

The physical attractiveness of beauty anchors on consumers' purchase intention

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Abstract. In the post-COVID19 era, live-streaming e-commerce has developed rapidly and has a positive effect in promoting consumption in China. This paper uses the questionnaire survey method to explore the influence of the appearance attraction of beauty anchors on consumers' purchase intention. Consumer's degree of trust is also analyzed as an intermediary variable. The results found appearance attraction of beauty anchors has a significant impact on consumers' purchase intention, and the degree of consumer trust plays an intermediary role between appearance attraction of beauty and consumers' purchase intention. The results suggest that beauty brands should select anchors with higher physical attractiveness, which can improve consumer's purchase intention. In addition to high-quality photos, makeup or smiling, or taking photos from the best angle, may help to enhance the attractiveness. It is helpful to attract the attention of scholars and to help live streaming e-commerce's development.

1 Introduction

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19, live streaming e-commerce as a new form of e-commerce, has been quietly emerging. It refers to the form of e-commerce takes live broadcasting as the channel to achieve marketing purposes. Compared with traditional way, live streaming e-commerce has advantages of low cost, strong interactivity and high conversion rate. In June 2020, the scale of e-commerce live streaming, short video and online shopping users in China increased by more than 5% compared with March. The scale of e-commerce live streaming users reached 309 million with a growth rate of 16.7% compared to March 2020.

TikTok and other platforms have released supportive policies for anchors. Anchors focus on their own experience and make a comprehensive description and display of goods. It can reduce the strangeness between goods and consumers and gain the trust of consumers, then arouse their willingness to buy. Especially for the beauty industry, beauty anchors can show the effect of beauty products through the lens, easier to bring intuitive experience to consumers and stimulate the impulse purchase behavior of consumers. We can find that the anchor has a good face in most beauty studios, which can also be explained by the halo effect.

Halo effect belongs to the concept of social psychology, first proposed by the famous American psychologist Edward Lee Thorndike. It means that when a cognitive forms a good or bad impression of a person, he also tends to infer other aspects of his characteristics. Halo effect generally refers to a good impression effect, especially attracted to appearance.

Many scholars are studying the factors that affect consumers' purchase intention. However, there are very few literature in the field of live streaming e-commerce, and there is very little literature in the subdivision of live streaming e-commerce. Due to the particularity of the beauty product, beauty anchor's appearance attraction should have more significant impact on consumer behavior. To make up for the lack of research, this paper choose beauty industry of live streaming e-commerce and study the relationship between beauty anchors and consumer's purchase intention. It also use the consumer trust to research intermediary effect.

2 Literature review and research hypotheses

Appearance attractiveness refers to the individual's ideal appearance image and pleasant emotional experience its induced ^[1]. People will often think attractive people as more trustworthy^[2]. People with attractive looks have more positive self-beliefs^[3] to get positive emotional responses from others^[4]. Therefore, the attractiveness of appearance affects the individual's perception of others. People will form a relatively stable social cognition, concept, or expectation of individuals with higher or lower appearance attractiveness ^[5]. A large number of studies have shown that people with highly attractive appearance will always gain advantages in personnel decisions, intimate relationships, service evaluation and product promotion, which is no exception in live-streaming e-commerce.

Huang E (2012) Based on social networks, it is found that emotional factors and interaction will have a great

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impact on consumers' purchase intention^[6]. Fan Huijie (2020) took Li Jiaqi as an example and found that anchors with delicate features will have highly attractive looks, which can deepen the impression of consumers and attract loyal fans.^[7] Li Longyi and Zhang Yuting (2021) have pointed out that anchors' appearance, movements, language and other behaviors will have a positive impact on consumers' willingness to buy their products^[8]. Zhang Hangrui (2021) found that in live streaming e-commerce, excellent-looking male anchors will attract female consumers more than ordinary male anchors, while female consumer groups have irrational consumption impulse^[9].

Sutherland et al. (2013) believe that physical attractiveness plays a very important role in the formation of first impressions^[10]. Many people will infer someone's qualities because they look good, and give some behavioral feedback. When consumers see the anchor through the screen, the appearance of the anchor will affect consumer's impression of the broadcast studio or the brand in the first time. It will also affect whether the consumers will trust the anchor, or even complete the final purchase. This impact is particularly significant for the beauty industry. Because most beauty products need to be displayed on the face or hands, then a strong correlation will form between the appearance of anchors and consumer purchase behavior. Therefore, this paper puts forward the corresponding research hypothesis:

H1: The appearance attraction of beauty anchors has a significant impact on consumers' purchase intention in the beauty live broadcast.

