

Human Flourishing Theory in Advertising: Case Studies

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This manuscript examines the subject of human flourishing and its use in current advertisements. Human flourishing was developed by Aristotle over 2000 years ago. Despite clear examples of human flourishing appeals currently being used by advertising practitioners, there has been little academic research in the advertising or marketing literature. This manuscript attempts to interpret the developments of human flourishing and develops them for advertisers. The authors define human flourishing theory in the advertising context and provide three case studies of advertisements believed to represent human flourishing appeals for television, print, and websites.

INTRODUCTION

Although the notion of human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) first defined by Aristotle is not a new idea, the academic community has shown a renewed interest in the topic. In the past few years, research about human flourishing traits such as self-fulfillment, happiness, life satisfaction, well-being, contentment, and gratitude, had increased (Ruyer 2004, Fredrickson and Losado 2007, Layard 2007, Youkins 2008, and Seligman 2008). Time magazine reported in 2005 that there had been an “explosion of research” and “seldom has an academic field been brought so quickly and deliberately to life” as with the topic human flourishing, loosely defined as “happiness.” However, what hasn’t been studied fully, from an academic perspective, is the use of human flourishing theory in the context of modern advertising.

If marketing and advertising practitioners are at the forefront of recognizing consumer trends related to happiness, then it would be reasonable to assume that human flourishing appeals might represent an acceptable appeal used in modern advertising. The main questions that this manuscript aims to answer are: what is human flourishing; and how is the human flourishing appeal being used by advertising practitioners.

HUMAN FLOURISHING DEFINED

Aristotle first defined human flourishing theory. What he called *eudaimonia* (flourishing), was not a momentary state, but a condition of living a good life. Happiness, he wrote, was not limited to feeling good, but it encompassed a fulfillment of life, dreams and expectations (Aristotle 1980). After thousands of years, philosophers are still discussing human flourishing theories (Brighouse 2000, Raz 2003, and Youkins 2008). In addition, human flourishing theories have been developed in the economic (Layard

2007) and psychological disciplines (Ruyer 2004, Fredrickson and Losado 2007, and Seligman 2008). It is important to note the differences in the schools of thought. In philosophy, for instance, the theme of ethics, virtue and value are common themes, while in psychology, the common themes are motivational theory and the theory of the self. Descriptions of a number of approaches can be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1
HUMAN FLOURISHING THEORY AUTHORS

Author	Timing	Discipline	Definition
Aristotle	322-388BC	Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What amounts to the good life. • Eudaimonia (Greek: human flourishing). • Fulfillment of life's dreams and expectations • Part of an activity
Harry Brighthouse	2000	Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happiness and flourishing are not the same. Flourishing is a richer property than happiness, sensitive to many more features of a person's life than inner states.
Joseph Raz	2003	Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal well-being that involves wholehearted engagement in valuable activities and relationships
Edward Younkins	2008	Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human flourishing involves the rational use of talents, abilities, and virtues in the pursuit of chosen values and goals. An action is considered to be proper if it leads to the flourishing of the person performing the action.
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi	2003	Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoying what you do • Doing something well • Absorbed in an activity • Effortless action that is instinctively rewarding
Doret J. De Ruyer	2004	Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person is thriving, has a good life A flourishing life and a good life are interchangeable, but having a good life and living a good life are different
Fredrickson and Losada	2007	Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To live within an optimal range of human functioning, one that connotes, goodness generativity, growth and resilience
Martin Seligman	2008	Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved if one exercises one's unique strengths and virtues in a purpose greater than one's own immediate goals
Richard Layard	2007	Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flourishing lives have two features in common: they contain objectively valued goods: and agents have to identify with the life they are leading

Many of the previous discussions on human flourishing theory have centered around three theories of happiness: Hedonistic, Objective List and Desire-Fulfillment (Parfit, 1984). *Hedonistic theories*, primarily from the philosophy tradition, are based on the thinking that what is best is what makes the person happiest. With hedonistic theories, the “good life” is synonymous with the pursuit of pleasure. Thank you, Hugh Hefner. The only experiences that have positive value are pleasant ones. The more pleasure one has in life the happier one is. The reverse is true as well though. The more suffering and displeasure one endures the less happy s/he will be. While a fine dining experience, a good wine, excellent entertainment, or playing on a successful sports team can all be great sources of pleasure, dealing with an illness, injury, or traffic jams can make your life unpleasant. Judgments of “Happiness” will be based upon the summed total of one’s pleasant and unpleasant experiences (Brülde 2007).

