physically
1172		X	Keeps families from having to apply for assistance
1173	X		Keeps kids thin
1174		X	Keeps me from having a diabetic reaction
1175	X	X	Keeps me from spending as much money
1176		X	Keeps me from wanting a cigarette
1177		X	Keeps me out of crowds/lines
1178		X	Keeps my kids from being addicted to sugar
1179		X	Keeps my mouth from being dry
1180		X	Keeps taxes lower
1181	X		Kids don't complain about it
1182		X	Kids don't spit up as much
1183		X	Kids won't be dependent
1184		X	Kids won't tear up the house
1185	X	X	Know brand is good to give your family
1186		X	Know brand is in demand
1187	X	X	Know brand must be high quality
1188	X		Know brand will have the same texture
1189	X	X	Know brand will taste the same every day
1190	X		Know the cheese is fresh
1191	X		Know the cheese won't be moldy
1192	X	X	Know company will stand behind its product
1193	X	X	Know the cost of it
1194	X		Know the product is clean
1195	X		Know what I am putting in my body

1196	X	X	Know you are buying a store brand
1197	X	X	Know you will make good use of your money there
1198		X	Lets me belch
1199		X	Lets me save sugar for something special (eg cake)
1200	X	X	Lets you buy something big and fun
1201	X		Looks cleaner
1202	X		Looks more like a restaurant
1203	X		Looks more professional
1204		X	Lowers insurance costs
1205	X	X	Make good decisions
1206	X		Make time to talk to my daughter
1207	X		Makes a meal look better
1208	X		Makes a meal taste good
1209	X		Makes a Mexican dish more Mexican
1210		X	Makes a party in my mouth
1211	X		Makes cooking easier
1212	X		Makes home a little nicer
1213	X	X	Makes life easier
1214	X	X	Makes me a better party host
1215	X		Makes my business more profitable
1216	X		Makes my meal a little different
1217	X		Makes my mouth water
1218	X	X	Makes purchasing quicker
1219	X	X	Makes the brand seem familiar
1220	X		Makes your food exciting
1221	X	X	Makes your money stretch more
1222		X	Makes your mouth feel clean
1223	X		Meal is more hearty
1224	X		More attractive appearance
1225	X		More consistent
1226	X		More convenient to add to a recipe
1227	X		More filling
1228		X	More pleasant to drink
1229		X	More portable
1230	X	X	More productive
1231	X		Motivated to cook my own meal for dinner
1232	X		My clients will use me again
1233	X	X	My clothes fit better
1234		X	No bitter taste in my mouth
1235		X	No gray hair
1236		X	No one has died from drinking them
1237	X		No taste
1238		X	Not heavy on your stomach
1239	X		People are eager to eat the food you make
1240		X	Perform better in class or rehersal
1241	X		Pizza has little pools of grease
1242	X	X	Pleasant in my mouth
1243		X	Provides relief
1244	X		Put less chemicals in your body
1245		X	Quenches my thirst

1246		X	Reminds me to be alert
1247		X	Replenishes me
1248	X	X	Safe to use
1249	X	X	Satisfies me
1250	X		Satisfies my hunger
1251		X	Satisfies my thirst
1252		X	Save energy for important things in life
1253		X	Save gas
1254	X	X	Saves money
1255	X	X	Saves time
1256	X	X	Saves frustration
1257	X	X	Saves resources
1258	X	X	Saves time for something special
1259	X		Saves time when you are cleaning up
1260	X		Saves waste
1261	X	X	Saves worry
1262		X	Shocks my taste buds
1263	X		Shows me that this cheese has a milk (not oil) base
1264	X	X	Shows company takes time to make a decent product
1265	X		Smells good
1266		X	Smooth going down my throat
1267	X	X	Something different for me
1268	X		Sounds Italian
1269	X	X	Spending money there is like an investment
1270	X		Stays in refrigerator better/ fresher
1271	X		Stays with me
1272		X	Stuns you
1273		X	Substitutes for exercise
1274		X	Support Knox Co. schools (my work)
1275		X	Tastes cool in my mouth
1276		X	Tastes cool in the summer
1277	X	X	Tells you if it is same product as national brand
1278	X		Tells you if the cheese has been aged
1279	X	X	Think the brand is worth trying
1280		X	Tingles in your mouth
1281		X	Treat for my kids
1282		X	Visible at work
1283		X	Wakes me up
1284		X	Want to help a company that helps others
1285	X	X	Will help me have money to retire
1286	X		Will last longer
1287		X	Won't have a hyperactive baby
1288		X	Won't raise my daughter's blood pressure
1289		X	Won't ruin my craving
1290	X	X	Worth my effort to take home
1291	X	X	Worth paying a little extra for
1292	X		You get the full impact of the cheese flavor
1293	X	X	You know what the brand stands for
2001		X	Calms my nerves

