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South African Millennials' Attitudes towards the Communications Effect of YouTube Marketing

Research Paper

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ABSTRACT

YouTube (YT) is the largest global digital video information and communication technology (ICT) channel and has become an important channel for companies and their brands to reach younger target markets with their marketing communications (MC). The main objectives of this research are to determine the effect of YouTube marketing communications (YTMC) on traditional and non-traditional attitudinal relationships, and to establish whether demographic variables and usage factors have an effect on traditional attitudinal relationships among the South African millennial cohort. A multi-stage sampling method was employed and 1,900 millennial cohort members (aged 18-32 years old) participated in the survey. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to assess the hypothesized attitudinal relationships. The study found that YTMC had a positive effect on all of the traditional (and one non-traditional) attitudinal relationships. The most favorable attitudinal responses were evident among older age categories, White ethnic groups, access via computer and mobile devices, longer usage length (in years), lower log-on frequencies, and higher log-on duration. Organizations should review their YTMC strategies to take cognizance of the positive attitudinal relationships and demographic variables and usage factors identified by this research when targeting millennial consumers.

Keywords

YouTube marketing communications, millennials, attitudes, response hierarchy models, generational cohort theory, South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet, social network sites, video channels, and other online information and communication technology (ICT) conduits have grown exponentially in developing countries, such as South Africa. The rapid expansion of digital video ICT platforms, such as YouTube (YT), is associated with the progression of Internet access and usage in emerging economies and mainly attributed to the irrevocable

proliferation of mobile devices, such as smartphones (over 70% of YT users view videos via mobile devices). YT has over 2 billion users who upload and view billions of hours of videos on a daily basis in 91 countries and 80 languages (Smith, 2019; YouTube, 2020b). YT is also the second most frequented global website and 80% of organizations deem this digital video ICT channel to be an effective marketing communication (MC) channel (Chadha, 2018; Gupta et al., 2017). Accordingly, greater portions of promotional budgets are allocating to YouTube marketing communications (YTMC). MC expenditure on digital video ICT conduits is predicted to reach $37 billion by 2022, and account for four and a-half-billion worldwide users over the same period. YT is forecast to account for a quarter of the abovementioned MC expenditure and for nearly half of digital video ICT platform users (Foye, 2018; Smith, 2019). Hence, YT has become an indispensable marketing communications (MC) tool to target young consumers, since this digital video ICT channel reaches over 80% of the millennial generational cohort (also known as Generation Y). Millennials are heavy users of YT and are an important target market for organizations due to their growing disposable income and looming $5 trillion inheritance from their Generation X parents (Kim, 2018; YouTube, 2020b). Hence, millennials' attitudes towards YTMC are of notable importance to organizations, since a greater knowledge will not only provide organizations and their brands with an enhanced understanding of this generational cohort's future cognitive, affective, and behavioral tendencies, but also assist with the development of effective MC strategies.

Several studies have established that online and social media advertising have a significant influence on attitudes, where an organization may seek cognitive, affective, and/or behavioral attitudinal responses from consumers, depending on the MC objective (Balakrishnan & Manickavasagam, 2016; Boateng & Okoe, 2015; Bolton et al., 2013; Duffett, 2020; Duffett & Wakeham, 2016). These investigations concur that the main objective of MC is to create positive attitudes towards organizations and their brands, which will increase preference and purchase intentions. Therefore, it can be surmised that a favorable attitudinal reaction to MC is the best measure of effectiveness, which is based on attitudes towards advertising (Aad) theory. A number of recent inquiries have considered various aspects of YT usage, MC, and consumer attitudes (Aggrawal et al., 2020; Antoniadis et al., 2019; Araújo et al., 2017; Arora & Agarwal, 2019; Baramidze, 2018; Bartozik-Purgat & Filimon, 2017; Benjamin & Nansen, 2018; Bi et al., 2019; Corrêa et al., 2020; Duffett et al., 2019a, 2019b; Evans et al., 2018; Feng & Xie, 2018; Firat, 2019; Göbel et al., 2017; Gupta et al., 2017; Gupta et al., 2018; Hansson & Stanic, 2017; Hinterberger et al., 2020; Hor´akov´a, 2018; Klobasa et al., 2018; Kujur & Singh, 2018; Lee et al., 2017; Lou et al., 2019; Mutsikiwa & Maree, 2019; Naeem, 2019a, 2019b; Olasina, 2017; Rasmussen, 2018; Rodriguez, 2017; Roma & Aloini, 2019; Shon et al., 2020; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Tafesse, 2020; Viertola, 2018; Vingilisa et al., 2018; Westenberg, 2016; Yang et al., 2017; Zaitceva, 2018).

However, much of the aforementioned research utilized demographic and usage factors as descriptive variables, and did not use these independent variables for cross-analysis versus the applicable scales. Additionally, most of the aforementioned YT research investigated developed regions/countries such as Western Europe and the United States (US). Westenberg (2016) proposes that additional YT inquiry from other countries is necessary. Balakrishnan and Manickavasagam (2016) agree that there is a dearth of YT research in countries with developing economies, especially owing to the rapid diffusion of social media in these countries, whereas the growth rate has begun to decline in several developed nations due to saturation of these markets. Furthermore, developed countries have more advanced ICT infrastructure (e.g., broadcasting technologies, telecommunications, transmission systems, wireless networks, and online, computer, mobile and satellite systems) and superior Internet access/speeds in comparison to

countries with developing economies, which potentially could result in different socio-cultural and usage behavior (particularly in Africa) (Duh & Struwig, 2015; Lesame, 2013; Padayachee, 2017).

A number of other gaps in research were acknowledged also by prior studies. Dehghani et al. (2016) recommended that a more representative sample should be used than only college or university students, since this inhibits the generalizability of the results. Göbel et al. (2017) concur that a wider range of YT users should be investigated in terms of YTMC. Hence, a sample of 1,900 of respondents (employed, unemployed, and student millennials) aged 18 to 32 years old were surveyed by this study. Zhang and Mao (2016) propose that other antecedents should be considered to assess the influence of social media advertising on consumer attitudinal responses. Rodriguez (2017) reveals that further investigation is required to understand social media, since these interactive ICT channels were still growing rapidly, and improved knowledge is necessary to implement effective YTMC. Weller (2015) concurs that more YT research is required, since inquiry is lagging behind other social media conduits, such as Facebook and Twitter. Dehghani et al. (2016) agree that more YTMC research is necessary in order to use digital video ICT channels as effective advertising mediums. Araújo et al. (2017) opine that greater quantitative analysis of digital video ICT conduits is necessary among younger consumer groups. Hor´akov´a (2018) suggests that different subcultures should be considered to determine the influence of YTMC on consumer attitudinal responses.

Therefore, this study aims to make a contribution to Aad theory (based on the response hierarchy model framework) and generational cohort theory (GCT) by quantitatively analyzing South African millennials' traditional and non-traditional attitudinal relationships due to YTMC, which will contribute to the research gaps highlighted by the above-mentioned inquiries. The research also aims to establish whether several demographic and usage factors have an impact on traditional attitudinal responses (based on the hierarchy-of-effects model), which will reveal if heterogeneity is evident within this generational cohort (as suggested by Bolton et al., 2013; Duh & Struwig, 2015; Padayachee, 2017; Zambodla, 2018) in terms of YTMC.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

YouTube Marketing Communications

YT is the largest digital video ICT website in the world and the second largest search engine (only behind Google). This interactive video ICT platform allows users to upload, view, share, and comment on video clips via websites, social media sites, mobile devices, e-mail, and blogs. YT was created initially for information and entertainment purposes but developed into a substantial MC income-generating platform, which includes advertising, promotions, channels, product placement, celebrity endorsers, influencers, and testimonials. Additionally, YT provides organizations with a wide range of MC formats, such as standard, sponsored cards, overlay, bumper, and in-search discovery advertisements. Consequently, YT video content is available at no cost to its 2 billion users, which includes a mix of user-generated content (UGC), such as how-to-do, educational, and music videos; and a variety of organizational and brand videos (Gupta et al., 2017; Smith, 2019; Vingilisa et al., 2018; YouTube, 2020b). Hence, it is no surprise that YTMC has become an indispensable marketing tool for eight out of ten organizations, which acknowledge YT as an effective digital video ICT marketing platform (Chadha, 2018). Foye (2018) estimates that YTMC will account for over a quarter of digital video advertising expenditure over the next four years, which equates to over $9 billion per annum.

