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Guilt Induced Message Elaboration and Effect on Attitude towards Value Adoption: An ANCOVA Approach

Rajat Subhra Chatterjee¹, Sharifah Azizah Haron², Syuhaily Osman³, Afida Mastura Binti Muhammad Arif⁴

¹UCSI University, ^{2,3,4}University Putra Malaysia

Abstract

Engagement in Voluntary Simplicity behaviour can be strongly attributed to contributing towards environmental protection through consumption reduction. The attitudinal inclination towards adopting VS values has mostly been observed on the degree of awareness and current behaviour of individuals. However similar to sustainability practices, VS adoption can also be instigated through external influences. In the present study, a pioneer effort is being undertaken to observe the degree of persuasive intent that can be created through the intervention of anticipatory guilt, argument quality, and source credibility manipulation. The sample was drawn from the Malaysian youth population using the multi-stage cluster sampling method. The result of ANCOVA analysis shows significant direct effects on each of the VS values namely material simplicity, social responsibility, self-sufficiency, and spiritual growth. We also found strong interaction effects of anticipatory guilt and argument quality at high and low intervention levels towards youth attitude.

Keywords: Voluntary Simplicity, Values, Anticipatory Guilt, Argument Quality, Source Credibility, Behavioral Intent

Introduction

It is being observed that even though primarily being a value-oriented concept, voluntary simplicity (VS) has been ubiquitously propagated as a lifestyle which requires adoption of certain practices. VS as a lifestyle has gained momentum over the last few decades as a movement towards intentional non-consumption and well-being (Alexander & Garrett, 2017; Cherrier et al., 2011; Range & Smale, 2002). Lifestyle is inevitably linked with behavioral manifestation of individuals with reference to their spending and consumption patterns (Adnan et al., 2017). This has also been inferred as lifestyle behaviour (Ahmad et al., 2010; Tagoe & Dake, 2011) which requires a strong attitudinal inclination towards adoption of any lifestyle. In context of VS, such adoptions have mostly been evident as a self-realized act. Earlier studies measuring VS have coined it as either a value or an attitude, which essentially relies on a low consumption-oriented lifestyle coupled with low dependency on materials (Iwata, 1997, 2006). However, attitude orientation towards adopting a value-based lifestyle can be manipulated. Such phenomenon is evident from earlier value to lifestyle models (eg,

VALS) where causal effects of value orientation towards adopting certain lifestyle is evident (Al-Dmour et al., 2020). Studies concerning attitude of towards VS practitioners and also the behavioral manifestation has also been recently observed (Chang, 2016, 2021). It is not surprising that the VS adoption has been envisaged to intrinsically contribute towards augmenting the beneficial aspects related to pro environmental behaviour in consumption parlance (Demirel, 2020; Ertz & Sarigöllü, 2019). The foray of such observations have mostly correlated on curbing of materialistic attachments and developing mindful and frugal consumption habits and practices allowing improved environmental sustenance (Gatersleben et al., 2019; Geiger et al., 2020; Uren et al., 2021). However, the relative impact of interventions on VS values to address environmental attitude is yet to be explored. It can be rightfully asserted that a causal intervention-based observation of attitude towards VS value orientations would add a new dimension towards evaluating its effective adoption.

Guilt appeal has gained substantial academic interest as a potent message appeal type, directed towards generating emotional and affective response. Drawing parallel with sustainability research especially in context of environmental advertising, guilt has been observed to be instrumental towards developing attitudinal inclination (Chang, 2012; Yang et al., 2015). Taking the appraisal theory approach (Smith & Lazarus, 1993), this can be attributed to the intricate relationship between appraisal of a situation (negative or positive) or event and the causal emotion aroused. Past studies have stressed on guilt as a stronger motivator than other felt negative emotions in appraisal of consumption-oriented attitude or behaviour (Watson & Spence, 2007). However, in message design context, manipulations have given mixed results, whereby inverse relationship between induced guilt and attitude has also been observed (Jimenez & Yang, 2008; Muralidharan & Sheehan, 2018). A recent study measuring low carbon consumption behaviour have further established the negative mediating effects of anticipatory guilt in value to behaviour route (Jiang et al., 2020). However, exploration of causal influences of anticipatory guilt manipulation on attitude towards value adoption has been quite limited in nature.

The applicability of elaboration likelihood model (Heesacker et al., 1983; Petty et al., 1981), in attitude change through message manipulation is evident in past academic literature, which has been reiterated in recent studies (Petty et al., 2017). However, it has been stressed that the relative effectiveness of this model may differ when considering the dual routes to persuasion, which may not be mutually exclusive but follow the same cognitive elaboration path in different manner. The causal antecedent in such cases will depend on the intent and ability of the individual processing the message (Leong et al., 2019; Morris et al., 2005). Moreover, the intrinsic components of this model such as argument quality (AQ) and source credibility (SC) have shown different impact in different intervention settings. As an example, studies on AQ manipulation in advertisements both strong and weak arguments have been effective towards different attitude orientation in varying proportions (Kao, 2012; Kao & Du, 2020) AG As such, recent studies have emphasized that further exploration of this model in context of pro-environmental attitude and message communications would be useful (Manca et al., 2020).

Taking the above cue, the current study focusses on an empirical observation of intervention effect through messages on youth attitude towards specific VS value dimensions. The aim of this research is to identify to what extent negative emotional inducements, coupled with strong or weak arguments and source factors can impact VS values among youth population. It has been observed that youth around the world exert their behavioural preferences specifically when it comes to lifestyle and consumption decisions, which has substantial

impact over the current and future sustainability efforts (Kadic-Maglajlic et al., 2019; Pena-Cerezo et al., 2019; Vantamay, 2018). However, the current studies on VS have observed the behavioral disposition on the population that is already aware and are motivated to practice this as voluntary simplifiers (McGouran & Prothero, 2016; Pravet & Holmlund, 2018). The element of “persuasiveness”, or its relative applicability toward developing such attitude still lacks empirical findings. The study utilized anticipatory guilt as the emotional inducement for the messages. The scope of this guilt variant has been extensive in studies concerning environment such as environmental attitude (Chang, 2012; Haynes & Podobsky, 2016), environmental behaviour (Elgaaied, 2012; Onwezen et al., 2013, 2014), environmental hyperopia (Lee, 2013), and essentially, green advertising (Kabadayı et al., 2015; Schneider et al., 2017). The ELM is considered most appropriate as the relative impact of varying the intervention level was measured. The degree of personal relevance was maintained at high level through proximity of the issues being presented in the messages. Recent studies have substantiated the fact that the relative attitudinal inclination from motivation perspective is more effective when issues are felt to be more imminent and close by the audience (Breves & Schramm, 2021; González-Gaudio & Meira-Cartea, 2019; Kulkarni & Yuan, 2015).

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

The VS Value Dimensions

Though originally being coined by Richard Gregg (1936), it is generally accepted that values were galvanized by others. Barton’s (1981) work elicits the value component of Voluntary Simplicity, which was drafted by Elgin and Mitchell in 1977 (Elgin & Mitchell, 1977; Leonard-Barton, 1981). It constituted of five values namely, Material Simplicity, Self-determination, Ecological Awareness, Human Scale and Personal Growth. Numerous definitions were posited to comprehend the true meaning and applicability of this construct. It ranges from “a manner of living that is outwardly simple and inwardly rich” Elgin (1993) to a typical lifestyle adoption “intended to maximize direct control on activities” (Leonard-Barton, 1981), and to be practiced at different levels based on the intention and capability of the individual, which have been duly categorized (Ballantine, 2020; Etzioni, 1999). A foray onto the past literature clearly establishes a differentiated opinion as to the maintenance and adoption of VS and notion of its value dimensions. The commonality observed and reflected in recent studies constitutes of a consensual agreement towards truncation of strong materialistic attachments and striving towards living a simple yet superior and contented life through ameliorated mental and psychological state of existence (Aidar & Daniels, 2020; Osikominu & Bocken, 2020; Pashkevich, 2019). A further review of its value dimensions would help to clarify the true nature of VS as a construct of measurement.