2002	X	X	Can buy from a company that cares
2003		X	Can enjoy myself
2004		X	Can see people grow in a positive way
2005	X	X	Can take pride in the product
2006	X	X	Don't feel bad about spending the money
2007		X	Don't feel disgusting or uncomfortable
2008	X	X	Don't feel like I am being cheated
2009	X	X	Don't feel like I am giving money away
2010	X	X	Don't get in a bad mood
2011	X		Don't get scared
2012	X	X	Don't have to worry
2013	X		Don't have to worry about a recall
2014	X	X	Don't have to worry about choosing between brands
2015	X		Don't have to worry about it being moldy
2016	X	X	Don't have to worry about money as much
2017	X	X	Don't have to worry about trying something new
2018	X		Don't have to worry about your food
2019	X	X	Enjoy my meal
2020	X	X	Everything else in life falls into place
2021	X	X	Feel better about my diet
2022	X	X	Feel better emotionally
2023	X	X	Feel comfortable buying there
2024	X	X	Feel comfortable with the brand
2025	X	X	Feel confident in the product
2026		X	Feel energized
2027		X	Feel good about helping good people
2028	X		Feel good about my meal
2029	X	X	Feel good about myself
2030	X		Feel good about what you are eating
2031	X	X	Feel good about your purchase
2032	X	X	Feel important as a customer
2034	X	X	Feel less stressed
2035	X	X	Feel like a good shopper
2036	X		Feel like everything is just right
2037	X	X	Feel like I am getting a deal
2038	X	X	Feel like I am indulging myself
2039	X	X	Feel like I am not wasting my money
2040	X		Feel like I am supporting a smaller company
2041	X	X	Feel like I am valued
2042	X	X	Feel like I cut corners
2043	X	X	Feel like I have wasted
2044	X	X	Feel like I outsmarted the store
2045		X	Feel like you can go on
2046		X	Feel more refreshed
2047		X	Feel more relaxed
2048		X	Feel ready to go for my day
2049	X	X	Feel resentful that we can't buy what we want
2050	X	X	Feel that you have more choices
2051		X	Feel that you have more wealth

2052		X	Feels like a change
2053		X	Feels like paradise in my mouth
2054		X	Gives me a feeling of relief
2055		X	Gives me a moment to myself
2056	X		Gives you an authentic feeling
2057		X	Feel like I am connected to what is going on
2058		X	I feel special drinking it
2059		X	Keeps me from embarrassing myself
2060	X	X	Know kids will be satisfied
2061	X	X	Know they will be there in future years
2062		X	My security blanket
2063	X	X	Not afraid it will hurt me
2064	X	X	Not afraid to buy the product again
2065		X	Not afraid to drink it
2066	X	X	Not disappointed
2067	X	X	Not embarassed
2068		X	Puts me in my comfort zone
2069	X	X	Reminds me of being a kid
2070	X		Reminds me of mom
2071		X	Simple pleasure
2072	X	X	Something I can rely on
2073		X	Tells me company is considerate of vision impaired
2074	X	X	Trust brand
2075	X	X	Trust the company
2076	X		Wouldn't feel bad about getting a larger package
2077	X	X	You don't worry
3001		X	Don't have reputation of falling asleep at work
3002	X		Don't want to lose your friends over a meal
3003	X	X	Guests might think I am cheap
3004	X		Helps my reputation as a cook
3005	X	X	My family is pleased
3006		X	Grandmother is proud of me if I buy Coke
3007	X		No one sees what brand of cheese I buy
3008	X		Not authentic
3009		X	See yourself as different that non-drinkers
3010		X	See yourself as similar to other drinkers
3011		X	Shows I am open to new ideas
3012	X	X	Shows my children I love them
3013	X	X	Shows my friends I want the best for them
3014	X	X	Shows you are using common sense
3015	X	X	They might look down on me
3016		X	You think of new possibilities for yourself

Note: Consequence level brand associations coded in the 1000's represent functional consequences; codes in the 2000's represent emotional consequences; and codes in the 3000's represent self-expressive consequences.

