

The Influence of the Popularity of Romantic Films on TikTok on Generation Z's Interest in Watching Local Films

Zikri Fachrul Nurhadi¹, Hatri Sahara²

Universitas Garut, Indonesia¹²

Correspondent: zikri_fn@uniga.ac.id¹

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ABSTRACT: The key issue in this study is the increasing dependence of Generation Z on TikTok as a primary source of entertainment, potentially replacing conventional film promotional media. Therefore, without adequate understanding, the local film industry risks failing to capitalize on TikTok's popularity strategically and sustainably. This topic is relevant, as local films face challenges in attracting young audiences. This study employed an exploratory quantitative approach with a sample of 30 active Generation Z TikTok users aged 19-25 years. Data were collected using a questionnaire with validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and simple linear regression analysis. The results showed that film popularity on TikTok had a positive and significant influence on adolescents' viewing interest (0.647; $p < 0,001$) with an R^2 of 0.538, indicating that 53.8% of the variation in viewing interest was explained by popular films. The results show a relationship between the intensity of user interaction with film content on TikTok and the tendency to be interested in watching local films, with the involvement of film producers maximizing social media as an interactive promotional tool that can expand audience reach and increase awareness of local films. In this study, the popularity of romantic films was measured based on the level of exposure (frequency of watching film content) and engagement (interactions in the form of likes, comments, shares, and use of hashtags). The uniqueness of this study lies in its positioning of TikTok as an algorithmic and participatory communication space that shapes Generation Z's perceptions of local films.

Keywords: Film Popularity, Gen Z, Local Films, TikTok, Viewing Interest.



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INTRODUCTION

The popularity of a film plays an important role in shaping Gen Z interest in watching, especially local films which often face the dominance of foreign films (Fatimah et al., 2025). In the context of the Indonesian film industry, the increase in a film's popularity is usually driven by an effective digital promotion strategy, the strength of a narrative that is relevant to a young audience, and the

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involvement of actors widely recognized to the public (Abdurrahman et al., 2024). Gen Z, as a key audience segment, are tends to be highly responsive to viral trends and public opinion on social media. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the relationship between film popularity and adolescent viewing interest in local films is crucial for understanding the dynamics of entertainment consumption among today's Generation (Liu et al., 2024).

According to the Digital 2025: Indonesia report, the number of active TikTok users in Indonesia has reached approximately 126 million, with over 60% of them being Generation Z youth aged 16-24. This fact indicates that TikTok plays a central role in shaping cultural consumption habits, including entertainment preferences (Fajriyah et al., 2025; Liu & Deng, 2025). This platform is not only a promotional space for film producers through official trailers, but also a place for user-generated content such as video reviews, reactions, and creative edits that organically increase audience curiosity about certain films (Kemp, 2025).

Previous research has shown that TikTok usage can influence consumer behavior and user interest in various contexts, including shopping decision-making and film reviews among students (Montag et al., 2021). However, research on the impact of TikTok content on adolescents' interest in watching local films is still limited. In contrast, research on YouTube shows that consumption of long-form video content influences interest in watching other media, such as television, as well as user motivations for video content, indicating differences in the mechanisms of influence across social media platforms (Khan, 2017).

The number of active TikTok users in Indonesia is expected to continue to grow to 100 million monthly users by 2025, with users aged 18-35 dominating and concentrated on the island of Java. Significant growth in other regions, such as Sumatra and Kalimantan, indicates that TikTok has become a cross-regional social space with potential as a promotional medium for local films (Setiawan & Suhaji, 2025; Victory, 2025).

The influence of TikTok on adolescent behavior is well known (Romadhona & others, 2025). Gen Z often follow viral trends on TikTok as a form of self-identity expression and a strategy to maintain social relationships (Khaerunnisa & Syarif, 2024). The more frequently teenagers are exposed to trending content, the more likely they are to consume entertainment products like movies. Therefore, the popularity of movies on TikTok is an important indicator in understanding Generation Z's consumption behavior patterns (Khansa & Putri, 2022).