Conceptualizing from a value dimension perspective, materials constitutes of three major components which are acquisition centrality, acquisition as the pursuit of happiness and possession defined success that influences individual’s choice of consumption (Millar & Thomas, 2009; Richins & Dawson, 1992). The key aspect of Material Simplicity (MS henceforth) encompasses how people view their possessions and the mechanism of its relative association with their other existing values concerning such acquisitions (Furnham & Valgeirsson, 2007). Subsequently, MS was found to inherently correlate with another originally proposed value dimension, namely Human Scale (HS henceforth). The primary notion of HS being originally posited as “small is beautiful” (Shama, 1981, 1988) lies in restricting consumption aspirations and reducing the complexities arising from them. This again is an inherent criterion towards adopting MS. It is therefore not uncommon that a

majority of researchers contributing towards VS attitude and behaviour-based measurements, either subsumed it within MS, or completely ignored it as an individual value dimension (see, Chieh-Wen et al., 2008; Cowles & Crosby, 1986; Iwata, 1997, 2006). In fact in recent study undertaken towards developing a comprehensive engagement scale of VS adoption, the items pertaining to Human Scale were not found to achieve any significant factor (Rich et al., 2019). Also, from sustainable consumption standpoint, both the values have been found to strongly align to its proposition. This is proven from the fact that both the value dimensions negates the attitudinal inclination towards acquisitive, repetitive and conspicuous consumption, which is considered an essential pathways to achieve sustainability in individual and societal consumption (Lee, 2016; Lim, 2017).

The “self-sufficiency-self-determination” (SS Henceforth) value dimension signifies the control mechanism being present within the individuals which strives towards reducing dependency and concurrently improving self-reliance on every aspect of their lives in an effective manner (Shama, 1985). Also, with reference to self-determination theory, (Deci & Ryan, 2008, 2012), it attributes to voluntary simplicity concept as the theory postulates to the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy. This value dimension has also been interpreted to be a part of other psychological constructs relating to human behaviour. As an example, self-sufficiency of individuals within the purview of motivation is considered to be the Self-Direction (SDI) value entity, which primarily relies on independence and autonomy of thoughts and actions (Grunert, 2006; Schwartz, 2012). It is evident from the academic literature that in subsequent studies the focus of self-determination-self-sufficiency value dimension was more pronounced on the "self-sufficiency" aspect, whereby it was attributed to facilitate consumption reduction as part of VS consumer culture and subsequently reduce their choice dilemma (Shaw & Moraes, 2009). Therefore it is quite evident that SS as VS value dimension has been prevalent in recent inquires towards VS adoption and practice towards attitude orientation and life satisfaction (Bayat & Sezer, 2018; Nefat et al., 2018).

The Ecological Awareness value dimension is considered a pre-cursor to an individual's environment-oriented thoughts and actions, which influences the nature and pattern of his/her lifestyle and consumption choices (Chen, 2014; Figueredo & Tsarenko, 2013; Pillai & Gupta, 2015). Over the years the terminology has evolved to become a generic “social responsibility” of individuals towards the society at large, especially in context of sustainable consumption. It encompasses the practicing of pro-environmental behaviour, whereby the individuals adopt the pro-environmental self-identity (Dermody et al., 2015, 2018) towards consumption. Also, such awareness-oriented value has been envisaged as a responsibility towards upliftment of social knowledge across various societies. Sustainability Education Transdisciplinary Model (STEM) (Clark & Button, 2011) and "ecopedagogy" (Gadotti, 2010; Gottlieb et al., 2012), are examples of such responsible actions, which were institutionalized and implemented to augment knowledge about social sustainability. Studies have established that a high awareness towards ecology would ensure a developed sense of responsibility, though the manifestation of the same may not be evident due to attitude-behaviour gap (Caruana et al., 2016; Csutora, 2012) being present within the individuals. In fact, recent studies have stressed on the fact that adoption of both VS and SCB require individuals to be responsible and make necessary adjustments/altercations in their lifestyle and consumption habits regarding environmental protection and ecological stability (Chatterjee, 2020; Taljaard & Sonnenberg, 2019).

Finally, the “personal growth- spiritual growth” value dimension expounds on the development of one's inner self in a psychological and spiritual dimension to improve the

quality of living (Elgin & Mitchell, 1977; Rich et al., 2017). It can be ascertained that personal growth as a VS value propounds the mental and spiritual uplifting of individuals, which amplifies their ability to dissociate from a materialistic lifestyle. This value mechanism is also considered crucial towards "downshifting" which is a practice of improving work-life balance by augmented time allocation towards leisure and self-improvement (Nelson et al., 2007). It has also been classified as part of an intrinsic value system reflecting self-acceptance, which involves psychological growth and a relative sense of autonomy of the spiritual self (Brown & Kasser, 2005). Recent studies pertaining to consumption reduction and frugal lifestyles have stressed on the relative importance of religiousness which improves mental strength and augments the sense of moral obligation towards curbing unwanted materialistic attachment (Alsaad et al., 2021; Montoro-Pons & Cuadrado-García, 2018). In fact, a recent review on the role of religion and sustainable consumption has enumerated that the former influences the latter in indirect manner as the primary effects are on shaping the individuals values, attitudes and social norms among others (Orellano et al., 2020). Also, though having different connotation, spiritual awareness and religiosity have been observed to serve common agenda such as job satisfaction, mental well-being and values such as morality and honesty among others (Prashar et al., 2018). Therefore, it would not be wrong to ascertain that this value can be measured as an individual inclination towards "spiritual growth" (SG henceforth) which constitutes of an augmented time allocation towards leisure and self-improvement.

Measuring VS and its Relative Influences

The quantitative measurements of voluntary simplicity have been undertaken from varied perspectives, which ranges from attitudinal inclination towards value adoption to behavioral disposition towards adopting the VS lifestyle. Pioneer research on adoption across U.S. cities observed a motivational consistency within people but varying actual adoption inclination (Shama, 1988). Comprehensive studies on its attitudinal and behavioral aspects of VS adoption towards shopping, further truncated the applicability of the original value orientations (Iwata, 1999, 2001, 2006). Recent foray into VS attitude on Taiwan population has emphasized on the lack of VS adoption exploration among the Asian communities (Chang, 2016). It further emphasized that demographic factors such as age and education did influence the degree of VS adoption.

Taking the values to belief to behaviour based studies, a general agreement on its role towards encouraging people to ascribe towards non-materialistic aspects of life and reducing consumption through adoption of this lifestyle through various means, is prevalent across the extant literature (Walther et al., 2016). Furthermore, such observations have established linkage of VS to various other mental and psychological developments within individuals. Spiritual development, life satisfaction and attainment of happiness through augmented well-being, is such an example which has been consistently proved to be achieved by diligent VS practitioners (Alexander & Garrett, 2017; Lloyd & Pennington, 2020). As a lifestyle, VS explorations generated different levels of adoption and practitioners who ranged from beginner to advanced level and were labelled as simplifiers. Taking the value orientation, such lifestyles apart from being less materialistic, are also considered as part of overarching sustainable lifestyle with strong focus on ethical consumption (Gwozdz et al., 2020). In fact, consumption ethics has strongly entrenched through decades in VS parlance, whereby the scope has widened from merely ethical choices to adoption of frugality and abstention from strong materialism through "ethical" alternative choices (Newholm & Shaw, 2017).

