



The Influence Mechanism of the Self-Presentation of KOLs in Travel Short Videos on Tourists' Behavioral Intentions

Yuqing Xu^(✉)

School of Economics and Management, Beijing Jiaotong University, Beijing, China
408877965@qq.com

Abstract. With the rise of mobile short videos, many key opinion leaders (KOLs) of travel short videos have emerged, which have brought a number of “internet-famous” tourist attractions. Based on “self-presentation theory”, this study classifies tourism short videos created by KOLs into “positive self-presentation” and “real self-presentation” short videos; combined with the SOR theory is used to investigate the influence mechanism of the self-presentation of KOLs in travel short videos on tourists' behavioral intentions, and to build a research framework mediated by destination image. The results show that: (1) the self-presentation of KOLs in travel short videos significantly and positively affects the cognitive, emotional, and overall image perception and travelers' behavioral intentions of the destination. (2) The KOLs' “positive self-presentation” in travel videos is more effective in improving the destination image and motivating the travelers' behavioral intentions. (3) The cognitive image, emotional image and overall image of the destination partially mediate the relationship between the self-presentation of KOLs in travel short videos and travelers' behavioral intentions, respectively. The study is intended to provide implications for the use of short videos for tourism destination marketing.

Keywords: key opinion leaders · self-presentation · destination image · tourists' behavioral intentions

1 Introduction

With the rise of mobile short videos, tourism destination promotion and marketing has also shifted from traditional promotional videos and poster ads to mobile short videos. Many travel bloggers have emerged, playing the role of opinion leaders who can vividly express the image of the destination and influence the attitudes and behaviors of travelers. What kind of presentation of opinion leaders can better promote the image of the destination and stimulate the travelers' willingness to visit has become a topic of urgent concern for destination marketing organizations.

At present, scholars have explored the mechanism of influence of opinion leaders on social platforms on users' consumption intention and its factors from different perspectives. In the field of tourism research, some scholars have also demonstrated

the significant influence of short video opinion leaders on tourism destination image and travel intention [1]. However, few scholars have explored the mechanism of influence on destination image and travelers' behavioral intentions from the perspective of "self-presentation" of opinion leaders.

Based on self-presentation theory, this paper classifies tourism short videos created and published by opinion leaders into "positive self-presentation" and "real self-presentation" short videos; combined with SOR theory, it explores the mechanism of self-presentation of KOLs in travel short videos on tourists' behavioral intention. In order to provide an effective reference for the use of short videos in shaping the image of tourism destinations and marketing tourism destinations, an experimental method was used to test the hypotheses.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

2.1.1 SOR Theory

Mehrabian & Russell proposed the "stimulus-organism-response" (SOR) theory in 1974, which is mainly used to explain The mechanism of environmental influence on individual mental activity and behavior [2], individuals receive external environmental stimuli, which trigger cognitive, physiological, emotional and thinking activities in the organism, and then make a series of behavioral responses [3]. The theory was most applied to environmental psychology, and since then, some scholars have introduced the theory into the field of tourism research [4–6].

2.1.2 Self-Presentation Theory

Goffman proposed the theory of mimesis based on the theory of symbolic interaction, which became the classic theory of self-presentation. He believes that life is a big "stage", and people can better realize their own purposes through "performance" behaviors and interactive interactions in different contexts [7]. Kim classifies self-presentation into positive self-presentation and real self-presentation according to the content of the presentation. Positive self-presentation refers to individuals presenting according to their ideal self and selectively presenting positive aspects; real self-presentation emphasizes authenticity and objectivity [8]. Based on this, this paper classifies tourism short videos into "positive self-presentation" and "real self-presentation" according to the different content and form of self-presentation by tourism short video opinion leaders.

