THE EMBARRASSMENT PARADOX: ENCOURAGING COMPENSATORY CONSUMPTION IN MORALITY-LADEN CONTEXTS

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This research introduces the unique context of immoral inaction—situations in which consumers have the opportunity to engage in virtuous behaviors but opt against doing so. Through five studies I demonstrate that in such contexts, embarrassment—a negatively valenced self-conscious moral emotion evoked by the perception that one's behavior is worthy of judgment by others—interacts with the use of approach-motivated coping strategies to lead consumers to engage in prosocial compensatory behaviors. Though extant literature suggests that marketers seeking to evoke prosocial behaviors should employ communications and promotions framed to elicit consumers' guilt, such studies are based in contexts whereby individuals feel guilty and/or embarrassed because of something they have done, not for something they did not do. This research suggests that that the condition of immoral inaction serves to evoke a contrasting psychological mechanism that reverses these findings, making embarrassment a more effective driver of desired outcomes when marketers seek to promote overcoming past inactions. These findings are discussed in light of their implications for research and application.

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INTRODUCTION

Mary listens to her local National Public Radio every day. She appreciates its presentation of local, national, and international news and enjoys several of its syndicated broadcasts. She engages in word-of-mouth promotion of NPR and its content and derives a sense of identity from her affiliation with the network. By all measures, Mary perceives great value in the NPR brand and its products (Keller and Lehmann 2003). However, despite years of listening to and enjoying NPR, Mary has never contributed to its biannual membership drives. She knows how important it is that listeners support their local NPR stations, but she has never done so herself. During the membership campaigns, she either turns down the radio volume or switches to a different station to avoid the guilt conjured by the incessant reminders of her moral failings. A question of paramount concern to NPR, other nonprofits, policymakers, and even for-profit firms is: How might marketers reverse Mary's response so that she is compelled to compensate for her past inactions rather than to repeat them?

When consumers encounter morality-laden situations, they must determine the actions that constitute (im)moral behaviors within that context. This research argues that these moral judgments (Campbell 2007) depend upon whether the consumer adheres more closely to a prescriptive or proscriptive moral lens (Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, and Hepp 2009; Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010a, 2010b). Specifically, this research posits that consumers employing a prescriptive lens will emphasize engaging in virtuous actions as moral and failing to engage in such acts as immoral, whereas proscriptively lensed consumers will emphasize avoiding non-virtuous actions as moral and failing to avoid such actions as immoral. This research suggests that these dichotomous emphases on engagement versus avoidance will be most prevalent when considering consumers' inactions—those times when they could have behaved morally but did

not—such that prescriptively lensed consumers will view such inactions as more immoral than their proscriptively lensed counterparts. These perceptions will lead consumers to adhere to the moral standard of social-responsibility (Thomas, Johnson, and Peck 2009; Berkowitz and Daniels 1964), and the failure to meet this standard in instances of immoral inaction will evoke negatively valenced self-conscious moral emotions (Haidt 2001). The experience of such emotions—specifically, guilt and embarrassment—triggers a coping response (Lazarus and Folkman 1984), and the approach-motived coping strategies (Duhachek and Oakley 2007; Carver and Scheier 1999) employed by the consumer that will determine the observable behavioral outcomes (Patrick, Lancellotti, and Demello 2009). Though extant literature suggests that marketers seeking to derive prosocial behaviors (e.g., donations of money, time, etc.) from their communications and promotions should seek to elicit consumer guilt, which leads to approach-motivated coping and reparative behaviors (Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton 1994; Tangney and Dearing 2002), this research suggests that such findings are only relevant when consumers are seeking to atone for their past *actions*. When confronted with their past *inactions*, however, consumers will be more compelled to engage in compensatory behaviors—those aimed at avoiding repeated inaction—when they experience embarrassment, rather than guilt.

By introducing the context of immoral inaction and its provoking of a contrasting psychological mechanism that reverses traditional findings related to the desirability of evoking consumer guilt and avoiding consumer embarrassment, this research contributes to the literature that emphasizes distinct motivational consequences of emotions (Allard and White 2015; Cavanaugh, Bettman, and Luce 2015; Wilcox, Kramer, and Sen 2011; Winterich and Haws 2011; Griskevicius, Shiota, and Neufeld 2010). This research also contributes to the literature on

consumer embarrassment and subsequent consumption behaviors (Blair and Roese 2013; Dahl et al. 2005; Lau-Gesk and Drolet 2008; Moore et al. 2006; Keltner and Buswell 1997). Furthermore, unique insights are provided for marketers seeking to persuade consumers to engage in prosocial behaviors and to overcome their past immoral inactions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Morality

Morality is an inherently social construct that evolved alongside humans' necessity to coexist in societies (Moore and Gino 2013; De Waal, Macedo, and Ober 2006; Haidt and Joseph 2004; Haidt and Kesebir 2010). According to evolutionary and moral psychology (Alexander 2007), the development and sustaining of such ties requires not only the mitigation and regulation of immoral behaviors, but also the encouragement, rewarding, and even mandating of moral behaviors. Thus, social norms and their associated institutions work together to regulate antisocial behaviors and to encourage prosocial behaviors (Haidt and Kesebir 2010).

As a microcosm of the larger global society, the marketplace also requires mutual and supportive ties between individual consumers and various groups (Komarova Loureiro et al. 2016). In fact, some scholars (Vitell 2003, p. 33) have gone so far as to suggest that "all aspects of consumer behavior … have an integral moral component," because consumers make decisions related to the acquisition, spending, and general distribution of resources while also adhering to the moral norms and laws of their societies (Komarova Loureiro et al. 2016). This theorizing about the omnipresence of morality within consumer behaviors is further strengthened by scholars' (Graham et al. 2013; Krebs 2008; Shweder et al. 1997) calls to expand moral research in ways that recognize the central role that emotions play in consumers' morality and into domains and contexts beyond those that have been traditionally considered morality-laden.

Moral Contexts

Early modern work on morality (Kohlberg 1981; Kohlberg and Candee 1984; Turiel 1983, 2002), equated the moral domain to contexts associated with "rights, justice, fairness, and the welfare of people" (Turiel 2006, p. 10). Though the prosocial emphasis of morality is still

accepted (Aquino and Reed 2002; Aquino et al. 2009), the moral domain has recently expanded. Moral foundations theory (Graham et al. 2013) distinguishes five relatively stable and universal moral context areas ("foundations"): harm vs. care, fairness vs. cheating, loyalty vs. betrayal, deference to vs. disobedience of authority, and purity vs. degradation. This expansion of those contexts that are understood to be morality-laden appears to be widely accepted among researchers. In fact, a recent meta-analysis (Komarova Loureiro et al. 2016) of studies related to morality published in *Marketing Science*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, and *Journal of Consumer Psychology* between 2005 and 2015 revealed research related to all of the moral foundations, with the exception of deference to vs. disobedience of authority. This analysis found that the majority (85.71%) of research conducted within the care/harm domain relates to charitable giving (Chernev and Blair 2015; Krishna 2011; Kristofferson, White, and Peloza 2014; Lee, Winterich, and Ross 2014; Nelson et al. 2006; Smith, Faro, and Burson 2013; Winterich and Barone 2011; Winterich, Mittal, and Aquino 2013; Winterich, Mittal, and Ross 2009). The majority (36.36%) of studies related to fairness/cheating have examined illegal file sharing/piracy (Danaher et al. 2010; Henning-Thurau, Henning, and Sattler 2007; Miyazaki, Rodriguez, and Langenderfer 2009; Vernik, Purohit, and Desai 2011). The majority (66.67%) of work on purity/degradation has looked at sustainable and environmentally friendly behaviors (Karmarkar and Bolinger 2015; Kidwell, Farmer, and Hardesty 2013), and the majority (62.5%) of examinations of group loyalty/betrayal have focused on community (including brand community) participation (Algesheimer et al. 2010; Chen and Kirmani 2015; Manchanda, Packard, and Pattabhiramaiah 2015; Mathwick, Wiertz, and De Ruyter 2008; Thompson and Sinha 2008).

How one interprets behaviors in these contexts represents internalized, often dynamic standards that can vary along the abstract-concrete continuum (Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010b). Individuals develop these symbolic representations throughout their lives, based on their unique historic, sociocultural, and experiential contexts (Haidt 2001, 2007; Carver and Scheier 2008; Markus and Nurius 1986). Specific media for an individual's moral development in such contexts include religious teachings and traditions; desired and undesired self-images; and mass-media representations of images, symbols, and models (Markus and Wurf 1987; Ogilvie 1987; Schlenker 1980; Mead 1934). Thus, the entirety of an individual's experiences and exposures combine to form the lens through which he/she views behavior in morality-laden contexts.

Moral Lenses

Recently, scholars have incorporated the tenets of control theory (Carver and Scheier 1999) to examine individuals' views of morality. This research (Janoff-Bulman et al. 2009; Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010a) suggests that people generally undertake one of two lenses when faced with issues of morality: a prescriptive or a proscriptive moral lens. This self-regulatory view of morality indicates that in moral contexts, outcomes that individuals define as *moral* become the goals targeted by their approach behaviors. Conversely, outcomes that individuals perceive to be immoral become anti-goals that they seek to avoid. The prescriptive moral lens is defined by its emphasis on engaging in moral actions, whereas the proscriptive moral lens emphasizes abstaining from immoral actions (Janoff-Bulman et al. 2009; Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010a, 2010b). To illustrate, consider the moral obligations "to tell the truth," which is prescriptively framed, and "not to lie," which is proscriptively framed. At first, these moral mandates might appear synonymous. However, though each is socially desirable, *telling*

the truth and *not lying* are not the same, as an individual can certainly abstain from lying to someone without telling him/her the truth.

Prescriptive Moral Lens

Janoff-Bulman et al. (2009) describe the prescriptive moral lens as involved in the activation of virtuous behaviors, such that individuals undertaking a prescriptive moral lens view morality in terms of *doing right or good things* (Janoff-Bulman et al. 2009; Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010a; Komarova Loureiro et al. 2016). Actions associated with prescriptive moral regulation are generally perceived as more discretionary, based on desire or duty, commendatory, and abstract. Such actions include prosocial behaviors such as charity, generosity, and benevolence, in addition to individually focused virtues such as self-reliance, the willingness to work hard, and industriousness (Janoff-Bulman et al. 2009; Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010b). This emphasis on virtuous action means that prescriptively lensed individuals are generally more sensitive to positive outcomes and emphasize approach-motivated behaviors (Janoff-Bulman et al. 2009; Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010a, 2010b).

Proscriptive Moral Lens

Individuals undertaking a proscriptive moral lens emphasize restraint, because they view morality in terms of inhibiting wrong or immoral behaviors (Janoff-Bulman et al. 2009; Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010a). Proscriptively lensed individuals view immoral actions as those in which humans innately desire to engage (Janoff-Bulman et al. 2009; Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010a), a tenet that aligns with the theorizing of modern psychologists as diverse as Freud (Freud and Strachey 1964) and Kant (Kant and Schneewind 2002), in addition to the Judeo-Christian conceptualization of humanity as prone to the pitfalls of sin and temptation (Miller and Delaney 2005). Therefore, via the proscriptive lens, moral individuals work to overcome their innately

wicked desires. Most penal and policy codes are framed proscriptively, as laws and rules generally denote socially undesirable behaviors in which individuals should not engage and then outline the punitive actions that might result from such behaviors (Noval and Stahl 2017). Given this everyday association, it is unsurprising that individuals usually discern proscriptive moral mandates as more harsh, strict, mandatory, and condemnatory (Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010b). The nature of the proscriptive lens also aligns with psychological research on negativity bias, which suggests that individuals perceive negatively valenced events as more impactful than equivalent positively valenced events (Baumeister et al. 2001; Rozin and Royzman 2001; Vaish, Gorssmann, and Woodward 2008).

