The Impact of the Audience's Continuance Intention Towards the Vlog: Focusing on Intimacy, Media Synchronicity and Authenticity

Xianya Wang [1] and Byenghee Chang [2,*]

[1] Department of Media and Communication Sungkyunkwan University; M.A.; elaine9wang@gmail.com
[2] Department of Media and Communication Sungkyunkwan University; Professor; mediaboy@skku.edu
* Correspondence

Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to examine the impacts of the audience and vlog creator's self-disclosure, media synchronicity (immediacy of feedback, variety of symbol set), as well as content authenticity on the intimacy between the vlogger and the audience and continuance intention of the audience. The participants of the online survey were young Chinese females, instructed to practice their routine of watching vlog and the fixed vlog channels. By the interpersonal process of intimacy model and media synchronicity theory, the results of the structural equation modeling revealed that self-disclosure (audience's disclosure) and partner responsiveness (vlogger's disclosure) form the experience of intimacy in interactions. Also, the quick immediacy of feedback, rich symbol set, and content authenticity positively impacted intimacy development. Meanwhile, intimacy enables the audience to form a continuous viewing behavior. We expect the results of this study will provide more insight into the relationship between the audience and the producer in online video content. In terms of the personal media influencers and MCN companies, this study is also suggests strategic implications.*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the competition in social media gets into full swing. However, rare emphasis has been laid on the vital effect of the way to mediate intimacy on the novel celebrity platform. Existing studies [1] based on the existing "attention economy" [2] and online platforms (e.g., YouTube) represent a competitive area for vloggers of various themes.

Since vlog refers to a video content with full self-disclosure, it helps fans identify the lifestyle displayed by vloggers, which can develop close relationships between each other and fulfill the continuance objective of the audience. Bilibili, as one of the top cultural community websites in China, has monthly active users of 110 million in August 2019; the broadcast volume of professional user-generated video (PUGV) has taken up 89% of the overall broadcast volume of the whole platform [3].

Based on the interpersonal process model of intimacy, intimacy is critical to interpersonal relationships [4], and intimacy is the most crucial part for maintaining relationships [5], as well as an essential part for consolidating interpersonal relationships [6]. According to the existing studies [7-9], positive self-disclosure positively impacts intimacy development. When vlog is being shot, most vloggers shoot from their perspectives, while sharing their life experience and emotional status in the video, which can be useful to increase the intimacy with the viewers [10]. Besides, the perceived partner's self-disclosure is another critical element to develop close relationships. If the speaker can feel the response of the listener and feel that he/she is considered from the response of them, he/she will be more likely to have a sense of intimacy with the listener [7].

In accordance with the theory of media synchronicity, the media can meet the synchronicity in the communication process, so the effect and quality of communication will be enhanced noticeably. According to existing research, media synchronicity is critical to the positive effect of intimacy formation [11, 12]. Given the limited interaction between vloggers and viewers, the immediacy of feedback and symbol set are taken as the independent variables that affect intimacy development to measure.

In the existing research, authenticity is conducive to enhancing the audience's visual satisfaction; meantime, it provides a real insight into vlogger [13-15] to promote the formation of the intimate relationships between vloggers and viewers [16]. In celebrity research, the vlog also acts as a carrier for artists to draw closer to fans and indicate the authenticity of celebrities [17].

Though content and quality of vlog are of vital significance, how to strengthen the relationships between vloggers and viewers, and then maintain the loyalty and continuance watching intention for the channel of audience is also a critical topic for video content creators and MCN (Multi-channel network) companies. In this study, self-disclosure, partner's self-disclosure and perceived partner's self-disclosure in the interpersonal process model of intimacy, immediacy of feedback and diversity of symbol set in media synchronicity theory, and authenticity are considered as independent variables in the research model; intimacy between vlogger and audience is considered as mediating variable; audience's continuous viewing intention is considered as a dependent variable.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Vlog(video-blog)

Vlog is a video blog, which can be considered a blog containing video materials [18]. Vlog means that vlogger (the blogger who publishes video) records the daily life and shares it with netizens via diary by uploading the video on the personal channel. The vlogger's   of hand-held shooting and lens monologue, simulating the visual scene of dialogue, helps the audience experience the natural feelings to gain the trust of the audience [18].

Over the past few years, vlog related studies focused on the field of marketing. As revealed from the results, vlog with high audience participation is more likely to enhance the acceptance of brand endorsement by improving the audience's perception of trust in brand endorsement [19]. It has also acted as a popular marketing method recently to change the audience's perception of the brand via a vlog, as an attempt to increase their preference for the brand [20]. Chinese scholars [21] compared the vlog content on China's Bilibili video website with that on YouTube platforms.

2.2 The interpersonal process model of intimacy

According to the interpersonal process model of intimacy, both self-disclosure and partner responsiveness contribute to the experience of intimacy in interactions [7]. Though numerous studies are using this model, most of them primarily analyze offline interpersonal relationships [22]. There has been almost no research on the intimate relationships between online members.

In particular, Bilibili has born witness to a type of celebrification on a remarkable scale, with the platform, as [23] reported, has forged a unique celebrity culture of its own. Accordingly, it is critical to maintain the continuance intention and interest of fans by developing close relationships between video creators and viewers.

