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Brockman, Rebecca M. ***Presenting Toys Through YouTube: How Hosts Impact Youth Reception***

Abstract

Since YouTube's 2005 launch, it has become an integral part of our everyday media culture enabling a media ecology where youth have grown up seeing amateur and professionally-created videos appear alongside one another. Despite YouTube's significant position in youth media consumption (and production), little research has explored how youth perceive and evaluate different types of videos hosts (brands, adult hosts, and peer hosts) or the varying production qualities they encounter.

This research engaged directly with 27 youths, asking them to watch a selection of toy-related product videos, featuring different types of hosts and production qualities. Via an online survey, participants shared their perceptions. Youth placed little to no value on the overall production quality of the videos they viewed, instead paying attention to host attributes, perceptions of authenticity, and their natural connection to other youth. They also demonstrated an ability to overlook marketing messages and enjoy a video for its entertainment. Based on insights like these, it's recommended that brands, communicators, researchers, and others who are interested in youth audiences pursue additional research to deepen our understanding of this powerful generation that is poised to become the largest and most educated the world has ever seen.

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I could not have done this without all of you! Thank you.

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Chapter I: Introduction

YouTube launched on February 14, 2005. In the decade and a half since, it has evolved from being a place to share one's home movies to a part of our everyday media culture, where both individuals and brands co-exist, sharing a wide variety of content. The platform has grown to over a billion users (Lister, 2019) and many of those users have been watching their entire life. YouTube is so integrated into day-to-day life that one set of researchers suggests, for the youth generations, "YouTube natives" might be a more appropriate description than "digital natives" (Evans, Hoy, & Childers, 2018).

My research is interested in the viewing preferences of youth, between the ages of five and thirteen. In 2017, over half the U.S. underage population—56 percent—was between the ages of 5 and 14 (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2018). Online video has always been a part of their everyday life and they watch significantly more than television (Media, 2015). YouTube viewing, on mobile devices alone, reaches a larger U.S. audience than television (YouTube, 2019) and YouTube represents the largest portion of teen media consumption (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Online communication is no longer "new media," but their "traditional" media format.

Youth, between five and thirteen, belong to either Generation Z (those born between approximately 1996 and 2010) or Generation Alpha, (those born from 2010 and on). Nagy and Kolcsey's work (2017) inquired whether the separation between Generation Z and Alpha was scientifically valid or a marketing construct. While generations are typically characterized by shared experience, cohesion, similar attitudes and behaviors (Mannheim as cited in Nagy & Kolcsey, 2017), Generation Z and Alpha have yet to experience *any* defining events that would make a clear distinction between the two. They do share a very similar technological history:

they have always had access to the internet, most have had access to smart devices since they were very young, YouTube and Instagram hold more influence than television, and they are accustomed to being able to rapidly gather information via digital technology (Nagy & Kolcsey, 2017). Because of these similarities, Nagy and Kolcsey (2017) suggest "Alpha" is a redundant title (p. 111) and these generations should instead be referred to as "Gen Z" and "Z 2.0" (p. 114). Alternately, one youth marketing executive suggests that the speed and dramatic impact of various technological changes may necessitate separating youth into "micro generations," of two to three years each (Bradley, 2016). In a time of rapid technological innovations, any new disruption may become a "society shaping breakthrough" (Nagy & Kolcsey, 2017, p. 114) making what we know about a demographic today, untrue about that demographic in the future.

Along with evolving populations and inevitable technological disruptions, online platforms that are complicated and changing also necessitate continually refreshed research. YouTube is a "hybrid media space" where content from varied genres—including commercial, amateur, and educational— "coexists and interacts in ever more complex ways" (Jenkins, 2007). The videos "interweave instruction, socialization, promotion, and education in a rather textured narrative of expertise" (Bhatia, 2018). YouTube provides a complicated landscape in a complex media ecology.

Statement of the Problem

For the first time in history, we have access to an inexhaustible supply of on-demand video content. Every minute of the day, 500 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube, which is the equivalent of 82.2 years' worth of video posted per day (Hale, 2019). The voluminous uploads represent an endless variety of content creators, demonstrating a wide range of competencies and experience. Many content creators are part of the youth audience: youth

creators making content for youth audiences. It is difficult to find statistics about the exact amount of YouTube content published for youth audiences though. In fact, youth under the age of 13 aren't supposed to have YouTube accounts (Google, n.d.). The age restrictions, coupled with the sheer volume of uploads per day, is likely to blame for the lack of detailed statistics about youth-directed content and youth users (Murray, 2015).

Despite the size of the youth audience and the vast variety of content competing for attention, there has been little examination into the way youth audiences may perceive and evaluate different types of creators and production qualities. The lack of inquiry has created gaps in our understanding of youth communication practices, their behavior as an audience, and even youth culture in general. Recognizing that amateur media production was an evolving phenomenon, playing an "increasingly significant" role in the media ecology, Buckingham and Willett (2009) encouraged additional research, to bring to light "significant new questions about creativity, identity and culture" (p. 47).

They further emphasized that research should "…pay attention to the continuities and convergences between old and new, as well as what seem to be dramatic new departures" (Buckingham & Willett, 2009, p. 231). Since Google acquired YouTube, its business strategy has represented an element of continual evolution and change. YouTube has regularly pivoted the platform (Cunningham, Craig, & Silver, 2016) —changing YouTube monetization requirements, offering paid subscriptions, shuttering channels with questionable content, etc.—to stay relevant and its content, like other social media entertainment, has continued to demonstrate "a stark contrast to the production, content and marketing strategies of traditional media" (Cunningham & Craig, 2018, p. 72). YouTube's dramatic shifts and continual recreating of itself creates another demand for regularly refreshed research.

Purpose of the Study

A primary goal of this study is to understand how video is evaluated by youth and how they determine if a host and their content are relatable. Some researchers have focused on specific video genres. The unboxing genre (Chesher, 2017; Craig & Cunningham, 2017; Evans, Hoy, & Childers, 2018; Marsh, 2015; Marsh, 2016; Queensland University of Technology, 2017), where viewers watch a video host open and experience a new product, and the beauty tutorial genre (Bhatia, 2018; Bishop, 2018; Choi & Behm-Morawitz, 2017; Duffy, 2017; Garcia-Rapp, 2017; Neil & Mbilishaka, 2019; Sur, 2017; Zhang & Chikwaya, 2018) have often garnered the attention of researchers. However, while existing research has sought to unpack the genre, often focusing on the common practices of the genre or the similar behaviors of practitioners, less research has sought to illuminate the differences and similarities when hosts who share genres belong to different professional status and/or demographics. Likewise, there has been little research regarding whether youth assess peer-created videos differently than those created by non-peers (brands and adults).

Not only is there great variation in the production qualities of videos and the types of creators, but content producers also have a variety of motivations for their content creation. Some creators aren't looking to build an audience, fame or a future career, but view their video creations as an extracurricular, social activity and "maybe even a serious lifelong one" (Ito, et al., 2009, p. 284). Those who are looking to grow their audience, however, need an understanding of their target audience's needs, behaviors, beliefs, and feelings (Aladwani, 2017). These creators need to know how to stand out and produce content that appeals to their audience, invokes the desired response, and that will result in ongoing interest in their content (Aladwani, 2017; Ashman, Patterson, & Brown, 2018). It is not uncommon to hear about a brand that has

taken notice of a youth content creator (Chou, 2012), given a shout out to a fan who published something positive (Harrison, 2019), responded to a criticism (Bernazzani, 2017; Harrison, 2019) or extended a business opportunity (Barker, 2019; Hale, 2018) via social media.

While brands are reaching out to youth, it is less clear if youth lean towards peer hosts because of their shared demographic, brands for their image and production quality, or if identification and connection are driven by some other criterion altogether. Ito et al. (2008) described that although technology was changing rapidly during their research—a condition that continues today—the "underlying practices of sociability, learning, play, and self-expression (were) undergoing a slower evolution, growing out of resilient social and cultural structures that youth inhabit in diverse ways" (p. 4).

Some research (Duffy, 2015; Hall-Phillips, Park, Chung, Anaza, & Rathod, 2016; Ito et al., 2008) has indicated that audiences are attracted to communicators like them, believing that their similarities make them seem "real" and authentic. The division between commercial and non-commercial can seem blurred in YouTube videos though, enabling the possibility that there can be a relationship between individuals and commodity culture that is authentic (Banet-Weiser, 2015; Banet-Weiser & Gray, 2009). Cunningham and Craig (2018) argue that "instead of a binary between authenticity and commerciality being *blurred*, there is a temporal topography to be *mapped*" (p. 74). Authenticity occurs between individuals and commodity culture; and the relation is "trilateral among the 'authentic' creator, the fan community, which validates all such claims to authenticity, and the brand which is seeking to buy into, and leverage, that primary relationship" (Cunningham & Craig, 2018, p. 75). My research hopes to begin mapping out the interplay of authenticity and relationships, across the media ecology, specifically for youth audiences.

The value of mapping out the relationships between youth, brands, and creators is also valuable for understanding youth literacies. As this research is specifically looking at product-related videos, it will provide insight into what attracts youth to product-related content and marketing messages. While this information is of interest to those who market to children, this research will also explore how youth define and distinguish between entertainment and consumer content, which is of importance to organizations concerned with the ethics of advertising and protecting children from marketing content (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2006; Kunkel, 2004; Palmer, 2014).

Chapter II: Literature Review

YouTube has received an abundance of academic research attention. Existing research has included both the way YouTube has impacted our overall culture, such as its influence on digital literacy and the media industry, and how it functions as a communication tool. Despite the significant volume and breadth of research, some of which is outlined in the literature review that follows, there continue to be gaps for new academic investigations to resolve.

