

## Understanding the Influence of Mobile Short Video Perceived Value on Chinese Consumers' Purchase Intention — Based on the Mediating Effect of User Participation and Attitude

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### Abstract

This research investigates the intrinsic relationship between perceived value of mobile short video and customer purchase intention and explores the potential key variables between these two. It is an early attempt to put forward a conceptual framework for understanding the impact of perceived value on Chinese consumers' purchase intention based on the mediating effect of user participation and attitude. This research used a quantitative design by developing online questionnaires to collect data through the snowball sampling approach from 622 Chinese users of mobile short video social applications who have experience with relevant social applications of mobile short videos. The results indicate that consumers' perceived value of mobile short video has the greatest impact on their purchase intention. Besides, attitude and user participation these two factors could produce mediating effect simultaneously between perceived value and consumers' purchase intention. Moreover, user participation behavior positively affects consumers' attitudes in this study. The findings provide corporate marketers and managers valuable insights into developing effective marketing strategies to improve their service by affecting consumers' perceived value, attitude and participation.

**Key words:** attitude, mobile short video, perceived value, purchase intention, user participation behavior

### Introduction

With the quickening pace of life, consumers are constantly receiving information through mobile terminal devices in scattered time. Meanwhile, the traditional mobile social model of "text + picture" can no longer satisfy consumers' pursuit of highlighting individuality. Based on this background, mobile short video industry emerged. Mobile short video refers to a new video mode with no more than 20 minutes of playing time, played and filmed by mobile intelligent terminal devices, and Shared and interactive through social media platforms, such as Douyin, Miaopai and Kuaishou. Mobile short video is not only the shortening of the length of time compared with long video or the terminal change different from general video in Internet. Low threshold of creativity, fragmented consumption and personalized recommendation of content are the main characteristics of mobile short video. Because of these unique features, it speeds up the propagation fast. IResearch shows that in 2017, there were more than 10 mobile short video apps with monthly active volume exceeding 100,000, among which 4 had monthly active volume exceeding 100 million. Quest Mobile shows that from March 2017 to March 2018, the active user scale of Mobile short video application increased from 213 million to 461 million, with a year-on-year growth of up to 116.4% (QuesMobile, 2018). At present, more and more enterprises are aware of the importance of using mobile short video marketing to communicate with customers to build brand name, but there are few academic researches on consumers' use of mobile short video.

Therefore, based on the theory of perceived value, this study discusses the potential influence mechanism of the value of mobile short video on purchase intention of consumers who use mobile short video under the combined effect of their attitude and user participation.

Marketing activities of mobile short video social applications are different from traditional advertisement placement marketing, which is kind of content marketing that encourages users to participate. In the context of social media, content marketing influences consumers' emotional experience through entertaining and valuable information, thus generating various interactive participation and purchase behaviors. Based on the traditional consumption situation of brand community, Li, Chen and Zhang (2017) mentioned that consumers' purchase intention is positively influenced by their perceived value in the community. In mobile short video social applications, consumers' perceived value towards the content produced by other users may influence the purchase intention. In the new marketing era dominated by content marketing, few literatures involve how external factors affect consumers' perception of their marketing content value and how to improve their purchase intention through perceived value. When consumers face other user-generated content in mobile short videos, their perceived value, on the one hand, could influence their purchase intention via affecting the attitude towards enterprise products or services in the videos. On the other hand, the perceived value of consumers could influence the purchase intention by their participation behaviors. The active participation and content contribution of existing members has played a decisive role in the success of mobile short videos. Chen (2017) found that the user participation behavior on WeChat would affect the purchase intention. At the moment, the current observation and research on these phenomena are only reasoning, and the specific influence mechanism remains to be empirically tested. This study will explore and examine the mechanism of the influence of the perceived value on purchase intention on mobile short video social through questionnaire survey. The findings provide corporate marketers and managers valuable insights into developing effective marketing strategies to improve their service by affecting consumers' perceived value, attitude and participation.

