



WARWICK BUSINESS SCHOOL
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Masters Programmes

Dissertation Cover Sheet

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Degree Course | MSc Marketing and Strategy |
| Student ID Number | 1661480 |
| Title | Anthropomorphised Spokes-characters and Word-of-mouth Communications |
| Dissertation Code | IB9Z90 |
| Submission Deadline | 26 September 2017 |
| Word Count | 13861 |
| Number of Pages | 111 |

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**ANTHROPOMORPHISED SPOKES-CHARACTERS
AND WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATIONS**

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MSc in Marketing and Strategy

Warwick Business School, University of Warwick

Date: September 2017

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III. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Steve Henderson for his invaluable support. His wise advice and assistance enabled me to overcome some challenges at the beginning of the dissertation, and throughout the research process. Without his guidance, this dissertation would not have been possible.

Moreover, I have to express my gratitude to my friends on social media who have spent their valuable time in participating in my research. I would also like to give thanks to my friends in University of Warwick, in particular Krystal and Jojo, for their supports during my research journey.

I would like to acknowledge with my utmost gratitude to my parents and my sister for their love, caring, support and encouragement. Thank you.

IV. ABSTRACT

Spokes-characters have been used as brand identifiers since the 90s. This research is to examine whether different level of kindchenschema cuteness in non-celebrity spokes-characters would influence one's attitude towards the advertisement, the brand and their behaviours in sharing word-of-mouth, in terms of communication channels used and the tendency to share adverts with people in different interpersonal relationships / tie strengths. Rowse - a leading brand that sells honey in the United Kingdom, was selected to be the object of study. A pilot test was conducted to determine the type of product, and the type of spokes-character to be displayed in the actual survey.

The actual survey was distributed online and 106 responses were deemed suitable for analysis. The results indicated that people were more likely to develop positive attitudes towards the advertisements and the brands when a spokes-character with high level of kindchenschema cuteness was presented in the advertisements. Senders tend to share advertisements with cute characters in comparison with the one in low level of cuteness. Nevertheless, individuals were more likely to share during face-to-face verbal conversations than in written format, such as on instant messaging or social networking sites. The research also showed that people tend to share the advertisements with cute characters to those who were with close interpersonal relationships to maintain emotional connections, and those who were in distant relationships to make good impressions. Practical Implications for industry are drawn and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Anthropomorphism, Spokes-characters, Kindchenschema Cuteness, Brand Attitude, Word-of-mouth (WOM), Electronic Word-of-mouth (eWOM), Communication Channels, Social Media, Synchronicity, Interpersonal Relationships / Tie Strengths

DISSERTATION

ANTHROPOMORPHISED SPOKES-CHARACTERS AND WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

Word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is an influential marketing tool on consumption decisions (Chen, 2017). Traditional WOM involves the presence of individuals, and verbal communications for one to share consumption experiences with others (Carl, 2006; Godes et al, 2005). In recent years due to the advancement of Internet technologies the way people communicate has changed. The use of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) becomes popular as individuals can share information and express opinions at their convenience (Sun et al, 2006). Prior studies found that more interesting topics were more likely to be shared through eWOM (Bakshy et al., 2011; Berger and Milkman, 2012) and to be talked about than using verbal communications (Berger and Schwartz, 2011), and in some studies suggested that the more interesting the product was, the more likely it would be talked about (Dye, 2000; Hughes, 2005).









To generate word-of-mouth in communities, create awareness and reach large audiences, organisations endorse celebrities as spokespersons, and sometimes, create anthropomorphised spokes-characters for their commercials in order to enhance credibility, heighten the appeal of the advertisements to be memorable, and make products to be glamorize (Spielman, 1981).

The endorsement of ‘experts’ and celebrities is an effective way to attract audience’s attention, provided the endorsers are attractive, credible, and able to match their own personal characteristics with the image of the brand or firm (Stafford et al., 2002). Advertisements with celebrity endorsements are more likely to stand out from the others (Erdogan, 1999). However, in some cases the image of the persons may not fit the brand, which is due to changes in physical appearance, reductions in professional achievements, or involvements in scandals or illegal activities (Erdogan, 1999; Klebba and Unger, 1983; Till and Shimp, 1998).

In the late '90s, spokes-characters became more popular for companies to use as brand identifiers (Dotz et al, 1996). It is ideal to be used in a long run, as they do not age like human, and companies created the spokes-characters have a large extent in controlling how the characters behave, and how they are presented in different marketing channels (AdAge, 2003).

In commercials, businesses promote products, services, or their brands using spokes-characters with different forms of appearances (AdAge, 2003; Figure 1), which include human (e.g., Mr. Clean, Wendy's, Ronald McDonald), animals (e.g., Chester Cheetah, Tony the Tiger, Trix the Rabbit), mythical creatures (e.g., Green Giant, Keebler's Elves, Count Alfred Chocula), or fictional characters (e.g., Michelin Man, Pillsbury Doughboy, M&M's spokes-candies).

FIGURE 1
DIFFERENT TYPES OF SPOKES-CHARACTERS

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|--|---|
| Human |  |  |  |
| Animals |  |  |  |
| Mythical Creatures |  |  |  |
| Fictional Characters |  |  |  |

These characters are anthropomorphised and have similar humanlike features that are likely to enhance its perceived cuteness, which is to be attractive, adorable and endearing (Lorenz, 1943; Hellen and Sääksjärvi, 2011). Prior studies found that cuteness could capture one's attention (Brosch et al, 2007) and influence one's cognitive processes and behaviours (Lehmann et al, 2013). However, not much is known with respect to the kindchenschema cuteness in spokes-characters would influence consumer attitudes towards the advertisements or the brands, and their word-of-mouth behaviours in terms of channels used and the person to share with.

The aim of this study is to explore the relationships between anthropomorphised spokes-characters and consumers' word-of-mouth behaviours. Consistent with past studies (Callcott and Alvey, 1991; Callcott and Lee, 1995; Phillips, 1996), the current research focused on non-celebrity spokes-characters, which are solely created and used to promote products or brands.

The underlying objectives of the research are to (1) review the literature on how WOM affects attitude, and to (2) investigate whether specific characteristics of spokes-characters, such as kindchenschema cuteness, will influence consumer's perceptions towards the advertisement and the brand, and the word-of-mouth behaviours regarding the channels used and person to share with.

Before working on the actual survey, a pilot test was conducted to examine consumer's attitude towards the brand, the tendency for them to purchase Rowse's products, and the types of characters (i.e., ants, bears, bees, and raccoons) to be used in promotion (i.e., TV / print advertisements). The pre-test also measured the level of kindchenschema cuteness in characters (i.e., bears and bees), and tested whether higher level of kindchenschema cuteness in spokes-characters was considered interesting.

The research proposed that spokes-characters with a higher level of kindchenschema cuteness bring positive attitude towards the advertisement and the brand. In terms of channels used, it is predicted that people are more likely to share the word-of-mouth with cute spokes-characters through electronic channels than traditional face-to-face channels. While in terms of tie strengths, as different tie strengths or interpersonal closeness might also influence what individuals share with one another (Berger, 2014); and prior research found that the tenderness in products with kindchenschema cuteness would influence one's cognitive processes and behaviours (Lehmann, 2013). The research hypothesised that people tend to share cute spokes-characters with people who were in close interpersonal connections (i.e., close friends) to maintain the relationships, and with distant interpersonal connections (i.e., acquaintances / distant friends) for self-enhancement.

Two advertisements with a spokes-character (i.e., a bee) of different level of kindchenschema cuteness were created, of which one had cute attributes of newborns, such as large eyes, a bulging forehead and rounded cheek (Nenkov and Scott, 2014), while the other did not. Based on participant's selection and their responses on the scenario cases, their attitude towards the advertisement and the brand, and WOM behaviours can be measured and analysed. Interpretations of the results and insights for businesses that use spokes-characters in promoting products, services, or the brand can then be drawn.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. SPOKES-CHARACTERS & ANTHROPOMORPHISM

2.1.1. SPOKES-CHARACTERS

Over century spokes-characters have been used in marketing campaigns or on product packaging (Callcott and Lee, 1995). Spokes-characters, also known as character icons, become brand signatures and symbolise some attributes or benefits of a brand (Garretson and Burton, 1998), which can create visibility effect in advertisements, attract attentions from audiences (Callcott and Alvey, 1991), create brand identity and build positive brand associations (Dotz et al, 1996; Fournier, 1998; Thompson, 2002; Garretson and Niedrich, 2004). Some research indicated spokes-characters in commercial and print advertisements were created to promote a range of products or services, or for a specific product or brand (Callcott and Lee, 1994; Neeley and Schumann, 2004; Spears et al, 1996).

These characters can be categorised into two types: celebrity, or non-celebrity. The former is from movies, cartoon strips and programmes (e.g., Snoopy, Pink Panther, the Flintstones), and then licensed by brands for advertising and promotions (Garretson and Niedrich, 2004), while the latter is created and used solely for the purpose in promoting a product or a brand as listed in Table 1. The characters can be deities, mankind, natural animals, or manmade creations, which depend on the culture in specific areas (Spears et al, 1996). To become a spokes-character, one of the elements is anthropomorphism, which is defined as the selected entity (e.g., animal, god, object) has the attributes of human characteristics (Epley et al, 2007).

2.1.2. ANTHROPOMORPHISM

‘Anthropomorphism’ can be defined as a nonhuman agent (i.e., an animal or object) that acts like a human, which has its own characteristics, motivations, intentions, or emotions (Epley et al, 2008a). Creations that have anthropomorphised features can be dated back to 50,000-10,000 BC, due to the rise of behavioural modernity (Trinkaus, 2005).

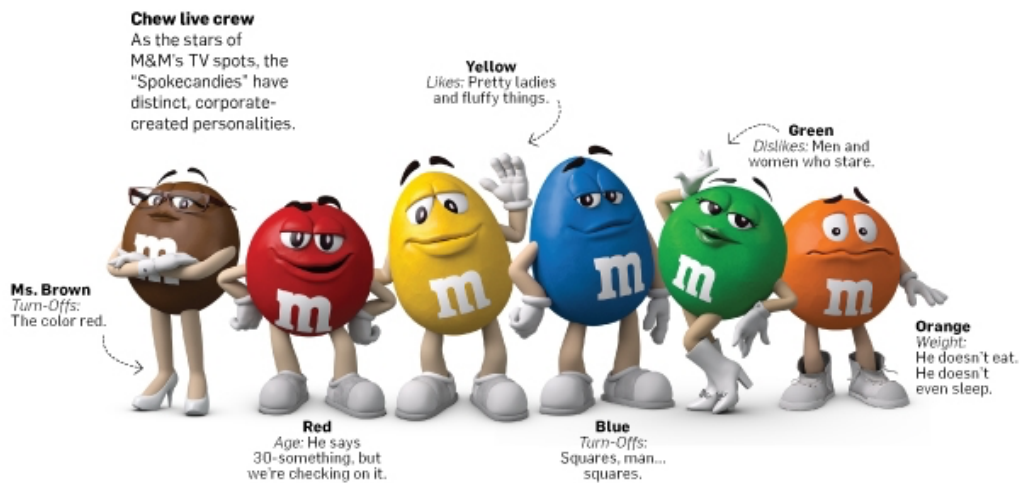
TABLE 1
EXAMPLES OF SPOKES-CHARACTERS

| Spokes-character | Brand / Company | Type of Products / Services |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Tony the Tiger | Kellogg's | Frosted flakes breakfast cereal |
| Trix the Rabbit | General Mills | Breakfast cereal |
| M&M's "spokes-candies" | Mars, Incorporated | Candy-coated chocolate |
| Chester Cheetah | Cheetos | Snacks and puff corn |
| Energizer Bunny | Energizer | Battery |
| Kevin the Carrot | Aldi | Supermarket chains |
| Aleksandr | Comparethemarket.com | Online insurance comparison |
| Gecko | GEICO | Auto insurance |
| Kumamon | Government of Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan | Promote Kyushu tourism in Japan |

Anthropomorphism not only makes nonliving objects alive, it also involves implementing human-like descriptors, such as human-like physical attributes, emotions, and consciousness, to the mental and physical characteristics of nonliving agents (Hur, et al, 2015; Epley et al, 2008b). With the attribution of humanlike features, it brings positive influences when consumers evaluate the products (Aggarwal and McGill, 2007; Touré-Tillery and McGill, 2015).

For example, M&M's 'spokes-candies' in Figure 2 are anthropomorphised, which have human-like personalities, such as excitable, sarcastic, and even sexual (Klara, 2016) as shown in the Super Bowl Commercial (AdAge, 2012). Other than personalities, another important element is the product appearance.

FIGURE 2
M&M's 'Spokes-candies'
(Klara, 2016)



Product appearance is a blend of visual attributes, such as ratios in shapes (Raghubir and Greenleaf, 2006), styles in packaging (Orth and Malkewitz, 2008), and visual arts (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). These attributes are created by designers and can be observed by consumers in order to build a sensory effect (Bloch, 1995; Hollins and Pugh, 1990). One's cognition and decision-making process to a product or a brand can easily be influenced by appearance, which is a visual attribute that gets connected with consumers at their first glance (Bloch et al, 2003; Rindova and Petkova, 2007). As for a spokes-character, the appearance would be its cuteness.

2.1.3. CUTENESS

The general definition for cuteness is to be attractive, adorable and endearing (Hellen and Sääksjärvi, 2011). Anthropomorphised attributes are often included in some cute products (Epley et al, 2007), as the humanised characteristics can potentially help the character improve its perceived cuteness (Lorenz, 1943). Norman (2004) added that some other attributes including size, shape, design, or the positioning in the market might also affect one's perception of product cuteness.

Whimsical cuteness is a dimension that multi-faced constructs cuteness (Carver, 1989; Nenkov et al, 2008), which is associated with fun and playfulness and embodied in an inanimate object (Nenkov and Scott, 2014). Prior studies found that individuals exposed to whimsically cute products were more likely to trigger mental representation of fun, and get engaged in indulgent consumption (ibid). Another aspect of cuteness is related to the vulnerable nature of baby-like characteristics, which is kindchenschema (baby schema) cuteness.

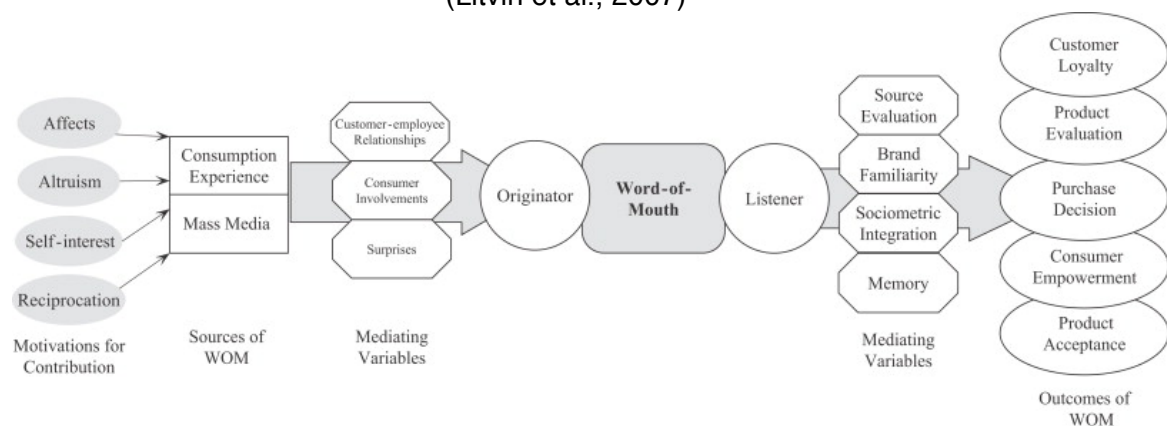
Most of the studies in the past examined the kindchenschema (baby schema) cuteness, which can be found in newborns that have large eyes, rounded cheeks or a bulging forehead (Nenkov and Scott, 2014). Individuals associated these characteristics with naiveté, kindness, warmth (Berry and McArthur, 1985), and honesty (Gorn et al, 2008). When individuals come across with cute infants or baby animals, prior studies found that individuals tend to be more careful (Sherman et al, 2009), and triggered adult's hormonal responses to ensure the cute living entity was under protection (Sprengelmeyer et al, 2009). Consistent with prior studies (Callcott and Alvey, 1991; Callcott and Lee, 1995; Phillips, 1996), the current research will examine spokes-characters with kindchenschema cuteness.

In recent years, brands from highly commoditised sector (i.e., food or fast-moving consumer goods) are more likely to create cute anthropomorphised mascots or characters as their spokes-characters to engage with consumers and promote their products, services, or brands (Costa, 2010; Vranica, 2012), which creates topics and word-of-mouth for consumers to talk about verbally or through electronic channels.

