

YOUTUBE USAGE AND YOUTH NETIZENS' BEHAVIORS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

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Abstract. Recent advances in technology have resulted in over-dependence on social media for communication purposes. With the emergence of various social media platforms, youths have become increasingly active users of social media and are driven to surf online information. As such, youths are susceptible to the influence of social media. Therefore, this research aims to determine the relationship between Youtube usage and youth netizens' behaviors in the Malaysian context. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from a sample of 132 youth netizens in Damansara, Kuala Lumpur. The data were analyzed using Pearson Correlation at an alpha (α) level of ≤ 0.05 via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The relationship was measured based on Youtube access, purpose, motivations, and interests, lifestyle, self-personality, and communication skills. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between Youtube usage and youth netizens' behaviors ($r = .711$, $k < 0.05$). It was envisaged that this study will advance our understanding of how Youtube videos influence youth behaviors.

Keywords: *Malaysia, netizenship, social media, Youtube, youth behavior*

Introduction

Advances in communication technology have transformed the way people communicate with each other (Dijk, 2006; McMullan, 2020; Subramanian, 2018). In Malaysia, social media usage has flourished significantly (Chung et al., 2019). According to a report from the Malaysian Commission of Communications and Multimedia (MCMC) conducted in 2020, the use of social media has reached 93% with 87% online video usage. The reports also showed that while Facebook usage declined from 97.3% in 2018 to 91.7% in 2020, Youtube usage has significantly increased from 48.3% in 2018 to 80.6% in 2020. These statistics also show the recognition of Youtube as a medium of communication, particularly in Malaysia. The use of Youtube in Malaysia has become more popular with the emergence of social media influencers (Khalid et al., 2018).

The culture of uploading videos has become prevalent among youths (Yarosh et al., 2016). Youtube is the second most popular social media platform in the world with 2 billion active users (Oberlo Official Portal, 2020). This popularity is evidenced by prizes for Youtube uploads, such as the Asian Influence Award. Youtube has a significant impact on youth personality (Westenberg, 2016). This impact can be due to the interesting and effective nature of Youtube videos (Zhou et al., 2016). Socially

influential individuals may use social media platforms to influence youth netizens. Netizens are defined as a group of active internet users who use online networks as intellectual spaces to form global connections within their local contexts (Yigit, 2014).

Moreover, the influence of Youtube on youth attitudes has become a contentious topic recently (Klobas et al., 2016). Youtubers are believed to possess a high level of influence (Aran-Ramspott et al., 2016). Youtubers have more influence on youths than traditional celebrities (Westenberg, 2016). Research shows Youtubers use a variety of advertising techniques, such as eccentric body language, easy jokes, and recurrence of slang, to attract viewers (Pereira et al., 2018). Some companies even advertise their products through Youtube influencers as they are viewed as authentic when reviewing a product or brand (Westenberg, 2016). Also, social media influencers can advertise products or services at relatively low costs.

In essence, previous studies showed that the content of social media, particularly Youtube (Levinson et al., 2020; Westenberg, 2016), can influence youth behavior either positively or negatively. However, the extent of this influence still needs to be thoroughly ascertained. Therefore, this study aims to determine the relationship between Youtube usage and youth netizens' behaviors. This analysis offers an assessment of Youtube usage and its relationship with youth netizens' behaviors, particularly in Malaysia. This is because the formation of youth behavior is crucial in developing a peaceful society (Jiménez and Vozmediano, 2020; Westenberg, 2016).

Literature review

Vlog content on Youtube

Generally, vlogs refer to a set of videos created to provide information on a particular topic containing opinions, stories, and daily activities (Christian, 2009). The content of vlogs, which is the main material in Youtube influencers' accounts, has a great influence on the lives of youths nowadays (David et al., 2017). Combel and Codreanu (2016) noted that vlogs express what goes on in one's daily routine, and viewers have a high probability to emulate such a lifestyle as depicted in the videos. Vlogs are highly powerful in attracting viewers and shaping their attitudes. For example, researchers show that students who embark on learning via videos tend to be more motivated than their counterparts who learn via texts (Chen, 2012; Choi and Johnson, 2005; Iwantara et al., 2014).

Additionally, David et al. (2017) argued that vlogs can influence viewers' attitudes. The authors found a significant positive correlation between the vlog content and the formation of student behaviors. This correlation suggests that vlog content can influence the formation of individual personality, especially among youths. In this context, vlogs are crucial in shaping youth attitudes. Youtube provides online informative videos that contain opinions and information about particular issues. Nevertheless, the content of vlogs may influence the lives of youths negatively. In this regard, Westenberg (2016) mentioned that parents often complained that their children spend a lot of time online. According to Nima (2020), some Youtube videos can be misleading.

