

A STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING YOUTUBE SEO IN 2020

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Abstract- YouTube is the most successful online video sharing platform. Millions of users come on this platform to see informative, funny, motivational etc. videos. There are millions of creators present on this platform who make videos on similar topics. Thousands of videos are available on this platform on the same topic. When viewers search on YouTube regarding their query, they will see only a few videos on the first search result page. Videos on the first page gain most of the views. Hence it is important to be at top rankings of the first search result page. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a technique to bring the video in higher rankings on the first page. This research paper discusses about various factors which affects the SEO of YouTube in 2020.

Key words- YouTube SEO, YouTube ranking factors, Search Engine Optimization for YouTube videos

Introduction:

YouTube is the second most popular social media platform after Google. It has 2 billion active users all over the world (1). It is the top engaging & entertaining video sharing & video consumption platform available today. People from all age groups watch videos on YouTube.

As YouTube has a large number of users, number of marketers are attracted towards the platform. Marketers prefer to upload videos regarding the products and services, offers, discounts, features etc.

Till a few years back, there were few video creators on this platform. Any uploaded video used to get attention by the viewers. But today's scenario is altogether different. Large numbers of video creators are putting their work on YouTube and many marketers are considering YouTube for promotion of their products & services. This has created a competition among the video creators to be in the top list of videos so that maximum viewers can watch their videos.

If you want that your video to be in top 3 or top 5 then focusing on SEO is very important. This research paper focuses on various SEO factors important to rank the video in 2020.

Literature Review

Meng Cui, Songyun Hu (2011) studied search engine optimization concept and tools for promotion of websites.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a process developed and adopted by search engines which improves the search performance of users. Various tools such as Keyword tool, Link tool, Usability tool etc. are useful in SEO (2).

Krishna Choudhari, Vinod K Bhalla (2015) researched about the search engine optimization of videos with the help of keyword and feature analysis. For video SEO keyword research, video tags, title, description, video transcript, thumbnail, annotations are important. These all points should be considered before publishing or while publishing the video. Views, shares, comments, channel authority etc. points should be considered after publishing the video (3).

Y.K. Sharma, Atharva Ashthaputre, Vishal Jaiswal, Anvay Joshi, Shah Ali Raza Zaidi (2019) discussed the effect of sentiment analysis on SEO of YouTube. YouTube search mainly focuses on keywords. It also focuses on likes, dislikes, number of subscribers, view count, watch time etc. YouTube does not consider the sentiment of the comments provided by the viewers.(4)

Gokhan Egri, Coskun Bayrak (2014) discussed the importance of search engine optimization from a website point of view. Search engines have considered it as an important source of information. Search engines provide the right information to the right user at the right time. As the competition is increased between creators, it is important to use search engine optimization for higher search engine rankings (5).

Nursel Yalcm, Utku Kose (2010) discussed the basic meaning of search engine optimization. The Internet has millions of users as well as millions of creators. When any user searches on any search engine for a query then there are thousands of search results appear on it. Users generally go through the search results on the first page of the search engine. Users generally go through only first five results (6).

Sergiu Chelaru, Claudia Orellana- Rodriguez, Ismail Sengor Altıngövd (2013) discusses about the usefulness of social feedbacks for ranking video. Top rank videos for any search has high number of like and dislikes. Top rank videos have more views. That means videos in higher ranks have more viewer engagement. YouTube and Google have similar nature of search trend for any query (7).

Xu Cheng, Cameron Dhale, Jiangchuan Liu (2008) discussed that viewers can view the video on YouTube platform without logging in but for commenting and rating they have to login. So, comments show the more user engagement. Views are in large numbers but rating and comments are in comparatively less. This shows that viewers are more interested in watching the video than rating and commenting on it (8).

Objectives:

- To learn about Search Engine Optimization
- To explore & identify the factors affecting YouTube SEO

Research Methodology

This is an exploratory research where researcher has explored various factors which affect YouTube SEO.

Scope

There are various video sharing platforms but this research paper focuses on YouTube only. Similarly, the SEO concept is applicable for websites as well as videos. This research focuses on SEO of YouTube videos only.

