

# *Multiple Masculinities in Beauty Market*

## *A Case Study of Male's Gender Performances on Live-Streaming Platforms*

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**Abstract:** In recent years, with the development of social media, a new business model—live-streaming e-commerce emerged in China and provided a chance for males to enter the female's beauty consumption field. The research aims to analyze how male beauty influencers conduct their gender performances on the live-streaming platform and construct multiple masculinities. By adopting qualitative methods of case studies and content analysis, the research analyzes three male live-streamers on the platform—Taobao from the aspects of performance setting, appearance, language use, and the interaction with the audience. The findings suggest that the three cases perform multiple masculinities during their live-streaming. They present hybrid gender traits through their performances in the field of the traditionally female-dominated beauty market, and successfully blur the boundaries of femininity and masculinity and break the stereotypes of males' self-presentation.

**Keywords:** gender performance, multiple masculinity, live-streaming platforms, beauty market

### **1. Introduction**

In 2019, a special Guinness record for the "most lipstick applications to models in 30 seconds" was awarded to a young male beauty influencer—Li Jiaqi. He gains huge popularity in the field of the female beauty market. According to Chinese media's estimations, Li earns \$10-\$20 million every month from live-streaming e-commerce. Li Jiaqi is not the only male entering the female beauty industry. On the leading video platform YouTube, some male users have joined the beauty content making and gradually became Key Point Leader (KOL) in beauty consumption. Previously, the famous Jeffree Star founded his make-up brand Jeffree Star Cosmetics in 2014 and promoted the brand on YouTube. Due to his success on YouTube, he was described as "a musician and onetime MySpace celeb that reinvented himself in the YouTube makeup tutorial space." [1]. Another successful male in the beauty market is Manny MUA, a make-up artist on YouTube. He became the first male ambassador of Maybelline and the second male spokesperson for a beauty brand [2]. In 2018, he started his makeup line called Lunar Beauty [3].

In China, especially after Li's success, more males start participating in this traditional female domain as beauty influencers and promote the beauty and skincare products during their live-streaming on China's online shopping platforms represented by Alibaba's Taobao. Live-streaming e-commerce is a new business model, promoting and selling the products while influencers are streaming on their social media channel. The emergence of these platforms provides more

opportunities for men to share the profits of the female beauty market. On the LSP, they present themselves as a special male group in the aspects of appearances, languages, and so on. On the stage set up by the live-streaming platform, a transformation of masculinity is taking place. As a controversial group in Chinese society, it is necessary to explore how do they present themselves and perform multiple masculinities to attract female consumers through their gender performances and the performing setting created by themselves and the platform.

The existing literature on masculinities provides a theoretical basis for this study that masculinity is beginning to take on many forms [20, 18, 19, 4, 21, 17, 14]. Besides, individuals' different and changing gender traits that reflected by their social practices in society [4]. The researches on male's masculinity traits in traditional female-dominated beauty market focus on male's gender traits as consumers [5]. Meanwhile, research on gender performances on the live-streaming platform is limited. Therefore, the research gap triggers the researcher's interest to explore how male beauty live-streamers conduct their gender performances in real-time live streaming to build multiple masculinities in the patriarchal society and thus attract female consumers to achieve commercial success.

This paper conducts a case study on the performance of three male beauty influencers who work in female beauty markets during their live-streaming. From the aspects of performance setting, appearance, language, and interactions with consumers, the study aims to analyze how they explore and present their masculinities to construct themselves on the LSP.

## 2. Literary Review

The research is conducted from a sociological perspective in consuming society. Gender traits and gender performance provide insights into the special phenomenon that males are gradually entering females' beauty industries in China's new business model—living-streaming e-commerce on social media. This part is divided into the following topics: gender performance and gender identity, males' masculinities nowadays, and performances on social media in China.

### 2.1. Gender Performance and Gender Identities

Goffman defines gender as performance, self-impression management [6]. According to him, people perform themselves in ways in accordance with the public's perception of "maleness" and "femaleness". Judith Butler's theory on gender performativity also supports that performativity is conceptualized by repeated actions, as she explains in *Gender Trouble* "performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration"[7]. During the process of repeating social practices, gender identity could be gradually constructed based on traditional male/female binary structures.