## **Literature Review**

### **Perceived value and consumers' purchase intention**

In the 1990s, with the help of psychology and marketing, perceived value was first proposed. Zeithaml (1988) elaborated the perceived value from the perspective of "gain and loss", and evaluated the overall utility of the product or service after comparing the perceived benefit with the cost paid. Sheth and Talarzyk (1972) expanded the concept of perceived value into multi-dimensional concepts incorporating functional, emotional, social, cognitive and conditional values. Flint, Jahanir and Browner (2009) believed that understanding the concept of perceived value should determine whether certain attributes and performance of the product or service contribute to the realization of a certain goal in the specific situation where consumers use the product or service, and conduct a comprehensive assessment of the results of perceived product or service. In short, this research hold that the concept of perceived value is the consumers' perceived preference and comprehensive evaluation of the goods or services based on their existing subjective impression of the product or services. To be specific, when consumers browse videos on mobile short video social applications, their overall preference of the commodities and services involved in the videos are based on their existing subjective impression.

Based on the empirical research, Zeithaml (1988) demonstrated that consumers'

perceived value could positively predict their purchase intention. Tam (2004) put forward that consumers' perceived value can improve their purchase intention. Chen and Tan (2004) pointed out that website quality and service quality would affect consumers' attitude towards their websites, thus affecting their online purchase intention. Li et al. (2017) took virtual brand community as an example, and his research showed that consumers' perceived value could positively influence their purchase intention of new products. Through studying mobile phone brands, Yang, Li and Liu (2018) found that brand attitude played an intermediary role in the influence of perceived value on purchase intention. It can be seen from the above literature review that when consumers watch short mobile videos, their perceived value will have purchase intention on the products or services of relevant enterprises, and at the same time, perceived value will also have an impact on their purchase intention by influencing consumers' attitudes towards the products or services of enterprises involved in the videos. Therefore, hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> are proposed in this study.

**H<sub>1</sub>: Consumers' perceived value of mobile short videos will positively influence consumers' purchase intention of products or services involved in enterprises in the videos.**

**H<sub>2</sub>: Consumers' perceived value towards mobile short videos will positively affect consumers' attitudes towards the products or services involved in the videos.**

### **User participation behavior**

The theory of user participation behavior originates from the theory of customer participation. Greenwald and Conover (2014) believes that customer participation refers to customer behaviors related to the production and delivery of services. In previous research on consumer behavior, the research field of participation behavior focuses on value co-creation and customer innovation. Customer participation is inevitable due to the characteristics of simultaneous production and consumption in service industry. Specifically, the spiritual and material contribution and involvement of customers in the production and delivery of services belong to customer participation behavior. In the field of mobile short video research, participative behavior is mainly an active state of being involved, occupied and retained, as well as a state of inherent interest in something. The participation behavior of this study mainly refers to the behavior of users watching and viewing relevant videos, thumb up, forwarding or commenting with others and uploading small videos made by themselves on mobile short video social applications. The concept of customer participation is quite broad, and different service industries require different levels of customer participation, so there is no consensus on the dimensions of customer participation in the academic community. The scale developed by Peng (2010) for the research on customer participation behavior in the hairdressing industry includes four dimensions: preparation, information exchange, cooperative behavior and interpersonal interaction. Wu, Xiao and Zhou (2017) divided user participation into two dimensions, namely, the breadth and depth of participation, by studying user participation in tourism virtual communities. Dai and Gu (2017) divided user participation behaviors on social networks into browsing behavior, interactive behavior and creation behavior. Increasingly dominated by the service concept has been accepted by many companies, they will focus shifted from the previous supplier to consumers, to consider how to embed the consumer service value formed in the production process, rather than through the enterprise to provide services to create value to consumers, which is an essential aspect of corporate branding in mobile short video social applications. The purpose for users' participation behavior in mobile short video social applications is to

meet certain needs, and whether mobile short video can meet such needs is the key factor for the occurrence and level of user participation behavior. Consumers determine participation behavior by perceiving the value of short videos, so user participation behavior is the evaluation result of perceived value. Chen, An and Chen (2008) pointed out that the availability of information and services is a significant factor in predicting user behavior. Chen (2017) studied the use of WeChat and found that perceived brand value would affect positively on user participation. Based on the above theoretical research, hypothesis H<sub>3</sub> is proposed.

**H<sub>3</sub>: Consumers' perceived value towards mobile short videos will positively affect user participation behavior.**

In the mobile short video social application environment characterized by low threshold for creation, fragmented consumption and personalized content recommendation, user participation behavior with the main content of watching and browsing, sharing thumb up and forwarding creation has become increasingly important to consumers' purchase intention. Bergkvist and Bechlarsen (2010) found that when consumers browse virtual brand communities, posts or topics related to products will influence their purchase decisions. Fan and Ma (2009) found that relevant product information obtained by consumers through community interaction could significantly predict their purchase intention. Wu and Huang (2014) verified that the interaction among members of online virtual brand community would have a positive impact on their purchase intention by applying the motivation-behavior theory. Based on the above literature review, hypothesis H<sub>4</sub> is proposed.

