

Product Placement Approaches on YouTube: Impactful Tips from Influential YouTubers amid the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021, Thai audiences tended to develop more bonds with, and thus dependency on, YouTube platform. This paper aims to explore YouTubers' adoption of the product-placement advertising approach and investigate the impactful tips that work for "product placement" on YouTube amid the Covid-19 pandemic, as shared through in-depth interviews by four influential YouTubers. Important recommended tactics for product placement in YouTubers' channels are: 1) select advertised products/services based on compatibility with their contents, 2) emphasize honesty toward their viewers, 3) aware of all sorts of negativity, 4) beware of producing or presenting contents that could potentially violate existing laws or rules, 5) attend to content details that may affect their viewers, 6) express the care and caveat on environmental issues, and 7) be careful in offering comments or providing feedback that might drive a wedge between contentious interest groups. In sum, Harmonic Communication is a three-step Harmonic approach to improving the credibility of product-placement advertising via YouTube programs and channels. Moreover, a surge in online usage of advertising media following consumer-mobility restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated effective regulatory interventions.

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Introduction

According to the 2021 survey conducted by the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA, 2021), ever since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, Internet traffics in Thailand has surged resulting in the average weekday usage per person reaching 10 hours 36 minutes, and 10 hours 55 minutes for learning/working-from-home purposes compared with the average weekend usage of 9 hours 49 minutes.

Following such an increase in online traffics, amounts of viewing-audience download and content-producer upload of video clips on such platforms as YouTube have gone up proportionally, especially during January and July 2021 when the uploads rose by 80 percent (Matter, 2021).

Based on ThinkwithGoogle's (2021) recent data analytics on video-content access amid the pandemic during 2021, Thai audiences tended to develop more bonds with, and thus dependency on, YouTube platform due primarily to their inspirations or happiness derived from its

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channels' contents for connecting with the outside worlds or learning for self-improvements. For instance, the numbers of Thai viewership have doubled on financial-related videos, gone up by 70 percent on karaoke videos, 50 percent on agricultural techniques as well as exercise lessons, and 45 percent on various knowledge-based documentaries.

Uparimart (2018), found that YouTube-based advertising has certain influences on consumers' real purchase intentions. As a result, YouTube platform has become a new place for launching advertising campaigns via YouTubers for myriad products/services, including product unboxing, eating places, cooking recipes, exercise regimens, living-space interior/décor designs, or cast games. He also found that in 2020 there were over 100,000 million hours collectively spent on viewing game-based content, during which daily streaming of lived activities ranging from interactive games to online religious services had surged by 45 percent, making it the first-ever milestone event to have over half a million channels live-streaming.

Nevertheless, such a milestone success still requires YouTubers to connect products/services and their brands to their target consumer groups based on a vital factor, i.e., their video content with motivational influence to persuade and convince viewers to complete their entire video clips (Wisankosol, 2021). Qualitative research by Ongkrutraksa (2019) found that advertisement-embedded game-casting differs from conventional advertising practices in that there is a creative complementarity between an advertised product/service and a game-cast content that could retain viewers' both attention and interest in the product/service throughout the whole clip, based on the interviewed YouTubers' expert opinions. However, this research also shows that while some viewer groups are environmentally concerned, especially about relevant events and practices amid or beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, the clips they watched rarely address those issues, or at least those peripheries with some connections to them.

Moreover, surprisingly, the study of YouTubers' impactful tips that work for "product placement" on YouTube amid Covid-19 has not always been done in the past. Therefore, it is of critical interest for researchers and practitioners alike to study this questionable phenomenon further into why such is the case and how YouTube-based marketing communication can play its pivotal role there in Thailand. The objectives of this paper are as follows.

1. To explore YouTubers' adoption of the product-placement advertising approach,
2. To investigate the impactful tips that work for "product placement" on YouTube amid Covid-19.

Literature Review

YouTubers and Product-placement Advertising

Most YouTubers collaborate with marketers in designing video clips for specific purposes, e.g., product-brand advertising campaigns or video-clip production sponsorships. The contents and production processes are steered and controlled by product/brand owners. For instance, a cosmetic company may allow its YouTubers to test its goods and share their feedback (Gerhards, 2019), or they may simply incorporate the brand of the products in the description box of their videos (Wu, 2016). Additionally, YouTubers have evolved into brand ambassadors for product/brand owners beyond traditional advertising agencies as a result of placing products in their video content or merely including products in channels as paid YouTuber, helping marketers expand their advertising space to target consumers. According to one definition, product-placement advertising refers to YouTube advertisements that are not obvious as advertisements but ensure non-skipping visitors. As viewers tend to skip conventional advertisement content but not amusement ones, embedding a product in a video clip provides the potential to interface the product with an exciting storyline (characters, settings) (Russell, 2019). Making their content more interesting may help YouTubers get more followers, which is one of the reasons the product-placement method is commonly known among them (Ongkrutraksa, 2022).

