

Copyright
by
Sakurako C. Stephens
2019

**The Thesis Committee for Sakurako C. Stephens
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:**

The Power of Makeup: A Digital Ethnography

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Christina Bain, Supervisor

Christopher O. Adejumo

The Power of Makeup: A Digital Ethnography

by

Sakurako C. Stephens

Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2019

Dedication

To my friends, family and faculty at The University of Texas. And especially to my pomeranian, Boo.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge several people that helped me through graduate school. Dee Matthews for constantly encouraging me to apply for a graduate program even when the dream seemed far away. My parents for supporting me in anything I pursued ever since I can remember. My friends for being my family and supporting me through the highs and lows that come with moving to an unfamiliar place. And finally, to Dr. Bain for being my mentor and role model; I only hope to be half as inspirational of an art educator as you are one day.

Abstract

The Power of Makeup: A Digital Ethnography

Sakurako C. Stephens, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2019

Supervisor: Christina Bain

The purpose of this study is to investigate how one YouTube makeup tutorial impacted and shaped viewer's perceptions in one digital community. This study uses ethnographic content analysis to analyze a transcription of *The Power of Makeup* YouTube video and the top 300 comments left below the video. The text from the artifacts (transcription and comments) were coded and categorized into 6 themes: empathy and relatability, empowerment, societal expectations, insecurities, personal justifications and disagreement. Each theme is a reflection of how participants responded to *The Power of Makeup* through their comments. This research will help equip viewers with an understanding of how images are perceived. With this knowledge, viewers will be able to use critical thinking skills to discern fact from opinion. The findings of this study also provide information for educators to teach visual culture in the classroom.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	x
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Introduction to the Study	1
Central Research Question.....	1
Problem Statement.....	2
Personal Motivations for Research	2
Professional Motivations for Research	3
Definition of Terms	5
Research Method	6
Limitations of Study	7
Benefits to the Field of Art Education.....	8
Conclusion	9
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	10
Visual Culture Studies	11
Social Media	13
Beauty Vlogging	17
Feminist Research.....	20
Aesthetics.....	21
Normative Feminine Beauty Standards	23
Visual Culture Art Education	25
Summary	27

Chapter 3: Methodology	29
Research Methods	29
NikkieTutorials and The Power of Makeup	33
Data Collection	36
Researcher as Instrument and Researcher Reflexivity	38
Data Analysis	41
Validity and Reliability	48
Summary	48
Chapter 4: Findings	50
The Power of Makeup Video	50
Themes	57
Conclusion	67
Chapter 5: Conclusion	68
The Message	68
Empathy and Relatability	69
Societal Expectation and Insecurities	71
Empowerment	73
Personal Justifications	74
Disagreement	75
Recommendations for Future Research	78
Final Thoughts	80
Appendices	82
Appendix A: Transcription of <i>The Power of Makeup</i>	82

Appendix B: Top 300 Comments Coded from <i>The Power of Makeup</i>	86
References	97

List of Figures

Figure 1: Sample from <i>The Power of Makeup</i> Transcription.	36
Figure 2: Word Cloud of <i>The Power of Makeup</i> Comments.	44
Figure 3: Field Notes Sample of Coding <i>The Power of Makeup</i> Comments.....	45
Figure 4: Sample from Video Comments with Key.	46
Figure 5: Nikkie de Jager bare faced in <i>The Power of Makeup</i>	52
Figure 6: Nikkie de Jager and Marilyn Monroe in <i>The Power of Makeup</i>	53
Figure 7: Nikkie before and after applying makeup.....	55
Figure 8: Nikkie de Jager’s completed look.	56
Figure 9: Pie Chart of the 6 Themes from <i>The Power of Makeup</i> Viewer Comments.....	57

Chapter 1: Introduction

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

From magazines to the internet, media projects a standard of beauty suggesting what we should look and act like. For example, there are thin models wearing high heels strutting in exotic locations, women with extremely contoured facial features, full lips and perfect eyebrows carrying exorbitantly priced handbags while they casually sip a Starbucks latte and slide into a luxury vehicle in a billboard ad. Articles and online tutorials describe how we can attain such physique or facial proportions whether it be through dieting, plastic surgery, or spending \$150 on the newest miracle elixir. These beauty ideals are demonstrated by celebrities and various social media personalities, but what they do not show are the drastic procedures and photoshopping these individuals undergo to achieve such an unrealistic appearance in order to satisfy current beauty norms. We live in a world where information is constantly presented in the form of visual technology, but there is a lack of education on how to interpret the images and texts bombarding our daily news feed.

For this research project, I investigated *The Power of Makeup*, a viral YouTube beauty tutorial video, and analyzed feedback from viewers. The feedback I examined was in the form of comments left below the videos, and I identified patterns in how viewers perceived these tutorials. Through this research, I identified impacts of the tutorials on viewers' perceptions of beauty standards and feminine normativity.

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

How does *The Power of Makeup* beauty video impact viewers' perceptions?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how one YouTube makeup tutorial impacted and shaped viewer's perceptions of beauty today. With the increase in technology as a mode of transmitting information, it is crucial to stay informed with not only the changes that are occurring in the world around us, but how to interpret this constant stream of information and misinformation. Visual culture transmitted through technology is becoming prominent and influential, but there is a lack of education on how to interpret visual culture, specifically shared through social media. Beauty standards are shaped through commercials, magazine covers, music videos, Instagram posts and YouTube videos. This research will help equip viewers better understand the role of visual culture in helping viewers decode social media imagery.

PERSONAL MOTIVATIONS FOR RESEARCH

In the 6th grade, I glanced at the most popular girl in my class. Okay, it was more like staring at her intently as my awkward pre-pubescent self tried to figure out how to conform and fit into a middle school nightmare. She was perfectly blonde, thin and *almost* my friend. All I needed was to look more like her, act more like her, and wear my makeup like her. She started wearing pearly stark white eyeliner as eyeshadow, with that infamous blue "Great Lash" brand mascara gracing her lashes, finished with black eyeliner lining both top and bottom lids, giving off a smoldering stare. Every girl in the 6th grade, including myself, immediately adopted this heinous makeup trend, but to us, that look made us beautiful.

Fast forward to college and the popularization of YouTube makeup tutorials. Watching beauty guru Promise Phan turn herself into anybody she chose simply through

the power of makeup was like watching magician David Blaine cough up frogs into a cup. I was mesmerized. As I became more and more involved with the world of makeup and began to harness its transformative powers, I realized that my idea of beauty shifted when makeup trends changed for my gurus. All of a sudden, my white eyeshadow and blue mascara was a thing of the past and I moved on to contouring, highlighting and cut-crease eyeshadow with fake lashes. Celebrities began promoting lip injections and microblading, and I found myself investigating the nearest facility where I could obtain Juvederm injections. I was so caught up in the images of mass media that I almost forgot about the option to think critically and reject these ideas.

When I began considering the different purposes of art education (Bolin & Hoskings, 2015), the idea of discussing media images with students resonated with me. Without a space to critique media images, I could be typing this today with puffy lips and regrets. I am by no means condemning cosmetic procedures, but I believe that everyone should be entitled to the opportunity to be critical of beauty ideals presented by the media prior to making any body modification choices. It is time to move beyond the media generated message that narrowly defines beauty as thin and white. A more critical view of mass media can be applied to all images presented to the world today, and my hope is that visual culture studies can be used to help individuals understand the influence media has upon images they see.

PROFESSIONAL MOTIVATIONS FOR RESEARCH

If three years of working in a Title I, underprivileged school taught me one thing, it is that relevancy is critical to having engagement in the classroom. High art, hours of sketching still life images, or critiques of long dead artists, is not always a priority for

students who barely have their basic needs met at home - if they even have a home. When I discovered that visual culture is related to Art Education, I was intrigued to learn that I could teach students about contemporary popular culture. Visual culture is a “new paradigm”, a “new, new art history” which offers “a fresh approach to new objects and images” in the context of art education (Homer, 1998, p. 6). I want to utilize this approach in the art classroom, so this study is a stepping stone in understanding visual culture.

YouTube makeup tutorials are a popular form of visual culture influencing millions of people worldwide. According to Androulaki-Ralli (2015), there are over “45,000 YouTube channels specializing in fashion and beauty-related content, videos include makeup tutorials, cosmetic/skincare hauls, recommendations etc...”, with the top beauty YouTube channel having over 20 million subscribers (p. 30). In a world where we are constantly influenced and shaped by the images around us, it is critical that art educators equip students with the ability to think critically about the ideas presented to us through popular culture.

Christine Griffin (2004) argues that “the bodies of preteen and teenage girls are often constructed as objects of male gaze in need of improvement through fashion, makeup and hair styling techniques presented in girls’ magazine and other popular cultural texts created for girls’ consumption” (p. 31). Using the visual culture paradigm, it is important to investigate how YouTube makeup tutorials construct gender and femininity in the United States. Doing so may help us better understanding how beauty tutorials are perceived and influence their audience. And so, teaching critical inquiry

through visual culture in the art classroom may help students discern fact from opinion when viewing images.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Beat: A term in the beauty community used to describe a face that is fully made up.

Beauty Influencer: Beauty YouTubers are people who create and post videos on their channel about beauty related topics and are defined as individuals who had generated a notable digital presence through their engagement in beauty-related content generation and were able to utilize their impact to position themselves as relevant in the beauty community (Gnegy 2017). They are also called Beauty Vloggers and Beauty Gurus.

Fleek: Often associated with eyebrows in the makeup community. Fleek eyebrows describe eyebrows that are drawn on with precision and are often thick and well defined.

Gender Role: Behaviors, attitudes and physical characteristics that are considered socially acceptable based on the perceived sex or sexuality of the individual.

Highlight and Contour: Highlighting and contouring are makeup techniques frequently referenced and used in makeup tutorials that are used to shape or sculpt the face and body. Highlighting is using a light colored or shimmering pigment on the high points of the face or body. Contouring is a method where darker matte pigments are applied in areas of the face and body to allow them to give the illusion of depth.

Male Gaze: The act of viewing women as objects or for the purpose of male pleasure.

Normative White Femininity: The white capitalist patriarchal compulsion to adopt styles and attitudes consistent with an imposed white feminine aesthetic (Bartky, 2003).

This is typically fair skin, slim nose, light eyes and light hair.

Slut Shaming: The action of stigmatizing a woman for engaging in behavior judged to be promiscuous or sexually provocative.

Snatched: Refers to the contouring of the nose to make it appear slim, elongated and small.

YouTube: A website where the public can upload and share videos and watch other user's videos.

Viewer: Term describing individuals who watch YouTube videos. They may leave their written feedback in the form of comments. Beauty community viewers are individuals who view beauty influencer video content and engage in active or passive consumption (Gnegy, 2017).

Viral: An image, video, advertisement, etc..., that is circulated rapidly on the Internet.

Visual Culture: An interdisciplinary field which studies the social construction of visual experience (Homer, 1998).

Vlog: Short for "video blogging". A person who posts videos onto a social media platform documenting events in their life.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized a digital ethnography framework. Ethnomethodology is described as a qualitative research method which focuses on the shared and learned patterns of values, language, behaviors and beliefs of a culture-sharing group. Ethnographers study the meaning of the behavior, language and the interaction among members of the culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2006). Through observation of such interactions, the researcher determines how a culture understands and defines itself.

Digital ethnography builds upon traditional ethnomethodology, but specifically focuses on studying the culture of a digital and computer-mediated society. The main factor that differs between digital and traditional ethnography is the mode of connectivity within the community, which is computer-mediated rather than in-person. Digital ethnography studies how digital environments shape behaviors, interactions, and cultural processes (Caliandro, 2016).

Since this project took place in the digital realm, the “community” studied was a digital community where individuals build relationships and personas that surpass geographic boundaries. Social networking sites such as YouTube are a major component of modern society and serve as platforms of communication and fellowship in a digital context (Gnegy, 2017). Because this study took place in a digital realm and its data consisted of video content and text-based comments, this methodology was well suited to answer the central research question.

Through ethnographic content analysis, this research examined how a digital culture’s responses and interactions reflected the effect of the messages relayed through the video. According to Creswell (2006), “the ethnographer produces the participant’s views through closely edited quotations and has the final word on how the culture is to be interpreted and presented” (p. 70).

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The parameters of this study are to investigate what ideas were presented to viewers/subscribers by analyzing viewer/subscriber feedback through one YouTube makeup tutorial. The first limitation is that among the various forms of popular media outlets such as Instagram and Snapchat, only YouTube was included, so it is impossible

to tell how the results might be different via other means of social media. The feedback studied was in the form of comments left below one video in the comment section. The findings of this study cannot be generalized to the general public and those who do not watch YouTube makeup tutorials.

Another constraint to this study is not having direct correspondence with the vloggers or viewers, limiting the data to the video content and comments. The creators and viewers of the video were not contacted or interviewed, so all results are based on analyzing the video and comments. I also limited the comments to English only due to the inability to accurately translate other languages posted in the comments. Additionally, the viewer's comments will not be tracked over an extended period of time, so I will be unable to analyze long term change of perceptions and impact from the video.

Finally, the video that was investigated has nearly 30,000 comments, and only a select number were analyzed. I chose to analyze the "top" 300, or roughly 1% of comments. YouTube determines top comments via algorithms based on the accounts of viewers. YouTube has not publicly released information as to how top comments are determined. However, top comments were selected because they were most relevant to answering the central research question in this study.

BENEFITS TO THE FIELD OF ART EDUCATION

This research study will benefit the field of art education by providing support and evidence that visual culture studies is a valid approach for informing society about the messages we view. Art education is often viewed as a classroom based learning environment where studio production takes place, instead of a field of academic importance. It is becoming increasingly difficult in the United States to maintain funding

and evade budget cuts for the fine arts. This project contributed to the awareness that visual culture is relevant and necessary for 21st century learning.

CONCLUSION

In an ever changing world, keeping up with trends is impossible. Digital media platforms present modern day challenges in society that need to be addressed in the classroom. For example, teaching students how to decipher the codes and messages in visual culture images can encourage a healthy understanding of images rather than a need to conform or change to fit a fluid standard. By assessing viewer feedback to one beauty YouTube tutorial, my aim is to discover how social media can shape beauty ideals and feminine normativity.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter discusses pertinent literature in the following sections: visual culture studies, social media, aesthetics, normative feminine beauty standards, feminist theory, beauty vlogging and Visual Culture Art Education. Visual culture communicated through technology is becoming prominent and influential, but there is a lack of education on how to interpret online images, specifically social media (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004). One of the ways viewers interpret visual culture is by comparing their own body image to those on digital platforms and social media (Milkie, 1999). Commercials, magazine covers, music videos, Instagram posts, snapchat and YouTube videos, create a normative feminine beauty standard which influences viewers' perceptions of themselves and others. Finally, this chapter examines how art educators can equip students with tools to examine the motives behind mass media and popular culture through critical questioning (Chin, 2015). It is critical that art education moves away from teaching formalistic art practices towards addressing the changing and contemporary world. Teaching 21st century skills and knowledge means that there is a need to update art education curriculum so that it aligns with the knowledge needed to succeed in modern society. Hence, images in contemporary society are no longer limited to fine arts, such as painting, drawing and sculpture. Society is bombarded with images everyday, yet many do not have the tools to resist the messages the visuals are conveying. With the aesthetic pleasures of visual culture used to lure viewers, teachers can play a vital role in helping students decode the images that they encounter on a daily basis.

VISUAL CULTURE STUDIES

Visual culture focuses on everyday culture, and is a “new paradigm”, a “new, new art history” which offers “a fresh approach to new objects and images” in the context of art education (Homer, 1998, p. 6). Visual culture theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff claims that, “the human experience is now more visual and visualized than ever before”, and that “visual culture is not a just part of our everyday lives, it is our everyday lives” (1999, p. 315). Freedman (1994) refers to visual culture as “forms of human production that function as manifest images” (p. 158). While studio artists and art historians may view visual culture as a threat to the field of art history and aesthetics, Mitchell (2002) disagrees. He acknowledges the dissonance of the relation of visual culture to existing disciplines, but articulates the purpose and place of visual culture in the world of art. Visual culture studies is not merely an interdisciplinary field or dangerous supplement to other fields of study, but rather a specific domain of research that examines both the explicit and implicit meaning of images.

As a relatively new field, visual culture studies is still finding its way in the world of the fine arts. Like art education, it is interdisciplinary and can be misunderstood and dismissed. Not quite art history, fine art, or social studies, it is described as a youthful and amorphous medium that is the study of social construction of visual experience (Homer, 1998). Visual culture is a way that art can be taught as a subject of relevance and importance rather than just a reflection of social life, and integrates visual technologies as a major source of dissemination (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004).

While there was once a preoccupation with written text during the late 1900s, the study of visual culture focuses on the visual sensory experience. Some argue that there

has been too much emphasis on “word-text-oriented thinking” and that images have been neglected when they are in fact, “the primacy of the visual” (Stafford, 1996, p. 7). Stafford argues that the “seen” world provides just as much, if not more insight than text, into the study of any given time or place. Duncum (2007) further defines visual culture as a lens to view various theories, ranging from feminism to semiotics. Using visual culture as a paradigm, Duncum argues that viewers can break down the “canon of great masterpieces fabricated by white Western European males” (p. 8) as well as critique popular culture today. Through a visual culture paradigm, emerging controversial topics can be deconstructed and analyzed without the distractions of political agendas. Although visual culture can be used to examine politically charged topics, Mitchell (1995) asserts that it is not a political movement. Unlike feminism or culture studies, visual culture lacks the inherent politics of gender, class or race and allows viewers to examine the imagery in the world around us through the senses.

Barrett (2003) describes visual culture as the mundane and common objects found in everyday life such as printed t-shirts, cereal boxes, teddy bears, advertisements and wrestling. These “material items of culture signify and express meaning” to the viewer and can be interpreted through two categories: denotation and connotation (Barrett, 2003, p. 6). Denotation is the literal description of the image and text presented, while connotation is the implicit meaning behind the images. Barrett (2003) emphasizes the importance of interpreting images and designed objects in our culture because these images are often presented as the truth. The images we view have the power to reinforce attitudes as well as shape our beliefs and values. By failing to interpret the messages being presented by these images and objects, viewers and consumers are unknowingly

“buying, wearing, promoting and otherwise consuming opinions in which we may or may not agree” (Barrett, 2003, p. 12). This is important to address, as all people should have the conscious ability to make decisions that are educated and well informed before buying, promoting or believing anything. However, this becomes increasingly challenging as new social media applications emerge and viewers are subjected to ideas and values with little choice of the content that appears. In the technological world of the 21st century, images are produced and shared through digital means such as social media. While traditional art education curriculum may have revolved around paintings and other forms of fine art, art educators are now faced with the challenges of addressing visual content that fill the digital screens held in nearly every hand today.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations...and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (p. 61). Since the beginning of the 21st century, social media has increased in usage and has now become a major component in how people interact, specifically in the younger population. As of 2018, three million people worldwide spend up to two hours a day on various social media sites (Brown, 2018). Although these sites have been used to form networks and relationships, they have also been used to “make social comparisons which increase the psychological distress of individuals and as a result lower the overall level of self-esteem” (Jan, Soomro, & Ahmad, 2017, p. 330).

