

Audience Encoding-Decoding Analysis in TikTok's Dark Romance Content

Anisah Nur Fathimah^{a*}

^a *Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia*

^{*}Corresponding author. E-mail address: anisahnur.21024@mhs.unesa.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes how audiences respond to violent portrayals in dark romance content on TikTok using Stuart Hall's (1980) encoding-decoding theory as the main framework. Audience reactions are categorized into three positions: dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional. The data consists of five selected TikTok posts under the hashtag #darkromance, with the three most-liked comments from each post (fifteen in total) examined through qualitative content analysis. The focus of the analysis is on textual elements such as captions, hashtags, and written comments, supported by visual cues when relevant. The findings reveal that audience responses vary depending on how the content is framed and what narrative style is used. When violent themes appear in book-promotional posts, audiences more often adopt an oppositional stance, expressing disapproval or discomfort. In contrast, the same themes packaged as fantasy or POV-style content are more likely to be accepted, generating dominant-hegemonic reactions. Among the 15 analyzed comments, eight reflect oppositional positions, five are dominant-hegemonic, and two are negotiated. Interestingly, oppositional comments received the highest number of likes, suggesting that a silent majority may support these critical views even if they are not the loudest voices. Overall, this study highlights that TikTok users are not passive content consumers but active meaning-makers whose responses are shaped by context and content framing. It is recommended that future research expand this topic by incorporating audio elements, conducting interviews with audiences and creators, or exploring similar phenomena on other new media platforms to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding.

Keywords: Audience Responses, Encoding-Decoding, TikTok, Violence

INTRODUCTION

How the media portrays the darker sides of romance can strongly shape how audiences respond. Romance has long been a popular and commercially successful genre worldwide (Fletcher, Driscoll, & Wilkins, 2018), evolving into various subgenres, including dark romance, which highlights the complex and controversial aspects of intimate relationships (Hernandez, 2024; Rosanes, 2024; Fortune, 2024). This development cannot be separated from the media's role in producing and spreading literary narratives to a global audience (Shahwan, 2023). McLuhan's (1964) idea that "the medium is the message" reminds us that how a story is delivered shapes how people interpret it.

Digital platforms like Wattpad, Netflix, and TikTok have made this transformation more visible. TikTok, with its huge global user base and algorithm-driven distribution, allows content to reach audiences beyond its original target group (Statista, 2025). Communities such

as #BookTok have popularized genres like dark romance, with more than 3 million posts under the hashtag by early 2025 (Mastantuono, 2024). On TikTok, short videos and comment sections create spaces for users to directly express their interpretations and reactions. Research indicates that BookTok not only facilitates literary discovery but also serves as a space for public discussion (Merga, 2021; Dera, 2024)

Previous studies show that how violence is framed influences audience reactions. Pyke (2024) found this in his study of fanfiction on Wattpad and Dream SMP on Twitch, while Widodo (2022) demonstrated it through audience responses to *Squid Game*. Studies on TikTok specifically emphasize how the platform's unique style and short-video format shape the way meaning is constructed (Alley & Hanshew, 2022; Zeng, Abidin, & Schäfer, 2021; Lee, 2023). Building on Stuart Hall's (1980) encoding-decoding theory, this study focuses on how TikTok audiences respond to dark romance content through comments, highlighting that they are not passive consumers but active interpreters who accept, negotiate, or reject the narratives they see.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative content analysis to examine how TikTok users interpret violent tropes in dark romance content through the comment section. Stuart Hall's (1980) encoding-decoding model is applied as the main framework, with three audience positions: dominant-hegemonic (acceptance), negotiated (partial acceptance), and oppositional (rejection).

Sampling and Corpus

Purposive sampling was used to select dark romance posts that gained high visibility so audience decoding practices could be observed in active comment sections. The inclusion criteria were: (1) uploaded between January 2023 and January 2025; (2) at least 700,000 views and 1,000 comments; (3) English-language captions with an open comment section; and (4) content related to dark romance themes such as kidnapping, stalking, or morally grey characters. Five posts met these criteria. From each post, the three most liked top-level comments were analyzed (total 15), along with their reply threads to provide context. Additionally, eight supplementary comments were examined to give more context and support the analysis, without changing the main dataset. Each post was documented by URL, creator handle, upload date, caption, hashtags, and engagement metrics (views, likes, comments, shares). This step ensured that audience responses could be understood in relation to the visibility of the content.