YouTube and Digital Literacy

Since its inception, YouTube has been appearing in media research. In 2005, Buckingham and Willett (2009) began research for their book on amateur participation in digital media. When they began, YouTube did not even exist; but, by 2008, when they completed the research, YouTube had almost 100 million videos and had become a significant topic in their research (Buckingham & Willett, 2009). Video had been incorporated into day-to-day life (Buckingham & Willett, 2009).

Currently, YouTube is the most popular social media platform among teens (Anderson & Jiang, 2018); so naturally, it is often central in discussions about youth technology and digital literacy practices. Some research has focused on the skills required to navigate such a digitally enabled world (Burgess & Green, 2009; Kafai & Peppler, 2011; Lange, 2014; Mustacchi, 2008; Simsek & Simsek), while others have focused on the development of youth identity through video-making (Lange, 2014; Perez-Torres, Pastor-Ruiz, & Ben-Boubaker, 2018; Uhls & Greenfield, 2012).

Ito et al. (2009) engaged in a large-scale study of youth and (what was then called) new media, describing that participation reflected and was "intertwined with young people's practice, learning, and identifying formation within…varied and dynamic (online) media ecologies" (p.

31). Patricia Lange (2014), a researcher in Ito et al.'s study who later embarked on her own ethnographic study of youth using YouTube, described that YouTube was enabling youths to develop important literacy skills outside of formal learning environments, although the value of these skills and the variability of media experiences were often unrecognized by parents and educators. This widespread adoption of digital media has created a literacy environment where it is "increasingly crucial that young viewers and media consumers be trained and encouraged to critically interrogate, evaluate, and challenge the media they consume, love, and promote" (Wee, 2017, p. 139).

Participatory Culture

YouTube is often analyzed from the perspective of its place in participatory culture (Chau, 2010; Dynel, 2014; Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins, 2007; Tripp, 2012). Jenkins (2007) describes YouTube as a participatory platform where fan communities, brand communities, and subcultures not only co-exist but learn from one another. The world has changed so that now, "if you cannot find the content you are looking for, you can now produce it yourself, for the benefit of others searching for the same type of content" (Mogos & Trofin, 2015, p. 41).

Dynel (2014) looked at the specific dynamics that make participating on YouTube unique from other types of communication: it demonstrates characteristics of both mass and face-to-face communication, while also displaying one-to-many and intergroup interactions. There are three levels of participation that occur on YouTube: speaker and hearer within the video, sender, and recipient of the video and then the interactions between the speakers and hearers who read and post comments (Dynel, 2014). It rewrites "normal" rules of communication between parties because the host can't see or hear their audience and the audience can't see or hear one another;

they do, however, rely on commenting as a "means to negotiate participant roles, or rather signals of uptake in a modally restricted environment" (Frobenius, 2014, p. 60).

Digital media, in general, has provided many opportunities and formats for youth to engage in participatory culture (Kafai & Peppler, 2011). Grimes and Fields (2015) describe the transition of child-made media, from the outside of their parent's refrigerators to public online spaces, as a move that has brought youth opportunities and challenges. YouTube's position at "the intersection of media creation and social networking" provides an opportunity where youth can simultaneously create, share, and make valuable social connections (Chau, 2010, p. 65). Montgomery (2007) also suggests that the move to online media production represents an empowering transition for youth, where society can reconsider the old narrative that suggests youth are victims of marketing and inappropriate programming and recategorize children as participants in media culture who are gaining skills, knowledge, and confidence to take part in the digital world around them.

Amateurs Versus Professional Creators

YouTube has unquestionably disrupted the "traditional" media industry by democratizing publication, which can be identified as problematic, confusing "standards of craftsmanship, aesthetic quality or ethic norms" (Muller, 2009, p. 127). One of the most "innovative elements" has been creating a "new screen ecology" where low-budget, often ad-supported, online channels can professionalize and monetize what would have once been merely amateur content (Cunningham et al., 2016, p. 377).

The inclusivity of YouTube creates some challenges for researchers. Buckingham and Willett (2009) discuss the trickiness of defining what constitutes an "amateur" video because it can be a judgment of the creator's ability or an implication that they are creating out of personal

desire and not commercial motives (which may not be accurate). Mogos and Trofin (2015) compared tutorial videos made by professionals and amateurs, finding that there was a wide variety of production quality in amateur user-generated content; but, Lewis (2013) suggests that the "inconsistent, sometimes shambolic" quality in amateur videos is reminiscent of punk culture, which is an element of its appeal. For others, quality can be what makes the difference in a vlogger being perceived as an expert or amateur (Muller, 2009) or as credible and trustworthy (Mogos & Trofin, 2015). Further complicating the matter is that some creators learn and innovate as they go (Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2011). Multiple studies have also shown that viewers rate hosts they believe similar to themselves more favorably than others (Paek, Hove, & Jeon, 2013). Some YouTubers use this identification to their advantage, adopting "non-expert fronts" while still conveying to viewers that they have important information to give (Thomson, 2017).

Motivations for amateur creating has also been a topic of discussion. Creators can create for their own entertainment, in pursuit of a career, and/or for the enjoyment of their friends and family (van Dijck, 2009). YouTube's low barrier to participation and simple circulation offers individuals an opportunity to contribute meaningful content (Chau, 2010). Creation also offers an opportunity for self-expression, identity creation and social connection with peers within one or more communities (Chau, 2010). Some academic discussions have also focused on the challenges that amateur YouTubers face as they attempt to offer something of value to their viewers, even when it comes at a personal cost. Lange (2017) describes that "the myth of accidental celebrity, while containing a seed of truth at times, masks not only the concerted effort that goes into creating one's media and cultivating a brand, but also tends to elide the personal toll that success often entails" (p. 51). Many creators continue to publish, even in the absence of compensation (Bishop, 2018; Duffy, 2015; Duffy, 2017).

Also, by becoming "entrepreneurs of their own lives," creators risk suffering alienation if they aren't able to find fulfillment in their intertwined professional and personal life (Guercini & Cova, 2018, p. 389). Ashman et al. (2018) describe self-esteem and anxiety issues arising from stress over video metrics, channel growth, pleasing their fanbase and negative viewer comments. As the authors soberly explain: "…we present a more nuanced view of entrepreneurial behavior, one that details not only the determinants of success, but also the quiet desperation, the self-doubt, the waning ambition that can also constitute part of the entrepreneurial journey" (Ashman et al., 2018, p. 481). While the digital world provides "unimagined scale and scope of flourishing online creativity and culture," it is simultaneously "turbulent and precarious" (Cunningham et al., 2016, p. 388).

Another influence that has often been discussed, is how brand culture and consumerism impact and intertwine with YouTube's media ecology. User agency is more complicated than "bipolar terms" like producer or consumer and "we need to account for the multifarious roles of users in a media environment where the boundaries between commerce, content and information are currently being redrawn" (van Dijck, 2009, p. 42). Lee and Watkins (2016) examined how fashion vloggers, through their parasocial interactions (PSI), act as brand ambassadors, influencing their viewers' perceptions of luxuries brands in positive ways. Cunningham and Craig (2018) agree that vloggers shape brand culture through the dual influences of their authenticity and community.

The coexistence of entertainment and commercial content has been a cause for concern to some (Ellery & Murphy, 2017; Queensland University of Technology, 2018; Sloane, 2015) due to its significant influence on youth. In one survey of postmillennial consumers, 72% said they were far more likely to purchase a product that was promoted by an influencer they follow on

social media (Stratton, 2017). Oversight groups, however, have questioned the ethics of sponsored product reviews (Garcia-Rapp, 2017) and blamed a lack of sponsorship disclosures for the "blurring between content and advertising" (Evans, Hoy, & Childers, 2018).

Adult Versus Youth Creators

YouTube's open accessibility to youth and adults alike, "erases the traditional markers of status and authority" and youth "respect one another's authority online, and they are often more motivated to learn from peers than from adults" (Ito et al., 2008, p. 2). Some have also suggested that youth audiences may connect more to child influencers than scripted commercials because other children seem more accessible to them (Stratton, 2017). J. Walter Thompson Intelligence (2018) predicts that Generation Alpha will rewrite the playbook on social strategy, prompting them to name youth influencers as one of the "Future 100" trends for marketing (p. 24). Likewise, it has been reported that adult millennials put little value on "traditional" media celebrities' opinions about products or services, preferring YouTubers who provide peer-to-peer advice (Arnold, 2017).

Popular news outlets often suggest that young YouTube creators are nothing more than celebrity-seekers (Ohlheiser, 2018), although such claims rarely appear with supporting evidence. Still, many researchers have sought to "crack the code" to achieving celebrity via YouTube (Cocker & Cronin, 2017; Howes, 2012; Jeffery, 2016; Lavaveshkul, 2012). Hou (2019), however, determined that YouTube celebrity isn't elusive, luck or manipulation, but simply a product of presentation and marketing decisions such as a "managed connectedness with the audience" (p. 551) and demonstrating "self-sufficient uniqueness" (p. 550). In fact, among youth who would like to one day pursue YouTube creation as a career, many reported that creating and self-expression were the main drivers of the desire and not fame (Dirnhuber,

2017). Some youth creators seek connection with viewers and quality content (Ohlheiser, 2018), not just impressive popularity metrics. While not all youth creators aspire to future careers as video producers, YouTubing and vlogging have become common career goals for youth. In one survey, over one-third of the youth participants said they would like to one day become YouTubers, while another 18% said they would like to become vloggers or bloggers (Dirnhuber, 2017).