Research attests to the many ways that social media has impacted adolescent girls and shows the importance of understanding media influence and viewer responses to

media images. Milkie's (1999) research examines the effects of media images geared towards adolescent girls through a social comparative theory. This theory states that we determine our own social and personal worth based on how we stack up to others based on attractiveness, wealth, intelligence, success, etc... (Milkie, 1999). The images that adolescent girls view impact how they perceive their self-worth. These images are viewed through social media platforms such as YouTube, and inundate adolescent girls with ideas and societal expectations through tutorials and video logs (vlogs).

Social media may contribute to low self-esteem and cause other negative side effects in viewers. Social media creates a façade, drawing attention to the most attractive portions of daily activities while omitting the mundane in order to create an illusion for other viewers. According to Silva (2017), 60% of people using social media reported that it has impacted their self-esteem in a negative way. 80% of people reported that it is easier to be deceived by events others post on social media compared to the events that take place in reality. Other studies show that social media causes depression, is addictive, and causes individuals to be more isolated while projecting the illusion of being more connected with society than they really are (Walton, 2017). A large factor of this feeling of isolation is linked to the comparison factor in social media, producing feelings of jealousy, envy and discontent among users. Additionally, Brown (2018) claims that depression from social media use has been attributed to giving a distorted view of other people's lives due to photo filters, strategic lighting and clever angles giving an illusion of unrealistic and unattainable beauty standards. Even uploading or viewing a seemingly harmless selfie has been shown to cause detrimental side effects. A study by Wang, Yang, & Haigh (2017), suggest that viewing other people's selfies on

social media lowered women's self-esteem and that some women compare themselves negatively to selfies of other women.

However, not all research points to negative impacts of social media. Miller, et al. (2016) claim that social media can cause happiness. In addition, their research shows that gender, politics and social status greatly affect the way in which people interact and react to social media. For example, people who use social media may do so as an escape from the reality of poverty. It also may help them stay connected with others whom they would otherwise have no relationship with.

There has been increasing participation in the creation of media content due to the emergence of social media platforms and website builders. Pages such as Myspace give users increased opportunities to interact with the website as opposed to traditional pre-designed marketing websites that have no user choices influencing them. Digital interactions are being reframed as user-control increases (participation and customization of published content), which is a drastic change from pre-made mass produced media content (such as websites for companies). An example of this are blogging websites such as Myspace and Tumblr, where the user can design nearly every aspect of the web page. The aesthetic choices and content produced on online platforms such as Myspace are a form of self-expression and identity for users which allows them to communicate and interact with others. Livingstone (2018) adds that self-actualization is a social process and involves taking risks on social media. These risks include forfeiting privacy, misunderstanding and abuse, but the advantages involve experimenting with identity, intimacy and sociability. Through internet-mediated communication, users can create

and re-create their identities in a stylistically elaborate way and interact with others in order to display their identity and selves.

With over half of all teens globally partaking in social media as a means of interacting with others, the ways in which information is created and shared has changed drastically. Information is no longer communicated through mail, magazines and radio. Today, ideas can be exchanged rapidly through the internet via apps on phones and social media platforms.

Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton, and Robison (2006) describe this collaborative, creative and online community of social media users with the term *participatory culture*. Participatory culture has many factors which define it, but its essence is a real or virtual space where people can contribute and feel that their input is valued by others. This space of informal learning is called an *affinity space*. Jenkins, et al., (2006) argue that formal education is static while informal learning within popular culture is dynamic. Rather than learning from a textbook, through digital platforms students are able to learn information that is relevant to their lives and the community around them. They also point out that children need parent and teacher supervision when processing media environments due to their emerging complex social practices. It is necessary to engage our youth in critical dialogues which allow them to clearly articulate their experiences in new digital cultures. Without parental or teacher intervention, there is a *participation gap*, or “unequal access to the opportunities, experiences, skills, and knowledge that will prepare youth for full participation in the world of tomorrow” (Jenkins, et al., 2006, p. 3).

Social media use is becoming a part of everyday life for people all over the world, so it is difficult to ignore the wide-reaching effects (both negative and positive) that it is having on societies everywhere. In fact, “creating and networking online content is becoming, for many, an integral means of managing one’s identity, lifestyle and social relations” (Livingstone, 2008, p. 5). Since it is impossible to keep young people away from social media, using visual culture images may be one way for art educators to teach students about the effects of social media on self-esteem, self-recognition, self-actualization and self-confidence.

BEAUTY VLOGGING

Video blogging (vlogging) is a practice in which an individual documents their experiences and narratives using video as a medium. These are often personal videos using a handheld camera or smartphone, and can include daily routines or story telling about an experience (Stefanone & Lackaff 2009). According to Stefanone and Lackaff (2009), YouTube is one of the top three sites which video bloggers (vloggers) use as a platform to upload their content. YouTube is a social media platform launched in 2005, where users can upload video content to view, share and interact with other users (Hopkins, 2003). Statistics show that as of 2019, YouTube is the second most visited internet website globally and in the United States (Alexa.com, 2019). Additionally, the total number of views on YouTube as of 2011 exceeded one trillion, making YouTube a leading social media vlogging interface (Androulaki-Ralli, 2015).

A YouTube beauty vlogger is a person who uploads video content on YouTube to share their ideas about beauty trends, ideas and products. They are often referred to as *beauty gurus* or *beauty influencers* because of their expertise and influence over viewers

on the topics of makeup, hair and fashion. Beauty vloggers, beauty brands and viewers are what create the YouTube beauty community, a genre of channels with beauty-related content (Androulaki-Ralli, 2015). Within the sphere of the YouTube beauty community, there are over 45,000 channels specializing in beauty-related topics ranging from hair and nails to lifestyle and fashion. Although a majority of beauty vloggers are women, the population consisting of the viewers and vloggers is diverse, including both males and females of varying ages, sexual orientations and gender identities. Despite the variety in audience, the YouTube beauty community is 75% female. Furthermore, half of all beauty community viewers are female between the ages of 13 to 24 (Androulaki-Ralli, 2015). This means that a majority of the YouTube beauty community is comprised of young teenage girls.

The role of beauty gurus in the YouTube beauty community is to provide guidance to their viewers through advice about beauty and fashion related topics. However, the role of these beauty gurus precedes vlogging. Prior to the emergence of social media and the internet, beauty trends and cosmetic information were communicated through magazines, staff at makeup counters and word-of-mouth (Peiss, 1998). Modern day beauty gurus film their videos in domestic spaces, such as bedrooms and other private spaces, to give viewers a sense of being a trusted friend while they give their advice about beauty products (Weinzimmer, 2018). Weinzimmer also notes that in order for a beauty vlogger to achieve a position of trust, they must have a persuasive and interesting persona to engage her audience not only to promote beauty products, but a lifestyle as well. Beauty vloggers regularly upload content of themselves consuming and interacting with material goods while wearing the latest trends and product launches.

Consumer products are often sponsored and gifted from companies for the vlogger to review for the audience, and this creates a successful marketing tactic for the featured brands. These promotional products arrive in packaging available to beauty gurus only. The packaging that beauty companies send the beauty guru are colorful, large and nothing like what consumers buy in stores. Despite the pressure to sponsor products, beauty vloggers provide more than the latest skincare routine and tour of their shoe collection. Beauty gurus share relatable stories about their personal lives. Each beauty guru has a slightly different demographic that they cater to, but typical subjects include sharing about breakups, embarrassing high school stories, divorce, or updating the audience on their lives. Weinzimmer (2018) notes audiences look to the beauty influencers as a “successful model of womanhood in the current social, cultural, and economic climate” that models “how to exist in the contemporary world, predominantly focusing on performances of ideal femininity and attaining a desirable lifestyle” (p. 81). Many YouTube gurus hash out advice on how to handle difficult life situations that their viewers may commonly face. Examples include videos about moving to a new place, losing a job, or the death of a loved one. By creating a sense of connection through these stories, the viewer begins to trust the guru with other life issues as well. These include videos which feature about what the beauty guru eats in a day, workout routines, how to date, where to eat, and what brands to purchase. However, the “ideal” feminine subject most often portrayed by YouTube beauty vloggers aligns with Western ideals of white, middle class (Banet-Weiser, 2018). Most of the brands advertised by mainstream YouTube beauty gurus are affordable by middle class white females, but too expensive for many individuals from marginalized groups.

FEMINIST RESEARCH

Visual culture in the classroom can be explored through various lenses. One such paradigm is feminist theory. Keifer-Boyd (2010) explains how to facilitate feminist critiques of visual culture in the classroom. An example of this would be discussing gender inequities and gender roles in society. Another approach is to analyze appropriate music videos or magazine covers in order to question images that may be oppressive towards women. Addressing topics such as how beauty standards are presented through visual culture in the classroom can help teachers raise awareness about the limiting and oppressive ideals of gender.

Feminist research is a methodology that emerged during the 1960s that seeks to question traditional research theories by giving visibility to marginalized groups in order to reduce inequities (Bailey, 2012). Although qualitative inquiry is the most common approach to feminist research (due to being narrative in nature), it can be conducted qualitatively, quantitatively or through mixed-methods. Feminist theory is used to confront oppressive beliefs such as racism, homophobia and sexism. Bailey (2012) asserts that unlike many other approaches to research, “feminist methodologies are overtly political and emancipatory in aim” (p. 393).

Using a feminist paradigm is useful in confronting hegemonic beauty standards and to understand the male gaze. Giving women a voice allows them to “challenge the dominant gender, class, or racial imaginaries and to contest the dominant narratives” (Ferguson, 2017, p. 270). Feminist theory provides a different perspective from the long standing research theories set in place by researchers, traditionally white males. Ferguson (2017) asserts that the dominant narrative is a world defined by the viewpoint

of men and is held as “absolute truth.” The opportunity to be heard is critical for those who inhabit marginalized identity categories such as transgender, low socioeconomic status, minority community members, as well as those who have experienced traumas such as rape and sex trafficking (Ferguson, 2017). Traditional research theories have oppressed marginalized groups and prevented their stories from being heard. Women’s ability to tell their stories creates a platform to challenge a masculine point of view and allows for analysis of prevailing conditions and social injustices (Ferguson, 2017).

AESTHETICS

The term “aesthetics” is derived from the Greek term “aesthesis,” which means sense data and includes all perceptual experience both material and imagined. In the last few decades, aesthetics has become a commonly used term to separate different stylistic and structural principles (Regan, 1991). Although the word has taken on several meanings and “a great deal of philosophical baggage,” it still preserves its original Greek meaning and is associated with experiences perceived with the senses (Forrest, 1999, p. 50).

As an area of philosophy centered on beauty, specifically focused in the fine arts, aesthetics has been dismissed by many outside of the fields of literature and art; even considered by some as a “forbidden field” (Duncum, 2007). Although it was only associated with elite, fine art during the 20th century, aesthetic approaches are a way to experience popular culture. Images from popular culture can be examined and discussed for their visual qualities in the same way that fine art has in traditional art classes. Sturken and Cartwright (2001) assert that aesthetics is a way in which ideologies are projected and are often so subtly manifested in visual culture, that the viewer is unaware

of them. Duncum (2007) argues that art educators have the responsibility to intervene by drawing attention to the immediate surroundings of their students. This can be done by asking questions about their daily aesthetic experiences and emphasizing the significance of these aesthetic experiences on its viewers.

As educators, aesthetic inquiry of popular culture is important because it helps viewers ask questions and make connections about the ideological messages social media presents (Lee, 2008). The aesthetic characteristics of fine art can be used to interpret non-aesthetic properties such as moral and cognitive values. One example of this is examining the moral and cognitive value of fine art through a feminist theory to understand the male gaze. This means examining the connotations and implications of a work of art through a feminist paradigm. Feminist theories have noted “the way in which the aestheticization of women leads to their objectification and to the promotion of a dominant male perspective” and how certain ways in which the nudity of women is depicted as an object for the male gaze and desire (Alcaraz León, 2008, p. 24). Although the nude figure of a woman could be considered a work of fine art, the way in which it is depicted could send both negative and positive messages about women. Viewing artwork through a feminist lens allows the viewer to interpret the meanings and messages that are alluded to through the context of the artwork.

In addition to being used to analyze fine arts, aesthetics is viewed in site-specific and social terms. It is used to describe ordinary daily objects and experiences ranging from consumer goods, sports, advertisement and television. Duncum (2007) claims that the use of aesthetics in the classroom allows art educators to deal with the development of consumerist capitalism or “late capitalism” in everyday life. This “designer

capitalism” as it is also called, describes an economy that aims to create a continuous drive of increasing desire. In terms of everyday life, the aesthetic experience involves our considerable exposure to the media, what we buy, the manner in which we present ourselves and how we curate our real and virtual environments (Duncum, 2007).

NORMATIVE FEMININE BEAUTY STANDARDS

According to Freedman (1994), research indicates that the way in which popular culture portrays gender affects the way that females view themselves. From a young age, girls are taught to view their bodies as intended for the aesthetic pleasure of others. Traditional patriarchal ideas of the female body suggest that a woman’s bodily appearance is constantly being refined and worked on, although sometimes discreetly, for a desirable physical outcome (Ivashkevich, 2011a). Freedman (1994) and Alcaraz León (2008) both point out that females as subject matter in fine art has led to the objectification of women and are used to serve the male gaze. The male gaze is a typically heterosexual male audience which objectifies and sexualizes women. Because of this, art educators are concerned that the way in which women are portrayed in both fine arts as well as popular culture is inherently tied to the ideas of normative feminine beauty ideals today. Freedman (1994) points out how gender conceptions are perpetuated in the art classroom as students often copy images from advertisements and other sources of popular culture. Their representations of gender are often stereotypical and reflect the content found in visual culture images.

Beauty standards and gender norms are often influenced by the media and visual culture. However, Milkie (1999) challenges the claim that media images are powerful enough to create and enforce traditional feminine ideology. He contends that individuals

are not passive recipients of media, but have the ability to critique and reject the messages conveyed through social media. Milkie's research shows that various communities interpret the same content differently based on their cultural and community values as well as identity. For example, African-American beauty standards are influenced by media and images that distort images of black females to "whiten" them to conform to normative femininity, which is portrayed as white femininity. Additionally, graphic images targeted to female consumers often portray white female body types and offer products in the middle class price range, making them inaccessible to those in different socioeconomic statuses and minority groups (Ivashkevich, 2011b).

Lyotard (1991) suggests that over the course of history, men have attempted to admit women into their professional communities by encouraging them to mimic males. Whether this was intentional or not, it has changed the current normative feminine beauty standards and women's experience as a whole. According to Mazur (1986), research shows that men place more importance on physical attractiveness of women than women do on men. This results in greater pressure for women to conform to beauty standard ideals placed on them, as their social opportunities are affected by their outer appearance. Mazur states that there has been an increase in self-destructive eating disorders within the last quarter of the century. He claims that dietary abuse has been growing rapidly due to media enforcing unrealistic beauty ideals on women. Indeed, beauty standards are rapidly changing for women due to the rise of mass media in the 20th century. Beauty trends and ideas are being communicated quickly and across geographic and social borders. For example, Korean beauty routines are easily shared via the internet for any women to adopt. Likewise, American companies such as Dove,

Target, and Aerie are promoting body positivity for women globally (<https://stylecaster.com/body-positive-fashion-brands/>). As media platforms are utilized to promote brands and beauty products, the standards of an ideal women are beginning to shift and change as well.

VISUAL CULTURE ART EDUCATION

According to Freedman (1994), the future of art education will focus on teaching visual culture and interpreting social issues. Therefore, it is crucial that art educators understand the importance of implementing visual culture lessons into their curriculum. Freedman states that although popular culture is considered inappropriate for the classroom due to its “simplicity”, it is in fact, highly complex and it is our duty as educators to guide our students in decoding the messages inherent in these images. Chin (2015) asserts that visual culture studies allow students to examine the true motives behind mass media and popular culture by removing the aesthetic mask of pleasure and seduction. Examining visual culture in this way reveals the ideologies placed on viewers by society.

Freedman and Stuhr (2004) argue that if art education is meant to help students find personal fulfillment and contribute to society, then it is important to discuss current issues. The authors point out that traditional forms of art education center curriculum around objects from museums, but that students are experiencing the world through popular culture. According to Tavin (2003), visual culture embraces the study of popular culture as a means of understanding and challenging the messages presented through images. One way that art educators can approach visual culture art education is through critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy is defined as being “primarily concerned with

challenging individuals to investigate understand, and intervene between schooling, ideology, power and culture” (Tavin, 2003, p. 197). This teaching approach, inspired by critical theory, encourages students to think critically about dominant beliefs set forth by society. Rather than teaching visual culture in a way that imposes teachers’ personal views on students, Tavin encourages educators to address issues and to think about popular culture through multiple perspectives such as through feminist or critical theory. Art educators can implement popular culture in their pedagogical practice through teaching with images that students are exposed to on a daily basis. This can be done by using popular culture in a way that engages students in confronting issues, and to recognize embedded and hidden texts in visual culture.

One issue that is addressed through visual culture lessons in the classroom is gender disparities in fine art and popular culture. It is important to implement teaching strategies using social networking technology to help students understand how visual culture constructs gender. In order to deal effectively with the issue of gender disparities presented in visual culture in the classroom, we as art educators must pay attention to the relationship between student gender identity and visual culture. By examining visual culture through questioning its intended targeted audience, viewers can reveal the politics of gender construction in images. Discussing marginalized groups in the classroom is important, but Freedman (1994) argues that simple additions of women and multiculturalism to the curriculum is not enough to educate our students about social equity. Keifer-Boyd (2010) encourages teachers to discuss social and gender equity, and explains that most students will have an understanding of feminism through what they learn from patriarchal media. Freedman (1994) asserts that intergraphicality, or “the

perceptual cross-fertilization of images and artifacts” (p. 104) influences how students interpret visual culture because of the association that are made with particular images based on what they have seen in the past. With this knowledge, teachers can begin to understand the perceptions that students receive through visual culture, and begin to encourage students to question the ideas that these images present.

In a changing world full of newly emerging technology, it is crucial to keep up with how our younger generation is viewing the world in which we live and to provide the tools to allow them to succeed in the 21st century. What was a relevant curriculum five decades ago is no longer considered adequate to provide the knowledge needed for this new global society. The National Education Agency (NEA) is a partner and advocate for the 21st century learning movement which uses the “Four Cs”— critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Visual culture art education equips students with critical thinking skills to assess images presented through emerging technology, making knowledge learned in the art classroom relevant to students. In this way, visual culture as part of the art curriculum aligns with the values of the 21st century learning movement.