Appendix C. Summary table of desired end states.

Desired End State Number	Shredded Cheese	Soft Drinks	Content of Desired End State Association
801	X	X	Balance
802	X	X	Better appearance
803	X	X	Better host
804	X	X	Can control my weight
805		X	Can deal with things more easily
806		X	Can get through my day
807	X		Can live on my disability income
808		X	Can pass my class
809		X	Can rest at night
810	X	X	Can stay in graduate school
811	X		Can take pride in the meals I cook
812	X	X	Can treat myself
813		X	Comfort
814	X	X	Community/ local orientation
815	X		Conflicts with Italian heritage
816	X	X	Connect with my past
817	X	X	Conservation
818	X	X	Consistency/ habit
819		X	Contribute to society's welfare
820	X	X	Do well in areas of life that are important to me
821	X		Don't give as much money to corporate America
822	X	X	Enjoyment/ pleasure
823	X	X	Environmental concern
824	X	X	Good health
825	X	X	Good judgement
826	X	X	Good parent to my kids
827	X	X	Good person
828	X	X	Good provider
829	X		Good reputation as a businessperson
830	X	X	Happiness/ pleasure
831	X	X	Have no friends
832	X		Have time to relax
833	X	X	Helps me take advantage of what God has given me
834	X	X	Helps us get by on our (low) income
835	X	X	I am a good homemaker
836	X	X	I am a wise shopper
837		X	I am an opinion leader among my friends
838	X	X	I am content
839	X	X	I am making good decisions
840	X	X	I am responsible with my money
841	X	X	I did God's will for the day
842	X	X	Improve my relationship/ marriage
843	X	X	Keeps me in control
844	X	X	Knowledgeable

845	X	X	Less hassle
846		X	Let me live more of life
847		X	Lets me serve others
848	X	X	Live longer life
849	X		Loss of self respect
850	X		Maintain a vegetarian lifestyle
851	X	X	Makes life easier
853	X		Mom would be proud of me
854	X		My hunger is satisfied
855		X	My vice ("drug of choice")
856	X	X	Need fulfillment
857	X	X	Nice appearance
858	X	X	No surprises
859	X	X	Not in control
860	X	X	Not pleasant
861	X	X	Peace of mind
862	X	X	Personal safety
863	X	X	Pride
864	X	X	Pride in my heritage
865	X	X	Pride in my work
866	X	X	Productivity
867	X	X	Prudent
868		X	Reassuring
869	X	X	Recognition
870	X	X	Reflects well on me
871	X		Respect for family
872	X	X	Safety
873	X	X	Satisfies/ fulfills me
874	X	X	Security
875	X	X	Self-importance
876	X	X	Sense of being treated right
877		X	Sense of belonging
878	X	X	Sense of equity
879		X	Sense of freedom
880		X	Something special for me
881	X	X	Stability in life
882	X	X	Validates you
883	X	X	Vanity
884	X	X	Variety

Note: Desired end state associations are coded in the 800's.

Appendix D. Summary codes for attribute level brand associations.

Assoc'n Code	Shredded Cheese	Soft Drinks	Code Definition
C101		X	Caffeine
C102	X	X	Taste/ flavor
C103	X	X	Price
C104		X	Carbonation
C105	X		Color
C106	X	X	Product quality
C107	X	X	Characteristics of packaging
C108	X		Smell
C109	X	X	Low fat
C110	X		Texture
C111	X		Shred
C112	X		Freshness/ healthiness of ingredients
C113	X	X	Variety of flavors
C201	X	X	Employees
C202	X	X	Store facility/ locations
C203	X	X	Store guarantee
C204	X	X	Store name/ organizational reputation
C301	X	X	Brand is concerned/ cares about me
C302	X	X	Brand is consistent/ dependable
C303	X	X	Brand is familiar
C304	X	X	Brand is honest
C305	X	X	Brand is successful
C401	X	X	Brand name/ image
C402	X	X	Commercials
C403	X	X	Logo/ trademark
C404	X	X	Meaning conveyed by packaging
C405	X	X	Past experience/ rituals associated with the brand

Note: Attribute level brand associations coded in the 100's represent brand as product associations; codes in the 200's represent brand as organization associations; codes in the 300's represent brand as person associations; and codes in the 400's represent brand as symbol associations.

