



The influence capability of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) commerce toward consumers' satisfaction

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Abstract

The sound in ASMR video will give a pleasant physical and a tingly feeling in the brain. The specific feature of video becomes flourishing on the social network and catches attention from a particular group of people. Interestingly, in filming and commercial industry, there are some firms that intend to promote their goods or service using ASMR, especially in food and beverage advertisement. This research aims to study the satisfaction of consumers toward ASMR video clips. Therefore, we employ a qualitative approach with a focused group interview to find out the influence of ASMR in terms of commercial. There is a total of 21 participants in our sample. We find a strong attitude of the examiners on ASMR skillfulness. In addition, ASMR sounds can work very well and be interesting because they perform so real. Nevertheless, some viewers also noted that too much noise detracts from the experience. So, the result of this study describes the ability in new aspects toward the ASMR.

Keywords: *ASMR, advertising, satisfaction*

1. Introduction

Innovative technology is generated to fulfill the expectation of human in modern society. In industrial science, programming and all electronic equipment are elaborating on the specific system or feature which could be new enlightenment to qualify in any condition of living. Recently, Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) effectuate a newfound between sound and sensory. It is also well known on the internet based on the relaxation trend. Many people who have experienced in ASMR will find it more than just sensation. Google Trending shows that the number of searching on the word "*Autonomous sensory meridian response*" continually increasing from the past five years. After their experience, some people start recording themselves in ASMR video and upload it on internet platforms such as Facebook or YouTube. Also, they call themselves as ASMR-tists. Generally speaking, the definition of ASMR is as follows: Autonomous refers to autonomous responses that are not voluntary such as our heart beating; Sensory refers to the different senses that humans have: taste, touch, sight, sound, smell; Meridian refers to the term used in Chinese acupuncture where energy is supposed to flow in a set of pathways; and Response is the response people get from experiencing the different stimulus. ASMR video is also known as more than just feeling a video that exhibits the results beyond expectation. Moreover, the current research investigated the relationship between ASMR and both state and trait mindfulness. State mindfulness reflects a transient moment-to-moment conscious experience (Tanay & Bernstein, 2013), whereas trait mindfulness is a more stable and enduring tendency to attend and experience the world in a mindful manner (Brown & Ryan, 2003). At the same time, as ASMR has received some media attention in recent months, many have taken to public forums to explain their ability to induce ASMR that can ease symptoms of these conditions in cases where other routes of treatment may have been lacking or ineffective (Taylor, 2013; TheWaterwhispers, 2013).

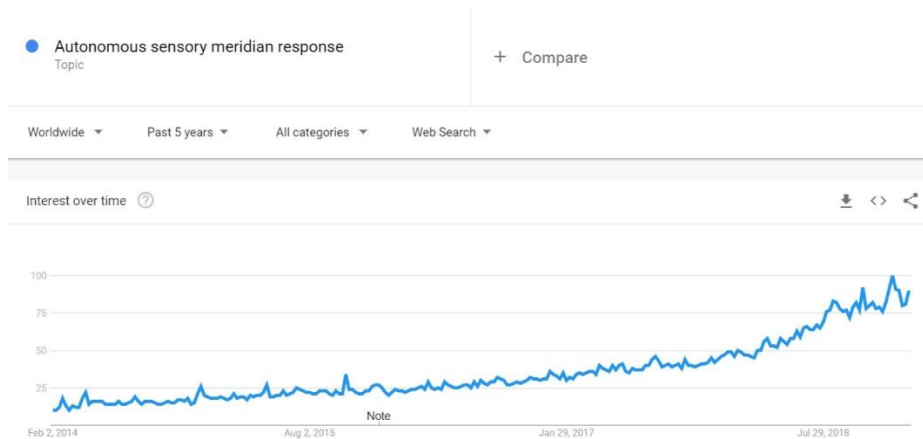


Figure 1 The visual graph below details the exponential growth of ASMR

Source: Google Trends, January 2019

In the past 5 years, the interesting rate of ASMR is continues growing which is provided by how many people search the word "Autonomous sensory meridian response" on google.