Yarosh et al. (2016), recognizing the youth drive to participate in video creation, compared video authorship practices of adults and youth to inform platform design that would protect youth privacy and encourage creativity. McRoberts et al. (2016) also compared youth channels to adult and professional channels, finding that youth creators, while often falling short in their editing and meta-content skills, emulated the conversational and engagement practices in professional quality YouTube videos. Youth vary "tremendously with regard to their goals, skills, and…their media dispositions" (Lange as cited in Jenkins, 2014), but most fall into one of two categories: either wishing to commercialize their work or just wanting to connect with others through their "personally expressive media" (Lange, 2014, p. 16). Khan (2017) agreed that participation was most strongly motivated by the social interaction motive.

Engaging the Audience

One of the gaps identified in my study is the lack of research regarding the desires and preferences of youth audiences. Researcher Adel Aladwani (2017) identified a similar lack of awareness between organizations and their customers, arguing that more research should approach content quality from the perception of the viewer.

Lewis (2013) described YouTube's intimacy with the viewer as a "revolutionary element," setting it apart from television's one-way communication mode, making it more like a

live music or theater performance. Other researchers, however, see the relationship between YouTuber and audience as something less intimate: a one-way parasocial relationship (Ferchaud, Grzeslo, Orme, & LaGroue, 2018).

Whether the relationship is one- or two-way, researchers agree that creators employ a variety of strategies to encourage engagement. Bhatia (2018) focused on beauty industry videos, reviewing engagement practices and presentation styles to "discern and analyze the way vloggers can represent themselves…as experts through online tutorials" (p. 110). Vloggers may use techniques (e.g., whispering can be used to differentiate the audiences into two groups) to enable one-way monologues that feel more like multi-party discussions (Frobenius, 2014). Creators also use emotional exchanges and self-disclosure to strengthen the bond with the audience (Berryman & Kavka, 2018; Bhatia, 2018; Mardon, Molesworth, & Grigore, 2018; Utz, 2015). In fact, just as feelings of emotional closeness can build a connection with viewers, the use of auto-responders to reply to comments can negate feelings of closeness (Labrecque, 2014). Other work found that by using particular phrases, YouTubers craft specific relationship-identities with the audience: non-expert, friend, sister, teacher, tastemaker, persona, expert, business, brand, and celebrity (Thomson, 2017).

Khan utilized the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) framework to analyze users' motivations for liking, disliking, commenting, sharing, and uploading (2017). He found that all engagement practices, except reposting another's video, were ways that users shared information and satisfied social interaction needs (Khan, 2017). Other research, drawing from Tajfel's social identification theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), found that consumers were motivated to interact with a brand when they identified with the values, images and content the brand presented (Hall-Phillips et al., 2016).

Additionally, both content *and* content-agnostic factors, like age of the video and number of previous views, contribute to a video's popularity (Borghol, Ardon, Carlsson, Eager, & Mahanti, 2012; Figueiredo, Almeida, Benevenuto, & Gummadi, 2014; Figueiredo, Almeida, Gonçalves, & Benevenuto, 2014; Figueiredo et al., 2013; Hoiles, Aprem, & Krishnamurthy, 2017; Kong, Rizoiu, Wu, & Xie, 2018). Metadata—such as title, tags, description, and comments—can influence search engine results which can impact a videos' popularity (Figueiredo et al., 2013); however, the often changing YouTube search algorithm (Cunningham et al., 2016; Figueiredo et al., 2014) and recommendation system (Kong et al., 2018) creates a challenge to predicting the long-term and/or ongoing effect of the metadata. Metadata, coupled with social dynamics, also affects video popularity through its impact on user interest and engagement (Hoiles et al., 2017).

Comments by viewers have also been used to gain a deeper understanding of the connection between producer and viewer. Paek et al. (2013) performed a content analysis of videos and comments to understand how host, content, and influence of other viewers (through video ratings and view count) links to positive viewer responses. Another study examined and categorized comments to understand how viewers used commenting for self-expression and communication (Madde, Ruthven, & McMenemy, 2013).

Analyzing Content and Genre

While the number of independent videos published has democratized distribution (van Dijck, 2009), the massive volume makes comprehensive, content-level research difficult (Tripp, 2012). Content-level research can be challenging because quality (Figueiredo et al., 2014), and even genre (Lange, 2014; Mogos & Trofin, 2015; Yew, Shamma, & Churchill, 2011), can be subjective. Genre identification is "a process that depends upon factors such as context,

audience, intent, and self-conception" (Lange, 2014, p. 24). Mogos and Trofin (2015) found that the classification of videos is complicated by two phenomena: 'genre hybridism' and 'individualization' (p. 39). It is further complicated by the varied contexts with which videos are consumed (Mogos & Trofin, 2015). Content analysis also requires looking at the consumer's sharing behavior and social actions, to see what is being done with the content because "genres are socially constructed" (Yew et al., 2011, p. 297).

The primary focus of my research study is fairly narrow: amateur and professional presentation and youth responses within the product information genre, intended for audiences under age 13. Although amateurs are increasingly participating in genres that were once the domain of professional communicators, research isolating the differences between amateur and professional content has been restricted to a few specific genres. Within the science genre, user-generated content (UGC) is more popular; although professionally-generated videos outnumber UGC (Welbourne & Grant, 2016). Welbourne and Grant (2016) also found that viewers, in general, preferred channels with a regular host and information provided at a rapid pace. With regards to the former, this may be a quality where amateur channels excel; although, the latter may prove to be challenging for amateurs.

When reviewing how-to and tutorial videos, the most significant difference was found in creator motivation: professional tutorials are created by a brand for aftermarket support and amateur videos are usually made as a result of the user's experiences with the product, often as a result of challenges they encountered with it (Mogos & Trofin, 2015). Morain and Swarts (2012) argue that effective user-generated tutorials should be embraced as a part of the media ecology and acknowledged as a valid form of technical communication. In the case of tutorials

though, production quality may be less important than content for viewers, as they seek out the quickest and easiest solution to a problem they have encountered (Mogos & Trofin, 2015).

Duffy (2015), whose inquiry focused on beauty vloggers, found creators were engaging in "aspirational labor," where they enter the practice with hopes of building social and economic capital that will pay off in the future. Beauty vloggers have also been observed demonstrating their expertise (Bhatia, 2018) while building a seemingly "intimate" relationship with their viewers (Berryman & Kavka, 2018). They may engage in conscious expressions of emotion, also referred to as "emotional labor," to stimulate viewers' emotions and strengthen bonds between the YouTuber and her "tribe" (Mardon et al., 2018). Hosts often attempt to commercialize the existing emotional bonds (Mardon et al., 2018) while avoiding the appearance of "losing themselves" in the pursuit of their professional aspirations (Garcia-Rapp, 2017, p. 1). Beauty channels employ a range of content types—tutorials, consumer reviews, and consumption exhibition (Hou, 2019)—that appear within other genres, making much of the findings applicable to other research and genres, including this study.

Another popular genre, which has garnered some attention and is related to product videos, is the unboxing video. These appear on both amateur and professional channels, although they are often peer-to-peer (youth-generated) videos (Marsh, 2016). Some researchers categorize these as social media entertainment (SME) (Craig & Cunningham, 2017) and others identify them as product review videos (Zielinski, 2016). Chesher (2017) described a related hybrid category of video, where the amateur creator unboxes, experiments with and destroys the toy, ultimately creating a promotional moment that is likely to benefit the creator of the video more than the product.

Conclusion

In the past, research efforts concentrated on how previous generations were adapting to the rapid onset of digital media. Researchers also wondered how being born in a digital era would impact youth, debating the merit of terms like "digital native" (Bennett & Maton, 2010; Bennett, Maton, & Kervin, 2008; Helsper & Eynon, 2010; Ng, 2012; Tapscott, 1997). In fact, the generation that came before Gen Z and Alpha, the Millennials, has often been considered the most researched generation ever.

There have been fewer efforts, thus far, devoted towards Generation Z or Alpha though; despite that, they were born into a world of truly constant connection where an internet-enabled device is often just an arm's length away. Many of their parents are too young to remember life before the internet either. These individuals have not just accepted digital technologies, but they have internalized them. Understanding this generation is particularly important because they will soon become the largest, most educated, technologically-endowed and globally wealthy generation our world has ever seen (Burton, 2015; Fromm, 2018).

My study focuses on this generation as an audience, specifically focusing on their perception of product-related videos. Product videos were chosen for their popularity with young audiences, both in terms of their interest in creating videos within the genre and in viewing the genre. Product videos have managed to not only capture the attention of youth (Marsh, 2015), but also the attention of concerned parents (Craig & Cunningham, 2017), popular mainstream news media (Stratton, 2017), and watchdog organizations (Craig & Cunningham, 2017; Kunkel, 2004; Palmer, 2014; Sloane, 2015). Much of this attention has focused on the supposed dangers of consumer-oriented content and the ethical responsibilities of sponsorship disclosures. Some have even been critical of children (and their parents) who create such content (Abidin, 2017).

Most of these discussions though have made little attempt to engage youth first-hand to understand youth preferences and perceptions of the genre.

The current youth generation and their YouTube viewing preferences deserve to be assessed, based on their unique characteristics and relationship, rather than rely on outdated assumptions and theories about media and viewers. Van Dijck (2009), a media studies scholar, explains that "although older cultural theories of media use may still prove to be helpful in defining the conceptual boundaries at stake…we need more than singular disciplinary theories to help us understand the intricate relationships between social and technological agents" (p. 54). YouTube is a dynamic platform, featuring diverse content and creators, with audiences whose interests and opinions are subject to change. This research represents an inquiry into the complex relationship that youth users have with YouTube, product-related videos, and video creators. This, along with the "newness" of the current youth audience, makes fresh research timely and necessary.

