



BookTok Brazil and new literary experiences



About Reglab

We are a private research center specializing in the media and technology sector, supporting companies, associations, and policymakers in making strategic decisions based on data and evidence.

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Executive Summary

This study examines BookTok and how this reading community on TikTok is reshaping reading practices, literary discovery dynamics, and the publishing market in Brazil. The research combines a synthesis of academic literature with participant observation in physical bookstores, analyzing how the digital mediation of reading intersects with offline experiences and narrative consumption practices.

The analysis shows that BookTok functions as an informal infrastructure for discovery, recommendation, and social validation of reading, particularly among younger audiences, by embedding books within entertainment-oriented digital ecosystems.

Key Findings

- **Incidental literary discovery and entertainment:** On BookTok, exposure to books occurs in an unplanned manner, embedded within the consumption of entertainment content. Reading is associated with emotions, identification, sociability, and representation, reaching both readers and non-readers outside traditional circuits and encouraging experimentation with new genres, authors, themes, and works.
- **Peer recommendation and the legitimization of reading:** Content creators have established themselves as key references for book recommendations, driven by perceived authenticity and proximity to their audiences. The legitimization of works now occurs through multiple forms of mediation, including shared personal experience and diverse modes of critique, within a heterogeneous ecosystem that brings together general readers, specialized creators, authors, and critics active on the platform, a dynamic already recognized and incorporated by the publishing industry.
- **Expansion of impact beyond fiction:** Although often associated with the popularization of romance and entertainment genres, BookTok also drives the circulation of non-fiction works, including titles in philosophy and contemporary essays.
- **Impacts on the publishing market and bookstores:** BookTok influences sales, revives backlist titles, and shapes the organization of physical bookstore spaces, where platform-associated works gain prominence through curated displays, signage, and special editions. This impact, however, is not uniform; it varies according to bookstore profile, curatorial practices, and local context.

- **Expansion of readers' repertoires and its limits:** BookTok's community dynamics encourage readers to move beyond their "comfort zone" and engage with new literary repertoires. At the same time, the logic of trends and virality can concentrate attention on specific genres and titles, revealing tensions between cultural diversity and homogenization.
- **Recommendations emphasize representation and diverse voices:** BookTok promotes diverse works, particularly those featuring LGBTQIA+ narratives, varied forms of protagonism, and themes related to identity and mental health, fostering stronger reader identification.

Introduction

The Brazilian publishing market has grown over the past three years, driven by events such as the International Book Biennial in Rio de Janeiro, which in 2023 attracted 600,000 attendees and sold 5.5 million books¹. The 7.8% increase in book sales between 2024 and 2025² reflects the influence of social media platforms, such as TikTok, on cultural consumption³.

BookTok and other online reading communities have the power to turn older books into contemporary successes, placing classic titles back on bestseller lists, as occurred with Machado de Assis's *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* (The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas)⁴. This digital dynamic is already visible in the physical world, with the emergence of stands and labels such as "TikTok sensation" in bookstores and book fairs⁵.

Our research **investigates how BookTok manifests in reading and consumption practices and how these dynamics connect to the Brazilian publishing market, especially in the offline context**. Through bookstore observation and data analysis, we seek to understand **how this digital mediation impacts the offline publishing market**.

¹ [Com mais de 600 mil visitantes, Bienal do Livro 2023 teve 5,5 milhões de livros vendidos \(G1, 2023\)](#)

² [Varejo de livros registra mais um resultado positivo na expectativa para o fim do ano \(PublishNews, 2025\)](#)

³ ["Tá, tá movimentando": a indústria editorial e o TikTok no Brasil. Comunicação Mídia e Consumo \(Depexe, Freitas, 2023\); O TikTok e a formação de novos leitores no Brasil: o impacto dos booktokers no mercado editorial \(Barbosa, 2024\)](#)

⁴ [A influência do TikTok no mercado editorial: uma análise do BookTok \(Führ, Rauber, Barth, 2023\); O papel das mídias sociais no ato de incentivar o jovem a ler e o impacto do gênero literário romance \(Fernandes, 2024\)](#)

⁵ [A influência do TikTok no mercado editorial: uma análise do BookTok \(Führ, Rauber, Barth, 2023\)](#)

Sample data

What is BookTok?

BookTok is a book-focused community within TikTok. It is organized around the hashtag **#BookTok**, where users share short videos about books, reading, and their literary experiences.

It is a digital space in which users recommend books, share their emotional responses to reading, and interact with one another, creating new ways of talking about literature.

In 2025, videos under the hashtag #BookTokBrasil surpassed 3 billion views in Brazil. More broadly, book-related content on the platform exceeded 12 billion views in the country during the same period⁶.

On BookTok, **content creators act as reading influencers**, sharing personal stories, discussing their emotions, and building connections with audiences. This helps make certain books, authors, and genres more visible and popular. These changes affect not only what people read and buy, but also the strategies adopted by publishers and bookstores.



Methodology: Participant Observation and Knowledge Synthesis

We investigated how BookTok manifests in reading and book purchasing practices, and how these dynamics connect to the offline publishing market. To do so, we adopted a qualitative approach combining knowledge synthesis and participant observation.

Knowledge synthesis (systematic literature review): This stage indicated that there is a well-established body of academic research on BookTok in Brazil, including studies employing methods such as netnography, interviews with content creators (BookTokers) and readers, and discourse analyses of the platform. We analyzed this body of work by integrating findings and recurring patterns, which informed the structuring of the report's main thematic axes.

Field research (participant observation): To move beyond the digital environment and better understand the offline dimension of the research question, we conducted a phase of participant observation in physical bookstores. These visits allowed us to observe, in loco, consumption practices, curatorial strategies, the circulation of BookTok-associated titles, and interactions among readers, staff, and the physical retail space.

⁶ According to internal data provided by TikTok.

Book networks: a new reading culture

Although the research focuses on BookTok, we recognize that the influence of social media on book recommendation and dissemination is not limited to TikTok. BookTok is part of a broader context referred to as book *networks* (*bookredes*) - virtual communities of readers that, since before 2020, have used different digital platforms to share reading experiences and recommend books⁷. Examples include BookTube (on YouTube) and Bookstagram (on Instagram).

Field research: participant observation

The social sciences emphasize that participant observation is particularly relevant for capturing the “imponderability of real life,” that is, subtle, implicit, and contextual aspects of social behavior that are perceptible through direct engagement with the field. Observation allows access to routines, interactions, uses of space, and everyday behaviors as they actually occur, rather than as they are later narrated or rationalized by research subjects⁸.

For this study, we considered participant observation to be more appropriate than other qualitative methods. The research question required understanding practices and dynamics that manifest in the materiality of everyday life, through interactions among people, spaces, and symbolic references. Unlike interviews or questionnaires, observation makes it possible to examine what people actually do, how they behave, and how they interact in concrete situations.

Given that this method is intensive in terms of presence and interpretation, we explicitly state who the researchers are and how their backgrounds inform the analytical lens. The study was conducted by Natália Ribeiro and Stephanie Mathias de Souza, researchers at Reglab, in bookstores across São Paulo. Both had prior familiarity with BookTok, developed through the literature review and ongoing engagement with debates on digital culture. This proximity was treated both as an empirical advantage (facilitating the recognition of key signals and dynamics of the phenomenon) and as a methodological point of attention, requiring reflexivity regarding expectations and potential biases.

To ensure rigor, we adopted standardized instruments: an Observation Guide to support researchers during fieldwork activities and a Note-Taking Template. These tools functioned as a shared “map,” without reducing observation to a mechanical exercise. The fieldwork phase also acknowledged the inherently interpretive nature of note production: each visit was shaped by variations in foot traffic, store atmosphere, staff availability, and the presence of the researchers themselves, all of which influenced what became visible and interpretable in each moment.

⁷ Comunidades Virtuais de Leitores: o Impacto das Bookredes no Consumo e na Difusão da Literatura (Valença, 2023)

⁸ MARQUES, J. P. A. “observação participante” na pesquisa de campo em Educação. Available on:; JACKSON, L., GLOWACKI, M. Watching People: Observations. In: VAN DEN BULCK, H. et al. The Palgrave Handbook of Methods for Media Policy Research. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019

Ste: Participant observation captured the “BookTok offline effect,” recording not only what was on display but how it was experienced in real time. It revealed, for example, differences between commercial and traditional bookstores, the pace of customer browsing, and the role of staff mediation. Most interestingly, it also showed indirect signs of TikTok’s influence, which I believe would be difficult to perceive through digital data alone, as they depend on context, store flow, layout, and real-time interactions.



Ste

Seguir

Mensagem



Ste holds a bachelor’s degree in Design and is a Law student. Her favorite book of 2025 was Pachinko, by Min Jin Lee. In this project, she accompanied Nat on the bookstore visits, which constituted her first experience with participant observation in research.

