

## Guilt, Shame, and Non-Profit Marketing

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**Abstract:** People are put into situations sometime throughout their life where they are asked, “Would you like to donate? Cause related marketing requires often guilt and shame tactics to get people to perform desired behavior, which more often than not is donating to an organization. We wanted to find to what extent does guilt and shame drive the likelihood for someone to donate? Also, what demographics are more likely to donate than others? To figure out these questions as well as others, we conducted a quantitative research study. We gathered primary data through a convenience random sampling method to continue for our descriptive research using quantitative data, then used OLS Simple Linear Regression method to process the data. The following data that we found to be the most significant from our survey is focused on Age, Income, and Neuroticism. Showing that a person’s age, Income, emotional stability all have some connection as to feelings guilt or shame as the statscal driver to donate to a non-profit organization. We also found that Gender, Ethnicity, Income, and Year of School do not have an effect on a person’s likelihood to donate. We have found significant data that nonprofit organizations may benefit from for their marketing strategies. They can save money by avoiding costly marketing campaigns that target a certain gender, because gender does not drive likelihood to donate and gender does not drive susceptibility to guilt and shame tactics. They can improve their bottom line by spending it on the right age groups. Organizations should spend their money targeting age groups 25-54 because they are more susceptible to guilt and shame tactics, eventually leading to donations.

**Keywords:** behavior, quantitative research, Neuroticism

### INTRODUCTION

Guilt and shame tactics in advertising are tools often used by organizations promoting a social cause with benefits that are not directly related to the individual’s personal behavioral motivations. For example, using a video of a severely malnourished child for an organization aimed at ending world hunger or expressing the negative environmental implications caused by not using a green company’s product or service [1]. Ultimately organizations try to put the idea in consumers’ minds that a donation or purchase can make these negative emotions go away. In terms of responses to guilt and shame tactics, it would be naive to believe that all consumers will respond similarly to the same tactics. Demographics will most likely affect the efficacy of certain guilt and shame tactics and how likely the individual is to believe an advertisement is manipulative or not. This looks at the use of shame and guilt tactics in non-profit marketing campaigns and examines which demographics are more susceptible to these tactics. The research is based on a random sample of 238 participants. Findings provide insights into the constructs of guilt and shame and the role they play in not-for-profit marketing. Results are of interest to academics and practitioners alike.

### Past Research

“Moral emotions provide the motivational force the power and energy to do good and avoid the bad” [2]. Though guilt and shame feel similar they are not the same emotion, the difference between the two is based off the perspective of the emotion. For example by “focusing attention on behavior (I have done something bad) which lead to the feeling of guilt” and by “concentrating on the self (I am a bad person) which would lead to feeling of shame [3]. Also while there is only one type of shame and there are three types of guilt used in cause related marketing, they are Existential guilt, Anticipatory guilt, and reactive guilt. Existential is the most common form of guilt used in cause related marketing because existential guilt is “the result of a comparison between one’s own well-being and other’s well-being. “In the process there is an urge to bring the two closer together” [4].

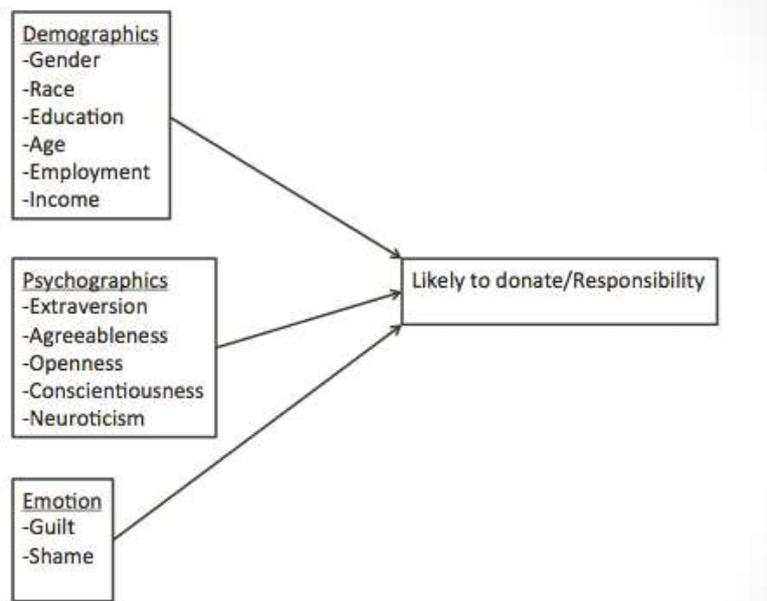
When it comes to gender there tends to be major differences between male and females in guilt driven marketing. Guilt appeals work on females but do the opposite when it comes to males. “... major gender differences in prosocial behavior: Average male donations in the control were 40% higher than female donations; whereas, this outcome is almost completely reversed in the guilt appeal treatment, there females

