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Communicating the right emotion to generate help for connected versus unconnected others

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COMMUNICATING THE RIGHT EMOTION TO GENERATE HELP

FOR CONNECTED VERSUS UNCONNECTED OTHERS.

1 <u>ABSTRACT</u>

This study investigated the effectiveness of positive versus negative and of ego-focused versus other-focused feelings evoked in advertisements promoting help for connected versus unconnected needy people. Results showed that when help is asked for people to whom respondents feel connected, positive (versus negative) and ego- (versus other-) focused feelings led to more positive ad evaluations and increased respondents' helping intentions. When help was needed for unconnected people, the negative ads were most effective. Furthermore, it was investigated whether the effect of ego- versus other-focused feelings on ad evaluations and helping intentions was mediated by people's motivation to help.

2 INTRODUCTION

Most charity organizations face an ongoing challenge of raising sufficient funds to achieve their goals to help people in need. Due to an increasing number of good cause organizations that are competing within the charity sector, this task becomes increasingly difficult.

Since many of these organizations use print advertisement to communicate their objectives to convince people of the need for help and to persuade them to donate money, it is important to know what drives the effectiveness of such advertisements.

According to Guy and Patton (1989), individuals go through a certain decision process before actually donating money for a good cause. In short, this process implies that individuals first need to be aware that another person needs help. They will interpret a situation in terms of intensity and urgency. Once they are convinced that help is needed, they should see it as their own responsibility to help the needy people. Furthermore, the individual should feel able and competent to help. Finally, when all preceding steps are completed the individual might engage in appropriate helping behavior like donating money. Furthermore, Guy and Patton (1989) identified two categories of potential factors that might enhance or inhibit the progress through these different steps, namely internal individual factors and external environmental factors. The internal factors include demographics, personality variables, social status, mood, etc. External factors include the nature of the appeal, other people involved and the availability of alternate courses of action. According to Guy and Patton, it is especially the external factors that exert a considerable influence on helping behavior. Therefore, this study investigated the impact of two external variables on the effectiveness of good cause advertisements, namely, the nature of the ad appeal and the people involved.

Concerning the nature of appeal, a considerable amount of evidence has already been provided: the use of emotional advertising appeals can be very effective to persuade people to donate money for the good cause which is advertised or to promote other helping behavior (e.g., Bagozzi & Moore, 1994; Dillard & Peck, 2000; Marchand &

Filiatrault, 2002). The question that remains mostly unsolved is which emotions should be evoked to persuade as many people as possible to donate as much money as possible. To partly answer this question, this study considered two dimensions of emotions: the valence dimension and the ego- versus other-focus dimension. The former divides emotions into positive and negative ones. The latter divides emotions into ego-focused (e.g., pride) and other-focused (e.g., shame) ones, based on the degree to which people see themselves as independent from or interdependent with other people during the experience of this emotion (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

With regard to other people involved, one aspect that is found to increase people's willingness to help considerably is the extent to which those in need are like themselves and to what extent they feel connected with the needy people (e.g., Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce & Neuberg, 1997). However, help is often needed for people with whom there is no connection. European people, for example, have little or no similarities with the people suffering from famine in Africa. It is unlikely though, that for this reason, European people will donate less to organizations that labor for putting a stop to starvation in Africa. According to Stürmer, Snyder, Kropp and Siem (2006), people will not necessarily help connected others more than unconnected others, but the motivation to help these two groups of others will be fundamentally different. Furthermore, Fujioka (2005) showed that people can react differently to emotional news stories when the story is about in-group versus out-group members. Therefore, it is suggested in the present study that different emotional appeals might be needed to generate help for needy people with whom individuals have a certain connection than for needy people with whom individuals have no connection whatsoever.

To summarize, this study investigated the effectiveness of different emotional appeals to promote a project for "connected" needy people versus "unconnected" needy people. More specifically, it was investigated whether respondents reacted differently to positive versus negative and to ego-focused versus other-focused feelings evoked in advertisements promoting a good cause project for connected versus unconnected needy people.

3 EMOTIONAL ADVERTISEMENTS FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Emotions can be conceptualized in different ways. Two general approaches to conceptualize emotions are very prominent in recent literature: the discrete (or basic) emotions approach and the dimensional approach (see Guerrero, Andersen & Trost, 1998 for an overview). Proponents of the basic emotions approach have tried to identify some basic emotions based on several characteristics that distinguish them from each other (e.g., Izard, 1977). The dimensional approach of emotions describes different emotions in terms of some underlying dimensions. In the beginning, only two dimensions were proposed: pleasure and arousal (e.g., the circumplex model: Russell, 1978). Both approaches have been the subject of criticism, however. When the basic emotions approach fails to capture similarities and differences among emotions, the (bi-)dimensional models are said to be too simplistic to capture the complexity of emotions.

Adherents of a third approach of emotions, the cognitive appraisal approach, tried to meet the criticisms passed on the two previous approaches by stating that a range of cognitive dimensions (rather than just valence and arousal) effectively differentiates emotional experiences and effects (e.g., Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). More specifically, this theory claims that the experience of a specific emotion is characterized by the person's evaluation of the event on a whole range of cognitive dimensions. Therefore, when investigating the effect of different ad-evoked feelings on ad effectiveness, it is useful to examine the contribution of the cognitive appraisal dimensions (e.g., certainty, responsibility, control, ego versus other) underlying these emotions. Only little research has been conducted on the effectiveness of these other dimensions, though. Therefore, the current study tries to partly fill this gap and includes next to the valence dimension, one of these under-researched dimensions, that is, the ego- versus other-focus dimension. The authors chose to go deeper into this dimension because it seemed relevant in the context of social marketing. Indeed, when deciding to help, one can focus attention on oneself or on the people in need.

3.1 POSITIVE VERSUS NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Most studies dealing with the impact of emotions on persuasion concentrated on the valence dimension, investigating the differential impact of positive versus negative emotions (e.g., Hullett, 2005). Concerning this dimension, many studies tend to indicate that the experience of a positive versus a negative emotion leads to more positive ad and brand evaluations and higher purchase intentions. This positive effect of the valence dimension is explained by theories like the affect transfer theory and the affect as information theory. According to the former theory, which is related to classical conditioning, emotions can be directly (and often unconsciously) transferred to the evaluation of an object (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The latter theory states that people will interpret and process emotions as information about the advertised product (i.e., the "how do I feel about it" heuristic). This direct effect will occur only when people think the feeling is representative for the advertised brand, perceive it as a genuine response to the product and consequently, (mis)attribute their feeling to the target stimulus (e.g., Schwarz, 1990).

