



Matching green messages with brand positioning to improve brand evaluation

Victoria Vilasanti da Luz^{a,b,*}, Danielle Mantovani^{a,b}, Marcelo Vinhal Nepomuceno^c

^a Department of Business Administration, Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR), Curitiba, PR, Brazil

^b Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR), Av. Lothario Meissner, 632 – 2º andar, 80210-170 – Jardim Botânico, Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil

^c Department of Marketing, HEC Montréal, Montréal, Québec, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Green message
Brand positioning
Demarketing
Mass-market
Luxury

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of brand positioning (luxury vs. mass-market) on the relationship between the type of green message (demarketing vs. environmental) and brand evaluation. Three studies demonstrate that a luxury (vs. mass-market) positioning generates more positive brand attitudes and a higher willingness to buy in the demarketing (vs. environmental) green message condition. However, brands with an essential green mission statement equally benefit from using demarketing or green environmental messages. The experiments also show the mediating effect of ad believability. These results contribute to green advertising and brand literature by extending findings on demarketing as a type of green message and advancing the discussion of the uses of green messages by luxury and mass-market brands. They are also useful for managers by demonstrating how non-green brands are able to use a green strategy while maintaining a positive evaluation.

1. Introduction

Green advertising has been largely employed for informing consumers about a product's environmentally friendly attributes or the company's sustainable practices (Leonidou, Leonidou, Paliawadana, & Hultman, 2011; White, MacDonnell, & Dahl, 2011; Chang, Zhang, & Xie, 2015; Shin & Ki, 2018). Typically, a green message illustrates how a product (or brand) reduces its environmental impact by improving its production or composition. For instance, in its "Go green, wear blue" campaign, H&M promotes environmental sustainability through the consumption of its jeans produced with organic cotton (H&M, 2014). Also, Topshop and Zara have developed sustainable campaigns in the past few years. Topshop has created an entire capsule collection made of discarded and leftover materials in collaboration with "Reclaim to Wear", an upcycling collaborative initiative (Topshop, 2012). Zara has a collection made of organic cotton, reused plastic, and recycled wool that is called "Join Life" (Zara, 2019). These types of green messages, known as green environmental, are based on the belief that current environmental issues should be solved by reforming current market practices (Kilbourne, 1995). Though green environmental is often used by practitioners to advertise green features and incentive the consumption of environmentally friendly products (Leonidou et al., 2011; Joshi & Kronrod, 2019), green messages can also be used to reduce consumption (Kilbourne, 1995; Yakobovitch & Grinstein, 2016). In this

case, demarketing can be used as a strategy whereby "a brand encourages consumers to buy less at the category level through the purchase of the company's brand for the sake of the environment" (Soule & Reich, 2015, p. 1403). That is, green demarketing states to consume better in order to consume less and/or to reduce the consumption of unnecessary products. Brands that have notoriously used this strategy are Patagonia with its "Don't buy this jacket" campaign (Hepburn, 2013), Vitsø that created videos against planned obsolescence (Vitsø, 2011) and Jeans (2015), a Swedish denim company, that offers free denim repair to reduce overconsumption. This strategy is also used by Crockett and Jones, a luxury shoes and accessories brand based in the United Kingdom. They make an effort in educating their consumers to have better consumption choices and, therefore, to buy fewer products (Crockett & Jones, 2019).

Demarketing is a promising path to sustainable consumption. However, past research demonstrates that brand and product attitudes can be more negative if an ad asks for a reduction in consumption than if it asks to buy environmentally friendly products (Reich & Soule, 2016). At the same time, there is a movement claiming for consumption reduction (Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Kropfeld, Nepomuceno, & Dantas, 2018; Sekhon & Soule, 2019). This movement is inserted within a broader and social movement called "sustainable degrowth" (Martínez-Alier, Pascual, Vivien, & Zaccai, 2010). Generally speaking, sustainable degrowth is the active downscaling of production capacities for

* Corresponding author at: Department of Business Administration, Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR), Curitiba, PR, Brazil.

E-mail addresses: victoria.vilasanti@gmail.com (V. Vilasanti da Luz), danielle@ufpr.br (D. Mantovani), marcelo.nepomuceno@hec.ca (M.V. Nepomuceno).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.07.024>

Received 13 July 2019; Received in revised form 15 July 2020; Accepted 18 July 2020

Available online 29 July 2020

0148-2963/© 2020 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

consumption reduction enforcement (Sekulova, Kallis, Rodríguez-Labajos, & Schneider, 2013; Germain, 2017). Therefore, demarketing is an application of sustainable degrowth in the marketing field. Given the growing importance of demarketing (Soule & Reich, 2015) and sustainable degrowth (Drews, Savin, & van den Bergh, 2019; Martínez-Alier et al., 2010) for consumers and society, an overlooked issue is to identify which brand positionings are more likely to benefit from demarketing strategies or from a green environmental approach.

This research investigates two types of brand positioning. The first is the mass-market, which is formed by brands known for creating more inclusive market offers. That is, they position their products as an accessible good, affordable by most consumers. They usually are more ephemeral and lower-cost products when compared to luxury (Fuchs, Prandelli, Schreier, & Dahl, 2013). This type of brand positioning might not benefit from demarketing, given that mass-market suggests constant consumption and demarketing suggests a decrease of consumption in a product category. The second type of brand positioning considered is luxury, which emphasizes the quality, rarity, and uniqueness of its pieces (Kapferer, 2006). We expect that these characteristics should favor more positive brand evaluations for demarketing compared to the green environmental message.

Though past research found that green environmental usually outperforms green demarketing messages (Reich & Soule, 2016), we demonstrate that the brand's positioning can greatly change this conclusion. We show that for luxury brands, demarketing generates more positive brand evaluations than green environmental messages. Conversely, for mass-market brands, green environmental messages generate better brand evaluations than demarketing. We demonstrate that this match (luxury/demarketing and mass-market/green environmental) receives better evaluations because consumers perceive them as more believable. Thus, an additional contribution of the current research is to show that consumers need to believe that the green arguments are convincing and honest, which is a consequence of the match perception between the brand's characteristics and the type of green message. Furthermore, this research tests demonstrate that for brands created with a green mission statement, brand evaluations are equally positive irrespective of the type of green message (green environmental vs. demarketing).

This research advances current knowledge regarding green advertising by exploring demarketing as a message type. Moreover, it adds to the brand positioning literature. Past research investigated how the evaluation of green attributes (e.g. product design, recycled materials) influences the perception of luxury products (e.g. Achabou & Dekhili, 2013; De Angelis, Adigüzel, & Amatulli, 2017). However, past research has overlooked how brand positioning characteristics are related to the claims of consumption reduction compared to consuming green alternatives. Also, the present research contributes to an older sustainability debate of sustainable degrowth by investigating brand and consumption elements instead of political and production environments (Germain, 2017). Finally, this research provides useful guidelines for practitioners choosing a suitable green message strategy according to the brand's positioning. Since environmental issues are gaining more attention, the creation of green strategies as well as its communication are key components to enhance consumer's brand perceptions (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2016).

2. Green messages: Green environmental vs. demarketing

All green messages and actions performed by companies are based on the assumptions of sustainability. The most common definition of sustainability is to measure business performance based on the environmental, financial, and social criteria. That is to maintain a balance between these three dimensions to guarantee resources for future generations (Zayyad, Obeidat, Alshurideh, Abuhashesh, & Maqableh, 2020; Park & Kim, 2016). Based on this concept, brands outline several strategies and actions. These sustainability programs are usually called

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Specifically, the environmental sustainability refers to both companies and consumers taking actions with lower environmental impact. That is, it implies in decreasing waste of non-renewable resources as well as decreasing the overall amount of pollution (Kang & Atkinson, 2019; Sekhon & Soule, 2019). For that matter, brands that offer green products, encourage recycling and consumption reduction (García-de-Frutos, Ortega-Egea, & Martínez-del-Río, 2018).

There is a large variety of definitions of green messages (Kilbourne, 1995; McDonagh & Prothero, 2014). Green message is one that meets at least one of the following criteria: it presents a positive relationship between a product and the environment; promotes green consumption or lifestyle; and/or, presents the organization's green image (Banerjee, Gulas, & Iyer, 1995). Furthermore, green messages are often used to promote a product's environmentally friendly feature and/or show how a particular product or brand being advertised contributes to the preservation of the environment (Matthes, 2019; Leonidou et al., 2011). Moreover, it is also a reaction to a rise in corporate social responsibility practices (Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla, & Paladino, 2014).

Despite the increasing use and acceptance of green messages (Segev, Fernandes, & Hong, 2016), it is still a challenge to create green campaigns that enhance brand evaluations and increase consumers' environmentally friendly behaviors (Amatulli, Angelis, Peluso, Soscia, & Guido, 2017). Numerous studies have suggested that green messages may negatively impact brand evaluations or purchase intentions if not properly executed (White et al., 2011; Newman, Gorlin, & Dhar, 2014; Chang et al., 2015; Amatulli et al., 2017). For instance, Amatulli et al. (2017) investigated the importance of the valence of the message and found that negatively framed messages were more effective than positively framed ones in motivating consumers to engage in pro-environmental behaviors. In another study, White et al. (2011) showed that loss frames were more efficacious in influencing consumer recycling when paired with low-level, concrete mind-sets, whereas gain frames were more effective when paired with high-level, abstract mind-sets.

In this sense, brands have been communicating green products mostly through green environmental messages. That is, those messages focused on advertising the consumption of an environmentally friendly product, which has a lower environmental impact on the production process or can be discarded with reduced environmental impact (Reich & Soule, 2016; Joshi & Kronrod, 2019). Typically, green environmental messages promote and inform consumers about the benefits of environmentally friendly consumption (Kilbourne, 1995; McDonagh & Prothero, 2014; Amatulli et al., 2017).

As an alternative to this type of message, recent research has suggested the use of green demarketing. Kotler and Levy introduced the concept of demarketing in 1971 in the article published by the Harvard Business Review. According to the authors, there are three types of intentional demarketing, as it follows: (a) general demarketing – used to decrease the overall level of demand; (b) selective demarketing – to discourage the demand level in some categories or consumer classes; and, (c) ostensive demarketing – used when the company discourage the demand as a strategy to increase sales (Kotler & Levy, 1971).

The difference between green demarketing and green environmental refers to the nature of the action taken to preserve the environment. While green demarketing implies the reduction of the general consumption of a category in benefit of the environment (García-de-Frutos et al., 2018), green environmental message implies consumption of green products as a means of contributing to environmental sustainability. For instance, a green demarketing message would ask consumers to reduce the purchase of clothing or apparel, while a green environmental message would motivate consumers to recycle these products or state that the clothes are made of materials that have a lower environmental impact.

