

The Effect of Short Video on People’s Subjective Well-being

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Abstract

In recent years, short video has developed rapidly and gradually become a daily companion in the mobile era. Short video has become the main market and attract lots of users in China. Would short video influence Chinese people’s subjective well-being and how it affect people’s happiness is worth to be examined.

This research is conducted following 3 objectives: (1)To study the current use of short video among users. (2)To analyze the relationship between short video and users’ subjective well-being. (3) To study the differences of the effects of short video usage on subjective well-being of users of different ages. This research uses in-depth interview and literature Research Method.

The findings are as followed: (1) The users spend long time on watching short video, and people watch different length of short video. (2) In terms of preference content, young people prefer entertainment and leisure, and middle-aged and elderly people prefer videos that focus on skills in life and self-improvement. (3) In general, some interviewees think that short videos can improve their subjective well-being, but some interviewees have no obvious feeling about it. (4) Short videos would influence users’ positive affect and negative affect, which involves all ages. In terms of the life satisfaction after watching short video, most of the interviewees think their life satisfaction has no change or is improved. (5) There are many factors influence users’ subjective well-being, include personality trait, comparative psychology, the time spending on short video, the length of short video, the content of short video, intelligent push function, page desire, frequency of use and professions. (8) There are some differences on the effect effects of short video usage on subjective well-being of users of different ages.

Keywords Short video, Subjective well-being, Short video users.

1. Introduction

Recently, internet and mobile technology has developed dramatically. During the last two decades, social media was born and immersed itself into our lives. Recent years, in China, short video apps like Tik Tok, Kuaishou develop rapidly and watching short videos has become a part of people's live. In addition to the domestic market, short video is also popular overseas. From East Asia and Southeast Asia, to North America and Europe, the development of Chinese short video apps is quite fast.

Happiness is the ultimate goal of human beings. In 2012, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 20 March as the International Day of Happiness, recognizing well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of people around the world. Happiness is a subjective feeling, so we also call happiness the subjective well-being. Psychologists, sociologists, economists and politicians are all working to improve people's subjective well-being.

The research topic is "The Effect of Short Video Art on people's subjective well-being". The short video discussed in this study is mobile short video. The broadcasting platform includes Tiktok, Kuaishou and other mainstream short video apps. The reason for the choice is that, on the one hand, users use a wide range of short video apps. For example, in the in-depth interview, some respondents said that they use multiple short video apps at the same time; On the other hand, this topic focuses on the commonality of short videos, not on the uniqueness of a certain type of short video content or a certain short video app.

In the research, I will solve the following questions:

- (1) How about the use of short video?
- (2) Would short video influence users' subjective well-being?
- (3) What factors would affect the relationship between short video and subjective well-being?
- (4) What are the differences of the effects of short video usage on subjective well-being of different ages?

The research objectives are as follows:

- (1) To study the current use of short video among users.
- (2) To analyze the relationship between short video and users' subjective well-being.
- (3) To study the differences of the effects of short video usage on subjective well-being of users of different ages.

2. Literature Review

About what is short video, actually there has no universal definition. Some scholars have made effort to give a definition on short video. For example, Lei Pan(2014,p.4) considers that short video is based on mobile smart terminals, allowing users to shoot extremely short videos (generally 8 to 30 seconds) using mobile devices such as smart phones or tablets. Fang Fang (2016,p.349) considers that short videos are videos that are filmed for 10 seconds (60 seconds or 5 minutes can be selected in various apps)on smartphone, edited and embellished, and then shared to social apps. Peng Lan(2020) points out that the most popular short video app such as Tiktok and Kuaishou usually limit the duration of short video to 57 seconds or 15 seconds, and in Tiktok, some videos on knowledge can be extended to 5 minutes, and the videos in Kuaishou can have 10 minutes.

Scholars have done researches on the relationship between short video and subjective well-being.

Deng Yuanbing and Li Hui (2021) conclude that the use intensity of Kuaishou(a famous short video app in China) among rural resident users can significantly and positively predict the subjective well-being of rural residents, that is, the greater the use intensity, the higher the well-being. Here, the use intensity refers to the emotional connection between Kuaishou users and Kuaishou, as well as the integration of Kuaishou in people's daily life. In addition, users' motivation to use short videos is also an important factor affecting subjective well-being. Subjective well-being includes three aspects, positive affect, negative affect and life satisfaction. Studies have found that information motivation, entertainment motivation, social motivation and expression motivation have a significant positive predictive effect on life satisfaction (Zhang Shaogang, Chen haobing, 2019). Zhang Shaogang and Chen haobing(2019) also point out that people who use Tiktok longer in one time, their negative emotion such as anxiety and irritability will be increased.

