

# Qualitative Study on Short-video Use, Social Comparison and Learning Burnout among College Students

Ru Jia\*

School of Social Sciences, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Hong Kong, 999077, China  
\*jiaru200408@163.com

## ABSTRACT

To reveal the associative mechanism between college students' short-video use and learning burnout in the digital era, this study, based on the Social Comparison Theory, the Two-dimensional Model of Envy, and the Three-dimensional Model of Learning Burnout, employed thematic analysis to conduct semi-structured interviews with 6 full-time college students. The focus was on the interactive relationship among short-video usage behaviors, the triggering process of social comparison, and the experience of learning burnout. The findings show: (1) College students' short-video use is characterized by "duration differentiation (high duration: 5-8 hours/day vs. medium-low duration: 2-4 hours/day), concentrated timing (mainly before sleep), fragmented contexts, and inefficient management". (2) Short videos primarily trigger upward social comparison in dimensions of academic achievement, material conditions, and physical appearance. Emotional responses are dominated by benign envy, and the intensity and persistence of online comparison are significantly weaker than offline comparison. (3) Short videos have a "double-edged sword" effect on learning burnout-planned intermittent use in the short term can supplement psychological resources to alleviate burnout, while unmanaged excessive use in the long term consumes attentional resources to exacerbate burnout. This study provides qualitative evidence for understanding the relationship between college students' digital media use and learning psychology, and offers practical references for universities to carry out media literacy education and learning burnout intervention.

## KEYWORDS

College Students; Short-video Use; Social Comparison; Learning Burnout.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Popularization of Short Videos and Usage Status among College Students

In recent years, short videos have become the mainstream media form in the digital era, characterized by "short duration, high stimulation, and strong interactivity". According to the *55th Statistical Report on the Development of China's Internet* released by the China Internet Network Information Center, the number of short-video users in China has reached 1.28 billion, among which college students aged 18-24 account for 23.7% [1]. The median daily usage duration is 3.2 hours, and over 40% of college students exhibit high-frequency usage behavior of "more than 5 hours per day". Psychological studies have shown that as digital natives, college students' media usage behaviors are deeply intertwined with psychological processes such as learning and emotion [2]. The algorithmic recommendation mechanism of short videos easily constructs an "idealized content cocoon", such as frequent pushes of content like "top students' schedules" and "delicate life", which may affect learning mindsets through social comparison [3]. Meanwhile, the "instant gratification" feature of short videos

may also crowd out study time and weaken attentional persistence , laying hidden dangers for the emergence of learning burnout[4].

## 1.2. Concept and Hazards of Learning Burnout

Learning burnout is a common learning psychological problem among college students. First, it was extended from job burnout to the educational field, and later proposed a three-dimensional model of learning burnout based on the characteristics of Chinese college students, defining it as "a negative psychological state generated under long-term academic pressure", specifically manifested as:

**(1) Emotional exhaustion:** Decline in learning motivation, easy fatigue, and resistance to academic tasks;

**(2) Inappropriate behavior:** Avoidance of learning tasks (e.g., skipping classes, procrastination), and significant reduction in learning efficiency;

**(3) Low sense of accomplishment:** Decreased self-efficacy and negation of one's academic value[4,5].

Long-term learning burnout not only leads to academic performance decline and loss of learning interest among college students but may also trigger mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, even affecting career planning and long-term development [6,7]. Existing studies have pointed out that academic pressure, task difficulty, and lack of interest are traditional inducements of learning burnout. However, with the popularization of digital media, the use of platforms such as short videos has gradually become a new variable affecting learning burnout, and its mechanism of action urgently needs in-depth exploration.

## 1.3. Potential Correlation between Short-video Use and Learning Burnout

Theoretically, the correlation between short-video use and learning burnout can be explained from the perspective of "resource consumption-supplementation"[8]:

**(1) Resource consumption path:** The highly stimulating content of short videos easily leads to "attentional fragmentation". Long-term excessive use consumes cognitive resources, reducing focus during learning. Meanwhile, the "idealized content" pushed by algorithms may trigger upward social comparison. If self-negation occurs after comparison, it further exacerbates emotional exhaustion, ultimately leading to learning burnout.

