Emotion and Techniques of Propaganda in YouTube Videos

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Abstract

Objectives: This study aims to comprehend relationships between YouTube video elements—the techniques of propaganda and people’s emotions, and simultaneously discover influences of video elements in each emotion. Methods/Statistical Analysis: Kansei Engineering has been established as being compatible to be applied for the purpose of understanding human emotions and psychology, thus this study employs this approach by using 30 Kansei Words, adopted from PANAS-X emotional descriptors. 10 YouTube videos were selected as stimulus, and Partial Least Square (PLS) analysis was executed to identify those relationships. Findings: From the results obtained, it is evident that the techniques of propaganda element in YouTube videos conjure people’s emotion that could affect unity. Firstly, in order to analyse design requirements, PLS was executed to identify relationships between emotion and video elements that could affect people’s unity. It is also used to discover the influence of video elements in each emotion, the best and worst value for each video element, and the kind of emotion elicited by each specimen, so as to counter such propaganda video. Secondly, the PLS Range of each emotion was calculated to determine the influence of video elements to emotion. The calculation of Range allows the identification of element/design influence, the good element, as well as the bad element. Finally, the result from the PLS scores are used to compose the propaganda element/design requirement. The propaganda element/design elements included in the guideline are the components that have high influence (for each ‘Category’) in eliciting each Kansei/emotion. Application/Improvements: The result provides insights to people’s emotional response towards propaganda videos and how the techniques affect the emotional responses. This could then be used as a guide to designing counter-propaganda videos that embed targeted responses by the people.

Keywords: Emotion, Kansei, Techniques of Propaganda, Unity, YouTube

1. Introduction

Propaganda could be communicated and disseminated via a variety of mediums, including print media and electronic media. Nowadays, the Internet also plays an important role as one of the key tools that can be used to transmit propaganda. From this study’s perspective, the involvement of social media on the Internet could be an agent provocateur and third party in many issues, simultaneously complicating matters. This is for the reason that, when the media – social media in particular, point out a topic, the audience receiving the message will consider the topic to be important.

For instance, issues relating to ethnic unity seem to be ever present in many countries, whether overtly or covertly. The conflicts of ethnicity and ethnic relations are of much concern because they continuously subsist in daily lives and are often regarded as threats to national unity and the welfare of the people. However, the conflict would be more severe when users of new media try to manipulate the issues.
The most popular social media – YouTube, could be a powerful medium for manipulating the issues and disseminating propaganda because of its easy accessibility by the audience. The rapid growth of YouTube provides an extra major factor contributing to the rise of radical media campaign of the extremist group, ‘netizens’, as well as political figures and parties, in the online sphere. In this situation, the online media campaign, especially on videos – represent an ever-improving propaganda effort to appoint the ‘hearts and minds’ of their target audiences.4

This study aims to comprehend the relationships between YouTube video elements—the techniques of propaganda and people’s emotions whilst concurrently discovering influences of video elements in each emotion. Since Kansei Engineering has been established as being compatible to be applied for the purpose of understanding human emotions and psychology, this study will thus employ this approach by using 30 Kansei Words, adopted from Positive Affective and Negative Affective Scale-Expanded (PANAS-X) emotional descriptors, which are rated by 30 participants, upon watching 10 video specimens during Kansei evaluation and Partial Least Square (PLS) analysis which are executed to identify those relationships. Thenceforth, the result of Kansei evaluation and relationships between YouTube videos and people’s emotion will be described at the end of the study, representing the significance and conclusion of the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Propaganda and Techniques of Propaganda

Propaganda is designed to influence people’s thoughts and actions, and could be regarded as being one-sided or biased communication. For instance, the majority of advertisers and political campaigns work openly and express their factual purpose. They could present any combination of truths, half-truths, lies, and harassments they think are the most effective way to influence their audience.5

In any case, propagandists use a variety of propaganda techniques to disseminate information and influence others. Therefore, the Institute of Propaganda Analysis (IPA), a United States based organisation, has identified seven devices, which can transmit such propaganda. The IPA objective was thus to educate the public about propaganda and assist them to recognise and deal with it. Of greater concern then was the possible weakening of the peoples’ ability to analyse and think rationally about issues due to the increasing amounts of propaganda.6

This study uses the seven techniques recognised by the IPA as a guideline to classify the item/category for YouTube video elements because they are simple and commonly used in propaganda materials.7 The seven techniques of propaganda used are stated in the Table 1.

