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Key Factors Predicting Viewers' Purchase Intentions of Beauty Vlogs in Chengdu, China

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to examine the factors influencing consumer brand awareness and purchase intention toward beauty vloggers on Video-Sharing platforms in Chengdu, China, determined by physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, attitude homophily, para-social interaction, purchase intention, brand-user-imagery fit, and brand awareness. **Research design, data, and methodology:** 500 sample data were collected from the target population by distributing online and offline questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to university students in the top five universities in Chengdu, China, who spend at least half an hour a day watching beauty videos from Video-Sharing platforms. This research applied the Structural Equation Model (SEM) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to analyze the data for the model fit and hypothesis testing. **Results:** The results explicated that physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, and attitude homophily have a significant impact on para-social interaction. Para-social interaction, which can influence brand-user-imagery fit, significantly impacts purchase intention, along with brand-user-imagery fit and brand awareness. **Conclusions:** The results support all seven hypotheses and achieves the research's goals. Product companies and vloggers were advised to put more effort into para-social interaction and brand awareness of vlog viewers to approach more product sales performance.

Keywords: Purchase Intention, Brand Awareness, Beauty Vlogger, Vlog, Video-Sharing Platform

JEL Classification Code: E44, F31, F37, G15

1. Introduction

It has been 18 years since the first beauty video appeared on YouTube in 2006. Four years later, in 2010, Michelle Phan, a popular beauty vlogger, struck a deal with Lancôme to become their new 22-year-old video makeup artist. Michelle Phan accepted revenue from the brand by using and featuring Lancôme products in videos on her own YouTube channel. Beauty vloggers have ruled almost half of beauty and skincare marketing and advertising in the decade since.

Relying on online video-sharing platforms, beauty vloggers have changed the landscape of beauty in the last five to seven years. The video-sharing platform is a location where users may post, save, or distribute published video material for others to watch, connect with, and engage with. YouTube is the most widely used video-sharing and hosting website, with over two billion active users as of October 2020 and the largest selection of videos online (Dean, 2021). Indeed, around 43% of Internet citizens worldwide visit YouTube each month (Mohsin, 2022). There are now 2 billion people who use YouTube. On average, 42.9% of all Internet citizens worldwide access YouTube monthly, up from 800 million users in 2012. According to Backlinko's report in September 2021, more than 122 million Americans, or 62% of all YouTube users, log in to the website every single day.

Moreover, by 2020, 20 million customers purchased premium services to watch videos without advertisements (Shepherd, 2024). Due to the internet industry's fast expansion and the country's significant demand for digital

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entertainment in China, the number of China's online video users is steadily increasing. Users, including both short and long videos, are becoming more widespread in China. A statistical analysis states that as of December 2017, there were 5. Seventy-nine billion digital video viewers, up 34.37 million from the end of the prior year, make up 75.0% of all internet citizens (Yang, 2017). The entire user base of online video in China will keep growing in 2021, led by new consumers of short-form video applications. As the number of Chinese users of short videos keeps growing and becoming more widespread, the proportion of the size of internet users climbs year by year. The scale of Chinese short video users accounted for 90.52% of the size of internet users in December 2021, up 12.31% from 78.21% in the same period of 2018. There is still room for future growth. As the number of short video users continues to grow, its value as a method of information dissemination is increasingly recognized, and it is gradually becoming a standard configuration of internet products. The integration of short videos with news, e-commerce, education, and other fields continues to strengthen and promote each other's development.

While video blogs and video-sharing platforms have existed in China for a long time, "vlogging" only slowly came into the limelight around 2018. The year 2019 has been called the first year of vlogging in China. From niche to popular, the Chinese vlog industry has gradually entered the era of universal vlogging. The timeline chiseled out the momentum of the "first year" in 2019. As vlogs have not been popular in China for long, there is a certain distinction between vlogs and videos posted by bloggers in the past. The concept of vlogs in China has more emphasis on the concept of recording daily life. In 2020, Bilibili unexpectedly launched a vlog partition independent of other partitions, confirming this point. In China, "vlogger" is commonly known as "uploader." Uploader is an internet term of Japanese origin, meaning a person who uploads videos, audio, or other resources on video. It is often referred to in Chinese as an uploader on pop-up video sites (Xi, 2021).

Beauty vlogs have always been a field that must be addressed throughout the development and status quo of the vlog industry. A beauty vlogger makes and uploads videos on makeup, style, hairdressing, nail designs, and other beauty-related subjects to YouTube. They are also known as beauty YouTubers, beauty gurus, YouTube beauty creators, or beauty influencers (Mau, 2014). YouTube cosmetic vloggers gained notoriety as "beauty gurus" due to their supposedly foolproof methods of achieving flawless skin and fashion (Wu, 2016). Though it started with a subtle jab at the seemingly flawless makeup artists like Dulce Candy, Michelle Phan, Tati Westbrook, and Zoella, the term "guru" eventually came to refer to the profession many individuals are familiar with nowadays. Nearly 45,000 channels on YouTube that focused on cosmetics and fashion-related videos were available as of 2015 (Androulaki-Ralli, 2015). Approximately 88 billion beauty-related videos were posted to YouTube in 2017.

