YouTube Advertisements: A Study into Consumer Perception of Ads
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INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of this study was to evaluate how the recent implementation of YouTube's non-skippable ad format impacts user experience. The objectives included examining the extent to which these ads influence user satisfaction and their overall interaction with the platform. By investigating these effects, the research aims to provide insights into the broader implications for user engagement and behavior. This analysis lays the foundation for a deeper exploration of YouTube's advertising strategies and their influence, which will be discussed in the body of this paper.

COMPANY/BRAND INFORMATION

YouTube is one of the most notable video-sharing websites that has shifted the internet culture. Without YouTube, the landscape of marketing and advertisements would look very different. YouTube created a new way for brands to advertise and share products both through YouTube ads and through the birth of influencers and influencer marketing. YouTube was founded in February 2005 by Steven Chen, Chad Hurley and Jawed Karim, the site was created to share videos and as a form of social media (Hosch). The company was bought a year later by Google as the site was struggling to keep up with its massive growth. In 2007 the first advertisements on YouTube were rolled out as a result of the creator fund, a first-of-its-kind partnership with creators that gave them 55% of the ad revenue generated by their videos (Dutt). Now YouTube advertisements are commonplace for the site and feature pre-roll, mid-roll, and end-roll advertisements. YouTube is the 2nd most popular social media platform with an estimated 2.5 billion active users in April of 2024 (Ceci).

Competitor Overview: While YouTube dominates the video-sharing market, Twitch, a live-streaming platform primarily focused on gaming content, serves as a notable competitor with approximately 240 million active users. Twitch's ad ecosystem differs, focusing heavily on live, interactive engagement with mid-stream ads. Although Twitch's user base is smaller, its niche appeal and immersive experience offer an alternative for both viewers and advertisers.

CURRENT CAMPAIGN

YouTube's current campaign focuses on reinforcing its non-skippable advertisement format as a means to boost brand visibility and engagement for advertisers. These ads are integrated into the user experience across pre-roll and mid-roll placements to ensure viewers are exposed to brand messaging without interruption. Concurrently, Twitch emphasizes interactive, streamer-led sponsorships and pre-roll ads, which align with its live-streaming environment. The primary distinction lies in user engagement: YouTube emphasizes ad exposure while Twitch fosters community-driven advertising experiences.

CONSUMER ANALYSIS

YouTube's user base spans a wide demographic range, from young digital natives to older, established viewers. Key consumer insights include:

- Age Demographics**:** A majority of YouTube viewers belong to the 18-25 age group, characterized by heavy daily platform usage and high digital literacy.
- Media Habits**:** Younger audiences frequently interact with skippable and non-skippable ads but are more likely to use ad blockers or premium subscriptions to avoid interruptions.
- Engagement Trends**:** Users primarily prefer content that allows interaction and personalization, which influences their perceptions of ad intrusiveness.

In contrast, Twitch caters to a younger demographic (18-34) with a focus on gaming communities. Engagement on Twitch is highly interactive, with viewers often tolerating mid-stream ads due to their affinity with the platform's niche content.

PRIMARY RESEARCH ANALYSIS METHOD/DATA DESCRIPTION/FINDINGS

The following pages contain the 18 questions posed to participants and the summary of their responses. The questions will be presented with the data received corresponding to the following three themes: User Behavior and Ad Preferences, Ad Experience and Frustration Levels, Subscription and Control Options

Disclaimer: 87 participants began the survey and three responded no to the consent form. However, as questions continued few participants closed the window, unable to complete the survey. This occurrence resulted in participant response numbers varying throughout the survey.

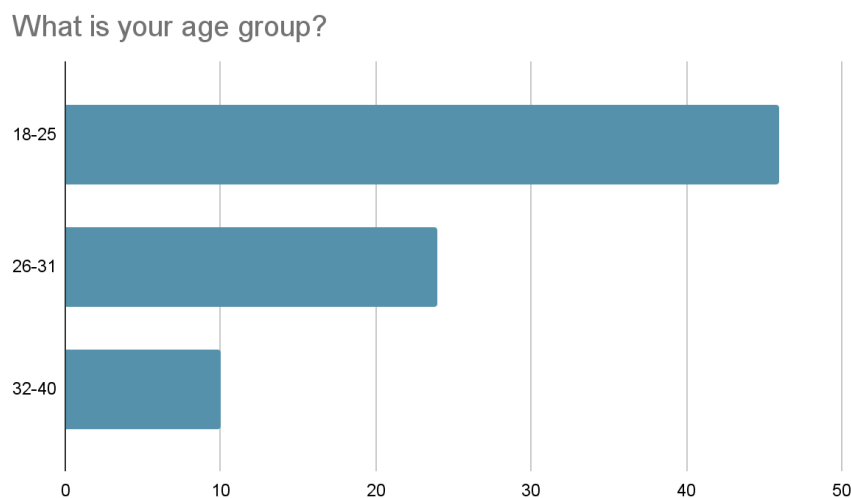**Q1. What is your age group? (Question type: multiple choice)**

Figure 1

Question 1 determines the age demographic of the participants. Figure 1 presents the data within the three multiple-choice response demographics available: *18-25, 26-31*, and *32-40*. There was a total of 80 participants who responded to this question. 46 belonged to the *18-25* category (57.5%), making this demographic the largest group. 24 participants belonged to the *26-31* demographic (30%), and 10 belonged to the *32-40* demographic (12.5%).

This data will be used corresponding to all the questions within each respective theme. Due to the demographic nature of the question, it is presented as an overarching question, one to classify who the participants are. Determining the age of our participants presents their experience of advertisements within YouTube and through other media channels. The data collected will be crucial in determining how YouTube can interact with each age demographic respectively.

User Behavior and Ad Preferences

Data regarding participants' behavior with ads and preferences on YouTube was most notable through the following 6 questions in our survey. This theme incorporates the majority of responses not only from the question data observed but also to the corresponding age demographics.

