THE IMPACT OF HEURISTIC CUES ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THREATENING APPEALS

By

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Research on the issues of fear level and options level in fear appeal advertising was undertaken in order to determine what effect, if any, these variables have on emotions, attitudes, and purchase intention.

Participants were given one of four advertisements (low fear, low options; low fear, high options; high fear, low options; high fear, high options) and were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding emotions such as fear, anger, and disgust, as well as purchase intention, attitude toward the ad, and demographic items.

Results showed that high fear manipulations caused anger and disgust toward the ad. In addition, the options variable indirectly influenced negative emotions such as anger and disgust.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Fear appeals are a widely utilized and hotly debated topic in today’s society. Some opponents of the idea say that using fear to promote an idea or product is unethical; others argue that using fear appeals results in alienation and avoidance or rejection on the part of the audience. Although research has been gathered supporting both sides, as will be discussed later, much of the recent literature has favored the use of fear appeals as an effective means of advertising.

Basic human emotions affect all humans. As Randy Cornelius wrote in The Science of Emotion, “Emotions are the very stuff of what it means to experience the world. It makes sense, then, that the subject matter of thousands of novels, poems, films, newspaper stories, and tabloid headlines is, in one way or another, emotion” (Cornelius, 1996, p. 3). Different emotions are often thought of as distinct entities and have been have induced as such in recent studies (Gopinath & Bagozzi, 1999). However, in most situations emotions often occur in negative or positive groups such as a negative grouping fear, anger, and sadness or a positive grouping of happiness, pride, and excitement (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyes, 1999).

Emotions are very important in marketing and promotions, since they have been found to influence not only evaluation of consumer goods (Srull, 1983), but also the information processing stage (Isen, 1987). Since fear is universally regarded as one of the basic human emotions, it logically follows that emotions
are often used in appeals, whether to sell products or gain acceptance of ideas.

One way of explaining the relationship of fear to marketing is:

> Fear is an emotional response to a threat that expresses, or at least implies, some sort of danger. For most people, fear has a significant effect on behavior, leading them to seek ways of removing or coping with the threat and therefore the danger. Marketers have attempted to take advantage of this relationship by using the threat of danger to evoke the emotional response of fear and thus influence behavior. (Tanner, Hunt & Eppright, 1991, p. 36)

Information on how to cope with a fear appeal has been found to increase participants’ belief in their ability to solve the problem (Tanner, Hunt & Eppright, 1991). In addition, offering coping information or suggestions results in a more positive attitude toward the ad and brand, which improves the intent to purchase (Snipes, LaTour & Bliss, 1999).

Although there has been a wide variety of research on fear appeals, one area which is still unclear is whether offering several options with which to reduce fear is more effective than offering only one solution to the problem. The proposed study is an important contribution to the research because if the predicted results occur, it suggests that offering more than one solution option in fear appeal advertisements for consumer products increases the effectiveness of the ad. The comparison of results for low and high levels of fear in the study will further understanding of fear appeals and the impact they have on the reader of an ad.
The proposed study combines the two variables of fear level and quality of options available in order to discover the most effective combination of characteristics to be included in a fear appeal message.

First, a background of some major studies in this area will be supplied. This will be followed by an explanation of how the hypotheses were developed, including formal statements of each hypothesis. Next, the methodology of this experiment will be explained, followed by a report and analysis of the results of the study. Finally, implications for practitioners and ideas for future research will be discussed.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Fear appeals have been shown to be effective in a number of studies (Hewgill & Miller, 1965; Leventhal, 1970; Witte, 1992). Fear appeals were first investigated in the early 1950s for hygiene and health products (Janis & Feshbach, 1953). At that time it was concluded that their use was a hindrance to message acceptance, because in that study, increased fear arousal led to a decrease in persuasion. A positive effect of fear appeals was shown in the Hewgill and Miller study (1965) in which parents of elementary school children saw one of four taped question and answer sessions concerning fallout shelters. In that study, the high fear condition elicited greater attitude change than the low fear condition. One of the earliest meta-analyses on fear appeals was conducted by Ray and Wilkie in 1970. Using research gleaned mostly from health and hygiene campaigns, Ray and Wilkie examined many aspects of fear appeals and suggested that they could also be effective in marketing.

Fear appeals are used in three different types of promotions: health promotions, social issue messages, and consumer products and services (Ray & Wilkie, 1970). Each will be discussed in detail below.

**Health Promotions Messages**

There have been many studies regarding fear appeals as they appear in health promotions messages. These appeals are used with the hope of encouraging audiences to
take actions or avoid behaviors in order to preserve their health. A meta-analysis of these studies suggested that these appeals have become more effective through the years (Witte & Allen, 2000). Some examples include messages about such topics as HIV/AIDS, skin cancer, and teen pregnancy. The latter could also be considered in the next category, which is social issue messages.