YouTube is a huge market for cosmetic videos. On the Video-Sharing platform, beauty-related content garnered over 169 billion views in 2018 (Ceci, 2023). With over 5.3 million videos on YouTube as of 2016, makeup-related vloggers produce 86% of the top 200 videos, contrary to cosmetic companies (Nazerali, 2017). YouTube users interested in cosmetics frequently post instructions and do-it-yourself videos, evaluations, haul videos, and videos created by makeup vloggers. Beauty tutorials are among the most popular categories on YouTube (Banjong, 2019). Businesses have redirected their marketing resources to concentrate more on social media instead of conventional advertisements like television and magazines since beauty vloggers with sizable social media followings have grown in importance in the cosmetics industry (Wischhover, 2018). Vloggers now have the type of rich beauty partnerships that were formerly reserved for established celebrities. Beauty vloggers often share their makeup-free faces with millions of audiences, which is a vulnerable move, allowing them to seem less distant and more affable. According to Rutledge (2010), a media psychologist, fans form a parasocial relationship—a unilateral sensation of intimacy that has a sense of a genuine relationship when they regularly see someone on the internet. It feels like a prize for being a chummy friend when someone shares personal information about you (Clark & Reis, 1988).

At present, beauty vloggers are the main force influencing consumers and even further influencing brands. Especially in the sales-oriented stage of Chinese cosmetics, the right to speak about consumer trends is in the hands of beauty vloggers (Giovannini, 2016). As the market matures and Chinese beauty brands become more professional and have their pursuits, the creation of subcategories can be initiated and led by the brand (Nelson & Paek, 2007). In the foreseeable 2024, beauty vloggers will still play an important role in the industry, influencing and promoting the continuous iteration and development of the cosmetics industry.

Lee and Watkins (2016) published a thesis on vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions. Many academics later adopted and referenced the research framework of this study. Later research by Sokolova and Kefi (2020) continued to utilize Lee and Watkins's (2016) framework and made a few adjustments on this basis. In a study from Kusumawardhany (2021), the author added brand awareness with the research framework used by Lee and Watkins (2016). The research framework of this study extracted seven variables from the three literatures mentioned above and constructed the theoretical framework by using these seven variables.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Physical Attractiveness

Physical attractiveness refers to an outward appearance that can be directly observed, such as a proportionate body shape, gorgeous facial features, and fashion style (Shimp, 2007). Physical attractiveness is an attractive outward display, such as vloggers with attractive facial features (Purnamaningsih & Rizkalla, 2020). Physical attractiveness refers to the attractive and pleasing attributes of their physical appearance and aesthetic beauty (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

There are universal perceptions common to all human cultures regarding physical attractiveness, such as facial symmetry (Grammar & Thornhill, 1994), and individual characteristics and preferences dependent on their sociocultural background (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2015). Several studies stress that physical attractiveness is an important factor in character attraction (Ruiz et al., 2005), while other authors claim that this aspect does not have much significance (Medrano et al., 2010). It is more favorable to see presenters with different personality characteristics who are physically attractive (Kahle & Homer, 1985). A physically physically attractive individual makes more friends with others with a higher status and influence, according to Lo (2008). Task, physical, and social attractiveness are the three major categories of attraction, based on McCroskey and McCain (1974). Klimmt et al. (2006) postulate that different media promote different para-social interaction relationships. Silvera and Austad (2004) believe it is important to determine the right endorsers based on their physical attractiveness among the various source models. Accordingly, this research indicates a hypothesis:
H1: Physical attractiveness has a significant impact on para-social interaction.

2.2 Social Attractiveness

Social attractiveness can be defined as the impression someone makes on the communicator that can prompt them to build a relationship (Baxter et al., 2022). The perception by the audience that an influencer has high social attractiveness is based on a sizable number of friends or followers on his social media account, which may be used to defy social attractiveness (Wise et al., 2012).

A social person develops relationships with those similar to themselves and finds them attractive on a social level (Lee & Watkins, 2016). When a media user perceives some similarity between him or her and the media persona, PSI is more likely to develop between the two (Ballantine & Martin, 2005). Among consumers, Lee and Watkins (2016) concluded that those with similar social attractiveness or common ground were most likely to communicate and develop relationships with each other. The interaction between viewers and influential individuals on social media is positively influenced by social attractiveness, based on a recent study by Sokolova and Kefi (2020). In both traditional and new media, PSI has been shown to predict social attractiveness (Kurtin et al., 2018). As the theoretical basis for previous research suggests, PSI is mainly influenced by social attractiveness (Kurtin et al., 2018). According to Vania (2020), YouTube influencers' social attractiveness can affect viewers' reactions to luxury brand fragrance review videos. In the context of YouTube, a spokesperson's physical and social attractiveness may support their argument (Crijns et al., 2017). Accordingly, this research indicates a hypothesis:
H2: Social attractiveness has a significant impact on para-social interaction.

2.3 Attitude Homophily

According to Prisbell and Andersen (1980), attitude homophily is the tendency of individuals to engage and form bonds with one another on an akin level. Attitude homophily refers to how individuals attend to fasten with comparable individuals, which explains relationships based on influence and interpersonal communication, especially regarding social networks (McPherson et al., 2001).

An attitude homophily occurs when similar beliefs and attitudes create a sense of likeness (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). Attitudinal dispositions and demographic characteristics are two dimensions of homophily that affect communication effectiveness (Fischer et al., 1997). The meaning of messages exchanged in a communication can be more easily interpreted when there is a high degree of homophily between the participants (Eyal & Rubin, 2003). One of the antecedents of PSI identified by Turner (1993) is attitude homophily, while Frederick et al. (2012) developed a significant correlation between PSI and attraction and attitude homophily. A study carried out by Lee and Watkins (2016) concluded that the attitude of homophily of video bloggers affects PSI, which in turn influences the perception of luxury brands and the intentions of consumers to purchase them. Likewise, according to Xiang et al. (2016), PSI is positively impacted by users' attitudes and homophily towards each other on social networks, which can cause impulse buying. Researchers have found that attitude homophily predicts increased identification (Turner, 1993). Accordingly, this research indicates a hypothesis:
H3: Attitude homophily has a significant impact on para-social interaction.