Data Collection

For each post, I recorded metadata, saved screenshots of captions and top comments, and wrote short memos to note the main framing (e.g., book promotion vs. POV/fantasy), relevant hashtags (#BookTok, #joke), and visible visual elements that shaped interpretation (e.g., typography overlays). Cases where creators used humor or intentional misspellings to soften violent acts were also noted as "encoding strategies" for later analysis.

Coding and Analysis

The analysis was carried out in two stages. In the first stage (deductive), comments were classified into Hall's three audience positions using linguistic indicators such as sarcasm, disclaimers, moral evaluations, or emoji use. In the second stage (inductive), thematic codes

were developed across all posts, such as “romanticization vs. safety,” “loyalty outweighs violence,” “mixed feelings of discomfort and attraction,” “use of humor or irony,” and “framing effects: promotion vs. POV.” Analytic memos were then written to connect these themes with creators’ encoding strategies (e.g., captions, hashtags) and with engagement patterns (likes or creator endorsements). When comments were brief or ambiguous, reply threads and creator interactions were used as additional context.

Trustworthiness and Ethics

To maintain reliability, I kept a record of coding decisions, memos, and revisions, and I re-checked the codes two weeks later to ensure consistency. All data came from public posts; usernames are included only when necessary for analysis and are shown exactly as they appear on TikTok. No private information was accessed. Quotes are presented briefly and always with context, to avoid reproducing or amplifying harmful narratives.

Planned Data Augmentation

Following the reviewer’s request, I plan to expand the evidence by adding two additional examples for each theme, using posts that fit the same inclusion criteria. Priority will be given to comments with clear indicators and from diverse creators. This will enrich the findings while maintaining consistency in the analytic process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Content 1

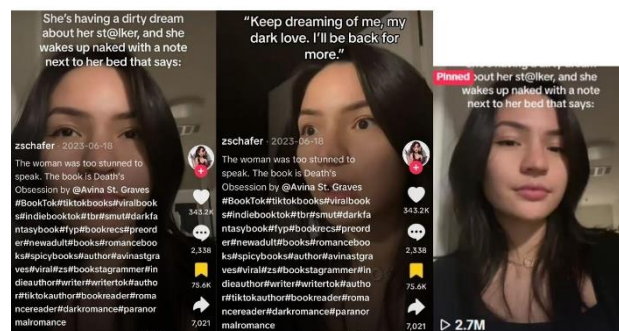


Figure 1. A dark romance content by @zschafer (retrieved on March 7, 2025)

Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSMCTNBRc/>

The first content was uploaded by TikTok user @zschafer, a dark romance author with around 38,700 followers, on June 18, 2023. The video promotes the novel *Death's Obsession* by @Avina St. Graves, as stated directly in the caption. The creator uses numerous hashtags related to TikTok’s book community (#BookTok, #romancebooks), the dark romance genre (#darkromance, #smut, #darkfantasybook), and the writing world (#author, #indieauthor). This combination indicates a clear promotional purpose and helps the content reach a targeted audience. The post attracted significant engagement, gaining over 2.7 million views and more than 343,000 likes. After establishing the content's intent, the creator opened the comment section, where audience responses show diverse interpretations.



Figure 2. Most liked comments on dark romance content by @zschafer (retrieved on March 7, 2025)
 Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSMCTNBRc/>

The first and second comments reflect a negotiated position. The first, “idk if this is good or bad”, expresses ambiguity. The commenter is unsure whether to accept or reject the content’s narrative, indicating an internal negotiation. The second comment, “I’m scared but”, shows a similar contradiction. While the viewer admits feeling discomfort, they also imply curiosity or attraction that prevents a complete rejection. These responses indicate that the creator’s framing introduces a narrative twist, prompting audiences to rethink their interpretation of romanticized violence.

Meanwhile, the third comment, “nah y’all need help 🤡”, reflects an oppositional position. This comment uses sarcasm directed at either the creator or the audiences who support the narrative. It indicates direct rejection and likely discomfort with the way violence is framed within the romantic storyline. These three responses illustrate how audiences negotiate meaning based on their individual values and emotional reactions. Even within a highly promotional and aesthetic context, not all viewers passively accept the content. This aligns with the core of Hall’s encoding-decoding theory, which sees audiences as active participants who interpret media messages through their own understanding.



