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## Article

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## MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Exploring the opinions of the YouTube visitors towards advertisements and its influence on purchase intention among viewers

Ann Tresa Sebastian<sup>1</sup>, Bhagya Lal<sup>1</sup>, J. Anupama<sup>1</sup>, Jee Varghese<sup>1</sup>, Aleena Agnus Tom<sup>1</sup>, Eslavath Rajkumar<sup>1\*</sup>, Allen Joshua George<sup>1</sup>, Sundaramoorthy Jeyavel<sup>1</sup>, Vijendra Pandey<sup>1</sup>, Maria Wajid<sup>1</sup> and Romate John<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Online retailing as a mode of transaction has been dominating the market through web-based advertisements since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, replacing the role of mass media. India, being a populous country, has witnessed a rapid increase in online customers in recent years. Nonetheless, there are not many in-depth studies analyzing the opinion of Indian netizens on online advertisements and its influence on decision-making process and purchase intention. Thus, the current study explored opinion about advertisements and its role in purchasing intentions among young YouTube visitors, using qualitative research design. The data were collected from 50 participants (23 males and 27 females) who have reported engaging in YouTube for a minimum of 30 minutes per day, through a semi-structured interview. Data were analyzed and interpreted through thematic analysis. Four themes and 10 sub-themes were identified. The main themes include the *relevance of the advertisement* (personalization, future purchases, and trials), *disinterest* (personal testimonies and inattentiveness), *subjective distress* (recurrent advertisements, placement of advertisements and length of advertisement), and *information and entertainment* (introduction to the product, distinctiveness, and

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eslavath Rajkumar is an Assistant Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychology, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Central University of Karnataka, India. He holds an Integrated Masters in Health Psychology and a Ph.D. in Psychology. His research interests are Health Psychology, Positive Psychology, and Social Cognition.

## PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed the shift of marketing and advertising from its traditional offline setup to an online platform where it gets a wider audience. This research paper titled 'Exploring the Opinions of the YouTube Visitors towards Advertisements and its Influence on Purchase Intention among Viewers' focuses on how the advertisements shown on YouTube influence the customers about their purchase intention. The study results reveal that users have both positive and negative attitudes towards YouTube advertisements which in turn reflect on their intention to avail the goods and service. Some viewers find it annoying whereas for others it is a source of information. Viewers preferred to get personalized advertisements where they see what they prefer to watch. The current study contributes to the existing empirical literature on how advertisements induce purchase intention. The results highlight how advertisements can be made more effective.

creativity). From the results, it can be observed that YouTube users have both positive and negative opinions and corresponding intentions about the purchase.

**Subjects:** General Psychology; Social Psychology; Consumer Psychology

**Keywords:** YouTube advertisements; opinion towards advertisements; purchase intention; opinion; decision-making

## 1. Introduction

E-commerce has spread its reach to every nook and corner of marketing and purchasing with the help of online broadcasting platforms and productive use of multimedia with a clear dominance in trade (Kalia et al., 2018). A *web advertising* is any paid form of impersonal commercial content designed for an audience and delivered through video, print, or audio, which makes it more user friendly and interactive (Abd Aziz & Ariffin, 2010). India, being the second largest populated country with a regularly updating e-commerce industry is expected to surpass the US to be the second largest e-commerce market in the world (Indian Ecommerce Industry Analysis, 2020). In February 2019, National E-Commerce Policy was released in India, and the online economy was promoted by the Government through the Digital India Campaign. Thus, an understanding of the recent trends of the Indian E-commerce Industry will be relevant and helpful for marketersTable 1Table 2.

Social media facilitates the marketing of products and services (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Online media platforms and social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube play a major role in this growth of online business enterprises. YouTube as an online video sharing platform emerged in 2005 founded by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen & Jawed Karim, and in 2006, it was taken over by Google and is currently operating in collaboration with it (Soukup, 2014). In 2020, YouTube has more than two billion registered users, and every day more than a billion hours of videos are being watched YouTube has experienced rapid and tremendous growth and is the second most visited website in the world today (Arthurs et al., 2018).

Evolving interfaces of YouTube brought out different features like live-streaming, premium channels, and monetization (Arthurs et al., 2018). YouTube is identified as being more distinguished from traditional content broadcasters with user-to-user social experience contributing to high popularity (Susarla et al., 2012). Later, with technological advancements, there have been a tremendous increase in product promotions through social media platforms, which undeniably made YouTube its most important target, due to its user index (Schwemmer & Ziewiecki, 2018). In 2010, YouTube introduced “True View in-stream” advertisement enabling a “skip ad” option while playing a video. Results showed a strong viewer preference for skippable advertisements than conventional non-skippable types suggesting a better viewing experience without sacrificing advertising value (Pashkevich Dorai-Raj, Keller & Zigmond, 2012). This was further expanded with the introduction of non-skippable advertisements in the year 2018 (YouTube, 2018).

Social media including YouTube has emerged as an interactive tool for young adults (Berryman et al., 2018) with a considerable number of users falling in the age group of 18–34 years (Talwar et al., 2020a; YouTube, 2020). Members of this age group have been noted to use social media to satisfy a variety of needs, especially of social nature (Young et al., 2017). Being the most active group, the young generation never failed to get updated about recent trends and developments of the market, making them suitable participants of any study regarding online advertising and purchasing. Moreover, younger viewers preferred to watch YouTube videos since they found the user-generated content to be more authentic (Holland, 2016).

## 2. The opinion of YouTube visitors towards advertisements

An opinion is a belief that a person has formed about a specific concept, and is considered as a valuable suggestion when it comes to marketing, either online or offline (Vinodhini &

Chandrasekaran, 2012). Previous studies (Dhir, Khalil, et al, 2017; Grange & Benbasat, 2018) had pointed out that consumers seek others' opinions online to reduce their risk on prospective purchases. For assessing opinion, a broader aspect has been dealt by researchers in different ways, including the possibilities of opinion mining, thus enabling a system to identify and classify opinion or sentiment through an electronic text (Vinodhini & Chandrasekaran, 2012). Opinion on advertisements can be understood as the expression of a favorable or unfavorable response. Opinion when identified in terms of "attitude" clarifies this point of view. Attitude towards an advertisement was defined as a predisposition to respond either favorably or unfavorably to an advertising stimulus when exposed to it (Sallam & Algammash, 2016). The attitude of consumers on online applications is mostly perceived with ease of use (Anthony et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2016) and user-friendliness (Trivedi et al., 2020)

Opinion about advertisements, whether they are favorable or unfavorable, has some influence on the purchase intention of the consumers. This also depend on the effectiveness of the advertisements, as proven by earlier studies (Johnson & Manickavasakam, 2020; Kong et al., 2019; Otamendi & Sutil Martín, 2020). An advertising value (subjective) is associated with the advertisement and how the consumer receives and perceives it (Mustafi & Hosain, 2020). Other determinants that contribute to the effectiveness of advertisements include different features of the advertisement, new ideas, content of the message, awareness about brand products, colored visuals, and so on, which may influence the purchase behavior.

