Expected-Experience Entanglements: Reframing Morning Experience through Design Fiction and Sound Interaction

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ABSTRACT

This research, starting from breakfast to explore varied morning experiences and expectations, aims to reframe morning experience through diverse possibilities.

KEYWORDS

Research through design; human computer interaction; culture Probe; tech-mediate; Internet of Thing

A good morning keeps people in good psychological and physical conditions, thus improving efficiency at work. In Taiwan, multiple ethnic groups and long working hours are common, which is also embodied by the choice of local breakfast. However, according to a Herbalife research in 2018 [4], around 25% of all Taiwanese lack the habit of eating breakfast every day. Our research starts to explore the role breakfast plays in people's morning routine, as well as the morning expectations and experiences of different lifestyles. The end goal is to create designs that give people a different perspective to engage with a good experience of the beginning of their day, to wonder about how their morning could be, not just about breakfast but about morning experience as well.

1 INTRODUCTION

As the old Chinese saying goes, "Morning is the key to planning for the day," the plan and mood of preparation at morning affect people's attitudes for their day that follows. Breakfast is one of the most important elements, not only granting us the energy for the coming day, keeping us healthy, but according to a 2010 research [1], putting us in a good mood.

In Taiwan, the types of breakfast places vary from American-style burgers, local Taiwanese soy milk with fried bread sticks, to a big bowl of noodles and more, which fill in energy for people of all lifestyles in the morning. However, a 2018 research from Herbalife showed that even with so many different choices, around 25% of all Taiwanese are not used to eating breakfast on a daily basis, and 70% of all do not have enough protein intake in the morning. The busy modern lifestyle usually means having a tight schedule already in the morning; breakfast is therefore gobbled up during commuting time or in the office. This might have a negative impact on our psychological and physical health in the long run. Another research conducted in 2018 [5] pointed out that eating breakfast with someone else helps create a blissful feeling, and that the communication and interaction during the time is beneficial to our body and our mind. With this research, we would therefore like to understand breakfast experiences of different lifestyles so as to create good morning experience that affect people's attitudes for their day.

2 METHODOLOGY

We used the Research Through Design (RTD) approach by Zimmerman, Forlizzi, and Evenson (2007) as our research methodology [6]. Since the whole design process is the research, designers are able to explain their standpoints and beliefs with designs. We also explored different thoughts, attitudes and dreams with culture probes [3] to find out clues that are not easily picked up. Finally, we handed participants designer tool kits so they could keep track of specific events or feelings as well as be inspired to observe and imagine more.

Figure 1: The tool kit for culture probe, packaged in the mission box for each special agent. These include the mission guideline, the wishing Fu that blesses the expectation to be fulfilled, and the personality cards that help participants imagine their breakfast experiences.

Figure 2: The notes on the wishing Fu from a participant. Fu 福 is a Chinese word that can mean both the amulet and good luck.

The experiment continued for 7 days. Every participant was given a special agent identity and breakfast mission and was asked to make notes of their breakfast wishes in the evening for the morning ahead. Participants had to take photos of their real breakfast experiences the next morning and upload them to a social media platform anonymously. The key in the experiment was to observe the gap between expectation and the real experiences and feelings. We even encouraged them to take a further step to think about the meaning of eating breakfast to a great morning and the elements that make up a better morning experience.

A total of nine individuals, 3 males and 6 females, participated, and were separated into six groups according to their lifestyles. In Table 1, they were asked to name their special agent identity and write a sentence to describe their, or their group member's, occupation and personality. All participants received a mission box with the mission guideline, a wishing "Fu 福," a personality card, and a special mission card in Fig. 1. We aimed to open up possibilities for imagination so participants could provide unexpected feedback. The experiment included three special breakfast missions, with every participant being a secret agent. Mission 1, Clarifying Your Expectation. Mission 2, Reaching Expectation. Mission 3, Sharing Mission Results.

Table 1: All agent names, personalities and occupations.

Nickname	Career	Description	Lifestyle
Looking good	Magician of visual	Just is a cartoon character	Couple live together (Model A)
Emma Peanuts	Artisan	A woman full of action	
BBQ	Magician of body and soul	Breathing body	Single lady
Darth Vade	Toy Fanatic	Toy store owner	Couple live separately（Model B）
Noble lady, Yun	Magician of visual	Queen is coming	
LOHA	Pet trainer	Housewife	Mother and child live together
Bard	Poet	God's talent son	
Butthurt	Rookie	I feel useless	Living with roommates
Andy Warhol	Artist	A little white bear	Living with family

In the first mission, Fig. 2 displays participants wrote down their expectations for the next morning and their current mood on the wishing "Fu 福". "Fu" in Chinese means that the expectation will be

Figure 3: Personality cards that help participants imagine the breakfast expectation.

