

A Model to Classify Television Social Advertisements According to the Use of Positive or Negative Appeals

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1 Positive and Negative Appeals in Social Marketing

Social Marketing consists on the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence behavior change with the goal of improving society and welfare (Andreasen 1994, 2003; Dann 2010; Kotler and Zaltman 1971; Smith 2000). There is evidence that interventions adopting social marketing have been effective in changing behaviors with expressive use and effectiveness in public health (Evans 2006; Evans and McCormack 2008; Gordon et al. 2006; Grier and Bryant 2005; Morris and Clarkson 2009; Stead et al. 2007; Walsh et al. 1993). One of the most important and effective tools of social marketing in public health has been social advertising, especially in television (Abroms and Maibach 2008; Block and Keller 1995; Della et al. 2008; Hastings et al. 1998).

Social marketing appeals may be expressed in a positive or negative way according to the intention of guiding behaviors. Positive appeals aim to show the direct benefits of a specific behavior, as an incentive to adopt it. Negative appeals describe unintended consequences of certain attitudes and behaviors, by creating psychic discomfort that leads to a disincentive or inhibition to behave in a certain way (Brennan and Binney 2010; Dillard and Anderson 2004). In order to inhibit people from continuing or adopting unhealthy behaviors, social marketing explores viewer reactions such as fear, guilt and shame with negative appeals such as threats (Boudewyns et al. 2013; Cauberghe et al. 2009; LaTour and Rotfeld 1997; Lewis et al. 2007; Ray and Wilkie 1970). On the contrary, positive appeals are based on humor, irony, hope, the exploration of benefits, and the use of celebrities or social models, who activate the coping response (Brennan and Binney 2010; Hastings et al. 2004; Lewis et al. 2007). A better understanding about the effectiveness of message appeals has long been a research challenge (Block and Keller 1995; Janis 1967; Lewis et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2009) because the existing conclusions for the best direction – positive or negative – are not consistent (Block and Keller 1995; Brennan and Binney 2010; Dillard and Anderson 2004; Gardner and Wilhelm 1987; Hastings et al. 2004; Lewis et al. 2007; Lwin et al. 2010; Reeves et al. 1991). This topic is related to the self-efficacy understood by the receptor and efficacy levels of the message response (Block and Keller 1995; Manyiwa and Brennan 2012), as well as the motivation and involvement of the target, according to regulatory focus theory and the demographic factors that characterize it (Gygax et al. 2010; Higgins

1997; Jäger and Eisend 2013; Keller 2006; Keller and Lehmann 2008; Krisjanous et al. 2013; Yoon and Tinkham 2013).

It is crucial to analyze advertising appeals in order to understand the feelings evoked next to the receptors (Aaker et al. 1988). The research about social advertising involves several studies which require the analysis of the appeals used in advertisements which is a complex and subjective task. It is common to combine both positive and negative appeals in social ads, as the Ordered Protection Motivation Theory suggests (Eppright et al. 2003; Tanner et al. 1991) or the new tendency of combining fear with humor (Mukherjee and Dubé 2012; Yoon and Tinkham 2013). A methodological model to classify social advertisements according to their proportion use of positive and negative appeals might simplify the task and give a contribution to these research challenges.

2 A Model to Classify Social Advertisements

The literature uses to classify advertisements by the simple identification of presence/no presence of appeals, following their definitions without any model for qualitative analysis (Cismaru et al. 2009; Paek et al. 2010). Another methodology found is to classify advertisements using a population inquiry with a Likert scale from one to seven - one being totally negative, seven totally positive and four a combination of both (Biener et al. 2004). We also note the use of qualitative interviews or focus group in order to understand if people consider a social advertisement as positive, negative or a combination of both appeals (Brennan and Binney 2010; Soscia et al. 2012). Existing methodologies are difficult and expensive to develop, because they need respondents for inquiries or interviews. They can also be subjective and poor because the results may vary according to the respondents' technical knowledge of marketing and communication, who may not analyze the diverse forms of communication, since positive and negative appeals may be presented in advertisements in verbal or non-verbal forms (Anderson et al. 2006; Barthes 1964; DeRosia 2008; Mick 1986).

This research suggests a model to classify social advertisements focusing on health according to their use of positive or negative appeals with content and discourse analysis. The model is built from the definitions of positive and negative appeals in social marketing found in the literature and from an exploratory research conducted with external judges. It proposes to resolve this absence in the literature and assist rigorous qualitative research on this topic.

