PREFACE

The emergence of the internet has transformed the landscape of communication. One of the foremost advantages of the Internet is flexibility. The user need not be physically present; they do not even need to be participating in the conversation at the same time. This makes computer-mediated communication one of the most accessible means of transmitting the information. Many people have raised their voices over the shift from physical communication to digital communication and its repercussions on society; however, online socialization has several advantages over traditional socialization.

In the past few years, internet marketing strategy has shifted away from an emphasis on *paid* media, where a brand pays to advertise, to *earned* media, where the customers themselves become the delivery channel (Corcoran, 2009). The broad scope of word-of-mouth in social networks offers a geographic and timeless impact. It allows the customers/followers to influence the brand's image and change the perception of other consumers (Laureano et al., 2018). The viral quotient depends upon its ability to stand out from the clutter and engage the viewer in a meaningful and entertaining way.

This research moves above the personal level of emotional engagement and explores factors that affect sharing content in broader social circles. With multiple theoretical insights from multidisciplinary research in digital marketing, advertising, marketing, social media marketing, and viral video advertising, this research aims to assess the effect of contributing factors instrumental in viral content. The research gap has been mentioned in the work of researchers like Tylor West (West, 2011) and Lance Porter & Guy Golan (Porter & Golan, 2006). The prime focus of the proposed study is to understand the 42 contributing factors from the experts' perspective. Here, experts refer to individuals who are involved in the process of making the video. This was accomplished by assessing expert opinion on the creative determinants.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Viral video advertising can construct engagement through P2P (peer-to-peer) interactions and has been studied to constitute endorsement and improve the brand's reliability (Chiu et al., 2007). But it also needs to be noted that apart from the advantages of viral potential, online video advertising is difficult to control (Petrescu & Korgaonkar, 2011).

Online videos may provoke more motivation and emotionally intense processes in consumers than traditional advertising. (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). The flexibility of online video engagement is higher. Online video advertising on social media allows consumers to share, discuss, rate comments, and replay videos (Southgate et al., 2010). Online video advertising is also perceived as more compelling (Lee & Lee, 2010) and personal (Porter & Golan, 2006) than traditional advertising.

The idea that the target audience can make their buying decisions for emotional or rational reasons has been responsible for research by consumer psychologists (Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999). Advertising scholars, marketers, and advertisers are enormously concerned with understanding the effect of advertising appeal on the end consumer.

Emotional Appeal

There are two types of emotional appeals; rational appeal and emotional appeal. A clear distinction has been drawn between emotional appeals and rational appeals; the emotional appeals significantly aim at the consumer's symbolic, social or psychological needs, targeting to blend emotions and bring into play an affection mechanism that will stimulate the target audience to purchase products. In contrast, rational appeals focus on the rational thinking process of the customer, where utilitarian and measurable benefits play an essential role (Leonidou & Leonidou, 2009).

Positive emotional appeal advertising creates favorable emotional responses (e.g., happiness, joy, and a sense of pleasure), while negative emotional appeals produce negative emotional responses (e.g., sadness, anger, and fear). Such different emotional response experiences may vary depending on individuals' ability to relate their self-relevant to the specific events, persons, or situations (Stout & Leckenby, 1988).

For this research, a list of 28 appeals was referred to and reviewed (Belch & Belch, 2003).

- Safety and Security (Pollay, 1983)
- Fear (Leonidou & Leonidou, 2009)
- Love (Belch & Belch, 2003)
- Affection (Ambujakshan, 2013)
- Happiness (Deans et al., 2016)
- Joy (Teixeira et al., 2012)
- Nostalgia (Marchegiani & Phau, 2010)

- Sentiment (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2003)

- Excitement (Czarnecka & Mogaji, 2020)

- Arousal/Stimulation (Berger & Milkman, 2012)

- Sorrow/grief (Phelps et al., 2004)

- Pride (Moriarty, 1991)

- Achievement/Accomplishment (Cheung et al., 2007)

- Self-esteem (Cheung et al., 2007)

- Actualization (Belch & Belch, 2003)

- Pleasure (Belch & Belch, 2003)

- Ambition (Cheung et al., 2007)

- Comfort (Belch & Belch, 2003)

- Recognition (Taylor et al., 2012)

- Status (Taylor et al., 2012)

- Respect (Moriarty, 1991)

- Involvement (Engel et al., 1990)

- Embarrassment (Tracy & Robins, 2004)

- Affiliation/belonging (Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988)

- Rejection (Moriarty, 1991)

- Acceptance (Nikolinakou & King, 2018)

- Approval (Nikolinakou & King, 2018)

Message characteristics

The second cluster of creative determinants under study is 'message characteristics.' Here message characteristics refer to *the way* message is imbibed and weaved in the video. Below is the list of 'message characteristics' affecting video virality.

- Utility (Johar & Joseph Sirgy, 2003)

- Distinctiveness (Originality) (Wojnicki, 2006)

- Encourage participation (Mantri et al., 2015)

- Topical content in message

- Social Message

- Inspired by real-life events/Values

- Corporate Storytelling

Treatment factors

The third cluster of creative determinants under study is the 'treatment factor.' The 'art and craft' is an essential aspect of video development. Here is the list of treatment factors.

- Unusual perspective (Smith & Yang, 2004)
- Generate curiosity (Mantri et al., 2015)
- Richness and colorfulness of imagery (Greenwald & Leavitt, 1984)
- Dramatic effect & Fantasy (Quesenberry & Coolsen, 2019)
- Element of irony (Burgess et al., 2006)
- Element of surprise (Karpasitis, 2017)
- Music quality (Yeoh & North, 2010)