Can you believe what you see?

A qualitative study about the determinants affecting the perceived credibility of video eWOM

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Abstract

Thesis Purpose: With the increasing popularity of social networks like YouTube, and the increasing accessibility of consumers to devices able to make and edit videos, video reviews are facing a remarkable growth. Hitherto, the research in eWOM has paid more attention to written reviews, leaving a notable gap of research in video eWOM. The purpose of this study was to improve the knowledge about video eWOM, studying the determinants affecting the perceived credibility of video reviews. Indeed, credibility is a crucial factor, playing a significant role in the consumer's attitude toward a brand or product, and the consequent purchase intention. The study reached an answer to the following question:

What are the determinants affecting the perceived credibility of video-eWOM reviews?

Theoretical Perspective: The research model, adopted in this study, built upon three (3) main theoretical areas, due to a lack of research in video eWOM and in order to formulate an adequate background, suitable for the interpretation and analysis of data. First, the study drew upon the determinants of perceived credibility, found by prior research in the field of written eWOM. With the purpose of facilitating the use of this theory, it was built a comprehensive model, summarising all the determinants. Second, some theories about the influence of video features on the audience were implemented in order to fully grasp the potentiality of video reviews. Finally, the third area was focused on the peculiar features of nonverbal communication, involved in video reviews through the adoption of images, motion and sound to convey the message.

Methodology: The empirical research was performed through a qualitative study based on a variation grounded theory. The data was collected at one point in time, and the sample consisted in 12 female participants who interacted with five (5) video reviews on YouTube. The participants' opinions were collected performing semi-structured interviews, supported by the techniques of photo elicitation and list of thoughts. The empirical data was then analysed through a sequence of definite steps, based on grounded analysis.

Results: The results of the empirical research were summarised in a new model, encompassing all the determinants observed to exert an influence in the current study. Two (2) new determinants of perceived credibility – *visual evidence* and *testing* – were revealed along with one (1) new moderator, *first impression*. Besides, the determinants and moderators, corresponding to the ones of written eWOM, were assessed by the participants through the adoption of more cues, including the reviewer's appearance, facial expressions, tone of voice, and video features (e.g. setting).

Keywords: Video eWOM, Video reviews, Electronic word-of-mouth, Credibility, YouTube.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Nowadays, the balance of the market has been profoundly altered, defining a new marketplace, which Karpinski (2005) refers to as "bottom-up marketing". The new balance is characterised by consumers who trust their own opinions and the opinions of their peers, changing the market from a place where marketers speak down to consumers, to a place where consumers have excluded companies, organising and creating content themselves (Karpinski, 2005). Consumers have built virtual relationships, which are condensed in social networks operating 24 hours a day for seven days a week (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011), that marketers are not welcome to join (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011).

Due to the rise and proliferation of the Internet, people are able to create their own messages and upload them instantaneously on different digital media platforms, expressing and sharing their thoughts about companies, brands and products, and introducing a new phenomenon, called electronic word of mouth (eWOM) (Lin, Lu & Wu, 2012). Every time a person spreads on the Internet a positive, neutral, or negative statement about a product, a service, a company, or a brand, it can be referred to as eWOM (Kietzmann & Canhoto, 2013). On the Internet eWOM is broadcasted in three (3) main different formats: text, images and videos (Xu, Chen & Santhanam, 2015). While written reviews can include only words, and sometimes pictures, video format has the peculiar possibility to combine visual content with motion and sound (Xu, Chen & Santhanam, 2015). However, even though videos expand the boundaries of communication through the Internet, until now written reviews have outnumbered video reviews (Xu, Chen & Santhanam, 2015). However, recently, companies such as Amazon.com and Procter & Gamble are encouraging consumers to upload video reviews on their websites (Godes & Mayzlin, 2009; Xu, Chen & Santhanam, 2015). Videos spread on social platforms, such as YouTube, have a significant impact on people's opinions, thoughts, and cultures (Borghol, Ardon, Carlsson, Eager & Mahanti, 2012). The impact is further enhanced by the fact that each minute 300 hours of video content is uploaded on YouTube, generating billions of views each day (YouTube, 2015).

With the massive spread of consumers' opinions on the Internet, companies are losing control on what people say about their brands and products (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Since eWOM is rising in popularity, playing an important role in the consumers' purchase decisions (Chen & Xie 2008; Gu, Park & Konana, 2012), recently companies are trying to undertake an active role in the online conversations, developing unique marketing strategies in order to obtain benefits from the product reviews (Chen & Xie, 2008). By being aware of the power of word-of-mouth (WOM), and choosing the right social media, companies can take actions to

increase, in a profitable way, the number of conversations about their products and brands (Godes & Mayzlin, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

1.2 Research Aims

Nowadays, many studies have been conducted about the perceived credibility of written eWOM, namely reviews presented in text format. Despite that, a lack of research is particularly evident in the field of video eWOM, even though the video format is increasing in popularity. Therefore, the first aim of this research is to contribute to fill the research gap in this field. One of the reasons why researchers have not turned the focus on video eWOM is due to the persistent prevalence of written reviews (Xu, Chen, & Santhanam, 2015). However, some symptoms are forewarning the increasing relevance of video reviews. For instance, Rosensteel (2012) argues that making a video is becoming easier and easier for consumers. By using the webcam of a mobile phone, a laptop, or other similar devices, consumers have the opportunity to make instant videos, with the possibility to edit them through applications, which can be easily accessed for free on different devices. Moreover, consumers are reducing their attention span on the Internet, which can be improved with the adoption of video formats (Rosensteel, 2012). Furthermore, eWOM is a growing phenomenon that is starting to attract also the interest of companies, which begin to encourage consumers to upload video reviews about their products on their websites (Godes & Mayzlin, 2009; Xu, Chen, & Santhanam, 2015). This new trend can be harnessed by companies, which have to be prepared to approach it from the right perspective. Indeed, even though eWOM is associated by consumers to a high level of credibility (Johnson & Kaye, 2004; Keller & Fay 2012), and is trusted more than traditional advertisement (Phelan, 2013), with the variety of information sources online, people's perception of risk has been amplified (Franagin, Metzger, Pure, Markov & Hartsell, 2014). As a consequence, this situation is undermining the credibility of eWOM, an important element for the assessment of the message (Fogg & Tseng, 1999). Credibility is a crucial factor that exerts a significant impact on the consumers' behaviour, in terms of attitude toward a brand and purchase intention (Lafferty & Goldsmith 1999). Lis (2013) explains that the perceived credibility of the message can significantly and positively influence the message adoption and, consequently, have an impact on the purchase intention. For these reasons, the second aim of this research is to explore the recent phenomenon of video eWOM from the perspective of the perceived credibility that consumers associate to it. Rosensteel (2012) argues that this phenomenon that may become, in a near future, the next generation of product reviews.

1.3 Research Purpose

Given the fact that credibility is a crucial factor, which exerts an important influence on the consumers' behaviour, it is important to understand the elements triggering in consumers the

perception of credibility. For this reason, the current study is aimed at answering to the following question:

What are the determinants affecting the perceived credibility of video-eWOM reviews?

In the context of this study, the word *determinants* was employed to indicate the factors leading to the perception of credibility. Furthermore, the research question refers to the *perception* of credibility, since what a person chooses to believe is based on a judgment of his or her perceptions to be an accurate reflection of the reality (Newhagen & Nass, 1989). Paraphrasing the research question, the purpose of this study was to explore, from the recipient's point of view, what are the elements of a product review, presented in a video format, taken into consideration in order to perceive it as credible.

The research drew upon a model including the determinants of perceived credibility in written eWOM, and the theories about the impact of video features and nonverbal communication on the consumers' behaviour. Due to a remarkable lack of research in the field of video eWOM, it was necessary to borrow some theories from related areas. For this reason, a model integrating the determinants of credibility, previously uncovered through the studies about written eWOM, has been adopted. However, since video reviews presents peculiar features, which are not present in written reviews (e.g. motion, sounds) (Xu, Chen & Santhanam, 2015), in order to fully comprehend video eWOM, it was necessary to include in the research model theories about video features and nonverbal communication.

Through the interaction of 12 participants with five (5) video reviews, and a recording of their thoughts on a piece of paper, it was possible to conduct in-depth interviews, where the participants could express in detail what were the determinants that influenced their perception of credibility. Afterwards, with the adoption of grounded analysis, based on a sequence of systematic steps the interviews were analysed maintaining an open approach in finding new determinants, and in relating consistently the findings with the outcomes of prior research in written eWOM. Indeed, in order to develop the research in eWOM in a consistent way, the determinants that were equal to the ones in written eWOM were named with the same labels.

The outcome of this research consists in a new model, depicting the determinants of perceived credibility in the context of video eWOM. The model was built in a way to provide comparable results with prior research and, at the same time, highlighting the areas where further research is needed. Through the creation of this model, some evidence has been shown about what elements that people take into consideration when assessing the credibility of a video review. However, the findings are not generalizable to the population, since the research undertook a qualitative study. However, the outcomes provide solid basis on which further quantitative studies can be accomplished in the future. Besides, a big gap was found in the field of video eWOM, since so far just a few studies had been conducted. The model represents a bridge between written and video eWOM, opening the path to investigate this growing phenomenon.

In terms of practical outcomes, the model provided by this study can help companies in formulating marketing strategies, ad hoc for their products and markets, to take an active role in online conversations performed through video reviews. However, since the model is a result of a qualitative study, companies should use it as a basis to formulate more specific models, working in their particular industry and context. Indeed, as the model itself highlights, the typology of product can exert a moderator impact on the determinants.

1.4 Research Limitations

Some limitations, connected to the study, stemmed from its qualitative nature. Indeed, qualitative research is often criticized to be too subjective, because it relies too much on the researchers' unsystematic views (Bryman & Bell, 2011), and the interpretations could be influenced by the researcher's leanings. In this research, this issue was partially avoided adopting a grounded analysis, which is composed of a sequence of systematic steps, but some of the subjectivity still endured. On the other hand, the subjectivity helped the researchers in obtaining a closer perspective from the object of study, the determinants of perceived credibility, since it was possible to establish closer relationships with the participants, for instance adopting more subjective semi-structured interviews instead of structured ones. Another issue, associated to the qualitative study, is about its difficulty to be replicated (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This is due to the fact that investigators are the main tool in collecting data, and the participants' responses tend to be influenced by the researcher's characteristics (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thirdly, this research project cannot be generalised to the population, because it is a qualitative study (Bryman & Bell, 2011), providing useful results for subsequent quantitative research.

With respect to the data collection, the participants, who attended the current research, were not driven by a real motivation, since they were placed in a simulated situation, where they had to interact with some video reviews on YouTube. For this reason, the results could be different in subjects with a higher level of involvement. As far as sampling is concerned, on the other hand, the participants met specific requirements, in terms of gender and age, thus the results could be dissimilar addressing another target population. Other limitations are linked to the product type. Indeed, the current research studied the phenomenon in relation to an *experience good*, strongly associated to the consumer's experience (Peterson, Balasubramanian, & Bronnenberg, 1997). Moreover, it has been studied only one (1) product, belonging to the beauty industry, since particularly affected by video eWOM, but the results could be different if exploring other industries, or different categories of products within the same industry. Additionally, some of the determinants, previously uncovered by studies about written eWOM, could not be observed, due to some research choices. Indeed, studying video eWOM on YouTube excluded the possibility to analyse the effect of *web reputation* on the perceived credibility, and three (3) other factors –motivation, issue type, and confirmation of prior belief – could not be observed, since they required ad hoc studies, focused specifically on them. Moreover, as afore mentioned, the research focused on one product, excluding consequently the possibility to study the moderator effect of the product type.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

The current paper is structured in a way to lead the reader gradually into the topic. For this reason, Chapter 2 will provide some general information referred to word-of-mouth (WOM), electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and credibility. Besides, the theories, related to the research model adopted in this study, will be introduced. Thus, the previous studies conducted upon the determinants, affecting the perceived credibility of written eWOM, will be presented in detail. Subsequent this part, the studies conducted so far in the field of video eWOM and perceived credibility will be showed. Afterwards, the chapter will focus on video features and nonverbal communication theories, and finally the research model, adopted to accomplish the research purpose, will be presented in the chapter summary.

Chapter 3, conversely, will introduce the methodology adopted for the empirical research, describing the reasons behind a *social constructionist* philosophy, and an *inductive approach*, along with the choice to adopt a variation of *grounded theory*, and a *qualitative* and *cross sectional* study. Subsequently, it will be described the data collection, the sampling, and the data analysis. Moreover, some considerations about validity and reliability will be argued. Finally, the last part of Chapter 3 will be dedicated to some reflections upon the ethical and political concerns emerged in the context of this study.

Chapter 4 will present the results of the empirical study, showing the findings together with some examples from the interviews. Then, in Chapter 5, the results will be discussed in relation to the theories argued in Chapter 2, and the final model, representing the contribution of this research, will be shown in the chapter summary.

Finally, Chapter 6 will summarise the main aspects of the research and will discuss the theoretical and practical contributions stemming from the current study. In order to guarantee continuity to the research, the last section will highlight the opportunities for future studies in this field.

2 Literature and Theoretical Review

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature and theories relevant to dig into the context of video eWOM. In particular, the chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section is intended to clarify the concepts of word-of-mouth (WOM), electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and credibility, in order to place the study in a definite context. Subsequently, the second section will argue about the main determinants of perceived credibility in written eWOM. Thus, the determinants uncovered in previous studies will be examined in depth, and positioned in an integrative model. Together with the studies in written eWOM, the chapter will present the research accomplished so far in the field of video eWOM, but, since video eWOM is still highly under-researched, the last section will be focused on studies about video features and nonverbal communication, useful to support the purpose of the current research project.

2.1 From WOM to eWOM

2.1.1 Word-of-Mouth

In consumer behaviour studies, the understanding of social interactions has always been fundamental for marketing research (Vásquez, Suárez & del Rio, 2013). As part of social interactions, the concept of word of mouth (WOM) has been developed as a critical factor, influencing the consumers' behaviour and their purchase decisions (Torlak, Ozkara, Tiltay, Cengiz & Dulger, 2014). One of the first authors defining Word of mouth was Arndt (1967), who argued about an "oral, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver concerning a brand, product or a service offered for sale" (p.190). Many authors considered WOM as one of the crucial drivers of consumers' behaviour, such as Fulgoni and Lipsman (2015), Keller and Fay (2012), Herr, Kardes and Kim (1991). Meuter, Brown and Curran (2013) have considered WOM as a driver of a company success. Furthermore, Day (1971) shows in his study that WOM is nine times more effective than traditional media advertising, in changing unfavourable or neutral attitudes into positive attitudes. Indeed, one of the main peculiarities of WOM is its high perception of credibility, confirmed by Keller and Fay (2012) who pointed out in their study that 58% of consumers perceived as highly credible the information they received during a WOM conversation, and that 50% were likely to buy a product as a result of a WOM conversation. If WOM has always been in the focus of the researchers, in the past few years, with the emergence of the Internet and new possibilities of communication, a new form of WOM is present on the market, the electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

2.1.2 Electronic Word-of-Mouth

In the past decades, new communication channels have emerged, allowing consumers the possibility of instantaneous interactions with other consumers (Vásquez, Suarez & del Rio, 2013). Nowadays, people can express their opinions on several virtual and social platforms on the Internet, such as blogs, forums, social networks, and review sites, expanding word of mouth to a new sphere called electronic word of mouth (Lin, Lu & Wu, 2012; Chintagunta, Gopinath & Venkataraman, 2010). Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006) explain that people seek others' opinions on the Internet to reduce their risk, to secure lower prices, to obtain information easily (especially pre-purchase information), because others do it and it is cool, because stimulated by off-line inputs (e.g. the TV), or just by accident. According to the definition of Kietzmann and Canhoto (2013):

> eWOM refers to any statement based on positive, neutral, or negative experiences made by potential, actual, or former consumer about a product, service, brand, or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet (pp.147-148).

Six unique characteristics distinguish eWOM from the traditional WOM: *enhanced volume*, *dispersion*, *persistence and observability*, *salience of valence*, *community engagement*, and *anonymity and deception* (King. Racherla & Bush, 2014). *Enhanced volume* implies eWOM to be able to reach big scales and global audiences through the Internet (Dellarocas, 2003). The second characteristic, *dispersion,* is defined by Godes and Mayzlin (2004) as "the extent to which product-related conversations are taking place across a broad range of communities" (p. 546). Indeed, King et al. (2014) pointed out that consumers can spread and receive messages using different online platforms at the same time. Besides, *persistence and observability* are another unique eWOM characteristic, since what a person shares online can be seen and tracked by others for an indefinite period of time (Hennig-Thurau, Malthouse, Frieze, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy & Skiera, 2010). A forth aspect is *salience of valence,* according to which consumers can assign negative or positive ratings to the products or services they review (Liu, 2006). On the one hand, positive eWOM enhances the expected quality of a product or service (Liu, 2006). On the other hand, negative eWOM reduces the expected quality (Liu, 2006). Furthermore, eWOM channels have the potential to create virtual communities, in which people can discuss about products and services and learn from the experiences of others (de Valck, van Bruggen & Wierenga, 2009). This phenomenon introduces a fifth attribute of eWOM, referred to as *community engagement*. Finally, *anonymity and deception* characterize the possibility for users on the Internet to engage in eWOM conversations without disclosing their identities, thus keeping their profile anonymous (Ku, Wei & Hsiao, 2013). According to Tsikerdekis (2012) "[a]nonymity refers to the state of an individual's personal identity, or personally identifiable information, being publicly unknown" (p.3). Anonymity increases the chances of deception, because companies or consumers can manipulate online conversations for their own benefits (Ku, Wei & Hsiao. 2013) or solely for fun (King. Racherla & Bush, 2014).

2.2 Credibility

Perceived credibility is one of the peculiar characteristics of eWOM and WOM at large (Johnson & Kaye, 2004; Keller & Fay 2012). In order to understand the determinants, which lead the online user reviews to be perceived as credible, it is necessary to define what is credibility. Credibility, from a receiver-oriented perspective, can be defined as "the degree to which an individual judges his or her perceptions to be a valid reflection of reality" (Newhagen & Nass, 1989, p. 278). Credibility is an equivalent or synonym of believability (Fogg, Marshall, Laraki, Osipovich, Varma, Fang, Paul, Rangnekar, Shon, Swani & Treinen, 2011), and consists in a perceived quality, which cannot be placed in a person, object or information (Fogg & Tseng, 1999). Fogg et al. (2011), when defining credibility, argue about the source credibility, including expertise and trustworthiness. However, credibility is a broader concept than source credibility. Indeed, it is also associated to the media and the information conveyed through the media (Rieh & Danielson, 2007). Information credibility can predict the behaviour of a person online, because, if an advice is perceived as credible, the probability of the person to follow that advice is higher (McKnight & Kacmar, 2006).

According to Tseng and Fogg (1999) there are four (4) types of credibility: *presumed*, *reputed*, *surface*, and *experienced*. *Presumed credibility*, according to Tseng and Fogg (1999), refers to a credibility remarkably influenced by the perceiver's assumptions. It's a type of credibility based on stereotypes (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). If a person believes that salesmen do not tell the truth, then that person will create a credibility in his or her mind, stemming from pre-assumptions which were already in his or her mind (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). *Reputed credibility*, on the other hand, requires a third party in order to be formed (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). Indeed, according to Tseng and Fogg (1999), it is exerted when "the perceiver believes someone or something because of what third parties have reported" (p.42). The third type of credibility, *surface credibility*, is described by Tseng and Fogg (1999) as a credibility which lays on a simple inspection of the reality. A clear example of surface credibility is when people judge other people on the basis of their appearance, or the clothes they wear. Finally, *experienced credibility*, originates when a person directly experiences a situation, for instance when judging someone's expertise from a first-hand interaction with that person.

2.3 Written eWOM

The literature, so far, seems to have paid more attention to written rather than video reviews, since reviews in text format are still the prevalent way to convey messages about brands and products (Xu, Chen, & Santhanam, 2015). For this reason, this section will provide a summary of the main determinants of credibility found in written eWOM, and will combine the main points of each of them in a unique integrated model, able to provide solid basis to support the study of video eWOM. Indeed, since video eWOM is a field particularly unexplored, a background, about the studies conducted upon the perceived credibility of written eWOM, will facilitate the accomplishment of the research purpose. From a review of different studies, the model provided by Cheung, Luo, Sia, and Chen (2009) seems to include

most of the determinants found so far. For this reason, the theoretical review will use as basis this model, explaining each determinant including the findings of different scholars. Moreover, the determinants that have not been taken into account by the original model of Cheung et al. (2009) will be included in order to provide a unique and comprehensive model. As stated previously, in the context of this study *determinants* refer to the factors that lead to the perception of credibility.

2.3.1 Informational and Normative Determinants

When consumers look for reviews, they are subjected to two (2) main needs: a *functional* and a *social* need (Chih, Wang, Hsu, & Huang, 2013). While the former refers to the seeking of product information, the other is addressed by building online social relationships (Chih et al. 2013). These two (2) basic needs match with two (2) fundamental social influences, explained by Deutsch and Gerard (1955), in the psychological theory, as *normative social influence* and *informational social influence*:

> [w]e shall define a *normative social influence* as an influence to conform with the positive expectations of another. An *informational social influence* may be defined as influence to accept information obtained from another as *evidence* about reality (p. 629)

According to Deutsch and Gerard (1955), the *normative social influence* is stronger in contexts characterised by groups or communities rather than individuals gathered together. Moreover, the influence can vary according to how much the individual feels the pressure to conform to what the others expect from him or her (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). In situations where people are not sure about their own judgements, they will be more exposed to these two (2) types of influences (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Deutsch and Gerard (1955) explain that, while conformity leads to self-esteem and self-approval, non-conformity drags the person toward anxiety and guilt. In the same year, Asch (1955) conducts some experiments to study the social pressure people are subjected to when they have to form their own judgments and beliefs. The experiments run by Asch (1955) show how social pressure can shift a person's opinion, even if the error of the group's opinion is unquestionably evident. However, according to the scholar, the group pressure is more powerful in conditions of unanimity than majority, and can be disturbed by a person supporting the opinions of the individual (Asch, 1955).

The importance of informational and normative psychological forces led some authors to consider them in the explanation of the determinants of perceived credibility in eWOM. Indeed, Cheung et al. (2009) draw their research model upon the theory of Deutsch and Gerard (1955), in order to explain the determinants of perceived credibility in an eWOM context, introducing what they refer to as *informational determinants* and *normative determinants*. According to Cheung et al. (2009), informational determinants include five (5) components: *arguments strength*, *recommendation framing*, *recommendation sidedness*, *source credibility*, and *confirmation of prior belief*. On the other hand, normative determinants can be classified in *recommendation consistency* and *recommendation rating* (Cheung et al. 2009).

When talking about informational determinants, the model provided by Cheung et al. (2009) does not take into consideration the *source style*, consisting in textual and visual cues that can be found in written reviews (Teng, Khong, Goh, & Chong, 2014). For this reason, it will be included in the theoretical review. Moreover, since in previous studies *arguments strength* has often been referred to as *argument quality*, in this context it will be referred using this label. As far as normative determinants are concerned, other than the ones introduced by Cheung et al. (2009), *web reputation* will be also discussed and included in the integrative model (see Figure 2.1). In the following sections all the determinants afore mentioned will be discussed in depth.

2.3.2 Argument Quality

On the Internet people face the issue of identifying what is good from what is bad information, because of the lack of quality control mechanisms that characterise such an environment (Rieh, 2002). Argument quality has received much attention in the research and it has been defined in different ways. Wang and Strong (1996) define what they call *data quality* as: "data that are fit for use by consumers" and the dimensions of data quality as: "a set of data quality attributes that represent a single aspect or construct of data quality" (p. 6). Bhattacherjee and Sanford (2006), on the other hand, argue about the quality of the arguments as "the persuasive strength of arguments embedded in an informational message" (p.811).

In the past research, several studies have demonstrated the relevance of the arguments on the message evaluation and on the perceived credibility of the message (Cacioppo, Petty & Morris, 1983; Cheung et al. 2009). Cheung et al. (2009) demonstrates that what they refer to as "argument strength" positively influences the perceived credibility of an eWOM review. In order to go deeper in the understanding of this influence, it is necessary to explore the elements that contribute to judge the quality of an argument. Wang and Strong (1996) categorise the data quality in four (4) groups: *intrinsic data quality*, *contextual data quality*, *representational data quality*, and *accessibility data quality*. The former refers to quality directly connected to the data, which is not influenced by other factors (Wang & Strong, 1996). Contextual quality, on the other hand, it is dependable on the context, according to Wang and Strong (1996). Representational quality can also be referred as *format*, in that it consists in the consistence and conciseness of the message representation, which assures that the argument is interpretable and easy to understand (Wang & Strong, 1996). The last category is not relevant in the context of this review, since it refers to the accessibility of the information, and in eWOM it is supposed that the consumer has already accessed the review. Nelson, Todd and Wixom (2005), studying the determinants of information quality in the technology context, draw upon Wang and Strong (1996) classification and define *accuracy*, *completeness*, *currency*, and *format* as the most important ingredients for the quality of the information. Accuracy is defined by Wang and Strong (1996) as correct, objective and source-based information and, in the model by Nelson, Todd and Wixom (2005), it reflects the intrinsic quality. Completeness and currency, on the other hand, matches with contextual quality (Nelson, Todd & Wixom, 2005). According to the scholars, completeness is to what degree the statements, the user perceive as relevant, are inserted in the message, while currency is "the degree to which information is up to date, or the degree to which the information precisely reflects the *current* state of the world that it represents" (p. 203). The last dimension argued by Nelson, Todd and Wixom (2005), namely format, is defined in the same way of Wang and Strong (1996), and it is linked to representational quality. For each

dimension presented, Nelson, Todd and Wixom (2005) emphasise that quality is not an absolute construct, but it is linked to the perception of the receiver.

