THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UNINTENDED: NEGATIVE SELF-CONSCIOUS EMOTIONS IN MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the negative self-conscious emotions of guilt, shame and embarrassment in consumption experiences. Recently, there has been a call from marketing scholars to examine specific emotions rather than general affective states. This work answers this call by identifying antecedents and consequences for each negative self-conscious emotion. Findings are based on literature grounded in social psychology as well as findings from ten in-depth interviews. Specifically, the authors uncovered three antecedent themes: norm violations, social judgment and social stigma. In addition, six coping themes emerged as ways consumers dealt with negative self-conscious emotions: avoidance, mental escape, physical escape, positive reinterpretation, planful problem solving and acceptance. This work offers rich contributions for theory and practice. Theoretically, this work contributes by identifying a unique set of antecedents and coping mechanisms for each negative self-conscious emotion. This work also offers managerial implications; by understanding how each negative self-conscious emotion functions within a consumption context marketing managers will be better able to tailor their offerings to meet consumer needs.

References available upon request.