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# What Makes Chinese Animation, Comic, Game, and Novel Subculture Users Willing to Engage in Community Activities on Video Websites? An Empirical Study of Motivation, Engagement Intention, and Media Satisfaction

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### **Abstract**

The influence of the ACGN (animation, comic, game, novel) subculture has become popular worldwide, with video websites serving as primary cultural exchange platforms. These users bring high economic and cultural benefits to online communities, which can stem new cultural crazes. This research focuses on the relationship among different motivations, media satisfaction, community participation, and content contribution of ACGN users. Using a quantitative research method, data on this core group was collected using a questionnaire and analysed by SmartPLS. Results of this study demonstrated that entertainment, information, social interaction, self-expression, and reputation positively correlated with community participation and content contribution. Expected reciprocal benefit was positively correlated with content contribution, while deep ACGN research was correlated solely with community participation. Altruism was not significantly correlated with either construct. Media satisfaction partially mediated the relationships between entertainment, information, social-interaction, self-expression, community participation, and content contribution. This research discovered the motivations and behavioral intentions of this subculture with its large base and affirmed their contribution. Finally, based on the results, suggestions are given for the construction of online communities on video websites that attract ACGN groups.

Keywords: ACGN, online community, motivation, media satisfaction, engagement intention

### 1. Introduction

The animation, comic, game, and novel (ACGN) subculture has become one of the most influential genres in East Asia (Zhu, 2022). In Japan and China, the ACGN subculture is a major cultural and commercial business (Kawashima, 2024; Su, 2022). Scholars are fascinated by ACGN's topic. Since childhood, these consumers have been exposed to ACGN content on mobile phones and computers, which impacts their self-awareness, self-control, aesthetic standards, and lifestyles (Tan, 2008; Zhu, 2017). These groups prefer the internet for socializing, remain home, have weaker social interests, and are interested and proactive in ACGN-related socialization (Niu et al., 2012).

The internet space has become a platform for communication among youth subcultures. ACGN contributes similarly to this internet-culture interaction. ACGN is a subculture, yet it has influenced many generations, notably Gen Z (Chen, 2021). This generation has forums, post bars, and other communication platforms are a result of internet use (Lu, 2012). Their openness to new information has made them more interested in ACGN culture (Yan, 2020).

Many video websites offer mass enjoyment, knowledge, and social interaction (Georgescu & Popescul, 2015). Internet users utilize them to watch shows, movies, and short videos. From video uploading and sharing to watching, live streaming, community engagement, and cloud gaming, these services have expanded (Cai, 2019; Chau, 2010; He, 2018). In China, 995 million people utilize video websites—94.6% of the internet population (AskCI, 2022). This range has reached almost all internet users, showing China's powerful video site utilization.

Bilibili is a unique ACGN video platform. The platform has amassed 197 million full members, with 80% of them being high school and university students (Sohu, 2023). Many ACGN student users are linked with Bilibili's content and platform development (Hong, 2019; Iresearch, 2021). Bilibili's core material is ACGN, and user engagement has improved it. Users can post *danmaku* or remarks in the comment's forum during consumption (Peng et al., 2016). These behaviours build user communities. With varied aesthetics and behaviors, they create a content circle (Zhao et al., 2017). A positive user community culture improves user experience, which encourages site consumption. This culture stabilizes users' consumption behavior, including value-added services and marketed merchandise. Building a strong community culture has stabilized user utilization and consumption. This community stabilizes site revenue and helps overcome negative net income (Sun, 2021; Zhao & Zhao, 2020).

In studies of users on platforms, Chiang and Hsiao (2015) discovered that users' needs for interactivity and self-expression, among others, prompted them to share videos and spend more time on video-sharing websites. Hu et al. (2016) found that the effectiveness of self-construction and community interaction promotes user participation. Xu and Li (2015) found that users' relevant motivations including reputation, reciprocity, and altruism had an impact on users' community engagement behaviour. These studies analyzed the relationship between users' needs and motivations on behavior. However, when further exploring these relationships, relevant research has occasionally overlooked media satisfaction. To better understand the relationship between users' motivations on the platform – participation and contribution – users' media satisfaction is considered in this research. At the same time, uses and gratifications theory and self-determination theory are relevant and appropriate. In addition, Niu et al. (2012) found that the willingness of these groups to make purchases changed as they explored the ACGN-related areas in depth, which was not mentioned regarding participation behaviour. Therefore, the relationship between groups' deep ACGN research and their participation activities is proposed in this study. These theories are applicable to the interpretation of users' media behaviour, especially in an internet environment. Therefore, this study proposes the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent does ACGN research influence community participation and content contribution in video site communities?
  - 2) To what extent do motivations influence participation and contribution in video sites communities?
  - 3) To what extent do motivations influence media satisfaction?
- 4) To what extent does media satisfaction influence community participation and content contribution in video site communities?

