

**SOURCE CREDIBILITY CONSTRUCTION AND PORTRAYALS OF
BEAUTY INFLUENCERS THROUGH DOUYIN SHORT VIDEOS**



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INFLUENCERS THROUGH DOUYIN SHORT VIDEOS



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Source Credibility Construction and Portrayals of Beauty Influencers through Douyin
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the primary source credibility strategies employed by Chinese and non-Chinese beauty influencers on Douyin, exploring the similarities and differences in their self-portrayals. This study combines content analysis with the textual analysis of Douyin short videos. Content analysis was employed to categorize and count the number and frequency, and textual analysis was used to analyze the meanings generated in the media texts for 80 Douyin short videos from both groups. Chinese beauty influencers mainly adopt Dependable, Reliable, Sincere and Trustworthy to present themselves with trustworthiness; Expert and Qualified to present themselves with expertise; Body Attractiveness to present themselves with attractiveness. Foreign beauty influencers mainly adopt Trustworthy to present themselves with trustworthiness; Expert as the strategy to present themselves with expertise; Beautiful, Facial Attractiveness and Body Attractiveness as the strategy to present themselves with attractiveness. Furthermore, key differences include the frequency and selection of credibility strategies, content themes (product reviews vs. fashion), and incorporation of cultural nuances (present among foreign influencers in China but not Chinese influencers).

Keywords: Source Credibility, Beauty Influencer, Douyin, Short Videos

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Hui Tian



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

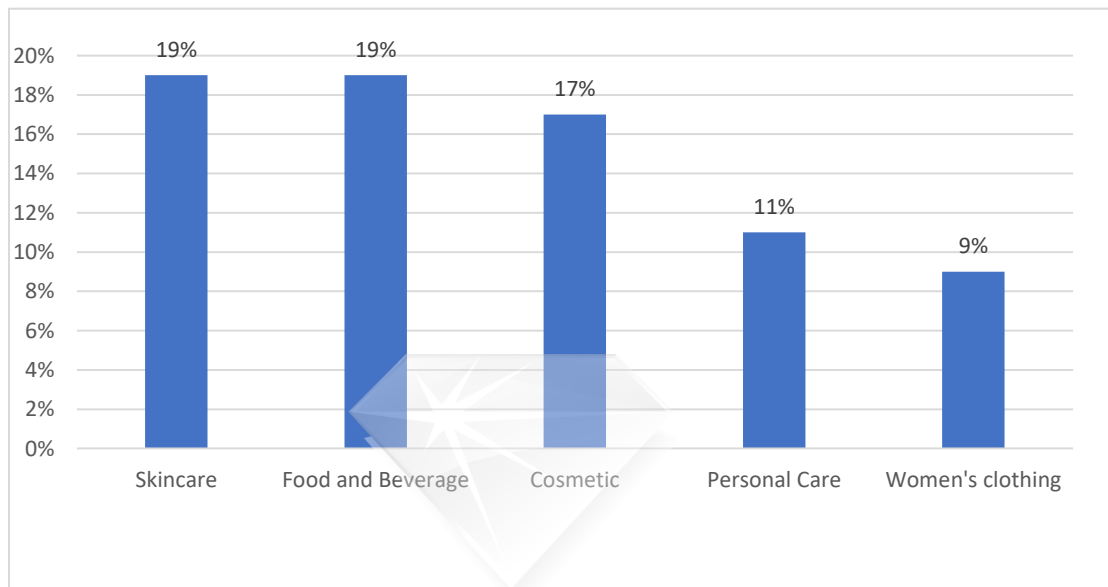
1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

The improvement of Chinese people's living standards and the cultivation of beauty products consumption habits have promoted the development of China's beauty product industry market (Zhao, 2020). Since the living standard of the Chinese people has improved, people are paying more and more attention to their quality of life, especially when it comes to beauty. Through the dissemination of the media and the popularity of the people around them, people have gradually cultivated the consumption habit of beauty products. With the development of society, people are now paying more and more attention to their physical appearance and spending more on beauty products. In the previous Chinese society, one of the most important things for people was to solve the problem of food and clothing. When the food and clothing problem is solved, people seem to care more about other things, such as appearance. People now think that appearance is very important to them because everyone prefers good looking people as per beauty standards and social values.

Increasing consumer incomes and changing lifestyles have contributed to the growth of the global beauty market, which is also driven by a growing middle class in developing countries (Łopaciuk & Łoboda, 2013). Beauty influencers use social media to spread knowledge and information about beauty to their audiences. Therefore, more and more people follow and pay attention to beauty influencers to learn makeup skills, skin care knowledge, and get information to buy suitable cosmetics and skincare products. The size of the beauty market is steadily increasing. In the first quarter of 2021 in the Chinese market, while the investment costs of traditional industries such as food, beverages and household appliances have dropped year-on-year, the beauty and skincare industry has risen sharply. From December 2020 to March 2021, retail sales of goods in the cosmetics grew from 9% to 42.5% (CBNData, 2021).

Technology is advancing and developing day by day, and marketing is also transforming to digital. Social media has become the new leading marketing tool, and many companies also use social media influencers to promote their brands and products (Zietek, 2016). For example, in Douyin, it is evident that influencers shoot short videos to introduce the efficacy and usage of beauty products and publish their comments on the products in the videos. The products mentioned in these beauty videos are not only local brands in China such as Pechoin, One Leaf, ZMC etc., but also many international brands such as Lancôme, Estee Lauder and so on. Besides, International beauty brands have a good amount of content and interaction on Douyin (Jian, 2022). In 2021, there were more short marketing videos about international brands on Douyin, which means that more short videos were mention international beauty brands. According to the data from Jian (2022), 14 of the top 20 Douyin beauty brands in terms of content volume are international brands in the Chinese market. The influencers who shoot these videos have received sponsorship and promotion fees from the brand side. With the popularization of the Internet industry, the number of Chinese Internet users has increased, and the Internet model continues to innovate and integrate with business. The marketing concept of Key Opinion Leader (Jackob, 2008) is that they are the ones who have more influence on the purchase of the relevant group. KOL recommends and sells products on various platforms such as Taobao, Douyin, Kwai, Red app to drive product sales growth. Young consumers whose age are younger than 35 years old are the main consumer group of beauty products, and beauty products have become the first choice for marketing and promotion on various platforms because it has the highest sales volume (Zhao, 2020).

Figure 1.1: Top 5 Douyin Popular KOL Main Products Categories in the Second Half of 2020



Source: CCsight. (2020). 2020 下半年抖音和小红书美妆行业营销报告 [Marketing Report on Tik Tok & Red App for the beauty industry in the second half of 2020]. Retrieved from <https://www.fxbaogao.com/detail/2140770>.

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As shown in Figure 1.1, in the second half of 2020, among the top 1,000 key opinion leaders of the most popular Douyin, the main product categories promoted by influencers in the Douyin application are skincare, food and beverage, which account for 19%, followed by the cosmetic category account for 17% (CCsight, 2020). This important report by CCsight (2020) shows that promoting beauty products on Douyin has been a mainstream form, and the KOLs of these products are mostly Chinese beauty influencers.

According to Fei (2020), the United States has been the country with the highest proportion of the global beauty and personal care market, and China has gradually become the world's second largest beauty market with the fastest market growth, and its consumption potential is prominent (Fei, 2020). During the Covid-19 outbreak, beauty brands tended to use online channels for sales to deal with the disruption of the pandemic on offline product sales.

Short videos are becoming increasingly popular on mobile terminals through social media (Wang, 2020). In 2020, short video platforms such as Douyin and Kwai are the main channels for advertising media in the beauty industry, of which Douyin accounts for 24%, becoming the most popular and the largest advertising medium in China (CBNData, 2021). In addition, it is important to know about the trends of China's short video market.

China's short video market has reached 140.83 billion CNY (around 21 billion USD) in 2020 (iiMedia, 2021). Influencer marketing is becoming progressively relevant to many companies and represents a \$10 billion industry in 2020 (Haenlein, et al., 2020). With the development of influencer marketing, beauty influencers have played an important role in this period, especially in the promotion of beauty products. The success of influencer marketing lies in the core foundation of word-of-mouth recommendation (Veissi, 2017). Therefore, influencers must adopt some marketing and communicative strategies to improve their word-of-mouth and credibility.

As mentioned above, the disruption of the covid-19 pandemic to offline market and the development of the beauty market have promoted the popularity of online influencer marketing on Douyin. The use of short videos by influencers to promote products has also become an emerging market trend. Influencer marketing is a popular industry now, and the successful marketing and communication strategies used by influencers in the marketing process also play an important role. In the communication of online influencer marketing, the audience's purchase decision will be influenced not only by the credibility of the influencer but also by the credibility of the message expressed by the influencer. Therefore, source credibility strategies and message credibility strategies are very important in relation to whether the influencer can be successfully marketed. Additionally, numerous influencers from various countries have gained popularity on Douyin. Chinese and non-Chinese influencers employ distinct credibility strategies in their videos, offering insights that can assist other influencers in selecting suitable strategies for their content. We can learn more about this industry through research on influencers, so as to provide a deeper foundation and exemplary advice for researchers and influencers who are interested in this area.

1.2 Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1) To examine the core source credibility strategies Chinese beauty influencers adopt to present themselves as expert, trustworthy, and attractive through Douyin short videos.

2) To examine the core source credibility strategies foreign beauty influencers, adopt to present themselves as expert, trustworthy, and attractive through Douyin short videos.

3) To analyze and compare the similarities and differences between portrayals of Chinese and foreign beauty influencers through Douyin short videos.

1.3 Scope of Study

This study studied 80 videos by the top 4 Chinese TikTok most famous beauty influencers and 4 foreign beauty influencers from Italy, Korean and Russia, their core source credibility strategies to portray themselves as the expert, trustworthy and attractive. The most famous beauty influencers are ranked according to the areas/fields that influencers are involved in, the number of Douyin followers, popularity, netizen ratings, network attention index, and based on relevant data from internet platforms such as Gray Dolphin Data and New Shake Data. The study follows the source credibility theory proposed by Ohanian (1990).

Influencers' beauty-related videos with the highest likes posted between November 2021 - November 2022 were samples. The analysis of Chinese and foreign beauty influencers' Douyin short videos shows the similarities and differences between them and how they attract their followers through such videos. The results may differ from different categories of influencers and different countries/contexts.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 What are the core source credibility strategies that Chinese beauty influencers adopt to present themselves as expert, trustworthy, and attractive through Douyin short videos?

1.4.2 What are the core source credibility strategies that foreign beauty influencers adopt to present themselves as expert, trustworthy, and attractive through Douyin short videos?

1.4.3 What are the similarities and differences between portrayals of Chinese and foreign beauty influencers through Douyin short videos?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study would contribute to academic and the influencer industry. Many parties would benefit from the study:

1.5.1 The scholars who are interested in this field.

Credibility is a crucial part of influencers. This study would help scholars interested in beauty influencers learn more credibility strategies that influencers use to portray themselves as more reliable. It can be used as a basis for future research on influencers. Not only beauty influencers but other types of influencers may also use the same strategies. Scholars can use this essential to further research about influencers and get more contributions to this field.

1.5.2 Social media influencers

The finding of this study would provide social media influencers with communicative strategies to portray themselves, making them more expert, trustworthy, and attractive. By this way, they can attract more followers and become more famous.

1.5.3 Influencers agent

Behind social media, there may be interest groups shaping the role of beauty bloggers and starting to make money (Guan, 2021). The influencers agents cultivate and shape influencers and profit from them when they become famous. The finding of this research can help influencer agents better shape influencers so that they have source credibility and attract more followers and audiences.

1.5.4 The skincare and cosmetic brand party

The skincare and cosmetic brand party can better understand the core strategies that beauty influencers portray themselves. Therefore, when they need to find beauty influencers for product promotion, they can adjust and adapt to these

strategies of beauty influencers to better show the products to the audience and bring greater benefits.

1.6 Definition of Terms

“Short Videos” refers to video content of fewer than five minutes, which plays on the network platform for people to watch, browse and share at any time (Yang, Zhao, & Ma, 2019). Short video content incorporates themes such as beauty and skincare, fashion trends, skill sharing, humor and quirks, social hotspots, street interviews, public welfare education, advertising creativity and commercial customization.

“Douyin Influencers” are people who have become popular because of a certain event or behavior in Douyin, or a person who has been famous for a long time by exporting expertise in a specific field on the Douyin short video platform. Their popularity is because some of their qualities are magnified by the network. They match netizens’ aesthetic, entertainment and spectator psychology and are sought after by the network world, intentionally or unintentionally, and become “influencers”. Therefore, the emergence of “Douyin influencers” is not spontaneous but the result of the comprehensive role of interests of influencers, cyber promoters, traditional media and audience psychological needs in the network media environment.

“Beauty Influencer” is a person who is famous on Douyin for sharing beauty-related content, such as makeup, skincare, beauty product reviews, and so forth.

“Source Credibility” refers to the degree to which people believe and trust the information that the originator/sender of the communication provides them with information about a particular product or service (Cambridge University, n.d). People are more likely to be persuaded if the degree of credibility is higher. Source credibility in this study refers to a particular information Douyin short video provider is considered expert, trustworthy (Kim & Kim, 2014) and attractive (Ohanian, 1990).

“Trustworthiness” refers to the degree of confidence in the communicator’s intent to communicate the assertions he considers most valid (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). In this study, trustworthiness means the ability of Douyin beauty

influencers are worth to be trusted by the audience. In this sense, the contents of Douyin beauty influencers are dependable, honest, reliable, sincere, and trustworthy.

“Expertise” refers to the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions (Hovland, et al., 1953). In this study, expertise means the expert skill or knowledge that Douyin beauty influencers have in the beauty field. The influencers are experts, experienced, knowledgeable, qualified, and skilled in the beauty field.

“Attractiveness” refers to the role that creates an emotional connection between the source and the receivers (Li & Yin, 2018). In this study, attractiveness describes the degree of appeal or pleasing that Douyin beauty influencers’ features and aesthetic beauty are perceived to be. The influencer has attractiveness means she/he is attractive, classy, beautiful, elegant, or sexy.

CHAPTER 2

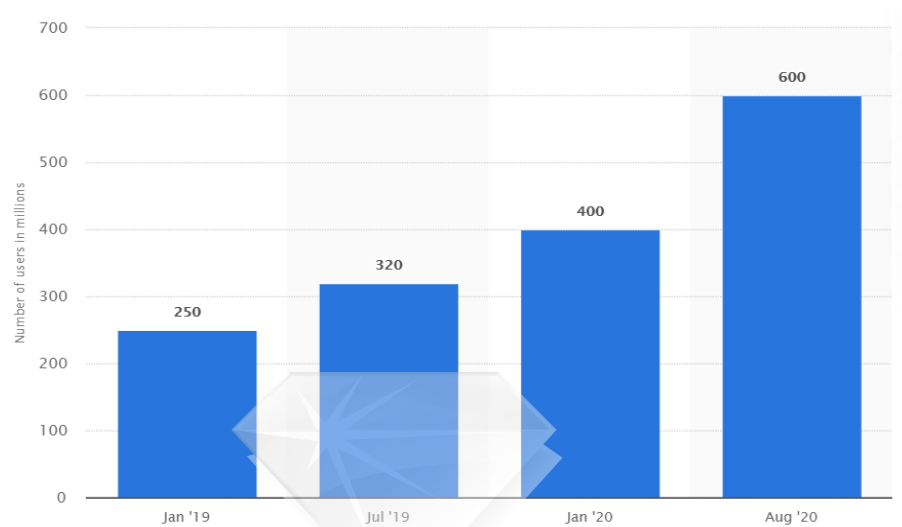
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Related Literature and Previous Studies

2.1.1 Douyin in China

Douyin was launched by a company named Bytedance in China in September 2016 and was launched globally as TikTok in the following year. The videos on Douyin cover many aspects of life, such as beauty, cooking, movies, education, health, and technology (Wang, 2020). This study will focus on the beauty field and the beauty field's influencers. The beauty field in this study includes make-up, cosmetics and skincare product recommendations and reviews; the beauty influencer refers to the influencers who have been doing well in beauty knowledge such as having good makeup skills, having enough knowledge in skincare and beauty products, and have become famous in these aspects of the beauty field. Since its development in 2016, Douyin has become one of the most popular social media platforms for Chinese millennials (Du, Liechty, Santos, & Park, 2022).

