

A reason to buy: Justification as underlying mechanism in the effect of message frames on impulse purchase behavior

**Anne Moes**

University of Groningen

**Marieke Fransen**

University of Amsterdam

**Tibert Verhagen**

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences

**Bob Fennis**

University of Groningen

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## **Abstract**

In this paper we studied the role of justification in the effect of message frames (self-benefit versus other-benefit) on impulse buying urges and impulsive choice behavior of a self-indulgent product. We performed a field-experiment (Study 1; N = 366) and an online-experiment (Study 2; N = 524). Study 1 showed that when people see a message in which the benefits for others (versus self) are presented, they report more justifications to buy the product. Next, we found that reporting a justification positively affects impulsive buying urges. Study 2 showed that there is a direct positive effect of message frame on impulse choice behaviour. People who were exposed to an other-benefit frame significantly more often chose to buy a self-indulgent product than people who were exposed to a self-benefit frame. Additionally, Study 2 showed that justification functions as an underlying mechanism that explains this effect.

**Keywords:** *message frames; impulse buying; justifications*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour