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The YouTube - Savoring Model: YouTube as a Means of Increasing Savoring for an Upcoming Consumption Experience

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ABSTRACT

YouTube started primarily as a means of entertainment. However, in recent years it has become a platform for both information-seeking and information-giving behaviors. Using the consumption, participation, and production framework for user generated media, YouTube is examined as a platform to influence an individual's savoring and remembered enjoyment of a consumption experience. This study proposes a model for utilizing YouTube as a means of increasing savoring for an upcoming consumption experience through elaborative processing, minimizing distractions, and encouraging remembered enjoyment.

INTRODUCTION

If you have ever thought or daydreamed about an upcoming experience and imagined the pleasure you might derive from that experience, you have likely experienced savoring (Chun, Diehl, & MacInnis, 2017). If you have ever researched a travel destination to find desirable experiences and activities (Reino & Hay, 2011), or sought information about a product or experience, you have likely utilized YouTube to do so (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Khan, 2016). Understanding YouTube's role in creating and facilitating the savoring of an upcoming or remembered consumption experience is important for marketers. The maximization of consumption enjoyment through savoring has the potential to protect companies against commoditization of an experience and encourage repeat customers (Chun et al., 2017). This research examines YouTube's ability to encourage savoring of a consumption experience, minimize distractions during the consumption experience, and promote remembered consumption enjoyment.

SAVORING AN UPCOMING EXPERIENCE

Defining savoring as "a cognitive process involving an awareness of current pleasure from a target-specific consumption experience," Chun, Diehl, & MacInnis (2017, p. 97) explored the effect of savoring on upcoming and remembered consumption enjoyment and found that savoring an upcoming consumption experience increased both the ongoing and remembered enjoyment of the experience. Additionally, research suggests that savoring is based in elaborative processing (Chun et al., 2017; Gersema, 2007; Schacter & Addis, 2007). As an individual savors an upcoming experience, he/she elaborates on aspects of that experience using prior knowledge and information processing (Schacter & Addis, 2007). The process of savoring through elaborative processing creates and strengthens positive memory traces about the upcoming

experience. Research suggests that these memory traces are reactivated both during an experience and when remembering an experience (Chun et. al., 2017).

Elaborative processing, and therefore savoring, requires that a person has sufficient motivation, ability, and opportunity to engage in elaborative processing (Chun et. al., 2017; MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989; Schacter & Addis, 2007). Motivation, ability, and opportunity impact an individual's level of processing directed towards the information presented in a message (such as an advertisement or video) and higher levels of processing are required for elaboration of the information from the message (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). This current study proposes a model for utilizing YouTube as a means of increasing savoring for an upcoming consumption experience through motivation, ability, and opportunity.

YOUTUBE

When it comes to online video, YouTube is the go-to source (Khan, 2016; Shao, 2009). With over 216 million users (Degenhard, 2020), YouTube has become the most popular social network in the United States with the largest share of online users in 2020, overtaking Facebook which has historically had the lead (Clement, 2020). As a go-to resource, YouTube is both a resource for information and a technological platform.

YouTube as an Information Seeking-Resource

Entertainment content has long been the driving force for YouTube usage (Shao, 2009) and continues to see significant growth (Tubular Labs, 2019). However, YouTube is also an important resource for information-seeking (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Khan, 2016) and has seen growth in information-related genres, including: education, home and DIY, family and parenting, food and drink, and travel (Tubular Labs, 2019). YouTube also includes social components that allow users to seek-out and provide relevant information (Khan, 2016).