Even though product-placement advertising has been recognized as the effective advertising tool, previous research suggests that to develop appropriate YouTube advertising, it is vital to focus on promoting ethical conduct, policies and regulations for YouTubers' videos especially for Child YouTubers (Ongkrutraksa, 2021a).

In choosing a YouTuber in marketing communications, Kok (2021) outlined four steps: Step 1: Determine your basic marketing goals, whether necessary, your audience, your goals, and what you want to be successful. For example, to make consumers aware of the brand information dissemination, to promote a positive attitude towards products or to stimulate product purchasing, etc. Step 2: Determine how to deliver the right presentation. Step 3: Determine

the creation of interesting content by selecting YouTubers based on their ability and content that is appropriate for the brand. This step will be a variable in the way to create marketing communication content, whether it is a filming location. Expressive personality, value, amount of content each YouTuber wants to offer or the minimum number of YouTube followers Step 4: Set a budget for marketing communications.

Communication amid the Crisis of Covid-19 Pandemic

Since the spread of Covid-19 has affected not only consumers' attitudes and their health-related behavior but also various factors determining their well-being, marketers must be aware of the complexity in consumers' lives and their mindsets, both past and present, as well as adapt their marketing-communication strategies accordingly (Dewan, 2021). Marketers must also be able to learn through strategy using in-depth data analytics and collaboration with media alliance.

For instance, social-distancing practice under the Covid-19 new-normal market environment has substantially altered the ways in which people work and learn, i.e., from public places to private zones. Consequently, social-networking and online-communication have become a necessity rather than a choice for certain public institutions or places such as hospitals or tourist attractions. Therefore, social-media technologies and platforms are taken by both consumers and marketers as the primary drivers and tools for making their lives

and well-being better ones. (Kwok, Lee, & Han, 2021)

Methodology

In order to reach objectives, this research was conducted by an in-depth interview with four Thai YouTubers who are popular in Thailand from producing and presenting their video clips during 2021-2022 through the selection of intra-channel content tracking, advertising, content delivery and diversity of concepts. They were selected from popular topics during COVID-19: work-from-home essentials, study with me, pantry meals, stress reduction and in-home fitness (Thinkwithgoogle, 2021) to achieve research objectives and results. Two YouTubers have been selected as famous YouTubers and the other two are YouTubers who recently started a YouTube channel. All four YouTubers have given their consent to be interviewed for details on how they present the content, their marketing-communication approaches, content-planning and creating methods. Twelve questions for these YouTubers are generated by ideas about levels of product placement by Russell (2007) which are shown in appendices. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the researcher followed Thai government recommended social distancing policy, therefore used online video interviews for a period of 30 - 60 minutes each, recorded the conversation and transcribed audio to text. Description of samples are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Description of Samples

YouTuber Number	Gender	Age	Category	Subscribers	Total Viewers (All clips)
1	Male	37	Travel	365,000	36,630,062
2	Male	37	Language	141,000	1,930,818
3	Female	20	Beauty	122,000	9,148,340
4	Male	28	Trip	12,400	606,078

Operational Definitions

YouTuber refers to Thai YouTubers who are popular in Thailand for producing and presenting their video clips during 2021-2022 through the selection of intra-channel content tracking, advertising, content delivery and diversity of concepts. They were selected from popular topics during COVID-19 pandemic.

Product-placement advertising refers to YouTube advertisements that are not obvious as advertisements but ensure non-

skipping visitors. As viewers tend to skip conventional advertisement contents but not amusement ones, embedding a product in a video clip provides the potential to interface the product with an exciting storyline (characters, settings).

Data Analysis

In this study, text analysis was used by categorizing the words of YouTubers answering questions and expressing their

opinions and then used to interpret, analyze, and synthesize according to the cause and effect (inductive analysis) (Vanover, Mihas, & Saldaña, 2021). The results of the analysis were used in discussing the findings. The process also included sorting out the same and different answers from each YouTubers which were summarized in the results.

