



# The effects of gratification on continuance usage intention among Weibo users: A study in China

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## ABSTRACT

Given the use of social media platforms that continues to rise worldwide, gratification is considered a key component for social media platforms to engage users. In this regard, social media platforms in China have rapidly increased their number of users and activities, allowing researchers to explore their unique characteristics. However, Weibo, one of China's most popular social media platforms with millions of active users, has not been thoroughly researched in terms of user satisfaction and intention to continue using the platform. Drawing on the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Stimulus-Organism-Response, this study investigated the effects of various types of gratification on user satisfaction and continuance usage intention of Weibo. This study recruited 414 Chinese Weibo users through an online survey using the snowball sampling technique. The results of the SmartPLS analysis indicate that different types of gratification—hedonic (entertainment value and passing time), social (social value), utilitarian (utilitarian value and information-seeking) and content gratification (information sharing)—positively influence user satisfaction. Additionally, Weibo's user satisfaction positively affects Weibo's intention to continue using it. This study comprehensively explains how various gratification dimensions enhance user satisfaction and sustain continued usage intentions on the Weibo platform. The findings provide valuable insights for improving user experience and shaping the strategic design of social media platforms, ensuring their ongoing relevance in the digital landscape.

**Keywords:** *Weibo, gratification, continuance usage intention, uses and gratification theory, stimulus-organism-response theory*

## INTRODUCTION

Social media has experienced tremendous growth in recent years, emerging as the primary platform for social interaction and information sharing. This transformation signifies a major shift in communication patterns, where traditional media outlets such as newspapers and television are increasingly giving way to new media channels, including social networking sites, blogs, and podcasts (Norizzati et al., 2023). In contrast to traditional one-way communication, these platforms enable users to create user-generated content, including text, images, or videos (San et al., 2025). It fosters engagement and interaction among users, enabling them to express their experiences and connect with others. In tandem with the global rise of social media platforms, the social media market in China continues to expand and innovate. As of 2023, WeChat had a user base of over 1.36 billion, establishing itself as the leading national social media app. With 833 million monthly active users, Douyin (also known as TikTok) and Weibo, with 594 million monthly active users, hold an absolute advantage in user engagement (Asset Information Network, 2023).

As one of the world's largest internet markets, China has achieved significant milestones in adopting and expanding social media (Zhang et al., 2021). The country's social media platforms have rapidly increased the number of users and activities (Zhang et al., 2022). While some global social media platforms, such as Twitter (X) and Facebook, have been extensively studied, the Chinese microblogging social network, especially Sina Weibo, remains underexplored, providing researchers with an opportunity to investigate this Chinese social media's unique characteristics. The fragmentation and immediacy of Weibo caters to users' demands for timeliness and a sense of being present. With a constraint on each post not exceeding 140 characters, users can swiftly share brief messages anytime, anywhere. This attribute enhances Weibo's timeliness and immediacy, providing users with a platform that rapidly disseminates concise information. These characteristics render Weibo rich in research value, making it the focal point of this study in social media platforms.

Weibo's users have a marked preference for entertainment content. Entertainment-driven content on Weibo has propelled the development of social media in China, reflecting Chinese users' preference for light-hearted and enjoyable content (Li & Ma, 2023). A comparison between Sina Weibo and Twitter (X) reveals significant differences in content sharing. In China, trends on Weibo primarily emerge through reposting media content, such as jokes, images and videos. In contrast, trends on Twitter (X) are more closely tied to current global events and news stories (Zhou et al., 2021). The trends in Chinese social media are predominantly driven by entertainment content (Cheung et al., 2021). This also underscores the Chinese social media users' preference for relaxed content, emphasising the unique cultural aspects of content creation and dissemination in Chinese social media.