A demarketing strategy carries several characteristics of an environmental marketing campaign, such as advertising, public relations, and the 4P's management (Grinstein & Nisan, 2009; Soule & Reich,

2015). Even though green demarketing is a fairly new term, there is a body of research that corroborates the central idea of decreasing the overall consumption volume as a means to achieve environmental sustainability (Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Sekhon & Soule, 2019). There are studies focusing on consumers' responses to green demarketing communication campaigns for natural resources in a more general way. Early academic research on demarketing was associated with either demand suppression of products that are harmful to public health, such as tobacco, drugs, and alcohol (e.g. Pechmann, Zhao, Goldberg, & Reibling, 2003; Wall, 2005) or resource conservation campaigns such as water and electricity saving (e.g. Press & Arnould, 2009; Allcott, 2011). For instance, Yakobovitch and Grinstein (2016) suggest a consumer boomerang effect depending on their materialist trait when using demarketing as a social norm in an energy-saving campaign.

In a slightly different direction, there are other studies exploring consumer responses to green demarketing as sustainability actions from specific brands and/or products. That is, they emphasize green demarketing as the consumption of a specific branded product in substitution of other products of the segment; reducing, therefore, the general consumption of a category (e.g. Miklós-Thal & Zhang, 2013; García-de-Frutos et al., 2018; Kropfeld et al., 2018; Soule & Reich, 2015; Reich & Soule, 2016; Sekhon & Soule, 2019). For instance, Miklós-Thal and Zhang (2013) have identified the use of demarketing to build a high-quality perception in consumers' minds. Soule and Reich (2015) investigated consumer perceptions about the companies' motivation for adopting green demarketing strategies. The authors found that consumers' attitude toward the product was more positive when perceived company's motivation was genuine instead of selfish based. More recently, Sekhon and Soule (2019) suggested that brands could help consumers to find symbolic meanings when decreasing their consumption levels through explicit green demarketing actions.

The effectiveness of each type of green message could vary across brands. In order to determine which one triggers the best brand evaluations, it is necessary to consider some key factors. For instance, it is known that both product type (Olsen, Slotegraaf, & Chandukala, 2014) and consumer's individual characteristics (Tucker, Rifon, Lee, & Reece, 2012) influence consumer's perceptions of green advertising. Moreover, brand characteristics, such as positioning strategy, should affect consumer's judgments.

In the following section, we will discuss whether demarketing and green environmental types of green message match with mass-market, luxury, and green brand positioning.

3. Brand positioning (luxury vs. mass-market) and green message (demarketing vs. environmental)

Mass-market brands are inclusive, affordable, abundant, and more accessible (Park & Kim, 2016). Mass-market brands assume mass-production and more ephemeral strategy with short-term cycles and little preoccupation with the exclusivity of products. They are easily found and produced to be replaced quickly (Stillman, 2003; Fuchs et al., 2013). Contrarily, luxury brands entail uniqueness, excellent quality, selective distribution, and moderate advertising (Berthon, Pitt, Parent, & Berthon, 2009). Luxury presupposes social elevation, timelessness, and pricelessness (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Kapferer & Michaut, 2015). It is closely linked with the status signaling and hedonic pleasure, as well as strong consumer-brand relationship and a sense of exclusivity (Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). Luxury brands differ from other brands by their magical, creative, and extravagant products that emphasize sophistication (Kapferer, 2006).

Luxury and mass-market brands are on opposite sides of brand positioning strategies. However, there are many other types of brands between these two positionings. For instance, Ralph Lauren is a premium brand with also a mass-market strategy. Premium brands, characterized by higher quality, promote additional benefits, but lower prices compared to luxury brands. There are also mass-market brands

that offer special collections at higher prices. For instance, Riachuelo is a Brazilian department store company positioned as a mass-market and fast-fashion brand that has been making a partnership with famous fashion stylists to offer special premium brand clothing in its stores. Although there are many possible combinations between mass-market and luxury brand positionings, this research compares only luxury and mass-market positionings in order to avoid possible confounds coming from the combination of these two positioning strategies.

The relationship between luxury brand positioning and sustainable consumption has been extensively explored in the past few years (e.g. Torelli, Monga, & Kaikati, 2012; Achabou & Dekhili, 2013; Janssen, Vanhamme, Lindgreen, & Lefebvre, 2014; Kapferer & Michaut, 2015). On one hand, it is expected luxury products to be concerned with sustainability because of its inherent characteristics (Achabou & Dekhili, 2013; De Angelis et al., 2017). On the other hand, several researchers note that there are some compatibility problems between luxury and sustainability because of supposed conflicting values between them (Torelli et al., 2012; Kapferer & Michaut, 2015). For instance, Dion and Borraz (2017) argue that luxury consumption is based on social stratification and, thus, it highlights social differences. Achabou and Dekhili (2013) explain that a luxury item loses its perceived quality when it has recycled materials in its composition. Additionally, Beckham and Voyer (2014) point out that when luxury products have environmental features they lose their luxurious and desirable values. These studies advocate that not every green action matches the luxury brand positioning. That is, environmental green message conflicts with a luxury brand and potentially generates negative brand evaluations.

Controversially, other studies have suggested that luxury products could be aligned with the CSR agenda when emphasizing durability rather than ephemerality (Janssen et al., 2014; Sun, Belezza, & Paharia, 2018). Particularly, luxury inherent characteristics, such as commitment to higher quality standards and product's timelessness make luxury products an important asset in consumption reduction, which in turn helps to reduce the overall amount of natural resources spent (De Angelis et al., 2017). Additionally, both luxury and green consumption could be a means to signal the user's status (Berthon et al., 2009; Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010).

Overall, these studies suggest that demarketing may work well with the luxury brand positioning as long as the reduction in consumption is justified by the high quality, durability, and exclusivity of luxurious products. That is, exploring luxury characteristics as arguments to promote environmental well-being could be a path to conscious consumption (e.g. demarketing) and, therefore, "greening" luxury brands without changing its features. Yet, adding new green features to luxury products and, consequently, communicating it with an environmental green message, could generate negative brand evaluations.

Regarding mass-market positioning, it does not seem to match with demarketing. The goal of green demarketing is to reduce consumption of a product category; that is, to consume less quantity and better quality products in order to save resources (Soule & Reich, 2015). However, the goal of mass-market is to increase consumption by massively producing products and making them more accessible (Stillman, 2003). Given these contradictory goals, consumers are likely to distrust ads using demarketing for mass-market brands.

The match between green environmental actions and mass-market is less clear. While some authors argued that mass-market is inherently unsustainable because of its disposability (Park & Kim, 2016), others have pointed out that some mass-market brands have developed product lines that have a weaker environmental impact. For instance, H&M, Zara, and C&A have been producing clothes with organic cotton (H&M, 2014; C&A, 2016; Zara, 2019). Given that environmental green messages simply states that a product is produced in a more environmentally-friendly fashion (Kilbourne, 1995), and considering that mass-market brands can improve their production or supply management to reduce their environmental impact, a match between mass-

market and green environmental is possible. In support of this rationale, [Catlin and Wang \(2013\)](#) found that recycling may lead to an increase in resource consumption. Given that green environmental matches best with mass-market whereas demarketing matches best with a luxury brand positioning, we test:

H1a: The green environmental message generates higher brand evaluation for mass-market brands than for luxury brands.

H1b: The demarketing message generates higher brand evaluation for a luxury brand than for mass-market brands

4. The mediating role of ad believability

Past research has already demonstrated that communication elements, such as the green message objectivity, the type and specificity of arguments in green advertising, have an effect on whether consumers perceive it as more or less believable ([Tucker et al., 2012](#); [Kang & Atkinson, 2019](#)). For instance, some studies have indicated the importance of clear and detailed information to effective green advertising (e.g. [Leonidou et al., 2011](#)); others emphasize that brand elements are the starting point to build a green advertising strategy that will result in favorable brand evaluation (e.g. [Torelli et al., 2012](#)).

Following this rationale, brand attitudes are higher when ad believability and green claim believability are high as well ([Chang, 2011](#)). To illustrate this argument, [Kim, Oh, Yoon, and Shin \(2016\)](#) found that combining environmental commitment with ad believability strengthens the relationship between message acceptance and purchase intention. These positive outcomes from ad believability do not emerge from a basic congruence or fit between the brand positioning and the message frame. Even though there might be a fit between the advertised green message and the brand concept ([Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006](#)), this fit is not sufficient to drive the proposed effect on brand attitudes. That is, the fit between the brand and green message plays a part in consumer evaluation, but ad believability may encompass more than this congruency effect. For example, one may disbelieve an ad, not because of a lack of congruency but because the ad makes an unlikely promise (e.g., green coal).

Consumers believe in the brand because the message shows credibility and authenticity, communicating convincing arguments and honesty with the message arguments ([Beltramini, 1988](#); [Tucker et al., 2012](#)). Therefore, the match between the brand positioning and the message frame is a consequence of how much consumers believe that this match is convincing rather than only their perception on similarity between the green advertising and the brand positioning.

As ad believability plays a key role in brand evaluation formation, we suggest that it explains the higher brand evaluations resulting from the match between brand positioning and type of green message. The mismatch between green message and brand positioning could lead to a perception of lower believability. A mass-market brand that uses demarketing should be poorly evaluated because while mass-market encourages overconsumption, demarketing encourages consumption reduction. Consumers would infer that the brand is not being honest, convincing and trustworthy. However, when mass-market brands use green environmental messages, the ad should be perceived as more authentic and therefore, more believable because the conflict does not necessarily exist. As previously stated, past studies suggest that green environmental conflicts with the luxury brand characteristics as consumers perceive green products as inferior and less desirable ([Achabou & Dekhili, 2013](#); [Beckham & Voyer, 2014](#)). Thus, consumers could become skeptical if a luxury brand uses green environmental messages, as it seems unlikely that quality and exclusivity would be kept while adding green attributes. However, demarketing and luxury have common attributes such as status, uniqueness, scarcity, and high-quality inferences ([De Angelis et al., 2017](#); [Miklós-Thal & Zhang, 2013](#); [Reich & Soule, 2016](#)). Thus, demarketing would be perceived as more believable when used by luxury brands, leading to more positive brand

evaluation. Given the rationale presented, we propose that:

H2: Ad believability plays a positive mediating role in brand evaluation when demarketing is matched with luxury brands (a) or when green environmental is matched with mass-market brands (b).

Although we propose that ad believability mediates the relationship between brand positioning and green message, one could argue that there might be additional influences in this process. One possibility is that green demarketing could be more consumer-oriented (the customer decides to buy less), and therefore, be more associated with luxury brands, while green environmental could be more company-oriented (the company makes the product greener), which would be more aligned with mass-market brands. In fact, consumers can engage in anticonsumption practices and brands can also encourage consumers to reduce consumption. However, green demarketing is not only consumer-oriented. Companies may also perform demarketing practices, by reducing product production or going against campaigns that motivate overconsumption practices. For instance, since 2015, REI, an outdoor supply retailer, closes all its retail stores and websites and gives its employees the day off during the Black Friday event ([Sekhon & Soule, 2019](#)). Similarly, green environmental actions are company-oriented when the brand makes a product greener. These green actions can also be consumer-oriented when they encourage consumers to return empty packaging, or when they provide ways of recycling the product or motivate consumers to donate the old product.