Q2. How often do you watch YouTube?
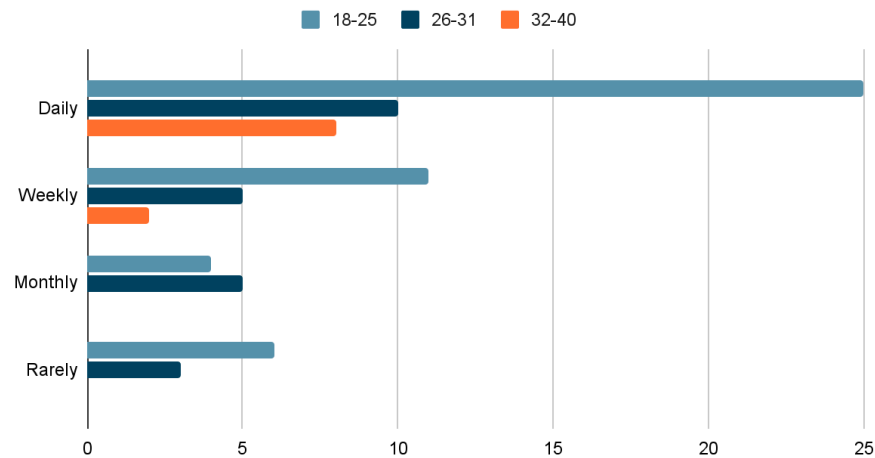
How often do you watch YouTube?

Figure 2.

Question 2 determined the relevancy of the survey to the respondents. Figure 2 represents the question as presented with the five multiple-choice answers to choose from: *daily*, *weekly*, *monthly*, *rarely*, and *never*. Those who never used the application were skipped to the end of the survey. 79 participants responded to this question. 43 respondents (54.4%) watched YouTube *daily*, making this the largest demographic. 18 respondents (22.8%) watched YouTube *weekly*. Nine respondents used YouTube *monthly* and *rarely*, respectively, at 11.4% each. Overall, 77% of respondents had high YouTube usage, making up the majority of respondents.

This data provides insight into participants' behavior through the frequency with which they use the platform. Those who use YouTube daily are more likely to respond to the following questions with more insight as opposed to those who rarely use it. Furthermore, *daily* YouTube users are more likely to notice changes to their ad experience. They are also more likely to be informed about how often they interact with skippable and non-skippable ads, providing insight into future questions.

Q3. Do you use an ad blocker while watching YouTube? (Question type: multiple choice)
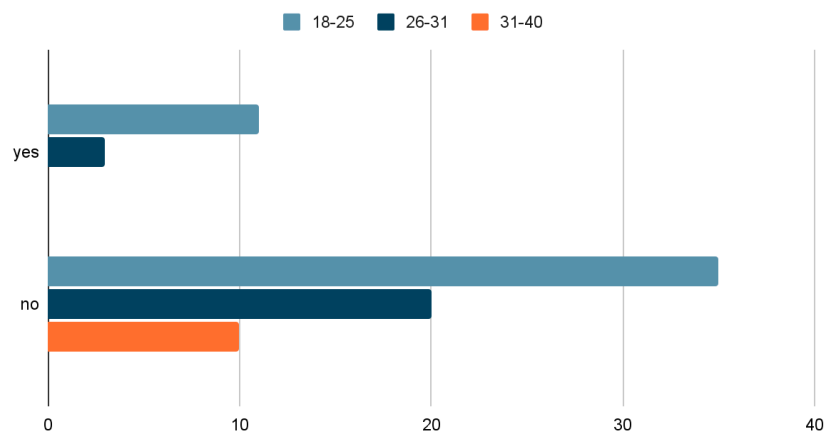
Do you use an ad blocker while watching YouTube?

Figure 3.

Question 3 determined the participants' ad blocker usage, specifically for the YouTube application. Figure 3. represents the two multiple-choice answers to choose from: *yes* and *no*. 80 participants responded to this question. 66 respondents, 82.5%, responded *no*, while only 14 respondents, 17.5%, responded *yes*. The majority of respondents do not use an ad blocker within their YouTube experience.

This data shows learned user behavior. Those who responded *yes* belonged to lower age groups, indicating that their implementation of ad-blocking software was integrated over time. They are not accustomed to ads compared to higher age demographics, who have more experience interacting with ads through older media services.

When compared to Question 2, 23% of the respondents who watched YouTube daily used an ad blocker. This is lower than expected; however, it could be attributed to YouTube's new software implementation, which blocks the use of ad-blocking services.

Q7. When watching skippable ads, how often do you choose to skip the ad after the initial 5 seconds? Question type: multiple choice)

When watching skippable ads, how often do you choose to skip the ad after the initial 5 seconds?
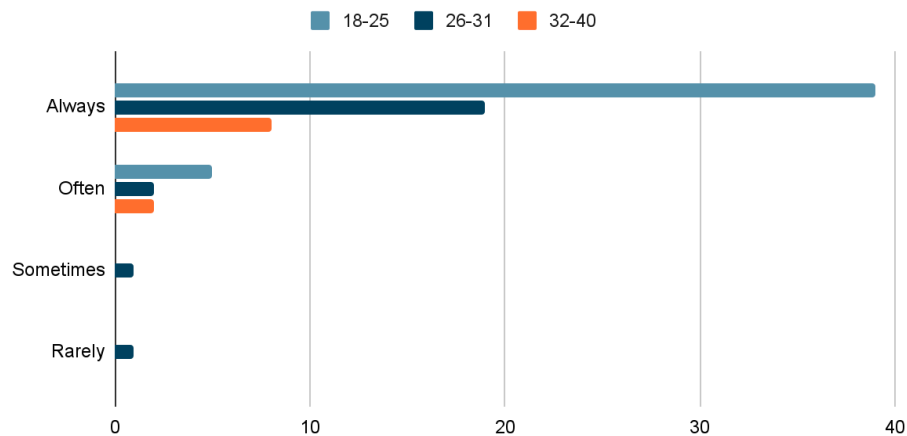
Figure 4.

Question 7 determined the likelihood of participants skipping ads if given the option after the first five seconds. The question was presented to participants through five multiple-choice answers: *always*, *often*, *sometimes*, *rarely,* and *never*. 77 participants responded to this question. 66 respondents, 85%, answered *always*, making it the majority. Nine respondents, 11.5%, answered *often*, while only one responded *sometimes* and *rarely,* respectively, 2.6% collectively. No participants answered *never*. For all age demographics, the majority of respondents answered *always*.

The majority of respondents' behavior indicated they chose to skip the ad after the initial five seconds. This question provided insight into user behavior when interacting with the older implementation of YouTube ads. The single respondent who answered *rarely* also only watched YouTube *monthly* and belonged to the *26-31* age demographic. Although there is limited data, one can gauge from this participant that the less frequently one uses the application, the less impacted they are by personal preferences.

