Guilt and shame appeals in advertisements for conspicuous consumption goods

Bachelor thesis

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Introduction
Advertising is very common in our society. You can find advertisements everywhere: on television, billboards, in newspapers, on the internet and in many more places. All these advertisements have the goal to let people behave in a certain way: they want you to buy a product, to donate money to charity, to stop cursing, to stop smoking and so on.

In 1925, Strong introduced one of the first advertisement models; this was the AIDA model, what stands for: **Attention, Interest, Desire and Action**. In this model emotions play an important role in advertisement. During the advertisement, the emotion of desire occurs after the interest for the product. After Strong introduced this model, the role of emotions in advertisements has changed. Since 1980 people really start to think about emotions in advertisements (Poels & Dewitte, 2006). So Zajonc (1980) argued that emotions also function independently of the interest for the advertisement of the product. And after Zajonc many other researchers accepted that emotions were a mediator for cognitive and behavioural response. (Batra & Ray, 1986; Edell & Burke, 1987; Holbrook & Batra, 1987)

There are many examples of the use of emotions in advertisements. One of them is the anti-smoking campaign in the Netherlands, which said: ‘smoking is so 2012.’ This campaign tried to let you feel out-dated if you were smoking. There are also many campaigns that ask you to donate money to charity, showing little sad children. This is supposed to let you feel sorry for those children and therefore more willing to donate. Another good example of an advertisement which uses emotions is the Dove advertisement about real beauty. This advertisement tries to make you feel good about yourself, regardless of how you look. As you can see, it is not odd that using emotions in advertisements and campaigns is more common nowadays. A lot of research has been done on the influence of emotions on behaviour and we know that different emotions (positively) affect our behaviour, so using this in advertisements is convenient.

The influence of emotions on behaviour is not a self-contained concept. It depends not only on the type of behaviour but also on the context in which the emotion is presented (Agrawal and Duhachek, 2012). Agrawal and Duhachek found that two emotions which are quite similar, namely guilt and shame, have a different effect on drinking behaviour when in a campaign they are framed as either a gain or a loss. Guilt and shame are quite similar emotions because they are both caused by doing something ‘wrong.’ What Agrawal and Duhachek found was that guilt framed as a gain made the persuasion in the message more effective and the same effect occurred by shame being framed as a loss.

However, Agrawal and Duhachek only focused on preventing behaviour (**drinking too much**). The question whether these findings can be generalized to other consumer behaviour (**Stimulating to do and / or buy something**) remains. That is why this research will focus on the emotions guilt and shame and test if using them in advertisements has influence on the effectiveness of the advertisement.

Current research will focus on advertisements for conspicuous consumption goods, because I assume that guilt and shame are relevant emotions by conspicuous consumption. The guilt and shame feeling can go away by buying a conspicuous consumption good. An example is the moment at which you feel ashamed because you do not have the good. This shame will then go away when you buy the good. You can also feel ashamed because you have a so-called lower social status, for example
because you do not have an expensive car or watch. The feeling guilt can appear when you have offended someone because you did not have a conspicuous consumption good, for example you could not use expensive china or silver utensils when they visited you. You can get rid of this feeling of guilt by buying these goods and use them the next time when these people visit you.

The goal of this research is to understand the influence of guilt and shame even more than we already do. Known is that guilt and shame have an influence in campaigns that try to prevent people from behaving in a certain way. It is also known that the frame of the emotion has an influence of the effectiveness of the persuasion. It has not been researched yet whether guilt and shame have the same influence in advertisements that want to pursue people to behave in a certain way. That is why I want to research whether using guilt and shame in advertisements for conspicuous consumption goods does influence the persuasive message of those advertisements. Since it is known that the frame also influences the effectiveness of the messages, I also want to research what the interaction effect between the emotion and the frame is.
Literature review

Conspicuous consumption

The first time conspicuous consumption was introduced as scientific concept was in 1899 by Thorstein Bunde Veblen in his work the Theory of the Leisure Class. According to Veblen, conspicuous consumption was something for the upper class in that century. Rather than only buying the goods which covered their basic needs, the upper class showed how wealthy they were and how high their income was using their possessions. The goods they bought were to maintain or to gain a higher social status. The standard effect, in which demand for a product decreases when prices rise, cannot be applied to conspicuous consumption goods. In case of conspicuous consumption goods the opposite effect occurs: when the price rises, the demand for the product will increase. Examples of conspicuous consumption goods in the late nineteen and early twenty century are silver utensils, which people only used when they had visitors, and the china for meals. Nowadays the silver utensils and the china are less common, but a good example of a conspicuous consumption good nowadays is expensive cars.

Conspicuous consumption is consumption which aims to show that you are wealthy and have a high income, so that other people think that you have a high social status.

Emotions and conspicuous consumption

Nowadays there is not much information on how emotions influence conspicuous consumption. Conspicuous consumption would give you a higher social status, which has as result that people are faster accepted in social clubs. (Jaramillo, Kempf and Moizeau, 2001) You can conclude from this that people who are feeling excluded, are more likely to buy conspicuous consumption goods, so they will belong to a group.

