



Empirical Research Article

Video-Induced Visit to a Destination: The Psychological Mechanism and the Role of Video Sharing Sources

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Abstract

Promotional videos have been increasingly adopted in social media marketing. Given that video production incurs high costs, evaluating the effectiveness of promotional videos is necessary. This research examines the effect of promotional video on visit intention through affective and cognitive destination images, respectively. Furthermore, grounded in the theoretical reasoning of social ties and persuasive intent, the effects of promotional videos disseminated by different sources (i.e., unknown users, friends, and marketers) are compared. Two experimental studies were carried out with 200 participants in Study 1 and 243 participants in Study 2. Study 1 revealed that the presence of promotional video induces visit intention through affective and cognitive destination images. Study 2 found that promotional videos disseminated by friends (versus unknown users) are more effective to induce visit intention because of positive cognitive destination image, while the video effects are indifferent between marketers and users. Meaningful implications are provided for destination marketers.

Keywords

destination image; destination marketing; persuasive intent; social media; tie strength; video promotion

1. Introduction

Destination marketing has evolved into multimedia experience in the digital era (Kim & Kerstetter, 2016; Kim, Park, Kim, & Koo, 2021). Marketers can generate and disseminate various types of information via social media to promote destinations (Chu, Deng, & Cheng, 2020; Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006). Compared to textual and pictorial promotions, videos are interactive, dynamic, and rich in contents (Leung, Dickinger, & Nixon, 2017). Nevertheless, the production of videos requires substantial costs (Shani, Chen, Wang, & Hua, 2010). Considering the investment on social media marketing, it is necessary to evaluate the influence of promotional videos on tourist behavior (Guerrero-Rodríguez, Stepchenkova, & Kirilenko, 2020). An important factor to evaluate marketing effectiveness is visit intention (Kim & Kerstetter, 2016). Moreover, previous research suggested that video promotion induced visit intention because of destination image (Leung et al., 2017). Destination image refers to the visual or mental impression of a place or an experience held by a person (Milman & Pizam, 1995) and comprises emotional and reasoned interpretations. Although previous research compared tourists' behavioral change after exposure to videos, the impact of promotional video presence (versus absence) on affective and cognitive destination image is inconclusive (Alamäki, Pesonen, & Dirin, 2019). Therefore, this research aims to examine if the effect of video presence on visit intention is through affective image, cognitive image, or both.

This research further compares the effectiveness of promotional videos shared by various sources, considering the same message can be disseminated by different agents. First, we compare the promotional videos sourcing from friends and unknown users based on the theoretical argument of social ties which explains the strength of social relationships between/among individuals (Brown & Reingen, 1987). High strength is described as strong ties whereas low strength is labelled as weak ties. In the context of destination marketing, online information disseminated among strong ties (versus weak ties) can be more trustworthy and thus influential on tourists (Luo & Zhong, 2015). Second, we compare the promotional videos sourcing from destination marketers and users (including friends and unknown users) based on persuasive intent. People deem that marketers are required to persuade consumers in their promotion and thus their information is considered less trustworthy, whereas general users' information is perceived as less biased (de Jans, van de Sompel, de Veirman, & Hudders, 2020). Consequently, information shared by users (versus marketers) is considered as more trustworthy (Sparks, Perkins, & Buckley, 2013). Trustworthiness of sources has been shown highly influential in consumers' decision making (Choi, Hickerson, & Kerstetter, 2018). Prior research has showed that the source cues (e.g., specialization, endorsement, and star rating) of promotional videos influenced destination image and visit intention (Choi et al., 2018). However, the source effects of promotional videos, from the perspectives of social ties and

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persuasive intent, on destination image and visit intention remain unknown.

This research has two major objectives. First, it examines the effect of presence of promotional video on visit intention through affective and cognitive destination images. Second, the promotional video presence effects are compared among different information dissemination sources (i.e., friends versus unknown users, users versus marketers). The proposed effects are examined by conducting two experimental studies. This research contributes to tourism marketing literature by evaluating if affective or cognitive destination images are the major components that translate the presence of promotional videos into visit intention. Moreover, we evaluate if the promotional video presence effects are contingent on the video sharing sources. The findings can provide implications for destination marketers to understand the effectiveness of video promotion and to choose disseminators in social media promotional campaigns.

In the next section (Section 2), based on the S-O-R model, a literature review is presented regarding the effect of presence of promotional videos on visit intention through affective and cognitive destination image, as well as the source effect based on social ties and persuasive intent. Next, in Section 3, research design and results of two experiments are articulated. Then, the findings are discussed in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 presents the implications and limitations of the study.

2. Literature Review

The conceptual framework is developed based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. The S-O-R model suggests the external stimulus can influence individual's behavioral response through internal psychological process (i.e., organism) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this research, the stimuli are promotional videos, organism refers to affective and cognitive destination images, and response refers to visit intention.