Q11. Which type of ads do you find most disruptive? (Question type: multiple choice)
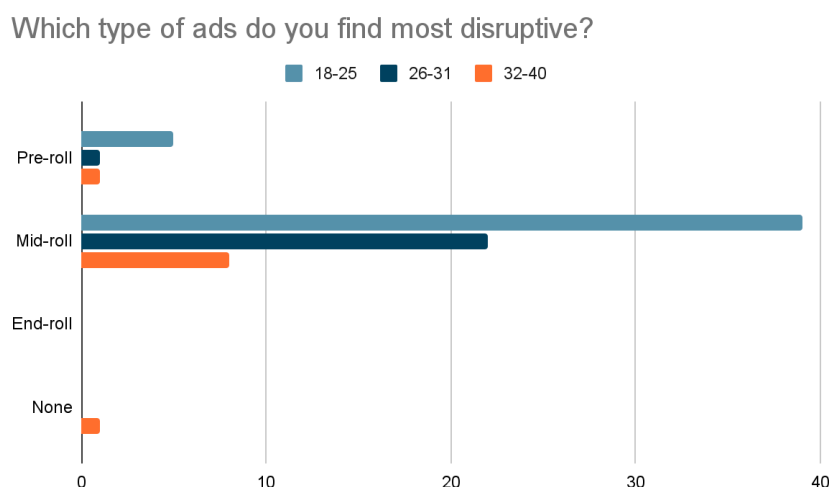

Figure 5.

Question 11 determined at which point within a YouTube video an ad was the most disruptive to play. The question was presented in multiple-choice format with four answers to choose from: *pre-roll, mid-roll, end-roll*, and *none*. 77 participants responded to this question. 69 respondents, 89.6%, answered *mid-roll*, making this the majority. Seven respondents, 9.1%, answered *pre-roll*, while only one respondent, 1.3%, answered *none*. No participant answered *end-roll*. For all age demographics, the majority of respondents answered *mid-roll*. However, the one respondent who answered *none* belonged to the *31-40* age demographic.

This data shows user preferences for their ad structure. Pre-roll ads run at the beginning of a YouTube video before the video begins. Mid-roll ads run at any point after the video has begun and before the video is complete. End-roll ads play once the YouTube video is complete.

Pre-roll and *end-roll* ads respectively did not cause as much disruption to participants' user experience compared to *mid-roll* ads. This is mostly due to the nature of each ad. *Mid-roll* ads break a user's engagement, especially if they are longer than usual, as they take users out of the viewing experience.

It is important to note the respondent who answered *none*. They previously answered always to Question 7, **When watching skippable ads, how often do you choose to skip the ad after the initial 5 seconds?** This provides limited but insightful data into the *31-40* age demographic. Although their behavior showed they preferred a limited ad structure, by answering none to Question 11, they demonstrated the non-disruptive nature of ads to them. This creates a behavior molded by their previous experience with television ad structures.

Q14. Would you prefer fewer, longer ads? Or would you prefer more, shorter ads? (Question type: multiple choice)

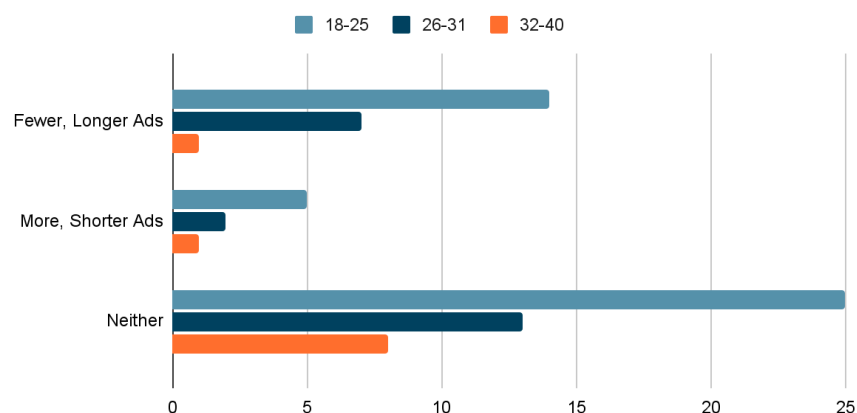Would you prefer fewer, longer ads? Or would you prefer more, shorter ads?

Figure 6.

Question 14 determined participants' preference for fewer but longer ads or more frequently occurring short ads. The question was presented through three multiple-choice answers: *fewer longer ads*, *more shorter ads*, and *neither*. 76 participants responded to this question. 46 respondents, 60.5%, answered *neither*, making this the majority. 22 respondents, 28.9%, answered *fewer longer ads*, while only eight respondents, 10.5%, answered *more shorter ads*. For all age demographics, *neither* was the majority response.

This data shows user preferences toward ads, not only for YouTube but also in general. The majority of participants preferred *neither* ad structure, suggesting they preferred no ads at all. However, given the choice between *fewer longer ads* and *more shorter ads*, the majority chose *fewer longer ads*. This data relates to Google's data, which yielded the same majority response (Google, 2024).

Overall, the data suggests that user behavior and preferences converge for younger demographics but not older ones. Older demographics sway toward *fewer, longer ad* breaks due to their previous experience with other media outlets. Given the choice, older demographics behave in the same way as younger demographics. However, through their preferences, they are not truly impacted in the same way as younger demographics. Therefore, age demographics are pivotal in how YouTube should structure its ads.

Note that YouTube is currently running the longer, fewer ad model. The following theme will represent whether that model is working.

Ad Experience and Frustration Levels
Q5. On a scale of 0-10, how frustrated do you feel when encountering non-skippable ads? (Question type: Likert scale)
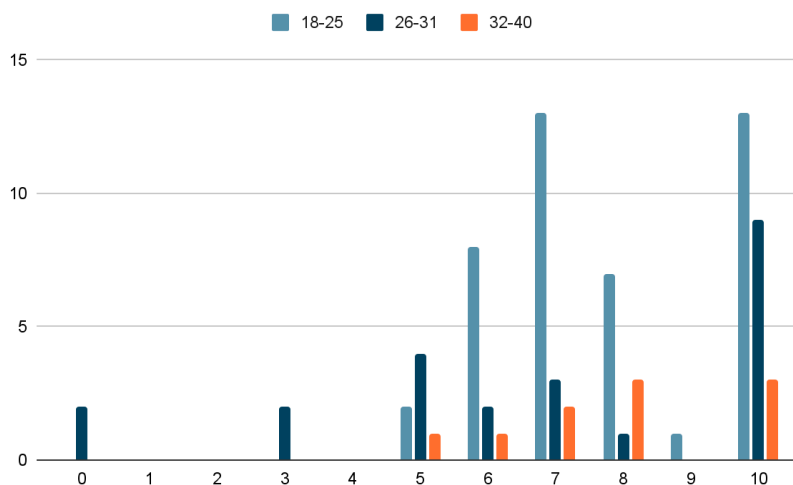

Figure 7.

