

Copyright  
by  
Boyoung Kim  
2020

**The Thesis Committee for Boyoung Kim  
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:**

**ASMR in Advertising and Its Effects: The Moderating Role of Product  
Involvement and Brand Familiarity**

**APPROVED BY  
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Natalie Brown Devlin, Supervisor

Matthew S Eastin

**ASMR in Advertising and Its Effects: The Moderating Role of Product  
Involvement and Brand Familiarity**

**by**

**Boyoung Kim**

**Thesis**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Master of Arts**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**May 2020**

## **Acknowledgements**

My sincere gratitude goes first to my supervisor Dr. Natalie Brown Devlin for the ongoing support, encouragement and useful guidance. She inspired me to further investigate my thesis by showing me her unwavering confidence in my ideas and valuable feedback to elevate the ideas. She encouraged me to consistently conduct my research with endless positive energy whenever I was bogged down by obstacles or difficulties.

My appreciation also extends to Dr. Matthew S. Eastin, for his encouragement and erudition. He encouraged me to further study media phenomena by filling in what I was lacking with his immense theoretical knowledge.

I would also like to express special thanks to my friends, Soya Nah, Won-ki Moon, Tae Rang Choi, Hayoung Lim, and Eun Joo Jin, for their help and advice. Finally, I would like to thank my family who unconditionally supported and believed in me and my dreams.

## **Abstract**

# **ASMR in Advertising and Its Effects: The Moderating Role of Product Involvement and Brand Familiarity**

Boyoung Kim, M. A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2020

Supervisor: Natalie Brown Devlin

The autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) is an atypical media phenomenon that has been garnering the attention of the public with certain sensory, primarily audio-visual, stimuli. This study looks at the effects of ASMR in advertising on viewers' positive affect, attitudes and purchase intentions. Furthermore, the study investigates the moderating effects of product involvement and brand familiarity with ASMR ads. The findings reveal that ASMR ads promote a higher positive affect and more favorable attitude towards ad and purchase intention than non-ASMR ads. This study also finds that the effect of ASMR ads on positive affect is higher with low product involvement and high brand familiarity. The interaction between ASMR with product involvement and brand familiarity did not vary on attitude towards brand and purchase intention while the attitude towards ad was more favorable when brand familiarity was higher. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

## Table of Contents

List of Figures .....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	4
ASMR.....	4
Dual Processing Model .....	6
ASMR as A Heuristic Cue .....	9
Positive Affect.....	11
ASMR Ad and Attitude.....	14
Product Involvement .....	15
Brand Familiarity .....	17
Chapter 3: Methods .....	20
Chapter 4: Results.....	25
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	29
References .....	35

## List of Figures

Figure 1:	Product involvement moderates the effect of ASMR ad on positive affect. ....	26
Figure 2:	Brand familiarity moderates the effect of ASMR ad on positive affect. ....	28

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) is a sensory phenomenon that has been recognized as an audio-visual stimulus which induces a specific sensation or feeling. ASMR is often consumed in a video format, with videos garnering millions of views on streaming sites such as YouTube. This content trend has contributed to the development of numerous influential YouTube channels, with some boasting more than two million subscribers (ASMR Darling, 2017; Gibi ASMR, 2018). ASMR content creators produce videos that are meant to mesmerize their viewers (Lopez, 2018), prompting some users to report relaxing effects (Cline, 2018). This type of content garnered much mainstream attention following Michelob Ultra's use of the trendy sound phenomenon in their 2019 Super Bowl ad, which was viewed by upwards of 100 million people (Schultz, 2019). The use of ASMR in a Super Bowl advertisement signaled the potential shift of this formerly niche, personal pastime to being utilized as a novel, creative advertising strategy.

Despite a significant number of ASMR users reporting that consumption of ASMR media contributes to positive effects such as feelings of relaxation and connectedness (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Fredborg et al., 2018; Poerio et al, 2018), researchers have yet to scrutinize the effects of ASMR within the context of advertising. However, as ASMR content has grown more prominent online, several brands have utilized the phenomenon in their advertisements or in their social media content. In 2015, Dove chocolate released one of the very first advertising campaigns featuring ASMR, highlighting the auditory sounds associated with eating their chocolate (Dua, 2019).



Since the airing of the Dove ad, the majority of product categories employing ASMR as a strategic advertising tactic appear to be from the food and beverage vertical, as such brands intend to ignite the palate. However, other brands have attempted to utilize the phenomenon in various manners, as well. For instance, IKEA released a 25-minute-long ASMR video that featured its bedroom furniture line and attempted to associate their furniture with comforting ASMR sounds (Lee, 2017). Additionally, the strategy has been utilized by cosmetic brands in an attempt to spark tactile sensations associated with their product lines (Olivar, 2020). While ASMR is meant to elicit positive, relaxing effects, some consumers do report being irritated by ASMR content (McErlean & Banissy, 2017). As such, brands that utilize ASMR as a creative audience strategy must understand more about how it will influence their target audiences. In stark contrast with the viewers who actively choose to consume ASMR content via online streaming websites, ASMR commercials are viewed by a wider ranging, general audience, as commercials are exposed to large audiences through the diverse media channels the brands select.

In order to appeal to audiences, the utilization of ASMR as an important, new advertising phenomenon is able to garner audience attention due to two, primary reasons: the novelty and sensory appeal. First, deploying ASMR in ads is more likely to captivate audiences due to its novelty. As both traditional and digital media sources are saturated with ad clutter, the ingenuity of advertisements becomes more significant to produce attention and awareness. Since ASMR is a relatively new media phenomenon, utilizing it as a creative content strategy is meant to create a form of auditory disruption to intrigue ad viewers as advertisers seek to transform their commercial content into a consumer

experience (Goldsmith, 2019). Empirical data linking the originality and effectiveness of an ad and brand (Keller, 1993; Sheinin et al., 2011) implicates that ASMR in ads offers a new, adventurous route allowing viewers to experience products. Second, ASMR advertisements maximize the multisensory aspect, which has been studied for “sensory marketing”, and accentuates the sensory impressions that influence different emotional and cognitive consumer responses. The sensory effectiveness in advertising and branding has been examined by consumer researchers (Krishna, 2010; Hill, 2003). Previous research has suggested that the coordination of auditory stimuli and visual imagery heightens elaboration by engaging audiences, rendering a successful persuasion (Unnava et al., 1996).

In light of these findings, the current study bridges the gap by exploring the effects of ASMR in the context of advertising. Ad effects will be scrutinized by examining the ad viewers’ emotional and cognitive responses within the framework of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Heuristic-systematic model of persuasion (HSM). As ELM posits, involvement and prior brand knowledge are perceived to influence motivations to elaborate the persuasion (Kim et al., 2017; Phelps & Thorson, 1991). Therefore, it will also examine the moderating role of product involvement and brand familiarity on the ASMR ad effects.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### ASMR

While many saw ASMR as a more recent trend, this atypical phenomenon has been in existence for over a decade, with Jennifer Allen, one of the initial members who built an ASMR community, first coining the term in 2010 (Richard, 2018). The earliest peer-reviewed ASMR research was conducted by Barratt and Davis (2015) who examined the primary benefits of ASMR consumption, reporting the flow-state as a contributing factor to relaxing effects of ASMR. ASMR videos emphasize delivering a sensory experience through the utilization of audio sound that subsequently stimulates sensations within viewers. Due to the feature of the content, ASMR is often anecdotally described as a “head orgasm,” as users report experiencing pleasant, relaxing tingles through their head and body during consumption (Etchells, 2016).

There are some sensory phenomena that share several similarities with ASMR such as frisson, synesthesia, and misophonia. Fredborg et al. describes different aspects that distinguish ASMR from other sensory experience (2017). Frisson, also referred to as music chills, share a noticeable similarity in employing tingling sensations from a triggering stimulus. Synesthesia – sync + aesthesia – correspond with ASMR experiences by garnering similar experiences of multiple senses. However, the two phenomena differ from ASMR according to the type of tingles and arousals and engagement level. Frisson is prominently associated with an excited state, whereas ASMR generates calm and relaxing affect. Further, sensory sensations produced with synesthesia are involuntary and uncontrollable, while the engagement of the sensations from ASMR is more self-ruling, which enables audiences to disengage with the stimulus (del Campo & Kehle, 2016; Fredborg et al., 2017). These distinctive characteristics of ASMR’s utilization of auditory

and visual modalities and their resulting unique sensations suggest investigating ASMR as a valid topic for scholarly examination of its effect on consumer behavior.