2.4 Para-Social Interaction

Para-social interaction is the interrelationship between audience members and media personas such as actors, presenters, and celebrities (Purnamaningsih & Rizkalla, 2020). Para-social interaction refers to a new way for media characters to interact with their audiences in a mediated manner (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Labrecque (2014) defines para-social interaction (PSI) as when consumers interact with personas on screens, such as controlled depictions of famous people, entertainers, and fictional characters, as though they were present and collaborating.

The para-social relationship is seen as a communal interrelationship in which media charisma is one-sided toward viewers and established akin to communal relationships (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). PSI is regarded as essentially a "camaraderie" with the media presence that developed between a media personality and viewers through media (Perse & Rubin, 1989). As if they were friends, media users ask media personalities for advice (Rubin et al., 1985). As well as being voluntary, companionship-minded, and influenced by social attractiveness, PSI and interpersonal relationships share many similarities (Ballantine & Martin, 2005). The development of PSI as a media personality occurs in much the same way as interpersonal relationships (Eyal & Rubin, 2003). Para-social interaction occurs when a medium figure offers advice to a media user as if it were a close friend (Xiang et al., 2016). One can engage in para-social interaction by seeking direction from a media character, fantasizing about interacting with them in person, and envisioning being a member of a treasured show's societal circle (Rubin et al., 1985). One-sided relationships between celebrities and their followers can be understood through para-social interaction, in which one party is unaware of the other's interactions (Kim & Song, 2016). Moreover, Labrecque (2014) finds that PSI increases brand loyalty, openness to sharing private information, and online brand interaction by improving feelings of connectedness with the brand. Accordingly, this research indicates a hypothesis:

H4: Para-social interaction has a significant impact on purchase intention.

2.5 Brand-User-Imagery Fit Responsiveness

According to Aaker (1997), brand-user-imagery fit can be defined as the hominid traits connected to a brand's usual customer. Brand-users-imagery fit is a comprehensive analysis of the appropriateness or resemblance between brands and individuals (Putri & Astuti, 2021).

Personal and social meanings are attached to brands (McCracken, 1989), which a person uses to establish, maintain, or transmit their identity (Belk, 1988). A brand's image is a vital component of its association with users, resulting in its equity (Xie et al., 2020). Miller and Mills (2012) proposed that if the present clientele's images of the brand match the images of single consumers of the brand, then the level of brand-user-imagery fit is high, purchasing an offered product will be more likely to be paid. A brand-user-imagery fit occurs when consumers perceive themselves as similar to typical brand users, thus assessing the brand as valuable (Triawan, 2020). Brand ambassadors, such as YouTubers or vloggers, can enable luxury brands to achieve positive outcomes, such as brand-user imagery fit, enhanced brand value, and perceived luxury (Lee & Watkins, 2016).

Additionally, getting to know favorite branding ambassadors through para-social interactions contributes to a better brand-user image fit. It increases brand value, ultimately creating a greater desire to acquire (Lee & Watkins, 2016). There is a brand-user-imagery fit between the viewers and brands if the brand appears to be the best choice for viewers in their own eyes, or they can visualize themselves marching on the brand mentioned by the YouTube vlogger; it will lead to an increase in the purchase intentions of viewers against the brand (Handriana et al., 2019). Accordingly, this research indicates a hypothesis:

H5: Brand-user-imagery fit has a significant impact on purchase intention.

2.6 Brand Awareness

According to Aaker (2009), brand awareness refers to the capacity of a possible customer to recognize that a brand belongs to a category of products having the qualities of a brand that customers have recognized. The ability to distinguish or remember a brand is known as brand awareness (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). Brand awareness is the capacity of customers to recollect brand names while thinking of certain product categories and the convenience of using those products (Shimp, 2010).

Brand awareness is the first stage in creating a product brand (Ramadhanti et al., 2019). Brand awareness can effectively enhance a strong relationship with a brand (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). An important aspect of brand awareness is how easily consumers can recall the attributes of a familiar product, which simplifies the process of obtaining information about the product and making a purchase decision (Wu & Ho, 2014). It is possible to measure brand awareness by how well consumers understand a brand's characteristics and knowledge (Aaker, 2012). Consumers can discover a company's services and products by learning about their brand awareness, according to Malik et al. (2013). Based on Rossiter and Percy's (2017) definition of brand awareness, consumers can identify a distinctive brand and purchase the item. It has also been suggested that brand awareness is the process of informing customers about

commodity attributes, convincing customers to experiment with products, and reminding them to repurchase them (Fadhilah, 2015). According to Keller et al. (2011), brand awareness is determined by several factors, including consumers' skill to identify a brand among competitors, understanding of a brand's appearance, awareness of the brand's presence, ability to envision brand features, and ability to recognize the brand logo. As part of brand equity, brand awareness plays an important role (Ramadhanti et al., 2019). Accordingly, this research indicates a hypothesis:
H6: Brand awareness has a significant impact on purchase intention.