The Gen Z Romance film has become an interesting phenomenon because it is able to create viral interactions through scene cuts, behind-the-scenes videos, and challenges that users participate in (Rusman et al., 2025). The film's digital campaign on TikTok, through the hashtag #AsmaraGenZ, managed to reach 20-28 million views in just the first two weeks (Ningsih & others, 2025). Social media variables significantly contribute to interest in watching local films, with an R^2 value of 0.52. This fact confirms that social media-based promotions have a high influence on the behavior of young viewers (Sahabuddin et al., 2025).

The majority of TikTok's weekly active users in Indonesia, 63%, are aged 13-24 years (Rudiansyah & Ula, 2023). This percentage shows that teenagers are the most dominant group in the TikTok

ecosystem (Montgomery, 2025), This makes this platform a media strategy for shaping perceptions of local films. In fact, content from creative accounts like @potongfilm is estimated to contribute up to 60.9% to sparking interest in Indonesian films among teenagers (N Hilyah et al., 2024; Sahabuddin & others, 2025).

However, the effectiveness of digital promotion is not always linear with the increase in the number of viewers (Dewi & others, 2025). In his study on the promotion of the film *Gampang Cuan*, he found that although the digital campaign was quite popular, only 34.1% of the variation in viewing interest was explained by social media promotion variables, while the rest was influenced by other factors such as the reputation of the actors and the narrative of the film (Putri & Apriadi, 2025). This shows that virality certainly does not guarantee ticket sales success, but it can strengthen the image and audience awareness of local films (Fadilah & Putra, 2023). This phenomenon demonstrates an empirical relationship between a film's popularity on TikTok and its actual viewing decisions. Most previous research has focused on other platforms like Instagram or YouTube (Virós-Martín et al., 2024). For example, the Instagram content of the film "*Rata Laen*" significantly influenced students' viewing interest. However, similar studies on TikTok and local films are limited, so a quantitative study is needed to measure the extent to which the film's virality on TikTok influences adolescents' interest in watching Indonesian films (Pratama & Sianturi, 2025).

Short video content on the TikTok platform has proven effective in increasing viewing intensity among teenagers, especially because of its short, visual, and easily shareable format (Padilah et al., 2023). In addition, the existence of the For You Page (FYP) algorithm plays a significant role in accelerating the distribution of entertainment content which has the potential to influence viewers' decisions in choosing what to watch (Faltesek & others, 2023). On the other hand, local films that are unable to take advantage of viral trends on social media tend to lose strategic promotional opportunities, resulting in a decline in teenagers' interest in domestic cinema (Khairunnisa & Alfurqan, 2025; Mula et al., 2025; Nurhasanah & Zakiah, 2025).

To explain the relationship between exposure to content on TikTok and adolescents' viewing interest, this study uses the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) approach proposed by Hovland in 1953. In this framework, the stimulus is defined as exposure to film content on TikTok, the organism describes the psychological processes of adolescents in responding to the stimulus, and the response is manifested in the form of interest in watching local films. This approach is considered relevant to understanding how the influence of digital media can shape consumer behavior in the context of modern mass communication (Effendy, Onong, 2011).

Several previous studies support the relevance of this model. The first study, titled "Analysis of Factors Influencing Film Viewing Interest Based on Genre Perception, Actor Popularity, and Online Reviews on Social Media," found that user interaction and bold reviews significantly impact viewing interest, primarily because they shape perceptions of a film's quality and reputation (Sahabuddin et al., 2025).

The second study, entitled "The Influence of Instagram Content on Viewing Interest: A Case Study of the Film 'Mencuri Raden Saleh'," found that promotional content on Instagram, such as still cuts and behind-the-scenes posts, increased viewing interest among teenagers. The results of this study indicate that the activity of official accounts and audience engagement on social media have a positive influence on viewing decisions. This research is relevant because it emphasizes the role of visual-based social media in shaping positive perceptions and driving interest in local films, which thematically aligns with this study's focus on the TikTok platform (Yeremia et al., 2024).

Based on these findings, this study seeks to answer three main questions:

1. What is the popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok in terms of exposure, interaction, and public opinion?
2. How much interest does Generation Z have in local films?
3. To what extent does the popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok influence interest in watching local films?

