

Multimedia tool as a predictor for social media advertising- a YouTube way

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Abstract Multimedia has embraced the marketing industry with its innovative tools. Advertising as a part of marketing is not an exception. Social media is one of its tools which is growing with an accelerating speed and facilitating meaningful participation. YouTube is the second largest search engine after Google and is considered to leverage its features to provide nothing but the best to its users. Marketers of beauty products have also realized its potential and are using YouTube as a powerful marketing tool. The paper attempts to evaluate importance of YouTube as a multimedia tool. Content analysis of hundred YouTube advertisements of the beauty segment has been done to identify their critical success factors like Audio content (sound saturation, background music, loud and fast music, sound effects), Visual Category (No. of cuts, visual effects, intense imagery, slow motion, bold/ unusual colours), Content category (acted out, unexpected format, surprise ending), Message Appeals (Rational, Fear, Social, Youth, Statistics, Bandwagon and Celebrity Appeal) and viewers' response through the number of views and likes. Accordingly, a framework has been proposed that may be useful for the managers who develop promotional strategies for the organizations. AIDA model has been used to validate the framework.

Keywords YouTube · Multimedia · Advertising · Content analysis · Social media · AIDA model

1 Introduction

“Marketing has become digital” is just an understatement in today's era. It has touched all the dimensions of the mushrooming multimedia universe. The marketing managers find this

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platform very useful as they possess tremendous amount of power to attract the consumers' eyes leading to a huge brand awareness and development of the consumers' buying intention.

With so many companies advertising using multimedia, it becomes a bit difficult to shine out and increase visibility among the consumers. In this era of information overload, the importance of effective communication from company to consumer is necessary [10]. Therefore, managers need to be very careful regarding the selection of multimedia tools. Social media platform has emerged as a profitable multimedia tool to market the products effectively. Reason for its popularity comes from the fact that these social media sites have become a good source of news updates regarding various issues worldwide. They have the potential to give detailed information to the audience and also provide an interactive medium to get their responses.

Amongst various social media websites, YouTube is amongst the popular one. It is a rich repository of information and insights regarding markets and consumption [6]. It is loaded with videos on various aspects of the product. A single word in the search bar returns many related videos which one can access to increase the knowledge. According to Dehghani et al. [6], entertainment, informativeness, and customization are positive drivers of YouTube advertising and the advertising value through YouTube affects brand awareness and purchase intension of consumers. According to a study, YouTube has come up as highly influential market space where brands and their audiences engage [18]. Thus, this shows the importance of YouTube in marketing the product in the digital market place. YouTube is the second largest search engine after Google [18].

Amongst various sectors, beauty sector is one sector which is increasingly making its presence felt on YouTube. Different beauty brands like to market their products through YouTube as the chances of visibility is higher due to its high usability. The beauty space experiences a growth rate of 50% from 2014 to 2015 [19]. Yet the segment has enormous potential and a deep research regarding its popularity and usability is required. Beauty segment includes all the videos which are related with hair, make-up, nails, skincare and perfumes. Beauty brands are constantly posting videos promoting their brands and in return gain huge audiences' views.

2 Evolving multimedia- the boon for marketing industry

According to Chua et al. [5], there is a fast development of computing and sensing technologies like emergence of social networking sites, and due to this there is a huge scope of new research opportunities and challenges for multimedia content analysis [5]. Multimedia is one platform which gives an opportunity to interact rather than just watch an advertisement over and over again. They have taken a form by which they are more of educating the audiences than merely overloading them with one-sided communication. Multimedia gave birth to few social media sites like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc. which have also served the purpose of marketing and advertising and made the lives of marketing managers way easier than it used to be earlier. Multimedia enables people to get involved and interact with information at their desired speed and according to their needs and capabilities [13]. Over 9 billion network devices are connected to the internet which is facilitating more than 2.5 billion people around the globe for communication, leisure and entertainment, sharing knowledge, other services such as education, geographical information, encyclopedias, etc. [2].

