Unlocking the Potential of YouTube Marketing Communication: The Effects of YouTube Influencer Attributes on Millennials' Purchase Intention in Pakistan

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
History: Received: June 10, 2022 Accepted: March 11, 2023 **Keywords:** Digital Marketing YouTube Marketing Communication Consumer Behavior Purchase Intention Pakistan **DOI:** 10.52700/assap.v4i1.184	Companies can use digital media to promote their goods or services on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. From various viewpoints, several academics investigate the influence of various social media applications on consumer purchasing behavior from various angles. This study looks at how YouTube ads are used to build brand awareness and image and how they affect people's plans to buy. Respondents in this survey are millennials who live in Multan, Punjab, Pakistan, and the neighboring territories and are 18–34 years old. They were selected using a non-probability sample approach from Multan City and adjacent areas. The smart PLS is used in conjunction with structural equation modeling (SEM) in this work. YouTube ads affect brand awareness and brand image, but they do not affect people's ability to make good decisions. YouTube ads have a significant association with the urge to conduct a transaction. This study did not use brand awareness and brand image as mediators because they had nothing to do with people's buying plans.

1. Introduction

Marketing communications have become even more sophisticated in recent years due to the proliferation of new digital media possibilities available. These new digital choices provide marketers with new possibilities and improved strategic branding, but they also add complexity to the decision-making process (Nabila & Achyar, 2019). Social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat are part of digital media technologies as well as blogs and content and community sites like YouTube, which have "changed the markets and business dynamics by causing a shift in the firms' competitive positions and increasing consumer power," (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Due to the sheer evolution of social media, digital influencers are gaining more possibilities to communicate with their audience (Masuda et al., 2022), resulting in the establishment of interaction points where a co-creation of values between consumers, influencers, and brands can take place (Świtała et al., 2018).

Because of the proliferation of new social media channels over the last ten years, there has been a significant shift in how people behave online. These new channels include social networking sites, discussion boards, podcasts, webinars, and Q&A websites (Ardiansyah & Sarwoko, 2020; Masuda et al., 2022). In terms of marketing and advertising, this has had a tremendous impact. New YouTube channels have continued to bring in more advertising revenue, particularly in consumer markets. As one of the primary routes for communicating with customers, corporate YouTube channels allow for new consumer involvement, interaction, and even co-creation (Saima & Khan, 2020). YouTube is one of the most widely used social media platforms nowadays. YouTube is now the second most viewed website in the world (behind Google), with an average visit time of 22 minutes (Figenschou & Fredheim, 2020; Hollebeek et al., 2014). YouTube, at the crossroads of social media and social networks, allows for advertising and promotional conversation.

YouTubers create and distribute material that has a positive impact on online communities, resulting in the development of strong connections with their peers as well as with the firms that use their videos as a basis for the development of new market strategies (Duffett, 2020). Because YouTubers have the power to create content that is seen by millions of people, this study focuses on how well they can generate engagement and how eagerly they want to incorporate brands in their videos to influence their viewers' purchasing decisions (Deng et al., 2021). A consumer's engagement with a brand or business is measured by the intensity with which their conduct toward the brand or company manifests itself in a context that is extrapolated from the purchasing circumstance (Jin et al., 2021). Unengaged consumers advocate for and recommend a company and its brands, make positive statements about the use of a product or service, share their own experiences with the brand, participate in the development of new products and/or services, and participate in various activities sponsored by the company, such as sports competitions, amongst other things (Ganesh & Bright, 2020). This conduct may have a transformational influence on the customer himself to a certain degree. It also has a favorable impact on the company's bottom line, as seen by an increase in financial performance (Britt et al., 2020; Coco & Eckert, 2020). In this context, academics have been devoting a significant amount of time and effort to the creation and testing of models that link engagement with loyalty and brand intention (Park et al., 2021). The expectation is that customers who interact with YouTubers would react favorably to their signals and examples, therefore building or increasing their use intention for the brand that has been marketed or consumed by them. The study of this phenomenon offers the possibility of making breakthroughs in the realm of consumer behavior.

