Grandma on YouTube

: A case study of the older female YouTuber *Korea Grandma*

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Abstract

Older women have long been invisible and marginalized in society and culture at large because of the 'gendered' ageist stereotypes towards them. Especially, ageist stereotypes towards older women have been reinforced by their invisibility and stereotypical portrayals in traditional media. However, with the rise of social media, elderly women have become visible in society bypassing the gatekeepers in traditional media. More specifically, older women nowadays have become to be not only visible but also popular by adopting affordances of social media which encourages people to conduct to be fame—self-branding. This self-branding practices online are often described as "micro-celebrity". Despite a growing number of micro-celebrity activities of older adults, most existing studies about micro-celebrity have focused on younger generations whose daily lives and cultures are different from older women who experience double marginalization intersecting two power systems: ageism and sexism.

Thus, this thesis aims to explore the micro-celebrity practices of older women and how those practices are related to gendered ageism. In order to pursue these aims, this study takes a closer look at the case of Korea Grandma—a South Korean 73-year-old female YouTuber— to contextualize and get rich information of the practices. By conducting a multi-method approach combining visual narrative analysis and visual analysis, this study shows micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma provide opportunities for her to draw attention and suggest 'alternative' images that are disruptive to typical ageist images of older women. However, this study also demonstrates that sometimes the self-presentation of Korea Grandma is required to be negotiated by accepting social norms or consumer capitalism values. This is because of the nature of micro-celebrity practices unavoidably subscribing to 'the attention economy', and also due to the characteristics of the object of stereotyping being locked into existing social norms. Thus, this study points out that the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma cannot entirely contribute to challenge nor reinforce ageist stereotypes. This study rather suggests that micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma can be understood as a constant negotiation, rather than a binary, situated somewhere between challenging and reinforcing ageist stereotypes.

Keywords: micro-celebrity, older adults, older women, ageism, gendered ageism, YouTube, South Korea, Korea Grandma, granfluencer, silver creator

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Table of contents

Figures

* Note: All screenshots were re-illustrated by the author because of the copyright issues of the screenshots of the videos. Original images can be found via links below the drawings.

1. Introduction

[G]etting older means moving – or more accurately, being moved – to the margins of visibility in the labor market, the visual market, the socio-political market, assisted living facilities and nursing homes (Cobrin and Levine, 2012, p.2).

South Korea (hereinafter Korea) is the fastest ageing country within the OECD[1] (Lee, J., 2019), as the percentage of senior citizens aged over 65 accounts for 14.9% of the population (approximately 7,685,000) and is expected to steadily increase to 43.9% by 2060 (Statistics Korea, 2019). However, older people[2] are *rarely visible* in Korean society and culture at large mainly because of the ageist stereotypes towards them and the "marginalization by the state and the market" rather than their lack of "physical and material capital to be socially included" (Gilleard and Higgs 2009, p.291). Older women in Korea have experienced especially more serious invisibility and marginalization than the older men because of stricter beauty standards (e.g. glorifying youthfulness, slenderness and wrinkle-free skin) shown towards the older women's aging bodies, as well as patriarchal norms such as dignity, sacrifice and motherhood (Hurd, 1999; Kang, 2012; Oh and Shin, 2019).

These negative stereotypes and the level of invisibility of older women can be seen in the media, as the frequency of certain groups' occurrence in the media alludes to the power and status of the group in society: "groups who appear more often in the media are more 'vital' and enjoy more status and power in daily life" (Williams et al., 2009, p. 818). Until the 2000s, older Korean women had been silenced, and portrayed in stereotypical ways in the media (Kim, J., 2017; Oh and Kim, 2016), often being considered as 'lethargic, slow, weak, sick and laggard behind the social and cultural development of society' and portrayed in limited roles as mothers or daughters-in-laws following a patriarchal family system with silenced femininity (Kang, 2012). Even though the visibility of older women has increased nowadays, most of the portrayals are still mis- or under-represented by constructing polarized images—"heroes of aging" versus "bodily decline" (Featherstone, 1995, p.231). Accordingly, ageist stereotypes towards older women have been reinforced by the representation of media, and these portrayals

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[1] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

[2] Labelling "old" and age classification are different from country to country (Coto, et al., 2017). In Korea, people over 65 years old are defined as "older adults" by law (Hankyung, 2017).

have made them more marginalized (Gott, 2004; Richards, Warren and Gott, 2012, p.76; Gewirtz-Meydan, and Ayalon, 2018, p.486; Loos and Ivan, 2018, p.164).

However, older people have become visible and included in society with the advent of social media. With the popularization of mobiles and tablets in Korea – which has the highest smartphone penetration in the world at 94% – social media use of older adults in their 60's increased from 5.1% to 18.9 % between 2014 and 2018 (Hwang, 2018; Kim, Y. 2016; 2019). The term 'silver creators' refers to older people who produce media content by themselves on their social media; these silver creators are getting attention as new trendsetters and influencers of the media industry (Korea creative content agency, 2018; Nam, 2019).

Silver creators enthusiastically present themselves by sharing various content (e.g. texts, images and videos) and asking their audiences to 'subscribe', 'follow', or 'like' their social media channel to increase their popularity (Papacharissi, 2010, pp.304-305; Hackley and Hackley, 2015, p.469; Korea creative content agency, 2018). This celebrity pursuit and self-branding are often described as a "celebrified presentation of the self" (Williamson, 2016, p.134), derived from the term celebrification, which is "the process by which ordinary people or public figures are transformed into celebrities" (Driessens, 2013 p. 643). Other terms include "micro-celebrity" (Marwick, 2013, p. 10), which refers to a recent style of online performance where people use digital media technologies like videos or blogs to gain popularity (Senft , 2008, p.25; Abidin, 2018, p.11) and people "with internet fame" via online affective labor such as bloggers, YouTubers, and Camgirls (Driessens, 2015, p.378).

This performance entails careful and strategic self-presentation (Marwick, 2015, p.337), along with a strong sense of duty to their audiences (Abidin, 2018, p.12); ongoing fan maintenance, "performed intimacy, authenticity and access, and construction of a consumable persona" (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p.140), because the popularity that celebrity practitioners pursue is built upon a community of their audiences composed of a fan base (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p.140; Abidin, 2018, p.12).

'Korea Grandma' [3], the name of a YouTube channel run by a 73 years old lady 'Park Mak Rye' as well as Park's YouTube pseudonym, is a prime example of an older micro-celebrity. She is regarded as the most popular older YouTuber in Korea having 1,260,000 subscribers and is ranked in the Top 1% of overall Korean YouTubers (Noxinfluencer, 2020a). At first Korea Grandma was a non-famous, ordinary older woman. She started getting involved with YouTube after her granddaughter recommended it to her to stave off her dementia—the planning and editing of her videos are done by her granddaughter—and her first video about traveling Cairns in Australia with her granddaughter made a big splash among younger people. Her popularity soon picked up, with 400,000 people following her YouTube and Instagram after less than 6 months (Lee, Y., 2017).

Her YouTube videos—what she calls "Grandma's Diary"—shows not only her ordinary daily life in detail (e.g. vlogs, make-up tutorials and recipes) but also other things (e.g. traveling, paragliding and smoking cigars) which challenge, and are quite different from, typical images of older women in mass media. She was even introduced in Vogue, one of the most famous fashion magazines in the world, as a trend leader who brought about a "YouTube Sensation". She was invited to Google I/O conference as a representative of YouTube creators in Korea, filmed commercials with Korean cosmetics brands such as Innisfree, had two different fan meetings, and received the Ministry of Science and Technology award, getting credit for alleviating the digital divide and ICT side effects (Bobb, 2017; Jang, 2018; Lee, Y., 2019).

With the rise of social media, therefore, one can see that celebrification (Driessens, 2013, p.643) and 'micro-celebrity' has trickled down to not only younger but also older people (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p.141; Marwick, 2013, p. 10; Hackley and Hackley, 2015, p. 469), and this increased "celebrity-style visibility" of older people (Williamson, 2016, p.153) has made them more included and influential to society.

Despite the growing number of older micro-celebrities, little is known about older adults' celebrity practices online—and that of older females. Most existing studies about micro-celebrities have been limited to younger generations (Jerslev, 2016; Fägersten, 2017; Martínez

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[3] In this study, second word 'Grandma' was intentionally capitalized to match with her pseudonym and the name of channel as it is.

and Olsson, 2019) whose images and everyday lives are pretty different from older women who suffer from double marginalization with the intersection of gender and age power systems (Krekula, Nikander and Wilińska, 2018, pp.34-45).

Furthermore, previous studies related to the elderly's social media use have mostly concentrated on technological aspects which cannot not sufficiently contextualize the use of social media which is composed of a complex social fabric (Baym and Boyd, 2012). Additionally, these studies homogenize older adults as a single group, without acknowledge the gender differences that exist in social media use (Chen, 2015). The few studies that did not use a technological approach have understood the older adults' social media use as an inclusive tool for public debate (Trentham, et al., 2015; Brewer and Piper, 2016) or intergenerational communication (Harley and Fitzpatrick, 2009). With such studies, more information about the increased micro-celebrity practices of older adults nowadays remain unclear.

Therefore, this study firstly aims to critically examine how older women in Korea have adopted skills characterized as celebrity practices online: micro-celebrity (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p.141), and secondly, to investigate how these micro-celebrity practices contribute to ageist stereotypes that have made the elderly women invisible in society. To pursue these objectives, this study will take a closer look at the case of Korea Grandma—a Korean older female famous YouTuber— to contextualize and get in-depth information (Flyvbjerg, 2001), and empirical materials will be examined by a multi-methods approach combining visual narrative analysis and visual analysis (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). Built upon these aims, the research questions are as following:

1. How does Korea Grandma present herself on YouTube through the micro-celebrity practices?
2. In what ways are the ageist stereotypes towards older women challenged, reinforced, and negotiated through the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma?
3. What are the limitations of micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma in terms of challenging ageist stereotypes?

This thesis consists of largely four sections. First, a literature review about gendered ageism,

representation and stereotypes of older women in the traditional media (Western / Korean context) and social media use of older adults will be examined. Second, methodology and methods will be discussed going through the detailed steps of the research process. Third, analysis will be uncovered critically understanding the data of the research. Lastly, a conclusion will follow, summarizing key findings and reflecting on this research.

2. Literature Review

Gendered Ageism

Ageism is a term coined by Robert Butler (1980), referring to the over-generalization of a certain age group by ignoring individuals' differences and defining the whole group of people by certain characteristics (Van Es, 2016, p.11; Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018, p.1). Even though ageism can happen to any age bracket, generally it is used to mean stereotypical behaviors and thoughts towards older adults by the younger generations (Butler, 1980; Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018, p.2). In contemporary society, older adults are disdained by the middle-aged group, who is the most economically active group in society, as much of the older peoples' knowledge has become 'out-of-date' with technological development leading them to be seen as a "selfish welfare generation" (Phillipson, 2013, p.24), "non-contributing burdens"(Shiovitz-Ezra, Shemesh, and McDonnell, 2018,p.135) and imposing a heavy cost on society (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018, p.7).

Ageism is considered one of the causes that brings about inequality in society, similar to racism, sexism, homophobia: discrimination and imbalanced power relations derived from gender, race, and sexual orientation. Ageism does not occur independently, rather it happens with other categories interplaying multiple factors that lead to discrimination. The understanding of ageism becomes, therefore, further enriched with social context, intersection of age and gender, economic level, ethnicity, and so on (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018, p.7; Krekula, Nikander and Wilińska, 2018, p.34).

"Gendered ageism" is a crucial concept widely used when discussing social status and the situation of older women (Krekula, Nikander and Wilińska, 2018, p.35). Older women in general are considered as a 'double jeopardy' or 'multiple marginalized group', having increased vulnerability via two intersecting power systems: ageism and sexism (Krekula, Nikander and Wilińska, 2018, pp.34-45), as women experience more serious ageism than men (Krekula, Nikander and Wilińska, 2018, p.34).

A vast amount of literature (e.g. Hurd, 1999; Hurd, 2000; Clarke, 2011; Gewirtz-Meydan and Ayalon, 2018; Krekula, Nikander and Wilińska, 2018 and so on) suggest women are more marginalized than men because of their aging bodies. Even though aging happens for both women and men, women experience a particular aging and ageism through their bodies. This is not only because the body is the most malleable part where visible physiological traits related to aging appear; "changes in body shape, skin and muscle tone" (Warren and Richards, 2012, p.164), but also because historically women's' bodies have been closely related to their social value, being used as a mark of social status as well as social roles; giving birth to children, satisfying men's sexual desires, housework and so on (Brown and Jasper, 1993, p.18). As women have tended to have more limited access to educational and social opportunities than men (Hurd, 2000, p.81), women's' bodies, more specifically, their physical and sexual attractiveness, have been seen as a significant asset and means to obtain access to men's resources (Rodin, Silberstein, and Striegel-Moore, 1984, p. 273; Hurd, 2000).

For such reasons, stricter beauty standards (e.g. youthfulness, slenderness and wrinkle-free skin) are held towards older women's aging bodies compared to the standards for elderly men (Hurd, 1999, pp.419-422). This strengthens gender inequality and brings about negative self-evaluations of older women (Lee, D., 2014). Signs of aging for women (e.g. wrinkles, weight gain and grey hair) are considered as 'shameful', 'need to be concealed' and even 'moral decay', whereas those of men (e.g. grey hair, bald, age spots and weight gain) are regarded as 'dignity' and 'prestige' (Hurd, 2000, p.83; Lee, D., 2014, pp.136-137). Internalizing these beauty norms, older women attempt to hide signs of their aging through the usage of hair dye, makeup, and plastic surgery to escape from discrimination and social change (Lee, D., 2014, p.135; Gewirtz-Meydan and Ayalon, 2018, p.486). However, as Hurd (1999, p.422) suggests, it is impossible to hide and prevent the realities of aging. Hence, women are moved by the 'gendered' ageist discourse to the margins of visibility in society as their bodies grow older (Kang, 2012, pp.118-120; Tulle, 2015, p.130).

Representation and stereotypes of older women in the media

The media plays the central role of agenda-setting in society (Weaver, 2007). It frames stories in certain ways which leads us to decide which issues are important, and shall be prioritized as social problems (Bergström and Edström, 2018. p.15). If certain groups' voices are not included in media stories, their presence and voices become less important and invisible in society (Williams et al. 2009, p. 818; Bergström and Edström, 2018. p.15). Couldry (2008, pp.16-23) claims the media has been instrumental in deciding which voices represent—and 'speak for'— certain groups, but adds that there is an increasing 'crisis of voice', as the voices of particular groups are not properly and legitimately represented, being "systematically both invoked and denied" by political and media systems. Therefore, it is important for us to understand how the media deals with certain people and groups and identify whose voices are excluded in the media (Bergström and Edström, 2018, p.15).

