# A Video is Worth 1000 Words: Linking Consumer Value for Opinion Seekers to Visually-Oriented eWOM Practices

**Andrew N. Smith & Martin A. Pyle**

The rational view of consumer information seeking suggests that the practice creates value because of its ability to inform better decision making. Our examination extends this understanding by showing that opinion seeking provides additional benefits, such as social, emotional, and aesthetic value. We observe these findings in the context of visual online word-of-mouth (i.e., 'haul' and 'outfit' videos), and link these sources of value to six distinct visually-oriented eWOM practices: modeling, product highlighting, persona projecting, image manufacturing, audience appreciating, and professionalizing. In doing so, we also contribute to our nascent understanding of visual WOM. We conclude by suggesting future research opportunities in the areas of word-of-mouth, including visual word-of-mouth, as well as consumer opinion seeking.

Keywords: eWOM; visually-oriented eWOM; word-of-mouth; opinion seeking; consumer value; consumer practices; YouTube

*Introduction*

Within word-of-mouth (WOM) research, there is an emphasis on what gets people talking: general motivations behind WOM behavior (e.g., Dichter, 1966; Verlegh, Bujis & Zethof, 2008), aspects of the consumption experience that prompt people to want to share (e.g., Berger & Schwartz, 2010; Brown, Barry, Dacin & Gunst, 2005), and even individual traits that increase or decrease the likelihood of sharing WOM (e.g., Cheema & Kaikati, 2010; Clark & Goldsmith, 2005). Garnering less attention, though, is the phenomenon of consumers' opinion seeking behavior and in particular, the benefits of getting advice from others, and how various WOM practices might relate to those benefits.

Perhaps this lack of attention stems from the somewhat intuitive explanation for opinion seeking: WOM provides informational value to improve decision making through benefits such as risk reduction, reduced search time, and product usage information (Flynn, Goldsmith & Eastman, 1996; Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006; Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003-4; Punj & Staelin, 1983), as people perceive WOM to be more trustworthy due to the lack of material benefits associated with sharing such information (Day 1971; Dichter 1966; Stephen and Lehmann 2009). In defining the term *opinion seekers* as "individuals who [seek] information or opinions from interpersonal sources in order to find out about and evaluate products, services, current affairs, or other areas of interest" (p. 302), Feick, Price, and Higie (1986) implicitly assume that rational decision making is the sole need fulfilled from receiving WOM.

This perspective echoes the utility-based conception of consumer value, which argues that value is simply a calculation of the tradeoff between what is given versus what is received (e.g., Zeithaml, 1988). In an opinion seeking context, this would suggest that consumers perceive the value of WOM as dependent on the balance between the costs involved in the process (i.e.,

the effort required to find, read, and process the WOM) and the benefits derived from these efforts (i.e., improved decision making). Some findings, however, suggest that opinion seeking behavior does not directly relate to purchase outcomes, at least in the fashion category (Goldsmith & Flynn, 2005), and that consumers note multiple motivations for opinion seeking (Goldsmith & Horowicz, 2006). While these results do not negate improved decision making as *one* source of value, they demonstrate that opinion seeking may not be as purely rational as intuition indicates, and substantiates the need to explore other potential sources of value that stem from opinion seeking.

Further research sheds light on at least one other source of value derived from opinion seeking, beyond the purely rational approach of information gathering. Seeking the opinions of others also fulfills a social need, confirming a sense of belonging and providing access to socially-acceptable practices (Flynn, Goldsmith & Eastman 1996; Goldsmith & Clark 2008; Goldsmith & Horowitz 2006). In other words, people derive value from opinion seeking as a source of social comparison markers. This prompts our first research question: what other sources of value do WOM messages provide to opinion seekers?

*Consumer Value and Opinion Seeking*

In lieu of the simplistic utility-based view of consumer value, other researchers argue that consumer value is a complex, multidimensional construct that includes experiential aspects to balance the cognitive decision making element (Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). There is some debate on how many dimensions comprise consumer value, though overlaps in the categories exist across the research. For example, Sheth,

Newman & Gross (1991) offer a five-dimensional model that includes functional, conditional, social, emotional and epistemic value, while Holbrook (1999) posits a typology of eight sources of value (i.e., efficiency, play, excellence, aesthetics, status, ethics, esteem and spirituality) by crossing three dichotomous dimensions: intrinsic/extrinsic, self-/other-oriented, and active/reactive. Despite the nuanced differences in these varied typologies, the relevant point is that the consumption process offers several benefits to the consumer. This suggests that opinion seeking provides more value than simply the ability to make more efficient decisions. This is particularly likely when we consider novel developments in social media, where electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) continues to evolve beyond a straight-forward written description of the consumption experience.

*Visually-Oriented WOM*

Within the past decade, consumers using social media have engaged in visual eWOM content generation, adding pictures to, or simply using pictures alone, as a form of communication (e.g., Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, etc.), and developing video content (e.g., YouTube, Dailymotion, etc.) to share their consumption experiences. This is a significant departure from the text-based online reviews in forums such as Amazon and ePinions, which typically share a common element: the reviews are pallid descriptions, at least in comparison to face-to-face interactions. In short, while some textually-oriented eWOM authors wax poetic and offer evocatively-phrased messages that paint a picture, the medium is restricted in its capacity. This shift to include visual elements increases the vividness of the shared experience, which can

4

impact message persuasiveness (Herr, Kardes & Kim, 1991), but also potentially enhances existing, and offers additional, sources of value to the opinion seeker.

This visually-oriented eWOM provides a rich context for isolating potential sources of value derived from opinion seeking, as it shares common elements with strong-tie face-to-face WOM encounters as well as weak-tie eWOM sharing. Using this media for the purposes of eWOM bridges the gap between face-to-face and text-based eWOM, offering several possibilities for extending our overall understanding of the WOM phenomenon.

As with the prototypical text-based eWOM, there is a certain level of physical and psychological distance between the opinion provider and the opinion seeker. While some content providers become micro-celebrities (c.f., Burgess and Green, 2009; Marwick, 2013), leading to an opinion seeker's sense of *knowing* the person, social media as a medium frequently allows for a degree of anonymity and the ability to construct an online persona that may not tie into the reality of the offline individual (Belk & Costa, 1998; Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006; Schau & Gilly, 2003). Similar to a face-to-face encounter, though, the inclusion of visual elements into the eWOM communication provides unique additional information beyond the message content, allowing for contextualization and elaboration on the part of the opinion seeker. In essence, it is possible to isolate and differentiate the eWOM content from the contextual information to ascertain how subtle cues apart from the message content affect the message reception and response. Recent research demonstrates the need for exploring WOM at such a nuanced level to better understand the phenomenon.

