# The Research on the University Students' Subjective Views on Using Short Videos for Learning

-- Taking TikTok as An Example

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**Abstract.** Whether short video learning can improve learning efficiency is a hot topic that university students pay attention to. Some researchers find that short video learning can improve learning efficiency and significantly impact university students learning. However, behind it, there is still a lack of relevant issues, such as the boundary between short video and learning. Therefore, this study conducted a semi-structured interview analysis on fifteen university students to explore the relationship between university students and short video learning, after conducting semi-structured interviews with fifteen university students, it is concluded that they think short videos are helpful to improve knowledge memory and quickly retrieve important content and methods when they are in difficulty. It shows that watching short videos in leisure time is directly helpful to learning. Based on the suggestions the investigators gave, the research puts forward some improvement schemes for learning videos to help university students get better experiences when watching short videos for learning.

**Keywords*:*** University Students; TikTok; Short Videos; Learning.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

With the spread of COVID-19, whether university students can return to school has become a social issue of concern. The spread of COVID-19 has led to the continuous popularity of online courses, and the development of the Internet has promoted the popularization of knowledge through short videos. In our daily life, a short video has also become a key to acquiring knowledge and opening the door to the new world. China's Internet penetration rate has reached seventy percent in 2022, the report (1.032 billion) [China Internet network development state statistic report], the utilization rate of a short video in 2022 user accounts for about ninety percent of Internet users (934 million) [China Internet network development state statistical report], university students accounted for in a short video user, on the west of the location of the main force. Among many forms of entertainment, social platforms in the form of short videos have successfully integrated into today's fast-paced life with information fragmentation under their short simplicity, low cost, and rich content.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

In the eyes of the public, short videos are characterized by low efficiency, lack of interaction and participation, and inability to give feedback to teachers promptly. However, in this era of the short video, does the method of short video learning play a role in our understanding of knowledge and strengthening memory? Can it stimulate the creativity of university students? Can it provide an excellent platform to help us learn?

### 1.3 Research Idea

This study will also discuss and research three aspects: the boundary between entertainment and learning, the particularity of short video learning, and how students watch the short videos to help them memorize knowledge.

This research will adopt the qualitative research method of semi-structured interviews. The sample number is fifteen university students. The questions answered by them are subjected to the test of objective data and recorded by the recording function.

### 1.4 Literature review

#### 1.4.1 The Boundary between Recreation and Learning

Entertainment and learning can integrate with education. The public can acquire knowledge from entertainment and experience pleasure from learning. Among various forms of entertainment, social platforms in the form of short videos have successfully integrated into today's fast-paced life with fragmented information of their short simplicity, low cost, and rich content.

In 2021, Nurul et al. used questionnaires to collect 20 data from university English departments to investigate students' views on using the TikTok app as an adjunctive teaching media during the pandemic. The study found that most students admitted they were bored with book-only learning and expressed a more positive attitude towards learning via video. They believe that TikTok learning has advantages in attracting students' attention and is more likely to stimulate students' interest in learning than traditional classroom teaching, at the same time, it is also proposed through research that the use of short videos can effectively provide help for teaching and learning styles, and it is feasible to turn social media into learning media to assist education.

#### 1.4.2 The Particularity of Short Video Learning

The communication channel provided by short video knowledge communication is different from the previous communication media. It is a diversified communication mode, allowing more people to participate in the communication process. Due to its small volume and diversified application of social scenes, a short video can help people supplement their needed knowledge with TikTok in their original leisure time and effectively improve the efficiency of knowledge dissemination. In addition to receiving knowledge in short videos, students themselves can also use the short video platform to disseminate knowledge. Through a series of work such as video recording, recording, and editing, students can mobilize their senses to achieve the effect of multi-modal teaching communication.

#### 1.4.3 The Short Videos about Learning can Increase the Degree of Knowledge Memorization

Short videos are presented in different ways from photography, painting, English, language, office software, science popularization, and so on, to integrate pictures, text, sound, and visuals. Scholars can use vision and hearing to get better all-around learning, increase the degree of students' memory, and make a short video teaching more attractive. Some scholars have proposed that manual memorization can achieve twice the result with half the effort while performing short video learning. Studies have shown that students' learning and memory can be improved more when they watch in the form of drawing and note-taking, and mind mapping can enhance the retention of memory. Based on the research of the above researchers, it is found that this unique learning style can stimulate not only students' interest in learning but also stimulate students' enthusiasm.

#### 1.4.4 The Shortcomings of Existing Studies

When summarizing the previous literature, this study found that most of the previous studies focused on the advantages of short videos in learning content and the influence of short video learning on students, without a more detailed division of the effect objects or an investigation and analysis of students' views on short video learning. This study from these previous studies has not discussed the problems of the significant study of Chinese university students for their use of short video to learn, by seeking university students how to use short video learning and why short video learning will

affect university students such as investigation and in-depth interview research, and analysis of survey results.