Multimedia advancements brought YouTube into the picture, which was started in 2005 as a social media tool but now has emerged as one of the powerful marketing platforms. The beauty brands have analyzed the growing popularity of YouTube and also that consumers like to engage in educating themselves with the help of videos available on YouTube before going for the purchase of any beauty product. The beauty segment on YouTube has grown with a rate as fast as 50% in views from January 2014 to April 2015 which amounts to a lifetime total of 45.3 billion beauty views [19]. Increase in monthly views of beauty content on YouTube over time from 200 million views per month in September 2009 to 1.3 billion views in September 2014 to 1.6 billion views per month as of March 2015 endorses this [19].

3 Objective of the study

The paper aims to identify the trends of YouTube advertisements with the help of common advertisement attributes like audio, visual and message contents. And also, to identify critical success factors of YouTube advertisements that can bring views and likes for the same.

4 The conceptual framework

As depicted by AIDA (Attention, interest, desire and action model) model of advertising. Effectiveness of any advertising depends upon the extent to which the advertising message has been received and accepted by the audience. AIDA model indicates that an advertisement message follows four sequential steps in persuading a customer towards a product. An advertisement initially gathers a consumer attention by its various features [4]. However, every advertisement that has been able to catch attention may not be read or liked by the consumer. Advertisement needs to generate further interest into it. Interested consumers may subsequently develop a desire to acquire the product which is then ultimately converted into an action of purchasing.

In social media like YouTube, views of the advertisements can be assumed to gain the consumers' attention and likes of the advertisements shows that interest has been aroused. This paper focuses mainly on identifying the key features of an advertisement that can lead an advertisement to gain more views and likes.

Attention An advertisement gains consumers' attention when it's features are such that it attracts them to watch it. An advertisement's audio and visual attributes, message appeals and content are among the key features that gains consumers' attention towards it. These characteristics attract a consumer towards it which is reflected as number of views in a YouTube advertisement.

Interest There are various kinds of audio and visual characteristics of an advertisement but only a few have the ability to develop interest in the mind of the viewers, so much so that they go ahead to like that particular YouTube advertisement. Some of the popular audio characteristics are sound saturation, background music, loud and fast music and sound effects. No. of cuts, visual effects, intense imagery, slow motion and bold/ unusual colours are some of the most observed video characteristics. These characteristics have the ability to generate likes on a particular YouTube advertisement. Hence, the likes validate the interest of a viewer in that advertisement.

Figure 1 displays a conceptual framework to study the nature of YouTube Advertisements which brings viewership and results into likes from the viewers. It shows how various message

