

**YOUR CAR LOOKS LIKE YOU!
CONSUMER EVALUATION OF ANTHROPOMORPHIZED PRODUCTS**

Kenya Hirashima, Keio University, Japan
Daiki Ito, Keio University, Japan
Rei Arai, Keio University, Japan
Shingo Kajita, Keio University, Japan
Akinori Ono, Keio University, Japan¹⁾

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, in highly developed economies, consumer preferences and choice are determined not only by product function, but also product design. In this regard, some researchers have investigated product anthropomorphism, which means the tendency for consumers to think of products as having human-like personalities.

Based on the pleasure–arousal theory, prior studies have proposed that consumers prefer cars best with a certain “face”, *i.e.*, the combination of headlights of slanted eyes and a front grille of upturned mouth, because they perceive higher aggressiveness (arousal) from the slanted eyes as well as higher friendliness (pleasure) from the upturned mouth.

However, prior studies have three problems: (1) they have considered only 2 (slanted and arched eyes) x 2 (upturned and downturned mouths) product designs; (2) they have considered only 2 factors of product images (aggressiveness and friendliness). Moreover, (3) they have neglected heterogeneity in preferences for product designs/images.

Thus, we expand the consumer evaluation model of anthropomorphized products by considering 4 (slanted, arched, squared, and round eyes) x 3 (upturned, downturned, and horizontal mouths) designs and 4 factors of images (vitality, warmth, intelligence, and uniqueness) as well as congruities between product image and actual/ideal self-image.

By doing so, we contribute the research field of product design by implying how firms can fit their anthropomorphized products to their customers and differentiate them from competitors.

Keywords: Product design, Consumer evaluation, Pleasure–arousal theory, Product image, Face

References available upon request: Akinori Ono <akinori@fbc.keio.ac.jp>

¹⁾ akinori@fbc.keio.ac.jp