To summarize (see Figure 1): Proscriptive morality emphasizes restraint and resisting temptations or negative desires (Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010b). Individuals undertaking a proscriptive moral viewpoint therefore define morality in terms of things that "should not" be done (e.g., "to be moral, people should not lie"). Proscriptive morality is therefore based on *in*action—not engaging in immoral acts. Conversely, proscriptive morality is action-based—moral individuals actively engage in behaviors that they perceive as virtuous. Individuals undertaking a prescriptive moral viewpoint will therefore define morality in terms of things that "should" be done (e.g., "to be moral, people should tell the truth"). The difference between these moral lenses is important, not only for a theoretical understanding, but also because consumers will likely engage in different (in)actions in moral contexts depending on the view of morality which they have undertaken. After all, *not hurting someone* and *helping someone* can be very different things. Therefore, this research posits that, because the prescriptive definition of morality emphasizes virtuous action, consumers who adhere to a prescriptive moral lens to a greater degree will be those more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors.

H1: The greater a consumer's adherence to the prescriptive moral lens, the more likely he/she is to engage in prosocial behaviors when given the opportunity.

Figure 1: Prescriptive vs. Proscriptive Morality

	Proscriptive Morality	Prescriptive Morality
Being moral is ...	Not doing bad things	Doing good things
Being immoral is ...	Doing bad things	Not doing good things

Extant research has examined proscriptive morality in contexts such as self-control (Lowe and Haws 2014; Dzhogleva and Lamberton 2014; Gal and Liu 2011; Laran 2010; Patrick, Chun, and Macinnis 2009; Mukhopadhyay, Sengupta, and Ramanathan 2008; Hoch and Loewenstein 1991) and restraint (Wilcox and Prokopec 2018; Nenkov and Scott 2014; Scott et al. 2008). Scholars have assessed proscriptive immorality related to maintaining the status quo (Chernev 2004) and to undesirable behaviors such as biased advice-giving and lying (Anthony and Crowley 2012; Cain, Loewenstein, and Moore 2011), opportunism (Jap e al. 2013), counterfeit product consumption (Wilcox, Kim, and Sen 2009), taboo trade-offs (McGraw and Tetlock 2005), and product waste (Bolton and Alba 2012). Additionally, extensive research on prescriptive morality (i.e., prosocial behaviors) exists in relation to areas such as disaster-relief efforts (Raggio and Folse 2011), information-seeking for ethically produced products (Ehrich and Irwin 2005), resisting perceived price unfairness (Wang and Krishna 2012), and sharing (Galbreth, Ghosh, and Shor 2012; Lamberton and Rose 2012). Finally, though researchers have examined consumer inaction in various contexts, such as comparisons between chosen and foregone outcomes and purchase-timing (Lin, Huang, and Zeelenberg 2006; Cooke, Meyvis, and Schwartz 2001; Bell and Bucklin 1999; Greenleaf and Lehmann 1995), counterfactual comparisons (Mandel and Lehman 1996), and anticipated emotional responses (Lemon, White,

and Winer 2002; Inman, Dyer, and Jia 1997; Tsiros and Mittal 2000; Henderson and Lyons 2013), few studies (with the notable exceptions of Kivetz and Keinan 2006, 2008) assess this phenomenon in relation to morality-laden contexts and consumers' moral perspectives, leaving the prescriptive immoral domain virtually unexplored. The present research begins to fill this gap, focusing specifically on the processes associated with consumers' confrontations of their prescriptive immorality (i.e., "immoral inactions") and the resulting downstream behaviors.

Because little research has examined this theorized domain, this research first establishes the reality of prescriptive immorality as a unique perspective of inaction in morality-laden contexts. Specifically, the present studies hypothesize that a consumer's use of a prescriptive moral lens will correlate to his/her perceiving inaction in morality laden contexts as less moral (more immoral) than consumers who use a proscriptive lens to view the same phenomenon.

> *H2: Greater adherence to a prescriptive moral lens is associated with a stronger perception of inaction in a morality-laden context as immoral.*

Moral Standards: Social Responsibility

Even among prescriptively lensed consumers, variation likely exists in the motivations underlying specific prosocial proclivities, with individuals sometimes adhering to a moral standard of self-responsibility and supporting causes that yield a certain degree of egocentric reward (Hoffman 1981; Campbell 1975), such as increasing their own welfare or the welfare of close others or receiving recognition or rewards (Baston and Shaw 1991). Other times, consumers invest their resources in support of certain causes for purely altruistic reasons (Batson 1991; Krebs 1970), expecting no reward or recognition in return (Simpson and Willer 2008; Baston 1998; Piliavan and Charng 1990). When consumers are altruistically motivated to engage in prosocial behavior, they likely do not reap any real benefits themselves (Kulow and Kramer

2016). Such altruistic motivations are likely related to their internalization of the moral standard of social-responsibility.

The moral standard of social-responsibility reflects the idea that all entities—individuals, groups, and organizations—are obligated to engage in behaviors that benefit society, especially when those receiving the aid are understood to be in need, unable to help themselves, and unable to reciprocate the help they get (Thomas et al. 2009; Berkowitz and Daniels 1964; Gomperz 1939). As with all moral standards, individuals usually learn about social-responsibility when they are children and then internalize and adopt the norm as their own to varying degrees (Fabes et al. 1999; Carlo et al. 1999).

Socially responsible individuals are more likely to engage in altruistic behaviors when (1) the recipient is perceived to have a great need (Fisher and Ackerman 1998), (2) the individual empathizes with the recipient (Batson et al. 1995), and (3) the individual feels personally responsible for the recipient (Piliavin and Charng 1990) Thus, people who have internalized the norm of social-responsibility to the greatest degree feel *obligated* to help others in need and do not expect any form of payback or reciprocity (Thomas et al. 2009). Sellars (1951) emphasizes that both the individual's anticipation that his/her action will generate positive results and the degree to which he/she attributes the action as applicable to others are key to differentiating between behaviors motivated by desire and those motivated by obligation. Specifically, one's desire is specific to him/her: "I want to donate blood." However, one's obligations relate to his/her feelings about conduct that is appropriate for everyone, as is the case with social-responsibility. "I ought to donate blood" essentially equates to a belief that "everyone ought to donate blood." Though nuanced, this difference is fundamental, Sellars (1951, p. 24) points out, because "our moral consciousness finds all the difference in the world between merely wanting

to do something and being morally obligated to do it," with the latter being a stronger motivator of actual behavior. For example, in their study of AIDS volunteers, Omoto and Snyder (1995) found that feeling an obligation to help others and believing that people should act on important issues were positively correlated with greater satisfaction with volunteering, which led to longer durations of volunteerism.

This research posits that, because the prescriptive moral lens emphasizes action, and because individuals engage in prosocial actions for different reasons, the adherence to the prescriptive lens will positively correlate to an internalization of both the moral standard of self-responsibility (i.e., engaging in prosocial behaviors that provide a perceived benefit to the actor) and the moral standard of social-responsibility (i.e., engaging in prosocial behaviors from which no perceived benefit to the self will be derived). However, the present research also suggests that one's internalization of such moral standards will mediate the relationship between one's prescriptive moral lens and the extent of his/her prosocial actions, with the internalization of social-responsibility leading to greater prosocial actions than the internalization of self-responsibility.

> *H3: The more a consumer adheres to the prescriptive moral lens, the more he/she will express an internalization of moral standards.*
>
> *H4: The greater a consumer's internalization of the moral standard of social-responsibility, the greater his/her prosocial actions.*
>
> *H5: The greater a consumer's internalization of the moral standard self-responsibility, the less his/her prosocial actions.*

Moral Emotions

Haidt (2003, p. 276) defines moral emotions as "linked to the interests or welfare either of society as a whole or at least of persons other than the judge or agent," and Kroll and Egan (2004) suggest that such feelings are motivational for engaging in both prescriptive and

proscriptive forms of moral behavior. Moral emotions are classified by their valence and by whether they are directed toward the self or toward someone or something else (Haidt 2003; Ortony, Clore, and Collins 1988).

When moral emotions are self-directed, they are referred to as “self-conscious” emotions, and they differ significantly from other-directed “basic” emotions (Tracy, Robins, and Tangney 2007). First, the experience of self-conscious emotions requires not only self-awareness, but also cognitive representations of the personal, relational, social, and collective selves (Tracy et al. 2007). This means the self-conscious emotions are not fully present until around age 3 (Izard, Ackerman, and Schultz 1999; Lagattuta and Thompson 2007; Lewis, Alessandri, and Sullivan 1992). On the other hand, basic emotions—including the moral emotions of anger and disgust (Haidt 2003)—emerge within the first nine months of life (Campos, Campos, and Barrett 1989; Izard 1971, 1992). Secondly, in contrast to their basic counterparts, self-conscious emotions do not have universally recognized, discrete facial expressions (Ekman and Friesan 2003; Tracy et al. 2007). Researchers (Izard et al. 1999; Lewis 2007) have posited that this might be because the self-conscious emotions are more cognitively complex than basic emotions. Finally, the elicitation of self-conscious emotions indicates that the individual has a high perception of self-accountability for the event at-hand (Smith and Lazarus 1993; Tracy et al. 2007; Russell and McAuley 1986).

The negatively valenced self-conscious moral emotions of guilt and embarrassment immediately punish behaviors (Tangney, Stuewig, and Mashek 2007) as consumers reflect upon their past or imagine their potential future actions and inactions. Therefore, these emotions act as “emotional moral barometer(s), providing immediate and salient feedback on our social and moral acceptability” (Tangney et al. 2007 p. 22). Though these emotions are similar, they are not

identical, and the differences between them are paramount in understanding each.

Guilt

The experience of guilt relates to one's feeling of deserving blame for a real or imagined violation of internalized personal and/or social standards (Watson and Spence 2007; Allard and White 2015; Chen and Sengupta 2014; Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton 1994; Dahl, Honea, and Manchanda 2003; Mukhopadhyay and Johar 2009; Peloza, White, and Shang 2013; Tracy and Robins 2004). Therefore, one's experience of guilt is related to his/her negative self-evaluation in a morality-laden context (Baumeister et al. 1994). Research (Allard and White 2015) suggests that this focus on the self (Dedeoğlu and Kazançoğlu 2010; Passyn and Sujan 2006; Smith and Ellsworth 1985; Tangney et al. 1996; Duke and Amir 2019; Tracy et al. 2007; Ellsworth and Smith 1988; Roseman 1991; Smith and Lazarus, 1993) leads consumers experiencing guilt to engage in behaviors aimed at self-improvement (i.e., repairing one's self-evaluation). Guilt has also been correlated to the prescriptive moral lens, as guilty individuals tend to focus on what they did not do right in a morality-laden situation (Carnes and Janoff-Bulman 2012).

The experience of guilt has been related to downstream behaviors in seemingly unrelated contexts (Kivetz and Zheng 2006; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998), including consumption behaviors such as shopping (O'Guinn and Faber 1989), reduced calorie intake (Choi, Li, and Samper 2019) binge-eating (Bybee et al. 1996) and prosocial behaviors such as volunteering, helping strangers, and cooperating (Nelissen, Dijker, and deVries 2007; De Hooge, Zeelenberg, and Breugelmans 2007; Ketelaar and Tung Au 2003; Regan, Williams, and Sparling 1972). Because research (Tangney and Dearing 2002; Lindsay-Hartz, De Rivera, and Mascolo 1995; Hoch and Loewenstein 1991; Ainslie 1975) suggests that consumers are motivated to engage in

behaviors to atone for those actions for which they feel guilty, social marketing initiatives often employ guilt appeals to attempt to entice consumers to direct their reparative behaviors toward the marketing's target domain (Agrawal and Duhachek 2010; Basil, Ridgway, and Basil 2008).