Further qualitative inquiries from lifestyle perspective have put VS as a contributor and in certain cases a part of sustainable anti-consumption, which includes collaborative consumption and debt-free life, which again strongly includes certain ethical considerations (Balderjahn et al., 2020; Ziesemer et al., 2019). However, VS lifestyle literature has strong demographic ramifications. The extent of commitment can be influenced by the prevalent cultural norms including the family upbringing, availability of goods and diverse experiences of the practitioners. Recent studies have claimed European countries to be more conducive in VS adoption due to some of the aforementioned factors and strong sociological support which allows clustering of groups and families who can unclutter their materialistic cravings and practice non-affluent lifestyle (Balsa-Budai et al., 2019; Pelikán et al., 2020).

Argument Quality and Source Credibility

Argument quality is considered a crucial component of any message elaboration, which substantially influences the processing route being followed and the relative influence on the respondent's attitude (Y. Kang et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2016). The quality of an arguments signifies whether the thoughts being evoked after the message processing are more favorable or unfavorable than the one which was present in respondent's mind before processing (Coulter & Punj, 2004; R. E. Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). However, it is also implied that a clear conceptualization of the manipulative criterion towards differentiating the strong versus weak arguments is not evident.

In a definitive response to critique of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM henceforth), Petty et al (1987) clarified that the merits of any argument is not processed in an unambiguous manner, whereby the degree of involvement may render its presence as a simple cue (low involvement condition) or a as potent factor influencing attitude (under high involvement condition). This fact has been further substantiated by further studies, which corroborated on high attitudinal influence by argument quality under high involvement conditions (Nuzulfah et al., 2019; Petty & Briñol, 2020; Zha et al., 2018). The role of argument quality in message design has been observed to impact attitude across multiple domains when utilized in experimental design conditions. Further exploration of this construct was undertaken in context of explicit and implicit conclusions being presented in any advertisement. The results clearly established that individuals possessing high need for cognition had higher attitudinal and behavioral influences when exposed to strong argument quality (Duan et al., 2018; Luttrell et al., 2017; See et al., 2009).

The construct of source credibility has been exhaustively researched in context of persuasion which constitutes of the perceived level of trust and expertise of the message source of any message by target respondents (Tormala et al., 2006). In reference to ELM, prior studies on source credibility manipulations have shown that it plays different role at different state of elaboration, which may range from being a simple cue towards acceptance to a significant contributor towards effective interpretation of the message (Kareklas et al., 2015; Nan, 2009). The credibility of the source can also be induced in the message format such as authoritative cues, which have been found to impact the perceived credibility(Lin et al., 2016). It has also been established that a relatively higher perceived credibility of a source, whether an individual or an organization, usually leads to a better attitudinal influence of the individuals processing the information (Case et al., 2018; Horning, 2017).

Source Credibility as a factor has also been found to be equally effective in case of resistance to persuasive intent conditions. To gauge the relative effectiveness of the trust and credibility on negatively framed persuasive intent, a few studies focused on the effect of manipulated

source credibility on counter-attitudinal messages (Reinhard et al., 2014; Tormala & Clarkson, 2007; Zhao & Fink, 2020). The results indicated that attitude certainty was visible among the respondents under high source credibility conditions, whereby counter argument of the implied messages was undertaken.

Guilt and Anticipatory Guilt Appeal

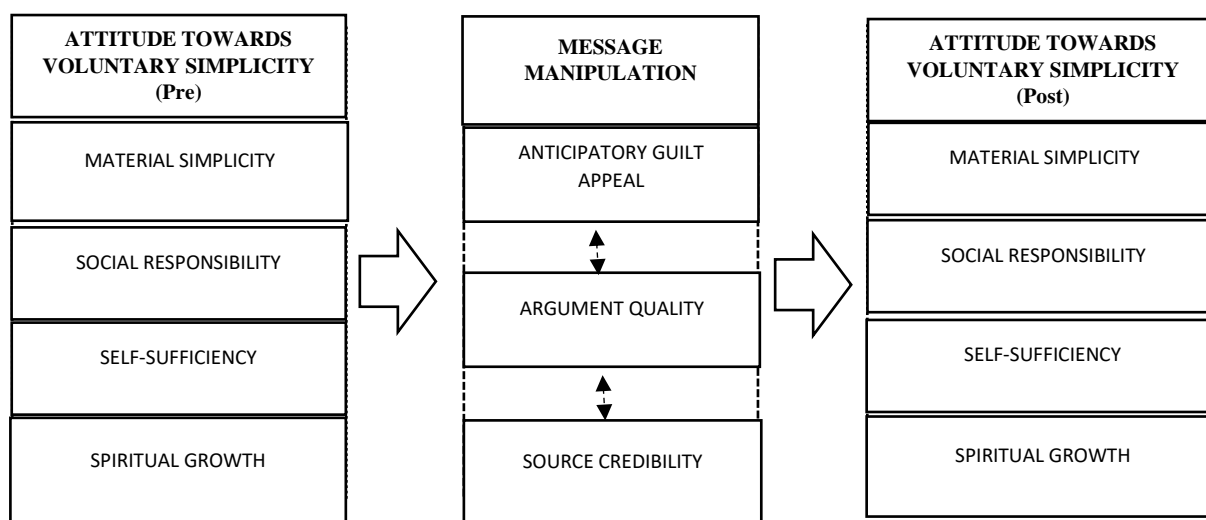
Guilt has always been considered a priori appeal which was considered a form of fear as both feelings lead to reduction of the unpleasant state of the mind. However, subsequently guilt was observed to be a more definitive appeal when the communication objective primarily hinted a change in the thought and behavioral process with a persuasive intent (Antonetti et al., 2018; Chédotal et al., 2017; Graton et al., 2016). A foray into the past studies on message design and appeal, predominantly establishes guilt as type of negative emotional appeal, which can lead to certain feeling of reparation and retributive action to alleviate such feelings (see, Batra & Ray, 1986; Ghingold, 1981; Lascu, 1991; Pinto & Priest, 1991). However, substantive difference in its applicability was observed subsequently, whereby guilt was found to be exercised in adequacy to reduce the produced anxiety and dislike towards the message and source (Breggin, 2015; Diana-Mirela & Aurora, 2018; Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). Applications are varied and quite comprehensive in marketing and communication based observations such as brand attitude determination, cause related marketing, ethical consumption and environmental management issues (Bilandzic & Sukalla, 2019; Singh et al., 2020; Urbonavicius et al., 2019), among others. It is evident that at current juncture, this appeal transcends domain restrictions.

