

How YouTube Product Placement Shapes Thai Consumer Behavior: Insights from the COVID-19 Era

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of media exposure and attitudes toward product placement advertising on YouTube on viewer behavioral responses, based on the AISAS theory (Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share). Specifically, it investigates overall viewer responses and three sub-components: interaction, engagement, and conversion. Data collected from 408 Thai members of Generation Y in Bangkok during August 2021, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, were analyzed quantitatively. Multiple regression analysis revealed that "willingness to recommend the product to others" strongly influences both overall and each of the three subdivided viewer behavioral responses. Furthermore, exposure to YouTubers who create brand entertainment (through humorous or engaging content) moderately influences interaction (e.g., liking). Perceived product reliability moderately influences engagement (e.g., commenting), and a preference for eco-friendly products moderately influences conversion (e.g., purchasing). The model explained 48% of the variance in consumer behavior ($p < 0.05$). These findings have practical implications for practitioners and businesses, suggesting that Generation Y consumers are particularly concerned with product reliability and environmental impact. Therefore, they may be more discerning about advertising and more likely to seek additional information before purchasing.

Keywords: Product Placement; AISAS Theory; Thai Consumers; COVID-19 Pandemic; Generation Y

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Introduction

At the end of 2019, the first cases of the novel Coronavirus, COVID-19, were detected in Wuhan, China (WHO, 2019). As viewer behavior changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people lost the opportunity to interact with others in person. This social disconnection has significantly impacted emotional and cognitive well-being (Provenzi & Tronick, 2020). To fill this void, people turned to watching video clips, becoming more aware of both raw materials and finished products. Given YouTube's significant growth, many marketers shifted their advertising spend from television to YouTube (Battaglio, 2016; Vučenović et al., 2021). Companies are increasingly interested in developing marketing strategies on this popular digital platform to target younger generations and encourage purchases (LadyBee, 2020).

Including 2024's digital marketing trends (Khalid, 2023), studies on Generation Y during COVID-19 have shown that this demographic has been significantly impacted by the pandemic, particularly in terms of mental health and coping behaviors (Grelle et al., 2023). In Thailand, the number of YouTube users seeking entertainment is growing rapidly, particularly among Generation Z, Generation X, and Generation Y (Wang, 2021; Mintel, 2022). This has led to increased use of product placement advertising on YouTube, which changes the advertising process and interaction patterns within the industry (Budiono & Triyono, 2020). During COVID-19, video content became a competitive strategy for marketers, especially for explaining and demonstrating products (iPlan Digital, 2021). Viewers increased their online purchases, prompting YouTube to adapt by producing engaging video content and better-connecting brands with consumers (Bergen & Shaw, 2020; Wisankosol, 2021).

YouTube's marketing communications significantly impact consumer responses, especially among young consumers (Duffett, 2020). Product placements on YouTube have been found to influence young African and Thai consumers (Duffett et al., 2019). During the COVID-19 pandemic, Thai YouTube advertising showed a positive correlation between exposure, engagement, and purchase intention (Ongkrutraksa, 2019). However, further research is needed to determine the most effective product placement strategies on YouTube.

Another interesting finding by Ongkrutraksa (2022a) is that consumers are highly interested in environmentally friendly products featured in YouTube videos. Similarly, a study by Mintel showed that over 82% of Thais are concerned about the environmental impact of COVID-19 due to increased waste (Mintel, 2022). This aligns with Nadja-Marie Tybussek's (2019) research, which found that YouTube is crucial for promoting sustainable lifestyles to

combat climate change and global warming. Recent analyses of digital marketing trends indicate that sustainability and eco-friendly practices are becoming increasingly important in digital marketing strategies (Khalid, 2023). Thus, it is important to understand how environmentally friendly messages on YouTube impact viewers.

Strengthening connections to sustainable marketing practices (Intel, 2022; Nadja-Marie Tybussek, 2019), and product placement advertising on YouTube is an increasingly important topic that requires further research. As viewers continue to shift towards streaming services and web videos, product placement advertising on YouTube is becoming more common. However, not all product placements are successful, and advertisers must carefully execute these placements to effectively influence viewers (Fossen, 2021). This study aims to investigate the role of YouTube in consumer attention, awareness, and behavioral responses towards product placement advertising, and to determine how advertising can effectively use this tool. YouTube presents significant potential for presenting products through video content (Raharjo, 2019). YouTubers utilize their channels to create promotional video content, capture audience attention, increase website traffic, raise brand awareness, and foster conversations between audiences and YouTubers (Miller, 2020; Goh et al., 2016; Stanimirovic, 2021).

