Source, Message and Medium? The Role of Personal Values in Forming Credibility Perceptions of Non-Sponsored Product Review Videos

Abstract

Purpose: This research investigates an integrated, holistic assessment of the characteristics by which consumers judge non-sponsored product review video (PRV) source, message and medium components as credible, and how these are linked to personal values for a deeper understanding of multidimensional credibility assessments of PRVs.

Design/methodology/approach: Employing a means-end approach, we draw on credibility theory and the persuasion knowledge model to analyse data from twenty-one in-depth semi-structured laddering interviews.

Findings: First, we demonstrate distinctive contributions of the video modality towards PRV credibility assessments and the interplay between specific PRV characteristics, cognitive and socio-emotional consequences, and personal values in an ongoing process of credibility assessment. Second, high persuasion knowledge creates awareness of the potential phoniness of the market, revealing a dark side to PRV use even in non-sponsored PRV seemingly created and shared as an act of benevolent concern between consumers.

Originality: This work advances credibility theory in the PRV context by examining how non-sponsored PRVs are evaluated as credible, by highlighting consumer persuasion knowledge and scepticism and including the holistic effects of the interplay between source, message and video format characteristics, and by linking these to consumers' goals and values.

Practical implications: This research offers practical implications for reviewers and brand managers to leverage the unique informational values of video by focusing on the interplay between credibility attributes and customer values.

Keywords: user-generated content, product review videos, social media, source credibility, message credibility, personal values, persuasion knowledge.

Introduction

Despite the importance of online consumer reviews in influencing consumers responses and decisions, these have also resulted in increased consumer scepticism about their credibility, accuracy and independence (Filieri, 2016; Pyle, Smith and Chevtchouk, 2021). Attention has recently moved from text-based reviews to reviews of products and services presented in video formats in social media (Munnukka *et al.*, 2019). This produces a powerful marketing tool (Lee and Watkins, 2016), borne out by the 110% year on year increase in user time spent watching YouTube videos to learn about "which [product] to buy" (Think with Google, 2018). Such videos have gained further traction during the COVID-19 pandemic, presenting an influential area for online marketing (Taylor, 2020).

This paper focuses on Product Review Videos (PRVs) for the following reasons. PRVs represent a richer modality of User-Generated Content (UGC) as it integrates audio-visual content, allowing users to share their personal experiences and stories in audio-visual content, combining text, audio, and graphics (Xu, Chen, and Santhanam, 2015; Muda and Hamzah, 2021). Theories of information processing and the media naturalness theory suggest that, compared to text, video format provides benefits for the user in terms of message processing as it is closer to the face-to-face condition (Moreno and Mayer, 1999). In face-to-face communication, parallel processing of visual and verbal inputs result in less cognitive effort, less communication ambiguity, and higher physiological arousal (Moreno and Mayer, 1999; Powell *et al.*, 2018).

The assessment of review credibility might thus be facilitated by video reviews, as this format may generate additional credibility cues through the presence of non-verbal communication and differences in format or norms for emotional and personal disclosure (Kahai and Cooper, 2003). The richer video format is thought more realistic with enhanced

social presence and immediacy and hence more likely to be considered credible and to result in increased perceptions of helpfulness and persuasiveness (Xu *et al.*, 2015).

However, the very "richness" of the video format may also prime users to attend to supplementary rather than structurally relevant information, giving rise to uncertainties about adverse effects on user information-seeking and direction of attention (Hong,Thong, and Tam, 2004). Therefore, the richer, multiple additional audible and visual cues that produce higher perceptions of realism, social presence and credibility may do so at the expense of switching attention away from the message toward the unconscious use of peripheral cues (Kahai and Cooper, 2003), such as the source attractiveness, or the production quality of the video, rather than concentrate on the argument quality of the communication message itself (Hautz *et al*., 2014; Metzger *et al*., 2010).

In a similar vein, recent research on influencer marketing stresses the roles of homophily, identification, and parasocial attachment with the review producer in influencing consumers credibility perceptions. For example, perceived influencer similarity, physical attractiveness, and social attractiveness significantly influence credibility perceptions towards the influencer, brand attitude, and consumer behavioural responses such as purchase intention (Munnukka *et al*., 2019). Recently, Rohde and Mau, (2021) found further support for associating the persuasive impact of influencers with the role of social influence heuristics (e.g., reciprocity, social proof, consistency, liking, authority). Such findings lend weight to the idea of the ascendency of source credibility factors in influencing consumer behaviour in rich media formats, including videos (Muda and Hamzah, 2021).

In contrast, there is some support, that being more engaging than text (Yadav *et al*., 2011), the video format advantages the message as higher engagement and participation produces deeper message processing. Thus, where user engagement with the product is considered, message characteristics influence credibility and behaviour (Djafarova and

Rushworth, 2017; Lee and Watkins, 2016) and may be more influential than reviewer likeability and homophily (Xiao, Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2018).

Studies considering the effects of the technical quality of image or video format find mixed results for 'amateur' vs professionally produced videos. Hautz, Füller, Hutter and Thürridl, (2014) experimentally, report that where technical quality is low, user-generated videos (UGVs) have a stronger positive effect on source credibility, while Stein, Koban, Joos and Ohler, (2020) also experimentally, find higher evaluations of relevance, identification, parasocial responses, immersion, and enjoyment for professionally produced videos. This result might be partially explained by the Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) qualitative study, who found an expected norm of good quality, professional images in social media. Further, many previous studies are quantitative and measure credibility as a function of existing scales developed for other contexts and/or do not examine the joint effects of the format, source and message components of the videos together, despite evidence that all are implicated, and that credibility assessment of review videos is likely accomplished differently to that of other formats.

The conclusion from this mixed evidence is that there is a considerable gap in knowledge of the actual characteristics by which users judge PRV source, message and medium components as credible. Moreover, individuals do not form credibility assessments in isolation, so the contradictory results from studies that do not consider the medium holistically suggest the need for a study of an integrated assessment towards a deeper understanding of multidimensional credibility assessments of PRVs. This gap in knowledge is complicated by two further issues with relevance for PRV credibility judgments. First, that viewers do not approach online consumer reviews as *tabula rasa*, rather users' level of experience with such reviews is a principal factor in the assessment of credibility (Filieri, 2016). Tightly coupled with this are the ambiguous effects of sponsorship disclosure. Online

video review producers (sometimes known as vloggers) are required to disclose sponsorship, but some studies find sponsorship awareness in social media decreases source and message credibility (e.g., Müller and Christandl, 2019), while others find positive effects on brand recognition and recall, moderation and even reversal of negative effects on credibility in some circumstances (Chapple and Cownie, 2017; Hwang and Jeong, 2016). Moreover, non-sponsored PRVs are not necessarily considered credible (Ertimur and Gilly, 2012).

Second, people are not passive consumers of information; consumer values and goals can affect what aspects of information are attended to, assessed and used (Friestad and Wright, 1994; Kirmani and Campbell, 2004). Prior research has long established the connection between offline consumer goals, values, and desired attributes and more recently, in the online social media context (e.g., Huang and Chen, 2018), with a limited focus on the role of the medium.

An approach that encompasses both these factors is the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM), which posits that consumers learn about persuasion tactics through experience and develop strategies to deal with these, to facilitate achievement of personal goals (Friestad and Wright, 1994; Kirmani and Campbell, 2004). Studies show that consumers do use their persuasion knowledge in evaluating review video credibility (Ertimur and Gilly, 2012) and importantly, that consumer evaluation and intentions are influenced by consumer goals (Zollo *et al*., 2020). Thus, we argue that the lack of detailed knowledge on how people arrive at the assessment of PRV credibility and the role of prior experience denotes the need for an in-depth study of the consumer viewpoint. Further, that mixed findings on disclosure signify a need for a study at the baseline of no sponsorship. This examination must also allow for the consideration of personal values when investigating consumer perceptions and responses to PRVs, especially since we have a limited understanding of the link between consumer responses and personal values.

