

YouTube Advertising Avoidance and Viewer Tolerance

A Study of Ad Skipping, Duration and Placement Preferences among Consumers in Ahmedabad

Manzurfatema Sabbirali Patawat

PhD Scholar, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, India

Email: manzurpatawat@gmail.com

Dr. Swati Dave

Research Guide, Gujarat University and Lecturer, Shree Narayana College of Commerce, Ahmedabad, India

ABSTRACT

People usually open YouTube to watch a video they have chosen. The advertisement is an interruption, so it has only a short time to give the viewer a reason to stay. This paper looks at how much YouTube advertising viewers in Ahmedabad are willing to accept. The analysis uses responses from 1,009 adults who use the free, advertisement-supported version of YouTube. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to examine acceptance, duration, placement, format and skipping behaviour. Almost half of the respondents (49.75%) found YouTube advertisements unacceptable. Short advertisements were strongly preferred. A total of 69.18% chose six to ten seconds, and 83.95% chose ten seconds or less. Pre-roll was the least preferred placement (13.78%). Nearly half (47.37%) said they never watched a skippable advertisement in full. When viewers did continue, entertaining advertisements were selected most often, followed by educational and social cause-related messages. Bumper advertisements were the leading format choice at 66.50%. The pattern is simple: viewers will give advertising some attention, but they expect the message to be brief and worth the interruption.

Keywords: YouTube advertising, advertising avoidance, ad skipping, viewer tolerance, advertisement duration, advertisement placement

1. INTRODUCTION

Most people do not open YouTube because they want to see an advertisement. They come for music, news, a tutorial, a product review or some other video. The advertisement enters a viewing experience that already has a purpose. A viewer may skip it, look away or even leave the video. Being shown on the screen is therefore not the same as being watched.

Viewer tolerance is useful in this setting. It does not mean that a person likes advertising. It simply shows how much interruption the person is prepared to accept. Length, placement and the choice to skip all play a part. Content matters too. Goodrich et al. (2015) found that information and humour can make online video advertising feel less intrusive. A longer advertisement can hold attention, but it has to earn that time.

Avoidance is often linked with disruption, too much advertising and an earlier bad experience (Cho & Cheon, 2004). YouTube gives viewers an immediate response through the skip button. This gives them control, but it also leaves the advertiser very little time. Research on skippable advertising shows that the opening, the viewing context and the value of the message can decide whether a person stays (Belanche et al., 2017a; Campbell et al., 2017).

In this paper, we study that viewing decision among consumers in Ahmedabad. Purchase intention and advertisement relevance are not examined here because they belong to separate parts of the wider research. The concern in this paper is narrower: acceptance, skipping, preferred length, preferred placement and the kind of advertising that viewers are willing to finish.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Advertising interruption and avoidance

People avoid online advertising when it gets in the way of what they are trying to do. Cho and Cheon (2004) connected avoidance with interruption, clutter and negative past experience. Li et al. (2002) described intrusiveness in a similar way, as interference with a person's goal. On YouTube, that judgement can be made almost immediately because the advertisement appears in place of the selected content.

Studies dealing specifically with YouTube report the same problem. Lin et al. (2021) found that irritation encouraged viewers to avoid skippable in-stream advertisements. Yin et al. (2023) found that intrusiveness increased avoidance intention, while a sense of control reduced it. Interviews conducted by Banerjee and Pal (2023) show an interesting distinction: viewers may dislike the interruption without necessarily disliking the brand that was advertised.

2.2 Skipping and viewer control

Once the skip button appears, watching becomes a choice. Pashkevich et al. (2012) found that viewers valued this control and that skippable advertisements could still work for advertisers. The choice to skip, however, can soon become a habit. Belanche et al. (2017b) found that viewers who were familiar with the option often decided more quickly, especially when they felt they had little time.

The first few seconds carry most of the pressure. Campbell et al. (2017) found that familiar attention-seeking techniques could actually work against a pre-roll advertisement because viewers were already aware that they were being interrupted. Banerjee and Pal (2021) found that curiosity, emotion and immediate relevance gave viewers reasons to continue. Belanche et al. (2020) also showed that skippable and non-skippable formats should not be designed in exactly the same way.

2.3 Duration and placement

A short advertisement is generally easier to tolerate, although length is not the only consideration. Goodrich et al. (2015) found that information and humour could reduce intrusiveness even in a longer video advertisement. Evidence from actual viewing behaviour still shows a cost to added time. Krishnan and Sitaraman (2013) reported that completion fell as advertisements became longer. They also found higher completion for mid-roll than pre-roll advertisements.

Placement changes the kind of interruption. Pre-roll makes a person wait before the chosen video starts. Mid-roll stops a video that is already under way. Frade et al. (2023) found greater visual attention for pre-roll and non-skippable advertisements, although mid-roll could be experienced as more intrusive. Kim et al. (2023) found that viewers stayed longer when the surrounding video was long, popular or informational. The best position may therefore depend on the video and the moment at which the break occurs.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The objectives were kept focused on the viewing experience:

1. To examine how viewers in Ahmedabad feel about YouTube advertising and how often they avoid or complete it.
2. To identify the advertisement length and placement they prefer.
3. To find out which advertisement formats and types of content are more likely to hold their attention.

These questions are descriptive. The results show what the respondents selected and how common each response was. A preferred format is not automatically the format that will perform best in every campaign.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey. A structured questionnaire was circulated online from late 2024 to mid-2025. It was completed by 1,009 adults living in Ahmedabad who used the free version of YouTube. Convenience sampling was used because there was no complete list of YouTube users in the city. The link was also passed on to other eligible users, giving the survey a snowball element.

Only the questions connected with advertising acceptance and avoidance were used for this paper. Respondents gave their general view of YouTube advertisements and selected the placement and length they preferred. They could choose more than one answer for engaging formats and for the kinds of skippable advertisements they watched in full. We also used three five-point items: whether advertisements felt interruptive, how often a skippable advertisement was watched in full, and how often repeated advertisements caused the respondent to stop watching a video.

Counts and percentages were used for the category-based questions. Mean and standard deviation were used for the five-point items. Agreement ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), and frequency ranged from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Participation was voluntary and the responses were kept confidential.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

Characteristic	Largest groups	Share
Age	25-34 years; 35-44 years	41.43%; 34.29%
Gender	Male; Female	56.29%; 43.71%
Education	Bachelor's degree; High school	43.21%; 41.03%
Occupation	Employee; Self-employed/business	41.72%; 21.41%
Location	Ahmedabad	100.00%
YouTube access	Free/ad-supported version	100.00%

Most respondents were between 25 and 44 years of age. This range accounted for 75.72% of the sample. Men made up 56.29% and women 43.71%. All 1,009 respondents lived in Ahmedabad and used the free, advertisement-supported version of YouTube.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Overall acceptance and reported interruption

Table 2. Overall feeling about YouTube advertisements

Response	Number	Percentage
Unacceptable	502	49.75%
Neutral (unaffected)	190	18.83%
Acceptable	317	31.42%
Total	1,009	100.00%

The first result is quite direct. Almost half of the respondents, 49.75%, called YouTube advertisements unacceptable. Only 31.42% found them acceptable, while the remaining 18.83% were neutral. The statement “YouTube advertisements are interruptive” had a mean of 3.400 (SD = 1.075). The respondents did not reject every advertisement, but interruption was clearly part of their experience.

5.2 Preferred advertisement duration

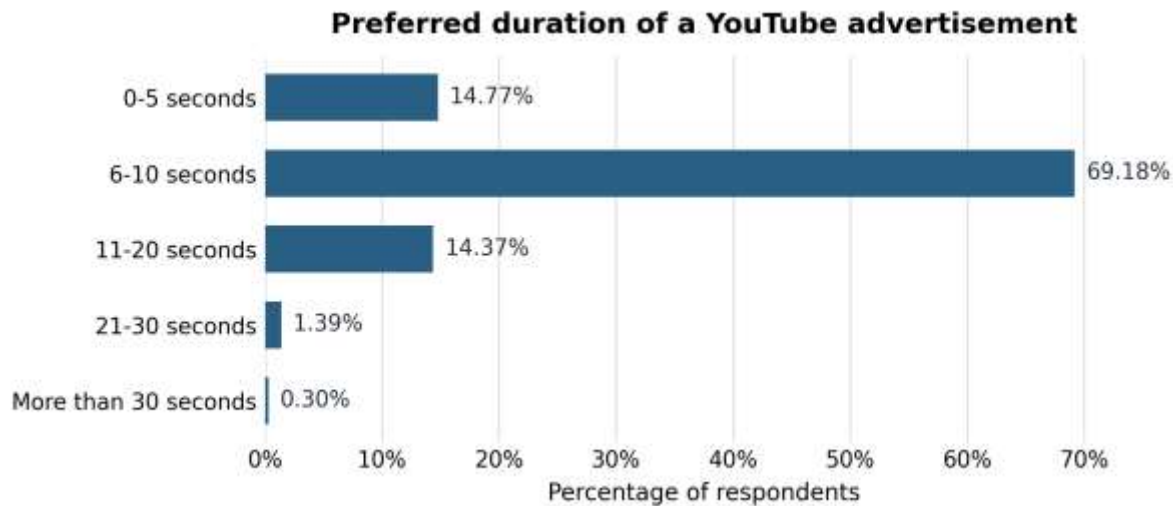


Figure 1. Preferred duration of a YouTube advertisement. Source: Primary survey.

Six to ten seconds was the clear first choice, selected by 69.18% of respondents. Another 14.77% wanted the advertisement to last no more than five seconds. This means that 83.95% preferred ten seconds or less. Only 1.69% chose more than twenty seconds. The group selecting more than thirty seconds was very small, just three respondents or 0.30%, but it has still been shown in Figure 1.

5.3 Preferred advertisement placement

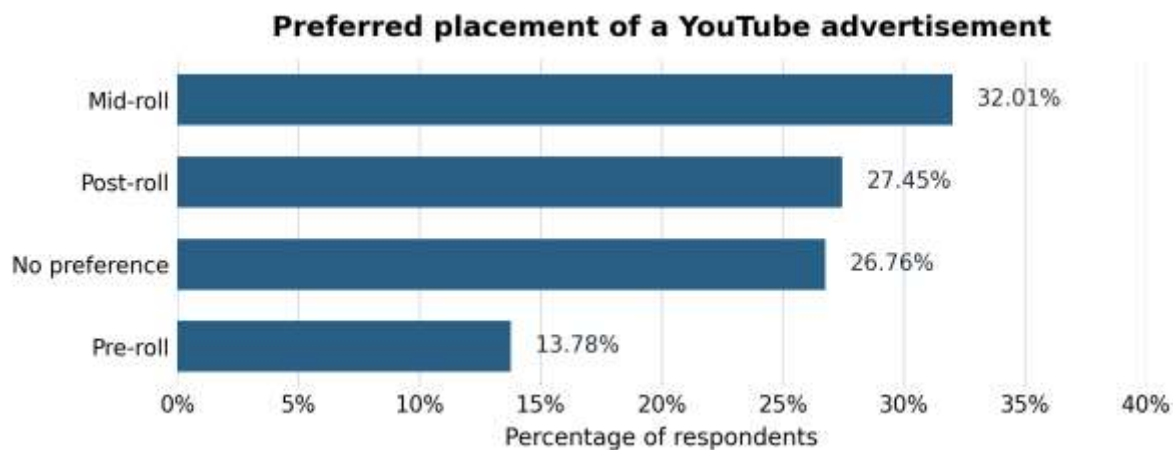


Figure 2. Preferred placement of a YouTube advertisement. Source: Primary survey.

Placement did not produce one overwhelming choice. Mid-roll came first at 32.01%, followed by post-roll at 27.45%. A similar share, 26.76%, said that placement did not matter. Pre-roll was much lower at 13.78%. The main point is not that everyone wants mid-roll. It is that far fewer respondents wanted an advertisement to delay the selected video before it began.

5.4 Advertisement formats considered engaging and effective

Table 3. YouTube advertisement formats selected by respondents

Advertisement format	Number	Percentage
Bumper advertisements (non-skippable, up to 6 seconds)	671	66.50%
Non-skippable in-stream advertisements	452	44.80%
In-feed video advertisements	423	41.92%
Masthead advertisements	403	39.94%

Advertisement format	Number	Percentage
Display advertisements	338	33.50%
Skippable in-stream advertisements	290	28.74%
YouTube Shorts advertisements	214	21.21%
Sponsored cards	38	3.77%

More than one format could be selected, so these percentages are not expected to total 100. Bumper advertisements led by a wide margin at 66.50%. Their six-second limit matches the strong preference for short messages. Non-skippable in-stream advertisements were selected by 44.80%, compared with 28.74% for skippable in-stream advertisements. This is worth noting. The presence of a skip button did not, by itself, make a format engaging. A compulsory advertisement may still be tolerated when it ends quickly.

5.5 Skippable advertisements watched to completion

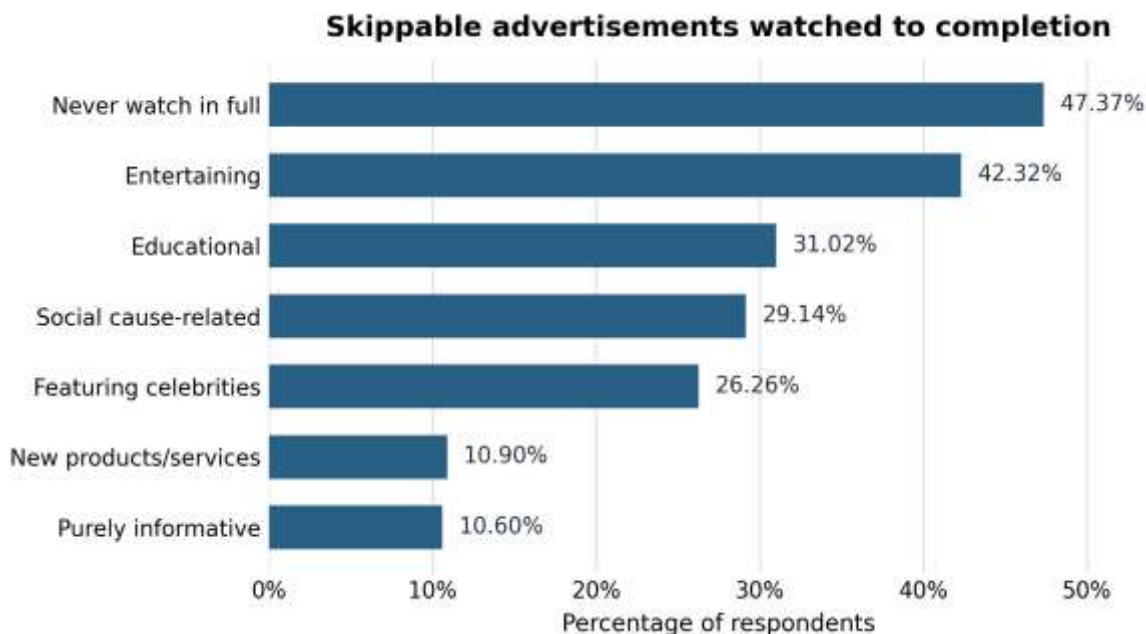


Figure 3. Content in skippable advertisements watched to completion. Source: Primary survey.