Cacioppo, Petty and Morris (1983) argued about the impact of the quality of the arguments not only on the message evaluation, but also on the recipient's attitude and impression that the recipient has on the communicator. Moreover, the scholars demonstrate how "situational" and "dispositional" factors can influence the impact of the arguments (Cacioppo, Petty & Morris, 1983). Among the dispositional factors the authors studied the role of *need for cognition* on argument quality, asserting that people who are high in need for cognition tend to recall better the arguments and be subjected more to argument quality than people low in need for cognition (Cacioppo, Petty & Morris, 1983).

The argument quality influence on the message evaluation can differ among people who adopt a more systematic thinking from people who adopt a heuristic process of information (Wood, Kallgren & Preisler, 1985). Wood, Kallgren and Preisler (1985) divide people in *high-retrieval recipients* and *low-retrieval recipients*, defining the former as people with a high capacity to retrieve in memory attitude-relevant information, and the latter as individuals with a low capacity of retrieval of attitude-relevant information. The scholars noticed that high retrieval recipients are more subjected to the quality of arguments than low-retrieval ones, who, on the contrary, tend to base their judgments on cues rather than basing their thoughts on the content quality (Wood, Kallgren & Preisler, 1985). In particular, they observed the influence of the message length on low-retrieval recipients (Wood, Kallgren & Preisler, 1985). The use of cues to assess arguments validity was already observed by Petty and Cacioppo (1984), who demonstrated that also the number of arguments have an impact on the message persuasion, arguing that the impact is more relevant in situations characterised by low-involvement of the recipient. The fact that the arguments number is more relevant between people with low-involvement, suggests that it is a heuristic process that the recipients adopt to judge the strength of the message without scrutinising the content, and so the quality of the arguments (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984).

To sum up, it is possible to consider argument quality as a determinant of perceived eWOM-review credibility, but it is necessary to be aware of the cues certain people adopt to overcome this influence (see Figure 2.1). The cues adopted by recipients when assessing the message will be further developed in the context of *source style*.

2.3.3 Recommendation Framing

Recommendation framing is the second determinant of credibility in the integrative model (see Figure 2.1). According to Cheung et al. (2009), recommendation framing stands for the valence of the review. In other words, the review can be positively or negatively framed in relation to the message that can be either positive or negative (Cheung et al. 2009).

In the past studies, researchers have named the influence of positivity and negativity as *negativity bias* or *negativity effect* (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). As a general principle, valid for a wide range of psychological phenomena, bad has a stronger impact than good, and bad information is processed more thoroughly than good (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer & Vohs, 2001). According to Baumeister et al. (2001), the reason why our brain is more attracted by bad is because, in our life experiences, bad events have stronger and more enduring consequences than comparable good events, which suggests that people tendency is

to avoid bad rather than pursuing good. Cheung et al. (2009) support the explanation provided by Baumeister et al. (2001), that people act to avoid risks, and add that negative-framed messages are less likely uploaded by marketers or by other biased people, leading people to be more attracted by them. Another perspective from which looking at the prevalence of unfavorable information, is provided by the attribution theory, based on the perceived cause to which information is attributed (Mizerski, 1982). Mizerski (1982) explains that:

> the more an individual attributes information about an entity that is obtained from another person to that entity's factual performance or actions (a stimulus cause), the more the individual will be influenced by that information (p. 302).

In many cases, Mizerski (1982) points out, the causes of some information can be perceived to stem from other factors, such as the communicator's bias, and classified as *nonstimulus causes*. The tendency to be influenced more by negative information rises because desirable information, thus what people expect to hear, can be perceived to come from the communicator's adherence to social norms, which makes the recipient unsure if the information has a *stimulus cause*, and so representing the true intentions of the communicator, or a *nonstimulus cause*, thus deriving from social pressure (Hastorf, Shneider & Polefka, 1970). Indeed, Hastorf, Shneider and Polefka (1970) assert that from the social desirable it is not possible to grasp evidence about a person, whereas from the social undesirable, a behaviour deviating from the average, it is possible to infer more about a person. This is due to the fact that undesirable, which cannot come from social pressure, is perceived as stemming from a *stimulus cause*, so from the true intentions of the person (Mizerski, 1982). The scholar asserts that the stronger the stimulus attribution the stronger the belief (Mizerski, 1982).

The correlation between valence and credibility in the context of eWOM is demonstrated by Cheung et al. (2009), who show that negatively-framed eWOM reviews are perceived as more credible than the positively-framed ones.

2.3.4 Recommendation Sidedness

eWOM reviews can be classified, according to sidedness, in *one-sided* or *two-sided* messages:

> [a] one-sided message presents either positive or negative valenced information. A two-sided message includes both positively and negatively valenced information (Cheung & Thadani, 2012, p. 464).

In the past research, the sidedness of the message has attracted attention in the field of advertising. Settle and Golden (1974) demonstrated that the believability of the message increases when some disclaimers about the superiority of some product characteristics are introduced. According to the scholars, it is better to disclaim minor characteristics of a product rather than avoid talking about them, because disclaimers have the power to increase the confidence the recipient has toward the message (Settle & Golden, 1974). The findings of Settle and Golden (1974) are relevant in terms of sidedness because, arguing about a message containing positive information presented together with some disclaimers, is equal to talk about a two-sided message. The positive impact of two-sided messages has been proven also

in the study conducted by Golden and Alpert (1978), where two-sided messages have been found to be more believable than one-sided ones.

Shifting from advertisement to eWOM, Cheung et al. (2009) have demonstrated than two-sided eWOM reviews are perceived as more credible than one-sided ones, supporting the findings aforementioned in advertising. However, Kamins and Assael (1987) explore further the message sidedness, studying another classification that can influence the impact of the message on the recipient. The scholars analyse the influence of *two-sided refutational* and *two-sided nonrefutational* messages compared to one-sided ones (Kamins & Assael, 1987). According to Kamins and Assael (1987), a message is defined *two-sided nonrefutational* if there is no attempt to discredit the negative aspect introduced in the message. On the other hand, the message is *two-sided refutational* if, other than just talking about the negative aspects, they are also refuted (Kamins & Assael, 1987). Kamins and Assael (1987), in their first experiment, demonstrate that a two-sided refutational message leads to more supporting arguments and less counter-arguments of the recipient than two-sided nonrefutational and one-sided messages.

Finally, it is possible to include recommendation sidedness in the determinants of perceived eWOM credibility, concluding that two-sided messages are believed more that one-sided ones (see Figure 2.1).

2.3.5 Source Credibility

Source credibility is a determinant that has been spoken by several authors in previous studies. Some of them are Cheung et al. (2009), Lis (2013), Teng et al. (2014), Chih et al. (2013). Ohanian (1990) defines source credibility as "a term commonly used to imply a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of the message" (p. 41). The role of source credibility is presented by Ohanian when he mentions the "receiver's acceptance of the message" (Ohanian, 1990). The author defines the construct of source credibility as composed of three main components: *expertise*, *trustworthiness*, and *attractiveness* (Ohanian, 1990) (see Figure 2.1). In the following sections the three components will be discussed more in depth.

2.3.5.1   Source Expertise and Source Trustworthiness

The first two components of source credibility will be discussed together, since they are interrelated and linked by strong connections. Mackiewicz (2010) defines a trustworthy person as one who is sincere and honest, but not necessarily accurate. Indeed, according to Mackiewicz (2010), accuracy is a quality referred to an expert, who, on the other hand, is not necessarily honest. The two components together form what for Mackiewicz (2010) is source credibility. Even though the author does not take into account source attractiveness, Mackiewicz (2010) introduces a new conception of source credibility, which does not limit its boundaries to the reviewer, but extends its formation to the reader, and so allowing to consider what the scholar refers to as *co-construction of credibility*. Indeed, through the

creation of a dialog made of comments and ratings, readers have the power to reframe the credibility of the source (Mackiewicz, 2010). As He (1995) points out: "identity is taken to be a construction that makes actual what once was potential in the context of other persons' responses and attitudes toward a person", implying the others in the creation of one's identity. Mackiewicz (2010) draws upon an Aristotelian concept, discussed by Crowley & Hawhee (2009), to distinguish credibility in *invented* and *situated* credibility, where the former is a type which is formed from a single rhetorical situation, such as a single product review, while the latter, situated credibility, originates through time, which in the eWOM context would be constituted by the reviewer's good reputation in the community. The concept of invented and situated credibility is embedded in the model provided by Mackiewicz (2010) to argue about the reviewer's trustworthiness and expertise. In this way the scholar creates the concept of *invented* and *situated expertise*, and *invented* and *situated trustworthiness*. The co-constructed situated expertise includes all the elements constituting the reputation of the reviewer, so the profile page of the website becomes a useful source of cues where the readers can evaluate the expertise of the person through a list of experiences (Mackiewicz, 2010). However, Mackiewicz (2010) asserts that the profile page is also relevant in terms of situated trustworthiness, where the readers can check the quantity, and especially the quality of the person's reviews. It's here that trustworthiness and expertise intertwine each other, since high-quality reviews originate partially from expertise. Indeed "expertise feeds situated trustworthiness" (Mackiewicz, 2010, p. 411). On the other hand, trustworthiness and expertise stem also from the single review, leading to invented expertise and invented trustworthiness (Mackiewicz, 2010). According to Mackiewicz (2010), when a reviewer demonstrates to posses a proper background for supporting valid arguments, he or she is conveying an expertise input to the reader. In this context, as well, the reader has the power of co-creating the expertise identity asking questions, agreeing, and disagreeing through the use of comments and rating systems (Mackiewicz, 2010). While invented expertise is conveyed through experiences and arguments provided by the reviewer, invented trustworthiness consists in delivering a feeling of sincerity and honesty, according to the observations of Mackiewicz (2010). The scholar points out that also here the co-creation occurs through the readers' comments, who suggest the honesty of the person talking about the efforts put by the reviewer and the level of depth reached in the review (Mackiewicz, 2010).

Analysing trust from a broader perspective, Lewis and Weigert (1985) classify it in *cognitive* and *emotional* trust. Emotional trust is led by feelings toward the information provider, whereas cognitive trust is characterised by rational thoughts. In reality it is never either one or the other, but the individual adopts a mix of feelings and rational efforts in order to judge if the other person is trustworthy or not.

When talking about eWOM, source trustworthiness dresses a different role than in the reality. In fact, whereas in traditional WOM, most of the times, the information source is an acquaintance of the receiver, in eWOM the receiver has just a short time to judge the person (Xu, 2014). Xu (2014) explains how a person is able to establish trust toward the information source, looking at cues provided by the online platform. In particular Xu (2014) studies the role of two of the most common characteristics displayed in the reviewers' profiles: reputation cue and profile picture. Reputation-wise, if the reviewer has been endorsed by a large group of people, that information contributes to both a cognitive and emotional trust (Xu, 2014). On the other hand, according to Xu (2014), the judgement of the profile picture is

exclusively based on feelings, and so strictly linked to an emotional trust. The scholar focuses specifically on these two aspects, but his analysis is helpful in order to classify the cues, adopted by readers in judging the person's trust, from a cognitive or emotional side.

2.3.5.2   Source Attractiveness

The third element constituting source credibility, according to Ohanian (1990), is source attractiveness. Langmeyer and Shank (1994), exploring the concept of beauty, argued that beauty is a complex construct made of both *physical* and *non-physical* beauty. This categorisation of beauty was already supported by the source attractiveness model of McGuire (1985 cited in McCracken, 1989), which divides source attractiveness in *familiarity*, *likeability*, and *similarity*. According to McCracken (1989), familiarity refers to the knowledge of the source reached through his or her exposure, likeability is the attraction of the source due to his or her physical appearance, and similarity consists in a "resemblance between the source and the receiver of the message" (p. 311). The concept of similarity introduces one of the determinants of perceived credibility that several scholars have endorsed through their studies in the context of written eWOM: *social homophily*.

Homophily, also referred to as "like-me principle" by Lis (2013), consists in a congruence between two individuals – in this case source and recipient – who have in common some attributes. Gilly, Graham, Wolfinborger and Yale (1998), point out that homophily is built on "demographic and perceptual similarity". While demographic similarity has already been pointed out by others, the authors introduce another kind of similarity, based on lifestyle, preferences and values: the perceptual similarity (Gilly et al. 1998). From empirical evidence, people are likely to approach similar sources, and under some circumstances the influence of the homophilous source can be even greater than the one exerted by an expert (Gilly et al. 1998). The influence due to homophily outlined by Gilly et al. (1998) has been observed also by other scholars in the field of written eWOM. Lis (2013) has demonstrated how greater homophily can lead to a greater perceived credibility, and Llamero (2014), studying eWOM in the context of tourism, noticed how respondents used homophily as a heuristic process to assess trustworthiness.

However, even if homophily fits perfectly in a context made of written reviews, in video eWOM it can explain only partially source attractiveness, where the reviewer shows himself in front of the camera, overcoming the anonymity of written reviews. For this reason, later in the text, further discussion will be focused on physical beauty and its influence on perceived credibility.

2.3.6 Source Style

> Style may consist of consistency of tone, uniqueness of voice, presence of attitude … level of formality, creativity, and more. A favourable evaluation of a message may mean it is perceived as well written, and it brings the reader closer emotionally and cognitively (Slater & Rouner, 1996, p. 976).

Slater and Rouner (1996) mention, in their definition of style, creativity and good writing. The visual and written elements of style can be found, similarly, also in Teng et al. (2014), who define source style as all the textual and visual cues that can stimulate the information elaboration of the message, and that can increase the information retention. When reviewing the literature about argument quality, some of the textual properties have already been introduced. In this research, the concept of argument quality and source style are differentiated in a way that the former refers to the content of the message, while the latter is linked to the rhetorical figures and visual aids adopted in the text.

When discussing about argument quality, it has already been pointed out that low-retrieval recipients tend to adopt a heuristic strategy when processing the information of a message (Wood, Kallgren, & Preisler, 1985). Wood, Kallgren, and Preisler (1985), in particular, demonstrated the impact of the text length. Also Petty and Cacioppo (1984) supported the cue-based evaluation of the text validity, introducing the number of arguments heuristic. Other authors, in the past research, have analysed the style of the text and its influence on the recipient. Among those, Ludwig, de Ruyter, Friedman, Brüggen, Wetzels and Pfann (2013) observed that linguist styles can affect the recipient's perception of the source, leading to a positive bias. Reviews, according to Ludwig et al. (2013), have a greater impact on the recipients when they are conveyed using affective content, matching the linguistic style of the targeted audience. The linguistic style has the power to establish source similarity perceptions, revealing personality-related aspects of the source (Ludwig et al. 2013). This characteristic is remarkably important in the written-eWOM context, in that it's a virtual space characterised by anonymity. Slater and Rouner (1996) talk about *message quality* to refer to the stylistic quality of the message, which makes the recipient perceive the text as well-produced and well-written. The authors argue about a cognitive and affective evaluation, which does not consider necessarily the message arguments, but it is focused on its presentation, including a good organisation and style (Slater & Rouner, 1996). Slater and Rouner (1996) demonstrated that a good style influences also the judgment of the source, who will be perceived as more knowledgeable and expert in the eyes of the recipients.

With regard to visual cues, the first input, showing the relevance of visual information, is that most of the communication experts agree on the fact that at least two thirds of the communication is made by non-verbal information (Lin, Lu, & Wu, 2012). Mitchell and Olson (1981), manipulating the advertising content, varying it between verbal and visual, found out that the images, stored in memory, were associated to the brand. The scholars considered the connection between brand and images as a belief, demonstrating, as a consequence, that images have an impact on the recipient's beliefs (Mitchell & Olson, 1981). More connected to eWOM, the study of Lin, Lu and Wu (2012), demonstrated that visual information enhances the credibility of the eWOM reviews.

To sum up, source style, including both textual and visual cues, is an important determinant of perceived credibility in the written eWOM context, therefore it will be included in the model used in this research.

2.3.7 Confirmation of Prior Belief

> Beliefs and prior experiences retrieved from memory should represent a highly valid, trustworthy source of information on which to base one's opinions (Wood, Kallgren, & Preisler, 1985, p. 74).

Klayman and Ha (1987) argue about what they refer to as *confirmation bias* to indicate the tendency of people to verify their beliefs. The same theory is hold also by Lord, Ross and Lepper (1979), who demonstrate that people who have strong opinions on an issue tend to examine empirical evidence accepting easily the information supporting their expectations, but adopting a critical thinking on information which discredits their beliefs. The scholars suggest that it can be due to a propensity to remember the strengths of confirming evidence, considering it as more relevant and reliable, while to remember weaknesses of disconfirming information, and consequently considering it as unreliable and irrelevant (Lord, Ross & Lepper, 1979).

The impact of prior beliefs on perceived eWOM review credibility has been tested by Cheung et al. (2009), who demonstrate that the confirmation of prior belief has a positive impact on the perceived credibility of the review (see Figure 2.1). On the other hand, the study accomplished by Wood, Kallgren and Preisler (1985) distinguishes the impact of it looking at the type of recipient. Indeed, the authors state that low-retrieval recipients, so individuals with a low capacity to retrieve attitude relevant information, make a poor use of prior beliefs and experiences, when facing new information (Wood, Kallgren, & Preisler, 1985, p. 74). Wood, Kallgren and Preisler (1985) suggest also the role of involvement in helping the access to personal data.

2.3.8 Recommendation Rating

> Recommendation rating indicates the overall rating given by other readers on an eWOM recommendation (Cheung et al. 2009, p. 18).

The websites, where consumers upload reviews, allow the users to rate the recommendations according to some criteria, such as quality and utility, in a way that other users can check how previous readers evaluated the message (Cheung et al. 2009; Lis, 2013). Thus, according to Cheung et al. (2009), a high rating indicates that other readers agreed or were satisfied with the content, whereas a low rating stands for a negative readers' reaction. Since Cheung et al. (2009) and Lis (2913) demonstrate that a high rating has a positive influence on perceived eWOM review credibility, recommendation rating is included in the model shown in Figure 2.1.

2.3.9 Recommendation Consistency

In websites populated by online reviews, users have the possibility to compare the opinions of different reviewers and check the consistency of one review with the others (Cheung et al. 2009). Cheung et al. (2009) consider recommendation consistency as the degree to which one

review is consistent with the others, talking about the same product or service. Zhang and Watts (2003) demonstrate the relevance of information consistency in relation to the acceptance of the message. Information consistency refers to the extent to which some information is congruent with the prior knowledge of the recipient (Zhang & Watts, 2003), a heuristic process based on the perception that if prior knowledge was true, the new information, consistent with prior knowledge, is likely to be true as well.

Cheung et al. (2009) find that recommendation consistency has a positive effect on the perceived credibility of the eWOM message (see Figure 2.1). Their findings are supported by a study conducted by Qiu and Li (2010) about the interaction between aggregate ratings and individual reviews, in cases where the two are not consistent in valence. The study is run using the distinction between *product-related attributes* and *non-product-related attributes*. Indeed, using the concept of location well-established in theories of attribution, a positive or negative review can be caused by factors related to the product or external factors, such as the reviewer (Qiu & Li, 2010; Mizerski, 1982). Their findings show that product-related factors are positively associated with information credibility (Qiu & Li, 2010). The logic behind the findings, according to Qiu and Li (2010), is that when, for instance, a person reads a positive review which is accompanied by a negative aggregate rating, he or she may attribute the discrepancy to factors related to the reviewer, such as his or her inability to judge critically the product. Qiu and Li (2010) argue that, while a negative aggregate rating can influence a positive review, it is not possible to demonstrate the vice versa. This could be due to the presence of the negativity bias, which leads to give relevance to the single negative review (Qiu & Li, 2010).

2.3.10 Web Reputation

The relevance of the website reputation in driving credibility was demonstrated by Fogg, Marable, Soohoo, Stanford, Danielson and Tauber (2003) through a study of two similar websites, evaluating which features of a website people consider when assessing the credibility of it. From the study it emerged that the most affecting characteristic taken into account is the *website design* (Fogg et al. 2003). The participants in the study commented several times to look at the design of the website, including the typography, the white spaces, the images, the colours, and many other visual features (Fogg et al. 2003). However, according to Fogg et al. (2003), the design is not the only point noticed by people, who considered also the *information structure* as the second most important feature of a website in terms of its credibility. Indeed, the easier the website is to navigate, the higher is its perceived credibility (Fogg et al. 2003).

Even though Fogg et al. (2003) demonstrates the impact of website reputation at large on credibility, it is reasonable to explore further the concept from a point of view closer to eWOM. In particular, some evidence is provided by Park and Lee (2003) and Chih et al. (2012). The study conducted by Park and Lee (2003) explains the implications of the website reputation on the eWOM effect, demonstrating that the reputation of the site significantly impacts the effect of eWOM and it is greater when the website is established. Moreover, the effect is more evident in eWOM when the information is about experience goods rather than search goods. On the other hand, the study accomplished by Chih et al. (2012) contributes in

affirming a positive relationship between the website reputation and the credibility on positive eWOM reviews.

According to the Oxford Dictionaries (n.d.), reputation is defined as: "[a] widespread belief that someone or something has a particular characteristic." The adjective *widespread* makes reasonable to place the reputation in a social rather than individual context. Therefore, it seems logical to think of reputation as a social force impacting the on the perceived credibility of the individual, namely a normative determinant of credibility (see Figure 2.1).

2.3.11 Moderators

Cheung et al. (2009) include in their model three (3) moderators of perceived credibility: motivation, ability, and opportunity. Whereas opportunity, consisting in the reader's possibility of processing the information, is not relevant in the context of written eWOM, since recipients can control the pace of their reading, the relevance of the other two (2) moderators can be identified in the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). The ELM describes the process behind effective persuasive communication to induce attitude change, claiming that persuasion can adopt two (2) main routes, central and peripheral, based on the motivation and ability to process the information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The motivation to process the information, according to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), is affected by several variables, such as *personal relevance* and *need for cognition*. As aforementioned, need for cognition can moderate the impact of argument quality, since a subject high in need for cognition is more subjected to that determinant (Cacioppo, Petty & Morris, 1983). The most important motivational factor, according to Petty and Cacioppo (1986) is personal relevance, also referred to as involvement. Involvement enhances the cognitive processing of the information, strengthening the role of argument quality in the acceptance of the message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). Indeed, according to the authors, high involvement leads to a better recall of both strong and weak arguments, enhancing the persuasion of strong arguments, but decreasing the persuasion of weak ones (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). Petty and Cacioppo (1979; 1986) explore further, demonstrating that high involvement not only strengthens arguments importance, but also weakens the role of *nonmessage cues*, such as source expertise, source attractiveness, or number of endorsers, which reach their maximal influence in conditions characterised by low-involvement.

Conversely, the ability to process the information is affected by other factors, such as the repetition of the arguments, distraction, prior knowledge, and so forth (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The repetition of the arguments is not taken into account in this context, because the communication recipient can choose how many times to be exposed to the message. On the other hand, *distraction* can moderate the impact of argument quality in eWOM, since Petty and Cacioppo (1986) observed that, increasing distraction, it was possible to develop a more favourable attitude to a weak message, but a less favourable one to a strong message. Finally, in relation to *prior knowledge*, Petty and Cacioppo (1986) argue that people with high prior knowledge tend to change less toward the direction of the message, because of their ability to produce counter-arguments toward the message incongruences. Diversely, subjects with low

prior knowledge tend to make cue-based judgments (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Cheung et al. (2009) make the distinction between *prior knowledge of the review topic*, and *prior knowledge of the on-line consumer discussion* forum. They observed that the higher the recipient's knowledge about the topic, the lesser source credibility will affect his or her perceived credibility toward the message (Cheung et al. 2009). These findings are congruent with the ones of Petty and Cacioppo (1986) about cue-based judgments in low-prior knowledge situations. On the other hand, the second type of prior knowledge, related to the online platform, influences the role of recommendation ratings: the higher the prior knowledge about the website, the more the recipient will rely on recommendation ratings as heuristic strategy (Cheung et al. 2009). Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that people adopt this strategy when they know they can rely on the website.

In general:

> [a]ccording to the central/peripheral framework, when motivation or ability to expend cognitive effort are low, cues residing in any of these places may lead people to infer that they like or don't like the advocacy or that it is not worth supporting (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984, p. 78).