While ASMR has been featured in both streamed YouTube videos and commercial advertisements, the effects of ASMR might differ due to the length of the content and the type of viewers. Online ASMR videos are primarily created and uploaded by so-called “ASMRtists,” who create ASMR content that is meant to elicit positive effects from viewers (Smith, Fredborg & Kornelsen, 2017). After the Michelob Ultra commercial was streamed during the 2019 Super Bowl, there were polarized reactions toward the ad. The highlighting of a novel, atypical phenomenon in the ad prompted different audience reactions and enjoyment. While ASMR is intended to prompt a pleasurable affect, many comments on social media forums, such as YouTube and Reddit, discuss strong, negative reactions to ASMR experiences. For instance, Sweeney (2019, para. 4) states,

“The tingling leads to a calm, relaxed feeling that reduces anxiety. I feel the opposite when I hear ASMR videos. I feel creeped out, stressed, anxious, and even angry—no tingles.”

While many ASMR videos are meant to stimulate all five senses through the amplification of mundane noises, such as hair brushing and sounds of opening snack packages, other ASMR videos feature food-eating sounds, which have provoked varying responses from viewers. As previously mentioned, Dove aired an ASMR advertisement highlighting their chocolate in 2015 (Dua, 2019). The advertisement employed stimulating, audio-visual senses that were intended to highlight the product’s characteristics (i.e., the silky, smooth texture of the chocolate) as the actor consumed the chocolate. The advertisement highlighted the crinkly sound of opening the chocolate wrap and the crunchy sound of biting into the chocolate to induce a pleasurable brand experience of the audience. While some people are severely agitated by the sounds of other people’s eating, others

report heightened levels of enjoyment (Kapadia, 2017). In a study of particular responses to different ASMR trigger types, 9.6% of ASMR users recounted ‘people eating’ as a strong trigger, while 25.3% noted it as an unpleasant or uncomfortable sound (McErlean & Banissy, 2017).

These conflicting reactions toward an audiogenic stimulation may be explained by a phenomenon of misophonic; a study surveying more than 300 misophonics found that half of the participants also experienced ASMR, suggesting some people could be more attuned to sound, including both the good and the bad (Rouw & Erfanian, 2017). Another potential cause pertaining to different users’ reactions of ASMR is expectations. When participants were informed that ASMR content would provide a pleasurable experience, it positively influenced ASMR-naive group whereas a negative reaction was prompted by a perceived negative experience (Cash et al., 2018). About the mysteriously polarized perception of ASMR, a founder of the ASMR University, Craig Richard, explains,

“Right now, there is no scientific association with any cause or aspect of why some people are relaxed by ASMR videos and some people can't turn them off quick enough.” (Sweeney, 2019, para. 7)

Due to the fastidious differences of audiences’ tastes toward the phenomenon, brands who choose to utilize ASMR for advertising purposes must either take a creative approach that is more palatable to general audiences or focus efforts on targeting a precise, niche audience who is likely to enjoy the sensory appeal.

## **DUAL PROCESSING MODEL**

Communication research has accentuated the vital role of thought process in attitudes and persuasion (Festinger, 1957; Greenwald, 1968; Petty et al., 2014). Though

numerous persuasion theories note the importance of thought process, no aspect of information processing has captivated researchers' interest as much as the cognitive response to persuasion. The Elaboration likelihood model (ELM) of persuasion is one of most notable models of thought process, which outlines two routes to persuasion: central and peripheral (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Under the central route, an individual is more likely to be persuaded by giving thoughtful, careful consideration to the information and stimulus presented. Central cues involve high levels of elaboration, resulting in attitudes that are expected to be comparatively resistant, enduring, and stable. Under the peripheral route, the receiver is predicted to interact with heuristic cues to the stimulus, which are not necessarily relevant to the logical attribute of the stimulus. The Heuristic-systematic model of persuasion (HSM) attempts to explain a similar dual-processing approach (Chaiken, 1987; 1999), and the model posits that persuasion can be accomplished through either a systematic or a heuristic mode when individuals receive a persuasive message. That is, individuals are on systematic mode when deliberative process of a message is required, whereas heuristic mode is used to quickly evaluate the message by relying on heuristics with least cognitive effort (Chaiken, 1987). Due to the level of elaboration, which is determined by an individual's motivation and ability to assess the information, studies with both of these dual processing models have revealed the persuasion generated through the central route as a higher prediction of consumer behavior (Hamilton et al., 1993; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty et al., 1995).

Despite the ample attention given to the role of systematic mode to an attitude formation, little attention has been applied to the importance of heuristic cues and their

effect on consumer behavior. HSM assumes that individuals are cognitive misers who are apt to minimize their use of elaboration and rest on heuristic cues (Chaiken, 1980; 1987; Chaiken & Eagly, 1983; Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991). Indeed, a study of human behavior reveals that many of human beings have limited capacities, resulting in their preference or reliance upon mental shortcuts or heuristics for decision making (Halpern, 2019; Lang, 2000). Following this logic, the sufficiency principle was introduced by HSM, which posits that individuals attempt to attain the sufficiency threshold through balancing the amount of effort to process information in the interest of economy (Chaiken et al., 1989; Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991). This principle may explain that processing strategies can be shifted when the heuristic mode does not offer confidence in the validity of one's judgement or decision. Based on this thought, HSM proposes the dual process can occur simultaneously and generate interactive efforts rather than engaging in either of the processes (Chaiken, 1987; Chaiken et al., 1989; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

With the concept of interchangeable information process within the HSM framework, situational variables have been suggested as factors that can affect one's sufficiency thresholds or increase information process in systematic mode. That is, situational variables such as personal relevance (Chaiken et al., 1989; Haugtvedt & Strathman, 1990; Petty et al., 1995), high need for cognition (Haugtvedt & Petty, 1992), and message involvement (Axsom et al., 1987) affect the information processing and attitudes. Given that the external factors affect dual processing, marketing research should consider the influencing factors such as an involvement to brand and product

when investigating the persuasive effects of advertising. Specifically, a personal relevance or knowledge of a target audience towards an ad can moderate the effects of the ad (Bian & Moutinho, 2011; Delgado-Ballester et al., 2012). Therefore, research with ASMR in advertising is needed to investigate the effectiveness of ASMR advertisements associated with various influencing factors such as product involvement and brand familiarity.

### **ASMR AS A HEURISTIC CUE**

ASMR is often described as an audio-visual experience, which maximizes multi-sensory experience. Previous research (Yoon & Park, 2011) has noted that employing sensory modalities in advertising triggers receivers' intuitive senses and creates cognitive or emotional responses, such as self-referencing, positive affect, and brand attitude change. Intuitive senses, such as humans' five senses, have been an incredible source to accumulate natural and automatic learning and experience to construct a judgement confidence, which refers to a process of building heuristic cues. This heuristic cue of human sensory perception can innately be linked to one's perception of products and services (Krishna, 2010). Along with the sensory aspect of ASMR, characteristics of ASMR should be identified for this current study attempting to evaluate ASMR in advertising. According to Barratt et al., ASMR is distinguished from other sensory experiences in that the sound is delivered quietly without sudden noises. It is accompanied by visuals that are presented slowly, without erratic changes in lighting or setting, which is meant to convey a calm and relaxing atmosphere (2017). Creating the



calm ambience whilst the attention is focused on viewers rather than products or information allows the viewers to engross themselves to the stimuli without the need to put an effort to process high levels of elaboration.

In line with this rationale, this research argues that ASMR in advertising can serve as a heuristic cue within the heuristic-systematic model framework. This is consistent with previous research, suggesting the affect or feelings aroused by a sensory experience can prompt a decision, albeit quickly (Slovic et al., 2007). Slovic et al. argues that reliance on such feelings aroused by a stimulus can be characterized as “the affect heuristics” (2007). As past ASMR studies suggest that the content sparks tingling sensations and feelings (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Barratt et al., 2017), the use of ASMR in advertisements is meant to elicit those feelings, resulting in positive affect. Furthermore, ASMR in advertisements is meant to serve as a heuristic cue in hopes of influencing consumers’ purchase decisions. The linkage between ASMR and affect might be explained with a study of the exposure-affect relationship by Bornstein (1989). A meta-analysis of mere exposure research conducted between 1968 and 1987 contained over 200 experiments examining the relationship, and unenforced exposures were found to consistently enhance affect toward stimuli with visual, auditory and other senses (Bornstein, 1989). Additionally, marketing scholars proposed an “affect-referral heuristic” in which a particular affect relating to a referral, such as an object or behavior, posits that the recalled affect associated with a product influences consequent choice of the product (Wright, 1975). In light of these, advertisers are hoping that ASMR can provide a strategic persuasive technique that enhances audiences’ affect while resonating

with their memories. For example, an ASMR ad video of freshly fried chicken with a crispy sound of a bite can elicit a physical response, resulting in a craving feeling for chicken. This tactic is worth noting, as marketers often attempt to more directly connect products or services to the feelings that are stimulated within consumers (Bennett, 2019). Therefore, the present study seeks to analyze the effectiveness of ASMR as an advertising strategy by examining emotional and cognitive responses to determine the extent to which ASMR can function as an affect heuristic.

