

Identifying the Effects of Users' Mood Management on the Continuous Intention of Animation Derivatives

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Abstract

The development of anime derivatives has become an important part of the anime industry in the Chinese and Asian markets. Such derivative products provide users with relevant entertainment and emotional channels in their daily lives. Changes in users' emotions are key factors influencing their behaviour when making decisions about continued use. Exploring how mood management affects users' continued use of anime derivatives remains an issue worthy of in-depth research and is of great practical significance. In addition, expanding the application of mood management theory to the field of anime derivatives consumption helps to fill a gap in the existing literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the influence of users' mood management on their willingness to use animation derivatives consistently. Based on mood management theory, this study analyses how users regulate their emotions, which affects their willingness to continue using animation derivatives. Consumers of animation derivatives aged 18 - 35 years old were selected for this quantitative study, and a total of 297 valid questionnaires were collected. Regression analyses were conducted in this study using SPSS 27.0 to verify the relationship between variables. The results show that the positive effect of mood seeking on users' willingness to continuous intention is the most significant, followed by entertainment value, and the positive effect of mood avoidance is also significant.

Keywords: Mood Management Theory, Mood Seeking, Mood Avoidance, Entertainment Value, Continuous Intentions

Introduction

In China and Asia, the development of anime derivatives has become a popular trend today (Fan & Feng, 2021). According to SANDUA (2023), anime derivatives not only include traditional toys and apparel, but also extend to a category of digital content or virtual products commonly found in social media. Users are confronted with such derivatives while generating sustained intentions that are often driven by emotional and psychological factors (Wang, 2010).

However, there is still limited existing research on the diffusion mechanisms of such products and the impact of user mood changes on diffusion during this process. In addition, Bartsch et al (2008), provided a specific explanation of the regulation of user emotions in the process of social media use. Meanwhile, Knobloch-Westerwick (2013), further supported Bartsch et al. (2008), and argued that Mood Management Theory provides a valuable framework, thus helping users to understand the process.

However, there is still a gap in the existing literature that discusses users' continued intention towards anime derivatives based on the perspective of mood management theory.

Therefore, the overall objective of this study is to identify how users influence their continuance intention by regulating their emotions during the process of choosing anime derivatives through the lens of mood management theory. To address the research objectives, the following three research questions are proposed:

1. what is the effect of users' mood seeking on their continuous intention for anime derivatives?
2. what is the effect of users' mood avoidance on the continuous intention of anime derivatives?
3. what is the effect of users' entertainment value on the continuous intention of anime derivatives?

The concrete contribution of this study is mainly reflected in two aspects. Firstly, it extends the theory of emotion management and develops its practical application in the field of mass communication and new media. Secondly, the relevant conclusions drawn from the research can not only provide a new reference for the user group interested in animation derivatives, but also provide an effective channel for the subsequent dissemination of such products.

Theoretical Framework

Mood Seeking

It has been found that mood seeking is conceptualised as a way in which users attempt to increase good feelings when using a particular media or product (Kemp & Kopp, 2011). According to Zillmann's (1988), theory of mood management, how individuals choose media content, which enhances their share of positive emotions. Furthermore, Pappas et al (2020),

stated that users prioritise content that brings them pleasure when choosing media. Meanwhile, Liu et al (2023), supported Pappas et al (2020), and argued that individuals who are faced with a low mood scenario will tend to choose interesting content to improve their mood. Therefore, when users choose anime derivatives, it is more likely to be the case that they will choose needs that can satisfy their emotions, which will further influence their continued interest.

The reason why anime derivatives can bring emotional support to users is that such products often contain rich cultural and storytelling elements (Wu et al., 2021). In addition, Bhosle (2024), states that the design of anime images as well as unique narrative techniques are usually associated with users' preferences, thus increasing positive emotions to some extent. This view is also supported by Wu and Chen (2022), that anime derivatives can establish special emotional associations with users and fulfil their relevant emotional needs. Therefore, the motivation for continued use of anime derivatives may be related to the motivation for mood seeking. The resulting hypothesis is:

H1: Users' mood seeking positively influences their continuous intention towards anime derivatives.