### *Problem statement*

Despite Weibo's growing user base, a decline in business revenue suggests challenges related to user satisfaction with content, hedonic experiences and other user-related factors. At end of the second quarter of 2023, Weibo's monthly active users reached 599 million, reflecting a net increase of 17 million compared to last year, with daily active

users reaching 258 million, a year-on-year net increase of 5 million (Asset Information Network, 2023). This indicates a positive short-term growth trend in Weibo's user base. However, the company experienced a 2% year-on-year decrease in business revenue in the second quarter, suggesting that while users are engaging with Weibo, their support for business activities that generate commercial value, such as advertising and paid services, has declined. This fall in revenue points to potential user dissatisfaction with the quality of content and the hedonic experiences provided by Weibo, as well as broader user-related factors, such as competition from other platforms and changing user preferences (Ye & Chua, 2023).

Weibo may provide users with content that is inconsistent with or irrelevant to their interests, reducing user satisfaction with the platform. At the same time, users may encounter some experience issues when using Weibo, such as an unfriendly interface or push content that does not align with the user's interests, decreasing user satisfaction with the platform and reducing the willingness of users to use its commercial services (Yang et al., 2021). The recent trend shows Weibo users increasing. However, the 2% year-on-year decline in business revenue suggests that the higher number of users has not brought the expected commercial returns (Asset Information Network, 2023).

It is possible that Weibo is competing with other social media platforms or online entertainment services in the social media market. If competitors offer more appealing content or higher-quality services, users may shift to other platforms, reducing Weibo users' sustained usage intent (Li, 2022). For instance, platforms like Douyin and Kuaishou have gained popularity by offering short, engaging videos and personalised content recommendations, potentially drawing users away from Weibo. Additionally, emerging platforms may provide innovative features or better user experiences, further intensifying the competition (Hruska & Maresova, 2020).

Weibo's entertainment domain operation primarily depends on celebrity entertainment resources. While this is a common strategy, it may result in the homogenisation of content relative to users' entertainment needs (Li & Ma, 2023). If users are not interested in specific celebrities or related topics, their likelihood of obtaining hedonic gratification on the platform tends to be relatively low. Furthermore, relying on celebrity content may make Weibo vulnerable to fluctuations in public interest and scandals involving celebrities, negatively impacting user engagement and satisfaction. Thus, diversifying content and enhancing the user experience beyond celebrity-centric posts are essential for driving user interest and engagement (Gawer, 2021).

Compared to Twitter (X), Weibo offers a broader range of social interaction features, allowing users to join and engage with people who share common interests. This somewhat enhances users' satisfaction. Therefore, many users have switched from Twitter (X) to Weibo (Yang et al., 2021). However, the actual situation may not be as favourable as anticipated, as Weibo's social ecosystem might not meet their expectations for high-quality social interactions (Prantl & Prantl, 2018). These issues could decrease users' social gratification, reducing their sustained activity on the platform. Additionally, users may feel that displeasing prominent figures (Key Opinion Leaders) have not been effectively regulated, resulting in dissatisfaction with the platform's governance mechanism, perceptions of shortcomings in maintaining a healthy content ecosystem and user experience. Thus, Weibo must pay more attention to content governance

while protecting prominent figures, ensuring that users have high-quality and positive experiences on the platform, and enhancing their utilitarian gratification.

In its pursuit of user engagement, Weibo may have overlooked the demands of some users for more in-depth content. Users on social media platforms are not solely seeking momentary entertainment; they also desire content that is more substantive and insightful (Liu et al., 2025). Weibo's excessive focus on entertainment, neglecting knowledgeable and professional content, may further diminish gratification with the platform's user content.

### *Research objectives*

RO1: Examine the effects of hedonic gratification (entertainment value and passing time) on user satisfaction.

RO2: Examine the effects of social gratification (social participation and social value) on user satisfaction.

RO3: Examine the effects of utilitarian gratification (utilitarian value and information-seeking) on user satisfaction.

RO4: Examine the effects of content gratification (information sharing) on user satisfaction.

RO5: Examine the effects of user satisfaction on Weibo's continuance usage intention.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Overview of Weibo and its usage*

The creation of Weibo can be traced back to the success of Twitter (X) in the United States in 2006, which was launched that same year. Twitter's short messaging format quickly attracted global users, paving the way for the emergence of Weibo in China (Kim et al., 2021). In the initial stages, multiple Weibo platforms were created in China; many of which failed to survive. It was not until 2009 and 2010 that portal-type platforms like Sina Weibo gained prominence, gradually steering Weibo into the mainstream (Sullivan, 2012). The importance of Weibo in China's social media landscape is reflected in its widespread adoption and diverse user base. According to the latest statistics, as of the second quarter of 2023, its monthly active users have exceeded 573 million, constituting a vast and diverse social network. Active participation from political figures, celebrities and businesses on Weibo has facilitated the development of a rich and dynamic content ecosystem (Wang et al., 2019).

