



**Investigating Effective Social Marketing Campaigns:  
The Direct and Indirect Impacts of Fear, Challenge, and Fear  
Mixed with Challenge Appeals on Help-Seeking Intentions**

**by**

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## Abstract

The primary aim of the current study is to empirically test a novel conceptual framework which united the Cognitive Phenomenological Theory of Emotions (Lazarus, Kanner and Folkman, 1980), the Revised Protection Motivation Model (Arthur and Quester, 2004), and the Heuristic Systematic Model (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993) to investigate the impact of various emotions on help-seeking intentions (BI). In particular, this research was undertaken to investigate the persuasive power of emotional advertising eliciting fear, challenge and fear mixed with challenge in consumers to induce help-seeking behavioural intentions in social marketing context. The study seeks to evaluate the direct and indirect impact of fear, challenge and fear mixed with challenge on behavioural intentions via systematic mode and depth of information processing (SMIP/DP) and attitudes towards the advertisement (AT). The study also strive to determine whether respective influence of fear mixed with challenge emotional advertising serves as a conditioning stimulus to enhance systematic mode and depth of information processing, and indirectly, through attitudes towards the advertisement, influence the strongest intentions to seek professional help in comparison to fear or challenge appeals. Since marketing communication is progressing to an era of tailored messages targeted at individuals, this study investigates a-priori individual differences such as tolerance of ambiguity, tolerance of negative emotions, involvement with the advertisement, response efficacy and self-accountability to unveil the unique information processing patterns among consumers exposed to the emotional advertising.

The study is based on mixed research design and comprised of qualitative (thematic analysis) and quantitative stages (quasi-experiment with web-based survey). Results of the study empirically confirm that emotional blend of fear mixed with challenge indirectly via cognitive mediators of SMIP/DP and AT exerted the strongest positive impact on help-seeking intentions in comparison to fear or challenge appeals in at-risk population. Across all emotional appeals, heuristically proceeded messages resulted in non-significant impact on behavioural intentions. Additionally, the empirical results of the current research suggest that market segmentation should be effectively applied when using fear mixed with challenge in advertising, since a-priori individual characteristic such as tolerance of ambiguity weakens the relationship between attitude towards the advertisement and help-seeking behavioural intentions in at-risk population. The moderating role of involvement with the advertisement was also supported to strengthen the direct relationship between SMIP/DP and AT regardless of felt emotion/s. The research provides important information to social marketers seeking to exploit the persuasive impacts of emotional advertising on inducing help-seeking intentions in at-risk consumers.

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## **Abbreviations**

- AT – Attitude towards the Advertisement
- AVE – Average Variance Extracted
- BI – Help- Seeking Behavioural Intention
- CFA - Confirmatory Factor Analysis
- CH – Challenge
- CPHTE - The Cognitive-Phenomenological Theory of Emotions
- CR – Construct Reliability
- EFA - Exploratory factor analysis
- ELM - The Elaboration Likelihood Model
- F – Fear
- HSM - The Heuristic-Systematic Model
- INV – Involvement with the Advertisement
- LMS – Latent Moderated Structural Equations
- LR - Log-likelihood Ratio Test
- MLR - Robust Maximum Likelihood Estimator
- CPGI - The Canadian Problem Gambling Index
- PGI – Problem Gambling Index
- PMT - The Protection Motivation Theory
- PB - Perceived Help- Seeking Benefits
- PSA - Public Service Announcement
- PS - Perceived Susceptibility
- RE – Response Efficacy
- RPMM - the Revised Protection Motivation Model
- SA – Self - Accountability
- SEM – Structural Equation Modelling
- SMIP – Systematic Mode and Depth of Information Processing
- TA – Tolerance of Ambiguity
- TNE – Tolerance of Negative Emotions

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