Anticipatory and Reactive Guilt Appeals

Their Influence on Consumer Attitudes and the Moderating Effect of Inferences of Manipulative Intent

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Abstract

Guilt appeals are used to try to influence consumer behavior, with literature defining three kinds – existential, anticipatory, and reactive guilt. Anticipatory and reactive guilt appeals have never been individually studied.

The purpose of this study is hence to explain the relationship between anticipatory guilt and reactive guilt, respectively, inferences of manipulative intent, and consumers’ attitude toward a brand. To test this, an online questionnaire was used, followed by linear regression and moderation analyses.

The results show a positive relationship between both anticipatory guilt and attitude and between reactive guilt and attitude. Inferences of manipulative intent do not moderate either relationship.

Keywords

Guilt appeal, anticipatory guilt, reactive guilt, inferences of manipulative intent, consumer brand attitudes
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1. Introduction

One of the most significant channels of information for the public is the mass media. It can communicate information in simple condensed messages, make messages memorable, and provide a basis for personal thoughts and opinions (O’Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009; Lewis et al., 2007; Cotte et al., 2005). Mass communication is filled with images that have the potential of greatly influencing people’s perceptions of and behavior toward any given issue (O’Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009; Lewis et al., 2007).

A frequently used method for trying to influence perceptions and elicit behaviors are so-called guilt appeals (Cotte et al., 2005; Brennan & Binney, 2010). Guilt appeals are an attempt at making the viewer feel guilty to influence their behavior – usually this means getting them to buy a specific product or act in a certain way (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Cotte et al., 2005). The implication is that the viewer will feel bad until they do as the message instructs them and so remove the negative feelings (Lwin & Phau, 2014; Chang, 2014; Bessarabova et al., 2015). This is what makes guilt appeals so persuasive; they motivate consumers and make them take whatever possible action to alleviate the dissonance they feel, whether it is by apologizing, confessing, or, most importantly, changing their behavior (Bessarabova et al., 2015; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Lwin & Phau, 2014).

Guilt appeals are frequently used, with literature defining three different kinds – existential, anticipatory, and reactive guilt. Existential guilt looks at comparisons between life situations, whereas anticipatory guilt looks to the future and reactive guilt looks to the past (Izard, 2013; Cotte et al., 2005; Hibbert et al., 2007; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). The appeals are used in 14% to 85% of advertisements depending on the type of product; simultaneously, many of them are deemed offensive (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Chang, 2014). Viewers need to feel that the guilt appeal is credible to feel guilty – usually this is achieved through subtle guilt appeals (Cotte et al., 2005; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Hibbert et al., 2007; Chang, 2014). If, however, viewers instead feel the advertisement is trying to be manipulative through obvious guilt appeals, their feelings of guilt are minimized and they view the advertisement more negatively (Cotte et al., 2005; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Brennan & Binney, 2010; Peloza et al., 2013).

These results have profound implications for brands. Advertisers that want to use guilt appeals are walking a fine line between persuasively getting the message across and appearing manipulative as viewers are likely to resist or ignore messages they perceive to be
the latter (Lwin & Phau, 2014; Cotte et al., 2005; Peloza et al., 2013; Ghingold, 1981; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Hibbert et al., 2007; Coulter & Pinto, 1995). Advertisements that exaggerate negative information can consequently reflect badly on the communicator or even lead to them becoming discredited by the viewers (Hastings et al., 2004).

However, if consumers instead find the advertisement credible, can relate to it, and are presented with solutions to minimize the feelings of guilt they are more likely to follow the suggested course of action (Lwin & Phau, 2014; Cotte et al., 2005). This way, advertisers can create win-win situations, where companies get money and consumers make better choices and feel better about themselves rather than lose-lose situations, where companies lose customers and get a negative brand image at the same times as consumers feel guilty or detach themselves from important issues (Cotte et al., 2005).

1.1 Problem Discussion

Guilt is effective for motivating consumers to act as they want to minimize bad feelings – however, this doesn’t always mean consumers act as advertisers intend (Ghingold, 1981; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Hibbert et al., 2007; Brennan & Binney, 2010; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; 1990; Cotte et al., 2005). Consumers are an active part of any advertising attempt as they evaluate advertisers’ motivations and how credible the persuasive messages they send out are (Coulter et al., 1999; Cotte et al., 2005; Brennan & Binney, 2010; Friestad & Wright, 1994). They judge the advertisement to identify how and when marketers try to influence them to be able to respond with the most appropriate coping tactic (Friestad & Wright, 1994).

Some studies have shown that the more guilt an advertisement arouses, the more people want to change their behavior or donate to charitable causes (Chang, 2014; Lwin & Phau, 2014). For self-generated guilt, the relationship holds true. However, when guilt is induced by mass media the effect of the guilt appeal is decreased as the level of guilt increases (Bessarabova et al., 2015). In other words, mass media campaigns that make viewers feel too guilty may make them less willing to do something about it (Bessarabova et al., 2015; Brennan & Binney, 2010).

Previous studies have considered guilt appeals in detail, examining consumer reactions to guilt appeals (Ghingold, 1981), the impact of negative emotions on behavior (Cialdini & Kenrick, 1976; Harvey & McCrohan, 1988), individual consumer factors that mediate feeling guilty (Bennett, 1998; Coulter et al., 1999), guilt as a measurable construct (Ruth & Faber, 1988; Burnett & Lundsford, 1994; Coulter & Pinto, 1995), the
use of negative emotional appeals on donation intention (Hibbert et al., 2007; Basil et al., 2008; Lwin & Phau, 2014) and the effect of guilt on subsequent attitudes (Bozinoff & Ghingold, 1983; Edell & Burke, 1987; Englis, 1990; Pinto & Priest, 1991; Coulter & Pinto, 1995). However, there is still a lack of theoretical understanding concerning the relationship between mass communication guilt appeals and their ability to persuade people to change their behavior (Bessarabova et al., 2015: Lwin & Phau, 2014; Brennan & Binney, 2010).

Furthermore, the link between a realized emotional arousal – in this case, feeling guilty – and attitude formation is still theoretically problematic (Brennan & Binney, 2010). This relationship is complicated further as researchers have now broken the unified guilt concept down into smaller parts – existential, anticipatory, and reactive guilt - as unified guilt appeals have been found to be less effective (Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Izard, 2013; Cotte et al., 2005; Hibbert et al., 2007). Huhmann and Brotherton’s (1997) study has previously brought attention to this problem, as they state that most research on guilt appeals has not discerned which kind of guilt is being examined. Cotte et al. (2005) and Lwin and Phau (2014) have more closely examined the existential guilt appeal and found it has a negative effect on consumer attitudes when inferences of manipulative intent are registered. Basil et al. (2006; 2008) included anticipatory guilt in their studies, but only in relation to donation intent. Induced anticipatory and reactive guilt and the effect they have on subsequent consumer attitudes have, based on the literature review in the following chapter, never been studied.

1.2 Purpose and Research Questions

Considering the gaps in research mentioned above, the purpose of this paper is to explain the relationship between anticipatory guilt and reactive guilt, respectively, inferences of manipulative intent, and consumers’ attitude toward a brand. To do so, the following research questions will be used as a guide:

- Is there a relationship between anticipatory guilt and the attitude toward a brand?
- Is there a relationship between reactive guilt and the attitude toward a brand?
- Does inferring an inference of manipulative intent moderate the relationships between the guilt appeals and the attitude toward the brand?
1.3 Report Structure

In the following chapters the following structure will be used: first, a literature review explaining the theories, concepts and scope of the study, followed by a method chapter outlining the methods used and steps taken to conduct it. The results are then presented and analyzed, followed by a discussion of the findings. Finally, a conclusion is drawn to answer the purpose and contributions made, limitations, managerial implications and possibilities for further research are described.
2. Theoretical Framework

*In the following chapter, the theoretical basis of this study is presented.*

2.1 Persuasive Marketing

Persuasive marketing has been broadly defined as “all influences—both direct and indirect—that lead people towards action. Persuasion principles apply to all media whether still, motion, or sound” (Armstrong et al., 2016, p. 277). Such influences include a credible source, messages that facilitate a connection to the audience and are easy to process, contextual elements, the environment of the advertisement, message sequencing and framing, and messages that are consistent with the audiences’ beliefs (Shu & Carlson, 2014). Advertisements making use of persuasion are best-recalled in 75% of all cases, making it the most effective tactic (Wright, 2016).

However, as consumers are frequently targeted by and exposed to persuasive marketing, they build up knowledge about these tactics (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Coulter et al., 1999; Campbell, 1995; Hibbert et al., 2007). As active participants in marketing, the more they learn the easier it is for them to identify how and when marketers try to influence them and respond with a coping tactic that benefits themselves rather than the company (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Coulter et al., 1999; Cotte et al., 2005).

For an advertisement to be persuasive, some basic level of processing on the part of the consumer is necessary (Lavidge & Steiner, 2000; Campbell, 1995). Advertisers need to catch the attention of consumers and make sure they stay focused on the advertisement long enough for the message to be conveyed (Campbell, 1995; Friestad & Wright, 1994). Properly processing the advertisement leads consumers to remember the advertisement better, improve their attitude toward the brand and keep those attitudes for longer (Petty et al., 1983; Campbell, 1995). However, over-processing can lead to negative outcomes. Consumers may try to dispute the message or get irritated, and as a result not be persuaded by the message (Petty et al., 1983; Campbell, 1995).

Emotional appeals are used as a persuasive method to grab the audience’s attention (Hibbert et al., 2007). They can be either positive or negative in nature and are usually used to get the audience to change their behavior as emotions – especially empathy, which can be aroused by both kinds of emotional appeals – drive people to act (Cialdini et al. 1987; Brennan & Binney, 2010; Hibbert et al., 2007; Chang, 2014). There
have been many studies comparing the effectiveness of positive versus negative appeals, with varying results (e.g. Wheatley & Oshikawa, 1970, Homer & Yoon, 1992, Block & Keller, 1995). However, many agree that negative emotions are an effective way of creating an emotional response (Bagozzi & Moore, 1994; Vitaglione & Barnett, 2003; Brennan & Binney, 2010).

2.1.1 Negative Emotional Appeals

Negative appeals been used for decades (e.g. Higbee, 1969). Such appeals include fear, shock, anger, insecurity, envy, regret, shame and guilt, with fear being the focus of most academic research (e.g. Ray and Wilkie, 1970, Wheatley and Oshikawa, 1970; Bagozzi and Moore, 1994; Burnett and Lunsford, 1994; Latour and Rotfeld, 1997). As negative emotions have been proven to cause psychic discomfort, negative appeals aim to create emotional discomfort that can be fixed by a desired behavior; this behavior is usually described in the advertisement (Brennan & Binney, 2010). The goal is that the audience will uncomfortable enough to be motivated to act and so decrease the feeling (Brennan & Binney, 2010; Chang, 2014).

The link between emotional arousal and attitude formation is still theoretically problematic (Brennan & Binney, 2010). Despite this, negative emotional appeals have been used to sell to audiences for decades. Advertisers have relied on them to change attitudes and convince consumers to purchase products – this is particularly the case with guilt appeals (Edell & Burke, 1987; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Brennan & Binney, 2010). Hence, this study delves deeper into guilt appeals and examines how they help shape consumer attitudes.

2.2 Guilt Appeals

Guilt is defined in literature as “a negative, self-evaluative response arising from behavior observed to be in conflict with one’s understanding of and commitment to social norms and relationships” (Abell & Gecas, 1997, p. 103, cited in Bessarabova et al., 2015). If someone’s self-evaluation and self-presentation does not match their ideal or how others evaluate and see them, they feel guilty (Chang, 2014; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Coulter & Pinto, 1995). As guilt is accompanied by feelings of remorse and responsibility, feeling guilty can lead to people making apologies, confessing their mistakes, learning lessons and changing their behaviors (Boudewyns et al., 2013;
Bessarabova et al., 2015; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Lwin & Phau, 2014). It also increases empathy and helps people to not harm others (Vitaglione & Barnett, 2003; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Brennan & Binney, 2010; Bagozzi & Moore, 1994).

A guilt appeal consists of two elements: (a) a relational theme of guilt evoked by suggestions of personal moral wrongdoing or violation of a standard, and (b) a response in the form of a change in behavior or attitude in the receiver to allow them to feel better (Bessarabova et al., 2015; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Cotte et al., 2005; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Ruth and Faber, 1988). Basically, guilt appeals to an individual’s conscience, sense of right and wrong, and the moral obligations they have toward others around them (Brennan & Binney, 2010; Chang, 2014; Ruth and Faber, 1988). Guilt appeals are persuasive in nature as they motivate action (Lwin & Phau, 2014; Cotte et al., 2005; Chang, 2014; Burnett and Lundsford, 1994).

Guilt has been proven an effective influence strategy in personal relationships, as increased levels of guilt lead to an increased desire to make amends (Bessarabova et al., 2015; Chang, 2014; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). However, for mass media campaigns, relying on personal emotional bonds is not possible – instead, the success of the guilt appeal depends on the level and intensity of emotion induced by the persuasive message (Bessarabova et al., 2015; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Brennan & Binney 2010). Subtle and moderate appeals induce guilt without the audience realizing the source which leads to more positive attitudes toward the message (Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Hibbert et al., 2007; Chang, 2014). If the appeal is too obvious people become aware of its manipulative intention (Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Cotte et al., 2005; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Bessarabova et al., 2015). This can trigger a negative reactance where the effectiveness of the message decreases, viewers become angry, annoyed, or simply ignore guilt appeals to protect themselves (Ghingold, 1981; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Hibbert et al., 2007; Brennan & Binney, 2010; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Englis, 1990; Cotte et al., 2005).