Weibo's evolution has progressed from initial text-based posts to supporting various content formats such as long text, images and short videos, demonstrating its flexible adaptation to user preferences. This transformation has enhanced the user experience, allowing Weibo to adapt to the constantly changing digital media landscape (Yang et al., 2021). Weibo's widespread use and importance in China is manifested in its unique social features and massive user base. Weibo not only provides a space for users to share information and engage in interactive communication but has also positioned itself as a key force shaping China's social media landscape. In-depth research on Weibo reveals its unique features, such as its distinctive microblogging format, the extensive nature of topic discussions and user tracking of real-time news. Compared to other global social

media platforms, such as like Twitter (X), this distinctiveness highlights apparent cultural differences, making Weibo an ideal subject for researchers to gain insights into Chinese social media's dynamics and user behaviour.

Weibo's significance is also apparent in its influence on business competition. Advertisers and brands leverage the Weibo platform to interact directly with a massive user base and promote products as well as services. Successful advertising strategies are key to inspiring advertisers to place ads on the platform, maintaining user interest and engagement.

In summary, Weibo's development in China has made it a mainstream social media platform. Its diverse user base and rich content ecosystem has played a crucial role in driving the development of China's digital social media landscape. Future research should examine Weibo users' continued usage intentions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Weibo's role in the Chinese social media environment.

### *Entertainment value*

Entertainment value, a key component of hedonic gratification, is defined as the pleasurable and entertaining experiences that users gain through engaging in media activities, such as via digital entertainment platforms (Kuriakose & Nagasubramaniyan, 2024). It emphasises users' desire for entertainment and engaging in enjoyable and amusing experiences by participating in media content or interactions. Previous studies of WeChat users in China have shown that entertainment value positively affects user satisfaction, increasing the willingness to continue using the platform. This suggests that the sense of entertainment satisfaction and perceived enjoyment positively impact users' willingness to continue using the platform (Gan & Li, 2018). Studies have shown that users are likelier to remain engaged with a platform if they find the content enjoyable and entertaining because entertainment provides intrinsic satisfaction, fostering a positive user experience and increasing the likelihood of repeated usage. For instance, Ashraf et al. (2018) found that entertainment content enhances user satisfaction, strengthening their continuance intention.

Hence, we hypothesised the following:

**H1:** Entertainment value has a positive effect on user satisfaction.

### *Passing time*

Passing time refers to individuals engaging in certain activities when feeling idle or lacking more purposeful tasks, choosing some easygoing, entertaining activities to fill the time (Smock et al., 2011). Passing time may be considered a behavioural motive or purpose, especially when individuals seek entertainment, relaxation or to alleviate boredom (Hicks et al., 2012). This behaviour may involve engaging in entertainment media, social activities or light pastimes to pass the time, rather than pursuing more specific, goal-oriented objectives.

The activities engaged in when passing the time typically encompass a range of easygoing, enjoyable and entertaining elements. Such recreational activities on social media include watching amusing videos or participating in light-hearted social interactions, obtaining pleasure and entertainment. The concept emphasised by Hedonic Gratifications, underscoring the idea of receiving pleasure and enjoyment through

participation in an activity, is particularly highlighted in the context of social media. Users may experience hedonic gratification by browsing interesting content and engaging in relaxed social interactions, fulfilling their desire to pass the time (Zhou et al., 2025). This entertainment-oriented experience enriches individual interactions on social media and underscores users' pursuit of pleasure and entertainment.

Hence, we hypothesised the following:

**H2:** Passing time has a positive effect on user satisfaction.

### *Social participation*

Social participation encompasses various behaviours and activities of individuals actively engaging within social groups or social networks. This concept emphasises individuals' active involvement and interaction in social environments as opposed to passively receiving information (Heinonen, 2011). Social media platforms offer diverse social interaction features, such as commenting and liking.