YouTube as a Platform

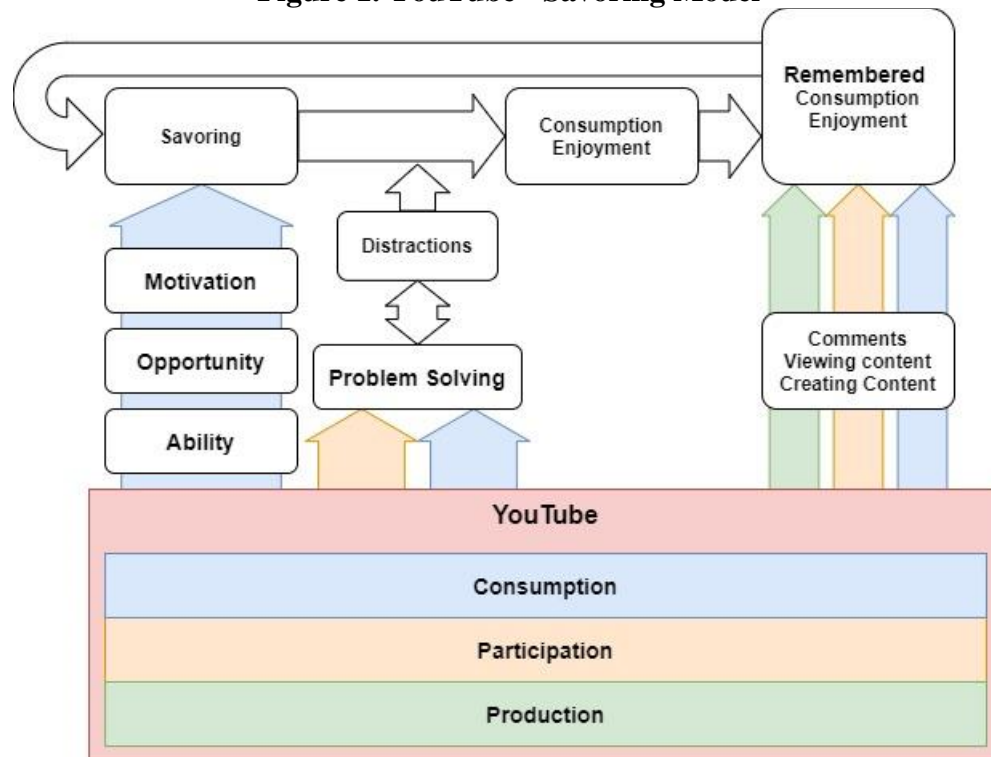
YouTube allows users a variety of ways to interact with the website, content, and users (Khan, 2016). Not only can users search for and view videos, they are also able rate (like/dislike) videos, create and upload their own videos, read and post comments, share videos, and even subscribe to specific creators (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017; Khan, 2016). These functions encourage and facilitate both active and passive user engagement with YouTube and content creators on the platform (Khan, 2016). Engagement is defined as “a user-initiated action... [leading to] a co-creation of value” (Khan, 2016, p. 237). Khan (2016) describes engagement as “comprising [of] behavioral aspects or click-based interactions (participation) as well as simple content viewing and reading (consumption)” (p. 237). Shao (2009) suggests that individuals interact with user-generated content in three ways: (1) consumption, (2) participation, and (3) production. In the context of YouTube, consumption refers to watching videos, reading comments, and viewing likes/dislikes. Many users choose to engage in user generated content through consumption without interacting with other users, content creators, or the content itself.

Participation involves user-to-user and user-to-content interactions. User-to-user interactions include sharing content with other users and replying to other users' comments, user-to-content interaction includes commenting on videos and liking/disliking videos (Khan, 2016; Shao, 2009). Finally, production involves the publishing of content on YouTube, such as creating uploading a video (Khan, 2016; Shao, 2009). The consumption, participation, and production framework provides the basis on which YouTube will be examined as a platform to influence savoring.

THE YOUTUBE - SAVORING MODEL

The YouTube - Savoring model is based on the Chun et al.'s (2017) model of savoring an upcoming consumption experience and the consumption, participation, and production framework for user generated media (Khan, 2016; Shao, 2009). The model explores how a user's engagement with YouTube impacts savoring a consumption experience throughout the savoring process. As shown in Figure 1, the YouTube - Savoring Model explores YouTube's role in fostering motivation, ability, and opportunity for information processing; it examines how YouTube can aid in minimizing distractions during the consumption experience; and demonstrates how YouTube can facilitate remembered consumption enjoyment.

Figure 1. YouTube - Savoring Model



MOTIVATION

Motivation is important to facilitate elaborative processing (Chun et al., 2017; MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). Motivation affects the amount of information processing resources allocated to

a task (MacInnis, Moorman, & Jaworski, 1991), specifically the *attention* and *processing capacity* (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). Attention is the general distribution of mental activities to current tasks, processing capacity refers to the amount of working memory allocated to a stimulus (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). Higher levels of motivation are associated with higher levels of both attention and processing capacity, leading to higher levels of processing necessary for elaborative processing (Schacter & Addis, 2007; MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989) and savoring an upcoming experience (Chun et al., 2017).

