

Tourism Destination Marketing by Travel Vlogs

by

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ABSTRACT

TOURISM DESTINATION MARKETING BY TRAVEL VLOGS

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Travel vlogs are popular among younger generations nowadays. However, tourist behaviors facilitated by travel vlogs are still unknown. Two parts were undertaken in this study to examine how travel vlogs influence tourist behaviors and to explore the value of travel vlogs in destination marketing. Study 1 adopted the Attention-Interest-Desire-Action (AIDA) principle as the theoretical underpinning to uncover how the mechanism of travel vlogs influence the travel decisions of younger tourists (i.e., Generation Y). In addition, Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) promotional videos were compared with travel vlogs regarding the proposed mechanism. Study 2 examined the effect of destination competitiveness levels on willingness to pay (WTP) between two video types (i.e., travel vlog and DMO promotional video). A convenience sample of 205 North Americans who mostly belonged to Generation Y was collected via an online experiment. Study findings provide theoretical implications to the literature and practical implications to DMOs regarding marketing strategies.

Keywords: *travel vlogs, promotional videos, destination competitiveness, AIDA, willingness to pay, Becker-DeGroot-Marschak (BDM) auction*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Chapter 2. Literature Review	6
2.1. Destination marketing value of travel vlogs.....	6
2.2. AIDA principle and related constructs.....	8
2.3. Relationships between AIDA constructs.....	12
2.4. Travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos	15
2.5. WTP and Becker-Deegroot-Marschak (BDM) auction	16
2.6. Travel video type and destination competitiveness.....	18
Chapter 3. Methodology.....	22
3.1. Destination and video selection	22
3.2. Study population and data collection	23
3.3. Measurements scales	25
Chapter 4. Results	27
4.1. Demographic profile of the sample.....	27
4.2. Independent-Sample T Test.....	28
4.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).....	30
4.4. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)	34
4.5. Moderating effect of video type.....	36
4.6. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).....	37
Chapter 5. Discussion	39
Chapter 6. Implications	45
6.1. Theoretical implications	45
6.2. Practical implications	48

Chapter 7. Limitations and Future Studies.....	53
Chapter 8. Conclusion.....	57
References	58
Appendices	73
Appendix 1: Measurement Items.....	73
Appendix 2. Questionnaire.....	74
Appendix 3: REB approval letter.....	78

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Experimental design	24
Table 2. The Socio-demographic Information of the Participants (N=205)	27
Table 3. Manipulation Check Results of Video Type.....	29
Table 4. Manipulation Check Results of Destination Competitiveness	29
Table 5. T-Test Results of Destination Competitiveness.....	29
Table 6. T-Test Results between Travel Vlog and DMO Video on AIDA Constructs	30
Table 7. CFA Results	31
Table 8. Standardized Correlation Table of Travel Vlog Group.....	32
Table 9. Standardized Correlation Table of DMO Promotional Video Group	33
Table 10. SEM Results.....	35
Table 11. Moderating Effect of Video Type	37
Table 12. One-way ANOVA Results of Destination Competitiveness on WTP	38
Table 13. One-way ANOVA Results of Video Type on WTP	38

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model.....	14
Figure 2. SEM Results of Travel Vlog Group.....	36
Figure 3. SEM Results of DMO Promotional Video Group.....	36

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Noticeably, travel vlogs are the most watched content on YouTube and have gained increasing attention in recent years. Google trends proposes that the search item “travel vlog” has continuously represented over half of the YouTube videos watched since March, 2020 (Google, 2021). Younger generations constitute the largest audience of travel vlogs, where they seek travel inspiration (Lodha & Philip, 2019). Travel vlogs are conversational travel videos created by individual tourists (i.e., travel vloggers, mostly younger people), which are considered to be trustworthy and authentic (Wang, Kim & Agrusa, 2018; Mathisen & Prebensen, 2013). Similar to destination promotional videos, a traditional destination marketing tool utilized by Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) for decades, travel vlogs reveal destination attributes such as architecture, culture, people, and natural scenery. Differently, travel vlogs incorporate these attributes in personal travel stories. As a main component of travel vlogs, these travel stories may play a key role in attracting tourists as they vivify the destination, provide abundant travel information, and show authentic scenes of the destination (Kavoura, Kefallonitis & Giovanis, 2019). As obtaining travel information from videos that contain experiences which can happen in real life has become tourists’ one main motive (Khan, 2017; Lodha & Philip, 2019), travel vlogs adequately live up to their expectations. It is inferred that travel vlogs have penetrated tourists’ daily lives and may affect their travel decisions.

Despite travel vlogs being consumed on mass, tourist behaviors facilitated by travel vlogs are unexplored, especially among a younger population. This type of investigation could assist DMOs in deciding whether and how to utilize travel vlogs for future marketing strategies. In addition, it remains unknown how travel vlogs influence tourist behaviors, which is important for identifying the predominant characteristics of travel vlogs and for understanding tourist

behaviors. Previous literature has highlighted that travel vlogs are a valuable source for authentic and useful travel information (Mathisen & Prebensen, 2013; Kavoura et al., 2019). However, there is no empirical evidence whether it is authenticity, informativeness, or its combination that attract tourists. Furthermore, research into what psychological reactions are stimulated by the two characteristics, which will in turn affect actual behaviors, has been under investigated.

Travel vlogs, created by tourists, are a format of user-generated content (UGC) while DMO promotional videos are a format of marketer-generated content (MGC) as they are created by organizations. Previous literature has attempted to explore the differences between UGC and MGC (e.g., Lee, Lee & Hansen, 2017; Hautz, Füller, Hutter & Thürridl, 2014), with a focus in recent years on investigating tourist behaviors and marketing potential (e.g., Jia, 2020; Yu, Xie & Wen, 2020). Considering the important role of travel vlogs in tourist decisions (Lodha & Philip, 2019), it is surprising that travel vlogs have not yet been investigated as a UGC using MGC (i.e., DMO promotional videos) as a comparison. Understanding this gap could help DMOs understand the relative significance of the two types of videos in relation to destination marketing.

To fill in above research gaps, two approaches have been taken, targeting Generation Y (i.e., born between 1981 and 2003). Study 1 aims to explain the influence of travel vlogs by adopting the Attention-Interest-Desire-Action (AIDA) principle (Strong, 1925), with attention regarded as a precondition, authenticity and informativeness regarded as external stimuli that arouse interest, inspiration regarded as a motivational state that facilitates desire, and information search as well as word-of-mouth (WOM) regarded as ultimate behaviors. It also tests whether video type (i.e., travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos) has different impacts on the relationships among above constructs. Originally used to explain consumer behaviors in a

marketing context, the AIDA principle suggests that consumers will be aware of a product, be interested in it, and desire for it step by step before purchasing. Moreover, this principle has been tested in video advertisement contexts (Sharifi, Khazaei Pool, Jalilvand, Tabaeian & Ghanbarpour Jooybari, 2019). Rather than treating each component of AIDA as an individual construct (e.g., Lee, Song, Lee & Petrick, 2018), previous studies have demonstrated that the four could serve as foundation and be operationalized by other constructs (e.g., Sun, Cardenas & Harrill, 2016). For example, Xu and Schrier (2019) investigated how website aesthetics affect booking intention through ease-of-navigation, information quality and search intention in a hospitality sharing economy platforms context by adopting AIDA components as a theoretical basis. Based on the points above, the AIDA principle is considered as an appropriate framework for this study.

Study 1 uses a self-report questionnaire to measure related constructs. However, self-report measures have been criticized for existing cognitive biases causing inaccurate results (Li, Walters, Packer & Scott, 2018). To address above concerns, study 2 adopts Becker-DeGroot-Marschak (BDM) auction (Becker, DeGroot, Marschak, 1964) to test how individuals react differently to travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos in terms of willingness to pay (WTP) for a destination. As a well-validated incentive-compatible method that has been applied to economic experiments in the last few decades, this auction method helps researchers get true answers from participants (Eustice, McCole & Rutty, 2019; Li, Fooks, Messer & Ferraro, 2021). While DMOs consistently use positive tone to depict a destination for attracting tourists, travel vloggers are free to share positive or negative comments about a destination. The valance of their comments can be largely affected by destination attributes such as physical environment, services, tourism resources, etc. (Hosany & Witham, 2009), which in turn will affect other

tourists' evaluations toward the destination (Pahlevan Sharif & Mura, 2019). These destination attributes can be summarized into destination competitiveness (Gómez-Vega & Picazo-Tadeo, 2019). On this basis, destination competitiveness may play a different role between travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos in facilitating WTP. From this point of view, study 2 examines the effect of destination competitiveness on WTP for travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos respectively.

In summary, study 1 addresses two research questions: 1) how travel vlogs influence tourists' behaviors? 2) is there any difference in the level of influence between travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos? Study 2 addresses two research questions: 1) is there significant difference in WTP between travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos? 2) does the level of destination competitiveness influence differently on WTP between the two video types? To answer above questions, study 1 adopts AIDA principle with six aforementioned constructs and compares travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos regarding the proposed research model. Study 2 conducts a 2 (video type: travel vlog vs. DMO promotional video) x 2 (destination competitiveness: high vs. low) online experiment on WTP, where BDM auction is adopted.

Theoretically, the study findings enrich the literature by suggesting six constructs to operationalize the AIDA components; uncovering the mechanism how travel vlogs affect travel decisions of Generation Y; revealing the group differences between travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos on the proposed mechanism from the perspective of UGC and MGC; identifying a potential ranking range to categorize high, medium and low-competitive destinations; and introducing BDM auction to the tourism destination marketing context for measuring WTP. Practically, DMOs can benefit from study results to develop future marketing strategies. Travel vlogs should be considered as an additional marketing tool by collaborating

with popular travel vloggers. Attention, informativeness, authenticity, and inspiration all deserve consideration in video design and dissemination. Platforms such as official tourism websites are necessary to satisfy tourists' needs for additional destination information. Adjusting marketing strategies based on the current competitiveness level might also be beneficial.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Destination Marketing Value of Travel Vlogs

DMO promotional videos produced by a local tourism authority have been used as a destination marketing tool for many decades (Pan, Santos & Kim, 2017). These videos provide secondary images to tourists by combining the attractions, characteristics, and values of a destination that DMOs aim to promote (Gong & Tung, 2017; Paül i Agustí, 2018). The marketing role of promotional videos has been extensively investigated in previous literature (e.g., Li, 2019; Pan, Santos & Kim, 2017). It has been found that promotional videos shape destination images (Pan, 2011; Shani, Chen, Wang & Hua, 2010), affect tourists' attitudes and visit intention positively (Guerrero-Rodríguez, Stepchenkova & Kirilenko, 2020). Despite the positive impact of DMO promotional videos, the literature reveals their limitations in destination marketing as they provide a narrow view and limited information about the destination (Pan, Tsai & Lee, 2011). By comparing advertisements produced by different creators (i.e., tourists vs. tourism agencies), Un-Kon (2017) found that tourists have a higher intention to visit the depicted destination after watching tourist-made advertisements as they consider the presented information reliable, accurate, complete and relevant.

Vlogs are usually created by Generation Y who was born between 1981 and 2003 (Edge, 2014; Merritt & Neville, 2002; Mohamed & Azzman, 2017). Compared to preceding generations, Generation X (born from 1961-1980) and Baby Boomers (born from 1941 to 1960), Generation Y are more active travellers and have a strong motivation to explore new destinations with different cultures (Li, Li & Hudson, 2013; Fong, Firoz & Sulaiman, 2018). Generation Y are more immersed in the online environment, and they are more tech savvy, adept at learning and focusing on building social networks (Chen & Chou, 2019; Eastman & Liu, 2012). They are the

most active travel vlog viewers, who greatly use vlogs for seeking travel information and receiving updates from vloggers (Kim, Choe & Lee, 2018). They highlight their roles as a peer tourist and provide relevant information such as travel guide for attractions, transportations, accommodations, restaurants and cuisine to future tourists, which are significant components of travel vlogs (Kavoura et al., 2019). In addition, they are considered by marketers as a generation who has a high level of purchasing power (Martin & Turley, 2004). They may be willing to pay for visiting the destination if the destination shown in travel vlogs attract them. Based on the above discussion on the significant participation in and contribution to the current trend of travel vlogs, Generation Y is considered as the target sample in this study.