Social participation on platforms like Weibo has a direct and tangible positive impact on user satisfaction by fostering active engagement, encouraging content creation and cultivating a vibrant community. The stimulating effects of user interactions and content contributions significantly enhance the user experience, boosting overall satisfaction with the social media platform (Cheng et al., 2020).

Hence, we hypothesised the following:

**H3:** Social participation has a positive effect on user satisfaction.

### *Social value*

Social value refers to the benefits that individuals or groups in a society derive from a particular behaviour, activity or resource (Wang et al., 2007). These benefits comprise economic, cultural, emotional or other aspects. Social Network Services (SNSs) simplify social interactions, enabling users to easily share various types of information, including text, images and videos. Social value is created when individuals experience an enhanced sense of interpersonal connection and emotional bonds, enriching the user experience and contributing to success in a competitive market.

The continual delivery of appealing social value is crucial to maintaining long-term user engagement. It addresses the evolving needs of users and ensures that a platform remains satisfying and enjoyable. This highlights the importance of user experience and value creation in the digital social landscape (Khan, 2025). The social motive embedded in platforms like Weibo directly enhances user satisfaction by fostering a sense of community, providing unique and engaging content and facilitating meaningful interactions (Zhu et al., 2022). Social gratification encompasses both social participation and social value.

Hence, we hypothesised the following:

**H4:** Social value has a positive effect on user satisfaction.

### *Utilitarian value*

Utilitarian value refers to the functionalities or benefits individuals derive from a particular product or service (Babin et al., 1994). These benefits may involve economic,

practicality, efficiency, convenience, among others. In academic research, utilitarian value describes how a product or service meets specific needs, solves problems or provides practical benefits for individuals. In social media, utilitarian value is crucial.

Using structural equation modelling, previous research has investigated the impact of utilitarian value on user satisfaction in the context of an e-commerce platform. The study found a positive relationship between utilitarian value and user satisfaction, further influencing repurchasing intention on an e-commerce platform (Cuong, 2025).

Hence, we hypothesised the following:

**H5:** Utilitarian value has a positive effect on user satisfaction.

### *Information-seeking*

Information-seeking refers to the activity of individuals or groups actively seeking and acquiring information to meet their specific needs (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). It encompasses multiple stages, including information needs generation, acquisition, evaluation, as well as use and application (Chen et al., 2021). Through various information resources and search strategies, individuals seek information to obtain the desired content or knowledge (Aydin, 2019). Research on information-seeking plays a significant role in understanding individuals' or groups' behaviours and decision-making processes in the context of acquiring and utilising information.

Park et al. (2009) analysed four primary needs in the Facebook community: social, entertainment, self-status seeking and informational needs, illustrating the diverse requirements of the participating community when using social media. The analysis results indicate that information use correlates more with users' civic and political actions than entertainment-oriented ones. This supports the positive impact of information-seeking in the social media environment on societal and political engagement.

Hence, we hypothesised the following:

**H6:** Information-seeking has a positive effect on user satisfaction.

### *Information sharing*

Information sharing is the process by which individuals actively or passively transmit information to others or groups. In the fields of information science and information behaviour, information sharing is defined as an active behaviour that facilitates, disseminates, communicates and shares information. This process comprises the stages of selection, transmission, presentation and interpretation of information (Wang & Oh, 2023).

Information sharing can occur through oral communication, written materials, digital platforms and social media. It helps expand the scope of information dissemination and promotes knowledge sharing and collaborative efforts. Research into information sharing contributes to understanding the roles and behaviours of individuals and organisations in information communication and the impact of information sharing on society, education and business. In social media, information sharing is crucial (Ghahtarani et al., 2020).