When composing a review, people make choices in the phrasing and content of the message (Pyle, 2013; Ward & Ostrom, 2006). For example, using WOM to project a positive self-image impacts whether people choose to share positive or negative consumption experiences, the level of language complexity, inclusion of self-related content, and the use of personal pronouns (de Angelis, Bonezzi, Peluso, Rucker & Costabile, 2012; Packard & Wooten, 2013; Wojnicki & Godes, 2008). Further research shows how these subtle differences in language and message content impact message persuasiveness and opinion seekers' perceptions of the reviewer (e.g., Hamilton, Vohs & McGill, 2014; Karmarkar & Tormala, 2010).

Whether or not these differences are conscious and intentional on the part of the reviewer, or whether they reflect some socially normative method of communication (Higgins, 1992) is immaterial when focusing on the opinion seeker. Instead, what is important is that nuanced differences in the phrasing of the message act as signaling markers, and can alter the meaning derived by opinion seekers (Bradac, Konsky and Davies 1976; Higgins 1981). In other words, certain practices among reviewers directly influence opinion seekers' perceptions. In the context of visually-oriented eWOM, a similar signaling effect may occur in addition to the phrasing and content of the message. The extraneous visual information present in this type of eWOM, such as the "set" of a YouTube video or the backdrop and lighting in an Instagram photo, and the way that reviewers *present* the information may impact the types of value derived by opinion seekers as they act as markers signaling additional information. This leads to the second question driving the present research: what is the relationship between specific practices in visually-oriented eWOM and the value derived by opinion seekers?

*Practice Theory*

We use the term *practices* here to suggest routinized types of behavior that are comprised of bodily activities, mental understandings, and the use of 'things' (Reckwitz, 2002). According to practice theory, practices involve a level of common social understanding whereby people engage in a particular practice in relatively similar ways, and that they can convey social competence through their performance of practices.

Consumer researchers leverage practice theory to investigate a variety of phenomena, including digital music consumption (Magaudda 2011), self-tracking (Pantzar & Ruckenstein, 2014), and eating (Domaneschi, 2012). Prior research also uses this theory as a lens for identifying several brand community practices that create value for consumers (Schau, Muniz & Arnould, 2009), supporting our use of practice theory as a means to provide useful insights for exploring how opinion seekers derive value from visually-oriented eWOM. In this context, presenters craft their performances and communicate their experiences not only through message content, but also by using and/or developing socially-recognized visual practices. Thus, our research takes initial steps to identify and link commonly used visual eWOM practices with sources of consumer value.

**Method**

YouTube© is the world's largest video sharing site and community. It hosts a diversity of brand-related user-generated content, from consumer reviews and advertisements to 'unboxing'

7

and 'haul' videos (c.f., Burgess & Green, 2009; Smith, Fischer & Yongjian, 2012), providing an abundance of source material for this study. We specifically study two types of fashion videos, 'haul' and 'outfit' videos, and in doing so, follow the lead of other consumer research that investigates the rich and culturally influential domain that exists at the intersection of fashion and new media (e.g., Goldsmith & Flynn, 2005; McQuarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013). In short, in the broad category of visually-oriented eWOM (e.g., videos, pictures, etc.), we focus exclusively on video eWOM about fashion for the purposes of this examination.

'Haul' videos are a popular genre of fashion video in which consumers show off and discuss clothing, make-up, and accessories that they recently purchased or acquired. The videos, which frequently run longer than 10 minutes, generally feature a 'haul' of items representing multiple brands from a variety of stores. Some of these YouTube© performers develop micro-celebrity status and attract attention from marketers as a result of the 'haul' videos that they produce (Boudreau & Singh, 2011).

'Outfit' videos are another ubiquitous genre of fashion video in which consumers model an outfit or look that they are wearing in preparation for a day or particular event. Presumably, the act of assembling an outfit requires cultural skill and an awareness of current trends and how items pair together. As with 'haul' videos, 'outfit' videos typically feature female consumers; however, they are generally much shorter, rarely running longer than 5 minutes, unless the presenter models and discusses multiple outfits. Both 'haul' and 'outfit' videos are forms of video eWOM because they feature displays, discussions, and judgments about consumer goods and brands.

Our analysis focuses on 25 'haul' videos and 25 'outfit' videos posted on YouTube©, as well as the comments associated with each video. The videos allow us to identify common

practices while the comments provide insight on the opinion seekers' perspectives regarding the value derived from this visually-oriented eWOM. The videos run from approximately 1 minute in length to just over 12 minutes in length. While some videos elicit no more than 5 comments, others receive hundreds of replies.

We selected our sample of videos at random, according the following protocols. While conducting a separate research project on user-generated content relating to the fashion forward brands American Apparel (AA) and Lululemon (LLL), we downloaded a sample of 200 YouTube© videos by conducting a search on the brand name and using every 10th hit. Of the 200 videos, 19 fell into the category of 'haul' videos, and 18 qualified as 'outfit' videos. At a later date, for the purposes of the present research, we added 13 more videos to our sample by specifically searching based on the brand name (AA or LLL) and the type of video (either 'haul' or 'outfit'). In this instance, we randomly selected every 5th result until our sample included 25 'haul' and 25 'outfit' videos, and the associated comments by opinion seekers, for coding and analysis.

We developed our coding protocol for the videos by examining the videos for the presence of explicitly visual eWOM practices and by examining the comments for expressions of derived value. Our coding of both the practices and sources of value emerged inductively, though the literature on consumer value (e.g., Holbrook, 1999; Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1999) informed our coding of the comments. Coding and analysis proceeded iteratively (Miles & Huberman 1994), as we looked for patterns within the datasets, connecting and comparing emergent findings with prior theory on eWOM, opinion seeking, and consumer practices. Through this process, we identified the types of value and visual eWOM practices associated

with both genres of YouTube© video; we were also able to glean insights about the relationships between certain practices and the value opinion seekers derive in a video eWOM context.

