Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Global Politics and Socio-Humanities
DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.23092

The Influence of Goods Economy on Youth Consumption

Yihan Zhao

International College Beijing, China Agricultural University, Beijing, China
yihan.zhao@ucdenver.edu

Abstract: As a product of emerging anime culture, "goods" cater to the consumption interests of young people. With the emergence of various types of goods in large quantities, the economic effects brought by the "goods economy" and the reasons behind its explosive growth are worth studying. This article investigates the relationship between goods economy and the consumption characteristics of young people. This article first elaborates on the origin of goods economy and its operating mechanism. By comparing with the fan economy and blind box economy, the paper then analyzes the marketing style of goods economy, that it can leverage the advantages of these two economies to achieve its own success. Goods can provide young consumers with sufficient emotional value, while being affordable and generating sufficient consumer appeal. Purchasing goods has increased the consumption frequency of young people, led to impulsive consumption, and intensified consumption comparison. Goods economy, therefore, has strong development prospects, which can drive commercial development and strengthen cultural promotion.

Keywords: goods economy, anime culture, youth consumption behavior

1. Introduction

In the last two decades, anime has gradually come into public view. Anime refers to the virtual world and cultural space created by two-dimensional images, including animation, comics, games, and other graphic visual works. The anime culture originated in Japan and gradually spread to China in the 1970s [1]. As the anime culture becomes more and more popular among young people in China, the domestic anime industry is also growing. Its representative commodity is cultural derivative products, also known as "goods." There are various types of goods. The most common types are small decorative items including badges, standing plates, collectible cards, figurines, etc. Goods are particularly popular among young people. In just a few years, whether it is upscale shopping malls located in the center of the capital city or small shops in small towns, goods can be seen everywhere. On the most popular second-hand trading platform in China, Idlefish, the highly rare collectible card of the American animation "My Little Pony" was once sold for 45,000 yuan [2].

Goods economy is a new economy born from the trade of goods. Driven by the purchase of goods by the youth, goods economy is sparking a wave of goods craze in the market. The impact of goods on the consumption psychology and behavior and of young people deserves attention. The rapid development and massive scale of the goods economy are due to its ability to precisely cater to the consumption habits of young people. The consumption features of the youth group are closely related to fashion trends [3]. They are more likely to purchase the most popular products among their peer. Interpersonal socialization is another important factor that affects the consumption of the youth [4].

© 2026 The Authors. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.23092

The consumption behavior and emotional orientation of young people are also closely related, and pleasure is their biggest motivation for consumption [5]. The blind box economy and fan economy are also related to the goods economy. The blind box economy promotes consumption through surprising outcome [6]. The fan economy utilizes the emotional connection between consumers and brands to attract consumption [7]. The goods economy has a clear integration with the two.

This article introduces the origin and operation mechanism of the goods economy. After comparing the similarities and differences among the goods economy, blind box economy, and fan economy, the article analyses the impact of the goods economy on the consumption behavior and psychology of young people. Finally, strategies for controlling the goods economy and prospects for its development are provided.

2. Overview of goods economy

2.1. Emergence of goods economy

The goods economy, as its name implies, refers to the derivative product economy born around the anime culture. These products typically include anime merchandise, figurines, fan creations, and more. They deeply represent anime culture and meet the fans' needs for in-depth experience and collection of their favorite works. The origin of the goods economy can be traced back to Japan. With anime culture spreading rapidly in China, the goods economy has gradually been accepted by the domestic market.

In the early days, the form of goods was relatively simple, with only basic products such as badges and paper cards. The market size was relatively small, with related goods mainly sold at specific anime exhibitions. However, in recent years, with the gradual acceptance of the anime culture in China, the goods economy has developed rapidly. Nowadays, a rich variety of goods products appear. They are for purchase not only at various anime exhibitions but also in large shopping malls and online platforms, where these derivatives have become popular products that attract consumers.

At this stage, the target consumer group of the goods economy is mainly the lovers of anime culture. This group, although relatively young, has high purchasing power and loyalty. As Ne Zha 2 becomes popular, which is now the most popular in the Chinese film history, the related merchandise of Ne Zha 2 has been selling well on various platforms. Among them, the characters Ne Zha and Ao Bing are very popular among Chinese children. Buying their peripheral cards has become a new trend. Many movie fans come into the store to buy merchandise after watching the movie. There are many young trendy toy enthusiasts and movie fans, but most of them are accompanied by parents to purchase goods. Therefore, the market potential of the goods economy is enormous.

