

Comparative Analysis of the Consumption Phenomena of Hong Kong Postgraduates via Tiktok and Bilibili Based on In-depth Interviews and Questionnaires

Xing Li *

Department of History, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China

* Corresponding Author Email: XXLLX@link.cuhk.edu.hk

Abstract. The attraction of Bilibili to young audiences is increasing year by year. The explosion of Tiktok has made a certain impact on the popularity of Bilibili. Therefore, it is particularly vital to explore the deep consumption causes behind young people. At present, there is relatively little research on the comparison between Bilibili and Tiktok video platforms, including the consumption psychology of the audience. This kind of research is relatively novel and mainly employed and disseminated in the industry. Therefore, academic research is still rather rare. Meanwhile, there is a lack of in-depth and systematic research results. This study tries to investigate Hong Kong graduate groups from eight prestigious public universities through in-depth interviews and questionnaire surveys, using SPSS software for data analysis. By collecting the comments and feedback of postgraduate students on Bilibili and Tiktok, the consumption status of young audiences and the underlying consumption reasons can be understood. The commercial value will be provided to those similar video broadcast platforms' business modes. The research suggests that young audiences with a certain educational background have not been significantly affected by using Tiktok, although the popularity of Tiktok in recent years is reflected in the increasing data. Comparatively, Bilibili is relatively attractive to this group. This group will not blindly engage in impulsive consumption on the platform. The underlying consumption reasons can be summarized as follows: the upgrading of the consumption concept, the demand for functional products, better daily consumption platform alternatives, and the fondness for anchors.

Keywords: Bilibili and Tiktok; Hong Kong postgraduates; consumption causes; questionnaires.

1. Introduction

Tiktok was launched in September 2016. But within a few years, it has gone viral throughout the world. Tiktok has more than 800 million daily active users, meaning that half of the Chinese netizens are using it every day [1]. According to the financial report for the second quarter of 2022, the revenue of Bilibili in this quarter was 4.91 billion Yuan [2]. The average daily active users were 83.5 million and the average daily time length of subscribers was 89 minutes, leading the overall flow in the community is increased by 48% more than that of the last second quarter [2]. The growth of these figures is driven by young users.

In 2017, Jiani Wu published Why Social Video Software for Music is Popular -- Take Tiktok APP as an Example. Her research mentioned that the audience of Tiktok short videos can interact with others to meet their social and psychological needs. The audience can change their moods and obtain respect and satisfaction [3]. Her paper is of great enlightening significance to the audience research of short video platforms. It is the rapid outbreak period from 2018 to 2019. The main research focuses on these three parts, audience's needs, psychology, and behavior [4-6].

According to academic research in recent years, most of the literature focuses on the research of audience behavior and platform operation strategy of a single platform. Few scholars have compared and analyzed Tiktok and Bilibili, which both have younger users at the same latitude. It has deepened the theoretical research on the psychology, needs, and behavior of the audience, which can be further studied from the perspective of the audience in the future, and also deepened uses and gratifications research [7, 9]. At the same time, this study is conducive to scholars who study the psychology and behavior of the audience and other popular video platforms or applications.

Specifically, this paper mainly involves the following four aspects. First, two social science research methods are explained in detail, including how to design the questionnaire and how to arrange in-depth interviews. The next part is about descriptions and explanations of three specific questions about consumers' consumption tendencies on two platforms with accurate table data. The third part shows the comparison results with three bar charts. The last part is about the conclusion and future expectations. This paper aims to solve the problem of the consumption causes behind Hong Kong postgraduates on two different platforms.

2. Methodology

This paper adopts the mixed social science research method of in-depth interviews and questionnaire surveys. The research object of this paper is master and doctoral students from eight famous universities in Hong Kong.

