

Analysing the emotions and preferences of viewers with regard to troll memes in social media – A Special reference to “KirubaKiruba” YouTube Video song

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Abstract

Social media is a common platform used by all age groups of people. The people mostly use social media platform such as You Tube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, Snapshot, and LinkedIn. Social media is popular for its effective visibility online for various videos, trolls, and memes etc, and considered as an influential tool to spread information and focus on any particular issue. Among many videos some becomes viral in social media. ‘kirubaKiruba’ a trending religious video song in YouTube became popular in 2020 and attracted huge audiences and increased the viewers and subscribers for that song. This study attempts to analyse audience emotions, preferences and estimate their responses to find out the reasons why this social media content goes viral? The proposed study analyses the emotions and responses of the public through regression analysis with the help of qualitative and quantitative data to delve deeper into the subject.

Keywords – kirubakiruba song, public emotions, social media, Memes

Introduction

Social media facilitates tools to connect and allows various levels of interaction with people around the world. It helps any individual to find their new interest, liberty to voice their thoughts, share their latest endeavours and chance of being heard easily by sharing the information at a faster pace, than ever before. Video stuffs related to emotions or sharing the feelings, spreads faster beyond and between social circles. In social circles, the memes culture is pervading our generation and flooded the Internet. Membersemerged spreading memes and likely to forward if they feel funny rather than strictly useful. Facebook and Twitter play a huge role in amplifying a challenge or helping memes go viral and easily hit a critical mass internally. Sometimes people express their individual values about a meme that cause the story to flip into a new dimension which can take off more powerfully and make some social media videos go viral. Memes can influence audience (Karlsen, 2011), and it compels the viewers to watch the video's content, it is likely that the visceral emotional reaction created by the images, music, messages, and people in the video increased viewer's interest and led them to forward it to friends and acquaintances. “Kirubakiruba” a religious Tamil video song of Pastor Darwin Ebenezer was released in YouTube in the year 2014. Video content is about Pastor and his friends dancing to share his feelings for thanking and praising lord Jesus and celebrate the blessings he received from him throughout his life. The question arises is why is this song suddenly popular? The song was used on many as memes, for instance, after the end of a recent cricket match the fans had tweeted that particular team won the game because of Kadavul Kirubai which means God's blessings. This caught with the cricket fans who have been using the word often in memes, trolls and social media posts. The viewers have taken the word Kiruba playfully and imitated as memes wherever they can and in 2020 during pandemic the netizens shared the memes, and the song went on insanely viral in social media.

This paper tries to elicit the reasons why the song became viral after six years of its release by analysing audience emotions, preference and estimating their responses towards memes.

The main objective of the study is to find out audience preferences and emotions to “Kiruba Kiruba” song memes and, the reasons for its popularity after six years and the causes of the memes.

Memes Contagion

A meme can be a behaviour, idea, or style that spreads by means of imitation from person to person within a culture and often conveys symbolic meaning representing a specific phenomenon or theme. Spreading memes has become highly visible practice in netizens vernacular. The term “meme” coined by Richard Dawkins, a biologist. Dawkins believed that cultural ideas are like genes and spread from brain to brain, multiplying and mutating as they went. A successful meme has some functionality in common and continues propagating, either for making joke, aid as a coping mechanism, deliver social commentary, spread cognizance, advocate a cause, or connect a sentiment and it influence the way people think and act. “A picture speaks a thousand words” anyone can create and share a picture, video or GIF to communicate their feelings on this more visceral level, not everyone was worried about the cause. When people watch the memes, they may experience the same emotions and by forwarding the memes they anticipate that the recipient will also experience similar emotions, this contagion can spur appropriate behavioural responses by a mass of people (Karpf, 2010). According to (Knobel & Lankshear 2007), a ‘meme’ is employed through Internet users mainly to define a quick uptake and spread a particular idea using a written text, image or some other part of cultural stuff and documented the content of many Internet memes and found that most are intended to provide humour or social commentary. Memes can rack up hundreds and even beyond thousands of likes and shares. Most memes are intended to elicit funny pictures and humour and quickly shared across the internet, memes that suit the sociocultural environment spreads successfully as others become extinct (Chielens & Heylighen, 2005). Heath, Bell, and Sternberg (2001) found alike results while examining another viral phenomenon, urban legends. The authors suggested that both positive and negative content will succeed in the ‘marketplace of ideas’ as long as the emotion is one that is suitable for consumption by a particular audience. For instance, if anyone finds an amusing YouTube video, they share the video with social circles as a way of sharing a positive or happy mood and establish similarity through a shared emotive experience will increase closeness and liking (Anderson, Keltner, & John, 2003). The social media critics (Cashmore, 2009) have found that there is an emotional commonality among the most popular videos on YouTube. Specifically, videos that are attractive, emotive or humorous entice more viewers.