**(2) Resource supplementation path:** Short-term and planned short-video use can serve as a "relaxation method during study intervals", supplementing psychological resources by diverting attention and acquiring positive emotions, temporarily relieving fatigue caused by academic pressure.

However, existing studies mostly explore the correlation between short-video usage duration and learning burnout using quantitative methods[2], lacking qualitative exploration of the dynamic process of "how individuals experience short-video use-social comparison-learning burnout". This makes it difficult to reveal the subjective mechanisms and individual differences behind the phenomenon. Therefore, this study captures the real experiences of college students through interviews to fill this research gap.

## 1.4. Research Significance

### 1.4.1. Theoretical Level

(1) Breaking through the offline limitations of the traditional Social Comparison Theory, revealing the "distance decay effect of online comparison" in short-video scenarios, and enriching the connotation of social comparison theory in the digital era[9].

(2) Making up for the neglect of digital media factors in learning burnout research, sorting out the chain process of "short-video use→social comparison→emotional response→learning burnout", and adding a "digital media-psychological process" mediating path to burnout theory[6].

(3) Verifying the two-dimensional envy model of Van de Ven et al. (2009) and expanding the model's application scenarios.

#### 1.4.2. Practical Level

Research conclusions can be implemented targetedly:

(1) Universities can design counseling programs like "Pomodoro Technique + short-video interval planning" with reference to relevant findings;

(2) Platforms can reduce the push of content such as "wealth showing off" and "idealized achievements" and increase "real learning" content based on relevant feedback;

(3) College students with different usage durations can learn from different study models to balance short-video use and learning.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Research on Short-video Use among College Students

Existing studies explore college students' short-video usage behaviors from two aspects: "usage characteristics" and "usage management":

**(1) Usage characteristics:** According to Katz et al.'s (1973) Media Dependency Theory, college students' reliance on short videos stems from three major motivations: "information acquisition, emotional regulation, and social needs". Empirical studies show that college students' short-video use is characterized by "centralized timing" (before sleep, after class) and "fragmented contexts" (queuing, eating)[7]. Significant individual differences exist in usage duration—over 50% of undergraduates use short videos 3-6 hours per day, while only 20% can control it within 2 hours[2].

**(2) Usage management:** Self-regulation Theory indicates that individuals' management of media use relies on "self-control resources"[11]. Due to the incomplete maturity of self-control abilities, college students are prone to "planning failure".

### 2.2. Research on the Correlation between Short-video Use and Social Comparison

Social Comparison Theory suggests that individuals evaluate themselves by comparing with others, and the "selective content presentation" feature of short videos has changed the objects and frequency of comparison[9]:

(1) On the one hand, the "highlight content cocoon" constructed by short videos easily triggers upward social comparison—users frequently encounter "others' achievements and advantages" but rarely see the underlying efforts. This "incomplete comparison" may exacerbate self-negation[3].

(2) On the other hand, Social Identity Theory points out that the "group membership" of comparison objects affects the intensity of comparison[12]. Online objects (such as strange bloggers) have far weaker influence than offline "real group members" (such as classmates and friends), which highly aligns with this study's finding that "online comparison has short and weak effects".

(3) Additionally, Two-dimensional Model of Envy is verified in short-video scenarios: Most studies find that envy generated by short-video content among college students is mainly "benign envy", and only a few experience slight "malicious envy" due to "excessive wealth-showing content", consistent with the result that none of the six interviewees in this study showed malicious envy[2,13].

## 2.3. Research on Learning Burnout

Studies on the causes of learning burnout can be divided into "internal factors" and "external factors":

- (1) Internal factors include low academic self-efficacy and insufficient time management ability[6];
- (2) External factors include traditional variables such as academic pressure and peer competition, as well as new variables like digital media use. Resource Conservation Theory states that the essence of learning burnout is "psychological resource consumption > supplementation"-excessive short-video use consumes "attentional resources", while moderate use can supplement "emotional resources", providing a theoretical framework for understanding the two-way correlation between short videos and learning burnout[8].