Chapter III: Methodology

Over a decade ago, Ito et al. (2008) set out to understand youth's relationship to what was then termed "new media". A guidepost of their research was to engage directly with youth, allowing them to inform the research, rather than relying on "adult expectations and agendas" (Ito et al., 2008, p. 5) about youth practices and behaviors, as adult assumptions about youth's digital use are not consistently on target (Sorbring & Lundin, 2012; Yarosh et al., 2016). Instead of viewing youth as part of a development continuum, youth should be recognized as "actors in their own social world" whose defining attributes have varied historically (Ito et al., 2008, p. 7). Using Ito et al.'s recommendation, my research engaged with youth to understand their media practices and preferences. This process was facilitated using a survey instrument.

Instrumentation

The participants completed a survey that was designed for this study. This study focuses on product videos intended for youth audiences. The specific product focus was narrowed to dolls and plush-type toys. The featured toy was chosen first and then videos that matched the needs of the survey—reasonably short duration and video hosts from each of the host categories—were located. It was determined that Amazon's "Top 25 Toys for the 2018 Holidays" list would provide a good selection of popular toys to choose from. L.O.L. Surprise products were well-represented on the Amazon toy ranking, so a product from that line was chosen: L.O.L. Surprise House. Marketing for the L.O.L. Surprise line appears to be more focused on female users though. Based on the initial feedback to the recruitment efforts, a toy with more gender-neutral marketing would be beneficial to appeal to a wider-range of participants. As a result, two versions of the survey were made available, so participants could

choose the version that best suited them. The second survey option features FurReal Munchin' Rex, an "interactive" battery-operated toy, that still fit within the product range of the study.

Each of the two survey versions contained three videos featuring the same product. Both surveys had one video published by the brand, one video published with an adult host channel, and one video published with a youth host. In both surveys, the child-hosted videos were rooted firmly in the amateur category of video and the adult-hosted videos fell somewhere in between the youth host's unedited and strictly amateur production and the brand's professional, well-edited production.

The survey was published using Qualtrics Survey Software and participants were provided with a survey link so they could complete it at their convenience.

Subject Selection and Description

Due to the age of the youth participants (five to 13 years of age), a parent or guardian was required to act as a co-participant. The adult co-participant was asked to help the youth input responses, provide their own observations and answer household demographic questions.

The recruitment criteria were that the youth participant be between five and 13 years old and both the parent and child be willing to spend between 30 minutes and one hour completing the survey. The criteria were included in any recruitment posts on social media, reiterated to any respondents who expressed the desire to participate or requested additional information and then verified before providing the survey to the participant. Demographic information, including the child's age, was also requested again within the survey itself.

Participants were recruited via social media between March and May 2019. I posted recruitment notices on my personal Twitter, Facebook and Instagram account pages. As of June 12, 2019, I have a total of 2,705 "friends" and "followers" across the three platforms who could

access these posts. I also posted in Facebook groups that I belong to and where I thought I may find volunteers. These groups are primarily focused on homeschooling, parenting, and/or social media participation. The following are the specific groups I posted to (The group names are capitalized and spelled exactly as the group has posted and the member totals are accurate as of June 12, 2019.):

- Bentwater Moms: 74 members
- Boss-Moms: 38,728 members
- Greater Houston Homeschoolers- GHH: 1,305 members
- Hip Homeschool Moms Community: 34,137 members
- Homeschooling Magnolia/The Woodlands/Conroe/Tomball: 1,324 members
- Huntsville Homeschool Organization Information Site: 234 members
- Kids YouTube Channels: 2,906 members
- North Houston homeschoolers: 372 members
- REAL Moms of The Woodlands: 1,820 members
- Rock Your Homeschool!: 25,790 members
- Small Youtubers Community: 9,968 members
- Social Media Talk: 65 members
- Spring Texas Homeschoolers, Louetta Rd.: 129 members
- Texas Homeschoolers Support Group: 7,536 members
- Youtubers: 12,438 members
- Youtube kid Vloggers: 1,960 members
- YouTube Mamas: 2,553 members
- Youtube Mommy Society: 240 members

- YouTube, Vloggers & Bloggers: 30,540 members

Lastly, I paid for promoted posts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to enable my recruitment posts to reach individuals outside of my personal social media reach. I scheduled two campaigns on Twitter. The first lasted from April 3, 2019, to April 4, 2019, and I chose a target audience of females, between the ages of 21 and 49 years old, with an interest in "parenting K-6 kids." This campaign resulted in 2,763 impressions. The second campaign lasted from April 11, 2019, to April 14, 2019, and I chose a target audience of females, between 21 and 49 years old, with any of the following interests: moms, parenting K-6 kids, and/or homeschooling. This campaign resulted in 397 impressions. The total impressions resulting from promoted Twitter posts was 3,160.

I also scheduled two campaigns through Facebook and chose to have the posts appear on both Facebook and Instagram. The first campaign was from April 12 to April 15, with a target audience of parents, between the ages of 25 and 49, with school-age children and/or preteens, who demonstrate interests in any of the following: paid surveys, sweepstakes, family, parenting or motherhood. This campaign reached 336 Facebook users and 8,838 Instagram users, for a total reach of 9,186 individuals across the two platforms. The second Facebook campaign took place from May 3 to May 6, with a target audience between 18 and 65 years old and no other demographic restrictions. This campaign reached 12 Facebook users and 215 Instagram users.

After the initial recruitment efforts, the survey was incentivized due to a poor response rate. The initial incentive was a drawing, for a $25 Amazon gift card, that would occur on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of that week. The hope was that scheduling the drawing throughout the week would encourage participants to participate sooner, rather than later. Additionally, to encourage participants to refer others to the survey, individuals who referred a

person who completed the survey would receive an additional entry. There were no completed surveys as of the first two drawings and only two completed surveys for the final drawing. This drawing did not result in the desired response and the subsequent iteration of the incentive called for the next drawing to occur once the total number of participants reached 100. The drawing details were included in all the social media posts, both those I posted and the promoted posts.

The recruitment posts included information for interested individuals to either direct message me through the social media platform where the post appeared or via email. All but one individual chose to contact me via direct messaging. Once I had confirmed that the volunteer met the recruitment criteria, answered any questions, and confirmed their desire to participate, I would send them a link to the Qualtrics survey. I had hoped communication through personal channels, versus simply posting a survey link within the recruitment posts, would increase the completion rate of the volunteers, although quite a few did not follow through. The recruiting efforts resulted in a total of twenty-seven adult and child participant pairs.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey contained 32 questions (see Appendix: Survey Questions). Participants watched one video at a time, answering identical sets of five multi-choice questions after each of the three videos. After watching the entire set of three videos, they were presented with a set of six questions—3 multi-choice and 3 open-ended—that asked them to consider all three videos. The adult participant was also asked to respond to two-open ended questions regarding the child's engagement as they watched the videos. The remaining questions asked about the child's technology use (2), household demographics (4), and for optional contact and referral information (3).

Limitations of the Study

The products were chosen from Amazon's "Top 25 Toys for the 2018 Holidays" list. Video selection required that videos meet certain requirements: they feature a toy on Amazon's list, the video be less than a year old, there be available videos produced by each of the three categories of hosts (brand, adult, and youth) and that the length of the video would not exceed a length that would be reasonable for participants to watch during the completion of the survey. The L.O.L. Surprise line was heavily represented both within Amazon's 25 toy recommendations and across the videos on YouTube, making its inclusion simple. Finding a second toy and video set, that was significantly different from the L.O.L. Surprise dolls, yet fit into the doll and plush category of play but would appeal to participants preferring a product that was less feminized, was more challenging. FurReal Munchin' Rex was the only toy on the Amazon list with available videos that met the criteria, although there were limited videos to choose from. As a result, the three videos in this set were less detailed and had a shorter duration than those included in the L.O.L. Surprise survey. Ideally, both surveys would have included videos of similar breadth and duration.

This study was also limited by the number of youth participants that I was able to recruit. The number of videos used for analysis was determined based on the number of participants for the survey, so only six videos were used throughout the study, representing six different channels, belonging to three categories (brand, adult, and peer).

Chapter IV: Results

This research seeks to understand how children relate to different types of video hosts: brand hosts, adult hosts, and youth hosts. This exploration will also begin to illuminate how children assess videos and content. For instance, little attention has been directed towards understanding youth perceptions of professionally produced and edited videos versus amateur-style videos. This study relied on a survey to begin its exploration into youth video preferences.

Participant Overview

A total of 27 participants participated in the two surveys. The children's ages ranged between five and 13, with the majority (16) falling in the eight to 10-year-old range. Two-thirds of the respondents were female: all of those participating in the L.O.L. Surprise version of the survey were female, while there were nine male and four female participants in the FurReal survey.

Most of the youth participants view YouTube videos multiple times per week and watch product-related videos, including unboxing and product-haul videos, multiple times per week. Only six participants reported "never" watching such videos (Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1

How Often Do You View Videos on YouTube?

Response	# of participants (N=27)	Percentage
Rarely or never	3	11.11%
A few times per month	4	14.81%
A few times per week	8	29.63%
Daily	12	44.44%

Table 2

Do You Watch Product-Related Videos (Including Unboxing and Product-Haul Videos)?

Response	# of participants (N=27)	Percentage
Often	9	33.33%
Sometimes	12	44.44%
Never	6	22.22%

Survey Findings

Eleven of the 14 L.O.L. Surprise group participants had some knowledge of the product: they had heard of it, seen it or played with it. Three of the 14 participants reported they had not heard of the toy. Conversely, none of the 13 participants in the FurReal group had seen or played with the toy and only three had heard of it.

Both groups began the survey viewing the brand-produced product video. All the L.O.L. group expressed a degree of like for the brand video hosts (four "really liked" and 10 "somewhat liked" the hosts); and all but one of the FurReal group expressed a degree of like for the brand video hosts (four "really liked" and eight "somewhat liked" the hosts). When participants were asked if they enjoyed the hosts' demonstration of the product though, three of the 27 total participants reported not enjoying how the hosts demonstrated the toy and only two of the 27, one from each of the groups, responded that the video wasn't interesting at all. When asked if the video made them excited about the possibility of owning or playing with the product though, the audience was divided (Table 3).

