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ARTIGOS

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECTS THE PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF FEMALE CONSUMERS IN MACAO - WATCHING BEAUTY AND COSMETICS PRODUCT EXPERIENCE VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE

COMO AS MÍDIAS SOCIAIS AFETAM AS INTENÇÕES DE COMPRA DAS CONSUMIDORAS FEMININAS EM MACAU - ASSISTINDO A VÍDEOS DE EXPERIÊNCIA DE PRODUTOS DE BELEZA E COSMÉTICOS NO YOUTUBE

ABSTRACT

YouTube has become increasingly popular for marketing purposes. As corporate and user-generated content is widely available on this platform, beauty-related professionals need to understand how to create videos that make their products more appealing and stand out from the clutter. In this study, we examine four factors (i.e., perceived usefulness of the information, perceived credibility of the information, attitude toward the purchase, and perceived video characteristics) that affect the purchase intentions of female consumers. After viewing beauty-related videos, a sample of 204 female consumers was analyzed by structural equation modeling. The findings showed that videos with more views, likes, and comments tend to have a greater effect on the respondents' intentions to purchase. Also, the factors of perceived usefulness of the information, perceived credibility of the information, and attitude toward the purchase exhibited a significant effect on the intention to buy beauty-related products. The result showed that perceived video characteristics (such as quality and visuals) did not significantly influence the purchase intention, however, there is evidence that this factor should not be ignored by content creators. Finally, our research provides insights, strategies, and future directions for industry practitioners and marketers.

Keywords: YouTube marketing; YouTube beauty products; beauty and cosmetics marketing; purchase intention.

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RESUMO

O YouTube tem se tornado cada vez mais popular para fins de marketing. Como o conteúdo corporativo e gerado pelo usuário está amplamente disponível nesta plataforma, os profissionais relacionados à beleza precisam entender como criar vídeos que tornem seus produtos mais atraentes e se destaquem da desordem. Neste estudo, examinamos quatro fatores (ou seja, percepção da utilidade da informação, percepção da credibilidade da informação, atitude em relação à compra e percepção das características do vídeo) que afetam as intenções de compra das consumidoras femininas. Após a visualização dos vídeos relacionados à beleza, uma amostra de 204 consumidoras femininas foi analisada por meio de modelagem de equações estruturais. Os resultados mostraram que vídeos com mais visualizações, curtidas e comentários tendem a ter um efeito maior sobre as intenções de compra das entrevistadas. Além disso, os fatores de percepção da utilidade da informação, percepção da credibilidade da informação e atitude em relação à compra demonstraram um efeito significativo sobre a intenção de compra de produtos relacionados à beleza. O resultado mostrou que as características do vídeo percebido (como qualidade e visuais) não influenciaram significativamente a intenção de compra, no entanto, há evidências de que este fator não deve ser ignorado pelos criadores de conteúdo. Finalmente, nossa pesquisa fornece insights, estratégias e direções futuras para os profissionais da indústria e marqueteiros.

Palavras-chave: marketing no YouTube; produtos de beleza do YouTube; marketing de beleza e cosméticos; intenção de compra.

1 INTRODUCTION

Beauty-related videos are more and more popular on social media. Globally, around 37 percent of the digital population accessed YouTube in 2021, with more than nine in ten users watching videos (STATISTA, 2022). Accordingly, content creation is becoming a recognized profession. Influencers and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) often pursue a career in specific industries by using their channels in cooperation with emerging or popular brands.

According to the website Statista (2022), beauty-related videos such as makeup and skincare tutorials, cosmetics, and product recommendations are among the most popular content on YouTube. There were 169 billion views on beauty-related videos in 2018, and that number keeps rising. Some of the top subscribed beauty content creators on YouTube totaled 16 million subscribers in early 2022.

In the past, companies relied on traditional media (magazines, newspapers, TV, etc.) and celebrities to promote their brands and deliver their messages to potential customers. In recent years, however, brands have increasingly relied on key opinion leaders and influencers active on social media platforms, which has proven to be highly effective.