Important Factors/Enablers Identification

As an outcome of literature review, researcher has identified Ten important factors which make impact on YouTube SEO in 2020.

Sr. No	Factor	Source
E1	Keyword Research	Krishna Choudhari, Vinod K Bhalla (2015)
E2	Tags	Krishna Choudhari, Vinod K Bhalla (2015)
E3	Length of Video	Y.K. Sharma, Atharva Ashthaputre, Vishal Jaiswal, Anvay Joshi, Shah Ali Raza Zaidi (2019)
E4	Competition	Brian Dean (2020)
E5	Click Through Rate	Brian Dean (2020)
E6	Audience Retention	Y.K. Sharma, Atharva Ashthaputre, Vishal Jaiswal, Anvay Joshi, Shah Ali Raza Zaidi (2019)
E7	Like, Comment & Share	Y.K. Sharma, Atharva Ashthaputre, Vishal Jaiswal, Anvay Joshi, Shah Ali Raza Zaidi (2019)
E8	Video Description	Krishna Choudhari, Vinod K
E9	Closed Caption	Krishna Choudhari, Vinod K
E10	Keep Viewers on YouTube	Sam Oh (2020)

Relationship Building Among Factors Relationships among different factors which are considered for the study are mentioned in Table number 1. Researcher has considered opinion of various experts in this field regarding the factors.

VAXO Model is used for comparing factors pair wise. Relationship existence and relationship direction is produced by the discussion done with experts. Two factors are denoted by character 'i, j'. Following symbols are used to give the relationship

1. V - When i leads to j but j doesn't lead to i
2. A - When i doesn't lead to j but j leads to i
3. X - When both i & j are unrelated
4. - When i & j lead to each other

Use of Structural Self Interaction Matrix is done from all factors considered for the study. Pair wise interaction is shown in the table-1:

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	Driving Power
E1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	6
E2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
E3	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	6
E4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
E5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	3
E6	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	5
E7	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	7
E8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
E9	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	5
E10	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
Dependence Power	2	7	7	2	7	4	6	7	7	7	56

E1- Keyword Research, E2 - Tags, E3 - Length of Video, E4 – Competition, E5 - Click Through Rate, E6 - Audience Retention, E7 - Like, Comment & Share, E8 - Video Description, E9 - Closed Caption, E10 - Keep Viewers on YouTube.

Final Reachability Matrix: Table-2

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	Driving Power
E1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	6
E2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
E3	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	6
E4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
E5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	3
E6	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	5
E7	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	7
E8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
E9	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	5
E10	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
Dependence Power	2	7	7	2	7	4	6	7	7	7	56

Level Matrix: Table-3

Enabler	Level
E8	1
E5, E10	2
E6, E9	3
E1, E3	4
E7	5
E2	6
E4	7

As indicated in table -3, E8 is level one enabler whereas E4 is having level7.

SEO

What is SEO?

SEO is a short form of 'Search Engine Optimization'. When we search any keyword on any search engine then that search engine ranks the results of that keyword.

Search Engine Optimization is Optimization of your website, video etc. so that it will come in the higher rank on search engines (9).

'SEO for YouTube' in simple words is the marketing practices or tactics a creator follows so that the video appears in higher ranks of YouTube search.

Why is SEO important on YouTube? Three hundred hours of video content is uploaded on YouTube every hour (10). This means there is a huge competition between various video creators.

Thousands of video options are available for a single keyword. Whenever anyone searches for a particular keyword then thousands of videos appear on YouTube. Viewers generally click on top ranking videos.

So, it is important to rank the video in the top five. For ranking the video, SEO is very important. Marketer/ Video Creator can rank the video with the help of SEO.

Factors affecting the YouTube SEO Achieving the high ranking is not an easy task. Top video creators & marketers around the world try to achieve top position on YouTube.

Many factors are responsible for higher rankings/ SEO on YouTube. Following are some of the main factors affecting YouTube SEO in 2020.