Other two (2) moderators, which have been found to be relevant in different studies, are *product type* and *issue type*. *Product type* refers to a product classification made by Peterson, Balasubramanian and Bronnenberg (1997), who distinguished goods in *search goods* and *experience goods*. While the formers are goods that can be assessed through external information, the latters are goods that have to be personally experienced in order to form a judgment (Peterson, Balasubramanian & Bronnenberg, 1997). For this reason, the authors suggest that the Internet is a good channel to convey information about search goods, but could be limited for experience ones (Peterson, Balasubramanian & Bronnenberg, 1997). However, Peterson, Balasubramanian and Bronnenberg (1997) refer to the current possibilities of the Internet at that time, suggesting that in the future it may be possible to provide information on the Internet far beyond verbal messages, increasing the experience consumers can live through this channel. A similar product classification is outlined by Holbrook and Moore (1981), who classify the products in *utilitarian* and *hedonic products*. Utilitarian products are evaluated mainly looking at pros and cons, while hedonic products are related to aesthetics and sensory experience (Holbrook & Moore, 1981). In a research project, Lin, Lu and Wu (2012) studied the influence of visual information on eWOM reviews, considering the moderator effect of product type. The authors adopted, as product classification, a combination of the product typologies depicted by both groups of research, defining four (4) types of products: *search-utilitarian*, *search-hedonic*, *experience-utilitarian*, and *experience hedonic* (Lin, Lu & Wu, 2012). They observed that visual information has an impact on eWOM review credibility for all the typologies of products other than *experience-utilitarian* ones, where the online environment seems not to be enough to make possible a proper evaluation of them. Another example, illustrated by Park and Lee (2009), shows that, when the message is about experience goods, people are less likely to possess information about the product, due to the fact that on the Internet it is easier to collect information on search goods (Peterson, Balasubramanian, & Bronnenberg, 1997). As a consequence, the uncertainty and fear created by negative-valenced information is enhanced by the lack of

information associated to the experience good, which makes the product type perform the role of moderator for the recommendation frame of the review (Park & Lee, 2009).

With regard to the *issue type*, Kaplan and Miller (1987) introduce the type of issue as a moderator of informational and normative determinants. According to their findings, Kaplan and Miller (1987) show that *intellective issues*, defined as tasks which have a correct and supportable solution (Laughlin, & Earley, 1982), are more subjected to informational influences, whereas *judgmental issues*, involving more ethical, behavioural and attitudinal judgments (Laughlin, & Earley, 1982), tend to be more vulnerable to normative influences. To summarise, *motivation*, *ability*, *product type*, and *issue type* are moderators, which have been uncovered by different studies in the course of several years of research. Because of their significant impact on the written-eWOM determinants, they will be included in the integrated model provided by this theoretical review (see Figure 2.1).

INFORMATIONAL DETERMINANTS

ARGUMENT QUALITY

RECOMMENDATION FRAMING

RECOMMENDATION SIDEDNESS

SOURCE CREDIBILITY

- Source Expertise

- Source Trustworthiness

-Source Attractiveness

SOURCE STYLE

CONFIRMATION OF PRIOR

BELIEF

MODERATORS

MOTIVATION

- Need for Cognition

-Personal Relevance

ABILITY

- Distraction

- Prior Knowledge

PRODUCT TYPE

ISSUE TYPE

PERCEIVED eWOM REVIEW CREDIBILITY

NORMATIVE DETERMINANTS

RECOMMENDATION RATING
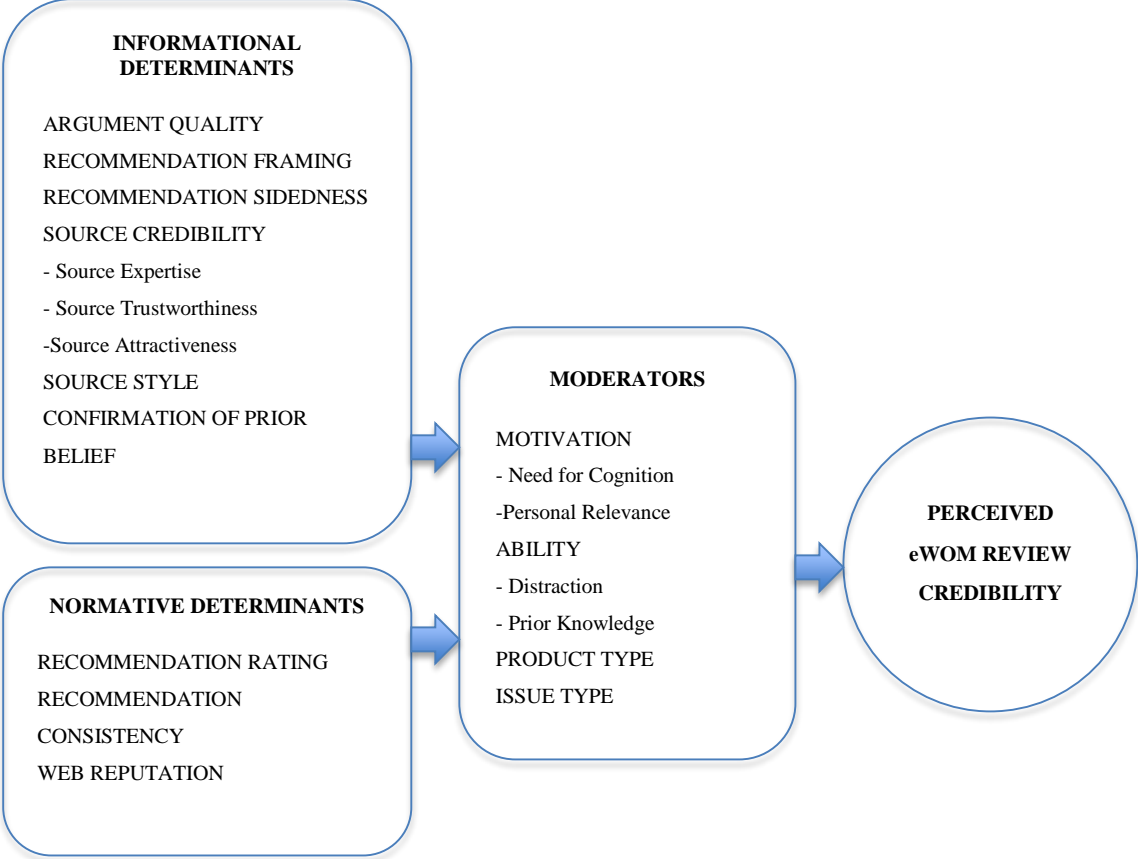
RECOMMENDATION CONSISTENCY

WEB REPUTATION

Figure 2.1 Summary of the written eWOM determinants of perceived credibility.

2.4 Video eWOM

This section will highlight some studies that has been conducted so far in the context of video eWOM, and that can be linked to the concept of credibility. Video reviews have not received much attention until now, because of the prevalence on the Internet of text-format reviews (Xu, Chen, & Santhanam, 2015). However, recently, companies like Amazon.com are encouraging consumers to post on their websites reviews in video format, and the reason why videos are gaining success, according to Rosensteel (2012), is because the attention span of people is decreasing and watching a video can capture the attention for a longer time than a written text. Evidence in the environment can support the upcoming emergence of video reviews in the society, such as the availability of webcams in most of daily life devices (Rosensteel, 2012). Nowadays, consumers have the possibility to upload, share, comment, and rate videos in different channels using online platforms referred to as *video-sharing websites* (Cheng, Dale, Liu, 2013). Video-sharing websites offer people the opportunity to interact each other, creating virtual communities gravitating around videos and channels about topic of interest (Cheng, Dale, Liu, 2013). One of the popular modalities of uploaded videos is the *videoblog*, a video type where people broadcast themselves in front of the camera (Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2014). From the researchers' personal experience, videoblogs play a consistent role in video reviews, since most of the time reviewers show themselves to the audience.

A recent study, conducted by Xu, Chen, and Santhanam (2015), compares, in a laboratory experiment, different review formats – text, images, and videos – in relation to the product type – search goods and experience goods. The reason for the comparison was due, according to Xu, Chen, and Santhanam (2015), to the increasing presence on the Internet of video reviews, and for the peculiarity of videos to convey realistic visual cues, dynamic movements, and sound, making them different from written information (Morrain & Swarts, 2012). The authors' assumptions find support in their findings, which confirm that the presentation format has an impact on the consumers' perceptions, but this effect is moderated by the product type (Xu, Chen, & Santhanam, 2015). Video-review effects on viewers are superior for experience goods than search goods, suggesting a vicarious experience the viewers can live through the camera (Xu, Chen, & Santhanam 2015). In fact, according to Peterson, Balasubramanian and Bronnenberg (1997), experience goods have to be experienced in order to be understood, and the Internet, at least until the appearance of videos, was able just to provide factual information, which is helpful for search goods, but not for experience ones. Videos can display the consumers' experiences, which seems to bring the viewer closer to the real product experience (Xu, Chen, & Santhanam 2015). Furthermore, video and text review formats have different effects depending on the communication source as well. Indeed, Chaiken and Eagly (1983) demonstrated in a study that likeable communicators are likely to be more persuasive in videotapes, whereas unlikeable communicators tend to be more persuasive in text formats. These results suggest that video formats increase the relevance of the source in comparison to the content of the message (Chaiken & Eagly, 1983), a fact that could be explained by the higher amount of nonverbal cues, which characterise videos (Chaiken & Eagly, 1976). Chaiken and Eagly (1983) add that for complex topics the text

format is more persuasive and leads to a better comprehension than the video format, but for simple messages videotapes are more persuasive (Chaiken & Eagly, 1976).

The primary importance of the source in videotapes, underlined by Chaiken and Eagly (1983), is further supported in another study, conducted by English, Sweetser, and Ancu (2011), about the political-videos influence on YouTube viewers, which showed that source credibility is the most impactful appeal in online videos, overcoming arguments and emotions. For instance, the authors found that the humour appeal, used in a context of health-care, is perceived as less credible than an expert source. Source credibility could be particularly evident in videoblogs, where reviewers can harness their faces and gestures to show their personalities (Biel, Tsiminaki, Dines & Gatica-Perez, 2013). The results about source credibility of English, Sweetser, and Ancu (2011), are supported also by Yu and Natalia (2013). Interestingly, Yu and Natalia (2013) also noticed that, in video reviews, the most appreciated characteristic by consumers was to see the product in action during the review, an aspect not present in written eWOM that should be further analysed. Furthermore, in videotapes, the product can be seen in its totality, from a three-dimensional perspective, which enhances the experience provided by a picture (Rosensteel, 2012).

Another study about video eWOM, always conducted using YouTube as platform, underlined other aspects of the message. Looking at the quantity of posts, views, and reviews Mir and Rehman (2013) found a positive relationship between those information sources and the viewer's perceived credibility. Their results are supported by another research study conducted by Paek, Hove and Jeon (2013), showing that the number of viewers positively influences the perception of the message content of the video. Paek, Hove and Jeon (2013), other than the number of viewers, focused their study on the *message sensation value*, defined by Palmgreen, Donohew, Lorch, Rogus, Helm and Grant (1991) as "the degree to which formal and content audio-visual features of a televised message elicit sensory, affective and arousal responses" (p. 219). According to Stephenson (2003), message sensation value is a combination of music, multiple cuts and edits, lighting, camera angles, zoom, and close-ups. The results of Paek, Hove and Jeon (2013) on message sensation value point out that it increases the odds of favourable responses to the content of the message. Furthermore, Paek, Hove and Jeon (2013) suggest that, comparing videos created by laypeople or professional people, the layperson could be trusted less if the content of the message is about a serious issue.

2.5 Videos: Cardinal Features and Nonverbal Communication

In the previous section, it has been argued that video eWOM is still an under-researched field. In order to enhance the understanding of this context, it is necessary to borrow some of the theories developed in other related fields. For this reason, the following section will develop an explanation about video communication features and nonverbal communication. The former topic is addressed since the main property of video eWOM is the video, so it is crucial to analyse its characteristics. Theories on nonverbal communication, on the other hand, will

be argued since video-format reviews involve a remarkable use of human senses, able to capture nonverbal cues, including, according to Hall and Knapp (2013), factors such as facial expressions, gestures, voice, and many others.

2.5.1 Emotional Elicitation of Video Communication and Its Features

All the visual features can come with emotional associations, based on individual experiences, biology and cultural influences (Messaris, 1997). According to Bang (1991, cited in Messaris, 1997), people associate colours, shapes and other pictorial elements with their experiences in the reality, thus linking them to emotions. Emotional elicitation triggered by images is a technique widely implemented in advertising, creating an emotional disposition toward the product, social causes, politicians or whatever the ad is about (Messaris, 1997). The association between images and emotions is generated by interactions in the social and natural environment, and so linking for example specific gestures, facial expressions, or physical surroundings to particular emotions (Messaris, 1997). Using some variables, able to control the viewers' perspectives such as the degree of proximity, angle of view, or presence of subjective shots (Messaris, 1997), it seems possible to provoke different kind of reactions in the viewers. According to Messaris (1997), techniques as looking at the camera can be effective to engage the interest and attention of the viewers, making the speaker above board and transparent. Additionally, elements, like viewing distance, operate in a similar way than in the real world interactions, in which proximity encourages higher level of involvement and attention, but, on the other hand, too much proximity can create a hostile appearance (Messaris, 1997).

Videos possess many visual features that seem to be important for the assessment of credibility. According to Niu and Liu (2012), the quality and professionalism of a video depend on its visual features, such as *camera motion*, *shot length*, *lighting* and *illumination*, *focus control* and *depth of field*, *colour palette*, and so forth. One of the main differences between an amateur and a professional video is the intentional management of the visual features (Niu & Liu, 2012). According to Brown (2012), the placement of the camera has the power to control what the viewer sees and from which perspective. The *camera motion* has to be motivated, since unmotivated movements can distract the viewers, making them conscious that what they are watching is not real (Brown, 2012). A second video feature is *shot length*. Shots represent elemental operational units of a movie, which are going to be joint together via cuts (Kraft, 1986). According to Kraft (1986) "sequences with cutting were preferred over uncut sequences and were judged to be significantly more interesting, more active, stronger, and quicker that sequences without cutting" (p. 161). *Lighting*, conversely, has the power to affect the moods and feelings of the viewers (Jackman, 2010). According to Jackman (2010), lighting is important to have a proper video exposure, and a bad management of it could lead the scenes to be under or overexposed. A fourth element of videos is the *focus control* and the *depth of field*. According to Niu and Liu (2012), filmmakers typically keep the focus in the subject of interest to drive the viewers' attention, using techniques as blurring the background. On the other hand, in relation to *colour palette*, the colour appearance of an object or image is influenced by different factors, such as light sources, the media, the background colours and the luminance levels (Luo, 1998). The *length* is another video feature

and, according to MacInnis and Jaworski (1989), the information processing can be affected when the presentation of the brand information is limited, for example by time constraints. Furthermore, Singh and Cole (1993) tested the length of two types of video commercials, one lasting 15 seconds, and the other 30 seconds. In their study they found out that the length effect is significant only in emotional commercials, where the 30-second video obtained a better score in attitude toward the brand, but resulting irrelevant in informational ones (Singh & Cole, 1993). Other two features, other than the ones pointed out by Niu and Liu (2012) can be added as components of videos: the *first impression*, and *indexicality*. According to Lingaard, Fernandes, Dudek and Browñ (2006), people can assess visual appeals in 50 milliseconds. In other words, the first impression about a visual stimulus can be formed in an extremely short timespan. Since videos are composed by a sequence of visual shots, *first impression* can be included among the features characterizing videos. This characteristic is even more important if considering that first impressions are relevant in assessing the information as credible (McKnight & Kacmar, 2006). Halvorson (2015) contends that impressions happen very rapidly and "[f]irst impressions are important in particular because they are so stubborn. It's very, very difficult to change an impression. It's totally possible. But there is no easy way to do it" (n.p.). The resistance of them is due to the fact that the human brain is exceptionally good at ignoring and reinterpreting information, in a way to make it consistent to what the person already believes to be true (Halvorson, 2015). On the other hand, with respect to *indexicality*, Messaris (1997) illustrates how pictures characteristic to record the reality automatically give them an authenticity which cannot be found in words: "[a]s Jacob Javits's statement points out, photographs come with an inherent guarantee of authenticity that is absent from words" (p. 141). However, in this process there are several forms of interventions by humans, which can alter the truthful record of reality (Messaris, 1997). Since videos are a sequence of visual shots, indexicality is an aspect that can be reasonably associated to videos other than photographs.

2.5.2 Perception and Nonverbal Communication

According to Schiff (1980), perception involves being aware of the world and its characteristics, and obtaining information with the human's sense organs and sense-organ systems. People's judgments, intentions, likes, dislikes, and social roles are based on their visual perception (Schiff, 1980). Video reviews are a form of communication, which involve a communicator, the reviewer, and a recipient, the viewer, creating a social interaction. In a context characterized by social interactions, *social perception* plays a significant role. Indeed, social perception, which can also be referred to as *social cognition*, stands for obtaining and using information about people and social encounters to formulate judgments about them, classifying and remembering social interactions and personal characteristics (Schiff, 1980). One of the most important information source used by people to draw impressions about others are the physical characteristics, such as size, height, facial configuration, gender, clothes, grooming, and so forth (Schiff, 1980). Besides, nonphysical and more abstract characteristics play a role as well, exhibiting in people's tendency to describe others as outgoing, talkative, boring, and so on (Schiff, 1980). According to Schiff (1980), nonverbal communication is relevant in affecting social perception. Hall and Knapp (2013) defined nonverbal cues as "all potentially informative behaviours that are not purely linguistic in

content" (p. 6). Nonverbal communication extends to facial expressions, eye behaviour, body posture, interpersonal distance, clothing, qualities of the voice – pitch, loudness, speed – and many other factors (Hall & Knapp, 2013). Among those, facial expressions have received much attention in the past research, and its relevance is so evident that some researchers claimed that the other factors are useful only to enhance the information that receivers gather from facial cues (Halberstadt, Parker & Castro, 2013). It is crucial to highlight that verbal and nonverbal communication interplay each other to convey a single meaning (Hall & Knapp, 2013). In the following sections, the main nonverbal cues will be discussed thoroughly.

2.5.2.1   Facial Expressions

People normally identify individuals by their face, because it carries and communicate several information about a person, such as gender, age, health, social status as well as their character, intentions, affective states and so on (Kappas, Krumhuber & Küster, 2013; Ekman & Friesen, 2003). According to Ekman and Friesen (2003), the face is a multi-signal system that provides three types of signals: *static*, *slow* and *rapid*. *Static signals* refer to more or less permanent facial characteristics, such as location of the facial features or bone structure (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). *Slow signals*, on the other hand, are subjected to changes that occur gradually with time, like permanent wrinkles (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). Finally, the *rapid signals* are the ones producing temporal changes in the face, due to the activation of facials muscles (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). According to Ekman and Friesen (2003), these are the ones transmitting emotion messages externally (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). Even though static and slow signals have not the capability to convey emotions, they can affect the message interpretation (Ekman & Friesen, 2003).

One of the key points of facial expressions is their relationship with emotions (Kappas, Krumhuber & Küster, 2013). According to Ekman (1999), emotional expressions are critical in the development and regulation of interpersonal relationships. As a result of his research, Ekman (1999) noticed that people affected by congenital paralysis have difficulties in developing and maintaining casual relationships, due to their lack of facial expressiveness. It is important to remember that that humans can pretend emotional expressions, showing emotions they are not truly experiencing in a particular moment, for example faking a smile (Ekman, 1999). Additionally, people can modify their facial signals, for instance using makeup, sunglasses or changing their hairstyle (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). Porter and Brinke (2009), referring to legal psychology, contend that facial expressions are crucial to assess credibility, and can influence the evaluation of the defendant's credibility in the courtroom.

2.5.2.2   Eye Behaviour

Eyes are often considered as the *window of the soul*, because one, from the eyes, can understand the true intentions of the person (Adams, Nelson & Purring, 2013). According to Adams, Nelson and Purring (2013), people have a natural inclination to process information from the eyes. Besides, eye contact increases the relevance of the information conveyed by the speaker, because if the recipient is looked in the eyes, he or she can understand that the

message is implying specifically him or her, increasing, as a consequence, the relevance of it (Adams, Nelson & Purring, 2013). Generally, emotions such as sadness, embarrassment, or fear, have been associated with averted eye contact, whereas emotions like joy, love, or interest are typically associated with direct eye contact. According to Halvorson (2015), eye contact allows the communicator to project warmth to the recipient. This characteristic is fundamental since warmth, interpreted as being friendly, is essential to build trust: "[i]f you have colleagues, you're working with new people and you want them to feel like you're someone that they can trust and they can count on, it's absolutely essential to project warmth." (Halvorson, 2015, n.p.).

2.5.2.3   Gestures and Body Movements

Gestures, according to Bull and Doody (2013), are important to communicate emotions and attitudes. They are defined by Bull and Doody (2013) as "visible body action[s] which communicate a message" (p. 206). Gestures are mostly synchronized with a speech, with its meaning, syntax, and vocal stresses (Bull & Doody, 2013). According to Woodal and Burgoon (1981), subjects are more persuaded by highly synchronized messages, affecting also the comprehension of those. Moreover, Woodal and Burgoon (1981) affirmed in their study that highly synchronized messages deliver higher credibility, and lead to higher levels of attentiveness, recall, and willingness to accept the message.

2.5.2.4   Clothing and Makeup

The clothes people wear are a principal element in the appearance, which can influence the impression formation of the others (Judd, Bull & Gahagan, 1975). Based on the stereotypes associated to specific wearing styles, clothes have an impact on the impression formation, according to Coursey (1973). For instance, Morris, Gorham, Cohen and Huffman (1996) demonstrated that formal-dressed people are perceived as more knowledgeable and competent, but at the same time less extroverted and kind. Additionally, Mckeachie (1952) found that the first impression of a girl can be affected by the use or lack of lipstick. According to O'Neal and Lapitsky (1991), when there is a match between the clothes the source is wearing and the context, people assign a higher level of credibility and increase their intention to purchase.

2.5.2.5   Voice and Accent

Through respiration, phonation and articulation of the voice, the listener can assess important contextual information (Patel & Scherer, 2013). According to Patel and Scherer (2013), three major features of vocal behaviour can be distinguished: *traits*, *states*, and *intentions*. *Traits* can be defined as more stable speaker's characteristics, such as age, sex, size, social status, personality, native language, and so forth (Patel & Scherer, 2013). *States*, on the other hand, refers to short-term changes such as fatigue, intoxication, mood, and hormonal cycles (Patel & Scherer, 2013). *Intentions*, finally, are deliberately emitted sounds intended to inform the

listener about something (Patel & Scherer, 2013). Indeed, speech can be partly controlled by human beings, because vocal signals are determined by conscious activities (Patel & Scherer 2013).

Related to voice, source *accent*, according to Tsalikis, DeShields and LaTour (1991), is a significant dimension of source credibility. DeShields, Kara and Kaynak (1996), found that, when selling, standard accents have a positive impact on the listener's purchase intention, compared with unusual accents. The results of DeShields, Kara and Kaynak (1996) are supported by Tsalikis, DeShields and LaTour (1991), who showed in a study involving American participants that people with standard American accents were perceived as more credible, intelligent, honest, clear, professional, knowledgeable, and convincing than people with American/Greek accents.

2.5.2.6 Physical Attractiveness

Physically attractive models and actors have been used by advertisers to enhance the message effectiveness (Joseph, 1982). Horai, Naccari and Fatoullah (1974) found that people tend to like and agree more with physically attractive sources. Additionally, Chaiken (1979) stated that physically attractive sources may be more persuasive than non-attractive ones, and they may be better communicators. Furthermore, DeShields, Kara and Kaynak (1996), showed that physically attractive people generate higher purchase intentions.

The impact of physical attractiveness can be explained drawing upon a universal assumption that people usually make when they have to judge other people, which is called *halo effect* (Halvorson, 2015). Halvorson (2015) explains in her podcast that individuals tend to infer from a quality of a person other qualities that are not related to the first one. For instance, "we tend to believe that attractive people are also more likely to be warm, and honest, and intelligent, even though logically that's not true at all" (Halvorson, 2015, n.p.).

2.5.2.7 Physical Environment

The physical environment is another way to communicate without words. Indeed, according to Gosling, Ko, Mannarelli and Morris (2002), people form impressions of a person, based on the physical features of the surrounding environment. For instance, in their study, participants thought that colourful rooms belonged to extroverted people (Gosling et al. 2002).

2.5.2.8 Demonstrations

Another form of nonverbal communication lays its foundation in the *vicarious learning*, defined by Nord and Peter (1980) as a "process which attempts to change behavior by having an individual observe the actions of others (i.e., models) and the consequences of those behaviors". Similar to video reviews, vicarious learning is a phenomenon which can be found in *infomercial*, a particular form of advertising, which combines traditional advertisements

with direct experience (Singh, Balasubramanian & Chakraborty, 2000). One of the peculiar aspects of infomercials, according to Singh, Balasubramanian, and Chakraborty (2000), is the presence of demonstrations. Demonstrations harness the vicarious learning, which has the power to educate the consumers to the use of new products, and raise the likelihood that potential customers follow the message conveyed by the advertisement (Nord & Peter, 2000). If the person doing the demonstration is showed while living a good experience, or if the recipient of the message can clearly see the effects of the product on the person who is trying it, the probability of purchase tends to increase (Nord & Peter, 2000). The direct experience leads to a higher level of acceptance of the message, and to a higher consistency between the recipient's attitude and behaviour, given the fact that people trust more their own experiences (Smith & Swinyard, 1983; Singh, Balasubramanian & Chakraborty, 2000). Furthermore, the vicarious learning is more effective if there is a strong fit between the person who makes the demonstration and the product shown, because the viewer tends to associate in a stronger way the benefits of the product to that person, and so increasing the level of acceptance of the message (Singh, Balasubramanian & Chakraborty, 2000).