Youtube and the young generation

Several studies were conducted to explore how Youtube influences the attitudes of youths from various perspectives (Jiménez and Vozmediano, 2020; Levinson et al., 2020; Muniruddin, 2007; Westenberg, 2016). Most of these studies found that, to some

extent, Youtube videos influence youths' behaviors, positively and negatively. For example, Westenberg (2016) relied on semi-structured interviews to explore how Dutch Youtubers influence youth viewers. The study found that Youtubers influence teenagers' behavior, of which youths and their parents are unaware. Youtube has become part of youths' daily life. A study found that the main themes in Youtube videos for youths include sex, drugs, and pregnancy (Jiménez and Vozmediano, 2020). According to the study, Youtube users have also shown great "interest in seeking out constructive content to learn, educate themselves, or avoid potentially risky situations". Westenberg (2016) asserted that "although Youtube is used by all ages, the platform is very popular among teenagers".

Similarly, Levinson et al. (2020) explored Youtube as a potential source of support for sexual and gender minority youths. The analyzed the ecological comments on Youtube videos using thematic analysis. According to the study, youths most commonly share feelings and experiences related to their identity on Youtube videos ask for identity-related advice or information; they view Youtube as a source of education. The study showed that "minority youth's use of Youtube can be advantageous for social support and community, identity-related information, identity development, and overall well-being". In line with these findings, research shows that youths are highly satisfied with Youtube as a source of information (Haqqi et al., 2019).

Moreover, videos uploaded by Youtube influencers have grown and been favored by youths. According to Meyerson (2010), 72 hours of video duration is uploaded every minute. Also, Youtube is not only seen as a medium for information sources for the younger generation but also as a channel for them to contribute and share ideas (Jiménez and Vozmediano, 2020). The younger generation has turned to Youtube as a source of tutorials in getting and gathering information. Abdul and Adam (2015) stated that Youtube serves as a platform via which educative videos are uploaded, watched, and shared.

Additionally, Youtube is one of the widest social networks in society (Abdul and Adam, 2015). In this context, the level of Youtube usage is believed to have influenced public thinking. Youtube videos tend to be powerful in shaping people's perceptions (Munirudden, 2007). The emergence of Youtube has opened avenues for the gathering of information quickly and accurately. However, the condition still bears both positive and negative impacts (Neumann and Herodotou, 2020). It was found that youths and informants surf Youtube for information from educative and entertaining videos (Aguslianto, 2017; Aripin et al., 2016; Pires et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Aguslianto (2017) noted that Youtube videos benefit youths in many ways, such as facilitating the search for information, which makes youths knowledgeable on global issues. Most people tend to rely on line views for information (Larasati and Manalu, 2017). In this regard, Destiana et al. (2013) argued that the acceptance of Youtube as a source of educative information could be due to its ease of use. However, excessive exposure to Youtube videos may have some negative effects. Aguslianto (2017) revealed that watching Youtube videos results in negligence of prayers among Muslim youth. Youths tend to form personalities based on what they watch on Youtube rather than parental guidelines (Abdul and Adam, 2015).

In essence, studies found a strong relationship between exposure to Youtube videos and change in netizens' behaviors from various perspectives (Jiménez and Vozmediano, 2020; Levinson et al., 2020; Westenberg, 2016). Very few studies focused on the influence of Youtube advertising on the purchasing behavior of youths. For instance,

Viertola (2018) determined the influence of Youtube marketing on a young target group. The study found that Youtube marketing influences the young target audience's purchasing decisions to some extent but has more impact on the general opinions and attitudes of the youths.

Theoretical approach

In this study, arguments are made based on framing as a media effect theory. According to Borah (2015), the framing effect is one of the most commonly used theories to examine how media content influences people's behaviors or perceptions of a particular subject. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) noted that intrinsic symbolic values such as visual phenomenon can be influential. In essence, "framing influences information processing and the subsequent decision-making processes" (Borah, 2015). Researchers used frame effects to study the processes involved in the formation of attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions, as well as how news framing influences information processing and the subsequent decision-making (Borah, 2015). Kahneman and Tversky (1979) were the first researchers to investigate how the presentation of information can influence people's opinions and choices.

According to Kahneman (2003), the basic principle of framing effect suggests a passive acceptance of formulation. This presumption explains the media effects on the behavior of media users. People who search for information on social media may interact with other groups with similar interests. This situation suggests the tendency of individuals to expose themselves to the content they favor. In this situation, the media could provide opportunities for users to obtain information of their interest. Based on the assumptions of framing effect theory, we hypothesized that youth netizens are likely to be influenced by the content of Youtube videos in the process of information seeking. The following hypothesis was developed to be tested;

H₀: There is a significant relationship between Youtube usage and youth netizens' behaviors.

H₁: There is no significant relationship between Youtube usage and youth netizens' behaviors.

Materials and Methods

Design

This correlational study employed self-developed questionnaires to determine the relationship between Youtube usage and behaviors of selected youth netizens in Malaysia. According to MacDonald et al. (2014), a correlational design is used to observe and describe relationships between two or more variables. Because variables in correlational designs are not directly manipulated, conclusions are limited to describing relationships instead of inferring causality. Also, correlational designs are used to establish relationships between variables before conducting larger studies.