After conducting a necessary analysis of existing literature on product placement and viewer behavior, it was found that there is a research gap concerning product placement advertising and viewers in Thailand. Therefore, this study aims to provide updated guidelines to help companies and organizations improve their product placement advertising. This will enable advertising professionals to better understand this online media tool and be prepared for any issues that may arise. Additionally, it is worth exploring whether the product's context within the environment affects consumer attitudes toward product placement on YouTube. Research on product placement advertising on YouTube is crucial as it can help advertisers learn how to effectively influence their audience and create more impactful advertising campaigns that connect with viewers and drive sales (Fossen, 2021).

Expanding on emerging social media marketing theories (Goh et al., 2016; Stanimirovic, 2021), this study aims to investigate consumers' attitudes using the tricomponent of attitudes model and AISAS theory, focusing on how exposure to product placement influences their behavioral responses. Applications of AISAS theory in social media contexts have shown significant impacts on consumer decision-making processes (Javeda et al., 2022). This study also explores viewer behavioral responses to social media, including interaction, engagement, and conversion. The sub-objectives are as follows:

1) To investigate the impact of various forms of product placement, such as brand placement, integration, and entertainment.

2) To analyze attitudinal effects on different response levels (e.g., interaction, engagement, and conversion).

Literature Review

The conceptual framework has been developed from a literature review of the following theories and concepts. The literature review consists of two groups of independent variables (exposure and attitude) that are presumed to influence consumer behavioral responses that refer to the behavior of responding to product placement advertising on YouTube, which is considered a dependent variable. Hypotheses in this research are developed by various aspects of theory and concept as stated in the following paragraphs.

1. Media Exposure

In the digital age, media exposure affects purchasing decisions (Tansiri & Devahastin, 2019). This study measured consumers' exposure to product placement on YouTube videos by recording how often they watched such ads in a week, using McLeod and O'Keefe's (1972) method. Also in this study, the concepts of product placement based on Russell's (2019) concepts were combined with other concepts to formulate the research variables as follows:

1. Product placement: Products are used as props in video clips. (Gupta & Lord, 1998)
2. Brand integration: Video clip of YouTubers discussing or showing products they want to promote. (Schwemmer & Ziewiecki, 2018)
3. Brand entertainment: Video clips with YouTubers talking about products in a humorous manner. (Hudson, S. & Hudson, D., 2006)

All 3 types of product placement advertising above are used to formulate the variables shown in Figure 1.

2. Attitude

Attitude refers to an individual's feelings, beliefs, and actions towards a person or an object. It can be either positive or negative, as stated by Rogers (1985). When it comes to advertising, the audience's response to it determines their attitude towards it, whether they are satisfied or not, as noted by Mackenzie and Lutz (1989). The appearance of advertising influences the audience's behavior, and they decide whether to skip or continue watching the

ad on YouTube, as pointed out by Danang (2018). Positive attitudes are formed when consumers find the advertisement informative and entertaining, as stated by Fireman in 2010, as cited in Ramadhani et al. (2020).

This study has used the Tri-component Attitude Model to explain consumer attitudes. The tri-component model of attitude is essential in researching product placements on YouTube. The model includes cognitive, affective, and conative components. It provides a comprehensive framework for understanding individuals' attitudes towards product placements. Schiffman et al. (2010) describe the Tri-component Attitude Model as follows:

Three components influence consumer decision-making:

1. Cognitive - knowledge & perception from experience & information
2. Affective - emotions toward a product or brand
3. Conative - buying intention or behavioral intention

Consumers' attitudes toward purchasing products are shaped by their prior beliefs, preferences, and intents. Makanyaza and Ongkrutraksa have used this framework to design survey questions for measuring attitudes toward YouTube product placement. This research aims to reveal the COVID-19-related results. The model has been divided into three components and formulate the hypothesis testing with variables shown in Figure 1 as follows:

1. Learn (about a product) or the cognitive component allows this study to explore viewers' beliefs and thoughts about product placements in YouTube videos.

2. Feel (positive or negative) or the affective component allows this study to examine emotional responses to YouTube product placements, assessing factors such as reliability and eco-friendliness.

3. Tend to do (willingness to recommend products) or the conative component addresses viewers' behavioral intentions and actions resulting from product placements in YouTube videos. This study investigates whether the placements influence viewers' willingness to recommend products.

3. AISAS Theory and behavioral responses to social media

Behavior is the performance of a human in a specified situation, caused by the influence of their intention. Attitude is a factor that can influence behavior. The behavior response to a YouTuber is referred to as YouTube audience engagement. (Khan, 2017) AISAS theory was utilized in this study to answer questions.

AISAS theory, short for Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share. (Sugiyama & Andree, 2011) AISAS theory describes consumer behavior with the internet, namely the attention, emotion or preference, and action or behavior response which is divided into 3 stages as follows: (Chantamas & Pongsatha, 2017)

1. Awareness Stage: “Attention” is when consumers view advertisements or see products and services. The interaction includes watching a video clip, and reading comments, but not responding to the video clip. YouTubers get only view counts (Shao, 2009)

2. Emotion Stage: “Interest” is when consumers are eager to find information about the product in which they are interested. “Search” is when consumers search for brand-related topics in discussion forums and ask friends for information which is used to compare brands.