2.1.3 Key Opinion Leader Theory

American media researcher P.F. Lazarsfeld was the first to formally introduce the concept of Key Opinion Leader (KOL), which he considered to be an influential intermediary in the process of disseminating information to the masses. In his book "The People's Choice", Lazarsfeld proposed the "two-level communication theory", which suggests that information is disseminated in the order of "media to opinion leader to general audience", with the opinion leader being the essential node [9]. In this paper, people

who have personal influence on short video platforms, who can influence others by spreading information and opinions are regarded as short video opinion leaders.

2.2 Research Hypothesis

2.2.1 KOLs' Self-Presentation in Travel Short Videos, Destination Image and Tourists' Behavioral Intentions

The study of destination image originated in the 1970s, Hunt first defined destination image as the impression formed by individuals about the tourist place [10]. Gartner pointed out that destination image is a three-dimensional structure composed of cognitive image, emotional image and intentional image [11], while Baloglu & Mc Cleary believed that the formation of destination image includes the process of cognitive and emotional evaluation, and finally the formation of the overall perception of destination image [12]. This conclusion has been confirmed by domestic and foreign scholars in the development of research, so this study adopts the "new three-dimensional structure" of destination image as the theoretical support.

Ajzen defines behavioral intentions as the likelihood that people will be inclined to behave towards a product [13]. Chen & Tasi (2007) consider tourist behavioral intentions as the willingness of tourists to recommend a destination to their acquaintances and the willingness to visit again [14]. Some studies have realized the significant influence of opinion leaders on tourism destination image and travel behavior intention [1, 15]. A large number of studies have focused on the strategies and motives of opinion leaders' self-presentation, but there are few studies on the influence of self-presentation, such as Liu Rong et al. found that merchants' self-presentation can positively influence customer trust [16], Cao Jiang et al. explored the influence mechanism of e-commerce net celebrities' self-presentation on consumers' purchasing behaviour [17], and opinion leaders' self-presentation through short travel videos may also influence people's travel behavior willingness, based on this, this paper tries to put forward the following hypothesis.

H1 (a-c): There is a significant positive effect of self-presentation of key opinion leaders in travel short videos on the perception of tourism destination image (a.cognitive image, b.emotional image, c.overall image).

H2: There is a significant positive effect of self-presentation of key opinion leaders in travel short videos on travelers' behavioral intentions.

2.2.2 The Mediating Role of Destination Image

Lee C K et al. verified that tourist's perception of destination image is positively related to willingness to go, and the higher the emotional attachment to the destination, the stronger the willingness to recommend [18] and Xu Feng et al. confirmed that destination image perception has a significant positive impact on tourist's willingness to visit through perceived value and psychological distance [19].

Based on the SOR theory, in this study, opinion leaders act as external stimuli (S) by expressing what they see and feel about the destination through different forms of self-presentation, and by triggering dynamic changes in tourists' perceptions of the

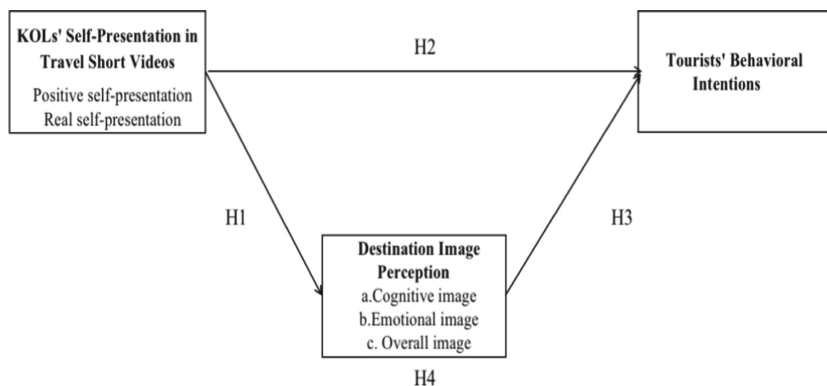


Fig. 1. Research model

destination image (O), which in turn have an impact on tourists' behavioral intentions (R). Based on the above theoretical background, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H3 (a-c) Cognitive image, emotional image, and overall image perception each have a significant positive effect on travelers' behavioral intentions.

