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RESEARCH ARTICLE



Exploring the impact of travel vlog attributes on silver tourists' behavioural intentions: the role of cognitive and emotional resonance

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of different stimuli in travel vlogs on the responses of silver tourists. A particular focus is on the effects of cognitive and emotional resonance. A total of 376 valid questionnaires were collected from Chinese nationals aged 50 years and older. The results indicate that certain attributes of travel vlogs, namely information usefulness, vlogger's attractiveness, para-social interaction, and audio-visual stimuli, can positively influence the behavioural intentions of silver tourists. In addition, emotional resonance tends to play a more important role in the responses of silver tourists than cognitive resonance. The results suggest that travel vlogs could serve as effective tools for destination marketers aiming to gain a competitive advantage in the silver tourism sector. In addition, in the process of developing or selecting travel vlog content, it is essential for marketing professionals to incorporate informative travel messages accompanied by high-quality audio-visual elements.

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Silver tourists; social media marketing; video marketing; travel vlog; resonance; S-O-R model

1. Introduction

The population profile is now ageing not only in the developed world but also in many developing regions (UN, 2024). In China, for example, over 487 million citizens are aged 50 and above (National Development and Reform Commission, 2023). Like many European countries, China has been making increased efforts to provide for the consumption requirements of people who are 50 years and older: the so-called 'silver generation'. This includes the introduction of a comprehensive framework for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services tailored specifically for the older consumer (Financial Times, 2024). A report presented to the national legislature by the National Development and Reform Commission advocates for the development of the 'silver economy' through the cultivation of new products and the implementation of higher standards to guide producers and service providers (NDRC, 2022). The silver generation, which is characterised by having increased leisure time and disposable income, is considered distinct from the middle-aged demographic, which often struggles with job uncertainty and financial difficulties. This silver generation now represents nearly 20% of all outbound tourism in China (Ryder, 2025). It is further estimated that around half of all domestic tourists will be silver tourists by 2040 (Ryder, 2025). Given

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that this age group also includes senior tourists and elderly tourists, it has become a vital segment of the world tourism market (Huang & Hu, 2024; Zsarnoczky et al., 2016).

While it is often presumed that older people are digital non-adopters, such a supposition is increasingly being questioned. While the older generation has undoubtedly been slower than their younger counterparts to adopt digital technologies, the digital divide is now narrowing. In China, for example, elderly population has gradually adapted to the digital society, there being now 170 million older people engaging with the internet, the digital penetration rate being 43.2% in 2023 (Lu, 2024). A significant portion of the Chinese population is now able to engage beyond the basic functions of smartphones like calling and texting. Ever-increasing numbers are now able to complete online activities such as submitting 'health codes' (an electronic system used to track people's travel to prevent the spread of health risks), purchasing groceries, searching for information, and consuming video content (CNNIC, 2024). Zhang et al. (2024) note the changing attitude and engagement behaviours of silver tourists when interacting with advertising on social media platforms. In terms of tourism, 44% of tourists in the silver age bracket consume photo-text or video contents via social media (Buzulukova & Lobova, 2023).

Those in the silver generation are not merely recipients of content. An increasing number of older people have become active participants in various social media platforms (Köttl et al., 2022). There has also been an increase in popularity of older digital influencers, sometimes referred to as 'grandfluencers'. A compelling instance is 83-year-old Granny Wang, who began using social media in her seventies, and has built a following of 1.2 million people in the Douyin area who view the vlogs she posts showcasing her distinctive fashion style (Yue, 2024). Through the sharing of content, older audiences are afforded the opportunity to be inspired and acquire knowledge regarding various products and services (Antunes et al., 2022).

Given the increasing incidence of older content creators on social media platforms, along with the growing importance of the silver tourist market, three significant gaps can be noted in the extant research. Firstly, the impact of social media marketing on older travellers is less frequently examined, particularly in the context of travel vlogs (Zhong et al., 2021). Leung et al. (2025) demonstrated that the impact of travel influencers on the destination choices of older tourists can be significantly shaped by age cues and travel activity type. Their study did not, however, address the effect of travel vlog attributes.

Secondly, current studies linked to social media marketing have focused predominantly on younger demographic groups, especially millennials and Generation Z (Bui, 2022). This reflects the view that technology adopters and innovators are almost always younger people. Organisational marketing strategies have frequently therefore been tailored to appeal to younger consumers (Eisend, 2022). In addition, media representation during the Covid-19 pandemic depicted older adults as vulnerable and passive individuals who are reliant on families, public institutions, and governments (Li, 2021; Zhang & Liu, 2021). These unfavourable attitudes towards older people have resulted in this cohort being overlooked and undervalued. While some commentators have acknowledged that businesses need to provide different marketing communication strategies for this segment since they behave differently (Yannopoulou et al., 2023), comprehension of the silver generation's usage of marketing content remains limited (Bubphapant & Brandão, 2024).

Thirdly, despite there having been many studies examining the utilisation of ICT among senior travellers (Suwannakoot & Paireekreng, 2024; Wang et al., 2017), including those from China, such investigations have focused primarily on the digital divide and the barriers associated with digital access for older people (Wu & Yang, 2023; Xu et al., 2023). This serves to overlook the increasing use of the internet by older people, particularly in view of the catalyst for digital engagement provide by the Covid-19 pandemic (Martínez-Alcalá et al., 2021).

