



# The Impact of Viewers' Behavior and YouTubers' Credibility in Advertainment on Building Consumer Trust

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## Authors' contributions

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## ABSTRACT

Advertainment is an upcoming concept in the current scenario combining two concepts called Advertising and Entertainment. This concept has helped modern day YouTubers to reach maximum customers within a short period. This study can facilitate spotting the factors of advertainment that have influenced on building client trust by YouTubers in Sri Lanka. In the recent years, YouTuber advertainment has become a trending advertising concept in Sri Lanka to grab the viewer's attention as people are extremely tired of TV commercials and they tend to ignore them. However, the TV commercials were able to build the consumer trust by showing them repeatedly on traditional media. Therefore, will the YouTuber's advertainment would also help to build consumer trust. In order to measure the impact of YouTuber advertainment on building consumer trust, viewers' behavior and YouTubers credibility were selected as two variables. A quantitative approach was used as the research approach and data were collected via internet questionnaires and snowball sampling was

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used as the sampling method. The target population will be the young adults in Sri Lanka age 15 to 34 year olds who follow YouTubers content online. The results of this research revealed that viewers' behavior has no impact on building consumer trust whereas YouTuber's credibility has an impact on building consumer trust. Therefore, the YouTubers in Sri Lanka should maintain their Credibility among the community when creating their content of advertainment

*Keywords: Advertainment; youtubers; consumer trust; viewers' behavior; youtuber's credibility.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

For advertising revenue, YouTube is turning into the "worldwide video platform" for competitive worldwide. With the expansion of YouTube, marketers are rapidly connecting with the platform. YouTube is quite different in offering new interactions and community building possibilities comparing to the traditional TV advertising platform. For promoting functions, it is necessary for the marketers to understand the characteristics of YouTube as there are many users of YouTube are becoming the mainstream [1].

Since the YouTubers carry themselves as role models for their viewers, it can be considered as a best methods for influencer marketing. According to the studies led by the research, it was seen that YouTubers are more than role models to their viewers as they influence their followers buying behaviour [2] YouTubers showcase products in their videos through advertainment. In such conditions, "YouTube advertainment" is selected by the organizations and YouTubers are chosen as the brand advocates in their social media promoting technique (Chițu and Tecău, 2010). This technique is used as a tool for building long term relationships with customers. When looking at advertainment created by YouTubers, a key role is played with an intriguing storylines and the suitable enclosure of the brand [1] Branded content resembles a short film. The most interesting part is that this is not just advertising, but also the shared creativeness with the brand (Hudson & Hudson, 2006).

Due to the busy life of people, many have reduced watching Television. According to Asquith and Hearn [3] nowadays the majority are not keen on watching advertisements that are displayed through traditional media and the viewers does not like to focus on an ad for over 30 seconds. As indicated by Milja Milenkovic's television advertising statistics 2020 delivered in smallbizgenius.net, stated that in 2018, the time

spent by 18-to-34-year olds of watching television had been dropped by 17.2% than previous years as they're generally with digital devices and they are more into checking content showed in digital media than the content showed in traditional media. In spite of that, Asquith & Hearn [3] have mentioned that the advertisement of products that are shown repetitively on traditional media has resulted in increase in sales of that particular product. Therefore, it was indicated that those advertisements have significantly impacted the rise in developing consumer trust.

When considering the advertainment made by the Famous YouTubers in Sri Lanka, the length of their videos is at least more than 10 minutes, but they reach millions of views in a shorter period of time. Nevertheless, the problem of the study is, although it has a better reach, will the YouTuber's advertainment would help to build consumer trust?