Appendix E. Summary codes for consequence level brand associations.

Assoc'n Code	Shredded Cheese	Soft Drinks	Code Definition
C501		X	Gets me ready for my day
C502	X	X	Helps me stay healthy
C503	X	X	Breaks the monotony/ gives me something different
C504	X		Makes my food taste better
C505	X	X	Makes me more productive
C506	X	X	Can buy more things
C507	X	X	Can save money
C508	X	X	Can drink/ eat more
C509	X	X	Easy to find/ access
C510	X	X	Can feed my family/ survive
C511		X	Can give you bad side effects
C512	X	X	Can stay/ live within my budget
C513	X	X	Gives me choices
C514	X	X	Can please others
C515	X	X	Can reduce waste / recycle
C516	X	X	Less hassle
C517		X	Can sleep /rest / helps me wind down
C518	X	X	Lets me treat myself
C519	X	X	Can accomplish my goals
C520	X	X	Can socialize more/ be more friendly
C521	X	X	Can evaluate the company/ brand better
C522	X	X	Makes me more attractive
C523	X	X	Makes me notice/ pay attention to the brand
C524	X		Makes my food more attractive
C525		X	Makes me more refreshed/ cooler
C526	X	X	Can do good for others / my community
C527	X	X	Fills me up/ satisfies my hunger
C528	X	X	More convenient for me
C529		X	Don't drink as much
C530	X	X	Less risk for me
C531	X		Lasts longer
C532	X	X	Get what you expect
C533	X	X	Gives me a pick me up/ energy
C534	X		Safe for me to eat
C535		X	Helps me avoid bad habits I have
C536	X	X	Good for my kids/ family to eat
C537	X	X	Know that the brand is high quality/ in demand
C538	X	X	Consistent every time
C539	X	X	Makes my home/ life a little nicer
C540	X		Makes my business more profitable
C541		X	Makes my mouth feel clean
C542	X		People are more eager to eat the food you make
C543	X		Makes my food less attractive/ appealing
C544		X	Quenches my thirst

C545	X	X	Saves time/ energy
C546	X		Shows me food is good for me/ natural ingredients
C547	X		Stays fresh longer
C601	X	X	Feel like the company cares about me
C602		X	Calms/ relaxes me
C603	X	X	Makes me happy
C604	X	X	Makes me proud
C605	X	X	Comforts me/ less worry
C606	X	X	Makes me feel that I was treated fairly
C607	X	X	Reassures me/ feel better emotionally
C608	X	X	Gives me confidence
C609		X	Energizes/ rejuvenates me
C610	X	X	Makes me feel like I am a good/ responsible person
C611	X	X	Makes me feel important/ wealthy/ special
C612	X	X	Feel like a new/ different person
C613	X	X	Makes me feel secure/ not afraid
C614	X	X	Brings back good memories for me
C615	X	X	Gives me something I can trust/ rely on
C701	X	X	Helps my reputation
C702	X	X	Pleases others
C703	X	X	Shows others that I want the best for them
C704	X	X	No one else sees what brand I buy
C705		X	Differentiates me from others
C706		X	Affiliates/ associates me with others
C707	X	X	Shows others I am an interesting, creative person