Figure 3. Most liked comments on dark romance content by @zschafer (retrieved on August 24, 2025)
 Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSMCTNBRc/>

Additional reply threads in the same post also reveal negotiated audiences. One user, @hann.16.8, wrote “In the book good, in rl BAD,” which clearly separates enjoyment of the trope in fiction from rejection in real life. The fact that the author liked this comment shows

how creators sometimes endorse these disclaimers as part of framing their work. Another user, @marymeepls, said “It’s obviously bad, but good 😊,” using humor and an uneasy emoji to express mixed feelings of attraction and discomfort. These examples show how audiences negotiate meaning by balancing enjoyment of dark romance as fantasy with an awareness of its violence elements in reality.

Content 2

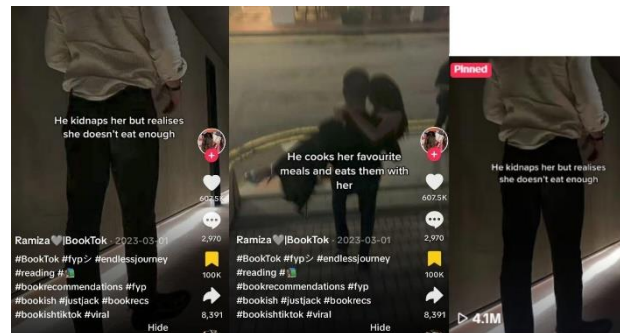


Figure 4. A dark romance content by @readingwithramiza (retrieved on March 14, 2025)
Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSMt3xEKM/>

The second content was uploaded by TikTok user @readingwithramiza, a bookish creator with about 77,400 followers, on March 1, 2023. This video aims to recommend a book by presenting short quotes or prompts, combined with hashtags like #BookTok, #fyp, #bookrecommendations, and #bookish to connect with the online reading community. Other hashtags such as #fypシ, #fyp, and #viral are added to increase reach and boost engagement beyond niche readers. Although the caption is left empty, the hashtags help categorize the post and attract viewers who enjoy book-related content. The video received strong interaction, reaching over 4.1 million views, with more than 607,000 likes and nearly 3,000 comments. By keeping the comment section open, the creator gives audiences space to share their thoughts, which leads to various ways of interpreting and responding to the content.



Figure 5. Most liked comments on dark romance content by @readingwithramiza (retrieved on March 14, 2025)

Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSMt3xEKM/>

The first comment, “Are we gonna ignore the kidnapping part,” by @nykzo (March 2, 2023, 21,200 likes) clearly shows an oppositional position in Stuart Hall’s encoding-decoding theory. By pointing out the “kidnapping part,” the commenter questions how easily an act of violence can be romanticized and reminds other viewers not to overlook it just because it is framed as fantasy. This reflects how some audiences decode the message through their own moral lens and choose to resist the normalizing of problematic themes.

The second comment, “what kind of kidnapper is gonna worry if the victim eats enough,” posted by @sarcasticreader on the same day (12,200 likes), also takes an oppositional stance. The sarcastic tone exposes the absurd logic behind portraying a kidnapper as caring, which makes the violent act seem oddly sweet. By pointing out this contradiction, the audience shows how they actively interpret and question the content’s hidden meaning instead of accepting it blindly.

The third comment, “I’m genuinely so concerned for you guys,” written by @readerincrisis (9,700 likes), echoes the same oppositional response. Although short, the phrase “concerned” hints that the commenter feels uneasy seeing how easily others normalize the storyline. This could be read as genuine worry or subtle sarcasm aimed at fellow viewers who accept the narrative without thinking critically. Together, these three reactions show that not all viewers passively absorb what they see. Instead, they decode and challenge the content based on their own values, which supports Hall’s idea that audiences are active interpreters of media messages.



Figure 6. Additional comments on dark romance content by @readingwithramiza (retrieved on August 24, 2025)

Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSMt3xEKM/>

Other additional comments in the same post also show oppositional responses. One viewer, @katiee_lev, wrote “yeah, but he kidnapped her,” directly pointing out the violent act that was being downplayed in the promotional framing. Another user, @indirect_code, pushed this further in a reply chain, explaining that crimes and mental abuse should never be treated as romance and pointing that “this kind of tropes should never be under the romance category.” These examples highlight how some audiences not only reject the narrative but also try to remind others about the real-world harm behind such portrayals.