2.7 Purchase Intention

Ferdinand (2006) defined purchase intention as the probability that a customer will acquire an item or service that meets their highest expectations. As defined by Saidani and Arifin (2012), purchase intention describes the tendency of customers to people to buy specific items under certain circumstances. Purchase intention is the term used to describe a purchaser's eagerness to buy a certain commodity from a specific brand (Shahid et al., 2017).

Electronic word of mouth can influence social media platforms when it comes to consumer purchasing intention (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Because social media encourages social interaction and provides excellent opportunities to engage customers, it has been shown to positively influence consumer purchase intentions (Yoong & Lian, 2019). Studies have consistently shown that consumers' purchase intentions are influenced by their perception of social value (Cheah et al., 2015). Buying products and expressing their style are ways consumers express themselves. Therefore, previous research has shown that consumers have a greater desire to purchase when they perceive their value to be positive (Nazir & Tian, 2022). According to Sheng et al. (2022), social media users' perception of para-social positively correlates with their social purchase intention on social media. According to earlier research on para-social interactions and customer behavior, para-social interactions were additionally discovered to influence purchase intentions via customer brand impressions and knowledge (Lee & Watkins, 2016).
H7: Para-social interaction has a significant impact on brand-user-imagery fit.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Framework

The conceptual framework is structured by identifying many relevant connections among several prior works of literature. The research framework is proposed by extracting variables and constructing three theoretical models from three kinds of literature. According to Sokolova and Kefi (2020), the first study used to form the conceptual framework is a review of previous studies. This research supports the study of four variables, including social attractiveness (SA), attitude homophily (AH), para-social interaction (PSI), and purchase intention (PI). The second study was conducted by Lee and Watkins (2016), which concerns the examination of physical attractiveness (PA), para-social interaction (PSI), brand-user-imagery fit (BF), and purchase intention (PI). The third previous literature was carried out by Nugraha and Setyanto (2018), and it provides the study of brand awareness (BA) and purchase intention (PI). Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework of this study.

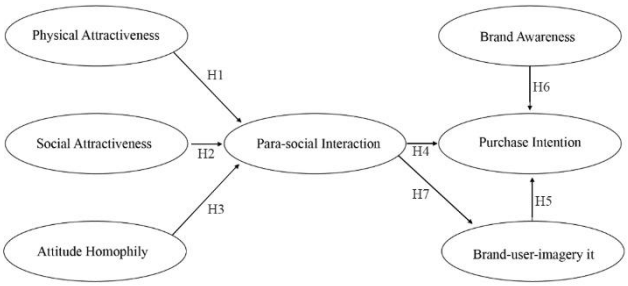

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

H1: Physical attractiveness has a significant impact on para-social interaction.
H2: Social attractiveness has a significant impact on para-social interaction.
H3: Attitude homophily has a significant impact on para-social interaction.
H4: Para-social interaction has a significant impact on purchase intention.
H5: Brand-user-imagery fit has a significant impact on purchase intention.
H6: Brand awareness has a significant impact on purchase intention.
H7: Para-social interaction has a significant impact on brand-user-imagery fit.

3.2 Research Methodology

Sample data of this research was collected from the target population by applying multi-stage sampling techniques, including non-probability sampling such as purposive and quota sampling through online and offline questionnaires. The non-probability sampling method of purposive or judgmental sampling aimed to select the top five universities in Chengdu, China. The non-probability sampling method of quota sampling was used to determine the sample size from each university. Finally, the non-probability convenience

sampling is used to narrow the target population to university students in the top 5 universities in Chengdu, China, who spend at least half an hour a day watching beauty videos from video-sharing platforms.

There were three principal sections of the questionnaire. Screening questions, measurement of all variables, and demographic questions were included. Screening questions are designed to narrow down and ensure that the respondents have met the target of university students studying in the top 5 universities in Chengdu, China, who spend at least half an hour a day watching beauty videos from video-sharing platforms. The second section measures baseline and independent variables using a Five-point Likert scale. The Likert scale measures variables, with strong disagreement at 1 point, disagreement at 2 points, neutral at 3 points, agree at 4 points, and strongly agree at 5 points. This questionnaire contains variable items that were drawn from previous studies that are relevant to the topic. In the last section, demographic information of the target respondents, such as gender, age, university degree, and academic year, is collected.

To develop the relevant research instruments, the researcher first designed the questionnaire by analyzing the variable items from previous studies, then applied the item-objective congruence technique (IOC) index to verify all the questions used. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) guarantees a threshold set at a score above 0.6. Additionally, the researchers intentionally selected 50 target students for the pilot test and evaluated internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The resulting Cronbach's Alpha score surpassed 0.7, indicating a reliable measurement of the intended construct and bolstering the overall reliability of the test results (Nunnally, 1978).

The 500 questionnaires were delivered to the target group, and Cronbach's Alpha was applied for validity and reliability testing purposes. By examining the measurement model to validate components using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), an evaluation was created, and the validity of the measurement model of purchase intention was confirmed. That is suitable for applying the measurement model's variables for structural equation analysis (SEM) in a subsequent order to confirm the validity of every component.

