

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the findings and discussion of the study on how online fan communities on TikTok shape the reception of the Malaysian drama adaptations. Through a qualitative content analysis method, this chapter reviews audience discourse about two novel-based dramas, *Hilang Dalam Rindu* and *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*, during their respective times of airing. The analysis centers on TikTok videos, captions, hashtags, comments, and indicators of engagement as some of the spots where the audience shares meaning, emotions, and judgments of the dramas.

This chapter is divided into two major sections. The first part shows the results by giving a detailed description of how each drama's audience reacted each week, including the types of content shared, the overall readings, the tone of the conversation, and the levels of engagement. The second part talks about these findings by comparing how audiences reacted to the two dramas and using Reception Theory and Participatory Culture to make sense of the patterns. This structure allows the research to first record the observable phenomenon in the data and then question the processes and justifications that underlie the comparatively received paths.

#### 4.1 Overview of Data Collected

The data of the study were obtained from TikTok while the two Malaysian drama adaptations, *Hilang Dalam Rindu* and *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*, were airing. The period of data gathering was from 17 July up to 11 September 2025, which was the same time the two dramas were broadcast. This made it possible for the research to capture the audience reactions through their real-time expressions.

Regarding *Hilang Dalam Rindu*, 114 TikTok videos were found and gathered by exploring the content posted under the hashtags, most of which were #HilangDalamRindu, alongside several other ones that emerged naturally during the airing of the drama. The videos that were collected were divided into weeks, each week illustrating the airing of a different episode and the reaction of the viewers. Such a weekly arrangement has made it possible for the researcher to examine the shifts and consistencies in the discourse and the sentiment, as well as the level of the audience's engagement over time.

In relation to *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*, 124 TikTok videos were brought together by performing a hashtag search such as #ThariqRidzuwanHisTreasure and other tags that surfaced during the airing. The procedure of dividing videos by week was done here as well to give an orderly account of the viewers' behavior patterns throughout the drama run.

In total, the data for the two dramas includes TikTok videos, captions made by users, hashtags, comment sections, and indicators of engagement such as likes and comments. The data is structured on a weekly basis which not only gives a clear picture of how audience involvement and acceptance changed over time but also makes it possible to carry out a comparative study between the two drama TV adaptations.

#### **4.2 Audience Reception of *Hilang Dalam Rindu* on TikTok**

This section shows the results associated with the audience reception of the Malaysian drama adaptation, *Hilang Dalam Rindu* based on TikTok contents which were collected during the whole period of its broadcast. The study basically analyzes how audiences reacted to the drama via user-generated videos, captions and comment sections, twitting out the trends of the audiences' engagement and discussions which appeared on the platform. Instead of theoretically interpreting these responses, this section portrays the trackable features of audience participation that were evident in the gathered data.

The section looks in detail at the number and type of TikTok videos featuring *Hilang Dalam Rindu*, how deeply the fans were involved, and what kind of sentiments the users showed over time. The results are arranged to give a clear picture of the weekly changes in popularity, the most common kinds of content, and the overall reactions from the crowds. In this way, the research is basically based on how TikTok functioned as an interactive and conversational platform for the drama adaptation fans, thereby providing a point of reference for the ensuing section, which is more interpretative.

#### **4.2.1 Type of Contents of *Hilang Dalam Rindu***

This section gives a descriptive summary of TikTok content that was collected for *Hilang Dalam Rindu* during the period of the drama. The discussion will be based on the type of posted videos, the amount of content per week, and the proportion of content categories over six weeks.

According to the data, the 114 TikTok videos that were related to *Hilang Dalam Rindu* were broken down into different types of content, including drama clips, fan edits, fan-created content, comparisons with the original novel, trailer videos, promotional videos, opening drama clips, and actor-related content. Drama clips were small clips copied right off the drama episodes, and fan edits were clips that were edited together with a few chosen scenes and music or visual effects. Viewer-created original video content, including personal reactions or commentary on the drama, was part of fan content. Trailer videos included clips that were leaked before or at the time of the broadcast, whereas promotional videos contained marketing-related information that spread on TikTok. The introduction to drama clips showcased the intro to the drama, and actor-related content included videos that focused on the cast. The comparisons with the original novel were where people compared the scenes of the drama or the plot of the story with the original book.

The types of content mentioned above represent the differences in formats in which the users of TikTok were engaging with the drama at the time of its broadcast. Table 2 outlines the distribution of these types of content weekly, thus providing a more accurate understanding of how people were engaged throughout the period.

**Table 2:** TikTok videos collected for *Hilang Dalam Rindu*

WEEK	NUMBER OF VIDEOS	TYPE OF CONTENT (VIDEOS)
Week 1	4	Drama clip (1 video)
		Comparison with novel (1 video)
		Promotional video (1 video)
		Opening drama (1 video)
Week 2	8	Drama clip (2 videos)
		Comparison with novel (2 videos)
		Promotional video (3 videos)
		Actor content (1 video)
Week 3	17	Drama clip (5 videos)
		Comparison with novel (1 video)
		Fan edit (9 videos)
		Trailer drama (2 videos)
Week 4	35	Drama clip (14 videos)
		Comparison with novel (1 video)
		Fan edit (21 videos)
Week 5	33	Drama clip (8 videos)
		Fan edit (22 videos)

		Fan content (3 videos)
Week 6	17	Drama clip (12 videos)
		Fan edit (4 videos)
		Fan content (1 video)

During Week 1, only four videos were made in total, which could mean that the first-time viewers of the drama's premiere showed a quite low indifference-level initial interest. Doubled the number of videos in Week 2, as the audience activity continued to grow. The audience increased significantly in Week 3 when 17 videos marked the highest number so far. In Week 4, there was the most excellent level of engagement with 35 videos, and only a slight drop in engagement in Week 5, which had 33 videos, and it was much more noticeable in Week 6, which had 17 videos. This pattern indicates that audience participation peaked in the middle of the broadcast period and then progressively decreased in the final few weeks.