Question 5 asked respondents to rate their frustration levels with non-skippable ads on a scale of 0-10. There were 78 respondents. 28.2% fell into the "Detractor" category (0-6), expressing low frustration, likely accepting ads as a fair trade-off for free content or due to loyalty to YouTube. Meanwhile, the largest group, 37.2%, were "Passives" (7-8), indicating moderate frustration but a general willingness to tolerate ads as part of the platform experience. 34.6% were "Promoters" (9-10), reporting high frustration levels, and a tendency to engage in avoidance behaviors like using ad blockers, skipping videos, or subscribing to YouTube Premium.

The findings suggest that a significant majority, *Passives,* and *Promoters* at 71.8%, view non-skippable ads as disruptive and frustrating and the minority *Detractors* were more tolerant. This highlights an opportunity to address frustration among *Promoters* and *Passives* by shortening ad lengths, improving relevance, and offering interactive options. For *Promoters*, maintaining high-quality, engaging content can sustain their acceptance of ads. These discoveries imply that optimizing ad formats could reduce frustration, enhance user retention, and create a more balanced experience for all user segments.

Q6. How likely are you to watch a video that includes non-skippable ads?(Question type: Likert scale)
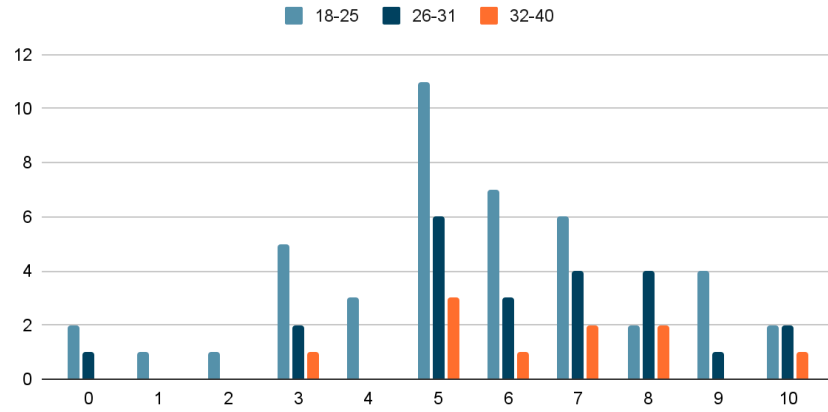

Figure 8.

Question 6 examined how likely participants were to watch videos with non-skippable ads on a scale of 0-10. There were 78 respondents. The majority, 61.5%, fell into the "Detractor" category (0-6), expressing significant resistance and a high likelihood of abandoning videos, skipping content, or seeking alternatives. This indicates that non-skippable ads negatively impact video engagement and retention for a substantial portion of users. Meanwhile, 25.6% were classified as "Passives" (7-8), reflecting moderate willingness to watch videos with these ads. While less resistant than Detractors, this group could still be swayed toward avoidance behaviors depending on factors like ad length and relevance. Only 12.8% of respondents were "Promoters" (9-10), meaning they were highly likely to watch videos with non-skippable ads, possibly viewing them as an acceptable trade-off for free content.

The results highlight a notable challenge for YouTube: with over 60% of users unlikely to engage with videos containing unskippable ads, the format poses a risk to user retention and satisfaction. While 38.5% of Passives and Promoters suggest that some users are willing to tolerate or accept these ads, improving their relevance, length, and overall presentation could shift more users out of the Detractor category. These findings suggest that changes to ad formats could enhance user experience and limit the adverse effects of non-skippable ads on platform engagement.

Q8. In your experience, do non-skippable ads make you more or less likely to stay on YouTube? (Question type: Likert scale)

In your experience, do non-skippable ads make you more or less likely to stay on YouTube?
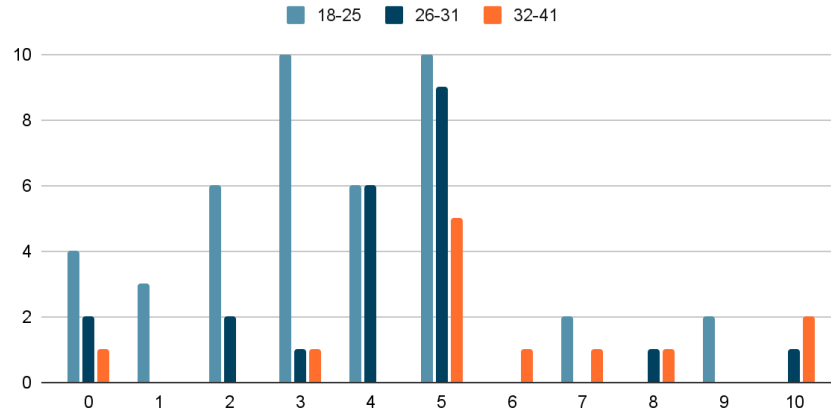
■ 18-25 ■ 26-31 ■ 32-41

Figure 9.

Question 8 explored whether encountering non-skippable ads influenced respondents' likelihood of staying on YouTube. An overwhelming 87.0% of users identified as "Detractors," indicating that non-skippable ads make them less likely to remain on the platform. This dominant majority suggests that such ads significantly harm user retention, with many users potentially avoiding YouTube altogether, employing ad blockers, or seeking alternatives like ad-free subscription services.

By contrast, only 6.5% of respondents were "Passives" (neutral impact) and 6.5% were "Promoters" (more likely to stay), reflecting a very small portion of users who tolerate or even accept non-skippable ads as part of their YouTube experience.

These results demonstrate a clear negative trend: non-skippable ads are a substantial deterrent to platform loyalty, with nearly nine out of ten users indicating they decrease their likelihood of staying on YouTube. The tiny percentages of Passives and Promoters suggest minimal tolerance for these ads, emphasizing the need for YouTube to rethink its approach to improve user retention. Innovations like shorter ads, increased relevance, or enhanced incentives for ad-tolerant users could help mitigate the adverse effects and reduce user attrition.

