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INTRODUCTION

Online marketing communication has impacted the way that companies engage with masses of consumers. Attitudes towards advertising, in general, are expected to influence the success of any particular advertising. Online video advertisements outperform other types of online advertisements, and hence increase brand awareness, brand favourability, and purchasing intention (Mehta & Scott, n.d.). Little is known about traditional advertising versus social media advertising, in South Africa. This research attempts to shed some light on how effective social media is, especially YouTube advertising, on the hierarchy of model element to a sample of UWC students.



PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The need for information sharing and networking has increased with fast social media growth and a mass of advertising which appeal to the youth who represents a difficult market to reach with marketing communications. Initial information search revealed few research studies in South Africa regarding YouTube advertising, with little known about attitudes towards social media as an advertising medium. Therefore, the research objective was to determine the effects of YouTube advertising on the cognitive attitude component (knowledge) based on various usage characteristics and demographical elements.



LITERATURE REVIEW

It is reported that 11.4% of Africa's population has access to the Internet, which would constitute about 5.7% of the global online sum total (Patel, 2012). Main activities for Internet users in South Africa include running searches, emailing, social networking, online chatting and instant messaging. Social media utilises and creates opportunities for the use of inductive and deductive logic by their users and networking sites continue to be one of the hottest commodities in the international online marketplace (Magolnick, 2010). YouTube is a video sharing website, with over 2 million active monthly users in South Africa (Grossman, 2012:38-43), giving advertisers an opportunity to reach Generation Y through YouTube advertising, since the youth has grown up in a media saturated world, and are, therefore, more brand conscious, technologically savvy and well-networked (Bianca, 2010). YouTube presents a tremendous opportunity for exposure and engagement in a social context (Odden, 2012). Whether students view appropriate video content posted by others or create and post their own, the learning environment is stimulated and made more relevant for today's techno-savvy generation (Brew, 2007; Full Brain Marketing, 2010).



RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A survey method was used by randomly distributing 500 questionnaires to UWC students, from which statistical descriptive analysis was conducted by using a quantitative approach. The questionnaire encompasses closed ended questions, which comprised both multiple choice questions and Likert scale questions. The research method was chosen based on time, money, feasibility and availability to measure the impact and views of UWC students regarding YouTube advertising.

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The exploration indicates that respondents believe that knowledge emanates from YouTube advertising. A near majority of respondents agreed that they have acquired knowledge owing to YouTube advertisements (Figure 1). Nielsen's (2009) research supports the view that Internet advertising enhances brand loyalty and brand awareness; eight out of ten Internet users consult websites before purchasing a product.

**Access aspects:** A majority of respondents confirmed that YouTube advertising results in knowledge when accessed from both a mobile device and a PC (Figure 2). More than double the number of respondents, when compared to those who disagreed, asserted that a combination of both mediums supplies information about brands, while it decreased for mobile device alone and moreover for users of PCs. The number of South Africans who use their mobile device to access the Internet exceeds the number of those who rely on traditional desktop, with close to 9.5 million mobile Internet users compared to the estimated 5 million desktop users (SA Good News, 2008).

**Period of usage influences:** The exploration showed that nearly double the respondents, in comparison to those who disagreed, believe that YouTube advertising results in knowledge, regardless of the length of time that they have used it (Figure 3). Nevertheless, the impact is subject to change within 5 years of usage, as the investigation showed that YouTube advertisements tend to yield moderate effect within the first 2 years of use and increase in the 3rd year, before diminishing from the 4th year of usage.

**Usage frequency elements:** The research revealed a partial descending trend with the usage frequency factor (Figure 4), as respondents who use YouTube daily agreed that its commercials are an effective source of information, while this decreased to 2-4 a week, and again to once a week and, furthermore, to once a month. According to a study on US online video viewers aged 18 years and older, 42% of YouTube viewers visit the site frequently and 65% of US online users have watched a video on YouTube (Marketing Charts, 2012).

