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# WHAT DRIVES CONTINUOUS VIEWING OF SHORT-FORM DRAMA? THE ROLE OF VIEWING MOTIVATION AND FLOW EXPERIENCE

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**Abstract**

*The rapid expansion of short-form video platforms has reshaped the way audiences engage with digital entertainment. Among these formats, short-form drama has emerged as a distinctive narrative genre characterized by episodic storytelling within brief viewing durations. Despite its increasing popularity, empirical research explaining the psychological mechanisms underlying Continuous Viewing Intention in short-form drama remains limited. This study investigates the influence of Viewing Motivation on Flow Experience and Continuous Viewing Intention. In this study, Viewing Motivation is conceptualized as a higher-order construct comprising Performance Expectancy, Social Influence, Hedonic Motivation, Habit, Substitute Expectancy, and Aesthetic Motivation. Data were collected through an online survey involving 140 respondents in Makassar who actively consume short-form drama content. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that Viewing Motivation significantly influences both Flow Experience and Continuous Viewing Intention. Furthermore, Flow Experience significantly affects Continuous Viewing Intention and mediates the relationship between Viewing Motivation and Continuous Viewing Intention. These findings underscore the importance of motivational drivers and immersive viewing experiences in fostering sustained engagement with short-form drama content.*

**Keywords:** *Continuous Viewing Intention, Digital Media Consumption, Flow Experience, Short-form Drama, Viewing Motivation*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed the way audiences consume entertainment content (Yan et al., 2023). Short-form video platforms enable users to access narrative content anytime and anywhere, making digital media an integral part of daily life (Tang & Wang, 2025). Among the various formats, short-form drama has emerged

as a distinctive genre that combines episodic storytelling with concise duration, allowing users to engage in structured narratives within fragmented viewing time (Mahda et al., 2025).

Unlike conventional short videos that emphasize isolated and spontaneous content, short-form drama provides narrative continuity, emotional engagement, and character development across episodes (Hyungjoon, 2026). This structure encourages repeated consumption and strengthens audience attachment (Qinghua, 2025). However, despite its rapid growth, empirical research explaining the psychological mechanism behind continuous viewing intention in short-form drama remains limited (Jiao, 2025). Most prior studies focus on general short-video usage or technology adoption without integrating motivational dimensions and experiential states in a unified framework (Molem et al., 2024).

To bridge this gap, this study draws upon the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) as its underlying theoretical framework. Building upon the framework proposed by Zhou and Chen, (2025) which integrates motivational factors with flow experience to explain continuous viewing behavior in the context of micro-drama consumption in China, the present study extends the model to a different socio-cultural setting.

In this research, viewing motivation is conceptualized as a higher-order construct consisting of performance expectancy, social influence, hedonic motivation, habit, substitute expectancy, and aesthetic motivation. These dimensions collectively represent users' cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral drivers in engaging with short-form drama content. By modeling viewing motivation as a multidimensional construct, this study contributes to a more comprehensive perspective on user engagement behavior in short-form drama consumption.

In addition to motivational factors, psychological experience during content consumption also plays an important role in shaping user behavior (Park & Jung, 2024). Flow experience refers to a state of deep concentration, immersion, and intrinsic enjoyment while performing an activity (Zheng, 2023). In narrative digital entertainment, flow may strengthen user attachment and enhance continuance intention (Yang et al., 2023). Therefore, this study integrates motivational drivers with flow experience to explain sustained viewing behavior more comprehensively.

Empirically, this study focuses on users in Makassar, one of the major metropolitan cities in Eastern Indonesia. As a regional economic and educational hub with growing internet penetration and active social media usage, Makassar represents an emerging urban digital community (Hastuti, 2025). Examining this phenomenon in Makassar expands digital media research beyond Java-centered contexts and enhances regional representation in Indonesian media studies.

Grounded in this framework, this study examines the influence of Viewing Motivation on Flow Experience and Continuous Viewing Intention, including the mediating role of Flow Experience in the relationship between Viewing Motivation and Continuous Viewing

Intention in short-form drama consumption. This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it broadens the application of the UTAUT2 framework in the context of short-form drama consumption, which remains relatively underexplored in digital media research. Second, it conceptualizes viewing motivation as a higher-order multidimensional construct that integrates cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral drivers of user engagement. Third, by examining the model in Makassar, Indonesia, this study provides empirical evidence from an emerging digital media environment and expands the geographical scope of previous research that has largely focused on East Asian contexts.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design

This study utilizes a quantitative survey method to investigate the relationships among Viewing Motivation, Flow Experience, and Continuous Viewing Intention in short-form drama consumption. Because the model includes a higher-order construct (Viewing Motivation) and mediation effects, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used for data analysis, as it is suitable for complex and prediction-oriented models (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

### 2.2 Population and Sample

The population includes short-form drama users in Makassar, Indonesia. Makassar is one of the largest metropolitan cities in Eastern Indonesia, characterized by growing internet penetration and active digital media consumption (Hastuti, 2025). The selection of Makassar expands empirical research on digital entertainment behavior beyond Java-centered contexts and enhances regional representation in Indonesian media studies.