Western context

In light of this view, Edström (2018, pp.79-80) and Bergström and Edström (2018, p.15) contend that the lack of visibility and stereotypical portrayals of the elderly in the media can be seen as a deficit of the democratic, political and human rights of the elderly, and are connected to 'ageism', which restricts older peoples' involvement in public debates as well as the opportunity for younger people to get proper information about aging. Many scholars have asserted that older people are generally under-represented compared to their respective ratio of population across various platforms of the mainstream media, such as television advertisement (Lee, Carpenter and Meyers, 2007; Kessler, Schwender and Bowen, 2010; Prieler, 2012), films (Lauzen and Dozier, 2005), and the news (Edström, 2018). Many media scholars have shed light on the problematic way older women are silenced and portrayed in stereotypical ways (e.g. Lauzen and Dozier, 2005. Clarke, 2011; Edström, 2018 and so on).

Clarke (2011, pp.104-126) claims that mass media (e.g. films and TV advertisements) portrays older women negatively and under-represent them by glorifying youthfulness and portraying feminine beauty as "the sole purview of young, predominantly White, physically fit, thin yet

buxom women". Due to the nature of mass media, older women appear less than older men in TV advertisements containing older adults—38% and 82% respectively—(Lee, Carpenter, and Meyers, 2007, p.25), and are devalued as "frail, useless, unattractive and dependent", whereas youth is described as "sexuality, independence, beauty and productivity" (Jones, 2008, p. 85).

In addition, the range of roles for older women are much more limited than older men. Particularly in Hollywood, which Biggs (2004, p.49) describes as a "youth-obsessed society"; although aging is not a big hindrance to the career of male actors, it gets harder for actresses to find parts as they grow older and the signs of aging appear on their bodies (Jermyn, 2012; Van den Bulck, 2014, p.69). To illustrate this, only 9% of older female characters played central roles in contrast with 37% of older male characters among the top 100 films in 2002 (Lauzen and Dozier, 2005, p.442). Whereas male actors, such as Cary Grant, continue to play central roles and remain heartthrob icons regardless of their age (Van den Bulck, 2014, p.69), older actresses have played out "exaggerated and discomforting performances of female ageing" such as Norma Desmond played by Gloria Swanson in Sunset Boulevard (1950), where ageing itself is portrayed as a "horrifying process of inexorable" and "grotesque and traumatic" (Jermyn, 2012, p.4).

However, Ylänne (2015, p.369) demonstrates that the visibility of older people has increased and the portrayals of them in the media has changed towards more positive images in the 21st century. In the case of older women, increasing numbers of women's' magazines and newspapers have started to use older female models in their adverts (Richards, Warren and Gott, 2012, p.67; Lee, D., 2014, p.141). The older models featured on the adverts are described as "happy, active, independent" (Hurd, 1999, p.426), "successfully resisting ageing", embodying a "glamorous, ageless lifestyle" (Richards, Warren and Gott, 2012, p.67) and as "healthy, vigorous, productive, attractive and smart" (Rozanova, 2010, p. 214).

The reason for this trend is rooted in a 'successful aging discourse' (Rowe and Kahn, 1997, p.433; Loos and Ivan, 2018, p.169) which encourages older people to live a high-quality life by proposing a prescriptive life plan for "how to age well" (Silverstein, 2014, pp.212-213). The

essence of this idea is that aging is 'controllable', and that following these rules will lengthen the "middle age as long as possible" and prevent "entry into disability and dependence" (Rowe and Kahn, 1997, p.433; Silverstein, 2014, pp.212-213).

On the one hand, this paradigm has resulted in positive consequences. It not only gives rise to the increased representation of older women, proving that the elderly can also have a "healthy, active, and liberated time of life" as much as younger generations (Hurd, 1999, p.428), but also allows people to view the aging process as a "potential opportunity for growth and development" in the journey of realizing oneself (Christensen, 2019, p.113), rather than a pathological disease. On the other hand, however, this paradigm is criticized by many scholars (e.g. Blaikie, 1999; Vincent, Tulle and Bond, 2008; Richards, Warren and Gott, 2012; Lee, D., 2014; Loos and Ivan, 2018 and so on) in that 'positive' images influenced by the paradigm—"youthful, active, and rich"(Gewirtz-Meydan and Ayalon, 2018, p.486)—create another type of stereotype in opposition to 'negative' images that connote "dependence and decline" (Richards, Warren and Gott, 2012, p.67).

These 'positive' images are referred to a 'marketing manoeuvre' of a 'grey market' exploiting consumers' desire to be "forever young", the fantasy of "everlasting youth" and the fear that they might be excluded from society because of their age (Richards, Warren and Gott, 2012, p.67; Loos and Ivan, 2018, pp.166-170): most of the older models featured on women's magazines looks younger than their age, and their images are often "digitally or cosmetically enhanced" (e.g. Twiggy) to highlight functions and effects of products such as anti-aging cosmetics (Richards, Warren and Gott, 2012, p.67; Lee, D., 2014, p.141).

The successful aging discourse is also criticized by other scholars (Van den Bulck, 2014, p.68; Katz and Calasanti, 2015; Loos and Ivan, 2018, p.169) in that it makes people who don't fit into these positive stereotypes feel like 'losers' in the "game of life" (Silverstein, 2014, pp.212-213) and encourages them to blame themselves (Gewirtz-Meydan and Ayalon, 2018, p.487). To illustrate, Van den Bulck (2014, pp.69-71) argues older actresses in Hollywood are particularly scrutinized by celebrity gossip magazines focusing on how celebrities such as Madonna (61

years old) are still good looking and energetic, and how they manage their aging process 'properly'. Actresses who 'stand the test of time' are praised as those who 'succeed in aging', whereas those who have "visible wrinkles, cellulite, fat, and saggy breasts and bottoms", are not perfect according to the ideal beauty standards. Although these features are the results of a natural aging process, they are described as a lack of self-discipline and are unwanted by audiences (Van den Bulck, 2014, pp.69-71).

Yet, a successful aging lifestyle is not volitional, but rather an unavoidable issue for some people as Loos and Ivan, 2018 (p.169) argue: "[o]lder people in the so-called fourth age in particular are not able to meet the obligations imposed on them by the dominant successful ageing". Blaikie (1999, pp. 22-23) supports this view, asserting that positive representation of older people is only applicable to people who belong to the 'Third age' group who have "sufficient income, cultural capital, and mental and physical health". Therefore, as the anti-ageing trends that encourage looking 'good' and 'healthy' expand, people in the 'Fourth Age', who suffer from decrepitude, poverty, physical impairment and disease (e.g. dementia) are becoming more stigmatized, marginalized and culturally invisible (Blaikie, 1999, pp. 22-23; Clarke and Bennett, 2015, p.134).

Korean context

In order to examine the presence and portrayals of older women in the Korean mainstream media more adequately, it is necessary to understand the unique Confucian culture firmly entrenched in Korean society, as Gelb and Palley argue:

> In fact, a discussion of Korean society would be incomplete without some understanding of the moral code that is associated with Confucianism, and more specifically, an understanding of the changing roles and status of women in Korea requires some sense of the centrality of this moral code in the evolution of that society (1994, p.3).

Confucianism was adopted during the Chosun Dynasty (Yi Korea: 1392-1910) in Korea as a moral code as well as an ideological basis of society (Kim, Y., 2005, pp.27-28). Confucian values such as "motherhood and son preference", "marriage and patrilineal family system"

"chastity ideology and prohibition on remarriage" (Kim, Y., 2005, pp.28-29) were used as a justification for a secondary and unequal position of women (Gelb and Palley, 1994, p.4). The values highlighted the hierarchical order of human relationships: men were referred to *heaven* (superior) whereas women did *earth* (inferior), and formed a patriarchal gender definition by underlining sex-difference (Kim, Y., 2005, pp.27-28). Y. Kim exemplifies the picture of an ideal woman defined by traditional Confucianism as:

> [F]ilial daughter, faithful wife and dedicated mother, who was expected to sacrifice her life to make her three men – father, husband and son – recognized in the public sphere (2005, p.30).

With increased opportunities for education, industrialization and modernization, the social position of Korean women has remarkably improved nowadays, but still traditional Confucian culture remains penetrated in modern Korean society, influencing women's lives and identities, and simultaneously conflicting with the new expectations of women (Gelb and Palley, 1994, p.4; Kim, Y., 2005, pp.26-43).

Influenced by Confucian culture, older women in Korean mainstream media (e.g. TV dramas, news media) seem to be more harshly stereotyped than those in Western media, this being tied to ideal beauty standards and Confucian values. To be specific, on the one hand, similar to Western context, older women are invisible and portrayed as frail and declined in Korean mainstream media, which privileges youthfulness. A study of Korean TV drama in 2000 found that 45 percent of female main characters were women in their 20s. Among women in their 60s, 9 out of 15 were depicted as silly and ludicrous (Hong, J., 2010). D. Lee (2014, pp.141-142) suggests that major newspapers in Korea encourage both younger and older women to maintain their youth through consumption of anti-aging products (e.g. plastic surgery and cosmetics): especially, these articles portray 'elderly plastic surgery' in positive ways as a choice for self-development, a general phenomenon, and sometimes as a 'gift' for Mother's Day.

On the other hand, distinct to Western media, older women in Korea are portrayed stereotypically within the patriarchal system based on Confucianism. Studies about TV dramas

demonstrate that the elderly women are depicted as the ones who cause conflicts between family members (e.g. between the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law over not giving birth to a son) (Hong, S., 1998), and are likely to be involved in their son's marriage (Kang, 2012; Oh and Shin, 2019). Older women's' roles have been limited to the main character's mother/grandmother or daughter-in-law, following patriarchal families and norms (Kang, 2012, p.115; Oh and Shin, 2019). Moreover, Confucian values such as dignity, sacrifice and tolerance have been highlighted by putting emphasis on motherhood and virtuous women images, which disdains their femininity and desires (Kang, 2012, pp.118-120).

Oh and Kim (2016) assert that the visibility of older adults in Korean media has increased since 2010 throughout documentaries and entertainment TV shows. They suggest that the representation of older women drew attention in 2013, as they were featured in reality TV shows as main characters. However, the images of the older women in the shows were still associated with traditional gendered and appearance-oriented images.

How to combat ageism in media?

The above mentioned bipolar representations of older women in the media what Gott (2004) refers to as 'the sexy oldie' or 'asexual old age' reinforce ageist stereotypes by over-homogenizing the whole older women group in two ways, while clearly there are a more diverse range of lifestyles and characteristics within the group (Richards, Warren and Gott, 2012, p.76; Oró-Piqueras and Marques, 2017, p.258; Bergström and Edström, 2018. p.18; Loos and Ivan, 2018, pp.172-173). Such representations can negatively influence the self-image of older women and create misperceptions for both younger and older generations towards older women and ageing (Cohen, 2002, pp.602-604; Gewirtz-Meydan and Ayalon, 2018, p.486) permeating and molding our daily lives (Hepp, 2013, p.70). Therefore, Cohen (2002, p.604) and Loos and Ivan (2018, pp.172-173) suggest that it is necessary to discuss not only how to include more older women in media, but also how to include more realistic, diverse and nuanced images of older women to prevent over-homogenizing their representations.

Social media and older adults

> Arguably today's important 'media' institutions are not the BBC, CNN or Time Warner, but Google, Facebook and Twitter (Couldry, 2015, pp.386-387).

As Couldry (ibid) argues above, social media has become prevalent and has gained prominence in contemporary society. It challenges and sometimes surpasses the position of traditional mass media as its symbolic power has been concentrated enormously (Couldry, 2008, p.23; Marshall, P.D., 2010, p.38). Therefore, emerging research demonstrates that it is necessary to discuss the inclusion of older adults in social media as well (e.g. An and Kang, 2018, p. 21; Kim, A. 2018). An and Kang (2018, p. 21) emphasize the importance of visibility and portrayals of older adults on social media, revealing that social media content has an impact on the stigma and discriminatory attitudes shown towards the elderly that is consistent with traditional media: the more older adults appear in social media, and the more older adults are portrayed positively, the more stigma towards the elderly and discriminatory attitudes decrease.

What is new about social media is that social media has brought the cultural transition from "representational" to "presentational" media (Marshall, P.D., 2010, p.35). Older adults can autonomously and strategically manage their own images, controlling how they want their identities and cultures to be received, by applying the affordances of new technologies, whereas, in mainstream media, they have no choice but to rely on traditional gatekeepers /celebrities to represent their cultures and identities (Abidin, 2018, p.10). They can present more diverse and layered identities as well as their everyday lives filled with nuance and complexity, without the filtered lenses of the mainstream media. As a result, it allows us to broaden our experiential horizons of older people's lives (Baym and Boyd, 2012, pp.320-321; Kidd, 2016, p.84; Williamson, 2016, p.133; Oró-Piqueras and Marques, 2017, p.258).

Inclusion of older adults in social media

In regard to the visibility of older adults in social media, discourse has often been related to the roles and designs of technology. Most existing studies about the social media use of older adults have suggested that older adults are profoundly invisible because of the digital divide. These works

have focused on technological points of view, such as 'how to change the designs of interface or equipment' in order to increase accessibility for older adults, who might have visibility or accessibility needs for social media. (Boyd, et al., 2015; Yang, et al., 2016, p.3134; Coto, et al., 2017, pp.67-71). After reviewing 36 research papers related to "social media and elderly", Coto, et al. (2017, p.76) concluded that 81% of the papers contribute to the technological domain.

However, it is not enough to understand older adults' presence in social media simply through a technology perspective, since social media is constructed "not only by the design of these media, but also by the social fabric of people's lives" (Trentham, et al., 2015, p.564)—social contexts and practices (Baym and Boyd, 2012). Also, this perspective often narrows our views to symptoms such as "motor ability, memory, or loneliness" and makes us believe those problems can be improved through technology (Lazar, et al., 2017, p.656), but, for older adults, as Trentham, et al. (2015, p.564) assert, there are extra factors that "further complicate the ways in which they do or do not navigate social media, such as social segregation, ageism". Therefore, it is necessary to understand the role of older adults in social media in regards to how the architectures and the affordances of social media comes to be located within "the social and emotional lives of older people", rather than immediate interactions between the elderly and technology (Harley and Fitzpatrick, 2009, p.7).

For some scholars (Vroman, Arthanat, and Lysack, 2015; Brewer and Piper, 2016; Ferreira, Sayago and Blat, 2017), older adults' invisibility in social media is due to the generational differences of users: differences between older and younger adults in behaviors and attitudes towards social media. These studies claim that older adults use social media mainly for maintaining connection with family and friends, or keeping memories of special events, while younger adults use it not only for staying in touch with family and friends, but also for self-expression (Quinn, 2014, p.188; Trentham, et al., 2015, p.562; Ferreira, Sayago and Blat, 2017, p.564). Furthermore, Brewer and Piper (2016) and Ferreira, Sayago and Blat (2017) suggest that older adults are less likely to be active online than younger people, and share information superficially as they are more concerned about privacy.

However, this view is challenged by J. Kim (2019). After investigating older adults' motivation for participating in media education, specifically, through YouTube production classes for

senior citizens, J. Kim (2019) contends that older people also have desires to create and share contents and to express themselves in society through content creation and sharing. In line with J. Kim (2019)'s view, Trentham, et al. (2015, p.562) claim that nowadays a growing number of older people have been "invited to engage with content producers and one another – and indeed to generate their own content – rather than remain passive recipients of information" on social media, and particularly many of them actively make use of 'blogging'.