## **POSITIVE AFFECT**

Although numerous scholars have addressed communication effectiveness through consumers' cognitive response with dual processing, additional scholarly inquiry is warranted to analyze affect and emotion, especially within the ELM and HSM. Nevertheless, emotional state and mood have been a crucial indicator of media consumption as well as consumer behavior (Bless, 2001; Devlin et al, 2011; Knobloch & Zillmann, 2006; Kuvaas & Kaufmann, 2004; Mastro, Eastin & Tamborini, 2002; Zillmann, 1988). To date, a significant amount of research has examined discrete emotions, such as fear or avoidance towards negative emotions (e.g. disgust) (Dillard et al., 1996; Nabi, 1999). Despite the skewed focus on negative emotions, positive emotions have been suggested as an enhancer for consumer cognition, behavior, and decision making by a growing body of research (Djamasbi & Strong, 2008; Isen & Means, 1983; Isen, 2001). According to positive mood theory, positive mood can improve individuals' ability to assimilate new information, resulting in a better understanding of the stimuli

(Isen, 1984). Previous research has determined that positive mood enhances assessments of stimuli and improves consumers' willingness to try new products, which strengthens their tendency to accept messages and persuasion (Isen, 2003). A study about sensory marketing also revealed that positive affect is a paramount mediator of the consumers' perception toward the brand (Yoon & Park, 2012). Moreover, positive affect has been shown to be beneficial to build consequent positive attitudes toward ad and brand (Chang, 2005; Kamp and Macinnis, 1995). Yoon and Park (2012) states,

“Positive affect is inducible without cognitive efforts when stimuli are congruent with sensory-involved schema. This view is consistent with the perspective of classical conditioning theory on affective reaction” (p. 3)

This statement underscores the concept of positive affect as a heuristic cue, which largely influences one's response. This affect heuristic is also germane to the characteristics of ASMR content due to its relaxing sensory experience.

ASMR literature suggests possible links of the phenomenon to diverse sensory-emotional experiences and physical states such as flow-like mental state and mindfulness (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Fredborg et al., 2018). ASMR not only has been demonstrated as a calm and peaceful state in academic studies, but it also has been suggested as a form of digital self-care meant to help users sleep and find personal comfort and relaxation (Baker, 2015; Koul, 2016). Additionally, ASMR has been introduced as a current relaxation strategy trend similar to meditation and yoga (Pettie, 2018). Positioning the phenomenon as a relaxing media trend, the effects of ASMR have been explored in different fields, including psychology, physiology, and neuroscience (Barratt et al. 2017;

Fredborg et al., 2017; McErlean & Banissy, 2017; Lochte et al., 2018; Poerio et al., 2018). The phenomenon of ASMR was viewed as an intimate, affective micro-interaction through digital media (Smith & Snider, 2019). Also, looking at mood, Barratt and Davis (2015) found that 80% reported positive effects following exposure to ASMR. Pertaining to user motivations for ASMR consumption, respondents reported experiences pertaining to mood and arousal control, such as ‘I watch ASMR videos to relieve negative mood,’ ‘. . . to deal with anxiety,’ and ‘. . . to relieve stress.’ (Barratt & Davis, 2015, p5).

Consistently, recent ASMR research demonstrated that the use of ASMR is strongly associated with a sense of relaxation and restoration (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Barratt et al., 2017; Fredborg et al., 2018). With growing empirical evidence of therapeutic benefits associated with ASMR media, such distinct emotional states (e.g. relaxation) aroused by ASMR were also investigated, with physiological experiments showing its pleasant affect accompanied by reduced heart rate and increased skin conductance levels (Poerio et al., 2018).

Furthermore, A neuroimaging study with fMRI scanning showed an activation in certain brain regions associated with social engagement, relaxation, and empathy (Lochte et al., 2018). As numerous studies show the effects of ASMR on positive affect, including peaceful and pleasant feelings, positive affect will be examined along with the viewers’ attitudes. Thus, the following hypothesis is proffered:

**H1:** ASMR ads will promote higher level of positive affect of the audience compared to Non-ASMR ads.

## **ASMR AD AND ATTITUDE**

Given that the positive affect states also have an impact on evaluative judgement as the state transfer to informational and motivational functions (Schwarz & Clore, 1988), it is worthwhile to assess consumers' resulting attitudes and behavioral intentions from ASMR advertisements. ASMR literature provides empirical evidence of its effects resulting in a positive sensory experience. (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Barratt et al. 2017; Fredborg et al., 2018). ASMR ads differ from non-ASMR ads in that the ads are acutely focused on delivering messages by emphasizing audio-visual senses. While previous research has examined the positive affect that results from ASMR consumption, advertising scholars have not yet examined how ASMR consumption influences consumer attitudes.

Advertisers hope that by pairing their messages with an emphasis on audio-visual senses through ASMR, they can potentially facilitate increased engagement with the advertisement's message and the brand, thus helping in persuading consumers in their decision-making processes. Since a study argues that the presentation of an ad can interact with individuals depending on their imagery abilities, the varied abilities affect brand attitudes differently (Petrova & Cialdini, 2005). This suggests that elevating the level of imagery by utilizing auditory and visual modalities can promote positive attitudes. Eimer (1999) found that a single system may control people's visual and auditory attention, suggesting a link to attract the attention of audiences by simultaneously directing their attention to a synchronized visual and auditory stimulus. In addition to the attention, the integration of sensory stimuli has been shown to enhance a

brand (Lindstrom, 2006). According to a new sensory cognitive theory, consumers learn after feeling and sensing, which reverses the traditional model of learn-feel-act as an order of response to stimuli. (Hill, 2003). This view can be applied to ASMR advertisements, as such advertisements are meant to stimulate consumers' senses before delivering messages that require cognitive processing (feel-learn-act). Quickly and unconsciously formed sensory-emotional responses through the process make a significant contribution to advertising comprehension and attitude formation with a product and brand. Thus, positive feelings toward the ad may establish more positive attitudes toward an ad and brand, as well as affect consumers' behavioral intentions, leading to the following hypothesis:

**H2:** ASMR ads will have a greater impact on consumers' attitudes (**H2a:** ad attitude, **H2b:** brand attitude) and purchase intentions (**H2c**) compared to Non-ASMR ads.

## **PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT**

According to Zaichkowsky (1985), product involvement is defined as an individual's perceived relevance of the objects in regard to the inherent needs, values and interests. Product involvement has been believed as enduring involvement, indicating that product involvement levels remain relatively stable and sustainable over time (Andrews et al., 1990). While involvement has been comprehensively examined in persuasive

communication, product involvement has been identified as an influential variable on ad effectiveness, brand attitude, and consumer behavior (Bowen & Chaffee, 1974; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Muehling et al., 1993; Phelps & Thorson, 1991; Traylor, 1981; Te'eni-Harari et al., 2009; Quester & Lim, 2003). Considering the vital role of product involvement in the consumer decision-making process, the current study examines the moderating effects of the product involvement by measuring the level of involvement (e.g., high/low product involvement).

The Elaboration Likelihood Model explains the role of involvement in recipient responses to an ad stimulus (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Petty et al., 1983). ELM argues that the central route is used when product involvement is high because individuals are motivated to use cognitive efforts in processing product-relevant information. Conversely, the peripheral route is theorized to occur when the involvement is low because the person is less motivated to elaborate the product-relevant information. In this case, individuals would prefer to rely on heuristic cues surrounding the message to reach a final judgement or decision (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; 1986)

ASMR advertisements, which seek to deliver messages by igniting human sensation and intuition, may be involved less in a high-elaboration processing due to the lack of specific description, requiring receivers to search for more detailed information to go through a central route to decide on consequent purchases or to change attitudes. In fact, previous studies suggested that visual and audio modalities, such as images and music, act as a peripheral persuasion cues in advertising (Laczniak & Muehling, 1993; Park & Young, 1986). Therefore, the usage of ASMR in advertising would seemingly be

more effective at positively influencing consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions when the viewers have low involvement toward advertised products. In a high-involvement product category, audiences may be likely to respond more favorably to non-ASMR ads, which tend to convey more detailed messages pertaining to products through voice-over. Given that heuristic cues in advertising, such as the usage of ASMR, perform more efficiently with lower product involvement (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981), the following hypotheses are offered to assess the moderating role of product involvement:

**H3:** ASMR ads will promote higher level of positive affect of the audience compared to Non-ASMR ads when product involvement is lower.