2.2.1 Self-disclosure, Partner self-disclosure and Perceived partner responsiveness

Self-disclosure can be conceptualized as any message regarding oneself that an individual communicates with other people [24, 25]. Uncertainty reduction theory mostly indicated that the more one is exposed to other's self-disclosure, the more the uncertainty will be reduced; as a result, liking is strengthened [26]. According to the study of [7], speakers are more likely to experience an interaction as intimate if perceiving their partner's response as understanding.

When testing the role of self-disclosure in intimacy, scholars [7] also split self-disclosure into factual and emotional. Factual disclosure refers to the fact or information regarding an individual; emotional disclosure refers to a person's personal feelings, opinions or judgments. The results suggested that self-disclosure with more emotional information will gain more intimacy than those carrying more factual information [7, 8]. In the case of SNS use, the interesting level and the platform of self-disclosure can affect the degree of connection

between people [9, 27, 28]. Users can get a sense of being connected with others by updating their novel situation on their home page [9, 29, 30]. In YouTube-related studies, some researchers analyzed the user's behavior. In such type of social network video, the user's behavior is primarily affected by the two-way interaction [31], and the success of vlogger is largely determined by the positive response of the audience [32]. Likewise, vloggers' videos are commonly themed by video recorders with high viewing times and ratings, resulting in the fixed phrase "please comment, rate and subscribe," which frequently appears in the videos. This also reflects the vlogger's desire for the audience's active participation [33]. However, some scholars [34] also proved that in some specific scenarios, superficial self-disclosure would reduce the satisfaction of the other party with the relationship, thereby adversely affecting the interpersonal relationship.

Thus, for vlogger, appropriate self-disclosure plays a critical role in the process of building an online relationship with the audience.

2.2.2 Intimacy

Intimacy is a result of a process that one person (the speaker) communicates personally and reveals the information to another person(the listener). In such process, intimacy will be relatively reduced or enhanced for different reactions of each other [35]. Intimacy takes up a part of the interaction between the audiences and vloggers [4]. People will find the similarity between each other from the existing interaction and repeated interaction process to develop intimacy [36].

In terms of the relationships between vlogger and audience, some scholars [2, 32] studied the cases of vlogs on YouTube. They consider that the celebrification of vloggers is primarily determined by the positive response of the audience. Meantime, the response of the audience depends on the video content, as well as the YouTuber's ability to combine "natural" self-promotion with digital technologies of intimacy. This ability will significantly impact the intimate relationships between vlogger and the audience; for the audience, intimacy can also be termed as "a feeling of proximity" [37].

Several studies reported the positive effect of intimacy on relationships. In the IS behaviors field, the intimacy level was considered as three dimensions, verbal intimacy/overall intimacy and affective intimacy. Furthermore, the result suggested that verbal intimacy and affective intimacy are conducive to discriminating posting/ lurking groups of users [38]. People's communication on the internet is largely used to manage and maintain the interpersonal relationship in the real world. Via the Internet platform, people can narrate their emotional situation, share their personal information and enhance their emotional intimacy, to develop a closer relationship [9, 39]. For the vlogger's self-disclosure, self-disclosure with more emotional information will form more intimacy than those mainly factual ones [7, 8]. For the content of vlog, whether it is the Bilibili platform [21] or YouTube [10], audience will have a strong dependence on the content about the daily routine, which contains considerable private information. Also, the self-disclosure of vloggers is related to a higher level of authenticity and reality [40].

Accordingly, we developed the following hypotheses.

H1. Perceived partner responsiveness is impacted by the self-disclosure of viewers(a) and self-disclosure of vloggers(partner responsiveness)(b).

H2.The intimacy is impacted by the self-disclosure of viewers(a) and self-disclosure of vloggers(partner responsiveness)(b).

H3.The intimacy is impacted by the perceived partner responsiveness.

2.3 Theory of Media Synchronicity

On the whole, two media theories, namely, the media richness theory and the media synchronicity theory, are complied with to clarify the role and effectiveness of media in the communication process. The media richness theory argues that the quality of communication is determined by the clarity of the delivered information [41]. However, [42] proposed the media synchronicity theory since the media richness theory was insufficient to interpret why one communication should be selected over another.

The theory of media synchronicity shows that if the media can meet the simultaneity in the communication process, the effect and quality of communication will be significantly improved, which is also conducive to improve the user's interpersonal relationships [11, 12, 43].

Scholars [42, 43] have defined the synchronicity of media as transmission velocity (immediacy of feedback), parallelism, symbol variety(symbol sets), rehearsability, as well as reprocessability. However, it is

difficult for all these elements applying to communication equipment to apply to vlog: video and audio channels are not only asynchronous, but also unidirectional - vlog cannot see or hear the audience, and the audience cannot see or hear each other. However, the lagging communication can be conducted via the media, the comments under the video frame can be left by the video creator and viewer. They are considered to be the signals received by both sides of the interaction in a limited situation [33]. Because of the different types of interaction modes of Bilibili platform and ordinary communication way of media, two levels consistent with the interaction modes are taken: the immediacy of feedback and the symbol variety, adopted as effective variables to ascertain the intimacy between the vlogger and the audience.