Table 3

Did This Video Make You Feel Excited About the Possibility of Playing with or Owning This Product? (Brand-hosted Video)

Response	FurReal Group (N=13)	L.O.L. Surprise Group (N=14)	Combined Results (N=27)
Yes	5	9	14
No	2	1	3
Unsure	6	4	10

The second video viewed by survey participants was the adult-hosted video. This time, all the FurReal group reported liking the host (five "really liked" and seven "somewhat liked" her). Most of the L.O.L. Surprise group liked the host as well (one "really liked" and 11 "somewhat liked" her), with only two responding that they didn't like the adult host at all. As with the first brand-hosted video, despite that most participants reported liking the host, more reported disliking the host's *demonstration* of the product and/or found the overall video uninteresting. Of the 27 total participants, eight reported that they felt no enjoyment watching the host demonstrate the product and eight felt the video was "not interesting at all." Also, like the first video, the brand-produced video, the audience was divided on whether the video left them excited about the prospect of owning or playing with the product (Table 4).

Table 4

Did This Video Make You Feel Excited About the Possibility of Playing with or Owning This Product? (Adult-hosted Video)

Response	FurReal Group (N=13)	L.O.L. Surprise Group (N=14)	Combined Results (N=27)
Yes	6	2	8
No	4	6	10
Unsure	3	6	9

The final video of the survey was the peer-hosted video. The FurReal group was nearly unanimous in liking (10 "really liked"; one "somewhat liked"; two "didn't like at all") the youth-host. The L.O.L. group, however, varied in their feelings about the host: 6 really liked, 3 somewhat liked and 5 didn't like the host at all. Most of the participants, in both surveys, "somewhat enjoyed" or "really enjoyed" the host's presentation of the product: only two of the 13 in the FurReal group and five out of 14 of the L.O.L. group reported not enjoying the presentation at all. Most of the FurReal group also rated the overall video as somewhat or extremely interesting (five chose "extremely interesting" and six chose "somewhat interesting"), while a minority of the 14 individuals in the L.O.L. group reported the peer-hosted video was interesting (three selected "extremely interesting" and three selected "somewhat interesting"). Once again, the participants were scattered on whether the video made them want to play or own the product (Table 5).

Table 5

Did This Video Make You Feel Excited About the Possibility of Playing with or Owning This Product? (Youth-hosted Video)

Response	FurReal Group (N=13)	L.O.L. Surprise Group (N=14)	Combined Results (N=27)
Yes	5	3	8
No	6	3	9
Unsure	2	8	10

Following the video sets, the participants completed a set of questions that asked them to reflect on all three videos and hosts. The respondents were asked to pick both the video (Table 6) and the host (Table 7) they preferred.

Table 6

Which Video Was Your Favorite?

Response	FurReal Group	FurReal Group Percentage	L.O.L. Group	L.O.L Group Percentage
Brand	1	7.69%	9	64.29%
Adult	5	38.46%	2	14.29%
Youth	7	53.85%	3	21.43%

Table 7

Which Host(s)/ Presenter(s) Did You Like the Most?

Response	FurReal Group	FurReal Group Percentage	L.O.L. Group	L.O.L. Group Percentage
Brand	2	15.38%	10	71.43%
Adult	4	30.77%	2	14.29%
Youth	7	53.85%	2	14.29%

The explanation youth participants provided for why they chose the video and host(s) provided some insight into the factors that contribute to their positive assessments. When participants were asked to provide reasons for preferring a specific video, many answers pointed to reasons they liked the video's host. Participants in the FurReal group who favored the peer-produced video provided reasons such as: the video was (more) "realistic," "because it was a kid trying to explain how the toy works," and several commented on the authentic "real play" elements (e.g., attempting to "feed" the dinosaur foods that didn't come with it and the dinosaur "falling asleep" while the host was playing with it). The L.O.L. Surprise group also referenced the host(s) as a reason for preferring a video, describing aspects of young hosts that were relatable or contained authentic "play" elements. In the case of the L.O.L. Surprise group though, the brand also utilized youth hosts in their video; thus, across both groups, youth seemed most likely to attribute positive feelings to videos where they also noted likable and/or relatable attributes of the hosts. The L.O.L. Surprise group provided feedback like: "(they) were really nice…and acted like the dolls," "they were cute and looked like the dolls," they were "excited," "her reaction to the toy was genuine," and "it didn't seem like she was pretending or acting." Seven of the 14 L.O.L. Surprise group participants mentioned how much they enjoyed watching

the youth hosts play with the product. In the peer-hosted video, the youth host is surprised by receiving the product as a gift and three participants described her extreme surprise and happiness at receiving the product as the reason they preferred the video. The two L.O.L. Surprise participants who preferred the adult-host *and* the adult-hosted video also cited authenticity as the reason, explaining that she provided an honest assessment of the toy, describing both the good and bad aspects. In the FurReal group, reasons given for preferring the adult-hosted *video* included host characteristics like the host was "nice," "interesting," awesome" and she had a "great personality"; although, they provided no specific actions causing them to assign these attributes to her. Conversely, when the participants who chose the adult host as their favored host provided their reasoning, several mentioned more content-related attributes such as the video "was really detailed about how it works" and "it showed all the things you could do."

The adult participant was also asked what video they thought most engaged the child and why they felt this. For the most part, the adult's response matched the preferred video chosen by the youth, although several mentioned that their child seemed significantly engaged with more than one video. The adults were able to describe the engagement behavior they observed. Many of their responses described the youth laughing and talking directly to the hosts. Four out of the 12 adults in the FurReal group mentioned a secondary video that they felt also significantly engaged their child; half of the parents in the L.O.L. group, on the other hand, described their children as demonstrating boredom or listlessness in response to content the adult felt was either not entertaining enough or too lengthy.

As many of the participants cited host attributes as a primary reason for their video preference, there were some parallels in the participants' explanations for their host preference. The FurReal participants who preferred the youth host, once again mentioned his humor, that he

was relatable, managed to avoid being boring, played with the toy the most, that his authenticity made him more interesting and one participant mentioned liking his accent. The two individuals in the FurReal group who preferred the brand hosts, which featured youths who played with the product and did *not* speak, mentioned the professional actors and the use of music instead of narrative as a reason for their choice. Reasons for preferring the adult-host though, varied between host and content-related feedback. Of the four in the FurReal group that preferred the adult host, three mentioned her attention to detail in demonstrating the product and one mentioned her personality and looks. The L.O.L. group, however, heavily identified with and overwhelmingly referenced the personality they observed from the hosts, describing both the two young brand hosts *and* the peer host with comments like the following:

- *"(She) seemed nice."*
- *"(I like) their outfits and personality."*
- *"They were fun…"*
- *"They were funny and acted like how I would act."*
- *"Her excitement made me excited."*
- *"…they were sweet girls…they were talking sweetly to each other, and I like that."*

Two respondents preferred the adult host. One did not give a clear reason for her choice, but the other explained that she was attracted to the host's honesty in providing both the good and bad aspects of the product.

The youth participants' final survey question asked for any additional thoughts or comments about the videos. Of the participants that provided a response to this question, all the comments were content-focused, most involved a critique of some aspect of one of the videos, such as pointing out an aspect of the product that wasn't demonstrated or a suggestion for

improvement. The adult participants also had an opportunity to share additional comments as well. Most elaborated on their child's familiarity with one of the hosts, viewing habits with regards to the product-related video genre, or the child's impressions of the product. Four of the 27 adult participants mentioned that their child had either previously watched one of the video hosts or watched similar videos on YouTube. Several shared their (adult) perspective of what made it interesting or uninteresting, making comments such as:

- *"…one was informational but negative. Good for me as a parent thinking of purchasing, but not for a child."*
- *"As an adult, number one was my favorite and the other two seemed unprofessional."*
- *"The take-away here is, (it) was effective and engaging and would have been a home-run if it had been a bit shorter."*

And while none of the adults mentioned their child leaning towards professionally produced videos or adult-hosts, several mentioned the connection they believe youth feel with other youths who are hosting videos:

- *"Kids like to see other kids in these videos…not parents or other adults demonstrating products."*
- *"…kids relate better to other kids playing with the toys…It is nice to have the adult's perspective for parents, but my kids don't seem as concerned about this."*
- *"(My child) sometimes makes videos of himself playing with new toys, and I noticed he acts very similarly to the boy in the video."*

While the youth responses didn't reflect that they disliked watching adult hosts, the survey responses did suggest that many gravitate towards watching other youth at play.

Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

My study looks at how youth assess and connect with hosts and their videos, seeking direct feedback from the youth audience about what makes them interested. Previous research has analyzed how content-related and content-agnostic factors, such as the number of previous views, contribute to the popularity of a video (Borghol et al., 2012) and others have questioned what makes some videos become hugely popular, while the majority get far less attention (Figueiredo et al., 2014). The study is not concerned with the overall popularity of videos; nor, is it concerned with isolating elements that result in viral videos or impressive popularity metrics. Instead, my research is rooted in understanding a specific audience's perceptions.

The first two sections of this chapter, Connecting with Video Hosts and Authenticity and Production, look at fundamental factors in children's video assessments: connection with the host and the host's perceived authenticity. The discussion about authenticity is coupled with production quality. Discussions about authenticity and production quality often overlap, particularly when amateur video enters the conversation. Also, because today's youth are among the first to grow up with publically accessible amateur video, their awareness of authenticity and production became central to this study. Another centrality to this study is that product videos can fill the role of multiple genres. The section, The Product Genre, begins to unpack how youth conceptualize product-focused videos. Additionally, this section and the section following it, Adult Assumptions, address some of the preconceptions and misconceptions about children's media use and preferences that have been debated in academic and popular literature of recent years.

