

Influence of User-Driven Factors and System-Driven Factors on Users Stickiness of People's Daily Douyin

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Abstract

This study reviews prior research to establish a foundation for understanding the current state of knowledge and the contextual background for users' stickiness on China's People's Daily's use of Douyin as a platform for news dissemination. The paper first explains the role of short-video platforms in news dissemination. It then outlines the establishment of the People's Daily Douyin account and its coverage, providing the background to the current study. Furthermore, it synthesises previous studies on the continuous usage behaviour of social media users, examining its antecedents, underlying concepts, and measurement approaches. Users' stickiness are then explained through the lenses of Commitment-Trust Theory, and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (highlighting individual factors). Building on these foundations, the study reviews the key variables investigated, conceptualises a research model, and proposes hypotheses concerning the factors influencing continuous usage of the People's Daily Douyin account. The paper concludes with a summary of the research framework developed.

Keywords: User Stickiness, News Media, Short Video Platform, User Driven Factors, System

Introduction

In recent years, the consumption of news through mobile devices has become a dominant trend, with short videos emerging as one of the most popular formats. This shift reflects broader changes in technology, consumer behavior, and media consumption habits (He et al., 2022). Short videos, with their concise and engaging nature, are well-suited for small screens and on-the-go viewing, making them ideal for capturing the attention of modern audiences with shorter attention spans (Wannamaker et al., 2021). Moreover, short videos are easily shareable on social media platforms, which enhances the visibility and reach of news stories, further driving engagement (Carlson et al., 2022; Shin, 2013). As more people turn to digital platforms for news, the need for media outlets to adapt and leverage these new formats has become increasingly urgent. Among the many platforms offering short video content, Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok) has

become a significant venue for news dissemination, attracting a large and diverse user base (Zarra et al., 2024). Notably, traditional media outlets, such as BBC in the United Kingdom (<https://www.tiktok.com/@bbc?lang=en>), CNN in the United States (<https://www.tiktok.com/@cnn?lang=en>), and People's Daily in China (https://www.douyin.com/user/MS4wLjABAAA8U_l6rBzmy7bcy6xOJel4v0RzoR_wfAubGPeJimN__4?from_tab_name=main), have created official accounts on short video platforms to engage with audiences in novel ways.

This research focuses on factors influencing the stickiness of People's Daily Douyin in China. In this study, stickiness is defined as sustained engagement and repeat visits to People's Daily Douyin. The People's Daily's Douyin was selected because after comparing the number of subscriptions of People's Daily with other news media (e.g. China Central Television (CCTV), China Daily), it is found that the follower count of the People's Daily Douyin accounted for 15.91% of all Chinese media organization accounts on Douyin, ranking the first (Zhang, 2021). Most of the posts have hundreds of thousands or even millions of likes. These data show that the number of users of the People's Daily Douyin account is high and highly active with strong user stickiness. While Douyin is widely known for its entertainment-focused content, People's Daily, a historically authoritative and government-affiliated Chinese newspaper, has utilized the platform to deliver more formal, journalistic content, often focusing on domestic and international political issues (Pan et al., 2022). Since its entry into Douyin in September 2018, People's Daily has successfully attracted millions of followers, demonstrating the potential for serious, professional content to gain traction even on platforms dominated by entertainment (Han et al., 2023).

People's Daily is the pioneer in using the short video platform among the mainstream media in China and has one of the highest followers. Despite the initial success, recent data indicate a slowdown in the growth of People's Daily's Douyin following, with new follower gains declining significantly since 2022. This trend raises important questions about user engagement and retention, specifically the factors that influence "stickiness"—a term used to describe a platform's ability to maintain user interest over time. While there has been some research on the factors driving user engagement in social media platforms, there has been a dearth of studies explaining factors influencing the stickiness of news-related content on platforms like Douyin (Khattab, 2020).

This study aims to fill this gap by determining a research framework for key factors that influence user stickiness on People's Daily's Douyin account. It adopts a framework that considers both user-driven factors, such as trust, commitment, social influence, performance expectancy, and social media engagement, as well as system-driven factors, such as the facilitating conditions, effort expectancy, timeliness, content richness and overall use experience (Algharabat et al., 2020). By integrating these two perspectives, this research seeks to provide a more holistic understanding of what drives sustained user engagement on Douyin for news-related media and offer recommendations for improving user retention. Furthermore, the findings could serve as valuable insights for other traditional news media outlets looking to transition to short video digital platforms and for content creators aiming to build long-term loyalty among their audiences.