**Social Issue Messages**

Social issue promoters also make use of fear appeals, for such issues as education, teen pregnancy, and violence (Henthorne, LaTour & Natarajan, 1993). These ads are not trying to sell products; rather, they are trying to promote ideas which will hopefully lead to a better society through the creation of an active community. The best examples of fear appeals in social issue promotion come from the work of the Ad Council with such campaigns as “Take a Bite out of Crime” and the “Loose Lips Sink Ships” campaign from World War II (Ad Council Annual Report, 1986/1987).

**Consumer Products and Services**

The third type of fear appeal ad is for regular consumer products. Types of products most apt to make use of fear appeals include insurance (particularly life insurance and flood insurance), security systems, medications, and tires. In a sample of pharmaceutical magazine advertisements, 43% of emotionally based ads used fear appeals to get their message across (Blaum, 2000).

Products not immediately associated with fear reduction can also use fear appeals. Some examples include tires, anti-bacterial soap, and life insurance (Schonwald, 1998).
Ethical Issues Surrounding Fear Appeals

Fear appeals concerning health and social issues may be considered controversial because unintended behaviors could result; unintended behaviors in health or social realms could cause problems for society in general. One example is drunk driving, which puts everyone on the road at risk. Obviously, it would be in the best interests of all involved to reduce this behavior.

The usage of fear appeals to promote consumer products is also somewhat controversial: Is it ethical to promote a product by scaring the customer into buying it? This question obviously has a myriad of different possible answers depending on whom you ask, and this paper will not attempt to address the issue of ethicality surrounding the use of fear appeals. Most important to remember is that fear appeals seem to work under certain conditions, which vary according to the audience and product type, among other variables.

Why Study Fear Appeals?

It is important to understand the intricacies of fear appeals because if they are not executed properly, they can potentially do more harm than good. When confronted with a threatening situation in the form of a fear appeal advertisement, individuals can choose to either a) avoid thinking about the problem or to b) find a means of coping with the situation (Keller & Block, 1996).

For example, a graphic poster against drinking and driving could be so traumatic to the viewer that he or she avoids thinking about the message. On the other hand, a message that is not perceived as being serious may not influence the
viewer to think about the problem and solution. Or, worse, a poster perceived as being patronizing could insult the audience and have the unintentional effect of actually increasing instances of the behavior which had been targeted to be reduced. Clearly, understanding the characteristics that go into making an effective fear appeal ad are vital in order to inhibit maladaptive behaviors.

Since the 1970s, several different models have been proposed to explain the effects of fear appeals on individuals. These will be explained in turn.

**Fear-as-Acquired Drive Model**

This model, proposed in 1953 by Hovland, Janis, & Kelly states that fear appeals produce a “negative drive state” which influences the audience to take action in order to reduce the negativity they are feeling. Based on this model, moderate fear appeals are the most effective in persuasion. At least some fear is required in order to provoke people to act; however, this model states that too much fear, or an inability to reduce that fear, will lead to maladaptive coping behaviors (Janis, 1967).

**Parallel Process Model**

This model (originally known as the parallel response model) was developed after the Fear-as-Acquired Drive Model and suggested that stronger fear appeals are the most effective (Leventhal, 1970). In contrast to the Fear-as-Acquired Drive Model, the parallel process model proposed that two reactions to fear appeals exist: 1) the cognitive reaction, which happens first and is related to danger control, and 2) the emotional reaction, which occurs second and which involves fear control. According to this model, both reactions occur whenever a threat is perceived.
Protection Motivation Theory

The protection motivation theory (PMT) focused on cognitive responses to fear appeals and how these cognitive processes swayed the attitude and ultimate behavior of an audience member (Rogers, 1975). According to the PMT model, four fundamental concepts must be present in order for a fear appeal to be effective;

1) probability of occurrence of the threat
2) magnitude of the threat,
3) effectiveness of the response to the threat, and
4) the self-efficacy of the person being threatened.

Rogers’ PMT model was based upon the fact that an individual’s reaction to a fear appeal would be dependent on all four of the above variables. The sum of these variables indicates not only how much a person feels threatened, but also how well they think they can cope with or remove the threat. It was suggested that high levels of threat and efficacy would produce the highest message acceptance while low levels of threat efficacy would produce the lowest message acceptance.

Extended Parallel Process Model

The most recent of the models attempting to explain the concept of fear appeals is the Extended Parallel Process Model, or EPPM. The EPPM combines the previously discussed three models: parallel process, fear-as-acquired, and PMT (Witte, 1992). This model maintains that two separate appraisals are made when a person is faced with a threatening situation. The first is the appraisal of
the threat itself, and the second is the evaluation of the recommended response, specifically, how effective the recommended response is thought to be.

Three different end results can occur:

1) no response,
2) acceptance of the message, and
3) avoidance/rejection of the message.

According to the EPPM, when a threat is regarded as minor, no response occurs. As seen in the literature, a threat can be defined as “an appeal to fear, a communication stimulus that attempts to evoke a fear response by showing some type of outcome that the audience wants to avoid” (LaTour & Rotfeld, 1997, p.46).

