**The effect of high arousal advertising design on brand recall and ad recall**

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**Working paper**

**Abstract**

Professionals of advertising create emotional ads to get the attention of consumers and increase advertising effectiveness. This research explores the concept of arousal on video ads and analyzes its relationship with brand recall and ad recall. Specifically, our work in progress studies how different temporal sequences of high arousal and brand logo presentation may affect brand recall and ad recall. Skin conductivity and survey techniques are combined in the research methodology. Preliminary results of two experiments confirm that post-arousal brand logo presentation increases brand recall compared to pre-arousal and during arousal brand logo presentation conditions. Nevertheless, when brand logo is presented after the high arousal peak, the time length between both moments does not affect brand recall. In addition, the different sequences of brand logo presentation and high arousal do not influence ad recall. The conclusion section discusses the role of arousal on consumers’ attention and cognitive information processing. Results also suggest interesting implications for ad design and further research lines in consumer behavior to advance on the study of advertising arousal, attention and memory.

**Keywords:** *arousal, advertising, brand recall, ad recall, skin conductivity*

## 1. Introduction

Companies invest a great amount of their budgets to deliver their messages effectively and be elected against their competitors by consumers. Advertising is one of the most common instruments used in marketing to build brand values and brand image (e.g. TV commercials). In 2013, global advertising investment has reached 505,000 million (US Dollars) which represent a 3.5% increase compared to 2012 (ZenithOptimedia 2013). Nevertheless, users’ interaction with multiple devices and adverting overexposure have led to a smartest consumer control of the media and a decrease of interest in the ads (Astolfi et al. 2008).

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## 2. Literature review

Today, people are exposed to a continuous information overload (Plassman, Ramsøy, and Milosavljevic 2012). Companies are aware of this bombard with ads and explore new commercial strategies, such as using a different high-impact emotional stimulus, to get the attention of their audiences. In this sense, attention and arousal have been proposed as determinants of advertising effectiveness.

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### *2.1. Attention: theoretical background*

Attention is a human basic psychological process difficult to conceptualize and measure (Bialkova and van Trijp 2010). After years of discussion, the scientific community has reached a consensus (Bialkova and van Trijp 2010) to define attention as “a mechanism, or a set of mechanisms for selecting representations, which constitute the psychological and neural mechanisms that mediate perceptual selectivity” (Allport 1987; Yantis 2000). Attention is a human basic psychological process difficult to conceptualize and measure (Bialkova and van Trijp 2010). After years of discussion, the scientific community has reached a consensus (Bialkova and van Trijp 2010) to define attention as “a mechanism, or a set of mechanisms for selecting representations, which constitute the psychological and neural mechanisms that mediate perceptual selectivity” (Allport 1987; Yantis 2000). Attention is a human basic psychological process difficult to conceptualize and measure (Bialkova and van Trijp 2010). After years of discussion, the scientific community has reached a consensus (Bialkova and van Trijp 2010) to define attention as “a mechanism, or a set of mechanisms for selecting representations, which constitute the psychological and neural mechanisms that mediate perceptual selectivity” (Allport 1987; Yantis 2000). Attention is a human basic psychological process difficult to conceptualize and measure (Bialkova and van Trijp 2010). After years of discussion, the scientific community has reached a consensus (Bialkova and van Trijp 2010) to define attention as “a mechanism, or a set of mechanisms for selecting representations, which constitute the psychological and neural mechanisms that mediate perceptual selectivity” (Allport 1987; Yantis 2000).

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Figure 1. Graphical description of sequences employed for hypothesis test: (1) Post-arousal condition, (2) Pre-arousal condition, (3) High arousal condition, (4) Far from arousal condition.

Figure 1.tif

Table 1. Summary of studies conditions, hypotheses and results.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Study** | **Conditions and graphs** | **Hypo-thesis** | **Dependent variable** | **Proposed effect** | **Result** |
|  | Post-arousal  (Graph1) vs. |  |  |  |  |
| Study 1 | Pre-arousal  (Graph 2) | H1a | Brand recall | Higher in  post-arousal | Supported |
|  |  | H1b | Ad recall | Not significant difference | Supported |
| Study 1 | High arousal peak  (Graph 3) | H2a | Brand recall | Higher in  post-arousal | Supported |
|  |  | H2b | Ad recall | Not significant difference | Supported |
| Study 2 | Far from arousal  (Graph 4) | H3a | Brand recall | Higher in  post-arousal | Not supported |
|  |  | H3b | Ad recall | Not significant difference | Supported |

## 3. Preliminary results

The preliminary findings of our research have management implications specifically remarkable for advertising design. Initially, our studies supports that a high arousal scene increase advertising effectiveness but only depending on ad sequential order design. Our conclusions that a higher brand recall is achieved when the logo brand is presented after a high arousal stimulus suggest that the principal information that advertisers aims to communicate should be placed after this high arousal stimulus.

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