5. Green brands and green message (demarketing vs. environmental)

Most of the companies were not born green, but they are constantly motivated to create green products or perform environmental actions as a result of market demand. That is, it has become imperative for brands to create market offers with lower environmental impact ([Joshi & Kronrod, 2019](#); [Cho & Berry, 2019](#)). For instance, H&M, C&A, Prada, Zara, among many others, besides the original brand positioning (luxury, premium, or mass-market oriented), perform green actions. Also in line with this market demand, some brands were created with a green mission statement. Green brands are those that have all its values, and consequently, all its products based on environmental sustainability ([van Gils & Horton, 2019](#)).

Regardless of being a luxury, premium, or mass-market oriented, green brands always convey an inherent level of “greenness” in all its market offers ([Cho & Berry, 2019](#)). For instance, Stella McCartney is a luxury brand with an essential green positioning. Patagonia is a premium brand that endorses sustainable principles in its production. Unlike luxury or mass-market brands, which are non-green brands using a green action or strategy, a green brand already has intrinsic green values and all its communication could be considered as green advertising ([Banerjee et al., 1995](#); [Yang, Lu, Zhu, & Su, 2015](#)).

Given that green brands promote environmentally friendly products or a sustainable lifestyle every time they are communicating with their consumers, their motivations for green advertising should be perceived as more genuine than other brands ([Soule & Reich, 2015](#); [Kang & Atkinson, 2019](#)). In other words, because green brands have fundamentally green actions, they consistently promote environmental sustainability through advertising. Accordingly, they could be perceived as legitimate to have more embracing choices on the type of green advertising appeal they want to use ([Lee, Yoon, & O'Donnell, 2018](#); [Zayyad, et al., 2020](#)).

Thus, we propose that they will benefit both from green environmental and demarketing advertising messages because their brand positioning favors positive brand evaluations either way. Consequently, brand evaluations will be the same for both green demarketing and green environmental appeal. Patagonia is evidence of this argument. Besides using green traditional advertising to promote its products, the

brand also used green demarketing a few years ago. The famous campaign “Don’t buy this jacket” was printed in The New York Times on 2011’s Black Friday to encourage conscious consumption and resulted in positive brand evaluations (Lowitt, 2011). Another example is Adriana Castro, a Colombian luxury handbag brand that carries the name of its designer. This brand promotes sustainability by encouraging consumers to buy enduring products, that will be passed on through generations. Besides the demarketing appeal, the brand also promotes green environmental messages, advertising the fair trade actions and the use of organic materials in its production (Adriana Castro, 2019). Consumers believe in both actions because regardless of being a luxury brand or a premium brand, they are essential to green brands. Thus, we suggest that:

H3a: For demarketing message, brand evaluation will be higher for luxury than for mass-market brand positioning

H3b: For demarketing message, brand evaluation will be higher for green than for mass market brand positioning

H3c: For environmentalism message, brand evaluation will be higher for green than for luxury brand positioning

H3d: For environmentalism message, brand evaluation will be higher for mass-market than for luxury brand positioning

6. Study 1

The main purpose of this study is to investigate whether the match between the brand positioning and green message affects brand evaluation (H1a and H1b). Furthermore, this study tests the mediating impact of ad believability (H2).

6.1. Participants and design

Undergraduate students ($n = 179$; $M_{age} = 22.24$, $SD = 5.12$; 58% male) participated in this experiment in exchange for course credit. Fourteen participants were excluded from the analyses for failing to pass an attention check (Oppenheimer, Meyvis, & Davidenko, 2009), leaving a final sample of 165 responses. We employed a 2 (demarketing vs. green environmental) \times 2 (luxury vs. mass-market), between-subjects design. The respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions.

6.2. Procedure

Participants were invited to answer the survey in the computer lab. They were presented with a fictitious situation where they were searching for online stores to buy new clothes and found the Saltwater Collective’s website (a real brand unknown by participants). They saw a fictitious website page (see Appendix A). Those in the luxury brand condition read the following text: “Saltwater Collective is recognized by its exclusive and sophisticated clothes. The uniqueness of its collections is a result of the work from the world’s most renowned designers”. Participants in the mass-market brand condition read the following text: “Saltwater Collective is recognized by fashion democratization. The swift production and distribution guarantee a variety of clothes and easy access to the brand’s products”. After, participants were presented with green messages. In the demarketing condition, they read: “Saltwater’s commitment to the environment is in the manufacturing process. By producing clothes with resistant materials, that last much more than one season, Saltwater Collective helps you to consume less. The environment is your duty too; use your clothes consciously”. In the green environmental message condition, participants read: “Saltwater’s commitment to the environment is in the manufacturing process. By producing clothes that are not washed on the factory floor, Saltwater Collective saves up to 1.5L of water in each outfit. The environment is your duty too; use products with lower environmental impact”.

It is important to note that for the green environmental condition

we avoided green actions involving recycled materials to prevent quality perception biases (Achabou & Dekhili, 2013).

6.3. Measures

After reading the information on the website, as in Reich and Soule (2016), participants evaluated the brand using three items on a seven-point semantic differential scale ranging from 1 – (bad/unfavorable/negative) to 7 – (good/favorable/positive). Afterwards, as in Beltramini (1988), participants evaluated the ad believability answering seven items in a seven-point semantic differential scale (1-unbelievable/untrustworthy/not convincing/not credible/dishonest/not authentic/unlikely; 7-believable/trustworthy/convincing/credible/honest/authentic/likely).

In order to rule out alternative explanations for H2 and to test whether fit plays a mediating role, we included a four-item measurement of brand-cause fit between (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). This was a semantic differential scale ranging from 1 – (incongruent with the brand/different to the brand/inconsistent with the brand/not complementary to the brand) to 7 – (congruent with the brand /similar to the brand/consistent with the brand/complementary to the brand).

For the brand positioning manipulation check, respondents answered a two-item question based on Fuchs et al. (2013): “Regarding the brand positioning, Saltwater Collective is...” 1 – It’s a popular brand/it’s an inclusive brand (mass-market) to 7 – It’s an elitist brand/It’s an exclusive brand (luxury). Lower scores denote mass-market whereas higher scores denote luxury. For the green message manipulation check, respondents answered two items, based on Reich and Soule (2016): “In their website page, Saltwater Collective incentives consumers to preserve the environment by...” (a) consuming fewer unnecessary products; (b) consuming environmentally friendly products. Responses ranged from 1-totally disagree to 7-totally agree.

To check for possible confounds from the type of green action on each type of green message, participants rated their perception about the relevance of the company’s green action in one item question “How relevant is the green action presented by Salt Water Collective?” Answers ranged from 1-Not at all relevant and 7-Very relevant. Finally, as a control measure, they were asked if they knew Saltwater Collective before the study. Finally, they answered demographic questions, were thanked and debriefed.

6.4. Results

6.4.1. Manipulation checks

Individual ANOVAs were conducted. For type of green message, participants in the demarketing condition perceived that Saltwater Collective encouraged them to buy less unnecessary items than participants in the green environmental condition ($M_{demarketing} = 4.86$; $SD = 1.57$; $M_{green\ environmental} = 3.06$; $SD = 1.22$; $F(1, 161) = 19.89$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.110$). In addition, participants in the green environmental condition perceived that Saltwater Collective encouraged them to buy more environmentally friendly products than in the demarketing condition ($M_{green\ environmental} = 6.26$; $SD = 1.34$; $M_{demarketing} = 3.04$; $SD = 1.51$; $F(1, 161) = 37.42$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.203$). As expected, for both types of green message we did not observe neither a main effect of brand positioning nor an interaction effect ($F_s < 1$).

When testing brand positioning manipulation we found only a significant main effect for brand positioning $F(1, 161) = 13.40$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.077$). Participants in the luxury condition perceive the brand as more exclusive ($M_{luxury} = 5.36$; $SD = 1.43$) than participants in the mass-market condition ($M_{mass-market} = 4.55$; $SD = 1.41$). We did not observe a significant main effect for the type of green message or an interaction effect ($F_s < 1$).

Finally, we also tested for the perceived relevance of the company’s green action. As expected, the green environmental ($M = 5.42$,

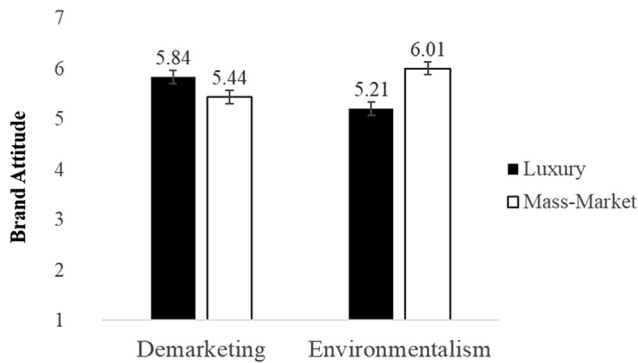


Fig. 1. Brand attitude as a function of brand positioning and type of green message (Study 1).

SD = 1.58) and demarketing ($M = 5.44$ SD = 1.45) conditions are similarly relevant ($F(1, 161) = 1.36, p = .244$). No main effect of brand positioning or interaction effects emerged ($F_s < 1$).

Attitudes Towards the Brand. A two-way ANOVA was conducted to test H1a and H1b. The results showed no main effect of brand positioning ($F(1, 161) = 2.32, p = .129$) or green message ($F(1, 161) = 0.04, p = .837$) on brand attitudes ($\alpha = 0.88$). However, the expected interaction between brand positioning and green message was observed ($F(1, 161) = 20.575, p = .000; \eta_p^2 = 0.113$, see Fig. 1).

Within luxury condition, brand attitudes were higher in the demarketing condition ($M_{\text{demarketing}} = 5.84$, SD = 0.86) than in the green environmental condition ($M_{\text{green environmental}} = 5.21$, SD = 0.93; $F(1, 161) = 10.768, p = .001; \eta_p^2 = 0.063$). Within mass-market, brand attitudes were higher in the green environmental condition ($M_{\text{green environmental}} = 6.01$, SD = 0.78) than in the demarketing condition ($M_{\text{demarketing}} = 5.44$, SD = 0.93; $F(1, 161) = 9.80, p = .002; \eta_p^2 = 0.057$). Within demarketing, participants in the luxury condition had higher brand attitudes than in the mass-market condition ($F(1, 161) = 4.63, p = .033, \eta_p^2 = 0.028$). Within green environmental, brand attitudes were higher in the mass-market than in the luxury condition ($F(1, 161) = 17.97, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = 0.100$). As expected, brand attitudes were not significantly different when demarketing was matched with luxury and when green environmental message was matched with mass-market ($F(1, 84) = 0.95, p = .331$). Overall, these findings support H1a and H1b. Additionally, since consuming less would benefit consumers from an economical point of view, we performed the same analysis with income as a covariate and the results showed no main effect of income ($p > .30$).