3.3 Population and Sample Size

The target population is university students in the top 5 universities in Chengdu who spend at least half an hour a day watching beauty videos. The top 5 universities in Chengdu, namely Sichuan University, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, Southwest Jiaotong University, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, and Southwest Petroleum University, are ranked by BCUR in 2022. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) recommended that three hundred individuals be sampled. A sufficient sample size is between 30 and 500 for most studies by Hair et al. (2007). A study by Jackson (2001) revealed that between 400 and 800 instances where the appropriate sampling size regarding model fit. According to Soper (2019), 425 is the minimal sample size that should be used. The research applied the SEM technique to maximize sample size. A total of 500 respondents is targeted for the questionnaire distribution in this study. After screening all responses, 500 were considered eligible for further use in this study.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The sampling techniques selected for this study were three types of sampling methods. The first step applied quota sampling, the second stage applied stratified random sampling, and the third stage applied convenience sampling. In the research, the non-probability sampling of purposive sampling, called judgment sampling, was accepted by five universities located in Chengdu, China. In the research, the non-probability sampling of purposive sampling, called judgment sampling, was accepted by five universities located in Chengdu, China. Subsequently, the researcher applied a quota sampling technique to assign participants in each of the top 5 universities in Chengdu to be equal to the total sample size of 500 respondents. Due to the sample size of 500 respondents in this study, 500 questionnaires will be distributed proportionally to each generation, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Units and Sample Size

University Name	Population Size	Proportional Sample Size
Sichuan University	65,000	148
University of Electronic Science and Technology of China	41750	95
Southwest Jiaotong University	44024	101
Southwestern University of Finance and Economics	24600	56
Southwest Petroleum University	44000	100
Total	**219374**	**500**

Source: Constructed by author

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Information

Due to the nature of the beauty industry, females made up 86.4% of the respondents, while males made up 13.6% of the sample. A total of 272 respondents, or 54.4%, were between 19 and 20. Ages between 20 and 24 comprised the second-biggest group of responders, or 54.4%. Seven individuals, or 1.4% of the total, are over 24. Four responders, or 0.8% of all

respondents, are between 16 and 18. Finally, only a few responses were from people under sixteen. Regarding participants' educational programs, 381 respondents, or 76.2%, are pursuing a bachelor's degree. One hundred seventeen respondents, or 23.4%, are pursuing a master's degree. Only two respondents, or 0.4% of the sample, are enrolled for a Ph.D. regarding marital status; 496 respondents, or 99.2% of the sample, had single accounts. In contrast, four married respondents, or 0.8%, represented marriage status. It is not the case that any of the respondents are divorced. Regarding the monthly individual earnings range, 349 respondents, or 69.8% of the sample, made less than 4,500 Yuan per month. Subsequently, 107 respondents, or 21.4% of the sample, reported having a personal monthly revenue of between 4,501 and 6,000 Yuan. Thirty-four respondents reported having personal monthly earnings of between 6,001 and 7,500 yuan; four reported having a personal monthly salary between 7,501 and 9,000 yuan. In contrast, six reported having personal monthly incomes beyond 9,000 yuan, making up 1.2%, 0.8%, and 6.8%.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

Demographic and General Data		(N=500) Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	68	13.60%
	Female	432	86.40%
Age Gender	Below 16 years old	0	0.00%
	16-18	4	0.80%
	19-20	272	54.40%
	20-24	217	43.40%
	Above 24 years old	7	1.40%
Educational program	Undergraduate program	381	76.20%
	Graduate program	117	23.40%
	Doctor program	2	0.40%
	Others	0	0.00%
Marital status	Married	4	0.80%
	Divorce	0	0.00%
	Single	496	99.20%
Monthly personal income	Below 4,500 Yuan per month	349	69.80%
	4,501-6,000 Yuan per month	107	21.40%
	6,001-7,500 Yuan per month	34	6.80%
	7,501-9,000 Yuan per month	4	0.80%
	Above 9,000 Yuan per month	6	1.20%

4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

In this research, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used. Acceptable values reflect the goodness of fit, and all items in each variable are significant and represent the factor loading of each item (Hair et al., 2006). Chen and Tsai (2007) proposed a threshold of 0.5 and a p-value of less than 0.05.

In Table 3, the average extracted variance was above the threshold of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and the construct dependability is higher than the threshold of 0.7. Therefore, the significance of every estimation has been proved.

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Result, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	Source of Questionnaire (Measurement Indicator)	No. of Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Factors Loading	CR	AVE
Physical Attractiveness (PA)	Lee and Watkins (2016)	3	0.768	0.693-0.749	0.770	0.528
Social Attractiveness (SA)	Liu et al. (2019)	6	0.838	0.630-0.722	0.838	0.464
Attitude Homophily (AH)	Lee and Watkins (2016)	3	0.855	0.791 -0.832	0.855	0.663
Para-social Interaction (PSI)	Lee and Watkins (2016)	8	0.964	0.786-0.958	0.963	0.766
Brand-user-imagery Fit (BF)	Lee and Watkins (2016)	5	0.978	0.929-0.976	0.978	0.901
Brand Awareness (BA)	Lee and Watkins (2016)	7	0.965	0.853-0.967	0.965	0.799
Purchase Intention (PI)	Foroudi et al. (2018)	3	0.890	0.709-0.985	0.899	0.752

As of Table 4, it can be inferred from the square root of the average variance extracted that each correlation is bigger than the corresponding correlation values within that variable. In CFA testing, model fit indices such as GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, TLI, IFI, RMSEA, and RMR are employed.

