



Association for Consumer Research

Volume XLIII
PROCEEDINGS

Editors

Kristin Diehl

Carolyn Yoon

Advances in Consumer Research, Volume 43

Kristin Diehl, Carolyn Yoon

2015 Copyright © ASSOCIATION FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher.

International Standard Book Number (ISBN): 978-0-915552-00-9

Association for Consumer Research
Labovitz School of Business & Economics
University of Minnesota Duluth
11 East Superior Street, Suite 210
Duluth, MN 55802

www.acrwebsite.org



ASSOCIATION FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH

Labovitz School of Business & Economics, University of Minnesota Duluth, 11 E. Superior Street, Suite 210, Duluth, MN 55802

Consumers' Pro-Environmental Behaviors: the Role of Framing and Emotions

Cesare Amatulli, LUISS Guido Carli University, Italy

Alessandro M. Peluso, University of Salento, Italy

Matteo De Angelis, LUISS Guido Carli University, Italy

Richard P. Bagozzi, University of Michigan, USA

Isabella Soscia, SKEMA Business School, France

Gianluigi Guido, University of Salento, Italy

Sustainability is a central issue for people's well-being, but companies often fail in communicating and selling "green" products. This paper shows that using negative frames in communications activates a sense of shame in consumers, which in turn leads them to choose green products and develop pro-environmental attitudes.

[to cite]:

Cesare Amatulli, Alessandro M. Peluso, Matteo De Angelis, Richard P. Bagozzi, Isabella Soscia, and Gianluigi Guido (2015), "Consumers' Pro-Environmental Behaviors: the Role of Framing and Emotions", in NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 43, eds. Kristin Diehl and Carolyn Yoon, Duluth, MN : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 449-450.

[url]:

<http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/1019493/volumes/v43/NA-43>

[copyright notice]:

This work is copyrighted by The Association for Consumer Research. For permission to copy or use this work in whole or in part, please contact the Copyright Clearance Center at <http://www.copyright.com/>.

Consumers' Pro-Environmental Behaviors: The Role of Framing and Emotions

Cesare Amatulli, LUISS University, Italy
Matteo De Angelis, LUISS University, Italy
Alessandro M. Peluso, University of Salento, Italy
Isabella Soscia, SKEMA Business School, France
Richard P. Bagozzi, University of Michigan, USA
Gianluigi Guido, University of Salento, Italy

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Companies have been increasingly developing green (i.e., environmentally sustainable) products in order to attract consumers and be appreciated by the society at large (Olsen et al. 2014). Yet, despite the global relevance of the sustainability, little is known about the factors that might determine the effectiveness of communication strategies. Therefore, the issue of how sustainable products should be communicated to win consumers' preferences represents an under-researched area of inquiry.

The present research investigates how different frames companies may use in their communications may produce different effects on consumers' behaviors and pro-environmental attitudes. We first demonstrate that in communicating green products emphasizing positive social effects of environmentally sustainable behaviors (i.e., positive framing) activates pride, whereas emphasizing negative social effects of environmentally unsustainable behaviors (i.e., negative framing) activates shame (Bagozzi et al. 1999; Mizerski 1982; Soscia 2013, Tracy and Robins 2007). Moreover, we show that negative framing is more effective than positive framing at influencing consumers' sustainable behaviors and attitudes.

Two separate studies test the effects of positive versus negative framings on environmentally sustainable consumers' choices and attitudes. Study 1 explores the effect of message framing on environmentally sustainable choice. We manipulated the frame through hypothetical shopping situations involving the purchase of a green product, and then observed the effect of this manipulation on the tendency to choose that option. We also tested whether or not pride and shame mediated that effect, and whether or not the direct and indirect effects of the message frame on choice are moderated by personal concern for the environment. Study 2 shows that, when exposed to unsustainability-oriented stimuli, people feel a sense of shame that increases their pro-environmental attitudes. Moreover, the study analyzed whether or not consumers' disposition to empathize with others (empathy as trait) moderated the effect of the framing used on shame and on individuals' pro-environmental attitudes.

In Study 1 we used type of framing as independent variable, respondents' choice as dependent variable, pride and shame as mediators, and concern for the environment as moderator. We estimated a moderated mediation model by using the PROCESS SPSS Macro (Hayes 2013). Regressing pride on the type of framing, environmental concern, and their interaction, we found a non-significant interaction between type of framing and environmental concern ($p > .50$). Regressing shame on the type of framing, environmental concern, and their interaction, in addition to a negative effect of type of framing ($b = -.53, p < .001$) and a positive effect of environmental concern ($b = .25, p = .02$), we found a significant type of framing \times environmental concern interaction ($b = -.25, p = .02$). A simple slope analysis showed that, when concern for the environment was low ($M - 1SD$), the type of framing had no effect on shame ($b = -.23, p = .22$). Conversely, when concern for the environment was high ($M + 1SD$), reading a negatively framed scenario induced greater shame than reading a positively framed scenario ($b = -.83, p < .001$). To test whether or not shame transmits this interaction effect on choice, we

estimated the effects of shame on choice, while controlling for type of framing. We found an effect of shame on choice that was positive and significant ($b = .65, p = .002$), while the effect of type framing was not significant ($p > .20$). More importantly, we found an indirect effect of the type of framing \times environmental concern on choice, via shame, that was significant ($b = -.16, 95\% CI = -.47, -.02$). The analysis also returned conditional indirect effects. When environmental concern was low ($M - 1SD$), reading a negatively framed, rather than a positively framed, scenario, had no significant effect on choice ($b = -.15, p > .05$). In contrast, when environmental concern was high ($M + 1SD$), negatively framed scenario induced greater shame than positively framed one ($b = -.54, 95\% CI = -1.29, -.15$).

