FISHING FOR FEELINGS? HOOKING VIEWERS HELPS!

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ABSTRACT

To better understand individual variation in emotional responses to advertising, the authors recommend considering three general factors: characteristics of the individual who sees the ad, characteristics of the ad itself, and the nature of the ad/individual interface. This paper examines one aspect of the individual, affect intensity; one aspect of the ad, the degree to which the ad tells a story; and one aspect of the ad/individual interface, whether the individual is hooked by the ad. Experimental results reveal that an individual’s being hooked by an ad has a positive relationship with upbeat and warm feelings, a negative relationship with disinterested feelings, and significantly enhances the viewer’s attitude toward the ad. We find that affect intensity has a positive relationship with upbeat and warm feelings, and affect intensity moderates the effect of being hooked on upbeat and warm feelings. Findings also reveal that narrative ad structure has a positive relationship with upbeat and warm feelings, a negative relationship with disinterested feelings, and that being hooked moderates the effect of narrative ad structure on upbeat and warm feelings responses.
INTRODUCTION

Imagine that you are watching television with some friends and a McDonald’s ad comes on. In the ad, a little boy has brought his father to school for show and tell. The boy describes going to McDonald’s and sharing secrets with his father. The ad ends when the little boy states, “My Dad is my best friend.” You look around the room. About half of your friends are teary eyed. One is actually crying. The others look bored or skeptical. What’s going on?

This anecdote characterizes one of the puzzles in the search to understand emotional responses to television advertising: the puzzle suggested by the considerable variability in feelings responses to ads within and among individuals. Although the field is beginning to understand the specific effects of specific emotions on attitude toward the ad (A_Ad) and attitude toward the brand (A_B), we know that individual responses to a particular ad vary widely across viewers. For instance, Edell and Burke (1987) found greater variance associated with feelings reactions to TV ads than was associated with other, more cognitive ad-related judgments. This observation led Edell and Burke to suggest a potentially important implication of this intriguing variation—feelings may be more appropriately characterized as properties of the individual than as properties of the ad (see also, Aaker, Stayman, and Hagerty 1986; Scott 1994).

This paper takes a step towards solving the puzzle of variation in emotional reactions to ads by proposing that individuals' feelings responses to television advertisements are a function of three elements: characteristics of the individual viewing the ad, characteristics of the ad itself, and the interface between the ad and the individual. We characterize the interface between the ad and the individual as the extent to which individuals are "hooked" by an ad. "Being hooked" is defined as a viewer's being drawn into, or pulled into, an ad. In the next section we propose that
the extent to which an individual is hooked by an ad affects the nature and extent of feelings that are evoked. In addition, we examine the effects of a stable individual difference, Affect Intensity, and an important ad characteristic, Narrative Structure (the degree to which the ad tells a story), on variation in feelings across individuals, separately and in relation to Being Hooked.

**THEORY AND HYPOTHESES**

The basic elements of Figure 1 represent the three elements of our theory: the individual, the ad, and their interface. In this section we develop our theory and resulting hypotheses regarding how these elements may explain variation in individuals' emotional responses to ads. Three feelings types are investigated: Upbeat (e.g., happy, energetic), Warm (e.g., affectionate, moved), and Disinterested (e.g., bored, critical) (Goodstein, Edell, and Moore 1990). Goodstein, Edell, and Moore (1990) also identify a fourth feelings type, uneasy feelings (e.g., fear, sadness), which we chose not to investigate because we wanted to first identify the more straightforward path to warm and upbeat feelings. Uneasy feelings are complicated because they often coexist with warm or upbeat feelings—ads that present anxious moments (e.g., a Volvo ad that shows scenes of people almost getting killed) usually resolve them within in ad, producing warm or upbeat feelings in addition to uneasy feelings.

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**The Interface Between the Individual and the Ad: Being Hooked**

The key piece to our proposed solution to the puzzle of variability in feelings responses to ads is the interface between the individual and the ad. Before any feelings response can occur,
the viewer must be drawn in, or hooked, by the ad. In this paper, we treat Being Hooked as a holistic construct that represents the degree to which a viewer is pulled into an ad. Being Hooked is related to a psychological construct, "experiential involvement" which is defined as "pronounced engagement with attentional objects" (Wild, Kuiken and Schopflocher 1995, p. 569). During episodes of experiential involvement, "individuals are ‘captured’ by feelings, 'immersed' in activities, 'absorbed' in imagery, 'riveted' by interactions with others, and so on..." (Wild et al. 1995, p. 569). These processes describe what we mean by Being Hooked, however, in the context of advertising, the full extent of experiential involvement will probably not occur. Thus, Being Hooked is a more moderate concept, created specifically for an advertising context.