Subsequently studies categorized guilt and defined anticipatory guilt (AG) as a form of guilt that precedes an action or an inaction, existential guilt is espoused from the felt differences across one's state of existence or wellbeing with others and reactive guilt as a reaction towards felt transgression of one's own behaviour (Basil et al., 2001; Cotte et al., 2005; Lwin & Phau, 2014). AG was found to be in high in cases where individuals felt an unwanted future occurrence rather than in retrospection of a past event that has already happened (Block, 2005; Kayal et al., 2018; Pounders et al., 2018). Through an exploration of recent studies, it can be asserted that in social context, existential guilt can be more effective in evoking moral responsibility through the aroused sense of empathy (Nguyen et al., 2020; Stuhler, 2018). However, in context of environmental and pro-social behavior, which involves a certain amount of threat inducement to allow realization of catastrophic effects in future anticipatory guilt will be a more suitable appeal to be utilized in communication parlance (Mukherjee & Chandra, 2021; Wang & Basso, 2019; Wen & Qi, 2020). Taking the consumption viewpoint, anticipatory guilt has been found to induce ethically oriented consumption and moderate consumption of luxury goods (Gregory-Smith et al., 2013; Lindenmeier et al., 2017). Such effects are not only immediate in nature but has been observed to be effective in longitudinal studies concerning consumption habits (Baghi & Antonetti, 2017). Anticipatory guilt is also effective towards inducing responsible consumption within individuals by espousing a sense of protectionism towards environment and society (Ha & Kwon, 2016; Theotokis & Manganari, 2015). In fact, in context of message appeal-based experiments, it has been observed to influence and encourage pro-social behavioural practices among individuals such as participating in donations and charities (De Luca, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

With reference to the comprehensive review of the past and the current academic literature the study presents the below conceptual framework. This framework is a depiction of the interrelationship between the independent and dependent variables and the relative pathway of influence between the constructs. The primary objective of this model is to clarify on the constructs being utilized in this study. Subsequently, it also helps to determine the pre and post measurement of attitudinal construct which, is the manifestation of causal effect (if any) on the similar value dimensions.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

Research Design

In accordance with the requirement of the study, which follows the causal research design requiring manipulation of variables, between-subject quasi- experimental research design was being adopted. A factorial design was developed constituting of 2 (AG: High/low) x2 (AQ: Strong/Weak) x2 (SC: High/low) manipulating conditions. To ascertain the causality effect through explanatory variables (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Sekaran, 2003), the message inducement was varied according to the designed manipulation for each group. The below table summarizes the message design presented to each group:

Table 1.1

Experimental Group and Induced Manipulation

Experimental Group	Guilt Induced	Argument Quality	Source Credibility
1	High	Strong	High
2	High	Strong	Low
3	High	Weak	High
4	High	Weak	Low
5	Low	Strong	High
6	Low	Strong	Low
7	Low	Weak	High
8	Low	Weak	Low

Message Design and Manipulation Check

The message design process involved a comprehensive review of previous studies depicting AG appeal in textual or pictorial format. Review of AQ and SC as manipulative variables was also being undertaken. A total of 32 messages were finally selected which contained a mix of picture and textual description towards each manipulative condition. A panel consisting of six experts adjudged the quality and appropriateness of the messages being designed. A comprehensive review questionnaire was developed (see Appendix 1) for the panel's feedback on the level of guilt induced, the argument strength, credibility of the identified sources and appropriateness of the images being induced as stimulus material. The final questionnaire constituted of four composite messages for each experimental group, each message attributing to one of the VS value orientation.

Table 1.2

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.870
Approx. Chi-Square		1458.893
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	190
	Sig.	.000

Table 1.3

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
MS1			.706	
MS2			.834	
MS3			.762	
MS4			.710	
MS5			.728	
SR1				.784
SR2				.733
SR3				.625
SR4				.764
SR5				.664
SS1		.794		
SS2		.814		
SS3		.723		
SS4		.840		
SS5		.648		
SG1	.797			
SG2	.743			
SG3	.823			
SG4	.760			
SG5	.824			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Population and Sample

The study population is youth population who are being enrolled as undergraduates students in the Malaysian private and public Universities. The youth population is not only an important part of the community but also is generally found to have high propensity towards consumption. The youth in Malaysia is defined according to the latest amendment of Youth Societies and Youth Development Act (Amendment) in 2019 which includes anyone of age between 15-30 years of age (Ahmad, 2019; Bernama, 2019). As inferred earlier in the academic review, adoption of Voluntary Simplicity directly influences the consumption habits of individuals and reduces the propensity to overconsume. There have been studies indicating this pattern of consumption in Malaysia, which indicated highest amount of food and luxury item consumption within the youth community (Wong et al, 2012). Studies pertaining to Malaysian consumption patterns have identified that the youth population possesses a high propensity towards materialistic possessions and luxury-oriented spending (Abdul Adzis et al., 2017). The reason for such attribution has also been linked to marketing communication and especially the social media influences within the similar age groups exchanging such information (Khalid et al., 2018). Multi-stage Cluster Sampling method was adopted to primarily identify the sample respondents.

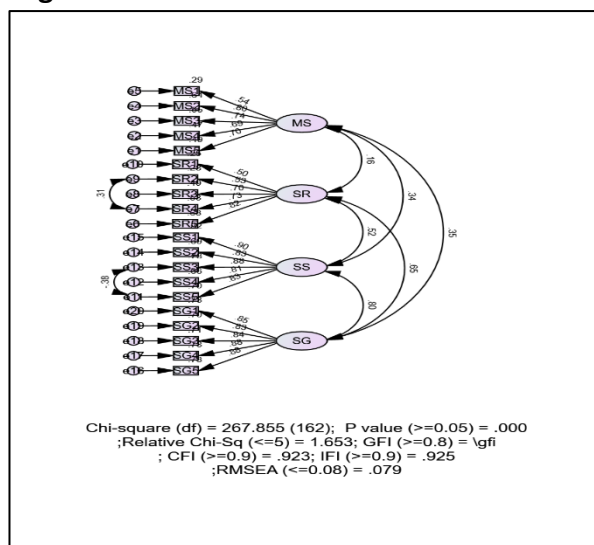
Instrument Validity

The study utilized similar number of items to measure the attitude towards VS values at both pre and post exposure to message manipulation. The items pertaining to VS value measurement were adapted from two previous studies on VS behavioral manifestation (Chang, 2016) and VS engagement scale (Rich et al., 2019). Though, the dimensionality of the items in reference to the respective value orientations have already been tested in these studies, an exploratory factor analysis was undertaken to establish the repeatability of the measurement, considering a new demographic setting of application (Rencher, 2002). The exploratory factor analysis using the varimax rotation technique was applied on the 20 items adapted for the attitudinal scale. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was found to be 0.870, which is above the suggested value of 0.6. Also, the Bartlett's test of sphericity was found to be significant ($\chi^2 = 1458.22$, $p < 0.05$). (table 1.2). In reference to the current study, all initial communalities were found to be above threshold. All loading factors were found to be above 0.5. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation technique was used which resulted in extraction of four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. (table 1.3).

To further verify the factor structure and entrench upon the relationship between the variable and the relative constructs, confirmatory factor analysis was undertaken for the VS value items. The results indicated an item loading above 0.5 for all items and a good model fit ($\chi^2 = 267.855$; $df=162$; $RMSEA = .079$). Also, the CFI value was 0.923 which meets the threshold criteria for a model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The factor loadings for all the factors are shown in figure 1.

The convergent validity was ascertained by the composite reliability (CR) value which ranged between 0.794 to 0.934 with an $AVE \geq 0.50$ for all the value constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The discriminant validity was being established by comparing the squared correlation value of each factor with the AVE values whereby a higher AVE confirms the validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014).

Figure 2: Factor Loadings



Data Analysis

Demographic Factors

All the demographic variables (age, gender, income, university, academic programme, ethnicity) have been explored using descriptive statistics analysis for each of the groups. A comparative evaluation among groups was undertaken using the independent Chi-Square test. The results indicated that even with random selection of the sample respondents for all the groups no significant effect was observed for any of the demographic variables except ethnicity.

It was observed that the four ethnic groups namely Malay, Chinese, Indians and Bumiputera (Sabah/Sarawak) had unequal distribution across the sample respondents which can be partly attributed to the random sampling effect. A One-way ANOVA test of this variable with the pre-test Value scores showed a significant effect of ethnicity across all the values. (refer to table 1). Therefore, it can be ascertained from the results that ethnicity is a significant confounding factor. Hence an ANCOVA analysis was undertaken to exclude the effects of the ethnicity on the differences between pre and post VS attitudinal measurement.

