

Engaging in sustainable bioeconomies: The role of data-driven communication

Researchers

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Focus.

In this project, we investigate how different targeted messages can be effective in influencing citizens' intention to engage in and attitudes toward sustainable clothing consumption. Based on two studies, this project provides key insights for both scientists and policymakers/activists on how to design an effective information campaign.

Innovative idea and objective

Many of the changes towards a more sustainable society require a behavioral change of individual citizens. Providing those citizens with information that is factually correct is of key importance. However, for messages to be convincing and to foster desirable behavioral change they also must resonate with individuals' personal situations and connect to their values and priorities. Online (micro)targeting strategies might be useful. Using the personal data people leave behind on digital media, this information can be used to develop targeted messages that are more personally relevant. In this project, we have investigated how different targeted messages can be effective in influencing citizens' attitudes as well as purchasing behavior of clothes.

Relevance to the materials transition in textiles and/or building materials?

Behavioral change asks for effective communication. Our project provides concrete insights into the features that co-determine whether people engage with information that encourages sustainable consumer behavior, in particular relating to buying, selling and reusing clothes.

What did you do?

We have conducted an experiment to test whether introvert and extrovert individuals are more susceptible to different types of ads. More specifically, we developed different Instagram ads focusing on reusing and reducing clothing consumption, targeting introvert and extrovert individuals and see whether they had a differential impact on ad engagement, attitudes and intentions towards sustainable clothing consumption– both directly and after several weeks. We focused on female Instagram users. Currently, a follow-up experiment that focuses on education and political preferences is conducted.

Main result, achievement and highlight

We find that extrovert individuals are indeed more susceptible to ads that suggest extravert behaviour (e.g. organizing trading parties, engagement with friends) than introvert individuals. Effects are small and disappear after a few weeks.

Key message

Targeting individual citizens with tailored messages can be effective in changing their attitudes and behavioral intentions relating to sustainable clothing behavior. However, to change individual's attitudes and also in the long run, a continuous flow of communication (e.g. through campaigns) might be needed.

Visual abstract

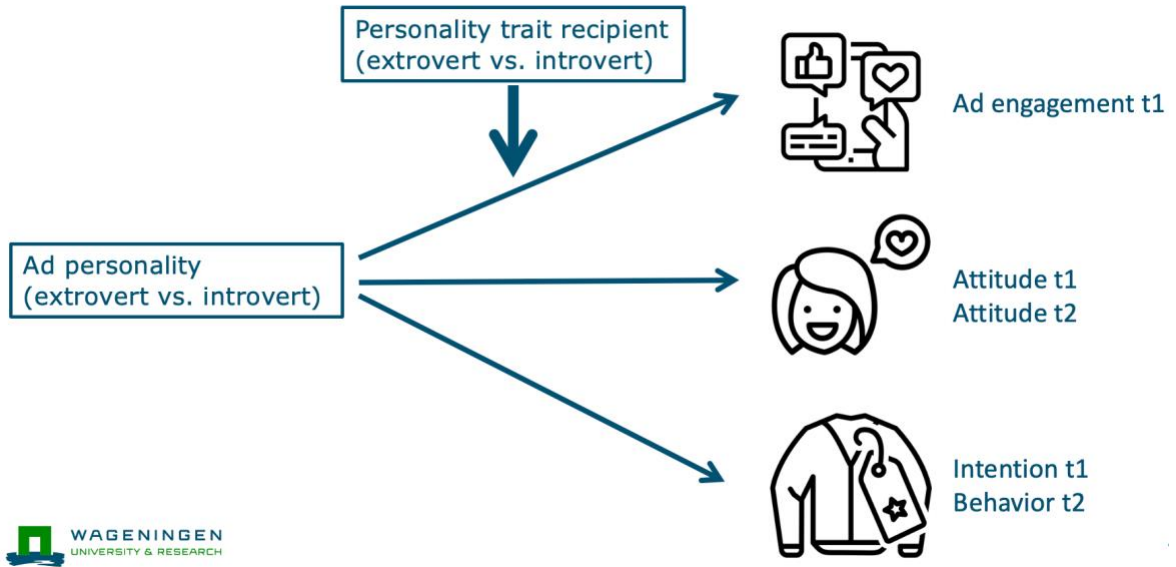


Figure 1: Testing the effects of personalized ads on ad engagement, attitudes and behavioral intentions