As a form of tourist-created videos, travel vlogs are likely to complement the limitations of DMO promotional videos. Filmed with portable devices such as smartphones, travel vlogs record personal travel experiences in chronological order by storytelling (Mohamed & Azzman, 2017; Raun, 2014; Munnukka, Maity, Reinikainen & Luoma-Aho, 2019). They have some unique characteristics and advantages for destination marketing. First, travel vloggers provide first-hand travel information and authentic destination images in vlogs, making it a reliable source for travel information (Paül i Agustí, 2018; Lodha & Philip, 2019). Second, travel vloggers provide genuine individual feedback and recommendations to future tourists based on their personal experiences (Wang, Kim & Agrusa, 2018). As going over others' reviews has become an important part in decision-making (Huang, Chang, Bilgihan & Okumus, 2020), travel vlogs have been constantly referenced by tourists before travelling (Lodha & Philip, 2019). Third, travel vloggers communicate with tourists openly and interactively (Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2011). They often have public contact information, inviting comments or messages through channels such as YouTube, making it straightforward for tourists to reach out to the vlogger directly, privately and

promptly to discuss the travel experience. Fourth, travel vlogs tend to show interesting, unique, and aesthetically pleasing travel stories that portray diverse destination images (Frobenius, 2011; Du, Liechty, Santos & Park, 2020). These individual stories contain plots, characters, and pacing that constitute sequences of related events (Antunes, Pino, Tate & Barros, 2019; Kwan-Liu Ma, Liao, Frazier, Hauser & Kostis, 2012), which are likely to strengthen individuals' memory about the depicted destination (Grabe, Bas & van Driel, 2015). In addition, travel stories may facilitate understanding as individuals tend to process information in a story-like form (Mathisen & Prebensen, 2013).

2.2. AIDA Principle and Related Constructs

The AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) principle was first proposed by Strong (1925) in explaining customers' purchasing behaviors. Attention measures how much "conscious thinking" a person gives to something at a certain moment (Heath, 2009). Interest is a psychological state of special attention towards something and an enduring feeling of enjoyment as well as exploration over time (Harackiewicz, Smith & Priniski, 2016; Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Desire is a psychological state where an individual has motivations to take an action or to reach a goal (Han, Kim, Kim & Ham, 2015; Meng & Han, 2016). An action is the fact or process of doing something, typically to achieve an aim (Oxford, 2021). According to AIDA, customers initially pay attention to the product, get interested in the product, and generate desire towards the product prior to purchasing a product. Previous studies have confirmed the hierarchical relationships among the four stages, that is, attention, interest, and desire influence their subsequent step in the AIDA principle. In another word, the realization of one stage is based on the completion of its previous stage. For example, Lee et al., (2018) test the AIDA principle

when investigating the influence of Korean pop culture on visit decisions. It is suggested that people initially should have a general idea about Korean pop culture, such as Korean dramas, music, celebrities, or cosmetics. Later, they develop emotional ties with the culture, which prompts them to long for Korea. Eventually, people make their decision to visit Korea. Moreover, the AIDA principle has been successfully applied to evaluate marketing effects. For example, Sharifi et al., (2019) use the AIDA principle to quantitatively test how a renewable energy technology advertisement influences actual actions. It is noted that people first pay attention to the technology, after which their emotions are evoked. They develop a positive attitude towards the technology, become sensitive to the features introduced by the advertisement, and are eventually persuaded to use the technology. In the end, they are likely to seek more information about the technology, use the technology, or recommend the technology to others. Based on the successful application of AIDA principle in previous tourism and marketing literature, it is reasonable to adopt it to the destination marketing context. This study particularly adopts the AIDA principle to investigate how attention affect information search intention and WOM intention through informativeness, authenticity and inspiration.

An influential travel video should be able to attract attention (Ranjbarian, Shaemi & Jolodar, 2011). According to the Attentional Control Theory (Kim & Cave, 1999), people use top-down or bottom-up psychological processes to direct their attention. The difference between the two processes lies in their purpose. In a top-down process, people have a specific goal, and contents that benefit the goal particularly grab their attention. For example, if tourists want to know the featured food of a destination, they may specifically pay attention to the food section of a travel vlog. In the bottom-up process, attention is driven by the external stimuli, including visual elements such as titles, images, dynamic scenes, and special effects (Yeh, Wang, Li & Lin,

2017; Sharifi et al., 2019; Carmi & Itti, 2006); audio elements such as background music and voiceover (Guido, Peluso, Mileti, Capestro, Cambò & Pisanello, 2016); and astonishing contents (Sharifi et al., 2019). As competency and innovation in filming and creating videos vary from people to people, the quality of travel vlogs on YouTube can vary widely (Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2011). Without regard to the equipment used, some tourists upload raw scenes while some tourists edit carefully by selecting excerpts of scenes and conversations, adding soundtracks before uploading. However, when searching for travel vlogs in YouTube by default setting, the first page is often occupied with popular travel vlogs with a large number of views. As people tend to view only the first several web search results (Josef Hanson, 2018), the top travel vlogs are likely to attract attention.

Interest occurs after attention, which is a crucial stage that transfers feelings from a cognitive level to an affective level (Sharifi et al., 2019). It is shown that interest may enhance attitudes toward the content shown in a video (Alwitt, 2000). Therefore, how to arouse interest is constantly a main concern in marketing. For intangible service like travelling, tourists refer to travel vlogs for seeking useful information to reduce the risks during consumption (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Research has illustrated that interest is always information specific and it is associated with curiosity-based learning (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Sung, Hartley, Vanman & Phau, 2016). Information, therefore, is a trigger of interest. According to Xu and Schrier (2019), providing product-related information such as its benefits and features on websites can arouse customers' interest in the product. Lee and Hoffman (2015) suggest that in infomercial marketing, highlighting information such as the characteristics and advantages of a product can trigger interest. In social media marketing, clear, timely, and up-to-date information keeps customers interested in a product (Hassan, Nadzim & Shiratuddin, 2015). In this study,

informativeness indicates providing people with useful and helpful information (Lee & Hong, 2016). Other than providing travel information, travel vlogs are also characterized by sharing realistic travel experiences. It is acknowledged that realistic plots help people relate to their personal experiences and evoke empathy, further triggering interest (Kim & Kim, 2018; Becker, Wiegand & Reinartz, 2019; Hidi & Renninger, 2006). The relationship between authenticity and interest has been empirically tested. For example, it is shown that people tend to be more interested in realistic games (Ribbens, Malliet, Van Eck & Larkin, 2016). Fact-based plots attract special attention to an advertisement and stimulate interest (Cho, Shen & Wilson, 2014). Different from most tourism literature which defines authenticity as something unique, genuine, and original (Jiménez-Barreto, Rubio & Campo, 2020; Busser & Shulga, 2019; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006), authenticity in this study refers to the extent to which the reality of ordinary life is presented, a definition that has been widely adopted in the video marketing literature (Becker et al., 2019; Miller, 2015; Stern, 1994).

Stimulating desires is the last step before taking actions, which aligns with the Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Tourists are likely to be inspired by travel vlogs (Lodha & Philip, 2019). Inspiration is a motivation state that is evoked by external stimuli, where people can gain vision or better insights (Tang & Tsang, 2020; Thrash & Elliot, 2004). For example, a local food consumption story in travel vlogs may inspire tourists to search more information about the food and to try the food when visiting the destination. Evidence shows that inspiration triggers desire (Ki & Kim, 2019). The common ground between inspiration and desire lies in that they both indicate motivations (Thrash & Elliot, 2004; Han et al., 2015; Meng & Han, 2016).

Facilitating actions is the final goal of a marketing approach. Most literature predict actions based on behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991), which refer to anticipated future behaviors (Li & Cai, 2012; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Oliver & Swan, 1989; Swan, 1981). As requesting information and spreading WOM are two possible outcomes of marketing (Pan, 2011; Liu, 2006), these two intentions are selected in this study. Information search intention, as proposed in the action stage, refers to the probability that tourists will search additional destination information in the near future. WOM intention refers to the probability that tourists will recommend the destination to others.

2.3. Relationships between AIDA Constructs

Psychology, marketing and communication fields have unraveled the dynamic interconnectedness of attention and information processing (Simmonds, Bogomolova, Kennedy, Nenycz-Thiel & Bellman, 2020; Gao, Ji, Liu & Sun, 2020; Lang, 2000; Campos, Mendes, do Valle & Scott, 2017). Evidence from these fields shows that information processing requires attention because it results in a quietening of the body and an increase in blood flow to the brain that enables information absorption (Campbell, Wood & McBride, 1997; Öhman, 1997). In addition, according to Lang (2000), encoding, the first stage of information processing where individuals get information out of the environment (e.g., videos) and into their minds, can be measured by attention operationally. It is also accepted that the depth at which individuals process information depends on their amount of attention (Segijn, Voorveld, Vandeberg & Smit, 2017).

The correlation between attention and authenticity can be explained by self-forgetfulness, which refers to a stage where individuals are attentionally absorbed and focused (Montag, Reuter

& Axmacher, 2011; Thrash & Elliot, 2004). When individuals are focused and concentrated on one thing, they tend to forget the surrounding physical environment as well as the passage of time (Fang & Zhao, 2010). The mind-altered experiences enable people to feel being physically present in a virtual environment (e.g. video scenes) and to feel that what happens in the virtual environment is real (Costa, Oliveira, Pestana & Costa, 2016; Jin, 2011; Blom & Beckhaus, 2013). Moreover, empirical findings show that the mental and emotional engagement facilitated by attention enhances the reality of soap operas (Campos et al., 2017; Sood & Rogers, 2000; Kim, 2012).

According to Thrash and Elliot (2004), openness to experience is one antecedent of inspiration, which indicates the breadth and depth of individuals' awareness, reflection, curiosity, and imagination (Schwaba, Luhmann, Denissen, Chung & Bleidorn, 2018). Information, as suggested by previous literature, is key in raising awareness (Simmonds et al., 2020; Campos et al., 2017), triggering curiosity (Wright, Clarkson & Kardes, 2018; Scacco & Muddiman, 2020), and stimulating imagination (Spears, Ketron & Ngamsiriudom, 2016; Ketron, Spears & Dai, 2016). In addition, previous literature suggests that customer inspiration is induced by the reception of marketing information (Böttger, Rudolph, Evanschitzky & Pfrang, 2017). Real scenes, on the other hand, contribute to individuals' reflection process (Kim & Kim, 2018). For example, live-experience videos might remind those who have travelled to the depicted destination of their previous travel experiences, especially when they have visited the same place or experienced the same activity. In addition, people who have not travelled to the depicted destination may also link travel video scenes with their lives. For example, a scene of a visit to a zoo might remind tourists of their personal experiences in a zoo. Nostalgia helps evoke inspiration and the reflection process facilitates inspiration by enhancing absorption (Stephan,

Sedikides, Wildschut, Cheung, Routledge & Arndt, 2015; Kim, 2012; Brown, 2015; An & Youn, 2018).

Numerous marketing studies have tested the relationship between inspiration and behavioral intentions. For example, it is found that inspiration affects consumers’ purchase intention (Tang & Tsang, 2020), facilitates viewers’ donation intention (Liang, Chen & Lei, 2016), and leads to consumers’ exploration intention (Böttger et al., 2017). Theoretically, the “inspired-to” component indicates that inspiration results in an individual’s internal motivation to implement a new idea and take actions (Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash & Elliot, 2004).

Based on above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1:** Attention positively affects informativeness.
- H2:** Attention positively affects authenticity.
- H3:** Informativeness positively affects inspiration.
- H4:** Authenticity positively affects inspiration.
- H5:** Inspiration positively affects information search intentions.
- H6:** Inspiration positively affects WOM intentions.

Based on the hypotheses mentioned above, the proposed conceptual model in study 1 is illustrated in Figure 1.

