

## Short-Form Dramas and User Perception: Influences on Continued Use

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### Abstract

The use of short-form dramas on smartphones is rapidly increasing worldwide. Currently, short-form dramas are popular in China, the United States, Korea, and Japan, and their impact on the global market is expected to be significant in the future. Despite growing interest from both the market and academia, research on short-form dramas remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to explore users' perceptions of short-form dramas and their intentions to continue using them. Based on the Technology Acceptance Model, we conceptualized users' perceptions in relation to individual and service characteristics and developed a research model to analyze their attitudes and intentions to continue using short-form dramas. A survey was conducted to assess users' perceptions and intentions regarding the continued use of short-form dramas. The results indicated that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use significantly influenced users' intentions to continue using these dramas. This study offers a more comprehensive understanding of short-form drama usage and provides valuable insights for relevant market participants.

**Keywords:** *Short-Form Drama, User Perception, Intention To Use, Individual Characteristics, Service Characteristics, User Attitude.*

### Introduction

The landscape of video content consumption has been profoundly reshaped by the pervasive adoption of smartphones, leading to a rapid surge in the utilization of short-form dramas. These concise episodic narratives, typically around one minute in duration, are experiencing an escalating wave of popularity, especially among adolescents and young adults (often referred to as the "10-20 generation"), who exhibit a clear preference for abbreviated video formats [1]. The burgeoning global proliferation of short-form dramas underscores the growing significance of this market segment across numerous countries. For instance, the U.S. short-form drama market is projected to expand by approximately 8,000% to reach 146 million in the first quarter of 2024. Concurrently, a June 2024 survey indicated that the number of short-form drama users in China has already surpassed 576 million [2]. In South Korea, the market size for short-form dramas in 2024 is estimated at KRW 650 billion, demonstrating exponential year-on-year growth [3]. Furthermore, global sales of short-form dramas are anticipated to reach approximately \$700 million by the first quarter of 2025 [4]. Such impressive growth rates unequivocally highlight the critical importance of short-form dramas and illuminate key characteristics of contemporary content consumers.

As the prominence of short-form dramas within the broader content industry continues to expand, there is a commensurate rise in research interest and demand concerning this emergent media form [5]. Nevertheless, despite substantial attention from both industry practitioners and academic scholars, comprehensive research on short-form dramas remains conspicuously limited. Specifically, empirical investigations exploring how short-form dramas influence users' perceptions and their intentions for continued engagement are remarkably sparse. Given that the emergence of any novel media format necessitates a thorough examination of users' perceptions, attitudes, and usage intentions [6], this study seeks to address this gap. Accordingly, the primary objective of this research is to analyze the distinctive characteristics of short-form dramas and their user base, thereby exploring users' perceptions and their sustained usage intentions.

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## **Literature Review**

### **Short-form Drama Usage**

Scholarly investigation into short-form dramas has primarily concentrated on their market performance and overall impact. More specifically, academic endeavors exploring the characteristics of the short-form drama market have predominantly addressed topics such as profitability frameworks, market dynamics, and associated negative ramifications [7]. Regarding the profitability models within the short-form drama market, Dong and Wang [8] elucidated that a diversified profit structure fundamentally establishes the business ecosystem of this industry. Similarly, in a study concerning quality enhancement strategies for short-form dramas, Xu [9] underscored the necessity of fully leveraging the initial advantages of market entry and developing varied profit paradigms. Pertaining to the performance of the short-form drama market, Liu [10] undertook an analysis of the economic benefits arising from its rapid proliferation from a commercial viewpoint, underscoring the evolution of a new segment within the entertainment industry.

Furthermore, researchers have examined the less favorable aspects. Elhai et al. [11] explored the mechanisms connecting short-form drama addiction with fear, revealing a notable correlation between these detrimental emotional states and addictive tendencies. In a separate inquiry, Bukya and Lakshmana [12] conducted a biometric analysis to investigate usage patterns, cyber addiction, and mental well-being in relation to short-form dramas. Their findings suggested a robust association between addictive behaviors and adverse mental and physical health outcomes, prompting recommendations for preventative measures [12]. Nonetheless, comprehensive research delving deeply into users' perceptions of short-form dramas and the underlying motivations for their continued engagement remains limited.

