



Impact of commercial advertisement based on the attitude and content of YouTubers

Impacto del anuncio comercial desde la actitud y contenido de los YouTubers

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Abstract

This is a descriptive, non-experimental, cross-sectional study that aims to determine whether the attitude towards YouTubers and their content influences the impact of the commercial advertisement on its audience. Men and women between 18 and 24 years old from Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador were surveyed. Data treatment by structural equations and hypothesis testing was through SPSS v25, Amos v24, SmartPLS 3 and EQS 6.3. It can be inferred that there is a direct relationship between the YouTuber's attitude and the use of products in their content, generating empathy from their followers. This contributes to the purchase intention due to the aspirational attitudes of the YouTubers: the lifestyle they want or desire. Acquiring brands or products that the YouTuber consumes mentioning or not the attributes of these.

JEL Code: M31, M37, Z13

Keywords: consumer behavior; youtube; influencer, product placement

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Resumen

Se trata de un estudio de tipo descriptivo, no experimental y transversal que pretende determinar si la actitud hacia el YouTube y su contenido influyen en el impacto del anuncio comercial en su audiencia. Se encuestaron a hombres y mujeres de 18 a 24 años de México, Brasil, Colombia y Ecuador. El tratamiento de los datos por ecuaciones estructurales y prueba de hipótesis fue a través de SPSS v25, Amos v24, SmartPLS 3 y EQS 6.3. Se puede inferir que existe una relación directa entre la actitud del YouTuber y el uso de productos en su contenido generando empatía de sus seguidores. Que coadyuva a la intención de compra por las actitudes aspiracionales de los YouTubers: estilo de vida que quiere o desea. Adquiriendo marcas o productos que el YouTuber consume mencionando o no los atributos de estos.

Código JEL: M31, M37, Z13

Palabras clave: comportamiento de consumo; youTuber; influencer; product; placement

Introduction

Recent studies have found that consumption develops both habitually and contextually. Consumer behaviors are initiated from purchase intention to consumption habits that have been modified or altered through four contexts (Roozmand et al., 2011; Sheth, 2020): 1) the social context, reflected in the consumer's life and workplace, community, neighbors, and friends; 2) the technological context, which has broken old habits in consumption with artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, smartphones, Internet 4.0, and e-commerce; 3) the context of coexistence, awareness, and well-being, which impacts consumption habits of socially good, friendly, and inclusive healthy products; and 4) the external context related to natural disasters, global pandemics—recently the COVID-19 pandemic—regional conflicts, and civil and global wars.

This study investigates the influence or impact on YouTubers' followers and their intention to use a brand or product advertised or promoted on YouTube channels. YouTubers' attitude (YTA), Motivation to follow the YouTuber (MFY), Relation between the brand and the content (RBC), and the Attitude toward the YouTubers' content (ATC) are mediating variables of the YouTuber-follower relationship; and the engagement or impact of the advertisement (IA)—known as product placement—is the antecedent variable in this relationship.

This is one of the first studies to empirically examine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer purchases in four culturally matched Latin American countries as demonstrated in the indices of the six cultural dimensions for the selected markets, according to Hofstede (2010, 2015). For entrepreneurial practice, the results provide concrete guidance to technology companies (physical and face-to-face) on sales opportunities to focus on post-pandemic times or in the face of external contexts

related to natural disasters, pandemics, regional conflicts, civil and global wars, or when the consumer (follower) is in social isolation due to health or civil security issues.

