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Fear advertising and its impact in audience behaviour

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Assignment Cover Page

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Fear advertising and its impact in audience behaviour

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DECLARATION

I, the above named student, confirm that by submitting, or causing the attached assignment to be submitted, to CCT, I have not plagiarised any other person's work in this assignment and except where appropriately acknowledged, this assignment is my own work, has been expressed in my own words, and has not

Executive Summary

This study approaches the effectiveness of the use of fear through advertisements regarding posting threat appeals in an attempt to improve the driver safety. The study attempts to examine the extent to which the road safety approaches through the publicity of fear in the Government Campaigns is effective. Moreover, it explores the pros and cons of the interpretation of the common strategies of making threat-based advertising campaigns. Therefore, the study offers a contrasted analysis with the already published research around Crashed Lives advertising campaign in Ireland.

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1. Project background and rationale

The relation alcohol and driving has been a worldwide issue for road safety. It has been known that the consumption of alcohol prejudices drivers' abilities and increases risks of crashes. According to the Global Road Safety Partnership (2007), the consumption of alcohol induces to a poor judgement, slow reactions, also decrease vigilance and visual perceptiveness.

Many studies have shown when under alcohol effects, the probability of having an accident while driving, rises significantly. Zhao's et al. (2014) work showed that ten thousand deaths are thought to be addressed to drunk driving in Europe each year.

Even with a low blood alcohol concentration (BAC), drivers can have their judgements affected thus increase accidents risk, being twice likely to suffer an accident while driving than sober drivers.

For years, authorities all around the world have been working to diminish the number of crashes and deaths in roads caused in a large number by drunk drivers.

Every year laws related to drunk driving are becoming tougher and a huge amount of publicity is being made in order to aware people of the risks they are taking when drinking and driving. The ads are thought to show, not only risks they are taking to themselves, but also to all people involved in the accidents.

However, how far can the ads, showing consequences of their possible drunk and driving act, influence their decisions?

The research is based on evidence around the effectiveness of the use of fear through advertisements regarding posting threat appeals in an attempt to improve the driver safety. The study attempts to examine the extent to which the road safety approaches through the publicity of fear in the Government Campaigns is effective as a part of the shock tactics to evoke strong fear responses among individuals (Teng et al. 2019). The study explores the pros and cons of the interpretation of the common strategies of making threat-based advertising campaigns such as the display of the consequences of drinking and driving or the distracted driving activities such as texting, watching movies. Harbeck et al. (2018) states it is usually expected that the threat appeal of the display of crash driving leading to a case of a likely death would evoke fear as per section of Behavioural scientists. Therefore, the study offers a critical commentary on the efficacy of the advertising campaigns in terms of road safety initiatives.

Primary research question

The primary research question for the current study is stated below:

RQ: What is the impact of the portrayal of threat appeals through media advertisements on the driving behaviour and personality of the individuals?

Sub-research question

The sub-research questions that act as the secondary research questions for the current study are:

SRQ 1: How does the “Crashed Lives” campaign affected the driving behaviour of the individuals in Ireland?

SRQ 2: What are the alternative methods to evoke the modification of the driving behaviour?

2. Literature Review

It is important to highlight that thebehaviourism theory represents an important role in the studies related to consumerbehaviour, which approaches a psychological thought based in a conditioning concept.

Maslow (1943) started from the assumption that the humanbehaviouris induced in order to achieve certain needs, aiming self-achievement and cannot be explained by the simple relationship between stimulus-reaction or because of impulses and conflicts. However, Watson (1930) used of observation to study the human behaviour to reinforce his beliefs in a stimulus-reaction and reinforcement mechanism. In addition, Moraes (2008) underscore when related to motivation, behaviourists consider that impulse is the gear to initiate action. Most experiments carried out for Pavlov (1926) resulted in a conclusion that reflexes are an innate conduct, a reaction not pre conditioned whilebehaviourism is when an individual is conditioned for external stimulus.

Soares (2017) argued that advertisements uses of this concepts to condition consumer behaviour increasing a need and creating wishes. Through persuasive ads, it transforms a simple need of hydration (primary necessity) to a wish of consume a determinate brand of fizzy drink (second necessity). The view supported by Gade (1998), however, shows a controversy about how far advertising and other types of promotion can persuade consumers to buy products they do not need or want.