Perceived efficacy consists of two concepts. Response-efficacy is the perceived ability of a suggestion or recommended response to cope with the threat. Self-efficacy is an individual’s perception of his or her ability to perform that suggested response, thereby reducing the severity of the threat.

The message is likely to be accepted if both perceived threat and perceived efficacy are relatively high. When the threat is perceived as high but the efficacy is seen as being low, the message is likely to be rejected. This suggests that in order for a fear appeal to be most effective, both perceived threat and perceived efficacy need to be at high levels.

Regardless of which models form their bases, most of the fear appeals studies have focused on whether or not fear appeals actually work in persuading
people to take a certain action, and this, in turn, often depends on the type of message being offered.

**Characteristics of the Effective Fear Appeal Message**

Obviously, the main focus of most research has been to determine what makes an effective fear appeal and how fear appeals can be improved. Many variables are involved in the process, including communicator credibility, audience characteristics, message characteristics, and type of product or idea being marketed (Sternthal & Craig, 1974). Another article on the subject stated that “[a] response to fear is probably specific to the situation, topic, person, and criterion” (Burnett & Oliver, 1979, p. 182).

**Audience Characteristics**

Some of the variations in effectiveness of fear appeals can be attributed to the fact that audiences have not been homogeneous across studies. For example, Ray & Wilkie (1970) pointed out the fact that two studies resulted in differing outcomes, but one study used middle school aged students (Insco, Arkoff & Insko, 1965) while another used high school students (Janis & Feshbach, 1953).

The demographics of the audience is only one factor; psychographics may have an even greater impact on the effectiveness of fear appeals. For example, one study looked at high and low anxiety groups in regards to fear appeals (Janis & Feshbach, 1954). It was found that the low anxiety group was more affected by the strong fear appeal, while the high anxiety group was more affected by the weak fear appeal. Similar results were also found in a study concerning “copers” and “avoiders” (Goldstein, 1959). The copers reacted to low and high fear
appeals the same way, but the avoiders tended to react in a less positive manner to the high fear appeals as compared to the low fear appeals.

Usage and familiarity with the product are another audience characteristic which may have an impact on the effectiveness of fear appeals toward that audience. From their meta-analyses of fear appeals, Ray & Wilkie surmised that “fear motivation should be most effective for those who have not seen themselves as part of the market for the recommended product or brand,” (1970, p. 59). In their work, fear appeals worked better for individuals who were new to using a product rather than those who had used it before.

More recently, in a study by Roser & Thompson (1995), a previously low-involvement audience (as measured by having no previous exposure to the issue) was persuaded to become an active, higher-involvement audience through a fear appeal regarding a nuclear waste site. Other research has suggested a seemingly opposite result. High involvement has also been found to encourage in-depth processing of a message as well as a longer lasting shift in attitude (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The difference between experience and involvement with a product is key. Although fear appeals seem to increase a person’s involvement with a topic, substantial evidence exists that the higher the beginning involvement, the more persuasive a message will be. Although it appears to be true that using a fear appeal can increase a person’s perception of involvement, fear appeals should not be relied on for that alone; they have been demonstrated to serve more useful purposes such as increasing purchase intention and attitude toward an ad.
Message Characteristics

The level of fear applied in a message is obviously one of the main factors in whether a fear appeal is accepted or rejected. In the past, researchers have achieved results consistent with an inverted U-shape for the effects of increasing the amount of fear on the persuasiveness of an advertisement (Ray & Wilkie, 1970). A moderate amount of fear produced the most persuasiveness, with lower and higher fear appeals being rather ineffective. However, more recent literature has reported more positive results for high fear appeals. Specifically, Witte and Allen (2000) conducted a meta-analysis on recent literature and reported that a higher fear ad is more persuasive than a lower fear ad.

Based on the earlier discussion of varying audience types, the conclusion may be drawn that many factors enter into this equation, such as audience involvement. It is not simply a matter of strong or weak fear levels; other considerations must be taken into account to see the big picture.

The type of fear being employed, which ties in somewhat to the product or idea being promoted, also has an effect. There are two main types of fear that can be aroused: physical fear and social fear (Sternthal & Craig, 1974). Physical fear involves a threat of injury, death, or loss of belongings. Social fear involves the disapproval of behaviors or characteristics. Although not much research on this topic has been published, it is worth noting that the type of fear aroused may be one of many variables involved in the whole process of fear appeals. Obviously, in some cases only a social fear could be aroused. For example, deodorant manufacturers can rely only on socially-based fear appeals
rather than physical fear appeals; not wearing the right type of deodorant poses no physical threat, but wearing a brand of deodorant that doesn’t work well can definitely put some social stress on a person!

In order for the fear appeal message to be effective, it needs to include a way for the audience to reduce their anxiety concerning the fear. Usually, that would be the product or behavior to be adopted. As one unnamed advertising executive suggested, “First, address the problem, then provide the solution” (Columbia stress website, 2002).

One study found that individuals who received coping information after a fear appeal had greater intentions to take action than did a group of individuals who received the fear appeal but no coping information (Tanner, Hunt & Eppright, 1991). The same study also revealed that providing coping responses without a fear appeal was not as effective as providing both.