3. Action Stage: “Action” is when the product can fulfill the needs of consumers and the product would be selected such as comments, shares, likes, and dislikes. (Shao, 2009). “Sharing” is after purchasing a product, consumers will assess the quality of the product, and usually do this by writing about a product, reviewing it, and writing it on their own social media.

In sum, the AISAS model is a basic model for decision-making resulting from reactions to product placement. Consumer response is the result of the AISAS model from the advertising content and messages displayed via YouTube video clips. In the final stage of the AISAS model, consumers are prompted to search, act, and share. Search and share activities are relevant to consumers who interact with YouTubers. (Ruswandi et al., 2021). The consumer becomes an intermediary (Word of Mouth). (Nofrizal & Delliana, 2021) This AISAS theory is used to describe how consumers are influenced by exposure and attitudes.

Furthermore, there is a process of consumer responses, especially to social media, which according to Benjarongkij (cited in Kotsa, 2017) can be divided into two types of responses based on namely; (i) expressions of communication in social media, and (ii) expressions of behavior in purchasing decisions. These 2 types of responses indicate how much time viewers spent on YouTube, e.g., following product placement information that appears in

a YouTube clip video, clicking “Like”, commenting below the clip video, sharing the clip video on other social media, downloading the clip video, subscribing to the YouTuber, clicking on the link to the product website, and deciding to buy the product.

Therefore, this study utilizes and applies the above 2 processes of consumer responses and categorizes consumer responses to social media into three subdivisions to measure consumers' behavioral responses to product placement advertisements on YouTube and formulates the hypothesis with the variables shown in Figure 1.

4. YouTube Marketing Communication: YMC

YouTube is becoming increasingly popular and is developing into a global marketing phenomenon that has turned into an advertising space. This provides marketers with more opportunities to control their advertising content. Despite the greater time and creative constraints, it also allows for more viewer interaction and connectivity (Wang and Chan-Olmsted. , 2020). The most popular formats are description (72%), presentations (49%), sales (48%) and advertising (42%) (iPlan Digital, 2020). In addition, the main types of advertising on YouTube include skippable in-stream ads, non-skippable in-stream ads, bumper ads, overlay ads, display ads, sponsored cards, video discovery ads, masthead ads, ad sequencing, and collaborations with YouTube influencers. These various ad formats allow advertisers to engage with audiences through pre-roll, mid-roll, or post-roll video placements, display banners, interactive overlays, and strategic partnerships. (Google, 2023)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the most popular video content on YouTube was repair & retouch, exercise, humor, cooking, and electronics (Popticle, 2021). The main group watching video clips uploaded to YouTube are the younger generation consumers, especially Generation Y and Z, who watch them via mobile channels and devices. Therefore, YouTube focuses on influencing their attitudes and consumer behavior which will lead to future purchases (Duffett, 2020). The most popular advertising needs to be fun and entertaining to capture the audience’s attention and convey a positive product message. (Fischera & Reuber, 2011). YouTube, therefore, offers marketers and advertisers great opportunities. (Yang et al., 2017) for the placement of video clips (Koshy & Manohar, 2018).

5. YouTubers and Product Placement Advertising

YouTube product placement is a popular passive format of advertising where creators collaborate with brands to promote products. Brands have complete control over content

creation and production, and YouTubers may receive free products to advertise. (Gerhards, 2019). Wu (2016) found that brands can link to their website in a video's description. Boerman and Van Reijmersdal's (2020) study suggests that disclosing that product placement is not paid advertising can influence children's reactions to the brand, advertised product, and video, thus affecting the persuasiveness of influencer marketing in online videos.

In addition, the disclosure of sponsorship on YouTube may sensitize consumers to the fact that sponsored product reviews are driven by the motive to persuade consumers to buy the reviewed products rather than to inform them objectively. (Pfeuffer et al., 2021). The existing research on sponsorship disclosure in the eWOM (Electronic word of mouth) context shows that sponsorship disclosure has an impact on a variety of consumer responses. (Nofrizal & Delliana, 2021)

6. Harmonic Communication or HC

The Harmonic Communication concept proposed by Ongkrutraksa (2022b), is about sustainability for everyone, and everything related to and affected by communication. The messengers must have an ethical and social responsibility towards the environment and their audience. The recipients should also have media literacy, especially children who can be influenced by dangerous products. Furthermore, freedom of communication should not be a problem for anyone or get anyone into trouble (Freedom of expression with empathy). Freedom of communication should be under the rules, and it is important not to present violent content because this will influence the behavior of viewers in the future.

Based on the above communication concepts, the researcher included the socially responsible issues in the independent variables (feel or the affective component) to test its impact on consumers' behavioral responses.