Content 3

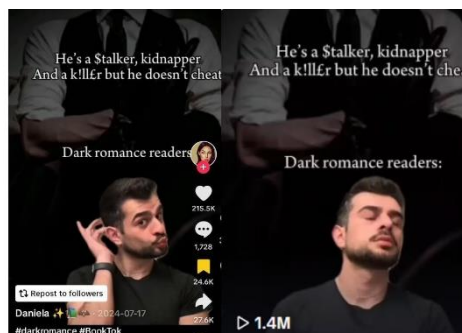


Figure 7. A dark romance content by @danielanatalia92 (retrieved on March 20, 2025)
 Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSMKqTxL2/>

The third content was shared by TikTok user @danielanatalia92, a book reader creator with around 2,550 followers, on July 17, 2024. Unlike the previous examples, this video does not include any caption or detailed description, making its purpose less obvious at first glance. However, from the video elements and how viewers react in the comment section, it can be inferred that the content illustrates the 'dark romance math', a playful way dark romance fans rationalize certain character behaviors in stories. This intention is supported by the use of #darkromance and #BookTok, which link the post directly to TikTok's online reading and dark romance communities. Despite having fewer followers than the other accounts, this video still attracted notable engagement with over 1.4 million views, 215,500 likes, and 1,728 comments, showing how niche topics like this can gain diverse audience responses.



Figure 8. Most liked comments on dark romance content by @danielanatalia92 (retrieved on March 20, 2025)
 Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSMKqTxL2/>

The first comment, “we be forgiving every crime but not cheating,” posted by @tacendahlz on August 12, 2024 (7,765 likes), reflects a dominant-hegemonic position in Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory. This line shows that the audience fully accepts the idea that readers often excuse various crimes in dark romance stories as long as the character stays loyal. This attitude sums up the dark romance math, where violent or problematic actions

are overlooked, but cheating remains an unforgivable betrayal. The comment confirms that the message is received just as the creator intended, showing a smooth decoding process.

The second comment, simply “Zade Meadows,” written by @fatiii8951 on August 10, 2024 (2,177 likes), supports the same stance. Zade Meadows is a character from *Haunting Adeline* by H.D. Carlton, well-known on TikTok for being a morally grey figure, a stalker and killer who is fiercely loyal to his partner. By mentioning his name, the commenter connects the content to this familiar trope, signaling that such dark but loyal characters are widely accepted in the community. Rather than rejecting this narrative, the comment shows that it has become a normal part of the fantasy.

The third comment, “Mama, I’m in love with a criminal,” posted by @obsessed.me1 on August 12, 2024 (1,747 likes), quotes a line from Britney Spears’ song *Criminal*. Although it might seem playful, in this context, it works like a subtle nod of agreement to the idea that readers are drawn to ‘bad’ characters. The lyric can mean the audience relates to the fantasy or simply recognizes how common this theme is in dark romance. Either way, it reflects acceptance of the message, placing this comment in the dominant-hegemonic position. Together, these responses prove that some audiences fully embrace the dark romance narrative without questioning its moral contradictions.



Figure 9. Additional comments on dark romance content by @danielanatalia92 (retrieved on August 24, 2025)

Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSMKqTxL2/>

Additional comments from the same post further illustrate how loyalty is prioritized over harmful actions. One user, @dilveen.kamal, wrote “What matters that he doesn’t cheat, the rest ✨ i can fix him ✨ 😊😊😊😊,” openly normalizing the character’s violent traits as long as he remains faithful. Another comment, liked by the creator, came from @vickybby_ : “We will accept just about anything in our dark romance books EXCEPT cheating lol 😊.” Both comments show how loyalty is valued in the community, even when it comes with harmful behavior. This reflects common patterns in popular romance, where possessiveness and faithfulness are often seen as devotion rather than warning signs.

Content 4

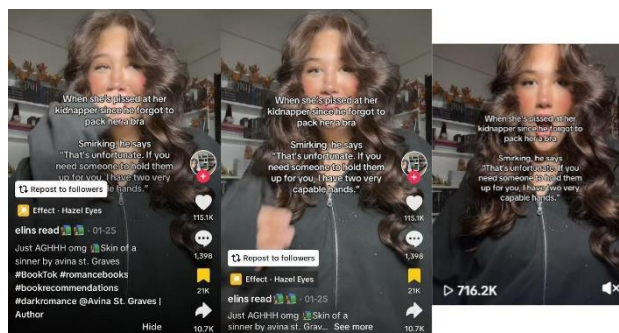


Figure 10. A dark romance content by @elinsread (retrieved on April 24, 2025)
 Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSrvHeFUR/>