2.2. WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATIONS

Word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is a process that enables individuals (i.e., the senders) in sharing their consumption experiences, opinions, and information with other parties (i.e., the receiver), which may influence the receiver's mind towards or away from particular products, services, or brands (Arndt, 1967; Carl, 2006; Godes et al, 2005; Hawkins et al., 2004). Litvin et al. (2007) has constructed a conceptual model of WOM communications as shown in Figure 3. Researchers have been studying WOM communications since the 1960s (Arndt, 1967; Dichter, 1966; Engel et al, 1969) - traditional WOM communications, which require physical presence of two parties who are not commercial entities of a product or companies (Arndt, 1967; Carl, 2006). The advancement of technologies allows individuals share experiences and information not only through face-to-face interactions, but also on electronic channels, such as social networking sites and instant messaging applications, which help individual builds virtual relationships and communities.

FIGURE 3
CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATIONS
(Litvin et al., 2007)



2.2.1. TRADITIONAL WORD-OF-MOUTH (WOM)

Traditional WOM is an informal communication process between consumers in exchanging and sharing opinions and experiences on products, services and brands they have encountered with (Westbrook, 1987; Litvin, 2007). For businesses, consumers share WOM help the brands speed up the spread of information (Goldenberg et al., 2001), encourage new consumer purchases (Schmitt et al, 2011), and generate more sales in product categories (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Godes and Mayzlin, 2009). While for consumers, prior research indicated that individuals often search for experience to enhance or bolster self-concept (Baumeister, 1998; Sirgy, 1982). It is an affective way for consumers to build satisfaction, pleasure and sadness with other users (Dichter 1966; Neelamegham and Jain, 1999; Nyer, 1997). Self-enhancement is one of the factors that motivates individuals to share word-of-mouth (Dichter, 1966; Packard and Wooten, 2013; Wojnicki and Godes, 2010). Other factors include the characteristics of the topics (Berger and Milkman, 2012; Chen and Berger, 2013), contexts of conversations (Barasch and Berger 2014; Berger and Iyengar, 2013), differences among individuals (Cheema and Kaikati, 2010; Zhang et al, 2014), and tie strengths (Frenzen and Nakamoto, 1993; Chen, 2017).

In accordance with Berger and Schwartz (2011) people are more likely to share novel and interesting stories than boring ones with others. Recent research in WOM showed that it was favourable for people to share WOM with strangers or distant relationships to induce self-enhancement; and share with close friends to maintain an emotional and interpersonal connection with one another (Chen, 2017; Dubois et al, 2016). In recent years, the improvements of technologies enable people to gain access to the Internet at anytime and anywhere. It becomes conventional for people to share comments and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) through electronic channels, such as social networking platforms (e.g., Facebook, Weibo) and instant messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp, WeChat).

2.2.2. ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH (EWOM)

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is a crucial and influential marketing tool in modern society. Informal opinions, recommendations, and feelings of particular products, services, or brands are shared online through Internet-based technology with others (Litvin, 2007). Individuals share news articles or jokes to look smart, and helpful (Berger, 2011, 2014; Berger and Milkman, 2012), and share emotional video clips to enhance the relationships and help building social connections (Peters and Kashima, 2007). Studies found that one of the reasons people share eWOM on social networking channels was to enhance their self-esteem (Gonzales and Hancock, 2011).

Self-enhancement means that the person would like to be seen as in a positive frame and make them favourable to the other parties (Baumeister, 1982; Gregg, et al, 2011; Sedikides and Gregg, 2008). These eWOM would be a reference and bring positive or negative impacts to one's product evaluation and purchase decisions process (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Kumar and Benbasat, 2006; Zhang et al, 2010). Sernovitz (2006) pointed out the most important factor that constitutes to the spread of word-of-mouth was to be considered as interesting.

2.2.3. BEING INTERESTING

In accordance with Sernovitz (2006), people tend to share topics that were interesting with one another, rather than talking about things that were boring and dull. Other studies provided some evidences that individuals would be more likely to share interesting online contents (Bakshy et al, 2011) and interesting news articles online (Berger and Milkman, 2012) with the other parties. Similarly, consumers tend to talk about brands/products/topics that were interesting (e.g., Nike, iPhone, Hollywood blockbusters) than those (e.g., Cheerios, Tide, ketchup) that were less interesting (Berger and Iyengar, 2013; Berger and Schwartz, 2011).

Interesting is an abstract concept, which different people would consider different things as interesting. In general, interesting can be defined as things that were new, brought excitements and surprises to the person, and out of their expectations (Berlyne, 1960; Silvia, 2006, 2008). The two main components of this intrinsic emotion were to be novel and comprehensible. Novelty means the topic has to be up-to-date and astonishing (Berlyne, 1960), while comprehensibility means the new topic has to be understandable. If the topic is novel and comprehensible, people consider it as interesting (Silvia, 2008). However, if the topic is novel and incomprehensible, people will be confused (ibid).

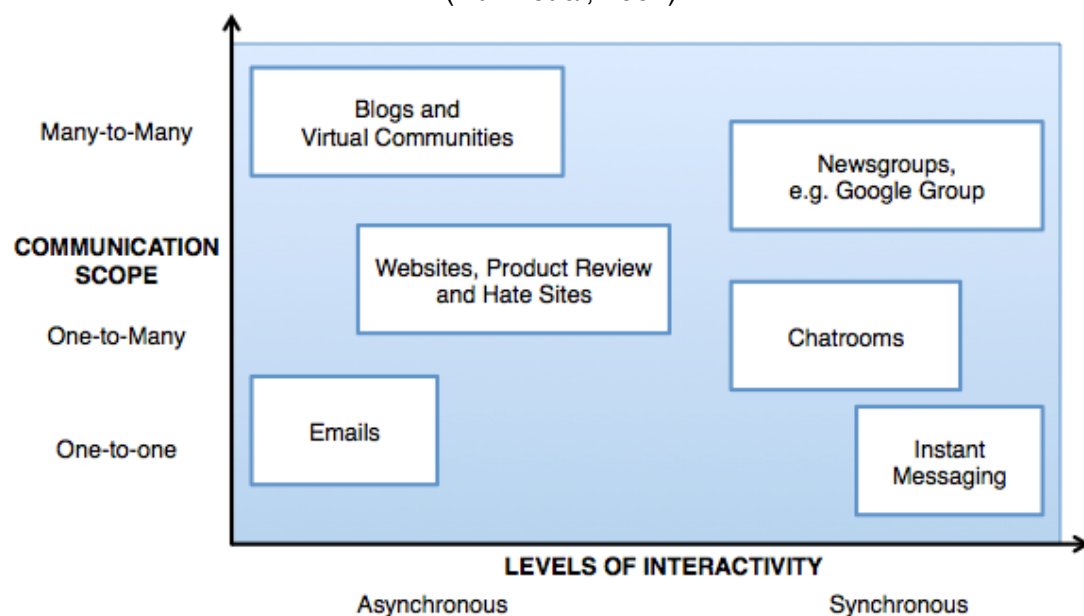
Prior studies also illustrated that topics that were unusual, outrageous, or remarkable (Hughes, 2005), or interesting and surprising (Knox, 2010; Nulman, 2009; Rosen, 2009) were more likely to be shared with one another. Some research suggested that due to novelty, more interesting products could increase the possibility to generate immediate word-of-mouth, but their interest would fade over certain period of time (Moldovan et al, 2006; Wu and Huberman, 2007).

2.2.4. DIFFERENCE IN MODALITY AND SYNCHRONICITY

The major difference between traditional WOM and eWOM is the modality (Chafe and Tannen, 1987). The former involves verbal communications (e.g., face-to-face or conversations on phones), while the latter involves written communications (e.g., share information or experiences through texting, messaging, posting, or typing).

Prior studies indicated that different modalities involve different synchronicity (Clark and Brennan, 1991; Morris and Ogan, 1996). In verbal communications, individuals are more likely to interact and response in real-time with little delay in between oral conversations, which tend to be more synchronous. In contrast, written communications are relatively less synchronous in the sense that individuals can have time to construct and modify their messages before sending them to the other parties (Chafe and Danielewicz, 1987; Redeker, 1984; Walther, 2007). As shown in Figure 4 Litvin (2007) suggested the types of eWOM media can be divided based on its communication scope and level of interactivity.

FIGURE 4
TYPOLGY OF EWOM CHANNELS
 (Litvin et al, 2007)



Among the types of electronic channels, instant messaging is considered to be more synchronous than emails and social networking sites, as people are more likely to have real-time communications or responses (Litvin et al, 2007). However, instant messaging is somewhat asynchronous as it allows individuals to take breaks between conversations or to reply at a later time (Berger and Iyengar, 2013). Due to communication asynchrony, research found that individuals tend to share more interesting topics about the products and brands in written communications than verbally (ibid). Things consider being interesting, as they are novel, exciting, surprising, or out of the person's expectation (Berlyne, 1960), and to be understandable or comprehensible (Silvia, 2006, 2008).

However, Eisingerich et al (2015) argued that individuals tend to recommend a brand or WOM during face-to-face conversations rather than on social media. The findings indicated the difference that influenced one's tendency to share positive WOM and eWOM was due to the perceived social risks and the association of the communication channels (ibid). In addition, people tend to share differently with close friends and acquaintances, due to their interpersonal closeness or tie strength (Frenzen and Nakamoto, 1993).

2.2.5. INTERPERSONAL CLOSENESS / TIE STRENGTH

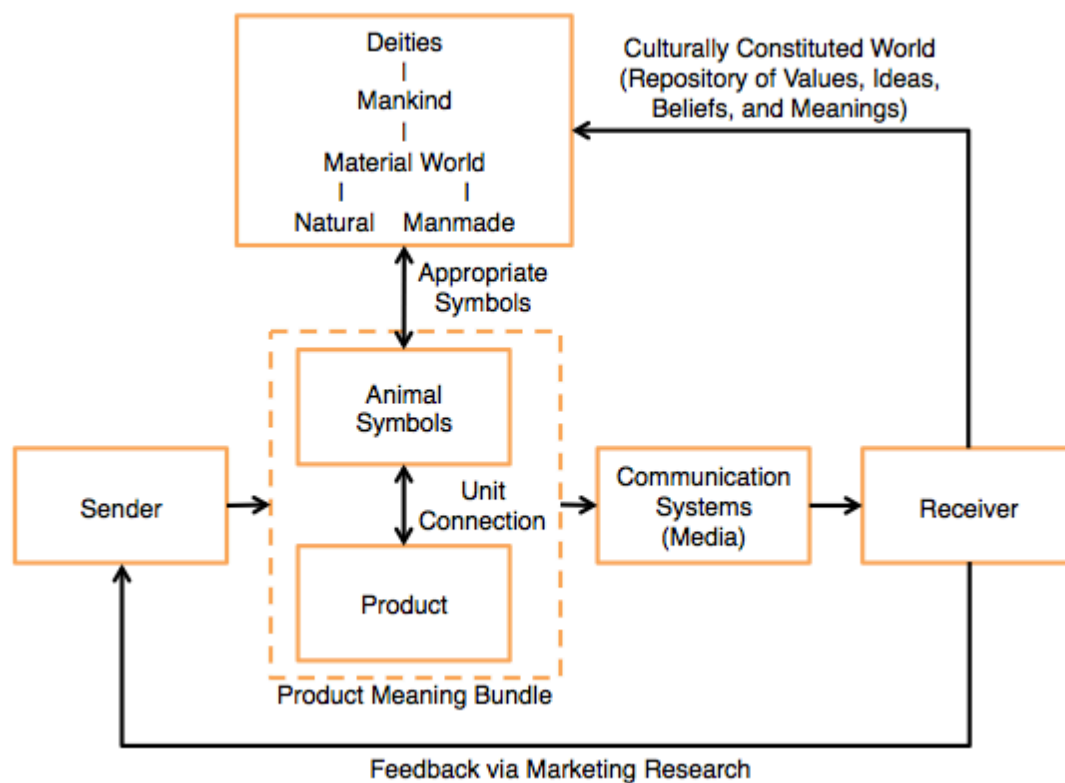
The WOM varies when individuals share with people in different interpersonal closeness, or tie strength. Berger (2014) indicated that the functions of WOM are to build good impressions, regulate emotion, acquire information, create social bonding, and persuade others. Prior research indicated that people engaged with others who have a low level of interpersonal closeness or weak in tie strengths (i.e., strangers or acquaintances) were more likely to engage in positive WOM (De Angelis et al, 2012; Wojnicki and Godes, 2013) and amend their public WOM when they recognised others were expressing divergent opinions (Schlosser, 2005). Individuals are less likely to share things that would make them look bad (Rimé et al, 1998), but there was a reduction in tendency for the close others, as people would like to vent or look for social support (Berger, 2014).

With a high level of interpersonal closeness or strong in tie strength (i.e., close friends), the sender tends to share emotionally connecting contents to the receiver in order to maintain the relationships via communications (Finkenauer and Rimé, 1998). Levinger (1983) believed once the relationship was formed, if it did not have active maintenance between two parties, the relationship would eventually decay.

2.3. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SPOKES-CHARACTERS AND WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATIONS

In accordance with the symbolic communications model constructed by Spears et al (1996) as shown in Figure 5, it provides an overview of how messages about products with animal symbolism are formed and the communication process.

FIGURE 5
Symbolic Communications Model
(Spears et al., 1996)



The model proposed that advertisers created product-meaning bundles by linking products with animal symbols from a culturally constructed world. Based on Leach (1970) schema, the animal symbols can be deities, mankind, animals or the material world. With a high level of similarity, interaction, proximity, familiarity and ownership, it builds a close association (i.e., unit connections) between the products and animal symbols (Heider, 1958; Mowen, 1980; Spears et al, 1996).

Senders can then transmit information in the product-meaning bundles through communication systems or channels to the receivers (Spears et al, 1996). Several studies have examined both WOM and eWOM (Berger and Schwartz, 2011; Gershoff et al, 2003; Schlosser, 2011; Trusov et al, 2009). However, not much is known whether specific characteristics of spokes-characters, such as the level of kindchenschema cuteness, would influence consumer's perceptions towards the advertisement and the brand, and word-of-mouth behaviours regarding the channels used and the person to share with. The research will explore further by conducting an online survey.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the current research is to explore whether there is a relationship between the level of kindchenschema cuteness in the anthropomorphised spokes-characters and consumers' word-of-mouth behaviours. Figure 6 shows the conceptual flow of the current research. First, the research reveals the usage of various electronic channels, and participants' attitude towards sharing advertisements in general. Followed by is the first hypothesis that related to the cuteness in spokes-characters and the attitude towards the advertisements and brand. The current research proposed that spokes-characters with a higher level of kindchenschema cuteness bring positive attitudes towards the advertisement and the brand, where cuteness of the spokes-characters will be measured by averaging variables such as (i) cute/ not cute, (ii) adorable/ not adorable, and (iii) endearing/ not endearing.

H1a: Compared to spokes-characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, cute characters are more likely to bring positive attitudes **towards the advertisement**.

H1b: Compared to spokes-characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, cute characters are more likely to bring positive attitudes **towards the brand**.

In terms of channels used, it is predicted that advertisements with cute spokes-characters are more likely to be shared. Prior studies indicated that individuals engaged in word-of-mouth communication could be a means for self-enhancement (Ditcher, 1966; Packard and Wooten, 2013; Wojnicki and Godes, 2010), which referred to their desirability in presenting themselves as positive and favourable to others (Baumeister, 1982; Gregg et al, 2011; Sedikides and Gregg, 2008). Other studies indicated that due to communication asynchrony, individuals have more time to construct and refine their messages, therefore, they were more likely to share more interesting topics in written communication channels than oral conversations (Berger and Iyengar, 2013). It is predicted that individuals consider cute characters interesting, and prefer to share advertisements with cute spokes-characters through asynchrony channels (e.g., social networking sites) than synchrony channels (e.g., traditional face-to-face communications and instant messaging).

H2: Compared to spokes-characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, cute characters are considered to be interesting.

H2a: Characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness are more likely to be shared through communication channels with **low level of synchronicity (e.g., social networking sites)**.

H2b: Characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness are more likely to be shared through communication channels with **medium level of synchronicity (e.g., instant messaging)**.