Because consumer guilt has been shown to influence consumers' altruistic responses to charity appeals (Basil et al. 2008; Chang 2011), marketers routinely seek to exploit consumer guilt—by both inducing and reducing it—via marketing communications (Dedeoğlu and Kazançoğlu 2010; Cotte and Ritchie 2005; Soscia, Busacca, and Pitrelli 2007). For example, during their biannual membership drives, public broadcasting stations have become experts at evoking guilt among their audience members through tactics such as pointing out that consumers could forego one $5 coffee each month to contribute $60 to their beloved programming (Thomas 2009).

Embarrassment

The "aversive and awkward emotional state" (Dahl, Manchanda, and Argo 2001, p. 474) induced by the self-conscious moral emotion of embarrassment (Tracy et al. 2007) is likely less cognitively complex than guilt, as evidenced by its emergence earlier in childhood (Lewis et al. 1989; Izard, Ackerman, and Schultz 1999). Embarrassment occurs when individuals feel as though they have "violated a social convention or disrupted ongoing social interactions" (Feinberg, Willer, and Keltner 2012, p. 1), and it is widely accepted that everyone experiences embarrassment at some point (Miller 1995). During this unpleasant experience, individuals react to their real, imagined, or anticipated negative evaluations from others, real or imagined (Moore et al. 2006; Dahl et al. 2001). Thus, embarrassment is considered a "uniquely social emotion" (Miller 1995, p. 316) and generally requires that a referent other is aware of the individual's faux pas, such that the experience of embarrassment indicates a perception that the other person is

judging the individual unfavorably (Sarkar and Sarkar 2017). It has thus been suggested that the tell-tale signs of embarrassment—sweating, blushing, fumbling, and unusual voice pitch—might have evolved to indicate to others that the individual is apologetic for failing to adhere to a given social norm (Goffman 1956). Therefore, the characteristic that most differentiates guilt from embarrassment is the former's emphasis on the self (i.e., judging oneself as failing to meet an important self-held moral norm) and the latter's emphasis on others (i.e., feeling that others will judge someone for failing to meet an important society-held moral norm).

As noted earlier, guilt and embarrassment share several characteristics, including their antecedents and functions. Therefore, though they are discrete emotions, they are likely correlated. This research therefore suggests that when prescriptively lensed consumers who have internalized the moral standard of social responsibility are confronted with their immoral inactions (i.e., instances during which they failed to meet their moral standards), they will experience greater degrees of both embarrassment and guilt.

> *H6: Confronting socially responsible prescriptively lensed consumers with their immoral inactions will cause them to experience a greater degree of guilt and embarrassment.*

Morality and Coping

Coping theory (Lazarus 1991, 1999; Smith and Ellsworth 1985; Lazarus and Folkman 1984) suggests that individuals constantly assess the situations they encounter, and that these appraisals generate emotional reactions. When situations evoke negative, stress-related emotions, individuals then seek to assess their potential to manage the stress-inducing situation (Lazarus 1991; Lazarus and Folkman 1984).

Building on past work related to self-regulation and control theory (Carver and Scheier 1999), Duhacheck and Oakley (2007) suggest that coping strategies might be best understood by considering whether the tactics employed in their use are motivated by approach or avoidance.

Under this paradigm, coping strategies traditionally understood as problem- and/or emotion-focused could be classified as approach-motivated if they serve the purpose of directly addressing the stressor or they could be classified as avoidance-motivated if they serve to drive the consumer away from the source of his/her stress (Krohne 2002; Roth and Cohen 1986). To this end, this research posits that various tactics related to problem-focused, emotion-focused, and support-seeking coping strategies might result in behavioral outcomes meant to address or atone for the consumer's perceived source of his/her experienced negative emotion, with the undertaking of such approach-motivated strategies resulting in specific behavioral outcomes. For example, research (Luce, Bettman,and Payne 2001) shows that the employment of approach-motivated coping strategies in response to the stress evoked by a difficult trade-off results in behaviors like working harder, whereas the use of avoidance-motivated coping strategies results in seeking to avoid the trade-off altogether. Extant research also supports theorizing that the traditionally termed problem-focused, emotion-focused, and support-seeking coping strategies might work in tandem to achieve an overarching goal (via approach motivation) or avoid an overarching anti-goal (via avoidance motivation). For example, Moore et al. (2006) found that 96.9% of their participants used at least one coping strategy and most used an average of 3.71 tactics related to emotion-focused coping, 7.42 tactics related to problem-focused coping, .85 support-seeking tactics, and .5 avoidance tactics to control, reduce, or prevent their embarrassment related to purchasing condoms.

Though embarrassment is generally understood to evoke avoidance motivations, as consumers seek to distance themselves from the source of their embarrassment (Miller 2007; Moore et al. 2006), and guilt is generally considered an approach-motivating emotion, as guilty consumers seek to overcome the source of their guilt (Agrawal and Duhachek 2010; Basil et al.

2008; Amodio et al. 2007; Tangney et al. 1996; Lindsay-Hartz et al. 1995), the present research suggests that consumers experiencing either emotion might engage in approach- and/or avoidance-motivated coping strategies. Thus, in line with extant literature (Duhachek and Oakley 2007; Carver and Scheier 1999), this research categorizes approach-motivated coping as strategies employed to move the actor toward a goal/desired end-state (which necessarily also moves him/her away from an anti-goal/undesired end-state). In relation to the traditionally assessed categories of problem-focused, emotion-focused, and support-seeking coping strategies (Duhachek 2005; Lazarus and Folkman 1984), this research posits that, though an observed behavioral outcome might be most easily understood as the manifestation of a consumer's problem-focused coping (Patrick et al. 2009b), it is likely that he/she engaged in several emotion-focused and/or support-seeking approach-motivated tactics in preparation for such action (Moore et al. 2006). For example, a consumer who is observed to donate blood after opting against doing so for several years (a manifestation of problem-focused coping) likely had to overcome his/her negative self-conscious emotions via emotion-focused coping and might have sought advice about the best course of action from a trusted friend (support-seeking coping). Therefore, the present research suggests that prescriptively lensed consumers who experience greater degrees of guilt and embarrassment when confronted with instances whereby their immoral inactions caused them to fall short of their internalized moral standard of social responsibility will employ various degrees of approach-motivated coping. The degree to which they use such coping strategies will interact with their experience of guilt and embarrassment to produce distinct observable behaviors.

> *H7: The consumer's use of approach-motivated coping strategies will interact with his/her experience of the negatively valenced moral emotions of guilt and embarrassment to produce specific behavioral outcomes.*

Immoral Inaction

The extant literature reviewed hereto suggests that marketers would benefit most from framing communications to illicit consumer guilt, which would encourage compensatory behaviors, if the consumer employed approach-motivated coping aimed at solving the presented moral dilemma. However, such studies (Agrawal and Duhachek 2010; Basil et al. 2008) assess contexts whereby consumers feel guilty for a past *action*, not a past *inaction*. Similarly, studies relating the socially responsible feeling of embarrassment deal with instances where consumers feel that others will judge them for something they have *done* (e.g., buying condoms), not something they *have not done*.

In such cases of embarrassment, the observed undesirable outcomes (i.e., reduced purchase intent and/or avoidance of the brand or retailer) are behavioral manifestations of the consumers' avoidance-motivated coping strategies (Patrick et al. 2009b), as he/she seeks to avoid the anti-goal of the action for which he/she is embarrassed. However, in cases of immoral inaction, the marketer must frame the inaction as the anti-goal and the consumer must be motivated to avoid that inaction. Therefore, though guilt has been associated with more desirable outcomes when consumers are confronted with their past actions, as consumers are motivated to atone for those actions, this research suggests that embarrassment might be a more effective driver of desired marketing outcomes when consumers are confronted with their past inactions.

> *H8: Under conditions of immoral inaction, the consumers' experience of embarrassment, rather than guilt, will result in compensatory downstream behaviors.*

Specifically, the present research posits that, though being confronted with one's past immoral inactions will enhance the experience embarrassment and guilt, the context overall will serve to evoke a contrasting psychological mechanism that reverses previous findings related to the relative superiority of guilt and inferiority of embarrassment for resulting in downstream

compensatory behaviors. This research suggests that this reversal occurs because of the aforementioned approach and avoidance motivations associated with each emotion.

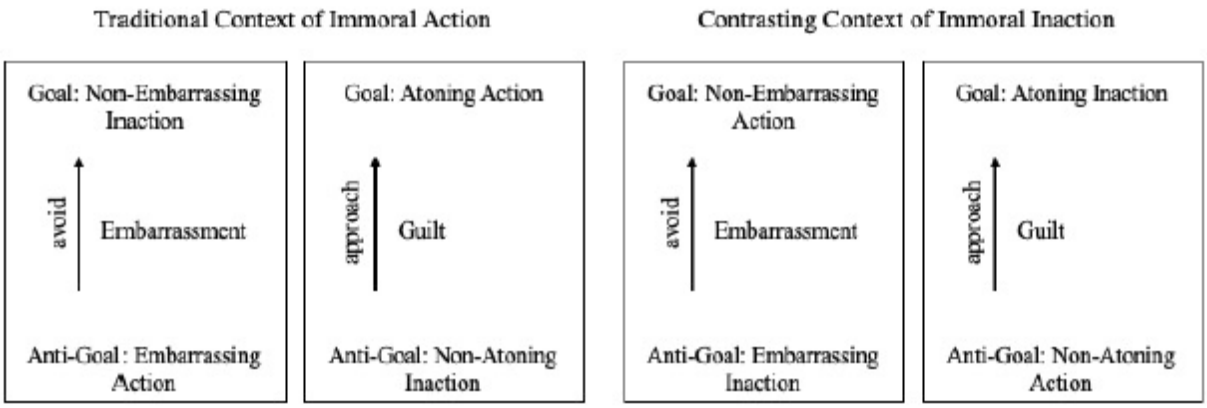
In the extant literature, consumers either seek to avoid an action for which they are embarrassed or to approach an action that they perceive as atoning. The opposite of action is inaction. Therefore, in the traditional view, embarrassed consumers are avoiding the anti-goal of action by engaging in coping strategies that move them toward the goal of inaction. Conversely, guilty consumers employ coping strategies that enable them to approach the goal of atoning behaviors, while moving farther away from doing nothing to atone for their guilt.

The present research proposes that the counter-situation of immoral inaction reverses the positions of action and inaction as goals and anti-goals, such that repeated inaction becomes the anti-goal that embarrassed consumers will employ coping strategies to avoid while they pursue the goal of compensatory action. The same is theoretically true in the case of guilt: The contrasting situation of immoral inaction flips the positions of action as the goal and inaction as the anti-goal to make inaction the goal which guilty consumers approach (see Figure 2). Therefore, a consumer who feels guilty for not giving money to a homeless person might atone for that guilt by not giving to other homeless people. The thinking underlying such a decision might be: “I do not know that this homeless person is any more deserving of help than the one I did not give to earlier; therefore, I should not give to this person either, because doing so would imply that he/she is more worthy.” Though it is beyond the scope of this research, future studies should assess whether consumers who feel guilty as the result of past inactions view future actions or inactions as more atoning. Finally, because approach-motivated coping serves to move a consumer toward a goal and away from an anti-goal, guilty consumers using approach-motivated coping in situations of immoral inaction would engage in tactics to move them toward

the goal of inaction, whereas embarrassed consumers employing the same coping strategies would move toward the goal of action.

> *H9a: The use of approach-motivated coping strategies by consumers who are embarrassed by their immoral inactions will result in more prosocial and compensatory behaviors.*
>
> *H9b: The use of approach-motivated coping strategies by consumers who feel guilty about their immoral inactions will result in less prosocial and compensatory behaviors.*

Figure 2: The reversal of goals and anti-goals in the context of immoral inaction



Behavioral Outcomes

Like the stress consumers experience in response to their actions, they must also cope with stress induced by their inactions. Therefore, when responses to immoral inaction are evaluated within a coping framework it becomes evident that the use of different coping responses to deal with the stress of experienced negative emotions brought about by being confronted with one's past immoral inactions will result in different behavioral outcomes. For example, inaction inertia and dissonance reduction might be viewed as outcomes related to avoidance-motived coping, as both behaviors decrease the likelihood will take action to remedy or atone for his/her past failures (Patrick et al. 2009b). Approach-motivated coping strategies, however, are more likely to produce outcomes related to compensatory behaviors, as consumers

take action to repair the stress-inducing situation. This employment of approach-motived coping might include tactics related to problem-focused, emotion-focused, and support-seeking strategies as consumers seek to control their emotional response to a stressful event (emotion-focused coping), seek guidance for what to do (support seeking), and then engage in an observable behavior (problem-focused coping) (Duhachek and Oakley 2007).