Purposive sampling was used to select respondents with relevant experience in the research context. The selection criteria were as follows: (1) residing in Makassar, (2) having experience watching short-form drama on digital platforms, and (3) actively using short-video platforms.

The minimum sample size was determined based on the 10-times rule recommended by Hair et al. (2021) for PLS-SEM analysis. According to this guideline, the minimum sample size should be ten times the maximum number of structural paths directed to a construct. In this study, Continuous Viewing Intention receives the highest number of incoming paths (two), resulting in a minimum sample requirement of 20 respondents.

The final sample of 140 respondents substantially exceeds this threshold and is also consistent with the commonly recommended sample size of 100 - 200 observations for SEM-based studies, indicating that the sample size is adequate for conducting the analysis.

### 2.3 Measurement of Variables

The measurement items were adapted from validated instruments in prior studies, particularly Zhou and Chen (2025) and other UTAUT2-based research. Minor wording

modifications were introduced to ensure contextual suitability for short-form drama consumption in Makassar while preserving the conceptual definition of each construct.

Viewing Motivation is modeled as a higher-order construct comprising six first-order dimensions: Performance Expectancy, Social Influence, Hedonic Motivation, Habit, Substitute Expectancy, and Aesthetic Motivation, with each dimension measured using multiple indicators adapted from previous empirical studies.

Flow Experience was assessed using items capturing users' immersion, concentration, and enjoyment during short-form drama viewing. Continuous Viewing Intention was measured using items reflecting users' intention to continue watching similar content in the future. All constructs were evaluated using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), without a neutral midpoint, to encourage more definitive responses.

### 2.4 Data Analysis Technique

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the data). PLS-SEM was selected because it is suitable for complex models involving higher-order constructs and mediation analysis, as well as for prediction-oriented research (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Viewing Motivation was conceptualized as a higher-order construct composed of six first-order dimensions: Performance Expectancy, Social Influence, Hedonic Motivation, Habit, Substitute Expectancy, and Aesthetic Motivation. The hierarchical component model was assessed using the repeated indicators approach, where all indicators of the first-order constructs were assigned to the higher-order construct (Shmueli et al., 2019).

The analysis was undertaken in two stages. Initially, the measurement model (outer model) was examined to determine indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability), convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted/AVE), and discriminant validity. Subsequently, the structural model (inner model) was evaluated by examining path coefficients, the coefficient of determination ($R^2$), and hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping procedure. The mediating effect of Flow Experience was tested through indirect effect analysis (Hair et al., 2021).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Result

A total of 140 valid responses were obtained and subjected to analysis. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1, including age, gender, platform used to access short-form drama, and daily viewing duration.

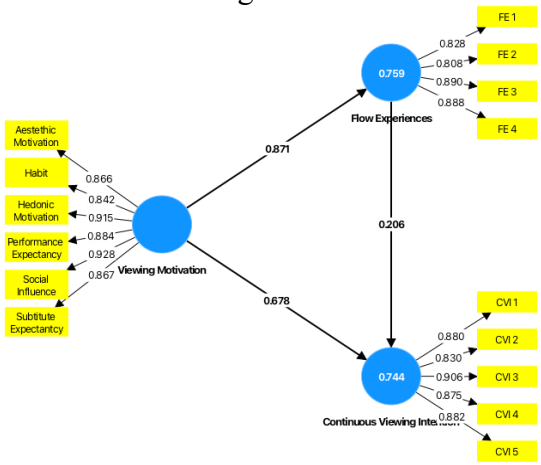
Table 1. Respondent Profile

| Characteristic | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | ≤ 17 years | 9 | 6.4% |
| | 18–22 years | 59 | 42.1% |
| | 23–27 years | 28 | 20.0% |
| | 28–32 years | 9 | 6.4% |
| | 33–42 years | 27 | 19.3% |
| | ≥ 43 years | 8 | 5.7% |
| **Gender** | Male | 54 | 38.6% |
| | Female | 86 | 61.4% |
| **Short-Video Platform Used to Access Short-Form Drama** | TikTok | 85 | 60.7% |
| | Instagram Reels | 33 | 23.6% |
| | YouTube Shorts | 22 | 15.7% |
| | Other Platforms | 51 | 36.4% |
| **Daily Viewing Duration** | < 15 minutes | 37 | 26.4% |
| | 15–30 minutes | 47 | 33.6% |
| | 31–60 minutes | 38 | 27.1% |
| | > 60 minutes | 18 | 12.9% |

