The Effects of Values-Affirmation on Charity Support Behavior: the Mediating Role of Positive Other-Directed Feelings

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We propose that affirming important personal values increases charity support behavior and the effect of values-affirmation on charity support behavior is mediated by positive other-directed feelings. We demonstrated that values-affirmation increased donation intention (Study 1). Study 2 replicated the results of Study 1 and showed that participants in values-affirmation conditions were more likely to support charity on the greater positive other-directed feelings than those in control conditions. Study 3 further provided the robustness of such effects on willingness to help charity and demonstrated that the effect of values-affirmation on charity support behavior was mediated by positive other-directed feelings. The results of this research were consistent with the findings of Crocker et al. (2008) suggesting that values-affirmation leads people to transcend concerns about increasing the integrity of the self, which in turn induces positive other-directed emotions.

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toward counterfeit products. H5: Subjective norm has a positive effect on the attitude toward counterfeit products. H6: Attitude toward counterfeit products has a positive effect on purchase intention of counterfeits.

Method: Three hundred and sixty-nine undergraduate female students (M=21.4) at a large university in Seoul, Korea took part in this study. Korea is one of the top five biggest manufacturers in counterfeit products worldwide along with China, Taiwan, India and Hong Kong (Casabona 2009). Approximately 70% of the respondents were marketing and fashion majors. Their monthly personal disposable income ranged from $70 to $900 (M=$318). The questionnaire included demographic items and questions as to whether or not participants had purchased counterfeit products. The purchasers of counterfeits ‘knowingly’ purchased a counterfeit as non-deceptive counterfeits. For measurement, perceived price-advantage, quality of counterfeits, and subjective norms items were adopted from Tom et al (1998)’s scale. Richins and Dawson (1992)’s materialism scale and Muncy and Vitel (1992)’s consumer ethics scale were also used for this study. Each item was accompanied by a 7-point scale (7=strongly agree; 1=strongly disagree). Descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling using AMOS program were conducted for data analyses.

Major Findings: Approximately 67% of respondents had purchased counterfeit fashion products such as clothing, handbags, accessories and shoes. To ensure data validity and reliability in this study, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminate validity were examined. As the results, strong evidence demonstrated satisfactory data validity and reliability. As the next step, the subsequent process of identifying the structural model that best fits the data was conducted. The findings indicated the structural model presented in this study showed adequate overall goodness-of-fit with observed data (Chi-square =15.85, d.f. =5, p=.05; GFI=.99; AGFI=.98; CFI=.99; RMSEA=.001, RMR=.028). The results of hypothesis testing showed four hypotheses out of six supported at the significant level of lower than 0.05. That is, the perceived price-advantage of counterfeits (H1: Estimate= .126, p<.05), and perceived quality of counterfeits (H2: Estimate=.373, p<.0001) had a positive effect on the attitude toward counterfeit products. Also materialism (H4: Estimate=.175, p<.0001) had a negative effect on the attitude toward counterfeit products. Finally, attitude toward counterfeit products (H6: Estimate=.446, p<.0001) had a positive effect on purchase intention of counterfeits. However, H2 and H4 were not supported.

Managerial Implications: Based on these results, consumer’s attitudes toward counterfeits is an important predictor of counterfeits of luxury brands. Purchasing counterfeit products is illegal globally and is considered consumer misbehavior. This study will provide practical and useful information for educators, global marketers and policy makers that will be beneficial in the protection of counterfeit misbehavior. Results of this study are only partially conclusive, and further research is necessary to better understand this phenomena.

References

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Despite charitable organizations’ enormous social and economic impacts in our society (Bendapud et al. 1996), charitable giving has stagnated in the U.S over the last 30 years, and philanthropic institutions have found it increasingly difficult to raise needed funds from givers (Merchant and Ford 2008). Given today’s daunting situations charities are faced with, in this article, we suggest that affirming important personal values motivate charity support behavior.

