

EXAMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANIMATED CARTOON AS BRAND AWARENESS IN TV ADVERTISEMENT: EVIDENCE FROM SURVEY IN MALAYSIA AND JORDAN

Ahmad Azaini Abdul Manaf*
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Yousef Khaled A. Alallan
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

ABSTRACT

Animation is a dynamic visual statement and is frequently used for advertising purposes, expanding the TV advertisement content and causing affective stimuli to consumers. It has been documented that animation may increase TV advertisement effectiveness in terms of consumers' affective, cognitive and conative responses, thus, having a positive and significant impact on their attitudes, including brand awareness and preferences, products' choice, and intention to purchase, although the role of involvement is significant for assessing consumers' responses to TV advertisement. The aim of this paper is to investigate animation influences on advertisement effectiveness, by examining consumers' responses to animated advertisement (cognitive and affective) as regards intention to buy, taking also into account the role of involvement. Findings suggest that watching animated ads is positively correlated with the intention to purchase. In addition, consumers' intention to buy is higher by watching cognitive than affective animated ads for the moderate-involved subjects, as well as that for highly involved individuals, intention to purchase is high for both types of cartoon animated advertisements, i.e. cognitive and affective.

Keywords: Animation; Advertising; Ads; TV Advertising; Cognitive; Affective; Intention to Purchase.

1. INTRODUCTION

Animation in advertising has a long history, as cartoons and animated figures appeared on television during the 1930s for several TV commercials, exhibiting afterwards a significant growth potential in other than the TV means, including movies, games, broadcasting and the Internet (Simon, 2006). Animation, as a character-based business, is widely used as a dynamic visual statement in advertising, highly expanding the content and effectiveness of different media used. Previous research has documented that animated figures can create consumer awareness about a product advertised, suggesting that this type of commercials provide visual demonstrations for a wide variety of products (Callcott & Lee, 1994). Other studies have indicated that motion lead to an emotional response (Detenber & Reeves, 1996), enhancing product visualization so that is more comprehensible, thus, attracting user attention (Hong et al, 2004). In this frame, animation has become a design tool of great importance for advertisers, since it motivates consumer actions, behaviors and feelings, drawing viewer attention to specific product features. Previous research literature has documented that animated figures

* Corresponding Author: Ahmad Azaini Manaf, Design Technology Programme, Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, UNIMAS, SARAWAK, Malaysia. Email: amaazaini@unimas.my. The author is from post graduate programme, Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts. UNIMAS.

in advertising can significantly influence TV advertisement effectiveness, via enhancement of viewers' attention and impact on respective attitudes towards the advertised brand.

Indeed, a significant number of researchers have tried to illustrate the animation and animated figures effects on several forms of advertising, including TV, Internet and banners. According to Heiser et al (2008), animated spokes-characters in advertising exceed the impact of human spokes-persons in terms of TV advertisement efficacy, as they are highly adaptable, easily controllable and clearly identified as a product symbol. Huang et al (2011) investigated the advertisement effectiveness of endorsements from animated spokes-characters and found that animation figures enhance brand impression, improve advertisement communication affects and attract viewers' attention, suggesting that they are a very valuable tool for increase positive brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Similarly, Neeley & Schumann (2004) documented that using animated spokes-characters in advertising increases young viewers' attention, leading to product preference, via increase in brand recognition and recall, and Tversky et al (2002) argued that animation facilitates several psychological effects, influencing human cognitive processing and attention.

Aim of this paper is to investigate the animated commercials effectiveness, by exploring the viewers' attitudes and perceptions regarding their intentions to buy the advertised product and taking into account the role of involvement. In order to achieve the aforementioned objective, a qualitative research was conducted via self-administrated questionnaires. The commercials were classified into two different types, according to their characteristics, i.e. cognitive and affective ads. In particular, it was investigated whether consumers' intention to buy the advertised products is affected by watching cognitive and/or affective animated ads, taking into account the level of consumers' involvement.