Moreover, the content shared during the first few weeks was very diverse. In Week 1, the videos were composed of an even mix of drama clips, comparisons with the novel, opening drama clips, and promotional videos, each having only one video. Week 2 was almost the same, with drama clips (2 videos), promotional videos (3 videos), comparisons with the novel (2 videos), and actor-related content (1 video) all contributing to the diversity of content.

However, as time passed and the drama developed, the types of content shared gradually became more focused, with fan edits and drama clips becoming more prominent in the peak weeks of content uploads compared to the diverse range of content types recorded in the broadcast period. Fan edits took the lead as the most significant category of the content in Week 3 with nine videos, followed by drama clips (five videos), trailer videos (two videos), and one comparison with the novel. This pattern continued into Week 4, with the biggest audience-created content consisting of fan edits (21 videos) and drama clips (14 videos), but there was

only one video that focused on a comparison with the novel. Week 5 continued the same pattern, with fan edits still being the most prevalent type of material (22 videos), followed by drama clips (eight videos) and a few fan content videos (three videos). Week 6, the final week, was primarily centered on drama clips (12 videos), supported by fan edits (four videos) and fan content (one video).

In general, the results suggest that as the weeks progressed, the range of content types narrowed, but at the end of the broadcasting period, it got narrower. The first week had a greater variety of types of content, and the second week was dominated by drama clips and fan edits. This visible change in the distribution of content provides a descriptive foundation to explore the audience reception patterns and engagement in the following sections.

#### **4.2.2 Overall Readings, Tone, And Engagement of *Hilang Dalam Rindu***

This section illustrates the general trends of audience readings, tone, and engagement rates in the TikTok content of *Hilang dalam Rindu* throughout the duration of the broadcasting. By using Hall's Reception Theory as a basis, audience reactions were classified as dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings depending on how the users of TikTok understood and reacted to the drama. Stuart Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model is the main theoretical foundation that this analysis is built on. The model portrays audience members as active participants who, based on their ethnic background, values and life experiences, can produce a dominant, negotiated or oppositional reading. Therefore, in order to determine the kind of reading that audience members gave to the drama on TikTok, their reactions were categorized as dominant, negotiated, or oppositional. Besides that, the tone of audience expression was also determined as positive, negative, neutral, or mixed. At the same time, the degree of engagement was measured in high, medium and low, depending on the ratio of likes and comments received on each video.

**Table 3:** Overall readings, tone, and engagement of *Hilang Dalam Rindu*

WEEK	NUMBER OF VIDEOS	OVERALL READING	TONE	ENGAGEMENT	Average Likes	Average comments
Week 1	4	Dominated (2 videos)	Positive (2 videos) Mixed (1 video)	High (2 videos)	181,210	683
		Negotiated (2 videos)	Neutral (1 video)	Medium (2 videos)		
Week 2	8	Dominated (7 videos)	Positive (4 videos) Negative (2 videos) Mixed (1 video) Neutral (1 video)	High (7 videos) Medium (1 video)	114,629	508
		Negotiated (1 video)				
Week 3	17	Dominated (16 videos)	Positive (6 videos) Negative (4 videos) Mixed (1 video) Neutral (6 videos)	High (6 videos) Medium (10 videos) Low (1 video)	135,924	536
		Negotiated (1 video)				
Week 4	35	Dominated (29 videos)	Positive (16 videos) Negative (2 videos) Mixed (2 videos) Neutral (15 videos)	High (5 videos) Medium (16 videos) Low (14 videos)	99,007	458
		Negotiated (6 videos)				
Week 5	33	Dominated (25 videos)	Positive (13 videos) Negative	High (4 videos) Medium (15 videos) Low	35,307	203
		Negotiated (8 videos)				

			(5 videos) Mixed (4 videos) Neutral (11 videos)	(14 videos)		
Week 6	17	Dominated (11 videos)	Positive (4 videos)	High (2 videos)	37,169	244
		Negotiated (5 videos)	Negative (1 video)	Medium (11 videos)		
		Oppositional (1 video)	Mixed (5 videos) Neutral (7 videos)	Low (4 videos)		

As summarised in Table 3, dominant readings were the highest type of audience reception each week. Out of the four videos analyzed in Week 1, two videos had dominant readings showing that the audience interpretations were matching the drama storyline from the very beginning. This pattern not only remained but also became very clear as dominant readings massively increased in Week 2 (7 videos) and Week 3 (16 videos), peaked in Week 4 (29 videos) and remained at the same level in Week 5 (25 videos). In the last week, the dominant readings decreased to 11 videos. Such findings imply that majority of the TikTok users who took part in the *Hilang Dalam Rindu*, embraced and enforced the intended meanings in their interactions with the drama especially as the storyline unfolded.

Negotiated readings were also a significant part of the broadcast period besides dominant readings. These readings were followed every week, and the number of videos ranged between one and eight, and they demonstrated situations in which the audience not only partially accepted the drama but at the same time they were voicing their criticism or emotional dissatisfaction. The presence of negotiated readings can be noticed especially in Weeks 4 and 5 which is the time of the highest audience interaction and the most intensive narrative. It thus

appears that the drama was generally followed and supported by the audience but at the same time they were critically examining its plot developments, character portrayals, and adaptation choices.

