

Consumers' Attitudes Towards Advertisement in YouTube



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Abstract Attitudes towards online advertisements has been an important topic of research for academics and practitioners, especially in Social Networking Sites (SNSs). In this paper we examine the effect that YouTube advertisements have in consumers' behavior. Using a structured questionnaire and a sample of 224 respondents, we explore the ways consumers perceive advertisements in YouTube, the effectiveness of this kind of advertisement as well as the engagement levels with consumers. Our results indicate the existence of four main and specific attitudes (factors) of consumers towards advertisement in YouTube namely, entertainment, irritation, information and credibility, and a fifth one indicating a general positive attitude to YouTube advertisements.

Keywords Social Networking Sites · YouTube · Online advertisement · Attitudes · Greece

1 Introduction

Social Media (SM) and Social Networking Sites (SNSs) have dramatically changed marketing interaction and communication during the last decade, as firms and consumers have found a new field of creating and dispersing material and content [1]. The explosive growth of users and new platforms, affected consumer behaviour and the way consumers seek and provide information about brands, displacing traditional channels of marketing communications and advertising [2, 3].

The importance and the increasing growth of adoption of SNSs by firms for marketing and business communication with customers and stakeholders, regardless

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of their industry and size, is outlined by a number of studies [4, 5]. Founded in 2005, with more than 1.47 billion users in 2017, YouTube is one of the most important SNSs, as it is the third most visited web site (after Google and Facebook) and the second largest search engine, aggressively replacing traditional media of marketing like radio and TV. This is also true about Greece where [6] found that YouTube is the second most popular SNS in Greece, and most users take advantage of it to listen to music and share videos in Facebook as well.

These characteristics made YouTube an important platform for online advertising with a growing number of firms choosing to advertise in YouTube in video or/and banner form. The effect that online advertisements in SNSs have in brand value and the factors that affect its effectiveness, has been a major trend in the relevant research with a number of studies focusing mainly in Facebooks advertisements [7–11].

In this paper the main attitudes of consumers towards YouTube advertisements, in Greece, are going to be identified and investigated. Factor analysis is performed in 18 questions with the use of a structured online questionnaire, and five main attitudes towards online advertisement were identified. The contribution of this research lies in the further understanding of the ways that online advertisement interacts with SNSs users, and more specifically YouTube, providing insight to academics and practitioners on the formulation of more efficient IMC campaigns in SNSs.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. The following section reviews the relevant literature concerning SNSs advertisement, focusing on YouTube. Section 3 presents the methodology of our research, the main characteristics of the sample and the method employed. In Sect. 4 the factors affecting consumer behaviour towards advertisements in YouTube are described. Finally, Sect. 5 concludes the paper, by discussing the marketing consequences of its findings for academics and marketers, and by proposing directions for further research on the topic.

2 Literature Review

Since their appearance SNSs have attracted the attention of scholars of various disciplines providing a number of definitions. [12] defined SNS in terms of the ways that their users interact with them as “*a web-based service which is based on certain meaningful and valuable relationships including friendship, kinship, interests, and activities, and which allows individuals to network for a variety of purposes including sharing information, building and exploring relationships, and so on*”. YouTube has been one of the early innovators in the field providing an important platform for posting videos. After its acquisition by Google in 2006, it offered opportunities for advertisers, with the introduction of TrueView in-stream advertising [13] that allowed users to skip advertisement after 5 s of viewing.

As outlined in the introduction online advertisement soon found a promising field of application in SNSs. In specific, [14] pointed out its importance in SNSs digital marketing and the ways that IMC planning and implementation are transforming [15].

The effectiveness of advertisement relies on a number of factors. YouTube usage and social interaction has been examined by [16], who found that information seeking, entertainment and social interaction were the most important actors for viewing YouTube videos. These motivations have a significant effect on attitudes towards advertisement as well, and especially online advertising. [17] identified five belief dimensions that affected online advertisement and more, specifically: information, entertainment, credibility, economy and value corruption. The first two attitudes (information and entertainment) were also identified by [8], who found credibility of the advertisement to be an important factor that affects advertisement value as well. [9] have also found that the importance and positive effect of the informational role of advertisement.

