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A Pilot Study on Factors Influencing Audiences' Continuance Intentions of Chinese Online Film Festival

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ABSTRACT

The recent rise and development of online film festivals have transcended geographical limitations, allowing films and filmmakers to reach audiences who can participate from the comfort of their homes. This shift has made the study of the positioning and future development of online film festivals a focal point in the film industry. However, there is currently a paucity of research on online film festivals. Most studies focus on the curatorial, economic, or cultural tourism significance of these festivals, often overlooking the perspective of the audience. Based on uses and gratifications theory and technology acceptance model, this pilot study aims to understand the experiences of audiences participating in online film festivals and to predict their continuance intention. This study collected data through an online survey, inviting 34 participants from film fan communities and social media-related keywords. In the final analysis, 32 valid responses were retained. The results indicate that audience gratification and positive attitudes are critical factors influencing their intention to continue participating in online film festivals. This finding underscores the importance of enhancing audience gratification and fostering positive attitudes for the sustainable development of online film festivals. This study is crucial for film festival organizers, as understanding the audience's intentions to continue participating can aid them in making more informed decisions in future event planning and organization, thereby promoting the long-term development of online film festivals. This pilot study is based on a small sample size and covers a limited group. Therefore, future research should increase the sample size to obtain more convincing results, providing further support for the development of online film festivals.

Keywords: *Attitude, Continuance intention, Gratification, Online Film Festival*

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a global health crisis. To curb the spread of the virus, many countries implemented restrictive measures such as limiting cinema attendance, suspending film festivals, and even shutting down theatres. These actions created an unprecedented crisis for film festivals and the entire film industry. However, people quickly found ways to adapt: the emergence of online film festivals allowed the continuation of cinematic experiences in a different space and at a different pace. Some view this shift optimistically, while others express concerns. Optimists consider online film festivals as a "Global Film Festival," uniting people worldwide under the motto "We Are One." Critics, however, argue that online film festivals lack the sense of physical presence and collective belonging, with "watch-along" sessions on the cloud merely offering self-consolation, which starkly contrasts with the reality of "watching alone" (Liu, 2021). The identity of a film festival is built on the idea that it is a crucial intermediary for film culture, which is fundamentally rooted in social interaction and exchange. Nevertheless, the online format still aligns with the two main goals of film festivals: bringing films selected based on artistic and cultural criteria to audiences, and directly or indirectly supporting the independent art film market. The symbolic value conferred on films through

festival selection and awards facilitates their integration into the global screening circuit, and digital platforms can significantly contribute to this process by increasing film exposure and helping connect rights holders, festival programmers, and distributors (Taillibert & Vinuela, 2021).

Film festivals are not only significant from a cultural and artistic standpoint but also hold commercial value, as they are international events encompassing film screenings, competitions, trading, and film project pitching. Particularly in international film festivals, there are numerous sections, and this study focuses on those that engage the audience, such as screenings, masterclasses, and seminars, with the screening section being the most crucial. Watching films is the stage where films, after being produced, are delivered to audiences and subjected to their evaluation. Sometimes, the audience's viewing experience can impact a film's market performance, making research on viewing experiences an essential aspect of film studies. According to Wu (2020), film viewing not only includes the process of screening the film but also the audience's experience during the viewing. Viewing experiences have both internal and external dimensions. The internal dimension refers to the audience's experience of the film itself during viewing, which can include the form and content of the film. The external dimension involves factors unrelated to the film, such as the viewing environment and functionality. The combination of these viewing characteristics forms a viewing system, which gives meaning to the viewing experience. As film exhibition has evolved, the viewing experience has expanded from a single channel to multiple channels, leading to changes in how audiences experience films. Viewing, as a ritualized behaviour, also changes as the viewing experience shifts.