Figure 2.1: Number of daily active users of Douyin from January 2019 to August 2020



Source: Thomala, L. L. (2021). *Douyin's DAUs in China 2019-2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1089845/china-douyin-tiktok-daily-active-user-number/#statisticContainer>.

As shown in Figure 2.1, Douyin is trendy in China. As of August 2020, its cumulative daily active users have reached 600 million (Thomala, 2021). It is easy to see from the chart that the number of TikTok users is showing an increasing trend, and the number of users in August 2020 is 2.4 times that of January 2021 (Thomala, 2021).

Douyin can be used as a tool to spread entertainment content to persuade people to adopt specific new technologies (Wang, 2020). Douyin's short videos use creative presentation to attract young people who love to achieve new and innovative things, such as using new social media platforms for entertainment, breaking the communication barrier of a direct connection between consumers and products, innovating interactive scene modes, and creating a new social experience for the younger generation of popular culture (Li & Yin, 2018).

2.1.2 Influencers in China

2.1.2.1 Social Media Influencers

With the development of social media, influencers with many followers have recently had advertising effects and boosted sales. Chinese influencers are popular among Chinese users by showing their appeal on Chinese social media (Park & Lin, 2020). Social media influencers and their followers may be connected by social media platforms to promote the sale of ideas, services, and products (Wang, 2020). Influencers themselves act as role models for fans, so they can have an advertising effect when they are promoted through social media (Zhang, Liang, & Moon, 2020). Many previous studies showed that celebrity endorsements have advertising effectiveness (Amos, Holmes, & Strutton, 2008; Menon, Boone, & Rogers, 2001 and Rahman, 2018). Basically, everyone knows about celebrity endorsements, and brands use them for marketing purposes because their advertising effect. Influencers also play an important role in social media for marketing and media communication. People identify with influencers more than celebrities, believe they are more similar to influencers, and trust influencers more than celebrities (Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget, 2020). In short, influencers share products on social media, conduct product reviews, and recommend products to their followers so that they feel they are similar to the influencer and therefore trust the influencer more. Driven by the advertising and e-commerce industry chain, influencers have gone through the text era, graphic era, and broadband era, forming the current hybrid Internet celebrity business operation model (Zhang, et al., 2020).

2.1.2.2 Beauty Influencers

The current share of China's beauty market is second only to the United States (Weil, 2021). China has a huge beauty market and a large population base, so it is easy to see that Chinese consumers also have a huge potential to spend on beauty products. As China gradually becomes the world's largest beauty market, Chinese beauty influencers are crucial for foreign beauty brands seeking to gain market share in the country (Weil, 2021). Nowadays, many foreign well-known and affordable beauty brands entering the Chinese market. For example, some internationally known brands like Estee Lauder, Shiseido and SK II, and some affordable brands like Mistine, Innisfree and NYX.

Beauty influencers are part of social media influencers. In China, being a beauty influencer is also a popular career, and influencers need to earn profits through this career. There are many multi-channel network companies in China with which influencers work and contract. Some Chinese beauty influencers earn commissions from advertising and also earn profits from working with the companies. Therefore, this career is often combined with online promotion and e-commerce. The beauty retailing industry qualifies and is beneficial for influencer marketing research as a global business with the third-largest social media following (Phung & Qin, 2018). Chinese beauty influencers usually introduce and review beauty products on social media and recommend products of a brand party to followers for profit. Chinese beauty influencers can attract a large number of followers, and their followers often surpass Western beauty influencers (Weil, 2021). There are large numbers of famous Chinese beauty influencers who have millions of fans on their social media platforms. For example, a Chinese beauty influencer named Li Jiaqi has more than 40 million followers on Douyin. Chinese beauty influencers are not completely different from foreign ones. They both gain a reputation on user-generated content platforms and rely on consumer culture to monetize their reputation, and their target audiences are mainly women (Guan, 2021).

2.1.3 Knowledge Gap from Past Studies

Many scholars studied Chinese influencers (Joshi, Lim, Jagani, & Kumar, 2023; Xu & Pratt, 2018 and Zottola, 2020). Past studies examined the factors of beauty bloggers influencing consumers' purchasing intention after watching blogs using the source credibility scale. The results showed that beauty influencers' expertise, knowledge and content are the key factors affecting purchase intention (Khongthaworn, 2017). The impact of social media influencer endorsements on purchase intentions and the results show that attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise positively impact consumers' purchase intentions (Weismueller, Harrigan, Wang, & Soutar, 2020). The study on the impact of eWOM and sponsored advertisements of beauty video influencers on followers who use Weibo shows that compared with traditional influencers, video influencers' direct advertisements that promote the convenience of product purchase are appreciated by followers (Ding, Henninger, Blazquez, & Boardman, 2019).

Beauty video content is still a relatively new phenomenon in marketing communication, but it has experienced significant development in recent years, contributing to the overall growth of the industry (Ding, et al., 2019). Despite this progress, there remains a gap in understanding the strategies employed by Chinese beauty influencers in their videos. Consequently, the findings of this study represent a fresh perspective in this burgeoning field. Moreover, the research not only explores the self-presentation strategies of Chinese beauty influencers but also acknowledges that non-Chinese beauty influencers may exhibit cultural differences in their approaches.

2.2 Related Theories

This study mainly adopts the source credibility theory and the social construction of reality theory to the analysis. This section will discuss and explain the theoretical aspects as follows.

2.2.1 Source Credibility

Source Credibility refers to the perceivers' judgment of the communicator's credibility (Spence, Lin, Lachlan, & Hutter, 2020). The perceivers of this study are the audiences who watch the short videos on Douyin posted by beauty influencers. The communicators are the beauty influencers on Douyin. Ohanian (1990) defined source credibility as a term used for the positive characteristics of the receiver being influenced by the communicator to receive information. This means that beauty influencers have positive effects on audiences to receive information if they have source credibility. Credibility is considered to be the perceived characteristics or pre-existing characteristics result of the source (Jackob, 2008). Credibility is considered as a perceptual state where the audiences form a judgment about its source (beauty influencer) when watching the video. Thus, audiences will decide whether a video is credible or not based on the credibility of the beauty influencer. Suppose the sources are not trusted by the receivers. In that case, the information dissemination will not be completed, so the result of communication cannot achieve the expected effect in terms of persuading and marketing (Hu, 2015). Therefore, source credibility plays an important role in communication.

Source credibility can enhance the information value of messages. In eliciting positive attitude changes and behavioral intentions, highly credible sources of communication are more effective than less credible sources (Yoon, Kim, & Kim, 1998). Douyin beauty influencers with high credibility seem to be more effective at changing audiences' attitudes and behaviors than beauty influencers with low credibility. It is apparent that source credibility can cause attitude changes and behavioral intentions, and the use of credible sources is essential for other aspects, such as advertising and product promotion. Perceived source credibility has a positive impact on the persuasiveness of the advertisement (Nan, 2013). Source credibility can be closely related to influencers, advertisers, endorsements (Eisend, 2006), sales persons (Simpson & Kahler, 1981), and marketers. These people are all related to communication, advertising and marketing, and it can be concluded that source credibility has a positive effect on the advertising and marketing aspects.

The term source credibility can be traced back to Aristotle in his work "The Rhetoric"; he believed that the rhetorician ethos is essential in affecting the thoughts and beliefs of the audience (Umeogu, 2012). Many researchers undertook research related to source credibility (see table 2.1), such as Scales for the measurement of ethos (McCroskey, 1966), factors of source credibility (Whitehead, 1968), the basis of credibility (Simons, Berkowitz, & Moyer, 1970), source credibility scale (Ohanian, 1990 and Simpson & Kahler, 1981), dimensions of source credibility (Applbaum & Anatol, 1973) and spokesperson credibility (Eisend, 2006) (see Table 2.1)

Table 2.1: The Previous Studies Related to Source Credibility

Source	Context	Dimensions
McCroskey (1966)	Scales for the measurement of ethos	Authoritativeness, character
Whitehead (1968)	Factors of Source Credibility	Trustworthiness, professionalism, dynamism
Simons, et al. (1970)	Basis for Credibility	Respect, attraction, trust

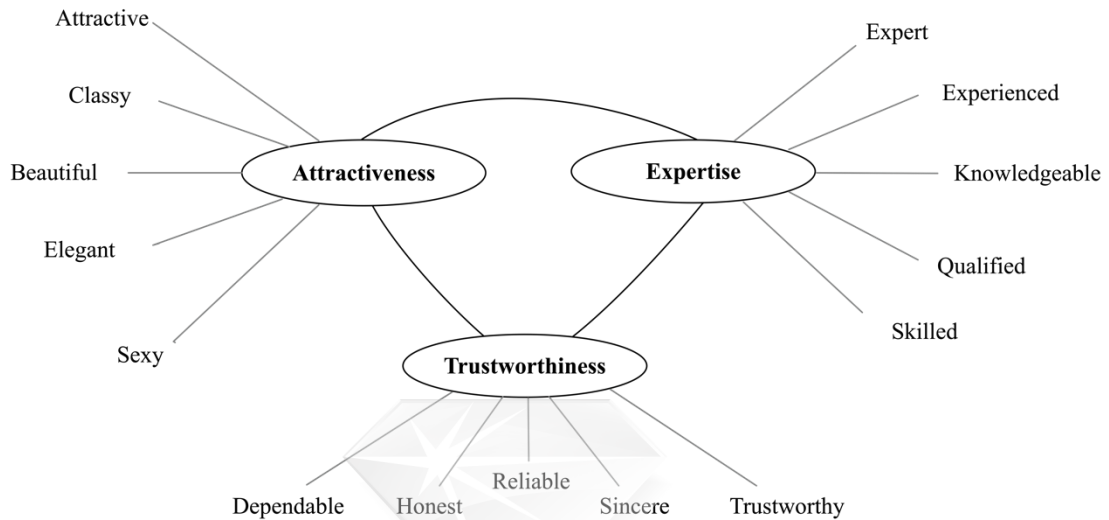
(Continued)

Table 2.1 (Continued): The Previous Studies Related to Source Credibility

Source	Context	Dimensions
Applbaum & Anatol (1973)	Dimensions of source credibility	Trustworthiness, expertness, dynamism, objectivity
Simpson & Kahler (1981)	Source Credibility Scale	Dynamism, expertness, believability, sociability
Ohanian (1990)	Source Credibility Scale	Trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness
Eisend (2006)	Spokesperson credibility	Sincerity, professionalism, attraction
Umeogu (2012)	Ethos of Aristotle	Good sense, good moral characters, goodwill

There are tons of contexts and dimensions related to source credibility. This study mainly adopts the source credibility scale constructed and verified by Ohanian (1990). Many of these researchers' main elements are similar, and some use different words to express them. Among them, trustworthiness, expertness, and trust appear many times. Ohanian's concept encompasses all three dimensions and reasonably explains each dimension. Pornpitakpan (2003) has also verified the credibility scale by Ohanian (1990) and concluded that this scale is very useful and suitable for Singaporeans. According to the users' willingness to promote the results to other audience cultures, the credibility scale may be applied to other Asian audiences, including Chinese, Thai, Korean, Japanese, etc. (Pornpitakpan, 2003). Therefore, this scale can be also used for Chinese and foreign influencers. Therefore, Ohanian's concept of source credibility is appropriate for this study. The source credibility scale was divided into three dimensions which are trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise (Ohanian, 1990); see figure 2.2 Source Credibility Model.

Figure 2.2: Source Credibility Model (Ohanian, 1990)



Source: Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39-52.

2.2.1.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an attribute of personal exchange partners. When an exchange partner is trusted by others, it is trustworthy (Barney & Hansen, 1994). Ohanian (1990) suggests that five factors of trustworthiness are dependable, honest, reliable, sincere, and trustworthy. Trustworthiness has a positive effect on credibility (Seiler & Kucza, 2017). A trustworthy communicator has high credibility (Lui & Standing, 1989), and high trustworthiness also indicates integrity (Bhatt, Jayswal, & Patel, 2013), honesty and believability of communicators (Gupta, Kishor, & Verma, 2017). Obviously, trustworthiness plays a vital role in communication, especially when the communication is related to advertising and endorsement. Dependable, honest, reliable, sincere, and trustworthy are five characteristics of trustworthiness. People who have these characteristics are considered as trustworthiness. A trustworthy influencer is someone who consistently provides valuable and authentic content. In this study, influencers with trustworthiness are considered to have at least three characteristics.

2.2.1.2 Expertise

Expertise broadly refers to domain-specific knowledge reflecting objective and subjective components (Gastel, 2023). Expertise has been claimed as the perception of the source in persuasive communication positively influences attitude change (Ohanian, 1990). Expertise has been explained as the perceptual ability of an authorized to make or provide effective information as well (Gupta, et al., 2017). Li and Yin (2018) said that “One shows more his or her professional skills or reputation will largely influence the expertise perceived by the receivers.” That is, the more expertise a person demonstrates, the more professional skills or reputation will greatly affect the expert information the recipient perceives.

Expertise has a positive effect on credibility (Seiler & Kucza, 2017), and it is also a factor of the source credibility model by Ohanian (1990). Ohanian (1990) suggests five factors of expertise, including 1) expert, 2) experienced, 3) knowledgeable, 4) qualified, and 5) skilled. In the sense of this study, an "expert" influencer is highly proficient in beauty-related topics, demonstrating advanced knowledge and skills. "Experienced" influencers have a significant background in the beauty industry, showcasing a depth of practical involvement. "Knowledgeable" influencers possess a comprehensive understanding of beauty products and techniques. "Qualified" influencers refer to the influencers having the necessary training or experience in the beauty field. "Skilled" influencers refer to the influencers having ability to apply related knowledge in the beauty filed. All these key factors show the expertise of the source to the audiences. Of the expert's five characteristics, people with these characteristics are considered trustworthy. In this study, influencers with expertise must own at least three characteristics in relation to the beauty area.

2.2.1.3 Attractiveness

Attractiveness is defined as the role that creates an emotional connection between the source and the receivers (Li & Yin, 2018). Physical attractiveness is a kind of information cue that will have a subtle, universal and inevitable impact on people (Patzer & Burke, 1988). The attractiveness model developed by McGuire (1985) defines familiarity, likability, and similarity as the dimensions of attractiveness. Ohanian (1990) suggests five components of attractiveness. These include being 1) attractive, 2) classy, 3) beautiful, 4) elegant, and 5) sexy "Attractive"

refers to the influencer or the video having a visual appeal and the video contents appeal, encompassing physical features and presentation that capture attention positively. "Classy" reflects a refined and sophisticated style, emphasizing tasteful choices in fashion, makeup, and demeanor. "Beautiful" refers to an overall pleasing and aesthetic, including facial features and grooming. "Elegant" signifies a polished and graceful demeanor, and the graceful outfit's styles and kind expressions, often associated with a sense of sophistication and poise. Lastly, "sexy" conveys an alluring and confident presence that exudes appeal and sensuality.