2.3.1 Immediacy of feedback

Immediacy of feedback refers to the speed at which a user gets replies when communicating with others [41]. It is a feasible variable that can effectively improve the directness of communication and the speed of information transmission. Via YouTube, vlogger and the audience can create a "social distance" through the interaction platform (comments) and screen (video content) to render a sense of intimacy. The comments and replies of registered users will be displayed below each video. The vlogger who can read and respond to its "fans" continuously and timely is more likely to retain subscribers and gain more views [44]. In the interpersonal process model of intimacy, some researchers [4] think that in the communication process, the speed of reply is critical to form intimacy between the two sides of the communication. Also, in the study regarding the use of mobile phones, the results show that the reply with a long time will make the other person feel disrespectful and uncomfortable, while the reply with a fast speed will make people feel a sense of being valued or cared [45]. Other researchers [46] highlighted that it is more conducive to achieving information transmission and social connection enhancement via timely reply or comment.

2.3.2 Symbol variety

Symbol variety refers to the essence of communication and language [47]. People often use symbols sets to express their ideas. In face-to-face communication, people can transmit information in various ways, such as a handshake, facial expression and tone. However, in the CMC (Computer-mediated communication) communication, it is relatively limited. When people are communicating with each other, the transmission of information and the effectiveness of transmission will be affected by the diversity of symbols. In the research related to SNS use, to convey subtle emotional differences, people will use a variety of emoticons [48]. Thus, in the communication process, the use of rich symbols can correctly and clearly show emotion, thus enhancing the intimacy of both sides [49]. The straightforward lens angle is similar to the direct gaze in the communication process [50]. Accordingly, the way that vloggers hold the lens and look directly at the lens to talk with the audience, which is common in the vlog, is conducive to developing intimacy between both sides. Second, visual gestures (e.g., nodding, smiling) and tones can be exploited to emphasize important points and show doubt, uncertainty or acceptance, which can expand the meaning itself more effectively than attempting to express the identical meaning in oral form [51].

Thus, we developed the following hypotheses.

H4.The intimacy is affected by the vlogger's immediacy of feedback.

H5.The intimacy is impacted by the vlogger's variety of symbol sets.

2.4 Authenticity

Authenticity acts as a process of being true to one's self, of living life according to one's being [40]. In social psychology, it refers to the consistency between people's internal state and action [52]. In business research, authenticity is a psychological state that affects consumers' memory [53]. In mass media-related study, the recurring theme is concerned with authenticity. For the communication in the CMC environment, "freshness" and "spontaneity" become the novel mode of real presentation [54].

In the study on content authenticity, the concept of authenticity is primarily adopted to study TV programs [13] as well as the pop music category [17]. In the existing studies, authenticity is conducive to enhancing the audience's audio-visual satisfaction and form a real understanding [13-15].

In the virtual environment of the network, people cannot easily get a sense of reality in communication. Compared with a simple short video of life record, the vlog is more about storytelling. When people are developing intimate relationships in novel media, narrating is of central significance [55]. On the whole, Vlog

narratively tells stories, and the audience can develop a feeling of closeness to the character by merging into the narrative [16]. Some scholars [17] consider vlog as a carrier to close the distance between celebrities and fans in the field of celebrity. According to the presentation mode of vlog that we are familiar with, most vloggers look at the camera directly and share the daily life with us. Lens angle turns straightforward, and in the communication process, the direction of gaze is positively associated with authenticity. Besides, the lens angle is also considered to be essential when establishing interpersonal relationships between celebrities and the audience [50].

The environment with human characteristics makes it easier for the audience to feel that the vlogger is not performing but "being themselves" [14], so the audience can feel more authenticity from the vlogger, thereby generating more intimacy. In the communication process, the direction of gaze positively impacts the formation of authenticity [50]. Thus, this study speculates that vlog related to real-life can create a real atmosphere for the audience.

Thus, the following hypothesis is derived.

H6.The intimacy is impacted by the vlogger's authenticity.

2.5 Continuance intention

The concept of continuance intention has been described in the literature as 'routinization' [56]. Continuance intention describes "the user decides to continuously use a specific product that he or she has used," which differs from the first use of the user. Unlike the first time a user uses it, continuity is crucial. As the internet has been leaping forward, the length of people's fragmentation time is rising, laying a good prerequisite for the development of short videos (e.g., vlog, "snack culture"), which has become the mainstream of people's choice. Accordingly, the success is determined by its continuous utilization rate rather than the first utilization rate. Among the theories related to the continuance intention, the most representative one refers to the expectation-confirmation theory (ECM). In this model, users' satisfaction based on the information system and perceived usefulness of the use of information systems determine their intention to continuously employ the information system. Many other researchers have extended the ECM model by introducing novel factors [57-59].

The factors having been suggested in the continuance intention studies thus far can be largely classified as cognitive and affective factors. Affective factors are related to specific emotions or states of feeling. Intimacy is critical to the relationship with the user and the emotions accumulated over time, so it is more conducive to explaining the user's continuous intention. Some scholars [60] also used new variables: familiarity and intimacy, as emotional factors to investigate users' willingness to use web services continuously. The results revealed that cognitive factors (e.g., perceived usefulness) and affective factors (e.g., familiarity and intimacy) jointly affect continuance intention. Besides, intimacy, a purer affective concept than familiarity, affects users' continuance intention more than familiarity.

Thus, the following hypothesis is derived.

H7.The viewer's continuance intention is impacted by intimacy.