However, gender identity might shift and change for it is a dynamic and fluid concept in a different context at different times. Bem argues that many individuals can show both masculine and feminine traits depending on different situations in social practices [8]. He explains that "many individuals might be 'androgynous', that is, they might be both masculine and feminine [...] depending on the situational appropriateness of these behaviors." . Deborah Cameron's research on young men's talk and act is conducted from the perspective of sociolinguistics [9]. In the research, she states that men and women can perform in ways that subvert prevailing "masculinity" and "femininity". The masculinity and femininity here refer to the constructed gender forms in social discourses, associated with behaviors, roles, personal traits, and so on [10,11]. The conceptualization of femininity and masculinity can also be illustrated in "role-appropriate behaviors, associated physical characteristics, occupations and personality traits" [12].

In the field of marketing, socially constructed gender identity will influence consumer behaviors. In the postmodern consuming society, the distinctions of femininity and masculinity are deconstructed and blurred. Kacen described the male's performances in the advertisement of L'Oreal to illustrate that male's gender performances in the advertisement subvert traditional masculinity and transform into a submissive female role [12]. Hjort and Konulaine express that gender identity plays a significant role in marketing and brand management [13]. Focusing on the observations on the male beauty vlogger's physical traits in their appearances, including their makeup faces, their hair, and clothing, their research on the selected individuals have supported that gender identity is not determined by the dichotomy of masculinity and femininity. The presentations of masculinities are in various forms.

## 2.2. The Construction of Masculinities

As the researches presented in Part 1, the ideas of masculinity and femininity which can be considered as a social construction, are historically variable. Masculinity is one of the most significant parts of social practices and attracts extensive attention in the field of sociology, concerning "transformations in men's behaviors, appearances, opinions and more" [14]. And masculinities can be analyzed from the performance setting, male appearance and clothing, language use, and interactions with message receivers [15].

R.W Connell classified masculinities into four types: hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, and marginalized masculinities. Among the four types, she states that hegemonic masculinity, which, according to her, is traditional masculine bases of multiple masculinities, reveals males' dominant position and subordination of women [16] in a patriarchal society. And hegemonic masculinity is the main pattern of gender relations [17]. Remarkably, masculinity is a fluid concept. According to Kimmel [18], masculinities are constantly changing in different social contexts and public reconstruction. Connell shares the same idea with Kimmel, proposing a concept named "plural masculinities" to illustrate that masculinities are reconstructed by society through daily life and presented differently in various cultural contexts [4]. Exploring what will influence the repositioning of males, she mentions that mass media also has a huge effect on the reconstruction of masculinities—people can deliberately create gender images for marketing [19]. Through constant social practices, both Connell and Messerschmidt hold the opinion that "specific masculine practices may be appropriate into other masculinities" [17].

The concept of "hybrid masculinities" is generally accepted by many researchers. Bridges and Pascoe define hybrid masculinities as a combination of privileged masculinities, marginalized masculinities, subordinated masculinities, and femininities [14]. The emergence of hybrid masculinities implies that the changes in the system of power and gender quality. Connell believes that hybridization of masculinities is related to the "remaking of gender meanings"[19]. He as well as Messerschmidt argue that hybrid masculinities are transformations of hegemonic masculinities [17]. These transformations, according to Bridges and Pascoe, imply the privileged group's flexible identities afforded by power [14]. By analyzing hybrid masculinities presented by American men, Messner considers hybrid masculinity as a personal and cultural style and "softer" and more "sensitive" than traditional hegemonic masculinity [20]. Demetriou also explores how the elements of "gay culture" are absorbed into the constructions of heterosexual men's masculinities [21]. He conducts a conclusion that the incorporation of marginalized masculinities helps alter the existing performances of gender.

