

A Study of Viewers' Responses to Fashion Haul on the YouTube  
- Focused on luxury goods –

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**Introduction.** Nowadays people are delighted with witnessing the lives of complete strangers and goes as far as envying their lives (Gauntlett, 2013). Recently with the commercialization of mobile devices, media content that can be consumed through mobile devices has diversified (Strangelove, 2010). Every month 1.9 billion users visit YouTube, and more than million contents creators are uploading videos (YouTube Press, n.d.). There are various subjects among YouTube's videos, especially fashion-related videos accounting for more than 10 percent of the total number of videos (Lee, 2018). Among fashion-related videos, Luxury Haul is likely to go viral because they give viewers a sense of vicarious pleasure and also cause a sense of relative deprivation (Oh, 2018; Born, 2019). This study aimed to analyze the viewers of Luxury Haul for the following reasons: to examine the reason why they continue to watch the videos; what positive or negative aspects can come out from watching these videos; and what role does the viewers expect from the YouTubers.

**Methodology.** This study conducted interviews with viewers to investigate their authentic responses to Luxury Haul. Prior to conducting interviews, the theoretical basis for understanding viewers of social media, such as the concept of Luxury Haul, users of social media, and psychology of media users, was provided from specialized books, news articles and precedent studies. Based on the above, this study interviewed 20 women in their 20~30s who has watched Luxury Haul spontaneously. As for interview contents, specific statements of viewers were collected, on their perception of Luxury Haul which is about luxury goods, the aspect of establishing online relationship through communication with YouTubers, and their feelings after watching videos. By dividing semantic units of the data and integrating them by types, through Giorgi's phenomenology, the following characteristics of viewers were derived from the collected data.

**Findings.** Firstly, viewers emphasized that when it comes to the Luxury Haul, the video itself matters more than providing information or entertainment. Luxury Haul is a video circulated via YouTube and it is a matter of secondary consideration to provide information related to luxury goods or entertainment to viewers. Therefore, when making a video, technical and functional elements should be emphasized prior to other aspects. In case when the editing effects or technical aspects of a video interface with delivery of messages to viewers, their desire to watch the corresponding post would be decreased. Some viewers commented on their discomfort of watching videos without any refining. Thus, some YouTubers showed their responses to these comments in their next videos.

Secondly, the relationship between viewers and YouTubers varied according to the perceived attributes of viewers on YouTubers, for example, attractiveness, friendliness, expertise and

trustworthiness. In particular, it was found that the relationship between them started to form when viewers perceived friendliness or trustworthiness from YouTubers. As for the relationship modes of viewers with YouTubers, viewers, who tried to build a relationship only through watching videos, perceived trustworthiness more strongly than friendliness from YouTubers, while viewers, who try to make a relationship through comments, perceived friendliness more strongly than trustworthiness. Relationship through comments can be defined as more active relationships. And viewers, who were in this relationship with YouTubers, were greatly influenced by YouTubers not only for their fashion taste, but also for individual attitude and behavior.

Finally, viewers felt vicarious pleasure or relative deprivation when watching Luxury Haul. Viewers felt vicarious pleasure when watching luxury items or the reactions of YouTubers. In case viewers cannot purchase luxury fashion goods due to their economic limitation, they experienced vicarious pleasure through luxury fashion items on videos. In addition, when they cannot purchase the featured items due to their geographical and temporal limitations, they experienced it through YouTuber's behaviors. On the other hand, relative deprivation occurred when viewers perceived relative economic disparity or relative inferiority of their appearance through forced comparison with YouTubers. Meanwhile, viewers experienced a stronger sense of relative deprivation when YouTubers were similar in age with them.

Viewers had different psychological reactions according to their involvement either in luxury fashion goods or in YouTubers. When viewers had a higher level of involvement in luxury fashion goods, they felt more vicarious pleasure. On the contrary, when viewers had a higher level of involvement in YouTubers, they felt more relative deprivation. Here, involvement in YouTubers refers to viewers' sensitivity toward YouTubers rather than to affection for them. Such sensitivity expanded to self-doubt and caused relative deprivation which expressed negative feelings.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** Recently, fashion products are being introduced through various video along with the growth of YouTube-based fashion markets. Accordingly, consumers are experiencing indirect consumption just by watching the consumption of others. In particular, viewers of Luxury Haul which is about high-priced luxury goods are consuming not just fashion products but the lifestyle of fashion YouTubers as well. In addition, it shows that viewers are involved in content production of YouTubers through their continuous interactions with YouTubers. This study has its significance in that it gave understanding of viewers that embrace fashion-related video, along with understanding of viewers of Luxury Haul. Furthermore, this study analyzed responses and feedbacks of fashion consumers as well as fashion-related contents, which newly emerged along with the growth of online visual media.

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