The Influence of and Expectations for Film Reviews on TikTok among Malaysians

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Abstract
TikTok has emerged as one of the most influential social media platforms, gaining widespread popularity among Malaysian users. Its algorithm-driven content delivery system has significantly shaped user engagement, particularly in the realm of film reviews. This qualitative study examines the influence of and expectations for film reviews on TikTok among Malaysian audiences, with a specific focus on individuals aged 18 and above who actively engage with such content. The study employs thematic analysis to explore the influence of and expectations for film reviews on TikTok among Malaysians. By capturing diverse perspectives, this research provides insights into the role of TikTok in shaping public discourse on films. The findings contribute to the growing scholarship on TikTok's impact in Malaysia, particularly in digital media consumption.
Keywords: Influence, Expectations, Film Reviews, TikTok

Introduction and Research Problem
According to a study by Intan Nirmala Sari (2023), in September 2016, ByteDance, a China-based company, introduced a short video application called Douyin, founded by Zhang Yiming. Yiming had established the technology company ByteDance in March 2012 before developing the TikTok application. Subsequently, ByteDance innovated by launching Douyin in 2016. This is significant because TikTok later emerged as a social media platform under ByteDance's management, making it one of the largest technology companies in China.

TikTok is a social media platform that enables users to create and share short videos accompanied by music, allowing them to disseminate various forms of information. According to Syahrul Yaumil (2023), besides creating their own videos, users can also view, share, and comment on videos made by others. Consequently, TikTok can be regarded not only as a space for fans and content creation but also as a platform for reviews and news dissemination.

TikTok facilitates content creation by offering user-friendly tools within its application. It was also said that films under review should be analyzed in relation to societal, cultural, and temporal contexts. According to Syahrul Yaumil (2023), film reviews can enhance audience interest in watching a particular film. This is because most film reviews include key scenes that are integral to the storyline, commonly referred to as "spoilers." Spoilers provide detailed explanations of the plot, as analyzed by reviewers.

According to Azyyati Ahmad (2014), film reviews on any platform can influence viewers' perceptions of films they have watched or intend to watch. Positive reviews can enhance audience interest and appreciation of a film, whereas negative reviews can diminish both interest and appreciation. For instance, a viewer who initially intends to watch a particular film may lose interest after encountering an unfavorable film review. This occurs because some reviews indicate that the film is unappealing, citing reasons such as a dull storyline, repetitive plot elements similar to previous films, or other shortcomings. Consequently, when viewers are exposed to negative reviews, they may immediately lose interest in watching the film.

According to Mohd Nizam Mohamad Yatim (2021), audiences expect film reviews to be informative, engaging, and honest, as these elements assist them in deciding whether to watch a film. A review devoid of honesty may leave viewers feeling discontented and undecided about whether to continue watching the film. This underscores the essential need for authenticity and openness in film reviews, as deceptive content can adversely affect viewer trust and decision-making.

This study explores the increasing impact of TikTok as a medium for film reviews in Malaysia, an evolution that has altered audience interaction with cinematic content. As TikTok's short-form, visually oriented format increasingly appeals to varied groups, comprehending its influence on film perceptions is essential. This research is significant as it elucidates how TikTok reviews shape audience preferences, impact viewing trends, and cultivate digital discussions on films. In an age where digital opinions influence box office success and streaming appeal, analyzing the credibility, style, and substance of TikTok reviews is crucial for both media scholars and industry professionals. The research is especially relevant for filmmakers, marketers, and content providers, since it provides insights on audience anticipations for engaging, candid, and informed reviews. It also enhances scholarly literature on digital media consumption by elucidating the interaction between user-generated material and audience decision-making. The findings offer practical implications for utilizing TikTok as a promotional and educational instrument, ensuring that reviews both entertain and augment audience comprehension of films. This research highlights TikTok's efficacy as a contemporary platform for influencing cinematic culture in Malaysia.

Research Objectives and Research Questions
This study aims to:
- Explore the influences of and expectations for film reviews on TikTok among Malaysians.

The study specifically seeks to answer the following research question:
- What are the influences of and expectations for film reviews on TikTok among Malaysians?