Recent works have identified that older adults use blogging as an "inclusive tool to resist ageism" not only by increasing their opportunity to participate in public debates (Trentham, et al., 2015, pp.562-563) but also by providing an outlet for self-disclosure and affiliation with like-minded others (Lazar, et al., 2017 p.656). To illustrate, Lazar, et al. (2017, pp.662-663), who conducted the research on 'elderblogger', found that older people use blogging to form collective narratives online, disclose the "complexity of their experience of aging" (Lazar, et al., 2017, p.656), develop counter-discourses, and even share information to resist ageism; discussing ageist TV shows, objecting to ageist languages and jokes, and sharing tips about how to get and fit in with "workplaces that prize youthfulness". Hence, one can see that older bloggers articulate alternative and diverse images of themselves that oppose ageism as well as the mainstream media (e.g. advertising or TV), where images of the elderly are quite limited and filtered by traditional gatekeepers (Sandvoss, 2014, p.206; Brewer and Piper, 2016; Williamson, 2016, p.133).

For Harley and Fitzpatrick (2009), on the other hand, older adults' blogging has the potential to be connected with a broader social community beyond like-minded people. They argue that older people's blogging is not only a form of social interaction, but also fosters "intergenerational communication and co-creativity for older people" in a younger adults' medium (Harley and Fitzpatrick, 2009, p.6). After carrying out a study of an older YouTuber 'Geriatric 1927', a 79 year-old man, Harley and Fitzpatrick (2009) revealed that YouTube offers a communicative space where 'Geriatric 1927' can share his everyday life and emotions, and show his own narrative of aging in a transparent manner. It also provides him with an opportunity, in that younger followers of his channel can give technical advice for video

production through subsequent comments; accordingly, both generations not only communicate with, but also learn from and collaborate with each other (Harley and Fitzpatrick, 2009, pp.16-17).

New angle to social media use of older adults

Although previous studies have understood older people's blogging as a tool for freedom and protest (Trentham, et al., 2015; Lazar, et al., 2017) in a mode of civic/public engagement, and intergenerational communication (Harley and Fitzpatrick, 2009), this study would like to take a different approach to older people's blogging activities and their increased visibility in social media by linking these to contemporary online celebrity culture. This is because prior works do not sufficiently demonstrate increasing "celebrity-style visibility" (Williamson, 2016, p.153) of older adults in social media nowadays.

It is true that social media has offered a great opportunity for older adults to participate in public debates by letting them express their voices, affiliate with each other, and display alternative images that cannot be found in traditional media, but it is also crucial to identify that nowadays the architecture of social media encourages not only self-presentational but also self-promotional values (Williamson, 2016 140). Murdock and Golding (2002, p.126) even argue that affordances of social media have "hollowed out the space previously available for the reconstruction and extension of citizenship, and refilled it with seductive promises of boundless consumption and personal satisfaction."

Indeed, older adults do not always use social media for the purpose of collective connections. Rather, they are encouraged by social media tools to update their status, no matter if it is a meaningful dialogue or not, and to build—more specifically 'brand'—their members profiles in a way that is appealing to fans (Williamson, 2016, 140). Harvey (2019) claims that nowadays there are a growing number of 'granfluencers': older adults who make great use of social media, and who have become not only visible but also influential—as its name denotes—by sharing their mundane lives (e.g. fashion and inspirations from daily life) on social media such as Instagram, which is dominated by younger people: almost 75% of Instagram influencers are

considered to be under 35 years old. Therefore, one can see that participatory affordances of social media encourages not only younger but also older adults to conduct self-promotion as well as self-celebrification practices (Williamson, 2016, p.153; Hou, 2019, p.535)—"the process by which ordinary people or public figures are transformed into celebrities" (Driessens, 2013 p. 643).

Senft refers this type of celebrity pursuit practices and personality to 'micro-celebrity'—"a new style of online performance that involves people 'amping up' their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs and social networking sites" (2008, p.25), and people who became popular through online emotional labor such as Camgirls, YouTubers, and bloggers who gain lots of followers (Driessens, 2015, p.378). What we have to keep in mind here is that micro-celebrity practices are not subject to numerous followers, as "practicing celebrity and having celebrity status are different" (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p.156). From this perspective, irrespective of who is paying attention, individuals perceive themselves as micro-celebrities: present themselves akin to celebrity and treat their audiences as fans—in a way that will garner or enhance their popularity (Senft, 2008; Marwick, 2013; 2015; Driessens, 2015; Jerslev, 2016; Williamson, 2016, p.144).

Marwick (2015, p.337) and Marwick and Boyd (2011, p.140) argue that since micro-celebrity practitioners perceive their audiences "as fans rather than friends or family", this celebrity practices involve careful and strategical self-presentation that can be consumable by their audiences and entails continuous fan management in order to maintain their popularity and attention. Also, Marwick and Boyd (2011, p.140) and Abidin (2018, p.12) demonstrate that micro-celebrity practitioners are expected to display a sense of connection, authenticity, accessibility, and close interactions with their audiences. This is because their popularity, which is the ultimate goal of their practices (Hou, 2019), is constructed together with a community of the audience, composed of a fan base (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p.140; Abidin, 2018, p.12)— contrary to traditional celebrities who construct "aurora of distance" (Hills, 2015, p.476) from their audiences and whose fame is managed by "the mere mechanisms of the traditional entertainment industry" (Abidin, 2018, p.12).

Ellcessor (2012, pp.51-52) claims that the affordances of social media encourage a sense of intimacy and authenticity by enhancing "perceived access to private, backstage behavior" and the illusion of "liveness", making audiences believe celebrity practitioners are more "real". Marwick and Boyd (2011, p.147) also suggest that celebrity practitioners on Twitter create a "sense of closeness and familiarity" between their followers by sharing what seems to be exclusive, personal looks into their mundane lives. Marwick and Boyd (2011, p.148) continue to state that Twitter has even altered the "parasocial dynamic": whereas parasocial interaction is generally imaginary, being experienced in a fan's mind, the conversations between followers and famous people on Twitter are "public and visible", and entail "direct engagement". This way of communication, therefore, "de-pathologizes the parasocial and recontextualizes it within a medium that the follower may use to talk to real-life acquaintances" (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p.148).

According to Jerslev (2016, p.5236), for such cases of micro-celebrities, the self-presentation of micro-celebrity practitioners are naturally 'tied' to commodification and self-branding which means their self-presentation is guided by 'the attention economy' (Marwick, 2013, p.11). Therefore, it becomes important for us to understand not only how online celebrity practitioners display themselves but also how they strategically present themselves as a way of being consumed by their fans. (Marwick, 2015, p.337).

Despite the growing micro-celebrity practices of older adults, including older women, little attention is posed to older people's micro-celebrity practices. Existing studies dealing with online celebrity practices have mainly focused on younger generations; YouTuber Zoella (Jerslev, 2016), Misslisibell (Martínez and Olsson, 2019), and PewDiePie (Fägersten, 2017) whose everyday lives are quite different from older adults. Also, as stated above, studies about social media usage of older adults mostly focus on technological views which does not give sufficient context about micro-celebrity practices.

Scholars who don't focus on technological perspectives have understood older adults' blogging activities as part of an expansion of civic rights (e.g. freedom and protest) or intergenerational communication, so the self-branding aspects of blogging activities of older adults remains

unclear. Last but not least, existing studies about the social media use of older adults are generally devoid of a gender angle (e.g. Trentham, et al., 2015; Yang, et al., 2016; Coto, et al., 2017; Lazar, et al., 2017 and so on). This body of works considers older adults as a homogeneous group, while obviously there are gender differences in social media use: Chen (2015, p.36) argues women blog more often than men, but little academic attention is paid to women's online activities.

To address this research gap, drawing on 'micro-celebrity' and 'gendered ageism' concepts, this study attempts to examine how older women adopt affordances that encourage micro-celebrity practices to increase their visibility, and how this self-presentation contributes to gendered ageism that make older women marginalized and invisible in society. And then by focusing on the case of Korea Grandma, this study would like to contextualize these practices more in detail. More specifically, since micro-celebrity practitioners consider their audiences as fans (Marwick, 2015, p.337), the present study defines the content creators-audiences relationship as an older female celebrity practitioner-fans. As one's performance (front and back stage) take place differently depending on audiences and contexts (Goffman, 1959) this re-conceptualized relationship would provide us new knowledge that would not be provided from previous studies.

3. Methodology and Methods

Qualitative case study approach

For this research, a qualitative case study method was chosen by taking a closer look at a YouTube channel named *Korea Grandma*. As for the detailed selection process of the case, first, YouTube was selected over various kinds of social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and so on). This was because Korean smartphone users in all age groups (10s~50s+) spend the longest time on YouTube: in total 46 billion minutes in August, 2019, according to Wiseapp (2019 cited in Song, 2019), and YouTube offers "powerful sources that transmit cultural information which either perpetuates or undermines cultural stereotypes" (Oró-Piqueras and Marques, 2017). After that, the list included three elderly women [4] YouTubers who were nominated as the most influential senior citizen YouTubers in Korea (Korea creative content agency, 2018). Among them, one was excluded from the list as, strictly speaking, her age (62 years old) does not belong to the "elderly group" in Korea: people over 65 years old are classified as 'older adults' in Korea by law (Hankyung, 2017). Finally, "Park makrye", the 73-year-old lady who runs the '*Korea Grandma'* channel, was chosen over the other candidate on the basis of popularity. [5] The reason why "popularity" became the main criterion was because firstly, YouTube is a platform where creators compete for 'visibility', in that YouTube's algorithm automatically leads users to the most viewed videos by prioritizing popular content above the less popular content during a user's navigation process (Simonsen, 2011, pp. 51, 76-77). Secondly, micro-celebrity practice itself sets a high value on popularity; pursuing fame is a goal in this practice (Hou, 2019, p.536).

In this study, an atypical example was strategically chosen—not all older YouTubers can be as successful as *Korea Grandma*, who has lots of subscribers and is very popular. This is because,

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[4] The listed candidates were as following: 1) Park makrye (73 years old) - Korea Grandma (beauty, travel, Vlog) 2) Youngwon Kim (83 years old) - 01seeTV (Mukbang) 3) Seongja cho (62 years old) - Korean Food Recipes (Cooking) (Korea creative content agency, 2018).

[5] The number of subscribers of 01seeTV was 347,000, whereas that of Korea Grandma was 1,220,000 [Accessed 28th of March 2020] (01seeTV, 2020; Korea Grandma, 2020a).

as Flyvbjerg (2007, p.395) argues, a typical or average case generally does not prove to be the "richest in information", whereas atypical or extreme cases disclose more information, since these "activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied". Furthermore, as the present study does not aim to prove something through this research, rather to *learn* and get the "greatest possible amount of information" on a phenomenon, it is more important to identify "the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences" than superficial symptoms and the frequency of the problem (Flyvbjerg, 2007, p.395). Accordingly, it is more appropriate to strategically focus on a smaller but atypical case that provides more in-depth and richer information than a sizable case (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.78; Gray, 2003, p.101).

Multi-methods: Visual narrative analysis and Visual analysis

One of the key challenges during the research was to decide which particular methods to deploy. That was because, as Pace (2008, p.220) argues, there are "not yet refined specific methods" of YouTube, which is a relatively "new medium". Also, YouTube is composed of heterogeneous types of communication, encompassing visuals, sound, speech and so on (Vergani and Zuev, 2011, p.215). Therefore, when designing the research, I had to be flexible enough to combine different kinds of methods that fit into my research direction (Pace, 2008, p.222; Vergani and Zuev, 2011, p.215). As a consequence, a multi-methods approach combining visual narrative analysis and visual analysis was employed for the present research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017).

The visual narrative analysis method was inspired by Pini (2001) who has done research on teenage girls by using video diaries. There are many similarities between Vlogs on YouTube and video diaries because of the "narrative nature of YouTube" (Pace, 2008, p.214). In both mediums, speakers are narrating their personal daily life to imaginary audiences by formulating their own accounts, and this story is enriched by visuals (Pace, 2008, p.220; Riessman, 2008, p.173).

Hence, "introspective narratives" and behaviors permeated in habitual daily life of Korea Grandma were explored (Martin, 2015, p.96); 'how she feels to be grow older in her everyday lives' or 'what it means to live as an older woman'. Furthermore, in order to understand the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma more deeply, celebrity-style narratives and performances were also investigated such as calling her audiences fans while staring at the camera. Such understandings were achieved by going through spoken languages, nonverbal languages (e.g. behaviours, embodied interactions and gestures) and written texts along with visuals (Pace, 2008, p.216; Riessman, 2008, pp. 179-180).

However, it was necessary to add another method as well. Visual narrative analysis has a limitation, in that sometimes visual expression and actions can't be completely interpreted into linguistic elements, as Pace (2008, p.222) confirms: "Visual elements can be reduced to a language through vague linguistic proxies" and it "cannot be reduced totally to words". Therefore, visual analysis was also applied to the present study to overcome this limitation, and as a "strategy for validation" (Bazeley, 2013, p.406).

The visual analysis was conducted according to a checklist[6], which was invented by mixing the framework of Barthes's (1993) semiotics and Rose's (2016) 'compositional interpretation'. This was because deconstructing visuals with an analytical tool (the checklist) allows us to have a richer understanding of the information. Furthermore, focusing on "compositional interpretation" has its own limitation that disregards social context, so combining both approaches was a necessary step to consider social conditions and allow reflexivity (Jensen, 2002, p. 34; Rose, 2016, pp.57-142). As visuals in YouTube videos are moving images, it was also imperative to capture the specific moments strategically, and justify 'when' and 'why' those shots were taken (Rose, 2016, p.64). In order to capture the appropriate moments which would be most valid for this research, components of film analysis were borrowed considering the characteristics of YouTube: "the editing and chronological sequence" (Pace, 2008, p.220), so one screenshot from each sequence and the duration of each sequence were recorded to the checklist (Molyneaux, et al, 2008, pp.2-4). Standards for the screenshot selection was based on

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[6] Detailed information of the checklist can be found in 'Appendix 1: checklist for visual analysis'.

the literature review. For example, the moments were taken largely guided by the themes that classified as ageist stereotypes towards older women by Hurd (1999, p.421): *decline, body image and loss,* and specifically when the signs of ageing and ageing bodies (e.g. hair loss, wrinkles, body shape, and so on) of Korea Grandma appeared (Pace, 2008, p.215). After that, collected screenshots were analyzed in accordance with the checklist.[7]

Piloting

Prior to the sampling process, the pilot was carried out with the most recent video[8] at that time to check if my preliminary research design worked well. During the pilot study, video content and the comments below the video were both analyzed. However, after the pilot, I realized the users' comments would produce too much information, which would likely take the research direction the wrong way. Thus, it was decided to not analyze the user-generated comments below the videos, but to refer to them when understanding the context of the video: people act upon and influence each other through videos and comments (Lillie 2008; Edgerly, et al., 2013). Another lesson from the pilot was that translating and analyzing the Korean data into English made me miss lots of meaning and context that can't be fully translated from the original to a foreign language (Bazeley, 2013, p.77). Because of this, I decided to transcribe and analyze all the data in Korean (the original language of the empirical data) for this research.