H4 (a-c): Tourist destination image perception (cognitive image, emotional image and overall image perception) plays a mediating role between key opinion leaders' self-presentation in travel short videos and tourists' behavioral intentions.

2.3 Research Model

Based on the above assumptions, the research model in this paper is shown in Fig. 1.

3 Study

3.1 Materials and Pre-test

The short travel video of Nianhua Bay (located in Wuxi City, Jiangsu Province) released by a certain account on TikTok was selected as the experimental stimulus material one, with a video duration of 0'55", without the appearance of opinion leaders, which is a pure landscape type travel short video. The video is 0'55" in length, mainly presenting the scene of the blogger dressed in Chinese costume and exquisite modeling at the scenic spots of Nianhua Bay, and it belongs to the "positive self-presentation" type of short video. In the same way, another blogger's travel video was selected as experimental material three, with the same video duration of 0'55". In this video, the blogger appeared in the video in the usual costume shape, and simply recorded his tour process in Nianhua Bay, and is a short video of the "real self-presentation" type.

In order to ensure the reasonableness of the experimental materials, 13 travel professionals and general subjects were invited to participate in the pretest. The subjects were randomly divided into two groups and watched the short videos of Experimental Stimulus Materials 2 and 3 respectively, and filled in the Opinion Leader Self-Presentation

Scale to judge the types of the videos (positive self-presentation and authentic self-presentation). All subjects agreed that the types of the two travel videos were consistent with their positioning, which proved the validity of the experimental materials.

3.2 Measurements

The opinion leader self-representation scale is based on the research of Kim et al. (2011) [8]. The cognitive image scale was based on the research results of Long Ling et al. (2021) [20], and was appropriately adapted to the actual context of the video, involving natural scenery, humanistic features, and supporting facilities. The overall image scale was designed as “My overall impression of Nianhua Bay is very bad - very good”, referring to the research of Liu Li et al. (2013) [21]. The tourist behavior intention scale was based on the study by Guo Anxi et al. (2018) [22]. All items were answered on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating “strongly disagree” and 5 indicating “strongly agree”.

3.3 Procedure

In this study, a between-group experimental design was used, and college students from Beijing and Suzhou universities were selected to participate in the experiment. Some studies have shown that college students are the main users of TikTok.

First, all subjects were given a pre-test, and each person was asked to fill in the Demographic Characteristics, Destination Image Scale and Traveler’s Behavior Intention Scale to understand the subjects’ original impressions of the Nianhua Bay scenic area. After that, all the subjects were randomly divided into three groups, G1, G2, and G3, and the experimental materials were stimulated for the whole-landscape tourism video, the opinion leader’s “positive self-presentation” video, and the “real self-presentation” video, respectively. All subjects were asked to fill out the Destination Image and Traveler Behavior Intention Scale. Both scales were marked with the same notation for recall for subsequent matching. Six sets of data were obtained: G1_{before}, G2_{before}, G3_{before} and G1_{after}, G2_{after}, G3_{after}.

A total of 77 subjects were recruited for the formal experiment, 154 questionnaires were distributed (77 pre-tests and 77 post-tests), after excluding invalid questionnaires, 73 groups of questionnaires were successfully paired. Among the 73 subjects, 35 (48%) were male and 38 (52%) were female, the samples were all college students, and their ages ranged from 28 to 25 years old, which basically excluded the experimental errors caused by gender and age differences.

4 Results

4.1 Manipulation Check

Both the Destination Image Scale (0.899) and the Traveler’s Behavioral Intentions Scale (0.756) measured reliability by the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient method. The KMO values for the scale data were 0.875 and 0.729, respectively. The Bartlett’s sphericity test reached the probability of significance. Overall, the scale has good reliability and validity.