Many studies have focused on the mediators of short videos affecting users' subjective well-being. The first is social capital. In a number of different studies, larger and more integrated social networks have been associated with better physical health and greater levels of subjective well-being (Myers, 1999). With the use of the Internet, social media provides another way for people to socialize online and maintain social networks. There is a concept related to social interaction, called social capital. Williams(2006) refers to the resources obtained online as online social capital, which are beneficial to their own development, such as friends, fans, care, information, etc. Online social capital can be divided into bridging type and bonding type. Deng Yuanbing and Li Hui (2021) take Kuaishou as an example and point out that the use of Kuaishou app helps to enhance the online social capital of rural residents' users, thus

helping to enhance their subjective well-being. The second mediator is social comparison. Deng Yuanbing and Li Hui (2021) take Kuaishou and rural users as the research objects, and conclude that users' upward social comparison will decrease their subjective well-being in the use of Kwai short videos.

In addition to mediating variables, some scholars have also discussed the impact of moderating variables on the relationship between short videos and subjective well-being. For example, Li Bingxin(2019) consider that the addictive state of consumers has a moderating effect, which leads to the difference in the impact of hedonic short videos and utilitarian short videos on well-being. When consumers are addicted to content consumption, hedonic content consumption produces stronger positive emotions than utilitarian content consumption; When consumers are not addicted to content consumption, the impact of the two types of content consumption on positive emotions is not significant. In addition, personality traits also have a moderating effect on the relationship between short video usage and subjective well-being.(Deng Shulin, 2020)

The above research has provided a lot of help and inspiration for my research, and I will explore more factors that affect subjective well-being based on this foundation.

3. Methodology

Methodology means how to conduct the research. In my research, I use in-depth interview and literature research method.

In depth interview is a method for researchers to directly contact and talk with the interviewees one-on-one to obtain detailed information about their attitude, motivation, values, expressions, feelings, etc. (Liu Yannan, 2011,p.197)

I conducted in-depth interviews with the 30 interviewees through to obtain more detailed first-hand information. In the interview, I adjust the outline order and questions according to the actual situation, so that the answers and opinions of the interviewees can supplement the deficiencies of the interview outline and further improve the interview content.

Before the interview, we communicated with the interviewees to tell them the research purpose and the research problem. After determining the interviewees, the we conducted the interview according to the time and place of mutual negotiation. The time was controlled at about one hour, and we choose quiet places to make the interviewees feel comfortable and minimize the negative impact of environmental factors on the interviewees. After obtaining the consent of interviewees, we use

mobile phones to record the interview content. Of course, shorthand is also used to record the interview content during the interview.

In my research, I will also use literature research method. Literature research method refers to a research method that forms a new understanding of the research field after studying the literature on the basis of collecting and sorting the relevant literature.

In my research, the literatures I search and read include short video and the relationship between short video and subjective well-being. These literatures give me much help and fresh thought to my research, broaden my horizon and provide me abundant resources. However, the research shortcomings and blanks which related to my research is also obvious. For example, the variables involved in the study were limited, and we could take other factors into consideration. So in my research, I will explore and find more factors which would influence users' subjective well-being when watching short video.

4. Research findings

Through in-depth interviews, I have obtained a lot of data and materials, and I will analyze them and show the findings.

4.1 The Use Status Of Short Video Among Users

4.1.1 The time users spend in short video. In the in-depth interview, most interviewees use short videos every day and open multiple times a day. Younger generation spend more time than the elder people and it varies from man to man. For example, the No.1 interviewee respond that she watches short video 5-6 hours one day, and the No.2 interviewee watches short video less than 1 hour on weekdays, and 2-3 hours on weekends. The former one is a students and the latter one is a State-owned Enterprise Employee, so it is supposed that the time length maybe related to occupation. The interviewees over 40 watch short video less than 3 hours.

4.1.2 The length of short video users prefer. In the interview, people between 20-39, some watch short videos of less than one minute, while some prefer short video with 1-3 minutes. The majority of respondents over 40 tend to choose short videos of less than one minute.

4.1.3 Preference content. The respondents aged 20-29 like the content with pets, food, beauty anchors, games, etc.; the 30-39 year old respondents like the content with fitness, shopping, games, news, etc.; the 40 to 49 year old respondents like the content with pets, dance, food, philosophy of life, etc.; people aged 50 and above like the content with health care, geographic and military videos, etc. Users of different ages have different types of preferences for short videos. Young people prefer videos that focus on entertainment and leisure, while middle-

aged and elderly people prefer videos that focus on skills in life and self-improvement.

4.2 The Relationship Between Short Video And Users' Subjective Well-being

In general, some interviewees think that short videos can improve their subjective well-being, but some interviewees have no obvious feeling about it.