When a fear appeal is used without giving coping information, negative behavioral responses including avoidance or rejection of the message may occur; therefore, including both components in a fear appeal advertisement is vital to the effectiveness of the ad. Maladaptive behaviors such as avoidance should be identified and counteracted in order to eliminate them (Tanner, Hunt & Eppright, 1991). When people feel high self-efficacy toward solving a problem, their perceptions about an ad are better and they see the ad as being more ethical (Snipes, LaTour & Bliss, 1999).

The characteristic most relevant to this thesis topic is the source credibility of the message. It has been shown that a higher credibility
spokesperson for a company induces a more positive attitude toward an ad than does a lower credibility source (Craig & McCann, 1978). Similarly, the reputation of the company as perceived by viewers of an ad also has an effect on the credibility of that ad (Goldberg & Hartwick, 1990). In a more recent study, it was found that the reputation of the company had a greater effect on brand attitude and intention to buy, whereas higher spokesperson/endorser credibility was more effective in increasing attitude toward the ad itself (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1998).

As would be expected, a high credibility source coupled with a high fear message was the most effective in changing attitudes to agree with the message (Hewgill & Miller, 1965). A continuing study demonstrated that high credibility sources are more effective when they employ a higher fear appeal than when they use a lower fear appeal (Miller & Hewgill, 1966). The use of low-credibility sources is understandably not recommended, as they are easy for the audience to discredit, which in turn leads to rejection of the proposed message.

Although the main idea of fear appeals is to scare a person and motivate them to perform a desired action, research has found that other emotions such as anger, anxiety, and others are also elicited from fear appeals ads (Duke, Pickett, Carlson, & Grove, 1993; LaTour & Zahra, 1989).

Fear appeals in advertising have demonstrated effectiveness in various recent studies addressed above (Roser & Thompson, 1995; Witte, 1992; Witte & Allen, 2000). As evidenced by the previous literature review, a variety of constructs influence the level to which a fear appeal is influential in changing
opinions, attitudes and, ultimately, behaviors. Furthermore, it has been established that higher credibility of sources has a positive effect on an audience (Craig & McCann, 1978). It has also been noted that individuals’ perception of self-efficacy has a positive result on effectiveness of a fear appeal ad (Snipes, LaTour & Bliss, 1999). Therefore, this study looking to test whether having several options rather than one, as well as including a more credible option (a solution to the problem which does not benefit the sponsor), available to reduce anxiety in a fear appeal situation will increase the effectiveness of the ad. Specifically, will an ad which includes an unbiased solution to the fear appeal threat be more effective than an ad which offers only a solution benefiting the sponsor?
Emotions are a complicated issue that would be described by many different people in many different ways. One thing that almost every scientist would agree on, however, is that emotions play a role in just about every facet of our existence, whether it be talking to a friend or reacting to an advertisement. As Randy Cornelius wrote in his book *The Science of Emotion*, “Experience without emotion is like a day without weather. Emotions are the very stuff of what it means to experience the world.” (1996, p. 3).

In many cases, emotions can be combined into positive or negative categories to explain reactions (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999); negative emotions such as fear, disgust, or anger often occur in groups and, although normally undesirable, can have profound impacts on a marketing message. Precisely this was found in a study by Duke, Pickett, Carlson, and Grove (1993) in which they discovered that a fear appeal provoked not only fear but additional, unplanned negative emotions from participants.

Fear is a strong motivator because it normally inspires an individual to either a) avoid the threat or b) reinterpret the situation (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). Therefore, the first set of this study’s hypotheses involve the high fear condition and its effects on other emotions, which may in turn have impact on reactions to the advertisement. Clore and Gasper (2000) proposed that negative emotions may lead to a
discounting of supplied information (or, in this case, suggestions for solving the threat of a break-in) and therefore a search for new information.

If an individual views the high fear condition advertisement, perhaps he/she will feel not only fear but also anger and disgust, since negative emotions often occur together. Therefore:

H\textsubscript{1A}: The higher fear condition will induce elevated levels of anger.
H\textsubscript{1B}: The higher fear condition will induce elevated levels of disgust.

An individual who is presented with a threatening appeal can be anticipated to experience negative emotions such as fear, anger, and disgust. However, self-efficacy (how an individual feels that they can use provided information to solve a problem), has been found to have a positive effect on attitude toward an ad (Snipes, LaTour & Bliss, 1999). Providing several options to solve the threatening issue should result in higher self-efficacy by the individual viewing the ad, and those options being used by the individual in order to reduce his or her level of fear. Along with the reduction in fear, having several options offered, including options which are not sponsor-benefitting, will make the individual feel fewer negative emotions such as anger and disgust. Therefore:

H\textsubscript{2A}: The high options condition will result in reduced levels of reported fear.
H\textsubscript{2B}: The high options condition will result in reduced levels of reported anger.
H\textsubscript{2C}: The high options condition will result in reduced levels of reported disgust.

