

The Influence of Exposure and Attitude on YouTube's Product Placement Advertising on Thai and Japanese Consumer Behavioral Responses

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ABSTRACT

Technology has impacted people's lifestyles with the expansion of the internet, and YouTube has emerged as a popular platform for product placement ads, especially in Japan and Thailand. However, concerns exist about their impact on audiences. Thus, training advertising professionals to manage such issues is crucial. This study aims to investigate the current state of product placement advertising on YouTube in Thailand and Japan and how cultural differences impact consumer behavior, norms, and attitudes, topics that have not been explored previously. It also identifies factors that influence Thai and Japanese consumers' response to product placement on YouTube. This study utilized a quantitative approach to analyze data from 400 participants, comprising 200 Thai and 200 Japanese individuals who have experience in watching YouTube videos. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicate that "Consumer Ethnocentrism" has the greatest impact on the Thai sample group while "Exposure" has the greatest impact on the Japanese sample group. Meanwhile, "Purchase Intention" has the most significant impact on the combined Thai and Japanese samples. This research provides insights for marketers, particularly regarding product placement advertising on YouTube.

Keywords: YouTube, Product Placement Advertising, Behavioral Responses, Japan, Thailand

1. INTRODUCTION

YouTube is a platform that has a diverse user base with up to two billion users per month, which is almost one in four of the world's population. This makes it easy for brands to choose it as a channel to connect with new target groups. Approximately 77% of internet users aged between 15-35 years of age use YouTube, followed by 73% of users aged between 36-45 years, and 70% of users aged 46-55 years [1].

According to the Global Digital Report 2021 [2], YouTube is the most used platform in Thailand, ranking first with 94.2% usage. This report aligns with the online content consumption behavior of Thais, who are most interested in watching online videos,

followed by music video viewing. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, data from the Think with Google website indicates that Thai consumers have increasingly become content creators or streamers on YouTube. Even Thai celebrities and artists have turned to creating YouTube content. This has allowed various brands and products to reach consumers through advertising campaigns on YouTube via these streamers [3].

The technical perspective that leads to the success of YouTube marketing is creating an emotional connection with content that makes viewers feel emotionally involved with a brand's story. This method yields better results than focusing on presenters or using humor to achieve sales success and can also create positive memories for consumers through creative thinking [4]. However, sometimes there is no need for creativity in product tie-ins. A previous study found product placement advertising in movies was able to impact brand awareness and brand purchase intentions [5]. YouTube product placement advertising can be categorized into three types: 1. Product Prominence: placing products visibly or as a backdrop [6,7]; 2. Relevance of Products to YouTube Content: advertising relevant products [8]; 3. Talking about a Product: discussing and providing information about a product [9]; How many times mentions made and how these depend on the brand message strategy [10]; YouTubers talk about prices, brand names, and stores where they buy products [11].

More than nine out of 10 Thai viewers admit to using YouTube for selecting products and making purchases. Currently, there are new methods that allow consumers to buy products and services on YouTube. Moreover, it was found that viewers trust YouTubers up to 91% and believe that YouTubers provide the most accurate product information or reviews at 94%. In terms of driving business, campaigns on YouTube have increased offline sales by up to 3.9%, and 92% of viewers in Thailand are open to advertisements and content from brands when watching videos related to themselves [12]. These statistics have been described in a previous study in 2017, which revealed the effects of source credibility, source attractiveness, product match-up, and meaning transfer on consumer attitude and purchase intention [13].

In marketing communication, there are needs to consider, not just in terms of consumers, but also in terms of product presentation. Countries with different cultures and societies need different ways of communicating with consumers, for example, the distinctiveness of Japanese advertising lies in the cultural differences that influence the advertising industry and make consumers around the world feel that Japanese products are more special than other products. In contrast, this distinctiveness does not appear in Thailand's advertising industry [14]. Although Japan tends to produce advertisements that are more exaggerated than reality, the advertisers are interested in communicating meaningfully what the brand wants to convey, which is known as “Kokoro wo utsu (心を打つ)” and means captivating or touching the hearts of consumers, not focusing solely on sales (Hard Sell) because they want their advertisements to attract consumers quickly while focusing on consumer-centric sales called Soft Sell [15].