2.1 Promotional Video, Destination Image, and Visit Intention

Promotional videos are used as stimuli to influence tourists' mental process in destination marketing (Hao, Xu, & Zhang, 2019). For example, promotional videos are proved to be effective in enhancing destination image (Shani et al., 2010). Destination image refers to the visual or mental impression of a place or an experience held by a person (Milman & Pizam, 1995). Moreover, destination image can predict tourists' behavioral response such as visit intention (Tasci, 2009). Visit intention is influenced by mental processing of stimuli (Kim & Kerstetter, 2016). Therefore, destination image plays a mediating role between video presence and visit intention (Leung et al., 2017). While destination image contains affective and cognitive aspects (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008), the existing literature on the specific destination image aspects that mediate the stimulus-response process is inconclusive (Alamäki, Pesonen, & Dirin, 2019). Thus, this study proposes that affective destination image and cognitive destination image mediate the effect of video presence on visit intention. The rationale is articulated below.

2.1.1 Affective Destination Image

Affective destination image refers to the emotional interpretations or feelings towards a destination (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008). A key source of affective destination image is destination's promotions (Hao et al., 2019). For instance, destination advertisements and guidebooks influence tourists' feelings towards a destination (Lee, Busser, & Yang, 2015). Prior research showed that promotional videos

were positively associated with overall destination image because of empathy (Kim & Kerstetter, 2016). However, whether the presence of promotional videos has an impact on affective destination image remains unknown. In the format of multimedia, promotional videos are abundant with sensory cues to entertain and appeal (Leung et al., 2017). The visual entertainment plausibly enhances tourists' emotional interpretations towards destinations. Thus, we hypothesize that:

H1a: Presence of video in promotions results in more positive affective destination image than that without the video.

Prior research demonstrated that positive destination image induces behavioral responses (Kim & Kerstetter, 2016). Specifically, affective destination image has been identified as an essential trigger of tourists' visit intention (Kim, Lee, Shin, & Yang, 2017). When being exposed to promotions with videos, tourists are more likely to generate emotional attachment to the destination (Hao et al., 2019). The formation of affective image then stimulates tourists' visit intention. Therefore, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H1b: Affective destination image is positively associated with visit intention.

H1c: Affective destination image mediates the positive effect of presence of video in promotion (versus without video) on visit intention.

2.1.2 Cognitive Destination Image

Cognitive destination image refers to the beliefs or knowledge about a destination (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008). According to the literature, cognitive image is formed by accessing information related to destination attribute (Yilmaz & Yilmaz, 2020). Promotional videos can convey rich destination information with realistic visualizations (Leung et al., 2017). Additionally, the contents are easier to be understood through multiple sensors (Kim & Kerstetter, 2016). When watching the videos, tourists can obtain vivid knowledge about destinations, which constitutes cognitive destination image. Prior research also indicated that promotional videos can add value to the cognitive destination image (Yilmaz & Yilmaz, 2020). Thus, we hypothesize that:

H2a: Presence of video in promotions results in more positive cognitive destination image than that without video.

Previous research showed that cognitive destination image has a direct effect on visit intention (Kim et al., 2017). Tourists who hold a favorable cognitive destination image will have a high visit intention (Yilmaz & Yilmaz, 2020). Additionally, cognitive destination image explains the effect of promotional videos on visit intention (Hao et al., 2019). When tourists perceive the destination image as more favorable by watching promotional videos, visit intention will be strengthened. Therefore, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H2b: Cognitive destination image is positively associated with visit intention.

H2c: Cognitive destination image mediates the positive effect of presence of video in promotion (versus without video) on visit intention.

2.2 Source Effect of Promotional Videos

The formation of destination image is part of the persuasion process and requires trustworthiness towards the source (Choi

et al., 2018). Therefore, the impact of promotional videos on forming destination image may depend on the entity who disseminates the information (Hautz, Füller, Hutter, & Thürndl, 2014). In this research, we suggest that promotional videos shared by friends will exert a greater influence on tourists in forming destination image than those shared by unknown users. Additionally, we propose that promotional videos shared by users are more influential in forming destination image than those shared by marketers. These propositions can be explained by tie strength and persuasive intent respectively.

2.2.1 Social Ties

Social ties explain the variation of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes in interpersonal interaction. The strength of social ties ranges from strong ties (e.g., close friends) to weak ties (e.g., seldom-contacted acquaintances) in terms of closeness and association (Brown & Reingen, 1987). Information sourced from strong ties and weak ties has different impacts on receivers' attitude and behavior (Luo & Zhong, 2015). This is because receivers deem the information from strong ties as more trustworthy. Prior research indicated that perceived trustworthiness would be higher if the hotel information is shared by someone that a person knows—strong ties such as friends (Shen, Chiou, Hsiao, Wang, & Li, 2016; Xie, Miao, Kuo, & Lee, 2011). Besides, trustworthy information can be more influential on receivers' responses. For example, source trustworthiness was positively associated with destination image (Veasna, Wu, & Huang, 2013). Therefore, information sent by strong ties will exert a greater influence on receivers compared to weak ties. Earlier research noted that strong ties (friends) are more likely than weak ties (unknown users) to be activated for the flow of information (Brown & Reingen, 1987). The greater the strength of social ties between a sender and a receiver, the more influential the sender is on receiver's decision making (Shen et al., 2016). Considering the effects of videos from different sources may vary, we propose that promotional video shared by friends exerts a greater positive effect on destination image compared to those shared by unknown users.

As stated before, destination image comprises affective and cognitive destination images. Prior research demonstrated that processing social tie stimuli triggers affective and cognitive responses (Li, 2007). The affective and cognitive responses can further stimulate tourists' visit intention (Yilmaz & Yilmaz, 2020). Taken together, the hypotheses are thus formulated:

H3a: Compared with that received from an unknown user, a promotion with video received from a friend results in a more positive affective destination image, which in turn increases visit intention.

