

A Study of Emotional Appeal in Advertisement

Dr. Pratima Upadhyay

Lecturer, Department of Modern Office Management
Government Women's Polytechnic College, Jabalpur, MP, India
pratimau755@gmail.com

Abstract: *Many studies have already examined the use of emotions in advertisements. However, these researches have only studied the influence of emotions in advertisements by investigating the valence and specific emotions, not which of these influences consumers the most. This study will research whether specific emotions influence people more than just random positive and negative emotions in advertisements. To answer the question: 'With what framework can we predict emotion effects of advertisements on consumer behaviour?' four emotions will be researched, namely; pride, happiness, fear, and guilt. The use of a specific framework, with advertisements with specific emotions in it, will be compared to the use of a valence framework, with advertisements with only positive and negative emotions in it, regardless of which emotions. The results of this research show that a specific framework predicts emotion effects the best. When an advertiser wants to use emotion appeals in his advertisement he should use an emotion, which appeals the most to his consumer segment. Further research should be done on the effects of different emotion appeals on consumer behaviour. If all emotion appeals that can possibly be used in advertisements are studied, it will become easier for marketers to use the most effective emotion appeals for their product in their advertisements.*

Keywords: Emotional Appeal, Advertisement, Valence, Specific Emotions, Random Positive, Negative Emotions.

I. INTRODUCTION

A picture of a man, with underneath it the text: 'In the meantime, I am already deceased.' with below it an account number to which you can donate money (appendix A). This is a Dutch advertisement to help raise money for the muscle disease ALS. The emotion this advertisement uses is obviously fear, because it is scary to see a deceased person staring at you. Emotions are often used to influence people in advertisements, and a lot of research has already occurred on the influences of emotions in advertisements, called emotion appeals. Yet a lot of these studies have only researched this topic rather broadly. They have examined the effects of positive and negative emotions in advertisements, but it remains the question whether the valence of emotions influences the behaviour of consumers the most, or that specific positive and negative emotions influence the behaviour of consumers the most. Would it have been just enough for the ALS advertisement to use a negative emotion? Or is it really the emotion fear that makes this advertisement effective? This research will examine whether emotion effects in advertisements are most effective when advertisements use specific emotions, or whether it is enough to focus on negative emotions or positive emotions in general. Two frameworks will be researched; the first framework is the valence framework. This framework will compare the use of positive and negative emotions in advertisements. It will not distinguish two negative emotions or two positive emotions, but only differentiates the emotions on the basis of valence. The second framework is the specific framework, which will compare the use of specific emotions in advertisements. The focus will be on two positive emotions: happiness and pride, and two negative emotions: fear and guilt. These emotions are chosen because pride and guilt are both emotions that arise due to people's own actions, while happiness and fear are mostly emotions that arise because of the actions of other people or things. Two positive and two negative emotions will be chosen because then the effects between specific positive and negative emotions can be compared, to form the valence framework. Also, the effects between two specific positive and two specific negative emotions can be compared, to form the specific framework.