Literature Review

People's Daily is the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the most influential newspaper in China. It was founded on June 15, 1948 and played an important role in the Chinese Revolution and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 (Fish, 2017). Since then, People's Daily has been the voice of the CPC and the Chinese government, providing news and information on political, economic, and social developments in China and the world (Du, 2021). As the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (Zhang, 2022), it adheres to the principle of disseminating the spirit of the CPC Central Committee and the policies of the government in a timely, accurate, vivid and vivid manner, reporting domestic and foreign affairs, and reflecting the will and demands of the overwhelming majority of the people (Tanskanen, 2023). After 72 years of development, it now owns more than 10 carriers, including newspapers, websites, micro and micro terminals and short videos. Through multimedia means and various new integrated reporting methods, it conveys China's voice to the world (Wu, 2014a). The link of People's Daily official website is as follows: http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/202304/07/nbs.D110000renmrb_01.htm.

In the 1990s, People's Daily began to embrace new technologies and launched its online edition in 1997, becoming one of the first newspapers in China (Wu, 2014b). Today, People's Daily has a strong online presence and reaches millions of readers both domestically and internationally (Wang, 2021). In recent years, People's Daily has played a key role in promoting the Belt and Road Initiative (Qiu & Li, 2022), China's ambitious infrastructure and development plan aimed at enhancing connectivity and cooperation between countries along the ancient Silk Road routes (Fell, 2019). As the official newspaper of the CPC, People's Daily will continue to play an important role in shaping public opinion and guiding the country's development in the years to come.

Consumption of News on Douyin

The evolution of digital media platforms has significantly transformed the patterns of news consumption, with short video applications like Douyin (known internationally as TikTok) emerging as primary sources of news dissemination. Douyin's unique appeal lies in its ability to deliver concise, engaging, and visually stimulating content, catering to contemporary audiences who prefer quick bursts of information (Zhao, 2021). This shift underscores the growing role of short video platforms in providing news, where users can follow dedicated news accounts that regularly post updates on a wide range of topics, including politics, sports, and entertainment. For example, Xinhua News, a state-run media outlet in China, has amassed nearly 8 million followers on Douyin, leveraging the platform's reach to disseminate news efficiently (Zhao, 2021).

Among the most influential news accounts on Douyin is People's Daily, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which has successfully expanded its operations onto the platform. By utilizing its authoritative status, People's Daily ensures the credibility and reliability of news dissemination, a crucial factor in the digital era where misinformation is prevalent (Tang, 2020). The newspaper's Douyin account has significantly impacted news consumption in China, leveraging short video formats to attract a broad audience. Its content, designed to be engaging and accessible, integrates visually appealing graphics, subtitles, and concise reporting, making it particularly

effective for mobile users who prefer on-the-go news consumption (Yuan, 2019). The platform's interactive features, such as likes, comments, and shares, further encourage user engagement, fostering discussions on current events and social issues (Liu & Xin, 2020).

People's Daily's Douyin presence has also diversified news consumption by covering a wide array of topics, including politics, economics, culture, and entertainment, thereby catering to the varied interests of the platform's users (Liu & Xin, 2020). This diverse content strategy ensures that different audience segments remain engaged, making Douyin an effective medium for reaching younger generations who may not consume traditional news formats. The short, dynamic videos align with younger users' preferences for brief and visually stimulating content while also providing educational value by simplifying complex issues (Dongke et al., 2022). Additionally, Douyin's sophisticated recommendation algorithms enhance content delivery by ensuring that users receive news relevant to their interests and viewing behaviors. By leveraging these advanced algorithms, People's Daily maximizes its reach, effectively positioning itself as a leading source of digital news in China.

Douyin has transformed the way news is consumed, offering an alternative to traditional news formats through engaging, algorithm-driven, and interactive content. The platform's ability to personalize news feeds, facilitate rapid news dissemination, and encourage user interaction makes it a crucial player in the digital media landscape. The presence of established news outlets, such as People's Daily, further enhances its credibility, making Douyin an increasingly popular platform for news consumption in the modern age.