Moreover, feminine traits can be also discovered. Klasson and Ulver's research on males in Sweden who are involved in domestic food work in 2015 reveals that the feminized traits could be incorporated into hegemonic masculinities [22]. Kristen Barber's research on the phenomenon that males' growing concerns on appearances and enter the beauty industry whose dominant consumers

are always females, shows the feminization of male's masculinities [23]. Many researchers have explored the emergence of the "new man"—the metrosexuals. Mark Simpson describes those males who pay special attention to fashion as "metrosexual" [24]. He describes this new kind of man as "one less certain of his identity and much more interested in his image—that's to say, one who was much more interested in being looked at" [25]. Scholars such as Coad believe the metrosexuals are inclined to break the stereotyped masculinities and embrace their feminine sides [26]. From Anderson's perspective, the birth of the metrosexuals is the product of contemporary culture under the constant reconstruction of gender. McNeil and Douglas analyze masculinities in the field of retailing in New Zealand by exploring male's behaviors and attitudes in the consumption of grooming products, reaching a conclusion that even though metrosexual masculinity may face a societal challenge, males are becoming increasingly "feminized and appearance-focused"[5].

These studies result that masculinities have been developed in various forms in particular social contexts. Males are gradually entering the traditional female-dominated fields such as makeup consumption [13] and domestic work [22]. The development of social media also provides people with a stage to construct masculinities.

### 2.3. Performance on Social Media and Live-Streaming E-commerce

The development of social media platforms gives individuals more chances to perform themselves. Goffman's dramaturgy theory concerning self-presentation provides many types of research about gender performance on social media with a theoretical basis. In *No Sense of Place*, Joshua Meyrowitz explores how electronic social media influences social life and sense of identity [27]. He states that the current information system plays a crucial role in the merging of masculinity and femininity, as he concludes that "now the movement...indeed, for a minimization or elimination of dividing line between masculinity and femininity". Hjort and Komulainen explore how male beauty vloggers on YouTube perform themselves [13]. They analyze 5 male makeup vloggers' self-presentations on YouTube. Conducting the methods of ethnographic content analysis, they explore how these vloggers construct their own gender identities and achieve gender transgression by analyzing their physical traits and behaviors in the contexts of their videos. They conclude that social media like YouTube provides a stage for male makeup influencers to conduct gender transgression.

With the development of communication technology, a new model of social media called the live-streaming platform emerged worldwide. In Zhang and Hjorth's research focusing on gender performance in living-streaming media in China, they pay much attention to analyzing Livestream studios' settings and the live-streamers themselves and their interactions with the audience [15]. They find that traditional gender qualities could be disturbed for live-streamers could reconstruct their gender traits for gaining popularity through their performances on social media. Moreover, e-commerce is integrated with the live-streaming platform. Based on the utilization of live-streaming platforms, this prevailing business strategy allowing customers to have direct interaction with e-retailers successfully integrates real-time social interaction into online shopping to facilitate marketing [28, 29]. Through the interactions, the live-streamers gender traits could be performed in front of the audience.

In conclusion, the development of live streaming e-commerce is helpful to analyze how male live-streamers perform on LSP and construct their own identities on social media to exploit the above advantages of living-e-commerce to the full, which will finally light the fire of female's consumptions.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Data Collection and Data Analysis

According to a theoretic basis, gender is performed through repeated symbolic actions and masculinities can be presented differently in various social discourses. The research is conducted in qualitative approaches of content analysis and theme analysis to analyze cases based on the observations of how the male live-streamers perform in the females' beauty market. The study will be conducted on Chinese mainstream social media especially on Taobao, which can be considered as a representative platform for male live-streamers to perform their gender identities and masculinities.

The study analyzes the contents and gender elements during the time of live-streaming. Three live-streamers who represent different ways of gender performances are selected. The study analyzes how they perform their variable masculinities and reconstruct their gender identities from the following perspectives: performance settings, appearances, use of languages, body gestures, and interactions with message receivers based on observations of their live-streaming records.

Content analysis methods are conducted to analyze collected data. Content analysis is applied to visual contents in the study to depict the sampling live-streamers self-presentations on social media. Their live-streaming provides the study with the potential to advance the empirical analysis of their masculinities.

#### 3.2. Cases

The three cases of this research are chosen strategically. All of the selected live-streamers have their special characteristics in the area of beauty consumption and are related closely to the research question. According to the platform's regulations, individuals conducting commercial live-streaming behavior need to meet the following aspects:

1. The number of Weibo followers exceeds 50,000
2. The live-streamer needs to have good control of the scene, needs to be fluent, have a clear thought, and maintain strong interaction with fans.
3. The live-streamer is required to have a certain base of relevant knowledge on female beauty products.

