UNDERSTANDING SINA WEIBO USERS' LIKING BEHAVIOR: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN CHINA

Yiyi Wang, Wenzhou-Kean University
Md. Jahidur Rahman, Wenzhou-Kean University

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether hedonic motivation (enjoyment and passing time), social motivation (social support), and utilitarian motivation (information seeking and self-presentation) significantly affect users' motivation to click "like" on Sina Weibo. A research model is developed and empirically tested using Sina Weibo users through an online survey. Using valid data from 215 Sina Weibo users in China, the research model is assessed by regression analysis. The results show that two types of motivation positively affect Sina Weibo users' liking behavior: hedonic motivation (enjoyment) and utilitarian motivation (information seeking). Enjoyment plays the most salient role in determining liking behavior, followed by information seeking. Passing time, social support, and self-presentation were not found to affect liking behavior. The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of liking behavior and offer important theoretical and practical implications to researchers and marketers.

Keywords: Liking Behavior, Motivation, Sina Weibo, Social Media.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become increasingly popular in China and significantly affects individuals' daily life (CNNIC, 2018). Across diverse media platforms, one-click endorsement function (such as the Sina Weibo "*like*" button) has become ubiquitous (Lee et al., 2016). Clicking a "*like*" button demonstrates one's enjoyment of, agreement with, or interest in specific website contents (Basalingappa et al., 2016). Generally, a "*like*" serves as a public endorsement of a user's, brands, or organization that is displayed instantly in virtual community (Lee et al., 2016). However, the prevalent use of "*like*" may be changing its original meaning, making it less about "*liking*" (Bosch, 2013). In addition, according to LaRochelle (2017), the implications of a "*like*" button vary depending on the context. It is therefore significant to explore factors that cause users to click "*like*" in social media.

Numerous studies focused on why users like posts on Western social media platforms. For instance, Lee et al., (2016) examined the psychological, technological, and motivational factors that stimulate Facebook users to click "*like*" However, in the literature; motivators are somewhat ambiguous (Sumner et al., 2018). Less attention has been paid to motives for liking behavior in the Chinese context. Gao (2016) compared the differences in motivations for liking behavior on social media between Chinese and European users and found that Europeans primarily clicked "*like*" for enjoyment, while Chinese users liked others' posts primarily for social purposes. However, Gao did not examine "*like*"-clicking behavior on a specific Chinese media platform.

Only recently has research explored liking behavior on specific Chinese media platform, such as WeChat Moments (Gan, 2017). Yet no study has investigated what makes users click "*like*" on Sina Weibo, one of the most widely used social media platforms in China (CNNIC, 2018) and China's biggest microblogging network (Chen et al., 2011). Similar to users of various other social media platforms, such as WeChat Moments, Sina Weibo users can share text, images, videos, and links with others (Chen & She, 2012). The distinctive characteristic of Sina Weibo is the non-mutual following relationships between users: one person can follow another without being followed in return (Chen & She, 2012). To fill this knowledge gap, this empirical study focuses on the motivations for Sina Weibo users' liking behavior.

Hedonic motives have been shown to play an important role in social media usage (Xu, 2012; Gan, 2017). Users may use social media for enjoyment or to pass time (Meier et al., 2014; Basalingappa et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2016; Gan, 2017). The desire to socialize also drives users to participate on social media. Liking behavior may show love or support for others (Basalingappa et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2016; Gan, 2017). In addition, utilitarian motivation in terms of information seeking and self-presentation has been verified to be a critical factor that influences users' liking behavior (Gan, 2017). This paper hypothesizes that hedonic motivation (enjoyment and passing time), social motivation (social support), and utilitarian motivation (information seeking and self-presentation) motivation affect Sina Weibo users' liking behavior.

Given the aforementioned knowledge gap, this study seeks to identify the motivations for Sina Weibo users' liking behavior. This paper investigates whether hedonic motivation (enjoyment and passing time), social motivation (social support), and utilitarian motivation (information seeking and self-presentation) significantly affect users in click "*like*" on Sina Weibo.

To achieve the above objective, the proposed research model was empirically tested by Sina Weibo users through an online survey. The data in this study were collected from Chinese university students and examined using regression analysis.