In order to measure the impact of advertainment on building consumer trust, Viewers' behaviour and YouTuber's credibility were identified from past researches as independent variables to consumer trust which is the dependent variable in this study.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In today's fast paced business context, one of the main goal/ objectives of a company would be increase the customer perception by using latest advertising technique such as Advertainment. According to (Wanninayake, 2014) the modern-day marketers find a growing interest in the research of consumers' purchasing decision styles, in order to understand about how they can plant a seed of consumer trust in the competitive environment. The importance of this concept is, that it is so helpful when marketers are deciding consumers' behavioral patterns and market segments (Wanninayake, 2014)

This chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the study. This chapter provides the empirical pieces of evidence on the

impact of viewer's behavior and YouTubers credibility in Advertainment on building consumer trust. Accordingly, the main elements of this research are extracted systematically. Firstly, a brief understanding is provided regarding the dependent variable Consumer Trust then followed by the independent variables which are viewers' behaviors and YouTubers' Credibility. Finally, the chapter deliberates the significant impact of the impact of viewer's behavior and YouTuber's credibility in Advertainment on building consumer trust with a summary of providing findings from the literature.

## 2.1 Consumer Trust

Consumer is taken as the dependent variable of this study. Customer trust is defined as the middle point of establishing and maintaining a long-term relationship which is beneficial for both customers and organizations. A study done by [3] says that trust is started to build when one party which is involved in the transaction process has confidence in exchanging the other party's reliability and integrity. The initial idea of relationship in marketing is called making and maintaining a relationship with customers which is profitable for both ends in order to make sure that the parties who are involved with the organization get the competitive advantages [4] Furthermore, they state that when it comes to marketing context, customer trust has linked with expectations of customers concerning organization's ability to fulfill the promises. Nguyen, Leclerc and LeBlanc, [4] also stated that fulfilling customer expectations can be considered as a dominant fact in building customer trust. As per [5] video advertisements/advertainment on YouTube are considered as one of the best marketing tool because the message delivered through the storylines can be relatable to the viewer's life and also the message could be important to the viewer. [1] cited that Martensen et al, 2018 had stated, consumer trust in an online setting, the viewer must trust the influencer without any personal interactions, so that the visual nature of the social media makes people more connected with the influencer.

Therefore, this study is investigating how the factors of YouTuber's advertainment (Viewer's behaviour and YouTuber's credibility) had impacted on building consumer trust on the product promoted in their content. The two factors that have identified in this study will contribute on building consumer trust in related to YouTuber's advertainment.

## 2.2 Viewers' Behaviors

When it comes to viewer behaviors, according to [7] It is about how viewers actively participate in fans' chat, commenting and how much they spend on YouTube and subscribing to those accounts. [8] stated that YouTube review and commitment take place on Entertainment, content seeking and social association. In addition to that, they mentioned that when viewers actively participate in fans chats and commenting on videos, it automatically entertains the viewers. In addition to that, according to (Lange, 2007), Most of the YouTubers respond to the comments in comment sections and it also entertains the viewers as well. Marketers tend to focus YouTubers due their unique identity and the standards they are having. With this approach, the brand will get people to want to buy their products due to the idolization of the YouTuber. On the other hand, this whole process is about using certain people who have a following and trust of a certain group. With this approach, the YouTuber is building up the brand's image and the trust toward the brand in their follower's minds [2]

## 2.3 YouTuber's Credibility

According to Rapaso & Galrao (2019) YouTubers credibility is about how much trust that YouTubers have built up on consumers through the information given by the content. Based on the information given by the YouTubers, they expect some feedback from viewers. From the way that YouTubers react to those feedbacks, viewers can figure out how much they trust the information given by the YouTubers. In addition to that, according to Menezes (2017) they are encouraged to feature the product to get more feedback from the viewers. In terms of featuring those products or brand to promote them celebrities and YouTubers need to accomplish their own identity being unique in the market and that drives marketer to hire them (Jiang, 2018). Deatara et al. (2019) states YouTubers are found to be credible with the ability of influencing because of their lifestyle of vlogging and showing their day-to-day activities to their followers and it creates a trustworthiness and special relationship with the viewers.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

Based on the literature study, the proposed framework consists of two variables in YouTuber's advertainment to measure the

impact on build consumer trust. The following shown is the proposed framework for this study.

