

Identifying Features in Studio Lighting Tutorial Videos for Photography Education

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ABSTRACT

The shift from print-based to time-based learning has been more intense in the modern era, accelerated particularly by the Covid-19 pandemic. Online and flexible modes of learning demanded an educational shift from the traditional printed word to electronic and online media. The purpose of this research is to identify key features used in studio lighting tutorial videos that enhance the learning experience of photography students. It focuses on how video tutorials can effectively deliver practical knowledge in photography.

A content analysis method was employed on 20 YouTube videos related to studio lighting tutorials. Nine critical features were identified which is typography and text, video duration, language, lighting condition, audio and narration, instructor presence, graphic elements, shot variety, and equipment demonstration. These features were consistently used across the most engaging and informative videos.

The findings suggest that a well structured visual content plays a crucial role in improving comprehension and attention among students, particularly in subjects requiring practical demonstration. The result serves as guidelines for educators and video creators to develop more effective instructional videos, especially in creative and visual fields such as photography.

Keywords: Studio Lighting, Video tutorial, Photography Education, Content Analysis, Visual Learning



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1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions have seen a significant shift from traditional print-based learning methods to time-based learning formats. This shift is particularly evident in creative and visual disciplines such as photography, where practical skills and visual demonstration are essential. Video tutorials have become an increasingly popular medium for delivering such knowledge. With platforms like YouTube offering free access to instructional videos, educators and learners alike have turned to this medium as a primary source of learning.

This study focuses on identifying the essential features found in effective studio lighting tutorial videos. As photography students require hands on skills in lighting setups, understanding how these features, this research aims to offer valuable insights for educators, video content creators and curriculum developers.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of video in education has been widely discussed across various disciplines. According to Carmicheal (2017), videos provide visual advantages that can expand access to practical demonstrations and allow for repeated viewing. The rise of self-learning among Generation Z also plays a role in the relevance of video based education. According to Seemiller and Grace (2017), Gen Z learners prefer flexible, technology driven learning experiences that allow autonomy and multimedia integration. Tutorial videos meet these expectations, especially when they include visually appealing elements, clear language and direct instruction interaction.

Sulaiman (2017) emphasised that YouTube tutorials are especially effective in photography education, where visual clarity and step by step guidance are crucial. Video tutorials can present abstract or complex ideas in a tangible, demonstrative format, making them ideal for skill-based learning courses such as studio lighting. These tutorials often incorporate layered explanations using demonstrations, animations and real-time applications, which enhance cognitive engagement and motivation. Fiorella and Mayer (2016) suggested that videos can facilitate generative learning by encouraging students to actively engage with content through visuals, narration and pacing.

Research also highlighted the importance of specific video design features. Guo (2014) found that shorter videos tend to maintain student attention better, particularly those under six minutes. Mayer's (2005) multimedia learning theory emphasises the synergy between visuals and spoken words to enhance retention. This principle is applicable in studio lighting tutorials, where combining on-screen lighting setups with verbal instructions can improve knowledge transfer. Other scholars have identified common best practices for instructional video design by using conversational tone (Clark * Mayer, 2011), reducing cognitive overload through segmentation and showing real-life application of tools and techniques (Brame, 2016). These practices align with features commonly found in high-performing studio lighting videos.

In parallel to educational design, recent studies in visual communication particularly in tourism promotion, offer relevant insights. Nasruddin (2024) highlighted how motion graphics elements in projection mapping videos can significantly enhance tourist engagement by using vibrant colours, clear graphics and sound design. Although the context is agrotourism, the visual strategies applied are transferable to educational video content. Their study shows that integrating dynamic visuals such as typography, transitions and lighting helps sustain viewer interest and effectively deliver complex messages. Thus, integrating visual communication strategies from fields like agrotourism promotion into tutorial video design can enhance the effectiveness of educational media. Understanding how visual elements operate across disciplines allows creators to adopt a more holistic and impactful approach when producing photography instruction content.

Nine elements are frequently highlighted in the literature as key to effective tutorial videos. The elements are typography and text overlays, concise duration, clear language, proper lighting, quality audio, instructor presence, supportive graphics, varied camera shots, and visibility of equipment. Each of these components contributes uniquely to the overall learning experience. Together, these components not only support understanding and knowledge retention but also significantly increase student engagement and satisfaction (Fiorella & Mayer, 2016).

3 METHODOLOGIES

This study employed a qualitative method which is visual analysis approach. A total of 20 YouTube videos on studio lighting were selected using purposive sampling based relevance, popularity, and educational value. The analysis focused on identifying recurring features used across these videos.