It has been claimed that attractiveness has a positive effect on credibility (Seiler & Kucza, 2017). The attractiveness of the spokesperson has an impact on the purchase intention of Chinese consumers, and the higher the attractiveness, the more significant the positive impact on consumers' purchase intention (Liu & Brock, 2011). The messages that are preoccupied with dressing attractiveness, facial beauty attractiveness, body attractiveness (Li & Yin, 2018), and postures attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990) are used to describe and emphasize attractiveness. People who have these characteristics are considered attractive. In this study, influencers with attractiveness mean that they have at least three characteristics - attractive, classy, beautiful, elegant, and sexy. These can be related to features and special skills that enhance attracting people - facial beauty, dressing style, and body language used to present them, and posture to promote themselves.

2.2.2 The Social Construction of Reality

The processes through which people collectively form their understanding of the world are shaped by social construction of reality (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). The theoretical aspect of social construction of reality focuses on how realities are produced and experienced by people (Krippendorff, 2016). "Reality is socially constructed" (Berger & Luckmann, 2016) and all human knowledge is created, shared, and maintained in social settings. These basic assumptions about "reality" and "knowledge" are fundamental to the social construction of reality (Lekngam, 2019).

This research project sees the portrayals and representations of beauty influencers on Douyin as a process of media construction of social reality regarding beauty, in which the credibility of the source/sender is vital. The rapid development of the Internet has given rise to a new online virtual society, which is a social state that

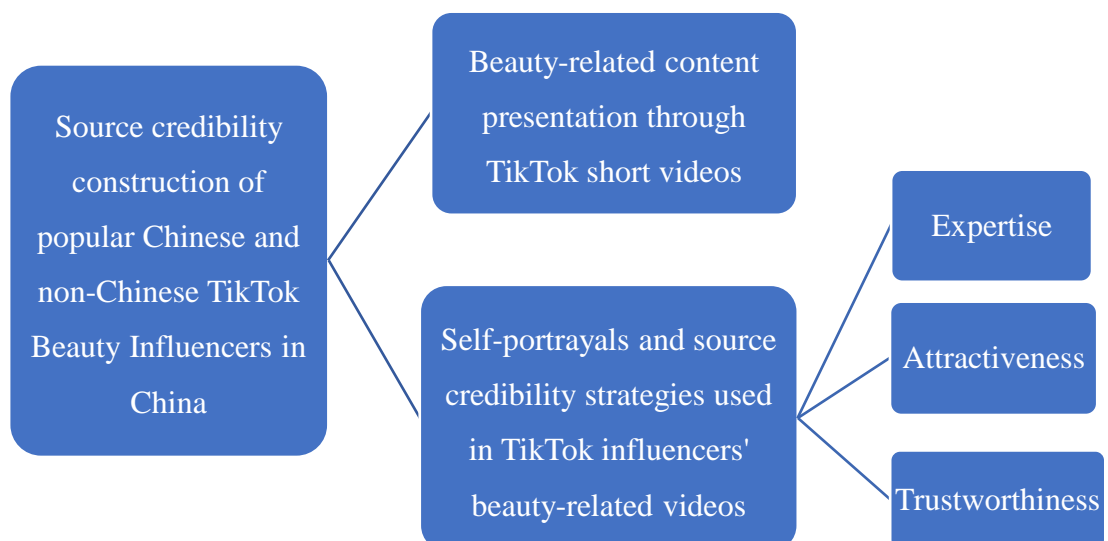
mirrors real society. Media-constructed information and knowledge in virtual society have been essential in constructing people's perceptions and understanding of things. The unpredictability of media discourse leaves plenty of leeway for challengers such as social movements, to present opposing constructions of reality and gain support from readers whose everyday lives may drive them to construct meaning in ways that go beyond media visuals (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992). The media construction of social reality is a process influenced by various factors. The important factors are the influence of media organization, media technology and the audience's stock of knowledge and experience.

It can be suggested that beauty influencers' portrayals through Douyin videos are a product of media constructs. Beauty influencers' short video content could be differently constructed and perceived by people in different social contexts. Therefore, using the social construction of reality as the basis for analysis will help to understand how beauty influencers' representations are constructed through the Douyin short videos in which source credibility is deliberately built.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study employs the source credibility and the social construction of reality to set a conceptual framework, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 2.3: The conceptual framework of this study



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a mixed research method, blending both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Primarily utilizing qualitative methods, it combines content analysis with the textual analysis of media texts. Content analysis was employed to categorize and count the number and frequency, and textual analysis was used to analyze the meanings generated in the media texts. Qualitative research is a process of generating knowledge from people's perspectives in daily life and is a tool for understanding how realities are socially constructed (Wongwilatnurak, 2018). This study started with examining the Douyin short video app to analyze how beauty influencers portray themselves to audiences through it. The knowledge and information presented through beauty influencers' media may influence how audiences perceive and build their understanding of such knowledge and information. The 80 Douyin short videos posted by popular Chinese and foreign beauty influencers as the sample were analyzed.

The analytical framework of this study is based on the conception of source credibility proposed by Ohanian (1990) and the social construction of reality. Most previous studies on credibility used quantitative research methods. However, some studies have employed qualitative methods to research in this aspect. Qualitative research methods can be used in exploratory studies that focus on understanding and explaining phenomena from the participants' perspective rather than measuring or testing theories (Hussain, Melewar, Priporas, & Foroudi, 2020). Source credibility has thus been used by qualitative research (Baudier, Boissieu, & Duchemin, 2023 and Shuang, 2013). Therefore, conducting this research project will help contribute knowledge theoretically and methodologically.

In this study, textual analysis was employed to analyze the Douyin video content and its meanings, and core source credibility strategies that Chinese and foreign beauty influencers use to portray themselves to attract Chinese followers to their beauty-related content and presentation.

3.1.1 Textual Analysis

Textual analysis is a qualitative research method typically employed when tackling more challenging, detailed phenomena and attempting to gain a comprehensive understanding of the individual, group, or text being studied (Griffith & Papacharissi, 2010). In many research fields, such as media and cultural studies, textual analysis has been widely used as a method of data collection and analysis (Lekngam, 2019). The study of the short video is also a kind of media and communication studies.

In media and communication research, textual analysis focuses on analyzing media texts or content and the generated meanings. Although we can see part of the meaning of a text on the surface, there is much more to the text than what we see on the surface. Analyzing text can help us analyze and understand other hidden meanings behind the text. We must comprehend the meanings audiences assign to "texts" if we are to comprehend the role of the media in our lives and precisely how its messages contribute to the cultural construction of our worldview (McKee, 2001). Therefore, textual analysis is suitable for this study. This study will adopt textual analysis as the method for data collection and analysis to examine the short video contents to understand the beauty influencers' portrayal of themselves and the construction of core source credibility.

3.2 Population and Sample Selection

This study applied a purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is used because it better matches the sample to the research objectives and enhances the study's rigor and reliability of the data and findings (Campbell, et al., 2020). This study focuses on the Douyin portrayals of top Chinese and foreign beauty influencers in Douyin because famous beauty influencers can be the representatives of overall beauty influencers (population).

In terms of sample selection, the top four most famous Chinese beauty influencers and the top four most famous foreign beauty influencers (see Table 3.1) were selected based on the criteria: being the beauty influencers with popularity, evidenced by the number of Douyin followers, netizen ratings, online attention index, and a combination of relevant data from internet platforms.

Table 3.1: Chinese and Foreign Popular Beauty Influencers in This Study

Chinese Beauty Influencer 1	
Douyin ID:	程十安an
Name/Nickname:	Cheng Shian
Followers:	29.3 million +
Douyin Link:	https://v.douyin.com/rJ1N3qC/
	

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): Chinese and Foreign Popular Beauty Influencers in This Study

Chinese Beauty Influencer 2	
Douyin ID:	骆王宇
Name/Nickname:	Luo Wangyu
Followers:	20.4 million +
Douyin Link:	https://v.douyin.com/rJdy35Y/
	

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): Chinese and Foreign Popular Beauty Influencers in This Study

Chinese Beauty Influencer 3	
Douyin ID:	我是张凯毅
Name/Nickname:	Zhang Kaiyi
Followers:	14.2 million +
Douyin Link:	https://v.douyin.com/rJ8728k/
	

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): Chinese and Foreign Popular Beauty Influencers in This Study

Chinese Beauty Influencer 4	
Douyin ID:	豆豆_Babe
Name/Nickname:	Doudou
Followers:	13.6 million +
Douyin Link:	https://v.douyin.com/rJQtRy2/
	

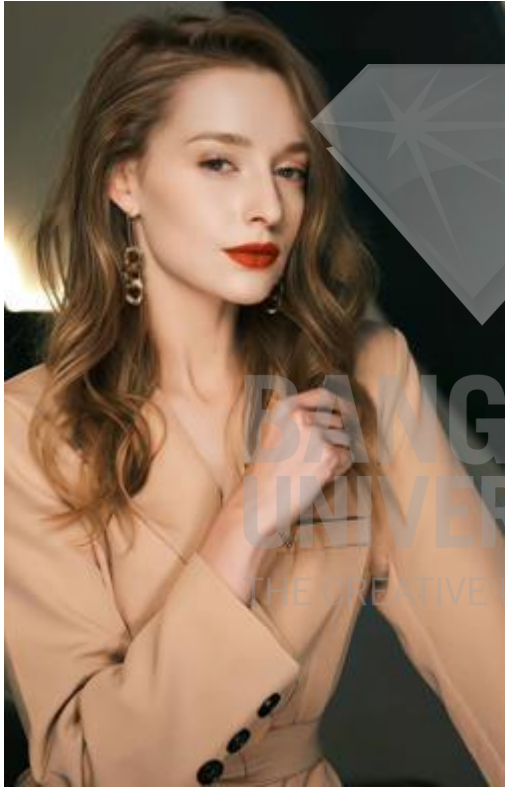

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): Chinese and Foreign Popular Beauty Influencers in This Study

Foreign Beauty Influencer 1 (Italian)	
Douyin ID:	意大利的伯妮
Name/Nickname:	Rossi Boni
Followers:	12.5 million +
Douyin Link:	https://v.douyin.com/rJCNm6u/
	

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): Chinese and Foreign Popular Beauty Influencers in This Study

Foreign Beauty Influencer 2 (Russian)	
Douyin ID:	Anna
Name/Nickname:	Anna
Followers:	6.47 million +
Douyin Link:	https://v.douyin.com/rJCQvr7/
	

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): Chinese and Foreign Popular Beauty Influencers in This Study

Foreign Beauty Influencer 3 (Korean)	
Douyin ID:	韩国欧尼慧敏
Name/Nickname:	Hyemin
Followers:	1.5 million +
Douyin Link:	https://v.douyin.com/rJ4YNxB/
	

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): Chinese and Foreign Popular Beauty Influencers in This Study

Foreign Beauty Influencer 4 (Korean)	
Douyin ID:	宝藏珍妮
Name/Nickname:	Jenny
Followers:	719 thousand
Douyin Link:	https://v.douyin.com/rJXC3wA/
	

As China has many social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Bilibili, Red app, Kwai and Douyin, there are three reasons why this study chose TikTok as the platform to study:

1) According to the survey on "The most frequently used platform by short video users" by iiMedia (2021), Douyin and Kwai are currently the leading platforms in China's short video industry, with Douyin accounting for 45.2% and Kwai accounting for 17.9%. Therefore, Douyin is the most popular short video platform in China.

2) By August 2020, the daily active users of the Chinese version of Douyin have reached 600 million (Choudhury, 2020). According to China's census data in 2020, the total population of China is approximately 1.4 billion (BBC News, 2020). Combining these two data, it is evident that Douyin has a huge number of users in China, and it can be said to be a popular application.

3) iiMedia (2021) showed that the number of short video users in China reached 700 million in 2020, and the short video e-commerce companies mainly rely on the conversion of KOL fans and can best promote the transformation of products such as clothing, leisure snacks and beauty products.

The 10 short videos focusing on beauty content and with the highest likes released by each beauty influencer between November 2021 to November 2022 were chosen as samples to examine. The beauty content in the samples refers to beauty-related video content, such as make-up, skincare, beauty product recommendations, beauty product reviews, the different aspects of presenting beauty and so forth. Finally, a total of 80 videos with the highest likes of each beauty influencer were analyzed.

3.3 Research Instrument

Coding was used for data analysis. One of the most challenging and important parts of qualitative research is the data analysis, and coding is one of the critical stages that adopt to be completed to organize and make sense of textual data (Basit, 2003). The fundamental process of coding entails selecting a coherent section of people's empirical material, such as a word, a paragraph, or a page, and labeling it with a single word or phrase that captures the essence of the content (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Coding is an essential component of the qualitative analytical process and the ways in which researchers dissect their data to produce new information (Elliott, 2018). Coding is a crucial tool in transforming unprocessed qualitative data into an understandable and reliable narrative (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). The coding scheme was adopted as the research instrument in this study. A coding scheme is a collection of codes defined by the words and phrases that researchers use to categorize data segments by topic. The coding scheme of this

research used three dimensions of the source credibility model, including expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, see Table 3.2

Table 3.2: Coding Scheme as a Research Instrument for Qualitative Analysis of Douyin Content

Concept	Source Credibility Markers	Coding Item	Description
Source Credibility	Trustworthiness	Dependable	The content which indicates that the influencers are dependable.
		Honest	The content which indicates that the influencers are honesty.
		Reliable	The content which indicates that the influencers are reliable.
		Sincere	The content which indicates that the influencers are sincere.
		Trustworthy	The content which indicates that the influencers are trustworthy.
	Expertise	Expert	The content which indicates that the influencers are expert.
		Experienced	The content which indicates that the influencers are experienced.
		Knowledgeable	The content which indicates that the influencers are knowledgeable.

(Continued)

Table 3.2 (Continued): Coding Scheme as a Research Instrument for Qualitative Analysis of Douyin Content

Concept	Source Credibility Markers	Coding Item	Description
Source Credibility	Expertise	Qualified	The content which indicates that the influencers are qualified.
		Skilled	The content which indicates that the influencers are skilled.
	Attractiveness	Classy	The content which presents influencers as classy
		Beautiful	The content which presents influencers as beautiful/handsome.
		Elegant	The content which presents influencers as elegant.
		Sexy	The content which presents influencers as sexy.
		Facial	The content that focuses on influencers' facial attractiveness - the face and facial expressions that influencers showed in the videos are attractive (Li & Yin, 2018).

(Continued)

Table 3.2 (Continued): Coding Scheme as a Research Instrument for Qualitative Analysis of Douyin Content

Concept	Source Credibility Markers	Coding Item	Description
Source Credibility	Attractiveness	Body	The content that focuses on influencers' body attractiveness – the attractive body and figure that influencers show in the videos (Li & Yin, 2018).
		Dress	The content that focuses on influencers' dressing attractiveness - the attractive clothes and dressing styles influencers wear in the videos (Li & Yin, 2018).
		Posture	The content that focuses on influencers' posture attractiveness - the attractive gestures that influencers show in the videos (Li & Yin, 2018).