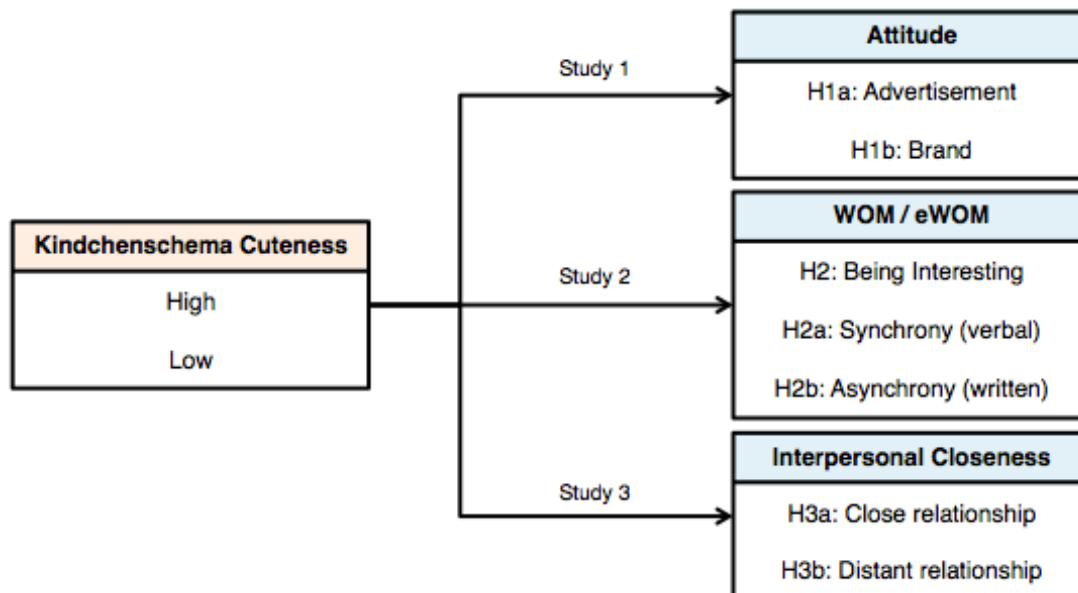
H2c: Characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness are more likely to be shared through communication channels with **high level of synchronicity (e.g., traditional face-to-face communications)**.

While in terms of tie strengths, as different tie strengths or interpersonal closeness might also influence what individuals share with one another (Berger, 2014); the research hypothesised that people tend to share cute spokes-characters with whom has a close interpersonal connection or strong tie strength (i.e., close friends) to maintain the relationships; and with whom has a distant interpersonal connection or weak tie strength (i.e., acquaintances / distant friends) for self-enhancement.

H3a: Compared to spokes-characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, cute characters are more likely to be shared **towards close relationships (i.e., close friends)** to maintain the relationships by emotionally connected with the person.

H3b: Compared to spokes-characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, cute characters are more likely to be shared **towards distant relationships (i.e., acquaintances / distant friends)** to make a good impression.

FIGURE 6
CONCEPTUAL FLOW OF THE RESEARCH



4. METHODOLOGY

The current research was quantitative-based to understand the correlation, i.e., whether the level of kindchenschema cuteness in a spokes-character would influence consumer's attitude towards the advertisement and the brand, and their WOM behaviour. It was common for brands in low-involvement product category, such as cereals and confectionery, to employ spokes-characters in representing the products or the brand. However, characters were less likely to be found in sweet and savoury spreads/dips category, therefore, the research selected a leading brand, Rowse, as the object of study.

Before working on the actual survey, it was crucial to understand and examine consumer's attitude towards the brand, types of products that were more likely to be purchased, and the types of character that were the most suitable to represent the brand, therefore, a pilot test was conducted (Appendix 1). The pre-test also measured the level of cuteness in characters (i.e., bees and bears), and tested whether higher level of kindchenschema cuteness in spokes-characters was considered interesting. 21 participants, who were students from University of Warwick, were invited to take part in the pilot test.

4.1. PILOT TEST

4.1.1. BRAND ATTITUDE

Rowse, a leading company that sells honey products in the United Kingdom, was selected to be the brand in the current research. In 2011, the company has launched its first TV advertisement campaign (Reynolds, 2011), and invested millions of £s in commercials to advertise their products since then (Degun, 2015). The advertisement illustrated the versatility of honey, which could be used as a spread on toast and porridge, as a cookery ingredient, or as a cold-symptom reliever (Salter, 2015). To measure the attitude towards the brand, four bipolar likert scales were used by anchoring the following items: dislike/like, bad/good, negative/positive, and unfavourable/favourable (Garretson and Burton, 1998; Goodstein, 1993; Miniard et al, 1991; Garretson and Niedrich, 2004). Coefficient α for the scale in brand attitudes was .95 (Appendix 2). The results indicated that consumers in general had a positive attitude towards the brand.

4.1.2. PRODUCT SELECTION

In addition, the pilot test examined how likely were the participants to purchase honey products from Rowse's product category as shown in Figure 7.

FIGURE 7
ROWSE'S PRODUCT CATEGORY



The results indicated that they were more likely to purchase Rowse's Clear Honey and Clear Squeezy Honey, rather than Set Honey, Light & Mild Honey, and the new product Snap & Squeeze Honey Sachets as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
LIKELINESS TO PURCHASE ROWSE'S PRODUCTS

| HONEY OPTIONS | % |
|---|----------|
| Clear Honey (option 1) | 76.2 |
| Clear Squeezy Honey (option 2) | 61.9 |
| Set Honey (option 4) | 57.1 |
| Snap & Squeeze Honey Sachets (option 3) | 33.3 |
| Light & Mild Honey (option 5) | 33.3 |

4.1.3. CHARACTER SELECTION

Type of characters. To select the best type of character to represent Rowse, the pilot test examined which animals/insects (i.e., ant, bear, bee, or raccoon) were the most suitable to be used as a character to promote Rowse's products on TV or print advertisements. These animals/insects were selected based on their likeliness to be tempted by the sweetness of honey in real life. Participants were asked to indicate the likeliness for the proposed animals/insects to consume honey, and to be the spokes-character of Rowse using seven-point likert scales anchored by 1 = very unlikely and 7 = very likely. The pilot test revealed that participants considered bees and bears were more likely to consume honey than ants and raccoon as shown in Table 3, and were appropriate to be the representative in promoting Rowse's products as in Table 4.

TABLE 3
TYPES OF ANIMALS/INSECTS TO CONSUME HONEY

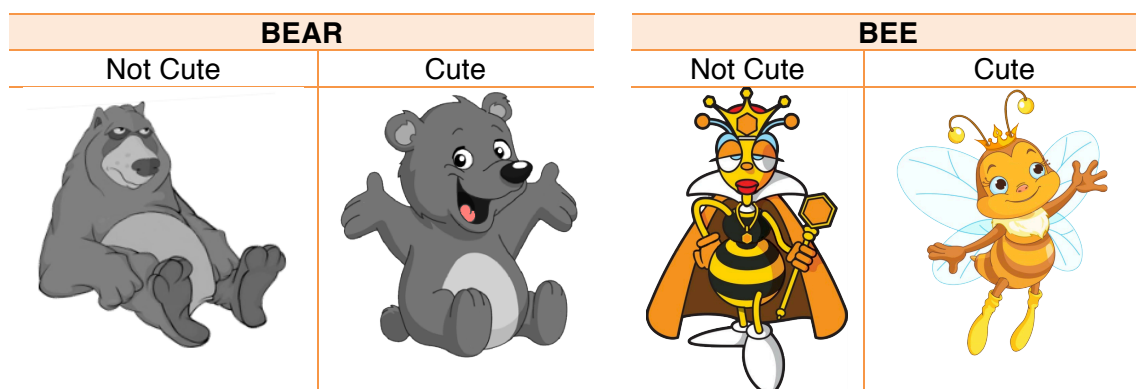
| ANIMALS/INSECTS TO CONSUME HONEY | % |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Bees | 71.4 |
| Bears | 66.7 |
| Ants | 47.6 |
| Raccoons | 28.6 |

TABLE 4
ANIMALS/INSECTS TO BE A SPOKES-CHARACTER

| TYPES OF CHARACTERS | % |
|---------------------|------|
| Bees | 95.2 |
| Bears | 71.4 |
| Ants | 14.3 |
| Raccoons | 14.3 |

Cuteness of the characters. The pilot test also examined the level of kindchenschema cuteness in characters. As bears and bees were considered to have close associations with honey products, and deemed appropriate to be used in current research, two sets (cute vs. not cute) of the two characters (i.e., bears and bees) were prepared as shown in Figure 8.

FIGURE 8
TWO SETS OF CHARACTERS



The characters were shown each at a time, and participants were asked to rate on their cuteness using a bipolar scale, i.e., not cute/cute, not adorable/adorable, and not endearing/endearing, in accordance with the method used by Nenkov and Scott (2014). The four items were then averaged. Coefficient α for the scales in characters with different levels of cuteness were shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
COEFFICIENT α IN CHARACTERS
WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CUTENESS

| CHARACTER | LEVEL OF CUTENESS | COEFFICIENT α |
|-----------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Bear | Low | .90 |
| | High | .94 |
| Bee | Low | .97 |
| | High | .95 |

Characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness were considered to be interesting, as the results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between high level of kindchenschema cuteness in characters (i.e., bees and bears) and of being interesting, where, $r(19) = .85$, $p = .00$ and $r(19) = .61$, $p = .003$ respectively (Appendix 3 & 4). In addition, the results also indicated that the bee with high level of cuteness was considered to be more interesting than the bear.

Several key attributes have been identified in the pilot test. The results indicated that individuals had a positive attitude towards the brand Rowse. Consumers preferred to purchase Clear Honey if they were to buy some honey products. There was a positive correlation between high level of kindchenschema cuteness and considered of being interesting. As for the types of character, bees and bears were considered appropriate to be used as a character for Rowse to promote its honey products, of which the former was considered interesting than the latter one.

4.2. ACTUAL SURVEY

After conducting the pilot test, an online survey was distributed to examine the current research concerning whether the level of kindchenschema cuteness in a spokes-character would influence consumer's attitude towards the advertisement and the brand, and their behaviour in sharing WOM. The use of online survey would be an appropriate method to test the hypothesis one point in time. It also allowed the research to be distributed at ease and in minimal costs to the audiences (i.e., individuals who use social media). Based on participants' responses, data could be collected, measured and analysed.

4.2.1. PARTICIPANTS, SAMPLING AND PROCEDURES

Participants. 106 participants, who were Internet users aged 18 or above, of which 32 were male and 74 were female, deemed suitable for the research. Participants could access to the form through a hyperlink, which was shared on three commonly used social networking platforms, i.e., Facebook, WeChat, and WhatsApp.

Sampling. As the participants were recruited from online social media platforms, which implied that they were not randomly selected. Snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling strategy (Goodman, 1961) was used for the current research, which was a simple and cost-efficient way in recruiting participants with similar characteristics, i.e., those who use online social media. Nevertheless, this strategy has its limitations that it was not possible to determine sampling error, and gave researchers little control over the sampling method.

Procedures. The online questionnaire was constructed on Qualtrics, and took participants approximately 10 minutes to complete. Before proceeding to the questions, a brief instruction on the purpose of the research was listed on the first page (Appendix 5) and participants were required to read it carefully. They were informed that their social media usage, opinions on advertisements, and demographic data would be collected. These data would only be used for this research and would be kept strictly confidential and ensured its anonymity.

By clicking the Next button, participants confirmed that they understood the purpose of the study, and were willing to participate in the research, which consisted of four sessions (Appendix 6).

The first session was related to their usage of social media and their perception towards the brand Rowse. The second and third sessions were to understand whether the cuteness of the spokes-characters in the advertisement would influence (1) the attitude towards the advertisement and the brand, and (2) their behaviour in sharing the advertisement in different communication channels (i.e., synchrony vs. asynchrony) and (3) with different interpersonal closeness or tie strength (i.e., close vs. distant relationships) under a scenario. The last session was related to their demographic data, such as gender, ethnicity, level of study, and age.

To test the cuteness of the spokes-characters, participants were asked to indicate and rate several attributes, i.e., cute, adorable and endearing (Nenkov and Scott, 2014). The means of these variables were then averaged. As indicated in the pilot test, bees were considered to consume honey, and were more likely to be used if Rowse were to create a character in promoting its products on TV and print advertisements. Two advertisements with different level of cuteness (i.e., not cute vs. cute) were created as shown in Figure 9. The two characters were deemed appropriate, as there was a significant difference in its cuteness. The one on the right was considered to be cute, which had the attributes of kindchenschema cuteness (i.e., large eyes, a bulging forehead and a rounded cheek) as suggested by Nenkov and Scott (2014), while the one on the left did not.

FIGURE 9
ADVERT WITH SPOKES-CHARACTERS
IN LOW AND HIGH LEVEL OF CUTENESS



Before participants rated the spokes-character with high level of kindchenschema cuteness, they first rated their opinions on the advertisement with a spokes-character in low level of cuteness. Contents (i.e., messages, layout and product) in both advertisements were consistent, such that consumer's perception would not be influenced, and the difference between the two spokes-characters could then be measured.

To measure the first hypothesis (i.e., H1a and H1b) regarding consumer's attitude towards the advertisement and the brand, four bipolar seven-point likert scales (i.e., dislike/like, bad/good, negative/positive, and unfavourable/favourable) were used, which were adapted from previous studies (Garretson and Burton, 1998; Garretson and Niedrich, 2004; Goodstein, 1993; Miniard et al, 1991).

In the next sessions, advertisements with characters of different levels of cuteness (i.e., low / high) were shown to the participants each at a time. Participants were asked to think of a close / distant friend, and under a scenario that they noticed this person was a supporter of this brand Rowse. Table 6 illustrated the flow of scenarios to measure individual's behaviours in sharing WOM in terms of communication channels and interpersonal relationships.

TABLE 6
SCENARIOS

| SCENARIOS | LEVEL OF CUTENESS | INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS | COMMUNICATION CHANNELS |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Low | Close | Synchronous (verbal) / asynchronous (written) |
| 2 | Low | Distant | |
| 3 | High | Close | |
| 4 | High | Distant | |

Similar to prior studies conducted by Berger and Iyengar (2013) in measuring individual's interest towards products or brands (i.e., "how interesting it would be to talk about") using a seven-point likert scale (1 = not at all; 7 = a great deal), it was adapted to examine whether the character with different level of cuteness was considered interesting. A bipolar seven-point likert scale (i.e., not interesting/interesting) was embedded in the question concerning the cuteness of the character to measure the second hypothesis (i.e., H2).

The pilot test shed some lights that cute characters were considered to be interesting, therefore, it was predicted that individuals might be more likely to share the advertisement on asynchronous channels (i.e., social networking sites) than through synchronous channels (i.e., face-to-face and instant messaging), as proposed in H2a and H2b. In order to understand which communication channels would the individuals use, participants were asked to indicate their likeliness (1 = very unlikely; 7 = very likely) in sharing the advertisements under three channels (i.e., tell your friend when you meet, on social networking sites, and through instant messaging).

In addition, as Berger (2014) illustrated that the difference in tie strengths or interpersonal closeness (i.e., strong or weak) might influence what individuals share with one another, the third hypothesis (i.e., H3a and H3b) proposed that characters with higher level of cuteness were more likely to be shared between close friends, and acquaintances / distant friends.

Similar questions (i.e., “How likely are you to tell a friend (stranger) about the camera you bought?” and “To what extent they care about making a good impression / emotionally connecting with the person?”) on a seven-point likert scale ranging from 1 = very unlikely to 7 = very likely, to measure the likelihood in sharing WOM were adapted from Godes and Wojnicki (2013) and from Chen (2017) respectively.

In the final session, general demographic data (i.e., gender, race, level of study and age) would be collected. These data were important as it might influence one’s tendency in sharing WOM, and the likeliness and preferences in spokes-characters.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The survey on Qualtrics recorded in total 112 responses, of which 106 ($N = 106$, 69.8% female) were deemed suitable to be used for analysis, and 6 of the responses were excluded, as some key attributes (i.e., rating of the character's cuteness) had not been completed. Table 7 indicated the respondents' demographic data in terms of race, educational level and age group.

TABLE 7
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

| RACE / ETHNICITY | FREQUENCY | % |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| Asian | 76 | 71.7 |
| White | 21 | 19.8 |
| Black or African American | 2 | 1.9 |
| Others | 3 | 2.8 |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | 1.9 |
| Total | 106 | 100 |

| EDUCATION | FREQUENCY | % |
|-------------------|------------|------------|
| College | 17 | 16.0 |
| Undergraduate | 20 | 18.9 |
| Postgraduate | 63 | 59.4 |
| PhD | 1 | 0.9 |
| Prefer not to say | 5 | 4.7 |
| Total | 106 | 100 |

| AGE GROUP | FREQUENCY | % |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| 18-24 | 57 | 53.7 |
| 25-30 | 32 | 30.2 |
| 31-34 | 2 | 1.9 |
| 35-40 | 2 | 1.9 |
| Above 40 | 13 | 12.3 |
| Total | 106 | 100 |

The results showed that the majority of the respondents were Asian (i.e., 71.7%), aged 18-30 (i.e., over 80% in total), female (i.e., nearly 70%) and studying postgraduate degree (i.e., nearly 60%). It was worth noting these factors would influence the usage of social media, and sharing behaviours in word-of-mouth communications.