The second type of theory from the philosophy discipline is the *objective-list theory*. It states certain things or actions are intrinsically good or bad – if you pursue activities that promote happiness, you will be a happy person (Parfit, 1984). The objective-list theories involve several objective values that promise to make life good for a person regardless of their personal opinions of the activities. For instance, you may not like eating broccoli but it is good for you. Broccoli will make you healthy, which in turn will make you happy. Judgments of “Happiness” will be based upon the type of experiences pursued, so one will feel good only by doing good things (Brülde 2007).

The third type of theory is more aspirational – what would be best for someone is what can best fulfill their dreams – called *desire-fulfillment theories*. From the psychology discipline, desire-fulfillment theory focuses on finding the type of life one desires. Positive value for a person depends on if that person’s intrinsic desires are fulfilled. In other words, people cannot be happy so long as their desires are still unmet. Ironically, those who tend to have lower expectations of life tend to be more satisfied with their lives than those who always demand more. Judgments of “Happiness” will be based upon how well experiences satisfy one’s desires (Brülde 2007).

The modern notion of “human flourishing” has primarily evolved from the objective-list and desire-fulfillment theories of happiness developed from both philosophy and psychology disciplines. In his 2002 book, *Authentic Happiness*, author and president of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman states that the most profound sense of happiness is experienced through the “meaningful life” (an objectively superior experience), achieved if one exercises one’s unique strengths and virtues in a purpose greater than one’s own immediate goals (satisfies longer-term desires).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted on the theory of human flourishing. Waterman (1993) suggested that human flourishing occurred when people’s life activity was consistent with their deeply held values. Under this view of human flourishing, it is a time when people feel intensely alive and authentic, and he measured this with the term “personal expressedness”.

King & Napa (1998) asked people to rate features of the good life and found that both happiness and meaning were implicated and important. McGregor and Little (1998) conducted a study to analyze a diverse set of mental health indicators and found similar results. They found two factors, one reflecting happiness and the other meaningfulness, to be an important and distinct part of human flourishing. Furthermore, Ryan and Deci (2001) added that true happiness is found in virtue while doing what one likes to do and is worth doing.

Ryff and Singer (2002) also built on the idea of human flourishing by adding and clarifying the importance of self realization and self determination. They outlined six distinct aspects of human flourishing: autonomy, personal growth, self acceptance, life purpose, mastery and positive relatedness.

While the purpose of this manuscript is not to provide a comprehensive literature review on human flourishing theories, the authors have outlined some of the significant work that has been done in this area in order for the reader to better understand how the concept of human flourishing appears in modern advertisements.

EMOTIONAL APPEALS IN ADVERTISING

An appeal based on promoting human flourishing directly targets consumers' personal ambitions for happiness. When a consumer is considering a personally relevant advertising message for a high-involvement good, they can experience a strong emotional reaction to the advertising appeal. The feelings generated by the advertisement can influence the attitudes a consumer has towards the advertiser and/or the product. These emotional reactions can create very strong loyalties (Hoyer and MacInnis 2007).

Emotional appeals can be categorized as positive or negative. Positive emotional appeals might include love, desire, hope, joy, or excitement. Positive emotional appeals can directly improve attitudes by generating positive feelings which improves the consumers' attitudes. Negative emotional appeals include guilt, fear, anger, or shame. Negative emotional appeals can yield positive changes in attitudes by motivating consumers to act to reduce or avoid the negative emotions. Once action is taken, the consumer feels better (Aaker, Stayman, Hagerty 1986).