The opinion of young professionals and students about online advertisement revealed that it was effective in creating awareness about various products/services and has a role in purchase decisions (Dhir, Chen, et al., 2017; Eze & Lee, 2012; Rehman et al., 2014). The purchase intention of the customer is described as the decision-making process of a customer whether or not to purchase a product, making an intention on the purchase (Martins et al., 2019; Zheng & Chen, 2020). Advertising value would affect the purchase intention through brand awareness, where brand awareness is the process of familiarizing or becoming aware of a particular brand (Dehghani et al., 2016). Even if an opinion can be evaluated using some common attributes as in previous studies, purchase intention demands in-depth exploration, inclusive of consideration of the emerging scope.

### **3. Influence of advertisements on purchase intention**

The effectiveness of advertisement depends on attention, interest, desire, and action model, where action is the desire leading to purchase. Also, the number of views could determine how far the ad gained attention on YouTube and the likes it gained validate interest (audio, video, content, and message appeals) based upon the characters persuading the viewers (Santos, 2020). Effectiveness of advertisements on YouTube was explained as a set of multimodal frameworks where framework stands for a joint representation of auditory, visual as well as textual patterns which is developed with the help of multimedia signal processing and natural language processing tools by using the extracts of temporal patterns forming the content of the advertisements (Vedula, Sun, Lee, & Parthasarathy, 2017). Entertainment, informativeness, customization (viewer can customize the information as it suits them) was found to have a positive effect on advertising value (Kelly et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2012), and irritation had a negative effect where advertising value was defined as a subjective evaluation of value attached to the advertisement (Bang & Lee, 2016; Jung, 2017; Van Doorn & Hoekstra, 2013).

YouTube and brands of beauty products, digital marketing, and social media sites are good sources of news updates (Gupta et al., 2017). Rather the growing popularity of YouTube has made consumers educate themselves with the videos available on YouTube before purchasing the beauty products (Pixability, 2015). Consumers find value when they require the product, representing the subjective aspect of purchasing intention (Anthony et al., 2020). Thus, the customization of advertisement is promoted, thereby enhancing the impact of ads (Tyrväinen et al., 2020). Different measures are used in customizing ads that enable users to determine the content, through

customer preference surveys and cookies by visiting websites (Urban et al., 2020; Xue, 2020). Irritation occurs due to disruption of purpose that also results in a concern of losing privacy (Aziza & Astuti, 2018). Positive purchasing behavior, engaging, and time-saving possibly determine customer's attitude and perception about advertisements favorably whereas ubiquitous and intrusive nature might be perceived as annoying, rather the use of colored visuals and advanced technology make internet advertisements distinguishable from mass media advertisements (Srivastava et al., 2014). Talwar et al. (2020b), confirmed that monetary value, quality of benefits, social status, preference values, and information were seen to have significant positive association with the purchase intention of people through online travel agencies.

The repetitive nature of advertisements is treated as a negative predictor of purchasing intention as given by numberless websites which is unreliable though quantifiable (Van den Broeck et al., 2019). And research has also revealed that when the same advertisement is shown multiple times, the viewer is likely to get frustrated by the ad, consequently associating it with the servicing brand (Voorveld, 2019). Multimedia is a platform to interact than watch advertisements over and over again and expected to be more educative than being overloaded with one-sided communication (Gupta et al., 2017). Consumer's information processing is assumed to be negatively influenced by forced exposure conditions leading to lower memory about product and manufacturer (Adaval et al., 2019; Nurunnahar, 2019). The marketers found that advertisements on social media platforms like YouTube and Twitter, made personalized for each individual as more profitable, but people seem to feel it as an intrusion to their privacy that would also lead to the advertisement avoidance (Miia & Dong, 2019). Evidences also show that the individual tends to make a positive or negative perception about a product of services, when there is continuous expose to recurrent advertisements. (Groshek & Brookes, 2015).

Factors that influence the viewers to consider YouTube as an advertising medium have not yet been properly explored. Dehghani et al. (2016) identified four dimensions that have an influence on YouTube advertising—entertainment, informativeness, customization, and irritation which were said to affect brand awareness, and purchase intention. In addition to that, brand awareness and continued purchasing behavior were positively associated with the value that the viewer gives to advertisements. Previous researches also identified that the viewers of online advertisements on social networking sites do not dislike them, instead they simply do not notice them (Hadija et al., 2012). The quality of the video or the gear used for video making doesn't matter in marketing a product online, but the authenticity of the advertisement and the way it is presented does. For the proper marketing of a product through any social media, the strategy is to provide what the viewer is interested to watch (Miles, 2011).

#### **4. Purpose of the study**

Studies revealed that the magnitude of the negative relationship between benefits barriers and purchase intentions was different for customers in different age groups including 20–25 years, 26–30 years, and 31–35 years (Talwar, Dhir, Kaur & Mäntymäki, 2020a). Researches suggested that adolescents and young adults are more frequent users of the social media platforms (Dhir & Tsai, 2017), and as the advertisement become close to the self-image and identity of them, the chances of them sharing these advertisements and engaging in usage of the products and services increase (Taylor et al., 2012). As there is a tremendous lifestyle change occurred across the globe due to the COVID pandemic and accompanied practices of social distancing and quarantine, a remarkable increase is visible in the usage of social media platforms like YouTube (Al-Qahtani et al., 2020; Kaya, 2020), so the duration of an individual encountering advertisements have also increased (Papadamou et al., 2020). The current study emphasizes the influence of advertisements on the purchase intention or decision-making process of YouTube visitors and explores the opinion of YouTube visitors towards advertisements that are shown on YouTube.

Though there had been studies enquiring the effectiveness of online advertisements and how they benefit retailers with its reach to a large number of people (Bakshi & Gupta, 2013; Lim & Lau,



2011), researches which focus their attention on video streaming platforms such as YouTube or daily motion weren't much studied. The researchers intended to look into this matter in depth since the possibilities of video advertisements in online retail hasn't been explored thoroughly. The nature of advertisements shown through YouTube differs from other online advertising platforms since it filters and specifies potential customers and offers different ad formats varying from display ads to skippable ads specific to the content (Belanche et al., 2020).