Table 1.4
One Way ANOVA (Ethnicity)

Variable	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Bumiputera	F value	P value
Pre.MS	16.78(4.4)	21.77(5.39)	17.23(4.	18.18(3.8)	24.578	<0.001
Pre.SR	18.38(5.66)	23.35(5.53)	17.88(5.	19.06(4.76)	24.505	<0.001
Pre.SS	18.09(5.61)	22.97(5.47)	17.62(4.	19.41(4.43)	25.209	<0.001
Pre.SG	19.92(5.04)	23.7(5.17)	19.91(5.	20.76(4.62)	14.260	<0.001

Homogeneity test of Variance

The homogeneity test of variance across groups was undertaken using the Leven’s test. The results indicate that all groups at the pre-manipulation observation, does not have significant differences across the given value dimensions, except for SG value dimension (refer to table1.5). The reason for the same can be established from the presence of unequal ethnicity distribution among the observed groups, which influenced the same. However, it has been stated that this assumption as a requirement can be ignored if the difference between the sample size among groups is nil or very less or in other words there is no unequal samples

across groups (Keppel, 1991). As the eight groups being observed for this study have same sample sizes, therefore based on the above inference this requirement for further analysis using ANCOVA can be ignored.

Table 1.5

Homogeneity test for all dependent variables

	Pre-MS	Pre-SR	Pre-SS	Pre-SG
Group1	19.02(5.46)	20.35(6.29)	19.33(4.59)	20.56(5.52)
Group2	19.21(6.44)	21.19(6.89)	20.9(6.58)	21.31(6.51)
Group3	20.1(5.74)	19.79(6.1)	20.38(6.16)	21.24(6.05)
Group4	20.54(5.84)	22.05(5.91)	21.68(6.35)	23.15(5.17)
Group5	20.15(4.47)	20.78(5.03)	20.68(4.63)	23.45(3.63)
Group6	19.95(5.95)	21.98(5.84)	21.05(5.66)	23.5(5.14)
Group7	18.95(4.94)	21.1(6.69)	21.59(6.79)	22.63(6.1)
Group8	18.63(4.44)	20.02(5.4)	19.26(5.15)	19.88(4.09)
F value	0.678	0.797	1.063	2.827*
p value	0.691	0.59	0.387	0.007

Overall Main and Interaction Effects (Intervention)

To investigate the impact of intervention (AG; AQ; SC) on each of the four VS value dimensions (MS; SR; SS; SG), factorial analysis of co-variance was applied. Results of analysis indicated that the main effect of each intervention was statistically significant on each of the VS value dimensions.

In reference to the interaction effect of the three intervention factors (AG, AQ and SC) on the VS value dimension, factorial analysis of co-variance was applied for each combination (AG/AQ; AG/SC; AQ/SC and AG/AQ/SC). The results indicated that only the interaction between AG and AQ was statistically significant across all the value dimensions. The results of the analysis for each value is further explained to facilitate effective interpretation.

Material Simplicity (MS) value reflected that the main effect of AG ($F=38.296$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=0.108$), AQ ($F=7.551$, $p=.006$, $\eta^2=.023$) and SC ($F=7.767$, $p=.006$, $\eta^2=.024$) were significant in nature (refer to table 1.6). Also, as presented in the table the interaction of only AG*AQ intervention was found to be significant ($F=15.866$, $p<0.001$) for this value dimension across all groups.

Table 1.6

Summary of results of factorial ANCOVA for material simplicity

	Source	df	Mean	F value	p	η^2
Main effect	AG	1	523.552	38.296**	<0.001	0.108
	AQ	1	103.231	7.551**	0.006	0.023
	SC	1	106.186	7.767**	0.006	0.024
Interaction effect	AG * AQ	1	216.91	15.866**	<0.001	0.048
	AG * SC	1	39.445	2.885	0.09	0.009
	AQ * SC	1	2.536	0.185	0.667	0.001
	AG * AQ * SC	1	53.547	3.917*	0.049	0.012
	AG * AQ * SC *	7	105.63	7.727**	<0.00	0.146
	PRE_MS	1	339.085	24.803**	<0.001	0.073

The Social Responsibility (SR) value also showed similar outcome whereby the direct effects of all three interventions [AG: (F= 61.993, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.164$); AQ: (F=17.216, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.052$); SC: (F=12.165, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.037$)] were significant. Furthermore, AG*AQ interaction was the only composite intervention which proved significant (F= 14.71, $p < 0.001$). (Refer to table 1.7)

Table 1.7

Summary of results of factorial ANCOVA for social responsibility

	Source	df	Mean Square	F value	p value	η^2
Main Effect	AG	1	753.105	61.993**	<0.001	0.164
	AQ	1	209.144	17.216**	<0.001	0.052
	SC	1	147.779	12.165**	<0.001	0.037
Interaction effect	AG * AQ	1	178.699	14.71**	<0.001	0.044
	AG * SC	1	19.533	1.608	0.206	0.005
	AQ * SC	1	2.174	0.179	0.673	0.001
	AG * AQ * SC	1	46.194	3.803	0.052	0.012
	AG * AQ * SC * PRE_SR	7	118.913	9.789	<0.001	0.178
	PRE_SR_TOTAL	1	628.93	51.772	<0.001	0.141

The analysis of Self-Sufficiency (SS) value dimension revealed similar outcome with significant impact of AG (F= 42.696, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.119$), AQ (F=18.828, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.056$) and SC (F=5.395, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.037$) across all the values. Similar to other values only AG*AQ interaction effects were found to be significant (F= 9.179, $p < 0.001$). (Refer to table 1.8)

Table 1.8

Summary of results of factorial ANCOVA for self-sufficiency

	Source	df	Mean	F value	p	η^2
Main effect	AG	1	536.686	42.696**	<0.001	0.119
	AQ	1	236.666	18.828**	<0.001	0.056
	SC	1	67.815	5.395**	0.023	0.017
Interaction effect	AG * AQ	1	115.375	9.179**	0.001	0.028
	AG * SC	1	41.059	3.266	0.072	0.01
	AQ * SC	1	24.039	1.912	0.168	0.006
	AG * AQ * SC	1	56.236	4.474	0.055	0.014
	AG * AQ * SC * PRE_SS	7	103.41	8.227	<0.001	0.154
	PRE_SS	1	85.63	6.812	0.009	0.021

Lastly the Spiritual Growth (SG) value dimension. The results showed statistically significant main effect for all the three interventions, namely AG (F= 42.647, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.119$), AQ (F=7.612, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.024$) and SC (F=2.183, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.017$). As in the case of all values SG was also influenced only by the AG*AQ interaction which showed statistically significant impact (F= 20.313, $p < 0.001$). (Please refer to table 1.9)

Table 1.9

Summary of results of factorial ANCOVA for Self Sufficiency

	Source	df	Mean	F value	p value	η^2
Main effect	AG	1	502.688	42.647**	<0.001	0.119
	AQ	1	89.721	7.612**	0.006	0.024
	SC	1	25.732	2.183**	0.041	0.017
Interaction effect	AG * AQ	1	239.429	20.313**	<0.001	0.06
	AG * SC	1	71.531	6.069	0.014	0.019
	AQ * SC	1	1.889	0.16	0.689	0.001
	AG * AQ * SC	1	45.215	3.836	0.051	0.012
	AG * AQ * SC * PRE_SG	7	117.9	10.002	<0.001	0.181
	PRE_SG_TOTAL	1	418.907	35.539	<0.001	0.101

Main and Interaction Effects (Comparison of Means)

To identify the actual difference between the two levels of each intervention (high/low) for the main effects of each intervention, the Post Hoc test (Bonferroni) was being undertaken. The result showed statistically significant difference in the impact between the two levels of intervention for each of the value dimensions. In each value dimension, it was observed that only the interaction effects of AG*AQ was statistically significant. Hence, the comparison of means was conducted for only this interaction.

