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When Beauty is More Than Skin Deep: A Content Analysis of Popular Beauty YouTubers' Video Strategies

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When Beauty is More Than Skin Deep:

A Content Analysis of Popular Beauty YouTubers' Video Strategies

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A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Media and Communication

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Brand and Media Strategy

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by

Kristen Jones

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Keywords: YouTube, Beauty Influencer, Mediated Communication, Content Analysis,

Parasocial Interaction Theory, Framing Theory

ABSTRACT

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The beauty community on YouTube is a popular outlet for influencer generated video content. Beauty YouTubers provide their viewers with makeup-related videos from tutorials to the latest trends on the platform. As a result, the influencers have gained high subscriber counts that generate revenue through advertisements and brand partnerships. The influencers create relationships with their subscribers that lead to loyalty in the form of video views and merchandise purchasing. This study provides a content analysis of common characteristics within 10 popular beauty YouTubers' videos examining the strategies used by the influencers. The top five videos from each beauty YouTuber were selected resulting in a total of 50 videos analyzed. Parasocial Interaction and Framing theories were the theoretical frameworks for this study. The results of this study indicated a series of commonly used characteristics within the most popular videos posted by the top beauty influencers on YouTube.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband, Eli Bare, who walks beside me through any challenge I might face. His love and compassion inspire and motivate me to be a better partner, student, and human being. Eli, thank you for your words of encouragement and never-ending support. Words cannot express my love and appreciation for you.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

YouTube is a form of mediated communication that receives over a billion hours of video views each day and is only growing in popularity ("YouTube in Numbers," n.d.). The beauty community on YouTube has massively contributed to the video view count of YouTube as a whole with beauty content earning 125 billion views to date ("Digital Makeover," n.d.). As consumer trust switches from traditional sources to social media and video-based sources, the need for product reviews on YouTube continues to increase (Wright, 2017). Viewers seek out YouTube videos as a means of relaxation and entertainment while also using the platform to influence their purchase decisions (Think with Google, n.d.). Beauty influencers are proving their worth as their videos accumulate millions of video views and subsequently millions of dollars in advertisement revenue and brand deals.

Beauty YouTubers have multiple sources of income that are generated from their activity on the platform. Their success results in revenue through Google AdSense, Patreon, affiliate links, merchandise, and brand deals ("Evan Edinger," 2017). Brand partnerships alone create opportunities to gain income through product launches, sponsored collaborations, and viewer giveaways (Quan, 2017). This level of success is desired by many beauty YouTubers, but only acquired by few. To reach success and popularity on YouTube, beauty YouTubers strategically edit their videos and include certain techniques.

This thesis provides an analysis of common strategies utilized in 50 videos posted by 10 of the top beauty YouTubers on the social media platform. The strategies are listed and explained in the following categories: Video Type, Messaging Techniques, Design Techniques, and Viewer Engagement. These characteristics of beauty videos are employed by the popular beauty

YouTubers who have earned trust, credibility, and loyalty amongst their followers, creating

successful channels and careers for themselves.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Mediated Communication Defined

Franklin Fearing proposed that there are four generalized situations of communication based on the consistent behavior patterns within interactions (Fearing, 1962). None of the proposed situations mentioned any form of media involvement. Seeing an inadequacy in the communication typology at the time, Robert Cathcart and Gary Gumpert (1983) proposed that media be included in communication definitions moving forward. Cathcart and Gumpert (1983) used the term "mediated interpersonal communication" to define the newly determined category of technology-based mediums that assist in the communication from one individual to another.

During this time in the early 80s, more and more researchers became aware of the hole in communication theories from the lack of mentions of media. Rice and Williams (1984) were some of the first to begin researching where the new technology fit into the previously established theories. They began their analysis by researching the topic interpersonally, organizationally, and institutionally (Rice & Williams 1984). Through their research and review of previous theories, they came to the conclusion that mediated communication should not simply be compared to the traditional forms of media, rather it should take on a new form of study of communication research that allows new analysis and theories to be created (Rice & Williams, 1984).

By the 1990s, researchers began to realize that technology was becoming a necessary integration into society. As the technological advances occurred, a new communication environment was created known as Computer Mediated Communication (Riva & Galimberti, 1997). Through this new interactive media, a social space emerged known as Cyberspace. Within this Cyberspace, Riva & Galimberti (1997) uncovered and defined three psychosocial roots –

networked reality, virtual conversation, and identity construction. Within Cyberspace, subjects interact with one another, creating "a convincing simulation of the physical presence of the other" (Riva & Galimberti, 1997, p. 156). The benefits of this interaction are the creation of a new sense of self and control, which collectively form a community. While the sense of physical presence was an impressive feature of the new form of Computer Mediated Communication, the lack of visual facial recognition introduced the problem of online impersonation (Riva & Galimberti, 1997).

Social Media as a Mediated Communication

A form of mediated communication, social media are online platforms that promote communication and entertainment through shared content (Kietzmann et al., 2011). The platforms can be web based or applications downloaded directly to devices for easy access. These platforms include but are not limited to Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat. Even though the overall function of social media is to bring users together to share content, there are different characteristics of social media that make them all unique. LinkedIn is a social media that is focused on business connections, while YouTube is a platform for sharing a specific type of content (Kietzmann et al., 2011). The one commonality between the different popular social media platforms is that users are flocking to the sites. In 2019, approximately 70% of Americans reported using some form of social media (Perrin & Anderson, 2019).

Though individuals report various motivations for using the platforms, the most frequently reported include passing time, connecting with others, and staying up to date on news and social information (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Additionally, social media allows users to present whatever image of themselves online that they wish through self-disclosure (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The desire to influence the online opinion of themselves is often led by a hope

to please others and also to encourage wide spread belief of the identity they are portraying (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

As the internet and social media have continued to gain popularity over the years, brands quickly realized how the new technology was going to impact their company. Social media allows for vocal and widespread expression of beliefs that can have a less than desirable impact on a brand's image. Brands are now forced to take a back seat while real people create user generated content on social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Customers value the opinions shared through user generated content and search for it online before purchasing products.

The history of YouTube. YouTube was launched in 2005 by three PayPal employees, Jawed Karim, Steven Chen, and Chad Hurley, who wanted to create a central location for video sharing (X, 2016). They came up with the idea for the website in 2004 after the Janet Jackson Super Bowl incident and the later tsunami in December, which left audiences unable to publicly share videos of both occurrences. The first video uploaded to the website was titled "Me at the Zoo" and was posted by one of the founders, Jawed Karim (X, 2016, para. 2). The first video to reach one million views was a Nike commercial featuring a Brazilian soccer player that was uploaded in the same month the website officially launched (X, 2016). Noticing the quick growth of the website and the popularity of videos being posted, Google purchased YouTube for $1.65 billion after less than a year of the website being up and running. As YouTube expanded to other countries and increased the qualities available for uploads, users began to find a wide variety of uses for the website including vlogging and gaming (X, 2016).