As an emerging phenomenon, online film festivals have coexisted with traditional in-person festivals for over a decade. Over the years, countless festivals have chosen to replicate some of their activities online, expanding their traditional formats to reach a wider audience through their websites or existing video-on-demand platforms (Stevens, 2017). The core lies in content planning, including curators' ability to gauge audience emotions, uncover scarce resources, and innovate viewing formats. Research on online film festivals is still in its infancy globally, and studies specifically focused on online film festival audiences are limited. Therefore, this study will focus on the audience of online film festivals, as their willingness to participate is a crucial factor influencing the future development of these festivals. This research aims to understand the intentions of Chinese online film festival audiences to continue participating in future online festivals and to explore the potential factors that influence their continuance intention. The study seeks to enrich the research on Chinese film festivals, filling the gap in audience research related to Chinese online film festivals. This, in turn, could contribute to more in-depth studies on the Chinese online film festival landscape and film festival research overall. Additionally, the operation of online platforms presents an opportunity to break through the existing rigid frameworks of traditional film festivals, potentially facilitating the transformation of the traditional film festival industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online film festivals

Academic research on online film festivals gained momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic, and scholars have increasingly recognized the importance of studying this emerging field, emphasizing the need to explore online film festivals within the contemporary context (Valck & Damians, 2020; De Valck, 2020; Armstrong, 2021). Despite this growing interest, a systematic and comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding online film festivals is still in its infancy.

Some researchers have begun to distinguish online film festivals from traditional physical ones by examining their unique characteristics and positioning within the broader festival landscape. For instance, Bakker (2015) conceptualizes online film festivals as alternative exhibition platforms, distinct from conventional practices. He identifies three central aspects that define these festivals: their virtual location, the nature of their content, and the commercial motivations driving them. Similarly, Taillibert (2018) delves into the significance of positioning film festivals online, tracing the historical development of this phenomenon. He defines online film festivals as web-based platforms that mimic the format of traditional festivals, showcasing films online while incorporating familiar elements like audience interaction and expert commentary. Taillibert's analysis underscores how virtual locations, content curation, and business considerations have become pivotal in distinguishing online film festivals from their physical counterparts. In his 2021 study, Taillibert further examines how digital technology is leveraged by film festivals to extend their reach and influence. He argues that digital platforms provide unprecedented visibility for film festivals, facilitating their circulation within the festival circuit and enhancing their market access. This shift towards digitalization represents a significant evolution in how film festivals are organized and experienced.

Many community-based festivals remain closely tied to their physical locations, as highlighted by Armstrong (2021). Case studies in film festival research, which have traditionally focused on specific geographical areas, continue to be a valuable method for understanding the dynamics of these events (De Valck, 2020). For example, Hobbins-White and Limov (2020) examine the transition of the Southwest Film Festival in the United States to an online format, analyzing the experiences of filmmakers and audiences while exploring the potential for future virtual festivals. Armstrong's (2021) research on the Regent Park Film Festival in Canada identifies challenges faced by online film festival organizers, based on interviews with the festival's curation team. Richards and Pacella (2022) provide insights into the Australian film festival industry, conducting qualitative research through interviews with festival directors, organizers, and staff to understand their work lives during the pandemic. Meanwhile, Hanzlík and Mazierska (2022) offer a case study from Eastern Europe, summarizing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cinemas and VOD platforms, and exploring the future possibilities of online film festivals in the region. Other regions, such as Brazil (de Almeida, da Silva, Suppia, & de Mello, 2022), Chile (Peirano & Ramírez, 2023), and the Alicante region (Jurado-Martin, 2023), have also been the subject of related studies, further highlighting the global relevance and diversity of online film festival research.

This body of work underscores the importance of understanding the unique dynamics of online film festivals, particularly as they continue to evolve and adapt in response to technological advancements and changing audience behaviours. As research in this area expands, it will be crucial to develop a more comprehensive theoretical framework to guide future studies and inform the practices of festival organizers and industry professionals.

Film festival audience research

While a significant body of research has explored films and general film audiences, studies specifically targeting film festival audiences remain relatively limited. Film festival audiences differ from general film audiences in that they tend to be more niche and concentrated, often characterized by their specialized interest in cinema beyond mainstream appeal. Despite the growing significance of online film festivals, in-depth studies on their audiences are scarce, particularly within the context of Chinese film festivals.