6.4.2. Mediation analysis

The mediation of ad believability ($\alpha = 0.91$) was tested using the PROCESS macro on SPSS (model 8; 10,000 samples; Hayes, 2018). Green message was coded as 1 = demarketing and 0 = green environmental. For brand positioning, the codes were 1 = luxury and 0 = mass-market. See Fig. 2 for the visual representation of the model tested.

We found that the interaction between green message and brand positioning significantly influences ad believability ($\beta = 1.08$, CI = 0.38–1.77), and that ad believability is significantly associated with brand attitudes ($\beta = 0.37$, CI = 0.27–0.47). Additionally, this interaction influences brand attitude ($\beta = 0.79$, CI = 0.32–1.25). The expected indirect effect of the moderated mediation of ad believability was positive ($\beta = 0.40$, CI = 0.15–0.71). For the conditional indirect effect, when the mass-market brand was combined with demarketing, there was a negative conditional indirect effect of ad believability on brand attitudes ($\beta = -0.19$, CI = -0.40 to -0.02). In support of H2a, when luxury was combined with demarketing we found a positive conditional indirect effect of ad believability on brand attitudes ($\beta = 0.20$, CI = 0.02–0.41).

To test H2b, we repeated the mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro on SPSS, (model 8; 10,000 samples; Hayes, 2018) with reverse codes. Thus, green environmental = 1 and demarketing = 0. For brand positioning, the codes were 1 = mass-market and 0 = luxury. The expected indirect effect of the moderated mediation of ad believability was significant ($\beta = 0.40$, CI = 0.14–0.71). In support of H2b, when mass-market was combined with a green environmental message, we found a positive conditional indirect effect of ad believability on brand attitude ($\beta = 0.36$, CI = 0.04–0.68). Also, when luxury was combined with green environmental there was a negative conditional indirect effect of ad believability on brand attitude ($\beta = -0.42$, CI = -0.75 to -0.09).

6.4.3. Alternative model

To recall, we measured the fit between the green message and brand positioning ($\alpha = 0.83$). This scale measures to what degree participants perceive the green message and brand positioning used in the experiments to be congruent. We then tested an alternative model to verify if this fit mediates the association between green message and brand attitudes. Therefore, instead of having ad believability as a mediator, we included fit as a mediator. We found that the indirect effect of fit was non-significant (CI = -0.61 to 0.40). Thus, there is no evidence that fit could be an alternative explanation for an effect on brand attitude.

6.5. Discussion

Study 1 confirms H1a, H1b, and H2. Consumers have a more positive attitude toward a luxury brand when it uses a green demarketing compared to the green environmental message. Besides, consumers have a more positive attitude toward a mass-market brand when it uses green environmental rather than the demarketing message. Furthermore, this study shows the role of ad believability as a mediator, explaining the predicted interaction. That is, ad believability has a positive effect on brand attitudes when a luxury brand uses demarketing or when a mass-market brand uses green environmental message. However, brand attitudes are lower when a brand has a mass-market positioning and uses demarketing or when the brand has a luxury positioning and uses green environmental because the message is less believable. Finally, this study rules out the alternative explanation that the simple presence of a fit between brand positioning and green initiative leads to higher brand attitudes. Consumers need to believe that the message is trustworthy, convincing, honest, and authentic for the positive brand evaluation to emerge.

The next study seeks to replicate these findings and to address the impact of green brand positioning on brand evaluations about green messages.

7. Study 2

Study 2 has two goals. First, it attempts to replicate H1a, H1b, and H2 in a real brand scenario. This is an important objective because it assesses the replicability of our findings in a setting with greater external validity. Second, this study tests H3a, H3b, H3c, and H3d by showing whether demarketing or green environmental message has a different impact on evaluations for brands with an essential green positioning, which were created with a green mission statement. Unlike luxury or mass-market, which are non-green brands that may or may not use a green strategy, original green brands have intrinsic green values. For this reason, we propose that green brands benefit from either type of green message. Green brands using green environmental messages should be believable as reducing the environmental costs of a product is a core value for them. Similarly, demarketing is also in line with green positioning, as the reduction of consumption contributes to achieving sustainable societies. Given that both types of green messages match with a green positioning, we expect that brand evaluations will be equally high for green brands using demarketing or green

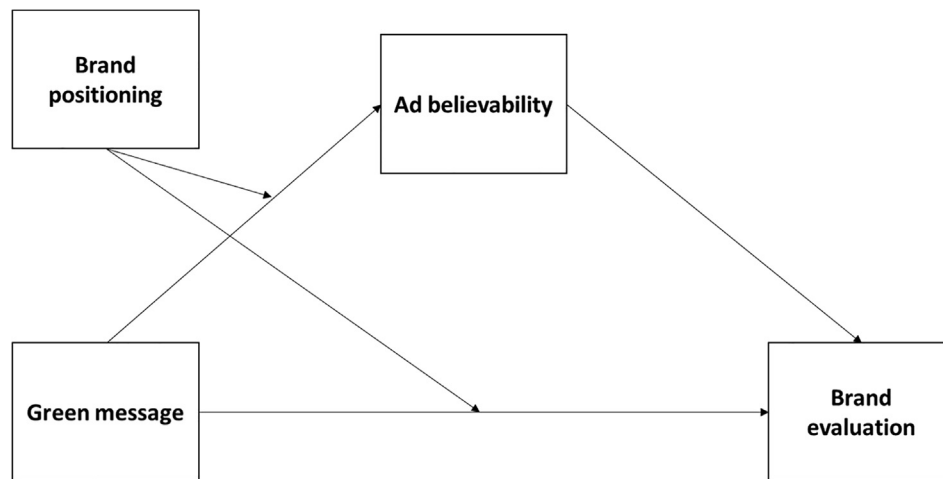


Fig. 2. Mediation Model.

environmental messages.

7.1. Participants and design

A total of 249 undergraduate student (M_{age} : 22.35, $SD = 6.24$; 54% male) participated in exchange for course credit. Sixteen participants failed the attention check and were eliminated from further analysis, leaving a final sample of 233 respondents. The experiment employed a 2 (demarketing vs. green environmental) \times 3 (luxury vs. mass-market vs. green), between-subjects design. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the six conditions.

7.2. Procedure

Similar to study 1, participants were told they were searching for online stores to buy new clothes and entered a brand's website (see Appendix B). Real brands were used for greater external validity. The first part was the brand's logo and a brief description (either luxury – Prada; or mass-market – Riachuelo; or green – Patagonia) and the second described the green message (either demarketing or green environmental).

Prada was chosen because it is a well-known brand and recognized worldwide as a luxury brand. Several studies in the luxury literature mention Prada as an example of luxury and others that had already pre-tested and used Prada in experimental studies (e.g. Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Fuchs et al., 2013). Also, Patagonia was elected because it was created with a green mission statement and all its products are based on environmental sustainability. Riachuelo was chosen for being a popular mass-market and fast-fashion brand.

7.3. Measures

After reading the manipulations, participants in all conditions indicated their attitudes toward the brand and ad believability, measured as in study 1. For the brand positioning manipulation check, respondents answered a three-item question based on Fuchs et al. (2013): "Regarding the brand positioning of the brand that you saw..." (a) it's an inclusive brand (mass-market); (b) it's an exclusive brand (luxury); (c) it's an essentially green brand. Responses ranged from 1-totally disagree to 7-totally agree. For the green message manipulation check, respondents answered the same two-items used in study 1.

As an attention check, they were asked to write the name of the brand they saw. Due to the use of real and well-known brands, we added brand familiarity (Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011) as a control measure. We used a seven-point scale ranging from 1-totally disagree to 7-totally agree, (I feel very familiar with the brand; I

feel very experienced with the brand, and I know the products of this brand). Finally, they answered demographic questions, were thanked and debriefed.

7.4. Results

7.4.1. Manipulation checks

Individual ANOVAs were conducted. For type of green message, participants in the demarketing condition perceived that the brand encouraged them to buy less unnecessary items than participants in the green environmental condition ($M_{\text{demarketing}} = 5.17$; $SD = 1.60$; $M_{\text{green environmental}} = 3.52$; $SD = 1.85$; $F(1, 227) = 56.19$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.198$). In addition, participants in the green environmental condition perceived that the brand motivated them to buy more environmentally friendly products than in the demarketing condition ($M_{\text{green environmental}} = 5.12$; $SD = 1.82$; $M_{\text{demarketing}} = 3.26$; $SD = 1.81$; $F(1, 227) = 31.87$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.140$). As expected, no other effects emerged ($F < 1$).

For brand positioning, we conducted separated ANOVAs for each item. For green message, we did not observe any type of main effect nor interaction effects; only the brand positioning main effects were significant. Participants in the luxury (Prada) condition perceive the brand as more exclusive ($M_{\text{luxury}} = 6.27$; $SD = 1.15$) than those in the mass-market (Riachuelo) ($M_{\text{mass-market}} = 2.18$; $SD = 1.21$) and in the green (Patagonia) conditions ($M_{\text{green}} = 3.21$; $SD = 1.17$; $F(2, 227) = 198.35$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.636$). Participants in the mass-market condition perceived the brand as more inclusive ($M_{\text{mass-market}} = 4.98$, $SD = 1.36$) than those in the luxury ($M_{\text{luxury}} = 2.85$; $SD = 1.78$) and green conditions ($M_{\text{green}} = 3.65$; $SD = 1.64$; $F(2, 227) = 36.82$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.245$). Participants in the green condition perceived the brand as more essentially green ($M_{\text{green}} = 5.57$; $SD = 1.32$) than those in the luxury ($M_{\text{luxury}} = 3.70$; $SD = 1.45$) and green conditions ($M_{\text{mass-market}} = 3.82$; $SD = 1.54$; $F(2, 227) = 37.67$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.249$).

7.4.2. Attitudes towards the brand

We conducted a two-way ANOVA with the two green message conditions (demarketing vs. green environmental) and all three brand positioning conditions (luxury vs. mass-market vs. green) for brand attitude ($\alpha = 0.86$) as the dependent variable.

The results showed a significant main effect of brand positioning ($F(2, 227) = 6.60$, $p = .002$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.055$) and a non-significant effect for green message ($F(1, 227) = 0.31$, $p = .577$). Additionally, the expected interaction was observed ($F(2, 227) = 7.42$, $p = .001$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.061$). For luxury positioning, participants in the demarketing condition showed more positive attitudes toward the brand

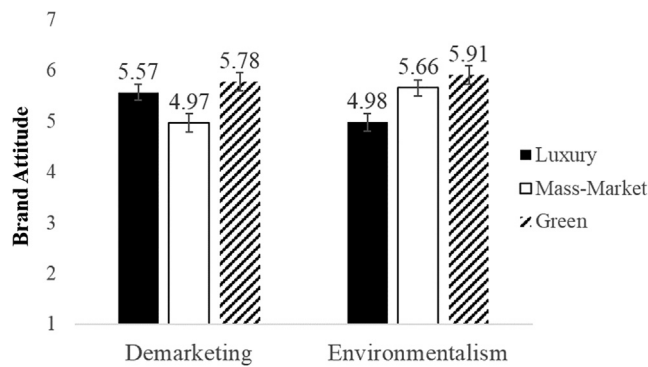


Fig. 3. Brand attitude as a function of brand positioning and type of green message (Study 2).