2.6 Chapter Summary

DETERMINANTS OF CREDIBILITY	DETERMINANTS OF CREDIBILITY	FEATURES
In Written eWOM	In Video eWOM	Of Videos and Nonverbal Communication

Figure 2.2 Research model.

In this chapter it has been developed a discussion of the relevant literature and theories, necessary to explore the under-researched field of video eWOM. For this reason, after clarifying the definitions of the key concepts adopted in this research project, the written eWOM determinants of perceived credibility, uncovered over the years by several researchers, have been integrated in a unique and integrative model. Furthermore, a review of the research conducted so far on video eWOM has been presented, in order to provide a complete overview of the research context. Since much research still needs to be pursued in this field, an explanation of the related-fields theories has been provided, in particular covering the aspects of video features and nonverbal communication. Through the support of these theories along with the integrative model, the research project can be developed with an exhaustive background. The model shown in Figure 2.2 is the one that will be adopted in the current project, in that it is comprehensive of all the aspects afore mentioned in this chapter.

3 Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with a description of the methodology adopted in order to collect and analyse data, together with the perspectives employed toward the empirical study. For this reason, the first part of the chapter will explain the philosophy, the approach, the strategy, the research choice, and the time horizon employed in the process. Subsequently, a second part will focus on the collection and analysis of data, discussing the reasons behind the selected techniques and procedures. A concluding part, finally, will introduce some considerations related to the validity and reliability of the study, presented together with some reflections about ethical and political issues, which could be related to the current study.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The definition of the research philosophy, according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), will influence the way in which the researchers answer to the research question. Our study adopted a *social constructionist view* which, according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2008), is based on the idea that "'reality' is determined by people rather than by objective and external factors" (p. 59). When studying social phenomena, social scientists should be concerned with "the different constructions and meanings that people place upon their experience" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008, p.59). This philosophy matched with our research purpose, because the aim was to study a social phenomenon, and every experience, feeling or thought of the participants was observed and taken into account to formulate the results. Furthermore, social constructionism enables to address new issues and contribute to the evolution of new theories (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008), therefore was suitable for our research purpose of building a theoretical model, explaining the determinants that affect the perceived credibility in video eWOM reviews.

3.2 Research Approach

The research followed mainly an inductive approach with the purpose of building a theory from the interpretation of the collected data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) contend that through an inductive approach is possible to gain and understand the meaning that people attach to events.

The choice of adopting an inductive approach was due to the lack of theory about video eWOM, which made reasonable to collect and analyse data with the purpose of generating a new theory. Although the research was based mainly on an inductive approach, some attributes of a deductive approach were employed, especially in the formulation of some questions, where previous determinants that affected the perceived credibility of written reviews, along with some theories about videos and nonverbal communication, were borrowed in order to study video eWOM.

3.3 Research Strategy

The research strategy drew upon a variation of *grounded theory*, which is defined by Glasser (1992, cited in Davis & McDonagh, 2015, p. 455) as "a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area". One of the main reasons for using this strategy is stated by Locke (2001), who affirmed that grounded theory is particularly appropriate when a research project is aimed at developing a theory in new or understudied areas. At the best of our knowledge, only a few studies had been conducted so far about video eWOM and perceived credibility, thus grounded theory appeared to be suitable for our purpose. Through this strategy, it would be possible to categorize the data and generate a theory. On the other hand, we applied a variant of grounded theory, since some theoretical background was taken into account, in order to define the gap in video eWOM and dig deeper in this area. This procedure was reasonable since, according to Bryman and Bell (2011), it is unlikely that a researcher can avoid previous theories or concepts before undertaking a research. However, the empirical research was carried remaining open to uncover new categories, not defined in the past studies.

3.4 Research Choice

This project adopted a *mono method*, consisting in the "use of single data collection technique and corresponding analysis procedures" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p.151). In particular, the research was defined upon a *qualitative mono method*, based on semi-structured interviews supported by two other tools: photo-elicitation and list of thoughts. Taking into consideration that the object of study were the *determinants of perceived credibility*, a qualitative method was appropriate to reach a better understanding of *how* and *in which ways* video eWOM reviews are perceived as credible, since qualitative research emphasizes the ways in which individuals interpret their social world (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Furthermore, the qualitative study was preferred over a quantitative one, because the generalization of the findings was not part of our research objectives.

3.5 Time Horizon

We decided to use a *cross sectional study*, meaning that data was collected at a single point of time (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The reason behind such a choice was that the purpose was not to analyse the evolution of a phenomenon, but have an understanding of the current situation of it. Indeed, before studying how the determinants of perceived credibility in video eWOM evolve in time, it is reasonable to have a preliminary understanding at a single point in time.

3.6 Techniques and Procedures

3.6.1 Data Collection

Supported by the fact that our research question and purpose required an understanding of the respondents' beliefs and opinions, the data was collected adopting *semi-structured interviews*, along with *list of thoughts* and *photo elicitation*. Indeed, as stated by Kvale (1996), "the qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (p. 1). The selected technique was suitable to uncover the consumer cognitive process and identify which are the determinants that affect the perceived credibility in video eWOM. Additionally, interviews were conducted following a *romanticism* position, considering them as ways to engage in real conversations, promoting authenticity and exploring the participants' inner world and social reality, through the establishment of trust and commitment with the interviewees (Alvesson, 2003).

We implemented *semi-structured interviews*, because the respondents' answers tend to be more personal when using less structured formats (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008). Additionally, semi-structured interviews highlight what is relevant for the respondents, who can develop more their thoughts, thanks to the flexibility of the format (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Some of the questions were structured in ways to observe if the determinants of perceived credibility, uncovered by scholars in written eWOM, were also applicable to video eWOM, and other questions were aimed at revealing new determinants, more related to the context of video eWOM. An interview guide was created to carry on the interviews and making sure that all the areas and topics, needed to be covered, were investigated during each session (Bryman & Bell, 2011) (see Appendix A).

During the interviews, the participants interacted with five (5) videos, constituting reviews on YouTube about L'Oréal Elvive Extraordinary Oil. The videos were selected in a way to differ under several aspects – source, style, number of views, valence, and so forth – which were relevant in order to obtain an answer to the research question (see Appendix B). Furthermore, the choice of the product was due to three (3) main reasons. At first, the product was selected

because belonging to the beauty industry, particularly affected by video reviews online. Second, L'Oréal Elvive Extraordinary Oil is a product that seemed to have a perceptible effect on the consumers' hair, thus was considered to be adequate for assessing some visual elements related to it. Third, it was crucial for obtaining refined results, since it presented many reviews differing under several aspects, a factor which could have helped the respondents and interviewers to focus the determinants leading to the video-review perceived credibility.

The participants' interaction with the videos made possible to employ *photo elicitation*. Photo elicitation harnesses the power of photographs, which help the participants to reflect upon an event, object or emotion (Bryman & Bell. 2011). In the context of this research, it was used a variant of photo elicitation, since videos were adopted instead of photographs. The first reason to implement photo elicitation was concerned to the observation of the participants' interaction with the videos, in order to guarantee a better probing during the following interview. Second, Bryman and Bell (2011) claimed that photographs help recall events from the past, or express complex emotions. In this case, the images conveyed through the videos had a threefold function: refresh the past experiences of the expert users of video reviews, provide inexperienced participants with a real experience to discuss about, and help all the participants in expressing their emotions through the use of examples.

During the view of the videos, the participants were asked to record their thoughts and opinions on a paper, called *list of thoughts* (see Appendix C). The aim of the list of thoughts was to understand which elements were relevant in impacting on their perception of credibility, and to foster the participants' attention during the process. Indeed, the task of writing down the thoughts on a piece of paper, forced the participants to pay more attention to the details present in each video, and helped them recalling their opinions during the interview.

With regard to the procedure, the interviews were conducted in presence of both the researches, who played the role of interviewers. A quiet and private setting was chosen to avoid any interruptions of the process. Besides, recording was used instead of taking notes, because it ensured that we could pay as much attention as possible, being alert on *what* people said and *the way* they said it (Bryman & Bell, 2011). At the beginning of the procedure, the participants were sitting in front of a computer, and had to read and sign an introductory document, attached to the list of thoughts, including the instructions and the terms of the interviews (see Appendix C). In the document, the participants were informed of the objective of the study and the tasks to be accomplished during the process. In the same document the participants found the list of thoughts, together with the instructions of how to complete the task. After being sure the interviewees fully understood the instructions, they could start watching the videos in the most natural way, as they normally did at home. The video sequence was each time randomised to avoid biases due to the order of exposure. During the interaction with the videos, the participants completed the list of thoughts. Subsequent this phase, the semi-structured interviews begun with the participants reading and arguing what was written in the list of thoughts. Afterwards, following the interview guide, the thoughts and the areas, which were not covered yet, could be investigated. In order to dig deeper in the

mental processes of the respondents, the technique of probing was exploited in ways that the underlying or hidden information could be effectively uncovered (Malhotra, 2008).

3.6.2 Sampling

According Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2008) the purpose of using a sample for the data collection is to make statements about the population that the sample represents. Sampling in a wrong way could lead to conclusions not referable to the population, and so undermining the accuracy of the results (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008). Thus, in order to ensure the respect of the two basic sampling principles, *representativeness* and *precision* (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008), we followed the five (5) steps of a sampling design depicted by Malhotra (2008), including the determination of *target population*, the *sampling frame*, the *sampling technique*, the *sample size*, and the *execution the sampling process.*

With respect to the *target population*, it was necessary to narrow down the population to the audience the video-reviewed product was referred to. Indeed, nowadays there are approximately three (3) billion Internet user worldwide (United Nations, 2014), among whom one (1) billion of them have interacted with YouTube (YouTube, 2015), which makes it one of the largest provider of video user-generated reviews. Using the product as a way to filter the YouTube population, the sample was characterised by females, since L'Oréal Elvive Extraordinary Oil targets women. With respect to the age, the participants had to be between 20 and 30 years old since, at the best of our knowledge, this seemed to be a population particularly involved with this kind of video reviews, making them a suitable audience for the selected videos. A further requirement was that the participants had not to have used the product before, allowing to exclude from the study prior beliefs related to the past experience with the product, which might have strongly biased the results. Moreover, the participants had to be able to communicate in English, the language chosen to conduct the interviews, and to have the possibility to reach Lund for the interviews, which were conducted all in the same place, excluding the possibility to perform them via telephone or Skype. With regard to the second step, the *sampling frame* was formed adopting the available contacts, who met the requirements afore determined in relation to the target population. Conversely, the *sample technique* consisted in a *traditional* and *non-probability sampling*, since the objective of the study was not to generalise the results, but to obtain a deep understanding of the respondents' opinions. In particular, we applied a *judgmental sampling*, in which the sample was selected on the basis of our judgments (Malhotra, 2008). Moreover, the *sample size* was determined to find sufficient data for our research purpose, while considering the time constraints. Indeed, 13 participants were selected, among whom one (1) attended the pilot study. The last step, the *execution of the sampling process*, was implemented contacting the selected people through their Facebook contacts.

3.6.3 Data Analysis

The data was analysed using grounded analysis, based on grounded theory, which offers an open approach towards the collected data and where "data is systematically analysed so as to tease out themes, pattern and categories that will be declared in the findings" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008, p. 175). One of the main steps of grounded analysis is *coding*, consisting in breaking data in different pieces, and assigning labels to the components that seem to have theoretical significance, or that are relevant in the respondents' social world (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Coding was essential in the data analysis, because it allowed to find common patterns in the interview transcriptions (see Appendix D). In the coding process, the labels, assigned to the codes related to concepts equal to the ones found in written eWOM, were made consistent with the names adopted by previous studies (e.g. argument quality, expertise, sidedness), whereas new names were assigned to the new codes. Subsequent the coding process, the quotations related to each code were gathered together in order to create a *list of quotations* (see Appendix E), which allowed to identify the common patterns in the participants' opinions, and to group together similar codes, creating the *categories* (see Appendix F). Finally, the categories have been considered as the determinants of perceived credibility in video eWOM.

All over the process a *constant comparison* was implemented in order to maintain a close relationship between the data and conceptualisation (Bryman & Bell, 2011), in a way to provide consistency among data, codes, and categories. The analysis was conducted in a thorough way, making sure that each transcription was double-checked by both researchers, reducing the risk of misinterpretations. Moreover, an aspect to take into account was the fact that the interviews were performed in English, which is not the native language for both us and the participants, opening the chance of misinterpretations during the communication. This aspect was considered particularly during the data analysis, in order to understand the real meaning that the participants attached to the words.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), it is hard to anticipate whether the research findings will be right or accurate, but researches should pay attention in the validity and reliability to reduce the chance of obtaining wrong answers. Validity is "the extent to which measures and research findings provide accurate representation of the things they are supposed to be describing" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008, p. 334). The validity of this study, contextualised in the social constructionist philosophy, was measured by the clear access to the participants' experiences (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008). In the current research, at the beginning it was conducted a pilot study, since its function was to test if the empirical research would have worked properly (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The pilot study was essential to safeguard the validity of the research, because we were able to adapt many of the questions included in the interview guide, and, at the same time, it provided insights on how we had to approach the participants during the process. Moreover, the validity was

further ensured by the fact that the participants could freely express their opinions using the list of thoughts, and they were probed during the interviews in order to gain a better understanding of their perceptions. One negative point, in terms of validity, was due to the language issue afore mentioned, which we tried to overcome through probing, and so verifying what the participants meant during the interview, and paying more attention during the data analysis.

With regard to reliability, according to the social constructionist philosophy applied in this research, a study is reliable depending if it can answer to the following question: "[i]s there transparency about how sense was made from the raw data?" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008, p.109). Besides, reliability is described by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) as "the extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings" (p.156). In our study, reliability was accomplished using a systematic procedure, composed of definite steps regarding the data collection and analysis, which was maintained for all of the interviews. Furthermore, transparency was guaranteed by the fact that everything we performed, could be also read.

According to Robson (2002) there are four elements that can affect reliability: *participant error*, *participant bias*, *observer error*, and *observer bias*. *Participant error* refers to the fluctuation in the participants' answers, due to factors such as the time when the participants attend the interviews (Robson 2002). To control this threat, when possible the interviews were conducted in the morning to avoid tiredness symptoms. *Participants bias*, conversely, is when participants say what they think the interviewers expect from them (Robson 2002). Even though it was not possible to fully ensure the avoidance of this bias, in order to reduce it we indicated in the instructions the research objectives, through which the participants could understand the importance of acting honestly, and we guaranteed the anonymity of their answers. On the other hand, *observer error* refers to errors related to the data collection (Robson 2002). To guarantee reliability, the researchers used techniques as probing, leading to a better understanding of the participants' inner world. Moreover, the list of thoughts guaranteed that the initial step of data collection was accomplished reducing the presence of biases. Finally, *observer bias* consists in the misinterpretation of the collected data (Robson 2002). On the one hand, grounded analysis ensured a systematic process, and, on the other hand, each transcription was double-checked by both researchers, assuring more accurate results.

3.8 Ethical and Political Issues

3.8.1 Ethical Issues

In every research project, there are four (4) main issues the researchers must be aware of: *lack of informed consent*, *harm to participants*, *invasion of privacy*, and *deception* (Diender & Crandall, 1978, cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011). The principle we were more concerned about was the *lack of informed consent*. With the purpose of respecting this ethical issue, we created an introductory document, explaining the general context of the research along with its

purpose, and where it was asked for the participants' consent to the research terms, such as the quotation of their speech and the recording of the interviews. In this way it was possible to ensure that the participants could take an informed decision about participating, and under which terms attending the interview (Bryman & Bell, 2008). With respect to the second principle, the risk to *harm the participants* was avoided by treating the interviewees with respect and professionalism, avoiding any possible harm. The respect of *privacy*, on the other hand, was followed adopting the interview consent, and paying attention to avoid asking questions violating the respondents' privacy. Finally, *deception* occurs when researchers disguise the real nature of the study (Bryman & Bell (2008). In this research, transparent information was communicated to the participants in the introductory document, and sometimes stressed also orally, if further explanation was necessary.

3.8.2 Political Issues

When designing a research, it is important to consider the underlying power relationships between the individuals and institutions involved in the project. The power interactions between those subjects can be referred to as *political influences* (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008). According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2008), those influences can be exerted over *what* it is researched, *how*, *when* and by *whom*. The first political influence to take into account was the personal interests of the researchers. Indeed, *what* to research arouse from our personal interest, subsequently took a step further through an identification of a gap in the research accomplished so far. Second, since the project was run by two researchers, some political influences could arise also from the relationship between the two subjects. Indeed, we had to agree upon a common way to follow. Even though these kinds of influences were present, they did not have negative effects on the research, because our personal interest enabled to conduct a thorough study, and we agreed all over the process on how to proceed. Moreover, it is important to highlight that this research was part of a master's degree project and it was carried with the supervision of a teacher, who could influence the direction of the project, for instance by ensuring the research topic or the methodology to be close to his or her research interests (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008). With respect to this issue, the supervisor was particularly useful in raising our awareness on crucial aspects, but always respecting our decisions.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter was to show in detail the methodology employed in order to address the research question. A summary of the main aspects is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Methodology summary based on the research onion (adapted from Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p. 108).

The research adopted a *social constructionism* philosophy, focused on studying the inner world created by the participants. An *inductive* approach, combined with some deductive elements, allowed to cover a research gap, present in the field of credibility and video eWOM, through the creation of a model. We adopted a variant of *grounded theory*, aligned with an inductive approach. Furthermore, the data collection was based on 12 *semi-structured interviews* supported by *photo elicitation* and the *list of thoughts*. The data was analysed using *grounded analysis*, implying the transcription, and the creation of codes and categories of the participants' answers. The methodology of this research was designed with the purpose of obtaining valid and reliable results, taking into account at the same time, ethical and political issues.

4 Results

In this section, the results of the interviews will be presented following, as a structure, the determinants of perceived credibility in video eWOM reviews, which have been observed through the analysis of the empirical data. The outcomes will be combined with relevant quotations from the interviewees, in order to provide the reader with direct evidence, confirming the presented results.

4.1 Argument Quality

In terms of what was observed about the quality of the information and its impact on the viewers, the participants were influenced by different kinds of arguments. In particular, they expressed to be positively affected by reviewers who provided a more complete picture of the situation. The participants appreciated when the reviewer talked about something that cannot be gathered easily, such as the reviewer' personal experience. Indeed, only one participant did not appreciate the subjectivity of the review, claiming that, in order to trust the reviewer, the message has to be objective. Except this case, the majority of the participants looked for reviewer's personal opinion and experience with the product:

> "… that they tell their opinion about the product and their experiences, if it's good or bad, or if they like the smell or not, but for me it's not important to know about the ingredients, because I can get that information by myself, so it wouldn't be of additional value. Really, how they experienced it" (Gretel).

This finding can be related to the product type the reviews were about, which is a good typically related to the person's experience, in that the effects of the product can vary from person to person. This assumption is supported by one interviewee, who felt that the arguments where stronger when she could recognise herself in the interviewer:

> "I would look for information, I guess, like the packaging, the price, how other people think it works for them, but I guess I would also look for her hair and see if it is similar to mine in that product case, so if someone has straight hair and long hair. So if someone has curly hair and short hair I would think maybe it doesn't apply to me so much, so I think it's about empathizing with them" (Edda).

Furthermore, some interviewees asserted that it was good a comparison of the product with other products on the market. A participant expressed that through the comparison of different products, one may have the possibility to understand the difference between a product, which he or she already knows, with the one reviewed. Besides, the participants at large showed a

positive response to the explanation and categorisation of the different ways to use the product:

> "If I just compare like the first one and the second one, it's just you talk about it in a way that can tell the listeners the different categories you talk about. Like in the second video, she just talked, and talked, and talked and wasn't like: 'Ok, if you use it for this, you can do like this, and it's very good. This it's very good for this and this.' It's kind of categorise it in a way" (Susanna).

4.2 Recommendation Framing: Valence

Recommendation framing stands for the valence – positive or negative – of the message. In this study was observed the *negativity bias*, in that participants asserted several times to give more weight to negative rather than positive information:

> "Well, when they said that this products is: 'excellent, phenomenal or awesome' for me it was not credible, because it's superficial, or kind of, for me. I wouldn't believe it. For me it would be more important, I mean, if they said: 'The hair is really sticky afterwards' or something. Then I pay more attention to this, listen more to the negative … if I hear negative comments it would be in my mind stronger that positive things" (Gretel).

> "… because I would be more scared of the negative sides than positive sides. If they said: 'This product burns my hair, it goes on fire', I would never buy it, even if for someone it was working good" (Maria).

They explained that the reason why this happens could be that negative information is perceived as more authentic and honest:

> "I really like the first one, because she seems very authentic, and she criticized the product too. You didn't feel it was like: 'Everything is awesome, is so awesome!' I really liked that" (Edda).

On the other hand, sometimes too much negativity had as well a negative impact on the participants, who preferred more a balance between positive and negative:

> "It was the packaging of the information that was too *no*: too pessimistic …" (Susanna).

4.3 Recommendation Sidedness

Most of the participants stated that the reviewer should say positive and negative characteristics about a product, making the review more complete, objective, credible, and

honest. Thus, reviews that showed a balance between positive and negative were more accepted:

> **"**I think it's credible if they can present both sides, positive and negative. I mean, if somebody is really convinced of the product and there are only positive things, I would still watch for other videos that discuss the same product, just to see if it's really so positive or there are negative aspects that one person didn't mention" (Gretel).

When the reviews were extremely positive, some participants found that the message was less honest, because it looked like an advertisement, stating that it is difficult that a product is perfect. Thus, they would still look for more information to make a decision:

> **"**I think that if everything is super cool, it's unbelievable. So, there has to be at least one point that you don't like. I don't know, even if the product is perfect, maybe the bottle is terrible. I don't know, something. If you hear only the good stuff, probably they are paid" (Dana).

On other hand, when the message was extremely negative, some participants claimed that the reviewer was not objective, because even if the product does not work for one person it could work for another. So, it seems that positive sides have to be also presented in the discussion:

> "Like for me she is not objective at all, that is why I don't trust her. It seems she doesn't notice the good points of the product and she only talks about the negative ones" (Charlotte).

4.4 Source Credibility

The results of the interviews show that people assess the reviewer's credibility looking mainly at the *expertise* of the communicator, his or her perceived *trustworthiness* and, finally, the level of *attractiveness* the recipients feel toward the communicator.

4.4.1 Expertise

The perceived expertise of the reviewers stemmed from different cues, which can be classified in *verbal cues*, *visual cues*, *and reputational cues*. In this research, verbal cues are defined as all the inferences that participant made from the language adopted in the review, in order to judge the reviewer's expertise. On the other hand, visual cues are the ones that can be collected from the sight, and finally, the reputation cues relate to the contextual factor of the reviewer.

In the case of the verbal cues, participants expressed to consider as more credible the reviewers who were able to present in a better way the product, judging the pros and cons of it, and being able to compare the product with others on the market. It consists in going

beyond the surface, which can be easily reached by everyone looking at the information on the package. The language seems to reflect the confidence on what the person is saying:

> "I noticed that one of them said: 'This are the ingredients, blah blah blah, I don't know what that is', so if you don't know even what are you talking about, that is weird. I would leave that out in her position. It makes it very honest, but I don't believe her or her expertise anymore" (Edda).

On the other hand, visual cues do not rely on the arguments or language adopted, but look at the reviewer's appearance and the setting of the video. More than one participant inferred from the appearance to judge the expertise of the reviewer. In particular, looking at the reviewer's hair, they interviewees could assume how much the person was into beauty products:

> "Well, in the first video, it looks like she cares about her hair, the colours of the hair are so weird. If you dye your hair so much, you should put something on it, because you ruin it, so I actually trust her more and I think she knows what she is doing" (Maria).

> "… when you seem to have an appearance that matches with the product. If I listened to a guy talking about computers, maybe I would trust a nerd more. … she has that hair that I can kind of tell that she's into beauty, a lot, mostly because her makeup was really nice, and also her hair was really nice" (Susanna).

The setting is included among visual cues as well. More the one interviewee claimed to consider the quality of the video at large, including the background, the lighting, the colours, because it is a cue that the reviewer did more than one video, thus reflecting his or her expertise. In particular, one participant expressed that the home setting made her feel that the reviewer actually tried the product before talking about it, because the review was taped in an environment where usually people use that product.

Finally, reputational cues refer to the number of views, subscribers, comments of the video, and the connection of the person with beauty sites. The majority of participants explained to be positively influenced by people who tried a bunch of different products. That could be assumed by the popularity of the reviewers, inferred from the number of views and subscribers on their channels, by the number of videos on their channels, and by their membership with beauty sites, an indicator that they are particularly into the beauty world. Moreover, the fact that the reviewer received a sample of the product could be assessed by the interviewees has a sign of expertise:

> "…from the way she talks she seems very self-confident, she just seems more knowledgeable, but maybe it was also because she said that the product was sent to her, so you know that she tried a lot of different products and you know that she has something that maybe she can compare it to, and that's why I think that her opinion is more valuable … I know girls who have a lot of subscribers, and maybe they have blogs, and they have connections in the beauty world, and they get sent all the newest products" (Julia).