Mood Avoidance

According to Anderson (2003), Mood Avoidance is when an individual actively avoids or reduces the effects of negative emotions by choosing specific media or products. Mood management theory suggests that when people feel stressed, anxious, annoyed, or other negative emotions, they tend to regulate their emotions by choosing content that helps them get away from those emotions (Zillmann, 1988). Kosa and Uysal (2020), state that when a person is in a state of stress, he or she may escape from the reality of the negative emotions by watching relaxing films, playing interactive games, or engaging in virtual social activities to escape negative emotions in reality.

In the realm of the continued use of anime derivatives, Mood Avoidance may manifest itself as users utilising these products to cope with distress and stress in their daily lives (Cervelli, 2017). According to LiPuma (2017), as the pace of life accelerates and work pressures increase, more and more users are choosing to temporarily escape from their daily stresses through the continuous use of anime derivatives. These products not only provide users with entertainment value, but also help them construct an emotional 'safe space' where they can escape from the negative aspects of reality, thus increasing their reliance on these products. As Sharma and Arora (2019) suggest, Mood Avoidance plays an important role in users' choice of goods, especially when the product provides immediate emotional regulation. The hypothesis derived from this is:

H2: Users' Mood Avoidance positively influences their continued intention towards anime derivatives.

Entertainment Value

According to Pihlström and Brush (2008), Entertainment Value refers to the pleasurable experience and entertainment feelings that users get through a certain product or service. In the perspective of mood management theory, users often choose media or goods in order to

obtain feelings of pleasure and fulfilment, which are embodied in Entertainment Value (Zillmann, 1988). According to Kosa and Uysal (2020), Entertainment Value serves as a mood management mechanism that helps users regulate their emotional state by providing them with mental relaxation and emotional satisfaction. Therefore, Entertainment Value has an important influential role in users' media choice behaviour, especially when the product is able to provide a highly immersive and interactive experience, the user's engagement and emotional connection will increase dramatically (Shin, 2019).

With regard to anime derivatives, Entertainment Value is one of the most important factors influencing users' intention to sustain consumption (Fan & Feng, 2021). As Brenner (2007) stated, anime works not only have a high degree of emotional appeal, but also provide users with a pleasurable experience through their characters, plots, and visual designs. According to Hu (2010), when using anime derivatives, users tend to experience the emotional satisfaction associated with the original works, which further enhances their identification and dependence on these products. Thus, Entertainment Value not only enhances users' motivation to generate consumption, but may also strengthen their loyalty to the product and their intention to continue consumption. The resulting hypothesis is:

H3: Users' perceived Entertainment Value positively influences their continued intention to consume anime derivatives.

Methodology

Measurement

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement of each variable in the study, measurement tools based on established literature were used in this study. Each variable was measured in a quantitative manner to ensure that the data accurately reflected the users' emotions and behaviours. The items of the questionnaire were mainly based on several concepts proposed above, namely Mood Seeking (MS), Mood Avoidance (MA), Entertainment Value (EV), and Continuous Intention (CI).

Specifically, MS was measured using Lee's (2023), research scale, which considers whether users are motivated to enhance positive emotions when purchasing or using anime products. Sample questions included statements such as 'I have been using anime derivatives to improve my mood', and people rated these questions on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. On the other hand, the MA measure followed Chen's (2021), scale, which was designed to examine the extent to which users avoid negative emotions by using anime derivatives. Questions included statements such as 'When I feel stressed, I buy anime derivatives to help me relax', which was rated similarly by respondents. EV is based on measurements from Buditomo's (2018), study on entertainment value, which examined the enjoyment and entertainment experience users gained when engaging with anime derivatives. Questions such as 'I get great enjoyment from anime derivatives' were used for the assessment. CI was measured by referring to al - emran et al.'s (2020), Continuous Intentions Scale, which examines whether an individual plans to continue purchasing or using anime derivatives. Questions such as 'I intend to continue purchasing anime derivatives in the future' were used to measure this.