This argument follows from self-affirmation theory. Self-affirmation refers to behavioral or cognitive events that bolster the ‘perceived integrity of the self’ (Steel 1988, p.291). Social psychologists have documented that self-affirmation encourages people to see themselves objectively (Harris and Napper 2005), and helps them buffer against self-threatening information (Armitage et al. 2008; Harris et al. 2007; Koole et al. 1999) and decrease biased information processing of a persuasive message (Cohen et al. 2000; Harris and Napper 2005; Reed et al. 1998). It has also been linked with less motivational processing of dissonance provoking situations (Steele and Liu 1983), increased open-mindedness (Correll et al. 2004; Sherman and Cohen 2006), and decreased closed-mindedness and inflexibility in negotiation (Cohen et al. 2007). Taken these together, we argue that the process of values-affirmation may increase the persuasiveness of a message about charity support.
**H1:** Participants in values-affirmation conditions are more likely to support charity than those in control conditions.

Recent studies (Koole et al. 1999; Steele and Liu 1983; Tesser 2000) have argued that values-affirmation increases positive feelings. Along the same line with this argument, Crocker et al. (2008) demonstrated that affirming important personal values induced greater positive other-directed emotions, by enabling people to diminish concern for themselves (Correll et al. 2004) and transcend the self (Crocker et al. 2008). As for the linkage between positive mood and enhanced helping behavior, Weyant (1978) found that when people were on positive mood, they volunteered more than those on neutral mood. This leads us to theorize that values-affirmation increases positive other-directed feelings, and thereby enhance helping behavior.

**H2:** The enhanced charity support behavior through the process of values-affirmation is mediated by positive other-directed feelings.

In three studies, we investigate whether this is the case. We begin by demonstrating the effects of values-affirmation on donation intent to the Red Cross (Study 1), willingness to help people in crisis (Study 2), and willingness to help patients coping with end-stage diseases (Study 3). We then demonstrate that participants in values-affirmation conditions are more likely to help charity on the greater positive other-directed feelings than those in control conditions (Study 2). Finally, we demonstrate that the effect of values-affirmation on willingness to help others is mediated by positive other-directed feelings (Study 3).

**Study 1**

**Method**
Participants were asked to rank six values (i.e., business, art-music-theater, social life-relationships, science-pursuit of knowledge, religion-mortality, government-politics) in order of their personal importance (Sherman et al. 2000). Participants were then assigned to either the values-affirmation versus the control condition. In the values affirmation condition, participants were instructed to think about their most important value and write a short essay about why the value was important and meaningful to them. In the control condition, participants were asked to write about their least important value and why it might be important and meaningful to other people (Schmeichel and Vohs 2009). Then participants were presented with the message from the Red Cross and asked whether they would like to make monthly donation to the Red Cross Champions Program (0= do not want to make monthly donation, 1= want to make monthly donation).

**Results**
**Monthly Donation Intention.** We measured monthly donation intention as dichotomous and analyzed the data by using Chi-Square test. The results showed that participants (59.4%) in the values-affirmation conditions were more likely to make monthly donation to charity than those (40.6%) in the control conditions ($\chi^2(1)=3.574, p=.06$).

**Study 2**

**Method**
Participants were asked to rank twelve values (i.e., relations with family and friends, social skills, romantic values, athletics, sense of humor, creativity, managerial skills, spontaneity, neatness or tidiness, aesthetic appreciation, physical attractiveness, and music ability or appreciation) in order of their personal importance (Harris and Napper 2005). As Study 1, participants were then assigned to either the values-affirmation versus the control condition. And we measured their positive other-directed feelings (loving, connected, and grateful; Crocker et al. 2008) using a three-item five-point scale (1= not at all, 5= extremely). Then participants were presented with the message of the Red Cross Champions Program and asked to leave their email addresses, if they were willing to help people in crisis, so that the program coordinator could contact them.