Another research [18], added irritation and interactivity as another two main factors for consumers' assessment of SNSs advertisements, to the ones mentioned above. [13] found that the YouTube online video advertisement platform has decreased the negative effects (irritation) it has on advertisement value.

The effect, however, that irritation has on online advertisement value is debatable. In a cross SNSs comparison [19] studied consumers' perception towards advertisements in Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, concluding that online advertisement in all three examined SNSs was considered to be annoying. [20] investigated the attitudes of Italian students towards YouTube advertisements, resulting to similar findings with other researchers regarding online advertisement in other SNSs. They have identified entertainment, informativeness and customization as the main attitudes that have positive effect on advertisement value, while irritation, in terms of video interruption for example, is negatively related to YouTube advertising.

3 Data and Methodology

The research took place from March until May 2018 using a structured online questionnaire. In order to identify the main attitudes of consumers towards advertisements in YouTube we have used a set of 18 questions, as suggested by [8, 9] and also used by [18], measured in a 5-point Likert scale. Questions regarding the content, the frequency and timing of advertisements and the overall opinion of users towards them, were included. The sample examined is a convenience sample with no clear demographic focus and consists of 71 (31.7%) male respondents and 153 (68.3%) female respondents, and the majority of them (52.7%) hold a bachelor degree. As far as the age of the respondents is concerned, 27.7% of them were 18–25 years old, 29.5% were 26–30 years old, 26.3% were 31–40 years old and 16.5% were older than 40 years.

As far as usage of YouTube (Fig. 1b) and the means respondents use to access it (Fig. 1a) are concerned, two out of three (67%) use smartphones to watch videos in YouTube, and 47.3% use YouTube for less than an hour a day. Laptop computers is the second most popular response in video watching question, and 32.4% of them watch videos for 1–3 h. In the following Section the results on the degree of

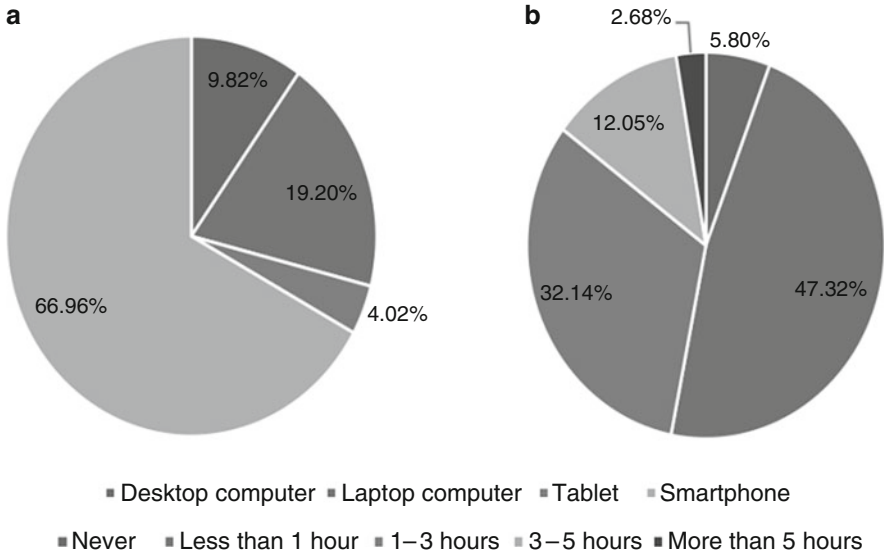


Fig. 1 (a) Device used to access YouTube, (b) Hours spent in YouTube daily

engagement with YouTube advertisements and the attitudes of consumers towards them will be presented.

4 YouTube Users and Advertisements

YouTube offers six different formats of ads, with three of them appearing as banners, and three of them as videos in the video player. Video advertisements offer three choices to advertisers: skippable ads (which are the most common), non-skippable ads and bumper ads. According to [13], in-stream advertisements improve the viewing experience for users without inflicting losses of advertising value for advertisers or content owners.