I think guilt and shame would be interesting by conspicuous consumption, because when you feel guilty or ashamed, you can feel excluded from a group. In case you hurt someone in the group and feel guilty about that, you think you do not belong to the group anymore. You did something weird or do not have something everybody else have, and feel ashamed about it and are therefore excluded from the group. Not having conspicuous consumption goods can make you feel ashamed because you have a so called lower social status which makes you feel excluded from the group. Not having a conspicuous consumption good can also make you feel guilty, because when you had the good, you would not be too late for your date or you could show your guest they are worth expensive china or silver utensils.

Because conspicuous consumption is related to the emotions this research covers, I want to find out whether the emotions guilt and shame have an influence on consumption behaviour. Agrawal and Duhachek already did some research related to the influence of guilt and shame on consumer behaviour related to drinking alcoholic beverages.

Agrawal and Duhachek

Agrawal and Duhachek (2010) researched whether using guilt and shame in messages is an effective way to prevent people from doing a certain behaviour. They tested this by highlighting the socially undesirable consequences of alcohol consumption and found that compatible appeals in the message, so appeals that evoke the same emotion as experienced in first instance by the receiver of
the message, are less effective in influencing intentions. This is because of the process that occurs after the message is received. This process reduces how the receiver thinks of the possibility that he or she will cause the negative consequence, because they want to reduce that existing negative emotion. Therefore, people experience the negative emotion (guilt or shame) because they did something, they see a message which evokes the same emotion, the emotion which they in fact want to reduce. Subsequently, they process the message in a defensive way, which leads to a less effective influence on the behavioural intentions.

In this research I want to let people start with behaviour by using guilt and shame in an advertisement. I expect that using guilt and shame in advertisements for ‘starting behaviour’ will have a different effect compared to using guilt and shame in a campaign, which tries to prevent people from doing behaviour in the future (as Agrawal and Duhachek did). For example, in the anti-drinking message used by Agrawal and Duhachek, shame and guilt can be very vivid. Also the only solution to avoid those negative consequences is to start drinking responsible and they already know that. In the advertisement for a conspicuous consumption good this is different. The consequences that cause the guilt or shame will not be that vivid for everyone. Also buying the advertised product is not the only solution, so it can be that this solution is still unclear by the receiver of the message.

The emotions which were evoked in the research of Agrawal and Duhachek were guilt and shame. As mentioned previously, those emotions are quite similar because they are both caused by doing something ‘wrong’. But what are those emotions exactly and how do they work?

**Guilt**

Guilt is a negative emotion which arises after a moral transgression (Baumeister, Stillwell & Heatherton, 1994). This means that you act in a way that deviates from normal and which harmed other people. People experiencing guilt harmed someone with their behaviour and as consequence, perceive themselves as a bad person (Lewis, 1971). Guilt gives a feeling of high self-efficacy, so people who experience guilt are aware that the behaviour they did is something they choose to do by themselves. Because the guilt-laden person focuses on the aspect of the self which behaved unfavourably and he or she wants to fix this aspect, guilt gives a focus on the problem: the negative aspect of the self. And this negative aspect has to be changed, to make the guilt feeling disappear (Agrawal and Duhachek, 2012).

Agrawal and Duhachek claim that this problem-focus after feeling guilt motivates pro-social behaviour, whereby the relation between the guilt-laden person and the victim will be restored. This is why some studies claim that guilt is a negative emotion with positive consequences (de Hooge et al. 2009). But does the pro-social behaviour after experiencing guilt exist because the guilt-laden person wants to repair the relation between themselves and the victim, or because they want to get rid of the feelings of guilt? De Hooge (2012) claims the reason is that the guilt-laden person wants to get rid of the feelings of guilt.

Agrawal and Duhachek stated that compatible appeals in (anti-drinking) messages are less effective. However, this is also the case with conspicuous consumption. As mentioned before, I think that in case of conspicuous consumption the negative emotion, guilt, is less vivid compared to the case of drinking too much. When you drink too much, the only solution is to stop drinking. In case of conspicuous consumption there are multiple solutions to get rid of the guilt feeling. Because of this I think that the results of Agrawal and Duhachek cannot be generalized to conspicuous consumption.
If pro-social behaviour follows on guilt, I think that conspicuous behaviour will not follow on guilt. Conspicuous consumption is behaviour in which people are more concerned about the self and how the self is presented. This is why I state that conspicuous consumption is not pro-social behaviour. Guilt motivates pro-social behaviour, whether to repair the relation between themselves and the victim, or to get rid of guilt feelings. Therefore, guilt will demotivate conspicuous consumption. This leads us to our first hypothesis:

H1: Guilt compared to the control condition reduces the persuasive effect of the advertisement for conspicuous consumption goods.