The results showed that two types of motivation positively affect Sina Weibo users' liking behavior: hedonic gratification (enjoyment) and utilitarian gratification (information seeking). Enjoyment plays the most salient role in determining liking behavior, followed by information seeking. Passing time, social support, and self-presentation were not found to affect liking behavior.

This study makes several contributions to the literature. First, this study investigates the motivations for liking behavior in the Chinese context and extends this line of research by focusing on motivations for users' liking behavior on a specific social media platform. The findings of this study are likely to provide insight regarding how various factors affect users' liking behavior in the context of Sina Weibo. The findings can also help social media practitioners attract and retain users.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly reviews the relevant literature and develops the research hypotheses. The research methodology is presented in Section 3. Section 4 describes the results and findings. Section 5 presents the discussion. Section 6 concludes the paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Previous Studies

One-click endorsement functions (such as the Sina Weibo's "*like*" button) has become omnipresent on social media platforms (Lee et al., 2016). A "*like*" button is used to express one's enjoyment of, agreement with, or interest in specific website content (Basalingappa et al., 2016). Liking behavior is connected with users' motivations to press the "*like*" button on others' posts on social media (Chiang & Tseng, 2017). Although many studies have explored the motivations of liking behavior, most focused on Western social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. Few concentrated on motivations for liking behavior in the Chinese context, especially on specific Chinese social media platforms. No study investigated what motivates users to click "*like*" on Sina Weibo, one of the most widely used social media platforms in China (CNNIC, 2018). To fill this knowledge gap, this empirical study seeks to identify the motivations for Sina Weibo users' liking behavior.

Social media

Social media are Internet-based applications that enable content generated by users to be displayed and exchanged (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As Correa et al., (2010) stated, the use of social media refers to the specific consumption of digital media or Internet that differs from traditional informational media use. It allows viewers to connect, communicate, and interact with each other and their mutual friends through instant messaging or social networking sites (Correa et al., 2010).

The "Like" button on social media

"*Like*" buttons on various social media platforms are features used to express one's enjoyment of, agreement with, or interest in specific website content, such as status updates, photos, shares, and comments posted by others (Basalingappa et al., 2016). Users can thus publicly favor and support other users, brands, and organizations in virtual communities through a quick and simple click (Lee et al., 2016). The number of "*likes*" and the identities of the users who clicked "*like*" are visible for each post on media platforms (such as Facebook) (Basalingappa et al., 2016).

Liking behavior

According to Chiang & Tseng (2017), liking behavior is connected with users' motivations for clicking the "*like*" button on others' posts on social media platforms. In general, clicking the "*like*" button gives a positive response and expresses a connection with things that an individual is concerned about (Basalingappa et al., 2016). However, with the increased use "like," its original meaning may be shifting toward acknowledgment or agreement (Bosch, 2013). Studies have found that the implications of a user's liking behavior can vary depending on the context (LaRochelle, 2017).

Motivations for liking behavior

Many studies have explored why users like posts on Western social media platforms. For example, Lee et al., (2016) examined psychological, technological, and motivational factors of Facebook users' liking behavior and found that enjoyment of posted content and the desire to maintain interpersonal relationships with others on social network sites were the principal motivations for clicking the "*like*" button. However, Sumner et al., (2018) found that the "*enjoyment*" and "*interpersonal relationships*" motivations overlapped slightly. Hence, it is necessary to further explore the specific motives for liking. Meier et al., (2014) studied Twitter favoriting behavior and concluded that motivations for clicking the favorite button could be generally classified as responses to tweets, a method of nonverbal communication, and reusing or re-seeking information.

Motivations for liking behavior in the Chinese context

Few studies have concentrated on motives for liking behavior on social media in China. Gao (2016) compared and contrasted the differences in motivations for posting and liking on social media between Chinese and European users through interviews. Gao (2016) divided liking motives according to whether they were communicative or non-communicative. The former included referential, expressive, relational, and appealing motives, while the latter included information storage and psychological motives. Through comparison, Gao found that enjoyment of an agreement with the posts were the main motives for the liking behavior of European users, while Chinese users were more likely to click "*like*" to please others and maintain interpersonal relationships with them. While this study examined the liking motives of Chinese people, it did not examine motives for liking on a specific media platform.