H3b: Compared with that received from an unknown user, a promotion with video received from a friend results in a more positive cognitive destination image, which in turn increases visit intention.

2.2.2 Persuasive Intent

In the digital era, social media posts play a crucial role in trip planning (Ye, Fong, & Luo, 2021). The same contents can be posted by various agents. Two major agents that disseminate videos about destinations are users and marketers (Sparks et al., 2013). Consumers deem users' information more trustworthy because the evaluations from third party are more neutral (Zhang, Ye, Law, & Li, 2010). In contrast, consumers may be skeptical about information sent by marketers because the messages are embedded with persuasive intent. Persuasive intent refers to the attempt to change recipients' attitudes and behavior in communication (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). Research

showed that consumers are conscious of the advertising tactics and associate marketer information with persuasive intent (de Jans et al., 2020). Thus, information sourcing from users is perceived as more trustworthy compared to marketers. Considering trustworthy information is more influential in consumer decision making (Choi et al., 2018), we propose that user information exerts greater positive impact on destination image compared to marketer information.

As discussed above about tie strength, users comprise friends and unknown users. The effect of promotional videos sourcing from marketers is compared with those from friend and unknown user respectively. Moreover, we investigate the destination image from affective and cognitive aspects respectively. The affective and cognitive responses are proved to stimulate tourists' visit intention (Hao et al., 2019). Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H4a: Compared with that received from a marketer, a promotion with video received from an unknown user results in a more positive cognitive destination image, which in turn increases visit intention.

H4b: Compared with that received from a marketer, a promotion with video received from an unknown user results in a more positive affective destination image, which in turn increases visit intention.

H5a: Compared with that received from a marketer, a promotion with video received from a friend results in a more positive cognitive destination image, which in turn increases visit intention.

H5b: Compared with that received from a marketer, a promotion with video received from a friend results in a more positive affective destination image, which in turn increases visit intention.

3. Methodology

This research conducted two scenario-based experiments to test the proposed hypotheses. The first experiment (Study 1) focuses on the promotional video effects on visit intention through affective and cognitive destination image as hypothesized in H1 and H2. Given the findings about promotional video effect in Study 1, the second study (Study 2) compares the effect of sources who share the promotional videos so that H3 to H5 are examined. Mainland Chinese are selected as the participants because of the rapid growth of tourists from China. Macao is selected as the destination because Mainland Chinese visitors are its major tourist source market. Sina Weibo is an influential microblogging platform among Chinese and thus is chosen as the study context of social media.

3.1 Study 1

3.1.1 Participants and Procedures

The data were collected on wjx.com— a popular online survey service provider in China which has been used in recent studies (Fong, Lam, & Law, 2017; Zhou, Su, Zhou, & Zhang, 2016). At the beginning of the survey, screening questions were asked to identify the target participants. As Sina Weibo is chosen as the study context, the target participants were the people who had a Weibo account. Moreover, people aged 18 years old or above and had never been to Macao were qualified to participate. In addition to responding to the experimental scenario according to instructions, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains four parts which are affective destination image of Macao, cognitive destination image of Macao, tourists' visit intention to Macao, and socio-demographic characteristics including travel frequency,

education, monthly household income, age, and gender. By completing the experiment, participants gained credits that can be exchanged for monetary rewards.

This study has two conditions. In the control condition, the participants are asked to carefully read the promotional text about Macao (see Appendix). In the treatment condition, a promotional video about Macao (see Figure 1) is played after the promotional text is read. The promotional text and video were

extracted from marketing information produced by Macao Government Tourism Office (2016). A between-subject design was adopted. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions. One hundred samples were collected for each condition.

Before the main study, a pretest was conducted among 21 participants on wjx.com. None of them has expressed difficulties or problems in the process of completing the experiment.

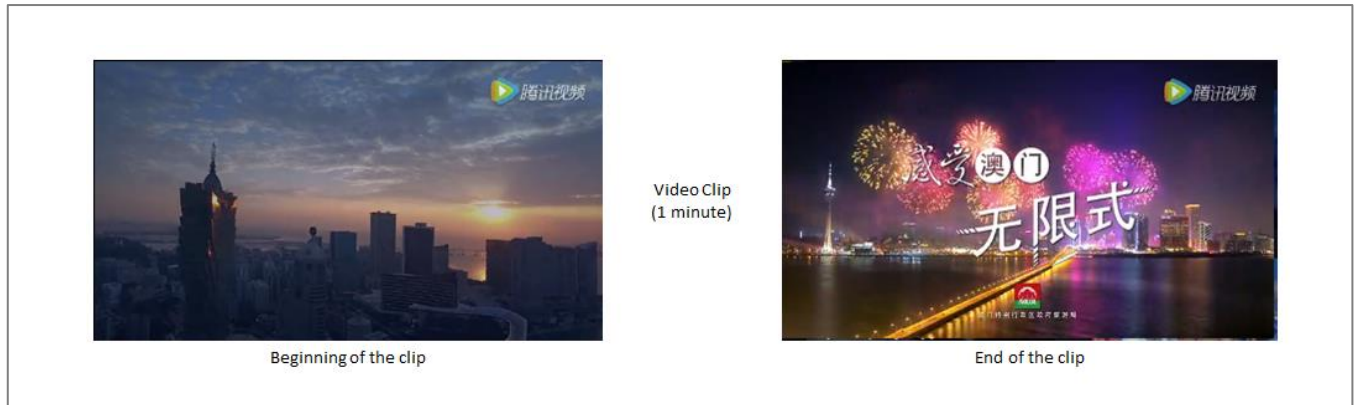


Fig. 1. Video clip (source: <https://v.qq.com/x/page/r0335wngpt3.html>)

