RedFame

International Journal of Social Science Studies
Vol. 14, No. 4; December 2026
ISSN 2324-8033 E-ISSN 2324-8041
Published by Redfame Publishing
URL: http://ijsss.redfame.com

How Online Discussions Triggered by Documentaries Shape Young Adults' Cultural Product Preferences: A Case Study of Exploring the Unknown with Wang YIBO

Yuanmei Wang[1]

[1] School of Management, Yang-En University, Quanzhou, China

Correspondence: Yuanmei Wang, Yang-en University, China.

Received: August 7, 2026 Accepted: October 28, 2026 Available online: November 13, 2026

doi:10.11114/ijsss.v14i4.9493 URL: https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v14i4.9493

Abstract

The pervasive integration of digital platforms has transformed how cultural products influence consumer preferences, with online discourse serving as a critical mediator. However, international scholarship lacks a precise, theory-driven model linking the quantitative metrics of this online buzz to subsequent behavioral intentions, particularly in non-Western entertainment contexts. This study addresses this gap by investigating how online buzz generated by the documentary Exploring the Unknown With Wang YIBO is associated with young Chinese viewers' preferences for related cultural products. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the research employs a quantitative design integrating secondary social media data with a cross-sectional survey (N = 372). Structural equation modeling analysis indicates that the association between buzz metrics (discussion volume, sentiment polarity) and behavioral intention is consistent with full mediation by TPB constructs. Discussion volume was positively associated with subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, while sentiment polarity was most closely associated with attitude. The study provides actionable insights for global content creators and cultural policymakers, emphasizing the need to strategically nurture both the volume and sentiment of organic online discourse.

Keywords: Online buzz, Cultural consumption, Theory of Planned Behavior, Structural Equation Modeling, Chinese youth

1. Introduction

Exploring the Unknown With Wang YIBO is an outdoor exploration documentary produced by the Discovery Channel and co-presented by Tencent Video and Warner Bros. It follows the pop star Wang Yibo as he and a team of professional explorers travel to six physically extreme destinations. The series received a rating of 9.8 out of 10 on Tencent Video, reached a heat index of 18 000 within its first 55 minutes, and won a Gold Telly at the 46th Annual Telly Awards. Its second season generated 4.6 billion topic views, 124 trending-list appearances, and 38.09 million discussions on platforms such as Weibo and WeChat (Note 1).



[Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

The global convergence toward digital cultural economies constitutes a critical arena for investigating the mechanisms through which media content is associated with subsequent consumer attitudes and behaviors, a question of consequence for stakeholders in creative industries, cultural policy, and international marketing. Within this digital milieu, documentary filmmaking has moved from a niche genre toward a potent form of mass entertainment, often catalyzing substantial online discourse. Documentaries featuring celebrity hosts or exploring adventure, travel, or heritage themes are increasingly designed for viral circulation, blending education with spectacle, and the interactive nature of social media means that the reception of such content is no longer a passive act but an active, visible process quantified through metrics such as discussion volume, sentiment polarity, and engagement rates.

The core research question of this study is: to what extent do the quantitative indicators of online buzz, namely discussion volume and sentiment polarity, triggered by the documentary Exploring the Unknown With Wang YIBO relate to young Chinese viewers' intention to consume cultural products associated with the documentary's themes, such as themed merchandise, the featured travel destinations, and comparable entertainment formats? The choice of a Chinese documentary centering on exploration and cultural heritage and fronted by a prominent youth idol provides a suitable case for examining these dynamics within a digitally sophisticated yet culturally distinctive youth market in which online communities and fan economies are especially robust.

The study introduces quantifiable external stimuli, that is, online buzz metrics, as antecedents to the core constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) within the context of digital entertainment-led cultural consumption. It asks whether and how the digital crowd's voice is associated with personal attitude and perceived social pressure, thereby offering a more finely grained understanding of mediatization processes at the individual behavioral level, and it traces pathways through which documentary content can stimulate interest in related cultural products and tourism, a form of sustainable cultural economy.

Overview of the study. Buzz data were collected from two Chinese social media platforms, Sina Weibo and Douyin, over a 30-day window (15 October to 13 November 2025) through platform-accessible interfaces and a customized crawler, and two indicators were constructed: discussion volume, the daily number of posts and first-level comments mentioning the documentary, its host, or one of its six destinations, and sentiment polarity, the mean valence of the same texts. A questionnaire was administered to Chinese viewers aged 18 – 35 through an online panel during the same window, yielding 372 valid responses across 28 survey dates. Each respondent was matched to the buzz values for the date on which they submitted the questionnaire, and a structural equation model estimated with cluster-robust standard errors at the survey-date level tested whether the two indicators were associated with the intention to consume related cultural products through attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Control variables were age, gender, education, monthly disposable income, and prior interest in the documentary's themes.

2. Literature Review

The intersection of digital media, cultural consumption, and youth behavior constitutes a vibrant and multidisciplinary field of international scholarship. To contextualize the present study's investigation, this review synthesizes extant literature across three core dimensions: theoretical frameworks for modeling media influence on behavioral intention (Section 2.1); empirical research on online buzz, paratexts, and their measurable effects on consumer engagement (Section 2.2); and the socio-digital context of youth cultural consumption in contemporary China (Section 2.3).

2.1 Theoretical Frameworks: From Media Effects to Behavioral Prediction

Within communication studies, the uses and gratifications (U&G) tradition has long explained media selection in terms of the needs that audiences seek to satisfy (Katz et al., 1973). Applied to contemporary streaming, Menon (2024) examined over-the-top video platforms within a U&G framework (N = 421) and identified eight motivational factors for viewing, including convenient navigability, improved viewing experience, entertainment, relaxation, social interaction, companionship, voyeurism, and information seeking. The study showed that different gratifications predict different outcomes: entertainment and voyeurism predicted platform affinity; entertainment, voyeurism, and information seeking predicted satisfaction; and several gratifications together with interactivity predicted the intention to discontinue traditional subscription services. Such work establishes why audiences select a given cultural product, but by design says little about what measurable platform-level discourse does to those audiences' intentions afterwards.

For the prediction of intention, social psychology supplies the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which holds that intention, the proximal determinant of behavior, is a function of attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, and that these three constructs mediate the influence of external variables such as media exposure. The reasoned-action lineage of the model is set out at length by Fishbein and Ajzen (2010). TPB has been applied widely in marketing and consumer research, including Rasul et al.'s (2025) cross-national study of social identification and online marketing, which shows that consumers' identification with a social network shapes how they respond to marketed content. A theoretical gap nevertheless persists in the application of TPB to organic online

paratexts. Does discussion volume strengthen subjective norms? Does sentiment polarity enhance attitude? The literature lacks a systematic integration of platform-derived metrics into this well-established psychological model, creating an opportunity for theoretical extension.

2.2 Online Buzz, Paratexts, and Measurable Media Effects

The content itself is now inseparable from its paratext, namely the conversations, reviews, memes, and data traces that surround it. This paratextual layer is often quantified as online buzz, encompassing volume, sentiment, reach, and engagement. Badrul Hisham et al.'s (2019) ethnographic study of Korean Wave fandom in Malaysia positions social media as a central agent of mediatization, sustaining a cultural phenomenon's visibility and reach. Such work highlights the role of buzz in sustaining cultural phenomena.