Recent studies have, indeed, applied the resonance theory to investigate the mechanism of travel vlog marketing (Cheng et al., 2020; Ramadania et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2023). Resonance theory originates from sociological research and focuses on the cognitive and emotional consequences of an individual's experiences (Giorgi, 2017). Researchers have applied this theory to interpret how an

audience can match the information they are receiving to their internal worldview when using an online platform (Camilleri & Kozak, 2022). Previous research has verified that the resonance generated during this process had a positive impact on destination image, travel intention, and word-of-mouth (WOM) intentions (Cheng et al., 2020; Mohanty et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023, 2024). Regarding the significance of the silver tourism market and the digital performance of silver individuals, social media content in general, and travel vlogs in particular, can be considered potential marketing tools to arouse resonance among silver tourists.

In view of the policy emphasis on developing and reforming the silver tourism economy in China (National Development and Reform Commission, 2024), this study aims to examine the impact of travel vlogs on the behavioural intentions of silver tourists. In doing so, it aims to address pertinent gaps in the literature. Drawing on the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model as its theoretical foundation, the study investigates the underlying mechanisms that silver tourists experience when exposed to marketing messages presented in travel vlogs. The S-O-R model is considered appropriate to investigate tourists' responses to media generated using advanced technology and viewed on digital device before or during travel (Huang, 2023; Jiang & Phoong, 2024). As such, the study aims to help fill a significant theoretical gap in terms of the understanding the digital behaviour of silver tourists.

The study focuses particularly on the mediating effects of cognitive and emotional resonance experienced by silver tourists, based on the principles of the resonance theory. In doing so, the study offers theoretical insights into the psychological processes involved in travel decision making on the part of silver tourists, taking into consideration both cognitive and emotional dimensions. Practically, the findings provide valuable lessons for destination marketers and vlog creators in their selection of social media content aimed at silver tourists.

2. Literature review

2.1. Stimulus – organism – response model

The S-O-R model, which was introduced by Mehrabian and Russell in 1974, further elaborates upon the stimulus-response (S-R) model that itself originated in the field of behaviourism (Baber & Baber, 2023; Li et al., 2022). The S-O-R model is used to investigate the influence of environmental stimuli (S) on an individual's psychological reactions (O), as well as the resulting attitudinal and behavioural responses (R). Recent research has utilised this model to examine the relationship between social media marketing activities (stimuli or external factors), resonance (organism), and behavioural intention (response or behavioural response) (Wang et al., 2023, 2024). The model has been applied to investigate consumer behaviour in a digital context, notably in the context of online shopping and booking (Le et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2019). It has also been used to examine the effect of virtual-reality tourism-related activities on tourist behavioural responses (Jiang & Phoong, 2024; Kim et al., 2020).

The S-O-R model has recently also been adopted as a framework for analysing the role of digital influencers, including vloggers, offering a structured methodology to elucidate the connections between the constructs that account for both cognitive and emotional dimensions of tourist behaviour (Li et al., 2022). Abbasi et al. (2022), for example, used the S-O-R model to examine the influence of travel vlog attributes on the travel intentions of Generation Z tourists, incorporating perceived value and attitude as mediating factors. Bai et al. (2023), meanwhile, examined the relationship between short form travel videos and visit intention, considering the effects of familiarity and behavioural involvement.

Previous studies that have adopted the S-O-R framework have demonstrated that it provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the emotional and behavioural responses of potential tourists when video-format marketing is involved (Bai et al., 2023; Chin & Wong, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2024; Sultan et al., 2021; Truong et al., 2024). The framework accommodates both internal

and external stimuli, as well as both experiential and non-experiential organisms, and both attitudinal and behavioural responses (Li et al., 2022; Yousaf, 2022). As such, it offers considerable flexibility for researchers to adapt it to specific study contexts.

2.2. Travel vlog attributes and resonance

2.2.1. Information usefulness

The concept of information usefulness, sometimes referred to as 'informativeness', is widely employed as an indicator for assessing the quality of information provided to a specific audience (Hussain et al., 2021). Information usefulness is defined as the extent to which individuals recognise information to be beneficial or valuable to them (Luo et al., 2018). This is especially relevant in the present digital era, where the internet has come to serve as the predominant channel for information seeking, acquisition, and adoption, thereby shaping consumer's purchasing behaviour (Phillips et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2013). Viewers of vlogs may draw upon information provided in vlogs when making their travel choices, which will be in the form of the experiential knowledge the travel vloggers build as they visit the destination (He et al., 2021). Some of this information is likely to be more useful in helping them to make their purchase decisions than others. Hence, the travel information provided through vlogs will vary in its usefulness.

The provision of useful information also serves to promote the establishment of resonance. When the information that individuals receive aligns with their expectations and meets their requirements, they are inclined to experience cognitive resonance with that information (McDonnell et al., 2017). The two main motivations to encourage viewers to watch vlogs are information acquisition and inspiration seeking (Dewantara et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown that either can elicit both cognitive and emotional resonance experiences (Cheng et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2023). Furthermore, when individuals encounter information they perceive to be both interesting and insightful, such content is more likely to promote conversation and emotional interactions with the audience (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). When this occurs, there is an increased likelihood that individuals will respond emotionally to the content (Shang et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2023). Furthermore, as the cognitive and affective needs of consumers are satisfied by the information they receive in vlog viewing, customers are more likely to participate in online discussion and share information with their peers (Wang et al., 2023). This study therefore adopts the following hypothesis pertaining to information usefulness, which is in two parts:

H1a Information usefulness has a positive impact on the cognitive resonance of silver tourists.

H1b Information usefulness has a positive impact on the emotional resonance of silver tourists.