Several formats of advertisements which can be avoided by viewers keep them feel that they are in control at least to some extent (Edwards et al., 2002), unlike television, but some other ads mandate exposure to the target program video ensuring viewers to watch the advertisement for a specific period of time, usually 30 seconds (Campbell et al., 2017). This technique in fact helps YouTube to get paid more as per their policies. It is a common sensical question that these 'forced advertisements' can lead to negative impressions about them as assumed by several researchers (Freier, 2019). But some other studies have revealed that offering a skip button does not influence the viewer's perceived intrusiveness as well as their attitude towards the advertisement (Hegner et al., 2015). Even if it is a forced view, only around 16 percent of viewers click away from the 30-second pre-roll ads, which leave roughly 84 percent of viewers completing the ads (Redsteer, 2019). Additionally, a 15-second video ad is considered less intrusive compared to a 60-second video ad and thus considered more effective because viewers are more likely to stay through a shorter advertisement to get to their desired video (Hegner et al., 2015).

As YouTube being one amongst the important platforms that includes advertisements for marketing, a huge number of organizations and services see this as an opportunity to bring about an awareness about the product to a larger population (Ahmad et al., 2020). Moreover, marketing and business entities invest a huge amount for the better reach of their advertisements on YouTube (Geyser, 2020). Hence, we can understand that this huge capital actually brings in a lot of brand and service awareness which also makes people to avail their services (Manideep et al., 2019) or at least to be familiarized with them through browsing, which brings in word-to-mouth passage of information about their product or services (J. Park & McMahan, 2020). This study focuses on helping the marketers to understand how these advertising plays a role in their opinions towards the service or product and how well there is a significant influence in the purchase intention of individuals. Another important contribution the study intent to make is to help the marketers understand the perception and difficulty that the individual make and encounters, and in what way can such advertisements can be enhanced (Dehghani et al., 2016; Kujur & Singh, 2018). YouTube introduced YouTube premium in 2019, which actually makes the consumer to have a no ad experiences (Shon et al., 2020), which were availed by the higher strata of the society, leaving the middle-class population as major viewers to these advertisements. In India, majority of population belong to a lower-middle financial levels and social economic status (Vasudevan et al., 2016).

Thus, the impact advertisements can bring on this huge population set might lead to a better understanding of the need and consumption of those products and a different idea on making of those advertisements which internally contributes to the success of many organizations. Moreover, the study uncovers on how these advertisements can create an immediate surge to an increased need to such products. As mentioned this study can also assist in understand the different opinions of Indians in terms of this phenomenon. Several advertisements on the internet can give measurements of success rate which predicts the chance to purchase the product or service (Rodriguez, 2017). Because they demand response from visitors in some way, by clicking a link, entering a code, and so on, it is useful to predict the probability of purchase. Even though these studies predict the success rates which help to create a basic idea, these do not explain the factors that can affect this success rate (Gupta et al., 2017). Therefore researchers assumed that it is relevant to know how far these advertisements can contribute towards better success of

organizations referring to the opinions on advertisements and purchase intention, leading to a qualitative, in-depth analysis in this regard.

## 5. Methods

### 5.1. Study Design

The present study used a qualitative approach for the investigation and thematic analysis for the data interpretation expecting a consolidated set of ideas. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) by minimally organizing and describing the data set in detail. This method aids to discover the themes and concepts embedded throughout the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Thematic analysis could be done in two different ways depending on the identification of themes or patterns from the data set; the inductive and the deductive analysis. This study employs an inductive thematic approach in which the discovered themes robustly represent the collected information.

### 5.2. Participants and Recruitment

The reviewed literature shows that the people in early adulthood tend to be more active in the internet-based media platforms by commenting on others' content, generating, and sharing their own content, and so on. Therefore, they tend to have more opportunities to watch online video-advertising (Joa et al., 2018) and are assumed to be the major target of online in-stream video advertisements on YouTube (Blattberg, 2015). So, the current research focused on the young adult population in India. The participants included 50 young adults (46% males and 54% females) between the age of 18 and 35 years (Mean = 22.9, SD = 3.14), of which 62% belonged to the category of 18–23 years, 36% between 24 and 29 years and 2% falling in the age group of 30–35 years. Twenty-three participants were undergraduates, and 27 were post-graduates.

A purposive sampling method was adopted for the current study. The participants who could understand and communicate in English were enquired about the amount of time that they spend on YouTube daily and those who invested a minimum of 30 minutes per day who had also reported to watch advertisements were selected for the interview. And the participants subscribed to YouTube premium were excluded from the study. As the research was conducted during COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the participants were approached through phone calls.

### 5.3. Data collection

The data were gathered through individual semi-structured telephonic interviews, which ensured that researchers would achieve the required information by encouraging the participants to talk freely and share their experiences. The focus of the interview was sharing experiences regarding

**Table 1. The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants**

Variables	n (50)	%
<b>Age</b>		
18–23 years	31	62
24–29 years	18	36
30–35 years	1	2
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	23	46
Female	27	54
<b>Education Qualification</b>		
Under graduation	23	46
Post-graduation	27	54
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban	19	38
Semi-urban	13	26
Rural	18	36



the advertisements they see on YouTube. The time frame of the data collection was from 20 March 2020 to 30 April 2020. As part of the interview, the participants were explained about the purpose of the study and were informed of their right to privacy and the right to withdraw from the study. The verbal consent was taken from the participants as it was difficult to obtain written consent due to the mode of communication employed.

All the interviews were guided by seven main questions including the following: “Have the advertisements that you see on YouTube influenced you to avail their services?” and “What is your opinion on advertisements shown on YouTube?” Along with the pre-set questions, other probing questions such as “Can you explain with some more examples?” or “What could be the reason for that?” were asked to the participants to get detailed information. The questions asked during the interview were generated with the help of secondary data and also by taking opinions from experts. The interview was conducted only once using English as the medium of communication. The average duration of the interview was 30 minutes. All the interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and later the recorded interviews were transcribed by the researchers. The data collection procedure was continued until it reached data saturation of 50 participants. The content that an individual sees on YouTube differs tremendously and it is difficult to categorize it on the uniformity of a content that is seen on YouTube by an individual, hence to get a wider understanding along with different content, a large sample of 50 participants was taken up for the current study.

#### **5.4. Data processing and analysis**

For data analysis, the process of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used. The researchers got familiarized with the data first and later converted it to verbatim. This was followed by the generation of the initial list of ideas (codes). The topics or patterns that come up repeatedly and the ideas that appeared relevant to the analyst or the basic segment or element of the raw data were taken into consideration as the initial code. For example, “frequent”, “irrelevant”, and “interesting” were taken as the initial codes due to their repetitiveness during the interview. Further, different codes from the data set were sorted into potential themes, different sub-themes and main themes were identified, and then the identified themes were reviewed and refined. At the end of the analysis, the identified themes were named and defined.