After the outbreak of COVID-19, it was found that Japanese people gradually accepted

digital media as a marketing strategy. Data from Yahoo! Japan states that the success factor of online marketing in Japan is using images of famous people, characters or mascots in advertisements [16]. In addition, video advertisements have become more popular, especially product placement in YouTubers' content [17]. Moreover, Virtual YouTube, also known as Vtuber, is a recent innovation that has gained popularity worldwide since 2016. Vtubers can be either 2D or 3D and are characterized by having one person provide the voice and another person control the character's movements [18]. A Vtuber can be a YouTuber who uses cartoon or motion capture technology to represent themselves [19]. Vtubers are currently being used to sell unpopular products and promote merchandise by using their images, sounds, and content during live broadcasts. One of the key advantages of using Vtubers is their ability to instantly respond to any inquiry, making them an attractive option for companies looking to promote their products [20].

When comparing advertising through content in Thailand and Japan, it was found that Japanese marketing communication is fun and focuses on "Product Value" and "Consumer Need" while Thailand's stands out for creativity and fun. Moreover, marketers prefer to promote communication through bloggers and influencers and use a Real-Time Marketing style or trend-following marketing [21]. Furthermore, there is a belief that Japanese people think buying foreign products may not be suitable for their own country because Japan is conservative [22].

Based on the provided information, this research aims to explore and study the current state of product placement on YouTube in Thailand and Japan, a topic that has not been previously investigated. The research seeks to answer how product placement advertising on YouTube in Thailand and Japan is presented, whether it is similar or different, and how cultural differences affect consumers. Furthermore, it identifies the attitudes toward virtual YouTubers based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). It also examines Thai and Japanese consumers' cultural attitudes based on the concepts of Consumer Ethnocentrism (CET) and Cosmopolitanism. This research extends and expands on previous studies, providing academic benefits for those who are interested in applying the research findings to study or operate marketing in Thailand and Japan or further study product placement on YouTube.

This study aims to investigate how exposure and attitudes influence the responses of Thai and Japanese consumers toward product placement advertising on YouTube. Moreover, due to the rapid increase in the use of product placement on YouTube in Thailand and Japan during the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher believes that this study is necessary.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research has gathered information from past studies, prevailing theories, current articles, and relevant documents to use as background sources for conducting this study.

2.1 Thai and Japanese Marketing Communications

Upon comparing the advertising strategies through content between Thailand and Japan, it was found that marketing communication in Japan is joyful and focuses on initiating marketing from “Product Value” and “Customer Needs”. This approach stems from the Japanese business ethos, which emphasizes slow, steady growth, and sustainability. It also adheres to a set framework, reflecting the orderly lifestyle in Japan [21].

Japanese marketers prioritize consumer needs, but this does not imply that the Japanese market is narrowing into a niche. For instance, the brand “Muji” does not perceive its target group to be confined to the small Minimalism market. Instead, it caters to anyone who desires well-functioning products. On the other hand, Thailand stands out for its creativity and joyful content. It prefers to promote communication through bloggers and influencers and employs a Real-Time Marketing strategy or trend-based marketing [22].

2.2 Media Exposure

The human process of receiving information or media can be compared with a distillation apparatus called “Selective Exposure”. Selective exposure represents a psychological phenomenon where individuals intentionally focus on aspects of their environment that align with and validate their existing attitudes. This behavior is primarily driven by the need to circumvent or mitigate cognitive dissonance [23].

Cognitive Dissonance refers to the psychological phenomenon where discord arises between beliefs and attitudes. This discordance can cause discomfort, and as humans, we naturally try to avoid such discomfort [24].

Everyone has different media reception behaviors, influenced by various demographic characteristics. Individuals choose to receive media that best meets their needs, satisfaction [25], and interest in gaining information [26].

2.3 Consumers' Attitude

Consumers' Attitude refers to a consumer's opinion or feelings towards something, which results in various forms of behavior or actions, including: 1. Attitude towards the product that consists of the thought and feeling toward the product, for example, like or unlike, and the level of intention to purchase or recommend the product to another person [27]. And 2. Attitude towards the content of the product consists of the thought and feeling that the product's content is credible and the consumer will like or dislike the content that presents the product's benefit [27]. Advertisements can create a positive attitude among consumers when consumers feel that the ad is informative, reliable, and entertaining [28,29]. Content marketing and influencer marketing also have positive relationships with consumer attitudes. Furthermore, consumers' perception of value and attitudes have an impact on their actions and behavior [29].