# 2. Literature Review

# 2.1 Community Activities: Community Participation and Content Contribution

For video websites, user engagement is important for maintaining operations and positive development (Baker & White, 2011; Casaló et al., 2007). Shao (2009) classified user engagement on video websites as consumption, participation, and production. However, these engagements are based on the environment of user-generated content. Heinonen (2011) also classified engagement in a social media environment in a similar way. Khan (2017) agreed with some of Shao's views, especially the definition of consumption behavior. However, he also grouped users' upload behaviour into participation, so that user behaviour is reduced to two types. In related research on users' engagement behavior, the specific classification for user behavior is not standardized. This portrayl is based on the media environment under consideration. For the community environment of this research, the classification in Xu and Li (2015) are more accurate, which include content contribution and community participation, because both the knowledge-sharing community and the ACGN community have behaviors such as participating in activities, posting comments, and creating content. Participation shifts from interacting with objects to interacting with modes. Contribution, on the other hand, elaborates on the user's upload behavior in more detail, such as uploading dannaku, images, and videos (Tang et al., 2012). This way of distinguishing engagement is more in line with the environment of cultural communities. As fresh blood for the video website, contribution and participation can help websites enhance customer value and brand equity (Luo et al., 2015). For the ACGN subculture group on Bilibili, these community activities are even more diverse, such as anime exhibitions, cosplay, and offline activities. These two forms of user engagement are the two main pillars that benefit websites. Therefore, this research focuses on these two engagement modes of ACGN and what motivates them.

# 2.2 ACGN Subculture and Specialised Research

Research related to ACGN explores the group associated with this subculture (Wang et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021). These studies link ACGN with consumer behaviour and participation behaviour. Niu et al. (2012) explored the characteristics of *otaku*, finding that their deeper love of ACGN culture can stimulate their purchase of related products. Moreover, some specific behaviors can further stimulate the behavior, such as staying at home, or actively strengthening their interest in ACGN. Although most previous research on the relationship between deep ACGN and engagement

intention is speculative or non-empirical, this research seeks to understand the relationship between deep ACGN and engagement intention through empirical methods.

Deep ACGN research involves a strong interest, knowledge, and appreciation of ACGN (Niu et al., 2012). These researchers prefer to praise these products and activities about ACGN, especially the love of *Doujinshi* (a product of self-creation of ACGN content). Deep ACGN research has a strong relationship with the purchasing intention of the corresponding population; purchases also fall into the category of engagement behavior on social media. Therefore, this research will consider whether the ACGN community's in-depth knowledge of this field can affect their participation in video websites. The following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Deep ACGN research is positively correlated with community participation.

H2: Deep ACGN research is positively correlated with content contribution.

# 2.3 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Katz et al. (1974) focused on the use and motivation of media consumption. Most scholars classify the motivations of audiences in media into four types: entertainment, information, social-interaction, and self-expression. The needs that audiences have when using media are also related to these four motives (Bae, 2023; Bondad-Brown et al., 2012; Chen et al., 2013; Wu et al., 2010). Motivation inspires, maintains, and guides human behaviour, that is, the internal drive to act towards a goal. Determining the motivations behind people's consumption of these different types of media is a major part of the field of communication studies (Sjöblom & Hamari, 2017).

Motivation is measured by gratifications sought. Gratifications are the personal outcomes of these behaviors and can show the effects of media use. Satisfaction is based on the audience's memory of system use, while motivation is based on the audience's future expectations. Satisfaction is an important component in audience research (Ruggiero, 2000). Media satisfaction is expected or unexpected in the process of using media, which can change or strengthen media choices, and continue to affect subsequent media choices and usage tendencies (Perse & Ferguson, 2000). The motivation-satisfaction-continuance intention relationship is explained in detail by Hsu and Lin (2023). Contribution and participation, as a user's tendency or actual behavior, can also be explained by this relationship. Therefore, entertainment, information, social interaction, and self-expression, as the four classic motivations for using media, and media satisfaction as an emotional state between motivation and engagement, are noted in this research.