Nat: Participant observation was essential for answering the research question, as it allowed us to observe how BookTok manifests in the offline context. Being present in bookstores enabled us to identify explicit and implicit references to TikTok in the organization of display tables and the prominence given to certain titles. Informal conversations with customers and staff helped capture spontaneous perceptions of the phenomenon and levels of familiarity with it. In a context of growing use of AI in research, this approach reinforces the value of qualitative methods that are sensitive to human experience and contextual factors.



Nat

Seguir

Mensagem



Nat holds a degree in Law. Her favorite literary genre is fiction, and her favorite book of 2025 was A Natureza da Mordida, by Carla Madeira. She was the project’s lead field researcher, with support from Ste and the entire Reglab team.



Research universe

10

BOOKSTORES

visited in São Paulo

34

DOCUMENTS

of academic literature
included in the
knowledge synthesis

To facilitate the reading and comprehension of the information presented in this study, we adopted a color-coded highlighting system:

The **pink** vertical bar displayed alongside the paragraphs indicates that the findings derive from the systematic literature review, which synthesized pre-existing academic knowledge on BookTok.

Text segments marked with a **blue** vertical bar, in turn, correspond to data collected through participant observation conducted in physical bookstores in São Paulo.

Results

1. How BookTok works: a digital reading community

How does BookTok talk about books?

BookTok posts rely heavily on emotion- and experience-based communication. Recommendations are grounded in what readers felt, as illustrated by hashtags such as #BookTokMadeMeCry (“BookTok made me cry”).⁹ In this environment, emotional response is often valued more highly than traditional critical analysis.¹⁰

BookTokers (content creators within the community) tend to share their opinions and personal stories, which helps make the reading habit more “humanized” and relatable¹¹. This style is known as *emotional storytelling*: short, sincere videos focused on the lived experience of reading rather than on technical or critical evaluation of the book.¹²

Displaying emotions, performing reactions, and offering passionate commentary function as invitations to read, increasing audience engagement and identification.¹³

BookTokers create content using popular audios, ready-made visual templates, and viral music on the platform. The videos combine performance and special effects with fast-paced, entertaining language.¹⁴ The combination of short videos, spontaneity, and expressive gestures fosters a new reading behavior based on rapid discovery and visual recommendation.¹⁵

Literary discovery on BookTok

BookTok is a digital space in which readers discover new books in a dynamic and engaging way. This discovery occurs through:

- **promised emotions:** videos anticipate the feelings a book may evoke (e.g., “this book made me cry”);

⁹ [Booktok: uma análise sobre a comunidade e sua plataforma na formação de leitores \(Santos, 2025\)](#)

¹⁰ [O Ensino de Argumentação Multimodal Articulado à Produção de Vídeoresenhas para o Booktok \(Neto, 2025\)](#)

¹¹ [Booktok: uma análise sobre a comunidade e sua plataforma na formação de leitores \(Santos, 2025\)](#)

¹² [A influência do TikTok no mercado editorial: uma análise do BookTok \(Führ, Rauber, Barth, 2023\)](#)

¹³ [O Ensino de Argumentação Multimodal Articulado à Produção de Vídeoresenhas para o Booktok \(Neto, 2025\)](#)

¹⁴ [O papel das mídias sociais no ato de incentivar o jovem a ler e o impacto do gênero literário romance \(Fernandes, 2024\)](#)

¹⁵ [Book-tok: o Tik-Tok como uma rede de incentivo à leitura \(Alexandre, 2023\)](#)

- **visual cues**, especially book covers, which become immediate markers of recognition; and
- **Identification with other readers:** when users see someone with similar tastes recommending a book, they are more likely to want to read it themselves.¹⁶

Within this community, specific content formats organize literary recommendations, working together to capture attention and spark the desire to read:

- **thematic lists** (e.g., “5 fantasy books you need to read”);
- **short, authentic reviews; and**¹⁷
- **“fofoca literária”** (known as *storytime* in the international BookTok scene), a strategy in which BookTokers discuss plot elements in an intriguing way to arouse curiosity¹⁸.

This new mode of communication is powerful: nearly half of Generation Z prefers to use TikTok or Instagram for searches and recommendations rather than traditional search engines¹⁹.

- BookTok creates “communities of choice,” based on affinities and identification, which sustain this online space for literary recommendation²⁰.
- Content personalization broadens the discovery of genres and authors, encouraging readers to move beyond their “comfort zones” and to resume or strengthen their reading habits²¹.
- TikTok’s “For You” feed recommends personalized content according to each user’s interests. This mechanism recognizes readers’ preferences, increases the visibility of books, and shapes what is discovered²².
- Communication strategies such as *Fofoca Literária* mean that the reading process often begins even before accessing the book itself, by stimulating curiosity about the story and its outcomes²³.

¹⁶ [Book-tok: o Tik-Tok como uma rede de incentivo à leitura \(Alexandre, 2023\)](#)

¹⁷ [Práticas de leitura na ponta dos dedos: uma análise do BookTok \(Nascimento, 2023\)](#)

¹⁸ [Book-tok: o Tik-Tok como uma rede de incentivo à leitura \(Alexandre, 2023\)](#)

¹⁹ [A importância das comunidades literárias nas mídias sociais para a formação do leitor: uma análise do Booktube e Booktok \(Santos, 2023\)](#)

²⁰ [BookTok: o papel dos criadores de conteúdo do TikTok no estímulo à leitura no Brasil \(Karhawi; Iossi; Fernandes, 2024\)](#)

²¹ [A influência do TikTok no mercado editorial: uma análise do BookTok \(Führ, Rauber, Barth, 2023\)](#)

²² [Comunidades Virtuais de Leitores: o Impacto das Bookredes no Consumo e na Difusão da Literatura \(Valença, 2023\)](#)

²³ [Booktok: Letramentos Literário e Digital no Processo de Formação de \(Ciber\)leitores \(França; Rodrigues, 2023\)](#)

In bookstores, we observed how these dynamics affect the daily routines of both customers and staff:

- **Supporting sales:** A bookseller we spoke with uses TikTok to better understand storylines and provide more precise recommendations to customers. In the same store, we observed young people purchasing books they had seen on the platform, either as gifts for friends or for personal use.
- **Beyond romance:** It was possible to observe that the influence of BookTok also extends to non-fiction works, including titles in philosophy and contemporary essays. Among the examples mentioned by booksellers were *A Sociedade do Cansaço*, by Byung-Chul Han, and *Coisa de Rico: a vida dos endinheirados brasileiros*, by Michel Alcoforado - an anthropological essay on lifestyles and social distinction in Brazil.
- **Unexpected successes:** At Livraria da Travessa (Pinheiros), the book *O Caderno Proibido (Forbidden Notebook)*, by Alba de Céspedes, became a bestseller due to social media, despite not belonging to romance or fantasy genres. Meanwhile, at Shopping Morumbi, works by Freida McFadden, author of bestselling thrillers and romantic comedies, were highlighted as major TikTok-driven successes.
- **A recognizable marker:** In the internal system of one of the bookstores, the platform's influence is reflected even in book cataloging. For instance, one title appears as "*Gild – Fantasy Sensation on TikTok 1: Book 1 of The Plated Prisoner series.*"

Content creators have established themselves as key references within a plural ecosystem of literary recommendation

BookTokers help **reshape how books are recommended and recognized online**. They have become important references in deciding what to read, sharing their reading experiences in a personal manner and creating relationships of proximity and trust with their audiences.

This phenomenon is not limited to the activity of "amateur" readers or to the circulation of purely subjective opinions. BookTok encompasses a diversity of profiles and discursive styles, including creators with specialized training, as well as authors and critics who actively produce content on the platform. The presence of literary professionals on TikTok, such as writer and screenwriter Raphael Montes, who uses the platform to discuss works and engage with readers, or BookToker Tiago Valente,

who holds a degree in Literature, illustrates how these boundaries are becoming more porous. What emerges is a new configuration of cultural criticism, in which formal credentials coexist with forms of legitimation grounded in experience, accessible language, and the capacity to engage audiences.

The publishing market already recognizes this influence: publishers invite BookTokers to literary fairs, send them books for promotion, and in some cases even encourage them to write their own books²⁴.

A survey conducted by Instituto Pró-Livro at the São Paulo Book Biennial (2022) showed that **52% of visitors had been motivated to read a book by the opinion of digital influencers** in the previous three months²⁵.

Even so, credibility in these spaces remains closely tied to perceptions of authenticity and identification. As Mattos (2025) argues, based on interviews with BookTok content creators, when these profiles grow and begin to prioritize paid recommendations excessively, they risk appearing “overly commercial,” which can undermine the trust they have built with their audiences.²⁶

During bookstore visits, staff members recognized specific BookTokers as key references in book recommendation. In one of the bookstores visited, the interviewed bookseller mentioned creators such as Paulo Ratz, Ana Ju, and Liv Resenhas, as well as Paola Aleksandra, who is known for quickly reading new releases and publishing reviews that stimulate reader demand. She also reported that customers often mention to one another that they “saw someone talking about how good the book was,” illustrating how recommendations circulate between creators and readers and gain strength through social sharing.