Results

First of all, it is found that all four interviewed YouTubers adopt the product-placement advertising approach and its corresponding methods. Even though the trip-related channels are undesirably affected by worldwide pandemic due to travel bans and other cross-border restrictions, the production of video clips for their programs can still be based on local sources domestically.

As for the choices of products/services to be placed within their programs, all four YouTubers use their own selection criteria and rules of engagement for that purpose, e.g., disallowing illegal products/services, adopting trustworthy, reliable, and testable products/services, avoiding exaggeration or disinformation, and refraining from over-emphasizing products/services. They all agree that being frank, truthful, and authentic about their product-placement advertising yields more benefits and positive impacts than otherwise. YouTuber #1 adds that repeating the same products/services across multiple programs in his channel can increase their credibility.

All interviewees consider honesty in offering opinions on products/services for viewers as one of the key success factors in their YouTube-based advertising methods while capitalizing on the uniqueness (characteristics and features) in each of the channels. Such uniqueness can be adapted toward and flowed along external changes without losing its core ethics, quality, and value while avoiding misinformation or disinformation.

Moreover, two YouTubers had the idea of not receiving support from the products they do not use because they wanted to show their sincerity to the viewers, as two of them stated as follows.

YouTuber #1: "The product has to be of a really usable type. because you have to use it yourself. If some products cannot be used or

not used, it will cause a conflict and lose the credibility of the channel."

YouTuber #2: "I only show the products that you use, and I can't advertise things that I don't eat and don't use because I don't want to deceive those who follow me."

Those four YouTubers believe that the number of their viewership would further increase without losing their current subscriber base during the pre- and post-pandemic periods despite the locational limits in their video-clip production and presentation between those periods. Both YouTubers #2 and #4 decide to pause accepting sponsorships from product/service owners in order to show viewers their sincerity and unbiasedness. Another interviewed YouTuber highlights the importance of being courteous in language usage and cautious in message tone that could affect younger viewers, and how the quality of products/services can be measured, tested, and standardized collaboratively with other YouTubers to build trust and enhance credibility toward their program viewers.

Furthermore, all of them share similar viewpoints that YouTubing (i.e., program-casting through YouTube platform) is an honest, fiduciary, and prudent profession which intermediates between suppliers and demanders in a dynamic marketplace wherein the interests of product/service owners are fairly aligned with the merits for program viewers/prospective customers.

Apart from possessing such internal characteristics as integrity, sincerity, and trustworthiness, the interviewees opine that YouTubers should also concern themselves with other external issues so as to lend desirable impacts on other parties. Ever since the advent of Covid-19 pandemic, the number of YouTubers has gone up significantly due to low entry barriers onto the platform. Yet, the filtering barriers are higher when it comes to creating worthy content or producing quality programs when incentives to misconduct, e.g., luring viewers with captivating yet useless or deceitful contents. For instance, "Thumbnail-click bait," which creates the content that viewers would imagine or expect in the programs, sometimes YouTuber manipulated their clips' thumbnails as a click bait. Therefore, it might somehow create new values for the young generation. The disturbing issue in the post-COVID period is that social, economic, political, and mental conditions shape the young generation into

something, and they stay in the online world more than any other period in the past.

Therefore, YouTubers ought to be more ethically conscientious about the appropriateness of their contents and programs, lest their video clips could adversely affect younger or naïve viewers' behavior. Conversely, mature, or experienced audiences are more selective in viewing YouTube programs and could either ignore or abandon those mediocre programs produced by less ethically thoughtful YouTubers.

In terms of regulatory and supervisory practices on YouTube-based advertisements, all four YouTubers express diverse opinions as follows:

1) Being unaware of the laws and rules, YouTubers may not be able to comment relevantly on them. Hence, taking more precautions and seeking more information are advisable;

2) In spite of certain laws and rules, it may still not be effective to regulate or supervise YouTube contents or programs as there are many other ways to circumvent those laws or rules, e.g., anonymity of, or proxy accounts by, content-users allows them to dodge accountability;

3) In case of effective laws and rules as a result of the pandemic, YouTubers have been satisfied with their regulatory and supervisory practices and outcomes. However, one of the four interviewees differed in that the pandemic is irrelevant since laws and rules already predated it.

In view of social responsibility regarding YouTube-based advertisements, three out of four interviewees agree that YouTubers should take that role seriously upon themselves without burdening it on their viewers. Here are two quotes:

YouTuber#2: "YouTubers should be socially responsible. Anyone who has a way to become an influencer has to be held accountable."