SUMMARY

The sources of literature discussed in this chapter are pertinent to this research of the effects of YouTube beauty tutorials on viewers. More specifically, this study investigated how viewers interpreted images of one Youtube makeup tutorial. In order to explain this paradigm, the study was informed by feminist theory, which is discussed in this chapter. The methods used to conduct this research are discussed in Chapter Three, and build upon the literature cited in this chapter. The literature review also emphasizes

the importance of visual culture as a curricular approach in the art classroom. Although the study did not happen in the art classroom, there is potential for bringing social media into the art curriculum. Visual culture in the art classroom uses objects from everyday life as curricular influences, expanding the notion of what can be used to teach art. These are more than just elements, principles, masterworks, and museums. It is teaching students the critical thinking strategies to interpret the images they are seeing and asking them to analyze beyond the surface and to think critically.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology, data collection and data analysis implemented in this research. First, this chapter will re-introduce the research question, expected outcomes, and questions that this study addresses. Next, this chapter will explain why a digital ethnography is best suited for my study, and how it differentiates from traditional ethnography. The next section will discuss my ethical obligations as a researcher. The selection of my participants and data samples will be described and well as the setting. Due to this study taking place in a digital realm, without any personal interactions with participants, there were many constraints to consider when conducting the research. For example, I was unable to interview participants, observe them in person, or gather much information about the context of their lives. Finally, I will describe my data analysis, using researcher-as-instrument and ethnographic content analysis.

RESEARCH METHODS

As technology has advanced in the 21st century, so have the ways in which communities are formed. Interactions are no longer limited to in-person contact, written letters, or phone calls. Thanks to global internet access, there has been development of countless social media platforms, chat rooms, and online forums. These websites allow virtually anyone with internet access to engage with others in a variety of ways. Some examples include online chatting through message or video, or posting comments on online forums (threads). Some engage in discussions through posted topics while others interact through virtual reality and gaming. Popular sites such as YouTube offer a plethora of ways in which users can be part of a digital community. Users without an

account can view videos anonymously, or those with accounts can post comments in response to videos uploaded by other YouTube members. For this study, I observed the interactions of the YouTube beauty community in one video. As mentioned in Chapter Two, a YouTube beauty community consists of both video content creators, viewers, and sponsors. There are several different genres of communities within YouTube, usually themed by common interests. Some examples include cooking, gaming, fashion, science and books. The data collected in this study were *The Power of Makeup* video as well as the top 300 comments in response to this video.

Ethnomethodology is a qualitative research method that focuses on the shared and learned patterns of values, language, behaviors and beliefs of a culture-sharing group. Ethnographers study the meaning of the behavior, language and the interaction among members of the culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2006). Through observation of such social interactions, the researcher determines how a culture represents and identifies itself. Traditionally, ethnography is the method used to study human interaction within a community through social stories (Murthy, 2008). It is the primary methodology used by anthropologists and aims to answer questions regarding the life and cultural practices of humans. One of the key ideas of this methodology is that is “naturalistic”, meaning it focuses on people in their natural setting (Riemer, 2012). Ethnographic methods have defining characteristics such as answering “what?” and “how?” and utilize thick descriptions, which is simply an in-depth description of the researcher’s observations (Riemer, 2012). According to Geertz (1973), ethnography goes beyond description by delving into the slight nuances in language such as the differences between a wink, blink and a twitch. This is called cultural interpretation and is defined as the “ability to

describe what the researcher has heard and seen within the framework of the social group's view of reality" (Fetterman, 1989, p. 28). Anthropologist Ward Goodenough (1970) describes the importance of going beyond just documenting the laws and practices of a society, but capturing what an individual must know in order function as a member of that society.

While in other types of qualitative studies (such as case-studies), the participant is considered a subject to gather data from, ethnographers describe their respondents as informants whose role is to describe what they think others should know about their culture (Bernard, 2005). If the participant is willing and cooperative, the ethnographer is able to acquire information from informants about their daily lives and practices. Ethnographic studies examine real people in their natural environments, which is conducted "in situ", or on-site (Riemer, 2012). Data collection methods include participant observation, interviews, surveys, projective techniques, finding key informants to interview, and analyzing written records and artifacts. Through the analysis of this data, ethnographers are able to identify cultural patterns within societies through the functions of that culture.

For this research, I observed a digital community, specifically focused around the YouTube beauty video, *The Power of Makeup*. My data collection techniques were similar to that of a traditional ethnographer. Due to the nature of digital spaces, I was focused on my participants' everyday routines that took place within the virtual realm. Additionally, this research was constrained to the observation of the interactions posted to one YouTube video. I observed two things: *The Power of Makeup* YouTube video

created by Nikkie de Jager (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4Ov8qvZ2_w) and the top 300 comments posted below the video.

This specific study investigated the public rather than a closed community. According to Arvidsson (2005), the public is defined as mediated associated between strangers of temporary interest rather than through direct interactions. Gnegy (2017) argues that studying the public affords more complex form of interactions for the researcher because digital interactions are not as limited and close-knit as in a traditional community setting. Due to the ability to publicly access the video without restriction, the viewers represented an internationally diverse and large community of at least 40,000. Comments were written in languages such as English, German, Spanish or Danish, and since I am not fluent in all of those languages, I limited my analysis to only English statements. Additionally, the comments did not reveal the background of the viewer including their age, gender or race, which could have provided more context for the responses. These constraints would not have existed if the study had been conducted in a community of people in a real setting as opposed to a virtual one. Since this research was confined to the digital realm, digital ethnography was the best suited methodology for my research.

Digital ethnography builds upon traditional ethnomethodology, but focuses on studying the culture of a digital and computer-mediated society. The main factor that differs from traditional ethnography is the mode of connectivity within the community, which is computer-mediated rather than in-person. Digital ethnography research studies how the digital environment shapes human behaviors, interactions, and cultural processes (Caliandro, 2016). Since this project took place in the digital realm, the community

which I studied was a digital community where individuals built relationships and personas that were shared beyond geographic boundaries. Social networking sites, such as YouTube, are a major component of modern society and serve as platforms of communication and fellowship mediated through a digital context (Gnegy, 2017). Because the data collected in this study consisted of video content and text, this methodology is well suited to examine what takes place in digital environments.

NIKKIE TUTORIALS AND THE POWER OF MAKEUP

Nikkie de Jager is a 25 year old Dutch beauty vlogger and makeup artist who resides in the Netherlands. She is also the creator and face of the YouTube channel, NikkieTutorials, that as of March 2019 has a whopping 11,672,250 subscribers. This is an impressive feat, as according to her YouTube page (<https://www.youtube.com/user/NikkieTutorials>), she founded her channel in 2008. Since then, her channel totals 1,008,700,495 views, making her currently the 7th highest ranked beauty vlogger on YouTube. Her most popular video is *The Power of Makeup* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4Ov8qvZ2_w) which went viral in 2015 with currently over 40 million views.

I selected Nikkie de Jager as the focus of this study because of her popularity in the YouTube beauty community. As an avid member of the beauty community myself, I watch several beauty gurus in my spare time. These beauty gurus include Jeffree Star, Stephanie Lange, James Charles, and Carli Bybel, who all offer slightly different flavors and perspectives to the world of makeup. It was not easy to select only one YouTuber and video for this study, as I have channels that I personally prefer over others and some of them rank even higher in popularity than de Jager's. For example, Jeffree Star has

over 12 million subscribers. I struggled with the selection criteria, considering whether or not to select a transgender, gay, straight or ethnic figure, or whether I should compare diverse bloggers to bring attention to marginalized groups. However, I elected to focus on how viewers responded to what was considered a “normative femininity” beauty standard in order to shed light on this phenomena. As a Caucasian, blonde, blue eyed YouTube guru, Nikkie de Jager fits the profile of what society currently defines as normative white femininity. Furthermore, her website (www.nikkietutorials.com) claims that de Jager aspires to be known for her feminine but edgy and unique style. Her videos consist of tutorials on how to do glamorous makeup, holiday makeup, editorial makeup, or silly videos such as doing her entire face with only children’s play makeup or a full face using only liquid lipsticks. She also posts videos that exemplify straight white normative femininity with videos such as her boyfriend doing her makeup, and high end product reviews that are typically afforded by the middle class consumers.

The 715 videos on de Jager’s channel address many of the same video topics as other YouTube beauty channels. For example, Carli Bybel, Jeffree Star, and most other YouTube beauty vloggers do “GRWM” (Get Ready With Me), “How I Did My Makeup in Highschool” and “Five Minute Makeup Challenge” videos. These are recurring ideas that are popular within the beauty community, and different vloggers do their own renditions. Despite the similarities in content, de Jager’s video, *The Power of Makeup* represents an enormously popular video created by a female representing white feminine beauty standards.

The Power of Makeup is de Jager’s most viewed video to date, with over 40 million views since it was published on May 10, 2015. The 6 minute and 50 second

video shows Nikkie de Jager applying glamorous makeup to only one half of her face, while leaving the other half bare. In the description box below the video, de Jager introduces the video with this message:

Hey guys, I'm here today to show you the power of makeup. I've been noticing a lot lately that girls have almost been almost ashamed to say that they love makeup. Because now a days when you say you love makeup, you either do it because you wanna look good for boys, you do it because you're insecure, or you do it because you don't love yourself. I feel like in a way lately, it's almost a crime to love doing your makeup. (Nikkie de Jager, personal communication, March 9, 2019)

Nikkie asserts that the purpose of her video is to stand up to makeup shaming. She points out that makeup can be fun and does not have to serve the purpose of looking good for men. Because this study utilized a feminist paradigm, this video was particularly suitable because it features a woman that "fits" society's standards of beauty. During the nearly seven minute tutorial, Nikkie performs a makeup routine on only one side of her face to make her eye bigger, her chin and cheek sculpted, and to create the illusion of fuller lips. At the end of the tutorial, one side of her face looks very different from the other. Such a dramatic transformation from her bare face to a glamorous appearance enhanced through makeup contributed to her video going viral, reaching over 40 million viewers. Ultimately, over 30,000 of these viewers commented on this video, leaving a "video trail" which documents viewers' perceptions. Through the analysis of these posted comments, I examined how viewers perceived the messages that Nikkie claimed about the transformative power of makeup.

DATA COLLECTION

The artifacts that were collected for this research were the video, a transcription of the video, and the top 300 comments as of March 31, 2019. To have these artifacts in a tangible format for analysis, I printed out the transcription of the video and the viewers' comments. Once the video was selected, I transcribed the entire 6:50 minute video into a word document. Figure 1 shows a sample of the video transcription which is divided into two halves.

1:15 Holding up foundation bottle by her face.	Today I'm first going in with my Koh Gen Do Aqua Foundation in number 213. It makes me look photoshopped without photoshop. That's - that's why I love it.
1:23 Using brush and applying foundation down face and neck	Silence (applies makeup)
1:37 Using brush and applying concealer under eyes and around nose and mouth, then blends with beauty blender.	Same goes for concealer. I have dark circles, I want them to be gone. (silently applies makeup)
1:54 Holds brow pencil up next to face.	I love brows. Problem is, I don't have em' naturally. What is the solution for that? Brow pencil!
1:55 Using brush to draw on eyebrows while looking into handheld compact mirror.	

Figure 1: Sample from *The Power of Makeup* Transcription.

The right side is a written record of de Jager's words. The left side features the time and my descriptions of de Jager's actions.

The second set of data include comments left by viewers who chose to leave written feedback about de Jager's video. YouTube's main interactions occur through the comment section, as users can like or dislike comments via thumbs up or thumbs down buttons and enter written comments, creating a field for dynamic discussions. YouTube

does not require all viewers to make accounts, nor do all viewers with accounts choose to leave comments. Those viewers who did choose to leave feedback on this video totaled more than 30,000, which can be sorted by “top comments” and “newest first”. Due to the sheer volume of the comments, I selected the top 300 comments to analyze. At first, I considered selecting the most recent 300 comments. However, after reading through the most recent comments, they did not provide any information that was consistently relevant to the research questions of this study. For example, many recent comments simply stated “2019”, which is the year that the viewer watched the video. Yet others posted simplistic statements such as “yes”, which did not provide enough content to analyze. Other non-relevant comments included YouTube accounts asking viewers to come see their own page, or the same comment about how Nikkie “needs to make a new video” over and over. Although all of these comments have meaning, with the sample constraint of only 300 comments, it was important to identify comments that were most relevant to my research question: How does *The Power of Makeup* impact viewers’ perceptions? I was searching for in-depth responses, such as how a viewer feels about the power of makeup, how they felt about the video, or personal experiences in regards to imposed beauty standards. Consequently, this posed another question that I knew would have to be justified: What is deemed a top comment?

After extensive research and asking people who are affiliated with YouTube, I discovered that YouTube has not publicly released an algorithm which calculates how top comments are generated. The best source of information I could find from YouTube was their official blog site, (<https://youtube.googleblog.com/2013/11/youtube-new-comments.html>) which explains the change in how comments are sorted as of

2013. YouTube comments are powered by Google, and claim to show top comments as showing those people that are most relevant to you. According to YouTube, this is defined as the video's creator, popular personalities, engaged discussions about the video, and people in your Google+ Circles. Google+ is a social media platform that I am personally not engaged in, so this category did not apply to me when filtering the comments into top comments. How Google moderates and selects which comments are most engaging is not completely clear, but I chose to go with "top comments" because it did provide relevant material for the purpose of this study.

RESEARCHER AS INSTRUMENT AND RESEARCHER REFLEXIVITY

Creswell (2006) suggests that qualitative researchers serve as the fundamental research instrument for data analysis. Ethnographic methodology uses a researcher-as-instrument approach, where the researcher serves as the key component in collecting and analyzing data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Researchers "use their sensory organs to grasp the study objects, mirroring them in their consciousness, where they then are converted into phenomenological representations to be interpreted" (Turato, 2005, p. 510). As the researcher conducting the study, I was the primary data collection tool.

In order to assure quality and rigor in this type of research, it is important to be open about my research practices by addressing any potential biases in order to remain aware of the reflexive nature of qualitative inquiry. Ellis and Berger (2003) point out that in order to increase the transparency and validity of findings, it is important that we "understand ourselves as part of the process of understanding others" (p. 486). It is also important to recognize that my own views impact what I see in order to help me pay attention to what I might not have initially noticed. However, Creswell (2006) suggests

that the reflexivity of the researcher is beneficial in being made aware of the subjectivity in qualitative research. Practicing self-reflexivity during my research and being transparent about plausible inclinations that I may have will help draw me back to being as balanced in my perspective as possible.

As a researcher, I have several influences and assumptions that could potentially affect the results of my data analysis. As I go about my research, it is important for me to keep in mind that I am a 29 year old woman of color approaching this study through a feminist lens. As discussed in the previous chapter, this theoretical framework aims to give a voice to marginalized groups, and points out disparities and inequities. Even as a woman of color, I also identify with white Caucasian culture, as my father is a white male. I was afforded many privileges of being raised middle class in a predominantly white and affluent suburb in the Southeastern United States. However, I was also raised in Japan for part of my childhood, and these experiences have shaped my perceptions. This is important to note because Asian beauty standards differ greatly from American beauty standards, and I have long struggled with conforming to both cultures' beauty ideals (not being skinny enough in Asia, not being white enough in America). I come from an educated family, and am completing graduate studies. Being raised in a Southern Baptist church has influenced my worldviews to align with a conservative stance. Although I do not identify with all of the ideals of my religious upbringing, it is important to recognize that a lifetime of influence has shaped my perceptions. My own bi-cultural ethnic background, as well as my chosen paradigm are important to keep in mind when interpreting beauty standards and recognizing the white race as the dominant race against to which minorities are compared.

It is also critical for me to reveal my position as a member of the YouTube beauty community and my involvement and influence from years of partaking in the culture. I have watched YouTube beauty videos for nearly 10 years, and have watched the genre grow in popularity and expand as new gurus entered the scene. Being a light skinned Asian American, I am partial to watching videos of other similar skin toned gurus, for the sole reason of being able to select the shades of makeup and relate makeup looks to myself. Because of this, I have not spent an extensive amount of time watching videos representing ethnicities other than Caucasian and East Asian. However, I do feel that in regards to my research of a white female YouTube beauty guru, my use of the same products used in the videos provides me a familiarity of the products, brands and reputations associated with them.

Although many of the makeup products I use are swayed by the white YouTube gurus I follow, I can relate with the difficulty in finding a shade that matches my ethnic undertones. Shade range is a heated topic in the beauty community, and several brands such as Tarte, YSL, Beauty Blender and Kim Kardashian West's foundation lines have been heavily criticized for having limited colors. This limited assortment of skin tones within makeup excludes women of color, and has been criticized repeatedly in YouTube makeup videos through makeup foundation reviews. Falling into the minority when it comes to a shade of foundation suitable for me, I have certain biases when interpreting *The Power of Makeup*. One of the most transformative aspects of the video was of Nikkie de Jager covering her skin with a full coverage foundation in a Caucasian skin tone, which is available in the majority of foundation brands in the United States. Knowing how difficult it is for a person of color to find their matching shade, I

wonder how many viewers automatically tuned out of the video knowing that even the first step might be unattainable without great effort. Despite the disparities in shade range and emphasis on normative white femininity, I enjoy watching YouTube makeup tutorials. I am not approaching my study with an intention to find racism, sexism, homophobia, or to demonize the YouTube beauty community. I do not have anything against wearing makeup or body modification for any reason. I wear makeup every single day because I enjoy the practice and routine of applying makeup. I am also completely comfortable without makeup, but I do not feel the need to criticize those who are not comfortable leaving the house without a full face of makeup. Many viewers in the YouTube beauty community express their disapproval with YouTube beauty gurus using sponsored products. This is when a beauty guru receives monetary compensation for promoting, reviewing or featuring a particular brand on their channel. I personally do not have an issue with how beauty gurus make a living, but think it is important to keep this in mind when watching videos. These are the particular biases that influence and shape my research, but through self-reflexivity, I hope to provide a study of quality and rigor.

DATA ANALYSIS

Ethnography of any kind involves the collection of copious amounts of data in the form of observations, fieldnotes, historical artifacts, interview transcripts etc... Riemer (2012) explains that it is an ethnographer's job to find patterns within this data. My study used ethnographic content analysis, which is an inductive manner of analysis that begins with specific data and moves towards broader topics (Gnegy, 2012). Inductive analysis means that the researcher looks for patterns and creates codes from their own data rather

than using a preexisting coding system (as in deductive analysis). The process of inductive analysis involves both developing “a set of analytic categories” relevant to the aspects of the data as well as assigning the “particular items of data to those categories” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, pp. 208-209). Riemer (2012) provides a basic outline for inductive analysis in the following steps:

1. A careful reading of the entire body of data
2. The development of codes that describe chunks of data
3. The combination and reclassification of codes into categories
4. The systematic structuring of categories into typologies, or classifications based on characteristics, and taxonomies, the ordered hierarchies of particular classification. (p. 178)

To begin the analysis, the researcher openly codes the raw data set and identifies emergent categories and key issues. During this process, emerging categories from data are constantly being compared to new data. This constant comparison of data causes the categories to be modified, expanded and shifted, and themes begin to emerge. When coding, it is important not to force all data into certain categories, but to set aside a separate “other” category so as not to ignore any data that does not fit into already existing categories (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Conversely, Cressey (1953) describes the steps of analytic induction as defining the phenomenon, creating a hypothesis and repeatedly testing it against facts before modifying it. Ethnography is fluid and open ended with the outcome sometimes being unexpected. Instead of defining terms prior to conducting research, ethnographers create educated guesses which they test and modify throughout the process.