4.4.2 Trustworthiness

In the interviews, it was possible to observe a pattern showing that trustworthiness was assessed by taking into account facial cues, the reviewers' experience, and the perceived connection of the reviewer with companies.

4.4.2.1 Visual Trust: The role of the face

The link between facial information and trust was observed in a frequent use of the word *trust* when participants were talking about the reviewers' faces. Even though the majority of the interviewees agreed on the fact that with a hair product it is weird not to show the face, they expressed contrasting opinions when asked to think about more technical products, such as a computer. Some of them thought it was better to show the face anyway, even in a more technical context, because it helps in establishing a relationship with the reviewer. Others, on the other hand, believed that showing the face is not always necessary to create credibility, depending on the product type.

Among those who believed that the face is a necessary feature in order to establish trust, it emerged that from facial expressions, or by looking at a person in the eyes, it is possible to perceive if a person is honest or is lying, and if the reviewer is confident or doubtful about what he or she is saying:

> "If it were another product, not related to the person, would you still want to see the face?" (Interviewer). "Yes I would prefer it, because when you are talking about something and you are lying about it, or you are honest about it, body expressions and face expressions are saying everything. So, it's good to have it in front of you, absolutely. I think it's good. If you want to be credible you have to show yourselves. I guess I would do that" (Maria).

On the opposite side, some interviewees would like to focus more on the product features in case of technical products:

> "Not for everything, well maybe. When I think about it, when I see reviews of cameras I don't mind to see the person, because I want to watch the whole object, but is a more complex object, so you want to see the details. This is just a bottle, so" (Juliette).

A particular attention in the eyes was paid by most of the participants, who explained that one person's eyes can convey the emotions and feelings the person is feeling. Furthermore, from the eyes it is possible to assess the confidence of the person, for example if the reviewer is natural when talking about the product or has memorised what to say, which reflect on his or her expertise:

> "I will trust them more if they feel confident in front of the camera, like not looking down, and know what they are talking about" (Charlotte).

"Well, a normal way of speaking is that you look at the person and then, when you think, you can look away again, and you structure the sentences in a natural way: sometimes you think a little bit. But if it sounds really memorized it's kind of weird, and if you keep starring at the camera the whole time, it's kind of weird too. So, to seem like a natural conversation, you look a lot at the camera, but then you look away to you think a little. Just like a natural flow, like in a conversation, that for me makes it authentic" (Edda).

4.4.2.2   Experience

The experience provided by the participants seems to justify the usage of the product in a way that reviewer is seen as more trustworthy:

"If you live in a country like this, you might want a product not to get your hair, like, frizzy. She was living in London and it makes sense actually that she wanted to use this product" (Aìda).

"If there is a logic why you use this product, I give to you a bit more credibility than if there wasn't any logic" (Cora).

4.4.2.3   Perceived Connection with Companies

The respondents have been asked to explain if they perceived one or more videos to be sponsored by companies. Also in this case, participant's opinions can be distinguished in two (2) main groups. There were respondents who were negatively influenced by video sponsorship, and others who believed that in certain circumstances sponsorship can even enhance the credibility of the reviewer.

The first group of respondents argued saying that sponsorship makes the video less authentic, because it is assumed that the reviewer is biased, at least partially. This condition is worsened especially if the reviewer talks only about positive features of the product:

"… if I'm a company and I want to talk about these things, I would tell you a little bit what to say I guess, like: 'Say this or try to avoid this, or hide a little bit the bad side.' I think they would manipulate their speech … I would trust less if I know that there is a company behind" (Maria).

"… if I think that someone is paid to do that, and you can see it because they were told what to say, basically, then you can hear it and see it in their speech. It goes on and on, because they memorise their speech, and that is not good. If it's authentic, then I believe it. It doesn't mean that I agree with it, but I believe that the person is saying something that she or he actually means" (Edda).

One of the respondents talked about the setting in relation to sponsorship, claiming that when the video looks more home-made it can be easily linked to authenticity, while when it is

professional, so when it is possible to see that some money has been spent on it, it is easily perceived as influenced by companies:

> "… if you have a film studio or something, you can see there is money put on this, which makes it more professional, so I would connect it more to the company than in their homemade setting" (Edda).

The second group of respondents hold a different opinion in relation to sponsorship. They asserted that when the reviewer is able to provide pros and cons, even if the video is sponsored by some companies, the person does not loose trust in the eyes of the recipient. In some cases the reviewer states that he or she received the trial for free, but providing good arguments, such as a post-purchase after the trial, the trust is re-gained and even reinforced:

> "… What I like with them [the reviewers she follows] is that they always tell you where the product comes from, so they tell you: 'The company sent this to me to review it', or they tell you: 'I got this sample, and I liked it so much that I actually went back and re-purchased it.' When you know that they went out and they bought it themselves, it gives them more credibility … From what I think about these girls, they wouldn't accept payment for saying something positive, because they build their all image around trust, so people go there to watch their videos, and know that what they get are their personal opinions, whether they liked it or they didn't like it, and even though the companies sent them a product, like I saw in a couple of videos, they said: 'Oh I got sent it from a company, and I really didn't like it.' So, that it makes it even more credible … It kind of builds a trust, and you think: 'You can trust them'" (Julia).

4.4.3 Source Attractiveness

The participants showed a positive attitude toward reviewers with whom they could empathise more, and stated also a relevance of the physical attractiveness of the reviewers in affecting their responses. For these reasons the findings will be showed distinguishing between *physical attractiveness* and *empathy*.

4.4.3.1   Physical Attractiveness

> "Sometimes you trust more beautiful people, and yes, that is a horrible thing to say, but it's true" (Valentine).

Valentine expresses the general findings in terms of physical attractiveness. In this context, an issue that is assumed is that for people it is difficult to admit to be influenced by what can be against social norms. This assumption is supported by Valentine who stated that: "[it] is a horrible thing to say". Nevertheless, some cues could be observed in the interviews, which made physical attractiveness to be considered in this context. For instance, Charlotte claimed to have linked the person's beauty to the product effects, even though there was not a specific causality between the two.

"I think I will unconsciously like and trust the product if the girl is pretty, because you think that it's because of the product, even if it's not the case, yes" (Charlotte).

A contrasting opinion about physical attractiveness was gathered from Julia:

"… I don't think that just because she is not what it's confirmed as classically beautiful, I don't think it makes her opinion any less valuable" (Julia).

In this case it is uncertain if such a claim is due to social norms or if it was truly thought.

4.4.3.2   Empathy

"… when it's something too professional, I wouldn't believe in that, because when I'm looking at the videos I'm looking at someone like me" (Valentine).

Two parts in Valentine's statement match together: *believe* and *someone like me*. Many participants expressed to perceive as more trustworthy the reviewers they felt empathised with, in terms of attitude, face presence, appearance, and needs. Attitude-wise, participants were positively impressed by reviewers judged as friendly, feature defined by one interviewee as being able to create a friend-to-friend conversation, where the reviewer positions him or herself at the same level of the viewer. Moreover, reviewers who showed energy and passion in what they were doing, had a positive impression on the viewers, but at the same time, to be perceived as trustworthy, reviewers had to show seriousness. According to the participants, empathy occurs when the reviewer's attitude matches with the one of the recipient:

"It could be maybe a bad product, but if you are saying it [She imitates and enthusiastic attitude], I can be more convinced than one person that is saying it like [she imitates a bored attitude]. I think that it's really important" (Chiara).

"I think it could be because of her personality matches mine" (Susanna).

Face presence seems to be an important element to establish a connection with the reviewer. All the participants felt a lack of empathy in the case where the reviewer did not show her face:

"… if I can see someone's face I can, like, grasp their personality, not grasp but I can connect with them, definitely. I can't connect that well with the one who showed just the nails" (Edda).

A third element from which the interviewees could derive empathy was the person's appearance. The participants used several times the word *normal* to describe a person's appearance with whom they would empathise, in contrast with an unreachable beauty. The word normal, if analysed literally, it is something that is common, found in the normality, thus something that is similar, in this case with the viewer's appearance. It means that reviewers can empathise more with someone who is physically similar to them. These findings can be interpreted from what Edda, Charlotte and Dana affirmed.

"… because if I have a supermodel sitting there, super dressed-up, looking amazing, I would never look like that, so I would probably turn it off. But, if you have somebody sitting there that looks normal pretty, it's easier to connect" (Edda).

"But, because she had no natural hair, it was difficult to identify with her hair" (Charlotte).

"I think that normal girls, who look pretty, is better than a super model, because you don't trust the models who are in the commercial in the TV, with perfect hair, because you know that they made this hair in the graphics programme or they are putting a lot of this stuff for hair" (Dana).

Finally it was observed that, not only the appearance, but also similar needs could make the viewer feel the person closer to him or her:

"The last one with the dry ends, I think that it is a problem that every consumer maybe might experience, so it's good that her hair is not really perfect" (Gretel).

4.5 Source Style

4.5.1 Eloquence

The participants stated that it was important that the reviewers presented the arguments in a fluent and precise way, catching their attention. The eloquence, according to the interviewees, reflects the expertise of the reviewers in creating video reviews. Thus, redundant messages and the reviewer's hesitation were perceived as less professional and, in some cases, less credible:

"It was not really good structured: she referred to this and then to that, and then she talked about something completely different, and she also mixed up a lot of the products. She talked about a product and then she had this small box that said: 'I actually meant this product', and I think that it kind of ruins the credibility, if you think that she can't even remember what product she is talking about. Maybe her review of this product is not good, I don't know, I felt she was unorganized" (Julia).

4.5.2 Video Features

Video features were one of the most mentioned cues in the list of thoughts and were considered important in order to judge a video and its credibility. One of the most important factors of the video was the professional appearance, including *good lighting*, *clear background*, *high-definition* and *stability of the camera*, which provoked contrasting impressions in the participants. These features represented, for some of the participants, the expertise of the reviewers, and videos with more professional features were associated with a better first impression.

"I think, as I said, that maybe if they place the camera in a stable surface, so it doesn't shake when they move, it is better. Good light is important, because when it's dark it makes it look a little dodgy, I think. Yes, I think these are the 2 things I would look for, because if you see the last girl, if she had had a more professional set-up, you would, I don't know, automatically that gives her more credibility, because it feels that she has done this before … I don't like this kind of videos that look like when there is a random person, sitting at home, filming a video themselves, because just, I don't know why, but for me it makes it a little less credible, although it's as much their opinion as it is with the girl with the professional set-up. But, I don't know, I like to watch it more when it's with a professional set-up, compared to the more homemade" (Julia).

Even though some of the participants liked professional video features, this aspect seems to affect credibility also in a negative way. Some participants associated the good production of the video with the influence of companies, decreasing the perceived credibility. Additionally, homemade background was perceived as more honest and authentic by some interviewees, because it looked more natural:

"Do you like this homemade appearance?" (Interviewer). "Yes I do, because it's authentic. Otherwise, if you have a film studio or something, you can see there is money put on this, which makes it more professional, so I would connect it more to the company than in their homemade setting" (Edda).

Another important role of the video features was to display the product results, connecting them to another determinant, called *visual evidence* (see Section 4.6.). The participants complained that they would have liked a good lighting and a good video definition to be able to see the product effects on the hair:

"If the same people … would have spoken maybe in a living room, with a natural light, sitting in front of a table, I think that they would have been more credible. A better atmosphere, a better light. You could see for example in the Asian one; It was cool the idea of showing how she's doing it, but it was so dark, and there was a so bad lighting that you couldn't actually see, because she had dark hair. When you have dark hair and its dark, you cannot see anything. So that wasn't a good idea, because I couldn't see the results, if she had good hair or bad hair" (Aìda).

The video was also judged in terms of its *length*. According to the participants, a video review should be precise, and most of them agreed on the fact that more than four (4) minutes was too long for a video review about that product. When it was longer, they lost their attention in the middle of the video. Some of them referred to use the video length also in the initial selection of the video reviews:

"I didn't like of the second one that it was too long. She was speaking and speaking, just shut up. 8-minute video for just a product, come on!" (Aìda).

On the other hand, one of the videos was considered too short for some of the participants, pointing that the reviewer wasn't able to transmit all the information they needed or expected from the video.

"There was no extra information for me. So, it's too short to be very credible. There has to be at least more details or more extra information for me" (Cora).

4.6 Visual Evidence

Visual evidence is a new determinant that was observed in the analysis of the interviews that, according to previous studies, was not present in the context of written eWOM. In this study, visual evidence is defined as the totality of the visual cues showing the effects of the usage of the reviewed product. The participants believed that seeing the benefits of the product in the reviewer's hair made the review more credible:

"She was showing her hair and it was actually supper shiny, so I was like: 'Oh god! That is working!' … if you show is better, totally better" (Maria).

The same outcome was observed from the less bright side, where participants complained that, in some reviews in which the reviewer talked about the benefits of the product, they could not see the results, and for this reason they did not believe those people:

"… in the last one her hair was terrible, without body, completely stuck to her face. I wouldn't believe that one" (Chiara).

4.7 Testing

Together with visual evidence, testing is another concept uncovered through the analysis of these interviews. It consists in a demonstration of the usage of the product in front of the camera, as normally used in the real life. The majority of the participants agreed on the higher credibility stemming from the testing of the product:

"When you kind of demonstrate it, it's easier to grasp. First of all, it shows credibility toward that person, because it shows that they know, or don't know, what they are doing. If you don't show anything, I don't think it's as credible as if I can see" (Susanna).

Testing resulted important in terms of source credibility, enhancing both the expertise and trustworthiness of the reviewer. Using the product in front of the viewers means being confident about the product effects and being confident in how to use it. As mentioned above, Susanna said: "it shows that they know, or don't know, what they are doing", reflecting the impact of testing on the reviewer's expertise. Trustworthiness-wise, Edda explained:

"… if you are not even putting the product on your hair it makes me think: 'Is the product so bad that you don't even want to touch your hair?' … It demonstrates trust, or sort of, because you wouldn't put anything in your hair or body that you think it's very bad, so when they put it on the hair … that makes it credible, because it shows

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that they trust the product at least … I don't know, I didn't think about it until the last video when she didn't do that … Even though the verbal messages that she sent was like: 'It's awesome and great and blah blah blah', but if you don't use it, it's not very credible" (Edda).

Furthermore, testing appears to be important for the comprehension and retrieval of the message:

"… it's like instructions, but in manual ways … my visual memory is stronger than my auditive memory. So, I will watch it once and after I will remember and when I will use the product I won't need to watch it again" (Valentine).

4.8 Recommendation Rating

Comments, number of views, likes and dislikes are cues that some of the participants took into account to judge a video review. From what it was observed, comments presented two (2) roles: supporting the message of the video, especially if the comments were positive, or being a new source of information, where people could collect additional information about the product:

"Yes, I like looking at the comments, sometimes. You have more opinions from people, and sometimes it's even more credible to see a comment than the video" (Aìda).

Number of views, likes and dislikes were taking into account especially to form the first impression of the video, since, according to some of the interviewees, it can reflect that the video is good, the reason why many people liked or watched it:

"Do you think that if a video has a lot of views it reflects something in terms of credibility?" (Interviewer). "Actually yes. If someone has 10 million views, he or she must have reached the consumer somehow, so he or she must have said something right, or done something good" (Gretel).

It is important to highlight that an important number of participants stated that they did not think that the number of views, likes, and comments were relevant to judge a video review, because not reflecting the quality of it:

"I see you didn't check the number of views likes or dislikes" (Interviewer). "No, I never use them because I think it's too like.. YouTube is full of buzz, and some videos have millions of viewers and they are bad. So, I don't trust it. I just look at the content and I'm just neutral at the beginning. If I'm interested in something, I just scroll down and I do it. But I don't usually do it. I do it for music, where I go to the feedbacks to see if there was the concert, where it was, where the tape was filmed. Something like that: more knowledge" (Valentine).

4.9 Recommendation consistency

Contrasting information seems to be a complicated issue for the participants, in that some of them claimed that information can be also subjective, and that it can vary from person to person. In such cases, it may be not exist right or wrong opinions, but just the variety of them. For this reason, some of the participants explained to approach the reviews without prejudices, and make at the end the final sum of the information gathered:

> "I think that if I look for specific information about a product, I don't really judge some information as more valuable than other. I kind of just look at what it's out there, and then, from all the information that I found, I make my decision from myself, if I want to buy the product or not" (Julia).

On the other hand, some interviewees were more affected by negative statements, in case of contrasting opinions, which confirms what was already explained in terms of the review valence:

> **"…** but one is saying that's good, and another one says that is not: 'Why?' I have to understand if you are reliable, if you have the means to say this, if you have some experience … But, I don't know, if there is a negative comment about it, it's still a bad comment. For someone it doesn't work, so it still counts, I think" (Chiara).

Even though Chiara gave more weight to negative impressions about the product, this does not mean that she did not believe in the contrasting opinion, because, as she stated, for beauty products the effects can be remarkably different from person to person, supporting what was already pointed out by Julia:

> "I don't know, because actually for beauty products one thing works for one person, and another one works for the others. You really have to try it on yourself" (Chiara).

4.10   Moderators

4.10.1 Distraction

The participants indicated that many visual and audio aspects of the video interfered with their cognitive process. One of the main distractions was the reviewer's accent:

> "If the accent, or the tone, is really high, it really distracts me" (Gretel).

The second main cause of distraction was the background of the video. Most of the interviewees complained it and expressed the requirement of a neutral and monochromatic background, helping to maintain the focus on the communicator.

"… one colour background, like white or like she had a green/blue one, so that's it's really easy to focus on the person and not on a lot of things in the background: 'Oh, that mug looks kind of dirty' or 'Oh, that paint is ugly', like you look at stuff in the background instead of focusing on the person. I think that sometimes it can distract me otherwise" (Susanna).

Thirdly, the appearance of the reviewer sometimes can be too striking, distracting the viewer and thus moderating the perception of him or her. In one of the videos the reviewer showed her hands with a particularly eye-catching nail polish, able to deflect the viewer's focus from the arguments she was presenting:

"I was focused, for the first one, on the nails. She has some funny nails and I'm like: 'Ok [she laughs], I'm not listening to what you are saying, I'm just concentrated on your nails.'" (Valentine).

4.10.2 Prior Knowledge

The participants' prior knowledge seemed to affect the whole disposition through the video reviews and the product. In the research sample, two (2) participants had more knowledge and experience in the use of video reviews than the others, and they were observed to be opener to accept the message of the video. Moreover, their information assessment seemed to be more sophisticated, considering data that other participants did not take into account, such as the description of the videos, the number of subscribers to the reviewers' channels, and the number of videos published on the channel of the reviewers. Moreover, the two (2) participants explained that they were already following and trust some professional reviewers on YouTube, who are considered expert in a specific field. Therefore, if they sought for information about a product, they would watch videos uploaded by these reviewers, because they are sure about their knowledge and have established with them a relationship based on trust:

"Kind of everything actually, because you can find everything on YouTube, like cameras, hair products, beauty stuff. YouTube sometimes is better than written reviews, because it take less time and I have these people that I follow, so I trust their opinions and it's easier for me" (Juliette).

4.10.3 First impression

The participants showed a strong selection of the videos based on the first seconds of those, determining the level of attention they were willing to pay:

"If I automatically like the person, if I like her voice and stuff, I'm more inclined to watch the video. If it's a person whose I think: 'Oh my god, she is annoying' or I don't like her voice, the way she talks, probably I would skip it to the next video" (Julia).

Therefore, factors such as the professional setting, pleasant tone of voice, appearance, video length, number of views and other cues were relevant to select a video, but also to decide if to watch the whole length of it or just one part:

> "If you start watching this video, the first impression is the most important, because you don't want to wait 5 minutes for something that maybe it's important or maybe it's not. If the video is well-made you want to watch it and then you will see. So, probably I would watch more videos which look nice" (Dana).

5 Discussion of Results

In this study it was applied an integrative model including the written eWOM determinants of perceived credibility, along with theories on video features and nonverbal communication in relation to the consumer's behaviour (see Figure 2.2). Through the application of the model, it emerged that both *informational* and *normative* determinants are influencing the perceived credibility of video eWOM on YouTube, making the results coherent with the theory about social influences argued by Deutsch and Gerard (1955). The following discussion analyses the findings related to each determinant in comparison with the results of previous research studies.

5.1 Argument Quality

From what it was observed in terms of argument quality, two (2) of the most remarkable findings are concerned with *completeness* and *format* of the message. The message completeness is consistent with one of the elements outlined by Nelson, Todd and Wixom (2005) to define the quality of information. Indeed, participants expressed several times to be positively affected by the reviewer's personal experience and by information which could be gathered from other sources, if not from the experience of one who has tried the product. This fact could be attributed to the product type, *experience goods* (Peterson, Balasubramanian & Bronnenberg, 1997), since hair products seem to be closely associated to the person's experience, making the subjective point of view more interesting than objective information. Another aspect, impacting on both the *completeness* and *format* of the arguments, was the comparison of the review product with other products on the market. Indeed, other than providing a complete picture of the situation, the comparison made the message easier to interpret and understand, supporting the *representational data quality* articulated by Wang and Strong (1996).

5.2 Recommendation Framing and Recommendation Sidedness

Aligned with the results of the past research about the message valence, a *negativity bias* could be observed in the participants' opinions. Negative information was perceived to be more authentic and honest than positive information, representing the true intentions of the communicator. Thus, in relation to the attribution theory, negative information was associated to the *stimulus cause* and perceived as not influenced by external factors (Mizerski, 1982).

One of the participants mentioned also the strong consequences that could arise from a product not working properly, suggesting that people, sometimes, make judgments trying to avoid risks rather than pursuing beneficial effects (Baumeister et al. 2001; Cheung et al. 2009).

Closely related to the valence of the message is its *sidedness*. The participants expressed that a balance between positive and negative information (i.e. *two-sided* information) is perceived as more complete, objective, credible, and honest. Completeness and objectivity are two (2) elements enhancing the quality of the information, according to Nelson, Todd and Wixom (2005). Even though the completeness effect was already shown when participants commented about the argument quality, objectivity, an element constituting the *accuracy* of the message (Wang & Strong, 1996), was revealed by the participants only when talking about sidedness. As far as credibility and honesty are concerned, the study confirmed the results of Golden and Alpert (1978), who argued that two-sided messages are more believable than one-sided messages.

5.3 Source Credibility: Expertise, Trustworthiness, and Attractiveness

Relevant findings stand also in relationship to the information source. Source credibility was found to be an explicit determinant of credibility in video eWOM. The components defined by Ohanian (1990) in the leverage of source credibility, namely *expertise*, *trustworthiness*, and *attractiveness*, were present also in the current study, with the difference that new drivers, other than the ones uncovered in written eWOM, led to the creation of trust and the perception of expertise. Furthermore, source attractiveness, operating only through homophily in written eWOM, was influenced also by physical attractiveness in video eWOM.

Exploring more in detail the three components, *expertise* was inferred from verbal, visual, and reputational cues. Among verbal cues, the participants observed the capacity to *argue pros and cons* of the product, the ability to *make comparisons*, the *language adopted*, and *the way the product was presented*. These aspects reflect accuracy, confirming the definition of expertise expressed by Mackiewicz (2010). Moreover, Slater and Rouner (1996) pointed out that a good style influences the judgment of the source, perceived as more knowledgeable and expert, supporting the presence of the information presentation as a cue to judge expertise. Conversely, visual cues were related to the *reviewer's appearance*, which had to show that the person took care of him or herself, and to a *professional setting*. This effect can be linked to the emotional elicitation argued by Messaris (1997), according to whom visual features come with emotions based on individual, biological, and cultural factors. It seems that, in the real world, a person into beauty takes usually care of him or herself, and that, in order to create professional video settings, it is necessary to possess specific knowledge. On the basis of these personal experiences, both visual cues seemed to elicit in the participants' mind a perception of expertise. The third kind of cues, reputational cues, referred to the *number of views*, *subscribers*, *comments*, and *membership with beauty sites*, which clearly support the co-creation of credibility, pointed out by Mackiewicz (2010). In particular, reputational cues,

according to Mackiewicz (2010), matches with situated credibility. In her study, Mackiewicz (2010) focused specifically on reputational cues found on the webpage profile. In the context of this research, however, other reputational cues were observed outside the profile page, such as the number of views, the number of comments, or the reviewer's membership with beauty sites, which can be stated on the video page. An interesting finding was that situated credibility was found relevant only in relation to expertise and not trustworthiness, contrasting the findings of Mackiewicz (2010). This could be due to the bigger amount of visual information which can be gathered in order to assess the trustworthiness of the reviewer. Another interesting result was that, in the current research, only the situated, and not the invented credibility (Mackiewicz, 2010), was observable in the co-creation of the reviewer's identities.