Connecting with Video Hosts

At the heart of this study is the belief that generational differences shouldn't be taken for granted when it comes to understanding media audiences. Technology's rapid innovation, along with evolving and disruptive platforms that can suddenly be replaced by other platforms, has created a new media environment that defies the structure of mass broadcasting. Growing up in this turbulent media environment profoundly shapes Generation Z's and Alpha's perceptions of media.

Some have described YouTube as "democratizing" video production (Brownlee, 2016; Curry, 2012; Kim, 2009) by allowing amateurs to publish alongside professionals. At the very least, YouTube has been instrumental in introducing the amateur video efforts of strangers into our homes. The proliferation of amateur content and the ease of access has ensured that young viewers have grown up watching a variety of videos with a range of production quality. Amateur content may have become "normalized" for young viewers who have grown up with YouTube and other social media platforms where messages from "everyday people" are the norm. Older audiences, who experienced life before social media and online connection, and who spent most of their lives engaging with traditional legacy forms of mass media, may still view professional quality as the standard; but, professionally produced videos and communicators may not have the same advantage with youth.

Participants in this survey were asked how they felt about hosts and videos, which hosts and videos they liked best, and what made them prefer a host or video. When given an opportunity to explain why they preferred a given host, as anticipated, participants discussed the positive attributes of the host. When asked for specific reasons they preferred a video though, most of the responses still centered around the likability of the host.

The responses to the open-ended questions indicate that youth don't make a clear distinction between the host and other content elements. Khan (2017) described that users expect individual social media platforms to satisfy multiple purposes: "social interaction, information, news, and entertainment" (p. 236) and it seems, to some degree, that youth have internalized social media so that they blur the distinction between speaker and message, seeing them as one. Thus, connection with the host appears to be the most central factor in liking a video.

Social identification theory (Tajfel, 1974) explains that individuals identify and connect with a group when they perceive similarities between their own characteristics and the group. Paek et al. (2013) found that videos produced by laypeople often receive favorable responses because viewers are more likely to see those creators as similar to themselves. When viewers identify with the host, they see "two entities (the self and the group) as belonging to the same category" (Hall-Phillips et al., 2016, p. 485), which could explain why young, likable hosts hold so much weight in youth's assessments of videos.

Bhatia (2018) also detailed strategies that vloggers use to simultaneously appear as someone "like the viewer" and as someone with knowledge to share. Thomson (2017) discussed how vloggers might encourage such identification, adopting "non-expert fronts," to facilitate a connection with viewers. This strategy can be seen in the L.O.L. Surprise brand video where the two young actresses appeal to the audience through their playful interactions, but they still convey all of the features of the product. While such contrived attempts to connect did not appear in the peer-hosted videos chosen for this study, it was still clear the young hosts were not experts, but they had an experience—not necessarily expertise—that they wanted to share. Feedback from the youth participants seemed to reflect that sharing an *experience*, versus *expertise*, was valued.

Across both surveys, relatable young hosts ranked as the most preferred. Of the 14 participants in the FurReal survey, only two participants didn't like the peer host or his presentation. The L.O.L. Surprise group had two videos that featured youth hosts: the peer-hosted video and the brand video, featuring two young actresses. All the participants expressed a degree of like for the brand video and had positive feedback when given the opportunity to provide open-ended responses; but, the L.O.L. Surprise peer-host had a mixed response. Of the 14 participants, five didn't like her at all, three somewhat liked her, and six really liked her.

Authenticity and Production

Muller (2009) discussed that YouTube's open platform, where creators of widely varying abilities co-exist, has confused "standards of craftsmanship" (p. 127). Lewis' (2013) assertion that part of the appeal of roughly shot video is its similarity to the punk culture hardly applies to youth audiences who likely have little reference of "punk culture." In fact, the participants in this study didn't acknowledge that there was a quality difference between roughly shot video and edited video. Mogos & Trofin (2015) also indicated that professional quality translates into credibility and trust. This study, however, suggests that credibility and trust are derived from host characteristics such as likability, authenticity, and relatability, *not* production quality.

In the L.O.L. Surprise adult-hosted video, a mother reviews the L.O.L. Surprise dollhouse. She "walks" the viewer through each room of the house, pointing out the features. She also discussed some product issues she had run into, such as a sticker in the swimming pool that warped after getting wet. Youth viewers recognized that her review was not all positive, with one describing it as "a little sad because it listed so many cons" and another saying that the host "complained too much." Twelve out of the 14 participants, however, said they liked the host and nine liked her demonstration. Two participants selected the adult host and video as their

favorite of the three they watched. When providing the reason, both participants mentioned that they appreciated the host being honest and sharing the good and bad. One of these participants also explained that her "fun voice" was one of the reasons they preferred her.

It is also interesting that the least edited video, across all six videos in both surveys, was the most popular in the FurReal Rex group. The peer host and his video received the highest scores in this group: seven out of 13 favored this host and they also favored the video. This was the only video, out of the six presented in the two surveys, that did not feature a custom thumbnail, opting instead to use an auto-generated clip from the video where the host's head was "cut off" and the background was cluttered. During the video, the host demonstrates the toy, speaking directly to the viewers. There is some direct engagement with the audience such as when the host begins the video by saying "Hey, guys! Lewbear Channel here!" At the end, he offers the audience a semi-wave, thanks them for watching his channel, advises them to "stay tuned for the next one" and playfully tosses a piece of toy food at the camera exclaiming, "Here's some food for you!" Not only is the video shot as a "flat" and conversational-style vlog (Aran, Biel, & Gatica-Perez, 2014) with no signs of post-production editing, but the video had no meta-data tags to help with YouTube categorization for search. The children in the survey were between the ages of five and 13 (Although, the majority, 73%, were between eight and 13.), the younger of which may lack the awareness or literacy to articulate differences in production quality; however, participants were still empowered and encouraged by the open-ended questions to share what they noticed about the videos and hosts and what attracted (or deterred) their interest. Despite this, none of the youth participants' comments referenced the lack of professional conventions or described anything that would suggest they took note of differences in production quality. In fact, when asked why they preferred this host and video, the majority of

responses focused on the positive attributes of the host. Four of the comments mentioned liking his sense of humor and one even mentioned liking his accent. Several participants also said that the peer-host was relatable and his video was most interesting because it was a fellow child experiencing the toy and playing with it. The youth participants seemed unaffected by the lack of set, production quality or editing polish—or if they are affected they didn't articulate it.

The differences between the FurReal peer video and the L.O.L. Surprise peer video are interesting. It appears the host in the FurReal video is demonstrating the toy for no particular reason, while the girl in the L.O.L. Surprise video is shown receiving it as a surprise. Both videos have some indications that they were created for an audience though, although these elements differ greatly between the videos. The boy in the FurReal video seemed to be speaking to the viewers, even though there is someone—presumably a parent—holding the camera for him. The host's behavior in the L.O.L. Surprise video seems intended for home viewing, not made for an audience: she frequently speaks to someone off-camera and the person filming (again, presumably her parents) and seemed to be reading the product's features from the box to one of those people. The L.O.L. Surprise video was recorded with little editing, although it was apparent that some footage had been cut. It did, however, have evidence of some post-production editing: textual overlays during the video, an edited thumbnail, an end card encouraging viewers to click on to another video and meta-data tags.

Although the L.O.L. Surprise peer host wasn't favored by the majority of the survey group, the reasons for liking her—as with the FurReal peer video—focused on her relatability and likability. The comments mentioned her excitement and/ or the perception that her excitement was authentic. One participant mentioned that "it didn't seem like she was pretending or acting" and another replied, "her excitement made me excited."

While the L.O.L. Surprise peer-hosted video did not garner the most favor, peer hosts were still highly valued within the group. The brand video featured two young, peer-aged, female hosts. In fact, L.O.L. Surprise has a robust YouTube channel and these hosts appear in many of the videos, as well as episodic content on the channel. Although the video was a professional and highly-edited production, with actresses and scripted dialogue, the youth seemed to feel as if they were encountering "girls like themselves," not an orchestrated marketing effort. An overwhelming 10 out of 14 participants chose these young brand hosts as their favorite and nine out of 14 said this was their favorite video as well. The girls in this video interact with one another, continuously speak directly to the audience, play and demonstrate the features of the dollhouse. While host traits were frequently provided for both the reason a viewer liked the host best and the reason they liked a particular video best, the participants who chose the L.O.L. Surprise brand video, did not demonstrate the same blurring between the host and content. Participants described them as "fun," "sweet," "cute" and several described their humor. One mentioned liking the apparent friendship between the girls and another found them relatable, explaining they "acted how I would act." When asked why they chose the video as their favorite, most answered that they liked how the girls played and demonstrated the product and/ or they mentioned specific features of the house.

The FurReal Rex branded video was labeled as the "official" commercial for the product. It was a fast-paced spot where two children ran around a grocery store with the toy, stopping briefly to attempt feeding it accessories that come with it. Music plays in the background, although there are some eating sound effects and textual overlays of the sounds as it occurs (e.g., "Slurp! Slurp!" written in bubble letters). At the end, a voiceover says: "It's Munchin' Rex. New from FurReal." Incidentally, I had hoped to include a more substantial brand video, but this is the

only branded video available, at this time, showing the product. Overall, the participants in my survey were not engaged by this video. Only one of the 13 participants chose this as their favorite video, explaining that they liked all the playing, music and "jumps" in the video. His mother said the video "speaks to his personality" because it was "upbeat and exciting." It is worth noting, four of the parents who participated in the FurReal survey reported that their children seemed very engaged when watching the short brand video. It would seem, that while the children may have initially responded to the fast-pace and high-impact of the commercial, most found a greater connection to longer-form product videos.