WeChat Moments

Recently, Gan (2017) conducted a study of the factors affecting people's motivation to click "*like*" on WeChat, a popular Chinese social media application. This study applied uses and gratifications theory to investigate how hedonic, social, and utilitarian gratification influenced users' liking behavior of WeChat Moments, where people can share texts or photos with their friends and comment on or "*like*" the posts of others. Gan noted that factors such as enjoyment, social support, and information seeking affected whether people clicked "*like*" in the application.

Sina Weibo

Sina Weibo, launched in 2009, allows users to write and publish short messages of at most 140 characteristics, and to reply to, repost as well as "*like*" the content published by others (Chen et al., 2011). On Weibo, people can acquire information, update statuses, share opinions, and communicate with each other (Guan et al., 2014). In contrast with other social media platforms, such as WeChat Moments, the following relationship among users on Sina Weibo is not mutually reciprocal (Chen & She, 2012). On Sina Weibo, an individual can follow another without any permission given by the one being followed; meanwhile, if a user gets followed, he or she does not need to follow back. Thus, this characteristic helps to establish a unique connection beyond acquaintance (Chen & She, 2012). With the rapid development of social media and the popularity of mobile phones, engaging in checking updates on Weibo has become

a routine activity. According to the China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC) Statistical Report, the monthly active users of Sina Weibo numbered 376 million at the third quarter of 2017 (CNNIC, 2018).

As mentioned, relatively little attention has been paid to motives for liking behavior on a particular social media platform in the Chinese context. Only recently has there been a focus on the liking behavior of users of WeChat Moments, which is similar to Sina Weibo. To fill this knowledge gap, this empirical study concentrates on the motivations for Sina Weibo users' liking behavior.

Hypothesis Development

Based on prior findings, this study seeks to identify three main types of motivations for Sina Weibo users' liking behavior: hedonic motivation (enjoyment and passing time) (Lee et al., 2016; Gan, 2017), social motivation (social support) (Levorashka et al., 2016; Gan, 2017), and utilitarian motivation (information seeking and self-presentation) (Meier et al., 2014; Gan, 2017). The research model is shown in Figure 1.
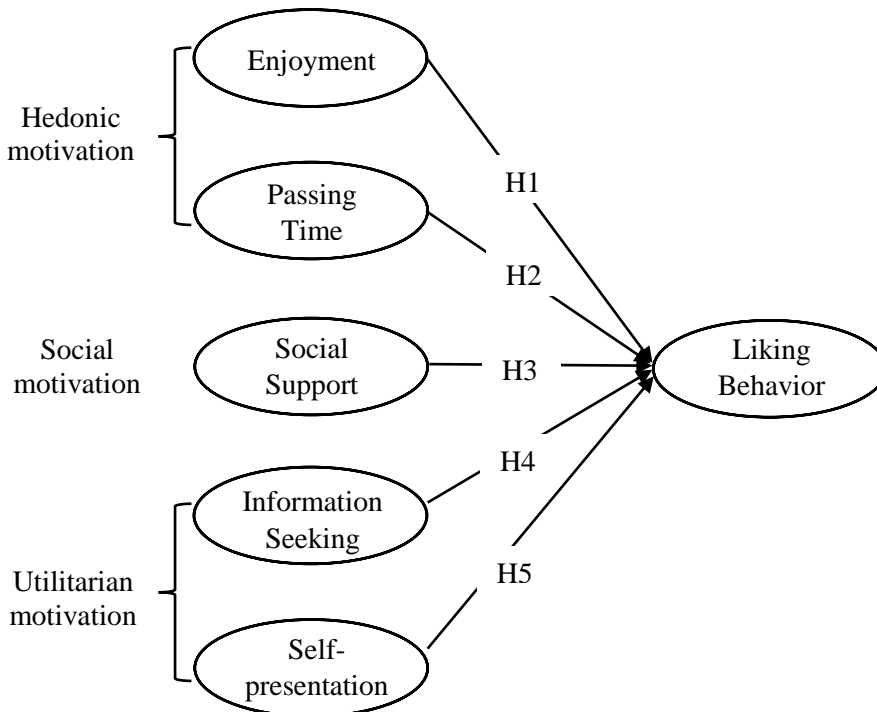
Figure 1
THE RESEARCH MODEL (Gan, 2017)

Hedonic motivation

Hedonic motivation refers to the pursuit of happiness and relates to the emotional needs of an individual (Williams & Soutar, 2000; Xu et al., 2012), which can be categorized into two dimensions: enjoyment and passing time. Enjoyment is defined as the extent to which an activity

is considered to be pleasing, and passing time is related to the degree to which an activity can take up individuals' leisure time (Gan, 2017).