Q9. How often do you find YouTube ads relevant to your interests? (Question type: Likert scale)

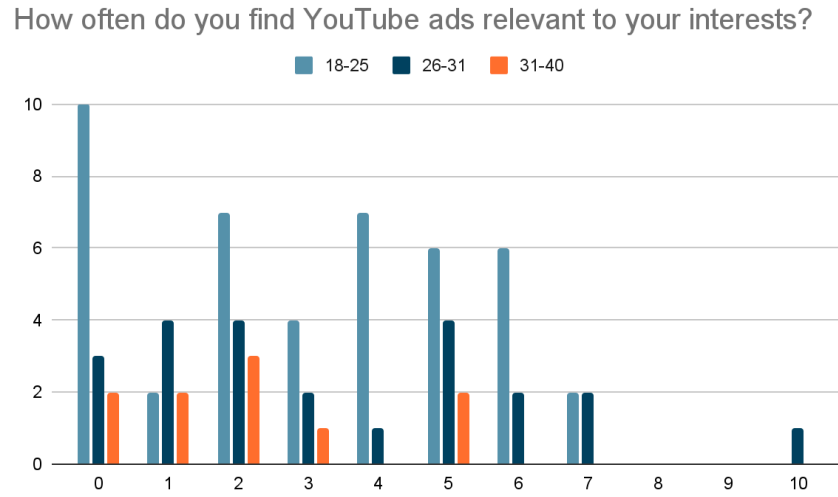How often do you find YouTube ads relevant to your interests?

Figure 10.

Question 9 examined how often respondents find YouTube ads relevant to their interests, revealing a striking disconnect between ad content and user preferences. An overwhelming 93.5% of respondents fell into the "Detractor" category, reporting that they rarely or never find YouTube ads relevant. This dominant negative sentiment suggests significant shortcomings in YouTube's ad-targeting algorithms, which fail to deliver personalized or meaningful ad experiences for the vast majority of users. A small 5.2% of respondents were "Passives" (occasionally relevant), indicating inconsistent ad relevance, while only 1.3% were "Promoters" who often or always find ads tailored to their interests.

The data highlights a critical challenge: the vast majority of users perceive YouTube ads as irrelevant, which likely exacerbates frustration and reduces ad engagement. Such poor ad targeting could contribute to user behaviors like skipping content, using ad blockers, or abandoning the platform. Addressing this issue through improved personalization, refined targeting algorithms, and more relevant ad content could help bridge the gap, enhancing user satisfaction and the overall ad experience on YouTube.

Q10. Would you be more likely to watch non-skippable ads if they were tailored to your interests? (Question type: Likert scale)
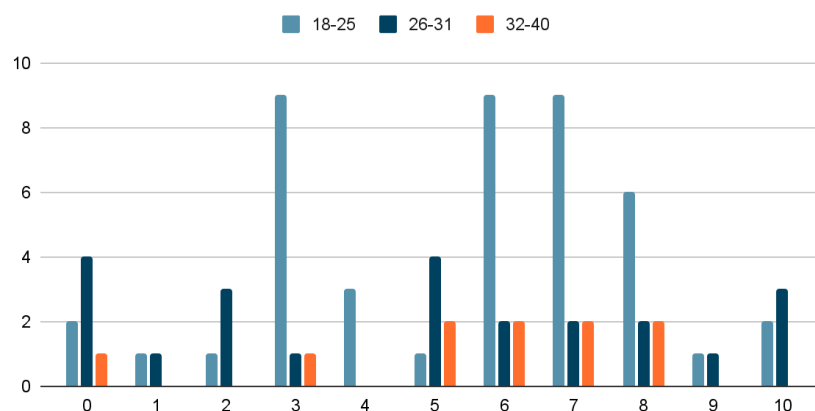

Figure 11.

Question 10 appears to have focused on respondents' attitudes toward non-skippable ads, particularly whether they would be more likely to watch such ads if they were personalized. The data reveals that 61.0% of respondents are "Detractors," showing a strong resistance to non-skippable ads even if tailored to their interests. Meanwhile, 29.9% fall into the "Passives" category, indicating a neutral stance, suggesting that with improved targeting or content quality, this group might be swayed. A smaller segment, 9.1%, are "Promoters," who would actively engage with personalized non-skippable ads.

The data suggests that while a portion of respondents may be open to non-skippable ads if they are tailored, the majority strongly oppose the format, regardless of personalization. The findings imply that advertisers face significant resistance, especially from Detractors, and need to focus on improving ad quality and relevance to appeal to Passives. Moreover, the small group of Promoters highlights the potential for niche targeting, but overall, this suggests that non-skippable ads may not be a universally effective strategy and alternative ad formats should be explored.

Q12. How much would your experience improve if ads were shorter? (Question type: Likert scale)

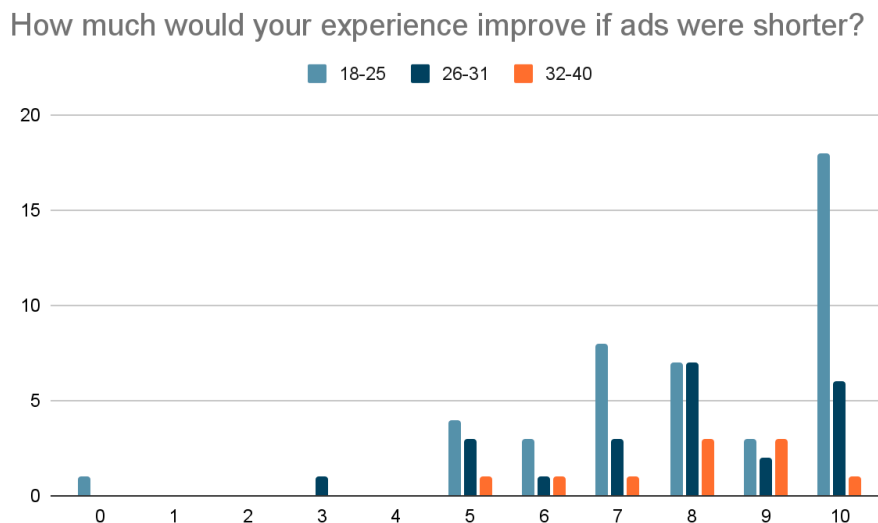How much would your experience improve if ads were shorter?

Figure 12.

Question 12 explores how much respondents believe their experience would improve if ads were shorter. The data shows that 42.9% of respondents fall into the "Promoters" category, indicating they would experience significant improvement with shorter ads. This suggests that a large portion of users are highly sensitive to ad length and prefer more concise ads. Additionally, 37.7% of respondents are "Passives," meaning they would experience some improvement, though not as strongly as the Promoters. For this group, shorter ads may make the experience more tolerable, but not dramatically enhance their satisfaction.

The data implies that shortening ads could have a positive impact on the user experience for a majority of users, as 80.6% of respondents (Promoters and Passives combined) would experience some level of improvement. However, the 19.5% of Detractors, who feel no significant change would occur even with shorter ads, suggests that these users are already dissatisfied with the ad format itself, and simply shortening the ads may not be enough to address their concerns. This highlights the importance of considering both ad length and overall ad quality when aiming to improve user experience.