Empirically, research has begun to connect platform metrics to downstream outcomes. Xu et al. (2025) show that streamer characteristics, including expertise and the nature of streamer – viewer interaction, are associated with sales performance in live-streaming commerce, evidence that platform-level attributes translate into commercial outcomes. Yan et al. (2026) extend this logic in a cultural direction, demonstrating that Douyin-style short videos diffuse destination images and reshape viewers' perceptions of rural tourism destinations. Filieri et al. (2023) sharpen the picture by distinguishing hedonic from utilitarian products: for video-based consumer reviews of travel, content quality and source homophily predicted behavioral intention, whereas source popularity mattered mainly for utilitarian products. Guo et al. (2025) identify the content-marketing features through which tourism short videos are associated with users' travel behavioral intention. This strand of work now supports its own synthesis: reviews of influencer-generated content converge on the finding that source and content attributes reliably predict purchase intention, while noting that the mediating pathways remain inconsistently specified (Sardar & Vijay, 2025). A methodological limitation persists, however: while studies of this kind acknowledge the importance of online discourse, few operationally link large-scale, platform-derived quantitative metrics to individual-level survey data on psychological constructs and intentions. Most rely on either macro-level analytics or micro-level qualitative interviews, leaving the mechanistic bridge between the two levels, the very pathway this study proposes via TPB, insufficiently mapped.

2.3 Youth, Digital Culture, and Consumption in the Chinese Context

The manifestation of digital media effects is profoundly shaped by local socio-technical ecosystems and cultural values. Research on Chinese youth reveals a landscape characterized by highly integrated digital platforms, robust fan economies, and rapidly emerging online subcultures. Hu (2025) shows how Chinese youth groups create textual role-playing spaces online, a phenomenon described as the cosplay of language, as a platform for conveying values and seeking emotional community, reflecting a blurring of entertainment, identity, and social interaction. Chen et al. (2020) similarly show that Douyin does not merely host content but shapes the expressive repertoires through which young users articulate shared values, evidence that platform affordances are implicated in cultural meaning-making rather than serving as neutral conduits.

The commercial and cultural impact of digital platforms in China is correspondingly potent, and platform-based marketing has reshaped consumer behavior. Yet research on China tends to treat these phenomena in isolation: subculture studies, e-commerce studies, and fandom studies rarely speak to one another. Few studies follow the full pathway from a mainstream, celebrity-fronted cultural product to the paratextual buzz it generates and then to the downstream spectrum of related preferences, which ranges from commerce (merchandise) to experience (travel) to further media consumption.

In summary, three interrelated gaps remain. First, at the theoretical level, the interface between the quantitative metrics of organic online paratexts and the cognitive mediators of TPB is under-explored, and the applicability of TPB to this emergent social-digital stimulus requires explicit testing. Second, at the empirical level, a methodological disconnect prevails: studies analyze buzz analytics and psychological surveys in isolation, lacking designs that formally link aggregated platform data with individual-level attitudinal and intentional data to test a fully specified mediating model. Third, at the contextual level, no study systematically examines the pathway from a high-profile, hybrid cultural product's online reception to its downstream cultural-economic impact within China's commercialized, platform-driven digital ecosystem. These gaps hinder consensus on the mechanisms of influence in entertainment-led, digitally mediated cultural economies.

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

To investigate the mechanistic pathway from documentary-induced online buzz to cultural product preferences, this study is anchored in the TPB (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Intention is shaped by three conceptually independent factors: (a) attitude toward the behavior, the individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior; (b) subjective norm, the perceived social pressure from significant others, including family,

friends, and online peers, to engage or not engage in the behavior; and (c) perceived behavioral control, the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, reflecting past experiences and anticipated obstacles. A core tenet of TPB is that these three factors mediate the influence of external variables, such as demographic factors, media exposure, and personality traits, on intention and, ultimately, behavior. The selection of TPB is predicated on its parsimonious and widely validated capacity for predicting and explaining social behavior across diverse domains.

The application logic involves a deliberate cross-cultural adaptation and integration with digital media concepts. The core independent variable, online buzz, is positioned as a critical external variable within the model, and its two quantifiable dimensions are theorized to influence the three mediators differentially. High discussion volume surrounding the documentary is conceptualized as a salient indicator of its social relevance and popularity. In the highly networked and trend-conscious digital environment of Chinese youth culture, pervasive discussion is expected to strengthen subjective norms, because when a topic trends online, individuals perceive a stronger social expectation to be aware of and to engage with related content and products. Concurrently, the sentiment polarity of the buzz, representing the aggregate affective tone of online discourse, is theorized to shape viewers' attitudes toward related cultural products. It may also inform perceptions of control, to the extent that an enthusiastically discussed product appears easier to locate, evaluate, and acquire. The Chinese socio-digital milieu, characterized by collectivist undertones and powerful platform-based opinion climates, suggests that the subjective norm construct may be particularly potent.

Based on this theoretical integration, the study proposes the following hypotheses. The first set concerns the influence of buzz metrics on the TPB mediators, and this is illustrated in Figure 1.

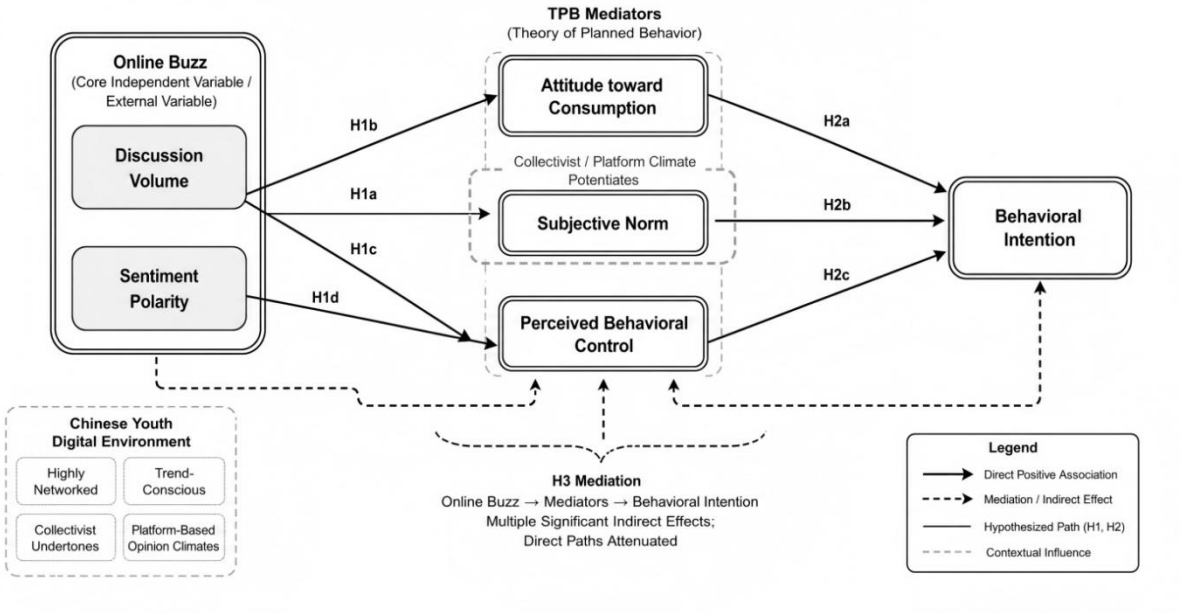


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

H1a. A higher volume of online discussion about the documentary is positively associated with a stronger subjective norm regarding the consumption of related cultural products.