2.4 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Perceived Enjoyment (PE)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) has been developed as innovative technologies are emerging all the time, resulting in the acceptance of technology from the awareness stage to the interest stage, where more information about the technology is sought and assessed to determine whether the technology is suitable for one's benefit or not [30]. Three factors that influence the decision and intention to use innovations are as follows: Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), and Attitude Toward Using (ATU) [31]. Perceived Enjoyment (PE) derives from the theory of accepting entertainment incentive systems. Hedonic Motivation is defined as the enjoyment and satisfaction of using technology, which is a key factor in consumer acceptance of technology [32].

2.5 Consumer Ethnocentrism (CET) and Cosmopolitanism

Consumer Ethnocentrism (CET) and Cosmopolitanism include the following concepts:

1. Consumer Ethnocentrism (CET) refers to the belief that consumers who purchase foreign products may be acting inappropriately or immorally towards their own country and may harm national businesses and employment. This affects consumers' perceptions of purchasing foreign products [33]. Consumer ethnocentrism is a significant factor in consumers' product evaluation, whether it comes from the image of the product's country of origin, the perceived quality of the product, or consumers' purchase intentions [34]. For example, a Ministry of Commerce of Thailand report found that 82.9 percent of Thai people would rather buy domestically produced goods than imported ones. This preference is especially strong when it comes to necessary goods, like personal care items (shampoo, soap), vegetables, and fruit [35].
2. Consumer Cosmopolitanism (Cultural Openness) refers to consumers who consider themselves more as global citizens than citizens of any country. They also appreciate global diversity and cultural differences. Such consumers prefer products from developed countries, although this is not always the case [34].

2.6 Consumer Behavioral Responses on YouTube

Consumer behavioral responses on YouTube are the number of likes and viewers, indicating that an advertisement has received attention. Consumers choose the content they want such as entertainment, information, or customized content [36]. In addition, word-of-mouth is generated by the interaction between consumers through experience and product evaluation because consumers believe that the information they receive is what helps them make purchase decisions [37]. Consumers rely on YouTubers and believe they are trustworthy sources [38]. The usefulness of content from YouTube will enhance consumer purchasing behavior and reduce risk during decision making [39]. In addition, viewers' expressions include comments, followers, clicks, recorded videos, and sharing video clips that YouTubers have uploaded [40].

3. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT & RESEARCH MODEL

Hypotheses in this research are introduced by various aspects of theory and concept as follows: 1. Media exposure 2. Attitudes toward product and content 3. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and 4. Consumer Ethnocentrism (CET) and Cosmopolitanism. The conceptual framework consists of five groups of independent variables that are presumed to influence consumer behavioral responses that refer to the behavior of responding to product placement advertising on YouTube [41,42], which is considered as a dependent variable. The hypotheses were developed based on past empirical evidence found from several research studies [43, 44].

3.1 Media Exposure and Product Placement on YouTube

Based on a study by Chan that found product placements could impact brand awareness and brand purchase intentions [5], this research is intended to confirm the result of a previous study in the Thai and Japanese contexts. To evaluate the influence of product placement, this study defined “Exposure” as an individual’s willingness to view product placement content on YouTube. Exposure is measured by the frequency of exposure, which is the level of frequency of exposure to product placement in three types of video clips, including 1. VDO clip that only has products placed in the scene [6,7]; 2. VDO clip that subtly mentions or picks up a product in the content [8]; and 3. VDO clip that primarily discusses a product entertainingly and interestingly within the content [9,10].

3.2 Consumers’ Attitude toward Product and Content

Attitude refers to a consumer’s opinion or feelings towards something, which results in various forms of behavior or actions [19]. The product's attitude was expressed by consumers as their preference towards specific products [45]. The credibility and usefulness of product content can also play a role in influencing consumer attitudes [46]. This research intends to confirm the result of the previous study in the Thai and Japanese contexts; therefore, the test of the influence of attitude toward products and content on consumer behavioral responses include and are referred to as follows:

1. Attitude towards the product in the product placement on YouTube [38,40].
2. Attitude towards the content of product placement on YouTube [9,29].