In this coding scheme, the three dimensions and each factor of source credibility were set to answer research questions 1 and 2 of this study. The source credibility was examined by analyzing Douyin videos of each beauty influencer, and a more depth qualitative text analysis was to answer the research question 3.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

In the initial stage, by using the purposive sampling method, Chinese and Foreign beauty influencers were selected through the analysis of the fields covered by the beauty influencers, the number of Douyin followers, popularity, netizen ratings, online attention index, and a combination of relevant data from internet platforms. Among them, there are four Chinese beauty influencers and four foreign beauty influencers. The four foreign beauty influencers included one from Italy, one from Russia, and two from South Korea. Finally, 8 beauty influencers were selected as the target population of this study.

Then, using the purposive sampling method, videos were selected through the beauty contents related videos posted by the mentioned influencers with the highest likes in November 2021 to November 2022. In this study, ten videos were selected from the Douyin account of each beauty influencer. In the end, 80 videos were selected as samples of this study for analysis. The established meanings of the 80 videos were deeply analyzed.

The research on Douyin short videos was based on the ten most-liked videos of the eight selected beauty influencers. All videos were downloaded from the personal Douyin accounts of the eight beauty influencers mentioned above. At the initial stage, the videos were initially viewed, and the video content suitable for this study (beauty-related content) was downloaded. The second step is to watch them in detail, transcribe the relevant text and make notes on the key points. Due to the content being presented as a video, not only spoken and written but also audiovisual text is included in the transcription process. Analysis of the text began after transcription was complete.

3.5 Data Analysis

This study sees Douyin short videos as media text combining multiple modes of communication: audio, visual, and written texts. In analyzing the short videos, this study incorporates the qualitative content analysis to analyze the source credibility construction strategies used in Douyin videos and the meanings conveyed in such representation. Although content analysis has typically been done as a quantitative study, it has also been used as a qualitative form of text analysis (Lekngam, 2019).

Before deeply understanding and analyzing how the influencers portray themselves and the similarities and differentiations between foreign beauty influencers and Chinese beauty influencers' portrayals, the content analysis was used to count the number of presentations of each code to seek the frequency and size of each topic in terms of source credibility.

The fundamental principles of content analysis are objectivity, reliability, and systematicity. Content analysis, which is primarily concerned with the mere description and interpretation of the content in a text, is systematically limited in its ability to go beyond the characteristics of the text (especially established meanings) and provide social and cultural explanations (Lekngam, 2019). To gain a deeper understanding of beauty influencers' presentations, this study will analyze and explain the connection between the content and its meanings. This study, therefore, adopts textual analysis for analyzing short video texts, which differs from written texts in a general sense.

This study aims to have six main understandings of beauty influencers. First, analyze what beauty influencers verbally present in the video to understand the deeper meaning by. Second, explore the content in combination with the beauty influencer's appearance, expressions, body language and gestures. Third, analyze what tactics beauty influencers used to portray themselves. Fourth, analyze from the audience's perspectives how to view the performance of beauty influencers in the video and the meaning of understanding from the video. Therefore, the top audiences' comments on each video were analyzed. Fifth, combine the first four points to analyze why these beauty influencers have become famous and worthy of the audience's trust. Finally, compare Chinese beauty and foreign influencers according to the analysis findings.

In the data analysis process, this study follows the analytical framework based on the conceptions of source credibility and the social construction of reality. Understanding of data begins with knowing and becoming familiar with the data, and proceeds by repeatedly watching short videos in detail and reading and revising the records many times. Then, coding the data by looking through the recorded content to find content related to the research objectives for analysis. At this stage, important research-related content is highlighted. Next, answers to the research questions in this study were found from the highlighted text through qualitative analysis. The final

stage was to categorize and summarize the answers to the questions and interpret the data. The followers' comments and feedback on their analyzed videos were also drawn to explain and support the results of the analysis.



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CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter begins with the descriptions and textual characteristics of Douyin beauty influencers along with providing some audience comments on analyzed Douyin videos to support the results of textual analysis. It is followed by an explanation of the topic of beauty represented through the short videos and the core source credibility strategies that Douyin beauty influencers adopt to present themselves through beauty-related short videos.

In exploring the vibrant landscape of content creation on this platform, this study delves into the nuanced ways these influencers craft their presentations. Following this examination, the chapter systematically explains three fundamental factors crucial to the source credibility construction of each beauty influencer: Trustworthiness, Expertise, and Attractiveness. By dissecting these elements of source credibility construction, this study aims to unravel the intricate strategies Douyin beauty influencers employ in shaping and enhancing their perceived credibility. The findings presented herein offer valuable insights into the deliberate choices made by beauty influencers to establish a rapport with their audience and solidify their standing within the competitive realm of beauty content on Douyin.

4.1 Descriptions and Textual Characteristics of Douyin Beauty Influencers

4.1.1 Cheng Shian (Chinese)

4.1.1.1 The Textual Characteristics of Cheng Shian's Videos

Cheng Shian's video content is mainly based on the knowledge of becoming a beauty, such as makeup tutorials, hairstyle tutorials, product reviews, and product recommendations. Each video of Cheng Shian is an efficient knowledge of becoming beautiful. This kind of beauty content is more attractive to the audiences and helps to improve user stickiness. The common feature of her videos is the use of eye-catching covers, which clearly tell the audiences the topic and main content of the video on the cover content, and it can make the audiences clearer about the content of her videos. There is an example of Cheng Shian's video cover (see Figure 4.1). The Chinese text on the cover means "A natural and daily eye makeup tutorial that can

enlarge your eyes”. Therefore, audiences can easily catch the main topic and content of this video. The cover picture is Cheng Shian’s own picture. Notably, she has only one eye made up and she uses an emoji of a finger to point out her made-up eye to highlight and make audience pay attention on it. Thus, the audiences can easily see how the eye makeup enlarge eyes and it will stimulate the interests of audiences,

Figure 4.1: An example of Cheng Shian’s Video Cover



In her videos, the talking parts come with Chinese subtitles. Subtitles make it easier for audiences to watch the video when it is not convenient to play sound, and reduce the ambiguity caused by some homophones. Her tone and actions in the video are very easy-going and friendly to the audiences. In addition, the whole video is smoothly articulated, the video quality and editing are very professional, and the video content is attractive to the audiences. Her target audience is young Chinese women between 18-35 years old. Her target audiences are interested in beauty knowledge and would like to learn beauty skills through social media. She is a

popular and famous beauty influencer with 29.3 million followers on Douyin. According to the comments and reactions from her audiences, such as “I suggest everyone takes a look at her video about tips for becoming beautiful; after watching her videos, I just want to exclaim really great!” and “Everyone, please be sure to watch Cheng Shian’s beauty videos, I finally learned how to put on false eyelashes!”, audiences really recommend others to watch her videos. It not only presents the acceptance of audiences for her videos, but also reflects the audiences like her videos very much because they think her videos are all practical.

At the beginning of each video, Cheng Shian introduces the topic with words and corresponding images/videos. Her videos always introduce the topic clearly and resonate directly with the audience. For makeup tutorial videos, she starts with a non-makeup face and then adds a picture/video of the makeup face to introduce the topic of this video to teach the audience to make up in this style. For hairstyle tutorial videos, she starts with a before and after comparison of doing the hairstyle to introduce the topic of this video is to teach audiences a new hairstyle/skill. In the video, she uses a combination of words and body language to explain and demonstrate to the audiences her action at the same time. The beauty knowledge she shares not only captures audiences’ needs, but also has practical applications for the audiences in their daily lives. These useful beauty tips and good product recommendations make audiences try to tag their friends’ accounts to learn together, thus greatly increasing the power of communication.

4.1.1.2 Trustworthiness

All of Cheng Shian's videos seem very real and relatable to all audiences. And she treats her audiences as friends in every video she posts. She calls her audiences “*sisters*” and always interacts with audiences in the comments with a friendly tone. She uses herself as a demonstration in most of the videos to show her audiences some proper knowledge and techniques for becoming more beautiful. She pays close attention to the detail in her videos and is sincere in her efforts to pass on her knowledge to audiences. For example, in order to show audiences, the correct way to wash hair, she showed them how to wash hair directly, although she was wearing a T-shirt. Also, she explained it intently; even though foam was on her face, she did not stop explaining. In order to teach the audiences how to do a different type of makeup,

she started with her own face step by step and showed the audiences a comparison of before and after makeup. Besides the content of the videos, the comments from the audience also proved that she is perceived as very sincere, reliable and trustworthy. The comments of Chinese followers under her videos: "Your video is really real, practical and lovable"; "I learned the hairstyle from Cheng Shian's hair tutorial video and it didn't change the hairstyle shape even in gym class, it was really too useful."; "Your videos are all too good and very practical." and "Although I am Russian and there are many different ways of doing makeup, I can learn a lot from you every day." show the audiences' love of her video, and her video is useful.

It also showed her sincerity and authenticity on the side. "It's so sincere and everyday sharing"; "Her video is daily sharing, I like it" and "She sincerely hopes us can become beautiful" shows that audiences think both her and her videos are sincere, and the content of the videos is in line with the real-life situation. "I really like the tone and speed of your voice. You don't make me feel insincere like some other bloggers do" shows that the audiences recognize her sincerity and think her videos are friendly because of the appropriate tone. "I bought almost all the products you recommended, they're really good"; "You recommended skincare products help me a lot, I will buy it again" and "When do you share other good skincare products for this coming season? ", the comments not only show how much this audience love the products she shared in the videos, but also how much her audiences trust her. These comments also reflect that she is reliable and trustworthy for her audiences. "It's so practical, I learned it" shows that the audiences trust her content otherwise they would not learn from the videos. A possible explanation for this also might be that audiences viewed her as reliable. "You really want all girls to be beautiful" shows that audiences praise her, and on the other hand, it shows her sincerity because the audience thought she wants every girl to become beautiful, she treats the audience sincerely from her heart and shares useful beauty knowledge to audiences.

Moreover, there are many comments asking her about other beauty tips, and many audiences tag their friends to watch her videos, proving that audiences like her videos' content. It is also evident from the videos and viewer comments that she consistently delivers reliable and high-quality content, which reflects that she is dependable. Since her videos are basically focused on beauty knowledge and

techniques, audiences can clearly see her actions and changes in the videos as she explains them. Therefore, there is no connection between the content of her videos and honest. In conclusion, Cheng Shian adopts Sincere, Dependable, Reliable and Trustworthy to present herself trustworthiness.

Table 4.1: The summary of analysis for Cheng Shian's trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Trustworthiness	Sincere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video contents. E.g., she pays close attention to the detail in her videos and is sincere in her efforts to pass on her knowledge to audiences - Audiences' comments. E.g., "She sincerely hopes us can become beautiful" - Interactions with audiences
	Dependable	Video contents. E.g., she uses herself as a demonstration in most of the videos to show her audiences some proper knowledge and techniques for becoming more beautiful.
	Reliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video contents. E.g., in order to teach the audience how to do a different type of makeup, she started with her own face step by step and showed the audience a comparison of before and after makeup. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "You really want all girls to be beautiful".
	Trustworthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video contents. E.g., she only recommends products that she has used and found to be good. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "I bought almost all the products you recommended, they're really good".

4.1.1.3 Expertise

Cheng Shian's videos share a lot of knowledge about beauty content and how to become beautiful to the audiences. The authenticity of short videos is important for the credibility of influencers. Fake content, excessive marketing are all signs that the video is not authentic. To ensure the authenticity and reliability of the content of her videos, she has enrolled in a professional makeup training institute named Dongtian Styling School to study the makeup knowledge and thus improve her professionalism and beauty skills.

In all the videos, she shows her expertise and provides demonstrations. For example, in the video she says that "makeup gradation of eye shadow is the most effective way to enlarge the eyes". After she says this statement, she starts to give a demonstration so that it is obvious to the audiences that the way she applies eye shadow magnifies the eyes. Her videos gave the audience a lot of help in practical terms, which made the audiences recognize her expertise even more.

In addition to the content of the video itself, audiences commented underneath the video "You really know what we want" shows her the recognition of audiences to her videos, and also shows she is qualified and expert. "I can only watch your videos for makeup tutorials" reflects from the side that audiences think her videos are expert, so they will only follow her to learn makeup. "Your technique is so good and makes yourself beautiful" shows her expertise and qualification because she can use the technique to make herself looks more beautiful, which also portray her as skilled. "Your videos are so professional", "Your hair looks great, can you give a tutorial on hair style as well" shows that she is qualified and knowledgeable, because if she is not qualified and knowledgeable the audiences will not ask her more techniques about hair style. Most of Cheng Shian's video content focuses on beauty knowledge, and her actual practice is only to show the makeup effect. Also, she didn't tell the audience about her past experience such as she took professional make-up training from the institute in the videos and account introduction. Therefore, it is not evident in the videos that she is experienced in the beauty field. In conclusion, Cheng Shian adopts Skilled, Qualified, Expert and Knowledgeable to present herself as expertise.

Table 4.2: The summary of analysis for Cheng Shian's expertise

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Expertise	Skilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video contents. E.g., the beauty knowledge shares in the videos. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "Your technique is so good and makes yourself beautiful".
	Qualified	Background. She has enrolled in a professional makeup training institute named Dongtian Stylingling School to study the makeup knowledge and thus improve her professionalism and beauty skills.
	Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video contents. E.g., she shows her expertise and provides demonstrations in all the videos. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "Your videos are so professional"
	Knowledgeable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video contents. E.g., the beauty knowledge shares in the videos. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "Your hair looks great, can you give a tutorial on hair style as well"

4.1.1.4 Attractiveness

Most of the content she shows in the videos is about becoming beautiful. These types of content are attractive to many audiences who want to become beautiful and are interested in the beauty field. Cheng Shian is very beautiful and gentle in person. Whether before or after makeup, she looks very beautiful. Therefore, she is facially attractive to audiences. Furthermore, her tone of voice and use of body language in the videos are very gentle and elegant. In addition, the comments below her video, "What are you doing to your beautiful face", "It's so pretty" and "It's really beautiful" show that the audiences praise her beauty, which also means the audiences are attractive by her beauty. "I will use one week to watch all videos you posted", it

not only shows how much this audience loves her videos, but also how much the videos attracted her audiences. "I like you so much, you are so elegant" shows how much audiences love her and how much they recognize her elegance. Regardless of actions, attire, and language, Cheng Shian does not reflect sexy and classy within the content of the videos. In conclusion, Cheng Shian adopts Beautiful, Elegant, Facial and Body attractiveness to present her attractiveness.

Table 4.3: The summary of analysis for Cheng Shian's attractiveness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Attractiveness	Beautiful	- Beautiful appearance in videos. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "Your technique is so good and makes yourself beautiful".
	Elegant	- Video contents. E.g., her tone of voice and use of body language in the videos are very gentle and elegant. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "I like you so much, you are so elegant".
	Facial attractive	- Good looking and good skill for make-up. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "You are so pretty".
	Body attractive	- Video contents. E.g., the demonstration of make-up. - Body language in the videos.

4.1.2 Luo Wangyu (Chinese)

4.1.2.1 The Textual Characteristics of Luo Wangyu's Videos

Luo Wang Yu's videos mainly focus on skincare tutorials, skincare knowledge, product reviews and product recommendations. The content of his videos is basically about skincare related knowledge, and the content is uniform, thus attracting many audiences who interested in skincare. The cover of each of his videos indicates the topic of the video and is easy to understand.