### 3.1 Proposed Framework

These two variables of YouTuber's advertainment has been identified as having a direct relationship to consumer trust. As per the shown framework, the two hypotheses are as follow,

H1: The Viewers' behaviour reflected to YouTubers' advertainment has a significant impact on building consumer trust.

H2: YouTuber's credibility in advertainment has a significant impact on building consumer trust.

### 3.2 Procedure

This study follows Positivism as the research philosophy as it will be a highly structured and a quantitative research that will be conducted by providing questionnaires. Data for this study were collected from the individuals who are aged between 15 and 34 through an online questionnaire and the sample size of this research is 234 individuals. The deductive research approach is applied as the questionnaire items were extracted and developed based on past literature. Snowball sampling which is a non-probability sampling method. The measure of the consumer trust on YouTuber's advertainment were extracted from [7,8,9] and (Menezes 2017). In this study, four

items are taken for Viewer's behaviour and three items are taken for YouTuber's credibility. The items to measure the dependent variable were extracted from [7] and (Corrêa et.al 2020). All these items are revised based on the results gain from the pilot survey. Every item has used 5 point Likert scale with anchors strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The given out questionnaire is divided in to two part focusing on the demographic details such as gender, age category, marital status and employment status, and the variables. A regression analysis was performed to analyze the data collected from the online questionnaire using AMOS and SPSS Statistical software [10-12].

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Demographic Details of the Respondents

When considering the above mentioned demographic factor of this study, it is considered to measure how males and females who are in the four stated age categories pay attention or actively engage with YouTubers' advertainment and how much they consider YouTubers' contents are credible in Sri Lanka respectively.

### 4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

The data set was undertaken a reliability analysis where all the items exceeded 0.7 in Cronbach alpha coefficient. Below table shows the summary of the factor analysis.