2. Objectives

The objective of this research is to learn about the function of ASMR and how can it pressure the emotion of other people in advertising. The main focus 3 objectives are the list below;

1. To understand the functions of the capacity of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) used in commercial advertising
2. To observe the impact of the ASMR on the viewers' emotion
3. To understand the viewers' perception of the ASMR

3. Materials and Methods

Interestingly, ASMR presents the sensations that are generally accompanied by a sense of calm as well as a positive effect on a human's brain and mind (Barratt & Davis, 2015). Because of that, ASMR content has appeared as a keyword in many scientific types of research for a psychology study. New usability and performance have been discovered over the paper by paper. The experiment on each study is described as the power of ASMR in more depth and variety. One of the researches believes that both mindfulness and ASMR can lead to a feeling of relaxation that enhances people's subjective well-being (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Bishop et al., 2004). The paper focus to find out the state of mind using the scale of the Toronto Mindfulness Scale (TMS) which is more sensitive to state mindfulness (TMS; Lau et al., 2006) and the Mindful Attention and Awareness Scale (MAAS) which is more sensitive to the attentional component of trait mindfulness (Fredborg, Clark & Smith, 2017). ASMR participants also completed the ASMR Checklist to determine the result (Fredborg, Clark, & Smith, 2017). This idea of thinking encourages recovering new features and capability that can blow and attack human's mind. In addition, other researchers have suggested that mindfulness involves an openness to sensations, attentional control, emotional regulation, and resilience (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Therefore, it captures viewers' attention by creating a trigger feel. Based on recent researches, this current study clarifies the unique appearance of ASMR in term of a commercial which examines the satisfaction and attitude of viewers. The objective of



this study can uphold the suggestion of ASMR to advertising or giving a piece of advice for commercial industry or adapting for other industries. Furthermore, the conclusion might contribute to the objectives for the next research in the future.

Research Methods

The qualitative research methods, particularly in the in-depth interview, has adopted in this study. None of the research gives an actual number of interviewees – not even a maximum or a minimum – as the ideal to ensure that the qualitative research will be effective and productive (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). However, some researchers such as Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) and Mason (2010) suggested that the sample should not be too large because the data could then become repetitive and superfluous, which could make it too difficult to extract thick and rich data. Why group interview, not an individual? In order to gain a reliable result and conclusion, the variety of data are needed. The focused group interview points out the different attitude and opinion of those participants that have the same experience. The discussion will scrutinize ideas to support the reason for research.

In this research, the group interviews were divided into four groups as shown in table 4.3. Each group comprised of between five to eleven members including males and females whose ages ranged from 18-25 for allowing the gap between age and education to evade uncomfortable condition during the interview. Table 2 shows the demographics of those participants classified by gender. The group interviews took between 30 to 45 minutes to procure the valuable statistics. ASMR sample video was played for participants before the discussion began. Regarding the setting of the interviews, the discussion took place in a quiet room provided with a projector and speaker. The participants were asked to discover the individuality concept definitions, symbols, or characteristics using a scientific method of observation and analyzation from the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. The focused group process contributed to a diverse group of people whose reactions are studied, especially in market research. Besides, the participant can debate during the argument. In an effort to accumulate the standard data, the focus group should allow the researcher to ask further related questions, based on the participants' responses, thereby, gaining a deeper understanding of the specific issues and experiences of the people involved in this research.

Table 1 Interviewees' demographics

Group 1			Group 2		
Name	Gender	Age	Name	Gender	Age
1. Ja	Male	18	1. Prakorn	Male	20
2. James	Male	21	2. Nook	Male	21
3. Haroon	Male	22	3. Kank	Male	25
4. Jamai	Female	20	4. Stephanie	Female	19
			5. Chony	Female	22
Group 3			Group 4		
Name	Gender	Age	Name	Gender	Age
1. Bart	Male	20	1. Bank	Male	18
2. Markur	Male	20	2. Tanik	Male	21
3. Mickey	Male	21	3. Beam	Male	23
4. Soo	Male	25	4. Wanta	Female	21
5. Leeya	Female	19	5. Nicha	Female	21
6. Mimee	Female	20	6. Dyna	Female	21

Source: Authors



The questions of this study are designed into opened-ended question. The participants could answer in the form of various and design to elicit fuller responses from the interviewees. The set of opened-ended questions is reported in Table 2 below.

