

How animation speed affects consumers' perception of product size

August 4 2020, by Matt Weingarden

Researchers from University of Hong Kong, Yonsei University, and Chinese University of Hong Kong published a new paper in the *Journal of Marketing* that examines the relationship between animated movement speed in video ads and consumers' assessment of the product size.

The study forthcoming in the *Journal of Marketing* is titled "Speed Up, Size Down: How Animated Movement Speed in Product Videos Influences Size Assessment and Product Evaluation" and is authored by Michael Jia, B. Kyu Kim, and Lin Ge.

In [video](#) ads, products cannot be shown at their actual physical sizes. When no explicit size information or point of reference is provided, product size may be unclear to consumers. Given the potential ambiguity and the importance of size assessment in consumer preference formation, it is highly beneficial for marketers to know what visual cues consumers might use to infer the physical size of a product shown in video ads.

Video advertising often involves dynamic presentations of products that are displayed to move in a lively fashion, similar to how animals move. For instance, an audio speaker can be animated to flash in, bounce, turn around, or spin actively in video ads although it cannot move spontaneously in reality. In this case, the overall animated movement pattern may look similar to various movements insects or birds perform in the air, fishes perform in the water, dancers perform on the stage, or

superheroes perform in movies. As another example, when a Swiss Army knife is animated to unfold its moveable parts (e.g., blade and corkscrew) or transform its shape, these movements may also to some extent resemble the way animals move their body parts. When creating video ads, graphic designers can animate products to move either faster or slower.

Jia explains that, "We conducted a series of experiments to examine whether and how the animated movement [speed](#) of a product displayed in video ads can influence consumers' size assessment of the product. We found a speed-based scaling effect, meaning that consumers estimate the size of a product to be smaller when the product is animated to move faster in video ads." Moreover, a product's animated movement speed is more likely to color product size assessment for consumers who perceive the product's animated movement pattern as more similar to animals' movement patterns.

The findings offer important implications for marketers, graphic designers, and online advertisers. For products for which a [small size](#) is preferred by consumers due to considerations of portability or storage constraint (e.g., mobile devices), practitioners can animate products' movements to be fast in video ads to communicate a small product size. In contrast, for edible products (e.g., food and drinks) and household products (e.g., detergents), consumers generally consider large product size desirable. To summarize the practical value of the research, Kim says, "Practitioners should avoid fast animated movements for these products in video ads if they adopt a value-based positioning such as a larger quantity for the same price. To leverage the speed-based scaling effect, practitioners can animate a product to move like animals' movement patterns."

In the contemporary digital era, [consumers](#) are constantly exposed to product videos. When creating [video ads](#), practitioners should be aware

of the general negative relationship between animated movement speed and size assessment. Guided by this principle, they can determine the ideal animated [movement](#) speeds for their products through speed calibration tests tailored to their products' natures and marketing communication objectives.

More information: He (Michael) Jia et al, Speed Up, Size Down: How Animated Movement Speed in Product Videos Influences Size Assessment and Product Evaluation, *Journal of Marketing* (2020). [DOI: 10.1177/0022242920925054](#)

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