H2: The appearance attraction of beauty anchors has a significant impact on consumer trust in beauty live broadcasts.

H3: The degree of consumer trust plays an intermediary role between the appearance attraction of beauty anchors and consumers' purchase intention.

3 Empirical study

3.1 Research objects and research methods

This paper adopts the method of questionnaire survey and researches people in Beijing who watch beauty makeup live broadcast. This paper used 4 anchors with different appearance types were selected to investigate consumers' ratings on their attractiveness, trust level and

purchase intention. A total of 235 questionnaires were collected, and 200 were effectively collected with effective recovery of 85.1%. Among them, 95 (47.5%) were female and 105 (52.5%) were male. 35 people were under the age of 18 (17.5%), 118 people were 18-30 (59%), 27 people were 30 to 40 years old (13.5%), and 20 people were 40 years of age or older (10%). The statistical analysis of the data was performed using SPSS26.0.

3.1.1 Measurement of physical attractiveness

A 5-level scale was used to measure physical attractiveness, 1="very dissatisfied", 2="relatively dissatisfied", 3="general", 4="more willing", 5="very willing", and the willingness increased from "very dissatisfied" to "very willing".

3.1.2 Measurement of purchase intention

A 5-level scale was used to measure purchase intention. 1="very dissatisfied", 2="relatively dissatisfied", 3="general", 4="more willing", 5="very willing", and the degree of willingness increased from "very dissatisfied" to "very willing" successively.

3.1.3 Measurement of the degree of trust

A 5-level scale was used to measure the degree of trust, 1="Very distrustful", 2="compare the distrustful", 3="general", 4="more trustful", 5="very trustful", the willingness degree from "very distrustful" to "very trustful" increased.

3.2 Research results

3.2.1 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

This paper uses one-way analysis of variance to analyze the differential purchasing intention of consumers. The results show that anchors' physical attractiveness has a significant effect on consumers' purchase intention with an F value of 26.175, as shown in Table 1. From Table 1, we can see appearance attractiveness level of anchors varies greatly. The higher the appearance attractiveness score, the higher the purchase willingness of consumers.

Table 1. Analysis of Appearance Attraction (M ± SD)

	Anchor purchase intention (standard deviation)				F	P	
	4.0(n=202)	3.0(n=198)	1.0(n=116)	2.0(n=196)			5.0(n=88)
M	4.391±0.677	3.197±1.084	1.466±0.774	2.418±0.803	4.841±0.477	26.175	0.000***

Note: N=200, * * * represents 1% significance level; M attractiveness

This article will use beauty anchor's appearance attraction, consumer purchase intention and consumer trust degree to make Pearson related analysis. From table

2, we can see that there exists obvious positive correlation between beauty anchor's appearance attraction, consumer purchase intention and consumer

trust degree. It also shows that beauty anchor's appearance attraction be higher, the consumer purchase intention will be higher.

Table 2. Correlation analysis of the appearance attraction, purchase intention and trust degree of anchors

	Purchase intention	Degree of trust	Appearance attraction
Purchase intention	1(0.000***)	0.816(0.000***)	0.799(0.000***)
Degree of trust	0.816(0.000***)	1(0.000***)	0.871(0.000***)
Appearance attraction	0.799(0.000***)	0.871(0.000***)	1(0.000***)

Note: ***, **, and * represent the significance levels of 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively

3.2.2 The intermediary role of consumer trust

This paper use Wen Zhonglin's method to make simple mediation model analysis and mediation effect test of beauty anchor's appearance attractiveness-consumer trust degree-consumer purchase intention. As a study with the traditional mediation effect, we should test whether the coefficient c is significant at first.

Firstly, variables such as beauty anchor's appearance attractiveness, consumer trust and consumer purchase intention are standardized. The total effects of the simple mediation model were examined and the results are shown in Table 3. Based on the analysis of the total effect test results of the mediation model, this paper can determine that the appearance attraction has an influence on the purchase intention. The impact is relatively significant. The model was further tested according to the mediation effect testing process.