Within the context of social marketing, the impact of the valence dimension has also been already investigated (e.g., Clark & Isen, 1982; Shaffer & Graziano, 1983; Obermiller, 1995). Advertisements that try to evoke a positive emotion (e.g., happiness and pride) usually concentrate on the positive outcomes that can be obtained, both for the people in need and for the potential donors, when help is offered. Advertisements that try to evoke a negative emotion (e.g., sadness or guilt) usually concentrate on the problematic situation and the negative consequences, both for the people in need and for the potential donors, when no help is provided.

Carlson and colleagues (Carlson, Charlin & Miller, 1988; Carlson & Miller, 1987) conducted two meta-analyses (one for positive and one for negative emotions) in which they assembled and tested different theories that attempt to account for the positive effects that positive and negative emotions can have on helping behavior. However, only one theory deals with the differential impact of positive and negative emotions on the helping behavior, that is, the theory of attentional focus (Rosenhan, Salovey & Hargis, 1981; Thompson, Cowan, & Rosenhan, 1980). According to this theory, a positive feeling will only incite people to help others when the feeling is directed toward oneself,

whereas a negative feeling will only incite people to act benevolent when the feeling is directed outward toward the person in need.

Regarding the impact of negative feelings, focusing on the problematic situation that others (the needy people) have to go through generates empathic responses which in turn increase helping behavior (Thompson et al., 1980). However, when a person focuses attention on oneself during the experience of a negative feeling (e.g., by imagining oneself in the problematic situation) it is most likely that this person will think about one's own personal interests rather than consider other people's needs. Therefore, this person is expected to help needy people to a lesser degree than a person who focuses on the others in need. On the other hand, when a person focuses attention on oneself during the experience of a positive feeling (e.g., when seeing oneself as the recipient of a positive event), one might experience an advantage relative to others which has to be restored (e.g., by helping others). Furthermore, such a positive feeling, focused on oneself, could prime positive thoughts, leading to higher helping behavior. Instead, when the focus is on someone else, this positive feeling could prime more negative thoughts like jealousy.

When a project is promoted for people with whom the readers of the ad feel connected, with whom they feel close attachement, they will experience some self-other overlap. That is, they will perceive some parts of themselves in the needy other (Cialdini et al., 1997; Neuberg, Cialdini, Brown, Luce & Sagarin, 1997). Therefore, the problem touched in the ad might also affect the reader of the ad when he/she feels connected with the people facing the problem. The motivation to help connected others might thus be partly selfish. As a consequence, it is predicted that when confronted with the connected needy people, respondents will largely focus their attention on themselves. On the contrary, people will not experience the problem as affecting oneself when a project is promoted for unconnected people in need. When there is no connection, the focus of their feeling is expected to be completely on the people in need (and not on themselves).

Following the earlier reasoning and the predictions of the attentional focus theory, it can be expected that when a project is promoted for connected needy people, respondents will

focus attention on themselves. Focusing on oneself as the beneficiary of the positive outcome of giving help will create positive thoughts, leading to higher helping. Imagining oneself as the victim of a negative problematic situation will make people concerned about themselves, decreasing helping behavior to others. Thus, when a project is promoted for connected needy people, respondents are expected to react more positively to a positive appeal than to a negative appeal, with a positive appeal leading to higher helping behavior.

In contrast, for projects related to unconnected people, individuals are expected to focus attention on the people in need and to react more positively to a negative appeal than to a positive one, with a negative appeal leading to a higher helping behavior. In this case, emphasizing the problematic situation that these others have to go through will lead to higher empathic responses than focusing on the potential positive outcomes.

The idea that a positive feeling would work better for a project for "connected" needy people whereas a negative feeling would work better for a project for "unconnected" needy people could also be explained by the salience of, or the concern for the different types of projects. According to Obermiller (1995), an ad that evokes a negative emotion focuses on the importance of the project and the salience of the need for help, whereas an ad that evokes a positive emotion stresses the positive outcome that can be obtained when everybody does one's share, heightening the perceived consumer effectiveness. An ad evoking a negative emotion will thus be most effective when people still need to be convinced of the needy situation, and when concern for the issue needs to be intensified. In contrast, when the issue is already salient or when the importance of the problem is very clear, a negative emotion could make the problem look like an insurmountable one. In this case, an ad evoking a positive emotion is preferred that affirms the significance of an individual action in the solution to the problem.

When people feel connected with the people in need, they will experience a part of themselves in these others (Cialdini et al., 1997), and therefore, the problem will partly affect themselves. This might, in turn, increase the salience of and the concern for the problem. Stapel, Reicher, and Spears (1994), for example, showed that when a (problematic) event happens to a connected versus an unconnected person (an in-group

versus out-group member), the event becomes more self-relevant, and personally threatening. As a consequence, people judge the event as more likely to occur, and the event is perceived to be more risky, and to concern more people. Based on this, it is predicted that when a project is promoted for connected needy people, concern for the problem will be high and a positive feeling will work better than a negative one. In this case, a positive appeal will emphasize that the problem can be solved, resulting in more positive attitudes and higher helping intentions. For a project for unconnected needy people, respondents are predicted to react more positively to a negative appeal than to a positive one. In this case, a negative feeling might heighten the salience of and the concern for the problem for which help is needed.

> **H1**: When a project is advertised for connected needy people, a positive emotional appeal will lead to more positive evaluations of the ad and the organization, and higher helping intentions than a negative emotional appeal.

> **H2**: When a project is advertised for unconnected needy people, a negative emotional appeal will lead to more positive evaluations of the ad and the organization, and higher helping intentions than a positive emotional appeal.

3.2   EGO-FOCUSED VERSUS OTHER-FOCUSED EMOTIONS

The ego- versus other-focus dimension of emotions was introduced by Markus and Kitayama (1991). They stated that the emotions that humans experience vary depending on whether they experience themselves as being independent from, or interdependent with other people. In the former case, ego-focused emotions are experienced and in the latter, other-focused emotions. Ego-focused emotions can be described as emotions that are directed toward oneself, and those who put oneself as the central person, independent from others. When experiencing an ego-focused emotion, focus is on one's own wishes, needs, successes, and failures. Examples of ego-focused emotions are pride, happiness, and frustration.