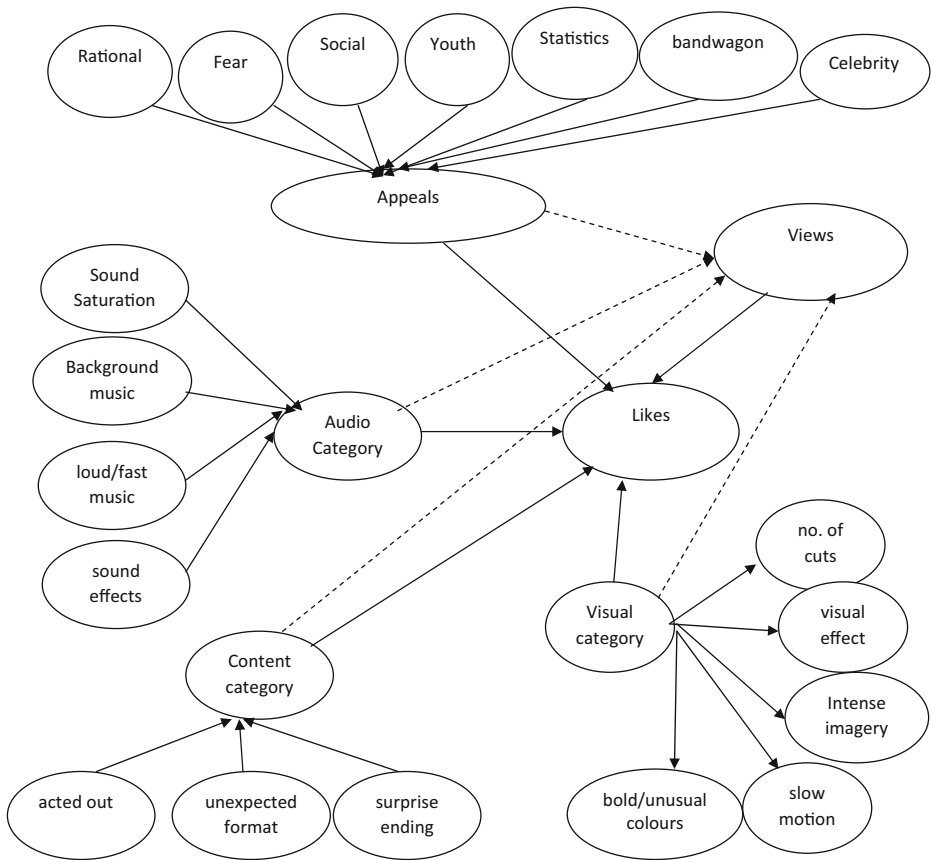


Fig. 1 The conceptual framework

characteristics and message appeals drive viewers' responses. According to researchers, message characteristics are those that trigger such responses. They may be impressive sound and visual effects, for example 'suspenseful or intense music, multiple cuts and edits, unusual lighting and camera angles, zooms, or close-ups' [22]. The study involves three broad categories of message characteristics viz. audio category, video category and content category. Audio category consists of sound saturation, background music, loud/fast music, sound effects. Visual category includes number of cuts, visual effects, intense imagery, slow motion and bold/ unusual colours. Content category has unexpected format, surprise ending and acted out as its sub- category. Studies such as [16] have taken these characteristics into consideration to find out the nature of YouTube advertisements.

Message appeals are those characteristics which lead to persuasion [16]. Appealing to consumers in different cultures has been an ever-present challenge for international advertisers, and the challenge continues to grow as advanced technology and increased economic globalization contribute to the proliferation of international marketing and advertising [1]. Advertising appeal usage varies across product types [9]. The present study has been done on YouTube advertisements of beauty segment, seven appeals namely Rational, Fear, Social, Youth, Statistics, Bandwagon and Celebrity appeal are considered to be the more relevant to this segment. Rational advertising originates from traditional information processing models of

decision making where the consumer is believed to make logical and rational decisions which in turn changes the message receiver's beliefs about the product [1]. Rational appeal is an important appeal when it comes to beauty products. Many researchers believe that advertisers can increase the interest and persuasiveness of an advertisement through the use of a fear appeal [8]. As existing media get increasingly cluttered, the need to stand out has become paramount and celebrities have proved to be the ideal way to ensure brand prominence [7]. Studying the beauty products advertisements, Celebrity appeal has shown its appearance in most of them. Bandwagon appeal puts emphasis on telling that many people are using a particular product so even others should also use it. It revolves around convincing someone to follow what everybody else is doing. Statistic Appeal is using of graphs, charts, numbers, etc. to validate the benefits of the product. Thus, the current paper aims to study the message characteristics and appeals to find their relationship with viewers' response in terms of likes and views.

Therefore, it can be hypothesized that

H1- Advertisement with audio features gets more views.

H1a: sound saturation, H1b: Background music, H1c: loud music and H1d: sound effects

H2. Advertisement with visual features gets more views.

H2a: No. of cuts, H2b: visual effects, H2c: intense imagery, H2d: slow motion and H2e: bold/ unusual colours

H3: Advertisement with content attributes gets more views.

H3a: acted out, H3b: unexpected format, H3c: surprise ending

H4: Advertisement with message appeals gets more views.

H4a: Rational, H4b: Fear, H4c: Social, H4d: Youth, H4e: Statistics, H4f: Bandwagon and H4g: Celebrity Appeal

H5: Advertisement with audio features get more likes.

H5a: sound saturation, H5b: Background music, H5c: loud music and H5d: sound effects.

H6: Advertisement with visual features get more likes.

H6a: No. of cuts, H6b: visual effects, H6c: intense imagery, H6d: slow motion and H6e: bold/ unusual colours.

H7: Advertisement with content attributes get more likes.

H7a: acted out, H7b: unexpected format, H7c: surprise ending

H8: Advertisement with message appeals get more likes.

H8a: Rational, H8b: Fear, H8c: Social, H8d: Youth, H8e: Statistics, H8f: Bandwagon and H8g: Celebrity Appeal.