2.2.2. Vlogger's attractiveness

The perceived attractiveness of a vlogger, as well as the credibility attributed to vloggers in certain instances, is acknowledged as a significant factor in the study of vlog marketing (Abbasi et al., 2022). Kim and Park (2023) suggest that the attractiveness of digital influencers can be categorised into two dimensions: physical attractiveness, which refers to the vlogger having an aesthetically pleasing appearance, and social attractiveness, which relates to a vlogger's likeability and the belief that a follower would choose the vlogger as a friend in real life (Liu et al., 2019). The aspect of physical attractiveness has been found to serve as the predominant element shaping the audience's initial perception when viewing a video, whereas social attractiveness exerts a beneficial influence in the context of interpersonal interactions. Research indicates that individuals are more likely to interact with those who are perceived as socially attractive on social media (Ladhari et al., 2020). Meanwhile, socially attractive vloggers are viewed as being more persuasive, which adds to their credibility due to the ability to orient and alter audiences' perceptions (McLaughlin & Wohn, 2021). AlFarraj et al. (2021) demonstrated that the social attractiveness, including the expertise

and trustworthiness of a vlogger, positively influence the purchase intentions of their followers. Dwyer et al. (2007) found that the trustworthiness of social media information significantly influences the consumption behaviour behaviours of elderly users.

Wang and Lin (2021) reported that the engagement of celebrity influencers with brands can be particularly persuasive to consumers, as it had a significant impact on customers' resonance with the brand. The attractiveness of vlog creators has been examined as a significant factor influencing the cognitive resonance experienced by vlog viewers (Cheng et al., 2020; Yu, 2021). Moreover, Gunawan et al. (2021) demonstrated that the credibility of celebrity influencer endorsements plays a significant role in shaping purchase intentions, with resonance-based attitudes serving as a mediating factor in this relationship. Hence, the following two-part hypothesis pertaining to vlogger's attractiveness is presented:

H2a Vlogger's attractiveness has a positive impact on the cognitive resonance of silver tourists.

H2b Vlogger's attractiveness has a positive impact on the emotional resonance of silver tourists.

2.2.3. Para-social interaction

In addition to the vlogger's attractiveness, the interaction between vloggers and their audiences, as well as the para-social relationships, are considered critical components in the realm of vlog marketing (Wu & Lai, 2024). This is because one of the definitive characteristics of social media is its interactivity. According to the definition provided by Horton and Wohl (1956), para-social interaction pertains to the relationship established between a media user and a media persona, whereby the individual perceives the persona to be a close conversational partner and to respond to them in a manner that is consistent with such a perception. As a vlog increases the vividness of the experience shared by vloggers through its visual elements, the perceived intimacy can be enhanced, thereby encouraging the emergence of para-social interaction that can then go on to influence behaviour of viewers (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Chen et al. (2021) reported that the information-related factors (perceived information usefulness), vlogger-related factors (vlogger's attractiveness), interactivity-related factors (perceived interaction) of travel vlogs all had a positive impact on study participants' willingness to travel. The para-social interaction formed through viewing vlogs thus plays a significant role in enhancing the credibility of influencers, which in turn fosters greater trust in brands and positively influences consumers' intentions to make purchases (Reinikainen et al., 2020).

The phenomenon of resonance arises from such interactions (Hu, 2023). Shang et al. (2017) found that the strength of relationship between consumers and brands plays a crucial role in influencing customer resonance, which ultimately impacts upon purchase intention. When audiences have a meaningful para-social interaction with vloggers, they will experience strengthened resonance and pay more attention to the video content, consequently affecting their attitudes towards the vlog. It can therefore be hypothesised that the connection between positive emotions, such as relaxation and enjoyment, and the attitudes of audience members towards the video, may be enhanced when they experience a strong parasocial interaction with the internet celebrity (Wu & Lai, 2024). The hypothesis associated with para-social interaction, which is in two parts, is thus:

H3a Para-social interaction has a positive impact on the cognitive resonance of silver tourists.

H3b Para-social interaction has a positive impact on the emotional resonance of silver tourists.

2.2.4. Audio-visual stimuli

The significance of audio-visual stimuli in shaping the mood of audience members and their willingness to respond to the video should not be overlooked. In face-to-face interactions, individuals are given the opportunity to engage multiple senses, which enables them to perceive other individuals or objects more fully. With a screen between them and the vlogger, however, audience members are limited to perceiving the individual and the object using only sight and hearing (Sundar & Limperos,

2013). Vlogs tend to use the visual element to attempt to capture the consumer's attention by constructing an engaging narrative about the destination, its local communities, and the distinctive attractions the vlogger encounters during their visit (Simmonds et al., 2020). The use of auditory elements, including script, vocal tone, and musical accompaniment, is also used to build audience engagement (Razak & Zulkifly, 2020). The integration of visual and auditory elements in video presentations has been found to facilitate improved recall among consumers, particularly among the elderly demographic (Bubphapant & Brandão, 2024).

Liu (2009) suggested that the application of audio-visual language in advertising can enhance artistic expression and evoke psychological resonance within audiences. The alignment of viewers' aesthetic preferences with the aesthetic elements manifested in audio-visual media, including videos and films, facilitates a resonance with the content, thereby fulfilling their aesthetic expectations. Mardhatilah et al. (2023) found that both visual and auditory stimuli had a substantial impact on the cognitive processes of tourists, thereby enhancing their engagement with social media content. Cao (2024) highlighted that content with the attributes of speed, intuitiveness, and ease of consumption, enabled creators to communicate with audiences through audio-visual elements that can stimulate strong emotions. Consequently, the process of information transmission surpasses mere exchange of information, turning the experience into an emotional one. Effective communication has the potential to swiftly trigger resonance among audience members, which increases the effectiveness of the content. Based on previous studies, the two-part hypothesis related to audio-visual stimuli is:

H4a Audio-visual stimuli has a positive impact on the cognitive resonance of silver tourists.