5.2. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA & LIKELIHOOD IN SHARING ADS

Measures. Participants were invited to rate on a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 = very unlikely to 7 = very likely or Not Applicable, to indicate their likelihood in using electronic channels (i.e., Social networking sites: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Weibo; Instant messaging: WhatsApp, Skype, WeChat) and their behaviour in using the electronic channels and sharing advertisements in general.

Results. In terms of social media usage, 76.5% of the respondents ($N = 106$) indicated that they were likely to use social networking sites, and 82.1% were likely to use instant messaging. Detailed results were shown in Table 8. With respect to the behaviours in sharing advertisements, 23.6% and 19.8% of the participants considered likely to share advertisements on social networking sites and through instant messaging respectively.

TABLE 8
SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

| TYPES | PLATFORMS | FREQUENCY | % |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|------|
| Social Networking Sites | Facebook | 81 | 78.3 |
| | Instagram | 69 | 65.1 |
| | Twitter | 31 | 29.3 |
| | Weibo | 30 | 28.3 |
| Instant Messaging | WhatsApp | 67 | 63.2 |
| | Skype | 55 | 51.9 |
| | WeChat | 46 | 43.4 |

Discussion. As the respondents were aged 18-30, they were very likely to use social media, such as social networking sites and instant messaging, to communicate with one another. However, the results indicated that there was a low tendency for the respondents to share advertisements in general on social media, which was consistent with prior studies (Eisingerich et al, 2015).

One of the possible reasons was due to impression management (Berger, 2014). Individuals tend to share word-of-mouth with others for enhancing oneself, signaling identity and filling conversational space (ibid). People on social media engaged with others who were in different interpersonal relationships (i.e., strong ties: close friends or weak ties: acquaintances / distant friends) and it was complicated for the senders to tailor every message to various audiences in the network (Eisingerich et al, 2015). In order to avoid the perceived social risks and to maintain relationships and reputation (Okazaki, 2008; Sun et al, 2006), individuals would be less willing to share eWOM.

5.3. OVERALL BRAND ATTITUDE & PURCHASE INTENTION

Measures. The first session of the research tested the consumer's overall attitude towards the brand (i.e., Rowse) and their tendency in purchasing its products. A set of five Rowse's products and a short description (i.e., "Rowse is a brand from the United Kingdom that sells honey since 1938") were shown to the participants.

Consistent with prior studies (Garretson and Burton, 1998; Goodstein, 1993; Miniard et al, 1991; Garretson and Niedrich, 2004), brand attitude was measured using four bipolar 7-point likert scales by anchoring the following items: dislike/like, bad/good, negative/positive, and unfavourable/favourable. The four items had adequate internal consistency with a coefficient α for the scale .96 (Appendix 7) and were averaged to generate a composite score. Participants were also asked to rate on a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 = very unlikely to 7 = very likely so as to measure the tendency in purchasing Rowse's products.

Results. The results revealed that participants had a positive overall brand attitude towards Rowse ($n = 106$, $M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.20$) and were likely to purchase its products ($n = 106$, $M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.90$) as shown in Appendix 8 and 9 respectively. The results were consistent with the results in the pilot test, and would be used as a baseline in Study 1 for comparison.

5.4. STUDY 1

LEVEL OF CHARACTER CUTENESS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ADVERTISEMENT AND BRAND

Study 1 examined the relationships between level of character cuteness and the attitude towards the advertisement and the brand as proposed in H1a and H1b.

H1a: Compared to spokes-characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, cute characters are more likely to bring positive attitudes **towards the advertisement**.

H1b: Compared to spokes-characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, cute characters are more likely to bring positive attitudes **towards the brand**.

Measures. Two advertisements with a character (i.e., the bee) with different level of cuteness (i.e., one with kindchenschema cuteness and one did not) were shown to the participants once at a time. The characters were tested in the pilot test and people were more likely to expect a bee to represent the brand as the spokes-character for promotion purposes.

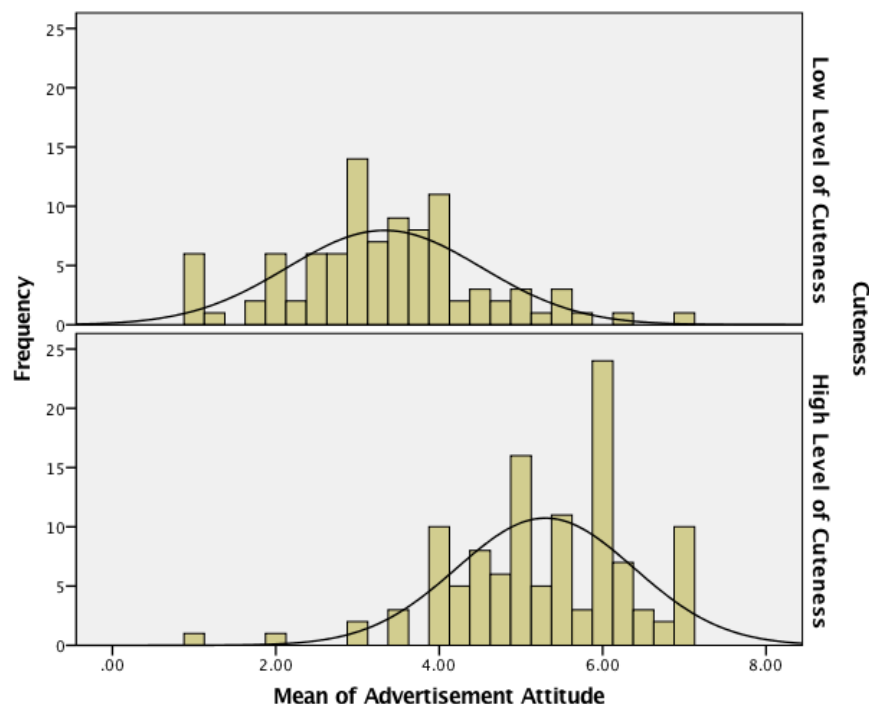
To test hypothesis H1a the independent variable was the level of cuteness in spokes-characters. In accordance with Nenkov and Scott (2014) cuteness of a character could be measured by rating on the following items: not cute/cute, not adorable/adorable, uninteresting/interesting, using three bipolar 7-point scales. These items were then averaged. For variables mean scored 4 or below were coded as 0, which indicated the character had a low level of cuteness; otherwise, it was coded as 1 that indicated the character had a high level of cuteness.

The dependent variable was the advertisement attitude. Participants ($n = 106$) were to rate on the two advertisements they saw based on five items, including dislike/like, bad/good, negative/positive, unfavourable/favourable, and uninteresting/interesting, using five bipolar 7-point likert scales, where 1 = very unlikely and 7 = very likely. Five items were then averaged.

As for hypothesis H1b, the independent variable was the level of cuteness in character, which was the same as in H1a. The dependent variable was the brand attitude. With reference to Berger and Iyengar (2013), the brand attitude was measured using four seven-point likert scales ranging from 1 = very unlikely to 7 = very likely to rate on attributes, such as dislike/like, bad/good, negative/positive, and unfavourable/favourable. These items were then averaged to form a composite score.

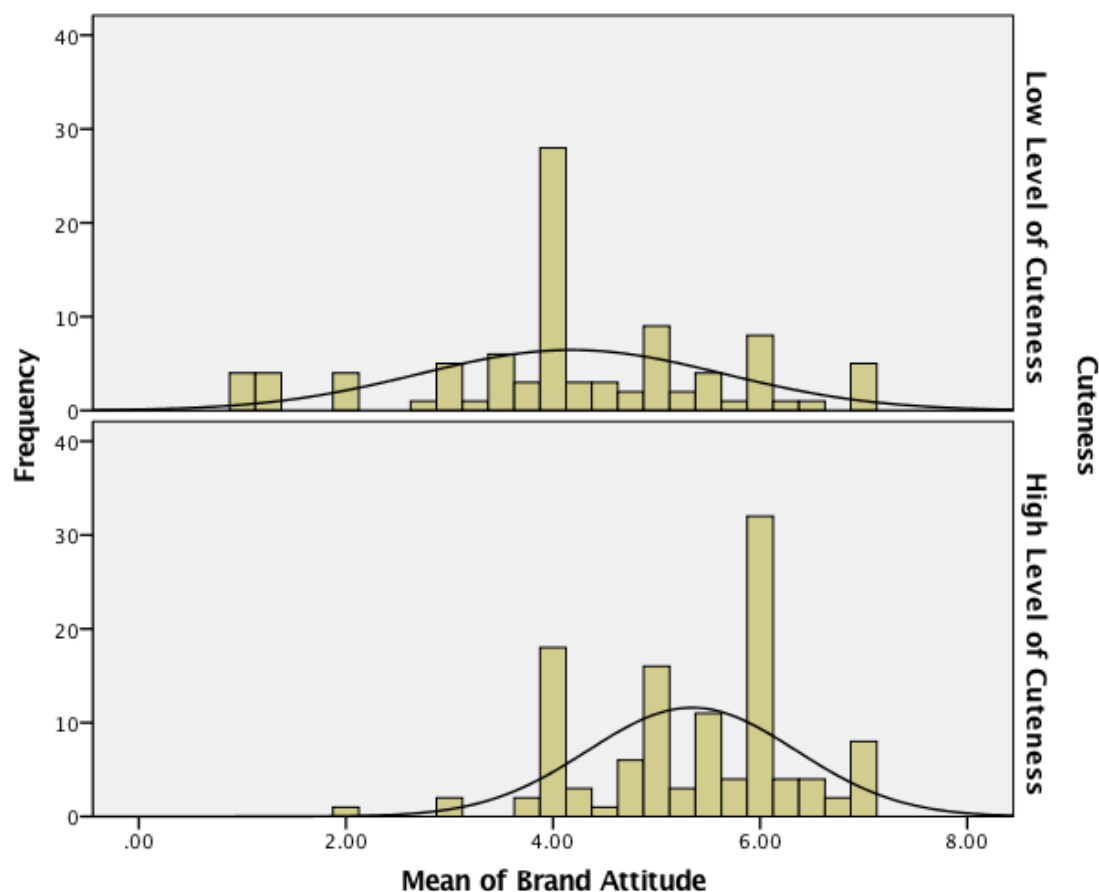
Results. An independent-samples t-test was used to examine whether difference of level of cuteness (i.e., low or high) would influence the attitude towards the advertisement and the brand (Appendix 10 & 11). For hypothesis H1a, the significance value for Levene's test was larger than .05 (i.e., .68); therefore, it was assumed equal variances. The results revealed that there was a significant difference in scores for characters with low level of cuteness ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.19$) and high level of cuteness ($M = 5.30$, $SD = 1.09$), $t(210) = -12.58$, $p = .00$, two-tailed as shown in Figure 10. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.97, 95% CI : -2.28 to -1.66) was large (eta squared = .43), which indicated that 43% of the variance in attitude towards the advertisement was explained by the level of cuteness in spokes-characters.

FIGURE 10
LEVELS OF KINDCHENSHEMA CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER
AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ADVERTISEMENT



While for hypothesis H1b, which examined the brand attitude, the significance value for Levene's test was smaller than .05 (i.e., .02), which it meant equal variances were not assumed. The results indicated that there was a significant difference in scores for characters with low level of cuteness ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.47$) and high level of cuteness ($M = 5.34$, $SD = 1.01$), $t(210) = -6.57$, $p = .00$, two-tailed as shown in Figure 11. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.16, 95% CI : -1.51 to -.81) was large (eta squared = .17), which indicated that 17% of the variance in attitude towards the brand was explained by the level of cuteness in spokes-characters.

FIGURE 11
LEVELS OF KINDCHENSHEMA CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER
AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE BRAND



Discussion. Not surprisingly, the results were similar to prior studies. Characters with kindchenschema and human-like qualities were associated with several attributes, such as naiveté, kindness, warmth and vulnerability (Berry and McArthur, 1985) and honesty (Gorn et al, 2008), which could capture one's attention (Brosch et al, 2007), generate a positive affective feeling (Sherman et al, 2009) and influence one's cognitive processes and behaviours (Lehmann et al, 2013).

MacInnis and Folkes (2017) pointed out that humanizing a brand could have the possibility to bring happiness to audiences and, therefore, create a positive attitude and attachment towards the brands. This explained the reason behind spokes-characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness were more likely to bring positive attitudes towards the advertisements and the brands.

5.5. STUDY 2

LEVEL OF CHARACTER CUTENESS AND SYNCHRONICITY IN WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATIONS

Study 2 first examined whether participants would consider characters with different level of cuteness to be interesting as proposed in H2, and the tendency to share the advertisements using different channels with different synchronicity as proposed in H2a and H2b.

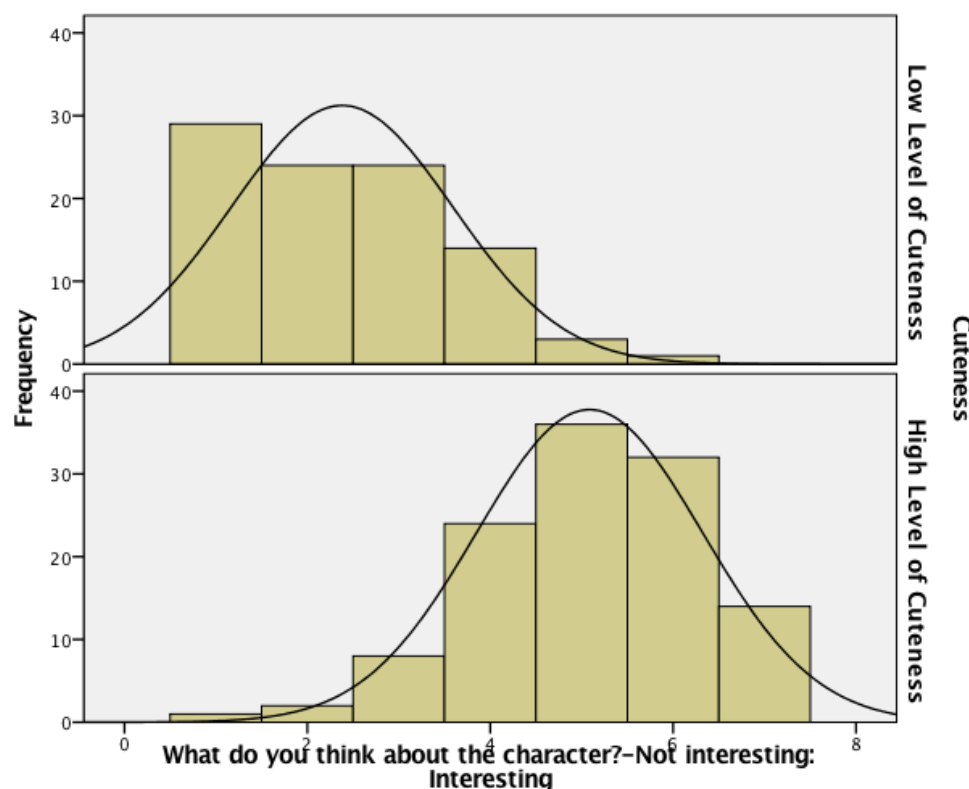
H2: Compared to spokes-characters with low level of cuteness, cute characters are considered to be interesting.

Measures. Similar to Study 1, the independent variable was the level of cuteness in spokes-characters. Participants rated the spokes-characters cuteness with reference to the method conducted by Nenkov and Scott (2014) by indicating their preference on three bipolar scales (i.e., not cute/cute, not adorable/adorable, and not endearing/endearing). The three items were then averaged, which the Cronbach's alpha was .97. For mean scored less than or equal to 4 was regarded as low level of cuteness and coded as 0, whereas mean scored higher than 4 was regarded as high level of cuteness and coded as 1.

The dependent variable for H2 was the tendency to be considered as interesting. Participants were asked whether the character was interesting (i.e. "What do you think about the character?") and a bipolar 7-point likert scale, where 1 = very unlikely and 7 = very likely, was used to indicate their chosen preference in considering the character interesting or not.