5 Research methodology

The present study investigates into the trends of YouTube usage by various big brands of beauty segment world-wide to promote their products. Therefore, for this purpose, various scholarly articles, papers, reports, etc. are studied in depth to bring the characteristics and latest advertising patterns of YouTube to the light.

The study has been conducted in two stages:

In the first stage, a Content Analysis of 100 YouTube advertisements has been done. Wherein, all the advertisements under study belonged to the category of beauty products.

These were all Indian advertisements and were uploaded during 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2015. The time frame taken under the study was to ensure that the advertisements have got enough time to be viewed by the audience. The following characteristics were studied through the Content Analysis:

- **Audio content** (sound saturation, background music, loud and fast music, sound effects)
- **Visual Category** (No. of cuts, visual effects, intense imagery, slow motion, bold/ unusual colours)
- **Content category** (acted out, unexpected format, surprise ending)
- **Message Appeals** (Rational, Fear, Social, Youth, Statistics, Bandwagon and Celebrity Appeal)
- **Viewers' response** through the number of views.

The second stage of the study attempts to identify a relationship between characteristics of advertisements studied through content analysis and views and likes mentioned on YouTube. Correlation analysis has been conducted to study this relationship. Different analysis techniques that have been used in both the stages are: Content analysis, coding procedure, coding scheme and correlation analysis.

5.1 Content analysis

Content analysis is described as the scientific study of content of communication [20]. It is a popular research technique used when the text or the content to be analyzed is huge. There is systematic coding system which is to be followed and thereafter, the inferences are drawn in order to comprehend the meaning or the hidden intensions underlying a message or a data set. Earlier this method was used to study the written communication like content of newspapers or speeches of a public figure, etc. but with the time, it is now being used for studying various forms of communication medium. Studies reported that “in the field of mass communication research, content analysis has been the fastest-growing technique over the past 20 years or so” [14, 21, 23].

The visuals and graphical components of advertising have been targeted for the studies by the marketers since the time they adopted full-scale marketing activities in the late nineteenth century [3]. The marketers who are curious to know about what appeals and sensations are there in a video which attracts the attention of the consumers can go for a content analysis of the videos which are known for their popularity.

5.1.1 Coding scheme

The coding scheme as mentioned in Table 1 is already used in past literature (e.g. Morgan et al. [15]; Palmgreen et al. [17]; Paek et al. [16]). Table 1 explains the message characteristics and message appeals as used in the current study.

5.1.2 Coding procedure

After going through various literatures on Message characteristics and different appeals and clearly understanding the meaning of the jargons, a coding scheme was developed. All of the 100 advertisements were watched several times in order to correctly code the message characteristics under the study.

Table 1 Following operational definitions were borrowed from past literature (e.g. Morgan et al. [15]; Palmgreen et al. [17]; Paek et al. [16])

-
- Message characteristics
 - a) Video images category 1. Number of cuts: the number of times the camera cuts from one visual scene to the next.
 - low (0–10)- 0
 - high (11 and more)- 1
 2. Visual effects: anything beyond the range of human ability involving special visual effects.
 - Present- 1
 - Absent- 0
 3. Slow motion: the slowing of real-life action through technical intervention.
 - Present- 1
 - Absent- 0
 4. Bold or unusual colors: unusual colors outside the range of colors normally perceived in real life.
 - Present- 1
 - Absent- 0
 5. Intense images: intense or horrifying images like blood shed or death.
 - Present- 1
 - Absent- 0
 - b) Audio/music category
 - Coded as:
 - Present- 1
 - Absent- 0
 - 1. Sound saturation: background sound throughout the video clip, including street noise or other sounds, rather than simply a person talking throughout the video clip.
 - 2. Background music: music to accompany the dialogue or action of the video clip.
 - 3. Loud/fast music: the use of loud (relative to other sounds in the video clip) and fast (more than 120 beats per minute) music throughout the video clip.
 - 4. Sound effects: unusual sounds (those that could not have occurred in real life) heard in the video clip, including gongs and other noises.
 - c) Content category
 - Coded as:
 - Present- 1
 - Absent- 0
 - 1. Acted out: instead of being told about the features and benefits of a product, viewers see in action how the product works.
 - 2. Unexpected format: if images and message are interchangeable with those in other beauty ads, the format is expected.
 - 3. Surprise/twist ending: the presence of a climactic, shocking end to the video clip.
 - Advertising appeals
 - Coded as:
 - Present- 1
 - Absent- 0
 - 1. Rational appeal- emphasis on facts, details and other benefits of the product.
 - 2. Fear appeal- attracting the attention by showing the threatening effects of wrinkles, dandruff, pimples, rough skin, etc.
 - 3. Social appeal- attempt to show more social acceptance and social appreciation after using the advertised product.
 - 4. Youth appeal- showcasing the benefits of younger looking skin, hairs, etc.
 - 5. Statistic appeal- use of graphs, charts, comparison in numbers, etc. to validate the benefits of the product.
 - 6. Bandwagon appeal- putting emphasis on telling that many people are using a particular product so even others should also use it. It is like convincing someone to follow what everybody is doing.
 - 7. Celebrity appeal- presence of a known celebrity promoting the product.
-