The second component of source credibility, *trustworthiness*, was inferred from *face signals*, called in this research as visual trust, from the *reviewers' experiences*, and from the *perceived connection of the reviewers with companies*. These three components support the distinction between *cognitive* and *emotional trust* (Lewis & Weigert, 1985), where visual trust could be seen as emotional, whereas the reviewer's experience and the perceived connection with companies required a more rational and cognitive thinking. The face provoked different opinions, since parts of the participants would not need to see the reviewer's face in case of more technical products. However, the majority agreed on the fact that the face is a transparent channel, able to display if the person is honest or lying. The confidence could be assessed as well from the facial expressions. The face, showed in front of the camera in all of its dimensions, can be seen as an evolution of the profile picture driving to emotional trust argued by Xu (2014). Furthermore, Ekman and Friesen (2003) indicated rapid facial signals as ways to convey emotions. The relevance of the face is further developed by Ekman (1999), who posited that emotional expressions are critical in forming interpersonal relationships. The face co-operates together with the eyes, able to show the communicator emotions, feelings, and confidence. These observations are aligned with what Adams, Nelson & Purring (2013) contended, considering the eyes as "the window of the soul", able to convey externally emotions and feelings. Further confirmation is provided by Messaris (1997), who pointed out that looking directly at the camera makes the reviewer to be perceived as above board and transparent. With respect to the perceived influence of the companies on the reviewer's opinions, some participants expressed that, if a person was influenced by companies but was able to provide convincing arguments, the trust would not be undermined. This statement supports the view of Mackiewicz (2010) that expertise feeds trustworthiness.

Source attractiveness, distinguished in physical attractiveness and homophily, was the third element constituting source credibility. In terms of physical attractiveness, the observations made in the current research were contrasting each other. For this reason, the tendency of people to agree more with physically attractive people (Horai, Naccari & Fatoullah, 1974) was only partially confirmed by what was expressed by the participants. Also the *halo effect* (Halvorson, 2015) found little evidence in the interviews. However, an interpretation for the lack of clear results could be explained by recalling the power of social pressure explained by Asch (1955). It could be speculated that for people it is difficult to admit to be influenced by one's physical appearance, because it may be against the social norms. On the other hand, in terms of homophily, the participants' opinions supported the role of empathy in making the source more attractive. In particular, the interviewees showed to be influenced by what Gilly

et al. (1998) called *perceptual similarity*, a similarity based on lifestyle, values, and preferences. Empathy was established in terms of *attitude*, *face presence*, *appearance* and *needs*. With regard to the attitude effect, participants expressed several times to like people with a friendly approach, confirming that warmth, defined by Halvorson (2015) as being friendly, has a positive impact on the recipient. Moreover, also in this context, the theory developed by Ekman (1999), according to which emotional expressions help in establishing interpersonal relationships, can justify the role of the face in creating empathy. Appearance, conversely, can be supported by the fact that people, according to Coursey (1973) and Mckeachie (1951), form impressions about others on the basis of their clothes and makeup. It can also be linked to the *halo effect*, explained by Halvorson (2015), according to which people, from a quality, can infer other traits of a person. In terms of similarity, Ludwig et al. (2013) argued that the linguistic style has the power to establish source similarity perceptions. However, in this research the participants did not express to pay attention to such a cue to empathize with the reviewers. One possible explanation could be that the other cues, afore mentioned, could have had a greater impact eclipsing the linguistic style.

5.4 Source Style

According to the definition of style formulated by Slater and Rouner (1996), style is made by the uniqueness of voice, attitude, level of formality, and creativity, making a text to be perceived as well written. The current research outcomes can support this definition only partially. Indeed, the uniqueness of voice and the level of formality were not observed to influence the credibility, in relation to the review style. However, attitude was found to be relevant in establishing empathy, and consequently impacting on credibility, and creativity was evident in the comments about video features expressed by the participants. Moreover, Slater and Rouner (1996) defined a well-written text as well organized, and eloquence, the art of writing and speaking, was several times mentioned by the participants as an important quality, impacting on their disposition toward the message. On the contrary, the redundancy of the arguments influenced negatively the credibility. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1984), the number of arguments in a text can be a cue for assessing the quality of it. However, from what it was observed in this research, it did not have an impact on the participants.

As far as video features are concerned, *good lighting*, a *clear background*, *high definition*, *stability of the camera*, and *length of the video* were the features taken into account by the interviewees to judge credibility. Some of these characteristics were already been argued by Niu and Liu (2012) as constituting the video quality, but through this research a connection with credibility was observed. However, discrepant opinions emerged in the interviews, in that, when these features resulted well-managed, some of the interviewees linked that to a higher expertise of the reviewer and to a better first impression, whereas others associated that to the presence of companies behind the reviewer. With respect to the background, it was found more credible if representing a household situation, supporting what has been argued by Gosling et al. (2002) in relation to the physical environment, as a way to infer information on a person, and, in this case, what has been said by a person. In written eWOM, text length

was found by Wood, Kallgren, and Preisler (1985) to be a cue considered when judging the quality of an argument. The equivalent of the text length in a video eWOM review is the *video length*. Participants indicated the existence of an optimal length of a video, depending on the product, that if overcome can increase the distraction of the recipient and, if not reached, can reveal a lack of important information. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986) distraction is a moderator of argument quality, one of the determinants of perceived credibility, thus the video length can indirectly have an impact on the credibility of the message. On the other hand, the negative impression, due to a video judged as too short, supports the findings of Singh and Cole (1993), according to whom longer videos lead to a better attitude. Moreover, MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) have already showed that time constraints in a video can affect the information processing of the message conveyed though it.

5.5 Visual Evidence and Testing

Visual evidence and testing are discussed together since they represent two determinants that were not uncovered in written eWOM, but were observed, in the context of this research, to be relevant in the evaluation of credibility. *Visual evidence* consists in comprehending the effects of a product directly seeing them, and not by reading or listening a description. The significance of this determinant can be fully understood drawing upon *indexicality*, one of the video features introduced by Messaris (1997) when arguing about photographs. Indeed, since images have the power to automatically depict the reality, they are typically associated with authenticity, even though human interventions can manipulate them. This direct connection to the reality can support why visual evidence has been observed to be remarkably evident in the context of video reviews.

On the other hand, connected to visual evidence, *testing* stands for the demonstration and usage of the product in front of the camera. Yu and Natalia (2013), in their study, noticed that most of the participants appreciated to see the product in action during the review, but it was not argued about a connection between the demonstration of the product and the perceived credibility of the review. In this research, testing has played a twofold role. On the one hand, it enhanced directly the perceived credibility of the message, and, on the other hand, it had a positive effect on the evaluation of source expertise and trustworthiness. It has been argued that demonstrations lead to vicarious learning, a process through which people learn from the actions of others (Nord & Peter, 1980). Nord and Peter (2000) argued that vicarious leaning increases the probability of acceptance of the message, a phenomenon that was observed in the participants, who considered easier to believe a review with the demonstration of the product. Singh, Balasubramanian and Chakraborty (2000) pointed out that vicarious learning is more effective if the person making the review fits more with the product, suggesting an effect of the source on the demonstration. In this research, however, some evidence showed how demonstration has an effect on the source, since participants expressed that, seeing the product in action, led them to perceive the source as more expert and trustworthy. Nonetheless, the effect pointed out by Singh, Balasubramanian and Chakraborty (2000) was

observed in terms of visual evidence, in that the participants tended to associate the beauty of the reviewer's hair to the benefits of the product.

Visual evidence and testing can be associated to the *experienced credibility* outlined by Tseng and Fogg (1999), which originates when a person directly experiences a situation. In this case, video review does not allow the person to directly experience the product, but to experience it *vicariously*.

5.6 Recommendation Rating and Recommendation Consistency

According to Mir and Rehman (2013), the quantity of posts, views and reviews in video eWOM, enhances the perceived credibility of the review. In the current research, the participants did not believe the reviews directly because of the video ratings, but number of views, comments and videos created by the same person, were taken as cues to infer the expertise of the source, and it was adopted by the participants as an element to form the first impression of the videos, or an element to make the first selection of them.

Regarding recommendation consistency, participants tended not to be concerned about the consistency of the reviewers' opinions. As they mentioned more than once, some information provided in the reviews was subjective, thus information could not be judged as right or wrong. These results are probably due to the typology of product, an *experience good*, according to the definition of Peterson, Balasubramanian and Bronnenberg (1997). In other words, drawing upon the attribution theory, some information was perceived by the participants as *non-product-related* information (Qiu & Li, 2010), ascribable to the reviewer experience and not to the product in itself. It was also maintained by the participants that one negative-framed review, compared to the positive-framed majority, is still taken into account, even if it represents the clear minority. This observation is aligned with the findings of Qiu and Li (2010), who, studying the effect of aggregate rating on the single review, could not demonstrate the influence of the positive aggregate rating on the single negative review. The current research findings, together with the ones of Qiu and Li (2010), support the presence of the *negativity bias*.

5.7 Moderators

In the studies conducted upon written eWOM, motivation, ability, product type, and issue type were highlighted as moderators of perceived credibility. In this research it was possible to detect only some evidence about *ability* and its components: *distraction* and *prior knowledge*. Moreover, *first impression*, which was not pointed out in the context of written eWOM, played an important role in video eWOM.

Concerning *distraction*, the results showed that the reviewer's *accent*, *the background*, and the *appearance* had the power to divert the attention of the viewer from the arguments provided by the reviewer. This observation is consistent with what was asserted by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), who argued that distraction can moderate the impact of argument quality. Even though Petty and Cacioppo (1986) presented also a favourable attitude towards weak arguments in case of distraction, in the current research the participants expressed only negative thoughts, when speaking about review aspects diverting their attention. In particular, with respect to the distracting background, it is possible to recognise the importance of *focus control* when editing a video (Niu and Liu (2012). On the other hand, from what was observed in terms of *prior knowledge*, the findings showed that people, equipped with higher experience with the website and video reviews, assessed the reviews adopting more cues than the other participants. This outcome confirms what was concluded by Cheung et al. (2009) about written eWOM reviews, among whom people with a higher prior knowledge of the website rely more on recommendation rating as a heuristic strategy. Indeed, experienced users showed to use heuristic shortcuts, such as the number of views, the number of subscribers to the channel, or the number of videos posted by the reviewer, to evaluate the video. Recommendation rating, however, was not taken particularly into account, and it could be explained by the fact that YouTube offers to the users different features, which may be considered more reliable than ratings. Cheung et al. (2009) highlighted also another kind of prior knowledge, *prior knowledge of the review topic*, which could not be studied in the current research, since one of the sample characteristics was that participants were selected among those who had not used the product before.

A new moderator, the *first impression*, which was not pointed out in written eWOM, was stressed several times by the participants. The first impression has the power to interrupt the view of the video, in case it is particularly negative. Even though the participants expressed that the first impression can change during the video, if a negative impression was present from the beginning, it was difficult to discredit it. These findings confirm what asserted by Halvorson (2015) about the stubbornness of first impressions. According to the participants, in order to form the first impression of the video, they took into account *visual elements*, such as the setting and the reviewer's appearance, *numerical elements*, such as the number of views and video length, and *other elements*, including the reviewer's tone of voice. In particular, the importance of visual information is confirmed by the study conducted by Lingaard et al. (2006), who demonstrated that people assess visual appeals in 50 milliseconds.

5.8 Chapter Summary

A summary of the results from this study is presented in Figure 5.1.

INFORMATIONAL DETERMINANTS

ARGUMENT QUALITY
RECOMMENDATION FRAMING
RECOMMENDATION SIDEDNESS
SOURCE CREDIBILITY
- Source Expertise
- Verbal Cues
- **Visual Cues**
- Reputational Cues
- Source Trustworthiness
- **Visual Trust**
- Reviewer's Experience
- Perceived Connection with Companies
- Source Attractiveness
- **Physical Attractiveness**
- Homophily
SOURCE STYLE
- Eloquence
- **Video Features**
VISUAL EVIDENCE
TESTING
CONFIRMATION OF PRIOR BELIEF *

NORMATIVE DETERMINANTS

RECOMMENDATION RATING
RECOMMENDATION CONSISTENCY
WEB REPUTATION *

MODERATORS

MOTIVATION *
- Need for Cognition *
- Personal Relevance *
ABILITY
- **Distraction**
- **Accent**
- **Background**
- **Appearance**
- Prior Knowledge
PRODUCT TYPE *
ISSUE TYPE *
FIRST IMPRESSION

PERCEIVED eWOM REVIEW CREDIBILITY

■ **New Factors**
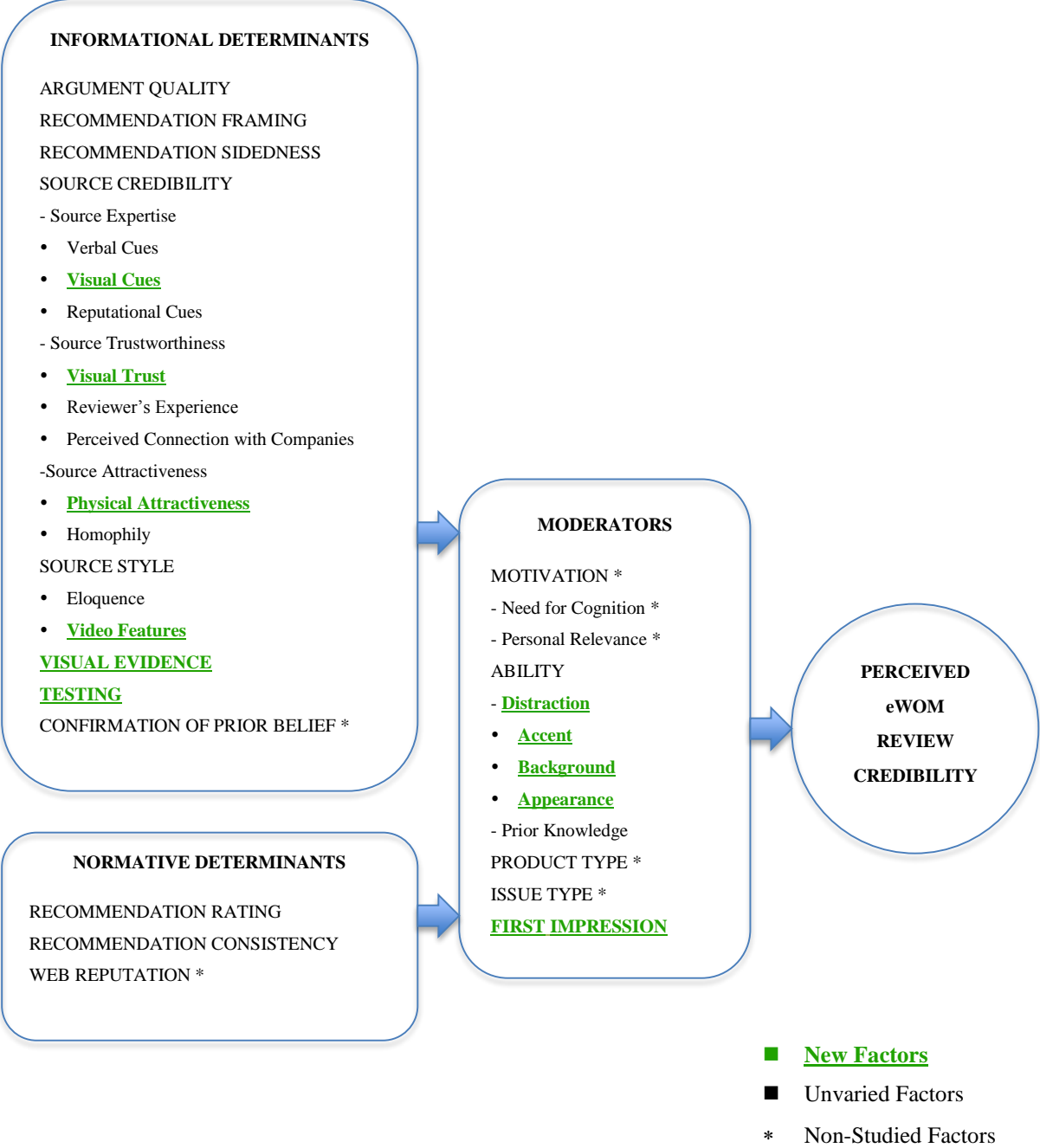■ Unvaried Factors
* Non-Studied Factors

Figure 5.1 Summary of the video eWOM determinants of perceived credibility, related to previous studies in written eWOM.

The model presented in Figure 5.1 represents an adaptation of the model shown to describe the written eWOM determinants of perceived credibility (see Figure 2.1). Figure 5.1 presents the new results in **GREEN**, whereas the factors, corresponding to the ones in written eWOM, are presented in BLACK. Besides, the areas, which could not be studied in this research, are marked with *. Despite the similarities with the model of written eWOM (see Figure 2.1), the results summarised in Figure 5.1 reveal that the peculiarity of video reviews to combine visual information with motion and sounds (Xu, Chen & Santhanam, 2015) offers to the message recipients new cues to assess the credibility of video eWOM. Indeed, even though some of the video eWOM determinants were equal to the ones of written eWOM, in video reviews they were triggered by new drivers, not present in written reviews. To illustrate, *source credibility*, in all of its components, namely expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, was assessed also by the adoption of visual cues, absent in written eWOM. Another example is represented by source style, which in video eWOM is also composed by *video features*. Besides, two (2) new determinants − *visual evidence* and *testing* − were observed to be particularly significant in this context, whereas they were not displayed in written eWOM.

On the other hand, regarding the moderators, even though some of the ones revealed in written eWOM could not be studied in the current research, it was possible to highlight important factors enhancing the participants' level of *distraction*. Furthermore, the role of *first impression* was observed to have a significant importance in moderating the all process to assess credibility, whereas there are no studies describing it in written eWOM.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the following question:

> *What are the determinants affecting the perceived credibility of video-eWOM reviews?*

Addressing such research question, the main aims were to contribute to the research gap, and to explore the video eWOM phenomenon, in relation to the perceived credibility that consumers associate to it. Through this, it was found that there is a distinct difference between the *written* and the *video* eWOM.

The first aim was set since, in the past years, much research focused the attention on the perceived credibility of written eWOM, leaving a significant lack of research regarding video reviews. One of the reasons why the attention was directed toward written eWOM was due to the prevalent amount of text-format reviews on other kinds of eWOM (Xu, Chen & Santhanam, 2015). However, nowadays some evidence is declaring the growth of video eWOM, which is attracting the attention of both consumers and companies (Rosensteel, 2012; Godes & Mayzlin, 2009; Xu, Chen, & Santhanam, 2015). Moreover, by understanding the determinants affecting the perceived credibility, it is possible to predict the consumers' behaviour, in terms of attitude toward a brand, and purchase intention (Lafferty & Goldsmith 1999). eWOM has been always associated to a higher level of credibility than traditional advertisement (Phelan, 2013; Johnson & Kaye, 2004). However, due to the variety of information sources online, people's perception of risk has increased (Franagin, Metzger, Pure, Markov & Hartsell, 2014), damaging the credibility associated to eWOM. Because of the growing importance of the video eWOM and the relevance of understanding the credibility associated to it, the second aim of this research was to explore the perceived credibility of the video eWOM phenomenon. This study has been able to provide both theoretical and practical implications, which will be developed in detail in the following sections.

6.1 Theoretical Contribution

A model, showing the determinants impacting on the perceived credibility of video-eWOM reviews, was structured as a result of the current qualitative study. The research offers solid basis in the under-researched field of video eWOM, laying the foundation upon which building a quantitative study to test the determinants revealed in this context. The results show how the peculiar characteristics of video eWOM, namely images combined with motion and sound (Xu, Chen & Santhanam, 2015), perform the role of cues that viewers adopt in order to assess the credibility of the message. The reviewers' appearance, facial expressions,

tone of voice, along with video features, such as the video setting, play a significant role in facilitating the viewers' assessment.

The main theoretical contribution, provided by the current study, is the fact that two (2) new determinants – *visual evidence* and *testing* – were observed to play a significant influence in the assessment of credibility in video reviews, whereas there are not previous studies, in both written and video eWOM, showing their impact. Furthermore, the determinants already uncovered in the studies about written eWOM, play a significant role also in video eWOM, with the difference that, with the video format, new factors constitute the determinants. Two examples are the source expertise, also assessed by looking at the reviewer's appearance, or the source trustworthiness, which was also influenced by visual cues.

With respect to the moderators, the main contribution refers to the discovery of a new factor – *first impression* – that prior authors did not reveal in both written eWOM studies, and in the little research conducted upon video eWOM. Moreover, the study showed the elements enhancing the level of distraction in a video review, namely the reviewer's accent, appearance, and the video background. The presented model provides continuity to the research in eWOM, distinguishing the factors, already revealed in previous studies, from the new factors. Moreover, the areas, not analysed in the current research, have been indicated in the model as well, in order to facilitate further research in this field. To guarantee continuity with prior research, the model adopts a consistent terminology with the one employed in other studies.

6.2 Practical Contribution

The increasing number of video reviews online could represent a challenge for companies, which have to face an environment they cannot control completely, and where consumers talk freely about brands and products (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Recently, companies are trying to develop unique strategies, in order to play an active role online, and manage product reviews in a way to obtain beneficial effects (Chen & Xie, 2008). One important attribute, to manage this process, is the *perceived credibility* associated by the consumers to the message, able to shape their attitude toward a brand, and their purchase intention (Lafferty & Goldsmith 1999). The current research provides a model that companies could use in order to formulate more specific models, ad hoc for their industries and products. Indeed, by understanding which reviews costumers perceive as credible, companies can encourage consumers to create more impactful messages. By identifying the reviewers with a stronger influence on the audience, companies can establish strategic relationships with these people, in order to encourage them to convey favourable messages about the brands and products. In other words, credible reviewers should be treated by companies as *opinion leaders*, thus marketing activities, specifically focused on them, could lead to beneficial outcomes. However, the investments, employed to build such relationships, have to be directed to the right people, and it is here that the provided model offers the right basis to manage this issue. The research model depicts specific determinants that companies should test individually on their particular context, in order to obtain a deeper understanding of what elements compose

each of them in the contextual situation. Such understanding would allow companies to extend marketing strategies to a new level, able to manage effectively and efficiently the relationships with the public. The model provides also relevant insights on the possibility that video reviews offer to the companies. In the current research, it has been observed the possibility of vicarious learning through video reviews, which is particularly useful for companies to educate consumers to the use of new products (Nord & Peter, 2000). This is another aspect opening the possibility to convey credible and helpful messages to the viewers, and opening, as a consequence, new opportunities for the companies.

6.3 Future Research

Even though the outcomes of this research contribute both theoretically and practically, in order to enhance the understanding of perceived credibility in video eWOM, further research is recommended. First, in order to overcome the issues related to qualitative studies, namely the remarkable subjectivity, the difficulty in replicating the study, and the limitations in generalising the results, a quantitative study is recommended. Furthermore, some limitations about the sampling have been already highlighted in this context. Thus, further research should extend the study, adopting a different target group through a variation of the gender or the age of the sample. Moreover, the current study adopted reviews about a single product, belonging to the beauty industry, and categorised as *experience good*. In order to obtain a deeper understating of the perceived credibility of video reviews, further research could study a context characterised by a *search good* (Peterson, Balasubramanian & Bronnenberg, 1997), a different industry, or a product, within the beauty industry, associated to a different level of involvement. Besides, the model provided highlights some determinants and moderators which could not be analysed in the current research. In particular, *confirmation of prior belief*, *web reputation*, *motivation*, *product type*, and *issue type* were not observed. In order to study the effect of prior beliefs on the perceived credibility, it is recommended a longitudinal study, where it is possible to fully identify the prior beliefs of the participants, and then follow the evolution and influence of such beliefs on the formation of perceived credibility. On the other hand, in relation to the web reputation effect, further studies should compare video eWOM presented in different online platforms. With respect to the moderators, conversely, motivation should be studied in a real environment, where participants are driven by real motivations, whereas, to study the moderation effect of the product type, the study should compare different typologies of product. Finally, issue type could be addressed by studying the different effects driven by intellective and judgmental issues.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Introduce yourself to the participant and provide her with the paper explaining the research project and including the list-of-thoughts tables.

E.g. "Hi! I am… He is… We are glad you have agreed to be interviewed."

After the participant has read the introduction paper, make sure that she has understood the given instructions, and stress the fact that she can interact with the page in the way she normally does.

INTERVIEW

The following questions are presented as a guide. The interview has to follow the flow of the conversation, thus the order of the questions does NOT have to be respected necessarily. Some questions can be avoided, and other added. Keep the conversation spontaneous.

OBS: It is possible that after some interviews new areas will be interesting to probe. In such a case, add new questions to ask in each subsequent interview.

General information

Can you introduce yourself?

Have you already heard about this product before?

What is your impression about L'Orèal?

Have you already used video reviews online?

What is your general impression about them?

Do you usually use treatments for your hair? For example?

How much do you care about your hair?

The participant, at this point, is asked to describe the thoughts written in the list of thoughts:

If necessary, try to probe more the thoughts.

Questions about old determinants

<u>Argument Strength</u>

Do you think reviewers provided relevant information about the product?

Can you give us an example?

Why is it relevant?

Which video do you think presents the strongest arguments? Why?

Recommendation Framing

Where you more attracted by negative or positive comments?

Source Style

Did you perceive some reviewers have omitted some information?

Can you give us an example? What did she omit?

Do you think the length of the video affects the quality of it?

Do you think videos where people showed their faces are more credible? Did you look at the reviewer in the eyes or you focused on other things?

Did you appreciate personal suggestions?

Did you notice differences in the sets of the videos?

Did you notice differences in the definition of the videos?

Did you read the descriptions under the videos?

Did the music trigger an emotional impact on you?

Source credibility

What do you think about the appearance of the reviewers?

Can you classify them from the most to the least trustworthy?

Did you feel empathise with some of them?

Did you trust more that person?

Has the attitude of the reviewers influenced your thoughts?

Which girl looked more expert?

Why does that girl look more expert?

Did you check some information of the reviewer?