Thus, in pursuit of better understanding and guidance for PRVs, this paper complements and advances existing research by answering the following research questions. In response to previous research calls (King *et al.*, 2014; Xu *et al.*, 2015), the first research question concerns how, from the consumer perspective, PRVs are evaluated as credible (i.e., on which characteristics are judgments made). In particular, this paper examines the holistic effects of the interplay between source, message and medium format characteristics on non-sponsored PRVs credibility perceptions.

Secondly, we aim to answer the question of how evaluations of the source, message and medium characteristics link to consumers' values. Prior studies have limited their scope to identifying consequences in examining the effects of credibility of UGC (e.g., Muda and Hamzah, 2021; Ayeh *et al.*, 2013). To the best of our knowledge this paper is the first that explores how source, message and medium characteristics are linked to consumers' values in PRVs. As we elaborate later, such a link can result in the dark side of PRVs.

Thirdly, this paper extends prior research by examining how consumers' credibility perceptions are influenced by persuasion knowledge in this context. It addresses whether and how persuasion knowledge plays a critical role in affecting consumers' perceptions, evaluations of credibility of non-sponsored product review in the context of video-based reviews.

The findings show that consumers assess credibility of PRVs by relying on certain attributes of the reviewer (e.g., expertise), review (e.g., valance) and the video itself (e.g., production quality). These attributes can be associated with multiple consequences (e.g., product evaluation, perceived identification with the reviewer) and personal values, including achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction and peace of mind. Further, scepticism pervades credibility assessment, which confirms that even non-sponsored PRVs are critically evaluated by the respondents. The persuasion knowledge provides explanations why

respondents use particular attributes to alleviate some of their scepticism and purchase risk. The respondents also expressed negative reactions towards PRVs, especially for the reviewer of product review, reflecting the dark side of PRVs.

Research Background

Characterising Credibility

We adopt the Wathen and Burkell, (2002) definition that credibility is a multidimensional concept denoting the *believability* of the information and/or its source that develops from the interaction of source, message, the media, and receiver characteristics. For Source Credibility Theory (SCT), perceived source credibility affects message persuasiveness through expertise and trustworthiness, and peripheral dimensions such as physical attractiveness, homophily, or source friendliness/ likability (Metzger *et al*., 2010). For UGC, perceived message credibility includes source credibility, prior belief confirmation, consistency, rating, argument strength and quality (Xiao *et al*., 2018); it is the extent to which the message is believable and factual. Regarding the media, research shows that there are different effects of presentation formats on consumer persuasion, credibility assessment, and decision making and thus a video can be persuasive in different ways to a textual medium (Xu *et al*., 2015). Finally, an accepted tenet of credibility research that source effects interact with receiver factors. These include personality traits and demographics and, importantly for this research, also involvement, goals, values, and beliefs (Vinson *et al*., 1977; Worsley and Lea, 2013).

Credibility of Online Product Review Videos

A substantial body of research has examined the features consumers use to evaluate text-based online consumer product reviews. However, the credibility of PRVs is still a relatively underexplored area with mixed findings. Table 1 presents an overview of studies

related to PRV credibility. Some argue that PRVs are higher in credibility than text and (static) image-based sources because the information is generated by attractive, experienced and trustworthy reviewers considered a credible source of information (Munnukka *et al.*, 2019; Xu, *et al.,* 2015). Some of this increased credibility may be related to perceptions of source independence PRVs produced by individual consumers (Dou *et al.* 2012). A number of studies support this supposition that source effects may play a considerable role in PRVs credibility perceptions as relationship factors, (e.g., perceived source homophily, parasocial interaction) increase credibility, message acceptance and purchase intention (Stein *et al.*, 2020).

Insert Table 1 about here

Nevertheless, other research finds UGVs are assessed as authentic but not credible and that they are critically evaluated by consumers with concerns about source identity and motivations (Ertimur and Gilly, 2012). In the context of UGVs, two studies suggest that consumers do not confidently trust online reviews, critically assessing the motives of the creators and learning through experience to rely on particular cues to assess trustworthiness (Pyle *et al.*, 2021). Indeed, in a qualitative study, Hautz *et al.*, (2014) concluded that there are no differences in consumers' credibility perceptions between UGVs and commercially generated videos, finding rather that the influence depends on the technical quality of the video. Stein *et al.*, (2020), support this experimentally, also finding a significant role for video production quality, as contrary to expectations from persuasion knowledge, a professionally produced vs. an "amateur" video generated more favorable responses. The evidence for the multi-dimensional nature of credibility assessments is further supported in studies that demonstrate the role of message characteristics, such as, argument quality and product-source

fit (Xiao *et al.*, 2018), and receiver characteristics with, importantly, roles for involvement, motivation and goals (Hansen *et al.*, 2014; Xiao *et al.*, 2018).

Alongside these disparate findings, many of these studies have a bias towards examining source credibility and credibility attributes selected by researchers using mostly quantitative methods and pre-existing scales that assume consumers evaluate each aspect of a review independently, whilst in real life individuals process source, message and medium, interdependently (Filieri, 2016). Moreover, there is considerable variation in whether sponsorship is specified, assumed, disclosed or specifically ruled out, making comparisons difficult. Further, less is known about attributes considered in non-sponsored videos or where sponsorship is not clear (Muda and Hamzah, 2021). Given the concerns regarding the credibility of UGVs, and the recognised interplay between source, message and medium characteristics, a baseline exploratory qualitative examination is warranted to investigate which attributes consumers use to assess non-sponsored PRVs holistically.

Persuasion Knowledge Model

The PKM offers a conceptual explanation of how consumers learn over time to identify, evaluate, and respond to influence attempts (Friestad and Wright, 1994). Persuasion knowledge is developed over time about marketing strategies based on consumer experiences, or from observing marketers' tactics in the media. This knowledge includes information about marketer persuasion motives, tactics and strategies, including the fairness and appropriateness of the strategies, and consumer tactics to be used to cope with persuasion attempts (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Hence, this knowledge helps consumers to know how, when, and why marketers are trying to influence them.

The process of how an individual consumer use persuasion knowledge to cope with marketing attempts includes the stages of exposure and recognition of a persuasion attempt; assessment of the advertiser's particular tactics and motives and relevant persuasion coping

tactics, and lastly storing in memory to recognise future marketing tactics (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Likewise, consumers might rely on their 'persuasion knowledge' and their learning from experience to assess the credibility of PRVs (Ertimur & Gilly, 2012).

Support for this supposition can be found in the extant literature. First, in the context of online reviews, Pyle *et al*., (2021) show a credibility learning process similar to that suggested by PKM, that is, consumers learn, based on experience, to rely on particular cues to assess PRVs credibility. Second, prior research demonstrates activation of conceptual persuasion knowledge (recognition of advertising) and attitudinal persuasion knowledge (developing distrusting beliefs) in various related online contexts (e.g., celebrity endorsement, influencer marketing; User Generated Content (Hwang & Jeong, 2016; Thompson & Malaviya, 2013). Generally, activation of persuasion knowledge is associated with negative outcomes such as, less favourable brand attitudes or lowered intentions (for a review see, Eisend & Tarrahi, 2022).

Notwithstanding, a critical aspect of the PKM, often overlooked, is that Friestad and Wright (1994) state *"we do not assume that people invariably or even typically use their persuasion knowledge to resist a persuasion attempt"* (p. 3) and the activation of persuasion knowledge does not necessarily lead to negative consumer responses (Isaac and Grayson, 2017). Indeed, some PRVs studies find positive effects of disclosure on brand recognition and recall, plus moderation and even reversal of negative effects on credibility depending on features of the review message (e.g., sidedness), or the strength of prior relationships with the reviewers or the brand (Boerman, 2020; Chapple and Cownie, 2017).