H1b. More positive sentiment polarity in the online buzz is positively associated with a more favorable attitude toward consuming related cultural products.

H1c. A higher volume of online discussion is positively associated with higher perceived behavioral control over consuming related cultural products.

H1d. More positive sentiment polarity is positively associated with higher perceived behavioral control over consuming related cultural products.

The second set derives from the core propositions of TPB:

H2a. A more favorable attitude toward consuming related cultural products is associated with a stronger intention to do so.

H2b. A stronger subjective norm is associated with a stronger consumption intention.

H2c. A higher level of perceived behavioral control is associated with a stronger consumption intention.

Finally, the study hypothesizes the mediation structure:

H3. The relationship between the buzz indicators and behavioral intention is mediated by attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, such that multiple significant indirect effects are observed and the direct paths are attenuated.

Because the buzz indicators are measured at the platform-day level while the TPB constructs are measured at the individual level, the model is a cross-level model. Section 4.4 specifies how the two levels were linked and how the resulting dependence was modeled, and Section 5.4 reports the corresponding robustness checks.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design and Case Selection

This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational design combining a survey with secondary platform data. The design does not permit causal identification, and the language of the article reflects this throughout. The purpose-built case is the documentary Exploring the Unknown With Wang YIBO, selected because it combines a mass-market celebrity vehicle with heritage and adventure themes, generates unusually large domestic discourse, and is tied to an identifiable set of downstream cultural products, namely themed merchandise, the six featured destinations, and comparable documentary formats.

4.2 Buzz Data Collection

Documentary-related content was collected from two Chinese social media platforms, Sina Weibo and Douyin, over a 30-day observation window (15 October to 13 November 2025) selected to cover the peak of the second season's online discussion. Both platforms expose public post and comment data through authenticated interfaces; a customized crawler was used to retrieve records not returned by those interfaces. Commercial advertising accounts, duplicate reposts, and bot-like accounts were excluded (identification rule reported in Appendix B).

The 30-day window served to establish the trend and peak of the discourse. For the hypothesis tests, the buzz indicators were not averaged across the window; each respondent was assigned the indicator values for the date on which the questionnaire was submitted (Section 4.4).

4.3 Buzz Indicators and Sentiment Analysis

Discussion volume was defined as the number of unique user-generated posts and first-level comments published per platform per day that mentioned the documentary title, the name of its host, or one of the six destination names. Sentiment polarity was defined as the mean valence of the same texts, computed with the Chinese sentiment analysis function of Weiciyun (www.weiciyun.com), a commercial Chinese-language text analytics service; valence scores are expressed on a scale of −1 to 1, with negative values indicating negative sentiment, 0 indicating neutral sentiment, and positive values indicating positive sentiment. Pre-processing addressed Chinese-language specifics, including word segmentation, negation and degree adverbs, emoji, danmu-style slang, and mixed Chinese–English tokens.

Validation proceeded by independent double coding. A random subsample of 1200 posts and comments was coded by two trained human coders, who achieved substantial agreement (Cohen's $\kappa = .78$); their coding accuracy was .86 against adjudicated consensus labels, and agreement between the automated labels and those consensus labels was 83%. Full diagnostics are reported in Appendix A and the full protocol in Appendix B. Because the measure relies on a general-purpose commercial tool rather than a purpose-built classifier validated on social-media Chinese, the residual classification error is acknowledged as a limitation in Section 7.

The unit of analysis was the individual post or first-level comment. Daily counts and valence scores were first computed separately for each platform and then averaged across the two platforms, yielding 56 platform-days of data and, after averaging, 28 daily values matched to the 28 survey dates.

4.4 Linking Platform-Level Buzz to Individual Respondents

The two levels were linked by date matching: each respondent was assigned the buzz values of the calendar day on which the questionnaire was submitted. The matched dataset, therefore, contains 56 platform-days of text data (two platforms × 28 calendar days), averaged across platforms to yield 28 daily values, one for each of the 28 distinct survey dates on which valid questionnaires were submitted. Respondents who completed the survey on the same date, a mean of 13.3 respondents per date, share an identical value on both buzz indicators. The data thus have a two-level structure, with respondents at level 1 nested within survey dates at level 2, and the number of independent level-2 units is 28 rather than 372.

Three consequences are reported rather than assumed away. First, the intraclass correlation of the buzz indicators attributable to survey date is ICC = .04, corresponding to a between-date variance component of 4% and a within-date

component of 96%. Second, the resulting design effect is 1.56, computed as

$$DEFF = 1 + (m - 1)\rho \quad (1)$$

where m denotes the average number of respondents per survey date and ρ the intraclass correlation, implying an effective sample size of approximately 238 independent observations and confidence intervals roughly 25% wider than an independent-sample calculation would produce. Third, because 28 level-2 units fall below the range in which cluster-robust standard errors are known to be well calibrated in small samples, the model was estimated with cluster-robust standard errors at the survey-date level using Mplus TYPE = COMPLEX, and the cross-level estimates are interpreted with corresponding caution. The observation window spans 30 consecutive days, of which 28 days contained at least one valid submission; the full 30-day series is used to describe the trend of the discourse (Appendix B), while the 28 matched days enter the hypothesis tests.

4.5 Measures

The questionnaire contained four sections. The first collected demographic information (age, gender, education, monthly disposable income) and a single-item measure of prior interest in the documentary's themes (archaeology, adventure travel) on a 5-point Likert scale. The second measured the TPB constructs: attitude (4 items, e.g., "For me, purchasing products related to the documentary's themes would be: harmful/beneficial"), subjective norm (4 items, e.g., "Most people who are important to me think I should engage with cultural products from the documentary"), and perceived behavioral control (4 items, e.g., "It would be easy for me to access products related to the documentary's themes"), each on 7-point semantic differential or Likert scales adapted from established TPB instruments and contextualized for cultural products (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Behavioral intention (3 items, e.g., "I plan to purchase goods related to the documentary's themes in the next 6 months") was measured identically. Full item wording, response anchors, and the source of each adapted scale are reported in Appendix C.

A pilot study (n = 60) was conducted before the main survey to examine item comprehension and scale performance; its reliability coefficients are reported separately in Appendix C and are not pooled with the main sample. In the main sample, Cronbach's alpha was .89 for attitude, .86 for subjective norm, .84 for perceived behavioral control, and .90 for behavioral intention.

4.6 Sampling and Participants

Respondents were recruited through Credamo, a Chinese commercial online panel, using custom quota sampling. Invitations were targeted at users who met three conditions: aged 18–35; prior viewing of the documentary Exploring the Unknown; and an approximately balanced distribution across gender and age. Questionnaires were distributed through the panel's sample pool on a random basis, and responses were additionally screened by manual review to ensure sample quality. The sampling frame was the panel's registered user pool; no probability sampling frame was available, and the sample is therefore a non-probability quota-based sample, which limits generalizability. Eligibility also required residence in mainland China and prior viewing of the documentary, the latter verified by a screening item. The 18–35 restriction reflects the documentary's own target demographic and the age composition of the online fan community discussed in Section 2.3.