Today, "over 2 billion logged-in users visit YouTube each month, and every day people watch over a billion hours of video and generate billions of views" ("YouTube in Numbers," n.d., Global Reach section). The reach of YouTube is high and even comparative to Facebook's,

with 73% of adults reporting previous use of the site (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). The largest demographic watching YouTube videos is 18 to 34-year-olds and more than 70% of the views are watched through mobile devices ("YouTube in Numbers," n.d.). The influencer marketing agency Mediakix analyzed the top videos on YouTube based on view counts and engagement to construct a list of the most popular types of videos ("The 16 Most," 2019). Some of the top categories of videos are commentaries, product reviews, how-to/tutorials, and top lists ("The 16 Most," 2019). Relaxation and entertainment are the two most popular reasons viewers report watching YouTube (Think with Google, n.d.). In addition to those two reasons for watching YouTube, 68% of YouTube viewers report using the platform to aid in their future purchase decisions (Think with Google, n.d.). As video popularity continues to grow, so does the success of YouTubers. YouTube reported that "the number of channels earning six figures per year on YouTube grew more than 40%" and "the number of channels with more than one million subscribers grew by more than 65%" ("YouTube in Numbers," n.d., Investing in Creators section).

Theoretical Framework

Parasocial interaction theory. Horton and Wohl (1956) were the first to introduce the term "para-social interaction" with their publication "Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction: Observations on Intimacy at a Distance." They defined parasocial interaction as being an imagined face-to-face relationship with a character as a result of mass media. This illusion is one-sided, and the recipient of these feelings is completely unaware unless the individual has gone to great lengths to have their feelings heard. Horton and Wohl also described how the actor's behavior controls the strength of the parasocial interaction. The more the actor obviously speaks, looks, or moves towards the audience, the more likely the audience is to feel

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like the character is actually speaking to them. These actions of the character reinforce the parasocial interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956).

Parasocial interaction was defined in reference to mass media, but there has always been a focus on television where viewers can visually follow the life of a character. In his study, Jonathan Cohen (2004) examined how people would react to their favorite television characters no longer being on the show, while also searching for a link to attachment theory. Cohen found that these parasocial relationship break ups have similar effects to actual relationships. Television viewers who are categorized as being anxiously attached are more likely to feel a strong level of involvement with their parasocial relationships and are also more concerned with the possibility of these relationships ending (Cohen, 2004).

While mass media is seen as being the reason behind parasocial interaction, these relationships were forming before types of mass media had even been created. Public figures, gods, political figures, and anyone else who had been in the spotlight for a period of time, were subject to having the people listening to them create parasocial interactions. The media increases the rate these interactions are formed, but anyone who receives enough attention and shares enough information about themselves is likely to have someone create a parasocial relationship to them. Parasocial interaction was originally believed to be a result of a lack of interaction with others until it was later determined that it is a natural result of viewing those in the spotlight (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The formation of these relationships has always been unconscious, until people began to realize how powerful they can be.

Once the discovery was made that parasocial interactions can be strong and have equally strong impacts on a person, brands began to use these interactions as a marketing strategy. In their study, Xiang, Zheng, Lee, and Zhao (2016) explain how brands are utilizing social

commerce platforms in conjunction with parasocial interactions to increase sales. Pinterest is an example of one of these platforms where brands are sharing pictures and communicating with followers to give the illusion of friendship. As a result, consumers are more likely to make purchases, promote products, and have an emotional investment in the company (Xiang et al., 2016). In a similar study, Labrecque (2014) discussed the tactics being used by brands to create parasocial interactions with their followers on social media. She found that brands' interactions with consumers, which are sometimes automated, can cause followers to feel connected and even loyal to that brand. Those positive feelings towards the interaction are quickly dissipated once the consumer realizes that they received an automated response and not one from a human (Labrecque, 2014).

Using parasocial interaction theory as a marketing tactic is becoming widely known to the point that it is not just brands who are using it to sell their products. It has become a popular tactic used today by YouTubers for purposes of self-promotion (Chen, 2014). Labrecque (2014) noted that interactivity and openness were two main factors that foster parasocial relationships. These YouTubers speak directly to their viewers and edit their videos to make sure they are presenting themselves in an ideal manner. The comments section underneath every video allows for viewers to leave feedback and ask questions directly to the content creator they are watching. This line of communication promotes the parasocial interactions by acting as a direct line of perceive interactivity. Using openness as a strategy involves revealing personal information to the viewers with the intent of building intimacy and trust, imitating an actual friendship (Labrecque, 2014). It is beneficial for the YouTubers to create and maintain these parasocial interactions because their fame will rise with their increased views and communications (Chen, 2014). The YouTubers who have reached a high fame level tend to also sell merchandise with

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their channel name or personal branding on it. This also provides them with encouragement to maintain the parasocial interactions. Bo Burnham (2016) openly admitted to his knowledge and advocation of parasocial interactions during a live performance that he later uploaded on his YouTube channel. In the performance he directly responds to an audience member who shouts the words "I love you" at Burnham. In response, Burnham exclaims, "You love the idea of me, you don't know me, but that's okay. It's called a parasocial relationship. It goes one way and it's ultimately destructive. But please, keep buying all my shit forever" (Burnham, 2016).

Marketing schemes and Youtubers building their fame are just two ways parasocial interaction theory is being used today. Of course, as Horton and Wohl (1956) originally explained, television continues to be one of the top platforms for creating parasocial interactions with viewers. Television, movies, radio, books and even sports are all seen as opportunities for parasocial interactions to be built and then profited off of. These parasocial interactions then open up the opportunity to sell merchandise related to the characters, celebrities, and athletes that the following surrounds. Parasocial interaction theory is also being used today through social media. Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have all become platforms for parasocial interactions to occur. Social media allows users to constantly check in on celebrities, influencers, or even just normal people they have never met. This view inside their life causes parasocial relationships to form, but the ability to communicate with followers on social media is starting to blur the line between what is a parasocial interaction and a normal interaction.

Framing theory. Erving Goffman first introduced framing theory in his 1974 book, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience,* where he stated that individuals have primary frameworks used for situation interpretation (Goffman, 1974). Based on the situation that arises, the frameworks drive how the event is framed inside the individual's mind,

influencing how it is then processed. The media is known for taking advantage of this knowledge and using it to shape public opinion by strategically framing the news to produce the desired effect (de Vreese, 2005).

Framing is also present on social media. Social platforms and the anonymity of the internet allow users to create their online identities, even if that means altering their actual selves. In an attempt to connect with a favorable group of people online, an individual will frame their identity so that it appears they share similar values with the group members (Seyranian, 2014). By framing their social identity, it is also possible for social media users to become leaders in online environments through this method. To become a leader, the individual employs a series of communication tactics to engage the group while also earning their trust. They must first display characteristics and values of the ingroup to fit the ideal prototype that has been constructed by group members (Seyranian, 2014). Once labeled as a member of the ingroup, the individual begins to emerge as a leader by vocally defining who members of the ingroup are and what characteristics they possess. The leader can now enact change by framing their vision and values to align with the group's (Seyranian, 2014). Alternatively, a lack of perceived incompatibility from the group members will result in rejection of the ideas (Seyranian, 2014).

Social media influencers are seen as online leaders in their individual categories of expertise. Influencers provide product reviews that sway the audience's opinion towards the belief that is framed (Nandagiri & Philip, 2018). Through images and videos, social media influencers frame their lives and opinions shared with followers while simultaneously physically placing the content in a frame that does not allow for what is beyond the frame to be seen. The use of framing by social media influencers creates the idea of a perfect life. Followers and subscribers are only exposed to the perfectly posed images and videos that have been edited to

remove mistakes and retakes. Because of the ability to edit and frame the scene, influencers are able to tailor their persona and messaging to fit the interests of the viewers. Some YouTubers have taken their framing capabilities too far and have been accused of over editing their videos to the point of lacking personality. As a result, more YouTubers are including blooper reels at the end of their videos to show a level of authenticity.

