

Mukbang mania: exploring attitudes and parasocial relationships among viewers

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to examine how the motivation to watch mukbang influences attitudes towards watching content and para-social relationships, which ultimately result in the intention to watch content and purchase intention using the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework.

Design/methodology/approach – Using a quantitative approach, this study was conducted on 400 respondents of generation Z and millennials selected using the purposive sampling method. The data obtained were processed using structural equation modeling with SmartPLS 3.0 software.

Findings – The findings of this study indicate that visual appeal, auditory elements, and content variety can influence attitude toward mukbang content, while frequency of interaction, content relatability, and engagement level influence parasocial relationships. Furthermore, attitude toward mukbang content and parasocial relationships can lead to intention to watch mukbang, which also influences purchase intention.

Research limitations/implications – This study only used samples from generation Z and millennials in Indonesia, which may not be fully representative of the wider population. Future studies could explore different demographic groups or add other variables such as emotional motivation.

Practical implications – The results of this study provide insights for content creators and marketers to pay more attention to visual, auditory, and content variation elements in mukbang to increase audience engagement. Strengthening parasocial relationships can also be used as a marketing strategy to increase purchase intentions.

Originality/value – This study highlights the influence of viewing motivation on attitudes and parasocial relationships in the context of mukbang, which is still rarely explored in the literature. This study contributes to the understanding of digital consumer behavior, especially among generation Z and millennials.

Keywords: Viewing motivation, mukbang, attitude towards content, parasocial relationship, viewing intention, purchase intention, SOR.

Introduction

In recent times, the emergence of content creators has brought a variety of interesting content to social media platforms (Tsekouropoulos, 2019; Wahid et al., 2023). The viral phenomenon has become a relatively new form of marketing used by individuals, companies and organizations in

promoting the products or services they offer (Zhang et al., 2023). This appears to be a new form of word-of-mouth promotion (Iqbal et al., 2022). In analyzing how consumer purchasing intentions are influenced by shared content, understanding the factors that influence it becomes very important in improving marketing performance (Itani et al., 2020; Yuan & Lou, 2020). According to Song et al. (2023) Consumer attitudes in responding to content tend to show positive and negative attitudes. This will certainly be greatly influenced by how well the content attracts attention and is relevant to the audience's interests, so that it can create high involvement in making purchases (Penttinen et al., 2022).

In addition, audience engagement and visual appeal play an important role in building experiences and capturing consumer attention (Fimberg & Sousa, 2020). Attractive design, good use of visuals, and layout can create a positive impression on consumers in influencing their attitudes leading to purchasing decisions (Amanah & Harahap, 2020). Visual media such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are often used by consumers to search for references, compare products, and support their purchasing decisions (Penttinen et al., 2022). Current phenomenon, empirical evidence shows that 79% of consumers use video content as a source of information that can help in making their purchasing decisions (Penttinen, 2022). Therefore, it is not surprising that many content creators today share their videos as a means of promoting products or services.

One of the growing trends in Indonesia today is live food broadcasts or live streaming, where content creators taste or review food interactively, which attracts the attention of viewers and increases engagement on social media platforms (Donnar, 2017; Kircaburun, Harris, et al., 2021). In the context of mukbang content, sound elements, such as eating sounds, chewing, and various food-related sounds, can create an immersive sensory experience. These sounds not only provide a sense of authenticity, but also stimulate auditory pleasure that can affect the emotions of the audience (Yousefi et al., 2024). As stated by Lee & Wan (2023) mukbang is a term that indicates the activity of eating through live broadcasts. This activity is used to refer to videos that show someone eating, along with other activities, such as talking or commenting on food (Yang & Babenskaite, 2019).

According Lee & Wan (2023) mukbang activities are not only used by individuals, but also by companies that want to promote and market their products. The increasing number of mukbang viewers shows that users enjoy the fun mukbang content while also looking for information related to food and beverage products (Choe, 2019).

Instagram, Youtube and Tiktok are some of the platforms that provide many videos for users to explore sharing information about food and drinks, which play a role in connecting people directly. The real phenomenon in Indonesia has several famous Food Vloggers and their number of followers such as Tanboy Kun, Nex Car-los, MGDa-lenaf, Ria SW, and Ken & Grat (Isdarwanto, 2023). However, although the popularity of food vloggers continues to increase and mukbang content is increasingly popular, research on the influence of mukbang content on the viewing intention of social media users in Indonesia is still very limited. Most of the existing studies focus more on food consumption behavior or the health impacts of watching mukbang such as research (Kang et al., 2020; J.-H. Kim et al., 2024; Y. Kim & Oh, 2024; Minh et al., 2024), without explaining in depth the factors that influence user interest and intention to watch mukbang videos. Therefore, this study will fill this gap by exploring the factors that drive the intention to watch mukbang among social media users, especially among Gen Z and Millennials in Indonesia.

Following previous research conducted by Song et al. (2023) using the S-O-R theory, this study examines the antecedents that can influence purchase intentions. On the other hand, content variety also plays a role in maintaining audience interest, with a variety of foods and diverse presentation styles, which can attract wider attention and thus influence the attitude of the audience. In turn, the more positive their attitudes and the higher the intention to watch, the greater the likelihood of purchase intention, where viewers are interested in buying food products or brands featured in the mukbang.