The COVID-19 pandemic came to modify purchasing and consumption behaviors caused by social distancing and commercial restrictions due to the health emergency. These factors are part of the shifting purchase behavior (Dooley, Yan, Mohan, & Gopalakrishnan, 2010; Foxall, 1979; Lamming, 2000; Habel et al., 2020). Today, with no pandemic and no risk of contagion or loss of life, consumers are left with: 1) hoarding of essential products for daily consumption resulting in temporary shortages; 2) improvisation due to restrictions, discarding existing habits and inventing new forms of non-contact consumption (contactless); 3) pent-up demand due to a change in the demand for non-essential products now and in the future; 4) the use of digital technology not only for the acquisition of products on a massive scale online but also to maintain social and work contact and even to maintain health; 5) home deliveries because consumers no longer can or want to go to the grocery store or shopping malls; they have virtual shopping from home and also intangibles such as services, ideas, and experiences (work, education, health care, religion, politics, and entertainment) reversing the flow of purchase and consumption; 6) adjustments to the working day that have led to extended hours and immediate availability in front of an electronic or mobile device through remote working; 7) holding gatherings through digital platforms to share stories and experiences for school or with friends and family; and 8) by discovering their talents with more flexible time at home, consumers are experimenting with cooking, music, art, and entertainment (the prosumer effect that has been unleashed in the last few years). Consumers now reproduce, share, produce, and purchase knowledge (learning) online more creatively through social networks such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok (Larios-Gomez et al., 2021; Seth, 2020).

In this last factor, the restrictions on social coexistence and the accelerated technological development experienced in the first two years of the pandemic intensified the use of online video games in Mixer, Twitch, and in social networks, streaming services, virtual channels in social networks such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, meeting platforms through video calls such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and Webex Meet, which made it possible to interconnect people from all over the world.

The development of existing marketing and communication strategies increased (Smith et al., 2013; Johnson & Woodcock, 2019). The presence of brands and products was adapted and also reinforced through product placement or commercial advertisements by public figures, opinion leaders in conventional media such as television, radio or cinema, or those that have recently been integrated, such as influencers or content creators (in virtual media), who impact specific audiences (Adis et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2015; Alassani, & Göretz, 2019; Wai Lai & Liu, 2020; Rutter et al., 2021; Ghosh, 2022). Content creators or influencers, as subjects of study in the present research, are individuals who can interact with

their audiences through video games (streamers or gamers) or through content channels on social networks such as YouTube (YouTubers), Twitter (Twitterers), Instagram (Instagramers), TikTok (TikTokers), or pioneers through blogs (bloggers) (Pellicone & Ahn, 2017; Zhao et al., 2018; Li et al., 2021).

As technological media without supplier-consumer contact develops, there is a co-creation of value between consumers and the brand or product (Hinson et al., 2019). Today, there is a boom of contactless strategies with social networks, meeting platforms, QRs, Apps (short for applications), Near Field Communication (NFC) technology, and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). Marketing in companies has found a contactless communication bridge with consumers (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016). For digital influencers, this is an example of best practices for interacting with their followers: a relationship between influencers and brands through online social media as hybrid spaces that allow consumers to establish new forms of integration with other actors, thus expressing their commitment to a brand or product (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In this environment of virtual and mobile platforms, the consumer can recommend a product, express dissatisfaction, give opinions, persuade, and dispel doubts with the help of other users in organized online brand communities or through influencers (for this study, a YouTuber) on their followers in networks, or even simply give a “like” on a virtual platform (Yusuf et al., 2018).

As of 2019, youtube.com, categorized as an art and entertainment streaming and online TV website, has become the world’s second-most visited website after google.com, followed by facebook.com, xvideos.com, and xnxx.com (the last two are adult websites), with 20 minutes average duration of user visits, bounce rate of 21.10%, and an average of 11.09 pages visited (SimilarWeb, 2023). As its categorization describes it, it is a social media that offers a space in which brands and products can be presented by YouTubers, actively producing and sharing content to different internet communities, establishing solid relations with people and companies, and generating content for engagement and intention to use brands or products in their followers (Sabich & Steinberg, 2017; SocialBlade, 2020; Burgess & Green, 2018).

This study’s research questions were: What factors generate commitment or engagement toward YouTubers concerning the content and commercials they recommend on YouTube channels? How is the relation between attitude toward the content and influence toward the commercial advertisement or product placement activated by the YouTubers?