2.2. Operating mechanism

There are three main aspects that need to be understood about the operating mechanism of the goods economy, namely, the industrial chain, business model, and profit model of the goods economy.

The industrial chain of the goods economy covers multiple links such as content creation, product design, production and manufacturing, distribution channels, and after-sales service. Content creators and anime copyright holders are the starting points of the industry chain, providing original content. Then, designers and manufacturers create derivative products based on these contents. Finally, merchants sell products to consumers through online and offline channels. Generally, online channels provide certain after-sales service, and customers have the right to return defective products. However, offline sales generally do not include after-sales service.

The business model of the goods economy mainly relies on the loyalty of anime enthusiasts to the Intellectual Properties (IPs) and the official authorization. By creating attractive anime IP, businesses can attract fans to consume. The profit model of the goods economy mainly comes from the sales

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.23092

profit of products. Merchants have many ways to increase the attractiveness of their products. The most common sales method is to make goods into blind boxes, using the unknown nature of blind boxes to add fun. Merchants often impose time and quantity restrictions on goods, enhancing their scarcity and added value. The main costs of the goods economy are copyright licensing fees and promotional expenses, while the material value and production costs of the product itself are relatively low.

Table 1: The price of producing different goods on Taobao

Badge	Photo card	Acrylic stand	Plush toy
1 yuan each	3.9 yuan for 55 cards	15 yuan each	50 yuan

As Table 1 shows, compared with other goods, photo card is the cheapest, but also the easiest to inflate. In the case where the cost of a card is less than 0.1 yuan, if a card with high rarity can be sold for 50 yuan, it is equivalent to earning 500 times the cost, not to mention many small cards with a unit price of hundreds or even thousands of yuan. Compared to photo cards, although other types of goods are not as exaggerated, items with high rarity are still sold at prices that are generally more than five times the original price.

3. Comparative analysis of goods, blind box and fan economy

The form of goods economy is very similar to blind box economy. In the current market, most goods are sold in blind boxes. There are usually 6 to 12 kinds of goods mixed together in a set of blind boxes, which significantly increases the difficulty for consumers to pick their desired ones. The randomness of purchasing blind boxes increases consumers' consumption incentives. When consumers fail to pick the style they want, most of them will choose to give up. However, there are also a few consumers who will keep buying blind boxes until they get their favorite style. This greatly increases the purchase volume of blind boxes. Differently, there are also a small amount of non-blind box goods. However, this part of the goods usually has a small quantity and limited pattern, mostly including large acrylic stands and plush toys. The best-selling cards and badges are still almost entirely in the form of blind box.

Besides, the main characteristic of the fan economy reflected in goods economy is consumption incentives. All category of goods carries the characteristics of corresponding anime characters. For consumers, purchasing goods of favorite characters is an important way to express their love. In the fan economy, the most important means for fans to support their idols is to purchase corresponding merchandise. Differently, idols, as real human, have a relationship between their income and the sales volume of their merchandise. The higher the popularity of an idol, the better the surrounding sales. As virtual characters, the revenue from selling products is controlled by the manufacturer and copyright holder, and has nothing to do with the character itself. It will not generate a fan effect where the more goods it sells, the higher the idol's popularity. However, the sales of goods can reflect the popularity of the corresponding anime characters. Popular anime characters will sell out their corresponding merchandise faster. On second-hand trading platforms, the peripheral sales of popular anime characters are also more expensive.

After the analysis of blind box economy and fan economy, the fact is that the goods economy, blind box economy, and fan economy are already highly integrated. Many characteristics of blind box economy and fan economy can be seen in the operation mode of the goods economy. For example, the form of blind boxes has increased the difficulty for consumers to buy goods corresponding to specific characters, while the love for specific characters has led to the phenomenon of consumers continuing to purchase blind boxes for specific styles. There is also a situation where consumers

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.23092

choose to cooperate in order to avoid excessive consumption during the purchase of blind boxes, such as raising funds to purchase all blind boxes, and then distributing them. This solution may seem ideal, but it is still influenced by the fan effect. The probability of drawing popular characters is relatively low. Therefore, many people have to bring along unpopular characters in order to buy popular ones. This has increased the total purchase volume of blind boxes, which is still a manifestation of fan economy. Therefore, the goods economy presents the characteristics of both blind box economy and fan economy, and has its own unique consumption model.