However, YouTube advertisements do not seem to attract much of attention in terms of viewability and impressions (clicks). Only 4% of the respondents mentioned that they frequently visit the sites of the product/service advertised, while almost two out of three respondents (66% or 148 out of the 224 respondents) never click on the advertised link and one out of four rarely do it. Similarly, three out of four respondents very frequently or always skip ads whenever the advertisement is shown. Only 8.9% of the respondents said they never or rarely click on the skip add button, while 4.0% of the sample skip ads some times, and 12.1% frequently. These findings are similar to a recent research regarding advertisements engagement and viewability in social media and SNSs Greece and YouTube [4, 6], and pose significant questions about marketers (Fig. 2).

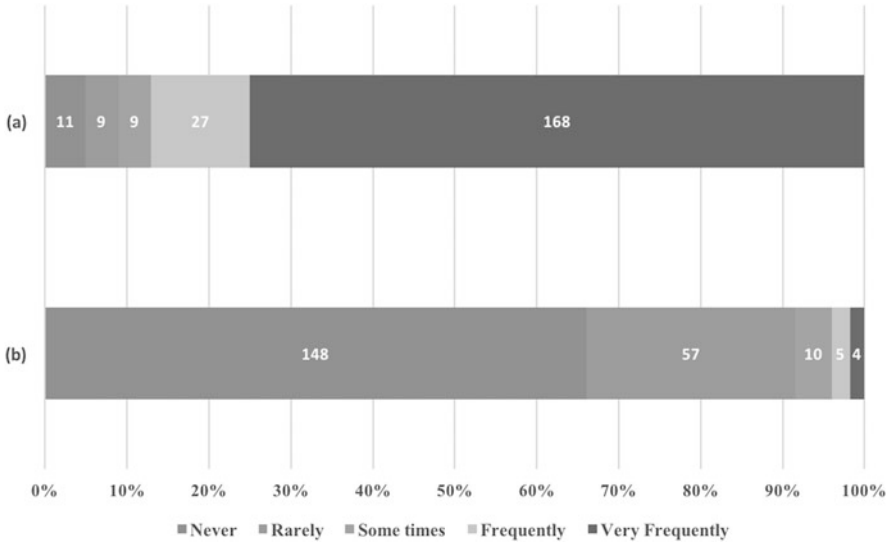


Fig. 2 Users actions towards YouTube Advertisement. (a) How often do you skip advertisements in YouTube, (b) How often are you visiting the link associated with the advertisement

The same results are also found in other researches [21] where YouTube comes in second place (after Facebook), with 32% of the respondents saying they engage with branded video content. 18 questions were posed to examine respondents' attitudes towards advertisements in YouTube. However, two questions, regarding the inclusion of indecent messages and the effect on kids were omitted by our analysis since they have not provided significant statistical results, leaving us with 16 items. Principal Components analysis was used with Varimax rotation, and the communalities of the used questions are presented in Table 1.

Table 2 demonstrates the loadings of each variable for each one of the five identified factors: irritation (Factor 1), credibility (Factor 2), entertainment (Factor 3), information (Factor 4) and the general attitude towards YouTube online advertisements (Factor 5). The five factors identified, account for a total of 80.95% of the total variance explained. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure for sampling adequacy was found to be of a very high value ($KMO = 0.885$) that literature characterizes as "meritorious", while the Bartlett's sphericity test provided a value of $\chi^2(120) = 2721.411, p < 0.001$.

The identified factors can be described as:

1. *Irritation*: Online advertisements in YouTube are disturbing, misleading, excessive in number and interrupt videos in points of interest.
2. *Credibility*: Online advertisements in YouTube are credible, original and authentic, and they deliver what they are promising.
3. *Entertainment*: Online advertisements in YouTube are entertaining, humorous and interesting.