Other-focused emotions are directed toward others, and put a person in relation with others. These are emotions that are experienced in a social context. When experiencing

the other-focused emotion, one does not focus on oneself, but on the wishes, needs, successes, and failures of others. Examples of other-focused feelings are empathy, peacefulness, indebtedness, and shame (Aaker & Williams, 1998; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

With respect to the potential impact of this dimension on the effectiveness of emotional appeals on helping behavior, the authors refer to the empathy–altruism hypothesis developed by Batson, O'Quin, Fultz, Vanderplas, and Isen (1983). According to this hypothesis, the confrontation with another person in need can induce two qualitatively distinct types of emotional reactions in people. More specifically, they will experience higher levels of personal distress and/or of empathic concern. Although most people have a predominance of one of these two emotional reactions, feelings of personal distress and empathy can also be manipulated (Batson et al., 1983). Furthermore, the empathy–altruism hypothesis states that when a feeling of empathic concern is experienced, people focus attention on the person in need, and this leads to a selfless and purely altruistic motivation to reduce the distress of this other person. Feelings of personal distress, on the other hand, are more likely to result in egoistic motivations to help. In this case attention is focused on oneself, and helping the others might help to relieve them of their own negative feeling. So, both egoistic and altruistic motivations are expected to increase helping behavior (Bendapudi, Singh & Bendapudi, 1996), only the reason differs.

The Empathy–Altruism relationship has been questioned by quite a few researchers, though. Cialdini et al. (1997), for example, claimed to have found a non-altruistic alternative explanation for the effect of empathic concern on helping behavior by introducing the concept of what they called "oneness". They found that when individuals feel more at one or experience a connection with the people in need, they will help not just because of a purely altruistic motivation, but also because they feel more of themselves in the needy people and they can imagine themselves in the same problematic situation. Due to the connection, the motivation to help becomes partly egoistic. Batson (1997), for his part, argued that Cialdini and colleagues did not overthrow the empathy–altruism theory in the sense that they did not provide clear evidence against the

hypothesis that the feeling of empathic concern leads to pure altruism. The authors agree with Batson that Cialdini and his colleagues did not prove that empathic concern does not always lead to an altruistic motivation to help, although, they believe that this construct of oneness is an important factor to further elaborate on.

Based on the definitions of ego- and other-focused feelings, it is clear that personal distress can be classified as an ego-focused feeling and empathic concern as an other-focused feeling. Furthermore, the explanation of Batson et al. (1983) for the fact that empathy leads to purely altruistic motivations to help, whereas personal distress also leads to egoistic motivations, is largely based on the idea that empathy is an emotion that is focused on the other in need, while personal distress is an emotion focused on oneself. Therefore, it is expected that this hypothesis might not just apply to (the more negatively valenced) empathy and personal distress, but more generally to all other-focused and ego-focused emotions. More specifically, it can be expected that the experience of any other-focused emotion (positive or negative) will lead to more altruistic motivations to help than the experience of any ego-focused emotion (positive or negative), and that the experience of any ego-focused emotion will lead to more egoistic motivations to help than any other-focused emotion.

> **H3**: Ego-focused emotional appeals will lead to higher egoistic motivations to help others than other-focused emotional appeals.
>
> **H4**: Other-focused emotional appeals will lead to higher altruistic motivation to help others than ego-focused emotional appeals.

In this study, The authors also investigated the impact of the connection felt with the people in need on the effectiveness of ego- versus other-focused emotions evoked by the ad. According to Cialdini et al. (1997, p. 483) people will "feel more at one with the needy people, they will feel more of themselves in the other", when confronted with connected versus unconnected needy people. Therefore, the authors expect the motivation to help to be partly egoistic when the project is for connected needy people and to be altruistic when the project is for unconnected needy people.

When people experience a feeling of oneness with the needy other, they will reflect the problematic situation on oneself and focus attention on oneself, leading to an egoistic motivation to help. An ad evoking an ego-focused emotion is expected to further increase the egoistic motivation to help the needy people, leading to higher helping behavior. An other-focused emotion, on the other hand, might be rather inappropriate because a project for people with whom respondents feel a connection incites them to focus attention on themselves. Therefore, it is expected that for a project for connected people, an ad evoking ego-focused emotion will be evaluated more positively and lead to higher helping behavior than an ad evoking other-focused emotion, through an increased egoistic motivation.

When a project is promoted that helps unconnected others, little or no egoistic helping motivations will be generated because the problem does not affect oneself, and it is not easy to imagine oneself in the place of the needy people. In this case, an ego-focused emotion is expected to be inappropriate to persuade people to donate money. Ads evoking an ego-focused emotion will not generate a higher egoistic motivation to help, because a project for unconnected others incites them to focus attention on the people in need. Instead, to generate help for unconnected others, an other-focused appeal is predicted to work better than an ego-focused one. An other-focused feeling brings the focus of attention on the people in need, and this in turn increases the altruistic motivation to release them from their suffering or to give them the opportunity to a better life.

The earlier reasoning leads us to the following hypotheses:

> **H5A**: When a project is advertised for connected needy people, ads evoking ego-focused emotions will lead to better ad evaluations, better evaluation of the organization, and higher helping intentions than ads evoking other-focused emotions.
>
> **H5B**: The positive effect of ego- (versus other-) focused emotions is mediated by a higher egoistic motivation to help.

H6A: When a project is advertised for unconnected needy people, ads evoking other-focused emotions will lead to better ad evaluations, better evaluation of the organization, and higher helping intentions, than ads evoking ego-focused emotions.

H6B: The positive effect of other- (versus ego-) focused emotions is mediated by a higher altruistic motivation to help.

4 RESEARCH METHOD

To test the hypotheses, The authors created advertisements for a good cause. A 2 (positive versus negative emotional appeal) X 2 (ego-focused versus other-focused emotional appeal) X 2 (project for "connected" versus "unconnected" people) between subjects design was set up.

4.1 STIMULI

To manipulate the felt connection with the people in need, the authors refer to the manipulation Batson et al. (1997) used. They asked students to help a fellow student from the same university versus a student from a rival university. They found that students felt more connected (at one, or belonging to one group) when the student in need was studying in the same university as they did. In this study, the authors used a sample of a nonstudent population of people older than thirty years. Assuming that people living in the same city feel connected with each other or feel as if they belong to one group in a similar way that students studying in the same university do, the connection was manipulated by changing the city where the project operates. Advertisements were created for a project in a European city (the city where the questionnaire was conducted) and one in an Asian city, Tokyo. The authors wanted to create advertisements for a food aid project in two cities that were located far from each other, and that were as similar as possible. With regard to wealth and poverty, Tokyo was considered to be quite similar and comparable to this European city.

Advertisements for two fictitious food centers were created, one in the Asian city and one in the European city. The two projects were completely similar. The objective of the food

centers was to distribute food packages within a friendly and warm-hearted environment to people who are not able to provide for themselves.