The Influencers of Social Media

  Micro-influencers. Micro-influencers are named because of their smaller follower count that is below 100,000 (Dhanik, 2016). This group of influencers is commonly known as being "normal" people and most of them have around 10,000 followers or less (Hatton, 2018). Because of their smaller following, micro-influencers are more connected with their followers and have a more targeted fan base (Dhanik, 2016). It is easier for brands to get into contact with these influencers because their inbox is not as congested as celebrities' and they are often cheaper to partner with. HelloSociety, an agency that partners with influencers for campaigns, found that the micro-influencers they partnered with produced 60% higher engagement than their other campaigns, making it more beneficial for marketers to partner with them over more popular influencers (Main, 2017). There are still risks to partnering with influencers with smaller followings. Marketers run the risk of struggling to find the right influencer for their brand, they have less control over what the influencer says, and they will be managing more influencers to compensate for the smaller following (Dhanik, 2016).

  Macro-influencers. Macro-influencers have a greater following than micro-influencers, with follower counts entering the hundreds of thousands and even millions (Dhanik, 2016). These influencers are not considered "normal" like micro-influencers. Macro-influencers are famous, whether they are celebrities or in the limelight because of their success on social media,

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they are definitely well known (Hatton, 2018). The greatest benefit of partnering with a macro-influencer is the potential volume of followers the post will reach. When partnering with a macro-influencer, brands tend to have more control over what they post, giving the brand the ability to create the image they are wanting to portray to the audience (Hatton, 2018). It is also much easier for brands to track their return on investment from macro-influencer led campaigns by being able to simply monitor specific posts and promotional codes used (Hatton, 2018). Much like micro-influencers, macro-influencers also have several downsides to partnering with them. Followers expect the influencers they support to be authentic and sponsored posts are often easy to spot, creating doubt over whether or not the influencer actually uses the product (Hatton, 2018). Macro-influencer campaigns are also much more expensive. Brands pay the price for the higher reach of macro-influencers, sometimes paying tens of thousands of dollars (Hatton, 2018). This number can even approach the million-dollar mark when working with top celebrities.

  Unfluencers. Unfluencers are a new category of influencer. An unfluencer is a person you follow specifically so that you are nothing like them. Marisa Meltzer (2019) defined the term as "the person who makes me want to do the opposite of whatever she's doing and throw out whatever I already own that she has posted about." Every influencer is also acting as an unfluencer to a portion of their followers whether they realize it or not, but a follower is a follower, and they will benefit from this relationship regardless of the title. Meltzer's theory on unfluencers is that we dislike them because they post about things we like, making them mainstream. There is a strange feeling of superiority that an unfluencer's followers receive when they use the same products as the unfluencer but do not share their use on social media. Meltzer (2019) states that credit is due to the unfluencer for helping her to better understand herself,

recognize that her distaste for the unfluencer is based in similarity, and realize that she is not as original as she would hope to be.

YouTubers. YouTube has become an outlet for users to express themselves digitally to anyone with internet access for free. As a result, YouTubers are becoming a new kind of celebrity, complete with screaming fans and obligatory haters. Popular YouTubers like PewDiePie, Shane Dawson, and Smosh have millions of subscribers and likewise make millions of dollars from their careers as YouTubers (Leskin, 2019). Gamers, beauty gurus, and vloggers are some of the most popular categories of YouTubers (Leskin, 2019). There are a variety of ways YouTubers make their living by posting videos, and YouTuber Evan Edinger outlined what those ways are. Google AdSense, Patreon, affiliate links, merchandise, and brand deals are the top five ways YouTubers make money ("Evan Edinger," 2017). AdSense places advertisements on YouTubers' videos and based on views the YouTuber receives a certain amount of money. Patreon is a voluntary way of "tipping" a YouTuber for content subscribers like or support. YouTubers can also create special content and perks for their Patreon members. Affiliate links are given to YouTubers by brands to encourage purchases of the products mentioned by the YouTuber. The YouTuber then receive a percentage of the purchases made through their link. Nearly every YouTuber with a significant fan base has created their own merchandise line to sell personally branded products as a form of revenue. Lastly, YouTubers make the largest portion of their earnings through brand deals where they are paid to mention a brand's products in their videos ("Evan Edinger," 2017).

The Beauty Community on Social Media

Beauty influencers. Beauty influencers are highly popular on YouTube with "125 billion views of beauty related content on YouTube" and this number is increasing by 65% each year ("Digital Makeover," n.d.). Consumers today are more drawn to videos and social media rather than traditional media and trust the advice of video bloggers more than journalists (Wright, 2017). A study conducted by Chloe Wright (2017) found that beauty YouTubers' levels of parasocial interaction and perceived credibility are two factors that impact the purchase intentions of their viewers. Consumers have grown to trust and respect the beauty influencers they follow and continually watch on YouTube, and therefore allow the influencers to sway their product selection.

On YouTube, beauty influencers' videos are classified within the popular "How-To" category. Often referred to as "Beauty Gurus," this group of YouTubers is responsible for uploading content related to makeup, hairstyles, and fashion. Two of the most popular types of videos uploaded by beauty influencers are tutorials and vlogs. Tutorials are what define the beauty influencer on YouTube by showcasing their skills, knowledge, and ability to instruct others (Garcia-Rapp, 2016). Vlogs are much more relaxed than tutorials and allow viewers to essentially follow along with the influencer throughout the day. The personal nature of this type of video strengthens the connection with the subscribers by increasing the relatability factor (Garcia-Rapp, 2016). The variety of video types posted by beauty YouTubers resulted in the first research question.

RQ1: What video types posted by popular beauty YouTubers are most frequent?

In addition to being relatable, there are certain characteristics that beauty influencers need to possess to be successful on YouTube. To maintain subscribers and views, the influencers

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should be "considered 'real,' honest, hard-working, talented and inherently 'deserving' gurus" (García-Rapp & Roca-Cuberes, 2017, p. 20). Being perceived as "real" shows the audience how similar the influencer is to the viewers while also bringing a genuineness to the videos that decrease hate comments regarding being overly edited. How each YouTuber is perceived is based on the messaging they are using. This finding led to the second research question.

RQ2: What messaging techniques are beauty influencers using within their most popular videos?

Viewers have high expectations for the YouTubers they subscribe to and expect them to also be trustworthy and authentic. A lack of authenticity or a betrayal of viewers' trust can quickly result in the influencer being "cancelled," a relatively new term that is best described as a public attack of a specific influencer that results in them losing a large quantity of followers in a short amount of time (Dodgson, 2019). Viewers expect that the YouTubers will be accurate sources of knowledge that display their content in visually appealing, easy to follow ways. To gain a greater knowledge of how the videos are displayed, the third research question was posited.

RQ3: What design elements are most commonly present in beauty influencers' videos?

As previously discussed, beauty YouTubers utilize parasocial interactions to impact and persuade their viewers (Wright, 2017). The parasocial interactions are solidified through openness and interactivity, two highly valued qualities from viewers (Labrecque, 2014). Interactivity specifically allows the viewers to communicate directly with the beauty YouTuber, strengthening the relationship between the two. Due to the value placed on interactivity between viewer and YouTuber, the fourth research question was proposed.