# 2.4 Self-determination Theory

Engagement behavior not only involves media consumption, but also participation in and contribution to community activities, in which the identity of individuals in the community is more complicated. Self-determination theory (SDT) focuses on the influence of social environments on attitudes, values, motivations, and behaviors in developing and current situations. There has been much research based on SDT on the relationship between motivation and behaviors. For instance, Lin (2007) conducted research on knowledge-sharing behavior, dividing motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic, and ultimately finding that reciprocal benefits, knowledge self-efficacy and enjoyment in helping others, significantly affect users' emotional and behavioral tendencies. In this study, users' motivation in the video-sharing website environment may lead them to engage in contribution and participation.

Xu and Li (2015) classified users' motivations in knowledge sharing platforms based on SDT. Among these motivations, reciprocity is the act of giving back to a website after gaining knowledge or other information from it. Reputation is also an effective extrinsic motivator that helps users establish their identity and status on the website. Altruism is an important motivation for using websites. De Vries et al. (2017) organized the motivations that drive users to contribute. They found that entertainment, self-expression, socializing, and remuneration each have an impact on users' contributions to consumer brand activities on media. However, community activities on websites are more focused on enthusiasm related to the field, so remuneration is not considered. In communities with rich social activities and content exchanges, the motives described by SDT are also in line with the objectives of this research. Therefore, based on UGT, reputation, altruism, and expected reciprocal benefit are also included in this research.

# 2.5 Use Motivation to Participation and Contribution

Users generate gratification to meet their needs, which motivates their media use. Entertainment, social, and information motivations play a role in the *danmaku* interaction process on websites (Pan, 2023). In the process of compulsive use of YouTube, information seeking has a lower correlation, and entertainment has a stronger relationship (Klobas et al., 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic, information and entertainment motivations were significantly related to social media use. In addition, social-interaction showed a strong correlation to social media use (Bae, 2023). In the excessive use of Bilibili, motivations such as entertainment and socializing also had a significant impact on users (Lv et al., 2022). In research on the impact of online consumption behavior, the motivations of entertainment, information seeking, social-interaction, etc. all had a good predictive function for consumption behavior (Hilvert-Bruce

et al., 2018). Both social-interaction and escapism have varying degrees of influence when people consume, participate in, and produce TikTok content (Omar & Dequan, 2020). Although the willingness and behavior of users towards media fluctuate to a greater or lesser extent depending on the motivation in different media environments and audiences, these motivations generally play an important role. Therefore, this research makes the following hypotheses based on the motivations of ACGN users in the video website community:

- H3: Entertainment is positively correlated with community participation.
- H4: Entertainment is positively correlated with content contribution.
- H5: Information is positively correlated with community participation.
- H6: Information is positively correlated with content contribution.
- H7: Social-interaction is positively correlated with community participation.
- H8: Social-interaction is positively correlated with content contribution.

Enjoyment and altruism have a direct and significant impact on users' online interactions and sharing behaviors (Ma & Chan, 2014). In research on the motivations of users on websites, the motivations that influence content contribution are more extrinsic, such as reputation and expected reciprocal benefit, while those that influence community participation are more influenced by intrinsic motivations, such as altruism and enjoyment (Xu & Li, 2015). Self-expression also plays a significant role in user participation and contribution (Omar & Dequan, 2020). On platforms with blog features, reciprocity does not actively influence attitudes and usage; only altruism and reputation play a role (Hsu & Lin, 2008). Users use the internet to gain reputation. Like expected reciprocal benefit, many are motivated to share knowledge and contribute to organizations. Based on previous research results on users' self-expression, expected reciprocal benefit, reputation, altruism motivation, and user behaviour, this study suggests the following hypotheses:

- H9: Self-expression is positively correlated with community participation.
- H10: Self-expression is positively correlated with content contribution.
- H11: Expected reciprocal benefit is positively correlated with community participation.
- H12: Expected reciprocal benefit is positively correlated with content contribution.
- H13: Reputation is positively correlated with community participation.
- H14: Reputation is positively correlated with content contribution.
- H15: Altruism is positively correlated with community participation.
- H16: Altruism is positively correlated with content contribution.