This study utilized an ethnographic content analysis approach to investigate ways in which viewers perceived *The Power of Makeup*. As Creswell (2006) points out, qualitative research tends to be driven by inductive research strategies to explore the data regarding a phenomenon rather than adhering to testing pre-existing hypothesis. Staying true to the naturalistic essence of qualitative research by being open to new categories and themes that may not exist in a preexisting coding system was an important part of my data analysis process. First, I printed out the top 300 comments for *The Power of Makeup* by NikkieTutorials. I also transcribed the video and described de Jager's actions. Next, before reading the transcript and comments, I created a wordcloud (www.wordclouds.com) by inputting the text from all 300 comments into the wordcloud website. The purpose of creating wordclouds is to create a visual of the most prominent words in a text to help identify potential patterns. The largest words appeared most frequently in the text, and the size of the word diminishes with less frequency (See Figure 2).

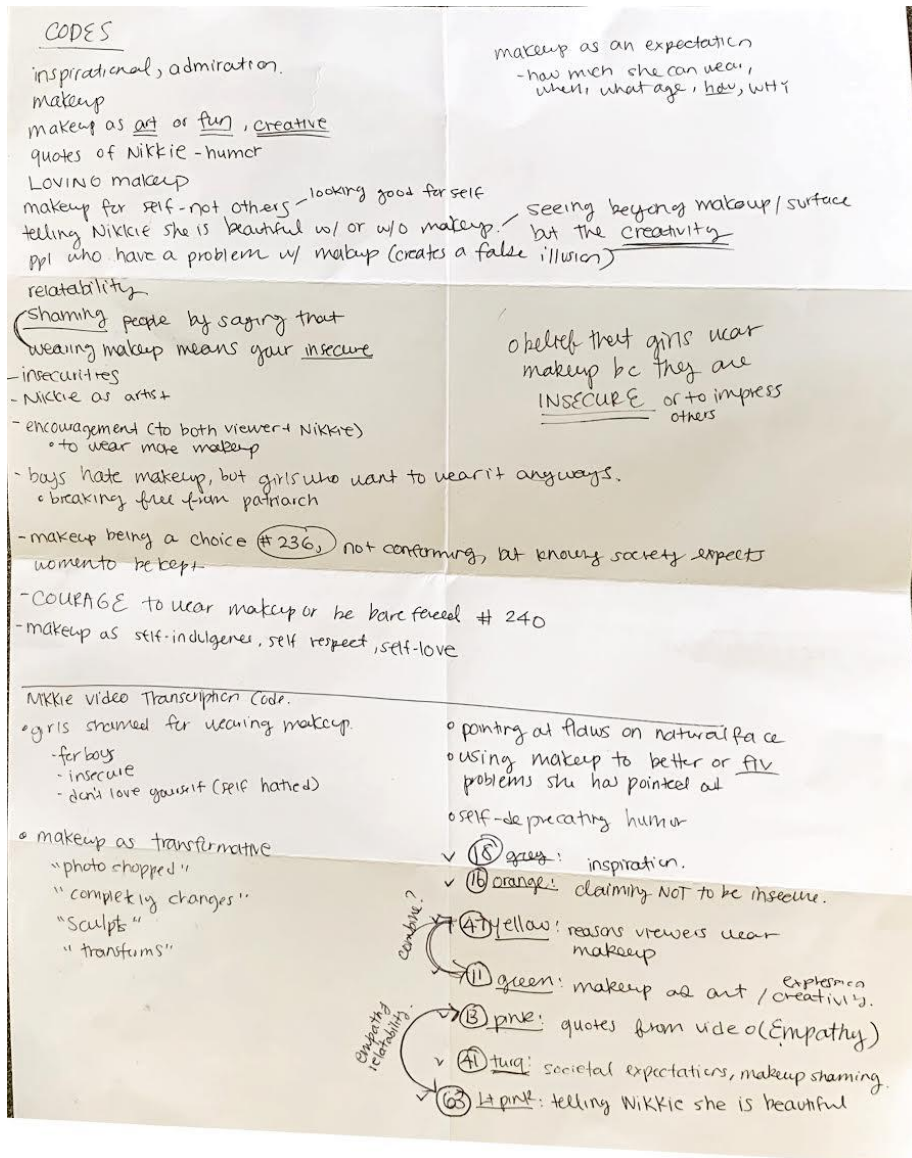


Figure 3: Field Notes Sample of Coding *The Power of Makeup* Comments.

Through this iterative analytic process of the comments, I inductively identified 8 new categories and then compared them to emerging categories I had already created in my field notes (See Figure 3). There was a constant shifting of words until a long list of possible themes were condensed into 6 final categories. This was not a straightforward process, so it was time for me to *tidy up* or create a “workable system that affords easily

retrievable data” so that I could begin to examine my data more closely (Riemer, 2012, p. 176). Tidying up began by creating an organized word document with color-coded themes for the comments. I went through the document and color highlighted each comment (or part of a comment) that corresponded with a category. Figure 4 illustrates a key which I created and shows each category corresponding with a different color.

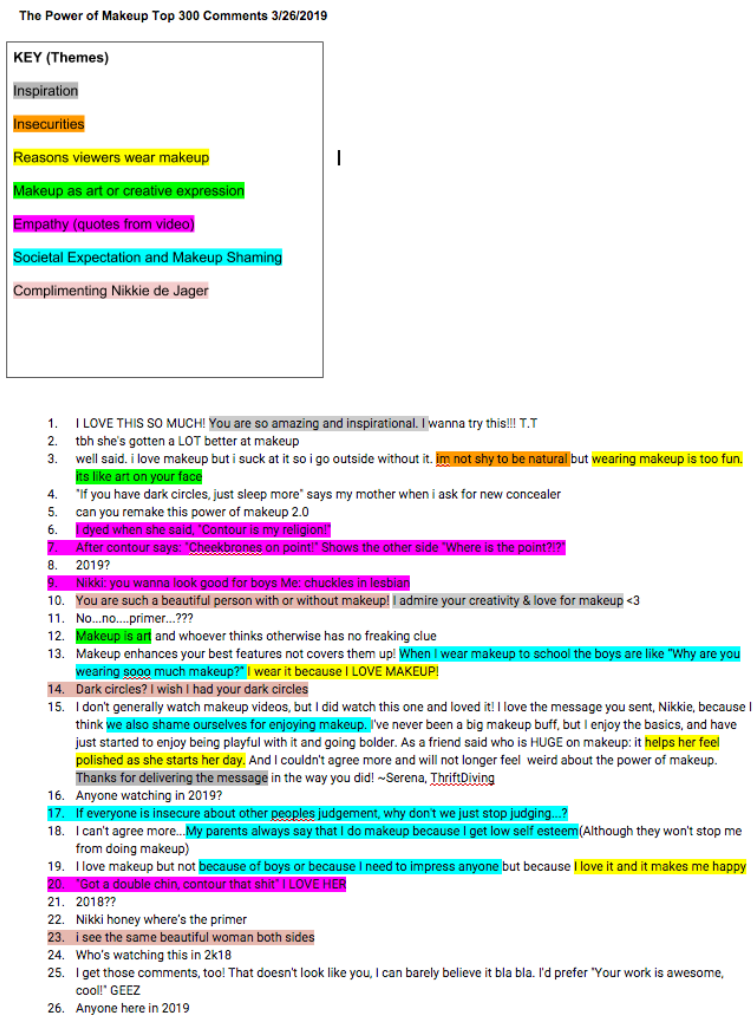


Figure 4: Sample from Video Comments with Key.

After color coding the comments into 8 themes, I counted the frequency of each and ranked them in order of most frequent to least. Although the percentage of comments for each category is useful to note, it did not determine the order in which the themes are discussed in Chapter Four. This is because certain themes were related to each other, and the ranking by frequency number did not correspond with the way that the themes related to each other. The frequency of each theme still provided useful data to support discussions in Chapter Four, and helped shed light on the importance of each theme.

Through video content and comment analysis, I gained an understanding of how a digital culture's responses and interactions reflected the effect of the messages being relayed through the video. According to Creswell (2006), "the ethnographer produces the participant's views through closely edited quotations and has the final word on how the culture is to be interpreted and presented" (p. 70). I used content analysis to identify recurring themes within the written text uploaded via comments by the viewers. Content analysis is a technique used to condense many words of text into categories (Stemler, 2001). This is because it allows the researcher to sift through data to identify trends and patterns in documents based on word frequency. It can be defined as a method for making inferences by systematically identifying certain characteristics of messages (Holsti, 1969). Content analysis is an effective method to apply to data presented in forms of text such as transcribed interviews, as it allows the researcher to sift through large amounts of data. Content analysis is useful in understanding the focuses of an individual or community (Weber, 1990).

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The key to valid ethnography is being transparent. In all research, it is imperative to present findings that are trustworthy and valid. As a researcher, it is my obligation to provide writing which accurately describes the phenomenon and events that took place during my study. Ethnographic validity is defined by Roger Sanjek (1990) in three ways: “theoretical candor, the ethnographer’s path, and fieldnote evidence” (p. 395). Transparency is created through the ways in which the ethnographer explains their choices made for the research process. This can include a thorough description of data collection, always supported by emerging theory, the research path, and as many details about the participants as possible (Riemer, 2012). The primary validity procedure this study employed is researcher reflexivity. As mentioned in the previous section, I have disclosed my biases as well as assumptions and beliefs that I believe would shape my inquiry. This includes describing social, cultural and historical forces that shape a researcher’s interpretation early in the research process so that readers can be aware of these influences on the study. As the researcher, it is important for me to always be self reflexive and to “acknowledge the inseparableness of the researcher and the process of inquiry” (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p. 129). This form of transparency ensures that the reader is provided with the necessary perspective of the researcher.

SUMMARY

This chapter described how digital ethnography is built upon traditional ethnography, and why this methodology was best suited for my study. The participants, namely Nikkie de Jager and her viral video, *The Power of Makeup* were introduced, as well as the selection criteria explained. The video transcript, video and top 300

comments were identified as artifacts for this ethnographic study. All were examined through ethnographic content analysis. Finally, I recognize myself as the main data collection tool in the study, and explained the validity and quality of results through researcher reflexivity.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter discusses the findings from the data analysis conducted on *The Power of Makeup* YouTube video. The first section describes the video which provides context for the themes generated from the data analysis. This is followed by a brief overview of the themes and messages expressed throughout the video. Next, themes from the viewer comments are described. These 6 themes were pulled from analyzing the responses and video transcription, with examples of what viewers said to support the emerging themes. The results presented in this chapter answer the central research question: How does *The Power of Makeup* influence viewer perceptions?

THE POWER OF MAKEUP VIDEO

Nikkie de Jager (See Figure 5) opens her video with a sparkly greeting, “Hey guys, I’m here today to show you the power of makeup.”¹ These last three words are emphasized and spaced out, as to bring weight to the title of her video. She sits poised against a glittery pink backdrop with a smile. The camera is focused rather closely on her face, framing everything above her collarbones. Although the shot is very close up, it is apparent that Nikkie is wearing a plain black t-shirt as to not detract from the transformation she is about to perform. Her blonde hair is tied up out of her face into a bun, and she has zero traces of makeup upon her fair skin. She begins with an opening statement about her stance on wearing makeup. She states, “I’ve been noticing a lot lately that girls have almost been almost ashamed to say that they love makeup. Because now a days when you say you love makeup, you either do it because you wanna look

¹ This quote is taken from a transcription of *The Power of Makeup* by Nikkie de Jager. All quotes by Nikkie de Jager are a form of personal communication and were taken from the same video on the same day (March 15, 2019).

good for boys, you do it because you're insecure, or you do it because you don't love yourself. I feel like in a way lately, it's almost a crime to love doing your makeup." Nikkie is claiming that society shames women from wearing makeup, and that there are certain stigmas attached to the act of putting on makeup.

She continues to share her personal experiences of people telling her that she looks completely different and even unrecognizable without makeup on. While sharing her story, Nikkie looks bothered as her face seems to show that she feels hurt by these perceptions about her. Nikkie closes her introduction with, "So without any further adou, I'm gonna do half my face, full on glam. I'm truly going to transform one side of my face. And the other side, is gonna be me. Raw, unedited, nothing, me. Just me. So let's do it."



Figure 5: Nikkie de Jager bare faced in *The Power of Makeup*.

Holding up a foundation bottle to her face, Nikkie describes how Koh Gen Do Aqua Foundation in number 213 “makes me look photoshopped without photoshop. That’s - that’s why I love it.” Nikkie then liberally applies the foundation to one half of her face with perfectly manicured fingers adorned with gold jewelry. There is an instant difference in the two sides of Nikkie’s face as the foundation neutralizes the red tones and color variances, creating a stark contrast with the bare side of her face (See Figure 6).

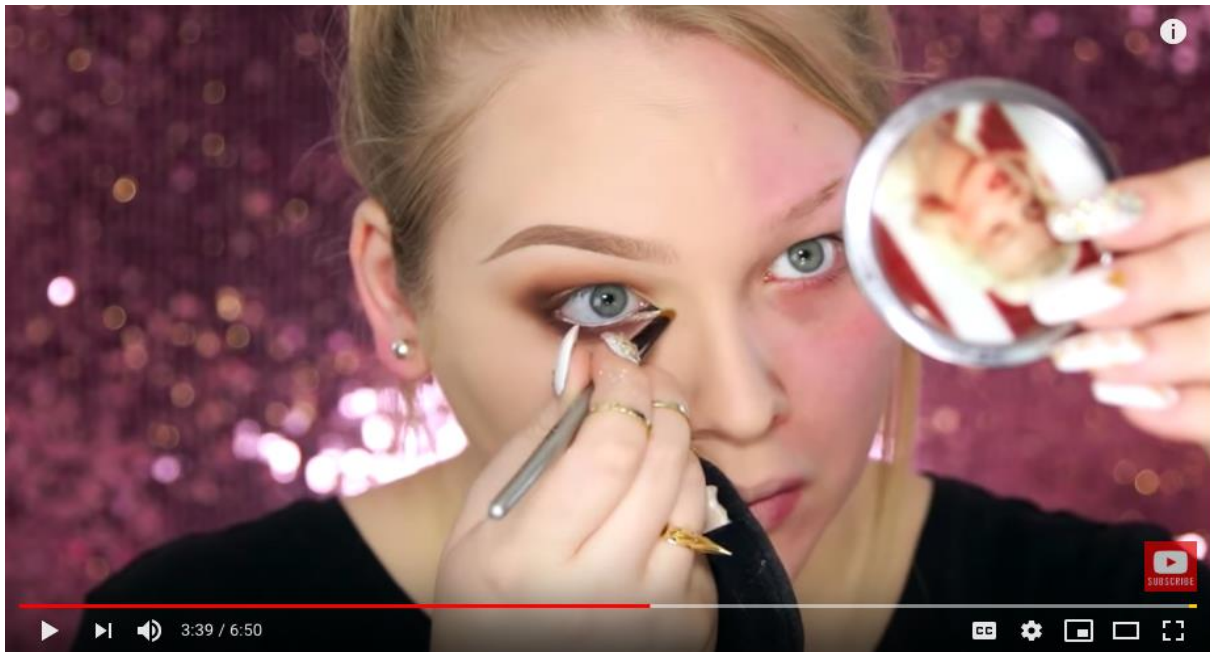


Figure 6: Nikkie de Jager and Marilyn Monroe in *The Power of Makeup*.

Nikkie continues with concealer underneath her eyes, creating a further whitening effect on the entirety of her face, claiming that she has dark circles and “wants them gone.” Next, she uses an eyebrow pencil to draw on her brows saying, “I love brows. Problem is, I don’t have em’ naturally. What is the solution for that? Brow Pencil!” There are several occurrences in the video where Nikkie proposes that there is a problem with her facial features and proposes a solution with makeup.

After drawing on one eyebrow with light brown pencil by Anastasia Beverly Hills (See Figure 6), Nikkie describes how she feels about her eyes. “I don’t like how my eyes are hooded, slightly on the smaller side and just not as open and awake and fresh.” She then explains how she creates a new eye shape using brown and gold eyeshadows to make her eyes appear larger. With precise strokes of her makeup brushes, she effortlessly creates shading around one eye, making it appear significantly larger than the eye without makeup. The rhinestones on her fingernails glimmer in the light as she

continues to draw in an inner corner with black eyeliner and smudge out her bottom eyelid with more brown eyeshadow. She continues, “And if there’s one thing that completely changes up my eyes, it’s eyeliner. And of course, lashes.” Holding up a compact mirror with an image of Marilyn Monroe (Figure 6), she stares into it with concentration as she flicks out a sharp black winged eyeliner and applies long false lashes to both top and bottom eyelids.

The scene shifts as Nikkie, with a renewed enthusiasm exclaims, “One of the main things I get told when I show people a picture of me with makeup like in my videos and when I’m without makeup in front of them in person. They always say ‘But you look so much slimmer!’ Let me introduce you to the world of contouring.” She then adds a humorous statement, “Contouring is my religion.”

With a slightly larger brush, she blends in a brown powder until her cheek bones become apparent. Her chin is sharply defined, and she turns her head from side to side while saying, “Look at that! Look at that! Cheekbone on point... (turns head) Where is the point?” The use of self deprecating humor elicits a large response from the viewers, as we will later see that they often quote her from the video with approval.

The finishing touches are of Nikkie vigorously blending bronzer into her cheeks and forehead as she claims that it gives her the sun “without the damage.” This is followed by a sweeping back and forth motion with a brush of Luminoso blush by Milani. She softens her voice as she compares how the blush transforms her cheeks into “heaven.” The next product (highlighter) is held up and applied to the high points of her cheeks, resulting in a reflective, glowing look.

Finally, Nikkie explains how she will do her lips. She pauses to examine the product to name the shade, make gestures with her hands to describe adding volume to her lips, then silently continues lining her lips with the lip liner. She then adds a pink coral lipstick and tops it off with a gloss.

The next scene shows where Nikkie has clearly wiped a clean, clear line down the middle of her face to divide the made up side from the bare-faced side. She has also taken her hair down from a bun and styled it. She holds her hand up over each side of her face to reveal the difference (See Figure 7). Her facial expression is that of a model, not smiling, but staring into the camera with intent.



Figure 7: Nikkie before and after applying makeup.

She finally relaxes her face in the next scene to conclude her video (See Figure 8). With a wave of her fingers she explains, “And that guys, is the power of makeup. By no means, I wanna say that if you have insecurities that you should just slap makeup on, feel better, and never be content with yourself. I just want people to know that makeup is fun and there are no rules to makeup and if you wanna go for that super ass sharp contour for the day, do it. If you wanna go for a red lip and crazy bold eyes, do it. There are no rules to makeup and makeup is there for days where you wanna look hella good! And that’s why I love the power of makeup.”