Based on the above requirements of the platform, this study selected three cases that are represented in the field of female beauty marketing. The chosen live-streamers are Li Jiaqi, Shang Miao, and Chen Wosun, who have different fan bases.

Li Jiaqi, also known as Austin Li, without a doubt is the best beauty salesman as well as the most popular live-streamers in China. Selling 15,000 lipsticks in just 5 minutes, he is called as "King of Lipstick" by his fans. In recent years, Li has built a following of more than 29 million on China's most popular social media Weibo, and more than 50 million on Taobao. He received the honors of "The Most Commercially Valuable Red Man of the Year" in 2020 and was awarded as one of "Top 10 Beauty Influencers of 2020". Besides, he also holds the record for "the most lipstick applications to models in 30 seconds".

Shang Miao, a beauty vlogger who has successfully entered the female's beauty live-streaming, names himself "best guy friend". His Weibo followers have exploded from over 100,000 to over 2 million in three months, growing by over 2 million in six months, and now has over 5.5 million followers. So far, the average number of people watching his live streaming has also exceeded five million. He is nominated as one of "Top 10 Commercial Influencers of 2019" and "Yong E-commerce Star of 2020".



Chen Wosun, is a beauty blogger coming into the field of live-streaming e-commerce, and currently has more than 3.5 million Weibo fans and the number of followers continues rising. His live broadcast last April attracted close to 6 million viewers. He won the T-Mall Beauty Reward twice, in 2019 and 2021.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Performance Settings

For beauty live-streamers, the performance setting includes the live-streaming background and beauty products that may be used in the live-streaming. Among the three cases, Li Jiaqi's performance setting is the most representative. His live-streaming was mainly conducted at home, where a "lipstick wall" behind him. The "lipstick wall" is a huge shelf on which there are lipsticks of various brands and color codes. By the end of 2019, the cumulative value of these lipsticks has exceeded one million.



Figure 1: Li's lipstick wall in his live-streaming studio.

According to Goffman's dramaturgy theory, social interaction is a kind of performance. He demonstrates that the importance of the "front stage", which will be considered as the platform where the performance takes on and character building. Home is a more private space, part of the "backstage", and its decorations can reflect some of the qualities and characteristics of a person's private life.

Li Jiaqi set the background of the live-streaming at home, transferring part of the "backstage" to the "frontstage" and presenting himself in this space. He presented the lipstick wall in front of the camera, deliberately giving away part of his private space in which he owns far more lipsticks as a male than most females have. His large collection of lipsticks and his level of female beauty knowledge have differentiated him from traditional males who know nothing about females' beauty products. This is a practice for him to break through the traditional male stereotype. By displaying the special "wall", Li not only intends to create a social context in which he can perform his masculinity which is he tends to present in the live-streaming, but he also tries to convey some information to his consumers: he is a professional who has invested a lot of money in the field of female beauty in his private life. At a time when consumption in the female beauty market is increasing, the lipstick wall will attract the attention of many female consumers.

Meanwhile, the lipstick wall as the background of the live-streaming echoes the act of putting lipsticks on his lips for consumers on the LSP that he has been repeating. In a traditional sense, lipstick exists as a symbol of women, and wearing lipstick is also a repeated feminine behavior. Therefore, wearing lipstick to a certain extent is his separation from traditional masculinity. The wall also provides a context for him to show his special masculinity in the public sphere. However, Li Jiaqi's continuous practice of using lipstick is not the same as the practice of female behavior in the traditional sense; for him, the symbolic meaning of lipstick is completely transformed from a female object to a commercial one, and the application of lipstick does not belong to the category of female

behavior alone, but a repeated commercial behavior. As a beauty influencer, he once used 380 lipsticks on his lips in live streaming. For Li, they are just tools for his work, just part of the job. He does not give up his masculinity in the process of repeatedly putting on lipstick to gain female consumers. Rather, through the professionalism presented by the lipstick wall behind him and the unique affinity that is missing from traditional masculinity during the live-streaming, he has created his unique self-position: a professional male beauty live-streamer who can mingle with women but has a strong voice over them.