Compensatory Behaviors

Research (Conway and Peetz 2012) suggests that when consumers feel that they are morally deficient (e.g., when they perceive themselves to have committed an immoral (in)action), they become motivated to engage in cleansing behaviors (Zhong and Liljequist 2006) to compensate for their past (in)actions. Commonly studied compensatory behaviors include engaging in (un)related prosocial behaviors, seeking self- and/or social-enhancement, and engaging in greater degrees of self-control.

Prosocial Behaviors

The consumer domain is replete with studies related to prosocial behaviors. Research in this area assesses providing donations (Goenka and van Osselaer 2019; Zhou, Kim, and Wang 2019; Lee et al. 2014; Zhou et al. 2012), volunteerism (Lee and Shrum 2012, Winterich and Zhang 2014), or other support to charities (Small and Simonsohn 2008; Kristofferson et al. 2013); helping behaviors (Duclos and Barasch 2014); sharing (Aspara and Wittkowski 2019); and ethical consumption (Olson et al. 2016; Tezer and Bodur 2019).

Self- and Social-Enhancement

Allard and White (2015) demonstrate that consumers' experience of guilt is related to their preference for products that promote self-enhancement—i.e., those that claim to enable the

improvement of a self-relevant aspect of one's moral, physical, or intellectual self (Sedikides 2009; Sedikides and Strube 1997, 1995). These results are logical, given guilt's association with the self-perception that one has fallen short of a personally held moral standard, which would encourage an individual to seek to atone for this shortcoming by enhancing related or other aspects of him/herself (Allard and White 2015). Other research has shown that embarrassed consumers are generally more concerned with social-enhancement. For example, Blair and Roese (2013) show that consumers who are embarrassed about—and therefore anticipate others' judgement for—items in their shopping basket purchase additional items in an effort to counteract the undesired identity they perceive the embarrassing items as communicating. Additionally, consumers who have experienced the social sanction of exclusion spend considerably more on products to enhance their social affiliations (Mead et al. 2010).

Self-Control

Self-control represents resisting temptations that one might regret later and relates to the ability to alter one's own states and responses (Baumeister 2002). Research suggests that consumers who experience negatively valenced self-conscious emotions might attempt to alleviate these feelings by engaging in behaviors that make them feel more balanced through heightened self-control (Dedeoğlu and Kazançoğlu 2010). For example, consumers who feel that they have over-indulged might attempt to regain a feeling of self-control by subsequently choosing utilitarian, rather than hedonic, choices (Ramanathan and Williams 2007). Furthermore, some scholars (Geyer and Baumeister 2005; Vitell et al. 2009) have equated self-control to an individual's capacity to behave morally (though this definition inherently relates to the proscriptive view of morality, as it depends on one's ability to override innate immoral tendencies), and suggest that individuals must have self-control in order to behave virtuously.

Dissonance Reduction

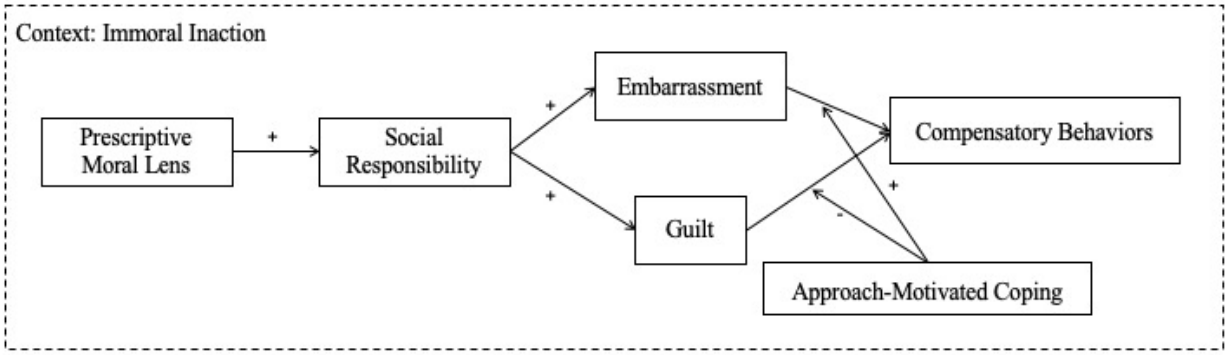
Dissonance reduction compiles several lower-order coping tactics, including emotional support, positive reappraisal, and denial, all of which fall into the higher-order categories of support-seeking and emotion-focused coping strategies (Patrick et al. 2009b; Arkes, Kung, and Hutzel 2002). Dissonance reduction occurs when consumers cognitively devalue the original choice opportunity and favor their selected alternatives (Brehm 1956) to reduce any negative feelings he/she is experiencing, to increase the perceive value of the chosen alternative, and/or to emphasize a positive outcome gleaned from the situation (e.g., it was a learning experience) (Lazarus 1991, 1999; Smith and Ellsworth 1985). For example, a prescriptively lensed consumer might make the assertion "I failed to act morally when I did not make a donation to that organization," which would arouse his/her dissonance. To cope and reduce the experience of such dissonance, the same consumer might seek to convince him/herself that the organization seeking donations was not the most charitable to those it seeks to serve. Such rationalizations serve not only to reduce the consumer's current experience of dissonance, but also reduce the likelihood that he/she would donate to that organization in the future.

Inaction Inertia

Tykocinski and Pittman (1998, p. 607) define the inaction inertia effect as the phenomenon in which "forgoing an attractive action opportunity (initial inaction) decreases the likelihood that subsequent action will be taken in the same domain." Research suggests that consumers who perceive that they have missed a favorable purchase opportunity (e.g., a limited-time sale) are less likely to purchase the product later, compared with others who were unaware of the purchase opportunity or with situations in which the foregone product was significantly cheaper than the current or future product (Tykocinski and Pittman 2001; Zeelenberg and van

Putten 2005; Tykocinski, Pittman, and Tuttle 1995). Consumers experiencing negatively valenced self-conscious moral emotions that provoke avoidance coping strategies might also opt to forego any future actions related to the initial inaction, even if the initial inaction was actually meant to only be a delay in action (Henderson and Lyons 2012). The inaction inertia effect has been demonstrated by several authors (Tykocinski and Pittman 1998, 2001, 2004; Tykocinski, Israel, and Pittman 2004; Tykocinski et al. 1995; Arkes et al. 2002; Butler and Highhouse 2000; Kumar 2004) in contexts ranging from fitness center memberships, vacations and ski passes, apartment rentals, vehicle purchases, gambles, and more. However, there remains a lack of research on moral contexts, such as making charitable donations, purchasing items that benefit nonprofit organizations, or engaging in behaviors (such as recycling) that have prosocial benefits, regardless of when they are undertaken.

Figure 3: Conceptual model



Compensatory behavioral outcomes likely align most closely with the behavior marketers seek to evoke when attempting to persuade consumers to overcome past immoral inactions. Dissonance reducing strategies and inaction inertia might be the desired behavioral outcomes for some social marketing campaigns (e.g., anti-smoking campaigns that seek to encourage consumers to stop engaging in a behavior); however, given their emphasis on action rather than inaction, they are beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, the studies herein will emphasize

specific compensatory behaviors related to prosocial actions, self-enhancement, and self-control. Though it is suspected that all of these outcomes will be more closely associated with guilt in traditional settings, this research posits that the unique context of immoral inaction will reverse these findings, such that embarrassment leads to compensatory behaviors (see Figure 3).

METHODOLOGY

Plan of Studies

This research examines the notion that embarrassment, a negatively valenced self-conscious moral emotion stemming from the perception that one will be judged by others for failing to meet a moral norm, leads to compensatory consumption behaviors when confronted with their past immoral inactions. The studies herein contrast embarrassment with a similar negatively valenced self-conscious moral emotion, guilt, which stems from one's assessment that he/she has fallen short of a personal moral standard, and which has been shown to increase compensatory consumption behaviors in situations where consumers seek to atone for past immoral actions. The pilot study is a field survey that provides preliminary support that embarrassment (vs. guilt) leads to greater compensatory consumption behaviors. Study 1 establishes the consumer's use of a prescriptive moral lens as the foundation on which is built his/her interpretation of inaction as immoral in a morality-laden context. Study 2 assesses the theorized role of the consumer's adherence to the moral standard of social-responsibility and his/her experience of guilt and embarrassment when confronted with his/her immoral inactions. Study 3 assesses the effects of consumers' experiences of guilt and embarrassment and their use of approach-motivated coping strategies onto various outcomes. Finally, study 4 tests the full conceptual model, providing evidence that, in circumstances of immoral inaction, consumers' use of approach-motivated coping strategies increases the effectiveness of embarrassment in driving compensatory behaviors.

Pilot Study

As an initial test of the overarching hypothesis that embarrassment leads to problem-focused coping behaviors under conditions of immoral inaction, I conducted a field study. My

key prediction was that consumers who experienced embarrassment at being confronted with their immoral inaction would choose healthier snack items than those who experienced guilt in the same context. The selection of less-indulgent foods has been associated with consumers attempting to cope with their feelings of guilt for past actions. Research (Giner-Sorolla 2001; Hofmann and Fisher 2012; Ramanathan and Williams 2007; Zemack-Rugar, Bettman, and Fitzsimons 2007) suggests that guilt-ridden consumers enact greater self-control in their food choices because the selection and consumption of indulgent foods can exacerbate feelings of guilt. I therefore assume that, in situations of immoral inaction, similar outcomes will result from consumers' experience of embarrassment, rather than guilt.

Method

Forty-eight students enrolled in an undergraduate consumer behavior course at a large Southwestern university were informed on the first day of the spring semester that the class was conducting a donation drive for the university's food pantry, which provided nutritional assistance to students and staff (see Appendix). The students had 10 weeks to procure their donations and to leave them in a labeled box outside of the instructor's office door. A representative from the food pantry made a brief presentation to the students during the third week of class, and they received an additional reminder two weeks before donations were due.

On the day that the donations were due, the 44 students in attendance (M_{age} = 22, 59% female) were taken in groups to the university's behavioral research lab, where they completed a survey for class credit. Students were first asked whether they participated in the food drive and were then provided a space to write their rationale for (not) participating. They were then offered a snack as a token of appreciation for participating in the food drive. They selected from 18 items (see Appendix). Two independent coders blind to the purpose of the study had previously rated

each item's healthfulness based on the Environmental Working Group's food scores (Environmental Working Group 2020; IRR = 58.82%). A third coder resolved all disagreements. The average of these measures served as the scale for my dependent variable. Finally, students completed measures of guilt (α = .9) and embarrassment (α = .92) from the discrete emotions questionnaire (DEQ; Harmon-Jones, Bastion, and Harmon-Jones 2016) before providing demographic information.

Results

Nine students indicated that they had contributed to the course's food drive and were subsequently omitted from analyses. Therefore, the final sample size for analyses was 34 (M_{age} = 22, 60% female). Regression analyses revealed that, for students who did not contribute to the food drive, the experience of embarrassment was significantly positively correlated with their selection of a healthier snack item ($F(1, 33) = 5.77$, $\beta = .35$, $p = .022$, $R^2 = .12$), whereas their experience of guilt ($F(1, 199) = 2.52$, $\beta = .19$, $p = .122$, $R^2 = .05$) was not.