*Findings*

Our analysis reveals that opinion seekers regularly derive four types of value – informational, social, emotional, and aesthetic – from video eWOM (Table 5.1), and that presenters employ a variety of visual practices – related to product display, personality and image projection, and audience care – to animate their video eWOM (Table 5.2). Furthermore, our investigation suggests that there are relationships between the presence of particular visual eWOM practices and certain types of consumer value. For many of the identified practices, the relationship with opinion seekers' derived consumer value is one-to-*n*, rather than one-to-one. In other words, consumers can obtian multiple types of consumer value from the presence of a single practice. We discuss each of these findings in turn.

<< **TABLE 6.1 AND 6.2 NEAR HERE** >>

*Consumer Value Derived From Video eWOM*

One definition of opinion seeking asserts that people engage in such behavior in order to acquire useful information (Feick, Price & Higie, 1986). In other words, they read consumer reviews on Amazon.com©, look at accommodation photos on Airbnb©, and watch fashion videos on YouTube© to gather product-related information from other users in order to improve their decision making. Intuitively, and in accord with this definition, we find that consumers

truly derive informational value from watching video eWOM. Opinion seekers say they acquire

new ideas, find inspiration, and receive help from watching fashion videos on YouTube©. The

following comment, written in response to an outfit video, supports this premise:

> *…i have been trying to figure out how to add a little 'girly' touch to my style*
>
> *because i was told i was dressing too 'boy-ish?' but this reallly really helped me!*
>
> *thank you so much!* (cristinall5; Outfit Video #6)

Commenter, cristinall5, confesses to having a perceived social problem: pressure related

a lack of femininity in her style of dress. The video eWOM endows her with ideas and

inspiration to help her resolve this issue, and thus provides her with informational value that

fulfills a functional purpose and satisfies her desire for knowledge. In this way, it is a hybrid

form of value that reflects both of Sheth, Newman and Gross's (1991) functional value and

epistemic value (i.e., her opinion seeking serves both a utilitarian function, as well as stimulates

new interests). Arguably, consumers may also derive similar value from watching other types of

media as well, including advertisements, news, and 'info-tainment.' Interestingly, though, our

results highlight a novel perspective on opinion-seeking for informational value. Prototypically,

we may think of opinion seeking as a targeted behavior: the consumer has a particular need, such

as cristinall5's desire to feminize her wardrobe, and thus actively pursues additional information

to fulfill that need. However, our data also indicate that the informational value may be

incidental when opinion seekers watch the video eWOM for other reasons or with no particular

purchase or need in mind.

Our results align with the extant literature, and offer further evidence relating to video

eWOM, that opinion seeking also helps to fulfill social needs, such as achieving a sense of

belonging (Goldsmith & Clark, 2008; Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006). With social value relating

to one's perceived association with an individual or social group (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991), opinion seekers may feel that they are associated with video eWOM presenters because they share similar lifestyles and tastes. Alternatively, they may feel as if they are in a relationship with the performer because she encourages and engages in interaction with her audience members. The following comment from opinion seeker, Vanessa M, expresses the social value that she derives from watching a particular haul video:

*OMG I SCREAMED WHEN I SAW THE SUNFLOWER ROMPER GURL YOU*

*HAVE THE BEST FASHION SENSE EVER I SWEAR LOOKS LIKE WERE*

*GOING TO BE TWINS* (Vanessa M; Haul Video #22)

Vanessa M enthusiastically articulates her affection for the performer's fashion sense, suggesting that it is similar to hers. The fact that they share this similarity helps to validate Vanessa's tastes and form a perceived association with the performer, with whom she will "be twins". Vanessa's use of this term implies social closeness and supports the premise that people derive such social value from watching video eWOM.

In short, our data support and replicate the limited literature in the area by confirming that opinion seekers derive both informational and social value from eWOM, and show that this value also exists in the context of video eWOM. However, our data also extend these findings by identifying two other sources of value generated by video eWOM: emotional and aesthetic value.

Emotional value pertains to the arousal of positive feelings or affective states (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991). For example, opinion seekers may enjoy an entertaining eWOM performance, feel comfort from seeing a familiar presenter, or experience the "embodied passion" of desire (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003: 326) after discovering a new product. Opinion

seeker, miki2043, expresses the emotional value that she derives from watching a presenter's haul video:

> *whenever i get home i come on youtube to watch these videos. i honestly sit here laughing the entire time, you're so funny (:* (miki2043; Haul Video #8)

In miki2043's comment, she divulges to the eWOM presenter that entertainment (i.e., emotional) value provides one reason, and perhaps the primary reason, for actively seeking out the latest haul video. Of particular interest, we note that emotional value derived from video eWOM may, at times, be completely disconnected from the focal product or products being discussed, centering more on the presenter and context. This calls into question the persuasive impact of video eWOM when the emotional value supersedes the informational value for the opinion seeker.

We also find evidence of a fourth category of value derived from eWOM: aesthetic value. This type of value relates to the appreciation or enjoyment of something that is regarded as beautiful, well-designed, or aesthetically pleasing (Holbrook, 1998). While some overlap exists between aesthetic and emotional value, in that aesthetics can also be a potential source of positive emotional arousal (e.g., the love of something beautiful), the two categories are conceptually distinct. Aesthetic value extends beyond the emotional; for example, it can encompass an intellectual understanding or appreciation of well executed product design. Thus, we treat the two separately, following Holbrook's (1999) lead.

Opinion seekers who receive aesthetic value might love a product, deem a presenter to be beautiful, or appreciate a unique product design detail. The following comment from opinion seeker beccababyy08 expresses the aesthetic value she derives from watching an outfit video:

13

*your sooo pretty! i looove your makeup! and your hair! and your outfit you just*

*look stunning all around! <3 p.s. i looove your videos <3* (beccababyy08; Outfit

Video #18)

In her remark to the presenter, beccababyy08 gushes with enthusiasm. She not only

comments on the focal product (i.e., the outfit), she also specifically comments on the presenter's

aesthetic beauty, mentioning how "pretty" and "stunning" she is. Her hyperbolic language

suggests considerable value that is linked with the aesthetics of the presented visuals. An

important aspect of aesthetic value, distinguishing it from social and emotional value, is the

appreciation of something beautiful simply because it is visually appealing rather than because it

serves as an inspiration for a desired look. Aspirational elements may undergird many aspects of

social value, with the opinion seeker hoping to one day acquire the same clothing and accessories

to form a similar image. For aesthetic value, this is not a necessary precursor. For instance,

someone who prefers a clean and classic look for herself can still appreciate a well-put together

hippie image.