People's Daily on Douyin

People's Daily, the official newspaper of China, has a presence on Douyin, or better known as TikTok outside of China. People's Daily uses its Douyin account to reach a younger audience and promote its content through short videos (Fan, 2022). In September 2018, People's Daily officially entered Douyin short videos, positioning itself as an era of participation, communication and recording news events (Li et al., 2022). Based on the credibility and influence of its parent newspaper and strong content aggregation ability, it quickly became the most popular media Douyin account with over 100 million followers (Liu & Xin, 2020). The first short video, a Cappella version of the Brightest Star in the Night Sky, was released on September 10, 2018, as a tribute to teachers on Teachers' Day and received over 300,000 likes. In October 2018, People's Daily and Douyin jointly launched the # Capture Beauty Around # challenge, which has been viewed more than 8.2 billion times. On its Douyin account, People's Daily shares videos on various topics, including politics, society, culture, science, and technology (Fan, 2022, Li et al., 2022). The videos are typically short and engaging, with subtitles and background music to appeal to younger viewers. People's Daily also collaborates with popular Douyin creators to create content that is relevant to younger audiences.

People's Daily's Motivation to Utilize Douyin

Under the background of diversified channels for audiences to receive information, the development trend of traditional mainstream news media is declining. The paper version

of People's Daily is no longer the primary and necessary way for audiences to obtain information. It has gradually lost its dominant position and absolute advantage in the traditional production and communication pattern and is gradually fading out of the daily life of ordinary people. In recent years, various short video platforms have witnessed explosive growth, especially phenomenal-level short video apps such as Douyin and Kuaishou, which have taken a leading position in the competitive landscape of short video industry. It can be said that short videos have become the main channel for audiences to obtain information and visual consumption. According to the 2022 Douyin Data Report released by the company, as of December 2022, Douyin had over 250 million daily active users (DAUs) and over 500 million monthly active users (Douyin, 2023). As a phenomenal-level short video social media, Douyin has become a new space for mainstream news media to reconstruct their discourse power and improve their influence by virtue of its significant platform and abundance news resources.

Social Media Users' Stickiness Behavior

The concept of stickiness behavior in social media platforms refers to users' sustained engagement and repeated interactions with a digital platform over time (Chiang & Hsiao, 2015; So et al., 2024). Stickiness is a critical determinant of platform success, particularly in the highly competitive landscape of short video applications such as Douyin. The interplay of user-driven factors and system-driven factors plays a crucial role in influencing user retention and engagement on these platforms (Kümpel, 2020).

Studying stickiness behavior especially in the context of social media usage in table 2, can provide insights into how social media platforms are used and how they evolve over time (M. Zhang et al., 2017). By tracking user behavior, researchers can identify trends and changes in usage patterns, which can inform platform design and development. Additionally, studying stickiness behavior can also help researchers understand the social and psychological factors that influence social media use (Lee et al., 2018). For example, by examining patterns of engagement and disengagement with social media, researchers can gain insights into how users manage their social networks and how they use social media to fulfill social needs such as connection, validation, and identity formation.

Table 1

Summary of Social Media Users' Stickiness Behavior

Authors/ The context	Operationalisations of the Stickiness/ Theoretical background	Relationships/ Outcome of the research
(Liu & Wang, 2023) Online visual art platform	User stickiness is operationalized by measuring the duration and frequency of visits, user retention rates, loyalty indicating continuous engagement, and the depth of interactions on a platform. Push-Pull-Mooring (PPM) framework	Push effect, relationship inertia and pull effect as the antecedents of stickiness/ The results show that push effects (convenience and perceived security risk), pull effects (function experience, content experience, interactive experience, emotion experience), and mooring factor (relationship inertia) positively impact user stickiness.
(Yu et al., 2021) Online knowledge	User stickiness is operationalized in the context of online platforms primarily involves measuring user engagement and retention	Performance expectation, effort expectation, social impact, facilitating conditions and willingness to use as the antecedents of stickiness/