Being Hooked goes beyond attention, a basic requirement for generating any response to ads (e.g., Aaker, Batra and Myers 1992). We assert that sustained attention is necessary to evoke feelings responses in viewers, except feelings of disinterest. Sustained attention allows the viewer to become sufficiently engaged to become involved with the ad’s plot or arguments, or to take the ad personally, i.e., to be hooked by the ad. Ad viewers may become hooked in a variety of ways. An ad can pull viewers into the ad by making them feel as though they’re experiencing what is happening in the ad, by reminding them of experiences from their own lives, or even by presenting an experience the viewers would like to have in the future. Being Hooked does not depend on which element of the ad (the hook) managed to snare each ad viewer or produce emotional reactions in the viewer. Nor does Being Hooked depend on which particular individual difference happens to influence the extent and nature of feelings that an ad viewer experiences. Being Hooked is an outcome of an individual viewing an ad, an outcome that can affect the nature and extent of the individual's feeling reactions to the ad.
Hypotheses. We assert that ads are only able to evoke emotions (other than feelings of disinterest) when viewers are involved in the ad’s plot or arguments or take the ad personally, i.e., when the viewer is hooked. This type of engagement can lead to viewers’ becoming personally involved in the ad, which many theorists of emotion believe to be necessary for emotional responses to occur (e.g., Lazarus 1999). Thus, only when an ad hooks an individual (by whatever means), do we expect Upbeat or Warm feelings to be evoked. However, when an individual is not hooked, we expect feelings of disinterest will arise. Ads that do not hook the viewer are likely to be viewed as boring and uninteresting.1

H1: Being Hooked will have a positive relationship with Upbeat and Warm feelings and a negative relationship with Disinterested feelings.

The effects of Being Hooked on emotional responses to ads will, in turn, affect attitude toward the ad. We expect, but do not explore specifically in this study, that Being Hooked affects other intervening constructs such as ad judgments, which have been shown to influence AAd (Burke and Edell 1989). These unmeasured effects will be reflected in an effect of Being Hooked on AAd, in addition to its effect on emotional reactions to the ad. Furthermore, as a function of the nature of Being Hooked, the experience of the ad will be enhanced, resulting in a direct effect of Being Hooked on AAd. Taken altogether, we predict that:

H2: Being Hooked will have a positive effect on Attitude toward the Ad over and above its effect through Upbeat, Warm, and Disinterested feelings.

1 While this paper does not consider Uneasy feelings, such as fear, that advertisers may sometimes hope to evoke, we would predict that these feelings would also have a positive relationship with Being Hooked. An ad cannot evoke any feelings response, other than disinterest, without first hooking the ad viewer.
The Individual: Affect Intensity

Affect Intensity is a potential piece of the variation-in-feelings-responses puzzle. The construct is due to Larsen, Diener, and their colleagues (e.g., Larsen, Diener, and Cropanzano 1987; Larsen, Diener, and Emmons 1986) who find that some people respond more emotionally to almost everything, while others' feelings reactions are more reserved or conservative. Affect Intensity (AI) includes both how strongly individuals feel emotion and the range of (or variation in) the emotions individuals experience. AI is a bipolar construct, with strong intensity, high variation individuals on one end, and mildly emotional, low variation individuals at the other. A low-AI individual would express “happy” as “placid, enduring contentment;” while a happy, high-AI person express happy as “enlivened, animated spikes of enthusiasm and exhilaration” (Larsen and Diener 1987, p. 27). Larsen and Diener have documented individual differences in AI across a wide spectrum of emotions, including both positively and negatively-valenced feelings. This makes AI an especially appealing construct to consider as an explanation of individual variation in feelings responses to TV advertising which are, often by design, both positive and negative.

Moore (1995) compared the emotional reactions of high and low-AI subjects to three Public Service Announcements he thought would evoke emotions. Moore found that high-AI participants exhibited stronger emotional reactions than low AI participants. These differences were not found for three product demonstration ads that were considered (a priori) to be non-emotional. The emotional responses in Moore's study consisted of five “empathic emotions” (compassionate, tender-hearted, etc.), two measures of “empathic contagion” (sad, angry), and three measures of empathic involvement (the ad was painful to watch, etc.); which were used to predict attitude toward the ad and desire to help. Moore, Harris, and Chen (1995), using a similar
methodology, found that AI moderated the effect of negative feelings (alarmed, worried, sad) and positive, empathic feelings (concerned, compassion) on attitude toward the brand, but found mixed evidence as to whether those emotions acted as a full or partial mediator of the effect of AI on $A_B$.

We build on Moore et al.'s findings by using Affect Intensity as a moderator variable in an attempt to explain variation in a more comprehensive set of specific feelings responses than the Moore et al. studies. In addition, the emotionality of the ads in our studies is ultimately determined by the study participants rather than the researchers, which is consistent with our premise that emotional reactions to an ad are individual-specific outcomes.