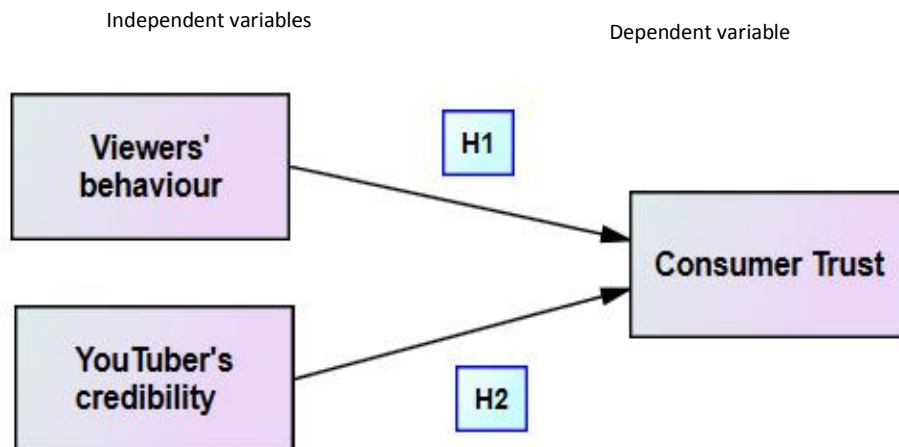
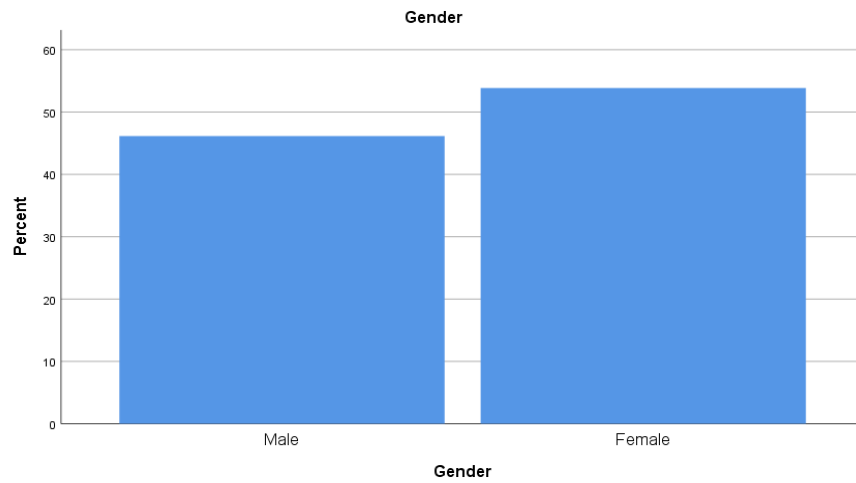
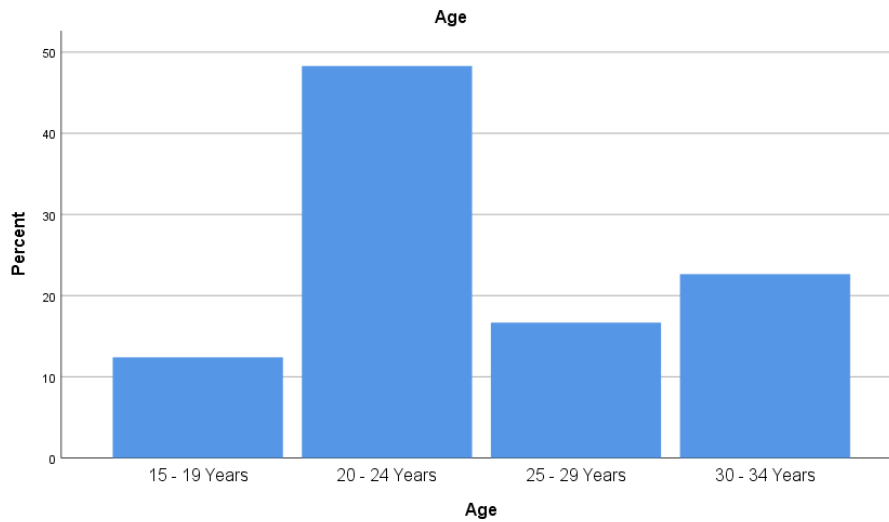


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework



**Fig. 1. Demographic Factors – Gender (Appendix 01)**



**Fig. 2. Demographic Factors – Age (Appendix 01)**

Source: Authors' representation based on SPSS results

The below values were obtained using the following equations.

**Factor Loading**

$$L = \sqrt{\hat{\lambda}_1 e_1} \sqrt{\hat{\lambda}_2 e_2} \dots \sqrt{\hat{\lambda}_m e_m}$$

**KMO**

$$KMO^j = \frac{\sum i = j^r i^2 j}{\sum i = j^r i^2 j + \sum i = j^r i^2 j}$$

**Cronbach's alpha**

$$p_T = \frac{k^2 \bar{\sigma}_{ij}}{\sigma_x^2}$$

**Table 1. Factor Analysis and Reliability Test (Appendix 02)**

Construct	Measurement Items	KMO Value	Cronbach Alpha
Consumer Trust	CT1 CT2 CT5 CT6	0.721	0.806

Viewers' behaviour	VB5 VB6 VB7	0.694	0.650
Youtuber's Credibility	YC2 YC3 YC4 YC5	0.799	0.832

Source: Authors' representation based on SPSS result

The Table 2 presents the summary of the reliability test and the factor analysis. The dependent variable consumer trust has a KMO value of 0.721 which is a middling level value and the Cronbach's alpha value of 0.806 respectively. The variable Viewer's behaviour records a KMO value as 0.694 which is also a mediocre level value and the Cronbach's alpha value as 0.650. Ursachi, Horodnic and Zait, (2015) stated that Alpha value between 0.6 - 0.7 is indicated as the acceptable level of reliability. YouTuber's credibility shows a KMO value of 0.799 which is at the middling level and a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.832. The average factor loading for Consumer Trust is 0.820, Viewer's behaviour is 0.633 and YouTuber's Credibility is 0.683.