A total of 476 questionnaires were submitted. Of these, 104 were excluded for failing attention checks, straight-lining checks, or the minimum completion-time threshold, leaving 372 valid cases; the valid-case ratio is therefore 372/476 = 78.2%. Regarding sample size, following the widely used minima of ten cases per estimated parameter and 200 cases for structural equation modeling with latent variables, the achieved N = 372, and more conservatively the effective N ≈ 238 after accounting for date-level clustering, retains adequate precision for detecting medium-sized effects. Respondents and non-respondents could not be compared because the panel does not release information on non-completers, which is acknowledged as a limitation.

4.7 Common Method Bias

Common method bias was addressed primarily by design, supported by the statistical tests available. By design, the independent variables were derived from platform data rather than self-report, so predictors and mediators were measured in different modes; items for different constructs were separated by unrelated filler items; and respondents were assured of anonymity. Statistically, Harman's single-factor test was conducted, and the first unrotated factor captured 31.7% of the variance, below the conventional 50% threshold. We acknowledge that this test is a weak diagnostic; because the predictors are not self-reported, however, the most common mechanism of common method bias, namely same-source and same-method measurement of predictor and criterion, does not apply to the buzz-to-mediator paths, and the threat is limited to the relationships among the four self-reported constructs. A stronger remedy, namely temporal or source separation of the measurement of buzz exposure from the TPB items, is identified as a direction for future research in Section 7.

4.8 Ethics, Data Availability, and AI Use

4.8.1 Ethics

The study drew on two data sources: publicly available posts and comments retrieved through platform-accessible interfaces, and a voluntary online questionnaire. No institutional review board approval number was obtained because data collection was conducted wholly through an online panel and publicly available online content, involved no physical intervention, and collected no sensitive health, biometric, or clinical data. Participants were informed of the purpose and content of the study on the first page of the questionnaire, participated voluntarily, retained the right to withdraw at any point, provided informed consent electronically before proceeding, and were assured that their responses would remain anonymous; no personally identifying information was retained, responses are reported only in aggregate, and no individual is identifiable from the data or the results presented here. Data collection complied with the terms of service of the platforms from which content was retrieved.

4.8.2 Data availability.

The aggregated buzz dataset, the full questionnaire, and the Mplus syntax used to produce Tables 2 to 4 and Appendix A are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

4.8.3 Declaration of AI use.

Generative AI tools were used for language editing and for citation formatting. All AI-assisted output was reviewed and verified by the author against the data and the cited sources. No AI tool was used to generate data, analyses, or substantive scholarly content, and the author takes full responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

4.9 Analytical Strategy

Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were conducted in Mplus v8.8; descriptive statistics were computed in SPSS v27. The measurement model was estimated first, followed by the structural model with the five control variables specified as predictors of all four endogenous constructs. Standard errors were cluster-robust at the survey-date level (TYPE = COMPLEX). Indirect effects were tested with bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals based on 5000 resamples, and the significance level was set at $\alpha = .05$. Explained variance is reported for each endogenous construct.

5. Findings

This section presents the results in sequence: sample characteristics and data quality (Section 5.1), descriptive statistics for the core variables (Section 5.2), and the inferential results testing the hypothesized structural model (Section 5.3), followed by robustness checks (Section 5.4).

5.1 Sample Characteristics and Data Quality

The demographic profile of the 372 participants is presented in Table 1. These characteristics align with the target population of educated, digitally native youth, supporting the sample's relevance to the research question.

Table 1. Sample Demographic Characteristics (N = 372)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	177	47.6%
	Female	195	52.4%
Age	18–24 years	156	41.9%
	25–30 years	164	44.1%
	31–35 years	52	14.0%
Education	High school or below	44	11.8%
	Bachelor's degree	256	68.8%
	Master's degree or above	72	19.4%
Monthly disposable income (RMB)	Less than 3 000	102	27.4%
	3 001–5 000	142	38.2%
	5 001–8 000	85	22.8%
	More than 8 000	43	11.6%

Note. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

The multi-item scales performed well in terms of internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .89 for

attitude, .86 for subjective norm, .84 for perceived behavioral control, and .90 for behavioral intention, each exceeding the accepted .70 threshold. Confirmatory factor analysis of the four-factor measurement model demonstrated good fit: $\chi^2(84) = 198.32$, $p < .001$; CFI = .96; TLI = .95; RMSEA = .06 (90% CI: .05, .07); SRMR = .04. All standardized factor loadings were significant and ranged from .68 to .88, confirming convergent validity. The square roots of the average variance extracted for each construct (.71 for attitude, .68 for subjective norm, .65 for perceived behavioral control, and .73 for behavioral intention) were greater than the inter-construct correlations, supporting discriminant validity. All variance inflation factors from the preliminary regressions remained below 2.5, indicating no multicollinearity. Common method variance is addressed in Section 4.7.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations are reported in Table 2. For the buzz indicators, statistics are computed over the 28 matched survey dates that enter the analysis rather than over respondents; they therefore describe the daily discourse environment to which respondents were exposed. Averaged across the two platforms, daily discussion volume was M = 12 450 posts (SD = 3 210), and mean sentiment polarity was 0.62 (SD = 0.18), indicating predominantly positive online discourse. All three TPB constructs averaged above their scale midpoints, with attitude highest (M = 5.12, SD = 1.05) and behavioral intention slightly lower (M = 4.78, SD = 1.21). The three TPB predictors were positively intercorrelated, with coefficients between .42 and .51 ($p < .01$). Both buzz indicators correlated positively with the mediators and with behavioral intention, most strongly with subjective norm for discussion volume ($r = .25$, $p < .01$) and with attitude for sentiment polarity ($r = .34$, $p < .01$).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Discussion Volume	12.45	3.21	1					
Sentiment Polarity	0.62	0.18	.11*	1				
Attitude (A)	5.12	1.05	.09	.34**	1			
Subjective Norm (SN)	4.65	1.14	.25**	.18**	.42**	1		
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	4.80	1.08	.19**	.13*	.47**	.51**	1	
Behavioral Intention (BI)	4.78	1.21	.22**	.29**	.58**	.49**	.53**	1

Note. Buzz indicators are observed at the platform-day level (56 platform-days, averaged across platforms to 28 daily values matched to respondents' survey dates) and are therefore reported here as daily aggregates rather than as respondent-level means; TPB constructs are observed at the individual level (N = 372). Correlations between the buzz indicators and the individual-level constructs are cluster-dependent, because respondents surveyed on the same date share one value per indicator (ICC = .04; design effect = 1.56). Discussion volume is reported in thousands of posts. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

5.3 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesized structural model was tested using structural equation modeling. The control variables (age, gender, education, income, and prior interest) were included as covariates predicting the mediators and the outcome variable. The model exhibited good fit: $\chi^2(162) = 352.71$, $p < .001$; CFI = .95; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .05 (90% CI: .05, .06); SRMR = .05. Standardized path coefficients for the hypothesized relationships are detailed in Table 3 and displayed in Figure 2.