Figure 4.2: An Example of Luo Wangyu's Video Cover



Each of his videos has Chinese subtitles to make the audiences clearer about the content of the video. He looks funny in his videos and is very friendly to his audiences, as he often interacts with audiences in the comments section. He studied at a professional makeup school in France to improve his skincare and makeup expertise. He used to be a makeup artist for TomFord brand which showed that he is experienced. His videos are authentic and have a personalized style. He shares a lot of knowledge to help audiences understand and learn more about non-sponsored skincare products before buying them. The target audience of Luo Wangyu is Chinese young generations. Even though he is male, her target audiences are both male and females, and most of the audiences are female. This indicates that while efforts may be made to attract both genders, the content seems to resonate more strongly with females, leading to a higher proportion of female audiences. He analyzes the ingredients of skincare products and then tells audiences in the video which popular skincare products are problematic and which ones are not worth buying. His Douyin introduction says, "I want my followers to get the most effects out of fewer products."

The knowledge he shares in the video helps audiences to be more discerning in the field of beauty and skincare so that they are not easily misled by the marketing of skincare products and spend money.

He starts each video with one or two sentences of the main content or topic of the video to attract the audiences, and then introduces the theme of the video. For example, in a product introduction video, he will first use one or two sentences to summarize the main effects of the product and the people it is suitable for, and then start to introduce the product. In the video of skincare knowledge, he will first use one or two sentences to introduce the problems people encounter in skincare, and then start to introduce the skincare knowledge to solve these problems. The audience can quickly catch the main content of the video from the beginning of his video, which also attracts the audience very well.

4.1.2.2 Trustworthiness

As he is a non-sponsored reviewer, the content of his videos seems very real and convincing. In the videos, he realistically measures the effectiveness of the products and gives feedback, and he aims to save money for his viewers by discovering beauty products that are good value for money. Nowadays, there are many false propaganda and over-marketing problems in the beauty industry and a beauty influencer like Luo Wangyu who helps audiences avoid unnecessary products, fakes some beauty products, and teaches audiences to be beauty product literacy plays an important role. It is also easy for him to win the audience' trust in this aspect. He buys the current very hot skincare products to use and review. If the product is not good or not useful, he says directly in the video, "not good", "do not buy", "this product is very bad", and so on.

He also gives the corresponding reasons and negative comments such as "the product is not good at all because the ingredients are not safe", "this whitening product has no effect at all because it has only moisturizing ingredients", "don't buy it, it's not worth the price" and so on. He does not promote the product with a clear conscience because it is currently a popular product. The comment below his video: "Beauty influencer like Luo Wangyu will never go out of fashion; he really output useful content with his heart. And he earns money through their character and talent, and his fans will be very sticky", shows the audience's sincere support and trust in

him. "You won't go wrong with being sincere, and I won't lose if I pay for what I like" and "I only buy what you recommend" show that the audiences trust him enough and he is reliable enough. Luo Wangyu's videos show that he is a non-sponsored beauty products reviewer, that's also one of the reasons why he can get many followers and he is dependable. Therefore, Luo Wangyu adopts Sincere, Honest, Trustworthy, Reliable and Dependable to present him as trustworthiness.

Table 4.4: The summary of analysis for Luo Wangyu's trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Trustworthiness	Sincere	- Non-sponsored reviewer - Audiences' comments: E.g., "You won't go wrong with being sincere, and I won't lose if I pay for what I like".
	Honest	Video contents. E.g., honestly review each product with reasons.
	Trustworthy	- Video contents. E.g., he realistically measures the effectiveness of the products and gives feedback. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "Beauty influencer like Luo Wangyu will never go out of fashion; he really output useful content with his heart. And he earns money through their character and talent, and his fans will be very sticky"
	Reliable	Video contents. E.g., he aims to save money for his viewers by discovering beauty products that are good value for money
	Dependable	Audiences' comments. E.g., "I only buy what you recommend".

4.1.2.3 Expertise

Luo Wangyu has the experience that he used to work for the internationally renowned beauty brand TomFord. As a beauty influencer, he has studied in a professional beauty school and has beauty-related work experience, so audiences find him to be an expert in the beauty field. Having relevant experience and background increases his expertise in the beauty field and also indicates that he is experienced and qualified. In addition to relevant work experience, the professionalism of beauty product evaluation can also be demonstrated from the content through daily sharing. Luo Wangyu has completely achieved these points. He is fully qualified in beauty and skincare. Moreover, the skincare knowledge he introduces in his videos is well received by audiences. Many audiences comment under his videos with questions about more skincare knowledge. This reflects his expert and knowledgeable from the side. The editing and production of his videos also look very professional and attractive to the audiences. Despite the fact that he has specialized knowledge in the field of beauty, there is no enough points inside his videos that particularly highlight the fact that he is skilled in terms of makeup, skincare, and other beauty practices. This is because most of his content is about skincare and product reviews, among other things, and this video content does not reflect that he is skilled. Therefore, Luo Wangyu adopts *Expert*, *Knowledgeable*, *Experienced* and *Qualified* to present himself expertise.

Table 4.5: The summary of analysis for Luo Wangyu's Expertise

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Expertise	Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Background. Working experiences in beauty filed and learning experiences in professional make-up institute. - The professionalism of beauty product. - Professional editing and production of his videos.

(Continued)

Table 4.5 (Continued): The summary of analysis for Luo Wangyu's Expertise

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Expertise	Qualified	- Working and training background. - Qualified in beauty and skincare.
	Experienced	- Background. Working experience in TomFord. - Video contents. E.g., the professionalism of beauty product evaluation
	Knowledgeable	- Video contents. E.g., the beauty knowledge shares in the videos. - Audiences' comments. The skincare knowledge he introduces in his videos is well-received by audiences.

4.1.2.4 Attractiveness

As a male beauty influencer, his overall appearance looks very good. The comments below his videos, "you are becoming more handsome" and "your skin is so good", also show that he is considered handsome and has very well-maintained skin. Therefore, his face is attractive to the audiences. He has a hand pointing out the skincare knowledge in the video and demonstrates the correct skincare techniques and steps to the audiences. He makes full use of body language to help explain himself and gives the audiences a more visual experience of learning about skincare because audiences can see clearly and have enough understanding with the beauty skills. This shows that he is attractive to the audiences on body language and appearance. He speaks in a very soft tone in the videos showing that he has a good personality, he looks very elegant and knowledgeable when he combines his personality and body language to show the video content. Audiences' comments also reflect this point: "You speak so softly, and I really enjoy watching your videos", "Your body language helped me incorporate the video content better", and "Your body language use helps me to see the correct way to do skincare". Therefore, Luo Wangyu uses *Facial and Body Attractiveness* and *Elegant* to present his attractiveness.

Table 4.6: The Summary of Analysis for Luo Wangyu's Attractiveness

	Factors	Analysis to Approve the Factors
Attractiveness	Elegant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soft tone. - Video contents. E.g., combines his personality and body language. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "I like you so much, you are so elegant".
	Facial attractive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good appearance. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "you are becoming more handsome".
	Body attractive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video contents. E.g., he makes full use of body language to help explain himself and gives the audiences a more visual experience of learning about skincare because audiences can see clearly and have enough understanding with the beauty skills. - Body language in the videos. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "Your body language use help me to see the correct way to do skincare".

4.1.3 Zhang Kaiyi (Chinese)

4.1.3.1 The Textual Characteristics of Zhang Kaiyi's Videos

Zhang Kaiyi's videos mainly focus on product recommendations, product reviews, makeup tutorials, beauty knowledge sharing and daily outfits sharing. Zhang Kaiyi advocates that all her videos are "just sharing, no advertising". All her video covers use eye-catching words to highlight the theme of the video.

Figure 4.3: An example of Zhang Kaiyi's Video Cover



All of her videos have Chinese subtitles. Even though she speaks fast, audiences can also understand the content of the video easily. But she is different from other beauty influencers' style; she is very excited in each video and speaks very loudly. She is calling out and convincing the audience in her unique way -showing her straightforward and domineering personality in the videos. She also attracts many followers according to her character. Zhang Kaiyi treats all her audiences as friends, and all her product recommendation videos are about recommending products which she thinks are really good after using the products. Also, she really wants her fans as "friends" to be able to buy valuable and high-quality beauty products. She shares knowledge about beauty and popular products at good prices through short videos to meet the shopping needs of different consumer groups, while also allowing them to learn some beauty tips and techniques through the videos. She starts each video with a very excited tone; she speaks loudly and fast and sometimes looks like a product promoter in shopping mall. She looks very excited with the body language she uses. She introduces the main content of the video, then introduces the importance of the content and urges audiences to keep watching.

4.1.3.2 Trustworthiness

Zhang Kaiyi's product recommendations mostly focus on Chinese brands and new products, many of which may have yet to be well-known before. She is very sincere with the audience. Before recommending or reviewing a product, she had tried it herself for a long time. For example, she uses a set of skincare products for four months before sharing her views with the audience. If she encounters a considered unpleasant product or has allergies or discomfort after using it, she tells the audience frankly and reminds them not to buy the product. This truthful, sincere and outspokenly character can make audiences feel that Zhang Kaiyi is trustworthy. The comments below her video, "Zhang Kaiyi said it works, so I'll try it," "I bought it, and it works very well on my face", and "The products you recommend are good and trustworthy," all show the audiences' trust in her. This indicates that the audience trusts her and thinks she is reliable and dependable. Therefore, Zhang Kaiyi adopts Trustworthy, Honest, Reliable, Dependable and Sincere to present herself with trustworthiness.

Table 4.7: The summary of analysis for Zhang Kaiyi's trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis to Approve the Factors
Trustworthiness	Sincere	Sincere with the audience. E.g., before recommending or reviewing a product, she had tried it herself for a long time.
	Honest	Video contents. E.g., honestly share the feedback of products.
	Trustworthy	- Truthful, sincere and outspokenly character in videos. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "The products you recommend are good and trustworthy"

(Continued)

Table 4.7 (Continued): The summary of analysis for Zhang Kaiyi's trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis to Approve the Factors
Trustworthiness	Reliable	Video contents. E.g., the videos are authentic and recommend the product from the audience's point of view.
	Dependable	Audiences' comments. E.g., "Zhang Kaiyi said it works, so I'll try it".

4.1.3.3 Expertise

Zhang Kaiyi said in the video that she learned makeup techniques from many celebrity makeup artists. After sufficient practice, she has shared her knowledge and experience of these makeup techniques with the audience. The audience recognizes Zhang Kaiyi's professionalism, evident in comments such as, "Your makeup skills and techniques are great" and "You do such beautiful makeup." They acknowledge her training with celebrity makeup artists, stating, "Celebrities' makeup artists taught you their makeup skills, you teach us your makeup skills. So, we are equivalent to having the same professional makeup skills as the makeup artists of the celebrities, thank you." The audience's admiration for Zhang Kaiyi's makeup expertise is clear in their supportive and appreciative comments.

Besides, the makeup techniques taught by the celebrity's makeup artists themselves are very professional in the eyes of the audience, which also side-by-side reflects that Zhang Kaiyi is an expert in sharing makeup tutorials. She has accumulated relevant experience after a long time of product trials and reviews, and in the video, she knows how to show the advantages and disadvantages of the products and how she feels about using them. She is also considered skilled and qualified when it comes to product recommendations. Audiences view her as skilled and qualified in providing product recommendations, as evidenced by comments such as, "I've bought all the products you've recommended, and every single one of them has worked great. You are quite qualified when it comes to product recommendations." Another comment highlights her engaging approach, stating, "You are so engaging when you recommend products; what is it about you that keeps me wanting to buy them?"

The audience expresses a preference for her honesty, noting, "With so many beauty influencers, I think you are the most qualified to recommend beauty products because you always tell it like it is." Overall, the comments underscore the audience's trust in her expertise in recommending beauty products. Therefore, Zhang Kaiyi adopts Expert, Qualified, Skilled and Experienced to show herself expertise.

Table 4.8: The summary of analysis for Zhang Kaiyi's expertise

	Factors	Analysis to Approve the Factors
Expertise	Expert	The makeup techniques taught by the celebrity's makeup artists themselves are very professional in the eyes of the audience, which also side-by-side reflects that Zhang Kaiyi is an expert in sharing makeup tutorials.
	Qualified	- Learned makeup techniques from many famous makeup artists - Audiences' comments. E.g., "With so many beauty influencers, I think you are the most qualified to recommend beauty products because you always tell it like it is."
	Experienced	- She has accumulated relevant experience after a long time of product trials and reviews. - Video contents. E.g., she knows how to show the advantages and disadvantages of the products and how she feels about using them.
	Skilled	Video contents. E.g., she has shared her knowledge and experience of these makeup techniques with the audience.

4.1.3.4 Attractiveness

Although the audience commented that "Zhang Kaiyi's looks are not that beautiful compared to some other beauty influencers, she has good make-up skills and

makes her looks differently” and “Although you're not exactly stunning looking, I just especially enjoy watching your videos”. Zhang Kaiyi has her own unique style and character in her videos to attract the audience. In each video, she uses a lot of body language and posture in addition to an excited tone, which not only shows that she really wants the audience to watch the important content of the video sincerely but also shows her own unique style of attracting the audience. In addition, she has great dressing skills. She also posts videos about her daily wear and has gained recognition from the audience, so she is attractive in dressing. Therefore, Zhang Kaiyi adopts Body, Posture, and dress attractiveness to present her attractiveness.

Table 4.9: The summary of analysis for Zhang Kaiyi’s attractiveness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Attractiveness	Dress attractive	- Video contents. The daily wear sharing. - Outfits in videos.
	Posture attractive	Posture used in videos.
	Body attractive	Body language used in the videos.

4.1.4 Doudou (Chinese)

4.1.4.1 The Textual Characteristics of Doudou’s Videos

Doudou's videos mainly focus on makeup tutorials, skincare knowledge sharing, product reviews and product recommendations. Her videos are mainly targeted at young women and some men with skincare needs. Her followers are those who mostly have makeup and skincare needs. All her videos have her own specific video story structures for different types of video content. For product recommendation and product review videos, she first shows the product, then introduces the product in detail and analyzes the ingredients and the people for whom the product is suitable. At the end, she shows the use of the products and gives the audiences her experience and suggestions. For the makeup tutorial video, she first introduces the characteristics and style of the makeup, then introduces the cosmetics needed, and then demonstrates makeup steps in detail. Finally, she shows what the makeup looks like afterwards.

The main content and topics of her videos are closely related to our lives and can easily resonate with the audiences. The cover of each of her videos clearly shows the topic of the video, and audiences interested in the relevant content can directly click in to watch it.

Figure 4.4: An example of Doudou's video cover



Doudou's titles are strictly controlled by limited words, so that they are concise and catch the audience's attention through keywords. For example, "affordable makeup" "dry skin" and "summer sunscreen". Each of her videos is subtitled, which makes her content clearer. In addition, she uses distinguishable calligraphic styles and colors to mark the key points and keywords in her videos, which allows audiences to get a better understanding of what her videos are about. Audiences can also use her videos to get the knowledge and products they want for makeup and skincare.

Figure 4.5: An Example of Doudou's Video by Using Different Calligraphic Styles and Colors



4.1.4.1 Trustworthiness

Doudou's appears in her daily videos usually without make-up at the beginning, with a casual at-home look, and she dresses more casually compared with other influencers. This enhances her friendliness and to a certain extent her audiences' trust in her because people who are approachable in their daily lives are more likely to speak in a believable way. Since most of the influencers keep their most beautiful side on social media platforms, they are reluctant to show their daily state to the audience. This way the audience will always have the best side of them in their mind, making them think that there is a gap between them. Therefore, it also reflects her affinity and brings her closer to the audience.