This is the same effect Agrawal and Duhachek found in their research, but the process why this happens differ from the process Agrawal and Duhachek found. They stated that messages which evoke the same emotions as the receiver experienced in the first place, will be less effective because of the process of defensive processing: the receiver does not want to feel that emotion again and that is why he or she processes the message in defensive manner. I assume that pro-social behaviour follows on feeling guilt and I do not see conspicuous consumption as pro-social behaviour. That is why I expect a reduced effect of the messages when using guilt in the message.

Shame
Shame is one of the most intense self-conscious emotions (Tangney, 1991). It is powerful, painful and a potential destructive experience (Gilbert, 1997). In contrast to guilt, shame gives a feeling of low self-efficacy: you cannot change it, which gives a focus on emotion. Shame-laden people see their entire self in a negative light and so their whole self is undesirable. Because the whole self is undesirable, it cannot be changes. The negative emotion dominates the thought of fixing the problem. People who experience shame want to regulate their emotional state. (Agrawal and Duhachek, 2012) There are two reactions which follow on experiencing shame: approaching behaviour and withdrawal behaviour. Shame activates the approach behaviour to restore the threatened self, but in situations where this is impossible or too risky, shame activates withdrawal behaviour to protect the self from further damage. After experiencing shame, people start with approach behaviour; trying to fix the self. But when they notice that this is impossible, the approach behaviour can be decreased. If the person realises directly after doing something shameful that it cannot be fixed, withdrawal behaviour will come up and this will stay the same, because nothing changes the situation. So approach behaviour gets influenced by the situation and can be decreased over time, while withdrawal behaviour stays the same over time (de Hooge et al. 2011).

Agrawal and Duhachek claim that this emotion-focus makes people self-conscious. De Hooge et al. state that approach behaviour follows on the feeling of shame. This is why I expect that shame in advertisements does have influence on consumer behaviour related to conspicuous consumption goods. When everybody around a person has a (conspicuous) consumption good, except for the person itself, a feeling of shame is not unthinkable. You get the feeling that you have a lower social status, which you feel ashamed of. When it is possible and not too risky, you want to change this feeling of shame. This is for example by buying the product. From this I come to my second hypothesis:

H2: Shame compared to the control condition increases the persuasive effect of the advertisement for conspicuous consumption goods.
Instead of a less effective message, which Agrawal and Duhachek expect to happen because the emotion evoked by the message is the same as the emotion experienced, I expect in this case that the message will be more effective. I expect a more effective message because the emotion experienced was not that vivid and by seeing the advertisement the emotion becomes more vivid. Moreover, by seeing the advertisement they immediately know how they can get rid of this feeling.

**Framing**

After their research in 2010 Agrawal and Duhachek did another research to the influence of guilt and shame in message. In this research they made a distinction between the guilt and shame frame of the message. They argued that the frame which fits the emotion best will have a more fluent, and therefore a more persuasive effect. (Agrawal and Duhachek, 2012) This can be explained by the regulatory fit theory. (Higgins, 2000) This theory suggest that when the message used the same means as the goal, it intensifies and sustains the orientation and chosen set of means. So when the goal and the mean of the messages fits, the message will be more fluent and, consequently, more persuasive (Lee & Aaker, 2004).

Agrawal and Duhachek tested whether the fit between the mean and the goal was more fluent and because of that more persuasive with two hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that guilt appeals using a gain frame were more effective and fluent than guilt appeals using a loss frame. The second hypothesis was that shame appeals using a loss frame were more effective and fluent than shame appeals using a gain frame. This means that when guilt is used in an advertisement, it should be more effective when it is framed as gain and when shame is used, it should be more effective with a loss frame. They suggested that a gain frame fits more with a guilt appeal and a loss frame fits more with a shame appeal because guilt-laden people use a problem-focused coping strategy and shame-laden people use an emotion-focused coping strategy.

Guilt-laden people feel that one aspect of the self behaved unfavourably and they want to fix this negative aspect. This is why guilt is action oriented. A gain frame emphasizes the positive benefits of a behaviour and in that way causes a challenge appraisal, which promotes high confidence in one his ability to cope with the situation. Because of this, a gain frame enacts a problem-focused strategy just like guilt does. Shame causes an emotion-focused coping strategy, because when someone is shame-laden, they see their entire self in a negative light. When this happens there is a lack of efficacy to change the situation. A loss frame emphasizes the negative consequences of the behaviour and causes a threat appraisal. This appraisal shows potential danger and gives a low confidence in one’s ability to cope with the behaviour. Because of this, a loss frame enacts an emotion-focused strategy just like shame does. They tested this with an anti-drinking campaign in which they showed guilt and shame, framed as gain or loss. A gain frame showed what people gained when they changed their behaviour, a loss frame showed what people loss when they do not change their behaviour. This campaign was showed to the respondents and after the respondents saw the campaign, they had to do something unrelated for ten minutes. After those ten minutes, different advertisements for alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks were shown. By asking questions about the advertisements and looking at how long participants watched to the advertisement, they measured which campaign had the most influence on the effectivity of the persuasion of the advertisement.