Prior research describes motivation as “involvement”, “behavior”, and “goal directed arousal” (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). In relation to brand processing, motivation has been defined in the context of goal directed arousal as “the desire to process brand information in the ad” (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989, p. 4) and “customers’ desire or readiness to process brand information in an ad” (MacInnis et al., 1991, p. 34). Content on YouTube about an experience could be in the form of either an advertisement, such as sponsored content, or non-sponsored user generated content, such as a user-documented experience or review. Furthermore, content in the context of YouTube goes beyond just videos (which may be sponsored) to include user comments and interactions (Khan, 2016). Since videos are usually user generated content, they often contain information outside of the specific experience to be savored. For example, vlog-style content may include information regarding daily routines, food, or other activities and experiences outside of the targeted experience. For these reasons, the definition of motivation must be adapted to be used within the context of YouTube.

For this context, motivation is defined as *the desire and readiness to seek out and process information about a target-specific consumption experience*. This definition aligns with the goal directed arousal-based definitions laid out by previous research but is adapted to better reflect the specific attributes of YouTube. *Target-specific consumption experience* distinguishes the information related to the specific, desired, and savored experience from any addition and unrelated information that may be contained within the content (both video and text). “Brand” is omitted, as the information relating to a consumption experience may not be directly linked to a specific brand, or may contain experience-related supporting information linked to other brands. Unlike prior definitions that look at information within an “ad”, which is often not sought out by the customer (rather it is presented to them), users of YouTube are generally actively participating in searching for information related to an experience (Khan, 2016). To represent the information-seeking behavior and involvement of users, “*seek out... information*” is added to the definition. *Desire* and *readiness* are derived from the original definitions and represent the goal-directed arousal components of motivation.

Users who are actively seeking out information about a consumption experience are likely to be high in motivation, as they display both the desire to find relevant information about a consumption experience and a readiness to process that information. Additionally, active use of YouTube to search for relevant information implies that a user is devoting attention (distribution of mental activity) and processing capacity (working memory) to the task (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). Based on these assumptions, two outcomes are proposed:

P1: Information-seeking activities on YouTube related to a consumption experience increase a person's motivation.

P2: Higher levels of motivation increase the savoring of a consumption experience.

ABILITY

Ability moderates the impact of motivation on attention and processing capacity (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). In the context of information processing, ability is defined as a person's "skill or proficiency in interpreting brand information in an ad" (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989, p. 7). The foundation for an individual's ability is the availability and accessibility of relevant knowledge structures for processing information. An individual must have both the relevant knowledge and ability to access that knowledge before being able to effectively process information about a consumption experience.

In the context of savoring a consumption experience through YouTube, ability is defined as an individual's *skill or proficiency in interpreting the information about a target-specific consumption experience*. Derived from prior research, this definition is again adapted to better align with the features and attributes of YouTube. As before, *target-specific consumption experience* is used to distinguish relevant information about a savored experience from any unrelated information that may be contained within the content. As the relevant information about a consumption experience can be consumed in the form of either a video or text, and the information likely comes from user generated content (Khan, 2016; Shao, 2009), *information* is substituted in place of "brand information in an ad."

Individuals seeking out information on a specific consumption experience can utilize YouTube to find relevant information (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Khan, 2016). As a user consumes relevant content related to a desired consumption experience, the information found may aid in building knowledge structures related to the desired consumption experience. These knowledge structures could in-turn improve an individual's ability to process relevant information regarding consumption experience. Based on this information, it is proposed that:

P3: Information-seeking activities on YouTube related to a consumption experience increase a person's ability to process information about the consumption experience.

P4: A higher level of ability increases an individual's savoring of a consumption experience.

OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity, like ability, also moderates the impact of motivation on attention and processing capacity (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). Opportunity reflects the favorability of surrounding circumstances during exposure to information (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989), and is defined within the brand information processing context as the "extent to which distractions or limited exposure time affect consumers' attention to brand information in an ad" (MacInnis et al., 1991,

p. 34). A distraction refers to anything which draws attention away from the information being processed (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989; MacInnis et al., 1991).

To reflect the context of savoring a consumption experience through YouTube, opportunity is defined as the *extent to which circumstances evidenced during content consumption are favorable to information processing*. In this context, *circumstances* refer to the presence of distractions (or lack thereof) and the amount of time available to process relevant information. *Content consumption* replaces “brand information in an ad” to better reflect how information is presented through YouTube (video and text-based comments) (Khan, 2016; Shao, 2009). Favorable circumstances would be those in which few distractions are evident and there is sufficient time to process all relevant information.