Keyword Research:

Keyword research is the most important point in YouTube SEO. Marketers should identify various terms (which are considered as 'Keywords') which viewers search on YouTube. Videos should be created around Keywords. Keywords should be used in the video, video title, tags etc. Exact match as well as similar keywords should be used in a video.

While considering the keywords for video, keyword search volume should be considered. Keywords with few search volumes will give few views. So, keywords should be substantial search volume. Keyword search volume can be found with the help of various paid tools such as Ahrefs.com, Semrush.com. Keyword ideas can be freely identified with

the help of YouTube suggested videos. Popular videos in the same niche can be viewed to find keywords for free (11).

While creating any new video first important point should be taken care is the 'Keyword Research'. Keyword should be researched with keyword research tools and competition should be identified for the keyword. If competition is high for the keyword then it will be difficult to rank the video. So, an alternative keyword should be identified.

The video should be built around the keyword and it should genuinely contain information related to the keyword. Multiple keywords can be used in a single video but it is recommended to use only few keywords in a single video.

Tags:

Tags are the terms or words video creators/marketers use in the description of YouTube videos (12). YouTube allows multiple tags for every video. Five to eight tags should be used for each video for optimization (13). Tags should be related to video, so that YouTube can send a particular traffic searching for the video regarding the tags.

Tags can be copied from competitor videos with the help of some paid tools such as yutubetool.com, tubebuddy.com

After creating the video tags should be identified. Tags should be related to video which can give indication to YouTube about the topic of video. Tags should be related to the search queries which people usually search on the YouTube when they want to watch a particular video. Adding popular tags which are not related to the video must be avoided as it will give wrong indication to YouTube algorithm. Wrong tags will increase the bounce rate of the video.

Length of Video:

YouTube is a video sharing platform which allows creators to upload videos of any length. Videos with short length are generally considered as less informative. Hence YouTube generally prefers and ranks videos with longer length (14).

Creator should consider this point while creating the videos. The video should contain in depth information so that it will be of more length and more informative. Unnecessary increasing the length of video should be avoided because this will lose the interest of viewers and search rankings may go down.

Video creator should identify topics which can justice to a long video. Small length videos should be avoided as it is less

preferred by the YouTube. Video should have in depth information and the viewer should get the satisfaction after watching the video. Unnecessarily increasing the length of video should be avoided as it will lower the audience retention.

Competition:

Competition in the niche or competition for a keyword is very important in SEO. If the keyword has high competition then it is difficult to rank the video, a huge amount of effort is required to rank the video. If the keyword has low competition then it is comparatively easy to rank the video. So, creators should first analyze the competition in the niche and competition for the particular keyword. Keyword competition can be analyzed with the help of paid YouTube SEO tools such as Keywordtool.io, Kparser, and Keyword Keg (15). It's always recommended to start with low competition keywords. After certain experience of video creation, the creator can go for high competition keywords.

Competition should be analyzed before making the video. It is easy to dominate in the less competition hence first preference should be given to less competitive niches. It is not impossible to rank high in more competitive keywords. High end video quality, good quality sound recording, low bounce rate, high Click Through Rate etc. can rank the video even if in high competition.

Click Through Rate (CTR):

Click Through Rate is one of the most important SEO factors on YouTube. It is shown in percentage value. CTR is the percentage of viewers click on your video when it is shown to them as search results. If CTR is low then YouTube considers it as a negative factor & lower the video rankings (16).

So, it is important to have a good Click Through Rate for every video. That means your video should appear in the search results as well as it should be clicked by a maximum number of viewers.

To get maximum CTR, creators should focus on the thumbnail & title of video. The thumbnail is a picture or video icon which represents the video (17). Thumbnails should be attractive, clear and customized. Viewers should be tempted to click on the thumbnail after seeing it. Title should be self-explanatory. Viewers should be able to guess about the video after reading the title. Main keyword should be mentioned in the title which gives a positive sign to YouTube.

To achieve high CTR the title & thumbnail should be attractive. No 'Click bait' should be used. The title and thumbnail should be related to the video and should not make any false claims.