The results of the research of Agrawal and Duhachek were that indeed a guilt advertisement framed as a gain and a shame advertisement framed as a loss were more effective.
Because of this result I also want to examine the influence of the frame used in the advertisement. I want to research the interaction-effect between guilt and the gain and loss frame and between shame and the gain and loss frame. I will research this with the following hypothesis:

**H3:** Guilt framed as gain in advertisements for conspicuous consumption goods will have a greater persuasive effect compared to guilt framed as a loss in those advertisements.

and

**H4:** Shame framed as loss in advertisements for conspicuous consumption goods will have a greater persuasive effect compared to shame framed as a gain in those advertisements.
Method

Introduction

The goal of this study is to find out whether there are differences in effectiveness of persuasion between the use of guilt and shame in advertisements for conspicuous consumption goods. I wonder if the results of Agrawal and Duhachek (2010) which used guilt and shame in anti-drinking campaigns can be generalised to advertisements for conspicuous consumption. Moreover, I wonder if the frame, gain or loss, does have influence on the effectiveness of the persuasion in the advertisement. Agrawal and Duhachek (2012) found out that a guilt advertisement framed as gain and a shame advertisement framed as loss were more fluent and therefore a more effective message.

To test this, six advertisements for the six conditions have been developed. Advertisements in a guilt, shame or control condition to test the first and the second hypothesis. For each condition (guilt, shame and neutral) there are two advertisements. One which is framed as gain and one framed as loss. With those different frames in the advertisement for the different emotion conditions, hypothesis three and four can be tested.

Participants and design

One hundred ninety people completed the questionnaire (140 females and 50 males, \(m_{age} = 23.26\) SD = 6.23). Participation in the questionnaire was completely voluntary. The participants were approached via the social media website Facebook, since this was the way of approaching, participants were mostly students who for a large extend live in Wageningen. The participants randomly viewed one of the six advertisements. The study was a 2 (gain vs. loss) x 3 (guilt vs. shame vs. neutral) between subject design. The rejection level for all hypothesis was set at \(p = .05\).

Procedure and variables

Participants filled in the questionnaire on their own computer. They first saw one of the six advertisements and were able to decide by themselves how long they watched the advertisement. These six advertisements were the independent variables and based on the six conditions I studied: guilt, shame and the control condition combined with a gain and loss frame.

In the guilt advertisement, the participants were shown a men and a women who were talking to each other, and two watches. In the gain frame the following text was in the advertisement: Feeling guilty because you were too late for your date? Buy a Vendoux and you are always on time! By the loss frame the text was as follows: Without a Vendoux watch, you will feel guilty for arriving too late on your dates. The picture of the people has to represent a date, which is a nice but exciting event. Coming too late on a date is not done, so you can feel guilty about that. The gain frame shows what you gain, being on time for you date, if you have a Vendoux. The loss frame shows what happens if you do not have a Vendoux: you arrive too late on your date.

In the shame advertisement the participants were shown a group of friends on the beach and two watches. Next to the gain frame the following text was shown in the advertisement: Ashamed because all your friends have a Vendoux and you don’t? And in the advertisement with the loss frame: A Vendoux gives you a good reputation, you will be ashamed without. The group of friends represents a group you want to belong to, because they are having a nice time together. In the gain frame the shame feeling will go away (a gain) when you buy a Vendoux. In the loss frame, not having
a Vendoux, will give you a bad reputation (a loss). In the control advertisement, participants just saw three watches and the brand of the watch with the following text in the gain frame: Need a new watch? Buy a Vendoux. And in the loss frame: Lost your old watch? Buy a Vendoux! (See appendix 1-3) The control advertisements were not aiming to evoke any special emotion because of this the advertisement shows only the three watches. The advertisement stating When you need a new watch, buy a Vendoux shows the gain which a Vendoux gives. The advertisement stating Lost your old watch? shows a loss which you can solve with a Vendoux.

After seeing one of the advertisements participants had to indicate to what degree they experienced the following feelings: shame, disappointment, excitement, guilt, anger, happiness, sadness and amazement. Those feelings were measured with a 0–10 Likert scale and were used for an emotion manipulation check.

Next, the participants had to indicate what they thought about the product in the advertisement. This was done on the following variables: I want to obtain more information about the watch, I want to purchase the watch, I will probably buy the watch, I like the brand in the ad (Vendoux), my impression of Vendoux is positive, My impression of Vendoux in negative, I think the watch is of high quality, I think my life is better when I have this product, The watch will give me status, The watch will make me look rich. All the variables were rated from 0 (not agree), what was negative, to 10 (agree), what is positive, except for the factor my impression of Vendoux is negative. I turned the scale of this variable around from 10–0.

Because I think the factors wanting to purchase and probably buying the watch measure the same construct, I verified whether the correlation between the variable wanting to purchase and probably buying the watch was significant. The correlation indeed turned out to be significant (Spearman's correlation coefficient = 0.74, p < .01), so I computed a new variable, purchase intention, by taking the average of those two variables.