In another visit, a bookseller reported consuming BookTok content for professional purposes, using videos to learn summaries of books arriving at the store, given the lack of time to read them all. This information is then incorporated into their sales interactions with customers.

On BookTok, reading is also performance

BookTok transforms reading—traditionally a solitary activity—into a collective and interactive practice, in which readers feel they are part of a community²⁷.

²⁴ [Booktokers e transformação literária: como o TikTok formou comunidades literárias digitais e impactou o mercado editorial \(Mattos, 2025\)](#)

²⁵ [Ferramentas colaborativas para a produção e representação de conteúdos em comunidades virtuais de leitores: um estudo de caso no BookTok \(Sousa, 2024\)](#)

²⁶ [Booktokers e transformação literária: como o TikTok formou comunidades literárias digitais e impactou o mercado editorial \(Mattos, 2025\)](#)

²⁷ [Uma análise do fenômeno Booktok na promoção de letramentos literário e digital, a partir da obra “Dom Casmurro”, de Machado de Assis \(França, 2024\)](#)

The platform functions as an online book club with millions of active members, where readers do not read alone but as part of reading communities²⁸.

This transformation occurs because users seek instant dialogue and community validation, which in turn influence consumption decisions. BookTok turns book discovery into an emotional and shared experience, framing reading as a social and affective habit²⁹.

Videos function as narratives that humanize literary consumption, while audiences interact by liking, commenting, and creating their own content³⁰.

In bookstores, this behavior is mirrored: it is common to see customers talking about titles and even debating books that became famous on TikTok.

During one of the visits, in a shopping mall bookstore, we observed a group of young people discussing books together, exchanging impressions about covers, plots, and titles they had already seen on the platform: "this one looks like they hate each other," "this cover is so beautiful, I want it," as they pointed out books displayed on a table at the store's entrance to one another. It is worth noting that most of the titles featured on this table were recognizable for having circulated on TikTok.

These interactions show that reading, driven by BookTok, goes beyond individual experience and becomes a shared social practice that extends from the digital environment into the physical space of bookstores.



Entrance table - Livraria Leitura (Tatuapé Mall)

Thus, reading also takes on a performative character: it ceases to be merely a pastime or a search for knowledge and comes to function as a lifestyle, an aesthetic, and a social identity. Being a "reader" becomes a visible position, expressed through habits, objects, and community belonging. In this context, books, curated bookshelves, attractive covers, and even emotional reactions serve as signals of this identity. On the other hand, part of the critical literature points out that the centrality of performance may lead to "appearing to be a reader" becoming more important than the act of reading itself³¹.

²⁸ [Muito além da dancinha: as apropriações do Tiktok para o compartilhamento da leitura \(Freitas, 2023\)](#)

²⁹ [Book-tok: o Tik-Tok como uma rede de incentivo à leitura \(Alexandre, 2023\)](#)

³⁰ [Influência do Booktok na Formação do Leitor Contemporâneo: estudo de caso do sebo online Via Littera \(Cruz, 2025\)](#)

³¹ [In the shallow world of BookTok, being 'a reader' is more important than actually reading \(Pierce, 2023\)](#)

2. Influence of BookTok on Reading Practices

Reading becomes more accessible and social, gaining popularity

The reading community on TikTok functions as a space of belonging, exchange, and literary sociability, encouraging readers, generally young people, to resume and strengthen their reading habits³².

BookTokers make reading feel more accessible through the language they use, supported by simple editing and an informal tone, which contributes to a sense of proximity and spontaneity with audiences³³.

This stimulus intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, when social isolation led young people to seek new forms of cultural consumption on social media³⁴. The community became a space of welcome, exchange, and belonging, reinforcing networks of affinity and encouraging reading practices³⁵.

On BookTok, people share their favorite books and authors, turning reading into a collective experience. This communal aspect is one of the main factors influencing book consumption³⁶.

During the participant observation phase, a bookseller reported having abandoned reading for an extended period and later resuming the habit after encountering literary recommendations on social media, reorganizing her routine to include daily reading moments. This account highlights BookTok and related book networks as mediators of re-engagement with reading, making it more accessible, integrated into everyday life, and connected to shared experiences.

Emotion and identification guide reading

On BookTok, reading ceases to be perceived as an institutional imposition, such as school or university obligations, and comes to be seen as something enjoyable, grounded in **informality, identification, and emotion**³⁷.

³² [Influência do Booktok na Formação do Leitor Contemporâneo: estudo de caso do sebo online Via Littera \(Cruz, 2025\); Booktok: uma análise sobre a comunidade e sua plataforma na formação de leitores \(Santos, 2025\)](#)

³³ [Comunidades Virtuais de Leitores: o Impacto das Bookredes no Consumo e na Difusão da Literatura \(Valença, 2023\); Booktok: uma análise sobre a comunidade e sua plataforma na formação de leitores \(Santos, 2025\)](#)

³⁴ [A importância das comunidades literárias nas mídias sociais para a formação do leitor: uma análise do Booktube e Booktok \(Santos, 2023\); "Tá, tá movimentando": a indústria editorial e o TikTok no Brasil \(Depexe; Freitas, 2023\)](#)

³⁵ [Booktok: uma análise sobre a comunidade e sua plataforma na formação de leitores \(Santos, 2025\)](#)

³⁶ [Comunidades Virtuais No TikTok: As Implicações Do BookTok No Consumo De Livros Da Geração Z Da Grande Porto Alegre \(Cazarré, 2023\)](#)

³⁷ [Booktok: uma análise sobre a comunidade e sua plataforma na formação de leitores \(Santos, 2025\)](#)

Book recommendations circulate according to what moves readers emotionally, creating a more horizontal and affective connection among them. This experience helps bring reading closer to everyday life and can stimulate the expansion of literary repertoires³⁸. Book discovery is marked by rapid finds, visual recommendations, and emotional appeal³⁹.

Many videos function as tools for social bonding, using book recommendations as a way to express emotions elicited by reading and to invite others to experience similar feelings⁴⁰.

"Fofoca literária" (storytime) is also highly successful: it generates curiosity and anticipation about the story, sparks the desire to read, and anticipates the reading experience through emotion⁴¹.

Discovering new genres and authors expands repertoires

BookTok's community dynamics enable new literary discoveries. Content creators use emotional hooks and accessible formats to "break the bubble" and attract even non-readers who browse the "For You" page, expanding the reach of recommendations⁴².

Readers report moving beyond their "comfort zones," discovering books they would not normally read, as well as new genres and authors⁴³.

BookTok also encourages participation in literary discussions. Thematic hashtags function as meeting points for sharing interpretations, fostering reader autonomy and active engagement in meaning-making around books. For example, the hashtag #CapituTraiuounaooBentinho, related to the plot of Dom Casmurro, circulated on TikTok and is seen as a communal space for debate, interpretation, and diverse perspectives on the story⁴⁴.

It was also possible to observe the diversity of repertoires in the offline environment. In the field, the bookseller we spoke with reported increased demand for denser, less commercial titles, often associated with discoveries made through digital influencers. Works outside the typical romance or fantasy circuits, such as *O Caderno Proibido*, by Alba de Céspedes, began to appear more frequently at checkout, indicating an expansion of readers' repertoires driven by social media.

³⁸ A Influência do Booktok na Formação do Leitor Contemporâneo: estudo de caso do sebo online Via Littera (Cruz, 2025)

³⁹ Book-tok: o Tik-Tok como uma rede de incentivo à leitura. (Alexandre, 2023)

⁴⁰ Muito além da dancinha: as apropriações do Tiktok para o compartilhamento da leitura (Freitas, 2023)

⁴¹ Booktok: Letramentos Literário e Digital no Processo de Formação de (Ciber)leitores (França, 2023)

⁴² O TikTok e a formação de novos leitores no Brasil: o impacto dos booktokers no mercado editorial (Barbosa, 2024)

⁴³ A influência do TikTok no mercado editorial: uma análise do BookTok (Führ, Rauber, Barth, 2023)

⁴⁴ Uma análise do fenômeno Booktok na promoção de letramentos literário e digital, a partir da obra "Dom Casmurro", de Machado de Assis (França, 2024)

The bibliography also addresses the idea that the formation of critical readers and viewers is hindered by persistent socioeconomic inequalities, drawing attention to disparities in access opportunities⁴⁵.

This perception was also present in fieldwork: a customer, when asked about her views on BookTok, expressed a critical stance by questioning a desire to “revive reading” already oriented toward consumption, one that encourages the writing of plots based on their sales potential, and by arguing that it may create an elitist view of reading.

Overall, however, the literature approaches BookTok optimistically, emphasizing its role in stimulating reading habits, forming communities, and positively impacting the publishing market.

Although literature has been democratized, the diffusion of titles on social media does not guarantee equality of access, since many promoted books are not available in public libraries and remain restricted to purchase at relatively high prices, reinforcing inequalities.⁴⁶

BookTok beyond the text: consumer good, aesthetics, and identity

The dynamics of BookTok, as well as of book networks, go beyond the promotion of reading itself. Academic studies analyze how this community shapes the social perception of reading behavior by linking it to visibility, media narrative consumption, and cultural belonging⁴⁷.