Subjective well-being includes three aspects, positive affect, negative affect and life satisfaction. From the interview, it can be found that short videos would influence users' positive affect and negative affect, which involves all ages. For example, the No.2 interviewee says that when she watches some funny videos, she feels very happy. Besides, there will also be many people sharing interesting things they have encountered in life, which make her feel happy. In the meantime, short videos also bring her negative affect. For example, many bloggers will say that they are 20 year-old, with an annual salary of one million yuan, and this will make her feel anxious. Besides, some people who will spread some anxiety about life on the Internet. When she sees it, she will have the same feeling which will influence daily life. It show that emotions can be contagious. This situation also exist in the 40-49 age group. Users over 50 think short videos can enrich their hearts and spirits. But for them, it is also easy to be deceived by some bad and illegal information in short videos and it would make them feel unhappy.

In terms of the life satisfaction after watching short video, most of the interviewees think their life satisfaction has no change or is improved. For example, the No.15 interviewee tells that after watching short video, her life is more full. She can learn a lot in the short video software, can keep up with many trends and current events. No.3 interviewee and No.21 interviewee consider that short video is still a little help to life, which can enrich her life.

Based on the information above, it arise my research interest on: what factors will affect the user's subjective well-being when using short videos?

First, personality trait. Personality trait factors belong to the subjective category and are the main factors that affect users' subjective well-being. In psychology, it emphasize the integration and functional role of personality. Personality determines a person's lifestyle, and sometimes even determines a person's destiny. So different personality types affect their subjective well-being when watching short videos. For example, No.1 interviewee is a student, and she is very strict with herself. When she find the peers in the short videos are successful, her anxiety and comparison psychology would be produced. She constantly denies herself, and falls into the psychological anxiety of "lagging behind others". While, No.2 interviewee is a girl

who has weak self-control, is curious about the online world. She is energetic, free, has a strong sense of justice, and is optimistic. Compared with No.1 interviewee, short video could improve No.2 interviewee's subjective well-being and make her happy.

Second, comparative psychology. For example, when No.6 interviewee says when she sees someone live a rich life and own many luxury goods, she may compare this with her life and feel upset. The No.18 interviewee says that when she sees that some short videos show that people's lives are not as good as her own, she will have a sense of superiority, and increase the satisfaction with her life.

Third, the time spending on short video. From the in-depth interview, it is found that the longer time spending on short video, the more likely the interviewees are to have negative emotions such as anxiety and irritability. For example, the No.19 interviewee says that watching short videos is sometimes not good for his health. Watching short videos for a long time will cause him to stay up late, thus affecting his health and make him feel unhappy. No. 6 interviewee agree with it, she says that spending too much time on short videos will affect her work and make her anxious and she describe an experience to interviewer that once when she was ready to start work, Tiktok pushed her a short video. The rich content and convenient operation mode made her forget the existence of time. When she decided stop watching, it was late, and the work had not been completed, which made her feel anxious, but she had to drag her tired body to finish the work.

Fourth, the length of short video. Before interview, I contact with people surrounding by to know how long of the short videos that they usually watch. I get different answers, some people like short videos in seconds, the shorter the better, while some people like to watch the ones within 2-4 minutes. Combing with the videos I have seen on Tiktok and other related short video platforms, in the interview, the length of short video are divided into three kinds, less than 1 minute, 1-3 minutes, and above 3 minutes. From the interview, the results show that people between 20-39, some watch short videos of less than one minute, while some prefer short video with 1-3 minutes. The majority of respondents over 40 tend to choose short videos of less than one minute. Overall, more people prefer to watch shorter videos, which is more consistent with people's fragmented information intake. The length short video will affect people's subjective well-being when watching short videos. For example, No.2 interviewee prefer to watch short videos with 1-3 minutes, she thinks that longer videos are richer in content, more detailed in description. No.6 interviewee choose to watch short videos with less than 1 minutes, and the shorter the better. She says that daily work leads to more and more fragmented spare time. Therefore, there is not enough time and patience to watch videos with long duration. In the same time, the shorter the video, the more content you can watch.

Fifth, the content of short video. When users use short videos, the specific content of short videos will also influence their subjective well-being. The existence of short videos is mainly due to the faster pace of social life. People are occupied with heavy work and do not have much leisure time, but they have strong desire for entertainment and relaxation. Short video provide a lot of humorous content, and develop many other type of content, including life skills, personal show, life record, social record, nature, history and culture, knowledge, food, love, marriage and relationship, film and TV show, shopping, health, cartoon, news, travel, game, star information, beauty and fashion, pet, sport, music and dance, digital technology, education and study, work, military, finance and economics, car information, maternal and child, house information, etc ,which could meet different users' demands. The interviewees of different ages agree that seeing their favorite video content would generate positive emotions of joy, happiness, excitement and warmth. For example, No.13 interviewee says that when she sees the video content of health care, military, geography and history, she will feel happy, because these content is consistent with her interest. Not only the content of short video, but also the emotional orientation of short video content would influence users' subjective well-being. For example, the No.6 interviewee describe an experience of watching a short video. The short video records grandpa taking his granddaughter out to play, in the video, users could see beautiful scenery and a cheerful little girl, and her emotion can infect people watching this video.