### **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Venkatesh and Davis [13] incorporated modifications that led to a more precise and intuitive conceptual framework. This iteration of TAM is widely employed to interpret and forecast users' initial acceptance and continued engagement with various systems [14]. Furthermore, TAM has been extensively utilized in studies concerning Internet platforms, including analyses of internet-based mobile health services [15], user-generated content platforms [16], the adoption of mobile banking services [17], and the acceptance of online games [18]. Hancerliogullari and Koksalmis [19] developed a scenario-based research model grounded in TAM, affirming its sustained relevance for investigating behavioral intentions and actual behaviors.

Traditionally, the TAM model primarily centers on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. However, this study extends the TAM model by integrating additional variables such as enjoyment, personalization, innovativeness, social influence, and attitude. This expanded framework offers a more comprehensive perspective on short-form drama user behavior. Such an augmentation provides a deeper insight into the user experience within short-form drama research, which is vital for formulating strategies to enhance the overall success of participants in the short-form drama market.

### **Personal Innovativeness**

Personal innovativeness, defined as an individual's intrinsic desire to embrace novel innovations [20], has been incorporated into various Technology Acceptance Models to account for individual variations [21]. Individuals demonstrating higher levels of innovativeness typically exhibit a greater tolerance for ambiguity and risk, rendering them more receptive to exploring new ideas and transformations [22]. The interplay between technology and an individual's receptivity to innovation significantly influences their propensity to adopt new technologies [23]. Consequently, users with elevated technological innovativeness are often more open to novel experiences, possess enhanced computer self-efficacy, and tend to perceive emerging technologies as both useful and easy to use [24]. These characteristics increase their likelihood of exploring and embracing new forms of technology-driven services, such as short-form drama content. In the context of this research, personal innovativeness specifically refers to the users' inclination to experiment with short-form drama services.

**H1:** Personal innovativeness positively influences the perceived ease of use in the short form drama service.

**H2:** Personal innovativeness positively influences the perceived usefulness in the short form drama service.

### **Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy, a foundational concept within social cognitive theory, pertains to an individual's conviction in their own capacity to attain desired objectives within a particular setting [25]. It is fundamentally understood as an individual's belief in their competence, thereby mirroring the perceived extent of their capabilities [26]. Numerous researchers have explored self-efficacy across diverse contexts, domains, and viewpoints, including specific manifestations like computer self-efficacy [27], internet self-efficacy [28], technology self-efficacy [29], and online learning self-efficacy [30]. Prior empirical studies have consistently shown that users exhibiting a high level of self-efficacy tend to possess enhanced perceptions of both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use [31]. In the context of this study, technology self-efficacy, a key focus, is specifically defined as an individual's conviction in their ability to successfully utilize the relevant technology service for watching short-form drama.

**H3:** Self-efficacy positively influences the perceived ease of use in the short form drama service.

**H4:** Self-efficacy positively influences the perceived usefulness in the short form drama service.

### **Perceived Enjoyment**

Perceived enjoyment is characterized as the degree of pleasure or intrinsic gratification experienced when interacting with a specific system or technology [32]. It serves as an indicator of affective or hedonic perception, assessing the extent to which users derive pleasure from an experience [33]. The adoption of content-related services by consumers is often shaped by the interplay and trade-offs between utilitarian and hedonic attributes [34]. Research indicates that the interaction between perceived enjoyment and perceived performance is instrumental in facilitating the adoption of information systems within organizational contexts [35]. Furthermore, a study on AI virtual assistants revealed that consumers' perception of AI product performance can be enhanced when the AI is designed to incorporate enjoyment and entertainment elements, alongside addressing the practical utility of task completion [36]. Consequently, it is reasonable to infer that consumers' perceptions regarding the use of short-form drama services are significantly linked to hedonic attributes, specifically perceived enjoyment.

**H5:** Perceived enjoyment positively influences the perceived ease of use in the short form drama service.

**H6:** Perceived enjoyment positively influences the perceived usefulness in the short form drama service.

### **Service Quality**

Research on service quality has contributed a substantial body of knowledge, encompassing detailed frameworks and models that have been developed, refined, expanded, and empirically validated across diverse service environments [37]. Service quality is conceptualized as the consumer's holistic assessment of a product or service, derived from their perception of the exchange between what is received and what is provided during an interaction [38]. Its significance is paramount, given its role as a primary determinant of consumers' purchase decisions, making it a widely examined concept in prior academic literature [39]. Numerous empirical investigations have demonstrated that superior service quality enhances customer experience and positively impacts both usage rates and sustained engagement [40]. When service quality is high, customers tend to more distinctly perceive the utility and convenience of the service, which in turn fosters satisfaction and cultivates loyalty [41]. Consequently, the perceived quality of a service delivering short-form dramas is directly linked to users' perceptions of its usefulness and convenience.