Nevertheless, oppositional readings of the drama were extremely few, and they occurred only during the last week of data collection. A single video was identified as oppositional. The oppositional reactions appeared to be more of a total rejection of the drama or its storyline decision, but their very limited number shows that a complete rejection was not the dominant part of the audience reaction to *Hilang Dalam Rindu* on TikTok.

Regarding the tone, positive expressions were the most common throughout all six weeks especially in the middle weeks of the broadcast. Positive tone was frequently related to fan edits, emotional scenes, and admiration of the drama's story, characters, and performances. There were also negative tones, which were mostly associated with frustration of the audience, emotional strains, or discontent with certain plot twists. Mixed tones with elements of both praise and criticism were seen quite regularly from week to week and thus reflected the existence of negotiated readings. Neutral tones, being the least frequent, were mostly used in connection with informative or narrative materials.

Regarding engagement metrics, most of the videos across in all weeks were either highly or moderately engaging, which also demonstrated the continuity of the audience interaction with the TikTok content related to *Hilang Dalam Rindu*. The classification is reflected in the average numbers of likes and comments, particularly in the first and mid-final weeks of the broadcast. These engagement metrics indicate the ongoing contact with TikTok content related to the drama, and the audience still showed active interest and responsiveness to the drama. The peak engagement was especially strong during the Weeks 3-5, coinciding with the highest production of videos and the greatest amount of discussion among the

audience. Only a few videos had low engagement, which means that their visibility and audience reaction could have varied depending on the type of content and whether the narratives were relevant. Such patterns of engagement can be also seen in the average number of likes and comments per video that were obtained during each week.

During the first week, *Hilang Dalam Rindu* had the highest average engagement with an average of 181,210 likes and 683 comments per video. In the second week, the two measures declined, as the average number of likes dropped to 114,629 and the average number of comments dropped to 508. The third week showed a modest improvement with the average likes increasing to 135,924 and average comments increasing to 536 suggesting a temporary increase in interaction compared to the previous week.

Since Week 4, there was a steady decrease. During Week 4, mean likes had decreased to 99,007, and the mean number of comments had decreased to 458. This decrease was more significant in Week 5, where the average number of likes decreased further to 35,307 and the average number of comments dropped to 203. During the last week of data collection (Week 6), the mean number of likes showed a slight growth to 37,169 and the mean number of comments increased to 244, but these were significantly less than those in the previous weeks.

In general, the study has basically proven that the public reception of the *Hilang Dalam Rindu* through TikTok was highly influenced by the audiences' positive feelings and their engaged behaviour, accompanied by the presence of a small number of reactions from the audience who disagreed with the drama. Such behavioural pattern of the drama listeners on TikTok basically reveals that it is a highly engaged community where the audience is not only a passive viewer of drama adaptations but also through continuous interaction, viewers publicly express, negotiate, and share their diverse interpretations.

### **4.3 Audience Reception of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* On TikTok**

This section shows the results of audience reception of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* on TikTok at the time of its broadcast. As in the last section, the study analyzes how online viewers understood, reacted, and were involved with the drama via TikTok videos, captions, and comment sections. A sample of 124 TikTok videos in eight different weeks were studied to provide a full insight into the audience talks over the period. The findings are structured in a way that identifies trends in content production, audience readings, the tone and the level of engagement, which is consistent with the qualitative content analysis method used in this study.

The reception of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* was influenced by a more disputed online space. TikTok discussions with the audience often overlapped with wider discussions about the production and creative direction of the drama, which had a bearing on how viewers understood and judged the adaptation. Consequently, TikTok served as a platform of fan appreciation and, at the same time, a site of critique, negotiation, and oppositional discourse. The analysis of these trends offers an idea of the way in which online fan communities are actively creating meanings that surround drama adaptations, especially when it comes to a situation that is characterized by controversy and heightened public awareness.

#### **4.3.1 Type of Contents of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure***

In this section, the type of TikTok content created by online audiences concerning *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* during the period of broadcast is outlined. A sample of 124 TikTok videos was studied over a period of eight weeks, from 23 July to 11 September 2025. The content types were categorized based on the common forms observed in the dataset, thus providing a glimpse of how the audience interacted with the drama in different ways of participation and expression over TikTok.

Table 4 shows how TikTok content related to *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* was distributed weekly in a period of eight weeks. During the eight weeks of observation, some main content categories were found. These included drama clips, fan edits, comparative analysis between the novel and the drama, and trailer video clips. Drama clips were small clips copied right off the drama episodes, and fan edits were clips that were edited together with a few chosen scenes and music or visual effects. Trailer videos included clips that were leaked before or at the time of the broadcast, whereas the comparisons with the original novel were where people compared the scenes of the drama or the plot of the story with the original book. Table 3 lists the number of videos per week, and the classification of the content created, thus making it easier to analyze the way audience participation changed during the broadcast.

**Table 4:** Data of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*

WEEK	NUMBER OF VIDEOS	TYPE OF CONTENT (VIDEOS)
Week 1	19	Drama clip (11 videos)
		Comparison with novel (1 video)
		Fan edit (6 videos)
		Trailer drama (1 video)
Week 2	22	Drama clip (13 videos)
		Fan edit (9 videos)
Week 3	15	Drama clip (8 videos)
		Fan edit (7 videos)
Week 4	18	Drama clip (9 videos)
		Fan edit (9 videos)
Week 5	13	Drama clip (4 videos)
		Fan edit (9 videos)

Week 6	15	Drama clip (10 videos)
		Fan edit (5 videos)
Week 7	15	Drama clip (7 videos)
		Fan edit (8 videos)
Week 8	6	Drama clip (4 videos)
		Fan edit (2 videos)

The audience engagement in the first week was strongly numerous and presented four different categories of content: drama clips, comparison to the original novel, fan edits, and trailer content. This trend indicates the exploratory level when the audience was trying different types of interactions extensively with the drama being fresh. The existence of comparative and promotional content also points to audience efforts to place the drama in existing expectations, especially for those who were familiar with the original novel.