Whereas this problem of poverty and famine might be very salient and perceived as important when it occurs in poor regions like South Africa, it might be perceived as less important when it is situated in countries that have a wealthy image, like West-European countries or highly developed Asian countries. Furthermore, many people are either not aware that poverty also exists in such wealthy cities, or it does not occur to them. It is expected, however, that the connection felt with the people in need will influence the perceived severity and the salience of this problem.

For each of the two projects, four print ads were created, each intended to evoke a different emotion: a positive ego-focused emotion, a positive other-focused emotion, a negative ego-focused emotion, and a negative other-focused emotion. As in the study of Aaker and Williams (1998), both visual and verbal manipulations were used to evoke the intended emotions. This ad framing technique to evoke emotions has also been proven to be effective by Chang (2005). All full-page ads looked very similar (see appendix A for an example). The only elements that differed were the slogan and the feeling evoking pictures and text. At the bottom of each ad the logo was pictured together with some information about the organization and the account number to make donations. In the ads for the European project, European people were pictured, whereas in the ads for the Asian project, Asian people were pictured. In the ego-focused ad appeals single persons were shown per picture to increase the likelihood for the respondents to imagine themselves in the place of that person. The text in these ad appeals started with "imagine it would happen to you…". In the other-focused ad appeals groups of people were pictured, and the text described what these people go through. The ads evoking a negative feeling showed people who are clearly hungry and look unhappy, while the text described the miserable situation. The ads evoking a positive feeling showed happy people enjoying a nice meal (which they received from the food center), and the text described the positive outcomes of the food center's efforts.

4.2   PRETESTS

Two separate pretests were conducted. In a first pretest, the authors tested whether people living in the European city felt more connected with fellow citizens than with people living in Tokyo. Forty adult citizens of the European city were asked whether they did indeed experience a stronger connection with fellow citizens than with the inhabitants of the foreign city (Tokyo). Different scales were used to measure this feeling of connection. Two additional cities were included as filler items. The IOS (Inclusion-of-Other-in-the-Self) scale (Aron, Aron & Smollan, 1992) measures the perceived self-other boundary by showing respondents seven combinations of two circles that overlap increasingly. Respondents had to select that pair of circles that best described the relation they have with inhabitants of the different cities. Furthermore, for the inhabitants of each of the four cities, respondents were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale going from 1 (not at all) to 7 (completely) to what extent (a) they would use the term "we" to describe their relationship with these citizens, (b) they have similar characteristics with these citizens, (c) they and these citizens belong to the same group, and (d) they feel connected with these citizens (Batson, Lishner, Cook & Sawyer, 2005; Cialdini et al., 1997). The latter item was included because it measures connectedness in a more direct way. Cronbach's alpha for the five items was 0.95. A t-test revealed that respondents felt significantly more connected to fellow citizens ($M = 5.52$, $SD = .53$) than to habitants of the Asian city ($M = 2.11$, $SD = .71$) ($t = 24.24$, $p < .001$).

In a second pretest the authors tested whether the different ads indeed evoked emotions with the intended valence and focus. Eighty respondents were shown two of the eight advertisements and were asked to think about the emotion that they experienced when watching each of the two ads. Then, respondents were asked to indicate to what extent this was a negative or a positive emotion, that is, how pleasant (positive) or unpleasant (negative) it was to experience this emotion. The valence scale ranged from 1 (negative) to 11 (positive). Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which the emotion was ego-focused or other-focused. First, they read a definition of these two constructs. Ego-focused emotions were defined as "emotions that focus attention on yourself, and that put you in the centre of attention, independent from others". Other-focused emotions were defined as "emotions that focus attention on other people or on you in relation to

others. These emotions are experienced in a social context". For the ego- versus other-focus dimension, the scale ranged from 1 (ego-focused emotion) to 11 (other-focused emotion). Results showed that the ad-evoked emotions that were intended to be negative had a lower score on the valence scale than the ad-evoked emotions that were intended to be positive ($M = 4.70$ ($SD = 2.53$) and 8.20 ($SD = 1.90$) respectively, $t = -8.83$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, the ad-evoked emotions that were intended to be ego-focused had a lower score on the ego-other scale than the ad-evoked emotions that were intended to be other-focused ($M = 5.55$ ($SD = 2.52$) and 8.55 ($SD = 1.81$), respectively, $t = -8.73$, $p < .001$). The pretest also included some control variables. Respondents were asked questions about the credibility of the ad, the reliability of the ad, whether the ad looks familiar, and whether the ad is clear. No significant differences were found between the eight different advertisements concerning these control variables. Furthermore, the authors wanted to make sure that the European respondents did not feel more responsible for the European poor people than for the Asian people. After reading the ad, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the following three statements on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (completely): "To what extent do you think it is a good thing that the organization appeals to civilian people like you and me?", "To what extent do you approve that the organization takes the liberty of making an appeal to civilian people like you and me?", and "To what extent do you feel responsible for helping these people?". The answers to these questions did not differ significantly for the two cities (item 1: M_{Gent} = 5.04, M_{Tokyo} = 5.30, p = .15; item 2: M_{Gent} = 5.27, M_{Tokyo} = 5.46, p = .30; item 3: M_{Gent} = 3.98, M_{Tokyo} = 4.15, p = .38).

4.3   PROCEDURE

Adult citizens of one European city (251 native), proportionately both male and female, aged between 28 and 70 years, participated in this study. The authors made sure that the respondents of the main experiment had not participated previously in one of the two pretests. Respondents were recruited by a random walk procedure. A door to door procedure was performed in several randomly chosen streets in the centre of the European city. People were asked whether they were willing to participate in a study conducted by the University of their city. To avoid an interviewer bias, the pollster did

not explain any of the questions. So respondents were not told that the questionnaire was about the effectiveness of advertisements for a good cause organization. Respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire by the next day. Those who were willing to participate were given a booklet which they were asked to fill in during a quiet moment. Moreover, every respondent was given an envelope to put the questionnaire in, which he or she could seal before the pollster came to pick up the questionnaire. The addresses of those people who agreed to participate were noted and the next day the booklets were collected again by the pollster. Participants were assured that their answers would be handled confidentially. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions. After participation they received a pen as a small gift.

In the first page of the booklet, a short introduction to the researchers and the objectives of the research were given. Participants were then asked to carefully read the test ad and to answer some questions about the ad. The questions following the ad contained first the dependent measures and the motivation scale, and then the manipulation checks.

4.4 MEASURES

4.4.1 Manipulation checks

Valence: The degree to which respondents experienced the ad-evoked emotions as negative versus positive was measured by using the same 11-point scale as in the pretest ranging from 1 (negative) to 11 (positive). As in the pretest, first a definition was given for this dimension.