The limitation of existing studies is that they mostly use questionnaire surveys to explore the correlation between variables (e.g., "usage duration is positively correlated with burnout scores"), lacking process-oriented exploration of "how individuals experience 'short-video browsing→comparison→burnout'". This makes it difficult to reveal the subjective experiences and individual differences behind the phenomenon-gaps that this study aims to bridge through qualitative methods.

## 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- (1) What are the specific characteristics of college students' short-video usage behaviors? Including individual differences in usage duration, time distribution, triggering contexts, and usage management strategies.
- (2) How does short-video content trigger social comparison among college students? What are the manifestations of concentrated comparison dimensions (e.g., academics, material conditions, appearance), selection of comparison objects (online vs. offline), and accompanying emotional responses (e.g., envy).
- (3) What is the interactive mechanism between short-video use and learning burnout? Do different usage patterns (excessive vs. moderate) have differential impacts on learning burnout (emotional exhaustion, inappropriate behavior, low sense of accomplishment)?

## 4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- (1) There are two typical patterns of short-video use among college students: "high duration - low management" and "medium-low duration - medium management", and high-duration, unmanaged usage behaviors are more likely to be associated with learning burnout.
- (2) Short videos mainly trigger upward social comparison among college students in the dimensions of academic achievement, material conditions, and appearance. Emotional responses are dominated by benign envy, and the intensity and persistence of online comparison are significantly weaker than offline comparison.
- (3) Short videos have a "double-edged sword" effect on learning burnout: short-term, planned intermittent use can alleviate burnout by supplementing psychological resources, while long-term, unmanaged excessive use exacerbates burnout by consuming cognitive resources.

## 5. RESEARCH METHOD

### 5.1. Research Design

This study adopted Thematic Analysis, based on Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), the Two-dimensional Model of Envy, and the Three-dimensional Model of Learning Burnout[6,13]. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, focusing on the correlation among college students' short-video usage behaviors, social comparison triggering mechanisms, emotional responses, and learning burnout, to extract core themes and interactive rules. Thematic analysis is suitable for exploring the subjective experiences of complex psychological phenomena, aligning with the core goal of this study to "understand the psychological processes related to college students' short-video use and learning"[14].

### 5.2. Research Participants

Purposeful sampling was employed to select 6 interviewees who met the criteria: "full-time college students, continuous short-video use (Douyin/XiaoHongShu/WeChat Video, etc.) in the past 3 months, and experience of learning burnout". The basic information of the sample is shown in **Table 1**. Sampling considered academic stages (freshmen to seniors), institution types (mainland universities/Hong Kong universities), and short-video usage intensity to ensure sample heterogeneity and cover diverse experiences.

**Table 1.** Basic Information of Interviewees

Interviewee ID	Age	Academic Stage	Institution Type	Main Short-video Platforms	Daily Usage Duration
QYY	21	Undergraduate Sophomore	Mainland University	Douyin	7-8 hours
FSZ	22	Undergraduate Senior	Hong Kong University	Douyin/TikTok	8-12 hours (including background play)
WRX	21	Undergraduate Senior	Mainland University	Douyin/Xiaohongshu	3-4 hours
AJH	21	Undergraduate Junior	Mainland University	Douyin	2-3 hours
OYZ	18	Undergraduate Freshman	Mainland University	Xiaohongshu/WeChat Video	6-8 hours
HYF	20	Undergraduate Senior	Hong Kong University	Douyin	5 hours

### 5.3. Data Collection

A semi-structured interview outline was designed with reference to the preliminary research framework, including 5 modules: interviewee background, short-video usage behaviors and habits, social comparison and emotional responses, learning burnout experiences, and the correlation between short videos and burnout (Appendix 1: Interview Outline). Interviews were conducted via online meetings from August 18 to 21, 2025, lasting 40-60 minutes each, fully recorded and transcribed in real time, resulting in approximately 32,000 words of interview text. Informed consent forms were signed before the interview, promising anonymization (using IDs instead of real names), encrypted data storage, and the right for interviewees to withdraw at any time, in compliance with the *Ethical Guidelines for Psychological Research*.