3 Methods

The authors started to build a first version of the model with the theoretical background of advertising creation and with the state of the art about the definitions of positive and negative appeals. That model was improved and strengthened

ened with the identification of positive and negative appeals by a set of external judges in a sample range of social advertisements. The final model was tested with the comparison of results between its use by the researchers and the results of independent coders without using the model.

3.1 The Conception of the Model

The model, whose purpose is the advertisement analysis, was organized in three areas: 1) the story concept (Starks and Trinidad 2007), which is the creative guide and purpose of the advertisement; 2) verbal; and 3) non-verbal communication (Anderson et al. 2006; DeRosia 2008; Harris and Attour 2003; McQuarrie and Mick 1999; Vakratsas and Ambler 1999; Vaughn 1980). The research considered as important categories to analyze in verbal communication the narrative and slogan. As categories of non-verbal communication which may affect the meaning of messages the authors highlighted the music or tonality of voice (Craton and Lantos 2011), colors (Aslam 2006; Kress and Leeuwen 2002) and symbols of the scene (Anderson et al. 2006; DeRosia 2008; Harris and Attour 2003; McQuarrie and Mick 1999; Mick 1986; Puntoni et al. 2010; Vakratsas and Ambler 1999; Vaughn 1980). The authors searched for the definitions of positive and negative appeals in the literature and the model integrated the ideas that correspond to positive or negative appeals.

3.2 The Empirical Test of the Model

3.2.1 The Sample Data

HIV/AIDS prevention is considered a priority for public policies (Merson et al. 2008) and has been implemented with a range of social marketing activities, including social advertisements on television (Myhre and Flora 2000; Noar et al. 2009), which has been the most employed and effective media in AIDS prevention (Block and Keller 1995; Mattson and Basu 2010) and health-related social marketing in general (Fuhrel-Forbis et al. 2009; Self and Findley 2010). HIV prevention social advertisements also reveal contradictory results about the effectiveness of positive or negative appeals (Campbell and Babrow 2004; Eppright et al. 2002; Green and Witte 2006; Johnson and LaTour 1991; Lwin et al. 2010; Muthusamy et al. 2009; Sampson et al. 2001; Slavin et al. 2007; Smerecnik and Ruiter 2010; Terblanche-Smit and Terblanche 2010), suggesting the use of both positive and negative appeals.

The researchers used a sample of twenty television social advertisements preventing HIV/AIDS from a database of 375 HIV prevention television advertisements broadcasted until the end of 2011 in France, Germany, Portugal or Italy. The social advertisements were collected on the internet from January 1 to June 30 2012 and these four countries were those with more data within 539

advertisements collected in the same period from all the European Union countries. The sample included five advertisements from each of the four mentioned countries, dividing data into five chronological groups: 1987-1991; 1992-1996; 1997-2001; 2002-2006 and 2007-2011. As aleatory criteria to find the sample of twenty advertisements, the researchers selected the third of each group appearing in Nvivo software for each of the four countries, in alphabetical order of code. They were translated into English and totally transcribed to Nvivo software with descriptions of the story and the nonverbal communication.

3.2.2 The Analysis of Categories

The consensus of several judges might be more accurate than the judgment of any individual one (Perreault and Leigh 1989). The authors asked three external judges with wide academic experience in marketing and communication to view the twenty television social advertisements. One has an MBA, one a MSc in Marketing and one is PhD in Communication Sciences. After an individual briefing about the topic and a quick training about the tasks, the researchers asked the judges to complete an inquiry with an open question to identify the positive and negative appeals in the sample. In order confirm the conception of the model the answers of the judges were coded in the initial defined categories, using the N-Vivo software. The assessment of the judges' considerations also allowed the inclusion of new categories to the final model.

3.2.3 The Test of Model Classification

The external judges were also asked to grade the direction of each social advertisement from one to seven - one being a totally negative direction and seven totally positive, with four an equal combination of both appeals. This followed the Likert Scale method that has already been used in the literature (Biener et al. 2004).

In order to test the model, that grades were then compared with the results of the classifications done by one of the authors using the final proposed model, including new insights on the organization of categories that arose from the exploratory analysis. That classification was done with content analysis, considering the context of signs and the connotative associations with HIV/AIDS infection because the context is an important factor in qualitative and semiotic analysis (Mick 1986). Finally, each social advertisement was classified as positive or negative focused, depending on the proportion of references of each direction in all categories. Advertisements were classified as a combination of appeals when there was a draw between positive and negative appeals in each category or advertisement.

The research used the Proportional Reduction in Loss (PRL) approach to calculate reliability, an appropriate measure for qualitative judgment data (Rust

and Cooil 1994). In the case of 4 judges - 3 external judges and 1 of the authors – the agreements between the 6 pair of judgments were calculated. The design of the process of empirical test of the model can be analyzed in Figure 1.