($M_{\text{Demarketing}} = 5.57$, $SD = 0.87$), than participants in the green environmental condition ($M_{\text{Green environmental}} = 4.98$, $SD = 1.25$; $F(1, 227) = 6.23$, $p = .013$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.027$). For mass-market positioning, participants in the green environmental condition had more positive attitudes toward the brand ($M_{\text{Green environmental}} = 5.66$, $SD = 0.83$) than participants in the demarketing condition ($M_{\text{Demarketing}} = 4.97$, $SD = 1.36$; $F(1, 227) = 8.64$, $p = .004$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.037$). As expected, for green brand positioning, there were no significant attitude differences between the types of green message ($M_{\text{green environmental}} = 5.91$; $SD = 0.84$; $M_{\text{Demarketing}} = 5.78$; $SD = 1.14$; $F(1, 227) = 0.271$, $p = .603$; see Fig. 3).

An analysis within each green message condition shows a similar reversal. For participants exposed to demarketing, brand attitudes were higher in luxury condition when compared to the mass-market condition ($p = .037$) and that the brand attitudes were higher in green condition also when compared to the mass-market condition ($p = .005$; $F(2, 227) = 5.69$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.048$). These results show support for our H3a and H3b. Additionally, among the participants exposed to the green environmentalism message, brand attitudes were higher for mass-market condition than for when compared to the luxury condition ($p = .012$). Furthermore, brand attitudes and the attitudes were also higher for in the green conditions than in the when compared to luxury condition ($p = .001$; $F(2, 227) = 7.78$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.064$). These results support our H3c and H3d. Finally, there was no significant difference in brand attitudes between mass-market and green positioning within the green environmental condition ($p = .88$), and between luxury and green positioning within the demarketing condition ($p = .98$).

Overall, these results show that green brand positioning elicits positive brand attitude using both green environmental and green demarketing messages. That is, when using green demarketing messages, brand attitudes rates for green brand positioning are similar to attitude rates for luxury brands. Moreover, when using green environmental messages, brand attitude rates for green brand positioning are similar to attitude rates for mass-market positioning. Please see these results in Fig. 3. These results also replicate Study 1, providing additional support for H1a and H1b.

In order to test for possible effects originated from the use of real brands, we conducted an ANCOVA with brand familiarity as a covariate and the results were unchanged by it. Thus, we ruled out this alternative explanation. Also, there was no main effect of income as a covariate ($p > .30$).

7.4.3. Mediation analysis

The mediation of ad believability ($\alpha = 0.90$) was tested through the PROCESS macro on SPSS (model 8; 10,000 samples; Hayes, 2018). In order to test our hypotheses, the green message was coded as 1 = demarketing and 0 = green environmental. For brand positioning, the codes were 1 = luxury and 0 = mass-market.

When the dependent variable was the attitude toward the brand, the interaction between green message and brand positioning influences ad believability ($\beta = 1.40$, $CI = 0.60$ – 2.19). Furthermore, brand positioning ($\beta = -0.65$, $CI = -1.20$ to -0.09) and appeal type ($\beta = -0.77$, $CI = -1.33$ to -0.21) present negative direct effects on ad believability. Also, Ad believability significantly impacts brand attitude ($\beta = 0.46$, $CI = 0.34$ – 0.57). Additionally, the interaction between green message and brand positioning significantly impacts brand attitude ($\beta = 0.63$, $CI = 0.04$ – 1.23). Finally, the direct effects of appeal type ($CI = -0.74$ to 0.07) and brand positioning (-0.79 to 0.02) on brand attitude are non-significant.

The expected indirect effect of the moderated mediation of ad believability was significant ($\beta = 0.64$, $CI = 0.25$ to 1.21). For mass-market brand, there was a negative conditional indirect effect of demarketing on consumers' attitude toward the brand ($\beta = -0.35$, $CI = -0.70$ to -0.11). In support of H2a, for luxury brands, there was a positive conditional indirect effect of demarketing on brand attitude ($\beta = 0.28$, $CI = 0.01$ – 0.65).

Reverse codes were used to test H2b (i.e. for green message 1 = green environmental and 0 = demarketing; for brand positioning 1 = mass-market and 0 = luxury) and run a similar analysis. Again, we ran our model with attitude towards the brand as a dependent variable and ad believability as the mediating variable. Results show that the interaction effect of brand positioning and appeal type on ad believability was significant ($\beta = 1.40$, $CI = 0.60$ – 2.19). Furthermore, ad believability had a significant effect on brand attitude ($\beta = 0.46$, $CI = 0.34$ – 0.57). Finally, the interaction between brand positioning and appeal type on brand attitude was also significant ($\beta = 0.63$, $CI = 0.04$ – 1.23).

The expected indirect effect of the moderated mediation of ad believability was significant ($\beta = 0.64$, $CI = 0.25$ – 1.21). For luxury brands, there was a negative conditional indirect effect of green environmental on brand attitudes ($\beta = -0.28$, $CI = -0.65$ to -0.01). In support of H2b, for mass-market brands, a positive conditional indirect effect of green environmental on brand attitudes was observed ($\beta = 0.35$, $CI = 0.11$ – 0.70).

7.5. Discussion

Study 2 uses real brands known by participants and replicates the key findings of Study 1, corroborating H1a, H1b, and H2. Moreover, the study demonstrates that brands with an essential green positioning benefit from using either type of green message as brand attitudes are equally and positively influenced by demarketing messages used by luxury and green brands (H3a) and green environmental used by mass-market and green brands (H3b). Finally, the current study also included brand familiarity as a control variable, and the results were unchanged by it. This again speaks in favor of the consistency of the findings.

8. Study 3

Study 3 has three objectives. First, it attempts to replicate the hypotheses with a different product category, showing that the proposed interaction effect is also true in a non-fashion related scenario. Second, it uses a green message manipulation that is different from the first and second studies to extend the validity of our findings. Third, we test our model with a new dependent variable (i.e. willingness to buy), to verify whether our findings are generalizable for correlated variables.

8.1. Participants and design

A total of 199 respondents were recruited on Amazon Mechanical Turk ($M_{\text{age}}: 37$, $SD = 11.12$; 55% male). The experiment was available only to participants with IP addresses from the United States or Canada. Three participants that already knew the brand and sixteen participants that failed the attention check were eliminated from further analysis,

leaving a final sample of 180 respondents. The experiment employed a 2 (demarketing vs. green environmental) \times 2 (luxury vs. mass-market), between-subjects design. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions.

8.2. Procedure

Participants were told that while searching for home appliances online they found out that ARNO had a new environmental campaign on its website. ARNO is a real home appliances brand, but it is unknown to the participants (see Appendix C).

First, participants were exposed to the brand's logo and the description of the campaign (either demarketing or green environmental) and a brief brand description (either luxury or mass-market). Participants in the demarketing condition read "Arno is passionate about improving consumers' quality of life while minimizing environmental impact. Arno's products are designed for durability, which helps the consumer to buy fewer unnecessary items. Arno invites you to preserve the Earth every day by consuming less". Whereas, participants in the green environmental condition read: "Arno's production process is focused on saving water, energy and reducing carbon emissions at the factory. Its products are the most energy-efficient in the market. Arno invites you to preserve the Earth every day by consuming green". For luxury brand positioning manipulation, they read: "Arno is a high-end home appliances brand. Arno gives you the opportunity to enjoy cooking using the most unique and sophisticated products". Finally, for mass-market brand positioning manipulation, they read: "Arno is a popular home appliances brand. Arno gives you the opportunity to enjoy cooking using products that are simple and available for everyone".

8.3. Measures

After reading the manipulations, participants in all conditions indicated their attitudes toward the brand (measured as in study 1 and 2) and willingness to buy, measured with one-item, ranging from 1- (Would certainly not buy) to 7- (Would certainly buy). They also rated ad believability, in the same fashion as studies 1 and 2.

For brand positioning manipulation check, respondents answered a two-item question based on Fuchs et al. (2013): "Considering ARNO's description, what would you say about this brand's positioning..." (a) it's an inclusive brand (popular/mass market); (b) it's an exclusive brand (high-end). Responses ranged from 1-totally disagree to 7-totally agree. For the green message manipulation check, respondents answered the same two-items used in studies 1 and 2.

We included Google's reCAPTCHA system which was designed to establish that a computer user is human (and not a bot). Thus, participants were required to click on "I'm not a robot" before completing the study. Additionally, they were asked to describe what kind of products ARNO sells by the end of the survey. As a control measure, they were asked if they knew ARNO before the study. Finally, they answered demographic questions, were thanked and debriefed.

8.4. Results

8.4.1. Manipulation checks

Individual ANOVAs were conducted. For type of green message, participants in the demarketing condition perceived that ARNO's encouraged them to buy less unnecessary items than participants in the green environmental condition ($M_{\text{demarketing}} = 5.76$; $SD = 1.79$; $M_{\text{green environmental}} = 3.66$; $SD = 2.06$; $F(1, 176) = 50.36$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.222$). In addition, participants in the green environmental condition perceived that ARNO's encouraged them to buy more environmentally friendly products than in the demarketing condition ($M_{\text{green environmental}} = 6.34$; $SD = 0.98$; $M_{\text{demarketing}} = 5.09$; $SD = 1.91$; $F(1, 176) = 29.30$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.143$). As expected, for both

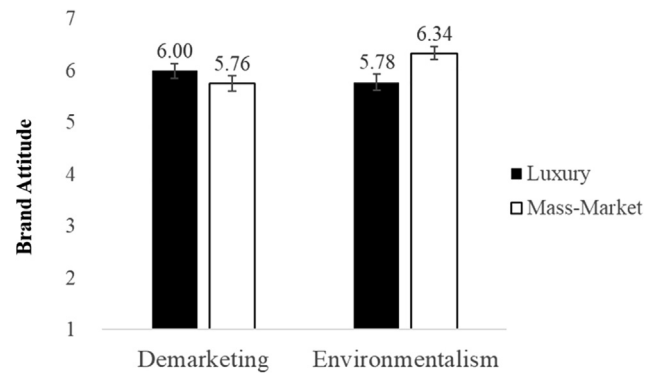


Fig. 4. Brand attitude as a function of brand positioning and type of green message (Study 3).

types of green message we did not observe neither a brand positioning main effect, nor an interaction effect ($F_s < 1$).

For brand positioning, participants in the luxury condition perceived the brand as more exclusive/high-end than participants in the mass-market condition ($M_{\text{luxury}} = 5.05$; $SD = 1.72$; $M_{\text{mass-market}} = 3.81$; $SD = 1.74$; $F(1, 176) = 61.16$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.112$). In addition, participants in the luxury condition perceived the brand as more inclusive/mass-market than participants in the luxury condition ($M_{\text{mass-market}} = 5.21$; $SD = 1.38$; $M_{\text{luxury}} = 4.14$; $SD = 1.52$; $F(1, 176) = 23.28$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.117$). No other significant effects emerged ($F_s < 1$).