Guilt appeals can help foster helping behaviors and encourage avoiding risky behaviors. Hence, guilt appeals have been used frequently in campaigns about the environment, volunteerism, public health and safety, alcohol campaigns, social justice, and foreign aid agencies (Brennan & Binney, 2010; Boudewyns et al., 2013; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1995; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Coulter & Pinto, 1995). Particularly charities often use guilt appeals in their advertising, but guilt has also been used to sell consumer
nondurable goods like food and cleaning products, cosmetics, and pet care products (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Basil et al., 2006; 2008; Brennan & Binney, 2010; Hibbert et al., 2007; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Chang, 2014; Bozinoff & Ghingold, 1983). Audiences that are susceptible to guilt appeals and feel empathy, worry or sorrow for those portrayed in, for example, charity advertisements, find guilt appeals encourage them to help those less fortunate (Brennan & Binney, 2010; Lwin & Phau, 2014). For products, the advertiser can portray the product as a way of making amends and so convince them to make a purchase (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Burnett & Lundsford, 1994).

Guilt appeals have been thoroughly researched. Early studies of guilt appeals focused on consumer reactions to guilt appeals (Ghingold, 1981). Since then, guilt appeal research has mainly focused on the relationships between the emotions consumers experience and the subsequent effectiveness of the appeals (Hibbert et al., 2007). Harvey and McCrohan (1988) argued that guilt appeals may be more effective than fear appeals. MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) expanded the knowledge of how emotions influence attitudes. Ruth and Faber (1988), Burnett and Lundsford (1994) and Coulter and Pinto (1995) confirmed that guilt is a construct that can be manipulated. Ghingold (1981), Bennett (1998) and Coulter et al. (1999) examined individual factors in consumers that mediate feelings of guilt. Bozinoff and Ghingold (1983), Edell and Burke (1987), Englis (1990), Pinto and Priest (1991) and Coulter and Pinto (1995) found that negative emotions and guilt has the greatest impact on subsequent attitudes.

More recently, studies have started to break the unified guilt concept down into smaller parts – for example, Brennan and Binney (2010) examined the differences between fear, shame, and guilt and their effect on behavior, where previously the three had not been considered separate feelings (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). Related to this study, Cotte et al. (2005) and Lwin and Phau (2014) have more closely examined one kind of guilt appeal – existential guilt - and found it has a negative effect on consumer attitudes. Furthermore, Lwin and Phau (2014) state there is a need for advertisers to use specific types of guilt when formulating their communication strategies as unified guilt appeals are less effective (Coulter & Pinto, 1995).

2.2.1 Three Kinds of Guilt Appeals

Psychology literature defines three kinds of guilt – existential, anticipatory, and reactive guilt (Izard, 2013; Cotte et al., 2005; Hibbert et al., 2007; Huhmann &
Brotherton, 1997). All three can cause viewers to feel guilt and motivate them to action if used in advertisements; they only differ in the origins that led to feeling guilt (Cotte et al., 2005; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). So far, despite identifying three types, marketing researchers have primarily explored guilt appeals as a unified construct (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Cotte et al., 2005; Godek & LaBarge, 2006; Hibbert et al., 2007; Lwin & Phau, 2014). The effectiveness of the specific types individually and whether one is more effective than the others remains unclear (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Lwin & Phau, 2014).

Existential guilt has been most thoroughly researched despite being the least frequently used in advertisements (Cotte et al., 2005; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). Existential guilt occurs when someone compares their own well-being and fortune with others (Izard, 2013; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Ruth & Faber 1988; Cotte et al., 2005; Lwin & Phau, 2014). If the difference between the two is too great in favor of the one doing the comparison they may feel empathetic to those less fortunate and feel existential guilt (Lwin & Phau, 2014; Hibbert et al., 2007; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). Not surprisingly, charity advertisements and campaigns with social responsibility themes frequently employ this type of guilt (Cotte et al., 2005; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). Existential guilt has been found to have a positive effect on donation intent and amount as well as a negative effect on the attitude toward the advertisements and the sponsoring brand (Basil et al., 2006; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Cotte et al., 2005; Hibbert et al., 2007).

In contrast, anticipatory guilt has very seldom been studied individually despite being the most frequently occurring (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). Basil et al. (2006; 2008) included it in their studies, but only in relation to donation intent. Anticipatory guilt occurs when an individual potentially will violate a personal standard of acceptable behavior (Cotte et al., 2005; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Hibbert et al., 2007; Lwin & Phau, 2014). Examples of this is contemplating to call in sick despite being in full health or disappointing your kids (Hibbert et al., 2007; Cotte et al., 2005; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). Anticipatory guilt appeals offer consumers a way to avoid or in some way prevent such situations and unwanted outcomes. Many times, anticipatory guilt appeals present future scenarios where the viewer is at risk of violating a personal standard, but which they can avoid if they take precautionary steps today (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). Campaigns promoting consumer nondurable goods, health care products, and health care services often use
this type of guilt appeal (Cotte et al., 2005; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997).

Reactive guilt is equally under-researched. Reactive guilt is a response to having violated a personal standard of acceptable behavior – whereas anticipatory guilt looks to the future, reactive guilt is associated with the past (Cotte et al., 2005; Hibbert et al., 2007; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Lwin & Phau, 2014). Examples include not paying the bill at a restaurant, forgetting an important date or anniversary, or being unsatisfied with a currently used brand (Hibbert et al., 2007; Cotte et al., 2005; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). Campaigns promoting consumer goods of all kinds, health care products and services use reactive guilt appeals (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Cotte et al., 2005).

2.3 Attitudes Toward Brands

The concept of attitudes is defined as a complete evaluation of or “a response to an antecedent stimulus or attitude object” and is commonly identified to consist of three response components: affect, behavior and cognition (Breckler, 1984, p. 1191; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Affect measures emotional responses, either by collecting data about subjects’ mood or feelings or by measuring physiological responses such as heart rate. Behavior includes actions, intentions to act, or verbal statements about behavior (Breckler, 1984). Finally, cognition involves perceptions, beliefs and thoughts about the stimulus (Breckler, 1984; Bagozzi et al., 1979). The three response components are assumed to vary and be evaluated on a common continuum, such as from favorable to unfavorable (Breckler, 1984). In turn, the stimulus is an independent variable which may or may not be observable, for example another person, an object, a product, a behavior, or a policy (Breckler, 1984; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Mitchell & Olson, 2000). For this study, the stimuli are brands – hence, the attitude measured is brand attitude and refers to the overall evaluations of and responses to a brand (Olsen et al., 2014).

Consumer attitudes are important for companies as they are a basis for creating effective marketing strategies (Mitchell & Olson, 2000; Bagozzi et al., 1979). They are also used to evaluate new products, assess advertising effectiveness and measure reactions to social issues (Bagozzi et al., 1979; Mitchell & Olson, 2000). Although attitudes are enduring after they are formed, it is possible to change them through marketing actions (Olsen et al., 2014; Mitchell & Olson, 2000).

Therefore, the three response components have frequently been used in persuasion
research (Breckler, 1984). Persuasive communication affects the three components differently – it is hence important to know which response component one is examining (Bagozzi et al., 1979). The aim with influencing one component is to bring about a similar change in the remaining ones, although there is some doubt whether changing one attitude response component is enough to influence the other two (Breckler, 1984).

Nevertheless, previous studies have relied on measuring single components of attitude, usually cognition, with specific focus on beliefs about brand attributes – as is the case with this study (Bagozzi et al., 1979; Mitchell & Olson, 2000; Breckler, 1984). Beliefs have been under scrutiny as they are affected by marketing stimuli first and in turn affect attitudes, meaning that to modify someone’s attitude, one must change their beliefs. Specifically, beliefs and attitudes about advertisements strongly influence overall consumer brand attitudes (Mitchell & Olson, 2000).

2.4 Inferences of Manipulative Intent

Inferences of manipulative intent, IMI, are defined as “consumer inferences that the advertiser is attempting to persuade by inappropriate, unfair, or manipulative means” (Campbell, 1995, p. 228; Cotte et al., 2005; Hibbert et al., 2007). They have been proven to influence consumer responses, specifically emotional ones (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Coulter et al., 1999; Hibbert et al., 2007). For advertisements that use general guilt appeals, inferences of manipulative intent have a significant influence on relationships (Cotte et al., 2005; Hibbert et al., 2007; Lwin & Phau, 2014).

It has been shown that an excessive use of guilt appeals leads to viewers’ realization that such an appeal is being used as a persuasive tactic to manipulate (Bessarabova et al., 2015). Viewers that detect inferences of manipulative intent are more likely to resist the message by providing counterarguments (Wood & Eagly, 1981; Cotte et al., 2005; Campbell, 1995; Lwin & Phau, 2014). Instead of feeling guilty they may get angry, disgusted, or simply ignore the message, reducing the effectiveness of the emotional response (Englis, 1990; Coulter and Pinto, 1995; Campbell, 1995; Cotte et al., 2005; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Lwin & Phau, 2014). Hence, advertisers need to carefully weigh the balance when using guilt appeals between getting the message across persuasively and seeming manipulative (Cotte et al., 2005; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Hibbert et al., 2007). In studies focusing on general guilt and existential guilt it has been found that those that detect inferences of manipulative intent are less likely to feel guilty –
detected inferences of manipulative intent hence have a negative effect on persuasive guilt appeals (Cotte et al., 2005; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Campbell, 1995).

Studies have shown that detected inferences of manipulative intent have a negative impact on guilt (Hibbert et al., 2007), donation intentions (Chang, 2014; Hibbert et al., 2007) and attitude towards the message, advertisement and the sponsoring brand (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Campbell, 1995; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Cotte et al., 2005; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Friestad and Wright, 1994; Coulter et al., 1999; Pinto & Priest, 1991). In extreme cases, perceived inferences of manipulative intent can create a deep-seated mistrust of the company, leading to a loss of consumers (Cotte et al., 2005). However, there is one exception: Lwin and Phau (2014) found that inferences of manipulative intent do not moderate the relationship between existential guilt and donation intentions, suggesting that consumers perceive existential guilt to be appropriate for charity advertisements and are therefore more tolerant toward manipulative intent in that context (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Coulter et al., 1999). Research on inferences of manipulative intent in connection to anticipatory and reactive guilt is lacking.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review, guilt appeals have clearly been thoroughly researched (e.g. Ghingold, 1981; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Coulter et al., 1999; Hibbert et al., 2007). However, Lwin and Phau (2014) and Coulter and Pinto (1995) identified a need for advertisers to specify which type of guilt appeal they are using as unified guilt appeals are less effective.

Despite this, individual guilt appeals have not been studied sufficiently. Existential guilt has been the focus of several studies even though it is least frequently used by marketers (Cotte et al., 2005; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). In contrast, anticipatory guilt has seldom been studied despite being the most frequently used type of guilt appeal (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Basil et al., 2006; 2008). Reactive guilt is equally under-researched (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997). To counteract this imbalance and reduce the gap in research, this study focuses on the latter two kinds of guilt and excludes existential guilt appeals.

As for the moderating effect of inferences of manipulative intent, they have been shown to have a negative impact on general feelings of guilt and attitude towards the sponsoring brand (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Campbell, 1995; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Cotte et al., 2005; Coulter et al., 1999; Pinto & Priest, 1991). However, Lwin and Phau
(2014) found that inferences of manipulative intent do not moderate the relationship between existential guilt and donation intentions (Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Coulter et al., 1999). There has been very little research on inferences of manipulative intent in connection specifically to anticipatory and reactive guilt – it is hence unclear whether individual kinds of guilt have the same effect on brand attitudes as general appeals, or if inferences of manipulative intent influence that relationship. This study aims to fill that gap. The above outlined gaps lead to the four hypotheses below:

- **H1**: Anticipatory guilt appeals have an impact on the consumer’s attitude toward a brand.
- **H2**: Reactive guilt appeals have an impact on the consumer’s attitude toward a brand.
- **H3**: Inferences of manipulative intent moderate the relationship between anticipatory guilt and the attitude toward the brand.
- **H4**: Inferences of manipulative intent moderate the relationship between reactive guilt and the attitude toward the brand.

Based on these hypotheses, the following model was developed:

![Figure 1 – Research Model](image)

**Figure 1** – Research Model  
**Source:** Original Model

The model shows the main theoretical concepts and their hypothesized relationship to each other. The hypotheses are labelled H1-H4.
3. Method

The research procedure is presented in detail in the following chapter.

3.1 Research Approach

For this study, a deductive and quantitative approach was taken. Deductive theory examines the link between the theoretical field and research as it uses existing theory to construct a testable hypothesis (Wallén, 1996; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Based on the collected data the hypothesis is accepted or rejected, followed by a generalization of the results. These are reintroduced into the theoretical basis of the research field to confirm or revise existing models (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As this paper is testing hypotheses based on existing theory, it is unmistakably deductive in nature.

Quantitative studies use a highly-structured framework with set procedures designed to objectively study social interactions and behaviors (Robson, 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2011). This framework allows the researcher to determine an exact outcome (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As this study uses a questionnaire whose results were coded and quantified to produce exact statistics, it is clearly quantitative.