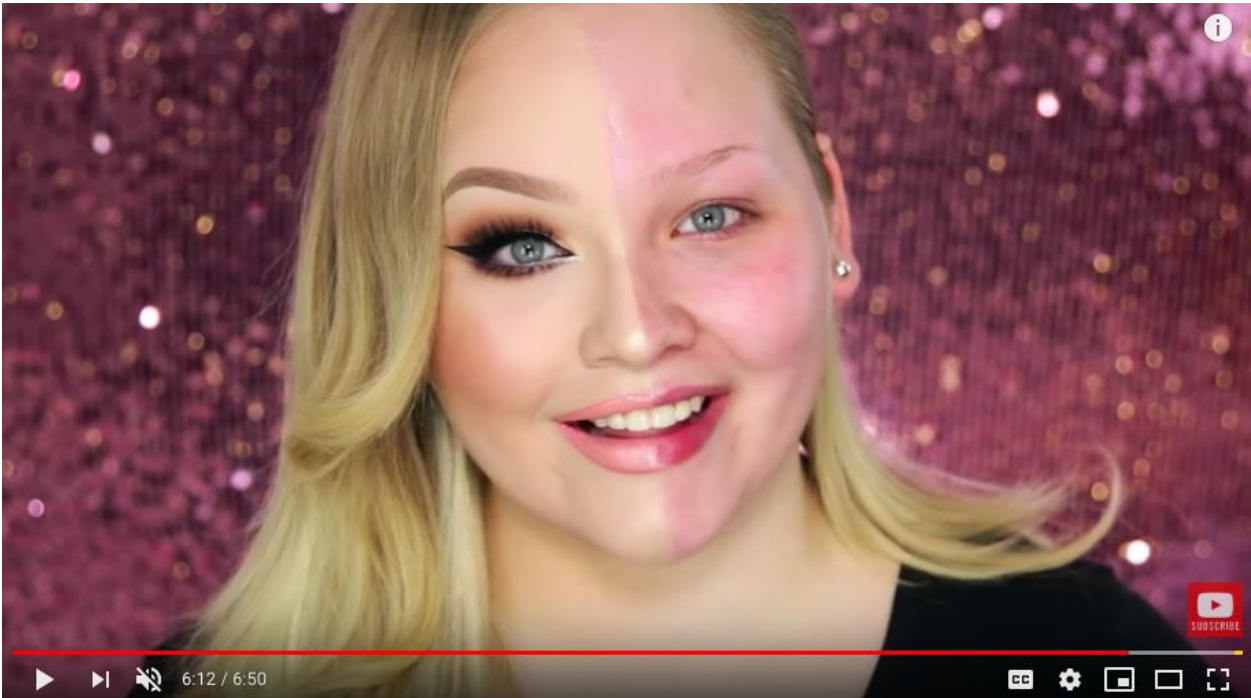


Figure 8: Nikkie de Jager’s completed look.

As with most YouTube videos, Nikkie ends with encouraging her subscribers to hit the “like” button and subscribe. She also prompts viewers to copy her look and experiment with makeup freely, making sure to “tag” or reference her in any re-created

looks. With a wave of her hand, she says “ And I wanna thank you for watching! Bye bye!” and the 6 minute and 50 second video ends.

THEMES

This section presents 6 themes which emerged through inductive analysis. The themes are the following:

1. Empathy and Relatability
2. Empowerment
3. Societal Expectations
4. Insecurities
5. Personal Justifications
6. Disagreement

Figure 9 represents the percentage of comments that each theme represents.

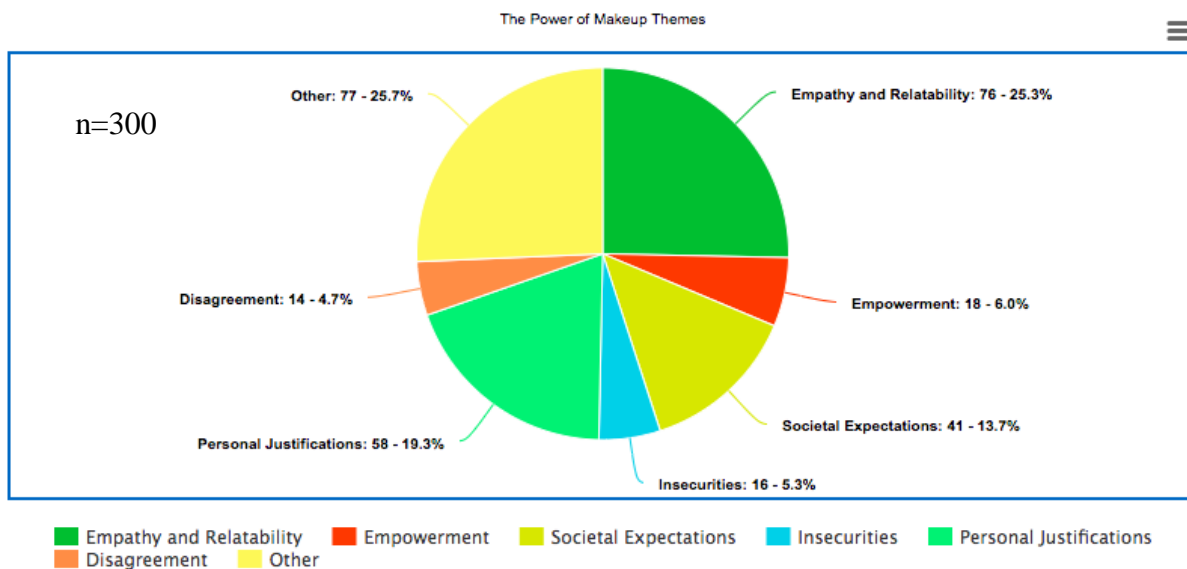


Figure 9: Pie Chart of the 6 Themes from *The Power of Makeup* Viewer Comments.

Theme 1: Empathy and Relatability

Upon cursory glance of the data, I noticed that a majority of comments (25.3%) from the top 300 were of viewers complimenting Nikkie de Jager. As I delved deeper, I noticed that 65 out of 300 comments (21.6%) were in the form of positive feedback directed towards de Jager's physical attributes. Typical comments included, "Beautiful", "You're pretty", and "You are pretty with and without makeup." Although viewers do not receive direct responses from Nikkie herself, these types of comments demonstrate that they feel connected with her and reinforce that sense of connection through empathetic statements.

What is creating the bond that viewers feel? What is NikkieTutorials providing viewers with to feel a sense of connection and empathy? Further analysis of the comments revealed that viewers feel that they can relate with the content. Nikkie uses self-deprecating humor to point out her flaws in order to be relatable with the viewer. One viewer remarked, "Finally, someone I can relate with." 13 out of 300 responses, or 4.3% were direct quotes of Nikkie from the video. These quotes are taken from portions of the video where Nikkie refers to her own insecurities, such as a double chin and her cheekbone structure. For example, a respondent from Germany quotes, "You are so smart and funny! *Double Chin? Contour that shit!* :D Love and Support from Germany!" Here, the viewer clearly states that they think Nikkie is "smart and funny", then shows validation with their "love and support." Another viewer responds, "*The sun without the damage.* Hahaha too funny," finding the quote relatable because the viewer understands that bronzer is used to give the appearance of a sun tan. By drawing attention to her insecurities, Nikkie demonstrates that she is a human being with flaws

just like the average viewer. Pointing out her double chin or her cheek bones in the video resulted in positive viewer acknowledgement: “*Cheek bones on point.....where is the point?? Hahaha love!*” Pointing out insecurities in herself, Nikkie shows vulnerability, which gives the viewers a safe space to share their own experiences.

Theme 2: Empowerment

Through de Jager’s sense of relatability, viewers claim that they gain inspiration, motivation and encouragement to express themselves through makeup. Nikkie de Jager proports that makeup shaming motivated her to create a video with the intention of empowering her viewers to wear makeup despite societal expectations. Many viewers saw her stance as courageous. One viewer stated, “Going out in public with a full on Glam takes some serious courage because we all know how quick some are to judge”. Another viewer saw Nikkie as “so so so strong.” 18 out of 300 comments (6%) suggested that the video inspired viewers in some way. Comments such as, “I LOVE THIS SO MUCH! You are so amazing and inspirational. I wanna try this!!! T.T.” suggests that the viewer admires Nikkie and was encouraged to try wearing their makeup in the same way. A few comments were as simple as “You are an inspiration,” but other respondents felt vulnerable enough to share their experiences and thanked Nikkie for inspiring them through the video. One particular viewer, who identified herself as a 12 year old girl, described being ridiculed for wearing “too much makeup” stating that others “said that I just wanted to show out and that I was trying to make myself look better.” The respondent continued by saying that they chose to wear makeup anyways and thanked Nikkie “for being such [an] inspirational person to all of us young ladies.” Another viewer thanked Nikkie for helping them through a difficult time in life when

they experienced loss. They said, “You're amazing. You're tips helped me through melasma after a still birth. Love you.” Some described the pain of living with shame and insecurity but attribute the video to giving them the strength to get back up. One such viewer said “I would feel so insecure at school and I wouldn't wear any of my makeup because I was scared of being slut shamed and this completely inspired me to do what I want with my face and feel better.” Feeling empowered, viewers claim that de Jager's video strengthened their resolve to wear makeup.

Theme 3: Societal Expectations

As mentioned earlier, viewers have expressed that society dictates rules for makeup. Nikkie's statement that society claims that people wear makeup because “you either do it because you wanna look good for boys, you do it because you're insecure, or you do it because you don't love yourself.” This summarizes a few ways in which wearing makeup is categorized. She continues to say that, “I feel like in a way lately, it's almost a crime to love doing your makeup.” Many viewers agreed with her, as responses about insecurities and social expectations revolving around makeup totaled 57 out of the top 300 comments analyzed, or 19%.

However, some viewers rejected the idea of wearing makeup as an act to please men. One viewer stated, “I love makeup but not because of boys or because I need to impress anyone but because I love it and it makes me happy.” Another respondent countered the idea of women's desire to please men with, “Nikki: you wanna look good for boys Me: chuckles in lesbian.” This viewer points out that not all women have the

same heterosexual inclinations that society might expect of women. As a lesbian, the viewer suggests that she wants to look good to attract other women.

Several viewers posted comments about what men have directly said to them. A respondent describes one such encounter with a man as “he said that girls only wear makeup because they want to impress men. They wear shorts or crop tops because they want to impress men. We [women] don't live to impress men.” The viewer clearly indicates that they are aware of a woman's role in society based on male perspective. However, the viewer seem to oppose the idea of doing things to impress men and suggests that it is unfair. Another comment tells a similar story: “When guys do something they say it's for themselves (e.g. get a new car or new hair cut) but when girls put on makeup boys say it's for them.” One viewer describes receiving unwanted attention from wearing makeup in a male-dominated work environment: “It has taken me a long time to get comfortable and confident with putting on makeup because of this stigma that I'm only trying to impress the men around me. Even now, some of my former coworkers (I work in a very male-dominated environment) would ask if I was ‘trying to impress the new guy’ or ‘going out right after work’ if I came in wearing some eyeliner and a single colour of eyeshadow.” This viewer implied the discomfort she feels when wearing a minimal amount of makeup. The story she shared is echoed throughout the data sample, as several viewers responded with similar comments. Feeling insecure for wearing makeup out of fear of “being slut shamed” (as mentioned in a comment from the previous section) implies that there is an idea in society that women who wear makeup are promiscuous.

The responses were not limited to viewers who had experienced the oppression of the male gaze. There were a few comments that reflected the nature of makeup shaming discussed in the video. For example, a respondent who described themselves as a man says, “TBH [to be honest] as a guy, the before looked better. The makeup version does not look attractive at all, not even a bit.” The key word used here is “attractive,” as the viewer is assuming that women wear makeup to attract men instead of for the purposes of looking good for themselves. He is suggesting that a natural look is appealing to men, but wearing makeup is creating an alternate version of oneself which is “not even one bit” attractive. Another respondent avoids wearing makeup because of the fear of being judged by viewers like the one just mentioned. They said, “I rarely go out with it on because then you get all the ‘I like natural girls’ comments thrown around, as if I was wearing it because I thought you would like it.” In contrast, one viewer suggested rebelling against what men want by saying, “All the boys at my school always say they hate girls who wear makeup. So guess what I did.... Doubled the makeup. Hahahaha.” This viewer seemed pleased to purposefully do what boys “hate” by wearing even more makeup.

Theme 4: Insecurities

According to Nikkie de Jager, another reason that women are ashamed to wear makeup is because of the belief that it is used to cover insecurities. However, only 16 out of 300 (5.3%) comments discussed insecurities. Many of the responses related to the theme of “insecure” used the term to defend the viewer’s desire to wear makeup without feeling ashamed, while others used the term in order to express vulnerability and share their insecurities. For example, some viewers admitted to feeling insecure about

themselves, but argued that they should be able to wear makeup to cover an insecurity without feeling shame for it. One viewer expressed, “even if you are insecure and wearing makeup makes you feel better sometimes, that shouldn't be shameful either.” This response contradicted Nikkie’s message when she says, “By no means, I wanna say that if you have insecurities that you should just slap makeup on, feel better, and never be content with yourself.” Although de Jager claims that people should not wear makeup to cover insecurities, not all viewers feel the same way.

There were additional comments that displayed viewers’ willingness to be open about their insecurities rather than denying them. For example, viewers mentioned discomfort with their facial features, appearing unnatural, or covering up the symptoms of medical conditions such as acne or melasma. One viewer spoke out against those who “bash on other women who want to cover up their acne, scars, hyper pigmentation by making fun of them and calling them insecure.” Another comment revealed that makeup is used to cover up internal insecurities as well. A viewer stated, “I started this practice [sic] of makeup and cosmetics because I used to feel insecure about my emotions getting reflected on my face.” The viewer went on to explain that they use the power of makeup to hide any indication of inner emotions, much like wearing a mask.

In contrast, several viewers made sure to state that they were *not* insecure, and that they wore makeup for unrelated reasons. In fact, a majority of the comments that discussed insecurities (80%) claimed that makeup did not cover or hide their insecurities. Comments to support this included, “I’m not insecure,” “I’m not doing my makeup because I’m Insecure” and “I love doing makeup not bc I’m insecure bc I enjoy it

and it's fun to do I don't see how that's a crime." In this way, many comments about insecurities were promptly followed by the reason that viewers did choose to use makeup.

Theme 5: Personal Justifications

Nikkie de Jager encourages her audience to wear makeup as a form of play. She says that makeup is fun and that, "There are no rules to makeup and makeup is there for days where you wanna look hella good!" 58 out of 300 comments (19.3%) described reasons that viewers wore makeup. Most of the reasons included self-gratification, fun, or for the love of makeup. Most comments discussing reasons for wearing makeup were part of a larger theme revolving around insecurities or societal expectations. An example of this is, "I hate when people say that people use makeup to, like Nikkie said, to impress a boy or something like that. I wear makeup because it makes ME feel beautiful. I wear makeup for ME. Not to impress other people." The commenter addresses the expectation to "impress a boy," and then overrides that idea with the explanation that makeup is worn for themselves. Another respondent shares a similar story, "I love to wear makeup, but at school I'm shamed for it. I'm not insecure, I just love doing makeup." The viewer asserts that they are not insecure, but they wear makeup because they enjoy the act of putting on makeup. Other viewers simply responded, "i do makeup just for fun", or "I do my makeup because i love makeup," without any context of stigmas or insecurities related to wearing makeup.

Finally, 11 out of 58 comments (18.9%) suggested that respondents viewed makeup as a form of art or creative expression. These comments described people who do makeup as artists, and putting on makeup as an artistic technique. For example, a viewer recognizes someone who does makeup as an artist stating, "Makeup artists are

called an artist for a reason.” While another viewer recognized Nikkie as “an amazing artist,” another viewer argues that, “Makeup is art and whoever thinks otherwise has no freaking clue.” One viewer commends those who wear makeup and points out the skill it requires as with any other art technique. They emphasize that it takes talent when they say, “I think makeup is an art, a talent it's not a joke... It's an art and anybody can't do this art.” These viewers contend that makeup is a creative outlet and a form of self-expression. This is supported when another viewer says, “the power of makeup is how you can just be creative with it. Like, you can [do] whatever tf you want!!” Here, the respondent states that the benefit of makeup is the ability to freely express yourself creatively without limits. This comment, along with others, suggests that the viewers are choosing to wear makeup despite negative connotations associated with wearing “too much makeup” or “trying to impress men.”

Theme 6: Disagreement

Despite the overwhelming majority of responses supporting de Jager’s *The Power of Makeup* video (95%), it is important to include the viewers’ opinions that were not positive. Out of 300 comments, 14 comments (4.7%) reflected negative opinions towards Nikkie de Jager, the message behind the video, or the video itself. Comments ranged from short and concise statements to lengthy explanations about perceived problems with wearing makeup. Responses such as, “I hate you” and “Guys she has black circles” did not provide much context for interpretation. Other comments such as, “im sorry there are rules for makeup” shows a clear disagreement with Nikkie’s message that makeup has no rules, but did not give further details as to why the individual felt this way. Others elaborated on why they had a problem with the makeup tutorial by saying that the

flawless appearance of makeup exaggerated flaws that were unnoticeable prior to the makeup application. One viewer said, “ I think that's what make up does, it creates problems in your mind about your natural state that were never there to begin with.” Nikkie’s bold makeup style is not suited for all tastes, and some viewers found her final appearance offensive. One such respondent voiced their concern that “Its doing a drag queen approach to makeup that is the problem” and that they “don't want their daughters going down that path.” Another viewer also found Nikkie’s makeup too heavy handed and suggested that women “Just apply less makeup unless you want to look like a ceramic doll on purpose.” However, other comments were sarcastic and degrading towards Nikkie, and accused her of body modification or video editing in order to look better. Such comments included, “Ironically she’s had a lot of work done since this video 3 years ago” and “The power of editing.” These comments imply that the power of makeup does not create transformation, but that plastic surgeries and video editing do.

Some viewers were sensitive to the more subtle messages of the video by making observations of Nikkie’s body language and tone. One viewer noted that, “She seems sooo angry in the intro and pretty much throughout the video” while another respondent added that they felt “like Nikki is very shy and not as confident as usual.” Although Nikkie emphasized confidence and fun, some of her viewers were able to point out what they felt were hidden messages that conflicted with the message of *The Power of Makeup*. They claimed that she appeared angry, shy, and lacked confidence. In particular, a viewer points out that Nikkie contradicted herself when she said, “I don’t do makeup because I’m insecure” and then “proceeds to explain how much she hates her facial features and shows how to correct them.” Whether Nikkie or other viewers were

aware of it or not, the messages that some viewers received were very different from what was verbally expressed in the video. This may be due to different life experiences and worldviews, but perception creates a variety of outcomes when receiving information. The viewers who responded adversely to the video may have had past experiences with makeup that had a negative impact on them, or were raised in a community that had certain views about women's appearances.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided the results from *The Power of Makeup* transcription and the top 300 comments in response to the video. Through this data, I investigated viewers' perceptions in response to *The Power of Makeup* video. The chapter began with a narration of *The Power of Makeup*, providing context for the reader to better understand the viewers' comments in response to the video. During the data analysis, I examined the video transcription and the viewers' comments. Data analysis revealed 6 key themes: empathy and relatability, empowerment, societal expectations and insecurities, personal justifications and disagreement. These themes were discussed in each section and were supported by viewer comments as well as quotes from Nikkie de Jager's video. The final chapter will further discuss the 6 themes and their meanings, future implications for research, and final thoughts of this study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter serves to summarize the key findings of this digital ethnographic study conducted on *The Power of Makeup* YouTube video. The guiding research question of the study was: How does *The Power of Makeup* video influence viewers' perceptions? In Chapter Four, the data was organized into 6 themes: empathy and relatability, empowerment, societal expectations and insecurities, personal justifications and disagreement. In this chapter, I will expand on these six findings. The next section describes implications for future research. Finally, I explain what I gained from this study as a researcher and why the findings are important for the field of art education.