### 5.4. Data Coding and Analysis

This experiment adopted a three-level coding process[15]:

**(1) Open coding:** The researcher independently read the interview text and extracted initial concepts related to the research theme (e.g., "watching short videos before sleep", "envious of Harvard twins' offers", "inattentive after watching short videos"), obtaining 89 initial concepts in total. The Kappa coefficient was 0.87 ( $P < 0.01$ ), indicating good consistency.

**(2) (Axial coding:** Initial concepts were categorized by "attributes-dimensions", and similar concepts were merged to form sub-themes (e.g., "7-8 hours of usage" and "2-3 hours of usage" were categorized into "short-video usage duration differentiation"), resulting in 12 sub-themes.

**(3) Selective coding:** Based on the theoretical framework and sub-theme associations, 3 core themes were extracted-"Characteristics of College Students' Short-video Usage Behaviors", "Social Comparison and Emotional Responses Triggered by Short Videos", and "Interactive Mechanism between Short-video Use and Learning Burnout"-forming a logical chain of "behavior-cognition-emotion-result".

## 6. RESEARCH PROCESS

This study constructs a qualitative research framework for college students' short-video use, social comparison, and learning burnout based on the logical chain of "behavior-cognition-emotion-result":

### 6.1. Short-video Usage Behaviors

**(1) Usage duration:** Divided into a high-duration group (5-8 hours/day, e.g., QYY, OYZ, HYF) and a medium-low-duration group (2-4 hours/day, e.g., WRX, AJH). Duration differences may affect the degree of resource consumption/supplementation.

**(2) Usage timing:** Mainly concentrated in "before sleep" (mentioned by all 6 interviewees), supplemented by "study intervals" and "evening free time". Timing choices correlate with the conflict level of study tasks.

**(3) Triggering contexts:** Including "boredom relaxation" (6 people), "learning avoidance" (WRX, HYF), and "others' sharing" (OYZ). Context differences reflect motivations for short-video use (e.g., emotional regulation, stress avoidance).

**(4) Usage management:** Most interviewees showed "inefficient management" (e.g., HYF: "planned to stop by 12 PM but couldn't persist"), while only a few achieved "basic management" (e.g., OYZ: "no short videos before sleep"). Management effectiveness directly affects the degree of usage interference with learning.

The theoretical support for this section is Media Dependency Theory and Self-regulation Theory, explaining the "motivation-behavior-management" logic of college students' short-video use[10,11].

## 6.2. Social Comparison Cognition

**(1) Comparison dimensions:** Focused on academic achievement (e.g., FSZ: "comparison triggered by others' high IELTS scores"), material conditions (e.g., QYY: "envious of 'wealthy lifestyles' in short videos"), and physical appearance (e.g., OYZ: "pays attention to others' makeup and photography skills in short videos"). Dimension choices align with self-assessment areas of concern for college students.

**(2) Comparison objects:** Online objects (short-video bloggers, strange users) have short and weak comparative effects due to "psychological distance"; offline objects (classmates, friends) have more persistent and intense effects due to "strong real-world relevance" (e.g., WRX: "Classmates' good grades in reality affect me longer than online content").

The theoretical support for this section is Social Comparison Theory and Social Identity Theory, revealing how short videos shape comparison objects and dimensions through "content cocoons"[9,12].

## 6.3. Emotional Responses

Social comparison further triggers emotional responses, with this section focusing on "envy" as the core emotion, manifested as:

**(1) Predominance of benign envy:** All 6 interviewees mentioned, "When seeing others' advantages in short videos, I feel motivated to learn from them" (e.g., QYY: "I want to live a good life in the future, so I study harder now"). No manifestations of malicious envy (belittling others) were observed.

**(2) Short-term emotional impact:** Envy triggered by short videos mostly lasted <30 minutes (e.g., AJH: "Watching cute pet videos makes me happy, but I forget it soon"), with only a few cases (e.g., HYF: "Watching delicate life videos") lasting about 1 hour due to "comparison with excellent others".

The theoretical support for this section is the Two-dimensional Model of Envy, verifying the emotional characteristics of youth in digital scenarios[13].