3.2 Research Design

The research design determines how the study and data collection is conducted from beginning to end; in this case, the study is explanatory in nature (Malhotra, 2010). Explanatory studies are sometimes known as causal studies as they examine why things are the way they are and look for causal relationships (Wallén, 1996; Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2014; Malhotra, 2010). It is a design that requires careful planning and structure to determine the cause variables and effect variables, as well as to establish a relationship to be predict future effects (Malhotra, 2010). As this study is examining the relationship between two kinds of guilt appeals, their effect on consumer brand attitudes, and the moderating effect of inferences of manipulative intent, it is appropriate to employ an explanatory design.

3.3 Data Source

Data sources can be either primary or secondary in nature. Primary sources convey first-hand information, which is why they are considered the most reliable. Furthermore, they are frequently the first to publish information about a topic
Secondary sources depend on primary sources as they reiterate and relay the information from them. Secondary sources should be more carefully evaluated as they may have been put in a different context or angled to fit a new situation (Alexanderson, 2012). Regardless of the type, all sources should be carefully examined to determine if—and if so, to what extent—they can be considered reliable (Alexanderson, 2012).

For this study, primary sources are the main sources of data. The articles used in the theoretical chapter come from respected and peer-reviewed magazines, while the questionnaire was constructed to collect first-hand data for this study alone. All sources, regardless of whether primary or secondary, were carefully considered to ensure they are appropriate to use to ensure a reliable and valid study.

3.4 Research Strategy

The research strategy structures the data collection and analysis and acts as a guide for the research process. For this study, a cross-sectional strategy was used as data was collected from a focus group and an online questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The study follows a sequential design where the focus group acts as a pre-study to the questionnaire to more accurately choose appropriate guilt-inducing advertisements (Robson, 2011).

3.5 Data Collection Method

Two data collection methods were applied in this study: two focus groups were held, followed by the distribution of an online questionnaire. The focus groups acted as a pre-study to collect information about which advertisements were most guilt-inducing.

The advertisements presented in the questionnaire were chosen and confirmed by two different focus groups and the questions were adapted from previous studies on guilt appeals. This leads to the questionnaire being less biased and cannot be influenced by any preconceptions the researcher may have about guilt appeals.
3.5.1 Overview of the Data Collection Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29th</td>
<td>1st-30th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group 1: Choosing the advertisements</td>
<td>Collecting data by sending out the survey per mail/sharing it on Facebook/in Facebook groups</td>
<td>Summarizing results and data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group 2: Confirming the guilt appeals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2 - Overview of the Data Collection Procedure**  
*Source:* Original diagram

3.6 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a suitable segment of a population, based on set parameters or characteristics, for the study being undertaken (Emerson, 2015). The sample needs to be appropriate sample to allow for a generalization of the results and to be representative for the population (Marshall, 1996).

This study uses a non-probability sample, which means that some members of the population have a higher probability of being selected to take part (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Specifically, the sample is a convenience snowball sample. Friends and family were asked to participate first, as they were most easily accessible and willing to help – this is the core of convenience sampling (Marshall, 1996; Malhotra, 2010). They were then asked to share it on their Facebook profiles and ask their friends to help fill it in, making the initial convenience sample a snowball sample (Emerson, 2015; Malhotra, 2010). The sampling process for both the focus groups and the questionnaire will be explained in more detail in section 3.6.3 below.

3.6.1 Sampling Frame

The sampling frame consists of those in the population that are eligible to participate in the questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2011). For this study, the sampling frame is the same as the population – any Swedish person, who are assumed to be familiar with or at least have heard of the brands shown in the questionnaire, or any person that speaks Swedish and is aware of the brands. For simplicity’s sake, the sampling frame is assumed to be the approximately the same as the population of
Sweden. As the questionnaire and the two chosen ads were completely in Swedish, it was mandatory for them to understand it. Otherwise there were no restrictions set for who could or could not take part, regardless of age, sex or background.

Due to the population and sampling frame chosen, it is now clear a probability sample was not possible to achieve. Contacting every Swedish citizen or anyone fluent in Swedish is too expensive and time consuming for this study, if possible at all. To balance this out, the sample size needed to be large and the sample varied enough to be able to be generalized nevertheless.

3.6.2 Sample Size

The following formula was used to find the sample size needed (SurveyMonkey, 2017):

\[
\text{Sample size} = \frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2} \times \frac{1}{1 + (\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N})}
\]

\(p = \) Standard deviation – in this case p is assumed to be 0.5 due to the random sample
\(e = \) Margin of error in decimal form
\(N = \) Population size
\(z = z\)-score

The z-score is the number of standard deviations any data point is away from the mean. In this case, the confidence level of 95% corresponds to a z-score of 1.96 (SurveyMonkey, 2017).

For this study, the population (N) is the population of Sweden. On the 31st of December 2016, this number was 9,995,153 (Statistiska Centralbyrå, 2017). For a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error at 10%, the sample size needed for the questionnaire is 97.

3.6.3 Sample Selection and Collection Procedure

There were two stages of sample selection with two accompanying collection procedures. The sample frame was the same.

For the focus group, friends and family were asked to partake. None of those
that participated in the groups participated in the questionnaire. This means the sample was a strict convenience sample for both groups. For the first group, there were two males and two females between the ages of 36 and 80. The second group consisted of three females and two males between the ages of 22 and 55. All participants in both groups spoke Swedish fluently and both focus groups were recorded and transcribed.

For the questionnaire, friends and family were asked to participate first – this excludes those that were part of either focus group. Those that had participated were then asked to ask their friends and to share it on their Facebook profiles, where more people could share it if they so wished. Hence, the sample for the questionnaire was a convenience snowball sample. The answers were collected over the period of a month and were anonymous except for the demographical data about the age, sex and educational background of the participants. In total, 103 answers were collected. As the advertisements presented in the questionnaire were in Swedish and participants needed to understand them to answer the questions, the questionnaire was only administered in Swedish.

3.7 Focus Group

A focus group is “a method of collecting data, in a safe environment, from more than one individual at a time, regarding a specified area of interrogation” (Krueger & Casey, 2000 cited in Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010, p. 711). They are commonly described as a mix between a group interview and group discussion as the participants are encouraged to talk to each other (Kitzinger, 1995; Hughes & DuMont, 1993).

Focus groups are used to explore what people know, how they reason and why (Kitzinger, 1995). Generally, due to their purposive sampling process to ensure members have knowledge about a chosen topic, the results from focus groups are not generalizable (Hughes & DuMont, 1993). However, as they generate great amounts of in-depth data on specific topics, they are ideal to use as a basis for creating questionnaires (Rabiee, 2004; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010; Hughes & DuMont, 1993; Barbour, 2008).

In this case, the focus group was used as a pre-study to collect information about which advertisements were most guilt inducing. There were two focus groups – the first group decided on which advertisements were most guilt inducing generally, while the second got more information about the different kinds of guilt appeals and were asked to categorize and rate the advertisements. This way, the chosen advertisements are more likely to generate guilt so that the effects can be more accurately measured in the
questionnaire. A more detailed description of how the focus group was conducted will follow in section 3.7.2 below.

3.7.1 Conducting a Focus Group

Focus groups need to be sampled purposively to ensure the members belong to the intended target group and have knowledge about the topic of discussion (Rabiee, 2004; Hughes & DuMont, 1993). This can be done either by exploiting pre-existing groups with an established group dynamic, or by bringing together a range of people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives which may allow for livelier communication (Kitzinger, 1995; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). Ideally, the focus group consists of four to 12 members – this is large enough to ensure a decent amount of data is collected and that everyone has an opportunity to talk while large enough to allow different perspectives to join (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1997; Kitzinger, 1995; Hughes & DuMont, 1993; Rabiee, 2004; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010).

Sessions should take place in a comfortable setting where participants can relax and normally take 1-2 hours contingent on the questions (Kitzinger, 1995; Morgan, 1997). Approximate time measures can be included for each question to keep the session shorter (Litosseliti, 2003). The questions should be clear, simple, easily understandable, open-ended and specific to one topic (Litosseliti, 2003). To help the moderator, the questions should be organized into a guide to keep the discussions relevant; however, the moderator may spontaneously add questions that are relevant to the topic to delve deeper into the subject if necessary (Litosseliti, 2003; Hughes & DuMont, 1993; Barbour, 2008; Rabiee, 2004).

A competent and opinion-neutral moderator is crucial in creating a successful focus group (Krueger, 1994; Litosseliti, 2003; Rabiee, 2004). At the beginning, they clarify the purpose of the focus group and start the discussion by asking questions: then the moderator only guides the discussion, asking questions or providing extra materials when necessary without actively taking part (Kitzinger, 1995; Onwuegbuzie et al, 2010; Barbour, 2008). The moderator should remain as passive as possible to avoid imposing bias on the group (Litosseliti, 2003). Perhaps most importantly, the moderator is responsible for taking notes and recording the focus group (Onwuegbuzie et al, 2010).

The results should be carefully recorded and transcribed – this can include notes taken by the moderator, tasks given to the group, and non-verbal communication
(Kitzinger, 1995; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). Dissenting voices are of particular interest: if they are ignored, the dissenting participant is censored (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). The moderator should, during the session itself, also pay attention to those individuals that may be silencing themselves if they do not agree or are shy (Kitzinger, 1995). Answers between participants and group decisions should be compared, followed by an attempt to draw conclusions from the analysis (Kitzinger, 1995). In this case, this was simple as the group was asked to come to a common conclusion.

3.7.2 Design of the Focus Group

Two focus groups were conducted to determine which advertisements were most guilt inducing. This was done to ensure that the advertisements would elicit the appropriate responses when incorporated into the questionnaire. This design has been adapted from Cotte et al. (2005) and Lwin and Phau (2014) that used focus groups as pre-studies for the same purpose. Real advertisements were used to allow participants to accurately assess the manipulative intentions and to show greater validity of consumers’ reactions toward the advertisements (Lwin & Phau, 2014; Hibbert et al., 2007). Advertisements are a good test subject to use when measuring beliefs and attitudes as they strongly influence overall consumer brand attitudes (Mitchell & Olson, 2000).

Before the first session, the questions – presented in section 3.7.4 below – were written into a script to guide the moderator. For the second session, the questions were altered some to more closely examine the different kinds of guilt appeals. Both sessions were voice recorded and transcribed with the participants’ permission. The scripts and transcripts from both focus groups, including the advertisements shown, can be seen in appendix A and B. The participants were informed about how the data collected was to be used and granted anonymity.

Both focus groups took place in private homes around a kitchen table. All discussion was held in Swedish. The participants and the moderator were placed around the table and the ads were spread out in the middle so that everyone could see them and each other. The advertisements were all watched and looked at before the discussions started. The participants were given ample opportunity to ask questions before the focus groups took place to ensure they knew what was expected of them. They were also informed they could ask further clarification questions whenever they felt the need. Each question had a limit of about 20 minutes to keep the session from
becoming too long – however, this was shorter for some questions that were quick to answer and longer for others where the participants discussed in greater depth. At the end of the session, the participants were thanked for their participation. Both sessions were transcribed in full.

The first focus group took 55 minutes. The participants were shown 11 advertisements, both print and video, all of which used guilt appeals in some way and to some degree. The participants were asked questions concerning how convincing the advertisements were, if it encourages them to act, which were most attention-grabbing and why. Once the group had determined which advertisements were most attention grabbing, they were asked to categorize them into how they made the participants feel. Finally, they were asked which advertisements could convince them to change their behavior. All rankings and categorizations were first written down individually to then arrive at a group decision through discussion. The individual and group answers were compared after the session was done to choose the most effective guilt appeal advertisements.

The second focus group took 35 minutes. The group was shown the four advertisements that the first group had deemed used guilt appeals effectively. They were then briefed about guilt appeals with added specific information about anticipatory and reactive guilt. Once the group had categorized the advertisements into different guilt appeals, they were asked to rate which was most guilt inducing. This was, as in the first group, first written down individually to then arrive at a group decision through discussion. The individual and group answers were compared after the session was done to choose the highest ranked advertisements to use for the questionnaire, resulting in two TV ads. These will be discussed in more detail in section 3.8.2 below.

3.7.3 Notable Comments from the Focus Groups

The focus group yielded some interesting information that may hint at the results of the questionnaire. The first group discussed the fact that the advertisements they found most effective were relevant to their lives, that they made you think in some way, or made you feel something instantaneously. The advertisements “feel relevant,” “they make you feel something” and they “made me think.” Those that had kids could relate particularly well to Trygg Hansa’s advertisement, whereas “alcohol, insurance and gym” were “more general and applicable to larger segments of the population.”
The advertisements they did not like, on the other hand, were too controlling, “too much like a parent,” too manipulative and “over the top.” One member commented on the Unicef advertisement, which was judged to be highly manipulative, by saying “I’m supposed to feel guilty, but I might just ignore it.” There was a short discussion that possibly Swedish advertisements are “tamer” than international ones, suggesting that perhaps Swedish consumers do not have as much knowledge about persuasion techniques in advertising as they are not frequently exposed to extreme guilt appeals.

The second group confirmed that emotional appeals that make you feel something are most effective. One member also commented that anticipatory guilt appeals focus on things that “you have the opportunity to change;” whereas for reactive guilt appeals it is already too late.