Also the factors wanting to obtain more information, linking the brand, positive impression, (turned) negative impression, thinking the watch is of high quality and thinking my life is better with this product are possible to correlate because they all cover an positive attitude towards the product. To check whether this assumption was right I conducted a factor analysis. This Factor Analysis showed that those factors can be combined in one component. This component would cover all the factors (Eigenvalue = 2.84, explained variance: 47.33%). Cronbach’s alpha for component one would be .75. I computed for component one a new variable, product attitude, by taking the average of all those variables.

The last two factors, the watch will give me status and the watch will make me look rich, were used for a manipulation check for conspicuous consumption. I also think those two factors are likely to correlate, because I think looking rich and having status are things which are related to each other (Spearman’s correlation coefficient =0.75, p < .01). For this reason, I combined those two variables by computing a new variable, conspicuous consumption, by taking the average of those two variables.

Next, I also wanted to know how people perceived the advertisement. For this I used five items to judge the advertisement. Those five items were boring – entertaining, uninformative – informative, useless – useful, uninteresting – interesting and not credible – credible. These items were measured on a scale from 0 – 10. Because I would allow for this five items to be correlated, I conducted a Factor
Analysis with Oblimin rotation. Those items correlated (eigenvalue = 3.10, explained variance: 62.04%, Cronbach’s Alpha = .84), so I computed one new variable, advertisement attitude, by taking the average of those five items.

Next, the participants had to indicate how many euros they were willing to spend on the advertised product. This will be the variable willingness to pay. Lastly, some general questions were asked (age and gender) and the participants were thanked for participating.

I used the variables purchase intention, product attitude, advertisement attitude and willingness to pay to measure the persuasive effect of the advertisement. The higher those variables were assessed, the more persuasive the advertisement was rated.

Results

Emotion Manipulation
The emotion manipulation works, when participants show significantly more guilt (shame) in the guilt (shame) condition than the other emotions. Participants also have to show more guilt (shame) in the guilt (shame) condition compared to the other condition. Lastly, the control condition should not evoke more of one emotion than the others.

The emotion manipulation check showed that participants within the Guilt condition reported not significantly more guilt than the emotions shame, anger, sadness and amazement. (all t’s(56) > 1 and all p’s > .05) Within the Guilt condition participants reported significantly more happiness (M = 3.09, SD = 2.88) and significantly more excitement (M = 3.03, SD = 2.64) than guilt. (M = 1.60, SD = 2.23) (all t’s(56) < 2. and all p’s < .05) Men within the guilt condition reported significantly more excitement (M = 4.13, SD = 2.83) and happiness (M = 4.13, SD = 3.29) than guilt (M = 2.53, SD = 2.82) (all t’s(14) < 2 and all p’s < .05). Women within the guilt condition reported significantly more disappointment (M = 2.42, SD = 2.37), excitement (M = 2.65, SD = 2.49) and happiness (M = 2.72, SD = 2.58) than guilt (M = 1.58, SD = 2.32). (all t’s(42) < 2 and all p’s < .05)

Figure 1: significant differences guilt condition
Participants within the Shame condition reported not significantly more shame than the emotions disappointment, anger and sadness. (all t’s(62) < 2 and all p’s > .05) Within the Shame condition participants reported significantly more amazement (M = 2.74, SD = 2.59), significantly more happiness (M = 3.23, SD = 3.00) and significantly more excitement (M = 2.69, SD = 2.54) than shame. (M = 1.11, SD = 1.69) (all t’s(62) > 2 and all p’s < .05)

For men within the shame condition there was only a significant difference between the emotions shame (M = 1.20, SD = 2.04) and amazement (M = 3.73, SD = 3.37). (all t’s(14) > 2 and all p’s < .05) However, this group was relatively small. (n = 15). Women within the shame condition reported significantly more excitement (M = 2.78, SD = 2.44), anger (M = 1.98, SD = 2.59), happiness (M = 3.36, SD = 2.93) and amazement (M = 2.44, SD = 2.26) than shame(M = 1.08, SD = 1.59) (all t’s(49) > 2 and all p’s < .05).

Participants within the control condition should not report significantly more of a specific emotion but they reported significantly more disappointment, excitement, happiness, amazement than shame. Significantly more excitement than disappointment, more excitement than guilt, more excitement than sadness, more happiness than guilt and more amazement than guilt. (all t’s(68) > 2 and all p’s < .05) As you can see there were many significant differences between the experienced emotions in de control condition. Together, those findings suggest that the emotion manipulation did not work within the conditions. Therefore I will also check if the manipulation between subjects did give significant differences between the subjects.

A manipulation check between subjects showed that only the feeling of guilt was significant higher in the Guilt condition compared to the shame and control condition (F(118) = 4.30, p = 0.015). All of the other emotions did not significantly differ between the conditions guilt, shame or neutral. When comparing only women or only men, there were no significant differences among the subjects.

