

Impact of Message Characteristics on Viral Video Advertising

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ABSTRACT

Viral video advertising is one of the active tools used by organizations to optimise social media presence. Marketers aim to generate video that motivate viewers to engage with it, in form of share, comment, like, which ultimately increases content consumption, brand awareness and engagement. This study focuses on different aspects of message characteristics and their impact on video virality. Creative professionals from advertising agencies and production studios were interviewed using semi-structured interviews to explore the role of message factors, which influences large set of viewers to engage with videos. The study provides insights on how high video virality is influenced by a specific aspect(s) of message factors and helps professionals in viral video creation.

Keywords: Brand Presence, Brand Recall, Content Marketing, Facebook, Message characteristics, Message Factor, Social Media Marketing, Video Virality, Viral Content, Viral Video Advertising, YouTube.

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INTRODUCTION

The Internet has transformed the landscape of communication. One of the primary advantages of the Internet is flexibility. The user need not be materially present; they do not even need to be contributing in the conversation at the same time. This makes computer-based interaction one of the easiest means of conveying information. Many people have raised their concerns and observations on the shift of physical communication to digital communication and its consequences on society; however, socialisation on the Internet has numerous advantages over traditional socialisation.

A virtual assembly or community offers opportunities to bring together people from different backgrounds, permitting them to find shared grounds for their beliefs and interests (Chen *et al.*, 2013). In a way, the viewer is curious and interested to communicate with a large audience without imposed by space and time. Individual has the flexibility to join groups and communities, receive update, view and share content, and influence his/her social web at a convenient time.

One of the broadly used practices is to create a video that inform or engage viewers. Marketers are producing video content that is attractive enough to spread across social networks. One of the effective tool to optimise social media interaction is viral video advertising. organizations and advertising agencies are motivated

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to generate content that go viral. This research aims to evaluate the influence of message characteristics on viral video advertising.

In present times, viewers are bombarded with multiple paid /organic messages from marketers. In the extremely competitive scenario, the video content without right message, appeal, context shall evaporate in a short period of time. With various theoretical comprehensions from multidisciplinary research in the area of advertising, digital marketing, internet marketing, social media marketing, and viral video advertising, this research intends to measure the impact of contributing 'message characteristics' that is/are influential in viral content creation.

- This paper aims at evaluating the importance of 7 message factors namely; utility, distinctiveness, encourage participation, topical content in message, social message, inspired from real life events/values,

corporate storytelling and their impact on the success of viral video advertising.

- The second objective was to evaluate the degree of importance of message characteristics on the success of viral video advertising

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section analyses existing research, including findings and opinions on the topic. In order to understand the why and how videos go viral, understanding of literature review in areas such as video advertising, social media marketing, message characteristics, and video virality is essential.

Viral Video Advertising

In current times, social media marketing platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, and so on, have changed the communication landscape for brands, individuals, and organisations (Sanne & Wiese, 2018). With the rise of social media, the dynamics of communication have shifted to new dimensions of interaction. The concepts of traditional groups and communities have been challenged by online communities due to rise of social media. In time like this, groups and communities exist in the physical, as well as in the virtual world that functions through internet (Lee & Lee, 2010).

As per report released by Statista, Facebook and YouTube are chief social networking sites across the world, with 2,853 million and 2,291 million active users respectively, followed by WhatsApp, FB messengers, WeChat, and Instagram, in the same sequence. (*Most Used Social Media 2021 | Statista*, n.d.). These platforms differ in their popularity. They all operate as channels to engage viewers with content. The form could be a carousel (picture in a loop), gif, video, photo and so on.

This enormous development in video streaming is an opportunity for brands. These are also the platforms where viewers can be targeted for the video engagement with the aim of promotion or branding. However, organizations are also exploiting these opportunities by producing video content that is engaging and compulsive. The objective is to generate content that creates deep engagement with audience, thus making a video viral.

In the past few years, Internet marketing approach has shifted away from an emphasis on 'paid' media where a brand pays for promotion, to 'earned' media, where customers themselves become the channel of delivery (Corcoran, 2009). The wide scope of WOM (word-of-mouth) in social media platforms offers a

geographic and enduring impact and allows customers/followers to impact the brand image and transform the perception of other consumers (Laureano *et al.*, 2018). The viral quotient of a video rest on its capability to stand out from clutter and engage the consumer or viewer in a meaningful and/or entertaining way.

