

**MENTOR | The Journal of Business Studies**

Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

JBS**THE IMPACT OF YOUTUBE ADVERTISING ON CUSTOMER PURCHASE INTENTION WITH THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF BRAND AWARENESS SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FAST FOOD INDUSTRY IN WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA*****U.G.N.D. Gunathilaka^a, D.M.T.D Dissanayake^b**^{ab}Department of Business Management, Faculty of Business Studies and Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka**ABSTRACT**

This research investigates the influence of YouTube advertising on customers' purchase intention in the fast-food industry in Sri Lanka's Western Province, with a focus on brand awareness as the mediating variable. The research begins with the recognition of the rapid growth of digital media outlets, particularly YouTube, as the most critical tools in influencing consumer preference. Despite the wide practice of online advertising, little empirical literature exists in the Sri Lankan fast-food business context, so this research tries to fill this gap. This study specifically focuses on Generation Y consumers. The quantitative approach was used with a structured questionnaire completed by 384 respondents in the Western Province. The correlation, regression, and mediation analyses were the statistical techniques of data analysis. The findings prove that entertainment, informativeness, and credibility positively influence brand awareness and purchase intention, while irritation negatively influences them. Moreover, brand awareness was confirmed to be a robust mediator for the impact of YouTube advertising on purchase intention. The study recommends marketers employ engaging, informative, and credible advertising strategies to develop brand awareness and facilitate consumer buying behavior. Overall, the research emphasizes the utility of strategically designed YouTube advertising in generating brand awareness and optimizing competitive potential in the quick fast-food sector.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Fast Food Sector, Purchase Intention, YouTube Advertising***Corresponding** dilhanigunathilaka99@gmail.com

© Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern University Sri Lanka. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

This study explores the impact of YouTube advertising on customer purchase intention within Sri Lanka's fast-food industry, emphasizing the mediating role of brand awareness. Digital marketing has transformed how consumers interact with brands, and YouTube has become a major platform for targeted and visual communication. In the Western Province, where fast food consumption and internet usage are rising, understanding how YouTube advertising drives purchase decisions is both relevant and necessary. The research focuses on the limited understanding of YouTube advertising effectiveness in this local context. Accordingly, the study aims to identify its impact on purchase

intention and brand awareness while guiding marketers to design more effective digital campaigns. The scope is confined to fast-food consumers in the Western Province.

In the current digital era, advertising has undergone a fundamental transformation. Traditional strategies are increasingly replaced by digital marketing due to the growth of the internet and social media platforms (Stephen and Toubia, 2010). YouTube has emerged as one of the most powerful advertising tools, providing companies with unparalleled reach and interaction (Dehghani et al., 2016). The relevance of studying YouTube advertising in the fast-food sector of Sri Lanka's Western Province arises from its expanding customer base and competitive environment.

YouTube's vast global user base and its integration into daily life make it a critical medium for reaching consumers. In January 2025, advertisers could reach approximately 2.53 billion users, representing 30.9% of the world's population (DataReportal, 2025). In Sri Lanka, internet penetration continues to rise, with over 10 million active internet users, a large share of whom frequently engage with social media and video content platforms like YouTube (Internet World Stats, 2025). This presents significant opportunities for fast-food brands to influence purchase behavior through creative and engaging advertising.

The Western Province fast-food industry is dynamic and rapidly expanding, driven by urbanization, lifestyle changes, and higher disposable incomes (Raut et al., 2023). In such a competitive market, creating strong brand awareness is vital for differentiation and customer loyalty. Effective advertising enhances both brand recognition and purchase intention, making YouTube a key channel for fast-food marketers (Keller, 2013).

Despite heavy reliance on digital advertising, there is limited empirical evidence on its effectiveness in the Sri Lankan context. Most studies have focused on Western markets, whose findings may not align with local cultural and economic conditions (Fernando et al., 2023). Moreover, understanding the mediating role of brand awareness is essential for developing impactful strategies. Brand awareness strongly influences consumer perceptions, evaluations, and purchasing behavior (Aaker, 2008). Therefore, this study investigates how YouTube advertising enhances brand awareness and, in turn, affects purchase intention, providing valuable insights for marketers in Sri Lanka's fast-food industry. This study specifically focuses on Generation Y consumers, who represent a highly active segment in digital media usage and online engagement in Sri Lanka.