**H4:** ASMR ads will have a greater impact on consumers' attitudes (**H4a:** ad attitude, **H4b:** brand attitude) and purchase intentions (**H4c:**) compared to Non-ASMR ads when product involvement is lower.

## **BRAND FAMILIARITY**

Along with product involvement, the effects of ASMR in advertising may vary depending on the valence of consumers' perceptions toward brands; these include consumers' prior experience differentiating brands, such as a brand awareness, image, familiarity, and loyalty (Macdonald & Sharp, 2003; Yagci, Biswas & Dutta, 2009; Phelps



& Thorson, 1991; Agrawal, 1996). Among many factors composing brands, brand familiarity plays a significant role in ads, as it gauges a consumer's direct and indirect brand experiences (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Taking account of the importance of brand familiarity, the current research evaluates the moderating effects of brand familiarity by measuring the level of familiarity (e.g., high/low brand familiarity)

As the formation of brand familiarity remains dependent on the amount of time and experience an individual has engaged to process information regarding a brand (Baker et al., 1986), previous studies have documented the advantages familiar brands have over unfamiliar brands concerning information processing and attitudes (Lange & Dahlén, 2003). According to Kent and Allen (1994), consumers put forth a lesser degree of effort in processing information when stimuli is accompanied with familiar brands, because the information is more readily retrieved due to prior experience of the brands. In this sense, familiar brands in advertising can be explained with ELM, which proposes that consumers will utilize the peripheral route, given their ability to interpret the ad is made easier by the presence of more recognizable and identifiable brands. As ASMR in advertising is described as a heuristic cue, the ASMR ad may show a stronger effect when presented with familiar brands than unfamiliar brands. Scrutinizing brand familiarity helps explore the effectiveness of ASMR ads and responses of viewers due to the feature enabling people to identify the ad quicker and easier, as well as to progress to the next stages, including brand attitude and purchase intention (Baker et al., 1986; MacDonald & Sharp, 2003). Considering that heuristic cues are more likely to show an

effectiveness with higher brand familiarity (Kent & Allen; 1994; Delgado-Ballester et al., 2012), the following hypotheses are put forward based on this premise:

**H5:** ASMR ads will promote higher level of positive affect of the audience compared to Non-ASMR ads when brand familiarity is higher.

**H6:** ASMR ads will have a greater impact on consumers' attitudes (**H6a:** ad attitude, **H6b:** brand attitude) and purchase intentions (**H6c**) compared to Non-ASMR ads when brand familiarity is higher.

## **Chapter 3: Methods**

### **SAMPLE**

Participants were recruited from a participant pool at the University of Texas at Austin and received course credit for their participation. Among the total of 278 participants, the sample included 62 males, 215 females, and 1 other, with an average age of 20 years old (min = 18, max = 29). The largest ethnic segment was Caucasian (138; 49.6%), followed by Hispanic (65; 23.4%), Asian (61; 21.9%), African American (4; 1.4%), and other (10; 3.6%). With regard to the ASMR experience, 79.1% participants have watched ASMR videos and 29.9% participants have never watched ASMR videos. Among ASMR viewers, 49.6% participants were found to watch ASMR videos less than once a month, 10.4% watched once or twice a month, 9.4% watched several times a month, 6.5% watched several times a week, and 3.2% watched every day. The primary platform utilized by participants to consume ASMR viewers was YouTube (69%). Users reported their main reasons for watching ASMR videos were that ‘ASMR content came across my feed’ (43.4%) and ‘Just curious’ (32.4%). Users mostly described their experience with ASMR as interesting (42.1%) or entertaining (33.5%). In terms of ASMR advertisements, only 33.2% participants among ASMR viewers responded that they have watched an ad that used ASMR.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study featured a 2 (ASMR: ASMR advertisement vs. Non-ASMR advertisement) X 2 (Brand: Sulwhasoo vs. McDonalds) factorial design experiment. The experimental design was administered through a Qualtrics questionnaire to investigate the

effect of the utilization of ASMR in advertisements on consumers' positive affect, attitudes toward the ad and brand, and their purchase intentions for the product. Especially, the current research set out to examine how the effects of ASMR ads vary depending on the moderation of product involvement and brand familiarity.

## **PROCEDURE**

First, participants filled out a prequestionnaire that included an informed consent form and answered questions designed to assess their product involvement and brand familiarity that will be shown on the ad before watching the ad stimuli. Second, participants were randomly assigned to one of the four advertisement stimuli conditions (ASMR ads vs. Non-ASMR ads; Sulwhasoo vs. McDonalds). The two types of ASMR ad videos were chosen to further scrutinize the difference in product categories and brands. All participants were informed that they would view an ad video and were given instructions to utilize their device's internal speakers or headphones to ensure that they could hear the audio sound. After viewing the ad, participants were asked to complete questionnaire items to indicate their emotional response, attitudes toward ad and brand, and purchase intentions. For the attention check, a question asked participants to correctly recall the product that was shown in the advertisement stimuli. Therefore, only participants who selected right answer for the attention check were included in study analyses. All participants who failed to the attention check were discarded from the analyses. Additionally, to check the ASMR/non-ASMR manipulation, a question required users to correctly identify the ad type (ASMR vs. Non-ASMR). As a result, 32 participants who failed to the manipulation check were eliminated from the analyses, leaving a total of 278 participants who perceived the ad type correctly to be included in further analyses.

## **PRE-TEST**

In advance of the official testing, a pre-test with 30 students was initiated to ensure the validity of the questionnaire items and pre-test the selected brands in terms of brand familiarity. After manipulation check indicating whether participants perceive ASMR ad videos as ASMR or Non-ASMR (voice-over), minor edits and alterations were reflected to optimize the survey for the primary sample population.

## **STIMULI**

In terms of ASMR advertisements, two types of ASMR ad videos were selected for different product categories and brands; Sulwhasoo – a Korean cosmetic brand and McDonald’s – an American fast food brand. The study utilized these two brands, as the product categories that have been adopting the relatively new ASMR phenomenon for use in advertisements are predominantly food and beverage products and health and beauty products. The two different brands were chosen as McDonald’s is one of the most familiar brands to Americans and the Korean cosmetic brand, Sulwhasoo, was comparatively little known by participants in our sample. As previously mentioned, pre-tests confirmed that McDonalds had high brand familiarity and Sulwhasoo had low brand familiarity. To assess the effects of ASMR ads, Non-ASMR ads for both brands were selected to provide a comparison of the ad effects with the baseline. For Sulwhasoo, a voice-over ad over the chosen ASMR ad was created to eliminate confounding factors. For McDonald’s, considering that the ASMR ad video was a professionally made commercial, an official voice-over ad that is also created by McDonald’s was selected as the ad promotes a similar breakfast product with similar showcasing of the ingredients.

## MEASURES

*Product Involvement:* Product involvement was defined as the level of a person's needs or values in purchasing a certain product (Howard & Sheth, 1969). Participants reported their perceived levels of involvement with the product in the ad video to which they were shown afterward. Product involvement was measured on a 9-item adjusted from Zaichkowsky's (1985) Personal Involvement Inventory (PII), 5-point semantic differential bipolar scale of involvement (i.e., "important/unimportant," "relevant/irrelevant," "desirable/undesirable," and so on) ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ,  $\alpha = .96$ ).

*Brand Familiarity:* Brand familiarity was conceptualized as "the extent of a consumer's direct and indirect experience with a brand" (Delgado-Ballester, Navarro, & Sicilia, 2010, p.33). Brand familiarity was measured with the four items adjusted from Kent and Allen's scale (1994), 5-point semantic differential bipolar scale anchored by "I never heard of the brand/ I have heard of the brand," "I'm not familiar with the brand/ I'm familiar with the brand," "I'm inexperienced with the brand / I'm experienced with the brand," and "I'm not knowledgeable with the brand / I'm knowledgeable with the brand" ( $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ,  $\alpha = .98$ )

*Positive Affect:* Positive affect was defined as a person's positive feeling elicited by exposure to an advertising stimulus (Edell & Burke, 1987). To measure the positive affect, Edell and Burke's (1987) scale on emotion was used; the five items were (1) happy, (2) pleased, (3) stimulated, (4) calm, and (5) peaceful. The items were measured

on a 7-point scale, with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree or Disagree, and 7 = Strongly Agree ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ,  $\alpha = .88$ ).