3.7.4 Operationalization

The focus groups were used as a pre-study to identify which advertisements were most guilt inducing and to determine which advertisements used which kind of guilt appeal. Those advertisements that were found to be most guilt-inducing for each kind of guilt appeal under scrutiny were used in the questionnaire. During the session, the questions outlined below were asked. The more defined, close-ended questions were used as follow-up questions when more in-depth answers were needed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Theoretical Definition</th>
<th>Conceptual Definition</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive Marketing</td>
<td>“All influences—both direct and indirect—that lead people towards action. Persuasion principles apply to all media whether still, motion, or sound” (Armstrong et al., 2016).</td>
<td>Which advertisements are most action-inducing?</td>
<td>Which advertisements convince you? How? Which advertisements encourage you to act? Why does it (not)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Emotional Appeals</td>
<td>A persuasive method to grab the audience’s attention (Hibbert et al., 2007).</td>
<td>Which advertisements are most attention grabbing? Which advertisements are perceived to use negative emotional appeals?</td>
<td>Which advertisements grab your attention and keep it? Why are they effective? Why not? How do these advertisements make you feel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt Appeals</td>
<td>Consists of two elements: (a) a relational theme of guilt evoked by suggestions of violation of a standard, and (b) a response in the form of a change in behavior or attitude in the receiver (Bessarabova et al., 2015; Huhmann &amp; Brotherton, 1997; Cotte et al., 2005; Lwin &amp; Phau, 2014; Ruth and Faber, 1988).</td>
<td>Which advertisements successfully make consumers feel guilty? Which advertisements can successfully create the wanted response?</td>
<td>Which of these advertisements make you feel guilty? Which advertisements would make you change your behavior? How? Why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Kinds of Guilt Appeals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Theoretical Definition</th>
<th>Conceptual Definition</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anticipatory guilt</td>
<td>Anticipatory guilt occurs when an individual potentially will violate a personal standard of acceptable behavior (Cotte et al., 2005; Huhmann &amp; Brotherton, 1997; Hibbert et al., 2007; Lwin &amp; Phau, 2014).</td>
<td>Which advertisements use an anticipatory guilt appeal?</td>
<td>How does this advertisement make you feel guilty?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive guilt</td>
<td>Reactive guilt is a response to having violated a personal standard of acceptable behavior (Cotte et al., 2005; Hibbert et al., 2007; Huhmann &amp; Brotherton, 1997; Lwin &amp; Phau, 2014).</td>
<td>Which advertisements use a reactive guilt appeal?</td>
<td>What does this advertisement focus on? The past? The future? Something else?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 – Operationalization of Added Questions for Focus Group Two**

Source: Original table

3.8 Questionnaire

Online questionnaires are a cost- and time-effective way of administering a questionnaire to a large target audience as they can be spread on social media sites (Phillips, 2015). Respondents can answer when it suits them best and are free to exit at any time without disclosing any data (Phillips, 2015). It was primarily spread by sharing it on Facebook profiles and in Facebook groups, but also by sending the link through direct messages and emails.

3.8.1 Administering a Questionnaire

For questionnaires to be effective, both the topic, purpose and the target group need to be clearly defined. To reach the right people, it is helpful if these are stated in the questionnaire itself (Walter et al., 1999). If done correctly, questionnaires can generate large amounts of data about attitudes, beliefs and values (Phillips, 2015; Robson, 2011). If there are expenses connected to the questionnaire, such as printing costs, these need to be budgeted for before the questionnaire is administered – no such costs arose in this case as it was all done online (Walter et al., 1999).

Deciding on the length of the questionnaire is tricky – if it is too long the
response rate may be lower, while if it is too short the researcher may not be able to gather enough data. Ultimately, the length depends on the sample size and the purpose of the study. More importantly, questionnaires should be easy to follow, understand, and look attractive (Walter et al., 1999). If this is not the case, participants may feel disengaged, leading to incomplete, random or faulty data (Stodel, 2015).

Before the questionnaire is sent out, it should be piloted on at least two to five people that are part of the intended target audience. This way, problems or unclear questions can be improved before data is collected to avoid problems (Walter et al., 1999). There is, however, still the risk of respondents falling for social desirability bias where they give the “better” answers they think the researchers want (Stodel, 2015; Robson, 2011).

3.8.2 Design of the Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was used to collect data about the use of guilt appeals, changing consumer brand attitudes and the moderating effect of inferences of manipulative intent. The full questionnaire can be found in appendix C. A cover letter with the name of the researcher and organization as well as information about how the collected data would be used was presented (Walter et al., 1999). It shortly described the aim of the study and ensured confidentiality as recommended (Robson, 2011; Phillips, 2015).

The questionnaire was split up into four parts to ensure a logical order and to make it look like it was easy to answer (Malhotra, 2010; Robson, 2011). The first examined what consumers’ attitudes were toward the brands used in the questionnaire – Trygg Hansa, a Swedish insurance company, and Systembolaget’s IQ initiative, an initiative sponsored by the Swedish government-owned chain of liquor stores to raise awareness about drinking habits (Trygg Hansa, 2017; IQ, 2017). In the second part, participants were shown a TV advertisement from Trygg Hansa followed immediately by a question to measure felt emotions and check for awareness about the guilt appeals used. Section three measured anticipatory guilt, inferences of manipulative intent, and asked the same questions as in part one to see if there is a difference in attitude toward the company after watching the ad. Section two and three were then repeated for IQ with reactive guilt. Finally, section four collected basic demographic information about the sex, age, and educational background of the participants.

This four-part design is adapted from Lwin and Phau (2014), but similar designs
were used by Cotte et al. (2005), Hibbert et al. (2007) and Bessarabova et al. (2015). The questions concerning attitude measurement were adapted from Cotte et al. (2005), Coulter and Pinto (1995) and MacKenzie and Lutz (1989). MacKenzie and Lutz’ (1989) work on attitude scales was also used by Campbell (1995) and Chang (2014).

To be able to distinguish which participants were aware of the guilt appeals, they were asked about the purpose of the message and could leave multiple answers about how they felt. This question is adapted from Bessarabova et al. (2015), who used the same question. For both kinds of guilt appeal, a three-item measure using “guilty,” “sorry,” and “bad” was used (Bessarabova et al., 2015). “Guilty” and “bad” were also used by Coulter and Pinto (1995), measured with a Likert scale.

The questions measuring the two guilt appeals were developed particularly for this study and for the ads used, taking Lwin and Phau’s (2014) method for developing questions for existential guilt as a precursor and adapting it. They were designed to capture four items used by Chang (2014) and Basil et al. (2006) – internal attributions, being responsible but failing to act, controllability and appraisal of the event.

Inferences of manipulative intent were measured using Campbell’s IMI scale (1995). All questions concerning inferences of manipulative intent are adapted from his study – the same questions were used by Hibbert et al. (2007) and Cotte et al. (2005).

Most questions were formulated as concise statements accompanied by a five point Likert scale ranging from “completely agree” to “completely disagree” (Walter et al., 1999; Robson, 2011). This is in line with Cotte et al. (2005) who also used a five point Likert scale, and similar to Chang (2014) and Campbell (1995) who used seven point Likert scales. The exceptions were the guilt appeal awareness questions and the demographic questions; here, the respondents were given a list of options, including an “other” option where the respondents could fill in an answer. The questions were designed to be clear, unambiguous, and easy to understand and answer to try to ensure a high response rate (Malhotra, 2010; Robson, 2011; Walter et al., 1999).

The questionnaire was piloted on staff from Linnaeus university and a convenience sample of three members of the target group – these answers were not included in the final results (Malhotra, 2010). This was done to make sure that inconsistencies, spelling mistakes and leading questions were avoided. Wording and sequencing of the questions was altered some to improve the flow (Robson, 2011; Malhotra, 2010).
3.8.3 Operationalization

The online questionnaire was used to measure the impact of guilt appeals, consumer brand attitudes and the moderating effect of IMIs. Questions were framed as statements with five point Likert scales. The questions are outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Theoretical Definition</th>
<th>Conceptual Definition</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Kinds of Guilt Appeals | Anticipatory guilt occurs when an individual potentially will violate a personal standard of acceptable behavior (Cotte et al., 2005; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Lwin & Phau, 2014). | Does the advertisement invoke anticipatory guilt? | • I would feel guilty if I do not plan properly/if this happened to my children. 
• I would feel sorry if I make avoidable mistakes. 
• I would feel bad if I could have avoided mistakes I made/ did not stop to check on my kids while driving. 
• I would feel regretful if I could have planned better but didn’t. |
| Kinds of Guilt Appeals | Reactive guilt is a response to having violated a personal standard of acceptable behavior (Cotte et al., 2005; Huhmann & Brotherton, 1997; Lwin & Phau, 2014). | Does the advertisement invoke reactive guilt? | • I feel guilty when things do not go according to plan/ when I drink too much. 
• I feel sorry when I have made a mistake. 
• I feel bad when I have made a mistake/ don’t consider the consequences of my actions. 
• I feel regretful when a plan I made does not work out. |
| Attitudes Toward Brands | “A response to an antecedent stimulus or attitude object” (Breckler, 1984, p. 1191). Three components: affect, behavior and cognition (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). | What attitudes do participants have toward the brands? Do attitudes toward the sponsors change? | • How do you feel toward [the sponsor]? 
• [The sponsor] has consumers best interest at heart. 
• I have a good feeling about [the sponsor]. 
• My image of [the sponsor] is positive. |
| Inferences of Manipulative Intent | “Consumer inferences that the advertiser is attempting to persuade by inappropriate, unfair, or manipulative means” (Campbell, 1995, p. 228). | Are participants aware of the guilt appeals? Do participants feel unfairly manipulated? | • The purpose of the message, in my opinion, was to make people feel… 
• The way this ad tries to persuade people seems acceptable to me. 
• The advertiser tried to manipulate the audience in ways I do not like. 
• I was annoyed by this ad because the advertiser seemed to be trying to inappropriately manage or control the consumer audience. 
• I didn’t mind this ad; the advertiser tried to be persuasive without being excessively manipulative. 
• The ad was fair in what was said and shown. 
• I think that this advertisement is fair/unfair. |

Table 3 – Operationalization of the Questionnaire

Source: Original table
3.9 Data Analysis Method

The data analysis method guides the data collection so it is important to consider which to use early in the research process. As certain variables work better with certain procedures, the analysis method will determine what kind of data is collected (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

For this study, the answers collected in the questionnaire were coded to allow them to be easily organized, quantified and analyzed. This was done using numbers which were matched to specific answers (Robson, 2011; Malhotra, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). For example, genders were coded 1 and 2 where 1 symbolizes a male and 2 symbolizes a female. For the Likert scales, “strongly disagree” was coded 1 and “strongly agree” was coded 5, with the corresponding numbers in between. Questions were reverse coded where appropriate.

To analyze the data, IBM SPSS Statistics was used – from here simply called SPSS. It is a software that supports the entire analytical process, including tools useful for preparing the data collection and organizing the results in an understandable way (IBM, 2017). The data shown in the empirical results and analysis chapter are adaptations from the results found with SPSS.

3.9.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics summarize the data collected by describing the basic features of it. This process condenses great quantities of data into single easy-to-understand numbers to get a simple overview. Descriptive statistics are usually done in table or graph form (Ayiro, 2012).

3.9.2 Cronbach’s Alpha

Cronbach’s alpha (α) is commonly applied to test internal reliability where multiple Likert scale questions have been used (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Malhotra, 2010). The variable varies between 1 and 0, where 1 indicates perfect internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A coefficient of >0.7 is considered good. Lower coefficients suggest an inadequate level of reliability (Davis, 1964; Murphy & Davidshofer, 1988; Nunnally, 1967; Peterson, 1994).
3.9.3 Correlation Analysis

The Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient ($r_s$) is frequently used to determine the construct validity as it explains the strength and direction of association between two variables on an ordinal scale (Lærd Statistics, 2017a; Westen & Rosenthal, 2003). It is used for ordinal variables and continuous data that have failed the assumptions needed for a Pearson’s correlation, with that added benefit that it is not very sensitive to outliers (Lærd Statistics, 2017a). A correlation coefficient of $-0.6 > x > +1.0$ is a strong association (StatsTutor, 2017).

To use Spearman’s rank-order correlation, two assumptions need to be passed – this is the case for the data presented in this study. They are:

1. The variables should be measured on an ordinal, interval or ratio scale. Likert scales are ordinal scales.
2. There is a monotonic relationship between the two variables, meaning that as one increases, so does the other and vice versa (Lærd Statistics, 2017a).

3.9.4 Linear Regression Analysis

A linear regression analysis is used to predict the value of a dependent variable based on the value of an independent variable (Lærd Statistics, 2017b). There are six assumptions that need to be passed for a linear regression analysis to be possible – this is the case for the data presented in this study.

To reject a null hypothesis using regression analysis in SPSS, the table of coefficients is used. If the t-value is statistically significant at a 0.05 level ($p \leq 0.05$) the null hypothesis can be rejected (Idre, 2017).

3.9.5 Moderator Analysis

A moderator analysis, also known as a moderated multiple regression analysis, is used to determine whether the relationship between two variables is moderated by a third. It adds an interaction term to a multiple regression model (Lærd Statistics, 2017c). There are eight assumptions that need to be passed for a moderator analysis to be possible. This is the case for all data shown in the empirical results and analysis chapter.

To understand whether there is a moderator effect using SPSS, the model summary table is used. If the R square change – the percentage increase in the
variation explained by the interaction term – is statistically significant at a 0.0005 level (p<0.0005) there is a moderation effect (Lærd Statistics, 2017c).

3.10 Quality Criteria

When assessing a study, it must be valid and reliable for it to be determined trustworthy (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Validity is concerned with measures and whether they measure what they should, while reliability looks at how consistent the measures are (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2014). The criteria are outlined in more detail below.

