

An Experimental Investigation Of The Impact Of Positive Versus Negative Advertising Message Framing, Moderated By Gender, On Charity Donation: A Study In The Context Of Anti-Domestic Violence Campaign In Mauritius

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Within the sphere of social advertisements, recent studies (El-Khoury and Shafer, 2016; Shortland and Palasinski, 2019) focused on encouraging pro-social behaviours (such as seeking help; behaviour change) instead of generating donation, despite the increase in number of charities and competition for funds. Moreover, research (Chung and Lee, 2019; Muralidharan et al., 2020) demonstrated that there is an ongoing debate about which type of message framing (i.e. negative versus positive) is more effective on intent to donate. Amid negative appeals, disgust is relatively new and under-researched although it proved useful in encouraging empathy and recruiting volunteers (Allred and Amos, 2018; Hamerman and Schneider, 2018) but not donation. On the other hand, within positive framing, recent studies (Homer, 2021; Muralidharan et al, 2020) demonstrated that hope is more efficient (than appeals such as anger; guilt; solidarity; repulsion and pity) in encouraging intent to donate (Hudson et al., 2019). However, to date, there is no evidence whether hope is more effective than disgust on donation and vice versa. The study, also, considers the moderating role of portrayal of male (versus female) victims. Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine the impact(s) of using a positive (i.e. hope) versus a negative message framing (i.e. disgust), moderated by gender, on actual donation behaviours, in the context of anti-domestic violence campaign.

The independent variable of this study is positive (i.e. hope) versus negative (i.e. disgust) message framing. The dependent variable is actual donation behaviour. The independent and dependent variables are moderated by gender. An experimental design will be conducted to measure the cause-and-effect factor. Participants will be exposed to different types of advertisements on a fictive website. Each advertisement will have a donation button leading to an online survey. The experiment will comprise of a 2 (hope versus disgust) x2 (male versus female victim) within subject factorial design. This research is expected to bring light to the ongoing debate of effectiveness of negative versus positive message-framed on pro-social behaviours (i.e. donation). Furthermore, it will guide charities who are sensitising against causes like domestic violence in improving their communication appeals and, thus, gathering more donations.

Keywords: Mauritius, advertising, gender