Table 3. Structural Model Path Coefficients (Standardized)

Hypothesis	Path	β	SE	p	95% CI (Bootstrapped)	Supported?
H1a	Discussion Volume → Subjective Norm	.21	.06	< .001	[.10, .32]	Yes
H1b	Sentiment Polarity → Attitude	.31	.05	< .001	[.22, .40]	Yes
H1c	Discussion Volume → Perceived Behavioral Control	.16	.05	< .01	[.07, .25]	Yes
H1d	Sentiment Polarity → Perceived Behavioral Control	.08	.04	.07	[−.01, .17]	No
H2a	Attitude → Behavioral Intention	.35	.06	< .001	[.24, .46]	Yes
H2b	Subjective Norm → Behavioral Intention	.22	.05	< .001	[.13, .31]	Yes
H2c	Perceived Behavioral Control → Behavioral Intention	.26	.05	< .001	[.17, .35]	Yes
—	Discussion Volume → Behavioral Intention (direct)	.07	.04	> .05	[−.01, .15]	No
—	Sentiment Polarity → Behavioral Intention (direct)	.08	.04	≈ .05	[.00, .16]	No

Note. Explained variance: $R^2 = .14$ for attitude, .08 for subjective norm, .06 for perceived behavioral control, and .45 for behavioral intention. The buzz indicators are measured at the platform-day level and matched to respondents by survey date; standard errors are

cluster-robust at the survey-date level (28 clusters; ICC = .04; design effect = 1.56). The direct path from sentiment polarity to behavioral intention has a confidence interval with a lower bound at zero and is treated as non-significant.

The control variables are reported in Table A1. Prior interest in the documentary's themes showed the strongest associations among them, with attitude (β = .25, $p < .001$), subjective norm (β = .15, $p < .01$), perceived behavioral control (β = .14, $p < .01$), and behavioral intention (β = .20, $p < .001$). Education was weakly associated with attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (βs = .10, .08, and .10, all $p < .05$) but not with behavioral intention (β = .06, $p > .05$), and monthly disposable income was weakly associated with attitude (β = .09, $p < .05$), perceived behavioral control (β = .13, $p < .05$), and behavioral intention (β = .08, $p < .05$). Age and gender were not significantly associated with any of the four endogenous constructs. The modest magnitudes of these associations indicate that the hypothesized paths are not attributable to demographic composition.

The results support most of the hypotheses. Regarding the effects of online buzz on the TPB mediators (H1a to H1d), discussion volume had a significant positive association with subjective norm (β = .21, $p < .001$) and with perceived behavioral control (β = .16, $p < .01$), supporting H1a and H1c. As hypothesized in H1b, sentiment polarity was strongly associated with attitude (β = .31, $p < .001$). The path from sentiment polarity to perceived behavioral control was not significant (β = .08, $p = .07$), so H1d was not supported: the emotional tone of online discourse was not significantly associated with feelings of control. The core postulates of TPB (H2a to H2c) were fully supported: attitude (β = .35), subjective norm (β = .22), and perceived behavioral control (β = .26) were all significantly associated with behavioral intention (all $p < .001$), with attitude showing the strongest association. The buzz indicators explained only a modest share of the variance in the normative and control constructs (R^2 = .08 and .06); their explanatory weight is concentrated in the intention equation, in which the three TPB constructs jointly accounted for 45% of the variance.

To test the mediation hypothesis (H3), the specific indirect effects from the buzz indicators to behavioral intention via the three mediators were examined using bootstrapping; the results are reported in Table 4. The indirect effect of discussion volume on intention through subjective norm was significant (β = .05, 95% CI [.02, .08]), as was the path through perceived behavioral control (β = .04, 95% CI [.01, .07]). The indirect effect of sentiment polarity through attitude was the strongest (β = .11, 95% CI [.07, .15]), whereas the path through perceived behavioral control was negligible and not significant (β = .02, computed as .08 × .26; a separate bootstrap interval was not obtained because the constituent direct path was not significant). The total indirect effects were significant for both discussion volume (β = .09, 95% CI [.04, .14]) and sentiment polarity (β = .12, 95% CI [.07, .17]). Both direct paths to intention were non-significant, a pattern consistent with full mediation.

Table 4. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Online Buzz on Behavioral Intention

Predictor	Path	Effect (β)	Boot SE	95% BC CI
Discussion Volume	Direct → BI	.07	.04	[−.01, .15]
	Indirect via Subjective Norm	.05	.02	[.02, .08]
	Indirect via Perceived Behavioral Control	.04	.02	[.01, .07]
	Total indirect	.09	.03	[.04, .14]
	Total effect	.16	—	—
Sentiment Polarity	Direct → BI	.08	.04	[.00, .16]
	Indirect via Attitude	.11	.02	[.07, .15]
	Indirect via Perceived Behavioral Control	.02 (a)	—	—
	Total indirect	.12	.03	[.07, .17]
	Total effect	.20	—	—

Note. (a) Computed as the product of the two reported coefficients (.08 × .26 = .02); this path is not significant because H1d was not supported, and a separate bias-corrected bootstrap interval was not obtained for it. Both direct paths are non-significant, a pattern consistent with full mediation. Total effects are computed as the sum of the direct and total indirect effects, for which bootstrap intervals are not separately available. BI = behavioral intention.

Finally, the bivariate correlations and the decomposed effects were reconciled. The zero-order correlations in Table 2 (.22 for discussion volume and .29 for sentiment polarity with intention) are larger than the decomposed total effects in Table 4 (.16 and .20). Three considerations account for the difference. First, the correlations are unadjusted, whereas the structural estimates are conditional on five control variables. Second, the buzz indicators and the individual-level constructs both carry a date-level component (ICC = .04; design effect = 1.56), so part of each bivariate correlation reflects covariation between survey dates rather than between individuals, and the 372 respondents supply roughly 238 independent observations. Third, with the three mediators intercorrelated at .42 to .51, a bivariate correlation cannot be

decomposed additively into the paths of a multivariate model. The same caution applies within Table 4: the sum of the two specific indirect effects of sentiment polarity (.11 + .02 = .13) exceeds the reported total indirect effect (.12) by .01, a discrepancy attributable to rounding of the two-decimal coefficients. The mediation claim therefore rests on the decomposed estimates, and, given the cross-sectional and date-clustered design, is stated as evidence consistent with mediation rather than as proof of it.