3. Method

3.1 Research model

We proposed a model that contains the interpersonal process of intimacy model, media synchronicity theory, and authenticity to explain why audiences would like to have a continuance intention to watch the vlog. The factors are created accumulatively over time. Fig.1 gives an overview of the research model proposed in this paper.
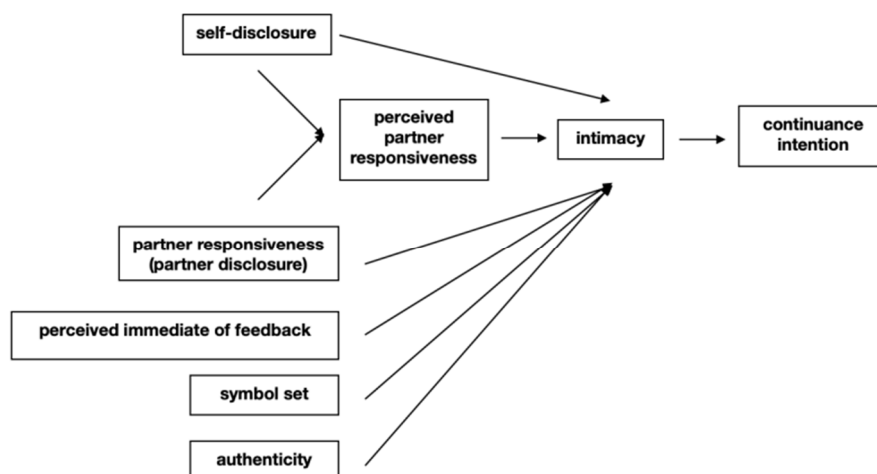
Figure 1. Research model

3.2 Data collection and sample

Our questionnaire complied with 5-point Likert scales, and all questions were designed based on topics raised by past scholars. A questionnaire was set using wjx (www.wjx.cn) and distributed on the Bilibili website. This paper contacted 6 vloggers with more than 50w fans on the Chinese bilibili website and asked them to call on fans who are interested in this research to fill out the questionnaire on their social platforms. The questionnaire was distributed from Dec. 1st to Dec. 9th, 2019. A total of 2097 valid questionnaires were received. The sample structure is illustrated in Table 1. This sample was focusing on the female, and most respondents were aged between 18 and 25 years (91.9%). Most respondents (40.2%) viewed vlog 3 to 5 times a week. The specific questionnaire content can be found in the attachment.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Category		Frequency	Percent %
	Under 18	91	4.3
Age	18~25	1928	91.9
	26~30	78	3.7
	Junior high school	4	0.2
	High school	89	4.2
Job	Bachelor Degree	1270	60.6
	Master's degree	249	11.9
	Social workers	485	23.1
	Under 3 times	168	8.0
Number of vlogs watched per week	3~5	842	40.2
	6~10	481	22.9
	Over 10 times	606	28.9

4. Results

4.1 Reliability and validity

The study adopted Chin's [61] recommendation that the value of Cronbach's α should be greater than 0.6 to meet the standard of reliability. Table 2 presents that the reliability values of the study exceeded the threshold, indicating good internal consistency. Validity analysis for this study revealed a KMO value of 0.927, which is bigger than 0.8 [62]. Hence, this study is suitable for factor analysis. As the factor loading of each dimension should be greater than the threshold value of 0.5 [63], the construct reliability (CR) of each dimension should be greater than the threshold value of 0.7. All data for this study met or exceeded these standards, which ensures construct validity.

Table 2. Convergent validity testing results

Construct	Item	Factor loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α	KMO
Self-disclosure	SD1	0.681	0.552	0.785	0.775	0.666
	SD2	0.847				
	SD3	0.702				
Perceived partner's disclosure	PSD1	0.818	0.673	0.860	0.859	0.727
	PSD2	0.848				
	PSD3	0.786				
Partner's disclosure	PD1	0.790	0.598	0.761	0.857	0.708
	PD2	0.710				
	PD3	0.442				
Intimacy	INT1	0.697	0.496	0.746	0.742	0.661
	INT2	0.821				
	INT3	0.606				
Perceived immediacy of feedback	PIOF1	0.776	0.617	0.827	0.822	0.699
	PIOF2	0.832				
	PIOF3	0.737				
Symbol set	SS1	0.765	0.595	0.815	0.816	0.718
	SS2	0.798				
	SS3	0.753				
Authenticity	AT1	0.838	0.735	0.892	0.890	0.746
	AT2	0.863				
	AT3	0.869				
Continued intention to watch	CU1	0.875	0.589	0.811	0.817	0.703
	CU2	0.673				
	CU3	0.795				
All			0.548	0.925	0.927	0.931

4.2 Hypothesis testing

To test the hypotheses, AMOS software was employed to set up the structural equation model of the variables. The fit coefficient of the model is listed in Table 3, indicating that the fit coefficient of the model is relatively effective.

Table 3. Fit coefficient of model structure

Fit coefficient							
x^2/f	RMSEA	CFI	RMR	GFI	AGFI	NFI	PGFI
10.584***	0.068	0.915	0.048	0.901	0.873	0.907	0.700

As can be shown in Table 4, all the direct hypotheses were supported. Self-disclosure (PC=0.390, p<0.001) and partner's self-disclosure (PC=0.391, p<0.001) were found to have a significant positive effect on perceived partner's disclosure, supporting H1. Also, the perceived partner's disclosure has a significance (PC=0.360, p<0.001) on intimacy, support H3. Moreover, intimacy was also influenced by the self-disclosure (PC=0.213, p<0.001) and partner's self-disclosure (PC=0.108, p<0.01), supporting H2. Furthermore, the results also show that intimacy is impacted by perceived immediacy of feedback (PC=0.368, p<0.001), symbol set (PC=0.075, p<0.001), and authenticity (PC=0.229, p<0.001) which supports H4, H5 and H6. Lastly, intimacy was found to have a significant positive effect on continuance intention (PC=0.449, p<0.001), supporting H7.

