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The Interpretation of Chinese Youth's Values Orientation in Post Epidemic Era Based on Buzzwords in Prototype Category Theory

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Abstract

The buzzwords born in the post-2020 epidemic era reflect the changes in the values of Chinese youths. However, little empirical research has been conducted to understand why people use buzzwords and changes of values of Chinese youths. Adopting the uses and gratifications theory and prototype category theory by means of regression analysis was employed to analyze the data collected from 112 undergraduate and graduate students in China Three Gorgeous University. The results reveal that socializing needs were the strongest motivation in predicting the usage intention of buzzwords. Applying the method of continuous comparison to analyze the data, the study found that the political, international, social, and moral views of Chinese youths have possessed more inclusive international value and more integrated social value in the post-epidemic era. This study has certain enlightenment to the value orientation of contemporary college students.

Keywords: Online buzzwords; Youth values; Prototype category theory; Uses and gratifications theory.

1. Introduction

The sudden outbreak of the novel coronavirus epidemic has been a major public health emergency with the fastest spread, the widest range of infections, and the most difficult prevention and control since the founding of the People's Republic of China, which influences the formation of values in the post-90s and post-00s. These young generations experienced not only an unprecedented epidemic test, but also a collective memory full of human love and an interactive ceremony to sublimate the feelings of home and country, which will become their psychological growth and ideological maturity of marks (Lian *et al.*, 2020). Many buzzwords were born during the post-epidemic period, reflecting both positive and negative value orientations (Sun, 2019). As a cultural phenomenon with distinctive characteristics of the times, network buzzwords are the subjective cognition of Internet users, especially young people, to the current social life, and the testimony and record of youth groups to the current era through language. It is the perception of real life and the display of their values. In short, buzzwords are not only the true reflection of real life, but also the manifestation of the value of the times (Jiang, 2019). Buzzwords are used on various social media, such as Weibo, WeChat and other software. Notwithstanding the thought-provoking standard use in these buzzwords, using buzzwords in social media has become a global phenomenon. Yet, knowledge about why they do so is still limited.

Thus, the objective of the present study is to explore the buzzwords born in post-2020 epidemic era and investigate factors that influence user's intention by means of prototype category theory and uses and gratifications theory as an effort to guide young people to form a correct outlook on the values in the current ideology.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Uses and Gratifications Theory

The uses and gratifications theory attempts to explain what social and psychological needs motivate audiences to select particular media channels and content choices (Rubin and Perse, 1987). This theory has been widely applied to investigate audience's gratifications in a variety of media channels and content, including print media, television, and pagers (Leung and Wei, 1999).

Domestic uses and satisfactions theory is also very pervasive. Lu (2015), took the theory as the model and the Internet users of college students as the research objects, and that paper discussed the reading motivation and satisfaction of mobile phones. Using the questionnaire method, the author extracted five factors representing college students' mobile phone reading motivation through five factor analysis of 30 items: convenience, friendly

interaction, reading experience, knowledge entertainment and personality presentation. These new features have the ability to motivate users to not only to seek news stories but also to share and distribute news content.

2.2. The Prototype Category Theory

In abroad, the study of category theory has gone through two processes: classical category theory and prototype category theory. The classical category theory means the integration of elements owning same characteristics. Philosopher Wittgenstein proposed "Family Resemblance" (That is, members of a family have something in common, but differ in some degree.), and people began to question the classical category theory (Wittgenstein, 1953). further developed the prototype category theory and proposed an Idealized Cognitive Model to explain the prototype category, emphasizing the subjective cognitive ability and imagination of people in the process of categorization (Lakoff, 1987). Taylor thought the prototype can be understood as a schematic representation of the conceptual core of a category Taylor (1995).

After the introduction of prototype category theory into China, linguists combined it with related language research. These previous studies include vocabulary, grammar, semantics and translation. "Category is the result of the categorization. To sum up, the study of prototype category is quite perfect, but there is room for further improvement.

By prototype category theory in cognitive linguistics and uses and gratifications theory in sociology, we can glimpse the true face of social life from buzzwords by cognitive channel to study the semantic variants of buzzwords, and values orientation of young people through cognitive bridge. Thus this is the reason to do interdisciplinary research.

3. Data Collection
3.1. Research Question

1) Why do Chinese youths use buzzwords?

2) Through the emergence of buzzwords in the post-epidemic era, what changes have the epidemic brought to the values of young people?