#### **6. Ethical considerations**

The participants were informed of their rights to privacy and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage of the research. Participation in the study was voluntary, and no remuneration was provided. The participants were explained about the purpose of the study. The permission for recording the voice clips was obtained and assured about the confidentiality of the data. Verbal consent was taken from the participants as the interviews were conducted via telephone.

#### **7. Results**

The study included 50 participants who were engaged in the YouTube platform. The objectives of the study were: (1) to explore the opinion of YouTube visitors towards the advertisement, and (2) to explore the influence of advertisement on purchase intention. The themes and subthemes of each objective are explained as follows:

##### **7.1. Objective 1: Exploring the opinion of YouTube visitors towards the advertisement**

Two themes were identified: (1) Subjective distress, and (2) Information and entertainment.

##### **7.2. Theme 1- Subjective distress**

The current study results showed that the majority of the participants experienced subjective distress towards the advertisements they watched on YouTube. While they did enjoy a handful of the advertisements, most were not liked. Features of YouTube did not give the option to skip the advertisements, which added to the discomfort. Advertisements that lasted longer and could not be skipped contributed further to the distress. Three sub-themes were identified related to the

theme of subjective distress: (1) Recurrent advertisements, (2) Placement of advertisement, and (3) Length of advertisement.

*Recurrent advertisements:* The participants reported that the advertisements were shown before most, if not all videos. The participants had to watch an advertisement before they could watch the video that they had opted. Some advertisements had an option to be skipped after a few seconds, but others did not. The advertisements were repeated, meaning that the participants had to watch one advertisement multiple times. Participants reported that viewing the same advertisement again and again was not desirable. Participants expressed their boredom and anger in seeing the same advertisements repeatedly. For example, Participant 1 (FM) shared,

*... that I see very very often, about frequency being everyday almost and Facebook being mildly or very rarely, like sometimes but Zomato and Swiggy, almost every day, every day means during every advertisement in every YouTube ad ... (Participant 1, FM)*

The participant has seen advertisements frequently as the advertisements on Zomato or Swiggy. The participant was compelled to get exposed to the advertisements before every video.

Similar views were expressed by LM (Participant 12) and LAD (Participant 4)

*... Every single time. They show the same advertisements again. It is repeated. Nobody would like to see them more than once, right? I usually skip such ads ... (Participant 12, LM)*

The participant had to endure watching advertisements in every video they have opted to view on YouTube. These advertisements are repeated and the participant does not like watching them multiple times.

*... the frequency of the advertisement is no actually was very much like every video will have two to three advertisements, two will be in the being even if you pause them in between the ads will pop up in between and also there are videos, videos also have this advertisement between them, if they are sponsored of course, but for me, it was getting really pissed because of this ads ... (Participant 4, LAD)*

The participant has seen two to three advertisements in front of every video. Advertisements are present in the middle of the videos and cannot be skipped. This was attributed to sponsored content. The participant experienced anger when watching these advertisements.

*Placement of advertisement:* Advertisements were placed in mainly three slots – before the video, middle of the video, and end of the video. The advertisements were shown usually at the beginning of a video. The participants were made to wait and watch the advertisements. The chosen content for viewing was sidestepped to bring in the advertisements. Participants also reported that they were irritated with advertisements that were shown in the middle of the videos. The deviation from the content that they were watching was not reportedly pleasant for the participants.

*... It is informative, but when an advertisement comes in between something we're watching seriously, we're missing the continuity. I don't like keeping an advertisement in between the video. (Participant 39, SS)*

The participant finds advertisements informative. However, when advertisements are shown in between videos, the participant misses its continuity. They have expressed a dislike for such advertisements.

*... Some ads which come in between annoy me. Ads in front of ads are tolerable. They are kind of irritating but can be adjustable ... (Participant 44, DG)*

Participant is annoyed with advertisements, which are shown in the middle of the videos. As compared to them, the participant finds advertisements placed in front of the video more tolerable.

*... I don't think that they are very useful. If I start to play songs in autoplay mode, these ads will come in between, and it would be kind of irritation ... (Participant 20, AA)*

The participant does not find advertisements useful. When they use "autoplay mode", the advertisements are shown in between, and the participant expressed their irritation with this.

*Length of advertisement:* The participants reported that the advertisements varied in length. Some of the advertisements lasted for a few seconds, whereas others could be as long as a few minutes. Sometimes there was an option to skip the advertisement after a few seconds if the advertisement was lengthy. This option was not available for all the advertisements. Some have reported that they enjoy short and catchy ones. Participants did not enjoy watching the longer advertisements, as it led to a delay in watching the original video. The disparity in opinion in accordance with the length of the advertisement holds true for most of the participants.

*... It always comes. In a video, two kinds of advertisements are seen one at the beginning, which can be skipped after seconds, and others cannot be skipped. In videos with more viewers, ads will keep on coming many times, and the same ad repeats for more than thrice ... (Participant 11, AN).*

The participant has seen two types of advertisements. One of them can be skipped after a few seconds, and the other cannot. The same advertisement may be repeated multiple times in the same video.

*... While watching movies and all in 5 minutes there is an ad and it becomes a nuisance for me. At sometimes there won't be even a skip option, so you are forced to watch that for some 20 seconds which I hate ... (Participant 42, MT)*

Participant reported that while watching movies there are frequent advertisements which are seen as a nuisance. When the skip ad option was not present, the participant was forced to watch advertisements for longer intervals, which they hated.

*... So if I am watching one hour of YouTube, I am hardly spending 10 minutes watching the ads. And you know like there are some open courses available on YouTube, and there are also advertisements. So here we will know more about advertisements than I know the course ... (Participant 10)*

Participant approximated that for every one hour spent on YouTube, they watched around 10 minutes watching advertisements. The participant reported that these advertisements are also present for the open courses available on YouTube and that they would know more about the advertisement than the course content.

*... I get angry when I see advertisements at the starting of every video. Because for some of the advertisements there won't be the option to skip ad. Then I feel like the time is simply wasted ... (Participant 24, AAT)*

The participant reported that they watch advertisements at the beginning of every video and that they feel angry when they see these advertisements. The participant reported that some advertisements did not have the skip ad option, and they felt like it was a waste of time to spare time for watching such ads.

### 7.3. Information and entertainment

The participants considered advertisements as a source of information regarding various services and products. New and improved features of various products were first introduced through advertisements. Participants reported that advertisements were also useful in decision-making with regard to purchase of products. The participants also reported that some of the advertisements were enjoyable and thought provoking. Some advertisements could capture the attention of the participants and were regarded as entertaining. The sub-themes identified under this were (1) Introduction to the product, and (2) Distinctiveness and creativity.