In Study 2 we estimated the moderated mediation model by using the PROCESS SPSS Macro (Hayes 2013). We first regressed pride on framing; the results revealed a positive effect of framing on pride such that, compared to an unsustainability-oriented communication, a sustainability-oriented communication increased pride ($b = .40, p = .013$). We also regressed shame on the same independent variable by showing a negative effect such that, compared to a sustainability-oriented communication, an unsustainability-oriented communication made participants feel more ashamed ($b = -.61, p < .001$). Second, we regressed pro-environmental attitudes on both pride and shame (i.e., the mediators), in addition to framing, empathy, and their interaction. The results showed a positive and significant effect of shame ($b = .33, p = .002$) and empathy ($b = .51, p < .001$) on attitudes. More importantly, the analysis revealed a significant framing \times empathy interaction ($b = -.27, p = .04$). To probe this interaction more closely, we examined this direct effect at conditional levels of empathy. When empathy was low ($M - 1SD$), sustainability-oriented communication, rather than an unsustainability-oriented one, increased consumers' pro-environmental attitudes ($b = .37, p = .04$). In contrast, when empathy was high ($M + 1SD$), people's attitudes did not vary as a function of whether communication was unsustainability- or sustainability-oriented ($b = -.16, p = .39$). Furthermore, the analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of framing on pro-environmental attitudes, via shame, which was negative and significant ($b = -.20, 95\% CI = -.42, -.06$), thus confirming that an unsustainability-oriented communication, compared to a sustainability-oriented one, induces greater shame, which in turn increases consumers' pro-environmental attitudes. In contrast, the same indirect effect via pride was not significant ($b = .04, p > .05$).

Our studies show that negatively framed messages make consumers more willing to prefer environmentally friendly products than positively framed messages. This effect is mediated by shame, which thus appears to be a key emotional driver in sustainable communication. Therefore, to increase consumers' pro-environmental attitudes and preferences for green products, marketers should develop communication strategies that focus on the negative consequences related to unsustainable behaviors.

REFERENCES

- Agrawal, Nidhi and Duhachek Adam (2010), "Emotional compatibility and the effectiveness of anti-drinking messages: a defensive processing perspective on shame and guilt," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 47 (2), 263-73.
- Bagozzi, P. Richard, Mahesh Gopinath, and Prashanth U. Nyer (1999), "The role of emotions in marketing," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27 (2), 184-206.
- Frijda, Nico H. (1986), *The Emotions*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Ganzach, Yoav and Nili Karsahi (1995), "Message Framing and Buying Behavior: A Field Experiment," *Journal of Business Research*, 32 (1), 11-17.
- Haws, Kelly L., Karen P. Winterich, and Rebecca W. Naylor (2014), "Seeing the world through GREEN-tinted glasses: Green consumption values and responses to environmentally friendly products," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 24 (3), 336-54.
- Hayes, Andrew F. (2013), *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis*. New York: Guildford.
- Lazarus, Richard S. (1991), *Emotions and Adaptation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Levin, Irwin P., Sandra L. Schneider, and Gary J. Gaeth (1998), "All Frames Are Not Created Equal: A Typology and Critical Analysis of Framing Effects," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 76 (2), 149-88.
- Lin, Ying-Ching and Chiu-Chi Chang (2012), "Double Standard: The Role of Environmental Consciousness in Green Product Usage," *Journal of Marketing*, 76 (5), 125-34.
- Michaelidou, Nina and Louise M. Hassan (2008), "The role of health consciousness, food safety concern and ethical identity on attitudes and intentions towards organic food," *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 32 (2), 163-70.
- Mizerski, Richard (1982), "An Attribution Explanation of the Disproportionate Influence of Unfavorable Information," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9 (3), 301-10.
- Nidumolu, Ram, Coimbatore K. Prahalad, and Madhavan R. Rangaswami (2009), "Why sustainability is now the key driver of innovation," *Harvard Business Review*, 87 (9), 57-64.
- Olsen, Mitchell C., Rebecca J. Slotegraaf, and Sandeep R. Chandukala (2014), "Green Claims and Message Frames: How Green New Products Change Brand Attitude," *Journal of Marketing*, 78 (5), 119-37.
- Oslo Roundtable (1994), *Oslo Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption*, <http://www.iisd.ca/consume/oslo004.html>.
- Pham, Michel T., Joel B. Cohen, John W. Pracejus, and David G. Hughes (2001), "Affect monitoring and the primacy of feelings in judgment," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28 (2), 167-88.
- Roseman, Ira J., Martin S. Spindel, and Paul E. Jose (1990), "Appraisals of Emotion-Eliciting Events: Testing a Theory of Discrete Emotions," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59 (5), 899-915.
- Soscia, Isabella (2013), *Emotions and Consumption Behaviour*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Ltd.
- Tangney, June P. and Ronda Dearing (2002), *Shame and Guilt*, New York: Guilford.
- Tangney, June P., Jeff Stuewig, and Debra J. Mashek (2007), "Moral Emotions and Moral Behavior," *The Annual Review of Psychology*, 58, 345-72.
- Tracy, Jessica L. and Richard W. Robins (2004), "Putting the self into self-conscious emotions: A theoretical model," *Psychological Inquiry*, 15 (2), 103-25.
- Tracy, Jessica L. and Richard W. Robins (2007), "The Psychological Structure of Pride: A Tale of Two Facets," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92 (3), 506-25.
- Wilson, Dawn K., Kenneth A. Wallston, and Joan E. King (1990), "Effects of Contract Framing, Motivation to Quit, and Self-Efficacy on Smoking Reduction," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 20 (7), 531-47.