YouTuber#3: "YouTubers should be responsible and should tell both advantages and disadvantages. Don't exaggerate too much."

While the remaining one sees that the responsibility ought to be fairly shared between YouTubers and their audiences who must be liable from their own decisions. Here is an example:

YouTuber#3: "YouTubers should follow the laws. As for social responsibility, it depends on the audience making their own judgment. When YouTuber posted a video clip, they do not force the audiences to follow. But from an ethical point of view, one should be responsible for the appropriateness of being watched by children. However, it depends on the YouTube channel's judgment on how to behave. Because if you behave improperly, the audience will gradually disappear."

Either way, YouTubers should be considerate and cautious about their content design, e.g., avoiding any reference to illegal activities as they can mislead their viewers, especially younger or naïve ones who lack experienced guidance.

In light of environmental friendliness of YouTube-based advertisements, all interviewees approve of the idea provided that it is compatible with their program contents since certain products/services they intend to endorse may have no clear linkage with the environment. What concerns one of them most is the issue of Greenwashing wherein the environmental friendliness of the products/services is in fact false yet the product-placement advertising attempts to make it true. The 20-year-old interviewee mentions that her age range may cause herself and her peers to put a lower priority on the environmental issues, whereas the 37-year-old one sees that environmental consciousness has been ongoing before the pandemic, and it is a personal matter rather than a public awareness. Nevertheless, the environment problems are not far away thus YouTuber endorses that more environmentally friendly products should be supported in the future. Especially during the post-COVID-19 outbreak where there is a large increase in waste since everything is plastic.

Last but not least on the issue of caveats and cautions of YouTube-based advertisements, the four YouTubers warn about how video contents could negatively affect viewers or any third party if the messages therein are deemed sensitive in their contexts or tones, especially after the outbreak of Covid-19 when politicization has in fact been intensified yet should have been downplayed to moderate potential conflicts among polarized viewers. YouTubers can instead focus on their specific points at hand without wandering out needlessly while addressing their viewers' diverse concerns. Nonetheless, it rests upon each of the YouTubers'

judgments to calibrate their messages' implications derived from their video contents based on their backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward their viewers or the society. In addition, YouTube after the outbreak of COVID-19 changing the state of the YouTube world due to the presence of a large number of new YouTubers. And there are more options to watch, therefore people forget the old channels. One YouTuber said:

YouTuber#2 "Don't lose yourself. Pay less attention to the number of viewers and focus on the content that you really want to present. There will be viewers who are keeping an eye on your own channels."

Summary and Discussion

Based on the empirical results from in-depth interviews, below are the summary and discussion of this study.

1. Product/Service Selection: YouTubers select advertised products/services based on compatibility with their contents, which is in line with Kok (2017) that product/service owners or markets also choose YouTubers in terms of their capabilities and contents, leading to mutual interests on the same group of target audiences. Besides content compatibility, YouTubers consider if the products/services are legitimate, credible, practical, and beneficial, for they can be objective and truthful about those items without annoying or alienating viewers. Such additional considerations are supported by Cho and Cheon (2004) in that non-intrusive advertisements subtly embedded in video clips are more consumer-friendly and aggressive ones.

2. Product/Service Presentation: All four interviewed YouTubers emphasize honesty toward their viewers through highlighting the unique characteristics or features of their programs and channels. Their presentational styles are also adaptive toward situational changes while maintaining their core messages and implications, which is in accordance with Russel (2007). Furthermore, both the storyline and storytelling about product-content compatibility is not based on story-fabrication or hearsays just to attract or bait viewers, but rather, based on how such a compatibility may lead to potential or actual consumer satisfactions.

3. Video Contents Production: The key consideration in designing and delivering

YouTube contents is the awareness of all sorts of negativity (e.g., vulgarity and hatred) affecting young or naïve audiences. YouTubers should, therefore, be adequately knowledgeable about the explicit and implicit Do's and Don'ts when producing their video contents, and apply their integrity, sincerity, and credibility upon them accordingly so as to drive mutual confidence and derive mutual trust with their content viewers. For example, YouTube #2 said that in the case of advertising a mobile phone brand, he explained to the mobile phone company that this type of mobile phone is not suitable for children. It is more suitable for businesspeople and expensive (the price up to 60,000 baht), so his channel put a caption stating that this product is not suitable for children, etc. In this connection, Nadia-Marie Tybussek (2019) found that YouTube viewers are more likely to believe in and follow the practices suggested by the programs that are well-aligned with their interests and lifestyles. As a result, YouTubers are in a vantage position to guide, lead, motivate, or influence their following audiences with real impacts on their behavioral patterns.