*Introduction to the product:* Participants reported that they had heard of new products for the first time from advertisements on YouTube. Many services were also introduced through advertisements. This included services and products that they haven't used or haven't heard of. Participants also cited advertisements as a tool to acquire information to compare different products. Advertisements also introduced new versions and features of existing products and services. The possibility of advertisements inciting the curiosity of the participant towards the products also remains.

*... It is very useful at times, not always. Ads make viewers feel bored and most of the time skipped. Even though boring it is helpful to know more about services, new products also to compare the products ... (Participant 19, JJ)*

The participant reported that the advertisements are useful, even if not all the time. They might cause boredom and be skipped. They can be helpful in gaining knowledge about new products and comparing products.

*... If I search for something, I might get an ad for that. I may decide on the company from which I buy the product from the advertisement ... (Participant 42, ABC)*

The participant has received advertisements for products they have searched for. They may decide on the company from which they buy the product based on the advertisement.

*... Nowadays we depend on YouTube for entertainment. It is not good not to have updated knowledge about something good or new. So YouTube advertisements are good to an extent ... (Participant 13, LM)*

The participant reported that they are dependent on YouTube for entertainment. They stated that advertisements helped them keep updated about the new products and services.

*Distinctiveness and creativity:* Advertisements which varied from others were noticed more by the participants. Participants reported products or services presented in novel and creative ways tend to catch their attention and that they were more likely to watch it again. These advertisements mostly fell under the category of short advertisements. Even in this case, repetitiveness of the same advertisement led to them being avoided by the participant.

*... There were some ads which used songs and such new things, they usually get noticed by many people, and they create a temptation to listen to them repeatedly. In such a situation, I watch them many times ... (Participant 12, RT)*

The participant finds some advertisements which use songs and other novel ideas to be noticeable. They tempt the participant to watch them multiple times.

*... I'll give attention only if the advertisement is attractive. Otherwise, I'll just ignore it ... (Participant 25, CS)*

The participant reported that they would only be attentive to the advertisement if it is attractive to them. If it is not, then they would ignore it.

*... the kind of advertisement that are seen are cosmetic and gadget related ads, and unless the ads are innovative and catchy, there will be preference given to go and see that ...*  
(Participant 2)

The participant usually saw advertisements related to cosmetics and gadgets. The participant reported that if the advertisements are innovative and catchy, they prefer to watch them.

#### **7.4. Objective 2: Explore the influence of advertisement on purchase intention**

Two themes were identified: (1) Relevance of the advertisement and, (2) Disinterest towards the advertisements.

##### **7.5. Relevance of the advertisement**

The relevance of the products or services showed in the advertisements influences how they are viewed. Participants tend to watch advertisements which are useful for them. The participants may also be shown advertisements of products or services which they have no use of or are unavailable to them. Such advertisements may not hold any value for the viewer. Advertisements with products or services with less relevance to the participant were less likely to be used. The sub-themes identified under this were (1) Personalization, (2) Future purchases, and (3) Trials.

*Personalization:* Participants reported that they noticed advertisements more when they were related to products or services, which were useful to them. Cookies and caches used by websites and applications aided in the personalization of the advertisements to each user. However, this is not fool proof and they were also shown advertisements for products or services which had no relevance to them. In that case, the advertisements didn't hold much interest to the viewers.

*... These advertisements are irrelevant to me. So I feel irritated seeing them. For others, it may be interesting seeing them and exploring the contents in them ...* (Participant 34, LI)

The participant was shown advertisements which were irrelevant and felt irritated. They noted that others to whom the content is more relevant might find them interesting and explore the contents of the advertisements.

*... I don't feel good watching ads. If it is relevant to my buying habits, I might ...* (Participant 41, SS)

The participant reported that if the advertisements shown to them are relevant to their buying habits, then they would be noticed.

*... I don't think I will use any of the products in the ads. It may be because I haven't seen any ad for things I am interested in ...* (Participant 48, NG)

The participant reported that they would not use any of the products advertised to them. The advertisements that they had seen were not related to their personal interests.

*Future purchases:* Participants reported that they did not have the need to use the product or service immediately after they had seen it. When they did need a particular product or service, the participants reported that they were likely to remember the advertisements and purchase that specific product or service. The participants cited the importance of recollection of the advertisements, when they made a purchase. Advertisements which were attractive to the participants formed an impression that the advertised products or services were good. When the participants

had to make a purchase, they could have been reminded of these good products or services. The advertisements also created a sense of want in the participants, which could also lead to future purchases.

*... Ads of beauty products/cosmetics are influencing. It influences the decision to purchase a product in future. The most popular products are easily noticed and striking. It prompts to choose that product ... (Participant 15, AT).*

The participant reported that advertisements of cosmetics influence the future purchases that they make. The popular products were reported to have advertisements which were noticeable and striking, which prompted the selection of that product.

*... When we see frequent advertisements, we tend to develop credibility in the services provided. I got an idea about Netflix and later started subscribing it ... (Participant 29, AD)*

The participant reported that watching the advertisements led to a belief in the credibility of the products. They watched advertisements related to Netflix and after a while started subscribing to it.

*... Whenever we watch an ad, we will notice the brand and the product with curiosity since it is given as visual input. So we come to know that there is such a company and it has such a product with such and such specifications. It might not appear to influence viewers at that moment, but they would influence at some other time when we are in need of such a product in future ... (Participant 17, SF)*

The participant reported that the visual input from the advertisements would arouse their curiosity. From the advertisements, they gain knowledge of the company, product, and its specifications. It may not influence them to use such a product immediately. But when they are in need of such a product in the future, the advertisement would have some influence.

*Trials:* Participants reported that if the product or service offered a trial, they would try it. The participants had tried many products, especially applications, after they had seen advertisements for them. If the product or service was deemed useful, they continued using it. The trials were offered for free by multiple product and service providers. After the trial period ended, the participants could continue using them for a subscription fee. Many users reported that they had been willing to make payments to continue using these products or services. The trials were thus used to pique the interest of the participants.

*... Sometimes ads influence me to avail the services they provided. Even if I am not really willing to purchase, the way that ads are presented gives a feel that the product might be good, making me think that I will have it tried. So ads do influence. But after a trial, if it is not satisfactory, I would discontinue the product ... (Participant 19, JJ)*

The participant reported that advertisements which are presented enticingly prompted them to try them. And if the service or product is not satisfactory during the trial period, it would be discontinued.