Based on what I learned from the pilot, the criteria and the unit of analysis were determined to clearly separate the data for analysis and context for understanding (Snelson, 2015). The unit of primary data for analysis was defined as: (1) videos; (2) information of videos (title, description, length of the video, published date, number of views, likes and dislikes). Also, the unit of secondary data for the context was defined as: (1) text comments below the videos; (2) autobiography[9]. As for the secondary data, an autobiography about Korea Grandma was referred to, in order to obtain a richer understanding of her background stories and the purpose

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[7] Detailed information of the checklist can be found in 'Appendix 2: example of visual analysis'

[8] The name of the video for the pilot was 'Tough Role Play of Going on a Blind Date with Impregnable Makrye [Korea Grandma]' published on 9th of February 2020(Korea Grandma, 2020a).

[9] This book mainly deals with Park makrye (*Korea Grandma*)'s life story, motivation of starting YouTube and background stories of the production process of YouTube videos (Park and Kim, 2019).

of the video production on YouTube (Bazeley, 2013, p.81; Rose, 2016, p.57).

Sampling, data collection and analysis

The sampling of the videos was done in several steps. First, after going through all the videos (284 videos in total) on the YouTube channel of Korea Grandma, the information from the videos (e.g. published date, title, view count, the number of likes and dislikes and URL) was listed[10] in the excel sheet. Subsequently, all the collected videos (283 in total; the pilot video was not used) were categorized according to the genres of the videos. This 'purposive sampling strategy' was chosen to "maximize variation" and explore as many diverse aspects of the channel as possible (Gobo, 2007, p.418). Categorization was done using genre trees[11], loosely led by the concept of genre work (Hill and Turnbull, 2017). Admittedly, it was challenging to define the genre of the videos clearly, as Hill and Turnbull (2017, p.3) argue "genres are not fixed, [...] they mutate, hybridize, and migrate from one location to another" constantly. Therefore, a process that moved the genres back and forth in a 'circuitous way' was needed (Hill, 2007, p.93).

As a result of the genre tree, 22 categories were created. Among these categories, the 'notification' category was excluded from the sample list, since the videos included in this group were mainly for information delivery (e.g. time and place notification of fan meetings), not for presenting 'Korea Grandma' herself. Then, 21 videos – one video per category – were finally selected, so that all the categories were proportionately included in the research (Snelson, 2015), and so that the most representative video (which best unfolds characteristics of the specific genre) was picked out. For instance, the video chosen from the 'makeup' category best presents the characteristics of the 'makeup tutorial' genre; sharing 'feedback of beauty products' and 'detailed steps of makeup preparing for certain occasions' in her daily life (Jeffries, 2011; Fischer, 2014).

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[10]   The list was created from the 18th of February to 20th of February, 2020. As for the detailed example, please see 'Appendix 3: the example of list for the sampling'.

[11]   Please see 'Appendix 4: the example of purposive sampling strategy - categorization'.

The collected 21 videos [12] were watched repeatedly, and the information from the video – (non-) verbal languages with detailed context observed from the videos – was transcribed in the excel sheet. In parallel, screenshots for visual analysis were collected from each video and analyzed in the way mentioned earlier, and the information gained from this was also recorded on the spreadsheet. Then, the coding process was done in two major steps. First, a cycle of coding was conducted in the transcript through line-by-line [13] and open coding (Bazeley, 2013, p.162; Saldaña, 2015). During this process, analysis and interpretation were used, spontaneously interacting between theoretical knowledge gained from previous studies and empirical data (Gray, 2003, p.149; Bazeley, 2013, p.336), which helped me get emerging initial codes [14] (theoretical concepts and themes), which is crucial groundwork for the second cycle of coding (Snelson, 2015, p.327). The second cycle of coding was conducted through re-organizing and refining the preliminary codes from the first stage to generate the analytical categories (Bazeley, 2013, p.126; Saldaña, 2015), and it was also led by the existing theoretical framework, as Gray (2003, p.147) suggests "continuous interpretation" is inevitable when conducting the qualitative research.   In this way, two themes were created: "Gendered ageism" and "Micro-celebrity"[15], and remaining codes were located within a hierarchy under categories and subcategories (Snelson, 2015, p.327).

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations for this research were fulfilled following the guideline "framework for ethical research with social media" suggested by Townsend and Wallace (2016, p.8). According to Townsend and Wallace (2016, p.5), the key ethical concerns when conducting research within social media is whether the data is going to be considered as 'private or public', and this can be categorized by the 'online setting'. Thus, the empirical data set for this research was treated as 'public data', as YouTube is a "public video-sharing website" that encourages people to freely share their personal experiences and stories by using the slogan "broadcast yourself" (Lange, 2007; Ding, et al., 2011). Also, Bassett and O'riordan (2002, p.244) suggest the information

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[12] Please see 'Appendix 5: the list of collected 21 videos.

[13] Please see 'Appendix 6: the example of the first cycle of coding'

[14] Please see 'Appendix 7: the list of the initial codes from the first cycle of coding'.

[15] Please see 'Appendix 8: outline of themes, categories and sub-categories'.

shared on social media can be treated "to the same degree that they would with a similar publication in traditional print Media" as social media users are aware that their postings will be watched by the public. Not only because the data was treated as public, but also as not to remove the context, anonymity was not kept in the present study. Instead, however, the information was handled carefully so as to not harm *Korea Grandma* and her reputation (Townsend and Wallace, 2016).

4. Analysis

Challenging stereotypes

According to Van Es (2016, pp.13-14), people who are stereotyped don't just passively internalize stereotypes towards them, but rather sometimes subvert the stereotypes in ways contradicting them when presenting themselves. Subverting stereotypes, however, is not always a deliberate strategy. It also can be a subconscious and unintentional, because stereotypes can be simply challenged showing different behaviors from commonly expected or 'alternative images' (Van Es, 2016, pp.13-14). Therefore, in this chapter, micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma and how these performances challenge ageist stereotypes will be examined in five different ways: para-social/social relationship, on being a successful older female YouTube celebrity, doing age differently, contradicting Confucianism, and revealing aging signs.

Para-social/social relationship

Through micro-celebrity practices, Korea Grandma constructs para-social as well as social relationships, which help challenge ageist stereotypes that label the elderly as 'condescending' and 'conservative', which has led to severe generational conflicts in Korea (Kim, S. 2019; KORDI, 2020).

Korea Grandma creates the impression of intimacy by 'performing connectedness' with her fans (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p.144; Jerslev, 2016, p.5241). Mostly, she opens her videos with her signature pose (e.g. rabbit ear fingers) and greeting: "hello, this is Park makrye" (e.g. Korea Grandma, 2019a; 2019b, and so on). She continuously addresses her viewers using the nickname *pyun*—which means fans, but which she pronounces in her own way, while staring at the camera. This demonstrates that Korea Grandma sees her audiences as fans, and that she is creating 'affiliation' constantly with her fans by constructing their own culture, which confirms the arguments of previous studies: micro-celebrity practitioners perceive their audiences as 'fans' rather than family or friends (Marwick, 2015, p.337), and strategically manage their fans to maintain their popularity (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, pp.140-147). Sometimes, she tells scary

stories to the camera eating watermelon and sitting in a comfortable position on the bed (Korea Grandma, 2017a), and in this way viewers receive a greater intimacy, "connection and interactive responsiveness" with Korea Grandma, as if their grandmother is telling a bedtime story (Abidin, 2018, p.12).

Korea Grandma's direct and candid way of talking without pretention is conducive to the sense of closeness and authenticity as well. Diverging from makeup tutorials of younger beauty YouTubers that share detailed information about makeup products (e.g. name of brands, colors and sizes of brushes) and numerous brand products (Jerslev, 2016, p.5241), Korea Grandma shares the products she buys from traditional markets or unknown brand, introducing one of these products as an "unknown Japanese cream" (Korea Grandma, 2017b, 01:55). She even proudly states that she bought her green lipstick for 1,000 KRW (approximately 0.82 USD) from a traditional market (Korea Grandma, 2017b, 05:02-05:11). She mentions that the product price makes no difference in effects of makeup; the more important thing is 'whether it suits me or not' (Korea Grandma, 2017b, 02:17-02:45).

More interestingly, swear words function as a source of humor as well a way to foster intimacy on Korea Grandma's channel. Korea Grandma uses swear words such as *yeombyeong* in her thick local dialect quite often in her videos (e.g. Korea Grandma, 2017f). Its original meaning is "catching an epidemic", which can be used to derogate or abuse someone, so its use is sometimes restricted, particularly in the public context (Fägersten, 2017, p.1). However, on Korea Grandma's channel, swearing works as a feature of informal, casual conversation which mimics the solidarity between close friends, actively reducing the feeling of social distance and creating a sense of intimacy (Adams, 2016, p.59; Fägersten, 2017, p.1). Translated into English, *yeombyeong* can be seen as 'damn', 'fuck' or 'hell' depending on the situation:

[Frustrated as there's a lot of delicious noodle] Damn, there's a lot... (Korea Grandma, 2018a, 03:42)
I've walked so damn much. (Korea Grandma, 2018b, 02:19)

Indulging in uninhibited language that is not subject to politeness or social norms (Adams, 2016), viewers are invited to feel much closer to Korea Grandma (e.g. the granny living next

door), narrowing the distance between them (Fägersten, 2017, p.1).

Moreover, Korea Grandma is likely to display less filtered and orchestrated human emotions – from happiness and grief to anger – in regards to certain incidents than traditional celebrities "who have been trained in deportment and impression management" (Abidin, 2018, p.6). This contributes to the audience's feeling that Korea Grandma, an ordinary celebrity, is 'humane' and is more 'real' than traditional celebrities (Abidin, 2018, p.6). On the day of her retirement ceremony, after 43 years running her restaurant, Korea Grandma unexpectedly cries in her kitchen, embarrassing her granddaughter (Yura) (Korea Grandma, 2018c, 00:00-00:47):

> Yura: How do you feel, Grandma? It's your last day.
> Korea Grandma: I just feel... so sad.
> Yura: Are you not happy and sad that it's over?
> Korea Grandma: I'm not happy and but sad because it's over.
> I really have worked so hard at this place to earn money... (Korea Grandma is crying)
> Yura: Why are you crying...Grandma.
> Korea Grandma: I struggled so much while running the restaurant.
> Yura: Get inside, get inside.
> Korea Grandma: (sobbing) when I came to Yongin, I didn't have a house but I open up this restaurant.

Furthermore, Korea Grandma shares her own techniques in her instructional videos, using, in her words, "Park Makrye style", rather than sharing skillful and professional advice (Abidin, 2018, p.12):

> Yura: How many minutes do they have to boil it for?
> Korea Grandma: No, just use your hand...
> Yura: What?? Put their hands in boiling noodles?
> Korea Grandma: Yeah...just to check if it is cooked or not…
> […]
> Yura: but don't you have to have some standard, Grandma?
> Korea Grandma: What? [Nothing]
> Yura: Like..boil the noodles for a certain amount of time, isn't there something like that?
> Korea Grandma: How can I say accurate time? Just look with your eyes and you'll know if it's cooked. There's no fixed number of minutes
> Yura: No, but what if they don't know
> Korea Grandma: They'll know. (Korea Grandma, 2018d, 00:23-00:34).

Although she does not share certain things, like an amount of time or exact measurements, the

grandma's "Bibim noodle rough recipe" has become the most popular video [16]on her channel (Korea Grandma, 2018d, 00:14-00:36), as this recipe does not require strict rules or tools, which means it is easy to follow for ordinary people, and is what Abidin (2018, p.5) calls more "attention-worthy from their private lives". This is a much different attention dragging strategy compared to the performances of traditional celebrities, as traditional celebrities make sure to present their craft and professional skills in a way that maintains their extraordinary and glamour status (Marshall, P.D., 2010, p.39; Abidin, 2018, p.12). Korea Grandma attracts her audience's interest by displaying her skills as approachable as possible to her audience.

Moreover, unedited mistakes and failure enhance 'the aura of realness and liveness' (Ellcessor, 2012. p.52). Korea Grandma makes many mistakes during filming, such as putting her palm on the camera lens in front of the product, which is supposed to be the other way around (Korea Grandma, 2017b, 2:00), having her phone ringing while she's talking (Korea Grandma, 2018a), or leaving out some steps while cooking or applying makeup (Korea Grandma, 2017b; Korea Grandma, 2018d):

> Korea Grandma: next, apply moisturising cream. Oh, my! I've used it all up!
> Yesterday or the day before, it finished. So I was meaning to buy a new one. But forgot all about it. I'll just have to leave the moisturiser out. So, I'll apply eye cream now (Korea Grandma, 2017b: 01:11-01:22)

Paradoxically, given the amount of moments that would likely be outtakes or bloopers for other renowned YouTube celebrities, one can view these videos as more 'authentic', viewing it as un-rehearsed and unscripted, rather than perceive it as flawed (Jerslev, 2016). In a similar vein, contrary to older celebrities in traditional media, who receive attention for their successful self-discipline in maintaining their appearance, especially their slender bodies, Korea Grandma demonstrates the opposite image, such as when she discusses failing to lose weight:

> Korea Grandma: [*Spoonful of curry*] I'm going to reduce my carb intake. I'm on the right track, right? There's no rice (no carbs).
> Yura: Potatoes are carbs.
> Korea Grandma: I don't know. I'm just going to cut rice.

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[16] '7,316,651 views' (Korea Grandma, 2018d) [Accessed 22 April, 2020]

[…]
Korea Grandma: What day is it today? Everything's better when you start it on the Monday.
Everything just falls into place.
I'm going to start my diet from tomorrow.
It's abnormal to start your diet in the weekend.
I'm gonna start from tomorrow.
Don't nag me. (Korea Grandma, 2018b, 04:06-04:50)

This presentation not only encourages her fans to feel a sense of authenticity, but also allows them to resonate with Korea Grandma, as they may have experienced the same things in their life, which works as a way of narrowing the distance between them.

The Korea Grandma-fans online relationship is even extended to 'actual interaction' as well. One video in her channel (Korea Grandma, 2018c) shows that many fans visit the restaurant [17]run by Korea Grandma—even though it is located on the outskirts of a city that is hard to get to using public transportation—to communicate with Korea Grandma in person. On the last day of the restaurant's opening, lots of her fans visited her to celebrate the day together. Korea Grandma takes selfies with her fans, and goes around the tables and talks with them. Her fans, mostly young people, give gifts to Korea Grandma and write letters on the pictures taken together with Korea Grandma. The moment the fans try to pay for the meal and Korea Grandma tries to stop them, saying "no no, it is all right! Just let grandma treat you" illustrates how their intimate relationship can be developed in 'reality', and is not just an illusion (Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p.148): micro-celebrity practitioners and fans' relationships in social media are sometimes criticized as a poor substitute for face-to-face interaction (Hills, 2015, p.475; Marwick and Boyd, 2011, p.147) and "second order intimacy" (Rojek, 2001, p.52).

In summary, Korea Grandma builds a sense of intimacy and authenticity through micro-celebrity practices. Creating a 'friendly' and 'authentic' grandma celebrity persona can be seen as part of the "attention getting techniques" of micro-celebrity practices (Williamson, 2016, p.139). These techniques are distinct to traditional celebrity practices which create "a sense of separation and distance" from their fans and presents an unrealistic and perfect image (Abidin,

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[17] This restaurant is no longer operated now.