All the above theories and concepts are carefully selected for this study, the aim of which is to find out whether there is an influence of exposure and attitudes toward YouTube product placement advertising on consumer behavioral responses (1. overall response, 2. interaction, 3. engagement, and 4. conversion). This study hypothesized the following:

H1 Exposure and attitudes towards product placement advertising on YouTube influence viewer behavior response (overall responses).

H2 Exposure and attitudes towards product placement advertising on YouTube influence viewer interaction.

H3 Exposure and attitudes towards product placement advertising on YouTube influence viewer engagement.

H4 Exposure and attitudes towards product placement advertising on YouTube influence viewer conversion.

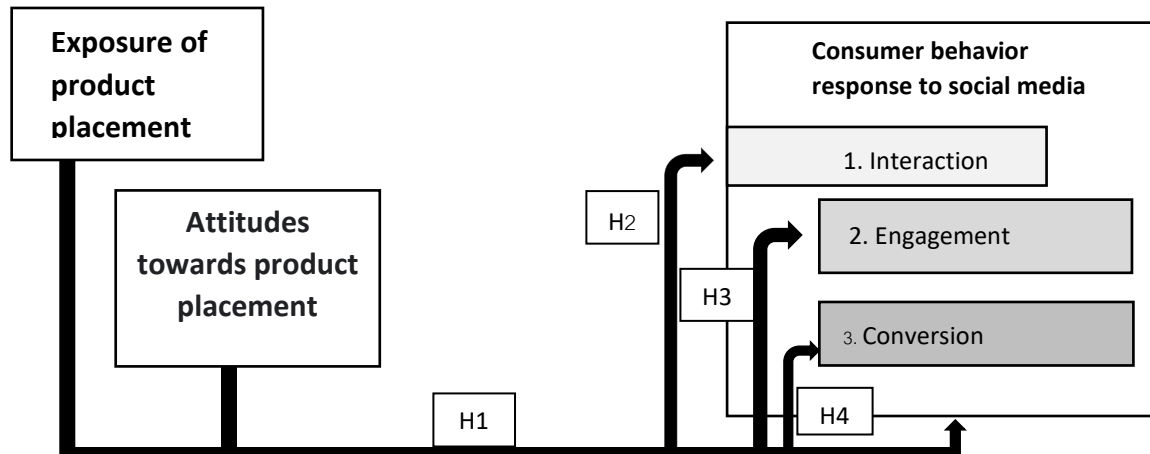


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Population and Samples

The samples were selected from the population of Thai YouTube viewers between the ages of 20 and 50 who were familiar with YouTube product placements. The sample group was selected based on a report stating that younger internet users have been actively viewing YouTube nowadays (LadyBee, 2020). If the sample group were not familiar with YouTube product placements, they were not allowed in the study. The sample size was determined by using Hair's method (Hair et al., 2010), which should be five to ten times the study index. Data were from a sample of 408 respondents who completed an online questionnaire in August 2021 from 5,527,994 residents in Bangkok, Thailand. The sample size was created according to the 2021 Census Bureau registration. (Department of Provincial Administration, 2021) The questionnaire was distributed online via "Google".

The questionnaires comprise a total of 25 questions distributed to a minimum of 250 respondents so as not to impede statistical calculations. (Henseler et al., 2016). This study comprised 408 respondents, well over the required minimum. For sample selection, this research used a three-stage randomization along with probability and non-probability sampling. (Ngampradit, 2011) Respondents were recruited through contacts from schools,

universities, offices, and businesses in Bangkok. In addition, Bangkok is the area with the highest internet connection in Thailand, at 10,452,548 people. (National Statistical Office, 2021).

Detailed Explanation of the Three-Stage Randomization Process:

Stage One - Stratified Random Sampling:

The researcher selected samples from the area, which is divided into 18 commercial districts within Bangkok, which are areas related to commerce, including entertainment venues, commercial districts, restaurants, offices, and places of various communities. This ensures that each subgroup is adequately represented in the sample.

Stage Two - Systematic Random Sampling:

Within each stratum, systematic random sampling was employed by lottery by selecting 9 districts from a total of 18 commercial districts in Bangkok, accounting for 50% of the total number of commercial areas, which are randomly selected as follows: 1.) Phra Khanong District, 2.) Din Daeng District, 3.) Ratchathewi District, 4.) Khlong Toei District, 5.) Sathorn District, 6.) Bang Na District, 7.) Phaya Thai District, 8.) Phasi Charoen District, 9.) Pathum Wan District.

Stage Three - Quota sampling:

Quota sampling is given to 50 people from each district with an age range of 20 – 55 years old, all male or female, regardless of education level. A total of 408 people must have watched video clips from any YouTube channel before

Research Instruments

The research instrument was developed from concepts of previous studies by Russell (2017) and based on a Tri-component Attitude Model. (Makanyeza, 2014) and based on AISAS theory by Sugiyama and Andree (2011) and Benjarongkij (cited in Kotsa, 2017).

