

Institution: University of Bath
Unit of Assessment: 19: Business and Management Studies
Title of case study: Measuring the Power of Emotion in Advertising
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research at the University of Bath demonstrating that emotion exerts a powerful influence on brand choice has benefited advertising practice through the development of a market research tool known as the Cognitive Emotive Power Test. Major multinationals (for example: Wal-Mart, General Motors, Ford Europe, Nestle, Kraft, Procter & Gamble, Disney, Starbucks) have used this system to pre-test advertisements and to select from among competing ads those that score highest on the emotional response scale. Since 2011 Ipsos ASI, the largest advertising pre-testing company in the world has licensed CEP®Test to support up to 10,000 advertising tests annually, resulting in greater brand marketing effectiveness. As a result of the research, companies can improve the ability of their advertising to build a strong brand.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research was conducted at the University of Bath Centre for Research in Advertising and Consumption (CRiAC) by a small team led by Dr. Robert Heath (Lecturer, then Senior Lecturer, at Bath since 2003) with Dr. Agnes Nairn (Lecturer, then Senior Lecturer, at Bath 1997 – 2006). The research was designed to address a gap in the academic understanding of emotion in advertising and to develop a tool that could be used by companies to effectively measure emotional responses to advertisements. The academic contribution of this research was related to a shift from reliance on recall-based metrics, towards an understanding of the ‘hidden power’ that enables advertising to work without attention or recall.</p> <p>The conceptual groundwork on this shift was first published in a research monograph (reference 1) followed by further empirical evidence published in 2005 (reference 3) and 2009 (reference 4). The 2005 paper (reference 3) demonstrated the shortcomings of recall-based methods of measurement and the team proposed instead the need to measure the <i>amount</i> of emotive content in advertisements. The notion of ‘amount’ here refers to an assessment made by the consumer of the extent to which they perceive emotion in the advertising. The underlying research done at Bath showed that the emotive content of advertising is a primary driver of brand relationships (references 2 and 3). The significance of this research is that it has challenged traditional thinking about how consumers interact with and process brand communications.</p> <p>The research demonstrates that the mechanism of low attention processing turns out to be an especially effective way of getting through to consumers. Marketers once relied on rational communication to build their brands. Now, skilful use of emotion is the key to creating strong relationships and enduring brands. By identifying low involvement processing and demonstrating that emotive content influences intuitive decision-making (a major factor in brand favourability) this research has altered how advertisers are able to influence consumers.</p> <p>A further study published in 2009 (reference 4) established precisely the level of attention given to various advertising examples. The study, conducted in a carefully disguised environment, used highly sophisticated equipment to measure the speed of eye fixation. Results confirmed that advertising with higher emotive content tended to receive <i>less</i>, not more, attention than advertising with low emotive content. The search for an explanation for this anomaly led to the recognition that the brain’s capacity to absorb certain types of brand information is far greater than previously imagined, explaining why emotion is able to be processed instantaneously and regardless of the level of attention being paid. The research team found that emotion plays a significant part in the decisions we make, especially those based on intuition.</p>

This led the team to hypothesise that emotive content, rather than facilitating information processing, might have a *direct beneficial influence on the relationship we have with brands*, and that by operating at low levels of attention, it would be hard to resist by rational counter-argument. Proving this hypothesis required a system to measure the power of emotion in advertising. The Bath team developed scales to measure both the perceived power of emotion in advertising (emotive power), and the perceived power of explicit messages (cognitive power). Eliciting the help of OTX, a Californian-based market research company, an experiment was conducted to test the relationship between brand favourability and the emotive power and cognitive power in advertising. A total of 43 TV ads (23 in USA, 20 in UK) were tested in two parallel studies. The results showed a highly significant correlation between emotive power and brand favourability, but no significant relationship at all between cognitive power and brand favourability (reference 2).

Based on the success of the tests, the emotive power scales were incorporated into an advertising research system known as Cognitive Emotive Power Test (CEP®Test), which was licenced by OTX. This research system was then marketed specifically as a means of measuring advertising's ability to build strong brand relationships. The CEP®Test is a distinctive tool that has developed from innovative research. It is used in conjunction with other tests as part of companies' overall evaluation of advertising, but it is the only tool available to companies that measures the overall communication of emotion on the consumer.

The research has generated international interest, shown in a recent overview of the research (reference 5), which has been translated into Polish, Russian, Bulgarian and Chinese.