The viral-ability of content is a critical factor to guarantee engagement on a large scale. Researcher Lance Porter and Guy Golan recommended the following explanation of viral video advertising "Viral video advertising is unpaid peer-to-peer communication of provocative content originating from an identified sponsor using the internet to persuade or influence an audience to pass along the content to others" (Porter & Golan, 2006).

There is much vagueness and an imprecise approach in defining viral marketing, as researcher and corporate professionals practice the terms viral advertising, stealth marketing and buzz marketing interchangeably (Porter & Golan, 2006). Porter and Golan also witnessed that viral marketing is different from viral advertising. "While the viral marketing refers to a very comprehensive marketing strategy that may include several (viral) components, viral advertising refers to a specific online advertising practice" (Porter & Golan, 2006).

Viral marketing, and viral video advertising and viral videos are three different terms. Viral videos refer to any videos uploaded by individuals or influencers and viewed and picked up by a larger audience. Viral marketing is 'paid' online advertising (such as pre-rolls that appears before online video content on video streaming websites), while viral video advertising refers to AV (audio-video) posted by marketer on social media networks that receive peer-to-peer sharing. In this paper, researcher aims to study viral video advertising. Viral marketing or viral video analysis is outside the scope of this study.

At the primary stage of the video release, brands spend money for video promotion to ensure that an AV (audio visual) reaches a wider audience. Although, spending through paid-promotion has little influence on video virality, as paid promotion can uplift viewing but not video sharing. The measures of viral video are not number of views, but number of times the video content is shared in a circles on social networks.

Message Characteristics in Viral Video Advertising

How to appeal to the consumers has been an ongoing challenge for marketers across different cultures around

the world. This challenge is increasing as new technology and augmented economic globalisation contribute to the explosion of advertising and international marketing (Albers-Miller & Stafford, 1999).

The major focus of the proposed study is to comprehend contributing factors in viral video advertising. The objective was accomplished by interviewing advertising experts, to receive their views on viral videos.

Diverse set of viewers have different motives behind sharing content. Few motives are more effective in triggering consumers to share the content compared to other motives. Carter and Marketo found that high-sharing content included at least one of the following: Warn, Amaze, Give, Advise, Amuse, Unite and Inspire (Carter & Marketo, 2014). Another research observed utility (more informative) factor (value) as well as messages with high hedonic factor (more enjoyable) has more probability of passed along (Chiu *et al.*, 2007).

Video virality is the result of multiple factors. One of the clusters of factors affecting the video virality is Message Characteristics. Message characteristics is the way the message imbibed and weaved in the video. Below is the list of major message factors observed in the research that impact video virality.

a) Utility

Utility of the product, service or idea presented in the communication is one of the message characteristics of the video. The presentation of utility is more effective than value oriented appeal when the product or service projected in the communication is utilitarian. In other words, utilitarian communication considered to be more effective than value based appeals as the target customer feel a higher level of connection between the practical features of the service or product and anticipated characteristics likely found in the product or service that causing higher persuasion (Johar & Joseph Sirgy, 1991).



Name of the video: Vedanta Television Commercial | #KabhiSochaHaiKya

Name of the brand: Vedanta Resources

Published date: 24-Jan-20

Popularity rank*: 12

Popularity of the video over leading Social media platforms

	YouTube	Facebook	Total
Link	https://youtu.be/pTBKbyOurz0	https://www.facebook.com/vedantaresources/videos/182682479507745/	-
Duration of video	94	94	-
Number of shares	NA	11000	11000
Number of comments on video	72	1000	1072
Number of likes	681	118000	118681
Number of views	4,597,645	14000000	18,597,645



Here is the video posted by Vedanta named 'KabhiSochaHaiKya' where the brand attempt to showcase the utility of their range of product/services and how it benefitting the larger community. The focus is to make people realize their contribution towards a society at large.

b) Distinctiveness (Originality)

Distinctiveness is the originality imbibed in the video communication. The original content brings attention as well as the need to share with social circles. The probability of sharing the content is higher with the original content, as the viewer also feels the status of someone who shares original content. There is a sense of status by sharing their expertise and knowledge (Wojnicki, 2006).

