

THE ROLE OF YOUTUBE INFLUENCERS IN SHAPING CONSUMER ATTITUDES, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the influence YouTube influencers on consumer behaviour, exploring how various stimuli, namely informativeness, trendiness, and argument quality, affect attitudes, recommendations, and purchase intentions. The study, rooted in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model. Data is collected using structured questionnaire administered to Generation Y students in Ghana. The results shows that informativeness positively influenced attitudes, recommendations, and purchase intentions. Similarly, trendiness impacted attitudes and purchase intentions, emphasizing the importance of staying current in content creation. Argument quality significantly affected all outcomes, emphasizing the strength of persuasive content. The findings underscored the mediating role of attitudes between stimuli and consumer responses, indicating the pivotal nature of attitudes in decision-making. Implications indicated the need for influencers to balance trendy content with substance and prioritise high-quality, persuasive content creation to impact consumer attitudes and subsequent actions positively. This study contributes to understanding YouTube influencer marketing's dynamics and offers insights into crafting effective influencer strategies.

Keywords: Influencer, YouTube, Consumer Attitudes, Consumer Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

The accelerating consumer interest in online video consumption is a notable trend, with YouTube ranking as the world's second most visited worldwide as of November 2022 (Statista, 2023). Users spend approximately 23.1 hours using the YouTube mobile app per month (Statista, 2023). It is the number one video website and the most accessed platform (Ferchaud et al. 2017). YouTube is an American video-sharing social media platform launched on February 14, 2005, by Steve Chen, Chad Hurley and Jawed Karim (O'Neil-Hart & Blumenstein, 2016).

Notably, the massive following of this channel has resulted in some individual content creators known as vloggers or YouTube influencers who share their video content on YouTube, providing a space where they can interact with their peers (Sabich & Steinberg, 2017). Tolentino (2022) states that most countries, such as the United States, Brazil, and Thailand, have YouTube influencers with nearly one trillion total views as of March 2019, including individuals like PewDiepie, Dude Perfect, and Mr Beast. In sub-Saharan Africa, the trend is also growing, where

there have been a number of YouTube influencers. For instance, some YouTube influencers in Ghana include Kwadwo Sheldon, Sharkboy, Ama Governor, Magraheb TV, etc., providing information on trending issues such as politics, social life, relationships, fashion, celebrity lifestyle, and entertainment. YouTubers bond with their audience by building intimate experiences, often through conversations about personal or sensitive themes (Arnold, 2017). Consequently, they significantly influence their followers as most organisations and brands use these influencers (vloggers) to advertise their products (Bi et al, 2019).

Many firms adjusted to the rise of consumer power by leveraging the interactive capability of YouTube to enhance customer value, develop relationships with communities and communicate efficiently with their customers to achieve brand objectives (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2013; Felix et al., 2017). Besides, YouTube emphasises customer–brand interactions and facilitates involvement through influencers (vloggers) creating different types of brand stimulus, influencing consumer organism and response—, which determine the behavioural outcome of an event (Zhang et al., 2023). Consequently, brands see most YouTube influencers as opportunities to relate to their audience and a channel to convey information about their products and services (Chapple & Cownie 2017). For instance, brands like “Tap Tap Send” communicate to their audience using a YouTube influencer called Kwadwo Sheldon. The Big Six brand, which provides British households with gas and electricity, communicates to its audience through a Vlogger called PewDiePie. Kwaku Manu and Chip line brands use Vlogger, Magraheb TV, and other brands such as Yazz sanitary pads, homeland store, and Delight cosmetics. They also communicate to their audience using other YouTube influencers such as Kainos Kasa, Dude Perfect and MrBeast, respectively.

In today's fiercely competitive landscape, consumer attention is besieged by various advertisements across various platforms, prompting individuals to actively evade marketing efforts (Belch & Belch, 2017). Effective communication is a linchpin for organisational success, necessitating engaging consumers where their presence is most pronounced (Si et al., 2023). In recent times, the burgeoning influence of YouTube has unveiled an avenue for organisations to leverage YouTube influencers in disseminating messages to their target audience. Moreover, since the existing literature shows that celebrity endorsements wield significant influence over consumer purchase intentions (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Hung, 2014; Spry et al., 2011), it could be argued that YouTube influencers may have similar influence. However, it is imperative to discern the distinction between celebrities and YouTube influencers (Wang et al., 2017). Celebrity endorsements possess unique characteristics, including their impact on followers and varied attention-grabbing strategies (Ohanian, 1990; Kamins, 1990). While extant research has scrutinised the impact of celebrity endorsements on purchase intentions, there is scanty research that investigate how YouTube influencers stimulate consumer purchase decisions. This research gap necessitates a focused exploration into the stimuli through which YouTube influencers influence consumer attitudes, recommendations, and purchase intentions. This contributes to knowing which stimuli have the strongest influence allows influencers and marketers to tailor content accordingly. Moreover, this facilitates the creation of more effective, persuasive, and engaging content that resonates with the audience.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) Model

