



Sustainable Shock Advertisement – When Wicked Problems Need Disruptive Solutions

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Background

Sustainable companies face not only the duty to solve wicked sustainability problems, but they are involved in a fight of gaining legitimacy and marketing their green products within an unsustainable and highly competitive playing field. Therefore, a disruptive marketing tool for sustainable entrepreneurs may help to influence consumers towards a sustainable mindset and at the same time to gain a competitive advantage over unsustainable companies. Shock Advertisement may be a radical solution breaking the setting of classic marketing models, but until now hasn't been researched on much.

Objective

This paper examines the potential of a shock-based advertisement strategy, focused on the creation of a more sustainable world. It responds to the call of sustainable entrepreneurs, with especially smart and emerging enterprises, enabling them to understand the opportunities given by Shock Advertisement, thus helping them to compete successfully on the market.

Introduction

Many sustainable entrepreneurs struggle to compete against their unsustainable and greenwashing competitors on the market. Therefore, this research aims to answer the following research question: **"How can Shock Advertisement influence consumers and create a competitive advantage for sustainable entrepreneurs?"** Examining relevant literature on consumer behaviour, legitimacy and marketing shall serve as a theoretical base for the later analysis of multiple semi-structured interviews methods section. After being able to answer the research question, a **framework** shall help sustainable entrepreneurs to understand and apply Shock Advertisement within their marketing strategy. The umbrella under which this research stands is the contribution to a sustainable world by helping sustainable companies grow and eliminate unsustainable companies.

Methods

To answer the research question, a qualitative approach has been chosen, using semi-structured interviews combined with a quasi-experiment to collect data on emotional stimuli created by Shock Advertisement. The participants were shown a shocking advertisement on dairy products and the connected animal abuse and subsequently interviewed on their emotions. Then a second non-shocking product advert, seen as the solution towards the shock, is shown before the participants undergo the second interview. The interview and analysis was focused on (1) the adverts impact on the participant's emotions, (2) its effect on the company's legitimacy and (3) its impact on the purchase behaviour of consumers.

Results

After seeing the sustainable product advertisement

Impact on emotions

- Happiness, Positivity, Relief, Hope, Clear Conscience

Effect on the sustainable company's legitimacy

- Gain of legitimacy, Seeing a good reason for the products to exist, Even the high price is justified

Impact on consumers purchase behaviour

- 100% of the interviewees are willing to change their purchase behaviour and support sustainable consumption within this industry. The reasons are: cruelty free, organic, high quality and healthier products.

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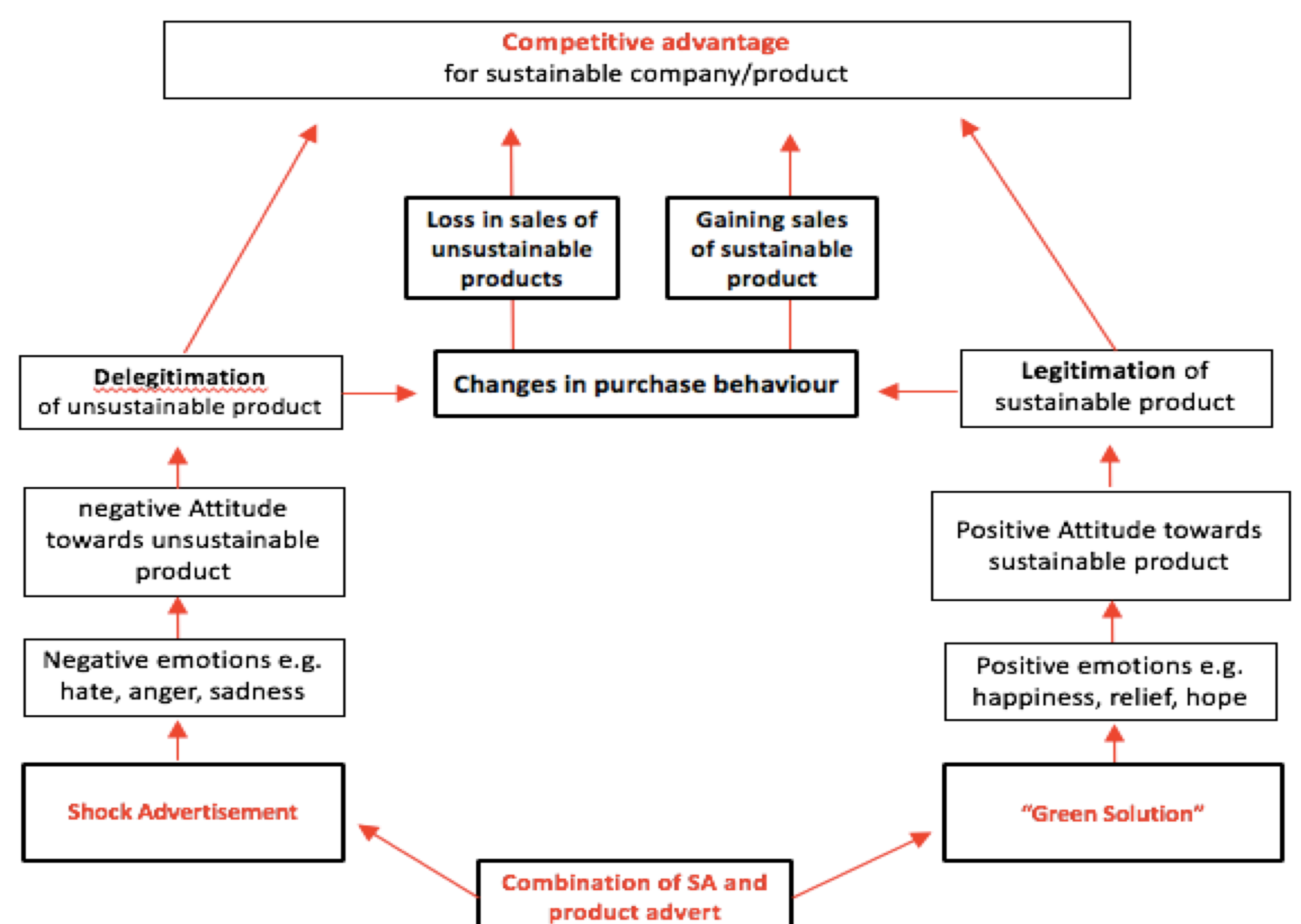
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Framework



Conclusion

Since there is a need for "classic marketing models to be future-fitted, marketing must be deconstructed, redefined, and stretched. Marketing is not going to work if its only charge is to pump up the sales of existing goods. Therefore, this approach is seen as being an **innovative and disruptive marketing solution benefiting sustainable entrepreneurs. SA combined with a Green Solution may legitimize green products while delegitimizing and "swiping away" unsustainable ones.**