The absence of research on the influence of YouTubers on consumer behavior is worrisome since it provides a study void in this area. Therefore, Reinikainen et al., (2020) study is one of the few that have been published in this field, and it is worth highlighting. They conducted research in this vein, to determine the extent to which YouTubers impact consumers' views and intentions about premium brands and products. To contribute to closing this gap, the current research seeks to understand the link between the interaction of customers with YouTubers and the desire to use the products that they promote or utilize in their videos. This relationship will be evaluated experimentally in two ways: directly and indirectly (Martínez-López et al., 2020) by taking into account as mediators the trust, the self-connection and the brand love. Even though participation and engagement are two independent ideas, involvement is connected to engagement since it is the antecedent of engagement (Weismueller et al., 2020). Aside from what has already been said, this research presents a novel conceptual relationship for the constructions under consideration, one that is formed by YouTubers rather than by the brand of a commodity or service. The significance of this study is that it contributes to the field by attempting to fill a gap in the

research about the relationship between brand use/purchase intention and involvement with personal branding, which in this case is represented by YouTubers in this example. Human brands are any well-known or emerging wealthy individual who is the topic of interpersonal or inter-organizational marketing communication activities, whether they are well-known or emerging affluent (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Up to this point, researchers have looked at this link in terms of the same brand, both in terms of use intention and in terms of engagement.

Our study has also provided practical insights that indicate the extent to which customers appreciate, admire, and associate with their favorite YouTube personalities. They are made aware of the many MC possibilities open to them when it comes to brand selection as a result of this information. Selection of the most appropriate YouTuber to interact with the public, as well as decisions on what message will be given, its substance and style, as well as public relations methods that will enable the public to connect with their favorite YouTuber, are just a few of the alternatives available.

2. YouTube Marketing Communication:

YouTube emerged as a digital information and entertainment channel for ICT users, but it quickly grew into a substantial revenue-generating medium for businesses. YouTube material is accessible, but it produces income via MC through mobile devices, such as smartphones, rather than through traditional means. YouTube has facilitated a significant expansion in the world of entertainment. For marketing communication firms, YouTube provides a choice of possibilities and formats to choose from (Munsch, 2021). It has evolved as a crucial promotional tool for businesses, with over 80 percent reporting that YouTube acts as an online digital video platform for marketing communication. Consequently, it is not unexpected that YMC is responsible for a larger proportion of the marketing expenditure, which amounts to 25 percent (Arrigo et al., 2021). Many organizations have devoted the majority of their resources to MC. Marketing communication efforts are carried out via social media platforms such as YouTube, but the impact of these attitudes on the customer is not known in advance (S. W. Khan & Zaman, 2021). The outcome of MC actions is the act of buying. Using internet analytics, it is simple to measure the results. The efficacy of the YMC has been investigated in various research using both qualitative and quantitative data from Generation Y. A variety of studies have shown that Generation Y is responsive to the actions of a firm when they are communicated via YMC. The stimulation of cognitive attitudes, as well as the effect on buying choices on generation Y, will take place.

2.1. Entertainment

People use entertainment media channels to talk about things that are interesting to them through a variety of different types of media (Arrigo et al., 2021). Previous studies have shown that watching is more enjoyable, encouraging individuals to watch more. The advertisements that appear on the screen are another potential source of amusement. As a result, the display becomes more enjoyable for the user (Shankar et al., 2021). People who purchase items often utilize advertising to satisfy their hedonistic demands, and this is one of the primary purposes of advertising. So, advertisers need to develop ads that make people happy and excited. People can laugh and have more fun and pleasure when watching ads that use today's most popular social media (Juska, 2021). This may be a good thing for marketers to stay up with and develop their creative campaigns since the entertainment values that accompany advertising might reduce people's emotional response to the product.

Users may trade information, post photographs and videos on social media, and create social interactions (S. W. Khan et al., 2021; S. W. Khan & Adnan, n.d.). To help natural businesses improve their marketing programs, marketers can buy premium ads on the YouTube channel. They may also attract more specific audiences by inserting their items into popular videos on YouTube, which can be of use to them. If you want to get more people's attention, you can entertain them by putting a product in the right place (Juska, 2021).

2.2.Informativeness

The degree to which users are given valuable information may be described as the amount to which they are presented with information. In the user's opinion, there is a significant difference between the capacity of the media to educate consumers and the various underlying reasons for accepting advertisements themselves (Martins et al., 2019). Informativeness is the capacity of an advertisement to tell customers about some of the alternative items available to them. This may result in a satisfied buying choice. As discovered by Lin et al., (2021) customers have a greater need for product knowledge and a greater ability to get additional information via the interchange of data with the community and their family members (Wu et al., 2021). Previous research has shown the value of information in reaction to advertisements sent via different social media platforms, which supports this notion. As a consequence of this, social media is an efficient medium for the transmission of marketing due to the structure it uses, which allows for the presentation of more extensive product information to be shown (Shareef et al., 2019).