*Attitudes toward the ad:* Attitude towards the ad was defined as “a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion” (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989, p. 49). Participants’ attitudes toward each ad video were measured on a five-item, 5-point semantic differential scale. The bipolar items were scaled by “like/dislike,” “delightful/not delightful,” and “good/bad” ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ,  $\alpha = .95$ ) (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Muehling 1987).

*Attitudes toward the brand:* Attitude towards the brand is conceptualized as “a relatively enduring, unidimensional summary evaluation of the brand that presumably energizes behavior” (Spears & Singh, 2004, p.55). Participants’ attitudes toward the brand in the advertisement were assessed on a six-item, 5-point semantic differential scale. The items were measured by “upplealing/unapealing,” “good/bad,” and “favorable/unfavorable” ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = .88$ ,  $\alpha = .95$ ) (Spears & Singh, 2004)

*Purchase Intention:* In this study, purchase intention is defined as the degree to which a person intends to purchase or use a particular product of a particular brand (Bearden et al., 1984). Participants’ purchase intention was anchored on a four-item, 5-point semantic differential scale (Unlikely-likely, improbable-probable, uncertain-certain, definitely not-definitely) ( $M = 2.44$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ,  $\alpha = .91$ ) (Bearden et al., 1984).

## Chapter 4: Results

### DATA ANALYSIS

H1 and H2 were examined by an Independent Sample T-Test. Hypotheses 3 – 6 were further probed by a regression model of Hayes (2017)'s PROCESS Macro Model 1.

### THE EFFECT OF ASMR ADVERTISEMENTS (H1 AND H2)

An Independent Sample T-Test was conducted to test for main effects ASMR ads (ASMR vs. Non-ASMR condition) on positive affect (H1). Data indicate ASMR ads viewers ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ ) reported a statistically significant higher positive affect than Non-ASMR ads viewers ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ), ( $t = -2.087$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2, examined the effects of ASMR ads on attitudes toward ad (H2a), brand (H2b), and purchase intention(H2c) through the use of an Independent Samples T-Test. As expected, ASMR ad viewers ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ) had significantly more favorable attitudes toward the ads than Non-ASMR ads viewers ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = .86$ ), ( $t = -2.314$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). However, there were no significant differences in terms of attitudes toward brand between ASMR and non-ASMR viewers,  $t = -1.28$ ,  $p > .05$ . For purchase intention, ASMR ads viewers ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) reported higher purchase intentions than Non-ASMR ads viewers ( $M = 2.29$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ), ( $t = -2.197$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H2a and H2c were supported by the data.



## THE INTERACTION EFFECT OF ASMR ADVERTISEMENTS AND PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT (H3 AND H4)

To examine the proposed moderating effects of product involvement on the relationship between ASMR advertisements and positive affect (H3), the regression model of PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2017) was conducted. There was a conditional interaction effect between product involvement and ASMR ads on positive affect. To be specific, the interaction effect between product involvement and ASMR advertisements on positive affect was shown to be greater for the participants with lower product involvement (M-1SD),  $b = .63$ ,  $t(274) = 2.74$ , 95% C.I from .18 to 1.08,  $p < .01$ ., and moderate product involvement (M),  $b = .34$ ,  $t(274) = 2.09$ , 95% C.I from .02 to .65,  $p < .05$ . As expected, ASMR ads did not significantly lead to positive affect for those who have high product involvement (M+1SD),  $b = .05$ ,  $t(274) = .19$ ,  $p > .05$ . Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported by the data (Figure 1).

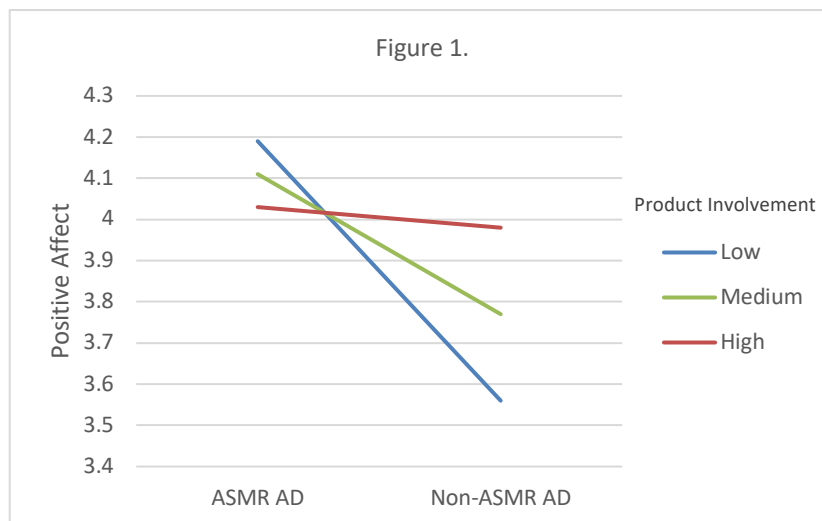


Figure 1: Product involvement moderates the effect of ASMR ad on positive affect.

Turning to Hypothesis 4 investigating the moderating effects of product involvement on the ASMR ads effectiveness (e.g., attitude toward ad, brand attitude, and purchase intention), there was no significant interaction effect between product involvement and ASMR ads on attitude towards ad (H4a),  $F(1, 274) = 1.27, R^2 = .00, p > .05$ , attitude towards brand (H4b)  $F(1, 274) = .76, R^2 = .00, p > .05$  and purchase intention (H4c),  $F(1, 274) = .65, R^2 = .00, p > .05$ . Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not supported by the data.

#### **THE INTERACTION EFFECT BETWEEN ASMR ADVERTISEMENTS AND BRAND FAMILIARITY (H5 AND H6)**

To explore the proposed moderating effects of brand familiarity on the relationship between ASMR advertisements and positive affect (H5), the regression model of PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2017) was used. The interaction effect between brand familiarity and ASMR advertisements on positive affect was significant,  $F(1, 274) = 8.58, R^2 = .03, p < .01$ . Specifically, positive affect was shown to be greater for the participants with high brand familiarity (M+1SD),  $b = .79, t(274) = 3.50, 95\% \text{ C.I. from } .35 \text{ to } 1.23, p < .001$ ., and moderate brand familiarity (M),  $b = .32, t(274) = 2.04, 95\% \text{ C.I. from } 0.01 \text{ to } .63, p < .05$ . As expected, ASMR ads did not significantly lead to positive affect for those who have low brand familiarity (M-1SD),  $b = -.14, t(274) = -.64, p > .05$ . Thus, Hypothesis 5 was supported by the data (Figure 2).

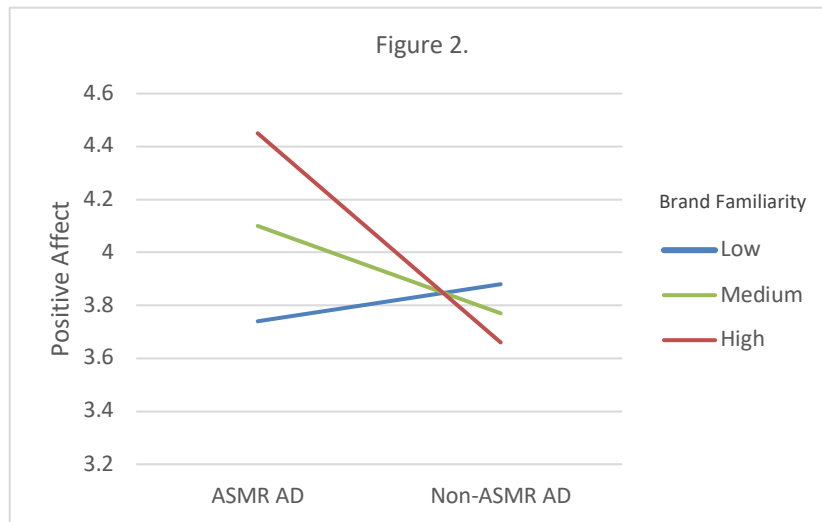


Figure 2: Brand familiarity moderates the effect of ASMR ad on positive affect.