Between Week 2 and Week 4, the total number of videos increased, and the content types became more centralized. During this time, the involvement of viewers was mostly linked to two main types of content, which are drama clips and fan edits. Despite the difference in the number of videos, the variety of content types stayed constant, which indicated a shift in the patterns of interaction towards exploratory and towards well-established engagement patterns. Drama clips remained to serve as a platform to share scenes and discuss them, but fan edits demonstrated the beginning of a more emotional connection and reinterpretation of the story.

The week five to seven period showed a slight change in terms of the number of TikTok videos, but the type of content was constant, with the majority being drama clips, with a strong presence of fan edits. This pattern shows an engagement stabilization in the audience, whereby the audiences continuously used the existing formats to interact with the drama instead of

adopting new types of content. The general dominance of fan edits during these weeks highlights an ongoing affective involvement and contribution as influenced by fandom factors.

At the end of Week 8, the number of videos and the variety of content decreased significantly, as the data included only drama clips and fan edits. This reduction implies a progressive weakening of the viewer interest along with the approaching end or resolution of the broadcast program of the drama.

On the whole, the table shows that despite the tendency of the volume of content to vary over time, the most common form of engagement resulted in relatively stable at an early stage, represented by the emergence of drama clips and fan edits as the main channels through which viewers engaged with the topic, *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*, on the TikTok platform.

#### **4.3.2 Overall Readings, Tone, And Engagement of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure***

This section critically explores how *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* is perceived by the audiences on TikTok by discussing the overall readings, tone, and level of engagement over a period of eight weeks. As the discussion is based on Reception Theory, audience reactions are divided into dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings, whereas tone evaluation is performed on positive, negative, neutral, or mixed scales. The levels of engagement are also defined as being high, medium, and low, according to the observable indicators of engagement, such as the number of likes and comments.

Table 5 shows a breakdown of overall readings, tone, and engagement levels of TikTok videos related to the post about *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* in eight weeks. In general, the data set demonstrates that the reaction of the audience changes over time, and at the same time, it shows that there were several reliable patterns in the way viewers perceived and engaged with the drama on TikTok.

**Table 5:** Overall readings, tone, and engagement of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*

WEEK	NUMBER OF VIDEO	OVERALL READING	TONE	ENGAGEMENT	Average Likes	Average Comments
Week 1	19	Dominated (12 videos)	Positive (9 videos)	High (1 video)	19,477	218
		Negotiated (3 videos)	Negative (3 videos)	Medium (6 videos)		
		Oppositional (4 videos)	Mixed (1 video) Neutral (6 videos)	Low (12 videos)		
Week 2	22	Dominated (17 videos)	Positive (16 videos)	High (2 videos)	24,135	162
		Negotiated (3 videos)	Negative (0 videos)	Medium (6 videos)		
		Oppositional (2 videos)	Mixed (4 videos) Neutral (2 videos)	Low (14 videos)		
Week 3	15	Dominated (10 videos)	Positive (7 videos)	High (0 videos)	26,779	106
		Negotiated (5 videos)	Negative (2 videos)	Medium (6 videos)		
		Oppositional (0 video)	Mixed (2 videos) Neutral (4 videos)	Low (9 videos)		
Week 4	18	Dominated (15 videos)	Positive (8 videos)	High (0 video)	12,834	56
		Negotiated (3 videos)	Negative (3 videos)	Medium (2 videos)		
		Oppositional (0 video)	Mixed (5 videos) Neutral	Low (16 videos)		

			(2 videos)			
Week 5	13	Dominated (12 videos)	Positive (4 videos)	High (1 video)	35,292	125
		Negotiated (1 video)	Negative (3 videos)	Medium (2 videos)		
		Oppositional (0 video)	Mixed (5 videos)	Low (10 videos)		
Week 6	15	Dominated (12 videos)	Positive (8 videos)	High (0 video)	26,594	98
		Negotiated (3 videos)	Negative (1 video)	Medium (4 videos)		
		Oppositional (0 video)	Mixed (2 videos)	Low (11 videos)		
Week 7	15	Dominated (12 videos)	Positive (3 videos)	High (1 video)	30,991	138
		Negotiated (3 videos)	Negative (6 videos)	Medium (4 videos)		
		Oppositional (0 video)	Mixed (2 videos)	Low (10 videos)		
Week 8	6	Dominated (5 videos)	Positive (4 videos)	High (0 video)	27,559	113
		Negotiated (1 video)	Negative (1 video)	Medium (3 videos)		
		Oppositional (0 video)	Mixed (0 video)	Low (3 videos)		
			Neutral (1 video)			

The dominant readings were the majority of the audience insights throughout the eight-week study period. In the first week, out of 19 videos examined, 12 videos were found to be

dominant readings, three videos were negotiated readings, and four videos were oppositional readings. A similar trend remained in Week 2, where the number of dominant readings increased to 17 out of 22 videos with three negotiated readings and two oppositional readings. In week three and later, the oppositional readings were reduced to zero level, and the dominant readings continued to dominate. To illustrate, Week 4 produced 15 dominant readings among 18 videos, and Week 5 produced 12 dominant readings among 13 videos. In week seven and eight, the dominant readings once again influenced the audience interpretation with 12 and five videos, respectively. This pattern suggests a long-term support of the narrative and thematic content of the drama by the TikTok audience during its period of broadcasting.