Persuasion knowledge and accomplishing personal goals and values

According to the PKM, persuasion knowledge helps consumers to respond to persuasion attempts in order to gain benefits or achieve personal goals. Consumers are goal-directed individuals (Kirmani and Campbell, 2004) and persuasion knowledge helps

consumers respond to persuasion attempts in order to gain benefits or achieve personal goals. Friestad and Wright (1994) see this arising when consumers "*develop beliefs …about the possible end goals they themselves can pursue in their coping activities*" (p. 5). Consumers can identify marketers' benefits and have parallel beliefs about their own benefits, and thus pursue more coping responses, critical assessments, and evaluations (Eisend & Tarrahi, 2022). Thus, consumer responses can go beyond resistance and discounting, to active efforts to achieve their own goals and values. With regard to the conflicting findings on consumers PRV credibility evaluation, we adopt the PKM as an appropriate theoretical lens to provide a greater understanding on how consumers might apply their learning and "persuasion knowledge" to assess the credibility of PRVs and how persuasion knowledge might help consumers respond to persuasion attempts in order to gain benefits or achieve personal goals and values.

Method

Using a means-end approach, we employed in-depth semi-structured laddering interviews to develop a holistic understanding of credibility assessment from the respondent perspective. The sections below include a detailed discussion of the approach, sample, laddering, interview procedure and analysis.

The Means-Ends Approach

The means-ends approach postulates that tangible or intangible service or product attributes (A), (i.e., means) derive their importance from achieving consequences (C), which provide reasons why particular attributes are important to the consumer and subsequently derive their importance from achieving high level individual goals and values (V) (i.e., ends), integrating into a chain called a *ladder,* that is, an A-C-V chain or a means-ends chain. Values are the ultimate end-states that motivate consumers' judgements and purchase decisions. The

means-ends approach thus connects the consequences and values resulting from specific attributes to identify the reasons *why* consumers make their choices (Vriens and Hofstede, 2000). Thus, it is a suitable approach to model consumer's values and the cognitive and socio-emotional responses underlying consumers' choices and behaviours (Heinze *et al.*, 2017; Huang and Chen, 2018; Klaus and Tarquini-Poli, 2022; Mitchell and Clark, 2021; Pai and Arnott, 2013).

Sample

We conducted 21 soft laddering interviews with users of YouTube PRVs (aged 18-59) in March-April 2019 in the UK, using snowball sampling, exceeding the threshold of 20 respondents for laddering interviews (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988). The identified A-C-V chains offer good understanding of the significant attributes, benefits and values of PRVs (Guest *et al.*, 2006) and appropriate coverage of gender, age, and PRV experience (Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

Laddering Technique

The laddering technique is an "*in-depth, one-to-one interviewing technique used to develop an understanding of how consumers translate the attributes of products/ services into meaningful associations with respect to self*" (Hinkle, 1965, p. 10). One advantage is that being semi-structured, participants may express their opinions in their own words, whilst the element of structure helps researchers probe deeper to elicit consumers' personal values. Laddering interviews start by eliciting concrete attributes that respondents can use for prompting the higher-level consequence and values underlying (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988).

Interview Procedure

All interviews were performed either face-to-face or via audio calls following the semi-structured format in recent research (Heinze *et al.*, 2017; Pai and Arnott, 2013). Each interview consisted of four stages, starting by asking the participants about their experience with online reviews in general. The second stage involved the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954), where the participants were asked to describe their most memorable PRV and what made it memorable. The third stage was attribute elicitation: participants discussed the characteristics of PRVs that they perceived as highly credible, ranked these attributes according to preferences and stated the reason for each ranking. The final stage was the laddering interview itself where respondents discussed each attribute, why it was important, the personal implications and meanings to elicit consequence, or higher-level benefits and values. A wide variety of product categories were discussed, including hotels, restaurants, IT products, mobile phones, automobiles, skin treatments and makeup. During the interviews, some respondents spontaneously mentioned alternative social media experiences with product review videos, most noticeably and frequently of text reviews. However, the discussed products types were not distinctive or unique compared with YouTube product review videos.

The participants had freedom to voice their perceptions of their experiences; the interviewer maintained the interview flow until the participant either reached the value level or was unable to give further answers (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988) (see Figure 1). The interviews averaged 90 minutes (range 45–120 minutes) forming a total of 46,261 words and 84 ladders (4 ladders average per respondent) identified from a total of 637 links (averaging 4.20 elements per ladder; range 3-7).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Analysis

We adopted the three-stage analysis methodology (Reynolds and Gutman,1988; Pai and Arnott, 2013), using MAXQDA 2019 software. Coding started by breaking down each respondent's responses into meaningful categories to be assigned to Attribute-Consequence-Value chains (A-C-V chains). For example, *"if it's someone that's similar to me"* was coded as the attribute "Similarity;" *"I can evaluate from my perspective whether the product is suitable for me"* was coded as a consequence ''Product evaluation;" and *"I feel accomplishment that I made along the way''* was coded as the value ''Achievement.'' Table 3 provides an overview of attributes, consequences, and values with verbatim examples. MAXQDA software assists in generating these categories and enables constructing distinct ladders for each respondent, essential because some participants mentioned more than one A-C-V linkage. The interviewer and a second blind coder independently coded all interviews. Cohen's Kappa = 0.83 indicated an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability (Heinze *et al.*, 2017; Pai and Arnott, 2013). Inter-rater disagreements were subsequently resolved by discussion.

Insert Table 3 about here

Structural Implication Matrix

We then used LadderUX software to construct the Structural Implications Matrix (SIM) (available on request) and produce the hierarchical value maps (HVMs). The SIM summarises all of the direct and indirect relationships between attribute; consequences and values identified in first phase analysis, providing data on which pairs of elements have salient linkages, and how many times each element can lead to other elements in total or has been reached by other elements (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988). Finally, this information was

used to identify the significant means-ends chains of PRVs. These chains are then represented in the form of a HVM. Finally, this information was used to identify the significant means-ends chains of PRVs.

Hierarchical Value Map

An essential decision affecting the HVM is predefining the *cut-off value*, which reflects the number of linkages to be included on the map. The choice involves a balance between data reduction and retention and between detail and interpretability (Christensen and Olson, 2002). After comparing cut-off levels 2, 3 and 4, a cut-off value of two was deemed to generate an interpretable HVM for the purpose of the study, accounting for 89.01% of all relationships, exceeding the 70% threshold (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988) and is similar to prior research for samples of equivalent size (Pai and Arnott, 2013).

Findings

Insert Figure 2 about here

The final HVM (see Figure 2) presents six principal attributes as cues to reviewer, message, and medium credibility, associated with eight identified consequences and a restricted range of five of the ten personal values of the Schwartz (1992) value theory, representing the personal values: self-enhancement (achievement), hedonism, openness to change (stimulation and self-direction) and conservation (peace of mind). This confirms the complexity of consumer decision making processes as consequences of individual attributes for credibility can be associated with multiple consequences and personal values. The overall map presents an overview of means-end chains (ladders). Due to this complexity, we used the LadderUX software to identify, for the individual attributes, the most salient means-end

chains in the data. That is, complete ladders identified at least twice following the determination of our cut-off value to balance data reduction and retention and between detail and interpretability (Christensen and Olson, 2002; Heinze *et al.*, 2017) (see Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

Reviewer credibility

Three principal attributes contribute to *reviewer credibility*: expertise, trustworthiness and social attractiveness. The strongest values achieved are peace of mind, achievement, hedonism and stimulation. (Figure 2, Table 4).