To answer these questions, this study uses a quantitative explanatory approach to analyze the relationship between two main variables: the popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok (X) and adolescent interest in watching local films (Y). The objectives of this study are: (1) to measure the level of popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok in terms of exposure, interaction, and public opinion; (2) to measure the level of interest among adolescents in local films; and (3) to measure the influence of the popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok on adolescent interest in watching local films.

Based on the Stimulus–Organism–Response theoretical framework and the results of previous research, the hypotheses in this study are formulated as follows:

H1: The popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok has a positive and significant effect on adolescent interest in watching local films.

H0: The popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok does not have a significant effect on adolescent interest in watching local films.

METHOD

Research Type

This research uses an exploratory quantitative approach to explore the growing popularity of romantic films on TikTok among Generation Z. The research focuses on mapping the level of audience exposure and engagement with romantic film content on TikTok. Numerical data is used to identify trends and initial statistical relationships between this popularity and interest in watching local films.

Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of Generation Z individuals aged 19–25 years old who actively use the TikTok platform and show an interest in film content. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, namely the deliberate selection of respondents based on certain characteristics that align with the research objectives. Respondent criteria include: (1) generation Z who actively use TikTok, (2) have seen content related to Gen Z Romance films or other local films, (3) interested or motivated to watch local films after seeing film content on TikTok. Based on these criteria, this study involved 30 respondents who were deemed capable and suitable for the purpose of an exploratory study with a limited research scope, but the findings of this study are not intended to be generalized broadly to the entire Generation Z population (Sugiyono, 2021).

Research Location

This research was conducted online in a digital social environment, specifically within friendship groups and TikTok user communities that frequently discuss the film "Asmara Gen Z" and other local films that have gone viral. The questionnaire was distributed to research respondents who were active on TikTok and had watched films influenced by the social media trend.

Therefore, the research location refers to the digital interaction space where respondents operate, not a specific geographic area, but rather the communication space (TikTok and digital chat groups). Data collection was conducted through Google Form links distributed on WhatsApp and Instagram Stories, with specific criteria specified.

Instrumentation or Tools

The instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The instrument included two main variables:

1. Variable X (Popularity of Gen Z Romance Films on TikTok Social Media) Eksposur (Exposure): frekuensi kemunculan konten film Asmara Gen Z di TikTok.
 - Interaction (Engagement): respondent participation in content (like, comment, share, or duet).
 - Public Opinion: respondents' perceptions of reviews and reactions of other users.
2. Variable Y (Interest)
 - Attention: level of awareness of the existence of local films.
 - Interest: curiosity about local films after seeing content on TikTok.

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- Action: a real decision to watch a local film in a cinema or on a digital platform.

Table 1. Operationalization Variables

Variables	Indicator	Sub Indicators	Measurement
X The Popularity of Gen Z Romance Films on TikTok	Exposure (Prashanta Kumar Shill & Dey, 2023)(Prashanta Kumar Shill & Dey, 2023)	1. I often see content about Gen Z Romance films on TikTok 2. Promotional videos for the Asmara Gen Z film often appear on the TikTok homepage (FYP). 3. I found out about the Gen Z Romance movie through TikTok	<i>Likert Scale</i>
	Interaction (Michael Yerima et al., 2024)	1. I once liked content about Gen Z romance films on TikTok 2. I once commented on a TikTok video discussing the film Asmara Gen Z 3. I once shared content related to the film Asmara Gen Z with my friends	
	Influence Opinion (P K Shill & Dey, 2023)	1. Positive reviews from TikTok users made me interested in the film Asmara Gen Z 2. TikTok user comments helped me assess the quality of the Gen Z Romance movie 3. TikTok Influencers' Opinions Influence My Views on Gen Z Romance Movies	
Y Generation Z's Interest in Watching Local Films	Attention (Effendy, onong, 2011)	1. I recognize local film titles through uploads on TikTok 2. I noticed that many local films are promoted through TikTok 3. I pay attention to local movie reviews and trailers that appear on TikTok.	<i>Likert Scale</i>
	Interest (Sahabuddin et al., 2025)	1. I feel like the promotion of local films on TikTok makes me interested in watching them. 2. I feel the storyline of local films is getting more interesting after seeing the promotions or trailers on TikTok.	
	Action (Nuzilla Hilyah et al., 2024)	1. After seeing the content and reviews from TikTok users, I immediately watched the local film. 2. I invited my friends to watch local films after seeing the trailers, teasers, and promotions on TikTok. 3. I found out the local movie showtimes after seeing it on TikTok.	