donated over twice as much as males” [5]. Females donated more than males with average donations of \$6.10 compared with \$4.78. Although, males donate more times than women. The difference is that women may donate less times than males, but women donate more money (twice as large as male donations. Example: \$6.50 vs. \$3.91. Guilt and shame appeals tend not to work as well on men due to them having higher levels of aversion toward attempts of manipulation [5].

Many donors only have a certain amount that they put aside for charity, and therefore need marketing ad campaigns to help distinguish which cause is in need of the donors help. Donors also feel that they have strong sense of persuasion knowledge, so if an ad is deemed too extreme by donor then their persuasion

knowledge tells them that the ad is too manipulative and are less likely to donate [6]. Research has also shown that donors are likely to donate big name causes when guilt and shame techniques are applied, and are not as likely to donate to lesser known causes when the same guilt and shame techniques are applied [6]. Donors also need to be able to trust the organization that they are donating to. They trust organizations when they feel “The people in the video appear to be just like me and I sometimes need help.” Having the initial sense of similarity positively influences donors. Findings indicate that similarity is indeed an important factor and people will donate more if they felt guilt and/or liked how people/things in the video are being portrayed [5].

**METHODOLOGY**



**Fig-1:**

**Research Design and Sampling**

The conceptual model for our research shows the main three hypotheses groups for our research that Demographics, Psychographics, or Guilt and Shame do not or do have a to drive one’s likelihood to donate for the problem that the cause related marketing campaigning for. Primary data was gathered through a convenience random sampling using snowball method to continue for our descriptive research using quantitative data.

**Scales and Validation**

For the scales in our survey we were influenced by Jordan van Rijn, Bradford Barham and Reka Sundaram-Stukel from the University of Wisconsin-Madison(UW) and their paper *An experimental approach to comparing similarity- and guilt-based charitable appeals*. We choose to base our study off this scale based on similar design in the sense

that both our surveys had the participants look at an advertisement and then answer questions based on the ad above. The main difference between our scales is the organizations that the participant was looking at and the type of advertisement the participant had to view (ours being a picture advertisement and theirs being video advertisements). The face validity of the scale used in the UW survey seemed appropriate for our type of research.

**Survey Design and Implementation**

Our research was conducted using primary data gathered through a convenience based random sampling using snowball method to continue for our descriptive research using quantitative data, then using OLS Simple Linear Regression to process the data. Secondary data was collected through scholarly articles and past research similar to our topic. Target population was a single person and or family households with an age range of 18 to 55 years of age. The sample size is

238 people that are in the target population range, 238 leaves around a 10%± and must room for standard error in the population that is 18 and older at a 90% confidence interval.

The research was completed through a 7 point Likert type scaled response survey questions to gain understanding of how familiar the person being questioned is with guilt and shame appeal in correlation with cause related marketing. We will also give our respondents the option to not respond to sensitive information. Examples of survey questions:

- What is the relation of demographics/psychographics to the effectiveness of guilt and shame tactics?
- Does a certain demographic (ie age,gender,race)/psychographics ( big five personality traits) have a stronger appeal to guilt and shame tactics?
- Which demographic/psychographic is most likely to shy away from guilt and shame tactics?
- To what extent do guilt and shame drive likelihood to donate?