Focus: The degree to which respondents experienced the ad-evoked emotions as ego- versus other-focused was also measured by using the same 11-point scales as in the pretest ranging from 1 (ego-focused) to 11 (other-focused). Again, the same definition as in the pretest was provided to the respondents.

4.4.2 Dependent variables

Several scales were used to measure the effectiveness of the ads. To measure the respondents' evaluation of the ad, the respondents' attitude toward the ad and their

perceived effectiveness of the ad was questioned. Respondents' evaluation of the organization was measured by their attitude toward the organization and finally, helping intentions were measured by asking respondents to indicate their intentions to donate money to the organization

Attitude toward the ad: Aad was measured using three 7-point semantic differential scales, anchored by the adjectives "bad–good", "negative–positive" and "dislike–like" (Cronbach's α = .86).

Attitude toward the organization: Aorg was also assessed by three 7-point semantic differential scales, anchored by the statements "the food center looks like a bad–good organization to me, "I don't like–like the food center" and "I feel negatively–positively about the food center" (Cronbach's α = .88).

Effectiveness: To measure the effectiveness of the ads, the respondents were asked to indicate how effective the ads are in persuading them to support the food center, and how effective the ads are in persuading most people to support the food center. The 7-point scale ranged from 1 (very ineffective) to 7 (very effective). The correlation between the two items (.61) was highly significant ($p < .001$).

Intention to donate: To assess the intention to donate, the respondents were asked to rate the following three statements on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree): "it looks like a good idea to support the food center", "it is very likely that I will make a donation for the food center in the near future" and "it is possible that I will once make a donation to the food center" (Cronbach's α = .81).

Motivation: Hypotheses H3–H6 include respondents' motivation to help. Since social desirability has been shown to bias consumers' responses to charity organizations (e.g., Louie & Obermiller, 2000) and because asking for people's egoistic versus altruistic motivations to donate money might be a delicate subject (people do not want to be regarded as selfish), the authors used a projective technique. Fisher (1993) provided evidence that this technique—which asks people to answer questions from the perspective of (an)other person(s), in the assumption that they will express their own opinion—is an effective means of reducing social desirability bias. So, instead of asking their own motivation, The respondents were asked what they think the motivation of most people would be to donate money for this project. Respondents were shown seven

possible motivations. They were asked to indicate to what extent most people would base their decision to donate on each of the seven motivations, after reading the ad. The 11-point scale ranged from 1 (not at all) to 11 (completely). The three items to measure people's egoistic motivation were: "They feel guilty", "To secure oneself (if one would find oneself in the same situation)" and "It makes them feel better" The four items measuring people's altruistic motivation were: "They feel for these people", "Out of sympathy for these people in need", "To help these people out of their misery", and "They feel concerned about the people in need". A factor analysis was conducted on the seven items and it revealed two factors explaining 72% of the variance. The first factor contained the four altruistic items (chronbach's α = .91), the second factor contained the three egoistic motivation items (chronbach's α = .70).

5 RESULTS

5.1 MANIPULATON CHECKS

To check whether the manipulation of the ad-evoked emotions was successful, two independent samples t-tests were conducted. The ad-evoked emotions that were intended to be negative had a lower score on the valence scale than the ad-evoked emotions that were intended to be positive (M = 4.26 (SD = 2.58) and 7.60 (SD = 1.77) respectively, t = −12.14, p < .001). The evoked emotions that were intended to be ego-focused also had a lower score on the ego-other scale than the ad-evoked emotions that were intended to be other-focused (M = 5.19 (SD = 2.20) and 8.17 (SD = 1.85) respectively, t = −11.62, p < .001).

5.2 HYPOTHESES TESTING

The four dependent variables, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the organization, intention to donate, and perceived effectiveness of the ad, were entered into a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with valence of the emotional appeal, focus of the emotional appeal, and the city where the organization operates as the independent variables (see Table 1). Results showed a significant interaction effect for all four dependent variables between the valence of the ad-evoked feeling and the city where

the organization operates (F (4, 240) = 7.07, p < .001, partial η^2 = .11), as well as between the focus of the ad-evoked feeling and the city where the organization operates (F (4, 240) = 4.24, p < .001, *partial η^2* = .07). No significant three-way interaction effect was found between the three independent variables (F (4, 240) = 1.17, p < .32, *partial η^2* = .02).

Table 5. 1: MANOVA: influence of emotional valence, emotional focus and the city where the organization operates on the four dependent variables

MULTIVARIATE				
Factor	**Wilks λ**	**df**	**F-value[a]**	**partial η²**
valence	.910	4	6.023***	.09
focus	.97	4	2.01	.03
city	.95	4	2.89*	.05
valence X focus	.99	4	.36	.01
Valence X city	.89	4	7.07***	.11
Focus X city	.93	4	4.24**	.07
Valence X focus X city	.98	4	1.17	.02

UNIVARIATE				
Dependent variables	**Source of variation**	**df**	**F-value**	**partial η²**
Aad	valence	1	10.88**	.04
	focus	1	4.77*	.02
	city	1	1.60	.01
	valence X focus	1	.26	.00
	Valence X city	1	24.78***	.09
	Focus X city	1	7.32**	.03
	Valence X focus X city	1	2.23	.02
Aorg	valence	1	2.79	.01
	focus	1	2.63	.01
	city	1	3.63	.02
	valence X focus	1	.55	.00
	Valence X city	1	10.01**	.04
	Focus X city	1	6.31*	.03
	Valence X focus X city	1	1.75	.01
Intention to donate	valence	1	1.47	.01
	focus	1	2.72	.01

		df	F	η²
	city	1	2.68	.01
	valence X focus	1	.16	.00
	Valence X city	1	7.41**	.03
	Focus X city	1	11.41**	.05
	Valence X focus X city	1	.38	.00
Perceived effect.	valence	1	.02	.00
	focus	1	6.55*	.03
	city	1	.46	.00
	valence X focus	1	.13	.00
	Valence X city	1	14.52***	.06
	Focus X city	1	13.02***	.05
	Valence X focus X city	1	.35	.10

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

To interpret the significant interaction effects, separate one-way ANOVA analyses were conducted. Hypotheses H1 and H2 concerned the interaction effect between the valence of the ad-evoked feeling and the city of the project, and predicted that when a project is advertised for connected needy people, positive emotional appeals would lead to higher ad evaluations, evaluations of the organization, and helping intentions than negative ones (H1), and that the opposite would be true when a project is advertised for unconnected needy people (H2). Results (see Table 2) revealed that the respondents who saw an ad for the project in their own city preferred the positive over the negative appeals in the sense that the positive versus the negative appeals led to a higher Aad ($p < .001$), and perceived effectiveness of the ad ($p < .05$). The effects on attitude toward the organization ($p = 1.00$), and intention to donate ($p = 1.00$) were not significant. So, hypothesis 1 was only confirmed for the ad evaluation variables. On contrary, the respondents who saw an ad for the project in Tokyo preferred the negative ads over the positive ones. In this case, the negative ads versus the positive ones led to higher attitude toward the organization ($p < .01$), intention to donate ($p = .05$) and perceived effectiveness of the ad ($p = .05$). Here, the effect on Aad was not significant ($p = 1.00$). These results partly support hypothesis 2.