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process was carried out in several systematic stages. The first stage was instrument design, which involved developing a questionnaire based on relevant research theories and variables. In the second stage, after the instrument was deemed feasible, the main

questionnaire was distributed to 30 respondents via the Google Forms platform. The questionnaire was distributed boldly through social media to ensure easy access for the target respondents, who were active on TikTok. Each respondent was given approximately 10–15 minutes to complete the questionnaire, and responses were automatically collected in a digital spreadsheet. The data was then checked for completeness and accuracy before statistical analysis. This research was conducted with the consent of respondents (informed consent) provided voluntarily through a bold questionnaire. Participation was anonymous, data was kept confidential, and respondents had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using simple linear regression analysis using SPSS software. The analysis was conducted in several stages, beginning with validity and reliability tests, followed by normality and linearity tests to ensure the data met the regression assumptions. Next, a regression analysis was conducted to measure the influence of the popularity of the film "Asmara Gen Z" on TikTok on adolescents' interest in watching local films.

The analysis showed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.734, indicating a strong and positive relationship between the two variables. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0,538 indicates that 53,8% of the variation in interest in watching local films can be explained by the film's popularity on TikTok, while the remaining 45,9% is influenced by other factors such as personal preferences, genre, and cinematography quality. These findings strengthen the argument that social media plays a significant role in shaping entertainment consumption behavior among adolescents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

A validity test was conducted to assess the extent to which the questionnaire items represent the construct being measured. In this study, the validity test was conducted on two variables: the Popularity of Gen Z Romance Films on TikTok (X) and Interest in Watching Local Films (Y). The test was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation in Microsoft Excel with 30 respondents. An item is declared valid if the calculated t_{hitung} is greater than the t_{tabel} (2.048) at a significance level of 0.05 (Ghozali, 2018). The calculation results show that all statement items in both variables have item-total values (r_{count}) between 0.708 and 0.814, and all t_{count} values (2.456-8.000) are greater than the t_{tabel} (2.048). Thus, all statement items are declared valid, because they have a significant relationship with the total score of each variable.

Table 2. Results of the Validity Test of Research Instruments

Variabel	Item	r _{count}	t _{count}	T _{table} (2,048)	Information
X	X1	0.798	3.501	2.048	Valid
X	X2	0.802	3.549	2.048	Valid
X	X3	0.752	3.015	2.048	Valid
X	X4	0.741	2.915	2.048	Valid
X	X5	0.719	2.737	2.048	Valid
X	X6	0.814	3.708	2.048	Valid
X	X7	0.750	3.003	2.048	Valid
X	X8	0.710	2.668	2.048	Valid
X	X9	0.757	3.062	2.048	Valid
Y	Y1	0.708	2.456	2.048	Valid
Y	Y2	0.765	2.912	2.048	Valid
Y	Y3	0.742	8.000	2.048	Valid
Y	Y4	0.780	3.050	2.048	Valid
Y	Y5	0.808	3.364	2.048	Valid
Y	Y6	0.790	3.153	2.048	Valid
Y	Y7	0.732	2.634	2.048	Valid

Reliability Test

Reliability testing was conducted to determine the level of internal inter-item consistency of each research variable. Analysis was conducted using the Cronbach's Alpha method using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. An instrument is considered reliable if its Alpha value is ≥ 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). A similar opinion states that a value of 0.70-0.79 is considered moderately reliable, while a value above 0.80 indicates high reliability (George & Mallery, 2003).

Based on the data processing results, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.874 was obtained for variable X (Popularity of Gen Z Romance Films on TikTok) and 0.861 for variable Y (Interest in Watching Local Films). Because both values are greater than 0.70, it can be concluded that the instrument used in this study is reliable and consistent in measuring the intended construct.