Audience Retention:

Audience retention is the percentage of video watched by the viewers. It is in the percentage value (18). Viewers have tendency to leave the video in between and jump on any other video. This gives low retention. If viewers see the maximum length of video then that gives a high retention rate. To get maximum retention it is important that the video should do the justice to the expectations of the viewers. If viewers find that the video is not providing the information as per expectations then viewers leave the video.

The creator should take care that video should be in line with the title and keywords. If the viewer finds that title is different from the video content then viewers will leave the video. Thumbnail should not be Click bait (false claims). It has been observed that click bait thumbnails give low audience retention.

To achieve high audience retention, the video should be made more engaging. Value should be provided to the viewer throughout the video. Viewer should not feel bored while watching the video. Some surprise elements can be added in between or at the end of the video. This will motivate the viewers to watch the video till end.

Like, Comment and Share:

If viewers hit the like button after watching the video then it gives the indication to YouTube algorithm that viewers are linking the video content & the video appears in more search results.

If viewers comment on the video or share the video that means viewers are engaging with the video. That means the video has engaging content. So, visibility of video will increase in more search results at higher rankings (19).

It is observed that viewers don't like, comment and share the video themselves (20). So, it is advised to ask the viewers to like, comment & share.

Viewers should be told by the creator to like, shares the video and to comments on the video. Innovative methods such as asking questions, experiences related to the video can increase the likes, comments and shares of the video.

Video Description:

Video Description is the description provided by the creator about the video. It is in the written format. It will help the viewers to judge the video and they can make the decision whether to watch the video.

While writing the description it is useful to use keywords in it. Keywords can appear multiple times in the description. Video creators can set the mindset of viewers about the video with the description. The description should be natural and easy to understand for the viewers. The descriptions should not be written only considering the YouTube algorithm (21).

Video description should give information about the video. Video description must have few keywords related to the video. Exact match keywords related to the video can rank the video fast. So, creators should avoid using broad keywords and should use exact match keywords.

Closed Captions

YouTube algorithm cannot watch or listen to the video. It ranks the videos on the basis of the text associated with the video. Adding Closed Caption can be a good SEO strategy to make the video search worthy.

Closed Captions are useful in terms of mobile phone video viewers. Closed Captions can be more helpful in the case of audio disturbance for viewers (22).

Creators should involve closed captions in all of their videos. Close caption will make an ease for YouTube algorithm to identify the topic and content of the video. It will give boost in ranking.

Keep Viewers on YouTube

It is very logical that YouTube will prefer the videos which keep the viewers on the platform (23). If any video motivates the viewers to go on another platform after watching the video then it can be a loss- making proposal for YouTube.

If viewers remain on YouTube then they will watch more videos, more ads shown to the viewers and more revenue will be generated by YouTube.

Creators should try to engage and keep the viewers on the YouTube platform. If videos motivate viewers to go to another platform after watching video then it will be a negative factor for YouTube. So, creator can refer the viewers to other videos made by him/her. This will keep the viewer

on the platform and also improve viewership of YouTube channel.

Conclusion

YouTube is a very competitive but second biggest search engine hence marketers/content creators cannot avoid it. Merely recording and uploading video on YouTube will not guarantee the views. The video may be lost among millions of other competitive videos. Hence it is important to consider search engine optimization for the videos.

Keyword researching should be done properly. Keywords with high competition or keyword difficulty should be avoided initially. Competitors should be analyzed closely. If the competitors are of high authority then it should be avoided to compete directly with them on same keywords. Rather than that some similar keywords should be considered for making Videos.

Tags should be used in limit. Tags should give proper indication to YouTube algorithm. Best way to use the tags is to analyze it from competitor's videos. Click Through rate should be maintained by the title, thumbnail in line with video content. Video description also need to give correct information regarding the video and should not mislead the viewers. All of this will ensure the audience retention. Audience retention will be considered as a positive sign by YouTube algorithm and the video will be recommended to more viewers.

With the help of 'Search Engine Optimization' Techniques in this research paper, high video rankings can be achieved on YouTube in 2020.

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