As mentioned in their work, Silva et al. (2016) points out that advertising has a broad and profound influence on consumers in various aspects such as cultural, social, personal and psychological. The dynamics of behaviour consumption is evidenced through emotional and rational actions that precede and drive the purchase of products and services. It is what Barreau (2014) supported considering an existence of roughly two categories of ads: (1) Thinking ads, where attention is to either real information or practical outcome of a product or service; (2) Feeling ads, that the focus is on the emotion an individual will try out when acquiring a product or service.

According to Edell and Burke (1987) feelings ads has influenced consumers' reactions towards brands and their ads and are a great tool to predict advertising. This approach is detailed by Cotte and Ritchie (2005), who said when the use of positive approach in ads is emphasized, it would conduct a consumer empathy with the product/service thus a purchase, while a negative approach leads to an incommensurable feeling, conducting consumers to acquire the solution that the advertiser offers. However, Putrevu (2010) pointed out research findings showing negative approaches in relation with positive ones, are more cogent and provoke a more favorable reaction.

2.1 Negative approach in advertising

Brown et al. (1998) stated that there was a considerable amount of works directed to understand how feeling ads influences consumer response. Meanwhile Huhmann and Brotherton (1997) identified negative approach as a promising area to exploit saying it is an under researched area. In addition, they pointed out that many studies are being taken to specify conditions under which this approaches will be more or less efficient.

Cotte and Ritchie (2005) questioned about why ads professionals use negative feelings in their campaigns since it induces fear and anger and it is very willing to consumers to ignore or not like the product/service. Generally, Richins (1997) said that they do it hoping it will (1) catch consumers' attention, (2) provoke an intended series of reactions and (3) induce consumers to purchase a product/service. However, Cotte et al. (2004) argued there is an incompatibility between advertisement intentions and individual response, consequently, in reality there is no guarantees that negative ad-evoked ads are going to work.

In an article published by Regional Center for Healthy Communities (n.d) it is showed that fear appeals, more often in young people, do not work. The article argued this approach

changes attitude without changing behaviour and explained that young people can be emotionally shaken when seeing a simulated car crash and say they will never drink and drive. However, it will not pair when they find themselves in a situation they have to decide whether drink and drive or not. In a study of Backer et al. (1992), they mentioned negative feelings in ads have different results when comparing adults with young people; it is because young people do not have much sense of their possible death and could understand the threatening as a challenge instead.

Cotte and Ritchie (2005) suggested there are no definitive conclusions of using fear appeals in advertisement, as some results of those studies direct to its effectiveness and others show the opposite. Although DeJong and Wallack (1999) state that strong fear appeals has a high effectiveness in motivating and triggers wiliness to change, even when following research shows it does not change their behaviour.

2.2 Negative approach advertising in a long term

Other point there is not much deep study, is the effects of fear campaigns in long term. Japerson and Fan (2002) explained about consumers' reaction at long-term repeated fear ads exposure. They mention, firstly, that response to a repeated fear ad is likely to change during the exposure, going from a formed attitude, to a re-evaluated and updated opinion turning the ad foreseeable, boring or even motive of laugh by audience. As Weinreich (1999) says, fear appeals can be undoubtedly effective in capturing attention in the beginning, but after numerous repetitions, it may stop working.

Secondly, they say repetition can lead to habituation, and it will raise a tendency for audience simply tune out the message. Devlin et al. (2002) in their research into smokers' reaction to the imposed warning in cigarette packs found that smokers accustomed to the warnings over time and just conceal the message. Similarly, Coulter et al. (1999) suggested that when consumers become conscious of an ad strategy as a strategy, they sense a change of significance turning the ad less persuasive.

Thirdly, using repetitive negative feelings in a particular matter, may condition public to always expect fear in same topic advertising. Eadie and Stead (1998) gave an example of this issue. They state that antismoking ads are expect to use visuals of black lungs, when it does not happen their initial reaction is to reject the advertisement.

Fourthly, a long-term use of fear appeal ad could damage reputation of advertiser and its image becomes related with the negative and threatening.