## 4.2. Appearances

The three live-streamers choose to wear makeup in every live broadcast to show their exquisite features as beauty industry practitioners. Shang Miao is the most representative of the three.

As with his self-proclaimed “girl’s best guy friend”, he presents himself as a completely feminine character whether in his daily life or during the live-streaming. He is fair-skinned, wearing a girl’s haircut - a long dark hair with French Fringe. After getting cosmetic surgery on his eyes, nose and lips, he has a more delicate look of a girl. During his live-streaming, he normally wears cosmetic contacts lenses to enlarge pupils and change eye color, making his eyes look bigger and more attractive. Besides, he also wears women’s clothes and accessories. The most impressive example is his live-streaming cover photo, where he wears a white ladies’ shirt with lace sleeves and collar, holding a small and delicate white folding fan with a tassel charm.



Figure 2: Shang Miao’s advertising photo.

Shang Miao's feminine appearance is entirely based on his interests as well as his aesthetics. His descriptions of how he is gradually becoming a beauty influencer reveal his interest in the beauty market: "Early on, I enrolled in a photography class to learn photography. At that time, there was a makeup school across the street from the photography school, to which I was attracted every day. Finally, I dropped the photography class, sold my camera, and went to the school to learn make-up." In the live-streaming, he abandons the mainstream masculinity which stresses a strong and virile characteristic, and embraces softer masculinity that blends femininity. Although, in the current environment dominated by traditional hegemonic masculinity, he is often called as "Nancy-boy" and "girly-man", he does not give up his pursuit of self-defined "beauty" and "individuality" because of external criticism. Shang's behavior of blurring the boundary of masculinity and femininity is a personal choice based on the persistence of interest. Therefore, he shows enough self-confidence and courage in the live-streaming, which breaks a social stereotype of masculinity and reconstructs his identity: a male who is confident enough to build up his special masculinity by blending masculinity and femininity when performing himself.

The reason why he can attract many female consumers to watch his live-streaming is that the masculinity he reconstructs in the performance exactly meets the dissatisfaction and challenge of female-dominated beauty consumers towards the traditional hegemonic masculinity. The hegemonic masculinity embodies male-dominated gender relations, in which women's behavior is gazed at and judged by men. However, Shang Miao's unique presentation on an appearance on LSP subverts

traditional gender relations and power structure—he places himself in the position of being evaluated, receiving the gaze of all women. In a sense, he allows the women who watch his performance to come out of the traditional disciplined subordination and satisfy their power-seeking psychology.

### 4.3. Language

Both the verbal language and body language of the three live-streamers show diversified masculinities.

When introducing the product itself, they will use a lot of descriptive adjectives, for example, when the three live-streamers are selling lipstick, the description of the color is very detailed and precise. As the Lipstick King, Li's detailed descriptions of lipstick color are quite diverse like "cameo brown", "caramel-colored", "apple red", "blood red", etc. Secondly, when describing the effect of the product, they also use more exaggerated expressions like females. The following are some examples:

1. "A..m..a..z..i..n..g!" (Li)
2. "Oh...My... God!" (Li)

Another major lexical choice feature is that all of them use adverbs of degree frequently and repeatedly in a sentence, such as:

1. "It is very, very, very beautiful if you wear this lipstick in the winter." (Shang)
2. "It is, really, really ugly!" (Chen)

Their narratives show the reality that the language usage styles of the three males are a blend of male and female language habits. In the field of sociolinguistics, there are differences in the language used by males and females. From the previous study, the use of intensive adverbs such as "very", "really" and "particularly" as well as emotion adjectives frequently, from Biber et al. 's [30] perspective, is a tentativeness of female language use. By using the above expressive and descriptive words which are traditionally in accordance with the characteristics of female language use, they can introduce their products to consumers easily and blur the gender differences in language, thus achieving the goal of marketing. In addition, from the descriptions for colors, they also differ from the traditional image of a male who knows nothing about female beauty and thus shows their self-positions as professional beauty influencers who understand females very well. At the same time, in the process of the performance, the live-streamers will occasionally describe themselves with obvious gender-specific words. For example, Shang Miao calls himself "bestie". This feminine self-reference helps him to highlight his soft and friendly gender quality during the live-streaming. At the same time, the word "bestie" also implies equality. He puts himself in an equal position with female consumers to shape the image he wants to present on LSP. This self-reference not only erases the boundaries between masculinity and femininity to reconstruct his feminized masculinity but also helps break the traditional unequal gender relations.