Table 4. Overall results of structural model testing

Regression weights						
H#	Hypothesized path	PC	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
H1-a	Perceived partner's disclosure<---Self-disclosure	0.390	0.022	17.870	***	supported
H1-b	Perceived partner's disclosure<---Partner's disclosure	0.791	0.055	14.366	***	supported
H3	Intimacy<---Perceived partner's disclosure	0.360	0.035	10.261	***	supported
H2-a	Intimacy<---Self-disclosure	0.213	0.024	8.763	***	supported

H2-b	Intimacy<---Partner's disclosure	0.108	0.045	2.384	0.017	supported
H4	Intimacy<---Perceived immediacy of feedback	0.368	0.026	14.077	***	supported
H5	Intimacy<---Symbol set	0.075	0.022	3.468	***	supported
H6	Intimacy<---Authenticity	0.229	0.020	11.444	***	supported
H7	Continuance intention<---Intimacy	0.449	0.030	15.195	***	supported

*P<0.05, **P<0.01, ***P<0.001. Notes: PC-path coefficient.

Notes: PC-path coefficient.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

Based on the interpersonal relationship model of intimacy and the characteristics of Internet communication, this study complies with the media synchronicity theory and the authenticity as one of the characteristics of vlog to delve into the formation process of intimacy between vlogger and the viewers, to propose practical suggestions and methods on how to maintain the audience's subscribe intention to the channel from the angle of intimacy. Four major contributions are made here, as presented below.

First, the results here reveal that focusing on the young female audience of the vlog, the audience's self-disclosure, and vlogger's self-disclosure affecting intimacy between each other is achieved via perceived partner's self-disclosure. It is therefore suggested that the perceived partner's self-disclosure plays a connecting role in intimacy development. Note that the partner's disclosure is of a higher significance (PC=0.79, p<0.001) on perceived partner's disclosure than self-disclosure (PC=0.390, p<0.001). According to the mentioned result, people's interaction is a two-way process, and people always expect the other one's response in the communication process. Accordingly, vloggers can often share life or emotional experience with the audience in the video, treat the audience as his friends, and show his life state or life distress freely, which will be helpful to narrow the distance between the audience and promote intimacy development. Uploading the video on their channel regularly (e.g., twice a week) is also a better way to keep connecting and made the audience get used to self-disclosure.

Second, intimacy is directly affected by the immediacy of feedback, symbol set. Between them, the speed of response (PC=0.368, p<0.001) has the more significant impact on intimacy. Existing studies [64] on smartphone users demonstrated that the diversity of symbol sets in media synchronicity slightly impacts the formation of an intimate relationships. However, the present study verifies that through vibrant language expression and body performance in communication, it is conducive to the formation of intimate relationships between the two sides. Since the interaction between vlogger and the audience is not real-time as social software, and the audience can only communicate with vlogger via comments or email, vlogger is capable of accelerating the response to make the audience feel that they are valued and in touch [45], which can noticeably promote intimacy development between the two sides.

Third, content authenticity positively impacted intimacy (PC=0.229, p<0.001). As a type of documentary, authenticity is the core of vlog. It is also different from the real presentation of "live broadcast." What vlog can gain from the pursuit of contemporary young people is the effect of "moderate reality." In the process of watching, from the set of characters to the shooting environment and the shooting content, all of them are essential factors to reveal the authenticity [50]. Thus, in terms of skills, vlogger can render a sense of immersive experience to the audience by expressing "self-talk", similar to the picture from the subjective perspective. In terms of content, some video creators will share their own experiences via a vlog, for example, examination/ love/ plastic surgery and tourism. The reason why this type of video can attract people is also the authenticity of the content, so video creators can gain people's trust by sharing their own authenticity experience, to facilitate intimacy development. In the case of the entertainment industry, there are also examples of celebrities getting closer to fans and even gain more fans in this way.

Furthermore, intimacy has a significant effect on continuance intention (PC=0.449, p<0.001). Based on the findings here, intimacy is one of the essential factors to maintain the interpersonal relationship. For vlogger, actively promoting intimacy development with the audience is a feasible means to maintain the audience's continuous viewing behavior of their channel.

5.2 Conclusion

To the best of our knowledge, no research has examined viewers from intimacy perspectives. The present study applied the interpersonal relationship model of intimacy and media synchronicity theory to online video content research and analyzed multi-faceted factors influencing intimacy and continuance intention.

The educational implications of the present study are as follows.

First of all, this study expands the research scope of the vlog. Because vlog is becoming a form of self-media video in China and even in the world, there are many related kinds of research, most of which focus on the popular types of vlog or the content of vlog creation [18-21]. However, this study focused on the relationship between video creators and audiences, providing novel ideas and methods for the study on media creation in the future.