Despite the stereotypes, advertisers do not have the ability to make people buy things they don't want or need. Where they are culpable is their ability to persuade consumers to recognize that they are unhappy with their current product choices. Consumers are pushed to recognize their problems, where problems are defined as the difference between their actual state (where they are) and their ideal state (where they want to be). Problem recognition appeals in advertising either a) create dissatisfaction with some component of a person's life and/or b) illustrate what is possible with the purchase of the new product. The theory is that the larger the difference between actual and ideal states, the more likely a consumer will act to resolve the difference (Hoyer and MacInnis 2007). So the greater the level of dissatisfaction, the easier it is for advertisers to persuade consumers to act. However, there may be long-term, negative effects on consumers' general happiness levels due to the accumulated disappointments in actual states.

NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL APPEALS

Negative emotions can be very persuasive under the right conditions. There are three types of customers on whom negative appeals might be effective; desensitized, sophisticated, and tribal consumers. *Desensitized* consumers have become immune to traditional advertising and ignore it, but negative emotional ads can be powerful and cut through the traditional clutter. *Sophisticated* consumers are going to quickly get the references, but are more likely to feel that they are being manipulated. *Tribal* consumers want to belong to a larger group, where negative appeals can be used to persuade them to behave consistent with the larger group. Although aspirational messages might appeal to the tribal consumer, they might get lost in the clutter (Cotte and Ritchie 2005).

POSITIVE EMOTIONAL APPEALS

Ads that promote positive feelings can make the consumer like the ad and then buy the product (Aaker, Stayman, and Hagerty 1986). According to the dual-mediation theory, ads can have both direct and indirect effects. The direct effects are if a consumer likes the ad they will like the product. The indirect effects are if a consumer likes the ad, the consumer will think more about the message arguments in the ad, and well-considered message arguments are more likely to persuade consumers to like the product (MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch, 1986).

There might also be benefits of pairing strong positive emotions to advertisers' products. According to classical conditioning theory, pairing positive emotional stimuli to product offerings frequently enough can elicit positive emotions when the product offerings are seen, eventually without the stimuli required (Shimp and Engle, 1987). The Coppertone brand, for instance, can still elicit positive feelings from their past use of a small child and little puppy in their classic ads.

Research provided a list of common advertising appeals for our study (Pollay, 1983). He developed the list, which he described as containing all common appeals, by drawing on previous advertising

literature and values research in other disciplines. All of the appeals were classified into 42 categories. Descriptions of the appeals are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
POLLAY'S LIST OF APPEALS