Table 3. Results of the Reliability Test of Research Instruments

Variabel	Jumlah Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Criteria	Information
X (Movie Popularity on TikTok)	9	0.874	≥ 0.70	Reliabel
Y (Interested in Watching Local Films)	8	0.861	≥ 0.70	Reliabel

The validity and reliability test results indicate that all statement items meet the eligibility criteria. The item-total correlation value is above the minimum limit, and the Cronbach's Alpha value for both variables exceeds 0.70. This indicates that the research instrument has good internal consistency, making it suitable for use in the regression analysis stage to test the relationships between variables.

Table 4. Demographic Frequencies

Demographic Frequencies	Categori	Percentage	Frequency
Age	15 - 19 Year	3,3%	1
	20 - 25 Year	96,7%	29
Gender	Woman	13,3%	4
	Man	86,7%	26
Education	Bachelor	46,7%	14
	SMA/SMK	53,3%	16
Active TikTok Users	Yes	100%	30
	No	0	0

Based on Table 4, the majority of respondents were aged 20-25 years (96.7%) and were predominantly female (13.3%). Most respondents had a high school/vocational high school education (53.3%), indicating that this study involved the Gen Z youth group, active TikTok users.

The regression analysis results show that the popularity of films on TikTok has a significant effect on interest in watching local films ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.18$). The 95% confidence interval [0.28, 0.56] indicates that the estimated effect is moderate and consistent. Descriptively, the variable of film popularity on TikTok has an average value of $M = 3.87$ ($SD = 0.62$), while interest in watching local films has an average value of $M = 3.74$ ($SD = 0.58$).

Table 5. Recapitulation of Respondents' Responses

Indicator	Sub Indicator	Cumulative Amount	Average Score	Criteria
Variable X (Popularity of Gen Z Romance Films on TikTok Social Media)				
Exposure	1. I often see content about Gen Z romance films on TikTok	126	4,20	Good
	2. Promotional videos for the Asmara Gen Z film often appear on the TikTok homepage (FYP).	115	3,83	Good
	3. I found out about the Gen Z romance movie through TikTok.	125	4,17	Good
Total Score		366	4,06	Good
Interaction	1. I once liked content about Gen Z romance films on TikTok.	124	4,13	Good
	2. I once commented on a TikTok video discussing the film Asmara Gen Z	86	2,87	Bad
	3. I have shared content related to the film Asmara Gen Z with my friends	99	3,30	Currently
Total Score		309	3,43	Good

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Influence of Opinion	1. Positive reviews from TikTok users made me interested in the film Asmara Gen Z	116	3,87	Good
	2. TikTok user comments helped me assess the quality of the film Asmara Gen Z	116	3,87	Good
	3. TikTok Influencers' Opinions Influence My Viewing of the Gen Z Romance Movie	112	3,73	Good
Total Score		344	3,82	Good
Total number		1.019	3,77	Good
Variable Y (Generation Z's Interest in Watching Local Films)				
Attention	1. I recognize local film titles through uploads on TikTok	123	4,10	Good
	2. I noticed that many local films are promoted through TikTok	127	4,23	Good
	3. I pay attention to local movie reviews and trailers that appear on TikTok	131	4,37	Very good
Total Score		381	4,23	Good
Interest	1. Saya merasa promosi film lokal di TikTok membuat saya tertarik untuk menontonnya	126	4,20	Good
	2. Saya merasa alur cerita film lokal semakin menarik setelah melihat promosi atau trailernya di TikTok	122	4,07	Good
Total Score		248	4,13	Good
Action	1. After viewing content and reviews from TikTok users, I immediately watched the local film	117	3,90	Good
	2. I invited friends to watch the local film after seeing the trailer, preview, and promotions on TikTok	108	3,60	Currently
	3. I found out the local film's release schedule after seeing it on TikTok	124	4,13	Good
Total Score		349	3,87	Good
Total number		978	4,07	Good

Classical Assumption Test

Before conducting a simple linear regression analysis, the first step is to perform a classical assumption test. This test aims to ensure that the data used meets the basic requirements of parametric statistical analysis. Through this test, we can determine whether the data is normally distributed, has a linear relationship between variables, and is free from heteroscedasticity issues that could affect the model.