*... I had become a premium member through a free trial. After the free trial, I could not handle the advertisements, and I loved its features, so I paid for the premium membership ... (Participant 47, BB)*

The participant reported that they had become a YouTube premium member through free trials. After the trial period ended, they wanted to continue and paid for the premium membership.



*... some ads I feel as useful. Those ads that are related to some apps which I haven't even heard of, I feel them be informative. I have tried Netflix by seeing its ad on YouTube ... (Participant 34, LI)*

The participant reported about their feeling that some advertisements are useful. The participant felt that advertisements related to applications that they have not heard of are informative. For instance, the participant started using Netflix (which offers a free trial) after seeing its advertisements on YouTube.

#### **7.6. Disinterest towards the advertisements**

Participants reported that many advertisements did not hold their interest, and they waited till they could skip the advertisement. The products or services depicted were not noticed by the participants. The sub-themes identified under this theme were (1) Personal testimonies and, (2) Inattentiveness.

*Personal testimonies:* Participants reported that while purchasing a product or service, they preferred personal testimonies from people they know, rather than advertisements. They had the opinion that advertisements were meant to promote the product or service and to make it look good. Many participants believed that the advertisements could not be trusted because they do not represent all the features of the product or service.

*... They are informative and give input for making opinions about them. More than ads other customers influence more in forming opinion ... (Participant 32, MT)*

The participant reported that the advertisements were informative, and they helped form opinions. More than advertisements, the participant found the opinions of other customers to be influential.

*... more than the ads I usually try things by hearing from others. Or I get the notification directly from the apps ... (Participant 34, KC)*

The participant reported that they tried things which were recommended by others rather than products seen in advertisements. The participant also tried products or services which were notified by the application.

*... It cannot be said that all these ads are giving us the correct theme (information about the services). Some of them present it in a different way. ... (Participant 12, RT)*

The participant holds the opinion that not all of the advertisements provide correct information about the services. The advertisements may present features of the products or services partially or differently.

*Inattentiveness:* Some of the participants reported that they did not pay attention to the advertisements and did not know what they were about. This led to them being unaware of a particular product or service, even if they were exposed to the advertisements.

*... Do not look into the advertisements that come up and do not give much attention for that ... (Participant 2, AMM)*

The participant reported that they neither watched the advertisements nor paid any attention to them.

*... I'm a regular user of YouTube. I get advertisements of simulation games and racing games. I don't give much attention generally ... (Participant 22, TN)*

The participant is a regular user of YouTube and gets advertisements for games. The participant reported that they do not pay attention to them.

*... They are not things that interest me. Usually, the ads are boring and long, and I don't pay much attention to them ... (Participant 50, GK)*

The participant did not find advertisements interesting. The participant felt that most advertisements are long and boring and reported that they did not pay much attention to them.

## 8. Discussion

YouTube is considered to be one of the most powerful radicalizing instruments of the 21st century, due to the flow and accessibility of content as well as how people are drawn towards the content, which gives the viewer more information to see (Tufekci, 2018). A unique characteristic seen on YouTube is that the advertisement encountered by the viewer is governed or recommended by an algorithm that is based on the viewer's previous search history and preference of the content that they see and seek on YouTube (Petersen, 2019). Through the emergence of social media, marketing itself changed to a two-way conversation, with the brand communicating to the customers. This platform has made communication with the consumers and marketers quite easy and convenient (Andreki & Yazdanifard 2014). Social media platforms, like YouTube, have revealed that brands can speed up consumer information dispatch and this platform stands as a medium to keep the negative and positive influence on the effectiveness of the associated products and services (Cheng, Cheng & Huang 2012).

One of the aims of the current study was to explore the opinions of the YouTube visitors about the advertisements that they encounter on YouTube. While attempts were made to understand the opinions of people towards advertisements, previous studies show there is a chance that the individual gets an idea about the service or the product from these advertisements (Wu, 2016) and through word-of-mouth recommendation. Hence, the individual starts to have an opinion of trust in the product even before using the service and making the marketing of the product possible. Evidence from the study conducted by Mohr (2014) showed that social media platforms can create opinion followers, or in other terms, a set of people who follow or get influenced by a particular leader (e.g., film actors or sports stars), and the people starts to avail the those infiltrated opinions made by those leaders and hence increasing its use as well as information about that person. The increased use of video has become a driving force and a new opening for a huge business and now it has become the customer's choice (Drury, 2008). Social media has created opportunities for consumers as well as advertisers to benefit from the comments and observations that others post on social media (Cha, 2009, Cuthall, Changchit & Pham 2020), and the content that is shown in those advertisements influence the customers to adopt that service or those products which are

**Table 2. Themes and subthemes identified**

Themes	Subthemes
<b>Exploring the opinion of YouTube visitors towards the advertisement</b>	
Subjective distress Information and entertainment.	Recurrent advertisements Placement of advertisements Length of advertisement. Introduction to the product Distinctiveness and creativity
<b>Exploring the influence of advertisement on purchase intention</b>	
Relevance of the advertisement Disinterest towards the advertisements	Personalization Future purchases Trials Personal testimonies Inattentiveness

advertised (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015). Hence, to explore this with the help of thematic analysis, the researchers were able to narrow down two different themes with the exploration of the individual viewer's opinion on the advertisement shown in Youtube. The major two themes that were explored were (1) Subjective distress and, (2) Information and entertainment.

The first theme identified was subjective distress. In this context, it refers to the uneasiness and the disturbance created in an individual when he or she is forced to see the ads before moving on to watch the actual content on YouTube. The theme explains various difficulties that an individual encounters when there are instances like absence of a skip button or when there is a hampering due to the sudden pop up of the advertisement instead of the content they intend to see. The YouTube visitors here experience anger, irritation, and disturbance when they encounter advertisements before watching the content. Similar findings were also reported in the literature (e.g. Gountas et al., 2019). Past researches showed a stronger viewer preference for skippable advertisements than conventional non-skippable types which suggests a better viewing experience without sacrificing advertising value (Pashkevich et al., 2012). Participants feel that when the advertisement pops out while watching a video, the continuity or flow of the video surfing is lost which hampers individuals' interests and involvement in the given video content is lost (Kong et al., 2019). The attention deviates from the desired contents to undesired contents. Thus, the process of information gathering is also disturbed (Lembcke et al., 2019). In a study, it was seen that in the platform of YouTube, where participants were exposed to advertisement that was not skippable, was seen to leave the site much earlier compared to the control group, who had skippable options available for advertisement (Pashkevich et al., 2012). In-stream advertising showed a larger negative impact on YouTube users towards YouTube as well as to what is being advertised (Dorai-Raj & Zigmond, 2011). Based on these, three sub-themes were identified—Recurrent advertisements, Placement of advertisement, and Length of advertisement.