## 6.4. Learning Burnout

Emotional responses ultimately act on learning burnout, showing two paths of "alleviation" or "exacerbation", corresponding to the three dimensions of the learning burnout model:

**(1) Alleviation path:** Short-term, planned intermittent use (e.g., OYZ: "10-minute short-video breaks during study") can supplement psychological resources, reducing emotional exhaustion (e.g., "decreased study fatigue") and inappropriate behaviors (e.g., "reduced frequency of learning avoidance").

**(2) Exacerbation path:** Long-term, unmanaged excessive use (e.g., HYF: "5 hours/day without planning") consumes cognitive resources, exacerbating emotional exhaustion (e.g., "decline in learning motivation"), increasing inappropriate behaviors (e.g., "procrastination on deadlines"), and reducing the sense of accomplishment (e.g., "decreased self-efficacy").

The theoretical support for this section is Resource Conservation Theory and the Three-dimensional Model of Learning Burnout, explaining the internal mechanism by which short-video use affects learning burnout[6,8].

## 7. RESULTS

### 7.1. The "Intensity-Management" Dichotomy of Short-Video Use

All interviewees could be divided into two categories: "high intensity - low management" (QYY, OYZ, HYF, FSZ) and "medium-low intensity - medium management" (WRX, AJH):

**(1) High intensity - low management group (accounting for 66.7%):** Daily usage > 5 hours, no effective management strategies, and prone to "inattention after watching short videos" and "exacerbated learning burnout";

**(2) Medium-low intensity - medium management group (accounting for 33.3%):** Daily usage < 4 hours, with basic management measures (e.g., WRX: "Finish tasks first before watching short videos", AJH: "No short videos during study intervals"), and the correlation between burnout and short-video use is weaker.

### 7.2. The "Online-Offline" Stratification Effect of Social Comparison

All 6 interviewees showed a consistent trend of "offline comparison impact > online comparison impact":

**(1) Online comparison:** Mostly triggers transient benign envy (e.g., "envious of Harvard twins", "envious of delicate lifestyles") with no long-term behavioral impact;

**(2) Offline comparison:** Mostly triggers persistent anxiety (e.g., "classmates achieve good grades with little effort", "people around have higher academic qualifications"), which easily leads to learning burnout (e.g., FSZ: "Seeing classmates' good grades makes me frustrated and anxious").

### 7.3. The "Bidirectional Regulation" Model of Learning Burnout by Short Videos

There are two typical patterns in the correlation between short videos and learning burnout:

**(1) Positive cycle (16.7%):** For example, OYZ's pattern: "No short videos before sleep + 10-minute short-video breaks during study" → focused attention → alleviated burnout → more efficient learning;

**(2) Vicious cycle (66.7%):** For example, HYF's pattern: "Unmanaged 5-hour use" → distracted attention → exacerbated burnout → using short videos to avoid (study) → more severe burnout;

**(3) Neutral pattern (16.7%):** For example, AJH's pattern: "2-3 hours of use without emotional burden" → weak correlation between burnout and short-video use.

## 8. DISCUSSION

### 8.1. Theoretical Contributions of the Study Findings

Based on interview data, this study makes three key theoretical contributions:

First, it confirms that upward social comparison triggered by short videos is affected by "psychological distance", with intensity and persistence weaker than offline comparison, supplementing the digital connotation of Social Comparison Theory.

Second, it proposes a mediating path of "short-video use - resource consumption/supplementation - learning burnout" based on Resource Conservation Theory, improving the model of digital inducements for learning burnout.

Third, it finds that college students mainly experience benign envy in short-video scenarios, verifying Van de Ven's Two-dimensional Model and providing a basis for the application of relevant theories and emotional education for adolescents.

## 8.2. Practical Implications of the Study Findings

The study findings offer targeted practical insights for different stakeholders:

**(1) Universities:** Can reference the experiences of AJH ("No short videos during study intervals") and OYZ ("No short videos before sleep") to develop group counseling programs focused on "Pomodoro Technique + short-video interval planning";

**(2) Platforms:** Can optimize algorithms to reduce the promotion of "wealth-showing" and "idealized achievement" content, based on feedback such as HYF's envy of "delicate life videos of 30-year-olds" and QYY's attention to "wealthy lifestyles";

**(3) Individuals and families:** Can draw on WRX's awareness of "not bringing online emotions to reality" to guide students to distinguish between online comparison and offline growth, and strengthen self-affirmation of "small-step progress" (e.g., OYZ: "Improve oneself by learning from study bloggers' skills").