1.1. Literature review

Consumers' responses to ads that use applications of animation, taking into account the impact of involvement, is very important for assessing their effectiveness. Heiser et al (2008), by applying the distinctiveness theory, examined the different impact of a creative caricature and of a cartoon spokesperson in printed ads, and revealed that the animated figure is more favorable than the human spokesperson in terms of TV advertisement effectiveness, as it had a positive effect on attitudes toward the brand, attitude toward the ad and purchase intention of the advertised brand. Kim & Lee (2009) found that both cognitive and affective responses to animated ads have a positive influence on brand likeability, although affective responses' impact is greater and empathy, a concept close to involvement, has a mediating role of these responses. Rakrachakarn & Moschis (2015) investigated the effects of animation in advertising offensive products online, demonstrating animated banner ads yield positive attitudes towards the product but are not effective in terms of grabbing users' attention.

Additionally, Huang et al (2011) investigated the advertising effectiveness of animated figures in ads, taking into account the role of involvement, and found that these animated characters have a positive impact on brand impression and TV advertisement effectiveness, although a link between animated spokes-characters and enhanced purchase intention was not documented in this study. Researchers concluded that marketers should always take into account the level of consumers' involvement in order to increase brand awareness, foster positive brand attitudes and enhance purchase intentions, as animation is a helpful tool for advertising but it cannot guarantee the formation of positive attitudes towards the advertised product (Huang et al, 2011).

Neeley & Schumann (2004) found similar results, by examining the influence of spoke-characters of ads on children, focusing on the specific effects of voice and action. In particular, this study revealed that animated characters' voice and action positively influence children's levels of attention to respective ads, while enhancing the degree of product recognition and positive attitudes' formation, but there is no certain link between animated ads and product preference or intention to purchase. Shuja et al (2016) studied the effectiveness of using animated characters in ads targeted to children and proved that high levels of likeability of these characters has a significant and positive impact on product and brand character recognition, as well as on brand preferences and association between product and character, concluding that animation is appealing to children and enhances brand recognition and memorization.

Ülger (2008) also revealed that animation can significantly influence brand preferences, by comparing children's responses to TV ads and packages of chocolate wafers. In particular, the researcher found that children who watched a cartoon film CD embedded with commercials and those who watched the same CD without commercials, selected the product with the cartoon trade character rather than the advertised one. In another study, Tanvir & Arif (2012) found that there is a positive and significant relationship between cartoon endorsement and children's impulse buying. On the other hand, Thota et al (2010) attempted to examine the relationship of brand loyalty and animation in adults and for the case of online advertising, demonstrating that exposure to animated banner ads on a website results in consumer skepticism toward the website, which negatively influences attitudes toward the brand and revisiting intentions, although it was also found that these links are moderated by consumers' website loyalty and their need for cognition.

Lastly, Jin (2011) examined the animation's cognitive, affective and conative effects according to the tripartite attitudinal dimensions through psychology experimental design procedures, taking into account that animation is a stimulus that can generate positive responses by the consumer. According to the research results, it was found that the hierarchical model of cognition, affection and conation is more effective in the low-involvement products and in the high-involvement individuals. In conclusion, Jin (2011) concluded that animation visuals in ads can positively influence consumers' perceptions of the advertised brand and purchase intention, pointing out that positive affective responses are associated with the product through low-involvement product types.

Several theoretical models have been used in order to assess and describe the effect of animation in advertising. The hierarchy-of-effects models have been excessively applied in the advertising literature for many years, as well as for examining the impact of animated ads. These models generally assert that consumers respond to TV advertisement messages in an ordered way and pay attention to an ad even before some influence of the corresponding message takes place (Pieters & Wedel, 2008). The steps of consumers' respond include (un)awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and purchase, which take place in a chronological order and form a causal relationship from cognition to affection and, then, to conation. In addition, these models make a basic assumption that ads either draw attention or are ignored and, thus, attention is secured with salient characteristics, such as color and motion, although the quality of attention is very important for processing relevant information as well as for memory performance (Brockmole & Henderson, 2005).

