

Abstract

What do people want to touch in their daily lives? We clarified the desire for touch in their daily lives by collecting and analyzing a huge amount of text data that people tweeted "want to touch" on Twitter. We revealed the relationship between the body part that the people want to touch and the way they want to touch it in their daily lives. Also, we revealed the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on touching desires. Specifically, we observed the "skin hunger", or touch desire for animate' warm skin, and variation of touch avoidance toward inanimate targets such as doorknobs. It is expected that our findings can contribute to problems in broad areas such as elucidating the mechanism of touch desire in their daily lives, designing products that consumers really want to touch, and monitoring the impact of actual social problems such as the spread of infection on people's awareness.

Understanding desire to touch

Question What do people want to touch in their daily lives?

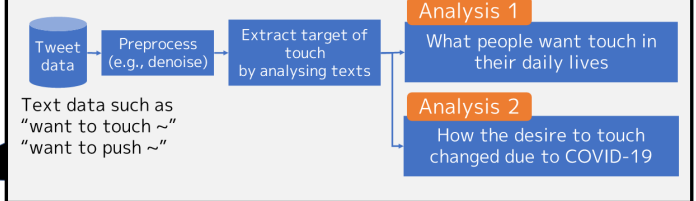
Previous study

- focused on experiment-specific object
- did not address the desire to touch in daily lives

This study

- analyzed large-scale Twitter text data representing "want to touch"
- understood the desire to touch in daily lives

Process of investigation

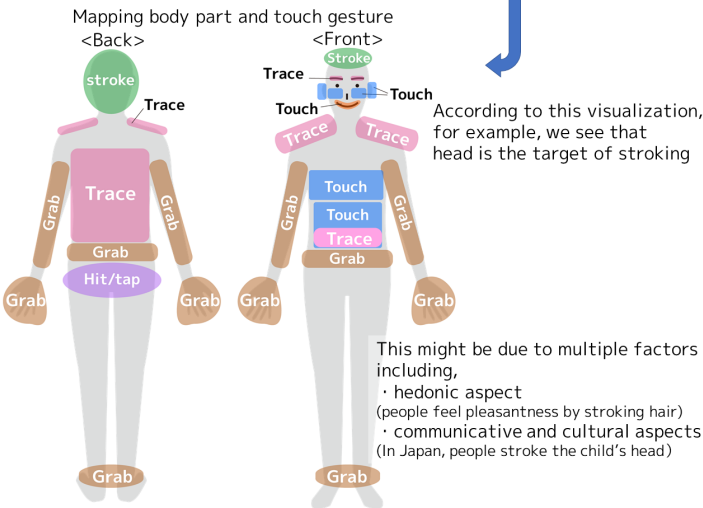


Analysis 1: Daily lives x Desire to touch

We clarified the relationship between targets of touch desire and touch gesture

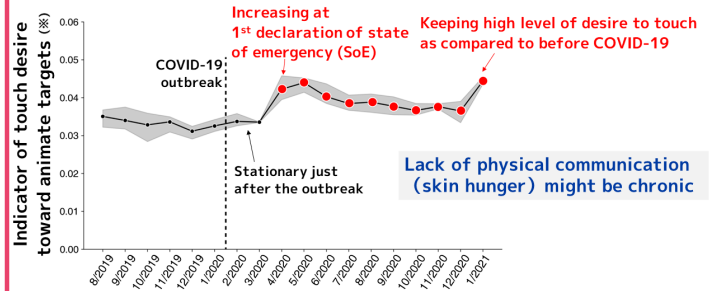
Touch gesture	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Touch	Breast	Hair	buttock	Cat
Statically contact	You	People	Skin	Cat
Stroke	Head	Cat	Dog	Abdomen
Grab	Waist	Hand	Buttock	Tail
Push	Button	Stamp	Cart	Abdomen
Hit/tap	Drum	Buttock	Keyboard	Head
Trace	Line	Abdominal muscle	Eyebrow	Muscle

Visualization of body parts and touch gesture

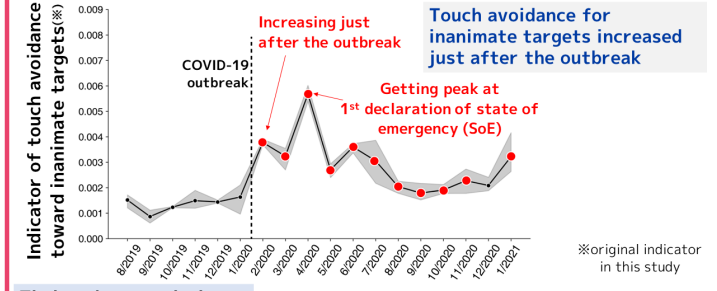


Analysis 2: COVID-19 x Desire to touch

After the outbreak of COVID-19, we investigated how the desire to touch toward animate targets (humans or animals) changed



We also investigated how the touch avoidance toward inanimate targets (e.g., doorknobs) changed



Timing characteristics

Skin hunger did not appear just after the outbreak and appeared at the declaration of SoE. In contrast, touch avoidance for inanimate targets appeared just after the outbreak and increased at the declaration of SoE.

References

[1] Y. Ujitoko, Y. Ban, T. Yokosaka, "Getting insights from Twitter: What people want to touch in daily life," *IEEE Transactions on Haptics*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 142–153, 2022.

[2] Y. Ujitoko, T. Yokosaka, Y. Ban, H. Ho, "Tracking changes in touch desire and touch avoidance before and after the COVID-19 outbreak," *PsyArXiv*, 2021.

Contact

Yusuke Ujitoko / Sensory Representation Research Group, Human and Information Science Laboratory
 Email: cs-openhouse-ml@hco.ntt.co.jp