_Hypotheses._ While advertisers cannot control whether viewers are high or low in AI, this variable contributes to our theoretical understanding of the variability in consumers' feelings responses to advertising. Based on the work of Larsen et al. (1986, 1987) described above, high-AI individuals should experience more Upbeat and Warm feelings in response to ads than low-AI individuals. Note that we do not expect AI to affect the level of Disinterested feelings. Disinterest arises from distraction, lack of attention, lack of involvement, and so forth, suggesting a strong cognitive component. Thus, we expect that Disinterested Feelings will be unaffected by affect intensity.

**H3:** There will be a positive relationship between the Affect Intensity of ad viewers and the strength of their Upbeat and Warm feelings, and no relationship between Affect Intensity and Disinterested feelings.

Further, we expect stronger effects of Being Hooked on Upbeat and Warm feelings for high-AI individuals than for low-AI individuals. Again, we do not expect such an effect for Disinterested feelings. This is not to say that high-AI individuals are more likely to be hooked by
an ad, but rather that the positive effect of being hooked on positive feelings responses (upbeat and warm) will be intensified for high-AI individuals.

H4: Affect Intensity will moderate (intensify) the positive relationship between Being Hooked and Upbeat and Warm feelings.

The Ad: Narrative Structure

The final puzzle piece in our investigation of variation in emotional reactions to ads is the ad itself, with its many and varied characteristics. Just as some individuals are more likely to react emotionally to ad stimuli, some ads are more likely than other ads to evoke emotions in those viewers. In this paper, we examine one ad particular characteristic--Narrative Structure, because advertising in the form of narratives (stories) provides the characters and situations Aaker et al. (1986) claim are necessary to evoke an emotional response (particularly warm feelings).

Narratives or stories contain two basic elements: chronology and causality. Narrative thought organizes events in terms of a temporal dimension; things occur over time (Bruner 1990, Polkinghorne 1991). Time is configured in narratives as episodes, each with a beginning, middle, and end. In addition to chronology, events in a narrative are organized according to the causal and intentional relations among them, i.e., the characters' goals lead to actions that result in outcomes (Bruner 1990). When individuals process a narrative or story, they establish relationships among the narrative's elements by incorporating general knowledge about human goal-oriented action sequences (Pennington and Hastie 1986, Stein and Albro 1997). Stated simply, a narrative structure links goals, actions, and outcomes over time to establish causality.
Lazarus (1999) claims that different emotions have different “plots.” A story that organizes a condition of the world and a person’s relationship to it in a particular plot will lead to a particular emotion (see also Shweder 1994). For example, in a happiness-joy narrative, making progress towards the realization of a goal provides lasting happiness, while achievement of the goal results in a more temporary, and more intense, sense of joy (Lazarus 1999). An ad viewer may relive similar emotional experiences while viewing an ad that portrays a happiness or joyfulness plot. Therefore, advertising narratives depicting particular emotion plots should evoke the corresponding feelings in ad viewers.

**Hypotheses.** Ads that tell well-developed stories provide the characters, situations, and emotion plots necessary to generate Upbeat and Warm feelings. In addition, better developed narratives should be less likely to result in skeptical and disinterested feelings, because ads that tell good stories should be entertaining (Bruner 1990).

H5: The degree of Narrative Structure of an ad will have a positive relationship with Upbeat and Warm feelings and a negative relationship with Disinterested feelings.

When a viewer is hooked by an ad that tells a story, the narrative ad elements, such as an interesting and relevant plot, a familiar setting, or characters with whom the viewer can relate, should enhance emotional responses to the ad. Green and Brock (2000) find that stories persuade via transportation, which is defined as “immersion into a text,” that is, the extent to which individuals become “lost” in a story (Green and Brock 2000, p.702). This transportation process includes strong affective responses. Additionally, the idea of an ad “drawing the viewer in” has been associated with drama advertising in the work of Wells (1988); Deighton, Romer and McQueen (1989); and Stern (1994). Classical dramas are similar to narratives: both contain chronology and causality components. These researchers all point to the superior ability of
drama-type ads to draw viewers in, i.e., “hook” them, and evoke an emotional response. Therefore, we propose that the interaction of Being Hooked by an ad that tells a story will lead to higher levels of positive feelings and lower levels of negative feelings than either Being Hooked or having Narrative Structure alone.

H6: Being Hooked will moderate the effect of the Narrative Structure of an ad on Upbeat, Warm, and Disinterested feelings (intensifying positive feelings and further reducing Disinterested feelings).