In addition, results show that both perceived credibility and usefulness positively influence consumer attitudes toward the product content that other users generate on YouTube. Results also reveal that consumer attitudes toward the content that other users generate on YouTube and their intentions to use that content in purchase decisions are associated positively.

3.3 Consumers’ Attitude toward Innovation

To evaluate the impact of attitude toward innovation on Thai and Japanese consumer behavioral responses, this research defines the dependent variable as an attitude toward the product placement in Virtual YouTubers' content such as Kizuna AI, Doctor

Junichi, and Code Miko [19]. Attitudes towards innovations according to TAM in this research include five topics:

1. Perceived Usefulness (PU) refers to consumers thinking the product placement in virtual YouTuber content provides useful product information [43].
2. Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) refers to consumers thinking the product placement in virtual YouTubers' content is easily accessible and provides easily understandable information [43].
3. Perceived Enjoyment (PE) [32] refers to consumers thinking that Virtual YouTubers' product placement provides entertainment and contributes to happiness.
4. Intention to Use refers to the consumer having the intention to continue watching virtual YouTubers' product placement [43].
5. Purchase Intention refers to the consumer having the intention to purchase products featured in virtual YouTubers' product placement [32].

3.4 Cultural Attitude

This research proposes hypothesis testing of cultural attitudes (the CET and Cosmopolitanism) that influence Thai and Japanese consumer behavioral responses. CET means buyers who purchase foreign products may be acting immorally towards their own country. Cosmopolitanism refers to consumers who see themselves as global citizens [33, 47, 48].

The following are proposed hypotheses based on the literature and empirical evidence above:

H1: Exposure and attitudes of Thai consumers influence their behavioral response towards product placement on YouTube.

H2: Exposure and attitudes of Japanese consumers influence their behavioral response towards product placement on YouTube.

H3: Exposure and attitudes of Thai and Japanese consumers influence their behavioral response towards product placement on YouTube.

Based on the above hypotheses, a conceptual model can be described as follows:

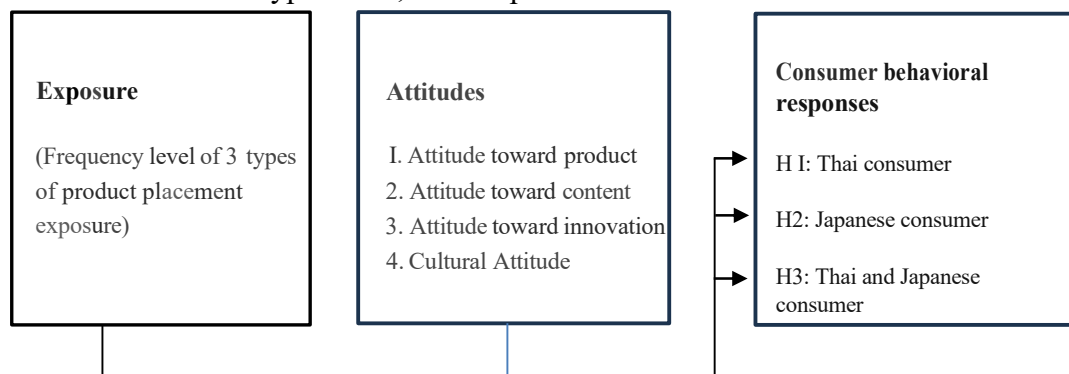


Figure 1: A Conceptual Model

4. METHODOLOGY

Data collection in this survey was performed online from a pool of sample consumers who watch YouTube to study and assess the exposures, attitudes, and behavioral responses to product placement on YouTube. Details are as follows.

4.1 Population and Samples

The population for this research include Thai and Japanese consumers who watch YouTube. According to the global overview report, people between 25 – 34 years of age are the largest group of users. The second group of users is 35 – 44 years old [49]. Therefore, the population selected in this research is aged 20 years and above. They are mostly in the initial stages of their careers and have purchasing power for various products and services. Due to the large size of the population and the uncertainty of the exact number, the researcher determined the sample size for this research based on the principle of multivariate statistical analysis, which requires at least 5-10 times the number of measurement indices. This research questionnaire has 39 questions, and the minimum sample size should be approximately 390 samples [50] to avoid obstacles in calculating various statistics. Therefore, the researcher used a sample size of 400 samples, which is more than the minimum requirement.