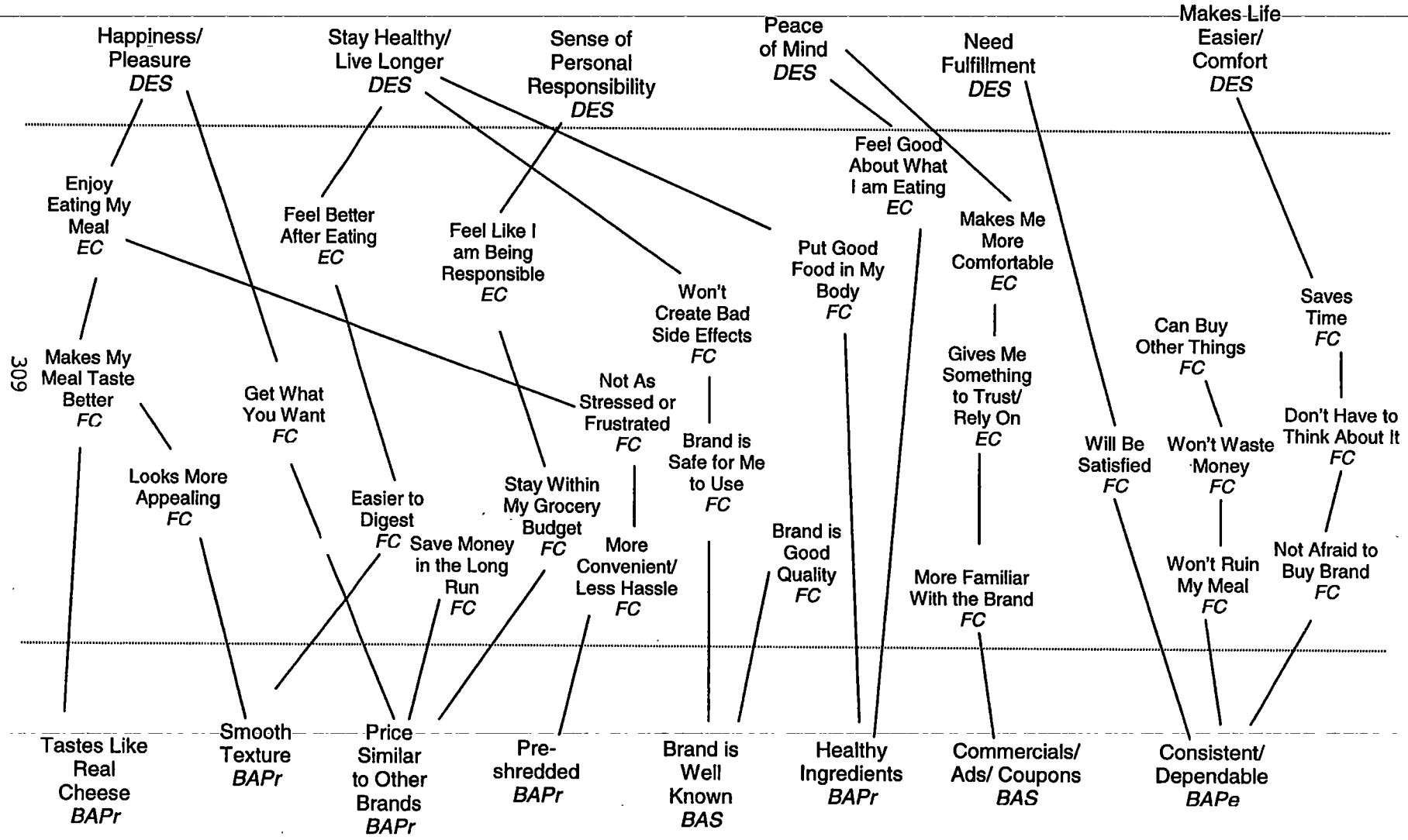
Note: Consequence level brand associations coded in the 500's represent functional consequences; codes in the 600's represent emotional consequences; and codes in the 700's represent self-expressive consequences.

Appendix F. Summary codes for desired end states.