When an individual is exposed to a threatening situation, the fear they experience usually motivates them to take action to reduce or cope with the fear (Tanner, Hunt, & Eppright, 1991). Having several options offered at the time of the threatening appeal
may indirectly affect fear’s effect on positive attitudes and purchase intention.

Therefore:

H₃ₐ: A positive correlation between fear and positive attitudes exists exclusively in the high options condition.

H₃₅: A positive correlation between fear and purchase intention exists exclusively in the high options condition.

Fear, anger, and disgust are all negative emotions. However, fear has a benefit in that it motivates people to protect themselves. Anger and disgust do not have such a benefit, especially when there are few options available, or if those options are unlikely to be used. As described in Tanner, Hunt, & Eppright’s, Protection Motivation Model (1991), the lack of options available in solving the problem leads to a less effective and potentially maladaptive response to the advertisement. Therefore:

H₄ₐ: A negative correlation between anger and attitude toward the ad exists exclusively in the no options condition.

H₄₅: A negative correlation between anger and purchase intention exists exclusively in the no options condition.

H₅ₐ: A negative correlation between disgust and attitude toward the ad exists exclusively in the no options condition.

H₅₅: A negative correlation between disgust and purchase intention exists exclusively in the no options condition.
If a person feels more positive attitudes toward an ad, it is likely that he/she will act on what the ad is suggesting. In other words, attitude toward the ad will be directly related to behavioral or purchase intention, as outlined by Villegas (2002). Therefore, 

H6: Positive attitude toward the ad leads to high levels of purchase intention.

These hypotheses will be tested in an experiment that manipulates fear level as well as number of options presented to viewers of a fictitious advertisement, and that also measures other variables such as anger, disgust, purchase intention, and attitude.
CHAPTER 4
METHOD

Pretest

Using images obtained from gettyimages.com with the search terms "burglar" and "break in", photos were paired together in a before and after sequence, as demonstrated in Figure 1. Levels of fear were measured by self-report with a scale of 1-5, where 1=no fear at all and 5=very high fear. One of the three pairs of photos used an inverse of the scale (1=very high fear, 5=no fear at all) to ensure that participants were not merely reporting the same number for each set of pictures. The pretest was administered to 127 undergraduates in an introductory public relations course.

Possible headlines and body messages were also tested, to be sure that the manipulation for number/quality of options would be successful in the predicted manner before the ads for the main experiment were finalized.

Before the main study, a focus group consisting of eight graduate students was conducted in order to gain insight into how to make the ad more effective and how to ensure that the manipulations would work. Based on the focus group, it was decided that the low fear condition would include no pictures while the high fear condition would feature two black and white pictures of a man with a crowbar entering a window. In addition, the first pretest fear manipulations of “It CAN happen” and “It WILL happen” were changed to all be “It CAN happen”.
Main Study

At the start or end of a class, as previously discussed with the instructor, students were asked for their participation in exchange for extra credit points. Those who agreed signed the informed consent and received the three-page questionnaire. Each participant received one of two different versions of the pre-test. This was to ensure that the manipulations for low levels of each variable (fear and options) would not interfere with the manipulations for high levels of the same variable.

Materials

Four advertisements were developed, using the phrases shown to be effective in the pre-test, to allow for a study of the interaction between fear level and number/quality of options offered to reduce fear. See Appendix.

The questionnaire measured the three emotions of anger, fear, and disgust by using nine items of Izard’s (1977) Differential Emotions Scale. Purchase intention, involvement, and perceived number and quality of options were also measured using a scale of 1 to 5 as illustrated in Figure 6. In addition, demographic variables such as age, major course of study, number of credit hours completed, and gender were collected with the data. History of break-ins was also asked about, as personal experience may have an impact on an individual’s answers to the questions.
CHAPTER 5
RESULTS

Subject Profile

Participants for the main study included 240 undergraduate students, 79.2% of which were female and 20.8% of which were male. The participants had an average age of 20.8 years with a standard deviation of 1.72, and the average number of credit hours they had completed at UF at the time of the study was 77.9 hours with a standard deviation of 29.13. The most common majors in decreasing order of appearance were advertising (62.5% of respondents), business (15.4% of respondents), public relations (7.9% of respondents), journalism (3.8% of respondents), and telecommunications (2.1% of respondents). Slightly more than 8% of respondents either did not supply their major, or indicated that their major was not among those listed.

Manipulation checks in the form of two one way analysis of variance procedures were performed on the data to ensure that the high and low fear conditions, and the high and low option conditions (for both quantity and quality of options) were working. Both tests were significant. The level of fear in the high fear condition (Mean=2.97, SD=.94) was significantly higher than the level of fear in the low fear condition (Mean=2.15, SD=1.00), F=43.508, p<.05. The level of options in the high option condition (Mean=3.58, SD=.8017) is significantly higher than the level of options in the low options condition (Mean=3.14, SD=.8159), F= 17.459, p<.05.
The reliability of each measurement was also tested. The Cronbach’s Alpha level for each is reported in Table 5-1. Each measurement was reliable.