- Effective:** Feasible, workable, useful, pragmatic, appropriate, functional, consistent, efficient, helpful, comfortable (clothes), tasty (food), strength, longevity of effect
- Convenient:** Handy, time-saving, quick, easy, suitable, accessible, versatile
- Durable:** Long-lasting, permanent, stable, enduring, strong, powerful, hearty, tough
- Ornamental:** Beautiful, decorative, ornate, adorned, embellished, detailed, designed, styled
- Cheap:** Economical, inexpensive, bargain, cut-rate, penny-pinching, discounted, at cost, undervalued, a good value
- Dear:** Expensive, rich, valuable, highly regarded, costly, extravagant, exorbitant, luxurious, priceless
- Distinctive:** Rare, unique, unusual, scarce, infrequent, exclusive, tasteful, elegant, subtle, esoteric, hand-crafted
- Popular:** Commonplace, customary, well-known, conventional, regular, usual, ordinary, normal, standard, typical, universal, general, everyday
- Traditional:** Classic, historical, antique, legendary, time-honored, long-standing, venerable, nostalgic
- Modern:** Contemporary, modern, new, improved, progressive, advanced and introducing
- Natural:** References to the elements, animals, vegetables, minerals, farming, unadulterated, purity (of product), organic, grown, nutritious
- Technological:** Engineered, fabricated, formulated, manufactured, constructed, processed, resulting from science, invention, discovery, research, containing secret ingredients
- Wisdom:** Knowledge, education, awareness, intelligence, curiosity, satisfaction, comprehension, sagacity, expertise, judgment, experience
- Magic:** Miracles, magic, mysticism, mystery, witchcraft, wizardry, superstitions, occult sciences, mythic, characters, to mesmerize, astonish, bewitch, fill with wonder
- Productivity:** References to achievement, accomplishment, ambition, success, careers, self-development, being skilled, accomplished, proficient, pulling your weight, contributing, doing your share
- Relaxation:** Rest, retire, retreat, loaf, contentment, be at ease, be laid-back, vacations, holiday, to observe
- Enjoyment:** To have fun, laugh, be happy, celebrate, to enjoy games, parties, feasts and festivities, to participate
- Maturity:** Being adult, grown-up, middle-aged, senior, elderly, having associated insight, wisdom, mellowness, adjustment, references to aging, death, retirement, or age-related disabilities or compensations
- Youth:** Being young or rejuvenated, children, kids, immature, underdeveloped, junior, adolescent
- Safety:** Security (from external threat), carefulness, caution, stability, absence of hazards, potential, injury, or other risks, guarantees, warranties, manufacturers' reassurances
- Tamed:** Docile, civilized, restrained, obedient, compliant, faithful, reliable, responsible, domesticated, sacrificing, self-denying
- Morality:** Humane, just, fair, honest, ethical, reputable, principled, religious, devoted, spiritual
- Modesty:** Being modest, naive, demure, innocent, inhibited, bashful, reserved, timid, coy, virtuous, pure, shy, virginal
- Humility:** Unaffected, unassuming, unobtrusive, patient, fate-accepting, resigned, meek, plain-folk,
- Plain:** Unaffected, natural, prosaic, homespun, simple, artless, unpretentious
- Frail:** Delicate, frail, dainty, sensitive, tender, susceptible, vulnerable, soft, genteel
- Adventure:** Boldness, daring, bravery, courage, seeking adventure, thrills, or excitement

Untamed: Primitive, untamed, fierce, coarse, rowdy, ribald, obscene, voracious, gluttonous, frenzied, uncontrolled, unreliable, corrupt, obscene, deceitful, savage

Freedom: Spontaneous, carefree, abandoned, indulgent, at liberty, uninhibited, passionate

Casual: Unkempt, disheveled, messy, disordered, untidy, rugged, rumpled, sloppy, casual, irregular, non-compulsive, imperfect

Vain: Having a socially desirable appearance, being beautiful, pretty, handsome, being fashionable, well-groomed, tailored, graceful, glamorous

Sexuality: Erotic relations: holding hands, kissing, embracing between lovers, dating, romance, intense sensuality, feeling sexual, erotic, attractiveness of clearly sexual nature

Independence: Self-sufficiency, self-reliance, autonomy, unattached, to do-it-yourself, to do your own thing, original, unconventional, singular, nonconformist

Security: Confident, secure, possessing dignity, self-worth, self-esteem, self-respect, peace of mind

Status: Envy, social status or competitiveness, conceit, boasting, prestige, power, dominance, exhibitionism, pride in ownership, wealth (including the sudden wealth of prizes), trend-setting, to seek compliments

Affiliation: To be accepted, liked by peers, colleagues, and community at large, to associate or gather with, to be social, to join, unite, or otherwise bond in friendship, fellowship, companionship, cooperation, reciprocity, to conform to social customs, have manners, social graces and decorum, tact and finesse

Nurturance: To give gifts, especially sympathy, help love, charity, support, comfort, protection, nursing, consolation, or otherwise care for the weak, disabled, inexperienced, tired, young, elderly, etc.