RQ4: What tactics are the beauty YouTubers utilizing to communicate with their

audience?

Brand partners. Beauty brands have had to adapt their strategies as the typical beauty

consumer of today has changed. The in-store sales for the beauty industry is dominated by the

"legacy brands" that have been around for decades, while the online sales for beauty are

overwhelmingly controlled by the "digitally native brands" that were created during the digital

commerce boom (Baldwin, 2019). Today's beauty consumer is not nearly as concerned with the

product as they are the experience behind the product that influences their purchase based on

trust and authenticity (Baldwin, 2019). Beauty consumers are aware of the popularity of beauty

related YouTube videos and are now using these videos to impact their beauty purchase

decisions ("Digital Makeover," n.d.). Being aware of this change from typical internet searches,

brands have shifted their techniques towards utilizing the beauty influencer and the parasocial

relationship they have with their viewers that impacts their purchase choices.

There are multiple ways that makeup brands can partner with YouTubers to promote

products and mutually benefit from the relationship. Sponsored videos are the most popular

option and involve paying the influencer to feature their products on their channel (Quan, 2017).

The content is often left up to the YouTuber, giving them the power to decide how to best

introduce the products into their content. Tutorials and monthly favorites videos both allow

beauty YouTubers to easily include brand promoted products through mini reviews without

disturbing the natural flow of the video (Garcia-Rapp, 2016). Additionally, videos completely

devoted to one sponsoring brand are not uncommon. These sponsored videos provide income to

the YouTuber while promoting the brand and their products. Product collaborations between

brands and beauty influencers have also become popular. From single product launches to entire

collections, the influencer can be involved in as much or as little of the process as the brand allows (Quan, 2017). This might include shade selection, concept development, packaging design and more. The brands get to attract the attention of the YouTuber's loyal viewers, while the YouTuber gets to create products tailored to their viewers and profit monetarily from the sales. Brands will also partner with YouTubers to host contests and giveaways that highlight the brand and their products while also pleasing the YouTuber's viewers (Quan, 2017). It's a win-win strategy for both parties that often involves sharing the giveaway on social media, further extending the reach of the partnership. Lastly, brands will recruit popular beauty influencers to be a part of their affiliate program. Affiliate marketing is an extremely beneficial partnership between brand and influencer that increases sales for the brand and creates a revenue stream for the influencer (Enfroy, 2020). In the beauty community, brands will provide influencers with affiliate codes, links, and access to special sales that the influencer will then market to their followers. By providing discounts to those who support the affiliated influencer, the brand is increasing the likelihood that the audience will take advantage of the deals (Enfroy, 2020).

Chapter 3. Method

Content Analysis

Neuendorf first provided her definition of content analysis as "the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics" in her book *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 1). In her second edition of the book, Neuendorf expanded this by detailing a six-part definition of content analysis that shows how the method has grown and adapted over the years (Neuendorf, 2017). Neuendorf states in her latest book that techniques applied to the method continue to grow, making it one of the most popular methods in research, especially in within the mass communications field (Nuendorf, 2017).

To gain an understanding of the characteristics of YouTube videos in the online beauty community, a content analysis was conducted of YouTube videos posted by popular beauty influencers. For the analysis, 10 different beauty YouTubers were studied. The top five most popular videos from each YouTuber were selected for analysis. Video popularity was based on the number of views. Each video was watched in its entirety, noting basic video characteristics, strategies for message delivery, video design elements, and the level and ability of engagement between YouTuber and viewer.

Selection of YouTubers

YouTubers were selected by randomly sampling every third user on a list of top beauty influencers of 2019 on Ranker.com ("The Best Beauty," n.d.). Jeffreestar was listed as the top beauty influencer of the year. With nearly 17 million YouTube subscribers, he has the most subscribers out of the influencers being studied. While Jaclyn Hill only has 5.87 million subscribers, she was selected as the next most popular influencer for the study followed by James

Charles who has the second most subscribers, 16.4 million, out of the beauty influencers being studied.

YouTuber Biographies

Jeffreestar. Born Jeffrey Lynn Steininger, Jeffree Star is a 34-year-old singer, song writer, makeup artist, and entrepreneur living in Los Angeles, California. With over 17 million YouTube subscribers and two billion views, he is one of the most popular influencers on YouTube (Jeffreestar, n.d.). Jeffree Star originally gained popularity on Myspace before becoming one of the first male beauty YouTubers. He has collaborated with beauty brands such as Morphe and Benefit Cosmetics and has also created his own brand, Jeffree Star Cosmetics that has contributed to his estimated $75 million net worth.

Jaclyn Hill. Jaclyn Hill is a 29-year-old professional makeup artist living in Tampa, Florida. She created her YouTube channel in 2010 but did not post her first video until a year later in 2011. She now has almost 6 million subscribers and 546 million video views (Jaclyn Hill, n.d.). Jaclyn Hill has collaborated with Morphe and Becca Cosmetics and has her own newly released brand, Jaclyn Cosmetics.

James Charles. The youngest of the beauty YouTubers in this study, James Charles is a 20-year-old beauty YouTuber living in Encino, California. Charles has nearly 17 million subscribers on YouTube and 1.9 billion video views (James Charles, n.d.). In 2019, he launched his collaboration with beauty brand Morphe that included a brush set and palette. James Charles hopes to launch his own makeup brand and explore music in the future.

Laura Lee. Laura Lee is a 31-year-old beauty YouTuber and Instagrammer who moved from Alabama to Los Angeles, California to pursue her career. She has 4.4 million subscribers and 633 million views on her YouTube channel (Laura Lee, n.d.). Laura Lee has collaborated

with brands such as Too Faced, Violet Voss, and Benefit Cosmetics. She also has her own makeup brand, Laura Lee Los Angeles.

Manny MUA. One of the first popular male beauty YouTubers, Manny Gutierrez, created his YouTube channel in 2014. At 28-years-old, Manny has gained 4.7 million subscribers and 488 million video views (Manny MUA, n.d.). He has collaborated with Makeup Geek, Ofra Cosmetics, and Jeffree Star Cosmetics, and also became the first male brand ambassador for Maybelline. Manny has also launched his own cosmetics brand, Lunar Beauty.

Tati. Tati Westbrook is the oldest of the YouTubers studied at 37-years-old. Tati's nearly 10 million subscribers have contributed to her 1.4 billion views (Tati, n.d.). Contributing to her popularity is her high video upload frequency compared to most other beauty YouTubers. She started her channel in Los Angeles, California and moved to Seattle at the end of 2019. Tati collaborated with Birchbox to create the makeup brand LOC (Love of Color) and has since launched two of her own brands, Halo Beauty and Tati Beauty.

KathleenLights. Kathleen Fuentes is a 28-year-old YouTuber from Miami, Florida who posts beauty related reviews, tutorials, and challenges. She has just over 4 million subscribers and 584 million views (KathleenLights, n.d.). Kathleen has collaborated with Makeup Geek, Morphe, Ofra Cosmetics, and most famously, ColourPop Cosmetics, who she has collaborated with multiple times since the brand launched in 2014. Kathleen has her own brand, Lights Label, where she sells apparel, jewelry, and "Light Squad" merchandise for fans of her YouTube channel. She also recently launched her nail polish brand, Lights Lacquer.