Repetition of information and the ability to control the pace at which it is delivered positively impact an individual’s opportunity to process relevant information (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). YouTube allows users a significant amount of control over the delivery of information. Content can be consumed at a user’s desired pace. For example, videos can be watched, paused, fast-forwarded, repeated, or even saved for future viewing when a user has more time or fewer distractions. This control allows users to view content at optimal times, possibly reducing distractions and allowing sufficient time to process information. The ability to re-watch content further increases processing opportunity through repetition, providing greater encoding opportunities (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989; Houston et al, 1987). The control provided over content consumption leads to two propositions:

P5: Control over information delivery on YouTube increases an individual’s opportunity for information processing.

P6: Greater opportunity for information processing increases an individual’s savoring of a consumption experience.

DISTRACTIONS AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Distractions can dampen the effects of savoring on consumption enjoyment (Chun et. al., 2017). The presence of distractions during the actual consumption of an experience can inhibit the retrieval of memory traces created by elaborative processing, reducing the effect of savoring during the experience. Distractions during the actual consumption experience take attention and processing capacity away from the primary task (the actual experience) and divert attention and processing capacity toward some other task or stimulus (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989; MacInnis et al., 1991). Minimizing distractions during the actual consumption experience is essential to enhancing consumption enjoyment through savoring.

YouTube presents two means of reducing distractions: (1) providing relevant information to aid in problem solving, and (2) visualization and scenario development to identify and address potential issues. YouTube allows users to access relevant information through both consumption and participation (Khan, 2016; Shao 2009). Through consumption, individuals can seek-out information related to a desired consumption experience by searching for and viewing related

videos and reading comments. YouTube enables its users and producers to share their thoughts and insights regarding a consumption experience (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017). The wealth of information can aid an individual in identifying potential issues and provide them with possible solutions, or information that may be helpful in developing their own solution. Through participation, an individual can interact with other users and content producers through the comment section of a video (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017). This enables an individual to ask specific questions regarding the consumption experience and potentially get information they otherwise would not have. This leads to the next proposition:

P7: Information-seeking activities (consumption and participation) facilitate problem solving and minimize distractions.

Visualization and scenario development are another means of reducing distractions through problem solving. Imagery is used in problem solving and allows for the visualization of problems to find solutions (Branthwaite, 2002). Imagery processing is “a process by which sensory information is represented in working memory” that falls on an elaboration continuum similar to information processing in general (MacInnis & Price, 1987, p. 473). Imagery processing at high levels of elaboration involves daydreaming, fantasies, and visual problem-solving. Imagined negative scenarios make it possible for an individual to engage in pre-purchase behaviors to reduce the likelihood of a negative outcome (risk reduction) for a consumption experience (MacInnis & Price, 1987). YouTube can facilitate elaboration through increased levels of information processing and providing visual stimulus to promote imagery processing. Based on this, it is proposed that:

P8: YouTube promotes elaborated imagery processing through visual stimulus and increased information processing.

P9: Elaborated imagery processing facilitates problem solving through visualization and scenario development.

REMEMBERED CONSUMPTION ENJOYMENT

In addition to YouTube’s ability to facilitate savoring before, and minimize distractions during, a consumption experience, it can also encourage savoring after the consumption experience. It is unlikely that an individual would be using YouTube during the actual consumption experience, therefore the YouTube-Savoring model does not examine any direct effects on the actual consumption enjoyment. Instead, this section will examine how YouTube effects savoring in relation to an individual’s remembered consumption enjoyment.

Motivation-Consumption

Shao (2009) suggests that individuals utilize user generated content for reasons including entertainment, relaxation, emotional release, and even mood alteration. These reasons may provide motivation for an individual to desire reliving a positive consumption experience to gain some satisfaction from the remembered enjoyment. YouTube provides an outlet for this

motivation. Through consumption, YouTube allows users to seek-out new videos and information related to an individual's past consumption experience, or even re-watch videos they found prior to the consumption experience (Khan, 2016; Shao, 2009). This allows users to relive their prior consumption experience, potentially recalling the memory traces and further strengthening those memory traces (Chun et. al., 2017; MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989; Schacter & Addis, 2007). Additionally, this process of seeking-out information may further heighten an individual's motivation, fostering savoring of the consumption experience and potentially impacting their repurchase intention (Chun et al., 2017). Thus, it is proposed that:

P10: Individuals who relive past positive consumption experiences through YouTube have increased motivation.