**Log-in duration facets:** The largest number of participants' responses indicated a general agreement that YouTube advertisements are useful in the provision of brand knowledge with regard to login duration facets (Figure 5). The findings attest that respondents who logged on for an average duration span of 2 to 3 hours strongly believed that YouTube advertising provides knowledge; whereas those who spent less than two hours or more than 3 hours, did not agree to the same extent that YouTube advertising supplies knowledge. The analysis of United Kingdom online content video and video advertisement viewers showed that 64.1% of the online video audience was exposed to a video advertisement, with the 15-24 age group representing the largest video advertisement audience (ComScore, 2012).

**Number of television advertisements watched per log-in section:** Figure 6 reveals that respondents agreed that the average number of 6-11 television advertisements watched per login session project knowledge; the effect of YouTube advertisements drops drastically when more than eleven television advertisements are watched per login session, and the effect is negative when less than five television advertisements are watched per login session. YouTube viewers can skip video advertisements after five seconds (Banham, 2011). Opted-in users who chose to watch the advertisements are 75% more engaged than an average user, while for standard pre-roll users spend 48% of time highly engaged with the advertisement content (Ipsos MediaCT, 2011). The decision to view advertisements instead of skipping could mean that UWC students may be seeking knowledge.

**Gender aspect:** The study reveals that there are noteworthy findings concerning YouTube advertising and knowledge, with a near majority of both males and females agreeing that YouTube advertising provides knowledge (Figure 7). US Research showed that 52% of females believed that YouTube advertising provides valuable product knowledge with 48% of males agreeing (De Raaf, 2012). There was no major difference between the genders regarding YouTube advertisements' effectiveness in generating knowledge.

**Age influences:** The effectiveness of YouTube in providing knowledge was highest amongst 19 to 21 year olds and 23 to 24 year olds age groups. The 19 to 26 year olds agreed that YouTube advertising provides knowledge, whereas the older age group (27 years older) disagreed (Figure 8). In the US, 54.5% of the YouTube's demographics are 35 - 65 years old, 19.1% are 25-34 years old, and 7.15% are 18 - 24 years old (White, 2009). The primary research comprised of students from one university, while the huge difference with the secondary research is that it was conducted across a wide sample and in a country where social media has been embedded in its core.

**Race factors:** A near majority of the Coloured group and less in the Black group agreed that YouTube advertising generates knowledge (Figure 9). De Raaf (2012) states that 65% of Caucasians in America who source information on brands regard the advertisements on YouTube as a source of information, while Hispanics (14%) slightly consider the same when it comes to YouTube advertisements, and 13% of African-Americans are a bit cautious to credit YouTube advertisements as being informative. The results are not compatible with the current research, as it was done in America and is representative of all races. The Coloured and Black groups fell under one category, while the current research was not representative of all races in South Africa owing to a small sample and the university predominantly comprising Black and Coloured students.

CONCLUSIONS

The effectiveness of YouTube advertising in providing knowledge was supported by a majority of the respondents, which implies that YouTube advertising is considered as a source of information based on the usage characteristics and demographical elements of the South Africa generation Y, which was represented by UWC students. Notably, female Coloured students comprise a bigger portion of the YouTube users at UWC, and could be a useful determinant of the impact of YouTube advertising amongst peer students. Mobile devices and PCs were popular mediums of access. Users are more attentive and engaged in YouTube advertising because advertisements are generally watched voluntarily.