Literature Review

The History of TikTok

According to Izatul A'yun Syaibani and Husniyatus Salamah Zainiyati (2022), TikTok is currently one of the most popular applications, with a large user base both in Indonesia and internationally. Typically, users create videos on TikTok with a duration ranging from 15 to 60 seconds. However, the platform has since extended the maximum video length to 10 minutes. TikTok also offers various features such as music, filters, and other creative content elements, along with the ability to broadcast live.

According to Yulia Nafa Fitri Randani et al. (2021), TikTok provides unique and engaging special effects, making it easy for users to create short, creative, and visually appealing videos that attract public attention. The application has amassed millions of users worldwide. Typically, TikTok features short videos with engaging and creative content spanning various genres, including educational content, film reviews, food-related videos, product sales, fashion, and other entertaining content. These videos are created with diverse entertainment purposes in mind.

According to Nurul Jannah Abdul Manan et al. (2023), TikTok has become one of the most frequently used applications among Malaysians, as it encompasses various functionalities that cater to different user needs, particularly for content creators, young preachers, and individuals seeking to share engaging video content. This phenomenon is significant, as many young preachers and content creators have started using TikTok to reach and influence younger audiences and other users, regardless of race, religion, or age.

The Influence of Film Reviews on TikTok

Film reviews can enhance an individual's interest in watching a particular movie. This is because most film reviews include key scenes related to the storyline, commonly referred to as "spoilers." Spoilers often provide detailed explanations of the plot as analyzed by reviewers. Film reviews also have the potential to influence audience perceptions, either positively or negatively. This influence is often complex, as it involves multiple interacting factors. According to Shazrin Daniyah Khansa and Kinkin Yuliaty Subarsa Putri (2022), while TikTok offers numerous learning opportunities, excessive engagement with the platform can also have negative effects, particularly on teenagers who are still struggling with self-satisfaction and identity formation.

Film reviews on TikTok can significantly impact both the popularity and perception of a film. TikTok is a highly popular social media platform, particularly among younger generations, and it allows users to share their opinions and views on films quickly and conveniently. According to Sufiana Rahman et al. (2022), continuous exposure to video content can have both positive and negative effects on users. Consequently, it is undeniable that teenagers are influenced by TikTok videos in various ways. Therefore, TikTok can be perceived as a platform that provides both positive and negative influences on the social lives of adolescents, depending on the content they engage with.

Additionally, the influence of film reviews on TikTok can be observed in their ability to foster creativity and self-expression. According to Najwa Cahya (2023), TikTok has evolved into a platform that enables younger generations to communicate more creatively. TikTok users can

create engaging short videos that entertain audiences by utilizing the diverse visual effects and audio features available within the app. This, in turn, encourages young individuals to be more innovative in conveying messages and expressing their personalities through a more dynamic and captivating medium. This is particularly relevant in the context of film reviews, where content creators must incorporate essential elements to clearly inform viewers about the films they are reviewing, ensuring that audiences gain a better understanding of the storyline before watching the film.

The Expectations for Film Reviews on TikTok
According to Low Jin Lu and Wan Amizah Wan Mahmud (2018), audiences expect film reviews to be entertaining. This is because a large portion of TikTok users seek entertainment through film reviews. Viewers enjoy humorous, engaging, or enthusiastic opinions and analyses of the films they watch. They are particularly drawn to reviews that are creative, amusing, and entertaining, as these can evoke laughter or emotional reactions. TikTok film reviews should provide both engaging and useful information about the film, including aspects such as the synopsis, themes, genre, and message. Additionally, TikTok film reviews should incorporate creative elements such as audio, text, and visuals to capture audience interest, including relevant emojis, background music that aligns with the film's theme, and other interactive features.

Furthermore, audiences also expect fair and honest film reviews. According to Azrul Affandi Sobry (2023), viewers seek honest reviews to assist them in making informed decisions before watching a film. As a result, audiences expect filmmakers to be open-minded and receptive to criticism, acknowledging that individual perspectives may vary widely. Film reviews on TikTok should offer genuine and unbiased opinions on the content being reviewed. Additionally, they should respect diverse audience preferences and refrain from insulting or defaming the film, its director, or those involved in its production. This is important because content creators should uphold honesty and integrity in their film reviews to ensure audience satisfaction with the information presented.