The ELM model (Elaboration Likelihood Model) distinguishes central and peripheral mechanisms for processing advertising messages according to the level of consumers' involvement. The ELM model explains advertising impact by the type of elaboration, meaning the involvement process of the viewer (Petty et al, 1983). Consequently, animation figures can be seen as means of elaboration, leading to the viewer high involvement and motivation, taking into account that elaboration takes place either via a

central route of high involvement or through a peripheral route of low involvement and low information processing capacity. However, the ELM model does not completely explain the impact of the quality attention to the latter levels of processing an ad, as well as the effects of other variables affecting attention dependent on the specific media used for advertising. For example, Cho (1999), by applying the ELM model on the online advertising, found that users' attitudes towards a website mediate the shift between central and peripheral routs of attention.

Involvement is a key variable for assessing consumers' responses to ads (Krugman, 1965). Cabañero (2006) points out that involvement is very important for assessing consumers' attitudes generated by advertising, as it produces certain behaviors and actions, such as intention to purchase, brand preferences and word-of-mouth. Indeed, it has been found that involvement significantly influences the decision-making process of consumers and the level of loyalty attributed to a product (Park, 1996), and that TV advertisement effectiveness is positively affected by product involvement (Te'eni-Harari et al, 2009). A similar and significant measure that has been developed to explain individual tendencies to display affective and cognitive activities as a result of an ad persuasion is the consumer's processing style, which reflects the level of involvement with the ad. For example, according to Sojka & Giese (1997), there four different types of processors, the feeling, the thinking, the passive and the combination processor, and for thinking (cognitive) processors, it can be assumed that informational ads are more effective, while for feeling (affective) processors, effectiveness is associated with emotions.

Ruiz & Sicilia (2004), taking into account the interactive relationship between affect and cognition that affects advertising success, documented that persuasive appeals tend to be more effective when the nature of the appeal matches the individual personality type of consumers regarding processing information of ads. The researchers also proved that matching between informational ads and thinking consumers, as well as between emotional and feeling processors, are associated with positive attitudes towards the advertised brand and the purchase intention (Ruiz & Sicilia, 2004). It has also been demonstrated that cognitive priming effects operate mainly through attitude towards the brand, while affective priming effects work primarily via attitude toward the ad (Yi, 1990). It should be noted, though, that according to the ELM model, individuals that display lower levels of product involvement are less motivated to process ads due to low need for cognition and low personal relevance (Cho, 1999). According to Yin (2011), a highly product-involved consumer can better recall the respective ad and form more positive attitudes towards the ad and the brand, including purchase intentions.

2. MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE

A quantitative research methodology was chosen for the research process. The statistical research was conducted based on a 6 point Likert-scale rating statements and the respondents were asked to choose between specific options (1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Somewhat disagree, 4-Somewhat agree, 5-Agree, 6-Strongly agree). Statements concerned the respondents' involvement with four different products, their intention to buy the products, their opinion about the products and their opinion about the animated advertisements. The advertisements were selected randomly. The types of the animated advertisements are:

- i. Stimuli I – Affective
- ii. Stimuli II – Cognitive

Based on the above, the corresponding discrete research hypotheses are:

H1: Consumers’ intention to buy will remain high either by watching cognitive or affective animated ad for the highly involved subjects.

H2: Consumers’ intention to buy will be higher by watching affective than cognitive animated ad for the low involved subjects.

H3: Consumers’ intention to buy will be higher by watching cognitive than affective animated ad for the moderate involved subjects.

The sample of the research consists of 220 individuals (109 Jordanians and 111 Malaysians). Before distributing the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted in 80 individuals to ensure process validation. The sampling method chosen was simple random sampling and the dataset and variables were created and processed with the statistical package SPSS software version 20.0.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 below presents the demographic characteristics of the total sample and by nationality. It is initially observed that 61.4% of the individuals are men and 38.6% are women. The mean age of the respondents is approximately 26.2±9.9 years, while the 15.5% of them are married and the 84.5% single. Finally, the 34.5% of the participants are employed and the 65.5% unemployed.