Báez and Devesa (2014) identified film festival audiences as comprising socially indifferent individuals, film lovers, and enthusiasts. Their research highlighted three key motivational factors driving festival attendance: discovery, entertainment, and an appreciation for cinema itself. These motivations align with the unique experience that film festivals offer, distinguishing them from regular cinema-going experiences. Smits (2022) further advanced the understanding of online film festival audiences by categorizing data collection into three main themes: surveys and automated data analysis, geographical distribution of audiences, and audience consumption patterns. This approach offers a more systematic understanding of how audiences engage with online film festivals across different regions and demographics. Yolal et al. (2019) examined film festival attendance motivations within the context of demographic characteristics, identifying four key dimensions: novelty, socialization, escape, and togetherness. These motivational factors reflect the complex and varied reasons why individuals choose to attend film festivals, underscoring the unique role these events play in the broader cultural landscape.

In the context of Chinese online film festivals, Sha (2021) provided an initial profile of the audience, revealing that users born in the 1980s (20.99%), 1990s (58.01%), and 2000s (16.99%) constitute the majority of "active users" in China's vast digital society. These demographic groups not only represent the core audience for physical cinemas but also dominate the online film viewing space in China. Notably, the study found that urban women born in the 1990s are more likely than their male counterparts to prefer watching films in physical cinemas and are also more engaged in the development, feedback, and discussions surrounding online film festivals. A review article by Yang et al. (2024) summarizes four types of gratification of online film festival audiences: content gratification, process gratification, social gratification, and technology gratification.

This body of research underscores the importance of understanding the distinct characteristics and motivations of film festival audiences, particularly as the landscape of film festivals continues to evolve with the rise of online platforms. As the field of online film festival studies grows, it will be crucial to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how audience engagement is shaped by both traditional and digital festival formats.

Uses and gratifications theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is a media use paradigm within mass communication research that guides the assessment of users' motivations for media consumption and access. The primary aim of this theory is to explain why individuals choose specific media over alternative communication channels and to elucidate the psychological needs that drive people to use particular media (Severin & Tankard, 1997). In recent years, there has been a growing body of research employing UGT to explain user engagement with online platforms (McLean et al., 2022; Camilleri & Falzon, 2021). However, the application of UGT to online film festivals remains incomplete, and the specific needs of this emerging audience segment have not been thoroughly identified. In this context, the present study introduces UGT into the film festival setting, focusing on the audience of online film festivals.

According to the Information Systems (IS) Continuance Model (Bhattacharjee, 2001), gratification directly influences users' willingness to continue using an IS. Continuance intention (CI) is defined as the user's intention to continue browsing, posting content, and remaining loyal to the same information system, reflecting consumer behaviours driven by different users' knowledge, opinions, and attitudes (Sharabati et al., 2022). In this study, online film festivals are defined as platforms hosting screenings and festival events, which fall within the domain of information systems. Research on

various types of digital technologies consistently supports the positive impact of gratification on CI (Yan et al., 2021). Mouakket (2018) suggests that gratification is the strongest predictor of CI, emphasizing that customer gratification significantly influences behavioural intentions. When people are satisfied with a service or product, they are likely to repurchase and reuse it, spread positive word-of-mouth, develop loyalty, and exhibit continuance intentions (Sharabati et al., 2022). Therefore, satisfied users are more likely to engage more deeply. Although there has been no direct research on the relationship between online film festivals and CI, previous studies provide a basis for inference. For instance, Baker et al. (2014) applied this reasoning to films and streaming, suggesting that users' gratification with their past experiences on YouTube positively influences their intention to continue using YouTube for watching films. Additionally, Lee and Beeler (2006) found a strong correlation between festival participants' gratification and their future intentions in their study on festival attendance.

Technology acceptance model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is widely regarded as one of the most influential and commonly used theories for describing individuals' acceptance of information systems. Initially proposed by Davis (1986), TAM posits that the key to increasing the usage rate of information technology is to first enhance its acceptance, which can be assessed by examining individuals' future usage intentions. The model hypothesizes that an individual's acceptance of an information system is determined by two primary factors: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). TAM includes five internal variables: in addition to PU and PEOU, the model considers attitude toward using the technology, behavioural intention to use the technology, and actual system usage (Marangunić & Granić, 2015). Behavioural intention is the factor that drives individuals to use the technology, and it is influenced by attitude, which represents the overall impression of the technology.