Problem Statement

In recent years, digital advertising has become one of the most powerful tools for influencing consumer behaviour in Sri Lanka. Among various digital platforms, YouTube has gained significant attention due to its visual and interactive nature, allowing brands to communicate messages more effectively to consumers (Dehghani et al., 2016). However, despite the widespread use of YouTube advertising by fast-food companies in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, the actual effect of these advertisements on customer purchase intention remains unclear. While consumers are increasingly exposed to fast-food ads on YouTube, this exposure has not always translated into a proportional rise in purchasing behaviour (Gunawardana & Perera, 2021).

Previous research conducted in Sri Lanka has mainly focused on the broader impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour across industries such as fashion, telecommunications, and beverages (Fernando et al., 2023; Jayasinghe & Perera, 2022). These studies have generally confirmed that online marketing improves brand visibility and engagement but often fail to address the fast-food industry or the specific mechanisms through which YouTube advertising affects brand awareness and subsequent purchase intention. For instance, studies focusing on Generation Y consumers in the Western Province highlight a significant link between social media marketing and purchase intention but do not isolate the effects of YouTube advertising or examine brand awareness as a mediating variable (Rathnayake & Karunathilaka, 2022).

This lack of empirical focus on YouTube's advertising influence within the Sri Lankan fast food market reveals a critical research gap. Although local businesses are investing heavily in YouTube campaigns, purchase intentions have not shown consistent growth, suggesting that consumers may not be fully influenced by these advertisements (Perera & De Silva, 2020). Therefore, the core research problem of this study is to investigate how YouTube advertising influences customer purchase intention through the mediating effect of brand awareness in the fast-food industry of the Western Province, Sri Lanka. Addressing this gap will contribute to both academic understanding and practical marketing strategies in the digital advertising landscape.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical Literature

This study is grounded primarily in the AIDA Model (Strong, 1925) and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), which together explain how advertising influences consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

The AIDA Model outlines four sequential stages Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action through which effective advertising guides consumer behavior. In the context of YouTube advertising, engaging visuals and storytelling attract attention, relevant information maintains interest, emotional and aesthetic appeal create desire, and persuasive calls-to-action stimulate purchase behavior. Brand awareness reinforces this process by strengthening recognition and trust, thereby facilitating the transition from desire to action (Strong, 1925).

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) posits that consumers process persuasive messages through either a central route when they are motivated and involved, or a peripheral route when motivation is low (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). For YouTube advertising, informative and credible ads appeal to the central route, while entertaining and visually attractive content engages viewers peripherally. The model further suggests that attitudes formed through either route can influence behavioral intentions. Therefore, integrating both models helps explain how entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and irritation in YouTube advertising affect brand awareness and ultimately purchase intention.

Empirical Literature

The researcher provides comprehensive explanations of the key conceptual terms at the heart of the investigation, elucidating the nuances of YouTube advertising, customer purchase intention, and brand awareness. Building upon these definitions, researchers align the existing body of literature to support the development of research hypotheses.

YouTube Advertising and Customer Purchase Intention

Prior studies have widely examined how YouTube advertising influences consumer purchase intention. Dehghani et al. (2016) found that attitudes toward YouTube advertisements significantly enhance consumers' purchase intentions and brand attitudes. Similarly, Yuksel (2016) identified that perceived credibility, usefulness, and video characteristics of YouTube content positively affect consumer intention to purchase. Lai, Lai, and Chiang (2015) observed that product placement and product relevance in YouTube videos encourage favorable buying responses among viewers. These findings confirm that engaging and informative video advertising directly impacts purchase decisions.

According to Ducoffe (1996), advertising value derived from entertainment, informativeness, and credibility plays a vital role in influencing consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions. Studies by Brackett and Carr (2001) and Dehghani et al. (2015) confirmed that entertainment and informativeness enhance positive attitudes toward online ads. In contrast, Edwards et al. (2002) and Yang et al. (2017) found that irritation caused by intrusive or repetitive advertisements negatively affects purchase intention.