Previous studies investigated the effect of YouTube videos on consumers' intention to purchase beauty and cosmetic products (YÜKSEL, 2016; MATHUR; KHANDELWAL; MITTAL, 2019), however, insights related to the context of Macau are absent. Data shows that 77 percent of internet users habitually watch YouTube in Macau, of which 76 percent are women (MACAO ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNET RESEARCH, 2019). Situated at the mouth of the Perl River, Macau is a flourishing Special Administrative Region (SAR) part of China, where gambling is the pillar of the economy (LAMPO; LEE, 2011), and one of the wealthiest places in the world (FRASER, 2018). To fill the gap in the literature, this paper seeks to investigate the impact of YouTube videos on the local beauty and cosmetic industry. The main objective is to explore the factors that influence female consumers' purchase intentions after being exposed to beauty-related videos on YouTube. Ultimately, this research provides strategies and insights for industry practitioners and marketers.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 YOUTUBE

Communication and sharing of information online are made possible today through social media platforms. In the past years, such platforms have deeply penetrated the mechanic of people's everyday lives, to a point that they greatly affect consumer preferences (ANANDA; WANDEBORI, 2016). Among several, YouTube is a platform for online video and participatory culture (BURGESS; GREEN, 2018) that allows users to share their content easily.

Since its launch in 2005, YouTube has grown from a repository of amateur videos into the biggest online video platform worldwide (STATISTA, 2022). As YouTube became popular, several features have also been added over time. For example, users can "tag" videos with keywords or phrases that best describe the content; this feature provides users with a list of suggested videos (GILL *et al*., 2007) which greatly enhances their browsing experience. Today people are getting used to watching product videos to obtain information about products' appearance and functionalities (HAO; SHAO; MA, 2019). In addition, consumer-generated videos typically can attract viewers and subscribers because they are considered trustworthy (FRED, 2015; DJAFAROVA; RUSHWORTH, 2017).

2.2 PURCHASE INTENTION (PI)

Purchase intention can be defined as the situation where consumers are willing and intend to perform a transaction (CHELLAPPA; PAVLOU, 2002; HSU; TSOU, 2011; AYKAÇ; YILMAZ, 2020), or have the future intention to purchase a product (HSU; TSOU, 2011; SAXENA, 2011). In studies on YouTube videos, several factors were found to positively affect consumers' purchase intentions, such as the number of interactions (e.g., likes, comments, replies), the perceived usefulness of the information, the perceived credibility of the information, the perceived video's characteristics, and the attitude toward the purchase (YÜKSEL, 2016; MATHUR; KHANDELWAL; MITTAL, 2019), which will be discussed in turn. Nevertheless, the number of studies focusing on purchase intention related to YouTube videos is still limited.

2.3 PERCEIVED USEFULNESS OF THE INFORMATION (PU)

Perceived usefulness relates to the degree to which a person believes that using a system could bring some advantages (DAVIS, 1989). It is usually assumed that information from websites can be considered an important factor (PAVLOU; FYGENSON, 2006). Yüksel (2016), for instance, found that the perceived usefulness of the information communicated through videos would increase consumers' purchase intention. Additionally, consumers tend to believe that the information provided would reduce the risk of making a wrong decision, which in turn affects their purchase intention (YÜKSEL, 2016). These findings are also supported in other studies (BOUHLEL *et al*., 2010; HSU; LIN; CHIANG, 2013). Therefore, the following hypothesis H1 is proposed:

H1: Perceived usefulness of the information positively affects purchase intentions.

2.4 PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY OF THE INFORMATION (PC)

Credibility can be defined as the fact that someone can be believed or trusted. This concept relates to perceptions, and it is not a direct measure of real quality (FREEMAN; SPYRIDAKIS, 2004). In our context, credibility is defined as the degree of consumer confidence in the information (MCKNIGHT; KACMAR, 2007; YÜKSEL, 2016). It is theorized that the credibility of a blog brings positive attitudes toward that blog, and the attitude toward the blog tends to positively

influence purchase intention (BOUHLEL *et al*., 2010; HSU; TSOU, 2011; YÜKSEL, 2016). Hence, hypothesis H2 is put forth:

H2: Perceived credibility of the information positively affects purchase intentions

2.5 PERCEIVED VIDEOS CHARACTERISTICS (PVC)

The video length, quality, production, and presentation of content are factors that affect consumers' engagement and purchase intentions in different ways (SATGUNAM *et al.,* 2010; DOBRIAN *et al*., 2011; YÜKSEL, 2016; MATHUR; KHANDELWAL; MITTAL, 2019). Perceived video characteristics are theorized to affect consumers' level of information and attitude (Yüksel, 2016). In this regard, the following hypothesis H3 is formulated.