Table 1: Demographics

| | | Jordanians | | Malaysians | | Total sample | |
|----------------|---------|------------|-------|------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| Age | | 29.2 | 12.8 | 23.3 | 4.4 | 26.2 | 9.9 |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Gender | Male | 79 | 72.5% | 56 | 50.5% | 135 | 61.4% |
| | Female | 30 | 27.5% | 55 | 49.5% | 85 | 38.6% |
| Marital status | Married | 28 | 25.7% | 6 | 5.4% | 34 | 15.5% |
| | Single | 81 | 74.3% | 105 | 94.6% | 186 | 84.5% |
| Working | Yes | 60 | 55.0% | 16 | 14.4% | 76 | 34.5% |
| | No | 49 | 45.0% | 95 | 85.6% | 144 | 65.5% |

By applying Pearson correlation tests between the involvement of the consumers with the product and their intention to buy the product before and after watching the advertisement, it is observed that the corresponding coefficients "R" are positive and statistically significant both for the total sample and the two sub-samples of Jordanians and Malaysians. Therefore, it appears that as the involvement of the respondents with the product increases their intention to buy the product also increases and vice versa. The correlation coefficient of the respondents’ intention to buy the product before and after watching the animated ads is remarkably positive and statistically significant, confirming the positive effect of animated advertising on the intention to purchase.

In addition, findings presented in Table 3 below document that the positive relationship between the level of involvement with the product and the respondents’ intention to buy the product before and after watching the advertisement holds both for cognitive and affective types of advertisement, implying the dynamics of animated advertisement regardless the type used to promote the products.

Table 2: Pearson correlation tests of involvement with the product and intention to buy

| | | | Level of involvement | Intention to buy before watching the advertisement | Intention to buy after watching the advertisement |
|--------------|--|---|----------------------|--|---|
| Jordanian | Level of involvement | r | 1 | 0.859 | 0.434 |
| | | p | | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | Intention to buy before watching the advertisement | r | | 1 | 0.432 |
| | | p | | | 0.000 |
| | Intention to buy after watching the advertisement | r | | | 1 |
| | | p | | | |
| Malaysian | Level of involvement | r | 1 | 0.820 | 0.358 |
| | | p | | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | Intention to buy before watching the advertisement | r | | | 0.342 |
| | | p | | | 0.000 |
| | Intention to buy after watching the advertisement | r | | | 1 |
| | | p | | | |
| Total sample | Level of involvement | r | 1 | 0.845 | 0.400 |
| | | p | | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | Intention to buy before watching the advertisement | r | | 1 | 0.386 |
| | | p | | | 0.000 |
| | Intention to buy after watching the advertisement | r | | | 1 |
| | | p | | | |

Table 3: Pearson correlation tests of involvement with the product and intention to buy by advertisement type

| | | | Level of involvement | Intention to buy before watching the advertisement | Intention to buy after watching the advertisement |
|-----------|--|---|----------------------|--|---|
| Cognitive | Level of involvement | r | 1 | 0.816 | 0.255 |
| | | p | | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | Intention to buy before watching the advertisement | r | | 1 | 0.229 |
| | | p | | | 0.000 |
| | Intention to buy after watching the advertisement | r | | | 1 |
| | | p | | | |
| Affective | Level of involvement | r | 1 | 0.877 | 0.550 |
| | | p | | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | Intention to buy before watching the advertisement | r | | 1 | 0.526 |
| | | p | | | 0.000 |
| | Intention to buy after watching the advertisement | r | | | 1 |
| | | p | | | |

By categorizing the respondents in relation to their involvement with the product but also in relation to their intention to buy the product before and after watching the advertisement, it is observed that 16.2% of the individuals of the sample present low involvement with the product, the 33.9% of them moderate involvement and the 49.9% high involvement. Meanwhile, the 35.8% of respondents show low intention to buy the product before watching the advertisement, 36.6% moderate and 27.6% high, with the corresponding percentages after watching the advertisement being equal to 7.6%, 30.7% and 61.7%.