THE MESSAGE

I used an inductive process of data analysis to code and organize the data from the video and top 300 comments into emerging themes and categories. I began coding of the video, trying to identify major themes from the transcript, all the while asking the question, "What messages are being conveyed to the viewer?" Nikkie de Jager prefaces the video by explaining that she feels that girls are being shamed for wearing makeup. A major theme that she conveys in her video is confronting makeup shaming. She addresses three main reasons that girls are shamed for wearing makeup: to impress boys, to cover their insecurities and the lack of self love. She then goes on to her next point, which is that makeup is powerful and transformative. She uses descriptors such as "photoshopped", "sculpted", "completely changes", and "transforms" as she applies makeup to her face in various stages. Despite the encouraging message to wear makeup regardless of what society says, Nikkie uses self-deprecating humor to engage her audience. There is a pattern of identifying a flaw on her bare face, then resolving it with

makeup. For example, Nikkie describes her lack of brows, and demonstrates how brow pencil can create the illusion of eye brows. Yet in another scene, she identifies several perceived deficiencies: lack of cheek bones, a double chin, small eyes and thin lips. She does this in a humorous and light hearted way, but some viewers certainly caught on to de Jager's dissatisfaction with her features. One viewer quotes Nikkie, "I dont do makeup because im insecure - proceeds to explain how much she hates her facial features and shows how to correct them." I was surprised to find that only 1 in 300 viewers pointed out Nikkie's perceived beauty flaws. In fact, a majority of responses (95%) were positive feedback towards Nikkie de Jager's looks. Viewers also expressed their own reasons for wearing makeup or shared their personal experiences with makeup. The following sections explain the six themes in more depth: empathy and relatability, empowerment, societal expectations and insecurities, personal justifications and disagreement.

EMPATHY AND RELATABILITY

Successful YouTube influencers like Nikkie de Jager have massive followings. But what makes her channel so different from other prominent vloggers? NikkieTutorials has a loyal following of more than 11 million subscribers. One reason for her popularity may be due to the way in which Nikkie engages with her audience. Although Nikkie is unable to physically connect with all of her viewers in person, she still successfully creates a sense of relatability through the sharing of sensitive or personal information about herself. For example, she regularly posts about personal events in her life, and even shared the story of her younger brother passing away. Her following is based on the relationship she has developed with her viewers over time through her series of videos.

Nikkie de Jager connects with her audience in a variety of ways. For example, she convinces viewers that she has insecurities just like everyone else. She often begins her videos bare-faced without makeup on before proceeding with her makeup routines. This presents an inviting and relatable image in order to avoid intimidating the viewer right from the beginning. Seeing Nikkie greet viewers with her natural appearance can be perceived as warm and inviting, even authentic and genuine. Having her hair up in a bun with no makeup on is a very common approach to an everyday look, and Nikkie makes sure to recognize that her viewers dress this way normally. In *The Power of Makeup*, Nikkie expresses her frustrations by saying, “I notice a lot that when I don’t wear makeup and I have my hair up in a bun, and I meet people and I show them pictures of my videos or whatever looks I have done, they look at me and straight up tell me ‘that is not you’ they tell me ‘That’s funny because I don’t even look like that girl on the picture.’” In this way, Nikkie describes a look that most girls can relate with and points out that wearing makeup can create a drastic contrast from her natural appearance. Viewers felt connected to Nikkie and repeatedly assure her through their comments that she is beautiful both with and without makeup.

By becoming vulnerable with her hair up in a bun and no makeup on, Nikkie demonstrates to her viewers that they could share their experiences as well. The vulnerability that Nikkie displays through her videos allows viewers to feel empathy and connection with her. She creates a sense of familiarity by sharing the things that she does not like about herself. Throughout the video, Nikkie points out what she views as imperfections on her own face and proceeds to change them with makeup techniques. She uses humor when making comments such as “Got a double chin?”

Contour that shit.” By choosing to highlight the appearance of her double chin, she shows viewers that they do not have to hide their own insecurities. This creates a forum for viewers to openly share their experiences and further their sense of connection with de Jager.

SOCIETAL EXPECTATION AND INSECURITIES

It appears that Nikkie, as well as her viewers, feel that there are stigmas attached to wearing makeup. Nikkie explains in her opening that this includes wearing makeup to impress boys, to cover insecurities, and wearing makeup due to self-hatred. She refers to this concept as makeup shaming, and encourages her viewers to ignore society’s rules of makeup. Viewers responded with stories of their own insecurities based on makeup shaming as well as experiences of feeling oppressed by societal expectations. Many also claimed that they wear makeup in order to look and feel good for themselves.

There is a long list of expectations for women to meet in a Western male-dominated society. For example, women are expected to behave in a certain way, dress modestly, but also have a sexually appealing body. Social media perpetuates unrealistic beauty ideals that have contributed to dietary abuse and self destructive eating disorders within the last quarter of the century (Mazur, 1986). Women are not expected to become engineers or business leaders, as those roles are traditionally reserved for men. More traditional female careers include nurturing roles such as teachers or nurses. In addition, having “too many” sexual partners results in being labeled as being promiscuous. Women’s fashion choices are also judged, and wearing suggestive clothing risks humiliation by being verbally harassed in public. Beauty vloggers like Nikkie de Jager

bring attention to these traditional patriarchal ideas of the female body and career paths as unrealistic and unfair, giving a platform for women to have a voice.

The data analysis revealed that viewers felt pressured to conform to a standard of beauty set forth by men. This standard was described by viewers as a “natural” look. Viewer comments such as, “I rarely go out with it on because then you get all the ‘I like natural girls’ comments thrown around, as if I was wearing it because I thought you would like it” and “It has taken me a long time to get comfortable and confident with putting on makeup because of this stigma that I’m only trying to impress the men around me,” suggest that viewers feel that they cannot wear makeup due to the fear of being judged.

The findings in this study show that there are certain Western standards of beauty for women. First, women should appear natural, without showing any evidence of wearing makeup. One male viewer supported this perception and commented, “the makeup version does not look attractive at all, not even a bit.” Second, according to the results of this study, society expects women to dress and act in ways that are pleasing to men. Women feel pressured to conform to the beauty ideals placed on them by society, as their outward appearance affects their social status (Mazur, 1986). Rebelling against this expectation is met with name calling and condescending remarks by disapproving men *and* women. This negative attention results in many women feeling insecure for choosing to look different from the expected beauty standard.

Historically, women have felt pressured to make themselves attractive to men. Young girls are groomed by society to view their bodies as an object of aesthetic pleasure for others (Freedman, 1994). However, beauty standards have shifted rapidly

due to the rise of mass media in the 20th century. For example, the internet allows people all over the world to access and upload content through social media. And so, vloggers like Nikkie de Jager have a platform to confront and challenge traditional beauty standards. She acknowledges that society views her choice to wear makeup as excessive and an attempt to impress men or cover her insecurities. Yet she says that makeup should be worn without rules or expectations, and for one's own enjoyment. By confronting makeup shaming, Nikkie encourages and thus empowers her viewers to wear makeup in a way that they choose.

EMPOWERMENT

Nikkie emphasizes the importance of having choice in terms of wearing makeup. She says, "I just want people to know that makeup is fun and there are no rules to makeup." Nikkie encourages her viewers to embrace a variety of ways to practice makeup. Viewers comment that her encouragement gave them the courage to take control of the use of makeup in their own lives. Viewers felt that Nikkie gave them the courage to claim the right to wear makeup back from a place of shame and insecurity. In some instances, this new found confidence went beyond makeup. One viewer claimed that it helped her through a difficult loss saying, "Your tips helped me through melasma after a stillbirth." This viewer may have felt depressed after the loss of a child, which can result in a sense of powerlessness. Her connection to Nikkie de Jager helped the viewer to heal.

Other viewers who expressed negative feelings, such as shame and insecurity, shared that the video "completely inspired me to do what I want with my face and feel better." Women are claiming their rights to do what they want with their faces despite

being “scared of being slut shamed” for wearing makeup. The fear of being denounced is only one facet of the oppression that women face in our society. Nikkie de Jager’s advice about this issue inspired some women to think critically about their rights beyond makeup. Feeling inspired and empowered by Nikkie de Jager, many viewers also voiced their opinion and personal experiences in regard to being ridiculed for wearing makeup. Even a small step, such as being confident enough to wear makeup freely, allows women to feel that they have some degree of control over their lives.

PERSONAL JUSTIFICATIONS

Despite societal expectations influencing women’s actions, viewers shared multiple reasons that they chose to wear makeup. Nikkie de Jager claims that makeup is fun and “for days where you wanna look hella good!” Viewers responded with their own personal justifications for wearing makeup by saying things such as, “I wear makeup because it makes ME feel beautiful” and “I wear makeup for ME. Not to impress other people.” The viewers emphasized the importance of wearing makeup for self gratification. They were very clear that they did not wear makeup to impress other people or to “impress boys.” Several comments suggested that viewers were offended by the expectation that women would wear makeup to attract men. Other viewers explained that they wore makeup as a form of play or creative expression and compared it to art. One viewer compared Nikkie to a makeup artist while another viewer commented that “makeup is an art, a talent it's not a joke.”

The findings suggest that women wear makeup to express themselves creatively, because they enjoy it, or to make themselves feel good. Wearing makeup is not for everyone, and it is a unique art technique just like drawing or painting. Some people are

able to resonate with this artistic technique and feel that they can express themselves through it. Enjoying the process of applying makeup is a reason that many viewers wear makeup. One viewer said, “I just love doing makeup.” Another viewer described enjoying the process so much that she removes the makeup immediately after applying it. She says, “I put makeup on in the night and just take it [off] after. This is because I love doing it.” Focusing on the application of makeup serves as a creative activity for this viewer, and a way of practicing the skill. As mentioned in the previous section, women are aware that wearing a lot of makeup is considered unattractive to some men. They are also aware that wearing makeup can result in ridicule. However, the viewers on de Jager’s channel voice their true motives behind wearing makeup and are not afraid to do so.

DISAGREEMENT

There were viewers that did not agree with Nikkie de Jager’s viewpoint and messages in *The Power of Makeup*. Some viewers’ comments seemed personal and they simply said they disliked Nikkie by commenting “I hate you,” but others had more to say. One viewer challenged Nikkie’s statement that there were no rules to makeup and responded, “I’m sorry there are rules for makeup.” This viewer disagrees with the notion that makeup can be used in any manner, and believes that there are certain ways in which makeup needs to be applied in order to look acceptable to society. Another viewer voiced their concerns for the makeup looking like “a drag queen approach.” A drag queen typically wears a lot of makeup to cover up masculine features to make them appear feminine. The viewer was using this remark to express that they felt Nikkie’s makeup style was excessive, resembling that of a drag queen. The viewers who had

negative opinions of the video generally did not find Nikkie's makeup style appealing. As one male viewer stated, "The makeup version does not look attractive at all, not even a bit." Other comments suggested that Nikkie had gotten cosmetic procedures done to her face, or that the video was altered with editing. These viewers rejected the idea that makeup is transformative or powerful, and doubted that makeup alone was responsible for Nikkie's change in appearance.

There were also viewers who noticed inconsistencies in the video. For example, one viewer pointed out that Nikkie contradicted herself when she said, "I don't do makeup because I'm insecure - and then proceeds to explain how much she hates her facial features and shows how to correct them." Although the introduction of the video is about the problems with makeup shaming, Nikkie pokes fun at her own features during the video. She points out her insecurities but does it in a light hearted way. Furthermore, Nikkie goes beyond highlighting her insecurities. She made degrading comments about her facial features, and then proceeded to "correct" them with makeup. What makes this confusing is that she repeatedly stated that makeup is fun, and that "if you have insecurities that you [should not] just slap makeup on, feel better, and never be content with yourself." Her actions do exactly what she is speaking out against, and surprisingly, only 1 out of 300 comments drew attention to this discrepancy.

Instead of accepting herself the way she is, de Jager uses makeup to change her appearance. An example of this is when she points out how she does not like her eyes. She says, "I don't like how my eyes are hooded, slightly on the smaller side and just not as open and awake and fresh." She also points out her "dark circles" and says "I want them gone" before concealing them with makeup. Every time Nikkie draws attention to a

feature of her face that she does not like, she changes it with a product. For each step of the transformation, she identifies a flaw on her face, and then holds up a product that she will use to correct it. The result is a drastic contrast on the two sides of her face. As fascinating as this is to watch, it is also an ingenious advertising tactic. This is a way in which many beauty gurus promote products they love, and are often sponsored by. Products are most successfully marketed and sold when they are proven to create a drastic yet positive difference in the user. Beauty influencers partner with beauty companies in order to market their products. For example, beauty gurus will receive a promotional code that viewers can use when purchasing products from a beauty company that was featured in a video. When a viewer uses the code online during checkout, they receive a discount, and the beauty guru receives a small commission. Nikkie de Jager has several partnerships with companies such as Morphe Brushes, Artist Couture, Beauty Bakerie and Ofra Cosmetics. She receives commissions from these sponsors by using their products in her videos and then asking viewers to use her promotional code, “Nikkie” (often left in description box below the video). Additionally, several beauty gurus create their own makeup product line through these companies, and Nikkie de Jager recently launched her own highlighters through Ofra Cosmetics. However, there has been a backlash from the viewers of the YouTube makeup community, as they feel that product reviews are driven by financial gain and not the beauty guru’s authentic opinion. Because of this, beauty gurus often claim that they are not sponsored by a company when promoting a product. Nikkie de Jager has taken this to another level by creating a visual transparency code that appears as a graphic on her videos. This side graphic uses symbols that indicate whether each product was purchased with her own

money, received it as a gift from a beauty brand, or if she is receiving a commission for using an affiliate code for the product. Nikkie most likely uses this new system in order to build trust with her viewers, so they can discern for themselves whether her reviews are genuine or driven by financial motives.

Despite the glittery pink backdrop and the sparkling bejeweled stiletto nails, Nikkie de Jager is still a human being just like everyone else. The glamorous makeup and beautiful video editing can be deceiving, preventing viewers from catching on to subtle discrepancies. The message behind *The Power of Makeup* is meant to be encouraging and uplifting, but some viewers picked up on Nikkie's mood, tone of voice, facial expressions, and actions that sometimes contradicted her message. A viewer noticed that "Nikki is very shy and not as confident as usual" while another interpreted Nikkie's demeanor as being "sooo angry." Although it may not be Nikkie's intention to send mixed signals, the results from this study show that viewers commented on what they perceived as inconsistencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study provides information that is beneficial to the field of art education. The analysis of viewer comments on *The Power of Makeup* helps provide insight into how viewers perceive the images in social media. The results of this study contribute information that allows educators to create relevant curriculum for students in the 21st century. With the emergence of new technology, it is imperative that students are prepared to think critically about the images around them. Visual culture in the art classroom gives students the skills to progress their careers beyond a k-12 education and understand the information that is around them.

Although the results from the study on *The Power of Makeup* is beneficial, continuing the study further would provide more information in regards to the ways in which viewers are impacted by YouTube beauty tutorials. The analysis done in this study was based on a non-statistically significant number (1%) of viewer comments, giving me a limited sample of data to work with. To continue the research, it would be ideal to do this study on a larger scale with more videos. Conducting a larger study with a larger sample of YouTube beauty videos would yield more accurate results. Through this type of same study, comparisons could be made between videos. For example, a video of a transgender beauty guru could be compared to a video of a gay or ethnic minority beauty guru. Comparing different YouTube channels based on the demographics of the creator could yield useful information about these demographics. The results would help researchers understand how different populations perceive the topic of beauty. It would also be interesting to survey viewers who did not choose to respond. What might their perceptions be and would they align or not align with the results of this study?

Another direction that this research could go is by interviewing the participants. The comments in this study were analyzed as “true” although online personas and comments are only one part of a more complex identity. If possible, contacting the viewers who commented below the videos would provide more insight into their responses. Interviewing the YouTube vlogger would be ideal as well, although a lower profile vlogger is more likely to participate because they receive less attention from viewers and less requests from sponsors.

Creating a study using a visual culture lesson plan would be research that is directly related to the art classroom. For this potential study, a pre and post assessment could be conducted to measure the effects of a visual culture lesson on students. A survey would be administered prior to the visual culture lesson to assess knowledge and perceptions about a YouTube beauty tutorial. After the visual culture lesson was taught, students would watch the same YouTube beauty tutorial again, and the same survey would be used to measure the difference in perceptions and critical thinking skills. This recommendation for future research using YouTube videos in the art classroom would be useful for researching the influence of visual culture.

FINAL THOUGHTS

When I first began this research journey, I was not sure what I would find. To be honest, I was not surprised by the results because I have been immersed in the YouTube beauty community for years. I have watched hundreds of videos for nearly a decade, so I am familiar with the opinions expressed and tactics used in *The Power of Makeup*. However, delving deeper into the data revealed to me that many people do not possess the critical thinking skills to see beyond the allure of social media. In the past, I never took the time to read other viewers' responses. Analyzing viewers' comments has helped me gain an understanding that there are multiple interpretations of the same message about beauty standards. Some viewers love wearing makeup for self-gratification, for the process, or to cover insecurities. On the other end of the spectrum, viewers expressed a distaste for heavy makeup application, finding it unattractive or too unnatural. Studying the comments in response to *The Power of Makeup* gave me insight as a researcher to see how viewers perceived the video and its message.

I believe that my own familiarity with the YouTube beauty community allowed me to have an understanding of the viewers' comments and helped me to stay balanced in my perspective. I used a feminist paradigm for my theoretical framework, and this could have easily led me to point out several negative aspects about *The Power of Makeup*. For example, I could have focused on how Nikkie shames herself and then covers it up with makeup, or been very skeptical about viewer claims to wear makeup purely for themselves. However, being a lover of makeup, I can relate to those who feel that makeup is an artform for creative expression. I can also understand that makeup can be worn purely for self gratification, even if it is wiped off without ever leaving the house or meeting anyone.

With that being said, this study made me aware of the need, as well as the importance, of teaching visual culture in the art classroom. I was surprised that only 1 out of 300 viewers noticed that Nikkie's actions were inconsistent with her message. It is important for all students to be equipped with the critical thinking skills to discern the messages in social media. This does not mean that there is a correct opinion about beauty standards, but beliefs should be a choice that students can make for themselves. Critical thinking skills can be taught through visual culture lessons and allow students to discover multiple viewpoints in the information they are exposed to. Through critical thinking, students discover facts for themselves and learn how to separate fact from opinion. Visual culture lessons facilitate conversation in the classroom and equip students with the ability to develop useful questioning strategies to navigate in today's world.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTION OF *THE POWER OF MAKEUP*

Hey guys, I'm here today to show you the power of makeup. I've been noticing a lot lately that girls have almost been almost ashamed to say that they love makeup. Because now a days when you say you love makeup, you either do it because you wanna look good for boys, you do it because you're insecure, or you do it because you don't love yourself. I feel like in a way lately, it's almost a crime to love doing your makeup. So after seeing last week's Rupaul's drag race, with half drag half male, I was inspired to show you the power of makeup. I notice a lot that when I don't wear makeup and I have my hair up in a bun, and I meet people and I show them pictures of my videos or whatever looks i have done, they look at me and straight up tell me "that is not you" they tell me "That's funny because I don't even look like that girl on the picture." So without any further adou, I'm gonna do half my face, full on glam. I'm truly going to transform one side of my face. And the other side, is gonna be me. Raw, unedited, nothing, me. Just me. So let's do it.