3.10.1 Reliability

Reliability evaluates measurement consistency and result repeatability (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Malhotra, 2010; Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2014). Reliability is a prerequisite for validity – a study can hence be reliable but not valid, but not vice versa (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Malhotra, 2010). For reliability to be achieved, the researchers need to remain unbiased and impartial to the results – any explanations should be objective and based on fact. Furthermore, the measurements should be consistent to give accurate results (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2014).

Internal reliability is achievable when the scales used in the study are consistent, meaning that the answers respondents give in different questions about the same concept should be related. Statistically, this can be established using Cronbach’s alpha (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Malhotra, 2010).

3.10.2 Content Validity

Content validity examines whether a measure accurately represents a concept (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Malhotra 2010). To establish content validity, the questions and scales need to be pretested, preferably by an expert or someone with knowledge on the subject, to make sure the measure focuses on the concept intended (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Despite being a systematic evaluation it is a highly subjective process – hence, content validity alone is not an adequate measure to establish scale validity (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011).
3.10.3 External Validity

External validity assesses the generalizability of the study. For a study to have external validity, the sample should be representative of the population and the results should be applicable outside the scope of the study. To achieve this, sampling needs to be purposive and sensible (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.10.4 Construct Validity

Construct validity is concerned with whether a measure is measuring what it is supposed to, and is the most difficult to establish (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). To establish construct validity, the researchers need to build on comprehensive theory and an in-depth description of the construct to explain why the scale used works and what deductions can be made (Malhotra, 2010). Correlation coefficients or a one-way ANOVA can be used to establish construct validity statistically (Westen & Rosenthal, 2003). If the concept is unstable, construct validity will not be able to be established and the results will be unreliable (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.11 Ethics in Research

When conducting a study, it is important to consider the ethical issues regarding data collection from participants. The main concerns are discussed below, along with explanations about which were relevant in this case and how potential unethical behaviors were minimized.

Firstly, participants should not be deceived as to the nature, length or purpose of the study. The length of the study and what is expected of the participants should be clear (Robson, 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2011). For this study, a cover letter informed the participants about the institution sponsoring the study, what the data would be used for, and how long it would take to fill in the whole survey. This time was exaggerated some to positively surprise participants rather than the other way around. An email address to the researcher was provided in case of further questions or interest in the study.

Participants’ lack of informed consent is the second issue. To give consent, participants need to (1) understand what they are asked to do and (2) agree to partake (Robson, 2011). However, as participants fall for social desirability bias and may change their answers if they know the exact topic of investigation informed consent is not always realistic (Stodel, 2015; Robson, 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2011). As this study did not
collect sensitive data about the participants, nor a high level of inconvenience or emotional involvement, the participants were not informed in detail about the topic of the study (Robson, 2011). They were told it examines emotional appeals in advertisements, but not that it is focused on guilt appeals particularly to avoid bias.

Avoiding invasion of privacy includes granting anonymity and confidentiality to participants and is standard practice (Robson, 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Anonymity means that no participant is named and answers are not traced, while confidentiality further includes any details which may uncover their identity (Robson, 2011). In this study, all answers were anonymous and the only personal details the participants had to share was sex, approximate age span, and educational background. Participants had the option to withdraw without submitting any answers at any time and were informed of this in the cover letter to put them at ease (Robson, 2011; Bryman & Bell).

Finally, no harm should come to participants; this includes both respondents and researchers. Harm includes physical harm, psychological harm, or harm to future career prospects (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Participants in this experiment could choose whether they wanted to take part, had as much time as they wanted to answer questions, and were informed of what was expected of them. It is assumed no harm came to them.
3.12 Chapter Summary

Below is a summary of the methods used for this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Research Approach        | • Deductive approach, testing hypotheses based on theory (Wallén, 1996; Bryman & Bell, 2011)  
                          | • Quantitative framework, following set procedures to study behavior (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Robson, 2011)                             |
| Research Design          | • Explanatory study, looking for a relationship between two kinds of guilt appeals, the effect they have on consumer brand attitudes, and the moderating effect of inferences of manipulative intent |
| Data Source              | • Primary sources and first-hand data to ensure a reliable and valid study (Alexanderson, 2012)                                          |
| Research Strategy        | • Cross-sectional study using two focus groups as a pre-study and an online questionnaire                                              |
| Data Collection Method   | • Focus groups as basis to more accurately choose guilt-inducing advertisements  
                          | • Online questionnaire spread via social media                                                                                   |
| Sampling                 | • Non-probability convenience sample for focus groups  
                          | • Non-probability convenience snowball sample for questionnaire  
                          | • Collection of data over a month                                                                                                 |
| Data Analysis Method     | • Coding answers to easily organize, quantify and analyze data (Robson, 2011; Malhotra, 2010)  
                          | • SPSS  
                          | • Descriptive statistics  
                          | • Cronbach’s alpha  
                          | • Correlation analysis  
                          | • Regression Analysis  
                          | • Moderation Analysis                                                                                                           |
| Quality Criteria         | • Content validity  
                          | • External validity  
                          | • Construct validity  
                          | • Reliability                                                                                                                    |
| Ethics in Research       | • Deceiving the participants – cover letter  
                          | • Lack of informed consent  
                          | • Invasion of privacy – anonymity and confidentiality  
                          | • Harm to participants – respondents and researchers                                                                             |

Table 4 – Summary of the Method Chapter  
Source: Original table
4. Empirical Results and Analysis

To answer the hypotheses, several tests were run in SPSS to ensure the validity and reliability of the study to ensure accurate results. The empirical results of the questionnaire are presented and analyzed in the following chapter.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The sample size for the questionnaire was 103 respondents, meaning that it is representative for the Swedish population at a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 10%. 35 (34%) were male and 68 were female (66%). As the tables below show, most respondents were over 50 years of age (60.2%), but the biggest age group were 18-29 year olds (32%). Most participants, 96.1%, have at least graduated from high school, and 48.5% went on to achieve at least a bachelor’s degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>81.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5** – Age of Questionnaire Respondents

*Source:* Original table adapted from SPSS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-high School Graduate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6** – Educational Background of Questionnaire Respondents

*Source:* Original table adapted from SPSS

These statistics show an imbalance between males and females – however, the number of respondents above and below 50 is about equally divided, as is the number of respondents that have finished high school versus those that went on to higher education.
To get an indication of the final results and get a feel for the data, descriptive statistics were used. For each kind of guilt, the results from the four questions about attitude before seeing the advertisements, the six questions about guilt, the six questions about inferences of manipulative intent and the four questions about attitude after seeing the advertisements were averaged out into total scores. This created an overall score for attitudes before seeing advertisements, level of guilt felt, whether inferences of manipulative intent are acceptable and attitudes after seeing advertisements for both guilt appeals. For all scores, the higher the score the more positive the response. For inferences of manipulative intent, a high score means the participant did not feel manipulated.

First, it is necessary to see whether the advertisements induced guilt in the participants of the questionnaire as they did for the focus groups. This is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Message</th>
<th>Trygg Hansa</th>
<th>IQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt Appeal</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Guilt Appeal</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7 – Awareness of Guilt Appeal*
*Source: Original table adapted from SPSS*

Most participants noticed some form of guilt appeal (felt guilty, sorry, bad). The advertisements hence created the feeling in the participants that they intended to.

Second, the means of the overall attitudes before and after watching the advertisements were compared for each guilt appeal to give an idea about the results for hypothesis one and two. The results were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Before and After</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trygg Hansa Attitude Before</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.3762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trygg Hansa Attitude After</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.4223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ Attitude Before</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.7573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ Attitude After</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.8544</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 8 – Average Attitudes Before and Watching Advertisements*
*Source: Original table adapted from SPSS*
As can be seen from the table, the average mean increased both for the anticipatory guilt appeal (Trygg Hansa) and the reactive guilt appeal (IQ). Running a one-way ANOVA test shows that both differences are statistically significant (p<0.0005). This suggests that guilt appeals of both kinds has a positive impact on attitudes – however, more tests are needed to statistically ensure this.

Third, the means of the attitudes before and after watching the advertisements were compared for those that did notice inferences of manipulative intent and those that did not for each guilt appeal to give an idea about the results for hypothesis three and four. The results were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inferences of Manipulative Intent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants Did Notice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trygg Hansa Attitude Before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trygg Hansa Attitude After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ Attitude Before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ Attitude After</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 – The Impact of Inferences of Manipulative Intent on Attitudes

Source: Original table adapted from SPSS

As can be seen from the table, the average mean decreased both for the anticipatory guilt appeal (Trygg Hansa) and the reactive guilt appeal (IQ) for those participants that were aware of inferences of manipulative intent. However, the opposite is true for those that did not notice – here, the means increased for both appeals. Running one-way ANOVA tests shows that the change in all categories but those that did notice IMI for IQ are statistically significant (p<0.0005). For those that did notice IMI for IQ, p=0.157, meaning it is not statistically significant.

Still, these results suggest that inferences of manipulative intent have a negative moderating effect on at least one relationship between the different guilt appeals and attitudes. A scatter plot showing the linear relationship between the level of manipulation felt and level of guilt felt, seen below, also seems to support this proposition as those that
feel highly manipulated, and hence have a low IMI score, feel the lowest levels of guilt – however, more tests are needed to statistically ensure this.

Figure 3 — Relationships between Guilt and Inferences of Manipulative Intent
Source: Original diagram adapted from SPSS

4.2 Cronbach’s Alpha

Cronbach’s alpha is used to test the internal reliability of the questionnaire. The results for the items used looked like follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trygg Hansa Attitude Pre</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipatory Guilt</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trygg Hansa Inferences of Manipulative Intent</td>
<td>.925</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trygg Hansa Attitude Post</td>
<td>.959</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ Attitude Pre</td>
<td>.945</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive Guilt</td>
<td>.893</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ Inferences of Manipulative Intent</td>
<td>.912</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ Attitude Post</td>
<td>.951</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 — Cronbach’s Alpha of Questionnaire Concepts
Source: Original table adapted from SPSS

As all values are >0.7, the questionnaire is considered to have good internal reliability.
4.3 Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis tests the construct validity of the questionnaire. All relationships between the concepts and items are monotonous, as seen in appendix D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$r_s$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Before Seeing Advertisement</td>
<td>Attitude Pre</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best Interest Pre</td>
<td>.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good Feeling Pre</td>
<td>.927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive Image Pre</td>
<td>.915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipatory Guilt</td>
<td>No Plan</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoidable Mistakes</td>
<td>.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>.679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mistakes</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planned Better</td>
<td>.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Check</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferences of Manipulative Intent</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manipulate</td>
<td>.878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annoyed</td>
<td>.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t Mind</td>
<td>.876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair Overall</td>
<td>.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude After Seeing Advertisement</td>
<td>Attitude Post</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best Interest Post</td>
<td>.922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good Feeling Post</td>
<td>.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive Image Post</td>
<td>.946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 11** – Correlations for Trygg Hansa Advertisement

**Source:** Original table adapted from SPSS
### IQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$r_s$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Before Seeing Advertisement</td>
<td>Attitude Pre</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best Interest Pre</td>
<td>.879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good Feeling Pre</td>
<td>.928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive Image Pre</td>
<td>.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive Guilt</td>
<td>No Plan</td>
<td>.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mistake</td>
<td>.835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drink Too Much</td>
<td>.703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bad Mistake</td>
<td>.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan Doesn’t Work</td>
<td>.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>.760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferences of Manipulative Intent</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>.855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manipulate</td>
<td>.743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annoyed</td>
<td>.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t Mind</td>
<td>.882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair Overall</td>
<td>.911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude After Seeing Advertisement</td>
<td>Attitude Post</td>
<td>.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best Interest Post</td>
<td>.906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good Feeling Post</td>
<td>.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive Image Post</td>
<td>.945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 12 – Correlations for IQ Advertisement**

*Source:* Original table adapted from SPSS

All correlations significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). The table is read in such a way the concept and the item are correlated with the $r_s$ value on the right – for example, the concept “attitude before seeing the Trygg Hansa advertisement” and “attitude pre” is correlated at a value of 0.91. As all values are >0.6, all items accurately measure the concepts and the questionnaire is considered to have good construct validity.

Furthermore, correlations were used to check whether the concepts are correlated to each other or not. The results from these correlation tests are shown in the tables below.
These tables show that all correlations are <0.9, although attitude before and after seeing the Trygg Hansa advertisement are close (0.887). As 0.9 is the limit for two concepts being very highly correlated, the concepts seem to measure different things as they should (Calkins, 2005).
4.4 Hypothesis Testing

In the following sections, each of the hypotheses will be tested in turn. All the assumptions for regression analysis testing have been passed for each of the hypotheses. The assumption tests can be seen in appendix E – however, the Durbin-Watson statistic and VIF values are included in the hypothesis tests here as they are calculated as part of the regression analyses.

Furthermore, a complete table of all results from the regression analyses are shown at the very end of the chapter. This is so that the reader can get an in-depth view of what the different models look like.

4.4.1 Hypothesis 1

Using SPSS to check for the Durbin-Watson statistic to test the last assumption, the result is 2.086. As any values between 1.5 and 2.5 are considered normal, the observations are independent (Field, 2009). A regression analysis can hence be done.