EXPERIMENTS 1 & 2

To examine the hypotheses developed regarding the relationships among Being Hooked, individual differences in Affect Intensity, ad differences in Narrative Structure, feelings responses to advertising, and ad attitudes, two advertising studies were conducted. We describe the methodology of the two studies separately, however, both studies collected the same dependent variables, such that we are able to analyze the data from each experiment in one combined data set, with appropriate controls.

Method: Experiment 1

Procedure. The data for this study were collected in two phases. The first phase consisted of a questionnaire assessing participants' level of Affect Intensity and their prior attitude towards the eleven brands contained in the stimulus set. Respondents returned their completed questionnaire, then, approximately one week later, participated in the second phase of data collection. In phase two, each of eleven stimulus ads was shown once in a theater-style classroom, after which participants responded to measures that assessed their attitude towards the
ad, the feelings they experienced while viewing the ad, and whether they were hooked by the ad. Finally, demographic data were reported and the respondents were debriefed. This phase of the study was completed in just less than one hour.

Respondents. Respondents were recruited via print ads that were distributed to graduate students. Thirty-three people participated in the study and were paid ten dollars.

Stimuli. Eleven TV commercials were shown to the participants in the second phase of the study. These commercials had all previously aired, though some had not been shown for several years. Because emotional response is the focus of this study, we selected commercials we believed had the potential to generate emotional reactions for at least some respondents. Additionally, care was taken to ensure that the selected ads reflected, and were appropriate for, our respondent population. The TV commercials came from a number of sources: e.g., the “Tears, Fears and Cheers” tape from the Marketing Science Institute, the CLIOs, and Advertising Age videos. Brief descriptions of the ads are in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1 about here
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Measures. In phase one, we captured individuals' Affect Intensity using the a 15-item subset of the 40-item Affect Intensity Measure (AIM) developed by Larsen, Diener and their colleagues (see Table 2). The first phase also captured participants' prior attitude toward each of the eleven stimulus brands (Prior AB), using two 7-point scales anchored by very favorable, very unfavorable, and very good, very bad. In phase two, after each ad was shown, respondents reported whether they had seen the commercial before (Prior Exposure: yes, many times; yes, a few times; or no) and their attitude towards the ad (AAd), assessed via two 7-point scales anchored by very favorable, very unfavorable, and very good, very bad. Next, viewers reported
the feelings they experienced while watching the ad using the 57-item feelings scale developed by Goodstein et al. (1990), including the extent to which they felt Upbeat (e.g., happy, energetic), Warm (e.g., affectionate, moved), and Disinterested (e.g., bored, critical), on a 5-point scale anchored by very strongly, not at all. Respondents then completed the 8-item Being Hooked scale. This set of questions covered areas such as sustained attention, the personal relevance of the ad, and whether the viewer felt captivated by the ad experience (see Table 3). Each item was evaluated on a 7-point scale, anchored by strongly agree, strongly disagree. Some of these items were drawn from Boller, Olson, and Babakus (1991); Deighton et al. (1989); and Puto and Wells (1984).

Independent Variable. The eleven stimulus ads were later coded by two independent coders blind to the hypotheses, using a six-item scale developed to measure the degree to which an advertisement has the structural elements identified above as being indicative of narratives (Escalas 1996; see Table 4). Two items appraise the causal relationships explored by narratives (items 1 and 4). One item captures the chronology of narrative; that is, whether the ad has a beginning, middle, and end (item 5). Another important element of narratives is character development (item 3). Narratives are higher quality when viewers/readers are made aware of the psychological state of the protagonist, that is, what he/she is thinking and feeling (item 2). Finally, one item addresses the characteristic focus of narrative thought on particular events rather than generalities or abstractions (item 6). The six items were averaged for each coder to form one narrative score for each coder for each ad. The two coders’ average narrative scores
were highly correlated \((r = .84, p < .001)\), had strong Cronbach alphas (coder 1 \(\alpha = .94\), coder 2 \(\alpha = .94\)), and were averaged to form one narrative score per ad (combined \(\alpha = .94\)).

Method: Experiment 2

Respondents. Forty-eight undergraduate students participated in this study. They were also paid ten dollars for their participation.

Stimuli. Thirty-eight television ads were recorded from local television or selected from award winning collections. Ten of the television ads were selected in a pretest based on four independent coders’ assessment of the quality of the ad \((A_{Ad} > 4.0\) on a five-point scale) and the degree of narrative structure in the ad. To assess narrative structure, the four coders rated the ads using two, five-point items (“Is this a well-developed story in terms of its elements (scene, actor, purpose/intention/goal, action, response/outcome)?” and “Does this ad have a temporal dimension (beginning, middle, end, occurs over time)?” \(r = .75\)). The ten ads varied in their degree of narrative structure (range: 1.0 to 5.0). In the selected ads, degree of narrative structure is not significantly related to \(A_{Ad}\) for the pretest data \((F(1, 24) = 1.75, p = .20)\). A description of the ten ads is given in Table 5.