To test the intervention effect of the experimental stimulus materials, all pretest data G_{before} and post-test data G_{after} were compared by paired samples t-test, and the results showed: $MG_{\text{before}}^{\text{cognitive}} = 3.7247 < MG_{\text{after}}^{\text{cognitive}} = 4.2493$, $p < 0.01$; $MG_{\text{before}}^{\text{affective}} = 3.7952 < MG_{\text{after}}^{\text{affective}} = 4.2027$, $p < 0.01$; $MG_{\text{before}}^{\text{overall}} = 3.6164 < MG_{\text{after}}^{\text{overall}} = 4.1507$, $p < 0.01$; $MG_{\text{before}}^{\text{behavior}} = 3.4726 < MG_{\text{after}}^{\text{behavior}} = 4.0753$, $p < 0.01$. 4.1507 , $p < 0.01$; $MG_{\text{before}}^{\text{behavior}} = 3.4726 < MG_{\text{after}}^{\text{behavior}} = 4.0753$, $p < 0.01$. This indicates that with the stimulation of the short tourism video, all three groups of subjects showed a significant increase in their perception of the destination image and willingness to travel behavior, indicating that the manipulation of the experimental material was effective.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the three groups of pretest data between groups, and the results showed that the three groups of pretest data $G1_{\text{before}}$, $G2_{\text{before}}$, $G3_{\text{before}}$ did not differ significantly in cognitive image ($F = 0.262$, $P = 0.77$), affective image ($F = 0.47$, $P = 0.627$), overall image ($P = 0.909$, $P = 0.404$), and travelers' behavioral intentions ($F = 0.187$, $P = 0.83$) were not significantly different, ruling out the effect of post-test results due to subject differences between groups.

4.2 Hypothesis Test

In order to test the influence of the opinion leader self-presentation on travelers' destination image perception and behavioral intentions, independent sample t-tests were conducted for $G1_{\text{after}}$ and $G2_{\text{after}}$; $G1_{\text{after}}$ and $G3_{\text{after}}$, respectively, and the data obtained are shown in Table 1. Subjects who were stimulated by the "positive self-presentation" type of tourism video by opinion leaders ($G2_{\text{after}}$) had significantly higher destination perception, emotion, overall image perception and behavioral intention than the full-view type of tourism video ($G1_{\text{after}}$), and $p < 0.01$. Similarly, subjects stimulated by the "real self-representation" type of tourism video by opinion leaders ($G3_{\text{after}}$) had significantly higher perceptions of the three dimensions of the destination image and behavioral intentions than the full-view type of tourism video ($G1_{\text{after}}$), $p < 0.05$. It indicates that short tourism videos with self-presentation of opinion leaders have a significant increase on destination image as well as travelers' behavioral intentions, and hypothesis H1 (a-c) and hypothesis H2 are verified.

Second, the results showed that the subjects stimulated by the "positive self-presentation" type of tourism videos by opinion leaders ($G2_{\text{after}}$) had significantly higher image perceptions and travel behavior intentions on the dimensions of tourism destinations than those stimulated by the "real self-presentation" type of tourism videos ($G3$), and the subjects stimulated by the "real self-presentation" type of tourism videos ($MG3$) had significantly higher image perceptions and travel behavior intentions on the dimensions of tourism destinations. This indicates that the "positive self-presentation" type of tourism video has a more significant positive impact on the image of tourism destination and tourists' behavioral intentions.

Table 1. Comparison of means for G_{after} (1, 2, 3) independent samples t-test

	$G1_{\text{after}}$	$G2_{\text{after}}$	$G3_{\text{after}}$
Cognitive image	M = 3.9640	M = 4.6042	M = 4.1583
Emotional image	M = 3.9600	M = 4.5375	M = 4.1000
Overall image	M = 3.8800	M = 4.6667	M = 4.2083
Behavioral intentions	M = 3.7800	M = 4.5833	M = 4.1042

4.3 Mediation Analysis

The results shows that cognitive image ($\beta = 0.353$, $p < 0.01$), affective image ($\beta = 0.165$, $p < 0.05$), and overall image ($\beta = 0.288$, $p < 0.03$) perceptions have a significant positive effect on travelers' behavioral intentions. Hypothesis H3 (a-c) was tested.