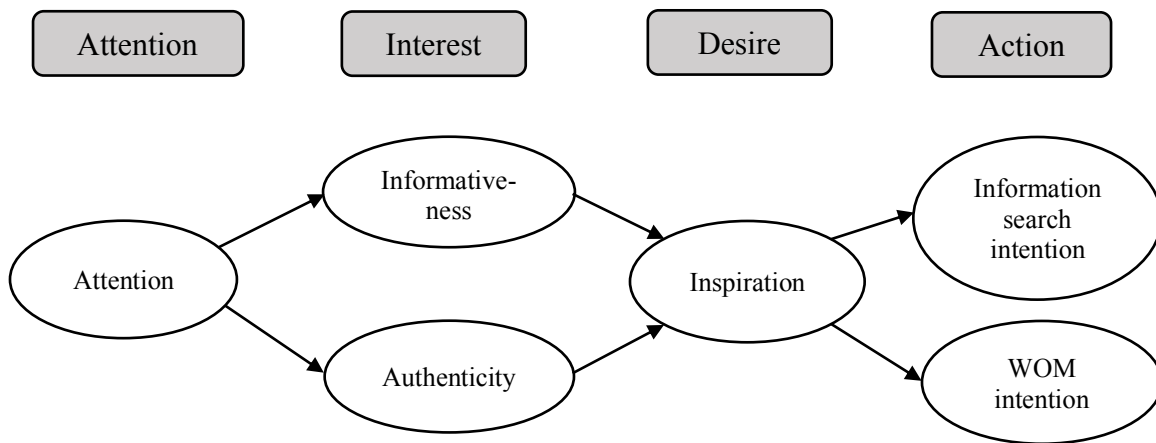


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model

2.4. Travel Vlogs and DMO promotional videos

Travel vlogs are different from DMO promotional videos in several aspects regarding AIDA components. Consecutive storytelling, one important characteristic of travel vlogs, follows a thematic sequence that attracts attention (Cho, Shen, & Wilson, 2014). While DMO promotional videos attract tourists by appealing design (Guerrero-Rodríguez et al., 2020). By sharing personal travel experiences, including vloggers' observations, emotions, and comments induced by the destination, travel vloggers share realistic destination scenes as well as detailed and unfiltered information such as the price of local transportation or food (Schuman, Lawrence & Pope, 2019; Stienmetz, Kim, Xiang & Fesenmaier, 2020). In contrast, promotional videos often screen out undesirable destination images, show factitious plots and present tourists with limited information in a short time (Pan, Tsai & Lee, 2011; Becker et al., 2019). Travel stories from travel vlogs help viewers process, absorb information and create new meanings, eliciting inspiration (Schuman, Lawrence & Pope, 2019; Mathisen & Prebensen, 2013). For example, when travel vloggers share museum visits, tourists can be inspired by the history, exhibitions, and architecture introduced in the verbal stories. In addition, there are differences between information sources (i.e., consumers vs. organizations) in terms of credibility, which will affect individuals' future evaluations about the information (Lee, Lee & Hansen, 2017). For example, customers favor Airbnb more than hotels because they evaluate the Airbnb host as an "equal peer" (Shuqair, Pinto & Mattila, 2019). Travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos, created by individual tourists and DMOs respectively, are likely to exert different influence on tourists. Based on the above different characteristics of travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Video type (Travel vlogs vs. DMO promotional videos) has different impacts on the relationships between the proposed AIDA constructs.

2.5. WTP and Becker-DeGroot-Marschak (BDM) auction

With the gap between intentions and actions suggested by previous literature (Ajzen, 1991), WTP is introduced in this study to better predict the actual travel decisions of tourists. WTP is defined as the highest price a tourist is willing to pay for a destination-related product (Lefebvre, 2019) and it has been tested as an indicator for actual actions in experiment studies, where people can bid for products (e.g., Eustice et al., 2019; Li, et al., 2019). Previous literature shows that WTP can be facilitated by marketing tools such as advertisements (Acquisti, 2011). WTP has been widely adopted to predict preferences toward a place or product, such as marine conservation area, protected areas, destination tours, wine, and beverage (Schuhmann, 2019; Witt, 2019; Huang, 2018; Eustice et al., 2019; Lefebvre, 2019). In tourism marketing literature, the most traditional way to measure WTP is using dichotomous choice contingent valuation method where participants are asked whether or not to accept a price (Lee, 1997; Andersson & Lundberg, 2013) or in an open-ended format where participants are simply asked about their WTP under a hypothetical market situation (Huang, 2018; Piñeiro-Chousa, López-Cabarcos, Romero-Castro & Vázquez-Rodríguez, 2021). However, participants may not reveal their true WTP under these measurement methods because of knowing this is hypothetical, which might lead to result bias. Thus, it is necessary to adopt an incentive-compatible method to elicit true WTP in the tourism marketing fields.

To achieve the above goal, BDM auction has been adopted from the economic literature for this study context, which is shown to be valuation-revealing in experimental settings (Irwin, McClelland, McKee, Schulze & Norden, 1998) and has been widely used to elicit WTP (e.g.,

Eustice et al., 2019; Li et al., 2021; Grewal, Hmurovic, Lamberton & Reczek, 2019). In the auction, people independently indicate the highest amount they are willing to pay for a product instead of bidding against each other. Their bids (B) will be further compared with a randomly drawn market price of the product (M), which will result in two outcomes:

- ⎧ Purchase the product (if $B \geq M$)
- ⎨ Do not purchase the product (if $B < M$)

The most benefit of this auction method lies in that it can elicit true WTP as people will lose either utility value or monetary value when they understate or overstate WTP. The underlying mechanism can be theoretically explained by:

$$EU = \int_0^B p(R)U(Y^0 + E + V - R)dR + \int_B^E p(R)U(Y^0 + E)dR$$

In this formula, EU (Experiment Utility) is the utility value from an experiment. B and E represent the bid and a gained participant payment from the experiment respectively. R is the random market price. Y^0 denotes the initial income. V signifies a person's endogenous utility from consuming a product and. To maximize EU, V should be equal to B:

$$\frac{dEU}{dB} = p(B)[U(Y^0 + E + V - B) - U(Y^0 + E)] = 0$$

BDM auction can be applied to the tourism context and one example is described as below. When investigating the WTP for the admission ticket of a tourism attraction, if the true WTP of a tourist is \$60 and the random market price is \$50, the tourist cannot get the admission ticket if he/she bids only \$40. As a result, utility value is lost. Likewise, if the true WTP of a tourist is

\$40 and the random market price is \$50, the person will purchase the product at \$50 if he/she bids for \$60. As a result, they will have to pay more money than expected for the product. To avoid potential loss, people will indicate their true WTP under this method.

2.6. Travel Video Type and Destination Competitiveness

One primary goal of DMO's is to enhance destination competitiveness, which plays a key role in stimulating the economy of a destination (Pike & Mason, 2011; Kubickova & Martin, 2020). In the past few years, literature has been studying destination competitiveness to suggest DMOs key points to improve competitiveness and to position their current tourism markets (e.g., Assaker, Hallak, Vinzi & O'Connor, 2014). Competitiveness reflects the ability of a destination to provide better tourism products, services, and experiences than other destinations (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Although objective figures such as tourist arrivals and room occupancy can indicate competitiveness, they may be insufficiently reliable (Kubickova & Martin, 2020; Zehrer, Smeral & Hallmann, 2017). In search of more accurate measures, scholars have been trying to develop competitiveness indicators such as political stability, tourism policy, price value, facilities, natural resources, etc. (World Economic Forum, 2019; Gómez-Vega & Picazo-Tadeo, 2019; Choi, Lee & Seo, 2018; Wong, 2018; Djeri, Stamenković, Blešić, Milićević & Ivkov, 2018). One of the most recognized contributions to the literature is "The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report" (World Economic Forum, 2019), which has been widely adopted in other academic studies (e.g., Kubickova & Martin, 2020; Gómez-Vega & Picazo-Tadeo, 2019; Albayrak, Caber, Rosario González-Rodríguez & Aksu, 2018). This report ranks 140 countries with 90 raw indicators, which assess destination competitiveness through four destination

attributes: enabling environment; travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions; infrastructure; and natural and cultural resources.

These indicators suggest that high- and low- competitive destinations are differentiated with each other based on the above destination attributes, which in turn affect their tourist arrivals. Tourists are more likely to visit destinations with stable political environments, and accessible and abundant tourism resources such as landscape, architecture, cuisine, activities, and shopping opportunities (Loi, So, Lo & Fong, 2017; Jin, Yang, Wang & Liu; 2020; Wen & Huang, 2019). While high-competitive destinations satisfy tourists in these travel needs, low-competitive destinations may perform worse here (Queiroz Neto, Dimmock, Lohmann & Scott, 2019; Wong, 2018). For example, political, social and hygiene issues might be associated with these low-competitive destinations, which constrain their tourism markets (Thapa, 2004; Lepp, Gibson & Lane, 2011).

However, these attributes can be shown in travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos differently. On the contrary to travel vloggers who voluntarily make vlogs to record personal travel experiences, DMOs specifically utilize promotional videos as a tool to improve destination images and to attract tourists (Gong & Tung, 2017; Wang, Kim & Agrusa, 2018). The motivational difference may determine the distinguishing information valences when depicting a destination. DMO promotional videos always try to show appealing segments of the destination. Previous literature has studied DMO promotion videos of both high- and low- competitive destinations, such as China, Korea, New Zealand, Egypt and Bahrain (Shani et al., 2010; Pan, Santos & Kim, 2017; Pan, 2011; Fong, Firoz & Sulaiman, 2018; Guerrero-Rodríguez, Stepchenkova & Kirilenko, 2020). The results have shown that these promotional videos all affect destination image and visit intentions positively. On the other hand, travel vlogs are more

pluralistic in destination presentation and travel vloggers are free to share positive or negative comments. Tourists are prone to be satisfied when travelling to destinations with favorable tourism resources, services, and physical travel environment (Hosany & Witham, 2009). Positive word-of-mouth will be shared through satisfaction (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). For destinations with issues associated with safety, politics, and services, tourists may express concerns about visiting the destination. The valences of word-of-mouth greatly influence other tourists' attitudes and perceptions toward the destination (Pahlevan Sharif & Mura, 2019).

Based on above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H8a: Destination competitiveness significantly affects WTP when tourists watch travel vlogs.

H8b: Destination competitiveness does not affect WTP when tourists watch DMO promotional videos.

High-competitive destinations are typically popular and well-known among the public. Examples include France and United Kingdom (World Economic Forum, 2019). Regarding these destinations, tourists have already formed awareness of their famous attractions, which are still highlighted in their DMO promotional videos. Travel vlogs, however, provide innovative travel guides to those attractions by sharing pleasant individual experiences, which concretize the destination and positively construct tourists' pre-travel anticipations, expectations and experiences (Kim, 2012). The positive pre-travel imagination arouses positive affect, which motivates tourists to visit the destination (Wei, Ma, Jiang & We, 2019; Hosany, Buzova & Sanz-Blas, 2020).

Regarding low-competitive destinations, travel videos should play a key role in raising tourists' awareness of the destination and demonstrate its appeal, which is one key mission of DMOs (Hultman, Strandberg, Oghazi & Mostaghel, 2017; Chin, Lo, Razak, Pasbakhsh & Mohamad, 2020). By briefly showing destination attractions, DMO promotional videos help

tourists form a basic understanding and shape their impression of the destination positively. Take Uganda as an example, tourists' self-reported destination images became more positive and perceived risks were reduced after they were exposed to Uganda's DMO official tourism website (Lepp, Gibson & Lane, 2011). In contrast to DMO promotional videos that try to maximize destination appeal, travel vlogs record original destination scenes. With the possible association of destination issues on politics, infrastructure, society, hygiene, economics or culture, tourists may hesitate to visit the destination (Brown, 2000).

Based on above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H9a:** Travel vlogs facilitate higher WTP compared to DMO promotional videos for high-competitive destinations.
- H9b:** DMO promotional videos facilitate higher WTP compared to travel vlogs for low-competitive destinations.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Destination and Video Selection

According to the destination travel and tourism competitiveness index (World Economic Forum, 2019), France, Austria, Egypt and Sri Lanka ranked 2nd, 11th, 65th and 77th respectively among the listed 140 countries. France and Austria were selected as high-competitive destinations, while Egypt and Sri Lanka were selected as low-competitive destinations in this study, based on the availability and qualification of their DMO promotional videos.

For each destination, one travel vlog and one promotional video were selected from YouTube based on criteria that characterize common travel vlogs and promotional videos. As the largest online video-sharing platform with more than 2 billion users, YouTube has become an important destination marketing channel (Duffett, 2020). To date, several marketing studies have been conducted in the YouTube context (e.g., Tellis, MacInnis, Tirunillai & Zhang, 2019; Feng, Chen & He, 2019). In this study, the first travel vlog that met the requirements below, after searching “destination travel vlog” (e.g., France travel vlog) sorted by relevance, was used in the experiment: (1) it targets general population; (2) it is nearly 10-minutes in duration; (3) it is in English. DMO Promotional videos were selected from the DMO official YouTube account (e.g., the account that indicates the destination organization copyright in their main page or link with the destination official tourism bureau website and other official social media accounts), which have a 1-minute duration. By investigating 95 DMO videos, a previous study found that only 24 of them (25%) include voice-over (Pan & Hanusch, 2011). As it is also observed that most of the available DMO promotional videos in YouTube were created without voice-over, all the selected DMO videos in this study have no voice-over. In total, eight travel videos constituted the stimuli pool.