Procedure. First, participants filled out a reduced version of the AIM scale, followed by a measure of prior attitude toward the brands to be included in the ad stimulus set, plus some filler brands. Next, participants viewed ten ads in a theater-style classroom, in two randomly assigned orders. (No order effects were found, so the participants were pooled to form one data set.) After
each ad, participants completed the feelings scale, ad attitude scale, and the eight-item Being Hooked scale. Finally, demographic data were reported and the respondents were debriefed. The entire procedure took about one hour.

*Independent Variable.* The ten stimulus ads were later coded by two independent coders blind to the hypotheses, using the six-item scale degree of narrative structure scale described above (Escalas 1996; see Table 4). The six items were averaged for each coder to form one narrative score for each coder for each ad. The two coders’ average narrative scores were highly correlated ($r = .84, p < .001$), had strong Cronbach alphas (coder 1 $\alpha = .94$, coder 2 $\alpha = .94$), and were averaged to form one narrative score per ad (combined $\alpha = .94$). The two-item scale used to select the ten ads in the pretest and the six-item narrative structure scale were also highly correlated ($r = .89, p < .001$). The averaged six-item scale score is used as the study’s independent variable, due to its more extensive assessment of multiple narrative elements and to be consistent with the data from Experiment 1, although the analysis with the two-item scale, used in the pretest in the interest of time, produces nearly identical results.

*Measures.* In Part I, Affect Intensity was measured, again using the 15-item subset of the 40-item AIM developed by Larsen, Diener and their colleagues. The same two seven-point items measured prior brand attitude. After each ad was shown, respondents reported whether they had seen the commercial before (yes, many times; yes, a few times; or no). Next, participants indicated the extent to which they felt each of 57 feelings while they were watching the commercial (Goodstein et al. 1990). Respondents then completed the 8-item Being Hooked scale. The same two seven-point items used for Prior $A_B$ assessed Attitude toward the Ad.
Descriptive Results: Combined Data Set

Before presenting the tests of the hypotheses, we present and describe our data in terms of our participants' responses to the measures of Affect Intensity, Being Hooked, three ad response feelings (Upbeat, Warm, and Disinterested), and A_{Ad} and Prior A_{B}.

Affect Intensity (AI). The average AIM score for each individual was used in our analyses (α = .91). Average scores on this 1-to-6 scale ranged from 2.27 to 5.56 with the median being 3.55. Using this median to split the sample into high and low AI respondents, we found those in the high AI group had a mean score of 4.23 compared to that reported by Larsen et al. (1986, 1987) of 4.26. Respondents in the low AI group had an average score of 3.01 compared to that reported by Larsen et al. of 3.48. Participants in this study report slightly lower AIM scores than are reported in some previous studies, yet a histogram of our participants' AIM scores reveals an approximately normal distribution. Although the mean of those in the high AI group was significantly greater than the mean of the low AI group ($F(1, 46) = 95.10, p < .001$), the continuous AIM score was used in subsequent analyses.

Being Hooked, Feelings, and Attitudes. The eight Being Hooked items were averaged into one continuous variable to test our hypotheses. The three feelings variables (Upbeat, Warm, and Disinterested) and the two attitude variables (Prior A_{B} and A_{Ad}) were also created by averaging their respective items. See Table 6 for more detail on the reliability, central tendency, and dispersion of these scales.

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Tests of the Hypotheses: Combined Data Set

The hypotheses are tested using a within-subjects ANOVA where the model includes the subject dummy variable, within-subject measures of prior exposure to the ad, prior attitude toward the advertised brand, a dummy variable for the particular ad, the continuous Being Hooked variable, the continuous Narrative Structure variable, the Being Hooked by Affect Intensity interaction, the Being Hooked by Narrative Structure interaction, plus the three way interaction of these variables. The model also includes an experiment number dummy variable and the continuous Affect Intensity variable as between-subjects covariates.

**Hypothesis 1.** This hypothesis predicts a positive relationship between how hooked one is by an ad and his/her Upbeat and Warm feelings in response to that ad, which is supported by the data (Upbeat: $F_{1,729} = 569.09$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .33$ and Warm: $F_{1,729} = 352.64$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .27$). Being Hooked also has a significant negative relationship with Disinterested feelings ($F_{1,729} = 374.20$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.25$). Thus, H1 is supported for all three feelings responses.