Reviewer expertise: Supporting previous research (Chapple and Cownie 2017; Muda & Hamzah, 2021), expertise emerges as an important cue for reviewer credibility, judged on specificity and depth of knowledge. Kostas (23, M) explains *"some people are working with these kinds of product for their whole life."* Distinctive contributions from the video modality on perceptions of expertise are indicated by Salman (24, M): *"looking at their body language you can actually tell how well they study or know the product, he is actually showing you (…) it does affect my belief in the person presenting the product."* Other respondents agree but it is clear that judgements of credibility are conditional and subject to change; they report constant monitoring and revision of reviewer credibility over successive reviews, becoming wary if the reviewer starts reviewing in a different area: *"if a certain reviewer reviews certain specific products or specific lines or specific brands, when they start introducing new brands, you will be more sceptical"* (Waseem, 32, M). Similarly, Salman stated: *"he made his reputation when he was reviewing technology products, but cars is a very different type (...) So, as I said, I would be interested to see what he says [but] not to make decision based on that review."*

The strongest link from reviewer expertise is to *product evaluation*. As Waseem clarifies: "*if he is a knowledgeable reviewer, (…) it is gonna give me the information faster, it is gonna be less effort for me to pick the feature that I would like.*" Thus, one chain links reviewer *expertise* into *product evaluation,* associated with *saving time,* linked with values of *hedonism, achievement and stimulation.*

However, the two other chains link *expertise* to the consequence of a *realistic demonstration* of the actual product/service. Markedly, in this case, the visual aspects are felt to provide unique additional information *beyond* expert knowledge and opinion *"a written review is just writing; it's from their experience, where a video actually shows what the place looks like."* (Mike, 27, M). This distinctive feature of the visual video modality helps consumers feel independent of the review itself by *visualizing themselves* using or consuming the product/service (*self-referencing*), helping make a *purchase decision*. Salman (24, M) explained: "*looking in real time, in real settings, in the hands of real people, you get this feeling that this is how it would look in my hands. Does it look nice? Will it be good for me*?" *Making a purchase decision* leads to perceptions regarding *value of money*, which provides respondents with the value of *peace of mind, hedonism* and *achievement* following purchase decision *satisfaction*.

Reviewer trustworthiness. It refers to perceptions that a source is dependable, sincere, honest, and reliable (Metzger *et al.*, 2010). Mike (27, M) believes that the visual format affords specific trustworthiness cues, "*it's not always going to be perfect, but I will definitely say that certain types of cues can be indicative of their intent and their honesty in the video.*" The cues may come directly from assessing non-verbal communication, "*we see everything from him, his facial expressions, his vocal tone, (…) his response physically.*" (Duncan, 52, M). Charlotte (59, F) explains the influence of such assessments on trustworthiness perceptions: "*It looked as if he believed what he was saying,*" and particularly visible

emotional content: *"So, I think that's part of the charm of it, is that they actually look surprised that it was so wonderful. That's what I was noticing, they seem so happy and they were a cute couple. They sold me!"*

Indicating an integration of non-verbal and other attribute assessments, Duncan (52, M) links reviewer trustworthiness to the honesty about experience: *"you're trying to get, you know, what's at the back, what's the angle, what's the subjective perspective on it? But with this guy, you know, he was very honest, and that helps because he said, you know, I'm not an expert on street food, the other guy is (…) so yeah, you're being honest, (…) so you've got more trust in what's being presented."* The means-end chain indicates that being able to trust information allows *product evaluation* and *a purchase decision* extracting the *best value of money*, thus *satisfaction* leading to *peace of mind* and *achievement* from being able to make the right decision. Yet, within his explanation, Duncan (52, M) reveals an underlying wariness and active scanning for deception, and it is the presence of a cue (honesty) that allows the respondent to trust the information rather than what appears to be a default of suspicion.

Underlying scepticism is also apparent when Nora (27, F) cautions about warning signs of reviewer untrustworthiness, such as lack of consistency in reviews or being presented by very well-known reviewers, and when Jian (28, M) states: *"if there is a reviewer that I know has previously done paid work to publicise a product, that makes them lose credibility in my head."* Such videos are not to be trusted and to be ignored: *"If I see something [is] a paid review, I will not watch it at all."* (Salman, 24, M).

Social attractiveness. In line with prior research (Chapple and Cownie, 2017; Munnukka *et al*., 2019), social attractiveness emerges as a cue for reviewer credibility. This may be judged by perceived similarity, *"if it's someone that's similar to me or seems to have similar interests, then I'll probably trust them more"* (Jian, 28, M) and can carry an affective component, *"I like her, I admire her and her lifestyle, I believe that she won't advertise*

something that's not real. It is about honesty I think, she is reliable." (Hanadi, 32, F). Thus, social attractiveness is linked to both cognitive (product evaluation) and affective (identification) consequences (see Table 4). For some, a *socially attractive* reviewer leads to *identification* with the reviewer and then to *hedonism*. For other respondents there was a link from *identification* to *make a purchase decision*, linked to *achievement,* from being able to fulfil *self-enhancement needs*. As Nora (27, F) describes: "*she does lots of exercises, eats healthy food, she follows healthy habits in general. I try to become like her.*" Nora explains how this affects her decisions: "*nothing stays in your mind if it is not linked to an emotion, if a vlogger [is] talking about healthy food, it resonates with me. I recall it,*" affecting achievement and self-enhancement needs: "*because I think it influences my life positively, changes life to make it better (...). I think everyone in life wants to become a better version of themselves. It is important to me to grow because if I don't grow, I don't feel I am alive.*"

Another chain emerging from social attractiveness shows a direct effect to *product evaluation* and subsequently *saving time* thus satisfies their *achievement* value as they are able to evaluate whether the product is suitable for them or look for another alternative.

Review credibility

The two strongest attributes are *review valance* and *review quality* and the strongest values emerging are *hedonism, peace of mind, achievement,* and *self-direction*.

Review valence. Review valence is judged on the reviewer provision (or not) of objective, critical evaluations of experiences and products, finding its expression in whether a message discusses the positive or negative sides of a product or a service, or both (balanced). Valence is considered a cue to credibility: "*if they try to do a glowing review, it loses reliability,*" (Hanadi, 32, F). Underlying suspicion about reviewer motives is noticeable. An unbalanced review valance accentuates scepticism beliefs and downgrading of information,

Oscar (33, M): *"if you just give the positive[side], I will start [to say] that it will be an advert, [but] balanced reviews are not sponsored or hide something."*

The associations between a balanced review, perceived expertise and trustworthiness are reflected in the means-end chains from *valence* to *evaluate the product* based on their needs, *"it was good, the info covered the positive and negative (…) the video was clear, you can see what it looked like on, I know now I would not buy it."* (Lucy, 30, F). Even if the decision is negative, it seems people can be pleased with the outcome, as the salient means-end chains for *review valence* led to three personal values, *peace of mind*, *self-direction,* and *hedonism. Self-direction* is important as consumers feel they are independent and capable of making their own decision when *evaluating the products*: *"It's important to have a balanced review, so then it lets the consumer make their decision on their own too, without being pushed into anything."* (Nadine, 28, F)*. Evaluating the product* based on needs increases the level of *value of money,* satisfying values of *peace of mind and achievement. Evaluating the product* is also related to *satisfaction,* fulfilling a *hedonism* need: *"this will help me to evaluate the product objectively because now I know more information about the product, so I become more satisfied with the product, happy to use the product*." (Bojing, 26, M).

Videos offer some respondents unique features for assessing review valance. Bojing (26, M) links review objectivity to the capacity of the medium to offer structured, visually comparative information: *"[reviewers] provide information and details, they are trying to be objective and you can see the efforts in terms of how they structure the video, how they used the product in different locations so you can compare between them. That makes it different in a video setting, not in a text, you know more about it."* Salman (24, M) explains how visual attributes uniquely provide the 'fuller picture' (i.e., balanced) of the product: *"well to get the unbiased opinion. (…) For example, if you go to [brand name] website, they promote something like it pops up camera to save space, but they don't tell you it shakes or not? He*

[reviewer] is telling you all that, and then he actually breaks the phone and shows you the inside; how does the phone work. (…). He is giving you a fuller picture."

Review quality. Text review quality refers to the information quality of the product review content (e.g., detailed, new, complete, correct) (Filieri, 2016). Our data show this extends to the richer modality of online videos, but with distinctive characteristics. Visual information was considered more understandable: *"video conveys the meaning much easier"* (Adam, 31, M), and to provide detail and completeness compared to text, reducing uncertainty as it is considered more useful and provide specific information. This allows feelings of a more independent assessment: *"when it comes to video, they are actually filming, so you can evaluate from a different angle"* (Chen, 24, F).