**H7:** Service quality positively influences the perceived ease of use in the short form drama service.

**H8:** Service quality positively influences the perceived usefulness in the short form drama service.

### **Perceived Usefulness**

Perceived usefulness (PU), a central construct within the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), is defined as the extent to which an individual believes that employing a particular system will enhance their job performance [42]. The TAM model systematically examines the interplay among beliefs (specifically, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use), attitudes, intentions, and subsequent behaviors, thereby positing that human actions are largely accounted for by these perceptions [43]. Numerous empirical studies across various technological applications have consistently demonstrated

the strong predictive power of usefulness perceptions [44]. For instance, Zhou [45] evidenced that perceived usefulness significantly promotes users' intentions for mobile purchases. Similarly, Ramadania and Braridwan [46] indicated that both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are primary factors influencing consumers' purchase intention.

**H9:** Perceived usefulness positively influences continued use intention in the short form drama service.

### **Perceived Ease of Use**

Perceived ease of use (PEOU) is defined as the extent to which an individual believes that utilizing a particular system would be effortless [47]. Consistent with this, a study by Gefen and Straub [48] on e-commerce adoption demonstrated a significant influence of both perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, as indicated in their third hypothesis. Furthermore, Legris et al. [49] similarly reported a significant relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Amin et al. [50] further asserted that perceived ease of use exhibits a positive relationship with customer satisfaction within the context of mobile websites. Corroborating prior research, Hess et al. [51] also demonstrated that perceived ease of use serves as a robust determinant of perceived usefulness in the adoption of technological products.

**H10:** Perceived ease of use positively influences continued use intention in the short form drama service.

## **Methodology**

### **Data Collection**

To empirically validate the proposed research model, which investigates users' perceptions of short-form dramas and the factors influencing their continued usage, an online survey was administered. The survey targeted short-form drama users aged 15 to 45 residing in South Korea. Data were collected through an online platform, yielding a total of 380 valid responses. The demographic characteristics of the participants are as follows: The age distribution included 63 teenagers (16.6%), 202 individuals in their 20s (53.2%), 83 in their 30s (21.8%), and 32 in their 40s (8.4%). Regarding their experience with short-form dramas, 222 participants (58.4%) reported having watched short dramas, while 158 (41.6%) had not.

### **Measurement**

All measurement items employed in this study were rigorously adapted and refined from established scales within prior research to suit the specific context of short-form drama services. Specifically, the construct of Innovativeness, defined as users' inherent receptiveness to embracing novel services or technologies, was operationalized using a measurement scale derived from [20]. Self-efficacy, pertaining to an individual's conviction in their capability to attain objectives within a particular environment, was assessed with items adapted from [25]. Perceived enjoyment, which quantifies the level of pleasure or intrinsic gratification experienced during the use of a specific technology or service, utilized a scale adapted from [32]. Service quality, conceptualized as a user's comprehensive evaluation of a particular service, was measured through an instrument adapted from [37]. Furthermore, Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, recognized as core variables within the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), were operationalized using scales adopted from existing literature [42, 47]. Lastly, the measurement items for continued use intention were also adapted from previous studies [50, 51].

### **Data Analysis**

All variables within this research model were measured using a 7-point Likert scale through a survey. The reliability of the survey items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. To examine the psychometric properties of the measurement instrument, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability analyses were conducted using SPSS 30.0. Subsequently, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed with AMOS 29.0 to assess the validity of the measurement model. Finally, the overall appropriateness of the structural equation model was evaluated using AMOS 29.0 to validate the proposed research model.