3.2. Study Population and Data Collection

The target sample population was Generation Y who live in North America. Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants, who were from a participant pool of a research laboratory in a major university in Canada. The participant pool consisted of nearly 1200 participants, who were originally recruited via online flyers and posters on social media (e.g., Twitter) accounts of the laboratory, the university, etc. The pool was considered for this study because it mostly consists of participants who live in North America and belong to the age range of Generation Y (i.e., born between 1981-2003). The laboratory email was used to recruit participants from the pool. People who were interested in participating registered in a Qualtrics survey and they were notified by email about their session information.

Four faculty and ten graduate students were invited to do a pre-test for the survey, who were from an economic and a tourism program from the same university. The wording of the survey was slightly modified based on the pre-test results. A pilot test with nine participants from the laboratory was conducted. The design of the experiment was moderately revised according to the test results. For example, clearer guidance was provided to participants regarding the experiment process and one experiment video was reedited because of the intrusive pause at the end of the video. Besides, one measurement item of destination competitiveness (i.e., The destination seems to have abundant tourism attractions) was deleted because of its low correlation with other measurement items of destination competitiveness, which decreases the convergent validity of the construct. Eventually, 27 experiment sessions with a total of 205 participants were launched from April 3 to April 9, 2021. The order of video type and the depicted destinations were randomized among different experiment sessions. Video type was

treated as a within-subjects factor presented in random order while destination competitiveness was a between-subjects factor. Two videos were shown in each session, including one travel vlog and one DMO promotional video. As a result, eight combinations of destination and the order of video type were created for this online experiment (see Table 1), which take turns for the 27 sessions.

Table 1. Experimental design

Combination	First video		Second video	
	Travel vlog	DMO video	Travel vlog	DMO video
1		Austria	France	
2	Austria			France
3		Egypt	Sri Lanka	
4	Egypt			Sri Lanka
5		France	Austria	
6	France			Austria
7		Sri Lanka	Egypt	
8	Sri Lanka			Egypt

In each session, participants joined the study via Zoom. After collecting everyone’s consent via an online survey, a sample video was played to ensure participants can watch the travel videos during the experiment with no technical issues. The BDM auction method was elaborated, followed by a quiz to test whether participants understood clearly (i.e., If you are willing to pay \$3605 for a package and the random drawn price is \$2000. What would be the result? – Purchase the travel package at \$2000 / Do not purchase the travel package). Participants watched two videos and filled out an online survey regarding WTP, manipulation check questions for video type and destination competitiveness, attention, informativeness, authenticity,

inspiration, information search intention and WOM intention after each (see the Appendix 2). At the end of the second survey, demographic questions and payment information were also asked.

Each session lasted between 40 minutes and one hour with a range of two to fourteen participants per session. Each participant received \$15 for an incentive. According to Zhang, Zhang, Gursoy, and Fu (2018), five to ten responses for each measurement item help to get reliable results. In addition, at least 30 participants for each treatment in an experiment design is appropriate for reliable results (Brysbaert, 2019). Accordingly, as current study contains 24 measurement items and four treatments in experimental design, 205 is an appropriate sample size. Furthermore, as each participant watched two videos, a total of 410 cases were collected at the end of the study.

3.3. Measurements Scales

WTP was indicated by a slider which allowed participants to select the maximum amount (up to \$5000 CAD) they were willing to pay for a travel package from Toronto Pearson airport to the depicted destination. The travel package included a round trip, economic class flight and seven-night hotel room stay for one traveller.

Two manipulation check questions were asked for video type (i.e., the video is created by individual tourists/ destination marketing organizations; the video contains/ does not contain personal travel experiences). Destination competitiveness was checked by three questions (i.e., the destinations seems safe for travelling; the destinations seems to have good infrastructure (e.g., transportation, hotel, etc.) based on a seven-point Likert scale (World Economic Forum, 2019); and the destinations seems to provide high-quality tourism service). All AIDA related measurement items were adopted from previous literature and were slightly modified to fit this

study context. There were 24 items across six constructs (see the Appendix 1), which were each measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1= “Strongly disagree” to 7= “Strongly agree”. Attention was assessed by three items (e.g., “When watching the video, I was paying attention to the video contents.”) (Sreejesh, 2018). Informativeness was measured with three items (e.g., “The video provides me helpful information.”) (Lee & Hong, 2016). Authenticity was measured by six items (e.g., “The video content is a realistic depiction of ordinary life.”) (Becker et al., 2019). Inspiration was assessed by five items (e.g., “After watching this video, my imagination is stimulated.”) (Böttger et al., 2017). Information search intention was measured by three items (e.g. “After watching the video, I would like to search additional information about the destination.”) (Biswas, Pullig, Yagci & Dean, 2002). WOM intention was assessed with four items (e.g., “After watching the video, I would like to say positive things about the destination to other people.”) (Taheri, Chalmers, Wilson & Arshed, 2021). Participant demographic information, including gender, age, marital status, education, ethnicity and household annual income were also collected. In addition, some travel-related questions such as travel partner and travel purpose were asked.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

4.1. Demographic Profile of the Sample

Demographic information of participants was explored by conducting descriptive statistical analysis using IBM SPSS version 27. As shown in Table 2, out of 205 participants, the majority of them were female (66.3%) and were single (71.2%). A total of 196 (95.5%) participants met the age range of Generation Y (i.e., between 18 and 40), with the majority (66.3%) of them aged between 18 and 25. Slightly less than half of the samples (42%) were university students. About 39.5% of the participants were White/European, followed by Southeast Asian (27.3%) and South Asian (12.7%). Nearly a quarter of the samples (22.4%) had a household annual income of below \$25,000 and the income level of other participants was somewhat evenly distributed between the four ranges: between \$25,001-\$50,000 (18.5%), between \$50,001-\$75,000 (15.6%), between \$75,001-\$100,000 (12.7%) and above \$125,001 (11.2%). More than half of the samples (54.1%) travelled with family. Sightseeing was the most popular travel purpose (76.8%) among the participants.

Table 2. The Socio-demographic Information of the Participants (N=205)

Characteristics	N	%	Characteristics	N	%
Gender			Education		
Woman	136	66.3	Some high school	1	0.5
Man	68	33.2	Completed high school	3	1.5
Others	1	0.5	Some college/university	86	42.0
Age			Completed college/university	60	29.3
18-25	136	66.3	Some graduate education	29	14.1
26-30	47	22.9	Completed graduate education	18	8.8
31-40	13	6.3	Professional degrees	8	3.9
41-50	7	3.4	Ethnicity		
51-60	2	1.0	Indigenous	1	0.5
Relationship status			White/European	81	39.5
Married	19	9.3	Black/African/Caribbean	21	10.2

Cohabiting	27	13.2	Southeast Asian	56	27.3
Divorced	2	1.0	Arab	5	2.4
Separated	1	0.5	South Asian	26	12.7
Single, never married	146	71.2	Latin American	4	2.0
Household annual income			West Asian	3	1.5
Below \$25,000	46	22.4	Other	8	3.9
\$25,001-\$50,000	38	18.5	Travel purpose (Multiple-choice)		
\$50,001-\$75,000	32	15.6	Food and cuisine	136	66.3
\$75,001-\$100,000	26	12.7	Religion	21	10.2
\$100,001-\$125,000	9	4.4	Visit friend/family	120	58.5
\$125,001 or more	23	11.2	Shopping	61	29.8
Prefer not to answer	31	15.1	Sightseeing	156	76.8
Travel partner			Conference	34	32.3
Friends	38	18.5	Night life	35	17.1
Family	111	54.1	Visit historic relics	110	53.7
Partner	29	14.1	Cultural experience	147	65.3
Myself	18	8.8			
Other	9	4.4			

4.2. Independent-Sample T Test

Independent-Samples T-Test was conducted for manipulation check. As shown in Table 3, the t-test result indicated that travel vlogs ($M = 0.96$, $S.D. = 0.15$) and DMO promotional videos ($M = 0.08$, $S.D. = 0.23$) were significantly different from each other regarding video type ($t = 46.60$, $d.f. = 408$). Table 4 indicated that high-competitive destination group ($M = 5.88$, $S.D. = 0.87$) had a significant different competitiveness level compared to low competitive destination group ($M = 4.75$, $S.D. = 1.24$) ($t = 10.745$, $d.f. = 408$). Thus, video type and destination competitiveness were both successfully manipulated in this study. Moreover, as shown in Table 5, it was found that there was no significant difference in destination competitiveness between Austria ($M = 5.87$, $S.D. = 0.88$) and France ($M = 5.88$, $S.D. = 0.87$) ($t = 0.103$, $d.f. = 218$). However, there was significant difference in destination competitiveness between Egypt ($M = 5.12$, $S.D. = 1.10$) and Sri Lanka ($M = 4.38$, $S.D. = 1.27$) ($t = 4.315$, $d.f. = 188$). In addition, Egypt had a significant different competitiveness level with Austria ($t = 5.401$, $d.f. = 203$). Therefore, this study divided the four destinations into three competitiveness levels for further

analysis, with Austria and France as high-competitive destinations, Egypt as a medium-competitive destination and Sri Lanka as a low-competitive destination.

Table 3. Manipulation Check Results of Video Type

Video type	Travel vlog (N=205)		DMO video (N=205)		<i>d.f.</i>	<i>t</i>
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
	0.96	0.15	0.08	0.23	408	46.6***

Note: d.f. = degrees of freedom. S.D. = standardized deviation.

Table 4. Manipulation Check Results of Destination Competitiveness

Destination competitiveness	High (N=220)		Low (N=190)		<i>d.f.</i>	<i>t</i>
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
	5.88	0.87	4.75	1.24	408	10.745***

Note: d.f. = degrees of freedom. S.D. = standardized deviation.

Table 5. T-Test Results of Destination Competitiveness

<i>between High-Competitive Destinations</i>						
Country	Austria (N=110)		France (N=110)		<i>d.f.</i>	<i>t</i>
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
	5.87	0.88	5.88	0.87	218	0.103
<i>between Low-Competitive Destinations</i>						
Country	Egypt (N=95)		Sri Lanka (N=95)		<i>d.f.</i>	<i>t</i>
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
	5.12	1.10	4.38	1.27	188	4.315***
<i>between Egypt and Austria</i>						
Country	Egypt (N=95)		Austria (N=110)		<i>d.f.</i>	<i>t</i>
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
	5.12	1.10	5.87	0.88	203	5.401***

Note: d.f. = degrees of freedom, S.D. = standardized deviation. *** p < 0.001

Independent-Sample T-Test was also conducted to see whether there was significant difference between travel vlog group and DMO promotional video group in the six constructs of the proposed AIDA model. As indicated in Table 6, the t-test result demonstrated that there was significant difference between the two video types with regard to attention ($t = 1.972$, $d.f. = 408$), informativeness ($t = 11.438$), authenticity ($t = 8.579$), inspiration ($t = 3.951$) and WOM intention ($t = 3.605$). However, no significant difference was found in information search intention ($t = 1.547$) between the two video types.

Table 6. T-Test Results between Travel Vlog and DMO Video on AIDA Constructs

	Travel vlog (N=205)		DMO video (N=205)		<i>d.f.</i>	<i>t</i>
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
ATT	6.28	0.83	6.09	1.09	408	1.972*
IFM	5.58	1.16	4.07	1.49	408	11.438***
AUT	5.32	1.29	4.16	1.44	408	8.579***
INS	4.85	1.40	4.30	1.38	408	3.951**
ISI	5.38	1.34	5.18	1.41	408	1.547
WOM	4.92	1.30	4.26	1.29	408	3.605***

Note: ATT = Attention, IFM = Informativeness, AUT = Authenticity, INS = Inspiration, ISI = Information search intention, WOM = Word-of-Mouth. *d.f.* = degrees of freedom. S.D.= standardized deviation. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

4.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

To measure the convergent validity of the proposed model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using IBM AMOS version 24 was conducted for travel vlog and DMO promotional video group respectively. One inspiration item (INS 5: After watching the video, I discover something new) was deleted because of the low standardized factor loading (< 0.60) (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 2006). All retained measurement items were listed in Table 7. All the items substantially and significantly loaded on their respective factors with the lowest loading of 0.66

and the highest loading of 0.99. The composite reliability (CR) values for the six constructs ranged from 0.88 (inspiration) to 0.96 (information search intention), higher than the recommended threshold value of 0.70 (Hair, Tatham, Anderson & Black, 1998). As shown in Table 8 and 9, the Average variance explained (AVEs) of constructs were above the suggested standard of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), ranging from 0.66 (inspiration) to 0.89 (information search intention). Thus, the proposed model had good convergent validity for both video types.

