

The Value of Unconscious Human Behavior in Product Design Innovation

Muhammad Jameel Mohamed Kamil
Department of Industrial Design,
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM),
Shah Alam, Malaysia
neronite@yahoo.co.uk

Shahriman Zainal Abidin
Department of Industrial Design,
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM),
Shah Alam, Malaysia
shahriman.z.a@salam.uitm.edu.my

Abstract— This paper evaluates a new perimeter of design thinking with respect to the value of unconscious human behavior, as well as the direction for the development of innovative product design. The paper reviews the literature on the value of unconscious human behavior in the design perspective. Freud's theory of mind and Bargh's model of the unconscious behavioral guidance system are being reviewed. Furthermore, four attributions of unconscious everyday human behaviors, which contribute in design concepts and ideation, are also being explored along with the model of obvious needs and latent needs in everyday life, which educate a designer about how unconscious human behavior could indicate user's implicit needs.

Keywords— *unconscious human behaviour; design thinking; product design;*

I. INTRODUCTION

As the world is expanded with innovation in product design, product designers are required to challenge themselves to create a product that has more aesthetic values, functionality and marketable. This scenario leads them to explore every possible factor that could create a new innovation in product design. To achieve this vision, exploring human values in design innovation has brought them to another level of design thinking. Therefore, the product designers have started to think deeply about the nature of human behavior. Every conscious activity in different classes of human society such as disable peoples, elders, children, etc. has become a popular study option. In other words, the conscious human behavior becomes the most interesting realms to be explored. However, there are other realms that might be overlooked; the unconscious human behavior. In comparison with the conscious human behavior, unconscious human behavior has always been hard to identify. The limited discussion on the latter has led the designers to neglect its potential value. Imagine a situation where one is bored of waiting for his/her friends and SMS (short message service) has been sent like a thousand times. Unconsciously, he/she starts to shake his/her cell phone like people usually do when face the boredom. In this situation, if suddenly the cell phone's screen starts showing a funny animation of Homer from The Simpsons being dizzy from being shaken, the animation may entertain him/her while reducing his/her stress throughout the

period of waiting. The above-mentioned example explains the value of existence of human unconscious behavior, which contributes a great potential towards product innovation. This paper contains a further explanation regarding the value of unconscious human behavior in the design perspective. Finally, the discussion is presented about a preliminary experimental method and analysis in determining the designers' reflection, perception, belief, and thinking towards the value of unconscious human behavior in product design by analyzing their sketches activity.

II. THE THEORY OF UNCONSCIOUS MIND AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSE

The unconscious mind is a pool of thoughts, memories, urges and feelings that are beyond human consciousness [1]. The unconscious level of mind denotes a set of mental processes and content that is operated outside of the conscious awareness. Although, its fundamental impacts are unaware, the unconsciousness continues to affect the experience and behavior. Furthermore, rather than the conscious control, the entire behavior of a person is extensively determined by the unconscious mechanism. According to Vollmer [2], psychological phenomena (perceptions, memory, feeling, mood, mannerism and automatism) have unconscious factors in our daily life. Numerous researchers stated that the entire behavior of a person is extensively determined by the unconscious mechanism rather than the conscious control. The behavioral response was created unconsciously by the environmental stimuli which continue to affect the emotional system, perceptual system, evaluative system and motivational system as explained by Bargh and Morsella [3] in their unconscious behavioral guidance system (see figure 1).

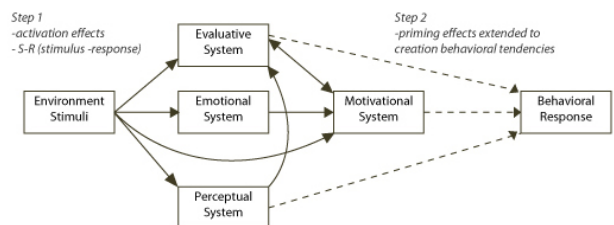


Fig. 1. Bargh and Morsella's unconscious behavioral guidance system