4. Legal Control & Oversight: YouTubers should beware of producing or presenting contents that could potentially violate existing laws or rules and seek relevant information to comply with any regulations or supervisions, lest their viewers or subscribers may inadvertently breach them. Sritiaphet (2021), for example, elaborated on the Cosmetics Act of 2015 under its Article 411 regarding false advertisements, and Article 422 regarding advertising practices; and on the Foods Acts of 1979 under its Article 403 regarding exaggerated advertisements, and Article 424 regarding a permission requirement before advertisements; and similarly in the Drugs Act of 1967.

5. Social/Ethical Responsibility: YouTubers' attention to content details that may affect their viewers (e.g., sale of illegal products/services, solicitation for gambling activities or addictive substances) is deemed as a prerequisite to their social or ethical responsibility. According to the Harmonic Communication concept proposed by Ongkrutraksa (2021), the sustainability of people and their milieus is beneficially affected by communication practices among stakeholders, provided that producers or senders of messages therein are ethically responsible for their social circles, ecosystems, and intended audiences as well as accountable to their actions and consequences. For example,

if selling illegal products like gambling or drugs, YouTuber will be responsible for the consequences. If the audience is a child, this will lead to imitation behavior which may cause problems. In terms of content, if the content is wrong, it needs to be corrected but most people let it pass. Resulting in misunderstandings.

6. Environmental Concerns: The four YouTubers in this study take similar stances in expressing their care and caveat on environmental issues. Yet, it depends on the contents in video clips being created and presented whether they have any relevance to or connection with the environment. What has become a critical concern herein is the so-called Greenwashing practice in which certain anti-environmental products/services attempt to alter public perceptions or degradation, and resource depletion have been managed and under control, which in fact are not. However, YouTuber has the view that YouTuber can insert environmental protection into the content of video clips for the audience to absorb. Because each viewer is different, some may like it, and some may not like it. For viewers who don't like to watch environmental issues will have the option to view other content.

7. Post-pandemic Impacts: Some interviewees admit that their channels have been affected by the pandemic in terms of general facts that are gradually revealed as well as related public opinions regarding how appropriately or effectively the issue has been handled by responsible parties. YouTubers should be careful in offering comments or providing feedback that might drive a wedge between contentious interest groups, when they should instead focus on their core interests.

Based on the empirical results from an in-depth interview in the previous section as well as the theoretical discussions above, it is apparent that the content of a video clip is the key for enticing marketers or product/service owners to engage influential YouTubers in their product-placement advertising campaigns in order to boost their sales indirectly from target viewers who directly benefit from the clip's content (Budiono & Triyono, 2020). As a result, YouTubers are deemed as impactful social influencers who could generate either positive or negative consequences from their creative contents.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has not significantly affected YouTubers' behavior, their social-responsibility role still has to be

fundamentally upheld while their environmental concerns or initiatives could add desirable impacts on the society as a whole. Mintel's latest research findings indicate that 82 percent of Thai consumers attempted to avoid causing environmental decays (prmatter, 2022). Similarly, refraining from disinformation or exaggeration of products/services helps elevate the quality of marketing communication and the attractiveness of product-placement advertising on YouTube channels, which in turn shall benefit the demanders and suppliers of products/services as well as the YouTubers involved.

Most importantly, what all YouTubers must possess include leadership, expertise, and credibility, which is in line with Punnasub's (2018) research. Their social influence to promote brands depends on their expert talents on content/message presentation, insightful advice about endorsed products/services, and trustworthiness (sincerity and empathy), all of which contribute toward their increasing number of subscribers and viewership.

Implications for Business Practices

1. In order to create trustworthiness in product-placement advertising on YouTube platform after the Covid-19 pandemic, it is suggested that a product/service be compatible with a program's content of a YouTuber's channel to allow him/her to test or utilize it unbiasedly without losing his/her objectivity while keeping the advertisement creatively low-keyed yet repeatable across multiple video-clip programs. Being frank and honest about the advertised product/service is a better marketing policy than otherwise. Refraining from obscene/vulgar languages and hate speeches that could affect younger or naïve audiences. Balancing the presentation of content and the advertisement of product/service between inner sincerity/integrity and outer social responsibility/interpersonal empathy. And if there is an environmental issue involved, engaging the audiences with positive concerns could effectively alter the viewers' behavior.