Apart from the demographic questions, all questions were rated on a Likert scale with five response options, with the lowest rating being negative (Strongly disagree) and the highest rating being positive (Strongly agree). (Likert, 1932) The end of the questionnaire consists of closed and open-ended questions divided into general information about the respondents, their demographic data, and their behavior when watching YouTube videos.

Variables in the Research

1. Independent Variables:

The independent variable “Exposure” is the duration of use of YouTube product placements in a week, which are divided into three indicators, namely: (1) product placement; (2) product integration; and (3) product entertainment. The measurement of this variable refers to Russell (2017).

Attitudes toward product placement in YouTube video clips are divided into three groups, which are designed based on a Tri-component Attitude Model. (Makanyeza, 2014), namely (i) Cognitive or “Learn,” (ii) Affective or “Feel,” which also included variables from the Harmonic Communication concept proposed by Ongkrutraksa (2022b), and (iii) Conative or “Intend to Do,”

2. Dependent Variables:

Viewer behavioral responses to social media questions are based on AISAS theory by Sugiyama and Andree (2011) and Benjarongkij (cited in Kotsa, 2017) as shown in Table 1

Table 1: Variables according to the four hypotheses

		Variables’ short names
Independent variables (Exposure)	1. Video clips with products only used as props only (Product placement)	A1
	2. Video clips with YouTuber talking about or showing products smoothly (Product integration)	A2
	3. Video clips with humorous or interesting product presentation (Product entertainment)	A3
Independent variables (Attitude)	1. Learning about the product through YouTube (Learn)	B1
	2. Liking the product presented in a YouTuber’s video clip (Feel)	B2
	3. Feeling that the product presented in a YouTube video clip is reliable. (Feel)	B3
	4. Willingness to recommend products that are presented in YouTube video clips to others. (Tend to do)	B4

- | | |
|--|----|
| 5. Belief that there should be strict laws to govern YouTube video clips. (Feel) | B5 |
| 6. Belief that it is normal and acceptable for YouTubers to advertise products in their video clips. (Feel) | B6 |
| 7. Belief that YouTubers should be socially responsible when advertising products in their video clips. (Feel) | B7 |
| 8. Liking products presented in YouTube video clips being eco-friendly (Feel) | B8 |

Dependent variables (Viewer Behavioral Response)	1. Searching for additional information about products presented in YouTube video clips.	Interaction
	2. Clicking LIKE for a video clip seen and/or heard about a product on YouTube	
	3. Posting a COMMENT after watching and/or seeing a video clip about a product on YouTube	Engagement
	4. Clicking SHARE for a video clip seen and/or heard about a product to personal channels on Facebook, Instagram, Line or Twitter	
	5. DOWNLOADING YouTube product video clip seen and/or heard	
	6. SUBSCRIBING to a YouTube channel that has a video clip seen and /or heard	
	7. Access a link below a video clip listing to go to a product website to gather further information.	Conversion
	8. Purchasing a product presented in a video clip seen and/or heard about.	

3. Research Instruments' Validity and Reliability

Regarding the validity test, the completed questionnaire of this study undergoes a thorough consultation with 2 communication research experts and the Human Ethics Committee, Chulalongkorn University, on November 5, 2021 (COA No.270/2564), to ensure content accuracy and suitability based on stated objectives. To ensure that respondents

comprehend the question and can answer it based on their reaction to product placement on YouTube.

The reliability test follows successful validation by testing according to population characteristics that should be close to the real sample and analyzing the results for credibility. Pre-testing was done by conducting the study on a sample group of 30 people, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability of the variables on the Likert scale, which determined the appropriate Alpha value being 0.70-0.90 (Vanichbancha, 2007). The researcher has set the Alpha value at 0.70 or higher to measure the accuracy according to the formula for deriving Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The results of Cronbach's Alpha scores are shown in the following Tables:

Table 2: Reliability statistics of exposure

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.818	3

Table 3: Reliability statistics of attitude

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.707	8

Table 4: Reliability statistics of viewer behavioral response

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.883	8

In addition, for statistical assumption tests, this study's research instrument has passed the normality test, since a sample of 200 or more samples is considered to have a normal distribution (Hair, 2019) and homoscedasticity or the variance of the tolerance is an unknown constant, the researchers conducted a preliminary investigation using an independent variable to create a diffuse plot. It was found that there was no cluster of data.