2018, p.12). Confirming her audience as fans, she proves her micro-celebrity practices are closely related to strategical fan management that maintain her popularity (Abidin, 2018, p.12). It is also interesting to see that the para-social relationship between Korea Grandma-fans can be extended to face-to-face interactions.

This communicative construction of relationships challenge ageist stereotypes of being 'condescending' and 'conservative' (Kim, S. 2019; KORDI, 2020). Furthermore, considering the fact that nearly 78 % of the Korea Grandma's subscribers are Millennials aged 18 to 44 years old (Noxinfluencer, 2020a), para-social relationships and face-to-face interactions between Korea Grandma and her fans can be seen as narrowing the distance between not only micro-celebrity and fans but also older and younger generations. Thus, the para-social/social relationship between Korea Grandma and her fans challenge ageist stereotypes by presenting alternative images as well as filling the generational gap.

On being a successful older female YouTube celebrity

Korea Grandma markets herself as a 'successful' older female YouTube celebrity. Perhaps the emergence of Korea Grandma as a YouTube celebrity is remarkable in itself for viewers, as older female YouTube celebrities are not considered to be "culturally normal or mainstream" because of both their gender and age (Van Es, 2016, p.14; Abidin, 2018, pp.22-23); all YouTubers ranked in the "Top 100 Most Subscribed Comedy Youtubers[18] in South Korea" are younger adults except for Korea Grandma (Noxinfluencer, 2020b), and YouTube is monopolized by male viewers, who take up 90% of all the 51 content categories. Additionally, female-dominated categories are quite gendered in nature, comprising of: makeup and cosmetics, skin and nail care, and weight loss (Openslate 2015 cited in Abidin, 2018, p.27; Abidin, 2018, p.27).

Korea Grandma continuously shares glittering stories that would not happen to ordinary older women, who are socially neglected in general. She donated 10 million KRW (approximately

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[18] The channel of Korea Grandma belongs to 'Comedy' category [Accessed 12 April 2020].

8,166.60 USD) to older adults who live alone (Korea Grandma, 2019a), held fan meetings (Korea Grandma, 2017c), shot an advertisement (Korea Grandma, 2017d), received the 'YouTube gold play button' 1 million subscribers reward (Korea Grandma, 2019b), and was featured on a women's magazine (Korea Grandma, 2017e). She presents herself as a person that lots of celebrities and public figures want to meet, from famous K-pop stars to the CEO of YouTube. She highlights the time where the CEO of Google, Sundar Pichai, requested to meet her in Google I/O 2019 (Korea Grandma, 2019c), putting this episode on the front page of her channel. She puts emphasis on the moment when Pichai states that Korea Grandma's story is "more inspiring than anyone I've ever seen" (Korea Grandma, 2019c, 04:12), and also stresses that the meeting with Pichai was 'exclusive' and 'privileged'. Hence, these 'successful' and 'extraordinary' stories show that the social position of Korea Grandma has changed from an ordinary older woman whose voice would generally be devalued to a person with "distinctive industrial strength and cultural logic" (Hou, 2019, p.535).

Furthermore, these 'successful' stories contrast the typical representation of older women in traditional media, which portrays older women as not attractive and frail (Jones, 2008, p.85) or rich and happy because of their youthfulness and sufficient socio-cultural backgrounds (Blaikie, 1999; Gewirtz-Meydan and Ayalon, 2018). When becoming a YouTube celebrity or meeting with the CEO of Google, her youthfulness and socio-cultural capital were not prerequisites for Korea Grandma; rather, she had not the received proper benefits of education and suffered from physical and mental defects such as arthritis and dementia (Korea Grandma, 2017a; Korea Grandma, 2018e). Therefore, these glittering stories of Korea Grandma prove that a ′successful′ life is not the exclusive property of Third agers (Blaikie, 1999, pp. 22-23; Clarke and Bennett, 2015, p.134), and an older female who does not look young and rich can also be attractive.

Doing age inappropriately

As people grow older, they are required to perform "a set of expected practices and enactments" according to their age (Meagher, 2015, p. 90). By doing this, they encounter "age-related crises" and sometimes refuse to meet certain expectations or behave their age (Westerhof and Barrett, 2005; Martey, 2014. p.194). Whilst the Youth is represented as embodying "passion, sexy, ambition and challenge", the elderly are required to represent "generosity, wisdom, experience

and contemplation" (Kang, 2012, p.115-116) (translated by the author). If younger adults behave "old", they are pointed out lightly as an 'old soul', but the elderly are ridiculed as 'going senile' (Kang, 2012, p.115-116). Also, in particular, social regulations and limitations "surround feminine respectability in old age" are strictly placed on older women (Meagher, 2015, p. 90).

Korea Grandma subverts the stereotype that older adults should maintain their dignity based on their 'age' (Kim, Y., 2005; KORDI, 2020) and shows that older people can be just as excited and enthusiastic fans as much younger people. Fan culture is traditionally considered as a "teen or youth phenomena"; accordingly, older fans are seen as "acting inappropriately for their age" (Jerslev and Petersen, 2018, p.160). Korea Grandma presents herself enjoying the concert of Na Hoon-a, a 73-year-old South Korean singer, who is a big star among older adults in Korea and Korea Grandma's favorite singer (Korea Grandma, 2018f). In the video, Korea Grandma says she has been excited during the days leading up to the concert. As she puts it: "I've been excited since Monday like I am in my 20s. I couldn't sleep at all" (Korea Grandma, 2018f, 0:00-00:04). At the concert, Korea Grandma is so excited that she buys various fan goods, such as three glow sticks and a shining headband (Korea Grandma, 2018f, 01:07-01:11). Then, after the concert, she shares her review with her fans while eating noodles at home: "he's so cute and he is so...sweet and adorable, you know? He's like a baby when he smiles. […] And his body is so well built. I was awe by his expressions." (Korea Grandma, 2018f, 04:11-04:58).

As A. Bennett (2015, p.355) states, fan culture for older adults is not just 'nostalgia' or "a desire to be young again", but rather indicates shared desires and sentiments of the youth. This means fan culture for the elderly are articulated "in a simultaneous fashion in a process that connects the individual's past and present in a seamless fashion." Therefore, the images and stories that Korea Grandma presents subvert not only the conventional expectations of older adults who 'do' their age properly (Meagher, 2015, p.89) but also indicates that "playfulness or excessive enthusiasm" for a celebrity can also be shown by older generations (Jerslev and Petersen, 2018, p.160).

Korea Grandma also challenges age norms by sharing her first ever experience smoking a cigar.

Even though it is not illegal for Korea Grandma to smoke a cigar, as she is not an underage, it is interesting to see how she compares her experience smoking a cigar to "puberty" (Korea Grandma, 2019d, 01:28- 01:39):

I must've been out of my mind. Maybe I'm going through puberty again. […] I just did it out of curiosity. The important part is that it was really fun! I got a cool picture too!

Above, Korea Grandma not only shows that cigars are bad for your health, but acknowledges that trying 'challenging new things' out of curiosity and having a 'deviation from existing social order' for older adults is deemed "age-inappropriate" (Meagher, 2015, p.90) while appropriate for teenagers. However, Korea Grandma refuses to follow "normative behavioural scripts" (Swinnen, 2015, p.72) by performing her age differently and showing an alternative image of 'an older woman smoking cigar' which disrupts conventional expectations of older women (Meagher, 2015, p.90). Therefore, by performing her age differently, Korea Grandma's "autonomy, self-expression and pleasure" (Gilleard and Higgs, 2014, p.xii), which have long been oppressed due to age norms, are released. Also, typical feminine images of older women are subverted, as 'smoking' for women is interpreted as not only a "symbol of emancipation", and "a torch of freedom" (Amos and Haglund, 2000, p. 3) but also a challenge to "masculinity" (Greaves, 1996; Hunt, Hannah and West, 2004).

Contradicting Confucianism

Ageist stereotypes influenced by Confucianism are subverted during a conversation between Korea Grandma and her friend, Ok-hee. When making decisions about travel, Ok-hee displays typical behaviors for an older Korean woman following the patriarchal family system (passive and dependent). Meanwhile, Korea Grandma comes off as self-directed, active and passionate:

Korea Grandma: Hey, don't you want to go on a trip to Europe?
I really want to go to Europe with you,
Leave your grandchildren to someone else for a while and let's leave together.
Ok-hee: But I can't go because I have to take care of my grandchildren.
Korea Grandma: Hey, you always take care of your grandchildren, and work all the time.
When are you going to live your life then? Won't you want to live your life?
You also have desires! Why do you always suppress that? Destroy the walls of reality!
Ok-hee: I can't help it

Korea Grandma: Live your own lives! (Korea Grandma, 2018g, 05:42-05:54) (translated by the author)

As the above conversation demonstrates, the stereotypes influenced by a Confucian patrilineal family system are not only perpetuated by younger people but also can be found in older people themselves (Barrett, Raphael and Gunderson, 2014, p.41). In this video Ok-hee "partake[s] in self-inflicted ageism" (Krekula, Nikander and Wilińska, 2018, p.37), specifically drawing on Confucian values of 'sacrifice' and a 'patrilineal family system' (Kim, Y., 2005). She makes her decision filtered through the lens of parenting roles within her family relationships (Oh and Kim, 2016. p.500), rather than independently. Distinct to Ok-hee, Korea Grandma contradicts these stereotypes by directly advising Ok-hee to live her independent life and to make her decisions detached from the patriarchal family system that highlights "devotion and sacrifice" (Kang, 2012, p.118) and from "the identity of care worker" which is criticized to be 'gendered' and formed around "hegemonic feminine traits" related to "emotion, body and nature" (Hearn and Wray, 2015, p.202).

Revealing aging signs

Figure 1: Korea Grandma (2017b, 03:45)
https://youtu.be/QU2Qc_LKTBk [Screenshot by author]

Korea Grandma reveals her natural aging signs, and ideal beauty standards privileging youthfulness, one of the central parts of the gendered ageism is challenged by this performance. Distinct to older female celebrities in traditional media, who get praised as "icons with aura of godly and timeless perfection" because of their well-disciplined bodies, Korea Grandma displays images that go against these beauty standards which embody a specific form of "youthful beauty" (Van den Bulck, 2014, p.65).

In Korea Grandma's beauty makeup tutorial (Figure 1), her face is scrutinized, and aging signs such as wrinkles and grey hair are shown close up and in detail, but she is not daunted by her aging body. She even invites her audience to "watch closely" (Korea Grandma, 2017b) when she shows the freckles and spots on her face, so that audiences are invited to perceive her signs of aging as natural, not horrific or discomforting as these signs are portrayed in traditional media. Also, she contradicts the anti-aging 'marketing manoeuvre' that encourages people to believe aging is controllable and promises 'everlasting youth' (Loos and Ivan, 2018). She ridicules the products that promise to give people a younger face, claiming: "you just need to be born again" (Korea Grandma, 2017b). She even goes further, claiming that we do not need to feel pressure because of what others think about our appearance (Korea Grandma, 2017b, 04:27-04:30).

Therefore, the inclusion of Korea Grandma's natural aging body in the visual field not only counters the invisibility of older women's bodies but also disturbs "the alignment of beauty with youth" (Ingalls, 2000; Warren and Richards, 2012, p.164; Meagher, 2015, p.89), which contributes to the "visual integration of the realities of old age" into the social media world (Hayden and Guibert, 2009, p.30).

Reinforcing stereotypes

Although people being stereotyped can challenge these stereotypes, it is impossible to be *completely* free from the stereotypes (Van Es, 2016, p.14). This is because rejecting entire stereotypes means their whole social identities are totally denied (e.g. ascribed characteristics

or label) (Van Es, 2016, p.14). As long as they are surrounded by the stereotypes and social norms, they inevitably come to internalize the ageist stereotypes (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018, p.3). Thus, those who are the object of stereotyping cannot completely behave outside of the given frame, rather, to some degree, they become engaged in "the categories and labels that the dominant group has chosen for them" (Van Es, 2016, p.14). This chapter will discuss how the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma reinforce stereotypes surrounding older people, especially older women. This will be examined in four ways: by revealing the pressures of existing beauty standards, examining negative perceptions and attitudes towards aging, digital minority, under the gaze of younger generations.

Pressures of beauty standards

Figure 2: Korea Grandma (2018a, 0:11)
https://youtu.be/u5C9efMiI3A [Screenshot by author]

Although Korea Grandma challenges existing beauty standards by showing signs of her natural aging process, she seems still pressured and influenced by societal ideals of beauty. In several videos on her channel (e.g. Korea Grandma, 2018a, Korea Grandma, 2018b, Korea Grandma, 2018d and so on), Korea Grandma appears while wearing a 'wig' at home, and puts on accessories and makeup on (Figure 2). This seems unnatural considering the fact that the location of the filming takes place at her home – the most comfortable place. Thinning 'hair' is

also a significant aging sign that shows off the "experience of growing old" (Ward, 2015, p. 141), and it can be assumed that Korea Grandma is using a wig to conceal her hair loss (an aging sign) in front of her audience, similar to actors putting on 'props' before they reach the stage. This shows that she is conscious of the camera, and not free from what others think of her based on beauty standards (Goffman, 1959).

Korea Grandma also shows an 'obsession with body weight', which is the central issue regarding older women's perceptions about their aging bodies and "body dissatisfaction" although it is a natural bodily change that occurs as women get older (Hurd, 2000, p.82; Clarke and Bennett, 2015, p.135). The video "Korea Grandma is on a diet..." exemplifies how Korea Grandma deals with pressure of weight-loss (Korea Grandma, 2018b). Even though Yura, the granddaughter of Korea Grandma, mentions that her grandma's weight loss is to improve her health of knees at the beginning of the video, in another video (Korea Grandma, 2018d), Korea Grandma unconsciously discloses that her weight-loss is somehow related to the pressure of appearance: "whenever I try to put on my clothes, I say, oh! I have to lose some weight. But, when I see the food, I eat all I want" (Korea Grandma, 2018d, 06:48-06:53). Hence, seeing this quote, one can conclude that Korea Grandma is still subject to pressures that mandate retaining a youthful appearance. More specifically, it means her aging appearance and identity are influenced by "dominant cultural norms and ideals" (Hurd, 2000, p.80; Clarke and Bennett, 2015, p.133).

Figure 3: Korea Grandma (2017e, 0:40)

https://youtu.be/hQ4rXkaiXrY [Screenshot by author]

Furthermore, Korea Grandma perpetuates this stereotype by accepting the imaginary of 'successful aging' and the idea of being "ageless", a new type of ageism in contemporary consumer capitalism and neo-liberalism. The concept of being 'ageless' puts more emphasis on successful aging, and contributes to the anti-ageing culture by applying cultural pressures to remain young and healthy later in life in regards to appearance, behavior, and physical functions (Clarke and Bennett, 2015, p.134; Marshall, B.L., 2015, pp.213-215). In a story about Korea Grandma's photo shoot feature for a women's magazine (Figure 3; Korea Grandma, 2017e), she is described as 'attractive, looking young, stylish, happy and even elegant', and her body posture is courageous and confident. This might seem positive at first, as it allows viewers to see Korea Grandma as an 'empowered' older woman.