Table 4: Level of involvement and intention to buy before and after watching the advertisement

| | | N | % |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----|-------|
| Level of involvement | Low involvement | 143 | 16.2% |
| | Moderate involvement | 298 | 33.9% |
| | High involvement | 439 | 49.9% |
| Intention to buy (before) | Low intention | 315 | 35.8% |
| | Moderate intention | 322 | 36.6% |
| | High intention | 243 | 27.6% |
| Intention to buy (after) | Low intention | 67 | 7.6% |
| | Moderate intention | 270 | 30.7% |
| | High intention | 543 | 61.7% |

Looking into the double entry tables of the level of involvement of the respondents with the products and their intention to buy the products before and after watching the advertisement, it is observed that the 98.6% of the consumers who exhibit low involvement levels also display low intention to buy the product before watching the advertisement. The percentage of the respondents of low involvement that present low intention to buy becomes significantly lower after watching the advertisement, as it equals to 23.8%. In addition, the 35.0% of the respondents with low involvement present moderate and the 41.3% high intention to buy the products.

Additionally, the 54.7% of the consumers with moderate involvement present low and the 43.3% moderate intention to buy the product before watching the advertisement. After watching the advertisement, the percentage of the respondents of moderate involvement that present low intention to buy the product reduces significantly and equals to 7.0%, with the 46.3% of the sample presenting high intention to buy the product.

On the other hand, the percentage of the high-involved consumers who also show high intention to purchase equals to 54.0% before watching the advertisement, but increases up to 78.8% after watching the advertisement. On the contrary, the percentage of the high-involved individuals who also show moderate intention to buy the product reduces significantly after watching the advertisement from 43.5% to 18.5%.

In both cases, a chi-square test is performed in order to clarify if there is statistically significant dependence between the level of consumers' involvement and their intention to buy. The resulting p-value is lower than the significance level of 0.05 and, therefore, there is statistically significant dependence of the consumers' intention to buy and their level of involvement. Additionally, findings for the total sample are similar for both sub-groups of Jordanians and Malaysians, as presented in Table 9 below.

Table 5: Chi-square test of the dependence of the level of involvement and intention to buy for total sample

| | | Level of involvement | | | | | | P |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|
| | | Low involvement | | Moderate involvement | | High involvement | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Intention to buy (before) | Low intention | 141 | 98.6% | 163 | 54.7% | 11 | 2.5% | 0.000 |
| | Moderate intention | 2 | 1.4% | 129 | 43.3% | 191 | 43.5% | |
| | High intention | 0 | 0.0% | 6 | 2.0% | 237 | 54.0% | |
| Intention to buy (after) | Low intention | 34 | 23.8% | 21 | 7.0% | 12 | 2.7% | 0.000 |
| | Moderate intention | 50 | 35.0% | 139 | 46.6% | 81 | 18.5% | |
| | High intention | 59 | 41.3% | 138 | 46.3% | 346 | 78.8% | |

Table 6: Chi-square test of the dependence of the level of involvement and intention to buy for sub-groups

| | | Nationality | | | | | | | | | | | | p |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|
| | | Jordanian | | | | | | Malaysian | | | | | | |
| | | Level of involvement | | | | | | Level of involvement | | | | | | |
| | | Low involvement | | Moderate involvement | | High involvement | | Low involvement | | Moderate involvement | | High involvement | | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| Intention to buy (before) | Low intention | 71 | 100.0% | 56 | 55.4% | 8 | 3.0% | 70 | 97.2% | 107 | 54.3% | 3 | 1.7% | 0.000 |
| | Moderate intention | 0 | 0.0% | 40 | 39.6% | 90 | 34.1% | 2 | 2.8% | 89 | 45.2% | 101 | 57.7% | |
| | High intention | 0 | 0.0% | 5 | 5.0% | 166 | 62.9% | 0 | 0.0% | 1 | 0.5% | 71 | 40.6% | |
| Intention to buy (after) | Low intention | 23 | 32.4% | 12 | 11.9% | 9 | 3.4% | 11 | 15.3% | 9 | 4.6% | 3 | 1.7% | 0.000 |
| | Moderate intention | 18 | 25.4% | 42 | 41.6% | 42 | 15.9% | 32 | 44.4% | 97 | 49.2% | 39 | 22.3% | |
| | High intention | 30 | 42.3% | 47 | 46.5% | 213 | 80.7% | 29 | 40.3% | 91 | 46.2% | 133 | 76.0% | |