According to the tone analysis, positivity expressions formed the majority of the responses observed during the study period, with negativity, mixed, and neutral expressions also recorded. During the first weeks of the timeline, specifically in Week 1 and Week 2, the positive expressions were quite dominant, as proven by nine and 16 videos presented with a positive tone, respectively. However, the negative and mixed-tone expressions were present as well, especially in weeks with a high number of videos. For instance, Week 3 and Week 4 had more visible tone classifications, given that negative, mixed, and neutral tones simultaneously showed up, thus indicating more mixed emotional responses with the development of the plot. During the following weeks, despite the dominance of positivity, mixed and neutral expressions still appeared, suggesting that the effect of the audience was not one-dimensional but instead diverse depending on specific episodes or scenes.

The engagement levels were analyzed and showed that medium and low levels were prevalent throughout most weeks. The most frequent videos within the first week were those with poor engagement, which are 12 videos, and there was only one highly engaged video. This distribution did not change over the following weeks, but low engagement maintained the leading category, especially during the fourth week, the fifth week, and the seventh week. High-

engagement videos were spread out, limited to a few specific occasions, like two videos in Week 2 and only one video in Week 7, whereas some weeks had no high-engagement content. On the other hand, medium-engagement videos continued to exist during all weeks, indicating consistent but moderate interaction with the audience in terms of likes and comments. Such patterns of engagement are further explained by the average number of likes and comments per video, which was noted on a weekly basis.

Week 1 showed the average number of likes per video was 19 477 and the average number of comments was 218. There was an improvement in both metrics in Week 2, as the average number of likes increased to 24135 and the average number of comments slightly fell to 162. Another rise in the mean number of likes came in Week 3, which was 26777, and mean number of comments decreased further to 106.

The most significant drop in the engagement was observed in Week 4 as the mean likes reached 12,834 and the mean comments reached 56, thus marking the lowest points of engagement measures in the eight weeks of observation. During Week 5, the mean likes were significantly improved to 35 292 and the mean comments were 125, thus making the most averages liked during the broadcast period. The following weeks exhibited average variations of the engagement levels. Week 6 had mean likes of 26 594 and mean comments of 98 and Week 7 had the mean likes of 30 991 and comments 138. In the last, Week 8, the mean likes became a bit smaller at 27559 and the mean comment reduced to 113.

In general, the table shows that the interpretations of the audience towards *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* were mainly positive, but there was a change in tonal quality and the engagement levels over time. The findings indicate that the viewers of the TikTok content had a variety of ways of consuming the drama, manifested in the variation of affective expression and depth of interaction across the eight-week time frame of observation. These noted

tendencies provide an empirical foundation for the later discussion of how the virtual community of fans plays a role in the meaning-making and reception processes in the TikTok environment.

#### 4.4 Discussion

This part analyses empirical results of the study against the research objectives and the theoretical framework. Based on the Reception Theory and the Participatory Culture Theory, the discussion examines how online audience discussion on TikTok shapes the reception of Malaysian drama adaptations. This discussion focuses on three main areas, including audience interpretations, engagement and participatory practices, and comparative reception patterns in the context of *Hilang Dalam Rindu* and *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*.

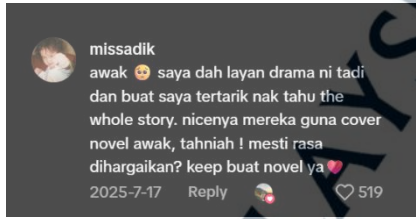
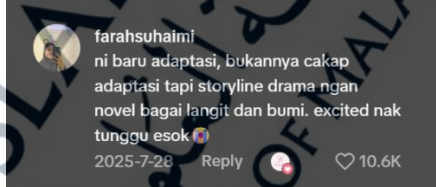
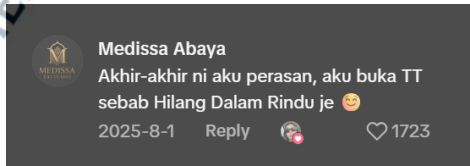
##### 4.4.1 Dominant, Negotiated, And Oppositional Readings in TikTok Fan Communities

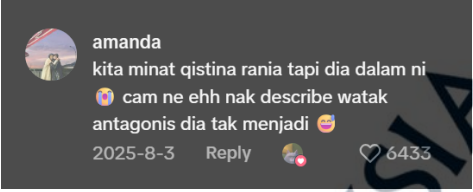
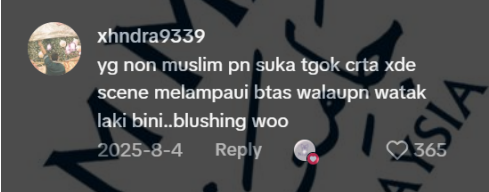
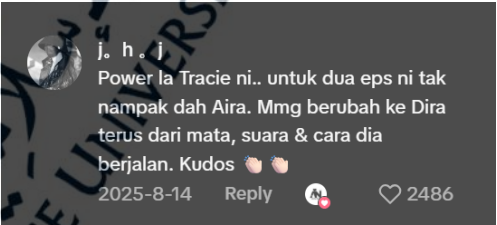

According to the findings of the current study, the ways in which Malaysian drama adaptations are received on TikTok can be conceptualized in terms of the Reception Theory of Hall (1980), particularly, the ideas of dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings. A review of TikTok videos and related discourse of comments demonstrates that viewers actively interpret and evaluate drama adaptations, creating heterogeneous meanings that circulate in online fan groups.