## 2. Research methods

The purpose of this project research is to investigate university students' views on using short videos for learning. This study is within the scope of the interpretive paradigm, which covers the relationship between subjective cognition and interpretation between individuals and the cultural background of people's identity. The hypothesis of this research is based on subjective reality, it is believed that human experience of the world is not a passive perception and acceptance of the external material world, and the truth of the world is subjectively constructed by human thoughts rather than objectively and uniquely. In this study, the semi-structured interview is selected as the research method, which may help us raise more in-depth questions while increasing the randomness of questions. Before the interview, the author prepared an interview outline (Appendix), which included the general direction of the questions to be asked and the key points to be paid attention to during the interview, which could help the researchers to talk with the participants more smoothly.

For the consideration of small and medium-sized research projects, the author set the interview number to 6 people. They are 19 to 24 years old, all university students in China. They have experience using short videos to absorb knowledge, and the frequency of using Tiktok every day is 2-3 hours. The identity of the same age helps us to narrow the psychological distance with participants. Using the interview research method can enable us to obtain more direct information from them. The author collected the interviewees' opinions on short videos of science learning on Tiktok based on their subjective thoughts and asked them about the degree of importance, content memory and trust.

Before the interview outline was used, this paper conducted a pilot study to help us make more detailed preparations before the research began. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the author used computer technology to conduct a remote conference with the participants throughout the whole process, and zero-contact interviews were achieved in this way. In order to ensure the accuracy of the information extracted after the interview, it is necessary to back up the recording during the interview, which can help the researchers timely detect and fill the gaps in the subsequent analysis of the results, and also help us to communicate with the participants without distractions. Considering that online interviews may be delayed, in order to prevent problems in the process of conversion to the greatest extent, in addition to recording, the author also prepared notes to record the critical contents of the conversation.

## 3. Research results

In the following content, researchers will begin to analyze and discuss the interview results obtained from the research. The author invited 15 university students from the same university to conduct semi-structured interviews. To protect the participants' private information, all the names mentioned in this study are pseudonyms. The research named these 15 students No. 1 to No. 15 respectively, took the recorded interview content and some forms formed according to the content as the basis of our discussion, and presented the analysis results through theme analysis (Terry et al., 2017). Among them, some interviewees mainly hold reservations about learning short videos, and their trust level is lower than that of other interviewees. While the other part of the interviewees have a high degree of trust and dependence on such short videos, and they also believe that these videos are helpful to their studies and life. The main purpose of this study is to explore the practicability of short videos in the field of education from the perspective of students' subjective experiences. The content of the interview is divided into several key themes through theme analysis: how much students value short videos, how much they remember them, and how much short video helps individuals and the education industry.

Among them, students do not attach much importance to short video content and have different feelings about memory, but they all think that short videos can be of great help in the education industry.

# 4. Discussion

## 4.1. Students' Emphasis on Learning Short Videos

From the results of the interview, when the author asked the participants how much they valued learning short videos, they gave the same feedback. They agreed that they did not attach importance to the possibility of learning short videos on TikTok or other platforms, because these interviewees thought that the entertainment of short video platforms was far more than their learning. Numbers 1, 12, and 14 indicated that for the most part, they would only open the short video platform in their free time, and everyone else agreed with them. "I prefer to take TikTok as one of my ways of leisure and entertainment rather than open TikTok for knowledge accumulation," No. 1 said. This is different from the view of , who believe that the way of using TikTok and other platforms for learning has advantages in attracting students' attention. However, the results of this study show that other types of short videos on TikTok are more attractive to students than learning videos, which may harm the way of using these platforms for learning.

In addition, whether students are interested or not also has an important influence on their value. Interest can effectively stimulate learning motivation, academic success rate and career trajectory, which is a psychological state of concern and influence on specific objects or topics. As for the preference for learning short videos, participants expressed different views: six students dislike learning videos and said they would not have the patience to watch them. Others think that although the main purpose of watching short videos is for entertainment, they will not feel disgusted when learning videos are presented. Among the other nine students, five indicated they were not more interested in learning videos than different kinds of videos. At the same time, the rest interviewees looked forward to watching learning videos and thought it was also a way to relax. It's worth noting that No. 3, 4, and 8 will have an additional knowledge search on TikTok in addition to the usual free-viewing videos. No. 3, 4, and 8 believe that using TikTok to search can make the problem more accurate and easier to understand; video explanation can make the content more scene oriented, which makes them feel that they have been effectively helped and increases their interest in browsing learning videos. These results also further support the view expressed by (Pratiwi et al., 2021): that short video expression can have a positive impact on teaching.

## 4.2. The Effect of Short Learning Videos on the Memory of University Students

Firstly, the semi-structured interviews with these these students show that half of the students think that the memory of learning short videos on TikTok is limited, while the other half of students think it is very helpful to memorize the content. Through the comparative study, the reason why short videos of TikTok can help different groups of people to remember differently lies in its fragmented knowledge dissemination and the complexity of dissemination of knowledge. Secondly, by comparing popular science learning videos with general learning videos, the author found that students usually get a longer memory after watching popular science learning videos. This is because the video of common knowledge can attract the user's interest, and fragmentation of knowledge could get into the user's mind bit by bit, forming a good memory effect. However, general learning videos, such as the solution to math, physics, and other subjects, are difficult to be memorized by users for a long time. The main reason is that the knowledge of these subjects is complicated and coherent, and the fragmented way of dissemination is not conducive to creating a lasting impression on the viewer's mind.