Table 5. 2: One-way ANOVA results comparing the effectiveness of positive versus negative emotions evoked in ads for a food aid organization in the European and the Asian city.

	City			
	European city		Tokyo	
Dependent variables	pos emotion[a]	neg emotion[a, b]	pos emotion[a]	neg emotion[a, b]
Aad	5.57 (0.91)	4.33 (1.50)	5.01 (1.10)	5.27 (1.25)
Aorg	5.93 (0.98)	5.72 (1.10)	5.25 (1.09)	5.90 (1.16)
Intention to	4.43 (1.39)	4.15 (1.47)	3.68 (1.33)	4.36 (1.40)

donate

Perceived	3.82 (1.34)	3.21 (1.30)	3.31 (1.14)	3.95 (1.46)
effect				

N	68	66	63	54

[a] cell entries are means on a 7-point scale (1 = low, 7 = high), numbers between brackets refer to SD.

[b] The significance of the difference between the means for the positive and the negative emotional ads (within one city) is indicated in the column of the negative emotion. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Independent samples t-tests were used to test whether ego-focused emotions led to higher egoistic motivations to help than other-focused emotions, and whether other-focused emotions led to higher altruistic motivations to help than ego-focused emotions (H3 and H4). Results showed that an ego-focused emotional appeal led to a higher egoistic motivation to help than an other-focused appeal (M_{ego} = 6.78 (SD = 2.09) versus M_{other} = 5.70 (SD = 2.48); t (249) = 3.70, $p < .001$) and that an other-focused emotional appeal led to a higher altruistic motivation to help than an ego-focused appeal (M_{ego} = 7.75 (SD = 2.17) versus M_{other} = 8.30 (SD = 2.02); t (249) = −2.10, $p < .05$). Support for hypotheses H3 and H4 was thus provided.

In line with the empathy–altruism hypothesis, the results also showed that an other-focused appeal generated a purely altruistic motivation to help ($M_{altruistic}$ = 8.30 (SD = 2.02) > 6 (neutral value), t (130) = 13.07, $p < .001$; whereas $M_{egoistic}$ = 5.70 (SD = 2.48) did not differ significantly from 6, t (130) = −1.36, $p = .18$). An ego-focused appeal, on the other hand, generated both an egoistic and an altruistic motivation to help ($M_{egoistic}$ = 6.78 (SD = 2.09) > 6, t (119) = 4.09, $p < .001$; $M_{altruistic}$ = 7.75 (SD = 2.17) > 6, t(119) = 8.82, $p < .001$). Although, as mentioned earlier, the altruistic motivation generated by an ego-focused appeal was lower than the one generated by an other-focused appeal.

Finally, hypotheses H5A and H6A predicted that an ego-focused emotional appeal would lead to higher ad evaluations, evaluations of the organization, and helping intentions than an other-focused appeal when a project is promoted for needy people in one's own city,

and that an other-focused emotional appeal would lead to higher ad evaluations, evaluations of the organization, and helping intentions, than an ego-focused appeal when a project is promoted for needy people in Tokyo.

Results of the one-way ANOVA revealed that the respondents who saw an ad for the project in their own city preferred the ego-focused emotional appeals over the other-focused ones in the sense that an ego-focused versus an other-focused appeal led to higher attitude toward the ad ($p < .01$), attitude toward the organization ($p < .01$), intention to donate ($p < .05$) and perceived effectiveness of the ad ($p < .001$). So, hypothesis H5A was supported. For the respondents who saw an ad for the project in Tokyo, however, no significant differences were found in the effectiveness of ego-focused versus other-focused ads, although the means did follow the predicted trend ($p = 1.00$ for all dependent variables). These results do not support H6A (see Table 3).

Table 5. 3: One-way ANOVA results comparing the effectiveness of ego-focused versus other-focused emotions evoked in ads for a food aid organization in the European and the Asian city.

	City			
	European city		Tokyo	
Dependent variables	Ego-focused emotion[a]	Other-focused emotion[a, b]	Ego-focused emotion[a]	Other-focused emotion[a, b]
Aad	5.37 (1.05)	4.67** (1.51)	5.10 (1.09)	5.15 (1.25)
Aorg	6.11 (0.93)	5.57* (1.07)	5.50 (1.24)	5.58 (1.10)
Intention to donate	4.75 (1.38)	3.87** (1.34)	3.85 (1.33)	4.10 (1.45)
Perceived effect	4.05 (1.43)	3.05*** (1.07)	3.54 (1.31)	3.66 (1.35)