paying-behavior	through various behavioral metrics. UTAUT	The findings show that content quality, peer influence, KOL influence, perceived interaction, effort expectation, and perceived trust significantly affect users' willingness-to-pay and have an indirect effect on users' paying behavior through their willingness-to-pay.
(Chen, Jia and Wu 2023) Banking industry	User stickiness is operationalization involves measuring user engagement and loyalty through metrics such as the duration and frequency of user visits, the extent of user interactions on the platform, and the likelihood of returning users, all of which collectively assess how effectively the platform retains and engages its users. UTAUT	Performance expectation, effort expectation, social impact, facilitating conditions and trust as the antecedents of stickiness/ The results reveal that trust and perceived risk are important factors that affect the behavioral intention of contactless financial services; users perceive that contactless financial services have advantages over traditional offline channel, their intention to use contactless financial services will be increased; social influence also has a positive impact on behavioral intention.
(Maqableh et al., 2021) Facebook	The operationalization of "stickiness" in the context of Facebook use, involves measuring user engagement metrics, the extent of user interactions, and the retention rates, which collectively assess how effectively the platform retains and engages its users. Value-based model	Hedonic value, social value, emotional value, trust and satisfaction as the antecedents of stickiness/ The SEM analysis showed that satisfaction positively and significantly did affect stickiness, where trust did not. Also, results showed while hedonic value affected satisfaction, it did not impact trust.
(Chiang & Hsiao, 2015) YouTube	User stickiness is operationalization focuses on user engagement and retention on YouTube. It involves measuring both the duration of visits and the number of visits to the site, as well as the interactions users have through sharing behaviors. Use and Gratification Theory, Social Cognitive Theory	Interactivity, expected reciprocal benefits reputation, altruism, self-expression, social norm, community identification, perceived video creation ability, video sharing self-efficacy, continuance motivation and sharing behavior as the antecedents of stickiness/ The results indicated that continuance motivation and sharing behavior were important antecedents of YouTube stickiness and mediated the influence of need, personal, and environmental factors.
(Hoque & Hossain, 2023) Social media platforms	The operationalization of "stickiness" in the context of social media platforms involves assessing user engagement through metrics such as the duration of user sessions, the frequency of visits, interaction rates through likes, shares, and comments, and retention rates, all of which collectively evaluate how effectively a platform retains and engages its audience. Use and Gratification Theory	Uses and gratifications motivations, emotional attachment, social presence as the antecedents of stickiness/ The results show that social media engagement and social media stickiness are positively impacted by uses and gratifications motivations such as social interaction, information, convenience, and entertainment. The study also found evidence of a relationship between uses and gratification motivations and social media stickiness, which is also mediated by emotional attachment.

User Driven Factors

User-driven factors determine users' personal motivations for continued interaction and engagement with a digital platform (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Studies have identified trust, commitment, social influence, performance expectancy, and social media engagement as key drivers of user stickiness on Douyin (Algharabat et al., 2020; Nahedh Alsehani et al., 2024; Shukla et al., 2023). Trust is a fundamental factor influencing users' willingness to continue engaging with social media platforms. It determines users' perceptions of content reliability and the credibility of news sources (Morgan & Hun, 1994). In the context of People's Daily Douyin, trust plays a pivotal role in users' commitment to engaging with news content, as short video platforms often struggle with misinformation and entertainment bias (Carlson et al., 2022). Commitment reflects users' emotional attachment and voluntary engagement with a platform over time (Lambert et al., 2020). Users who develop a sense of commitment to a social media account, such as People's Daily Douyin, are more likely to exhibit repeat usage behavior and long-term engagement (Yuan et al., 2019). The impact of social networks and peer behavior significantly affects users' stickiness behavior (Hsu & Lu, 2004). Research has demonstrated that social influence is a powerful determinant of users' engagement with social media platforms, as individuals are more likely to participate in activities endorsed by their peers (Yang & Zeng, 2018). On Douyin, the viral nature of content sharing and peer recommendations enhances stickiness by reinforcing users' motivation to return to the platform (Pang et al., 2024). Users' expectations regarding the utility and benefits of a platform influence their decision to continue using it (Izuagbe, 2021a). People's Daily Douyin users anticipate informative, engaging, and timely news updates, which contribute to their long-term engagement (Martins et al., 2014). The level of user interaction, including liking, commenting, sharing, and participating in discussions, is a significant predictor of platform stickiness (Trunfio & Rossi, 2021). High engagement levels lead to stronger community building, reinforcing users' habitual use of the platform (Cao et al., 2021). However, a lack of interactive engagement can reduce the perceived value of the platform, decreasing user retention rates (Liu & Xin, 2020).