Hence, we hypothesised the following:

**H7:** Information sharing has a positive effect on user satisfaction.

### *User satisfaction and the continuance usage intention of Weibo*

User satisfaction is the subjective assessment of users regarding their experience of using a product, service or system (Gu et al., 2016). It is typically based on perceived performance, usability, reliability, support services and other factors. User satisfaction is widely utilized in academic research to evaluate product or service quality, user experience and market competitiveness. It concerns the relationship between user perceptions and expectations by measuring whether a product or service meets users' needs. Enhancing user satisfaction is associated with the success of products or services and user loyalty. As a metric that assesses an individual's satisfaction level with a specific product, service or experience, user satisfaction in social media is crucial.

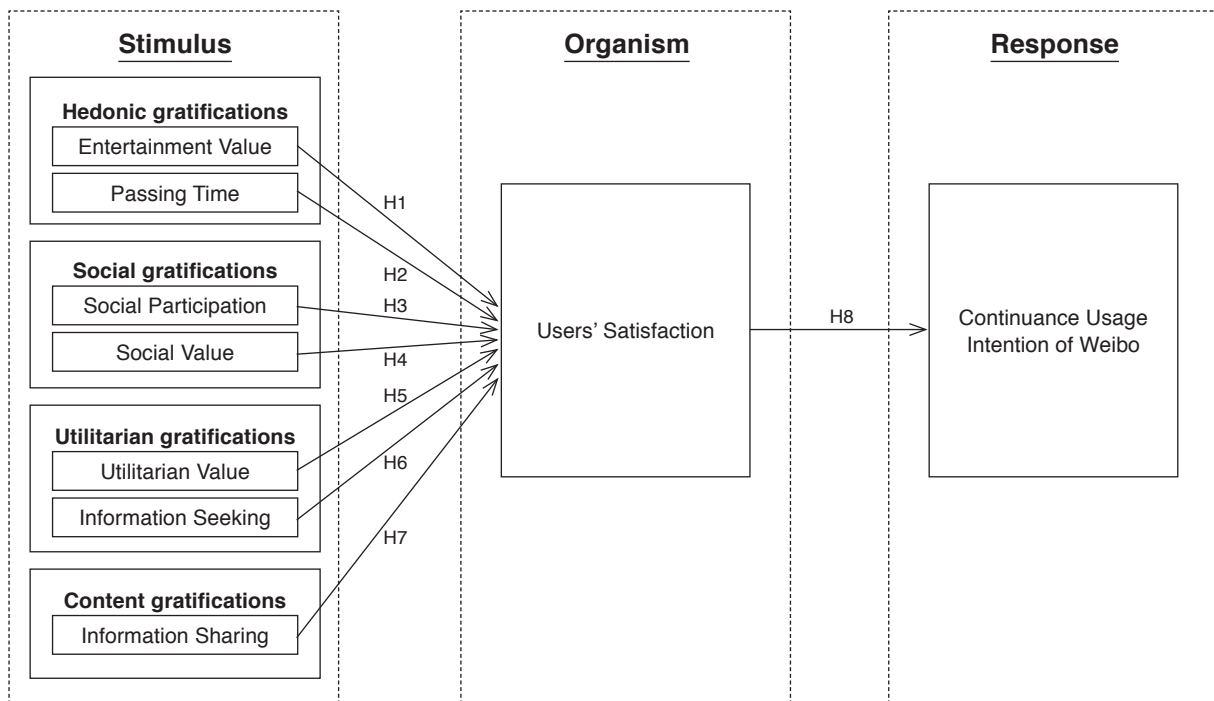
Continuance usage intention refers to a user's willingness or inclination to continue using a specific product, service or system after the initial usage (Venkatesh & Brown, 2001). It is commonly employed to assess user loyalty and the intention to adopt information technology, applications, websites or other digital platforms in the long term. This concept considers whether users will maintain their ongoing interaction and usage after their initial experience. Perception is also related to behavioural intention. Chang and Zhu (2012) argued that emotional responses might influence behavioural intentions. Consequently, this study extends this relationship to the context of social network platforms. It proposed that users' positive emotional reactions, such as user satisfaction and emotional attachment, may affect the intention to continue using the platform (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In the social media context, users' positive emotional experiences are regarded as a key driving factor of building a deep connection between users and the platform, influencing their willingness to continue using the platform.