Yang et al. (2017) specifically demonstrated that entertaining and credible YouTube ads improve purchase attitude and consumer willingness to buy. Firat (2019) further supported that YouTube advertising value positively influences customer purchase intention. Overall, the empirical evidence indicates that the quality of YouTube advertisements measured through entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and low irritation determines how effectively they stimulate purchase intention among consumers.

Brand Awareness and Customer Purchase Intention

Brand awareness represents a consumer's ability to recognize or recall a brand within a specific product category (Aaker, 2008). Empirical studies have confirmed that higher brand awareness strengthens consumer confidence and purchase likelihood. Huang and Sarigöllü (2012) found that awareness influences consumers' evaluation and preference formation. Keller (2013) explained that brand recall and recognition are essential for building associations that drive purchase behavior.

Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) emphasized that social media platforms help strengthen brand–consumer relationships by improving recognition and engagement. In the fast-food industry, Raut et al. (2023) confirmed that brand awareness significantly predicts purchase intention, showing that well-known brands enjoy higher customer loyalty and buying probability. Similarly, Ali (2019) found that brand awareness and brand loyalty positively affect purchase decisions in the retail sector.

Stephen and Toubia (2010) demonstrated that advertising through social media increases brand awareness, which later transforms into purchase decisions. Supporting this, Sivaram et al. (2020) identified that consumers with higher brand awareness are more likely to repurchase products due to familiarity and trust. Therefore, empirical evidence shows that brand awareness is a strong antecedent of purchase intention, as it facilitates brand recognition, recall, and preference—factors critical to influencing consumer choice.

YouTube Advertising and Brand Awareness

Research has consistently shown that YouTube advertising contributes significantly to developing brand awareness. Stephen and Toubia (2010) indicated that frequent social media advertising increases brand visibility and recognition. Aslam (2018) and Dehghani et al. (2016) found that YouTube, compared to traditional media such as television and radio, has a stronger impact on brand recall due to its interactive nature and visual content. Hasan and Gani (2023) reported that YouTube advertisements enhance consumer engagement and brand awareness, particularly in the food and beverage industry.

Khan et al. (2021) discovered that entertainment, informativeness, and credibility in YouTube ads positively influence consumer recall and familiarity. Likewise, Lovett and Staelin (2016) emphasized that visual and emotional aspects of digital advertising heighten enjoyment and aid memory retention. Schwemmer and Ziewiecki (2018) also observed that social media video promotions strengthen consumers' perceptions of brand authenticity and awareness.

In the Sri Lankan context, however, limited empirical studies have examined how YouTube advertising creates brand awareness among fast-food consumers. Rathnayake and Karunathilaka (2022) explored social media marketing and purchase intention among Generation Y in the Western Province but did not isolate YouTube advertising or consider brand awareness as a mediating variable. Hence, this research addresses that gap by empirically examining how YouTube advertising, through its entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and irritation dimensions, influences brand awareness in the Sri Lankan fast-food industry.

3. Research Methodology

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework developed for this study; it visually represents the hypothesized relationships between variables. There are three main variables. Those are independent variables, dependent variable, and mediating variable. And here the independent variable is YouTube

Advertising. The dependent variable is Purchase Intention, and the mediating variable is Brand Awareness. Further, under the independent variable, there are four dimensions. They are Entertainment, Informativeness, Irritation, and Credibility.