3. Brand Image

The notion of the brand image may be defined in a variety of ways in management research, from a narrow and wide perspective. Several writers, such as (Cheung et al., 2019; Sürücü et al., 2019) claim that a company's "brand image" is a mental picture of a particular brand that is related to memories of past experiences with the brand. Furthermore, Lin et al., (2021) see a brand's image as "a system of pictures and concepts existing in human consciousness, providing information about a certain brand and a fundamental attitude toward it. Using this definition, it can be stated that a brand's image is generated by a distinct collection of traits that distinguishes it from its competitors while also guaranteeing that the brand is recognized in the marketplace. Brand image is an impression created by a variety of elements (e.g., associations linked with a given brand name, the purchasing experience, and the reputation of a given company. However, Plumeyer et al., (2019) stress that from the perspective of various recipients, it is a complex, inhomogeneous, and quite abstract category.

Brand image and appeal go hand in hand rather often. "The arrangement of words, pictures, concepts and connections producing the overall brand image in customers" is how Cheung et al., (2019) define brand identity. Another way to put it is that a company's message about a particular brand is sent to customers via a variety of marketing tactics. The placing of a brand in the eyes of consumers and prospective customers is known as market brand positioning (Plumeyer et al., 2019). The establishment of a company's offer and image required the participation of brand image, which ultimately led to a distinct and strong brand position in the minds of target consumers. Adopting unique associations with the target audience may help distinguish a brand from other comparable brands operating in the same industry.(Mookda et al., 2020; Raza et al., 2018). Consequently, Cheung et al., (2019) see positioning from a somewhat different perspective; he emphasizes an essential market function of positioning, referring to the promotion of competition.

3.1. Brand Awareness

Researchers have shown that customers are better able to recognize or recall that a certain brand belongs to a specific product category (Sürücü et al., 2019) is defined as a consequence of a brand's awareness and traces in consumers' brains, the strength with which they can recognize (identify) a particular brand in a range of market circumstances is closely connected with brand awareness. From the definitions provided above, it is easy to conclude that being aware of the existence of a brand and its association with a certain product is equivalent to having brand awareness. Correspondingly to Cheung et al., (2019) recent research has shown that even a single occurrence of a brand name in a consumer's environment induces the customer to have the following cognition when he or she sees the brand again: "I recognize this brand." Also worth mentioning is the fact that several advertising efforts are built on this notion, with their messaging aiming to reinforce the brand name in the minds of both current and prospective customers (S. W. Khan et al., 2021).

According to research on brand management, brand awareness is one of the most important factors that determines how strong a brand is and, in turn, how competitive it is (Gómez-Rico et al., 2022). So, brand awareness monitoring is becoming more important in the marketing practices of contemporary businesses. This evaluation is made possible through survey studies, which examine the connections customers have with a brand (each market research firm and advertising agency has its patented method for evaluating this relationship) and brand image (Raza et al., 2023). This information is quite accurate, and its major purpose is to establish whether or not brand awareness has been successfully enhanced, i.e., how well people recognize and remember the brand and what they identify the brand with (among other things) (Tian et al., 2021).

3.2. YouTube Attitudes and Its Influence on Consumer Behavior

Positive attitudes toward advertising, according to a widely presented idea, result in good views about the brands of a business, which have a positive influence on buy intention and actual purchases. Consequently, attitudes about advertising were seen as a reliable indication of advertising effectiveness (Dubovi & Tabak, 2021). Because of this, a variety of advertising models have been proposed to reflect the hierarchical attitude stages that customers may encounter before purchasing more than a century (S. W. Khan & Zaman, 2021). In contrast to the notion that intention-to-purchase has a direct impact on the purchase, many advertising response hierarchy models argue that purchase is influenced by the intention-to-purchase. Traditional above-the-line (ATL) advertising was used to develop these models (Muda & Hamzah, 2021). Therefore, there is a paucity of data for this behavioral attitudinal link based on new digital interactive media advertising platforms such as YouTube, which are relatively new (Sokolova & Perez, 2021). A review of the literature found that the drivers of YouTube advertising had a considerable impact on customers' purchase intentions, and this evidence was used to determine the effect of YouTube advertising on purchasing intention.