Data collection

A structured questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 132 youth netizens. The respondents were selected using a probability sampling technique. All the respondents are actively involved in the use of Youtube as a social media platform. Only youth

netizens between the ages of 15 and 18 who live in the area of Damansara in Kuala Lumpur were considered. The questionnaire was developed using a 5-Likert scale and consisted of three sections with 35 items. The measurement of Youtube usage consisted of Youtube access, purpose, motivations, and interests. On the other hand, the measurement of the netizens' behaviors consisted of lifestyle, self-personality, and communication skills.

Data analysis

Pearson Correlation was used to determine the relationship between respondents' behaviors and Youtube usage. Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument. At this stage, questionnaires were administered to 30 respondents. The results showed 0.932 and 0.934 for Youtube usage and youth netizens' behavior respectively. These results are considered valid with high reliability (Bakar, 2013; Hair et al., 2010). The inferences for data analysis were set at an alpha (α) level of ≤ 0.05 using the SPSS software package (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA, 20.0).

Results and Discussion

Out of 132 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 115 were returned. However, 15 questionnaires were not included in the study due to incomplete information and invalid responses. Therefore, a total of 100 questionnaires were considered for analysis. Regarding the respondents' demographic information, 35% were males while 65% were females. This information shows that more females follow Youtube influencers than males. Also, 57% of the respondents were 17 years old, 25% were 18 years old, 12% were 15 years old, while very few were 16 years old (6%). Additionally, 89% of the respondents were Malays, 6 % were Chinese, 3%t were Indians, while only 2% were from other ethnic groups. The objective of this study was to determine the relationship between YiuTube usage and youth netizens' behaviors. This information is depicted in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Youtube usage and youth netizens' behaviors.

Variables	Correlation	Youtube usage	Netizens' behavior
Youtube usage	Pearson Correlation	1	.711
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Netizen youth behavior	Pearson Correlation	.711	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100

**** Correlation is significant at the level 0.00 (2-tailed)**

As shown in *Table 1*, there is a significant positive relationship between Youtube usage and youth netizens' behaviors ($r = .711$, $k < 0.05$). This finding explains that Youtube usage correlates significantly with youth netizens' behaviors. Hence, our hypothesis which claims that Youtube usage has a significant relationship with youth netizens' behavior is hereby accepted. The findings showed that respondents have significant access to Youtube videos and they are highly motivated toward using these videos with great interests. It was found that female respondents view and follow Youtube Influencer activities that relate to music entertainment. They also use Youtube

videos to collaborate with fellow students and friends. Nevertheless, male respondents were inclined to videos that relate to games. They were not likely to collaborate with other individuals. Additionally, the findings showed that the respondents develop positive lifestyles, self-personalities, and communication skills through Youtube usage.

The findings reported in this study showed a significant relationship between Youtube usage and youth netizens' behaviors. Also, this relationship was found to be positive. These findings concur with many previous studies on the relationship between Youtube videos and youth behaviors (Aguslianto, 2017; Destiana et al., 2013; Haqu et al., 2019; Levinson et al., 2020). However, some studies found both positive and negative influence of Youtube videos on teenagers (Jiménez and Vozmediano, 2020; Neumann and Herodotou, 2020). According to Jiménez and Vozmediano (2020), Youtube videos for youths include sex, drugs, and pregnancy. In line with the assumptions of framing effect theory (Borah, 2015), youth netizens' behaviors are likely to be influenced by Youtube videos. Based on this assumption, media users passively accept formulation (Kahneman, 2003).

Moreover, the findings of this study showed that Youtube Influencers are influential, particularly in shaping youth netizens' behaviors. Young people use Youtube to obtain valued information and entertainment on vlogs (Iwantara et al., 2014). This study shows that youth netizens in Malaysia tend to use Youtube to search for entertainment videos and educative tutorials. This kind of information can help youths be creative. The youth netizens are highly satisfied with Youtube usage. Some of the respondents even mentioned that they used Youtube to accomplish their school homework. These outcomes proved that in this technology millennium, Youtube videos can influence the behavior of teenagers.

Conclusion

This study examined Youtube usage and its relationship with the behaviors of youth netizens in Malaysia. According to the findings, there is a strong positive correlation between Youtube usage and youth netizens' behaviors. The respondents are highly motivated toward using Youtube videos with great interests. They also develop positive lifestyles, self-personalities, and communication skills through Youtube usage. Overall, this study revealed that the influence of Youtube usage leads to the formation of positive personalities and the development of self-personalities among youth netizens in Malaysia.

This study advances our understanding of how Youtube videos can help develop positive behaviors, particularly among youth netizens. However, parents must be conscious about the content viewed and used by their children as Youtube, like other social media platforms, often contain undesirable information. This objective can be achieved by constant parental observation and monitoring of children's' behaviors. Besides, this correlational study is limited to the Malaysian context with a few respondents, the analysis may be replicated with a larger sample to obtain more generalizable results. Also, a longitudinal study can be conducted to ascertain changes in the relationship between Youtube usage and youth netizens' behaviors over a specific period.

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest with any parties in this research.

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