Review of the literature

Attitude and purchase intention

For Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), attitude can predict purchase intentions and explain the behavior of a person or consumer. Attitude is defined as the degree of a person's favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of self, others, and objects when performing a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Kim, Njite, & Hancer, 2013; Vederhus et al., 2015). Attitude in purchase intention is based on the level of liking or disliking toward a brand or product subject to the consumer's tastes or judgments. This starts from a primary impression of the brand or product (good, service, idea, or experience) to the consumption of the product (Solomon, 2017; Ajzen, 2008; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977). Therefore, attitude is related to purchase intention and may be conditioned by other external factors directly related to the consumer, such as the opinions of a leader or group of influence, social pressure, purchasing power, access to the product, and lifestyle (Schiffman & Lazar, 2010).

The positive decision theory of Habel et al. (2020) proposes that consumers buy according to the perception of external factors that do not depend on the consumer, such as economic, social, psychological, cultural, and technological factors. On the other hand, attitudes are developed, learned, permeate throughout the consumer's life, and are difficult to change, although they can be modified by being influenced by the satisfaction of motivation from external actors that cause a change as new concepts about the idea or object being consumed are learned (Lien & Cao, 2014; Shaouf et al., 2016).

Attitude is a determining factor for the positive or negative predisposition to an individual's behavior. Recent studies have linked attitude and purchase intention from technological media, such as e-commerce in its beginnings and now social networks and mobile devices with marketing and advertising strategies. Although the use of these in social networks is not new (Cuadra-Martinez et al., 2020; Cristancho et al., 2022), since the COVID-19 pandemic there has been accelerated growth in the consumption of e-sports, streaming, social networks, apps, mobile use (Balhara et al., 2020; King et al., 2020; Toledo, 2020; Şener, 2021; Chae & Lee, 2022), and the display of information or content through influencers who seek to create content, increase their follower shares, gain brand sponsors, and position themselves in the minds of consumers as opinion leaders, influencing their audiences with advertisements or commentary or interacting with brands or products (Chen & Lin, 2018; Xu et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2017; Sjöblom & Hamari, 2017; Patiño & Valencia, 2020; Purnamaningsih & Rizkalla, 2020).

Comments, advertising, and product placement

The attitude and intention to purchase in the consumption of tangibles (goods) and intangibles (services, ideas, and experiences) with comments, advertisements, or product placement began in the 1920s to showcase products and reduce production costs during the Depression in the United States (Gallego & Bourdeau 2004; Brett 1995; Balasubramanian 1994), before moving on to television and radio. It is currently used in social networks with modifications for verbal, passive, and active brand and product placement (Demirel & Yildiz, 2020; Parengkuan et al., 2020; Sharma & Bumb, 2022; Guo et al., 2019; Kakkar & Nayak, 2019). For example, product placement can be verbal through just mentioning, active through interacting with the brand or product (Active by mention and Active by action), or Passive through just placing the brand or product in view of the followers.

Among the most used Product Placements are sweepstakes, live surveys, real-time video games with followers, live collaborations through links and video calls, and the most used or profitable by influencers: sponsored content through unboxing, where the YouTuber describes live the acquisition of a newly arrived product (Kim, 2020; Ch et al., 2021). This is done for the direct or indirect promotion of a brand or product to the audience to generate acceptance or rejection (Lou et al., 2019; Ibáñez-Sánchez et al., 2022) based on their attitude toward a brand community by influencing using advertisements on their content (product placement), and coming to be considered by their followers as leaders, pioneers, fashionistas, or experts (Demirel & Yildiz, 2020; Parengkuan et al., 2020; Sharma & Bumb, 2022; Amin et al., 2020; Luo, 2020; Kim, 2021; Piñeiro-Chousa et al., 2023; Nascimento et al., 2014; Bowman et al., 2022).