# 2.6 Media Satisfaction between Motivation and Behaviour

Satisfaction is a prerequisite for attitude change and an important correlate of behavioral intention and other variables. In the context of online game engagement, satisfaction with various user needs can help users build loyalty and further influence game use (Teng et al., 2022). However, not all literature indicates that the relationship between satisfaction and user behavior is significant. Ramanathan et al. (2017) found that the relationship between customer satisfaction and behavior is weak, but satisfaction is affected if there is an interaction between promotions and social media comments. This finding also highlights the importance of interaction in this relationship. Kim et al. (2011) analyzed the pleasure that users experience when using media on social networks after being guided by motives and found that this pleasure can affect users' behavioral intentions. The relationship between satisfaction and engagement intention has also been demonstrated in many papers (Akel & Armağan, 2021; Li, 2022; Valaei & Baroto, 2017). Based on previous research on the role of users' media satisfaction in the relationship between user motivation and engagement intention, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H17: Entertainment is positively correlated with media satisfaction.
- H18: Information is positively correlated with media satisfaction.
- H19: Social-interaction is positively correlated with media satisfaction.
- H20: Self-expression is positively correlated with media satisfaction.
- H21: Media satisfaction is positively correlated with community participation.
- H22: Media satisfaction is positively correlated with content contribution.

Based on the above hypotheses, this research has developed a conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 1.

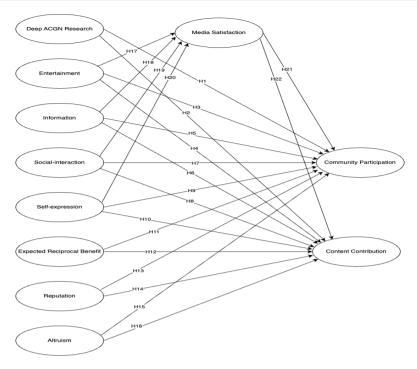


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

### 3. Method

To test these hypotheses, this research believes the positivist research paradigm and quantitative survey method are appropriate. Based on previous studies, this research adapted and integrated a questionnaire, which was used to assess users' motivations to use Bilibili through community participation and content contribution. The data will be analyzed using SmartPLS for structural equation modelling.

### 3.1 Research Location

Compared with other Chinese cities, Guangzhou has a greater source of cultural exchange and has been central to the birth of new cultures. Traditional culture, urban space, and emerging cultures are sustainably integrated through these channels, such as architecture (Jiao et al., 2023). In terms of the animation industry, Guangzhou also has great vitality, which has future benefits (Fusong, 2021). Overall, Guangzhou has a significant influence in China compared to other cities in terms of the developmental prospects of culture and subcultures. Regarding the ACGN field, there are more animation exhibitions, offline stores, and joint events, and the customer volume of one of the offline stores has increased by 30%. Guangzhou's ACGN industry is growing rapidly, with high consumption and frequent user engagement (Huang, 2024). Therefore, this study focuses on Guangzhou, and research on ACGN subculture users is appropriate.

From the perspective of consumers, students (especially undergraduates) are extremely dependent on social media and video websites. From the perspective of the website platform, university students have always been the largest group of content contribution and engagement on the platform (Bilibili, 2024). This behavior and motivation are reflected in both economic benefits and academic research, making university students the first choice for research on social media and video site users. Therefore, university students in Guangzhou are the target group for this research.

# 3.2 Measurements and Instrument Development

The questionnaire consists of 11 variables and 71 items, all measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Deep ACGN research was adapted from Niu et al. (2012). Entertainment and information were adapted from Klobas et al. (2018) and Kaye (1998). Social-interaction was adapted from Khan (2017) and Kaye (1998), self-expression from the scales of Liu et al. (2020) and Chiang and Hsiao (2015), expected reciprocal benefits, reputation and altruism from Xu and Li, (2015) and Chiang and Hsiao (2015), attitude toward the Web from Chen et al. (2002) and Liu et al. (2023), and content contribution and community participation from Hu et al. (2016) and Xu and Li (2015). The wording of the above questionnaire items was modified appropriately based on the research. A group of eight experts in communication studies evaluated the logical consistency, comprehensibility, order, and contextual appropriateness of the scale items. Based on the results of the Item Content Validity Index (I-CVI) and the Scale-level Content Validity Index for Universal Agreement (S-CVI/UA), 16 items were deleted, leaving 55 items. 152 participants were pre-tested in this research, and the results were used to modify the questions in the questionnaire and determine reliability. The remaining questionnaire items are shown in Table 1.