H4b Audio-visual stimuli has a positive impact on the emotional resonance of silver tourists.

2.3. Resonance and behavioural intention

The theory of resonance has often been applied in the field of media studies to examine the mechanisms through which media can shape discourse and enhance the cognitive processes of audiences in their comprehension of the world (Cerulo, 2010). In the context of online video consumption, videos may have the ability to engage viewers effectively, fostering an intimate feeling of connection with the content. This connection, referred to as resonance by Rosa (2017), is understood as a way of responding to the world in which individuals feel influenced or affected by the people, places, or things they encounter. McDonnell et al. (2017) describe the concept of resonance as the congruence between a communicated message and the prevailing worldview of its audience. Resonance emerges from the psychological responses of consumers, which are activated by the mass of information posted on social media and are enhanced by cognitive engagement and emotional connections with such content (Riegner, 2007; Russell, 2009). This, in turn, can play a significant role in influencing purchase intentions. Consequently, the measurement of consumer resonance represents an attempt to explore the extent to which consumers exhibit cognitive and emotional reactions to information (Shang et al., 2017).

Cognitive resonance arises when the content aligns with the beliefs, values, and understandings held by the audience, whereas emotional resonance is generated through the emotional responses of the audience, which encompass feelings, passion, and aspirations (Cheng et al., 2020; Giorgi, 2017). In modern digital environments, advanced algorithms deliver tailored content based on viewer's preferences and behavioural patterns, creating echo chambers that generate cognitive resonance (Bakshy et al., 2015; Helberger et al., 2018). This strengthens individuals' perceptions, leading to higher levels of engagement and belief reinforcement (Tufekci, 2015). Regarding emotional resonance, Ramadania et al. (2025) stated that emotional resonance can be built when the destination's projected brand connects with tourists' feelings which further leads to travel intention.

The interpretation of cognitive and emotional resonance can be varied according to the research context. Cognitive resonance is more related to familiarity, novelty, information acquisition, and

source credibility, while emotional resonance is associated with self-congruence, entertainment, inspiration and escapism (Cheng et al., 2020; Giorgi, 2017; McDonnell et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2023; Yu, 2021). The relationship between cognitive resonance and emotional resonance is considered complex and multifaceted. Wang (2021) stated that research has often concentrated on the emotional element of resonance, thereby overlooking the cognitive dimension. The alignment of video or film content with the cognition, ideas, and beliefs of the audience can result in a resonance that can evoke emotions, thereby provoking feelings and responses. In studies by Giorgi (2017) and Yu (2021), cognitive resonance and emotional resonance are considered to interpenetrate one another. The two elements collaboratively reinforce the connection between travel vlogs and their audience, consequently underscoring the importance of both cognitive and emotional resonance when evaluating audience responses (Giorgi, 2017; McDonnell et al., 2017).

An individual who reacts to external stimuli, particularly within the context of travel vlogs, can thus be expected to experience both cognitive and emotional resonance. This ultimately leads to behavioural response. In the present case, this would be a behavioural intention to purchase featured travel services. Wider academic research highlights the relationship between resonance and the willingness to purchase or travel. Wan (2008) suggested that resonance, incorporating both cognitive and emotional dimensions, can function as a mediating factor in the relationship between attitude and behavioural intention. The cognitive and emotional resonance encountered during the viewing of travel vlogs can therefore be considered to play a crucial role in shaping travel intentions, as demonstrated by the research conducted by Cheng et al. (2020) and Yu (2021). Zhang et al. (2021) further identified the influence of social resonance on the enhancement of recommend intention on e-commerce platforms. Thus, in the present case, the expected behavioural intention of silver tourists includes the intention to travel and the intention to recommend online (Cheng et al., 2020; Shirmohammadi et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2021). Based on previous studies, the two-part hypothesis related to resonance is:

H5a Cognitive resonance has a positive impact on the behavioural intention of silver tourists.

H5b Emotional resonance has a positive impact on the behavioural intention of silver tourists.

The present study thus hypothesises that cognitive and emotional resonance may mediate the relationship between various stimuli contained in vlogs and viewer's intention to visit the destination and/or recommend it to others. The proposed conceptual framework and hypotheses of this study is presented in Figure 1.

3. Method

3.1. Research instrument

This study utilised a quantitative research approach using a questionnaire. The questionnaire employed a seven-point Likert-type scale for measurement purposes. The scale was anchored with 1 representing strongly disagree and 7 indicating strongly agree. The survey, consisting of 47 questions, was organised into two sections: (1) demographic variables comprising five questions, and (2) items to measure constructs such as information usefulness (Chen et al., 2021; Khan, 2017), vlogger's attractiveness (Choi & Lee, 2019; Le & Hancer, 2021), para-social interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Lee & Watkins, 2016), audio-visual stimuli (Haase et al., 2020; Yoon & Lee, 2022; John and De Villiers, 2024), cognitive resonance (Cheng et al., 2020; Yu, 2021), emotional resonance (Cheng et al., 2020; Yu, 2021), and behavioural intention (Chen et al., 2021; Foroudi et al., 2018; Shang et al., 2017) (42 questions). Among these, information usefulness, vlogger's attractiveness, para-social interaction and audio-visual stimuli are considered the common characteristics or factors of vlogs which can be employed as the stimuli of vlog consumption (Chen et al., 2021; Li & Zhao, 2023; Zhang et al., 2024); cognitive and emotional resonance are viewed as psychological or internal status of silver tourists (Cheng et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2023; Yu, 2021); and behavioural intention, comprising travel