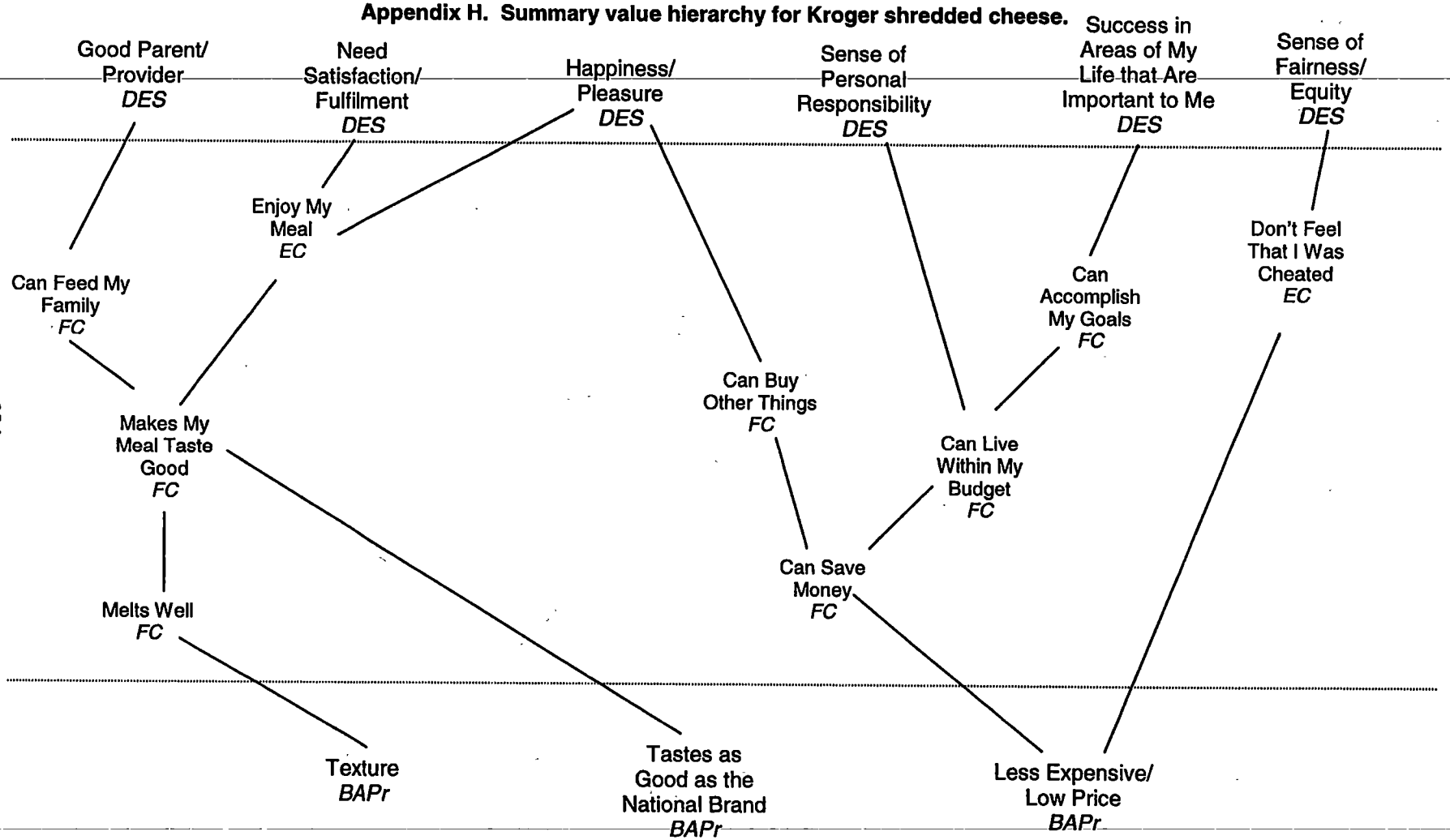
Assoc'n Code	Shredded Cheese	Soft Drinks	Code Definition
C801	X	X	Physical appearance/ beauty
C802	X	X	Consistency/ habit
C803	X	X	Connect with past/ heritage
C804	X	X	Contribute to the welfare of society
C805	X	X	Success in areas of life that are important to me
C806	X	X	Pleasure/ happiness
C807	X	X	Healthy/ long life
C808	X	X	Good person/ provider
C809	X	X	Comfort/ contentment/ balance
C810	X	X	Glorify God/ spiritual peace
C811	X	X	Survival
C812	X	X	Wisdom/ leadership
C813	X	X	Sense of personal responsibility
C814	X	X	Loss of friends/ self-respect
C815	X	X	Pride in self/ make others proud
C816	X	X	Need satisfaction/ fulfillment
C817	X	X	Peace of mind
C818	X	X	Personal safety
C819		X	Affiliation/ sense of belonging
C820	X	X	Sense of fairness/ equity
C821	X	X	Sense of freedom
C822	X	X	Variety/ change

Note: Desired end state codes are in the 800's.