3.2. Subjects and Operationalization

A survey instrument was developed and administered to undergraduate and graduate students at China Three Gorges University (CTGU), where is a representative university with roughly equal proportions of male and female. All respondents were briefed about the purpose of the research and assured of their privacy and confidentiality of their participation. A total of 113 questionnaires were collected in Sojump, of which 112 were usable after removing one respondents who reported no experience in using buzzwords. Of the 112 respondents, 50.89% were male and 49.11% were female. Their ages ranged from 20 to 30 years, mostly between the ages of 20 and 25.

In our study, the independent variables were the several needs like socializing needs, entertainment needs, information needs, and status seeking needs, whereas the dependent variable was intention to use buzzwords. A total of 11 question items were asked, and these were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

4. Data Analyses
4.1. Multivariate Regression Analysis

In order to illustrate the research question one, multivariate regression analysis of 11 questions including information, socializing, entertainment and status needs was carried out by using SPSS software, with an attempt to find out the motivation that affected the use of buzzwords by Chinese youth (See Table 1).

Table-1. Results of multivariate regression analysis

	ß	t	p
(constant)	.996	3.450	.001
Information	.106	1.385	.169
Entertainment	.112	1.157	.250
Socializing	.248	2.624	.010
Status	.244	3.439	.001
F=19.976 Adjusted R²	P<0.05 =0.406		

a. Dependent variable: Using buzzwords

The following conclusions are drawn from Table 1. First, the constructed theoretical model is significant as a whole (F=19.976 P<0.05). Second, the model is overall able to explain the change in the willingness of 40.6% of users to apply buzzwords (Adjust R^2=0.406). Third, socializing needs and status needs have significant impacts on the motivation of the use of buzzwords (P<0.05). Finally, information needs and entertainment needs have no significant impact on the use of buzzwords because their P values were over 5%.

4.2. Validity Testing

Following, principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was employed to test the validity of our previous result. Hence, items from both information needs and entertainment needs were loaded onto the same factor. It is likely that using buzzwords for entertainment needs belongs to a means of acquiring information. And items from both socializing needs and status needs were loaded onto the same factor. It is feasible that applying buzzwords for status seeking is also a way of socializing. Therefore, the two composite factors were combined as information needs and socializing needs in our subsequent analysis.

4.3. Reliability Testing

The motivation to determine the use of buzzwords after validity measurement changed from four factors, including information needs, entertainment needs, socializing needs and status needs to two factors, covering information needs and socializing needs. In order to measure the correlation of measurement problems under the same variable, reliability test uses Crobach's alpha to examine. The reliability of the Information needs and Socializing needs are acceptable as the values of the two factors are larger than 0.6 ($\alpha=0.862>0.6\alpha=0.819>0.6$) and the eight problems are related to the linkage.

4.4. Remultivariate Regression Analysis

The correlation and differentiation of motivation factors were verified by reliability and validity tests, and then multiple regression analysis was conducted again (See Table 2). The following conclusions are drawn from Table 2. First, the theoretical model constructed is significant overall (F=40.699 P<0.05). Second, the model is overall able to predict the change in the intention of 41.7% of users to apply buzzwords (Adjust R²=0.417). Third, Socializing needs and Information needs have significant impact on the motivation of the use of buzzwords. Finally, the change of young people's willingness to use buzzwords was explained from 40.6% to 41.7%, so the reliability and validity tests were effective.

Table-2. Results of remultivariate regression analysis

	ß	t	p
(constant)	.997	3.613	.000
Information	.218	2.612	.010
Socializing	.493	5.459	.000
F=40.699 Adjusted R²	P<0.05 =0.417		

5. Research Results and Discussion

5.1. Motivations of Using Buzzwords

We found that socializing needs were positively associated with motivations of buzzwords. (ß = .493, p < .05). This suggests that the anticipation of future social relational needs can significantly predict intention to use online buzzwords. Our results also indicate that socializing was bound to status needs. In other words, social needs cover status needs. Further, information needs have a wide range of entertainment needs. This finding suggests that users who use buzzwords for exchanging are actually seeking entertainment.

5.2. Changes to the Values of Chinese Youth

In the Internet era, buzzwords are not only the carrier that individuals use to export their own values, but also the input and recognition of others. In this paper's survey question 22, "In general, the impact of Internet buzzwords on my values might be _". Of the 27.68% college and graduate students assume that the influence of buzzwords on students' values is positive, and 44.64% students point that there is a certain positive effect. The proportion of negative effects and uncertain effects on buzzwords is 27.68%, so it should be highly valued.