Results. An independent-samples t-test was used to test whether different levels of cuteness (i.e., low or high) would be considered as interesting (Appendix 12). The significance value for Levene's test was larger than .05 (i.e., .45); therefore, it was assumed equal variances. The results revealed that there was a significant difference in scores for characters with low level of cuteness ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.21$) and high level of cuteness ($M = 5.09$, $SD = 1.24$; $t(210) = -15.99$, $p = .00$, two-tailed, Figure 12). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -2.71, 95% *CI*: -3.04 to -2.37) was large (eta squared = 0.55), which indicated that 55% of the variances in the tendency to consider interesting was explained by the level of cuteness in spokes-characters.

FIGURE 12
LEVELS OF KINDCHENSHEMA CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER
AND THE TENDENCY TO BE CONSIDERED AS INTERESTING



After examined the relationships between level of cuteness and the tendency to be considered as interesting, H2a, H2b and H2c were to examine the tendency to share the advertisements using channels with different synchronicity.

H2a: Characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness are more likely to be shared through communication channels with **low level of synchronicity (e.g., social networking sites)**.

H2b: Characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness are more likely to be shared through communication channels with **medium level of synchronicity (e.g., instant messaging)**.

H2c: Characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness are more likely to be shared through communication channels with **high level of synchronicity (e.g., traditional face-to-face communications)**.

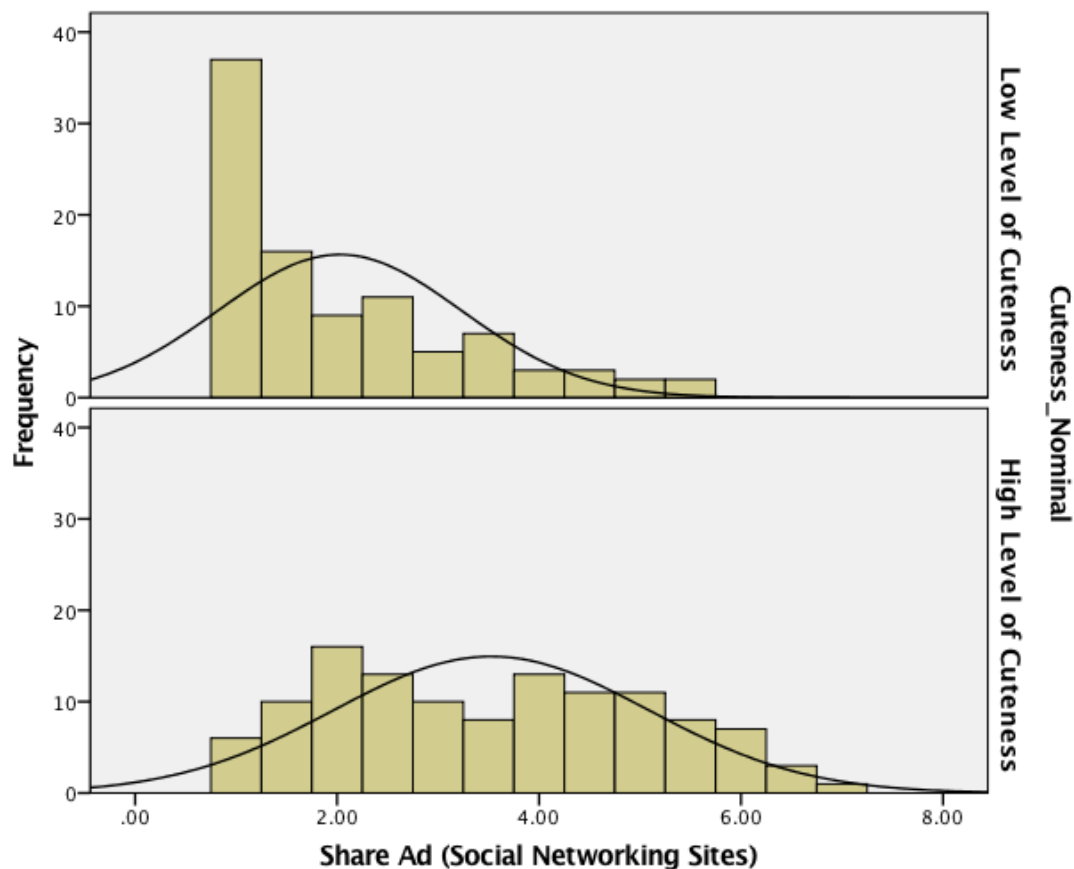
Measures. Similar to Study 1, the independent variable was the level of cuteness. Participants rated on three (i.e., not cute/cute, not adorable/adorable, and not endearing/endearing) to indicate their preference on two sets of characters. The three items were then averaged and coded.

The dependent variable was the tendency in sharing the advertisements on social networking sites (i.e., H2a), through instant messaging (i.e., H2b) and through face-to-face communications (i.e., H2c) under two scenarios, which was rated on three likert scales ranging from 1 = very unlikely to 7 = very likely after the participants looked at the advertisements. The items were then averaged accordingly.

Results. Three independent-samples t-test were used to test whether different levels of cuteness (i.e., low or high) would influence the sharing behaviours in communication channels with different synchronicity (i.e., social networking sites, instant messaging, and traditional face-to-face) as shown in Appendix 13.

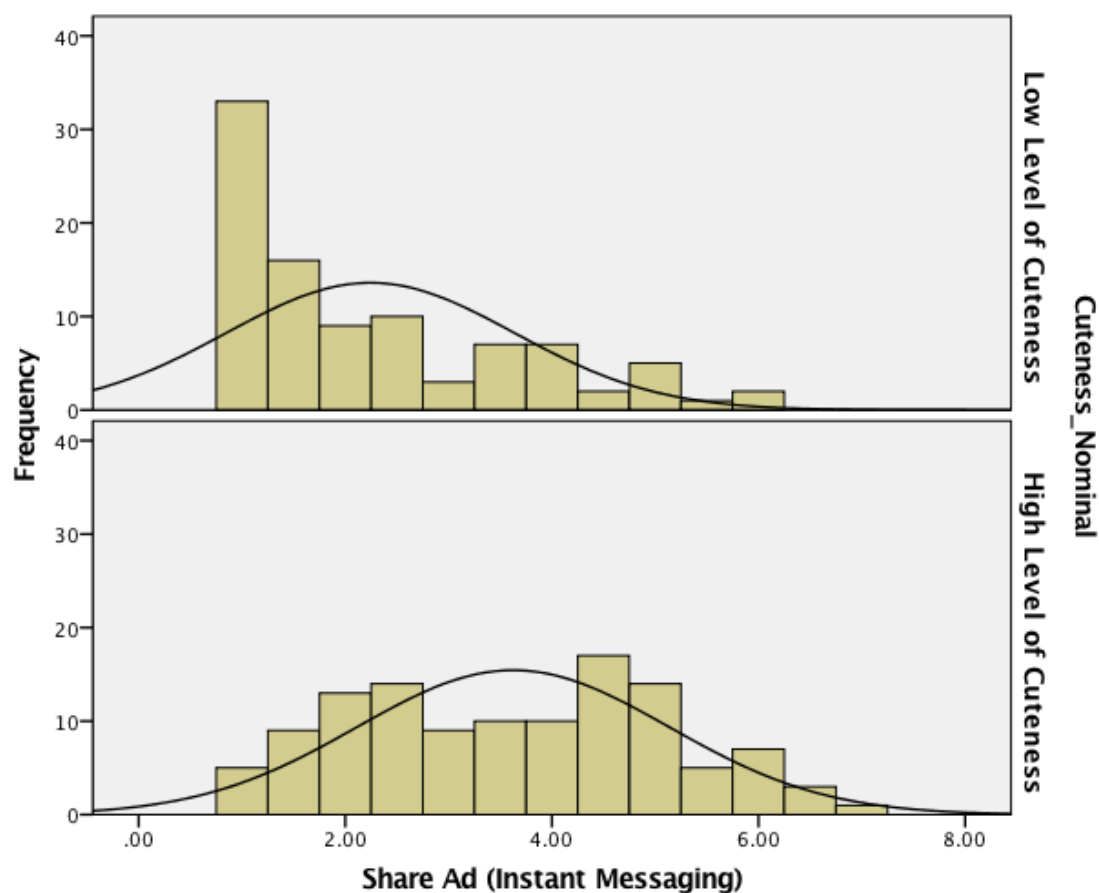
For H2a, the significance value for Levene's test was smaller than .05 (i.e., .001); therefore, equal variances were not assumed. The results revealed that there was a significant difference in scores for characters with low level of cuteness ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.21$) and high level of cuteness ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.56$; $t(210) = -7.87$, $p = .00$, two-tailed, Figure 13). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.50, 95% CI : -1.87 to -1.12) was large (eta squared = .23), which indicated that 23% of the variance in the tendency to share advertisements on social networking sites was explained by the level of cuteness in spokes-characters.

FIGURE 13
LEVELS OF KINDCHENSHEMA CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER
AND THE TENDENCY TO BE SHARED ON **SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**



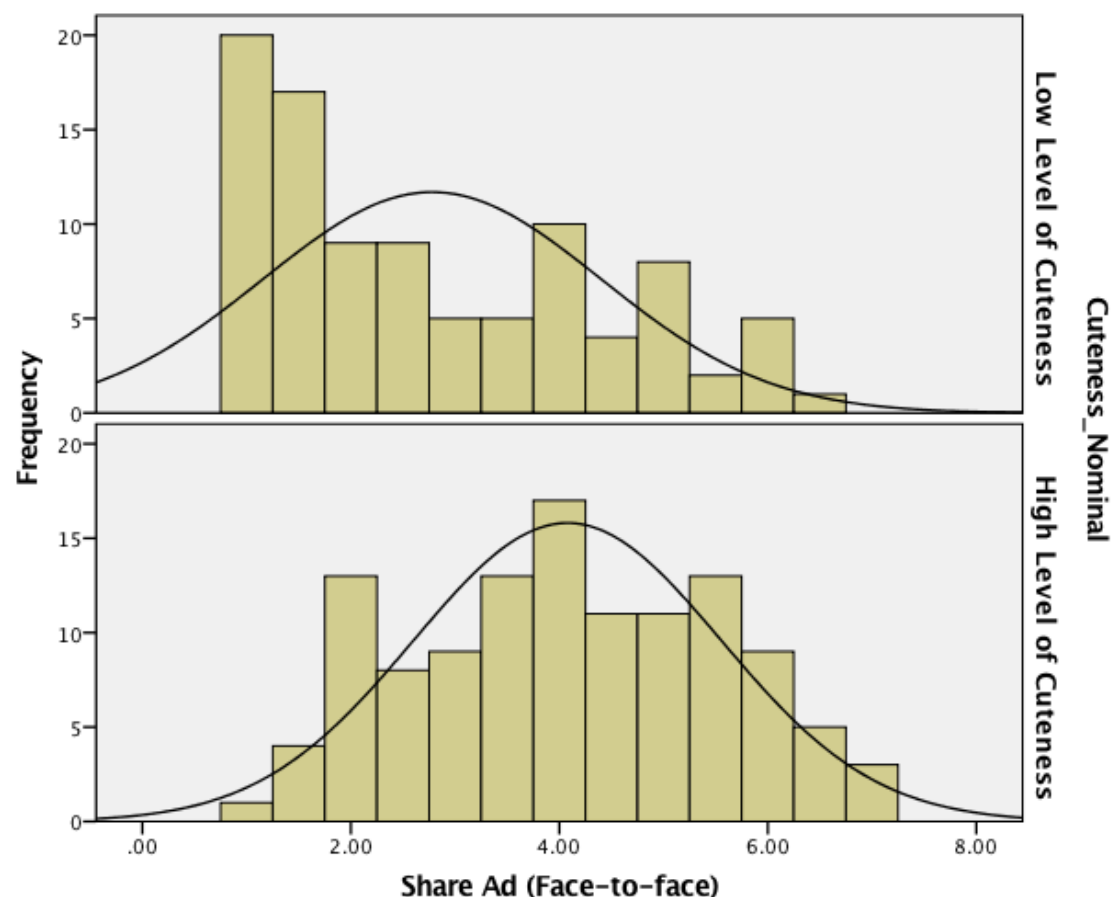
For H2b, the significance value for Levene's test was larger than .05 (i.e., .19); therefore, it was assumed to be equal variances. The results showed that there was a significant difference in scores for characters with low level of cuteness ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 1.39$) and high level of cuteness ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.51$; $t(210) = -6.86$, $p = .00$, two-tailed, Figure 14). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.38, 95% *CI*: -1.78 to -.98) was large (eta squared = .18), which indicated that 18% of the variance in the tendency to share advertisements through instant messaging was explained by the level of cuteness in spokes-characters.

FIGURE 14
LEVELS OF KINDCHENSHEMA CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER
AND THE TENDENCY TO BE SHARED THROUGH **INSTANT MESSAGING**



For H2c, the significance value for Levene's test was larger than .05 (i.e., .10); therefore, equal variances were assumed. The results revealed that there was a significant difference in scores for characters with low level of cuteness ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.62$) and high level of cuteness ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.48$; $t(210) = -6.09$, $p = .00$, two-tailed, Figure 15). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.30, 95% *CI*: -1.72 to -.88) was large (eta squared = .15), which indicated that 15% of the variance in the tendency to share advertisements during face-to-face communications was explained by the level of cuteness in spokes-characters.

FIGURE 15
LEVELS OF KINDCHENSHEMA CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER AND
THE TENDENCY TO BE SHARED DURING **FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATIONS**



Discussion. Past studies pointed out that interesting topics were novel, exciting, surprising, or over one's expectations (Berlyne, 1960; Silvia 2006, 2008), such that they were more likely to generate word-of-mouth and to be shared among individuals (Dye, 2000; Hughes, 2005; Sernovitz, 2006). Hence, H2a, H2b and H2c were conducted to examine how likely were characters in different levels (i.e., low and high) of kindchenschema cuteness to be shared through communication channels with different level of synchronicity. The results indicated that characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness were more likely to be shared on social networking sites, through instant messaging, and during face-to-face communications compared to characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness.

Among the three communication channels, individuals preferred to share the advertisements with spokes-characters in high level of kindchenschema cuteness during face-to-face verbal communications (i.e., high level of synchronicity, $M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.48$) than through written communications, such as instant messaging (i.e., medium level of synchronicity, $M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.51$) and social networking sites (i.e., low level of synchronicity, $M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.56$).

To sum up, the results in H2 revealed that the character with high level of kindchenschema cuteness was more likely to be considered as interesting, therefore, it was predicted that the topic or advertisement about the cute characters would be more likely to be shared through communication channels. However, the results in H2a, H2b, and H2c illustrated that individuals preferred to share the advertisements with characters in high level of kindchenschema cuteness verbally than on written communications. This can be explained by the synchronicity (i.e., synchrony vs. asynchrony) of modalities (i.e., oral conversation vs. written) in different communication channels (i.e., traditional face-to-face communication vs. instant messaging and social networking sites).

Similar to the findings from Berger and Iyengar (2013), the results indicated that people would have different responses when they were to share the advertisement. Traditional face-to-face communication was a channel with high level of synchronicity; individuals would have to make responses with one another in real-time and might have little breaks or pauses between conversational turns (Berger, 2014). This means that there will be less time for the senders to construct and refine the messages, therefore, they tend to share any products and brands that were accessible and first came up top of their mind with others despite the topics were interesting or not (Berger and Schwartz, 2011).

In contrast, channels with medium or low level of synchronicity (i.e., written communications: instant messaging and social networking sites) enabled individuals to compose and edit their messages before sending them to the other parties. Their responses were comparatively more permanent; therefore, the senders would make more efforts to look for more interesting products and brands before sending messages to others (Berger, 2014).

As in current research, though the character with high level of kindchenschema cuteness was considered interesting, it was associated with the products or the brands that were in the low-involvement product category. Prior studies illustrated that individuals tend to share information about products in medium or high-involvement categories (e.g., iPhone or Nike products) than in low-involvement category (e.g., ketchup or Tide) with others (Berger and Iyengar, 2013; Berger and Milkman, 2012; Berger and Schwartz, 2011). Hence, it explained why the characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness were more likely to be shared verbally than on written communications despite the characters were considered as interesting.

5.6. STUDY 3

LEVEL OF CHARACTER CUTENESS AND TIE STRENGTHS / INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Study 3 was used to test how likely was the character with different level of cuteness to be shared with people in different tie strengths / interpersonal relationships (strong: close friends vs. weak: acquaintances / distant friends).

H3a: Compared to spokes-characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, cute characters are more likely to be shared **towards close relationships (i.e., close friends)** to maintain the relationships by emotionally connected with the person.

H3b: Compared to spokes-characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, cute characters are more likely to be shared **towards distant relationships (i.e., acquaintances / distant friends)** for making a good impression.