Many studies focus on the influence of visual appeal individually on attitude and purchase intention, but little research combines the synergy between visual appeal and auditory elements in the context of mukbang (Kaczmarek-Gajewska & McDonnell, 2021; D. Lee & Wan, 2023; Song et al., 2023). Previous research has confirmed that the S-O-R framework has predictive power in

how consumers react to media stimuli (Chang, 2017). Thus, this study aims to examine how the motivation to watch mukbang (stimulus) influences attitudes toward watching content and parasocial relationships (organism), which ultimately result in intention to watch content and purchase intention (response). While many studies have focused on parasocial interactions in general, few have examined the frequency of interactions between viewers and mukbang content or creators. This study can help fill the existing knowledge gap and provide deeper insights into how purchase intention is related to shared content and contribute to the literature by expanding the relationship between variables that lead to purchase intention.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Stimulus Organism Response Theory

Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) is a conceptual framework that explains how an external stimulus (S) received by an individual (organism) is processed internally to ultimately produce a certain response (R) (Nam et al., 2021). The S-O-R approach in this study can be a basis for understanding how intention to watch and purchase intention are formed through the influence of external stimuli, such as media content or advertising (Zhang et al., 2023). Stimulus refers to internal and external factors that influence a person's perception and cause certain responses (Hussain et al., 2023).

These factors can be stimuli from the environment, socio-culture, marketing, and personal and psychological aspects. The second component, namely the organism, refers to the cognitive, affective, or psychological processes experienced by individuals after receiving the stimulus. These internal characteristics interact with the stimulus to produce the final component, namely the response. According to Zhang et al. (2023) response is the final result shown by an individual, which can be a behavioral, emotional, or cognitive response. In this study, the S-O-R approach is used to see how the external stimulus represented affects the individual's internal process, which ultimately forms the intention to purchase.

Para-Social Relationship

According to Kumar & Benbasat (2002) para-social presence refers to the extent to which a medium facilitates a sense of understanding, connection, involvement and interaction among participating social entities.

Parasocial relationship refers to an imaginary relationship developed by an audience (media consumer) with a media persona (such as a celebrity). In the context of social media influencer, parasocial relationship refers to the one-sided relationship followers perceive to have with an influencer. The interest in studying parasocial relationship goes back to the early mass communication research and the emergence of the uses and gratification approach. Research indicated that parasocial relationship often develops among audiences of traditional celebrities like actors/actresses, sport athletes, as well as in social media and online communities (Farivar et al., 2021).

Para-social relationships are the basis of audience loyalties to specific shows and account for the social influence of celebrities. As para-social relationships develop, they usually become stronger such that audiences feel less uncertainty about media personae, attach more importance to the relationship, and experience more distress when such relationships end (Tsfati et al., 2021).

Mukbang Content

Mukbang content, first popularized in South Korea, has become a global phenomenon where individuals watch someone eat large amounts of food via live broadcast or recorded video (Donnar, 2017). According to Lee & Wan (2023) Many food and beverage brands pay mukbang influencers or give them free products to boost their marketing performance. The huge potential of food marketing using mukbang influencers is reflected in their enthusiasm as evidenced by the large number of followers (Kim, 2024; Song, 2023). The sound of chewing and biting food is often used in mukbang videos to attract the audience's attention and influence their intention to buy (Pereira et al., 2019). Although this relationship is one-way, where the host does not really know the audience, Zhang & Wang (2024) states that viewers feel a deep closeness. Mukbang videos that

present an interesting combination of visuals and audio can influence purchasing intentions and trigger the desire to eat in viewers.

Hypothesis Development

The Influence of Visual Appeal on Attitude Toward Mukbang Content

Gronding (2016) States that a website or application is very important in shaping consumer perceptions when interacting on social media. The visual power of a website or application can arouse positive emotions, making the audience more emotionally involved and usually have a positive attitude towards the content they see (Amanah & Harahap, 2020). As stated by Kaczmarek-Gajewska & McDonnell (2021) stated that strong visual elements can enhance perception so that they create a sensory experience even though the audience only sees without feeling it directly. In the bottom-up approach, Grondin (2016) said that a stimulus received to process information occurs when the brain uses previous knowledge. In this context, content that is displayed if it has good image quality, attracts attention and influences the audience's perception of a product, service, or content so that it leads to an attitude towards the content (Roslan & Salim, 2022). Thus, the hypothesis is proposed as follows: H₁: Visual appeal has a positive and significant effect on attitude toward mukbang content.

The Influence of Auditory Elements on Attitude Toward Mukbang Content

Currently, marketing developments have led to direct marketing practices through the media and have abandoned conventional marketing practices (Chen, 2023). According to Jiang et al. (2024) factors such as sound elements delivered live are very important in influencing viewers. In this case, a content creator must pay attention to noise when making a video so as not to disturb the focus and comfort of consumers during the interaction (Iqbal et al., 2022). Auditory stimuli such as sound, effects, and music can positively influence the audience, thus forming an attitude of the audience towards a content. As stated Song et al. (2023) that in a content, factors such as visual (background, lighting, and color) and auditory (sound, effects, and music) have a significant influence in shaping the audience's attitude towards the content being shared. In the context of mukbang, this auditory element serves to increase audience involvement, strengthening the impression that they are enjoying the food directly (Kircaburun, Harris, et al., 2021; D. Lee & Wan, 2023). Thus, there is a positive correlation between auditory and attitude.

H₂: Auditory elements have a positive and significant effect on attitude toward mukbang content.