This study is underpinned by the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) model. The S-O-R model consists of three elements: stimulus, organism, and response, which collectively determine the behavioural outcome in a given situation. The stimulus refers to external influences that impact an individual's psychological state (Jacoby, 2002; Peng & Kim, 2014; Young, 2016). According to Eroglu et al. (2001), stimulus is “the influence that arouses the individual”. In the study context, the stimulus reflects the content created by YouTube influencers promoting a particular brand or product. This could include the influencer's video content, reviews, endorsements, or recommendations. Bagozzi (1986) defined organism as the “internal processes and structures intervening between stimuli external to the person and the final actions, reactions, or responses emitted. The intervening processes and structures consist of perceptual, physiological, feeling and thinking activities”. Fu et al. (2020) defined organism as internal processes and outcomes of the stimulus, usually mediating the relationship between stimulus and response. Thus, the organism represents the internal processes, including thoughts, emotions, and perceptions, that are triggered in response to the stimulus. In this study, consumer attitudes would serve as the organism, encompassing how individuals perceive the influencer's content and the brand being promoted. Attitudes can include beliefs and feelings towards the brand/product. The model's response refers to an individual's final behavioural outcome that may be positive or negative (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Spence, 1950). Hence, the response is the behavioural outcome resulting from the interaction between the stimulus and the organism. In this case, it includes the consumer's actions following exposure to the influencer's content. This might manifest as purchasing the product, recommending it to others, or engaging further with the brand (likes, comments, shares). Thus, S-O-R is well accepted and adopted in explaining the effects of YouTube influences on consumer behaviour.

Hypothesis Development

The stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) is one of the most prominent models in environmental psychology. However, researchers have recently started to employ the S-O-R framework to explain online consumer behaviour. Li, Dong, and Chen (2012) elucidated the role of emotions in the consumption experience of social media (e.g. YouTube). This study attempts to build a holistic model on the effect of YouTube influencers on consumer purchase intention, where YouTube influencers accommodate different types of brand stimuli to influence consumer behaviour. YouTube influencers' brand stimulus can be informative, trendy and based on quality arguments. The literature indicates that informative content shared by a YouTube influencer positively affects followers' intention to purchase. Research shows that, on social media platforms, followers look out for informative content, which influences them to stay on the platform for a longer time (Rodriguez, Peterson, & Ajjan, 2015). When a YouTube influencer shares a professional knowledge of products, ideas, and fashion, among others on a social media platform, followers are likely to see the knowledge and experience not simply as the influencer's personal statement but also as a display of expertise (Mcquarrie & Phillips, 2014). This informative content may include creating a daily, weekly, and monthly series, sharing some relevant content, repurposing content or even hosting a challenge. By following up on tips and posts made by an influencer, followers make themselves

appear more competent about the information shared, which positively affects a follower's intention to purchase. Not to mention that almost half of YouTube influencers' followers rely on influencers for product recommendations, and more individuals subscribe to influencers' channels based on recommendations by followers. Based on the above, it can be hypothesised that:

H1a: *Informativeness of YouTube influencer content is positively related to customer attitude*

H1b: *Informativeness of YouTube influencer content is positively related to recommendation*

H1c: *Informativeness of YouTube influencer content is positively related to purchase intention*