The entire coding procedure is completed by a single coder. Use of a single coder for the content analysis has been supported by various authors like Liebrecht [12], according to whom, “Depending on the complexity of the task and the materials, an analysis with only one coder can be acceptable as well”. Moreover, according to the article *coding for content*

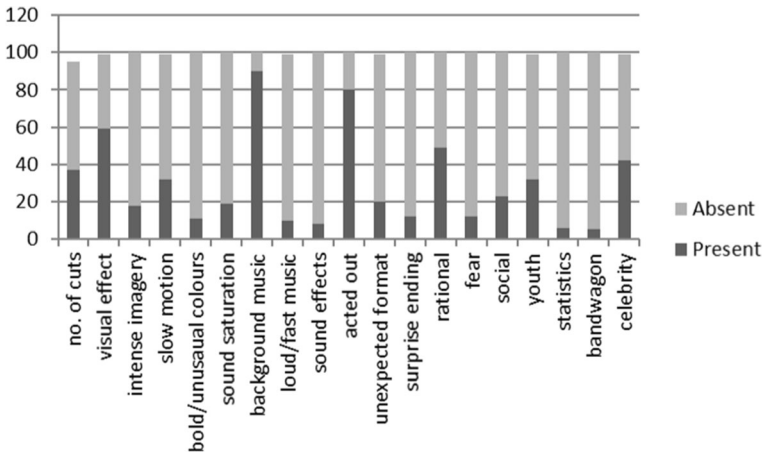


Fig. 2 Content analysis of YouTube advertisements: Presence of message characteristics and appeals

analysis [11], “use the minimum number of people to do the coding. The consistency is greatest if one person does it all. Next best is to have two people, working in the same room”.

5.2 Correlation analysis

According to the Fig. 2, visual effects, background music and acted-out content are the most used message characteristics amongst the 100 YouTube advertisements of beauty industry, followed by slow motion and number of cuts. Rational and celebrity appeals are used in many of these advertisements followed by social and youth appeal.

5.3 Biserial correlation analysis

Impact of various advertisement characteristics studied through content analysis was analyzed to find their impact on consumers’ views and likes. A biserial correlation analysis was conducted with views and likes as dependent factors and various audio, visual and message appeals as independent factors. A biserial correlation coefficient is used when one of the variables is dichotomous in nature

Table 2 Correlation analysis between views/likes and different advertisements attributes

	AP1	AP2	AP3	AP4	AP5	AP6	AP7
Likes	-.062(.539)	.202(.045)*	.426(.000)**	.142(.161)	.098(.332)	-.038(.712)	-.168(.097)
Views	.138(.172)	.022(.831)	.334(.001)**	.202(.044)*	-.031(.761)	.031	-.123
			V1	V2	V3	V4	V5
Likes			.178(.077)	.046(.649)	.357(.000)**	.215(.033)*	.722(.000)**
Views			.075(.456)	.107(.290)	.282(.022)**	.032(.755)	.030(.767)
				A1	A2	A3	A4
Likes				.367(.000)**	.023(.542)	.229(.022)*	-.045(.565)
Views				.343(.000)**	.421(.000)**	-.471(.000)**	-.017(.868)
					C1	C2	C3
Likes					.112(.270)	.386(.000)**	.284(.004)**
Views					-.029(.772)	.368(.000)**	-.023(.819)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 Correlations output

		Likes1	views
Likes1	Pearson Correlation	1	.317**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	100	100

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

whereas other variable is of ratio/interval nature. In this study the independent variable that is advertisement characteristics obtained through content analysis has a dichotomous or binomial nature where 1 stands for presence of an advertisement characteristics while 0 stands for absence of an advertisement characteristic. SPSS 16 was used to run the analysis. The result of biserial correlation so obtained is mentioned in Table 2.