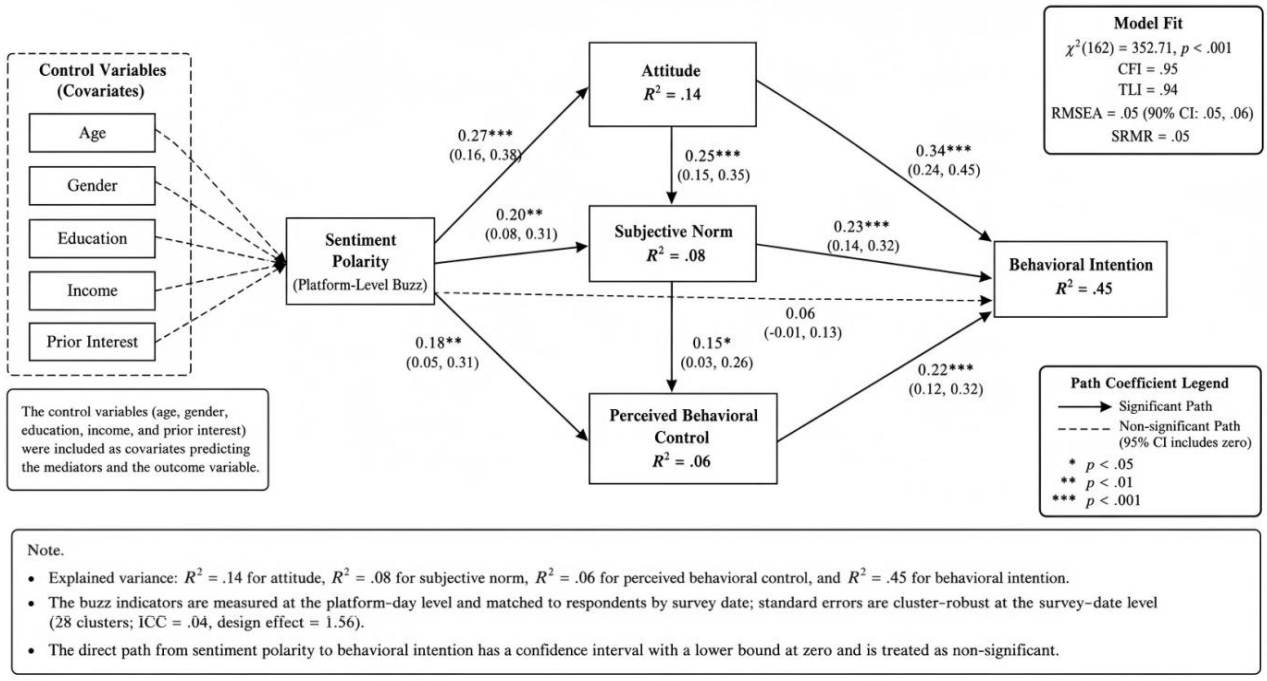


Figure 2. Standardized path coefficients for the structural model

Note. N = 372 respondents nested within 28 survey dates. Solid lines denote significant paths ($p < .05$); dashed lines denote non-significant paths. The two buzz indicators are measured at the platform-day level and matched to respondents by survey date. Control-variable paths (age, gender, education, monthly disposable income, and prior interest in the documentary's themes) are shown as grey dashed arrows, and their coefficients are reported in Appendix A, Table A1.

5.4 Robustness Checks

Three checks were conducted. First, the structural model was estimated with cluster-robust standard errors at the survey-date level (28 clusters; Mplus TYPE = COMPLEX). All substantive conclusions were unchanged: H1a (β = .21), H1b (β = .31), H1c (β = .16), and H2a to H2c remained significant, while H1d and the two direct paths remained non-significant. Comparing these standard errors with those obtained under the assumption of independent observations indicated inflation of approximately 25%, consistent with the design effect of 1.56. Second, a multilevel structural equation model with a random intercept for survey date reproduced the same intraclass correlation for the buzz indicators (ICC = .04; 4% between-date and 96% within-date variance) and left the significant indirect effects intact. Third, because 28 level-2 units fall below the range in which cluster-robust standard errors are well calibrated, the cross-level coefficients, particularly those involving sentiment polarity, are treated as the least precisely estimated in the model, and the interpretation in Sections 6 and 7 is qualified accordingly.

6. Discussion

Taken together, the results answer the research hypotheses in a clear way. H1a, H1b, and H2a to H2c were supported, so the chain from buzz through the proposed mediators to intention was empirically traceable. H1d was not corroborated: sentiment polarity had no significant association with perceived behavioral control. Emotional tone, it appears, is associated with how products are evaluated rather than with people's sense of whether they can obtain them. H3 received qualified support: multiple significant indirect effects emerged, and both direct paths were non-significant, a pattern consistent with full mediation under a cross-sectional design.

The control-variable results reinforce this reading. Prior thematic interest was the strongest of the control variables (β = .20 with behavioral intention, $p < .001$), which suggests that online buzz operates alongside, rather than instead of,

pre-existing audience predispositions; paratextual discourse appears to amplify interest that is already latent rather than to create it. That education and disposable income showed only weak associations, while age and gender showed none, further indicates that the mechanism identified here is not a proxy for demographic stratification.

These results connect with several strands of the literature reviewed in Section 2. For the uses and gratifications tradition (Katz et al., 1973; Menon, 2024), the study specifies what happens after media selection rather than merely documenting why audiences choose particular content: the gratifications that drive viewing are followed by discursive processes that are associated with intentions toward adjacent cultural products. For research on identification and online marketing (Rasul et al., 2025), the normative pathway identified here, with discussion volume operating through subjective norm, offers a behavioral intention counterpart to evidence that social identification shapes responses to marketed content. For mediatization scholarship and the Korean Wave literature (Badrul Hisham et al., 2019), the study supplies a micro-level accompaniment to a macro-level claim: mediatization is visible not only in the sustained visibility of a cultural phenomenon but also in the normative and evaluative constructs of individual viewers. The findings also speak to work on youth cultural practice in China (Hu, 2025; Chen et al., 2020) and to research linking short-video discourse to destination perceptions (Yan et al., 2026), in that entertainment-led content appears capable of generating interest that extends beyond the platform to commerce and travel.

One finding deserves emphasis because it links the quantitative results to cultural analysis. Subjective norm mediated the association between discussion volume and intention, and discussion volume was its strongest predictor. That pattern is consistent with the collectivist, community-oriented reading of East Asian online fan and youth cultures and puts quantitative weight behind an interpretation usually grounded in qualitative materials, while leaving open, as Section 7 notes, the possibility that the association partly reflects the shared date-level measurement of the buzz indicators.

The theoretical contribution is twofold. On one level, the study extends the cross-cultural application of TPB by showing that the relative weight of its components varies with contextual conditions: where online discussion is intense, the normative pathway carries particular force, which lends empirical substance to discussions of culturally contingent TPB trajectories. On the methodological level, the study offers a workable template for integrating computational social science measures with conventional psychometric tools, and, crucially, a template for reporting the level-of-analysis problem that such integration creates. By pairing platform-derived indicators with latent psychological constructs inside a single model, with explicitly documented cross-level matching and cluster-robust inference, it lays out a disciplined strategy for research aiming to trace how macro-level digital phenomena relate to micro-level dispositions, and treats the transparent handling of aggregation as part of the contribution rather than as a technical footnote.

7. Conclusion

Framed by TPB and supported by survey data combined with platform indicators, this study traced how online attention to a cultural documentary was associated with young Chinese viewers' preferences for culturally affiliated products. That association was not direct; it ran through the mediating structures of the TPB model. The outcome carries implications for interdisciplinary research at the crossroads of digital media, cultural demand, and cross-cultural psychological theory.

Three findings stand out. First, the two dimensions of online buzz are functionally differentiated: discussion volume operates primarily on the social and pragmatic plane, being associated with subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, whereas sentiment polarity operates on the evaluative and affective plane, being associated with attitude. This bifurcation refines the often monolithic conceptualization of buzz in media effects research and provides a more precise operational map of how different facets of digital discourse relate to consumer cognition. Second, the results are consistent with the core architecture of TPB in the context of digital entertainment-led cultural consumption: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control were all significantly associated with intention, with attitude showing the strongest association. Third, the association between platform-level discourse and individual intention operated through these psychological constructs: the indirect effects were significant while the direct paths were not, a pattern consistent with full mediation and one that moves beyond associative claims to specify the evaluative, normative, and efficacy-based conduits involved.