For example, a video posted by Hyundai named 'Celebrating 20 Years of Brilliant Moments' wherein the brands attempts to weave a emotional story between a father and son through the medium of 'car. In other words, the brands created a story to communicate

that how a brand is instrumental in creating beautiful memories and therefore relationship.

c) Encourage Participation

This is one of the possible characteristics of the videos that motivate consumers to engage with the video. Such videos are composed of 'call for action' which inspire viewers to do something or to be a part of some larger social cause. In one of the research, 'encourage participation' is considered as one of the ten commandments of successful viral marketing tactics in India (Mantri et al., 2015). Here is the video of named 'India, Ready, Action!' posted by Samsung, where they invite youth of India to shoot the dynamic India that breaks the stereotypes and share their videos on Internet. Here, the video is encourage the audience to do something and share it on Internet and this 'Call for Action' is increasing the video traction.

During the open ended interview, it has been observed that participants refer to few creative determinants related to 'message characteristics', over



Name of the video: Hyundai | Celebrating 20 Years of Brilliant Moments
 Name of the brand: Hyundai India
 Published date: 27-Jun-18
 Popularity rank*: 4

Popularity of the video over leading Social media platforms

	YouTube	Facebook	Total
Link	https://youtu.be/qSZ4h7YSGnQ	https://www.facebook.com/HyundaiIndia/videos/1741953395882411/	-
Duration of video	285	277	-
Number of shares	NA	102000	102000
Number of comments on video	2708	14000	16708
Number of likes	128000	988000	1116000
Number of views	222,947,470	45000000	267,947,470

and above the factors covered in literature review. Below is a list of 'message characteristics factors' referred to by participants during the interview.

d) Topical Content in Message

Topical content refers to the video that has relevance with the socio, political, national events that affect large numbers of people at the same time. Simply said, a large set of people are concerned and talking about it in their online and offline circles. Brands looked this as an opportunity to interact with audience on specific concern or for addressing the concern / motivate people with an aspirational message. During the research interviews, experts mentioned 'topical content in message' as one of the instrumental factors for video virality.

For example, this surf excel video named 'This Holi, let colours bring us together!' This video specifically

posted during the holi time and revolving around bringing together people from different belief and religion.

e) Social Message

Social message factor refers to the message that expresses the societal change in the video. In this kind of videos, the video content is a story that expresses certain situations that allow people to look at the issue from a different angle or create inquiry / curiosity about the topic/issues. For example, the third most viral video 'Samsung Bixby' featuring a deaf & dumb girl and her mother. Now, the video represents sympathy, care and use of technology to make especially able people's life better. As referred to by experts, when a video holds a social message, viewers like the stand and spirit of the video which makes it viral. For example a video of Adani



Name of the video: Samsung India, Ready, Action!
 Name of the brand: Samsung India
 Published date: 9-May-19
 Popularity rank*: 8

Popularity of the video over leading Social media platforms

	YouTube	Facebook	Total
Link	https://youtu.be/4ha4hnu8TLU	https://www.facebook.com/SamsungIndia/videos/679007685862484/ https://www.facebook.com/SamsungIndia/videos/2281169112134065/	-
Duration of video	94	60	-
Number of shares	NA	16172	16172
Number of comments on video	1081	11063	12144
Number of likes	58000	1306500	1364500
Number of views	100,468,070	117625000	218093070
Comments on video uploading	-	Two videos posted of different length (60 Sec & 94 seconds) in the same month	-





Name of the video: Surf Excel Holi 2019 | This Holi, let colours bring us together!

Name of the brand: Surf Excel

Published date: 27-Feb-19

Popularity rank*: 6

Popularity of the video over leading Social media platforms

	YouTube	Facebook	Total
Link	https://youtu.be/Zq7mN8oi8ds	https://www.facebook.com/surfexcelindia/videos/555761778268013/	-
Duration of video	60	60	-
Number of shares	NA	26000	26000
Number of comments on video	11783	80000	91783
Number of likes	156000	98000	254000
Number of views	22,053,220	816000	22,869,220

group named ‘Republic Day | #LiveTheConstitution’ wherein the brand is referring to ‘Live the constitution’ and brands pass on a message on important values and concerns like secularism, democratic republic, Secure justice in social, Economic and political, Liberty of thoughts – expression – belief – faith and worship, Equality of Status and opportunity and to promote among them all fraternity.

f) Inspired from Real Life Events/Values

Videos that exhibit real life events and incidents build a stronger connection with the video. Viewers find and appreciate the real live events and connect on a different level. The content with actual incidents offers an outlet for viewer to review and reflect on the real conditions portrayed in the video. According to expert video that are inspired from real life events / values draws higher attention and sharability from the audience.