Hypothesis one states that anticipatory guilt appeals have an impact on the consumer’s attitude toward a brand. To test this hypothesis, a linear regression analysis was run in SPSS using anticipatory guilt as the independent variable and attitude after seeing the Trygg Hansa advertisement as the dependent variable. The results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.952</td>
<td>.721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anticipatory Guilt</td>
<td>.315</td>
<td>.139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15– Regression Coefficients Hypothesis 1

Source: Original table adapted from SPSS

As p<0.05, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Anticipatory guilt appeals hence have an impact on the consumer’s attitude toward a brand. Furthermore, as the regression equation is

\[ \text{Attitude} = 1.95 + 0.315(\text{Anticipatory guilt}) \]

it seems that generally, anticipatory guilt appeals have a positive impact on consumer attitudes.
4.4.2 Hypothesis 2

Using SPSS to check for the Durbin-Watson statistic to test the last assumption, the result is 1.978. As any values between 1.5 and 2.5 are considered normal, the observations are independent (Field, 2009). A regression analysis can hence be done.

Hypothesis two states that reactive guilt appeals have an impact on the consumer’s attitude toward a brand. To test this hypothesis, a linear regression analysis was run in SPSS using reactive guilt as the independent variable and attitude after seeing the IQ advertisement as the dependent variable. The results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>.542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reactive Guilt</td>
<td>.318</td>
<td>.105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 – Regression Coefficients Hypothesis 2

Source: Original table adapted from SPSS

As p<0.05, the null hypothesis can be rejected. Reactive guilt appeals hence have an impact on the consumer’s attitude toward a brand. Furthermore, as the regression equation is

\[ \text{Attitude} = 1.75 + 0.318(\text{Reactive guilt}) \]

it seems that generally, reactive guilt appeals have a positive impact on consumer attitudes.

4.4.3 Hypothesis 3

Using SPSS to check for the Durbin-Watson statistic and VIF values to test the last assumptions, the result for Durbin-Watson is 2.084. The VIF values can be seen below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anticipatory Guilt Appeal</td>
<td>.956</td>
<td>1.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>.944</td>
<td>1.059</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 – VIF Values Hypothesis 3

Source: Original table adapted from SPSS
As any values between 1.5 and 2.5 are considered normal for Durbin-Watson, the observations are independent (Field, 2009). The VIF values are low, meaning there is no multicollinearity problem (PennState, 2017).

Hypothesis three states inferences of manipulative intent moderate the relationship between anticipatory guilt and the attitude toward the brand. To test this hypothesis, a moderator analysis was run in SPSS using anticipatory guilt as the independent variable, attitude after seeing the Trygg Hansa advertisement as the dependent variable, and inferences of manipulative intent as moderator. The results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>R Square Change</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 – Model Summary Hypothesis 3

Source: Original table adapted from SPSS

Model one is without the moderator variable, while model four includes it. Both are established as significant relationships.

Looking at the R square change, the second model with the moderation variable added only explains 5.2% more of the variation, all of which is explained by anticipatory guilt (see model 2 in table 21). Furthermore, this change is not significant (p>0.0005). Hence, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, and there does not seem to be a moderation effect by inferences of manipulative intent on the relationship between anticipatory guilt and consumer brand attitudes.

4.4.4 Hypothesis 4

Using SPSS to check for the Durbin-Watson statistic and VIF values to test the last assumptions, the result for Durbin-Watson is 1.997. The VIF values can be seen below:
As any values between 1.5 and 2.5 are considered normal for Durbin-Watson, the observations are independent (Field, 2009). The VIF values are low, meaning there is no multicollinearity problem (PennState, 2017). A regression analysis can hence be done.

Hypothesis four states that inferences of manipulative intent moderate the relationship between reactive guilt and the attitude toward the brand. To test this hypothesis, a moderator analysis was run in SPSS using reactive guilt as the independent variable, attitude after seeing the IQ advertisement as the dependent variable, and inferences of manipulative intent as moderator. The results are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reactive Guilt Appeal</td>
<td>.917</td>
<td>1.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>.953</td>
<td>1.049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19 – VIF Values Hypothesis 4

Source: Original table adapted from SPSS

Model one is without the moderator variable, while model four includes it. Both are established as significant relationships.

Looking at the R square change, the second model with the moderation variable added only explains 9.3% more of the variation, of which only 1.9% is explained by the moderator (see model 2 in table 21). Furthermore, this change is not significant (p>0.0005). Hence, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, and there does not seem to be a moderation effect by inferences of manipulative intent on the relationship between reactive guilt and consumer brand attitudes.
### Summary of Regression Analyses

Below is a summary of all the data collected from the regression analyses. It shows the data presented above, levels of significance and $R^2$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summarized Regression Results</th>
<th>Hypothesis 1</th>
<th>Hypothesis 2</th>
<th>Hypothesis 3</th>
<th>Hypothesis 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3.216*** (.470)</td>
<td>1.952** (.721)</td>
<td>2.866*** (.414)</td>
<td>1.750** (.542)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.053 (.056)</td>
<td>.059 (.055)</td>
<td>.066 (.049)</td>
<td>.062 (.047)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.189 (.186)</td>
<td>.124 (.184)</td>
<td>.631*** (.163)</td>
<td>.542** (.159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.089 (.104)</td>
<td>-.070 (.102)</td>
<td>-.088 (.091)</td>
<td>-.044 (.088)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1 Anticipatory Guilt</td>
<td>.315* (.139)</td>
<td>.315* (.139)</td>
<td>.315* (.140)</td>
<td>.315* (.140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2 Reactive Guilt</td>
<td>.318** (.105)</td>
<td>.318** (.105)</td>
<td>.318** (.105)</td>
<td>.342** (.105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3/H4 Inferences of Manipulative Intent</td>
<td>- .024 (.089)</td>
<td>- .006 (.088)</td>
<td>- .089 (.086)</td>
<td>- .128 (.082)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.028 .080 .160 .234 .028 .080 .160 .234 .169 .253</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>-.004 .039 .134 .201 -.004 .039 -.014 .029 .134 .201 .134 .213</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$ Change</td>
<td>- .052 - .074 - .052 .001 .052 - .074 .010 .093</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-value</td>
<td>.871 5.160* 6.090** 9.147** .871 5.160* .073 2.555 6.090** 9.147** 1.087 5.853**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees of Freedom</td>
<td>3 1 3 1 3 1 1 2 3 1 1 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.005$ *** $p<0.0005$

**Table 21** – Summary of Regression Analyses

**Source:** Original table adapted from SPSS
Interestingly, gender is flagged as statistically significant for hypothesis two and four, both concerning reactive guilt. It seems as if females feel significantly guiltier when they see a reactive guilt appeal, resulting in a more positive attitude than for males.

4.4.6 Revised Research Model

Based on the results, the research model can be revised to more accurately reflect reality. The revised model looks like follows:

Figure 3 – Research Model
Source: Original Model
5. Discussion

The findings of this study do, in many ways, confirm previous findings from the field of guilt appeal research. Looking at the descriptive statistics of the means of attitudes measured before and after seeing the advertisement, it seems as if both anticipatory and reactive guilt appeals had a positive impact on consumer attitudes toward a brand. Statistical testing of hypothesis one and two confirmed this initial estimate, solidifying the findings of Petty et al. (1983) and Campbell (1995). It also confirms Olsen et al. (2014) and Mitchell and Olson (2000), who claimed attitudes can be changed through marketing actions and that advertisements can influence overall consumer brand attitudes.

However, this result marks a distinct difference to existential guilt, which has been found to have a negative effect on the attitude toward the advertisements and the sponsoring brand (Basil et al., 2006; Lwin & Phau, 2014; Cotte et al., 2005; Hibbert et al., 2007). This strengthens Lwin and Phau’s (2014) statement that there is a need for advertisers to use specific types of guilt when formulating their communication strategies. Based on this study, choosing an inappropriate guilt appeal can lead to consumers being affected in an adverse way.

Hypotheses three and four found that inferences of manipulative intent do not moderate the relationship between the guilt appeal and the consumer attitude toward the brand. Interestingly, the initial descriptive statistic tests suggested a different outcome. When comparing the average attitude means before and after seeing the advertisements for those that did feel manipulated, the average decreased for both kinds of guilt appeal while it increased for those that did not feel manipulated. The scatter plots for the assumption testing of hypothesis three showed a similar result. This means that there should be some moderation effect caused by inferences of manipulative intent.

However, there was no statistically significant effect found when testing the hypotheses. This could, perhaps, be due to a small sample – only 27 participants felt manipulated by Trygg Hansa, three of whom were deleted as they were judged to be outliers. Only nine felt manipulated by IQ, two of whom were deleted for the same reason. Perhaps a larger sample of manipulated participants would have shown the outliers not to be outliers at all, and the tests may have therefore been statistically significant; this is, however, not possible to determine with the current results. Another explanation could be, as Lwin and Phau (2014) found, that inferences of manipulative intent do not have a moderating effect as participants find the guilt appeals appropriate for the type of advertisement – in this case, to make children
safer and to convince people to drink less alcohol. This, however, is speculative as no such questions were asked in the study.

Despite this, the last result is different to the majority of previous studies on the subject that have examined general guilt appeals and found that inferences of manipulative intent have a significant influence on relationships (e.g. MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Campbell, 1995; Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Bessarabova et al., 2015; Friestad and Wright, 1994; Coulter et al., 1999; Pinto & Priest, 1991; Cotte et al., 2005; Hibbert et al., 2007). Perhaps there is a difference simply because the different types of guilt appeals – further studies will need to confirm or disprove this.

Furthermore, this study found a significant influence of gender concerning reactive guilt appeals, where females felt guiltier, resulting in having a more positive attitude toward the advertisement. This may be due to social standards or the nature of the subject, where females are supposed to be more controlled and thoughtful than men and not lose control of their drinking. Further studies are needed to find the cause of the difference between genders.

A benefit that this study has that many previous ones do not, is the inclusion of focus group data and comments from the participants. Notwithstanding the fact that results from focus groups are difficult to generalize, many comments are in line with previous studies. As Swedish advertisements were considered “tamer,” there is a possibility that Swedish consumers do not have as much knowledge about persuasion techniques in advertising and hence are more susceptible to them, as suggested by Friestad and Wright (1994) and Hibbert et al. (2007). Comments like “I’m supposed to feel guilty, but I might just ignore it” are in line with studies by, for example, Coulter and Pinto (1995), Cotte et al. (2005), Lwin and Phau (2014) and Bessarabova et al. (2015), who say that overly obvious and excessive guilt appeals lead people to simply ignore the message or feel less guilty. This is also in line with the scatter plots presented in the descriptive statistics results that show that those that felt manipulated felt less guilt.

Finally, one of the comments from the second focus group was that for anticipatory guilt appeals, “you have the opportunity to change.” Perhaps the results were more positive toward the advertisements as people felt a sense of calm rather than guilt as they are now aware of the fact that they should check on their children and can do so the next time they drive. That way, they can completely avoid the guilt-inducing situation and it is no longer applicable to them. Similarly, for reactive guilt, those that may have drunk too much are now aware of the behavior, and feel they can do better the next time. This is, however, highly speculative and cannot be confirmed or refuted by the results presented in this study.
6. Conclusions and Contributions

The purpose of this study was to explain the relationship between anticipatory guilt and reactive guilt, respectively, inferences of manipulative intent, and viewers’ attitude toward a brand. To test this, an online questionnaire was used to collect data, followed by linear regression and moderation analyses. The results show that there is a positive relationship between anticipatory guilt and the resulting brand attitude, as well as between reactive guilt and the resulting brand attitude. However, inferences of manipulative intent do not have a statistically significant moderation effect on either relationship. The results are considered reliable and valid following statistical testing.

This study fills a gap in existing literature as it is the first to explicitly study anticipatory and reactive guilt appeals and their effect on attitudes. It provides a basis for future studies as it is the first to show the individual effects of these guilt appeals, which may be indicative of how individual guilt appeals can be used in different ways to achieve a specific goal.
7. Limitations, Managerial Implications, and Further Research

There are a few weaknesses with this study that should be considered when reading the results. First, as mentioned above, the sample that recognized the inferences of manipulative intent was very small – this could have affected the outcome. Secondly, as this study only looked at TV advertisements, it is unclear whether the results can be generalized to other kinds of media. Finally, as the questionnaire was an online questionnaire, there may have been problems with large numbers of non-response, i.e. people that saw the questionnaire but chose not to answer it. This could have biased the answers if only one type of personality chose to complete the survey. This, however, is difficult to calculate or overcome with this type of data collection.

Nevertheless, the overall results are encouraging for marketers and brands that want to use guilt appeals. If the appeals are not overly manipulative and chosen with care to fit the topic presented in the advertisement, they have a positive effect on consumers. The sample should be representative of the Swedish population, and so should be able to be applied to most Swedish TV advertisements of similar nature.

