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The Addictive Media Use of Audiences From Social Short Video Platforms

Shu-xian Yang

School of Humanities, Jianghan University, Wuhan 430056, Hubei, China

Abstract. The innovation of network technology has led to the flourishing of various diversified short-video social platforms, led by Tik Tok and Quick hand . These platforms have rapidly updated the social habits of audiences by virtue of their living, real-time, social and interactive characteristics, which have greatly changed the current media ecological environment and caused significant social communication effects one after another. However, the high fragmentation characteristics of social short video platforms have gradually formed a prominent entertainment culture atmosphere, giving rise to high intensity of media dependence, and the phenomenon of addiction is particularly common. This paper takes social short video platforms as an example to study the addictive audience media use, and proposes relevant strategies to advocate the construction of a benign, rational and diversified media communication ecology.

Keywords. Short video; Addiction; Audience; Media use

1. Introduction

In recent years, Tik Tok, Quick hand and other social short video platforms have been developing rapidly, and their reputation is very good, blowing a wave of "national vertical screen, everyone participate" entertainment trend. Data shows that during the "Double Eleven" period in 2021, the cumulative number of viewers on the Tik Tok platform reached 39.5 billion, and the GMV of Quick hand increased by 433% year-on-year. 2022 Tik Tok aims to reach 680 million daily active users, and the scale of e-commerce will reach 500-600 billion yuan. Such platforms have a profound impact on the selection and usage habits of audiences at the levels of content distribution, hot spotlight, real-time updates, and value guidance. Audiences can easily receive and disseminate information on these platforms, and engage in various kinds of communication and interaction, topic discussion and emotional catharsis. However, the proper use of media can bring positive effects, while the imbalance of media use can affect the whole social pattern. The problem of audience addiction caused by the proliferation of media use, entertainment and high speed is becoming more and more prominent. In this new ecological pattern of over-reliance on media, the critical consciousness of the audience is gradually being dissolved, and the audience is facing unprecedented tests and unprecedented challenges.

2. The meaning of audience addiction in social short video platforms

In the medical sense, "addiction" means that the patient has become physically dependent on the drug, which is essentially different from the concept of "habituation": whether there will be prolonged

withdrawal symptoms after stopping the drug. For example, a patient who has been taking sleeping pills for a long time may experience fatigue, anxiety, nausea, vomiting, etc. after suddenly stopping the medication . Addiction is latent in two main ways: one is physical addiction and the other is mental addiction. For example, many patients develop a severe, strong and obvious physical dependence on a drug after taking it for a long time. Such symptoms, even if treated, still cannot be completely eliminated in the short term and require a long-term adaptation process. Similarly, in the media sense, addiction refers to the fact that such people need to spend more time and energy on media use than the average person, they rely on media to satisfy their needs and rely on media to get excess gains, and this media need has long penetrated into all aspects of personal life, occupying a particularly significant role in personal life and having an indelible impact.

In fact, a long time ago, American scholar Sandra Bauer-Lokich introduced the concept of "media dependence", which explains people's dependence on the media when they use it to achieve a set goal. As the times change, people's dependence on the media will not diminish but will grow stronger. The "use and satisfaction" theory in communication science also believes that the audience occupies a more active position in the process of receiving media information, and they have different levels, perspectives and expectations of information. If the audience's needs are satisfied or their expectations are exceeded in the process of using a particular medium, then the medium will have a strong effect on them. The greater this gained satisfaction and the more exposure to the media, the stronger the effect of the media[1] . Therefore, we can understand that the behavior of audience addiction is ultimately due to the urgent path dependence of the audience after receiving certain media message signals, and this path dependence influences and even dominates the daily behavior of individuals. In the long-term development process, the audience's inherent psychosocial needs and this addiction are interdependent, deepened and irreconcilable.