Table 4: Goodness of Fit for Measurement Model

Fit Index	Acceptable Criteria	Statistical Values Before Adjustment	Statistical Values After Adjustment
CMIN /DF	< 3.00 Kline (1998)	(1920.019/539) or 3.562	(1541.464/538) or 2.865
GFI	≥ 0.80 Doll et al. (1994)	0.819	0.846
AGFI	≥ 0.80 Sica and Ghisi (2007)	0.788	0.819
NFI	≥ 0.90 Arbuckle (1995)	0.896	0.916
CFI	≥ 0.90 Hair et al. (2006)	0.923	0.944
TLI	≥ 0.90 Hair et al. (2006)	0.914	0.938
IFI	≥ 0.90 Bollen (1989)	0.923	0.944
RMSEA	< 0.08 Pedroso et al. (2016)	0.072	0.061
RMR	< 0.08 Hair et al. (2006)	0.015	0.014

Fit Index	Acceptable Criteria	Statistical Values Before Adjustment	Statistical Values After Adjustment
Model Summary		**Unacceptable Model Fit**	**Acceptable Model Fit**

Remark: CMIN/DF = The ratio of the chi-square value to degree of freedom, GFI = Goodness-of-Fit index, AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit index, NFI = Normed fit index, CFI = Comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis index, IFI = Incremental Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation, RMR = Root Mean Square Residual

As indicated in Table 5, the research's values exceeded permissible limits, verifying the convergent and discriminant validity. As a result, both discriminant and convergent validity are guaranteed. These model measurement results also validated the validity of later structural model estimation and supported discriminant validity.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity

	PA	SA	AH	PSI	BF	BA	PI
PA	**0.727**						
SA	0.134	**0.681**					
AH	0.295	0.471	**0.814**				
PSI	0.208	0.336	0.301	**0.875**			
BF	0.194	0.322	0.300	0.429	**0.949**		
BA	0.287	0.341	0.400	0.329	0.326	**0.894**	
PI	0.221	0.427	0.716	0.309	0.323	0.405	**0.867**

Note: The diagonally listed value is the AVE square roots of the variables
Source: Created by the author.

4.3 Structural Equation Model (SEM)

The model fit was assessed by comparing the index statistic value to the appropriate Goodness-of-Fit values in Table 5.3. Except for Chi-square statistics ($\chi 2$ /df) and RMR, examining the Goodness-of-Fit indices from the original structural model, revealed that the statistical values were unsatisfactory per the threshold. The statistical values obtained from the indices before modification are displayed in Table 6. The value of $\chi 2$ /df is 4.564, GFI has a value of 0.773, AGFI is valued at 0.742, NFI is 0.863 in value, CFI has a value of 0.889, TLI has a value of 0.881, IFI is valued at 0.890 RMSEA is 0.085 in value, and RMR has a value of 0.073. The structural model had been modified to increase the Goodness-of-Fit index findings once the fitness could be confirmed.

Table 6: Goodness of Fit for Structural Model

Fit Index	Acceptable Criteria	Statistical Values Before Adjustment	Statistical Values After Adjustment
CMIN /DF	< 3.00 Kline (1998)	(2523.827/553) or 4.564	(1576.878/548) or 2.878
GFI	≥ 0.80 Doll et al. (1994)	0.773	0.848
AGFI	≥ 0.80 Sica and Ghisi (2007)	0.742	0.825
NFI	≥ 0.90 Arbuckle (1995)	0.863	0.914
CFI	≥ 0.90 Hair et al. (2006)	0.889	0.942
TLI	≥ 0.90 Hair et al. (2006)	0.881	0.937
IFI	≥ 0.90 Bollen (1989)	0.890	0.942
RMSEA	< 0.08 Pedroso et al. (2016)	0.085	0.061
RMR	< 0.08 Hair et al. (2006)	0.073	0.073
Model Summary		**Unacceptable Model Fit**	**Acceptable Model Fit**

Remark: CMIN/DF = The ratio of the chi-square value to degree of freedom, GFI = Goodness-of-Fit index, AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit index, NFI = Normed fit index, CFI = Comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis index, IFI = Incremental Fit Index, RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation, RMR = Root Mean Square Residual

4.4 Research Hypothesis Testing Result

Regression coefficients, also known as standardized path coefficients, quantify the degree of correlation between the independent and dependent variables in the suggested hypothesis. The regression weight was applied to every study variable to determine the significance of the causal association (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Each of the seven offered hypotheses was confirmed, as illustrated in Table 6. The hypothesis testing outcomes showed that all of the presented hypotheses were supported at the significant threshold of $p = 0.05$.

The brand-user-imagery fit is most influenced by para-social interaction, having a t-value of 10.557 and a standardized path coefficient of 0.465. Brand awareness significantly influenced purchase intention, resulting in a t-value of 6.795 and a normalized path coefficient of 0.297. Para-social contact substantially affected purchase intention, as evidenced by the t-value of 3.436 and the standardized path coefficient of 0.165. Additionally, based on a standardized path coefficient of 0.274 and a t-value of 5.628, social attractiveness was the largest predictor of para-social interaction. Attitude homophily came in second, having a standardized path coefficient of 0.201 and a t-value of 4.320. Ultimately, the t-value was 3.936, while the standardized path coefficient of physical attractiveness on para-social interaction was 0.195. Table 7 provides illustrations of the causal relationships.