The Product Genre

If genre is determined by the "context, audience, intent, and self-conception" (Lange, 2014, p. 24) and it is "socially constructed" (Yew et al., 2011, p. 297), then categorizing product demonstration videos for youth is quite complex. This seems to confirm Mogos & Trofin's claim that the varied contexts with which videos are consumed, complicates genre classification (2015).

While brand-created videos are for the purpose of marketing and promotion, some product videos are created to educate viewers. Mogos and Trofin (2015) discussed that many product-related videos originate from users encountering difficulties with a product and wanting to share with others the challenge and how they overcame it. This rings true with tutorials and product review videos such as the L.O.L. Surprise adult-hosted video, where the mother gave a product review sharing her experience with the decorative stickers bubbling up.

The FurReal adult-hosted video was published by TTPM (Toys, Tots, Pets & More), a "consumer-facing product review site" published by aNb Media, Inc. (aNb Media, Inc., n.d.). Per the TTPM website (About, n.d.), they select from products submitted by manufacturers, but

they do not charge manufacturers for their review. The site says their purpose is to educate consumers and acknowledges that they may create sponsored videos, although it will indicate those videos as such (About, n.d.). The video used in the survey was not a sponsored video. Despite that the video was not intended to promote the product, the youth in this survey preferred the TTPM video to the FurReal brand video. Only two participants preferred the FurReal brand host and/or the FurReal brand video, but four of the 13 participants preferred the TTPM adult host and five preferred the TTPM adult-hosted video. Reasons for liking her and/or the video included several pointing to traits like her personality and her looks, with one participant going so far as to describe her as "really perfect." Other comments included that she was really detailed in demonstrating the functions of the toy.

The peer-hosted videos also fall into a rather hard-to-define category. There is no clear indication that either of the young video hosts are making money from their creative efforts. Bella's World, the child-hosted video featuring the L.O.L. Surprise product, has some semi-professional quality "branding" features such as a logo, a detailed "about" page linking to multiple social media accounts, a channel intro video, and videos organized into playlists. Despite these branding efforts, I was unable to find any affiliate links to the products shown in the girl's numerous videos, nor did I find any of the legally required "sponsorship" disclosures. Lewbear Channel, the channel that posted the FurReal Rex peer-hosted video, contained no such "branding" elements. By all indications, both of these videos were made by young people for other young people, in the interest of having fun and sharing their experience.

Van Dijck (2009) said the "boundaries between commerce, content and information are currently being redrawn" (p. 42). Cunningham and Craig (2018) assert that vloggers shape brand culture through their authenticity and community. Bella's World, the youth-hosted channel in

the L.O.L. Surprise survey, provides an example of a channel that redraws the traditional line between consumer culture and entertainment. The channel features predominantly L.O.L. Surprise product videos. The host demonstrates products and the channel even hosts product giveaways for subscribers. L.O.L. Surprise branded merchandise is not only demonstrated in the videos but also shown in the background and worn by the host. Still, there are no affiliate links or sponsorship disclosures. It is possible that the channel is failing to disclose sponsorships or the channel aspires to attract a brand deal with the company that owns L.O.L. Surprise. But, it is also possible that the young host is simply a L.O.L. Surprise "super fan" who enjoys making videos and sharing her experiences. YouTube's position at the "intersection of media creation and social networking" (Chau, 2010, p. 65) has allowed product-videos to be reframed as hybrid entertainment, having less to do with the product subject matter and more to do with sharing an experience.

In fact, the children in this study often reported liking a host or video, yet the video did not necessarily cause them to desire the toy. For instance, seven participants in the FurReal survey reported that the peer host and his video were their favorite and they also indicated they really enjoyed how he presented the product; but, only five responded that the video made them excited about the prospect of playing with or owning the product. Although seven participants said they really enjoyed the FurReal brand video's demonstration of the product, only 5 were excited about playing with it. Throughout both surveys, the audience was consistently divided about whether or not the video made them excited about the possibility of playing with or owning the product. Seeing a product in use doesn't necessarily inspire rampant consumer desires as some literature and watchdog agencies have suggested (Ellery & Murphy, 2017; Queensland University of Technology, 2017; Sloane, 2015). Although it is important to

recognize, the survey did not ask specifically about the child's interest in ownership. It asked whether they were "excited about the possibility of playing with *or* owning the product."

Adult Assumptions

Besides looking at how children perceive different types of hosts, as previously discussed, the study also questions how they perceive varying levels of production quality. For the purpose of this study, production quality refers only to the elements involved in shooting and editing a video. These elements would include composition, lighting, camera movements, sound and whether there are dynamic post-production editing and professional graphics. For instance, amateur videos that have a low-production quality are often "one-shot or cold cut films," using ambient lighting and "sound is usually picked up by the built-in microphone of the video camera and, in some cases, the producers feel the urge to put in some music" (Mogos & Trofin, 2015). The youth in this study *never* mentioned the differences in production quality among any of the videos they were shown. The closest that any responses came to calling out the differences in amateur and professional videos was one participant sharing that he (incorrectly) believed the reason the FurReal adult-hosted video contained such a detailed demonstration was that it was "probably made by the real maker's team." Another participant described the actors in the FurReal brand video as "professionals." Neither of these comments was a reference to the actual quality of the video production though. In fact, the *only* response, across both surveys, that seemed to refer to production quality was made by an *adult* participant in the L.O.L. Surprise group who shared that *she* preferred the brand content because the non-brand videos "seemed unprofessional."

When given the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback, some adults shared their assumptions about youth viewing behaviors and preferences. Two mentioned that they felt the

adult-hosted L.O.L. Surprise video, where the mom discussed the pros and cons of the product, was too negative for youth viewers. One explained that it was appropriate for a parent thinking about buying it "but not for a child." Several adults also commented on videos *they* considered too long. It is worth noting that these adult assumptions were not necessarily shared by the youth participants, although one youth did describe the L.O.L. Surprise adult host as complaining "too much" and another described the video as a "little sad."

Conclusions

The youth audience has developed their own reason for being interested in particular videos and there seems to be an appreciation for user-generated content (UGC) that is relatable and demonstrates authenticity. Youth also place more value on hosts they can identify with, often sharing the excitement that the host conveys. Likable hosts—particularly peer-aged ones they connect with—hold more appeal than professional sets or editing.

There have been "notable transformations in the way audiences conceptualize, interact with, and consume entertainment" (Wee, 2017, p. 135) and it is apparent in the responses and commentary from youth in this study. Some youth demonstrate an awareness that a creator may have marketing motives, but this does not necessarily negate a video's ability to function in an entertainment capacity. There has also been a significant transformation in genres, including the introduction of hybrid media genres, such as product-demonstration videos for the purpose of entertainment. Traditional media may have been "built on a notion of mass communication, in which content and information is linear" and "new media's open, largely unregulated structure and low barriers to entry offer the opportunity for content and information to flow from many sources to many recipients" (Wee, 2017, p. 134). And, the sources it is flowing from do not always have the same motivation. Some product-focused content is created to benefit a brand-

driven bottom line; but, the authenticity of experience is also a commodity that some producers seek to share with audiences.

In non-sponsored peer-to-peer communication, youth aren't victims of marketing, but are engaging in the digital equivalent of a "playdate." They are participants in media culture, not victims (Montgomery, 2007). Instead of saying that youth audiences connect with "youth influencers" more than commercials (Stratton, 2017), perhaps children simply connect more to other children, period. Much has been written about millenials placing less value on the opinions of "traditional" media celebrities (Arnold, 2017), finding online celebrities more "authentic" (Arnold, 2017; Lewis, 2013). Many youths were raised by millennial parents and, while outside of the scope of this study, it seems reasonable that some of their children's views of media emerge from their parents' example.

Recommendations

Generation Z and Alpha are poised to become powerful generations: the largest, most educated, globally wealthy, and technologically-endowed generations in history (Burton, 2015; Fromm, 2018). These achievements make them an important research demographic, across many disciplines, as their impact will be significant and widespread. My research has represented a preliminary exploration of how youth media perceptions are different from youth generations before them and their responses often don't align with adult assumptions or expectations. There are many directions that future research can and should take, to develop a deeper understanding of youth and media ecology. It is impossible to enumerate all the directions such research could take, but there are a few possibilities that emerged during the course of my study.

The first recommendation echoes Montgomery's argument that online media has empowered youth, replacing the outdated narrative that media victimizes youth through marketing and inappropriate content (Montgomery, 2007). The youth in this study expressed awareness that the products they were seeing could be purchased, and in some cases that the video hosts might be trying to encourage or discourage consumer behavior, but they did not mindlessly attach themselves to marketing sentiment. In fact, youth often weren't sure if they desired a product, despite enjoying viewing someone else with the product. From this initial inquiry, it would seem that some youth are quite capable of choosing their viewing context, and therefore the genre, of the videos they watch. Concerned parties should be cautious of outdated biases that are primarily based on legacy media or misconceptions about youth awareness, such as youth are naïve about media intentions, youth are easily enticed by advertising, youth are not critical media users, content can be categorized by a static genre, genre is determined by the intended purpose of a video, and that professionally-created content is better and/or more credible than amateur content. While there are certainly pitfalls that will call for caution and educational outreach, if youth are allowed open access to online platforms then they should also be armed with the literacy skills required to navigate online media as empowered users. While the value of digital literacy education has long been heralded, it is often focused on a narrow range of traditional concerns: evaluating information for quality (Schwab, 2019), recognizing advertising (Cai & Zhao, 2013), dealing with inappropriate or controversial content (Morris, 2017) and online safety and privacy (Balkam, 2017). To catch up with the current media landscape, digital literacy education should also promote empowerment and positive media perspectives. Youth are empowered when they recognize that context can alter the messages we share and the messages we receive; that how we perceive, share and interact with content can

change the genre; that identifying genuine authenticity and community online can be complex but rewarding; and—perhaps most importantly—that they are capable of questioning and analyzing, for themselves, the media they encounter.