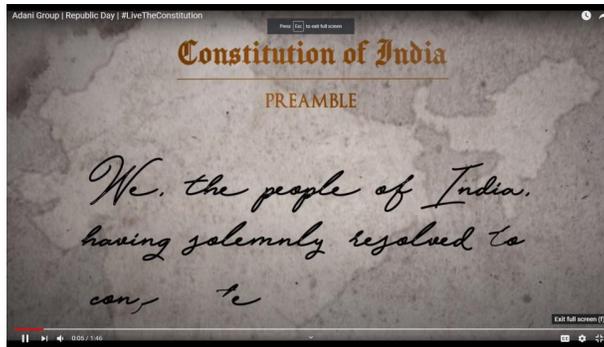
For example Horlicks released a video name ‘#FearLessKota #BottleOfLove’ wherein they refers to

real life people and issues of youngster who moved to Kota for their competitive exam preparation’. The characters and stories taken in the video are inspired from real life situation and characters.

g) Corporate Storytelling

Storytelling is an old form of engaging kids as well as people of all ages. Here, we are referring to the storytelling in the form of video created by a brand. It is important to note that the prime focus in corporate storytelling is to share a story with the viewer. The product promotion is secondary in this type of video.

As observed and shared by few experts, the brand curated viral video with the sole intention of engaging the consumer with a story. In this type of content, very low level of focus given to product / service promotion or branding. As observed by a respondent, ‘the product / service visibility during this kind of video, will reduce the effectiveness of the storytelling and hence brands intentionally keep it in the back seat’.



Name of the video: Adani Group | Republic Day | #LiveTheConstitution
 Name of the brand: Adani Group
 Published date: 25-Jan-20
 Popularity rank*: 5
 Popularity of the video over leading Social media platforms

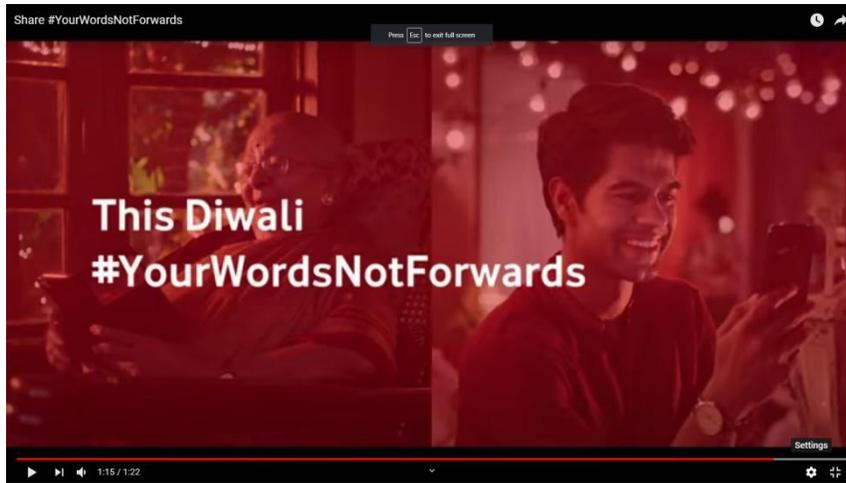
	YouTube	Facebook	Total
Link	https://youtu.be/qhTd2Al2hHw	https://www.facebook.com/AdaniOnline/videos/487456712187584/	-
Duration of video	106	107	-
Number of shares	NA	36000	36000
Number of comments on video	32	1900	1932
Number of likes	793	100000	100793
Number of views	2,309,726	6900000	9,209,726



Name of the video: #FearLessKota #BottleOfLove
 Name of the brand: Horlicks
 Published date: 18-Jan-19
 Popularity rank*: 10
 Popularity of the video over leading Social media platforms

	YouTube	Facebook	Total
Link	https://youtu.be/R3c0ENcF02w	https://www.facebook.com/HorlicksIndia/videos/372661926672182/	-
Duration of video	150	150	-
Number of shares	NA	12000	12000
Number of comments on video	Comments are turned off	4000	4000
Number of likes	54000	327000	381000
Number of views	59,663,725	19000000	78,663,725





Name of the video: Share #YourWordsNotForwards
 Name of the brand: Vodafone
 Published date: 23-Oct-19
 Popularity rank*: 13