Fear appeals seem to increase persuasion at some point, but lessen in others. Keller and Block (1996) say the reason is that weak fear plea could be ineffective if it fails to deliver a clear and elaborated message of damage caused by the undesirable behaviour; whereas a strong fear plea may fail if it presents too much formulation of those consequences, preventing audience from seeing the main point offered in the ad.

2.3 Comparing and contrasting the ideas

The contrasting ideas discovered through the review of the existing literature on the current study can be illustrated by the debates and arguments on the ethical nature of the use of threat appeals as road safety measures. This further examines the necessity of utilizing the idea of fear appeals on drawing the attention towards the advertisement and the problems of drinking and driving on public roads.

Hayashi et al. (2019), in his study had adjoined the findings on the degree of effectiveness of the threat appeals on influencing the decision-making processes with people texting while driving. The study was accomplished with sending a threatening message to the participants of the study about the dangers of texting while driving, whereas the other lot of the participants was exposed to a non-threatening message. The comparison of the responses of the participants illustrated that threat appeals minimized the tendency of the participants towards making impulsive decisions about texting while driving. The emotional response that was most evident among the participants who had texted while driving was about regret, which is a negative emotion.

On the contrary, Moraes et al. (2019), sums up the ethical concerns about exploring the emotional side of the people through the portrayal of threat appeals. The author in his study examined the morality of threat-based marketing experiments, which showed that feelings among the consumers are positive about the shock-based advertisements. The study establishes the relationship between the ethical judgment, context and consent about the perception of the consumers of fairness and consequences when exposed to threat-based advertisements. Thus, the main finding of the study remains to be the development of the consumer-experienced positive shock theory, which aligns the consensual shock value of the

threat-based ads in the media that are stated to be ethical as they offer an aspect of contextual acceptability.

This section therefore, summarizes the aspects of the application of the behaviourist theory as a part of the review of the previous literature that plays a significant role in evaluating the psychology of the drivers set in the social contexts and condition (AlwallSvennefelt et al. 2018). It may be reasonable to state that the review of the existing literature reveals that the most important role played by the threat-based ad campaigns is towards attracting the attention to criticalities road safety and the consequences they have over the medium contexts of trait anxiety and attitudes towards drinking and driving.

The campaign aired in Ireland, called Crashed Lives, adopt the fear approach to get audience to change their behaviour towards drink and driving. The campaign displays real life stories in which people talk about the effects of a crash or the loss of loved ones in road accidents linked to consumption of alcohol. It brings up also how those events has permanently changed their lives in an attempt to get audience to reflect the consequences of drink and driving is enduring and affect many people.

The analysis and discussion of the results of the campaign would allow the significant determination of the impact of fear appeals on the driving behaviour and would offer possible future directions towards enabling a better advertising representation of key issues in the society.

3. Analysis of the Case Study

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) is a state agency established within the Republic of Ireland by the Irish Government with the objective to deliver a safe environment for all road users, and to promote the effective use of the road network.

With a mission of saving lives and prevent injuries in collisions on the road, RSA has a full list of tasks. Among them, RSA works creating and implementing educational and informational campaigns aiming to maximize consciousness of road safety and promoting safer driving.

Crashed Lives is a road safety campaign, aired since 2008, showcasing real life case studies in which people speak about the effects of a crash or the loss of loved ones in road accidents

and how it has permanently changed their lives and consequently robbed every one of their dreams.

RSA Ireland gather as well the function to collecting and analyzing collision and road safety data in order to implement measures and endorsements to improve road.

According to them, in 2017 an average of 172 drivers were arrested per week accused of being driving under influence of alcohol. An increase of 11% compared to 2016, when were registered an average of 155 daily arrests.

2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
8920	8067	7419	7697	7962	9527

Figure 1 - Drivers arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence (An Garda Siochana).

The legal limits to drink under influence of alcohol is 50 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood or 22 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath for a fully licensed driver in Category B.

Accidents related to drivers under influence of alcohol are 38% of the fatal crashes, of which, 29% has a driver or motorcyclist involved and 9% involve a pedestrian.

In a research conducted by Behaviour & Attitudes as part of the RSA's advertising campaign "Crash Lives" performed in January 2017, B&A examined attitudes towards disqualification from alcohol-related driving offences. The research was based on a sample of a thousand adults aged 16 years and over in Ireland.