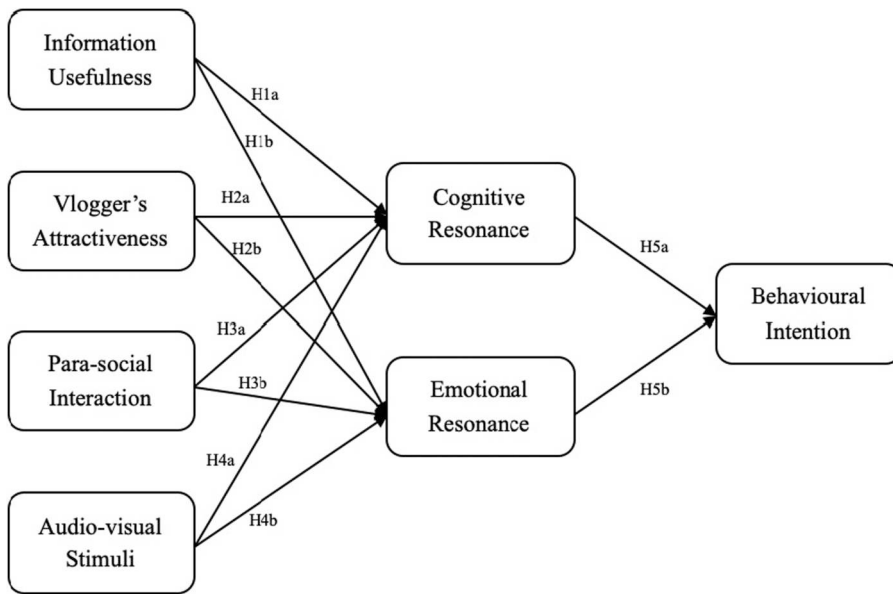


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework.

intention and intention to recommend online, is considered the response on the part of silver tourists (Cheng et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021).

3.2. Data sample and data collection

This study employed a sample of individuals aged 50 years and older (Huang & Hu, 2024; Zsarnoczky et al., 2016). A non-probability sampling method, using a purposive sampling technique, was employed to gather data. This involved the selection of sample participants based on an unequal probability of any specific respondent being included in the sample (Hidayat et al., 2024; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The research was launched using the online platform Credamo and targeted Chinese nationals. Credamo requests that those who want to be registered members fill out an electronic form with their personal information. Hence, the researcher can select the age range and design filter questions to approach proper participants (Ji et al., 2024; Li & Zhou, 2024). The questionnaire commenced with the following screening questions designed to determine the eligibility of the respondents: (1) Have you travelled during the past three years? (2) Have you watched travel vlogs in the past three months? All the items were translated into Chinese with two researchers conducting back translation and one bilingual researcher evaluating the translation. The final survey took respondents an average of around five minutes to complete and was open from 10 March to 2 April 2024.

The sample size was calculated utilising G*Power, where a statistical power of 0.95 and effect size of 0.15 required a minimum sample of 299 participants. A total of 410 respondents who fully met the qualification criteria were recruited, thus comfortably exceeding this minimum (Li & Zhou, 2024). As previously noted, individuals registering as members of Credamo are required to submit their personal information through an electronic form. Following a detailed review of the personal data of registered members, including gender, birth and age, utilising advanced big data analytics techniques, Credamo distributed the questionnaire link only to prospective respondents who fulfil the necessary criteria, in this case Chinese individuals aged 50 years and older. Thirty-four responses were excluded due to the lack of usable data. The size of final data set was thus 376, representing an effective response rate of 91.7%.

4. Results

4.1. Participant characteristics

Of the 376 valid respondents, 43.9% were males and 56.1% females. Regarding the age range, individuals in their 50s represented the largest group of participants, with 36.2% aged 50–54 and 46.0% aged 55–59, followed by 14.4% aged 60–64, and 2.1% aged 65–69. In terms of travel experiences, 44.1% of participants had travelled between four and six times in the past three years, while 33.5% reported a higher frequency of travel in the same period. [Table 1](#) displays an overview of the participant's demographic information.

4.2. Assessment of measurement model

The results pertaining to the reliability and validity analysis are presented in [Tables 2](#) and [3](#). [Table 2](#) presents the outer loadings of all items, each exceeding the threshold of 0.70, as established by Hair et al. (2019). The values of Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs fell within the range of 0.866–0.919, surpassing the established threshold of 0.80. Furthermore, the composite reliability was found to exceed the threshold of 0.70, as recommended by Hair et al. (2019). The average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded the established threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019). Therefore, all measurement variables within this study converged to the corresponding latent variables, demonstrating that the reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model were acceptable.

The heterotrait – monotrait ratio (HTMT) of correlations, as proposed by Henseler et al. (2015), is widely recommended for the evaluation of discriminant validity. Issues related to discriminant validity arise when HTMT values are high. Henseler et al. (2015) propose a threshold value of 0.90 for structural models with constructs exhibiting a high degree of conceptual similarity. [Table 3](#) demonstrates that the value of HTMT is below 0.90, indicating that the model possesses acceptable discriminant validity.