The Influence of Content Variety on Attitude Toward Mukbang Content

Appel et al. (2020) stated that social media marketing has undergone a transformation from what was originally done in static image format to live streaming video. This shift is influenced by changes in consumer behavior that increasingly prioritize real-time interaction, authenticity, and emotional involvement in their experiences (Itani et al., 2020). In today's digital landscape, content diversity is essential for a successful marketing strategy. This approach not only increases engagement but also meets the diverse preferences of the audience. In the context of mukbang, content variety includes variations in the types of food consumed, presentation styles, locations, and characteristics of the host (Kim, 2024). Watching videos of people consuming food in a content can provide a unique and interesting experience (Donnar, 2017). The results of earlier research conducted by Jiang et al. (2024) showed that content diversity significantly influences audience attitudes. This attitude reflects the emotional, evaluative, and behavioral responses shown by viewers when they feel that diversity not only increases engagement but also strengthens positive attitudes (Lee & Wan, 2023):

H₃: Content variety has a positive and significant effect on attitudes toward mukbang content.

The Influence of Frequency of Interaction on Para-social Relationships

The interaction between streamers and viewers has evolved and become a form of interactive and personal communication, creating deep emotional bonds and increasing real-time engagement (Efrat & Øyna, 2021). The use of live streaming on applications is characterized by the presence

of interactions that become a necessity. According to Lacap et al. (2024) content has interactions that refer to a person's tendency to approach others. Furthermore, Liao et al. (2023) stated that interactions include attitudes, behaviors, and preferences that shape how a person interacts in the form of active communication between streamers and viewers and provides answers to consumer questions. The frequency of interaction can be interpreted as how often individuals interact with content involving media figures (Penttinen et al., 2022). These interactions can take the form of comments, likes, shares, or even following their social media accounts (Song et al., 2023a). The more frequently individuals are exposed to content, the more likely they are to develop stronger feelings of emotional closeness to media figures.

H₄: Frequency of interaction has a positive and significant effect on para-social relationships.

The Influence of Content Relatability on Para-social Relationships

Content relatability as stated by Tsekouropoulos (2019) refers to the content presented can be accepted, understood, or felt relevant by the audience. In the context of digital marketing, relevant content can influence audience engagement and response. Although the nature of the content displayed is one-sided, this relationship can feel very real to the individual watching (Zhang et al., 2023). Relatable content can help create a more natural feeling of closeness to support the recommended product or service. Strong para-social relationships often lead to loyalty to support the products or services recommended by Lacap. In the context of digital marketing, relatable content has a significant impact on strengthening para-social relationships by creating relevant content according to experiences, interests, and needs that can build an emotional closeness relationship (Liao et al., 2023b; Penttinen et al., 2022b).

H₅: Content relatability has a positive and significant effect on para-social relationships.

The Influence of Engagement Level on Para-social Relationships

Engagement level refers to the extent to which the audience interacts and participates in live streaming activities (Roslan & Salim, 2022). In the context of digital marketing, engagement level can be a factor that can measure how effectively the audience is engaged with the content presented (Wahid et al., 2023). Previous studies have found that visual interaction and influencer imaging can increase para-social relationship engagement (Reinecke et al., 2013). Engagement level has a significant influence on the formation of para-social relationships. As stated by Liao et al. (2023) that para-social relationships are a bond that develops between the audience and media figures such as influencers. This relationship is characterized by feelings of closeness and connectedness (Song et al., 2023). The higher the level of engagement of a person with an influencer, the stronger the parasocial relationship that is formed (Lacap et al., 2024; Liao et al., 2023b; Yuan & Lou, 2020). High levels of engagement can increase the illusion of a personal relationship, where followers feel that they are part of the influencer's daily life (Roslan & Salim, 2022; Tsekouropoulos, 2019; Wahid et al., 2023). In a marketing context, these relationships can drive purchasing decisions or further content consumption, as followers feel more emotionally attached and strengthen the parasocial relationship.

H₆: Engagement level has a positive and significant effect on para-social relationships.

The Influence of Attitude Toward Mukbang Content on Intention to Watch Mukbang

According to Judd (1998) Attitude refers to a general, ongoing assessment of a person, object, advertisement, or issue that encompasses a range of emotions. In an online context, attitude is a factor that can influence how internet users can find information related to a product or service (Song et al., 2023a). A positive attitude in using social media platforms can increase the effectiveness of information searches. Individuals who have a proactive and open attitude towards technology tend to find it easier to find relevant and accurate product information (Pereira et al., 2019; Song, 2023a). Users who have a proactive and open attitude towards digital technology tend to find it easier to find relevant and accurate product information. On the other hand, negative attitudes, such as lack of trust in information sources or discomfort, can hinder individuals in the decision-making process. Attitude toward mukbang content refers to an individual's perception,

feelings, and evaluation of muk-bang content, which can be either positive or negative responses (Song, 2023a; Song et al., 2023a). This attitude plays an important role in shaping a person's intention to watch the content. Therefore, this study assumes that attitude toward mukbang videos is related to the intention to watch mukbang videos.

H₇: Attitude toward mukbang content has a positive and significant effect on the intention to watch mukbang.

The Influence of Para-social Relationships on Intention to Watch Mukbang

According to para-social interaction occurs when there is an interrelated interaction. Parasocial interaction refers to consumer communication when interacting with others as if they were present and involved in a reciprocal relationship (Song et al., 2023a; Xu et al., 2023). Para-social can be seen from the attitude of mutual understanding, attention, and adaptation. People involved in parasocial relationships will interact with each other which in turn leads to individual attachment, relationship involvement, and loyalty (Lacap et al., 2024). As stated by Liao et al. (2023) that future media use will be greatly influenced by para-social interactions. Viewers who form para-social relationships are more likely to want to watch content provider videos than those who do not form such relationships (Penttinen et al., 2022a). Thus, there is a correlation between para-social relationships related to the intention to watch mukbang videos.

