

# **We don't "read" minds, we "study" them: A video project to bridge gaps between the academics and the publics**

## **Introduction**

Misconceptions about psychology are quite common among the general public, even for some who have taken psychology courses (Furnham, 2018; Gardner, 1986; Vaughan, 1977), and some people believe in psychology-related contents that they receive from mass media (Arntzen et al., 2010; Furnham & Hughes, 2014), which may or may not be true. For instance, popular criminal TV shows (e.g., *Every Move You Make*) often exaggerate the extent to which experts may interpret body language and microexpressions. As well, mass media often portray psychology in the contexts of crime and mental health, so people are often confused about what psychology students learn in school, what psychology researchers actually study and how psychology plays a role in today's society. While some misconceptions may be harmless, many misconceptions may have real life consequences (Lilienfeld et al., 2009). For example, if an individual perceives giving punishments as an effective way to teach children, this individual may utilize this method for child rearing, which may be ill-advised by researchers. In addition, sharing research findings on topics such as ageism or other similar social phenomena may offer opportunities to raise awareness among the general public (e.g., Palmore, 2015). Hence, the present project aims to provide a glimpse into the "realities" and "fun" of psychology via a series of short but educational videos that can be distributed online.

We have reviewed existing resources that are available online. Indeed, there have been a few YouTube channels (e.g., MY 心理學, IAMGDROP 我是雞爪) and podcasts (e.g., Hidden Brain by NPR) that target the topic of psychology. However, we noticed some patterns with these existing resources: First, most resources are in English, so it would be harder for the general public in Chinese-speaking regions to benefit from these resources. Second, many of these videos or podcasts are relatively long (e.g., longer than 30 minutes) and with a relatively serious tone. Unless audiences are already interested, these contents are less competitive to reach the general public. Third, for videos that are relatively shorter and engaging, they often lack scientific evidence in the claims.

Previous studies illustrated that deliberate source monitoring was not useful in reducing the number of misconceptions (Landau & Bavaria, 2003), but refutational approaches in teaching and information (i.e., explicitly pointing out the misconception and refuting it with evidence) appeared to be quite effective in changing people's beliefs (Kowalski & Taylor, 2009). Furthermore, previous studies have demonstrated that humorous messages may be more effective in preventing reactance and changing false beliefs compared to non-humorous messages (Futerfas & Nan, 2017; Moyer-Gusé, Robinson, & Mcknight, 2018). Taken together, the current project will do the following: (1) provide 5 to 15 minutes videos (2) that directly target at least one misconception in each video (3) with humorous framing and real life relatable examples.

## Methods

YouTube has been one of the largest social media platforms with over 2 billions users (“YouTube for Press”, n.d.). In an online survey conducted on adults, 68% and 53% respondents said that Youtube is at least somehow important when it comes to “passing time” and “understanding things happening in the world” (Smith, Toor & Van Kessel, 2018). It shows that YouTube users want to enjoy a moment of relaxation but at the same time learn something about the world. We will create a YouTube channel to upload animations about different topics on Psychology. We choose to use animation for three main reasons: 1) It can help to cultivate a more relaxing and interesting atmosphere in the video, 2) it allows more flexibility to involve different characters (e.g. older character to share about ageism) and experiment settings and 3) it allows remote involvement of our team members. Topics range from general misconceptions to Psychology to interesting research in psychology [See Appendix 1 for a list of topics]. The content of the video will be primarily based on published articles/ book chapters, which helps to keep the contents to be as accurate as possible. When there are discrepancies in understanding an article, we will first discuss among our team to resolve the discrepancies. If we cannot reach consensus, we will consult the author directly. We will also provide sources of materials that we referred to in the video. It can build an impression how we work in this field - we speak according to evidence.

We will use an open-source animation software “Blender” to draw animation. For better quality of the animation, we hope to buy an application called “Astropad” to sync an ipad that we own to the computer. By doing so, we can use the ipad as a drawing pad. It will be less expensive than a regular drawing pad with display, like wacom (~HKD600 - HKD40,000). We will do dubbing and put on both English and Chinese subtitles by “ArcTime”, a free application. To illustrate the style and content of videos, we attached a sample video [See Appendix 2] along with this proposal. Video view counts and number of subscriptions will be used to evaluate the project. To allow our videos to reach a larger amount of YouTube users, we would like to promote our videos to the Chinese-speaking community, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan.

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### Timeline

- May-August 2020: Theme 1
- September-December 2020: Video 2 & 3 and first wave of video promotion
- January-April 2021: Video 4 & 5
- May 2021: second wave of video promotion

### Budget

We hope to utilize the award to give this project a jump start and continue this project even after the termination of the award.

#### Budget for project completion (1year)

Item	Costs	Justification
Video promotion cost	\$115HKD*41 days = \$4715 HKD	YouTube: In order for the video to have a broader reach of audiences, it would cost ~\$115HKD per day for campaigns in various Chinese-speaking regions, including Hong Kong.
Video editing softwares (Astropad)	\$285HKD	This is an application to sync an ipad to the computer so that the ipad can be used as a drawing tablet. This will be cheaper than buying a drawing pad (from HKD 650 to HKD 40,000). With a drawing tablet, the quality of animation can be improved greatly
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,000 HKD</b>	