Her target audiences mostly are young women who want to learn beauty knowledge and want to choose good beauty products. Thus, the content of her videos is in line with the concerns of her target audience and the beauty knowledge explained in the videos together with her own demonstrations is convincing and she is trustworthy. Not only does she share her knowledge of beauty in the video, but she also demonstrates it herself to the audience. For example, in the make-up videos, she explains the steps clearly and teaches the audiences step by step; in the product-sharing videos, she uses the products herself and shows the audiences the instant

results after using them. From the content of her videos, she treats the audience very sincerely, and each of her videos is very careful and attentive in detail. Each of her videos is not easy to produce, with detail in the video copy, content, presentation angles, explanations and keyword highlighting. When audiences leave comments that they want to watch other topics or content, she will prepare other topics and records videos to satisfy the audiences. She makes sure that she really puts her heart and soul into making good videos and meeting the needs of her audiences.

In her videos, she teaches audiences how to apply makeup step by step and patiently recommends products according to their ingredients and the people they are suitable for. Besides, audiences' comment shows that she is dependable, reliable, and trustworthy. For examples, "Ok, I'm gonna get ready to buy! With all the beauty influencers out there, I only trust your recommendations!", "OMG, watching your videos is addictive. Not only is it addictive to watch, but it addictive for me to buy", and "Doudou is very reliable and everything she recommends is good to use for me." Therefore, Doudou adopts Dependable, Reliable, Sincere, and Trustworthy to present herself as trustworthiness.

Table 4.10: The Summary of Analysis for Doudou's Trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Trustworthiness	Sincere	Video contents. E.g., she treats the audience very sincerely in videos, and each of her videos is very careful and attentive in detail.
	Trustworthy	- Video contents. E.g., the beauty knowledge explained in the videos together with her own demonstrations is convincing and she is trustworthy. - Audiences' comments.

(Continued)

Table 4.10 (Continued): The Summary of Analysis for Doudou's Trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Trustworthiness	Reliable	- Video contents. E.g., Each of her videos is not easy to produce, with detail in the video copy, content, presentation angles, explanations and keyword highlighting. - Puts her heart and soul into making good videos and meeting the needs of her audiences.
	Dependable	Audiences' comments. E.g., "Ok, I'm gonna get ready to buy! With all the beauty influencers out there, I only trust your recommendations!"

4.1.4.2 Expertise

Doudou's videos provide viewers with much beauty-related knowledge; she is knowledgeable. Her video quality is high in editing, and the content is also very professional. She is very expert in her video, whatever video editing or content. From her explanation and content in the video, it can see that she is very experienced and skilled in the beauty field. She can clearly explain the products and makeup techniques according to the focus so that the audience can learn more about beauty knowledge. The comments below her video: "I think I have learned the skills. You teach very carefully.", "Your tips are so practical!" and some audience tag friends to learn beauty knowledge from her are from side to show that she is qualified and trustworthy. Therefore, Doudou adopts Expert, Knowledgeable, Experienced, Qualified and Skilled to present herself as expertise.

Table 4.11: The Summary of Analysis for Doudou's Expertise

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Expertise	Expert	Video quality is high in editing, and the content are also very professional
	Qualified	Enough knowledge in beauty field.
	Experienced	- Video contents. E.g., she is experienced in the beauty field. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "I think I have learned the skills. You teach very carefully."
	Skilled	Video contents. E.g., clearly explain the products and makeup techniques according to the focus so that the audience can learn more about beauty knowledge.
	Knowledgeable	Video contents. E.g., provides viewers with much beauty-related knowledge.

4.1.4.3 Attractiveness

Doudou is very gentle in the video and her demeanor is very elegant and classy by her personality and behaviors. She also speaks in a very gentle and affectionate tone in the video. She has a beautiful and lovely look and speaks with eloquence. She is expressive in her explanations and uses a combination of body language and words. The comments below her video: "What kind of boy is worthy of her beauty", "You are very good looking" and "You are too beautiful" directly reflect the audience's recognition of her beauty. The audience expresses admiration for Doudou's gentleness and elegance, as seen in comments such as, "Doudou is too gentle and elegant" and "I like your personality in your videos, you are so gentle when you speak and your behaviors are so elegant." These comments reflect the audience's affection and appreciation for her graceful and refined demeanor. Therefore, Doudou adopts Facial and body attractiveness, Beautiful, Classy and Elegant to portray herself as attractiveness.

Table 4.12: The Summary of Analysis for Doudou's Attractiveness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Attractiveness	Beautiful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beautiful and cute looking. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "You are too beautiful".
	Facial attractive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good looking. - Good make-up skills.
	Body attractive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Body language used in the videos.
	Elegant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personality in videos speaks in a very gentle and affectionate tone in the video. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "Doudou is too gentle and elegant"
	Classy	Classy by her personality and behaviors.

4.1.5 Rossi Boni (Italian)

4.1.5.1 The Textual Characteristics of Rossi Boni's Videos

Rossi Boni's videos are mainly presented in the form of storytelling with her daily life Vlog, and her beauty-related videos are mainly focused on makeup tutorials, product recommendations and product reviews. Although she is a foreigner, she totally speaks Chinese and uses Chinese subtitles to explain in her videos. Every video starts with her own personal experience stories, then to introduce the main topic of the video. Each of her videos has Chinese subtitles and keywords are marked with different color words and enlargements.

Figure 4.6: An example of Boni's video using different colors and enlarge words in Chinese to show the keywords



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Most of her videos start from her daily life, such as the conversation with her husband, daily sharing, part-time work, and so on. Although there are many storytelling lines in her videos, the audiences may catch the main point of her videos very well. Because she needs makeup and skincare in her daily life, she needs to go outside most of the time and put on makeup. Sometimes, she does her makeup at home, in the car, and in the studio. Her style of video content also reflects her intimacy and is closer to the audience's real life.

4.1.5.2 Trustworthiness

Because Rossi Boni's videos include stories from her personal experiences, she is very authentic in her videos. Unlike other beauty influencers, she also shows in her videos the things she encountered as a foreigner in China through the cultural differences between China and the West in a humorous way. As she has

lived in China for a long time and has a Chinese husband, she shares these cultural differences as a story. Therefore, she is very honest in sharing her own experiences and daily life in her videos. The stories she inserts in her videos are things from her everyday life, and she starts each video with a veiled appearance, which makes the audience feel friendly; it's very close and not distant from the audience. Her videos are very close to ordinary people's lives, just like the trivial things the audiences encounter in their own lives. It is also because of the storytelling in her videos that her videos give audiences a feeling that she is trustworthy and reliable. By doing this, she inserts beauty-related content from the storyline and the stories all develop naturally. She has personally used all the products that appear in the videos. The audience can see some of the empty cosmetic bottles. This adds to her credibility because some beauty influencers are just recommending products to make money.

Audience comments like "You told the truth", and "I like honest people like you" indicate perceived Boni's honesty. Statements such as "The products you recommend are really good and worth buying," along with requests like "Where do you buy the products? Can you share the links?" reflect the audience's trust in her. Another comment states, "Before I bought it, I thought it was not as good as you said; after I bought it, all I can say is thanks! I will only trust you from now on!". These comments collectively indicate that Boni is trustworthy and reliable in the eyes of the audience. Therefore, the results indicate that Rossi Boni adopts Sincere, Honest, Trustworthy and Reliable to portray herself as trustworthiness.

Table 4.13: The summary of analysis for Rossi Boni's trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis To Approve The Factors
Trustworthiness	Sincere	- Video contents. E.g., share her daily experience and life. - Friendly treats audiences.

(Continued)

Table 4.13 (Continued): The summary of analysis for Rossi Boni's trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis To Approve The Factors
Trustworthiness	Trustworthy	- Video contents. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "Before I bought it, I thought it was not as good as you said; after I bought it, all I can say is thanks! I will only trust you from now on!".
	Reliable	Video contents. E.g., She has personally used all the products that appear in the videos.
	Honest	- Video contents. E.g., she is very honest in sharing her own experiences and daily life in her videos. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "I like honest people like you"

4.1.5.3 Expertise

Rossi Boni used to be an international supermodel, and her profession gives her the basis to be a beauty influencer. The comparison between before and after make-up in her videos directly reflects her experience and skills in make-up. Therefore, the videos show she is skilled. Her explanations in the product reviews and product recommendation videos are also very expert. The results reveal that her videos cover beauty related-product knowledge since she has knowledge about beauty product ingredient analysis. Not only does she explain how to use the products and how she feels about them, but she also analyzes products in terms of their ingredients. It also indicates that she is knowledgeable.

Audiences can directly understand the information of the products and the applicable people from her product introduction, so that they can choose the beauty products that really suit them. Therefore, Rossi Boni adopts Skilled, knowledgeable, Experienced and Expert to present herself as expertise.

Table 4.14: The summary of analysis for Rossi Boni's expertise

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Expertise	Expert	Video contents. E.g., share the make-up skills and knowledge.
	Experienced	- Video contents. E.g., she is experienced in make-up. - She used to be an international supermodel, and her profession gives her the basis to be a beauty influencer.
	Skilled	- Video contents. E.g., the comparison between before and after make-up - She has knowledge about beauty product ingredient analysis
	Knowledgeable	Video contents. E.g., not only does she explain how to use the products and how she feels about them, but she also analyzes products in terms of their ingredients.

4.1.5.4 Attractiveness

With her fair skin, blonde hair and light green eyes, Rossi Boni's physical appearance makes her particularly beautiful and attractive. The comment below her video, "She is so beautiful; her eyes are so beautiful." shows the audience her beautiful appearance and facial attractiveness. Her expressions and body language in the video are rich because she used a lot of facial expressions and body language in the video to show the products or the make-up, and she is very active and explain clearly and in detail. She shows body attraction to the audiences. Therefore, Rossi Boni adopts Beautiful, Facial and Body Attractiveness to portray her attractiveness.

Table 4.15: The summary of analysis for Rossi Boni's attractiveness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Attractiveness	Beautiful	- Physical appearance makes her particularly beautiful and attractive. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "She is so beautiful; her eyes are so beautiful."
	Facial attractive	- Good looking. - Facial expressions used in the video. - Good make-up skills.
	Body attractive	Body language used in the videos.

4.1.6 Anna (Russian)

4.1.6.1 The Textual Characteristics of Anna's Videos

Unlike other beauty influencer, Anna's videos mainly focus on cross-dressing, makeup, and lip-synching. She occasionally adds some product introductions and recommendations to her videos. All her videos have no spoken words or verbal explanations, and the product introduction videos only have captioned explanations. Most of her videos use Chinese subtitles only, and some videos use both Chinese and English subtitles. However, she is able to highlight the features of beauty products well enough in her own voiceless way with background music and sound effects. For example, when she introduces Estee Lauder's foundation, she adds subtitles to write about her experience while using it.

As Douyin cannot automatically translate subtitles from other languages to Chinese, non-Chinese influencers must add Chinese subtitles by themselves. Although she is a foreigner, she uses Chinese for all the subtitles and introductions in the video when she edits them. To highlight the foundation's 'lack of fear of sweat', she performs boxing exercises and gives close-ups of her face in the video. Despite being beauty product advertising, her videos always give a comfortable and good watching experience.

4.1.6.2 Trustworthiness

Anna's video content relies on non-verbal elements, primarily focusing on her skin condition and makeup appearance. Despite not providing verbal explanations, the visual representation of her skin and makeup in the videos serves as a compelling aspect of her presentation. The appeal lies in the viewer's being able to observe the results firsthand. Anna's trustworthiness as a beauty influencer is evident in her ability to showcase the effectiveness of beauty and skincare products through the visual outcomes on her own skin. The non-verbal communication in her videos contributes to building trust with the audience, as they can visually assess the impact of the products she recommends based on the results she achieves in her videos. Her video footage changes with the content and her videos are very expressive. Her eyes, expressions, and movements inside the video are very up tempo and can be a great experience visually. The sincerity in her videos is particularly emphasized through the effective combination of footage and content, including the dynamic changes in video footage aligned with the content being presented. Although there are some advertisements in her videos, they seem to not affect followers' perception of her trustworthiness as part of influencer endorsements. Evidently, the audience's comments also show that she is trustworthy, despite the fact that she did some advertisements - such as "You are so exquisite that if you advertised all the items that appear in your videos, I would buy them all.", "You are so perfect to be an ambassador for international beauty brands, especially Estee Lauder.", "If you endorse Estee Lauder, I'll switch all my beauty brands to Estee Lauders." The audience's comments also indicate she is reliable and dependable. Therefore, Anna adopts Trustworthy, Reliable, Dependable and Sincere to present her trustworthiness.

Table 4.16: The Summary of Analysis for Anna’s Trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Trustworthiness	Sincere	Video contents. E.g., the effective combination of footage and content, including the dynamic changes in video footage aligned with the content being presented.
	Trustworthy	- Video contents. E.g., audiences can visually assess the impact of the products she recommends based on the results she achieves in her videos. - Audiences’ comments. E.g., “You are so exquisite that if you advertised all the items that appear in your videos, I would buy them all”.
	Reliable	Video contents. E.g., the visual representation of her skin and makeup in the videos.
	Dependable	Video contents. E.g., she is evident in her ability to showcase the effectiveness of beauty and skincare products through the visual outcomes on her own skin.

4.1.6.3 Expertise

Anna's videos are very professional in production, editing, picture quality and video style. All her videos in terms of video quality and storytelling techniques are similar to international brand commercials. In addition, her makeup, pose, and the way she presents herself in the video all show her expertise since she is a model by profession, so she is very skilled when she shows herself in the video. Her model profession can indicate her beauty experience. As she is a very professional model, she also has enough beauty experience especially in make-up which shows that she is

experienced. Audiences can also see her make-up skills through her videos directly. Therefore, Anna used Experienced, Expert and Skilled to present her expertise.

Table 4.17: The summary of analysis for Anna’s expertise

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Expertise	Experienced	- Her model profession can indicate her beauty experience. - Good make-up skills and experience.
	Expert	- Videos are professional in production, editing, picture quality and video style. - Video contents. E.g., makeup, pose, and the way she presents herself in the video.
	Skilled	Video contents. E.g., the way she shows herself in the video.

4.1.6.4 Attractiveness

Anna has the standard Western beauty look with white skin and brown curly hair, which makes her look very elegant. Some audiences said, “You’re so classy and elegant” and “Your beautiful face makes me feel surprised’ in her video comments. Her overall style looks highly luxurious yet sexy; some examples are as follows.

Figure 4.7: Examples of Anna's luxurious style in the videos



She presents herself as classy and elegant like a high-end brand ambassador of Estee Lauder.

Figure 4.8: Examples of Anna's Estee Lauder vibe in the videos



Therefore, the audience also called her “Estee Lauder sister”. The comments below her video: "My first impression of her is not beauty, but nobility and elegance" showed that her nobility and elegance were recognized by the audience, "Sister is really beautiful", "You are so beautiful, it's a pity that you don't become an actress" and "OMG, her features are so good" show that audiences are attracted and impressed by her beauty. Because she does not speak in the videos, her body language and physical expressions are very powerful by using a lot of facial expressions, body language and movements. Her facial expressions, body language and movements appeal to the audience. She has a lot of videos with cross-dressing content, which means the videos have two or more definitely different styles of dressing and makeup, and her makeup and dress are very attractive after the cross-dressing.

Figure 4.9: An Example of Anna's cross-dressing



The audience's comments such as "You are so sexy" and "The clothes you wear are so sexy" also show that she is perceived as sexy in the videos. Therefore, Anna uses Attractive Facial, Body, Posture, Beautiful, Classy, Elegant, Sexy and Dressing to present her attractiveness.