3.3. The Influence of YouTube Marketing

The streaming website YouTube is a social media platform where anyone may post and share videos with other people (Dubovi & Tabak, 2021). Juniper Research estimates that advertisers' amount of money promoting content, such as YouTube and Facebook videos, will reach $38 billion by 2022. Also, over 1 billion hours of video are watched on YouTube every day, about a quarter of all the money spent on free video advertising in the future (Sokolova

& Perez, 2021). As a result, for marketers, YouTube has emerged as a crucial component of strategic MC accounting for a larger proportion of marketing communication expenses, especially among those targeting the 16–33 age range (Budzinski et al., 2021; Muda & Hamzah, 2021). In light of YouTube's prominence as a marketing communication tool, numerous researchers have examined the effects of YouTube videos across a variety of disciplines, including political campaigns public service announcements, advertising, health communications and others. Additionally, according to a global poll of marketers conducted in December 2019, marketers believe that YouTube is the most effective video medium for marketing. The informativeness, amusement, and trendiness of YouTube advertisements are essential aspects in increasing the advertising value of YouTube advertisements, and the advertising value of YouTube advertisements has a beneficial influence on customers' purchase intentions (Dubovi & Tabak, 2021; Marcoux et al., 2021). Brand perception and purchase intention were greater among consumers who saw YouTube videos of luxury items being reviewed than customers who hadn't seen such films. Coates et al., (2020) discovered that YouTube advertising to younger customers is more effective when the content is entertaining, instructive, and customizable.

- YouTube is still the most popular online site for Pakistani adults, according to experts. The YouTube channel is a popular marketing tool for many companies since it allows them to broadcast advertisements, product information, and entertaining videos, all of which can be shared with other users (Hussain et al., 2016). However, even though several experts have examined YouTube as a potential new avenue for marketing communication (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Tafesse & Wood, 2021) there has been little study into how major marketers in Pakistan have used YouTube as a marketing communication tool. To better understand how major firms employ YouTube as a strategic marketing communication tool, it is necessary to research the most popular social media site, which is YouTube. This research investigates the use of YMC in various industries after analyzing the use of YMC by prominent marketers in Pakistan. As a result, it is important to investigate the following four research questions:

- **RQ1:** How do YouTube marketing communication influences affect millennials' purchase intent?

- **RQ2:** How millennials in Pakistan are influenced by their usage of YouTube?

- **RQ3:** How does the continuous improvement of the internet support millennials in their comprehension of YouTube marketing techniques?

- **RQ:4** How can perceived Youtube marketing communication credibility affect millennials' purchase intent?

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Data collection

YouTube viewers between the ages of 18 and 34 were asked to participate in an online poll. This age group represented the millennials who made up the majority of the population in Multan, Pakistan. This age bracket included the most active Internet users, who were between the ages of 18 and 34 years old. Participants were told that they had the option to withdraw from the survey at any point throughout the process. A total of 400 users provided voluntary replies, which were compiled into a report. Respondents who provided insufficient or incorrect information were removed from the final data set, which consisted of 372 replies.

4.1.1. Instrument for The Survey

During the online survey, participants completed a structured questionnaire that assessed their purchasing intent as well as their brand awareness and the three factors of brand image. Participants were given one set of questionnaires and were exposed to YouTube advertising for the duration of the study. Respondents were asked if they were acquainted with the YouTube advertisement after seeing it, to determine whether they had gained previous familiarity with the advertisement while watching it on YouTube. Responses based on past acquaintance were excluded from consideration in the final study. The respondents were given the ability to control the commencement of the allocated advertising, as well as the stopping and replaying of it. Following their viewing of the YouTube commercial, individuals were required to respond to questions about brand awareness and brand image. The final questionnaire included five parts, which were as follows: Several previously published measurement items were used to create the current set of things. A five-point Likert scale was used to rate all items (with 1 being strongly disagreed and 5 being strongly agreed).

4.2. Data Analysis

Partial Least Squares were used to examine the data that was obtained (PLS). One of the multivariate data analysis approaches (also known as Structural Equation Modeling or SEM) used to assess theoretically supported linear and additive causal models was PLS (Parametric Linear Modeling) (Kitsios et al., 2022). To visually evaluate and monitor the correlations between latent variables (also known as constructs or factors) and independent variables, marketers used structural equation modeling (SEM). As a statistical approach, PLS is becoming more popular for testing and estimating causal links utilizing a mix of statistical data and qualitative causal assumptions (Abel et al., 2020; Clear et al., 2021). Test for Reliability: The reliability of the variables in terms of the one-dimensionality of the set of scale items was examined by calculating the rho_A for each variable, as recommended and comparing it to the reliability of the variables (M. Khan et al., 2020). In SEM, rho A proved to be a more reliable reliability measure than Cronbach's alpha since it was based on the loadings rather than the correlations detected between the observed variables, as did Cronbach's alpha. The rho_A values for all variables were more than 0.70, indicating that the variables were very reliable.