Turning to Hypothesis 6 probing moderating effects of brand familiarity on the ASMR ads effectiveness (e.g., attitude toward ad, brand attitude, and purchase intention), there was a conditional interaction effect between brand familiarity and ASMR ads on attitude toward the ad (H6). Specifically, ASMR advertisements significantly resulted in more favorable attitude toward the ad for those who have high brand familiarity, (M+1SD),  $b = .46$ ,  $t(274) = 2.79$ , 95% C.I from .14 to .79,  $p < .01$ , and moderate brand familiarity, (M),  $b = .26$ ,  $t(274) = 2.19$ , 95% C.I from .03 to .49,  $p < .05$  than those who have lower brand familiarity (M-1SD),  $b = .05$ ,  $t(274) = .30$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, H6a was supported. However, no interaction effect was founded between brand familiarity and ASMR ads on brand attitude (H6b),  $F(1, 274) = 1.70$ ,  $R^2 = .01$ ,  $p > .05$ , and purchase intention (H6c),  $F(1, 274) = .30$ ,  $R^2 = .00$ ,  $p > .05$ .

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

The purpose of the study has been to corroborate the effects of ASMR ads on consumers' positive affect, attitudes and behavioral intentions. Furthermore, the current study discovered the interaction effects of ASMR ads with other influential factors: brand familiarity and product involvement. The data supported the first hypothesis that ASMR ads will promote higher level of positive affect of the audience than Non-ASMR ads. The second hypothesis, proposing ASMR ads will have a greater impact on consumers' attitudes (H2a: ad attitude, H2b: brand attitude) and purchase intentions (H2c), is partially supported (H2a and H2c) as attitudes toward brand (H2b) from ASMR ads did not significantly differ from Non-ASMR ads. Next, the hypotheses 3 and 4 were concerned with how audiences' positive affect, attitude toward the ad and brand, and purchase intention are affected by the interaction with ASMR ads and product involvement. The results indicated that there is a significant interaction between ASMR ads and product involvement to predict positive affect, showing that participants with ASMR ads presented more positive feelings than did Non-ASMR ads when their product involvement is low (Hypothesis 3). However, the effect of ASMR ads was not found to be influenced by the product involvement on consumers' attitude changes and purchase intentions (Hypothesis 4). The next hypotheses in the study examined the moderating effect of brand familiarity on the relationship between ASMR ads and consumers' responses: positive affect, attitudes the ad and brand, and purchase intentions. The data indicated that ASMR ads with higher brand familiarity has yielded more positive affect of the audience (Hypothesis 5). Additionally, results indicated ASMR ads' higher impact on attitudes toward the ad when brand familiarity is high (H6a). However, the effect of ASMR ads on attitudes toward brand and purchase intentions did not vary to the brand familiarity (H6b, H6c). In

summary, the examination of the interaction between ASMR ads with both product involvement and brand familiarity indicated significant effects on positive affect, whereas showed partial impacts on consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions.

## **THEORETICAL IMPLICATION**

The findings provide important implications for advertising researchers. First, the present study advances the current understanding of ASMR in the context of ads by explicating the effects of the ads in promoting positive affect and favorable attitudes and purchase intentions. Previous studies argue that ASMR content allows audiences to experience pleasant sensations by feeling connected to a content creator and relaxed by the audio-visual stimuli (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Smith & Snider, 2019). The result of ASMR ads promoting audiences' positive affect extended the previous literature by corroborating the media content inducing positive feelings to the context of advertising. Recent research about ASMR shows that ASMR videos increased pleasant affect associated with decreased heart rate and increased skin conductance levels, indicating therapeutic benefits of mental and physical health (Poerio et al., 2018). In an attempt to verify these benefits in an advertising context, the current study provides the effect on viewers' positive affect, indicating the effectiveness on affective state regarding the strategic usage of ASMR in advertising.

Not only did the study implicate the effect on affective state, but the effects of ASMR ads were also probed within the framework of evaluative process – dual processing. Thus, the current research expands the theoretical approach to ASMR in advertising by entailing the ELM and HSM approach (Chaiken, 1987; Petty et al., 1983). Results showed that ASMR in advertisements functions as heuristic cue, significantly affecting the ad

viewers' emotional states as well as partial cognitive process, which validates previous academic research regarding the critical impact of heuristic cues on persuasion (Mattila, 1998).

Finally, the results of the present study stress the moderating role of product involvement and brand familiarity in explaining the positive effects of ASMR ads. This study indicates that ASMR ads promote higher positive affect of the audience than do non-ASMR ads and partially affect attitudes when the audiences have lower product involvement, especially for a familiar brand. The findings are consistent with ELM assertions that consumers with high product involvement engage in an argument-related claim rather than relying on peripheral cues, such as ASMR, in the ad (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). On the contrary, consumers with low product involvement would rely on heuristics in forming attitudes with minimal effort for elaboration (Chaiken, 1987). Furthermore, heuristic cues, with unfamiliar brands, may not motivate individuals to process information, because the stimuli will be perceived as new, which demands more informative details to help understand the brand (Campbell and Keller, 2003). Thus, the current study expanded the previous literature with influential factors on persuasion, such as product involvement and brand familiarity by investigating the moderating role.

## **PRACTICAL IMPLICATION**

Not only does this study expand the theoretical realm of ASMR, but it also sheds a light on ASMR advertising effects for marketers. As ASMR harnesses distinctive, sensory modalities, the result of the ad effects could contribute to the development of sensory marketing. Sensory marketing will persist since it delivers messages with instinctive human senses stimulation, surmounting language or cultural barriers. It is in the same vein

that using visuals and onomatopoeia, such as a body language, universally works for communication. As major advertising agencies have been seeking an efficient, global communication strategy with exports of commercial services accounting for more than 3 trillion annually (Gillespie & Hennessey, 2010), the current research contributes to an advanced understanding of the opportunities associated with creative strategies that utilize ASMR. Given that the current study used an American sample, future research should examine the effectiveness of ASMR with an international sample to determine its effectiveness as a global communication strategy.

The result of ASMR effects as heuristic cues can engage consumers and enhance their evaluative process (Chaiken et al., 1989). Marketing professionals may also see this analysis as valuable as it pertains to their strategic initiatives to increase audience engagement. ASMR ads, as heuristic cues arousing positive affect, may result in the affective state extending to a positive informative function, ultimately influencing a judgement (Schwarz & Clore, 1988). Subsequently, this influence on both emotional and cognitive responses positively affect consumers' decision-making. In addition to advertising effects, ads delivering emotional benefits can potentially help build brand identity and equity (Phau et al., 2013); thus, this study implicates the benefits of ASMR for both advertising and branding perspectives.

With the effects of interactions between ASMR and moderators (i.e., product involvement and brand familiarity), advertisers can consider more efficient arrangements of ad conditions in utilizing ASMR ads. When attempting to convince consumers through either emotional or cognitive inducement, a marketer may find it ineffective to employ ASMR in advertisements promoting high product involvement category at unfamiliar brand stage. Consequently, ASMR tactic would work more efficiently for a middle of funnel stage to engage and interact with consumers than increase brand awareness.

## **LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Despite the implications of the current research, some limitations should be referred and provide avenues for future study opportunities. First, the current experimental design compared the effects of ads deploying ASMR to those not deploying them. However, it is still possible that results might have been influenced by other confounding factors. As content creatives are different for each stimulus, it is not possible for researchers to maintain control over all variables. Future research can investigate the effectiveness of ASMR in advertising by considering dynamic factors that might possibly affect the effectiveness of ASMR ads. For instance, ASMR and non-ASMR ads can be created by controlling visuals and audio sounds to reduce the confounding factors in lieu of using existing commercials. Second, the study used a student sample, and participants reported more familiarity with ASMR phenomena than the general public, which may have impacted results. This limitation restricts the generalizability of the results to other populations. Therefore, future research can incorporate more various samples, including participants from a variety of age and ethnic backgrounds.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study provides an important step toward understanding the usage of ASMR as a creative advertising tactic by exploring its subsequent effects on consumers feelings, attitudes and behavior intentions. In addition to the ad effects, this study examined the moderating effects of other influential variables, including product



involvement and brand familiarity. As the ASMR effects are shown to differ from the level of those variables, it will be worthwhile for future studies to investigate the effects of ASMR ads utilizing other variables with more rigorous controls. Moreover, this initial examination of ASMR advertising can pave the way for future studies to explore broader constructs of advertising that employ various new media phenomena.