Secondly, the present study proved that the authenticity of video content positively impacts the formation of intimate relationships in the field of media through a large number of data, collecting 2097 numbers of samples to test the hypothesis. In the research regarding authenticity, almost all of them take offline interpersonal relationships as the research field [40, 52, 53]. In the present study, authenticity is quoted into online relationship research, and a large number of data are collected to confirm the reliability of the scale, so the present study provides a new scale for the later research on online interpersonal relationships. In addition, research on female groups alone is also a very characteristic part of this article. Some scholars have recognized the very important position of female characters in the field of vlog in research. The vlogger's rhetoric protects her image of transparency and the positive social environment; these are deeply-en-trenched social values of the vlogging community created by young female consumers [64].

Thirdly, the positive effect of intimacy development on the audience's intention of continuous viewing is determined. Accordingly, the research scope related to continuance intention has been expanded.

Fourth, the scope of application of this article is very wide. With the continuous development of social networks, there are various platforms for people to communicate and communicate, and there are also many ways to communicate on the network. Many vloggers or celebrities will also establish their own online fan base, update their daily lives in the form of pictures in chats with fans or on social platforms, or live broadcast on platforms such as Instagram or YouTube, which are all effective measures to promote the formation of intimacy. In the future research, if the variables used in this article are used in the research related to the above situation, I believe that more interesting results will be obtained.

The limitations and future research directions of this study are as follows. The research sample of this study focused on the female audiences who have used the Bilibili website to watch vlog in China, so the research results may not be applicable in the case of male or older audiences. Also, the survey only focuses on the Bilibili platform, and it is also an excellent choice to survey YouTube. As a new product of social media, vlog still has huge research space in its creation and utilization. Subsequent research can also primarily discuss how to attract viewers more effectively from the perspective of content creation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.

References

[1]   H. Reis, Relationships, Well-Being and Behaviour: Selected works of Harry Reis, Taylor & Francis, 2018.

[2]   "Investor Overview," http://ir.bilibili.com/investor-overview/, accessed 02-19, 2020.

[3]   J. P. Laurenceau, L. F. Barrett, and P. R. Pietromonaco, "Intimacy as an interpersonal process: the importance of self-disclosure, partner disclosure, and perceived partner responsiveness in interpersonal exchanges," (in eng), Journal of personality and social psychology, vol. 74, no. 5, pp. 1238-1251, May. 1998, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.74.5.1238.

[4]   B. F. Moss and A. I. Schwebel, "Defining Intimacy in Romantic Relationships," Family Relations, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 31-37, 1993, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/584918.

[5]   M. T. Schaefer and D. H. Olson, "Assessing Intimacy: The Pair Inventory*," Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 47-60, Jan. 1981, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.1981.tb01351.x.

[6]   H. T. Reis and P. Shaver, "Intimacy as an interpersonal process," in Handbook of personal relationships: Theory, research and interventions, Oxford, England: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 367-389, 1988.

[7]   H. S. Sullivan, The interpersonal theory of psychiatry, New York: Routledge, 2013.

[8] S. Utz, "The function of self-disclosure on social network sites: Not only intimate, but also positive and entertaining self-disclosures increase the feeling of connection," Computers in Human Behavior, vol. 45, pp. 1-10, Apr. 2015, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.11.076.

[9] F. García-Rapp, "'Come join and let's BOND': authenticity and legitimacy building on YouTube's beauty community," Journal of Media Practice, vol. 18, no. 2-3, pp. 120-137, Sep. 2017, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14682753.2017.1374693.

[10] S. Y. Ryoo and C. Koo, "The Moderating Effect of Media Synchronicity in the Communication Media Use and Knowledge Creation," Asia Pacific Journal of Information Systems, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 103-124, Jun. 2010. [Online]. Available: https://www.earticle.net/Article/A121035.

[11] J. Cho, D. I. Ramgolam, K. M. Schaefer, and A. N. Sandlin, "The Rate and Delay in Overload: An Investigation of Communication Overload and Channel Synchronicity on Identification and Job Satisfaction," Journal of Applied Communication Research, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 38-54, Feb. 2011, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2010.536847.

[12] P. D. Marshall, Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture, University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

[13] A. Tolson, "'Being Yourself': The Pursuit of Authentic Celebrity," Discourse Studies, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 443-457, Nov. 2001, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1461445601003004007.

[14] E. Ytreberg, "Erving Goffman as a theorist of the mass media," Critical Studies in Media Communication, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 481-497, Dec. 2002, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07393180216570.

[15] M. C. Green, T. C. Brock, and G. F. Kaufman, "Understanding Media Enjoyment: The Role of Transportation Into Narrative Worlds," Communication Theory, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 311-327, Jan. 2006, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2004.tb00317.x.

[16] R. Dyer, A Star is Born and the Construction of Authenticity, Stardom: Routledge, pp. 155-163, 2003.

[17] A. J. Christian, "Real vlogs: The rules and meanings of online personal videos," First Monday, vol. 14, no. 11, Oct. 2009, doi: https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v14i11.2699.

[18] J. Munnukka, D. Maity, H. Reinikainen, and V. Luoma-aho, ""Thanks for watching". The effectiveness of YouTube vlogendorsements," Computers in Human Behavior, vol. 93, pp. 226-234, Apr. 2019, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.12.014.

[19] J. E. Lee and B. Watkins, "YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions," Journal of Business Research, vol. 69, no. 12, pp. 5753-5760, Dec. 2016, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.171.

[20] Z. Wei, "The characteristics and development trend of Vlog - from the perspective of visual persuasion," Young reporters, vol. 17, no. 63, Dec. 2019.