8.4.2. Attitudes towards the brand

We conducted a two-way ANOVA for brand attitude ($\alpha = 0.92$) as the dependent variable. As expected, the results showed a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 176) = 7.99$, $p = .005$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.043$). We did not observe main effects neither for brand positioning ($F(1, 176) = 1.23$, $p = .269$) nor for green message ($F(1, 176) = 1.62$, $p = .205$, see Fig. 4).

The pairwise analysis showed that when the brand was luxury there was no significant difference in brand attitude between demarketing and green environmental conditions ($M_{\text{demarketing}} = 6.00$, $SD = 0.78$; $M_{\text{green environmental}} = 5.78$, $SD = 1.14$; $F(1, 176) = 1.17$, $p = .280$). When the brand was mass-market, participants in the green environmental condition had more positive attitudes toward the brand ($M_{\text{green environmental}} = 6.34$, $SD = 0.81$) than participants in the demarketing condition ($M_{\text{demarketing}} = 5.76$, $SD = 1.04$; $F(1, 176) = 8.66$, $p = .004$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.047$). An analysis within each green message condition shows that among participants exposed to demarketing there was no significant difference between luxury and mass-market ($F(1, 176) = 1.41$; $p = .236$). Among those exposed to green environmental message, attitudes were more positive for mass-market than for luxury ($F(1, 176) = 8.11$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.044$). These findings provide partial support for H1a and H1b.

8.4.3. Willingness to Buy (WTB)

We conducted a two-way ANOVA for WTB as the dependent variable. The results showed a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 176) = 11.14$, $p = .001$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.060$, see Fig. 5) and no main effects neither for brand positioning nor for green message ($F_s < 1$).

Within the luxury brand conditions participants had higher WTB scores in the demarketing condition than in the green environmental condition ($M_{\text{demarketing}} = 5.47$, $SD = 1.03$; $M_{\text{green environmental}} = 4.97$, $SD = 1.18$; $F(1, 176) = 4.22$, $p = .041$). When the brand was mass-market participants in the green environmental condition had higher WTB scores ($M_{\text{green environmental}} = 5.52$, $SD = 1.00$) than participants in the demarketing condition ($M_{\text{demarketing}} = 4.89$, $SD = 1.24$; $F(1, 176) = 7.15$, $p = .008$; $\eta_p^2 = 0.039$). An analysis within each green message condition shows a similar reversal. Participants exposed to

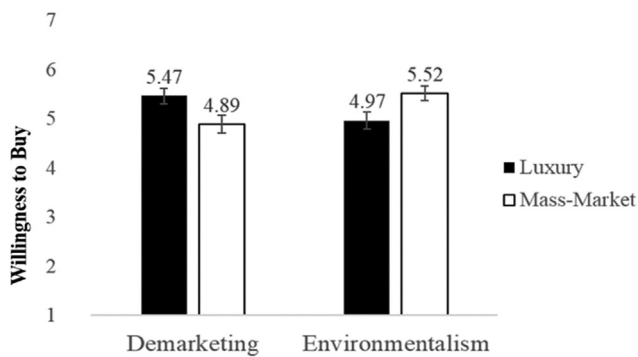


Fig. 5. WTB as a function of brand positioning and type of green message (Study 3).

demarketing had higher WTB for luxury than for mass-market ($F(1, 176) = 5.62; p = .019; \eta_p^2 = 0.031$). Among the participants exposed to the green environmental message, WTB was higher for mass-market than for the luxury brand ($F(1, 176) = 5.52, p = .020, \eta_p^2 = 0.030$). These results are in line with H1a and H1b. Also, no main effect of income as a covariate was found neither for brand attitude nor for WTB ($p > .40$).

8.4.4. Mediation analysis

An ad believability index was created by averaging the seven items ($\alpha = 0.93$). The mediation role of ad believability was tested through the PROCESS macro on SPSS (model 8; 10,000 samples; Hayes, 2018). In order to test our hypotheses, the green message was coded as 1 = demarketing and 0 = green environmental. For brand positioning, the codes were 1 = luxury and 0 = mass-market.

When the dependent variable was the attitude toward the brand, the interaction between green message and brand positioning influences ad believability ($\beta = 0.84, CI = 0.31\text{--}1.38$), whereas ad believability significantly impacts brand attitude ($\beta = 0.66, CI = 0.54\text{--}0.78$). The interaction on brand attitude is not significant ($CI = -0.20$ to 0.68). The expected indirect effect of the moderated mediation of ad believability was significant ($\beta = 0.56, CI = 0.21\text{--}1.00$). When the brand was mass-market there was a negative conditional indirect effect of demarketing on consumers' attitudes toward the brand ($\beta = -0.27, CI = -0.54$ to -0.04). Additionally, in support of H2a when the brand was luxury there was a positive conditional indirect effect of demarketing on brand attitude ($\beta = 0.28, CI = 0.02\text{--}0.58$).

Similar results were found when the dependent variable was WTB. The interaction between green message and brand positioning significantly impacted ad believability ($\beta = 0.84, CI = 0.31\text{--}1.38$), whereas ad believability positively impacted WTB ($\beta = 0.69, CI = 0.54\text{--}0.84$). The indirect effect of the moderated mediation of ad believability was also significant ($\beta = 0.58, CI = 0.22\text{--}1.05$). When the brand was mass-market there was a negative conditional indirect effect of demarketing on WTB ($\beta = -0.29, CI = -0.58$ to -0.04). However, when the brand was luxury, there was a positive conditional indirect effect of demarketing on WTB ($\beta = 0.29, CI = 0.02\text{--}0.62$).

Reverse codes were used to test H2b (i.e. for green message 1 = green environmental and 0 = demarketing; for brand positioning 1 = mass-market and 0 = luxury). Again, we tested the hypotheses through the same analysis procedures. The indirect effect of ad believability was significant for both brand attitudes ($\beta = 0.56, CI = 0.19\text{--}0.99$) and WTB ($\beta = 0.58, CI = 0.19\text{--}1.05$). When the brand was luxury there was a negative conditional indirect effect of green environmental on brand attitudes ($\beta = -0.28, CI = -0.59$ to -0.02) and on WTB as well ($\beta = -0.29, CI = -0.61$ to -0.02). In support of H2b, when the brand was mass-market a positive conditional indirect effect of green environmental was observed on brand attitudes ($\beta = 0.27, CI = 0.04\text{--}0.54$) and also on WTB ($\beta = 0.29,$

$CI = 0.03\text{--}0.59$).

8.5. Discussion

Study 3 replicates most of the results in a different product category, which demonstrates that the proposed interaction generalizes to other industries. Moreover, it shows the consistency of the results with a different green environmental action. It also extends the results by adding another dependent variable (i.e. willingness to buy). That is, results show that willingness to buy is higher when there is a match between demarketing and luxury or green environmental and mass-market. Finally, it provides further evidence of ad believability as a mediator, demonstrating that the mismatch between brand positioning and green message leads to negative brand evaluation and lower WTB because consumers perceive the message as less believable.

9. General discussion

In three studies we tested whether the interaction between green message and brand positioning influences brand evaluations. We found that individuals in a demarketing condition have more positive brand attitudes for luxury rather than for mass-market positioning, whereas individuals in the green environmental condition have more positive brand attitudes for mass-market rather than for luxury brand positioning. Additionally, ad believability explains why brand attitudes are higher when demarketing is matched with luxury, and when green environmental is matched with mass-market positioning. In short, consumers believe more in ads that match the luxury brand positioning and demarketing and ads that match mass-market brand positioning with green environmental. In turn, ad believability increases brand attitudes and WTB.

Past research has investigated the match between advertising elements as congruency and/or incongruence effects. For instance, past research shows that the congruency of product category and environmental issues affect green advertising effectiveness (Shin & Ki, 2018). Others have investigated the effectiveness of message valence (Amatulli et al., 2017) and message frame (White et al., 2011; Chang et al., 2015) on pro-environmental behavior. The present study extends past research on green advertising literature by showing that a match between the message type and the positioning of a non-green brand (i.e. luxury vs. mass-market) has an impact on brand evaluation and willingness to buy. These results go beyond a simple congruency or fit effect because it demonstrates that brand positioning is important to communicate convincing arguments and show the credibility and authenticity of the green message. Therefore, the positive outcomes on brand evaluations are a consequence of the believability in the match between brand positioning and the appropriate green message.

This study also adds to a crescent body of research suggesting that reducing consumption is the only conscious path to actual environmental sustainability (Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Kropfeld et al., 2018; Sekhon & Soule, 2019). Specifically, our results build on green advertising literature by further exploring the applications of demarketing as a green message type. While most studies have explored demarketing as a manner of conserving the environment by saving resources, such as water and energy (Wall, 2005; Yakobovitch & Grinstein, 2016), this work shows the effects of demarketing used as green advertising on brand evaluation.

The literature on luxury brands can benefit from this research as well. Past studies investigated consumers' evaluations of green features in luxury products (Achabou & Dekhili, 2013; De Angelis et al., 2017). Some studies found that luxury positioning does not always match with green messages because at times these messages may conflict with luxury claims (Torelli et al., 2012; Kapferer & Michaut, 2015). In support of past research, we found that brand evaluations are low when luxury positioning is combined with environmental messages. However, we showed that brand evaluations are more positive when luxury

positioning is combined with demarketing. These results build on past research and demonstrate that a green demarketing message generates positive evaluations for luxury brands that would like to perform green actions.

Furthermore, this research also has managerial implications. It shows how non-green brands (i.e. mass-market and luxury) can address a green strategy and still maintain a positive evaluation. Specifically, luxury brand managers should be careful when adding green features to their products, once our research shows that green environmental actions may be perceived as less believable when used by luxury brands. Instead, they can use luxury's inherent characteristics to promote sustainable consumption through demarketing (consumption reduction). For instance, luxury brands could perform demarketing campaigns during events that motivate overconsumption (i.e., Black Friday; Christmas). When luxury brands support green demarketing appeals, consumers will perceive positive signaling and have more favorable evaluations of the brand because demarketing will enhance the brand luxury characteristics such as durability, quality, scarcity, and exclusivity.

Although many luxury brands already promote demarketing practices, this strategy may seem difficult to implement for many luxury brands since these brands' economic growth rests on enticing systematic repeat purchases at each new season. However, demarketing can be used as a strategy for bringing more consumers to the company. Luxury products last longer and have a higher resale value than mass-market goods, which are quickly used and disposed of (Sun et al. (2018)). Therefore, instead of buying many disposable clothes, demarketing can motivate more consumers to buy one luxury piece and keep it for a longer time.

Conversely, mass-market brand managers should put effort into developing environmentally friendly product lines (eg. products made of recycled or organic materials). In this case, mass-market brands should motivate consumers to improve consumption behavior, shifting the claim from "consume more" to "consume green". This green strategy will probably increase positive attitudes toward mainstream brands, and more importantly, it will mitigate the negative aspects of overconsumption as green features promise less environmental impact.