3. The performance of audience addiction on social short video platform

The phenomenon of audience addiction in social short video platforms such as "Tik Tok" and "Quick hand" has become a clear trend in media applications. First of all, the content is compatible with the physical and psychological needs of the audience. Audiences combine their psychological and physical tendencies when using the media. For the psychological dimension, the audience can get a pleasure that is closest to life, cheapest cost and maximum satisfaction to a faster degree in the social short video platform. A large number of high-quality and original bloggers in the platform contribute their own content, and such "popular culture" can fully form a wide range of resonance in the content, establishing a wonderful gap between the audience and the short video. The audience can choose to watch current affairs hotspots, audio and video appreciation, entertainment gossip, soulful and beautiful articles, handsome girls and other contents anytime, anywhere and precisely. Under the pressure of busy work, they can briefly escape from real life and find their own sense of security and belonging. When this emotional resonance reaches a certain level, it creates an extremely strong dependence on short videos. For the physical dimension, the platform is full of topics such as "national fitness campaign", "rejecting appearance anxiety" and "don't 'emo'". "During the 2022 Shanghai epidemic, Liu Genghong and his wife performed fat-burning exercises five days a week through the Tik Tok platform, and their sweaty, sunny and positive image and the passionate "come on, go go go! It has become one of the most positive symbols in the epidemic. The audience only needs to touch the screen to enter the "media mecca" closely related to their own preferences, to achieve "face-to-face" communication with netizens who share the same interests, to start the role of mutual encouragement, and to restore the state of health. However, among these platforms, the youth group has become the most active group of "loyal fans" at the right time. As the most active, vibrant and energetic force in society, they dare to speak out, try and express themselves, and naturally occupy more than 80% of the overall audience. Because of their pursuit of new things, their exploration of new technologies, and their exposure to new media, young people are exposed to these social platforms day after day, and they experience a "feast of entertainment" day and night, which attracts the audience firmly and makes them unable to extricate themselves, and they are more likely to become addicted to the use of media and fall into it. It is easy to become addicted to the use of the medium and to fall into it.

Second, the rise of short videos has led to a gradual loss of audience autonomy over media criticism. The users of social short videos are mainly young people aged 14-35, of which more than 78% have installed or used a short video app. According to a survey conducted by the China Youth Network Association, teenage Internet addicts account for 13.2% of teenage Internet users, and have already reached 16.5 million[2] . With its characteristics of "short, new and fast", short video has reshaped the way of media communication and created a new form of media. In this form, viewers are not only the recipients of the content, but also the makers and distributors of the content. However, within the social short video platform, a large amount of homogenized information is flooded, and the phenomenon of competing for traffic hotspots continues to expand. What people love to watch and what is popular is produced and chased within the platform, leading to vicious competition in platform content, blindly following the trend and copying and imitating the phenomenon. For example, in November 2016, food blogger Li Ziqi gained wide attention and attracted a large audience with his short video "Lanzhou Beef Noodles", and in 2017, She formally set up his personal team. After Li Ziqi became popular, several food bloggers emerged in just a few years, with similar shooting styles; in September 2018, "Lipstick One" Li Jiaqi successfully challenged Ma during the "Double Eleven" and officially became a leader in the makeup live industry. Since then, hundreds of beauty bloggers have opened live makeup era. The emergence of homogeneous content is not wrong, but if a large number of homogeneous content appears the audience does not voice, only blind reliance, then the power of criticism of the media will gradually weaken or even disappear, and ultimately can not correctly guide the guidance of the media.

Finally, the development of technology has subsequently become a major influence on audience media dependence. According to McLuhan, "All technology is media, and all media is an outgrowth and extension of ourselves." The continuous innovation of media technology, 5G technology, virtual technology, artificial intelligence, cloud live streaming and other new dynamics of media convergence have created a fresher, more interesting and richer media environment for social short-form video platforms. Today's short video industry has a multitude of verticals, with self-media creators working deeply in their own fields and traditional media seeking breakthroughs in their own industries. These technological innovations enable audiences to get the maximum viewing experience, receiving experience, and interactive experience through short video production, viewing, sharing, and communication, comments, messages, pop-ups, and other functions, shortening the Time and space distance, these new forms also make the dependence of the audience media addiction has caused some impact, the audience will have a strong sense of media dependence on social clips because of the habit, which leads to addiction.

4. The consequences of the addictive nature of the audience of social short video platform

The addiction problem arising from the audience's over-reliance on social short video platforms will undoubtedly bring many undesirable consequences, such as the phenomenon of mediatisation of the audience, distortion of value orientation and the problem of group loneliness.

(A)Mediated phenomenon of audience

The trend of alienation presented by social short video platforms can make media communication counterproductive. In order to enhance the audience's media stickiness on social short video platforms with large sticky user groups, some content producers seize the opportunity to continuously put video times, release vulgar, curious and alienating video content, and appear in large numbers on the platform to "fight for position", "rub the flow " "gimmick" images to attract more uninformed audiences and seek more benefits. In addition, in order to help poor quality businesses seek profits, false manufacturing information in the live room to stimulate consumption, the platform excessive pursuit of entertainment and commercialization effect, through vulgar, low-intelligence, superficial means has become a breakthrough for unlawful elements to earn illegal interests, along with the audience gradually addicted to it, lost the original media characteristics. Long-term reading of vulgar and superficial content will only make the audience gradually numb and lose the ability to think rationally and critically, just doing mechanical reading for the pursuit of empty pleasure. The value of thinking about content is replaced by the desire to blindly brush videos, and rational perception is gradually dominated by hedonism.