#### 4.3 Correlation between Independent Variables and Dependent Variable

As per the above mentioned figures shows the correlation between the Independent variables, Viewer's behavior and YouTuber's Credibility and the dependent variable, Consumer trust. Viewer's behaviour (VB) has a weak positive correlation with Consumer trust which has indicated by an r-Value of 0.350. YouTuber's Credibility records an r-Value of 0.670, also indicating that a weak positive correlation with Consumer trust.

#### 4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses have been tested using standard regression analysis.

### 5. DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 The Impact of Viewer's Behavior on Youtuber Advertainment on Building Consumer Trust

The first objective of this study is to identify the impact of viewer's behaviour on YouTuber

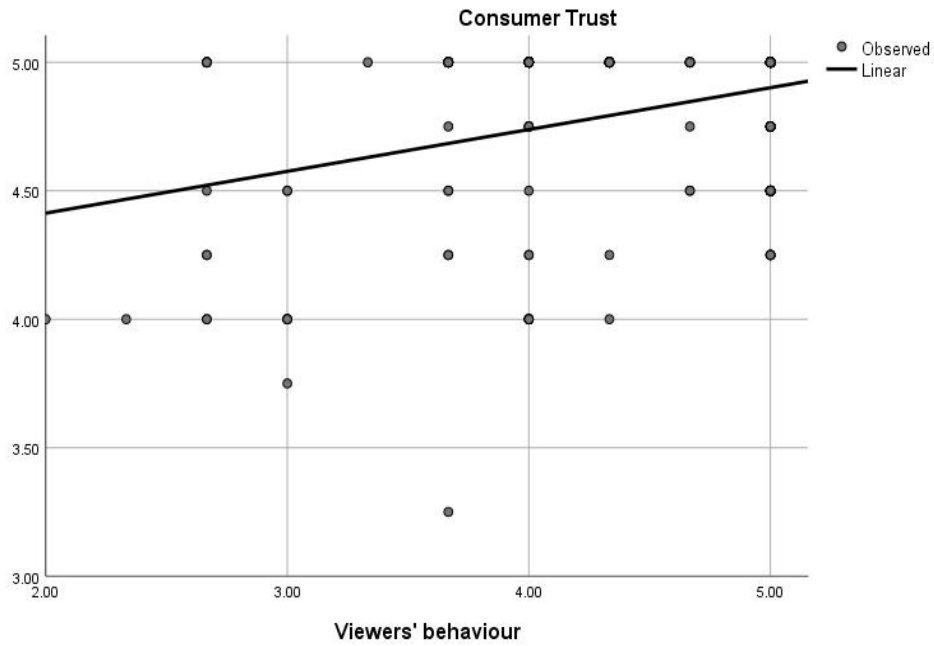
Advertainment on building consumer trust. As mentioned in the earlier table. Viewer's behavior and consumer trust has a weak positive relationship as the r-Value was recorded as 0.350. When considering the impact between the two variables, the regression weight was recorded as ( $\beta=0.010$ ) at a  $P= 0.790$  which is not a significant point. This could be understand as, when Viewer's behaviour increases by one unit, Consumer trust will rise by 0.010 units. Therefore the hypothesis (H1: The Viewers' behaviour in reflected to YouTubers' advertainment has a significant impact on building consumer trust.) is rejected in this study as it's not significantly supported.