Organizations and brands can create channels, which are effective platforms for content marketing, and have altered the way consumers watch video advertisements. Organizations also can include product placements in their YouTube videos, as well as use celebrity endorsers, testimonials, and influencers to promote their products and services, especially among young target markets, which also serve as important online traffic generators. Marketers have shown that if an advertisement is good enough, many users will choose to watch it, since a number of consumers actively choose to watch entertaining advertisements on this digital video ICT channel. Furthermore, these MC videos also have the potential to go viral and be shared with millions at no media cost. YouTube analytics are accessible to organizations and brands for their content videos and channels, which provide the number of video views, geographic area, and demographic information, as well as how users found the video and audience attention data (e.g., when viewers stop watching the video or go back to certain sections) (Statista, 2019; Stokes, 2017; Wendt et al., 2016; YouTube, 2020a).

A number of organizations and their brands have allocated large sums of money to YT based on the analytics/metrics, but without knowledge of the attitude phases that lead up to the final purchase or ultimate behavioral outcomes, especially among young consumers (YouTube, 2020a). Accordingly, many studies (delineated in the introduction) have examined various aspects of YTMC and a variety of attitudinal responses via interviews and focus groups (qualitative), and surveys and content analysis (quantitative) research. However, little inquiry has investigated the influence of YTMC on the entire hierarchy-of-effects model, so this study quantitatively explores these attitudinal relationships from an African developing economy perspective. The research should offer valuable insights on the traditional and non-traditional attitudinal stages that occur before a final purchase among South African millennials owing to YTMC.

Millennial Generational Cohort Theory (GCT)

GCT postulates that groups of individuals, who were born during a certain era, exhibit similar traits and behavior. These groups were fashioned by certain cultural, technological, social, economic, political, and other external events which transpired over a particular period when they lived. It is posited that each generational cohort exhibits relatively analogous psychographic attributes, lifestyles, attitudes, values, needs, interests, preferences, desires, consumption of media, shopping tendencies, and interactive ICT adoption owing to the external events which occurred over the specific era (Duh & Struwig, 2015; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009; Padayachee, 2017; Schewe & Meredith, 2004). The millennial generational cohort (also commonly referred to as Generation Y or simply as millennials) is more technologically advanced and highly sophisticated in comparison to all previous generations, since they have spent their whole lives in a digital environment and with online technology such as computers, mobile devices, Internet, social media, and a vast array of other digital ICT platforms in the era of ceaseless connectivity and multimedia-rich milieu. This tech-savvy generational cohort considers behavior such as posting and viewing online videos, tweeting, texting, instant messaging, online social networking, and e-commerce purchases not as major innovations, but as a fundamental part of their everyday lives (Duh & Struwig, 2015; Padayachee, 2017; Zhang et al., 2017).

The analysis of generational cohorts is of importance to organizations and their brands, as it provides them with a means to design and implement marketing offerings that are tailored directly to meet a specific generational cohort's needs, wants, desires, and other characteristics. As discussed in prior text, the millennial generational cohort is very important to organizations and brands due to its current and future buying power (Foye, 2018; Kim, 2018). The global millennial generational cohort has an

estimated consumer buying power of $600 billion per annum and will comprise three-quarters of the global workforce in the next five years. African millennials account for two-thirds of consumer spending and will control more than half of Africa's 180 trillion ZAR buying power. Countries with developing economies typically have young populations and more than half of Africa's inhabitants are under the age of 20. South Africa emulates this trend, since six out of ten residents are younger than 35 years old, and more than a quarter are members of the millennial generational cohort (Dovey et al., 2018; Thomson, 2018; Wawira, 2019). Hence, organizations and their brands cannot ignore the huge MC potential of using digital video ICT channels to target millennials. Moreover, Araújo et al. (2017) and Bolton et al. (2013) suggest that further research should consider social media and digital video ICT platforms quantitatively among younger generational cohorts.

The exact years in which each generational cohort occurs differ according to country, authors, and culture. The dates for the millennial generational cohort commonly range from the early 1980s to the early 2000s (Duh & Struwig, 2015; McCrindle, 2003; Padayachee, 2017). However, several studies agree that millennials commonly are aged from eighteen to their early thirties (18-32 years old), which is the age category that was utilized by this study (Bolton et al., 2013:248; Thomson, 2018; Zhang et al., 2017). However, differences may occur within the above-mentioned age category due to divergent life phases and socio-economic status. A majority of the younger millennial generational cohort members typically comprise those seeking or starting work, as well as students. Conversely, older millennial generational cohort members characteristically comprise those who may have been employed for a decade or more, which results in larger discretionary income (Foscht et al., 2009; Madikane, 2015; Padayachee, 2017; Zambodla, 2018). Therefore, it is opined that the millennial generational cohort is heterogeneous and comprise different age segments, which may have an influence on millennials' attitudinal responses due to YTMC in a developing economy. Consequently, this study has subdivided millennials into three age categories (18-22, 23-27, and 28-32 years old) in order to explore differences within this generational cohort, which expands on Duffett and Wakeham's (2016) research on Generation Y. Additionally, other demographic variables (gender and ethnic group) and usage factors (access, usage lengths, log-on frequencies, and log-on durations) are examined to establish if heterogeneity is prevalent within this generational cohort in terms of traditional attitudinal responses due to YTMC.

Attitudes and Development of Hypotheses

Aad can be evaluated in terms of favorable or unfavorable consumer feelings towards brand advertising. Hence, a positive Aad may result in equivalent attitudes towards the brand, which generally has a favorable influence on behavioral intentions. However, a number of other independent variables may also have an influence on Aad, such as usage/viewership factors, peer influence, media, population group, and age (MacKenzie et al., 1986; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). Several advertising response hierarchy models were established to consider various attitudinal stages which consumers experience prior to purchase, but these theories were developed mainly via traditional, above-the-line (ATL) advertising. The hierarchy-of-effects model proposes three traditional stages, viz., cognitive (awareness and knowledge), affective (liking and preference), and behavioral (intention-to-purchase/purchase intent, and purchase) attitude responses. Each phase of this response hierarchy model should be accomplished, but several stages can be attained simultaneously or in divergent order (Barry, 1987; Safko, 2010). Furthermore, response hierarchy models maintain that the effect of MC transpires over a prolonged period and may not have an instantaneous effect on sales or purchases. Therefore, organizations and brands frequently establish medium to long-term MC goals based on response hierarchical attitudinal

stages, which also are used to measure MC effectiveness (Barry, 1987; Belch & Belch, 2018), but few studies have investigated the traditional and non-traditional attitudinal relationships owing to YTMC.