For sample selection, this research used a multi-stage, non-probability sampling method. The first stage involved quota sampling, where the sample was determined from the Thai population in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region and its vicinity (Nakhon Pathom, Nonthaburi, Samut Sakhon, Samut Prakan, Chachoengsao, and Pathum Thani) with 200 Thai samples, and the Japanese population in Tokyo and its vicinity (Kanagawa, Yamanashi, Chiba, Saitama, Ibaraki) with 200 Japanese samples. The second stage involved purposive sampling and convenience sampling. Moreover, the research questionnaire has 39 questions and was distributed online.

4.2 Research Instruments

The questionnaire consists of a section used to screen the sample group before answering the questionnaire, which filters where the respondents are located and general demographic questions. In the second section, the study focuses on several factors that influence consumer behavior. Data collection took place from November 2022 to January 2023, and the questionnaire was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee at Chulalongkorn University on October 16, 2022.

For the Thai sample group, the questionnaire was in Thai, and for the Japanese sample group, the questionnaire was translated from Thai into Japanese by two qualified experts, Thai and Japanese individuals. The scoring criteria utilize the Likert Scale measurement (ranging from 1 to 5). The researcher calculates the average score using the formula $(\text{highest score} - \text{lowest score}) / \text{number of score levels} = (5 - 1) / 5 = 0.8$ (see all research questions in appendix).

4.3 Testing Research Instruments

1. **The validity test** of the completed questionnaire ensured content accuracy and suitability based on stated objectives by two qualified experts.
2. **The reliability test** (Pre-test consisting of 30 sets) was conducted with a group whose population characteristics are close to the actual sample. The results were analyzed for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the reliability of the variables from the Likert scale. According to [51], an appropriate Alpha value should be between 0.70 – 0.90. The researcher set the Alpha value at 0.70 and higher to measure the accuracy according to the formula of [52] for Coefficient Alpha. The reliability results are described in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability statistics of variable

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Exposure	0.795	3
Attitude	0.916	21
- Attitude toward product	0.780	3
- Attitude toward content	0.885	3
- Attitude toward innovation	0.969	9
- Cultural Attitude	0.764	6
Behavioral Responses	0.914	8

This study conducted the validity and reliability tests in the following manner. For the validity test, the completed questionnaire of this study underwent a thorough consultation with the experts to verify its correctness, whether it covers the contents for the intended purposes, and whether the language used is clear and appropriate.

The research reliability testing revealed that this survey is reliable and can be applied in this research. After completing the data collection process, the researcher analyzed all questionnaire responses using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics of 400 samples with characteristics are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	<i>n</i>	%
1. Thai	200	50
- Male	59	14.75
- Female	139	34.75
- Other	2	0.5
2. Japanese	200	50
- Male	100	25
- Female	100	25
1. 20 - 39 years	287	71.75
2. 40 years and above	113	28.25

Note. $N = 400$, n is the sample

5.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

The study uses data to assess the influence of independent variables on dependent variables through multiple regression analysis. The results are shown in Tables 3-5.

Hypothesis 1: Exposure and attitudes of **Thai consumers** influence their overall behavioral response towards product placement on YouTube.

Table 3: The Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis of Thai consumers

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE B	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
Constant	-0.916**	-1.564	-0.268	0.329	-	0.429	0.416
1. Exposure	0.085	-	-	-	-		
2. Attitude toward product	0.223**	0.042	0.404	0.092	0.243**		
3. Attitude toward content	0.178**	0.028	0.329	0.076	0.187**		
4. Attitude toward innovation							
4.1 Perceived Usefulness	0.133	-	-	-	-		
4.2 Perceived Ease of Use	0.121	-	-	-	-		
4.3 Perceived Enjoyment	0.071	-	-	-	-		
4.4 Usage Intention	0.099	-	-	-	-		
4.5 Purchase Intention	0.229***	0.109	0.350	0.061	0.249***		
5. Cultural Attitude							
5.1 Consumer Ethnocentrism	0.261***	0.140	0.381	0.061	0.284***		
5.2 Consumer Cosmopolitanism	0.187**	0.070	0.304	0.059	0.196**		