Subscription and Control Options
Q4. Are you currently subscribed to YouTube Premium? (Question type: multiple choice)
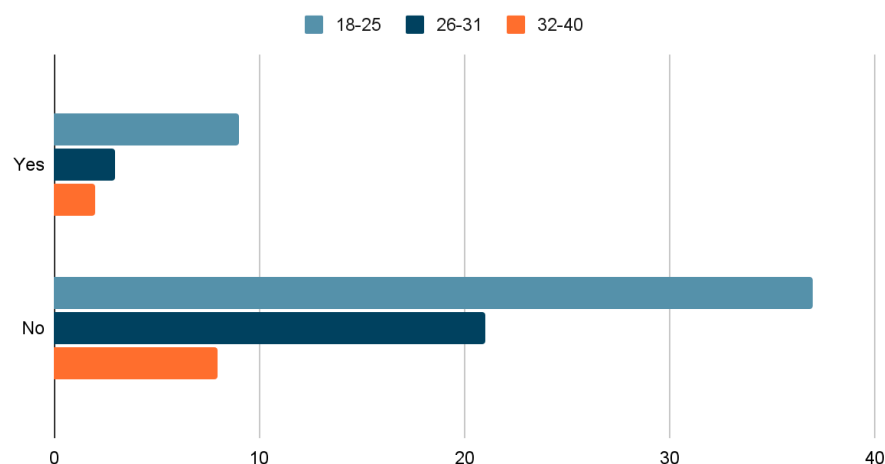

Figure 13.

Question 4 shows the number of people currently subscribed to YouTube Premium. This was presented as a "yes/no" multiple-choice answer. 16.3 % of participants are subscribed to YouTube Premium, while the other 83.8% are not. Most participants are not YouTube premium subscribers, so they are exposed to the current ad format. This is important as the study is looking for how the ad format disrupts user satisfaction.

Premium's relatively low adoption rate (16.3%) suggests that YouTube must continue relying heavily on ad revenue. Ensuring that ad formats like unskippable ads maintain or improve user engagement is vital for sustaining this model. The small amount of YouTube Premium subscribers shows that while ads are bothersome, the current ad format is possibly sustainable despite complaints from users. The dominance of non-subscribers (83.8%) reinforces that most YouTube users still consume free, ad-supported content, making the effectiveness of ad formats a key factor for YouTube and advertisers.

Q13. How would you rate your satisfaction with YouTube's current ad controls? (e.g., ad personalization)? (Question type: Likert scale)

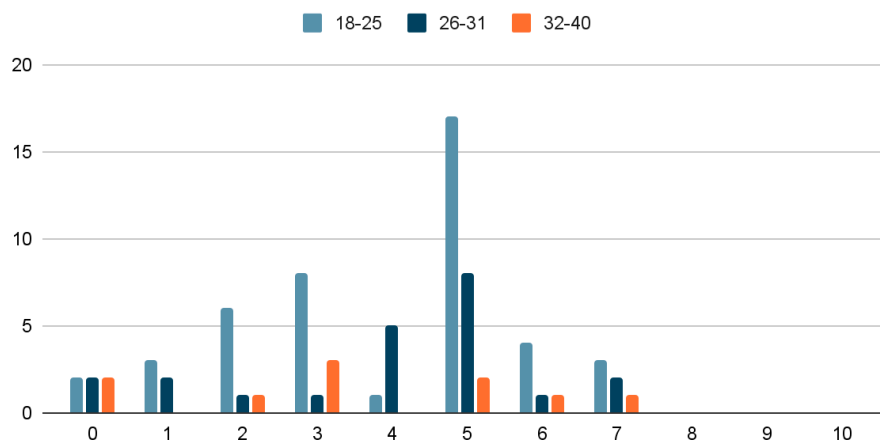How would you rate your satisfaction with YouTube's current ad controls?

Figure 14.

   This question rates the satisfaction with YouTube's current ad controls. This was shown as a Likert scale from 0-10 with 0 being *very dissatisfied* and 10 being *very satisfied.* The study found that 92.1% of respondents fall into the detractor category, meaning they are highly dissatisfied with YouTube's current ad controls, including ad personalization. The other 7.9% were passive, meaning that they were neutral and not satisfied or dissatisfied with the current ad control.s This group is possibly indifferent towards the ad format, or it is not a priority in that group's user experience.

   However, this question showed that none of the respondents were completely satisfied with YouTube's ad experience. This lack of satisfaction is a clear indicator that there is an area for improvement in YouTube's ad targeting, and personalization that could make the user experience more engaging.

Q15. Do you feel that YouTube provides enough options to control your ad experience? (Question type: multiple choice)

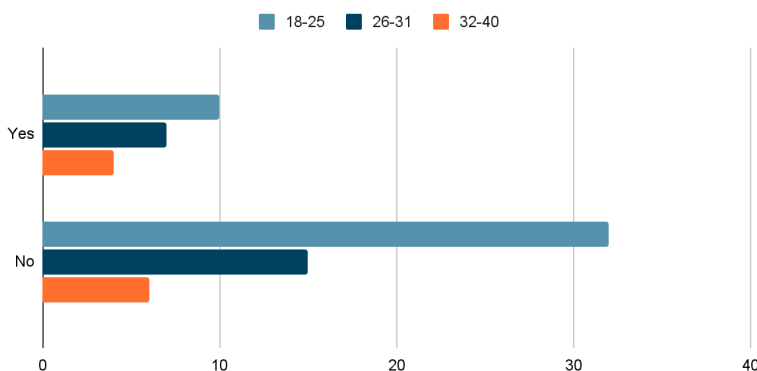Do you feel that YouTube provides enough options to control your ad experience?

Figure 15.

Question 15 asks whether there are enough options to control the user ad experience in multiple choice with options *yes* or *no*. 28.4% of answers were *yes,* while 71.6% of answers were *no*. The *yes* group believes there are sufficient controls for both skipping and ad preference. Meanwhile, the *no* group implies there could be room for more flexibility and options in ad controls that would make a meaningful impact on the user's experience.

Given that users are expressing dissatisfaction with the available options, YouTube may want to expand or improve its ad control features, potentially giving users more ways to influence the type, number, and format of ads they see. This could include greater customization of ad categories, ad frequency, or the ability to opt out of certain types of ads. To address this, YouTube might consider increasing transparency and options for users to manage ads, such as clearer and more accessible ad personalization settings or the option to fine-tune which ads are shown based on interests, frequency, or specific preferences.