Table 5-1  Cronbach’s Alpha scores for each measure

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option Qual &amp; Quant</td>
<td>.6947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Testing of Hypotheses**

Separate one-way analysis of variance measurements were performed on the data to test $H_{1a}$-$H_{2c}$. These will be discussed in turn.

It had been predicted in Hypothesis $1_a$ that the higher fear condition will induce elevated levels of anger. Hypothesis $1_a$ was supported by the data. The anger level in the high fear condition ($Mean = 2.12, SD = .88$) was significantly higher than the anger level in the low fear condition ($Mean = 1.71, SD = .87$), $F = 14.189, p < .05$.

The second part of Hypothesis 1, that the higher fear condition will induce elevated levels of disgust, was also supported. The disgust level in the high fear condition ($Mean = 2.22, SD = .87$) was higher than the disgust level in the low fear condition ($Mean = 1.80, SD = .82$), $F = 14.842, p < .05$.

It was predicted that the high options condition would result in reduced levels of reported fear ($H_{2a}$), reported anger($H_{2b}$), and reported disgust($H_{2c}$). These three hypotheses were rejected upon analysis of the data. The fear and disgust variables showed a trend in the predicted direction, although it was not statistically significant with $p$ values of .704 and .494 respectively. The anger variable showed a trend opposite to what was predicted. However, this finding was not statistically significant, $p = .361$. 
It was hypothesized that fear would occur with positive attitudes and higher purchase intention exclusively in the high options condition. At the same time, it was predicted that anger and disgust would happen with negative attitudes (anger H₄a), disgust H₅a) and lower behavior intention (anger H₄b, disgust H₅b) only in the low options condition. Furthermore, a positive attitude toward the ad was hypothesized to correlate to increased behavioral (purchase) intention (H₆).

Two linear regression models were tested for Hypotheses 3a through 6; one for Hypotheses 3a, 4a, and 5a (hypotheses concerning attitude toward the ad), and one for Hypotheses 3b, 4b, and 5b (hypotheses concerning purchase intention after viewing the ad).

A regression analysis was performed on the data to investigate the relationship between disgust, anger, fear, and attitude, and to test Hypotheses 3a, 4a, and 5a for the low option condition. The model was not significant in the low option condition, see Table 5-2. The model was significant for the high options condition for only one of the three variables (fear), F=3.015, p<.05. See Table 5-3 for the ANOVA and Coefficients information for the high options condition. Therefore, Hypothesis 3a was supported, but Hypotheses 4a and 5a were rejected.

Table 5-2 Low Option Condition: Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.284</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>49.444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>1.916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGER</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISGUST</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>-.120</td>
<td>-.884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R square= 0.040, Adjusted R square= 0.014 , F= 1.523  Sig= 0.213
Table 5-3  High Options  Condition:  Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.269</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td></td>
<td>58.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.335</td>
<td>2.809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGER</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>-.088</td>
<td>-.507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISGUST</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>-.146</td>
<td>-.963</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R square= 0.070, Adjusted R square= 0.046  , F= 3.015   Sig= 0.033

A second regression analysis was performed on the data to investigate the relationship between attitude, disgust, fear, and anger with purchase intention; this was in order to test Hypotheses 3_b, 4_b, 5_b, and 6. For the low option condition, the only significant variable was attitude, see Table 5-4. For the high options variable, both fear and attitude were significant, condition, F= 15.716, p<.05; see Table 5-5. Therefore, Hypotheses 4_b and 5_b were rejected, and Hypotheses 3_b and 6 were supported.

Table 5-4  Low Option Condition:  Purchase Intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGER</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>-.044</td>
<td>-.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISGUST</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>-.123</td>
<td>-1.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>9.585</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R square= 0.476, Adjusted R square= 0.476  , F= 24.950    Sig= 0.000

Table 5-5  High Options Condition:  Purchase Intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.904</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td></td>
<td>42.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>1.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGER</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>-.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISGUST</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.532</td>
<td>6.938</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R square= 0.344, Adjusted R square= 0.322  , F= 15.716    Sig= 0.000
Since the fear measure had very strong reliability (.9291) while the anger and disgust measures had lower reliability (.8652 and .7971 respectively), an exploratory factorial analysis was performed on the data. Based upon this analysis, it was determined that the variables relating to fear (scared, fearful, and afraid) occur together. The other variables seem to occur together in a combination of disgust and anger. See Table 5-6.