5.2.1. International Value

The novel coronavirus sweeping the world will also profoundly affect people's international view. The spread of the virus around the world reveals the cruel reality that the virus knows no borders. To overcome the COVID-19 as well as other types of infectious diseases, countries around the world need to truly establish the concept of global cooperation, concerted efforts and joint responses.

According to the survey, 71.43% of young people agree with the buzzword of "Double circulation" (shuang xun huan) on May 14, 2020. It belongs to the phenomenon of stylistic cross-use, that is, previous used in the competition system, which means that all teams participating in the competition can meet twice, but now adopted in the economic style. Promote domestic cycle and international cycle, so as to achieve win-win situation. The buzzword reflects China's major economic decisions aimed at long-term development and promoting world economic prosperity.

In addition, only three of the 112 samples disagreed with the buzzword "cloud" (yun), covering cloud education, cloud hugs, cloud videos and so on. The buzzword uses the framework extraction based on prototype construction. "Cloud" is a prototype structure, refers to the network through the relevant activities, so you can add a number of "cloud" after the general variables. Due to the sudden increase of epidemic infection, people have to work and study

at home, which promotes the rapid development of the Internet. "Cloud" represents all people around the world through the network can achieve what used to be done face to face. The development of cloud technology makes international relations closer, and the network makes people's study and life more convenient, which is the power of science and technology.

In the face of the alarming and incomprehensible international situation, Chinese young people do not blindly follow the extreme, and express their positive attitude in rational peace. It can be predicted that the Chinese youth in the new era will play an increasingly important role in participating in international affairs, promoting peaceful development and promoting the progress of world civilization. Specifically, 33.04% of the youths argue that "the influence of Internet buzzwords on my patriotism" has more positive effects, while 42.86% on positive impact. It can be seen that the international outlook of youths in the post-epidemic era has become more inclusive.

5.2.2. Social Value

With regards to the questionnaire, 80.36% of young people agree with "After wave" which comes from the short video released on the eve of May 4th Youth Day in 2020, which belongs to the phenomenon of semantic variation. The buzzword originally refers to the spray, now the post-90s generations. The previous generation has been full of dissatisfaction and contempt for future generations, because of rebellious, conceited and arrogant images. However, some stereotypes are too arbitrary and negative, so they do not truly reflect the mainstream and essence of the younger generation. Instead, in the battle of prevention and control of the epidemic, a large number of "post-90s" joined the front, not afraid of difficulties and harvest a lot of praise. Every major event is the best opportunity to shape the value of young people in an era and the best time for the young generation to reshape their image. In times of national rejuvenation and national distress, the younger generation has always breathed with the motherland and the people, shared destiny and heart, and handed over qualified answers (Cheng, 2020).

In addition, 72.32% of young people consent to "migrant workers", the phenomenon of semantic variation, whereas now refers to all kinds of workers, including social elite or ordinary staff, mental and physical workers. The buzzword highlights that, first, whether local workers or migrant workers, whether manual workers or mental workers, we are a group, regardless of nobility and status. Second, anyone is just a small existence in the world, but everyone's efforts will jointly promote social progress. In question 24, 64.28% of young people believe that the influence of buzzwords on life goals has a positive effect. As the main maker and disseminator of buzzwords, youths can fully reflect their outlook on life.

6. Conclusions

This paper applies SPSS app as a measure tool and adopts the uses and gratifications theory and prototype category theory to investigate the following research question: Why do Chinese youth use buzzwords? Through the emergence of buzzwords in the post-epidemic era, what changes have the epidemic brought to the values of young people?

The most salient factor motivating Chinese youths to use buzzwords was found to be socializing needs. Additionally, buzzwords shared among users provide the information source for socializing. Next, in the post-COVID-19 era, young people's international outlook has become more inclusive and their social outlook more integrated.

Liu argued that language is a mirror reflecting social life. As a part of language, buzzwords can see the real face of social life (Liu and Pu, 2019). In this paper, the top ten buzzwords born under the post-epidemic situation are analyzed from three aspects: the cross-use of stylistic based on the prototype stylistic, the semantic variation based on the prototype semantics and the frame extraction based on the prototype construction. Lin believes that under the background of multiculturalism in the new era, the value orientation of contemporary college students shows autonomy, openness, multiplicity, conflict and other characteristics. Universities should follow the principles of the unity of social guideline, and vigorously strengthen the cultivation of college students' social and international core values (Lin, 2020).

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