**H<sub>4</sub>: User participation will positively affect consumers' purchase intention of products or services involved in the video.**

Users' perceived value of mobile short video could influence their purchase intention and their participation behavior, which will also have a positive impact on the purchase intention of enterprise products or services involved in mobile short video. Therefore, we believe that user participation plays a partial mediating role in the influence mechanism of perceived value on their purchase intention, and propose hypothesis H<sub>5</sub>.

**H<sub>5</sub>: User participation plays a mediating role in consumers' perception of the value of mobile short videos and their purchase intention of enterprise products or services involved in the videos.**

User participation in mobile short videos could help improve consumers' familiarity with enterprise brands and change their attitudes towards products or services involved in the videos. Through sorting out previous literature on the relationship between customer participation behavior and brand attitude, Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) found that customer participation cognition, emotion and behavior can affect brand attitude. Besides, Steinmann, Mau and Schramm (2015) enhance their attitude towards the brand. Based on the above theoretical research, hypothesis H<sub>6</sub> is proposed.

**H<sub>6</sub>: User participation will positively affect consumers' attitude towards enterprise products or services in videos.**

### **The influence of attitude on purchase intention**

The attitude studied in this study refers to the user's attitude towards the enterprise products or services involved in short mobile videos when watching them. Purchase intention refers to the purchase intention of the enterprise products or services involved

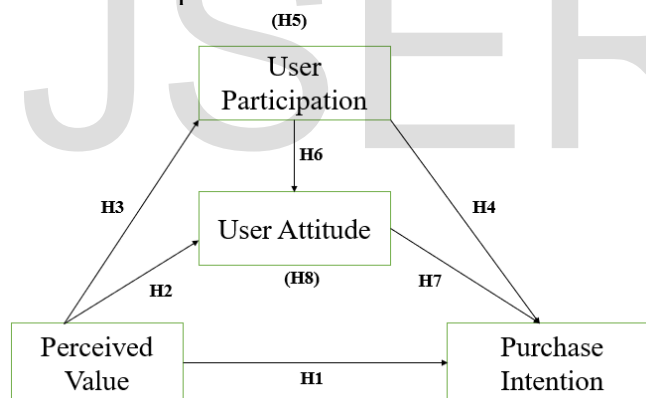
in the short videos watched. In the field of marketing, many scholars have proved that consumer attitudes can have a positive impact on purchase intentions. Hwang et al. (2011) found in their research on hotel websites that brand attitude can have a positive impact on purchase intention. Song, Xiao and Qi (2014), based on the data of the smartphone sales center, demonstrated that attitude could positively affect the purchase intention. Based on the above literature review, hypothesis H<sub>7</sub> is proposed.

**H<sub>7</sub>: Attitude can positively influence purchase intention.**

The user perceived value of mobile short video could positively influence the purchase intention, and at the same time positively influence the attitude towards the enterprise products or services involved in the mobile short video, and the attitude can also positively influence the purchase intention of the enterprise products or services involved in the mobile short video. Therefore, this research believes that attitude plays a partial mediating role between perceived value and purchase intention, and proposes hypothesis H<sub>8</sub>.

**H<sub>8</sub>: Attitude plays a mediator role in consumers' perception of the value of mobile short videos and their purchase intention of products or services involved in the videos.**

Based on the above hypotheses, we organize into the conceptual framework model as shown in Figure 1. In the theoretical model of this study, perceived value is an independent variable, consumer purchase intention is a dependent variable, and two important mediators of user participation and user attitude to add in order to discuss its effects on perceived value and purchase intention.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

**Methodology**

This study takes Chinese users of mobile short video social applications as research samples (not limited to one application) and collects data through online questionnaire survey by the snowball sampling approach. The survey questionnaire is based upon the related literature (e.g: Carlson, Hirschberg & Swerts, 2005; Yang, Zhang & Hong, 2013). Since this research mainly focuses on Chinese users who have used relevant social applications of mobile short videos, a screening item was set in the questionnaire, to make sure all respondents have used mobile short videos experience. Since the size of the target population of this study is difficult to define in actual size, thus the formula of Cochran (1977) will be chosen for calculating the sample size used in the quantitative analysis. With the 95% of confidence level is expected, the actual sample size was 385. A pilot testing of 40 samples was done from a small number of respondents before mass launch in order to establish its validity, reliability and internal consistency. Finally, 660

questionnaires were returned. After removing all the responses with invalid answers and data cleaning, 622 of these were deemed usable.