System-driven Factors

System-driven factors relate to the platform's design, functionality, and operational efficiency, which collectively shape user experience and engagement. Studies indicate that facilitating conditions, effort expectancy, timeliness, content richness are the most critical system-driven elements influencing stickiness on Douyin (Khan, 2017; Zhao & Shi, 2022). Facilitating conditions refer to the availability of technological infrastructure and resources that support seamless user interactions (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In the context of Douyin, facilitating conditions include an intuitive user interface, stable performance, and efficient content delivery mechanisms, all of which contribute to user retention (Albanna et al., 2022). Effort expectancy relates to the perceived ease of use and accessibility of a platform (Rahi et al., 2018). Users are more likely to remain engaged with social media platforms when they find them easy to navigate and interact with. A complex or unintuitive interface can create barriers to engagement, leading to lower stickiness (Al-Rahmi et al., 2022). In news dissemination, timeliness is crucial in sustaining user engagement, as individuals seek up-to-date and relevant information (Deady et al., 2024). Platforms that fail to provide real-time updates risk losing users to competitors that offer more immediate news coverage (Sianturi et al., 2024). The

richness and diversity of content significantly impact users' engagement levels. Multimedia elements, interactive features, and high-quality news coverage enhance user experience and contribute to stickiness (Moosavi & Baghiabadi, 2022). People's Daily Douyin, as an official news outlet, must balance authoritative reporting with visually engaging formats to retain user interest (Mammadov, 2022).

User Experience

User experience (UX) captures the totality of users' interactions with a digital platform, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and functional responses (Hsieh, 2020). In the context of social media and short-video platforms like Douyin, user experience plays a pivotal role in determining user stickiness behavior, which refers to sustained engagement and repeated usage patterns (Wang & Liu, 2022). A positive user experience enhances user satisfaction, fosters emotional connections, and promotes habitual usage, whereas a poor UX can lead to disengagement and platform abandonment (Trunfio & Rossi, 2021). User experience plays a pivotal role in influencing stickiness behavior, as it determines users' willingness to return to and continuously engage with a platform. Research has demonstrated that positive UX enhances trust, satisfaction, and perceived value, all of which contribute to long-term user retention (Moosavi & Baghiabadi, 2022). Conversely, poor UX—characterized by slow loading times, unengaging content, or non-intuitive interfaces—reduces user satisfaction and increases the likelihood of disengagement (Wang & Liu, 2022). On People's Daily Douyin, UX is shaped by a combination of technical efficiency (system-driven factors) and user perceptions of credibility and engagement (user-driven factors) (Khan, 2017; Zhao & Shi, 2022). Studies indicate that a seamless and enjoyable UX significantly enhances the likelihood of repeat visits, reinforcing stickiness behavior (Ren et al., 2021). A positive UX fosters habitual engagement, where users become accustomed to returning to a platform due to ease of use, quality content, and rewarding interactions (Chiang & Hsiao, 2015; So et al., 2024). In contrast, a subpar UX leads to dissatisfaction and disengagement, particularly in competitive environments where users have numerous alternatives (Zhao & Shi, 2022). For People's Daily Douyin, optimizing user experience is crucial for sustaining stickiness behavior. If users perceive the platform as credible, engaging, and easy to use, they are more likely to continue consuming news content and participating in platform activities (Ren et al., 2021). Conversely, if the user experience does not meet expectations, users may switch to alternative news sources or entertainment-based accounts (Mammadov, 2022).

Theoretical Lenses

Upon reviewing the literature, two theories emerged as most relevant to this present study: the Commitment Trust Theory (CTT) (Morgan & Hun, 1994) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Commitment-Trust Theory

