

"PLEASE STOP DISTURBING MY IMAGINATION" THE IMPACT OF ADVERTISEMENT INTRUSIVENESS IN SHORT-FORM TRAVEL VIDEOS ON MENTAL IMAGERY OF DESTINATION AND VISIT INTENTION

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INTRODUCTION

Short-form travel videos (STVs) have shown effectiveness in providing online destination experiences, sculpting and elevating the image of the destination and motivating the behavioral intentions of prospective visitors (Du, Liechty, Santos, & Park, 2020). On the other hand, the substantial advertising possibilities, and the immense value of advertising on short-form video platforms attract a variety of advertising tactics, including key opinion leader (KOL) endorsement advertisements (ads), which is also one of the most prevalent forms of advertising in short-form video platforms (Yuan, Xia, & Ye, 2022). and this study places the spotlight on KOL product endorsement ads within the context of STVs.

Despite the considerable business potential that advertising may provide, the perceived intrusiveness and irrelevance of online advertising have been indicated to adversely affect the user experience (Jiang, Guan, & L., 2019). When browsing STV with KOL product endorsement ads, in addition to the primary content in the STV (destination-related information), viewers need to additionally process the advertising information. Additional cognitive efforts are required to cope with the advertising (Jiang et al., 2019). Due to the limited capacity of cognitive processing, the high cognitive load prompted by stimuli with mixed design information may impede the user's evocation

of imagery processing (Le, Scott, & Lohmann, 2019) by suppressing processing fluency. However, some studies have revealed that moderate background complexity may increase rather than decrease individuals' fluency in information processing (Wang, Ma, Chen, Ye, & Xu, 2020; Luna-Nevarez & McGovern, 2021). It remains unknown whether the previous conclusions can be applied to the short-form video context. This study aims at the impact of advertising intrusiveness on users' interaction with short tourism videos instead of concentrating on the efficacy of advertisements (ads) or users' attitudes toward the advertised product. This study attempts to answer the following research questions through empirical results.

RQ1: Is there any difference exists in processing fluency, mental imagery, and destination access intent between users in the group with and without a KOL product endorsement ad? RQ2: Does destination information processing fluency in the context of STV contribute to mental imagery and destination-related behaviors?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mental Imagery is described as a key process in imagery persuasion, information processing, etc. (Ha, Huang, & Park, 2019; McLean & Barhorst, 2022; Lee & Gretzel, 2012), which is defined as a process of sensory information visualization in individuals' working memory (MacInnis & Price,

1987). The imagery processing elicited by pre-trip destination online experiential marketing messages causes individuals to unfold future-facing imagery (Goossens, 2000; Le et al., 2019), making individuals more likely to imagine themselves actually appearing at the destination (Lee et al., 2010). Mental images are indicated to help result in strong attitudinal confidence (Lee & Gretzel, 2012) and actual future visits (Bogicevic, Seo, Kandampully, Liu, & Rudd, 2019; Zheng, Chen, Zhang, & Guo, 2022).

Processing Fluency is defined as the subjective feelings of an individual regarding the extent of difficulty in processing new external information (Huang & Ha, 2020; Luna-Nevarez & McGovern, 2021; Schwarz, 2004). Processing fluency has a significant function in consumer decision-making (Huang & Ha, 2020). Individuals tend to feel more familiar and develop better attitudes when processing easy-to-process content or information that matches the user's knowledge

structures (Luna-Nevarez & McGovern, 2021). High-quality visual information (e.g., vivid, easily understood information) is also thought to be associated with higher processing fluency (Huang & Ha, 2020; Reber et al., 2004). Although imagery processing fluency during information processing has been proven to be an effective antecedent of mental imagery, which stimulates mental imagery and fosters individuals' behavioral intentions (Huang & Ha, 2020), few studies have focused on the relationship between these two concepts (Huang & Ha, 2020), especially in the context of STV.

Moreover, given that individual characteristics are thought to influence mental imagery (Ha et al., 2019). Characteristics such as the need for cognition were also taken into consideration as covariates in this study. In view of the link between the above-mentioned concepts, this study proposes the following research model, as shown in Figure 1.