**Descriptive Analysis**

The characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 1. There were slightly more female than male respondents. Majority of the respondents were aged 26 to 35 years old with diploma degree. Most respondents usually spend 0.5 to hour on mobile short video social applications every time and they like to enjoy the mobile short video 1 or 2 days per week.

**Table 1** Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	% (n=622)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	268	43.09%
Female	354	56.91%
<b>Age (years old)</b>		
Under 18	26	4.18%
18-25	257	41.32%
26-35	280	45.02%
35-45	44	7.07%
45 and Over	15	2.41%
<b>Your Education</b>		
Junior school or below Degree	33	5.31%
High school	169	27.17%
Diploma	241	38.75%
Bachelor’s Degree	164	26.37%
Master’s Degree and above	15	2.40%
<b>Days of Using Mobile Short Video per week</b>		
<1 Day	38	6.11%
1-2 Day(s)	290	46.61%
3-4 Days	188	30.23%
5-6 Days	46	7.4%
7 Days	60	9.65%
<b>Time spent on Mobile Short Video per time</b>		
<0.5 hour	95	15.27%
0.5-1 hour	312	50.16%
1-2 hours	165	26.53%
2-4 hours	30	4.82%
> 4 hours	20	3.22%

**Reliability and Validity Analysis**

To ensure the reliability of this study, the reliability test of each variable is required

before testing the variable relationship. The specific results are shown in Table 2. Cronbach's coefficients of user's participation behavior, perceived value, attitude and purchase intention were 0.923, 0.868, 0.773 and 0.829, respectively, which were all greater than the standard of 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951), indicating that the scale selected by the questionnaire had good internal consistency.

Validity is used to indicate the validity of the scale. In the study, the author consulted a large number of relevant literatures before the research questionnaires were distributed, and according to the opinions of relevant professional experts and professors to test and modify repeatedly, and on the basis of the analysis in the pre-test results to form the final formal survey questionnaire, so the content validity of the questionnaire of the scale is acceptable.

**Table 2** Measurement analysis results (n=622)

Variable	Item	Std factor loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$	AVE	CR
User Participation (UP)	UP1	0.645	0.923	0.651	0.960
	UP2	0.612			
	UP3	0.731			
	UP4	0.729			
	UP5	0.744			
	UP6	0.676			
	UP7	0.757			
	UP8	0.759			
	UP9	0.757			
	UP10	0.723			
	UP11	0.755			
	UP12	0.758			
	UP13	0.722			
Perceived Value (PV)	PV1	0.710	0.868	0.745	0.940
	PV2	0.771			
	PV3	0.786			
	PV4	0.732			
	PV5	0.730			
	PV6	0.745			
	PV7	0.763			
Attitude (AT)	AT1	0.799	0.773	0.722	0.912
	AT2	0.759			
	AT3	0.760			
	AT4	0.767			
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	0.766	0.829	0.779	0.934
	PI2	0.820			
	PI3	0.829			
	PI4	0.835			

**Table 3** Fitting indicators of structural equation models

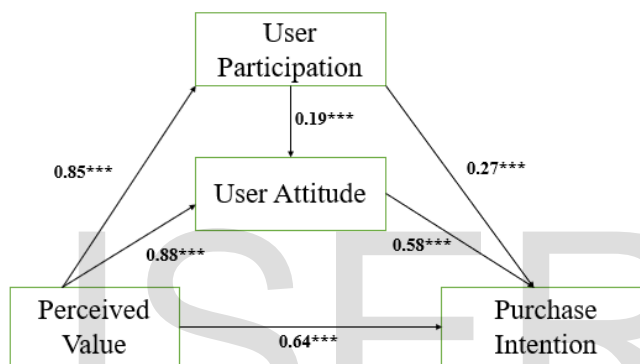
Fitting indicators	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	IFI	TLI
Fitting indicators in this SEM	865.506	344	2.516	0.049	0.947	0.915	0.947	0.941
Std. for Fitting indicators			< 3	< 0.05	> 0.9	> 0.9	> 0.9	> 0.9

In this study, the structural equation model was constructed (Figure 1), and tested by AMOS21.0 software. According to the data in Table 3, the  $\chi^2/df$  of the structural equation model is 2.516 (P=0.000), which is less than 3. RMSEA is 0.049, which is smaller than the minimum standard of 0.05. CFI is 0.947, NFI is 0.915, IFI is 0.947, and TLI is 0.941, all of which are all greater than the minimum standard of 0.9.