Material Simplicity (MS)

The value of MS at low AG induced manipulation (M= 24.439) was lower than high inducement condition (M=27.384). Similarly, at weak induced manipulation of the AQ the value was lower (M= 25.113) which again increased to M=26.710 at strong AQ inducement condition. As for SC similar differences were found between high (M=26.665) to low (M= 25.158) SC inducement condition. Based on the result of Bonferroni test the difference of MS score at posttest between different levels of AG, AQ and SR were statistically different ($p < 0.01$). (Refer to table 2.0).

The pairwise comparison of the AG*AQ interaction effects shows that at low level of AG intervention, the interaction of weak and strong level of AQ intervention was not statistically significant (MD= -0.221, $P = .705$). However, at high level of AG, the interaction effects of both strong and weak level of AQ intervention was statistically significant (MD= -2.971, $p < 0.001$). (Please refer to table 2.1)

Table 2.0

Mean Comparison using Bonferroni test for main effect of factors (AG, AQ, SC) for MS

Main effect	Level	Mean ^a	SE	MD	p value
Anticipatory Guilt	Low	24.439	0.292	2.945*	<0.001
	High	27.384	0.287		
Argument Quality	Weak	25.113	0.29	1.596*	<0.001
	Strong	26.710	0.289		
Source Credibility	Low	25.158	0.291	1.506*	<0.001
	High	26.665	0.288		

Table 2.1

Pairwise comparison MS mean score for interaction between AG and AQ

Group	(I)	(J)	Mean Difference	SE	P value	95% CI for	
						Lower	Upper
Low AG	Weak	Strong AQ	-0.221	0.584	0.705	-1.369	0.927
High AG	Weak	Strong AQ	-2.971*	0.574	<0.001	-4.101	-1.841
Weak	Low AG	High AG	-1.570*	0.579	0.007	-2.709	-0.43
Strong	Low AG	High AG	-4.319*	0.579	<0.001	-5.458	-3.181

Social Responsibility (SR)

Taking the Social Responsibility (SR) value dimension low level AG manipulation (M= 24.724) was again found to be lower than High inducement condition (M=28.144). Similar results can be seen between weak (M= 25.998) and strong (M=27.554) AQ and low (M= 25.998) and high (M=26.870) level of SC inducement conditions. With reference to the result of Bonferroni test the difference at posttest between the two levels were statistically significant. (refer to table 2.2). Again, the pairwise comparison result for the interaction effects showed similar interaction effects as MS value dimension. At low level of AG intervention, the interaction of weak and strong level of AQ intervention was not statistically significant (MD= -0.221, P= .705). However, at high level of AG, the interaction effects of both weak and strong level of AQ intervention was statistically significant (MD= -2.971, p= <0.001). Similar results can be seen at strong level of AQ where both high and low level of AG intervention is statistically significant (MD= -4.319, p<0.001). (refer to table 2.3)

Table 2.2

Mean Comparison using Bonferroni test for main effect of factors (AG, AQ, SC) for SR

Main Effect	Level	Mean ^a	SE	MD	p value
Anticipatory Guilt	Low	24.724	0.275	3.420*	<0.001
	High	28.144	0.272		
Argument Quality	Weak	25.323	0.273	2.221*	<0.001
	Strong	27.544	0.273		
Source Credibility	Low	25.998	0.275	1.506*	<0.001
	High	26.870	0.271		

Table 2.3

Pairwise comparison SR mean score for interaction between AG and AQ

Group	(I)	(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	SE	P value	95% CI for Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Low AG	Weak	Strong	-.292	0.58	0.550	-1.373	0.789
High AG	Weak	Strong	-4.150*	0.57	<0.00	-5.219	-3.080
Weak	Low AG	High AG	-1.492*	0.54	0.007	-2.568	-.415
Strong	Low AG	High AG	-5.349*	0.54	<0.00	-6.423	-4.275

Self Sufficiency (SS)

Self- Sufficiency main effect comparison of means showed similar outcome at the different levels of the three intervention. AG at low inducement condition (M= 24.724) was different from high (M=28.144) inducement level. Similarly, SC value was more effected by stronger AQ inducement (M=27.554) than at weaker state (M= 25.998). Based on the result of Bonferroni test the difference of SS score at posttest between low and high level of AG, AQ

and SC were all statistically significant. (refer to table 2.4). In the case of this value dimension as well, the pairwise comparison results showed similar AG and AQ interaction effects. At low level of AG intervention, the interaction of weak and strong level of AQ intervention was statistically significant (MD= -1.367, P= .016). Also, at high level of AG, the interaction effects of both weak and strong level of AQ intervention was statistically significant (MD= -2.820, p <0.001). Similarly, at weak level of AQ intervention, the interaction of both low and high level of AG intervention was significant (MD= -1.989, p<0.001). Similar results can be seen at strong level of AQ where both high and low level of AG intervention is statistically significant (MD= -3.443, p<0.001). (refer to table 2.5)

Table 2.4

Mean Comparison using Bonferroni test for main effect of factors (AG, AQ, SC) for SS

Main Effect	Level	Mean ^a	SE	MD	p value
Anticipatory Guilt	Low	25.625	0.281	2.716*	<0.001
	High	28.341	0.277		
Argument Quality	Weak	25.936	0.279	2.093*	<0.001
	Strong	28.030	0.279		
Source Credibility	Low	26.531	0.28	.903*	<0.001
	High	27.434	0.278		

Table 2.5

Pairwise comparison SS mean score for interaction between AG and AQ

Group	(I)	(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	SE	P value	95% CI for Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Low AG	Weak	Strong	-1.367*	0.56	0.016	-2.473	-0.261
High AG	Weak	Strong	-2.820*	0.55	<0.00	-3.911	-1.729
Weak	Low AG	High AG	-1.989*	0.55	<0.00	-3.089	-0.890
Strong	Low AG	High AG	-3.443*	0.55	<0.00	-4.541	-2.345

Spiritual Growth

To evaluate the differences of the level SG at two level of all three factors (AG, AQ and SC) as main effect, the Post Hoc test (Bonferroni) was again applied. The results show that impact on SR at low AG inducement condition (M= 25.373) was weaker than high (M=28.281) AG. Similarly, for AQ weak inducement (M= 25.962) was less effective than strong (M=27.692). The value of SG at low level manipulation of the SC was (M= 26.328) which improved at high inducement level (M=27.326) of SC. Based on the result of Bonferroni test the difference of SS score at posttest between low and high level of all the three interventions were statistically significant. (refer to table 2.6). The AG*AQ interaction was observed to be significant in case of this value dimension as well. The results indicated that at low level of AG intervention, the interaction of weak and strong level of AQ intervention was not statistically significant (MD= -.500, p= .385). However, at high level of AG, the interaction effects of both weak and strong level of AQ intervention was statistically significant (MD= -2.959, p <0.001). In case of AQ intervention, the weak inducement level interaction of both low and high level of AG intervention was statistically significant (MD= -1.678, p<0.001). Similar results can be seen at strong level of AQ where both high and low level of AG intervention is statistically significant (MD= -4.138, p<0.001) (please refer to table 2.7)

Table 2.6

Mean Comparison using Bonferroni test for main effect of factors (AG, AQ, SC) for SG