2.1. Questionnaire Design

In this paper, data are obtained by electronic questionnaire. Sample selection is carried out by random sampling method. Specifically, samples were collected through online questionnaires. At the same time, questionnaires were posted through links on social platforms and communities, like Wechat. The total number of samples was 226/250. The questionnaire questions are from the audience's watching habits, duration, type, and other aspects, with a single selection, multiple selections, and opening fill-in-the-blank questions. The questionnaire is mainly divided into two parts. The first part is the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, source of students, educational background, etc [8]. The second part is the consumption situation of consumers on the two platforms, including the types of goods, the scenarios of consumption, and the reasons behind the consumption preferences.

2.2. In-depth Interviews

This research intends to conduct in-depth interviews with 10 postgraduate students from eight renowned universities in Hong Kong through voice calls, face-to-face interviews, and text chat, with different departments and majors, so as to ensure that their consumption preferences are not the same due to their specialties. The ratio of male to female students is about 1:1, ranging in age from 22 to 30. The interview mainly asks respondents based on semi-structured interviews, and the single case time is about half an hour. Due to the limitation of research time and objective conditions, this study tries to take into account the gender, age and educational background of the research objects, but there are still some limitations.

The perspective falls on the young audience group with a certain degree foundation, trying to study the current consumption situation of the group's use of Bilibili and Tiktok through a sampling survey.

3. Specific Data of Two Platforms

3.1. Description of Tiktok Video Platform

Tiktok is a short video community platform for all ages. But the initial positioning audience of Tiktok is young people [10]. Interesting short video content has attracted many kinds of users, and its popularity continues to grow, causing a phenomenal social explosion in the last few years. Modern young people become increasingly difficult to focus exclusively on watching certain long videos. Tiktok, a short video application, comes into being. Tiktok develops a channel for people to access information in fragments and meets users' needs for quickly watching multiple videos in a short time. Similarly, the magic of pieces of background music also let everyone obsessed with it. Everyone has the opportunity to become the protagonist in their videos. Tiktok greatly stimulates the development of the virtual economy. In the following parts, the author will use three questions from the designed questionnaire to explore how young users spend their money on the platform.

Table 1. Data collection for whether to purchase or not on Tiktok.

Have you made any purchases on this platform?		
options	sub-total	percentage
yes	51	60%
no	34	40%
valid number of people in this question	85	

As shown in Table 1, among the 85 valid questionnaires, 51 people made purchases on Tiktok, accounting for 60%, while 34 people did not buy products, accounting for 40% of the total number.

Table 2. Data collection under what circumstances you consumed on Tiktok.

Under what circumstances did you choose to consume after watching the video of Tiktok?		
options	sub-total	percentage
people around have the same products	1	1.96%
famous-brand products they recommended	3	5.88%
high-tech products that meet functional needs	4	7.84%
products recommended by my favorite anchor	10	19.61%
the same products owned by my favorite star	6	11.76%
commodities that are strongly needed in reality	19	37.25%
eye-catching videos that led me to visit and consume	7	13.73%
others	1	1.96%
valid number of people in this question	51	

As can be seen in table 2, among the 51 valid questionnaires, 19 people chose to purchase products needed strongly on Tiktok, accounting for 37.25%. Ten people, about 19.61%, were willing to products recommended by their favorite anchors. Seven people, accounting for 13.73%, spent money on eye-catching videos, which led them to visit and consume.

Table 3. Data collection of different kinds of goods on Tiktok.

What kinds of goods have you consumed?		
option	sub-total	percentage
delicious food	16	31.37%
clothing	6	11.76%
game equipment	3	6%
cosmetics	12	23.53%
study supplies	4	7.84%
life and home furnishing	6	11.76%
member charge	1	1.96%
anchor tipping	1	1.96%
recommended project with offline consumption	2	3.92%
others	0	0%
valid number of people in this question	51	

As indicated in table 3, among the 51 valid questionnaires, 16 people enjoyed consuming delicious food, accounting for 31.37%, which has the highest percentage of all. Twelve people, about 23.53%, consumed cosmetics. Six people, accounting for 11.76%, were willing to do clothing as well as life and home furnishing, respectively.