H₈: Para-social relationships have a positive and significant effect on the intention to watch mukbang.

The Influence of Intention to Watch Mukbang on Purchase Intention

In the context of mukbang content broadcasted by creators, the intention to watch can influence the intention to purchase, especially when the mukbang content features certain foods or products. As stated Kim (2024) content not only functions as entertainment, but also as a powerful marketing tool (Kaczmarek-Gajewska & McDonnell, 2021). When someone has a strong intention to watch, they will tend to be involved in the content, thus influencing the perception of the product displayed. Previous studies have found evidence that the higher a person's intention to watch, the more often the individual is exposed to the product being broadcast (Song, 2023b; Song et al., 2023a). Visually appealing content, especially mukbang, can arouse the appetite when they see what is being broadcast, leading to the intention to buy the product (Pereira et al., 2019). Thus, the intention to watch mukbang can directly influence a person's intention to buy. This is because there is involvement that lets someone make a purchase.

H₉: Intention to watch mukbang has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

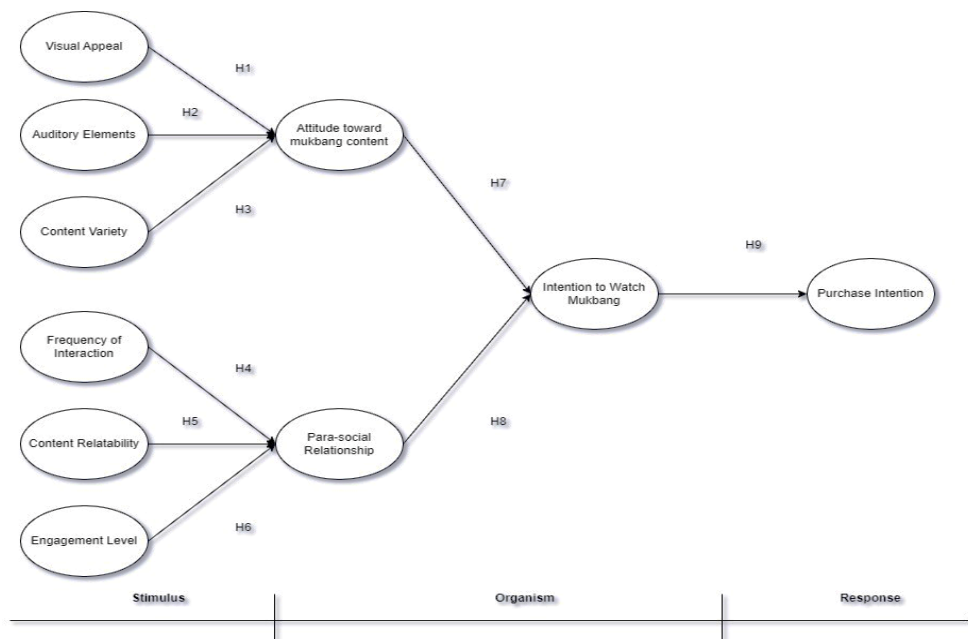


Figure 1. Research Framework

Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey as a data collection tool to see how and under what conditions the influence of independent variables affects the dependent variable. This study aims to explore, first, how visual appeal, auditory elements, content variety affect attitude toward mukbang content. Second, frequency of interaction, content relatability, engagement lever on para-social relationships. Third, attitude toward mukbang content and para-social relationships on intention to watch muk-bang. Finally, intention to watch mukbang on purchase intention. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to know the magnitude of the causal relationship of each variable studied (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), survey research can be used to describe and measure the relationship between two or more variables.

To see its influence, this study was conducted on the general public of Generation Z and Millennials in South Jakarta City which was taken using a non-probability method, especially with the purposive sampling technique, because it allows researchers to collect data from predetermined samples with the following criteria:

Table 1. Sampling Criteria

Criteria No.	Demographics	Description
1	Age	Respondents were aged between 18 and 35 years old, covering generations who actively use social media (Generation Z and Millennials), as they tend to be more familiar and interested in mukbang content.
2	Active Social Media User	Respondents who regularly use social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, or Instagram, where mukbang content is often promoted and watched.
3	Culinary Video Enthusiast	Respondents who are interested in food-related video content, such as culinary vlogs, cooking videos, or food exploration. They follow or watch popular food vloggers such as Tanboy Kun, Nex Carlos, MGDalenaf, Ria SW, and Ken & Grat, etc. who often display mukbang or other culinary content.
4	Frequency of Watching Mukbang	Respondents who have or frequently watch mukbang at least once a month, to ensure they have an understanding and experience with mukbang content.
5	Geographical Location	Respondents are domiciled in South Jakarta, considering that internet access and online video trends are more common in urban areas like this, and the focus of the research is on one particular area.
6	Motivation to Watch	Respondents who watch mukbang with motivations such as entertainment, relaxation, ASMR, or interest in the food served.
7	Time Availability	Respondents who have enough free time to watch long video content, considering that many mukbangs are longer than 15 minutes.