We present our analysis as four distinct types of consumer value, but we want to be

especially clear on the following point: one type of value does not preclude the existence of other

sources of value. To the contrary, we find evidence that indicates a coexistence of several types

of value for opinion seekers in single videos. For instance, a commenter might praise the

humorous presentation style (emotional value), and mention that she has a similar outfit (social

value), and then follow this up with a word of thanks to the presenter for suggesting an

inexpensive pair of earrings to complete the whole outfit (informational value). This type of

overlap, however, simply reinforces our initial position that opinion seekers gain more than

informational value from video eWOM. We turn next to the common practices that seem to enhance these sources of value.

*Visual eWOM Practices & Consumer Value*

We posit that the practices enacted in video eWOM can affect the types of consumer value stemming from the consumption of particular 'haul' and 'outfit' videos, just as, analogously, the content and language of textually-based WOM can impact opinion seekers' meaning-making (e.g., Karmarkar & Tormala, 2010; Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010; Packard & Wooten, 2014). Our analysis identifies six practices regularly employed in the animation of video eWOM of this type: modeling, product highlighting, persona projecting, image manufacturing, audience appreciating, and professionalizing. The consistent recurrence of these practices across numerous videos, presenters, and products, implies a level of common social understanding. Given our methodological approach, we do not speculate as to the primacy or strength of these relationships (nor should the reader infer that we are arguing a direct causal link between any practice and consumer value). Rather, our analysis suggests that specific practices may catalyze (i.e. create conditions that increase the likelihood of) one or more types of derived value.

Modeling is a visual eWOM practice in which a presenter shows a product in use. The modeling of fashion items often entails a person posing, turning, and walking down an imaginary runway while wearing clothes. In many instances, modeling entails showing off a constellation of items, which the presenter cobbles together in use: a blazer might be modeled in conjunction

with a blouse, slacks, and other items to form a complete outfit. In such situations, pairing may be recognized as being a sub-practice of modeling.

In its most basic form, modeling serves as a demonstration of product usage and can facilitate the decision making process by reducing risk (e.g., 'I know this top pairs well with those jeans') and providing a source of informational value. But, as Tatiana Christine points out in her comment, modeling also provides aesthetic and social value.

*This helped so much! I'm 5'8" and i was worried they'd be short. They're so adorable. Ordered mine last night!* (Tatiana Christine; Outfit Video #22)

From this statement, we can infer that the presenter's modeling facilitated Tatiana's decision ("helped so much", "Ordered mine last night!") by addressing a source of pre-purchase concern ("worried they'd be short"). However, we also note that seeing the product modeled by a similar other can create a bond between the presenter and opinion seeker, providing social value, and enhance aesthetic value by animating the product beyond a static image.

A second, similar, video eWOM practice involves product highlighting: the act of visually presenting a product, including its various features and details without actually using the product for its intended purpose. Both modeling and product highlighting practices emphasize the focal product but in different ways. In a fashion context, for example, modeling involves the presenter actually wearing the product, while product highlighting involves showing the product without actually donning the garment. This distinction is relevant because each practice implies different social roles and meanings.

People expect a fashion model to behave differently than a product presenter. Models embody glamour, status, and fame (Parmentier & Fischer, 2011), while product presenters generally do not possess the same cultural associations. With the practice of modeling, then,

attention is divided more evenly between the model and the product than it would otherwise be with the practice of product highlighting. With less implied attention on the product in modeling, the product focus is generally more holistic. Features and details typically receive greater attention through the practice of product highlighting.

To engage in product highlighting, presenters hold up items to the camera, show close-ups of product details, and display product packaging and information tags. While the presenter might provide informational value while highlighting the product verbally, the practice itself (separate from the verbal message content) involves putting the product 'on a pedestal' and 'under the spotlight', symbolically elevating the product's importance. In some instances, reviewers amplify the product presentation practice with the addition of visual expressions of judgment and/or affect. For instance, presenters might hug or cradle products and convey affection through facial expressions. In such cases, presenters romance the product, a sub-practice of highlighting. As the comment from VolerVersLeReve demonstrates, the practices of product highlighting and romancing the product seem to enhance the aesthetic and emotional value opinion seekers gain from watching video eWOM.

> *i just died when i saw the lace flower jumper sweater!!! its beautiful!!! OH MY*
>
> *GOD i wish i had it i wish i lived in england and i could find it!!!*
>
> (VolerVersLeReve; Haul Video #14)

In this quotation, we see how VolerVersLeReve expresses the derivation of both aesthetic and emotional value from seeing the highlighted sweater. Even though the garment is unavailable to her (and thus, is not part of her decision set, reducing the informational value of this video), she recognizes its attractiveness from a relatively objective standpoint ("its beautiful"), and expresses an ironic colloquialism ("i just died") that conveys a positive

emotional response to the practice of product highlighting. The subtle mannerisms involved in product highlighting and romancing (e.g., facial expressions, treating it with reverence and holding it close to one's body, versus treating it with disdain and holding it at a distance) seem to provide a means for the opinion seeker to vicariously interact with the product, thereby enhancing the potential for deriving emotional value from the video as a whole.

Persona projecting, a third visual eWOM practice, involves actions intended to convey aspects of a desired persona to the audience. Presumably, the assumption that personality helps to comprise a micro-celebrity brand somewhat drives users to adopt these practices. To help convey personality, people engage in acts such as dancing, giving high fives to their camera, making amusing facial expressions, and performing in character-rich spaces (e.g., bedrooms). These practices, from an opinion seeking perspective, seem to primarily contribute to the social value derived from watching the videos. After one particular video where the presenter danced playfully and made funny facial expressions towards the camera, one opinion seeker responded:

> *adorable! but do u ever wear jeans?! i feel like ppl at my school would hate so*
>
> *much if i always wore leggings* (Sierra Dawn; Outfit Video #23)

From a social value perspective, we see that persona projection practices seem to bridge the physical and psychological distance between the presenter and the opinion seeker, and help foster an interpersonal closeness. By developing these connections, opinion seekers like Sierra Dawn can feel more comfortable questioning (in a friendly manner) the choices of the presenter, and draw parallels of similarity between her own life and that of the presenter. In short, persona projection practices can convey a range of social information (e.g., introvert/extravert, approachable/haughty, etc.), which seems to directly impact the degree to which opinion seekers feel the development of a social bond.