TAM has been widely applied across various domains, including information systems, e-commerce, mobile technologies, and more recently, streaming services. Although no studies have yet applied this theory specifically to analyse online film festivals, several studies have used TAM to explore streaming platforms (Camilleri & Falzon, 2021; Sun & Zhang, 2021; Cebeci et al., 2019; Sharma & Kakkar, 2022). These studies suggest that the principles of TAM can be effectively extended to the context of online film festivals, providing a theoretical framework for understanding how audience perceptions influence their adoption and continued use of these platforms. The integration of TAM into the analysis of online film festivals provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding audience behaviour and suggests practical implications for the design and promotion of digital film festivals to enhance user engagement.

Therefore, based on the above, this study hypothesizes:

H1: Gratification is positively correlated with the audience's continuance intention to participate in the China Online Film Festival.

H2: Attitude is positively correlated with the audience's continuance intention to participate in the China Online Film Festival.

H3: Gratification is positively correlated with the audience's attitude to participate in the China Online Film Festival.

METHOD

This study followed a purposive sampling method, as recommended by Morgan (2008), and was conducted online in December 2023. Purposive sampling was employed as it allows for the deliberate selection of participants who meet the study's specific criteria, ensuring the inclusion of niche groups such as film festival audiences. This method is particularly effective in capturing insights from individuals with direct experience and engagement in online film festivals, aligning with the study's focus on audience continuance intention. According to Hertzog (2008), selecting 30-40 samples for a pilot study is considered reasonable and reliable, allowing for initial testing and refinement of research instruments.

Based on research by Tian and Li (2023), the primary audience for online film festivals consists of dedicated festival fans, creating a certain entry barrier for other viewing groups. Given that these audiences do not have obvious external characteristics, the researcher decided to invite 34 participants from film festival fan communities and relevant threads on the social media platform Xiaohongshu for the pilot study, all of whom met the criteria for the target participant group. Data collection was conducted through self-administered questionnaires. Out of the 34 questionnaires collected, 2 were incomplete and thus excluded from further analysis, resulting in a final sample size of 32 for this pilot study.

The research instrument for this study consisted of three main variables: attitudes, gratification, and continuance intention (CI). The attitude section included four items, the gratification variable comprised four items, and the CI variable consisted of six items. All scales used in this study were measured using a five-point Likert scale, designed based on previous studies and adjusted to fit the context of online film festivals. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was cross-checked with subject professors and industry experts. Ethical considerations were also addressed, including obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring anonymity, and explaining the purpose and use of the data.

SPSS was utilized for descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to analyse the data collected from the respondents. The data analysis process involved computing descriptive statistics to understand the central tendencies of the variables, followed by correlation analysis to examine the relationships between the variables. Data cleaning procedures were undertaken before the analysis, including handling missing data and ensuring the data met the assumptions of the statistical tests used.

Reliability testing was also conducted using SPSS. Cronbach's alpha, a commonly cited statistical measure, was used to assess the reliability of the scales. According to Shi et al. (2012), a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.6 is considered acceptable for exploratory research. In this study, the reliability tests conducted on the sample yielded Cronbach's alpha values of 0.905 (gratification), 0.908 (attitude), and 0.953 (continuance intention), indicating that the scales are reliable.

As this study is a pilot study, its primary purpose was to test the feasibility of the research design, identify any issues with the questionnaire, and refine the data collection process. While the small sample size and purposive sampling method may limit the generalizability of the findings, the study provides valuable insights into the online film festival audience and their continuance intention to participate in such events.

RESULT

Demographic profile

The sample size of this study is 32 participants, with a demographic breakdown showing that 71.9% of the respondents are female, while 28.1% are male. The age of the respondents spans from 17 to 35 years old, with the majority, 59.4%, falling within the 18-25 age group. This age distribution indicates a youthful demographic, which aligns with their reported identities: a significant portion of the respondents identify as cinephiles (40.6%) or as film students (40.6%), reflecting a strong interest in film and media among the participants. 12.5% of the people are from other majors and industries, and are not movie lovers, but participate in the film festival for accidental reasons.

In terms of educational background, a notable majority of the respondents, 68.8%, hold a diploma, suggesting a well-educated group, likely engaged in or recently completed higher education. This educational profile may correlate with their involvement in online film festivals, as these events often attract individuals with a keen interest in cinema and related studies.