Several studies also considered consumers' attitudes (Aad theory) using the advertising value attitude model (Ducoffe, 1996); web advertising attitude model (Brackett & Carr, 2001); and/or an amendment of the aforementioned models to examine various aspects of social media advertising and/or YTMC, which include cognitive (informativeness/knowledge), affective (entertainment), credibility, irritation, and other additional responses. Chungviwatanant et al. (2016) found that informativeness and entertainment had a positive impact on mainly Thai Generation Y respondents' Aad in terms of the YT skippable in-stream advertising formats. Dehghani et al. (2016) affirmed that informativeness and entertainment were associated positively in terms of Italian students' Aad regarding YT. Mansour (2016) found that informativeness and entertainment had a favorable effect on female Saudi students' Aad in terms of social media. Corrêa et al. (2020) found various positive cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes among young consumers due to consumer engagement with YouTubers among young Brazilian respondents. Zhang and Mao (2016) revealed that US students' shopping motivations were associated positively to informativeness and entertainment because of social media advertising. Feng and Xie (2018) found that YT-augmented reality MC also resulted in favorable informativeness and entertainment attitudinal responses among US respondents. Vingilisa et al. (2018) reported that YT videos were used frequently for information and entertainment and could influence future behavior of Canadian young male viewers. Yang et al. (2017) established that informativeness, entertainment, and credibility had a positive influence on purchase intention and purchase among students in Taiwan. Baramidze (2018) indicated that YT influencers had a favorable influence on cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitude phases among Lithuanian and Georgian students. Zaitceva (2018) revealed that YT advertising value was influenced favorably by the informativeness, entertainment interactivity, and engagement among European millennials.

However, most of the aforementioned inquiries were instigated in developed nations, which have in many instances reached saturation (or begun to decline) in terms of the usage of a number of social media platforms. The converse is true for countries with developing economies, which are maintaining rigorous social media usage development, which is due mainly to the proliferation of mobile devices (Duh & Struwig, 2015; Smith, 2019; Stokes, 2017, Zhang et al., 2017).

Additionally, none of these inquiries examined YTMC in terms of three traditional attitudinal relationships (as outlined by the hierarchy-of-effects model in prior text), which include cognitive (awareness→knowledge), affective (liking→preference), and behavioral (intention-to-purchase/purchase intent→purchase) attitudinal responses among the millennial generational cohort (Barry, 1987; Belch & Belch, 2018). Hence, the following traditional attitudinal relationship hypotheses are considered in this inquiry (refer to the conceptual model, which is depicted in Figure 1):

H1a. Awareness has a favorable effect on knowledge among South African millennials due to YTMC.

H1b. Liking has a favorable effect on preference among South African millennials due to YTMC.

H1c. Intention-to-purchase has a favorable effect on purchase among South African millennials due to YTMC.

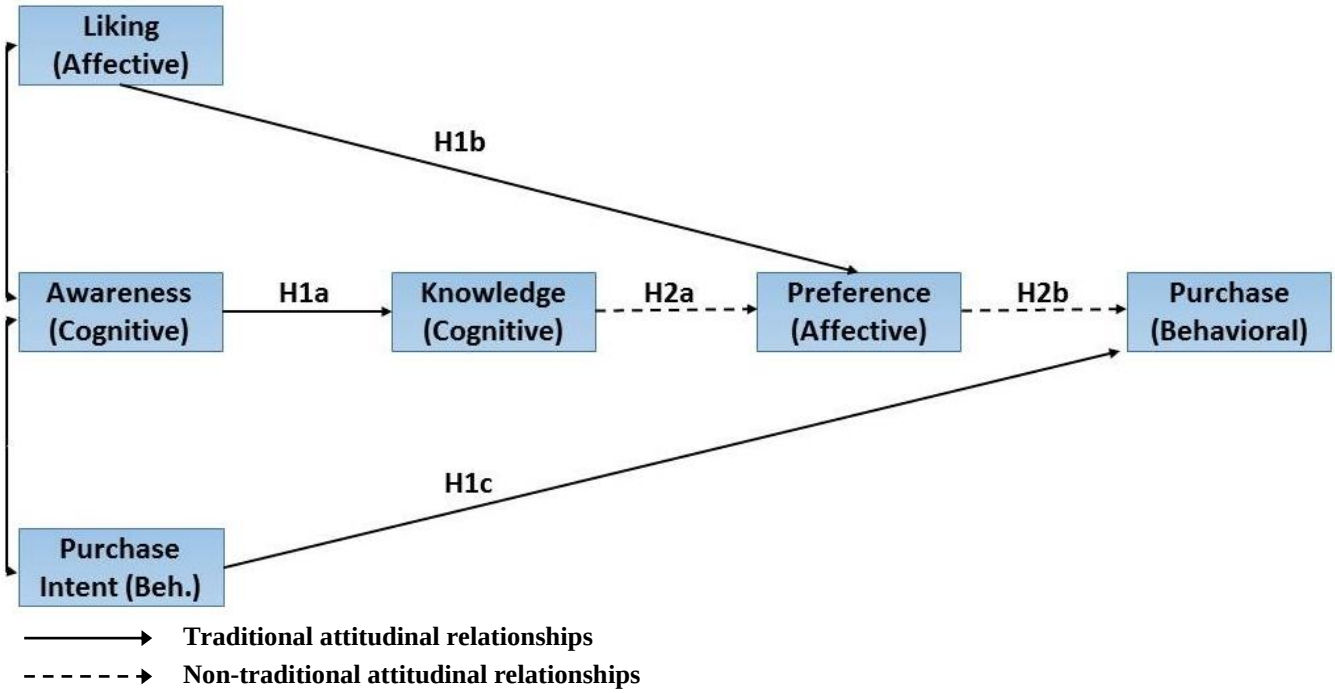

Figure 1. *Conceptual Model*

Barry (1987) and Safko (2010) reveal that attitudinal responses can be accomplished in a different order, which is demonstrated by a few other response hierarchy models. The Awareness, Acceptance, Preference, Intention, Provocation of Sale (AAPIS) model (Wolfe et al., 1962) and consumer acceptance theory model (Aspinwall, 1964) highlighted preference's (affective attitudinal response) importance regarding cognitive (knowledge) and behavioral (purchase) attitudinal responses (Barry, 1987; Belch & Belch, 2018). Hence, the following non-traditional attitudinal relationship hypotheses are considered by this inquiry (refer to Figure 1):

H2a. Knowledge has a favorable effect on preference among South African millennials due to YTMC.

H2b. Preference has a favorable effect on purchase among South African millennials due to YTMC.

The millennial generational cohort displays a number of similar characteristics across the globe, but there may be many differences, especially owing to the superior ICT infrastructure in developed countries. Disparities in terms of Internet access and mobile services may occur due to social-economic circumstances. Demographic and usage factors in developed countries may also result in heterogeneity within generational cohorts (Duh & Struwig, 2015; Padayachee, 2017). Hence, this study seeks to ascertain whether several demographic and usage factors have an effect on traditional attitudinal relationships in terms of YTMC.

A number of YT and/or social media inquiries used gender only as a descriptive variable (Antoniadis et al., 2019; Arora & Agarwal, 2019; Bi et al., 2019; Chiang & Hsiao, 2015; Corrêa et al., 2020; Evans et al., 2018; Hansson & Stanic, 2017; Lou et al., 2019; Mir & Rehman, 2013; Mutsikiwa & Maree, 2019; Naeem, 2019a; Naeem, 2019b; Shon et al., 2020; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Viertola, 2018; Wang, 2015; Westenberg, 2016; Yang et al., 2017; Zaitceva, 2018; Zhang & Mao, 2016). Other studies suggested

divergent findings in terms of the effect of gender on YT and/or different social media platforms' attitudes, usage, and/or behavior. Bartozik-Purgat and Filimon (2017), Chungviwatanant et al. (2016), Isaacs et al. (2013), and Vingilisa et al. (2018) reveal that males display positive attitudinal responses. Araújo et al. (2017), Mansour (2016), and Duffett and Wakeham (2016) found that females were more favorably predisposed. Duffett (2015e), Ehadi Okenda et al. (2013), Firat, 2019, and Rodriguez (2017) found that there were no significant differences. Hence, the first demographic factor hypothesis is as follows:

H3. The effect of the traditional attitudinal relationships differs according to South African millennials' gender due to YTMC.