Figure 4: The Mission Egret Instagram account.

fulfilled. Additionally, in Fig. 3 we gave them eight different personality cards. Participants, if they feel like, could pick the one most related to their breakfast expectation to help them imagine how the breakfast could be like the next morning; these personality cards were reusable. Participants then put their wishing Fu's wherever they liked after writing down their expectations.

The second mission arrived the next morning, when participants had to take photos of their breakfast experiences and upload 3 to 5 of them to the breakfast mission account on Instagram shown in Fig. 4. The photos could be about the food, the environment or anything they believed were related to the breakfast experience. What we wanted to know was less about the breakfast itself but more about the overall experience.

For the third stage, we asked participants to share their experiences and interact with each other on Instagram using their special agent names. We were able to discover their experiences, opinions about breakfast and the differences between expectation and reality. Furthermore, we could observe what everyone felt to their own different breakfast experiences.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We found a number of different breakfast experiences within the 7-day experiment. First, breakfast means a lot to many participants even though most of them have busy schedules in the morning.

"I drink coffee every single day. The process of pouring hot water into my coffee filter bag is when I can take some time for myself from the busy schedule." - BBQ

"I love eating noodles in the morning, just like what I used to do in my hometown Miaoli. And having them with milk tea is a must! I can be wandering around for an hour only to find a bowl of tasty noodles and a cup of milk tea. I'd feel a bit blue when I end up not having them. - Butthurt

Secondly, some participants would plan carefully for the morning and the things they wish to eat, but it usually went different ways in reality.

"I'd really like to have a big breakfast every day. But since I have to hurry to work, it's ok to just grab something small. Still, I think about having a relaxing brunch every day if possible." - Bard

"I am the kind of person who puts down detailed plans the night before, but never got to have time to do all of them as I wake up in the morning. So, I prioritize by the value they bring; sadly, breakfast is always the last." – Andy Warhol

Third, some would enjoy the breakfast time because they have a significant other or a pet to spend the time with.

"I don't really care that much when I'm eating breakfast alone. But it'll be so much different when my girlfriend is here together. I look forward to having breakfast with her." - Looking Good

Eating breakfast is not just about being hungry or being in the mood. All participants wanted to realize their expectation written on the wishing Fu. But from what we saw, breakfast is something that they forget or ignore from time to time. The tight schedule in the morning results in an unsatisfactory beginning of the day. For our Instagram platform, since the posts and engagement were anonymous, some participants would share things they usually won't or be curious about other breakfast experiences. Some also told us that with the missions and notes, they realized breakfast was seldom taken seriously before and that many morning hours were spent on things less important.

4 EXPERIENCE PROTOTYPES

From this experiment, we found that people's past experiences can bring special meanings to certain context, affecting their current feelings and behaviors. Besides, we noticed that some participants turn on music for relaxation right after they wake up, while some turn on the tv to listen to the news. We were thus eager to know if the combination of sound and past experiences or personal expectation can impact people's feelings and decision so as to change their morning experiences. That was why we collected participants' expectation, took out the keywords (see the table below), and looked for the corresponding sound to make a sound clip of 90 to 120 seconds. We included radio clips, pop music, ambient sound, classical music, dialogues, and famous quotes so that participants can randomly receive information with what they hear in relation to what they do (e.g. wake-up music, ambient sound, pieces of information). We hope to provide a better morning experience that people truly cherish.

Table 2: The table below lists some of the selected keywords.

Number	Text content	Keyword
1	I hope it could be going to a sunny day, and I will buy a favorite breakfast near my house and have a nice vacation!	Sunny, Leisurely
2	Have a cup of hot American classic coffee cooked. Light food, no burden, low calories. Hot air balloons are so big! One is like cotton candy, floating in the air and in my favorite tree above the rainbow.	Americano, Balloon, floating in air

After selecting the keywords, we generated different sound clips, shown in Table 2. We will continue collecting, making, and testing more clips. And in this upcoming experiment, participants will be separated into two groups. The first group will be requested to set their morning alarms with the sound clips given, while the second group will play the clips after they wake up. Our main goal is to identify whether playing the sound clips at different time will bring significantly different impact to the mood. Meanwhile, we are going to give out different sound clips to see if pure ambient sound or a mixed-up clip is more effective.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEP

With culture probes, we tried to name the various lifestyles and beliefs from people's breakfast experiences. These participants who come with different backgrounds contributed to quite some surprising data and experiences and we also see most participants think a better breakfast experiences can help boost the start of the day and prepare themselves for the challenges ahead. Further, we will explore further possibilities of these experiences combined with sounds and integrate the sounds with the wishing Fu's to make an interactive design. Our future research will then be of two folds. [2]

1. Sound database: Upon building up the sound database, we will digitalize the process of users noting down their wishes and us selecting the keywords. The computer will then automatically come up with a sound clip based on the keywords.

2. Interactive design: The interactive design gives users a chance to share their expectation and set a specific time and mode they want the music to be played.

In the next step, we would like to choose more diverse groups of people in the future, also more participants in the same group. This also helps us understand whether different groups of people need different solutions to the same research questions.

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