[21] J. P. Laurenceau, L. F. Barrett, and M. J. Rovine, "The Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy in Marriage: A Daily-Diary and Multilevel Modeling Approach," Journal of Family Psychology, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 314-323, 2005, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.19.2.314.

[22] D. Smith, "Charlie is so 'English'-like: nationality and the branded celebrity person in the age of YouTube," Celebrity Studies, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 256-274, Jul. 2014, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2014.903160.

[23] P. Cozby, "Self-Disclosure: A Literature Review," Psychological bulletin, vol. 79, pp. 73-91, Mar. 1973, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0033950.

[24] R. Lin, A. Levordashka, and S. Utz, "Ambient intimacy on Twitter," Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, vol. 10, no. 1, May. 2016, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.5817/CP2016-1-6.

[25] M. Sunnafrank, "Predicted Outcome Value during Initial Interactions: A Reformulation of Uncertainty Reduction Theory," Human Communication Research, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 3-33, Mar. 2006, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1986.tb00092.x.

[26] N. N. Bazarova, "Public Intimacy: Disclosure Interpretation and Social Judgments on Facebook," Journal of Communication, vol. 62, no. 5, pp. 815-832, Aug. 2012, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01664.x.

[27] V. J. Derlega, "Self-Disclosure and Intimate Relationships," in Communication, Intimacy, and Close Relationships, V. J. Derlega Ed., Academic Press, pp. 1-9, 1984.

[28] H. Krasnova, S. Spiekermann, K. Koroleva, and T. Hildebrand, "Online Social Networks: Why We Disclose," Journal of Information Technology, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 109-125, Jun. 2010, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/jit.2010.6.

[29] J. A. Bargh, K. Y. A. McKenna, and G. M. Fitzsimons, "Can You See the Real Me? Activation and Expression of the "True Self" on the Internet," Journal of Social Issues, vol. 58, no. 1, pp. 33-48, Jan. 2002, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1540-4560.00247.

[30] F. Benevenuto, F. Duarte, T. Rodrigues, V. A. F. Almeida, J. M. Almeida, and K. W. Ross, "Understanding video interactions in youtube," presented at the Proceedings of the 16th ACM international conference on Multimedia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, 2008. [Online]. Available: https://doi.org/10.1145/1459359.1459480.

[31] M. Kavka, Reality television, affect and intimacy: Reality matters. Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008.

[32] M. Frobenius, "Audience design in monologues: How vloggers involve their viewers," Journal of Pragmatics, vol. 72, pp. 59-72, Oct. 2014, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.02.008.

[33] S. A. Rains, S. R. Brunner, and K. Oman, "Self-disclosure and new communication technologies:The implications of receiving superficial self-disclosures from friends," Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 42-61, Feb. 2016, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407514562561.

[34] J. V. Cordova and R. L. Scott, "Intimacy: A behavioral interpretation," The Behavior Analyst, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 75-86, Apr. 2001, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF03392020.

[35] A. Rindfleisch and J. Inman, "Explaining the Familiarity-Liking Relationship: Mere Exposure, Information Availability, or Social Desirability?," Marketing Letters, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 5-19, Feb. 1998, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1007958302123.

[36] M. F. Lowenthal and C. Haven, "Interaction and Adaptation: Intimacy as a Critical Variable," American Sociological Review, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 20-30, 1968, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2092237.

[37] P. L. P. Rau, Q. Gao, and Y. Ding, "Relationship between the level of intimacy and lurking in online social network services," Computers in Human Behavior, vol. 24, no. 6, pp. 2757-2770, Sep. 2008, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2008.04.001.

[38] S. H. Park, "From Deviance To Normality: Avatars as Agent of Self Cyberspace," Korean Journal of Journalism and Communication Studies, vol. 48, no. 5, pp. 375-405, Oct. 2004. [Online]. Available: http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE00955297&language=en_US.

[39] S. Zickmund, "Deliberation, Phrônesis, and Authenticity: Heidegger's Early Conception of Rhetoric," Philosophy & Rhetoric, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 406-415, 2007. [Online]. Available: www.jstor.org/stable/25655289.

[40] R. L. Daft and R. H. Lengel, "Organizational Information Requirements, Media Richness and Structural Design," Management Science, vol. 32, no. 5, pp. 554-571, May. 1986, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.32.5.554.

[41] A. R. Dennis and J. S. Valacich, "Rethinking media richness: towards a theory of media synchronicity," in *Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Hawaii International Conference on Systems Sciences, 1999*, HICSS-32. Abstracts and CD-ROM of Full Papers, vol. Track1, p. 10, Jan. 1999, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/HICSS.1999.772701.

[42] A. R. Dennis, R. M. Fuller, and J. S. Valacich, "Media, Tasks, and Communication Processes: A Theory of Media Synchronicity," MIS Quarterly, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 575-600, 2008, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/25148857.

[43] C. Chau, "YouTube as a participatory culture," New Directions for Youth Development, vol. 2010, no. 128, pp. 65-74, Jan. 2010, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/yd.376.

[44] J. Lee, "A Study on College Students' use and daily experience of Mobile Instant Messenger," Media, Gender and Culture, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 37-70, Mar. 2014. [Online]. Available: http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE02390517&language=en_US.

[45] M. B. Beverland, "Crafting Brand Authenticity: The Case of Luxury Wines*," Journal of Management Studies, vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 1003-1029, Jul. 2005, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00530.x.

[46] S. W. Littlejohn and K. A. Foss, Theories of Human Communication: Tenth Edition. Waveland Press, 2010.