Selecting the continuance usage intention of Weibo as the dependent variable in this study is justified for several reasons. First, Weibo is one of China's largest social media platforms, boasting a massive user base and significant influence (Li, 2022). Understanding users' intention to continue using Weibo is critical for assessing user loyalty as well as designing enhancement and development strategies. Second, continuance usage intention is a metric for measuring long-term adoption intention and applies to assessing various information technologies, applications, websites or digital platforms (Ashraf et al., 2018). Finally, previous research has demonstrated that intention may accurately forecast actual behaviour. Understanding users' intention to continue using Weibo can help predict their behaviour and provide valuable decision-making insights on the Weibo platform (Gogan et al., 2018). Therefore, using Weibo continuance usage intention as the dependent variable in this study provides importance, broad applicability and behaviour-predicting characteristics.

Hence, we hypothesised the following:

**H8:** User satisfaction positively affects their intention to continue using Weibo.

## Conceptual framework



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework of the study

## METHODS

This study explored the influence of gratification on continuance usage intention among Weibo users in China. It employed a quantitative survey method, allowing for large data collection, which is suitable for the study's target population of Weibo users in China. To ensure the selection of appropriate respondents, this study posed three preliminary questions. The selection of respondents was based on three specific criteria: they must be aged 18 and above, Chinese and have used Weibo.

Next, selecting an appropriate sampling technique requires considering multiple factors, including the study's focus. In this case, our study aimed to understand the impact of user satisfaction on the intention to continue using Weibo. Thus, we opted for the non-probability sampling method of chain-network sampling, involving establishing connections among respondents to create a network or chain (Alvi, 2016). These connections may be social, familial, or other types. Researchers can conveniently identify new respondents through chain connections without predefining a sampling frame. This approach is particularly effective in studies where the population is difficult to locate or where the phenomenon under investigation is deeply embedded within specific social networks (Salganik, 2019).

The researcher subsequently employed a snowball sampling method to meet the research objectives by expanding the sample size. Using this technique, respondents from the initial sample were asked to recommend other individuals who meet the study criteria, creating a "snowball" effect (Babbie, 2020). Furthermore, snowball sampling can increase trust and cooperation among respondents. Because respondents are often more willing

to participate in research when referred by someone they know, this method can improve response rates and the overall quality of data collected (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018).

In utilising the snowball sampling method, it is crucial to determine the sample size. With a total population of approximately 1.4 billion in China, the total number of Weibo users in China reached 599 million (Asset Information Network, 2023). This study focused on Weibo users aged 18 and above as the target sample. The required sample size, calculated using a combination of the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, was 384, while the sample size calculated using G\*Power 3.1.9.2 was 236. Hence, the total number of respondents in the study was 414.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the respondents' demographic profiles, including gender, age, marital status, educational level, monthly household income, and Weibo usage in years. This study collected a total of 414 valid questionnaires. As shown in Table 1, most respondents who participated in the survey were between 18 and 34 years old, and the population aged 18–24 accounts for the highest proportion, reaching 48.6%, indicating that young respondents were the main respondents. This was followed by the age group of 25–34-year-olds, constituting 31.6%; 35–44-year-olds, representing 15.0%; 45–54-year-olds, representing 3.4%, and those aged 55 and above, making up 1.4%.

Regarding gender distribution, female respondents were dominant, accounting for 59.9%, while male respondents accounted for 40.1%. Most respondents were single, accounting for 67.4%, while married respondents accounted for 32.6%. Regarding education level, the largest group of respondents, at 46.1%, had a bachelor's degree, implying that the respondents generally have received higher education. This was followed by those with a high school education or below, constituting 13.8% of respondents, while those with a junior college education made up 19.6%. Respondents with a master's degree represented 15.2% of the total, and those with a PhD made up 3.6%. Additionally, 1.7% of respondents fell into the 'Other' category.

From the perspective of family monthly income, the high-income group (8000 RMB and above) accounted for the highest proportion at 37.9%, indicating that the economic situation of the respondents is relatively good; this is followed by those with a household income between 5000 and 7999 RMB, constituting 25.8%; 19.3% with an income between 3000 and 4999 RMB, and 16.9% of respondents with a household income of less than 3000 RMB. Regarding the duration of Weibo usage, 29% of users have used Weibo for 4–6 years, indicating that Weibo has a relatively stable user base among young respondents.