BookTok can be understood as a manifestation of what Néstor García Canclini, a contemporary Latin American anthropologist, defines as cultural consumption: the appropriation and use of products primarily for their symbolic value.

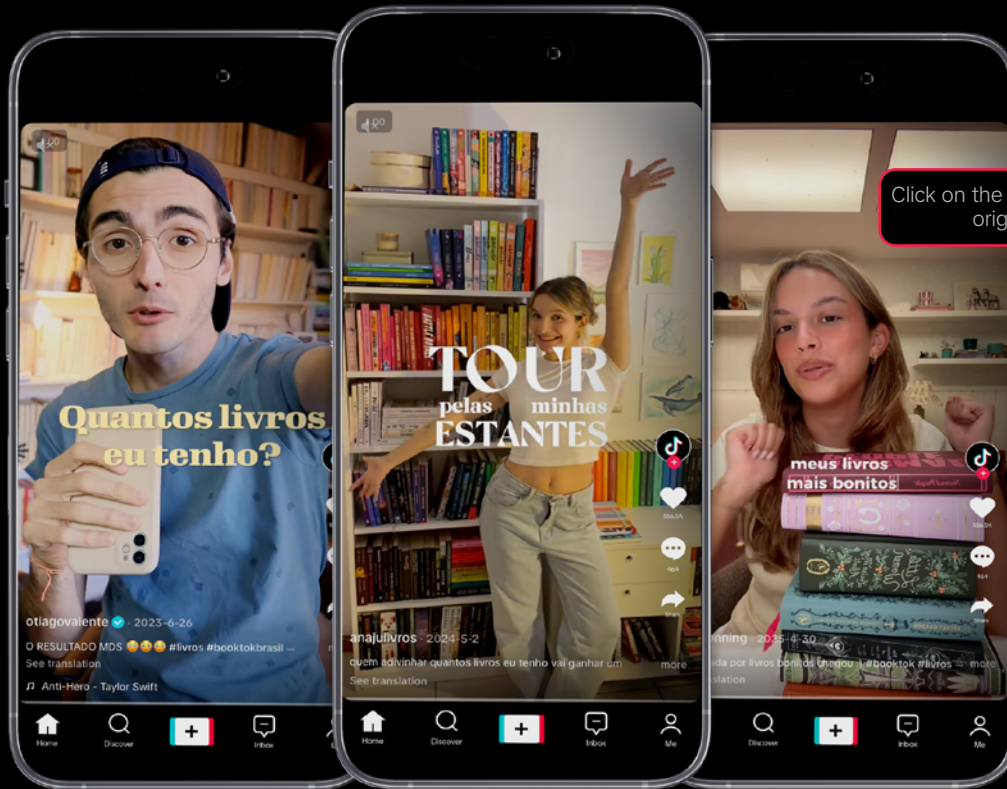
Thus, when video consumption on TikTok is understood as a form of media consumption—which is itself a branch of cultural consumption⁴⁸, it becomes evident that, on BookTok, book consumption goes beyond reading. The act of reading is transformed into image and aesthetics; it becomes a symbolic marker of identity and belonging within the community.

⁴⁵ O TikTok e a formação de novos leitores no Brasil: o impacto dos booktokers no mercado editorial (Barbosa, 2024)

⁴⁶ A Formação de novos leitores: Tiktok e sua influência na disseminação de leitura (Duda, 2024)

⁴⁷ A estética do leitor visível: uma análise do discurso midiático sobre a leitura no BookTok (Magalhães; Santos, 2025)

⁴⁸ CONSUMO MIDIÁTICO: uma especificidade do consumo cultural, uma antessala para os estudos de recepção (Toaldo; Jacks, 2013).



In the bookstores visited, we observed a strong emphasis on the material and aesthetic value of books. Hardcover editions, special editions, and collector's versions stood out, featuring elaborate finishes and visually striking elements. Many of these titles were recognized as TikTok successes or associated with works circulating within the book networks.



Cover of the special collectors' edition of *É Assim que Acaba* (It Ends With Us), by Colleen Hoover. Picture taken during the visit to Livraria Leitura (Tatuapé Mall)



During a visit to Livraria da Vila (Morumbi Mall), a special collector's edition of *A Hipótese do Amor* (*The Love Hypothesis*) was identified. This hardcover edition included an extra chapter and an additional accessory - a bookmark attached to the back cover. The copy featured refined finishing and visual elements designed to enhance the book's aesthetic value. On the back cover, there was an explicit reference to the platform: "TikTok sensation author, with more than 800,000 copies sold in Brazil."

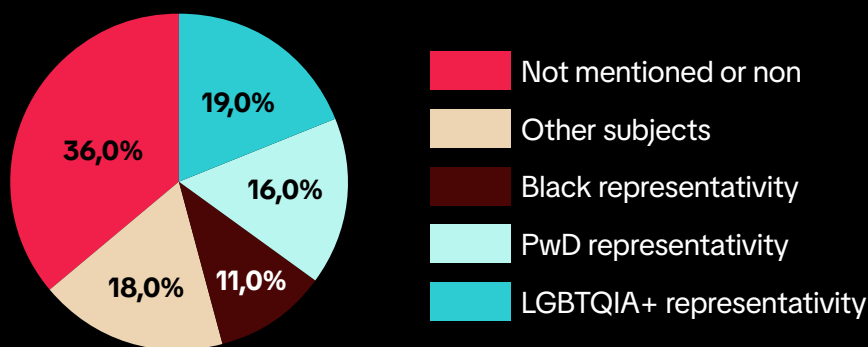
Narrative consumption

The consumption associated with BookTok can be related to the concept of *narrative consumption* developed by the Japanese critic Eiji Ōtsuka. In his study of Bikkuriman chocolates (similar to Nestlé's Surpresa chocolates in Brazil), Ōtsuka observed that Japanese children kept the collectible stickers and discarded the chocolates, in other words, what they truly sought to consume was the world of stories behind the product. According to Ōtsuka, narrative consumption operates simultaneously on two levels: the grand narrative (the universe of meanings that provides context for consumption) and the small narrative (the personal story each consumer creates within that universe)⁴⁹. On BookTok, the grand narrative is the community itself, with its content creators, shared emotions, and cultural codes. The small narrative is the individual book and each reader's unique reading experience, which is influenced by the community's collective perceptions.

Recommendations that value representativeness and diverse voices

The literature analyzed frequently addresses BookTok for its role in democratizing literary debate. The community is viewed as an open, inclusive, and interactive space for conversations about books, one that values diverse voices and promotes discussions around representativeness, diversity, and mental health. This perception stems from the fact that many BookTokers seek to recommend national authors, books that foreground diversity, and youth literature, as well as themes related to representation⁵⁰.

Representativity in books mentioned on BookTok⁵¹



⁴⁹ ŌTSUKA, E.; STEINBERG, M. World and variation: The reproduction and consumption of narrative. *Mechademia*, v. 5, n. 1, p. 99-116, 2010

⁵⁰ Das Trends para as Prateleiras: os Impactos do Booktok na Bienal do Livro Rio 2023 (Macedo, 2024); Booktok: uma análise sobre a comunidade e sua plataforma na formação de leitores (Santos, 2025)

⁵¹ Muito além da dancinha: as apropriações do Tiktok para o compartilhamento da leitura (Freitas, 2023)

One example is a study on the Brazilian publishing industry and BookTok that identifies “**LGBTQIA+ book recommendations**” as one of the recurring practices observed on BookTok⁵².

In the field, a customer at one of the bookstores visited mentioned purchasing *Vermelho, Branco e Sangue Azul* (*Red, White & Royal Blue*), an LGBTQIA+ romance, influenced by TikTok.⁵³ Titles observed during bookstore visits frequently included themes related to representation, confirming this influence on offline consumption habits.



At Livraria da Vila (Morumbi Mall), in the section dedicated to young readers, we observed a sign featuring the hashtag #TodaFormaDeAmor (“#EveryFormOfLove”), signaling the valorization of themes linked to diversity and representation. The use of a hashtag as a communicational device highlights the incorporation of social media-specific language into the physical bookstore environment.

Critiques of homogenization and the centrality of certain genres

The literature review warns of the risk of homogenization due to the logic of “trends” and “virality,” which play a structuring role in the circulation of books and content on BookTok. In order to expand reach and accelerate trends, formats, and potentially repertoires, tend to become standardized⁵⁴.

In the field, however, this homogenization appears to be relative. We observed that BookTok’s influence varies according to the bookstore’s profile, curatorial practices, and location, as will be discussed in the chapter “The ‘BookTok effect’ is not uniform.” BookTok does not operate evenly across contexts; it is filtered through pre-existing logics of consumption and legitimacy within each bookstore.