Note: Multiple responses were permitted, so percentages exceed 100%.

A sizeable 47.37% selected “I never watch skippable ads in full.” Entertainment gave viewers the strongest reason to continue, with 42.32% selecting it. Educational advertisements followed at 31.02%, social cause-related advertisements at 29.14%, and advertisements featuring celebrities at 26.26%. New products or services (10.90%) and purely informative advertisements (10.60%) received much lower selections. Since respondents could choose more than one answer, these figures should be read as selections rather than separate groups of people.

Table 4. Selected five-point indicators of avoidance and tolerance

Indicator	Scale	Mean	SD
YouTube advertisements are interruptive	Agreement	3.400	1.075
Watch a skippable advertisement in full	Frequency	2.94	1.214
Stop a video because advertisements are repetitive	Frequency	2.92	1.233

On the frequency scale, watching a skippable advertisement in full had a mean of 2.94. Stopping a video because the advertisements were repetitive was almost the same at 2.92. Both lie close to “Sometimes.” Viewers occasionally stayed for the advertisement, but repetition made them leave with nearly the same reported frequency.

6. DISCUSSION

The numbers show resistance, but not complete refusal. Almost half of the respondents found YouTube advertisements unacceptable, and interruptiveness received an above-midpoint score. This is consistent with Cho and Cheon (2004), who linked online advertising avoidance with interference in the user’s immediate goal. Lin et al. (2021) and Yin et al. (2023) also found that irritation and intrusiveness encourage avoidance.

The clearest result concerns time. Nearly 84% wanted an advertisement of ten seconds or less, and the six-second bumper was the leading format choice. Krishnan and Sitaraman (2013) similarly found that completion falls as length increases. This does not make every longer advertisement ineffective. Goodrich et al. (2015) showed that useful or humorous content can make a longer message easier to accept. Still, the starting assumption for this audience should be that attention will be brief.

The placement result needs a little more care. Mid-roll ranked first, but it was chosen by less than one third of the sample. Post-roll and no preference were close behind. Pre-roll was the only option that fell well below the others. Earlier studies help explain why placement is not a simple choice. Mid-roll can produce higher completion (Krishnan & Sitaraman, 2013), yet it can also feel intrusive (Frade et al., 2023). The interruption is likely to work better when it comes at a natural pause rather than in the middle of a sentence, scene or demonstration.

Content made a visible difference too. Although 47.37% said they never watched a skippable advertisement in full, many still selected entertaining, educational or social cause-related advertising. Banerjee and Pal (2021) also found that curiosity, emotion and immediate value can keep viewers watching. Pure information was selected far less often in the present study. Facts may hold attention better when they are built into a demonstration, story or entertaining idea.

Repeated advertising is another practical concern. The mean for stopping a video because of repetitive advertisements was almost identical to the mean for completing a skippable advertisement. The same message may work once and become irritating after too many exposures. Frequency therefore needs as much attention as the creative idea.

7. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Put the main point early. Viewers should see the brand and central benefit before they have a reason to skip.
2. Begin with a six-to-ten-second version. Use a longer version only when the idea genuinely needs more time.
3. Use natural breaks for mid-roll advertising. Avoid cutting into a sentence, scene or demonstration.
4. Do more than list facts. A demonstration, story, humour or useful explanation can make information easier to watch.
5. Watch the frequency. Rotating creative versions can reduce the irritation caused by seeing the same advertisement repeatedly.

8. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The survey covered adult users of advertisement-supported YouTube in Ahmedabad. Convenience sampling with a snowball element was used, so the percentages should not be treated as estimates for the whole of India. The answers are also based on what respondents remembered and reported. They do not record actual viewing time. A future experiment could show the same advertisement in different lengths and positions and then measure skipping, attention and recall. Similar work in other cities and in regional-language markets would show whether the Ahmedabad pattern appears elsewhere.