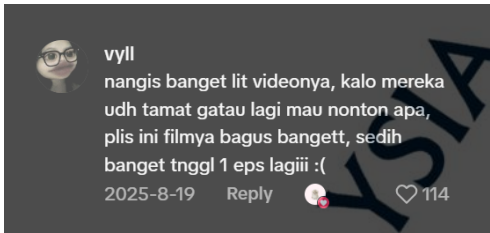
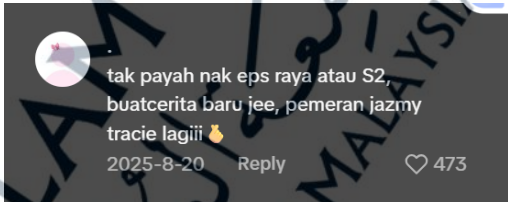
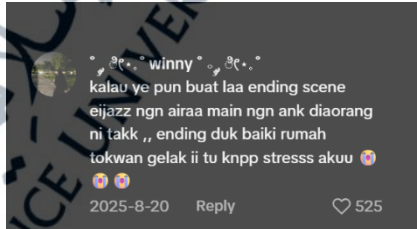
- *Hilang Dalam Rindu*

Table 6 presents some chosen audience remarks that represent the general interpretations identified in TikTok discourse related to *Hilang Dalam Rindu*. The interpretations which dominated were always the most common form of audience perception across all weeks of the analysis, as mentioned in the results section.

**Table 6:** Audience comments of overall readings of *Hilang Dalam Rindu* in TikTok

WEEK	TYPE OF CONTENT	OVERALL READING	AUDIENCE COMMENTS
1	Promotional video from the author	Dominated	 <p>Translation: I just watched this drama earlier and it made me really curious to know the whole story. It's so nice that they used the cover of your novel, congratulations! You must feel appreciated, right? Please keep writing novels.</p>
2	Comparison with novel	Dominated	 <p>Translation: This is what a real adaptation looks like—not something that claims to be an adaptation but ends up with a drama storyline that's completely different from the novel, like heaven and earth. I'm excited to wait for tomorrow.</p>
3	Trailer drama	Dominated	 <p>Translation: Lately, I've noticed that I only open TikTok because of <i>Hilang Dalam Rindu</i>.</p>

3	Fan edit	Negotiated	 <p>amanda kita minat qistina rania tapi dia dalam ni 👉 cam ne ehh nak describe watak antagonis dia tak menjadi 😞 2025-8-3 Reply 🗨️ ❤️ 6433</p> <p>Translation: We like Qistina Rania, but in this one 👉 how do you even describe it... her antagonist role just doesn't work.</p>
4	Drama clip	Dominated	 <p>xhndra9339 yg non muslim pn suka tgok crta xde scene melampaui btas walaupun watak laki bini..blushing woo 2025-8-4 Reply 🗨️ ❤️ 365</p> <p>Translation: Even non-Muslims enjoy watching the story, there aren't any over-the-top scenes, even between husband and wife... so blushing woo</p>
5	Drama clip	Dominated	 <p>j. h. j Power la Tracie ni.. untuk dua eps ni tak nampak dah Aira. Mmg berubah ke Dira terus dari mata, suara &amp; cara dia berjalan. Kudos 🙌🙌 2025-8-14 Reply 🗨️ ❤️ 2486</p> <p>Translation: Tracie is amazing... in these two episodes, you don't even see Aira anymore. She's completely transformed into Dira from her eyes, voice, to the way she walks. Kudos!</p>
5	Fan edit	Negotiated	 <p>lantak la pura ii ke tak tapi nak lagu bella astilah balik ost baru tak best we 👉👉👉👉 2025-8-11 Reply 🗨️ ❤️ 4393</p> <p>Translation: Whatever, fake or not, I just want Bella Astilah's song back, the new OST isn't good.</p>

6	Fan edit	Dominated	 <p>Translation: I cried so much watching the video... if they finish, I don't know what I'll watch next. Please, this film is really good, I'm so sad, just one more episode left.</p>
6	Fan edit	Negotiated	 <p>Translation: No need for a Raya episode or Season 2, just make a new story, have Jazmy and Tracie in it again.</p>
6	Fan content	Oppositional	 <p>Translation: If you're gonna do it, at least show Eijazz and Airaa playing with their kids! Ending with them fixing Tokwan's house and laughing... why is this stressing me out.</p>

In *Hilang Dalam Rindu*, the dominant readings were largely expressed through the commentary of the audience, in amplifying the level of satisfaction with the drama as true to the original novel. This was felt during the first weeks of airing with comments praising the adaptation due to its strong instrumentalization of the narrative frame and the dialogue of the

novel. For instance, comments such as “*ni baru adaptasi, bukannya cakap adaptasi tapi storyline drama ngan novel bagai langit dan bumi...*” and “*...nicenya mereka guna cover novel... mesti rasa dihargai*”, which are examples of the audience agreeing with the adaptation choices the production was making and the respect it was showing to the original source. Such remarks, refer to the audience as having accepted the encoded meaning and which fits the narrative intended, thus, defining dominant readings.

The supportive interpretations became more dominant throughout the mid-broadcast, when the levels of audience involvement were at the maximum. During this period, TikTok users gradually shared fan-created edits and emotional commentary which praised the emotion appeal of the drama, acting performance, and the quality of production on the whole. Comments such as “*...aku buka TT sebab Hilang Dalam Rindu je*”, “*yg non muslim pn suka tgok crta xde scene melampaui btas walaupun watak laki bini....*” and “*Power la Tracie ni.. untuk dua eps ni tak nampak dah Aira. Mmg berubah ke Dira terus dari mata, suara & cara dia berjalan. Kudos*” are examples of showing a deep emotional connection to and praise to the drama. Moreover, comments made by the global audience, such as the Indonesian audience like “*nangis banget lit videonya, kalo mereka udh tamat gatau lagi mau nonton apa, plis ini filmya bagus banget, sedih banget tnggl 1 eps lagiii* : (“, show that the play was well-received across the national boundaries, which supports the dominance of positive discourse in the TikTok community.

