Threats are often used in advertisements to warn people of, for example, the dangers of driving or smoking, to sell life insurance, or to raise awareness of environmental issues. These appeals are known in the academic literature as fear or threat appeals. Despite the fact that such appeals are commonly presented to the public, confusion regarding the effectiveness of these appeals is paramount in the academic literature. We posit that consumers experience a range of emotions (including fear) when viewing such advertisements which may in turn have effectiveness or behavioural implications.

**Hypotheses**

- **H1a**: Physical threats will generate higher activation than psychological threats.
- **H1b**: Physical threats will generate higher negative affect than psychological threats.
- **H1c**: Physical threats will generate lower positive affect than psychological threats.
- **H2a**: Self-directed threats will generate higher activation than other-directed threats.
- **H2b**: Self-directed threats will generate higher negative affect than other-directed threats.
- **H2c**: Self-directed threats will generate lower positive affect than other-directed threats.

**Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat Type</th>
<th>Activation</th>
<th>Negative Affect</th>
<th>Positive Affect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the type of threat influences on activation and valence separately this translates into a need to present both physical and psychological threats in stimuli. The presentations of physical and psychological threats in one stimulus may result in higher activation and negative valence in consumers leading to increased advertising effectiveness or behavior change.

Laura M. Chamberlain (L.M.Chamberlain1@aston.ac.uk) and Nick Lee (N.J.Lee@aston.ac.uk)