Sixth, intelligent push function. It is found that the intelligent push function of short video could improve users' subjective well-being and also could reduce their subjective well-being. Intelligent push function will make users additive and forget the time, thus will influence their subjective well-being. For example, No.2 interviewee says that when she watches short video, the app always provide her that she likes and make her easily addicted, and then time passes quickly, which is a waste of time. However, the No.7 interviewee thinks that he is happy to receive the short videos that he likes.

Another reason why intelligent push function bring users negative experience is that most of the videos pushed by the platform are of the same type, with single content and high repeatability, which greatly influence the users' experience.

Besides the factors above, there are other factors play roles in the influence of short videos to subjective well-being. For example, the page desire. A reasonable page design can help users better use APP, while a more cluttered page layout will affect users' sense of experience, thereby reducing their subjective well-being. The frequency of use will also have an impact on the subjective well-being of use. The respondents with high frequency of use (use daily) will have higher

subjective well-being than those with low frequency of use (twice a week), because they can alleviate the boredom in life through short videos. Furthermore, with different professions, users have different leisure time, which will affect the time they use short videos and thus affect their subjective well-being.

4.3 The differences of the effects of short video usage on subjective well-being of users of different ages

Through in-depth interviews, it is found that short videos have different effects on the subjective well-being of users of different ages, and the effects of the same factor are different. The details are as follows:

To begin with, from the point of view of the trouble short videos bring to users, elder users are more likely to worry about their own health problems. For example, the No.19 interviewee says that watching short videos is sometimes not good for his health. Watching short videos for a long time will cause him to stay up late, thus affecting his health and make him feel unhappy. The oldest interviewee says that during the use of short videos, the biggest problem is that they often affect the sleep time and may cause health problems such as vision loss. Young users are worried about low self-control, use addiction, time wasting and other problems in the use of short videos. No.2 interviewee says that when she watch short video, she is easily addicted to it, and time passes quickly, which is a waste of time and she also says that she has poor self-control. No. 6 says that she is easily addicted to short videos and it affect her work and make her anxious.

Additionally, younger users are more likely to make upward social comparisons, thereby reducing their subjective well-being, for example, when No.2 interviewee sees someone with a very substantial income, she may feel disappointed with her life. and the comparative psychology is not obvious for elder users when they watching short videos.

5. Summary and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 Objective. First, To study the current use of short video among users. Second, to analyze the relationship between short video and users' subjective well-being. Third, to study the differences of the effects of short video usage on subjective well-being of users of different ages.

5.1.2 Methodology. My research uses in-depth interview and literature Research Method. There are 30 participants join in the in-depth interview and each interview takes around 1 hour.

5.1.3 Summary of main points from all above findings. The users spend long time on watching short video, and it varies among people and people watch different length of short video. Young people prefer videos

that focus on entertainment and leisure, while middle-aged and elderly people prefer videos that focus on skills in life and self-improvement.

In general, some interviewees think that short videos can improve their subjective well-being, but some interviewees have no obvious feeling about it. From the interview, it can be found that short videos would influence users' positive affect and negative affect, which involves all ages. In terms of the life satisfaction after watching short video, most of the interviewees think their life satisfaction has no change or is improved. There are many factors influence users' subjective well-being, include personality trait, comparative psychology, the time spending on short video, the length of short video, the content of short video, intelligent push function, page desire, frequency of use and professions. The effects of short video usage on subjective well-being of users of different ages are different. For example, when watching short videos, younger users are more likely to compare themselves with the upstream society, thereby reducing their subjective well-being; For older users, this phenomenon is not obvious. From the point of view of the trouble short videos bring to users, elder users are more likely to worry about their own health problems and this may lead them unhappy, and younger users are worried about low self-control, use addiction, time wasting and other problems in the use of short videos and this would make them anxious.

5.2 Recommendation

5.2.1 Guideline for making use of this research findings for public interests. The short video industry and short video software operators can combine the research findings and conclusions to improve and enhance the relevant functions of short video in order to create a good viewing environment for users and enhance their happiness. For example, making the intelligent push functions reasonably and effectively and allows users decide whether using this function, thereby making the use of this function more user-friendly.

5.2.2 Guidelines for conducting future research in related fields. For future academic usefulness in the field of social media and high technology tools to enhance life quality of people in digital society, the recommendations of related field research conduction could be as followings:

To begin with, in the research, many factors have been examined that they would influence people's happiness, and in the future, by using questionnaire, we could conduct large scale study to get more data.

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