3.2. Description of Bilibili Video Platform

For young Chinese nowadays, Bilibili is definitely a well-known application. Bilibili started its business as an Animation Comic Game (ACG) community website [11]. Its early users are

concentrated in the field of games and quadratic elements, and as a gathering place of anime culture, where users are highly sticky. Bilibili is different from other video applications by highlighting the feature of Danmu [11]. Now Bilibili can be called a highly gathered cultural community and video site for Chinese young groups. Due to the cost decline of the whole industry chain, such as the changes in demand, and the high proportion of young users' consumption, the next step is to research the audiences' consumption status from the same three questions as Tiktok before.

Table 4. Data collection for whether to purchase or not on Bilibili.

Have you made any purchases on this platform?		
options	sub-total	percentage
yes	59	28.1%
no	151	71.9%
valid number of people in this question	210	

As is demonstrated in table 4, among the 210 valid questionnaires, 59 people made purchases on Bilibili, accounting for 28.1%, while 151 people did not buy products, accounting for 71.9% of the total number.

Table 5. Data collection under what circumstance you consumed on Bilibili.

Under what circumstances did you choose to consume after watching the video of Bilibili?		
options	sub-total	percentage
people around have the same products	2	3.39%
famous-brand products they recommended	1	1.69%
high-tech products that meet functional needs	10	16.95%
products recommended by my favorite anchor	11	22.22%
the same products owned by my favorite star	2	3.39%
commodities that are strongly needed in reality	15	25.42%
eye-catching videos that led me to visit and consume	6	10.17%
others	12	20.34%
valid number of people in this question	59	

From Table 5 above, we can see that among the 59 valid questionnaires, 15 people chose to purchase products needed strongly in life on Bilibili, accounting for 25.42%. Twelve people, about 20.34%, chose other purchasing scenarios. Eleven people, about 22.22%, were willing to products recommended by their favorite anchors. Ten people, accounting for 16.95%, spent money on high-tech products that meet functional needs. Six people, accounting for 10.17%, spent money on eye-catching videos, which led them to visit and consume.

Table 6. Data collection of different kinds of goods on Bilibili.

What kinds of goods have you consumed?		
option	sub-total	percentage
delicious food	2	3.39%
clothing	4	6.78%
game equipment	4	6.78%
cosmetics	1	1.69%
study supplies	1	1.69%
life and home furnishing	0	0%
member charge	42	71.19%
anchor tipping	23	38.98%
recommended project with offline consumption	3	5.08%
others	8	13.56%
valid number of people in this question	59	

As exhibited in table 6, among the 59 valid questionnaires, 42 people tended to purchase a membership, accounting for 71.19%, which has the highest percentage of all. Twenty-three people, about 38.98%, tipped those anchors online. Eight people, accounting for 13.56%, chose other kinds of goods.

3.3. Description of In-depth Interviews

Question 1. Have you made any purchases on this platform?

Of all the 10 interviewees, 5 students never consume on either platform. Two people only spent money on Bilibili, and three people spent money on both platforms. In addition, of the five students interviewed, all mentioned that Tiktok has low-product characteristics, which was a waste of time and easy to indulge. The products sold were not high-tech enough on Tiktok.

Question 2. In what situations did you consume on this platform?

In the interview of the remaining five students who had made consumption, three said that they would recharge their membership, and two said that they would make small consumption when tipping anchors and purchasing daily necessities.

Question 3. The variety of goods consumed

Two students who have only spent money on Bilibili bought memberships as well as tipped their admiring EKOLs based on their interests and hobbies. Of the remaining three students, two bought cosmetics and clothes for about 2 to 3 times on Tiktok, and one bought housing decorations once from Tiktok. All the three students had topped up their membership on Bilibili, and one of them had paid a tip to an uploader in the tourism video area.