Succorance: To receive expressions of love (all expressions except sexuality), gratitude, pats on the back, to feel deserving

Family: Nurturance within the family, having a home, being at home, family privacy, companionship of siblings, kinship, getting married

Community: Relating to community, state, national publics, public spiritedness, group unity, national identity, society, patriotism, civic and community organizations or other than social organization

Healthy: Fitness, vim, vigor, vitality, strength, heartiness, to be active, athletic, robust, peppy, free from disease, illness, infection, or addiction

Neat: Orderly, neat, precise, tidy, clean, spotless, unsoiled, sweet-smelling, bright, free from dirt, refuse, pests, vermin, stains and smells, sanitary

Researchers have translated these appeals into underlying forces or motives that help shape purchasing decisions. These appeals, combined with purchase motives identified by the Rossiter-Percy model below, provide a suitable framework for analyzing the human flourishing appeals in advertising.

TABLE 3
DECISION MOTIVES IN THE ROSSITER-PERCY MODEL
AND EMOTIONAL SEQUENCES

Negatively originated (informational) motives	Emotional Sequence
1. Problem removal	Annoyed to relieved
2. Problem avoidance	Fearful to relaxed
3. Incomplete satisfaction	Disappointed to optimistic
4. Mixed approach-avoidance	Conflicted to reassured
5. Normal depletion	Mildly annoyed to contented

Positively originated (transformational) motives

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Sensory gratification | Dull neutral to excited |
| 2. Intellectual stimulation or mastery | Naïve neutral to achievement |
| 3. Social approval | Apprehensive neutral to flattery |
| 4. Social conformity | Left out neutral to belonging |
| 5. Self-approval | Conscious-struck to self-consistent |

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Using the case study method of research, this manuscript examines contemporary advertising messaging. By looking at three case study examples of advertising in different media (television ads, print ads and websites) that contain positively originated motives, the authors illustrate how the human flourishing appeal can be used. This manuscript serves as an exploratory tool to provide a foundation for further inquiry and proves the strategic relevance of the human flourishing appeal in advertising.

METHOD

For this study, the authors examined a number of national advertisements looking for human flourishing appeals. After considering a number of advertisements in different media types, the authors selected what we considered to be excellent exemplars of the human flourishing appeal for further study.

To be considered an advertisement containing the human flourishing appeal, the following components must be present:

1. Emotions: Consumer feelings and emotions found as themes in the advertising message.
2. Terminal Values: The advertisement contains “terminal values” that are ideal and desirable for human beings. Examples provided previously from Pollay’s Advertising Appeals (Table 2) include: freedom, helpfulness, achievement, accomplishment, honesty, confidence, passion, proficiency and enjoyment and helpfulness, etc.
3. Instrumental Values: The advertisement presents products or services as instrumental values, the means to an optimal range of human functioning.
4. Long-term focus: The human flourishing appeal is presented as a long-term benefit about doing well and being one’s self. For example, drinking a Coke to be happy or taking a vacation for pleasure, would not necessarily entail human flourishing. But if one were a traveler who found meaning in learning about other cultures or who sought to better themselves through educational experiences that would likely entail human flourishing.

CASE NUMBER 1: TELEVISION- AMERIPRISE FINANCIAL SERVICES

The first advertisement to be examined is the Ameriprise Financial television spot that featured Denis Hopper. This ad began with a close up shot of the actor sitting on a stool reading from a dictionary: “To withdraw. Go away. To disappear.” He closed the dictionary and looked into the camera, “That’s how the dictionary defines retirement.” The shot opened to reveal him alone on a pristine white beach and he dropped the dictionary on the sand. “Time to redefine. Your generation is definitely not headed for bingo night. You still have things to do right? You have dreams. There is no age limit on dreams. There is no expiration date. In fact, you could write a book about how you are going to turn retirement upside down.” The scene then revealed the beach and a lone chair emblazoned with the Ameriprise logo and a tagline, “Go to What’s Next.” In the final few seconds Dennis Hopper returned and said “cause I just don’t see you playing shuffleboard, you know what I mean?”