Q16. If you could adjust ad settings to improve your experience, what features would you like to see? (Question type: free response)
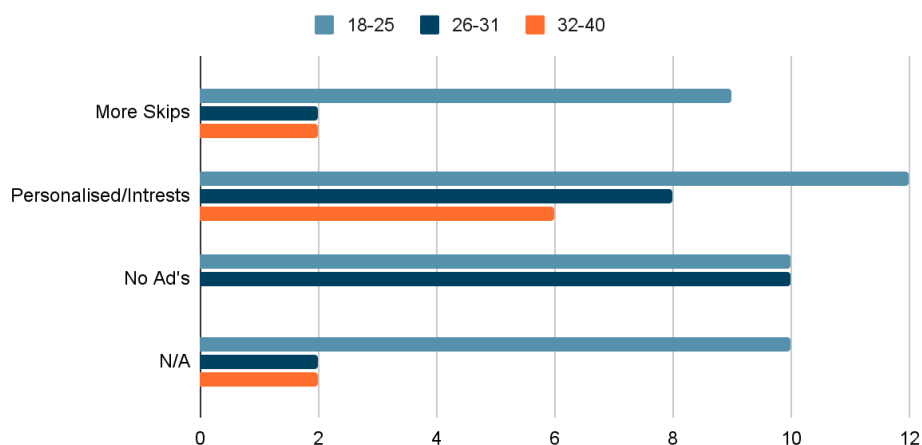

Figure 16

Question 16 was the only free-response question that was intended to see what improvements participants would like to see to the current ad platform. This was the most skipped question and left too many options which made analyzing the data a bit difficult. There were a variety of answers including a *desire for no ads, increased skippable ads, more targeted ads, better control over ad formats, no mid-roll ads, more variety, more tailored ads, opting out of long unskippable ads, a desire for YouTube Premium,* and *a general frustration for ads.*

Despite the broad scope of responses, the themes remain similar. Participants indicated a general increase in customization and relevancy in ads. Some responses reflect a more general frustration with ads, such as one user saying they skip ads because "they prefer to research products on their own", suggesting that many users may feel ads are less effective or intrusive.

Q17. If you are not a YouTube Premium subscriber, would you consider subscribing to avoid ads? (Question type: multiple choice)
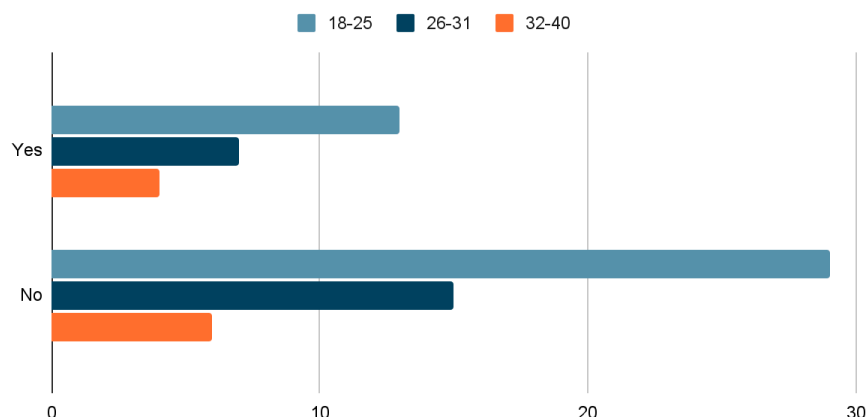

Figure 17.

   Question 17 explored the likelihood of participants subscribing to YouTube Premium in a *yes* or *no* multiple-choice question. 24 or 32.4% of respondents indicated that they would consider a YouTube premium subscription to avoid ads. The other 50 respondents or 67.6% percent would not subscribe to YouTube Premium. There is a substantial portion of users (32.4%) who would be willing to subscribe to YouTube Premium for an ad-free experience, indicating a market opportunity for YouTube to focus on. However, the majority (67.6%) of respondents do not find ads problematic enough to pay for a subscription, suggesting that YouTube needs to continue offering compelling features or value for users to upgrade, aside from the ad-free experience.

   The majority who said "No" suggests that cost is a significant barrier for YouTube users when it comes to upgrading to Premium. Even though they may find ads annoying, they might not view the benefits of ad-free content as sufficient to justify the subscription fee. Those who are not interested in subscribing likely tolerate ads and do not view them as a major issue. YouTube may need to continue improving its ad offerings (e.g., more relevant, shorter, or skippable ads) to keep users engaged without pushing them toward Premium subscriptions.

Q18. How likely are you to consider using an ad blocker if non-skippable ads continue? (Question type: Likert scale)
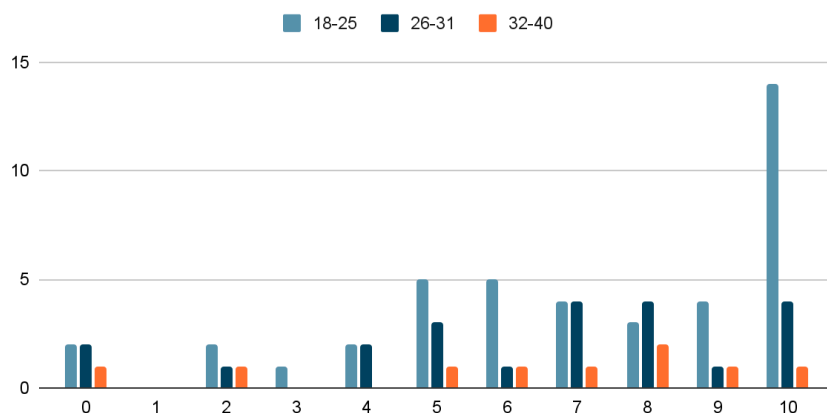

Figure 18.

This question explored how likely participants were to use or want to use an ad blocker. The question was presented on a Likert scale, with 0 being *very unlikely* and 10 being *extremely likely.* Respondents were placed in three categories, Detractors, or those likely to use ad blockers, Passive who are neutral about using ad blockers and Promoters who were unlikely to use ad blockers. 30 respondents or 40.5% were likely to use ad-blockers, 18 respondents, or 24.3% were passive, and 35.1% were Promotores or likely to not use an ad blocker to continue using the site.