For those respondents who are not currently students, the reported income levels provide insight into their socioeconomic status. The data shows that 18.8% of these non-student respondents have an income ranging between CNY 4001-8000, while 15.6% report earning above CNY 16,000. This spread in income levels suggests a varied economic background among the participants, which could influence their access to and engagement with online film festivals.

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Variable	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	9	28.1
Female	23	71.9
Age		
Below 18	2	6.3
Between 18 and 25	19	59.4
Between 26 and 35	11	34.3
Education		
High school or below	1	3.1
Diploma	22	68.8
Degree	7	21.9
Masters/ PhD	2	6.3
Identity		
Work in film industry	2	6.9
Study for film	13	40.6
Cinephile	13	40.6
Others	4	12.5
Income		
No monthly income, I am a student	13	40.6
Below CNY4000	2	6.3
CNY4001- CNY8000	6	18.8
CNY8001-CNY12000	4	12.5
CNY12001-CNY16000	2	6.3
Above CNY16000	5	15.6

Descriptive statistics

The survey results indicate the respondents' levels of gratification, attitude, and continuance intention (CI) towards online film festivals (see as table 2). The mean gratification score is 96.03 with a standard deviation of 17.37, suggesting that respondents generally have a high level of gratification, although there is a relatively wide variation in responses. The mean attitude score is 26.53 with a standard deviation of 4.70, indicating a generally positive attitude towards online film festivals, but with less variability compared to gratification. This suggests that most respondents share a similar outlook. For continuance intention, the mean score is 22.75 with a standard deviation of 5.69, indicating a moderate level of intention to continue participating in online film festivals. The standard deviation here also suggests some variation in the respondents' future intentions.

In summary, while the respondents generally report high gratification and positive attitudes towards online film festivals, there is some variability in their intentions to continue participating. This variation could be influenced by factors such as personal preferences, previous experiences with online film festivals, or perceived value and convenience. Further analysis might explore the relationships between these variables to better understand the drivers of continuance intention.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD
Gratification	96.03	17.37
Attitude	26.53	4.70
Continuance intention	22.75	5.69

Hypothesizes testing

The correlation coefficient between gratification and continuance Intention is 0.82($p < 0.05$), thus supporting hypothesis H1. This also represents a strong positive correlation, meaning that respondents who feel more gratified are more likely to intend to continue participating in online film festivals. The correlation coefficient between Attitude and Continuance Intention is 0.74($p < 0.05$), therefore hypotheses H2 is accepted. This is a moderately strong positive correlation, showing that a more positive attitude towards online film festivals is linked to a higher intention to continue participating in them. The correlation coefficient between gratification and attitude is 0.89, which is a strong positive correlation, indicating that higher levels of gratification are associated with more positive attitudes towards online film festivals. The p-value is 0.00, making this relationship statistically significant as well. Hence, H3 is accepted.

All three variables are strongly correlated with each other, with gratification showing the highest correlations with both attitude and continuance intention. These findings suggest that respondents' feelings of gratification strongly influence their attitudes towards online film festivals and their intentions to continue participating. Additionally, positive attitudes towards online film festivals are also linked to a higher likelihood of future participation.

Table 3. Correlation

Variable	Gratification	Attitude	Continuance intention
Gratification			

Attitude	0.89 (0.00)	
Continuance intention	0.82 (0.00)	0.74 (0.00)

DISCUSSION

Online film festivals experienced rapid development during the pandemic, becoming an important form for the film industry to adapt to the new normal. Compared to traditional film festivals, online film festivals have expanded their audience reach through digital technology, allowing global audiences to participate more conveniently. Despite being held online, many online film festivals have retained core elements of traditional film festivals, such as competition sections, audience interaction, and expert reviews. Overall, online film festivals are a digital form of film festivals that leverage the convenience of the internet, enabling more audiences to participate in the cultural exchange and interaction of films across regions. Therefore, understanding audiences' willingness to participate in online film festivals is crucial (Smits, 2022). This study aimed to explore the factors influencing audience continuance intention (CI) in online film festivals, a growing phenomenon in the film industry, particularly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings from this research provide valuable insights into the role of attitude and gratification in shaping audience behaviour within the context of online film festivals.