All of those checks showed that the emotion manipulation did not work. Despite of this I will go on with this study.
Conspicuous consumption manipulation

The mean of the factor conspicuous consumption was 2.83 (±2.64). This implies that people viewed a watch as conspicuous consumption good as 2.83 on a scale from zero till ten. From this I conclude that people do not see the watch as conspicuous consumption good. This score did not significantly differ between males and females. (t(190) = 0.18, p = .86) However, between age groups there was a significant difference. (t(190) = 4.17, p < .01) For participants who were 21 or younger, the mean of the factor conspicuous consumption was 3.65 (± 2.77) and for participants older than 21 the mean was 2.12 (± 2.31). I choose to split the group in those two age groups, because with those groups participants were equally divided over the groups.

Purchase intention

To test whether the different emotions and frames influenced the persuasiveness of the message I conducted several two-way ANOVA tests with emotion and frame as independent variables and purchase intention, product attitude and willingness to pay as dependent variables, which showed the following results.

The two-way ANOVA with the dependent variable purchase intention showed that there was no significant effect of emotion on the purchase intention (F(2,192) = 1.90, p = .15), so every emotion caused approximately the same purchase intention. The largest difference was found between the emotion guilt and shame, whereby guilt gave 0.51 more purchase intention, but this difference was not significant. There was also no significant effect of the frame on the purchase intention. (F(1, 192) = 1.47, p = .23). The frame also did not influence the purchase intention. There was also no significant interaction effect between the emotion and the frame (F(2, 192) = 0.90, p = .41). Guilt framed as gain resulted in the highest purchase intention and shame framed as gain resulted in the lowest purchase intention, but the difference between those two was not significant. All of these results were the same for men and women. For participants which were older than 21 there was a significant effect of the frame on the purchase intention. (F(1, 104) = 4.31, p = .04) The gain frame resulted in a significantly higher purchase intention compared to the loss frame.

Product attitude

The two-way ANOVA with as dependent variable product attitude showed that there was no significant effect of emotion on the product attitude towards the product. (F(2, 192) = 2.19, p = .12) There was also no significant effect of the frame on the product attitude towards the product. (F(1, 192) = 0.07, p = .80) Also the interaction effect between the emotion and the frame was not significant. (F(2, 192) = 1.12, p = .33) Again, these results did not differ between men and women. However, for participants older than 21 there was a significant effect of emotion on the positive attitude towards the product. (F(2, 104) = 3.36, p > .05) The control condition gave a significant higher positive attitude than the shame condition. (p = .027)

Advertisement attitude

The two-way ANOVA with as dependent variable advertisement attitude showed that there was no significant effect of emotion on the attitude towards the advertisement (F(2, 192) = 1.02, p = .36). There was also no significant effect of the frame on the attitude towards the advertisement (F(1, 192) = 0.97, p = .33). However, there was a significant interaction effect between the emotion and the frame (F(2, 192) = 4.09, p = .02). A post hoc test showed that guilt framed as gain resulted in a significant higher advertisement attitude than a control advertisement framed as a gain. (p = .047)
the other interactions between emotion and frame did not significantly differ, this means that only the guilt advertisement framed as gain gave a significant higher advertisement attitude than the control advertisement framed as gain, but the guilt advertisement framed as gain gave not a significant higher advertisement attitude than all the other conditions. When I took men and women apart, the interaction effect could only be applied to women (F(2, 141) = 4.97, p = .01). But by a post hoc test for women separately, guilt framed as gain gave a significant higher advertisement attitude than guilt framed as loss. (p = .027) For participants who were 21 or younger there was also a significant interaction effect (F(2, 88) = 4.96, p = .01). A post hoc tests showed that guilt framed as gain gave a significant higher advertisement attitude for people who were 21 or younger than the control advertisement framed as a gain.

Willingness to pay
The two-way ANOVA with as dependent variable willingness to showed that there was no significant effect of emotion on how many euros participant were willing to spend on the watch (F(2, 181) = 0.65, p = .52). There was also no significant effect of the frame (F(1, 181) = 0.04, p = .83) and no significant interaction effect (F(2, 181) = 2.00, p = .14). For this result there were no differences between men and women and no differences between the age groups (all p’s > .05).

Effectiveness persuasion
All of these dependent variables (purchase intention, product attitude, advertisement attitude and willingness to pay) taken into account resulted in the effectiveness of the persuasion of the message. The higher the average of those dependent variable, the higher the effectiveness of the persuasion. Because when one have an higher purchase intention (or product attitude, advertisement attitude or willingness to pay) one is more likely to act like the message intended.

I found that there are no general significant differences in effectiveness of the persuasion in the message caused by emotion or by frame. Also the interaction between the emotion and the frame had no general effect. There were some effects of emotion, frame and the interaction of those two on the separate dependent variables. Some of those effects did also differ between gender and age groups.