P11: Individuals who have increased motivation are more likely to savor repurchasing a positive consumption experience.

Motivation-Participation and Production

In addition to information-*seeking* behavior, information-*giving* behaviors are also a motive for individuals to use YouTube (Khan, 2016). Khan (2016) argues that YouTube is designed around content-sharing and motivates its users to share information and videos as well as interact with other users and content producers on the platform. Content creation and information sharing is an inclusive activity on YouTube, and users find satisfaction in both viewing and creating content (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017). This research suggests that an individual may find satisfaction in information-giving activities on YouTube, therefore increasing their motivation to participate and produce content for the platform.

Participation in YouTube typically consists of sharing, liking/disliking videos, commenting on videos, and responding to other users' comments (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017; Khan, 2016). A motivated individual may choose to engage in information-giving behaviors by sharing videos with friends or other users, leaving comments with information believed to be valuable to others, or responding to questions asked by other users. A highly motivated individual may also choose to produce content on YouTube to share knowledge of a consumption experience. Production on YouTube typically consists of creating and uploading a video, allowing an individual to engage with other users and provide information through both audio and imagery (Khan, 2016). Such behaviors would require an individual to actively recall a remembered consumption enjoyment, potentially strengthening the associated memory traces and fostering future savoring (Chun et al., 2017). This leads to the final propositions:

P12: An individual's information-giving behavior through participation enhances savoring of a remembered consumption experience.

P13: An individual's information-giving behavior through content production enhances savoring of a remembered consumption experience.

DISCUSSION

With YouTube's growth and increasing relevance as a source for information-seeking consumers, marketing practitioners need to understand the platform's unique potential for savoring a consumption experience. This research suggests that YouTube has the potential to be a powerful tool to encourage and facilitate savoring as the platform's distinctive combination of features that distinguish it from other social media platforms in its ability to integrate into the savoring process. The YouTube - Savoring Model as proposed in this paper provides a basis for researchers and practitioners to understand how the platform's features align with and influence the savoring process through consumption, participation, and production activities.

Practical Implications

Understanding how YouTube can increase savoring allows practitioners to leverage the platform and its user generated content to take advantage of the benefits of savoring a consumption experience. As YouTube is an easily accessible platform for both content consumers and content producers, the platform has an extensive variety of content and information available to consumers. The YouTube - Savoring model can be used to analyze the content that currently exists surrounding a consumption experience and understand how it might influence customer savoring. Furthermore, the model can be used to find gaps in the existing content and identify opportunities for marketing practitioners to create (or encourage others to create) content that fills those gaps and addresses the missing information. As discussed in prior sections, information relevant to a consumption experience can reduce barriers and distractions associated with the experience. Additionally, educating customers about the consumption experience and providing related information can increase the availability and accessibility of relevant knowledge structures that aid a customer's ability to savor the consumption experience.

Another advantage of YouTube is its ability to allow users to re-live past consumption experiences, encouraging them to savor that experience through remembered consumption enjoyment. Users of the platform may choose to re-live past consumption experiences through watching related content, participating through comments, or producing content related to a consumption experience. Practitioners could leverage this in two ways: (1) by encouraging past customers to share their experiences through participation and production activities on YouTube, and (2) by sharing or highlighting relevant YouTube content to both past customers and potential future customers. By cultivating an active customer base that views, shares, and creates content surrounding a consumption experience, marketing practitioners can facilitate a cycle of savoring for that consumption experience.

Future Research

Further research needs to be conducted regarding the proposed relationships in the YouTube - Savoring model. While prior research suggests that the proposed relationships might exist, empirical studies should be conducted to establish the validity of the proposed relationships. Product reviews, travel, and food-related categories would be ideal content for this research. Each of these categories often involve some form of consumption experience and are topics of interest for many information-seeking users.

Additionally, future research could focus on the content itself to identify and examine specific factors that could facilitate or hinder savoring. YouTube content is often presented in a variety of formats (such as vlog-style content, structured reviews, entertainment-focused or informational-focused content), and varies widely in terms of overall quality (including audio and video quality and the thoroughness of the information presented), content duration (long or short format videos), presentation style (such as comedic or serious tones), and qualifications of the content creator (including relevant professional qualifications and the degree to which they appear knowledgeable on the subject). Such factors could impact the effectiveness of content's ability to encourage savoring of a consumption experience, or influence a user's motivation, ability, or opportunity to savor that experience.

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