The fourth content was uploaded by TikTok user @elinsread, a book reader creator with about 33,200 followers, on January 25, 2025. The creator's caption, "Just AGHHH omg Skin of a Sinner by Avina St. Graves," clearly shows that the video aims to recommend or promote the book *Skin of a Sinner* by Avina St. Graves, likely by presenting a prompt from the story. This intent is supported by the use of hashtags such as #romancebooks, #bookrecommendations, and #darkromance, which highlight the genre and the post's purpose, along with #BookTok, which connects the content to TikTok's reading community. The video reached a notable audience, with over 716,200 views, 115,100 likes, and nearly 1,400 comments. By keeping the comments section open, the creator invites viewers to share their reactions and interpretations, leading to varied audience responses.



Figure 11. Most liked comments on dark romance content by @elinsread (retrieved on April 24, 2025)
 Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSrvHeFUR/>

The first comment, "Did you guys forget abt the kidnapping 🙄🙏," posted by @itsheididuhh on January 26, 2025 (19,900 likes), shows a clear oppositional position in Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory. Using sarcasm, the commenter calls out both the creator and other viewers who focus too much on the flirty side of the male character's line, which actually hides verbal abuse. By directly pointing out "*the kidnapping*," they highlight how easily a violent act is brushed aside or romanticized. This proves that although they understand the intended message, they choose to push back because it clashes with their own sense of what is

acceptable. This reaction supports Hall's point that audiences can actively resist messages that do not align with their values.

The second comment, "kidnapper packed her a suitcase? 😊," written by @alinn_rose_ on the same day (7,572 likes), also reflects an oppositional stance. The dry sarcastic tone underlines how unrealistic the scenario is when compared to how real kidnapping works. In reality, a kidnapper would never show kindness by packing a bag for the victim. This absurd twist exposes the gap between real-life logic and the fictional narrative, which pushes the audience to reject it. Instead of accepting the romanticized version, they decode the content critically and challenge how the story disguises violence. The third comment, "excuse me," by @jasm11naa (5,826 likes), might look simple but still falls under the oppositional category. Though brief, the phrase carries surprise, disbelief, or subtle criticism toward the narrative. It signals that the viewer recognizes the story's meaning but finds it uncomfortable enough to question it rather than just accept it.



Figure 12. Additional comment on dark romance content by @elinsread (retrieved on August 24, 2025)
 Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSrvHeFUR/>

Other comments in the same clip also show how audiences police boundaries. For instance, @marina_zdd.12 remarked, "may this love never find me," rejecting the storyline outright and framing it as something undesirable. Unlike playful jokes, this comment sets a clear boundary and reminds others that violent or forced relationships are not the same as romance.

Content 5

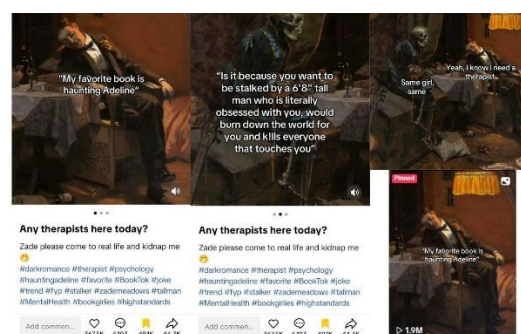


Figure 13. A dark romance content by @draymology (retrieved on April 26, 2025)
 Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSrToGVtp/>

The fifth content was posted by TikTok user @draymology on February 8, 2025, a book reader creator with about 7,679 followers. This video serves a double purpose. First, it promotes the novel *Haunting Adeline* by H.D. Carlton, shown clearly in the slide "My favorite book is *Haunting Adeline*," through hashtags like #hauntingadeline and mentions of Zade Meadows as the male lead. Second, the creator expresses a playful personal fantasy about Zade, describing him as an unrealistic standard for an ideal partner. This fantasy is framed humorously in the caption "Any therapists here today? Zade please come to real life and kidnap

me 🤔” and supported by hashtags such as #darkromance, #stalker, #tallman, and #highstandards. The #joke hashtag clarifies that the post is not fully serious and should be read with a sense of irony.

Meanwhile, hashtags like #booktok and #bookgirlies help the content reach the female reader community on TikTok. This video attracted significant interaction with over 1.4 million views, more than 367,500 likes, and 4,103 comments, showing how the blend of dark romance and humor sparks diverse audience reactions.