## 9. CONCLUSION

Based on the interview data of six college students, this study systematically explored the qualitative correlations among short-video use, social comparison, and learning burnout. It not only provides a new perspective for understanding college students' learning psychology in the digital era but also offers practical references for universities, short-video platforms, and families to develop targeted intervention strategies.

However, the study has certain limitations. The sample only covers six undergraduate students interviewed from QYY to HYF, excluding postgraduate students, thus limiting the representativeness of the results. Additionally, the interview data are cross-sectional (collected from August 18 to 21, 2025), making it impossible to reveal the causal sequence of "short-video use→social comparison→learning burnout".

In the future, researchers can expand the sample scope and optimize the research design to further deepen the study of the interactive mechanism between digital media and college students' learning psychology, thereby helping college students achieve a balance between short-video use and academic growth.

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## APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW OUTLINE

Interview Outline on the Impact of Short-video Use on Students' Social Comparison, Emotions, and Learning Burnout

### I. Basic Background Information of Interviewees

- 1) Could you briefly introduce your basic personal background, including age, gender, and current highest educational attainment or study stage (e.g., 12th grade of high school, sophomore year of undergraduate, first year of master's program)?
- 2) What is your specific current study stage (e.g., 9th grade of high school, junior year of undergraduate, second year of doctoral program)? Based on the characteristics of this stage, describe your typical daily or weekly study schedule, including time allocation and content for core activities like classes, self-study, and homework completion.

### II. Investigation of Short-video Usage Behaviors and Habits

- 1) How frequently do you use short-video applications (such as Douyin, Kuaishou, TikTok, Xiaohongshu's short-video section, etc.)? Please select from the following or provide details: multiple times a day, once a day, 3-5 times a week, 1-2 times a week, occasionally (1-2 times a month or less).
- 2) Considering your daily routine, estimate the total time spent on short-video apps each day. Please specify durations for typical weekdays and weekends (e.g., 30 minutes-1 hour on weekdays, 2-3 hours on weekends), and briefly explain the basis (e.g., daily perception, short-term usage records).
- 3) During which time periods do you mainly use short videos? (Multiple choices: after waking up, morning class breaks/rest periods, lunch break, afternoon post-class/work breaks, evening, within 1 hour before bedtime, other specific periods). Are there significant differences in usage duration/frequency across periods? If so, analyze reasons (e.g., time availability, usage purpose, environmental conditions).
- 4) Under what situations or states are you inclined to open short-video apps? (Examples: during study/work breaks for short rest, when bored with no plans, when needing stress relief, before bedtime to kill time, during fragmented time like queuing/commuting, when having specific information needs (e.g., study tips, general knowledge), other situations). Explain why you chose to use short videos in these scenarios.
- 5) Have you ever actively tried to control or reduce short-video usage time?
  - If yes: Detail specific methods/strategies tried (e.g., setting app usage limits, uninstalling apps, restricting to specific periods, seeking supervision, replacing with other activities). Evaluate effectiveness (e.g., very effective, partially effective, basically ineffective), and analyze reasons (e.g., method feasibility, self-discipline, external distractions).
  - If no: Explain why not (e.g., considering current duration reasonable, no need to control, lack of effective methods).
- 6) When actual short-video usage significantly exceeds your original plan (e.g., planned 30 minutes, used 1 hour), what feelings/thoughts do you usually have? (Multiple choices: self-blame, annoyance, anxiety, indifference, aware of the problem but unable to stop immediately, other feelings). Does this affect subsequent behavior? (e.g., prompting immediate stop, continuing to "compensate" or escape negative feelings, making you focus more on control later, no obvious impact). Illustrate with specific experiences.