In a similar vein, presenters also engage in visual eWOM practices relating to image manufacturing. While persona projection focuses on conveying social connection information, image manufacturing practices involve constructing and performing an overall, idealized cultural image. In the context of fashion, presenters frequently seek to create an image of being a fashion guru (a revered expert in the field). Specific practices can include featuring unique 'looks,' providing tutorials, and crafting contexts that convey category expertise (e.g., in large closets or before substantial make-up collections). From an opinion seeking perspective, these practices seem to provide informational value, in the form of presenter credibility, and thus either provide support for or refutation of the message content. At times, presenters initiate these practices while other times, additional image information requests come from the opinion seekers. Consider the following quotation:

> *do a room tour and a makeup tour i love your videos!!! Any video works hahah i*
>
> *love watchin um.* (Jen Kline; Haul Video #24)

In this case, commenter Jen Kline explicitly requests further contextual information in the form of a room and makeup tour. This information can be used to established presenter credibility in the field of fashion. In addition, though, image manufacturing practices can also provide social value when the opinion seekers identify similar contextual elements (e.g., a shared poster, matching tastes in bedspreads, etc.) and emotional value, as Jen Kline points out ("i love watchin um").

Those who craft eWOM operate in an attention economy in which audiences must be cultivated. An awareness of this cultural reality encourages many to engage in the visual eWOM practice of audience appreciating. With this practice, performers acknowledge and thank their audiences for their patronage. They do so verbally, but also by blowing them kisses, waving 'hi'

and 'bye', as well as thanking the audience (sometimes even specific commenters by name) in writing on closing slates at the end of videos. As with persona projecting practices, audience appreciation practices not only encourage follower loyalty, but also provide social value by fostering a direct connection, projecting a sense that it is just two friends conversing. For example, following one video in which the presenter starts with greeting the audience and closes with a wave goodbye and a word of thanks on a final slate, yelly201 leaves this comment:

> *Those Buxom glosses are fantastic! I have Dani (lol of course :D) What nail polish is that? I love it! BTW... 9 for a nail polish being steep? naw! we pay $26 for NARS blushes, what's a $9 np? LOLOL and those American Apparel nail polishes are great! MAKE SURE you wear a base coat under Malibu Green though or it'll STAIN your nails!! be careful!! and please please do a review on the foundation! maybe try mixing it wish another foundation like NARS sheer glow or even your new Chanel one?* (yelly201; Haul Video #10)

The overall tone of this comment is one of a regular conversation about fashion and beauty that one might expect to hear from two longtime friends. We see that yelly201 asks questions, gives advice, makes requests, and shows concern, manifesting a variety of elements you might see in a conversation between two people who know each other well. In essence, such behavior reflects the opinion seeker's perception that there is a close bond between herself and the presenter, a bond seemingly fostered by the presenter's audience appreciation practices.

Finally, our analysis reveals a sixth common visual eWOM practice: professionalizing. Professionalizing entails the use of more sophisticated visual techniques that mimic those used in professional publications. To engage in professionalizing, presenters must have an awareness of such techniques, the technical skills to pursue them, and access to resources and tools to translate

them into action. In contrast to practices such as audience appreciation or product highlighting, there are greater barriers to engaging in the practice of professionalizing (though admittedly, advancing technology and software access continues to lower such barriers). Presenters engage in professionalizing by employing animated and thoughtful opening and closing slates, editing in close-ups and other types of shots and camera angles, and including video footage from multiple contexts. In examining and comparing our data, we find that the degree of professionalization seems to enhance informational, aesthetic, and emotional value. For instance, following a video in which the presenter integrates professional looking opening and closing slates, splices in still photography shots, and includes footage shot in a different location, AAlexis communicates how she receives multiple types of value from this outfit video, and other video eWOM from the same presenter:

> *You always look so sexy!!! I love yours videos!!! And your vlog channel videos*
>
> *are cool too!!! All of the haters are just jealous of you and your style! Keep on*
>
> *doing your thing girl!!! :-)* (AAlexis; Outfit Video #1)

First, we see a strong emphasis on the aesthetic value ("You always look so sexy!!!") and emotional value ("I love your videos!!!"). While some of this value certainly stems from the presence of other factors and practices, the use of professionalizing practices presents those other practices, literally, in the best light. Second, we see evidence of how these practices contribute to source credibility and informational value. In defending the presenter ("All of the haters are just jealous of you and your style"), AAlexis demonstrates her staunch support, and thus her belief in the quality of information gathered from the video eWOM. In short, opinion seekers seem to interpret the addition of elements and practices that increase the professional look as more believable and trustworthy.

*Discussion and Future Research Directions*

Through our analysis, we identify and describe six common visual eWOM practices and speculate about their connection to different types of consumer value derived by opinion seekers. This work sheds new light on WOM phenomena enacted over social media, and challenges the intuitive explanation that informational value provides the sole value of opinion seeking. Although our analysis does replicate past work in identifying information as one source of value for opinion seekers, it goes beyond this starting point to reveal a far more complex array of consumer value relating to visually-oriented eWOM. Beyond the value of actually seeing the product and receiving product usage information, we find that opinion seekers derive social, emotional and aesthetic value as well. Furthermore, the data suggest that six common visual practices present in video eWOM enhance value for the opinion seeker.

We do not presume to argue that textually-oriented eWOM cannot provide similar value to the opinion seeker; that is not the purpose of this study. Certainly a well-written review can provide emotional as well as informative value, and consumers can make inferences about the reviewer based on his or her writing that might foster a social connection as well. Instead, we are proposing that the non-message content of these videos—the presenter's visual practices— *facilitate* the derivation of value and, thus, serve an enhancing role.

Furthermore, since not all viewers leave comments (or expressions of value), our coding and analysis likely under-represents the extent of the value these videos provide for opinion seekers. In addition, the comments that one leaves might be in response to something other than a visual eWOM practice featured in a video. For these, and other reasons, the evidence this

research offers regarding to the relationship between visual eWOM practices and types of derived value should be considered very preliminary. Rather than providing the definitive piece of research on the topic, we see a key value of this work as being its role as a catalyst, or call-to-arms, for further research in the area.