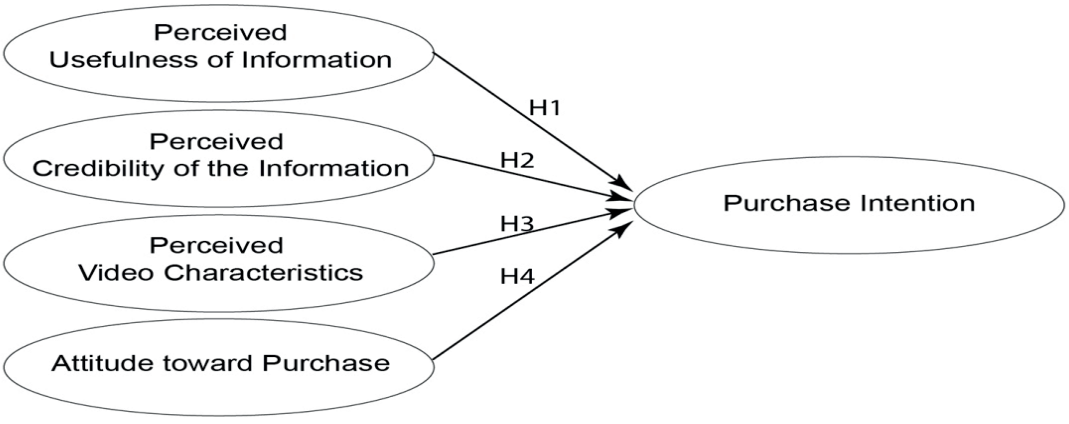
H3: Perceived videos characteristics positively affect purchase intentions

2.6 ATTITUDE TOWARD PURCHASE (ATP)

In our context, attitude is defined as a positive or negative feeling and evaluation of a particular product or brand (MIR; REHMAN, 2013; BOUHLEL *et al*., 2010). In general, the stronger the intention to participate in an action, the more likely it is to perform that action (AJZEN, 1991). Bouhlel *et al.* (2010) indicated that consumers' attitude affects online purchase intentions. Consumers who have positive attitudes towards blogs are likely to make related purchases. Yüksel (2016) supported that those consumers showing a positive attitude towards specific products seen on YouTube showed a higher intention to purchase. Therefore, hypothesis H4 is proposed:

H4: Attitude toward purchase positively affects purchase intentions.

Figure 1 - Proposed Conceptual Model



Note: authors' conceptual model.

3 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive approach (Kolb, 2022), a cross-sectional assessment of the impact of four variables on the intention to purchase beauty and cosmetic products.

A self-administrated survey with established and validated scales was considered the most suitable instrument for gathering data. The items measuring "perceived usefulness of the information"

were adapted from Davis (1989), those related to "perceived credibility of the information" were taken from Freeman and Spyridakis (2004), and the items for "perceived video characteristics" were based on Yüksel (2016), and the items for "attitude toward purchase" were inspired by Hsu and Lin (2008). To measure the impact on "purchase intention", items from Hsu and Tsou (2011) were adopted. All items were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale with anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Demographic variables were also included to capture the respondents' age, marital status, education, employment status, and income.

Regarding the determination of the sample size, Hair *et al.* (2021) noted that common rules suggest between 10 to 15 observations for each predictor in the model. Based on four independent variables in the model, G*Power (ERDFELDER *et al*., 1996), a tool to compute statistical power analyses, suggested a minimum of 85 cases as the recommended sample size.

The questionnaire was distributed in March 2020 and made available in English and Chinese to facilitate the response. The target population consisted of female Macau residents with an interest in beauty and cosmetics products on YouTube. Participants were initially selected from the researchers' networks and by the snowball method (FLICK, 2018), assuming that respondents were similar to the target population. The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and assured about the anonymity of their responses. Ultimately, 204 responses were considered valid and usable for further analysis.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

By design, the respondents were all female. Most of them were single (63.37%.), between 25 to 36 years of age (66.18%), held a bachelor's degree (70.1%), and employed (74.1%) with a monthly salary between MOP 20,000 and 29,999 (ca. 2,500-3,750 USD). Approximately 50% of the interviewees reported having spent up to 30 minutes per day watching beauty-related videos on YouTube.

4.2 NUMBERS OF VIEWS, LIKES, COMMENTS

As part of the study, we intended to determine whether the number of views, likes, and comments related to YouTube videos somehow affected viewers' purchase intention. We selected two videos with different characteristics from MUJI, a popular Japanese skincare brand. More precisely, the first video (Video 1) introduced MUJI beauty products, carrying the message that consumers "must buy MUJI skincare products because prices are affordable". As of March 2020, Video 1 totaled 132,552 views, 3,218 likes, and 122 comments. The second video (Video 2) introduced "the top 7 products from MUJI". In the same period, Video 2 accumulated 10,242 views, 410 likes, and 13 comments. Each video was proposed to 102 respondents. The following table summarizes the characteristics of the videos.