3.1.2 Measures

The measures of affective and cognitive destination image are Adapted from Smith, Li, Pan, Witte, and Doherty (2015). A six-point bipolar scale with eight items is used. The four items for affective destination image are “Macao as a tourist destination is: *arousing-sleepy, pleasant-unpleasant, exciting-gloomy, and relaxing-distressing.*” The four items for cognitive destination image are “Please rate on the following scales your perception of Macao: *extremely friendly-extremely unfriendly, extremely accessible-extremely isolated, extremely lively-extremely stagnant, and extremely interesting-extremely boring.*” The two measurement items for visit intention are Adapted from Reza Jalilvand, Samiei, Dini, and Yaghoubi Manzari (2012) and is in a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” (5) to “strongly disagree” (1). The items were “*if I get the chance to travel, I intend to visit Macao*” and “*when I go on a trip, the probability that I visit Macao is high.*” To ensure that the participants in the treatment conditions have watched the video and the audio system of their electronic devices work properly, they were asked if there is any person speaking a language other than Mandarin in the video. The correct answer is “Yes” as someone speaks English in the video.

As the participants on wjx.com were Chinese, the English questionnaire was translated into Chinese and then back translated by two independent translators who were proficient in English and Chinese. The investigators read the translation line-by-line to ensure that the meaning of questionnaire items was not distorted. Throughout the process, several minor changes were made in the Chinese version. The changes were agreed by the investigators.

3.1.3 Results

The 200 participants’ profile is summarized in Table 1. There are more females (60.5%) than males (39.5%). Most respondents are between 25 and 34 years old (66.5%). Approximately 80% of respondents are at college education level. Nearly half of the respondents earn a monthly income from 10,000 to 19,999 Yuan (42%). The average frequency of leisure travel is around three times per year.

Table 1. Profile of participants (N = 200)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	121	60.5
Male	79	39.5
Age		
18-19	1	0.5
20-24	25	12.5
25-29	65	32.5
30-34	68	34.0
35-39	23	11.5
40-44	9	4.5
45-49	5	2.5
50-54	3	1.5
55-59	1	0.5
Education		
High school/ Technical high school	18	9.0
College degree	162	81.0
Graduate school/ Advanced degree	20	10.0
Monthly household income (Yuan)		
2,000-3,999	7	3.5
4,000-6,999	15	7.5
7,000-9,999	21	10.5
10,000-19,999	84	42.0
20,000-29,999	47	23.5
30,000-39,999	18	9.0
40,000-49,999	4	2.0
50,000 or above	4	2.0
Frequency of leisure travel per year	$M = 3.10 (SD = 2.28)$	

In the treatment condition (i.e., presence of video), all the 100 participants indicated that someone speaks a language other than Mandarin. Therefore, the manipulation is successful. Reliability of the measures for affective destination image (.795), cognitive destination image (.797), and visitation intention (.701) is adequate as their Cronbach’s alphas are above the threshold of .7. Their items are thus averaged to generate the scores for

subsequent analyses. Regression analysis was performed to generate the VIF values for the variables and results show that all values are less than the threshold of 5 (the highest value is cognitive destination image which records 2.316), and thus multicollinearity is not a concern.

PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2013) is employed to test the mediation model that comprises H1 and H2. The independent variable is the experimental condition. The mediators are affective and cognitive destination image. Visit intention is the dependent variable. Covariates on the dependent variable include gender, age, education level, monthly household income, and frequency of leisure travel per year.

The results of hypotheses testing are illustrated in Table 2. The presence of video in promotions increases affective destination image ($a_1 = 0.270$, $SE = 0.087$, $p = .002$), and thus H1a is supported. Affective destination image is positively associated with visit intention ($b_1 = 0.304$, $SE = 0.110$, $p = .006$). Therefore, H1b is supported. H1c, which noted the positive indirect effect of presence of video in promotions on visit intention through affective destination image, is also confirmed ($a_1b_1 = 0.082$, $SE =$

0.040 , 95% CI [0.023, 0.186]). Specifically, presence of videos in promotions results in a positive affective destination image, which in turn increases visit intention.

H2a, which tests if presence of videos in promotions results in positive cognitive destination image, is supported ($a_2 = 0.393$, $SE = 0.091$, $p < .001$). H2b concerns the positive relationship between cognitive destination image and visit intention, which is supported by the result ($b_2 = 0.232$, $SE = 0.088$, $p = .009$). H2c, which examines the positive indirect effect of presence of videos in promotion on visit intention through cognitive destination image, is also confirmed ($a_2b_2 = 0.091$, $SE = 0.039$, 95% CI [0.030, 0.183]). Overall, presence of videos in promotions results in a positive cognitive destination image, which in turn increases visit intention. As the direct effect of presence of videos in promotions on visit intention is not statistically significant ($c' = -.081$, $SE = .075$, 95% CI [-.229, .067]), the mediating roles of affective and cognitive destination image are essential. While the promotional video effects are confirmed, Study 2 compares the source effects in video-induced intention to visit a destination.