In identifying these novel sources of value related to opinion seeking, and the common visual eWOM practices that seem to enhance this value, we offer an important first step in further understanding the eWOM process. But, as is often the case in exploratory studies, taking this first step also highlights further unanswered questions. In particular, two areas offer an initial starting point for providing further important theoretical and managerial contributions: 1) establishing a more detailed causal link between the identified practices and consumer value; and 2) exploring the interactive effects of practices and value on persuasive outcomes.

Although qualitative studies such as this offer several benefits for developing new insights, an admitted weakness of this type of work is its inability to conclusively establish causal relationships. While the temporal order of video consumption to opinion seeker comment is clear, and we can observe the presence of practices in conjunction with comments regarding the value derived, this is certainly an area where further controlled experiments might yield fruitful information regarding which practices directly lead to value creation, as well as determining their impact on key outcome variables such as purchase behavior and attitude change. Besides the theoretical extensions such a pursuit offers, it would also serve to inform the growing practice of word-of-mouth marketing.

Word-of-mouth marketing is the process by which companies seek to manage and influence WOM (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010). The typical approach involves seeding opinion leaders with a product, and then having them report in their medium of choice

23

(e.g., blogs, YouTube©, etc.). While this process is quite similar to the mailing out of free samples, the growth in popularity of social media and the availability of analytics for identifying audience sizes allows for more targeted, and effective, campaigns. By establishing the causal relationships between certain practices and consumer value, marketers can further increase the persuasive power of these efforts. This effect can potentially be refined even more if we can identify how these different sources of value work together, or possibly against one another.

The data show that a single review, and even a particular practice, can provide multiple sources of value. For example, a review might be informative, entertaining, and offer aesthetic value (particularly in the realm of beauty and fashion products). What remains unclear, however, is how these different sources of value work in conjunction with regards to relevant outcome variables such as persuasive impact, and future consumption and opinion seeking from the source. On the one hand, it is possible to argue that value should be additive and thus, increasing the sources value derived from the visually-oriented eWOM should also increase the persuasive outcome. In other words, if a visually-oriented eWOM message offers two sources of value (e.g., humorous/entertaining and informative), the opinion seeker's attitude towards the recommended brand should be enhanced (Eisend, 2009). Yet, equally plausible is that some sources of value may negate other sources of value, or that the effects may vary depending on differing levels of a certain value. For instance, it is not difficult to imagine watching a haul video where one is so distracted by the aesthetic qualities (e.g., the presenter's beauty) that the information provided is missed completely. In short, this avenue of exploration offers several empirical questions worthy of investigation.

We by no means suggest that the extent of investigation should be limited to these two areas. Several other items of interest came out of our analysis but did not directly relate to the

topic at hand. For example, in several videos, the presenters mentioned multiple brand names and concocted multifaceted brand pairings. This suggests a need for further inquiry into how such behavior impacts opinion seekers' attitudes towards the various brands involved, and what happens when some brands in the pairings are available and others are not.

Furthermore, our data source—consumer comments—offers another line of inquiry: how do these forms of 'discursive response' (Smith, 2014) to original eWOM messages offer value and impact consumer attitudes?

We also note that in describing the social value derived from opinion seeking via video eWOM, we focused on social similarity and belonging. In line with identity-building and social comparison research, though, we acknowledge that the inverse process, that of social distancing, is also likely. The anonymity of commenting can lead to derogatory and inflammatory comments as well as positive ones, and merits additional inquiry to understand this aspect of opinion seeking behavior.

In summary, we suggest that visually-oriented eWOM, and the practices contained therein, as well as consumer value perspectives on word-of-mouth and opinion seeking, merit further research. Many decades ago, Whyte (1954) reflected that there is something especially powerful about the visual aspect of WOM: seeing a neighborhood full of air conditioners can impact our understandings and choices. Since that time, communications technologies and social media platforms have dramatically expanded our 'neighborhoods' and provided us with means to create and derive value from visual word-of-mouth online. In addition to written product reviews, consumers are now – in great numbers – sharing their product and brand related opinions and insights online through pictures and videos. They are also seeking out this visual eWOM in their pursuit of information, pleasure, and social connectedness. Researchers will gain

a better understanding of eWOM as a multifaceted and evolving phenomenon by focusing not only on what is written 'on the page' by consumers, but also by studying the visuals and videos they create and communicate.

# References

Batra, R. & Ahtola, O.T. (1990). Measuring the hedonic and utilitarian sources of consumer attitudes. *Marketing Letters*, *2*(2), 159-170.

Belk, R.W. & Costa, J.A. (1998). The mountain man myth: A contemporary consuming fantasy. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *25*(3), 218-240.

Belk, R.W., Ger, G. & Askegaard, S. (2003). The fire of desire: A multisited inquiry into consumer passion. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *30*(3), 326-351.

Berger, J. & Schwartz, E.M. (2011). What drives immediate and ongoing word of mouth? *Journal of Marketing Research*, *48*(5), 869-80.

Boudreau, A. & Singh, N. (2011). Shop-and-tell: 'Haul videos' turn shopping sprees into potential profits. *ABC News* (May 31). URL: [http://abcnews.go.com/Business/shop-haul-videos-turn-shopping-sprees-potential-profits/story?id=13694508](http://abcnews.go.com/Business/shop-haul-videos-turn-shopping-sprees-potential-profits/story?id=13694508)

Bradac, J.J., Konsky, C.W. & Davies, R.A. (1976). Two studies of the effects of linguistic diversity upon judgments of communicator attributes and message effectiveness. *Communication Monographs*, *43*(1), 70-79.

Brown, T.J., Barry, T.E., Dacin, P.A. & and Gunst, R.F. (2005). Spreading the word: Investigating antecedents of consumers' positive word-of-mouth intentions and behaviors in a retailing context. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *33*(2), 123-138.

Burgess, J. & Green, J. (2009). YouTube: Online video and participatory culture. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Cheema, A. & Kaikati, A.M. (2010). The effect of need for uniqueness on word of mouth. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *XLVII*(June), 553-563.

Clark, R.A. & Goldsmith, R.E. (2005). Market mavens: Psychological influences. *Psychology and Marketing*, *22*(4), 289-312.

Day, G. S. (1971). Attitude Change, Media and Word of Mouth. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *11*(6), 31-40.