Detail, accuracy and completeness facilitate *self-referencing* and *product evaluation*, enabling an informed *purchase decision*: "*the better-quality information allows me to make better quality decisions*" (Mike, 27, M), which maximises *value of money* from being able to balance investment and value, and thus enhance values of *hedonism* and *peace of mind*. In addition, *making a purchase decision* enhances the respondents' *satisfaction* level, which thus fulfils their *hedonic* needs, that is, they felt that they had done well in making an informed decision: "*the information should be as accurate as possible, so I can make an informed decision (...) even if I make a decision and it turns bad, if I knew that I covered all of the information requirements I had, I am likely to be satisfied with it.*" (Deborah, 30, F). For some respondents, videos provide distinctive characteristics for assessing the review quality: " *I thought the quality was very good in terms of really taking you to that place, just like a restaurant review (...) might take you into that food in a way that the text can't. So, yeah, that's all about quality"* (Duncan, 52, M). Further, the video modality can uniquely enable easier, clearer understanding of product features: *"when the [brand name] phone came out, I remember the fingerprint put in the back (...) Now when I read it, it was confusing, (...) These*

the things if you put them into words like [brand name] trying to put into words sound really weird, when you show it, you don't have to say anything, just do this." (Salman, 24, M).

Medium credibility

Video production *authenticity* reflects whether the video production is judged an authentic experience that is not intended to deceive: Deborah (30, F) explains this by *"how authentic the video feels as supposed to being staged, very natural in essence of the scene is not very organised, some people, you know, they have their nice background, they have an over-engineered look."* Suspicion of staging or 'scripting' leads her to question credibility and so, rejection, "*it is, like, questionable how close the review is to reality? If it's too far, I am not gonna waste my time.*" *Video authenticy* is linked to *evaluating products*, making a *purchase decision* and the *value of hedonism.* However, Deborah does qualify her lack of trust to "*reviews with overly high quality,*" so better production quality is not necessarily a negative cue *per se.* A professionally produced video helps Waseem (32, M) to enjoy the mundane experience of *evaluating products*, leading directly to satisfy *hedonism* values, *"they are making their video more enjoyable to watch -more enjoyable to go to through the process of getting this information.*" For Salman (24, M) certain visual cues can help to assess the reviewer credibility: "*there are a couple of reasons why a better quality is going to, obviously, form a better memorable aspect (…) it shows that the person actually put time into their project, or to the review (…) people who put more effort are not only [make it] more memorable, but it also says that this person is serious, and has put a lot of thought into it.*"

Discussion

This study conceptualises credibility in the PRVs context and contributes to existing literature in four ways. First, as evidenced in the findings, it confirms the distinctive features of PRVs compared to other modalities. Second, it offers a holistic view of how consumers

form credibility perceptions in this context. Third, it provides a comprehensive understanding

of consumer evaluation responses that incorporate both the concrete level of specific PRV

attributes, and the more abstract level of values, which provide the ultimate reasons for

pursuing a course of action and thus reflect *why* consumers might accept one PRV over

another. Fourth, it illuminates how consumers' persuasion knowledge affects their credibility

assessments and responses towards non-sponsored PRVs. We propose a HVM of the

credibility dimensions of PRVs that explain *how* consumers form credibility perceptions. This

not only by identifies the antecedents of credibility (the attributes), but also recognises the

interplay between the attributes and their cognitive and affective consequences, which

connect them to the higher level of values. Our respondents were aware of the potential for

deception and some expressed doubts about being able to escape market forces, even using

non-sponsored PRVs, so we argue that the awareness of the potential phoniness of the market

is relevant for non-sponsored PRVs, though seemingly created and shared as an act of

benevolent concern between consumers, revealing a dark side of PRV use. In the following

sections, we discuss these more fully and discern the following contributions.

Holistic understanding of credibility perceptions formation

The paper offers a more holistic understanding of how consumers form credibility

perceptions in the non-sponsored PRV context. Prior research shows a connection between

attributes and values for social media (e.g., Huang & Chen, 2018), but with limited emphasis

on the medium itself. Our participants illuminate the connections between the concrete level

of specific PRV attributes (some of which are unique to the medium), their meaning, and the

more abstract level of personal values. Crucially for holistic understanding, their responses

also reveal they make connections between the attributes of the dimensions to assess the

credibility of a particular PRV, so showing how the dimensions of credibility assessment

interact. In addition to examples in the findings, Adam (31, M) explains why he links a

balanced review (valence) with *expertise* as: "*if he discusses both [sides], since he is a professional, then he understands a lot more about the product, than somebody who is not,*" whilst Waseem (32, M) believes that production quality adds unique cues to expertise judgements: *"So maybe the production quality is an indicator - how much credible info can you get from it. (…) So, the better the production quality the more the vlogger or channel creator has more experience in their product,*" while Nadine (28, F) evidences the complexity of inter-linked attribute assessments by conjoining review quality, reviewer trustworthiness and review valence: "*it's definitely very honest and very accurate because she showed you a valid proof. I mean, there are parts where she zooms in on the product to show you the flaws, like, in terms of giving honest review and hitting all the points, yes*." Hence, it is crucial to pay attention to the interplay between source, message and medium, and the links to consumers' goals and values rather than prioritising one dimension.

There are also strong indications in the data that the credibility assessment process is ongoing, as credibility seems re-assessed at various points making it sometimes difficult to separate credibility assessment from the decision making process. To watch a PRV, Mike (27, M) would first assess whether the "*the review is a good quality,*" then he would continue watching, but this leads to a new judgement, does it fulfil information needs? "*It allows me to, kind of, get an expectation of what it will be like to actually be there (…) Obviously, that would be my influence for buying it.*" This is a further (positive) credibility judgement that shows ongoing assessment throughout the course of the video. Chen (24, F):*"this review video is not very rich in content about the headphone because he lacks info on how the sound is working.*" Mike finishes watching the video and decides to buy the product, *"satisfied. You know, I've made a good decision,*" indicating that he reaches the highest level of abstraction (values) once *"the product is serving its purpose and it's making my life better."* Thus, we posit an ongoing process resulting in Mike forming an overall credibility assessment of the

PRV after the experience of product use. If the holistic assessment of the PRV credibility is positive, they will return to the same reviewer or apply the same attributes. Waseem: *"it is based on my past experiences with their reviews for other products. If I formulated in my head that the vlogger usually does have accurate reviews, for me, that means it is more likely for them to come up with more videos that are gonna match my criteria."* Therefore, we can liken this process to the ideas of value in use and value (co)creation (Vargo, 2011).

Debates in literature

The responses from our participants suggest explanations for two debates we identified in the literature. First, we have noted above that the richer modality of PRVs, involving moving images, body language, reviewer appearance and sound, adds uniquely to the available cues for credibility assessment of the reviewer. We also note the attraction of the vividness of PRVs. The data also show that the reviewer dimension contributes toward the formation of both affective consequences (through social attractiveness) and cognitive consequences (through expertise, trustworthiness, and social attractiveness). These findings, together with the evidence for integrative and ongoing assessments of credibility are relevant to a contrast in the literature between the impact of rich media formats on information processing as they support concerns about attention shifts to supplementary source factors (e.g., social attractiveness) (Booth-Butterfield and Gutowski, 1993; Hautz *et al*., 2014; Metzger *et al*., 2010). However, we have also noted the attribute interactions and ongoing credibility assessments, which support arguments that the deeper message processing that accompanies higher engagement (Yadav *et al*., 2011), in effect, advantages the message (Xiao *et al*., 2018). Our findings hence support both viewpoints, respondents indicate a greater salience of reviewer attributes compared to text, however, the ongoing fusion of information across attributes in forming credibility assessments suggests that attention is not so much

shifted, as supplemented and integrated at all levels. These additional sources of information and credibility assessment balance the attention given to source factors.

Our data also help clarify ambiguity in previous research about the role of the technical quality of video in credibility assessments of non-sponsored PRVs (Xu *et al.,* 2015; Stein *et al.*, 2020). In the results, Deborah links reviews with *"overly high quality"* to questionable *authenticity*, which we argue is an assessment of the producer motivation. However, for Waseem, better production quality is associated with a more concrete assessment of better visual quality (a feature of the video) and thus clearer detail, and more enjoyable. Therefore, our data support that variations in the assignment of meaning to video production quality affect results in credibility perceptions between non-sponsored 'amateur' PRVs and commercially generated 'professional' videos (Xu *et al.,* 2015; Stein *et al.*, 2020).