When asked whether they endorse or not to any driver caught over the drink limit should lose the right to driving, 91% of the adults interviewed supported the automatic disqualification from driving.

Then they were asked for how long the disqualification should be applied, the majority number (61%) agreed it should length for more than 12 months when only 5% said it should be 3 months – For a normal drive in Ireland, if he/she is tested over 50 milligrams limit, the penalty is 3 months disqualification and a fine of €200.

According to the research, 10% of the Irish drivers, stated have driven a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol in the past 12 months. Moreover, when asked how many drinks they could consume and be safe to drive, 73% of the motorists said the amount would be zero. However, 23% of them said have driven under alcohol influence in the last 12 months.

Analysing their behaviour to alcohol and driving, 97% of the people interviewed agreed at some level that driving under the influence of alcohol seriously increases the risk of an accident and that it is hard to respond appropriately in a dangerous situation. In accordance with the researchers, people who drank alcohol in the past 12 months before driving are also more likely to have lenient attitudes to drinking and driving – it indicates repeat offenders.

One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether the Crash Lives campaign has changed attitudes towards drink driving. Since the advert campaign was aired, have people been more likely to implement any of the following habits while planning a social activity, which might include alcohol consumption?

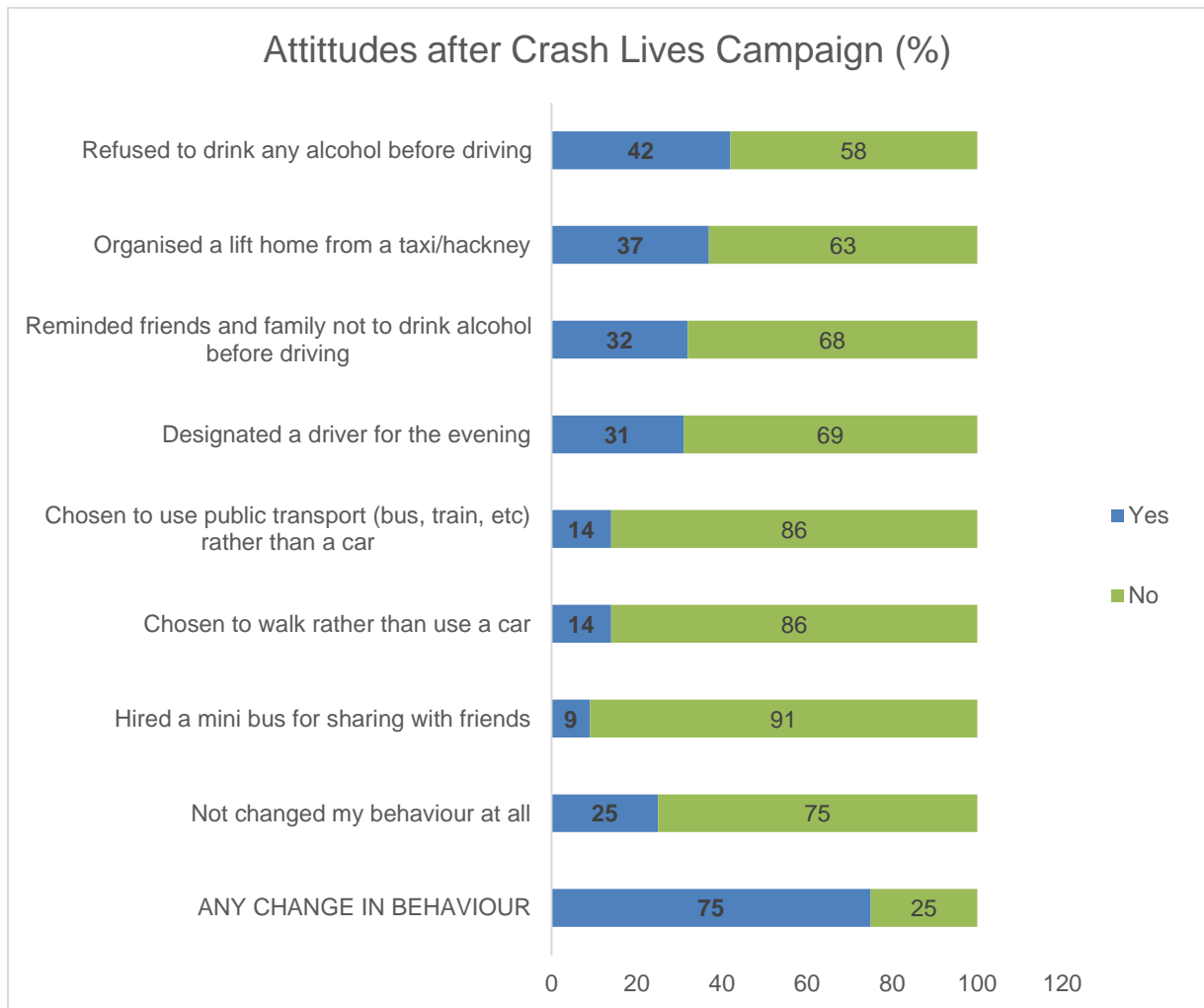


Figure 2 - Actions Prompted by Crashed Lives Campaign. (Behaviour & Attitudes)

This study has found that generally 3 in 4 drivers attempted to adopt better habits following at least one of the actions prompted by the campaign while planning a social interaction, which may involve alcohol consumption.

Furthermore, motorists who accumulate both facts, being aware of Crash Lives campaign and have driven after consuming alcohol in the past year, encouragingly, showed incidence significantly higher to be more likely to embrace positive habits.

4. Research Methodology and Methods

Quinlan et al. (2019) stated the research philosophy comprise of the logical guidance through a set of assumptions for accomplishing the study. There are different research philosophies

such as realism, positivist, constructivist, etc. The rationale behind the use of Positivist approach towards accomplishing the study remains to be the fact that the positivist approach allows a logical guidance and paradigm for accomplishing the study based on the merit of the interpretation of the data collected. The positivist approach further creates a logical representation of the data through statistical analysis.

Research on case study has risen in popularity as an important approach for researching and recognizing complex issues in real-world environments.