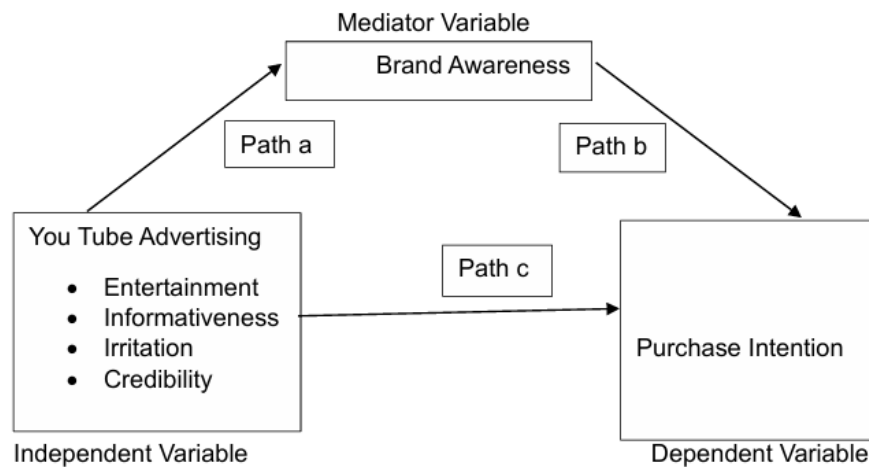


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed by the researcher (2025)

Based on the conceptual framework and the review of relevant literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is an impact of YouTube advertising on customer purchase intention in the fast food industry in Western Province.

YouTube advertising has a significant influence on customer purchase intention in the fast-food industry. Empirical studies by Yuksel (2016) and Rahayu and Utami (2022) show that engaging and credible YouTube content positively affects consumer buying behavior. This relationship aligns with the AIDA Model (Strong, 1925), which explains that effective advertising captures attention, creates desire, and motivates action. Thus, persuasive and entertaining YouTube ads can stimulate purchase intention among fast-food consumers in the Western Province.

H2: There is an impact of YouTube advertising on brand awareness in the fast food industry in Western Province.

YouTube advertising plays a key role in building brand awareness by repeatedly exposing audiences to informative and engaging content. Khan et al. (2021) and Hasan and Gani (2023) found that entertainment, informativeness, and credibility strengthen consumer recall and brand familiarity. Supported by the Hierarchy of Effects Model (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961), this hypothesis proposes that consistent and creative YouTube advertising enhances awareness and recognition of fast-food brands in the Western Province of Sri Lanka.

H3: There is an impact of Brand awareness on customer purchase intention in the fast food industry in Western Province.

Brand awareness has a strong positive effect on purchase intention by increasing consumer familiarity and trust. Ahmed and Pillai (2020) and Raut et al. (2023) revealed that well-recognized brands significantly improve consumers' likelihood of purchasing fast-food products. This relationship is supported by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which highlights that awareness shapes attitudes and influences behavioral intentions. Therefore, greater brand awareness leads to higher purchase intention among fast-food consumers in the Western Province.

H4: There is a mediating impact of brand awareness on the relationship between the YouTube advertising and customer purchase intention in the fast food industry in Western Province.

Brand awareness acts as a crucial mediator between YouTube advertising and customer purchase intention. Studies by Rautela and Sharma (2021) and Jayasinghe and Perera (2023) confirm that effective YouTube advertising increases brand familiarity, which in turn drives purchase behavior. This relationship aligns with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), where persuasive message processing strengthens brand cognition and transforms consumer attitudes into purchase intentions within Sri Lanka's fast-food industry in the Western Province.

Study Design

The research philosophy embraced in this research was positivism, which focused on objective and measurable data to examine the hypotheses. It employed a deductive methodology that starts with a theory and a hypothesis, which was checked by a quantitative survey. The quantitative mono-method was applied using a structured questionnaire to obtain numerical data from customers. Survey methodology was used because it facilitates standardized data collection from a large population efficiently. The study adopted a cross-sectional time horizon, collecting data at one moment in time to study relationships between variables systematically.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population of YouTube users in Western Province, specially focuses on Generation Y in this area. Specifically, the study targets individuals who have experience with or are potential consumers of the fast food industry. Given the context, the Western Province represents the geographic area of focus. A Convenience sampling method will be employed to achieve a representative sample for the study. This sample size ensures that the study's findings can be reasonably generalized to the larger population of consumers in the Western Province. There is an unknown population in here. The sample size is 384 participants, and this sample size ensures that the study's findings can be reasonably generalized to the larger population of consumers in the Western Province.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 - Descriptive Analysis

	N	Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
							Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
YA	384		2.00	5.00	3.5775	0.3880	-.348	.125	3.558	.248
BA	384		1.00	5.00	4.0710	0.5307	-1.721	.125	7.477	.248
PI	384		1.00	5.00	4.0553	0.5359	-1.842	.125	8.109	.248
Valid N (listwise)	384									