NikkieTutorials. Nikkie de Jager is a 26-year-old Dutch makeup artist living in the Netherlands. In 2015, Nikkie's YouTube video, "The Power of Makeup," went viral sparking a new video challenge in the beauty community while also increasing her subscriber count.

Nikkie's channel now has 13.3 million subscribers and over 1 billion views (NikkieTutorials, n.d.). She has collaborated with Ofra Cosmetics on several occasions in addition to Too Faced and Maybelline. At the beginning of 2020, Nikkie posted a video to her YouTube channel stating that she is transgender. The video, titled "I'm Coming Out," has 34 million views.

Jackie Aina. Jackie Aina is a 32-year-old who first started her beauty channel while serving in the military when she was stationed in Hawaii. She has 3.3 million subscribers and 318 million video views (Jackie Aina, n.d.). Jackie has become an advocate for diversity in the beauty industry, demanding brands offer shade lines that cater to all skin tones. She has collaborated with makeup brands such as Anastasia Beverly Hills, e.l.f. Cosmetics, and Too Faced.

Casey Holmes. Casey Holmes is a 28-year-old beauty YouTuber and entrepreneur with 1.7 million subscribers and almost 200 million views (Casey Holmes, n.d.). Casey lives in Georgia with her military husband and 8-month-old son. She has collaborated with Diff Eyewear, Physicians Formula, and Smashbox Cosmetics. In addition to her brand collaborations, Casey has an online clothing store, Rosie Daze Boutique.

Initial Variables

Before video analysis began, initial variables were coded based on the information provided on each of the YouTuber's channels. *Subscriber Count, Total Number of Video Views, Age, Ethnicity,* and *Sex* were the initial variables being studied.

- **Subscriber Count** and **Total Number of Video Views** are both values that can be found on each of the influencer's main YouTube channel pages. Subscriber Count is the current number of users who are following the channel, while Total Number of Video Views includes the total value of views for every video ever posted by the YouTuber.

- **Age** was coded as the numerical value describing how old each YouTuber is.

- **Ethnicity** was coded using five categories (i.e., 1. *White/European American, 2. Black/African American, 3. Hispanic/Latino, 4. Asian/South Asian American,* and *5. Other*) that were used in a previous study analyzing social media users and coded with the corresponding number (Webb et al., 2017).

- The **Sex** of each YouTuber was coded using Male or Female as the only two designations based on the biological factors that are considered to define the two (Tseng, 2008). On the codesheet, Females = 1 and Males = 2.

Levels of Analysis

The variables used for the content analysis were based on those used by Choi and Behm-Morawitz (2017) in their study regarding techniques used by beauty YouTubers. Some of the variables used in Choi and Behm-Morawitz's study were excluded, while other relevant variables were added. The variables that were included from Choi and Behm-Morawitz's video analysis were video title, video length, and video type. Based on the video content most often posted by beauty YouTubers today, the types of videos were altered to include "challenges and tags" instead of "outfit of the day" videos that were included in the original study. Choi and Behm-Morawitz's section of variables titled "Message Level" was excluded from the study due to the focus on themes that were irrelevant to the topic. The following technique variables used by Choi and Behm-Morawitz were included in the study: background music, special effects, additional text, images, and graphics. Such variables as "natural face technique" and "technique editing close up" were excluded. Lastly, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, comments, thumbs up, thumbs down, and personal website/blog were included from the viewer engagement section.

The remaining variables used by Choi and Behm-Morawitz were excluded and additional variables were added that focus on the techniques used by beauty YouTubers today.

Video information. The first level of analysis regards the basic information pertaining to each video. The following were coded: *Video Title, Views, Video Length (in minutes),* and *Video Type.* The video titles, number of views, and length of videos were determined from the information provided under each video.

- **Video Type** was broken down into seven possible types (i.e., 1. Tutorials/How-To, 2. Reviews, 3. Get Ready with Me, 4. Shopping Hauls, 5. Favorites, 6. Challenges/Tags, and 7. Personal/Other Vlogs). **Video Types** were determined by analyzing the titles and content to select a category of best fit and were coded with the corresponding number.

1. **Tutorials and How-To** videos can be described as videos that are instructionally based and revolve around technique sharing.

2. **Reviews** involve the YouTuber providing feedback on products they have tried out. This type of video also includes first-impression videos where the YouTuber shares their initial opinions of the products.

3. **Get Ready with Me** videos are more conversational in nature while still featuring beauty products.

4. **Shopping Hauls** are defined as videos in which the YouTuber shares the latest items they have purchased, often swatching the beauty products they can. Swatching is defined as sampling a small amount of the product on one's skin to test the color or quality.

5. **Favorites** videos contain all of the products the YouTuber has recently enjoyed using and also long time loved products.

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6. **Challenges and Tags** are video trends that encourage YouTuber participation. They often contain difficult or quirky rules that must be followed to achieve the desired video.

7. **Personal Videos and Other Vlogs** are videos that do not fall into a previously listed category. They are video concepts that the YouTuber has created themselves or vlog style videos that show daily activities of the YouTuber.

Messaging technique. The second level of analysis pertains to the messaging methods of the YouTuber and how their message was conveyed. *Mentions of Success, Solicitation for Purchase, Emotional Appeal, Sponsored Video, Products Listed in Description, Mention of Merchandise, Other YouTubers Present, Mention of Affiliate Code* were all coded for as either present (yes = 1) or not present (no = 0) in the video.

- **Mentions of Success** by the YouTuber are any references to previous accomplishments of any kind that prove their abilities in the field of beauty.

- **Solicitations for Purchase** include the YouTuber asking or suggesting the viewer purchase a product, both overtly or covertly.

- **Emotional Appeals** were considered present when the YouTuber would employ anecdotes with the intent of eliciting an emotional response from the audience.

- For **Sponsored Videos**, the YouTuber must have announced the brand's sponsorship of the content, even if the brand only required the product be briefly reviewed rather than a fully dedicated video.

- **Products Listed in the Description** box of videos allow the viewers to easily access the products they are interested in learning more about. They are often listed with links to purchase the products and sometimes prices.

- **Mentioning Merchandise** is not uncommon and can include YouTube channel specific merchandise or product lines they have created or collaborated on.

- **Other YouTubers Present** within the video are collaborations with other YouTube platform users, usually ones with a similar interest and audience.

- **Affiliate Codes** can be listed as copyable text or direct links that apply the code to a specific product or website mentioned in the video.

Design technique. The third level of analysis measures the design and video editing capabilities of the YouTuber. *Intro Clip/Greeting, Outro Clip, Use of Backdrop, Background Music, Special Effects, On Screen Text, Embedded Video, On Screen Images, Use of Graphics, Variety of Angles,* and *Logo Present* were coded for as either present (yes = 1) or not present (no = 0) in the video.

- **Introductory Clips** act as a greeting to viewers and also a summary of the content to come of the viewer decides to continue watching the video.

- **Backdrops** are considered in use when the YouTuber has a professional backdrop behind them. They are often solid colors or subtle textured or patterned fabrics.

- **Outro Clips** are concluding sections of video that review the contents and results of the video.

- **Background Music** consists of any audio playing in the background of the video, whether this is throughout the video or only in select sections.