Methodology

“Kirubakiruba” Tamil song in YouTube became viral during pandemic 2020 after six years of its release in 2014. Some videos quickly catch the attention of the viewers and achieve very high popularity in short periods of time. To understand the determinants of song virality with the help of theoretical background, the researcher investigated the Virality of “kirubakiruba” song based on viewers emotions, preferences and by estimating their responses with the help of a well-designed questionnaire encompassing the statements to decide the effect. The sample size consists of 150 respondents of both genders of 18 to 45 years and above. The responses evaluated by means of usage of social media and the curiosity to watch troll memes along with their emotions using regression analysis.

Limitations

The study has taken respondents of only 18 and above and even in this digital world still some are not using social media platforms and not aware of memes of this study subject and researcher felt difficult in explaining the intention of conducting the survey and though collecting questionnaire online was quite a tough task.

Data Analysis and Results

This study aims to find out the reasons of what makes “KirubaKiruba” religious Tamil song goes viral after six years of its release in 2014. A religious song becoming viral is a rare thing. Usually, the popularity is reserved for film songs. But this religious hit has spread like wildfire. The song is much loved and trolled as Kirubai Kirubai. Pastor Darwin Ebenezer who wrote and acted in the song says that a sudden recovery from a life-threatening accident inspired him to write this song. The reasons for popularity of the song are evaluated by viewers' emotions, preference and estimating the responses towards the troll memes for the song video. The viewers' emotions consist of humour, religious, angry and irritating are evaluated through their responses given in survey determines the reasons for the song virality, level of interest and preference towards the troll memes about the song. Memes sharing happens at a faster pace compels any individual either users or non-users of social media to watch the song makes the song video viral and not everyone worried about the cause or its usefulness.

Fig 1 and 2 gives the details of the respondents' age and gender. Respondents taken for study are 18 to 45 years and above. 95% of respondents are males using different social media platforms compared to females as it shows only 37.5% are active in social media platforms.

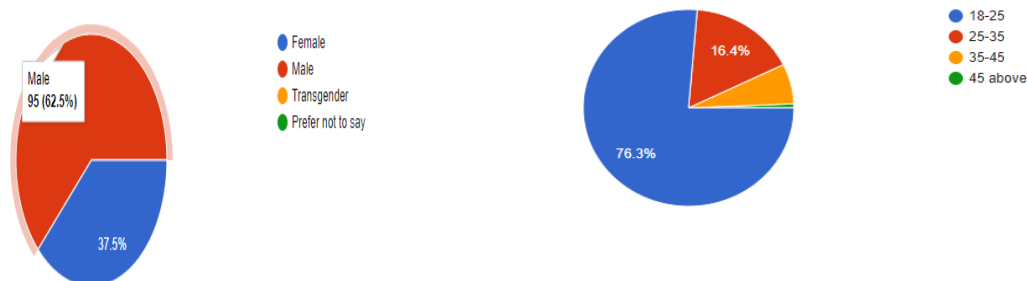


Figure 1: Gender

Figure 2: Age

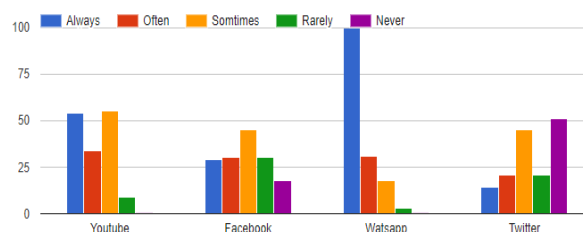


Figure 3: Usage of different media and duration

From Fig 3 it is inferred that in all time users of social media platforms category 100% of Respondents are using WhatsApp, 50% are always in YouTube, 25% are using Facebook and below 25% are using Twitter. whereas in the often-used category 25% and above respondents

are using YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp and Twitter viewers are below 25%. In sometimes category YouTube users are at the top percentage of 50%, Facebook and Twitter are in the next place of 40% users, whereas below 25% of users using WhatsApp sometimes. From the chart it is clear that YouTube and WhatsApp are the most used platforms by everyone throughout and when the question asked to respondents about “How many hours do you spend on social media per day?” the majority respondents says that they use for more than 4 to 5 hours daily, and some says for 3 to 4 hours per day and very few answered as less than 1 hour per day.

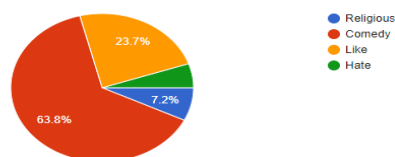


Figure 4: Level of Emotions.

From Fig 4 shows the preference of the respondents viewed the song after seeing many troll memes for this song. 63.8 % of respondents says that they enjoyed and said its funny. 23.7% of respondents says that they liked the song. 7.2% respondents say it's a religious song. 5.3% of respondents says that they don't like the song. Videos go viral because they connect with their audience. They make people laugh, inform, teach, and persuade. Video's Likes and Dislikes indicate the number of people liked or disliked a video after watching. This can be interpreted as people preference for memes for video, i.e., the split among different categories of viewers. The choice for comedy and religious category also related to the terms of Likes and Dislikes. This suggests that more the memes about the song are circulated more times the song is viewed and there is a tendency of receiving more Likes than Dislikes. Fig 5 elicits that the funny memes about the song forwards increases the level of curiosity and compels any viewers to watch the song. It shows that there is a relationship between the memes forwarded and viewers curiosity of watching the song, hence the model is in good fit.