[47] S. Lim, "How to educate Internet Language in Cyber Youth Culture?," Journal of Ethics, vol. 1, no. 99, pp. 183-204, 2014, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.15801/je.1.99.201412.183.

[48] S. H. Ann and S. J. Youn, "Design method of animation emoticons for non-verbal expression of emotion," in *Proceedings of the Korea Contents Association Conference*, pp. 200-204, 2006.

[49] J. Meyrowitz, "Television and interpersonal behavior: Codes of perception and response," Inter/media: Interpersonal communication in a media world, vol. 253, p. 272, 1986.

[50] Williams and Ederyn, "Experimental comparisons of face-to-face and mediated communication: A review," Psychological Bulletin, vol. 84, no. 5, pp. 963-976, 1977, doi: https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.84.5.963.

[51] D. Boyle, Authenticity Brands, Fakes, Spin and the Lust for Real Life, London: Harper Collins, 2003.

[52] B. Di and Paolo, "Authenticity as a mental state: A primer," Annals of Tourism Research, vol. 47, pp. 86-88, Jul. 2014, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2014.05.002.

[53] A. Tolson, A new authenticity? Communicative practices on YouTube, Self-Mediation: Routledge, pp. 93-106, 2013.

[54] R. Lin and S. Utz, "Self-disclosure on SNS: Do disclosure intimacy and narrativity influence interpersonal closeness and social attraction?," Computers in Human Behavior, vol. 70, pp. 426-436, May. 2017, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.01.012.

[55] R. B. Cooper and R. W. Zmud, "Information Technology Implementation Research: A Technological Diffusion Approach," Management Science, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 123-139, Feb. 1990, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.36.2.123.

[56] C. S. Lin, S. Wu, and R. J. Tsai, "Integrating perceived playfulness into expectation-confirmation model for web portal context," Information & Management, vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 683-693, Jul. 2005, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2004.04.003.

[57] J. Y. L. Thong, S. J. Hong, and K. Y. Tam, "The effects of post-adoption beliefs on the expectation-confirmation model for information technology continuance," International Journal of Human-Computer Studies, vol. 64, no. 9, pp. 799-810, Sep. 2006, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2006.05.001.

[58] K. Atchariyachanvanich, H. Okada, and N. Sonehara, "What keeps online customers repurchasing through the internet?," SIGecom Exch., vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 47-57, Jan. 2007, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1228621.1228626.

[59] Y. Lee and O. Kwon, "Intimacy, familiarity and continuance intention: An extended expectation–confirmation model in web-based services," Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 342-357, May. 2011, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2010.11.005.

[60] W. W. Chin, "Commentary: Issues and Opinion on Structural Equation Modeling," MIS Quarterly, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 7-16, Mar. 1998, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/249676.

[61] H. F. Kaiser, "An index of factorial simplicity," Psychometrika, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 31-36, Mar. 1974, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF02291575.

[62] C. Fornell and D. F. Larcker, "Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error," Journal of Marketing Research, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 39-50, Feb. 1981, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104.

[63] Y. W. Park and A. R. Lee, "The moderating role of communication contexts: How do media synchronicity and behavioral characteristics of mobile messenger applications affect social intimacy and fatigue?," Computers in Human Behavior, vol. 97, pp. 179-192, Aug. 2019, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.03.020.

[64] L. Jeffries, "The Revolution Will Be Soooo Cute: YouTube "Hauls" and the Voice of Young Female Consumers", Studies in Popular Culture, vol. 332, pp. 59-75., 2001.doi: https://doi.org/10.2307/23416384

Attachment

Measurement items of research variables

Construct		Measurement Items
Continued intention to watch	CU1	I will continue to watch this vlogger's channel in the future.
	CU2	I have an intention to continue to this vlogger's channel rather than another alternative channels.
	CU3	I will consider the relevant with this vlogger's channel preferentially when watching videos.
Self-disclosure	SD1	I can easily talk about various topics when i communicate with the vlogger on the internet.
	SD2	I can easily tell my feelings when i communicate with the vlogger on the internet.
	SD3	I can easily tell my fears when i communicate with the vlogger on the internet.
Perceived partner disclosure	PSD1	The vlogger can understand me well.
	PSD2	I think the vlogger cares about me.
	PSD3	I think the vlogger see me as acceptable
	PD1	Vlogger shows his thoughts and feelings very well in the video.

Partner's disclosure	PD2	Vlogger could easily talk about various topics in his vlog
	PD3	vlogger could easily tell his fears in the vlog.
Intimacy	INT1	I felt comfortable telling this vlogger thing that I do not tell other people.
	INT2	I think my relationship with vlogger is very close.
	INT3	I have the idea of meeting with vlogger in life.
Perceived immediate of feedback	PIOF1	Vlogger always responds to me quickly.
	PIOF2	It was easy to know how my contributions to the vlogger were being received, because I could get timely feedback.
	PIOF3	I am satisfied with the feedback that I got from vlogger.
Symbol set	SS1	Vlogger uses a variety of facial expressions during the communication process.
	SS2	Vlogger uses a variety of word expressions during the communication process.
	SS3	Vlogger uses a variety of gestures during the communication process.
Authenticity	AT1	I think the story that the vlogger telling about is true.
	AT2	This vlogger doesn't pretend to be somebody he isn't.
	AT3	I think this vlogger is a sincere person.