The practical implications are threefold. To encourage favorable attitudes, content creators, streaming platforms, and cultural institutions should cultivate authentic positive sentiment through compelling, emotionally resonant content rather than through promotional repetition. To leverage social influence, strategies should amplify discussion volume and visibility through community engagement and platform features that encourage sharing. To strengthen perceptions of control, clear information about product availability, pricing, and logistics should be embedded in the digital ecosystem surrounding the content. For international marketers, the differentiated pathways suggest that campaigns built on cultural content should be sensitive to local digital norms: in social-media-saturated, community-influenced

markets, discussion volume may matter as much as sentiment.

The limitations of this study are both methodological and conceptual. First, the design is cross-sectional, so the model cannot establish temporal order; the associations reported here are consistent with, but do not demonstrate, the causal sequence implied by TPB. Second, the buzz indicators are measured at the platform-day level and are shared by respondents surveyed on the same date; with 28 level-2 units and a design effect of 1.56, the effective number of independent observations is roughly 238 rather than 372, which makes the cross-level estimates the least precise in the model even after the cluster-robust procedures reported in Section 5.4, and means that conclusions about the buzz-to-mediator paths should be treated as provisional. Third, all TPB constructs and the outcome were self-reported in a single instrument administered once. Fourth, sampling relied on a non-probability quota-based commercial panel, respondents could not be compared with non-respondents, and the age restriction to 18–35 further limits generalizability. Fifth, this is a single-case design, namely one documentary, one celebrity host, and one platform ecosystem, so the findings cannot be extended to young adults or to global content creators in general. Sixth, sentiment polarity was computed with a general-purpose commercial Chinese-language tool whose accuracy was assessed on a human-coded subsample ($\kappa = .78$; agreement = 83%) but which was not purpose-built or validated on social-media Chinese, so measurement error cannot be ruled out. Future research should adopt a longitudinal or quasi-experimental design that measures buzz exposure before the TPB constructs, thereby separating the measurement of the predictors from that of the self-reported constructs, which is the most effective remedy for common method variance; should use a probability sample; and should extend the model comparatively across media markets and genres.

References

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50*(2), 179-211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-t

Badrul Hisham, N. A., Ahmad, A. L., & Kee, C. P. (2019). Refleksi penerokaan etnografi peminat gelombang Korea di Malaysia [A reflection of ethnographic exploration on Korean Wave enthusiasts in Malaysia]. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication, 35*(4), 286-304. https://doi.org/10.17576/jkmjc-2019-3504-18

Chen, X., Kaye, D. B. V., & Zeng, J. (2020). #PositiveEnergyDouyin: Constructing "playful patriotism" in a Chinese short-video application. *Chinese Journal of Communication, 14*(1), 97-117. https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2020.1761848

Filieri, R., A çikgöz, F., & Du, H. (2023). Electronic word-of-mouth from video bloggers: The role of content quality and source homophily across hedonic and utilitarian products. *Journal of Business Research, 160*, 113774. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.113774

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (2010). *Predicting and changing behavior: The reasoned action approach*. Psychology Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203838020

Guo, X., Liu, B., He, J., & Li, S. (2025). The impact mechanism of tourism short video content marketing on users' travel behavioral intention. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 12*(1), Article 494. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-04801-3

Hu, Q. (2025). Emotional needs and projection: A study on the phenomenon of language cosplay in youth subcultures. *Journal of Education and Educational Research, 16*(3), 300-306. https://doi.org/10.54097/10J6GT42

Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratifications research. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 37*(4), 509. https://doi.org/10.1086/268109

Menon, D. (2024). Uses and gratifications of over-the-top (OTT) video streaming platforms in India: Predictors of user's affinity, satisfaction and cord-cutting. *Journal of Creative Communications*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/09732586241240392

Rasul, A., Asim, M., & Shin, D. (2025). Socially networked endorsements: Exploring the relationship between social identification and online marketing in multicultural societies. *International Communication Gazette, 87*(7), 688-704. https://doi.org/10.1177/17480485241307558

Sardar, S., & Vijay, T. S. (2025). Social media influencers and purchase intention: A review and research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies, 49*(3), e70046. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.70046

Xu, X., Zeng, Q., Na, R., & Fan, W. (2025). Unveiling the influence of streamer characteristics on sales performance in live streaming commerce. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, 72*, 101510. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2025.101510

Yan, P., Yu, C., Zhang, C., Shi, H., & Wang, S. (2026). From pixels to perceptions: Analyzing rural tourism image

diffusion through Douyin-style short videos. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 1-17. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1108/apjml-07-2025-1356

Endnotes

Note 1. Programme performance figures (Tencent Video rating, heat index, Telly Award, topic views, trending-list appearances, and discussion counts) were compiled from the public pages of Tencent Video, Sina Weibo, and WeChat as of 30 November 2025.

Appendixes

Appendix A. Supplementary Quantitative Results

Table A1. Control-Variable Paths (Standardized)

Regression Coefficients of Predictors on Outcomes

Predictor	Attitude	Subjective Norm	Perceived Behavioral Control	Behavioral Intention
Age	.05	.03	.07	.04
Gender	.02	.06	.02	.03
Education	.10*	.08*	.10*	.06
Monthly disposable income	.09*	.05	.13*	.08*
Prior interest in the documentary's themes	.25***	.15**	.14**	.20***

Note.
Entries are standardized coefficients from the structural model in Section 5.3, in which the five control variables were specified as predictors of all four endogenous constructs. Buzz indicators are measured at the platform-day level and matched to respondents by survey date; standard errors are cluster-robust at the survey-date level (28 clusters). * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table A2. Model, Data-Quality, and Design Diagnostics

Indicator	**Value**	**Basis**
R^2 for behavioral intention	.45	Mplus standardized output
R^2 for attitude	.14	Mplus standardized output
R^2 for subjective norm	.08	Mplus standardized output
R^2 for perceived behavioral control	.06	Mplus standardized output
Distinct survey dates	28	Matched to the data-collection window
Platform-days before averaging	56	Two platforms × 28 dates
Intraclass correlation (ICC)	.04	Date-level clustering of the buzz indicators
Between-date / within-date variance	4% / 96%	Derived from the ICC
Design effect	1.56	$DEFF = 1 + (m - 1)\rho$, $m = 13.3$, $\rho = .04$
Effective sample size	238	N / DEFF = 372 / 1.56
Human double-coding (Cohen's κ)	.78	Two coders; subsample of 1200 posts and comments
Human coding accuracy / automated agreement	.86 / .83	Against adjudicated consensus labels
Questionnaires submitted / excluded / valid	476 / 104 / 372	Valid-case ratio = 78.2%