Table 2 The participants’ interview questions

Topic areas	Questions
1. Demographics	1. How old are you?
2. ASMR consumption experience	1. Have you guys ever watched this type of video before? 2. What sort of media did you use to watch the video?
3. Participations’ attitude toward the video	1. Identify is the first thing that comes to your mind while watching the video? 2. How would you describe your feeling while watching?
4. ASMR’s efficiency	1. Could you describe the most interesting about the video? 2. Is there anything you dislike about the video? 3. Which part of the video can catch your attention the most? 4. Do you think what the most appropriate length of the video that is still able to catch your attention? 5. Do you think this type of video can impact people in your generation based on your experience?

Source: Authors

Supporting tool

The ASMR commercial video is a supporting tool used for the interview process selected from YouTube. Each video is approximately 3 minutes in length. Also, all selected videos have no noise of speaking then the members could be more focusing on ASMR sound. According to the data in the year 2019 on Google Trends (Allison and Jason, 2016), there is a great quantity of ASMR commercial in South Korean. Several companies start using ASMR to present their products. According to Figure 1 below, the data shows that South Korean was the most attentiveness on ASMR in worldwide.

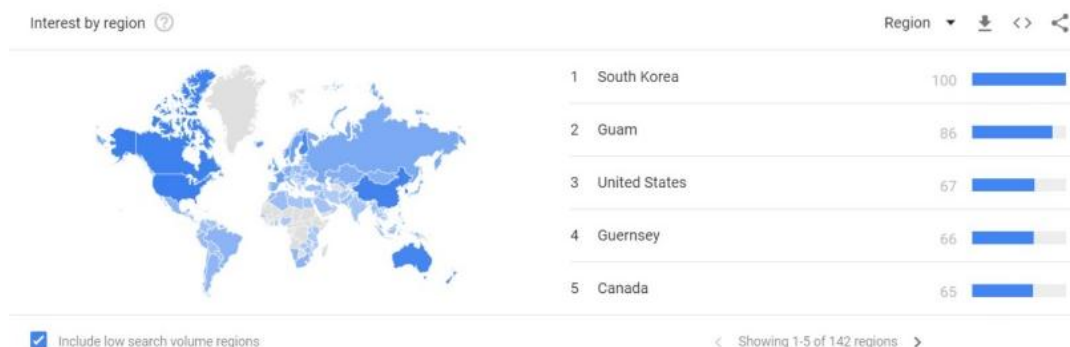


Figure 2 The interest by region Source: Google Trends, January 2019

The ASMR video clips using in this study are detailed as the following table 3



Table 3 ASMR video clips' details

Product name	Product categories	Origin country	Video clip time (Minute)
Innisfree	facial cream	Korean	0.28
Ritz	snack cracker	Korean	0.58
Dr. Dog	dog food	Korean	1.25
Spicy Noodle Kalguksu	instant noodle	Korean	1.56
Dove	chocolate bar	Chinese	3.26

Source: YouTube (2019)

4. Results and Discussion

The results show that the participants determined the term ASMR in several ways. It is found that there are three main reasons for the effectiveness of ASMR: reason, attitude, and satisfaction. Also, there are some factors that will make the ASMR works more fruitfulness. Based on their experience, there are two groups of people who have a negative and positive feeling toward the video. Those who like the video think of it as interesting broadcasting because it was kind of new trend and learning tool for them. The film presented in more whole level than some of them had experienced compared to a normal commercial.