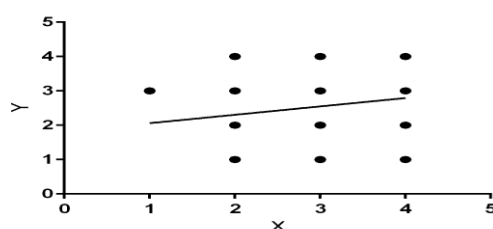


Figure 5: Level of curiosity

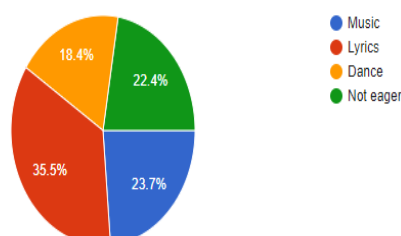


Figure 6: Preference for watching

The video song should have some captivating story when combined with music and dance moves that create a special effect in the minds of audience. But a good religious song

has been depicted into funny memes with no intention to hurt the song creator or anyone. From Fig 6 it is inferred that 35.5% of respondents says that they like the lyrics of the song. 23.7% of respondents likes the music, 18.4% of respondents prefers to see the dance performance in the song. Whereas 22.4% respondents say that they are not interested in watching or forwarding the memes for that. But in pandemic lockdown in 2020 where people at home and spending time on social media makes them to create memes and to forward it. In common the troll memes explain or changes absolutely nothing.

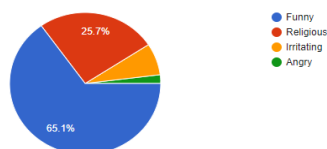


Figure: 7 Respondents feedback for song

When question is 'how they come to know about the song' along with the YouTube link provided by the researcher, the respondents openly stated that they already watched the song because of the meme's circulation in social media platforms. From Fig 7 the majority of 65.1% of respondents say that imagination of the memes while watching song makes them feel funny and happy. 25.7% respondents felt it as a religious song and no other feeling they got while watching the song. And very few agreed that the video made them angry and irritating while imagining it with the memes as it has no meaning, as the memes has no meaning with the song. Although at the categorical level, the participants were significantly more likely to forward troll memes and videos identified and feel as funny and participants showed a significant preference for forwarding such videos over all other videos, hence the model fits good. People tend to forward memes when it evoked positive affect, anger, or anxiety, but tended not to forward if they are not appealed to some trolls. It is found that people were more likely to watch and forward 'comedy or humorous videos' than any other category (Purcell, 2010).

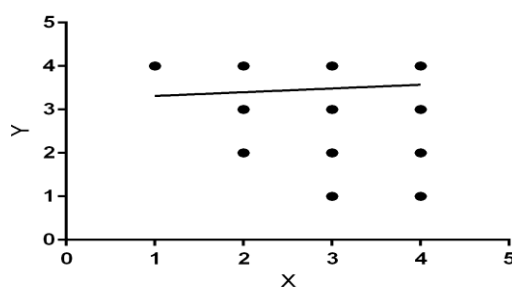


Figure 7: Respondents Feedback for song

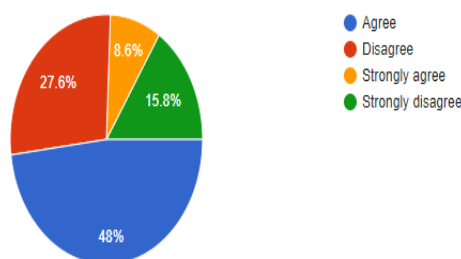


Figure 8: Preference for forwarding the memes and song

To assess forwarding intentions, respondents were asked, “How likely would they share the meme and video with others?” and responded using Likert scaling technique such as Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. From Fig 8 shows that majority of 48% of respondents agreed to forward. Participants were most likely to forward if they feel funny content either memes or video.

Conclusion

The versatility of memes is totally unparalleled as a language, they have some effects in the social, psychological, cultural and political realms. Rapidly information could be shared and spread about one's latest endeavours in social media. Memes serve an extensive variety of purposes, even though they are inherently simple. Therefore, if a meme pleases a large group and possesses traits like simplicity, humour, relevance and understandability, it is more likely shared and consequently, goes viral. And it is actually impossible to imagine the response to a particular video that goes truly viral. Also, the theme of the song plays a big role in its success as people often relate the troll memes images and videos with that song, dance or music. People tend to get a lot of emotional satisfaction from some songs and makes them highlight the actions, words used by the singer using troll memes. Social media is a great means for facilitating the success of anything shared. There are no specific reasons for creating memes for this religious song particularly during pandemic lockdown, people have enough time to spend in social media platforms made the song go viral after six years. Without any intentions to hurt anyone, netizens created and shared the troll memes of the song playfully among their social circles. The memes made the song popular after six years and the sudden popularity has given the song more than 4 million views. Infact, many viewers are not actually known the reasons for memes of this religious song, they just forwarded as they enjoyed the memes seen by them. It is important to learn how to use social media responsibly and usefully, and also make sure to be cautious with the type of content to be shared online.

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