

CODIFYING GENDER COMMUNICATION: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH TOWARDS IDENTIFYING DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIVITY

Athar Raihan Muhammad, Hapsari Dwiningtyas Sulistyani, S. Rouli Manalu

athar.riverside@gmail.com

Program Studi S1 Ilmu Komunikasi

Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Universitas Diponegoro

Jl. Prof Soedarto, SH Tembalang Semarang Kotak Pos 1268 Telepon (024)7465407

Faksimile (024)7465405 Laman: [http/fisip.undip.ac.id](http://fisip.undip.ac.id) Email: fisip@undip.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Two studies were conducted in order to contribute to diversifying the pillars of understanding on the interaction of gender to the concepts of emotional expression. Designed to understand both its key differences, this study utilizes a quasi-experimental method, with a mix of both controlled stimulant testings by an emotionally-inducing advertisement on populations of highly educated females and males. This study measures emotional expressivity in 6 dimensions, namely Sadness, Fear, Anger, Happiness, Surprise, and Disgusted, the results inhibit that the performative value of gender influences how emotional messages are captured.

Keywords: Emotions, Experiment, Performative

There exist an extensive amount of arguments and evidence that perceives minimal to absolute differences between gender in their cognitive computational processing. In various instances on the result of such cognitive processing, language use

became one of the major highlights in communication studies under both the comprehension of gender discourses and its practical implications. The latter, such as those that entails the systematic use of language and its differences in

communication situations that are among others, high risk, such as health communications between professionals (doctors) and its patients (Newman, 2008).

Blocks of Language

The previously mentioned situation, had it as one of the major attempts in identifying the major thematics of how gender discourses contributed in the computations and the creation of language, which in-turn rendered its use and fabrication a natural process. Discourses arise as to how systematically, the two genders “communicate” in such distinct and symbolic manner. This pretext has set an evident basis of questioning in the various factors and modalities that exist within the various range of communication processes, extending from interpersonal to mass. One of such benefactors to the question, is the modality of emotional expression, with symbolic interactionism as one of the major building blocks of societally-formed construction.

Communication En Masse

As it is mentioned that the effect of emotional expression and its perceived differences exposed due to gender discourses had profoundly grasped the

attention of various practitioners and academics alike. This is profound as to the evident trend of advertising mediums to include and utilize narratives that induce emotional responses.

The roles of mass communication mediums, with one being advertisements, are built above the construct of social responsibilities, especially within the context of social discourses (Kasper, 2020). Thus, with the current provided status quo of both the utility of emotional narratives and the face-value yet academically established perceived differences between gender in emotional expressions, gaps do persist for practical, academic, and social aspects of the phenomenon.

Thus, this study aims to define and explore the multifaceted intersections between emotional expressivity and the practical realities of emotional narratives in advertisements.

Emotional Expressivity

Emotions can be defined in various manners, including from the lens of intrapersonal, interpersonal to even mass communication. Through an academic perspective however, this study follows the inscriptions of Paul Ekman’s Emotional

Expressivity Framework in 1992. Emotions themselves are defined as the adaptive value in which a human responds towards his or her individual or societal life (Ekman, 1992).

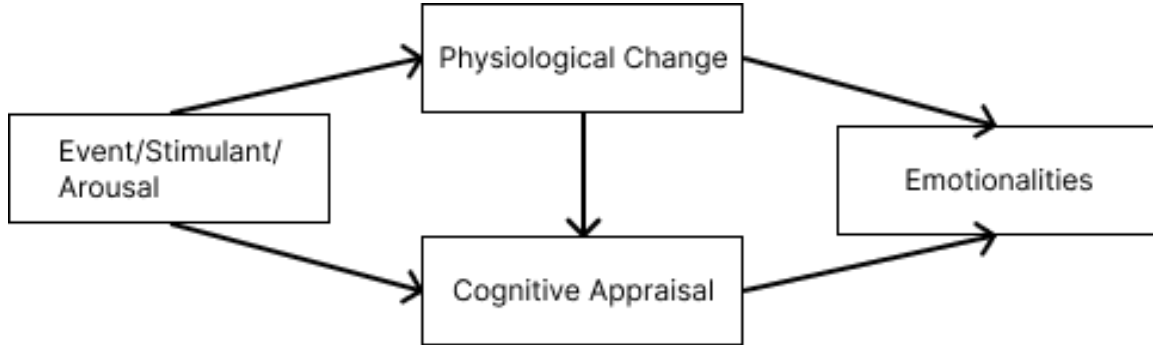
Dimension	Operations	Triggers
Anger	Negative response from a situational blockade to a certain goal or conditions of discrimination.	The cognitive interpretation of interference, injustice, hurt, and common anger (immersive and observational).
Disgust	Negative response towards the situation of aversion (dislike) or offensiveness.	The cognitive interpretation of offensiveness, poisonous, or possibly contaminated.
Fear	Negative responses towards situations that expose the subject to situations of potential hurt or danger.	The cognitive interpretation of imagined hurt (threat)
Happiness	Positive	The

	responses towards situations that excite, pleasure, and give a sense of enjoyment.	cognitive interpretation that 'excites', such as enjoyment (from the 5 senses), compassion, humor, achievement, etc.
Sadness	Negative response towards situations of loss and the need for comfort or help.	The cognitive interpretation of loss in value such as rejections, ending, disappointment, etc.
Surprise	Neutral response towards unexpected stimulants that focus attention.	The cognitive interpretation of sudden or expectations.