Although not all results were statistically significant, future and similar studies can be done on other populations, with larger samples, or other advertisements to either confirm or refute the results found here. This study did not show any statistically significant differences between age and educational background – however, future studies may find these areas, as well as gender differences, of interest to delve deeper into how guilt appeals affect specific consumer segments. They can, of course, also choose to focus only on those that feel manipulated or those that do not to uncover more specific data about the two groups – perhaps look at why they feel manipulated and the importance of the contributing factors.
List of References


Appendix A – Focus Group Scripts

Focus Group 1

- Welcome, information about the purpose of the study, how the data will be used, explain data collection process, grant anonymity

- Which advertisements convince you? How?
  - Rate them individually
  - Discuss

- Which advertisements encourage you to act? Why does it (not)?
  - Rate them individually
  - Discuss

- Which advertisements grab your attention and keep it? Why are they effective? Why not?
  - Rate them individually
  - Discuss

- How do these advertisements make you feel?
  - Group them individually according to feeling
  - Discuss

- Which of these advertisements make you feel guilty?
  - Group them individually
  - Discuss

- Which advertisements would make you change your behavior? How? Why?
  - Rate them individually
  - Discuss

- Is there anything you would like to add?
  - Thank you for participating
Focus Group 2

- Welcome, information about the purpose of the study, how the data will be used, explain data collection process, grant anonymity
- Information about anticipatory guilt and reactive guilt

- How does this advertisement make you feel guilty?
- What does this advertisement focus on? The past? The future? Something else?
  - Group them individually according to appeal used
  - Discuss
- Which advertisement is most guilt inducing?
  - Rate them individually
  - Discuss

- Is there anything you would like to add?
  - Thank you for participating
Appendix B – Focus Group Transcripts and Ratings

Focus Group 1

Held and recorded on the 29/03/2017, Växjö
Moderator: Josefin Ceder (J)
All participants were Swedish – the following script is translated from Swedish.
Participants: • Female, 80 years old (F1) - Pensioner
• Female, 54 years old (F2) – Works within the banking industry
• Male, 36 years old (M1) – Works within the travelling industry
• Male, 54 years old, (M2) – Works within the banking industry

Notes for added clarification are presented in [...].

Advertisements shown:
Print advertisements
• Balance gym
  “No big deal?”
• Länsförsäkringar insurance
  “What are the odds of getting a broken shoulder because of a gin and tonic? Don’t risk your life. Take care of yourself in traffic.”
• Unicef

“We have one thing in common. We are all going to die. That’s why it’s important we talk about it now. Come to us and we’ll tell you about the ‘archive of life.’”

• Gillis Edman, funeral home
“Without you, no midwives.”

Videos/Tv advertisements
- Trygg Hansa insurance, available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzk1p05emvE
- Actic gym, available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvXt_6rKeak
- AMF insurance, available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KzQiiRIjQM
- PantaMera recycling, available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnznbcmR6Z4
- Pensionsmyndigheten, administrative authority for pensions, available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPOzjmlepek

J: Welcome everyone! This is a focus group about advertisements and the feelings which they create, and I’ve prepared a few questions I want you to discuss. Try to talk to each other and pretend like I’m not here. In front of you now you see 11 advertisements, and the first questions about them is: which advertisements were convincing to you? Please rate them individually first and then we’ll talk about it.

[Pause to write down individual ratings.]
J: So, are you ready to discuss? Who wants to start?
F2: I can start. I really thought that most are pretty convincing, but in very different ways. Perhaps pensionsmyndigheten was the only one that wasn’t great.
M1: Yeah I agree. That and AMF. But maybe it’s because I feel it’s too early for me to seriously think about my pension – they feel irrelevant.
F1: I thought they were all good! Länsförsäkringar made me think the most, but Gillis Edman also stuck with me.
F2: Maybe those are more relevant to you?
F1: Maybe. I liked them all anyway, in different ways.
M2: I didn’t really get the PantaMera advertisement. It’s a little long for it to stick properly, but maybe it’s different if you are fans of the band.
F1: I don’t know who they are either.
M2: No exactly. The song’s catchy but too long.
F2: [laughs] I liked it! I like that PantaMera has so many versions of the song.
M1: At least it made you feel something. That’s why it worked for me, and why most of the advertisements work – they make you feel something. The ones that feel irrelevant for me are the ones that don’t care about or feel much about.
J: So all of the advertisements convinced you in some way?
M2: Yes.
[All nod in agreement.]
J: Ok, then we can move on to the next question, which is – which of these advertisements encourage you to act? Again, write it down first and then we’ll talk.
[Pause to write down individual ratings.]
J: Ready?
M2: Yes. I can start. The one that made me want to do most is probably Trygg Hansa – I have kids myself and even if they’re not at the age where I need to check on them in the car it makes me feel like I should. Had they still been like 5 or younger this advertisement probably would have made me think about it.
F2: Yeah I agree, that one’s near the top for me too. Balance I think is good too. It’s funny that they use McDonald’s in that way to make the connection between unhealthy eating and working out.
M1: I’m not sure McDonald’s would agree!
F2: No, probably not!
F1: The advertisements related to alcohol are the ones that make me want to act. I don’t even drink that much, but they make me feel like I should drink even less. Or tell other people to be careful.
M1: Those didn’t really work for me, they feel too much like a parent or something trying to control you.
F2: Maybe... I don’t really know what I think about them, but I don’t really drink either.
M1: That could have an effect. Like I don’t care about AMF and those kinds of advertisements because I don’t need that urgently right now.
M2: You’re probably right. I think most people would ignore those cause they’re “later in life.”
F1: Not for me!
M2: Haha yeah, not for you. Generally though I don’t think younger people think about it much?
F2: I agree, it’s not until you get to your age that it’s more serious, even though you should think about it earlier. Alcohol, insurance and gym advertisements are probably more general and applicable to larger segments of the population.
[Pause.]
J: Great, then let’s move on. Same as before, you rate individually first and discuss after – the question is which advertisements grab your attention? Why/why not?
[Pause to write down individual ratings.]
J: Ok?
F2: Yes!
F1: I want to start!
J: Ok!
F1: For me, Gillis Edman, Unicef and Balance all stood out. They are shocking and surprising
and it made me wonder what they were about.

F2: Yes, I agree. I’m going to add Trygg Hansa to that because it’s about children but otherwise I agree.

M1: I think Unicef is the most attention grabbing. It’s so graphic, especially in comparison to the other advertisements. Maybe it’s because it’s the only Swedish one that it’s so different? Are Swedish advertisements tamer?

F2: I didn’t think of that! But it’s true – Trygg Hansa is close because, as I said, it’s also about children, but it leaves more to your imagination. So does Länsförsäkringar and IQ. The Unicef one is pretty out there.

M2: I had a similar ranking – Unicef is at the top because it’s so different, followed by Trygg Hansa and Gillis Edman. Actic and the pension ones are near the bottom, they’re boring.

F1: Exactly. They don’t really tell you anything that you don’t really know, even if for the pensions they’re good to remind people. They’re important but not really attention grabbing.

F2: They need better marketers maybe. Or possibly it’s because they know their target group – those that need it will pay attention regardless so you don’t need to work so hard?

M1: That would make sense for Unicef too. It’s hard to get people to spend their money so you need to make them pay attention.

F1: Yes.

[Agreeing murmurs.]

J: Interesting. [Pause.] Next question?

M2: Sure.

J: Ok. The next questions is: how do these advertisements make you feel? You can group them according to which feelings they create.

[Pause to write down individual ratings.]

F2: Can you put one advertisement in several groups?

J: If that’s how you feel.

[Pause to write down individual ratings.]

M1: Ok I’m done.

F1: Me too.

J: Ok, then let’s start. Any categories?

F2: Yes, plenty. I have happy, sad, anxious, guilty, worried and one that’s maybe not a feeling but I called it funny.

M1: I have happy, sad, guilty, angry, and then a group with some that I didn’t really feel anything toward or didn’t care about.

M2: Me too. The not caring group that is. Otherwise I have either surprising, happy, and one group just called bad. I stayed pretty broad.

F1: Yeah, I have similar groups. Mine are also broad, but I have a label for each of them.

J: Ok great! I’m actually only focusing on one particular feeling in advertisements, and it’s great that some of you have already mentioned it – it’s guilt and guilt appeals in advertisements.

F1: Oh ok!

J: Yeah. So since I only really am interested in one category I’ll move on to the next question – look at your categories and the advertisements again and tell me which ones make you feel guilty. For some of you I guess this will be pretty easy but I’ll give you a few minutes anyway to think about it and write them down.

[Pause to write down individual ratings.]

M2: I think we can start. I can go first. The ones that make me feel guilty are Balance, Trygg Hansa, and IQ. Unicef and Göteborg university are probably supposed to make me feel guilty but it’s too obvious somehow… And it’s too late for me to feel guilty about what I want to study at university.
F2: I feel the same. I had the same three close to the top, but I want to add Länsförsäkringar as well. You need to think about it.

F1: I had Gillis Edman at the top.

F2: I thought about that one, but I’m not sure it’s making me feel guilty. I put that in my “anxious” category. It makes me more nervous than guilty.

F1: Maybe you’re right. All I know is it makes me a little uncomfortable because it’s so direct.

M1: I had the gym and the insurance advertisements on my list. I agree that the funeral home is related more to anxiety. I understand that the alcohol advertisements can make some people feel guilty but I know I can control my level of drinking, so it doesn’t really work on me.

M2: What about Unicef?

M1: Oh that one too. I agree with you though that it’s maybe a little bit over the top. I’m supposed to feel guilty, but I might just ignore it as well.

F2: People are so used to seeing advertisements like that today. Especially around Christmas, but they seem to be on TV all the time.

M2: Exactly! I almost feel more guilty about not really caring than I do looking at it. I’m glad I’m not alone.

M1: I kind of feel the same about Trygg Hansa – on the other hand, I don’t have children. Maybe I’ll feel different one day.

F2: Probably. I feel very guilty watching that. I’d keep an eye on my kids if they were still that age.

J: That leads us to our last question very well, which is which advertisements would make you change your behavior, if any?

F2: Trygg Hansa. Definitely.

F1: Probably IQ or Länsförsäkringar.

[Pause.]

M1: I don’t really know. The gym ones, I guess. On the other hand I already work out regularly so maybe that’s my personal bias.

F1: As long as they work maybe it doesn’t matter.

M1: Probably not. The advertisers still win. [Laughs.]

M2: I’d agree with Trygg Hansa I think. Possibly the ones related to alcohol and gym. But then, who doesn’t think about the fact that they should drink less and work out more? At least at some point in their lives? As someone said, they’re applicable to most people at some point or another.

F2: Or maybe that means they’ll make you change least? Almost everyone can relate but few people change.

M2: Habits can be hard to break.

M1: Or people are just lazy. They know better but there’s always something else to focus on in their normal lives.

F1: Probably, yes.

M1: I can just say that those are the ones that speak to me in some way at least. They make me want to change more than, let’s say, the pension ones or PantaMera.

F2: I agree with that. But I return my bottles already so I don’t need to change in that regard.

[Everyone agrees.]

J: Great, this has been really helpful. I’ll collect your rankings for the questions, no need to write your name on them or anything. Is there anything else you would like to add?

[Participants look at each other and shake their head.]

F2: No, I don’t think so.

J: In that case, I would like to thank you all for coming and for taking part!
Top ranked guilt advertisements (average rating in parentheses – the closer to one, the closer to the top the advertisement was):
1. Trygg Hansa (1,5)
2. Balance (2,5)
3. IQ (3,5)

Honorable mentions:
1. Länsförsäkringar (rated 2nd, 4th and 5th)
2. Unicef (rated 4th twice)
3. Gillis Edman (rated 1st once)
Focus Group 2

Held and recorded on the 30/03/2017, Växjö
Moderator: Josefin Ceder (J)
All participants were Swedish – the following script is translated from Swedish.
Participants:  
• Female, 22 years old (F1) – Student, individual courses  
• Female, 24 years old (F2) – Software developer, junior account manager  
• Female, 55 years old (F3) – Works at a funeral home  
• Male, 35 years old (M1) – Works within the transport industry  
• Male, 52 years old, (M2) – Currently on leave from the banking industry

Notes for added clarification are presented in [...].

Advertisements shown:
• Balance gym, print advertisement  
• Länsförsäkringar, print advertisement  
• Trygg Hansa, TV advertisement  
• IQ, TV advertisement

J: Welcome everyone! This is a focus group about advertisements and the feelings which they create – in particular, we’re going to focus on advertisements that make you feel guilty. I had another focus group yesterday that decided on a couple of advertisements that they thought were guilt inducing and you are going to get to build on their results and see if you agree. Are you ready?

F1 and F3: Yes! [Laughter.]

F1: Go.

J: Ok, you’ve seen the advertisements, so the first question is do you agree that they all make you feel guilty?

Everyone: Yes.

J: Good. The second question is – how do they make you feel guilty?

F2: They point out things that you should be doing or should be thinking about, but probably don’t.

M2: Exactly! You should go to the gym, you shouldn’t drink so much, you should check on your children. You might even feel guilty that you’re not doing it enough if you already are, for example, working out.

F1: Exactly. I agree. It’s pretty obvious that they’re trying to guide you.

J: Ok. The next question might be harder, so I want you to write down your answers before you discuss it. There are different types of guilt – what do these advertisements focus on? The past, the future, or something else?

Group nods along.

J: Ok. The next question might be harder, so I want you to write down your answers before you discuss it. There are different types of guilt – what do these advertisements focus on? The past, the future, or something else?

Pause to write down individual ratings.

J: Are you ready? Who wants to start?

M1: I can do it. I categorized my advertisements – I think Balance and IQ focus on the past. You’ve already eaten the fast food you feel bad about and you’ve already drunk too much and feel guilty. The other two focus on the future – next time you drive, check on your kids, and don’t forget to get good insurance. They’re things you have the opportunity to change.

F1: I don’t really agree. I think IQ might focus on the future – don’t drink so much next time?

M1: True, but it doesn’t make you feel guilty about the next time you drink – it makes you feel bad about your last time.

F1: Still. It’s not really clear to me where that one belongs. Maybe it’s something different
completely.