Did you notice that not everybody said their names?

Did the accent of the person influence you? Anything else about the voice of the person? (Nationality)

What do you think are the motivations of the reviewers to do the video?

Do you think the company is influenced them?

Which girl or girls did you perceive was influenced?

User Characteristics

Did the videos confirm what you thought about the product and/or the brand?

Recommendation Consistency

Did the fact that the Italian video provided opposite information from the others affect your thoughts?

Did contrasting information affect your credibility toward that video?

Recommendations Rating

Did you pay attention to information like number of views, likes, dislikes and so on?

Can you remember which video had the highest number?

Did you read the comments?

Did they influence you?

Web Reputation

-

Questions about testing (Testing is a determinant assumed by the researchers)

Did you find helpful the fact that some reviewers showed how to use the product?

Do you think that testing makes the video more credible? Why?

Conclusion: make sure to thank the participant.

Appendix B: Videos Analysis

This section explains how the videos, exposed to the participants, were selected for the current research purpose. As afore mentioned in the methodology chapter (see Section 3.6.1), the product chosen for the empirical research was *L'Oréal Paris Elvive Extraordinary Oil*, therefore all of the video reviews about this product, made in English and uploaded at that time on YouTube, were analysed in order to select the most relevant in terms of the research question. One criterion of selection was to combine together reviews differing on characteristics able to highlight the determinants of perceived credibility, such as valence, arguments, source style, number of views, and so on. Firstly, an initial selection led to the choice of six (6) videos. Subsequently, the videos have been evaluated, considering the previous determinants, found in the past research about written eWOM (see Section 2.3), the video features, and the nonverbal-communication cues (see Sections 2.5). As a consequence of the second selection, *video 4* was eliminated, because presenting similar characteristics of other videos, which were considered fitting more for the research purpose. The analysis was accomplished adopting the table shown below (see Table B.1).

Table B.1 Analysis of the videos.

	VIDEO 1 (Brie from Madame B Fatal, 2013)	VIDEO 2 (Beutyshades, 2012)	VIDEO 3 (bhTrialTeam, 2013)	VIDEO 4 (Seduced by Beauty, 2013)	VIDEO 5 (BlushOffBlog, 2014)	VIDEO 6 (Misseffortlessly chic, 2012)
INFORMATIONAL DETERMINANTS						
Argument Strength	- Packaging - Quantity - Six (6) types of oils - The hair looks soft, healthy, and shiny - The product is "awesome for FAKING great hair" - Floral scent - It lasts a lot	- She explains two (2) types of product. - Packaging - Different ways to use it - How to use it - Price	- Cheap price - On wet and dry hair - Prevention - Packaging - Personal experience - How to use it	- Different oils - Benefits (shiny hair, protection) - Different ways to use it -Value for money	- Benefits of the product	- Price - Personal experience - Different ways to use it - Results - Packaging - Smell - She recommended other products
Recommenda-tion Framing and Sidedness	+ - One-sided	+ - Mainly one-sided	++ - One-sided	+ - One-sided	+?	- - One-sided

Source Style	- Personal suggestion with the brush - Confidence with English - Simple language - Written description under the video - Informational and personal POV	- Simple language - Written description under the video - Informational and personal POV	- Both informational and personal POV - No written description under the video	- Clear speaking - Simple language - Long description	- No written description under the video - Use of humour	- Long description - Simple language
Source Credibility	- She thanked L'Oréal to make her try it - First name - Homophily: clear style - Brush tip - Personal channel	- Homophily (foreign accent) - No name - Personal channel	- Name - No personal channel (linked to a beauty site)	- Knowledgeable - Description with her experience - No name - Personal channel	- Homophily (Asian) - Sophisticated hair routine - Personal channel	- She knows about the brand and other similar products - Personal channel
Confirmation of Prior Belief	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
NORMATIVE DETERMINANTS						
Recommenda-tion consistency	- Consistent	- Consistent	- Consistent	- Consistent	- Consistent	- Not consistent with the other videos
Recommenda-tion rating	- 10.474 views - 34 likes - 3 dislikes - 3 positive comments - 3078 subscribers	- 22.060 views - 0 likes - 0 dislikes - 44 positive comments - 833 subscribers	- 764 views - 5 likes - 0 dislikes - 2 comments: questions with no answer -No personal channel	- 3.209 views - 17 likes - 4 dislikes - 3 comments: probably others deleted - 525 subscribers	- 5.496 views - 23 likes - 3 dislikes - 5 comments: not all about the product - 280 subscribers	- 20.717 views - 38 likes - 10 dislikes - 32 comments: there are comments which disagree with her opinion - 3.413 subscribers
Web Reputation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

VIDEO FEATURES and NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION CUES						
Video Features	- Length: 3:08 min. - High definition - Professional setting - Audio: not good at the beginning - Stable camera - Good lighting	- Length: 3:14 min. - Good definition - Simple setting: home-made - Audio: normal - Stable camera - Normal lighting	- Length: 2:31 min. - Low Definition - Household setting - Audio: good - Bad lighting	- Length: 2:23 min. - High definition - Simple setting - Audio: good - Good lighting	- Length: 4:07 min. - Normal definition - Household setting - Audio: music - Bad lighting	- Length: 8:16 min. - Normal definition - Household setting -Audio: normal - Not stable camera - Normal lighting
Nonverbal Communication Cues	- Testing of the product - Face shown in front of the camera - Relaxed body language - Edgy look - Australian accent	- No testing - Face not shown - Extravagant nails - Foreign accent	- Testing of the product - Face shown in front of the camera - Body language expressing lack of confidence - Native-speaker accent	- No testing - Face shown in front of the camera - Body language expressing confidence - Late-forties woman - Native-speaker accent	- Long testing and use of the product as part of the routine - Face shown in front of the camera - Confident and charismatic body language - No oral communication	- No testing: consistency of the product shown on her hand - Face shown in front of the camera - Evident facial expressions -Strong Italian accent

Appendix C: Introductory Document and List of Thoughts Example

YOUTUBE AND ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH

Before starting we are going to explain to you what is our research project about, and what is the purpose of our study. The research project is about electronic word-of-mouth, so how consumers exchange information about products or services on the Internet. In particular, we want to study what are the factors that are implied when judging the credibility of a video review on YouTube.

First you will be asked to watch 5 videos on YouTube and collecting some thoughts about those on a paper, writing the first things come up in your mind while watching or just after each video.

Later, based on the thoughts you listed, the interview will start.

The entire process will last between 60 and 90 minutes, and you will be tape-recorded. Feel completely free to interrupt the process if you don't feel comfortable.

Note: the recorded interview will not be public, but it is necessary only for us in order to transcribe what you will say. It is possible that some of your quotations will be used in the research, but they will not be associated with your name.

Are you between 20 and 30?_____

Do you give us the permission to audio record the interview?   YES _____   NO _____

Date _____   Signature _____

LIST OF THOUGHTS

Now you will start watching the videos. We want you to remember that you can act naturally as you normally do when you use YouTube. You can freely interact with the web page, as you prefer.

In this first phase, we are interested in everything that goes through your mind about the upcoming videos. Use this paper to list the first thoughts that come up in your mind during the video or just after it.

The thoughts can be about the video or yourself, and can be positive, neutral and/or negative.

Ignore spelling, grammar and punctuation. After each video, you will have 1.5 minutes to write. However, you can also start writing during the vision of it, if you feel like doing it. We have deliberately provided more space than we think people need, to ensure that everyone would have plenty of space.

Please be completely honest. The next page contains the form we have prepared for you to record your thoughts and ideas. Simply write down the first thought you had in the first box, the second in the second box, and so on. Please, put only one thought or idea in each box.

VIDEO 1

more focus on her nails which are funny.

chinese accent → less accurate.

does not really master the english language, so she

repeated a lot of sentences → makes it less serious

Should show her face, you are more confatable

after as a consumer.

I like the strategy of putting an other product at the

end.

VIDEO 2

bad video quality.

I like the fact that she shows how to applicatie the

product on the hair

I like the content what she is saying, more

complete than the last ifore.

advice : what does the product prevent → is such

an unavoidable topic that this girl said and not the

previous one

→ design is better

VIDEO 3

Good quality of the video, but the sound is annoying
show how to do ✓ more descriptive, it's better.
her |review's|content is more complete and organized.

the girl looks like a girl who takes care of
hes than the last one, she gets more credibility.
adjectives are more various and her english
is really better → we can easier trust her.

VIDEO 4

Background not really professional. less accurate
her accent is pretty funny → first reaction : I laughed.
Her hair → doesn't look like good → less accurate
I found good the fact that she criticizes the
instructions of the product She really gives her own
opinion, is very critical, which is good for us.
when she shows → funny because we cannot really see
and even the girl is confused because she does not
know if we see it.
The correction in the blank text → makes the review less
                                                    accurate.
Too long for only this product, our concentration is sometimes gone
we don't pay attention of every sentence because too long.

I like the fact that she advices an other product
and compares both of them depending on the situation, prices, ...

VIDEO 5

I liked this type of video = descriptive but at the same
very quick and well done ⇒ we directly get the idea
of how should be use the product.
no need to see how she straights her hair →too long
for the L'Oreal's product review
2 min - 41 : useless - we think that she in a kind top model
who just want to show her and not a normal person
(women don't spend so much time on their hair).
I don't have the impression to recognize myself in
this type of review. She looks like a star, instead
on a "normal" girl -

90

Appendix D: Data Analysis – Coding Example

INTERVIEW JULIA

[Can you introduce yourself and say if you have already used this kind of reviews, if you know L'Oréal, or the products?]

My name is Julia, I'm 23 years old, and I'm from Austria. I know L'Oréal, I didn't know the product, because I don't like to use hair oils in general. That is why I didn't look at this kind of products. I use YouTube a lot for reviews, to look at what different people think about different kinds of products, because I think it's really helpful to get insights, and know what people think about certain products, especially if they are expensive products, because you don't really want to buy it if a lot of people online already told you that it's not good. You think: "Ok, it doesn't worth the money. I don't need to buy it", but if it's something that I really really want to try, I would   probably still buy it, even if I found reviews that say that it's not good. Reviews are really personal and you never know, maybe the product didn't work for them or they didn't like it, but maybe can work for me. So, if it's something that I really really want or I really think might help, I will go for it, even if I find negative reviews.

Strong Experience

Good Impression

[Did you use them (video reviews) for beauty products?]

Yes, I used it for a couple of hair products, especially hair sprays, because I always buy hair sprays that make your hair really stick together and I try to find something that will hold it but will not stick together, and I found really good videos of that online, of some products, and then I tried the products, and for that they really helped.

Good Impression

[What are you looking for in a review?]

I kind of want to see if the people have already done some reviews, just because if they do it more often they kind of get more credibility than just only one review online. I always like if they have a good set-up, you know, the camera is stable, and if it's not, like looking that they film themselves in their phones or something. Besides that, I like when they show you how to use the product as well, because that automatically give them credibility. If they don't just hold the product and talk about it, but they use it, and if you can actually see that they know how the product is like.

Expertise and Setting

Testing

[What is your general impression about L'Oréal?]

About L'Oréal, I like some of their products. I think some of them are overprice, and what I don't, well, what personally I don't really like is that all their products are based on chemicals, and I try to find more natural products. So, I often go to other brands that usually offer natural ingredients, but I have some of their hair conditioners and they are, you know, they have bad chemicals, but they work really good, make you hair silky and soft, at least they do their jobs.

Ok Impression

[Do you consider yourself a person who cares a lot about their hair?]

About my hair, mm yes, well yes, I think.

Normal Involvement

[Do you spend a lot of money?]

No, not a lot of money… sometimes. I think that going to the hairdresser is a real treat for me, because my hair is really long, and every time you get a cut you have to pay an addition if it's long hair and blah balh blah, so it gets really expensive. That is the reason why I don't go to the hairdresser really often. I know some people that go every month or something so I'm not that intense, but I like to try different products.

[Are you picky in your choice?]

Mmm no. I think I like to try different products to see if they work. The only thing I'm picky on is the smell, because if I use it and I don't like the smell, and I have to smell it every time and I don't like the smell, it's not a good thing, but yes I'm not really picky.

[After you have seen these videos, do you believe in the product, or in the message?]

I was actually thinking I should try hair oils, just because they said it helps against frizz and because I have layer hair. I tried hair oil once and it made my hair really greasy. I think that in general, for me, it doesn't make sense to put oil on your hair, because it will make it greasy. But, after seeing these videos, I don't know, maybe, but they said that the product was really expensive, so I think that it would be the only reason why I would not buy it, because I think one of them said that it was 19,95£.

[No is 10£.]

But in euro that is 14/15 euro, and that is a lot for a hair product, so I don't think I would buy it.

[But do you have a positive attitude toward the product?]

Yes, yes.

<div style="text-align: right">Positive Impression</div>

[Something else about this video?]

Sometimes her camera was shaking as well. If she had a stable set-up, that would be better.

<div style="text-align: right">Video Features: Setting</div>

[Let's go to the second video.]

Yes, I didn't like the second one. It was just, there was not review, was there? She didn't talk about the product, she didn't say what it does. I read a comment bellow and one girl asked: "Can you put a link to let us know which product did you use?" I don't see the point of this video: "why do you?" Well, she shows how to use the product, but she doesn't say what it does, what the benefits are, what might be not good about the product, what she likes, and she just wrote some stuff in between and she said: "Oh, it protects your hair from the sun", but how do you prove that in a video? Like, in your bathroom and blow-drying, you can say: "Ok, it's for heat protection." Then she wrote down: "It helps for curling" and then she put it into her hair and curled her hair, but when she took it out there was no curls, so how does it help with curling? So, I didn't really like that. I would not watch it if I were at home looking for reviews because, I don't know, I don't think it was a review: it was not helpful at all, it didn't tell you anything about the product.

<div style="text-align: right">Arguments</div>

<div style="text-align: right">Visual Evidence</div>

I like the next one. I think it was well structured, short and concise, informative, and that is basically what I think about it: like it. At first I was: "Why don't we see her face?", but then I was: "She showed you the product and that is the actual thing that matters". So, you don't really need to see the face to be credible, because she sounds knowledgeable. She starts with the packaging, then the benefits, the ingredients, what she likes about it, what she doesn't like about it, that it is all you need about a review.

<div style="text-align: right">Visual Trust: Face; Expertise</div>

[So the content, was it good?]

Yes it was really good. I think it was the best one. Yes, I like it.

Yes, I don't know. For me she seems very nervous and she seems that she was unsure about what she was saying or about what she was supposed to say. I mean, she also showed how to use the product, but it was really dark and it wasn't really focus. She just seems a little nervous. I didn't quite like it, like

<div style="text-align: right">Attitude</div>

the third one. It was kind of: "I'm sitting at home and I don't know what I'm doing, so I would do a review" like: "I'm in my home and I'm bored."

The last one. I think, from the last one, you can see she is a professional blogger, because she has the professional set-up and she was sitting in front of a neutral background and you can see that she edited at some point, like there was some connection between the shots. You can see she edited it, and she also said that the product was sent to her and that she didn't buy it, so you can see that she probably has some influence, that people sent some products to review. So, she probably has a professional blog or something, that people trust her or she influences their opinions, so this one was more credible than the ones before. So, yes, this was good as well, it was good structured, she also talked about what it works for her, she showed how to use it, and I really like the thing she showed with the brush; I think that was a good idea, because you don't really have it over your hands. Yes, I think it was good as well, like my second favourite.

Video Features: Setting

Influence of Companies

Arguments: Personal Suggestions; Testing

[So, if you have to classify them, which reviewer provided good information?]

Rank them?

[Well, yes.]

Video number 3 has the most informative arguments, what she said. She explained the bottle and how to use it. Yes, I think that in video number 3, she has the best structure and the way to do it. Video number 5, she has also a good structure and she gave you good arguments about how to use it and why it's good to use it… well then…

[It's enough the firsts two. Why do you prefer video number 3 rather than 5?]

Mmm, I think because she clearly put the product in focus, you could not even see her. It was just about the product, she just talked about the product: "The product do this and the product do that, this are the benefits". It was all about the product, and numbers. [Video] number 5 was more about the girl, because she filmed herself and then she showed you the product. It felt more subjective than the third one, the third one makes you feel it's an objective video, but video number 5 was more about the girl and how she used it.

Arguments: Focus On the Product

[Do you prefer that, like an objective impression, or something more personal? Because at the beginning you said that you like the personal suggestions.]

I think it's important for people to tell you what worked and what didn't work and, if it's a review it's always subjective. Even in video number 3 she still talked about what worked for her and what didn't work for her. I just think it's important not to be too negative. I like when people take in mind that this is subjective for them, when people say: "Maybe this didn't work for me, but can work for you, because does this and this and this." So, they also give you the positive points. It's important to have some personal feedbacks, obviously, but also keep in mind that other people want to use it, and then tell them about the benefits are and what it's good about the product, not only focus in the negative points, just because it didn't work for you.

Arguments / Sidedness

[You said that you like the fact that she put the focus in the product, rather than her face. Do you think that people who make this kind of reviews should avoid to show themselves?]

No, I don't think they should avoid to show themselves, I just think that for her it was good. At the beginning I thought: "Why she is not showing herself?" But you don't really need it. I mean: if people want to show themselves and make it look more like a conversation, then it's fine, but you don't really need it for a product review. If it's just a product, you can put the product on focus and talk about it without you being in the shot. I don't think you need the person in the shot to make it more credible.

First Impression

Empathy: Face

[But in this case, that it's about the hair (the product), do you like seeing the person, or it's just ok if this girl has beautiful hair and: "I trust her"?]

But I think you cannot even see if the product works on her hair, can you? I mean, because the last one said it works against frizz and then she put it up in her roots, but she didn't have any frizz at the begging, so you cannot see if it works or it doesn't work. I don't think just because you see the person's hair, you will say: "Obviously the product works", because maybe she uses a different product. So, you cannot make the association: just because her hair looks good in this video, it's automatically that product, because she might use a different product.

Visual Evidence

[Were you more attracted by positive or negative comments?]

I think I was more attracted by the positive comments, because I have quite negative opinions about product like this, in general, so the most positive ones make me think: "Oh, it's a good product after all." Because they say it makes the hair more shiny and, maybe, I should give it a try, maybe it's a good thing. I don't know, because I have a more negative point of view, the positive stood more out to me.

Valence

[Are you normally like that, so you are looking for positive comments when you are watching this kind of videos, or it depends of the product?]

It depends on the product. If it's a product that I really want to try, then I'm looking for the positive reviews, because I can justify the purchase to myself. So I'm like: "Oh, it's really good, so I should purchase it" but if it's a product that I'm really neutral or I don't know, I think I'm looking more for, not really looking for, but listening to the positive and the negative equally, and maybe focusing more on the negative points of why it doesn't work or what it's not good about the product, but if it is something that I already have a negative point of view of the product, I don't think I would look for videos for that, because I would not want to buy it anyway, so I would not really look like for this product. For example, I would never look for video by myself, but now maybe I will.

Support of Others

Valence

[Do you think that these reviewers told you all the information that you were looking for or there was information that there wasn't in all of the videos?]

No, I think they gave you everything you were looking for, because they talked about the ingredients, that is really important for hair products, they talked about the benefits, and the thing that they didn't like. No, I think they gave you everything, I don't know what other information you could need, or that I would look for.

[You said that the set-up is important. Did you notice some difference between them and how do you define a good set-up for a review, in terms of credibility?]

I think, as I said, that maybe if they have the camera in a stable surface, it doesn't shake when they move. Good light is important, because when it's dark it makes it look a little dodgy, I think. Yes, I think these are the 2 things I would look for, because if you see the last girl, if she had had a more professional set-up, you would, I don't know, automatically that gives her more credibility, because it feels that she has done this before and that she has tried a couple of different products, so she can compare or something. I don't know, I don't like this kind of videos that looks like when there is a random person, sitting at home, filming a video themselves, because just, I don't know why, but for me it makes it a little less credible, although it's as much their opinion as it is with the girl with the professional set-up. But, I don't know, I like to watch it more when it's with a professional set-up, compared to the more homemade.

Video Features

[So, don't you like the homemade?]

The ones that really look homemade, like bad quality, shaking and dark, I don't like watching them.

[Why? What is the difference between that girl and the others? They are just people like you, just girls who used the product, why do you need a professional set?]

I don't know, it's just a personal preference. I like it more when videos are aesthetically cleaned, but yes, your argument makes sense: it's one person's opinion and another person's opinion, it's the same thing, but I like to watch the ones with a nice set-up.

[If you were at home, if you saw a video with a bad quality or that looks home made, would you skip it?]

Yes, I think so.

[Is it just about the quality and setting, or also about the person who appears in the video?]

Mm no, I don't know really. I think the person in the video… mmm… I think… then it's more than the first impression, how can I explain that? If the person, if I automatically like the person, if I like her voice and stuff, I'm more inclined to watch the video, instead if it's a person whose I think: "Oh my god, she is annoying" or I don't like her voice, the way she talks, probably I would skip it to the next video. But, if there is a person that I think she looks nice, or he looks nice, or they have a nice voice. or they seem more knowledgeable about what they are talking about, then I would watch more than somebody that I don't feel.

[Do you think that the appearance is really important here?]

No, not the appearance, I think it's more about character. It's more like how they can project what they feel. Sometimes you watch a video and you say: "Oh, I could like this person" **[Is it if you can empathise with them?]** Yes, empathise, exactly. That's the word I was looking for.

[Did you empathise with some of them?]

Yes I think the last girl. Because in the video number 3 I liked the girl, but I couldn't see her, so I can't really say anything about her. But in number 5 I liked that she seems a really open person, an honest person, but also a nice person, and happy and fun to be around, whereas the girl in video number 4 seems very shy and very nervous, she wasn't sure what she was talking about, and that what makes the video: "mmm, I'm not sure if I can trust your review, if you come across so nervous and so unsure of yourself".

Empathy: Attitude

[Are you conscious about what details you look at when you judge a person as the last girl?]

I don't know, just from the way she talks she seems very self confident, she just seems more knowledgeable, but maybe it was also because she said that the product was sent to her, so you know that she tried a lot of different products so you know that she has something that maybe she can compare it to, and that's why I think that her opinion is more valuable. It seems that she's knowledgeable in this field, so she has some experience about other products, so she can tell you: "ok, this is good, this is not good".

Expertise

[You mentioned the voice. Is it important? And How is it important?]

For me voice is very important. I just like listening, I think that everyone likes listening to people who have a pleasant voice, that is nice to listen to.

Tone of Voice

[About the accent, what do you think?]

I think that the accents are ok, as long as you understand them. Like at the beginning, I had problems in understanding the girl in video number 1, but that was only the first two sentences and something that she said, and then, after that, it got lot better and it didn't really bother me. **[Not at all?]** No, and I also think she had a pleasant voice and it was nice to listen to her. She was just a little scattered with what she was saying.

First Impression: Accent

[So if the voice is pleasant, what's the effect on you?]

I just like listening to it. It's just nice to listen to someone with a pleasant voice, rather than someone with an unpleasant voice and it's annoying and I don't want to listen to it.

[At the beginning you said that you see when people have subscribers and other things. So, what are the elements that define the expertise of the girl?]

I think it depends. If I'm looking for a special product, I'm likely going to watch the all videos that are out there, and it doesn't really matter if they have a lot of subscribers, of they don't have subscribers, because I want

Expertise: Arguments

information on a specific product, but if I just go to YouTube for inspiration, to look what's out there, then I'd certainly go the channels where I know the girls have a lot of subscribers, and maybe they have blogs, and they have connections in the beauty world, and they get sent all the newest products, so then they review them and you know what their opinions are. Does it make sense? Like

Expertise: Channel and Subscribers

if want like a specific product, I would look at whatever it's out there, but if I just want some basic inspiration, just for fun, then I go to certain channels, where I know that I like the girls who make reviews of the products and that they have a lot of subscribers.

[Do you follow some girls?]

Yes. I think there are 3 British YouTubers, and they have blogs as well as videos. The one is called Zoella, one is called [?], and one is called Louise Louise, but it's not her YouTube name… Sprinkle of Glitter!

[What do you like in those videos?]

I just like their personality, they seems they are really, again, honest, open, friendly girls, and you know that this is their jobs, so they only have the blogs and they only have the YouTube channels, they really dedicate their like to it. You see from all the different pads that they use, that they really try a lot of different things, even though they are not professionally trained in this field, that's what gives them a kind of expertise, because they've tried so many different things that they can say: "Ok, that works better than this, but if

Personality

Expertise: Professional Bloggers

you are looking for a cheaper version than this, you can use this". It makes it really easy for you to narrow it down to what you are looking for. What I like about them is that they not only talk about beauty, but they also have random videos where they talk about themselves, and you kind of get to know them a little. You kind of feel like watching a friend, when you are looking at the videos. That's what I like: when you work all day and you get home, and you see that they have uploaded a new video, it's kind of relaxing but getting information at the same time.

Empathy: Personal Stories

[About the fact that these girls show more than one product, also here there was a video, the one you liked, that at the end she showed another product, do you think that it makes the review more credible?]

I think that, if they are reviewing a specific product, then it doesn't really matter, but I liked in the third one that she basically gave you an alternative, because it was a similar product, just from another brand, so maybe if you are looking for something else than L'Oréal, like she said: "I will put it in a video, next week", so you can come back next week and see if she likes this product, because maybe I can use it instead of the L'Oréal product because I didn't like it or it's too expensive or I don't know.