Main Effect	Level	Mean ^a	SE	MD	p value
Anticipatory Guilt	Low	25.373	0.287	.998*	<0.001
	High	28.281	0.27		
	Weak	25.962	0.278	1.730*	<0.001
Argument Quality	Strong	27.692	0.279		
	Low	26.328	0.282	.995*	<0.001
Source Credibility	High	27.326	0.275		

Table 2.7

Pairwise comparison SG mean score for interaction between AG and AQ

Group	(I)	(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	SE	P value	95% CI for Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Low AG	Weak	Strong	-.500	0.57	0.385	-1.539	0.630
High AG	Weak	Strong	-2.959*	0.53	<0.00	-4.020	-1.899
Weak	Low AG	High AG	-1.678*	0.55	<0.00	-2.772	-0.584
Strong	Low AG	High AG	-4.138*	0.55	<0.00	-5.236	-3.040

Discussion

The main effects of Interventions

Anticipatory guilt (AG) can be envisaged to produce a strong influence over the attitude towards all the VS value dimensions. Taking the material simplicity value, this study has reiterated the fact that materialistic attachments can be ameliorated through intrinsic or extrinsic realizations. Similar results from previous research on social and ethical responsibility has been undertaken in context of message appeals and its framing effects, whereby messages indicating a positive gain are more influential (Oh & Ki, 2019). It is furthermore evidenced that the notion of social responsibility from the viewpoint of sustainable practices adoption have evolved through effective emotional message positioning (Vinzencz et al., 2018). The relative influence of guilt emotion on self-sufficiency is a new discovery. However, the results can be justified from Self-determination theoretical orientation which signifies both intrinsic and internalized extrinsic motivation as an influencer towards a positive outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Such motivation can be asserted through external emotional influence which acts as the integrative emotional regulation that supports and enhances the degree of autonomy (Roth et al., 2019; M. Ryan & Deci, 2017). Finally, the effect of emotion on spiritual awareness can be contextualized with realizations of wrongdoing within an individual, which can be attributed to a balancing act of the self through a spiritual experience (Preston & Shin, 2017).

The role of argument quality (AQ) towards the attitude is also being observed to be significant across all the VS value dimensions. Taking the ELM standpoint, it has been clearly established through both past and current studies that at both high and low strength conditions it can be effective towards attitude (Cacioppo et al., 1994; Petty & Brinol, 2020). These studies further emphasized that the key aspect to such an effect was the relevance or congruency of the argument to the issue being discussed. In the latter case (weak argument) the attitude may still be influenced through the peripheral cues. The current study proves this aspect of attitudinal influence whereby weak AQ in the message still contributed to a strong impact. Furthermore, in prior studies concerning argument quality, the lack of issue relevance has been observed to be countered through utilization of rhetorical questions, which when

combined with the other peripheral stimulus, including felt personal relevance or matching personal choice can create an impact towards acceptance of the presented logic without much consideration (Boller et al., 1990; Obilo & Alford, 2020). In context of corporate social responsibility (CSR), the relative argument strength coupled with strong visual rhetoric is a prevalent practice towards ameliorating believability of the companies CSR activities (Jimmy Xie et al., 2011). In case of self-sufficiency (SS) the study findings are pioneer in nature. However, it can be attributed to addressability by the "cognitive- emotional construct as being depicted in the Social Entrepreneurship Intention (SEI) model, whereby emotional empathy coupled with cognitive judgement leads to perceived desirability towards an action which in turn affects behavioural intention towards that outcome (Tiwari et al., 2017). Furthermore, the relative influence of AQ elaborations over spirituality can be indirectly substantiated from past studies on message elicitation effects on emotions. In an experiment conducted towards spiritual augmentation, it was observed that video messages presented on the positive emotion and self-transcendent emotions were able to improve the spiritual awareness among individuals post message inducement (Moal-Ulvoas, 2017; Saroglou et al., 2008).

The credibility of the source and its implication towards attitude change has been well researched from multiple perspectives. Though ascertaining credibility of a source may emanate from different factors, trust as a component is more influential towards immediate attitude change (Kang & Namkung, 2019) . The results of this study confirm the overall effect of source credibility (SC) on the VS values, which can also be partially be attributed to the believability component of the message source. This also signifies the combined effect of other intervention towards source which resulted in attitudinal impact even at low SC inducement conditions. The reason for the same can be related to the believability of the message itself, which in prior studies, significantly affected the adjudged credibility of the source (De Jans et al., 2020; Hanus, 2019). Also, taking the consumption reduction perspective, source credibility has been found to influence attitude for certain harmful products such as tobacco and alcohol through perceived source and message strength credibility (Hummer & Davison, 2016; Schmidt et al., 2015). Therefore, the effect of SC on MS or SR, which primarily focusses on consumption reduction and environmentally oriented consumption, can be substantiated from this perspective. Furthermore, SC effects on environmental messages are stronger when the highlighted issues have strong geographic and demographic proximity, which creates a sense of shared believability phenomenon across samples from that region (Marino et al., 2020). In reference to self-sufficiency (SS) value dimension, no empirical research prior to this study has observed a direct influence of SC interventions. However, the strong effects being viewed can be substantiated from the self-attribution perspective, which thrusts the acceptability of negative messages based on the combined attribution effect of source (creator) and information (message) credibility (Bitter & Grabner-Krauter, 2016; Chang & Wu, 2014). A strong self-attribution will result in a stronger acceptability of the depicted issues and suggested alternatives. This finding can be considered as quite an important indicator of how self-development attitude may be brought about or instigated among the Malaysian youth, which will help to relegate youth dependency. Lastly, in context of spiritual growth (SG), the duality of approach and avoidance from source credibility viewpoint can be attributed towards realization of negative emotions towards an action being performed or avoided, which can also be attributed to spiritual coping mechanism (Ki et al., 2017). The relative effect of low SC inducement on SG may a resultant of the heuristic message processing pattern (Koestner et al., 2001; Munnukka et al., 2016).

This low credibility attitudinal influence has been further envisaged across health and environmental messages, where source credibility and trust has been instrumental towards arousal of such guilt among groups in context of historical information (Bilewicz, 2016; Doosje et al., 2006; Imhoff et al., 2018).

Interaction Effects: Anticipatory Guilt (AG) and Argument Quality (AQ)

Though no exact studies could be found, similar results pertaining interacting effects of emotion and AQ were observed, similar studies of other intervening variable and AQ were observed. In experimental design concerning weak AQ inducements whereby the strength of other interacting factors such as source and author perceptions have demeaned the desired effect on attitude (Shin et al., 2017). Furthermore, the results also indicated that AQ interactions at lower level were not significant in nature for MS value dimension. This fact can be attributed to the degree of involvement and the existing state of emotion within the respondents. It may lead to partial or complete neglect of the given message and issues being presented. A recent study on advertising design has iterated similar results whereby people with negative emotional state showed no interaction effect on different levels of AQ inducement conditions (Kao & Du, 2020).

The AG*AQ interaction effect on social responsibility can be contextualized from the studies establishing the dual route to persuasion effects on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). A recent observation has found that both the direct and the indirect (central and peripheral) persuasion effects would involve attribution to the cause and primary motivation (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2019). It can be clearly envisaged that in current study such attribution was generated through high AG condition, which impacted the message perception and attitude formation process. Similar to MS value impact, low AG intervention with strong/weak AQ is not impactful towards attitude change. Dwelling deeper on the attitudinal context, the role of inward attitude, which manifests the consumer attitude towards environmental issues has been found to be more significant rather than outward attitude that focusses on the collective action required towards environmental protection (Leonidou et al., 2010). Studies have observed that low inward attitude effects the perceived issue relevance leading to counterfactual thought process whereby absence of strong affinity rejects the felt congruity towards the suggested collective action (Kim et al., 2016; Yoon et al., 2016). However, in case of spiritual growth (SG), both strong and weak AQ interaction effects with low and high AG is significant in nature. This further supports the fact that in context of message intervention, attributions are value specific and strongly dependent on the nature of the stimulus and felt congruity towards the message.

