

“Maybe She Loves It, Maybe She’s Sponsored”
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YouTube is an online video sharing tool designed to allow anyone with access to a computer and internet to upload virtually whatever they would like. Many women, notably Michelle Phan, Dulce Candy, and the Fowler sisters, have realized the potential for entrepreneurship and self-employment through uploading videos about beauty and fashion – a topic they love. Some of these videos have gained hundreds of thousands of views and these beauty gurus have millions of subscribers that listen to their endorsements. Many corporations have realized how powerful these “everyday, ordinary” women are in building relationships with their subscribers in comparison to famous celebrities endorsing products. The influence many of these beauty gurus have on their young female subscribers has called into question issues of self-esteem and impossible, unattainable beauty ideals. Not achieving these standards of beauty that many gurus possess, such as long, thick hair, flawless skin, larger breasts, and slim fit bodies, can result in many women feeling inadequate. With cosmetic surgery becoming more widely available, many gurus themselves are open about what they have altered and are incredibly casual in describing their experiences with cosmetic surgery. Subscribers are either incredibly supportive or perhaps turning to surgery themselves, or are extremely critical and abusive leaving hateful comments. I have chosen to focus on the most “mainstream” beauty gurus who happen to be straight and follow the societal norms of gender and beauty. I am exploring the powerful influence many of these straight beauty gurus possess over their subscribers and their possible influence on low self-esteem because I have been subscribed to a number of their channels for a few years and can identify with them. In the future should this research continue, I would like to further my research by analyzing gay and trans beauty gurus who have emerged on the YouTube beauty platform as well.