Several studies posit that heterogeneity is evident in the millennial generational cohort (as discussed in prior text), since different attitudes and life stages are likely to be prevalent between younger and older cohort members (Bolton et al., 2013; Duh & Struwig, 2015; Foscht et al., 2009; Madikane, 2015; Padayachee, 2017; Zambodla, 2018; Zhang et al., 2017). A number of YT and/or social media inquiries used age only as a descriptive variable (Antoniadis et al., 2019; Arora & Agarwal, 2019; Baramidze, 2018; Bi et al., 2019; Boateng & Okoe, 2015; Chiang & Hsiao, 2015; Corrêa et al., 2020; Dehghani et al., 2016; Evans et al., 2018; Göbel et al., 2017; Lou et al., 2019; Mir & Rehman, 2013; Mutsikiwa & Maree, 2019; Naeem, 2019a; Naeem, 2019b; Shon et al., 2020; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Viertola, 2018; Vingilisa et al., 2018; Wang, 2015; Westenberg, 2016; Yang et al., 2017; Zaitceva, 2018; Zhang & Mao, 2016), whereas other investigations yielded divergent results among different age groups. Araújo et al. (2017), Duffett (2015e), and Ehadi Okenda et al. (2013) revealed that younger cohort members showed more favorable attitudes. Balakrishnan and Manickavasagam (2016), Bartozik-Purgat and Filimon (2017), Chungviwatanant et al. (2016), Firat (2019), and Isaacs et al. (2013) indicated that middle to older cohort members exhibited positive predispositions. Duffett (2015a, 2016b) and Rodriguez (2017) disclosed that there were no significant differences. Therefore, the second demographic factor hypothesis is as follows:

H4. The effect of the traditional attitudinal relationships differs according to South African millennials' age due to YTMC.

South Africa is a multiracial democracy (also dubbed as the "Rainbow Nation"), which has eleven official languages and exudes ethnic diversity. Yet, the past injustices and inequalities are still palpable in the post-apartheid era, and will take a protracted time period to diminish in this relatively new democracy, which is 25 years old (Duh & Struwig, 2015; Padayachee, 2017; Petzer & Meyer, 2013). Almost 46% of the South African population (56.7 million) are under the age of 24 years, and comprise Black African (80.2%), Mixed Ancestry (8.8%), White (8.4%), and Indian (2.5%) ethnic groups (Dovey et al., 2018). Historically, the Black ethnic group has the lowest income per capita, but a large middle class segment (contentiously dubbed as "Black Diamonds") has emerged, which has more than doubled over the last 15 years (de Coninck, 2018; Duh & Struwig, 2015). The purchasing power of the Black middle class surpassed its White ethnic group counterparts nearly a decade ago and, therefore, is of particular interest to organizations and their brands (Chriso, 2014; Cooper, 2018; Dovey et al., 2018). A couple of YT and/or social media inquiries used ethnic groups to describe the sample (Lou et al., 2019; Wang, 2015; Zaitceva, 2018; Zhang & Mao, 2016). Several other YT and/or social media studies also found divergent results in terms of ethnic groups. Duffett (2015b, 2016a) and Ehadi Okenda et al. (2013) suggested that the Black and/or Mixed Ancestry ethnic groups displayed more favorable attitudinal responses. Araújo et al. (2017) and Duffett (2015c) found that the White ethnic group exhibited more

positive predispositions. Rodriguez (2017) revealed that the Hispanic/Latinx ethnic group showed favorable perceptions. Duffett (2015e, 2016b) ascertained that there were no significant differences. Hence, the third demographic factor hypothesis is as follows:

H5. The effect of the traditional attitudinal relationships differs according to South African millennials' ethnic group due to YTMC.

Currently, eight out of ten consumers in Africa have mobile subscriptions and over a third have smartphones, which is forecast to grow to two-thirds of the total African population over the next five years. This rapid growth of Internet-enabled devices has contributed to the increased usage of social media and digital video ICT platforms (such as YT) in South Africa. Hence, it is no surprise that younger generational cohorts are spending more time viewing online videos via mobile platforms, and seven out of ten YT viewers use mobile devices to watch videos (Stokes, 2017; Wawira, 2019; Westenberg, 2016; YouTube, 2020b). Several investigations suggested varying results regarding the impact of how YT and/or other social media conduits were accessed; Duffett (2016b) and Isaacs et al. (2013) found that mobile devices resulted in favorable perceptions. Chungviwatanant et al. (2016) indicated that Smart Television gave rise to more favorable attitudinal responses. Duffett (2017a) and Ehadi Okenda et al. (2013) confirmed that both mobile devices and personal computers (PC) resulted in positive predispositions. Marthinus (2014) and Mucha et al. (2014) established that there were no significant differences. Therefore, the first usage factor hypothesis is as follows:

H6. The effect of traditional attitudinal relationships differs according to how South African millennials access YT due to MC.

Several YT and/or social media inquiries utilized usage length (i.e., the number of years' experience) to describe the sample (Baramidze, 2018; Chiang & Hsiao, 2015; Mansour, 2016; Mutsikiwa & Maree, 2019; Yang et al., 2017). Other inquiries suggested divergent findings in terms of the effect of YT and/or different social media platforms' usage length on attitudes and/or behavior. Duffett (2015a, 2017b) found that less experienced users exhibited positive attitudinal responses. Duffett (2016b) and Ehadi Okenda et al. (2013) suggested that more experienced users displayed favorable predispositions. Isaacs et al. (2013), Marthinus (2014), and Mucha et al. (2014) established that there were no significant differences. Hence, the second usage factor hypothesis is as follows:

H7. The effect of the traditional attitudinal relationships differs according to the usage length of South African millennials due to YTMC.

A limited number of YT and/or social media inquiries utilized log-on frequency as a descriptive variable (Arora & Agarwal, 2019; Baramidze, 2018; Chiang & Hsiao, 2015; Mutsikiwa & Maree, 2019; Vingilisa et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2017). Further inquiries revealed a diverse range of results in terms of log-in frequency's effect on attitudes and behavior due to YT and/or social media MC. Duffett and Wakeham (2016) revealed that lower log-on frequencies gave rise to positive attitudinal responses. Araújo et al. (2017), Bartozik-Purgat and Filimon (2017), Ehadi Okenda et al. (2013), Isaacs et al. (2013), Viertola (2018), Wang (2015), and Westenberg (2016) found that higher log-on frequencies resulted in more favorable predispositions. Marthinus (2014) and Mucha et al. (2014) established that there were no significant differences. Therefore, the third usage factor hypothesis is as follows:

H8. The effect of the traditional attitudinal relationships differs according to the log-on frequency of South African millennials due to YTMC.

Some YT and/or social media inquiries utilized log-on duration (in hours) as a descriptive variable (Arora & Agarwal, 2019; Baramidze, 2018; Chiang & Hsiao, 2015; Hansson & Stanic, 2017; Mansour, 2016; Vingilisa et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2017). However, a number of inquiries reported divergent results regarding log-on duration's effect on attitudes and behavior due to YT and/or social media MC. Duffett (2017a, 2017b), Isaacs et al. (2013), Li and Lo (2014), and Viertola (2018) found that longer log-on durations brought about more favorable perceptions. Araújo et al. (2017), Balakrishnan and Manickavasagam (2016), Chungviwatanant et al. (2016), Duffett (2015d), and Ehadi Okenda et al. (2013) indicated that shorter log-on durations resulted in more positive attitudes. Marthinus (2014) and Mucha et al. (2014) ascertained that there were no significant differences. Therefore, the fourth usage factor hypothesis is as follows:

H9. The effect of the traditional attitudinal relationships differs according to the log-on duration of South African millennials due to YTMC.