Popularity of the video over leading Social media platforms

	YouTube	Facebook	Total
Link	https://youtu.be/BSy3DAXCjKg	https://www.facebook.com/zoozoo/videos/550806299014500/	-
Duration of video	83	181	-
Number of shares	NA	8600	8600
Number of comments on video	101	2200	2301
Number of likes	1400	119000	120400
Number of views	32,903,603	7900000	40,803,603

For instance a video posted by Vodafone titled ‘Share #Your Words Not Forwards’ which beautiful captured a story of a grandmother and grandson. Here, the story of the video is at the front-seat compare the brand/product/service which is in background in the video.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research has been employed to classify creative factors which also involve human behaviour, to comprehend and appreciate different characteristics which stimulate large numbers of people to like, share, and comment on videos. Convenience sampling helped in researching, with a deliberate section of the sample unit. Interviews were conducted with 10 creative professionals, who work with production house / digital agencies / advertising agencies. Respondents with more than 6 years’ experience are qualified for the interview process. This cut-off is based on two criteria: 1) As pointed out by two advertising professionals during an interaction, ‘A professional reach to middle-

level management in an advertising agency or production house within 6 years’. 2) There has been a surge in Internet data consumption in the last 6 years (TRAI, 2019). The explosion in data consumption leads to high supply of video advertising on the Internet.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with respondents, as they help in exploring creative responses. At the time of developing the survey questionnaire, two things were kept in mind. First, to receive un-aided responses from experts, and second, to assess advertising professionals’ feedback on set of ‘message characteristics’ found during secondary research. To accomplish the objective, interviews have been divided into two parts. The first part of the interview is focused on open-ended questions, wherein ‘three most viral videos of India’ have been showcased to the respondents, to receive expert’s views/opinions (unaided); it is followed up by the second part of the interview, where a close-ended questionnaire presented, wherein professionals must tick message

characteristics (aided response) instrumental in these top three viral videos.

Viral Video Selection

The brand engages with audience on multiple levels, such as 'like', 'comment', and 'share'. What kind of engagement is more beneficial for the brand? The answer to this question changes over time. In earlier times, brands counted on total 'clicks' on the video. More recently, brands started measuring higher engagement like comment and share of the video.

The research in the area of viral video measurement indicated diverse views in this area. As per the Feed report, "Marketers still have not established a yardstick for success. Some 27.8% say a video must get more than one million views to be considered a success, but 22.2% would say so if it was viewed 100,000 times, 250,000 times, or 500,000 times" (FEED Company, 2008). TechCrunch is one of well-known websites and blogs in technology field. In one of the blog-entry in TechCrunch, the author describe in this words "videos that have travelled on the internet and been shared on social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, blogs, etc. – videos with millions and millions of views" (Greenberg, 2007). As per Verticalrail.com, Video analyst argue about the benchmark and believe that benchmark should be 100,000 views, since 53% on videos on YouTube have lesser than 500 views, with fewer than 1% having more than 1 million views. (*What Does "Going Viral" Mean? - "Gone Viral" Defined*, n.d.). For this research, videos posted in India by national and international brands and received more than 1 million views within the first year (from the date of video publication) are considered as viral videos for ranking.

Media as well as research agencies involved in traditional or social media do release a ranking list of popular videos, based on various parameters. Countless agencies are involved in viral video ranking for national and international scale. Here is the list of few video ranking websites: YouTube playlist, www.digitaltrends.com, www.statista.com, and so on. Except these websites, no noteworthy research was found in terms of research paper or article featuring a detailed study of viral videos in India. Few websites portals documented viral video cases on these respective pages (Mansuri, 2018); (Nair, 2016); (Tandon, 2021). The research and observation showcased on these websites is either focus on few viral videos or depicts general trends. There are no significant reports or article work found which presents an inclusive study of viral video advertising in India.

The aim of this research is on videos posted by a company/brand on social networks. The following course of action, has been taken to develop a list of viral video advertising in India.

1. The reports that rank 'leading brands of India' have been reviewed.
2. Based on the research, four brands' reports have been selected for further investigation, based on their depth and credibility.
 - The World's Most Valuable Brands 2020 (*The World's Most Valuable Brands List 2020*, 2020).
 - The World's Most Valuable Brands 2019 (*The World's Most Valuable Brands - 2019 (Forbes) | Ranking The Brands*, 2019)
 - BrandZ Indian 2019 Report (*Brandz Top 75 Most Valuable Indian Brands*, 2019, 2019)
 - Brand Finance India 2019 Report (*The Annual Report on the Most Valuable and Strongest Indian Brands*, 2019)

The first two reports mentioned in the above list refer to the global presence of the brand whereas the last two report ranks Indian brands. These four reports have been reviewed to cover Indian as well as global brands with a digital presence in India. There are brands ranked in more than one reports. After eliminating brands with repeated mention in multiple report, a total of 255 brands have been recognised.