- **Special Effects** are any visual or auditory alterations made to the video.

- **On Screen Text** appears as descriptions, thoughts, and any text-based information.

- **Embedded Videos** are present when the YouTuber overlays additional videos into their content.

- **On Screen Images** cover some or all of the video content.

- **Graphics** are any digitally created images that appear throughout the video.

- A **Variety of Angles** are present when the positioning or direction of the camera changes.

- Some YouTubers have their own branding and **Logos** that are present in the bottom corner of videos posted to their channel.

Viewer engagement. Lastly, this level analyzed the engagement of the YouTuber, including variables that measure the YouTuber's willingness to engage with the audience and how the audience is engaging. The YouTuber's willingness to communicate with the audience is coded with the variables *Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Request Feedback from Viewers,* and *Personal Website or Blog* as either present (yes = 1) or not present (no = 0) in the video. The audience's engagement is coded with the variables *Comments, Thumbs Up,* and *Thumbs Down* and was recorded in numerical values.

- If the YouTuber included their usernames on **Instagram**, **Facebook**, or **Twitter** within the actual video or in the description box, it was noted as the YouTuber providing the opportunity to connect on social media with their followers.

- Whether through textual prompts in the description box or vocal appeals, **Requests for Feedback from Viewers** were considered present in both forms.

- **Personal Websites or Blogs** are linked websites within the description of the videos, encouraging the followers to further follow the influencer.

- The number of **Comments**, **Thumbs Up**, and **Thumbs Down** were also recorded for each video based on the data displayed automatically.

Intercoder Reliability

       This study utilized two sets of coding for each categorical variable. Each video was initially coded by a single coder. A random sample of 30% of the total videos was then assessed a second time by an additional coder. Cohen's Kappa was used to calculate intercoder reliability, resulting in suitable levels greater than .7 (Cohen, 1960, 1968).

Chapter 4. Results

This study examines the techniques and characteristics within popular YouTube videos posted by beauty influencers. In this section, the results will be shared from the content analysis of 50 total videos posted by 10 influencers. The qualitative variables in this study represent mutually exclusive categories with no quantitative meaning. Frequency tables were created using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to describe the qualitative variables in the study.

Research question one is first explored.

RQ1: What Video Types posted by popular beauty YouTubers are most frequent?

The sample consisted of 50 videos with six possible types that the videos could be labeled as. The content analysis revealed that Reviews ($n = 15$) and Personal or Other type of Vlogs ($n = 14$) were the most commonly posted successful videos. Together, these two categories comprised 58% (Reviews = 30%, Personal/Other Vlogs = 28%) of the popular video types. The least frequent popular beauty video was Favorites videos ($n = 2$). Table 1 shows the frequencies and percentages for Video Types while Figure 1 provides a visual breakdown of the percentages of Video Types analyzed in a pie chart. Please see Table 1 and Figure 1 on the following page.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Video Types

Video types	Frequency	Percentage
Tutorials/How-To	8	16.0
Reviews	15	30.0
Get Ready with Me	4	8.0
Favorites	2	4.0
Challenges/Tags	7	14.0
Personal/Other Vlogs	14	28.0
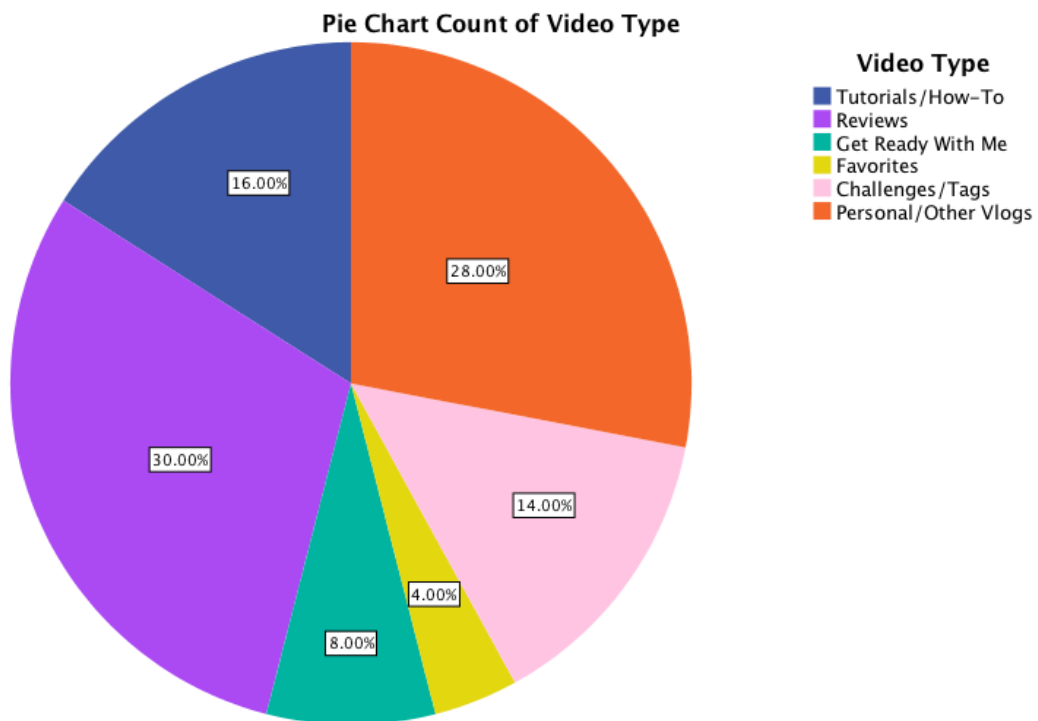
Figure 1. Pie chart of Video Types

Next, research question two is explained.

RQ2: What messaging techniques are beauty influencers using within their most popular

videos?

This study included eight possible messaging techniques that were noted throughout the

content analysis. Tables 2-9 display the frequencies and percentages of each messaging

technique that may or may not have been used by each influencer. The beauty YouTubers

mentioned their previous success in 70% ($n = 35$) of the videos analyzed, as shown below.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Mentions of Success

Mentions of success	Frequency	Percentage
no	15	30.0
yes	35	70.0

Solicitations for Purchase occurred in more than half of the videos ($n = 31$) posted by the

YouTubers. Table 3 reflects this data and the corresponding percentages.

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentages of Solicitation for Purchase

Solicitation for purchase	Frequency	Percentage
no	19	38.0
yes	31	62.0

The beauty YouTubers utilized Emotional Appeals in 48% ($n = 24$) of the videos, as shown in

Table 4 below.

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Emotional Appeal

Emotional appeal	Frequency	Percentage
no	26	52.0
yes	24	48.0

Sponsored Videos were the least common messaging technique ($n = 1$), only appearing in one of the videos watched during the study. This is reflected in Table 5, showing that 98% of the videos excluded sponsored content.

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Sponsored Video

Sponsored video	Frequency	Percentage
no	49	98.0
yes	1	2.0

Mention of Merchandise was the most common ($n = 41$) messaging technique throughout the study. Table 6 shows that 82% of the videos posted by the beauty YouTubers included some form of merchandise being mentioned.

Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of Mention of Merchandise

Mentions of merchandise	Frequency	Percentage
no	8	16.0
yes	41	82.0

Products were listed in the description of the videos 48% ($n = 24$) of the time to provide the

viewers with easy access to what the YouTuber was using. Table 7 reflects this data.