Table 4.18: The summary of analysis for Anna's attractiveness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Attractiveness	Beautiful	- Her physical appearance makes her attractive. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "Your beautiful face makes me feel surprised".
	Facial attractive	- High-end looking. - Facial expressions used in the video.
	Body attractive	Body language used in the video.
	Posture attractive	Posture used in the videos.

(Continued)

Table 4.18 (Continued): The summary of analysis for Anna’s attractiveness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Attractiveness	Dress attractive	Dressing styles in the video.
	Elegant	- Western beauty looks with white skin and brown curly hair, which makes her look very elegant. - Looks like a high-end brand ambassador.
	Sexy	- Video contents. - Audiences’ comments. E.g., “You are so sexy”.
	Classy	- Video contents. - Looks like a high-end brand ambassador.

4.1.7 Hyemin (Korean)

4.1.7.1 The Textual Characteristics of Hyemin’s Videos

Hyemin's videos mainly focus on product recommendations, product reviews, makeup tutorials, and beauty knowledge sharing. Her video covers are also clearly written with the keywords of the videos, but the difference is that some of her covers are bilingual (Chinese and Korean).

Figure 4.10: An Example of Hyemin's bilingual cover



The primary language she uses in her videos is Chinese for both written texts and speaking. However, she occasionally intersperses a few lines of Korean in her videos. Although she speaks some Korean sentences, she makes all the subtitles in Chinese because her target audience is Chinese. She uses Chinese introductions to make it easier for audiences to understand the main content of the video. The bilingual uses are not only conveying to the audience that she is Korean, but also explaining in a language that the audience can understand and enhance a sense of intimacy. She is also exporting some Korean culture such as the situations that Korean girls need to make-up in the video as well as beauty tips for Korean girls in terms of becoming beautiful that Chinese followers can apply it by themselves. She also highlights in the video the different perceptions and behaviors of Koreans compared to Chinese people about becoming beautiful. For example, Korean girls think that the whiter their skin is the better, so they like to use a white base for their makeup. In contrast, Chinese girls think that the more natural the color of their skin is the better, so they do their makeup with a foundation that suits their skin tone.

4.1.7.2 Trustworthiness

Hyemin is particularly approachable in the video. When she makes product recommendations, she explains the reasons for her recommendations and analyzes the ingredients of the products. The products she recommends to the Chinese audiences are famous in Korea or many Korean girls like to use them. And as mentioned in her videos, all the products have very good reputation and ingredients. The audience's comments show their trust in Hyemin, such as "I purchased the product in your video immediately after watching it", and "I have the money ready! Are there any other products you can recommend?". It indicates the audiences perceive Hyemin as reliable, dependable and trustworthy. Not only does she recommend good products to audiences, but she also shares some knowledge/facts about Korean cosmetics that audiences should learn in the videos. For example, many Korean cosmetics popular in China are unknown or widely used by Koreans. The content of her videos increases the audience's trust from the side. Therefore, Hyemin uses Reliable, Dependable and Trustworthy to present herself as trustworthy.

Table 4.19: The summary of analysis for Hyemin's trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Trustworthiness	Trustworthy	- Video contents. E.g., when she makes product recommendations, she explains the reasons for her recommendations and analyzes the ingredients of the products. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "I have the money ready! Are there any other products you can recommend?"
	Reliable	Video contents. E.g., all the products have very good reputation and ingredients

(Continued)

Table 4.19 (Continued): The summary of analysis for Hyemin’s trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
	Dependable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video contents. E.g., recommend good products to audiences. - Audiences’ comments. E.g., “I purchased the product in your video immediately after watching it”.

4.1.7.3 Expertise

Hyemin runs her own Korean cosmetics shop. Since this commercial role in the beauty industry may affect her trustworthiness, she uses her expertise and knowledge to balance it. She knows a lot about Korean cosmetics and skin care products as she is Korean. Korean cosmetics have a lot of good products in the hearts of Chinese people, which is related to the Chinese people's love for Korean cosmetics and perceptions. Her long experience in running Korean cosmetics shop also shows that she is very experienced and knowledgeable about Korean beauty products. Thus, she knows many products that are famous and popular in Korea, and she will choose them to recommend and promote for a commercial purpose to Chinese audiences. Chinese audiences are attracted by their love for Korean beauty products and her expertise in beauty products. In her videos, she recommends many products that Koreans love and the products have good reputations and also shows some products and techniques that Koreans prefer in her videos. Therefore, Hyemin uses knowledgeable, Expert and Experienced to present herself as expertise - a Korean beauty products expert.

Table 4.20: The Summary of Analysis for Hyemin's Expertise

Expertise	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
	Experienced	- Her long experience in running Korean cosmetics shop. - Experiences in beauty field.
	Expert	- Video contents. E.g., the products sharing. - Expertise in Korean beauty products.
	Knowledgeable	Video contents. E.g., she recommends many products that Koreans love and the products have good reputations and also shows some products and techniques that Koreans prefer in her videos.

4.1.7.4 Attractiveness

Although Hyemin is non-Chinese, she has very skilled makeup skills that Chinese audiences like and accept. After makeup, Hyemin looks very beautiful. The comments below her video, "Oni, you are so beautiful.", "I think you look good." shows that she is attractive to the audience in terms of beauty. Her explanation in the video is very meticulous and detailed, with a combination of verbal and body language in each video so that the audience can better understand the key points in her videos. She also appeals to the audience through her body language. Therefore, Hyemin uses Beautiful, Facial and Body Attractive to present her attractiveness.

Table 4.21: The summary of analysis for Hyemin's attractiveness

Attractiveness	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
	Beautiful	- Looks very beautiful. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "Oni, you are so beautiful".
	Facial attractive	- Good looking.
	Body attractive	Body language used in the video.

4.1.8 Jenny (Korean)

4.1.8.1 The Textual Characteristics of Jenny's Videos

Jenny's videos mainly focus on product recommendations, product reviews, beauty knowledge sharing, outfits, hair tutorials and makeup tutorials. As a Korean, even though she speaks Mandarin with a heavy Korean accent, she sounds very cute and gives the audience a sense of intimacy. Jenny sometimes speaks a few words or sentences in Korean in her videos, but they are always subtitled in Chinese.

Figure 4.11: An Example of Jenny's video subtitle



The cover of Jenny's videos is clear and shows the audience the main content of the whole video with keywords.

Figure 4.12: An Example of Jenny's video cover



Jenny's videos mainly focus on the daily beauty routine behaviors of Korean girls and provide audiences with knowledge and tutorials on beauty. Most of her videos start with "Korean girls", such as "What are the real Korean girls' favorite face masks?" She has also shown "Tips for Korean girls to get rid of acne marks" and "What is the favorite makeup look of Korean girls". She delivered the common beauty knowledge of Korean girls to the Chinese audiences, which not only let them know more practical tips without commercial purpose in terms of promoting Korean beauty products, but also brought the Chinese audiences closer to the Korean beauty culture.

4.1.8.2 Trustworthiness

Jenny is genuine and sincere in the video, and audiences can easily find that she really wants to teach audiences about how to become beautiful in the video. She uses an excited tone in the video; it sounds like a good friend has found some treasure and wants to share it with others immediately. The audience's comments under her videos also approve of this, such as "I already know how you feel about making us beautiful" and "Ok, I got it. I will start doing it now."

She is also very objective and honest in her review of the products. The results show that she objectively describes the pros and cons of the products in the video, and she straightforwardly tells the audience about the products that are not working well. She is very sincere with her audiences, even though she is Korean, she tries her best to speak Chinese in her videos. Therefore, Jenny uses Trustworthy, Sincere and Honest to present herself with trustworthiness.

Table 4.22: The summary of analysis for Jenny's trustworthiness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Trustworthiness	Trustworthy	- Video contents. E.g., she objectively describes the pros and cons of the products in the video, and she straightforwardly tells the audience about the products that are not working well.
	Sincere	- Video contents. E.g., Sincerely in the video to teach how to become more beautiful. - She is sincere with audiences. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "I already know how you feel about making us beautiful".
	Honest	- Video contents. E.g., honest review the beauty products, - Audiences' comments. E.g.,

4.1.8.3 Expertise

Jenny's major in university was character styling makeup and skincare. Korea is very famous in China in the field of beauty and skincare, and many young Chinese people will travel to Korea to buy beauty products and do skincare treatment. Jenny studied a beauty and skincare-related major in Korea, which greatly enhanced her professionalism as a beauty influencer. She is qualified to be a beauty influencer. She also adds an explanation of products and the correct way to use them when she explains makeup tutorials in her videos, which also shows her expertise and knowledge from the side. Therefore, Jenny uses Qualified, Expert and Knowledgeable to present herself as expertise.

Table 4.23: The summary of analysis for Jenny's expertise

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Expertise	Qualified	Her major in university was character styling makeup and skincare.
	Expert	Video contents. E.g., she adds an explanation of products and the correct way to use them when she explains makeup tutorials in her videos.
	Knowledgeable	- Video contents. - The learning background makes she has enough beauty knowledge.

4.1.8.4 Attractiveness

Jenny is considered very cute and beautiful in her video, especially after she puts on makeup. The comments under her videos, "You are so beautiful, Oni" and "If I looked like you, I'd look good even if I wore a plastic bag", prove that she is attractive to audiences in terms of physical appearance. She also has a body attractiveness to her audiences. She not only verbalizes her introductions in the videos, but also adds a lot of body language and movement while doing so. She uses body language to highlight the focus of the products in the video and clearly

demonstrates the process of using the beauty products. The combination of verbal explanation and body language in her videos makes her videos more dynamic and motivates audiences to learn along with her. Therefore, Jenny uses Beautiful, Facial and Body Attractive to present her attractiveness.

Table 4.24: The summary of analysis for Jenny's attractiveness

	Factors	Analysis to approve the factors
Attractiveness	Beautiful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cute and beautiful in videos. - Audiences' comments. E.g., "You are so beautiful, Oni".
	Facial attractive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good looking. - She is attractive to audiences in terms of physical appearance
	Body attractive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Body language used in the video.

4.2 The Topics of Beauty Represented through Douyin Short Videos and Core Source Credibility Strategies

4.2.1 The Topics of Beauty Represented through Douyin Short Videos

As a key component of textual ingredients for beauty influencers' portrayal, the beauty-related topics in the short videos are illustrated in the figure below.

Table 4.25: The beauty-related topics of beauty influencers

Influencers	Beauty-related Topics
Cheng Shian (Chinese)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make-up tutorials - hairstyle tutorials - product reviews - product recommendations

(Continued)

Table 4.25 (Continued): The beauty-related topics of beauty influencers

Influencers	Beauty-related Topics
Luo Wangyu (Chinese)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - skincare tutorials - skincare knowledge - product reviews - product recommendations
Zhang Kaiyi (Chinese)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make-up tutorials - beauty knowledge sharing - daily outfit sharing - product reviews - product recommendations
Doudou (Chinese)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - makeup tutorials - skincare knowledge sharing - product reviews - product recommendations
Rossi Boni (Italian)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - makeup tutorials - product reviews - product recommendations
Anna (Russian)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cross-dressing - make-up
Hyemin (Korean)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make-up tutorials - beauty knowledge sharing - product reviews - product recommendations
Jenny (Korean)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make-up tutorials - hairstyle tutorials - daily outfit sharing - beauty knowledge sharing - product reviews - product recommendations

The analysis results reveal that the beauty-related topics most beauty influencers focus on include tutorials, knowledge sharing, product reviews, and product recommendations about some aspects of beauty. These beauty-related topics are closely related to audiences' daily lives, so getting the audience's attention is easy. However, audiences still need to have their discernment when it comes to product reviews and product recommendations. Some beauty influencers promote for commercial purposes, and their product review and recommendation videos may be a form of soft advertising.

4.2.2 The Core Source Credibility Strategies that Douyin Chinese Beauty Influencers Adopt to Present Themselves through Beauty-related Short Videos

In addition to the topic selection mentioned above, the analysis results reveal that the TikTok influencers' short video representation involves the core source credibility strategies, which help enhance the self-portrayal construction. The core source credibility markers and their frequency are as follows.

4.2.2.1 Frequency of Trustworthiness

Table 4.26: Frequency of Trustworthiness (Chinese)

Influencers	Dependable	Honest	Reliable	Sincere	Trustworthy
Cheng Shian	/		/	/	/
Luo Wangyu	/	/	/	/	/
Zhang Kaiyi	/	/	/	/	/
Doudou	/		/	/	/
Total	4	2	4	4	4

The analysis results reveal that Chinese beauty influencers mainly adopt Dependable, Reliable, Sincere and Trustworthy to present themselves trustworthiness. Surprisingly, all Chinese beauty influencers apply these four strategies in their short videos. This shows that Chinese beauty influencers use similar strategies when they present themselves with trustworthiness. This also shows that these four strategies have a positive effect on Chinese beauty influencers to present themselves with trustworthiness. Besides, different Chinese beauty influencers use different source

credibility strategies. While Luo Wangyu and Zhang Kaiyi adopt all the strategies in their Douyin videos to show their trustworthiness, others use some of them.

4.2.2.2 Frequency of Expertise

Table 4.27: Frequency of Expertise (Chinese)

Influencers	Expert	Experienced	Knowledgeable	Qualified	Skilled
Cheng Shian	/		/	/	/
Luo Wangyu	/	/	/	/	
Zhang Kaiyi	/	/		/	/
Doudou	/	/	/	/	/
Total	4	3	3	4	3

Chinese beauty influencers mainly adopt *Expert* and *Qualified* to present themselves as expertise. Every Chinese beauty influencer uses more than one strategy to demonstrate their expertise. And expert is basic; the audiences have a feeling of conviction when they see someone is an expert. Audiences will trust what the expert people say and recommend. Experts are usually backed by specialized knowledge and skills, and their claims about products become factors that increase consumer persuasion (Sari, Hayu, & Salim, 2021). Being qualified is also an important factor of expertise; audiences trust qualified people and are attracted to what they have said in videos. All the strategies are used by Chinese beauty influencers. Moreover, Doudou adopts all the strategies to show her expertise.

4.2.2.3 Frequency of Attractiveness

Table 4.28: Frequency of Attractiveness (Chinese)

Influencers	Classy	Beautiful	Elegant	Sexy	Facial	Body	Dress	Posture
Cheng Shian		/	/		/	/		

(Continued)

Table 4.28 (Continued): Frequency of Attractiveness (Chinese)

Influencers	Classy	Beautiful	Elegant	Sexy	Facial	Body	Dress	Posture
Luo Wangyu			/		/	/		
Zhang Kaiyi						/	/	/
Doudou	/	/	/		/	/		
Total	1	2	3	0	3	4	1	1

Chinese beauty influencers mainly adopt Body Attractiveness to present themselves with attractiveness. All the Chinese beauty influencers have a lot of body language expressions in the video. The expression of body language not only allows audiences to better understand and follow the video content but also has a positive impact on their attractiveness. Although all Chinese beauty influencers use not only one strategy to show their attractiveness, there is no Chinese beauty influencers use sexy as a strategy to present themselves as attractive. Perhaps for Chinese beauty influencers, being sexy does not help for their attractiveness. And the way they attract audiences is more from their video content.