Balasubramanian et al. (2014) propose to identify the attitude toward both brand, content, and actors that relate to brand performance in the context of the story and thus its effect on brand attitude as an effect of product placement or ads embedded in movies. It is observed that the attitude toward actors is composed of the perception of their audience—in this case, the consumers of YouTubers—in terms of their attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise, and influences the attitude toward product placement and thus toward the brand. This model can be observed in the following diagram:

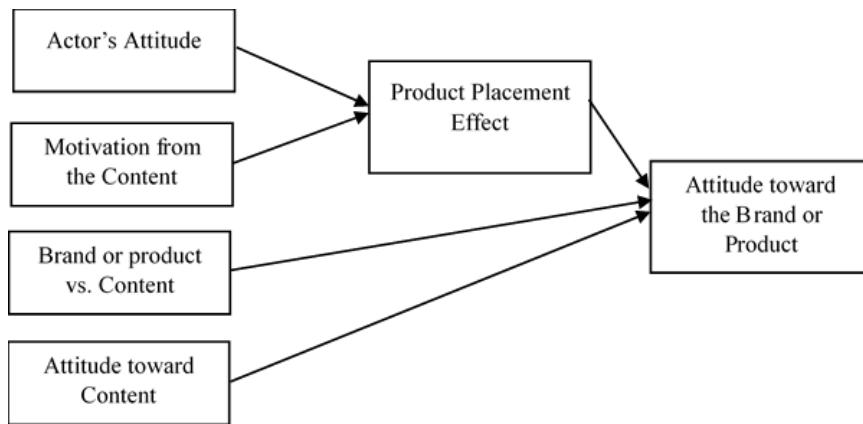


Figure 1. Balasubramanian Model
 Source: created by the authors based on Balasubramanian et al. (2014)

Based on the literature presented throughout this paper, and in order to analyze the relation between the attitude toward the brand, content, actors, and brand of YouTubers and the effect of product placement or ads embedded in the selected YouTube content or channels on their followers, the model proposed by Balasubramanian et al. (2014) was used to determine whether the attitude toward YouTubers and their content during the COVID-19 pandemic influences the effect of product placement on their audience. For this purpose, the variables attitude through the actor, attitude through the content, and the relation between the actor and the brand will be adjusted according to the context of product placement in the YouTubers, and the other variables will not be considered since they are very specific in the context of movies in the original model. Additionally, the variable motivation toward the content generated by the YouTuber is proposed since it is a relevant aspect of the audience's interest in the content generated by the YouTuber (comments) and the effect of product placement (comments). Figure 2 shows the proposed study model and its corresponding hypotheses:

H1: YouTubers' attitude (YTA) has a positive influence on the impact of the advertisement (IOA)

H2: YouTubers' attitude (YTA) has a positive influence on the followers' attitude toward the YouTubers' content (ATC)

H3: The followers' attitude toward the YouTubers' content (ATC) has a positive influence on the impact of the advertisement (IOA)

H4: Motivation to follow the YouTuber (MFY) has a positive influence on the followers' attitude toward the YouTubers' content (ATC)

H5: The relation between the brand and the content (RBC) has a positive influence on the impact of the advertisement (IOA)

Methodology

Through a conclusive, descriptive, non-experimental, cross-sectional, quantitative, and descriptive study, the aim was to determine whether the attitude toward YouTubers and their content influences the impact of the advertisement (product placement) on the audience. The target group included men and women from different cities in Mexico (Puebla, Mexico City), Brazil (São Paulo), Colombia (Bogota), and Ecuador (Quito), between 18 and 24 years old, who stated they were university students, YouTube content viewers, and followed YouTubers' accounts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The sample design was calculated at 95% confidence on the total population of university students selected among the ages indicated in each participating house, city, or country. Likewise, this is a non-probabilistic study since the sample was selected by convenience and snowballing, given that it was impossible to have a physical sample frame due to health and safety conditions. Nevertheless, a sample of 1 536 respondents (384 subjects for each country) was obtained.