2. A surge in online usages of advertising media following consumer-mobility restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated effective regulatory interventions and/or constructive supervisory oversights on product-placement advertising due to the fact that unscrupulous YouTubers can always find alternative means to violate acceptable practices or ethical conducts, e.g., through users' anonymity or usages' opacity, which allow

them to circumvent laws and rules without due-course accountability.

3. To further enhance the credibility of product-placement advertising practice via YouTube programs and channels, it is recommended that the following three-step Harmonic Communication approach (Ongkrutraksa, 2021) be adopted and applied:

3.1 Setting the principles of sustainability among people and their environs, including integrity, sincerity, social-responsibility, mental-healthiness, and environmental-accountability. When applying such principles, YouTubers will not compromise their self-authenticity since they shall first make relevant public disclosure of their contents and endorsable products/services, then avoid over-emphasizing their advertisements yet keep focusing on intrinsic merits of the products/services toward their audiences and relevant stakeholders, and become committed to their ethical code of conduct, social responsibility, and environmental accountability. For instance, the case of a popular travel-oriented YouTuber who demonstrated to his viewers how to catch and extract Sichuan crabs from their natural habitats without properly remarking the adverse environmental impacts his video-clip content would have caused is clearly against the sustainability principles set out above.

3.2 Becoming abreast with all sources of media content and platform so as to discern the causes and predict the effects of them on the audiences in all age ranges. When planning and preparing their contents, YouTubers should refrain from persuading or convincing their viewers toward illegal or unethical directions, e.g., supporting hazardous or substandard products/services, or exaggerating the merits of products/services, etc. While mature or experienced audiences are quite immune to mis/disinformation, young or naïve viewers can be subject to either deliberate or inadvertent manipulations by certain influential YouTubers. Hence, it is utmost important that YouTubers be duly responsible for, and accountable to, both themselves and their stakeholders.

3.3 Being independent from all sorts of bias and prejudice when connecting and communicating with the audiences without causing them any mental dangers or social damages. When engaging their audiences, YouTubers should be creative in their languages, tones, and implications that minimize any hateful thoughts, hurtful rumors, or harmful actions. Therefore, it is advisable that YouTubers remain objective in and truthful to their product-placement advertising efforts, for integrity and honesty yield intended results, positive outcomes, and desirable impacts more often than do conceits and deceits.

Limitations and Future Research

Firstly, the number of interviewees may not be able to cover most of YouTubers' thoughts and the question format is limited to the use of product placement only, not other ad formats that may have changed even more today.

Moreover, this study shows only one-sided view of YouTuber, not from the point of view of the consumer. It may lack the data to analyze how both the receiver and the messenger have on each other. Therefore, future research should include interviews that focus on the receiver. In order to gain the results more clearly. Including the study of new ways of advertising on YouTube, these YouTubers are constantly changing, especially the YouTube Premium subscription that happens to avoid ads on YouTube. More research on this regard would determine which marketing communications resonate with consumers the most. Conducting research with consumers would gain an understanding of the cognitive process of exposure and purchasing decisions which is not only beneficial to YouTuber but also to marketers.

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Appendix

Interview Questions for YouTubers

1. How different are there in the marketing-communication approaches in Thailand between the pre-pandemic period and post-pandemic one?
2. What kinds of products/services have been placed in your programs? What types of criteria have been used to select and choose such products/services, and why?

3. Which methods of YouTube-based advertising are deemed more effective than the rest? What types of criteria have been used to evaluate the pros and cons of such advertising methods?

4. Have you employed “product-placement advertising” in your programs? If so, what are the main reasons for it, and how do you deploy it? Are there any rules and restrictions adopted in your practice? If so, what are their descriptions and rationales?

5. How necessary do you think it is for the products/services to be compatible with the video contents when employing the product-placement method in your programs?

6. What are the unique characteristics and/or features that make your programs popular among your audiences, both before and after the pandemic?

7. What are your expert opinions on the YouTubers industry nowadays in terms of their practices?

8. How appropriate do you think the current laws and rules are in regulating YouTube-based advertisements, both before and after the pandemic?

9. How appropriate do you think it is for YouTubers to be hired and engaged in product-placement advertising campaigns, both before and after the pandemic?

10. How socially responsible and accountable do you think it should be for YouTubers to be and become when providing their advertising services, both before and after the pandemic?

11. How environmentally friendly do you think it should be for the products/services and video contents to be presented via YouTube channels and platform, both before and after the pandemic?

12. What kinds of caveats and cautions do you think all YouTubers should be aware of, both before and after the pandemic?