However, this positive portrayal has a limitation in that it glamorizes Korea Grandma by displaying highly-edited images based on a "performance of youth" (Marshall, B.L., 2015, p.214), rather than showing off the authenticity of Korea Grandma herself. 'Signifiers of old age' of Korea Grandma (Marshall, B.L., 2015, p.214) are erased in the positive portrayal; using Photoshop touch-ups as a way of concealing wrinkles, extending her hair, and choosing a 'young' style of fashion for her clothes. According to Twigg (2015, p.150), 'clothes' can also be a sign of old age, since some forms of dress are considered as appropriate/inappropriate

according to the age of the people. This also could mean that Korea Grandma strategically adopt values of consumer capitalism and neo-liberalism as an attention dragging strategy. Thus, the proliferation of these kind of images heighten the ageist stereotypes by continuing to impose polarized view of aging between 'good' and 'bad' (Holstein, 2011, p.235; Marshall, B.L., 2015, pp.213-215), and giving rise to fantasies such as "agelessness"; in the long run, this puts additional beauty standard pressures on older women (Edström, 2018, p.79) to remain "active and healthy no matter what" (Oró-Piqueras and Marques, 2017, p.258).

Negative perceptions and attitudes towards aging

According to Hurd (1999, p.424), many people in their later life vehemently dis-identify themselves from those considered to be 'old' and "the elderly" group, describing themselves as "young-at-heart". In line with this view, Korea Grandma is found to distance herself from the 'old' label by emphasizing she is "still young" (Van Es, 2016. p.14; Korea Grandma, 2018g). On the one hand, this "age denial" seems empowering in a sense, in that it refuses to be defined within an 'old' frame, but, on the other hand, it seems to me that this only nourishes the ageist stereotypes, as denying the 'old' label actually connotes "anxiety about aging" (Barrett, Raphael and Gunderson, 2014; Ylänne, 2015, p.373) and the label of 'old' is 'pathologized' or 'bad' – characterized as something we should escape from (Van den Bulck, 2014. pp.67-68).

Indeed, Korea Grandma reveals her 'death and aging anxieties' which are closely related to ageism (Bodner, et al., 2015), continuously making meaning for life in the framework of 'death' or limited time. For example, recounting the story about experiencing the first cigar of her life, Korea Grandma states that she tried the cigar because she thought there might be "no other chances in her life", and she wants to challenge herself as much as possible before she "dies" (Korea Grandma, 2019d, 00:06-00:13; 04:37-04:38). When her friends turn down her suggestion to go to travel abroad together, she asks back: "then what if one of us dies?" (Korea Grandma, 2018g).

For Korea Grandma, aging is considered as a limitation on her physical and mental activities, because growing older for her is tied to a series of 'physical and mental losses' (Lasher and

Faulkender, 1993; Bodner, et al., 2015, p.16), which reinforces such stereotypes as the elderly being "weak", "physically frail" and "needing care and support" (Kang, 2012, p.118; Van den Bulck, 2014. pp.67-68). Korea Grandma is presented as suffering from "arthritis" (Korea Grandma, 2018e) and a "bad shoulder" (Korea Grandma, 2018f) along with age-related memory loss (Korea Grandma, 2018h; Park and Kim, 2019), so due to her increased "susceptibility to disease, deteriorating bodily functions" (Lasher and Faulkender, 1993; Martens et al., 2004; Bodner, et al., 2015), she has to modify her activities and encounters because of various limitations; she cannot perform powerful dance moves (Korea Grandma, 2018e), and struggles with memorizing the names of brands (Korea Grandma, 2018h).

Furthermore, Korea Grandma reveals her negative attitudes and perceptions towards aging by self-stereotyping (Barrett, Raphael and Gunderson, 2014). She occasionally uses ageist language by depreciating herself with terms such as *noinne,* a Korean term looks down on older people. Her stage name *Korea Grandma* can be considered ageist as well, as it not only conjures the word "old", which connotes a negative meaning influenced by the perception of seeing the aging process as a loss of abilities and functions, but also the name puts a limit on older women's identities within the family system (Lazar, et al., 2017, p.661) and erases the 'femininity' and 'desires' of older women (Kang, 2012, p.115).

Korea Grandma even asks her audiences to regard her as 'a pitiful older woman' if she makes mistakes (Korea Grandma, 2017c). When Korea Grandma invites her audiences to consider her as a target of "pity and sympathy", this re-enforces another form of discriminatory practices that devalues minorities, as well as adds to core stereotypes towards the elderly who are shown as having "low competence" (e.g. dependent, unskillful, not confident, and so on), according to the *Stereotype Content Model* (Cuddy, et al., 2009; Shiovitz-Ezra, Shemesh, and McDonnell, 2018. p.136). Therefore, one can see that these 'self-perceptions of ageing' not only reinforce stereotypes stigmatizing old age, but also proves that aging stereotypes can be extended to "self-fulfilling prophecies" (Shiovitz-Ezra, Shemesh, and McDonnell, 2018. p.139).

Digital minority

Korea Grandma shows the difficulties of being an older woman living in a contemporary digitalized society. Especially, an instance where Korea Grandma uses a kiosk in McDonald by herself shows how hard it is for the elderly to order food through an automated machine (Korea Grandma, 2019e). On the way to McDonalds, Korea Grandma expresses her nervousness to her granddaughter: (irritated tone) "I told you earlier I would just eat at home! […] the machine does not work the way I want, so it hurts my pride! " (Korea Grandma, 2019e, 0:47-0:56). She even describes her anxiousness as "I'm scared..." (Korea Grandma, 2019e, 02:19).

Furthermore, even though the text in the kiosk is written in Korean, she cannot understand some words as they are loanwords; 'takeout' is written in Korean like it sounds in English. Some of the text is too small to read, so Korea Grandma just orders the food by guessing from the pictures. The time limit for ordering seems too short for her, so she has to restart the process more than three times. Because of these factors, in the middle of the ordering process, Korea Grandma keeps trying to discontinue the process; "I cannot do this" and "can we just not eat this?" (Korea Grandma, 2019e). The ordering ends in failure, as she gets different food from what she was trying to order— instead of a bulgogi burger and a coke, she gets a random burger that she wasn't trying to purchase, and a coffee (Korea Grandma, 2019e).

After watching her ordering processes in detail, on the one hand, Korea Grandma might be disempowered and confirm the ageist stereotype that older adults are 'digitally excluded' and have a 'lack of sufficient skills of digital technology' (Ferreira, Sayago and Blat, 2017, p.565); however, on the other hand, simultaneously Korea Grandma can be seen as empowered in the sense that she conveys the importance of the issue of digital exclusion of the elderly by inviting audiences to see these difficulties through the eyes of Korea Grandma, so that they can relate to the problems more easily and identify problems that they would have not encountered on thier own.

Under the gaze of younger generations

Korea Grandma's self-presentation reinforces ageist stereotypes in that she strategically excludes the gaze of older generations. As Korea Grandma's granddaughter shoots and edits

her content on YouTube, the videos are edited under the gaze of younger generations and in a way that young people find fun and easy to empathize with. For example, language used by younger adults (e.g. slang, newly coined terms and jokes from the internet) are frequently used in the subtitles, which resonates with the granddaughter's generation, but since such words require background knowledge to understand, people who do not know the context (e.g. the older generations) would find it difficult to follow these videos. Also, most of the topics are related to recent trends and youth culture. Its focuses are mainly on how Korea Grandma accepts or mimics youth culture that she is not familiar with; examples include Celeb Five Cover Dance (Korea Grandma, 2018e), American Toast Cereal ASMR (Korea Grandma, 2020b), Gold button unboxing (Korea Grandma, 2019b), Chinese Noodles Mukbang (Korea Grandma, 2018a) and so on.

These patterns seem to represent an inevitable direction of the channel, not just because the producer/video editor is young, but also because of the "attention economy". To illustrate, since micro-celebrity practices in its nature involve pursuing popularity, the performances are destined to face a dilemma between authenticity and commercial interest (Smith, 2017, p.701; Hou, 2019, p.536). The granddaughter hints at this idea both in the autobiography of Korea Grandma [19] and the description of the video:

> When I surfed the YouTube, I found that most videos ranked in the Top are related to makeup. My grandmother also have done the makeup for a long time, and she is very good at it…… Why don't we try it as well? (Park and Kim, 2019, p.97) (translated by the author)

> Videos dealing with how to organize watermelons becomes ranked in the list of popular videos in summer. So we tried it as well, but you wouldn't expect it would be this much rough! But we all eat like this don't we? (Korea Grandma, 2019f, description) (translated by the author)

Therefore, considering the above-mentioned granddaughter's view together with the fact that "most commonly occurring videos" on YouTube are related to the "youth/popular culture" category (Kavoori, 2015, p.2; Burgess and Green, 2018), the exclusion of the elderly culture and gaze might be a natural consequences of micro-celebrity practices. However, it is also important to keep in mind that this imbalanced cultural sharing can be connected to ageism

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[19] Although this book mainly deals with Korea Grandma's life story, the granddaughter also has a chance to deliver her stories in this book such as background stories of YouTube (Park and Kim, 2019).

again, as it reinforces a cycle where younger generations are less likely to come across the culture of elderly generations.

Negotiating stereotypes

To sum up, the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma and the relationship between ageist stereotypes towards older women seems intricate and ambivalent. On the one hand, micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma challenges ageist stereotypes in that the practices allow Korea Grandma to present 'alternative' images (e.g. a friendly and authentic grandma celebrity persona; an older female YouTube celebrity who performs her age 'inappropriately' by contracting Confucianism and revealing aging signs) to contrast the conventional representation of older women in traditional media, which simplifies the images of older women in extreme ways. Since ageism originates from over-generalization, the various, realistic, and nuanced images of Korea Grandma (Cohen, 2002, p.604; Loos and Ivan, 2018, pp.172-173) contribute to "the individuating processes": this process is key to prevent discrimination by making people to learn more about individuals who possess stigma and improving their perceptions towards people who are labelled (Geiselhart, 2009, pp.12-13).

However, on the other hand, ageist stereotypes are reinforced by the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma at the same time. Since people who are stereotyped cannot behave completely outside of their given categories and labels, Korea Grandma consciously and unconsciously accepts and even strengthens the existing stigma through her micro-celebrity practices. As Richards, Warren and Gott (2012) argue, images of old age should be handled as "a product of the beliefs and attitudes of their makers"; perhaps the self-presentation of Korea Grandma is inevitably "bound by the cultural limitations attached to age" (pp.66-77). Furthermore, what is quite remarkable is that sometimes ageist stereotypes are reinforced due to the nature of micro-celebrity being tied to 'the attention economy' system, waiting to be consumed by others (Marwick, 2013, p.11; Marwick, 2015, p.337). Therefore, it seems creating 'alternative images' that completely challenge stereotypes is impossible as long as subjects are still exposed to stereotypes and social norms, and, especially, embrace the practices of micro-

celebrity (Richards, Warren and Gott, 2012, pp.66-77; Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018, p.3).

Taken all together, these complexities and contradiction require us to understand the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma as a "compromise rather than a dichotomy or a binary" of ageism (Banet-Weiser, 2012, p.48), which means understand the micro-celebrity practices as a way of an ongoing balancing (or negotiating) act somewhere between challenging and reinforcing the ageist stereotypes.

5. Conclusion

The present thesis has aimed to critically examine how older Korean women have adopted the techniques characterized as micro-celebrity practices, and how these practices are related to ageist stereotypes that have made older women excluded in society. In order to achieve these aims, this study has chosen the specific case of *Korea Grandma* to gather rich and contextualized information. Then, the case was analyzed by conducting a multi-methods approach, mixing visual narrative analysis and visual analysis. The concluding chapter will summarize the key findings in relation to the research questions and end with a contribution to the knowledge, limitations of the research, and suggestions for future studies.

1. *How does Korea Grandma present herself on YouTube through micro-celebrity practices?*

2. *In what ways are the ageist stereotypes towards older women challenged, reinforced, and negotiated through the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma?*

Korea Grandma presents herself as a 'friendly' and 'authentic' grandma by constructing a para-social/social relationship. Specifically, she creates a sense of intimacy and authenticity by performing 'connectedness', 'affiliation', 'closeness', 'realness' and 'liveness' to her fans. By using this attention dragging strategy and technique of fan management, Korea Grandma differentiates her personal brand from traditional celebrities who generate a sense of separation and distance from their fans by performing inauthentic and faultless personas. Korea Grandma also proves that the intimate relationship between her and her fans is not always an illusion, but also can be extended to 'reality' by displaying moments of actual interaction with her fans. Considering the fact that her fan base is mostly composed of the younger generations aged between 18 to 44, it has been found that these communicative constructions of relationships not only challenge the stereotypical images of older adults—viewed as 'condescending' and 'conservative'—but also fill the generational gap between younger and older generations.

Korea Grandma also presents herself as a 'successful' older female YouTube celebrity. She has cemented her presence among YouTube celebrities, in a world that is usually dominated by younger cohorts and men. More importantly, by sharing glamorous stories like the time she was featured on a women's magazine or the time she met the CEO of Google, she shows herself to be a person with industrial and cultural power whose voice is socially valued. Her successful image and thrilling stories challenge typical portrayals of older women in mainstream media, where they come across as either old and frail or active and happy because of their youthfulness and sufficient socio-cultural assets. Taken together, this proves that people who do not have an elevated socio-cultural background, or who have physical or mental defects, can also live a 'successful' life.

Korea Grandma refuses to 'do' her age appropriately and challenges age norms, which are a set of expected behaviors and rules applied to people according to their age (Meagher, 2015, p. 90). For example, Korea Grandma subverts the conventional expectations for older adults to 'act' as their age with dignity, and instead shows such behaviors formerly linked to youth culture, like enthusiastically enjoying fan culture and showing excitement and enthusiasm towards her favorite celebrity. In a similar vein, Korea Grandma resists age norms by acting similar to teenagers. She challenges herself by trying new things out of curiosity and deviates from social customs such as trying to smoke a cigar for the first time in her life at an older age. Thus, by performing her age in a different way, the set of conventional images linked to older women, such as dignity, femininity and passivity, are all challenged.

Korea Grandma presents a contradicting view to ageist stereotypes influenced by Confucianism values during a conversation with her friend, as referenced earlier in this study. When discussing plans for traveling, Korea Grandma displays independent, active and passionate attitudes, whereas her friend indicates passive and dependent attitudes. By contrasting the completely opposite views and behaviors of these two older women, the unconventional images of Korea Grandma become more prominent. The stereotypes that limit older women's identities to parenting roles within broader family relationships and demand participation in a patriarchal family system that emphasizes devotion and sacrifice are both challenged. Korea Grandma directly criticizes the attitudes and decision-making processes of her friend who is locked into

the patriarchal family system and gives advice to her friend to live an independent life.