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3 revealed that out of a total of 10 variables, five variables influence the overall responsive behavior of consumers. These include attitudes toward the product ($\beta = 0.243$, $p = 0.016$), attitudes toward content ($\beta = 0.187$, $p = 0.021$), purchase intention ($\beta = 0.249$, $p = 0.000$), Consumer Ethnocentrism ($\beta = 0.284$, $p = 0.000$), and Consumer Cosmopolitanism ($\beta = 0.196$, $p = 0.002$), and the result pinpoints that “Consumer Ethnocentrism” has the most influence on Thai consumers’ behavioral response towards product placement on YouTube. The model or equation obtained can predict

the overall responsive behavior of Thai consumers toward covert advertising on YouTube up to 42% at a significance level of 0.05. Therefore, H1 is supported.

The result indicates that some of the coefficients are less than 0.2, which might still be statistically acceptable. This can be explained by the fact that the regression coefficient represents the average change in the dependent variable when the predictive variable changes by one unit while controlling other variables in the equation. For instance, if the attitude towards content increases by 1%, there will be a corresponding increase of 0.178 in behavioral responses if attitudes towards the product, purchase intention, consumer ethnocentrism, and consumer cosmopolitanism remain constant.

Hypothesis 2: Exposure and attitudes of **Japanese consumers** influence their overall behavioral response towards product placement on YouTube.

Table 4: The Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis of Japanese consumers

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE B	β	R^2	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
						0.513	0.492
Constant	1.434***	1.074	1.793	0.182	-		
1. Exposure	0.316***	0.216	0.416	0.051	0.324***		
2. Attitude toward product	0.170**	0.041	0.300	0.066	0.181**		
3. Attitude toward content	-0.085	-	-	-	-		
4. Attitude toward innovation							
4.1 Perceived Usefulness	0.049	-	-	-	-		
4.2 Perceived Ease of Use	-0.098	-	-	-	-		
4.3 Perceived Enjoyment	0.186**	0.080	0.291	0.053	0.199**		
4.4 Usage Intention	-0.098	-	-	-	-		
4.5 Purchase Intention	0.068	-	-	-	-		
5. Cultural Attitude							
5.1 Consumer Ethnocentrism	0.060	-	-	-	-		
5.2 Consumer Cosmopolitanism	0.082	-	-	-	-		

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4 shows that out of a total of 10 variables, three variables influence the responsive behavior of consumers, including exposure ($\beta = 0.324$, $p = 0.000$), attitude towards products ($\beta = 0.181$, $p = 0.010$), and perceived enjoyment ($\beta = 0.199$, $p = 0.001$), and the result pinpoints that “Exposure” is the most influential variable for Japanese consumers’ behavioral response towards product placement on YouTube. The model or equation obtained can predict the overall responsive behavior of Japanese consumers toward product placement on YouTube up to 51% at a significance level of 0.05. Therefore, H2 is supported.

Hypothesis 3: Exposure and attitudes of **Thai and Japanese consumers** influence their overall behavioral response towards product placement on YouTube.

Table 5: The Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis of Thai and Japanese consumers

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE B	β	R ²	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
						0.542	0.528
Constant	0.298	-0.155	0.751	0.230	-		
1. Exposure	0.360***	0.271	0.450	0.046	0.388***		
2. Attitude toward product	-0.022	-	-	-	-		
3. Attitude toward content	0.294***	0.186	0.403	0.055	0.307***		
4. Attitude toward innovation							
4.1 Perceived Usefulness	-0.144**	-0.263	-0.026	0.060	-0.128**		
4.2 Perceived Ease of Use	-0.041	-	-	-	-		
4.3 Perceived Enjoyment	0.039	-	-	-	-		
4.4 Usage Intention	0.059	-	-	-	-		
4.5 Purchase Intention	0.395***	0.288	0.502	0.055	0.412***		
5. Cultural Attitude							
5.1 Consumer Ethnocentrism	0.109*	0.002	0.216	0.054	0.125*		
5.2 Consumer Cosmopolitanism	-0.152***	-0.232	-0.072	0.041	0.138***		