#### 5.2 The Impact of Youtuber's Credibility on Building Consumer Trust

This objective of this study is formulated to identify the impact of YouTuber's credibility in Advertainment on building consumer trust. There's a strong positive relationship between YouTuber's credibility and consumer trust as its r-Value shows as 0.670. When look in to the impact between these two variables, the regression weight was recorded as ( $\beta=0.309$ ) at a  $P<0.05$ , at a significant point. This could determine as when YouTuber's credibility increases by one unit, consumer trust will get increased by 0.309 units. Therefore the hypothesis (H3: YouTubers' Credibility in advertainment has a significant impact on building consumer trust) was supported significantly. The findings that were gathered through the questionnaire indicated that Sri Lankan viewers trust the content of YouTubers who has many followers/subscribers. The viewers had positively perceived the utility of entertainment on YouTubers' content and they believe YouTuber's content determines its use intention of the brands. Nevertheless they believe that the product benefits shown by the YouTubers would help them to gain consumer trust.

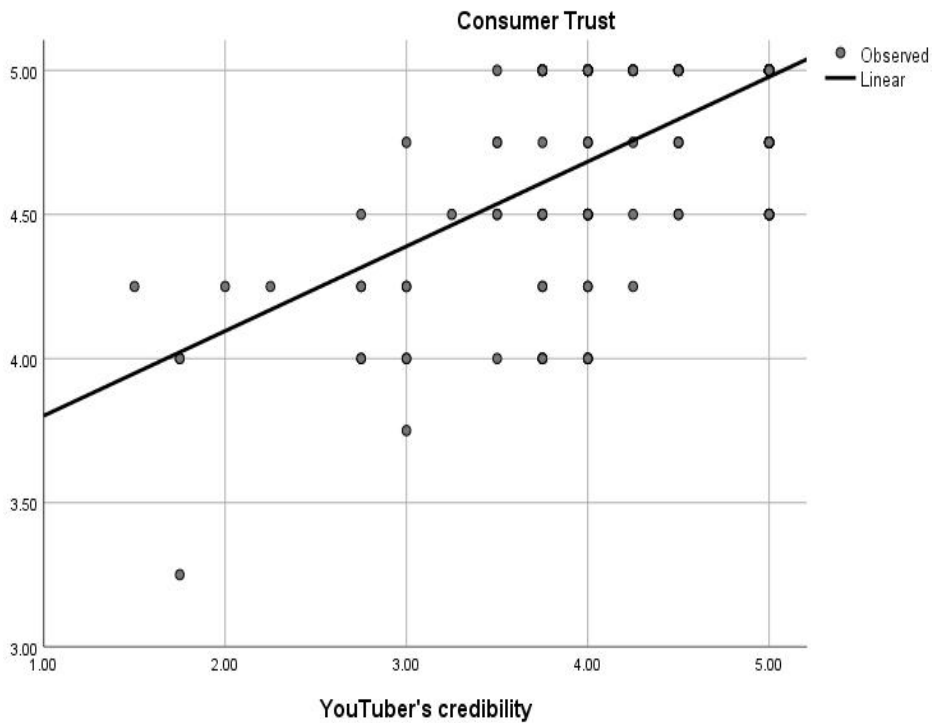
#### Viewers' behaviour and Consumer trust

R	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.350	.122	.039



**YouTuber's credibility and Consumer trust**

R	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.670	.449	.097



Authors' representation based on SPSS result

**Table 3. Hypothesis testing**

Hypothesis statement of path analysis	Estimate	S. E	C.R	P-Value	Result of Hypothesis
<b>H1: The Viewers' behaviour reflected to YouTubers' advertainment has a significant impact on building consumer trust.</b>	0.010	0.039	0.266	0.790	Not Significant
<b>H2: YouTubers' Credibility in advertainment has a significant impact on building consumer trust</b>	0.309	0.097	3.180	0.001	Significant

*Source: Authors' representation based on AMOS results*

*Note: S.E = Standard Error of Estimate, C.R = Critical Ratio, P-Value = Significant Value. The above table 4 shows the results of the hypothesis testing of our study. This study has 2 hypotheses and it indicated that YouTuber's Credibility is supported while Viewer's behaviour is not supported as its P-Value is greater than 0.05*

## 6. CONCLUSION

The study emphasizes the impact of advertainment used by YouTubers on building consumer trust. This provides an overview of the research with regard to the results obtained after the online questionnaire was distributed among the young adults of Sri Lanka. The main aim of the research was "to understand how the factors of advertainment have facilitated and influenced on building consumer trust by YouTubers in Sri Lanka".