Table 5-6  Rotated Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENRAGED</td>
<td>.748</td>
<td>.359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISGUST</td>
<td>.817</td>
<td>.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCARED</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>.866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVULS</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAD</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td>.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEARFUL</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>.891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGRY</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTASTE</td>
<td>.757</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRAID</td>
<td>.255</td>
<td>.904</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the fear variable and the new anger-disgust variable were tested in a regression analysis, it was found that for the low option condition, anger-disgust had a significant, negative relationship to purchase intention. In the high options condition, anger-disgust did not have a significant impact on purchase intention, but fear had a positive and significant relationship. See Tables 5-7 and 5-8. This data suggests that fear operates as a positive factor on purchase intention while anger and disgust combined decrease purchase intention.
Table 5-7 Low Option Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.401</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGER/DISGUST</td>
<td>-.121</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>-.150</td>
<td>-2.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>-.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>9.633</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R square= 0.475, Adjusted R square= 0.461, F= 33.532, Sig= 0.000

Table 5-8 High Options Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.371</td>
<td></td>
<td>.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGER/DISGUST</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>-.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>1.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE</td>
<td>.777</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>.532</td>
<td>6.955</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R square= 0.343, Adjusted R square= 0.326, F= 21.034, Sig= 0.000
We can infer from this data that a higher fear ad is more likely to cause high levels of anger and disgust in individuals. It seems that all three negative emotions that were measured in this study occurred in conjunction with each other, which supports conclusions drawn by Duke, Pickett, Carlson & Grove (1993). Perhaps this is because participants feel that their emotions are being manipulated in order to sell them a product. Alternatively, they could be angry at the situation described in the ad, rather than being angry at the ad itself. This provides a limitation in this study because those are two very different reactions.

The implications of this portion of the study are that trying to induce a high level of fear in participants will induce elevated levels of anger and disgust. This suggests that marketers who include fear appeal messages in their communication strategies should be sure that the level of fear being used is not strong enough to cause negative emotions other than fear.

It does not appear that fear level was reduced by providing more options; in fact, an opposite trend can be seen, although it is not significant. Perhaps this can be explained in that participants who were offered more options felt more comfortable admitting their fears to themselves and on the survey.

It had been predicted that anger and disgust would be reduced by offering more options. This was rejected by the data, although the trend was in the
predicted direction. The reasoning behind this is that the participants who saw more options being offered would feel less anger and disgust toward the ad. However, the lack of significant results may mean that participants felt anger not toward the security system ad, but rather toward the criminal act of breaking and entering. Alternatively, the participants could have viewed the high options condition as a ploy to get their trust, and therefore did not experience any significant reductions in anger or disgust.

It was found that fear and more positive attitudes toward the ad as well as fear and higher purchase intention happened only in the high option condition, it appears that the high option condition offers some benefits over the low option condition. Specifically, fear and more positive ads happen exclusively in the high option condition. This suggests that although the fear level is fairly high, participants have, in general, more positive attitudes toward the ad. The same is true for fear and higher purchase intention; these two variables only occur together in the high options condition. These findings suggest that although supplying more options cannot reduce negative emotions directly, it can play a role in moderating the effect of negative emotions on attitude and purchase intention.

Hypothesis 6 was supported. This suggests that positive attitude and high purchase intention were somewhat correlated in a positive manner. As attitudes increased (became more positive), purchase intention also increased. This finding supports a portion of the model discussed by Villegas (2002).
The findings from this study suggest that practitioners make sure that their ads are not extremely fearful, in order to avoid negative emotions such as anger and disgust. In addition, the conclusions of this study suggest that those in the ad industry at least consider offering some choices in their fear appeal ads, especially when a higher level of fear is utilized in the ad. Although not directly related, offering options can work with other aspects of the ad to reduce negative emotions.

Future research concerning quality and quantity of options would be helpful for this field. This study has suggested that giving an individual more options may have indirect effects on lessening negative emotions brought on by fear appeals; looking to explain how and why this occurs would assist practitioners’ development of more effective ads. The area of fear appeals is an important part of the field because although fear appeals have been shown to be effective, there are potential problems with the use of fear appeals which need to be considered and lessened. Research concerning options, ethicality, purchase intention, and how these variables fit together is also suggested. Furthermore, studies that investigate other product types or audience groups would be an important addition to the knowledge base.
Without Precautions, it CAN Happen!
Breaking & entering is most likely to occur during daylight.

Investing in a system from All-Year Security Systems is the only way to safeguard you and your belongings against burglary and theft.

**Full service, 24 hour protection**  
All-Year employs more local contacts than any other service, and our operators are on call 24 hours a day. This means faster response times to an emergency, whenever it may occur.

**Regularly scheduled upkeep**  
We keep our systems up-to-date and come by periodically to make sure that all components are working effectively.

**Not just for break-ins**  
All-Year also features monitoring for fires, floods, and carbon monoxide leaks. These things threaten your house from the inside and can wreak havoc while you are away or sleeping.

**Let our systems put your mind at ease.**  
All-Year has several systems to fit almost every budget. Call or stop by to discuss our best system to meet your needs!

**All-Year Security Systems**
Without Precautions, it CAN Happen!
Breaking & entering is most likely to occur during daylight.

Investing in a system from All-Year Security Systems is one of several precautions you can take to safeguard you and your belongings against burglary and theft.

**Neighborhood watch groups**
Talk to neighbors and come up with a plan! To help get you started, call 1-800-ALL-HELP for our free brochure on neighborhood watch groups, or pick one up at our location in Gainesville.

**Motion detectors & timers for lights**
Available at most hardware stores, these little gadgets can make it look like you are at home even when you’re not.