The sub-theme *recurrent advertising* refers to advertisements which are repeated multiple times. The individuals had to watch the advertisements before watching target videos and the advertisements were repeated, leading to annoyance and irritation. From the previous literature, it is understood that the optimal repetition for traditional media were three exposures (Champeny et al., 2019; Panaggio et al., 2016). When the advertisements are exposed recurrently, the individual perceives advertisements as annoying and tend to avoid them (Hu et al., 2007; Sethuraman et al., 2011). Individual participants could also make judgments pertaining to the quality of the products or services advertised through the amount of repetition, and assume the quality of the product or service with repeated advertisements as not good (Kirmani, 1997; Scott & White, 2016). Repeated exposure to the same media can provide enjoyment, especially when the individual discovers elements that they had missed previously. In this case, the positive sides of repeated consumption have not been found after repeated exposure (O'Brian, 2020). During repeated consumption, the individual eventually increases the length between each consumption. This is followed by boredom, which leads to a halt in the consumption (Benson et al., 2016; Tsukuda & Goto, 2020). The choice to cease consumption was not given to the individuals and thus they had to continue watching them. Other studies point out that the effectiveness of advertisement increased with advertisement repetition at first; however, the effect of the advertisement was saturated and decreased if advertisement repetition exceeded a certain point (T. Park & Salvendy, 2012; Park et al., 2008).

The *placement of the advertisements* refers to the position or the slot of the advertisement placed in the video that is being streamed on YouTube. Although the respondents noted that most of the advertisements they come across were at the beginning of a given video, they were also placed in the middle and end. This creates a sense of irritation and discomfort among YouTube visitors especially when an option to skip the advertisement is unavailable that also results in the perception of it being forceful or coercive. When the individual encounters such disturbance, exposure to advertisements will irritate the individual, leading to increased chances of losing

interest in seeing the content they wished to watch (Hu et al., 2007; Sethuraman et al., 2011). A vast majority of the literature suggests that it is the number of views garnered by the advertisement that determine its effectiveness (Palcu et al., 2017; Tiggemann et al., 2019). The current results contradict these findings. The views acquired from the video could be attributed to itself and not the advertisement, as the people had chosen to watch the video and not the advertisement. They did not control the advertisements they watched and could also opt to skip the advertisement.

Moreover, advertisements are generally placed in such a way that the viewers have to segment the content that they see (Sato, 2019), which might be disturbing the viewers which might also create subjective distress. When individuals are interrupted there is a sudden shift in the visual stimulus that an individual encounters and this creates a counter effect on the content they are intending to watch later on YouTube (Hsieh & Chen, 2011).

The length of the advertisement is referred to as the time that the advertisement was exposed to YouTube visitors. When an individual was exposed to lengthy advertisements they reported to have subjective discomfort and also lack of interest in such lengthy advertisements. But in contradiction, some responded that small and catchy advertisements made a positive opinion within them about the service and that made them to pay attention to what was actually portrayed through the advertisements. This is in contradiction to the previous findings which state that longer advertisements were more recognizable and memorable (Rodriguez, 2017). Other studies suggest that shorter advertisements which can grab the attention of the individuals and hold it for short durations are more effective (Ridout et al., 2010). Longer advertisements could be counter-productive after multiple repetitions.

So from these responses gathered, it can be concluded that people pay great attention to the content or the information that is shown in advertisements (Nettelhorst & Brannon, 2012). Respondents were attracted by the comprehensive and updated information covering all the dimensions of products which can include products' features, price, discounts, delivery, and availability considered in any social media ads message (Mohammed et al., 2003), hence forming a positive opinion about the service. But it is also observed as the duration of the advertisement prolongs, it contributes to disinterest toward the advertisements. Hence, the recall of the matter expressed in the advertisements may not be present (Angell et al., 2016).

The second theme identified was information and entertainment. It explained about the information, updates, and progress about the service or the product portrayed in the advertisements. The advertisements in social media platforms had established a connection between the consumers and the marketer and also opened ways to present innovative ideas and possibilities about the brand (Comscore Media, 2009). One of the major characteristics of advertisement was enhanced service awareness of the brand or a specific product (Dehghani et al., 2016). The advertisements that the viewers were exposed to not only provided them with sufficient information but also with entertaining content. In a similar fashion, participants in the current study have explained that some advertisements they had exposed to were creative and enjoyable. Previous studies reported that creative advertisement content was thought-provoking (Vedula, et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2019). YouTube presents moving images to a wide audience and has established itself as one of the most successful and most visited online video-sharing services (Snelson, 2011). From this theme of *information and entertainment*, the following sub-themes were extracted—*introduction to the product* and *distinctiveness and creativity*.

The sub-theme, introduction of the product refers to the fact that the individual gets introduced to new products or services, and novel innovations and specifications about the existing products or services. It can be seen through the responses given by the participants; they got familiarized with products that they have not heard about and got updated about the existing products. The widespread popularity of the web and the internet has led to an intense growth of commercial

product publicity online via advertisements and also it is said that the visual advertisements portrayed on television and social media are a crucial medium of attracting customers towards a product (Vedula et al., 2017). As emphasized by previous studies, advertisements provide information about products and services to individuals (Domazet et al., 2017; Terui et al., 2011). While discussing the previous literature, it can be understood that quality and the meaning of the content in an advertisement is an important influencing factor in social media marketing. When the content within the advertisement is standing out or controversial, it prompts the individual to watch them and when the number of views increases it becomes viral (Pashkevich et al., 2012). In this way, information transfer as well as marketing is happening quickly that reaches the masses in a cost-effective manner (Russ, 2017).

Distinctiveness and creativity are the uniqueness of the content or the quality that is shown in the advertisement. Respondents reported that creativity and the distinctiveness in the content of the advertisement exhibit itself as a form of entertainment, and the participants of the current study had reported that they tend to watch such advertisement again. Previous studies have also emphasized the importance of original, creative, and different advertisements and advertising strategies to improve positive perceptions towards the products or services (Buil et al., 2013; Domazet et al., 2017). Creativity has been proven as a cornerstone for the development of effective advertisements (Sasser & Koslow, 2012.) Findings of the present study aligned with the existing literature about the significance of creative and distinct advertisements.

The second objective of the study was to explore the influence of advertisements on purchase intention. Under this objective, two themes were identified: (1) *relevance of the advertisement* and, (2) *disinterest towards the advertisements*.

The relevance of the advertisement refers to the importance of the service that is being advertised, intended to influence the customers. Studies that compared advertisements of two different brands or two different versions of the same brand found that the preference depended on the relevance of the content (Del Barrio-García et al., 2020; Yagci et al., 2009). The advertisements had to be novel and relevant to improve the purchase intention for the particular product or service (Agnoli et al., 2019; Smith & Yang, 2004). In another study, Jung (2017) has argued that if the advertisements are perceived as relevant, they are more likely to pay considerable interest.