Persuasion Knowledge Model

A general scepticism pervades credibility assessment. This is significant as it means that even consumer-generated material seemingly created and shared for the benefit of other consumers, such as non-sponsored PRVs, are in danger of a 'change of meaning' (Friestad & Wright, 1994), which refers to the moment when a consumer recognises a persuasion attempt (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Although some PRVs features might boost consumer feelings of market emancipation (e.g., achieving the value of self-direction), at the same time, respondents are fully aware of potential market phoniness: *"some reviews they are more like advertisements"* (Antonio, 45, M); *"I tend to not trust very well-known vloggers because no matter what they do, they will get influenced by the companies"* (Nora, 27, F). Consistent with PKM, for Jain *"I've been bitten before, where if I've watched a review and it's been overwhelmingly positive, and then when I've bought the product and, you know, it's not as brilliant,"* experiences shape expectations and predispositions, which inform future contexts.

Thus, persuasion knowledge helps us understand the danger of a 'change of meaning' and a noticeable tension in the data between feeling that both the video medium and the visual information are more trustworthy, because - *you see it for yourself* - and a transfer of general underlying suspicions of the market and new possibilities for manipulation: Duncan (52, M) clarifies: *"just as the pen can, you know, be manipulated to distort the reality, I think somehow the camera can be more distorted so (...) you know, to create an artificial picture."* This indicates that the medium is a double-edged sword.

Persuasion knowledge also helps illuminate *why* respondents use particular cues to alleviate some of their scepticism and purchase risk, for example, seeking cues of source independence (e.g., Dou *et al*., 2012), in this case, using video production quality to judge whether a video is sponsored or not: Deborah, (30, F) *"when they start getting money for their videos, when suddenly the quality of their videos improves, they can afford better recording equipment, you can usually tell."* Or the deeper significance of homophily cues that not only promote feelings of PRV credibility, but also allow freedom from relying on even that credible information, through being self-sufficient in gathering information: *"I can get the whole idea and decide for myself whether I want this product or not."* (Nora, 27, F).

The strong, often emotionally charged, learnt suspicion of exploitation also supports the motivation for loyalty, Amal: *"the reviews were, like, oh it's okay, it's good, and it was all so [uses bad language], I couldn't believe it, and, like, I couldn't find someone good and I ended spending so much money. And, then I found the best and I've never changed it!"* Also, the motivation for the reported active monitoring of PRVs, and why even presently trusted reviewers are still subject to ongoing scrutiny, *"I trust vloggers but if I see something is wrong or something I don't like, I don't take it for granted, if I feel like she is changing or something about her is different, I would not trust her as I always do."* (Nora, 27, F). The PKM helps us understand *why* such scrutiny may be a prevailing behaviour when consumers

seek to escape market influences as Kozinets, (2002), in an offline context, describes a similar monitoring for trustworthiness in others' behaviours. Yet, others present a more pragmatic view of the PRV context: *"we're all consumers, we're all, you know, at times we're all very, very receptive to literally whatever is forced on us (…), so all we can hope is that we've got some kind of internal quality control"* (Duncan), *"recognition or resignation that if you enter the market in any way, then you are unlikely to escape influences"* (Jian). This implies a recognition of the impossibility of escaping the market even if the PRV is evaluated as credible.

A Dark Side?

In illuminating how consumers can reduce scepticism through using PRVs, it also helps us understand the conditions to which consumers react negatively, especially for social attractiveness of a product reviewer. This reflects the dark side of PRVs, expressed in PRV rejection if reviewers are perceived to create a fake persona to enhance engagement and trust or deceptive in other ways *"they are just telling lies, they haven't even tried it"* (Sara, 27, F).

An issue for PRVs is that visual appraisal of social attractiveness can increase feelings of exclusion from the market, Amal critiques several times, *"I feel, like, big girls are not really in the light of social media that much (…) I can't relate because I'm not skinny,"* and *"like, 'cause there's no market for them, they're so limited in everything, big girls."*

Another downside of visual information is the easy damage to reviewer reputation from visible mistakes: "*that prototype was, mm, he did not use it correctly and he published a video of him not using it correctly and he did not know (…) He is a known reviewer, hmm, and yeah, it was awkward for everyone and people start[ed] commenting on it"* (Waseem, 32, M).

Additionally, given the importance of time, Duncan (52, M) explained the possibility of losing track of time: *"…and then before I know it, you know, two hours have passed, (…) So, I've wasted (…) Have I wasted that time?"*

Practical Implications

Table 5 summarises the practical implications of our work. The strength of means-end chains in the HVM indicate the not-surprising focus on making a decision, but also that consumers attach considerable weight on using financial and time resources to best advantage and confirms that consumer decisions involve multiple values. To achieve these, practitioners can leverage the unique informational values of video, such as visual comparisons. However, there is tension between consumer hopes for access to unbiased information and an underlying distrust of the inevitability of market influences. Thus, ensuring an excellent quality of video production can satisfy values of both peace of mind and hedonism, but upgrades in video production must establish valid reasons. The data also suggest actionable insights on the underlying tensions regarding persuasion knowledge, review valence and social attractiveness. As might be expected, respondents are wary of any reviews that are not informative and balanced messages. Hence, the unique features of visual information and demonstration during PRVs offer the opportunity to add balance and address and negate the impact of common problems. This carries the added advantage of users perceiving they can extract their own relevant information. Even a negative purchase decision can help establish values of peace of mind and achievement and strengthen perceptions of credibility; a double win! This is due to respondents invest in particular trusted reviewers and are likely to return to the reviwers' review videos. Moreover, problem- solving videos attract pre and post-purchase viewers, amplifying impact. Further, investment in particular reviewers, coupled with scepticism and monitoring does mean, however, that reviewers must demonstrate relevant background reasons or expertise when moving outside their established domain. As the popularity of video reviews expands, marketers might reflect that respondents indicated the critical need for and interweaving of credible and personally relevant information. This confirms the importance of reviewer similarity in appearance, lifestyle and values. Also, the

finindings show that the negative and emotional reaction to reviewers thought to be too 'perfect' or deceiving consumers by creating a false image of themselves or exploiting peoples' weaknesses, especially body image.

Insert Table 5 about here

Limitations and further research

Amongst the limitations, specifically, the research context of the study and social desirability effects may have influenced respondent responses. This is a widespread research dilemma and must remain a possibility, however, we believe this was minimised by relaxed and convivial surroundings, accompanied by an initial informal conversation to establish a friendly atmosphere. The depth, richness and often affective content of the responses, together with concrete examples of past behaviours give us confidence in this belief.

We have focused on the credibility of non-sponsored PRVs where consumers possibly have lower expectations of persuasive intent. Certainly, respondents raised concerns about sponsored, fake and promotional review videos. Future studies might explore motivations and attributes by which users judge sponsored reviews. Our respondents discussed a variety of types of product, so the role of specific product categories should be further explored.

Further, individuals often overestimate the validity of their perceptions of a product or service (Herr, Kardes, and Kim 1991) such as the effect of existing brand trust on message credibility. This is an avenue for further research.