Commitment-Trust theory explains how trust and commitment between individuals can develop over time in a relationship. When users are committed to using a platform like Douyin, they are more likely to continue using it over time, even in the face of challenges or competing options (Yang et al., 2021). Similarly, when users trust a platform, they are more likely to use the platform's features and content (Ambalov, 2021). Commitment

and trust are particularly important in the context of online platforms, where users often have concerns about privacy, security, and the reliability of information. Commitment is defined as the degree to which an individual is psychologically attached to and invested in a relationship (Morgan & Hun, 1994). In the context of social media usage, it reflects as an individual's affective attachment or bond to using social media platforms, such as Li and Chang (2016) and Chen et al., (2022). This emotional connection may stem from the positive feelings and experiences that an individual has while using social media, such as social connectedness, enjoyment, and satisfaction. Commitment can influence an individual's attitudes and behaviors towards social media, leading them to use it more frequently and persistently, even when faced with challenges or negative consequences (Wang et al., 2019). Trust, on the other hand, is defined as the belief that the other party in the relationship will act in a reliable and predictable manner and will not take advantage of the other person's vulnerability (Morgan & Hun, 1994). In the context of this study, trust refers to the users' confidence in the reliability and integrity of the platform and its content, which is crucial for news media where credibility is paramount. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) is a theoretical framework for understanding the factors that influence an individual's acceptance and use of a particular technology. It was first proposed by (Venkatesh et al., 2003) and has since been widely used in research on technology adoption.

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) provides a robust framework for understanding the determinants of technology acceptance and usage. Initially proposed by Venkatesh et al. (2003), the model identifies four core constructs—performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions—that influence an individual's intention to use technology and subsequent usage behavior. Performance expectancy, which is the degree to which an individual believes that using the technology will help them to perform their job or task more effectively. Effort expectancy, which is the degree to which an individual believes that using the technology will be easy and require minimal effort. Social influence, which is the degree to which an individual perceives that others (such as colleagues or superiors) believe they should use the technology. Facilitating conditions, which is the degree to which an individual believes that the necessary resources and support are available to them to use the technology effectively.

In the context of People's Daily's Douyin account, the UTAUT model can elucidate how users' acceptance of Douyin as a medium for accessing news differs from traditional news consumption methods. The novelty of Douyin lies in its format and interaction style (Fung & Hu, 2022), which significantly contrasts with conventional news platforms. This difference necessitates an examination of how performance expectancy (the perceived usefulness of Douyin for obtaining timely and relevant news), effort expectancy (the ease of using Douyin for news access), social influence (the impact of peers and societal trends on Douyin usage), and facilitating conditions (the availability of resources and support for using Douyin) affect user adoption and engagement.

Problem Statement

Past research has explored various aspects of social media usage, including factors that influence user engagement and continuous usage behavior as shown in Table 1. Studies have identified key variables such as hedonic value, utilitarian value, social connection, and perceived enjoyment as important determinants (Akdım et al., 2022; Ashraf et al., 2019; Ramírez-Correa et al., 2019). However, these studies often focus on general social media usage rather than the specific context of news media on short video platforms like Douyin. Additionally, while the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) offers a comprehensive framework for understanding technology adoption, it does not fully address the unique challenges faced by news media on these platforms. Specifically, the roles of trust and commitment—critical for sustaining long-term user engagement with news content—have not been adequately explored (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). To address these gaps, this study integrates the Commitment-Trust Theory with the UTAUT model, emphasizing the importance of trust and affective commitment. Trust is crucial for news media as it directly impacts users' perceptions of credibility and reliability, while affective commitment reflects users' emotional attachment and loyalty to the platform (Turri et al., 2013). By incorporating these variables, the research aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors that drive continuous usage behavior on news media Douyin accounts.

Research Gap

Despite the extensive research on technology adoption and user engagement within digital platforms, significant gaps remain in understanding these phenomena in the context of short video platforms like Douyin, particularly in the context of news media. This study identifies several key areas where existing literature falls short, providing a clear justification for the proposed research. Previous studies have extensively applied the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) to various digital platforms; however, they often overlook the crucial roles of trust and commitment, especially in platforms dealing with sensitive or critical information like news media (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Abu-Taieh et al., 2022). While the Commitment-Trust Theory has been widely used in relational marketing and consumer behavior research (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), its integration with UTAUT in the context of news consumption on social media platforms remains underexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how trust and commitment influence technology acceptance and continual use behaviors on news-oriented short video platforms. Although the Data Quality Model has been identified as a critical factor in user satisfaction and trust in digital and information systems (Wang & Strong, 1996), limited research has applied this model to understand how data quality affects user engagement and retention in the specific context of short video news platforms. This research proposes to bridge this gap by exploring how different dimensions of data quality—accuracy, relevance, timeliness, and objectivity—affect user engagement and trust in People's Daily's Douyin account. The unique characteristics of short video platforms, which emphasize brief, engaging content, pose specific challenges for news media organizations striving to maintain credibility and depth in news reporting (Chung et al., 2023). Existing literature has focused on general social media or long-form content platforms, with less attention given to the constraints and opportunities presented by short video formats (Lu & Nam, 2021). This study seeks to address this oversight by examining how these platforms influence news consumption