Table 2. Model coefficients for Study 1

Antecedents	Mediators							Consequence					
		Affective Destination Image			Cognitive Destination Image			Visit Intention					
		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	P	Coeff.	SE	p		
Presence of Video in Promotion	a_1	0.270	0.087	.002	a_2	0.393	0.091	<.001	c'	-0.081	0.075	.283	
Affective Destination Image		-	-	-		-	-	-	b_1	0.304	0.110	.006	
Cognitive Destination Image		-	-	-		-	-	-	b_2	0.232	0.088	.009	
Gender		-	-	-		-	-	-	g_1	0.030	0.077	.696	
Age		-	-	-		-	-	-	g_2	0.010	0.031	.760	
Education		-	-	-		-	-	-	g_3	0.114	0.084	.176	
Monthly Household Income		-	-	-		-	-	-	g_4	0.044	0.028	.113	
Frequency of Leisure Travel per Year		-	-	-		-	-	-	g_5	0.035	0.016	.031	
Constant		i_{M1}	5.013	0.065	<.001	i_{M2}	4.763	0.071	<.001	i_V	0.798	0.453	.080
		$R^2 = .047$				$R^2 = .087$				$R^2 = .351$			
		$F(1, 198) = 9.720$, $p = .002$				$F(1, 198) = 18.665$, $p < .001$				$F(8, 191) = 11.719$, $p < .001$			
Indirect effect (a_1b_1)		Coeff. = 0.082, SE = 0.040, 95% CI [0.023, 0.186]											
Indirect effect (a_2b_2)		Coeff. = 0.091, SE = 0.039, 95% CI [0.030, 0.183]											

3.2 Study 2

3.2.1 Participants and Procedures

Data were collected on wjx.com. The research procedures follow Study 1, except the manipulation because this study concerns the source effect but not the promotional video effect. This study has three conditions in which all participants were asked to read the text and then watch the promotional video in the treatment condition of Study 1, while the text indicate that the video was received from: (1) the *Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) official Weibo account (i.e., marketer condition)*; (2) *a friend on the social media (friend condition)*; (3) *an unknown user called "Yuyu" (聿聿 in Chinese) on social media (unknown user condition)*. In the pilot test with 34 participants on wjx.com, none of them has expressed difficulties or problems in completing the experiment. While between-subject design was adopted, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions. One hundred samples were collected for each condition.

3.2.2 Measures

The measures of affective destination image, cognitive destination image, and visit intention follow Study 1. To ensure the success of our manipulations, in the marketer condition, the participants were asked to name the organization that sends the

video to them. In the friend condition, the participants were asked to name a Sina Weibo good friend before reading the promotional text and to write down the friend's name by the end of experiment. In the unknown user condition, while the user is called "Yuyu," the participants were asked to write down the user's name (i.e., Yuyu) by the end of experiment. To prevent any confounding effect caused by Yuyu, we asked the participants if their names or nicknames contain the word "yu" (聿 in Chinese) and if they know someone called "Yuyu" before reading the promotional text.

3.2.3 Manipulation Check

In the unknown user condition, eight responses reported that their names contain "Yu" or they know someone whose name is "Yuyu." In the friend condition, seven participants failed to write the correct names of their friends when they were asked. In the marketer condition, 42 participants failed to recall MGTO as the sender. Therefore, a total of 57 cases were deleted from the 300 responses, and 243 responses passed the manipulation checks and were retained for analysis.

3.2.4 Results

The 243 participants' socio-demographic information is displayed in Table 3. The participants include 60.5% females and

39.5% males. A majority of respondents are 25–34 years old (60.9%). Around 80% of the respondents hold a college degree, followed by high school degree (10.3%), and graduate degree (9.1%). Most respondents earn a monthly income between 10,000–19,999 Yuan (44.4%) and 20,000–29,000 Yuan (23.0%). Regarding frequency of leisure travel per year, the average is around three times per year.

Table 3. Profile of participants (N = 243)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	147	60.5
Male	96	39.5
Age		
20–24	27	11.1
25–29	73	30.0
30–34	75	30.9
35–39	33	13.6
40–44	14	5.8
45–49	7	2.9
50–54	10	4.1
55–59	2	0.8
60–64	0	0.0
65 or above	2	0.8
Education		
High school/ Technical high school	25	10.3
College degree	196	80.7
Graduate school/ Advanced degree	22	9.1
Monthly household income (Yuan)		
2,000–3,999	8	3.3
4,000–6,999	26	10.7
7,000–9,999	26	10.7
10,000–19,999	108	44.4
20,000–29,999	56	23.0
30,000–39,999	12	4.9
40,000–49,999	1	0.4
50,000 or above	6	2.5
Frequency of leisure travel per year	$M = 3.07 (SD = 2.288)$	

To check the reliability of measures, Cronbach’s alpha of variables was calculated. Visit intention (.751), affective destination image (.835), and cognitive destination image (.831) are all above the threshold of .7, which means the reliability is adequate. According to the results of regression analysis, their VIF values are less than 5 (the highest value is cognitive

destination image which records 2.388). Hence, there is no multicollinearity issue.