9. CONCLUSION

The respondents were willing to give YouTube advertising some attention, but not much time. Almost half found the advertisements unacceptable, nearly half said they never completed a skippable advertisement, and most wanted a message of ten seconds or less. Pre-roll was the least preferred placement. Bumper advertisements were selected most

often, while entertaining and educational messages gave viewers more reason to continue than information alone. For advertisers, the lesson is practical rather than complicated: get to the point quickly, place the break sensibly and give the viewer something worth watching.

REFERENCES

- Banerjee, S., & Pal, A. (2021). Skipping skippable ads on YouTube: How, when, why and why not? In Proceedings of the 15th International Conference on Ubiquitous Information Management and Communication (IMCOM) (pp. 1-5). IEEE.
- Banerjee, S., & Pal, A. (2023). I hate ads but not the advertised brands: A qualitative study on Internet users' lived experiences with YouTube ads. *Internet Research*, 33(1), 39-56.
- Belanche, D., Flavián, C., & Pérez-Rueda, A. (2017a). Understanding interactive online advertising: Congruence and product involvement in highly and lowly arousing, skippable video ads. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 37, 75-88.
- Belanche, D., Flavián, C., & Pérez-Rueda, A. (2017b). User adaptation to interactive advertising formats: The effect of previous exposure, habit and time urgency on ad skipping behaviors. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(7), 961-972.
- Belanche, D., Flavián, C., & Pérez-Rueda, A. (2020). Brand recall of skippable vs non-skippable ads in YouTube: Readapting information and arousal to active audiences. *Online Information Review*, 44(3), 545-562.
- Campbell, C., Thompson, F. M., Grimm, P. E., & Robson, K. (2017). Understanding why consumers don't skip pre-roll video ads. *Journal of Advertising*, 46(3), 411-423.
- Cho, C.-H., & Cheon, H. J. (2004). Why do people avoid advertising on the Internet? *Journal of Advertising*, 33(4), 89-97.
- Frade, J. L. H., de Oliveira, J. H. C., & Giraldo, J. de M. E. (2023). Skippable or non-skippable? Pre-roll or mid-roll? Visual attention and effectiveness of in-stream ads. *International Journal of Advertising*, 42(8), 1242-1266.
- Goodrich, K., Schiller, S. Z., & Galletta, D. (2015). Consumer reactions to intrusiveness of online-video advertisements: Do length, informativeness, and humor help (or hinder) marketing outcomes? *Journal of Advertising Research*, 55(1), 37-50.
- Kim, H. L., Kim, Y.-G., Yoon, S.-H., & Ryu, S. (2023). Effect of media context on avoidance of skippable pre-roll ads in online video platform: A mental accounting of time perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 164, Article 113966.
- Krishnan, S. S., & Sitaraman, R. K. (2013). Understanding the effectiveness of video ads: A measurement study. In Proceedings of the 2013 Internet Measurement Conference (pp. 149-162). Association for Computing Machinery.
- Li, H., Edwards, S. M., & Lee, J.-H. (2002). Measuring the intrusiveness of advertisements: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Advertising*, 31(2), 37-47.
- Lin, H. C.-S., Lee, N. C.-A., & Lu, Y.-C. (2021). The mitigators of ad irritation and avoidance of YouTube skippable in-stream ads: An empirical study in Taiwan. *Information*, 12(9), Article 373.
- Pashkevich, M., Dorai-Raj, S., Kellar, M., & Zigmond, D. (2012). Empowering online advertisements by empowering viewers with the right to choose: The relative effectiveness of skippable video advertisements on YouTube. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 52(4), 451-458.
- Yin, S., Li, B., & Zhou, Q. (2023). The impact of skippable advertising on advertising avoidance intention in China. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 41(8), 1121-1137.