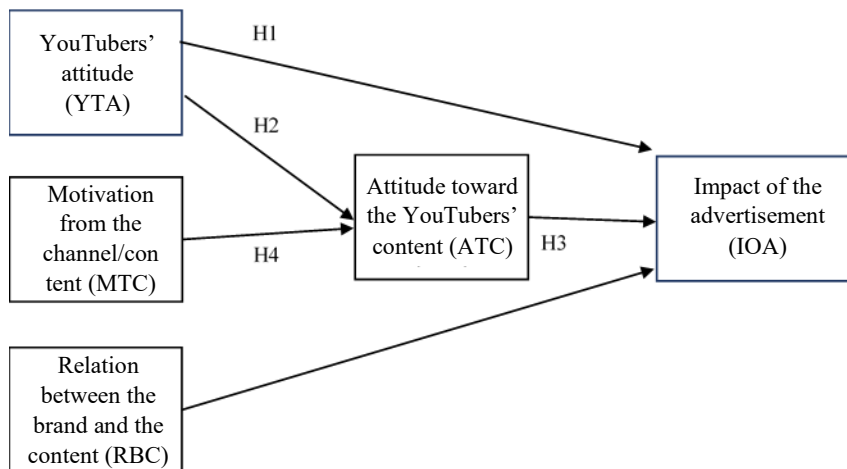


Figure 2. Proposed hypothetical model
 Source: created by the authors

The data collection technique used was an electronic survey through Google Forms, and the instrument was administered from August to December 2022. To identify the profile of the study subject, the instrument was composed of 30 items regarding the theoretical model applied, using 5-point Likert-

type scales (1=Strongly disagree and 5=Strongly agree) as a psychometric measurement where respondents indicated their agreement or disagreement with a statement (Bertram, 2008; Cañadas & Sánchez-Bruno, 1998; Dawes, 1975), because it is a type of instrument for measuring the attitudes of the followers of YouTubers (Likert, 1932; Edmondson, 2005). The treatment of the data obtained was through the SPSS version 25 programs for the descriptive analysis and exploratory factor analysis, and the modeling by structural equations and hypothesis testing was developed using Amos v24, SmartPLS 3, and EQS 6.3.

Results

Based on the descriptive analysis of the study subjects, it was found that the participating population of the four countries are 755 subjects between 18 and 21 years of age (49%) and 781 (51%) between 22 and 24. 782 are male (51%) and 754 are female (49%). 688 subjects were enrolled in public higher education institutions (HEI) (45%) and 848 in private ones (55%). Finally, 355 of them reported belonging to the high socioeconomic level (SEL) (AB=23%), 648 subjects to the medium level (C=42%), and 533 subjects to the low level (D=35%). Table 1 shows the percentages of these items individually by country.

Table 1
Study subject profiles for Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador

Item		Mexico n=384 Result		Brazil n=384 Result		Colombia 384 Result		Ecuador n=384 Result		General N=1 536 Result	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Age	18 to 21 years old	189	49%	167	43%	199	52%	200	52%	755	49%
	22 to 24 years old	195	51%	217	57%	185	48%	184	48%	781	51%
Genre	Male	198	52%	190	49%	195	51%	199	52%	782	51%
	Female	186	48%	194	51%	189	49%	185	48%	754	49%
HEI	Public	205	53%	155	40%	163	42%	165	43%	688	45%
	Private	179	47%	229	60%	221	58%	219	57%	848	55%
SEL	AB (high)	67	17%	89	23%	111	29%	88	23%	355	23%
	C + (average)	137	36%	145	38%	174	45%	192	50%	648	42%
	D (low)	180	47%	150	39%	99	26%	104	27%	533	35%
	n=	384	100%	384	100%	384	100%	384	100%		

Source: created by the authors with SPSS version 25

To determine the validity of the correlation between the items, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was calculated using the extraction method in the principal components analysis and varimax as

the rotation method (with Kaiser rotation). Thirty iterations were obtained by grouping the 30 items in the 5 proposed dimensions, obtaining factor loadings higher than 0.5 with 70.65% of the total variance explained. A satisfactory Bartlett's test of sphericity was obtained ($\chi^2= 14.234$; $gl=435$; $p<0.001$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO) was 0.879 with a total alpha of 0.943. Concerning the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), factor loadings greater than 0.55 were obtained, and Cronbach's Alpha for each dimension was greater than 0.802. See Table 2.