For the group as a whole the guilt advertisement framed as a gain resulted in a higher advertisement attitude compared to the control advertisement being framed as a gain. This effect could only apply to participants of 21 and younger. For women there was also an interaction effect: the guilt advertisement with a gain frame gave a higher advertisement attitude than the guilt advertisement with a loss frame.

Moreover, there was a higher purchase intention by the participants that were over 21 when they viewed an advertisement framed as a gain. Participants over 21 also had a higher product attitude in the control condition than in the shame condition.

Those results do not confirm my hypothesis. Hypothesis 1 and 2 were tested by the main effects of emotions in the two-way ANOVA. Those analyses did not provide significant differences between emotions, while I expected that the emotions would affect the effectiveness of the persuasion. I expected in hypothesis 1 that guilt would cause a lower persuasive effect of the message than the control condition and with hypothesis 2 I expected that shame would cause an higher persuasive effect of the message compared to the control condition. By utilizing guilt I expected a lower
persuasive effect because pro-social behaviour follows on guilt and I assume conspicuous consumption cannot be seen as pro-social behaviour. I expected a higher persuasive effect when using shame because when people see the advertisement, the feeling of shame becomes more vivid than it was in the first case. However, they directly see the solution to get rid of this feeling: buying the product.

Hypothesis 3 and 4 were tested using the interaction effect of the emotion and the frame in the two-way ANOVA. The only significant difference for the group as a whole was that guilt framed as gain resulted in a higher advertisement attitude than the neutral advertisement framed as gain. However, this will not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the interaction between the guilt condition with a gain frame has a higher persuasive effect.

Unexpected results are that for participants over 21 years, the gain frame caused a higher purchase intention than the loss frame. Moreover, for these participants the control condition also resulted in a higher product attitude towards the product compared to the shame condition.

One thing that matched my hypothesis was that for women the interaction effect between guilt and a gain frame would result in a higher advertisement attitude than the guilt advertisement with a loss frame.
Discussion

The goal of this research was to determine whether the results of Agrawal and Duhachek found in their researches in 2010 and 2012 can be generalized to conspicuous consumption goods. The questions I wanted to answer were whether there were differences in the persuasive effects of messages by using shame or guilt in the messages. According to Agrawal and Duhachek in 2012 the frame of the message also had an influence on the effectiveness of the messages, which is why I also wanted to research the interaction effect between the emotion (guilt and shame) and the frame (gain and loss).

The research was performed because answers on those questions would help us to understand emotions in advertisements (for conspicuous consumption goods) even more than we already do and this will promote the use of those emotions in advertisements.

The current research found that it cannot be said that guilt and shame used in a message has influence on the effectiveness of the persuasion of the message. Moreover, the frame does also not influence the effectiveness of the persuasion of the message. This is in contrast with the researches of Agrawal and Duhachek, who found in their research in 2012 that guilt framed as gain and shame framed as loss would cause a more fluent, and therefore a more persuasive message. This was addressed to the regulatory fit theory of Higgins (2000). With the results of the current research, we know that using guilt in an advertisement for a conspicuous consumption good will not influence the persuasive effectiveness of the advertisement. Also using shame would not influence this. In addition to that, the used frame also does not make any difference.

The results were not according to what I expected to find. I expected that: 1) guilt compared to the control condition would reduce the persuasive effect of an advertisement for conspicuous consumption goods, 2) shame compared to the control condition would increase the persuasive effect of an advertisement for a conspicuous consumption good, 3) guilt framed as gain in advertisements for conspicuous consumption goods would have a larger persuasive effect than guilt framed as a loss in those advertisements and 4) shame framed as loss in advertisements for conspicuous consumption goods would have a larger persuasive effect than shame framed as a gain in those advertisements. Founded in the current research was that there was no effect (neither positive nor negative) of emotion, frame or the interaction between the emotion and the frame on the effectiveness of the persuasion of the message. This does not comply with existing literature of Agrawal and Duhachek (2010, 2012), who stated that guilt and shame in an advertisement would reduce the effect of the advertisement when those appeals evoke the same emotion as the receiver original experienced. They also stated that a guilt appeal framed as gain and a shame appeal framed as loss would cause a more persuasive message because guilt results in a problem-focus which fits better with a gain frame while shame results in an emotion-focus which better fits with a loss frame.

A possible reason for those not complying results is that the emotion manipulation did not work. People did not experience more guilt (shame) in de the guilt (shame) condition compared to other emotions, and people experienced only significantly more guilt in the guilt condition compared to the other conditions. All emotions resulted in low means with high standard deviations.

Another reason to explain why the results are different than expected is that the participants were mainly female students from Wageningen. I believe that students in Wageningen, which are mainly female, cannot be viewed as representative for the population as a whole. I believe this, because you
leave certain groups out of the sample: non-students, people living outside Wageningen etc. I tested the influence of the mainly female participants by splitting up the file by gender. By doing this, there were actually not enough male participants to draw conclusions about males.