1:15

Holding up foundation bottle by her face.

1:23

Using brush and applying foundation down face and neck

Today I'm first going in with my Koh Gen Do Aqua Foundation in number 213. It makes me look photoshopped without photoshop. That's - that's why I love it.

Silence (applies makeup)

1:37

Using brush and applying concealer under eyes and around nose and mouth, then blends with beauty blender.

Same goes for concealer. I have dark circles, I want them to be gone.

(silently applies makeup)

1:54

Holds brow pencil up next to face.

I love brows. Problem is, I don't have em' naturally. What is the solution for that?

1:55

Using brush to draw on eyebrows while looking into handheld compact mirror.

Brow pencil!

For eyes, I don't like how my eyes are hooded, slightly on the smaller side and just Not as open and awake and fresh.

2:17

Using brush and applying eye shadow to outer corner of eye while talking.

So I like to take a brown eyeshadow and start building in my crease. And most of the days, I don't even follow my natural crease. I just go a little bit above it and create this new shape so I can create this eye shape or the effect that I want my eye to give by using makeup.

Here I'm using Anastasia Beverly Hills eyeshadows in faun and cognac.

2:54

Using finger to apply gold eyeshadow to lid while talking and looking into compact mirror.

Golds and taupe eyeshadows are my favorite for on the lid so for this transformation, I'll use no other. I love optically making my eyes look larger,

3:06

Holding up opened eyeliner and gesturing how eyeliner will be applied.

so for this I'm taking my Kat von D Tattoo Liner in Trooper and creating a new inner corner.

3:10

Drawing eyeliner into inner corner of eye and then taking another brush and creating a line below lash line.

I'm creating a parallel line underneath and leaving the space inbetween bare.

Blending out lower lashline eyeshadow (voice over video)

Smoke out the lower lashline as smokey as you want it to be.

3:30

Holding up product and uses other hand to gesture sparkling with fingers. Proceeds to silently apply product to inner corner of eye while looking into compact mirror.

And to open up those inner corners even more, I'm taking this dual effects in shine by makeup studio and sparkle it up.

3:46

Begins drawing wing on outer corner and filling it in with black eyeliner.

And if there's one thing that completely changes up my eyes, is eyeliner.

And of course, lashes.

<p>4:00 Placing false lashes to top and then bottom eyelid</p>	<p>For this, I'm using the Lena lashes and these are Bev.</p>
<p>4:27 Holding up palette 4:30 Shading in cheekbones with brush while making pout with lips.</p>	<p>One of the main things I get told when I show people a picture of me with makeup like in my videos and when I'm without makeup in front of them in person. They always say "But you look so much slimmer!" Let me introduce you to the world of contouring. Contouring is my religion. So today to sculpt one side of my face, I'll be using the Kat Von D Shade n' Light palette.</p>
<p>4:43 Shading below chin while making a pout with lips.</p>	<p>Got a double chin? Contour that shit.</p>
<p>4:50 Pointing to cheekbones with handle of brush.</p>	<p>Look at that! Look at that! Cheekbone on point... (turns head) Where is the point?</p>
<p>4:51 Vigorously blends bronzer onto cheeks and forehead with brush while talking.</p>	<p>Bronzer because it gives me the sun without the damage.</p>
<p>4:57 Holds up blush product and then applies blush to cheeks in sweeping back and forth motion while talking.</p>	<p>Luminoso blush by Milani cause it just transforms my cheeks into- heaven.</p>
<p>5:04 Holding up product</p>	<p>And the Balm's Mary Louminzer to highlight. (holds up product).</p>

5:08

Lining lips, but pauses to examine product to name the shade, make gestures with hands to describe adding volume, then silently continues lining lips with lip liner.

For lips, I like lining them. Today I'm using boldly bare by MAC just to give my lips a little bit more volume.

5:23

Holds up lipstick and applies to lips.

Then a pinky coral lipstick. This is "soft touch" by Dose of Colors. And over top, a nude gloss.

5:32

Applying gloss with voiceover speaking.

Here I'm using Rimmel Apocalips lip lacquer in number 100.

5:38

Holding up hand over half of face, revealing non-make-up side. Switches to cover other side of face to reveal made up side (on the word "power"). Concludes video with final thoughts with half made up face.

And that guys, is the power of makeup. By no means, I wanna say that if you have insecurities that you should just slap makeup on, feel better, and never be content with yourself. I just want people to know that makeup is fun and there are no rules to makeup and If you wanna go for that super ass sharp contour for the day, do it. If you wanna go for a red lip and crazy bold eyes, do it. There are no rules to makeup and makeup is there for days where you wanna look hella good!

And that's why I love the power of makeup.

Thank you so much for watching, if you enjoyed this video, please give it a thumbs up (holds up both thumbs) and subscribe to my channel.

I hope you enjoyed and by all means, if you want to do a take on this half face of nothing, half face of full on glam. Tag me on instagram and twitter, facebook or whatever, tag me. And I wanna thank you for watching! Bye bye!(waves).

APPENDIX B: TOP 300 COMMENTS CODED FROM *THE POWER OF MAKEUP*

The Power of Makeup Top 300 Comments

KEY (Themes)

Inspiration

Insecurities

Reasons viewers wear makeup

Makeup as art or creative expression

Empathy (quotes from video)

Societal Expectation and Makeup Shaming

Complimenting Nikkie de Jager

Disagreements

1. I LOVE THIS SO MUCH! You are so amazing and inspirational. I wanna try this!!! T.T
2. tbh she's gotten a LOT better at makeup
3. well said. i love makeup but i suck at it so i go outside without it. im not shy to be natural but wearing makeup is too fun. its like art on your face
4. "If you have dark circles, just sleep more" says my mother when i ask for new concealer
5. can you remake this power of makeup 2.0
6. I dyed when she said, "Contour is my religion!"
7. After contour says: "Cheekbrones on point!" Shows the other side "Where is the point?!?"
8. 2019?
9. Nikki: you wanna look good for boys Me: chuckles in lesbian
10. You are such a beautiful person with or without makeup! I admire your creativity & love for makeup <3
11. No...no....primer...???
12. Makeup is art and whoever thinks otherwise has no freaking clue
13. Makeup enhances your best features not covers them up! When I wear makeup to school the boys are like "Why are you wearing sooo much makeup?" I wear it because I LOVE MAKEUP!
14. Dark circles? I wish I had your dark circles
15. I don't generally watch makeup videos, but I did watch this one and loved it! I love the message you sent, Nikkie, because I think we also shame ourselves for enjoying makeup. I've never been a big makeup buff, but I enjoy the basics, and have just started to enjoy being playful with it and going bolder. As a friend said who is HUGE on makeup: it helps her feel polished as she starts her day. And I couldn't agree more and will not longer feel weird about the power of makeup. Thanks for delivering the message in the way you did! ~Serena, ThriftDiving
16. Anyone watching in 2019?
17. If everyone is insecure about other peoples judgement, why don't we just stop judging...?
18. I can't agree more...My parents always say that I do makeup because I get low self esteem(Although they won't stop me from doing makeup)
19. I love makeup but not because of boys or because I need to impress anyone but because I love it and it makes me happy
20. "Got a double chin, contour that shit" I LOVE HER

50. I think your beautiful with and without makeup, Everybody is!!!
51. I usually just wear makeup so I don't cry :/
52. I feel like your first videos aren't so great and in the future get better and better. E.g. Zoella was ok at makeup and is now really good. NikkieTutorials has just always been AMAZING at brows!!
53. Finally, someone I can relate with.
54. Eyeliner: Normal people: swish, flick, erase, flick, erase, give up. Her: Swish, Flick, done.
55. Look at little fetus Nikkie
56. Happy New Year
57. You are beautiful with or without makeup! I like to use in my everyday makeup red lipstick, but nothing else bright. No eyeshadows, just mascara, and soft invisible powder on skin. Someone says that red lipstick for everyday- too much, I don't care, I am adept of 50-s) so right, there's no rules in make up) thanks)
58. Right side is beautiful, Left side is beautiful
59. Make up artists are called an artist for a reason, Thank u for this.
60. "Contouring is my religion"
61. omg ik kende je al eerder maar ik had nooit echt naar je video's gekeken, maar nu je in wie is de mol zit dacht ik hmmm jij bent echt geweldig! en nu ben jij mijn favoriete youtuber je inspireert me zo erg en ik heb nu ook veel meer interesse in make up en wat het met je doet! bedankt xxxx
62. 2019?
63. And I can't even put on lipgloss without getting it in my hair.
64. 2019?
65. Oh luckily you are just dutch you are great in make up do not believe that I just had to say and with me it is always right
66. I love make-up its so fun, and i love my natural face too! when girls say they like make up people think. "oh you dont love yourself" but we do! we just like expressing our natural beauty differently, plus either way we are all beautiful without make up.
67. 2019?
68. When you're just going through the drive thru so you only do half your face.
69. 2019?
70. Like if you are Dutch, just like Nikkie.
71. 2018 anyone
72. i do it bc it's fun
73. Cool: Girls that don't wear makeup, girls that do, girls that don't but like makeup, girls that love makeup and wear it, boys that don't wear makeup, boys that do, boys that don't but like makeup, girls that love makeup and wear it, and everything in between. Not cool: Shaming someone for what they like and don't like.
74. Baby fetus Nikkie
75. SO CUNTENT WITH THIS LOOK
76. 39.5M views
77. Right side is beautiful
78. 2019
79. 2018 December anyone ?
80. She looks so pretty as she is
81. I do my makeup because i love makeup
82. all the comments are "you're so beautiful" (which you are) but my comment is "how do you get the foundation in a straight line in the middle?"
83. Y am i here! Only eye liner n lip balm I own! But trust me girl, ur video is addictive! Talented woman! Loads of love from India!
84. This is surprisingly my first time watching you Nikki & I wanted to say that you are very beautiful with & without makeup! I've heard sooo many people talk about your videos & how talented you are, I'm thinking about subscribing to you

- but I'll watch some more vids & decide from there on, anyways keep up the great videos girly, Love Jenny Rose!! Ps. I also love doing Makeup as well not for others but for myself & the passion I have for Makeup & the beauty of it all
85. wow, thats so cool!!
 86. i reallyyyyy like your jobbb greatingsss fromm brasil
 87. I'm more impressed that it's a perfect straight line at the end lol
 88. Thankuu so much nikki for empowering us and motivating us to do makeup not for anyone but to look good for ourselves love ya
 89. Cheek bones on point.....where is the point?? Hahaha love! Wonderful video! I wish I knew how to apply makeup like this!
 90. And you can speak English very well
 91. This video is OLD but GOLD.
 92. 2018 ? I love you Nikki I've watched this video but I was so inspired I had to watch it again like if you love Nikki
 93. 2019
 94. For you people out there, think of makeup as a toy. Makeup is something you can enjoy and experiment and play with! You can have fun with it! Makeup shouldn't just be this tool or this thing that some people think of as obnoxious. You just need to have fun with it. I'm only 11, way too young to wear makeup. But, that doesn't mean that I can't play with it or slap on a bit of mascara at a special occasion. As long as you are having fun with it, nothing else really matters! @Love you guys!
 95. "Cheek bones on point (switches side of face) ..where is the point?" OMG I DIED.
 96. Boo you look great without makeup on
 97. Her teeth though..
 98. Honestly she doesn't even need makeup at all
 99. Omg a BRUSH with FOUNDATION? Jesus Nikki what happened three years ago? XD
 100. Who's else is watching
 101. this in 2018!
 102. this is AMAZING!
 103. I do it cause it's fun and satisfying I dont do it often tho. I'm 10 also I'd do it casue I have acme and I hate how the red dots look. It's so weird
 104. Your so funny
 105. I like her eyebrows in this video than in 2018
 106. How did you get so good at doing makeup? I try so hard but end up looking like a clown.
 107. you can tell she was about to cry when she talked about her without makeup and people saying she wasn't the girl in the photos.
 108. I am speechless
 109. Nikkie, you are amazing with or without make up! We love you, follow you in Hungary. You are so beautiful!
 110. I started wearing at a pretty young age. I wore concealer, powder, and mascara. I didn't wear the powder much because it was too dark for my skin tone. It was my moms. I was with 2 of my friends and we had a sleepover. When we woke up we sat in the hallway and I heard her mom saying I wore makeup because I was insecure. But honestly, I love the way I look and when I look in the mirror I smile because I point out the beautiful things on my body and not the negitive. Some adults don't realize that I'm not doing my makeup because I'm Insecure... it's because I want to highlight those features that I love and make them pop. Everyone is beautiful in their own special way.
 111. You are so nice Nikkie!!!
 112. 2018?
 113. YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL
 114. An iconic video.
 115. The best part about Nikkie is she's absolutely fine with showing her bareface. There are some girls I know who tend to hide their faces when they are not making makeup and I think it's very unhealthy
 116. This video makes you so so so strong
 117. I love how u look with or without makeup

118. contouring is my religion
119. When guys do something they say it's for themselves (eg get a new car, new hair cut, ect) but when girls put on makeup boys say it's for them, I put makeup on in the night and just take it off after. This is because I love doing it. I may have my insecurities but most of the time when I put on makeup I do it because I love it. People say that my face looks Cakey and I did it wrong, but I don't care, I enjoy doing my makeup. I'm not trying to impress people.
120. You look beautiful without makeup girl
121. im sorry there are rules for makeup
122. I'm here after the video for her brother ! Anyone else?
123. I started wearing makeup when I was 12 years old. Everyone in my school said I looked like a younger Dolly Parton and that I wore too much makeup. They said that I just wanted to show out and that I was trying to make myself look better. I wore it all! I wore foundation, powder, blush, eyeshadow, mascara and the darkest or brightest lipsticks you can think of. I just thought that it made me look pretty and that I just loved it. I love myself even more! I can go all week without makeup and not even think twice about it. Thank you for being such an inspirational person to all of us young ladies. Ladies, don't let everyone bring you down just because you want to look like "a younger version of Dolly Parton". It feels amazing when you do! I understand! You are all beautiful and all amazing people! Thank you for being yourself! You too Nikkie Edit: Oh my god, guys thank you so much for 100 likes!!!
124. Power of make up is perfect for me, just one try for the eyelineeerrrrrr
125. Phat
126. wow the Power of makeup is so beautiful
127. THANK YOU!
128. She has really good brows. Even though they aren't completely naturally filled in, it's a great natural guide for what type of brow is suppose to go with her. Edit: I never meant it like she's "suppose" to fill in her eyebrows or anything it's just because she likes doing makeup and she likes doing her eyebrows, she's lucky her natural shape is really good so she has something to follow. And I'm not saying you have any specific shape for you you can obviously do what ever brow you want but your brows look the best when you follow your natural shape
129. You are goddess of makeup.. Love you..
130. Just do what u want toooooooo just for your own self
131. 100 subscribers with no video challenge
132. You look beautiful with or without makeup
133. OMG power of makeup yes
134. Your skin is bomb
135. In my opinion, the power of makeup is how you can just be creative with it. Like, you can do whatever if you want!
136. i do makeup just for fun
137. You are beautiful with and without makeup
138. i hate when people say that people use makeup to, like Nikkie said, to impress a boy or something like that. I wear makeup because it makes ME feel beautiful. I wear makeup for ME. Not to impress other people.
139. When I take off my makeup I like to take off one side first to see how much different I look with and without lol
140. You don't need makeup you look so pretty without it
141. I think makeup is an art,a talent it's not a joke... It's an art and anybody can't do this art
142. I know you are Dutch.
143. Got a double chin? Contour that shit." Amazing Loved your video
144. LOVE how she looks in the beginning
145. Omg can't believe this was already 3 years ago!
146. You are beautiful with and without make up. And your character of really amazing
147. Her eyes are so pretty
148. Beautiful before and after!

149. 2018??
150. I still get amazed by this video
151. 3 years later... still obsessed w this vid
152. anyone else watching in 2018
153. even if you are insecure and wearing makeup makes you feel better sometimes, that shouldn't be shameful either
154. Nikkie, ur so inspiring! llysm!
155. I love doing makeup not bc I'm insecure bc I enjoy it and it's fun to do I don't see how that's a crime
156. I love the video but I feel like Nikki is very shy and not as confident as usual. I love you Nikki and I hope you stay confident and beautiful!
157. i think that her natural face more beautiful
158. I always hear friends who don't care about makeup say things like, "This is my face, deal with it, I don't understand girls who wear a lot of makeup everyday." Well I do, and I love it. I go to cover my dark circles up in the morning and I just can't stop myself because I enjoy it so much. I feel more natural with makeup on because that's what I like doing, and going bare is against who I am.
159. accent omg your voice has changed so much
160. I love Nikkie, shes so inspiring
161. For all you've said I have to say now that I love you, you were so right when you said there's no rules for makeup. I LOVE YOU, YOU GORGEOUS
162. 2018?
163. With or without makeup she's still pretty
164. I love to wear makeup, but at school I'm shamed for it. I'm not insecure, I just love doing makeup.
165. Boy's on my school don't like girls when they have Make-up on. But I don't care You inspired my Nikki and I wont you too know that YOU ARE PERFECT Love you
166. It's almost 2019 and i am still here
167. U r so good at makeup girl.... Go ahead God bless..... Much love from
168. I've watched this 20 times.
169. the only reason why I don't like makeup is because once you are done you get a pimple explosion all over your face which I hate and I get embarrassed to walk out of the house
170. You look beautiful both ways
171. TBH as a guy, the before looked better. The makeup version does not look attractive at all, not even a bit. At least without she was genuine and cute. I guess the optimum is somewhere in the middle.. Just apply less makeup unless you want to look like a ceramic doll on purpose.
172. Omg this was literally 4 years and 1 day ago also look at now vs this and see how much better she has gotten this look is still pretty good but her more recent ones are like 10x better she really has improved
173. Grrrrr! your beautiful! With AND without makeup!
174. I don't have \$660 for a full face
175. You so right I from Israel and if I can meet you I be so happy love you Hila
176. Look at her 3 years ago she beautiful without make up but now she's still beautiful like omg but she looks so different then 3 years ago
177. You look good without makeup You look good with makeup There's nothing much to it Calm down haters
178. Omg you look so good without makeup To me, you are more beautiful without makeup. You are amazing
179. You are so beautiful WITH or WITHOUT makeup :) and not only that but you are super sweet n humble <3
QUEEN OML
180. this is why I have trust issues Jk I'm a big fan
181. I'm from Brazil likes to watch your video and I like makeup that you do