# 3.3 Sampling and Data Collection

Multistage sampling was chosen for this study. First, four universities in Guangzhou were randomly selected in the first stage based on 38 universities in Guangzhou. In the second stage, students were informed through the guidance teachers at these four universities to conduct convenience sampling. The questionnaire was only targeted at undergraduate students at universities in Guangzhou who had experience using Bilibili regarding the topic of ACGN. Participants were recruited between May 1 and September 1, 2024. Data was collected using an online questionnaire distributed via the WeChat applet called *So Jump*. After completion, *So Jump* also made it possible to download the results directly in Word format. This approach ensured that the data was intact. All participants read the informed consent form in detail before formally responding to the questionnaire. The consent form explained the purpose, risks, benefits and confidentiality provisions of the research.

After excluding incomplete, duplicate, and invalid questionnaires, a total of 615 valid questionnaires were used for analysis, meeting the minimum sample size calculated by G\*power. 51.1% of them were male, and most participants were between the ages of 18 and 22. More than 60% of ACGN users passed the exam to become full members. In addition, more than 40% of users purchased 'big member status' to access more content for consumption and participation.

### 4. Results

### 4.1 Measurement Model Test

As shown in Table 1, after deleting 9 items that did not promote reliability, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of all variables is not less than 0.785. This data shows that the scales used in this study have good internal consistency and meets the required reliability requirements. In addition, the average extracted variance of all variables is not less than 0.698, indicating that the convergent validity of the questionnaire meets the standard. The factor loading of each item in the questionnaire is not less than 0.71, which further proves that the convergent validity of the questionnaire meets the standard. Table 2 shows that all Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HMRC) are less than 0.90. This finding indicates that these constructs have sufficient discriminant validity. In addition, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) of the estimated model for this study reached 0.034, indicating good goodness-of-fit. Most of the Variance Inflation Factor values were below 3.3 and a few of which were below 5, which indicates that there is no serious lateral collinearity issue.

Table 1. Measurement Scale Properties

Constructs and Items	Cronbach's	AVE	CR	Factor
	Alpha			Loadings
A. Deep ACGN Research	0.923	0.724	0.940	
1. Profound interest in animation				0.871
2. Profound interest in games				0.854
3. Highly praise ACGN products				0.880
4. Exceptional knowledge of animation/games stores				0.885
5. Great understanding of ACGN				0.879
6. A deep interest in "Doujinshi"	0.010	0.500	0.020	0.726
B. Entertainment	0.912	0.792	0.938	0.001
1. I use Bilibili because it amuses me				0.881
2. I use Bilibili because it entertains me				0.892
3. I use Bilibili because I just like to access it				0.898
5. I use Bilibili because it relaxes me	0.027	0.726	0.042	0.888
C. Information	0.927	0.736	0.943	0.710
1. I use Bilibili to learn how to solve problems				0.710
2. I use Bilibili to get answers for some questions that I have				0.892
3. I use Bilibili to learn new things				0.878
4. I use Bilibili to get information about things that interest me				0.878
5. I use Bilibili to learn how to do things				0.895
6. I use Bilibili to find out what is new out there	0.012	0.700	0.020	0.880
D. Social-interaction	0.912	0.790	0.938	0.004
1. I use Bilibili to meet interesting people				0.884
2. I use Bilibili to feel like I belong to a community				0.895
3. I use Bilibili to connect with people who share same of my values				0.897
5. I use Bilibili so I can talk to other people about the Bilibili and its content I've accessed	0.007	0.792	0.025	0.890
E. Self-expression	0.907	0.782	0.935	0.000
1. I can record and express my ideas and inspirations etc. on Bilibili				0.880
2. I can record and express my feelings about life on Bilibili				0.887
4. I tend to provide personal information about myself on Bilibili				0.884 0.886
5. I try to well describe my personality to others on Bilibili	0.002	0.740	0.010	0.886
F. Expected Reciprocal Benefit	0.883	0.740	0.919	0.964
2. If I receive useful content from Bilibili, I should participate and contribute in return				0.864
3. I want to be a beneficial asset to Bilibili if I receive help from others' contributions				0.856
4. I find that participating and contributing on Bilibili can be mutually helpful				0.850
5. I find my participation and contribution in Bilibili can be advantageous to me and other users	0.000	0.817	0.931	0.872
G. Reputation  2. I feel that maticipating and contributing improve my status (fellowers, likes etc.) in Dilibility	0.888	0.81/	0.931	0.901
2. I feel that participating and contributing improve my status (followers, likes etc.) in Bilibili				
I participate and contribute to enhance my reputation in Bilibili     Participating and contributing would enhance my personal reputation in Bilibili				0.906 0.906
H. Altruism	0.785	0.698	0.873	0.900
	0.783	0.098	0.873	0.813
I. I enjoy helping others by participating and contributing in Bilibili     Participating and contributing with others gives me pleasure				0.813
Participating and contributing with others gives the pleasure     Participating and contributing can help others with similar problems				0.892
I. Media Satisfaction	0.912	0.791	0.938	0.797
I. I feel good after using Bilibili	0.912	0.791	0.936	0.877
2. I find experience enjoyable in Bilibili				0.877
3. I am very satisfied by using Bilibili				0.900
4. I am very pleased by using Bilibili				0.900
J. Community Participation	0.908	0.784	0.935	0.691
I. I assist other Bilibili members with their questions	0.908	0.764	0.933	0.885
I assist outer Birton members with their questions     It take part in discussions about community issues in Bilibili				0.886
3. I actively participate in activities organized by the Bilibili				0.884
• • •				
5. I take part in votes in the Bilibili community K. Content Contribution	0.876	0.729	0.915	0.886
	0.870	0.729	0.913	0.762
I. I often add new self-produced video and comments content to Bilibili     Leften add self-produced video and comments content on Bilibili				0.762 0.885
I often edit self-produced video and comments content on Bilibili     I often write articles and edit comments on Bilibili				0.885
4. I often add new Danmaku content on Bilibili				
4. I Offen add new Danmaku content on Bilibili				0.878