Researchers have empirically confirmed the vital role that hedonic motives play in influencing individuals' liking behavior on social media, including enjoyment and passing time (Basalingappa et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2016; Gan, 2017). For example, Basalingappa et al., (2016) found that "*likes*" on social media can indicate one's appreciation of something interesting or humorous. Similarly, Lee et al., (2016) found enjoyment to be the most salient motive for clicking "*like*" on social media, with passing time as a secondary motive. Facebook users interviewed by Basalingappa et al., (2016) said that they habitually "*liked*" the photos that they encountered when they logged in to pass time. Sina Weibo offers users a wide range of pleasing posts to pass the time when they are free or feel bored. Sina Weibo users can look at entertaining posts to satisfy their emotional needs and for hedonic gratification (Pang, 2018), and they can click "*like*" quickly and easily, which makes them feel that they have done something (Gan, 2017).

We expect enjoyment and passing time to affect users' liking behavior on Sina Weibo, and we posit the following hypotheses:

H1: Enjoyment significantly affects Sina Weibo users' liking behavior.

H2: Passing time significantly affects Sina Weibo users' liking behavior.

Social motivation

Social motivation is related to the development and maintenance of social relationship (Lee & Ma, 2012). Specifically, liking behavior in Sina Weibo may foster the achievement of social support, the extent to which material or immaterial assistance offering others through an activity (Gan, 2017).

Socializing is one of the primary reasons for social media participation, and many people click "*like*" on social media because of social needs. Studies have validated the importance of social motivation for users' liking behavior. Liking is a way to connect with others and to show respect or support for others (Basalingappa et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2016; Gan, 2017). Liking can also be regarded as a replacement for face-to-face meeting: if friends do not meet up very often, they may like each other's posts to show that they still follow one another (Basalingappa et al., 2016). Individuals may express their support, such as congratulations, condolences, and good wishes, by liking a post (Levorashka et al., 2016). Sina Weibo can thus function as a platform where users can offer or acquire various types of support. Thus, Sina Weibo users "*like*" the posts of others and thereby develop interpersonal relationships with them. Put differently, Sina Weibo users may click "*like*" to provide others with positive support. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posited:

H3: Social support significantly affects Sina Weibo users' liking behavior.

Utilitarian motivation

Utilitarian motivation involves rationality and goal orientation (Xu, 2012). In the literature, utilitarian motivation includes two concepts of information seeking and self-presentation. Information seeking refers to the degree to which users can an access to the necessary information to meet their perceived requirements (Gan, 2017). Self-presentation is the

extent to which an activity helps a user develop a specific self-image, and thus affects how other people think of and regard the user (Gan, 2017).

Utilitarian motivation has been shown to be a key factor affecting users' liking behavior in terms of information seeking and self-presentation (Gan, 2017). People may click "*like*" on social media because they have obtained information (Meier et al., 2014; Gan, 2017). As Meier et al. (2014) stated the "*like*" button can function as an act of collecting information, providing an underlying motivation to use it as a bookmarking tool. Sina Weibo provides a channel through which users can acquire a great deal of information (Pang, 2018). When users find desirable and useful information in others' posts, they can simply click "*like*" to be able to easily revisit these posts later (Meier et al., 2014). In addition, liking behavior can be used to build one's self-image and to reveal one's interests to others (Basalingappa et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2016; Gan, 2017). Meier et al., (2014) found that some users used their favorite's lists to present themselves online. Similarly, Pang (2018) found that personal expression encourages people to use Weibo continuously.