**Results**
**Willingness to help people in crisis.** We coded the data of willingness to help as binary (0= did not leave email address, 1=left email address) and analyzed them using Chi-Square test. The results showed that participants (60.4%) in the values-affirmation conditions were more likely to help others in crisis than those (39.6%) in the control conditions ($\chi^2(1)=3.333, p=.06$).

**Positive Other-directed feelings.** The results of a 2 (values-affirmation vs. control) × 2 (email left: yes vs. no) between-subjects ANOVA revealed a significant interaction ($F(1,74)=4.926, p=.03$). Participants in the values-affirmation conditions were more likely to help people in crisis on the greater positive other-directed feelings ($\alpha=.79$) than those in the control conditions ($M_{values}=2.86, M_{control}=2.17, t(46)=3.347, p=.002$). Furthermore, in the values-affirmation conditions, participants who wanted to help people in crisis showed greater positive other-directed feelings than those who did not want to help ($M_{yes}=2.86, M_{no}=2.17, t(37)=1.81, p=.07$). However participants in the control conditions did not differ on positive other-directed feelings regardless of participants’ willingness to help ($M_{no}=2.35, M_{yes}=1.93, t(37)=1.29, p=.20$).

**Study 3**

**Method**
As previous studies, participants were asked to work on ranking and writing tasks. Then participants’ positive other-directed feelings (loving, connected, and grateful) and positive self-directed feelings (powerful, strong, and admirable) were measured using a six-item five-point scale (1= not at all, 5= extremely; Crocker et al. 2008). Then they were told that a charity organization needed volunteers to help patients coping with end-stage diseases and asked to indicate their willingness to help (1= not at all, 5= very much). They were also asked to leave their email addresses, if they want to help patients, so that the program director could contact them.

**Results**
**Email Left.** The results demonstrated that participants (62.3%) in the values-affirmation conditions were more likely to help patients than those (37.7%) in the control conditions ($\chi^2(1)=3.689, p=.05$).
Willingness to help. The results of an one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect for values-affirmation ($F(1, 86)=5.475, p = .02$). Participants in the values-affirmation conditions were more likely to help patients than those in the control conditions ($M_{\text{values}}= 2.9$, $M_{\text{control}}= 2.13$).

Mediation analyses. The positive other-directed feelings ($\alpha = .82$) explained the relationship between values-affirmation and willingness to help charity. Values-affirmation significantly enhanced positive other-directed feelings ($\beta = -.703, p < .01; \text{most}=0, \text{least}=1$), which in turn predicted an increase in willingness to help ($\beta = .384, p < .05$). When the positive other-directed feelings was included in the regression analysis predicting willingness to help, however, the effect of values-affirmation on willingness to help ($\beta = -.768, p < .05$) was no longer significant ($\beta = -.504, p > .10$, NS), and only the effect of positive other-directed feelings was observed ($\beta = .353, p < .05$; Sobel $z=1.66, p < .10$). The positive self-directed feelings ($\alpha = .86$), however, didn’t mediate the effect of values-affirmation on charity support behavior.

Across three studies, we demonstrated that affirming important personal values increased charity support behavior and the effect of values-affirmation on charity support behavior was mediated by positive other-directed feelings. This research suggests that when people are encouraged to affirm important values, they experience greater positive other-directed feelings, and thereby transcend concerns about the self and overcome motivational conflicts between prosocial and selfish impulses.

References


Effects of Advertising Exposure on Materialism and Self-Esteem: Advertised Luxuries as a Feel-Good Strategy?
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Advertisements communicate that any aspiration can be fulfilled if one possesses the right products and brands (Kasser 2002; Pollay 1986). However, little experimental research has shown this presumed effect of advertising exposure on materialism (e.g., Brand and Greenberg 1994; Han and Shavitt 2005; Zhang and Shavitt 2003). Even less research attempted to disentangle the role of self-esteem in