- In an independent bookstore with a politically oriented curation in downtown São Paulo, the presence of “trending” titles is less pronounced, and TikTok appears as a secondary influence compared to other forms of mediation.

⁵² “Tá, tá movimentando”: a indústria editorial e o TikTok no Brasil (Depexe; Freitas, 2023).

⁵³ “Tá, tá movimentando”: a indústria editorial e o TikTok no Brasil (Depexe; Freitas, 2023); Muito além da dancinha: as apropriações do Tiktok para o compartilhamento da leitura. (Freitas, 2023).

⁵⁴ BOOKTOK: contribuições para desenvolver o hábito de leitura em sala de aula (Morais, 2025).

- At Martins Fontes, the predominant audience profile and the breadth of its curation dilute the centrality of the phenomenon.
- At Travessa, a street-level bookstore, we observed that social media can also shape demand for less obvious titles, suggesting that “homogenization” itself depends on local mediations such as curation, booksellers, neighborhood, and audience.

3. Audience and predominant genres on BookTok

BookTok is predominantly female and young

Age: BookTok is composed mainly of adolescents and young adults, with a core group between 15 and 25 years old and generational expansion reaching 45+⁵⁵. This profile is embedded within the platform’s wider user base, considering that the average age of TikTok users in Brazil is over 30⁵⁶.

Fieldwork reinforces this finding: booksellers reported seeing “primarily younger girls” seeking out BookTok titles, often mentioning young readers looking for books by authors such as Colleen Hoover. Nearly all customer interactions observed in bookstores involved teenage girls or young women. A recurring pattern across stores was mothers accompanied by their adolescent daughters, as well as groups of girls browsing fiction and romance sections.

Identity: there is a significant presence of LGBTQIA+ readers and a strong demand for representativeness: “new generations seek identification with characters and narratives, expanding titles with LGBTQIA+ representation.”⁵⁷.



+70%

OF BOOKTOKERS ARE WOMEN⁵⁸

⁵⁵ A influência do BookTok na formação do leitor contemporâneo: estudo de caso do sebo online Via Littera (Cruz, 2025)

⁵⁶ According to a statement by TikTok Brazil’s Public Policy Manager (official company statement) during the opening panel of Safer Internet Day 2026. Available at: <https://youtu.be/GK3rTjKoWYo?si=JnRJQpQxFLxC8FCm&t=3071>

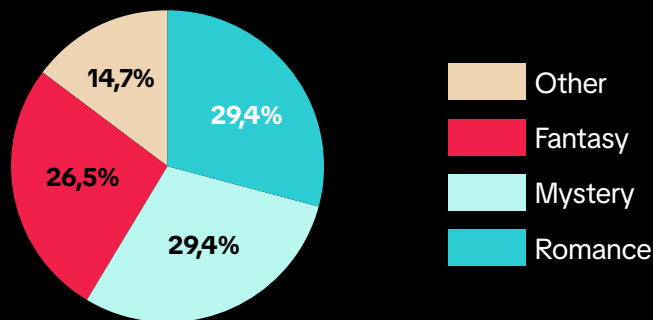
⁵⁷ A Formação de novos leitores: Tiktok e sua influência na disseminação de leitura (Duda, 2024)

⁵⁸ Muito além da dancinha: as apropriações do Tiktok para o compartilhamento da leitura (Freitas, 2023)

Romance, fiction, and Young Adult align well with trends

Field research reflects what the literature already indicates: there is a strong audience preference for fiction titles, such as fantasy and suspense, and for Young Adult (YA) literature. Bookstore staff repeatedly mentioned demand for romance, fiction, crime/thriller, and adventure genres.

Genres of books mentioned in BookTok videos analyzed in Chagas (2024)⁵⁹



Some authors and titles repeatedly observed during bookstore visits included *É assim que acaba* (*It Ends with Us*), by Colleen Hoover; *Verity*, by Colleen Hoover; and *A Biblioteca da Meia Noite* (*The Midnight Library*), by Matt Haig.

BookTok promotes the commercial rediscovery of older titles...

BookTok's influence goes beyond trending titles: it also revives older books, bringing them back to bestseller lists years after their original publication⁶⁰. In this sense, some examples mentioned in the literature review include:

- **Mentirosos (We Were Liars):** "BookTok promotes sales of already published books and drives older works back to the top of bestseller lists, as is the case with *We Were Liars*, whose rapid sales growth stems from the hashtag associated with the book."⁶¹
- **Stone Maidens:** *Stone Maidens*, a 2012 crime novel that never became a bestseller, reached Amazon's Top 10 bestsellers after videos posted by the author's daughter on TikTok, linked to #BookTok⁶².

⁵⁹ TikTok: Uma análise das estratégias comunicacionais dos booktokers no incentivo à leitura (Chagas, 2024)

⁶⁰ Adapted from Chagas (2024), based on the analysis of 70 BookTok videos. Among the videos examined, the genres of the books mentioned were identified, with a predominance of romance and mystery (29.4% each), followed by fantasy (26.5%), and a lower presence of general fiction (8.8%) and horror (5.9%). TikTok: Uma análise das estratégias comunicacionais dos booktokers no incentivo à leitura (Chagas, 2024)

⁶¹ Práticas de leitura na ponta dos dedos: uma análise do BookTok (Nascimento, 2023)

⁶² Booktokers e transformação literária: como o TikTok formou comunidades literárias digitais e impactou o mercado editorial (Mattos, 2025)

"BookTok also revives older books, such as *A Canção de Aquiles* (The Song of Achilles), and has led publishers and bookstores to adopt displays and signage highlighting popular titles."⁶³.

...as well as the revitalization of classic literature

Authors such as Dostoiévski, Machado de Assis, and Clarice Lispector were mentioned in conversations with bookstore staff as names that have regained prominence following recommendations on BookTok. In the field, a bookseller reported increased demand for *Noites Brancas* (*White Nights*), by Dostoiévski, noting that, despite being an older work, it has returned to bestseller lists after circulating on the platform.

Brazilian authors gain prominence, including internationally: Machado de Assis, for example, went viral on TikTok following praise from an American content creator⁶⁴.

- *Dom Casmurro* has attracted a new audience through BookTok. The hashtag #CapituTraiuOuNaoOBentinho has become a community meeting point, triggering lively discussions⁶⁵.
- The platform demonstrates its power to revive older or canonical works, as seen in the increased demand for *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* (The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas) after a viral video, highlighting the importance of content virality for book sales⁶⁶.



Click on the image to watch the original content

⁶³ Ferramentas colaborativas para a produção e representação de conteúdos em comunidades virtuais de leitores: um estudo de caso no Booktok (Sousa, 2024)

⁶⁴ BOOKTOK: contribuições para desenvolver o hábito de leitura em sala de aula (Morais, 2025)

⁶⁵ Uma análise do fenômeno Booktok na promoção de letramentos literário e digital, a partir da obra "Dom Casmurro", de Machado de Assis (França, 2024)

⁶⁶ O papel das mídias sociais no ato de incentivar o jovem a ler e o impacto do gênero literário romance (Fernandes, 2024)

4. BookTok and the Brazilian publishing market

BookTok impacts the publishing market...

Multiple studies in the literature document that BookTok boosts sales of printed books, countering expectations that digital formats would replace physical books. Its impacts on the market are broad:

- According to Nielsen BookScan data, between January and September 2021, 36 million books were sold, an increase of 39% compared to the same period in 2020, with adolescents and young adults playing a major role in this growth⁶⁷. By 2025, sales had reached 48 million.

This movement is not limited to the Brazilian context. The impact of BookTok is also reflected in measurable effects on the publishing market: in Europe, more than 50 million books recommended by the #BookTok community were sold in 2025, generating approximately €800 million in revenue.⁶⁸

- At the 26th São Paulo Book Biennial in 2022, publishers such as Seguinte and Companhia das Letras stated that the best-selling books at the event were the result of TikTok recommendations⁶⁹.

In the field, we observed customers arriving with screenshots saved on their phones, searching for specific titles they had seen on TikTok. In bookstores, booksellers confirmed this influence:

"when these [BookTok] books arrive in stores, they quickly become bestsellers or sell out," noted one of the booksellers we spoke with.

...and even the organization of offline spaces

In bookstores, physical space is often organized to highlight BookTok titles, with sections labeled "TikTok Hits" and thematic displays throughout the stores. These books are also frequently concentrated on prominent tables near store entrances.

⁶⁷ Comunidades Virtuais No TikTok: As Implicações Do BookTok No Consumo De Livros Da Geração Z Da Grande Porto Alegre (Cazarré, 2023)

⁶⁸ TIKTOK. #BookTok community helps sell more than 50 million books across Europe as TikTok expands Bestseller List. TikTok Newsroom, 18 mar. 2026. Available on: <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/booktok-community-50-million-books?lang=en-150>

⁶⁹ Muito além da dancinha: as apropriações do Tiktok para o compartilhamento da leitura (Freitas, 2023)

Field observations showed that explicit references to TikTok are not always necessary: its influence can be identified through distinct signals and visual cues, such as cover aesthetics, generic claims like “on social media,” and customized signage highlighting specific series.