Hence, it necessary to provide a summary of the various theories discussed in this research in order to provide a cohesive framework. The GCT states that members of the same cohort display analogous attitudes that ties in with the Aad theory, which maintains that advertising results in a change of attitudes. The hierarchy-of-effects model was derived from advertising theory, which posits that attitudes can be divided into three components, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Additionally, young consumers are perceived to have advanced technological capabilities and people from differing population groups may hold divergent attitudes based on their diverse backgrounds (Duffett, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

Sampling and Collection of Data

The research population included South African millennials, aged 18-32 years old, who had used YT and viewed MC on this digital video ICT platform. The investigation adopted a sequential sampling technique, which comprised several stages to select a representative sample. First, cluster sampling was used to divide South Africa into smaller geographic locations, which was representative of millennials from varying social-classes dwelling in rural and urban regions (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Second, organizations (commercial, community, and educational institutions) were contacted in a bid to secure permission to conduct the cross-sectional research. Finally, a convenience sample was drawn from the above-mentioned organizations, where millennial respondents were asked to participate in the survey on a voluntary basis. In this manner, the inquiry was able to survey a diverse range of millennials from urban and rural communities, which was comprised of unemployed, employed, and student respondents. Self-administered questionnaires were used via a face-to-face dissemination technique, which facilitated participation without the aid of fieldworkers, especially since the questions were structured and quick to answer. Informed consent was received from the respondents and no personal details were gathered, which ensured that all responses were both confidential and anonymous.

Research Measures

Duffett and Wakeham's (2016) self-administered questionnaire was adapted for this investigation. It included three primary sections after the two initial screening questions, which were used to establish that the millennial respondents had used YT and observed YTMC. The first section gathered information regarding South African millennials' demographic variables through three multiple-choice questions, namely gender, age and ethnic group. The second section gathered information regarding millennials usage factors through four multiple-choice questions: the devices that were used to access YT, length of YT usage, YT log-on frequency, and number of hours spent on YT per log-on. The third section encompassed the six attitudinal Likert scales: four-item "awareness" scale, four-item "knowledge" scale, four-item "liking" scale, three-item "preference" scale, five-item "intention-to-purchase" scale, and five-item "purchase" scale. Refer to Table 2 for an overview of the individual scale items. The five-point Likert scale statements ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with higher mean values indicating more favorable attitudinal responses, and lower mean values indicating less favorable attitudinal responses.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

A total of 1,900 millennials were surveyed, which represent the demographic variables aptly in the Western Cape, South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Table 1 offers a complete overview of the demographic variables and usage factors' descriptive statistics.

Demographic variables		**n**	**%**
Gender	Male	976	51.4
	Female	924	48.6
Age (years)	18-22	777	40.9
	23-27	750	39.5
	28-32	373	19.6
Ethnic group	White	311	16.4
	Black	834	43.9
	Mixed Ancestry	567	29.8
	Indian/Asian	188	9.9
Usage factors			
Access	Mobile device	271	14.3
	PC	320	16.8
	Mobile device & PC	1,309	68.9
Length of usage	≤1 year	244	12.8
	2 years	489	25.7
	3 years	444	23.4
	4 years	315	16.6
	≥5 years	408	21.5
Log-on frequency	Daily	470	24.7
	2-4 times a week	697	36.7
	Once a week	363	19.1
	2-4 times a month	209	11.0
	Once a month	161	8.5

Demographic variables		n	%
Log-on duration	≤1 hour	526	27.7
	2 hours	653	34.4
	3 hours	406	21.4
	4 hours	182	9.6
	≥5 hours	133	7.0

Table 1. *YT Demographic and Usage Factors' Descriptive Statistics*

Measurement Model

IBM Amos and SPSS were utilized to evaluate the reliability and validity via confirmatory factor analysis. Cronbach's Alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) were employed to consider the reliability of the attitudinal scales. Table 2 displays the Cronbach's α values, which range from 0.651 and 0.884, and the CR values, which range from 0.805 to 0.911. Bagozzi and Yi's (2012) universal reliability acceptance standard of 0.70 was exceeded by all of the attitude scales, except for the preference scale, where the Cronbach's α value was 0.651. However, the subsequent CR analysis value (0.805) showed the preference scale to have robust reliability.

Awareness	Factor loadings	AVE	Cronbach's α	CR
I have become aware of new YTMC	0.691	0.632	0.813	0.872
I notice new YT commercials	0.819			
I can recall certain YT commercials	0.828			
I can remember YTMC	0.833			
Knowledge				
YTMC provide useful data about company offerings	0.790	0.644	0.818	0.879
YT commercials are effective in providing information about brands	0.839			
YTMC are a good source of knowledge	0.814			
I use YT commercials to find new information about products	0.766			
Liking				
YTMC has made me like the brands more	0.692	0.590	0.771	0.852
YTMC adds to the enjoyment of using YT	0.816			
YTMC are likeable and pleasant	0.800			
YTMC are entertaining and fun	0.759			
Preference				
YT commercials are relevant to me and my interests	0.738	0.581	0.651	0.805
YTMC are effective in stimulating my preference in brands	0.841			
YTMC are effective in gaining my interest in products	0.700			
Intention-to-purchase				
I would buy products that are advertised on YT if I had the money	0.844	0.644	0.839	0.878
I intend to acquire products that are promoted on YT	0.852			
I am likely to buy some of the products that are promoted on YT	0.707			
I plan to purchase the products that are advertised on YT	0.800			
Purchase				
YTMC make me more loyal towards brands	0.715	0.672	0.884	0.911
YTMC positively influence my purchase behavior	0.863			
YT commercials help to make me loyal to the promoted products	0.900			
YTMC favorably affect my purchase actions	0.810			
YT commercials positively affect my buying actions	0.800			

Table 2. *YTMC Attitudinal Responses (Factor Loadings, AVE, CR and Cronbach's α)*

Convergent validity of the attitudinal scales was assessed via average variance extracted (AVE) and factor loadings. The AVE values ranged from 0.581 to 0.672, and the factor loadings values ranged from 0.691 to 0.900, which is indicative of convergent validity, as all values exceeded the Bagozzi and Yi (2012) universal acceptance standard of 0.5 (refer to Table 2). Fornell and Larcker (1981) posit that discriminant validity can be examined via a comparison of the square root of AVE values for each attitude scale versus the correlation between the other scales. Table 3 reveals that each attitudinal scale AVE square root value is greater than correlation values, which is typical of discriminant validity.

Awareness	**0.795**					
Knowledge	-0.044	**0.803**				
Liking	0.561	-0.002	**0.768**			
Preference	-0.022	0.409	-0.018	**0.762**		
Intention-to-purchase	0.014	-0.034	0.041	-0.023	**0.803**	
Purchase	-0.014	-0.009	-0.079	-0.066	0.359	**0.820**

Table 3. *YTMC Attitude Scales' Correlations and AVE Square Root*

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to test the attitudinal scale hypothesized relationships, as well as the effect of the demographic variables and usage factors on the three traditional attitudinal relationships. Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2008) minimum acceptable model-fit indices' thresholds (relative chi-square (χ^2)/degrees of freedom (df)<3.000-5.000, root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA)<0.080-0.100, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)>0.900, normed-fit index (NFI)>0.900, goodness-of-fit index (GFI)>0.900, comparative fit index (CFI)>0.900, and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)<0.080) were considered when assessing the goodness-of-fit measures of a freely estimated multi-group SEM model. The configural invariance test produced a very good model fit: χ^2/df=1.080, RMSEA=0.007, TLI=0.998, NFI=0.979, GFI=0.983, CFI=0.998 and SRMR=0.024. The unconstrained model was compared to the constrained model through a metric invariance test, which was utilized to constrain the models to be equal. The chi-square test showed that the two models were invariant (p=0.585), since there was no significant difference.