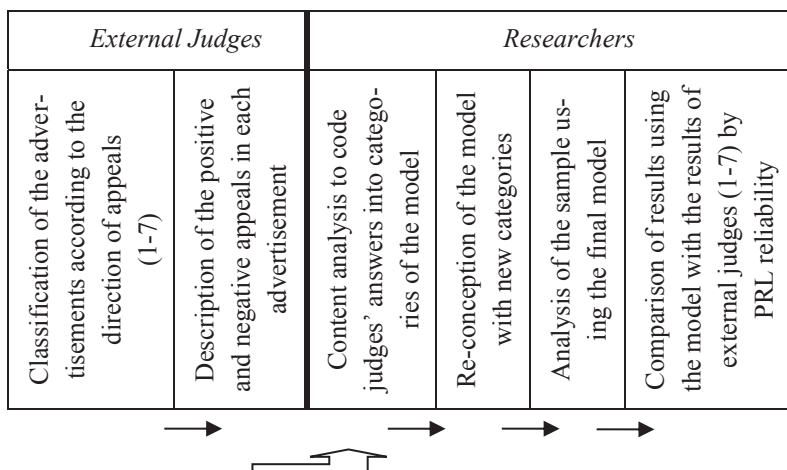


Figure 1: Design of the process of the empirical test of the model

4 Results

4.1 Categories of the Model

The researchers analyzed and coded the answers of judges identifying positive and negative appeals. Table 2 presents the 225 references eleven categories identified from a qualitative analysis. Those categories were re-organized into eight categories, as structured by tabs, because public figures or testimonials mentioned by the judges are characters of the advertisement. Symbols are part of the environment of the scenes and can also be joined in one category.

Table 1: Number of references from external judges discourse by categories

Category	No. References
Color	23
Character	15
Public Figure or Testimonial	8
Environment	21
Symbols	36
Humor	10
Music	19

Voice	2
Narrative	24
Slogan	11
Story	56
Total: 11	Total: 225

The results confirm the categories identified based on the background review and show that the characters and rhetoric figures as humor are important categories to add, as confirmed later in the literature (Barthes 1964; Chang and Yen 2013; Delbaere et al. 2011; Harris and Attour 2003; McQuarrie and Mick 1999). After identifying the signs related to the two new categories added to the previous model, we created the final model, shown in Table 2. The model consists of eight categories with literature support.

Table 2: Model to classify social advertisements as positive and negative appealed

Story Concept	
Positive	Negative
Benefits of intended behaviors (Brennan and Binney 2010; Cauberghe et al. 2009; Hastings et al. 2004; Lewis et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2009)	Dangerous consequences of unintended behaviors (Biener et al. 2004; Brennan and Binney 2010; Cauberghe et al. 2009; Hastings et al. 2004; Lewis et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2009)
Verbal Communication (oral/written)	
<i>Words/Expressions used in the narrative</i>	
Positive	Negative
Life, health, smile, love, respect, protect, prevent, treat, good, responsibility, copy, save, gains, intended, efficacy (Dillard and Anderson 2004; Hastings et al. 2004; Lewis et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2009)	Death, disease, illness, danger, fatality, fear, guilt, shame, risk, losses, bad, consequences, threat, effects, unintended (Brennan and Binney 2010; Cauberghe et al. 2009; Dillard and Anderson 2004; Hastings et al. 2004)
Slogan	
Positive	Negative
Incentive (Dillard and Anderson 2004)	Disincentive (Dillard and Anderson 2004)
Rhetoric Figures	
Positive	Negative
Humor, irony, empathy, motivating, advising, copy response (Dillard and Anderson 2004; Hastings et al. 2004; Lewis et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2009)	Shame, Frightening, Suspense with fear (Brennan and Binney 2010; Cauberghe et al. 2009; Dillard and Anderson 2004; Hastings et al. 2004)
Non-Verbal Communication	
<i>Tonality of Voice / Music</i>	
Positive	Negative

Motivating, exciting, empathic (Dillard and Anderson 2004; Hastings et al. 2004; Lewis et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2009)	Frightening,, sad, noisy, threatening (Brennan and Binney 2010; Cauberghe et al. 2009; Dillard and Anderson 2004; Hastings et al. 2004)
<i>Colors</i>	
Positive	Negative
Varied palette, blues, green, white (Aslam 2006; Kress and Leeuwen 2002; Mick 1986)	Grey scale, red (Aslam 2006; Kress and Leeuwen 2002; Mick 1986)
<i>Signs in the Environment</i>	
Positive	Negative
Health, happiness, smiles, hedonism (Dillard and Anderson 2004; Hastings et al. 2004; Lewis et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2009)	Death, fear, guilt, shame, desperation (Brennan and Binney 2010; Cauberghe et al. 2009; Dillard and Anderson 2004; Hastings et al. 2004)
<i>Characters</i>	
Positive	Negative
Motivating/Confident people, social models, testimonial, public figures (Delbaere et al. 2011; Dillard and Anderson 2004; Hastings et al. 2004; Lewis et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2009)	Frightened/worried people (Brennan and Binney 2010; Cauberghe et al. 2009; Dillard and Anderson 2004; Hastings et al. 2004)