A relationship was also analyzed between views and likes, the results so obtained is mentioned in Table 3.

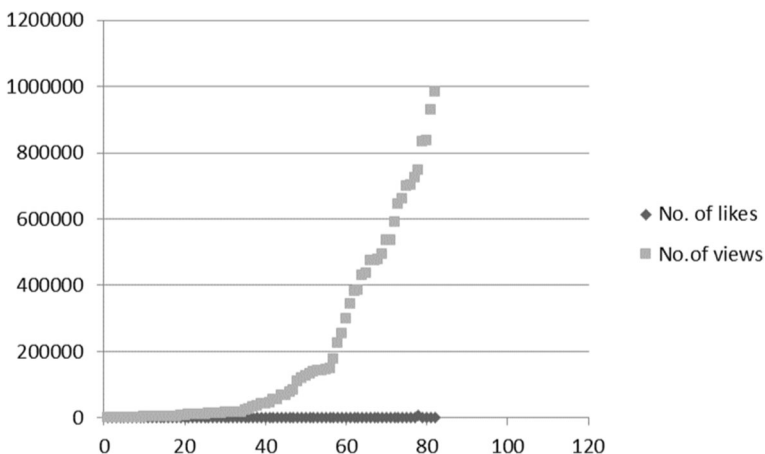
According to Fig. 3, there is a positive correlation between views and likes. For every increase in number of views, there is a positive increase in the number of likes.

5.4 Results

Among message appeals (AP) advertisements with social (Ap3–.001) and youth appeal (AP4–.044) indicates a significant correlation with views, indicating that advertisements with social or youth appeals are highly viewed by the consumers. However, advertisements that gains maximum interest of the consumers are those that have fear appeal (Ap2–.045) and social appeal (Ap3–.000).

Among visual category V3 that is slow motion is significantly correlated with consumers' views (Sig-.022), while advertisements with slow motion (V3–.000) and intense image (V5–.000) gets maximum likes.

Audio category of the advertisements indicates maximum contribution in getting consumer views as three of the four audio factors indicates a significant relationship with consumer views. Sound saturation (sig-.000), background music (.000) and loud music (.000) are

**Fig. 3** Correlation between views and likes

significantly correlated with consumer's views. However, advertisements with sound saturation and loud music gains consumer's likes.

In Content category, advertisements with unexpected formats are among the most viewed ones. In terms of likes, advertisements with unexpected format (C2-.000) or surprise ending (C3-.004) gains the maximum likes.

6 Conclusion

The goal of this study was to explore the nature of YouTube which accounts for its popularity in advertising and marketing field, thereby resulting in views and likes on the advertisements posted on it. And to know the ways in which the well-known brands are strategically using this platform to advertise their product to grab maximum attention and interest of the consumers.

The paper proposes a model for measuring the effectiveness of YouTube advertising. A well-established model AIDA has been used to validate the results. It measures the effectiveness of advertisement in four stages, viz. attention, interest, desire and action. The study shows how YouTube leads to the popularity of a brand by contributing towards the first two stages of the AIDA model that is gaining viewers' attention and creating interest for the product through message characteristics and appeals.

To sum up, the study contributes to both theoretical and managerial connotations. A theoretical base is built by discussing the YouTube element of the huge Multimedia-system catering to beauty segment. From managerial point of view, the content analysis provides insight into the usage patterns of message characteristics and appeals in advertisement of beauty products on YouTube which helps in understanding the factors which attracts audience towards an advertisement resulting in views and likes. Hence, knowing about the usefulness of its various attributes, managers can accordingly frame their promotional mix.

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