Identifying top brands of India is the first essential step towards viral video study. The next step is to observe and evaluate the social media presence of these brands. To social media platforms, i.e., YouTube and Facebook, have been studied for each of these 255 brands in order the evaluate the virality posted by these brands. The selection of YouTube and Facebook and elimination of rest of the social network platforms are based on the following data:

- YouTube is attracting 40% of global web traffic (Kajarekar, 2019).
- Facebook is having 65.36% of all social media traffic. It has more visits per month than all other leading social networks combined (Byers, 2020).
- YouTube is the 2nd most popular search engine and 2nd most popular social media platform. (Mohsin, 2021).
- YouTube is way ahead in video consumption than its closest competitor Facebook, which used by only 60% of US viewers for videos consumption. In this ranking, Instagram is at 35%, followed by Snapchat and Twitter at 21% and 18%, respectively (Mohsin, 2021).

The next step in the process is to review videos posted by each brand on their YouTube and Facebook



page and separate these videos based on number of views, likes, comments, and shares. In the review process, 455 videos were studied based on the above mentioned criteria.

Number of views on a video is not the only criteria for a video virality. Other factors like number of shares, number of comments also play crucial role in monitoring video virality. These aspects signify the degree of consumer engagement. One of the parameters of a video's success is number of viewing. However, when a viewer or consumer likes a video it characterizes higher engagement than just viewing. If the viewer positive or negative comment on the video, it represents higher level of involvement than just liking. And finally, when viewers share the video it indicates one level higher engagement than liking or commenting on the video.

A list of 'Top 100 most viral video' (in last two years) has been created, based on the number of times a video is shared in social circles. Refer Annexures 1 to 3 to see number of views, likes, comments, and shares of top three viral videos in India.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Seven themes emerged from the responses received from the creative professionals.

- *Theme 1: The alignment of message with value system*

The effectiveness of the message also depends upon the values projected in the video. Viewers would like to view and share it forward if its aligned with his/her value system. This observation marked by a respondent in this words "*it confirms their value system for humanity*". Other respondents referred this observation for the first video and made this statement "*It (Hyundai video) confirms our value system that we love our country. So it is not directly to connecting to viewer about the product. They associate (the video) with the values that you (the viewer) are respecting.*" One more respondents conveyed it this way "*We Indians, even though we are modern and living in contemporary times...still (at the time of) accepting the new things, we respect old values, so whichever communication confirmed our values our ethos, our rituals, good things, positivity.*"

- *Theme 2: Message with universal appeal influence a larger audience.*

The relatability of the message plays a crucial role. If a large audience can connect with the message presented in the video, it increases the chance of more viewing and eventually sharing. For example, message showcased

in the first viral video is stimulating 'patriotism', which resonates with a large population. The second and third videos portray 'mother-daughter relationship'. Parenthood again has a universal appeal and hence high views and virality. This concept of message with universal appeal has been generalized by a respondent in this words "*In India, religion, cricket and country sales*".

- *Theme 3: Message may influence the video virality, but not necessarily the brand.*

At the start of their interview, few respondents answered that they cannot recall any brand video that went viral in last 2 years. And when three top viral video presented to them, few could recall the video. For instance, after watching the first viral video, one respondent conveyed that "*I have seen this video, but was not aware that it's a Hyundai video*". Two other respondents also shared the same experience of 'Good recall of video but no recall of brand'. On the other hand, one respondent appreciates video's ability to acquire 'recall' for the video, even if the recall is only for the message of the video and not for the brand. This insight has been shared in this words "*In the first video, maybe someday I may not remember the brand – but will not forget the story. It's not good (that viewer forget the brand who has created this video) but again, you know at least they (brand) can acquire the mindset*".