Figure 14. Most liked comments on dark romance content by @draymology (retrieved on April 26, 2025)

Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSrToGVtp/>

The first comment, “I’m in enemy territory,” posted by @.maddd. on February 8, 2025 (3,701 likes), clearly shows an oppositional position in Stuart Hall’s encoding-decoding theory. The sarcastic phrase ‘enemy territory’ signals that the audience feels out of place and disagrees with the fantasy many others support in the comment section. By calling the space an ‘enemy territory,’ the commenter draws a line between themselves and other viewers who enjoy or accept the idea of being kidnapped by a fictional dark romance character. This playful pushback proves that they get the intended fantasy but choose to resist it, showing how audiences can reject a message when it clashes with their own values.

The second comment, “Still waiting for a Zade to kidnap me,” written by @idrkall on the same day (2,706 likes), reflects a dominant-hegemonic position. This line clearly embraces the fantasy theme presented in the content, imagining a scenario where Zade, the infamous stalker character from *Haunting Adeline* kidnaps them. The fact that the creator liked this comment shows that the audience’s interpretation fully matches what was intended: a playful acceptance of the dark romance narrative, without questioning its violent undertone.

The third comment, “even a therapist can’t help me at this point 🤔,” posted by @vikaauthor (2,241 likes), also fits the dominant-hegemonic position. The phrase admits that the viewer’s obsession with the dark romance fantasy is so deep that even professional help wouldn’t change it. The crying emoji softens the line but at the same time highlights how comfortable the viewer is with the narrative. The creator’s like on this comment confirms that the meaning was encoded and decoded just as planned, while the fantasy is accepted and shared without resistance.



Figure 15. Additional comment on dark romance content by @draymology (retrieved on August 24, 2025)

Source: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSrToGVtp/>

Another example from the same POV-style post shows how irony can invite acceptance. User @joiiangell commented, “i just want someone to really want me and i want to feel it. burning the world down is a little over the top but i wouldn’t reject it.” Here, the exaggeration of “burning the world down” signals irony, but the closing statement still embraces the fantasy. This mix of exaggeration and acceptance shows how POV framing makes audiences overlook the violent parts and focus instead on the fantasy, reinforcing a dominant-hegemonic reading.

Theme 1: Romanticization vs. Safety/Morality (Oppositional pushback)

Some audiences actively resisted the normalization of violence by highlighting acts that were downplayed in the content, such as kidnapping. For instance, in Content 2, one user wrote, “Are we gonna ignore the kidnapping part,” signaling rejection of the romanticized depiction. Other examples include: (a) “yeah, but he kidnapped her” (Content 4), emphasizing that violence should not be trivialized, and (b) “this kind of tropes should never be under the romance category” (Content 2), reminding viewers that criminal acts and mental abuse are not acceptable as romance. These oppositional responses align with previous findings that audiences resist abusive narratives when presented too literally or unethically (Widodo, 2022).

Theme 2: Loyalty-trumps-Violence (Dominant-hegemonic acceptance)

Several comments normalized violence as long as loyalty was maintained. A prominent example is, “we be forgiving every crime but not cheating” (Content 3). Other cases include: (a) “Zade Meadows” (Content 3), referencing a morally grey character who is criminal yet loyal, and (b) “What matters that he doesn’t cheat, the rest ✨ i can fix him ✨ 🤔🤔🤔🤔” (Content 3), indicating that audiences prioritize loyalty as a central value within the BookTok community, even when characters display harmful behavior (Dera, 2024).

Theme 3: Negotiated Ambiguity (Discomfort–Attraction Tension)

Some viewers expressed mixed emotions, balancing discomfort with fascination. Examples from Content 1 include: “idk if this is good or bad” and “I’m scared but ...” Additional examples include: (a) “In the book good, in rl BAD” (Content 1), which separates enjoyment of fiction from real-life rejection, and (b) “It’s obviously bad, but good 🤔” (Content 1), combining humor with reluctant acknowledgment of attraction. These negotiated readings demonstrate how audiences compartmentalize enjoyment of problematic tropes, resonating with Hall’s (1980) encoding–decoding framework.