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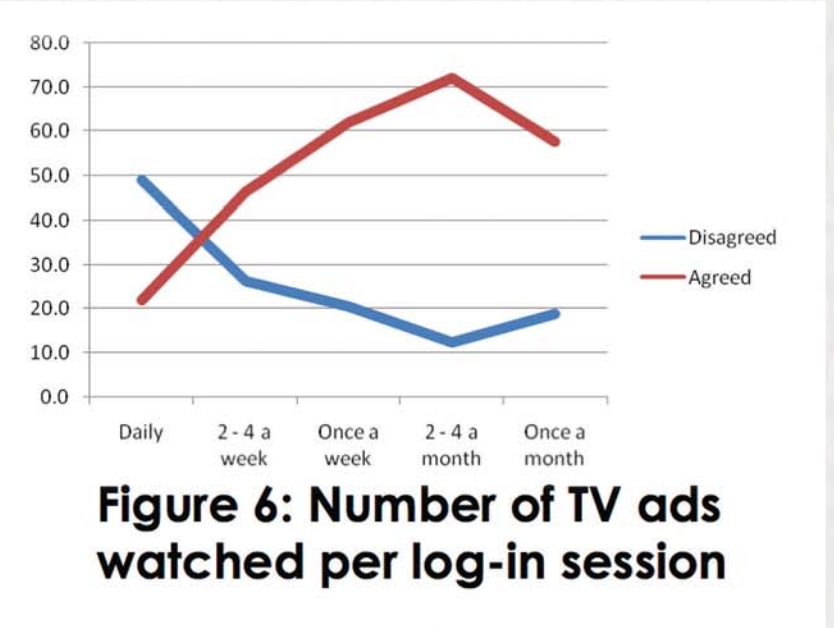
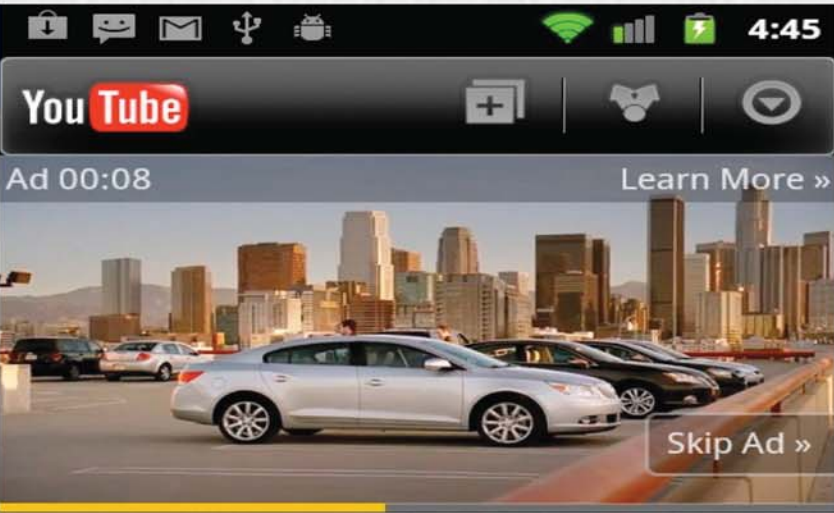