4.2.3 The Core Source Credibility Strategies that Douyin Foreign Beauty Influencers Adopt to Present Themselves through Beauty-related Short Videos

4.2.3.1 Frequency of Trustworthiness

Table 4.29: Frequency of Trustworthiness (non-Chinese)

Influencers	Dependable	Honest	Reliable	Sincere	Trustworthy
Rossi Boni		/	/	/	/
Anna	/		/	/	/
Hyemin	/		/		/
Jenny		/		/	/
Total	2	2	3	3	4

Foreign beauty influencers mainly adopt Trustworthy to present their trustworthiness. All the foreign influencers use this strategy in their video, which shows Trustworthy plays a vital role in portraying foreign beauty influencers. It's worth mentioning that three out of four foreign beauty influencers use these two strategies in their videos, which shows Sincere and Reliable are also important for foreign beauty influencers to present their trustworthiness. Most of the foreign beauty influencers used at least three strategies to show their trustworthiness, only Hymin used two strategies. Compared with Chinese influencers, Chinese beauty influencers used more strategies especially Dependable. This is maybe because of nationality and cultural differences; Chinese influencers are more dependable by Chinese audiences.

4.2.3.2 Frequency of Expertise

Table 4.30: Frequency of Expertise (non-Chinese)

Influencers	Expert	Experienced	Knowledgeable	Qualified	Skilled
Rossi Boni	/	/	/		/
Anna	/	/			/
Hyemin	/	/	/		
Jenny	/		/	/	
Total	4	3	3	1	2

Foreign beauty influencers mainly adopt Expert as the strategy to present themselves with expertise. All foreign beauty influencers used this strategy in their videos, making their video content more convincing to audiences. All the foreign beauty influencer uses at least three strategies to demonstrate their expertise. Surprisingly, all Chinese beauty influencers used Qualified to show their expertise while for foreign beauty influencers only 1 out of 4 people used these strategies. This may be caused by cultural differences and the different ways to demonstrate in the video, as Chinese beauty influencers may understand Chinese people's thoughts more and have better Chinese language skills.

4.2.3.2 Frequency of Attractiveness

Table 4.31: Frequency of Attractiveness (non-Chinese)

Influencers	Classy	Beautiful	Elegant	Sexy	Facial	Body	Dress	Posture
Rossi Boni		/			/	/		
Anna	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Hyemin		/			/	/		
Jenny		/			/	/		
Total	1	4	1	1	4	4	1	1

Foreign beauty influencers mainly adopt Beautiful, Facial Attractiveness and Body Attractiveness as the strategy to present themselves with attractiveness. All the attractive strategies are used by foreign beauty influencers. Only one influencer uses all the strategies in her video presentation. All the foreign influencers adopt Beautiful, Facial Attractiveness and Body Attractiveness to present their attractiveness. In contrast, all other strategies for demonstrating attractiveness were used by only one out of four foreign influencers.

4.2.4 The Similarities and Differences between Source Credibility Construction and Portrayals of Douyin Chinese and Foreign Beauty Influencers.

4.2.4.1 Similarities

The target audience may shape the way Douyin influencers select topics and communication strategies. Both Chinese and foreign beauty influencers' target audiences are Chinese, and some of the main topics of the beauty videos are similar. There are four main similarities between Chinese beauty influencers and foreign beauty influencers.

First, all the beauty influencers used multiple strategies to present themselves with Trustworthiness, Expert and Attractiveness, which can help construct their credibility.

Second, both Chinese and foreign beauty influencers use some same main credibility strategies. For example, all Chinese and foreign beauty influencers adopt Trustworthy to present themselves with Trustworthiness. They both also adopt Expert

to present themselves as Expertise and use Body Attractive to present themselves as Attractiveness.

Third, the main video content of Chinese and foreign beauty influencers is similar in topic selection. For example, they almost focus on product reviews, product recommendations and knowledge sharing on beauty transformation.

Last, they all use Chinese as the primary language in the videos. Remarkably, even though Anna (Russian) never speaks any words in the video, her subtitles are all in Chinese because she aims to target only Chinese followers.

4.2.4.1 Differences

There are some main differences between Chinese and foreign beauty influencers. Firstly, the main strategies they use to present themselves as Trustworthiness, Expert and Attractiveness are different.

In assessing "trustworthiness" and "expertise," it is observed that both Chinese and foreign beauty influencers employ all strategies, with a higher prevalence among Chinese influencers. On the other hand, in terms of "attractiveness," foreign beauty influencers utilize a more extensive array of strategies, encompassing all the subcategories under "Attractiveness." This suggests differing emphasis and prevalence of specific strategies among these influencers in building their credibility, expertise, and overall appeal to their audience.

Second, in contrast there are differences in the main video content in terms of video topics. Foreign beauty influencers put more cloth wearing and hairstyles into their creations, while Chinese beauty influencers focus more on products and knowledge of becoming beautiful.

Last, Chinese and foreign beauty influencers present themselves in different ways. Since foreign beauty influencers are involved in cultural differences in terms of topic selection, a cultural component is added to their videos. For example, they insert a few lines of their own language or show some cultural differences, such as some of the awkward issues of their daily life that they encountered in China due to cultural differences in their videos to attract more Chinese follows especially those who are interested in knowing the cultural differences. These cultural anecdotes serve to bridge understanding and foster connection. Examples of awkward issues might include misunderstandings arising from language nuances, unfamiliar customs, or

unfamiliar social norms. Whether positive or negative, these instances offer a genuine portrayal of cross-cultural experiences, enhancing the relatability of the influencer and creating a unique appeal for followers interested in cultural exchange. The positive aspect lies in fostering cultural understanding, while the negative aspect underscores the challenges and humorous moments inherent in navigating cultural differences. Chinese beauty influencers, on the other hand, do not have cultural differences show in their videos.

4.3 Conclusion

Based on the research results explained in this chapter, it can be concluded that while Chinese and foreign influencers may differ in their strategies, the adoption of source credibility strategies becomes remarkably similar when the target audience is Chinese. Chinese beauty influencers exhibit high usage rates for traits such as dependability, reliability, sincerity, and trustworthiness under the umbrella of Trustworthiness, along with emphasizing expertise and qualification in Expertise, and highlighting body attractiveness within Attractiveness.

Conversely, foreign beauty influencers prioritize being perceived as trustworthy and expert in building Trustworthiness and Expertise, respectively. Additionally, they emphasize both facial and body attractiveness within the Attractiveness category. Despite the cultural variations, both groups strategically employ these credibility strategies tailored to resonate with their Chinese audience, contributing to the effectiveness of their influencer status in this specific market.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary of Findings

Chinese beauty influencers mainly use Dependable, Reliable, Sincere and Trustworthy to demonstrate their Trustworthiness, while foreign beauty influencers use Trustworthy to demonstrate their Trustworthiness. Chinese beauty influencers mainly adopt expert and qualified to demonstrate their expertise, while foreign beauty influencers mainly adopt expert to establish their Attractiveness. Chinese beauty influencers mainly adopt body attractiveness to demonstrate their Attractiveness, while foreign beauty influencers mainly adopt Beautiful, Facial Attractive and Body Attractive to establish their Attractiveness.

There are four main similarities between Chinese influencers and foreign influencers found in the research:

- 1) All the beauty influencers use multiple source credibility strategies to present themselves.
- 2) Some of the main source credibility strategies mainly used by Chinese and foreign influencers are the same. Both Chinese and foreign influencers used some same main source credibility strategies in their videos, such as Chinese and foreign beauty influencers adopting Trustworthy to present themselves as Trustworthiness. They both also adopt Expert to present themselves as Expertise and use Body Attractive to present themselves as Attractiveness.
- 3) The main beauty topics presented in the video of Chinese and foreign beauty influencers are similar.
- 4) Both Chinese beauty influencers and foreign beauty influencers use Chinese as the primary language in the videos in order to fit the Chinese followers as target audiences.

There are three main differences between Chinese influencers and foreign influencers found in the research:

- 1) The main source credibility strategies they use to present themselves are different in terms of the uses of strategies and the frequency of using the strategies.

2) Foreign beauty influencers put more cloth-wearing and hairstyle into their creations. In contrast, Chinese beauty influencers focus more on products and beauty knowledge sharing.

3) All the foreign beauty influencers live in China, incorporating cultural differences such as language and the challenges unique to their experiences in the country into their videos. In contrast, Chinese beauty influencers do not typically address such cultural distinctions in their content.

5.2 Discussions

5.2.1 Discussion Based on Past Research Findings

An exploration of the credibility of the beauty influencer shows that the most important determining factor of credibility is Trustworthiness (Djafarova & Matson, 2021). Although this research did not focus on the study of the most important factors regarding credibility, the results of this study show that Trustworthy is the most frequently used feature in both Chinese and foreign beauty influencers to demonstrate their Trustworthiness. From this, it can be inferred that Trustworthy is a crucial factor in determining credibility. This is consistent with the results of Djafarva and Matson (2021).

However, there also are some different findings for beauty influencers to present their trustworthiness. Chinese and foreign beauty influencers use multiple strategies to present their trustworthiness, and they both frequently use trustworthy as the trustworthiness strategy. Credibility and purchase intent are positively correlated. Thus loyal followers of reputable influencers who show concern for their audiences and possess expert knowledge are more likely to buy the advertised products (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Trustworthy and expert influencers can attract audiences to buy the products they recommend.

Most of the beauty influencers in this study recommend products and do product reviews with the goal of attracting audiences to purchase these products. The source credibility strategy they use can help increase their credibility. This seems to help increase the audiences' intention to buy, making their product recommendations more successful. This point shows in audiences' comments on beauty influencers' videos, such as "I believe all the products you recommended, I will buy them all",

“If you didn’t mention this product, I can’t know such a good product”, and “I prepared my money already, please update the videos soon”.

The previous study from Huang (2021) studied China’s top eight YouTube foreign influencers. The primary language used in the videos published by American, British and German influencers is Chinese, and Korean is the primary language used by Korean influencers (Huang, 2021). Part of the findings of this study are consistent with Huang's (2021) results in the sense that the primary language used by foreign influencers in China is Chinese. However, the difference is that the Korean influencers studied by Huang (2021) used Korean. Although the Korean influencers in this study mainly used Chinese, they inserted a few sentences of Korean into the Chinese language or used part of the Korean language on the cover of the videos. This study, combined with Huang's research, reveals that using the Chinese language is important in developing foreign influencers in China.

5.2.2 Discussion Based on Relevant Theories

Media communication can function as a tool for constructing mediatized reality. Reality is socially constructed, and this construction process is the object of analysis in the sociology of knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 2016). The key concepts of the social construction of reality are reality and knowledge. In the context of this study, what distinguishes beauty influencers from those in other fields is their possession of substantial beauty-related knowledge. Additionally, they strategically employ source credibility strategies to present themselves as reliable authorities in delivering beauty-related content. Their audiences’ trust and support, together with their abilities and understanding, make them popular beauty influencers. It can, therefore, be argued that the source credibility strategies play an essential role in gaining the trust and support of audiences.

All the factors suggested by Ohanian (1990) in the source credibility model are used as source credibility strategies by beauty influencers. These strategies serve not only as inherent factors contributing to source credibility but also as pivotal approaches that actively contribute to the improvement of beauty influencers' overall credibility. For instance, the consistent display of expertise and knowledge in makeup techniques or skincare routines serves as both a source credibility factor and a deliberate strategy adopted by influencers to enhance their perceived credibility

among their audience. Beauty influencers try to present themselves to the audience in a way that enhances trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness construction. Although the strategies used by Chinese beauty influencers differ in terms of the frequency of strategies use from those used by foreign influencers, overall, all strategies are used by the beauty influencers. The source credibility concepts also help beauty influencers construct their role image as a beauty expert to the society in daily life and build their credibility from their audience.

5.2.3 Discussion Based on the Researcher's Expectations

This study answered all the research questions, and at this point, achieved the expected results of this study. However, some findings were unexpected to me. In my assumption, different beauty influencers use different source credibility strategies, so they may use different ways to present themselves. However, surprisingly, the analysis results reveal that all the Chinese beauty influencers used Reliable, Sincere, and Trustworthy as their primary strategies for demonstrating trustworthiness. The fact that all of them used the same strategies not only shows that Chinese beauty influencers share a common perception and construction of trustworthiness at certain points but also shows that these strategies do have a positive effect on the tendency of Chinese beauty influencers to present themselves.

5.3 Recommendation for Further Application

5.3.1 Application for Communication Scholars/Researchers

The exploration of source credibility among Chinese and foreign beauty influencers holds valuable implications for communication scholars and researchers in various ways. By examining and comparing the primary source credibility strategies employed by these influencers, this study provides insights into the nuanced construction of credibility in different cultural contexts. Communication scholars can leverage these findings to enhance their understanding of the source credibility model, particularly in the realm of beauty influencers. This study serves as a foundational resource for researchers interested in scrutinizing the credibility dynamics specific to influencers, offering a basis for identifying gaps in existing research. Furthermore, it opens avenues for deeper investigation and expansion into more nuanced and relevant topics within the evolving landscape of influencer communication.

5.3.2 Application for Media Policymakers

In addition to displaying their content on Chinese social media, foreign influencers can function as a bridge between Chinese and foreign cultures. Many foreign influencers include content about cultural differences in their videos, which helps audiences understand different cultural differences. Therefore, internet or social media policymakers can develop policies to facilitate the development of foreign influencers on Chinese social media. Policy makers can introduce policies to attract more foreign influencers to join Chinese internet platforms. Policymakers can set hotspots for promoting Chinese culture and entering positive foreign culture into China. This would not only lead to an increase in cultural exchange between China and foreign countries but would also allow influencers who promote culture to gain more traffic.

5.3.3 Application for Communication Practitioners

This research has brought benefits to the work of communication practitioners, who need to observe all aspects of communication. For communication practitioners who work in the influencer, advertising, and marketing fields, it can be helpful to understand the main strategies of influencer source credibility construction. They can use this research to understand better how influencers build their source credibility to audiences. As a result, they can use these source credibility strategies to incubate other influencers' communication. Influencers tend to find the most frequently utilized strategies to be the most effective for enhancing their source credibility. Communications practitioners can further learn and adopt these strategies to understand how to truly consider the influencer's communication strategy from the audience's perspective. This way, it is possible to better capture what the audience really wants from the influencers and get more ideas to improve influencers.

Regarding application for global communications practitioners, this study reveals the way Chinese and foreign influencers present the source credibility is different. This gives them a more precise understanding of the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign influencers. This can help them to make appropriate strategic adjustments when conducting global communications. Overall, the study provides strategic insights into influencer campaigns for communication practitioners.

5.4 Recommendation for Further Research

The online internet economy, which refers to the economic or commercial activities facilitated by the internet such as digital marketing, services, businesses, and influencer advertising, is a trend nowadays. The study of influencers is fascinating and significant.

In terms of limitations, this study is constrained by its small sample size, comprising only a limited number of short videos from Chinese and foreign beauty influencers. Additionally, it does not explore potential differences between genders or specific nationalities that could influence the findings. Furthermore, the study lacks triangulation, which involves utilizing multiple methods or data sources to enhance the credibility of qualitative findings. Thus, the recommendation for future studies is to take more samples for more profound research, which can deepen the results. Moreover, future studies could employ more research methods, such as doing a focus group with audiences and in-depth interviews with the influencers as key informants.

In addition, influencers may use different source credibility strategies to present themselves. There may be some differences between other types of influencers. Further research can, therefore, examine other types of influencers to do more research. Further research can use this study as a reference to find more strategies for source credibility from influencers' videos and analyze with more strategies and more populations and samples. Besides, the audiences' perspectives are also exciting points to investigate more. Moreover, future research may combine quantitative and qualitative methods to understand this field better.

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