4.2 The Use of the Model

For each advertisement, the researcher should code the transcriptions or notes corresponding to positive or negative appeals in each of the 8 categories. The negative form of discourse has to be considered in the syntax domain to avoid incorrect results (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Considering the number of references coded in each category for each appeal, the researcher should classify those categories as positive or negative or even a combination of both. It is possible to classify a category as “Not Applicable”. It happens in advertisements without data on that category – an advertisement without narrative, or without characters or slogan, for example -, and if that absence has not a semiotics meaning. The final classification of the advertisement may be positive, negative or a combination, depending on the proportion of classifications in the eight categories. A social ad is only classified as a combination of appeals if there are an equal number of categories classified as positive, negative and/or combination of both. When there were several categories classified as a combination of appeals, the number of categories classified only as positive or negative usually resolved the draw. As social advertisements may include both negative and positive appeals (Eppright et al. 2002; Gallopel-Morvan et al. 2009), the final classification of social advertisements as positive, negative or a combination of both reflect the proportion of codifications as positive and negative in the differ-

ent categories of the model – more than 50% –, considering that each category has the same importance to the classification of social ads.

4.3 Reliability of the Model

We found that there is reliability in the model. We proposed three possible classifications to code data – positive, negative or an equal combination of both appeals and found 79.1% intercoding agreement in the classification of social advertisements of the sample. We measured the reliability of the model with the Proportional Reduction in Loss (PRL) approach proposed by Roland Rust and Bruce Cooil (1994). This result corresponds to a PRL reliability of 0.97 concerning the 4 judges, which means that we can be fairly confident in the classifications made in this exploratory analysis, as well as in the proposed model (Kassarjian 1977; Rust and Cooil 1994). Table 3 shows the intercoding agreements and PRL Reliability from external judges on a Likert Scale and from one of the researchers by the use of the proposed model.

Table 3: Interjudge agreements and PRL Reliability of judgments from external judges on a Likert Scale and from one of the researchers by the use of the model

Interjudge Agreements	95
Total Interjudge Agreements Possible	120
Proportion of Interjudge Agreement	0.791
PRL Reliability for 3 categories and 4 judges	0.97

The existing disagreements between the judges are not too accented because they respect to the differences of classification near the combination point of the Likert Scale. The model proposes the classification of an advertisement as combination when it shows an equal number of positive and negative appeals. This specific result would be hard to fit with the simple classification of the external judges, who did not have the model to help their analysis.

5 Conclusion and Research Implications

This study proposed a methodological model to classify social advertisements according to their use of positive, negative and equal combination of both appeals. The model is based on the definitions of positive and negative appeals and is confirmed with an exploratory research with sample data by the comparison of appeal classifications by three external judges and classification by one of the researchers, following the model created.

The results of this study allow confidence in reliability of the model, considering that by using this model in orienting the classification of appeal direction in social advertisements, a similar result can be found than by doing it without any model. The proposed model for classifying social advertisements into posi-

tive and negative appeals allows for a more rigorous and more inexpensive qualitative analysis than the previous methods identified in the literature. It also may lead the researcher to a deep discourse and semiotic analysis of the advertisements, both in verbal and non-verbal forms that might remain separate or even forgotten without the use of the model. The model has the advantage of minimizing classification errors. As positive and negative appeals in social advertising is an important research topic for psychology and marketing areas, this paper gives a relevant contribution to the knowledge with a tool that may simplify research concerning those topics.

6 Limitations and Further Research

The model allows the classification of social advertisements according to the presence and proportion of positive and negative appeals but does not provide the analysis of the order of their use, as focused by Ordered Protection Motivation Theory. Further research may use the present classification model to analyze the order that positive and negative appeals appear in social advertisements. The model was tested with audiovisual advertisements, since they include more dimensions. In the future the model can be also tested with other media, cancelling some categories as "Not Applicable". Future research may also discuss its effectiveness comparing the presence of positive and negative appeals in each advertisement categories so that it can be possible to understand the communication elements whose appeals work better.

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