When the product or the service is available, they are likely to use them more often than they do in unfavorable or unavailable conditions. A large, persistent drop in purchasing is approximated in line with estimates from surveys found a 35% drop in total consumption during the spread of pandemic followed by unavailability of services (Baker et al., 2020). Participants tend to attend to advertisements which are relevant to them. Personally irrelevant advertisements tend to be ignored. Three sub-themes identified under the theme are *personalization*, *future purchase*, and *trials*.

*Personalization* indicates that participants tend to attend when the advertisements are personally relevant. If they are subjected to irrelevant advertisements, they tend to ignore it. Customers find value when they are in need of a product that represents the subjective aspect of purchasing intention (Tyrväinen et al., 2020).

In YouTube, a viewer gets to see a particular advertisement generated by the content of their previous search on YouTube itself or by the search history from certain other websites on the same content (Gross, 2013). When the social media advertisements can track the responses of the viewers through liking, sharing, commenting, and posting, they might use this data to analyze how and why specific advertisements are desired by the viewers (Laroche et al., 2013; Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

There is no surety that the customer will avail of the services immediately after viewing the advertisement. Customer satisfaction cannot guarantee the repurchase from a company but it

plays an important role in gaining customer loyalty, and a satisfied customer is more likely to send business back to the company, whereas an unsatisfied customer may avoid any future business with them (PraveenKumar, 2015). Participants in the current study have stated that they tend to remember the advertisement when they need the product or service. A study on several factors of attractiveness such as advertisements featuring celebrities, brand acceptance, and recall of the advertisement had shown a positive correlation between buying behavior and product attractiveness (Mittal, 2017). Participants also had to recall the advertisements at the time of purchase. In this regard, the memorability of the advertisement was rooted in its creative expression (Baack et al., 2008 & Jin et al., 2019).

*Trials* give a chance to try out the product or service before purchase. Participants stated that giving out trials also affect the purchasing of a product or service. Social media facilitates the marketing of products and services (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Currently, many applications provide trial versions or free trials of their services. This will help the customer to avail of those services for a short period and decide whether to purchase it or not. If the service is useful, the customer can continue subscription.

Disinterest in the advertisements was another theme for the second objective. It talks about the lack of interest participants hold towards the advertisements. In 2010 YouTube introduced “TrueView in-stream” advertisements enabling a “skip ad” option while playing a video. Results showed a strong viewer preference for skippable advertisements than conventional non-skippable types suggesting a better viewing experience without sacrificing advertising value (Pashkevich et al., 2012). Participants reported that they tend to wait until the skip button appears to skip the advertisement. Participants generally don’t give much attention to skippable advertisements unless it is highly attractive. The two sub-themes identified under this theme are *personal testimonies* and *inattentiveness*.

Personal testimonies from familiar contacts were preferred over advertisements by many participants who responded that they don’t simply use a product or service just by watching the advertisement. Rather they also consider the opinions of friends and others who have used those products or services. Especially in the case of beauty products, customers try to educate themselves by watching YouTube videos and expert opinions (Pixability, 2015). Word-of-mouth could have a better impact on purchase intention of products and services (Lee et al., 2017). Participants also said that advertisements are for the promotion of the products. Everything portrayed in the advertisement may not be true, and as a mere viewer, the customer cannot trust everything shown in the advertisement. Consumer skepticism in products is the tendency to disbelieve the informational claims of advertisements (Becker et al., 2019; Calfee & Ringold, 1994). In cases of consumer skepticism of the advertisements, the individuals would bypass the advertisements and gather the information themselves (Aydin, 2013; Obermiller et al., 2005).

The second sub-theme identified as *inattentiveness* when participants responded that they do ignore advertisement and don’t pay attention to it. As a study has pointed out, 1055 online browsers in the US and Europe responded to a survey that they disliked pop up advertisements, mobile advertisements, and video advertisements the most. On the other hand, offline advertisements including magazines, print, and TV were considered favorably (An, 2016).

Studies also suggest that online media advertisements have to compete with other stimuli to grab the attention of individuals (Simola et al., 2011). Advertisements would also be competing with each other, when multiple advertisements are present. Therefore, advertisements have to be truly effective to garner the attention of the viewers (Bakar et al., 2015).

## 9. Implications of the study

Wide reaching platforms such as YouTube can reach billions of people. As such, the advertisements on these platforms can also be viewed by the same number of people. YouTube advertisements can have a great impact on advertising. The facets which influence the effectiveness of online



advertisements may differ from those of traditional forms of advertisements. The influence of creativity on the memorability and enjoyment of the advertisement is emphasized in the study. Perceptions regarding recurrent advertisements and its lengths can also be considered to create more effective advertisements.

## 10. Limitations of the study

The study was conducted amidst COVID-19 pandemic causing difficulty in finding participants and interviewing them face-to-face which left researchers with the option of telephonic interviews. This might have had a considerable impact in the responses since a potential imbalance in regular life was observed globally during this period. While this study has identified themes pertaining to opinion of YouTube advertisements and its influence on purchase intention, further empirical research is needed to determine the strength of these relationships.

## 11. Conclusion

YouTube has gained much popularity with an increasing number of professional video bloggers providing informative content. Marketers use YouTube as a video platform and try different ways to advertise and promote marketing on YouTube (Sharma & Philip, 2018). The opinion of YouTube visitors about advertisements was explored from their narratives, which led to the formation of two broad themes—subjective distress and information & entertainment. Subjective distress is caused by recurrent advertisements, placement of advertisements in undesirable contexts, and too lengthy advertisements. Information and entertainment aspects of a YouTube advertisement occur when the products are introduced for the first time or when present in a distinctive or creative way. When the advertisements are perceived as informative or entertaining, customers tend to watch it multiple times that might also result in purchase decision-making.

While YouTube advertisements offer a new avenue in advertising, there are many pitfalls to be avoided. Personalized advertisements which are relevant to individuals are more likely to capture their attention. Viewers prefer their advertisements to not interrupt their viewing experience and pay attention to those advertisements which are short and distinctive. Advertisements which are placed in the middle of videos are disliked for their interruption and long, repetitive advertisements are perceived as irritating.

With the addition of YouTube premium, the YouTube users in India who watch advertisements have been narrowed to the middle class. The monetary and expenditure limitations which separate the upper class from the middle class can impact their spending behavior and their opinion on advertisements. Future studies can investigate the socio-economical class difference in opinion on advertisements.

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The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

### Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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