Source: Survey Data, (2025)

The descriptive analysis shows that YouTube advertising (YA) recorded a mean of 3.58 (SD = 0.39), indicating that respondents viewed YouTube advertisements positively. The slightly negative skewness

(-0.35) and peaked kurtosis (3.56) suggest that most perceptions were above average. Brand awareness (BA) showed a higher mean of 4.07 (SD = 0.53), with strong negative skewness (-1.72) and high kurtosis (7.48), reflecting that respondents were generally well aware of fast-food brands promoted on YouTube. Purchase intention (PI) had a mean of 4.06 (SD = 0.54), showing a strong willingness to buy. Its high negative skewness (-1.84) and leptokurtic distribution (8.11) indicate that most responses clustered at the upper end, confirming YouTube's strong influence on brand awareness and buying intention.

Reliability Analysis

Table 2 - Reliability Analysis

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Results
Entertainment	.888	4	Good
Informativeness	.895	4	Good
Irritation	.960	4	Good
Credibility	.938	4	Good
Brand Awareness	.917	4	Good
Purchase Intention	.918	4	Good

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Based on the information provided, it appears that the entertainment, informativeness, irritation, credibility, brand awareness, and purchase intention variables have good internal consistency. Because Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0.7.

It's important to note that Cronbach's alpha is just one measure of internal consistency and should be used in conjunction with other methods to assess the reliability of a scale or measure.

Validity Analysis

Table 3 - Validity Analysis

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.942
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8916.018
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The validity analysis evaluated the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests. The KMO value obtained was 0.942, indicating excellent sampling adequacy and strong correlations among variables. According to Approach (2016), KMO values above 0.5 are considered acceptable, and the results of this study far exceed that threshold, confirming data

appropriateness for factor analysis. Similarly, Bartlett's test of sphericity produced a highly significant result ($\chi^2 = 8916.018$, $df = 276$, $p < .001$), verifying that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. Together, these results confirm that the dataset is statistically suitable and valid for conducting factor analysis.

Correlation Analysis

Table 4 - Correlation Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error				Tolerance	VIF
1	(constant)	.775	.162		4.777	.000		
	EN	.121	.052	.121	2.330	.020	.375	2.665
	IN	.147	.056	.135	2.623	.009	.379	2.641
	IR	-.017	.021	-.026	-.807	.420	.990	1.010
	CR	.561	.034	.624	16.383	.000	.693	1.444

Dependent Variable: PI

Source: Survey Data (2025)

According to the correlation table, the sig. value of 0.020, which is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that YouTube advertising entertainment has a significant positive influence on purchase intention and the sig. value of 0.009, which is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that YouTube advertising informativeness has a significant positive influence on purchase intention. And also the sig. value of 0.420, which is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that YouTube advertising irritation has a non-significant, negative influence on purchase intention. Finally, the sig. value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that YouTube advertising credibility has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

Regression Analysis

Table 5 - Regression Analysis

Model Summary					Durbin-Watson
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.787 ^a	.619	.615	.33268	1.953
a. Predictors: (Constant), CR, IR, IN, EN					
b. Dependent Variable: PI					

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The model summary reveals that the regression model effectively explains variations in purchase intention based on YouTube advertising dimensions, entertainment, informativeness, irritation, and credibility. The R Square value of 0.619 indicates that 61.9% of the variance in purchase intention is explained by these predictors, showing strong explanatory power. The adjusted R Square of 0.615 confirms the model's stability after accounting for predictor count. The standard error of 0.333 reflects a low prediction error, while the Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.953, close to 2, indicates no autocorrelation among residuals. Overall, the model demonstrates reliability and highlights that YouTube advertising factors significantly shape consumer purchase intentions in the Western Province's fast-food market.

ANOVA

Table 6 - ANOVA Table

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	68.066	4	17.017	153.754	.000 ^b
	Residual	41.945	379	.111		
	Total	110.012	383			
a. Dependent variable: PI						
b. Predictors: (Constant), CR,IR,IN,EN						

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The ANOVA results confirm that the regression model significantly explains the variance in purchase intention based on YouTube advertising dimensions. The F-statistic of 153.754 with a p-value of .000 indicates a highly significant model, confirming that the observed variation is not due to chance. The regression sum of squares (68.066) compared to the residual sum (41.945) further supports this conclusion.