Discussion

In a field setting, the results of my pilot study indicate preliminary support for the prediction that embarrassment, rather than guilt, leads to problem-focused coping behaviors in situations immoral inaction. Though the field setting allowed for an examination of consumers' actual behaviors in a naturalistic setting, I use more controlled methods in subsequent studies.

Study 1

Study 1 measures participants' adherence to prescriptive or proscriptive moral lenses and then assesses the degree to which they perceive that the behaviors—littering, picking up litter, and walking past litter—in three pretested images are moral or immoral.

Pretest

Sixty-one students (M_{age} = 22, 57.4% female) participated in a brief study that asked them to "view a series of images and to indicate which is most representative of a given concept" and to provide their reasoning for the image they chose. Participants then viewed five images for each of three categories—littering, picking up litter, and neither picking up litter nor littering—in a randomized order (see Appendix). For the littering category, the majority of participants (39.3%) selected the first image; for the picking up category, the majority of participants (63.9%) selected the fifth image; and for the neither littering nor picking up category, the majority of participants (29.5%) selected the fourth image. A Pearson chi-square test confirmed that the order in which participants viewed the images had no significant effect on the images selected for the littering (Pearson chi-square = 10.43, p = .236), picking up (Pearson chi-square = 10.27, p = .246), or neither (Pearson chi-square = 7.04, p = .532) categories. The most exemplar image for each category was used to represent that behavior in study 1.

Method

Six hundred twenty-two Amazon Mechanical Turk (M_{age} = 42, 60.9% female) workers participated in this study to "assess how people interpret various actions related to the environment" for a nominal payment. Participants responded to items related to their moral lenses (α = .96, see Appendix) and were then randomly assigned to view one of three pre-tested images that depicted (1) a group of people picking up litter, (2) someone throwing trash over a bridge into a littered waterway, or (3) someone walking past an overflowing outdoor garbage bin with trash piled beside it. To increase the time participants spent processing the image, they were required to briefly describe what was depicted in the picture. They then completed a manipulation check and responded to items related to the informativeness, emotionality,

interestingness, and morality of the images they had viewed. The first three questions were fillers, designed to reduce participants' guessing about the purpose of the study, and were not used in analysis. Participants then indicated their sex and age and the degree to which they identified as being religious, spiritual, liberal, or conservative.

Results

Manipulation Check

The manipulation check was designed to assess whether participants (1) paid attention to and (2) accurately processed the image that they saw. Specifically, the item asked whether the activity in the image that the participant saw was most closely described as "(a) someone littering, (b) someone walking past litter, or (c) people cleaning up litter." Six participants incorrectly identified the littering image as "people cleaning up litter," and 13 incorrectly identified it as "someone walking past litter." Thirteen participants incorrectly identified the image of people collecting litter as "someone littering," and 11 incorrectly identified it as "someone walking past litter." Finally, 14 participants incorrectly identified the image of the person walking past litter as "someone littering," and 20 participants incorrectly identified it as "people cleaning up litter." To ensure the quality of the data, these 77 cases were removed from further analysis. This *a priori* decision reduced the final sample size to 545, with 171 participants in the moral (picking up litter) condition (M_{age} = 43, 60.8% female), 195 participants in the immoral (littering) condition (M_{age} = 42, 59% female), and 179 participants in the ambiguous/inaction (neither littering nor picking up) condition (M_{age} = 41, 63.1% female).

Moral Lens

Participants' usage of prescriptive or proscriptive moral lenses was measured using four semantic differential items (α = .95, see Appendix) ranging from 1 (prescriptive) to 10

(proscriptive). Participants' summated score on these items was used to obtain an overall measure and a median split was performed to dichotomize the data for comparison. Participants' group memberships and demographic information is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Study 1 Participants' Demographics by Conditions

Moral Lens	Image (n)	Age (M)	Sex (female)
Prescriptive	Moral (87)	44	60.9%
	Immoral (90)	42	62.2%
	Ambiguous/Inaction (78)	42	61.5%
Proscriptive	Moral (84)	42	60.7%
	Immoral (105)	41	56.2%
	Ambiguous/Inaction (101)	40	64.4%

$F_{age}(5, 539) = .926$, $p = .464$; Pearson $\chi^2_{sex} = 1.57$, $p = .905$

Perceived Morality

The self-regulatory model of morality (Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, and Hepp 2009) suggests that prescriptively lensed consumers will view inaction more immorally than proscriptively lensed consumers. However, there is generally little disagreement within a culture that a prosocial behavior (e.g., picking up litter) is more moral than an antisocial behavior (e.g., littering). Therefore, I presumed that there would be no significant difference between the ratings of morality for the moral and immoral conditions, regardless of moral lens. Furthermore, if this presumption is supported, the prescriptive x immoral and proscriptive x moral conditions should be excluded from further analysis for a more accurate interpretation of the prescriptive x ambiguous and proscriptive x ambiguous conditions, respectively.

The morality of the images was measured via a summated scale ($\alpha = .93$) combining participants ratings of the morality and immorality (reverse-coded) of the image they saw (on a scale of 1 = "not at all" to 10 = "very much") with their opinion (on a scale of 1 = "extremely

bad" to 7 = "extremely good") of the activity depicted in the image. A two-way ANOVA indicated significant differences between groups ($F(5, 539) = 655.95$, $p = .000$). As anticipated, Tukey planned contrasts revealed no significant difference between the perceived morality of the immoral ($p = .153$) or moral ($p = .198$), regardless of participants' use of a prescriptive ($M_{immoral} = 1.74$, $M_{moral} = 8.28$) or proscriptive ($M_{immoral} = 2.1$, $M_{moral} = 7.92$) moral lens. However, also as theorized, Tukey planned contrasts revealed that participants using a prescriptive moral lens viewed the ambiguous image as significantly less moral ($M = 3.5$, $p = .000$) than those using a proscriptive lens ($M = 4.24$).

Discussion

The results of study 1 support theorizing that consumers using a prescriptive moral lens view inaction in a morality-laden context, such as littering, as more immoral (less moral) than those using a proscriptive moral lens. Therefore, findings from study 1 support the theorized typology (Figure 4) of how prescriptively and proscriptively lensed consumers view various (in)actions.

Figure 4: Study 1 Results

	Prescriptive Lens	Proscriptive Lens
Moral Behavior	Virtuous Action	Virtuous Inaction
Immoral Behavior	Non-virtuous Inaction	Non-virtuous Action

Study 2

Study 2 builds upon the findings of study 1 to assess the relationship between consumers' undertaking of a prescriptive moral lens and their adherence to the moral standard of social-responsibility. Furthermore, study 2 assesses the proposed boundary condition of immoral

inaction as enhancing the experience of guilt and embarrassment among prescriptively lensed consumers who have internalized social-responsibility.

Method

Two hundred one Amazon Mechanical Turk workers (M_{age} = 38, 51.2% male) participated in this study for a nominal payment. Participants first responded to items measuring the degree to which they ascribe to a prescriptive moral lens (α = .85, see Appendix) before being told that they would be playing The Game of Rich and Poor (adapted from Duke and Amir 2019).

Game Introduction

The introduction to the game informed participants that they would be playing with other Mturk workers from either the current session or a past session and that the decisions they made would affect both how much money they could win and how much money other participants could win. After responding to an attention check (see Appendix), participants chose one of two options labeled “A’ and “B,” which they were told would assign them to play the game as either a rich or a poor player. Participants were unaware of which option corresponded to which wealth level, and all players were assigned to the rich wealth level, regardless of which option they selected. Full text presented to participants for this and all remaining game situations and choices is found in the Appendix.

After making their selection, participants were presented with a screen that read “You chose Option (A/B). This option assigns you to the RICH wealth level. This means that you will begin the game with more wealth ($10), giving you an advantage over POOR players, who begin the game with $0.” On the next page, participants learned that poor players would complete a difficult task in attempt to win $5 while rich players would choose whether to keep their game

money or to donate to a poor player. Participants also read that, at the end of the study, one player, regardless of wealth status, would be selected to receive all of the money he/she had accumulated in the game.

Donation Decision

On the following page, all participants chose one of two options labeled “Keep my money” and “Make a donation” to select whether they would give game money to a poor player. Those who elected to keep their money were then presented with a screen that read, “You have chosen to keep your game money and not to donate to a poor player. On the next screen, you will be presented with a list of ID codes for MTurk workers who are playing the game as poor players. The Mturk worker who’s ID code you select will be notified that they were paired with your ID code and that they will not receive a donation.” Then, on the next page, they were presented with a set of six randomly generated “poor player IDs” and asked to select the player who would not be eligible for a donation. Participants who elected to make a donation were then presented with a screen whereby they entered the amount of game money they wished to keep and the amount they wished to donate. On the next screen, they were presented with a set of six randomly generated “poor player IDs” and asked to select the player who would receive their donation. All participants then completed items related to social-responsibility ($\alpha = .84$) and self-responsibility ($\alpha = .86$) before indicating the degree to which they experienced various emotions related to guilt ($\alpha = .92$) and embarrassment ($\alpha = .90$) (see Appendix).

Results

Prosocial Behavior

For the comparison of prosocial behavior by degree to which participants employed a prescriptive moral lens, the prescriptive scale described earlier was split at its median (8) into

high and low groups. Analysis was then conducted only on participants who chose to donate to a poor player (n = 117). A two-way ANOVA revealed directional but insignificant (p = .526) differences between amounts donated by participants in the high (M_{54} = 4.26) and low prescriptive morality (M_{63} = 4.01) groups.

Moral Standards

To determine the relationship between consumers' higher utilization of a prescriptive moral lens and their adherence to the moral standards of social- and self-responsibility, participants' measured prescriptive morality were regressed onto the degree to which they claimed to have a sense of self- and social-responsibility. Analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between participants' use of a prescriptive moral lens and the degree to which they felt self-responsibility ($F(1, 199) = 6.27$, $\beta = .26$, $p = .013$, $R^2 = .03$) and the degree to which they felt social-responsibility ($F(1, 199) = 6.5$, $\beta = .2$, $p = .012$, $R^2 = .03$).

Mediation Analyses

To assess the hypothesized roles of self- and social-responsibility as underlying mechanisms for the observed relationship between prescriptive morality and prosocial outcomes, mediation analyses were conducted using PROCESS model 4 (Hayes 2018). Results indicated that internalization of social-responsibility completely mediated the relationship between use of a prescriptive moral lens and donation behaviors ($F (2, 198) = 8.91$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = .08$). Adherence to the moral standard of self-responsibility also partially mediated the relationship between prescriptive morality and donations ($F (2, 198) = 9.89$, $p = .000$, $R_2 = .09$), but, as hypothesized, the relationship between self-responsibility and donation was negative (ß = -.23, p = .000).

Moderated Mediation Analysis

To assess the theorized function of immoral inaction as a boundary condition that serves to enhance the experience of guilt and embarrassment among prescriptively lensed consumers who have internalized the moral standard of social-responsibility, moderated mediation analyses using PROCESS model 14 (Hayes 2018). Results indicated that participants' immoral inaction—measured via their decision not to donate to a poor player—significantly enhanced their feelings of both embarrassment (F (196, 4) = 10.38, p = .000) and guilt (F (4, 196) = 16.69, p = .000). Complete results are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Study 2 Moderated Mediation Results

Predictor		**M**		**Embarrassment (Y_1)**		**Guilt (Y_2)**
Prescriptive Moral Lens (X)	a_1 →	.2 (.012)	c'_1 →	-.04 (.630)	c'_2 →	.01 (.876)
Social-responsibility (M)			b_{11} →	.26 (.004)	b_{12} →	.37 (.000)
Immoral Inaction (W)			b_{21} →	-1.39 (.166)	b_{22} →	-.57 (.557)
W x M			b_{31} →	.35 (.014)	b_{32} →	.31 (.026)
Model Summary			F (4, 196) = 16.69 p = .000 R^2 = .25		F (4, 196) = 16.69 p = .000 R^2 = .25	

Discussion

Study 2 results support the theorized relationship between consumers' use of a prescriptive moral lens and their adherence to the moral standard of social-responsibility. Results also indicate that social-responsibility—rather than self-responsibility—fully mediates the relationship between prescriptive morality and observable prosocial outcomes, such as giving to the poor. Finally, results support the theorized boundary condition of immoral inaction as enhancing feelings of guilt and embarrassment among prescriptively lensed consumers who have internalized the social-responsibility.