Standing from a global sustainability point, the match between brand positioning and green appeal also has public policy implications because it improves pro-environmental behavior without the sacrifices often associated with consumption reduction. The anticonsumption activities are associated with activism and revolutionary changes in how individuals consume, which makes it more difficult to spread this pro-environmental movement (Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Kropfeld et al., 2018; Sekhon & Soule, 2019). If consumers associate positive signaling from the brand green actions, it may increase pro-environmental choices and may also increase subsequent pro-environmental behavior.

10. Limitations and future research

Like any research, ours is not void of limitations. First, a potential confound is a difference in purchasing power between mass-market and luxury brands. This prevented us to address the study in a behavioral real choice context (we used subjective measures of brand attitude and willingness to buy rather than a real choice setting) and it could create bias in participants' responses (e.g. certain participants might have positive brand attitudes towards Prada regardless of the green message used). However, this limitation does not invalidate our proposed relationship as we confirmed the hypotheses even when this confound is working against it. Furthermore, real-world brands were used in study 2 to enhance external validity, but it still was a laboratory experiment.

Second, although the respondents of our studies, undergraduate students and m-turkers, do not seem to be consumers who typically buy

luxury products, the use of these populations in research about luxury brands is a common procedure (see, for instance, Torelli et al., 2012; Fuchs et al., 2013; Choi, Seo, Wagner, & Yoon, 2018). Besides the fact that real luxury consumers would probably provide more convincing responses, there is no reason to believe that the perception about the match between brand positioning and green appeal would be different for luxury and non-luxury consumers. Also, the brands in studies 1 and 3 were

fictitious. Therefore, consumers did not need to have had a previous buying experience to provide brand evaluations. However, a possible difference would emerge for consumers with higher self-brand connections compared to those that are not close to the brand. Future research could further investigate this prediction.

Another concern is the fact that the "long lastingness" advertised by demarketing campaigns could be overlapping with luxury's products inherent quality characteristic. In our study, we find that there is a match between the demarketing appeal and the luxury positioning, and we argue that consumers are more likely to believe demarketing messages when perceived quality is high. However, an alternative explanation would be that quality on itself might be motivating consumers to purchase less and accept demarketing messages. Therefore, the inherent quality of luxury products would be the driving force behind ad believability. Future research would profit from untangling these constructs.

Our research suggests that ad believability is a key mediator, but future research investigating real purchasing behavior may explore different psychological mechanisms. For instance, one could explore if there is a reduction in guilt when consuming a mass-market brand that announces a green environmental campaign or a luxury brand that employs green demarketing. Another possibility is to explore the feelings of pride associated with a preference for a luxury (vs. mass-market) brand advocating green demarketing compared to green environmental actions.

Moreover, this study demonstrates that brands with green positioning are positively evaluated whether using a green environmental or green demarketing message. However, there are several levels of "greenness" in green brand positioning and that could have an effect when evaluating advertising. Therefore, we suggest future research to investigate how brand greenness and different types of green messages impact consumers' evaluations.

Regarding managerial implications, a limitation of our research relates to the use of green demarketing appeal by luxury brands. One could argue that demarketing would necessarily result in smaller revenues as consumers would purchase fewer goods. However, we believe that green demarketing enhances positive evaluations for luxury brands that want to have environmentally friendly actions as well as increases the chance of achieving new consumer markets that are currently purchasing less durable goods in other brands. Therefore, green demarketing might not necessarily result in lower revenues as reduced purchases per consumer might be compensated by higher prices per product or by new consumers attracted to the brand. Future research should investigate these possibilities.

Finally, premium brands are in between a mass-market and a luxury brand positionings (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Future research should investigate how green message would impact brand evaluations for premium brand positioning.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A

Scenario 1– Luxury and Demarketing (Study 1)

ABOUT SALTWATER COLLECTIVE
MAN
WOMAN
MY ORDERS
LOGIN

SALTWATER


COLLECTIVE

Saltwater Collective is recognized by its exclusive and sophisticated clothes. The uniqueness of its collections is a result of the work from world's most renowned designers

ENVIRONMENT

Saltwater's commitment to the environment is in the manufacturing process. By producing clothes with resistant materials, that last much more than one season, Saltwater Collective helps you to consume less. The environment is your duty too; use your clothes consciously

COMMUNITY



Scenario 2 – Mass-market and Green Environmental (Study 1)

ABOUT SALTWATER COLLECTIVE
MAN
WOMAN
MY ORDERS
LOGIN

SALTWATER


COLLECTIVE

Saltwater Collective is recognized by fashion democratization. The swift production and distribution guarantee the variety of clothes and easy access to the brand's products

ENVIRONMENT

Saltwater's commitment to the environment is in the manufacturing process. By producing clothes that are not washed on the factory floor, Saltwater Collective saves up to 1.5L of water in each outfit. The environment is your duty too; use products with lower environmental impact

COMMUNITY



Appendix B

Scenario 1– Luxury (Prada) and Demarketing (Study 2)

ABOUT PRADA

MANWOMANMY ORDERSLGIN


PRADA

Prada is a luxury brand that was founded by Mario Prada and has about 70 years of history. The brand produces clothes, shoes and accessories. Prada makes a perfect combination of cutting edge sophistication with exclusivity of its products.

ENVIRONMENT

Prada's commitment to the environment is in the manufacturing process. By producing clothes with resistant materials, that last much more than one season, Prada helps you to consume less. The environment is your duty too; use your clothes consciously

COMMUNITY



Scenario 2 – Mass-market (Riachuelo) and green Environmental (Study 2)

ABOUT RIACHUELO

MANWOMANMY ORDERSLGIN

RCHLO


RIACHUELO

Riachuelo is a fast fashion brand - agility in the creation, production and distribution of new trends - that has 70 years of history. Riachuelo has become great because it serves a greater purpose: to make fashion an instrument of democratization.

ENVIRONMENT

Riachuelo's commitment to the environment is in the manufacturing process. By producing clothes that are not washed on the factory floor, Riachuelo saves up to 1.5L of water in each outfit. The environment is your duty too; use products with lower environmental impact

COMMUNITY



Scenario 3 – Green (Patagonia) and green Environmental (Study 2)

ABOUT PATAGONIA
MAN
WOMAN
MY ORDERS
LOGIN


patagonia®

Patagonia is a green brand with around 70 years of history. The brand has the purpose of promoting environmental preservation through the production of sustainable clothing. All Patagonia clothing pieces are composed of materials that have low environmental impact.

ENVIRONMENT

Patagonia's commitment to the environment is in the manufacturing process. By producing clothes that are not washed on the factory floor, Patagonia saves up to 1.5L of water in each outfit. The environment is your duty too; use products with lower environmental impact


COMMUNITY





Appendix C


Scenario 1– Luxury and Demarketing (Study 3)


OUR PRODUCTS


 COOKWARE & KITCHENWARE


 COOKING APPLIANCES

 FOOD & DRINK PREPARATION


 BREAKFAST


 LINEN CARE


 HOME CARE


 PERSONAL CARE


CONSUMER SERVICES


 FREQUENT QUESTIONS

 CONTACT US

 WHERE TO BUY

 REPAIRS

 INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

 WARRANTY

EARTH DAY IS EVERYDAY

ARNO

Earth day is every day!

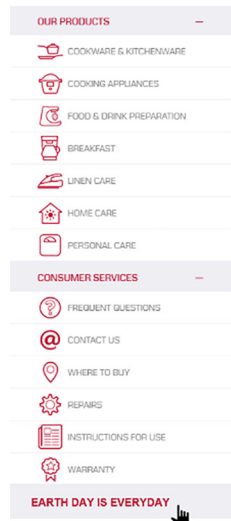
Arno is passionate about improving consumers' quality of life while minimizing environmental impact. Arno's products are designed for durability, which helps the consumer to buy fewer unnecessary items. **Arno invites you to preserve the Earth every day by consuming less.**

ABOUT ARNO

Arno is a high-end home appliances brand. Arno gives you the opportunity to enjoy cooking using the most unique and sophisticated products.



Scenario 2– Mass-Market and green Environmental (Study 3)



ARNO

Earth day is every day!

Arno's production process is focused on saving water, energy and reducing carbon emissions at the factory. Its products are the most energy efficient in the market. **Arno invites you to preserve the Earth every day by consuming green.**



ABOUT ARNO

Arno is a popular home appliances brand. Arno gives you the opportunity to enjoy cooking using products that are simple and available for everyone.