- How Familiar are you with big name causes such as Unicef or ASPCA (from Not Familiar to Very Familiar)
- How likely are you to donate to a big name causes such as Unicef or ASPCA(from Not Likely to Very Likely)
- How much television do you watch a day? (from 0-7 hours)
- How often do you see commercials that deal with charitable foundations? (from Not Often to Very Often)
- Why did you decide to donate? (Multiple Responses)
- Why did you decide not to donate? (Multiple Responses)
- Approximately how often do you donate to nonprofit, charitable, campus club, or religious organizations? (from Never to More than once a month)

(Samples of our guilt and shame advertisement questions are in Appendix 1)

**Sample Profile**

**Table 1: Sample Profile (n=238)**

<b>GENDER</b>		<b>AGE</b>	
Male	32.8%	18-24	42.9%
Female	67.2%	25-34	14.7%
<b>ETHNICITY</b>		35-44	9.2%
Caucasian	60.9%	45-54	19.7%
African American	13%	55+ older	13%
American Indian	.4%	Prefer not to respond	.4%
Asian	5%	<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	10.5%	Full time	49.6%
Other	7.6%	Part time	13.4%
Prefer not to respond	2.5%	Unemployed	3.4%
<b>HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION</b>		Retired	5.5%
Less than high school degree	.8%	Student	27.3%
High school graduate (GED)	10.5%	Prefer not to respond	.8%
Some college but no degree	29.8%	<b>YEAR OF SCHOOL</b>	
Associate degree	12.6%	Freshmen	3.8%
Bachelor's Degree	26.5%	Sophomore	4.6%
Master's degree	17.6%	Junior	7.1%
Doctoral degree	.8%	Senior	10.1%
Prefer not to respond	1.3%	Graduate	1.7%
<b>INCOME</b>			
Less than 25000	6.7	75001-100000	15.1
25001-50000	15.1	100000 or more	29.8
50001-75000	13.4	Prefer not to respond	19.7

Our sample consisted of 238 participants. Of these participants, 32.8% were male and 67.2% were female. Out of all our respondents majority (60.9%) are

Caucasian; ~2.5% did not report. A majority of our participants are employed full time (49.6%). Also, majority of our participants (56.7%) have attained a

degree from college. Because almost half of our respondents work full-time and more than half have a degree from a college, it is no surprise that our highest

income percentage reported (29.8%) is \$100,000 or more.”

**DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

**Table 2:**

Hypothesis	Result
H <sub>1</sub> : Guilt drives likelihood to donate.	<b>Confirmed</b> (p: .0001, F: 125.234, R <sup>2</sup> : 34.7%)
H <sub>2</sub> : Shame drives likelihood to donate.	<b>Confirmed</b> (p: .0001, F: 116.125, R <sup>2</sup> : 33.0%)
H <sub>3</sub> : An individual's gender drives how much guilt/shame they feel.	Results not significant
H <sub>4</sub> : An individual's age drives how much guilt/shame they feel.	<b>Confirmed</b> Guilt: (p: .0001 , F: 15.521, R <sup>2</sup> : 6.2%) Shame: (p: .001, F: 12.026, R <sup>2</sup> : 4.8%)
H <sub>5</sub> : An income drives how much guilt/shame they feel.	<b>Results not significant</b>
H <sub>6</sub> :An individual's education level drives how much guilt/shame they feel.	<b>Confirmed</b> Guilt: (p: .033, F: 4.577, R <sup>2</sup> :1.9%) Shame: (p: .052, F: 3.819, R <sup>2</sup> :1.6%)
H <sub>7</sub> :An individual's ethnicity drives how much guilt/shame they feel.	<b>Results not significant</b>
H <sub>8</sub> : An individual's employment drives how much guilt/shame they feel.	<b>Results not significant</b>
H <sub>9</sub> :An individual's Extrovertedness drives how much guilt/shame they feel.	<b>Results not significant</b>
H <sub>10</sub> : An individual's Openness drives how much guilt/shame they feel.	<b>Results not significant</b>
H <sub>11</sub> : An individual's Agreeableness drives how much guilt/shame they feel.	<b>Results not significant</b>
H <sub>12</sub> : An individual's Neuroticism drives how much guilt/shame they feel.	<b>Confirmed</b> Guilt: (p: .0001, F: 13.021, R <sup>2</sup> : 5.2%) Shame: (p: .004, F: 8.417, R <sup>2</sup> : 3.4%)

