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Factors Influencing the Intention to Continuously Use DouYin: A Study Among Media Content Producers in China

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ABSTRACT

In the ever-evolving landscape of Web 3.0, driven by technological advancements such as 5G, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality, Douyin has played a pivotal role in social media platforms, especially in China. Previous studies have mainly focused on the experiences of general Douyin users, overlooking the perspectives of content media producers. In response, this study delves into the factors that continuously boost the intention to use Douyin, especially among media content producers. Using the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this study conducted a web survey with 421 respondents. The results indicate that motivational factors (information-seeking, self-expression, entertainment, and financial incentives), and belief factors (attitude and perceived behavioural control) significantly affected the intention to continue using Douyin. However, socialisation did not have a significant positive effect towards the intention. These findings have practical implications for Douyin-centric investigations, studies involving media content producers, and the broader context of Chinese social media exploration.

Keywords: China, Douyin, intention to continuously use, media content producers, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Uses and Gratifications Theory

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a global increase in Internet media users, demonstrating its expanding impacts towards global countries. Given the total of 5.40 billion Internet users worldwide, with 1.03 billion Internet users from China, among whom 97% engage with social media platforms, online social interaction has become an integral part of people's lives (Firth et al., 2019). The advancement of the Internet, particularly during the Web 3.0 Era, has revolutionised communication and information exchange

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by eliminating time and location constraints. It allows for seamless interaction and access to information from anywhere in the world at any given time (Attaran, 2023). This digital revolution has increased the demand for diverse social interaction tools, leading to the rise of popular social media platforms such as Douyin in China.

Douyin, a short-form, music-based social video application, has gained over 800 million users in China by 2022 (Scherr & Wang, 2021). This application permits users to produce and post video content of 30 to 60 seconds. It also allows users to watch, share and comment on videos. Unlike traditional media, Douyin enables users to create and access user-generated content, making it a significant platform for general users and content producers (Pratiwi et al., 2021). Hence, it is essential to examine the factors influencing users' intentions to use Douyin, especially among media content producers.

The study aims to fill a gap in existing research by investigating the motivations and beliefs that drive media content producers' intention to use Douyin, particularly in China. The study utilises the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) to develop its theoretical framework. It includes motivational factors such as information-seeking, self-expression, entertainment, socialisation, and economic benefits, as well as belief factors like attitude and perceived behavioural control in predicting media content producers' intentions.

The research questions include:

RQ1: Do motivational factors (i.e., information-seeking, self-expression, entertainment, socialisation, and economic benefits) have a significant effect on the intention to use Douyin continuously?

RQ2: Do belief factors (i.e., attitude and perceived behavioural control) significantly affect the intention to use Douyin continuously?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A web survey was conducted, and purposive sampling was employed to gather 421 respondents. Given the study's objective to examine the factors that influence the intention of Chinese media content producers to continue using Douyin, the questionnaire was distributed via the Douyin platform. The questionnaire contained three sections. The first section included a filtering question to ensure respondents were Douyin users and media content producers. The second section included demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, and the frequency of using Douyin. The third section consisted of 41 items on eight variables (i.e., information-seeking behaviour, self-expression, entertainment needs, social behaviour needs, economic benefits, attitude, perceived behavioural control, and intention to use continuously) using a Five-point Likert Scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data analysis in Table 1 unveil several key findings that provide significant insights into the factors influencing media content producers' intentions to use the Douyin platform continuously. First, the study revealed that motivational factors, including information-seeking, self-expression, entertainment, and economic benefits, affect the intention to use Douyin. However, the study findings confirmed that the absence of socialisation leads to the intention among media content producers to use the Douyin platform. These findings offer detailed insights into the complexities of media content producers' behaviour towards Douyin's social media platforms. Paulino and Gomes (2021) underscored the significance of the platform's social accountability, highlighting the need for transparent and responsible practices in engaging with and serving the platform's users. It relies heavily on the accuracy of the information disseminated by media content producers to the users within the platform.

Table 1
Direct effect hypotheses

Research hypotheses		Beta (β)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	IS->ITCU	0.085	0.083	0.029	2.923	0.003	Accepted
H2	SE->ITCU	0.143	0.145	0.053	2.690	0.007	Accepted
H3	ENT->ITCU	0.150	0.147	0.046	3.244	0.001	Accepted
H4	SOC->ITCU	0.012	0.008	0.034	0.336	0.737	Rejected
H5	EB->ITCU	0.197	0.200	0.050	3.927	0.000	Accepted
H6	ATT->ITCU	0.275	0.272	0.081	3.396	0.001	Accepted
H7	PBC->ITCU	0.149	0.147	0.051	2.945	0.003	Accepted

Note. *p = 0.05, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.001
IS = information-seeking; ITCU = intention to continuous use; SE = self-expression; ENT = entertainment; SOC = socialisation; EB = economic benefits ATT = attitude; PBC = perceived behavioural control

CONCLUSION

This study explores factors influencing the media content producers' intention to continue using the Douyin platform, focusing on their motivations and beliefs in China. Producers who find Douyin entertaining and perceive financial benefits are more likely to continue using it, with past positive experiences reinforcing future use of the social media platform. However, social interaction does not significantly affect their intentions, signifying that producers may prioritise other platform features. The findings provide insights for improving Douyin, suggesting enhancements in features such as information-seeking, self-expression, and entertainment, as these drive the continuance usage of the Douyin platform. In addition, Douyin could also offer more incentives, such as revenue-sharing or

sponsorship opportunities, to encourage high-quality content production of the short videos. However, the study has limitations, including using non-probability sampling, which limits its generalisability. Future studies could address these limitations by employing probability sampling, examining producers from other regions, and exploring mediating factors that affect producers' intentions. Additionally, future research could explore the influence of Douyin updates on content creators' usage intentions by comparing factors affecting both media content producers and general users to gain a more comprehensive understanding of users' behaviour on the social media platform.

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