De Angelis, M., Bonezzi, A., Peluso, A.M., Rucker, D.D., Costabile, M. (2012). On braggarts and gossips: A self-enhancement account of word-of-mouth generation and transmission. *Journal of Marketing Research*: *49*(4), 551-563.

Dichter, E. (1966). How word-of-mouth advertising works. *Harvard Business Review*, *44*(6), 147-166.

Domaneschi, L. (2012). Food social practices: Theory of practice and the new battlefield of food quality. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 12(3), 306-322.

Eisend, M. (2009). A meta-analysis of humor in advertising. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *37*(2), 191-203.

Feick, L.F., Price, L.L. & Higie, R.A. (1986). People who use people: The other side of opinion leadership. *Advances in Consumer Research*, *13*, 301-305.

Flynn, L.R., Goldsmith, R.E. & Eastman, J.K. (1996). Opinion leaders and opinion seekers: Two new measurement scales. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *24*(2), 137-147.

Gibbs, J.L., Ellison, N.B. & Heino, R.D. (2006). Self-presentation in online personals: The role of anticipated future interaction, self-disclosure, and perceived success in internet dating. *Communication Research*, *33*(2), 152-77.

Goldsmith, R.E. & Clark, R.A. (2008). An analysis of factors affecting fashion opinion leadership and fashion opinion seeking. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, *12*(3), 308-322.

Goldsmith, R.E. & Flynn, L.R. (2005). Bricks, clicks, and pix: apparel buyers' use of stores, internet, and catalogs compared. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, *33*(4), 271-283.

Goldsmith, R.E. & Horowitz, D. (2006). Measuring motivations for online opinion seeking. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, *6*(2), 3-14.

Hamilton, R., Vohs, K.D. & McGill, A.L. (2014).We'll be honest, this won't be the best article you'll ever read: The use of dispreferred markers in word-of-mouth communication. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *41*(1), 197-212.

Hennig-Thurau, T., & Walsh, G. (2003-4). Electronic word-of-mouth: Motivates for and consequences of reading customer articulations on the internet. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, *8*(2), 51-74.

Herr, P.M., Kardes, F.R. & Kim, J. (1991). Effects of word-of-mouth and product-attribute informtion on persuasion: An accessibility-diagnosticity perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *17*(4), 454-462.

Higgins, E. T. (1981). The 'communication game': Implications for social cognition and persuasion. In E.T. Higgins, C. P. Herman and M. P. Zanna (eds) Social Cognition: The Ontario Symposium (343-392). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Higgins, E.T. (1992). Achieving 'shared reality' in the communication game: A social action that creates meaning. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *11*(3), 107-131.

Holbrook, M. B., & Hirschman, E. C. (1982). The experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings and fun. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(2), 132-140.

Holbrook, M. (1999). Introduction to consumer value. In. M. Holbrook (Ed.). Consumer value:

A framework for Analysis and Research (1-28). New York: Routledge.

Karmarkar, U.R. & Tormala, Z.L. (2010). Believe me, I have no idea what I'm talking about:

The effects of source certainty on consumer involvement and persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *36*(6), 1033-1049.

Kozinets, R.V., de Valck, K., Wojnicki, A. & Wilner, S. (2010). Networks of narrativity:

understanding word-of-mouth marketing in online communities. *Journal of Marketing*, *74*(2), 71-89.

Marwick, A.E. (2013). Status update: Celebrity, publicity, and branding in the social media age.

New Haven: Yale University Press.

Magaudda, P. (2011). When materiality 'bites back': Digital music consumption practices

in the age of dematerialization. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *11*(1), 15-36.

McQuarrie, E.F., Miller, J. & Phillips, B.J. (2013). The megaphone effect: taste and audience in

fashion blogging. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *40*(1), 136-158.

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A.M (1994). Qualitative Data Analysis. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Packard, G. & Wooten, D.B. (2013). Compensatory knowledge signaling in consumer word-of-

mouth. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *23*(4) 434-450.

Pantzar, M. & Ruckenstein, M. (2014): The heart of everyday analytics: emotional, material and

practical extensions in self-tracking market. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, DOI: 10.1080/10253866.2014.899213.

Parmentier, M-A. & Fischer, E. (2011). You can't always get what you want: Unsustainable

identity projects in the fashion system. *Consumption, Markets & Culture*, *14*(1), 7-27.

Punj, G.N. & Staelin, R. (1983). A model of consumer information search behavior for new automobiles. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *9*(4), 366-380.

Pyle, M.A. (2013). Using word-of-mouth to portray an image of being knowledgeable about a product category [dissertation]. Kingston, ON: Queen's University.

Reckwitz, A. (2002). Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory, 5*(2): 243–263.

Scaraboto, D. & Fischer, E. (2013). Frustrated fatshionistas: An institutional theory perspective on consumer quests for greater choice in mainstream markets. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *39*(6), 1234-1257.

Schau, H.J., Muñiz Jr., A.M., & Arnould, E.J. (2009). How brand community practices create value. *Journal of Marketing*, *73*(5), 30-51.

Sheth, J.N., Newman, B.I. & Gross, B.L. (1991). Why we buy what we buy: A theory of consumption values. *Journal of Business Research*, 22, 159-170.

Smith, A.N. (2014). Sensegiving word-of-mouth and collective sensemaking about epistemic objects [dissertation]. Toronto, ON: York University.

Smith, A.N., Fischer, E. & Yongjian, C. (2014). How does brand-related user-generated content differ across YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *26*(2), 102-113.

Stephen, A. T. & Lehmann, D. R. (2009). Is Anyone Listening? Modeling the Impact of Word-of-Mouth at the Individual Level.URL: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1371111

Sweeney, J.C. & Soutar, G. (2001). Consumer perceived value: The development of a multiple item scale. *Journal of Retailing*, *77*(2), 203–220.

Ward, J.C. & Ostrom, A.L. (2006). Complaining to the masses: The role of protest framing in customer-created complaint web sites. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *33*(2), 220-230.

Verlegh, P. W. K., Buijs, C.M. & Zethof, A. (2008). Talk, talk, talk: Consumer motives for word-of-mouth referral. *Advances in Consumer Research*, *35*, 50-51.

Whyte, W. H. Jr. (1954). The Web of Word of Mouth. *Fortune*, *50*(November), 140-143.