Mediator Analysis

Table 7 - Mediating Analysis 1

OUTCOME VARIABLE: BA						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.6294	.3961	.1705	250.5536	1.0000	382.0000	.0000
Model						
coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	.9914	.1957	5.0659	.0000	.6066	1.3761
YA	.8608	.0544	15.8289	.0000	.7539	.9678

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Table 8 - Mediating Analysis 2

OUTCOME VARIABLE: PI						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.8588	.7375	.0758	535.2706	2.0000	381.0000	.0000
Model						
coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	.2608	.1348	1.9352	.0537	-.0042	.5258
YA	.1674	.0467	3.5889	.0004	.0757	.2592
BA	.7850	.0341	23.0143	.0000	.7179	.8520

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Table 9 - Mediating Analysis 3

Direct effect of X on Y					
Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULI
.1674	.0467	3.5889	.0004	.0757	.2592

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Table 10 - Mediating Analysis 4

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y				
Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
BA	.6757	.0956	.4875	.8684

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The Mediation Analysis examines how an independent variable (YouTube advertising) affects a dependent variable (purchase intention) through an intermediary variable (brand awareness). A mediation analysis using PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2022) was conducted to examine whether brand awareness (BA) mediates the relationship between YouTube advertising (YA) and purchase intention (PI). Results indicated that YouTube advertising significantly predicted brand awareness, $B = 0.86$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .001$, and brand awareness significantly predicted purchase intention, $B = 0.79$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.001$. The direct effect of YouTube advertising on purchase intention was significant, $B = 0.17$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = 0.0004$. However, the indirect effect of YouTube advertising on purchase intention was significant, $B = 0.68$, $BootSE = 0.0956$, 95% CI [0.49, 0.87]. These results suggest that the relationship between YouTube advertising and purchase intention is partially mediated by brand awareness. Because path a, path b, direct effect, and indirect effect are significant.

Testing of the Hypotheses

H1: There is an impact of YouTube advertising on customer purchase intention in the fast-food industry in the Western Province.

The regression analysis confirmed that YouTube advertising significantly influences purchase intention. The ANOVA results ($F = 153.754$, $p < 0.001$) indicated that the overall model is statistically significant. Furthermore, the coefficient analysis revealed that entertainment ($p = 0.020$), informativeness ($p = 0.009$), and credibility ($p = 0.000$) have significant positive effects on purchase intention, while irritation ($p = 0.420$) was not significant. Despite irritation showing a negative effect, the majority of YouTube advertising dimensions positively predict purchase intention. Moreover, the direct effect of YouTube advertising on purchase intention was significant, $B = 0.17$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = 0.0004$ in the mediation analysis 3. Therefore, H1 is accepted.

H2: There is an impact of YouTube advertising on brand awareness in the fast-food industry in the Western Province.

The mediation analysis 1 demonstrated that YouTube advertising has a strong and significant effect on brand awareness ($B = 0.8608$, $p < 0.001$). This finding highlights that effective YouTube advertising enhances customers' awareness of fast-food brands in the Western Province. Therefore, H2 is accepted.

H3: There is an impact of brand awareness on customer purchase intention in the fast-food industry in the Western Province.

Results from the mediation analysis 2 showed that brand awareness significantly predicts purchase intention ($B = 0.7850$, $p < 0.001$). This demonstrates that when customers are more aware of fast-food brands, their likelihood of purchasing increases significantly. Hence, H3 is accepted.

H4: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between YouTube advertising and customer purchase intention in the fast-food industry in the Western Province.

The mediation analysis confirmed both direct and indirect effects. The indirect effect of YouTube advertising on purchase intention through brand awareness was significant ($B = 0.6757$, $CI [0.4875, 0.8684]$). At the same time, the direct effect remained significant ($B = 0.1674$, $p = 0.0004$). Since both direct and indirect paths are significant, this indicates partial mediation. Therefore, H4 is accepted.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of YouTube advertising on customer purchase intention in Sri Lanka's fast-food industry, emphasizing the mediating role of brand awareness. Empirical analysis confirmed that YouTube advertising significantly predicts purchase intention, explaining 61.9% of its variance. Among its dimensions, entertainment, informativeness, and credibility showed positive effects, while irritation was not significant. These findings highlight that engaging, informative, and credible advertisements are most effective in shaping consumer attitudes toward fast-food brands.