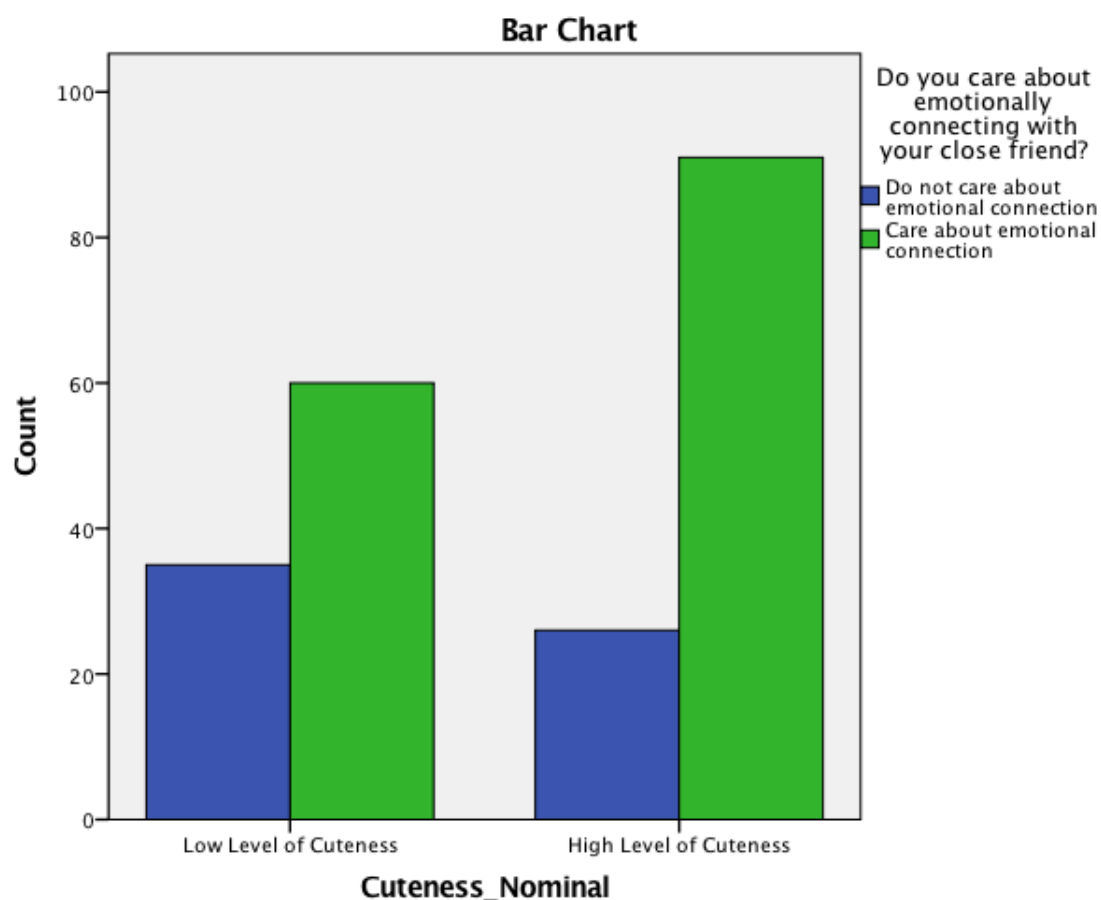
Measures. The independent variable was the level of kindchenschema cuteness in the spokes-character, which was measured by averaging the three bipolar scales (i.e., not cute/cute, not adorable/adorable, not endearing/endearing). Mean scored 4 or below were considered as low level of cuteness and coded as 0; otherwise, it was considered as high level of cuteness and coded as 1.

As for H3a and H3b, the dependent variables were the tendency to maintain an emotional connection with the person in close relationships, and to make a good impression in distant relationships respectively. Two scenarios were presented to the participants. They were asked to think of one of their close friends, and acquaintances / distant friends respectively. Participants first asked to rate how likely were they to share the advertisements with people in different tie strengths / interpersonal relationships, then indicated how likely they care about building an emotional connection with the person, and making a good impression. Likert scales ranging from 1 = very unlikely to 7 = very likely were used. For score 4 or below was considered as not to care about connecting emotionally or making good impressions, and coded as 0; otherwise it was coded as 1 to represent their likelihood in sharing the advertisements to build emotional connections and making good impressions.

Results. A chi-square test for independence (with Yates' Continuity Correction) was used to test H3a (Appendix 14) and H3b (Appendix 15) in exploring the relationship between two categorical variables.

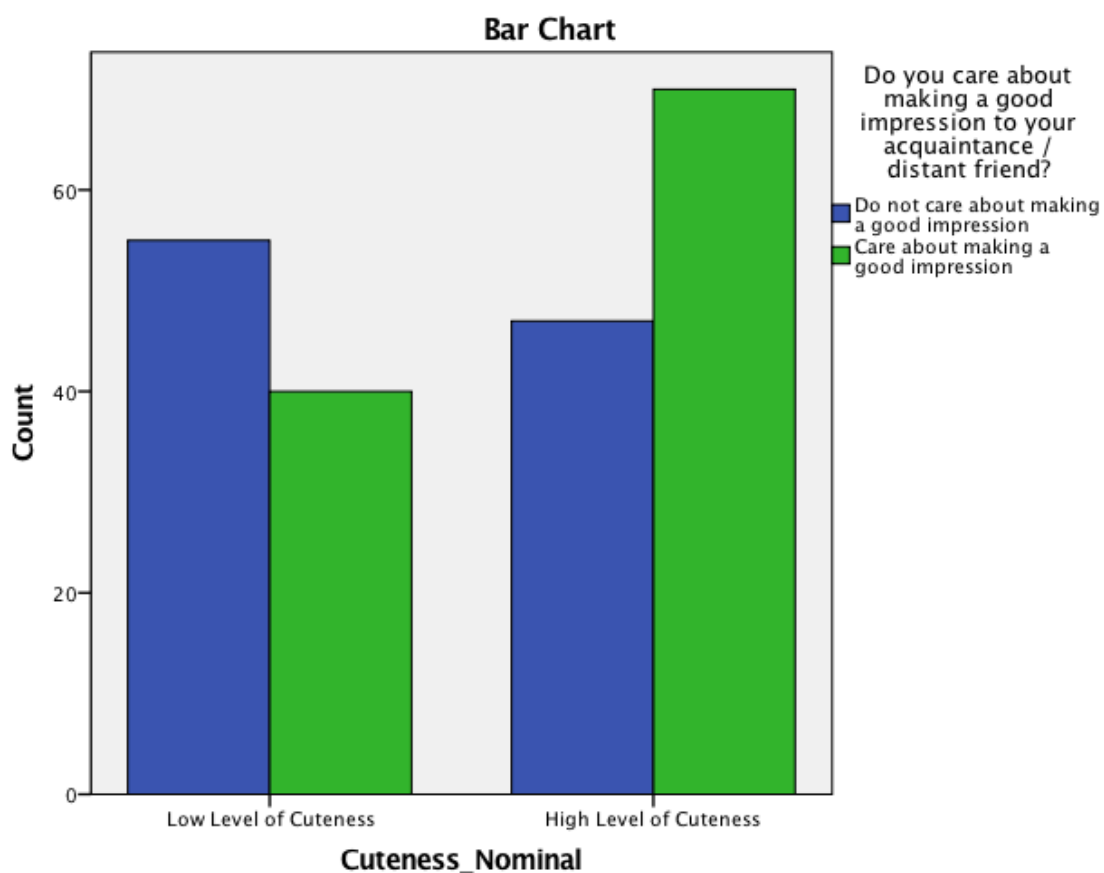
For H3a, none of the cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum count was 27.33, which indicated that the assumptions of chi-square have not been violated. The results as shown in Figure 16 revealed that there was a significant association between the level of cuteness in characters and the tendency in building emotional connection in close relationships, $\chi^2(1, n = 212) = 4.78, p = .03, \phi = .16$. It also indicated that 77.8% of individuals that preferred spokes-characters with high level of cuteness, and 63.2% of individuals that preferred spokes-characters with low level of cuteness would care about the emotional connections in close relationships.

FIGURE 16
LEVELS OF KINDCHENSHEMA CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER AND
TENDENCY TO BUILD EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS IN **CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS**



For H3b, there was 0 cells have expected count less than 5. The minimum count was 45.71, which indicated that the assumptions of chi-square have not been violated. The results as shown in Figure 17 revealed that there was a significant association between the level of cuteness in characters and the tendency in making a good impression in distant relationships, $\chi^2(1, n = 212) = 5.91, p = .02, \phi = .18$. It also indicated that 59.8% of individuals that preferred spokes-characters with high level of cuteness, and 42.1% of individuals that preferred spokes-characters with low level of cuteness would care about making a good impression in distant relationships.

FIGURE 17
LEVELS OF KINDCHENSHEMA CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER AND
TENDENCY TO MAKE GOOD IMPRESSIONS IN **DISTANT RELATIONSHIPS**



Discussion. In terms of interpersonal relationships / tie strengths, H3a and H3b examined how likely were advertisements with spokes-characters in different levels (i.e., low vs. high) of kindchenschema cuteness to be shared with people in different interpersonal relationships / tie strengths (i.e., strong: close friends vs. weak: acquaintances / distant friends). In current research, scenarios were given to the respondents and they were told to imagine one of their close friends (i.e., in H3a) and one of their acquaintances / distant friends (i.e., in H3b) was a supporter of the brand.

The results indicated that there was a significant association between the level of kindchenschema cuteness, and the tendency in sharing with people in close and distant relationships. For characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness, individuals tend to share advertisements with people in close relationships (i.e., close friends: 77.8%) to maintain emotional connections, and people in distant relationships (i.e., acquaintances / distant friends: 59.8%) to make a good impression. On the other hand, for characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, the results indicated that 63.2% and 42.1% of the respondents would share the advertisements with people in close and distant relationships respectively.

Similar to previous findings, individuals were more likely to treat others better (Clark, 1993; Rusbult et al, 2004), offer more supports (Brunstein et al, 1996) and provide more personal sacrifices or contributions (Agnew and Etcheverry, 2006; Impett et al, 2005; Powell and Van Vugt, 2003) to people who were in close relationships compared to those in distant relationships. Hence, respondents in the current research were more likely to share the advertisements to people in close relationships despite the level of kindchenschema cuteness in the characters under given situations.

6. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INDUSTRY

Spokes-characters have been created since the late '90s as brand identifiers and appeared in historical and modern advertising campaigns (Callcott and Lee, 1995; Dotz et al, 1996; Garretson and Burton, 2005). In the commercial world, advertising has to be innovative and interesting in order to gain attention, be memorable and get people to talk about with one another, which can then help generating sales in future. The use of spokes-characters provides a visual cue for current and potential consumers to recognise and remember the products, services or the brands (Callcott and Lee, 1993; Fournier, 1998; Mizerski, 1995; Phillips, 1996; Shimp, 2003; Thompson, 2000). It also helps building trusts that lead to positive brand attitude (Garretson and Niedrich, 2004).

Anthropomorphised spokes-characters become more popular to be used by businesses as a marketing communication tool to interact with consumers on social media (Vranica, 2012). These brand characters represent the brands or products; therefore, businesses have to be careful when employing a spokes-character. The findings in the current research shed some lights on the level and the importance of having kindchenschema cuteness in the spokes-characters. The results in Study 1 provide some insights that individuals tend to build positive attitude towards the advertisements and the brand when a character was in high level of kindchenschema cuteness in comparison to the one in low level of cuteness. Garretson and Niedrich (2004) pointed out that spokes-character's expertise and nostalgia would influence one's attitude in building trust with the characters; the features in characters would provide a signal to consumers as being honest and sincere.

Hence, it is recommended for brands, marketers, agencies and animators to create characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness (i.e., a bulging forehead, large eyes, and rounded cheeks) and include perceived expertise to enhance the level of trust in consumers' minds, which can ultimately enable consumers to develop better perceptions towards the brands.

In addition, consumers nowadays can communicate and share word-of-mouth with one another using various channels, which includes traditional face-to-face verbally or through online social media, such as instant messaging and social networking sites. These communication channels have different modality and level of synchronicity as listed in Table 9 (Berger & Iyengar, 2013).

TABLE 9
DIFFERENT CHANNELS OF MODALITY AND SYNCHRONICITY
(Berger & Iyengar, 2013)

| TYPE OF CHANNEL | MODALITY | LEVEL OF SYNCHRONICITY |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Face-to-face Communications | Verbal | High |
| Instant Messaging | Written | Medium |
| Social Networking Sites | Written | Low |

It is crucial for marketers to understand individuals would have different responses and behaviours in spreading word-of-mouth through different types of channels. Word-of-mouth can drive one's purchase decisions and their evaluations of goods and services (Anderson, 1998; Trusov et al, 2009). People consider a topic to be interesting if it is up-to-date, novel, out of their expectations, or brings excitements and surprises (Berlyne, 1960; Silvia 2006, 2008). Prior studies illustrated that interesting online contents (Bakshy et al, 2011) and interesting news articles (Berger and Schwartz, 2011) were more likely to be shared among individuals. The results in current research (i.e., H2) showed that spokes-characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness were more likely to be considered interesting, which could be a potential topic for people to talk about in daily conversations.

Moreover, the results in H2a, H2b and H2c demonstrated that spokes-characters in high level of kindchenschema cuteness were more likely to be shared verbally or on written communication channels than those in low level. Nevertheless, among those in high level, individuals were more willing to share the advertisements during face-to-face conversations (i.e., high level of synchronicity) than through instant messaging (medium level of synchronicity) and social networking sites (i.e., low level of synchronicity).

While the results in H3a, H3b also shed some lights when the advertisements were shared to people in different interpersonal relationships / tie strengths. In comparison, individuals were more willing to share spokes-characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness with both close friends (i.e., strong interpersonal relationships) and acquaintances/distant friends (i.e., weak interpersonal relationships).

The findings in the current research were consistent with prior studies conducted by Eisingerich et al (2015), which suggested that perceived social risk associated with communication modes was one of the factors that influences one's tendency in sharing word-of-mouth. Past research also showed that people engaged in word-of-mouth activities in order to foster their self-concept (Dichter, 1966) and for self-enhancement (Hennig-Thurau et al 2004). By sharing positive word-of-mouth it enabled the senders to signal the receivers their expertise, which makes the senders feel good about themselves, and keeps their reputations and relationships with the recipients (Wojnicki and Godes, 2011), or to fulfill the goals of self-serving (Cheema and Kaikati, 2010; Chen and Berger, 2013; De Angelis et al, 2012).

Hence, marketers may consider using spokes-characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness in other promotional campaigns (e.g. seasonal / festive campaigns), and changing the outfits of the characters (e.g., Halloween costumes, Christmas suits). Consumers would always like to see something different in advertisements, rather than things that are boring and dull. Marketers have to bear in mind that consumer's interest would fade over a certain period of time (Moldovan et al, 2006; Wu and Huberman, 2007). It was crucial to make active changes of the appearances of the spokes-characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness that represent the brands, consumers may find the brands interesting and would, therefore, generate an immediate word-of-mouth and enhance the possibility to share the advertisements with one another.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The research mainly examined the relationships between level of kindchenschema cuteness in non-celebrity spokes-characters and consumer's attitudes towards the advertisement, the brand, and their behaviours in WOM communications in terms of the channels used and the tendency to share the advertisements with people in different tie strengths/interpersonal relationships. However, there were some limitations in each study and can be improved in future research.

STUDY 1

Other types of spokes-characters. Study 1 demonstrated that non-celebrity spokes-characters with a high level of kindchenschema cuteness were more likely to bring a positive influence to the advertisements and the brand, compared to characters with low level of cuteness. In reality, there are various types of spokes-characters including human, animals, mythical creatures and fictional characters. Some businesses would also employ characters from movies, cartoon strips and programmes, which are also known as celebrity spokes-characters (e.g., Scooby-Doo appeared in Halifax U.K. banking commercials, Snoopy for MetLife Insurance in the U.S.) that are well known by the audiences, to promote their brands, products or services. The current research mainly focused on non-celebrity spokes-characters in animal form, which were created by the companies solely for promotion purposes. Future research can investigate whether other types of spokes-characters may also lead to similar or different results and implications.

Animated advertisements & character's personalities. In addition, the current research only considered the level of kindchenschema cuteness in characters that appeared in print advertisements (i.e., posters), and did not include TV advertisements and clips/videos on social media platforms, where the characters can demonstrate their own characteristics and personalities under different contexts or storylines. For example, Aldi has launched a campaign during Christmas in 2016 - 'Kevin the Carrot', which has received over 786k views on Facebook, 18k likes and 8k shares within a day (Griggs, 2016), and became one of the most memorable and mentioned advertisements during the festive period (Hobbs, 2016).