N	66	68	54	63

Furthermore, H5B predicted that for the project in respondents' own city, the effect of emotional focus on the effectiveness of the advertisements would be mediated by the people's egoistic motivation to help. This hypothesis was tested using the LISREL program for structural equation modeling, and following the instructions of Bagozzi and Yi (1989) on the use of structural equation models in experimental designs. For this analysis, only those respondents were included who evaluated the ads for the project in their own city. The mediation effect was tested in three steps. First, the measurement model was tested, comprehending a confirmatory factor analysis of the constructs included in the model. The model shown in Figure 1 revealed a rather poor fit (χ^2 (85) = 230.37, $p<.001$; *CFI* = .82; *TLI* = .98; *RMSEA* = .11). Inspection of the individual items revealed that one item of the intention construct had very high standardized residuals, and that one item of the egoistic motivation construct had a negative error variance (these items are indicated in grey in figure 1). Deleting these two items from the model increased the model fit significantly (χ^2 (58) = 106.38, $p<.001$; *CFI* = .90; *TLI* = .99; *RMSEA* = .08) ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 123.99, Δdf = 27, Sharma 1996)[1]. Although the fit of this model was still not excellent, it was acceptable, given that the focal interest was on the path analysis and not on the measurement model.
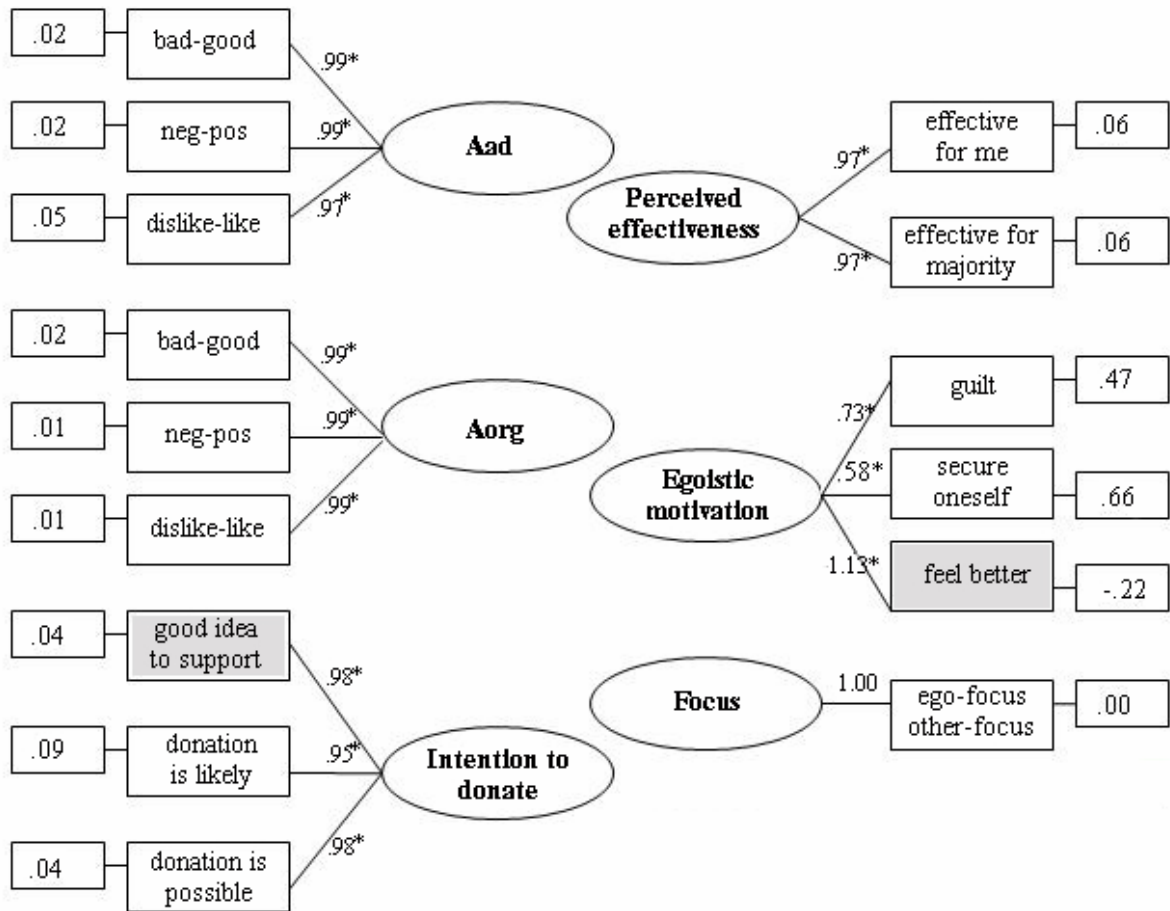
Note: The rectangles represent the observed variables, together with their error variance; the ovals represent the latent variables. The gray observed variables are not considered in the analysis. Standardized path coefficients are reported

* significant coefficients ($t > 2$)

Figure 5. 1: measurement model

In a second step, the direct path model was tested including the direct paths from the independent variable, focus of the ad evoked emotion, to the four dependent variables, Aad, Ab, intention to donate, and perceived effectiveness. This model $(\chi^2 (47) = 188.60, p < .001; CFI = .81; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .15)$ confirmed the results of the MANOVA analysis, indicating that the emotional focus had a significant negative effect on Aad $(\beta = -.22, t = -3.29)$, Aorg $(\beta = -.15, t = -3.21)$, intention to donate $(\beta = -.42, t = -4.42)$ and perceived effectiveness $(\beta = -.43, t = -4.49)$ (Figure 2, straight lines). In the final and most important step, the mediation model as shown in Figure 2 (dotted lines) was tested

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(χ^2 (64) = 138.77, p <.001; *CFI* = .87; *TLI* = .98; *RMSEA* = .09). Path analysis of this mediation model provided clear evidence for hypothesis 5B, in the sense that respondents' egoistic motivation to help mediated the effect of emotional focus on Aad, Aorg, intention to donate, and perceived effectiveness. The path from focus to egoistic motivation was negative and significant ($\beta = -1.79$, $t = -3.00$) and the paths from egoistic motivation to the four dependent variables were positive and significant (Aad: $\beta = .15$, $t = 3.12$; Aorg: $\beta = .10$, $t = 3.09$; intention to donate: $\beta = .30$, $t = 3.43$; effectiveness: $\beta = .34$, $t = 3.49$). Furthermore, the paths from focus to the dependent variables became insignificant (Aad: $\beta = .04$, $t = .35$; Aorg: $\beta = .03$, $t = .37$; intention to donate: $\beta = .12$, $t = .57$; effectiveness: $\beta = .19$, $t = .85$), indicating a full mediation of egoistic motivation. Comparing the fit of the direct path model to the mediation model provided further support for the mediation model. The addition of the mediating paths to the model improved the fit significantly ($\Delta\chi^2 = 49.83$, $\Delta df = 17$, Sharma 1996).
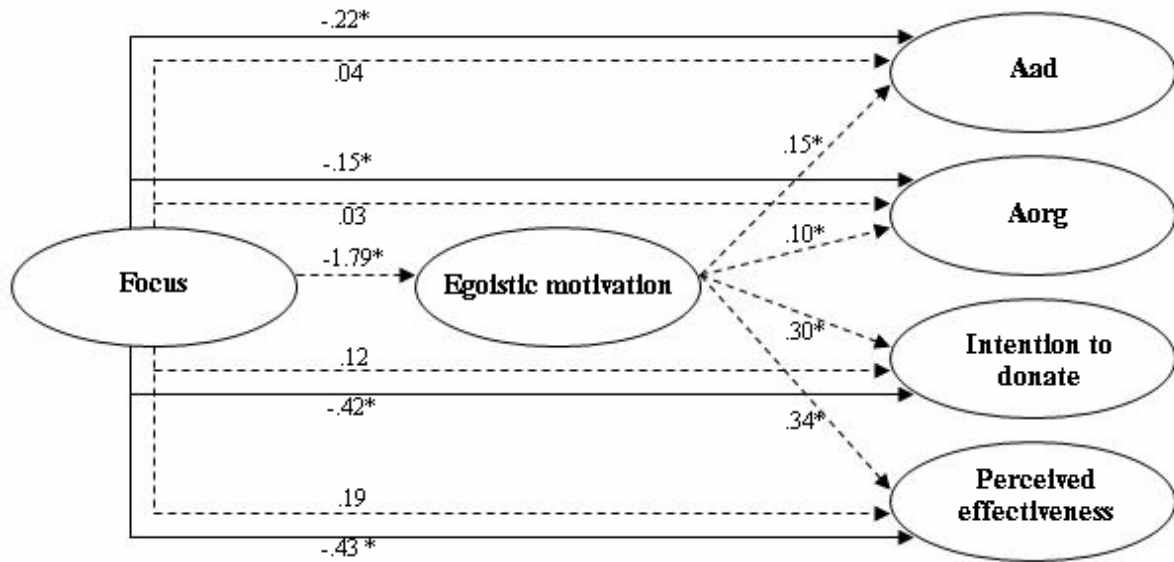
Note: the straight lines represent the direct model; the dotted lines represent the mediated model. Standardized path coefficients are reported.