Table 2. Results of Discriminant Validity

	ALT	COP	COC	DAR	ENT	ERB	INF	MES	REP	SEE	SOI
ALT											
COP	0.070										
COC	0.049	0.736									
DAR	0.036	0.774	0.568								
ENT	0.037	0.841	0.690	0.665							
ERB	0.121	0.406	0.478	0.398	0.403						
INF	0.048	0.733	0.687	0.630	0.720	0.442					
MES	0.023	0.785	0.725	0.690	0.746	0.455	0.724				
REP	0.036	0.768	0.751	0.633	0.682	0.425	0.655	0.728			
SEE	0.058	0.732	0.668	0.616	0.663	0.446	0.612	0.687	0.712		
SOI	0.070	0.822	0.748	0.673	0.783	0.448	0.728	0.768	0.762	0.728	

Note: ALT = Altruism, COC = Content Contribution, COP = Community Participation, DAR = Deep ACGN Research, ENT = Entertainment, ERB = Expected Reciprocal Benefit, INF = Information, MES = Media Satisfaction, REP = Reputation, SEE = Self-expression, SOI = Social-interaction

# 4.2 Structural Model Test

We evaluated the model by the significance of the path coefficients and the R<sup>2</sup> values. As shown in Figure 2, the significance of the path coefficients was estimated by bootstrapping (5000 samples), and the one-tailed test was used. The results show that deep ACGN research is significantly and positively correlated with community participation ( $\beta$  = 0.225, t = 7.211, p < 0.001) but not significantly correlated with content contribution ( $\beta = -0.052$ , t = 1.095, p > 0.05). This finding supports H1 and rejects H2. Entertainment ( $\beta = 0.279$ , t = 8.120, p < 0.001), information ( $\beta = 0.077$ , t = 2.500, p < 0.001) 0.01), social-interaction ( $\beta = 0.153$ , t = 3.794, p < 0.001), self-expression ( $\beta = 0.100$ , t = 3.271, p < 0.01), and reputation ( $\beta$ = 0.127, t = 4.226, p < 0.001) were all significantly and positively correlated with community participation. These results support H3, H5, H7, H9 and H13. Expected reciprocal benefit ( $\beta = -0.040$ , t = 1.732, p < 0.05) is significantly negatively correlated with community participation, which rejects H11. Entertainment ( $\beta = 0.098$ , t = 2.147, p < 0.05), information ( $\beta$ = 0.143, t = 3.230, p < 0.01), social-interaction ( $\beta = 0.171$ , t = 3.876, p < 0.001), self-expression ( $\beta = 0.092$ , t = 2.191, p < 0.0010.05), expected reciprocal benefit ( $\beta = 0.096$ , t = 3.265, p < 0.01), reputation ( $\beta = 0.241$ , t = 5.501, p < 0.001) were significantly and positively correlated with content contribution. This data supports H4, H6, H8, H10, H12 and H14. Altruism was not significantly related to community participation ( $\beta = 0.033$ , t = 1.395, p > 0.05) or content contribution  $(\beta = -0.008, t = 0.305, p > 0.05)$ . This data rejects hypotheses H15 and H16. Entertainment  $(\beta = 0.226, t = 4.439, p < 0.001)$ . information ( $\beta = 0.246$ , t = 5.184, p < 0.001), social-interaction ( $\beta = 0.253$ , t = 4.882, p < 0.001), and self-expression ( $\beta = 0.253$ ). 0.183, t = 4.448, p < 0.001) were all significantly and positively correlated with media satisfaction. This data supports H17–H20. Finally, media satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with community participation ( $\beta = 0.093$ , t = 2.638, p < 0.01) and content contribution ( $\beta = 0.154, t = 3.195, p < 0.01$ ), which support H21 and H22. The results of the path coefficients and p-values of this research are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Structural Model Results