**Communication is key!**
Let your neighbors know when you’ll be out of town, and ask them to do the same. It also doesn’t hurt to arrange for someone to pick up your mail, take out trash or re-arrange cars in your driveway.

**Let our systems put your mind at ease.**
All-Year has several systems to fit almost every budget. Call or stop by to discuss our best system to meet your needs!

All-Year Security Systems
Without Precautions, it CAN Happen!
Breaking & entering is most likely to occur during daylight.

1:32 P.M.                        1:33 P.M.

Investing in a system from All-Year Security Systems is the only way to safeguard you and your belongings against burglary and theft.

**Full service, 24 hour protection**
All-Year employs more local contacts than any other service, and our operators are on call 24 hours a day. This means faster response times to an emergency, whenever it may occur.

**Regularly scheduled upkeep**
We keep our systems up-to-date and come by periodically to make sure that all components are working effectively.

**Not just for break-ins**
All-Year also features monitoring for fires, floods, and carbon monoxide leaks. These things threaten your house from the inside and can wreak havoc while you are away or sleeping.

**Let our systems put your mind at ease.**
All-Year has several systems to fit almost every budget. Call or stop by to discuss our best system to meet your needs!

**All-Year Security Systems**
Without Precautions, it CAN Happen!
Breaking & entering is most likely to occur during daylight.

1:32 P.M.                        1:33 P.M.

Investing in a system from All-Year Security Systems is one of several precautions you can take to safeguard you and your belongings against burglary and theft.

Neighborhood watch groups
Talk to neighbors and come up with a plan! To help get you started, call 1-800-ALL-HELP for our free brochure on neighborhood watch groups, or pick one up at our location in Gainesville.

Motion detectors & timers for lights
Available at most hardware stores, these little gadgets can make it look like you are at home even when you’re not.

Communication is key!
Let your neighbors know when you’ll be out of town, and ask them to do the same. It also doesn’t hurt to arrange for someone to pick up your mail, take out trash or re-arrange cars in your driveway.

Let our systems put your mind at ease.
All-Year has several systems to fit almost every budget. Call or stop by to discuss our best system to meet your needs!

All-Year Security Systems
Please rate how the ad makes you feel with regard to the following emotions, on a scale of 1 to 5 as indicated under each emotion.

1) **Enraged**
   
   Not enraged at all
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2) **Disgusted**
   
   Not disgusted at all
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3) **Scared**
   
   Not scared at all
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4) **Feeling of revulsion**
   
   No revulsion at all
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5) **Mad**
   
   Not mad at all
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6) **Fearful**
   
   Not fearful at all
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7) **Angry**
   
   Not angry at all
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8) **Feeling of distaste**
   
   Not distaste at all
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9) **Afraid**
   
   Not afraid at all
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
10) How would you rate the quality of options offered by this advertisement to reduce the fear level associated with break-ins? Please circle a number from 1-5, where 1= low quality of options, and 5=high quality of options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low quality of options</th>
<th>High quality of options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11) How would you rate the advertisement in regards to the number of options or choices you feel it will present a reader who wants to reduce their fear about a break-in happening at their home? Please circle the number that most closely approximates your opinion on a five-point scale, where 1=few choices and 5=many choices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Few choices/options</th>
<th>Many choices/options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12) How relevant to your life is the topic of crime rates, in your opinion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all relevant</th>
<th>Very relevant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13) Have you or has someone you’re close to ever been the victim of a crime such as a break-in or burglary? Please circle one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Yes—more than 1 year ago</th>
<th>Yes—in the past 6-12 months</th>
<th>Yes—in the past 6 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14) How would you rate the likelihood that you will be a victim of a crime such as a break-in or burglary?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all likely</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements, where 1=strongly disagree, and 5=strongly agree.

15) This ad is good.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16) This ad is interesting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17) This ad is informative.  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly agree

18) This ad is appropriate.  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly agree

19) This ad is easy to understand.  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly agree

20) This ad is objective.  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5  
Strongly agree

21) If you were in the market for a security system, how likely is it that you would purchase it from the company depicted in the ad, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= I would definitely not buy from this company and 5=I would definitely buy from this company.  
Would definitely not buy 1 2 3 4 5  
Would definitely buy

22) What is your gender? (Please circle one)  
Male Female

23) What is your age? _____

24) How many credit hours have you finished at UF? ________

25) What is your major? (Please circle one)  
Telecom Adv PR Journalism Business  
Graduate Other (please specify)________________
REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jennifer L. Lemanski was born in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1978. She grew up in the Syracuse, New York, area where she attended Jamesville-DeWitt Schools and graduated in 1996. In the fall of that year, she enrolled at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York, where she obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. After graduation in May 2000, she relocated to College Station, Texas, where she worked as a disk jockey at a local radio station and took business classes at Texas A&M University.

In the fall of 2001, Jennifer enrolled at the University of Florida to pursue a master’s degree in mass communications with a concentration in advertising. After completion of the degree, she will relocate to southern Florida.