* significant coefficients ($t > 2$)

Figure 5. 2: Path models: the direct model versus the mediated model

Since for the project in Tokyo, no effect was found between the ego- and the other-focused ad appeals, it was impossible to test for a mediation effect of altruistic motivation to help, as predicted in H6B.

6 DISCUSSION

The results of this study clearly show that not all emotions are equally effective in communications for a specific good cause. Furthermore, it is shown that different dimensions of emotions, more specifically the valence and the ego- versus other-focus dimension, are important in explaining the differential effects of different ad-evoked emotions.

The results of this study showed that the use of ego- versus other-focused emotions in advertisements for a food aid project influences people's motivation to help. It was found that ego-focused emotions led to higher egoistic motivations relative to altruistic ones, whereas other-focused emotions increased respondents' altruistic motivations relative to their egoistic ones. Furthermore, the results of this study showed that the effectiveness of positive versus negative and of ego- versus other-focused emotions depended on the connection that respondents felt with the needy people. More specifically, it was found that when the ad promoted a project in the respondents' own city, which is for connected people, positive appeals led to better ad evaluations and ego-focused appeals led to better ad evaluations, better evaluations of the organization, and higher helping intentions. Furthermore, the positive effect of ego-focused versus other-focused emotional appeals was fully mediated by respondents' egoistic motivation to help. On the other hand, when the ad promoted a food aid project in a foreign city, this is for unconnected people, the negative appeals were most effective in the sense that they led to higher evaluations of the organization, higher helping intentions, and higher perceived effectiveness. In this case, no support was found for the hypothesis that an other-focused emotional appeal would be evaluated more positively, and would lead to higher helping behavior than an ego-focused appeal (although the means did follow the predicted trend). Results showed that for the project for connected others, both the ego-focused and the other-focused appeals generated an altruistic motivation, whereas only the ego-focused appeals

generated a significant egoistic motivation. So this significant egoistic motivation caused by reading an ego-focused emotional ad compared to an other-focused emotional ad could be responsible for the higher evaluations and intentions. For the project for unconnected others, on the other hand, neither of the appeals generated an egoistic motivation and (more important) both the ego-focused and the other-focused ad-evoked emotions generated an altruistic motivation to help. Although the altruistic motivation generated by ads evoking an other-focused (versus ego-focused) emotion was significantly higher, the difference in altruistic motivation generated by an other-focused versus an ego-focused emotion (2.00 versus 1.21) was probably not sufficiently big to lead to significantly higher ad evaluations and helping intentions. This could explain why a significant effect of emotional focus was found on ad evaluation and helping intentions for the project for connected others and not for the project for unconnected others. The results of this study largely support the assertions of the empathy−altruism theory of Batson et al. (1983).

The results of this study could guide marketers in creating emotional communications to promote a good cause. Before deciding on what emotions to evoke, they should first ascertain whether or not there exists a connection between the people to whom the communication is targeted, and the people in need.

7 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

A first limitation concerns the scores of the ad-evoked emotions on the ego- versus other-focus scale. In the main experiment, respondents scored their emotions quite high on the ego-other scale after reading an ad that was intended to evoke an other-focused emotion. However, they scored their emotions only moderately low on the ego−other scale after seeing an ad that was intended to evoke an ego-focused emotion. Although the latter score was significantly lower than neutral, and therefore the ad can be considered as an "ego" ad, it is only a mild and not a strong ego version. Therefore, the results would have been more generalizable if the ads would have evoked more extreme levels of ego- and other-focused emotions. A second limitation concerns the way the respondents'

motivations to help was measured. It could be argued that by using a projective technique to measure egoistic versus altruistic motivations, the authors do not assure that the respondents' true motivations were measured. However, assuming that social desirability will have a substantial impact on respondents' reported motivations to help, a direct technique was expected to bring about an even bigger bias in respondents' responses. Therefore, the authors opted to use a projective technique that has been shown to reduce social desirability biases considerably (Louie & Obermiller, 1993). Finally, this study investigated the impact of the valence and the focus dimensions in a good cause setting. In further research, these dimensions could be investigated in a more commercial context. Within such a context, it might also be easier to evoke more extreme levels of ego-focused emotions. Another suggestion is to consider other dimensions of emotions like the certainty dimension when investigating the effectiveness of feelings to promote good causes (or commercial products). It would also be interesting to investigate the moderating role of individual differences on the impact of different feelings on ad effectiveness. Finally, other elements related to the people in need could influence the effectiveness of different emotional appeals, for example, the age of the people in need (children versus adults versus seniors) or the extent to which the people in need are assumed to be responsible for their own problem. Trying to evoke a feeling of empathy, for example, seems inappropriate for a project that helps people suffering from lung cancer, a disease that has often been linked to smoking behavior.

Notes

1. Previous analyses (to test hypotheses 1-4) are conducted using the constructs 'intention to donate' and 'egoistic motivation' including all observed items. However, we conducted the analyses again after excluding the item 'good idea to support' from the construct 'intention to donate' and the item 'to feel better' from the construct 'egoistic motivation', and we found very similar results. Significant effects remained significant and insignificant effects remained insignificant.

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Appendix A:

Advertisement for the project in Tokyo evoking a positive other-focused emotion.