Source: Survey Data Processed (2026)

Descriptive statistics suggest that respondents generally exhibit favorable perceptions toward Viewing Motivation, Flow Experience, and Continuous Viewing Intention. Subsequently, PLS-SEM analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the proposed constructs, with the structural model results presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Result PLS Algorithm Measurement Model



The measurement model was examined using indicator loadings. As presented in Figure 2, all indicators surpass the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability. The loadings for Flow Experience range from 0.808–0.890, while Continuous Viewing Intention ranges from 0.830 - 0.906. For the higher-order construct Viewing Motivation, the six dimensions Aesthetic Motivation, Habit, Hedonic Motivation, Performance Expectancy, Social Influence, and Substitute Expectancy also show strong loadings (0.842–0.928), confirming that the indicators adequately represent the constructs.

The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) indicates that Viewing Motivation explains 75.9% of the variance in Flow Experience, Viewing Motivation and Flow Experience jointly explain 74.4% of the variance in Continuous Viewing Intention, indicating strong explanatory power. Convergent validity and reliability were assessed using AVE and CR, and as shown in Table 2, all constructs meet the recommended thresholds (AVE > 0.50; CR > 0.70), confirming satisfactory validity and reliability of the measurement model.

Table 2. Result Validity and Reliability

| Variable | AVE Value | CR Value |
|---|---|---|
| Continuous Viewing Intention | 0.766 | 0.942 |
| Flow experience | 0.729 | 0.915 |
| Viewing Motivation | 0.782 | 0.955 |

Source: SmartPLS, 2026

Table 2 summarizes the results of the validity and reliability assessment. All constructs meet the recommended criteria (AVE > 0.50; CR > 0.70), confirming satisfactory measurement model validity and reliability.

Table 3. R Square Result

| Endogen Variable | R Square Value |
|---|---|
| Continuous Viewing Intention | 0.744 |
| Flow experience | 0.759 |

Source: SmartPLS, 2026

Table 3 shows the coefficient of determination ($R^2$). Viewing Motivation explains 75.9% of Flow Experience, while Viewing Motivation and Flow Experience jointly explain 74.4% of Continuous Viewing Intention, indicating strong explanatory power of the model.

Table 4. Q Square Result

| | SSO | SSE | Q2 (1-SSE/SSO) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Continuous Viewing Intention | 700.000 | 304.007 | 0.566 |
| Flow experience | 560.000 | 254.042 | 0.546 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Viewing Motivation | 840.000 | 840.000 | 0.000 |

Source: SmartPLS, 2026

Table 4 reports the model's predictive relevance using the $Q^2$ statistic. The $Q^2$ values for Continuous Viewing Intention (0.566) and Flow Experience (0.546) are greater than zero, indicating satisfactory predictive capability of the model in explaining the endogenous constructs.

Table 5. Boostraping Result

| | Causality | Path Coefficient | T statistics | P values | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | Viewing Motivation → Continuous Viewing Intention | 0.687 | 6.978 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H2 | Viewing Motivation → Flow experience | 0.871 | 40.368 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H3 | Flow experience → Continuous Viewing Intention | 0.206 | 2.017 | 0.044 | Accepted |
| Indirect Effect | Viewing Motivation → Flow experience → Continuous Viewing Intention | 0.179 | 2.014 | 0.044 | Accepted |

Source: SmartPLS, 2026

Table 5 presents the bootstraping results of the structural model. The findings indicate that Viewing Motivation has a significant positive effect on Continuous Viewing Intention ($\beta = 0.687$, $t = 6.978$, $p < 0.05$), thereby supporting H1 and suggesting that stronger viewing motivation increases users' intention to continue watching short-form drama content.

Viewing Motivation also exerts a significant positive influence on Flow Experience ($\beta = 0.871$, $t = 40.368$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H2. This finding indicates that higher levels of viewing motivation enhance users' immersive experience during short-form drama consumption.

Furthermore, Flow Experience significantly affects Continuous Viewing Intention ($\beta = 0.206$, $t = 2.017$, $p < 0.05$), confirming H3 and suggesting that greater immersion and enjoyment promote continued viewing behavior.