Research Methodology
The study conducted was qualitative in nature and employed the interview method. A total of 10 informants were interviewed to explore the influence of and expectations for film reviews on TikTok among Malaysians. The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis to obtain a diverse range of perspectives.

Qualitative research focuses on obtaining rich, descriptive data that provides insights into attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions, differing from quantitative research, which emphasizes numerical data. According to Seriayuna Sa'don Zubir and Norillah Abdullah Hassim (2021), when research involves observing individuals, groups, families, classrooms, schools, communities, events, or cultural phenomena, case study research with qualitative data collection is highly suitable. A case study should focus on subjects that meet specific characteristics or criteria.

According to Syukr Abdul Hay Kamat (2022), qualitative interview-based studies typically recommend a sample size of up to 10 informants. Informants were selected randomly and included both male and female participants to ensure gender balance. Additionally,

participants were chosen within the age range of 20 to 50 years to provide accurate insights into TikTok usage.

As noted by Hennick and Kaiser (2021) and Creswell (1998), for qualitative research utilizing interview methods, 10 informants are considered sufficient to reach data saturation. Therefore, this study interviewed 10 TikTok users in Malaysia.

According to Mohammed Izrai Abd Razak et al. (2023), previous qualitative studies have highlighted that data saturation is a critical component in data collection. Data saturation occurs when additional data no longer yield new information regarding the subject under investigation. The author further explains that researchers using similar data collection methods have confirmed that between 6 and 12 qualitative interviews are generally sufficient to achieve data saturation.

Research Findings

The Influence of Film Reviews on TikTok among Malaysians

A reference source for film audiences

Many people now turn to TikTok as a reference when choosing films to watch. Positive reviews can encourage viewership, while negative ones may impact a film's popularity. Informant 2 highlighted that audience influence is shaped by diverse individual opinions. For instance, those who engage with film reviews on TikTok may be more likely to watch the recommended films.

Informant 3 noted that a review, whether positive or negative, can pique curiosity about the reasons behind a film's evaluation. However, audience perception plays a crucial role, as preferences vary. Some viewers may be drawn to specific genres like romance, crime, or action, influencing their decision to watch a film. This underscores the subjective nature of film selection, where individual taste ultimately determines viewing choices.

Encouraging the Desire to Watch a Film

Film reviews on TikTok are often presented in a casual and sincere manner. Reviewers typically speak directly to their audience in their own unique style, making it easier for viewers to connect with them and understand their perspectives. This approach can spark curiosity and encourage a desire to watch the reviewed film. Informant 4 emphasized that when a reviewer provides an analysis, viewers can gain a basic understanding of the film's content. Consequently, after watching the review, audiences may develop an interest in experiencing the film firsthand. An intriguing and compelling review might enhance viewers' motivation to watch the film.

Informant 7 highlighted that the influence of TikTok film reviews lies in the audience's curiosity about films they have already read about. Viewers seek additional insights from these reviews, allowing them to obtain a brief yet informative overview of the film. TikTok film reviews are generally short in duration, providing limited but engaging information. By highlighting the most captivating or controversial aspects of a film, these reviews can arouse curiosity among viewers. They may become eager to learn more about the storyline or characters featured in the film. As a result, TikTok film reviews not only provide information but also stimulate curiosity and interest in learning more. Ultimately, audiences are often

compelled to watch the reviewed film to gain a full viewing experience and understand the context of the review.

Conveying Positive or Negative Messages

Film reviews on TikTok can shape audience perceptions positively or negatively, depending on factors such as review style, content, and audience response. Informant 1 highlighted the impact of reviews on the Indonesian film *172 Days*, emphasizing that viewers should look beyond a person's initial circumstances and consider their overall journey. A film that depicts a protagonist overcoming adversity or conflict to achieve personal growth can serve as an inspiration, reinforcing the idea that one's past does not define their future.

Informant 5 stressed that TikTok film reviews contain both positive and negative messages. As such, viewers should focus only on the positive aspects and avoid being influenced by negative content. Consequently, audiences should be selective when engaging with film reviews, ensuring that they are not negatively influenced by misleading or harmful content. Informant 10 emphasized that TikTok film reviews can positively influence audiences. For instance, a film review discussing factual representations of diseases, such as mental illness, can help viewers gain valuable knowledge on the subject. This allows audiences to better understand the challenges faced by individuals with mental health conditions, fostering greater awareness and empathy.