Mediation analysis revealed that brand awareness partially mediates the relationship between YouTube advertising and purchase intention. This demonstrates that consumers must first recognize and trust a brand before exposure to advertisements can influence their buying behavior. The results align with the AIDA and Elaboration Likelihood Models, confirming that attention-grabbing and credible ads foster awareness and motivate purchase decisions.

Overall, YouTube advertising serves as a vital digital marketing tool for Sri Lankan fast-food brands. The study contributes theoretically by validating digital advertising models in an emerging market and

practically by offering insights for marketers to create more creative, relevant, and credible YouTube campaigns that enhance brand awareness and stimulate consumer purchase intentions.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The findings of this study may have limited generalizability since the research focused only on the fast food industry in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, and differences in cultural norms, socio-economic conditions, and consumer preferences in other regions within the country may lead to different outcomes. Moreover, the reliance on self-reported survey data may have introduced response bias or social desirability bias, thereby reducing the accuracy of the results. External factors such as market trends, economic conditions, or technological advancements may also have influenced customer purchase intention beyond the scope of this research. In addition, the cross-sectional research design limits the ability to establish causal relationships or track changes over time, while time and resource constraints restricted the possibility of studying the long-term effects of YouTube advertising and limited the overall scope of analysis.

Based on the empirical findings, several recommendations are proposed for marketers and fast food businesses to enhance the effectiveness of YouTube advertising. First, businesses should focus on creating engaging and informative YouTube advertisements that capture consumer attention while building brand credibility. Avoiding overly repetitive or irritating content is essential, as it does not positively influence purchase intention. Second, efforts to enhance brand awareness, such as consistent branding, logos, taglines, and interactive campaigns, can strengthen the effectiveness of advertising in driving purchases. Third, marketers should consider segmenting their audience based on demographics and YouTube usage patterns to tailor advertising content that resonates with different consumer groups. Lastly, leveraging analytics to track consumer responses and continuously optimizing content can help maximize the impact of advertising campaigns.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Acknowledgement: Authors are grateful to thank the referees for the useful comments also expressed sincere thanks to the editorial board for effort to publish this article.

References

- Aaker, D.A. (2008), *Strategic Market Management*, 9th ed., John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey.
- Ahmed, R. and Pillai, S. (2020), "The impact of brand awareness on consumer purchase intention: Evidence from the food and beverage sector", *International Journal of Marketing Studies*.
- Ajzen, I. (1991), "The theory of planned behavior", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 179–211.
- Ali, H. (2019), "Building repurchase intention and purchase decision: Brand awareness and brand loyalty analysis (Case study of private label products in Alfamidi Tangerang)", *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 241–250.
- Aslam, S. (2018), "YouTube by the numbers: Stats, demographics & fun facts", *Omnico Agency*, available at: <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/youtube-statistics>
- Brackett, L.K. and Carr, B.N. (2001), "Cyberspace advertising vs. other media: Consumer vs. mature student attitudes", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 41, No. 5, pp. 23–32.
- DataReportal (2025)**, "Essential YouTube statistics and trends", available at: <https://datareportal.com/essential-youtube-stats> (accessed 10 January 2025).
- Dehghani, M. and Tumer, M. (2015), "A research on effectiveness of Facebook advertising on enhancing purchase intention of consumers", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 49, pp. 597–605.
- Dehghani, M., Niaki, M.K., Ramezani, I. and Sali, R. (2016), "Evaluating the influence of YouTube advertising value on purchase intentions and brand attitude of consumers", *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 1–23.
- Ducoffe, R.H. (1996), "Advertising value and advertising on the web", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 36, No. 5, pp. 21–35.
- Edwards, S.M., Li, H. and Lee, J.H. (2002), "Forced exposure and psychological reactance: Antecedents and consequences of the perceived intrusiveness of pop-up ads", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 83–95.
- Fernando, D., Jayawardana, C. and Abeykoon, S. (2023), "Impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions in Sri Lanka's retail sector", *Asian Journal of Business and Management*.
- Firat, D. (2019), "YouTube advertising value and its effects on purchase intention", *Journal of Global Business Insights*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 73–85.
- Gunawardana, K. and Perera, S. (2021), "Influence of digital advertising on consumer buying behaviour: Evidence from fast-moving consumer goods sector in Sri Lanka", *Journal of Business and Technology*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 55–67.
- Hasan, N. and Gani, M. (2023), "The impact of YouTube advertising on brand awareness and consumer engagement in the food industry", *Journal of Digital Marketing Research*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 45–56.
- Huang, R. and Sarigöllü, E. (2012), "How brand awareness relates to market outcome, brand equity, and the marketing mix", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 65, No. 1, pp. 92–99.
- Internet World Stats (2025), "Sri Lanka Internet Usage Statistics", available at: <https://www.internetworldstats.com> (accessed January 2025).