### III. Investigation of Short-video Use, Social Comparison, and Emotional Responses

- 1) While browsing short-video content, have you ever experienced specific emotional responses like envy after seeing others' displayed lifestyles (e.g., material conditions: luxury goods, real estate;

lifestyles: travel, social activities; achievements: academic awards, career promotions; appearance: body shape, fashion/makeup)? Or felt stronger emotions than envy (e.g., desire for others' possessions/status with psychological disparity)?

- If yes: Describe 1-2 most memorable examples, including: theme of the triggering content (e.g., elite university students' study life, bloggers sharing high-end travel experiences), key presentation details (e.g., specific scenes, characters' performances, conveyed values), and your immediate emotional reaction (e.g., specific object of envy, manifestations of strong emotions).
- If no: Explain why not (e.g., considering short-video content mostly "performance", not focusing on others' lifestyles, maintaining a calm mindset).

2) When experiencing the above envy or stronger emotions, what are your specific thoughts and feelings? (Multiple choices with explanations: feeling inferior in related aspects, desiring similar possessions/lifestyles as in videos, believing others' achievements/statuses involve unfair factors, being motivated to pursue similar goals, feeling frustrated or self-denied, other thoughts). Illustrate the thought process based on specific emotional experiences.

3) Compared with similar emotions triggered by the achievements/advantages of people around you (e.g., classmates, friends, family) in real life, how do emotions triggered by short-video content (envy or stronger emotions) differ? (Analyze from dimensions: emotional intensity, duration, triggered behavioral impulses, impact on mindset, object familiarity, perception of emotional authenticity, etc.). Provide examples of specific differences.

4) Do you think emotional experiences (positive or negative) during short-video use will, in turn, affect your subsequent short-video usage behavior?

- If yes: Describe specific influence forms (multiple choices with explanations: prompting more frequent use, e.g., seeking similar stimulating content or escaping negative emotions; inclining to watch specific types, e.g., more motivational content for inspiration, more "wealth-displaying" content out of curiosity, deliberately avoiding emotion-triggering types; leading to thoughts/actions of reducing use; other influences). Illustrate with actual experiences.
- If no: Explain why not (e.g., rationally distinguishing emotions from behavior, usage more driven by habits).

#### IV. Investigation of Short-video Use, Social Comparison, and Behavioral Impacts

1) After watching short videos, do you unconsciously compare yourself with the people or lifestyles shown in the videos? What aspects are mainly involved in these comparisons (such as consumption ability, richness of social life, professional skill level, academic achievements, physical appearance, quality of life, etc.)?

- If yes: Please give 1 - 2 examples of the aspects where comparison most frequently occurs. Include the specific content of the comparison (for example, comparing your own fashion style with that of video bloggers, or comparing your academic performance with the "top students" presented in the videos), the frequency of comparison (such as comparing every time after watching, or only being triggered by specific content), and your mindset during the comparison (like actively making the comparison, being passively triggered, or doing it unconsciously).
- If no: Please explain the reasons why you haven't made such comparisons (such as considering short-video content unauthentic, focusing on your own life, or lacking a sense of comparison).

2) How do you think the content presented in short videos influences your tendency to compare yourself with others (either online or offline) in daily life? (Options: significantly enhanced, making you more concerned about comparisons in certain aspects; slightly enhanced, occasionally making you pay attention to specific comparison dimensions due to short-video content; no obvious impact, with the tendency to compare being unrelated to short-video use; somewhat reduced, realizing

through short videos that excessive comparison is unnecessary). Please illustrate the manifestations of this influence with specific examples. For instance, originally not caring about appearance comparisons but starting to care about your own appearance and comparing with others after frequently watching beauty and fashion short videos.

3) When you feel at a relative "disadvantage" in comparisons derived from or influenced by short videos (for example, others in the videos have higher academic achievements or better living conditions, and you consider yourself inferior after the comparison), what are your typical reactions or actions? (Please explain from both psychological and behavioral aspects. Psychologically, such as feeling anxious or self-doubting; behaviorally, such as striving to improve yourself, reducing social interactions, increasing related consumption, or escaping reality.