The mediation analysis further demonstrates that Flow Experience significantly mediates the relationship between Viewing Motivation and Continuous Viewing Intention ($\beta = 0.179$, $t = 2.014$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H4. This result indicates that Viewing Motivation

influences Continuous Viewing Intention both directly and indirectly through Flow Experience.

### 3.2 Discussion

The findings provide empirical support for the relationships among Viewing Motivation, Flow Experience, and Continuous Viewing Intention in short-form drama consumption. The results indicate that Viewing Motivation significantly increases Continuous Viewing Intention, encouraging continued engagement with short-form drama content. Motivational factors such as performance expectancy, social influence, hedonic motivation, habit, substitute expectancy, and aesthetic motivation can strengthen users' engagement with digital entertainment platforms. This finding is consistent with previous research by (Zhou & Chen, 2025) which reported that motivational constructs derived from the UTAUT2 framework significantly influence users' continuance intention in micro-drama consumption. This finding is also consistent with the UTAUT2 framework proposed by (Venkatesh et al., 2012) which suggests that motivational and behavioral drivers such as performance expectancy, social influence, and habit play an important role in shaping users' behavioral intentions in technology mediated environments. Similarly, Tang & Wang, (2025) highlight that user motivation plays a crucial role in sustaining engagement within short-form video platforms.

The results also indicate that Viewing Motivation significantly affects Flow Experience, suggesting that stronger motivations increase users' immersion, concentration, and enjoyment during short-form drama viewing. Motivational drivers can increase psychological involvement during content consumption, thereby enhancing users' immersive experiences. This finding supports previous studies suggesting that motivation is closely associated with the emergence of flow experience in digital media environment (Zheng, 2023). In narrative-based digital entertainment, strong user motivation often leads to deeper engagement and emotional involvement during content consumption (Qin et al., 2022). From a theoretical perspective, this finding aligns with Flow Theory proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) which explains that individuals are more likely to experience deep immersion and enjoyment when their motivations and interests are strongly aligned with the activity they are performing.

Furthermore, flow experience is found to significantly influence continuous viewing intention. This result suggests that immersive viewing experiences play an important role in strengthening users' attachment to short-form drama content and encouraging repeated consumption. In short-form drama consumption, immersive storytelling and fast-paced narratives may facilitate this flow state, encouraging users to remain engaged and continue watching subsequent episodes. When users experience enjoyment and deep concentration while watching short-form drama, they are more likely to maintain their engagement with similar content in the future (Zhao, 2025). This finding aligns with previous studies

emphasizing the role of flow experience in shaping continuance intention within digital media platforms. (Zhou & Chen, 2025).

In addition, the mediation analysis indicates that flow experience acts as an important psychological mechanism linking viewing motivation and continuous viewing intention. Viewing motivation not only directly influences users' intention to continue watching short-form drama but also indirectly affects it through immersive viewing experiences. In other words, users with stronger motivations tend to experience greater immersion, which subsequently strengthens their intention to continue consuming similar content. This finding further supports the theoretical framework proposed by (Zhou & Chen, 2025) highlighting the importance of integrating motivational factors and experiential states in explaining sustained engagement in short-form drama consumption.

Overall, this study extends previous research by validating the proposed model in a different socio-cultural context, namely Makassar, Indonesia. The findings provide empirical evidence from an emerging digital media environment in Southeast Asia and demonstrate that motivational constructs derived from the UTAUT2 framework, together with flow experience, explain continuous viewing intention in short-form drama consumption.

## 4. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the influence of Viewing Motivation on Flow Experience and Continuous Viewing Intention in the context of short-form drama consumption. The findings reveal that Viewing Motivation significantly affects both Flow Experience and Continuous Viewing Intention. In addition, Flow Experience significantly influences Continuous Viewing Intention and mediates the relationship between Viewing Motivation and Continuous Viewing Intention. These findings highlight the important role of motivational factors in creating immersive viewing experiences and sustaining users' engagement with short-form drama content.

This study contributes to the literature on digital media consumption by demonstrating that motivational drivers and immersive experiences jointly shape users' Continuous Viewing Intention on short-form drama platforms. The results suggest that platform providers and content creators should focus on developing engaging, personalized, and immersive content strategies to enhance user retention and viewing continuity.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations, particularly regarding the geographical scope and the variables examined. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to involve broader and more diverse samples, as well as additional explanatory variables, to provide deeper insights into user engagement behavior in short-form digital entertainment platforms.

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