**Hypothesis 2.** Here, we predict that there will be a significant effect of Being Hooked on $A_{Ad}$ over and above its effect through the feelings responses. The addition of Being Hooked to the model of $A_{Ad}$ that includes the three feelings scores in addition to the other experimental factors, explains significantly more variance than the model that excludes Being Hooked ($F_{Add}(1, 110) = 8.50$, $p < .01$). Being Hooked itself is significant in the model, with a positive relationship that supports this hypothesis ($F(1, 725) = 5.66$, $p < .05$, $\beta = 1.13$). The three feelings factors are also all significant, with the expected relationships (Upbeat: $F(1, 725) = 35.54$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .42$; Warm: $F(1, 725) = 10.72$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .21$; and Disinterested: $F(1, 725) = 79.32$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.61$).
Hypotheses 3. This hypothesis proposes positive relationships between Affect Intensity and Upbeat and Warm feelings. We find that both feelings are stronger for individuals with higher AIM scores (Upbeat: $F_{1,78} = 3.71, p = .06, \beta = 0.82$ [marginal] and Warm: $F_{1,78} = 6.36, p < .05, \beta = .57$). As also predicted by hypothesis 3, the effects of Affect Intensity are not significantly related to Disinterested feelings ($F_{1,78} < 1.0, \text{n.s.}$).

Hypothesis 4. This hypothesis asserts that Affect Intensity moderates the effect of Being Hooked on Upbeat and Warm feelings. The interaction of Affect Intensity and Being Hooked is significant for Upbeat feelings ($F_{1,729} = 13.03, p < .001, \beta = .09$) and Warm feelings ($F_{1,729} = 5.22, p < .05, \beta = .07$). As predicted by hypothesis 4, we do not find a significant interaction effect on Disinterested feelings ($F(1, 729) = 2.21, p = .14$).

Hypothesis 5. This hypothesis predicts that the Narrative Structure of ads will have a positive relationship with Upbeat and Warm feelings and a negative relationship with Disinterested feelings. The data from Experiment 2 support this assertion for all three feelings factors. Narrative Structure is positively related to Upbeat and Warm feelings ($F_{1,729} = 12.88, p < .001, \beta = .07$ and $F_{1,729} = 281.08, p < .001, \beta = .33$, respectively). Additionally, Narrative Structure is negatively related to Disinterested feelings ($F_{1,729} = 15.73, p < .001, \beta = -.07$).

Hypothesis 6. This hypothesis proposes that Being Hooked will moderate the effect of Narrative Structure on the three feelings responses demonstrated in hypothesis 5. The data support this assertion with a marginally significant interaction effect on upbeat feelings ($F(1, 729) = 3.48, p = .06, \beta = .06$) and a significant effect on warm feelings ($F(1, 729) = 5.39, p < .05, \beta = .08$). However, we find no effect on disinterested feelings ($F(1, 729) = 1.28, \text{n.s.}$).
Discussion of Experimental Results

The results support our assertion that the ad/individual interface is critical in explaining the strength and nature of an individual's feelings responses to TV ads. Viewers who were more hooked by an ad reported stronger Upbeat and Warm feelings and weaker Disinterested feelings (H1). Therefore, not only does Being Hooked lead to stronger emotional responses that advertisers might want their ads to evoke (such as Upbeat and Warm feelings), but Being Hooked also results in weaker levels of Disinterested feelings, which advertisers want to avoid. Further, we found that Being Hooked generated more positive Attitudes toward the Ad, not only by increasing Upbeat and Warm feelings and decreasing Disinterested feeling, but directly, as well (H2).

Our experiments also examine an important individual difference that contributes to the variation in viewers' feelings responses to advertising: Affect Intensity. As expected, individuals with higher Affect Intensity scores experienced stronger Upbeat and Warm feelings than did less affectively intense respondents (H3). Affect Intensity moderates the effect of Being Hooked on both Upbeat and Warm feelings (H4). The positive effect of Being Hooked on these positive feelings responses was greater for those who were more affectively intense. Our experiments also examine a characteristic of the ad, in this case, Narrative Structure. We find that Narrative Structure is positively related to Upbeat and Warm feelings and negatively related to Disinterested feelings (H5). Furthermore, the effect on positive feelings is moderated by the degree to which ad viewers are hooked by the ad (H6). The ability of narrative structural elements such as characters, situations, and emotion plots to generate positive feelings responses is enhanced as individuals become more hooked by an ad.
DISCUSSION

A primary contribution of these studies is the evidence regarding the relationship between how hooked by an ad an individual is and the nature and strength of the feelings experienced by that individual. The results from the experimental data support our assertion that the ad/individual interface is critical in explaining the strength and nature of an individual's feelings responses to TV ads. Viewers who were more hooked by an ad reported stronger Upbeat and Warm feelings and weaker Disinterested feelings. Furthermore, ads that are able to hook viewers are better liked, with both an indirect effect through feelings responses, and a direct effect, likely resulting from an enhanced experience with the ad.