3.1 Research Flow and Design Methodology

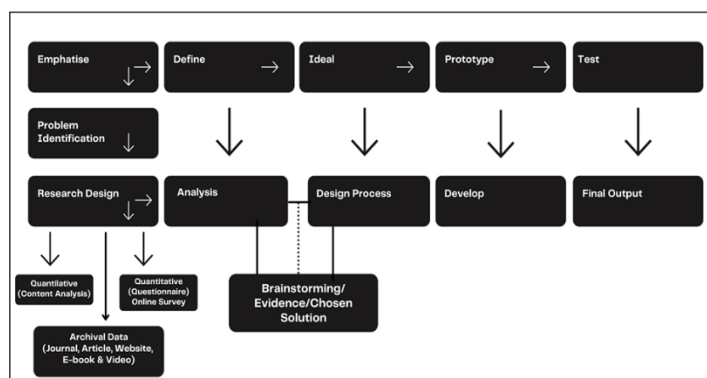


Figure 1 Framework of research methodology.

3.2 Data Analysis

Table 1 List of Video Information

No.	Video Title	Duration (Minutes)	Language	URL
1	How to setup light: Basic Portrait Light (Malaysia Version)	3:27	Malay	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ym2-hH56ssw
2	How To Setup Light: Key, Fill, Rim and Background Lighting (Malaysia)	3:52	Malay	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cc9CNsOfcEc
3	One Light Beauty Setup Making the Most Out of a Single Studio Light	2:29	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBK7jj8fYqo
4	How to Use One Light Overhead in Your Portrait Photography	2:13	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fs0OoW43Bj8
5	Three Ways to Use a One Light Photography Setup Miguel Quiles Sony Alpha Universe	3:36	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4ofNcXESZc
6	5 Portrait Lighting Positions on Photography Sets	3:34	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4ChaBrNtOM
7	Photography Tips-Quick Rembrandt Lighting Setup	3:15	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxB5Z0NhMJQ
8	Beauty Photography - Two STUDIO LIGHT Setup Studio Lighting for Beginners	2:54	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BH08pmCf5L0
9	7 Easy Portrait Lighting Setups in 70 Seconds	1:34	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DvYegArI-c
10	3 Ways to Light Your Photography Background Background Light Colour	2:25	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgEBS7h3wc0
11	Three Point Lighting Basics for Photography/Video	3:48	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBGuQZo0g94
12	TWO-LIGHT Portrait Setup Cross Lighting	3:19	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SqGcm9LSyA
13	Creating an Easy One Light Setup for Moody Portraits	3:31	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIPMx7TW7I0
14	One Light B+W Portrait Behind the Scenes	3:18	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ix6qNdp4eEg
15	How to Shoot a simple One Light Portrait	2:12	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Id7qwCVV40I
16	Fashion Photography with One Light	2:24	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDjPx1W3wzo

17	Episode 10 - 3 DIFFERENT Ways to use a Parabolic Softbox	3:55	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdrHVA9nX3k
18	One Light Fashion Boudoir Photography	3:28	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81X2NAyILMc
19	One Light Portraits in 60sqf/5.5sqm Shooting in Small Spaces	3:38	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LE0eQV6pbIs
20	How to create dramatic one-light portraits	1:57	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-oZx9ysl14

Each video was reviewed multiple times to examine specific elements, A checklist was used to categorise observed features including text use, video duration, spoken language, lighting setup audio quality, presenter visibility, use of graphic camera angles, and equipment shown. The data were then synthesised to identify patterns and common practices.

4 FINDINGS

The video analysis from 20 YouTube videos revealed nine key features commonly used in effective studio lighting tutorial videos.

Table 2 Data of duration from 20 collected YouTube videos

Duration	Total
1:00 to 2 minutes	10%
2:00 to 4 minutes	90%

According to Table 2, 10% of videos are 1 to 2 minutes long, while 90% of videos are 2 to 4 minutes long. Based on the article “How Long Should an Instructional Video Be? And Why Does It Matter?” February 23,2021. The study, which was taken from <https://www.boclip.com/blog/whats-the-optimum-length-for-an-instructional-video-andwhy-does-it-matter>, found that the student engagement was highest for the shortest movies, which were between 0 and 3 minutes. Videos should not exceed six minutes in length in order to be as effective as possible. By dividing the learning material into digestible chunks that students can watch in a single sitting, shorter films help to prevent this. This increases the overall control that the student has over their learning.

Table 3 Data of language used from 20 collected YouTube videos

Language	Total
Malay	10%
English	90%

Table 4.2:

Based on an article from Sinar Harian titled “Ini sebab UiTM guna Bahasa Inggeris” by Ali (2019, November 29), UiTM students should have no trouble understanding video tutorials that are in English because they have learned theories in English during class. As can be seen from Table 3, 81.8% of videos are in English, while another 18.1% are in Malay. English is the most preferred language to learn about photography.

Table 4 Data of typography used from 20 collected YouTube videos.

Typography	Total
Sans Serif	100%
Serif	0%

According to Table 4, all pop-up text graphics in the video that provide further information are typeset in Sans Serif. Sans Serif fonts have crisp, clean endings, while serif fonts are more ornamental

and have serifs protruding from the ends. These two styles have unique personalities and express quite different ideas. For this reason, it is essential to comprehend each style and choose a font that reflects the message the company wants to get across. Sans Serif fonts are clean, modern, and amiable. Sans Serif fonts are preferred by many for on-screen use because to their crisp, distinct lines. Users will find it easier to read text on a screen with crisp edges and clean lines. Sans Serif fonts give the appearance of relaxed, casual, amiable, and approachable. Sans Serif fonts are a popular choice because of these features. Rinaldi (2019, May 30).