## References

- Agrawal, D. (1996). Effect of brand loyalty on advertising and trade promotions: A game theoretic analysis with empirical evidence. *Marketing science*, 15(1), 86-108.
- Alba, J. W., & Hutchinson, J. W. (1987). Dimensions of consumer expertise. *Journal of consumer research*, 13(4), 411-454.
- Andrews, J. C., Durvasula, S., & Akhter, S. H. (1990). A Framework for conceptualizing and measuring the involvement construct in advertising research. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(4), 27–40. ASMR Darling (2017, February 25). What is ASMR? Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAEM95ixp-s>
- Axsom, D., Yates, S., & Chaiken, S. (1987). Audience response as a heuristic cue in persuasion. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 53(1), 30.
- Baker R. 2015. I'm using my newly discovered ASMR to fight depression. Thought Catalog. [http:// thoughtcatalog.com/rhys-baker](http://thoughtcatalog.com/rhys-baker).
- Baker, W., Hutchinson, J., Moore, D., & Nedungadi, P. (1986). Brand familiarity and advertising: effects on the evoked set and brand preference. *Advances in consumer research*, 13, 637.
- Barratt, E.L., Davis, N.J. (2015). Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR): a flow-like mental state. *PeerJ* 3:e851 <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.851>
- Barratt, E.L., Spence, C., Davis, N.J. (2017), Sensory determinants of the autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR): understanding the triggers. *PeerJ* 5:e3846; DOI 10.7717/peerj.3846
- Bearden, W. O., Lichtenstein, D. R., & Teel, J. E. (1984). Comparison Price, Coupon, and Brand Effects on Consumer Reactions to Retail Newspaper Advertisements. *Journal of Retailing*, 60(2), 11-34.
- Bennett, N. (2019, November 25). 4 Big Brands Using ASMR in Their Video Marketing. Retrieved from <https://www.impactbnd.com/blog/asmr-video-marketing>
- Bian, X., & Moutinho, L. (2011). The role of brand image, product involvement, and knowledge in explaining consumer purchase behaviour of counterfeits. *European Journal of Marketing*.
- Bless, H. (2001). Mood and the use of general knowledge structures. In L.L. Martin & G.L.Clore (Eds.), *Theories of mood and cognition: A user's guidebook* (pp.9-26). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bornstein, R. F. (1989). Exposure and affect: overview and meta-analysis of research, 1968–1987. *Psychological bulletin*, 106(2), 265.
- Bowen, L., & Chaffee, S. H. (1974). Product involvement and pertinent advertising appeals. *Journalism Quarterly*, 51(4), 613-621.

- Campbell, M. C., & Keller, K. L. (2003). Brand familiarity and advertising repetition effects. *Journal of consumer research*, 30(2), 292-304.
- Cash, D. K., Heisick, L. L., & Papesh, M. H. (2018). Expectancy effects in the autonomous sensory meridian response. *PeerJ*, 6, e5229.
- Chaiken, S. (1980). Heuristic versus systematic information processing and the use of source versus message cues in persuasion. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 39(5), 752.
- Chaiken, S. (1987). The heuristic model of persuasion. In *Social influence: the ontario symposium* (Vol. 5, pp. 3-39).
- Chaiken, S. (1999). The Heuristic—Systematic. *Dual-process theories in social psychology*, 73.
- Chaiken, S., & Eagly, A. H. (1983). Communication modality as a determinant of persuasion: The role of communicator salience. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 45(2), 241.
- Chaiken, S., Liberman, A., & Eagly, A. H. (1989). Heuristic and systematic information processing within and beyond the persuasion context. In J. S. Uleman & J. A. Bargh (Eds.), *Unintended thought* (pp. 212-252). New York: Guilford Press.
- Chang, C. (2005). Ad-self-congruency effects: Self-enhancing cognitive and affective mechanisms. *Psychology & Marketing*, 22(11), 887-910.
- Cline, J. (2018, September 26). What Is ASMR and Why Are People Watching These Videos? Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sleepless-in-america/201809/what-is-asmr-and-why-are-people-watching-these-videos>
- del Campo, M. A., and Kehle, T. J. (2016). Autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) and frisson: mindfully induced sensory phenomena that promote happiness. *Int. J. School Educ. Psychol.* 4, 99–105. doi:10.1080/21683603.2016.1130582
- Delgado-Ballester, E., Navarro, A., & Sicilia, M. (2012). Revitalising brands through communication messages: the role of brand familiarity. *European Journal of Marketing*.
- Devlin, M. B., Chambers, L. T., & Callison, C. (2011). Targeting mood: Using comedy or serious movie trailers. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 55(4), 581-595.
- Dillard, J. P., Plotnick, C. A., Godbold, L. C., Freimuth, V. S., & Edgar, T. (1996). The multiple affective outcomes of AIDS PSAs: Fear appeals do more than scare people. *Communication research*, 23(1), 44-72.
- Djamasbi, S., & Strong, D. M. (2008). The effect of positive mood on intention to use computerized decision aids. *Information & Management*, 45(1), 43-51.

- Dua, T. (2019, February 3). Michelob Ultra's Super Bowl ad had Zoe Kravitz whispering about pure gold beer - here's what ASMR is and why such videos have become internet sensations. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/videos-designed-to-trigger-asmr-are-surg-ing-in-popularity-2017-11>
- Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes*. Harcourt brace Jovanovich college publishers.
- Edell, J. A., & Burke, M. C. (1987). The power of feelings in understanding advertising effects. *Journal of Consumer research*, 14(3), 421-433.
- Eimer, M. (1999). Can attention be directed to opposite locations in different modalities? An ERP study. *Clinical neurophysiology*, 110(7), 1252-1259.
- Etchells P. ASMR and 'head orgasms': what's the science behind it? *The Guardian*. 2016; <https://www.theguardian.com/science/head-quarters/2016/jan/08/asmr-and-head-orgasms-whats-the-science-behind-it>.
- Fredborg, B., Clark, J., Smith, S.D. (2017). An Examination of Personality Traits Associated with Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR). *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 247. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00247
- Fredborg, B. K., Clark, J. M., & Smith, S. D. (2018). Mindfulness and autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR). *PeerJ*, 6. doi: 10.7717/peerj.5414
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gibi ASMR (2018, March 20). Dark & Relaxing Tapping & Scratching. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FidhD-izZnk>
- Gillespie, K., & Hennessey, H. D. (2010). *Global marketing*. Cengage Learning.
- Goldsmith, C. (2019). Advertisers turn to ASMR for marketing inspiration. *European CEO*. Retrieved from <https://www.europeanceo.com/lifestyle/advertisers-turn-to-asmr-for-marketing-inspiration/>.
- Greenwald, A. G. (1968). Cognitive learning, cognitive response to persuasion, and attitude change. *Psychological foundations of attitudes*, 1968, 147-170.
- Halpern, D., & Service, O. (2019). *Inside the nudge unit: how small changes can make a big difference*. London: WH Allen.
- Hamilton, M. A., Hunter, J. E., & Boster, F. J. (1993). The elaboration likelihood model as a theory of attitude formation: A mathematical analysis. *Communication Theory*, 3(1), 50-65.
- Haugtvedt, C. P., Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1992). Need for cognition and advertising: Understanding the role of personality variables in consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 1(3), 239-260.

- Haugtvedt, C. P., & Strathman, A. J. (1990). Situational product relevance and attitude persistence. *Advances in consumer research*, 17(1).
- Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford publications.
- Hill, D. (2003). *Body of truth: Leveraging what consumers can't or won't say*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Howard, J. A., & Sheth, J. N. (1969). *The theory of buyer behavior* (No. 658.834 H6).
- Isen, A. M. (1984). Toward understanding the role of affect in cognition.
- Isen, A. M. (2001). An influence of positive affect on decision making in complex situations: Theoretical issues with practical implications. *Journal of consumer psychology*, 11(2), 75-85.
- Isen, A. M. (2003). Positive affect as a source of human strength.
- Isen, A. M., & Means, B. (1983). The influence of positive affect on decision-making strategy. *Social cognition*, 2(1), 18-31.
- Kamp, E., & MacInnis, D. J. (1995). Characteristics of portrayed emotions in commercials: when does what is shown in ads affect viewers?. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 35(6), 19-29.
- Kapadia J. (2017). What's the Deal with ASMR Food Videos? Food Republic. Retrieved from <https://www.foodrepublic.com/2017/09/11/whats-deal-asmr-food-videos/>
- Keller, Kevin L. (1993), "Conceptualizing, Measuring and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity," *Journal of Marketing*, 57 ( January), 1-22.
- Kent, R. J., & Allen, C. T. (1994). Competitive interference effects in consumer memory for advertising: the role of brand familiarity. *Journal of marketing*, 58(3), 97-105.
- Kim, S., Kim, J., & Kim, E. (2017). Metaphor as visual thinking in advertising and its effects: focus on brand familiarity and product involvement. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 23(5), 654-672.
- Knobloch. S., Zillmann. D. (2006) Mood Management via the Digital Jukebox. *Journal of Communication*, Volume 52, Issue 2, June 2002, Pages 351–366, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2002.tb02549.x>
- Koul, S. (2016, December 21). *The Manufactured Intimacy Of Online Self-Care*. Retrieved from <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/scaachikoul/the-manufactured-intimacy-of-online-self-care>.
- Krishna, A. (2010). *Sensory marketing: research on the sensuality of products*. New York: Routledge.