Lastly, by comparing the percentages of the level of the consumers' intention to buy after watching cognitive or affective advertisement based on their level of involvement, it is demonstrated that low-involved consumers who watched a cognitive advertisement show higher intention to buy the products than the respondents that watched an affective advertisement, but these differences in the corresponding percentages are insignificant based on the results of the chi-square test ($p=0.056$). Moreover, it is observed that for the individuals of moderate involvement, intention to buy is higher for cognitive ads in comparison to affective ones ($p=0.002$). Finally, consumers' intention to buy remains high either by

Table 7: Chi-square test of the dependence of the level of involvement and type of advertisement by level of involvement

| Level of involvement | | Advertisement type | | p | |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| | | Cognitive | Affective | | |
| Low involvement | Intention to buy | Low intention | N 13 % 16.2% | 21 33.3% | 0.056 |
| | | Moderate intention | N 30 % 37.5% | 20 31.7% | |
| | | High intention | N 37 % 46.2% | 22 34.9% | |
| Moderate involvement | Intention to buy | Low intention | N 8 % 4.7% | 13 10.1% | 0.002 |
| | | Moderate intention | N 68 % 40.2% | 71 55.0% | |
| | | High intention | N 93 % 55.0% | 45 34.9% | |
| High involvement | Intention to buy | Low intention | N 7 % 3.7% | 5 2.0% | 0.342 |
| | | Moderate intention | N 39 % 20.4% | 42 16.9% | |
| | | High intention | N 145 % 75.9% | 201 81.0% | |

watching cognitive or affective animated advertisement for the highly-involved subjects, as the differences of the corresponding chi-square test are insignificant ($p=0.342$). The results are also similar by performing the corresponding tests for the two sub-groups of Jordanians and Malaysians.

Table 8: Chi-square test of the dependence of the level of involvement and type of advertisement by level of involvement for Jordanians

| Level of involvement | | Advertisement type | | P | |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------|
| | | Cognitive | Affective | | |
| Low involvement | Intention to buy | Low intention | N 8 % 26.7% | 15 36.6% | 0.269 |
| | | Moderate intention | N 6 % 20.0% | 12 29.3% | |
| | | High intention | N 16 % 53.3% | 14 34.1% | |
| Moderate involvement | Intention to buy | Low intention | N 7 % 10.6% | 5 14.3% | 0.029 |
| | | Moderate intention | N 22 % 33.3% | 20 57.1% | |
| | | High intention | N 37 % 56.1% | 10 28.6% | |
| High involvement | Intention to buy | Low intention | N 5 % 4.1% | 4 2.8% | 0.051 |
| | | Moderate intention | N 28 % 23.0% | 14 9.9% | |
| | | High intention | N 89 % 73.0% | 124 87.3% | |

Table 9: Chi-square test of the dependence of the level of involvement and type of advertisement by level of involvement for Malaysians

| Level of involvement | | Advertisement type | | P | |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------|
| | | Cognitive | Affective | | |
| Low involvement | Intention to buy | Low intention | N 5 % 10,0% | 6 27,3% | 0.168 |
| | | Moderate intention | N 24 % 48,0% | 8 36,4% | |
| | | High intention | N 21 % 42,0% | 8 36,4% | |
| Moderate involvement | Intention to buy | Low intention | N 1 % 1,0% | 8 8,5% | 0.006 |
| | | Moderate intention | N 46 % 44,7% | 51 54,3% | |
| | | High intention | N 56 % 54,4% | 35 37,2% | |
| High involvement | Intention to buy | Low intention | N 2 % 2,9% | 1 0,9% | 0.184 |
| | | Moderate intention | N 11 % 15,9% | 28 26,4% | |
| | | High intention | N 56 % 81,2% | 77 72,6% | |

4. CONCLUSIONS

According to the research results, it was firstly documented that watching animated ads is positively correlated with the intention to purchase, as it was demonstrated that individuals who watched the animated commercials exhibited greater intention to buy the corresponding products than before. These findings are comparable with those of Heiser et al (2008), who found that animated figures have a positive impact on attitudes toward the brand and on the purchase intention of the advertised product, although other studies have not concluded similar results (Neeley & Schumann, 2004; Huang et al, 2011). In addition, it was found that intention to purchase the advertised product increases both for affective and cognitive ads.