Based on these criteria, the sample size obtained was 400 respondents. Then, data collection was carried out using a questionnaire distributed using the Google Form platform and a printed

questionnaire distributed to respondents directly. The data obtained were then analyzed using structural equality modeling with SmartPLS 3.0 Software (Ringle et al., 2024). The following table 2 below presents the results of the descriptive analysis of respondents:

Table 2. Respondent Profile

Demographic variables	N	%
Gender		
Male	180	45,00%
Female	220	55,00%
Respondent Age		
< 20 years	85	21,25%
21-25 years	150	37,50%
26-30 years	100	25,00%
31-35 years	65	16,25%
Job		
Student	120	30,00%
Private Employee	140	35,00%
Entrepreneur	60	15,00%
Civil Servant	40	10,00%
Housewife	20	5,00%
Other	20	5,00%
Favorite Social Media		
YouTube	220	55,00%
Instagram	80	20,00%
TikTok	70	17,50%
Facebook	30	7,50%
Domicile District (South Jakarta)		
Kebayoran Baru	80	20,00%
Kebayoran Lama	60	15,00%
Mampang Prapatan	50	12,50%
Pancoran	40	10,00%
Pasar Minggu	60	15,00%
Cilandak	30	7,50%
Jagakarsa	40	10,00%
Setiabudi	40	10,00%
Monthly Income		
< 5 million	160	40,00%
5-10 million	150	37,50%
10-20 million	70	17,50%
> 20 million	20	5,00%
Frequency of Watching Mukbang		
Every day	90	22,50%
3-5 times a week	160	40,00%
1-2 times a week	110	27,50%
Rarely	40	10,00%
Reasons to Watch Mukbang		
Entertainment	200	50,00%
Cooking Inspiration	100	25,00%
Stress Relief	80	20,00%
Other	20	5,00%

Measurement of Variables

Operational definitions for measuring variables in this study are presented in table 2 below:

Table 3. Item Indicator

Variable	Item	Item Indicator
Auditory Elements	AE1	The sound quality on this mukbang video makes me feel more involved.
	AE2	I enjoy the food sounds produced by this mukbang video.
	AE3	The sound effects in mukbang content enhance the sense of reality.
Attitude Toward Mukbang Content	ATMC1	I find mukbang content entertaining.
	ATMC2	I have a positive view of mukbang content.
	ATMC3	It is worthwhile watching mukbang content on YouTube
Content Relatability	CR1	I feel like this mukbang video fits my lifestyle.
	CR2	This mukbang content is relevant to my taste in choosing food.
	CR3	I can understand the situation shown in this mukbang video.
	CV1	This mukbang video offers a variety of interesting types of food.
Content Variety	CV2	I am interested because this mukbang video presents a variety of menus that are not monotonous.
	CV3	This mukbang content provides different variations every time I watch it.
	EL1	I feel actively involved when watching this mukbang content.
Engagement Level	EL2	I often comment on or share mukbang videos that I watch.
	EL3	I follow the development of this mukbang channel with enthusiasm.
	FI1	I often interact with mukbang content through comments.
Frequency of Interaction	FI2	I communicate with mukbang content creators on a regular basis.
	FI3	I often get involved in discussions about mukbang content on social media.
	IWM1	I plan to watch mukbang more often.
Intention to Watch Mukbang	IWM2	I intend to watch mukbang frequently
	IWM3	The probability that I would consider buying an F&B product that I saw in a video is high.
	PI1	If I were to buy an F&B product, I would consider buying what I watch on a mukbang video.
Purchase Intention	PI2	The likelihood of me purchasing an F&B product that I saw on a mukbang video is high.
	PI3	My willingness to buy an F&B product that I saw on a mukbang video is high.
	PSR1	The mukbang influencer makes me feel comfortable, as if I was with a friend.
Para-social Relationship	PSR2	I look forward to watching the last video uploaded by the mukbang influencer on YouTube.
	PSR3	If the mukbang influencer appeared on another form of media, I would watch it to know more.
Visual Appeal	VA1	The visual appearance in this mukbang video is very interesting.
	VA3	The food featured in this mukbang content looks appetizing.
	VA1	The visual quality of this mukbang video makes me enjoy the content more.

Source: (Kang et al., 2020; Kircaburun, Harris, et al., 2021; Kircaburun, Stavropoulos, et al., 2021; D. Lee & Wan, 2023; Shabahang et al., 2024; Song, 2023; Song et al., 2023; Strand & Gustafsson, 2020; W. Zhang & Wang, 2024)