It would also be useful to explore how, if at all, a creator's motivation affects the audience. Several of the participants appreciated the LOL adult host for being honest enough to share the good and bad aspects of the product. Some viewed the honest review as being helpful and an act of authentic kindness, while others seemed to think she was just complaining. One child talked about liking the FurReal adult-hosted video because he believed it was created by the company that manufactured the product. It would have been interesting to probe youth judgments further and find what caused some children to label the host's review as "complaining," while others labeled it "honest"; or, why the child thought it better if the host worked for the brand.

After all, many youths are consistent and experienced technology users. Over 75% of the participants in this survey regularly watch product videos, including unboxing and product-haul. They are familiar with the variances of the genre that have emerged and are emerging within this video space. While many of the participants reported that they were not necessarily enticed into wanting to play with the product after watching the videos, some offered specific suggestions for how the videos could be improved. (This is also interesting because when asked why they liked a video, participants often provided responses that didn't have to do with the content itself, but had to do with the host.) These content suggestions were provided in the final open-ended question of the survey where participants were asked for any additional thoughts or comments about the videos. Some participants shared similar suggestions. Several responded that the L.O.L. Surprise video should have shown the hosts unboxing all of the products that come with

the house, as they only talked about unboxing the "family" that comes with it. Several in the FurReal group had recommendations for the adult-hosted video by TTPM. They wanted her to feed FurReal Rex foods that didn't come with the toy and one wanted to see how the toy reacts to other interactive toys. Perhaps future research should ask participants what they would like to see or change about particular videos in a genre. This may provide insights into their expectations for the genre or how they situate hybrid genres.

Additionally, both brand videos in the survey featured children, although the FurReal video was a short commercial featuring action, without narrative. The L.O.L. Surprise video, however, was the longest video in the study and featured the most dialogue. The FurReal commercial spot failed to impress most of the participants. Only one out of the 13, preferred the FurReal brand video. Alternately, the L.O.L. brand video was the most popular in the entire study, with nine out of 14 participants choosing it as their favorite and only one participant reporting the video was not interesting at all. These brands used youth actors in very different ways, both presumably with the goal of getting the audience's attention, but they had very different results. An extensive, content analysis of product-related brand videos, intended for youth audiences, that compares engagement techniques used to connect with audiences and assesses the effectiveness, could yield insights about the techniques that encourage youth connection, a sense of community and establish authenticity.

During the course of this study, I was often surprised by the complex or unexpected valuation methods used by youth. For instance, it was unexpected that liking a host didn't necessarily translate into the viewer liking their demonstration. It was also surprising that a roughly shot video with a somewhat mundane narrative would still be highly regarded if the host was relatable. But, like the parents who shared their comments in the surveys, my (adult)

assumptions about youth practices were not necessarily always on target. An ideal extension of this study would be a larger-scale ethnographic study, enabling in-depth conversations with youth, to provide deeper glimpses into how they are conceptualizing media and media producers. Also, while this study highlighted that enjoying a video doesn't always inspire the viewer to desire the product, it would be interesting to explore how entertainment and ownership drives come about. Google described that "personal relevance and passion are key drivers of engagement" (Google, 2019) and an in-depth ethnographic study would allow the opportunity to not only see what kind of product videos children gravitate towards when they have a choice, but also to see how they engage with the product videos they find most relevant.

Finally, the questions posed in this study and the recommendations in this chapter should be applied to other media platforms. Although youth are using YouTube more than any other media platform (Media, 2015), research should continue to look at other platforms that are receiving attention from youth, while also being mindful of new platforms appearing on the digital horizon. Patricia Lange, an authority on youth and media use, explains, "Media ecologies are complex and shifting, and it is instructive to know, are the findings gleaned by studying any particular set of technologies or websites limited to those sites, or are there patterns that reach across different theoretical lenses, methodological approaches, technological platforms, and research populations" (Lange as cited in Jenkins, 2014, para. 6). This study analyzed how youth conceptualize YouTube videos, but what about TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, and social media platforms that have yet to be created but will also capture the attention of youth? While many of youth's favorite social media platforms have strong video components, each platform has its own visual language and idiosyncrasies. Extending this research to Instagram's photo and short-form video imagery, TikTok's "short-form mobile videos" (About TikTok, n.d.), and Snapchat's

special effects-driven photo and videos (What is Snapchat?, n.d.) would help determine what audience traits are platform-specific and which are inherent to youth audiences.

But, just as media is "complex and shifting," so are youth audiences. The avenues for inquiry are limitless and rapid innovation will ensure that there will be a continual need for fresh research. As this promising generation progresses into the next stage of their life, the questions we explore now and the insights provided by research efforts will help lay a foundation for understanding the roles they take on in the future. If the youth generation will indeed become the largest and most educated our earth has ever known, their importance—from a research perspective—cannot be underestimated.

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Appendix: Survey Questions

Parent or guardian: Throughout this survey, there will be short instructions with a link to the videos to be watched. Please ensure your child understands the instructions and watches the correct videos. Please read your child the survey questions and select the multiple-choice response they provide or transcribe their responses into the text boxes. As your child is viewing the videos, please note any comments, responses or elements of engagement they demonstrate as there will be a question at the end about your observations. Thank you for your assistance and participation in this survey.

Please watch Video 1. Once you have viewed the entire video, return to answer the survey questions.

1. How much did you like the host(s)/ presenter(s) in this video?

   O Really liked

   O Somewhat liked

   O Didn't like at all

2. How much did you enjoy the way the host(s)/ presenter(s) demonstrated, played with or showed you this product?

   O Really enjoyed

   O Somewhat enjoyed

   O Didn't enjoy at all

3. Did this video make you feel excited about the possibility of playing with or owning this product

   O Yes

   O No

   O Unsure

4. How interesting was this video overall?

   O Extremely interesting

   O Somewhat interesting

   O Not interesting at all

5. Would you want to watch this video again?

   O Yes

   O No

   O Unsure

Please watch Video 2. Once you have viewed the entire video, return to answer the survey questions.

6. How much did you like the host(s)/ presenter(s) in this video?

   O Really liked

   O Somewhat liked

   O Didn't like at all

7. How much did you enjoy the way the host(s)/ presenter(s) demonstrated, played with or showed you this product?

   O Really enjoyed

   O Somewhat enjoyed

   O Didn't enjoy at all

8. Did this video make you feel excited about the possibility of playing with or owning this product?

   O Yes

   O No

   O Unsure

9. How interesting was this video overall?

   O Extremely interesting

   O Somewhat interesting

   O Not interesting at all

10. Would you want to watch this video again?

   O Yes

   O No

   O Unsure

Please watch Video 3. Once you have viewed the entire video, return to answer the survey questions.

11. How much did you like the host(s)/ presenter(s) in this video?

   O Really liked

   O Somewhat liked

   O Didn't like at all

12. How much did you enjoy the way the host(s)/ presenter(s) demonstrated, played with or showed you this product?

    O Really enjoyed

    O Somewhat enjoyed

    O Didn't enjoy at all

13. Did this video make you feel excited about the possibility of playing with or owning this product?

    O Yes

    O No

    O Unsure

14. How interesting was this video overall?

    O Extremely interesting

    O Somewhat interesting

    O Not interesting at all

15. Would you want to watch this video again?

    O Yes

    O No

    O Unsure

Please consider all three videos as you answer this set of questions.

16. How familiar are you with this line of toys?

- O This is the first time I've heard of it.
- O I've heard of it, but not played with it.
- O I saw or played with it in a store.
- O I have seen or played with it at someone else's house a few times.
- O I have seen or played with it at someone else's house many times.
- O I own this product, but don't play with it often.
- O I own this toy and play with it often.

17. Which video was your favorite?

- O Video 1
- O Video 2
- O Video 3

18. What about this video made it your favorite?

_____

_____

19. Which host(s)/ presenter(s) did you like the most?

- O The host in video 1.
- O The host in video 2.
- O The host in video 3.

20. What made you like that host(s)/ presenter(s) the most?

_____

_____

21. Do you have any additional thoughts or comments about any of the videos you watched?

_____

_____

In the following section, you will be asked about your YouTube and technology use.

22. How often do you view videos on YouTube?

O Rarely or never

O A few times per month

O A few times per week

O Daily

23. Do you watch product videos (includes unboxing and product haul videos)?

O Often

O Sometimes

O Never

There are no more questions for the child participant. The final questions will ask for feedback from the adult participant and for demographic information.

24. Which video do you think most engaged your child and what made you feel this way? (Please share any reactions, comments, etc. that your child may have expressed.)

_____

_____

25. Are there any other observations or comments you would like to share?

_____

_____

26. (Optional) What is your (the parent or guardian's) email for possible follow up?

_____

27. What is the age of the child participant as of today?

28. What is the child participant's gender?

O Male

O Female

29. What is the highest level of education completed by an adult living within the same household as the child participant?

O Less than high school

O High school graduate

O Some college

O 2-year degree

O Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BS)

O Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, Med)

O Doctorate

Other (please specify) _____

30. What is the total household income of the child participant's household?

- O Less than $10,000
- O $10,000 - $29,999
- O $30,000 - $49,999
- O $50,000 - $74,999
- O $75,000 - $99,999
- O $100,000 or more
- O Prefer to not answer

31. If you would like to be entered in the drawing for Amazon gift cards, enter your name and email address for notification.

_____

32. If someone told you about or referred you to this survey, enter their name, email and/ or social media contact information so they can receive an additional entry into the drawing. (You cannot enter your own information.)

_____