| Techniques            | Characteristics                                                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name Calling          | This technique is identified as giving an idea as a bad label, which can make audiences reject and condemn the idea without examining the evidence. Also, it can be classified as the usage of insulting language or words, which bring a bad and negative implication when describing an enemy. |
| Glittering Generality | Glittering generality is connecting something with a virtue word, which could be used to make audiences accept the thing in question without examining the evidence. It can be linked to highly valued concepts that have different positive meanings for some individuals in the specific subject matters. |
| Transfer              | This technique tries to make the subject view a certain thing in the same way as they view another thing, by linking the two in the subject's mind. Transfer can be used to describe something in a positive manner even though it is usually used to transfer the negative, blame and bad feelings from one object to another. |
| Testimonial            | When something consists in having some respected or hated person say that a given idea or program or product or even a person is good or bad that can be considered as the testimonial technique. |
| Plain Folks            | This technique can be seen as the method by which a propagandist encourages their audience that his or her ideas are good. In other words, this technique is used to convince an audience that the propagandist’s view effectively reflects those of the ordinary person and that they are also operating for the benefit of the ordinary person. |
Card Stacking

This technique involves the selection and use of facts or falsehoods, and logical or illogical statements in order to give the best or worst possible case for an idea, program, person or product. In addition, card stacking also involves only presented information, which is positive to an idea or proposal and omitting information contrary to it.

Bandwagon

This technique appeals to the subjects who follow the crowd, who will join simply because others are doing so as well. Also, this technique generally tries to persuade and convince the subject or audience that one side is the winning side, simply because more people are on their side.

2.2 New Media and YouTube: New Generation Propaganda Channel

The advent of new media posed a challenge towards conventional media. The issue arose because of the emergence of the Internet as a global media, which allowed faster access to information through the new media as compared to conventional media\(^2\). Generally, most people preferred traditional media over the Internet when it came to issues of credibility, even though the Internet and new media was more practical compared to conventional media in terms of delivery of relevant information\(^2\). However, among the reasons why new media appear credible are the perceptions that the conventional mainstream media in certain countries are government controlled. This is also coupled with the fact that the new media serves as an avenue for the opposition to air their grievances and reach their supporters.

Today, YouTube is the most popular social network, which can connects seamlessly with major Online Social Networks (OSNs) such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ to enable off-site diffusion. YouTube viewers rapidly use the ease provided for them to viewing and downloading the video in mobile phones, tablets and other mobile devices. In this situation, YouTube might be the best channel to disseminate propaganda as it can be easily accessed by the audience.

Graber\(^8\), places importance on analysing online visual propaganda because “purely verbal analyses not only miss the information contained in the pictures and nonverbal sounds, they even fail to interpret the verbal content appropriately because that content is modified by its combination with picture messages”. Moreover, humans process images more quickly than text, making images more emotionally visceral and responses to images frequently more immediate and powerful than responses to text. On the other hand, Winkler and Dauber\(^5\) claimed that experimental studies demonstrate that “viewers recall visual information at higher rates than information that either auditory or textual channels deliver”.

2.3 Kansei Engineering

In determining the success of a product design, it is essential to understand user satisfaction, as well as technical aspects, such as ergonomics, functionality and comfort because both are equally important\(^2,13\).

According to Lokman\(^14\), “KE is a technology that unites Kansei into engineering realms in order to realise a product that match consumer’s needs and desire. Henceforth, it is a scientific discipline carried out technologically leading to product development that would please and satisfy consumers\(^13\). The process will be done by analysing the consumer's Kansei and translates how the product design elicits this Kansei. Also, it collects the consumer's Kansei experience and establishes mathematical prediction models of how the Kansei is connected to product physical characteristics. KE targets to improve human well being by looking into physiological and psychological aspects that contributes to satisfaction\(^14\).

In comparison to other methods, KE is a method specifically used to analyse consumer’s implicit needs and associate them with product design characteristic, so that a guide to design a new concept of product could be established.

2.4 Kansei Words and Emotional Descriptors

Emotion is one of the strongest differentiators in user experience namely because it triggers unconscious responses to a product\(^14\). In every means of the assessment of emotion, core technique ground the translation of the implicit emotion into verbal description. Whether by the use of self-reporting technique, animation, facial expression and others, ultimate access to users’ emotion is commonly guided with the use of emotional keywords\(^17\).

