

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Discussion**

The results reported in this study reveal the effects of animation in the advertising of offensive and non-offensive products. The main findings indicate that when compared to static ads, animated ads yield less favourable cognitive response in terms of attention, but more favourable affective responses in terms of attitude towards product when the product is offensive. In contrast, for non-offensive products, the use of animation in advertisements leads to more favourable cognitive response in terms of attention, but less favourable response in terms of attitudes towards the product. In other words, animation is effective for increasing: 1) favourable attitude towards product for offensive products advertising, and 2) consumer attention towards non-offensive product advertising.

The different effects of animated ads for offensive and non-offensive products could be explained by the different degrees of mental process that consumers may engage towards these two different types of products; they are in line with the IP notions of automaticity (Stanovich, 2003) and cognitive load theory (Sweller & Chandler, 1994). The movement of animation, as stimuli, require more mental effort to be processed; they involve less automaticity and more cognitive loads for the information processing in human memory. Moreover, due to the limited resources of sensory memory, when the product is offensive, less attention is paid to the ads as humans tend to avoid things that are considered offensive or irrelevant (Kane & Engle, 2002). Since degrees of cognitive load and selective attention may impact the effectiveness of the learning process (Sweller & Chandler, 1994), the use of animation in offensive product advertisements may be burdensome for consumer information processing and, therefore, may lead to the ads being less effective.

The study findings showed that animation in the advertisements of offensive products generate lower attention among adults. It can be assumed that adult audiences would not prefer to pay attention to animated ads, especially when the products are not offensive to them. On the other hand, for non-offensive products, consumers may be more willing to pay attention, as the products do not offend them or causing them the negative feelings. Thus,

animation as stimuli in ads of non-offensive products may contribute to enhance cognitive responses such as attention.

The finding that animated ads have negative effects on the cognitive components (attention) of offensive products, but have positive effects on affective response (attitude towards product) also appears to be partially in line with the two-component model (TCM). This model suggests that there are two components of somatosensory experiences of pain and pleasure: informational and emotional reactions (e.g. Leventhal et al., 1979; Rainville et al. 1999; Read and Loewenstein, 1999; Shiv and Nowlis 2003); it proposes that the cognitive component is more prominent when distraction is low. Because movement in animation distracts audience from the ad content, animated ads clearly create more distraction than static ads especially in offensive product advertising which require a greater information-processing effort as viewers try to avoid the products in the ads. Such a distraction may not be as relevant for non-offensive products. As our results show, in comparison to static ads that are less distractive, animated ads have more positive effects on cognitive responses when the product is non-offensive; and they have negative effects when the product is offensive. In contrast, TCM suggests that emotional reactions are more prominent when distraction is high. As our results show, emotional reactions in the form of affect (attitude towards product) are generally more pronounced in the animated ads of offensive products than in a non-offensive products. Although this appears to be partially in line with TCM expectations, the findings of this current study also provide additional interesting insight into TCM suggesting that distraction has different effects on cognitive and affective components depending on the product category.

Because most previous studies revealing the positive effects of animation were conducted on children (e.g. Mizerski, 1995; Neely & Schumann, 2004), the present study suggests that the impacts of animation on young adults could be different either because of the age-related differences of the participants or because animation may not be as attractive to adults as they are for children. From a practical standpoint, the study findings suggest that ad designers should use animation that target adults either when they would like to increase favourable level of attitude towards offensive products, or when they aim to induce more attention toward advertising of non-offensive products. Very importantly, practitioners should be aware that the effects of animation may be varied among different types of cognitive and affective responses.

## 5.2 Implications

Because most previous studies on the positive effects of animation were conducted on children (e.g., Mizerski, 1995; Neely & Schumann, 2004), the present study suggests that the impacts of animation on young adults could be different either because of the age-related differences of the participants or because animation may not be as attractive to adults as it is for children. From a practical standpoint, the study findings suggest that ad designers should use animation that targets adults either when they would like to increase the favorable levels of attitude toward offensive products, or when they aim to induce more attention toward the advertising of non-offensive products. Very importantly, practitioners should be aware that the effects of animation may have a different impact on cognitive and affective responses.

In addition, the best condition for ad designer to use cartoons in the ads that target adults is when the product is high-involvement. However, they have to be aware that the favorable effects of cartoons are limited in terms of cognitive responses to attention and comprehension only. In addition, it is important that cartoons should not be used in low-involvement product advertising as these design elements also lead to less favorable results, especially for adult consumers. Since opposite effects were found when cartoons were used in different types of products, the decision to use cartoons in advertisements should include cautious consideration of whether the cartoon is suitable for the target audience and product category.

## 5.3 Limitations and Recommendations

The study findings and their implications should be considered in the context of several limitations that suggest the need for further research. First, because this study was conducted in Bangkok, Thailand, the results may have been influenced by Thai culture. Therefore, in order to validate our findings, this experiment may need to be replicated in other cultural settings.

Second, due to the fact that only students (young adults) were used in this study, the findings may not apply to all adult consumer groups. Further research with older age groups is, therefore, recommended. Third, although the effectiveness of cartoon and animated ads was assessed by using six dependent variables, the present study did not assess

effectiveness at the behavioral level. Therefore, future research should investigate the effects of cartoon and animated ads on other dependent variables, such as purchase intention and actual purchase.

Fourth, several interesting features of cartoons and animation such as colors, style, or sizing, were not included in the current study and could be examined in future research. The effects of animation movements (e.g., speed and length of animation) would be particularly interesting to investigate in experimental studies. In addition, the position of the banner ads in the experiment might be a factor that could potentially influence consumer responses to the advertisements.

Lastly, other types of product categories can also be considered as moderators of such experiments. Because this study suggests that product types have an influence on consumer responses toward the ads, product types and categories may be important factors that should not be ignored in future research. It would be particularly interesting to examine consumers' cognitive and affective responses in the context of TCM, as the results of this study show differences based on the level of product involvement. Such research could suggest the conditions under which TCM better explains consumer response.