

Online Appendix

Too Long, Didn't Read? The Impact of Length Limits on Microblogging Engagement

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Table A1. Comparison between Sample Users and General Weibo Users

	Users in the sample	Users on the focal platform
Percentage of users born in 1990s and later	0.81	0.77 ¹
Percentage of users born in 1980s	0.10	0.16 ³⁰
Percentage of users born in 1970s and earlier	0.09	0.06 ³⁰
Percentage of posts from PC	0.06	0.06 ³⁰
Percentage of posts from iPhone	0.39	0.37 ²

Note: Demographics of Weibo users are collected from *Weibo 2020 User Development Report*³.

Table A2. Replication with A Shorter Time Window

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
	Diff-in-Diff+PSM	Diff-in-Diff +PSM
	Wave 1	Wave 1
	Ln(DailyPosts+1)	Ln(Likes+1)
<i>Wave1Month(t-4)</i>	-0.00238	-0.0521
× <i>Treatment(Wave1)</i>	(0.0216)	(0.0550)
<i>Wave1Month(t-3)</i>	-0.00131	-0.0411
× <i>Treatment(Wave1)</i>	(0.0188)	(0.0586)
<i>Wave1Month(t-2)</i>	-0.0278	-0.00385
× <i>Treatment(Wave1)</i>	(0.0200)	(0.0378)
Wave1Month(t-1)×Treatment(Wave1) as the Baseline		
<i>Wave1Month(t)</i>	0.0446	-0.0503
× <i>Treatment(Wave1)</i>	(0.0296)	(0.0701)
<i>Wave1Month(t+1)</i>	0.0536**	0.125**
× <i>Treatment(Wave1)</i>	(0.0236)	(0.0600)
<i>Wave1Month(t+2)</i>	0.0315*	0.111**
× <i>Treatment(Wave1)</i>	(0.0180)	(0.0525)
Observations	46,008	10,277
Individual fixed effect	Yes	Yes

¹ <https://finance.sina.com.cn/tech/2021-03-12/doc-ikkntiak9143019.shtml>

² <https://www.ifanr.com/1042323>

³ <https://finance.sina.com.cn/tech/2021-03-12/doc-ikkntiak9143019.shtml>

Day fixed effect	Yes	Yes
Hour fixed effect	No	Yes

Robust standard errors clustered at the user and day level in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A3. Experiment Results (Without Monetary Incentives)

	Posts with 140-character limit	Posts with 2000-character limit	P value for t tests
Length (in characters) per post	43	59	0.04
Time spent on writing each character (in seconds)	1.81	1.31	0.02
Propensity to post	0.27	0.45	0.02
Writing quality per content unit (as measured by moving-average type-token ratio)	0.81	0.80	0.88
Number of likes per post	0.00	0.31	0.07

Note: Sample size 142, among which 19 controlled participants and 32 treated participants completed the task.

Table A4. Top 10 Most Popular Topics in Posts from Topic Analysis

	Paid Members	Non-paid Members
Before Wave 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Arts & Entertainment 2) Books & Literature 3) Online Communities 4) Jobs & Education 5) People & Society 6) Hobbies & Leisure 7) Food & Drink 8) Travel & Transportation 9) Health 10) Beauty & Fitness 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Arts & Entertainment 2) Books & Literature 3) Online Communities 4) People & Society 5) Jobs & Education 6) Food & Drink 7) Hobbies & Leisure 8) Travel & Transportation 9) News 10) Health
After Wave 1 and Before Wave 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Arts & Entertainment 2) Books & Literature 3) Online Communities 4) Jobs & Education 5) People & Society 6) Food & Drink 7) Travel & Transportation 8) Hobbies & Leisure 9) Beauty & Fitness 10) Health 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Arts & Entertainment 2) Books & Literature 3) Online Communities 4) Jobs & Education 5) People & Society 6) Food & Drink 7) Travel & Transportation 8) Hobbies & Leisure 9) Beauty & Fitness 10) Health
After Wave 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Arts & Entertainment 2) Jobs & Education 3) Books & Literature 4) Online Communities 5) Food & Drink 6) People & Society 7) Hobbies & Leisure 8) Beauty & Fitness 9) Travel & Transportation 10) Health 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Arts & Entertainment 2) Books & Literature 3) Jobs & Education 4) Online Communities 5) People & Society 6) Food & Drink 7) Travel & Transportation 8) Hobbies & Leisure 9) Beauty & Fitness 10) Health

Table A5. Impact on the per-Word Writing Quality (using Weibo data)