Incorporating an individual’s Affect Intensity added explanatory power to our models of feelings. As expected, individuals with higher Affect Intensity scores experienced stronger Upbeat and Warm feelings than did less affectively intense respondents. The impact of Affect Intensity is also seen as it moderates the effect of Being Hooked on the feeling responses. It appears from our experiments that ads that hook more affectively intense individuals will result in greater Upbeat and Warm feelings than ads that hook those who are less affectively intense.

The third element of our model is the ad characteristic, Narrative Structure. Our study finds that ads that tell stories evoke more Upbeat and Warm feelings, while reducing Disinterested feelings. Additionally, we find that Being Hooked moderates the effect of Narrative Structure on Warm and Upbeat feelings. Advertisers can set the stage for positive feelings reactions by creating narrative ads, which when they are able to hook the target audience will augment favorable feelings responses. While Being Hooked and Narrative Structure both have a negative relationship with Disinterested feelings, when the two act in combination they do not further reduce Disinterested feelings (i.e., in our data, we do not find an interactive effect of
Being Hooked and Narrative Structure on Disinterested feelings). Given the relatively low Disinterested feelings scores of our respondents in response to our stimulus ads, there may be a floor effect that hampers our ability to detect a significant interaction.

In sum, the studies in this paper demonstrate that individual differences and ad characteristics explain some of the variance in emotional responses to ads and, importantly, that the ad/individual interface, instantiated here as Being Hooked, affects emotional and attitudinal responses. Considering the results of these studies in conjunction with earlier ad-feelings research, we advocate shifting how feelings responses to advertising are conceptualized. In 1986, Wright challenged us to distinguish between personal responses and “ad critic” responses. In 1987, Edell and Burke contrasted affectively-based and cognitively-based responses to ads, distinguishing among various types of feelings and their effects on $A_{Ad}$ and $A_{B}$. In 1990, Stout, Homer and Liu showed that the emotional reactions experienced in response to an ad were not the same as those depicted by the characters within the ad. Historically, however, marketers have thought of feelings as a property of the ad, as in “that is a happy ad,” or “that ad was sad.” We advocate treating feelings as a property of the individual and treating the ad as the stimulus that evokes the feelings. However expedient it may be to characterize an ad as “upbeat” or “happy” or “fear-inducing,” the ad is better characterized as one that “most people find upbeat,” or “engenders happy feelings in our target audience,” or “makes most viewers fearful.”

**Directions for Future Research**

Figure 2 represents a conceptual scheme for future research. The bold lines and capitals indicate the particular relationships and constructs investigated in this study. The field can gain more insight into emotional ad reactions by examining: 1) other individual difference variables
(e.g., category involvement, verbalizer/visualizer tendencies), 2) the particular processes that result in an ad's hooking a viewer (e.g., personalization, vicarious participation), 3) other characteristics of ads that may affect the outcome of the ad/individual interface (e.g., music, the characters, humor, the ad's setting), and 4) additional feelings responses to ads (e.g., uneasy feelings). Individual differences in affective responses to ads clearly exist and, as shown here, accounting for individual differences in Affect Intensity provides insight regarding those differences. Ad characteristics also contribute to variation in affective responses to ads, as shown by our Narrative Structure results. And clearly, the ad/individual interface of Being Hooked is critically important to understanding variation in individuals' feelings responses to ads. One area our studies did not address is the role of the ad/individual interface on cognitive ad reactions. Future research can test the hypothesis that feelings moderate the effect of hook on ad judgements and brand cognitions (the dotted line in Figure 2). An important conclusion to draw from this study is that if one wants to evoke emotional responses to advertisements, having a hook helps.

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Insert Figure 2 about here
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REFERENCES


Figure 1
Model and Hypotheses

The Ad (NARRATIVE STRUCTURE)

The Interface: BEING HOOKED

The Individual (AFFECT INTENSITY)

Emotional Ad Reactions (UPBEAT, WARM, & DISINTERESTED FEELINGS)

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE AD

H1

H2

H3

H4

H5

H6
### Figure 2
A Framework for Understanding Emotional Reactions to Ads

- **AFFECT INTENSITY**
- Fantasy Proneness
- Category Involvement
- Verbalizer/Visualizer
- Etc…

- **NARRATIVE STRUCTURE**
- Characters
- Information Content
- Music
- Dramatic Form
- Etc…

- **Emotional Ad Reactions: FEELINGS**

- **The Interface: BEING HOOKED**

- **ATTITUDE TOWARD THE AD**

- **ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BRAND**

- **The Individual**

- **The Ad**

- **Cognitive Ad Reactions**
  - Judgments
  - Recall
  - Recognition
  - Etc.