In order to properly measure the relationships between Psychographics, Demographics, Guilt, Shame and likelihood to donate we ran several regression analyses. In our first set of regressions, which was a more general out looked, we were looking to assess how much guilt and shame drives likelihood to donate. To do so, we split the regressions by which advertisement the respondents were looking at. Then we used “likelihood to donate” as our dependent variable and used, guilt and shame as our independent variables in two regressions per advertisement. Our results indicate that Guilt is a statistically significant driver of likelihood to donate (p: .0001, F: 125.234, R<sup>2</sup>: 34.7%). Our results also indicate that shame is also a statistically significant driver of likelihood to donate (p: .0001, F: 116.125, R<sup>2</sup>: 33.0%). Here are what the \* stand for-

0.0001 to 0.001	Extremely significant	***
0.001 to 0.01	Very significant	**
0.01 to 0.05	Significant	*

**Table 3:**

Dependent: Likely to donate

Construct (Composite)	Items	R2 (%)	F*
Guilt	Ad #1	34.7%	125.234***
Guilt	Ad #2	35.5%	129.682***
Shame	Ad #1	33.0%	116.125***
Shame	Ad #2	25.7%	81.577***
Demographic	Income	.3%	.626
Demographic	Education	3.3%	8.070**
Demographic	Age	5.1%	12.774***

## Dependent: Guilt

Construct (Composite)	Items	R2 (%)	F*
Demographic	Gender	.2%	.371
Demographic	Education	1.9%	4.577*
Demographic	Age	6.2%	15.521***
Demographic	Income	.3%	.721
Psychographic: Neuroticism	Moody	5.2%	13.021***

## Dependent: Shame

Construct (Composite)	Items	R2 (%)	F*
Demographic	Gender	0%	.085
Demographic	Age	4.6%	11.703***
Demographic	Education	1.5%	3.645*
Demographic	Income	0%	.085
Psychographic: Neuroticism	Moody	2.9%	7.261**

After establishing that there is a strong relationship between guilt and shame on likelihood to donate, we shifted our focus to the relationship demographics and psychographics have with guilt and shame. Using each demographic/psychographic category as an independent variable. We chose to run multiple univariate analyses despite the fact that our overall research design contains multiple independent variables to avoid issues of multicollinearity. Overall the only significant relationships between demographics and guilt/shame were Age (Guilt: (p: .0001, F: 15.521, R<sup>2</sup>: 6.2%) Shame: (p: .001, F: 12.026, R<sup>2</sup>: 4.8%)) and Education (Guilt: (p: .033, F: 4.577, R<sup>2</sup>: 1.9%) Shame: (p: .052, F: 3.819, R<sup>2</sup>: 1.6%)). Gender, Ethnicity, Income, and Year of School all produced insignificant results for both guilt and shame. Upon noticing the significant results for Age and Education, we then split the cases to run the regression by each specific age group and used guilt or shame as independent variables with likelihood to donate as the dependent variables. After running the regressions for Age, we found that in every age group, guilt is a statistically significant driver of likelihood to donate but there are substantial differences in the strength of this relationship shown in the R<sup>2</sup> values for each age group (**18-24**: p: .0001, F: 29.627, R<sup>2</sup>: 22.6%, **25-34**: p: .0001, F: 35.472, R<sup>2</sup>: 51.8%, **35-44**: p: .051, F: 12.844, R<sup>2</sup>: 39.1%, **45-54**: p: .0001, F: 40.002, R<sup>2</sup>: 47.1%).