Figure 6: Number of TV ads watched per log-in session

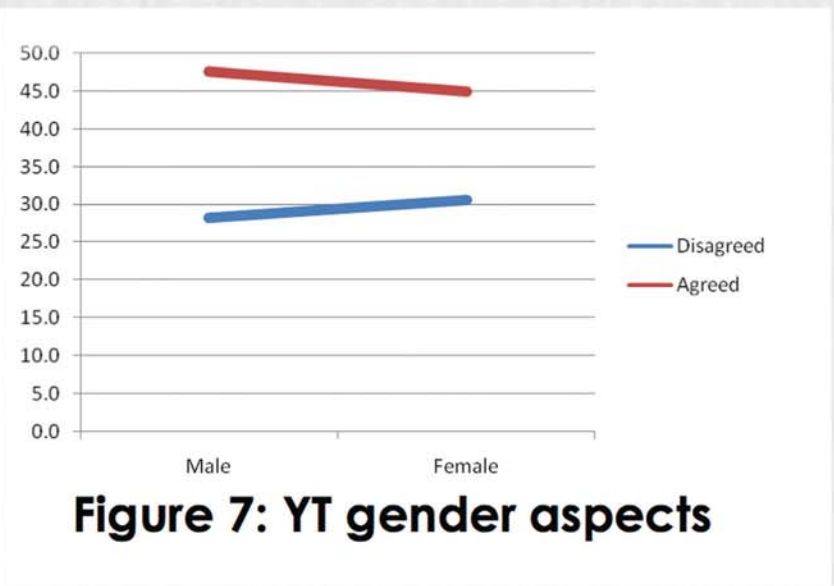


Figure 7: YT gender aspects

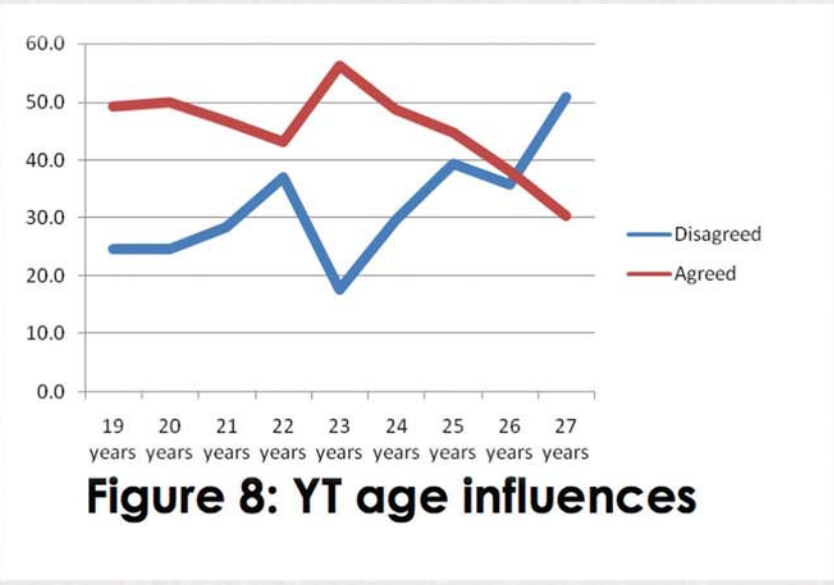


Figure 8: YT age influences

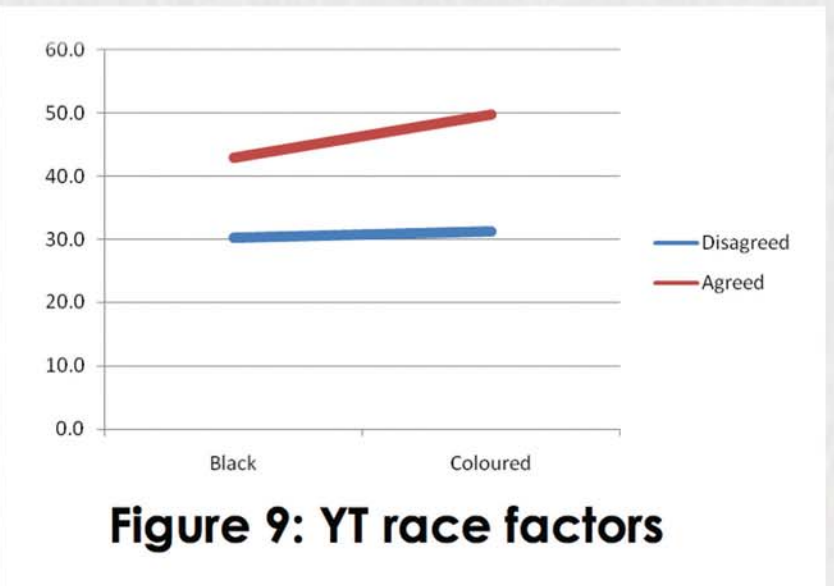


Figure 9: YT race factors

RECOMMENDATIONS

Advertisers should make use of video advertisements that will explicit the core message behind the advertising. Companies that want to create awareness of their brand amongst UWC students should target younger Coloured students, as they are more aware of YouTube advertising and can, therefore, act as ambassadors who will facilitate the impact of YouTube advertising among fellow students. When it comes to YouTube's True View, where sensible branding should be included in the first 5 seconds, this leveraging will heighten viewers' responses and ensure brand impact in all cases whether the advertisement is viewed or skipped. Other factors that should be considered include the quality of the video, and its compatibility to the device on which it is displayed.