Furthermore, this study reveals that involvement is positively correlated with intention to buy both before and after watching the animated ad. Indeed, given that involvement is the process by which consumers' motivation moderates the relationship between attitude formation and exposure to ads (Krugman, 1965), it has been assumed that highly-product-involved consumers can better recall the ad and form more positive attitudes toward the brand, including purchase intentions (Yi, 2011). Present findings support this assumption, as it was found that the higher the intention to buy before watching the ad the higher the intention to buy after watching it, implying that higher involvement levels with the product may lead to higher levels of recalling the ad and forming positive attitudes toward the brand.

Regarding the mediating role of involvement in the cognitive and affective processing of the animated ads in relationship with intention to purchase, the hypothesis that consumers' intention to buy will be higher by watching affective than cognitive ads for the low-involved subjects was not confirmed. In particular, it was demonstrated that in the low-involvement group, those who watch cognitive ads display higher levels of intention to buy compared to those who watch affective ads, although the respective differences did not exhibit statistical significance. On the other hand, it was found that consumers' intention to buy is higher by watching cognitive than affective animated ads for the moderate-involved subjects, as well as that for highly involved individuals, intention to purchase is high for both types of ads, i.e. cognitive and affective.

This study suggests that animation stimuli in advertising plays an important role in high-involvement individuals, as it has been previously confirmed by Jin (2011), although no significant differences were found for low- and moderate-involved subjects, implying that using animation in ads influences consumers' cognitive and affective processing in different ways. To that ends, other variables that may affect this relationship should be taken into account, such as the individual personality type (Ruiz & Sicilia, 2004), or the hedonic/utilitarian nature of the product (Lai et al, 2007). All in all, this study argues that animation in advertising can significantly influence consumers' attitudes toward the brand, as well as purchase intention, partly due to higher attention-grabbing impact. Thus, practitioners in the advertising market should focus on understanding the attitudinal effect of animation in terms of consumers' cognitive, affective and behavioral responses, which are highly correlated to TV advertisement effectiveness. Of course, present findings should be considered with caution, given the research limitations, mainly referring to the limited sample and the fact that no experimental procedure took place in order to verify the quantitative results.

4.1. *Implications*

This study revealed that animation plays a significant role in advertising, both for affective and cognitive ads, given the important influence of involvement. To that end, art directors, creative managers in

Malaysia and Jordan, as well as advertising companies, could take these findings into consideration, while designing animated characters and incorporating them into the advertisement. In particular, to advertisers, this study suggests that animation can positively influence viewers' attention and increase consumers' intention to purchase the animated brand. Of course, the effectiveness of animated advertisement depends on the specific characteristics of the ad and the formation of the respective perceptions by viewers, focusing especially on the cognitive or affective features. Our results may also help ad designers to structure the animated ad, taking into account that more realistic characters may have a greater influence. Lastly, it should be noted that the extent to which animation affect TV advertisement effectiveness is rather difficult to determine due to other factors' intervention, as well as that creative directors in the countries examined in this research should not just imitate the international animated advertisement movement, as cultural differences and language play a significant role and do not allow for the generalization of the findings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research article was supported by UNIMAS Special Funding for Research Institute number: I04/SpFRI/1427/16/4

REFERENCES

- Brockmole, J. R., & Henderson, J. M. (2005). Prioritization of new objects in real-world scenes: evidence from eye movements. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 31(5), 857-868.
- Cabañero, C. P. (2006). Consumer involvement in goods and service purchases. *Esic Market*, 73-91.
- Callcott, M. F., & Lee, W. N. (1994). A Content Analysis of Animation and Animated Spokes-Characters in Television Commercials. *Journal of Advertising*, 23(4), 1-12.
- Cho, C. H. (1999). How advertising works on the WWW: Modified Elaboration Likelihood Model. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 21(1), 33- 41.
- Detenber, B. H., & Reeves, B. (1996). A Bio-Informational Theory of Emotion: Motion and Image Size Effects on Viewers. *Journal of Communication*, 46(3), 66-84.
- Heiser, R. S., Sierra, J. J., & Torres, I. M. (2008). Creativity via cartoon spokespeople in print ads. *Journal of Advertising*, 37(4), 75-84.
- Hong, W., Thong, J. Y. L., & Tam, K. Y. (2004). Does animation attract on-line users' attention? The effects of flash on information search performance and perceptions. *Information Systems Research*, 15(1), 60-86.
- Huang, W. S., Hsieh, T., & Chen, H. S. (2011). The advertisement effectiveness of animated spokes-characters. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(23), 9971-9978.
- Jin, C. H. (2011). The role of animation in the consumer attitude formation: Exploring its implications in the tripartite attitudinal model. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing*, 19(2), 99-111.
- Kim, W. H., & Lee, H. W. (2009). The Mediating Roles of Empathy, Cognitive and Affective Responses to Animated Spokes-Characters. *Cartoon and Animation Studies*, 3, 179-192.
- Krugman, H. E. (1965). The impact of television advertising: Learning without involvement. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 29(3), 349-356.