- *Theme 4: Message with emotional content and patriotism has high level of influence on viewers*

It is reported that all ten participants responded (aided response) in an interview about the influence of 'message characteristics' on video virality. The degree of impact of message characteristics depends on the message. One respondent connected the idea of emotional appeal and patriotism message by conveying this statement: "*The very two basic things do very well in India. One's emotional content and patriotism.*" Another respondents shared views (for first video) in these words, "*મારા મત મુજબ first message એમ કહે છે કે જો કોઈ દેશની માટે કંઈક કામ કરતું હોય તો તેને first preference આપવો જોઈએ. આપણો આપણું કામ તો ક્યારેક પછી પણ કરી શકીએ, પણ દેશનું કામ વધારે important છે. આ adમાં તો army ની વાત કરે છે પણ કદાચ બીજું કોઈ પણ દેશ માટે કામ કરતું હોય તો એના માટે પણ આપણો time આપવો જોઈએ, એના માટે priority આપવી જોઈએ.*"

- *Theme 5: The degree of resonance and relatability*

The video that resonated with a set of audience gain higher traction. As observed by one respondent "*the*

first and foremost thing that I see is resonance. Is it relatable or not? be in terms of the content or the messaging or the craft of it – is there relatability? ... So I would say this factor really make a video viral.” It is important to notice that respondent is referring to relatability not only towards message but also applicable to other important trait like emotions and craft of video. According another professional relatability is high when a video has ‘emotional appeal’ and ‘social message’ The verbatim is “I think so એમી (in viral video) message બહુ connected હોય છે - તમે તમારી real life સાથે connect કરી શકો છો. મને એવું લાગ્યું કે જેટલી પણ આવી તરણ થી પાંચ minuteની viral થયેલી video હોય એની અંદર છે emotional touching વધારે હોય છે કે પછી કંઈક social message મળતો હોય છે.”

• *Theme 6: Message leading the communication*

In case of TVC and other traditional communication, we see a brand feature product / service to generate awareness or engagement. But the same is not true for Viral video advertising. In viral videos, product/ service is not leading the communication. Simply said, brands don’t push the product/service in viral video. The message of the video is considered more important and the ‘product/service’ is at the back-seat. Brands ensure to focus high on message and very low focus on product/service promotion as it may disinterest the viewer. This insight shared by a respondent in this word “the product is almost on the background, but it really is well integrated into the thing, so they’re they’ve done a series of such CSR with the human interest story primarily,

so it’s about a person”.

The above data reflect the aided response (close ended questionnaire) of advertising professionals. As per the Table 1, ‘Distinctiveness (Original content)’ and ‘utility’ perceived as most important ‘message characteristics’ for a viral video making. Top two characteristics followed by five factors in the descending order of influence. i.e. Inspired from real life events/Values, Encourage participation, Topical content in message, Corporate Storytelling, Social Message.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES/ CONTRIBUTIONS

Results of this research enables those who want to distribute messages/information by utilising social networking platforms. First, this research shares insights on video virality traits, which helps in selection of ‘message characteristics’. A detailed study on impact of ‘message characteristics’ on viral video advertising is what makes this study distinct and new.

Some research intends to evaluate the impact of sound, plot, and engagement quotient; this research focuses on evaluating at impact of message characteristics on viral video advertising. There are different reasons for a viewer to share video content with social circles, like message, emotion, humour, and so on. However, it is essential to comprehend that viewers are not always conscious of how the message characteristics influencing them to share the video forward. After exploring the advertising professionals’

Table 1: Showcases participants’ responses to a close-ended questionnaire. It characterises the message characteristics i.e. video creation. utility, distinctiveness, encourage participation, topical content in message, social message, inspired from real life events/values, corporate storytelling across top three viral video shared with them

Video 1		Video 2		Video 3		Total (Out of 30 responses)
Message Characteristics	Response (out of 10)	Message Characteristics	Response (out of 10)	Message Characteristics	Response (out of 10)	
Distinctiveness (Originality)	6	Distinctiveness (Originality)	7	Distinctiveness (Originality)	7	20
Topical content in message	3	Utility	6	Utility	6	13
Corporate Storytelling	3	Topical content in message	2	Inspired from real life events/Values	3	7
Social Message	2	Social Message	2	Encourage participation	2	7
Utility	1	Inspired from real life events/Values	2	Topical content in message	2	6
Encourage participation	1	Corporate Storytelling	2	Corporate Storytelling	2	5
Inspired from real life events/Values	1	Encourage participation	1	Social Message	1	4



views and opinions on viral video advertising, this research could be used as a decent guide for professionals.

Implications for Practice

This research is contributing as a scientific study of message characteristics, which is useful to brands for the selection of right message factors in making of a video with high viral quotient. For academicians and researchers, the research helps in understanding the motives behind viral video sharing. The research is contributing views/ insights of creative professionals involved in making viral videos. Better insights into these characteristics helps marketers create engaging content and creates win-win situations for both marketers and consumers/viewers.