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages of Products in Description

Products listed	Frequency	Percentage
no	26	52.0
yes	24	48.0

The beauty YouTubers studies utilized Other YouTubers in their videos 18% ($n = 9$) of the time,

as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Frequencies and Percentages of Other YouTubers Present

Other YouTubers present	Frequency	Percentage
no	41	82.0
yes	9	18.0

Lastly, Affiliate Codes or links were mentioned in 60% ($n = 30$) of the videos analyzed, making

it one of the more popular messaging techniques used. Please see Table 9 below for this data.

Table 9

Frequencies and Percentages of Mention of Affiliate Code

Mention of affiliate code	Frequency	Percentage
no	20	40.0
yes	30	60.0

Research question 3 is now discussed.

RQ3: What design elements are most commonly present in beauty influencers' videos?

In this study, 11 design elements were coded for to measure the techniques most commonly used when the popular YouTubers were editing and compiling their videos. Tables 10-20 provide the frequencies and percentages of each design technique used within the 50 videos studied. Intro Clips ($n = 48$) and Outro Clips ($n = 49$) were in almost every video except a few Personal/Other Vlog videos that did not require the two elements for structure. This is shown in Table 10 and Table 11.

Table 10

Frequencies and Percentages of Intro Clip

Intro clip	Frequency	Percentage
no	2	4.0
yes	48	96.0

Table 11

Frequencies and Percentages of Outro Clip

Outro clip	Frequency	Percentage
no	1	2.0
yes	49	98.0

The use of a professional Backdrop was the least common design technique and was not used in

66% ($n = 33$) of the videos. Instead, more of the influencers opted for seating at desks or in

bedrooms that created natural backgrounds in their home ($n = 17$). See Table 12 below.

Table 12

Frequencies and Percentages of Use of Backdrop

Use of backdrop	Frequency	Percentage
no	33	66.0
yes	17	34.0

Background Music was often playing within the videos ($n = 30$), whether throughout the entire

video or only for specific sections. Table 13 displays the percentages of Background Music in

videos.

Table 13

Frequencies and Percentages of Background Music

Background music	Frequency	Percentage
no	11	22.0
yes	30	78.0

Special Effects ($n = 42$) were also commonly used within the videos and were present in 84% of the videos. See Table 14 below.

Table 14

Frequencies and Percentages of Special Effects

Special effects	Frequency	Percentage
no	8	16.0
yes	42	84.0

The most popular design technique utilized by the beauty YouTubers was On Screen Text ($n = 44$). This technique was present in 88% of the YouTube videos. Table 15 expresses this data.

Table 15

Frequencies and Percentages of On Screen Text

On screen text	Frequency	Percentage
no	6	12.0
yes	44	88.0

On Screen Images were present in 66% ($n = 33$) of the YouTube videos analyzed and often depicted products mentioned in the video. Please see Table 16 below.

Table 16

Frequencies and Percentages of On Screen Images

On screen images	Frequency	Percentage
no	17	34.0
yes	33	66.0

Embedded Videos were also commonly used by the beauty YouTubers in 68% ($n = 34$) of the videos to integrate additional content being referenced. This data is reflected in Table 17.

Table 17

Frequencies and Percentages of Embedded Video

Embedded video	Frequency	Percentage
no	16	32.0
yes	34	68.0

The Use of Graphics was present in 64% ($n = 32$) of the videos analyzed in the study. Table 18 depicts the percentages of videos containing graphics.

Table 18

Frequencies and Percentages of Use of Graphics

Use of graphics	Frequency	Percentage
no	18	36.0
yes	32	64.0

A Variety of Angles was commonly used in the videos posted by the beauty YouTubers. Table 19 shows that 74% ($n = 37$) of the videos used this technique.

Table 19

Frequencies and Percentages of Variety of Angles

Variety of angles	Frequency	Percentage
no	13	26.0
yes	37	74.0

Over half of the beauty YouTubers utilized Logos in the bottom corner of their videos, resulting in 58% ($n = 29$) of the videos containing personal branding. Table 20 details the data on logo presence.

Table 20

Frequencies and Percentages of Logo Present

Logo present	Frequency	Percentage
no	21	42.0
yes	29	58.0

Research question 4 is lastly posited.

RQ4: What tactics are the beauty YouTubers utilizing to communicate with their audience?

This study analyzed the 50 beauty YouTuber videos, coding for variables that measure the level of Viewer Engagement displayed by each YouTuber. Viewer Engagement was represented with eight total variables, including the number of comments, thumbs up, and

thumbs down for each video. The remaining five variables measured the willingness of the

YouTubers to communicate with their followers. Tables 21-25 provide the frequencies and

percentages of each variable of viewer engagement that were measured within the study. The

presence of the YouTuber's Instagram account was included in 90% ($n = 45$) of the videos

studied. This is represented in Table 21.

Table 21

Frequencies and Percentages of Instagram

Instagram	Frequency	Percentage
no	5	10.0
yes	45	90.0

Facebook was the least often mentioned social media account by the beauty influencers,

appearing in only 30% ($n = 15$) of the posted videos. Table 22 shows this data.

Table 22

Frequencies and Percentages of Facebook

Facebook	Frequency	Percentage
no	35	70.0
yes	15	30.0

The beauty YouTubers who included their Instagram accounts also included their Twitter

accounts, resulting again in 90% ($n = 45$) of the videos containing their Twitter handles either in

the video or the video description. See Table 23 below.

Table 23

Frequencies and Percentages of Twitter

Twitter	Frequency	Percentage
no	5	10.0
yes	45	90.0

Requesting feedback from their viewers was a strategy used in 58% ($n = 29$) of the YouTubers'

videos. This is reflected in Table 24.

Table 24

Frequencies and Percentages of Request Feedback from Viewers

Request feedback from viewers	Frequency	Percentage
no	21	42.0
yes	29	58.0

The beauty YouTubers in the study included their personal websites or blogs in the description

of 60% ($n = 30$) of their videos, shown in Table 25 below.

Table 25

Frequencies and Percentages of Personal Website or Blog

Personal website or blog	Frequency	Percentage
no	20	40.0
yes	30	60.0

Chapter 5. Discussion

Discussion of Findings

In review of the results, the research questions reveal the most frequently used strategies by the top beauty YouTubers. The findings are reviewed in this section. The YouTubers analyzed in this study represent a fraction of the successful beauty YouTubers that have mastered the platform to not only gain millions of followers, but also to generate millions of dollars through their content creation (Leskin, 2019). Previous studies have illustrated the success and power of influence that beauty YouTubers have on their viewers (Wright, 2017). In the inherently competitive beauty community, YouTubers are expected to portray themselves in their videos in such a way that proves to viewers they are knowledgeable, trustworthy, and deserving of the views (García-Rapp & Roca-Cuberes, 2017). The result is a group of beauty YouTubers striving to showcase the latest beauty products on the market, stay up to date on the current video trends, build a rapport with subscribers, and create the most visually appealing content. For many beauty YouTubers, this becomes their full-time job and sole source of income. The results of this study indicate a series of commonly used YouTube strategies by successful members of the beauty community.