Data Collection

In order to better answer the research questions, the group of people collected in this study are mainly users of related animation derivatives aged 18-35. These users come from online shopping sites and related social media. In order to ensure that the number of questionnaires collected can reach the expected number, and maintain the diversity of data to the maximum extent. The methodology used in this study is a mixture of online and offline collection procedures. On the one hand, the electronic questionnaires of the online survey were distributed to the platforms related to Weibo and animation derivatives. On the other hand, the distribution and collection of questionnaires were anonymous in order to allow participants to express their opinions more freely, thus increasing the authenticity and accuracy of the survey. In addition, offline data collection selects specific anime events (such as anime exhibitions and related product launches). Paper questionnaires were handed out to participants during the event. The questionnaire collection took a total of four weeks, with a target number of 300 questionnaires returned. After excluding 17 incomplete questionnaires, 297 responses were used to test the hypotheses of the study.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was mainly carried out in SPSS 27.0 software package. Firstly, descriptive statistics were performed on the collected data to understand the basic characteristics of the sample, including gender, age, income level, etc. This step helps to provide a comprehensive understanding of the sample structure and provides background information for subsequent hypothesis testing. In addition, the validity of each hypothesis was verified through linear regression analysis. Specifically, linear regression analysis was used to test the direct effect of Mood Seeking, Mood Avoidance, and Entertainment Value on users' Continuous Intention.

Findings

Descriptive Analysis

This study begins with a detailed demographic characterisation of a group of users active on online shopping platforms and social media, which in turn identifies their intentions for Continuous Intentions for anime derivatives, including average age, gender ratio, and income level factors. The basic information of the respondents is detailed in Table 1.

Firstly, the data shows that the highest percentage of respondents is from 18 to 25 years old at 33.1 per cent, followed by 32.3 per cent of respondents in the 26 to 30 years old age bracket, and only 10.8 per cent of respondents in the 31 to 35 years old age bracket. This distribution shows that the study mainly targeted the young population, especially consumers aged 18 to 30, which is consistent with the consumption characteristics of anime derivatives, as the main audience of such products tends to be young and have a high frequency of Internet use. Secondly, in terms of gender, female respondents accounted for 39.7%, slightly higher than the 36.4% of male respondents. This phenomenon may indicate that females play a more active role in Continuous Intentions to purchase anime derivatives.

Finally, the distribution of income levels shows that respondents are mainly concentrated in the range of monthly income between RMB 3,000 and RMB 10,000, accounting for 24.4% and 32.1% respectively. This indicates that the middle-income group is the main group of people who consume animation derivatives. Of particular note is the high proportion of respondents with monthly incomes between RMB 5,000 and RMB 10,000, showing that this consumer

group has a certain degree of financial ability to consume, while the low-income group (less than RMB 3,000) accounts for only 9.2%.

Overall, the sample of interviewees is relatively balanced in terms of gender and age structure, but is biased towards the younger group and the middle-income group, which is basically consistent with the target market of animation derivatives. Through these descriptive statistics, we are able to better understand which groups of people are consuming animation derivatives, which in turn provides a reasonable basis for subsequent analyses.

Table 1
Demographics (n=297)

| Sample Characteristics | Frequency (%) |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Average age | 18-25 years old=129 (33.1%) 26-30 years old=126 (32.3%) 31-35 years old=42 (10.8%) |
| Gender | Male =142 (36.4%) Female =155 (39.7%) |
| Income level | Less than 3000RMB=36 (9.2%) 3000-5000RMB=95 (24.4%) 5000-10000RMB=125 (32.1%) More than 10000RMB=41 (10.5%) |
| Total | 297 |

Regression Analyses of Variables

In this study, linear regression analyses were used to explore the effects of multiple independent variables on the dependent variable to quantify the effects of Mood Seeking (MS), Mood Avoidance (MA), and Entertainment Value (EV) on consumers' Continuous Intentions to use (Continuous Intention (CI)).