Results and Discussion

Measurement and Structural Model

Outer model

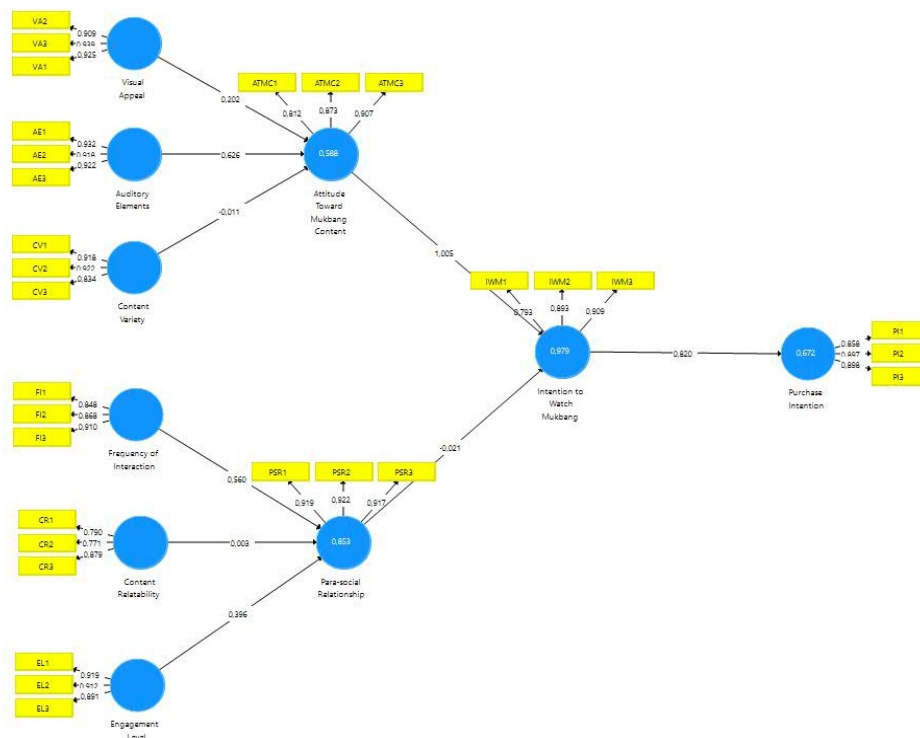
Outer loading, AVE, and reliability analysis

This study used partial least-squares structural equation model (SEM-PLS) modeling to explore the relationships between variables. Reliability and validity indicators evaluate the measurement model, with construct validity tested through convergent and discriminant validity. This ensures that each construct in the model accurately and consistently represents the intended concept.

Table 2. Outer Loading, AVE, and Reliability Analysis

Variable	Item	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Auditory Elements	AE1	0,932	0,914	0,914	0,946	0,854
	AE2	0,918				
	AE3	0,922				
Attitude Toward Mukbang Content	ATMC1	0,812	0,83	0,831	0,899	0,747
	ATMC2	0,873				
	ATMC3	0,907				
Content Relatability	CR1	0,790	0,774	0,918	0,855	0,664
	CR2	0,771				
	CR3	0,879				
Content Variety	CV1	0,918	0,872	0,887	0,921	0,797
	CV2	0,922				
	CV3	0,834				
Engagement Level	EL1	0,919	0,893	0,895	0,933	0,824
	EL2	0,912				
	EL3	0,891				
Frequency of Interaction	FI1	0,848	0,849	0,864	0,908	0,767
	FI2	0,868				
	FI3	0,910				
Intention to Watch Mukbang	IWM1	0,793	0,832	0,838	0,9	0,751
	IWM2	0,893				
	IWM3	0,909				
Purchase Intention	PI1	0,858	0,861	0,866	0,915	0,782
	PI2	0,897				
	PI3	0,898				
Para-social Relationship	PSR1	0,919	0,909	0,909	0,943	0,846
	PSR2	0,922				
	PSR3	0,917				
Visual Appeal	VA1	0,925	0,915	0,915	0,946	0,855
	VA3	0,909				
	VA1	0,939				

Source: Data Processing (2024)

**Figure 2.** PLS Algorithm
Source: Data Processing (2024)

Based on the test results in table 2 and figure 2, it shows that all variable item indicators have passed the outer loading cut-off (>0.5). Meanwhile, at the variable level, all have passed the cronbach's alpha (>0.4); composite reliability (0.4); and average variance extracted (AVE) (0.5) cut-offs (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014; Noor, 2017). These results indicate that all indicators and variables used in this study are valid and reliable.

Discriminant Validity

The following table 3 below presents the results of the discriminant validity analysis based on the Fornier-Larcker Criterion:

Table 3. Fornier-Larcker Criterion

	Attitude Toward Mukbang Content	Auditory Elements	Content Relatability	Content Variety	Engagement Level	Frequency of Interaction	Intention to Watch Mukbang	Para-social Relationship	Purchase Intention	Visual Appeal
Attitude Toward Mukbang Content	0,989									
Auditory Elements	0,865	0,924								
Content Relatability	0,812	0,895	0,815							
Content Variety	0,784	0,744	0,803	0,920						
Engagement Level	0,781	0,697	0,789	0,893	0,908					
Frequency of Interaction	0,779	0,662	0,765	0,618	0,876	0,900				
Intention to Watch Mukbang	0,753	0,655	0,749	0,600	0,852	0,876	0,866			
Para-social Relationship	0,752	0,620	0,681	0,578	0,735	0,755	0,820	0,920		
Purchase Intention	0,606	0,608	0,658	0,577	0,646	0,669	0,768	0,679	0,884	
Visual Appeal	0,548	0,596	0,656	0,533	0,621	0,581	0,630	0,663	0,649	0,925

Source: Data Processing (2024)

In table 3 of the discriminant validity results above, the interpretation of SmartPLS results based on the Fornell-Larcker criteria involves an understanding of discriminant validity, namely the extent to which the constructs in the model differ from each other. The numbers on the diagonal (0,989; 0,924; 0,815; 0,920; 0,908; 0,900; 0,866; 0,920; 0,884; 0,925) are the square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. AVE measures how much variance is captured by the construct compared to the variance caused by error. For good convergent validity, the AVE value should be greater than 0.50; and the square root of the AVE should be greater than the correlation between the construct and other constructs.