**Table 1.** Demographic profiles of respondents

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–24 years old	201	48.6
	25–34 years old	131	31.6
	35–44 years old	62	15.0
	45–54 years old	14	3.4
	55 years old and above	6	1.4
Gender	Male	166	40.1
	Female	248	59.9

**Table 1. (con't)**

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marital Status	Single	279	67.4
	Married	135	32.6
Educational Level	Bachelor's degree	191	46.1
	Master's degree	63	15.2
	PhD	15	3.6
	Other	7	1.7
Monthly Household Income	Less than 3000 RMB	70	16.9
	3000–4999 RMB	80	19.3
	5000–7999 RMB	107	25.8
	8000 RMB and above	157	37.9
How long have you been using Weibo?	Less than 1 year	87	21.0
	1–3 years	90	21.7
	4–6 years	120	29.0
	7–9 years	61	14.7
	10 years and above	56	13.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>414</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(N = 414)

Internal consistency reliability is typically assessed through Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) (Hair et al., 2017). If the CA coefficient is greater than 0.8, the reliability of the test or scale is considered excellent. Generally, reliability between 0.6 and 0.7 is sufficient for exploratory purposes, reliability between 0.7 and 0.8 is adequate for validation purposes, and reliability exceeding 0.8 is very good for validation (Garson, 2016). Additionally, Hair et al. (2014) observed that items are considered reliable when both CA and CR are above 0.7. As shown in Table 2, the minimum values for CA and CR are for the variable 'Information-Seeking' (CA= 0.904, CR = 0.929). Both CA and CR indicators measure the scale's internal consistency. A CA value greater than 0.7, indicates good internal consistency, while a CR value approaching or exceeding 0.7 indicates reliability. In this study, all CA and CR values were above 0.9, demonstrating the model's reliability.

Average variance extraction (AVE) is an index for measuring the convergence validity of the construction. Usually, an AVE value greater than 0.5 indicates that the construction has good convergence validity (Henseler et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2017). In this study, the AVE values of each construct were all over 0.7, indicating that the measurement items effectively converged to their respective constructs. This shows that the convergence validity of the scale is ideal. In summary, this study comprehensively evaluated the continuance usage intention of Weibo, including its entertainment value, information-seeking, information sharing, passing of time, social participation, social value, users' satisfaction and utilitarian value. The multiple constructs and measurements demonstrated high internal consistency and convergence validity of the scale through high CA, CR and AVE values.

**Table 2.** Assessment of the measurement model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Entertainment Value	EV1	0.830	0.937	0.95	0.760
	EV2	0.857			
	EV3	0.912			
	EV4	0.890			
	EV5	0.882			
	EV6	0.858			
Passing Time	PT1	0.893	0.921	0.941	0.761
	PT2	0.890			
	PT3	0.878			
	PT4	0.827			
	PT5	0.872			
Social Participation	SP1	0.863	0.911	0.938	0.790
	SP2	0.861			
	SP3	0.916			
	SP4	0.914			
Social Value	SV1	0.902	0.944	0.956	0.783
	SV2	0.873			
	SV3	0.868			
	SV4	0.898			
	SV5	0.905			
	SV6	0.861			
Utilitarian Value	UV1	0.942	0.904	0.94	0.839
	UV2	0.901			
	UV3	0.904			
Information-Seeking	ISE1	0.761	0.904	0.929	0.725
	ISE2	0.818			
	ISE3	0.888			
	ISE4	0.892			
	ISE5	0.889			
Information Sharing	ISH1	0.886	0.917	0.937	0.750
	ISH2	0.881			
	ISH3	0.854			
	ISH4	0.855			
	ISH5	0.853			
Users' Satisfaction	US1	0.911	0.932	0.951	0.830
	US2	0.910			
	US3	0.913			
	US4	0.912			
Continuance Usage Intention of Weibo	CUIW1	0.899	0.918	0.939	0.755
	CUIW2	0.889			
	CUIW3	0.902			
	CUIW4	0.910			
	CUIW5	0.733			

Note: N = 414, EV → Entertainment Value, PT → Passing Time, SP → Social Participation, SV → Social Value, UV → Utilitarian Value, ISE → Information-Seeking, ISH → Information Sharing, US → Users' Satisfaction, CUIW → Continuance Usage Intention of Weibo.