During fieldwork, a bookseller noted that the romance section is arranged into two categories: what she referred to as “classic romances” and “TikTok romances.”

In another bookstore, a bookseller mentioned that TikTok’s influence is most evident “in the books that make it to the checkout.” He reported that he actively asks customers where they discovered a given title, and the answers frequently include “influencers,” “friends,” or “on the internet”.

From online to offline, BookTok functions as a “thermometer” used by publishers to anticipate which works and authors “are going to explode,” with “specialized scouts” monitoring the platform⁷⁰.



Several promotion displays for the book “Alchemised” at Martins Fontes (at Paulista Avenue) and Livraria Leitura (Market Place Mall).



Personalized plaque at Livraria da Vila (Center Norte Mall)



Personalized plaque that mentions the book’s genre with Book networks’ own language, at Livraria da Vila (Center Norte Mall)

⁷⁰ Booktok: uma análise sobre a comunidade e sua plataforma na formação de leitores (Santos, 2025)

Covers and Special Editions Contribute to the Symbolic Value of the Book

One study in the literature review describes unboxings as a content format in which the book becomes the “central piece,” not only because of its content but also due to its aesthetics, featuring eye-catching titles and visually appealing bindings, highlighting both the economic and symbolic dimensions of the book⁷¹.

Another study explains that the influence on young readers can also be observed through the promotion of “special editions and new releases,” alongside recommendations and reviews, linking materiality to the desire for purchase and for community belonging⁷².

During fieldwork, observation of BookTok book covers reveals the consolidation of a recognizable aesthetic marked by visual choices that directly engage with the communicational logic of the community:



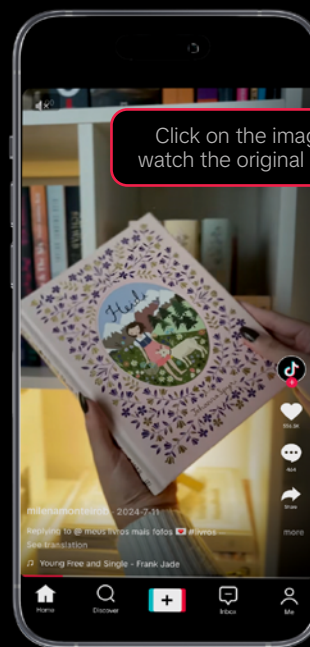
⁷¹ Muito além da dancinha: as apropriações do Tiktok para o compartilhamento da leitura (Freitas, 2023)

⁷² Práticas de leitura na ponta dos dedos: uma análise do BookTok (Nascimento, 2023)

These visual choices indicate a process of aesthetic standardization, in which certain conventions signal belonging to the BookTok universe. Recognizing a “BookTok cover” becomes part of a shared experience among readers, publishers, and bookstores, reinforcing the integration between the publishing market and the reading community on the platform.



The image compiles book covers identified as “TikTok sensations” in Amazon searches, organized according to color similarity. A recurrence of saturated or contrasting colors, stylized illustrations, and emotionally expressive titles can be observed. This similarity points to processes of visual standardization and to the valorization of the book as a symbolic object beyond its literary text.



The “BookTok Effect” Is Not Uniform: Not Everyone Is Impacted in the Same Way

Audiences are impacted from different angles, and the relative weight of mediators varies according to age, bookstore profile, and territory. Fieldwork shows that:

- Booksellers act as mediators who confirm trends (“this one is selling a lot”); translate incomplete requests (“I saw it in a video, cover like this”); and redirect customers by suggesting similar titles.
- In spaces with more politicized and independent curatorial approaches, BookTok’s influence is weaker and more indirect; in commercial contexts, it tends to be more visible and oriented toward rapid conversion.

The specific curation of an independent bookstore located in downtown São Paulo shapes how people interact within the space: books that go viral on TikTok are largely absent from its catalog. “There are only one or two TikTok books in the store,” we heard during field observation.

In another bookstore, also located in downtown São Paulo and characterized by its own curatorial approach and a more selective catalog, we were told that, as a more niche space, TikTok’s influence does not appear in a significant way. We observed that this dynamic may, to some extent, contribute to reinforcing the store’s image and independent character.

Analysis and Comments

BookTok Stimulates the Consumption of Physical Books Through Digital Mediation, Challenging Expectations of Substitution

The findings indicate that, for readers in general, digital mediation does not replace the physical book; rather, it contributes to its revaluation. While part of the debate around digital natives anticipated a shift of cultural consumption toward exclusively digital environments, BookTok points to a different dynamic.

The circulation of recommendations, images, and narratives about books on social media stimulates interest in the printed object, which is also consumed for its symbolic and aesthetic value. Special editions, elaborate covers, and collector's versions reinforce the book as a desirable good, integrated into reading performance and a sense of community belonging. The digital environment operates as a mechanism of legitimation, while the physical book concentrates material and cultural value, also being revalued in its sensory dimension, such as the tactile experience of handling, the act of flipping through pages, and the concrete perception of reading progress, elements frequently explored in content produced by book-related creators.

Expansion and Limits of Repertoire Through BookTok

BookTok's community dynamics expand the possibilities of literary discovery by engaging with TikTok's platform logic, which is oriented toward discovery and entertainment. This enables recommendations to reach readers and non-readers beyond their habitual circuits. Reports point to users moving beyond their "comfort zones" and engaging with new genres, authors, and works, as well as participating in collective interpretive discussions amplified by hashtags that cluster and organize content.

However, the literature warns of risks of repertoire homogenization associated with trends, virality, and short relevance cycles⁷³. While this critique highlights limits in BookTok's promotion of reading, field data nuance this tension by showing that homogenization is not uniformly distributed. This suggests that **BookTok operates as one among several vectors of repertoire expansion, acting with varying intensity across different audiences and environments.**

⁷³ BOOKTOK: contribuições para desenvolver o hábito de leitura em sala de aula (Morais, 2025); BookTok: o papel dos criadores de conteúdo do TikTok no estímulo à leitura no Brasil (Karhawi; Iossi; Fernandes, 2024); A estética do leitor visível: uma análise do discurso midiático sobre a leitura no BookTok (Magalhães; Santos, 2025)

Territory, Curatorship, and Consumption Differ Among Bookstores

Participant observation identified differences in how BookTok manifests in street bookstores versus shopping mall bookstores. In street bookstores, especially in downtown São Paulo, with more politicized curatorship, BookTok's influence was less evident, and titles centered on social, racial, and political debates predominated. In chain bookstores and shopping malls, structured by consumer logic, the influence was clearer, with greater concentration of BookTok titles, organized display tables, labels, and social media language, alongside a younger and predominantly female audience.

This difference suggests that **BookTok's impact does not depend solely on the platform itself, but on the articulation between physical environment, commercial logic, curatorship, and audience profile.** It manifests more intensely in spaces where symbolic consumption and visibility are central, while encountering greater resistance in bookstores operating under different cultural and editorial regimes.

Influence of Cultural and Media Consumption

Book recommendations are thus guided by interaction metrics. The selection of titles that gain prominence is less associated with critical judgments about the work and more connected to technical, economic, and organizational logics structuring content circulation on the platform.

In this context, reading also operates as performance, partially shifting from interpretive engagement with books to the public display of the act of reading. It is not only about consuming books, but about consuming and producing meanings about reading within a digital environment where visibility, engagement, and social recognition become central. **The book functions simultaneously as a cultural object and a symbolic marker of belonging.**

BookTok as a narrative world - and Its story is Still Being Written

TikTok's influence on reading habits is both a **specific expression of media consumption and of narrative consumption.** On BookTok, books cease to be isolated cultural products and instead become part of a broader narrative ecosystem in which the act of reading intertwines with reading performances, sharing rituals, and collective meaning-making.

Reading operates as performance, partially shifting from interpretation to public display. Within this narrative world, the book functions simultaneously as a cultural object and a symbolic marker of belonging, embedded in a dynamic where trends and recurring formats shape the visibility of certain titles, genres, and authors.

What makes BookTok particularly powerful is its **ability to generate stories about stories**: each video not only recommends a book but narrates the experience of reading it, creating layers of meaning beyond the original work. Users are not merely readers, but co-authors of a collective metanarrative about what it means to read, belong, and share in the digital environment.

Networked reading: BookTok, fandoms, and audiovisual adaptations

Beyond the circulation of books as isolated objects, BookTok situates reading within a broader ecosystem of cultural and media consumption. Works circulate in connection with other forms of entertainment, such as audiovisual adaptations and the formation of fandoms, bringing the literary sphere closer to dynamics typical of contemporary digital culture.

BookTok appears to function as a “cultural barometer,” signaling trends and contributing to the consolidation of titles that generate collective engagement. *Works such as Mentirosos (We Were Liars) and A Empregada (The Housemaid) illustrate this movement*: after circulating on the platform and fostering engaged reader communities, they have also been adapted for streaming and film, in a process shaped by multiple factors within the audiovisual industry, among which digital engagement may play a role.