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Table 1: Product Review Video Credibility: Indicative Literature

| Study	Method	Context	Attributes	Theory	Findings
Dou *et al.*, (2012)	Experimental study	Independent consumer product review site i.e., Amazon.com using video-based reviews	**Source** trustworthiness and expertise	Attribution theory	Reviewer trustworthiness significantly influences consumer attitude towards the PRV, the featured product, and purchase intention. However, reviewer expertise has no significant influence on purchase intention.
Ertimur and Gilly, (2012)	Netnography and in-depth interviews	Unsolicited, contest Consumer-Generated Advertising (CGA), and company advertising	**Source**: credibility; authenticity	PKM	Unsolicited CGA are seen as authentic, but not credible, while contest ads are seen as credible, but not authentic.
Hautz *et al.*, (2014)	Experimental study	Unsolicited CGAs and agency-generated videos (AGVs)	**Source**: trustworthiness & expertise **Message**: argument quality **Medium**: video technical quality	Source credibility model	There are no differences between CGAs and AGVs in influencing consumers' credibility perception and behavioural intentions, and that the influence depends on the technical quality of the video.
Xu *et al.*, (2015)	Experimental study	Textual, image and video-based reviews. Sponsorship not specified	**Source**: expertise & trustworthiness **Message**: helpfulness **Receiver**: involvement	Cognitive fit theory and elaboration likelihood model	Video-based reviews are more helpful, credible, and persuasive.
Lee and Watkins, (2016)	Online surveys and online experiments	Video blogs (vlogs) Sponsorship not specified	**Source**: physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, and attitude homophily of video blogger (vlogger)	Para-social interaction and social comparison theory	Consumers who view vloggers as similar to them develop para-social attachment with the vlogger and thus increased luxury brand perceptions and behavioural intentions.
Chapple and Cownie, (2017)	Semi-structured, in-depth interviews	YouTube lifestyle vlog. Disclosed sponsorship.	**Source**: expertise, trustworthiness, authenticity, and attractiveness. **Receiver:** involvement and knowledge of individual	Conceptual framework based on existing literature	Vloggers are considered highly credible. Disclosure increases vlogger credibility, where positive relationship pre-exists. Otherwise, sponsored endorsement perceived as opportunist behaviour.
Munnukka *et al.*, (2019)	Experimental study	YouTube vlog endorsement	**Source**: honesty, trustworthy, truthful, earnest, expertise and homophily. **Receiver**: audience participation and para-social attachment with the reviewer	Para-social relationship and source credibility	Audience participation in the vlog enhances para-social relationship with the vlogger, fostering vlogger's perceived credibility as an endorser. Perceived credibility increases the acceptance of the brand's endorsement.
Stein *et al.*, (2020)	Experimental study	Online video blogs (vlogs), including 'amateur' vs. 'professional' version. Sponsorship not specified	**Receiver:** identification, para-social responses, immersion, and enjoyment. **Medium:** video production styles (amateur vs. professional)	Para-social relationship	Professional vlog leads to more favourable responses.
Muda and Hamzah, (2021)	Self-administered questionnaires	UGC on YouTube videos Non-sponsored.	**Source** homophily, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness	The social identity theory and homophily theory	Source expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness indirectly lead to purchase intention and eWOM via attitude towards YouTube videos. Also, source expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness mediates the impact of perceived source homophily on attitude towards YouTube videos.
Pyle *et al.*, (2021)	In-depth interviews	Online reviews	**Source:** expertise, benevolence, and ability. **Message:** expertise, benevolence, and ability. **Medium:** expertise, benevolence, and ability.	Naïve theory and PKM	Consumer do not trust online reviews, but they learn by the time based on their experience to rely on particular cues to assess trustworthiness in multi-level reviewer, review, and website matrix.

Table 2: Sample Demographics

| Variable	Value	Number of Participants
Gender	Male	12
	Female	9
Age	18-25	5
	26-35	13
	36-45	1
	46-55	1
	56-65	1
Employment	Professional	11
	Students	10
Experience with Online Reviews	up to 5 years	9
	more than 5 years	12

Table 3: Overview List of Attributes, Consequences and Value

A: Attributes C: Consequences V: Values	Times	Example
A:1 Trustworthiness	7	"We want to know that these are people real experiences, these are people real feelings, they are not manufactured"
A:2 Social attractiveness	10	"If he is someone who is similar to me or seems to have similar interests, then I will probably trust him more"
A:3 Expertise	19	"I want to get a feel that someone is not doing this for the first time, that he has experience, he has knowledge"
A:4 Reputation	2	" How well known is the reviewer"
A:5 Review quality	19	"Quality of their review"
A:6 Review valance	12	"If I can tell it's a balanced review then, actually yeah, that will make me take a review more seriously."
A:7 Video parameters	1	"I think like a filter. If there are a lot of vloggers [with] high number of subscriptions, I feel like probably they have good content"
A:8 Video authenticity	13	"How authentic the video as being staged"
A:9 Consistency	1	"I also try to compare with other videos, and they should match more or less"
C:10 Save time	18	"The reason I am watching a review is because I have questions that need answers, so if I do not feel like that person is gonna give me those answers, it will be wasting my time"
C: 11 Value of money	20	"I am spending my money, it needs to be good. It is just being able to balance investment and value"
C:12 Satisfaction	18	"it would affect my satisfaction level"
C:13 Realistic demonstration	13	"Allows me to see the product in real life"
C:14 Self-referencing	8	"I will imagine myself in a hotel or a restaurant, it is very useful to watch reviews"
C:15 Engagement	6	"That impressed me, so that holds my attention longer"
C:16 Product evaluation	58	"This will help me to evaluate the product objectively (…) I know more information about the product"
C:17 Identification	7	"If I see him dress up like me, I feel I am connected to him."
C:18 Make purchase decision	29	"Make an informed decision"
C:19 Loyalty	5	"Buy from the same brand again."
V:20 Achievement	29	"I feel I can fit myself; I feel accomplishment that I made along the way"
V:21 Peace of mind	20	"I want to be as peaceful and smooth as possible"
V:22 Hedonism	23	"Gives it entertainment value"
V:23 Sense of belongingness	1	"They share things about themselves (…) you feel that you are part of their family when you follow them"
V:24 Stimulation	9	"Making my life better"
V:25 Self-direction	5	"I guess to make my own decision, it's giving me the freedom, yeah, it gives me the freedom to make my own decision"
V:26 Security	4	"I would feel more secure in my decision; I generally tend to get less buyer's remorse."