## Results

### Sample Characteristics

To investigate users' perceptions of short-form dramas and the factors influencing their continued usage, an online survey was administered to participants in South Korea. From an initial pool of 380 survey responses, a total of 222 valid responses were collected from self-identified short-form drama users, which constituted the final sample for this study. The demographic characteristics of the final sample (N=222) were as follows: The sample consisted of 92 males (41.4%) and 130 females (58.6%). Regarding age distribution, 32 respondents (14.4%) were teenagers, 119 respondents (53.6%) were in their twenties, 61 respondents (27.5%) were in their thirties, and 10 respondents (4.5%) were forty years old or older. Regarding occupation, the majority of participants in their teens and twenties were students, while those in their thirties and forties exhibited a diverse range of occupations.

### Measurement Model

We developed an initial measurement model using 222 respondents who had experience watching short-form dramas. To assess the model's validity and reliability, we used principal component factor analysis to assess convergent validity. Bartlett's test of sphericity verified the completeness of the data, with a KMO coefficient of 0.8 or higher. All Cronbach's alpha values were 0.7 or higher, and all composite reliability scores exceeded 0.7. The average variance extracted (AVE) for all components was 0.5 or higher, demonstrating the reliability of the measurement items.

### Structure Model

We estimated the structural model using maximum likelihood analysis. The findings showed several model fit indices including Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ), GFI, AGFI, NFI, TLI, RMR, and RMSEA. The model demonstrated good fit with these results:  $\chi^2 = 504.466$  (df = 249, p = 0.000), GFI = 0.867, AGFI = 0.827, NFI = 0.903, TLI = 0.937, CFI = 0.948, RMR = 0.081, RMSEA = 0.064.

**Table 1. Measurement Model Fit**

Model fit index	$\chi^2$ (Chi- square)	df	p- value	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Research model	504.466	249	0.000***	0.867	0.827	0.903	0.937	0.948	0.081	0.064
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001										

Structural model analysis supported six of the 10 structural hypotheses, and the detailed results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Influence Relationship Between Variables (N=222)**

Hypotheses and Path	Estimate	SE	t	p	Result
H1: Innovativeness → PEOU	0.046	0.032	1.433	0.152	Rejected
H2: Innovativeness → PU	0.137	0.053	2.592	0.010	Rejected
H3: Self-efficacy → PEOU	0.081	0.055	1.487	0.137	Rejected
H4: Self-efficacy → PU	0.318	0.080	3.982	0.000***	Supported
H5: Enjoyment → PEOU	0.708	0.079	8.955	0.000***	Supported
H6: Enjoyment → PU	0.811	0.103	7.613	0.000***	Supported
H7: Service quality → PEOU	0.339	0.074	4.588	0.000***	Supported
H8: Service quality → PU	0.369	0.119	3.330	0.000***	Supported
H9: PU → Continue Using	0.265	0.159	1.670	0.095	Rejected

H10	PEOU Continue Using →	1.478	0.188	7.865	0.000***	Supported
* p<0.05, ** p<0.0,1 *** p<0.001						

## Discussion

This study aimed to identify key factors influencing users' continued use intention of short-form dramas, a rapidly expanding global phenomenon. We investigated these factors by examining users' perceptions based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). From prior research, we first identified key variables, including personal innovativeness, self-efficacy, perceived enjoyment, and service quality, which were categorized into service, personal, and social factors. To explore their influence on user perceptions and continued use intention of short-form dramas, we designed and tested a structural equation model with ten specific hypotheses.

The survey results yielded significant findings regarding user perception and their intentions to continue using short-form dramas. Our analysis showed that hypotheses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 were supported. This indicates that self-efficacy positively influences perceived usefulness (H4), perceived enjoyment significantly impacts both perceived ease of use (H5) and perceived usefulness (H6), and service quality positively influences both perceived ease of use (H7) and perceived usefulness (H8). Furthermore, perceived ease of use was found to be a significant predictor of continued use intention (H10). The support for these hypotheses collectively underscores the critical role of users' positive perceptions and experiences in fostering continued engagement with short-form dramas.

However, hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 9 were not supported. Specifically, personal innovativeness was found to significantly influence neither perceived ease of use (H1) nor perceived usefulness (H2). This suggests that for short-form dramas, which might already be widely adopted or inherently intuitive, an individual's general innovativeness may not be a primary driver of initial perception. Similarly, self-efficacy did not show a significant influence on perceived ease of use (H3). Lastly, perceived usefulness (H9) was not found to directly influence continued use intention, a finding that diverges from typical TAM applications and warrants further exploration.