Next, study 3 examines the hypothesized relationships between consumers' experiences of guilt and embarrassment and their undertaking of approach-motivated coping strategies to resolve such feelings.

Study 3

In study 3, participants' experiences of guilt and embarrassment are manipulated to test the hypothesized relationships between each of these dimensions and their associated behavioral outcomes when consumers use approach-motivated coping strategies.

Method

Two hundred eighty-nine Amazon Mturk workers (M_{age} = 40, 55% female) participated in this study for a nominal payment. Upon beginning the study, participants learned that they would be participating in a "two-part study," the first part of which dealt "an individual's ability to recall emotional situations." Participants were then randomly assigned to either a guilt (n = 147, M_{age} = 40, 61% female) or embarrassment (n = 142, M_{age} = 40, 57% female) condition. Participants in the guilt condition were then provided with a definition of guilt that read, "People experience guilt when they feel that they deserve blame for falling short of an important personal standard. Guilt is unique because it occurs when someone feels responsible for causing harm to themselves or to someone else." They were then asked to write a detailed description of a recent event that made them feel guilty. Participants in the embarrassment condition were provided with a definition of embarrassment that read, "People experience embarrassment when they feel that they will be judged for falling short of a social standard. Embarrassment is unique because it depends on real, imagined, or anticipated negative evaluations from other people, real or imagined." They were then asked to write a detailed description of a recent event that made them feel embarrassed. Between the definition and writing, participants responded to an attention-

check item about the definitions of guilt and embarrassment (see Appendix). Participants then responded to the DEQ items (Harmon-Jones et al. 2016) for guilt, embarrassment, and relaxation. The relaxation items were included as fillers. Next, participants indicated the degree to which they engaged in approach-motivated coping strategies ($\alpha = .91$; see Appendix) before moving onto the last part of the study, which assessed their consumption decisions. Participants' indicated behaviors related to their allocation of an unexpected $100 and their preference for a cooking app that promoted self- or social-enhancement (see Appendix) served as the dependent variables.

Results

Manipulation Checks

T-tests confirmed significant differences in the average experiences of guilt (t (288) = 5.34, p = .000) and embarrassment (t (288) = -5.81, p = .000) reported by participants in the guilt (M_{guilt} = 6.92, $M_{embarrassment}$ = 5.81) and embarrassment (M_{guilt} = 5.34, $M_{embarrassment}$ = 7.39) conditions. Thus, the manipulations appear to have been successful.

Moderation Analyses

Participants' assignment to the guilt condition was coded as 0 and their assignment to the embarrassment condition was coded as 1. Moderation analyses were then conducted using PROCESS model 1 (Hayes 2018) to assess the theorized interaction effects of consumers' experience of guilt or embarrassment and their use of approach-motivated coping strategies onto their downstream behaviors. Results indicated a significant interaction effect between consumers' experience of embarrassment and their use of approach-motivated coping onto the amount that they indicated that they would save for themselves (F (3, 285) = 7.13, p = .000). Approach-motivated coping also significantly interacted with consumers' experience of guilt to

influence their indicated donation amount (F (3, 285) = 8.25, p = .000). Finally, there was a significant interaction between embarrassment and coping onto consumers' preference for a cooking app that fostered self-enhancement at the 90% CI (F (3, 285) = 17.93, p = .000). These results are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: Study 3 Moderation Results

Predictor		Amount to Save for Self (Y_1)		Amount to Donate (Y_1)		Self-Enhancement Product (Y_2)
Emotion (X) (0 = Guilt, 1 = Embarrassment)	a_1 →	-21.86 (.053)	c'_1 →	11.98 (.033)	c'_2 →	1.19 (.258)
Coping (W)	b_{21} →	-20.3 (.012)	b_{22} →	10.01 (.013)	b_{23} →	1.89 (.012)
W x X	b_{31} →	3.73 (.038)	b_{32} →	-1.8 (.044)	b_{33} →	-.29 (.079)
Model Summary	F (3, 285) = 7.13 p = .000 R^2 = .07		F (4, 196) = 8.25 p = .000 R^2 = .08		F (4, 196) = 17.93 p = .000 R^2 = .16	

Discussion

Study 3 provides support for the theorized interaction effects of emotion and approach-motivated coping onto behavioral outcomes, while also supporting extant literature related to consumers' experience of guilt, their use of coping, and prosocial outcomes.

Next, study 4 assesses the full model to examine the effects of the unique context of immoral inaction onto downstream behaviors, through the interaction of consumers' experience of guilt and/or embarrassment and their use of approach-motivated coping strategies.

Study 4

Study 4 builds upon the previous studies by manipulating the theorized boundary condition of immoral inaction and assessing its effects on the traditionally accepted (and hereto supported) relationship between the model's constructs. In this study, I assess the entirety of the

proposed conceptual model to suggest that, under conditions of immoral inaction, consumers are more likely to engage in compensatory consumption when they experience embarrassment, rather than guilt, and that the specific coping strategy employed by embarrassed consumers in these situations determines the observable behavioral action in which they engage.

Method

Two hundred sixty-nine Amazon Mechanical Turk workers (M_{age} = 32, 57% female) participated in this study "designed to measure the effect of participants' ability to recall specific events on their downstream behaviors" for a nominal payment. Participants were randomly assigned to either an immoral inaction (n = 137, Mage = 31, 56.7% female) or neutral condition (n = 134, Mage = 32, 61% female). Participants in the immoral inaction condition received a writing task that instructed them to "please describe a time when you had the opportunity to do the right thing, but you chose to do nothing." Participants in the neutral condition received a writing task that instructed them to "please describe a time when you felt completely neutral about the situation taking place and the people involved" (adapted from Allard and White 2015). Participants then completed a manipulation check (see Appendix) and the measures for adherence to a prescriptive moral lens described in studies 1-3. Participants then completed measures for embarrassment, guilt, and relaxation, approach-motivated coping, use of the prescriptive moral lens, and internalization of the moral standard of social-responsibility, as outlined in previous studies. Each of the aforementioned measures was counter-balanced via being presented to participants at random to control for any measurement biases. Finally, participants completed the measures for the dependent variables of (1) a charitable donation and (2) preference for a candle that promoted self-improvement versus one that promoted affiliation, the presentation of which was counter-balanced. For the first dependent measure, participants

were then asked to imagine that they had just unexpectedly received $100 and to indicate how much of that money they would donate to a charitable organization (see Appendix). For the second dependent variable, participants were presented with images and descriptions for two aromatherapy candles (see Appendix)—one that promoted clarity and another that promoted love—and to indicate their preference for each. This measurement was adapted from Allard and White (2015) to measure individuals' preference for products promoting self- versus social-enhancement.

Results

Manipulation Checks

Eighteen participants in the immoral inaction condition were removed for indicating that they could not recall a situation in which they had engaged in immoral inaction (no participants in the neutral condition indicated an inability to recall a neutral situation), and eight participants were removed for indicating via the manipulation check that they had described either a "neutral situation" or a "situation in which I did the right thing." This reduced the final sample size to 245 (M_{age} = 32, 56.5% female).

Immoral Inaction Boundary Condition

Because the hypothesis that immoral inaction enhances the experiences of guilt and embarrassment among prescriptively lensed consumers who have internalized moral standards of social-responsibility, the purpose of study 4 was to assess the context of immoral inaction's effects on the entire model. To this end, only those cases in which participants were assigned to the inaction condition were selected for analysis. Thus, the sample size for analysis was 111. Results obtained using this strategy remained consistent with earlier findings related to the

moderating effects of immoral inaction and moral standards onto feelings of embarrassment and guilt.

Moderating Effects of Approach-Motivated Coping

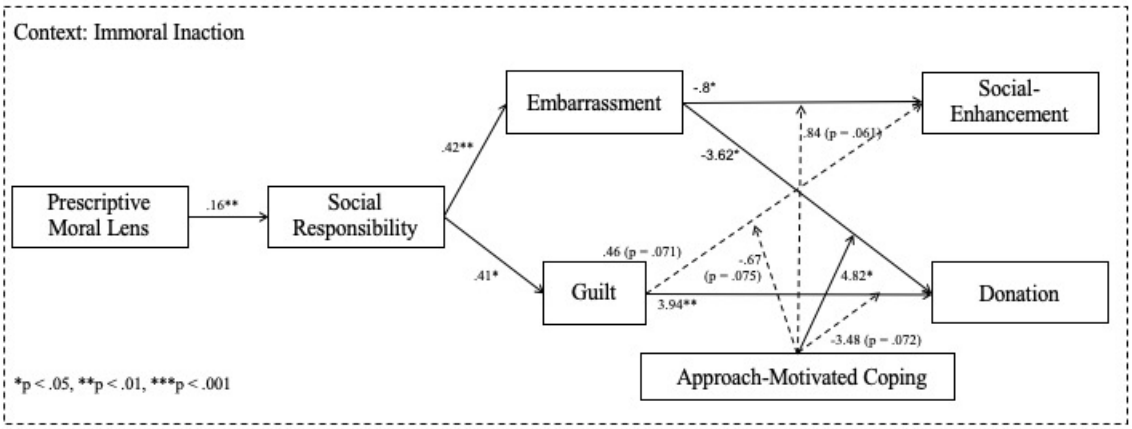
Moderated mediation analyses were conducted using PROCESS model 89 (Hayes 2018) to test the interaction effects of greater engagement in approach-motivated coping strategies (W) with the mediated relationships between prescriptive morality (X), internalization of social-responsibility (M_1), embarrassment (M_2), and guilt (M_3) onto consumers' indicated donation amounts (Y_1) and their reported preference for a candle promoting self- or social-enhancement (Y_2).

Results related to participants' donation amounts indicated that participants' experience of embarrassment related to their immoral inactions significantly negatively predicted their donations (β = -3.62, p = .022), However, engaging in approach-motivated coping reversed these effects, such that the interaction of embarrassment and coping significantly increased (β = 4.82, p = .036) donation amounts among participants experiencing embarrassment in response to their past immoral inactions. Similarly, while participants' experience of guilt related to their past immoral inactions was a significant positive predictor of donations (β = 3.94, p = .003), engaging in approach-motivated coping reversed this relationship, such that guilty consumers donated significantly less at the 90% CI (β = -3.48, p = .072).

Participants' candle preference was measured on a 10-point differential scale, where a score of 1 indicated a strong preference for the candle promoting the self-enhancement benefit of clarity and a score of 10 indicated a strong preference for the candle promoting the social-enhancement benefit of love. Analyses indicated that participants' experience of embarrassment related to their past immoral inaction was significantly related to their preference for the candle

that promoted clarity (β = -.8, p = .010), but that the interaction of approach-motivated coping strategies caused them to indicate a significant preference at the 90% CI for the candle that promoted love (β = .84, p = .061). Similarly, participants who felt guilty about their immoral inactions were significantly more likely at the 90% CI to express a preference for the candle that promoted love (β = .46, p = .071). However, the interaction of coping and guilt reversed these findings to indicate a significant preference at the 90% CI for the candle that promoted clarity (β = -.67, p = .075). These findings are presented graphically in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Study 4 Results



Discussion

Study 4 provides support for the theorized relationship between consumers' experience of embarrassment and their use of compensatory consumption behaviors, including prosocial actions, measured by the amount they indicated that they would donate to a charitable donation, and preference for a product that promoted social-enhancement. As theorized, consumers' engagement in such observable outcomes is moderated by their employment of approach-motivated coping strategies. Interestingly, results indicate that, when such coping strategies are not employed, there is an inverse relationship between embarrassment and both donations and

preference for social-enhancement products, whereas there is a positive relationship between guilt and donation amount.