Note: p < 0.05: \*; p < 0.01: \*\*; p < 0.001: \*\*\*

In addition, we analysed the R<sup>2</sup> for the three endogenous variables. Among them, media satisfaction explained 61% of the variance; content contribution explained 59.9%; and community participation explained 74.8%. Overall, the explanatory power of the research model was relatively strong, especially in explaining community participation.

Regarding the assessment of effect size, we use  $f^2$ . As can be seen in Table 3, the exogenous variables with a small effect size on media satisfaction are entertainment, information, social-interaction, and self-expression. Among them, information has the greatest influence. In Table 4, the exogenous variables that have a small effect size on community participation are entertainment, social-interaction, reputation, and deep ACGN research. Among these, entertainment has the greatest influence. Finally, in Table 5, the exogenous variables that have a small effect size on content contribution are information, social-interaction, reputation, and media satisfaction. The path with the greatest influence is reputation.

Table 3. Effect Size on Media Satisfaction

Exogenous Variable	Media Satisfaction	Effect Size
Entertainment	0.054	Small
Information	0.073	Small
Social-interaction	0.061	Small
Self-expression	0.045	Small

Table 4. Effect Size on Community Participation

Exogenous Variable	Community Participation	Effect Size
Entertainment	0.118	Small
Information	0.010	Trivial
Social-interaction	0.030	Small
Self-expression	0.018	Trivial
Expected Reciprocal Benefit	0.005	Trivial
Reputation	0.027	Small
Altruism	0.004	Trivial
Media Satisfaction	0.012	Trivial
Deep ACGN Research	0.098	Small

Table 5. Effect Size on Content Contribution

Exogenous Variable	Content Contribution	Effect Size
Entertainment	0.009	Trivial
Information	0.021	Small
Social-interaction	0.024	Small
Self-expression	0.010	Trivial
Expected Reciprocal Benefit	0.018	Trivial
Reputation	0.061	Small
Altruism	0.000	Trivial
Media Satisfaction	0.021	Small
Deep ACGN Research	0.003	Trivial

### 5. Discussion

The support of H1 shows that the more these ACGN users understand and like related products and content, the more willing they are to participate in community activities on video websites, answer questions from others, participate in online and offline activities, and provide suggestions for the development of the platform. This finding is similar to the results of Tan (2008) and Niu et al. (2012). They discussed the proactive nature of ACGN topics and activities they are good at and interested in. This result is a change in self-awareness and lifestyle brought about by prolonged exposure to ACGN content. The rejection of H2 indicates that even if ACGN users like certain content and consume it for a long time, the material will not affect whether they are willing to upload and publish content. This behavior may be due to the limited feedback in their interactions with the platform, and they prefer a quick and positive interaction model.

H3-H8 were supported. We found that the stronger the pleasurable feelings that ACGN users want to get from the media, the stronger their motivation to obtain the required information, and the stronger their desire to connect with others, all of which will make them more active in participating in community interactions and contributing content. In terms of community participation, we found that the influence of entertainment was the strongest correlation, which shows that for ACGN, participating in community activities is more for entertainment, to gain more happiness, and rest. In community interaction, user-to-user interaction is a prerequisite. ACGN users see online communities as a place to socialise, where they can actively exchange ideas in their field of interest and form their own circles. They also feel that they have their own space on the site and that there are similar people there who share their interests. At the same time, they also see it as a great platform for receiving and finding information, especially about their favorite fields. The significant influence of information shows that they likely have a strong need to learn and get answers. Like other websites with social functions, they ask questions and expect to get the information they need. Corresponding to social is content contribution, and these three motivations also significantly affect their content output.