Table 2
Confirmatory factor analysis

Dimension	items		Factor loading	Alpha
AYT	The YouTuber...			
	It seems to me that they speak the truth	YTA1	0.789	
	They give me confidence	YTA2	0.811	
Attitude toward the YouTuber	It seems to me that they speak with honesty	YTA3	0.798	0.912
	They have information	YTA4	0.787	
	They seem to be experts in what they say	YTA5	0.734	
	They have an appropriate image	YTA6	0.782	
	They are nice people	YTA7	0.834	
ATC	The content...			
	I think it's very good	ATC1	0.845	
	I'm interested in watching	ATC2	0.812	
	Is advisable	ATC3	0.799	
	Is amusing	ATC4	0.810	
Attitude toward content	Seems appropriate for my age	ATC5	0.789	0.897
	Is excellent	ATC6	0.834	
	The brands or products are consistent with the YouTuber's image.	ATC7	0.899	
	The YouTuber's expressions regarding the brand or product seem natural.	ATC8	0.855	
IOA	When I watch the ads...			
	I intend to purchase the brands or products recommended by the YouTuber.	IDA1	0.789	
	I wish I had the brands or products the YouTuber uses.	IDA2	0.799	
	I would recommend the brands or products the YouTuber uses.	IDA3	0.81	
Impact of the Advertisement	I perceive that the brands or products the YouTuber uses are the best.	IDA4	0.823	0.945
	I think the brand or product is appropriate to the content provided by the YouTuber.	IDA5	0.867	
	I think the YouTuber is sincere in recommending the brands or products they use.	IDA6	0.807	
MFY	I like to follow YouTubers...			
Motivation to follow YouTubers	To entertain myself	MFY1	0.815	
	To be part of a community	MFY2	0.895	0.901
	To consult important information	MFY3	0.842	

RBC	To know what is going on around me	MFY4	0.801	0.905
	To become a content creator	MFY5	0.752	
	I consider that...			
	The brand or product adds value to the YouTuber's comments.	RBC1	0.911	
	The brand or product adds value to the YouTuber's channel.	RBC2	0.899	
Relation between brand and content	The YouTuber's comments regarding the brand or product are consistent.	RBC3	0.901	0.905
	The YouTuber's comments about the brand or product they use motivate me to buy.	RBC4	0.906	

Source: created by the authors

Continuing with the measurement validation of the model, the convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs was determined. For convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) was used, obtaining for each dimension values above 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2012). For the validation of internal consistency, composite reliability (CR) was calculated, with values above 0.8. Discriminant validity was calculated using the Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) method. The results are shown in Table 5, and it is observed that all are within the threshold specified for this indicator (< 0.85) (Henseler et al., 2015; Fornell & Larcker, 1981); see Table 3. The goodness-of-fit indices are satisfactory in terms of the ratio of Chi-square value and degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF=2.89), as well as against the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA=0.05) and other indices as proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999); see Table 4.

Table 3
Discriminant and convergent validity

	CR	AVE	AHY	ATC	IOA	MFY	RBC
AHY	0.902	0.543	0.790				
ATC	0.943	0.698	0.545	0.845			
IOA	0.905	0.642	0.459	0.543	0.801		
MFY	0.899	0.598	0.598	0.423	0.321	0.834	
RBC	0.901	0.812	0.567	0.599	0.533	0.453	0.829

Source: created by the authors

Table 4
Goodness-of-fit indices

Fit index	Expected	Result
Chi-Square χ^2	> 0.05	0.001
Discrepancy between χ^2 and degrees of freedom; (CMIN/DF)	< 5	2.891
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.05	0.05

Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.90 -1	0.91
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.90 -1	0.903
Non-normed fit index (NNFI or TLI)	0.90 - 1	0.902

Source: created by the authors

With the goodness of fit of the model established, a CFA was performed for each subsample to determine the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument for the Mexican, Colombian, Brazilian, and Ecuadorian subsamples through the PLS Multi-Group Analysis in SmartPLS 3 (Ringle et al., 2015). The results are shown in Table 5. As in the global sample, the values of indicators with a minimum of 0.7 in their loadings were maintained, and the indicators that presented a Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability greater than 0.60 were retained. The average variance extracted (AVE) index was greater than 0.50 on each scale. In all the subsamples (Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador), the reliability and validity of the scales of the construct obtained from their indicators were adequate.