The demographic analysis revealed that the majority of participants in this study were young adults aged 18-25, who were either film enthusiasts or film students. This aligns with the observations by Sha (2021) that online film festivals attract a younger, more tech-savvy audience who are engaged with digital platforms. The gender distribution, with a higher percentage of female respondents, is also consistent with the findings of Sha (2021), who noted that young urban women are particularly active in both offline and online film-related activities.

The results demonstrated a strong correlation between audience gratification and their attitude towards online film festivals, with both variables significantly impacting their continuance intention. For gratification, this is in line with the theoretical framework provided by the UGT, which posits that gratification directly influences continued use of a medium (Mouakket, 2018). The strong correlation between gratification and CI found in this study supports the assertion by Baker et al. (2014) that positive experiences with digital platforms like YouTube can enhance users' willingness to continue engagement. Furthermore, the significant correlation between attitude and CI suggests that audiences with a positive perception of online film festivals are more likely to participate in future events. This finding is consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which emphasizes the role of perceived ease of use and usefulness in shaping users' attitudes and subsequent behavioural intentions towards technology (Davis, 1986; Bhattacharjee, 2001; Müller, 2020). It is also consistent with research on streaming platform audiences (Lestari & Soesanto, 2020; Lee et al., 2018), where applying TAM in this context highlights the importance of designing user-friendly and engaging online film festival platforms to enhance audience retention.

The shift towards online film festivals represents a significant evolution in the film exhibition sector, blending traditional festival elements with digital innovation. As noted by Stevens (2017), the ability of online film festivals to transcend geographical barriers has allowed for a more inclusive and diverse audience base. This has implications not only for audience engagement but also for the

distribution and marketing strategies within the film industry, as festivals become increasingly reliant on digital platforms to reach global audiences. However, while the digital format offers numerous advantages, it also presents challenges, particularly in replicating the communal and immersive experiences characteristic of traditional film festivals. Future research could explore how these challenges are being addressed by festival organizers and the impact of these strategies on audience gratification and CI.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is limited by the small sample size and focus on a specific population. The demographic distribution of respondents shows that 71.9% are female, while 28.1% are male. This may indicate that the results reflect female preferences, perceptions, and intentions more strongly, potentially leading to findings that do not fully represent male perspectives. Future research should aim to include a more diverse sample to better understand the broader audience of online film festivals. Additionally, longitudinal studies could offer further insights into how attitudes and satisfaction evolve over time and their long-term impact on CI.

In conclusion, this study highlights the critical role of attitude and gratification in shaping audience continuance intention in online film festivals. As the film industry continues to navigate the digital landscape, understanding these factors will be essential for the successful design and implementation of future online film festivals. The findings suggest that enhancing user experience and maintaining positive audience perceptions are key to sustaining engagement in this evolving format.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the emerging phenomenon of online film festivals, particularly focusing on the audience's characteristics, attitudes, and continuance intentions. The sample, though small, predominantly comprises young, educated cinephiles and film students, reflecting a demographic that is both passionate about cinema and familiar with digital platforms. The gender distribution, with a majority of female respondents, aligns with existing research suggesting that women, particularly younger urban women, are more engaged in online film festival activities.

The descriptive analysis indicates a generally positive attitude towards online film festivals, with respondents expressing high levels of gratification and a strong intention to continue participating in such events. The correlation analysis further supports these findings, showing significant positive relationships between gratification, attitude, and continuance intention. This suggests that the more satisfied the audience is with their online film festival experience, the more likely they are to continue participating in the future.

From a theoretical perspective, the study applies the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model to the context of online film festivals. The findings reinforce the relevance of these models in understanding audience behaviour in digital environments, particularly highlighting how gratification and perceived usefulness influence the continuance intention of users.

Overall, this study contributes to the limited but growing body of literature on online film festivals, particularly in the Chinese context. It underscores the importance of understanding the audience's needs and motivations, as these factors are crucial for the future development and sustainability of online film festivals. As the film festival landscape continues to evolve, especially in the post-pandemic era, these insights will be valuable for festival organizers seeking to engage and retain their audiences in an increasingly digital world.

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