Table 1 - Summary of MUJI videos

Item	Video 1	Video 2
Theme	Affordable products	The top 7 products
Link*	https://tinyurl.com/cxdphr3c	https://tinyurl.com/4ew8nb9t
No. of Views	132,552	10,242
No. of Likes	3,218	410
No. of Comments	122	13

Source: authors' table. Note: *Shortened URL.

The two videos greatly differ in the number of views, likes, and comments. In both groups of viewers, the distribution of the population was similar, ruling out the possibility that differences in demographic characteristics could influence the results. After watching the videos, the participants were asked to answer a set of questions measuring their intentions regarding the product. The result showed that the average scores related to Video 1 were higher than those of Video 2. The following Table 2 reports the detailed results.

Table 2 - Results of video comparison

Question	Video 1		Video 2	
	Mean	SD	Mean	Video 2
I would most likely purchase the product shown in the video.	3.26	0.83	2.87	0.96
I would most likely purchase the product shown in the video.	3.29	0.87	2.92	0.94
I would possibly tend to purchase the product shown in the video.	3.39	1.02	2.93	0.94
I would try the product shown in the video in the near future.	3.51	1.04	3.18	1.01

Source: authors' table.

To assess whether the means of the two groups significantly differ, a t-test was conducted. The result showed a significant difference between Video 1 and Video 2 ($p = .0014 < .05$). In particular, the analysis revealed stronger purchasing intention in relation to Video 1 (M=3.36, SD=0.94) compared to Video 2 (M=2.97, SD=0.96). Video 1 had a greater number of views, likes, and comments. The result suggested that videos with more views, likes, and comments tend to increase respondents' purchase intention.

4.3 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests were performed to determine the suitability of our factors (PU, PC, PVS, ATP, and PI) for further examination. In particular, the KMO measure of sampling adequacy test was conducted to examine the strength of the partial correlation between variables. Common rules suggest that values above 0.60 are acceptable. In our case, the test ranged between 0.70 and 0.85, indicating that the sample was adequate. Next, Bartlett's sphericity test was used to assess whether the correlations in the data were strong enough for factor analysis. The result showed a significant value ($p<0.05$) of the test, indicating that it was possible to proceed with the analysis of the factors.

4.4 FACTOR ANALYSIS

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the existence of relationships between the factors in our model. To establish whether the construct indicators measured the same concept and were different from other constructs, several tests were performed on the data. In particular, the item loading ranged between 0.714 and 0.825; Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) were all within the expected ranges (HAIR *et al.*, 2021). The following table summarizes the results.

Table 3 - Results from Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Construct	Item	Mean	SD	Factor Loading	C's alpha	CR	AVE
Perceived Usefulness	PU1	3.72	0.864	0.650	0.872	0.718	0.591
	PU2	3.74	0.908	0.641			
	PU3	3.86	0.873	0.684			
	PU4	3.92	0.873	0.714			
Perceived Credibility	PC1	3.33	0.879	0.769	0.925	0.862	0.609
	PC2	3.18	0.92	0.778			
	PC3	3.31	0.919	0.801			
	PC4	3.32	0.942	0.774			
Perceived Video Characteristics	PVC1	4.00	0.857	0.795	0.810	0.849	0.587
	PVC2	4.07	0.828	0.824			
	PVC3	4.02	0.899	0.804			
	PVC4	3.31	1.016	0.726			
Attitude Towards the Purchase	ATP1	3.56	0.911	0.745	0.861	0.745	0.611
	ATP2	3.30	0.96	0.777			
	ATP3	3.54	0.895	0.726			
Purchase Intention	PI1	3.35	0.943	0.780	0.897	0.816	0.722
	PI2	3.50	0.934	0.762			
	PI3	3.49	0.939	0.749			
	PI4	3.64	1.044	0.734			

Evaluation criteria based on Hair et al. (2021): Loadings >0.70; Cronbach's Alpha: >0.70; Composite Reliability: >0.70; AVE: >0.50.