Trendiness is the extent to which online network individuals perceive themselves to be involved in the latest internet technology (innovative social media) trends (Cheung, 2021). In the social media arena, people like to follow trendy news and subscribe to YouTube influencers who provide trendy information on relevant topics (Kaczmarek-Śliwińska et al., 2021). The youth focus on trendy items regarding fashion, new product or service introduction, and sporting activities, among others. Industry influencers are increasingly shifting their resources to produce trendier video content that may affect followers' attitudes towards purchase intention. A study conducted by Mimi An (2017), argued that followers are likely to pay more attention to trendy video content, followed by news articles. As long as the content is timely and engaging, trendiness has an influence on people's attitudes towards the information being provided (Akehurst, 2009). Notably, the trendiness of content has significantly led to an increase in followers' recommendations of YouTube influencers (Acikgoz & Burnaz, 2021). Follower's attitude to purchase is positively driven by the trendiness of content shared by YouTube influencers. Based on the argument provided above, it can, therefore, be hypothesised that,

H1a: *Trendiness of YouTube influencer content is positively related to customer attitude*

H1b: *Trendiness of YouTube influencer content is positively related to recommendation*

H1c: *Trendiness of YouTube influencer content is positively related to purchase intention*

Argument quality is the persuasive strength of an argument. Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman (1981) defined argument quality as the audience's subjective judgement of the arguments included in a persuasive message as being strong or weak. This may include considering all relevant information before making a judgement and providing reasons for accepting or not accepting a conclusion, among others. Followers of social media influencers look out for stronger arguments that may influence their perception to yield favourable and effective responses to the message. Researchers indicate that the argument quality made by YouTube influencers significantly impacts followers' intention to purchase and enables followers to also recommend the YouTube influencer to others (Xu & Yao, 2015). Notably, many persuasive contents include arguments that are created to adjust consumers' opinions, which are consistent with the goals of the influencer (Fisbien & Ajzen, 1975; Areni & Lutz, 1988). Many studies have focused on the effect of argument quality of content-shared (Park et al., 2017). Petty and Cacioppo (1986) argued that messages that contain strong arguments are more likely to persuade

the message recipient to believe the arguments displayed in the message. Therefore, the hypothesis stated is that.

H1a: Augment quality of YouTube influencer content is positively related to customer attitude

H1b: Augment quality of YouTube influencer content is positively related to recommendation

H1c: Augment quality of YouTube influencer content is positively related to purchase intention

Attitude toward YouTube Influencer Content

Consumer attitude relates to both favourable and unfavourable beliefs (Phelps & Hoy, 1996) towards social media influencers. Laroche et al. (1996) indicated that endorsers could alter consumers' preferences and generate a willingness to purchase. Most researchers have indicated that consumer attitude is important knowledge for developing a successful marketing operation (Solomon et al. 2010). A study conducted by Ting and de Run 2015; Tarkiainen and Sundqvist (2015) show that attitude and purchase intention exhibit a parallel relationship in consumer studies. Chen (2007) also argued that individuals or followers who have a positive attitude towards a specific product are a major determinant that can lead to a consumer's purchase intention. Therefore, a favourable attitude towards a product endorsed by a social media influencer (YouTube influencer) will have a higher impact on followers' purchase intention and lead to the YouTube influencer's recommendation by followers. Based on the above, it can therefore be hypothesised that,

H4a: There is a positive relationship between consumer attitude and recommendation

H4b: There is a positive relationship between consumer attitude and purchase intention.

Recommendation

The attitude of consumers comprises feelings, beliefs, and behavioural intentions towards a specific object (Solomon et al., 2010). Attitude is one of the most significant drivers of purchase intention. Hence, Youtubers play an influential role in stimulating consumers' attitudes to recommend their YouTube page or account or share content with others. A study conducted by Kahle and Homer (1985) revealed that a positive attitude of consumers could lead to a desire to purchase an endorsed product and, tend to recommend it to others. Identically, Pradhan et al. (2016) also argued that there is a positive correlation between consumer attitude and purchase intention, which results in a significant influence on recommendation. Based on the above, it can, therefore, be hypothesised that.

H5: Attitude positively influences consumers' intention to recommend.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire Development and Administration

A structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for the collection of the data. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that items from external literature was adopted with

some modifications. All items were measured on a five-point scale rating, where (1) represents “strongly disagree” and (5) represents “strongly agree.” The measures of purchase intention and argument quality were adopted from Botelho (2019). Informativeness and trendiness measures were adopted by Hazzam (2022). Raajpoot and Ghilni-Wage's (2019) study provided measures for attitude and recommendation. Sample respondents were Generation Y (Gen Y) students at a large public university in Ghana who follow YouTube influencers. As noted by Kim (2018), the Gen Y demographic represents the most frequent users of YouTube. The respondents were selected using purposive and snowball sampling. Participation was voluntary, and upon finishing the questionnaire, respondents were encouraged to nominate colleagues who follow YouTube influencers to join the study. The surveys were gathered through in-person interactions as online data collection was deemed unsuitable due to the anticipated low response rates (Muda & Hamzah, 2021). The respondents were screened prior to the survey. To be eligible, they need to be a follower of a YouTube influencer and have recently watched any of his/her content within the week.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Of the 325 respondents, 180 were males, making up 55.4 per cent of the respondents. Females numbered 145, making up 44.6 per cent of the total respondents. A total of 325 respondents were sampled for the study. Two hundred twenty-five, making up 69.2% of the respondents, were between the ages 18-20 years, and the remaining were less than 26 years. In terms of education from the table above, 205 respondents, 63.1%, were undergraduates, 66 (20.3%). In responding to the question on which YouTube influencer respondents followed the most, the data revealed that 122 respondents (37.5%) followed Kwadwo Sheldon, 58 (17.8%) followed Ama Governor, 32 (9.8%) some respondents also followed Campus with Sharkboy, 21 (6.5%) followed Kainos Kasa, 19 (5.8%) respondents followed Kofi Tv and 73 (22.5%) respondents also followed other YouTube influencers who include Zion Felix, Jasmine Ama and AJ Tv. Based on the data response, Kwadwo Sheldon has the highest number of followers on YouTube.

Hypotheses Testing

Structural Equation Model (SEM) is a multivariate technique used to test the hypothesised relationships using AMOS software. The AMOS software provided the advantage of testing all the relationships simultaneously. It involves combining two statistical methods. This includes the measurement model and structural model assessment. Thus, prior to testing the hypothesis, a measurement model assessment was done to discover the items measured for their validity and reliability in order to guarantee their acceptability for evaluating the constructs.

Table 1	
FACTOR LOADINGS	
Construct and measure items	Estimate

<i>Trendiness</i>	
The information provided by the YouTube influencer is current	0.804
The information provided by the YouTube influencer is up-to-date	0.840
Content shared by the YouTube influencer is the newest information	0.845
The YouTube influencer is very trendy	0.832
<i>Informativeness</i>	
Contents shared by the YouTube influencer are informative	0.828
The YouTube influencer's contents provide complete information about the issue	0.843
The YouTube influencer's contents provide timely information about the issue	0.864
The YouTube influencer's contents provide accurate information about the issue	0.847
The YouTube influencer's contents provide comprehensive information about the issue	0.890
The information shared by the YouTube influencer is good	0.843
<i>Argument quality</i>	
The information shared by the YouTube influencer is supported by strong arguments	0.844
The YouTube influencer's content provides reasons for accepting or not accepting a conclusion	0.836
The YouTube influencer makes a judgement by considering all relevant information	0.800
<i>Attitude</i>	
I think that the YouTube influencer is interesting	0.813
I think that the YouTube influencer is pleasant	0.844
I think that the YouTube influencer is likeable	0.865
I have a favourable opinion about the YouTube influencer	0.868
<i>Purchase</i>	
I have purchased a product based on the YouTube influencer's review	0.870
The YouTube influencer influences my purchase decision of a product	0.841
I consider the content shared by the YouTube influencer in my purchase of a product	0.873
I check the reviews shared by the YouTube influencer before purchasing an item	0.876
<i>Recommendation</i>	
I have recommended the YouTube influencer's account to other people	0.868
I say positive things about the YouTube influencer to other people	0.863
I have recommended the YouTube influencer to friends and relatives interested in entertainment	0.858
I hardly miss an opportunity to tell others interested in entertainment about the YouTube influencer	0.821

Measurement Model Assessment

The reliability, convergent and discriminant validity all met the required criteria due to the following, (1) all factor loadings were significant because they surpassed the required 0.7 table 1, in addition, the results of the CFA show acceptable goodness of fit: ($\chi^2(257) = 539.517$, $p < 0.05$, $\chi^2 / df = 2.099$, $RMSEA = 0.058$, $SRMR = 0.033$, $CFI = 0.961$, $NFI = 0.928$, $IFI = 0.961$, $TLI = 0.954$); (2) the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for each construct did exceed the proposed level of 0.7 which indicated that all constructs are reliable and (3) the average variance extracted (AVE) for each of the constructs fulfilled the accepted level of 0.5 Table 2. Also, the discriminant validity is derived by calculating the square root of the AVE for each construct, where it should surpass the interrelation for each construct (Hair et al., 2010).

