

How TikTok Satisfies the Public's Psychological Needs —A Perspective From the Uses and Gratifications Theory

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ABSTRACT

Dou Yin, known as TikTok, was launched in China in September 2016. This app allows users to create or view 15 to 60-second videos, soundtracked by music clips. After several years it was launched in the market, the downloads gradually surpassed the downloads of FaceBook. In this paper, the author analyzes why DouYin is so popular that it is able to attract such amounts of people. The author separates users into three groups according to their ages: adolescents (14 to 25 years old), middle-aged people (25 to 50 years old), and the elders (older than 50 years old). By analyzing what kind of videos they have a crush on watching and what type of bloggers they love to pay attention to, the author is capable of gaining a piece of comprehensive and holistic information, preferences, and hobbies of the customer. The researcher finds that DouYin provides services that could meet needs of people of different ages. For the adolescents, DouYin provides them with videos that they are interested in a lot and the chance to shopping by spending less time and energy. For the middle-aged people, DouYin needs their needs by offers them opportunities to relax and to be sociable. For the old men and women, DouYin makes them able to pass time and learning new things. Thanks to the overall and holistic functions given by DouYin, it gradually becomes one of the most popular short-time video applications.

Keywords : Needs, DouYin transitions, popularity Short-time videos

1. INTRODUCTION

With the ubiquity of the internet and telephones, viewing short-time videos as a way of entertainment is gaining increasing momentum. Among a variety of video applications, DouYin stands out and is favored by an increasing number of people. Douyin was launched in the market by ByteDance in September 2016. Douyin, as most of our readers might know, is a short video platform and the Chinese version of TikTok. It integrates with TaoBao, JD.com, Kaola, Weipinhui, Suning, Yangmatou, and 163, enabling direct links from social to e-commerce. Although live-streaming on Douyin has been booming, we have previously documented that its focus remains on more affordable items[1]. Initially, the viewers of it merely intended to search for fun by watching attractive videos, and the video publishers just use it to show up their adept operating of a camera lens. However, in recent years, DouYin has provided the consumers with a place

to sell products, learn, watch miniseries or films. In, and so on. It also offers job opportunities for the public. As the function of DouYin become wider and wider, its popularity rises. The app was the world's Second-most or fourth-most downloaded non-gaming app of 2019. (Only behind various Facebook entities in either case). By 2020, it was comfortably number one.) [2]. Besides, In t modern society, as the pace of life seems to be increasing rapidly, people tend more to enjoy the ephemeral happiness. Under this situation, like a superhero coming to save the day, DouYin emerges in people's lives for consuming their boring time. This sense of satisfaction and enjoyment that are gained within an extremely short time induces a large number of people to crush on watching DouYin.

Generally speaking, this paper illustrates why DouYin attracts such a large portion of population including adolescents (14-25years old), people in middle age (25-50) , and the elders (over 50 years old).

2. DOU YIN SUCCESSFULLY MEETS ADOLESCENTS 'NEEDS.

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to understand what characteristics adolescents hold and what changes they have undergone. Adolescence is the stage of development that begins with puberty and ends when individuals make the transition into adult roles, roughly speaking, from about 10 until the early 20s. Adolescents experience fundamental changes in three aspects: biological transitions, cognitive transitions, and social transitions[3].

2.1. The Biological Transition

The chief elements of the biological changes of adolescence involve changes in the young person's physical appearance (including breast development in girls and the growth of facial hair in boys) Nowadays, there are a huge amount of advertisements on the DouYin application. Shopping on DouYin gradually becomes a fashion way of daily buying kinds of stuff. The advertisements on DouYin are really attractive and intriguing that the advertisers usually design some apt situations under which the products they intended to advertise are introduced to the viewers of their videos. The advertisers show the viewers how wonderful the products are by designing interesting plots in which the products are used properly, letting the viewers conscious that the products are really useful, have high quality, and they ideend need the products. Because of the biological changes, Adolescents have need to buy shavers, bras, new clothes and shoes. Attracted by these well-designed advertisements, along with some discounts, adolescents are inclined to enjoy buying stuff they need on the DouYin or getting to know the products they intend to buy by watching videos on it.