The only psychographic that returned significant results was the neuroticism trait in susceptibility to guilt and shame tactics (Guilt: (p: .0001, F: 13.021, R<sup>2</sup>: 5.2%, Shame: p: .004, F: 8.417, R<sup>2</sup>: 3.4%). Upon realizing these significant results, we ran guilt and shame vs likelihood to donate but this time using only respondents who either “agreed and strongly agreed” that they were a moody person (neurotic) and again with respondents who either “disagreed or

strongly disagreed” that they were moody person (not neurotic). For those without the neurotic trait guilt and shame were statistically significant drivers of likelihood to donate (Guilt: p: .001, F: 23.170, R<sup>2</sup>: 35%, Shame: p: .053, F: 9.181, R<sup>2</sup>: 17.6%) For those with the neurotic trait, guilt and shame are still statistically significant values (Guilt: p: .001, F: 22.158, R<sup>2</sup>: 28.3%, Shame: p: .001, F: 38.738, R<sup>2</sup>: 40.9%). For those with the neurotic trait, the R<sup>2</sup> value is almost twice as high for shame as it is for guilt.

### Managerial Implications and Concluding Remarks

Our findings lead to several implications for marketing managers in the non-profit sector. They can save money by not conducting costly marketing campaigns targeting a certain gender, because gender does not drive likelihood to donate and gender does not drive susceptibility to guilt and shame tactics. They can benefit and maximize their money by spending it on the right age groups. Organizations should spend their money targeting age groups 25-54 because they are more susceptible to guilt and shame tactics, eventually leading to donations.

For future research should be conducted on the following questions: 1) How neuroticism has an effect on one's likelihood to donate to nonprofit organizations, 2) How does one's age have an effect on likeness to donate, 3) How does one's education level affect one's likelihood to donate, and 4) Why is income not a factor in someone's likelihood to donate. First question requires more research because there is little research produced on the psychographics for guilt and shame tactics because probably like the results from our research there wasn't any significance except for the question looking into neuroticism. The second question will look into how a person age affects the donation process the conclusion from our data is that found that

people around the ages of 25-34 and 45-54 are more likely to use guilt as a statistically significant driver to donate to nonprofit organizations. Research also needs to be done on why a person's education level is a statistically significant driver to donate but a person's income is not. This having do with a person's income and education level typically correlate with each other and also one would think that someone with a higher income would be more likely to donate due to the fact that they have more money to spend.

In conclusion there is a strong relationship between guilt and shame on likelihood to donate. We chose to run multiple univariate analyses despite the fact that our overall research design contains multiple independent variables to avoid issues of multicollinearity. Overall the only significant relationships between demographics and guilt/shame

were Age and Education. While Gender, Ethnicity, Income, and Year of School all produced insignificant results for both guilt and shame. After running the regressions for Age, we found that in every age group, guilt is a statistically significant driver of likelihood to donate. The only psychographic that returned significant results was the neuroticism trait in susceptibility to guilt and shame tactics. We ran a regression on guilt and shame vs likelihood to donate but this time using only respondents who either "agreed and strongly agreed" that they were a moody person (neurotic) and again with respondents who either "disagreed or strongly disagreed" that they were moody person( not neurotic) to find that there was a statistically significant drivers for likelihood to donate. We found that those who identified with the neurotic trait were extremely susceptible to shame tactics.

### APPENDIX 1

#### Ad 1 Question Set



Review the images above and respond to the following statements.

After seeing this ad...

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
I have a sense of guilt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a sense of shame	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel some responsibility for the cause occurring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am more likely to donate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel manipulated into donating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Ad 2 Question Set



Review the images above and respond to the following statements

After seeing this ad...

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
I have a sense of guilt	<input type="radio"/>						
I have a sense of shame	<input type="radio"/>						
I feel some responsibility for the cause occurring	<input type="radio"/>						
I feel manipulated into donating	<input type="radio"/>						
I am more likely to donate	<input type="radio"/>						

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