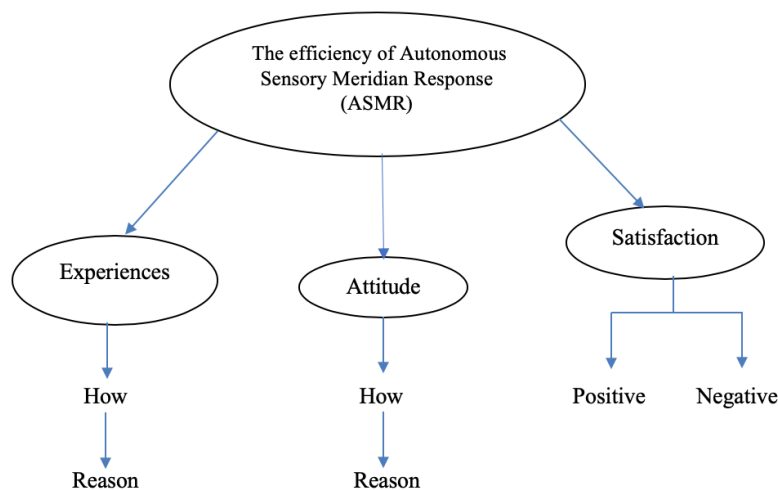


Figure 3 A classification term of the thematic coding process

“Actually, it quite interesting because when you see somebody enjoy and then like when you actually hear the sound and you want to try it too.” (Stephanie, aged 19)

“I find it interesting approach to make it in advertising, I don’t really watch it very often. Mostly it was like AMSR video in the form like informal production like some YouTube video uploaded themselves cutting wood, cutting soap or speak to the microphone. It’s interesting to see, I would say that.” (Tanik, aged 21)

On the other hand, ASMR was not able to maintain mindfulness of some participants. They thought the film was created too much unnecessary sound, and some parts of it could create the weird or strange sensory because the sound had too much noise and was unnatural. So, it could make you feel like you were in the scene with them.

“For me is like I feel it quite annoying and don’t understand why the sound should have to do it loud and louder. It’s kinda like it does not have a point to make it loud.” (Ja, aged 18)



"If I watch it when I was really hungry, I might be hungry while watching it because of the sound and everything. But then If I am not hungry it will be like (hmmm) it might be that much of sound." (Jamai, aged 20)

"I feel wired because the video is quite aside from the sound that they want to focus on, it is not natural. It makes me feel a bit uneasy for me...Like I know someone is eating cracker on the screen but if I close my eyes and just listen to the sound it is like someone is eating the cracker chip right next to me and I found that sense it so wired." (Markur, aged 20)

Furthermore, the sound only might not be functional enough to sustain the participants' consideration. Some members focus on the overall entertainment of the clip should be combined all together start from the plot of the story until the end. The storyboard is important as well. The viewers might not understand the story or get the message from the sound only. It could be a facial expression, storytelling, color of the scene and many other facts.

"For the cosmetic advertising, to be honest, the girl in the video looked really good (Laugh) so that is what comes to my mind at first. For the cracker advertisement, the biting and cracking sound makes me feel like I am doing the same thing. I like that." (Soo, aged 25)

"I like the cracker not because of the sound it because of the color of the video is pop out and represent the brand image. The color on the package is so colorful and behind the girl, the color is represent everything it so pops out to me but not because of the sound" (Leeya, aged 19)

"I like the noodle part because it was the most interesting for me because they were able to combine two things both vision and sense. I feel like that commercial capture both of the sensory very good and it makes me think that he really enjoys it and the noise it made me feel like it should taste good. And there was a person there confirming that it tasted good unlike the biscuit to advertise, she just breaking the biscuit." (Kank, aged 25)

Apart from all vision and sound, culture and tradition can be one of the main problems that cannot be work in some countries because of their beliefs. However, those participants understand other culture but they just don't feel comfortable to watch it.

"For me is like the way I was raised with my family and my culture if you.... I was always told that you eat with someone, your relative or friend and you make too much noise that is very rude and disgusting and looking at that is so irritating for me like I was raised in my whole life and if I sit somewhere and someone eating like that and there is some people who make noise when they eat I can't stand and will change my seat or I don't feel anything because it is their lifestyle I just change my seat or like close my ears press the music or something so this very irritating." (Haroon, aged 22)

Nevertheless, the capability of Autonomous sensory meridian response is capable of capturing attentiveness. The strange tone of sound can pop up many sensations to their brain at the same time like the awareness of curious, wired, disgusting, interesting, relax and so on.