Thus, the motivation of information seeking as well as self-presentation is expected to result in Sina Weibo users' "*like*" clicking behavior and the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: *Information seeking significantly affects Sina Weibo users' liking behavior.*

H5: *Self-presentation significantly affects Sina Weibo users' liking behavior.*

METHODOLOGY

Construct Measurement

Following Gan's (2017) framework, the research model includes the following six constructs: enjoyment (ENJ), passing time (PT), social support (SS), information seeking (IS), self-presentation (SP), and liking behavior (LIKE). All of the measurement items are adapted from prior research to ensure the validity of the constructs and to fit the context of clicking "*like*" on Sina Weibo. The items for enjoyment, passing time, and self-presentation are taken from (Lee et al., 2016; Gan, 2017). The items for social support are modified from (Levorashka et al., 2016; Gan, 2017). The items for information seeking and liking behavior are adapted from (Meier et al. 2014; Gan, 2017).

The research questionnaire was initially created in English. It was translated into Chinese and then translated back into English to ensure the consistency of the content. All of the items were measured with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). When the original questionnaire was developed, 10 users with rich experience of clicking "*like*" on Sina Weibo were invited to participate in a pilot survey to improve the questionnaire's clarity and understandability.

Data Collection

This study aims to investigate the factors affecting users to click "*like*" on Sina Weibo. The empirical data in this study were collected from Chinese university students through an online survey. Since university students comprise the largest portion of social media users (Kantar, 2015), so the sample is considered to be appropriate.

Procedure to Analyze the Data

To find out the influence of enjoyment, passing time, social support, information seeking and self-presentation on Sina Weibo users' liking behavior, the regression analysis was used in this study. The regression model to test the hypotheses is as follows:

$$LIKE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * ENJ + \beta_2 * PT + \beta_3 * SS + \beta_4 * IS + \beta_5 * SP + \varepsilon$$

Where,

Liking behavior (LIKE) is the dependent variable
Enjoyment (ENJ), passing time (PT), social support (SS), information seeking (IS), self-presentation (SP) are the independent variables
β_0 is the y-intercept of the regression line
β_1 β_2 β_3 β_4 β_5 are the slope of the regression line
ε is the random error term.

The measurement items and their sources were listed in Table 1.

Table 1
MEASUREMENT ITEMS AND THEIR SOURCES
Liking behavior (LIKE) (Meier et al., 2014; Gan, 2017).
LIKE1: I often click "like" in Sina Weibo.
LIKE2: In general, I would like to click "like" in Sina Weibo.
Enjoyment (ENJ) (Lee et al., 2016; Gan, 2017)
ENJ1: I enjoy the content.
ENJ2: It is funny.
Passing time (PT) (Lee et al., 2016; Gan, 2017)
PT1: It helps me pass time when I am bored.
PT2: It's just a habit, just something I do.
Social support (SS) (Levorashka et al., 2016; Gan, 2017)
SS1: I want to give my friends positive reply.
SS2: I want to give my friends positive support.
Information seeking (IS) (Meier et al., 2014; Gan, 2017).
IS1: I want to obtain useful information.
IS2: I want to use it as bookmarking to read the information again.
Self-presentation (SP) (Lee et al., 2016; Gan, 2017)
SP1: I want others to perceive me as sociable.
SP2: I want others to perceive me as fashionable.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

In total, 236 respondents completed the questionnaires. We examined all of the responses and dropped those (21 responses) with the same values for all of the questions. The remaining 215 valid responses were used for further analysis. Table 2 shows the demographic information of the sample. In all, 24.7 percent of the respondents were male, and 75.3 percent were female. The respondents were mainly aged between 17 and 26, with the majority (67.4 percent) between 17 and 21 years old. In general, the demographic information of the respondents in this research

is consistent with that of Sina Weibo users in China, most of who are young people, such as students (Weibo, 2017). Thus, the sample can be regarded as a good representation of Sina Weibo users in China. Of the respondents, 28.4 percent had used Weibo for more than 4 years, while 25.6 and 21.4 percent had experience of 2-3 years and 3-4 years, respectively. The majority (42.8 percent) used Sina Weibo at least once per day.