4. Influence of goods economy on youth consumption psychology and behavior

It is believed that this economic model has a significant impact on the consumption habits and psychology of young people. Goods economy not only satisfies the younger generation's pursuit of personalization and fashion, but also shapes their new consumption behavior patterns.

4.1. Consumption psychology

The development and growth of goods economy is driven by the enthusiasm and pursuit of young people, precisely because goods align with young people's consumption motivations.

Firstly, the unit price of goods is usually relatively cheap. For young people with limited disposable income, the price of goods will not impose a financial burden on them. Therefore, most young people will choose to consume when faced with whether to buy their favorite goods. They are clearly aware that the price will not become a burden for them [8]. After all, this money is almost a fraction of other expenses in daily life.

Secondly, goods can bring young people what they need most – emotional value. It is related to social psychology and is regarded as another important value after economic value, social value, and cultural value [9]. In today's society, emotional value holds great importance among the younger generation. Compared to traditional values, modern young people place greater emphasis on emotional experiences and quality of life, rather than just material possessions. Emotional value reflects the transformation of these values and has become an indispensable part of their lives. Goods satisfies the expression and pursuit of individuality and fashion among young people. As a fashionable decoration, it perfectly meets the emotional value needs of young people.

4.2. Consumption behavior

Purchasing goods, as a specific consumption behavior, has had the following impacts on the consumption patterns of young people. Firstly, there is an increase in consumption frequency. Goods are updated and replaced quickly, and consumption is often stimulated through limited editions, flash sales, and other methods, which may lead to an increase in the frequency of consumption among young people, forming a "fast consumption" model. This fast-paced consumption model is not a good phenomenon. The unit price of the goods may be cheap, but there is still a risk of financial crisis for young people when accumulated altogether.

Secondly, there is a tendency towards impulsive consumption. Due to the fact that goods often create consumer motivation through various marketing methods, young people may engage in impulsive consumption without sufficient consideration, for example, the blind box introduced earlier. Faced with the novelty and uncertainty brought by blind boxes, the motivation for young people to purchase them has greatly increased. Many goods that would not have been purchased by anyone before will be purchased by people to experience the excitement of unboxing, once packed into blind boxes. Similarly, if the style in the blind box is not what they like after opening it, consumers usually make a purchase again, hoping to get their favorite one next time, which increases the purchase

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.23092

volume of the blind box. Impulsive consumption not only results in financial losses, but also brings about a strong sense of regret afterwards.

Finally, there is the behavior of comparison and peer pressure. Young people who buy goods generally gathered together as a social group. Easily obtainable goods are common, while the rarer the goods, the higher its price. Young people who own expensive goods often gain a sense of superiority in their social circles. These goods are becoming a sort of luxury items for young people. Young consumers unconsciously compare their own goods or services with others when making purchase decisions, hoping to demonstrate their social status, economic ability, or taste through consumption. Precious goods can enhance its owner's social status within the circle. Winning in social comparison will affect the consumption decisions of young consumers [10]. In this endless process of comparison, consumers may constantly pursue higher-end goods or services, leading to an upgrading of their consumption level and ultimately triggering a financial crisis for themselves.

5. Policy recommendations

If consumer behavior is not controlled, it can easily lead to consequences such as impulsive consumption and excessive consumption. Therefore, it is important to reasonably control consumer impulses. Young people should objectively view goods as a common merchandise and remove the social value attached to it by the external environment. At the same time, young people should learn to plan their finances reasonably and purchase goods in moderation while ensuring their daily lives. Planning assets is a good way to enhance self-discipline and help young people improve themselves [11].

In the current booming economy of goods, how to utilize the positive effects of the goods economy is an important issue. At the government level, officials should encourage development of goods economy and support its integration with traditional culture. Nowadays, with the development of online shopping, many shopping malls are not thriving. As an emerging economy, goods economy can effectively drive the operating income of old shopping malls. Establishing a goods store in the mall can attract more young people to come and shop, injecting new vitality into the old mall.

In addition, the goods economy can also have an impact on promoting traditional culture. If anime characters can be integrated with traditional culture to create anime products with traditional cultural elements, they will be more popular among young people. The collaboration between domestic scenic spots and anime IPs is also a good way to promote cultural attractions. For example, on October 28, 2024, the Vatican officially unveiled its official Jubilee mascot for 2025 – Luce, meaning "light." By participating in designated activities, citizens can receive specific goods of Luce including badge, pendant, and brochure. The Vatican government has demonstrated the joint advantages of goods economy and traditional culture. By attracting the attention of young people to stimulate consumption and drive economic growth. Therefore, the government's encouragement of the goods economy under certain regulations can promote economic growth.