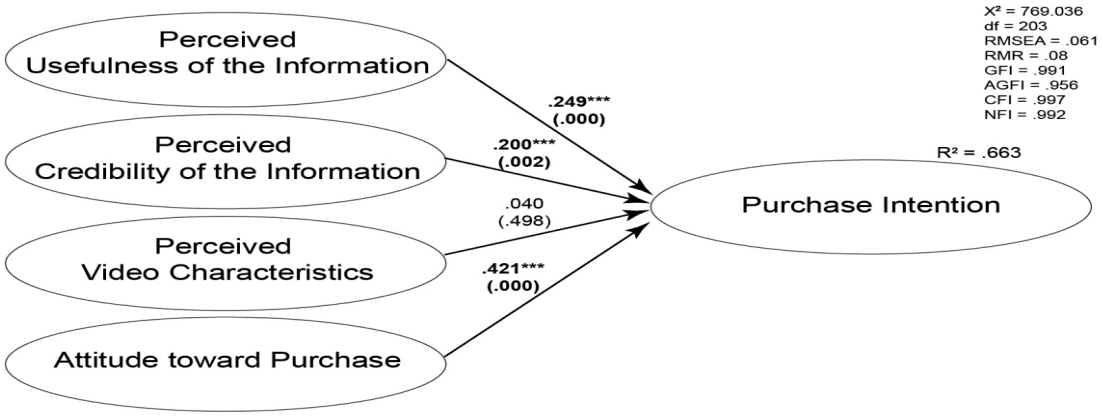
4.5 STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) returned values between 2.470 and 2.719, which was below the recommended value of 3 (HAIR *et al*., 2021)a free software environment for statistical computing, which runs on Windows, macOS, and UNIX computer platforms. Adopting the R software's SEMinR package, which brings a friendly syntax to creating and estimating structural equation models, each chapter offers a concise overview of relevant topics and metrics, followed by an in-depth description of a case study. Simple instructions give readers the "how-tos" of using SEMinR to obtain solutions and document their results. Rules of thumb in every chapter provide guidance on best practices in the application and interpretation of PLS-SEM.","ISBN":"978-1-5443-9640-8","note":"DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-80519-7","source":"ResearchGate","title":"A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM, and therefore excluded collinearity issues. Our model explained 66.3% of the target construct variance (R2 = 0.663), which is regarded as a moderate to substantial explanatory power (HAIR *et al*., 2021)a free software environment for statistical computing, which runs on Windows, macOS, and UNIX computer platforms. Adopting the R software's SEMinR package, which brings a friendly syntax to creating and estimating structural equation models, each chapter offers a concise overview of relevant topics and metrics, followed by an in-depth description of a case study. Simple instructions give readers the "how-tos" of using SEMinR to obtain solutions and document their results. Rules of thumb in every chapter provide guidance on best practices in the application and interpretation of PLS-SEM.","ISBN":"978-1-5443-9640-

8”,”note”:”DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-80519-7”,”source”:”ResearchGate”,”title”:”A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM. A closer examination of the structural paths showed that ATP had the strongest impact on the target variable PI (β = .421), followed by PU (β = .249), PC (β = .200), and PVC (β = .040).

As a measure of model fit, the Chi-square value assesses the magnitude of discrepancy between the sample and fitted covariances matrices (HU; BENTLER, 1999). In our model, the chi-square resulted in 3.788, which is acceptable (HU; BENTLER, 1999). An alternative measure of model fit is the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), which should be less than .070 (STEIGER, 2007). In our case, the RMSEA resulted in .061, which indicates an acceptable value. Therefore, model fit was established. The following figure illustrates the results.

Figure 2 - Model Results



Note: t-values thresholds at one-tailed test of alpha = .05 and 204 resamples: +t (.050, 203) = 1.645; *t (.010, 203) = 2.327; **t (.005, 203) = 2.576; ***t (.001, 203) = 3.091

4.6 EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The results showed that perceived usefulness of information (β = .249, p = .000 <.05), perceived credibility of the information (β = .200, p = .002 <.05) and attitude toward purchase (β = .421, p = .000 <.05) had positive and significant direct effects to purchase intentions, which provides support for H1, H2 and H4. It was found perceived credibility of the information (β = .040, p = .678 >.05) was not supported in the model, thus H3 was rejected. The results are summarized in the following table.