Although learning different types of short video have different effects on students' memory, they also reflect the advantages and disadvantages of fragmented communication modes in different learning short video. In general, short learning videos have a more profound impact on university

students' memory than traditional learning. The author believes that as short video operators, this paper can seize this feature and use different communication modes in different types of short video of learning, which will have a better help effect on university students' learning with short video.

### 4.3. Practicality of Short Video in the Field of Education

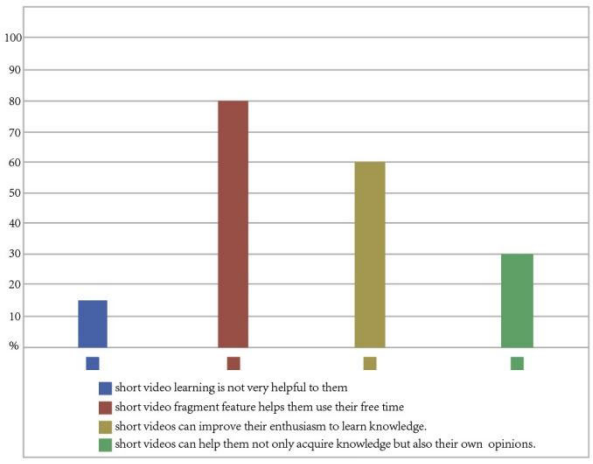


**Figure 1.** University students' views on short video problems (Photo credit: Original)

As Figure 1 shown Based on interviews with 15 university students, this paper plotted bar graphs of the positive effects of short videos on educational learning for university students. 60% of the students believe that short videos greatly help their study, which can improve their enthusiasm for learning, and they will also search on the short video platform when they have difficulties in learning. It can see that short video plays a specific role in helping students who encounter difficulties in the field of education. For example, in education, TikTok's short videos can enable the author to explain the knowledge in a very refined and exciting way, which can fully stimulate users' interest in discussion and research.

As Figure 1 shown the emergence of the short video, with the advantage of "fragmentation," provides corresponding help for the education industry. This point is also well reflected in the figure. 80% of students will use their spare time to study in short videos, making more reasonable time for students. At the same time, a short video has certain flexibility in communication, which can create more forms of communication media for modern students. In our survey, 30% of students believe that short videos can help them learn knowledge and also help them share their opinions. Students can spread their learning content to each other through this medium and show their unique views and opinions on learning. In addition, it can also expand students' vision in many aspects and thoroughly guide students' cognition of learning and education.

As Figure 1 shown Through a literature review and a semi-structured interview with classmates, one can draw a practical conclusion from a short video in the field of education. Short videos are great for education and can help students find solutions to life problems. However, there is no denying that 15% of students still do not consider finding solutions in short videos but solve their problems in other ways. However, from the literature review perspective, some authors believe that short video education will impact traditional education in the future.

## 5. Conclusion

This study draws relevant conclusions through semi-structured interviews with university students. University students do not attach great importance to the use of short videos for learning. The main reason is that most of the time university students use short videos for entertainment rather than learning. They only look for learning videos when they have their own needs which is different compared with previous studies of students' positive attitude towards learning with short videos.

The author believes that if short video communicators can add more interest to learning video, they can better attract the attention of viewers, so as to enhance their emphasis. The second is the help of short learning videos on the memory level of university students. The predecessors believed that short videos could give viewers a better receiving experience from the perspectives of vision and hearing, thereby strengthening memory, but in this study, the research found that the help of short learning videos on the memory of university students depends on the type of short learning videos themselves. The communicators can combine this feature to avoid weaknesses, so as to achieve better results. Finally, through in-depth questions of the interviewees, the research learned that when university students encounter problems in their study and life, they often use short videos to search for relevant information. This also confirms that short videos are helpful in the field of education. The author believes that if short video platforms and communicators can strengthen the expansion of short videos in knowledge search, short videos will have a better auxiliary effect in the field of education. This study starts from a subjective survey, and puts forward opinions and suggestions on the current TikTok learning short videos from the perspective of the recipients. Compared with the objective research from the advantages and disadvantages of the platform, this type of short videos can be displayed more intuitively. The current deficiencies, and combined with the subjective views of university students to modify, can maximize the use of time and cost, and the improved results can also be more in line with the subjective needs of university students.

There are some deficiencies in the number of interviewees in this study. The number of interviewees in this study is determined to be 15, which cannot be highly representative of the viewpoints of university students. Secondly, in terms of research methods, this study only involves the semi-structured interview method in qualitative research, and lacks the support of quantitative research. For the future scholars, appropriate questionnaire survey data can be added to greatly increase the number of people, and some survey objects can be selected to conduct qualitative interviews, so as to combine quantitative and qualitative aspects to achieve better investigation and research.

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