By referring to the first objective of the study, to determine the impact of YouTubers' advertainment on building consumer trust by observing the viewers' behavior. When the viewers actually get to connect with the YouTuber by commenting on their content and following them on their social media accounts, viewers build a special connection with them. YouTube is a free platform where anyone can express their opinions, so whenever they upload a video there is going to be positive comments as well negative comments on their content. Though their subscribers are loyal towards them when they see negative comments about the product, or the content consumer trust would fluctuate. Also, when the number of dislikes is high in the video it gets a negative impact on the message and the product they are delivering. Even though they build a strong relationship with the YouTuber by communicating with them, they do not build trust towards the products. Therefore, the results of this objective determined that viewers' behaviour is having a negative relationship with consumer trust and the variable viewers' behaviour is rejected by this study as it resulted that does not significantly impact on building consumer trust.

As the second objective of the study, it was to determine the impact of YouTubers'

advertainment on building consumer trust by the YouTubers' credibility. When YouTubers are honest, viewers tend to believe what they present in their content, because they consider them as an ordinary person who would educate and entertain them. YouTubers always expect a feedback from their audience in the comment section and they also react to viewers' feedback. That way the viewers can figure out how much they can trust the presented data. Viewers' also pay attention to the product attribute given by the YouTuber. Therefore, the YouTuber's credibility has an impact on building consumer trust.

Therefore, the YouTubers in Sri Lanka should maintain their Credibility among the community when creating their content of advertainment.

## 7. FUTURE RESEARCH

Further studies could investigate factors like communication, integration, influencer's point of view with an expansion of the theoretical model. Also the future researches can proceed the same research with a larger respondent sample. Since we could not conduct a qualitative research due to the COVID pandemic, the future researchers could do a qualitative study for broader evaluations.

## DISCLAIMER

The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.



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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 01

<b>Gender</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	Male	108	46.2	46.2	46.2
	Female	126	53.8	53.8	100.0
	Total	234	100.0	100.0	

*Source: Authors' representation based on SPSS results*

<b>Age</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	15 - 19 Years	29	12.4	12.4	12.4
	20 - 24 Years	113	48.3	48.3	60.7
	25 - 29 Years	39	16.7	16.7	77.4
	30 - 34 Years	53	22.6	22.6	100.0
	Total	234	100.0	100.0	

*Source: Authors' representation based on SPSS results*

**Appendix 02: Summary of Factor Analysis and Reliability Test**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Measurement Items</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>KMO Value</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
Consumer Trust	CT1: I believe benefits of the promoted product shown by the YouTubers would help to obtain customer trust.	0.94	0.721	0.806
	CT2: I pay attention to the advertainment content very well	0.45		
	CT5: I believe the YouTuber's can influence my buying behaviour.	0.88		
	CT6: I believe YouTubers play a role that is relatable to my life style.	0.63		
Viewers' behaviour	VB5: I watch the video more than one time to get more familiar with the product they promote	0.68	0.694	0.650
	VB6: On a daily basis I spend more than 1 hour on watching YouTubers' content	0.69		
	VB7: I comment on YouTuber's videos more often.	0.53		
YouTuber's Credibility	YC2: I believe viewers had positively perceived the utility of entertainment on YouTubers' content.	0.63	0.799	0.832
	YC3: I believe consumer trust created by YouTuber's content determines its use intention of the brands	0.63		
	YC4: I believe that product benefits shown by YouTubers would help to obtain customer trust.	0.67		
	YC5: I trust YouTubers who has many subscribers	0.75		

*Source: Authors' representation based on SPSS result*

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