		α	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Trendiness	0.898	0.899	0.69	0.831					
2	Informativeness	0.941	0.941	0.728	0.742***	0.853				

3	Argument quality	0.863	0.866	0.683	0.701***	0.806***	0.827			
4	Attitude	0.909	0.911	0.719	0.682***	0.779***	0.768***	0.848		
5	Purchase intention	0.913	0.915	0.728	0.631***	0.690***	0.718***	0.668***	0.854	
6	Recommendation	0.913	0.914	0.727	0.678***	0.784***	0.775***	0.789***	0.794***	0.853

Structural Model Assessment

In the structural model, the covariance matrix approach is used. The fit indices for the model were as follows: ($\chi^2(4) = 9.078, p < 0.05, \chi^2/df = 2.269, RMSEA = 0.063, SRMR = 0.059, CFI = 0.998, NFI = 0.996, IFI = 0.998, TLI = 0.988$).

The results allude that the fits for SEM was within the required and acceptable limits. Coefficient of determination, i.e., R^2 was 0.744 (74.4%) for attitude, 0.635 (63.5%) for purchase intention and 0.788 (78.8%) for recommendation. H1 points to the fact that informativeness indeed influences consumer attitude towards purchase intention ($\beta = 0.353, T - value = 5.805$). Results also show in H1b that, informativeness has a positive influence on YouTube influencer's recommendation ($\beta = 0.225, T value = 3.875$). Furthermore, also proves that trendiness of a YouTube content has a significant influence on consumer attitude ($\beta=0.131, T-value= 2.735$), recommendation ($\beta=0.057, T-value = 1.287$) and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.137; T - value = 2.367$), providing support for H2a, H2b and H2c respectively. Additionally, the findings shows that argument quality of a YouTube content has a significant influence on consumer attitude ($\beta=0.427, T-value = 7.384$), recommendation ($\beta=0.451, T-value = 6.04$) and purchase intention ($\beta=0.305, T-value = 5.365$), providing support for H3a, H3b and H3c respectively. Also, the results in H4a ($\beta=0.154, T-value = 2.318$) indicates that, there is indeed a positive relationship between consumer attitude and purchase intention and in H4b ($\beta=0.358, T-value = 7.089$) there is a positive relationship between consumer attitude and recommendation. Lastly, results points that in H5 ($\beta=0.358, T-value = 7.089$) attitude positively influences consumer's intention to recommend Table 3.

Table 3
SEM REGRESSION ESTIMATES

	Direct path		Estimate	T-value	P-value	
H1a	Informativeness	--->	Attitude	0.353	5.805	***
H1b	Informativeness	--->	Recommendation	0.225	3.875	***
H1c	Informativeness	--->	Purchase intention	0.108	1.416	0.157
H2a	Trendiness	--->	Attitude	0.131	2.735	0.006
H2b	Trendiness	--->	Recommendation	0.057	1.287	0.198
H2c	Trendiness	--->	Purchase intention	0.137	2.367	0.018
H3a	Argument quality	--->	Attitude	0.427	7.384	***
H3b	Argument quality	--->	Recommendation	0.305	5.365	***
H3c	Argument quality	--->	Purchase intention	0.451	6.04	***
H4a	Attitude	--->	Recommendation	0.358	7.089	***
H4b	Attitude	--->	Purchase intention	0.154	2.318	0.02
H5	Recommendation	--->	Purchase intention	0.358	7.089	***
	Control					

	Gender	--->	Recommendation	0.031	1.206	0.228
	Gender	--->	Purchase intention	-0.033	-0.97	0.332

Discussion of Findings

In recent times, influencing consumer purchase intention has become one of the ways of staying relevant and updated (Mimi An, 2017). According to the findings of the study, trendiness of a YouTube content, positively affects follower's attitude to purchase. Again, trendiness has a positive effect on follower's intention to recommend. A study conducted by Correa et al. (2020) argued that followers pay more attention to trendy video content, followed by news article. This is because, by providing trending content, people can engage with others and be part of a conversation, which helps them to be able to integrate with the society. As long as the content is timely and engaging, it has a significant influence on follower's attitude to purchase. Hence, YouTube influencers have to be abreast with the latest trends in the digital world by creating a long-form video content to generate the attention of the audience, engaging in live streaming, providing the current and newest information among others. This often leads to a higher engagement with followers. In addition, organizations are able to do well and promote their brands making use of certain YouTube influencers who communicate their brands to their followers by being aware of upcoming trends that can help to stay ahead of curve and capitalize on trends even before they go mainstream.