A Platform for Sharing Opinions

Film reviews on TikTok are gaining traction as the platform allows users to share their opinions in an engaging and accessible way. Informant 6 highlighted that these reviews can shape social perceptions of films. Exposure to positive or negative reviews may influence individuals to align with the opinions expressed, affecting their decision to watch a film.

The idea that TikTok film reviews shape social perceptions implies that opinions shared on the platform can influence how others perceive a film. People tend to be influenced by the views and actions of others, particularly when the reviewer is perceived as relevant or relatable. When a user watches a film review from someone they identify with or respect, they are more likely to adopt that opinion.

Additionally, Informant 8 emphasized that TikTok film reviews play a key role in shaping public perception. Trending reviews can significantly impact a film's reputation and reception among users. When a review gains traction, it can influence audience opinions, either encouraging or deterring viewers from watching the film.

A Trending Platform

Informant 9 emphasized that film reviews on TikTok have a significant influence, particularly among younger audiences, as they are the primary users of the platform. At the same time, TikTok serves as a key platform for users to share content with their peers, ultimately shaping trends and influencing the popularity of films.

TikTok is not merely a platform for watching videos; it also serves as a space where users can interact, review, and share content effortlessly. When users come across an engaging film review, they can quickly share it with their friends, thereby expanding its reach within their

social circles. This process strengthens the social influence of film reviews, contributing to their impact on audience perceptions and film trends.

The Expectations for Film Reviews on TikTok Among Malaysians
Continuity of Engaging Content
Informant 1 emphasized that TikTok film reviews should be engaging and compelling to attract a wider audience. This is essential in encouraging viewership, whether in cinemas or on streaming platforms like Netflix. Well-crafted, high-quality reviews can significantly influence audience interest, driving more viewers to watch the film.

Informant 8 further emphasized that TikTok film reviews should be concise and engaging. Reviews are expected to be brief and focused, highlighting only the most essential aspects. This approach ensures that viewers can quickly absorb key information without losing interest.

Additionally, Informant 1 suggested enhancing TikTok film review content by improving creativity, graphics, video and audio quality, and editing techniques tailored to different film genres. For instance, horror film reviews should incorporate sound effects and visual elements to amplify the eerie atmosphere.

Similarly, Informant 4 emphasized the importance of making reviews more engaging and insightful, ensuring they provide valuable information to audiences. This, in turn, helps potential viewers decide whether a film is worth watching.

Informant 5 emphasized that TikTok film reviews should highlight unexpected plot twists while ensuring the storyline remains engaging and easy to follow. They also noted that TikTok's main advantage over YouTube is its short, concise, engaging, and easily digestible content. In contrast, YouTube reviews tend to be longer, which may lead to viewer fatigue or disinterest. As a result, short yet impactful reviews on TikTok are often preferred over lengthy YouTube analyses.

Informant 9 emphasized that TikTok's primary benefit over YouTube for film reviews is its succinct and captivating approach, rendering it the favored route, particularly among younger demographics. However, TikTok's appeal extends beyond just the younger generation, as older users also find the platform engaging. This broad appeal positions TikTok as a leading social media platform for a diverse range of users.

A Platform for Enhancing Understanding
The expectation for TikTok film reviews is to provide audiences with meaningful and informative insights. By delivering in-depth, constructive, and engaging content, film reviewers can help viewers develop a deeper appreciation for films and encourage them to explore high-quality cinema. Informant 2 emphasized the hope that TikTok will serve as a platform that fosters positive knowledge, benefiting both current and future generations.

Informative and well-crafted film reviews not only offer valuable lessons but also influence audience interest in specific films. Given TikTok's growing popularity, these reviews have the potential to reach a vast and diverse audience. Informant 5 highlighted the expectation that

TikTok film reviews should provide meaningful takeaways, helping viewers gain insights and lessons from the films they watch.

Additionally, Informant 10 stressed that audiences prefer reviews that highlight the positive values conveyed in films rather than focusing solely on their flaws. Reviews that emphasize strengths over weaknesses help foster a more constructive and engaging viewing experience while avoiding unnecessary criticism.