3. References to the research

1. Heath, R. G. (2001) **The Hidden Power of Advertising** (Monograph 7), Henley-on-Thames, UK: Admap Publications. (ISBN 1-84226-093-8).
2. Heath, R.G., Brandt, D. and Nairn, A.C. 2006. Brand relationships – strengthened by emotion, weakened by attention. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 46(4): 410-419. DOI: 10.2501/S002184990606048X
3. Heath, R.G. and Hyder, P. 2005. Measuring the hidden power of emotive advertising. *Journal of the Market Research Society*, 47(5): 467-486. (A DOI is not available for this paper. However, the paper will be available to the panel on request and the publisher's URL is: http://www.emeraldinsight.com/bibliographic_databases.htm?id=1524793&show=abstract)
4. Heath, R.G., Nairn, A.C. and Bottomley, P. 2009. How effective is creativity? Emotive content in TV advertising does not increase attention. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 49(4): 450-463. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2501/S0021849909091077>
5. Heath, R. G. (2012) **Seducing the Subconscious: The Psychology of Emotional Influence in Advertising**, Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell. (ISBN 978-0470974889). <http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470974885.html>

4. Details of the impact

Research at the University of Bath demonstrating that emotion exerts a powerful influence on brand choice has benefited advertising practice through the development of a new market research tool. The research has challenged conventional wisdom on the measurement of emotional responses to advertising. It has delivered benefits to companies through the development and implementation of a new product and through the enhancement of professional and corporate practice. The development of scales that quantify the power of emotive content in advertising, or the extent to which the emotion in advertising is perceived as being influential, means that companies are now able to assess advertising's potential to trigger meaningful brand associations using quantitative tools. By demonstrating that the emotive content in advertising is the primary driver of brand relationships and developing robust scales for use in pre-test advertising, Bath researchers have given marketing professionals a new and effective tool with which to measure

Impact case study (REF3b)

and manage the emotive content in advertising. Multinational companies have used this tool to improve the ability of their advertising to build a strong brand. Two examples of advertisements that were evaluated using the CEP®Test are included in the sources to corroborate section (source 1).

There have been significant benefits from this research for companies during the REF period 2008-14:

- (1) *Distinctiveness and predictive value*: Companies now have a way of measuring the likely effect of emotion on favourability towards their brand. For example, a company can take two advertisements, identify which has more effective emotive content, and thereby create an accurate prediction of favourability and a more informed choice of advertisement. The Director of the OTX Marketing Insights Team has described the CEP®Test as 'a unique and innovative point of difference that was well received by many clients' (source 2).
- (2) *Effectiveness of the measure*: The tool that was developed from this research has improved the ability of companies to build strong brands. The specific benefit of this is that a marketing company can now tailor its advertising to the ability to communicate emotion and therefore to build brand favourability. The Senior Research Manager at Ipsos has confirmed the importance of the CEP®Test not only as a way 'to optimise our client's advertising, but in some cases was the deciding factor on which campaigns to move forward with' (source 3).
- (3) *Strategic importance*: The ability to pre-test advertisements and to select from among competing ads those which score highest on the emotional response scale has put marketing budgets to more strategic use as a driver of brand growth and loyalty. The Managing Director of OTX Europe has confirmed that the implementation of the CEP®Test has influenced brand strategy, citing T-Mobile as an example (source 4).
- (4) *Broader impact*: The research findings have important implications for regulators, especially in understanding and monitoring the influence of advertising in restricted categories such as alcohol, cigarettes and fast food.

As the benefits of the tool have become apparent, its reach and significance has developed. The number of companies across the globe now using the test provides evidence of the reach of the research (source 5). Following its introduction, two of the world's biggest and most successful marketing companies, Kraft and Procter & Gamble, made use of the CEP®Test. Other early clients included Nestlé, Wal-Mart, Tropicana (PepsiCo), Nokia, Burger King, General Motors, Ford Europe, and Quaker. In its first year of use (2006), 356 advertisements were tested. The following year 572 ads were tested with major marketers such as Unilever, Lee Jeans, Xbox, Microsoft, Kelloggs, and Sarah Lee. In 2008, the number of ads tested increased to 711, with Diageo, SC Johnson, Safeway, Disney, Warner Brothers Studios, Campbells, Citibank, T-Mobile, and O2 among the multinationals that were added to the client list. By this stage the CEP®Test was being used in 16 countries. In 2009, a total of 954 ads were tested. New clients included the BBC, Kimberley Clark, HSBC Bank, Del Monte, Walgreen's Pharmacies, Johnson & Johnson and Starbucks. In 2010, the number of ads tested rose to 1577.

By 2011, 30 Global Fortune 500 Companies were using the CEP®Test and its Emotive Power measure to test their advertising. In addition, 42% of the Advertising Age Top 100 Global Marketing Companies were using the test. In 2011 the biggest advertising pre-testing company in the world, Ipsos ASI, acquired OTX. The CEP®Test and the Emotive Power metric are now incorporated into some 10,000 advertising tests worldwide each year. A document of evidence that lists the wide range of international companies who have used and reused the test during the REF period is provided as part of this case submission (source 5).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Impact case study (REF3b)

1. Example advertisements that were evaluated using the CEP®Test:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wge0-Jb7a4I>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0VxwGd3Cbw&feature=player_embedded

2. Testimonial letter illustrating the predictive value of the CEP®Test, from the Director of the OTX Marketing Insights Team.

3. Direct communication (email) from the Senior Research Manager at IPSOS on the value of the CEP®Test

4. Testimonial letter on the strategic importance of the CEP®Test for company brand strategies from the Managing Director, OTX Europe.

5. A document of evidence of the wide range of companies who have used/ reused the test during the REF period.