

How to help high school students who are weak in social skills but are eager to establish relationships to improve their social niche

Implementation Description

Since we have found that most personal characteristics, like the physical similarity and the study ability, were not instrumental to friendship, it means that we cannot give suggestions on how to choose a social object for themselves directly. Hence helping those Chinese high school students appear to socialize well by improving their social skills is our propose.

As a result, the implementation part of this project is to make an interactive video that can achieve the function above. An interactive video is a video embedded with options which the audience is free to choose from, resulting in different endings. Through studying the conclusion of our research, previous researches, and books related to this problem, the game design team concluded some socializing norms to convey to the users. Then the team designed the plots of this video as well as the options provided. After finishing the art design, the team made the logic structural tree and put video clips at the corresponding places via online tools.

In this video, it offers a scene that users can do trial and error with their own decisions in different settings. At the same time, the instant feedback brought by the interactive video will also let users figure out whether they choose right or not. And then it will remind them to behave properly in the real world.

So far, the interactive video has already been published on bilibili.com, the most popular video sharing platform among the Chinese teenagers. At the same time, the project team also used the WeChat official account, our popularizing media, to post an article about this video.

Connections to Research

Our previous study indicated that the characteristics of unsociable Chinese high school students are poor social skills and poor confidence. In recent studies about embodiment, evidence show that acting powerful leads to feeling empowered (Lucia & Gruenfeld). By providing students a virtual world where they can succeed their social relationships, they are able to feel confident about socializing with other in real life.

Our research found out that the characteristics of high school students' friends have nearly no influence on their friendships. The method of "social with the group of people who is easier

to form friendship" is no longer useful for improving students' social niche. Thus, we use the method of "directly improve the social skill of unsociable students" as the solution of the social problem.

Our survey and study mainly focus on Chinese high school students. This interactive video, too, takes them as the targeted users. Our survey result indicates that spending time with friends and in common hobbies, especially sports and music preferences, is instrumental in establishing friendships. Hence, our approach to the problem emphasizes scenes of daily life. Based on the literature review in our study, Chinese high school students are more likely to have peer pressure, leading to various psychological problems. This issue has already drawn public concern. Thus, trying to help these students appears to be important and urgent.

During our reviewing process of previous solutions, computer games had been used to solve the social problems related to the adolescent. This is because of its advantages on time, financial, and opportunity barriers compared to the traditional social skill training programs (Derosier & Thomas 2019). This type of computer game mainly consists of a storyline and a few characters, where users can make their decisions while facing specific assessments set by the gamemakers (Derosier & Thomas 2010). These computer-based games create a virtual environment where users can experiment with their social skills, and ultimately develop their abilities.

Another approach to the problem is to provide social skill training program to adolescents. An example is "Skill 4 Life Curriculum", which was tested in 38 schools. However, the result of this approach was not ideal. The program did improve the self-efficacy of students, but it had no effect on students' social interaction and self-esteem. In addition, the effect of the program decreased while the grade level of participant raised (Pannebakker, et al. 2019). This indicates that social skill training program has limited effects on high school students.

In consideration of our previous research and other researchers' methods, we finally decided to make an interactive video as our solution to the problem. Interactive video refers to a specific type of video that responds to the choice made by the player, making it similar to the social skill training video game, which is introduced above.

On the setting of the interactive video, the design team refers to the conclusion of our research. Our research shows there are four factors that influence the social relationship of high school students: the common hobbies, sports, music preferences, and the amount of free time spend with friends. Accordingly, the interactive video include lots of scenarios regarding the criteria.

Reflection

Completion and impact

The project team completed the interactive video and successfully published it on bilibili.com on January 30th, 2020. Until Feb. 2, 2020, the interactive video has received 508 times of watch, and 23 likes on the bilibili.com website. The number of "watch" represents how many times a video has been played on the website. The number of "likes" is the number of the audience who think this video is amazing, or at least helpful for them.

Audiences reported that overall the project is great. But something are not done well enough. Some reflected that the settings and options are subjective, which cannot be applied to cases in real life. Others reported that reaching the condition to open the hidden level is a little difficult. But they are willing to try more times to figure that out, which achieve our propose to let users do trial and error with their own decisions in different settings. At the same time, several users assumed that using bilibili.com to make this interactive video is not proper.

However, few unsociable people are willing to share the fact that they are unsociable. It is impractical and inefficient to target this target group and distribute our project. Therefore the project team decide to distribute it to anyone and published the interactive video on bilibili.com. In this way, the video is able to reach some of our target groups, but the exact number is uncertain.

The whole project is practical and easy to perform. The video is built by existing tools on bilibili.com, which is the most popular video sharing platform among the Chinese teenagers. Thus from the perspective of production and spread, this is a feasible project.

Uniqueness

Needless to say, interactive video is a new method to engage with the audience; the approach itself is new and innovative. Compared to other solutions in history (video games and social skill training programs), interactive video is a better approach to reach our goal. Since previous studies did prove that video game was a better approach on this problem, the interactive video not only inherits these advantages from video game, but it is also easier to spread on the internet compares to the video game approach.

Future Plan

1. Popularizing

We will continue to popularize this interactive video, aiming to reach more Chinese high school students. Our target is to achieve 1000 times of "watch".

2. Write a game analysis

To help people understand the ideas behind this interactive video, the game design team decides to write a game analysis and post it on our WeChat official account. The design team

will explain the game theory and what we want users to know about social skills and social relationships based on our research.

3. A guide to effective social

The team will conclude and publish a overall guide about how to socialize with peers for Chinese high school students. This guide will summarize the conclusions of previous study, books on this topic, and useful suggestion on social.

4. Open Discussion

The feedback we received reveal that people have various opinions on how people would react on a certain behavior, including the tone of speaking or the chat topics. Therefore, we decide to open a free discussion about diferent social norms in daily life. We will collect people's opinion before the discussion, publish our findings, and invite people to talk about it on Wechat.

Works Cited

1. Lucia E. Guillory, Deborah H. Gruenfeld. "Fake it Till you Make It: How Acting Powerful Leads to Feeling Empowered." CiteSeerX. 2010, doi:10.1.1.183.9784
2. Derosier, Melissa E., and James M. Thomas. "Hall of Heroes: A Digital Game for Social Skills Training with Young Adolescents." *International Journal of Computer Games Technology*, vol. 2019, Jan. 2019, pp. 1–12., doi:10.1155/2019/6981698.
3. Thomas, James M., and Melissa E. Derosier. "Toward Effective Game-Based Social Skills Tutoring for Children." *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on the Foundations of Digital Games - FDG 10*, 2010, doi:10.1145/1822348.1822377.
4. Pannebakker, Fieke D., et al. "A Social Gradient in the Effects of the Skills for Life Program on Self-Efficacy and Mental Wellbeing of Adolescent Students." *Journal of School Health*, vol. 89, no. 7, 2019, pp. 587–595., doi:10.1111/josh.12779.