Audience reception was also highly composed of negotiated readings, which were especially prominent during the midweeks of the broadcast. What was reflected in these readings was a partial approval of the dramatised contents and at the same time disapproval or cynicism. As an example, the praise of the actors was accompanied by questioning of the characterization, as can be seen by comments like “*kita minat Qistina Rania tapi watak antagonis dia tak menjadi.*” Other negotiated reactions focused on dissatisfaction with the

changes in the soundtrack, but still expressed general interest in the play that illustrates in comments likes “*lantak la pura ii ke tak tapi nak lagu bella astilah balik ost baru tak best we*”. And the suggestions that the actors should be cast collectively in further projects, despite criticism of some of the plot aspects also can be seen by comments like “*tak payah nak eps raya atau S2, buat cerita baru jee, pemeran jazmy tracie lagiii*”, are another example of such negotiated position. These reactions suggest that audiences remained active and interested in the drama, as they continued to support it, and at the same time, engaged in evaluative analysis of particular areas of its performance.

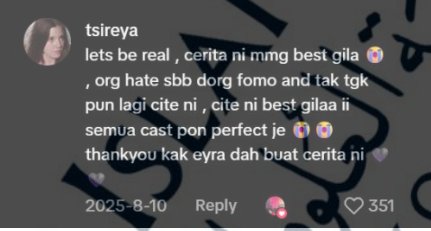
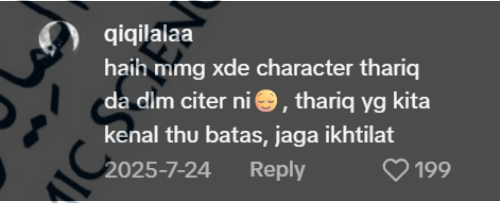
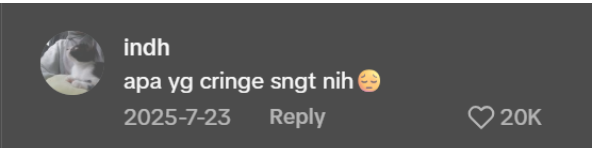
The phenomenon of oppositional readings in the reception of the *Hilang Dalam Rindu* was comparatively uncommon, with all observations mostly in the last week of the broadcast of the drama. These comments show that the anger of the audience was focused on the end of the series specifically and not on the rejection of the work altogether. As an illustration, an online comment like “*kalau ye pun buat la ending scene Eijaz ngan Aira dengan anak... stress aku*” shows dissatisfaction with the ending and at the same time a sign of long-lasting emotional involvement in the characters. The general dearth of such negative reception suggests that, as much as some viewers may have been displeased with specific narrative decisions, outright criticism was not a prominent aspect of TikTok audience reception.

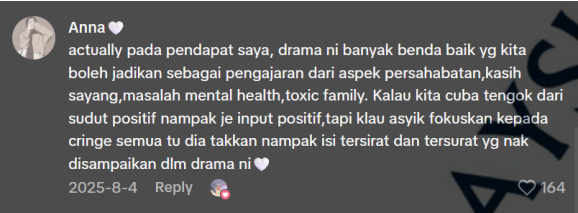
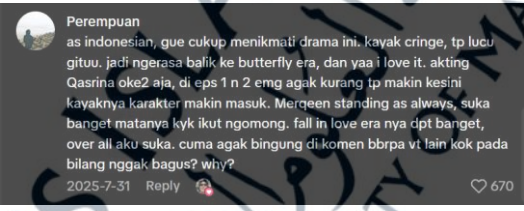
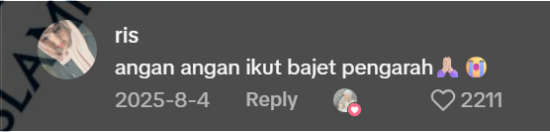
Overall, the dominance of the dominant interpretations supported by the selectively negotiated responses and limited oppositional reactions imply that the discourse about TikTok supported the positive attitude towards *Hilang Dalam Rindu*. By commenting, developing fan edits and frequent demonstrations of affective interaction, audiences played an active role in supporting the continuation of positive interpretations of the drama in online fan communities.

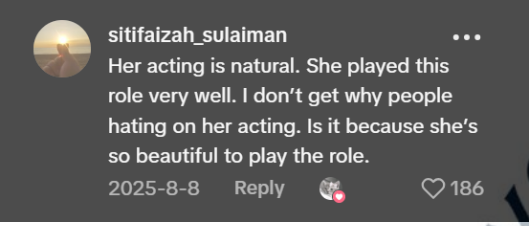
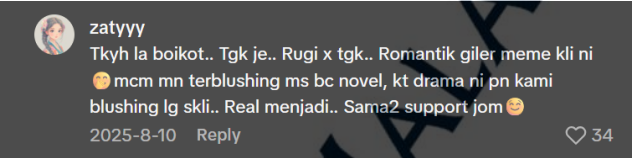
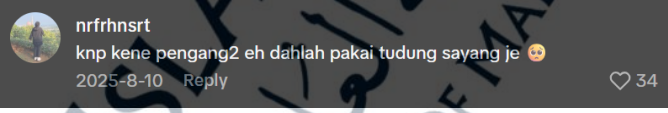
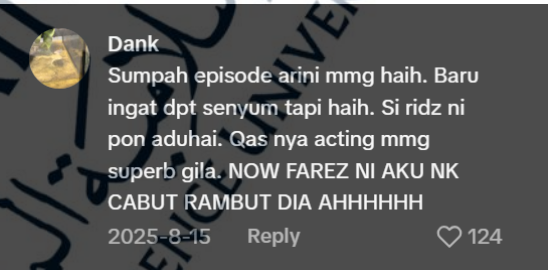
- *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*