This creative execution can be described as one with a human flourishing appeal. By addressing an issue that is on the minds of many people considering retirement, this ad makes an emotional connection

from the start. This ad is built on a relevant and believable premise-- being older doesn't have to hold you back from doing what you want to do.

The specific human flourishing appeal in this ad is clearly aspirational - making dreams come true. The ad references terminal values (self-fulfillment) as desirable for human beings and identified in human flourishing theory. The advertisement also presents the Ameriprise core offering as the means to an optimal range of human functioning, -- a fulfillment of life's dreams and expectations.

CASE NUMBER 2: PRINT – LANTAS

The next advertisement to be examined is a print ad that used the human flourishing appeal. *Lantus* was the only 24 hour insulin pharmaceutical product available for sale. It was marketed by Sanofi Aventis. A full page magazine ad featured an African American woman named Angela Younger, in her early 40s, standing next to her motorcycle. The copy told us that Angela had type 2 diabetes and had been a Lantus patient since 2003. The headline read: "Her Passion: Chasing the Wind. Her Power: Lantus 24 hour insulin."

The body copy tells the story about how Angela is able to realize her passion: "Angela was born to be wild. She also has type 2 diabetes, and pills alone weren't giving her the control she needed. So she asked her doctor about LANTUS®, the only 24-hour insulin approved exclusively for use once a day. As part of an overall diabetes treatment plan, including diet, exercise, other diabetes medications, and regular blood sugar testing, taking LANTUS® just once at the same time each day helps control blood sugar all day long. It works for Angela."

The advertisement uses the human flourishing appeal to connect with those who have type 2 diabetes. The ad features Angela who has a passion for riding her motorcycle that is an authentic part of her being. The ad uses Angela in a lifestyle situation to present Lantus as the enabler of human flourishing. It is also important to note that this is a long-term passion, not something she enjoys and then moves on to something else.

CASE NUMBER 3: WEB SITE – VOLVOFORLIFEAWARDS.COM

The third example showed how "human flourishing appeals" were used as part of corporate positioning and how the appeal was extended to websites. In the automotive market, Volvo had been using the tag line "Volvo For Life". The web site, Volvoforlifeward.com, was an informational site that provided personal stories of people who had made a difference in society by pursuing their passions and improving society, consistent with the "safety" equity that Volvo had in the marketplace.

Volvo held the Volvo for Life awards to recognize them and spread the word. The web site also met the criteria of human flourishing appeals and was built around the real-life stories of people who were exercising their unique strengths and virtues – a key element in the human flourishing theory. And in this case it was a purpose greater than one's own immediate goals.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The theoretical contribution of this paper is that it develops a theory from the disciplines of psychology and philosophy and applies it to advertising communications. It provides us with a better understanding of the theory of human flourishing by defining what the term means and shows how the use of the human flourishing appeal is a contemporary topic that will likely be utilized by advertisers more in the coming years. This paper makes a significant contribution in that "human flourishing" has never been considered a viable appeal in advertising and suggests that it should become part of the appeal taxonomy.

ADVERTISING IMPLICATIONS

Human flourishing theory is directly applicable to advertisers, and can be a very useful means of communication if applied appropriately. First, advertisers must consider if these appeals will motivate the target audience to buy the advertised products. For example, the human flourishing appeal would not likely resonate with children 13-17, as most children in this category are probably looking more for short-lived pleasure than long term security. However, with more mature segments this type of message might be very appealing and could be more personally relevant.

Consider the “recently remarried-divorced” segment often described as “second-chance” consumers (Halverson 1998). Consumers in this target are likely to react more positively to human flourishing appeals because this target audience frequently wants to develop a new outlook on life. This consumer group, usually 40-49 years of age is more content with life than the average adult so they spend more time seeking fuller, enriching lives for themselves.

The human flourishing appeal should appeal to the senior segment. Although they are not working fulltime, they still seek meaning in their lives. They contribute to the society through volunteer work and/or donations. They attend churches and organizations to satisfy belonging needs and self-actualization needs through services. Many of them even attend colleges and other continuing education programs.