Since this study applied self-reported data collected from questionnaire, there is potential common method bias. The variance inflation factor (VIF) is used to evaluate to identify the degree of multicollinearity. Through bootstrapping sampling 5,000 times after adding the random variable, the VIF between the variables ranged from 1.294–1.668, which is lower than 3.3, suggesting that the model can be considered free of common method bias (Kock, 2015; Liu & Meng, 2024).

Table 1. Demographic profile of the sample.

Variable	Category	N = 426	%
Gender	Male	191	43.9
	Female	235	56.1
Age	50–54	136	36.2
	55–59	173	46.0
	60–64	54	14.4
	65–69	8	2.1
	70 and above	5	1.3
	Junior school and below	21	5.6
Education level	High school	119	31.6
	Bachelors degree	214	56.9
	Masters degree and above	22	5.9
Time spent watching videos	Less than 1 h	12	3.2
	1–2 h	181	48.1
	3–4 h	163	43.4
	5 h and above	20	5.3
Travel experience in recent 3 years	1–3 times	84	22.3
	4–6 times	166	44.1
	7 times and above	126	33.5

Table 2. Results of reliability and convergent validity.

Items	Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Rho_C	AVE
Information Usefulness		0.869	0.910	0.718
IU1	0.866			
IU2	0.861			
IU3	0.813			
IU4	0.847			
Vlogger's Attractiveness		0.885	0.913	0.636
VA1	0.749			
VA2	0.791			
VA3	0.812			
VA4	0.862			
VA5	0.778			
VA6	0.788			
Para-social Interaction		0.919	0.935	0.673
PSI1	0.777			
PSI2	0.834			
PSI3	0.854			
PSI4	0.857			
PSI5	0.813			
PSI6	0.785			
PSI7	0.818			
Audio-visual Stimuli		0.917	0.934	0.669
AVS1	0.833			
AVS2	0.832			
AVS3	0.819			
AVS4	0.750			
AVS5	0.843			
AVS6	0.819			
AVS7	0.825			
Cognitive Resonance		0.866	0.903	0.650
CR1	0.848			
CR2	0.819			
CR3	0.798			
CR4	0.781			
CR5	0.784			
Emotional Resonance		0.888	0.912	0.598
ER1	0.787			
ER2	0.798			
ER3	0.770			
ER4	0.749			
ER5	0.781			
ER6	0.811			
ER7	0.713			
Behavioural Intention		0.868	0.901	0.604
BI1	0.773			
BI2	0.823			
BI3	0.816			
BI4	0.774			
BI5	0.719			
BI6	0.751			

Table 3. Results of HTMT value,

	IU	VA	PSI	AVS	CR	ER	BI
IU							
VA	0.451						
PSI	0.425	0.606					
AVS	0.406	0.423	0.516				
CR	0.606	0.660	0.573	0.527			
ER	0.498	0.416	0.585	0.761	0.549		
BI	0.497	0.460	0.690	0.689	0.559	0.870	

Note: IU = Information Usefulness, VA = Vlogger's Attractiveness, PSI = Para-social Interaction, AVS = Audio-visual Stimuli, CR = Cognitive Resonance, ER = Emotional Resonance, BI = Behavioural Intention

4.3. Assessment of structural model

The R^2 statistic is commonly used to assess in-sample predictive power (Rigdon, 2012). Table 4 shows that the coefficients of R^2 for the constructed cognitive resonance, emotional resonance, and behavioural intention were 0.498, 0.550, and 0.607 respectively. This indicates that the six variables – information usefulness, vlogger's attractiveness, para-social interaction, audio-visual stimuli, cognitive resonance, and emotional resonance – collectively accounted for over 50 percent of the variance in the dependent variable of behavioural intention. Furthermore, the four independent constructs demonstrated a significant contribution, accounting for 49.8% of R^2 in relation to cognitive resonance and 55.0% of R^2 concerning emotional resonance. Regarding Q^2 , the value of Q^2 of each dependent variable should be greater than zero (Hair et al., 2019). The Q^2 values for the three dependent variables presented in Table 4 did indeed exceed zero, confirming that the model possesses predictive relevance.

The data were then used to construct and test a structural model using partial least-squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings from the structural model, along with the hypothesis testing concerning the direct effects between the independent and dependent variables, are presented in Table 5. The results provide support for hypotheses H1a ($\beta = 0.272$; $p < 0.001$) and H1b ($\beta = 0.169$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that the information usefulness had a positive impact on both cognitive and emotional resonance. The findings further confirm H2a ($\beta = 0.323$; $p < 0.001$), suggesting that the vlogger's attractiveness positively affected cognitive resonance. Nonetheless, the findings did not support the influence of the vlogger's attractiveness on emotional resonance, thereby failing to verify hypothesis H2b ($\beta = -0.025$; $p > 0.05$). Para-social interaction demonstrated a positive effect on both cognitive and emotional resonance, thereby offering support for hypotheses H3a ($\beta = 0.155$; $p < 0.05$) and H3b ($\beta = 0.230$; $p < 0.01$). There was a significant correlation between audio-visual stimuli and both cognitive and emotional resonance, thereby supporting hypotheses H4a ($\beta = 0.178$; $p < 0.05$) and H4b ($\beta = 0.526$; $p < 0.001$). Lastly, both cognitive resonance and emotional resonance had a significant effect on behavioural intention, thereby supporting hypotheses H5a ($\beta = 0.154$; $p < 0.001$) and H5b ($\beta = 0.692$; $p < 0.05$) (Table 5).