In KE these keywords are called Kansei Word (KW). In the selection process of KWs, researchers commonly use domain specific KWs synthesised from technical magazines, pertinent literature, domain experts, expert users, technical documents and so on\(^14\)\(^-\)\(^20\).
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On the other hand, emotional descriptors are similar to KW in KE. In this situation, the researchers use the term emotional descriptors for words that describe human emotion in various research purposes, such as affective video content analysis\(^2\), emotional contagion for viral video\(^2\), multimedia learning content\(^2\), as well as image retrieval\(^2\). However, Wang and Ji\(^2\) emphasised that from the recent review on affective video content analysis, there are no agreed-upon standard emotional descriptors for specific research due to subjective emotion rating and uniqueness of each research.

Therefore, the researcher of this study chose to further investigate emotional descriptors based on Positive Affective and Negative Affective Scale-Expanded (PANAS-X). To assess specific emotional states, Watson and Clark\(^2\) created a 60-item. However, they suggested that researchers facing more severe time constraints would be able to select and assess only those scales that are most relevant to their research. Therefore, this study only selects the 30-item that are most relevant to the political domain – 11-item from basic negative emotion scales, 10-item from positive emotion scales, and 9-item from other affective states.

3. Methodology

In total, 30 subjects participated in the evaluations. The groups involved as participants in the Kansei evaluation are those who are familiar with video-watching activity and who voluntarily participated. Controls and criteria used in selecting the initial video for the preparation of such instruments are: 1. Video website – YouTube; 2. Focus content – various social reality issues in relation to politics; and iii) Length – < 3.00 minutes.

3.1 The Instruments

In order to define the perceptions in a selected product or research domain, this study used Kansei Words (KW$s$), which were selected and adopted from PANAS-X. The selected words should be related and able to describe the domain for the research. This research domain is ‘politics’, and thus reflects on beliefs and emotions of the people towards YouTube videos, which in turn could affect people’s unity. Hence, adjectives such as “Ashamed”, “Enthusiastic”, “Proud”, “Scornful”, “Hostility” etc. would best describe political perception and emotions of people. As to have a balanced response of perception from respondents, all selected adjectives must also represent both positive and negative adjectives. The selected words must be checked again to identify words that are possibly similar in meaning and may cause redundancy. The identified KW$s$ used for the evaluations are “Happy”, “Delighted”, “Excited”, “Enthusiastic”, “Proud”, “Strong”, “Confident”, “Fearless”, “Attentive” and “Determined” are from positive emotion scales; “Afraid”, “Frightened”, “Nervous”, “Angry”, “Scornful”, “Disgusted”, “Guilty”, “Ashamed”, “Sad” and “Alone” are from negative emotion scales; and “Shy”, “Bashful”, “Tired”, “Sluggish”, “Calm”, “Relaxed”, “Amazed”, “Surprised” and “Astonished” are from other affective states.

3.2 Stimuli and Evaluation Procedures

The stimuli contained 10 short videos of different themes obtained from YouTube. The selections of the videos’ themes are based on social reality issues, such as politics, economic, social, as well as religion, which could be related as having political context. All selected videos were based on previous popularity, as shown in “View Count”, “Like” and “Dislike” on YouTube. This evaluation required viewing of the video content, such as radical operations and discussion or discourse by political figures and parties, as well as from the civil society.

This study was conducted in two separate sessions for Kansei evaluation. There are 20 participants in the first session, and another 10 participants in the second session. The evaluation commenced with briefing to the subjects on consent statements and instructions. Afterwards, emotional descriptors/KW$s$ adopted from PANAS-X are used as a checklist and was presented for each of the 10 videos. To avoid bias response, this study rearranged the arrangement of the descriptors in that checklist\(^2\). Following the video presentation, subjects gave ratings in the form of Semantic Differential (SD) 5-degree bipolar scale concerning their feelings after watching each video.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Partial Least Squares (PLS) Analysis

In order to analyse design requirements, Partial Least Squares (PLS) was executed to identify relationships between emotion and video elements that could affect people’s unity. It is also used to discover the influence of video elements in each emotion, the best and worst value
for each video element, and the kind of emotion elicited by each specimen, so as to counter such propaganda video.

The exploration of video elements in the earlier phase of this study has resulted in 10 Item, which compose 18 Category. For PLS analysis purposes, all these categorical variations were converted into dummy variables. A sample of the converted data is shown in Table 2.

To determine relations between emotions and video elements, this study examined the results of the PLS coefficient score. The following sub-sections explain how the use of these scores allows the identification of how the combination of video elements influences emotions. Figure 1 shows a sample of model coefficient for centred and scaled data calculated by PLS analysis.