Theoretical Implication

The primary implication of this research lies on the fact that both the central and peripheral route to persuasion has been found to be effective in the main effect of argument quality and source credibility manipulation within the message design. This implies that in accordance with the ELM postulate both central and peripheral route to persuasion can influence the attitudinal dimension under conditions of high issue-relevance (Cacioppo et al., 1994; Neimeyer et al., 1989). However, this study helps to further establish this premise in context of value-based attitude orientations. The study also propounds that this occurrence can be attributed to the interchangeable influence characteristic of a variable as both central and peripheral factor. Limited research on such attributions has been observed in the current academic literature. The study further extends the relative applicability argument quality and

source credibility constructs in terms of their intervention-based applicability in combination with an emotion-based intervention. Drawing a parallel, prior studies have contributed to the applicability of ELM and the central and peripheral route persuasive intent through message design in different contexts such as e-WoM and service quality (Cao et al., 2017). However, the studies did not consider the relative impact from a negative emotional attribution towards the message.

The study has also contributed towards improving the cognizance of meta-cognitive emotions such as guilt in terms of their relative appraisal and applicability. Past research concerning the meta-cognitive appraisal have inferred knowledge to be a distal and appraisal to be a more proximal variable towards emotional arousal (Lazarus & Smith, 1988). However, the cognitive antecedent of an emotion and the appraisal content of the felt emotion have observed it to be different (Frijda, 1993). The implication of this fact can be attributed to the current study where cognition of the issue and its relative appraisal was undertaken to relate to guilt manipulation. Similar studies have tried to prove this point by experimenting positive emotions as an outcome of goal congruence, pleasantness or fairness appraisal (Hosany, 2012; Zheng et al., 2019). Furthermore, the study further posits on the complexity of the relationship between appraisal and arousal when attitudinal manipulation is the desired outcome. It further extends the manipulative effects of anticipatory guilt appeal towards attitude intervention on consumption and simplicity-oriented value dimensions. The outcome further substantiates the claim that the crux of such reactions lies on the interactivity of the thought process, concurrently influenced by past learning and cognitions, which differentiates the final appraisal and emotive reactions of similar event across similar demographic inhabitants.

Practical Implication

This study observes the propensity of the youth towards adopting such lifestyles with strong focus on environmental and personal development is present. The initial attitude (pre-manipulated) towards the value orientations indicated an alignment with the past findings of relatively moderate to high attribution towards conspicuous consumption and dependency to certain extent. This can be attributed to the upbringing and family value orientations which to certain extent establishes strong dependency and materialistic aspirations among the youth (Tjiptono et al., 2020). Moreover, such results do permeate across different domains including financial literacy and conspicuous consumption among the youth (Aziz et al., 2019; Zakaria et al., 2020). However, the attitude (post-manipulation) indicates a significant difference across the same value dimensions. This implies that the addressability of the issues is more dependent on the nature of impetus and the relevance of the issue being perceived rather than the actual issues. This further implies that the policy makers do require to be cognizant of two key factors namely the degree of perceived consequences the level of engagement being enacted among the youth population to negate high consumption propensity. Past academic literature on Malaysian population have reiterated on this requirement. Furthermore, consumption attitude related communication from policy perspectives should have effective elements to stimulate personal thoughts and actions, a necessary key to motivate adoption with felt happiness towards one's self imposed restrictions (Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2019). Therefore, communicating value adoption towards influencing attitude towards specific actions would be more effective through an emotional pathway with high felt consequences. In case of Malaysian youth such attitudinal influence would ascertain lower materialistic lifestyle with better self-determination and augmented

spiritual and mental well-being. Last but not the least, such communications should take ethnic backgrounds into consideration as heterogeneity of opinions and differences concerning the relative impact has been observed in this context.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study emanates from the research design being adopted for this study. It is generally being observed that in quasi-experimental design, randomization of the respondent allocation is somewhat restricted, which is counterbalanced through assumptive exogeneity of certain plausible factors (Bärnighausen et al., 2017). In this research the randomization of intervening conditions has been implemented at the third level of the multilevel cluster sampling method. Though prevalent across social science research, this method also restricts full control over the experimental condition (Podsakoff & Podsakoff, 2019), which is strongly assumed influence the resultant outcome. Also, the effect of three intervening variables have been observed on attitude of respondents (students) with pre-post measurements. However certain exogenous factors such as mood, situational factors, cognitive factors (ability to interpret) and most importantly their prior learning on the topic (Hogh & Larsen, 2016). Though it is argued that exogenous variables that are more contextual in nature does not directly influence the outcome of manipulated interventions in conditions of restrictive assumptions (Bădin et al., 2014; Faulkner et al., 2019). Therefore contextually, these factors may have certain minimalistic impact on the study outcome.

Conclusion

The consumption propensity among the youth population in Malaysia has been augmenting over time. It has been observed that in current scenario, the propensity to practice conspicuous consumption among the youth and striving towards luxurious lifestyle is on a higher end. Even though past studies have tried to assimilate the reasons pertaining to this issue, however studies exploring this aspect from causal perspective is not evident. Voluntary Simplicity and its respective value dimensions have been identified to be effective towards reducing the materialistic aspiration of individuals. It is being also observed that adoption of this practice also leads the individual to a more balanced life with higher inclination towards developing the self-congruity and a higher awareness towards environmental protection through consumption reduction. Numerous studies have discussed the benefits of such adoption and emphasized on the degree of adoption and its relative effects on the individual. However, an experimental approach towards developing attitudinal inclination towards this practice is not evident.

This research is primarily aimed to explore on this phenomenon through manipulation of guilt, argument quality and source credibility of messages. The theoretical support was primarily derived from Elaboration likelihood model, which espouses on the role of messages towards attitude manipulation. The study also utilized the guilt and appraisal theory as a base to develop potential messages. The Malaysian youth were found to be most suitable for undertaking this study as primarily the adoptability of this segment is considered crucial towards consumption control and economic improvement. The results of the study have clearly indicated a significant influence of the three manipulators on the attitude towards voluntary Simplicity values. It has also contributed towards extending the utility of the elements of elaboration likelihood model, namely argument quality and source credibility towards attitudinal influence in both high and low conditions of manipulation. The research also has profound implication on the current academic literature pertaining to anticipatory

guilt appeal as a significant influencer towards adoption of voluntary simplicity value dimensions.

In line with the current situation of consumption among the youth population in Malaysia. This research is a pioneer effort towards exploring a definitive consumption reduction process which has been well researched in other developed countries. It also provided a significant practical contribution whereby further studies can be directed towards undertaking further in-depth exploration within the field of causal research to identify and interpret the emotional manifestation of the Malaysian youth towards curbing luxurious spending.

Contribution

This research was undertaken to primarily explore the relevant causal effect of intervention on the Voluntary Simplicity Value Dimensions. This is a pioneer effort to measure attitude towards values through message design and inducement, whereby the three interventions namely anticipatory guilt, argument quality and source credibility were utilized to gauge the pre and post value effects. The results clearly indicate that Voluntary Simplicity values can be influenced through direct effects of the intervention. Significant differences were observed across the Malaysian youth population in their attitude towards adopting the VS values. This contributes to a new paradigm towards value adoption mechanism and contributes to the current academic literature on Voluntary Simplicity from a communication point of view.

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