Table 7. CFA Results

Items	Travel vlog		DMO video	
	Std. Fac. Loading	CR	Std. Fac. Loading	CR
<i>Attention (ATT)</i>		0.92		0.95
When watching the video,				
I was paying attention to the video contents	0.79		0.90	
I was focusing on the video contents.	0.99		0.98	
I was concentrating on the video contents.	0.89		0.90	
<i>Informativeness (IFM)</i>		0.91		0.91
The video				
helps me to learn a lot about the destination.	0.79		0.73	
provides me helpful information	0.94		0.96	
provides me useful information	0.96		0.94	
<i>Authenticity (AUT)</i>		0.92		0.94
The video content				
is a realistic depiction of ordinary life.	0.83		0.92	
shows a realistic life situation.	0.92		0.93	
is realistic.	0.84		0.79	
is authentic.	0.66		0.70	
shows an everyday life activity.	0.78		0.87	
is true to life.	0.85		0.83	
<i>Inspiration (INS)</i>		0.90		0.88
After watching this video,				
my imagination is stimulated.	0.86		0.80	
I am intrigued by a new idea.	0.90		0.86	
I unexpectedly and spontaneously get new ideas.	0.81		0.81	
my horizon is broadened.	0.75		0.77	
<i>Information search intention (INI)</i>		0.96		0.96
After watching the video, I would like to				
search for additional information about the destination.	0.94		0.94	
look for additional information about the destination.	0.98		0.97	
checkout additional information about the destination.	0.89		0.92	

<i>Word-of-Mouth (WOM)</i>	0.95	0.92
After watching the video, I would like to		
say positive things about the destination to other people.	0.89	0.80
recommend the destination to someone who plans to travel.	0.89	0.89
recommend friends and relatives to visit the destination.	0.96	0.93
spread positive word-of-mouth about the destination.	0.90	0.85

Note: Std. Fac. Loading = standardized factor loading, CR = composite reliability.

Table 8 illustrated AVE values and inter-construct correlations regarding travel vlog group. No inter-construct correlations were above 0.85, ranging from 0.17 (between attention and information search intention) to 0.79 (between inspiration and WOM intention). The AVEs of all constructs ranged from 0.67 (authenticity) and 0.88 (information search intention). All squared correlations in the scale were less than AVE value for each respective construct, indicating reasonable discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Cronbach's alpha values for the six-factor model ranged from 0.90 (attention and inspiration) to 0.95 (information search intention), indicating good construct reliability (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Table 8. Standardized Correlation Table of Travel Vlog Group

	ATT	IFM	AUT	INS	ISI	WOM
ATT	1					
IFM	0.41 (0.17) ***	1				
AUT	0.37 (0.14) ***	0.54 (0.29) ***	1			
INS	0.38 (0.14) ***	0.66 (0.44) ***	0.44 (0.20) ***	1		
ISI	0.17 (0.03) *	0.42 (0.18) ***	0.31 (0.10) ***	0.57 (0.33) ***	1	
WOM	0.28 (0.08) ***	0.62 (0.38) ***	0.43 (0.18) ***	0.79 (0.63) ***	0.54 (0.29) ***	1
Mean	6.28	5.58	5.32	4.85	5.39	4.92
S.D.	0.83	1.16	1.29	1.40	1.34	1.30
Cronbach's α	0.90	0.92	0.92	0.90	0.95	0.94
AVE	0.80	0.78	0.67	0.69	0.88	0.83

Note: ATT = Attention, IFM = Informativeness, AUT = Authenticity, INS = Inspiration, ISI = Information search intention, WOM = Word-of-Mouth, S.D. = standardized deviation, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance explained. * $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Correspondingly, Table 9 demonstrated AVE values and inter-construct correlations regarding DMO promotional video group. Inter-construct correlations ranged between 0.21 (between attention and information search intention) and 0.79 (between inspiration and WOM intention). The AVEs of all constructs were above 0.5, with the lowest value of 0.66 (inspiration) and the highest value of 0.89 (information search intention). All squared correlations were lower than the AVE value of each construct. Therefore, the model had reasonable discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Cronbach's alpha values of all constructs ranged from 0.88 (inspiration) to 0.96 (information search intention), indicating good construct reliability (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 9. Standardized Correlation Table of DMO Promotional Video Group

	ATT	IFM	AUT	INS	ISI	WOM
ATT	1					
IFM	0.30 (0.09) ***	1				
AUT	0.24 (0.06) **	0.60 (0.36) ***	1			
INS	0.26 (0.07) **	0.62 (0.38) ***	0.55 (0.30) ***	1		
ISI	0.21 (0.04) **	0.34 (0.12) ***	0.31 (0.09) ***	0.53 (0.29) ***	1	
WOM	0.25 (0.06) **	0.57 (0.32) ***	0.53 (0.28) ***	0.79 (0.62) ***	0.48 (0.23) ***	1
Mean	6.09	4.07	4.16	4.31	5.18	4.46
S.D.	1.09	1.49	1.44	1.38	1.41	1.29
Cronbach's α	0.95	0.91	0.94	0.88	0.96	0.93
AVE	0.87	0.78	0.71	0.66	0.89	0.76

Note: ATT = Attention, IFM = Informativeness, AUT = Authenticity, INS = Inspiration, ISI = Information search intention, WOM = Word-of-Mouth, S.D. = standardized deviation, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance explained. ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

Some standard key indices were examined to understand the model fit, including the chi-square (χ^2), the normed fit index (NFI), the incremental fit index (IFI), the comparative fit index (CFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The CFA results suggested that the research model was of adequate fit for both video types. For travel vlog group, the chi-square/degrees of freedom was less than 3 ($\chi^2 = 398.73$ (p < 0.001), d.f.

= 211, $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} = 1.89$) (Hu & Bentler, 1995). The NFI (= 0.93) was higher than 0.90. IFI (= 0.96) and CFI (= 0.96) had met the model fit criteria of above 0.95. The RMSEA was 0.07, lower than 0.08. Similarly, for DMO promotional video group, the chi-square/degrees of freedom was less than 3 ($\chi^2 = 343.33$ ($p < 0.001$), d.f. = 211, $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} = 1.63$). The NFI (= 0.93) was higher than 0.90. IFI (= 0.97) and CFI (= 0.97) were above 0.95. The RMSEA (= 0.05) was lower than 0.08. Based on above indices, the model was considered to be an adequate fit to the data.

4.4. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

The SEM analysis was conducted to test hypothesis 1 to hypothesis 6. Results indicated a good model fit to the data for travel vlog group: $\chi^2 = 456.99$ ($p < 0.001$), d.f. = 220, $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} = 2.08$ (< 3), NFI = 0.91 (> 0.90), IFI = 0.95 (> 0.90), CFI = 0.95 (> 0.90), RMSEA = 0.073 (< 0.08), as well as for DMO promotional video group: $\chi^2 = 420.84$ ($p < 0.001$), d.f. = 220, $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} = 1.913$ (< 3), NFI = 0.92 (> 0.90), IFI = 0.96 (> 0.90), CFI = 0.96 (> 0.90), RMSEA = 0.067 (< 0.08). From above indices, it was demonstrated that the model fit better to DMO promotional video group than to travel vlog group.

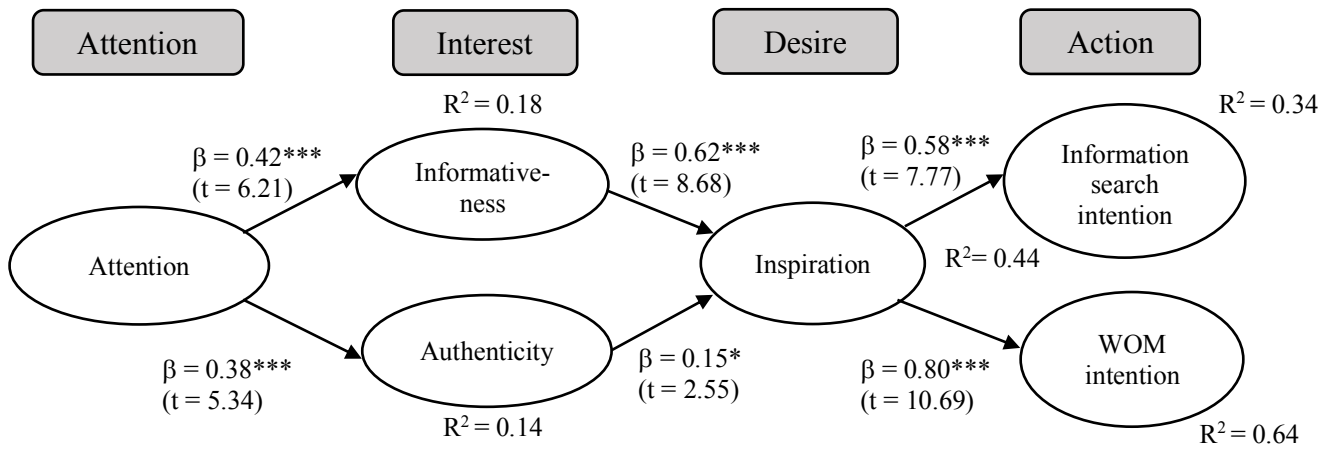
Hypothesis 1 and 2 were supported for both video types (travel vlog/DMO promotional video). Attention had a significant impact on informativeness ($\beta = 0.42/0.30$, $p < 0.001$) and authenticity ($\beta = 0.38/0.25$, $p < 0.001$). Informativeness ($\beta = 0.62/0.50$, $p < 0.001$) and authenticity ($\beta = 0.15/0.33$, $p < 0.05/0.001$) both significantly and positively affected inspiration, supporting Hypothesis 3 and 4. Hypothesis 5 and 6 were also supported. Inspiration had a significant effect on information search intention ($\beta = 0.58/0.52$, $p < 0.001$) and WOM intention ($\beta = 0.80/0.79$, $p < 0.001$). As shown in Table 10, coefficients were significant for all paths. Moreover, informativeness ($\beta = 0.62/0.50$) was found to be a stronger predictor for inspiration

compared to authenticity ($\beta = 0.15/0.33$). As shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3, the square multiple correlation (R^2) indicated the amount of variance in the dependent variable explained by independent variables. Attention explained 18% and 14% of the variance in informativeness and authenticity respectively with regard to travel video group. However, only 9% of the variance in informativeness and 6% of the variance in authenticity were attributed to attention with regard to DMO promotional video group. Informativeness and authenticity together accounted for 44% (38%) of the variance in inspiration for travel vlog (DMO promotional video) group. In addition, 34% of the variance in information search intention elicited by travel vlogs was explained by inspiration compared to 27% triggered by DMO promotional videos. Similarly, 64% (62%) of the variance in WOM intention was attributed to inspiration for travel vlog (DMO promotional video) group.