4. Comparison of consumption tendency on Tiktok and Bilibili

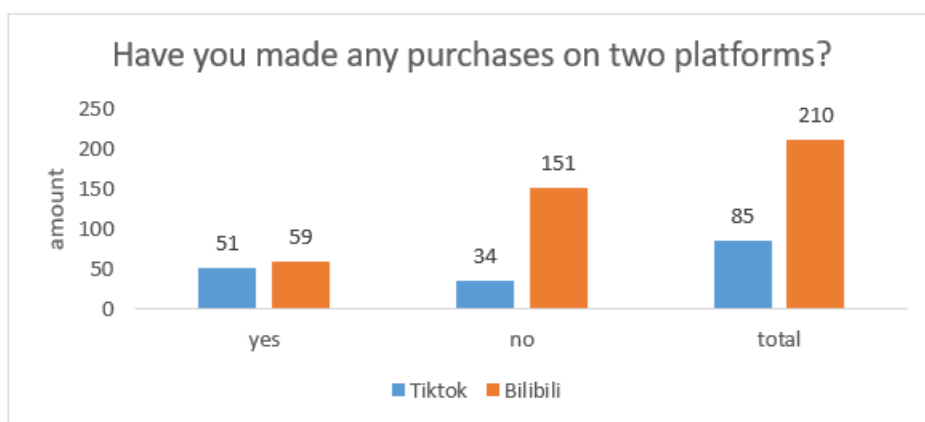


Fig 1. The comparison of whether to purchase or not on two platforms.

The comparison of Question 1 in figure 1 between two platforms show readers that the number of young consumers on Bilibili is larger than that on Tiktok, but not too much. In addition, the number of youngsters who didn't spend money on two platforms and total number of young users on Bilibili are also significantly higher than those on Tiktok.

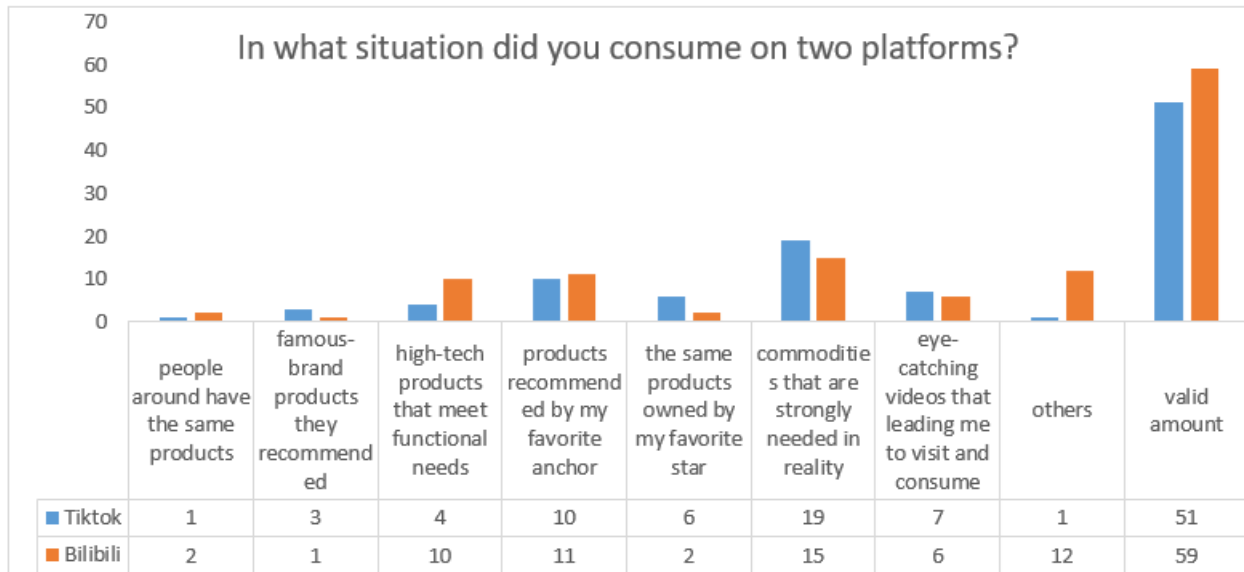


Fig 2. The comparison of what circumstance consumed on two platforms.