Table 5 Data of talents used from 20 collected YouTube videos.

Talent	Total
2 Talents	95%
3 Talents	5%

From the Table 5, 95% of the videos featured two talents, one as a model and one as an instructor. While the three talents video have one talent as an instructor, one as a model and one as the instructor's assistant are the additional 5%. Because of the instructor's and the examples' educational influence, the effectiveness of the talent based film is that it encourages students to engage in generative learning activities while they watch it. The practice of urging students to mimic the instructor's behaviours while watching a video presentation is supported by some preliminary data. Mayer, (2020).

Table 6 Data of audio used from 20 collected YouTube videos.

Audio	Total
Instrumental music only	5%
Instrumental music and audible audio	95%

As can be seen from Table 6, 95% of the videos used instrumental music and audio, while 5% used just instrumental music. According to a study from the article "Five ways to increase the effectiveness of instructional video" (Mayer, 2020), videos in which the instructor speaks and performs demonstrations while facing the camera will draw in more viewers than videos with instrumental music alone.

Table 7 Data of Graphic Elements used from 20 collected YouTube videos.

Graphic Elements	Total
Pop-up Text	100%
Graphic Images	10%
Pop-up Window	20%
Supporting Images	85%
Motion Graphic	5%

According to Table 7, 85% of the videos also included supporting photographs to display the final product of the photo shoot, and 100% of the videos employed pop-up text graphics to provide the viewer with more information. Ten percent of the video employed graphic pictures to accompany their message, and only twenty percent of the video used the pop-up window graphic. Finally, just 5% of videos used motion graphic animation.

Table 8 Data of Lighting Condition used from 20 collected YouTube videos.

Lighting Condition	Total
Bright and Warm	25%
Bright and Cool	60%
Dark and Cool	20%

According to the Table 8, bright and cold mood and tone colours were used in 60% of the films, while bright and warm mood and tone colours were used in 25% of the video's content was shot in cool, gloomy lighting. The article "What Are Warm and Cool Colours and How Do They Make You Feel?" served as the inspiration. Olsen, Jacob (n.d.). According to this article, which was taken from

<https://www.color-meanings.com/warm-cool-colors/>, cold colours eliminate the toxicity associated with these negative feelings.

Table 9 Data of Lighting Condition used from 20 collected YouTube videos.

Video Layout	Total
16:9	100%

According to Table 9, 100% of the video uses 16:9 layout which is the industry standard video layout to published in video in YouTube.

Table 10 Data of Lighting Condition used from 20 collected YouTube videos.

Video Composition	Total
Wide angle shot	95%
Medium shot	90%
Extreme Close-up shot	35%
Close-up shot	65%
Depth of field	25%

From the Table 10, wide angle shots are used in 95% of the videos. A broad perspective tells the viewer who is involved, where the action takes place, and when it happens. According to the article “What Is a Wide Shot in Film?, and How do directors use wide shots in filmmaking?” (2021, May 13), retrieved from <https://www.masterclass.com/article/whatis-a-wide-shot-in-film-how-directors-use-wide-shots-in-filmmaking>. Additionally, according to the article “Film 101: what is a Medium Shot,” 90% of the videos employed a medium shot. “A Comprehensive Guide to Using A Medium Shot in Film.” (2020, November 8). Taken from the article <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/film-1010-what-is-a-medium-shot-understandingthe-essentials-of-using-a-medium-shot-in-film>, the study finds that a medium shot, sometimes referred to as a mid-shot or waist shot, is a camera shot that shows an actor from the waist up in both cinema and television. A medium shot is intended to highlight the performer and their surroundings by giving them both an equal prominence on screen. Moving on to close up shot, 35% of videos utilised extreme close-up shots, while 65% of videos used close-up shots. In television and movies, close-up shots are a type of camera shot that gives a scene more emotion. In addition to giving the viewer a chance to notice subtleties in the subject’s face that they may miss in a wide, long, or full shot, this enables the actor to establish a strong emotional bond with them. Last but not least, only 25% of their film made use depth of field, which might be used to get more respectably sharp shots in less time. A large depth of focus is another name for this, and some cinematographers would just call scenes with a large DOF “depth”. This method is also known as deep focus.

These features align with the findings of previous studies and confirm their relevance in the context of photography education. A well designed tutorial videos not only convey technical knowledge but also foster a more immersive and engaging learning experience.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This study identified and confirmed seven critical features that contribute to the effectiveness of studio lighting tutorial videos. As photography education continues to evolve with digital tools, these findings can inform the development of higher quality educational videos. Educators and content creators are encouraged to incorporate these elements to enhance learning outcomes, especially in skill based disciplines.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors played equal contributions towards the production of this paper.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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