Table 10. SEM Results

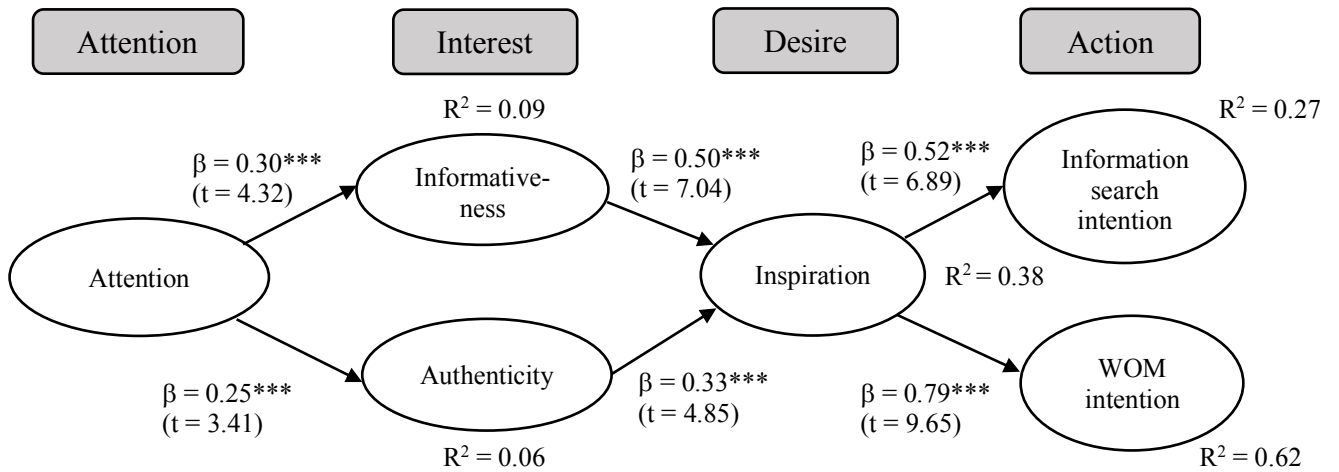
Paths	Travel vlog		DMO video		Result
	Standardized Estimate	<i>t</i> value	Standardized Estimate	<i>t</i> value	
H1 ATT → IFM	0.42	6.21***	0.30	4.32***	Supported
H2 ATT → AUT	0.38	5.34***	0.25	3.41***	Supported
H3 IFM → INS	0.62	8.68***	0.50	7.04***	Supported
H4 AUT → INS	0.15	2.55*	0.33	4.85***	Supported
H5 INS → ISI	0.58	7.77***	0.52	6.89***	Supported
H6 INS → WOM	0.80	10.69***	0.79	9.65***	Supported

Note: ATT = Attention, IFM = Informativeness, AUT = Authenticity, INS = Inspiration, ISI = Information search intention, WOM = Word-of-Mouth. *** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.05$.



Note: Model fit: Chi-square = 456.99, $p < 0.001$, d.f. = 220, NFI = 0.91, IFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.073. *** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.05$

Figure 2. SEM Results of Travel Vlog Group



Note: Model fit: Chi-square = 420.84, $p < 0.001$, d.f. = 220, NFI = 0.92, IFI = 0.96, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.067. *** $p < 0.001$.

Figure 3. SEM Results of DMO Promotional Video Group

4.5. Moderating Effect of Video Type

To test the differences in the video type, this study compared travel vlog and DMO promotional video groups using regressions analysis by PROCESS v3.5 in IBM SPSS 27. The data was divided into two groups based on the coding of the video type: travel vlog (code: 1) and

DMO promotional video (code: 0). Despite significant relationships of the six paths were found from SEM results for both video types, the results in Table 11 indicated a significant moderation in two paths: attention → authenticity ($p = 0.04$); informativeness → inspiration ($p = 0.02$). Attention exerted more positive effect on authenticity and informativeness more significantly affected inspiration in travel vlog group compared to DMO promotional video group. Therefore, hypothesis 7 was partially supported.

Table 11. Moderating Effect of Video Type

Path	Travel vlog				DMO video		
	β	SE	C.R.	P	β	SE	C.R.
ATT→ IFM	0.42	0.10	6.21	0.22	0.30	0.10	4.32
ATT→ AUT	0.38	0.09	5.34	0.04*	0.25	0.08	3.41
IFM→ INS	0.62	0.06	8.68	0.02*	0.50	0.05	7.04
AUT→ INS	0.15	0.06	8.68	0.85	0.33	0.06	4.85
INS→ ISI	0.58	0.09	7.78	0.85	0.52	0.09	6.89
INS → WOM	0.80	0.09	10.68	0.51	0.79	0.08	9.65

Note: β = coefficient, SE = standardized error, C.R. = composite reliability, ATT = Attention, IFM = Informativeness, AUT = Authenticity, INS = Inspiration, ISI = Information search intention, WOM = Word-of-Mouth. * $p < 0.05$.

4.6. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

In order to determine the effect of destination competitiveness on WTP for each video type and to determine the effect of video type on WTP for each competitiveness level, one-way ANOVA was performed. The ANOVA results shown in Table 12 indicated that destination competitiveness significantly affected WTP for travel vlog group ($F = 5.22$, $p = 0.006$), supporting hypothesis 8a. However, destination competitiveness had no significant effect on WTP for DMO promotional video group ($F = 2.26$, $p = 0.107$), supporting hypothesis 8b. However, as shown in Table 13, video type had no significant effect on WTP for high-, medium-

and low- competitive groups ($F = 0.67/0.09/0.31$, $p = 0.41/0.77/0.58$). Thus, hypothesis 9a and 9b were unsupported.

Table 12. One-way ANOVA Results of Destination Competitiveness on WTP

	High (N = 220)		Medium (N = 95)		Low (N = 95)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Travel vlog	2794	961	2886	1103	2304	879	5.22	0.006**
DMO video	2691	911	2822	1007	2414	1053	2.26	0.107

Note: S.D. = standardized deviation. ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 13. One-way ANOVA Results of Video Type on WTP

	Travel vlog (N = 205)		DMO video (N = 205)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
High	2794	961	2691	911	0.67	0.41
Medium	2886	1103	2822	1007	0.09	0.77
Low	2304	879	2414	1053	0.31	0.58

Note: S.D. = standardized deviation.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

Study 1 aimed to uncover the mechanism underlying the effect of travel vlogs on the travel behaviors of Generation Y based on the AIDA principle. By introducing six constructs associated with the four AIDA components, a four-step influence of travel vlogs was revealed. Younger tourists initially direct attention to travel vlogs, where they get useful travel information and witness authentic destination scenes. Inspired by the two characteristics, they tend to search more information and to spread WOM about the depicted destination. The measurement model had a good model fit, with good convergent validity and discriminant validity, verifying the applicability of AIDA principle in the marketing context, which was consistent with prior studies (e.g., Sharifi et al., 2019; Hassan, Nadzim & Shiratuddin, 2015).

Significant relationship between attention and informativeness was found, which is in accord with evidence from previous psychology, marketing and communication literature (e.g., Campbell et al., 1997; Segijn et al., 2017). As processing information requires attention (Lang, 2000), attention plays a key role in obtaining information. From personal travel experiences depicted in travel vlogs, abundant travel information can be obtained following the point of view of vloggers. As long as younger tourists pay enough attention to travel vlogs, they are able to find useful and helpful travel information. Informativeness can be therefore used to characterize travel vlogs, which is consistent with previous literature (Lodha & Philip, 2019). However, despite travel vlogs being useful in delivering information, the advantage will not be salient if tourists do not pay attention to the vlogs. This indicates that although travel vlogs might be characterized by informativeness, informativeness is not a fixed attribute of travel vlogs that is independent to viewer-related factors. Rather, it is an add-on feature of travel vlogs that requires viewers' attention.

Consistent with previous findings (Kim, 2012), attention was found to be a predictor of authenticity. While previous literature tested the relationship between attention and authenticity in a hypothetical environment such as video games (e.g., Jin, 2011; Blom & Beckhaus, 2013), travel vlogs in this study were not a hypothetical environment because realistic scenarios were depicted as a matter of fact (Lodha & Philip, 2019). It means that even though tourists do not pay enough attention to travel vlogs, they are supposed to think the depicted scenario is realistic. Surprisingly, results showed that the reality was somehow weakened with little attention paid to the vlogs, indicating that authenticity of travel vlogs is still not fully realized and recognized by members of Generation Y. Thus, attention is important for identifying the characteristics of travel vlogs (i.e., authenticity and informativeness). Only when younger tourists pay attention to travel vlogs, they consider the vlogs provide useful information and show realistic life scenarios.

In line with prior studies (e.g., Böttger et al., 2017), informativeness significantly affected inspiration. Based on previous literature, awareness, curiosity and imagination are antecedents of inspiration, which can be triggered by information (Thrash & Elliot, 2004; Simmonds et al., 2020; Wright et al., 2018; Spears et al., 2016). When members of Generation Y get more information from travel vlogs, they become more aware of the depicted destination. Meanwhile, their curiosity and imagination towards the destination are elicited. Take one travel vlog which described the vloggers' travel experience to the pyramids in Egypt as an example. Viewers learned about the history of the pyramid from the travel vlog. Their awareness of Egypt was raised and it may have raised curiosity about other aspects of Egypt, such as cuisine, architecture, local people and culture, etc. They might also imagine their own travel experiences when travelling to Egypt. All of the above components help them experience inspiration from the travel vlog.

A significant positive relationship between authenticity and inspiration was also found. Despite there being no previous empirical evidence to support this path, literature suggested that authenticity and inspiration can be connected with reflection process (Kim & Kim, 2018; Thrash & Elliot, 2004). As travel vlogs describe realistic travel experiences, which can be imitated and referred by other tourists, members of Generation Y can reflect on the vloggers' travel stories on their own previous or future travel experiences to the destination. The reflection process triggered inspiration (Thrash & Elliot, 2004). The more young tourists consider a travel vlog as authentic and realistic, the more likely they will be inspired by the vlog.

Inspiration was found to significantly affect behavioral intentions, including information search intention and WOM intention. These findings aligned with the "inspired-to" component that inspiration will result in certain behaviors, as found by Thrash and Elliot (2004). Previous literature has also demonstrated that inspiration was a key factor that affected multiple behavioral intentions (Tang & Tsang, 2020; Böttger et al., 2017). Inspired by travel vlogs, members of Generation Y will search out more information to satisfy their curiosity about the depicted destination and will recommend the destination to others. Searching for additional destination information and spreading WOM are therefore two tourist behaviors facilitated by travel vlogs.

Moreover, the aforementioned significant relationships were also found to be applicable to DMO promotional videos, verifying the applicability of AIDA principle in the marketing context (e.g., Sharifi et al., 2019). However, two paths in the measurement model showed different results between travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos. The relationship between attention and authenticity as well as the relationship between informativeness and inspiration were stronger for the travel vlog group. When younger tourists pay the same level of attention to travel

vlogs and DMO promotional videos, they significantly consider travel vlogs more authentic and realistic. Destination information provided in travel vlogs more significantly inspire tourists compared to DMO promotional videos. The above findings confirmed the predominant roles of authenticity and informativeness in travel vlogs, which was consistent with previous literature (Lodha & Philip, 2019; Kavoura et al., 2019). In addition, significant differences were found between travel vlog group and DMO promotional video group in attention, informativeness, authenticity, inspiration and WOM intention, where travel vlogs outperformed DMO promotional videos in all five constructs. Thus, the destination marketing value of travel vlogs in supplementing DMO promotional videos can be concluded. However, in spite that previous literature suggested that information source (e.g., consumers vs. organizations) affected behavioral intentions (Lee et al., 2017), no significant difference in information search intention was found between the two video groups. This might be attributed to the elaborate design of DMO promotional videos, which may counteract the potential influence of information source on individuals' evaluations. This might also be related to the skilled and salient information search behaviors of Generation Y (Kim, Choe & Lee, 2018; Prasad, Garg & Prasad, 2019). From another perspective, this result confirmed the constant important role of DMO promotional videos in destination marketing, which was illustrated by previous literature (e.g., Shani et al., 2010; Pan, Santos & Kim, 2017). Despite travel vlogs outperforming DMO promotional videos in some aspects, DMO promotional videos are still an important destination marketing tool as they were still found to influence WOM and WTP.

Study 2 aimed to investigate how video type and destination competitiveness affect WTP for a destination travel package by adopting BDM auction. To test whether participants in the experiment understand the auction method clearly and correctly, a check question was asked

during the online experiment. Results from the answers showed that almost all participants understood what consequences their bids would lead to. Therefore, the WTP that participants indicated was considered to be their true amounts.

Despite initially examining four countries in order to capture two high- (Austria and France) and two low-competitive destinations (Egypt and Sri Lanka), according to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (World Economic Forum, 2019), manipulation check results suggested three competitiveness levels across the four countries. As a result, Austria and France were regarded as high-competitive destinations; Egypt was regarded as a medium-competitive destination; and Sri Lanka was regarded as a low-competitive destination. Study findings showed that competitiveness level significantly affected WTP when members of Generations Y watched travel vlogs. However, no significant difference was found among different competitiveness levels in WTP for DMO promotional video group. The different results from the two video types might be explained by the distinct objectives. DMOs specially design promotional videos for destination marketing purpose while travel vloggers make vlogs to record travel experiences (Wang, Kim & Agrusa, 2018; Gong & Tung, 2017). On this basis, DMOs tend to show merely appealing segments of the destination to their audience (Pan, Tsai & Lee, 2011). While a variety of destination segments were realistically depicted in travel vlogs, no matter the segment will increase or decrease tourists' behavioral intentions toward the destination. The finding for travel vlog group was consistent with previous literature (Hosany & Witham, 2009). Members of Generation Y had a stronger preference for high-competitive destinations after watching travel vlogs. On the other hand, the results from DMO promotional video group supported previous literature as well (e.g., Shani et al., 2010; Pan et al., 2017; Pan, 2011; Fong et al., 2018;

Guerrero-Rodríguez et al., 2020), finding that they were a powerful destination marketing tool across destinations with different competitiveness levels.