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5 reveals that out of a total of 10 variables, six variables influence responsive behavior of Thai and Japanese consumers. These include exposure ($\beta = 0.388$, $p = 0.000$), attitude toward content ($\beta = 0.307$, $p = 0.000$), Perceived Usefulness ($\beta = -0.128$, $p = 0.017$), purchase intention ($\beta = 0.412$, $p = 0.000$), Consumer Ethnocentrism ($\beta = 0.125$, $p = 0.045$), and Consumer Cosmopolitanism ($\beta = -0.138$, $p = 0.000$), and “Purchase Intention” is the most influential variable for Thai and Japanese consumers’ behavioral response towards product placement on YouTube. The model or equation obtained can predict the overall responsive behavior of Thai and Japanese consumers toward product placement on YouTube up to 54% at a significance level of 0.05. Therefore, H3 is supported.

There is one point to note regarding Table 5, where a variable has been identified as negative (-0.128 **). This pertains to the relationship between Perceived Usefulness (independent variable) and consumer behavioral responses (dependent variable). This negative correlation between the two means that if the perception of benefits increases, the consumer's behavioral responses on YouTube are likely to decrease.

6. CONCLUSION

According to the results of this study, Thai consumers' response to product placement on YouTube is mainly influenced by "Consumer Ethnocentrism" while for Japanese consumers "Exposure" is the most significant variable affecting their overall response to product placement on YouTube. Moreover, the study found that "Purchase Intention" has the most considerable impact on both Thai and Japanese consumers' responses to product placement on YouTube.

The theoretical implications presented by this research are that it can expand the results

of previous studies. In addition, the managerial implication that can be given from this research is that product placement advertising on YouTube potentially boosts purchase intention for Thai and Japanese consumers. To ensure success, marketers must prioritize communication techniques that inspire “Purchase Intention”. For Thai viewers, using YouTubers or Vtubers with a Thai cultural touch can be effective. For Japanese viewers, “Exposure” to product placement advertising is the key to successful marketing communications.

7. DISCUSSION

From the multiple regression analysis, the results show that “Consumer Ethnocentrism” has the most influence on the Thai sample group which aligns with the research that found that “Consumer Ethnocentrism” significantly influences consumers’ product evaluation of whether the image of the country of origin of the product, the perceived quality of the product, and the consumers’ purchase intentions [34]. Additionally, the result aligns with the 2021 survey conducted by the Ministry of Commerce of Thailand, which found that 83.9% of Thai people prefer to purchase domestically produced goods over imported ones. This preference is particularly strong for necessary goods such as personal care items (shampoo, soap), vegetables, and fruit [35]. This result suggests that featuring made-in-Thailand products in product placements on YouTube will drive Thai consumers’ responses more effectively.

“Exposure” has the most influence on the Japanese sample group, which aligns with research published in the *Asian Journal of Business Research* entitled “Digital Transformation Challenges in the Sales of Pharmaceutical Companies in Japan”. This study reported that traditionally, Japanese pharmaceutical companies reached their target audience by having sales representatives visit their homes, thereby creating consumer exposure. However, with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, these companies adapted their marketing strategies by incorporating digital solutions. They reached their target audience through online marketing, which has proven effective in stimulating drug sales. The result suggests that ‘exposure’ is a variable that significantly influences the response of Japanese consumers. This result also supports a previous study that states that influencers have positive relationships with consumer attitudes and consumer behavior [29]. Advertisements can create a positive attitude among consumers when they find the ad informative, reliable, and entertaining [28,29]. Moreover, it also supports that consumers choose to receive media from a sender depending on their interests [25] and the information they want to receive [33]. Therefore, the more frequently product placement on YouTube is presented, the more chances of a positive Japanese consumer response and increase in product sales.

“Purchase Intention” has the most influence on the combined Thai and Japanese sample, which is consistent with a past study that states that viewers are twice as likely to buy a product when they see it on YouTube [46]. Therefore, product placement on YouTube should aim to stimulate the desire to purchase, for instance, demonstrating effective

usage or offering promotions to stimulate demand to maximize effectiveness. Marketers should incorporate content marketing to ensure that product placement on YouTube yields a good return on investment.

8. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research related to this study should explore other age groups beyond the nationalities to determine if there are any similar findings based on their viewing habits, considering their exposures, attitudes, and behavioral responses towards marketing-communication strategies such as product placement on YouTube. Furthermore, collecting sampled respondent data from other regions beyond Thailand and Japan could provide valuable insights by observing similarities and contrasts. Additionally, examining gender gaps among male, female, and LGBTQ viewers and analyzing the impacts of these gaps on gender-based behavior could be an interesting research topic for future studies. Lastly, future research could also include other variables that can be used as essential indicators in future digital technology development.

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APPENDIX: Research Instruments (with references)

Scale to answer the following questions from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1. Exposure (In the last 6 months, I often see the following clips...)
 - 1) VDO clip that only has products placed in the scene. [6,7]
 - 2) VDO clip that subtly mentions or picks up a product along in the content. [10]
 - 3) VDO clip that primarily discusses a product entertainingly and interestingly within the content [8,28,29].
2. Attitude
 - 2.1 Attitude towards the product in the product placement on YouTube.
 - 1) I feel that I receive product information from YouTube videos that place or mention the product.
 - 2) I like the product appearing in YouTube videos that place or mention the product.
 - 3) I intend to recommend or share the product appearing in YouTube videos that place or mention the product [41].
 - 2.2 Attitude towards the content of product placement on YouTube, which includes:
 - 1) I feel that YouTube videos that place or mention a product are credible.
 - 2) I like YouTube videos that present content or products that are beneficial to the world, such as being environmentally friendly.
 - 3) I like YouTube videos that present content or products that are beneficial to people in society [53].
 - 2.3 Attitudes towards innovation, refer to the product placement in virtual YouTuber's content. A virtual YouTuber is a character that uses cartoons or motion capture technology to represent themselves as YouTubers, such as Kizuna AI, Doctor Junichi, and Code Miko. Attitudes towards innovation include 7 questions:
 - 2.3.1 Perceived Usefulness [31,43]:
 - 1) I think Virtual YouTubers' product placement provides useful product information.
 - 2) I think Virtual YouTubers' product placement provides an opportunity to become acquainted with new and interesting products.
 - 2.3.2 Perceived Ease of Use [43]:
 - 1) I think Virtual YouTubers' product placements are easily accessible.

- 2) I think Virtual YouTubers' product placement provides easily understandable information.

2.3.1 Perceived Enjoyment [32]:

- 1) I think Virtual YouTubers' product placement contributes to happiness.
- 2) I think Virtual YouTubers' product placement provides entertainment and amusement.

2.3.4. Intention to Use [43]:

- 1) I have the intention to continue watching virtual YouTubers' product placement.
- 2) I have the intention to continue watching virtual YouTubers' product placement.

2.3.5. Purchase Intention [31] includes:

- 1) I have the intention to purchase products featured in virtual YouTubers' product placement.
- 2) I have the intention to recommend or share products featured in Virtual YouTubers' product placement.

2.4. Cultural Attitudes [33,47,48]:

2.4.1 Consumer Ethnocentrism (CET)

- 1) I feel discomfort when buying products not manufactured in his/her own country.
- 2) I prefer buying domestic products over foreign products.
- 3) I feel confident in domestic products over foreign products.

2.4.2 Consumer Cosmopolitanism (Cultural Openness)

- 1) I enjoy exchanging opinions with people from different cultures or foreigners.
- 2) I have an interest in learning about people from foreign countries.
- 3) I have a feeling of enjoyment when interacting with foreigners to learn about their perspectives.

3. Consumer behavioral responses, divided into 3 groups (8 questions) [40]:

3.1 Interaction:

- 1) I search for additional information about various products from YouTube videos where I have heard or seen the product.
- 2) I click buttons Like or Unlike on YouTube where you have watched, heard, or seen the product.

3.2 Engagement:

- 1) I comment or express opinions on YouTube where you have heard or seen the product.
- 2) I share YouTube videos where I have heard or seen the product to personal channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Line, Twitter
- 3) I save or download YouTube videos that I have heard or seen of the product.
- 4) I subscribe to the channel where I have heard or seen the product on

YouTube.

3.3. Conversion:

- 1) I enter the link in the description below the video on YouTube where I have heard or seen the product and decide to go to the website of that product.
- 2) I buy things according to the video on YouTube where I have heard or seen that product.