F3: I think I agree with you [M1]. It focuses on bad behavior in the past, even if it wants to influence future behavior. Balance is the same! It focuses on the past, when you ate too much, and wants to change future behavior. The other two are only about the future and explore what could happen.

M2: That makes a lot of sense. I was thinking in a similar way to her [F1] and thought it wasn’t entirely clear, but when you explain it like that it makes sense.

F2: I agree with you. I categorized them the same way. Same kind of reasoning as well.

F3: This is fun. I’ve never really thought about advertisements in this way before, but now it feels obvious that they are so specific.

[Pause.]

J: Ok, then the last question is which of these advertisements are most guilt inducing? Again, please write your answers down before we talk about it together.

[Pause to write down individual ratings.]

J: Ready?

M2: Yes.

F2: I can start. I put Trygg Hansa on top – I feel guilty even though I don’t have any kids?! It’s almost too over the top but I think it works as I imagine most people worry too much about their kids anyway. This might not be that extreme for them.

F3: True! I put that on top for that reason. It just makes me shiver a little bit at the possibility of anything happening to kids.

F1: I have IQ on top. I’ve only been properly drunk once or twice but it made me uncomfortable both times. This ad reminds me of that. Trygg Hansa is also very good though.

M2: Did no one pick Balance? I think that one’s terrible! I eat fast food every now and then and don’t exercise as much as I should, and this ad reminds me of all the worst things about that.

M1: I did. It’s my second choice, simply because I would not want to look like that. I think Trygg Hansa is worse though. Then third I put IQ and last Länsförsäkringar. That one is more informative and less emotional than the other ones – you need to think more, there’s less of a gut reaction.

F1: That’s true. The other three you feel something more immediately. They’re more visual, less to read maybe?

M2: Possibly. It would make sense to me.

J: Does it matter that two are TV advertisements and two are print advertisements then?

M1: I think so. You see more, hear more, and need to do less work when you watch something. They’re longer.

F2: I agree. You use more senses so it’s easier to be affected by them maybe. Print advertisements can flash by in a second, especially with large ones like the Balance advertisement if you’re driving by it.

F3: But you can ignore TV advertisements as well.

F2: True. But they’re still on quite frequently if you usually watch TV. Print advertisements you might see once and never again.

M2: The TV advertisements are more effective for me too. I think Balance is more guilt inducing than IQ, but I’ll probably remember IQ longer. They create a whole mood with the music and everything that print advertisements just can’t. It’s hard for print advertisements to compete when compared directly like this.

F1: Yeah, and you always hear people talk about alcohol around Christmas. I think a lot of people can relate to maybe having an extra drink around holidays, while not everyone goes to or wants to visit the gym.

M1: Trygg Hansa I think works in a similar way. Even if you don’t have kids on your own
most people are quite protective of children. At least you don’t want to see them hurt, and you
don’t want people close to you to drink too much.

[Pause.]

J: Great! Is there anything you would like to add before we finish?

F3: I’m ok!

M2: Me too.

F2: Me too. Hope it goes well with writing this out, it feels like the conversation was a little
chaotic sometimes.

J: Thank you, I’m sure I’ll be fine. Thank you so much for helping! Don’t forget to give me
your ratings before you leave so I can use those too.

Top ranked guilt advertisements (average rating in parentheses – the closer to one, the
closer to the top the advertisement was):

1. Trygg Hansa (1.4) – categorized as anticipatory guilt
2. Balance (2.2) – categorized as reactive guilt
3. IQ (2.4) – categorized as reactive guilt
4. LF (4) – categorized as anticipatory guilt

Due to the participants’ comments that it is hard to compare print and TV advertisements,
Trygg Hansa and IQ were chosen. They have a higher average rating, are both TV
advertisements, and represent the two kinds of guilt.
Appendix C – Questionnaires

**English Questionnaire**

The English questionnaire was used to simplify the process of adapting questions from previous studies, as they have all been in English. The English questionnaire was also used to receive feedback from non-Swedish speaking faculty members at Linnaeus university. This version of the questionnaire was never sent out to participants and so may look a little rough.

**Part 1 – Attitudes Toward Organizations**

How do you feel toward these brands?

**Trygg Hansa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Unfavorable</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Favorable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Strongly disagree – strongly agree for the following)*

[The sponsor has] consumers best interest at heart.

I have a good feeling about [the sponsor].

My image of [the sponsor] is positive.

**Systembolaget’s IQ Initiative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Favorable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Strongly disagree – strongly agree for the following)*

[The sponsor has] consumers best interest at heart.

I have a good feeling about [the sponsor].

My image of [the sponsor] is positive.
Part 2 – Show Advertisement 1

Trygg Hansa

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzk1p05emvE

The purpose of the message, in my opinion, was to make people feel… (several answers possible):

- Happy
- Angry
- Sad
- Guilty
- Relaxed
- Sorry
- Stressed
- Calm
- Bad
- Excited
- Other: ________

Part 3 – Measure Guilt, IMI, New Attitude for Ad1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E.g.</th>
<th>The way this ad tries to persuade people seems acceptable to me.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANTICIPATORY GUILT
I would feel guilty if I do not plan properly.

I would feel sorry if I make avoidable mistakes.

*I would feel guilty if this happened to my children.*

I would feel bad if I could have avoided mistakes I made.

I would feel regretful if I could have planned better but didn’t.

*I would feel bad if I did not stop to check on my kids while driving.*
**IMI**
The way this ad tries to persuade people seems acceptable to me.

The advertiser tried to manipulate the audience in ways I do not like.

I was annoyed by this ad because the advertiser seemed to be trying to inappropriately manage or control the consumer audience.

I didn’t mind this ad; the advertiser tried to be persuasive without being excessively manipulative.

The ad was fair in what was said and shown.

I think that this advertisement is fair/unfair.

**ATTITUDE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trygg Hansa</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Unfavorable</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Favorable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Strongly disagree – strongly agree for the following)

[The sponsor has] consumers best interest at heart.

I have a good feeling about [the sponsor].

My image of [the sponsor] is positive.
Part 4 – Show Advertisement 2

IQ

http://www.iq.se/sv/kampanjer/filmer/2014/nu-ar-det-jul igen

The purpose of the message, in my opinion, was to make people feel... (several answers possible):

Happy
Angry
Sad
Guilty
Relaxed
Sorry
Stressed
Calm
Bad
Excited
Other: __________

Part 5 – Measure Guilt, IMI, New Attitude for Ad2

REACTIVE GUILT

I feel guilty when things do not go according to plan.

I feel sorry when I have made a mistake.

I feel guilty when I drink too much.

I feel bad when I have made a mistake.

I feel regretful when a plan I made does not work out.

I feel bad when I don’t consider the consequences of my actions.

IMI ATTITUDE } Same questions and measurements as above

Part 6 – Demographics

Age (18-24, 25-29, 30-34 etc.)
Sex (Male, Female, Other/Do not wish to disclose)
Educational background
Swedish Questionnaire

Below are screenshots of the Swedish questionnaire as participants got to see it. The pages have been zoomed out some to allow for fewer screen shots. The translation was approved by a professional translator with a degree in English-Swedish translation.

Cover Letter

The letter reads: “Advertisements and feelings. This questionnaire is about advertisements, the feelings they stir, and how they affect consumers. You will soon see two different advertisements and answer questions about them. The questionnaire takes about 10-15 minutes to fill in, including watching the advertisements.”

“The one responsible for this questionnaire is Josefin Ceder, and I am an economy student from Linnaeus university that is currently working on my master thesis. The answers to the following questions are going to be shown in the thesis.”

“By answering these questions, you agree that your answers can be used for this cause. Participating is completely anonymous and there is no way you personally will be identified in the thesis. You can exit the questionnaire at any time, but once you have submitted your answers there is no way for me to track them and you can no longer take them back.”

“If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me via the email address jc222eg@student.lnu.se. Thank you for taking time to participate!”
Thank you message

The message reads “Thank you for your participation!”
Appendix D – Assumption Testing for Correlation Analysis

Testing for Monotonic Relationships – Trygg Hansa

As can be seen from the scatter plots above, all relationships between the concepts on the left and the items labelled underneath are monotonous. The correlation analysis can hence be done for Trygg Hansa.
Testing for Monotonic Relationships – IQ

As can be seen from the scatter plots above, all relationships between the concepts on the left and the items labelled underneath are monotonous. The correlation analysis can hence be done for IQ.
Appendix E – Assumption Testing for Regression Analysis

Testing for Hypothesis 1: Anticipatory Guilt Appeals have an Impact on the Consumer’s Attitude Toward a Brand.

Assumption 1 & 2 – Linear Relationship Between Variables and Homoscedasticity

Except for a few data points that look like outliers (red stars) the relationship between anticipatory guilt and the consumer attitude toward Trygg Hansa seems to be largely linear. It is also clear the data is homoscedastic. Whether there are outliers will be tested with the next assumption.
Assumption 3 – Outliers

To check for outliers, a histogram and a box plot was used. For anticipatory guilt, the results looked as follows:

For attitude, the results looked as follows:

Based on these graphs, the identified outliers (circled) were deleted from the data set. The identified outliers were numbers 18, 32, 86 and 91 for guilt and numbers 36, 39 and 79 for attitude. The next assumption can hence be tested.
Assumption 4 – Normally Distributed Residuals

To check whether the residuals are approximately normally distributed, a histogram with a superimposed normal curve and normal p-plots were used. The results for anticipatory guilt looked as follows:

![Histogram and Normal P-P Plot for TH_Anticipatory_Guilt](image1)

As can be seen from the graphs above, the variables are fairly normally distributed as the data points gather around the middle lines in each graph. The data normality assumption is hence valid and the next assumption can be tested.

For attitude, the results looked as follows:

![Histogram and Normal P-P Plot for TH_CompAtt_Post](image2)
Testing for Hypothesis 2: Reactive Guilt Appeals have an Impact on the Consumer’s Attitude Toward a Brand.

Assumption 1 & 2 – Linear Relationship Between Variables and Homoscedasticity

Except for a few data points that look like outliers (red stars) the relationship between reactive guilt and the consumer attitude toward IQ seems to be largely linear. It is also clear the data is homoscedastic. Whether there are outliers will be tested with the next assumption.
Assumption 3 – Outliers

To check for outliers, a histogram and a box plot was used. For reactive guilt, the results looked as follows:

For attitude, the results looked as follows:

Based on these graphs, the identified outliers (circled) were deleted from the data set. The identified outliers were numbers 32, 79 and 91 both for guilt and attitude. The next assumption can hence be tested.
Assumption 4 – Normally Distributed Residuals

To check whether the residuals are approximately normally distributed, a histogram with a superimposed normal curve and normal p-plots were used. The results for reactive guilt looked as follows:

For attitude, the results looked as follows:

As can be seen from the graphs above, the variables are fairly normally distributed as the data points gather around the middle lines in each graph. The data normality assumption is hence valid and the next assumption can be tested.
Testing for Hypothesis 3: Inferences of Manipulative Intent Moderate the Relationship between Anticipatory Guilt and the Attitude Toward the Brand.

Assumption 1 & 2 – Linear Relationship Between Variables and Homoscedasticity

Inferences of manipulative intent is the dichotomous moderator variable. For those that noticed them, the relationship between the anticipatory guilt appeal and attitude looks like follows:

For those that did not notice IMI, the relationship between the anticipatory guilt appeal and attitude looks like follows:
Except for a few data points that look like outliers (red stars) the relationship between anticipatory guilt and the consumer attitude toward Trygg Hansa seems to be largely linear for both groups of the dichotomous variable. It is also clear the data is homoscedastic.

**Assumption 3 – Outliers**

As outliers have already been tested for hypothesis one, also concerning anticipatory guilt, the same participants will be deleted. This includes numbers 18, 32, 86 and 91 for guilt and numbers 36, 39 and 79 for attitude.

**Assumption 4 – Normally Distributed Residuals**

To check whether the residuals are approximately normally distributed, normal Q-Q plots were used. The results for anticipatory guilt and attitude looked as follows:

As can be seen from the graphs above, the variables are fairly normally distributed as the data points gather around the middle lines in each graph. The data normality assumption is hence valid and the next assumption can be tested.
Testing for Hypothesis 4: Inferences of Manipulative Intent Moderate the Relationship between Reactive Guilt and the Attitude Toward the Brand.

Assumption 1 & 2 – Linear Relationship Between Variables and Homoscedasticity

Inferences of manipulative intent is the dichotomous moderator variable. For those that noticed them, the relationship between the reactive guilt appeal and attitude looks like follows:

For those that did not notice IMI, the relationship between the reactive guilt appeal and attitude looks like follows:
The relationship between reactive guilt and the consumer attitude toward IQ seems to be largely linear for both groups of the dichotomous variable, without any clear outliers. However, the data points for the group that did notice the inferences are few and far apart – this might impact the following results. It is clear the data for the group that did not notice the inferences is homoscedastic.

**Assumption 3 – Outliers**

As outliers have already been tested for hypothesis two, also concerning reactive guilt, the same participants will be deleted. This includes numbers 32, 79 and 91 both for guilt and attitude.

**Assumption 4 – Normally Distributed Residuals**

To check whether the residuals are approximately normally distributed, normal Q-Q plots were used. The results for reactive guilt and attitude looked as follows:

As can be seen from the graphs above, the variables are fairly normally distributed as the data points gather around the middle lines in each graph. The data normality assumption is hence valid and the next assumption can be tested.