
Car Safety: Texting While Driving

In the context of safety messages about using a mobile phone while driving, does whether the message is framed in terms of a loss or a gain impact the ability of the message to change drivers intentions? Can we increase the effectiveness of such messages by inducing high issue involvement in individuals?

The use of mobile phones to call and send text messages while driving is an increasingly significant issue. Crash data from 2010 to 2014 showed that the illegal use of a mobile phone was a contributing factor for 236 crashes, with seven of those being fatal and 116 being injury crashes (Transport NSW). However, there is the issue of under-reporting that makes it difficult to establish how much mobile phone use while driving contributes to crash involvement, so the number of crashes resulting from this behaviour could be even greater (Rowden and Watson 2014).

Furthermore, extensive research has shown that young people are the most at-risk group when it comes to this behaviour due their adoption of new technology and lack of awareness surrounding the risks of mobile phone use while driving (Cazzulino et al). Recent campaigns that have tried to address this in Australia include the 'Get your hand off it campaign'.

Gain framed, compared to loss-framed, safety messages about mobile phone use while driving will be more effective in changing people's intentions towards this behaviour.

The effectiveness of any road safety campaign relies on how the message is framed. Hoekstra and Wegman (2011) argue that applying the prospect theory can change people's behaviour on the road. This theory was developed by Tversky and Kahneman (1981) and examines how an individual could react to information depending on if it was framed positively, that is in terms of gains; or negatively, that is in terms of losses More specifically, gain-framed messages are effective when promoting cautious behaviour and loss framed messages are effective when promoting risky behaviour (Tversky and Kahneman (1981).

Chaurand et al (2015) found that in the area of road safety there was a lot of inconsistency in results from prior studies that tested this theory, as both framing types were found to be effective even though the behaviour being encouraged was cautious not risky. They argued that this was because previous studies have examined intention as a dependent variable so didn't take into account actual behaviour on the road (Chaurand et al 2015) To test this they set up a naturalistic study on a highway in France that measured the speed of cars after they passed either a gain framed message or a loss framed message. While they did find that the gain

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

GET HELP

framed message was the most effective, the study didn't take into account other factors that may impact an individual's processing of and response to the way the message is framed, including how involved they are with the issue in question.

High issue involvement inducing, compared to low issue involvement inducing, safety messages will be more effective in changing people's intentions about unsafe driving behaviour. Mahewaran & Meyers-Levy (1990) argue that issue involvement is an important factor when processing gain-framed and loss-framed messages. Through their research they found that the literature around message framing and prospect theory did not take into account people's attitudes towards an issue and therefore offered conflicting results (Mahewaran & Meyers-Levy (1990). They conducted their own study and found that when issue involvement is low then gain-framed messages are more effective because the message is not processed in detail. However, if issue involvement is high then processing of the message is greater so loss-framed messages are better.

Gain-framed safety messages about mobile phone use will be most effective when paired with a high issue involvement inducing message. However, Miller and Miller (2000) found the opposite result in their study on issue involvement and message framing when promoting safe driving behaviours. They found that gain framed messages were most effective when the subject had demonstrated involvement with the issue.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)