Except for the verbal language, Chen's body language is worth analyzing. In the process of showing the audience the authenticity of the product after using it live, he mostly shows a cute or flirtatious look, and it will be accompanied by upper body movements such as twisting his head, pursing his lips, etc. for a multi-angle presentation. Looking like a glamorous actress at a fashion party, he confidently shows off how products beautify his face.





Figure 3: Chen's body language in the live-streaming.

His understanding of beauty products is completely different from the requirements of social norms for men. His body language presents that he does not treat women's cosmetics as a commodity, but as works of art that can create and display charm. Based on this, he tries to perform from a female perspective, presenting himself as a shining female star. By repeatedly practicing feminine behaviors, he creates his image of a metrosexual. In addition, in his performance, he likes to use gestures with his pinky up or Lan Hua Zhi (a hand pose of ladies in Beijing Opera). In traditional Chinese society, males are generally not allowed to make these two gestures because they are exclusively for females. Chen does not accept the traditional mannerisms of masculinity in his performance. The female body gestures he makes on LSP can be seen as a challenge to traditional masculinity and a breach of the clear boundaries between the binary gender qualities. The repeated use of "exclusively" female body gestures in his performance to construct his masculinity contains not only a resistance to the correction of traditional masculinity but also a rebellion against the stereotypical image of males in the current discourse system. It is an empowerment of his gender performances under the power.

#### 4.4. Interactions

Interaction with the audience is more conducive to gender performance and identity building for live-streamers on LSP.

In live streaming, Shang is accustomed to calling his fans "my besties" and Chen also considers his customers as "sisters". Both Shang and Chen's addresses to their female consumers cross gender boundaries. In contrast to traditional gender relations, Shang and Chen define themselves as women's "sisters," which implicitly means equality. Meanwhile, they feminize their self-positions to create a gentler, more considerate male masculinity performance on LSP. Moreover, Chen adopts more polite expressions during the live-streaming, such as "Sorry about that" and "Thank you for your advice!". When he makes interactions with his consumers, he also asks their opinions: "Does it look good? Do you think it looks good?". Chen prefers that the audience can give him some suggestions to enable him to do better in the future. He relinquishes the right to dominate the discourse during the presentation of his products to consumers and gives the right of evaluation to the female audience. This behavior weakens the more aggressive aspects of masculinity and adds a softer feminine characteristic to his gender qualities. He also embodies the elements of feminine communication to some extent in the live-streaming, such as "Sisters, you are in a hurry! Why? Is your boyfriend urging you to sleep?". The audience in his live-streaming respond quickly in the comment section "Hahahaha, Sun, you are so cute!" He acts to some extent as a close female friend into the private sphere of the consumer's life: standing on a woman's point of view and spitting on her boyfriend's behavior. The identity he presents then becomes a male who shares more agreement with women. In his performance, he, as a male, speak up for women, which is a reinterpretation of masculinity. This also allows women to implicitly accept his self-position under certain circumstances. During the live-

streaming, he can build more comfortable guanxi with female consumers through this unique way of communication between women, which helps build more comfortable guanxi with female consumers.

However, there are differences between Li's self-presentation and the other two men's performances. Li is accustomed to calling female customers "all girls" when emphasizing important information. This reflects Li's intention to clear the distinction between femininity and his gender quality. Moreover, "all girls" put female customers into traditional gender relations in which they are still gazed at and evaluated by a male beauty influencer and their makeup is evaluated by a male.