Appendix B. Buzz Data Collection and Sentiment-Analysis Protocol

ID	Parameter	Details
B1	Platforms and access	Sina Weibo and Douyin; content was retrieved through authenticated platform interfaces, supplemented by a customized crawler for records not returned by those interfaces.
B2	Observation window	15 October to 13 November 2025 (30 consecutive days), of which 28 days contained at least one valid questionnaire submission.
B3	Retrieval fields	Publication timestamp, author account identifier, text, and engagement counts.
B4	Keyword set	The documentary title, the host's name, and the six destination names.
B5	Inclusion and exclusion rules	Unique user-generated posts and first-level comments were retained; commercial advertising accounts, duplicate reposts, and bot-like accounts were excluded. Bot-like accounts were identified as accounts meeting at least two of the following criteria: (a) more than 50 posts or comments per day during the observation window; (b) account age below six months combined with unusually high posting frequency; (c) highly repetitive text similarity across messages (for example, more than 80% similarity); and (d) abnormal interaction patterns, such as near-zero replies or likes relative to posting volume, or highly uniform engagement across unrelated topics.
B6	Sentiment computation	The Chinese sentiment analysis function of Weiciyun (www.weiciyun.com) was used. Scores range from −1 to 1, where negative values indicate negative sentiment, 0 indicates neutral sentiment, and positive values indicate positive sentiment. Pre-processing covered segmentation, negation and degree adverbs, emoji, danmu-style slang, and mixed Chinese–English tokens.
B7	Validation	A random subsample of 1200 posts and comments was independently coded by two trained coders; Cohen's $\kappa = .78$, and agreement with adjudicated consensus labels was 83%.
B8	Aggregation	Platform-level daily counts and mean valence scores were averaged across the two platforms to produce 28 daily values, one for each survey date.

Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire - Credamo

Documentary Film "Exploring the Unknown" – Audience Cultural Product Consumption Intention Survey Questionnaire

Informed Consent Form and Privacy Protection Statement
Dear respondent, hello! We are currently conducting an academic study on how the documentary *Exploring the Unknown* influences young audiences' consumption intentions regarding cultural products—such as cultural and creative goods, tourist destinations, and similar programs. This questionnaire was developed by the research team at the XX College of XX University; the data will be used solely for academic purposes and will never be used for commercial purposes.

[Your Rights and Privacy Protection]
1. Voluntary participation: You may freely choose whether to complete the form or withdraw from the process at any time without needing any reason.
2. Anonymity: The questionnaire does not collect direct identifying information such as names, phone numbers, or ID numbers; the data is stored in encrypted form and is accessible only to the research team.
3. Data Use: The results are presented solely in aggregated statistical form and will not identify any individuals.
4. Data Matching: This study will perform date-matching analysis by combining your public discussion data from social media platforms (e.g., the volume and sentiment trends of topics on Weibo, TikTok, and other platforms), but this analysis is solely intended for aggregated statistical purposes and will not identify your personal account.
5. Risk Disclosure: The questionnaire does not contain sensitive political, religious, or health-related information; however, please ensure that you are at least 18 years of age and are participating voluntarily.

[Informed Consent]By clicking "Agree and Continue," you indicate that you have read the above information and voluntarily participate in this study.

□ Agree and continue

□ Disagree and withdraw

Part 1: Screening Questions

S1. How old are you?

○ 18–24 years ○ 25–30 years ○ 31–35 years ○ Other (Stop responding; thank you for participating)

S2. Have you watched the documentary *Exploring the Unknown* (including Season 1 or Season 2)?

○ Yes (Continue)

○ No (End the survey; thank you for participating!)

S3. Which platform do you primarily use to watch content? (Multiple answers allowed)

□Tencent Video

□ Discovery International Platform

□ Short video clips from platforms such as Weibo, TikTok, and WeChat Video Accounts

□ Other: _____

Part 2: Measurement of Core Variables

[Instructions] Please select the option that best reflects your true feelings on a scale of 1–7 (1 = Very Disagree/Very Negative; 7 = Very Agree/Very Positive).

A. Attitude

A1. For me, purchasing cultural products related to documentary themes (such as cultural and creative goods, travel-related items, or books) is:

1 (Very harmful) – 7 (Very beneficial)

A2. Participating in cultural consumption related to documentaries (e.g., visiting filming locations or purchasing merchandise) is:

1 (Very unpleasant) – 7 (Very pleasant)

A3. I believe that supporting such cultural products is beneficial for my personal development:

1 (Very Low Value) – 7 (Very High Value)

A4. Overall, my stance regarding cultural products related to "Exploring the Unknown" is as follows:

1 (Very negative) – 7 (Very positive)

B. Subjective Norm

B1. People important to me (friends, family, or idol fan communities) believe that I should follow or purchase cultural products related to documentaries.

1 (Very disagree) – 7 (Very agree)

B2. Within my social circles (e.g., Weibo Super Topics, Douban Groups), a significant number of people engage in this type of consumption.

1 (Strongly disagree) – 7 (Strongly agree)

B3. If I don't understand these cultural products, I might feel disconnected from the people around me.

1 (Very disagree) – 7 (Very agree)

B4. Overall, I feel pressure from my social environment, which encourages me to engage in related consumption.

1 (Very disagree) – 7 (Very agree)

C. Perceived Behavioral Control

C1. I have sufficient resources (time, money, distribution channels) to purchase or experience cultural products related to documentaries.

1 (Very disagree) – 7 (Very agree)

C2. If I wish to participate (e.g., traveling to the filming location or purchasing related merchandise), I can easily find the channels to buy or join.

1 (Very disagree) – 7 (Very agree)

C3. Whether to make such a purchase is entirely up to me.

1 (Very disagree) − 7 (Very agree)

C4. I believe that I have the ability to make consumption decisions regarding documentary-related cultural products.

1 (Very disagree) − 7 (Very agree)

D. Behavioral Intention

D1. Over the next six months, I plan to purchase products related to the "Exploring the Unknown" theme (e.g., cultural and creative goods, clothing, books).

1 (Very disagree) − 7 (Very agree)

D2. I plan to choose a destination similar to the one where the documentary was filmed for my next trip.

1 (Very disagree) − 7 (Very agree)

D3. I am willing to recommend or share documentary-related cultural products/experiences with others.

1 (Very disagree) − 7 (Very agree)

Part 3: Online Hot Comment Perception

[Instruction]Over the past 30 days, what discussions about "Exploring the Unknown" have you seen on social media platforms (e.g., Weibo, TikTok)?

E1. I have noticed that this documentary has garnered a significant amount of online discussion.

1 (Very disagree) − 7 (Very agree)

E2. The relevant discussions I've encountered are mostly positive.

1 (Very disagree) − 7 (Very agree)

E3. I often come across topics, short videos, or comments related to this documentary.

1 (Very disagree) − 7 (Very agree)

Note: E1−E3 are used for individual-level date-matching validation against the "Discussion Volume (DV)" and "Emotional Polarity (SP)" data scraped from the platform.

Part IV: Control Variables

F1. Gender

○ Male ○ Female ○ Other ○ Male ○ Female ○ Other

F2. Educational Level

○ High school or below ○ Associate degree ○ Bachelor's degree ○ Master's degree or above

F3. Monthly disposable income (RMB)

○ <3000 ○ 3001−5000 ○ 5001−8000 ○ >8000

F4. My existing interest in documentary themes (e.g., archaeology, exploration, cultural heritage)

1 (No interest) 2 3 4 5 (Very interested) 3 4 1 (No interest) 2 3 4 5 (Very interested)

F5. Date of completion of this questionnaire: _____ year _____ month _____ day (automatically recorded by the system for matching with daily online trending comment data)

Part V: Closing Remarks and Acknowledgments

G1. Do you have any other thoughts or feedback regarding this documentary or cultural product? (Open-ended question; optional)

_____

Thank you for taking the time! Your feedback will help us understand the dissemination mechanisms of cultural products in the digital age.