Findings

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is employed to analyze the primary data collected from the research questionnaire in this study. Descriptive statistics of samples on demographic and psychographic data are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Demographic Characteristics of The Sample

Baseline Characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	114	27.94
Female	294	72.06
Age		
20 – 39 years	384	94.12
40 – 55 years	24	5.88
Psychographics		
Follows own thinking and likes to search for information before deciding	227	55.64
Emphasizes success in school or work, self-image, and fashion	36	8.82
Focuses on experience not on luxury while appreciating variety	60	14.71
Highlights challenges, quickly adapts to changes in the environment, and embraces new technologies	40	9.80
Emphasizes security and adverse risk	45	11.03

Note. N = 408, n is the sample.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The study uses data to test the influence of independent variables on dependent variables through multiple regression analysis to test all 4 hypotheses.

To report the absence of multicollinearity and to provide accurate stepwise multiple regression analysis. The researcher analyzed the results of the study to determine the relationship between the primary independent variables by analyzing it with Pearson's correlation coefficient. Before analyzing the influence of independent variables by multiple regression analysis. It was found that there was no multicollinearity since the primary independent variables were correlated less than 0.7 ($r = 0.24$) at a statistically significant level of 0.05. (Pandey, n.d.)

1. THE RESULTS FOR H1

It was found there were 6 of 11 variables of exposure and attitudes that could affect viewer behavioral responses. The model, or equation was able to predict 48% at a significance level of 0.05, which means the hypothesis is acceptable. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients of Predictor (Overall Viewer Behavioral Response)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Constant	-0.079	0.207	-0.486	0.327	0.702
Video clip with products only used as props only (Product placement) (A1)	0.145	0.023	0.100	0.190	0.000*
Video clip with a YouTuber talking about or showing products smoothly (Product integration) (A2)	-0.013	-	-	-	0.782
Video clip with humorous or interesting product presentation (Product entertainment) (A3)	0.026	-	-	-	0.548
Learning about products through YouTube about a product (B1)	-0.045	-	-	-	0.327
Liking the product presented in a YouTuber's video clip (B2)	0.150	0.054	0.043	0.257	0.006*
Viewers feel that the product presented in a YouTube video clip is reliable. (B3)	0.135	0.052	0.033	0.237	0.010*
Willingness to recommend the product presented in a YouTube video clip. (B4)	0.323	0.046	0.233	0.412	0.000*
The belief is that there should be strict laws to govern YouTube video clips. (B5)	0.009	-	-	-	0.812
Belief it is normal and acceptable for YouTubers to advertise products in their video clip. (B6)	0.003	-	-	-	0.942
The belief that YouTubers should be socially responsible when advertising products in their video clips. (B7)	-0.083	0.035	-0.151	-0.015	0.017*
Liking products presented in YouTube video clips being eco-friendly (B8)	0.115	0.042	0.033	0.197	0.006*

Note. $F(6,401) = 61.796$, $R^2 = 0.480$, $*p < 0.05$

2. THE RESULTS FOR H2

It was found there were 5 of 11 variables of exposure and attitudes that could affect viewer behavioral responses. The model or equation was able to predict 46.7% of viewer interaction at a significance level of 0.05, which means the hypothesis is acceptable. The results are shown in Table 7.

3. THE RESULTS FOR H3

It was found that there were 3 of 11 variables of exposure and attitudes that could affect viewer behavioral responses. The model or equation was able to predict 33.3% of viewer engagement at a significance level of 0.05, which means the hypothesis is acceptable. The results are shown in Table 7.

4. THE RESULTS FOR H4

It was found there were five of 11 variables of exposure and attitude that could affect viewer behavioral responses. The model or equation was able to predict 37.7% at a significance level of 0.05, which means the hypothesis is acceptable. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Summary of the Results of Hypothesis Testing

Independent Variables (Exposure& Attitudes)	Dependent Variables (Viewer behavioral response)			
	H1: Overall	H2: Interaction	H3: Engagement	H4: Conversion
Product placement as a prop only (A1)	influence	influence	influence	influence
Smooth discussion of products to be sold (A2)	-	-	-	-
Speaking humorously and interestingly (A3)	-	influence	-	-
Learning about products through YouTube about a product (B1)	-	-	-	-
Liking the product presented in a YouTuber's video clip (B2)	influence	influence	-	influence
Viewers feel that the product presented in a YouTube video clip is reliable. (B3)	influence	influence	influence	influence

Willingness to recommend the product presented in a YouTube video clip. (B4)	influence	influence	influence	influence
The belief that there should be strict laws to govern YouTube video clips. (B5)	-	-	-	-
The belief that it is normal and acceptable for YouTubers to advertise products in their video clip. (B6)	-	-	-	-
The belief that YouTubers should be socially responsible when advertising products in their video clips. (B7)	influence	-	-	-
In favor of products presented in YouTube video clips being environmentally friendly (B8)	influence	-	-	influence

Discussion

According to the analysis of multiple regression, the most significant factor affecting overall and subdivided viewer behavior responses is the willingness of viewers to recommend a product presented on YouTube to others. This aligns with the theoretical implications of word-of-mouth marketing, where consumers act as intermediaries, sharing their judgments based on gathered information (Nofrizal & Delliana, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the tendency to seek reliable information over entertainment content became more pronounced, influencing how product placements on YouTube affected viewer attitudes towards brands and companies. Viewers placed significant trust in YouTubers' content, which impacted their perceptions of the brands featured (Hashem et al., 2022; Koo, 2023).