Theme 4: Platform Vernacular & Framing Effects (Promo vs. POV; humor/#joke)

Content framing shaped audience responses. Promotional posts with hashtags like #romancebooks (e.g., Content 2 and 4) drew oppositional reactions, such as “Are we gonna ignore the kidnapping part” and “yeah, but he kidnapped her.” In contrast, POV-style posts like Content 5 elicited both oppositional (“I’m in enemy territory”) and dominant-hegemonic (“Still waiting for a Zade to

kidnap me”) readings, showing how immersive or playful framing can affect interpretation. These results suggest TikTok’s vernacular and framing mediate how audiences encode and decode romanticized violence (Alley & Hanshew, 2022; Zeng et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Audience responses to TikTok dark romance content reveal complex decoding practices shaped by content framing, genre, and platform vernaculars. While many users push back against violent tropes, others negotiate or embrace them, often prioritizing loyalty over morality. These patterns show that BookTok is both a space for critique and enjoyment (Merga, 2021; Dera, 2024). Future studies could combine content analysis with audience interviews to better understand how people interpret these posts and how algorithms shape what they see (Lee, 2023).

REFERENCES

- Alley, A., & Hanshew, J. (2022). A long article about short videos: A content analysis of U.S. academic libraries’ use of TikTok. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 48(6), 102611. (Elsevier/Scopus). [ScienceDirect+1](#)
- Ceci, L. (2024, November 12). *Number of TikTok users worldwide from 2020 to 2025*. Retrieved February 12, 2025, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1327116/number-of-global-tiktok-users/#statisticContainer>
- Dera, J. (2024). BookTok: A Narrative Review of Current Literature and Directions for Future Research. *Literature Compass*. (Wiley/Scopus). [Compass](#)
- Dipsea. (2024, May 15). *What is dark romance? Tropes, trigger warnings, and book recs*. Retrieved February 12, 2025, from <https://www.dipseastories.com/blog/what-is-dark-romance/>
- Fletcher, L., Driscoll, B., & Wilkins, K. (2018). Genre Worlds and Popular Fiction: The Case of Twenty-First-Century Australian Romance. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 51(4). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/jpcu.12706>
- Fortune, T. (2024). *Rape Beyond Fantasy: Exploring the Influence of BookTok’s Rape Beyond Fantasy: Exploring the Influence of BookTok’s Erotica and Dark Romance Literature on Young Adult Perceptions Erotica and Dark Romance Literature on Young Adult Perceptions of Consent and Boundaries of Consent and Boundaries*. <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/theses/336>
- Google Play Store. (n.d.). Retrieved February 12, 2025, from <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ss.android.ugc.trill&hl=en>
- Hall, S., Hobson, D., Lowe, A., & Willis, P. (1980). *Culture, Media, Language* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203381182>
- Hernandez, J. (2024). *Exploring Consent: An Analysis of Consent in Dark Romance and Contemporary Romance Books*. <https://doi.org/https://archives.pdx.edu/ds/psu/42463>
- Lee, J. (2023). Introduction to the Special Issue of “TikTok and Social Movements.” *Social Media + Society*. (SAGE/Scopus). [SAGE JournalsESPACE](#)
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: the extensions of man*. [1st ed.] New York, McGraw-Hill.

- Merga, M. K. (2021). How can BookTok on TikTok inform readers' advisory services for young people? *Library & Information Science Research*, 43(2), 101091. (Elsevier/Scopus). [ScienceDirectResearchGatero.ecu.edu.au](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0306461621001091)
- PYKE, L. (2024). *Immersive New Media And Abuse: Should There Be Regulations For How Interpersonal Abuse Is Broadcasted In Online Media?*.
- Rosanes, B. (2024, May 14). *Hello, You: The obsession and consequences of dark romance*. Retrieved February 12, 2025, from <https://thebadgeronline.com/2024/05/hello-you-the-obsession-and-consequences-of-dark-romance/>
- Shahwan, S. J. (2023). The Impact of Social Media on Literature. *Arab World English Journal*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/comm1.18>
- Widodo, J. S. (2022). Reception analysis of Indonesian audience towards physical and verbal violence on series Squid Game (2021) by Hwang Dong-Hyuk. *Rainbow : Journal of Literature, Linguistics and Culture Studies*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.15294/rainbow.v11i1.53347>
- Zeng, J., Abidin, C., & Schäfer, M. T. (2021). Research Perspectives on TikTok and Its Legacy Apps (Introduction). *International Journal of Communication*, 15. (IJoC/Scopus). [International Journal of Communication](https://www.internationaljournalofcommunication.com/)