Secondly, the model takes the appearance attraction of beauty anchors as the independent variable, consumers purchase intention as the dependent variable, and consumers' trust degree as the intermediary variable. The mediation effect analysis involved three types of models, as follows:

Model 1, independent variable X and dependent variable Y for regression model: consumer purchase intention=0.636+0.711* anchor appearance attraction,

Model 2, independent variable X and intermediary variable M for regression model construction: consumer trust degree=0.392+0.816*beauty anchor's appearance attraction,

In Model 3, independent variable X and mediating variable M were used to construct the regression model together with dependent variable Y: consumer purchase intention=0.451+0.326*Anchor's physical attractiveness+0.473*consumer trust degree.

Table 3. Table of mediating effect regression model coefficients

	Purchase intention				Degree of trust					Appearance attraction					
	coef	S.E	t	P	S.coef	coef	S.E	t	P	S.coef	coef	S.E	t	P	S.coef
C	0.636	0.067	9.532	0.000***	-	0.392	0.057	6.834	0.000***	-	0.451	0.063	7.181	0.000***	-
M	0.711	0.019	37.51	0.000***	0.799	0.816	0.016	50.017	0.000***	0.871	0.326	0.035	9.24	0.000***	0.366
T											0.473	0.038	12.561	0.000***	0.497
R ²				0.638					0.758						0.698
AR ²				0.638					0.758						0.697
F	F(1, 798)=1407.022, P=0.000***				F(1, 798)=2501.683, P=0.000***					F(2, 797)=920.619, P=0.000***					

Note: ***represent the significance levels of 1%; Physical attraction is marked as M, degree of trust is marked as T.

95% confidence intervals were calculated by repeated sampling 5000 times using Hayes Bootstrap method. Results are shown in Table 4. The mediating effect results show that the Bootstrap95% confidence interval of the mediating effect of consumer trust does not contain the value of 0, indicating that the mediating

variable has a significant mediating effect between beauty anchor's physical attractiveness and consumer purchase intention. The relative mediating effect value was 54.29%. Therefore, consumer trust plays a complete mediating role in the influence of anchor's physical attractiveness on consumer purchase intention.

Table 4. Table of summary results of mediating effect test

c	a	b	a*b	a*b (Boot SE)	a*b (z)	a*b (P)	a*b(95%BootCI)	c'	Relative mediating effect value
0.711	0.816	0.473	0.385	0.04	9.519	0.000***	0.459 - 0.301	0.326	54.29%

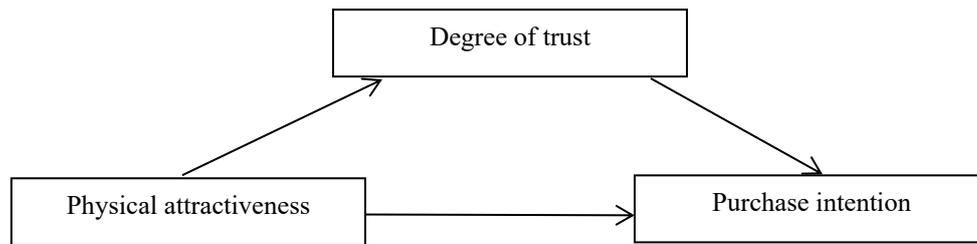


Fig. 1. The full mediating effect of consumer trust

Table 5. Summary of hypothesis testing results

Number	Hypothesis	Results
H1	The attractiveness of beauty anchors has a significant impact on consumers' purchase intention during beauty live streaming	✓
H2	The attractiveness of beauty anchors has a significant impact on consumer trust in beauty live streaming	✓
H3	The degree of consumer's trust plays a mediating role between the physical attractiveness of beauty anchors and consumer purchase intention	✓

4 Conclusion

Through empirical study, we can found that beauty anchor's physical attractiveness is an important factor affecting consumers' purchase intention. And consumers' trust plays a mediating role in the live streaming e-commerce of the beauty industry. The higher the physical attractiveness of beauty live streaming e-commerce anchors, the higher the trust degree of consumers will have for the anchors when watching live streaming, and the higher the purchase intention of consumers will be through the mediating effect. The results suggest that beauty brands should select anchors with higher physical attractiveness, which can improve consumer's purchase intention. In addition to high-quality photos, makeup or smiling, or taking photos from the best angle, may help to enhance the attractiveness

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