II. HISTORY EMOTIONS

Several theories and definitions of emotions have been formed throughout history. In the beginning of the 18th century the first ideas about emotions were formed by James (1884). He said that emotions followed our body, which means that someone is sad because he or she is crying. This theory was called the James--Lange Theory, and stated that our experience of emotion is our awareness of our physiological responses to emotion--arousing stimuli. Cannon (1927) criticised the James--Lange Theory, he thought that many emotions have the same physical reactions and thus the body would not know which emotion would fit these reactions. This is why he came up with a new theory, the Cannon--Bard Theory, and this theory stated that an emotion--arousing stimulus simultaneously triggers physiological responses and subjective experiences of the emotion. Some time later, in 1962, another theory about emotions came to light, Schachter thought that cognition was involved in emotions; he invented the Two--Factor Theory. This theory stated that to experience emotion, someone must be physically involved and the emotion should be labelled cognitively. The theories about emotions developed quickly and in 1974 another theory was presented, this time by Solomon and Corbit. Their theory is called the Opponent-- Process Theory and it suggests that the experience of an emotion disrupts the body's state of balance and that our basic emotions typically have an opposing counterpart. So, assuming that the opposite of fear is relief, when we feel fear the emotion relief get suppressed by this fear. When the initial emotion, the fear, cools down, relief will be experienced to balance out these two emotions. These are the four most important theories about how emotions occur. There are also other findings about emotions, like Ekman (1971) who found that emotions are culturally universal, which means that people from around the whole world can recognise the same basic emotions. He told members of a culture in New Guinea stories with a certain emotion in them and then showed a set of three pictures of people from Europe with different emotions. The people from New Guinea had to choose which emotion would fit the story the best. The results of his study showed that the people from New Guinea could indeed associate the emotions of the people from Europe. Later, Izard (1992) presented his theory about basic emotions. He recognized 10 different emotions, which are present from infancy on, namely: joy, contempt, surprise, shame, sadness, fear, guilt, anger, disgust, and interest or excitement. He called these emotions basic because they are assumed to have native and universal expressions, and have unique feeling – motivational states. However, in 2000 Damasio stated that there are six of these basic, or primary, emotions namely, happiness, fear, sadness, anger, surprise, or disgust. Apart from these emotions, there are also other emotions that are called secondary emotions, including pride, guilt, jealousy and embarrassment. These emotions are also called social emotions, because they arise in certain social situations. However, Ellsworth & Scherer (2003) contrast with these ideas of primary and secondary emotions, they are appraisal theorists. According to the appraisal theory emotions consist of patterns of perception and interpretation, and their correlation in the central and peripheral nervous system. It assumes that emotions are composed of simpler elements that correspond to the appraisal and their correlates. The appraisal process is a link between the person and the situation that has to be interpreted. One of the latest definitions of emotions is presented by Bhagwat (2014); he defined emotion as a mind and body's integrated response to a stimulus of some kind. Furthermore, he stated that emotions exist of three factors, physiological arousal, expressive behaviours, and conscious experience. When experiencing fear for example, your heart will start pounding, a physiological arousal, an expressive behaviour could be walking faster in order to get to a safe place, and a conscious experience could be thinking 'I am not going to get mugged, it is just the wind that made that noise.' These were a few theories and ideas about emotions, not all of the history of emotions can be covered, but now the phenomenon emotions should be clearer.

III. HAPPINESS, PRIDE, FEAR, AND GUILT

The emotions researched in this paper are two primary emotions and two secondary emotions from Damasio's theory. This way it will be clear whether social (secondary) emotions have more influence on consumer behaviour than primary emotions. Pride and guilt are two self-conscious emotions that separate the self and an object. Self-conscious means that these emotions are focused on one's self, and it makes people self-aware. They are evoked by self--reflection and self--evaluation. Self--evaluation can happen consciously or unconsciously, but it always has to do with people's reactions to their own characteristics or behaviour. For example, when someone feels proud of something it focuses the person on its action. The person is engrossed in the specific action, which gives it pride. And with guilt the person focuses on the self's actions and behaviours which are likely to repair a failure. Other emotions are also self--conscious like shame and embarrassment (Tangney & Fischer, 1995).