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	
	Simple Ratio	20-word moving ratio	200-word moving ratio	Simple Ratio	20-word moving ratio	200-word moving ratio	
	Wave 1	Wave 1	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 2	Wave 2	
	RatioOfUniqueCharacters			RatioOfUniqueCharacters			
<i>Wave1Month(t-8)</i>	0.00575	0.00978	-3.75e-05	<i>Wave2Month(t-8)</i>	-0.00481	0.00404	0.00232
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00996)	(0.00654)	(0.0109)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00805)	(0.00590)	(0.00944)
<i>Wave1Month(t-7)</i>	3.45e-05	0.0117*	0.00830	<i>Wave2Month(t-7)</i>	0.00211	0.00687	0.00630
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00937)	(0.00648)	(0.00967)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00617)	(0.00548)	(0.00813)
<i>Wave1Month(t-6)</i>	0.00265	-0.00214	0.00476	<i>Wave2Month(t-6)</i>	0.00358	0.000738	0.00139
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00971)	(0.00900)	(0.0103)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00625)	(0.00576)	(0.00896)
<i>Wave1Month(t-5)</i>	-0.00189	0.00356	-0.00323	<i>Wave2Month(t-5)</i>	0.00368	0.000669	0.00190
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00820)	(0.00777)	(0.0110)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00739)	(0.00559)	(0.00866)
<i>Wave1Month(t-4)</i>	0.00359	0.00636	0.00609	<i>Wave2Month(t-4)</i>	0.00620	0.00920	0.00646
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00901)	(0.00913)	(0.00980)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00608)	(0.00549)	(0.00682)
<i>Wave1Month(t-3)</i>	-0.00459	-0.00120	-0.00678	<i>Wave2Month(t-3)</i>	0.00426	0.00734	0.00807
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00733)	(0.00724)	(0.00816)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00651)	(0.00563)	(0.00827)
<i>Wave1Month(t-2)</i>	-0.00481	0.00104	-0.00388	<i>Wave2Month(t-2)</i>	0.000712	0.00125	0.00343
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00841)	(0.00651)	(0.00809)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00751)	(0.00645)	(0.00893)
<i>Wave1Month(t)</i>	0.00380	0.0123*	0.00662	<i>Wave2Month(t)</i>	0.00570	0.00243	0.00781
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00633)	(0.00696)	(0.00836)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00782)	(0.00705)	(0.00921)
<i>Wave1Month(t+1)</i>	0.0124	0.0115*	0.0153	<i>Wave2Month(t+1)</i>	0.00357	-0.00413	0.0104
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00837)	(0.00602)	(0.00918)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00745)	(0.00672)	(0.00952)
<i>Wave1Month(t+2)</i>	0.00738	0.00564	0.00278	<i>Wave2Month(t+2)</i>	-0.000321	-0.0113	-0.00366
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00900)	(0.00650)	(0.00919)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00941)	(0.00723)	(0.0108)
<i>Wave1Month(t+3)</i>	0.00535	0.00420	0.00283	<i>Wave2Month(t+3)</i>	0.00228	6.14e-05	0.00310
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00766)	(0.00687)	(0.00931)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00843)	(0.00905)	(0.0106)
<i>Wave1Month(t+4)</i>	0.00370	0.00995	0.00753	<i>Wave2Month(t+4)</i>	0.0130	0.0120	0.0180
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00817)	(0.00612)	(0.00959)	$Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.00862)	(0.00838)	(0.0107)
<i>Wave1Month(t+5)</i>	0.00184	0.00988	0.00533	<i>Wave2Month(t+5)</i>	0.00588	0.000163	0.00542
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00881)	(0.00724)	(0.00966)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.0117)	(0.00793)	(0.0128)
<i>Wave1Month(t+6)</i>	0.000604	0.00158	0.000819	<i>Wave2Month(t+6)</i>	0.00923	0.00533	0.00638
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00820)	(0.00681)	(0.00779)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.0108)	(0.00850)	(0.0126)
<i>Wave1Month(t+7)</i>	0.000381	0.00225	-0.00211	<i>Wave2Month(t+7)</i>	0.0108	0.0115	0.0160
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00930)	(0.00656)	(0.0100)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.0114)	(0.00887)	(0.0145)
<i>Wave1Month(t+8)</i>	0.00902	0.00883	0.00546	<i>Wave2Month(t+8)</i>	0.0160	0.00574	0.0163
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00887)	(0.00759)	(0.00985)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.0112)	(0.00917)	(0.0148)
<i>Wave1Month(t+9)</i>	0.00829	0.00893	0.00836	<i>Wave2Month(t+9)</i>	0.0129	-0.00134	0.0143
$\times Treatment(Wave1)$	(0.00840)	(0.00620)	(0.0103)	$\times Treatment(Wave2)$	(0.0129)	(0.0109)	(0.0160)

Robust standard errors clustered at the individual and day level in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note1: All interactions and control variables are included.

Note2: For Wave 1, we only include data before Wave 2 (Nov. 2016).