Table 2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS			
Measure	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	53	24.7
	Female	162	75.3
Age	Below 17	6	2.8
	17-21	145	67.4
	22-26	56	26.0
	27-31	6	2.8
	32-36	1	0.5
	Above 36	1	0.5
Time period in using Sina Weibo	Less than 1 year	22	10.2
	1-2 years	31	14.4
	2-3 years	55	25.6
	3-4 years	46	21.4
	More than 4 years	61	28.4
Frequency of using Sina Weibo	Many times a day	92	42.8
	Several times a day	51	23.7
	Once a day	16	7.4
	Several times a week	29	13.5
	Once a week	5	2.3
	Less than once a week	8	3.7
	Less than once one month	14	6.5

Reliability and Validity

Reliability was maximized in this study to ensure that the data collection techniques and analytic procedures would reproduce consistent findings. To avoid participant error, the survey questions were simple and clear enough to prevent the respondents from becoming impatient. To prevent participant bias, the respondents were assured that their identities and answers would be kept highly confidential and used strictly for academic purposes. To avoid researcher error, we were clear-headed when conducting the survey and analyzing the data. To avoid researcher bias, we tried to remain objective when interpreting the results.

The validity of the research was confirmed in three respects. First, construct validity was established. This study aimed to investigate the influence of enjoyment, passing time, social support, information seeking, and self-presentation on Sina Weibo users' liking behavior, and the explanatory nature of the research suggested a deductive research approach, implying quantitative methods. Second, internal validity was established because this study aimed to examine the causal relationships between various motivations and Sina Weibo users' liking behavior. All the variables were adapted from prior research to ensure the validity of the constructs and to fit the context of clicking "*like*" on Sina Weibo. Third, external validity was established. The empirical data in this study were collected from Chinese university students through an online survey. Because university students comprise the largest proportion of social

media users in general (Kantar, 2015) and Sina Weibo users in particular (Weibo, 2017), the sample is considered appropriate.

Data Analysis

To examine the effect of enjoyment, passing time, social support, information seeking and self-presentation on Sina Weibo users' liking behavior, regression analysis was used in this study. Table 3 presents the results of regression analysis.

Table 3 RESULTS OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS						
	Dependent Variable	**Independent Variables**				
	LIKE	ENJ	PT	SS	IS	SP
Mean Value	4.54	6.0	3.8	5.1	4.7	3.6
*P-value**	/	0.000	0.343	0.118	0.007	0.316
*Coefficients***	/	0.459	0.067	0.120	0.236	0.074
Multiple R=0.464; R²=0.215; *Significance F* < 0.001						
Definition of variables: LIKE=Liking Behavior; ENJ=Enjoyment; PT=Passing Time; SS=Social Support; IS=Information Seeking; SP=Self-presentation						

Note: P<0.01, very significant; 0.01<P<0.05, significant; 0.05<P, not significant
**Intercept: -0.458

In the regression model, the dependent variable (liking behavior) is regressed on the five independent variables (enjoyment, passing time, social support, information seeking and self-presentation). Thus, the regression model is as follows:

LIKE=-0.458+0.459*ENJ+0.067*PT+0.120*SS+0.236*IS+0.074*SP

As shown in Table 3, the results give a multiple R of 0.464, indicating a positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In this study, the R-squared equals 0.215, which means that around 22% of the variation in Sina Weibo users' liking behavior is explained by the independent variables (enjoyment, passing time, social support, information seeking, and self-presentation). The significance of F is less than 0.05, which indicates that the results are reliable.

The p-values of enjoyment (p-value = 0.000) and information seeking (p-value = 0.007) are less than 0.05, indicating that there is at least a 95% chance that there is a true relationship between the dependent (liking behavior) variable and these two independent variables (enjoyment and information seeking). However, the p-values of passing time (p-value = 0.343), social support (p-value = 0.118), and self-presentation (p-value = 0.316) are larger than 0.05, indicating that the relationships between the dependent (liking behavior) variable and these three independent variables (passing time, social support, and self-presentation) are not significant.

Thus, enjoyment and information seeking significantly affect liking behavior, while passing time, social support, and self-presentation do not. Therefore, H1 and H4 were supported, while H2, H3, and H5 were not supported.

DISCUSSION

This study explored the motivations that drive Sina Weibo users' liking behavior. The results show that enjoyment and information seeking had significantly positive impacts on Sina Weibo users' liking behavior, supporting H1 and H4.