Furthermore, the study revealed that "product placement as a prop only" had a significant impact on consumer behavior. This finding is consistent with the definition of product placement advertising, designed to be subtle and prevent viewers from skipping it (Russell, 2007). This suggests that using a product as a prop can be more effective than extensive discussions about it on YouTube, as viewers may find overt advertising annoying (Napontun & Senachai, 2023). Additionally, when YouTubers incorporate products as props in entertaining content, it positively influences consumer attitudes and creates an impression of reliability (Fischera & Reuber, 2011).

The study also discovered that positive attitudes towards YouTubers who speak humorously and engagingly can influence consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic. This underscores the need for marketers to develop creative and innovative strategies to make their brands memorable and engaging (Jaichansukkit, 2021). The preference for concise, creative video content among consumers was also highlighted (iPlan Digital, 2020).

Exposure and attitudes were found to influence consumer behavioral responses (engagement), consistent with Duffett's (2020) research. The rise of online digital video channels has facilitated continuous entertainment, particularly for younger generations. This is supported by Ye (2021), who noted that advertisers and marketers should focus on creating engaging content that retains viewers' attention and encourages interaction with advertisements. This includes searching for additional information on other social media platforms, clicking on links, downloading clips, following YouTubers' channels, or visiting the products' or brands' main websites (Benjarongkit, as cited in Kotsa, 2017).

Additionally, the independent variable "eco-friendly product preference" was found to influence "conversion," aligning with the characteristics of Generation Y-driven samples. This indicates that product selection is influenced more by societal benefits than by brand loyalty. This finding is consistent with Nadja-Marie Tybussek's (2019) research, which highlighted YouTube's role in promoting sustainable lifestyles to combat climate change and global warming.

Incorporating contemporary digital marketing trends and sustainability perspectives, it is evident that digital marketing strategies must evolve to meet the growing demand for eco-friendly practices and responsible resource management. As consumer awareness around environmental impact increases, integrating sustainability into digital marketing campaigns not only helps the environment but also builds trust with an audience that values authenticity and accountability (Lounge Lizard, 2024). This shift towards sustainable digital marketing practices is essential for aligning with evolving consumer values and ensuring long-term success in the digital landscape.

Conclusion

According to the multiple regression analysis, the factor that had the greatest influence on viewer responses was the placement of the product or the use of a product as a prop. Additionally, the attitudes that had the most significant impact were the willingness to recommend the product and the perception of the product's reliability as presented on YouTube.

The three subdivisions of behavioral responses are influenced by the following variables:

1. “The exposure to YouTubers speaking humorously or interestingly (Product entertainment)” fairly influences “interaction” (e.g., clicking like),
2. “Feeling that the product presented on YouTube is reliable” somewhat influences “engagement” (e.g., commenting),
3. “Liking products presented in YouTube video clips being eco-friendly” also influences “conversion” (e.g., purchasing products).

Based on the analysis of the psychographics of the samples, it was found that individuals aged between 20 to 39 years, also known as Generation Y, are more self-focused during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, they tend to be more interested in seeking additional information and are more concerned about a brand's social responsibility when it comes to advertising on online media. This heightened awareness may make them more likely to detect false or misleading advertising.

Limitations and Directions for Future

The study has limitations due to its narrow focus on a specific national economic framework and data source, limiting its ability to determine causality and draw generalized conclusions. Future research should aim to use other data-gathering methods and include other countries and sectors to gain a thorough understanding of the subject matter.

Implications

This study contributes to the AISAS theory (Sugiyama & Andree, 2011) and offers guidelines for improving product placement on YouTube as follows.

1. Awareness Stage:

Marketers and YouTubers should pay attention to products presented as props and make the content interesting, fun, and entertaining.

2. Emotion Stage:

Viewers prefer environmentally friendly products. Marketers and YouTubers should create sincere and entertaining videos with reliable information to display such products. Viewers base their purchase decisions on the video content, so it is crucial to make it engaging and informative.

3. Action Stage:

An attractive and reliable product presentation can drive viewer engagement and trust. This can lead to behaviors such as searching for information, following, liking, commenting, and sharing, which can further increase the product's popularity online.