5. Discussion and implications

The findings presented in this paper provide evidence of a positive impact of information usefulness, vlogger's attractiveness, para-social interaction, and audio-visual stimuli on cognitive resonance, aligning with previous studies. Silver tourists who are seeking travel information through vlogs experience a sense of cognitive resonance when they encounter content that is relevant and helpful for their trip planning (Hautz et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2023). The perceived trustworthiness and expertise of travel vloggers are regarded as indicators of social attractiveness of vloggers within the proposed framework, which accounts for variations in the degree of cognitive and emotional resonance (Benford & Snow, 2009; Zhang & Hung, 2020). Seçilmiş et al. (2022) further demonstrated that the level of expertise exhibited by travel influencers has a positive impact on the cognitive responses of their audience. When the perceived intimacy of silver tourists with influencers was higher due to greater para-social interaction, there was a notable enhancement in their familiarity with destinations and a greater comprehension of the tourist activities available there. This interaction also increased the probability of viewers aligning with the opinions and values of the influencer, ultimately leading to a higher degree of acceptance of the content (Liu

Table 4. R^2 and Q^2 value.

	R-square	Q-square
Cognitive Resonance	0.498	0.459
Emotional Resonance	0.550	0.514
Behavioural Intention	0.607	0.485

Table 5. Results of direct effect.

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	f^2	Confidence Intervals Bias	Result
H1a	IU→CR	0.272	3.469	0.001	0.114	[0.119, 0.426]	Supported
H1b	IU→ER	0.169	2.512	0.012	0.049	[0.049, 0.313]	Supported
H2a	VA→CR	0.323	3.944	0.000	0.134	[0.166, 0.488]	Supported
H2b	VA→ER	−0.025	0.266	0.715	0.001	[−0.172, 0.097]	Not supported
H3a	PSI→CR	0.155	2.218	0.033	0.029	[0.023, 0.304]	Supported
H3b	PSI→ER	0.230	2.761	0.006	0.071	[0.088, 0.409]	Supported
H4a	AVS→CR	0.178	2.347	0.019	0.045	[0.038, 0.337]	Supported
H4b	AVS→ER	0.526	6.545	0.000	0.445	[0.364, 0.677]	Supported
H5a	CR→BI	0.154	3.467	0.000	0.046	[0.068, 0.242]	Supported
H5b	ER→BI	0.692	18.289	0.013	0.925	[0.607, 0.759]	Supported

Note: IU = Information Usefulness, VA = Vlogger's Attractiveness, PSI = Para-social Interaction, AVS = Audio-visual Stimuli, CR = Cognitive Resonance, ER = Emotional Resonance, BI = Behavioural Intention

et al., 2019). As with previous studies, it was found that the visual perspective significantly influences the processes through which consumers engage with information and construct meaning from it (Libby & Eibach, 2011; Soliman et al., 2017). Regarding the audio dimension, this study confirms previous studies demonstrating that attitude toward a brand can become more positive if the audience considers that the feel of the music aligns well with the content of the advertisement (Karpasitis, 2017; North et al., 2004).

The impact of information usefulness, para-social interactions, and audio-visual stimuli on emotional resonance was also supported in this study. Information that corresponds with an individual's values, beliefs, or identity tends to be regarded as being more useful and emotionally resonant (Giorgi, 2017). The interactive experience from engaging with comments and responses from both vloggers and fellow viewers tends to encourage the development of emotional resonance (Li et al., 2023). The portrayal of recreational activities and destination landscapes in travel vlogs, achieved through various video-production techniques, has the potential to enhance tourists' imagination, subsequently creating an emotional resonance with the content (Xu et al., 2021).

The rejection of the significant relationship between vlogger's attractiveness and emotional resonance presents, however, a contradiction to previous findings (Agitashera et al., 2020; Sunuantari et al., 2023). This could possibly be attributed to the role of social attractiveness in shaping consumers' cognitive processes (Lewis & Walsh, 1978). When tourists perceive a travel vlogger to be trustworthy and knowledgeable with respect to their content, a foundation exists of shared understanding, and potentially a collective objective, as well as an alertness or receptiveness to certain information (Ruthven, 2021). In this manner, a correspondence is established between the contents produced by vloggers and the cognition of the audience, leading to a resonance that originates from a pre-existing alignment with a particular stance, belief, or information related to the vlog's content. Fan et al. (2022), in contrast, reported that despite the popularity of social media influencers, the lack of authenticity led to less emotional attachment of older consumers. In addition, compared to influencer attractiveness, perceived familiarity and influencer-brand convergency had more impact on emotional engagement when mature consumers view social media content (Chan & Fan, 2022).

The findings further indicate that both cognitive and emotional resonance have a positive effect on the enhancement of behavioural intentions among silver tourists. Zhou et al. (2023) examined the relationship between resonance and the tourist flow experience while viewing travel vlogs, highlighting that an increase in resonance within the flow experience directly influenced travel intentions. Moreover, the results of this study align with the conclusions of Shang et al. (2017), which suggest a positive impact of resonance on the intention to purchase. Cheng et al. (2020) reached similar findings, indicating that both cognitive and emotional resonance positively influence the audience's intention to recommend a destination. Both cognitive and emotional satisfaction derived from the experience of social media usage significantly influences the intention to recommend the destination to peers (Dias et al., 2023).