No significant difference between travel vlog group and DMO promotional video group in WTP was found. As WTP was introduced to explore tourists' actual behaviors, the gap between behavioral intentions and actual actions can be concluded. In study 1, it was demonstrated that members of Generation Y were more likely to say positive things about the depicted destination and to recommend the destination to others after watching travel vlogs compared to DMO promotional videos. However, in spite of their stronger preferences toward a destination from travel vlogs, they were unwilling to pay more for visiting the destination. Younger people (e.g., Generation Y) place more emphasis on uniqueness and diversity of a destination than destination facilities (Sirgy & Su, 2000). As long as the destination is attractive to them, the format through which the destination is presented to them may not matter. That is to say, the impacts from destination-related factors may exceed the influence of video types in facilitating their actual actions. Therefore, differences in WTP were not significant between the two video types for destinations at each competitiveness level.

CHAPTER 6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study makes a few contributions to destination marketing literature. First, the four AIDA components have been operationalized in the tourism destination marketing context. Despite the AIDA principle being widely adopted in previous literature to explain consumer behaviors, most studies have used the four AIDA components directly rather than operationalizing each component in a specific study context (e.g., Lee et al., 2018; Sharifi et al., 2019), failing to explore potential characteristics that were closely related to the AIDA components. To date, two studies have made this attempt to operationalize AIDA components. Sun, Cardenas and Harrill (2016) used eight constructs (i.e., visual appearance, information quality, ease of use, navigability, accessibility, interactivity, personalization, flexible reservation) to operationalize the four AIDA components in the travel website context; while Xu and Schrier (2019) operationalized attention by website aesthetics, interest by ease-of-navigation and information quality, desire by search intention and action by booking intention in the hospitality sharing economy platforms context. Following this trend, six constructs (i.e., attention, informativeness, authenticity, inspiration, information search intention and WOM intention) were used to operationalize the AIDA components. This adds new piece of information to the AIDA literature regarding its operationalization.

Second, by adopting the AIDA principle, the mechanism underlying the effect of travel vlogs on Generation Y has been revealed. Although travel vlogs were popular and massively consumed by most tourists, few studies have proposed a measurement model that explains the process of how travel vlogs affect behaviors of Generation Y specifically. A four-step influence of travel vlogs was demonstrated in this study: attract attention → deliver real destination information → inspire → enhance intentions to search information and spread WOM about the

depicted destination. The travel behaviors of Generation Y that are facilitated by travel vlogs are therefore better understood. Although some literature has suggested that travel vlogs were a valuable approach for tourists to acquire real travel information (Mathisen & Prebensen, 2013; Kavoura et al., 2019), no empirical evidence was provided to verify the importance of informativeness and authenticity in travel vlogs. This study provided empirical evidence on the significant roles of the two video characteristics in facilitating travel behaviors of Generation Y through inspiration.

Third, new insight into user-generated content (UGC) and marketer-generated content (MGC) has been provided by using travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos as a representative. The differences between UGC and MGC have been examined by previous literature in the brand marketing context (e.g., Lee, Lee & Hansen, 2017; Bruhn, Schoenmueller & Schäfer, 2012). In the tourism destination marketing context, Hautz et al., (2014) used a sport event video to investigate the different effects of UGC and MGC on expertise, visit intention and willingness to share. One group of participants was provided with the information that the video was created by a user, labelling as UGC group. The other group was provided with the information that the video was created by an agency, labeled as MGC group. Differently, the current study selected actual UGC (travel vlogs) and MGC (DMO promotional videos) from online sources (i.e., YouTube) and investigated the differences between the two types of contents. The selected experiment video stimuli were closer to actual life, making the comparison results closer to reality. Compared to MGC, it has been found that the relationship between attention and authenticity as well as the relationship between informativeness and inspiration have been strengthened by UGC. While previous literature has revealed the two above-mentioned relationships (e.g., Jin, 2011; Blom & Beckhaus, 2013; Böttger et al., 2017), it has been further

demonstrated that the strength of relationships can differ by the type of content (i.e., UGC or MGC). With the increasing number of tourism-related UGC and its potential to influence other tourists' decisions, recent tourism studies have paid special attention to UGC for understanding tourist behaviors by text-mining (e.g., Marques, Vinhas da Silva & Antova, 2021; Jia, 2020), and for investigating its impacts on destination perceptions (e.g., Arefieva, Egger & Yu, 2021). While most UGC literature focus on a written format of UGC such as online reviews (e.g., Kirilenko, Stepchenkova & Hernandez, 2019; Le, Arcodia, Abreu Novais, Kralj & Phan, 2021), this study explored the video format of UGC and highlighted its tourism destination marketing value. For example, UGC (travel vlogs) had a significant contribution to attract attention, provide useful travel information, show realistic destination scenarios, inspire young tourists, and elicit WOM intentions.

Fourth, a potential ranking index range for categorizing high, medium and low-competitive destination is identified. While most literature investigated measurable indicators of destination competitiveness (e.g., Gómez-Vega & Picazo-Tadeo, 2019; Choi, Lee & Seo, 2018), a competitiveness index was utilized as a basis to select destinations across different competitiveness levels in this study. Three competitiveness levels across four countries were identified, indicating potential ranking boundaries that distinguish high, medium and low-competitive destinations based on the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (World Economic Forum, 2019). The rough boundary between high and medium-competitive destinations is somewhere between 11th and 65th and that between medium and low-competitive destinations is somewhere between 65th and 77th. Future studies may use this standard for selecting destinations with a certain competitiveness level.

Additionally, an innovative way to measure WTP in a tourism destination marketing context is applied and tested. Most tourism literature measures WTP by simply asking tourists to indicate their WTP or by upper and lower-bounded dichotomous-choice questions (e.g., Huang, 2018; Witt, 2019). However, the self-report answers might differ from true answers because of cognitive bias (Li et al., 2018). There is a strong need for future researchers to adopt an incentive-compatible method that helps them get reliable answers to explain tourist behaviors. BDM auction can help to achieve the goal by letting participants take actual consequences for the amount they indicate for WTP rather than providing a hypothetical market situation. Participants tend to be more focused on the study and think more carefully about their answers. Future tourism experiments may adopt BDM auction in measuring WTP for a certain tourism product. For example, when investigating souvenirs, admission tickets of a tourism attraction, local cuisines, flights, accommodations, tourism insurance, local activities, etc., BDM auction can be applied by asking participants to bid for the tourism product.

6.2. Practical Implications

A few practical implications are provided to DMOs based on the study findings. Given the significant destination marketing value of travel vlogs, DMOs may consider travel vlogs as an additional marketing tool, especially targeting Generation Y, and to collaborate with travel vloggers. Popular travel vloggers can be recognized by the number of viewers and subscribers (Fu, 2012). These vloggers can be important future marketers for the destination due to their capability to attract mass viewers and to make attractive travel vlogs (Munnukka et al., 2019). It might be helpful for DMOs to build a positive relationship with vloggers through sponsorship. Philanthropic sponsorship can be adopted initially, where vloggers voluntarily assist for the tourism development of the destination with no commercial benefits expected (Shin, Lee &

Perdue, 2018). By sharing the uniqueness and attractions of the destination, DMOs can draw the vloggers' attention to the destination and attract them to visit (Fong, Firoz & Sulaiman, 2018). Considering the non-association with commercial benefits, DMOs must endeavor to persuade vloggers to visit. In doing so, it might be helpful for DMOs to learn the vlogger's travel styles and preferences first from their current vlogs. Accordingly, DMOs may selectively highlight the specific destination attractions or activities that are congruent with the vlogger's travel styles during the negotiation. Based on literature, people are prone to consume a brand with an image that is consistent with their self-image to achieve self-congruence (Zhu, Teng, Foti & Yuan, 2019). The level of self-congruence positively affects brand attitudes (Shin, Lee & Perdue, 2018). Vloggers may be more willing to visit destinations that align with their travel styles and have more positive attitudes towards those destinations. Alternatively, explicit (commercial) sponsorship can be used, where DMOs directly pay vloggers for promoting the destination. Previous literature revealed that although explicit sponsorship weakened an endorser's trustworthiness, it still positively affected consumers' willingness to buy and WOM intention towards the endorsed product (Gözegir & Göçer, 2018). However, the authenticity of the travel vlogs might be at risk as the motivations to make travel vlogs have changed. More compliments might be included in the vlogs without the vloggers' sincere personal comments. Apart from this, the destination scenes shown in vlogs are still realistic although they might be more selective. In addition to sponsorship, a contest can be applied, where vloggers win an amount of money if their travel vlogs featuring the destination gain over one million views. Previous literature found that consumers' motivations (i.e., internal creativity vs. contest) to create an ad had no significant effects on viewers' positive feelings toward the ad (Steyn, Wallström & Pitt, 2010). A contest

may raise tourists' awareness of the destination and increase their desire to learn about the destination for making competitive vlogs.

The effectiveness of travel vlogs in eliciting WTP varies from destination to destination. Travel vlogs featuring high-competitive destinations can elicit higher WTP compared to low-competitive destinations. However, DMO promotional videos elicit similar WTP for the two types of destinations. Adjusting marketing strategies based on the current competitiveness position might be necessary in destination marketing. For DMOs of high-competitive destinations, both travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos are competitive channels for marketing destinations. However, considering the enormous cost of DMO promotional videos, with some reaching \$ 250,000 (Cury, 2005), travel vlogs could be used as a way for destination marketing organizations to market their destinations at a lower cost. Depending on the market size, the compensation for blog endorsers varies from a gift card of \$20 to \$500 per day for product endorsement (Liljander, Gummerus & Söderlund, 2015). For the DMOs of low-competitive destinations, promotional videos seem to be more adoptable to compete with high-competitive destination for stimulating tourists' consumption. However, travel vlogs still play a key role in facilitating WOM intentions. DMOs of low-competitive destinations may use promotional videos as a primary marketing tool to attract younger tourists, as they are just as likely to pay a similar level of money to visit the destination as high-competitive destinations. Meanwhile, travel vlogs can play a subsidiary role in destination marketing for publicizing the destination. It would be also helpful that DMOs in the low-competitive destinations take special care to the current travel vlogs featuring the destination shared in the media such as YouTube and Facebook. When the top several travel vlogs show undesirable destination segments such as

untidy streets, DMOs can share the link of their promotional videos in the comment section for enhancing destination images (Shani et al., 2010).

As attention is the first step to elicit tourist behaviors, DMOs need to find out ways to keep tourists' (especially Generation Y) attention to their promotional videos. Apart from appealing design of the videos (Guerrero-Rodríguez et al., 2020), storytelling can be included in DMO promotional videos as it follows a thematic sequence that keeps individuals' attention (Cho, Shen & Wilson, 2014). Rather than changing destination scenes frequently in the video, which distracts attention (Raun, 2014; Yang, Lee, Kwak, Choi, Kim & Kim, 2015; Smith, 2004; Geiger & Reeves, 1993), a slower pace can be adopted and a travel story can be created to enrich each scene. For example, when depicting an architecture, rather than merely showing a two-second overview of its appearance, a short story that describes tourist activities in the architecture can be presented.

Considering the significant roles of informativeness and authenticity, it might be helpful for DMOs to incorporate the two characteristics in their marketing strategies. Despite previous literature finding that a larger number of DMO promotional videos have been created without voice-over recording to minimize distraction (Pan & Hanusch, 2011), voice-over recordings can be a potential way to deliver more destination information. In addition, it might be beneficial to select current popular travel vlogs to supplement the DMO website or media channel to enhance the authenticity of the destination.

How to make promotional videos inspiring deserves consideration because of the significant role of inspiration in facilitating information search intention and WOM intention of Generation Y. Key terms such as "inspiration" have been used in DMO promotional video titles (Colorado, 2016; Travel Wyoming, 2020; Nova Scotia, 2018) as a potential way to strengthen

the feeling of inspiration in viewers' minds. In addition, hashtagging a # inspiring + destination name when sharing promotional videos in media might be useful as hashtagging was a primary reason for individuals to be engaged in travel videos (Du et al., 2020). Some imaginative elements can be included in promotional videos as they are likely to inspire tourists by stimulating imagination and broadening horizon (Böttger et al., 2017).