CONCLUSION

Taken together, the results of these five studies provide converging evidence that the experience of embarrassment can lead to increased downstream compensatory consumption in situations where consumers are confronted with their past immoral inactions. The pilot field study provides an initial demonstration of the effect of embarrassment leading to greater self-control among students who opted against participating in a class-wide food drive, and studies 1-3 lay the groundwork for the theorized model. Study 1 establishes that consumers adhering to a prescriptive moral lens view inaction in a morality-laden context as more immoral than their proscriptively lensed counterparts. Study 2 affirms internalization of the moral standard of social-responsibility as the underlying mechanism from which prescriptively lensed consumers' prosocial actions are derived and supports theorizing of the boundary condition of immoral inaction. Study 3 shows that the use of approach-motivated coping strategies leads to distinct outcomes, depending on whether consumers are experiencing guilt or embarrassment. While the findings of studies 1-3 align with extant research, study 4 examines immoral inaction as a unique context in which the interaction of embarrassment and approach-motivated coping strategies produces greater compensatory consumption behaviors than the interaction of guilt and approach-motivated coping.

Theoretical Contributions

This research's account of the downstream effects of consumers' experiences of guilt and embarrassment combined with the coping strategies that they employ on consumption decisions is consistent with extant research indicating that discrete emotions interact with distinct goals to generate specific behaviors (Allard and White 2015; Roseman, Wiest, and Swartz 1994; Roseman, Spindel, and Jose 1990). However, the introduction of the unique context of immoral

inaction contradicts existing knowledge related to the relative superiority of utilizing marketing strategies to evoke consumer guilt (Choi et al. 2019; Allard and White 2015; Basil et al. 2008; Chang 2011; Amodio et al. 2007; Tangney et al. 1996; Lindsay-Hartz et al. 1995) and relative inferiority of using strategies that evoke consumer embarrassment (Blair and Roese 2013; Lau-Gesk and Drolet 2008; Miller 2007; Dahl et al. 2005; Moore et al. 2006; Keltner and Buswell 1997). To this end, the current research offers several theoretical contributions.

Primarily, the results of the current work indicate that findings from contexts of immoral action cannot necessarily be extrapolated to situations of immoral inaction. This research (study 1) indicates that immoral inaction is a unique context, and that consumers perceive inaction in moral contexts differently, depending on their adherence to a prescriptive or proscriptive moral lens. The present work shows that embarrassment increases self-control (pilot study), prosocial, and social-enhancement (study 4) outcomes, whereas guilt has the opposite or no effect, in immoral inaction contexts. By examining these specific behaviors, this work builds on and extends past research to indicate that embarrassment can lead to behaviors aimed at denying oneself indulgence and atoning for a past unrelated failure, even though such outcomes have traditionally been more closely associated with the experience of guilt (Choi et al. 2019; Zemack-Rugar et al. 2007; Allard and White 2015), and to fostering affiliation. These findings suggest that when consumers are confronted with their past immoral inactions, the associated embarrassment generates the anti-goal of repeated inaction, making compensatory behavior the goal that they seek to approach via self-control, prosocial, and/or social-enhancement behaviors. Future research should seek to assess this theorized nuanced role of self-regulation (Carver and Scheier 1999).

Second, the present research illustrates the underlying process for the effects outlined

above. Specifically, the findings (study 2) indicate that consumers employing a prescriptive moral lens are motivated by a moral standard of social-responsibility to help others (Thomas et al. 2009; Fabes et al. 1999; Carlo et al. 1999; Ruston 1982; Berkowitz and Daniels 1964; Gomperz 1939). When confronted by instances when they failed to meet this moral standard, consumers experience greater feelings of embarrassment and guilt, negatively valenced self-conscious moral emotions with which they must cope (studies 3 and 4). The importance of the coping strategies employed cannot be overstated, as this work (studies 3 and 4) and extant literature (Duhachek and Oakley 2007; Duhachek 2005) shows that consumers experiencing negatively valenced emotions generally engage in approach-motivated coping to deal with or overcome such experiences, and the strategies they use can completely change their observed behaviors (study 4). It is worth noting that the present findings (study 4) indicate that guilt is associated with increased donations—and embarrassment with decreased donations—when coping is present but not employed. Though it is beyond the scope of this research, studies on coping theory generally assume that consumers who encounter stressful situations will attempt to cope (Duhachek and Oakley 2007; Duhachek 2005; Lazarus 1991; Amirkhan 1990). However hard it might be to imagine a situation in which a consumer experiencing a negative emotion does not attempt to resolve it in any way, future research might attempt to assess the effects of guilt and embarrassment related to immoral inaction absent coping strategies.

Finally, the studies presented here extend the broad marketing literature that focuses on the (in)effectiveness of evoking consumer embarrassment (Blair and Roese 2013; Lau-Gesk and Drolet 2008; Miller 2007; Dahl et al. 2005; Moore et al. 2006; Keltner and Buswell 1997) and guilt (Choi et al. 2019; Allard and White 2015; Basil et al. 2008; Chang 2011; Amodio et al. 2007; Tangney et al. 1996; Lindsay-Hartz et al. 1995) by offering a novel mechanism by which

consumer embarrassment can lead to more desirable outcomes than consumer guilt. While existing literature has primarily focused on how consumer embarrassment can evoke avoidance of the situations and products that generated the initial embarrassment, the present research brings to light embarrassment's ability to increase the likelihood of compensatory consumption when the initially embarrassing context is one of inaction, rather than action. Given the ubiquity of embarrassment in consumers' lives, there exists important practical implications for understanding how the experience of this negative emotion—and marketing communications promoting such experience—can motivate prosocial behaviors.

Practical Implications

Marketers and policymakers wishing to encourage consumers to engage in compensatory prosocial behaviors might consider drawing attention to consumers' embarrassment for failing to engage in such behaviors in the past. For example, the American Red Cross not only seeks blood donations from eligible routine donors, but also from those who were eligible in the past but have never given before. Though there are several techniques that the organization might use to attempt to reach this population, this research highlights the importance of prescriptively lensed consumers' beliefs that they have a moral obligation to help those in need of blood, their experience of embarrassment for not doing so in the past, and their use of approach-motivated coping strategies to reduce this negative emotion as a potentially lucrative avenue for framing these messages. Future research should assess the presented model's applicability to framing marketing communications.

Carnes and Janoff-Bulman (2012) point out that, although prescriptively viewed immoral inaction might sometimes result from a strong motivation against helping someone (e.g., an out-group member), such failures to behave virtuously are likely more commonly the result of a lack

of motivation to actively engage (i.e., apathy). Furthermore, the assessment of an inaction as immoral depends on the context in which the inaction is observed, as it likely requires the observable existence of a moral dilemma that could be solved via action (i.e., the suffering or distress of another person). Therefore, marketers seeking to persuade previously inactive consumers to engage in prosocial behaviors must both overcome the consumers' apathy while also making salient that continued inaction would result in actual harm being inflicted in the given context. For these reasons, I propose that the prescriptive moral lens' emphasis on inaction in morality-laden contexts as immoral provides a unique domain in which to study consumer behavior. Specifically, I hypothesize that in the prescriptive moral context, marketers should:

- Frame a repeat-inaction as the immoral anti-goal that the consumer should seek to avoid.
- Frame marketing messages to evoke a sense of self- or social-responsibility in relation to the relevant solvable moral dilemma to promote action-based problem-focused coping for achieving the desired prosocial behavioral outcomes.
- Frame marketing messages to evoke a specific negatively valenced self-conscious moral emotion (i.e., guilt or embarrassment) to overcome the motivational apathy associated with the original inaction.

However, more research is needed to test the applicability of and success of each of these suggestions.

APPENDIX

MATERIALS USED IN STUDIES

Pilot Study

Information about the consumer behavior course's food drive as it appeared in the course syllabus

SHARE THE L♡VE Donation Drive to Benefit the UNT Student Food Pantry (due

February 19 @ 5 pm)

Throughout the semester, I will discuss how // why consumers decide to allocate their various finite resources (time, money, talents). Such allocation decisions can be made to benefit various charities.

The University of North Texas' Dean of Students Office established a food pantry in 2015 to provide an accessible on-campus source of food for students in need.

General information about the UNT student food pantry:

- The food pantry is located in Crumley Hall. It can be accessed through the front door or through the back, near the docks.
- Any current UNT student can visit the food pantry Mondays - Thursdays 10 am - 7 pm and Fridays 10 am - 5 pm during long semesters.
- Students who visit the food pantry can request to meet with a staff member to discuss any difficulties they are facing. When appropriate, staff members will make referrals to additional campus//community resources.

The Dean of Students has established protocols to allow for the maintenance of the confidentiality and dignity of students using food pantry and/or other services.
Additional UNT food pantries are located at Discovery Park and the New College at Frisco.

The UNT food pantry specifically seeks the following items for donation:

- Pasta sides
- Fruit snacks
- Canned fruit // fruit cups
- Instant rice
- Pudding cups
- Boxed mashed potatoes
- Chef Boyardee
- Canned tuna
- Muffins
- Boxed cereal
- Microwave popcorn
- Canned chili
- Crackers
- Toiletries // hygiene products
- Oatmeal

- Canned vegetables // beans
- Granola bars

General information about **SHARE THE L♡VE** event:

- Participation is encouraged, but optional
- Donations are due to Prof. Bennett's office (BLB 304H) by 5pm on Wednesday, February 19 (items can be dropped off at any time before then; there will be a box outside of the office door)
- The staff member who coordinates the food pantry for the Dean of Students Office, will visit class on Wednesday, January 22, at 11am to provide more information about the pantry and its services
    - Even if you do not plan to participate in the food drive, you are expected to arrive on-time for Ms. Ridgeway's presentation (or wait in the hall for her to finish -- do not interrupt) and to be respectful and courteous during it.
    - Failure to follow these instructions will result in a loss of 5 attendance/participation points.
- Additional information about the donation drive will be provided as I progress toward the due date.

Measures of Guilt and Embarrassment from the Discrete Emotions Questionnaire (Harmon-Jones, Bastian, and Harmon-Jones 2016) (randomized)

Please indicate the degree to which your decision related to contributing to the Consumer Behavior class's donation drive for the UNT student food pantry made you feel the following emotions.

For each item, a score of 1 indicates that you do not at all feel that emotion when considering your donation decision; a score of 10 indicates that you feel that emotion to an extreme amount when considering your donation decision.

Guilt

- Regret
- Remorse
- Sorry
- Guilty

Embarrassment

- Self-conscious
- Awkward
- Uncomfortable
- Embarrassed

Food items and ratings (1 = least healthy, 10 = most healthy)

- Sun Chips French Onion 1.5 oz
- Sun Chips Harvest Cheddar 1.5 oz
- Sun Chips Garden Salsa 1.5 oz
- Sun Chips Original 1.5 oz
- Cheetos Crunchy 1 oz
- Fritos Chili Cheese 1 oz
- Doritos Cool Ranch 1 oz
- Doritos Spicy Nacho 1 oz
- Lay's Sour Cream & Onion 1 oz
- Lay's BBQ 1 oz
- Lay's Classic 1 oz
- Doritos Nacho Cheese 1 oz
- Fritos Original 1 oz
- Pepperidge Farm Milano Dark Chocolate Cookies .75 oz
- Kirkland Soft and Chewy Chocolate Chip Granola Bar .85 oz
- Ocean Spray Craisins Dried Cranberries 1 oz
- Reese's Peanut Butter Cup Snack Size 1 oz
- Skittles fun size 1 oz

Study 1

*Pretest Images (the selected image in each category has an * beside it)*
Littering

Which of the following images best depicts **littering**? (randomized)

1*

2

3

4

5

Picking up litter

Which of the following images best depicts picking up litter**? (randomized)**

1

2

3

4

5*

Inaction

Which of the following images best depicts **neither picking up nor littering**? (randomized)

1

2

3

4*

5

Measures of Prescriptive/Proscriptive Moral Lens
Please respond by indicating the degree to which your understanding of morality most closely aligns with each pair of statements below.