"I mean it can definitely I can catch you on the brand and logo you know for example expect surely it psychology for me so I get irritating but at the same time if I watching something that can make me feel annoying on the TV or where ever it is so it catches attention and that is the purpose of the advertiser. But it doesn't necessary to be like me liking it to raise the awareness of the brand because that is watching the advertising does." (Haroon, aged 22)



“As I told you it catches the attention for sure but no matter if you like that kind of video or not you just make the attention you can get that awareness of your product but it just the question how much success for the advertising on the revenue sale.” (James, aged 21)

The main findings explain how does ASMR work to influence people using its sound and give more details on what the other main factors support the feature to be more functional. First, for the sound, ASMR seems to be a new advertisement for some members so they said that the first touch toward the video clip was "curious" before changing to "appealing". The responses from the participants showed how ASMR tingle their mind and awareness insensitivity by hearing in the first time. It proves that the potential of ASMR can affect their emotion while watching and present a sensation in the head. Besides, those who have experienced ASMR before still find it interesting, but it will be harder to catch their attention because they choose to pay attention to the content that they are interested in. If the content was not suite to the taste of the watcher, they might not look at it. So, to maintain awareness and consideration, the content of video has to be easy to understand and focus on the specific group of people to keep the entertainment work effectively. For instance, those who like to watch the content video about eating, they will find it more interesting when it presents in the form of ASMR and it can give them the enjoyment, but those who have no interest will find it disgusting. Some respondents who had no interest in any kind of products on the show had a negative feeling and dissatisfied. Storytelling is one of the main reasons that can improve on the influence capability of ASMR. Based on the examination, some members could not understand why the showman in the video had to make or present the noise in this strange way. The presentation of the goods was not clear enough so when they were watching the show, they felt annoying. In addition, in some cases, their attention got caught from what they saw more than what they heard, like a facial expression or a color that can clearly clarify and send the message to the audiences. Some examiners agree that by watching a good-looking showman in the facial cream advertise applying the product on his/her skin and together with the sound made them want to try or do the same thing. From all the reasons above, it shows how the function works and the importance of the storytelling, color, and showman that support ASMR power. However, the performance of ASMR might not work as effectively as it could due to the culture shock. Based on the participants' opinion, the way he/she was raised shapes his/her attitude and personality. From the experiment, the participants have a negative feeling toward the food commercial, especially the Spicy Noodle Kalguksu (instant noodle) advertise. The actor presented the product by making a noise while eating to send the message to the watcher. Unfortunately, the letter expresses into two meaning: delicious or greedily. In some culture, like Korean or Japan, eating with sound refer to palatable or delightful expression to the food. At the same time, in other traditions, eating with loud noise means uncultured and discourteous. So, the meaning of the message can change because of culture.

5. Conclusion

The working feature of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response has surprised a lot of people. Many people find it weird but interesting at the same time. All sounds created the next level of experience and emotion. After it became visual, there were many different contents of ASMR created and posted on the internet platform. Moreover, this trend has started to enter the film industry in some countries as entertainment or commercial. However, there is no evidence to explain the detail on the satisfaction and attitude of the viewer on the feature when ASMR has adopted in the form of advertisement. So, the purpose of the research is to discover the capability of ASMR in commerce. In order to get the result, this research uses qualitative research to understand the characteristics of the viewers and look for a piece of deep information on the influence of ASMR. In the process of data collecting, the examination will be conducted in a focused group. The participants were asked to watch a three-minute ASMR video and discussing in a group, with a total of four groups. After finished watching, the interviewer would start



interviewing with the questions that set before and could ask other question that might or might not relate to the setting question to gain more information. From the observation and testing, the study shows the strong attitude of the examiner on ASMR skillfulness. In term of attacking and influencing, ASMR can work very well on that. Many respondents found it interesting because the sound that they presented sounded so real. Also, because of that, the sound seemed to have too much unnecessary noise and too real for some groups of people, so they did not appreciate that. On top of that, the sound from the show could make people feel like they were on that actual scene as well or there were some people doing it right next to them. This can prove that ASMR can blow people mind and thought. At last but not least, the result can be a reference for the next research on ASMR that will search for new aspects of ASMR in terms of new technology and performance.

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