Since the Bootstrap procedure is applicable to small samples and does not require consideration of the normal distribution of the data, the Bootstrap method is used to test for mediation effects. If the confidence interval of the indirect effect does not contain 0, the mediating effect exists; if the confidence interval of the direct effect does not contain 0, the mediating effect is partially present, and if it contains 0, the mediating effect is fully present. The results for the sample size of 5,000 and the confidence interval of 95% are shown in Table 2. The results indicates that cognitive image, emotional image and overall image perception are significant in the relationship between tourism short video opinion leader self-presentation plays a partially mediating role in the relationship between opinion leader self-presentation and travelers' behavioral intentions. Hypothesis H4 (a-c) was supported.

Table 2. Decomposition of total, direct and indirect effects of cognitive, emotional and overall image

	Cognitive image			
	Effect Value	SE	95% confidence interval	
			LLCI	ULCI
Total effect	0.5638	0.0998	0.3648	0.7627
Direct effect	0.3642	0.1060	0.1527	0.5756
Indirect effects	0.1996	0.0610	0.0891	0.3301
	Emotional image			
	Effect Value	SE	95% confidence interval	
			LLCI	ULCI
Total effect	0.5638	0.0998	0.3648	0.7627
Direct effect	0.4275	0.1032	0.2217	0.6333
Indirect effects	0.1362	0.0527	0.0467	0.2528

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

	Cognitive image			
	Effect Value	SE	95% confidence interval	
			LLCI	ULCI
	Overall image			
	Effect Value	SE	95% confidence interval	
			LLCI	ULCI
Total effect	0.5638	0.0998	0.3648	0.7627
Direct effect	0.3733	0.1051	0.1637	0.5829
Indirect effects	0.1905	0.0587	0.0801	0.3115

5 Conclusion

The self-presentation of key opinion leaders in tourism short videos positively and significantly affects the destination's cognitive image, emotional image, overall image perception and travelers' behavioral intentions. Specifically, compared with the "real self-presentation" videos, the "positive self-presentation" videos significantly improve the perception of the destination image and motivate travelers' behavioral intentions. Thus, it is easier to obtain the expected publicity effect in tourism short videos with positive self-presentation by opinion leaders. Cognitive image, emotional image, and overall image perception partially mediate the relationship between the self-presentation of tourism video opinion leaders and travelers' behavioral intentions, respectively.

6 Discussion and Implications

This study provides some insights into the creation of tourism short videos on the one hand. In tourism short videos, the self-presentation of key opinion leaders is very important for the marketing effect of short videos, and positive self-presentation can produce better effect compared with real self-presentation, therefore, opinion leaders should try to put more effort on personal image, speech expression, and filming techniques when creating tourism short videos, and through appropriate "beautification and packaging" to highlight the tourism destination image and inspire tourists' willingness to visit.

On the other hand, the study provides reference and guidance for destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to promote through tourism short videos. The marketing content of short videos should stand out from the uniform landscape type short videos and give full play to the role of opinion leaders. Destination marketing organizations can cooperate with popular or professional opinion leaders as a way to enhance the marketing effect.

7 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

(1) The sample in this study was selected from the college student group, and although the experimental design used a between-group approach to avoid sample interference, there are still many differences between the college student sample and the real potential tourist group, so the findings still need to be further validated and replicated using other sample groups. (2) This study only constructs a research framework mediated by destination image, and relevant moderating variables can be added for in-depth research in the future.