Wojnicki, A.C. & Godes, D. (2008). Word-of-mouth as self-enhancement. University of Toronto Working Paper.

Zeithaml, V.A. (1988). Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: A means-end model and synthesis of evidence. *Journal of Marketing*, *52*(3), 2-22.

## Table 6.1: Types of Value Derived From Visual eWOM

| Types of Value | Description | Illustrative Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Informational Value | Value associated with the acquisition of information that can help a consumer achieve a particular goal (Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991). | • *"The dress is really cute on you. I would have totally over looked it. It seems so plain on the website."* (Elenluvsmakeup; Outfit Video #19)<br>• *"Love Thursdays outfit! So gonna copy it!"* (Amanda Green; Outfit Video #23)<br>• *"i like the hauls very imformative u should do some watches."* (Mrsunderstood0321; Haul Video #11)<br>• *"'made in bangladesh' :( i wonder what ethics lulu lemon has... after the whole sizing only for thin people, i wouldn't be surprised that the working conditions of the bangladeshi people in their factories were terrible."* (Méditations Guidées; Haul Video #25) |
| Social Value | Value related to the perceived association one has with a particular individual or social group (Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991). | • *"I'm really glad I came across your channel you have awesome style similar to me!"* (angelcreme; Outfit Video #6)<br>• *"We have the same top from topshop. Idk, but I'm feeling special."* (Stephanie Pink, Haul Video #20)<br>• *"I'm so glad someone else who isn't a little kid wears ivivva! It's so much cheaper for the same thing and they fit me exactly the same."* (846cookie; Haul Video #23)<br>• *"hey sabrina (: just letting you know, my mum purchased the bio oil, and it really does work, shes been constantly using it for about a year now and it actually has improved the look and feel of her skin.. haha just thought i would let you know. :D xoxo"* (yousafmalik2009; Haul Video #5) |
| Emotional Value | Value associated with the arousal of positive feelings or affective states (Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991). | • *"aww your smile at 3:17 was really adorable lol"* (Anna Taylor; Outfit Video #23)<br>• *"awww you're so cute! when you were talking about the skirt saying 'its a lot of money' and when u were talking about your mum giving you the bag. and i love the blooper! aww never ever change- youre just too cute"* (VanillaSecrets; Haul Video #14)<br>• *"'really cute, love it, nice' \*throws bag\* lol. love the haul"* (cierralovexo; Haul Video #5)<br>• *"oh it was cuute how you filmed yourself while you where moving around at the beginnen xD <3 !"* (jellbb; Outfit Video #16) |
| Aesthetic Value | Value associated with the appreciation or enjoyment of something that is regarded as | • *"Ah love love love your style! I found your channel through the persianbabe and I'm so glad* |

| | beautiful, well designed, or aesthetically pleasing (Holbrook 1998). | *because your style is just perfect! You're like my new favourite haha xx*" (Shanlovestuff; Outfit Video #21)<br>• *"those red shoes are gorgeous !!"* (huddlpj; Haul Video #12)<br>• "*everything is absolutely gorgeous! I especially adore the horse head t-shirt, the sunglasses, and the maxi dress!*" (Hailey5210; Haul Video #16) |
|---|---|---|

**Table 6.2: Visual eWOM Practices**

| Visual eWOM Practices | Description | Illustrative Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Modeling (& Pairing) | The practice of showing a product in use. For some product categories, there are more clearly defined understandings with regards to how modeling should occur. For example, in fashion, modeling often entails posing, turning, and walking down a runway in clothes, while channeling appropriately toned emotions and bodily demeanor, to present fashion items or an overall 'look.' Modeling potentially also involves the sub-practice of pairing, in which multiple products are featured together in a constellation to display how they look and function together. | *Modeling*<br>• Wearing a clothing item in a video<br>• Trying on or peeling off a clothing item<br><br>*Pairing*<br>• Posing in an outfit<br>• Walking toward the camera in an outfit |
| Product Highlighting (& Romancing) | The practice of visually presenting a product, including many of its various features and details, without actually using the product for its intended purpose. Presenters generally understand that particular conditions, such as brighter lighting and an in-focus camera, are more conducive to showing off the product, as well as that they should focus more attention on particular features and qualities, such as those that are unique or special to product. An exaggerated version of highlighting is product romancing, in which presentation is accompanied by visual expressions of extremely positive judgment or affect. | *Product Highlighting*<br>• Holding up an item to the camera and rotating it<br>• Showing a close-up of, or pointing at, a feature<br>• Pulling at an item or running one's hands over it<br>• Showing product packaging or information tags<br><br>*Product Romancing*<br>• Hugging or cradling an item<br>• Engaging in an extended inhale of a scented product<br>• Conveying affection for an item through one's facial expressions |
| Persona Projecting | The practice of visually conveying aspects of one's personality. There is a general understanding that presenters have the potential to become micro-celebrities and develop an audience, and that their personality is part of the image they convey in their performances to help increase their status. | • Dancing<br>• Giving high-fives to the camera<br>• Making amusing facial expressions<br>• Shooting videos in an information rich environment (e.g., whole room is visible vs. only a white wall) |
| Image Manufacturing | The practice of constructing or performing an idealized cultural image. In the context of fashion, one idealized image is that of the fashion guru. There is a general understanding that the fashion guru is fashion-forward, well put-together, and knowledgeable about trends and 'looks'. | • Featuring unique 'looks' that are complete and exhibited down to the smallest detail<br>• Providing visual tutorials on how to apply make-up or wear an item of clothing |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Crafting a context that conveys expertise (e.g.,, which shows 100 bottles of nail polish in the background) |
| Audience Appreciating | The practice of visually acknowledging and thanking one's audience. There is a general understanding that presenters perform for an audience in the context of an attention economy, and that such an audience – which helps to establish their status – is potentially fleeting and should be appreciated and cultivated. | • Blowing kisses to audience<br>• Waving 'hi' and 'bye' to audience<br>• Thanking audience on closing slate |
| Professionalizing | The practice of employing more sophisticated visual techniques that mimic those used in professional publications. There is a general understanding that some visual techniques convey a higher degree of skill and more closely adhere to cultural expectations regarding professional productions than amateur ones. | • Employing animated and aesthetically thoughtful opening and closing slates<br>• Editing in close-up, slow motion, still, and black and white shots into a video<br>• Including video footage from multiple contexts (e.g., inside and outside) |