What Distinguishes BookTok from Other Book Networks?

BookTok operates within a broader ecosystem of book-related networks but presents specific characteristics that help explain its influence.

- On TikTok, content creators produce dynamic videos with a spontaneous appearance, creating an experience perceived by users as more casual, relatable, and approachable. The platform also hosts more elaborate content and creators with varying levels of expertise, but overall, this communicative style fosters a sense of proximity and identification with audiences, in contrast to the more curated and aestheticized character often found on other book networks.⁷⁴
- Unlike other platforms, **TikTok favors organic virality and extends content relevance over time**. Older videos continue circulating and being redistributed, sustaining ongoing literary recommendations.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Comunidades Virtuais de Leitores: o Impacto das Bookredes no Consumo e na Difusão da Literatura (Valença, 2023).

⁷⁵ O BookTok e a disputa por poderes no campo editorial (Vilela, 2023).

- **Reaching beyond traditional reading audiences:** TikTok’s recommendation system is effective in reaching users outside the traditional “reader bubble,” allowing certain titles to gain visibility among entirely new audiences.
- Books appear casually within lifestyle, sports, entrepreneurship, beauty, or entertainment content, in a dynamic similar to “scroll learning”⁷⁶, where exposure occurs spontaneously while navigating the feed. This functions as an entry point for deeper engagement, either through reading the books themselves or through further exploration in offline spaces, sparking curiosity among users who would not actively seek out literature.⁷⁷
- Before TikTok, although books circulated on other book networks, their impact rarely transformed titles into **instant bestsellers**. BookTok enables more direct and authentic communication, prioritizing book content within seconds, which conveys greater credibility, particularly among Generation Z⁷⁸.

During participant observation, it became evident that social media influence on reading behavior is often recognized without specific platform naming, through references such as “a success on social media” or “went viral,” without necessarily distinguishing the originating platform.

BookTok in Relation to Public Reading Policies

Research findings indicate that BookTok operates as an **informal mediator of reading practices** among young people, acting where traditional public policies have limited reach, as it functions outside the institutional scope of the State and is structured by private and market logics.

Historically, Brazilian reading policies—such as the National Policy for Reading and Writing (PNLE – Law No. 13.696/2018)⁷⁹ and the National Book and Reading Plan (PNLL)⁸⁰, are anchored in **formal institutional mediation**, centered on schools, teachers, and libraries. BookTok **challenges this axis** by demonstrating that reader formation also occurs in **informal, affective, and digital environments**, where peer recommendation, identification, and community belonging assume central roles.

⁷⁶ [Teachtok e as novas jornadas de aprendizagem \(Portas et al., 2026\)](#)

⁷⁷ [Booktokers e transformação literária: como o TikTok formou comunidades literárias digitais e impactou o mercado editorial \(Mattos, 2025\)](#)

⁷⁸ [O BookTok e a disputa por poderes no campo editorial \(Vilela, 2023\)](#)

⁷⁹ [Política Nacional de Leitura e Escrita \(PNLE\) \(Brasil, 2022\)](#)

⁸⁰ [Plano Nacional do Livro e Leitura \(PNLL\) \(Brasil, 2021\)](#)

At the same time, the research highlights the limits of this digital mediation. The circulation of books on BookTok is strongly associated with purchasing, reinforcing pre-existing inequalities in access. While it expands interest in reading, BookTok does not replace public policies aimed at equitable access and may reinforce a consumption-driven model of engagement.

In this sense, BookTok does not replace public reading policies but **operates in parallel and in tension with axes already outlined by the PNLL**. The platform aligns with reading promotion and the formation of mediators by legitimizing readers as recommendation agents; contributes to the symbolic valorization of reading by associating it with belonging and visibility; and impacts the book economy by influencing circulation and consumption circuits. At the same time, it exposes persistent limits in the democratization of access, as reading promoted on social networks remains strongly tied to purchasing.

Thus, analyzing BookTok allows us to understand how contemporary reading practices are organized within **hybrid ecosystems**, where **institutional, digital, and market mediations coexist**, making visible historical contradictions and challenges of reading policies in the digital context, without, however, overcoming structural inequalities in access.

Conclusion

/ what did we seek to understand in this study? We investigated how BookTok, a literary subcommunity on TikTok, manifests in reading practices and book consumption, and how these dynamics connect to the publishing market in Brazil, particularly in offline contexts.

/ what did we find? The findings indicate that BookTok operates as an infrastructure of discovery, mediation, and social validation of reading, articulating digital practices and in-person experiences. The platform influences the visibility of specific titles, book selection, and the commercial circulation of works, impacting both new releases and backlist titles that return to bestseller lists. Reading emerges as a social, affective, and communal practice, especially among young members of Generation Z, shifting from an individual activity to practices grounded in identification, belonging, and sharing. Engagement with BookTok content expands contact with new genres, authors, and themes, including narratives marked by diversity and representativity, while also revealing tensions, such as concerns about genre concentration, risks of repertoire homogenization, and the diminished centrality of in-depth literary criticism.

In terms of consumption, the book does not appear merely as text, but as a symbolic, aesthetic, and media object associated with image, performance, and cultural identity. This influence materializes offline through bookstore spatial organization, highlighting and curatorial strategies, mediation by booksellers, and the incorporation of social media language. The phenomenon also extends to literary events, such as Book Biennials, demonstrating its capacity to move between digital and physical environments.

/ and why does it matter? The study reveals transformations in the communication, mediation, and circulation of books. BookTok demonstrates how young readers legitimize works and shape visibility within the publishing market. Digital platforms have become integrated into the cultural infrastructure of the book, influencing editorial and commercial practices. This dynamic expands the reach of books and authors, strengthens diverse narratives, and brings new audiences closer to reading.

At the same time, there are risks of thematic standardization, concentration in specific genres, and reduced space for in-depth criticism. Recognizing these tensions allows for more strategic action within the publishing market and reading policies, enhancing positive effects while mitigating the homogenization of literary repertoires in Brazil.

BookTok, like other book-related networks, shows that reading has not lost relevance in the digital context; rather, the ways it is mediated and consumed have changed. The challenge lies in directing its forces toward repertoire expansion, preservation of diversity, and the strengthening of reading culture in Brazil.

Direction for future studies

- 1. Pedagogical potential of BookTok:** Studies point to tensions such as the risk of interpretive superficiality and the homogenization of repertoires, but also highlight benefits such as bringing young people closer to reading, fostering the representation of marginalized communities, and promoting both literary and digital literacy. Future research may further investigate its impacts on the development of interpretive skills, reading attention, and the long-term formation of readers.
- 2. Quantitative analysis of youth reading practices:** this study adopted a qualitative and exploratory approach. Future investigations could incorporate quantitative data to analyze variations in reading habits among young people, comparing periods before and after the consolidation of BookTok, as well as differences across age groups, gender, region, and socioeconomic profile.
- 3. In-depth interview:** future studies could employ qualitative interview methodologies with content creators (BookTokers), young readers, and publishing industry professionals (publishers, booksellers, curators) to better understand recommendation strategies, legitimation processes, curatorial criteria, and perceptions regarding BookTok's impact on book consumption and circulation.
- 4. Democratization of reading, diversity and repertoire standardization:** future research could more systematically examine whether BookTok predominantly operates as a mechanism for democratizing access to reading and expanding literary repertoires, or whether it tends to reinforce processes of standardization, genre homogenization, and visibility concentration around specific titles—particularly in light of algorithmic content recommendation logics.

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Reglab Methodology Annex

Title	BookTok Brazil and the new literary experiences
Research question	How does the BookTok phenomenon manifest in reading and consumption practices, and how does it connect to the publishing market in Brazil, particularly in the offline context?
Methodology summary	<p>This study investigates how BookTok has influenced reading and consumption practices in Brazil and how these dynamics connect to the publishing market. The methodology is qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive, structured in two complementary stages. Data collection combines (i) a systematic literature review and content synthesis of Brazilian academic studies published between 2023 and 2025 on BookTok; and (ii) field research through participant observation in 10 physical bookstores in the city of São Paulo, producing descriptive and reflexive field memos based on a predefined methodological checklist, in addition to informal conversations with booksellers and customers. The analysis applies content synthesis to integrate findings from the literature and qualitative thematic analysis of field memos, aiming to identify patterns and connections between the platform, consumption practices, reading behaviors, and offline publishing market dynamics.</p>



Data collection

Data collection was conducted through a **literature review and qualitative field research** based on participant observation. It encompassed two complementary fronts, following defined selection criteria.

1. **Systematic literature review (secondary data).** Brazilian academic studies published between **2023 and 2025** addressing BookTok (or BookTok Brazil) were gathered, including articles, dissertations, and works available in academic repositories. Only publications presenting **analyses, empirical evidence, or methodological discussions** on the topic were included, with the aim of mapping findings, patterns, and gaps in national scholarship.