The company created the character solely for the promotional purposes during Christmas. The character was a humanised carrot, which has the attributes (e.g., limbs), characteristics and behaviours (e.g., personalities, movements and facial expressions) of human beings. The movement of the object can impress the audience as being alive (Tremoulet and Feldman, 2000). Other than the level of kindchenschema cuteness, researchers in future can also examine whether different personalities and behaviours of the spokes-characters expressed or reflected in animations would affect individual's behaviours towards the advertisements and the brands.

STUDY 2

High-involvement product category. Study 2 illustrated that the observed participants were more likely to consider the advertisements with characters in high level of kindchenschema cuteness interesting and willing to share with others, compared to the one in low level of cuteness. The results also indicated that individuals tend to share the advertisement verbally rather than in written format (i.e., instant messaging and social networking sites), which was due to the synchronicity of modalities in communication channels, and its position in the low-involvement product category.

The brand Rowse was a company that sells honey, which could be classified as in the low-involvement product category. Less time would be spent on searching for product information compared to products that were in the high-involvement product category (e.g. automobiles). The use of spokes-characters would act as a trigger to build emotional connections and positive feeling with the audience. Prior studies identified that it was more likely for anthropomorphised animals to appear in low-involvement purchases, such as non-durable food and drinks, pet foods and services, rather than in the high-involvement product category (Spears et al, 1996). This was because the characters might not match the products or brands in the high-involvement category, look frivolity and lack of seriousness (ibid).

Instead of using a spokes-character, brands in high-involvement category (e.g., automobiles) tend to use real animals to represent their brands. For example, Lamborghini uses a bull, Ferrari uses a horse, and Jaguar uses a jaguar to be their brand characters. Future research may examine whether applying a spokes-character with high level of kindchenschema cuteness in the commercials of high-involvement product category would attenuate its brand image, and influence their perceptions towards the brand.

STUDY 3

Complete strangers. The current research focused on the close and distant interpersonal relationships, and exclude people with no relationship (i.e., strangers). Prior studies showed that people would share resources with complete strangers (Batson, 1991; Camerer and Thaler, 1995), and share positive WOM with them (De Angelis et al, 2012; Wojnicki and Godes, 2013). If the other person has a divergent point of view, people would make adjustments of their public WOM (Schlosser, 2005). Chen (2017) pointed out that individuals would like to self-enhance with strangers so as to attract their attention and to establish a relationship. Additional work could test whether high level of kindchenschema cuteness in characters can be used as a topic for people to talk about with complete strangers for self-enhancement and forming a new relationship.

IN GENERAL

The sample size ($n=106$) of the survey was relatively small, due to constraints in time and budget, such that it may not reflect the whole population. Moreover, majorities of respondents were Asian (i.e. 71.7%), and were female (i.e., 69.8%). Culture influence and gender difference may affect the results.

Culture influences. Culture may shape different perceptions in cuteness (Cho, 2012). Cuteness in Western culture (e.g., in the United States) is associated with negative connotations, such as helpless, vulnerable and powerless (Roach, 1999). However, in Eastern culture people in general have positive perceptions towards cuteness. To be more specific, the East-Asian culture has been greatly influenced by Japanese ‘Kawaii’ (Steinberg, 2016).

The word Kawaii can be translated as ‘cute’; it also means sweetly alluring images or behaviours, or can be considered as a feeling, sentiment or a compliment (ibid). Small and clumsy items can also be considered as kawaii. In Japan, people tend to have positive responses to cuteness, even for masculine individuals such as truck drivers and police officers (Angier, 2006; Garger, 2007). As in current research, over 70% of the respondents were Asian. Their perceptions towards cuteness may be influenced by Japanese kawaii culture, which could lead to positive responses and attitudes towards the advertisement and the brand. Hence, future research could examine how likely would culture (e.g., American vs. Asian culture) influence one’s perception towards the cuteness in spokes-characters.

Gender differences. Compared to men, females were more likely to share information to individuals with both close and distant interpersonal relationships (Dindia and Allen, 1992), and tend to process information using experiential processing method (Wheeler and Berger, 2007). Acitelli and Young (1996) pointed out that females were more socialise and care about their relationships with one another, while men in general were more likely to be self-focus.

Moreover, Kring and Gordon (1998) found that females were more willing to express their internal emotions using verbal and non-verbal communications. In the current research, there were nearly 70% of the respondents were female. The spokes-characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness may trigger their nature and behaviours of caretaking (Glocker et al, 2008; Lorenz, 1943; Sherman et al, 2009), which may influence the results. Hence, additional research could examine whether gender differences would influence their tendency in sharing the word-of-mouth of spokes-characters. Other than culture influences and gender differences, future research could also examine the following:

Age differences. Individuals in different age groups may have different preferences towards the spokes-characters used in the advertisements. The participants in the current research were mainly from the age group of 18-24 and education level at postgraduate. Prior studies found that the market for children was a separation from adults (McNeal, 1987). Future research may focus on individuals at a younger age group, and lower level of education, such as students aged below 18 (i.e., Generation Z) who are studying in primary or secondary schools, or individuals at older age groups.

Less relevant types of characters. Furthermore, the spokes-characters used in the current research had been tested in the pilot test and showed the type of characters was relevant to the brand. Having relevant product information can lead to positive object evaluations and create well-matched stimuli to promote learning and memory (Heckler and Childers, 1992; Keller et al, 1998; Lee and Mason, 1999; Miniard et al, 1991; Sengupta et al, 1997). Additional research could also explore whether using less relevant types of characters to the brand would affect individual's attitudes towards the advertisement, the brand, and their behaviours in sharing offline and online word-of-mouth.

Whimsical Cuteness. Other than kindchenschema cuteness, cuteness can also be categorised as whimsical cuteness (Carver, 1989; Nenkov et al, 2008; Nenkov and Scott, 2014). Unlike kindchenschema cuteness that relates to cute infants with features of a bulging forehead, large eyes and rounded cheeks, whimsical cuteness is related to playfulness and fun, which does not take the vulnerable nature of the cute infants into account. For example, spokes-characters were in human-like format, such as Mr. Peanut, Mr. Pringles, or Captain Crunch. Individuals may perceive differently in comparison to characters in kindchenschema cuteness, such as Tony the Tiger, Trix the Rabbit, or Chester the Cheetah. The main focus of the current research was to examine the level of kindchenschema cuteness. Future research could examine and compare the differences between kindchenschema and whimsical cuteness in spokes-characters.

Nostalgia. The spokes-characters used in the advertisements in promoting Rowse Clear Honey were newly created characters, which the respondents have not seen them before. In reality, businesses could have created and used the spokes-characters for a long period of time. For example, Tony the Tiger was created in 1952 (Kellogg's, 2017) and Trix the Rabbit first appearance was in the 50s (Slotnik, 2017). These spokes-characters have been appeared in commercials over 60 years, such that individuals may have built nostalgic feelings with the characters. Some studies indicated that businesses understand the influential effect that associated with nostalgia, which help develop a positive connection between consumers and the brand (Braun et al, 2002; Poniewozik, 2002; Thompson, 1999). Future research could explore the differences between newly created characters and nostalgic characters.

8. CONCLUSION

The research explored the relationships between the level of kindchenschema cuteness in spokes-characters, and consumer's attitudes towards the advertisements, the brands and word-of-mouth communications, in terms of channels used and interpersonal relationships / tie strengths.

The current research predicted that in comparison with characters with low level of kindchenschema cuteness, spokes-characters with high level of kindchenschema cuteness were more likely to bring positive influence towards the advertisements (i.e., H1a) and the brand (i.e., H1b). It also predicted that high level of kindchenschema cuteness would be considered as interesting (i.e., H2), and be more likely to share through different communication channels, such as traditional face-to-face communications (i.e., H2a), instant messaging (i.e., H2b) and social networking sites (i.e., H2c). In terms of interpersonal relationships / tie strengths, it was hypothesised that individuals would be more likely to share cute characters with others who were in close interpersonal relationships (i.e. close friends) in building emotional connections (i.e., H3a), and distant interpersonal relationships (i.e., acquaintances / distant friends) in making a good impression (i.e., H3b).

A pilot test was conducted before proceeding to the actual survey. The pilot test in session 4.1 examined the types of products to be shown in the advertisement, and the type of spokes-characters to represent the brand that sells honey - Rowse. The results indicated that consumers were more likely to purchase Clear Honey among the other options (i.e., Clear Squeezy Honey, Set Honey, Snap & Squeeze Honey Sachets, and Light & Mild Honey). The character as a bee was deemed suitable to represent the brand, as it was considered to be more likely in consuming honey in real life compared to other animals/insects (i.e., ants, bears, and raccoons).

The actual survey was created on Qualtrics and was distributed on three social networking platforms, such as Facebook, WeChat, and WhatsApp, using snowball-sampling strategy. 112 participants have responded to the survey, of which 106 were deemed suitable; the remaining was excluded, as some of the key attributes had not been completed.

To analyse the data, SPSS was used. The results in H1a and H1b illustrated that if a character with high level of kindchenschema cuteness was presented, individuals were more likely to build positive attitudes towards the advertisement, and the brand. As kindchenschema cuteness is associated with naiveté, kindness, and warmth (Berry and McArthur, 1985), the cute appearance would bring happiness and trust to consumers, which help develop a positive attitude and attachment towards the advertisement and the brand.

As in Study 2, the results indicated that there was a significant difference in scores for characters with low and high level of kindchenschema cuteness to be considered as interesting, which means that the cuter was the character, the more likely to be considered as interesting. In terms of communication channels, individuals tend to share advertisements with spokes-character with high level of kindchenschema cuteness than the one in low level. Among the three types of communication channels, individuals preferred to share verbally (i.e., face-to-face communications) than in written format (i.e., instant messaging and social networking sites), which can be explained by the synchronicity in different communication channels (Berger and Schwartz, 2011) and its product category (Berger and Iyengar, 2013; Berger and Milkman, 2012).

Furthermore, results in H3a and H3b revealed that individuals tend to share the advertisements with spokes-characters in high level of kindchenschema cuteness to people who were in close interpersonal relationships (i.e., close friends) to maintain an emotional connection, and to those who were in distant interpersonal relationships (i.e., acquaintances/ distant friends) to make a good impression, in comparison with the one in low level of kindchenschema cuteness.

The results also showed that individuals preferred sharing with close friends than with acquaintances / distant friends, despite the level of kindchenschema in characters. Consistent with prior studies, individuals would have different responses with people in different interpersonal relationships / tie strengths (Agnew and Etcheverry, 2006; Brunstein et al, 1996; Clark, 1993; Impett et al, 2005; Powell and Van Vugt, 2003; Rusbult et al, 2004).

Prior studies focused on how messages related to products with animal symbolism are formed and the communication process (Spears et al, 1996) or how medium shapes the messages (Berger and Iyengar, 2013). However, little was known whether characteristics of spokes-characters, in particular the level of kindchenschema cuteness, would influence consumer's perceptions towards the advertisement, the brand, and word-of-mouth behaviours regarding the channels used and the person to share with. The current research shed some light on the relationships between the spokes-characters, in particular its level of kindchenschema cuteness, and the consumer's attitudes towards the advertisements, the brands, and their word-of-mouth behaviours.

To survive in the competitive market, it is crucial for businesses to create gimmicks and interesting topics to gain consumer's attentions and to share with one another. Making good use of spokes-characters would be a way for brands to create a visual cue in advertisements to promote its products or services. The current research provides some insights for marketers that it is crucial to consider the level of kindchenschema cuteness in spokes-characters, as it would affect one's attitudes towards the advertisements and the brands, and their behaviours in spreading the word-of-mouth with others.

9. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 PILOT TEST

INTRODUCTION

This is a pilot test to understand your opinions on a brand and four characters.

It only takes approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Your responses will be anonymous and kept confidential.

BRAND

Rowse is a brand from the United Kingdom that sells honey since 1938.



If you were to purchase some honey products, how likely were you to purchase the honey as shown in the above product category?
(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Option 1 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Option 2 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Option 3 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Option 4 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Option 5 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

What is your attitude towards **the brand (i.e., Rowse)**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Dislike | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Like |
| Bad | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Good |
| Negative | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Positive |
| Unfavourable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Favourable |

How likely are the following to consume honey?
(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
|--------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ant | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bear | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bee | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| accoon | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

If Rowse were to create a cartoon character to promote its products on TV and print advertisement, which of the following was the most suitable to be used as a character?
(1 = Very Inappropriate; 7 = Very Appropriate)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ant | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bear | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bee | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Raccoon | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

CHARACTER A

Please have a look at the following character.



What do you think about **the character**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Not cute | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Cute |
| Not adorable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Adorable |
| Not endearing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Endearing |
| Not interesting | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Interesting |

Do you think using this character in TV & print ads to promote Rowse's products is appropriate?

- ☐ Very inappropriate
- ☐ Moderately inappropriate
- ☐ Slightly inappropriate
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly appropriate
- ☐ Moderately appropriate
- ☐ Very appropriate

CHARACTER B

Please have a look at the following character.



What do you think about **the character**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Not cute | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Cute |
| Not adorable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Adorable |
| Not endearing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Endearing |
| Not interesting | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Interesting |

Do you think using this character in TV & print ads to promote Rowse's products is appropriate?

- ☐ Very inappropriate
- ☐ Moderately inappropriate
- ☐ Slightly inappropriate
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly appropriate
- ☐ Moderately appropriate
- ☐ Very appropriate

CHARACTER C

Please have a look at the following character.



What do you think about **the character**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Not cute | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Cute |
| Not adorable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Adorable |
| Not endearing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Endearing |
| Not interesting | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Interesting |

Do you think using this character in TV & print ads to promote Rowse's products is appropriate?

- ☐ Very inappropriate
- ☐ Moderately inappropriate
- ☐ Slightly inappropriate
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly appropriate
- ☐ Moderately appropriate
- ☐ Very appropriate

CHARACTER D

Please have a look at the following character.



What do you think about **the character**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Not cute | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Cute |
| Not adorable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Adorable |
| Not endearing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Endearing |
| Not interesting | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Interesting |

Do you think using this character in TV & print ads to promote Rowse's products is appropriate?

- ☐ Very inappropriate
- ☐ Moderately inappropriate
- ☐ Slightly inappropriate
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly appropriate
- ☐ Moderately appropriate
- ☐ Very appropriate

APPENDIX 2
PILOT TEST: BRAND ATTITUDE

| Reliability Statistics | | |
|------------------------|--|------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
| .954 | .954 | 4 |

Item Statistics

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|------|----------------|----|
| What is your attitude towards the brand (i.e., Rowse)?-Dislike:Like | 5.57 | .926 | 21 |
| What is your attitude towards the brand (i.e., Rowse)?-Bad:Good | 5.62 | .973 | 21 |
| What is your attitude towards the brand (i.e., Rowse)?-Negative: Positive | 5.57 | 1.028 | 21 |
| What is your attitude towards the brand (i.e., Rowse)?-Unfavourable: Favourable | 5.38 | .921 | 21 |

APPENDIX 3
PILOT TEST: CORRELATION BETWEEN
CUTE CHARACTERS (I.E., BEE)& BEING INTERESTING

| | | What do you think about this character?-Not interesting: Interesting | Cute_Bee |
|--|---------------------|--|----------|
| What do you think about this character?-Not interesting: Interesting | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .853** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 21 | 21 |
| Cute_Bee | Pearson Correlation | .853** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 21 | 21 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

APPENDIX 4
PILOT TEST: CORRELATION BETWEEN
CUTE CHARACTERS (I.E., BEAR) & BEING INTERESTING

| | | What do you think about this character?– Not interesting: Interesting | Cute_Bear |
|---|---------------------|---|-----------|
| What do you think about this character?–Not interesting:Interesting | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .614** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .003 |
| | N | 21 | 21 |
| Cute_Bear | Pearson Correlation | .614** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .003 | |
| | N | 21 | 21 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

APPENDIX 5
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

[PAGE 1]

Researcher: Ching Yuen Bryan Chan (c.chan.7@warwick.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Dr. Steve Henderson (tutor@mrkite.org)

Date: 25 August 2017

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This research aims to investigate how consumers behave towards advertisements and their use of social media. You will be providing data on your social media usage, opinion of brand and advertisements, and demographic data. Your answers are very important to the accuracy of our research.

It will take you appropriately 10 minutes to answer the questions.