H9 and H10 were supported where ACGN users, like the general population, strongly desire a platform where they can be seen. They believe that online communities provide opportunities to showcase and express themselves, and to be seen by other users. H12 was supported, while H11 was unexpectedly rejected due to a significant negative correlation. Expected reciprocal benefit is that users hope to obtain future requests through current contributions. Consistent with Xu and Li (2015), ACGN users expect to receive something in the future for their current content contribution. However, they do not think this way about their community participation and even feel the opposite. Considering the fandom of ACGN users, they behave differently on knowledge-sharing websites. They strongly expect the platform to give them what they need, but when the immediate output does not pay off in the future, they become rebellious. This rationale may be due to a sense of betrayal or revenge, or a thirst for the content they need. H13 and H14 are supported, as they believe that personal reputation is important, especially in content contribution because this content can be proof of their ability and identity on the platform. Unlike the widespread anonymity of knowledge-sharing websites, ACGN users interact more with real or carefully constructed identities in the community, especially the active core ACGN group. In addition, the rejection of H15 and H16 is inconsistent with the results of Kankanhalli et al. (2005) and Xu and Li (2015). Helping others for nothing is not particularly common for ACGN users considering that they rarely care about content that is not enthusiastic enough, and their social circles are relatively closed. It may be inferred that their social circles are divided according to content, which could limit seeing people or situations that require help; additionally, they may not be proactive enough to help others.

The effect size shows that entertainment has the greatest impact on community participation in this model. This finding also reflects the fact that ACGN users largely want to gain pleasure by participating in community activities. The second highest effect size is deep ACGN research, which reflects the fact that these professional users are eager to find the right people in the community to communicate with in related fields. Additionally, we found that reputation has the largest effect size on content contribution, which also suggests that they work hard to manage their image and status,

especially in terms of the content they create. This content is an important part of showing their professional strength and self-confidence. Media satisfaction also has an impact, which shows that when users upload comments, *danmaku*, videos, and other content, they themselves gain a sense of satisfaction and feel that the platform enriches them.

H17-H22 were supported in this research, indicating that these ACGN users who seek pleasure, obtain information, communicate with others, and express themselves will feel satisfied when participating in community activities, which in turn stimulates their desire to participate more actively. Satisfaction has a motivating and promoting effect between users' motivation and behavior. We can see from the effect size that user satisfaction is driving these four factors, affecting their satisfaction to varying degrees and indicating that these are important factors that online communities need to consider because they can promote user satisfaction.

In comparison with other platforms, we found that users on social media sites such as Amazon and YouTube are more popular, and their intentions are more in line with expectations. For example, motivations such as entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression generally have a greater influence. This result was also found in this study, as these ACGN users are also influenced by these motivations when using video websites. On knowledge-sharing websites like Wikipedia, users' motivations are closer to those. They also seek to obtain more information, as the professional ACGN content available on video platforms is highly valuable. Additionally, content contribution tends to focus on user-platform interaction, while community participation relates to user-to-user interactions. The impact of different motivations on these two areas varies significantly, similar to knowledge-sharing platforms. However, the specific motivations influencing each type of intention differ markedly from those of other platforms and general users.

### 6. Conclusions and Limitations

We have established a conceptual framework to analyze the relationship between the different motivations of the ACGN community and their community participation and content contribution on video websites and verified the mediating role of media satisfaction in this relationship. The empirical research shows that ACGN users' entertainment, information, social interaction, self-expression, and reputation are all significantly and positively correlated with community participation and content contribution. Expected reciprocal benefit is significantly and positively correlated with content contribution. Deep ACGN research is significantly and positively correlated with community participation. Altruism was not significantly related to either. Media satisfaction partially mediated some of the motivations and participation. This research contributes to community building on video websites by better understanding the motivations of ACGN users and their degree of expertise in related fields. The results have implications for website communities in terms of how to encourage user participation and contribution.

This research is based on two different theories. However, due to the wide variety of motivations, it is difficult to comprehensively explore them in just a few studies. In addition, there are still some variables from the environment or equipment that affect users' willingness to act, which also require further research and exploration. In terms of sampling, this study selected representative samples from first-tier cities, while other regions with relatively less ACGN subculture require further research in the future to cover them. As such, the research results are more reflective of young users in relatively developed cities. Since ACGN subculture is inherently a youth culture, longitudinal research on this culture is also worth conducting. In the future, qualitative research that explores new motivations for such target groups, as well as quantitative research based on more environments and objects, will be carried out to enrich this field.

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# **Authors contributions**

Mr. Cheng drafted the manuscript, and Dr. Shamsul revised it. Prof. Hamedi were responsible for revising the study design. Mrs. Ji and Ms. Wang were responsible for collecting the data. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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## Informed consent

Obtained.

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# Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

# Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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