- Jayasinghe, M. and Perera, D. (2022), "Effect of social media advertising on consumer engagement among Sri Lankan millennials", *Colombo Business Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 45–58.
- Keller, K.L. (2013), *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, 4th ed., Pearson Education, New Jersey.
- Khan, M.A., Rahman, Z. and Fatma, M. (2021), "The role of informativeness, entertainment, and credibility in developing brand awareness through social media advertising", *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, Vol. 33, No. 4, pp. 1038–1059.
- Lai, Y.F., Lai, C.Y. and Chiang, H.S. (2015), "Exploring the effects of online video advertising message display, product placement, and product involvement on advertising effectiveness", *Journal of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 15–26.
- Lavidge, R.J. and Steiner, G.A. (1961), "A model for predictive measurements of advertising effectiveness", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 25, No. 6, pp. 59–62.
- Lovett, M.J. and Staelin, R. (2016), "The role of paid, earned, and owned media in building entertainment brands: Reminding, informing, and enhancing enjoyment", *Marketing Science*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 142–157.
- Perera, D. and De Silva, T. (2020), "Digital advertising effectiveness and consumer response in Sri Lanka", *South Asian Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 33–45.
- Petty, R.E. and Cacioppo, J.T. (1986), *Communication and Persuasion: Central and Peripheral Routes to Attitude Change*, Springer-Verlag, New York.
- Rahayu, D.F. and Utami, Y.W. (2022), "The influence of YouTube advertising on purchase intention in fast-moving consumer goods", *International Journal of Business and Economic Development*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 22–31.
- Rathnayake, H. and Karunathilaka, A. (2022), "Impact of social media marketing on fast-food purchase intention among Generation Y consumers in the Western Province of Sri Lanka", *International Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 55–66.
- Raut, R., Pawar, P. and Bhosale, V. (2023), "Brand awareness as a driver of consumer purchase intention in the fast-food sector", *International Review of Business and Marketing Research*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 45–58.
- Schwemmer, C. and Ziewiecki, S. (2018), "Social media sellout: The increasing role of product promotion on YouTube", *Social Media + Society*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 1–20.
- Sivaram, M., Munawar, N.A. and Ali, H. (2020), "Determination of purchase intention through brand awareness and perceived quality (Case study: Consumers of PT. Sentosa Finance Tangerang area)", *Dinasti International Journal of Management Science*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 610–623.
- Stephen, A.T. and Toubia, O. (2010), "Deriving value from social commerce networks", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 47, No. 2, pp. 215–228.
- Strong, E.K. (1925), "Theories of selling", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 75–86.
- Tsimonis, G. and Dimitriadis, S. (2014), "Brand strategies in social media", *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 328–344.
- Yang, K.C., Huang, C.H., Yang, C. and Yang, S. (2017), "Consumer attitudes toward online video advertisement: YouTube as a platform", *Kybernetes*, Vol. 46, No. 5, pp. 840–853.

Yuksel, H.F. (2016), "Factors affecting purchase intention in YouTube videos", *The Journal of Knowledge Economy & Knowledge Management*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 67–78.