Like Study 1, Hayes’ PROCESS Model 4 was used to examine H3 to H5. In this study, owing to the three experimental conditions, the independent variable is multi-categorical, so indicator coding was applied. Unknown user was assigned as a baseline, so that friend effect can be compared with unknown user effect. After that, the analysis was performed again and marketer was assigned as a baseline and coded as 0. Unknown user and Friend were coded as 1 and 2 respectively. Consequently, both unknown user and friend effect can be compared with the marketer effect.

Table 4 shows the results of hypothesis test in which unknown user is the baseline. H3 compares the promotional videos sourcing from unknown users and friends. Specifically, H3a examines the mediating role of affective destination image between video source and visit intention. Promotional videos sourced from friends and unknown users make no difference on visit intention through affective destination image ($a_1b_1 = 0.050$, $SE = 0.036$, 95% C.I. = -0.007 to 0.138). Hence, H3a is rejected. H3b suggests the mediating role of cognitive destination image between video source and visit intention. Promotional videos sourced from friends results in higher visit intention through cognitive destination image than that from unknown users ($a_2b_2 = 0.060$, $SE = 0.037$, 95% C.I. [0.006 , 0.156]). Hence, H3b is supported.

Table 5 presents the results in which marketer serves as the baseline. H4 and H5 compare promotional videos sourced from marketers with unknown users and friends respectively. Compared with promotional video sourcing from marketers, H4a suggests that promotional video sourcing from unknown users generates higher visit intention through affective destination image, while H4b suggests that the positive promotional video effect is through cognitive destination image. Results show that promotional videos sourcing from unknown users and marketers make no difference on visit intention either through affective destination image ($a_1b_1 = -0.045$, $SE = 0.041$, 95% C.I. [-0.021 , 0.142]) or cognitive destination image ($a_2b_2 = -0.030$, $SE = 0.039$, 95% C.I. [-0.035 , 1.240]). So, both H4a and H4b are rejected.

H5 makes the comparison between friend and marketer. Compared with promotional video sourcing from marketer, H5a suggests that promotional videos sourcing from friends has a higher positive impact on visit intention through affective destination image, while H5b examines the mediating role of cognitive destination image. Promotional videos sourcing from friends and marketers also make no difference on visit intention either through affective destination image ($a_3b_1 = 0.005$, $SE = 0.038$, 95% C.I. [-0.071 , 0.084]) or cognitive destination image ($a_4b_2 = 0.030$, $SE = 0.037$, 95% C.I. [-0.033 , 0.116]). So, both H5a and H5b are rejected.

Table 4. Model coefficients for Study 2—Unknown user as the baseline

	Mediators							Consequence					
		Affective Destination Image			Cognitive Destination Image			Visit Intention					
		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p		
Antecedents													
Marketer vs. Unknown User	a_1	0.141	0.116	.224	a_3	0.103	0.125	.411	c_1'	0.122	0.096	.203	
Friend vs. Unknown User	a_2	0.156	0.103	.132	a_4	0.205	0.103	.049	c_2'	0.075	0.082	.359	
Affective Destination Image		–	–	–		–	–	–	b_1	0.319	0.093	.001	
Cognitive Destination Image		–	–	–		–	–	–	b_2	0.292	0.085	.001	
Gender		–	–	–		–	–	–	g_1	–0.027	0.076	.724	
Age		–	–	–		–	–	–	g_2	0.047	0.022	.032	
Education		–	–	–		–	–	–	g_3	0.009	0.080	.910	
Monthly Household Income									g_4	0.032	0.026	.227	
Frequency of Leisure Travel per Year									g_5	0.027	0.017	.107	
Constant		i_{M1}	5.005	0.074	<.001	i_{M2}	4.940	0.074	<.001	i_y	0.577	0.391	.141
		$R^2 = .011$				$R^2 = .016$				$R^2 = .409$			
		$F(2, 240) = 1.315, p = .270$				$F(2, 240) = 1.962, p = .143$				$F(9, 233) = 17.565, p < .001$			
Indirect effect (a_1b_1)	Coeff. = -0.045 , SE = 0.041 , 95% CI [-0.021 , 0.142]												
Indirect effect (a_2b_2)	Coeff. = -0.030 , SE = 0.039 , 95% CI [-0.035 , 1.240]												