Harrison et al. (2017) showed in their study that case study models had been used across a variety of fields, in particular in social sciences, education, industry, law and healthy, to tackle a wide range of research issues. As a result, case study research has experienced significant growth over the past 40 years through the implementation of a range of methodological approaches.

Reform and development were the product of opposing pressures from traditional approaches to research and the attitudes, viewpoints and expectations of case study participants.

As a result, different models are suggested to prepare schedule, and execute case study research with guidance on key performance factors. Therefore, while case study research has developed into a practical, flexible approach to research, the variation in concept, implementation, validity, and intent can create a confusing forum for use.

Merriam (2009) argued that there are different approaches in different case study exponents; however, they all have common characteristics. Creswell (2014) affirmed case study analysis is commonly defined as a flexible method of qualitative investigation that is most appropriate for a detailed, systematic and in-depth investigation of a complex issue where the distinction between context and problem is uncertain and involves several variables. Furthermore, Stake (2006) said case study analysis could be used to investigate a variety of subjects and purposes; the basic criterion for using case study derives from one's desire to understand complex stimuli.

According to Merriam (2009), case study, which is mainly exploratory and descriptive in nature, is used to gain an understanding of the problem in real-life settings and is advised to address how and why or less often what research questions. In addition, Stake (2006) considered that in case study analysis, the use of multiple methods for collecting and

analyzing data is promoted and found to be mutually beneficial where together they provide a more synergistic and detailed view of the subject under study.

Thus, which methods are used, as Harrison et al. (2017) summarizes, may differ and depend on the purpose and nature of the research, which is often a difference in the layout of a single or multiple case study.

In a definition by Creswell et al. (2007) case study analysis is a qualitative method in which the investigator examines a case or cases over time through comprehensive, in-depth data collection incorporating multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews, documentation and studies) and provides a case summary and case-based themes.

Primary data analysis is the initial data analyses obtained for a research report. Primary data analysis is the method of process the data obtained to address research questions, or to endorse or deny research theories that a study was originally intended to test. Secondary data analysis is data analysis that others have collected for another primary reason. The use of this existing information offers a viable choice for scholars who may not have enough time and resources. Secondary analysis is an analytical process which implements the same fundamental principles as studies using primary data (Johnston, M., 2013). The present study is a secondary analysis, based on the primary data collect for Road and Safety Authority (RSA) in relation to Crashed Lives advertising campaign in Ireland.