As depicted in figure 2, on the whole, high-tech products that meet functional needs, products recommended by their favorite anchors and products that are strongly needed in real life are the goods consumers preferred. And among them, the necessities in real life are the most purchased products. In this case, Tiktok had more customers than that of Bilibili, but the quantity is not too different.

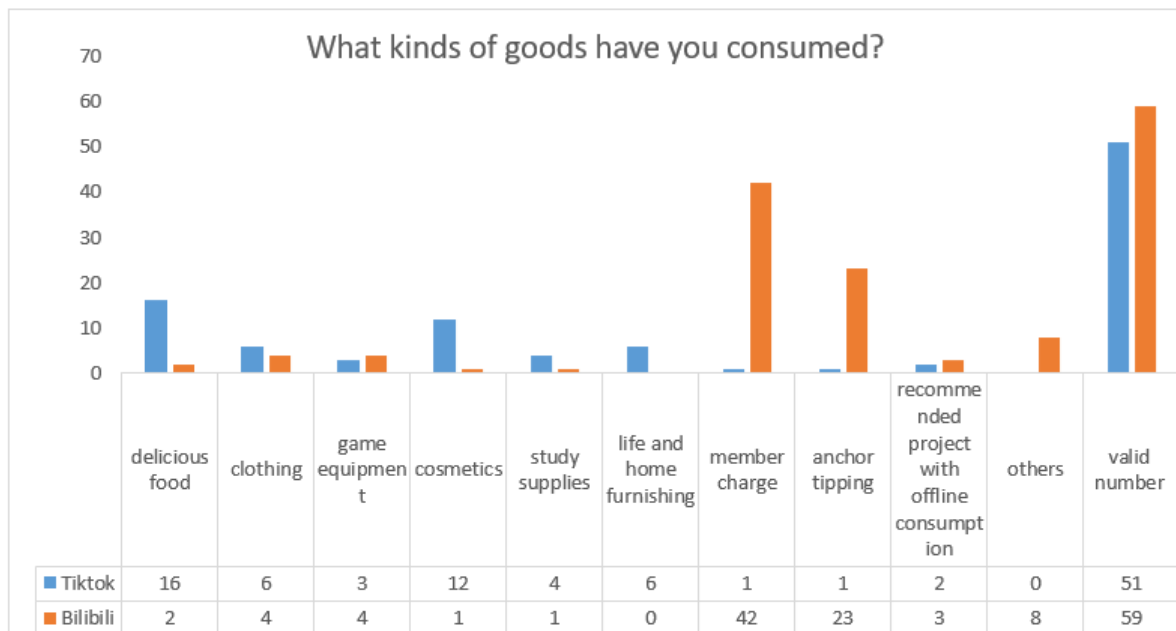


Fig 3. The comparison of different kinds of goods on two platforms.

Overall, as illustrated in figure 3, Bilibili had an overwhelming victory edge over Tiktok in terms of the amount of money spent by its members and anchor tipping. But when it comes to cosmetics and delicious food, Tiktok had a great advantage over Bilibili, and also in terms of daily consumption, such as clothing and household items, Tiktok had a relatively clear advantage.

Compared with data from question 1 on the whole, it was thought that two popular platforms would be consumed a lot by young audiences. Meanwhile, the number of purchases would be directly proportional to the popularity as the public thought before. However, the total consumption of young audiences on the two platforms is not very active. This is because they have upgraded of consumption concept. They will control impulse spending ideas. Postgraduates are more self-discriminating than the public. The young graduate groups consumed Bilibili more and more frequently than Tiktok. The

comparison of question 2 shows that postgraduate students have group preferences for products that meet necessary daily needs, products recommended by their favorite anchors, and products with high-tech functions. The sales of Tiktok are slightly higher than that of Bilibili for products that are in daily demand. Taobao, Tmall, Jingdong, and so on are better specific shopping platforms for purchases. Youngsters can choose products on such shopping applications. That is why they are less willing to buy things on two platforms. Some graduates buy high-tech things after video recommendations because they need functional products. This is the same as buying a membership, which has specific functions on Bilibili for the audience. The comparison of question 3 demonstrates that the consumption of Bilibili is much higher than that of Tiktok in terms of member fees and anchor tipping, but it is the opposite situation for daily consumption goods. Some of the graduates watched videos and tipped the EKOLs because of fondness. They seldom buy functional products on Tiktok because graduates suppose Tiktok is inferior, even vulgar sometimes. It can also explain why they buy more daily necessities on Tiktok.