He also uses large amounts of imperative sentences with a commanding tone, for example:

1. "Do not sleep! You must not sleep now! If you fall asleep, you will lose a few hundred yuan! Do not sleep! Keep Awake! Keep Awake!" (Li)
2. "All girls! Buy it right now!" (Li)

This commanding tone of the presentation is partly to capture the audience's attention during the live-streaming, but also to reposition female consumers in the power system of traditional gender relations. In the live-streaming, a commanding tone that is used to sell products reflects Li Jiaqi as a male disciplining female. Li's gender quality thus leans more towards orthodox masculinity. Even though he is more affable and has a deeper understanding of females than traditional masculine males, he still does not break away from the masculinity that is shaped by patriarchy. In his live streaming on October 27, 2019, he talked to his consumers "If you want to buy lipstick, you must buy the one that suits you and can make you more beautiful, OK?" "Those KOLs are Internet stars, while you are just ordinary people." "Do not go to try European-style makeup on your Asian face. Girls in Western countries dare to draw exaggerated eyeliner, and run heavy blush, you dare?". In his interactions with consumers, he does not work from a female aesthetic perspective. Rather, he tells women what products and what kind of makeup can better meet Chinese males' expectations of women's appearance from a male perspective and tries to construct his self-position as a professional male beauty guider. In essence, his gender performance to some degree is in accordance with traditional masculinity that mainstream society advocates.

## 5. Discussion

The three cases conduct their gender performances based on their daily practice of masculinity. They have obtained a chance on the Taobao, which, according to Goffman's theory, can be considered as a "front stage", to present multiple masculinities which break the stereotype of traditional masculinity and the dichotomies of femininity and masculinity and reflect the continuous reconstruction and fluidity of gender traits in modern society.

"Shang Miao's appearances in his live-streaming, such as wearing female clothes and accessories, reflect that he incorporates femininity traits in how he looks, how he behaves, and how he identifies himself. The confidence in his appearances when he is conducting gender performance helps him present himself as a metrosexual, who tends to spend more money and time on his physical appearance and create a certain image [25]. Meanwhile, his performances on the live-streaming platform to some extent subvert gender relations in social systems— "'masculinity' is gloried and 'femininity' is devalued" [11]. Moreover, Chen presents softer masculinity on the live-streaming platform. Especially in his interaction with female consumers, the study finds that he tends to actively seek the opinions of female consumers and communicate with them from female's perspectives, which is also different from the traditional hegemonic masculinity that emphasizes "domination, aggressiveness, competition, athletic prowess, stoicism, and control". Both of their gender performances are gradually breaking the boundaries between traditional masculinity and femininity, trying to show their individualities and pursue the construction of self-identity without interference.

Their self-presentation is a product of contemporary culture under the constant reconstruction of gender.

Li Jiaqi's lipstick wall reflects that he is familiar with the field of women's cosmetics and has invested a lot of money in it, which differentiates him from a traditional male image. He can also be seen repeatedly applying the products to his face during the live streaming. But rather than trying to embrace the feminine side like Shang, he deliberately distanced himself from femininity. The purpose of his gender performance on the live broadcast platform is to create an image of a beauty consultant who guides and instructs women to consume, to achieve commercial purposes. Moreover, from the interaction between Li Jiaqi and the female consumers, the research finds that he still follows the gender relations dominated by traditional hegemonic masculinity. Female consumers are still on the weak side, in the state of being disciplined by males' aesthetics. Li's masculinity is an expression of hybrid masculinity, which incorporates "marginalized and subordinated masculinities and femininities" [14, pp.246]. He made use of the characteristics of "men who make up", a non-mainstream male group, to reshape the male gender traits to some extent during the live streaming. Although his masculinity is different from traditional hegemonic masculinity, the domination of males is still reflected in his case.

It is found that although on the social platform, male beauty live-streamers show diverse masculinity through social practices in a specific context, blurring the boundary between masculinity and femininity to a certain extent, and endowing females with opportunities to gaze at males' gender performances. The performances of multiple masculinities demonstrate that there is a transition zone between the two traits. However, some of the gender power relations represented by traditional masculinity and femininity still exist. The three males have provided women with the power and opportunity to gaze at them through their performances on LSP, but the transfer of these powers is essentially due to the strong purchasing power of female consumers. Essentially, they recommend female beauty products to women still from a male perspective and place women under the regimented system of male aesthetics. Although the presentations of their multiple masculinities objectively challenge the dominance of traditional hegemonic masculinity in society, their shaping of their special masculinities which are different from traditional masculinity, are driven by commercial purposes in addition to the pursuit of individuality. Besides, in order to have a deeper analysis on how the male live-streamers, the method of the interview will be adopted in further research.

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