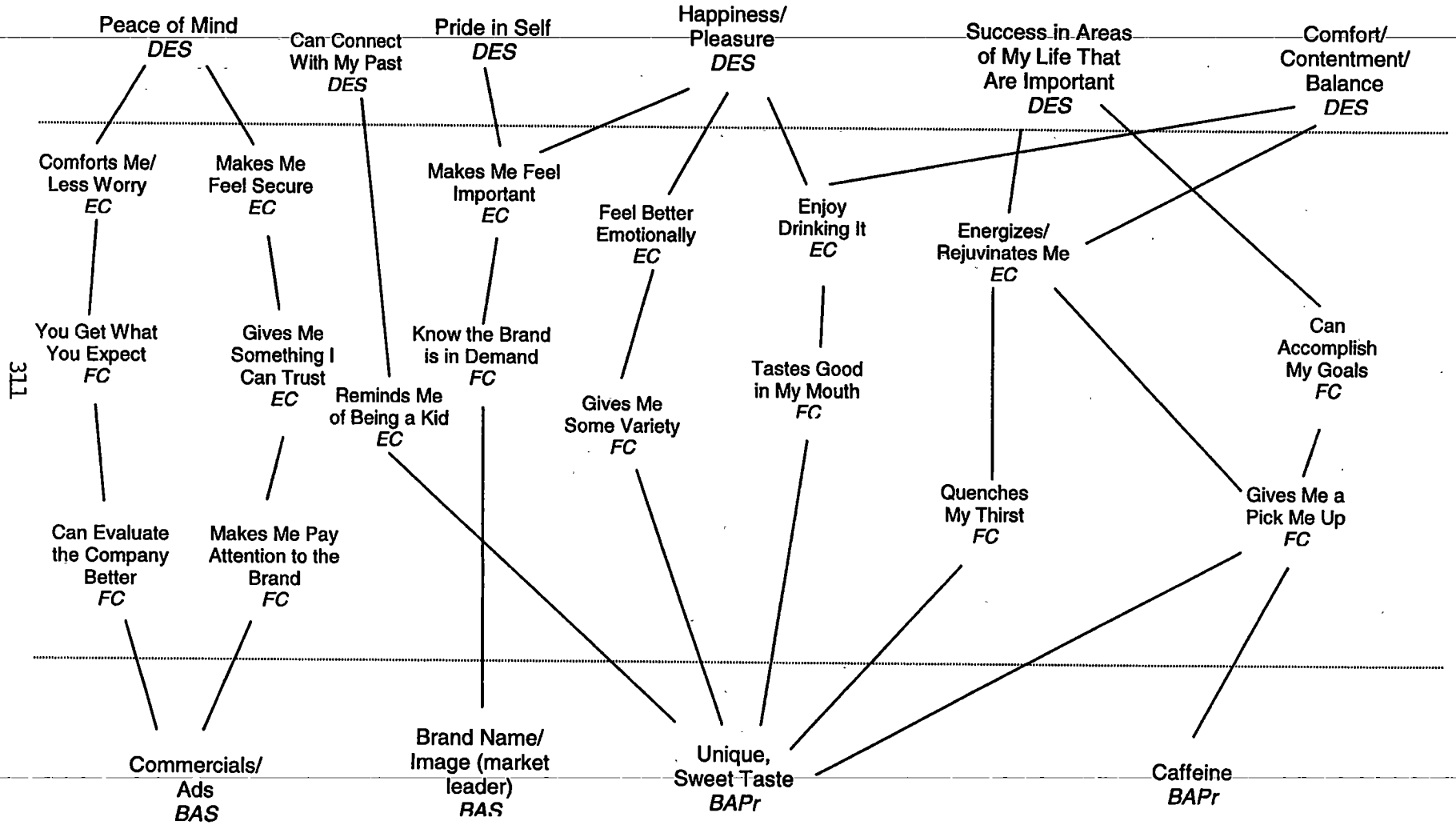
Appendix G. Summary value hierarchy for Kraft shredded cheese.