From the research results, the implications described above can be summarized based on the AISAS theory as shown in Figure 2

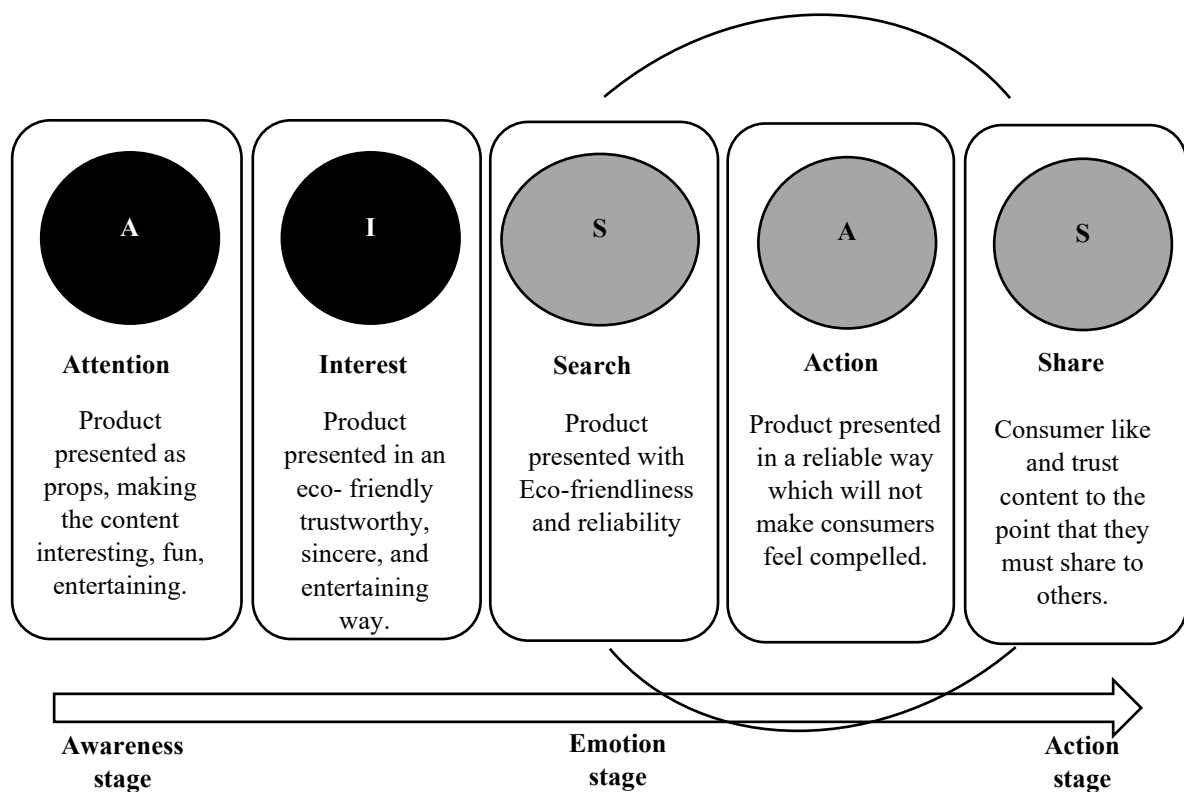


Figure 2: The implications based on AISAS Theory

Implications For Practitioners

During the pandemic, Gen Y and Gen X focus on seeking information before making decisions. They prioritize reliable brands and environmental issues in online advertising and limit purchases to essentials. They are more aware of deceptive advertising and cautious about product placement on YouTube. Marketers should understand their preferences and expectations.

Specific strategic recommendations for Gen Y content creation include adopting mobile marketing strategies, leveraging influencer marketing, and creating fresh, relatable, and visually engaging content (CSTMR, 2022). YouTube ads should focus on creating a sense of approval for the product and adapt to the objective of the ad. Product placement can convey reliability and eco-friendliness, leading to engagement and conversion. Sustainability principles include integrity, social responsibility, mental health, and environmental responsibility.

Propose YouTube utilization strategies for various crisis scenarios by creating content that addresses the crisis directly, providing helpful information, and maintaining a calm and reassuring tone (SAMHSA, 2019). This research shows YouTubers need to engage more with their audience for better advertising results. A lack of interaction can lead to less engagement and lower effectiveness. To improve, YouTubers should try live streams, feedback, and giveaways.

Develop sustainable marketing guidelines by focusing on eco-friendly products, green packaging, transparency, and authenticity in marketing efforts (Fit Small Business, 2024). To maintain credibility in product placement ads on YouTube, update content, identify issues, and avoid causing harm. YouTubers have a responsibility towards viewers and society. They must remain impartial while communicating and be accountable to their viewers. This approach is based on the Harmonic Communication approach by Ongkrutraksa (2022b). Therefore, YouTubers play a significant role in representing product placement advertising. Honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness are crucial elements that lead to a positive attitude and desirability of viewers as viewers in the marketplace.

Clearly articulate research limitations and future research directions by acknowledging the constraints of the study, such as sample size and scope, and suggesting areas for further investigation, such as the long-term effects of product placement on consumer behavior and the impact of several types of content on viewer engagement (SpringerLink, 2022).

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