The numbers outside the diagonal indicate the correlation between different constructs. To meet the discriminant validity based on the Fornell-Larcker criteria, the square root of the AVE of each construct (diagonal value) must be greater than the correlation of the construct with other constructs (off-diagonal value). Based on the results given, each construct meets this criterion. For example, the construct "Attitude Toward Mukbang Content" has a value of 0,989 which is greater than all other correlations in this column (0,865; 0,812; 0,784; 0,781; 0,779; 0,753; 0,752; 0,606; 0,548). Based on this, it can be concluded that each construct in the model has good discriminant validity because the square root value of the AVE for each construct is greater than the correlation between the construct and other constructs.

Colinearity Test

The following table 4 below presents the results of the collinearity statistical test based on Inner VIF Values:

Table 4. Colinearity Statistics (Inner VIF Values)

	Attitude Toward Mukbang Content	Auditory Elements	Content Relatability	Content Variety	Engagement Level	Frequency of Interaction	Intention to Watch Mukbang	Para-social Relationship	Purchase Intention	Visual Appeal
Attitude Toward Mukbang Content							2,596			
Auditory Elements	1,782									
Content Relatability								3,016		
Content Variety	3,487									
Engagement Level								2,571		
Frequency of Interaction								1,922		
Intention to Watch Mukbang									1,000	
Para-social Relationship							2,596			
Purchase Intention										
Visual Appeal	3,438									

Source: Data Processing (2024)

Based on the results of the collinearity test in table 4 above, it shows that there are no symptoms of collinearity because all the inner VIF Values correlation relationships in table 4 show values <5.

R-Square

The following table 5 below presents the results of the R-Square indicator for all variables:

Table 5. R-Square Indicators

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Attitude Toward Mukbang Content	0,588	0,583
Intention to Watch Mukbang	0,979	0,979
Para-social Relationship	0,853	0,851
Purchase Intention	0,672	0,671

Source: Data Processing (2024)

Based on the analysis results in table 5 above, it shows that the R-Squared value on all dependent variables shows a strong value. This is because each dependent variable has an R-Squared value > 0.5.

Construct Crossvalidated Redundancy

The following table 6 below presents the results of the Q-Square indicator for all variables:

Table 6. Q-Square Indicators

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Attitude Toward Mukbang Content	741,000	420,814	0,432
Auditory Elements	741,000	741,000	
Content Relatability	741,000	741,000	
Content Variety	741,000	741,000	
Engagement Level	741,000	741,000	
Frequency of Interaction	741,000	741,000	
Intention to Watch Mukbang	741,000	201,661	0,728
Para-social Relationship	741,000	212,242	0,714
Purchase Intention	741,000	361,940	0,512
Visual Appeal	741,000	741,000	

Source: Data Processing (2024)

It can be seen in table 6 above, that the Attitude Toward Mukbang Content variable has a Q-square value of 0,432; Intention to Watch Mukbang has a Q-square value of 0,728; Para-social Relationship has a Q-square value of 0,714; and Purchase Intention is 0,512. As for the remaining variables in the table, namely Auditory Elements, Content Relatability, Content Variety, Engagement Level, Frequency of Interaction, and Visual Appeal have a Q-square value of 0. Although it has a value of 0, the result is normal because the remaining variables are independent variables.

Hypothesis Testing

The path coefficient is a step to test the hypothesis results, which is calculated using the SmartPLS application using the bootstrapping technique. The following table 7 below presents the results of the Bootstrapping-based hypothesis testing:

Table 7. Path Coefficient and Bootstrapping Result

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Conclusion
Visual Appeal → Attitude Toward Mukbang Content	0,202	0,207	0,092	2,183	0,030	H1 Supported
Auditory Elements → Attitude Toward Mukbang Content	0,626	0,623	0,052	12,005	0,000	H2 Supported
Content Variety → Attitude Toward Mukbang Content	0,211	0,512	0,095	3,111	0,001	H3 Supported
Frequency of Interaction → Para-social Relationship	0,560	0,578	0,135	4,149	0,000	H4 Supported
Content Relatability → Para-social Relationship	0,103	0,407	0,037	2,086	0,003	H5 Supported
Engagement Level → Para-social Relationship	0,396	0,376	0,142	2,789	0,005	H6 Supported
Attitude Toward Mukbang Content → Intention to Watch Mukbang	1,005	1,006	0,015	66,728	0,000	H7 Supported
Para-social Relationship → Intention to Watch Mukbang	0,121	0,321	0,019	3,087	0,007	H8 Supported
Intention to Watch Mukbang → Purchase Intention	0,820	0,821	0,023	35,250	0,000	H9 Supported

Source: Data Processing (2024)

Based on the bootstrapping results in table 7 above, it shows that all hypotheses are supported. This is in line with the principle of Hair et al. (2016), which states that a hypothesis is supported if the T-statistics value is over 1,96; and the P-value is less than 0,05.

Discussion

Based on the bootstrapping results in table 7 above, it shows that Visual appeal has a positive and significant effect on attitude toward mukbang content (Original Sample (O) = 0,202; P-Values = 0,030). Visual appeal has a positive and significant effect on attitude toward mukbang content because attractive visuals can increase attention, create a strong sensory experience, and trigger positive emotions such as hunger or interest. An attractive visual display can strengthen the perception of content quality and increase viewing satisfaction, as found in S. Lee (2023) research, which shows that the attitude towards watching videos has a significant positive (+) effect on viewing satisfaction. Thus, this contributes to a positive attitude toward mukbang content, making the audience more engaged and more likely to like the content.

For example, the real implementation, McDonald's restaurant uses the color red to stimulate hunger and increase the desire to eat (Singh, 2006). The color red is known to be psychologically appetizing, and this also applies to mukbang content. Visually appealing food

displays increase perceptions of quality and positive emotions, thus forming a positive attitude towards the content (Labrecque & Milne, 2012).