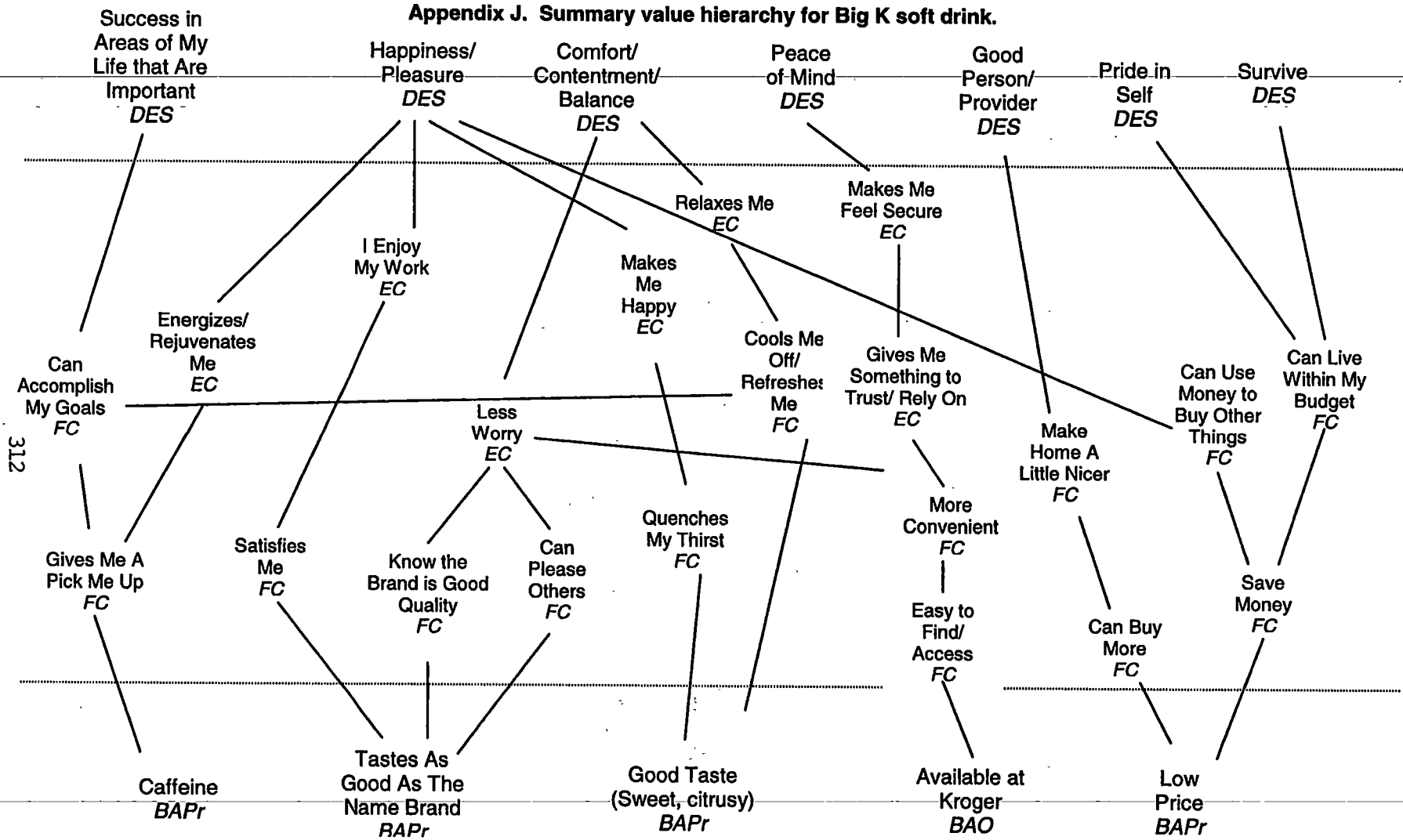
Appendix H. Summary value hierarchy for Kroger shredded cheese.



Appendix I. Summary value hierarchy for Coca-Cola soft drink.



Appendix J. Summary value hierarchy for Big K soft drink.



Vita

Amy Cathey was born in Knoxville, Tennessee on November 19, 1966. She attended schools in Knoxville, Tennessee, where she graduated from Bearden High School in June, 1985. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in June of 1988 and a Master of Business Administration degree in May of 1990, both from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Amy has worked in market research in the hospitality and technology industries and for several market research consulting companies. Amy's interest in market research led her to enter the doctoral program in marketing, also at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. As part of her work in the doctoral program, Amy refined her research interests, becoming specifically interested in understanding customer value.

During her doctoral program, Amy was a member of the Customer Value Research Team in the Department of Marketing, Logistics and Transportation. She also served as project manager for several customer value determination studies. These studies helped her learn about a number of industries, including consumer packaged goods, consumer durables, business services, insurance, business-to-business, and higher education. Amy received her doctoral degree in August 1999.