A common method bias test was used to compare the unconstrained common method factor (CMF) model to the zero constrained CMF, since the millennial respondents' answers were self-reported. The chi-square test ascertained that there was a significant difference at p<0.05, which is indicative of shared variance and resulted in the retention of unconstrained CMF model. A Cook's Distance test revealed that there were no outlying responses, so all responses were retained. The attitudinal scales were assessed via a multi-collinearity test to establish whether the scales were correlated excessively to one another, which may affect the reliability of the regression coefficients unfavorably. The attitudinal scales tolerance ranged from 0.597 to 0.954 (larger than 0.1) and the variation inflation factors ranged from 1.048 to 1.674 (less than 3), which indicates that there was not excessive correlation between the scales (Lee & Hong, 2016).

Hypotheses Testing

The significance (*p*), standardized beta coefficients (β), and variance, in terms of the SEM analysis of the traditional and non-traditional attitudinal relationship hypotheses, are depicted in Figure 2.

H1: Traditional Attitudinal Relationships

The standardized path coefficients exhibited a significant favorable effect for awareness→knowledge (β=0.491, p<0.001), liking→preference (β=0.664, p<0.001), and intention-to-purchase→purchase (β=0.829, p<0.001) attitudinal relationships. Hence, the three traditional (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) attitudinal relationship hypotheses (H1a - H1c) were supported (refer to Figure 2). Furthermore, awareness explained 26.5% of knowledge's variance; liking explained 35.6% of preference's variance; and intention-to-purchase explained 57.4% of purchase's variance among South African millennials due to YTMC.

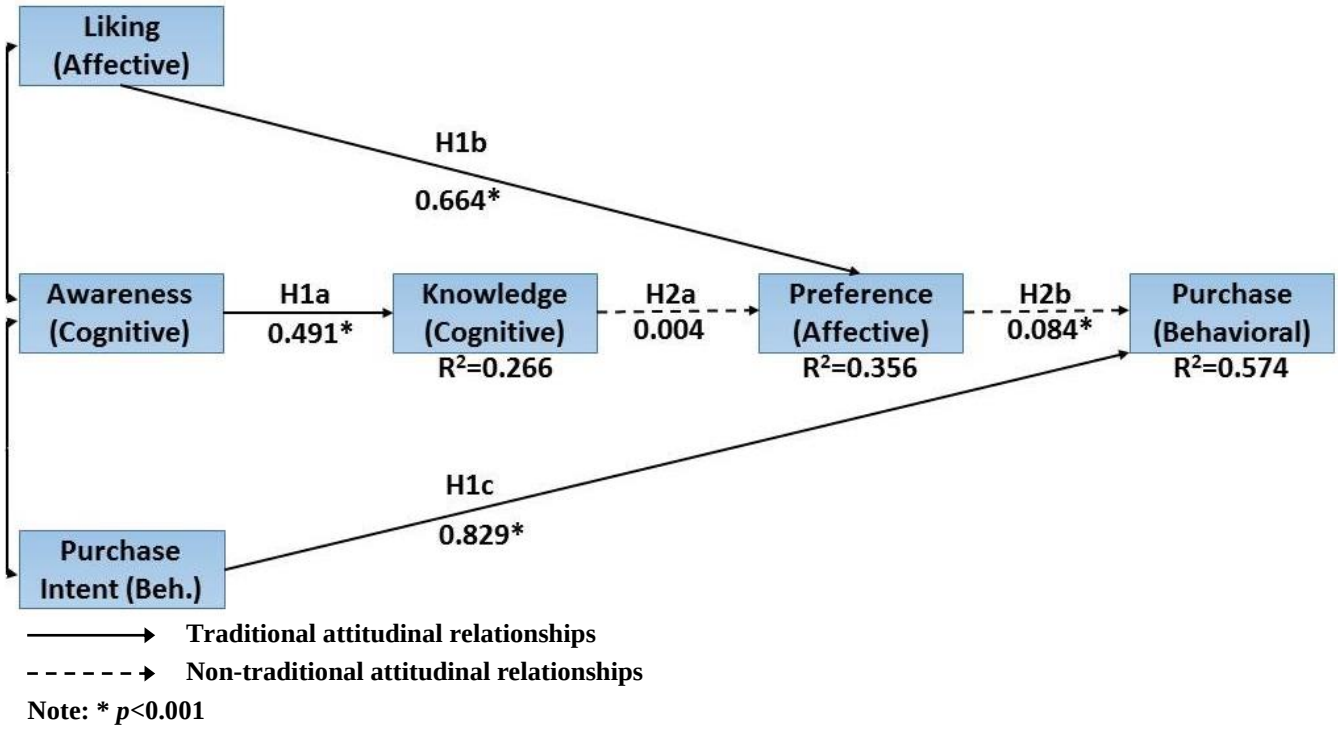

Figure 2. *SEM Analysis of Traditional and Non-Traditional Attitudinal Relationships*

H2: Non-traditional Attitudinal Relationships

The standardized path coefficients exhibited a significant favorable effect for the preference→purchase (β=0.084, p<0.001) attitudinal relationship, but no significance was found in terms of the knowledge→preference (β=0.004) attitudinal relationship. Therefore, the first non-traditional attitudinal relationship hypothesis (H2a) was not supported, whereas the second hypothesis (H2b) was supported (refer to Figure 2). However, knowledge explained 35.6% of preference's variance and preference explained 57.4% of purchase's variance among South African millennials owing to YTMC.

H3: Gender

The standardized path coefficients ascertained that there were no significant effects in terms of the traditional attitudinal relationships among South African millennials due to YTMC. Hence, there was no support for the third hypothesis (H3) (refer to Table 4).

H4: Age

The standardized path coefficient established that liking had a favorable effect on preference for millennials aged 23-27 years (β=0.620, p<0.05) compared to those aged 18-22 years (β=0.578, p<0.05). The standardized path coefficients also showed that intention-to-purchase had a favorable effect on purchase for millennials aged 28-32 (β=0.815, p<0.05 and p<0.001) in comparison to those aged 18-22 (β=0.758, p<0.05) and 23-27 (β=0.708, p<0.001) years. Hence, the fourth hypothesis (H4) was supported partially; as no significant effect was found regarding the cognitive attitudinal relationship due to the age of South African millennials as a result of exposure to YTMC (refer to Table 4).

H5: Ethnic Group

The standardized path coefficient ascertained that liking had a favorable effect on preference for White millennials (β=0.670, p<0.05) in comparison to Mixed Ancestry millennials (β=0.569, p<0.05). Therefore, the fifth hypothesis (H5) was supported partially, since no significant effect was found in terms of the cognitive and behavioral attitudinal relationships owing to the ethnicity of South African millennials because of YTMC (refer to Table 4).