2.2. The Cognitive Transitions

Compared with children, adolescents are much better at thinking about hypothetical situations and about abstract concepts, such as friendship, democracy, or morality. Groundbreaking research on brain development is beginning to shed light on how these and other changes in thinking during adolescence result from the maturation of various brain regions and systems. The growth of cognitive ability of adolescents offers them ability to understand lots of meaningful videos. They are able to understand what meanings and intentions many bloggers are trying to convey, and are intrigued by them. For example, thanks to the cognitive development, adolescents could watch videos about wars, policies, cultures, and so on. As they enjoy viewing the related videos, the need for watching DouYin appears.

2.3. The Social Transition

This makes adolescents undergone expectations as the more independent and mature people. Additionally, they also have to interact with their peers instead of merely relying on their parents, forming their own social circles. Under this situation, they should have something in common with their friends. Watching DouYin provides this chance since it allows adolescents to talk about some famous bloggers or videos together, creating a common topic among the teens. As they imitate the hottest actions and behaviors learned in the hottest video together, their friendship improved at the same time too.

2.4. The Contexts of Adolescence

Although all adolescents experience the biological, cognitive, and the period's social transitions, these changes' effects are not uniform for all young people. Puberty makes some adolescents feel attractive and self-assured, but it makes others feel ugly and self-conscious. Being able to think in hypothetical terms makes some teenagers they grew up with the parents they have, but it prompts others to run away from home. Reaching 18 prompts some teenagers to enlist in the military or apply for a marriage license, but for others, becoming an adult is frightening and unsettling. For the adolescents who feel attractive and self-assured, DouYin provides them opportunity to show themselves up. They can upload their singing and dance videos or selfies on this popular application. The sense of enjoyment that brought by attracting fans or gaining others' favors induce the these adolescents to continue to use DouYin. For the adolescents who feel relative self-conscious, Douyin makes them able to spend time lonely rather than interacting with others and being sociable. Additionally, there are many positive videos uploaded on the Douyin to encourage people and augment views' confidence. The active attitude and the way of passtime offered by DouYin also attracts this kind of adolescents.

3. DOUYIN SATISFIES MIDDLE-AGED PEOPLE'S NEEDS

According to gratifications perspective, which was formalized in an article by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch, people use media to satisfy their needs. People in the middle age are relatively complex and mature. They have to undertake a series of responsibilities. In the life aspect, they should support the family including taking care of their young child and old parents. For the society, they have to devote themselves into the work rather than being unemployed. For them, Douyin could suitably meet their various needs. The first one is the relaxation. Today, when we talk to groups of parents about using short-time video effectively in the home, we often take a few minutes to talk about the transitional time between afternoon and evening activities. This is often a time of chaos in the household as people shift gears and change activities.

For parents, the combination of winding down from the workday and preparing the evening meal can seem like a major challenge when young children are running around at a hyper pace. Some carefully selected, non-arousing videos can often be the perfect remedy to ease the household tension at this time of day. In this case, the parents have control over the selection, thereby getting opportunity to get rid of wasting time on companion their children rather than cook meals or work. Douyin also satisfies the need for social interaction. People may watch TV or expose themselves to media messages and be prepared for various sorts of interactions with other people afterward. For example, a group of colleagues is fans of blogger. I often tune in to see a new episode—not only because they enjoy the interesting plots or sound techniques applied by bloggers of videos—but also because they know that if they miss the some popular videos, they will feel left out of some of the office conversation of the next day. Media messages can provide people with common experiences that help to break the conservational ice with strangers or reinforce social connections with friends and family. It is also one of the most effective and spontaneous methods to both improve the well-established relationship such as friends or family members and the relationship between strangers.