40.5% of respondents are "Detractors" which suggests that there is a real risk of increased ad blocker usage among YouTube users if non-skippable ads become more frequent or problematic. This could result in revenue loss for YouTube, as ad blockers prevent monetization through ads. The responses indicate a mixed sentiment regarding non-skippable ads. While a significant portion of users (35.1%) are not inclined to use ad blockers, YouTube should consider the 40.5% of detractors who may actively seek ways to bypass ads. This signals that YouTube might need to re-evaluate the impact of non-skippable ads on user satisfaction. Given the diversity of responses, YouTube could benefit from segmentation to tailor its ad experiences more effectively. For instance, offering more targeted ads or allowing users to control the frequency and type of ads they see might improve satisfaction and reduce the likelihood of ad blocker adoption.

CONCLUSIONS/INSIGHTS/SUGGESTIONS + STUDY LIMITATIONS

This research was conducted to understand how advertisements on YouTube impact the user experience and determine how ads affect the user experience on YouTube after the implementation of long, fewer ad breaks/non-skippable ads. This research was guided through quantitative research using a survey and analyzed using themes, uncovering patterns of meaning. The findings provided evidence of YouTube users' frustrations with the current ad system in place. The findings also suggest that users crave personalization options in their viewing experience to create a more engaging experience.

Key Findings

Preferences Align with Current Ad System, Frustration Still Present.

Users prefer to have longer, fewer ad breaks, as shown in the data collected in *Figure 6.* However, when interacting with YouTube's current non-skippable, longer, fewer ad implementations they are frustrated shown in *Figure 7.* Users may, when given the choice, prefer this option. Yet in practice, users are seemingly more frustrated. This diverging trait may be due to YouTube's systems not performing properly. Though they claim to be giving users longer but fewer ad breaks, users are feeling the weight of the amount more than that of the older system. *Younger and Older Demographics, Differing Opinions.*

Younger demographic behavior and preferences converge while older demographics do not. Younger users responded to behavioral questions and preferences simmerally. However, older users had differing behavioral responses and preferences. For example, in *Figure 4,* a majority of respondents belonging to the 32-41 age demographic would skip an ad, if given the option, after the initial five seconds. In *Figure 5,* one outlying responder from the 31-40 age demographic decided no ad type was bothersome. While the sample size is very limited, it shows that although this demographic behaves one way, it is due to the option that has presented itself. *Frustration Present in Users Yet Still Likely to Use Platform.*

Users are frustrated with unskippable ads yet responded that they are still likely to watch a video with the ad type present. *Figure 7* shows that users were primarily upset with unskippable ads. However in *Figure 8.* 61% of the respondents feel in the detractor category. WHile the users show high frustration with the ad, YouTube does not have a similar competitor of the same nature. Meaning that audiences are willing to stay on the platform. *U*sers Crave Ad *Personalization Settings Based on Interests and Preferences.*

The majority of respondents in *Figure 16.* belonging to the 18-25 category craved more personalisation in their ad preferences. *Figure 14* shows that users are not currently happy with the ad experience on YouTube. Users explained how beneficial it would be to their experience uf *ads were personalised or played at parts in the video they wanted.* One respondent said they would choose to place all the ads at the beginning of the video. Another responded they would want to be able to c*hoose ads based on intrest so they could semi enjoy them.* The need for personalised ads would be able to change the YouTube landscape and make them a top competitor in the streaming space.

Insights

The 18–25 age demographic represents the largest segment of YouTube's user base and demonstrates a lower tolerance for ads. This group frequently skips ads when possible and is more likely to use ad blockers to avoid interruptions. Additionally, mid-roll ads are perceived as the most disruptive ad format across users. High-frequency users, who engage with the platform daily, are the most aware of and reactive to changes in YouTube's ad strategies.

User frustration with mid-roll ads may lead to decreased overall engagement, particularly among younger viewers who are already sensitive to disruptions. YouTube's increasing reliance on non-skippable ads could exacerbate this frustration and alienate ad-sensitive users. Consequently, this trend may drive higher adoption rates of ad blockers or subscriptions to YouTube Premium, as users seek uninterrupted viewing experiences.

Suggestions

To address these challenges, ad placement optimization is recommended by prioritizing pre-roll and end-roll ads to minimize disruption during content. Additionally, leveraging user data to deliver more relevant and personalized ads, particularly to younger audiences, could improve the overall ad experience. Exploring reward-based ad models, such as offering users

ad-free content after watching a certain number of ads, may also help mitigate ad fatigue and encourage engagement.

Limitations

Limitations in this research included the low demographic representation in age groups 31 and above. The survey outreach was limited to the survey conductors' social media channels and personal connections. In conducting this research again, three things would need to be improved on: survey flow optimization, demographic reach, and question improvement.

First, the flow of the survey should be improved through the addition of skip logic. While there was minimal skip logic implemented in the survey, it was not included in the case of repetitive questions. Skip logic was only included for the consent form and question 2 in the case that a participant had never used YouTube. Survey conductors received personal feedback from some participants indicating that the survey had a repetitive flow. To reduce this, skip logic can be implemented for questions that allow participants to skip one question if they respond in a different way than hypothesized.

The survey flow optimization would also include a reordering of specific questions. Saving demographics for the end, along with the more complex questions, would be beneficial for survey engagement. The survey participant number for each question varied. This could be due to a lack of engagement, making it difficult for participants to continue the survey. Starting broadly and creating more thoughtful questions for the end would reduce the amount of disengagement the survey received from participants.

Second, future research on this topic would need to improve its demographic reach. While the method of receiving participants for this study was beneficial for initial research, exceeding survey conductors' expectations, future studies must expand the age range. Limiting participants' options to 40 years old could have caused the loss of participation. Personal feedback was received from participants over the age of 40 who were confused about whether they should continue the survey or include themselves in the 31-40 age range.

Expanding the number of participants within the 31-40 age demographic and above would also be beneficial in understanding some of the findings. As one of the findings concluded, older demographics seem to be more likely to not mind the non-skippable ads compared to younger demographics. Due to the limited number of participants, the findings are limited, resulting in the need for more research in this area.

Lastly, improving question dynamics and including more questions regarding demographics would be beneficial in creating a detailed understanding from the participants. Future research should include demographic questions regarding location, economic status, and education level. Economic status would be beneficial in understanding participants' use of ad blockers or YouTube Premium. In comparison, location and education level would help in the analysis of all questions, including gauging frustrations with ads and participant behavior. A question regarding participants' familiarity with YouTube ad structure would also be beneficial here.

Furthermore, excluding the free-response question from the survey would improve participant engagement. A large number of respondents answered "I don't know" or NA. They did not provide thoughtful insight into their decision, making the question a placeholder of sorts and useless to the study overall. Some answers did provide helpful context; however, the majority of participants were left tired at this point in the survey.

Appendix

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