Independent variables		Awareness→ Knowledge (H1a)		Liking→Preference (H1b)		Intention-to-purchase →Purchase (H1c)	
Demographic variables		β	Sig	β	Sig	β	Sig
Gender (H3)	Male (1)	0.524	-	0.585	-	0.762	-
	Female (2)	0.507		0.609		0.738	
Age (H4)	18-22 (1)	0.485	-	0.578	*p*<0.05 (2) - (1)	0.758	*p*<0.05 (3) - (1) *p*<0.001 (3) - (2)
	23-27 (2)	0.525		0.620		0.708	
	28-32 (3)	0.567		0.570		0.815	
Ethnic group (H5)	White (1)	0.582	-	0.670	*p*<0.05 (1) - (3)	0.770	-
	Black (2)	0.520		0.577		0.736	
	Mixed Ancestry (3)	0.475		0.569		0.754	
	Indian/Asian (4)	0.513		0.643		0.777	
Usage factors							
Access (H6)	Mobile device (1)	0.489	-	0.526	*p*<0.05 (3) - (1)	0.718	-
	PC (2)	0.453		0.584		0.753	
	Mobile device & PC (3)	0.533		0.613		0.759	
Length of usage (H7)	≤1 year (1)	0.521	*p*<0.05 (4 & 5) - (2)	0.585	-	0.741	*p*<0.05 (5) - (1, 2 & 3)
	2 years (2)	0.428		0.602		0.732	
	3 years (3)	0.525		0.557		0.737	
	4 years (4)	0.596		0.570		0.759	
	≥5 years (5)	0.544		0.643		0.787	
Log-on frequency (H8)	Daily (1)	0.491	-	0.603	-	0.756	*p*<0.05 (5) - (3)
	2-4 times a week (2)	0.487		0.576		0.752	
	Once a week (3)	0.548		0.666		0.711	
	2-4 times a month (4)	0.576		0.569		0.783	
	Once a month (5)	0.556		0.554		0.792	

Independent variables		Awareness→ Knowledge (H1a)		Liking→Preference (H1b)		Intention-to-purchase →Purchase (H1c)	
Log-on duration (H9)	≤1 hour (1)	0.521	*p*<0.05 (5) - (2)	0.602	-	0.753	-
	2 hours (2)	0.469		0.570		0.728	
	3 hours (3)	0.511		0.641		0.751	
	4 hours (4)	0.595		0.575		0.780	
	≥5 hours (5)	0.610		0.591		0.803	

Table 4. *YT Demographic Variables and Usage Factors, Standardized Beta Coefficients, and Traditional Attitudinal Associations' Significance*

H6: Access

The standardized path coefficients established that liking had a favorable effect on preference for millennials who accessed YT via both mobile devices and personal computers (β=0613, p<0.05) compared to those who only accessed YT via mobile devices (β=0526, p<0.05). Hence, the sixth hypothesis (H6) was supported partially, since no significant effects were found regarding the cognitive and behavioral attitudinal relationships due to how South African millennials accessed YT (refer to Table 4).

H7: Length of Usage

The standardized path coefficient established that awareness had a favorable effect on knowledge for millennials who used YT for 4 (β=0.596, p<0.05) and 5 (β=0.544, p<0.05) years compared to those who utilized YT for 2 years (β=0.428, p<0.05). The standardized path coefficient also ascertained that intention-to-purchase had a favorable effect on purchase for millennials who utilized YT for 5 years (β=0.787, p<0.05) in comparison to those who used YT for 1 (β=0.741, p<0.05), 2 (β=0.732, p<0.05), and 3 (β=0.737, p<0.05) years. Therefore, the seventh hypothesis (H7) was supported partially, since no significant effect was found in terms of the affective attitudinal relationship owing to South African millennials' length of YT usage (refer to Table 4).

H8: Log-on Frequency

The standardized path coefficient determined that intention-to-purchase had a favorable effect on purchase for millennials who logged-on to YT once a month (β=0.792, p<0.05) compared to those who logged-on to YT once a week (β=0.711, p<0.05). Hence, the eighth hypothesis (H8) was supported partially, since no significant effects were found regarding the cognitive and affective attitudinal relationships of South African millennials' log-on frequency (refer to Table 4).

H9: Log-on Duration

The standardized path coefficient ascertained that awareness had a favorable effect on knowledge for millennials who spent ≥1 hours (β=0.610, p<0.05) in comparison to those who spent 2 hours (β=0.469, p<0.05) logged-on to YT. Therefore, the ninth hypothesis (H9) was supported partially, since no significant effects were found in terms of the affective and behavioral attitudinal relationships owing to South African millennials' log-on duration (refer to Table 4).

DISCUSSION

YTMC Influence on Attitudes

The findings of this investigation determined favorable cognitive (awareness→knowledge), affective (liking→preference) and behavioral (intention-to-purchase→purchase) traditional attitudinal relationships, as well as one favorable non-traditional attitudinal relationship (preference→purchase). As discussed in aforementioned text, several other YT, social media, and/or other ICT channel inquiries also found favorable cognitive (informativeness) and affective (entertainment) attitudinal responses (Chungviwatanant et al., 2016; Dehghani et al., 2016; Feng & Xie, 2018; Tafesse, 2020; Vingilisa et al., 2018; Zaitceva, 2018; Zhang & Mao, 2016), but did not consider behavioral responses. Firat (2019) ascertained that YT advertising resulted in positive entertainment, information, and purchase intention value among Turkish millennials. Rasmussen (2018) established that YT celebrities influenced millennials' (US students) knowledge and enjoyment perceptions favorably and had a significantly favorable effect on purchase decisions due to product recommendations. Göbel et al. (2017) indicated that unfamiliar brands (without the aid of persuasion knowledge activation) disseminated via user-generated conduits resulted in more positive attitudes towards covert YT advertising, as well as increased sharing intentions in comparison to brand channels among German millennials (students). Gupta et al. (2018) established that exposure to YT alcohol MC increased the probability of alcohol usage (behavioral response). Hansson and Stanic (2017) determined that Swedish millennials' attitudes towards the sponsored content were related to purchase intention via an affective association, which could be positive and negative, depending on the attitudes towards the content creator. Baramidze (2018) and Corrêa et al. (2020) established that YT influencers resulted in positive cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudinal responses among Georgian, Lithuanian, and Brazilian millennials. Hence, inquiry shows that African millennials demonstrate similar favorable attitudinal relationships with their international counterparts due to various forms of YTMC. However, a majority of the abovementioned investigations used student samples and were conducted mainly in developed nations. Furthermore, none of the aforementioned studies specifically considered YTMC in terms of the traditional or non-traditional response hierarchy attitudinal relationships identified by this study among the millennial generational cohort.

YTMC Demographic Variables' Effect on Attitudinal Relationships

The study established that gender did not have a significant effect on any of the traditional attitudinal relationships due to YTMC, which corresponds with Duffett (2015e, 2020), Ehadi Okenda et al. (2013), Firat (2019), and Rodriguez's (2017) findings. The inquiry ascertained that older millennial respondents displayed more favorable affective and behavioral attitudinal relationships than younger millennial respondents, which corresponds with Balakrishnan and Manickavasagam (2016), Bartozik-Purgat and Filimon (2017), Chungviwatanant et al. (2016), Duffett et al. (2020) and Firat's (2019) research. Balakrishnan and Manickavasagam (2016) indicated that older Indian millennials showed favorable attitudinal responses towards YTMC compared to those younger millennials. Bartozik-Purgat and Filimon (2017) found that older Turkish and Chinese millennials exhibited the greatest behavioral responses than younger millennials in terms of YT uploads, comments, and subscriptions. Chungviwatanant et al. (2016) determined that older millennial Thai respondents displayed favorable attitudes (cognitive and affective) to skippable in-stream YTMC in comparison to younger millennials who exhibited greater irritation towards YTMC. However, the aforementioned studies did not consider the traditional response hierarchy attitudinal relationships, yet are in agreement with this inquiry, which

advocates the notion of heterogeneity among different millennial age groups within the cohort due to YTMC. The research determined that White millennial respondents showed favorable affective attitudinal relationships versus Mixed Ancestry millennial respondents due to YTMC, which corresponds with the findings of Araújo et al. (2017) and Duffett (2015c, 2020). Despite 25 years of democracy, a number of White South Africans still have better access to digital ICT infrastructure and platforms (and consequently MC exposure), due largely to higher discretionary income per capita than their Black, Mixed Ancestry, and Indian/Asian compatriots (Dovey et al., 2018; Duh & Struwig, 2015; Petzer & Meyer, 2013). Hence, this inquiry also suggests some heterogeneity within different millennial ethnic groups owing to YTMC in an African nation with a developing economy.