- Lai, Y. L., Hui, K. L., & Liu, N. (2007). To animate or not to animate?-The effects of animation on recall, product perceptions & attitude. *Proceedings of the 11th Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems* (pp. 200-211). Auckland, New Zealand.
- Neeley, M. S., & Schumann, D. W. (2004). Using animated spokes-characters in advertising to young children: Does increasing attention to advertising necessarily lead to product preference? *Journal of Advertising*, 33(3), 7-22.
- Park, S. (1996). Relationships between involvement and attitudinal loyalty constructs in adult fitness programs. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 28(4), 233-250.
- Petty, R. E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Schumann, D. (1983). Central and Peripheral Routes to Advertising Effectiveness. The Moderating Role of Involvement. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10(2), 135-146.
- Pieters, R., & Wedel, M. (2008). Informativeness of Eye Movements for Visual Marketing: Six Cornerstones. In M. Wedel, & R. Pieters (Eds.), *Visual Marketing. From Attention to Action* (pp. 43-73). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Rakrachakarn, P., & Moschis, G. P. (2015). Is animation effective for advertising offensive products? Insights from an internet advertising experiment. *International Journal of Electronic Marketing and Retailing*, 6(4), 259-276.
- Ruiz, S., & Sicilia, M. (2004). The impact of cognitive and/or affective processing styles on consumer response to advertising appeals. *Journal of Business Research*, 57(6), 657-664.
- Shuja, K., Ali, M., Mehak Anjum, M., & Rahim, A. (2016). Effectiveness of Animated Spokes Character in Advertising Targeted to Kids. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 8(22), 16-24.
- Simon, H. (2006). Something from Nothing. *AdMedia*, 21(1), 25-31.
- Sojka, J. Z., & Giese, J. L. (1997). Thinking and/or feeling: an examination of interaction between processing styles. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 24(1), 438-442.
- Tanvir, A., & Arif, M. R. (2012). Impact of cartoon endorsement on children impulse buying of food: a parent's perspective. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4(2), 653-658.
- Te'eni-Harari, T., Lehman-Wilzig, S. N., & Lampert, S. I. (2009). The importance of product involvement for predicting advertising effectiveness among young people. *International Journal of Advertising*, 28(2), 203-229.
- Thota, S. C., Song, J. H., & Larsen, V. (2010). Do animated banner ads hurt websites? The moderating roles of website loyalty and need for cognition. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, 14(1), 91-116.
- Tversky, B., Morrison, J. B., & Betrancourt, M. (2002). Animation: Can it facilitate? *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 57, 247-262.
- Ülger, B. (2008). Packages with cartoon trade characters versus advertising: an empirical examination of preschoolers' food preferences. *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 15(1), 104-117.
- Yi, C. Y., & 우예순. (2011). Influences of Message Appeals in Hospital Advertising on Attitudes toward the Ad and the Brand. *A Journal Of Brand Design Association Of Korea*, 9(3), 277-285.
- Yi, Y. (1990). Cognitive and affective priming effects of the context for print advertisements. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(2), 40-48.
- Yin, K., Abdullah, A., & Alazidiyeen, N. (2011). Collaborative Problem Solving Methods towards Critical Thinking. *International Education Studies*, 4(2), 58-62.