Table 1 Communalities matrix

YouTube advertisements ...	Initial	Extraction
... provide more information compared to other media	1.000	0.780
... provide a new and exciting way of information	1.000	0.833
... keep me posted for the available products/services	1.000	0.736
... are entertaining	1.000	0.910
... are humorous	1.000	0.905
... are interesting	1.000	0.875
... are annoying	1.000	0.733
... are too much	1.000	0.839
... interrupt videos in points of interest	1.000	0.820
... are misleading	1.000	0.669
... are credible	1.000	0.839
... are original and authentic	1.000	0.791
... keep what they are promising	1.000	0.846
I like YouTube advertisements	1.000	0.753
... are necessary	1.000	0.852
My overall attitude towards YouTube advertisements is positive	1.000	0.771

Table 2 Identified factors for YouTube online advertisements (higher loadings in bold)

YouTube advertisements ...	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
... provide more information compared to other media.	-0.016	0.042	0.134	0.866	0.101
... provide a new and exciting way of information	-0.072	0.187	0.286	0.821	0.191
... keep me posted for the available products/services	-0.093	0.243	0.347	0.726	0.145
... are entertaining	-0.255	0.218	0.804	0.314	0.226
... are humorous	-0.131	0.292	0.799	0.348	0.208
... are interesting	-0.150	0.319	0.710	0.424	0.267
... are annoying	0.815	-0.004	-0.224	-0.094	-0.103
... are too much	0.887	0.020	-0.156	-0.044	-0.159
... interrupt videos in points of interest	0.885	0.046	-0.173	0.004	-0.071
... are misleading	0.765	-0.244	0.140	-0.065	0.007
... are credible	-0.041	0.851	0.290	0.139	0.096
... are original and authentic	0.000	0.819	0.168	0.162	0.257
... keep what they are promising	-0.093	0.849	0.142	0.131	0.283
I like YouTube advertisements	-0.139	0.270	0.470	0.188	0.636
... are necessary	-0.108	0.233	0.079	0.127	0.874
My overall attitude towards YouTube advertisements is positive	-0.147	0.281	0.347	0.251	0.696

4. *Information*: Online advertisements in YouTube give more information on the product/services and its features through a new and exciting way, helping users to be informed about available products/services in the market.
5. *General Attitude on Ads*: Online advertisements in YouTube are necessary, and users like them and think positively for them.

Interestingly and contrary to the literature [8, 9, 11, 20] questions regarding value corruption did not provide significant statistical results and were omitted by the above analysis. This finding, however, can be supported by previous research the authors conducted regarding online advertisement in Facebook, where value corruption was also found to have a negligible effect in the overall attitude of consumers towards online advertisement [11].

5 Conclusions: Suggestions for Further Research

In this paper the attitudes of YouTube users towards online advertisement on the platforms were investigated. Apart from the general attitude factor four more major factors were identified namely: irritation, credibility, entertainment and information. Corruption of values has not been found to be an important attitude towards online advertisement in YouTube.

The above findings are in line with the results of relevant literature [8, 9, 16, 20, 22] and prior research performed by the authors [11] regarding Facebook. These results provide additional insight to the understanding of the ways that SNSs users are affected by online advertisement. A critical discovery on the low levels of engagement, and conversions of advertisements in YouTube by consumers, should be of concern for academics and marketers and provides with some interesting insights for practitioners.

The managerial implications of our findings include the orientation of YouTube advertisements to informational and entertaining content in order to increase brand awareness and increase conversions and the duration YouTube users are exposed to a message, but also in decreasing irritation factor components (such as frequent video interruptions). In that way, YouTube advertisements will have a higher level of influence on consumers and the ROI of a campaign in YouTube can be increased.

Our research comes with some limitations. Specifically, the sample examined is rather small, and does not focus in a specific demographic group of the population. However, this is an ongoing research, extending to other SNSs like YouTube and Instagram. As SNSs are going to continue evolving as an innovative channel of marketing communication and interaction with consumers that affects the performance of firms [23], further research should use broader and more focused samples in specific consumer segments, like the Generation Z [24], exploring the ways that the identified factors and user generated content [25, 26] influence users' behaviour towards SNSs advertisements, providing insight on the mechanisms that drive consumers to interact more actively with ads in YouTube and other SNSs.

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