References

- Achabou, M. A., & Dekhili, S. (2013). Luxury and sustainable development: Is there a match? *Journal of Business Research*, 66(10), 1896–1903.
- Adriana Castro (2019). About. <https://adrianaacastro.co/about/> (accessed November 09, 2019).
- Allcott, H. (2011). Social norms and energy conservation. *Journal of Public Economics*, 95(October), 1082–1095.
- Amatulli, C., Angelis, M., Peluso, A. M., Soscia, I., & Guido, G. (2017). The effect of negative message framing on green consumption: An investigation of the role of shame. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1–22.
- Banerjee, S., Gulas, C., & Iyer, E. (1995). Shades of Green: A multidimensional analysis of environmental advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 24(2), 21–31.
- Becker-Olsen, K. L., Cudmore, B. A., & Hill, R. P. (2006). The impact of perceived corporate social responsibility on consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, 59(1), 46–53.
- Beckham, D., & Voyer, B. G. (2014). Can sustainability be luxurious? A mixed-method investigation of implicit and explicit attitudes towards sustainable luxury consumption. *ACR North American Advances*, 42, 245–250.
- Beltrami, R. F. (1988). Perceived believability of warning label information presented in cigarette advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 17(2), 26–32.
- Berthon, P., Pitt, L., Parent, M., & Berthon, J. (2009). Aesthetics and ephemerality: Observing and preserving the luxury brand. *California Management Review*, 52(1), 44–66.
- C&A (2016). Global sustainability report. Available at <http://sustainability.c-and-a.com/sustainable-products/sustainable-materials/more-sustainable-cotton/organic-cotton/> (accessed March 27, 2018).
- Catlin, J. R., & Wang, Y. (2013). Recycling gone bad: When the option to recycle increases resource consumption. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 23(1), 122–127.
- Chang, C. (2011). Feeling ambivalent about going green. *Journal of Advertising*, 40(4), 19–32.
- Chang, H., Zhang, L., & Xie, G. X. (2015). Message framing in green advertising: The effect of construal level and consumer environmental concern. *International Journal of Advertising*, 34(1), 158–176.
- Cho, Y. N., & Berry, C. (2019). Understanding the effects of retailer- and manufacturer-provided sustainability labels on product evaluations and purchase-related outcomes. *Journal of Business Research*, 100, 73–85.
- Choi, Y. K., Seo, Y., Wagner, U., & Yoon, S. (2018). Matching luxury brand appeals with attitude functions on social media across cultures. *Journal of Business Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.10.003> (in press).
- Crockett and Jones (2019). Buy less, buy better. <https://www.crockettandjones.com/the-article/buy-less-buy-better/> (accessed November 09, 2019).
- De Angelis, M., Adigüzel, F., & Amatulli, C. (2017). The role of design similarity in consumers' evaluation of new green products: An investigation of luxury fashion brands. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 141, 1515–1527.
- Dion, D., & Borraz, S. (2017). Managing status: How luxury brands shape class sub-junctivities in the service encounter. *Journal of Marketing*, 81(5), 67–85.
- Dreus, S., Savin, I., & van den Bergh, J. C. (2019). Opinion clusters in academic and public debates on growth-vs-environment. *Ecological Economics*, 157, 141–155.
- Fuchs, C., Prandelli, E., Schreier, M., & Dahl, D. W. (2013). All that is users might not be gold: How labeling products as user designed backfires in the context of luxury fashion brands. *Journal of Marketing*, 77(5), 75–91.
- García-de-Frutos, N., Ortega-Egea, J. M., & Martínez-del-Río, J. (2018). Anti-consumption for environmental sustainability: Conceptualization, review, and multilevel research directions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 148(2), 411–435.
- Germain, M. (2017). Optimal versus sustainable degrowth policies. *Ecological Economics*, 136, 266–281.
- Grinstein, A., & Nisan, U. (2009). Demarketing, minorities, and national attachment. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(2), 105–122.
- Griskevicius, V., Tybur, J. M., & Van den Bergh, B. (2010). Going green to be seen: Status, reputation, and conspicuous conservation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(3), 392.
- H&M. (2014). About H&M. Available at: <http://about.hm.com/en/media/news/conscious-denim-hm-jeanologia-collection.html> (accessed December 18, 2017).
- Hagtvedt, H., & Patrick, V. M. (2016). Gilt and guilt: Should luxury and charity partner at the point of sale? *Journal of Retailing*, 92(1), 56–64.
- Hayes, Andrew F. (2018). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Publications.
- Hepburn, S. J. (2013). In Patagonia (clothing): A complicated greenness. *Fashion Theory*, 17(5), 623–645.
- Janssen, C., Vanhamme, J., Lindgreen, A., & Lefebvre, C. (2014). The Catch-22 of responsible luxury: Effects of luxury product characteristics on consumers' perception of fit with corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 119(1), 45–57.
- Joshi, P., & Kronrod, A. (2019). Sounds of Green: How brand name sounds metaphorically convey environmental friendliness. *Journal of Advertising*, 1–17.
- Kang, E. Y., & Atkinson, L. (2019). Effects of message objectivity and focus on green CSR communication: The strategy development for a hotel's green CSR message. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 1–21.
- Kapferer, J. (2006). The two business cultures of luxury brands. In J. E. Schroeder, M. Salzer-Morling, & S. Askegaard (Eds.), *Brand culture* (pp. 60–69). Routledge: Taylor & Francis.
- Kapferer, J., & Bastien, V. (2009). *The luxury strategy*. Bodmin: MPG Books Ltd.
- Kapferer, J.-N., & Michaut, A. (2015). Luxury and sustainability: A common future? The match depends on how consumers define luxury. *Luxury Research Journal*, 1(1), 3–17.
- Kilbourne, W. E. (1995). Green advertising: Salvation or oxymoron? *Journal of Advertising*, 24(2), 7–20.
- Kim, Y., Oh, S., Yoon, S., & Shin, H. H. (2016). Closing the green gap: The impact of environmental commitment and advertising believability. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 44(2), 339–351.
- Kotler, P., & Levy, S. (1971). Demarketing, yes, demarketing. *Harvard Business Review*, 49(6), 74–80.
- Kropfeld, M., Nepomuceno, M. V., & Dantas, D. C. (2018). The ecological impact of anti-consumption lifestyles and environmental concern. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 37(2), 245–259.
- Lee, Y. J., Yoon, H. J., & O'Donnell, N. H. (2018). The effects of information cues on perceived legitimacy of companies that promote corporate social responsibility initiatives on social networking sites. *Journal of Business Research*, 83, 202–214.
- Leonidou, L. C., Leonidou, C. N., Paliawadana, D., & Hultman, M. (2011). Evaluating the green advertising practices of international firms: A trend analysis. *International Marketing Review*, 28(1), 6–33.
- Lowitt, E. (2011). Patagonia's "Buy Less" campaign may lead to more revenue. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Malär, L., Krohmer, H., Hoyer, W. D., & Nyffenegger, B. (2011). Emotional brand attachment and brand personality: The relative importance of the actual and the ideal self. *Journal of Marketing*, 75(4), 35–52.

- Matthes, J. (2019). Uncharted territory in research on environmental advertising: Toward an organizing framework. *Journal of Advertising*, 48(1), 91–101.
- Martínez-Alier, J., Pascual, U., Vivien, F. D., & Zaccai, E. (2010). Sustainable de-growth: Mapping the context, criticisms and future prospects of an emergent paradigm. *Ecological Economics*, 69(9), 1741–1747.
- McDonagh, P., & Prothero, A. (2014). Sustainability marketing research: Past, present, and future. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 30(11–12), 1186–1219.
- Miklós-Thal, J., & Zhang, J. (2013). (De) marketing to manage consumer quality inferences. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 50(1), 55–69.
- Newman, G. E., Gorlin, M., & Dhar, R. (2014). When going green backfires: How firm intentions shape the evaluation of socially beneficial product enhancements. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(3), 823–839.
- Nudie Jeans (2015). Available at: <https://www.vogue.com/article/nudie-jeans-new-york-repair-store> (Accessed April 5, 2018).
- Nyilasy, G., Gangadharbatla, H., & Paladino, A. (2014). Perceived greenwashing: The interactive effects of green advertising and corporate environmental performance on consumer reactions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 125(4), 693–707.
- Olsen, M. C., Slotegraaf, R. J., & Chandukala, S. R. (2014). Green claims and message frames. *Journal of Marketing*, 78(September), 119–137.
- Oppenheimer, D. M., Meyvis, T., & Davidenko, N. (2009). Instructional manipulation checks: Detecting satisficing to increase statistical power. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45(4), 867–872.
- Park, H., & Kim, Y. K. (2016). Proactive versus reactive apparel brands in sustainability: Influences on brand loyalty. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 29, 114–122.
- Pechmann, C., Zhao, G., Goldberg, M. E., & Reibling, E. T. (2003). What to convey in antimoking advertisements for adolescents: The use of protection motivation theory to identify effective message themes. *Journal of Marketing*, 67(2), 1–18.
- Peattie, K., & Peattie, S. (2009). Social marketing: A pathway to consumption reduction? *Journal of Business Research*, 62(2), 260–268.
- Press, M., & Arnould, E. J. (2009). Constraints on sustainable energy consumption: Market system and public policy challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 28(1), 102–113.
- Reich, B. J., & Soule, C. A. A. (2016). Green demarketing in advertisements: Comparing “buy green” and “buy less” appeals in product and institutional advertising contexts. *Journal of Advertising*, 45(4), 441–458.
- Segev, S., Fernandes, J., & Hong, C. (2016). Is your product really green? A content analysis to reassess green advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 45(1), 85–93.
- Sekhon, T. S., & Soule, C. A. A. (2019). Conspicuous anticonsumption: When green demarketing brands restore symbolic benefits to anticonsumers. *Psychology & Marketing*, 1–13.
- Sekulova, F., Kallis, G., Rodríguez-Labajos, B., & Schneider, F. (2013). Degrowth: From theory to practice. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 38, 1–6.
- Shin, S., & Ki, E. J. (2018). The effects of congruency of environmental issue and product category and green reputation on consumer responses toward green advertising. *Management Decision* (in press).
- Soule, C. A., & Reich, B. J. (2015). Less is more: Is a green demarketing strategy sustainable? *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(13–14), 1403–1427.
- Stillman, T. (2003). Introduction: McDonald's in question: The limits of the mass market. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(2), 107–118.
- Sun, J., Belezza, S., & Paharia, N. (2018). Sustainable luxury consumption: Paradox or hope? In Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Conference, Dallas, Texas.
- Topshop (2012). What is recycle to wear? Available at: <https://www.topshop.com/blog/2012/05/what-is-reclaim-to-wear> (accessed: November 09, 2019).
- Torelli, C. J., Monga, A. B., & Kaikati, A. M. (2012). Doing poorly by doing good: Corporate social responsibility and brand concepts. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38(5), 948–963.
- Tucker, E. M., Rifon, N. J., Lee, E. M., & Reece, B. B. (2012). Consumer receptivity to green ads: A test of green claim types and the role of individual consumer characteristics for green ad response. *Journal of Advertising*, 41(4), 9–23.
- Tynan, C., McKechnie, S., & Chhuon, C. (2010). Co-creating value for luxury brands. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(11), 1156–1163.
- van Gils, S., & Horton, K. E. (2019). How can ethical brands respond to service failures? Understanding how moral identity motivates compensation preferences through self-consistency and social approval. *Journal of Business Research*, 95, 455–463.
- Vitæ (2011). Planned obsolescence. [copyright YouTube website] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTg1LZydsBQ> (accessed March 3, 2018).
- Wall, A. P. (2005). Government demarketing: Different approaches and mixed messages. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39(5/6), 421–427.
- White, K., MacDonnell, R., & Dahl, D. W. (2011). It's the mind-set that matters: The role of construal level and message framing in influencing consumer efficacy and conservation behaviors. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 48(3), 472–485.
- Yang, D., Lu, Y., Zhu, W., & Su, C. (2015). Going green: How different advertising appeals impact green consumption behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(12), 2663–2675.
- Yakovovitch, N., & Grinstein, A. (2016). Materialism and the boomerang effect of descriptive norm demarketing: Extension and remedy in an environmental context. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 35(1), 91–107.
- Zara (2019). Join live sustainability. Available at: <https://www.zara.com/br/pt/sustainability-11449.html> (accessed: November 09, 2019).
- Zayyad, H. M., Obeidat, Z. M., Alshurideh, M. T., Abuhashesh, M., Maqableh, M., & Masa'deh, R. E. (2020). Corporate social responsibility and patronage intentions: The mediating effect of brand credibility. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 1–24.

Victoria Vilasanti da Luz, Marketing Researcher, Victoria Vilasanti da Luz (M.Sc., Universidade Federal do Paraná, Brazil; MBA, Lindenwood University). Her research interests include green consumption and branding strategies.

Danielle Mantovani, Associate Professor of Marketing, Danielle Mantovani (Ph.D., Universidade Federal do Paraná, Brazil), Assistant Professor of Marketing, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Brazil. Her research interests include consumer goals and emotions, green consumption, social class and pro-social behavior.

Marcelo Vinhal Nepomuceno, Associate Professor of Marketing, Marcelo Vinhal Nepomuceno (Ph.D., Concordia University, Canadá), Associate Professor of Marketing, HEC Montreal. His research interests are concentrated on anti-consumption lifestyles, hormones and consumer behavior, cross-cultural marketing, social media and consumer behavior.