- Kuvaas, B. & Kaufmann, G. (2004). Impact of mood, framing, and need for cognition and decision makers' recall and confidence, *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 17, 59-74.
- Laczniak, R. N., & Muehling, D. D. (1993). The relationship between experimental manipulations and tests of theory in an advertising message involvement context. *Journal of Advertising*, 22(3), 59-74.
- Lang, A. (2000). The limited capacity model of mediated message processing. *Journal of communication*, 50(1), 46-70.
- Lange, F., & Dahlén, M. (2003). Let's be strange: brand familiarity and ad-brand incongruency. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*.
- Lee, D. (2017, August 9). Ikea's 25-minute ASMR commercial is the most satisfying way to shop for furniture. Retrieved from <https://www.theverge.com/2017/8/9/16120624/ikea-asmr-commercial-oddly-youtube>
- Lindstrom, M. (2006). Brand sense: How to build powerful brands through touch, taste, smell, sight and sound. *Strategic Direction*.
- Lochte, B. C., Guillory, S. A., Richard, C. A., & Kelley, W. M. (2018). An fMRI investigation of the neural correlates underlying the autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR). *BioImpacts: BI*, 8(4), 295.
- Lopez. (2018, May 25). ASMR, explained: why millions of people are watching YouTube videos of someone whispering. Retrieved from <https://www.vox.com/2015/7/15/8965393/asmr-video-youtube-autonomous-sensory-meridian-response>.
- Macdonald, E., & Sharp, B. (2003). Management perceptions of the importance of brand awareness as an indication of advertising effectiveness (Doctoral dissertation, Massey University, Department of Marketing).
- MacKenzie, S. B., & Lutz, R. J. (1989). An empirical examination of the structural antecedents of attitude toward the ad in an advertising pretesting context. *Journal of marketing*, 53(2), 48-65.
- Maheswaran, D., & Chaiken, S. (1991). Promoting systematic processing in low-motivation settings: Effect of incongruent information on processing and judgment. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 61(1), 13.
- Mastro, D. E., Eastin, M. S., & Tamborini, R. (2002). Internet search behaviors and mood alterations: A selective exposure approach. *Media Psychology*, 4(2), 157-172.
- Mattila, A. (1998). An examination of consumers' use of heuristic cues in making satisfaction judgments. *Psychology & Marketing*, 15(5), 477-501.

- McErlean, A. B. J., & Banissy, M. J. (2017). Assessing Individual Variation in Personality and Empathy Traits in Self-Reported Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response. *Multisensory Research*, 30(6), 601–613. doi: 10.1163/22134808-00002571
- Muehling, D. D. (1987). An investigation of factors underlying attitude-toward-advertising-in-general. *Journal of Advertising*, 16(1), 32-40.
- Muehling, D. D., Laczniak, R. N., & Andrews, J. C. (1993). Defining, operationalizing, and using involvement in advertising research: A review. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 15(1), 21-57.
- Nabi, R. L. (1999). A cognitive-functional model for the effects of discrete negative emotions on information processing, attitude change, and recall. *Communication theory*, 9(3), 292-320.
- Olivar, A. (2020, January 14). Skincare ASMR Is The Oddly Satisfying Beauty Trend Of 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.clozette.co/article/skincare-asmr-beauty-trend-6372>
- Park, C. W., & Young, S. M. (1986). Consumer response to television commercials: The impact of involvement and background music on brand attitude formation. *Journal of marketing research*, 23(1), 11-24.
- Pettie, E. (2018). Trending now on YouTube: Virtual YouTubers, classroom set-ups, and relaxation videos, ThinkwithGoogle. Retrieved from <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/september-youtube-video-trends/>
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1981). Issue involvement as a moderator of the effects on attitude of advertising content and context. *Advances in consumer research*, 8(1).
- 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.
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. In *Communication and persuasion* (pp. 1-24). Springer, New York, NY.
- Petty, R. E., Haugtvedt, C. P., & Smith, S. M. (1995). Elaboration as a determinant of attitude strength: Creating attitudes that are persistent, resistant, and predictive of behavior. *Attitude strength: Antecedents and consequences*, 4(93-130).
- Petty, R. E., Priester, J. R., & Wegener, D. T. (2014). Cognitive processes in attitude change. In *Handbook of social cognition* (pp. 85-158). Psychology Press.
- Petrova, P. K., & Cialdini, R. B. (2005). Fluency of consumption imagery and the backfire effects of imagery appeals. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(3), 442-452.

- Phau, I., Teah, M., So, J. T., Parsons, A. G., & Yap, S. F. (2013). Corporate branding, emotional attachment and brand loyalty: the case of luxury fashion branding. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*.
- Phelps, J., & Thorson, E. (1991). Brand Familiarity and Product Involvement Effects on the Attitude Toward an Ad-Brand Attitude Relationship. *Advances in consumer research*, 18(1).
- Poerio, G. L., Blakey, E., Hostler, T. J., Veltri, T. (2018) More than a feeling: Autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) is characterized by reliable changes in affect and physiology. *PLoS ONE* 13(6): e0196645. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0196645>
- Quester, P., & Lim, A. L. (2003). Product involvement/brand loyalty: is there a link?. *Journal of product & brand management*.
- Richard, C. (n.d.). ASMR University. Medium. <https://asmruniversity.com/history-of-asmr/>
- Rouw, R., & Erfanian, M. (2017). A Large-Scale Study of Misophonia. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 74(3), 453–479. doi: 10.1002/jclp.22500
- Schultz, E.J. (2019) Superbowl Ad for Michelob Ultra’s Organic Beer Taps ASMR Sensory Trend, AdAge. Retrieved from <https://adage.com/article/special-report-super-bowl/michelob-ultra-s-super-bowl-spot-asmr/316388>
- Schwarz, N., Clore, G.L., (1988). How do I feel about it? Informative functions of affective states. In: Fiedler, K., Forgas, J. (Eds.), *Affect, cognition, and social behavior*. Hogrefe International, Toronto.
- Sheinin, D. A., Varki, S., & Ashley, C. (2011). The Differential Effect Of Ad Novelty And Message Usefulness On Brand Judgements. *Journal of Advertising*, 40(3), 5-17. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/docview/887284595?accountid=7118>
- Slovic, P., Finucane, M. L., Peters, E., & Gregor, D. G. (2007). The affect heuristic. *European journal of operational research*, 177(3), 1333-1352.
- Smith, N., Snider A.M., (2019). ASMR, affect and digitally-mediated intimacy. Elsevier, 30, 41-48 doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2018.11.002
- Smith, S.D., Fredborg, B.K., Kornelsen J. (2017). An examination of the default mode network in individuals with autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR). *Social Neuroscience* 12(4), 361–365 DOI 10.1080/17470919.2016.1188851.
- Spears, N., & Singh, S. N. (2004). Measuring attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions. *Journal of current issues & research in advertising*, 26(2), 53-66.



- Sweeney, E. (2019, March 30). The Reason Why ASMR Makes Some People Cringe. Retrieved from <https://www.menshealth.com/health/a26990905/why-asmr-doesnt-work/>.
- 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.
- Traylor, M. B. (1981). Product involvement and brand commitment. *Journal of Advertising Research*.
- Unnava, H. R., Agarwal, S., & Haugtvedt, C. P. (1996). Interactive effects of presentation modality and message-generated imagery on recall of advertising information. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 23(1), 81-88.
- Wright, P., 1975. Consumer choice strategies: Simplifying versus optimizing. *Journal of Marketing Research* 12, 60– 67.
- Yagci, M. I., Biswas, A., & Dutta, S. (2009). Effects of comparative advertising format on consumer responses: The moderating effects of brand image and attribute relevance. *Journal of business research*, 62(8), 768-774.
- Yoon, S. J., & Park, J. E. (2012). Do sensory ad appeals influence brand attitude?. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(11), 1534-1542.
- Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1985). Measuring the involvement construct. *Journal of consumer research*, 12(3), 341-352.
- Zillmann, D. (1988). Mood management through communication choices. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 31(3), 327-340.