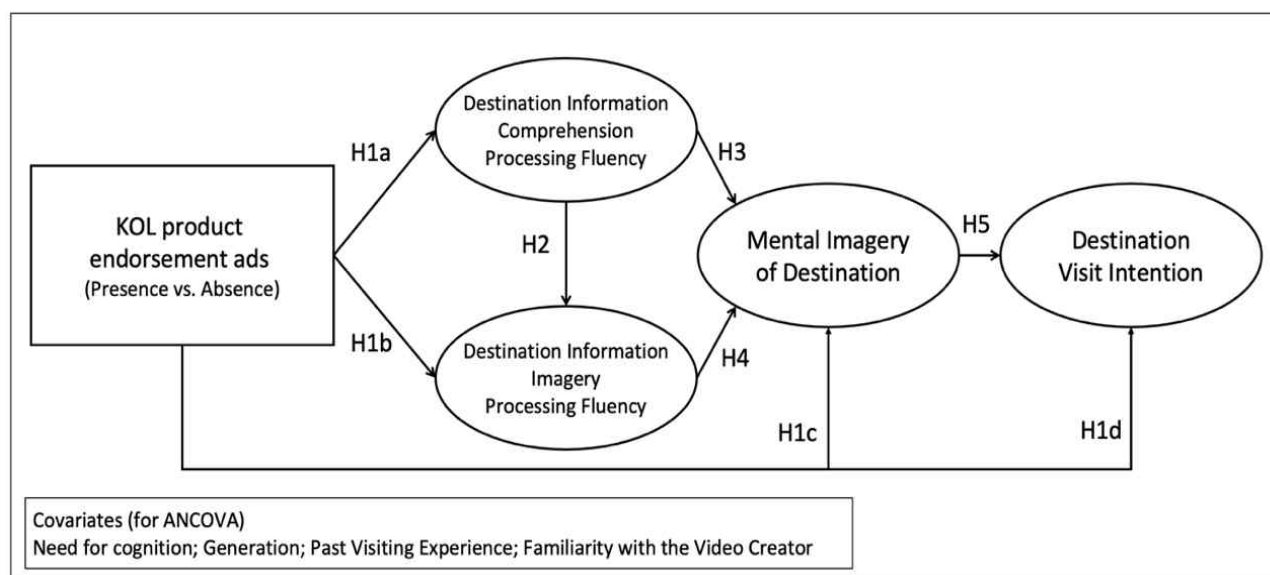


Figure 1. Research Model and Hypotheses

METHOD

A between-subjects designed (KOL product endorsement ads: presence vs. absence) online experiment was conducted in Late-February 2023. Participants were recruited via a reliable online survey platform called Credamo. At the beginning of this survey, one of the prepared stimuli videos was randomly shown to the participant. All respondents were directly guided to the original

video uploaded by the KOL to prevent copyright issues. All participants were prompted to answer the questions prepared after watching the video.

Tests on the level of manipulation effectiveness regarding the presence or absence of KOL product endorsement ads were implemented. After that, filter questions were employed to ensure that the respondents had completely and carefully watched the video and that the audio system was turned on and worked properly (Wang, Luo, Fong,

& Law, 2021).

Participants were requested to answer the questionnaire consisting of items adapted from previous research on comprehension processing fluency and imagery processing fluency (Huang & Ha, 2020), mental imagery (Bogicevic et al., 2019), and visit intention (Skard, Knudsen, Sjøstad, & Thorbjørnsen, 2021) on a 7-point Likert scale. This study also surveys questions on covariates and other demographic information, including gender and age. A total of 354 valid samples were obtained. The ratio of males to females is approximately 4:6. The younger generation makes up the majority of respondents in this study.

Regarding data analysis, ANCOVA was executed by controlling for covariates to ascertain the differences between the groups with or without endorsement ad by excluding the effect of covariates (H1a-H1d). Then, PLS-SEM was employed to appraise the structural model and hypotheses (H2-H5).

FINDINGS

KOL product endorsement ads in STVs do disturb.

The results reveal that product endorsement ads negatively interfere with the fluidity of visualization of the destination and significantly diminish users' intention to visit the destination that appeared in the STV. Although the discontinuity between destination content and product endorsement ads has a negligible impact on users' comprehension fluency in the context of short-form travel videos, the advertisement information apparently obstructs the formation process of the user's mental imagery related to the destination and, as a result, indirectly weakens users' intention to visit the destination.

Mental imagery facilitates destination visit intention effectively.

The high level of mental imagery generated by users about the destinations presented in short-form travel videos directly associate with the increase in individuals' destination visit intention.

High processing fluency leads to high levels of mental imagery.

During users' interactions with short travel

videos, comprehension processing fluency can effectively enhance imagery processing fluency. Considering the predictive role of mental imagery for actual travel intentions, it is a feasible approach for STV destination marketing to stimulate the formation of destination mental imagery and facilitate individual destination visit behavior by increasing users' imagery fluency when processing information in short tourism videos.

IMPLICATIONS

This study focuses on the negative effects of advertising intrusiveness on users' information processing and mental imagery processing in the context of short-form videos. This study explores the negative interference of ad intrusiveness on users' interaction with the original video content from the perspective of mental imagery processing in the context of short tourism videos. In addition, as one of the first studies to link the concepts of processing fluency and mental imagery in the context of STV while filling the gap in the study of advertising intrusiveness in the context of STV, this study also complements the research on processing fluency as well as mental imagery in the field of tourism as well as short-form videos. This study also provides practical suggestions for improvement. *STV creators* should seriously reconsider what is their primary purpose for posting videos and look for solutions from the point of view of ads' characteristics. Meanwhile, the richness and vividness of the strong sensory descriptions should be increased by creating high-quality video content to increase the perceived imagery fluency and facilitate viewers' mental imagery. *Short-form video platforms* should encourage creators to reduce the amount of advertising content embedded in their videos by increasing financial support and giving consumers more control over the ad content. *Destination stakeholders* are recommended to actively collaborate with qualified creators to promote local products or souvenirs to improve the coherence of ads and destination-related short videos for a win-win situation.

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