(B)Distortion of value tendencies

Since some time, rational and objective opinions often fail to attract people's attention, while on the contrary, extreme and emotional voices are instead more acceptable. Therefore, in order to gain more attention from netizens, more and more attitudes, opinions and rhythmic voices are conveyed in the news. For example, the topics of "drinking more hot water" and "desire to live" when a man is sick are gaining attention; the trend of "sending gifts and WeChat transfers by boyfriend" on Valentine's Day is prevalent. The boyfriend "forgot the wedding anniversary", "not so expensive gifts" continue to trigger discussion. During the holiday season, what is supposed to be a way for women to express their hopes and expectations for their loved ones has been turned into a game of "love and unlove" by the media's "fanning the flames". This "fantasy of boyfriend" has led to the prevalence of comparison and the intensification of the trend of showing off extravagance, which has caused a distortion of value tendencies and has had a negative impact on the formation of good values among young people.

(C) Group loneliness problem

Shirley Turkel believes that in the current daily application scenario, a typical "group loneliness" phenomenon often occurs. That is, when relatives, friends and colleagues gather, although they appear to be sitting around together, there is no communication, and they are all looking at their cell phones in unison. This phenomenon is similar to the phenomenon of "container people" proposed by Japanese communication scholar Nakano. In the current social environment, due to various pressures, people are gradually reluctant to show their real state and valuable ideas directly in the real social world. However, people in society have the desire to socialize, and this desire has been released in the virtual world of the Internet, and people prefer to wrap themselves in the virtual network container to relieve the lonely moments in real life. However, people eventually have to return to reality, and after leaving the virtual world, people will feel doubly empty and lost. Therefore, in order to get the real enrichment and satisfaction of the mind and reduce the loneliness of the group, it is necessary to reduce the dependence on the new media.

5. Countermeasures for the addictive nature of the audience of social short video platform

(A) strengthen the unified management of virtual society

Hu Jintao pointed out earlier that "we should further strengthen and improve the management of information networks, improve the management level of virtual society, and improve the mechanism for guiding public opinion online." Network virtual society management is not a simple technical issue, but a complex social system engineering. In the network virtual environment, the government cannot unilaterally control all network information by simple administrative instructions, regulate people's network behavior and standardize specific behavioral habits, but should regulate indirectly through ethics and morality, network technology supervision and policies and regulations. Therefore, the idea of online social management, which should take online technology management as the main means and optimize the overall online environment as the core goal, can further regulate the audience's daily online behavior and thus curb the proliferation of addictive phenomena[3] .

(B) Enhancement of Internet users' own immunity

Effectively improving the audience's inner self-control is the top priority in preventing Internet addiction. Internet communication development needs to be viewed dialectically, and its progressiveness and conflict coexist. In the process of prolonged exposure to the use of the Internet, a large amount of information content spreads, and Internet users lack sufficient scientific cognition in these contents and lose their personal value judgment. Therefore, in order to effectively change the addictive problem of the audience, it is necessary to correct the network cognitive bias and quit the malignant way of using the network media, and form a benign network behavior, if necessary, with the help of external social forces to guide and internalize into internal control in the long-term regulated network behavior.

(C) Optimization of content creation within the platform

"The root of the solid powder increase lies in the superimposition of quality content production and creativity." Overly entertaining content will not bring relief to the audience from the stress of daily life, but may lead them into another anxious negative emotion[4] . Therefore, short videos need to control the general direction of positive expression, not to indulge in earthy taste and only pursue

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entertainment effects. Optimize the connotation of works, establish a benign, diversified and open communication pattern; abandon vulgarized content, find a balance between commerciality and authenticity of works; oppose excessive entertainment, cultivate the awareness of spreading and promoting positive social energy, in order to let the audience really improve their own aesthetic level, abandon media dependence and get rid of the drawbacks brought by the media.

6. Conclusion

Nowadays, the problem of addictive media use by audiences, such as short social video platforms, is becoming more and more prominent. Although media convergence is the trend, the melting of borders cannot be stopped[5] . While the audience enjoys the convenience, novelty and fun brought by media convergence in the new media field, the problem of addiction still cannot be ignored. It is important to explore the addictive audience media use and propose relevant strategies to enhance the inherent communication power and influence of short videos.

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