4.3. Validity Test

It was determined if the loading and cross-loading criteria and the Fornell-Larcker criterion had sufficient discriminant validity. Overall, the findings suggested that all measurement items were strongly loading onto the intended components, with modest cross-loadings on the other elements. It was found that the average variance extracted value for each component was bigger than the squared correlations between that element and the other factors in the analysis. The findings revealed that there was evidence of discriminant validity.

4.4. Analysis Using the PLS-SEM Method

The results of the PLS-SEM analysis were used to determine if the predicted causal links between the variables were valid. A structural model's output is shown in this section. Brand awareness was shown to be significantly influenced by two factors: information seeking (r = 0.343 with p=0.01) and interactivity (r = 0.359 with p = 0.01), both of which were found to be significant. Aside from that, brand image (r = 0.377, p = 0.01) proved to have a statistically significant effect on purchase intention.

5. Results and Findings

The findings of the research demonstrated that the quality of the information in YouTube advertisements was substantially and positively associated with brand awareness, hence giving support for hypothesis one. This demonstrated that the informative commercials resulted in a considerable increase in brand awareness among the target customers as a result. Brand recognition was shown to be unaffected by the degree to which advertisements were intrusive. As a result, H2 was rejected. This demonstrated that even if advertising was aired repeatedly, viewers may not know a particular company or product. The impact of interaction on the brand image was found to be both positive and statistically significant, indicating that H3 was validated. This demonstrated that interactive commercials might improve buyers' perceptions of the brand that was the focus of the commercial. Finally, it was discovered that brand awareness had a positive and statistically significant influence on purchase intention, hence supporting H4. This demonstrated that consumers were more inclined to buy from a brand that they were familiar with and that they did so on intention.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

In conformity with the results of hypothesis testing to summaries, YouTube advertising has an impact on brand awareness and brand image but does not have an impact on purchase intent. YouTube advertisements are closely tied to the desire to make a purchase. In this conclusion, brand awareness and brand image are not mediating variables because they do not have any connection to the sample participants' intentions to make a purchase. As a consequence of these findings, it can be concluded that YouTube advertisements play an important role in raising brand awareness and attracting corporate brand image. YouTube has the potential to improve the buying intentions of its users. For businesses to be successful on YouTube, they must allocate a budget for the creation of innovative advertisements that will capture the attention of YouTube viewers. The vast majority of YouTube viewers do not pay attention to the advertisements that display. As a result, businesses must produce advertisements that are distinct from the competition so that those users can take advantage of them.

This study aims to gather empirical evidence on the key factors that determine the effect of video advertising on brand recognition and purchase intention. The research looked at numerous aspects of video commercials, including their informativeness, obtrusiveness, and interactivity, among other things. In this study, it was discovered that informativeness and interactivity were crucial in impacting brand recognition, whereas obtrusiveness was shown to not affect brand recognition. According to the data, buyers are now placing a larger importance on the substance, utility, and design of adverts than they were before. That is, it is more important whether or not the advertising has useful material and whether or not it includes interactivity that might help clients become more engaged. This research makes several important additions to the literature on the efficacy of internet video advertisements.

7. Limitation and Scope for Further Research

According to this research, brand awareness and brand image do not play a role as mediating factors between seeing YouTube advertisements and the decision to make a purchase. This illustrates that commercials on YouTube elicit a desire in customers to acquire a product from the business that is running the video. The YouTube advertising variable, on the other hand, has a statistically significant influence on brand awareness and purchase intention, showing that the adverts that display on YouTube assist the viewer in recognizing a specific brand. Additionally, as revealed in this research, the association between YouTube commercials and

brand image implies that YouTube advertisements might assist a firm in improving its brand image and establishing a favorable reputation among customers. This is because there are now just a few studies that examine YouTube advertising in more detail. This study only looks at YouTube advertising, brand awareness, brand image, and purchase intention as factors of interest. The study's primary focus is the Pakistani city of Multan in Punjab province, which necessitates an in-depth investigation, therefore the conclusions will change depending on the country or location.

Conflict of interests

- "The author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interests".

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