IV. DEFINITIONS SPECIFIC EMOTIONS

A definition of fear, guilt, happiness, and pride, will now be given so it will be clear what is meant when these emotions are discussed. First fear; a lot of researchers have a different definition of fear. One definition of fear is that it is a negative emotional state, triggered by the presence of a stimulus that had the potential to cause harm, and anxiety is a negative emotional state in which the threat is not present but anticipated (Ledoux, 2012). However, this definition of fear should be used carefully because, while the physical reactions of fear are the same for almost everybody, the emotional reaction to fear can be different for every individual (Fritscher, 2014). Lerner & Keltner (2001) define fear as a sense of situational control and uncertainty. The Handbook of Emotions states that fear denotes dread of impending disaster and an intense urge to defend oneself, primarily by getting out of the situation (Lewis et al., 2008). In this research, the definition of the Handbook of Emotions will be used. What happens when someone experiences fear, for example someone sees a threat, the breath and heart rate will increase, hands will start sweating, the person will blush, the stomach will experience a weird feeling, you will get goose bumps, and a fight-or-flight response will be chosen. This means the body will either choose to run away from the threat or start fighting it (Kalin, 1997). Happiness is defined as a state of well-being, characterized by relative permanence, by dominantly agreeable emotion ranging in value from mere contentment to deep and intense joy in living, and by a natural desire for its continuation (Oishi et al., 2013). The Handbook of Emotions also has a definition for happiness: people experience happiness when they receive a profit that is defined as 'just', and when others' profits are proportionate to their costs and investments as compared to the costs and investments of the persons making the comparisons (Lewis et al., 2008). Finally, according to Larsen et al. (2001) happiness means that people are satisfied with their current state, get what they want, and generally smile, laugh, and seek out others. In this research, the definition of Oishi will be used. Mogilner et al. (2012) states that happiness is not always the same for people, in some cases happiness is defined as feeling excited, and in other cases happiness is defined as feeling calm. It seems that when people focus on situations in the future they will feel excited, while when situations occur in the present, people experience the feeling of calmed. A smile is recognized in every culture as a sign of happiness (Lewis et al., 2008). The definition of guilt also has several definitions. Lascu (as stated in Jiménez, 2010) defined the emotion guilt as an internal emotional response involving penitence, remorse, self-blame, and self-punishment experienced after violating, or contemplating to violate an internalized standard. Guilty people are consumed with the idea that they did a bad thing or failed. It is characterized by feelings of tension, remorse, and regret over the bad thing that was done (Niedenthal et al., 1994). Lewis (2011) states that guilt is produced when individuals evaluate their behaviour as failure but focus on the specific features of the self, or on the self's action which led to the failure. The Handbook of Emotions defines guilt as produced when individuals evaluate their behaviour as failure but focus on the specific features or actions of the self that led to the failure (Lewis et al., 2008). Guilt can also refer to an individual's unpleasant emotional state associated with possible objections to his or her actions, inaction, circumstances, or intentions (Baumeister et al., 1994). In this research, the definition of Baumeister will be used. People often use shame and guilt interchangeably, but they are two different emotions: shame is a negative evaluation of the global self, while guilt is a negative evaluation of a specific behaviour. Shame is a painful emotion, when people feel ashamed they feel small, powerless, worthless, stupid, and exposed. Guilt, however, makes someone feel tension, remorse, and regret over something bad that is done. The feeling of guilt is often less painful, because it is not the global self that is attacked but a specific behaviour. It motivates confession of the behaviour, apologies, and ways to fix the situation (Leary & Trangeney, 2003). Finally, the emotion pride is defined by Brian (2014) as a self-conscious emotion characterized by the attainment of a goal and that accomplishment resulting in recognition and approval from others in the group. While Lewis (2011) states that it is the consequence of a successful evaluation of a specific action. The Handbook of Emotions says pride occurs when one makes a comparison or evaluates one's behaviour vis- vis some standard, rule, or goal, and finds that one has succeeded. According to Tracy and Robins (2007) there are two sides to pride. Authentic pride is the success story of pride; it promotes positive feelings and behaviour and helps the development of high self-esteem. While hubristic pride is associated with narcissism and the Seven Deadly Sins, it contributes to aggression, hostility, interpersonal problems and, relationship conflicts. Authentic pride appears when someone experiences internal but unstable, specific and controllable causes, like effort. Hubristic pride, however, appears when someone experiences internal but stable, and uncontrollable causes, like ability. So, the distinction between authentic and hubristic pride is almost the same as the distinction between guilt and shame, one feels authentic



pride because of their behaviour and one feels hubristic pride because of their global characteristics. In this research, this definition will be used. The feeling of pride is a pleasurable feeling, and that is why it is reinforcing, there is no other emotion that not only makes persons feel good, but also makes them feel good about themselves. Pride is also an emotion that can increase our self-esteem. When people experience success they feel proud of themselves, and when they often feel proud of themselves, these feelings may boost peoples self-esteem (Leary &Trangney, 2003).