Table 5
Internal consistency and convergent validity of the model adjusted for subsamples

	CR	AVE	CR	AVE	CR	AVE	CR	AVE
Dimension	>0.70	>.050	>0.70	>.050	>0.70	>.050	>0.70	>.050
	MEXICO		BRAZIL		COLOMBIA		ECUADOR	
YTA	0.799	0.619	0.776	0.681	0.723	0.634	0.745	0.612
ATC	0.729	0.607	0.723	0.556	0.790	0.600	0.734	0.567
IOA	0.723	0.599	0.756	0.599	0.776	0.609	0.723	0.579
MFY	0.858	0.601	0.866	0.615	0.834	0.545	0.899	0.523
RBC	0.789	0.501	0.798	0.590	0.734	0.588	0.786	0.589

Source: created by the authors

Measurement instrument invariance consists in introducing constraints to validate that the latent variables represent the same in the 4 groups (Aldás, 2013; Hair, 2018). In this research, shape and equal loading factor analyses were conducted using PLS Multi-Group Analysis in SmartPLS 3 and EQS 6.3 software. Table 6 shows the results to determine whether the constraints can hold and confirm the invariance of the measuring instrument. Cheung and Rensvold (2002) proposed an approach based on the CFI difference between the results after the same shape and factor loading, or ΔCFI . This approach indicates that when $\Delta CFI > 0.01$, the applied restrictions cannot be sustained, whereas when $\Delta CFI \leq 0.01$, the restrictions are sustained, meaning that the latent variables are the same in the subsamples.

In this study, it was found that $\Delta CFI = 0.004$ (CFI 0.954 - CFI 0.950). Therefore, the invariance is confirmed (Henseler et al., 2009). Likewise, it can be noted that the goodness-of-fit statistics and

benchmarks are adequate for the absolute fit, having a Chi-square/degrees of freedom (X^2/df) ratio below 3, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) below 0.05, and the Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) with zero approximations. In the comparative fit, both the Normed Fit Index (NFI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) are greater than or equal to 0.95.

Once the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model was assured, the relations between the variables were measured, starting by obtaining the different statistical parameters using the bootstrapping method (5000 subsamples). For the bootstrap-based MGA method of Henseler et al. (2009) ($p < 0.05$ or $p > 0.95$) between two categories, a p-value below 0.05 or above 0.95 indicates meaningful changes. There, the relation (H1) YouTubers' Attitude (YTA) <--- impact of the advertisement (IOA) is rejected, and the rest of the relations are accepted, as shown in Table 7.

Table 6
Invariance test

Group	X^2	df	X^2/df <3	RMSEA <0.05	SRMR P to 0	NFI ≥ 0.95	CFI ≥ 0.95
Mexico (n=384)	2,955.002	1,350.08	2.189	0.050	0.082	0.953	0.951
Colombia (n=384)	2,988.893	995.95	3.001	0.032	0.083	0.957	0.987
Ecuador (n=384)	2,856.456	1,996.321	1.431	0.023	0.086	0.986	0.977
Brazil (n=384)	3,456.348	1,345.673	2.568	0.049	0.088	0.971	0.956
Equal form	6,213.345	2,321.234	2.677	0.046	0.087	0.975	0.954
Equal load factor	5,956.654	2,345.678	2.539	0.049	0.087	0.973	0.950

Source: created by the authors

Table 7
Hypotheses test

	Hypothetical relations	Path (β)	T-value >1.96	P-value <.05	Result
H1	YouTubers' Attitude (YTA) <--- impact of the advertisement (IOA)	0.059	0.826	0.062	Rejected
H2	YouTubers' Attitude (YTA) <--- attitude toward the YouTubers' content (ATC)	0.329	3.349	0.000	Accepted
H3	Attitude toward the YouTubers' content (ATC) <--- impact of the advertisement (IOA)	0.436	2.458	0.043	Accepted
H4	Motivation to follow the YouTuber (MFY) <--- attitude toward the YouTubers' content (ATC)	0.321	5.211	0.000	Accepted