Table 5. Model coefficients for Study 2—Marketer as the baseline

	Mediators						Consequence					
	Affective Destination Image			Cognitive Destination Image			Intention to Visit					
	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p			
Antecedents												
Unknown User vs. Marketer	a_1	-0.141	0.116	.224	a_2	-0.103	0.125	.411	c_1'	-0.122	0.096	.203
Friend vs. Marketer	a_3	0.015	0.114	.897	a_4	0.102	0.124	.410	c_2'	-0.047	0.097	.631
Affective Destination Image	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	b_1	0.319	0.093	.001
Cognitive Destination Image	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	b_2	0.292	0.085	.001
Gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	g_1	-0.027	0.076	.724
Age	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	g_2	0.047	0.022	.032
Education	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	g_3	0.009	0.080	.910
Monthly Household Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	g_4	0.032	0.026	.227
Frequency of Leisure Travel per Year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	g_5	0.027	0.017	.107
Constant	i_{M1}	5.147	0.089	<.001	i_{M2}	5.043	0.100	<.001	i_V	0.699	0.393	.076
	$R^2 = .011$				$R^2 = .016$				$R^2 = .409$			
	$F(2, 240) = 1.315, p = .270$				$F(2, 240) = 1.962, p = .143$				$F(9, 233) = 17.565, p < .001$			
Indirect effect (a_1b_1)	Coeff. = -0.045, SE = 0.041, 95% CI [-0.021, 0.142]											
Indirect effect (a_2b_2)	Coeff. = -0.030, SE = 0.039, 95% CI [-0.035, 1.240]											
Indirect effect (a_3b_1)	Coeff. = 0.005, SE = 0.038, 95% CI [-0.071, 0.084]											
Indirect effect (a_4b_2)	Coeff. = 0.030, SE = 0.037, 95% CI [-0.033, 0.116]											

4. Discussion

With the aim to evaluate the effectiveness of promotional videos on social media, this research investigates the relationship among promotional video, destination image, and visit intention based on S-O-R model. Table 6 summarizes the results of hypothesis tests in the studies. The presence of videos in promotion induces visit intention because of positive affective and cognitive destination image. Moreover, compared with that shared by unknown users, promotional video shared by friends is more effective in inducing visit intention but only through cognitive destination image, whereas promotional videos sourcing from unknown users and marketers make no difference on visit intention regardless of affective or cognitive destination image.

Table 6. Summary of results

Hypotheses	Results
H1a: Video in promotion → Affective destination image	Supported
H1b: Affective destination image → Visit intention	Supported
H1c: Video in promotion → Affective destination image → Visit intention	Supported
H2a: Video in promotion → Cognitive destination image	Supported
H2b: Cognitive destination image → Visit intention	Supported
H2c: Video in promotion → Cognitive destination image → Visit intention	Supported
H3a: Friend (versus unknown user) → Affective destination image → Visit intention	Not supported
H3b: Friend (versus unknown user) → Cognitive destination image → Visit intention	Supported
H4a: Unknown user (versus marketer) → Affective destination image → Visit intention	Not supported
H4b: Unknown user (versus marketer) → Cognitive destination image → Visit intention	Not supported
H5a: Friend (versus marketer) → Affective destination image → Visit intention	Not supported
H5b: Friend (versus marketer) → Cognitive destination image → Visit intention	Not supported

Note. “→” denotes positive effect/relationship

The importance and effectiveness of promotional videos are demonstrated in Study 1. First, people being exposed to promotion with video form better affective and cognitive destination images than the counterparts who are not exposed to the video. The finding concurs with Kim and Richardson (2003) whose research revealed that the affective and cognitive components of destination image are changed by exposing

participants to a film. Second, the direct positive relationship between destination images (both affective and cognitive) and visit intention is confirmed. In other words, people are more likely to visit the destination when their perception of affective and cognitive destination image is positive. This result is consistent with previous findings that destination image has a significantly positive influence on visit intention (Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003; Gibson, Qi, & Zhang, 2008).

Furthermore, this research expands the source effect of promotional videos from the perspectives of social ties and persuasive intent in Study 2. Specifically, this study compares promotional videos sourced from friends, unknown users, and marketers. From the perspective of social ties, it was found that promotional video disseminated by friends (against unknown user) results in higher visit intention because of positive cognitive destination image. Coherent with prior research (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013; Hu, Wang, Jiang, & Yang, 2019; Leonard-Barton, 1985), strong ties (friends) have a stronger impact on information diffusion and receiver’s decision-making than weak ties (unknown users). However, no significant difference was found regarding the influence of promotional videos on visit intention through affective destination image. A possible explanation is the different processing routes of information. Brown and Reingen (1987) claim that strong ties allow people to access an enriched information environment actively. People normally devote more mental efforts and use central route to process information sent by friends compared to strangers. Affective destination is mainly formed by peripheral route, while cognitive destination image is mainly formed by central route. Therefore, promotional videos sent by friends are more likely to influence cognitive destination image, while the effect on affective destination image is minimal.

From perspective of persuasive intent, no significant difference regarding the effects of promotional videos on destination image and visit intention between marketers and users (either friends or unknown users) was found. This finding contradicts to prior research in which information sent from marketer is less influential on destination image compared to users (Sparks et al., 2013). However, the findings are consistent with a research in the context of Instagram in which consumers recognize that persuasive intent exists not only among marketers, but also sponsored users (de Jans et al., 2020). In the context of Sina Weibo, some users are incentivized to post advertisement. Consumers are aware of the sponsored posts and thus alert to the persuasive intent. Additionally, the video material used in

our experiments are generated by Macao Government Tourist Office. Therefore, participants may think that the users (unknown users and friends) are incentivized to post the promotional videos. The persuasive intent leads to similar trustworthiness of information disseminated by marketer and user, so that destination image and visit intention do not vary with these sources.