V. USE OF EMOTIONS IN ADVERTISEMENTS

The knowledge that emotions can persuade people is very old. It was Aristotle who identified three modes of persuasion: Pathos, Logos and Authos, which mean emotion, logic, and authority (Brinton, 1988). However, there are two ways to persuade people in advertisements: rational advertising and emotional advertising. Rational advertising comes from traditional information processing and assumes that consumers make logical and rational decisions about what they buy. They are assumed to weigh the pros and cons of products, like product quality, value, and performance, because it should employ logical arguments and believable evidence. These appeals are also called informational, utilitarian or product quality appeals, and are processed by the conscious mind (Albers--Miller & Stafford, 1999). Emotion appeals are appeals that generate positive or negative feelings to create a positive emotional association with a product. They try to make the brand a likeable or friendly brand in the mind of the consumer (Albers--Miller & Stafford, 1999). While rational advertising is a conscious process, emotional appeals rely on the subconscious mind, to receive, process, and evaluate information to make a decision. The subconscious mind cannot rationally process information based on conscious thought. When decisions are made in the subconscious mind, they are based on emotions and instincts, or gut feelings (Boykin, 2014). Emotion appeals use the subconscious decision making processes. People who see a certain emotion in an advertisement can transfer that emotion to themselves and to the brand of the product. Further, it can help generate engagement and memorability of an advertisement; this is often seen in negative emotional appeals (Brown, 2009). Emotional appeals seem to work in advertisements because studies have shown that emotional advertising can affect customers' reactions to advertisement, can enhance their attention, and can affect their brand attitudes (Mattila, 1999).

VI. METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions, different literature will be studied. Articles will be sought in the database of Scopus, because this database only contains peer--reviewed articles. When an article cannot be opened via Scopus, the article will be opened in Google Scholar. First, articles about the use of positive and negative emotions in advertisements will be sought by using the search terms: 'Emotions AND Advertisements', 'Emotions AND Marketing', 'Emotion Appeals AND Advertisements', 'Positive Emotions AND Advertisements', and 'Negative Emotions and Advertisements'. All articles that contain information about the use of positive and negative emotions in advertisements, if seen in the abstract, will be saved. After that, articles about the specific emotions will be sought by using different search terms. For fear: 'Fear AND Advertisements', 'Fear Appeal AND Advertisements', 'Fear AND Marketing' and, 'Fear Appeal AND Marketing'. For guilt: 'Guilt AND Advertisements', 'Guilt Appeal AND Advertisements', 'Guilt AND Marketing' and, 'Guilt Appeal AND Marketing'. For happiness: 'Happiness AND Advertisements', 'Happiness Appeal AND Advertisements', 'Happiness AND Marketing' and, 'Happiness Appeal AND Marketing'. And for pride: 'Pride AND Advertisements', 'Pride Appeal AND Advertisements', 'Pride AND Marketing' and, 'Pride Appeal AND Marketing'. All articles that contain information about the use of fear, guilt, happiness or pride in advertisements, if seen in the abstract, will be saved. After the search of all these articles, they will be read completely and put into a scheme to scan out the most important articles, and to see which articles may or may not be useful. Articles that research the influence of positive and negative emotions in advertisements, or marketing will be used, especially the ones that compare positive and negative emotions. Articles that research the influence of fear, guilt, happiness, and pride in advertisements or marketing will be used, especially the ones that compare the use of fear and guilt in advertisements, and pride and happiness in advertisements. Finally, the articles will be discussed and the appeals compared to form the frameworks and answer the research questions.