To ensure the reliability of the results, this study set the significance criteria based on Montgomery et al (2021): $p < 0.05$ means statistically significant, $p < 0.01$ means highly significant, and $p < 0.001$ means highly significant. Adopting these criteria helped to further validate the significant effects of Mood Seeking, Mood Avoidance, and Entertainment Value on Continuous Intentions to Use, and excluded chance factors to ensure that the relationship between these variables had a high degree of statistical support. It is important to note that if the variance inflation factor (VIF) of a variable is below 10, this indicates that the stability of the model is not affected by the problem of multicollinearity (Jou et al., 2014). According to the statistics in Table 2, the VIF values of the sample range from 1.935 to 2.571, so this interval is within reasonable limits.

According to the results of linear regression analysis, the following conclusions are drawn. Firstly, mood seeking has the most direct effect on users' continued use of anime derivatives, with a beta value of 0.346 ($p < 0.001$). This conclusion confirms that if users can seek more

positive emotions through anime derivatives, then their continued intention for such products will increase. Entertainment value came in second, with a beta of 0.250 ($p < 0.001$). This confirms that if users enjoy the entertainment experience provided by anime derivatives, it will directly affect their continued intention. Finally, the β of mood avoidance is 0.250 ($p < 0.05$), which means that the persistent intention of this group of people is enhanced when users choose to get rid of negative emotions through anime derivatives. Therefore, in the framework of this study, mood seeking is the most important factor affecting persistent intention. On this basis, entertainment and mood avoidance are also positively correlated with users' persistent intention.

Table 2

Linear regression analysis results

| Independent variables (Constant) | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. (p) | Collinearity Statistics | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|----------|-------------------------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta (β) | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| (Constant) | 0.638 | 0.180 | | 3.545 | 0.000*** | | |
| Mood Seeking (MS) | 0.386 | 0.076 | 0.346 | 5.109 | 0.000*** | 0.396 | 2.528 |
| Mood Avoidance (MA) | 0.185 | 0.074 | 0.171 | 2.503 | 0.013* | 0.389 | 2.571 |
| Entertainment Value (EV) | 0.259 | 0.061 | 0.250 | 4.230 | 0.000*** | 0.517 | 1.935 |

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.
Dependent Variable: Continuous Intention

Discussion

The overall goal of this study was to identify the impact of emotion management on the persistent intention of anime derivative users. Specifically, by examining the recovered questionnaires, mood seeking users' persistent intentions have the most direct impact. This is similar to the conclusion of (Zillmann, 1988). That is, individuals will be more inclined to media that can improve mood (Kemp & Kopp, 2011; Wu et al., 2021). In addition, this study also proposes that when users choose animation derivatives to avoid negative emotions, their persistent intention for animation derivatives will increase. As Anderson (2003), said, mood avoidance is about how users can reduce anxiety by choosing appropriate media. The positive link between emotional avoidance and sustained intention shows how anime products act as mood avoidance during difficult times. As described by Pihlström and Brush (2008), the entertainment value of anime products also significantly affects Continuous Intentions, the pleasure and satisfaction that users find in the product. For anime derivatives, this value comes from deep emotional content (Fan & Feng, 2021; Hu, 2010). People usually find pleasure in visual appeal, character design, and complex storylines, and this pleasure will keep them addicted to the product.

Conclusion

Focusing on mood management theory (MMT), this study seeks to understand how mood mechanisms control users' continued use of anime derivatives. The study focussed on mood seeking, mood avoidance and entertainment value, which are seen as the main components of how emotions guide users' continued use of these products. The findings suggest that all three aspects of mood seeking, mood avoidance and entertainment value positively influence

the willingness to continue making anime derivatives. However, there are limitations to the findings. For example, the data was collected through a self-report based survey. Self-report methods are not always very objective as they can be influenced by societal expectations, and respondents may give answers that they believe to be socially correct, but not their true opinions. This may lead to an exaggerated emotional attachment to anime derivatives. Future studies should try to include more diverse populations, such as older people or those who rarely access the internet, so that a more complete picture of how different groups interact with anime derivatives or other types of media can be obtained.

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