As viewed in Table 1 and Figure 1, this study discovered the most frequent popular videos posted by the beauty YouTubers. Reviews that provide viewers with the influencer's opinion on beauty products were the most frequent type of video posted. Personal videos and vlogs that do not fit within the realm of typical content posted by a beauty YouTuber were also commonly well received. The relaxed nature of the vlog style videos provides a break from the structured nature of many of the other types of videos (Garcia-Rapp, 2016).

The perception of the YouTuber by the audience is an important factor that determines the likelihood of viewers loyally watching their videos (García-Rapp & Roca-Cuberes, 2017). In addition to popular types of videos posted, this study identified messaging techniques that were commonly used by the studied beauty YouTubers to convey the desired message to the audience, as displayed in Tables 2-9. YouTubers mentioning their merchandise was the most popular messaging technique. Drawing on the loyalty and trust they have created with their followers, this tactic encourages viewers to purchase their products. Similarly to mentions of merchandise, solicitations for purchase were also common and suggested the viewer purchase products mentioned in the video. At times, the influencers benefited from these purchases through affiliate links that directed the viewer back to the brand's website. Mentions of success was another popular tactic utilized by the beauty influencers. By stating their previous successes, the influencers are building credibility with their viewers.

As the beauty community on YouTube continues to grow, there is a growing value placed in the quality of the videos being posted by YouTubers. Videos should be visually appealing and easy to follow so as to keep up with the standards that have been created. Tables 10- 20 reflect the design techniques used by the popular beauty YouTubers in their most viewed videos. To provide structure and frame each video, the beauty YouTubers utilized intro and outro clips to act as book ends on their videos. On screen text was a characteristic most often found within the videos, providing additional information to the viewers. Additional elements such as images, videos, and special effects were also integrated into the videos to provide visual appeal. A variety of angles were also commonly used throughout the videos to provide interest and highlight certain features of makeup looks.

Lastly, this study evaluated the willingness of the YouTuber to communicate and interact with their followers. The top communication outlets were discovered, as shown in Tables 21-25. In addition to communicating through the comments section of YouTube, the beauty YouTubers most often included their Instagram and Twitter accounts as additional lines of communication. Due to the value of interactivity when forming parasocial interactions, viewers consider the ability to converse with the beauty YouTubers as highly important (Labrecque, 2014).

This study was grounded in theoretical frameworks that elaborate on the strategies used by beauty YouTubers. Parasocial Interaction Theory relies on the use of media to create the illusion of a relationship in which the actor is directly speaking to audience members (Horton & Wohl, 1956). YouTubers are aware of the power of parasocial interaction and use it as a tactic of self-promotion (Chen, 2014). Interactivity and openness are two variables of parasocial interaction that foster the idea of an actual relationship (Labrecque, 2014). YouTube provides an immediate forum for interaction through comments in addition to the platforms for communication that the YouTubers also include in video descriptions. Openness is a quality utilized in YouTube videos that imitates the intimate conversations held in actual relationships while providing an emotional appeal to viewers. The feeling of connectedness to the YouTuber through the parasocial interaction drives feelings of loyalty and willingness to invest their time and money into the YouTuber (Labrecque, 2014).

Framing Theory, in terms of an individual on social media, refers to the ability to portray your social identity to strategically appeal to members of a specific group and gain their trust (Seyranian, 2014). Social media provides influencers with the capability to frame their appearance, personality, and opinions. In terms of appearance, YouTubers can frame what their camera sees, creating the ideal picture. An example of this scenario is Jaclyn Hill panning

outside of her usual shot that displays a nice backdrop and expensive blouse, revealing a messy table of products and the fact that she is wearing sweatpants. Personality wise, beauty YouTubers edit out mistakes made and jokes that missed the mark from their videos. An example of this would be KathleenLights revealing a "blooper" reel at the end of her video showing what she had edited out. Beauty YouTubers also frame products in review videos so that the desired opinion is broadcasted to viewers (Nandagiri & Philip, 2018).

Limitations and Future Directions

Limitations. Due to the length of each beauty YouTube video studied, it was only feasible to analyze 50 videos in the given timeframe. This meant that the overall data was limited. A larger data set could have uncovered greater strategy trends in the beauty YouTuber community. Additionally, only relatively successful beauty YouTubers were studied. Integrating less popular beauty YouTubers into the study could have created the opportunity for comparison to identify differences in strategies used by popular and less popular YouTubers. This study was also limited by the lack of preexisting research on the topic of beauty YouTubers. The topic of the beauty community on social media is relatively new and YouTube strategies have not yet fully been researched. This created a gap in the initial research of this study.

Future directions. Throughout this study, several considerations for future research were uncovered. This study could be enhanced by research related to the likelihood of a viewer clicking on a video through the addition of variables that analyze the thumbnail image of the video and the level of "clickbait" in the titles. Another future research prospect could be direct interviews with popular beauty YouTubers. This would provide the study with an internal perspective on beauty videos and what each YouTuber has noticed to be effective during their career on the platform. Lastly, further research should be conducted on beauty YouTubers and

their brand collaborations. Every YouTuber in this study has previously worked with a makeup brand to launch products and collections that target the YouTuber's viewers. The result is a mutualistic symbiotic relationship that creates income for the YouTuber and traffic and sales for the brand. This relationship should be explored and analyzed in the future.

Conclusion

The beauty industry is currently thriving as makeup trends continue to spark interest on social media. Beauty YouTubers are a group of influencers that are in high demand during the beauty boom that is taking place. Now more than ever, customers are seeking videos and social media as sources of product information (Wright, 2017). Beauty YouTubers have developed into credible and knowledgeable sources of feedback on the topic of beauty related products, resulting in millions of subscribers and millions of dollars gained by the influencers. This study acts as a representation of the gold standard of the beauty community on YouTube and outlines the popular strategies utilized in their videos.

It is evident from this study that beauty YouTubers are not only popular but also marketable. Combined, the YouTubers analyzed in this study have received billions of views on their YouTube channels. This level of popularity is accompanied by an equally impressive monetary earning from each of the influencers, making the profession highly sought after. While many strive to reach the status of successful beauty YouTuber, it is not so easily attainable. This study provides an analysis of the top strategies used in some of the most popular beauty YouTube videos on the platform.

There are a variety of video types that fall under the umbrella of beauty related content. While makeup tutorials are popular beauty videos, reviews are more sought after as the viewers seek out the opinions of YouTubers who have gained credibility on such topics. The success of

beauty YouTubers is also credited to the techniques utilized within their videos. Messaging strategies ensure that the YouTuber is portraying themselves and the products they mention in the intended way. Such strategies as appeals to emotion and mentions of success build a rapport with viewers that conveys openness and credibility. Design elements are additionally used within the videos to create visual appeal that sets the beauty YouTuber's channel apart from another. Lastly, beauty YouTubers must remain interactive and open to communication with their followers to maintain the relationships they have created. These strategies combine to create loyalty amongst their followers that results in higher rates of video views and trust in purchasing decisions.

The popular techniques identified in this study act as a reference guide for current and rising beauty YouTubers aspiring to grow their channels through subscribers and video views. The incorporation of these techniques in their videos could provide assistance in their journey to success on YouTube. In addition to aiding in the achievements of YouTube content creators, this study also serves as a testament to the value beauty YouTubers bring to brands. The mutually beneficial quality of brand partnerships should encourage brands to collaborate with successful beauty YouTubers to collectively prosper.

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