The strong support for hypotheses 5, 6, 7, and 8 highlights the paramount importance of both perceived enjoyment and service quality in shaping user perceptions of short-form dramas. The pleasure users derive from the drama content itself, including elements like engaging narratives, compelling visuals, strong acting, and harmonious musical scores, is critical for both perceived ease of use and usefulness. Moreover, the robust influence of service quality, which encompasses the overall quality of the drama's production, its technical execution (e.g., clear video and sound), and the overall artistic cohesion, directly impacts how easily and usefully users perceive short-form dramas. These findings collectively suggest that the intrinsic pleasure delivered by the content and the overall quality of the viewing experience are the most pivotal factors driving users' perceptions and their decision to continue consuming short-form dramas.

## Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study significantly contributes to the nascent but rapidly growing field of short-form drama research by empirically analyzing user perceptions and continued use intentions through the lens of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Despite the global surge in users and substantial industry growth, empirical insights into the specific factors driving user perceptions and sustained engagement with short-form dramas have been limited. Prior research on this genre has often focused on commercial performance or platform-specific motivations. In contrast, this study systematically identified and examined various key factors influencing user perceptions and continued use of short-form dramas, providing a deeper understanding of their impact. Specifically, by highlighting the paramount importance of perceived enjoyment and service quality, while revealing a comparatively lesser influence of personal innovativeness and even perceived usefulness on continued use in this unique media context, our findings extend TAM's applicability and offer refined theoretical insights for understanding emergent media consumption behaviors. This deeper empirical analysis contributes to shaping future research agendas within short-form media studies.

From a practical standpoint, this research offers crucial actionable insights for industry stakeholders. Our findings emphatically underscore the necessity for content creators and platform providers to prioritize two key areas: the inherent enjoyment that short-form dramas deliver, and the overall service quality associated with their consumption. The pleasure users derive from elements such as engaging narratives, compelling visuals, strong acting, and harmonious musical scores is not merely

a bonus but a fundamental driver of perceived ease of use and usefulness, ultimately fostering continued engagement. Concurrently, the robust influence of service quality, encompassing the production's technical execution (e.g., video/audio quality) and the overall artistic cohesion and integrity of the drama, is paramount for cultivating positive user perceptions.

As short-form content evolves beyond traditional formats, with emerging markets like Korea and China becoming central players in the global media landscape, short-form dramas are poised to forge an entirely new media ecosystem. To capitalize on these opportunities and ensure sustainable growth in this dynamic environment, industry stakeholders should strategically invest in: (1) developing compelling Intellectual Properties (IPs) that inherently maximize user enjoyment; (2) fostering and collaborating with talented artists who can deliver high-quality content; and (3) designing and maintaining user-friendly platforms that enhance the overall service experience. Continuous research into these unconventional methods will be essential to achieving meaningful production and distribution outcomes in this evolving market.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Despite its significant contributions, this study acknowledges several limitations that offer avenues for future research.

First, while focusing on current short-form drama users, the study's sample size was relatively modest. Moreover, the research did not include a comparative analysis between short-form drama users and non-users, which could have provided valuable insights into initial adoption barriers or differential perceptions. Future studies should aim to expand the overall sample size and, more importantly, incorporate a comparative design involving both user and non-user groups to further validate and refine the established model, offering a more holistic understanding of short-form drama engagement.

Second, the current participant demographic was predominantly concentrated among teenagers and individuals in their twenties. Given the evolving and widespread appeal of short-form content, future research would benefit significantly from diversifying the sample to include a broader spectrum of age groups. This would allow for a more nuanced understanding of how perceptions and usage intentions vary across different generational cohorts.

Third, the variables examined in this study were primarily framed within the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). While TAM provided a robust theoretical foundation, it may not fully capture the complex array of factors influencing user behavior in the dynamic media consumption landscape. Subsequent research should therefore investigate a wider range of variables, potentially integrating theories from media studies, psychology, or sociology, to more comprehensively elucidate user perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions concerning short-form dramas.

Finally, this study was conducted within a specific national context. To overcome this geographical limitation and enhance the generalizability of findings, future research should broaden its scope to include global users. Comparative analyses across different countries, considering diverse cultural backgrounds and demographic characteristics, would undoubtedly yield more meaningful and universally applicable insights into the global phenomenon of short-form dramas. Such international comparative studies could highlight cultural nuances in media consumption and further enrich the understanding of short-form drama's pervasive influence.

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