Arguments: Comparison

Yeah, I thin that if they show you that they do it more often, that just gives you more credibility than just do it once.

Expertise

[So, do you really believe in the girls that you follow? If they say: "This product is good", do you believe it?]

I do, because I tried a couple of products where they said they were good, and I liked them as well. It's just that, when they show you a lot of different product, you know from yourself that you won't need all these kinds of product, it's just because it's her jobs, so they have to try all the different things. And sometimes when you look at them, it's not that you want to try all the different products, because you know that you never use these things, so these are not interesting for me, but if you are looking for a body lotion or something, and they show you and they say: "Oh, it's really nice, it really works really nice for me" and whatever you look for from a body lotion, and you are like: "Oh ok, I can give this one a try".

Expertise / Experience

[Do you think that the companies influence these girls too much?]

No, because what I like with them is that they always tell you where the product comes from, so they tell you: "The company sent this to me to review it", or they tell you: "I got this sample, and I liked it so much that I actually went back and re-purchased it", and when you know that they went out and they bought it themselves, it gives you more credibility; you think that it has to be good. I think a lot of companies know how much influential these people can get to make use of them and make them say positive things about their products, but I can't know that. From what I think about these girls, they wouldn't accept payment for saying something positive, because they build their all image around trust, so people go there to watch their videos, and know that what they get are their personal opinions, whether they liked it or they didn't like it, and even though the companies sent them a product, like I saw in a couple of videos, they said: "Oh I got sent it from a company, and I really didn't like it". So that it makes it even more credible, than they actually say: "Oh, I got this for free and I like it". I like that it's not kind of shady and you find out from behind: "Oh, she actually didn't buy it herself. A company sent it to her", but they always tell you: "I got this, I got this, I got this". They are really honest and really open about this, and I think that this honesty is also transferred to the reviews. It kind of builds a trust, and you think: "You can trust them".

Influence of Companies

[You said that you have 2 ways: or you look at those people that you trust, otherwise you look at more reviews. When you look at more reviews, how do you judge some information as more valuable than the other? Maybe you can have contrasting information.]

I think that if I look for specific information about a product, I don't really judge some information as more valuable than other information, I kind of just look at what it's out there, and then from all the information that I found, I make my decision from myself, if I want to buy the product or not. But, if I'm really looking for specific information, I don't really say: "Oh no, you are not trustworthy, I will trust what this person says", but I will really look at everything before.

Valence

[And, how would you make the final judgment in order to form your personal impression?]

I think it depends on how much negative information I found, because if there's only negative information out there, it wouldn't make sense to still buy the product, but if it's more or less balanced, then I think that the only way that you can actually make a proper decision, it's to try it yourself, and I would probably go and buy myself and see if it works for me or if it doesn't work for me.

[Do you like when videos confirm your prior believes?]

If it's a really expensive thing, or if it's something that I really don't need, but then I find a lot of people who say: "Oh, but it's so good", well then I'm like: "Well, then you can hardly say no, can't you?" So, if I really really want something but I can't really justify it with myself, then I just look for positive reinforcement.

Support of Others

[What do you think are the motivations for the reviewers, especially the girls in those videos?]

I think for the first one, her motivation was probably that she didn't like the product and she wanted to tell people about it. It's kind of when you write a negative review on Trip Advisor or something, like: "I didn't like this, and I want people to know that it's not a good product. The second video, about the Asian girl, I think it was more because she wanted to put a video of herself online. It wasn't really about the product, it was really more about herself, like: "Look, I have pretty hair". Number 3 I think it was a proper review, and I think she said at the beginning that some people asked her to review it, so that's why she did it, and I think it was more a genuine attempt to help people to make a decision. I think she makes a really knowledgeable impression, and people probably ask her to do a review, and she has probably done a couple more. Video number 4 I don't really know, because at the beginning she

shows like a logo or something, so maybe it's like a beauty company that has a couple of different people who make reviews for them, and maybe they just wanted her to put a review. I don't think she was really comfortable with it: she didn't really seem comfortable, she seems really nervous. So, maybe it was like a company, not really a company but, how do you say it?, like a main channel for reviews. They probably just wanted her to make the review. And for the last one, I think she is a proper blogger, reviewer, so she probably did it for fun and also because it's her job.

[Did the fact that it's her job influence you?]

No, because if she's so interested in it, that she wants to make it her job, I think that it gives her even more credibility.

Professionalism

[Did you pay attention in the number of views, likes, dislikes, and so on?]

Likes and dislikes, no. Views, maybe… no, actually no, not really.

[Do you normally do it?]

No, I kind of want to watch what I'm watching, and I don't really care if somebody else has seen it or not.

[Because you scrolled down.]

Yeah, I was looking through the comments, and I wanted to see if they have a channel name or a personal name, because with the last girl you could see the she has a real channel name and that's where probably she uploads all the videos, and I just wanted to read a couple of comments that people left. I sometimes read through the comments because sometimes people in videos say: "Oh, I haven't tried any alternative to this product, so has anyone tried any alternatives leave it in the comments" and then if you think: "Oh, I like this product, but I think it's too expensive" you can scroll down and see if somebody left a comment and referred to another product that maybe you want to try. So I think the comments sometimes are helpful to find some information as well.

Comments

[Normally is it important just the information or you look also at the number of the comments?]

No, just the information.

[So you look at the comments and the channel. Do you also look at the number of subscribers?]

No, I don't, and I don't really look at the likes and dislikes.

[In this video, what do you think about the comments?]

I only so some. You could see in the video with the Asian girl that the only comment which was left was from herself, so…. You can also see from the comments if people are interested in this topic, if they are engaged in the conversation. Since none of the people interested in this oil left any comment, you can see that maybe other people also thought that it wasn't helpful.

Recommendation Rating: Comments

[Do you think that the comments influence you a lot, or it's more the video than the comments?]

No, in general I look at the content of the video, it's just if they say like: "Comment below" or "Look through the comments if there are other interesting opinions" or something, that then I will go and look through the comments, but sometimes people comment so many stupid things or spam so many comments, and you don't want to read through all of them and then just leave it, because too much to read through.

[When you are watching the video, do you look at the face of the girl to judge her personality?]

Yes I mostly looking at the girls, and the one with the nails, I was looking at her nails. Yeah, but generally I look at their faces.

Visual Trust: Face

[Do you think that the girls have to be beautiful, or it's just a matter of style? For example Zoella is a beautiful girl.]

I don't think that's important, because if you compare her to the other girls, like Louise or Sprinkle of Glitters, she is, I don't want to see fat, but she's a stronger built woman, and she's clearly not classically beautiful. You can see the she has a general interest in the topic and in all the reviews that she does. You can see that she puts a lot of efforts into it, so I don't think just because she is not what it's confirmed as classically beautiful, I don't think it makes her opinion any less valuable.

Physical Attractiveness: Appearance

[So don't you think that the physical appearance is important…]

No, I don't think so. I mean, the physical appearance, if they have a beauty channel, you can see that of course, because they will wear a lot of makeup, and you will see that they will use a lot of these products. I don't think you can see a girl who is not wearing makeup or that it's not clearly interested in [?].

Appearance

[Do you think that the physical appearance reflects she's an expert?]

No, I don't think so. For me, for credibility reasons, it's not important.

Appearance

[For example in video number 1, she has not the conventional beautiful hair, do you think that it influences you?]

Well I think that her haircut was not beautiful, like it was not my kind of haircut, but I think that from what she showed with her hair, it was shiny, it looked healthy, and that's what basically you can ask from it. The only thing is that she said that it didn't weight her hair down, but it kind of looked like stuck to her hair. That's the only thing that maybe was not really an accurate statement, but I'm not sure if it was the product that weighted her hair down, or if it was that she didn't wash her hair for a couple of days. She probably didn't wash her hair.

Visual Evidence

[You mentioned more the once the interest of the person. Do you think it's important, related to credibility? Do you trust the person if she shows interest toward the review?]

Yes, I think so, because if you are not really interested in the product, I think you can't really provide a good review, simply because if you have an interest you will look at so many different points, whereas if you say: "Yes, I don't really care", you just get an overall impression.

Expertise: Interest

[How do you judge if a person is interested? I know that maybe it's not really conscious, but if you think a bit more about it.]

I think from the way they talk about the product. I think you could see it from the first video, that she was really interested, and at the same time disappointed with the product, because she was looking for something that could help her frizz problem and everything, but this product didn't do it for her, and that's why, probably, it was so long, because she really wanted to make you understand, because she was really frustrated with that product. So, yes, I think that if you don't have an interest in that product, you don't have that many things to talk about, the review would probably be more incomplete: you wouldn't really look at the ingredients, if you liked the product, you wouldn't say anything about what might be negative about it, you would just say: "Yes, I liked it!"

Attitude: Interest

[So, do you look it from the details the person provides?]

Yes, because if you are not interested in the product, you would just say: "I like it!", or: "I don't like it!", but you couldn't really say: "I like it because it has natural ingredients" or: "I like it because it makes your hair shiny", something like that. Yeah, the level of details, I think, shows how interested a person is.

Arguments: Interest

[About the reviewers who showed you how to use the product, do you think it's helpful for the video? Is it like a strong argument to show how the product looks?]

I think it's a strong argument, because you can actually see they used the product, and also it makes really easy for yourself, you don't really know what to do with it, or if you haven't used anything like that before, it just makes it easier for yourself to actually understand what to do with it, because, for example, if it's an oil, I would never put it in dry hair, because I just think: "Why?", but they said that you can use it in dry hair and it doesn't make your hair to look greasy, so maybe I can try it as well. So, I think that helps a lot if they show you how they do it and how to use it.

Testing

Appendix E: Data Analysis – List of Quotations

The analysis of the data, collected through the interviews, was developed listing together all the relevant quotations related to each code, in order to identify common patterns in the participants' opinions. The list presented below is just an example to make the reader understand the procedure followed in the research, and includes only the quotations mentioned in the results.

LIST OF QUOTATIONS

ARGUMENT QUALITY

"If I just compare like the first one and the second one, it's just you talk about it in a way that can tell the listeners the different categories you talk about. Like in the second video, she just talked, and talked, and talked and wasn't like: 'Ok, if you use it for this, you can do like this, and it's very good. This it's very good for this and this.' It's kind of categorise it in a way" (Susanna).

"… that they tell their opinion about the product and their experiences, if it's good or bad, or if they like the smell or not, but for me it's not important to know about the ingredients, because I can get that information by myself, so it wouldn't be of additional value. Really, how they experienced it" (Gretel).

"I would look for information, I guess, like the packaging, the price, how other people think it works for them, but I guess I would also look for her hair and see if it is similar to mine in that product case, so if someone has straight hair and long hair. So if someone has curly hair and short hair I would think maybe it doesn't apply to me so much, so I think it's about empathizing with them" (Edda).

RECOMMENDATION FRAMING: VALENCE

"Well, when they said that this products is: 'excellent, phenomenal or awesome' for me it was not credible, because it's superficial, or kind of, for me. I wouldn't believe it. For me it would be more important, I mean, if they said: 'The hair is really sticky afterwards' or something. Then I pay more attention to this, listen more to the negative … if I hear negative comments it would be in my mind stronger that positive things" (Gretel).

"… because I would be more scared of the negative sides than positive sides. If they said: 'This product burns my hair, it goes on fire', I would never buy it, even if for someone it was working good" (Maria).

"I really like the first one, because she seems very authentic, and she criticized the product too. You didn't feel it was like: 'Everything is awesome, is so awesome!' I really liked that" (Edda).

"It was the packaging of the information that was too *no*: too pessimistic …" (Susanna).

RECOMMENDATION SIDEDNESS

"I think it's credible if they can present both sides, positive and negative. I mean, if somebody is really convinced of the product and there are only positive things, I would still watch for other videos that discuss the same product, just to see if it's really so positive or there are negative aspects that one person didn't mention" (Gretel).

"I think that if everything is super cool, it's unbelievable. So, there has to be at least one point that you don't like. I don't know, even if the product is perfect, maybe the bottle is terrible. I don't know, something. If you hear only the good stuff, probably they are paid" (Dana).

"Like for me she is not objective at all, that is why I don't trust her. It seems she doesn't notice the good points of the product and she only talks about the negative ones" (Charlotte).

SOURCE CREDIBILITY

<u>Expertise</u>

"I noticed that one of them said: 'This are the ingredients, blah blah blah, I don't know what that is', so if you don't know even what are you talking about, that is weird. I would leave that out in her position. It makes it very honest, but I don't believe her or her expertise anymore" (Edda).

"Well, in the first video, it looks like she cares about her hair, the colours of the hair are so weird. If you dye your hair so much, you should put something on it, because you ruin it, so I actually trust her more and I think she knows what she is doing" (Maria).

"… when you seem to have an appearance that matches with the product. If I listened to a guy talking about computers, maybe I would trust a nerd more. … she has that hair that I can kind of tell that she's into beauty, a lot, mostly because her makeup was really nice, and also her hair was really nice" (Susanna).

"…from the way she talks she seems very self-confident, she just seems more knowledgeable, but maybe it was also because she said that the product was sent to her, so you know that she tried a lot of different products and you know that she has something that maybe she can compare it to, and that's why I think that her opinion is more valuable … I know girls who have a lot of subscribers, and maybe they have blogs, and they have connections in the beauty world, and they get sent all the newest products" (Julia).

<u>Trustworthiness</u>

- **Visual Trust: Face**

"If it were another product, not related to the person, would you still want to see the face?" (Interviewer) "Yes I would prefer it, because when you are talking about something and you are lying about it, or you are honest about it, body expressions and face expressions are saying everything. So, it's good to have it in front of you, absolutely. I think it's good. If you want to be credible you have to show yourselves. I guess I would do that" (Maria).

"Not for everything, well maybe. When I think about it, when I see reviews of cameras I don't mind to see the person, because I want to watch the whole object, but is a more complex object, so you want to see the details. This is just a bottle, so" (Juliette).

"I will trust them more if they feel confident in front of the camera, like not looking down, and know what they are talking about" (Charlotte).

"Well, a normal way of speaking is that you look at the person and then, when you think, you can look away again, and you structure the sentences in a natural way: sometimes you think a little bit. But if it sounds really memorized it's kind of weird, and if you keep starring at the camera the whole time, it's kind of weird too. So, to seem like a natural conversation, you look a lot at the camera, but then you look away to you think a little. Just like a natural flow, like in a conversation, that for me makes it authentic" (Edda).

- **Experience**

"If you live in a country like this, you might want a product not to get your hair, like, frizzy. She was living in London and it makes sense actually that she wanted to use this product" (Aìda).

"If there is a logic why you use this product, I give to you a bit more credibility than if there wasn't any logic" (Cora).

- **Perceived Connection with Companies**

"… if I'm a company and I want to talk about these things, I would tell you a little bit what to say I guess, like: 'Say this or try to avoid this, or hide a little bit the bad side.' I think they would manipulate their speech … I would trust less if I know that there is a company behind" (Maria).

"… if I think that someone is paid to do that, and you can see it because they were told what to say, basically, then you can hear it and see it in their speech. It goes on and on, because they memorise their speech, and that is not good. If it's authentic, then I believe it. It doesn't mean that I agree with it, but I believe that the person is saying something that she or he actually means" (Edda).

"… if you have a film studio or something, you can see there is money put on this, which makes it more professional, so I would connect it more to the company than in their homemade setting" (Edda).

"… What I like with them [the reviewers she follows] is that they always tell you where the product comes from, so they tell you: 'The company sent this to me to review it', or they tell you: 'I got this sample, and I liked it so much that I actually went back and re-purchased it.' When you know that they went out and they bought it themselves, it gives them more credibility … From what I think about these girls, they wouldn't accept payment for saying something positive, because they build their all image around trust, so people go there to watch their videos, and know that what they get are their personal opinions, whether they liked it or they didn't like it, and even though the companies sent them a product, like I saw in a couple of videos, they said: 'Oh I got sent it from a company, and I really didn't like it.' So, that it makes it even more credible … It kind of builds a trust, and you think: 'You can trust them'" (Julia).

Source attractiveness

- **Physical Attractiveness**

"Sometimes you trust more beautiful people, and yes, that is a horrible thing to say, but it's true" (Valentine).

"I think I will unconsciously like and trust the product if the girl is pretty, because you think that it's because of the product, even if it's not the case, yes" (Charlotte).

"… I don't think that just because she is not what it's confirmed as classically beautiful, I don't think it makes her opinion any less valuable" (Julia).

- **Empathy**

"… when it's something too professional, I wouldn't believe in that, because when I'm looking at the videos I'm looking at someone like me" (Valentine).

"It could be maybe a bad product, but if you are saying it [She imitates and enthusiastic attitude], I can be more convinced than one person that is saying it like [she imitates a bored attitude]. I think that it's really important" (Chiara).

"I think it could be because of her personality matches mine" (Susanna).

"… if I can see someone's face I can, like, grasp their personality, not grasp but I can connect with them, definitely. I can't connect that well with the one who showed just the nails" (Edda).

"… because if I have a supermodel sitting there, super dressed-up, looking amazing, I would never look like that, so I would probably turn it off. But, if you have somebody sitting there that looks normal pretty, it's easier to connect" (Edda).

"But, because she had no natural hair, it was difficult to identify with her hair" (Charlotte).

"I think that normal girls, who look pretty, is better than a super model, because you don't trust the models who are in the commercial in the TV, with perfect hair, because you know that they made this hair in the graphics programme or they are putting a lot of this stuff for hair" (Dana).

"The last one with the dry ends, I think that it is a problem that every consumer maybe might experience, so it's good that her hair is not really perfect" (Gretel).

SOURCE STYLE

Eloquence

"It was not really good structured: she referred to this and then to that, and then she talked about something completely different, and she also mixed up a lot of the products. She talked about a product and then she had this small box that said: 'I actually meant this product', and I think that it kind of ruins the credibility, if you think that she can't even remember what product she is talking about. Maybe her review of this product is not good, I don't know, I felt she was unorganized" (Julia).

Video Features

"I think, as I said, that maybe if they place the camera in a stable surface, so it doesn't shake when they move, it is better. Good light is important, because when it's dark it makes it look a little dodgy, I think. Yes, I think these are the 2 things I would look for, because if you see the last girl, if she had had a more professional set-up, you would, I don't know, automatically that gives her more credibility, because it feels that she has done this before … I don't like this kind of videos that look like when there is a random person, sitting at home, filming a video themselves, because just, I don't know why, but for me it makes it a little less credible, although it's as much their opinion as it is with the girl with the professional set-up. But, I don't know, I like to watch it more when it's with a professional set-up, compared to the more homemade" (Julia).

"Do you like this homemade appearance?" (Interviewer) "Yes I do, because it's authentic. Otherwise, if you have a film studio or something, you can see there is money put on this, which makes it more professional, so I would connect it more to the company than in their homemade setting" (Edda).

"If the same people … would have spoken maybe in a living room, with a natural light, sitting in front of a table, I think that they would have been more credible. A better atmosphere, a better light. You could see for example in the Asian one; It was cool the idea of showing how she's doing it, but it was so dark, and there was a so bad lighting that you couldn't actually see, because she had dark hair. When you have dark hair and its dark, you cannot see anything. So that wasn't a good idea, because I couldn't see the results, if she had good hair or bad hair" (Aìda).

"I didn't like of the second one that it was too long. She was speaking and speaking, just shut up. 8-minute video for just a product, come on!" (Aìda).

"There was no extra information for me. So, it's too short to be very credible. There has to be at least more details or more extra information for me" (Cora).

VISUAL EVIDENCE

"She was showing her hair and it was actually supper shiny, so I was like: 'Oh god! That is working!' … if you show is better, totally better" (Maria).

"… in the last one her hair was terrible, without body, completely stuck to her face. I wouldn't believe that one" (Chiara).

TESTING

"When you kind of demonstrate it, it's easier to grasp. "First of all, it shows credibility toward that person, because it shows that they know, or don't know, what they are doing. If you don't show anything, I don't think it's as credible as if I can see" (Susanna).

"… if you are not even putting the product on your hair it makes me think: 'Is the product so bad that you don't even want to touch your hair?' … It demonstrates trust, or sort of, because you wouldn't put anything in your hair or body that you think it's very bad, so when they put it on the hair … that makes it credible, because it shows that they trust the product at least … I don't know, I didn't think about it until the last video when she didn't do that … Even though the verbal messages that she sent was like: 'It's awesome and great and blah blah blah', but if you don't use it, it's not very credible" (Edda).

"… it's like instructions, but in manual ways … my visual memory is stronger than my auditive memory. So, I will watch it once and after I will remember and when I will use the product I won't need to watch it again" (Valentine).

RECOMMENDATION RATING

"Yes, I like looking at the comments, sometimes. You have more opinions from people, and sometimes it's even more credible to see a comment than the video" (Aìda).

"Do you think that if a video has a lot of views it reflects something in terms of credibility?" (Interviewer) "Actually yes. If someone has 10 million views, he or she must have reached the consumer somehow, so he or she must have said something right, or done something good" (Gretel).

"I see you didn't check the number of views likes or dislikes." (Interviewer) "No, I never use them because I think it's too like.. YouTube is full of buzz, and some videos have millions of viewers and they are bad. So, I don't trust it. I just look at the content and I'm just neutral at the beginning. If I'm interested in something, I just scroll down and I do it. But I don't usually do it. I do it for music, where I go to the feedbacks to see if there was the concert, where it was, where the tape was filmed. Something like that: more knowledge" (Valentine).

RECOMMENDATION CONSISTENCY

"I think that if I look for specific information about a product, I don't really judge some information as more valuable than other. I kind of just look at what it's out there, and then, from all the information that I found, I make my decision from myself, if I want to buy the product or not" (Julia).

"… but one is saying that's good, and another one says that is not: 'Why?' I have to understand if you are reliable, if you have the means to say this, if you have some experience … But, I don't know, if there is a negative comment about it, it's still a bad comment. For someone it doesn't work, so it still counts, I think" (Chiara).

"I don't know, because actually for beauty products one thing works for one person, and another one works for the others. You really have to try it on yourself" (Chiara).

MODERATORS

Distraction

"If the accent, or the tone, is really high, it really distracts me" (Gretel).

"… one colour background, like white or like she had a green/blue one, so that's it's really easy to focus on the person and not on a lot of things in the background: 'Oh, that mug looks kind of dirty' or 'Oh, that paint is ugly', like you look at stuff in the background instead of focusing on the person. I think that sometimes it can distract me otherwise" (Susanna).

"I was focused, for the first one, on the nails. She has some funny nails and I'm like: 'Ok [she laughs], I'm not listening to what you are saying, I'm just concentrated on your nails'" (Valentine).

Prior Knowledge

"Kind of everything actually, because you can find everything on YouTube, like cameras, hair products, beauty stuff. YouTube sometimes is better than written reviews, because it take less time and I have these people that I follow, so I trust their opinions and it's easier for me" (Juliette).

First Impression

"If I automatically like the person, if I like her voice and stuff, I'm more inclined to watch the video. If it's a person whose I think: 'Oh my god, she is annoying' or I don't like her voice, the way she talks, probably I would skip it to the next video" (Julia).

"If you start watching this video, the first impression is the most important, because you don't want to wait 5 minutes for something that maybe it's important or maybe it's not. If the video is well-made you want to watch it and then you will see. So, probably I would watch more videos which look nice" (Dana).

Appendix F: Data Analysis – Creation of Categories

INFORMATIONAL DETERMINANTS

CODES	CATEGORIES	DETERMINANTS
ARGUMENT QUALITY	ARGUMENT QUALITY	ARGUMENT QUALITY
VALENCE	VALENCE	RECOMM. FRAMING
SIDEDNESS	SIDEDNESS	RECOMM. SIDEDNESS
EXPERTISE	EXPERTISE	
VISUAL TRUST: FACE		
EXPERIENCE	TRUSTWORTHINESS	SOURCE CREDIBILITY
INFLUENCE OF COMPANIES		
PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS		
EMPATHY	ATTRACTIVENESS	
ELOQUENCE		
VIDEO FEATURES	SOURCE STYLE	SOURCE STYLE
VISUAL EVIDENCE	VISUAL EVIDENCE	VISUAL EVIDENCE
TESTING	TESTING	TESTING

NORMATIVE DETERMINANTS

CODES **CATEGORIES** **DETERMINANTS**

| RECOMM. RATING | RECOMM. RATING | RECOMM. RATING |
| RECOMM. CONSISTENCY | RECOMM. CONSISTENCY | RECOMM. CONSISTENCY |

MODERATORS

CODES **CATEGORIES** **MODERATORS**

DISTRACTION	ABILITY	ABILITY
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE		
FIRST IMPRESSION	FIRST IMPRESSION	FIRST IMPRESSION

Figure F.1 List of codes and categories.

The figure above (See Figure F.1) shows the process of categorisation, and the subsequent creation of the determinants and moderators. After the initial coding process, the codes, interpreted as conceptually related, were gathered in a way to form the categories. Subsequently, the categories were classified in *informational determinants*, *normative determinants*, or *moderators*. Besides, Figure F.1 shows that *expertise*, *trustworthiness*, and *attractiveness* were further gathered to form *source credibility*. This step was accomplished in order to provide consistency with the determinants of perceived credibility, revealed by previous studies in written eWOM.