A Platform for Film Evaluation
Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of a film is a crucial aspect of reviews on TikTok and other platforms. By providing a balanced perspective, audiences can gain a better understanding of what a film has to offer. Highlighting a film's strengths helps viewers recognize its artistic potential and value, while identifying its shortcomings provides filmmakers with opportunities for growth and improvement in the future.

Informant 3 emphasized that film reviews should not be based solely on emotions after watching a film. Instead, reviews should include an objective evaluation of a film's strengths and weaknesses while also explaining what makes the film engaging or worth watching.

Informant 4 emphasized that TikTok film reviews are more accessible and easier to understand compared to those on YouTube. As TikTok is a preferred platform for many users, its reviews tend to be concise yet informative. In contrast, YouTube reviews often require viewers to watch longer videos, typically ranging from 7 to 10 minutes, to gain insights. On TikTok, audiences can obtain complete and relevant information about a film in under five minutes, making it a more efficient and engaging option for quick reviews.

Informant 9 emphasized that an area for improvement in TikTok film reviews is the depth of content analysis. Reviews should not only be brief summaries but should also delve deeper into key film elements, such as plot, characters, direction, and themes, while providing a more critical and insightful perspective rather than just a superficial review.

A Platform for Diverse Messages
The expectation for TikTok film reviews is to present both the positive and negative aspects of a film, offering audiences a well-rounded perspective. This balanced approach enables viewers to make more informed decisions before watching. Highlighting a film's strengths allows audiences to recognize its noteworthy elements, while acknowledging its weaknesses helps them assess whether the film aligns with their preferences.

Informant 4 expressed hope that film reviews would provide audiences with insightful evaluations of both a film's strengths and shortcomings. They emphasized that reviews should serve as an informative tool, helping viewers gain a deeper understanding before making their viewing choices. Additionally, they encouraged more content creators to review newly released films, as this would enrich the diversity of perspectives available to audiences.

Diversity of Voices and Perspectives
Each individual brings unique experiences and perspectives to interpreting and appreciating films. Encouraging diverse voices on TikTok can enrich film discussions, making them more inclusive and representative of different viewpoints. Informant 6 emphasized that TikTok's broad user base includes people from various backgrounds, providing a platform for diverse perspectives, including those from underrepresented communities in the film industry.

As TikTok continues to grow as a space for sharing opinions, its short and creative format allows a wide range of users to engage in film discussions. This accessibility empowers individuals from diverse backgrounds to share their insights without the need for professional critic status, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic conversation around films.

Resources for Film Review Content Creators
Expanding the number of film reviewers on TikTok presents an opportunity to enrich the platform's film review landscape. TikTok's accessible, concise format allows individuals to share their perspectives without requiring specialized skills, encouraging more people to express their opinions on the films they watch. With a broader pool of reviewers, audiences gain access to diverse viewpoints, helping them make more informed decisions before watching a film.

Informant 9 emphasized that the future of TikTok film reviews relies on increasing the number of reviewers and fostering deeper film discussions. These discussions should not be limited to newly released films but should also include older films, potentially attracting viewers who may not typically engage with cinema. Additionally, film reviews should be critical and diverse, covering a wide range of genres rather than focusing on a single category.

Meanwhile, Informant 7 highlighted the importance of sustaining and maintaining TikTok film reviews as a valuable resource for audiences seeking film-related information. Even the most concise reviews can offer valuable insights, providing viewers with a fundamental understanding of a film prior to their decision to watch it.

Conclusion
In conclusion, this study has offered valuable insights into the influence of TikTok film reviews and audience expectations within the Malaysian context. TikTok film reviews have become an essential source of reference for viewers, who often rely on content creators' opinions as a preliminary guide before deciding to watch a film. These reviews provide audiences with concise yet informative perspectives, helping them make more informed viewing choices.

Furthermore, TikTok's accessible and user-friendly platform has made it easier for individuals to create and share film-related content. Its short-form video format enables the production of engaging, entertaining, and easily digestible reviews, appealing to a broad audience. As a result, TikTok continues to play a significant role in shaping film discussions, influencing audience preferences, and redefining the way moviegoers engage with cinematic content in the digital era.

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