1. People should attempt to do what is good … People should attempt to avoid what is bad
2. People should attempt to do what is virtuous … People should attempt to avoid what is non-virtuous
3. People should attempt to do what is morally right … People should attempt to avoid doing what is morally wrong

Study 2

Measures of Prescriptive/Proscriptive Moral Lens (randomized)
For the items below, please indicate your feelings about morality by selecting the bubble between the descriptions that best represents your feelings about moral and immoral behavior.

Numbers 1, 2, 9 and 10 indicate a very strong feeling; numbers 3, 4, 7, and 8 indicate a fairly weak feeling, and numbers 5 and 6 indicate that you are undecided or do not understand the descriptors.

Please work quickly. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. People should attempt to avoid doing what is bad … People should attempt to do what is good
2. People should attempt to avoid behaving non-virtuously … People should attempt to behave virtuously
3. People should attempt to avoid immoral behaviors … People should attempt to engage in moral behaviors
4. Being moral means not doing bad things … Being moral means doing good things

Game of Rich and Poor
Introduction
In the next section, you will play a game with other Mturk Workers from either the current session or a past session.

The decisions you make will affect how much money you can win and how much money other participants can win.

Choose wisely!

Comprehension Check
Quick comprehension check: What can **your decisions affect**?

A. Just how much money I can win
B. Just how much money other participants can win
C. How much money both I and other participants can win

- Those who selected options A or B received a message that read: Sorry, that's not correct! Your decisions affect **how much money both you and other participants can win**.
- Those who selected option C received a message that read: That's correct! Your decisions affect **how much money both you and other participants can win**.

Instructions
In this game, **RICH** people have the power to act in two ways:

Some **RICH** people choose to keep all their money for themselves.

Other **RICH** people choose to make a donation to help **POOR** people.

In this game, POOR people have to work very hard.

But, sometimes, **POOR** people receive a donation of money.

This game is designed to mimic the real world and the challenges faced at difference income levels.

In this game, people are either **RICH** or **POOR**.

The **RICH** have an advantage over the **POOR**.

Please select OPTION A or OPTION B below to determine your wealth level for the game:

- Option A
- Option B

You chose Option [A/B]

This option assigns you to the **RICH wealth level**. This means that you will begin the game with more wealth (**$10**), giving you an advantage of **POOR** players, who begin the game with **$0**.

The game will work as follows:
Mturk workers playing as POOR people will work hard and complete a challenging task to win up to $5.

Mturk workers playing as **RICH** people will choose to do one of the following actions:

- Keep their game money.
- Donate some of their game money to a POOR player.

At the end of the study, one Mturk Worker (regardless of **RICH** or **POOR** playing status) will be selected to receive all of the money he/she has accumulated in the game.

Based on your earlier selection, are you are a **RICH** player.

Now, you must make a choice by selecting either to **KEEP your game money** or to **make a donation to a POOR player**.

- Keep my Money
- Make a Donation

Players who elected to keep their money received the following messages:

You have chosen to **KEEP your game money** and not to donate to a **POOR** player.

On the next screen, you will be presented with a list of ID codes for MTurk Workers who playing the game as POOR players.

The Mturk worker whose ID code you select will be notified that they were paired with your ID code and that they will not receive a donation.

Players were then presented with a list of six randomly generated “player ID codes” from which they selected one

Players who elected to donate their money received the following messages:

> You have chosen to MAKE A DONATION to a POOR player.
>
> On the next screen, you will be given the opportunity to determine how much of your $10 game money to donate, and you will then be presented with a list of ID codes for MTurk Workers who are playing the game as **POOR** players**.**
>
> **The Mturk worker whose ID code you select will be notified that they were paired with your ID code and that they will receive a donation in the amount you provide.**

Please indicate below how much of your game money you would like to keep and how much you would like to donate. The two numbers must sum to $10.

- Amount to keep: $_____
- Amount to donate: $_____
- Players were then presented with a list of six randomly generated “player ID codes” from which they selected one

Measures of Social-Responsibility (randomized)

1. How strongly do you feel that it is others’ responsibility to give some of what they have to the less fortunate?
2. How strongly do you feel that it is your responsibility to engage in behaviors that benefit others?
3. How strongly do you feel that it is your responsibility to give some of what you have to the less fortunate?
4. How strongly do you feel that it is everyone’s responsibility to engage in behaviors that benefit others?

Measures of Self-Responsibility (randomized)

1. How strongly do you feel that you should try to increase your own personal wealth?
2. How strongly do you feel that you should attempt to provide yourself with the best life possible?

Study 3

Guilt and embarrassment comprehension check items
Quick attention check: When do people experience [guilt/embarrassment]?

- When they feel that they deserve blame for falling short of an important personal standard
- When they feel that they will be judged for falling short of a social standard
- Both of the above are correct
- None of the above are correct

    - If participants selected the correct answer (A for guilt and B for embarrassment), they received a message that said: "That's correct!" and then repeated the definition
    - If participants selected the wrong answer, they received a message that said: "Sorry, that's incorrect" and then provided the correct definition for their condition.

Approach-Motivated Coping Measures (randomized)

1. I thought that I would concentrate my efforts on trying to do something about the problem.
2. I thought that I would try to come up with a strategy for what to do about the problem.
3. I thought that I would make a plan of action for resolving the problem.
4. I thought that I would try to see the situation in a different light, to make it seem more positive.
5. I thought that I would tell others how I was feeling.
6. I thought that I would rely on others to make me feel better.
7. I thought that I would share my feelings with others I trust and respect.

Dependent Variables

Donation Amount

Please imagine that you just unexpectedly received $100. The amounts entered must equal $100.

Below are several options for how you might choose to allocate the money.

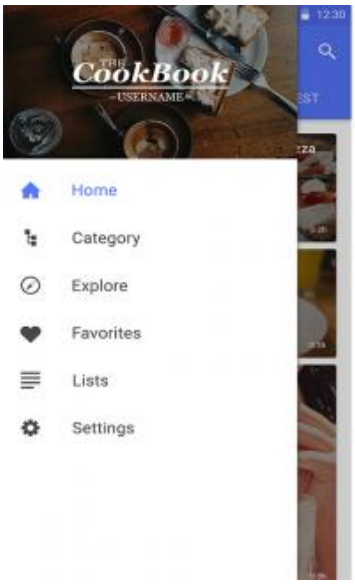
Please indicate the amount (if any) from the $100 that you would:

- Save for something for yourself (e.g., an expensive purchase or emergency fund)
- Save for something for someone else (e.g., an expensive gift or college fund)
- Spend on yourself
- Spend on gift(s) for someone else
- Donate to a charitable organization

Self- versus social-enhancement product

Below are pictures and information about two cooking apps. Please look over the images and details carefully and indicate which you prefer.

Cooking app A:

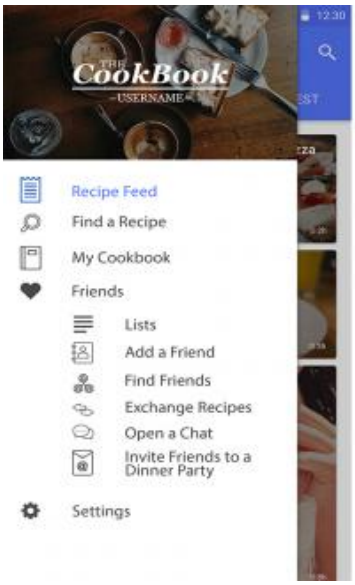


Find and save recipes and build your culinary skills with The CookBook app:

Whether you're just learning to cook or are looking to advance your already-substantial skillset, The CookBook is the app for you. Developed by chefs and designed like an old-fashioned recipe book, The CookBook puts the entire world of recipes and cooking techniques at your fingertips!

Save content under your own categories to find it again later, and become the best chef you can be!

Cooking app B:



Make cooking social again with The CookBook app:

Whether you already host weekly dinner parties or are looking to grow your foodie friend group, The CookBook makes trying new recipes and cooking techniques a social affair!

Simply add friends from your contacts or find them via the app, The CookBook lets you exchange recipes, chat for real-time feedback and help, and even invite friends for a dinner party.

Which cooking app do you prefer?

- Cooking app A … Cooking app B

Study 4

Immoral Inaction Manipulation
In the space below, please describe a time when you had the opportunity to do the right thing, but you chose to do nothing.

Though you will be able to advance after two (2) minutes, please take as much time as you need, including as many details and being as specific as possible.

I had the opportunity to do the right thing but chose to do nothing when …

Neutral Manipulation
In the space below, please describe a time when you felt completely neutral about the situation taking place and the people involved.

Though you will be able to advance after two (2) minutes, please take as much time as you need, including as many details and being as specific as possible.

I felt completely neutral about the situation taking place and people involved when …

Manipulation Check Items (randomized)

1. Please indicate the degree to which you think that the following items describes your behavior in the situation you wrote about.

   Numbers 1, 2, 9 and 10 indicate a very strong feeling; numbers 3, 4, 7, and 8 indicate a fairly weak feeling, and numbers 5 and 6 indicate that you are undecided or do not understand the descriptors.

   In the situation I wrote about, my actions were ...
   - Immoral … Moral
   - Non-virtuous … Virtuous
   - The wrong thing to do … The right thing to do
   - Bad … Good
   - Unimportant … Important
   - Insignificant … Significant
   - Inconsequential … Consequential

2. Which of the following most closely describes the type of situation you wrote about?
   a. A situation where I did the right thing
   b. A completely neutral situation
   c. A situation where I did not do the right thing

Dependent Variables
Donation Amount
Please imagine that you just unexpectedly received $100. The amounts entered must equal $100.

Below are several options for how you might choose to allocate the money.

Please indicate the amount (if any) from the $100 that you would:

- Save for something for yourself (e.g., an expensive purchase or emergency fund)
- Save for something for someone else (e.g., an expensive gift or college fund)
- Spend on yourself
- Spend on gift(s) for someone else
- Donate to a charitable organization

Self- versus social-enhancement product

Below are pictures and information about two candles. Please look over the images and details carefully and indicate which you prefer.

Aromatheraphy Candle for Clarity:

Let the fresh, herbal scents of these natural stimulants bring clarity your way!

Whether you're learning for yourself, your job, or school, these scents increase focus, concentration, and memory to make learning easier.

Aromatheraphy Candle for Love:

Let the rich, earthy scents of these natural aphrodisiacs bring love your way!

Whether you're single and looking to mingle or trying to find your one-and-only, these scents are sure to spark your social life.

Which candle do you prefer? Candle for Clarity … Candle for Love

Moderating Effects of Support-Seeking and Avoidance Coping

Predictor	M_1	M_2	M_3	Y_1	Y_2
Prescriptive Moral Lens (X)	.21 (.000)	-.02 (.709)	.00 (.994)	.04 (.965)	-.22 (.189)
Social-responsibility (M_1)		-.02 (.896)	-.26 (.040)	-2.16 (.005)	-.06 (.617)
Immoral Inaction (W)		-1.87 (.222)	-1.94 (.209)		
W x M_1		.43 (.023)	.67 (.001)		
Embarrassment (M_2)				-1.93 (.187)	-.38 (.235)
Guilt (M_3)				3.19 (.017)	.15 (.616)
Support Seeking (Z_1)				.39 (.760)	-.36 (.209)
M_2 x Z_1				.27 (.294)	.03 (.558)
M_3 x Z_1				-.4 (.109)	-.00 (1.00)
Avoidance (Z_2)				-.23 (.859)	-.31 (.292)
M_2 x Z_2				.3 (.252)	.06 (.331)
M_3 x Z_2				-.27 (.352)	-.03 (.633)

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