**Table 3.** Research hypotheses

	<b>Hypothesis/Relationship</b>	<b>Beta (<math>\beta</math>)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (STDEV)</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>H1</b>	Entertainment value → User satisfaction	0.172	0.054	3.186	0.001	Accepted
<b>H2</b>	Passing time → User satisfaction	0.138	0.055	2.519	0.012	Accepted
<b>H3</b>	Social participation → User satisfaction	-0.068	0.05	1.351	0.177	Rejected
<b>H4</b>	Social value → User satisfaction	0.211	0.061	3.478	0.001	Accepted
<b>H5</b>	Utilitarian value → User satisfaction	0.207	0.055	3.763	0.000	Accepted
<b>H6</b>	Information-seeking → User satisfaction	0.142	0.066	2.151	0.032	Accepted
<b>H7</b>	Information sharing → User satisfaction	0.217	0.06	3.62	0.000	Accepted
<b>H8</b>	User satisfaction → Continuance usage intention of Weibo	0.876	0.02	43.036	0.000	Accepted

## CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Weibo, the largest microblog platform in China, has become one of the most important information-sharing platforms in society today (Li et al., 2022). This study investigated how the satisfaction of Weibo users affects their willingness to use Weibo continuously and provides insights into user behaviour on Weibo. These insights can help Weibo better understand user needs, optimise the user experience as well as improve user satisfaction and continuance usage intention. For example, since past research found that entertainment value is one of the main reasons users continue to use Weibo, Weibo could add additional entertainment content, such as celebrity gossip and funny videos, to attract and maintain users. Social value also has an important impact on continuance usage intention among Weibo users. In this regard, Weibo could also strengthen its social network functions by incorporating more interactive elements and improving user interaction opportunities. Additionally, the results of this paper provide valuable information to Weibo advertisers. For example, because utilitarian value and information sharing significantly affect continuance usage intention among Weibo users, advertisers could more accurately target different user groups, such as professionals and students, and design more targeted advertising strategies.

From a practical standpoint, the insights from this study can inform strategies to enhance user experience, improve user engagement and promote long-term user loyalty on Weibo and other social media platforms. Platform developers and marketers could design more effective features, functionalities and marketing campaigns tailored to meet users' needs and preferences by understanding the key gratification that drive user satisfaction and continuance usage intention. Moreover, the study's findings aid in developing targeted user retention strategies. By recognising the predictors of continuance usage intention, practitioners can craft interventions that address those factors, increasing the likelihood

of users continuing to engage with Weibo over time, leading to a more stable and active user base, which is key to the platform's success and longevity.

In summary, the contributions of this study are twofold: it advances theoretical knowledge by expanding existing communication theories in the context of Weibo, and it provides practical guidance for stakeholders aiming to improve user engagement and retention on social media platforms.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored the impact of different types of gratification, including hedonic (entertainment value and passing time), social (social participation and social value), utilitarian (utilitarian value and information-seeking) and content gratification (information sharing), on Weibo user satisfaction and how this satisfaction positively influences the continuance usage intention among Weibo users. Through empirical analysis, the study found that all these types of gratification impact users' satisfaction. However, as one of the segmentation dimensions, social participation was found not to enhance user satisfaction with Weibo whereas information sharing, social value, utilitarian value and entertainment value positively impact users' satisfaction.

This study also found that user satisfaction has the potential to drive continuance usage intention on Weibo. Despite these meaningful findings, there are limitations in the study's sample selection and data collection. Therefore, future studies should consider adopting more diverse sampling techniques combined with qualitative methods to enrich the data dimensions and incorporate cross-cultural elements for comparative analysis. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into how social media platforms can enhance user loyalty and continuance usage intention by improving user satisfaction as well as recommendations for platform optimisation strategies.

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