Table 4 - Results of Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses	β	t-value	p-value	Supported
H1: Perceived usefulness of the information positively affects purchase intentions.	0.249	3.811	.000	Yes
H2: Perceived credibility of the information positively affects purchase intentions.	0.200	3.095	0.002	Yes
H3: Perceived video characteristics positively affect purchase intentions.	0.04	0.678	0.498	No
H4: Attitude toward purchase positively affects purchase intentions.	0.421	6.214	.000	Yes

Source: authors' table. Note: t-values thresholds at one-tailed test of alpha = .05 and 204 resamples: +t (.050, 203) = 1.645; *t (.010, 203) = 2.327; **t (.005, 203) = 2.576; ***t (.001, 203) = 3.091

5 DISCUSSION

Female consumers in Macau expressed generally positive intentions toward the purchase of beauty-related products after being exposed to related videos on YouTube. More precisely, the study showed that our model explained 66,3% of the variance in the target construct, a satisfactory result considering a framework based on four independent variables. The analysis supported the explanatory and predictive accuracy of the paths in the model. Despite a positive relationship between perceived video characteristics and intention being confirmed, the analysis did not substantiate the significance of this result. As a result, three out of four proposed hypotheses were accepted.

In particular, positive and significant relationships were observed between the factors of perceived usefulness, perceived credibility, and attitude concerning the behavioral intention to purchase beauty and cosmetics products. In our study, 'attitude' resulted as the strongest predictor of intention, in line with previous research (FISHBEIN; AJZEN, 2011) postulating that the stronger the intention toward an object, the more likely it is to execute the corresponding behavior.

The perceived usefulness of the information is depicted in several studies as an important element affecting consumers' purchase intention (BOUHLEL *et al.,* 2010; HSU ; LIN; CHIANG, 2013; CHO; SAGYNOV, 2015; YÜKSEL, 2016), and our research is in this direction, suggesting that this construct significantly affects the intention to purchase beauty and cosmetics products. In our study, the perceived credibility of the information also had a significant impact on purchase intentions. Chu and Kamal (2008) noted that reliable sources of information help develop consumers' attitudes. Thus, perceived credibility is an important factor in our context as it can positively influence both attitudes (MIR; ZAHEER, 2012) and purchase intentions (HSU; TSOU, 2011). In our context, the perceived characteristics of the videos (such as length, quality, visuals, etc.) tend not to impact significantly on consumers' purchase intentions. Orús, Gurrea, and Flavián (2017) noted that these characteristics are helpful, however, they may have the opposite effect when they become the focus of the video. This suggests that when consumers cannot perceive other benefits, such as whether the content is useful and credible, the video's characteristics do not increase purchase intentions.

6 CONCLUSION

Our study indicated that beauty-related videos on YouTube significantly influence female consumers in Macau. In particular, videos with more views, likes, and comments tend to increase respondents' purchase intention. The result, in particular, showed that the perceived usefulness of the information perceived credibility of the information, and attitude toward the purchase in the context of YouTube impact the behavioral intention of female customers to buy beauty and cosmetic products. In our context, perceived video characteristics did not affect purchase intentions. However, this result suggests that viewers may take for granted some basic characteristics of the videos (such as image quality and visuals), so these shouldn't be overlooked in the planning and production stages.

Our findings have relevance for those looking to create beauty-related product experience videos on YouTube or become influencers on this platform. It is suggested that content creators follow some guidelines, and in particular:

a) the content of the videos must be realistic;
b) the average length of videos should be approximately 3 minutes;
c) authors should engage with professional KOLs having established reputations and loyal followers;
d) strategies should be employed to enhance the numbers of views, likes, and comments, and;
e) the quality characteristics of the videos should not be underestimated.

Some viewers may still think that such communications are simply product advertisements with paid actors. To avoid this occurrence and make viewers relate to the product, content creators should also feature ordinary people endorsing the merchandise.

To conclude, this research has advanced knowledge of females' purchase intentions by highlighting some of the factors that should be taken into consideration when planning and creating beauty and cosmetics videos on YouTube. The study has also put forward suggestions for practitioners.

7 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Some limitations need to be acknowledged. In particular, the design opted for a convenience sampling method under the assumption that respondents were similar to the overall target population, which may not be the case. Also, the research used a quantitative approach to assess the relationship between variables. To understand the phenomenon in detail, a complementary qualitative approach is also recommended to deepen the understanding of the various relationships. More importantly, our study did not evaluate how behavioral intention translates into the corresponding action of purchasing beauty and cosmetic products. It is therefore suggested that future studies adopt a longitudinal approach to improve the knowledge in this area and be able to provide potential customers with a better beauty and cosmetics product experience on YouTube.

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