Table 7: Hypothesis Results of the Structural Equation Modeling

Hypothesis	(β)	t-value	Result
H1: PA→PSI	0.195	3.936*	Supported
H2: SA→PSI	0.274	5.628*	Supported
H3: AH→PSI	0.201	4.320*	Supported
H4: PSI→PI	0.165	3.436*	Supported
H5: BF→PI	0.158	3.290*	Supported
H6: BA→PI	0.297	6.795*	Supported
H7: PSI→BF	0.465	10.557*	Supported

Note: * $p<0.05$
Source: Created by the author

The first hypothesis has proven that high levels of physical attractiveness considerably impact the development of para-social interaction between vloggers and their fans. This would indicate that physical attractiveness has a major influence on para-social interaction. This result aligned with Handriana et al. (2019) and Vania (2020). research as for the second hypothesis, Handriana et al. (2019) and Kusumawardhany (2021) corroborate the considerable association between social attractiveness and para-social interaction. Accordingly, there is a greater likelihood of para-social interaction between vlog audiences and vloggers if the vlogger is viewed as more socially appealing. In terms of the third hypothesis, the results can also demonstrate how homophilic attitudes between vloggers and their followers have a significant impact on para-social interaction. The results of Lee and Watkins (2016), Sokolova and Kefi (2020), and Handriana et al. (2019) are in line with this encouraging association.

There is greater para-social interaction between vloggers and their fans when they have more comparable attitudes and worldviews. The fourth hypothesis has postulated the substantial influence of para-social interaction on purchase intention. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) found that para-social interaction was the source of audiences' purchasing intention to acquire products or services suggested by vloggers they watched. The results demonstrate how brand-user-imagery fit might significantly influence purchase intention, confirming the fifth hypothesis's statements. This research suggests that the compatibility or likeness between customer profiling of a brand and themselves can play a big role in a consumer's purchase intention toward an item, depending on how valuable they believe a brand or product to be. This positive association is consistent with Kusumawardhany's (2021) and Lee and Watkins (2016) findings. Concerning the sixth hypothesis, the results show that brand awareness significantly influences purchasing intention. The purchase intention of customers might be sparked by viewers' awareness of brands that vloggers mention, according to Nugraha and Setyanto's (2018) report. Lastly, the best indicator of the brand-user-imagery fit was para-social interaction. According to Lee and Watkins (2016), para-social interaction would substantially affect brand-user-imagery fit. In this scenario, audiences' perceptions of the product's suitability or similarity to themselves may be influenced by the para-social interaction between vlog audiences and the vlogger they have been following.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion and Discussion

The study's determinants were also established from reviews of prior work to identify the important aspects. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) conducted the first study to examine the impact of credibility and para-social interaction on purchase intention. The findings indicate that several factors, including social attractiveness, attitude homophily, and para-social interaction, highly influence purchase intention. Lee and Watkins (2016) carried out another investigation to investigate the impact of video bloggers on consumers' perceptions of high-end products. The study's findings demonstrated that the main factors influencing customers' purchase intentions were para-social interaction and brand-user-imagery fit. Furthermore, physical attractiveness was a significant factor in determining para-social interaction. In their third study, Nugraha and Setyanto (2018) found that consumers' purchase intentions for the suggested products included in vlogs were influenced by their brand awareness.

The study's conceptual framework formulation included identifying the problem statement and research objectives. Students from the top five universities in Chengdu who view at least 30 minutes per day of cosmetic videos on Video-Sharing platforms comprised the respondents for this empirical study. A quantitative method was applied in the research to gather data from these young people. Confirmatory factor analysis, correlation regression analysis, factor analysis, and structural equation modeling were utilized to analyze the data collection and produce research findings. The study's findings have validated the ideas and correlations between various parameters and purchasing intention. Brand awareness, brand-user-imagery fit, and para-social interaction all had a major and direct influence on purchase intention. Attitude homophily, social attractiveness, and physical attractiveness all indirectly affected purchase intention. Purchase intention is most significantly influenced by brand awareness. This research encourages businesses to increase brand awareness among consumers, which ultimately mentions consumers' propensity to purchase.

Furthermore, it came to light that para-social interaction significantly influenced purchase intention. This is due to the influences of brand-user-imagery fit, which shapes purchase intention. This suggests that while trying to increase

consumers' purchase intention, the most important element that ought to be stressed is the para-social interaction between vloggers and audiences.

Similar results were obtained for brand-user-imagery fit and purchase intention. Physical and social attractiveness and attitude homophily have been shown to have a greater influence on para-social interaction. Last, but not least, it was discovered that para-social contact significantly affected brand-user-imagery fit. Each variable was shown to impact purchase intention directly or indirectly within the online Video-Sharing business. Regression weights and R2 variances were used to assess the constructs, and the results showed that para-social interaction had the largest influence on brand-user-imagery fit. Brand awareness strongly influences purchase intention, followed by para-social interaction and brand-user-imagery fit. Attitude homophily and physical attractiveness are the next two factors that affect para-social interaction most shortly after social attractiveness.

Physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, para-social interaction, attitude homophily, brand-user-imagery fit, and brand awareness are the factors that drive purchase intention in that sequence. The study's findings indicate that certain variables may have a major or minor influence on audiences' intention to purchase after viewing vlogs on Video-Sharing websites. When viewers were confronted with different merchandise or services appearing in the videos of vloggers, para-social interaction was the best predictor of purchase intention. Additional key variables included brand awareness and brand-user-imagery fit. Physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, and attitude homophily, on the other hand, have indirect effects. These may identify the key elements that merchandise manufacturers, companies of the brand, vloggers, Video-Sharing websites, and practitioners can stress to increase audiences' propensity to buy goods or services suggested or discussed in vlogs.