Figure 1 A Visual Representation of the Laddering Interview Procedure.
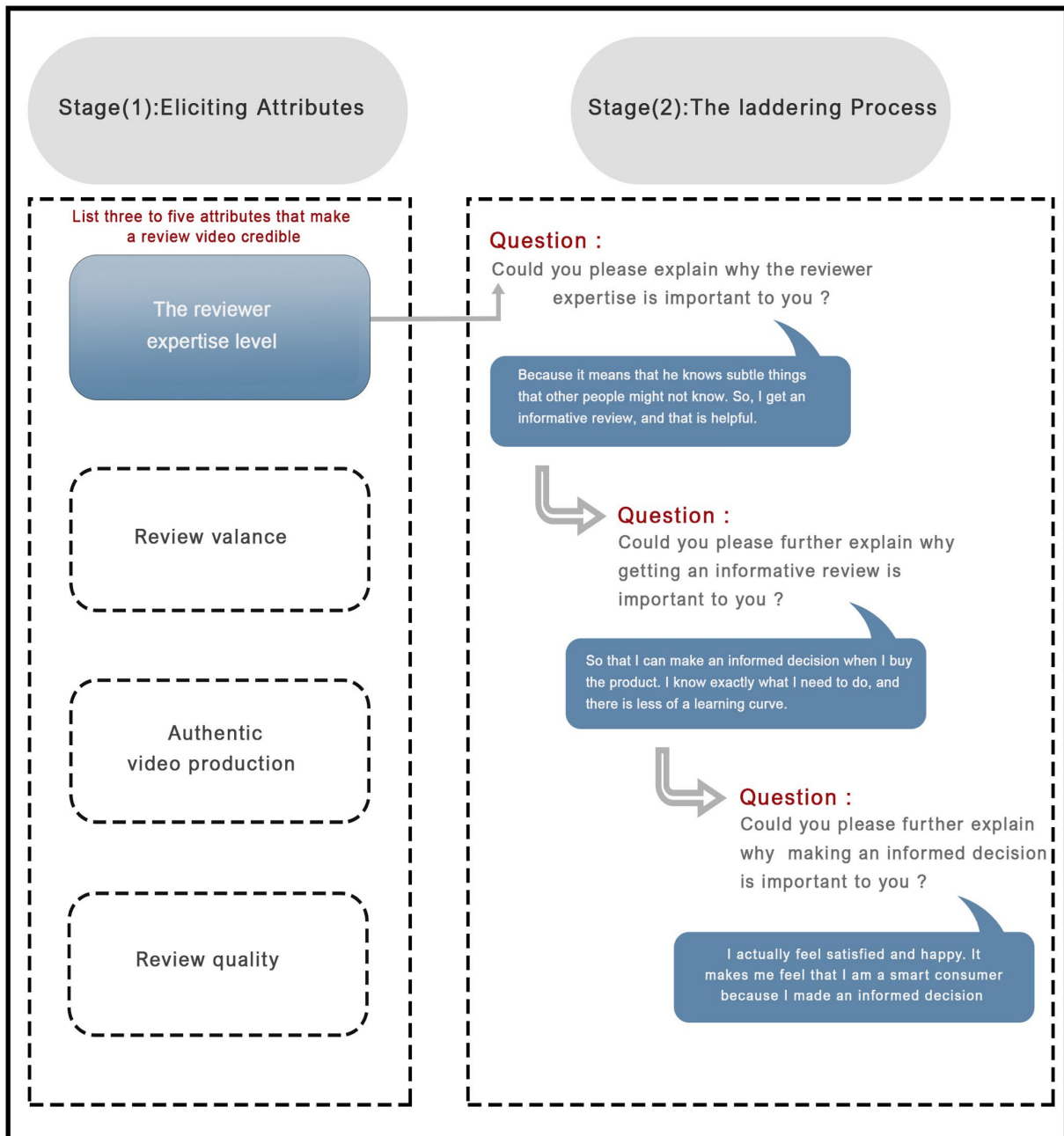
Figure 2 The HVM of the Credibility Dimensions of PRVs
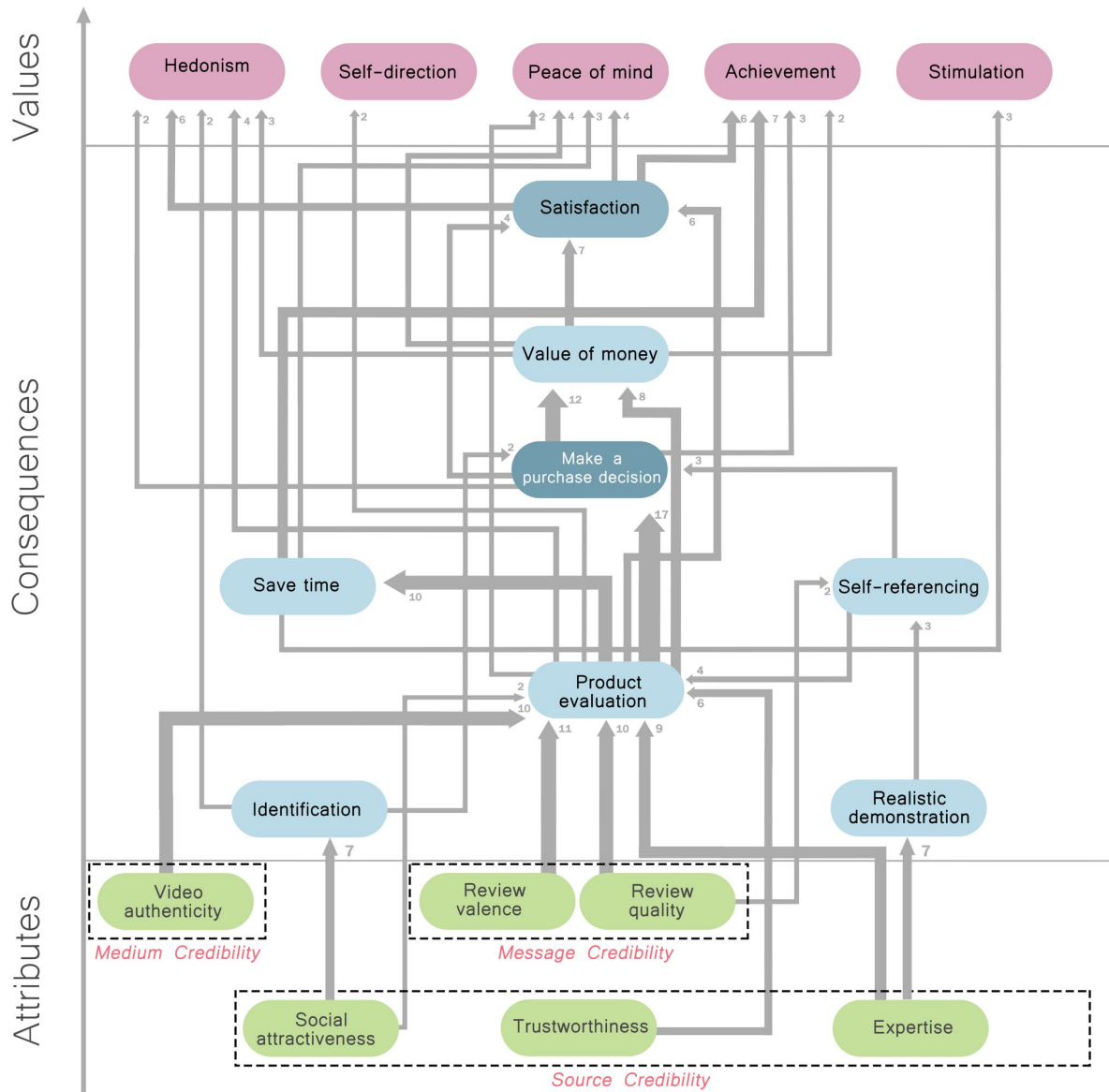
Note: Arrow thickness represents the strength of direct linkages

Table 4 Means-End Chains (Ladders) by Attribute

Dimension	Principal means-end chains
Source	Expertise → realistic demonstration → self-referencing → make a decision → value of money → satisfaction → peace of mind, hedonism, and achievement.
	Expertise → product evaluation → save time → stimulation, achievement and hedonism.
	Trustworthiness → product evaluation → make a decision → value of money → satisfaction → peace of mind and achievement.
	Social attractiveness → product evaluation → save time → achievement.
	Social attractiveness → identification → hedonism.
	Social attractiveness → identification → make a decision → achievement.
Message	Review quality → self-referencing → product evaluation → make a purchase decision → value of money → hedonism and peace of mind.
	Review quality → product evaluation → making a decision → satisfaction → hedonism.
	Review valance → product evaluation → value of money → peace of mind and achievement.
	Review valance → product evaluation → satisfaction →hedonism.
	Review valance → product evaluation → self-direction.
Medium	Video authenticity → product evaluation → hedonism.
	Video authenticity → product evaluation → make a decision → hedonism.

Table 5 Summary of Practical Implications

Tactics to enhance the credibility of PRVs	Examples
Enrich informational value	Leverage the unique informational values of a video. For example, provide visual comparisons betweeen featured products in order to provide additional information otherwise difficult to obtain. It helps consumers feel independent of the review itself and more confident.
Improve the quality of video production (but with caution)	Higher quality video production satisfies personal values of both peace of mind and hedonism, but sudden upgrades in video production must be handled with care and justified as overly professional videos may raise concerns about deception, sponsorship and authenticity.
Provide balanced review videos	Consider how the visual information is presented and structured; users value the fuller picture of seeing detail and the actual experience of a destination, or use of a product in a real life setting as viewers can make better evaluations and decisions.
Focus on delivering content, even if not always positive, that accomplishes viewers' personal values	Some values such as peace of mind and achievement, can be fulfilled even when deciding not to buy, which can strengthen perceptions of credibility. This is important as respondents often invest in particular trusted reviewers and hence they are likely to return to his/her video content.
Consider the type or theme of video content	It's not all about product reviews. Providing problem- solving review videos attracts pre-purchase as well as post-purchase viewers, providing a clearer understanding of product/service features and peace of mind towards purchase.
Pay attention to reviewer selection	a) Invest in enhancing reviewers' expertise. For example, provide training on product usage to improve their reputation as experts in their field. b) Match-up reviewer expertise, involvement or relevance with the featured product or service. c) Also consider reviewer similarity in appearance, lifestyle and values with their followers. For some products/services avoid a too 'perfect' reviewer. For example, for a skin problem solution product, reviewer is more credible if their skin has imperfections.