behaviors and what strategies might enhance user engagement and content credibility. While user experience (UX) has been recognized as a significant predictor of user retention and satisfaction in digital platforms, its specific impacts on user stickiness in the context of news media consumption on platforms like Douyin have not been sufficiently explored (Omar & Mustafa, 2017). The existing research often segments UX into general factors without a tailored approach to news consumers who may have different expectations and behaviors. This research fills this gap by investigating how UX, influenced by the quality of data and relational dynamics (trust and commitment), contributes to user stickiness in a news media context.

Conceptual Framework

The combination of the Commitment-Trust Theory, and the UTAUT model can explain users' stickiness on People's Daily Douyin account. Firstly, Commitment-Trust Theory (CTT) suggests that users' commitment and trust in an organization or platform are essential determinants of their continued use. In the case of the People's Daily Douyin account, users may continue to use the account if they feel a sense of commitment and trust in the People's Daily brand, as well as the content and messages delivered through the Douyin account. Second, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model identifies four factors that influence user behavior towards technology: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. These factors can be used to understand why users continue to use the People's Daily Douyin account. For example, users may perceive that using the Douyin account is beneficial to their social status (social influence) or that they have the necessary resources and support to use the account (facilitating conditions). In addition to the original UTAUT constructs (Deady et al., 2024), four factors pertinent to the context of news media production on short video platforms have been added, namely timeliness, content richness and social media engagement. Timeliness encompasses the promptness and immediacy with which users access news content on Douyin, significantly influencing their overall experience (Li et al., 2022). Timely delivery of news content can enhance performance expectancy by ensuring users receive relevant information quickly, thus increasing its perceived value and utility. Content richness refers to the depth, variety, and quality of information available on Douyin, which significantly shapes users' overall experience. Social media engagement refers to the level of interaction, participation, and connection users experience when interacting with Douyin, significantly shaping their overall user experience (Amobi, 2020). User experience (UX) is a critical component that explains users' stickiness to the People's Daily Douyin. UX encompasses the overall experience of users when interacting with Douyin, including usability, design, and emotional response. It intersects stickiness with users' commitment and trust on the platforms as well as all UTAUT constructs (Fleury & Chaniaud, 2024). Therefore, by integrating the variables integral to CTT, and UTAUT models, researchers can examine how users perceive and interact with the People's Daily Douyin account, understand their motivations for stickiness.