To draw in more consistent and devoted followers, vloggers ought to be more aware of their place in the industry and exercise greater caution when selecting the viewpoints and thoughts they convey in their vlogs. Video-sharing platforms, multi-channel networks, and advertisers should enhance their marketing and branding capabilities to choose appropriate vloggers to collaborate with and create more effective and workable promotional strategies for the vloggers. Increasing commercial cooperation between Video-Sharing platforms or Multi-Channel Network firms and vloggers will occur when the front-end vlogger assumes the promoter role, ultimately leading to better economic benefits. Working with video vloggers is essential for businesses and production firms who wish to sell goods and services across numerous media platforms as the We media industry in China grows. A firm's marketing and branding group must be capable of presenting certain promotional ideas and proposals for the brand and products. Brands and manufacturing firms must also be prepared to assess and determine the compatibility of other vloggers and products.

5.2 Recommendation

The study determined the major influences on purchase intention (PI) of university students of the top five universities located in Chengdu who spend at least half an hour a day watching beauty videos from Video-Sharing platforms, including physical attractiveness (PA), social attractiveness (SA), attitude homophily (AH), para-social interaction (PSI), brand-user-imagery fit (BF), and brand awareness (BA). The essential components ought to receive increased focus and promotion to boost audiences' inclination toward purchasing the items shown in the vlogs after viewing sponsored video content on Video-Sharing platforms.

These days, vloggers specialize in various topics. Audiences of these vlogs have varying focal points in different areas when they are exposed to video content, and their requirements are always evolving. As a result, it is advised that the growth of para-social interaction between vloggers and viewers take place at the forefront in the realm of all vlogging about fashion and beauty. The physical attractiveness of the clogger serves as a stamp of approval when it comes to beauty vlogs. It may demonstrate to the audience the vlogger's high level of proficiency in the area regardless of the absence of any linguistic or additional assessments. Three key factors that influence para-social interaction are physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, and attitude homophily. The degree to which the vlogger and viewers share a common perspective on different things determines the signs of social attractiveness and attitude homophily.

Regarding their large fan base, vloggers can hold different viewpoints than every viewer, but they may hold the same viewpoints as most subscribers. Using the fan profile data of their vlogging network statistics or other vloggers' data in a similar industry, vloggers can gain an overall perspective of the fundamental demographic information of subscribers in the beauty industry. Vloggers may utilize this information to assess if their values and principles align with those of the social group of people that form their fan base.

Additionally, when the product firm and manufacturer choose which vloggers to partner with, they ought to confirm and enhance brand awareness and brand-user-imagery fit. To acquire a thorough grasp of the brand's customer profiles, the company's advertising department must perform extensive studies on the target demographic of its brand along with prospective consumers before selecting a video logger to collaborate with. The business must also thoroughly analyze

the potential vloggers' fan profiles to ascertain how well their brand and the fan base of the candidates align in terms of brand-user-imagery. Furthermore, another important variable impacting the viewer's purchase intention is their brand awareness of the good or service featured in the vlog. By researching the candidate vloggers' fan base demographics, brands can determine whether every aspect of their brand satisfies the followers' preferences.

In conclusion, this study thoroughly explains the variables influencing vlog viewers' propensity to purchase the products featured in the videos. It helps vloggers, brands, and manufacturers determine the factors of vloggers that influence vlog audiences' propensity to make purchases. This information can be used for advertising, marketing, branding, popularization, and other research purposes.

5.3 Limitation and Further Study

While the results of this study have significance for vloggers, Video-Sharing platforms, and product manufacturers, there is room for improvement since numerous restrictions need to be addressed. This study's emphasis is limited to students in Chengdu, China's top five institutions. The results would most likely be diverse in an alternate environment, such as another country or location. Although the present research was conducted in China, the audiences' viewpoints of urban and rural vlogs might vary. To examine potential identical or distinct results, further research populations in various nations or geographical areas could be studied in future research. Secondly, only university students were included as responders in the study. To learn concerning the views of participants regarding vlogs and vloggers, future research could involve study participants who are outside students, such as employees in offices.

Furthermore, it would be intriguing to look at how it impacts purchase intention and other suggested factors that still need to be considered for this research, such as credibility, expertise, brand value, brand luxury, etc. Similarly, considering advertising disclosure and recognizing advertising may also contribute to expanding variables that have a greater impact on purchase intention. Future researchers may create a conceptual framework based on various research theories to investigate further significant variables influencing a brand's purchase intention and perception among vlog audiences. Likewise, this study places many spotlights on the beauty vlog industry. The items that vloggers stand for and their varying niches will cause variations in the research's variables and outcomes. As a result, future research might look at vloggers and how they behave in different contexts and find the evident benefits of vloggers having these traits, which might raise their economic value and enable product firms to make more revenue. Finally, future research might examine various vlog types and objectives to improve the generality of the study framework and produce more broadly applicable conclusions.

In subsequent research, the researcher can utilize experimental techniques to regulate additional variables that could obscure the causal relationship. For example, identifying a certain factor could be used to monitor how this independent variable affects the dependent variable of purchase intention. Additionally, mediating factors such as age, gender, years of experience with Video-Sharing platforms, or other variables that may be associated with the purchase intention may be incorporated into the conceptual framework. Finally, questionnaires were employed to obtain quantitative data for analysis. The research could be carried out either qualitatively or quantitatively. Thus, the researchers could be capable of a different strategy for gathering samples, including lectures at universities, student-focused organizations, or personal interviews. Qualitative research could also assess further vlog audiences' purchasing intentions toward sponsored video content by product firms.

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