Korea Grandma reveals her natural aging signs (e.g. wrinkles and freckles) candidly and contradicts ideal beauty norms which problematize women's bodies as they age and which privileges youthfulness. Since their bodies have been the most prominent place where women experience ageism, including signs of aging becomes a radical gesture that disrupts dominant stereotypes of older women where signs of aging are regarded as horrific or discomforting, and contributes to the visual inclusion of old age in the social media world. However, at the same time, Korea Grandma heightens those same ageist ideal beauty norms. She gives into normative pressures by concealing her signs of aging (e.g. covering her hair loss with a wig and putting make-up on at home), feeling pressured to lose weight, and accepting the imaginary of 'successful aging' which instigates anti-ageing culture in contemporary society (Marshall, B.L., 2015, pp.213-215). Thus, one can see that the image of Korea Grandma is strategically managed and conscious of her audience—comprised of her fans—as well as influenced by existing beauty norms.

Korea Grandma also shows negative perceptions and attitudes towards aging. She reveals anxiety about aging and pathologizes the aging process by dis-identifying herself from the label of 'old' and continuously viewing her life through the framework of 'death' or limited time; accordingly, ageist stereotypes that posit aging as something we should refrain from are reinforced. Moreover, Korea Grandma shows her true age through her deteriorating bodily and memory functions that shine through in her everyday life; things like age-related memory loss, arthritis, and a bad shoulder. This reinforces the perception people have where they see the process of becoming older as inevitably linked to losing functioning and abilities. In her videos, Korea Grandma encounters the limitations of her physical and mental activities in her daily lives such as when she has difficulty memorizing brand names or struggles with intense dance moves. These set of images confirms stereotypes like "weak", "physically frail" and "needing care and support" (Kang, 2012, p.118; Van den Bulck, H., 2014. pp.67-68).

Furthermore, the self-stereotyping of Korea Grandma reinforces ageist stereotypes that view

older people as frail, especially when she employs self-deprecating ageist language. Even her stage name *Korea Grandma* is an ageist name. She requests that her audience consider her as a target of stereotypes such as "pity and sympathy", which makes older people look like they have "low competence", and are dependent and unskillful (Cuddy, et al., 2009; Shiovitz-Ezra, Shemesh, and McDonnell, 2018. p.136). Therefore, her self-perception of aging strengthens stereotypes which devalue old age, and shows that aging stereotypes can be seen as "self-fulfilling prophecies" (Shiovitz-Ezra, Shemesh, and McDonnell, 2018. p.139).

Korea Grandma underscores problems around the digital exclusion of the elderly through her daily life—such as trying to use a kiosk in McDonalds. This video reinforces the stereotype that considers older adults as a 'digital underprivileged group'. At the same time, her experiences can be used as a means to show how difficult it is for the elderly to order food through automated machines and makes younger people aware of problems that they would have not imagined while using the kiosks themselves (e.g. too small text, a short time limit to order, and loanwords).

Lastly, Korea Grandma's presentation in general caters to younger adults. This performance strengthens ageist stereotypes as it results in the exclusion of elderly culture and the gaze of older generations in the social media world. The videos of Korea Grandma are strategically assembled in a way that young people find funny and relatable, through methods like using younger people's language in subtitles (e.g. slangs and internet jokes) and choosing younger-friendly topics (e.g. Mukbang and ASMR). So, in some sense, it is difficult for older generations to follow the videos of Korea Grandma and to empathize with them. This way of presenting herself and her channel is understood as an inevitable consequence of standard micro-celebrity practices, which entails careful and strategic presentation that can be consumable and enjoyable for fans—who are mostly the younger generations on YouTube.

3. *What are the limitations of micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma in terms of challenging ageist stereotypes?*

In this study, we see that the relationship between the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma and ageist stereotypes is complex and ambivalent. Whilst the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma subverts stereotypes by introducing 'alternative' images into the societal collective—which are distinct from the stereotypical images found in mass media in many ways and introduce diverse and nuanced images that help resist the overgeneralization of older women—the nature of micro-celebrity practices posits popularity as the ultimate goal, and accordingly, the self-presentation of Korea Grandma unavoidably subscribes to 'the attention economy'. This means sometimes she has to negotiate her self-presentation to be consumed by others accepting existing social norms or consumer capitalism and neoliberalism values. Furthermore, as the object of stereotypes are also inevitably tied to social and cultural norms—consciously and unconsciously—the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma cannot entirely challenge nor reinforces ageist stereotypes. Therefore, we must understand the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma as a constant negotiation, rather than a binary, situated somewhere between challenging and reinforcing ageist stereotypes.

Opening up the discussion about the micro-celebrity practices of older women

The present thesis sheds light on the micro-celebrity practices of older females in Korea, an area that has been extremely underexplored in terms of gender, age, and ethnicity. By approaching the social media use of older females with a different perspective from previous studies (which have been limited to civic engagement, intergenerational communication, and technological views) this study has explored not only the self-presentational but also the self-promotional values (e.g. fan management and strategical presentation guided by the attention economy) embedded in the architecture of social media. Furthermore, we found this information by focusing on one specific case—Korea Grandma. This case study has helped us contextualize this research to Korean society, which demands strict beauty standards as well as Confucian values in older women—demands that would not have been the same in a Western context. Thus, it is hoped that this research can add multiple layers of depth to not only the micro-celebrity practices of elderly women, but also to older women on social media in general.

Limitation of the research and suggestions for future studies

This present study mostly focused on video content, since, as Rose (2016, p.33) suggests, these visuals "have its own effects that exceed the constraints of its production (and reception)". However, in order to more deeply understand the association between Korea Grandma's micro-celebrity practices, ageist stereotypes, and the limitations of her micro-celebrity practices, it would be productive to add a production interview [20] with Korea Grandma and her granddaughter, who are the best informants to give us "explanations to media content characteristics and developments that neither media system analysis nor textual and audience analysis are able to provide", such as revealing the standard for selecting the topics of the videos and detailed information about power relations (e.g. political or economic forces) within the video content production process (Bruun, 2016, p.135).

For future studies, I suggest conducting audience research by carrying out textual analysis of the comments below the videos, and interviews with subscribers of Korea Grandma. This is because the model of YouTube requires us to understand not only the micro-celebrity practices of the creators, but also the participation practices from the audience who leaves their own traces; "quoting, favoriting, commenting, responding, sharing, and viewing". Thus, they also have influence on the "common culture of YouTube as it evolves" (Burgess and Green, 2018, p.57). Another reason that this would be a valuable addition is that the communicative authenticity and illusion of social media is interwoven with the context of fan cultures (Hills, 2015, p.475). For example, fans do not simply accept and feel a sense of entitlement to celebrity practices online (Burns, 2009, p.1), rather, they engage with the celebrity practices in different modes and facets (Hills, 2015, p.476; Hill, 2019, pp. 6-7); depending on how relationships between celebrity practitioners and fans are constructed and considered within each (Bennett, L., 2014, p.15).

Therefore, conducting this sort of audience research would allow us to understand how the

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[20] Unfortunately, several times of my interview requests have not been responded by them, so, instead, a recently released autobiography deal with Korea grandma's life story, motivation of starting YouTube channel, and production process of several videos on her channel was referred as a secondary data for this research (Park and Kim, 2019).

audience create the fan culture / community around Korea Grandma, by constructing their own relationship with Korea Grandma simultaneously with others in the same community. It would also illuminate how the micro-celebrity practices of Korea Grandma affect the audience's perceptions and attitudes towards Korea Grandma, as well as older women as a whole.

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1: checklist for visual analysis

Image components		Denotation	Connotation
What is happening in the image	Agency		
	Action		
	Color, light, shadow		
Carrier	Poses		
	Gazes		
	Objects		
	Setting		
Salience (cultural symbols, foregrounding, overlapping, size color, tone, light, focus)			
Viewer's positioning	Angle of interaction		
	Proximity and interaction		
Human in the image	Individuals and groups		
	Categorization		
	Non-representation		

Appendix 2: the example of visual analysis
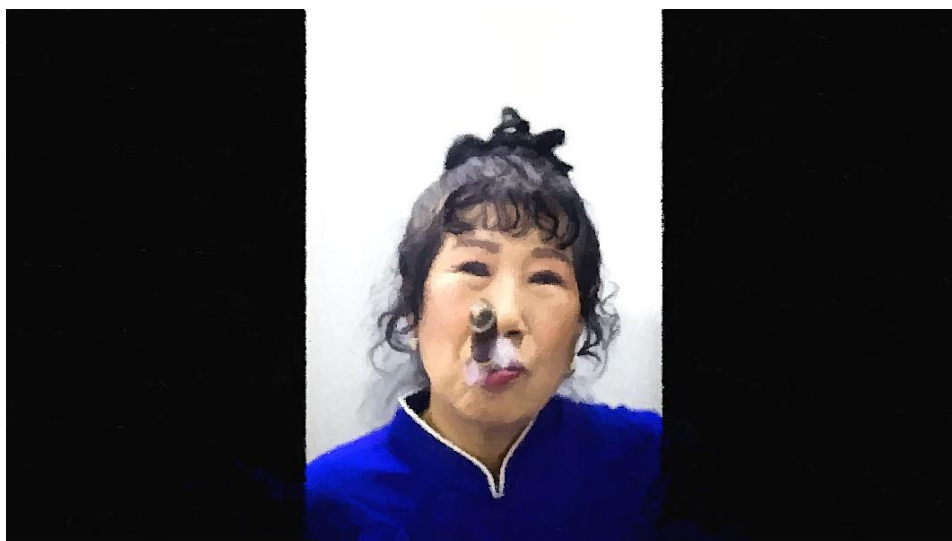

Figure 4: Korea Grandma (2019d, 05:07)

https://youtu.be/SzpMyND2NtE [Screenshot by author]

Number of sequence	Length	Denotation	Connotation
3	2:02	Korea Grandma is smoking a cigar. All focus is on Korea Grandma. She is staring at the camera. Smokes are coming out from her mouth. She is wearing Vietnamese blue traditional clothes. She putting on a makeup. The camera is very so close that her wrinkles can be seen.	Korea Grandma is going off the rails. She is challenging masculinity. She is empowered. She is releasing her oppressed desire and challenging femininity. She is challenging beauty standard by showing her natural aging body sign. She is challenging the age norm: she doesn't act her age.

Appendix 3: the example of the list for the sampling

The list was created from the 18th of February to 20th of February, 2020. The information from the videos is as following: published date, title (Korean & English), view count, the number of likes and dislikes and URL. While most of videos include both Korean and English titles, some were not having English titles.

list up : 2020.02-18~2020.02.20					
Published date (YYYY-MM-DD)	Title (KR)	Title (Eng)* in official channel	Views	Like	Dislike	Video URL
2017-01-30	[EngSub] 박막례 할머니의 욕 나오는 호주 케언즈 여행기 [박막례 할머니]	Grandma MakRye's (curse inducing) trip to Cairns, Australia! [Korea grandma]	1,214,125	24,000	178	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J_9o-ob5hA
2017-02-13	박막례 할머니의 라이언 초콜릿 만들기 [박막례 할머니]		1,609,176	28,000	507	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glRTXA7ott8
2017-02-16	우리 같은 영화 본거 맞나요? 박막례 할머니의 공조 리뷰 스포있음 [박막례 할머니]		403,553	7,400	46	https://youtu.be/xLnSAJ67Tuc
2018-11-14	(Eng)냄새 냄새... 이런 냄새가.. 두리안 먹어보다 [박막례 할머니]	The Smell the Smell... What Kind of Smell Is This.. Ate Durian [Korea grandma]	987,841	14,000	244	https://youtu.be/7JvjOLcPZgo
2017-02-22	할머니의 첫 연기 배우기! 녹차드세요 대사의 늪 [박막례 할머니]		547,354	11,000	72	https://youtu.be/ON1I33m9E2o
2017-02-27	71년만에 생애 첫 요가 도전! [박막례 할머니]		527,464	9,000	61	https://youtu.be/seQQxOvz8rY
2017-03-01	파스타를 처음 먹어봤어요! [박막례 할머니]	Tried Pasta for the First Time! (Granny Park Mak-Rye)	1,674,017	19,000	305	https://youtu.be/3zlvl1580wA
2017-03-03	[EngSub] 71년만에 처음 카약 타기에 도전하다! [박막례 할머니]	It is a challenge for the first time kayaking in 71 years! [makrye grandma]	282,971	5,900	43	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VoMoYziC9U
2017-03-07	[EngSub] 치과 들렀다 시장 갈 때 메이크업 [박막례 할머니] Grandma Make up	Going to the dentist and market makeup look [Korea grandma]	2,777,688	56,000	1,200	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QU2Qc_LKTBk
2017-03-12	옥희 생일파티 갈 때 하는 네일아트 [박막례 할머니]		1,091,453	20,000	363	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7luYlKDiA8I
2018-10-28	(Eng)카레 좋아하는 막례쓰가 인도 커리를 먹어봤다 [박막례 할머니]	Makrye, who likes curry, tried the Indian curry [Korea grandma]	985,172	15,000	194	https://youtu.be/MQz-c-kT8eQ
2020-02-04	(Eng)아끼면 똥 된다 (굳어가는 입욕제 털기) [박막례 할머니]	If you save them for too long, they turn to poop(using up the bombs)[Korea grandma]	982,189	22,000	451	https://youtu.be/I0Qcblcpy1k
2017-03-20	박막례가 평가하는 에씨엔엘(SNL) [박막례 할머니]	Grandma judges Korean SNL	580,206	10,000	108	https://youtu.be/GerQzPZBBGU
2017-03-21	ASMR 손주 귀 파주기, 옷겨서 못 잘 수도 있음 [박막례 할머니]		661,144	8,500	54	https://youtu.be/Jl5YMytRH4k
2017-03-26	[Engsub] 계모임 갈 때 메이크업 [박막례 할머니] Grandma Makeup	[EngSub] Going to the Important meeting makeup look [Korea Grandma]	2,117,324	34,000	627	https://youtu.be/MWkPPThr3u4

83

Appendix 4: the example of 'purposive sampling strategy' - categorization
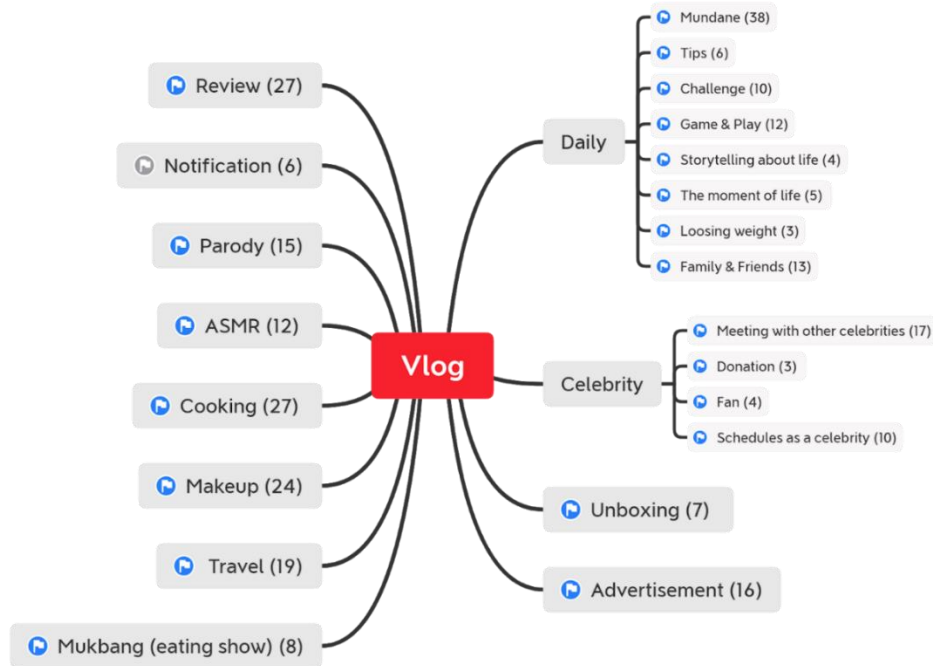
*Numbers of videos are written in the bracket

1) Review: product reviews or reaction videos (e.g. movies and games)

2) Notification: delivery of information (e.g. time and place for fan meeting)

3) Parody: mimicking or making fun of an original work ('Parody', 2020)

4) ASMR: "Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response" videos, which is "a tingling sensation that begins on the scalp and moves down the back of the neck and upper spine" ('ASMR', 2020)

5) Cooking: showing food preparation in detail ('Cooking show', 2020)

6) Makeup: feedback of beauty products, detailed steps of makeup preparing for certain occasions (Jeffries, 2011; Fischer, 2014)

7) Travel: daily blogs displaying experience and information while traveling (Chandralal, Rindfleish and Valenzuela, 2015)

8) Mukbang (eating show): showing eating food in front of camera while interacting with audience ('Mukbang', 2020).