182. A few days ago I was with my father at a shopping center and I told him That I wanted to buy a shadow palette and he was like "but you are pretty without Make up, why do you want to wear It? Are you THAT insecure?" and I was like..."noup...I just like It"
183. I agree with you! Keep it up!
184. Nikki, I love doing makeup but, being young, I get judged. People say makeup spoils me but I love it! Thank you for everything
185. You can tell that her accent is heavier in this older video. i love her sm haha
186. I wore powder and mascara to school one day and everyone came up to me and asked "are you wearing makeup?" So I felt insecure about wearing makeup to school until I watch this. I went to school with make up on and they asked the usual question "Are you wearing makeup?" I said "Yeah is there something wrong with that?" Then they just walked away I felt way more confident and I started wearing more and more to school and people stopped asking questions. So thank you so much for this video
187. anyone watching in 2019
188. So today I am wearing very full coverage foundation, and I usually do a very natural look. When I looked in the mirror I thought " oh this looks like way to much" but you inspired me to be ok wearing a bit more!!!! Thank you, you beautiful woman!!!!!!
189. Your way prettier with no makeup you don't need any makeup you much prettier than a lot of girls most girls would die to look like you
190. Also make a video in Dutch
191. you're an amazing artist and your message is on point! I've been subscribed forever and I love seeing you have this success
192. love makeup, but I dont love when someone creates a totally new face with it. Feels like you lie to yourself, because believe me, others know how much you use. I like makeup, but I love myself enough to want to see my own face in the mirror, not a stranger.
193. Tbh I do makeup cuz it's fun and it does make me look a little better.
194. Do you know she is from The Netherlands?
195. THIS IS AMAZING I CAN'T BELIVE <3
196. So beautiful either way. All the boys at my school always say they hate girls who wear makeup. So guess what I did.... Doubled the makeup. Hahahaha
197. 2018? Love this
198. Your face even without the makeup looks really good
199. Oh my God Nikki used a brush for foundation!!!!???
200. You don't have to be perfect to be amazing, but ur the best! Ur beautiful just the way u are.
201. You look so good and smiley
202. this is so good. love you Nikkie!
203. I would feel so insecure at school and I wouldn't wear any of my makeup because I was scared of being slut shamed and this completely inspired me to do what I want with my face and feel better and have a little more fun in the mornings!
204. Girl. I still get chills when I watch this. You're amazing. You're tips helped me through melasma after a still birth. Love you.
205. You be you if they don't think you're beautiful naturally then who cares you are beautiful with or without makeup
I love you Nikki
206. NO PRIMER???! Dang you're living on the edge babe..
207. You are talented. I love your make up!!!
208. The sun without the damage. Hahaha too funny
209. This video changed the game
210. U're beautiful. With or without make up. It's a fact. An obvious fact
211. She looks gorgeous with and without makeup
212. Nikkie really looks like Gigi Hadid, without makeup
213. You are very cute likewise without makeup\L

214. this video has gone VirAL.....2018 anyone?
215. I LOVE MAKEUP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Comment if you love makeup too, and aren't afraid to say it!!!!
216. I hate when people say that girls wear makeup to impress others. That is not true. Most of us girls wear makeup for ourselves. I like to wear makeup because I can play with it. I don't have any zits and I have pretty smooth skin because I am young. I wear makeup to have fun. I don't need to cover up flaws on my face cause I don't have zits. I wear it to pretend and have fun. So f off if you say those things to me or anyone because you don't know anything.
217. Its doing a drag queen approach to makeup that is the problem - especially for younger girls and their Mom's, rightful so, don't want their daughters going down that path.
218. You are beautiful and your makeup is too just remember that xx
219. Most of girls now a days are wearing make up to get attention from others.
220. I dont own any make up or wear any AT ALL but I love her videos. Something is just so calming about these. I am a 13 year old girl who knows nothing about any of this stuff. Still love u Nikkie!!!
221. Can't believe I have been watching her since this vid
222. Is that the swizzles drumstick look?
223. If your circles are dark..
224. 6 minuets of natural beauty and glam. Am I in heaven or what.
225. Honestly, if you make a "Contouring is my religion" t-shirt, I'd totally buy it.
226. makeup is art sometimes
227. The power of editing
228. Who came back here after watching her 10 mil video :(
229. 2018
230. Somebody should do a take me swimming challenge, where they put on waterproof makeup and just into a pool and see if their makeup lasts or not.
231. Ironically she's had a lot of work done since this video 3 years ago
232. you look so much more pretty then when you where makup in a good way
233. Omg old NIKKIE pink lipstick not as much coverage and muddy contour/bronzer omg I need to go
234. «I dont do makeup because im insecure» proceeds to explain how much she hates her facial features and shows how to «correct» them
235. Wow. You're really pretty and you know what you're doing with makeup.
236. I hate that wearing make up is considered socially compulsory and is expected and even demanded for a woman to look professional or even work-appropriate. And I hate that women with no make up tend to be told they look tired or unkempt. That being said personally I love makeup and I put it on most days because it makes me happy and it's a fun way to express myself. I just wish it was 100% a choice for women.
237. I hate you
238. Awesome video, Nikkie, but no way I can afford those prices for the make up you're using. Why not do a video on something us po people can afford to get a similar affect.
239. tbt to when kat von d wasn't cancelled & her products were used by the best of beauty gurus
240. Most people will say HEY WHY DO YOU WANNA HIDE YOURSELF? She isn't hiding herself... if she likes makeup then it is a part of herself
241. Defiantly a thumbs up! love this video!
242. IDK why some find it necessary to constantly bash others about wearing makeup. Going out in public with a full on Glam takes some serious courage because we all know how quick some are to judge. I love seeing women with make up on and natural do what makes you happy! If we really were insecure about how we look we wouldn't be doing youtube videos with a bare/naked face Anyhoo loved both sides <3
243. Not trying to hate but Nikki's skin looks so much better than it does now,idk maybe it's just me

- makeup because they want to impress men. They wear shorts or crop tops because they want to impress men. We (women) don't live to impress men. I hope and pray that no woman out there does something (for example, contouring their face so they look pretty) for a man. I love Nikki and any woman out there who is happy with themselves.
272. Beautiful
273. You are so beautiful
274. Omg that double lower eyeliner trick is life changing!
275. I think your so beautiful with or without makeup but girl you can slay like no other your my idol love you Nikkie
276. You're beautiful
277. Many man say 'Excuse me. Who are you?' in the morning after first sex. So different.
278. I was sent a link to this video in an email from Allure. Wonderful video. At 60 years old, I decided to stop coloring my hair, but I got back into makeup. I subscribed to several beauty boxes so I would get things to try that I might never have selected on my own. It has been wonderful. So many products are so luxurious -- truly, they feel so good on my skin. It is so much fun to try different colors, different styles, and different techniques. My daughter, neices, sister and sister-in-law had an unboxing afternoon, and we all tried things from all the boxes, I can't even tell you how much we laughed when my sister drew a joking cat-eye that was so wonky ... Well, I found out makeup can be social with those ladies! None of us get very glamorous in our daily lives. It was fun to get all made up! We're not insecure. We're not doing it for anyone but ourselves. Makeup is like wearing beautiful clothes instead of sweat pants- it makes you feel special, pampered, and that you have respected yourself
279. Whenever I take my makeup off for the day, I do one side first and then say "the power of makeup!!" And then finish haha
280. Hey Nikkie, I believe I am one of the few real Dutch people here but I wanted to say for a moment that I think you are absolutely right and that makeup should be fun! Many people say that I wear too much make-up (or mother in particular) while I usually don't even put on make-up. but I love myself so most of the time I gwn shit at what others think Really the best youtuber ever the real Dutchman Rian
281. You are an inspiration
282. I love makeup as a hobby lol I do my makeup for ME. Its about time someone got the real meaning of makeup LOL...Makeup is its name, you are literally "made-up" so many women don't get that, they really should. Women should ALWAYS do "them"! With makeup do what makes you happy! I do have to say this though, you have very full and pretty lips without anything on them at all. You lucky ducky! Such a talented young lady. Beautiful!
283. 40M views?!
284. look at you with your perfect winged eyeliner i always just look like i joined the black parade
285. her lips looks more beautiful here...
286. Fukk yh
287. I'm 12 and i love doing make-up i just do.
288. But you know it's not the age of wearing like a lot of make-up and if i do a lot of make-up on there's been making fun of me But i just do it because i'm not a shamed or i just want some boys or look hot NOI just love to be creative with it So it doesn't matter how old you're or how good you're it's just the passion wat you have in make-up so don't listen to people who say you are doing it wrong or you're to young or anything like that Just do it Follow your hard
289. Make my make-up
290. The only thing I hate is when girls are expected to wear makeup, I'm 14 and all my friends wear makeup and pretty much everyone in my school goes around looking like a wotsit with three eyelashes and slugs for eyebrows. I dont remove my hair on my arms and legs, don't do my eyebrows and wear no makeup. And yes, my skin is red and different shades in places but I really don't want to wear makeup and change who I am for the satisfaction of others. Why should it be weird for girls to not wear makeup? So yeah I'm sick of guys and "popular kids" making fun of me cos I have spots and don't hide them That was really long sorry
291. I love to wear makeup - I love how it makes me look....but I do not like the important cleanup...i dunno why....but whatev. I've tried a lot of different brands over the years - Mary Kay; Avon; Revlon; Maybelline; IT! Cosmetics; Bare Minerals. I have to say I love Bare Minerals but not the mess...which is why I went to IT!. I adored that line but when L'Oreal bought it I was like..nope. Then I found Jerome Alexander and I've been using that for about 4 months - it really gives a glowy air-brush look and the coverage is awesome. Cleanup is pretty easy too. It reduced my everyday makeup routine to about 10 minutes which is great - because I like to hit the snooze button!! Love your tutorials - keep 'em coming!
292. Beautiful

293. you're pretty
294. Girls should never be shamed for wearing makeup! I used to wonder why other girls would wear so much makeup because I thought it was silly and stupid but now I understand. I'm so sorry! If a girl wants to wear makeup, she can wear as much as she wants. Just remember that you are and always will be BEAUTIFUL! If anyone tells you differently I will come and punch them in the throat.
295. I've watched this well over a dozen times and I'm blown away each & every time. But, I do have just one question..??... How in TF can this be a thumbs down 8,600 times?!?! Like there's no way any real human being can't not like this Power Of Makeup. Must be a special group of haters
296. I use make up because I love it
297. 2019?
298. Guys she has black circles
299. I LOVE how passive aggressive u sounded!! This reminded me of the video of the girl telling boys no! wears makeup to impress their ugly asses "MY EYELIDS GON BE GOLD CAUSE IM GLITTER AF!"
300. I am 11 but makeup is my favourite! And I'm pretty good at it I have been doing it since I was 8! I also get acne but I don't cover it up when I'm out or at school only at home with foundation and concealer and all that crap!

References

- Alcaraz León, M. J. (2008). Aesthetics makes nothing happen? The role of aesthetic properties in the constitution of non-aesthetic value. *The Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism*, 76(1), 21-31.
- Alexa.com (2019). *Youtube.com Traffic Statistics*. [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.alexacom/siteinfo/youtube.com>
- Androulaki-Ralli, G. (2015). *The leading role of influencers in the YouTube beauty community* (Master's Thesis). Linnæus University, Sweden.
- Arvidsson, A. (2005). Brands: A critical perspective. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 5(2), 235–258.
- Bailey, L.E. (2012). Feminist research. In S.D. Lapan, M.T. Quartaroli, F.J. Riemer (Eds.), *Qualitative research* (pp. 391-422). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
- Banet-Weiser, S. (2018). *Empowered: Popular feminism and popular misogyny*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Barrett, T. (2003). Interpreting visual culture. *Art Education*, 56(2), 6–12.
- Bartky, S. (2003). Foucault, femininity, and the modernization of patriarchal power. In Conboy K., Medina, D., & Stansbury, S. (Eds.), *Writing on the body: Female embodiment and feminist theory* (pp. 129-154), New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bernard, H.R. (2005). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (4th ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.
- Bolin, P.E., & Hoskings, K. (2015). Reflecting on our beliefs and actions: Purposeful practice in art education. *Art Education*, 68(4), 40-48.

- Brown, J. (2018, January 5). Is social media bad for you? The evidence and the unknowns. *BBC*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20180104-is-social-media-bad-for-you-the-evidence-and-the-unknowns>
- Brown, R. (2016, September 28). New study concludes influencers rule the social media beauty landscape. *WWD*. Retrieved from <https://wwd.com/business-news/marketing-promotion/fixability-social-media-beauty-study-10568458/>
- Caliandro, A. (2016). Ethnography in digital spaces: Ethnography of virtual worlds, ethnography, and digital ethnography. In R. Denny & P. Sunderland (Eds.), *Handbook of anthropology in business* (pp. 658-680). New York: Routledge.
- Chin, C. (2015). Approaches to visual culture in art education. *The International Journal of Arts Education*, 13(1), 32-52.
- Cressey, D. R. (1953). *Other people's money: A study in the social psychology of embezzlement*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). *Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124-130.
- Creswell, J. W. (2006). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Duncum, P. A. (2007). Aesthetics, popular visual culture, and designer capitalism. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 26(3), 285-295.
- Ferguson, K. E. (2017). Feminist theory today. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20(1), 269-286.
- Fetterman, D. M. (1989). *Ethnography: Step by step*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Forrest J. (1991). Visual aesthetics for five senses and four dimensions: An ethnographic approach to aesthetic objects. In: Browne R, Browne P, (Eds.). *Digging into popular culture: Theories and methodologies in archeology, anthropology, and other fields* (pp. 48–57). Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Press.
- Freedman, K. (1994). Interpreting gender and visual culture in art classrooms. *Studies in Art Education*, 35(3), 157-170.
- Freedman, K., & Stuhr, P. (2004). Curriculum change for the 21st century: Visual culture in art education. In E. Eisner & M. Day (Eds.), *Handbook of policy and research in art education* (pp. 815-828). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gnegy, H. R. (2017). *Beauty and the brand: A digital ethnography of social capital and authenticity of digital beauty influencers through monetization activities on YouTube* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (10607847)
- Goodenough, W.H. (1970). *Description and comparison in cultural anthropology*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Griffin, C. (2004). Good girls, bad girls: Anglo-centrism and diversity in the constitution of contemporary girlhood. In M. Fine, & A. Harris (Eds.), *All about the girl: Culture, power, and identity* (pp. 29-43). Abingdon, U. K.: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203492567>
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. London: Tavistock.

- Holsti, O.R. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Homer, W. (1998). Visual culture: A new paradigm. *American Art*, 12(1), 6-9.
- Hopkins, J. (August 21, 2003). Surprise! There is a third YouTube co-founder. *USA Today*. Retrieved from https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/tech/news/2006-10-11-youtube-karim_x.htm
- Ivashkevich, O. (2011a). Girl power: Postmodern girlhood lived and represented. *Visual Arts Research*, 37(2), 14-27.
- Ivashkevich, O. (2011b). I'm gonna make you look weird: Preteen girls' subversive gender play. *Visual Culture & Gender*, 6, 40-48.
- Jan, M., Soomro, S., & Ahmad, N. (2017). Impact of social media on self-esteem. *European Scientific Journal*, 13(23), 329-341.
- Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Weigel, M., Clinton, K., & Robison, A.J. (2006). *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century*. Chicago, IL: The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.
- Retrieved from:
http://mitpress.mit.edu/sites/default/files/titles/free_download/9780262513623_Confronting_the_Challenges.pdf
- Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
- Keifer-Boyd, K. (2010). Visual culture and gender constructions. *The International Journal of Arts Education*, 8(1), 1-24.

- Lee, Y-J. (2008). Build-A-Bear workshop: Its aesthetic and ideology. *Art Education*, 61(6), 20-23.
- Livingstone, S. (2008). Taking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: Teenagers' use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy, and self-expression. *New Media & Society*, 10(3), 393-411.
- Lyotard, J-F. (1991). *The inhuman: Reflections on time*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Mazur, A. (1986). U.S. trends in feminine beauty and overadaptation. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 22(3), 281-303.
- Milkie, M. (1999). Social comparisons, reflected appraisals, and mass media: The impact of pervasive beauty images on black and white girls' self-concepts. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 62(2), 190-210.
- Miller, D., Costa, E., Haynes, N., McDonald, T., Nicolescu, R., Sinanan, Spyer, J., Venkatraman, S., & Wang, X. (2016). Does social media make people happier? In *How the World Changed Social Media* (pp. 193-204). London: UCL Press.
- Mirzoeff, N. (1999). *An introduction to visual culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Mitchell, W. (1995). Interdisciplinarity and visual culture. *Art Bulletin*, 77(4), 540-544.
- Mitchell, W. (2002). Showing seeing: A critique of visual culture. *Journal of Visual Culture*, 1(2), 165-181.
- Murthy, D. (2008). Digital ethnography: An examination of the use of new technologies for social research. *Sociology*, 42(5), 837-855.
- Nikkie, D. [NikkieTutorials]. (2015, May 10). *The Power of Makeup* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4Ov8qvZ2_w

- Peiss, K. (1998). *Hope in a jar: The making of america's beauty culture*. University of Pennsylvania Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fhx5m>
- Regan, S. (1991) Introduction: The return of the aesthetic. In Regan, S. (Ed.), *The politics of pleasure: Aesthetic and cultural theory* (pp. 1–1621). Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Riemer, F.J. (2012). Ethnographic research. In S.D. Lapan, M.T. Quartaroli, F.J. Riemer (Eds.), *Qualitative Research* (pp. 163-188). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
- Ritchie, J. & Spencer, L. (1994). Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. In A. Bryman and R. G. Burgess (Eds.), *Analyzing qualitative data* (pp.173-194). New York: Routledge.
- Sanjek, R. (1990). On ethnographic validity. In R. Sanjek (Ed.), *Fieldnotes: The making of anthropology* (pp. 385-418). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Silva, S. (2017, February 22). Social media's impact on self-esteem. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/social-medias-impact-on-self-esteem_us_58ade038e4b0d818c4f0a4e4
- Stafford, B. (1996). *Good looking: Essays on the virtue of images*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Stefanone, M. A., & Lackaff, D. (2009). Reality television as a model for online behavior: Blogging, photo, and video sharing. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(4): 964–987.
- Stemler, S. (2001). An overview of content analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 7(17). Retrieved from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=17>.

- Sturken, M., & Cartwright, L. (2001). *Practices of looking: An introduction to visual culture*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Tavin, K. M. (2003). Wrestling with angels, searching for ghosts: Towards a critical pedagogy of visual culture. *Studies in Art Education*, 44(3), 197-213.
- Turato E.R. (2005). Qualitative and quantitative methods in health: Definitions, differences and research subjects. *Revista de Saude Publica* 39(3), 507–514.
- Wang, R., Yang, F., & Haigh, M. (2017). Let me take a selfie: Exploring the psychological effects of posting and viewing selfies and groupies on social media. *Telematics and Informatics*, 4(34), 274-283.
- Walton, A. (2017, June 30). 6 ways social media affects our mental health. *Forbes Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2017/06/30/a-run-down-of-social-medias-effects-on-our-mental-health/#79260fb42e5a>
- Weber, R. P. (1990). *Basic content analysis* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Weinzimmer, L. (2018). *Online and in the spotlight: A critical analysis of the beauty vlogger* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from the University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy, <http://hdl.handle.net/11299/201063>.