All the answers you provided are strictly confidential and your anonymity is ensured. Participating in this research is completely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to participate in the research and you are free to withdraw from the research at any time regardless of the reason, with no negative consequence to yourself or the organisation for which you work.

It is not expected that you will experience any risks through participating in this project. Data will be anonymised from the start, with no names or specific positions recorded as part of the interview material. Your consent form will be stored in a locked office at the University of Warwick, and transcripts of interview data will be anonymised before being printed and stored in the same place. The transcripts will also be stored electronically. All material may be destroyed after 10 years from the completion of the research. The material from this research may be published. You can request a copy of the publication from the researcher named above.

Should you have any enquiries about this research, please feel free to contact the researcher Ching Yuen Bryan Chan via email c.chan.7@warwick.ac.uk. You may also contact the University of Warwick Research and Impact Services, University House, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 8UW, United Kingdom. +44 02476 75732 should you have wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the researcher.

[PAGE 2]

By proceeding indicates that:

You have read and understand the above information dated 25 August 2017 for the above study. You have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions of a member of the research team and have had these answered satisfactorily.

You understand that the participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

You understand that the information will be held and processed for the purpose of being analysed by the researcher for the purposes of completing their Masters Dissertation and, where relevant, for the writing of associated academic journal articles or monographs.

You agree to take part in the above named study.

APPENDIX 6
SURVEY QUESTIONS

SECTION I: SOCIAL MEDIA

How likely are you to use the following electronic channels?
(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Facebook | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| T itter | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Instagram | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| WhatsApp | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Skype | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Wechat | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Weibo | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How likely are you to do the following actions **in general**?
(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Use social networking sites | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Use instant messaging | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Share ads on social networking sites. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Share ads through instant messaging | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

SECTION II: BRAND

Rowse is a brand from the United Kingdom that sells honey since 1938.



What is your attitude towards **the brand (i.e., Rowse)**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Dislike | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Like |
| Bad | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Good |
| Negative | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Positive |
| Unfavourable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Favourable |

How likely are you to purchase the products as shown above?

- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ Moderately unlikely
- ☐ Slightly unlikely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Very likely

SECTION III (A): ADVERTISEMENT A**ADVERTISEMENT A**

In this section, you will provide your opinion on Advertisement A, and your intention to share the advertisement under two scenarios.

- PAGE BREAK -

Please have a look at the following advertisement, and answer the following questions



What do you think about **the advertisement**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Dislike | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Like |
| Bad | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Good |
| Negative | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Positive |
| Unfavourable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Favourable |
| Not interesting | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Interesting |

What do you think about **the brand (i.e., Rowse)**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Dislike | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Like |
| Bad | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Good |
| Negative | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Positive |
| Unfavourable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Favourable |

What do you think about **the character**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Not cute | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Cute |
| Not adorable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Adorable |
| Not endearing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Endearing |
| Not interesting | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Interesting |

- PAGE BREAK -

SCENARIO 1

Think of one of your **close friends**.

Suppose your close friend was a supporter of this brand.

And you have seen this advertisement.



How likely were you to share this ad with your **close friend**?

- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ Moderately unlikely
- ☐ Slightly unlikely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Very likely

How would you share the ad with your **close friend**?

(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Tell your friend when you meet. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Share the ad on social networking sites. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Share the ad through instant messaging | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

When you were to share the ad with your **close friend**, how likely do you agree on the following statements? (1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I care about making a good impression to my close friend. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I care about emotionally connecting with my close friend. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

- PAGE BREAK -

SCENARIO 2

Think of one of your acquaintances / distant friends.

Suppose your acquaintance / distant friend was a supporter of this brand.

And you have seen this advertisement.



How likely were you to share this ad with your acquaintance / distant friend?

- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ Moderately unlikely
- ☐ Slightly unlikely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Very likely

How would you share the ad with your **acquaintance / distant friend**?
(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Tell your friend when you meet. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Share the ad on social networking sites. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Share the ad through instant messaging | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

When you were to share the ad with your **acquaintance / distant friend**, how likely do you agree on the following statements? (1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I care about making a good impression to my acquaintance / distant friend. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I care about emotionally connecting with my acquaintance / distant friend. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

SECTION III (B): ADVERTISEMENT B**ADVERTISEMENT B**

In this section, you will provide your opinion on Advertisement B, and your intention to share the advertisement under two scenarios.

- PAGE BREAK -

Please have a look at the following advertisement, and answer the following questions



What do you think about **the advertisement**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Dislike | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Like |
| Bad | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Good |
| Negative | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Positive |
| Unfavourable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Favourable |
| Not interesting | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Interesting |

What do you think about **the brand (i.e., Rowse)**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Dislike | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Like |
| Bad | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Good |
| Negative | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Positive |
| Unfavourable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Favourable |

What do you think about **the character**?

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Not cute | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Cute |
| Not adorable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Adorable |
| Not endearing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Endearing |
| Not interesting | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Interesting |

- PAGE BREAK -

SCENARIO 3

Think of one of your **close friends**.

Suppose your close friend was a supporter of this brand.

And you have seen this advertisement.



How likely were you to share this ad with your **close friend**?

- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ Moderately unlikely
- ☐ Slightly unlikely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Very likely

How would you share the ad with your **close friend**?

(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Tell your friend when you meet. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Share the ad on social networking sites. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Share the ad through instant messaging | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

When you were to share the ad with your **close friend**, how likely do you agree on the following statements? (1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I care about making a good impression to my close friend. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I care about emotionally connecting with my close friend. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

- PAGE BREAK -

SCENARIO 4

Think of one of your **acquaintances / distant friends**.

Suppose your acquaintance / distant friend was a supporter of this brand.

And you have seen this advertisement.



How likely were you to share this ad with your **acquaintance / distant friend**?

- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ Moderately unlikely
- ☐ Slightly unlikely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Slightly likely
- ☐ Moderately likely
- ☐ Very likely

How would you share the ad with your **acquaintance / distant friend**?
(1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Tell your friend when you meet. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Share the ad on social networking sites. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Share the ad through instant messaging | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

When you were to share the ad with your **acquaintance / distant friend**, how likely do you agree on the following statements? (1 = Very Unlikely; 7 = Very Likely)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I care about making a good impression to my acquaintance / distant friend. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I care about emotionally connecting with my acquaintance / distant friend. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

SECTION IV: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Race / Ethnicity

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Pacific Islander
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Level of Study (if any)

- ☐ College
- ☐ Undergraduate
- ☐ Postgraduate
- ☐ PhD
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Age

- ☐ Below 18
- ☐ 18 - 24
- ☐ 25 - 30
- ☐ 31 - 34
- ☐ 35 - 40
- ☐ 41 - 44
- ☐ 45 - 50
- ☐ Above 50

- END OF SURVEY -

APPENDIX 7
RELIABILITY TEST:
OVERALL BRAND ATTITUDE

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

| | | N | % |
|-------|-----------------------|-----|-------|
| Cases | Valid | 106 | 100.0 |
| | Excluded ^a | 0 | .0 |
| | Total | 106 | 100.0 |

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|------------------|--|------------|
| .959 | .960 | 4 |

Item Statistics

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|------|----------------|-----|
| What is your attitude towards the brand (i.e., Rowse)?-Dislike:Like | 5.01 | 1.276 | 106 |
| What is your attitude towards the brand (i.e., Rowse)?-Bad:Good | 5.05 | 1.237 | 106 |
| What is your attitude towards the brand (i.e., Rowse)?-Negative: Positive | 5.14 | 1.276 | 106 |
| What is your attitude towards the brand (i.e., Rowse)?-Unfavourable: Favourable | 5.08 | 1.278 | 106 |

APPENDIX 8 OVERALL BRAND ATTITUDE

Frequencies

| Statistics | | |
|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Overall_BrandAt | | |
| N | Valid | 106 |
| | Missing | 0 |
| Mean | | 5.0684 |
| Std. Error of Mean | | .11616 |
| Median | | 5.0000 |
| Mode | | 4.00 |
| Std. Deviation | | 1.19599 |
| Variance | | 1.430 |
| Range | | 6.00 |
| Minimum | | 1.00 |
| Maximum | | 7.00 |
| Sum | | 537.25 |
| Percentiles | 25 | 4.0000 |
| | 50 | 5.0000 |
| | 75 | 6.0000 |

APPENDIX 9 TENDENCY TO PURCHASE ROWSE PRODUCTS

Frequencies

| Statistics | | |
|---|---------|-------|
| How likely are you to purchase the products as shown above? | | |
| N | Valid | 106 |
| | Missing | 0 |
| Mean | | 4.25 |
| Std. Error of Mean | | .184 |
| Median | | 5.00 |
| Mode | | 6 |
| Std. Deviation | | 1.898 |
| Variance | | 3.601 |
| Range | | 6 |
| Minimum | | 1 |
| Maximum | | 7 |
| Sum | | 451 |
| Percentiles | 25 | 3.00 |
| | 50 | 5.00 |
| | 75 | 6.00 |

APPENDIX 10**H1a: LEVEL OF CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ADVERTISEMENT****T-Test**

| Group Statistics | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----|--------|----------------|-----------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Cuteness | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | | | | |
| Mean of Advertisement Attitude | Low Level of Cuteness | 95 | 3.3289 | 1.18964 | .12205 | | | | |
| | High Level of Cuteness | 117 | 5.2991 | 1.08687 | .10048 | | | | |

| Independent Samples Test | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------|------|---------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--|
| Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | | | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper |
| Mean of Advertisement Attitude | Equal variances assumed | .168 | .682 | -12.580 | 210 | .000 | -1.97020 | .15662 | -2.27894 -1.66146 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -12.462 | 192.821 | .000 | -1.97020 | .15809 | -2.28201 -1.65838 |

APPENDIX 11**H1b: LEVEL OF CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE BRAND****T-Test**

| Group Statistics | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----|--------|----------------|-----------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Cuteness | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | | | | |
| Mean of Brand Attitude | Low Level of Cuteness | 95 | 4.1789 | 1.46804 | .15062 | | | | |
| | High Level of Cuteness | 117 | 5.3419 | 1.00569 | .09298 | | | | |

| Independent Samples Test | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------|------|--------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--|
| Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | | | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper |
| Mean of Brand Attitude | Equal variances assumed | 5.745 | .017 | -6.822 | 210 | .000 | -1.16293 | .17046 | -1.49896 -.82691 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -6.570 | 160.413 | .000 | -1.16293 | .17700 | -1.51249 -.81338 |

APPENDIX 12**H2: LEVEL OF CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER AND TENDENCY TO BE CONSIDERED AS INTERESTING****T-Test**

| Group Statistics | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Cuteness_Nominal | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | | | | |
| What do you think about the character?-- Not interesting: Interesting | Low Level of Cuteness | 95 | 2.38 | 1.213 | .124 | | | | |
| | High Level of Cuteness | 117 | 5.09 | 1.236 | .114 | | | | |

| Independent Samples Test | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------|------|---------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--|
| Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | | | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper |
| What do you think about the character?-- Not interesting: Interesting | Equal variances assumed | .580 | .447 | -15.988 | 210 | .000 | -2.707 | .169 | -3.040 -2.373 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -16.019 | 202.583 | .000 | -2.707 | .169 | -3.040 -2.373 |

APPENDIX 13**H2a, H2b, H2c: LEVEL OF CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER AND
TENDENCY TO BE SHARED IN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS****T-Test****Group Statistics**

| | Cuteness_Nominal | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| Share Ad (Face-to-face) | Low Level of Cuteness | 95 | 2.7789 | 1.62054 | .16626 |
| | High Level of Cuteness | 117 | 4.0769 | 1.47627 | .13648 |
| Share Ad (Social Networking Sites) | Low Level of Cuteness | 95 | 2.0263 | 1.21026 | .12417 |
| | High Level of Cuteness | 117 | 3.5256 | 1.56173 | .14438 |
| Share Ad (Instant Messaging) | Low Level of Cuteness | 95 | 2.2421 | 1.39311 | .14293 |
| | High Level of Cuteness | 117 | 3.6239 | 1.51132 | .13972 |

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|----------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| Share Ad (Face-to-face) | Equal variances assumed | 2.755 | .098 | -6.093 | 210 | .000 | -1.29798 | .21303 | -1.71793 | -.87802 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -6.034 | 192.524 | .000 | -1.29798 | .21511 | -1.72224 | -.87371 |
| Share Ad (Social Networking Sites) | Equal variances assumed | 12.262 | .001 | -7.671 | 210 | .000 | -1.49933 | .19545 | -1.88463 | -1.11402 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -7.873 | 209.573 | .000 | -1.49933 | .19043 | -1.87473 | -1.12392 |
| Share Ad (Instant Messaging) | Equal variances assumed | 1.741 | .188 | -6.855 | 210 | .000 | -1.38183 | .20158 | -1.77920 | -.98445 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -6.913 | 206.606 | .000 | -1.38183 | .19988 | -1.77589 | -.98776 |

APPENDIX 14**H3a: LEVEL OF CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER AND
TENDENCY TO BUILD EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS****Crosstabs****Case Processing Summary**

| | Valid | | Cases Missing | | Total | |
|---|-------|---------|---------------|---------|-------|---------|
| | N | Percent | N | Percent | N | Percent |
| Cuteness_Nominal * Do you care about emotionally connecting with your close friend? | 212 | 100.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 212 | 100.0% |

Cuteness_Nominal * Do you care about emotionally connecting with your close friend? Crosstabulation

| | | | Do you care about emotionally connecting with your close friend? | | |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------|
| | | | Do not care about emotional connection | Care about emotional connection | Total |
| Cuteness_Nominal | Low Level of Cuteness | Count | 35 | 60 | 95 |
| | | Expected Count | 27.3 | 67.7 | 95.0 |
| | | % within Cuteness_Nominal | 36.8% | 63.2% | 100.0% |
| | High Level of Cuteness | Count | 26 | 91 | 117 |
| | | Expected Count | 33.7 | 83.3 | 117.0 |
| | | % within Cuteness_Nominal | 22.2% | 77.8% | 100.0% |
| Total | | Count | 61 | 151 | 212 |
| | | Expected Count | 61.0 | 151.0 | 212.0 |
| | | % within Cuteness_Nominal | 28.8% | 71.2% | 100.0% |

Chi-Square Tests

| | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.468 ^a | 1 | .019 | | |
| Continuity Correction ^b | 4.778 | 1 | .029 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 5.455 | 1 | .020 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .022 | .014 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 5.442 | 1 | .020 | | |
| N of Valid Cases | 212 | | | | |

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 27.33.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Symmetric Measures

| | | Value | Approximate Significance |
|--------------------|------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Nominal by Nominal | Phi | .161 | .019 |
| | Cramer's V | .161 | .019 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 212 | |

APPENDIX 15**H3b: LEVEL OF CUTENESS IN SPOKES-CHARACTER AND
TENDENCY TO MAKE GOOD IMPRESSIONS IN DISTNAT RELATIONSHIPS****Crosstabs****Case Processing Summary**

| | Valid | | Cases Missing | | Total | |
|--|-------|---------|---------------|---------|-------|---------|
| | N | Percent | N | Percent | N | Percent |
| Cuteness_Nominal * Do you care about making a good impression to your acquaintance / distant friend? | 212 | 100.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 212 | 100.0% |

Cuteness_Nominal * Do you care about making a good impression to your acquaintance / distant friend? Crosstabulation

| | | | Do you care about making a good impression to your acquaintance / distant friend? | | |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------|
| | | | Do not care about making a good impression | Care about making a good impression | Total |
| Cuteness_Nominal | Low Level of Cuteness | Count | 55 | 40 | 95 |
| | | Expected Count | 45.7 | 49.3 | 95.0 |
| | | % within Cuteness_Nominal | 57.9% | 42.1% | 100.0% |
| | High Level of Cuteness | Count | 47 | 70 | 117 |
| | | Expected Count | 56.3 | 60.7 | 117.0 |
| | | % within Cuteness_Nominal | 40.2% | 59.8% | 100.0% |
| | Total | Count | 102 | 110 | 212 |
| | | Expected Count | 102.0 | 110.0 | 212.0 |
| | | % within Cuteness_Nominal | 48.1% | 51.9% | 100.0% |

Chi-Square Tests

| | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 6.597 ^a | 1 | .010 | | |
| Continuity Correction ^b | 5.906 | 1 | .015 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.627 | 1 | .010 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .013 | .007 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 6.566 | 1 | .010 | | |
| N of Valid Cases | 212 | | | | |

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 45.71.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Symmetric Measures

| | | Value | Approximate Significance |
|--------------------|------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Nominal by Nominal | Phi | .176 | .010 |
| | Cramer's V | .176 | .010 |
| N of Valid Cases | | 212 | |

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