Following Ekman's Basic Emotional Theorem (BET), the framework is mechanized in the first stage of the research. In particular, the BET would serve as both guide and operationalized guide for the pre-pst test formulation. The expected result of such established measurement is to provide a plausible thesis of increase or anti-thesis of the previously mentioned six dimensions of emotionalities.

Gender Roles

Within the basis of social discourses, the critical foundations of gender and its roles in building norms and its plausible differences are set to its utmost basic in order to follow the functions of bias prevention. Following such assumption, this study involves theoretical models that are, by its building blocks, critically foundational and basic in describing empirical reality.



Thus, Schachter-Singer's two factor theorem is utilized to build the guiding foundations of this study's argumentative correlation with socially-constructed and plausible perceived differences between genders. As the concept itself, provides grounds of justification, for such roles of gender construct, in identifying how the dimension delivers, communicates, and expresses emotions.

Methodological Construct

This study consisted of two-stage data collection, which entailed a semi-controlled quasi-experiment conducted at Diponegoro University, Faculty of Social and Political Science. With paired conduct of male (n = 5) and female (n = 6), chosen participants follows the following criterion; (1) Are able to apprehend and understand English as language medium (following the language

use of the stimulant) and (2) Enrolled with a minimum of a highschool diploma (following the age and educational conformity).

In its practicalities, this study begins with a procedural questionnaire that aims to identify pre-conditions of emotional elements in each individual. This is followed by a post-stimulant questionnaire with a similar design with the intent of identifying evoked emotional responses.

Emotional Utility - 2019 Apple Christmas Commercial

Stimulus, a selected emotionally-inducing advertising video, targeted towards the population of young adults and adults with enough level of comprehension in the English language would be utilized as a stimulus of this study. The rationale for the selection of this stimulus would be assisted by initiating a piloting measurement using the selected stimuli followed by the pre-test and post-test on a similar set group of subjects.

In the occasion of this study, a 2019 Apple Christmas commercial “The Surprise” created by Media Art Lab, directed by Mark Molloy is chosen for its functional purpose (Nudd, 2019). The video tells a heartwarming story of a grieving family dealing with the loss of one of their family members during the holiday (christmas) season. Story-wise, the advertising tells the story of a core family that visits their grandfather’s house after the loss of their grandmother. Throughout and even from the start of the advertisement, an Ipad and Apple Pen as a product placement were utilized by the parents to keep their daughters occupied, with the intentional utility of providing distraction in a form of entertainment.

This aforementioned particular 2019 Apple Christmas advertising “The Surprise”, were the build-up and exponentially different scenes that portrays and highlights different ranges of emotions throughout. By particular however, all of the scenes portrays how the children, utilized the supposedly entertainment-centric iPad to create a montage video that is heartwarming, as they compile old family photos, that portrays the history of their overall family and notably the old video of the grandmother waving, which was presented to the grandfather during Christmas day, leading to a heartwarming and touching conclusion.

The extent of the advertising being emotional, is not without merit, various reviews solidifies such claims. By extension, positive reviews were fairly elaborate in maintaining the “emotional” value by which the advertising was originally designed. With various instances of words such as “tear-jerker for even the hardest of people” (Williams, 2019).

Results

The multimodal faucets of the result had shown that the nuance of differences between gender in emotional expressions are both delicate and clear in certain thematics.

Such delicate and clear lines of differences are fairly dictated across different dimensions of emotional expressions.

Disgust

In this dimension, both genders reported a similar rate of intensity. However it is notable that in terms of expressivity, females are more likely to be more vivid in their explanation. Whilst male groups are more specific and are context-driven, lessening the nuance of expression.

Sadness

Within sadness, clear differences in language use can be observed, with females considered to be more expressive (more elaborative and detailed) in reflecting towards sad stimulants. Whilst male are more likely to be reserved and focus on the impact of the sadness cues, rather than the nuance it provided.

Happiness

Differences in happiness are more delicate than in other dimensions, females can be described to be open, detailed, and vivid in providing descriptions of happiness. On the other hand male are more likely to describe

happiness in similar details but focus on the cause and effects of the emotion.

Anger

In this particular negative dimension, females perceive the dimension in a much more reflective manner than their counterparts, with personal association being the major theme. On the other hand, similar to other dimensions, males are more likely to focus on the cues causing or affecting the production of the anger emotion than it is the nuance it produces.

Fear

Similarly tied to the previous dimension, fear is expressed differently in both genders, with females tended to be more detailed in their expression and are more likely to attune to personal experience. On the other hand, male are more contextual and are hyper focused on the situational details of the cues.

Discussions

Consistent with the study's initial assumption, the study did capture subtle yet clear differences between female and male in their descriptions of experiencing emotions. With the qualitative vignettes that are gathered, a definitive difference can be

established on how female groups within the study reported more intense and nuanced inscriptions of emotional expressions than it is male (Birditt & Fingerman, 2003).

The reflection of the study's result is directly tied to the role of gender in their essence of performativity. This argument entails the manner in which societal norms, expectations, and normalities shape how individuals, in this regard grouped by gender, expresses emotions. This constituent of society shaping perceptions and stereotypes are a highlight to the multimodal nature of communication and its relation to emotional expression (Hess et al, 2000).

To a certain extent, this study provides a basis for insights in designing narratives and mass communication messages that are attuned towards emotionalities. With results indicating that societal contexts play a significant role in the agency of emotions and how both genders would react differently in certain dimensions had placed this study as a likely basis of increasing considerations for future designs.

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