- Please further explain the specific impacts of these reactions or actions on your study state or daily life:
- Impact on study state (e.g., motivating you to study harder and set clearer goals; causing study anxiety and making it hard to concentrate; generating boredom and leading you to avoid study tasks; having no obvious impact). Please illustrate the influencing process with examples.
- Impact on daily life (e.g., changing your consumption habits and leading to unnecessary expenses; adjusting your social style, either actively expanding or reducing social interactions; adjusting your daily routine, such as increasing study or exercise time to improve yourself; generating negative emotions and affecting your daily mood; having no obvious impact). Please illustrate the influencing process with examples.

#### V. Investigation of Short-video Use and Learning Burnout

1) During your academic journey, have you ever experienced a state of "learning burnout"? (Definition of "learning burnout": feeling physically and mentally exhausted, lacking motivation and interest in studying, experiencing a significant decline in learning efficiency, and even developing psychological or behavioral tendencies to dislike or avoid studying).

- If yes: Please indicate the frequency of this learning burnout state (choices: multiple times a week, 1-2 times a week, 1-2 times a month, occasionally (1-2 times per quarter or less)), and describe typical manifestations of learning burnout (e.g., inability to concentrate in class, procrastination or avoidance of homework, easy fatigue while studying, loss of enthusiasm for previously interesting subjects).
- If no: Please explain why you haven't experienced learning burnout (e.g., moderate academic pressure, sustained interest in learning, good study adjustment abilities).

2) If you have experienced learning burnout, please analyze the main causes of this state (multiple choices with additions: heavy academic tasks and excessive pressure; high difficulty of learning content; lack of interest in the major/subject; insufficient time management leading to task accumulation; sleep deprivation and low energy; excessive external distractions (e.g., electronic devices, social activities); interpersonal relationship issues affecting mindset; other causes). Illustrate how each cause contributed to learning burnout with specific experiences.

3) Do you think there is a correlation between your short-video usage habits and feelings of learning burnout?

- If yes: Please elaborate on the specific manifestations of this correlation (analyzable from perspectives: short-video use occupying substantial study/rest time, leading to task procrastination and energy depletion; difficulty refocusing after watching short videos, affecting learning efficiency and causing burnout cumulatively; certain short-video content (e.g., others' "effortless success") triggering anxiety and indirectly causing burnout; short videos serving as a stress relief method, with moderate use reducing burnout; other forms). Illustrate the correlation process with real-life experiences.

- If no: Please explain why there is no correlation (e.g., fixed and short video usage time not affecting study; clear distinction between short-video use and study without interference).

4) When feeling learning burnout, do you choose to watch short videos to relax or distract yourself?

- If yes: Evaluate the actual effectiveness of this approach (e.g., effectively relieving burnout and allowing resumption of study after short relaxation; only temporarily distracting without fundamental relief; decreasing study motivation and exacerbating burnout after watching). Analyze reasons for the effectiveness (e.g., entertainment value of short-video content, rationality of usage duration, personal control over relaxation). Describe how your study state and emotions typically change after watching short videos (e.g., emotions shifting from irritability to calmness with improved focus; emotions becoming lethargic with further reduced motivation; self-blame affecting subsequent study mindset).
- If no: Explain why you don't choose this approach (e.g., believing short videos cannot effectively relieve burnout; having more suitable relaxation methods like exercise or reading; worrying about difficulty returning to a study state after watching). Introduce the methods you usually use to alleviate learning burnout.

5) Have you tried any methods or strategies to improve learning burnout?

- If yes: List specific methods/strategies (e.g., adjusting study plans to reduce pressure; increasing physical exercise to improve well-being; communicating with others to relieve negative emotions; adjusting sleep schedules to ensure adequate rest). Indicate whether these attempts included active management of short-video usage time (e.g., methods mentioned in question II.5). If included, evaluate the degree of help in managing short-video use (e.g., significantly helpful with increased study time and improved focus; partially helpful by reducing distractions but not addressing core burnout issues; minimally helpful as short-video use is not the main cause). Analyze reasons for the help degree. If not included, explain why short-video management was not incorporated (e.g., believing no correlation between short-video use and burnout; focusing strategies on other causes).
- If no: Explain why no improvement attempts were made (e.g., considering learning burnout a temporary phenomenon; lacking knowledge of effective methods; lacking motivation to change).