5. Ethical Issues

The research study would be established based on almost every ethical domain of academic research. The purpose of considering the ethical considerations prior to the study is to avoid any means of harm to the research participants and the people involved with the entire process of the research study (Livingstone et al. 2019). The key areas of ethical considerations that has been taken into account in the light of the current study includes:

- Good Behaviour and Personal Integrity
- Ethics of Confidentiality
- Data Protection Act 2006 (Livingstone et al. 2019)
- Professional and Scientific Responsibility
- Protection of Privacy

Towards accomplishing the study, the researcher has taken up appropriate measures to display Good Behaviour and Personal Integrity, in order to offer a conducive environment for a constructive activity. Additionally, the ethics of confidentiality is also maintained for the current study where the information about the people involved with the data collection and the storage of the collected data is maintained. This is followed by the considerations of the Protection of Privacy of the research participants has been ensured as well. The Data Protection Act 2006 is other significant ethical doses that has been considered for the protection of the data collected and the findings developed through this study (Livingstone et al. 2019).

Additionally, in the light of the current discussion, the ethics of Professional and Scientific Responsibility concerning the appropriateness and the accuracy of the data collected is another critical aspect that has been taken care of.

6. Risk Assessment

As per the analysis, the following are the key risks of a research:

Psychological risks

There might be the possibility of the research participants along with the researcher himself may be subjected to undesirable changes in the study (Livingstone et al. 2019). These changes may be of the recurrent or transitory nature, which might create problems of confusion, episodes of depression, etc.

Violation of Confidentiality

The most common risk associated with research studies on the violation of code of confidentiality through, leaking of vital research data among the unauthorised entities, which would create the problems of authenticity of claims of the study and may affect the overall successful completion of the study.

Time and Cost Overruns

A critical risk that is associated with the study may be in terms of the delay in the completion of the project along with the systematic increase in the cost of the study due to an increase in the number of days of indulgence (Ledford and Gast, 2018). This has a collaborative threat as

the study may require some last minutes changes, which will require newer resources and will affect both the delivery and the budget of the project.

Misinterpretation

Another significant aspect that is associated with the qualitative nature of the study is the fact that the qualitative data has a tendency to be inevitably being influenced by the theoretical frameworks and the perceptions or the personal characteristics of the researcher. Therefore, a critical risk of misinterpretation of the data collected is a prime risk that the study might be subjected.

7. Conclusion

This study aimed to analyse the impact of fear advertising campaign on behaviour of drivers towards consumptions of alcohol before driving as well as to analyse the data from RSA in relation to Crashed Lives campaign.

First, it presented a brief citation of behaviourism and how its concepts were applied in advertising to condition consumer behaviour. Afterwards, that negative approach in advertising is as a promising area to exploit however it is an under researched subject as no guarantees that this approach is going to work.

It is possible to see, analysing the present case study, people under influence of alcohol cause almost 40% of deaths in roads in Ireland. Although the numbers on the research shows a strong disagreement concerning drink driving, as well as solid support to punishments to who attempt to drive under such influence, it is clear the contradiction on some of them. For instance, 23% of the people who said the safest number of drinks to consume before drive would be zero, assumed also have driven inebriated.

A good point observed, though, was that the drivers who have driven after consuming alcohol, encouragingly, showed incidence significantly higher to be more likely to embrace positive habits after being aware of Crashed Lives campaign.

Overall, the research points out that 75% of the interviewed people, who were aware of the Crashed Lives campaign were more likely to change their attitudes when planning going out to drink. Nevertheless, the proportion of people being arrested because of drink driving is

constantly increasing every year, showing that negatives approaches could have some level of effectiveness in motivating and causing wiliness to change, but in reality, it does not change their behaviour.

Based on these analyses, there are good reasons to suppose that the standard understands of negatives approaches in drink driving campaign would need a more in-depth research. Cases studies in this matter should be broadly encouraged in order to collect enough data to a deeper analyses, as well as find better approaches to this concerning.

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