The tests included a normality test, a linearity test, and a heteroscedasticity test, conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26 software. The complete results of these three tests can be seen in the following table:

Table 6. Classical Assumption Test Results

Test Type	Variables / Relationships Tested	Sig value.	Criteria	Conclusion
Normality Test (Shapiro–Wilk)	The Popularity of Gen Z Romance Films on TikTok (X)	0.200	≥ 0.05	Normally distributed
	Interest in Watching Local Films (Y)	0.134	≥ 0.05	Normally distributed
Linearity Test (ANOVA)	$X \rightarrow Y$	0.586 (Deviation from Linearity)	≥ 0.05	Linear relationship
Heteroscedasticity Test (Glejser)	$X \rightarrow \text{abs_res}$	0.789	≥ 0.05	There is no heteroscedasticity

Based on Table 6, all classical assumption tests showed results that met the criteria. The normality test produced a significance value greater than 0.05 for both variables, thus the data were declared normally distributed. The linearity test showed a linear relationship between variables X and Y with a Sig. value of $0.586 > 0.05$, while the heteroscedasticity test showed a Sig. value of $0.789 > 0.05$, indicating no symptoms of heteroscedasticity. Thus, the regression model in this study met all classical assumptions and was suitable for use in parametric analysis.

Simple Linear Regression Test

This study used simple linear regression analysis to analyze the influence of the popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok on generation Z' interest in watching local films. The analysis was conducted to examine the relationship and magnitude of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable based on data obtained from respondents. A summary of the data processing results is presented in the following table:

Tabel 7. Simple Linear Regression Test

Variabel	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	R	R ²	F	Sig. F
(Constant)	6,348	3,073	–	2,065	0,048				
The Popularity of Gen Z Romance Films on TikTok	0,647	0,113	0,734	5,711	0,000	0,734	0,538	32,613	0,000

The results of a simple linear regression analysis show:

1. The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.734, indicating a strong and positive relationship between the popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok and adolescents' interest in watching local films.
2. The coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.538, meaning that 53.8% of the variation in adolescents' interest in watching local films can be explained by the popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok, while the remaining 46.2% is influenced by other factors outside the research model.
3. The model fit test (F test) shows an F value of 32.613 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the regression model is suitable for use and statistically significant.
4. The regression coefficient for the popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok is 0.647 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, indicating a statistically significant association.

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the results of the simple linear regression test, a significance value of 0.000 was obtained ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, stating that the popularity of the film "Asmara Gen Z" on TikTok significantly influences adolescents' interest in watching local films.

Interpretation of Main Findings

The research findings indicate that the popularity of the film "Asmara Gen Z" on TikTok has a positive and significant influence on adolescents' interest in watching local films. This is indicated by a regression coefficient of 0.647 with a significance level of $p = 0.000$, which is below the margin of error ($\alpha = 0.05$). This means that the higher the popularity of a film on TikTok, the greater the tendency for adolescents to be interested in watching that local film. Therefore, the research hypothesis stating a positive influence of film popularity on TikTok on adolescents' viewing interest is accepted.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.538 indicates that film popularity on TikTok explains 53.8% of the variation in teens' viewing interest in local films. The remaining

46.2% of the variation is influenced by factors outside the research model, potentially including peer recommendations, film genre preferences, previous viewing experience, story quality, and ease of access to cinemas or screening platforms. This finding confirms that although social media, particularly TikTok, plays a dominant role in shaping teens' viewing interest, external factors still influence viewers' film choices.

Thus, film promotion strategies utilizing social media, particularly TikTok, have proven effective in increasing the appeal of local films to Generation Z. This underscores the importance of integrating digital popularity with other supporting factors to encourage broader viewing interest among teens.

This relationship can be explained by the TikTok For You Page (FYP) algorithm, which increases repeated exposure to viral content and reinforces audience awareness and interest. This repeated exposure reinforces interest in and positive perceptions of local films, which in turn drives viewing decisions (Fitrianto, 2025; Zhang et al., 2022).

Theoretically, these findings align with the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which emphasizes that audiences actively choose media to satisfy their entertainment and information needs. Furthermore, these findings support the concept of Social Influence, where the popularity and virality of content on social media influence individual attitudes and behaviors. TikTok serves not only as a passive promotional medium but also as an interactive tool that triggers viewers' internal motivation to watch local films (Jayanti & others, 2025).