Therefore, the structural equation model is acceptable.

### Hypothesis Testing

In this study, standardized path coefficient indexes are mainly used for hypothesis testing. Figure 2 shows the standardized path coefficient and significance level of the established structural equation. From Figure 2, all the coefficients are significance ( $P < 0.001$ ), and all six hypotheses proposed in the study have been supported. Concerning  $H_1, H_2, H_3$ , consumers' perceived value has a significant positive effect on user participation ( $\beta=0.85, P < 0.001$ ), attitude ( $\beta=0.88, P < 0.001$ ) and purchase intention ( $\beta=0.64, P < 0.001$ ). Therefore, hypothesis  $H_1, H_2$  and  $H_3$  are fully supported. With regard to  $H_4$  and  $H_6$ , the results assert that user participation had a significant positive effect on attitude ( $\beta=0.19, P < 0.001$ ) and purchase intention ( $\beta=0.27, P < 0.001$ ). Thus, hypothesis  $H_4$  and  $H_6$  were also supported. Similarly, a positive and significant relationship was also found between attitude and purchase intention ( $\beta=0.58, P < 0.001$ ), supporting  $H_7$ .



**Figure 2** Structural Equation Model Analysis Results  
 (Note. \*\*\*means  $p < 0.01$ )

From Figure 2, the path coefficients of every variable and their relationships were determined. The direct effect, indirect effect and total effects of different variables were calculated through further analysis. The analysis results were shown in Table 5. In terms of direct effect, mobile short video users' perceived value of a short video has a direct effect on purchase intentions, participation behavior and attitude involved in enterprise product or service. And their standardized path coefficients were 0.616, 0.731 and 0.74, respectively. Thus, compared with other two factors, the direct effect of perceived value on user participation behavior is the largest. Besides, user participation has a direct effect on purchase intention and attitude, and the standardized path coefficients are 0.125 and 0.231 respectively. Moreover, attitude also has a direct effect on purchase intention and its standardized path coefficient is 0.539. In terms of indirect effect, perceived value has indirect effect on purchase intention and attitude instead of user participation. These two standardized path coefficients are 0.359 and 0.169 respectively, among which perceived value has large indirect effect on purchase intention. In addition, user participation also has an indirect effect on purchase intention, and the standardized path coefficient is 0.178. In terms of total effect, perceived value, user participation behavior and attitude these three all have a total effect on purchase intention. Among them, perceived value has the largest total effect on purchase intention, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.975, followed by attitude, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.539, and the last standardized path coefficient of the total effect of user participation behavior is 0.303. It can be seen that perceived value, user participation



behavior and attitude are three essential variables affecting purchase intention. As a result, the moderating effect of user participation and attitude were verified. Consistent with H<sub>5</sub>, user participation was shown to moderate the connection between consumers' perception of the value of mobile short videos and their purchase intention ( $\beta= 0.169$ ,  $p<.001$ ). so, supporting H<sub>5</sub>. Similarly, attitude was also found to generate a mediating effect on consumers' perception of the value of mobile short videos and their purchase intention ( $\beta= 0.399$ ,  $p<.001$ ), which means H<sub>8</sub> was supported.

**Table 5** Path analysis result

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	P-value
perceived value→ purchase intention	0.616	0.359	0.975	***
perceived value→ user participation	0.731	-	0.731	***
perceived value→ user attitude	0.740	0.169	0.909	***
User participation→ user attitude	0.231	-	0.231	***
User participation →purchase intention	0.125	0.178	0.303	***
User attitude→ purchase intention	0.539	-	0.539	***

(Note. All of number in the table are Standardized  $\beta$  value; \*\*\*means  $p<0.01$ )