Secondly, advertisers should consider using the human flourishing appeals for products and services that solve a real and valid consumer or customer problem. The visual and verbal elements of human flourishing advertising should minimize the negatives and focus instead on positive, aspirational outcomes. Positive outcomes that increase consumer generativity of new ideas or knowledge is consistent with the underlying themes of human flourishing theory.

And finally, if an advertiser wishes to successfully use the human flourishing appeal, they must be sure that the appeal is used for the right reasons – or risk consumer rejection of the advertising message. Often times, marketers use advertising to create dissatisfaction with an existing product or consumer category. Advertisers then propose a new desired solution. Creating needless dissatisfaction does not promote human flourishing and can backfire if a product doesn’t make people feel good about themselves or if the target cannot afford the product.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This manuscript discusses the use of human flourishing appeals in advertising. The human flourishing theory is based on a positive appeal within the consumer generated context of the individual’s worldview. Compared to problem recognition appeals that directly compare ideal states versus actual states, human flourishing appeals are an implied comparison between what could be and what is.

Consumer problem recognition can occur anytime a consumer is dissatisfied with their lives when they recognize something better is out there. Anything can trigger it. Even riding in a new car (a rental or friend's) one realizes how comfortable the seats are, how good the stereo system is, how easy the dials are to read, and how nice the new car smells. The ride home in your own car can be a demoralizing experience. With problem recognition appeals the new ideal state stands in sharp contrast to the actual state. The entire problem recognition process as a whole can be a negative experience for the consumer. With human flourishing appeals, the comparison between ideal state and actual state is only implied so it is not quite as stark. Human flourishing appeals offer happiness as its own reward, so there should be less avoidance of the negative consequences.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research into the area of human flourishing appeals might include a content analysis of how the appeals are currently being used by advertisers. Since the authors examined only three advertisements, there are still questions as to how each human flourishing ads might be operationalized across the

different media types of television, radio, and print advertisements. There are also potential cultural differences to examine. The United States is one of the few countries that has individual happiness as an ultimate goal. One would expect human flourishing appeals to be more common here than in other countries, such as Japan or China (community-focused cultures). On the other hand, the use of human flourishing advertisements might actually have an advantage in community-centered cultures due to their relative rarity.

Another avenue to examine is based on the experimental questions dealing with the advertising effectiveness of human flourishing appeals. Are there differences in effectiveness based on the strength of the appeal? With negative emotional appeals their effectiveness tends to have an inverted-U shape, where very weak emotional appeals are ignored and very strong emotional appeals are rejected. Some middle strength emotional appeal maximizes the effectiveness of the advertisement. Do the human flourishing appeals share this “Goldilocksian” effectiveness pattern or do they follow a more straight-line pattern.

Finally, does the choice of media used interact with a human flourishing appeal? Because of the more complicated communications required to position a product to benefit the consumer in an unknown future context, longer-form media such as television or magazines might be required over newspapers or outdoor advertisements.

LIMITATIONS

The primary limitation of this study is the case study method examined only three cases, as these cases are not generalizable in the conventional sense. By definition we have no way of know empirically to what extent the case study examples presented represent how human flourishing appeals are used in advertising as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

This manuscript has discussed many definitions of human flourishing theory that come from various schools of thought and added a new perspective to the idea of human flourishing and advertising. By applying communication and marketing theory to this definition one can see how it might be a useful, strategic appeal for advertisers.

While this study has provided three examples about how human flourishing is manifested in creative advertising appeals, there are many other brands and companies that are using the human flourishing appeal with apparently great success. These include: *Microsoft - Your Potential. Our Passion*; *Samsonite-Life's A Journey*; *Priceless.com – Are You Searching for The Priceless Things in Life*. The authors call upon the academic marketing field to recognize the popularity and usefulness of the human flourishing appeal and to begin to study it in greater depth.

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