9) Daily: ordinary daily lives as an older woman

10) Celebrity: daily lives or special events as a celebrity (e.g. fan meeting, magazine shooting and attending awards)

11) Unboxing: unpacking products and explaining it in detail ('Unboxing', 2020)

12) Advertisement: videos specifically mentioned those are including 'advertisement'

Appendix 5: the list of collected 21 videos.

Video	Published date(YYYY-MM-DD)	Title (KR)	Title (Eng)	Views	Like	Dislike	category	Video URL
		list up : 2020.02-18~2020.02.20						
1	2017-01-30	[EngSub] 박막례 할머니의 욕 나오는 호주 케언즈 여행기 [박막례 할머니]	Grandma MakRye's (curse inducing) trip to Cairns, Australia! [Korea grandma]	1,214,125	24,000	178	Travel	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J_9o-ob5hA
2	2017-03-07	[EngSub] 치과 들렸다 시장 갈 때 메이크업 [박막례 할머니] Grandma Make up	Going to the dentist and market makeup look [Korea grandma]	2,777,688	56,000	1,200	Makeup	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QU2Qc_LKTBk
3	2017-04-25	카리스마 폭발, 막례쓰 화보 촬영 현장 [박막례 할머니]	Charismatic! Grandma's Magazine Shooting Scene [Grandma's Diary]	623,639	19,000	150	Celebrity (celebrity)	https://youtu.be/hQ4rXkaiXrY
4	2017-07-09	[Eng]박막례의 무서운 이야기 (혼자 봐도 안 무서움) 휴머니즘 공포실화 [박막례 할머니]	Park Makrye's scary story a true humanism horror story [Korea grandma]	855,640	21,000	211	Storytellting about her life	https://youtu.be/-_SeO3x4bql
5	2017-08-23	[Eng]긴장해서 이틀을 굶었다고요. 그녀의 첫 팬미팅 현장!! [박막례 할머니]	She starved for two days from nervousness. At her first fan meeting!! [Korea grandma]	844,438	20,000	164	Celebrity (fan)	https://youtu.be/Z_TvpPNNglQ
6	2017-10-25	[Eng]충격의 막장 드라마 "자식새끼 믿을 놈 없다!" [박막례 할머니]	The shocking soap opera "Your offsprings, you can't trust those f**kers!" [Korea grandma]	1,254,175	13,000	132	Advertisement	https://youtu.be/SmpgMq5q1O8
7	2018-01-27	[Eng]관절조심! 박막례 셀럽파이브 커버 댄스 [박막례 할머니]	Take care of your joints! Park Makrye's Celeb Five Cover Dance [Korea grandma]	868,386	14,000	712	Parody	https://youtu.be/ojNHxWgITBs
8	2018-02-22	(Eng)반찬 걱정 이제 끝이다!! 43년 식당 은퇴식 [박막례 할머니]	Park Makrye's retirement ceremony, after 43 years at her restaurant [Korea grandma]	1,918,267	58,000	291	The moment of life	https://youtu.be/4sSeYpoU8Ig
9	2018-06-28	[EngSub] 할머니가 친구들 집합시킨 이유 (feat.꽃할배) [박막례 할머니]	The reason why my grandmother assembled her friends (feat. Granpas over Flower) [Korea grandma]	820,501	14,000	148	Family & friends	https://youtu.be/nZ_ROKmEN34
10	2018-07-16	(Eng)충-성!!! 나훈아 입덕을 신고합니다!!!! 나훈아 콘서트 후기 [박막례 할머니]	Na Hoon-a Concert Review [Korea Grandma]	956,843	16,000	179	Review	https://youtu.be/npR-Adturnk
11	2018-07-31	(Eng)막 대충 만드는 비빔국수 레시피 [박막례 할머니]	[Engsub] Bibim noodle rough recipe [Korea Grandma]	6,362,957	77,000	1,700	Cooking	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYtZgXlcpwc
12	2018-08-04	[EngSub] 막례는 진짜 진짜 다이어트 중ㅎㅎ.. [박막례 할머니]	[EngSub] Korea Grandma is on a diet...[Korea Grandma]	2,650,514	29,000	755	Loosing weight	https://youtu.be/2oeTuKfZAz8
13	2018-09-21	(Eng)막례를 질리게 만든 중국당면 시식기 [박막례 할머니]	[Korea Grandma] Trying Chinese Noodles That Sickened Korea Grandma	2,175,136	24,000	435	Mukbang	https://youtu.be/u5C9efMil3A
14	2018-12-30	(Eng)어려운 화장품 이름 맞히기ㅋㅋㅋ [박막례 할머니]	Getting the difficult makeup brand names right LOL [Korea grandma]	638,357	14,000	148	Game & Play	https://youtu.be/KUb9JOu7fQI
15	2019-01-04	(Eng)막례는 가고 싶어도 못 가는 식당 [박막례 할머니]	[Engsub] A restaurant that Mar-rye can't go [Korean Grandma]	958,948	31,000	230	Mundane	https://youtu.be/1BzqctRGgaU
16	2019-05-19	(Eng) 구글 CEO가 막례쓰를 만나고 싶대요!! 만남공개!!! [박막례 할머니]	The CEO of Google wants to meet Makrye!! The meeting revealed!! [Korea grandma]	795,463	25,000	219	Celebrity (other celeb)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kegpUeJ3Fsg
17	2019-06-10	(Eng)대충해보는 여름철 수박 정리법 [박막례 할머니]	Roughly showing how to keep watermelon well on summer [Korea grandma]	892,304	14,000	338	Tips	https://youtu.be/W2DHsiH1EYI
18	2019-07-12	(Eng)독거노인분들께 천만원 기부했어요 [박막례 할머니]	I donated 10 million won to the elderly living alone.	300,281	30,000	61	Celebrity (Donation)	https://youtu.be/A_D_nyFdHvl
19	2019-09-22	(Eng)드디어!! 골드버튼 언박싱 + 특별제작 수건 이벤트!! [박막례 할머니]	FINALLY!! Gold Button Unboxing + Customized Towel Event!! [Korea grandma]	356,631	17,000	77	Unboxing	https://youtu.be/1r6eZCfBFUw
20	2019-10-04	(Eng)인생 첫 시가 Cigar! [박막례 할머니]	The First Cigar in Her Life! [Korea grandma]	1,479,002	30,000	856	Challenge	https://youtu.be/SzpMyND2NtE
21	2020-01-24	(Eng)미국에서 온 식빵 씨리얼 ASMR (Toast crunch cereal) [박막례 할머니]	American Toast Cereal ASMR (Toast crunch cereal) [Korea Grandma]	318,672	8,900	71	ASMR	https://youtu.be/J9NfkW11840

Appendix 6: the example of the first cycle of coding

As it is mentioned in the body of the thesis, I realized translating and analyzing the Korean data into English lead me miss lots of meaning and context that cannot be fully translated from the original to foreign language after piloting. Therefore, first cycle of coding is conducted in Korean for this research.

	Transcript	Coding
Title	[(Eng) 구글 CEO가 막례쓰를 만나고 싶대요!! 만남공개!!! [박막례 할머니] (9:09)](#)	구글 CEO가 만나고싶어하는 존재
Description	구글 I/O 19 행사차 미국에 있을 때 일어난 일 구글 CEO 선다가 우리를 보고 싶다는거에요! 그래서 잠깐 특급 만남을 가졌답니다! 게다가 본인 인스타그램에 막례쓰와의 만남을 포스팅했다니 ㅠ_ㅠ 이 날 정말 행복하고 꿈만 같았어요 유튜브 CEO에 이어 구글 CEO 까지 우리 채널이 자랑스러운 날이었습니다! #합성아님 #인생은박막례처럼 ___ ♥막례 할머니의 유쾌한 일상이 보고싶다면 구독하기! ♥할머니를 보고 즐거웠다면 좋아요! ♥할머니를 친구에게 소개하고 싶다면 공유하기! 인스타 ▶ https://instagram.com/Korea_Grandma 페이스북 ▶ https://www.facebook.com/newra9462 메일주소 ▶ newrarara@naver.com 카테고리 코미디	구글 I/O 19에 참여하러 미국 방문. 구글 CEO가 코리아 그랜마를 만나고 싶어함. 구글 CEO가 이 만남을 자신의 인스타그램에 올림. 유튜브 CEO 및 구글 CEO가 만나자고 함. 인생은 박막례 처럼. 해시태그. 구독 좋아요, SNS 팔로우 링크.
content of the video	**Sequence 1 (00:00)**	
	배경: 구글 I/O 2019 행사장. 카메라는 막례의 얼굴에 집중되어 있다. 그녀의 뒷 배경에는 벽걸이 모니터 몇 개와 사람들이 모여서 이야기를 나누고 있다. 화면 왼쪽에는 커피잔을 든 손이 보인다. 막례의 얼굴은 약간 상기되어있다.	구글 I/O에 참여한 막례. 긴장한 막례.
	구글 직원: 순다 피차이 구글 CEO와 만나실 수 있게 모시고 갈거에요	순다 피차이 (구글 CEO)와 만남
	구글 직원이 말하자 곧바로 통역을 하는 여성분이 막례에게 설명해준다. 막례는 구글 직원을 바라보다가 통역을 바라본다.	통역의 도움을 통해 대화 하는 막례.
	막례: 저번에 본 사람?	구글 CEO가 생소함.
	구글 직원: 구글 CEO요.	
	유라: (한껏 들뜨고 긴장한 목소리) 아니 할머니~~! 구글 사장	유라는 막례가 알아들을 수 있도록 CEO를 사장으로 바꿔서 알려줌.
	막례: 저번에 우리가 거시기 준 사람?	
	통역: 오늘 아침에 나와서 연설하신 분이요. (Sundar Pichai / 구글 CEO)	통역도와주시는 분도 막례가 이해할 수 있도록 쉽게 설명해줌.
	구글 I/O 2019 Keynote 무대에 섰던 자료 영상이 나온다. Keynote 를 보러 많은 사람들이 몰려 있다.	키노트무대에 올랐던 구글 CEO
	막례: (한껏 밝아진 얼굴로) 어머 어구어구 너무 좋아!!	감정의 솔직함. 기쁨을 솔직하게 표현
	그제서야 구글 직원을 껴안는다.	
	구글직원의 이름이 이제서야 뜬다.	
	구글직원 (Saiya)i: 잠시후에 제가 와서 모시고 갈게요. 우선은 준비하고 계세요.	구글 직원의 상냥한 태도
	화면 전환된다. 한 호텔 침대에 나란히 앉아있는 유라와 막례.	당시의 감정을 추후 촬영을 통해 설명. 스토리텔링기법. 리얼리티 예능에서 자주 사용하는 편집.
	막례는 카메라를 바라보며 두 다리를 뻗고 앉아있고 유라는 모자를 쓰고 있다.	인위적인 환경이 아님. 편안한 환경.
	11: 작년에 그 셰인같일롱 역할을 한 친구가 있었어.	셰인. 작년에 구글을 잘 소개해준 직원. 영어는 잘 못하지만 도와줬던 친숙한 사람의 이름은 잘 기억한다.
	구석으로 우리를 막 데리고가.	당시의 감정과 속마음을 솔직하게 공유
	나는 근디 너무 심각해 보이는거야.	
	무섭더라고 막 한부짝으로 오라고 하니까. 거기서 하는 것도 아니고 한부짝으로 우리를 데리고 가니 무서워	긴장하고 무서웠음.
	화면 전환. 구글 직원 (Saiyai)가 할머니에게 차근차근 설명해주는 영상.	화면전환
	다시 호텔 침실로 화면 전환.	
	11: 순잔가, 순댄가, 나는 알아듣지도 못해.	순자, 순대. 구글 CEO의 이름 발음을 제대로 하지 못함.
	통역이 말하는데 나는 몰라.	당시의 감정을 솔직하게 표현

Appendix 7: the list of the initial codes from the first cycle of coding

Initial codes from the first cycle of coding (visual narrative analysis and visual analysis)				
not familiar with digital tech and automation	playing central role	gazes of younger people	surrounded by camera	sharing mundane life
pressure of loosing weight	challenging the beauty standard	mimicking youth culture	staged	performance of back stage
silenced ageing sign	challenging the typical masculinity	young people's language (slang, new coined terms	costume for the stage	not professional & not ordered
ageing successfully	not acting the age	new and trending	studio setting	meeting with other celebrities
glorifying youngness	showing ageing sign & natural ageing body	fan culture	impression management	Not as planned, not expectable, unscripted
limitation of time	challenge and difficulties as older women	older people's language	presentation and performance	trademark of greeting
limitation of body	older women's perspective & opinion	older people's culture	comfortable setting	interacting with audiences
limitation of opportunity			lay person vs celebrity	YouTube star
				Receiving acclaims
				attention economy
				different from mainstream celebrity
				appearance of friends and family

Appendix 8: outline of themes, categories, and sub-categories

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
Gendered ageism	Challenging the ageist stereotypes	playing central role, uncovering natural ageing body, challenging new things, not acting the age, breaking the norms, contradicting Confucianism, fan culture, sharing glittering stories
	Reinforcing the ageist stereotypes	digital divide, pressure of loosing weight, silenced ageing body, glorifying youngness, negative attitudes and perceptions towards aging, mimicking youth culture, younger people's gaze, younger people's language, new and trending
Micro-celebrity	Performance	performaces of private authentic self, performative intimacy, staged settings, impression management, fan management, parasocial relationship, social relationship
	Authenticity	unscripted, unexpected and unplanned situation, less filtered (edited)
	Ordinariness & Extraordinariness	everyday lives, layperson, meeting with other celebrities, YouTube star, Receiving acclaims
	Commodification	attention economy