5. Implications and Limitations

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The research adds knowledge to the literature from two major aspects. First, this research identifies that the presence (versus absence) of promotional videos is more effective on visit intention through both affective and cognitive destination image. Prior research compared the behavioral change before and after exposure to promotional videos, while we focus on whether video presence (presence versus absence) has an effect on tourist behavioral responses. Based on the research questions, we adopt between-subject experimental design while previous research used within-subject experimental design. Our research can help examine the robustness of previous findings, because using between-subject design can help reduce participants' fatigue during the experiment and get a result which is free from carry-over effect (Fong, Law, Tang, & Yap, 2016). Moreover, previous research about the mediating role of affective and cognitive destination image between promotional videos and visit intention is inconclusive (Alamäki, Pesonen, & Dirin, 2019). Therefore, this research contributes to tourism marketing literature by showing that both affective and cognitive destination images are the major components that mediate the effect of video presence on visit intention.

Second, although the source effect regarding information generators was well investigated in previous research, the source effect regarding information disseminators is relatively scant. Choi et al. (2018) proposed that source can be considered as an agent that disseminates the given information. Based on this notion, we propose that unknown user, friend, and marketer as the disseminators to examine the source effect. Social ties and persuasive intent are adopted as the theoretical background to develop the hypotheses. The findings lend credence to the importance of studying the mediating role of destination image separately by its cognitive and affective components.

5.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this study have implications for destination marketers. The first study shows the presence of promotional video shapes positive destination image and increases visit intention. The promotional videos are a useful instrument to trigger affective and cognitive image towards a destination. While destination marketers strive to ensure that their promotional material will allow tourists to form positive destination images, they are recommended to produce videos such as microfilm about the destination, which can enhance audiences' feelings (affective response) and knowledge about the destination (cognitive response). By influencing affective and cognitive images, promotion with video is effective in triggering visit intention. It is suggested that the destination marketers continue and attempt to share their promotional videos on social media to attract potential visitors.

The findings from the second study provide DMOs with suggestions on selecting the distribution agent to for dissemination of marketing videos. The video-induced visit to a destination is more likely if the video is sent by friends than if it is from unknown users. Destination marketers ought to encourage and incentivize users to share videos with their close friends, instead of any other users. Affective and cognitive

destination images are considered to be critical antecedents of visit intention. The findings indicate that if DMOs aim to develop cognitive destination image among the tourists, videos shared by users' friends are more effective compared to unknown users. However, if DMOs aim to develop affective destination image, choosing either friends or unknown users as agent is acceptable because video sources make no difference on affective responses.

Moreover, because the promotional videos disseminated by marketer and users are equally effective in shaping destination image and visit intention, marketers do not need to invest a lot on motivating the users to share the videos. Actually, the usage of its official social media account can save the destination marketer a lot of cost on sponsorship. However, if budget allows, sponsoring users to share the video with their friends is still encouraged.


5.3 Limitations and Future Research


There are several limitations that need to be considered. First, the participants had to be Sina Weibo users. Future research can re-examine the hypotheses using other social media context and with non-Chinese participants, so that the robustness of findings against cultures can be verified. Second, this experimental research manipulated the source effect based on the theoretical reasoning of tie strength and persuasive intent. The involvement of destination image and visit intention as a result of source effects is unknown as the extents of tie strength and persuasive intention were not measured. Future research can include related measurement scales and even explore if the effects are linear or non-linear. Finally, this research examined visit intention as the outcome variable, which might not accurately capture tourists' actual behavior. Future research can conduct field experiment to understand if the visit intention is realized.

Declaration of competing interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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Appendix

Promotional text about Macao in the experiments - English and Simplified Chinese versions

(Macao Government Tourism Office, 2016)

"Macao—located on the western bank of the Pearl River Delta in southern Guangdong Province, People's Republic of China—adjoins the Mainland city of Zhuhai and lies some 60 kilometers to the west of Hong Kong. Macao comprises Macao Peninsula, Taipa, and Coloane. Macao Peninsula is the hub of the territory and is connected to Taipa by three bridges. Several large international hotel resorts—with new supporting infrastructure—are located on the reclaimed land between Taipa and Coloane in the newly

developed district known as Cotai.

The Portuguese arrived and settled in Macao in the mid-16th century. Thus, the city's architecture, art, religion, traditions, food, and community reflect the integration of Chinese, Western, and Portuguese cultures. In 2005, The Historic Center of Macao was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a result of its unique historical and cultural landscape. Macao is currently positioning itself as the World Center of Tourism and Leisure as it develops into a quality international tourist destination."

“澳门位于中国广东省南部的珠江三角洲，地处珠江口的西面，北面邻接中国大陆的珠海市，东面与香港隔海相距约 60 公里。澳门由澳门半岛、氹仔及路环三部份组成，澳门半岛是澳门城市发展的中心；氹仔和路环本是两个岛屿，透过填海工程相连，填海区发展为路氹城，建有不少大型的酒店和度假村。自葡萄牙人于 16 世纪中叶抵澳定居，四百多年来中西建筑、艺术、宗教、美食、社区等文化在澳门交汇融合，多元共存。自 1999 年 12 月 20 日起澳门回归中国，成为中华人民共和国的一个特别行政区，在「一国两制」的政策下实行澳人治澳、高度自治。澳门由昔日的小渔村，逐渐发展成为国际城市，2005 年「澳门历史城区」成功列入教科文组织的《世界遗产名录》，令澳门得以向世界进一步展现其独特的历史文化面貌。现时澳门以世界旅游休闲中心为定位，致力发展成为高质素的旅游城市。”