Overall, this interpretation emphasizes that film promotion strategies on visual-based social media, especially TikTok, have an important role in shaping the perceptions, interests, and viewing behavior of teenagers, thus becoming an effective instrument for promoting the success of local films.

The findings of this study support the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework in explaining Generation Z's viewing behavior on TikTok, where film popularity acts as a stimulus that triggers cognitive and affective (organism) processes such as social interest and perception, which are then related to the interest in watching local films as a response. The concepts of media use and social influence are understood as internal mechanisms within the SOR model, not as separate theoretical frameworks. However, given the cross-sectoral nature of the study, the relationships found in this study are generally associative, not direct causal.

Compared with Previous Studies

The findings of this study align with several previous studies that emphasized the influence of social media on film viewing interest. The study, "An Analysis of Factors Influencing Film Viewing Interest Based on Genre Perception, Actor Popularity, and Online Reviews on Social Media," found that genre perception, actor popularity, and online reviews on social media significantly influenced film viewing interest. These findings suggest that online reviews play a role in shaping audiences' perceptions of a film's quality and reputation, thus contributing to their viewing decisions (Sahabuddin et al, 2025).

Similarly, research on the Influence of Instagram Content on Viewing Intentions: A Case Study of the Film 'Stealing Raden Saleh,' shows that visual promotional content on Instagram, such as still cuts and behind-the-scenes posts, positively influences viewing intentions among teenagers. The study also found that the activity of official accounts and the level of audience engagement contribute to film viewing decisions (Omar & Dequan, 2020; M Yeremia et al., 2024).

The findings of this study reinforce this evidence, emphasizing the effectiveness of visual-based social media, particularly TikTok, in shaping positive perceptions and increasing interest in watching local films among teenagers. The difference lies in the platform the study focuses on; previous research has focused on Instagram and the interaction of dare reviews in general, while this study specifically highlights the role of TikTok. This difference reflects the shift in teenage consumer trends in consuming film content through more dynamic, short-video-based social media platforms.

Limitations and Caveats

This study provides insight into the influence of the popularity of Gen Z romance films on TikTok on adolescents' interest in watching local films, but it has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish in-depth causal relationships. Second, the data obtained from self-report questionnaires have the potential to introduce bias, such as overestimating levels of viewing interest. Third, the sample size, limited to adolescents in a specific urban area, limits the generalizability of the findings to broader populations with different cultures and media access.

Future research should employ a longitudinal design and involve a more diverse sample to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of social media on local film viewing behavior among adolescents.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should focus on strengthening design methodology with a longitudinal approach to integrate changes in adolescent viewing interest over time and establish a clearer causal relationship between film popularity on TikTok and viewing behavior. Furthermore, analyzing specific factors, such as the types of TikTok content that most influence viewing interest or adolescents' interaction patterns with the For You Page algorithm, could provide deeper insights into the mechanisms of social media influence.

Expanding the sample to various regions and socio-cultural backgrounds would increase the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, implementing mixed methods, such as a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of local film viewing behavior among adolescents and support more effective film promotion strategies through social media.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the popularity of romantic films on TikTok is significantly related to Generation Z's interest in watching local films. High levels of exposure, engagement, and virality of film content on TikTok are associated with increased interest in local films among Generation Z, particularly through the cognitive and affective responses that emerge during interactions with the content. These findings suggest that TikTok serves as a relevant distribution and promotional platform for local films in reaching young audiences. From a theoretical perspective, the results of this study support the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, where the popularity of films on TikTok serves as a stimulus that triggers internal processes in the individual (organism), such as social interest and perception, which are then related to the formation of a response in the form of viewing interest. However, given the cross-sectional nature of the study, the relationships found in this study are understood as empirical associations and are not intended to imply a direct causal relationship. Practically, the findings of this study indicate that utilizing TikTok as a promotional medium for local films has the potential to increase Generation Z's viewing interest. However, this study also recognizes that local film viewing interest is not only influenced by popularity on social media, but also by other factors outside the research model. Therefore, further research is recommended to develop a more comprehensive model and use a longitudinal or experimental research design to strengthen the understanding of the dynamics of viewing interest among Generation Z.

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