Based on the bootstrapping results in table 7 above, it can be seen that the auditory element and content variety have a positive and significant effect on attitudes towards mukbang content. The original sample (O) for the auditory element is 0,626 with a p-value of 0,000; while the content variety has an original sample (O) of 0,211 with a p-value of 0,001. This suggests that auditory elements, such as the sound of food being consumed, as well as the variety of content displayed, can strengthen emotional engagement and increase positive attitudes towards mukbang content.

In theory, in marketing, consumers' perceptions especially rely on the auditory elements and the content diversity of the strategy. For example, hearing sounds of food during mukbang adds depth to the sensory experience by making the content more realistic. This coincides with the principles of sensory marketing, which states that emotions are reinforced when certain sensory stimuli are present. (Krishna, 2012). Content variety is also important, as range presents more appeal, keeps target target market interest, and will increase the perception of content material quality (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). Thus, both contribute to positive attitudes towards mukbang content.

Based on the bootstrapping results in table 7 above, it can be seen that the frequency of interaction, content relatability, and level of engagement have a positive and significant effect on para-social relationships. The original sample (O) for the frequency of interaction is 0,560 with a p-value of 0,000; content relatability has an original sample (O) of 0,103 with a p-value of 0,003; and the content variety has an original sample (O) of 0,396 with a p-value of 0,005.

Theoretically, in the context of digital marketing, parasocial relationships refer to a one-way psychological bond that an audience feels with a figure in the content, such as an influencer or vlogger. High frequency of interaction creates familiarity and emotional intensity, which strengthens the parasocial attachment (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). The relatability of the content increases the audience's identification with the experience or situation being portrayed, while the level of engagement refers to the audience's active participation, which increases the sense of closeness. These three elements strengthen the parasocial relationship, making the audience more engaged and loyal to the content presented.

Based on the bootstrapping results in table 7 above, it can be seen that the attitude toward mukbang content and para-social relationships have a positive and significant influence on the intention to watch mukbang. The original sample (O) for the attitude toward mukbang content is 1,005 with a p-value of 0,000; while the para-social relationships has an original sample (O) of 0,121 with a p-value of 0,007.

Theoretically, positive attitude towards content is one of the important determinants in influencing the intention to re-watch or consume similar content (Ajzen, 1991). When viewers feel satisfied with the experience of watching mukbang, they tend to have a greater intention to watch it again. In addition, parasocial relationships play a key role in the context of digital marketing. This one-way relationship strengthens the emotional attachment between viewers and content creators, which can increase viewer loyalty (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Parasocial interaction encourages viewers to feel more emotionally and psychologically involved with mukbang content creators, which ultimately increases the intention to continue watching (Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011).

Based on the bootstrapping results in table 7 above, it shows that intention to watch mukbang has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention (Original Sample (O) = 0,820; P-Values = 0,000). The results of this study are in line with the results of the (Song, 2023; Song et al., 2023) study which found that attitude toward mukbang and para-social relationships have a positive effect on the intention to watch mukbang, while the intention to watch mukbang has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Theoretical Implication and Managerial Implication

Based on Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) Theory, attitudes towards mukbang content and parasocial relationships can be understood as stimuli that influence viewers (organisms) to respond by increasing re-watching intentions (responses). Visuals and auditory images in mukbang content

function as stimuli that influence viewers' perceptions of the content (organisms), while parasocial relationships create emotional attachments to the creator. Viewers who feel emotionally connected usually have a positive response in the form of an intention to watch further. These findings support the SOR theory by confirming that stimuli from digital content not only influence direct perceptions but also strengthen one-way social bonds that influence further consumption decisions (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Song, 2023; Song et al., 2023).

Managerially, the results of this study suggest that content creators and marketers can leverage engaging visual and auditory elements and strengthen personal interactions with audiences to increase engagement and rewatch intentions. Strategies that focus on creating strong parasocial relationships, such as building personal narratives and direct interactions with audiences through comments or social media, can strengthen audience loyalty (Lacap et al., 2024). For businesses working with influencers or mukbang content, it is important to design relevant and emotional content to maximize parasocial experiences that lead to higher engagement.

Conclusion and Future Direction

This study shows that attitudes toward mukbang content and parasocial relationships significantly influence mukbang viewing intentions. Using the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) Theory approach, visual and auditory elements in mukbang content act as stimuli that influence viewers' behavioral responses, especially in increasing engagement and loyalty. Parasocial relationships, where viewers feel emotionally connected to content creators, have also been shown to be an important factor in maintaining interest and driving re-watching intentions (Song, 2023; Song et al., 2023). These findings add insight into the importance of design elements and social interactions in creating an engaging and sustainable viewing experience.

For future research, it is important to further explore the influence of individual differences such as gender, age, and cultural background that may moderate the relationship between parasocial interactions and re-watching intentions. In addition, content presentation formats such as live streaming and pre-recorded videos may also affect the intensity of parasocial relationships and should be further investigated. Future studies can also explore the long-term effects of parasocial relationships on brand loyalty promoted through mukbang content, especially in the context of influencer marketing. The use of technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) can also be an interesting opportunity to deepen the parasocial experience and increase audience engagement in the future. Next, it is also important to consider how elements of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), such as the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, may influence parasocial relationships and re-watching intentions, particularly in the context of mukbang content and influencer marketing.

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