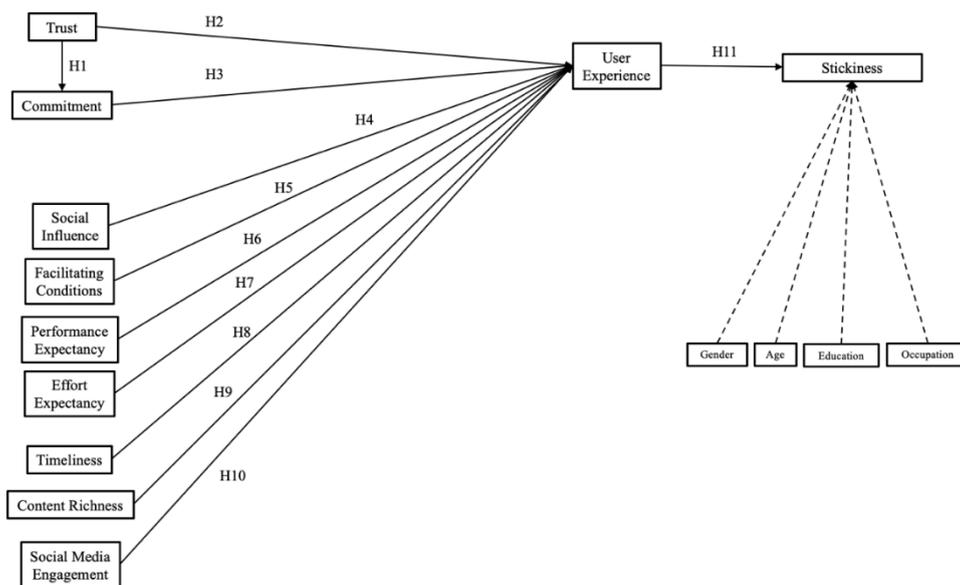


Figure 1
Proposed Research Model

Hypotheses Development

Trust is a cornerstone in numerous domains such as business, politics, and personal relationships (Hess & Story, 2005). When individuals or users trust an entity—be it a person, organization, or platform like social networking sites—they are more likely to depend on them, follow their guidance, and make decisions based on their recommendations (Asim et al., 2019; Chih-Hung et al., 2009; Şentürk et al., 2021; Shneiderman, 2020). In the specific setting of People's Daily Douyin, which serves as the official Douyin account of People's Daily, the largest newspaper group in China, trust is crucial for fostering commitment among its audience. Research indicates that trust significantly enhances commitment, thereby encouraging longer-term engagements and fostering deeper loyalty (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). This relationship is also supported by findings in the context of online communities and social media platforms, where trust has been shown to be a critical predictor of user commitment (Abbas Naqvi et al., 2020; Nicolaou & McKnight, 2006). If People's Daily Douyin consistently delivers accurate, credible, and objective information, it can strengthen trust, which is essential for building commitment. Increased commitment can result in higher user engagement, enhanced audience loyalty, and greater influence. Conversely, if the information provided by People's Daily Douyin is perceived as unreliable, biased, or misleading, it can severely impact trust and, consequently, commitment. Ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of the content is, therefore, paramount to maintaining and enhancing audience commitment. This study hypothesizes that in the context of People's Daily Douyin, trust directly leads to commitment, suggesting that a higher level of trust in the platform results in greater user commitment. This hypothesis is grounded in established research, indicating that trust builds commitment and that this relationship is fundamental in both offline and online contexts (Mayer et al., 1995; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Chiu et al., 2006; Casaló et al., 2007). This study hypothesizes that:

H1: Trust has significant influence on users' commitment.

H2: Trust has a positive influence on user experience.

- H3: Commitment has a positive influence on user experience.
- H4: Social influence has a positive influence on user experience.
- H5: Facilitating conditions has a positive influence on user experience.
- H6: Performance expectancy has a positive influence on user experience.
- H7: Effort expectancy has a positive influence on user experience.
- H8: Timeliness has a positive influence on user experience.
- H9: Content richness has a positive influence on user experience.
- H10: Social media engagement has a positive influence on user experience.
- H11: User experience has a positive influence on stickiness.

Conclusion

People's Daily Douyin account is continuing to develop. The purpose of this study is to explore the formation process of users' stickiness of the Douyin account of People's Daily and how to take measures to keep users loyal to the platform. The discussion of this study mainly focuses on the users of People's Daily Douyin account in the Douyin app. Three main theories – Data Quality Model, Commitment-Trust theory and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology are adopted in this study, which constitute the theoretical perspective of this study. This study developed a comprehensive model for the stickiness of Douyin account of People's Daily. Based on the literature review, the research model and method are analyzed, the theoretical framework is formulated, the hypothesis statement is formed, and the research direction is determined.

Research Contribution

The findings of this research will contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of digital media and communication studies. From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by incorporating variables specific to the context of news consumption on short video platforms, such as timeliness, content richness, and social media engagement. By integrating the Commitment-Trust Theory with UTAUT, the study will advance our understanding of how user trust and commitment interact with system-driven factors to enhance user experience and promote platform stickiness.

From a practical perspective, the implications are manifold. This study will inform the development of strategies that can improve user engagement and retention for People's Daily Douyin and similar media outlets. It will help media organizations tailor their content to better meet user expectations, foster deeper emotional connections, and encourage active participation through social media engagement. Furthermore, the findings will offer actionable recommendations for enhancing the user experience by focusing on system features such as interface design, content delivery timeliness, and multimedia richness—elements that are crucial for maintaining a competitive edge in the rapidly evolving digital media landscape.

Additionally, the research will provide valuable insights for content creators and digital media managers seeking to optimize their strategies for building and maintaining long-term loyalty among their audience. It will help address the ongoing challenges in

balancing authoritative content with the entertainment-driven preferences of younger audiences, ensuring that news platforms remain relevant, engaging, and trustworthy.

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