5. Conclusion

This paper mainly explores the consumption status and causes of young audiences, especially Hong Kong postgraduates. Although it is reflected in the data of Tiktok's popularity in recent years, young audiences with a certain educational background are not significantly affected. The frequency and duration of the consumption of Bilibili are higher than those of Tiktok. This young group does not make impulse purchases on the two platforms. In terms of purchasing daily consumer goods, the consumption of Tiktok was slightly higher than that of Bilibili. But Bilibili is much more accepted by young audiences than Tiktok when it comes to membership purchase and anchor tipping. Therefore, the author can conclude that the underlying consumption causes can be summarized as follows: first, the upgrading of consumption concept, second, the demand for functional products, third, better consumption platform alternatives, and fourth, the fondness for anchors. It has deepened the theoretical research on the psychology, needs, and behavior of the audience, which can be further studied from the perspective of the audience in the future, and also deepened uses and gratifications research. At the same time, this study is conducive to scholars who study the psychology and behavior of the audience and other popular video platforms or applications. This study has made up for the knowledge gap in consumption causes among young audiences with a certain degree basis, and future research can be further expanded to institutions in other regions. It expands the research object of comparison and fills the gap between the use and consumption of Bilibili and Tiktok.

References

- [1] Tiktok, Tiktok data report in 2020, 2020, 11th November 2022, https://p3-bd-official.byteimg.com/obj/eden-cn/uj_shpjpmmv_ljuhklafi/ljhwZthlaukjlkulzlp/data_reports/2020_douyin_data_report.pdf.
- [2] Bilibili, BILIBILI 2Q 2022 CONFERENCE CALL SCRIPT, 2022, 11th November 2022, <https://ir.bilibili.com/static-files/8d9e05fa-86ba-4008-87fc-665e60f9a9cf>.
- [3] Wu Jiani. Why Music Short Social Video Software becomes Popular -- A Case study of Douyin App. *New media research*, 2017, 3 (18): 88-89.
- [4] Kong Lingyuan. Music Short Video: Public Self-expression in the Era of We Media -- A Case study of Douyin. *Audiovisual Industry (Radio and Television Technology)*, 2018(03):94-98.
- [5] Montag C, Yang H, Elhai J D. On the psychology of TikTok use: A first glimpse from empirical findings. *Frontiers in public health*, 2021, 9: 641673.
- [6] Araujo C J, Perater K A, Quicho A M, et al. Influence of TikTok Video Advertisements on Generation Z's Behavior and Purchase Intention. *International Journal of Social and Management Studies*, 2022, 3(2): 140-152.
- [7] Katz E, Blumler J G, Gurevitch M. Uses and gratifications research. *The public opinion quarterly*, 1973, 37(4): 509-523.

- [8] Yang Qian. A Study on "Social Anxiety" in Social Media Use among Young People: Nanchang University, 2021.
- [9] Yang Y, Ha L. Why people use TikTok (Douyin) and how their purchase intentions are affected by social media influencers in China: A uses and gratifications and parasocial relationship perspective. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 2021, 21(3): 297-305.
- [10] Kong Lingyuan. Music Short Video: Public Self-expression in the Era of We Media -- A Case study of Douyin. *Audiovisual Industry (Radio and Television Technology)*, 2018(03):94-98.
- [11] Wang R. Community-Building on Bilibili: The Social Impact of Danmu Comments. *Media and Communication*, 2022, 10(2): 54-65.