References

1. Yan Shuo. Research on the influence of short video marketing on the image and tourism intention of Xiamen tourism destination [D]. Tianjin University, 2020.
2. MEHRABLAN A, RUSSELL J A. An approach to environmental psychology [M]. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974: 3-8.
3. BELKRW. Situational Variables and Consumer Behavior [J]. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1975, 2 (3) :157-164.
4. Song, Mengmeng, Qiao, Lin, Hu, Tao. The influence of social network interaction on tourism behavior based on SOR theory[J]. *Business Economics*, 2019(05):72-79.
5. Deng Weiwei, Lin Yingxing. The influence of tourists' visual perception on destination selection intention--analysis based on visual appeal and aesthetic emotion perspective[J]. *Business Economics*, 2021, 40(10):151-160.
6. Chen, Jieqi, Lu, Lin, Zhang, Hongmei, Zhang, Haizhou, Li, Guisha. The mechanism of influencing tourist behavior by tourism promo marketing in crisis situation-mediation of destination image and regulation of perceived safety[J]. *Geographical Research and Development*, 2020, 39(05):110-115+132.
7. Goffman. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* [M]. New York: Doubleday, 1959, p18.
8. Kim J & Lee J.E. The Facebook paths to happiness: effects of the number of Facebook friends and self-presentation on subjective well-being[J]. *Cyber psychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 2011, 14(6):359-364.
9. Lazarsfeld P F , Berelson B , Gaudet H . *The peoples choice: how the voter makes up his mind in a presidential campaign.*[J]. New York, Columbia University Press, 1948, 1948, 77(2):177-18.
10. Hunt J D. *Image -A Factor in Tourism* [D]. Colorado State University, 1971. management, 2007, 28(6).
11. Gartner W C. Image formation process[J]. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 1993, 2(2):191-215.
12. Seyhmus Baloglu, Ken W. McCleary. A model of destination image formation[J]. Elsevier Ltd, 1999, 26(4).
13. Ajzen. *The of Planned Behavior* [J]. *Organizational Behavior and Humman Decision Processes*, 1991, 50(2):179-211.
14. Chen, C-F, Tsai, D.C. How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioral Intentions? [M]. *Tourism Management*, 2007, 28(4).
15. Huizhang Yin. Research on tourism destination image perception and tourism intention based on WeChat marketing [D]. South China University of Technology, 2016.
16. Liu Rong, Yang Jiawei, Dong Xiaosong, Yu Hongyan. A study on the impact of merchant self-presentation on customer trust in social commerce context [J]. *Journal of Management*, 2021, 18(03):418-425.

17. Cao Jiang,Wang Ying,Zhu Lilong. Research on the influence of e-commerce netizens' self-presentation on consumers' purchasing behavior and its mechanism[J/OL]. Journal of Chongqing University of Commerce and Industry (Social Science Edition):1-14 [2021-12-30].
18. LEE C K, LEE Y K, LEE B K. Korea's Destination Image Formed by the 2002 World Cup [J]. Annals of Tourism Research, 2005, 32(4) : 839 - 858.
19. Xu Feng,Li Shuai-Shuai. Destination image and tourists' behavioral intention in South Xinjiang region - the mediating role of perceived value and psychological distance [J]. Economic Management,2018,40(01):156-171.
20. Long Ling,Liu Dejun,Liu Xiaomin. A study on the influence of film and television images on the attractiveness of tourist destinations--A case study of Dongji Island in Zhoushan City[J]. Journal of Natural Sciences, Hunan Normal University,2022,45(04):86-92.
21. Liu L. Tourism destination image perception and tourists' travel intention: A comprehensive study based on the perspective of film and television tourism[J]. Journal of Tourism,2013,28(09):61-72.
22. Guo Anxi,Guo Yingzhi,Li Navy et al. An empirical study on the influence of tourists' perceived value on revisit intention - the role of tourist satisfaction and risk likelihood [J]. Journal of Tourism,2018,33(01):63-73.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

