University of Groningen

Utterly Disgusting! How the Experience of Disgust Can Both Prevent and Stimulate Societal Change

Koch, Jan

DOI:
[10.33612/diss.182754184](https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.182754184)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2021

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Koch, J. (2021). *Utterly Disgusting! How the Experience of Disgust Can Both Prevent and Stimulate Societal Change*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. University of Groningen, SOM research school. <https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.182754184>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

university of
 groningen

Utterly Disgusting! How the Experience of Disgust Can Both Prevent and Stimulate Societal Change

PhD thesis

to obtain the degree of PhD at the
University of Groningen
on the authority of the
Rector Magnificus Prof. C. Wijmenga
and in accordance with
the decision by the College of Deans.

This thesis will be defended in public on

Thursday 21 October 2021 at 16:15

by

Jan André Koch

born on 25 April 1989
in Gelsenkirchen, Germany

Supervisor

Prof. K. van Ittersum

Co-supervisor

Dr. J.W. Bolderdijk

Assessment Committee

Prof. M. Siegrist

Prof. E.M. Steg

Prof. J.C.M. van Trijp

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction	5
1.1 Disgust	7
1.2 Disgust as A Barrier to Behavior Change	8
1.3 Disgust as A Key to Behavior Change	10
1.4 Outline of the Dissertation.....	12
Chapter 2 Disgust Preventing the Adoption of Sustainable Food Alternatives	15
2.1 Abstract.....	16
2.2 Introduction	17
2.3 Conceptual Background and Hypotheses Development	20
2.3.1 <i>Why Deviant Food Elicits Disgust</i>	20
2.3.2 <i>Why Intuitive Rejection Elicits Concerns</i>	22
2.4 The Current Research	23
2.5 Study 1: Deviant Food, Disgust, and Rejection Intertwined	25
2.5.1 <i>Method</i>	25
2.5.2 <i>Results</i>	26
2.5.3 <i>Discussion</i>	27
2.6 Study 2: Deviance Elicits Disgust and Causes Rejection.....	27
2.6.1 <i>Method</i>	28
2.6.2 <i>Results</i>	29
2.6.3 <i>Discussion</i>	31
2.7 Study 3: Why Consumers Rationalize.....	32
2.7.1 <i>Method</i>	32
2.7.2 <i>Results</i>	35
2.7.3 <i>Discussion</i>	37
2.8 General Discussion	37
2.8.1 <i>Implications</i>	39
2.8.2 <i>Limitations and Future Directions</i>	40
Chapter 3 Intervening and Overcoming Disgust.....	45
3.1 Abstract.....	46
3.2 Introduction	47
3.3 Why Do People Experience Disgust?.....	49
3.3.1 <i>The Social Nature of Disgust</i>	50
3.4 Public Exposure Therapy.....	51
3.4.1 <i>Formal Institutions</i>	53

3.4.2	<i>Retailers and Food Producers</i>	54
3.4.3	<i>Opinion Leaders</i>	55
3.4.4	<i>Parents and Caretakers</i>	57
3.5	General Discussion and Future Research	58
Chapter 4 The Effectiveness of Utilizing Disgust to Promote Behavior Change in the Domain of Sustainability		61
4.1	Abstract	62
4.2	Introduction	63
4.3	Theoretical Background	64
4.3.1	<i>Graphic Warning Labels: Conscious and Subconscious Influences</i>	64
4.3.2	<i>Disgust and the Cessation of Behaviors</i>	65
4.4	The Current Research	66
4.5	Study 1: Testing the Effect of Graphic Warning Labels on Intentions	67
4.5.1	<i>Method</i>	68
4.5.2	<i>Results</i>	70
4.5.3	<i>Discussion</i>	71
4.6	Study 2: Testing for Reactance	72
4.6.1	<i>Method</i>	73
4.6.2	<i>Results</i>	74
4.6.3	<i>Discussion</i>	75
4.7	Study 3: Circumventing Reactance	76
4.7.1	<i>Method</i>	77
4.7.2	<i>Results</i>	79
4.7.3	<i>Discussion</i>	81
4.8	General Discussion	81
4.9	Limitations and Future Research	83
Chapter 5 Ethical Concerns of Utilizing Disgust		87
5.1	Abstract	88
5.2	Introduction	89
5.3	The Current Research	91
5.4	Study 1: Does Disgust Stigmatize?	92
5.4.1	<i>Method</i>	93
5.4.2	<i>Results</i>	95
5.4.3	<i>Discussion</i>	95
5.5	Study 2: Do Disgust Appeals Stigmatize?	96
5.5.1	<i>Method</i>	96

5.5.2	<i>Results</i>	97
5.5.3	<i>Discussion</i>	98
5.6	General Discussion	98
5.7	Limitations and Future Directions	100
Chapter 6 General Discussion		103
6.1	Main Findings	105
6.1.1	<i>Disgust as a Barrier to Behavior Change</i>	105
6.1.2	<i>Disgust as a Key to Behavior Change</i>	106
6.2	Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications	108
6.2.1	<i>How to Overcome Disgust Regarding Sustainable (Food) Alternatives</i>	108
6.2.2	<i>Should Disgust Be Leveraged to Change Behavior?</i>	111
6.3	Future Research	112
6.4	Final Remarks	113
References		115
Appendices		127
Nederlandse Samenvatting		137
Acknowledgments		141