VII. CONCLUSION

When looking at all the findings on negative emotions (table 1) it can be said that people take fewer risks when advertisements with negative emotions in them are shown (Megías et al., 2013). Also, negative emotions have a bigger influence on behaviour in the short term (Lewis et al., 2008). Exposing people to anti-- smoking advertisements with negative emotions in them increased their attempts to quit smoking (Farely et al., 2012). However, negatively framed value propositions were less influential when trying to change the behaviour of consumers when drinking alcohol (Previte et al., 2015). Further, the use of negative emotions in pro--environmental scripts had a negative effect on people's environmental attitudes (Searles, 2010). Finally, negative emotions in advertisements are less effective in persuading consumers to change their behaviour (Lukic, 2009). When looking at all the findings on positive emotions. it can be said that people's speed--up response latency is larger when participants see positive advertisements (Megías et al., 2013). The use of positive emotions has a bigger influence on people in the long term (Lewis et al., 2008). Further, value propositions that were positively framed were more influential when trying to change the behaviour of consumers when drinking alcohol (Previte et al., 2015). Positive emotions used in pro--environmental scripts had a positive effect on people's environmental attitudes (Searles, 2010). Also, positive appeals can have a persuasive advantage over negative appeals, because it is easier to engage in the recommended (Lukic, 2009). However, people took more risks when they were shown positive advertisements on the road (Megías et al., 2013) and exposing people to anti-smoking advertisements with positive emotions in them did not influence people's attempts to quit smoking (Farely et al., 2012). It can be concluded that there is a difference between the influence of positive and negative emotions on consumer behaviour in advertisements. Positive emotion appeals appear to influence consumers more than negative emotion appeals, because most of the researches that are studied in this research conclude that the use of positive emotions in advertisements has more effect on the behaviour of consumers than negative emotions.

REFERENCES

- [1] Albers--Miller, N. D., & Stafford, M. R. (1999). An international analysis of emotional and rational appeals in services vs. goods advertising. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 16(1), 42--57.
- [2] Basil, D. Z., Ridgway, N. M., & Basil, M. D. (2006). Guilt appeals: The mediating effect of responsibility. *Psychology & Marketing*, 23(12), 1035--1054.
- [3] Baumeister, R. F., Stillwell, A. M., & Heatherton, T. F. (1994). Guilt: an interpersonal approach. *Psychological bulletin*, 115(2), 243.
- [4] Bhagwat R. (2014). Feeling all the Feels: Crash Course Psychology #25. Crash Course, viewed: 25--11--2014.
- [5] Boykin, G. (2014). How is Emotional Appeal Used to Persuade? Demand Media, viewed 17--01--2015.
- [6] Bozinoff, L., & Ghingold, M. (1983). Evaluating guilt arousing marketing communications. *Journal of Business Research*, 11(2), 243--255.
- [7] Brennan, L., & Binney, W. (2010). Fear, guilt, and shame appeals in social marketing. *Journal of business Research*, 63(2), 140--146.
- [8] Brian, P., (2014). What is Pride? Psychology Dictionary, viewed: 25--11--2014.
- [9] Brinton, A. (1988). Pathos and the "Appeal to Emotion": An Aristotelian Analysis. *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 207--219.
- [10] Brown, M. (2009). Should My Advertising Stimulate an Emotional Response? Millward Brown Knowledge Point.
- [11] Caes, C. (2001). Stichting ALS start confronterende champagne. Welingerichte Kringen: Media, viewed 29--01--2015.
- [12] Cannon, W. B. (1927). The James--Lange theory of emotions: A critical examination and an alternative theory. *The American journal of psychology*, 567--586.
- [13] Cotte, J., Coulter, R. A., & Moore, M. (2005). Enhancing or disrupting guilt: The role of ad credibility and perceived manipulative intent. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(3), 361--368.
- [14] Chung, H., & Ahn, E. (2013). The Effects of Fear Appeal: A Moderating Role of Culture and Message Type. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 19(4), 452--469.



[15] Damasio, A., R. (2000). *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. London, San Diego, New York, Harcourt Brace and Company.

[16] Ekman, P., & Friesen, W. V. (1971). Constants across cultures in the face and emotion. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 17(2), 124.