Participants viewed the advertisement at the beginning of the survey as a random advertisement instead of viewing it as something they had to answer questions about. When people viewed the advertisement as a random advertisement, they fixated at least once at the advertisement, but they did not remember the advertisement most of the times. (Hervet et al. 2010) Therefore, when participant had to answer the question afterwards, there was a chance that they did not remember the advertisement, which influences their answers and the results. The fact that the advertisement was seen as a random advertisement also has a good side. In daily life people do not consciously see advertisements and for that reason they do not consciously process the advertisement. Also the large failure rate can explain the results of the current research. A reason for this large failure rate can be that people did not understand the survey or they found it too boring to finish.

The mean for conspicuous consumption was relatively low and that is why I conclude that the watch was not seen as conspicuous consumption good. Because of this the results do not inform us about conspicuous consumption goods, but rather more about consumption goods in general.

A good point of this research is that various aspects of the persuasive effect of a message are taken into account: purchase intention, attitude towards product, attitude towards advertisement and willingness to pay. I expect those aspects cover the persuasiveness, because a positive attitude towards product and advertisement will cause an higher purchase intention. It also cause an higher willingness to pay. So when all those aspects score high, the probability that you act like the advertisement intended is quite high.

It would be useful to repeat this research with some small changes which would reduce the factors that influenced the results in this research. At first it is important to find a consumption good that can be seen as conspicuous consumption. This can for example be measured by adding a control question about a product of which you are sure it is not a conspicuous consumption good (e.g. toothpaste). When this control question is added, the results of the intended conspicuous consumption good and the control product can be compared. With comparing this, you can determine whether the good is conspicuous or not. And if it is, the results can be applied to conspicuous consumption goods instead of consumption goods in general. A conspicuous consumption good is a good by which people want to show their status and their high income.

In this repeated research it is also important to do the emotion manipulation check with a different sample set of participants: a pre-test. This is because when the manipulation does not work, you cannot conclude with certainty that the results are the cause of the emotions in the advertisement.

Using a more representable and larger group of participants would be fine. In this research some conditions contained only fifteen participants and fifteen participants are not enough participants to be representative. The general question about age should not be an open question, but a question with as possible answers different age groups.

If this repeated research with the changes would lead to the same results as this research, namely that guilt and shame do not have any effect on the persuasiveness of an advertisement for
conspicuous consumption goods, then this research could be applied to consumer goods in general. In case that the results are that guilt and shame, framed as gain or loss, do have influence on consumer behaviour, this can be also applied. When this is the case, and the emotions do have a positive influence on consumer behaviour, guilt and shame can be used in advertisements.

Overall it can be concluded that this research has to be repeated with several changes, which take away the factors which influenced the results in this study. When this repeated research leads to the same results, a subsequent research can be done which can question whether the results for conspicuous consumption goods can also be applied on normal consumption goods. In case the repeated research leads to different results, those results can be compared with the results of Agrawal and Duhachek (2010, 2012).
References


Appendices

Appendix 1. Control advertisements

Figure 2: Control + loss

Figure 3: Control + gain
Appendix 2. Guilt advertisements

Figure 3: guilt + gain

Figure 4: guilt + loss
Appendix 3. Shame advertisements

Figure 5: shame + gain

Figure 6: shame + loss
Appendix 4. Survey

Thanks for participating in this research. The research is for my Bachelor thesis at the Wageningen University. You will see an advertisement for a watch and after seeing this advertisement there will be some questions about the advertisement. There are no right or wrong answers, we are only interest in your opinion. Answers are completely anonymous and will be treated strictly confidential.

Answering those questions will not take more than 5 minutes.
If you have questions about the research, or if you want the results you can mail me: lotte.huijgen@wur.nl

- Participants see one of the six advertisements.

Below there is a list with feelings. Indicate for every feeling to what degree you experienced it when seeing the advertisement. The answers range from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very strongly)
  - Shame
  - Disappointment
  - Excitement
  - Guilt
  - Anger
  - Happiness
  - Sadness
  - Amazement

We are interested in what you think about the advertisement. Please indicate to what degree you agree with every statement below. After viewing the advertisement... 0 (not agree) – 10 (totally agree).
  1. I want to obtain more information about the watch
  2. I want to purchase the watch
  3. I will probably buy the watch
  4. I like the brand in the ad (Vendoux)
  5. My impression of Vendoux is positive
  6. My impression of Vendoux is negative
  7. I think the watch is of a high quality
  8. I think my life is better when I have this product
  9. The watch will give me status
  10. The watch will make me look rich

We also want to know what you think about the advertisement itself. The advertisement was...
  1. 1 (boring) – 10 (entertaining)
  2. 1 (uninformative) – 10 (informative)
  3. 1 (useless) – 10 (useful)
  4. 1 (uninteresting) – 10 (interesting)
  5. 1 (not credible) – 10 (credible)

Indicate how many euros you would pay for the advertised product: ... euros.

At last some general questions
  - Male/female
  - Age

Thanks for participating!