The findings also suggest that emotional resonance holds greater significance for silver tourists in comparison to cognitive resonance. Silver tourists may encounter the challenge of cognitive overload resulting from visually orientated social media contents. Due to the effects of the ageing process on the brain, silver tourists may simply require more time and effort to perceive and process information. A significant proportion of current travel vlogs are, however, created with a focus on a younger audience, involving a large amount of information being relayed at high speed. When older viewers become overloaded with information, there may be a decreased involvement of cognitive resonance in achieving the intended marketing outcomes (Ketron et al., 2016).

It could also be possible that older adults attribute greater importance to emotional content, which subsequently enhances their recall of emotional information as opposed to purely cognitive information (Yoon et al., 2009). Some studies do indeed indicate that elderly consumers exhibit a greater preference for the advertisements that utilise emotional appeals compared to their younger counterparts (e.g. Williams & Drolet, 2005). The significance of addressing emotional demands is also highlighted in studies that have examined how persons from the silver generation interact with social media platforms (Li & Waycott, 2024). Posting content and sharing information facilitates the provision of emotional support for both content creators and vlog viewers, highlighting the reciprocal nature of this interaction. Consequently, the emotional needs of older individuals promote an increased emotional engagement or resonance with advertising content (Safrrou & Guiot, 2023), ultimately leading to a greater marketing impact of travel vlogs.

5.1. Theoretical implications

This study offers three main theoretical contributions. First, this study employs resonance as a mediating variable in the context of vlog marketing studies. In response to the study conducted by Wan (2008), this study empirically assesses the impact of resonance on the behavioural intentions of media audiences, offering a novel perspective on the relationship between travel vlogs and the behavioural intentions of silver tourists, particularly in relation to the effects of resonance. In addition, this research employed additional attributes, such as vlogger attractiveness, para-social interaction and audio-visual stimuli, as recommended by Wang et al. (2023), to examine the formation of resonance and behavioural intention.

Second, this study contributes to the applicability of resonance theory through an examination of both cognitive and emotional resonance. The comparative importance of the two distinct forms of resonance enhances the theoretical understanding of how resonance in general may influence consumers' behavioural tendencies. Moreover, this study also verified the effect of para-social interaction on resonance, thereby enriching the theory of para-social interaction.

Third, by developing and validating a novel research model based on the S-O-R framework, this study examines the applicability of vlog attributes, namely information usefulness, vlogger's attractiveness, para-social interaction and audio-visual stimuli, to influence the behavioural intentions of silver tourists. In doing so, this study addresses concerns highlighted in extant literature that focuses on the heterogeneity of silver generation by broadening the applicability of the vlog marketing framework. Indeed, the study suggests that vlogging can be an effective means of marketing to older demographics.

5.2. Managerial implications

This study offers three managerial implications for destination marketers who wish to focus on the older demographic. Firstly, the findings of this study provide valuable insights regarding marketing strategies associated with travel vlogs. The findings indicate that viewing travel vlogs, particularly those that foster a sense of resonance, can significantly increase individuals' interest in visiting and recommending the travel destinations featured in them. Travel vlogs could, therefore, serve as effective tools for destination marketers aiming to gain a competitive advantage in the silver tourism market.

Secondly, by examining the impact of the four attributes of travel vlogs, destination marketers can gain insights into the preferences of older tourists when utilising travel vlogs to engage this age group. In the process of developing or selecting travel vlog content, it is essential for marketing professionals to incorporate informative travel messages accompanied by audio-visual elements. Travel vlogs presently tend to emphasise the use of fast-moving editing techniques and be of a relatively long duration. It is suggested to cater to the requirement of silver audience that the duration of the vlogs should be reduced to avoid information overload. The vlog should also outline the destination with real-time recording to increase the authenticity of the contents. In addition, encouraging a para-social relationship with older individuals is crucial. It can be achieved by emphasising attractiveness and interactions that resonate with the values held by silver tourists. This could involve, for instance, treating the silver audience as close friends when introducing the destination and the various activities that can be found to do there.

Thirdly, it is important to acknowledge the significant influence that emotional resonance has in the context of travel vlog marketing. Vlog creators and destination marketers should prioritise the presentation of emotional appeal during the filming of travel vlogs, effectively immersing the audience in feelings such as joy including imagination, and a sense of relaxation and escapism. When producing video content, tourism marketers should try to enhance the emotional bond between silver tourists and the destinations. Vlog storytelling can cater to the nostalgia and educational motivations of silver audience to resonate with this cohort. This will facilitate the transition of silver tourists from viewers to travel customers and ultimately to destination brand advocates.

5.3. Limitations and future research

The limitations in this research must be acknowledged. First, participants in this study were all Chinese nationals. Future cross-cultural studies involving samples from different populations could be undertaken to validate the results. Second, potential silver tourists were selected purposively to be the respondents. Future research should consider other types of silver tourists, including those who are first-time and repeat visitors to the same destination. Moreover, conducting comparative studies through multi-group analysis has the potential to provide significant insights that could complement the findings of the current study, e.g. a comparison of Generation Z and the silver generation. In view of the findings of previous studies (Dewantara et al., 2025; Manchanda et al., 2022), future studies should investigate the relationship between vlogger attractiveness and para-social interaction when silver tourists are involved to augment the research framework presented in this study. Lastly, the use of self-reported data collected by questionnaire can impact adversely on data accuracy due to the influence of social desirability. Future studies are recommended to gather multi-method data.

Author contributions

CRediT: **Lei Chen:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Visualization, Writing – original draft; **Rahmat Hashim:** Conceptualization, Supervision, Writing – review & editing; **Erose Sthapit:** Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing; **Zhuoma Yan:** Formal analysis, Methodology, Writing – review & editing; **Brian Garrod:** Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing.

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