In particular, enjoyment had the most significant positive effect on liking behavior, followed by information seeking. Research has revealed that enjoyment plays a salient role in encouraging users' liking behavior on social media (Meier et al., 2014; Gan, 2017). Enjoyment is a gratifying response to media use (Tamborini et al., 2010). Users are more likely to click "*like*" when they experience a high level of enjoyment. Also, consistent with prior findings (Meier et al., 2014; Gan, 2017) and expectations, information seeking was found to be important in affecting users' liking behavior. Social media has been used as an important source of information (Kim et al., 2014). When people seek to obtain useful or helpful information on social media, they may experience more liking behavior (Kumar, 2015).

However, in contrast with expectations, passing time, social support, and self-presentation were not found to affect liking behavior. Thus, H2, H3, and H5 were rejected. The possible reason may be that when users feel bored or have nothing to do; they may browse Sina Weibo posts aimlessly but may not click the "*like*" button (Gan, 2017). In addition, inconsistent with prior research (Gan, 2017) and expectations, social support did not significantly affect liking behavior. One possible explanation is that the following relationship among users on Sina Weibo is not mutually reciprocal, which is different from other social media platforms, such as WeChat Moments (Chen & She, 2012). Most "*followers*" and "*followees*" on Sina Weibo do not recognize each other in reality. Thus, users may not use the "*like*" feature to develop and facilitate social relationships with others through Sina Weibo. In addition, there is no significant relationship between self-presentation and liking behavior, probably because the excessive use of "*like*" and its changing meaning make users click "*like*" more cautiously (Bosch, 2013), and because users' need for self-presentation may be satisfied in other ways, such through comments (Gan, 2017).

CONCLUSION

In this study, we hypothesized that hedonic motivation (enjoyment and passing time), social motivation (social support), and utilitarian motivation (information seeking and self-presentation) motivations could affect Sina Weibo users' liking behavior. Using valid data from 215 Sina Weibo users in China, we empirically assessed the research model by regression analysis. The results showed that two types of motivation positively affected Sina Weibo users' liking behavior: hedonic motivation (enjoyment) and utilitarian motivation (information seeking). Enjoyment played the most salient role in determining liking behavior, followed by information seeking. Passing time, social support, and self-presentation were not found to affect liking behavior.

The findings of this study are important for both academics and practitioners. From a theoretical perspective, prior studies have mainly examined liking behavior on Western social media platforms, whereas this study considered motives for liking behavior in the Chinese context. Although there are some studies related to the liking behavior of Chinese people, this study extends this line of research by focusing on motivations for users' liking behavior on a specific social media platform, Sina Weibo. From a managerial perspective, the findings provide

social media developers and managers with practical recommendations for making their products or services more appealing to people. The findings of this study suggest that users' liking behavior may be affected by hedonic and utilitarian motivations at different weights. Because many social media platforms are versatile, developers need to leverage different motivations to facilitate user adoption. Developers can design a range of features to meet different user satisfaction, thereby increasing the adoption rate. Enjoyment and information seeking play the most important roles in affecting user' liking behavior. Thus, designers can encourage users to publish more enjoyable and interesting posts to satisfy users' enjoyment needs. They could also design more features for users to obtain useful information simply and conveniently to better meet their utilitarian needs.

There are some limitations to this study that should be acknowledged. First, the number of female respondents was far higher than that of male respondents. Consequently, the gender distribution of the participants did not perfectly represent the whole population. In addition, a cross-sectional design was applied in this research, and change was not measured (Kumar, 2015). Furthermore, the sample comprised university students in China. Care should be taken when extending the results to other population groups. Future research should consider a variety of samples, including social media users from different groups in other countries, such as working staff and seniors. In addition, this study mainly focused on liking behavior on one social media platform. Other studies could examine "*like*"-clicking behavior on other social media platforms, such as Taobao and LinkedIn. The use of "*like*" may vary when users interact with different friends, brands, and organizations. The meaning of clicking the "*like*" button on Sina Weibo may change over time. With the development of the Internet, social media functions for virtual endorsements will also advance, providing new research areas related to user attitudes and participation behavior.

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