Eliciting intention to search for additional destination information was one important outcome of both travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos for Generation Y. DMOs should create a space for younger tourists to acquire rich and useful travel information for the destination. An official destination website is required, which is an important approach for disseminating destination information and is often considered to be the most authoritative information source for tourists (Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018). The information provided in the website should be up-to-date and accurate (Hassan et al., 2015).

CHAPTER 7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

Some limitations need to be addressed in future studies. First, given that this study was conducted via an online experiment, which might be affected by the researcher's and the participants' Internet connection, future research should to mitigate this risk. Although the researcher was conducting each experiment session in an experimental lab with a stable Internet connection of a secured Wi-Fi at a university, participants' network conditions were not guaranteed. As watching videos especially required strong Internet connection, it was unknown whether participants had the network consistency in video-watching experience throughout the whole experiment. Future studies may conduct the experiment in a physical research lab for better control over the experiment environment. Another limitation was related to the online platforms utilized in this study. As this experiment requires playing videos and asking multiple types of survey questions (e.g., slider, multiple-choice, text-entry questions), Zoom was not adequate because of its limited survey function despite its usefulness in playing videos. Therefore, two platforms (i.e., Zoom, Qualtrics) were used in this study for playing videos and asking survey questions respectively. This increased the complexity for participants by switching between the two programs during the experiment. For future studies, a single program (e.g., OTree) that offers both functions of sharing videos and distributing surveys might minimize the complication of having participants to understand multiple programs.

Second, sampling bias may exist. A participant pool previously collected by an economic study lab was only included. Even though participants from the pool align with the target population, findings might be different if this study includes participants from the general population. For example, most participants were single and travel with family. As the selected travel vloggers were a couple, the congruence between participants and travel vloggers might not

be ideal, which might reduce the impacts of travel vlogs on travel decisions (Xu & Pratt, 2018). In addition, nine participants do not belong to Generation Y (born between 1981 and 2003) but their data was still included for analysis. This is because their ages do not overly exceed the upper age of Generation Y and the sample size will be smaller without the nine participants. More sessions that include Generation Y should be launched to increase the reliability of study results. Two thirds of the participants were female. As tourists at different age and gender groups have different travel and information channel preferences (Bernini & Cracolici, 2015; Kim, Lehto & Morrison, 2007), study results might differ if the target population is other generations. For example, members of Generation Y are more likely to be engaged in UGC such as user comments and to share social media videos with others compared to Generation X (Bento, Martinez & Martinez, 2018). The impact of travel vlogs might not be so salient to Generation X. Therefore, group differences between travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos in the proposed relationships might not be found. A larger sample with a variety of demographic groups is necessary to increase the study result reliability and generalization.

Third, other data analysis methods can be employed. One main benefit of SEM analysis is to assess each path simultaneously (Hair et al., 2010), which is closely related to the theory behind AIDA principle that each component is related to each other and the accumulated influence from the first three components cause actions (Xu & Schrier, 2019). Therefore, SEM analysis was adopted in study 1. However, despite the study sample size (i.e., 205) was appropriate based on the number of measurement items and experiment groups (Zhang et al., 2018; Brysbaert, 2019), it might not be large enough for SEM analysis (>400) (Hair et al., 2010). To increase the robustness of study results, other analysis that requires a smaller sample size

should be conducted, such as Partial least squares (PLS) regression analysis (Vinzi, Chin, Henseler & Wang, 2010).

Fourth, experiment conditions should be better controlled. For example, video length may affect evaluations of the video content (Goodrich, Schiller & Galletta, 2015). Future studies may consider video length as a control variable. However, based on the fact that travel vlogs typically have a longer duration than DMO promotional videos, it might not be a serious concern in tourism studies. In addition, each selected video should be published in the same recent year so that the information is comparable and updated. The technical quality (e.g., audio quality, visual quality and fluidity, graphical transitions) is also an important factor that affected intended behaviors toward videos (Hautz et al., 2014). Above factors need to be considered as control variables for future studies.

Fifth, the number of video stimuli should be enlarged in future studies. Despite each treatment having two video stimuli, it is unknown whether the two videos were representative to each treatment. With regard to travel vlogs, all four vlogs were created by the same vlogger according to the selection criteria to keep consistency. The results might be specific to the travel and photography styles of the vloggers. When it comes to DMO promotional videos, all the promotional videos were produced with no voice-over recording but background music. As the variety of destination promotional videos is diverse nowadays, this single format might not represent all types of current promotional videos.

Finally, the study results might be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, where travel restriction policy was in effective and travel safety was a main concern for tourists (Zenker, Braun & Gyimóthy, 2021). The measurement of WTP might be most vulnerable to the pandemic, which requires participants to take the actual consequences for their answers. It might happen

that people underbid for the travel package because they did not want to travel as a result of the pandemic despite of a strong desire for visiting the destination. As the departure location was fixed as the Toronto Pearson airport for the travel package, participants who lived far from Toronto might be hesitated about the WTP considering the commuting between their current locations and Toronto. Future studies may consider offering more options of departure airports according to the geographical information of the sample.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

A four-step, six-factor mechanism of how travel vlogs affect the travel behaviors of Generation Y was revealed by this study. By using DMO promotional videos as a reference, the value of travel vlogs in destination marketing has been highlighted. In addition, the different impacts of destination competitiveness level on WTP between the two video types has been explored. Most study findings were consistent with previous literature. However, no significant difference in facilitating WTP between travel vlogs and DMO promotional videos was found, which might be caused by sampling bias. Study findings provided theoretical implications to tourism destination marketing literature and practical implications to DMOs for future destination marketing strategies from the perspective of attention, informativeness, authenticity, inspiration, information search, WOM, destination competitiveness, WTP and the marketing value of travel vlogs. Limitations were mainly related to the experiment setting, sampling method and the current constrained travel environment. Inspired by this study, future studies may draw more attention on the marketing value of travel vlogs, the operationalization of AIDA components in specific study contexts, the differences between UGC and MGC, and on innovative ways for destination marketing based on the competitiveness level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Measurement Items

Attention

- ATT1 I was paying attention to the video contents.
- ATT2 I was focusing on the video contents.
- ATT3 I was concentrating on the video contents.

Informativeness

- IFM1 The video helps me to learn a lot about the destination.
- IFM2 The video provides me helpful information.
- IFM3 The video provides me useful information.

Authenticity

- AUT1 The video content is a realistic depiction of ordinary life.
- AUT2 The video content shows a realistic life situation.
- AUT3 The video content is realistic.
- AUT4 The video content is authentic.
- AUT5 The video content shows an everyday life activity.
- AUT6 The video content is true to life.

Inspiration

- INS1 My imagination is stimulated.
- INS2 I am intrigued by a new idea.
- INS3 I unexpectedly and spontaneously get new ideas.
- INS4 My horizon is broadened.
- INS5 I discover something new.

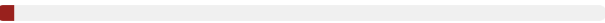
Information search intention

- ISI1 I would like to search for additional information about the destination.
- ISI2 I would like to look for additional information about the destination.
- ISI3 After watching the video, I would like to checkout additional information about the destination.

WOM intention

- WOM1 I would like to say positive things about the destination to other people.
- WOM2 I would like to recommend the destination to someone who plans to travel.
- WOM3 I would like to recommend friends and relatives to visit the destination.
- WOM4 I would like to spread positive word-of-mouth about the destination.

Appendix 2. Questionnaire

0%  100%

Please slide the red dot below to indicate the maximum amount you are willing to pay for a travel package from Toronto Pearson airport, Canada to the depicted destination if you have an opportunity to travel.

The travel package includes (one traveller):

1. Flight: round trip, economy class
2. Hotel: seven nights

0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500 3000 3500 4000 4500 5000
Canadian dollars (CAD)



Please indicate your level of agreement on each statement below.

	Strongly disagree	Neutral					Strongly agree
After watching this video, I would like to _____ about the destination.							
1. search for additional information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. look for additional information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. checkout additional information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Which of the following BEST describes this video?

1. Created by destination marketing organizations
2. Created by individual tourists

Please indicate your level of agreement on each statement below.

	Strongly disagree	Neutral					Strongly agree
The video content _____.							
1. is a realistic depiction of ordinary life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. shows a realistic life situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. is realistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. is authentic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. shows an everyday life activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. is true to life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Which of the following BEST describes this video?

1. Contains personal travel stories
2. Contains NO personal travel stories

Please indicate your level of agreement on each statement below.

	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Strongly agree		
The video _____.							
1. helps me to learn about the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. provides me helpful information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. provides me useful information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate your level of agreement on each statement below.

	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Strongly agree		
The destination seems _____.							
1. to have good infrastructure (e.g., transportation, hotel, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. safe for travelling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. to provide high-quality tourism service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate your level of agreement on each statement below.

	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Strongly agree		
When watching the video, _____.							
1. I was paying attention to the video contents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I was focusing on the video contents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I was concentrating on the video contents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate your level of agreement on each statement below.

	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Strongly agree		
After watching this video, _____.							
1. my imagination is stimulated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I am intrigued by a new idea	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I unexpectedly and spontaneously get new ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. my horizon is broadened	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I discover something new	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate your level of agreement on each statement below.

	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Strongly agree		
After watching this video, I would like to _____.							
1. say positive things about the destination to other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. recommend the destination to someone who plans to travel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. recommend friends and relatives to visit the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. spread positive word-of-mouth about the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please provide your demographic information

Gender:

- a. Woman
- b. Man
- c. My gender identity is not listed above

Age:

- a. 18-25
- b. 26-30
- c. 31-40
- d. 41-50
- e. 51-60
- f. 61 or above
- g. Prefer not to answer

Relationship status:

- a. Married
- b. Cohabiting
- c. Divorced
- d. Separated
- e. Single, never married
- f. Other (please specify):

Household annual income:

- a. Below \$25,000
- b. \$25,001-\$50,000
- c. \$50,001-\$75,000
- d. \$75,001-\$100,000
- e. \$100,001-\$125,000
- f. \$125,001 or more
- g. Prefer not to answer

Travel partner:

- a. Friends
- b. Family
- c. Partner
- d. By yourself
- e. Other (please specify)

Education:

- a. Some high school
- b. Completed high school
- c. Some college/university
- d. Apprenticeship training and trades
- e. Completed college/university
- f. Some graduate education
- g. Completed graduate education
- h. Professional degrees

Ethnicity:

- a. Indigenous (Inuit/First Nations/Métis)
- b. White/European
- c. Black/African/Caribbean
- d. Southeast Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Filipino, etc.)
- e. Arab (Saudi Arabian, Palestinian, Iraqi, etc.)
- f. South Asian (East Indian, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- g. Latin American (Costa Rican, Guatemalan, Brazilian, Columbian, etc.)
- h. West Asian (Iranian, Afghani, etc.)
- i. Other (please specify)

Travel purpose:

- a. Food and cuisine
- b. Religion
- c. Visit friend/family
- d. Shopping
- e. Sightseeing
- f. Conference
- g. Night life
- h. Visit historic relics
- i. Cultural experience
- j. Others _____

Appendix 3: REB approval letter



RESEARCH ETHICS BOARDS
*Certification of Ethical Acceptability of Research
Involving Human Participants*

APPROVAL PERIOD: March 5, 2021
EXPIRY DATE: March 4, 2022
REB: G
REB NUMBER: 20-12-002
TYPE OF REVIEW: Delegated
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jo, WooMi (woomi@uoguelph.ca)
DEPARTMENT: School of Hospitality & Tourism Management
SPONSOR(S): N/A
TITLE OF PROJECT: Tourism Destination Marketing by Travel Vlogs

The members of the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board have examined the protocol which describes the participation of the human participants in the above-named research project and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2nd Edition.

The REB requires that researchers:

- Adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB.
- Receive approval from the REB for any modifications before they can be implemented.
- Report any change in the source of funding.
- Report unexpected events or incidental findings to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants, and the continuation of the protocol.
- Are responsible for ascertaining and complying with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements with respect to consent and the protection of privacy of participants in the jurisdiction of the research project.

The Principal Investigator must:

- Ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of facilities or institutions involved in the research are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.
- Submit an Annual Renewal to the REB upon completion of the project. If the research is a multi-year project, a status report must be submitted annually prior to the expiry date. Failure to submit an annual status report will lead to your study being suspended and potentially terminated.

The approval for this protocol terminates on the EXPIRY DATE, or the term of your appointment or employment at the University of Guelph whichever comes first.

Signature:

Date: March 5, 2021

Stephen P. Lewis
Chair, Research Ethics Board-General