Note: **Bold** lines and ALL CAPS indicate aspects of the framework investigated in this paper.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Description of the Ad</th>
<th>Six-Item Narrative Structure Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goodyear tires</td>
<td>Brothers driving together to visit their mother</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Step e.p.t.</td>
<td>Couple unsuccessful in attempt to get pregnant</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pregnancy tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudential’s Living</td>
<td>Heart transplant recipient’s life story</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTE’s Smart Ring</td>
<td>Mother embarrassing her daughter by talking on the phone with one of the girl’s male friends</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kodak film</td>
<td>Daddy’s little girl gets married, snapshots of their past life together</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain laundry detergent</td>
<td>African American woman proud of her family’s clean clothes in church setting</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Electric (GE)</td>
<td>Bringing light to post-communist Hungary</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TeleCommunications Inc. (TCI)</td>
<td>Sponsor of CNN who covered the war in Kuwait and affected a taxi cab driver’s life</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillette Atra-Plus Razors</td>
<td>The best a man can get, scenes of men with theme song in background</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow shirts</td>
<td>We’ve loosened our collar, men singing in a choir that becomes jazzy</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allstate Insurance</td>
<td>Battery missing from fire alarm at a fire scene</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 2

**AFFECT INTENSITY MEASURE**  
*(BASED ON LARSEN, DIENER, AND EMMONS 1986)*

Instructions: The following questions refer to emotional reactions to typical life events. Please indicate how YOU react to these events by placing a number from the following scale in the blank space preceding each item. Please base your answers on how YOU react, not on how you think others react or how you think a person should react (asked on 6-point scales, anchored by “Never”/“Always”).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>When I feel happy it is a strong type of exuberance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>My emotions tend to be more intense than those of most people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>My happy moods are so strong that I feel like I'm in heaven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>I get overly enthusiastic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>My heart races at the anticipation of some exciting event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>When something good happens, I am usually much more jubilant than others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>My friends say I'm emotional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>When I'm happy I feel like I'm bursting with joy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>When I'm happy I feel very energetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>When I succeed at something, my reaction is calm contentment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>When things are going good I feel &quot;on top of the world.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>When I do feel anxiety it is normally very strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>When I am excited over something I want to share my feelings with everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>When I'm happy I bubble over with energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>When I am happy the feeling is more like contentment and inner calm than one of exhilaration and excitement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE 3**

“BEING HOOKED” SCALE ITEMS

1. This commercial did not really hold my attention (-).
2. This ad did not draw me in (-).
3. This ad really intrigued me.
4. If I had seen this ad at home, I’d have watched the whole thing.
5. I could not relate to this commercial (-).
6. This commercial reminded me of experiences or feelings I’ve had in my own life.
7. I felt as though I was right there in the commercial experiencing the same thing.
8. I would like to have an experience like the one shown in the commercial.

**NOTE:** These items are measured on seven-point scales, anchored by strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (7).
### TABLE 4

**NARRATIVE STRUCTURE CODING SCALE ITEMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To what extent does this ad consist of actors engaged in actions to achieve goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To what extent does this ad let you know what the actors are thinking and feeling?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To what extent does this ad provide you with insight about the personal evolution or change in the life of a character?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To what extent does this ad explain why things happen, that is, what caused things to happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To what extent does this ad have a well delineated beginning (initial event), middle (crisis or turning point), and ending (conclusion)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>To what extent does this ad focus on specific, particular events rather than on generalizations or abstractions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** These items are measured on five-point scales, anchored by not at all (1) and very much so (5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Description of the Ad</th>
<th>Six-Item Narrative Structure Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Express</td>
<td>Female worker stymies her overbearing boss with package tracking system, coworkers applaud</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizza Hut</td>
<td>Boy in right field catches the ball and wins the game (then the team goes to Pizza Hut)</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weyerhaueser</td>
<td>After a first little girl rejects him, boy recycles love note to second little girl</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Express</td>
<td>Couple discovers they are having twins and goes shopping for the babies with their American Express card</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald's</td>
<td>Larry Bird and Michael Jordan play HORSE for lunch from McDonald's</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa Gold</td>
<td>Woman books trip to Venice with Visa Gold card, on trip she deserts old boyfriend (who wouldn't join her) for an Italian man</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levi's 501 Jeans</td>
<td>Man trying to escape from unknown assailant’s dogs breaks in his jeans during the chase</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volvo</td>
<td>Scenes of individuals who believe Volvo saved their lives</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips Milk Of Magnesia</td>
<td>Toilet paper unused for days, Milk of Magnesia used, toilet paper unrolls</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coca-Cola</td>
<td>Red button with song lyrics against colorful, ever-changing backgrounds</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Cronbach alpha</td>
<td>Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Hooked</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>1.0 to 7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upbeat feelings</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>1.0 to 5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm feelings</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>1.0 to 4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disinterested</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>1.0 to 4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$A_{Ad}$</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>1.0 to 7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior $A_{B}$</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>1.0 to 7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>