4. DOUYIN ALSO MEETS THE ELDERLY'S NEED

In modern society, an increasing number of old people have a crush on watching shot-time videos. one of the reasons is that it provides old people chances to show themselves and purchase their dreams[4]. There is an instance can be used to demonstrate this statement. A 75-year old Sang Xiuzhu applies make-up – such as mascara and lipstick – every day before hanging out. However, this is a routine she discovered merely recently. “I didn’t wear make-up when I was young. I didn’t have the financial resources for that,” said Sang, who has lived in Beijing for almost five decades. Sang also had to give up her dream of being a performer to become an engineer in the 1960s. “At that time, my family wanted me to do something that would help improve the economic condition and not the superstructure. So anything related to art was a definite ‘no’,” she maintained. Nevertheless, as the the global economy progress, the elders like Sang discovered an measure to access the artistic learnings– a Douyin channel she participated last year named ‘Fashion Grandma’, which features Chinese grandmas that dress elegantly in conventional Chinese outfits such as cheongsams. Fashion Grandmather has more than 2.9 million fans in a society where respect for one’s elders is believed a high virtue. From 2015 to 2019, the size of China’s silver economy augmented from 2.4 trillion yuan to 4.3 trillion yuan (US\$658 billion), with a compound annual increase rate of 15.2 percent,

according to a recent report from a research firm Leadbao[5]. Furthermore, generally, old people are more likely to feel lonely as their children leaving them and they retiring from the working fields. At this critical period, companionship and connection provided is of much importance. So, many old people watch videos because it gives them a sense of connection to other people—a sense of attachment. Why should this be? Where the Internet is concerned, the concept of companionship is easier to comprehend. People could actually communicate with other people in chat rooms and use e-mail to keep in touch. But how does TV support a sense of companionship? Researchers Byron Reeves and the late Clifford Nass might have several insights into this question. According to these researchers, the human brain does not easily separate media images from reality. If Reeves and Nass are right, when we see people on TV, some primitive part of the brain is induced to thinking that those people are physically present in the real life. Higher-order cognitive processes might convey us that the images are not real, but the images arouse real emotional reactions just the same. Nowadays, More and more elderly people are moving their social activities to Douyin. Now, when you open Douyin, your friends' online updates are clearly exhibited on the message interface. When you open the chat box, Douyin has the same functions as Wechat, including sending voice messages, emojis, photos, and video sharing. Liu Lan, a 47-year-old woman from Anhui province, expressed that she opens Douyin more frequently than any other apps added up. Every time she receives a reminder from her friends, she clicks douyin to check it. She also makes comments and comments for interesting content, and never misses private messages and group chats. Just a year after downloading Douyin, she relies on it more than any other APP[6]. A more complete confirmation of the Reeves and Nass thesis must await further testing and a more complete understanding of brain functions. But the basic theoretical idea may be useful for explaining the sense that some people have relationships with media personalities.

Elderly users over 60 spend 64.8 minutes on the Internet per day, 16.2 minutes more than those over 40 and higher than the average of platform users, according to the 2020 Elderly People's Internet Life Report released on Oct 23. After retiring from the social working life, the elderly tend to enrich their life with entertainment and emotional content because of the increased leisure time and loneliness. According to the report on Mobile Internet for Senior Users released in 2018, since 2012, the number of mobile Internet users has increased by 79%, and the number of elderly Internet users has increased by 130%, and the speed of the elderly accessing the Internet is 1.6 times that of the overall mobile Internet penetration[6].



Douyin channel, Fashion Grandmas, featuring Chinese grandmas that dress gracefully in traditional Chinese outfits such as cheongsams. Photo: Handout

Figure 1: Fashion grandmothers

5. CONCLUSION

This passage aims to analyze how does DouYin has become more and more popular among the general public in the modern society by separating its users into three groups according to their ages. Appealing to the examples, theories, and researches, DouYin attracts people by meeting various people’s needs properly and eligibly in a plethora of aspects. Specifically, it helps adolescents to shop conveniently, provides them relative higher-level videos that they could already understand, assists the people in middle-age to blend in with their peers, and to relax from exhausting life, and enables the elders to learn new stuffs and gives them a chance to pursue their own dreams. Besides, Along with the availability and ubiquity of the electronic devices and the high-advanced internet, the development and improvement of Douyin progress at an extremely rapid pace, thus inducing an increasing portion of people in the contemporary society to be the consumers and fans of this desirable application. The shortage of this paper is that it lacks of the concrete data to support the researcher’s point of view.

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