Results from the study also indicates the importance of informativeness in communication, which according to a study by Miranda et al. (2023), influences consumer attitude towards purchase intention and recommendation. This is because, most people feel reluctant and do not have the time to search for information themselves, so they want a one stop area where they can easily obtain the needed information they require. Therefore, YouTube influencers in an attempt to influence follower's perception and intention to purchase must provide an accurate, clear, complete, timely, interesting and comprehensive topics or information about issues to their followers. Their facts must also support the value of an issue. Having said that, organisations that communicate their products through YouTube influencers must select platforms and vloggers that follower's see their knowledge and experience not simply as the influencer's personal statement but as a display of expertise (Mcquarrie & Phillips, 2014).

Followers are able to hold a strong perception of information by following the argument quality of YouTube influencers (Xiao et al., 2018). This includes providing information that is supported by strong arguments, making judgment by considering all relevant information as well as providing reasons for accepting or rejecting a conclusion. The findings of the study indicated the significant influence of argument quality on follower's attitude and on follower's recommendation. Followers look out for the quality of an argument because; it influences their perception when they process an information and provides them with enough facts on a shared content. This is based on a study by Purnawirawan et al (2015), which revealed that, high quality reviews with a positive valence, resulted in significantly more favourable attitudes, compared to low quality reviews, which consequently increased purchase intention of followers. To that end, organisations must be able to promote their products by looking out for stronger arguments that may influence consumer's perception to yield favourable and affective responses to messages.

A study conducted by Ting and Run (2015), and Tarkiainen and Sundqvist (2005) shows that, attitude and purchase intention exhibit a parallel relationship in consumer studies. Therefore, followers that have a positive attitude towards contents that are generated by vloggers or specific products have a major determinant that can lead to consumer's purchase intention. This is because; followers want to be connected to influencers who have unique attitude that can have a favourable impact on their perception. That said, there is a need for vloggers to generate a positive attitude from followers that will drive their purchase intention. This include providing contents that are credible, building relationship with followers by throwing content challenges, providing reviews that are understandable among others. It is, therefore, important for vloggers as well as organisations to provide means that make consumers confident about contents or information shared on specific issues or products to increase the chances of recommendation.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study confirm and extends the SOR model within the context of YouTube influencer marketing. It validates that stimulus (informativeness, trendiness, argument quality) directly influence the organism (consumer attitudes) and subsequently impact consumer responses (recommendations, purchase intentions). The study shows the mediating role of attitude. It establishes that attitude significantly mediates the relationship between stimuli and subsequent consumer responses, reinforcing the importance of attitude in the decision-making process. The study emphasises the importance of YouTube influencers crafting informative and persuasive content in influencing consumer behavioural outcomes. While staying trendy is valuable, the study suggests influencers should focus on balancing trendy content with substance. Trendiness alone might not significantly impact recommendations. Also, for YouTube influencers prioritise the quality of arguments and information provided is key to success. Focus on optimising content for higher quality, ensuring arguments are compelling, coherent, and persuasive. This will directly impact consumer attitudes and their subsequent actions. Recognise the pivotal role of attitude in driving both recommendation and purchase intention. Understanding and positively shaping consumer attitudes should be a key focus for influencers.

Direction for Future Studies

Further studies should consider the personality of the YouTube influencer since this study only concentrated on the characteristics of the content produced on YouTube. The study was performed on tertiary students only thus a further expansion unto workers in the various organisations in the country who are also exposed to the use of YouTube. The focus of the study was on YouTube which is just one platform of social media. Therefore, the researchers suggest further studies into other trending social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and Twitter.

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Received: 31-Dec-2023, Manuscript No. AMSJ-24-14310; **Editor assigned:** 01-Jan-2024, PreQC No. AMSJ-24-14310(PQ); **Reviewed:** 29-Jan-2024, QC No. AMSJ-24-14310; **Revised:** 15-May-2024, Manuscript No. AMSJ-24-14310(R); **Published:** 03-Jun-2024