**Table 6** Hypothesis verification result

Hypothesis	Statement	Results
H <sub>1</sub>	Consumers' perceived value of mobile short videos will positively influence consumers' purchase intention of products or services involved in enterprises in the videos.	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	Consumers' perceived value towards mobile short videos will positively affect consumers' attitudes towards the products or services involved in the videos.	Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	Consumers' perceived value towards mobile short videos will positively affect user participation behavior.	Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	User participation will positively affect consumers' purchase intention of products or services involved in the video.	Supported
H <sub>5</sub>	User participation plays a mediating role in consumers' perception of the value of mobile short videos and their purchase intention of enterprise products or services involved in the videos.	Supported
H <sub>6</sub>	User participation will positively affect consumers' attitude towards enterprise products or services in videos.	Supported
H <sub>7</sub>	Attitude can positively influence purchase intention.	Supported
H <sub>8</sub>	Attitude plays a mediator role in consumers' perception of the value of mobile short videos and their purchase intention of products or services involved in the videos.	Supported

**Discussion and Conclusions**

Based on the theory of perceived value, this study constructs a mechanism model of the influence of perceived value on the purchase intention of users in mobile short video social applications, introduces user participation behavior and attitude as mediator variables, and uses empirical data to verify the relationship between these four variables. This study further enriches the research on the impact of mobile short video perceived value on consumers' purchase intention.

Firstly, Consumers' perceived value of mobile short video is the most influential factor affecting purchase intention. The result shows that the largest total effect is consumer perceived value to their purchase intention. After considering mediators attitude and user participation behavior variables, perceived value impact on purchase intention fell slightly, A plausible reason may be the consumer perceived value to consumer attitudes have a more significant positive impact. When both are put in the same model, direct effect may be reduced by another variable. However, the questionnaire data shows that consumers' perceived value of mobile short video has the greatest impact on their purchase intention. The higher the perceived value is, the stronger their purchase intention is.

Additionally, attitude and user participation these two factors could produce mediating effect simultaneously between perceived value and consumers' purchase intention. More specifically, in this survey, the results showed the common mediating effect accounts for around 37% of the total effect, that is, consumers' perception of the value of mobile short videos will influence the purchase intention by influencing the attitude and user participation behaviors of enterprises' products or services involved in mobile short videos. Among them, the mediating effect of consumers' attitude is greater. Compared with users' participation behavior, consumers' attitude towards enterprises' products or services in short videos is more likely to positively predict their purchase intention.

Furthermore, perceived value has a strong positive impact on attitude and user engagement. Perceived value of mobile short video could change consumers' attitude towards enterprises or services involved in short video, improve users' participation behavior in relevant applications, and meanwhile, user participation behavior exerts positively influence on consumers' attitude. The result of hypothesis testing display attitude plays a partial mediating role in the way that users' participation behavior affects their purchase intention. To sum up, perceived value has two indirect paths to influence purchase intention. One is that consumers' perceived value positively predicts consumers' purchase intention through the mediating effect of their attitude. The other one is the perceived value of consumers influences their attitude through user participation behavior, and ultimately positively influences their purchase intention.

The results of this study carry several important practical and theoretical implications. It provides a useful framework and an academic base for researchers in mobile short video, which may help researchers gain further insight into the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention. Because consumers' perceived value of mobile short video has the greatest impact on their purchase intention, as the company marketing manager or decision maker of mobile short video, they need to establish favorable atmospherics and brand to enhance their perceived value towards product and service in mobile short video, thus stimulating purchase intentions (Darden et al., 1983; Schlosser, 1998). This study also provides an insight into the mediating role of attitude and user participation between perceived value and consumers' purchase intention for corporate marketers. They had better pay attention to the attitude of consumers, meet their various needs, encourage users to participate, deepen users' favorable impression of products and brands, and then turn to purchase at last.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

This research has some limitations. Firstly, in this research, only the quantitative research method was adopted and all questions are closed questions. Chew et al. (2012) comment that to ensure the effectiveness of research, and interviewing method should be incorporated into a survey because it will help to produce more in-depth data and improve analysis outcomes in terms of qualitative aspects. Therefore, in the future study, open opinions and suggestions from respondents are necessary to find more inputs on what would be the influence factors toward customer purchase intention. Secondly, the study uses non-probability sampling method, rather than using probabilistic methods (i.e., random selection) to generate a sample, which might give biased findings due to limited group of the respondents based on their subjective judgements (Mercer, 2017). Researchers for next study should take it into consideration. It is meaningful for future research to develop and expand more detailed models that explain more factors that may affect perceived value on purchase intention in mobile short video to help retailers and marketers satisfy consumers and optimize corporate marketing strategies.

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