H5	Relation between the brand and the content (RBC)	<---	impact of the advertisement (IOA)	0.454	3.716	0.004	Accepted
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Source: created by the authors

Conclusions and discussion

Based on the aim of the present study regarding the impact caused by commercial advertisements or product placement (PP) based on the existing relation between YouTubers' attitudes, their content, and followers' motivations, H1: "YouTubers' Attitude (YTA) has a positive influence on the impact of the advertisement (IOA)" was rejected given that, for YouTubers' followers, attitude did not positively influence the impact of the advertisement (IOA). From Ongkrutraksa's (2022) perspective, the actor's (YouTuber) attitude should be related to the commercial content to generate credibility for a positive effect on YTA. On their own, the YouTuber does not generate trust, credibility, or impact on the decisions of their followers: neither the appearance nor the impression at the first contact with them (image, appearance, or perception) is enough. Nonetheless, a positive correlation exists between the YouTubers' attitude (YTA) and the content they receive. That is, H2 is accepted: "YouTubers' attitude (YTA) has a positive influence on YouTubers' attitude toward the YouTubers' content (ATC)," as followers feel that the dialogues performed by YouTubers are of importance to them (funny, interesting, or useful).

From the analysis of H1 and H2, it is found that to create an impact of the advertisement (IOA) on the followers, it is necessary to determine or analyze the relations from the attitude towards the channel and its content (ATC). Therefore, H3: "YouTubers' attitude toward the YouTubers' content (ATC) has a positive influence on the impact of the advertisement (IOA)" was accepted. This impact of the advertisement can range from purchase intention to purchase and even desire to own the brand or product, not to mention the cognitive stage of direct and indirect recommendation. This confirms that the actor's interaction with the brand or product (active product placement) generates effective commercialization from strategic marketing actions (Woodcock & Johnson, 2021; Church, 2022).

Regarding H4: "Motivation to follow the YouTuber (MFY) has a positive influence on the Attitude toward the YouTubers' content (ATC)," it was found in the analysis of results that followers of YouTube channels are motivated to follow their actors because of the content they provide (YouTubers), so the hypothesis was accepted. This reinforces the relation of variables in H2 (YTA<--IOA) and H3 (YTA<--ATC). Additionally, this shows that the motivation of the followers is related to entertainment, being part of a community, consulting important information, knowing what is happening around them, and being a content creator, which will have an impact on the advertisement as it contributes to a better

perception of the channel's content (Duhaime et al., 2020) and a marketing action (positioning, purchase, and recommendation) toward the brands or products involved.

Finally, when analyzing the relation of the brand or product with the impact toward the advertisement, based on the literature consulted it can be inferred that there is a direct relation between the attitude toward the YouTuber (which is related to H4), the use of products in their content, and the empathy with the followers (Wang *et al.*, 2022). So H5, "The relation between the brand and the content (RBC) has a positive influence on the impact of the advertisement (IOA)," was accepted. It is inferred that there is a direct relation between the attitude toward the YouTuber and the impact toward the advertisement through the contents of the YouTube channel and the use of brands or products by the followers promoting their acceptance, as long as they are related to the context of the topic of interest of the YouTube channel.

As a marketing policy, the above undoubtedly contributes to the purchase intention derived from the actions of the advertisement (product placement) developed by YouTubers, who are perceived as aspirational by their followers—the lifestyle they want or desire—so brands or products that the YouTuber consumes are purchased without mentioning or promoting them as such.

Limitations and future research

The limitations presented by this research are related to the prompt availability of data collection since it was a study involving four countries. As future research, a comparison between the four participating countries is proposed through a measurement analysis for the Mexican, Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Brazilian subsamples using PLS Multi-Group Analysis in SmartPLS 3.

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