4.2 Element Influence: Analysing PLS Range

The PLS Range of each emotion was calculated to determine the influence of video elements to emotion. The calculation of Range allows the identification of element/design influence, the good element, as well as the bad element. The Range was obtained by calculations using maximum and minimum values, where

\[
\text{Range} = |\text{PLS Max} - \text{PLS Min}|
\]

Then, the mean of the Range was calculated, where,

\[
\text{Range} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \text{Range}_i
\]

Each Kansei/emotion has a means of Range. The item is considered to have good influence in design if the mean value of a 'Category' is larger than the Range. Henceforth, the Range for every 'Category' having value that is bigger than \text{Range} indicates the best-fit 'Category' that highly influences people's Kansei/emotion towards propaganda video. In each 'Category', the largest positive PLS score specifies components leading to good usage of propaganda element, and the largest negative value shows components leading to bad usage of propaganda element.

To demonstrate the result, the following Table 3 provides the partial result of such element influence in Kansei.

The table shows the result of element influence towards emotional responses that could affect people's unity. For the emotional response of feeling "Hostile", the high influence of propaganda elements is 'Card Stacking', 'Testimonial', 'Plain Folks', 'Name Calling' and so forth. On the other hand, for feeling "Proud", the high influence of propaganda elements is 'Plain Folks', 'Testimonial', 'Name Calling', 'Transfer' and so forth.

4.3 Formulate Design Guide of Counter Propaganda Element using Kansei

The analysis conducted in this study has enabled the researcher to propose a guideline for counter propaganda element, specifically for videos. The result from the PLS scores are used to compose the propaganda element/design requirement. The propaganda element/design elements included in the guideline are the components that have high influence (for each 'Category') in eliciting each Kansei/emotion. Table 4 shows part of the results of the established guideline.

The table shows an example of elements that could counter-propaganda. All selected Kansei or an emotional response only involves Positive Affective states because
they could lead to positive ways in each of the element proposed, specifically in videos. To illustrate an example of the guideline, propaganda/design elements for the Kansei “Happy” should be interpreted as:

- Demonstration of Card-Stacking technique must involve ‘Selection of Facts’ (accurate facts).
- ‘Do not Indicate’ any of the Testimonial technique.
- The illustration of Plain Folks, Name Calling and Transfer techniques should be ‘Not Specific’.
- Technique of Glittering Generality should be specified with ‘Virtue Word or Statement’.
- Also, ‘Do not Indicate’ any of the Bandwagon technique.

To successfully apply the guideline, audience i.e. policy makers are advised to select the best combination possible from a Kansei concept, that may comprise of one or more Kansei elements. Therefore, a blend of designers’ creativities (in this case, it would be suitable for policy makers/politicians to engage with this element) with the guideline is noted to ensure the success of the intended Kansei product – video27.

5. Conclusion

YouTube videos could be a powerful medium to spread propaganda because audience can access them easily. Also, it could shape prejudice and public opinion that could affect national unity. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the relationships between YouTube video elements – techniques of propaganda and the people's emotions, simultaneously determining the influences of video elements in each Kansei/emotion. This study employed the Kansei Engineering approach by using 30 Kansei Words, adopted from PANAS-X emotional descriptors. Henceforth, 10 YouTube videos related to various political issues were selected as stimulus, and PLS analysis was executed to identify those relationships. From the results obtained, the analysis of PLS scores showed that the techniques of propaganda element in YouTube videos conjure people's emotion that could affect unity. The result provides insights to people's emotional response towards propaganda videos, and how the techniques affect the emotional responses.
With the empirical evidence, the research has discovered that: 1. Kansei/emotion can be quantified, 2. identification of propaganda/design elements can be made from users’ viewpoint, and 3. discovery of evidence that arose from users’ emotional responses can be translated into, video elements/design requirements. As an outcome, the study has made it possible to propose a design guide to counter propaganda, specifically in the medium of videos. Eventually, this study managed to provide an idea on the emotions, sensitivity and awareness of people towards various political issues. Hence, the results from this study are proposed to be utilised as a basis of understanding for future investigation into emotions and propaganda, especially in political awareness.

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| Kansei / Emotion | Propaganda Elements | Card Stacking | Testimonial | Plain Folks | Name Calling | Transfer | Glittering Generality | Bandwagon |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Happy            | Selection of facts  | Do not indicate this technique | N/S        | N/S         | N/S         | Virtue word/statement | Do not indicate this technique |
| Proud            | N/S                 | Respected/ Good Idea | Convincing idea/statement | N/S         | Good Attitude/   |
| Positive manner  | N/S                 | N/S            |

Table 4. Kansei counter-propaganda element guideline.
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