6. Conclusion

In the past few years, with the popularity of anime, as a peripheral product of anime culture, goods is forming a new emerging economy. The article mainly analyzes the impact of the goods economy on the consumption psychology and behavior of young people. Originated in Japan, anime has sparked a trend among young people. Goods economy is an emerging economy that primarily relies on selling anime-related peripheral products to win the love of young consumer groups. The article, then, analyzes the origin and development of goods economy. As a derivative economy of anime culture, the main target group of the goods economy is young anime enthusiasts. The industrial chain of the

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7048/2025.23092

goods economy includes product design and product sales, with the main profit model relying on the popularity of anime IPs to increase product sales.

There are many similarities and differences in marketing models among goods economy, blind box economy, and fan economy. Most goods are sold in blind boxes, while attracting consumers through IP popularity is similar to the fan economy. Goods, blind box, and fan economy have been highly integrated. Goods have a low unit price and can provide emotional value to buyers, which increases the consumption desire of young people.

In terms of consumer behavior, goods economy has increased the frequency of consumption among young people, promoted impulsive consumption, and exacerbated the phenomenon of consumption comparison. The article believes that government encouragement measures are very important in promoting economic growth by leveraging the advantages of the goods economy. Goods economy can drive the development of the old-fashioned economic development mode and enhance the promotion of traditional culture.

Goods economy is an emerging economy, and the available research data is relatively limited. Therefore, there are certain limitations and room for improvement in the conclusion of the study. In the future, large-scale surveys can be conducted and integrated into quantitative analysis on evaluating the impact of goods economy on youth consumption.

References

[1] *Huang, H. (2024) Analysis of the Development History of China's ACG (Anime, Comics, and Games) Industry in 2024: From Subculture to Mainstream. Retrieved from https://xw.qianzhan.com/analyst/detail/220/240724-edb7cf58.html*

[2] *Li, H., Li, S. and Tang, J. (2024) A single card sold for tens of thousands! My Little Pony cards are on fire, investigative journalists uncover. Retrieved from http://nny.nnnews.net/yaowen/p/3219294.html*

[3] *Prashar, A and Kaushal, L. A. (2025) Nudging sustainable fashion choices: An experimental investigation on generation Z fashion consumers. Acta Psychologica, 104727.*

[4] *López-Mayan, C. and Nicodemo, C. (2023) "If my buddies use drugs, will I?" Peer effects on substance consumption among teenagers. European Journal of Health Economics, 101246.*

[5] *Grappi, S., Bergianti, F., Gabrielli, V. and Baghi, I. (2023) The effect of message framing on young adult consumers' sustainable fashion consumption: The role of anticipated emotions and perceived ethicality. Journal of Business Research, 114341.*

[6] *Zhang, Y., and Zhang, T. (2022) The effect of blind box product uncertainty on consumers' purchase intention: The mediating role of perceived value and the moderating role of purchase intention. Front Psychology, 3(13), 946527.*

[7] *Suttikun, C. and Mahasuweerachai, P. (2023) The influence of status consumption and social media marketing strategies on consumers' perceptions of green and CSR strategies: How the effects link to emotional attachment to restaurants. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 56, 546-557.*

[8] *Gourville, J., and Soman, D. (2002) Pricing and the psychology of consumption. Journal of Consumer Research, 80(9), 90-96, 126.*

[9] *Liu, Y., Duan, D., Han, Z. and Jia, W. (2024) Decoding "Emotional Value". China Social Science Network - China Social science Journal. Retrieved from https://www.cssn.cn/skgz/bwyc/202408/t20240815_5772113.shtml*

[10] *Hu, Y., Zhou, M., Shao, Y., Wei, J., Li, Z., Xu, S., Maguire, P. and Wang, D. (2021) The effects of social comparison and depressive mood on adolescent social decision-making. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 21(1), 3.*

[11] *Kumsa, M. J., Lemu, B. N. and Nguse, T. M. (2020) Lack of pocket money impacts Ethiopian undergraduate health science students learning activities. PLoS One, 15(12), e0243634.*