LIMITATIONS

- The advertising professionals (interviewed) are not directly involved in making of top three viral videos. The research sample comprises creative professionals from advertising agency and production studio who are involved in the creation of videos, but not necessarily the creator of the most viral videos of India.
- This study attempted research for the impact of message characteristics on viral video advertising. However, it must be acknowledged that the research offers views and opinions of sample's perceptions. The outcome of the research should be considered suggestive.
- In terms of representation, the brands are top brands in their market, spending a considerable budget on advertising on an annual basis. While these factors made the brands suitable subjects, it is important to note that the results are based on professionals' perceptions and experiences towards a set of viral videos posted by leading brands.
- A qualitative study is based on the researcher's understanding of the research data. Care should be taken in generalising the research outcomes.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE SCOPE OF WORK

Message characteristics is one of the decisive factors in the making of a viral video. Each message characteristic has varied degrees of influence. Thus, video virality partially relies on the selection of message characteristics and the degree of weightage of specific message(s) in the video. A large audience influence by video with message characteristics like universal message (like

patriotism or parental relationship), alignment with value system, corporate storytelling and hence have higher chances of virality. At the same time, it's also crucial to understand that viral videos focus more focus on storytelling / message than product / service promotion.

The present study recommends following four directions for further research.

- The research supports the view that message characteristics needs to be assessed from the view of creative advertising professionals who are instrumental in video creation.
- This study is dedicated to evaluating the influence of message characteristics on viral video advertising. It can be applied to other forms of interactive advertising and promotion tools too.
- This research reviews viral video advertising; further research could be conducted to evaluate the impact of message characteristics on a specific dimension like brand equity, consumer engagement, and purchase intention.
- It was obvious from the research that definitions of viral video advertising are rather imperfect, multiple, and do not offer a tangible measure for advertising professionals.

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Annexure 1

<i>Name of the first ranked viral video:</i>	<i>Hyundai Celebrating 20 Years of Brilliant Moments Duty</i>		
Name of the brand:	Hyundai India		
Published date:	17-Jul-18		
Popularity rank:	1		
The popularity of the video over leading Social media platforms			
	<i>YouTube</i>	<i>Facebook</i>	<i>Total</i>
Link	https://youtu.be/cJ1kUHRhk0A	https://www.facebook.com/HyundailIndia/videos/1773003189444098/	-
Duration of video	171	172	-
Number of shares	NA	209000	209000
Number of comments on the video	7471	17000	24471
Number of likes	191000	384000	575000
Number of views	203,214,165	37000000	240,214,165
Comments on video uploading	-	-	-

Source: Compiled from YouTube and Facebook, March 2021



Annexure 2

<i>Name of the Second-ranked viral video:</i>	<i>Samsung Bixby Voice Assistant-MND mother helps daughter with #VoiceForever</i>		
Name of the brand:	Samsung India		
Published date:	13-Sep-18		
Popularity rank:	2		
The popularity of the video over leading Social media platforms			
	<i>YouTube</i>	<i>Facebook</i>	<i>Total</i>
Link	https://youtu.be/5OhJ00an0ml	https://www.facebook.com/SamsungIndia/videos/301818797268218/	-
Duration of video	178	179	-
Number of shares	NA	180000	180000
Number of comments on the video	10281	20000	30281
Number of likes	155000	1400000	1555000
Number of views	201,515,465	99000000	300,515,465
Comments on video uploading	-	-	-

Source: Compiled from YouTube and Facebook, March 2021

Annexure 3

<i>Name of the third-ranked viral video:</i>	<i>Samsung India Good Vibes App: Caring for the Possibilities</i>		
Name of the brand:	Samsung India		
Published date:	8-Sep-19		
Popularity rank:	3		
The popularity of the video over leading Social media platforms			
	<i>YouTube</i>	<i>Facebook</i>	<i>Total</i>
Link	https://youtu.be/9djutxpXaQE	https://www.facebook.com/SamsungIndia/videos/1130343187173439/	-
Duration of video	180	180	-
Number of shares	NA	127000	127000
Number of comments on the video	3432	36000	39432
Number of likes	130000	1900000	2030000
Number of views	205,284,778	86000000	291,284,778
Comments on video uploading	-	-	-

Source: Compiled from YouTube and Facebook, March 2021