YTMC Usage Factors' Effect on Attitudinal Relationships

The study found the most favorable affective attitudinal relationships when YT was accessed via both mobile devices and personal computers than only mobile devices, which corresponds with Ehadi Okenda et al. (2013) and Duffett's (2017a) research. Despite the rapid growth of mobile devices in Africa, the cost of mobile data is very high in South Africa. Hence, it is likely that a number of employed and student millennials use computers at work and university campuses to access YT, so as to save on mobile data costs and take advantage of the larger screen size (Chungviwatanant et al., 2016; Dovey et al., 2018; Duffett, 2015a; Duh & Struwig, 2015; Padayachee, 2017; Thomson, 2018; Wawira, 2019). The research revealed that more experienced YT users exhibited favorable cognitive and behavioral attitudinal relationships compared to less experienced YT users, which corresponds with the findings of Duffett (2016b, 2019b) and Ehadi Okenda et al. (2013). This result is an acceptable notion, since more experienced millennials have become familiar with YTMC, and perceive it as useful to obtain knowledge on organizations and their brands, which ultimately increase their purchase intentions and decisions (Duffett & Wakeham, 2016). The investigation revealed that millennials who log-on to YT less frequently displayed more favorable behavioral attitudinal relationships in comparison to those who logged on more frequently, which corresponds with Duffett and Wakeham's (2016) research. It can be posited that Millennials who log-on to YT more frequently become accustomed to the MC on this digital video ICT platform, and therefore, are less likely to interact with MC than those who log-on less frequently. The study established that millennials who spent longer periods of time logged-on to YT showed a more favorable cognitive attitudinal relationship in comparison to those who spent shorter periods logged-on this digital video ICT conduit, which corresponds with Duffett (2019a, 2019b), Isaacs et al. (2013), Li and Lo (2014), and Viertola's (2018) research. This finding is a rational notion as the longer millennials spent on this digital video ICT channel, the higher the MC exposure, and the greater probability they will observe, interact, and be influenced by YTMC.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Managerial Implications

The millennial generation cohort is of great importance to organizations due to its rapidly growing spending power, but since the cohort also is very technologically advanced, it also is generally adverse to many forms of MC (Hansson & Stanic, 2017). However, YT has made these young consumers more accessible to organizations due to the advanced analytics/metrics and segmentation capabilities of this digital video ICT platform, the rapid growth in the usage of mobile devices in Africa, and a wide variety of MC formats. Hence, YT has become an important channel to target millennials, since this digital video ICT platform has enabled organizations and their brands a means to create offerings that meet

these consumers' precise needs, wants, interests, and desires. Hence, many organizations and their brands have allocated large percentages of their promotional budgets to YTMC, but without full knowledge of millennial consumers' attitudinal responses to this digital video ICT platform (Duh & Struwig, 2015; Kim, 2018; Statista, 2019; Stokes, 2017; Zhang et al., 2017). Therefore, millennials' attitudes towards YTMC are very important to organizations and their brands, which will assist them in enhancing MC effectiveness, and provide insight into future possible behavioral tendencies. This study confirms that YTMC has a favorable effect on both traditional and non-traditional response hierarchy attitudinal relationships. Hence, organizations and their brands should continue to utilize informative, entertaining, and engaging YTMC to influence young consumers' attitudes, which will have an influence on future behavioral responses. Furthermore, this study found that millennials in the older age categories, especially those in the White ethnic group, accessed YT via computer and mobile devices, had longer YT usage length (in years), lower YT log-on frequencies, and higher YT log-on durations, thereby displaying the most favorable attitudinal relationships due to YTMC. Hence, organizations and their brands should consider adjusting their YTMC tactics to match these demographic and usage variables (and YT metrics/analytics) to encourage the aforementioned favorable attitudinal relationships revealed by this study (YouTube, 2018).

Key Findings and Theoretical Implications

A multitude of response hierarchy models were developed through traditional advertising to assess the different attitudinal responses of consumers, which culminates with some type of behavioral response (usually purchase). However, few studies have considered response hierarchy advertising frameworks in terms of a digital video ICT platform or considered the influence of demographic variables and usage factors on the traditional and non-traditional attitudinal relationships. Hence, a number of investigations have revealed digital video ICT platform MC research gaps in terms of analysis of generational cohorts, large sample size, quantitative research approaches, different digital ICT channels, divergent and order of attitude associations, cross-analysis of independent variables (e.g., demographic variables and usage factors), and countries with developing economies, which were outlined in the introduction (Araújo et al., 2017; Balakrishnan & Manickavasagam, 2016; Dehghani et al., 2016; Hor´akov´a, 2018; Rodriguez, 2017; Westenberg, 2016; Zhang & Mao, 2016; Zhang et al., 2017). This study found that YTMC had a favorable effect on the traditional hierarchy-of-effects model's cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudinal relationships, as well as on the non-traditional preference→purchase attitudinal relationship (Barry, 1987; Belch & Belch, 2018). Therefore, this investigation has addressed a number of the above-mentioned research gaps and made a noteworthy contribution to the response hierarchy advertising framework in terms of YTMC among millennials in an African country with a developing economy. This study also revealed that certain demographic variables and usage factors had a more favorable effect on millennials' traditional attitudinal relationships due to YT, namely: older age categories, White ethnic group, computer and mobile device access, longer usage (in years), less frequent log-on, and longer log-on durations, which demonstrates heterogeneity within the millennial generational cohort. Hence, this study has made important practical and theoretical contributions in terms of GCT analysis, hierarchy-of-effect model framework, and Aad. Moreover, this paper is important because it focuses on an area where there has been a general lack of research regarding the influence of demographic variables and usage factors attitudinal relationships due to YTMC, within a single cohort, and from the viewpoint of a country with a developing economy.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This inquiry has several limitations, which afford opportunities for future research regarding YTMC and other digital ICT platforms. The research investigated YTMC, which includes advertising, promotions, influencers, celebrity endorsers, testimonials, and product placement, but did not distinguish between individual MC formats or MC for specific products and/or brands, which provides an opportunity for future research. The investigation considered only one African country with a developing economy, namely South Africa, whereas further research is necessary in other countries with developing economies to ascertain if analogous attitudinal relationships are evident among millennials. The study was conducted in a single province in South Africa and mainly in the Cape Town region, so the sample does not necessarily reflect the population demographics of South Africa and the Western Cape. Longitudinal and qualitative research approaches would provide greater depth of information in comparison to the quantitative approach adopted by this inquiry, which took a cross-section of the research population. A wider variety of socio-demographic variables (e.g., education, income, and occupation) could be examined to establish whether they have an effect on the different attitudinal relationships (Chungviwatanant et al., 2016). Only YT was considered, whereas future inquiries could investigate different social media and digital ICT platforms to ascertain if heterogeneity was evident also among millennials in terms of attitudinal relationships, demographic variables, and usage factors.

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