2. **Field research (primary data) through participant observation.** Reglab researchers conducted visits to **10 physical bookstores in the city of São Paulo**, producing systematic **descriptive field memos guided** by a predefined methodological checklist. The observation sought to document elements indicating the presence and influence of BookTok in the offline environment, including: (i) sections, signage, or thematic tables related to BookTok; (ii) the presence and prominence of books that went “viral” on the platform; (iii) marketing and editorial curation strategies; (iv) observable consumption and reading behaviors within the space; and (v) perceptions of booksellers, staff, and customers gathered through informal conversations during the visits.

Secondary data collection period: November 17 to December 22, 2025.

Primary data collection period: December 4 to 18, 2025.

→ Literature review

In this study, we employed a systematic literature review to map how Brazilian academia has analyzed BookTok and to identify existing evidence regarding its effects on reading and consumption practices, as well as its relationship with the publishing market.

The search was guided by the research question and adopted explicit selection criteria:

- Timeframe: publications from 2023 to November 2025.
- Linguistic and geographic scope: studies in Portuguese focusing on the Brazilian context.
- Types of documents included: academic articles, books, dissertations, theses, and undergraduate theses (TCCs) available in national academic databases and repositories.
- Search term: “BookTok.”
- Sources consulted: Google Scholar, CAPES Journals Portal, SciELO, Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), and public institutional repositories of Brazilian universities.

Sources:

ANDERSON, C.; REYNOLDS, Travis. Conducting a Literature Review. Washington, DC: University of Washington (Evans School of Public Policy and Governance), Symposium, v. 32, n. 1, p. 529-544, 2022. Available on: <https://doi.org/10.1002/iis2.12947>.

TORRACO, Richard J. Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Guidelines and Examples. Human Resource Development Review, v. 4, n. 3, p. 356–367, 2005.



Data collection

→ Field research (participant observation)

Field research was conducted through participant observation, a qualitative method inspired by ethnography, aimed at understanding social phenomena through direct field experience and the production of descriptive and reflexive records.

In this study, the team visited 10 physical bookstores in São Paulo between December 4 and 18, 2025, seeking to cover different regions of the city, as well as street bookstores, shopping mall bookstores, chain stores, and independent bookstores. The objective was to capture how BookTok manifests in the offline environment and how it influences consumption practices and publishing market dynamics. The bookstores visited were:

1. Livraria Leitura – Ibirapuera Mall
2. Livraria da Vila – Center Norte Mall
3. Livraria Martins Fontes – Av. Paulista
4. Livraria Megafauna – Downtown
5. Livraria Gato sem Rabo – Downtown
6. Livraria da Vila – Morumbi Mall
7. Livraria Leitura – Market Place Mall
8. Livraria Travessa – Pinheiros
9. Livraria Leitura – Tatuapé Mall
10. Livraria Boralê – Boulevard Tatuapé Mall

Data collection was guided by a standardized checklist and resulted in descriptive and reflective field memos, with attention to: the presence of BookTok-related sections/signage, the prominence of “viral” titles, marketing and curatorial strategies, customer interactions and behaviors, and the discourses mobilized within the space. When relevant, informal conversations/interviews were conducted with booksellers and customers to better understand perceptions and routines related to the topic.

Interactions in the field occurred in a spontaneous and contextual manner, as part of the participant observation strategy, with a focus on understanding consumption dynamics in bookstores. Conversations with booksellers and customers were informal in nature, with no collection of personal identifiers or handling of sensitive information. This constitutes a low-risk approach in terms of participant exposure. Given the exploratory nature of the research and the aim of capturing situated perceptions within the observed environment, we chose not to use formal individual consent forms, in order to avoid interfering with the naturalness of field interactions.

Data from participant observation are contextual and not generalizable.

Observations are sensitive to variables such as time of day, location, store profile and neighborhood, visual merchandising, and staff practices. The evidence is intended to generate hypotheses and map BookTok-related mechanisms (e.g., bookseller mediation, content trends, the centrality of cover aesthetics/virality, generational contrasts), rather than to estimate the prevalence of the phenomenon at the national level.

Sources:

MARIETTO, M. Observação participante e não participante: contextualização teórica e sugestão de roteiro para aplicação dos métodos. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia*, v. 17, n. 4, p. 5-18, 2018 <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/3312/331259758002/html/>

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Data analysis

Secondary Data from the Literature

After the identification and screening stages of the literature review, the texts were organized and synthesized through content analysis, with the aim of consolidating recurring findings and organizing empirical evidence on BookTok in the Brazilian context. The resulting synthesis was systematized into thematic axes, such as:

- the influence of BookTok on the publishing market;
- reading and consumption behaviors;
- the role of BookTokers as cultural mediators;
- community dynamics and encouragement of reading;
- communication strategies and the formation of contemporary reading behavior.

In a second stage, recurring patterns were identified—reiterated themes and forms of manifestation of the BookTok phenomenon described in the articles and documents. These patterns were extracted and organized with the support of artificial intelligence tools for data organization (Notion AI), used as auxiliary instruments for systematization, categorization, and thematic grouping.

Based on this grouping process, the patterns were consolidated into broader analytical themes, which informed the structure of this report's sections.

Primary Field Data: Participant Observation

The analysis of field data was conducted based on records produced through participant observation. Prior to the bookstore visits, the researchers were guided by an Observation Guide, which structured the analytical focus and ensured greater consistency and comparability across records, mitigating potential biases.

During the visits, field notes were produced describing the space, editorial displays, behaviors, and interactions. After each visit, a post-visit checklist was applied, transforming the notes into descriptive and reflexive field memos with systematic organization of the evidence (including photographs).

These memos were analyzed through qualitative thematic analysis, identifying regularities, contrasts, and patterns in the manifestation of BookTok in the offline environment, as well as contextual differences across types of bookstores, audiences, and curatorial strategies.

Bias reduction procedures

We recognize that all qualitative research involves interpretive biases and that participant observation, in particular, depends on the researchers' sensitivity and perspective in the field. Throughout the study, a stance of continuous reflexivity was adopted.

In this research, the investigators had prior familiarity with BookTok, particularly through the literature review conducted on the topic. This familiarity may, to some extent, have shaped the empirical lens during bookstore observations, especially in identifying potential signs of the platform's influence in the offline environment.

To mitigate bias, the following measures were adopted:

- **Standardized observation instruments:** use of a participant observation guide and pre- and post-visit operational checklists, ensuring greater consistency and comparability across records and field notes;
- **Data triangulation:** integrated analysis of field data and findings from the literature review, avoiding inferences based solely on empirical observation;
- **Explicit criteria in the literature review:** prior definition of the search term, timeframe, and predefined inclusion criteria for analysis;
- **Joint discussion of records:** validation of interpretations among the researchers involved in the project.

<p>Other methodological limitations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporal Scope: The analysis of secondary data is limited to documents publicly available up to November 2025. Likewise, the collection of primary data was concentrated in December 2025, which temporally delimits the empirical findings of the study. • Variability in Bookstore Foot Traffic: Observations depended on customer circulation within the stores. Audience profiles varied according to day and location, influencing the diversity of interactions observed. • Primary Data Collection Period: The data collection period coincided with the month of December, marked by school holidays and increased consumption associated with Christmas. This context may intensify book purchasing practices and influence consumption patterns. • Geographical Limitation: Participant observation was conducted in bookstores in the city of São Paulo. Although the sample sought diversity in store profiles and locations, the findings may not be generalizable to other regions of Brazil.
<p>Software use</p>	<p>The software used in the development of this study were:</p> <p>Notion for edition of texts and spreadsheets, data and archives organizations</p> <p>Notion AI for brainstorm, information systematization, data structuring, organization of pre-textual elements, ABNT revision, adequation to Reglab’s Writing Manual</p> <p>Chat GPT 4o for systematization of field information</p> <p>TikTok app for capture of screenshots and videos related to the object of study</p> <p>Image Sorter for grouping of visually similar images to systematize book covers featured on BookTok</p> <p>Suite Adobe CC for layout, graphic finishing, and illustrations..</p> <p>Gemini for AI image generation.</p>
<p>Ethical guidelines</p>	<p>Research funding:</p> <p>This research was funded by TikTok Brasil (Bytedance Brasil Tecnologia Ltda). Although this is a commissioned study, Reglab retained full editorial and methodological control over the project, including the independent definition of the methodology, analysis of results, and drafting of this research report. The authors maintained complete professional independence and assume full responsibility for the content and conclusions presented.</p> <p>Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality: The data used are in the public domain and were obtained from accessible sources, without violating the privacy or confidentiality of any individual or institution.</p> <p>Responsible Use of Public Data: Although the data analyzed are public, their use was carried out in a responsible and ethical manner, exclusively for independent research purposes.</p> <p>Methodological Transparency: The research methodology was detailed to ensure transparency and replicability, contributing to scientific integrity and enabling independent validation of the results</p> <p>Non-Discrimination and Respect for Diversity: The research was conducted in a manner that respects diversity and avoids any form of discrimination.</p>



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