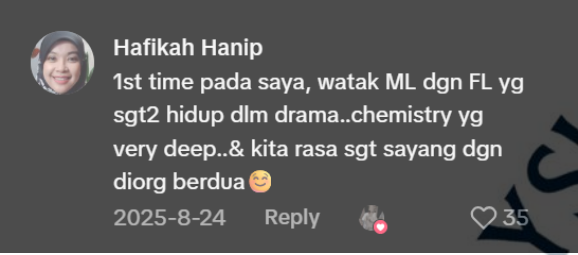
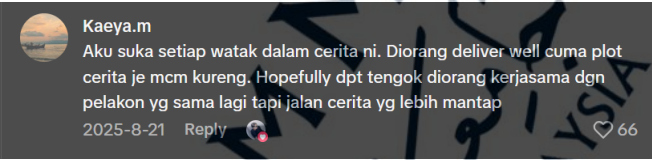
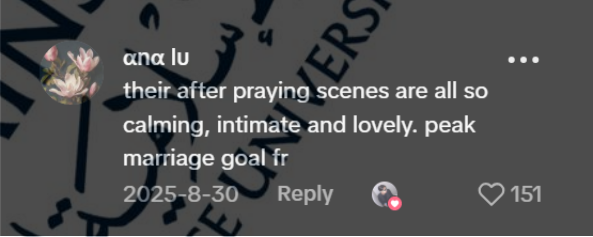
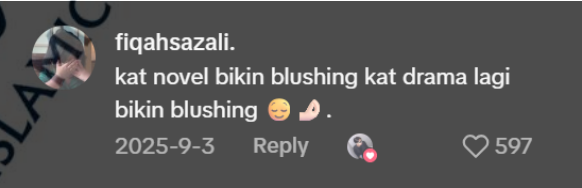
Table 7 includes the selected commentary of the audience that illustrates the general themes identified in the TikTok discourse in reference to *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*. According to the results recorded in the findings section, the dataset shows a temporal development of the audience reactions, at the same time it shows recurrent patterns of how viewers made sense of the drama and engage with it over an eight-week broadcast span.

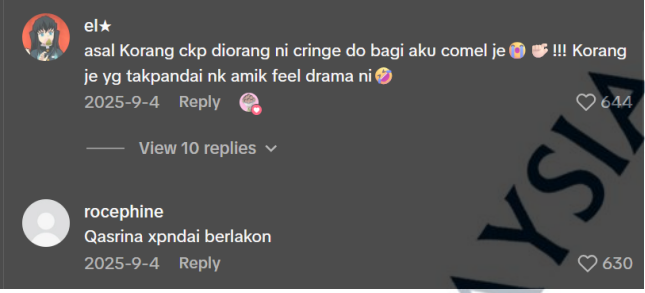
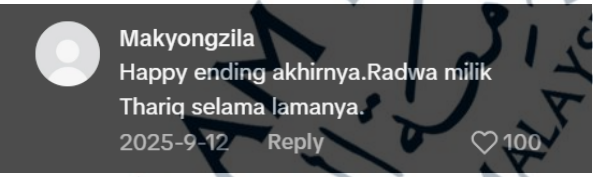
**Table 7:** Audience comments of overall readings of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* in TikTok

WEEK	TYPE OF CONTENT	OVERALL READINGS	AUDIENCE COMMENTS
1	Trailer drama posted by the director	Dominated	 <p>tsireya lets be real , cerita ni mng best gila 🤩 , org hate sbb dorg fomo and tak tgk pun lagi cite ni , cite ni best gilaa ii semua cast pon perfect je 🤩🤩 thankyou kak eyra dah buat cerita ni 🤍</p> <p>2025-8-10 Reply 🤍 351</p> <p>Translation: “Let’s be real, this story is insanely good 🤩. People hate it, because they’re FOMO and haven’t even watched it yet. This story is seriously amazing, all the cast are perfect 🤩🤩. Thank you, Kak Eyra, for making this story.</p>
1	Drama clip	Oppositional	 <p>qiqilalaa haih mng xde character thariq da dlm citer ni 😞 , thariq yg kita kenal thu batas, jaga ikhtilat</p> <p>2025-7-24 Reply 🤍 199</p> <p>Translation: Sigh, there’s really no Thariq character in this story 😞. The Thariq we know respects boundaries and follows ikhtilat.</p>
1	Drama clip	Oppositional	 <p>indh apa yg cringe sngt nih 😞</p> <p>2025-7-23 Reply 🤍 20K</p>

			<p>Translation: What's so cringe about this?</p>
2	Drama clip	Dominated	 <p>Translation: Actually, in my opinion, this drama has a lot of good things we can learn from, about friendship, love, mental health issues, and toxic families. If we try to look from a positive perspective, we can see all the positive messages. But if we just focus on the cringe moments, we won't see the implicit and explicit lessons that the drama is trying to convey.</p>
2	Drama clip	Negotiated	 <p>Translation: As an Indonesian, I really enjoyed this drama. It's kinda cringe, but funny. It makes me feel like I'm back in the Butterfly era, and yeah, I love it. Qasrina's acting is okay. Episodes 1 and 2 were a bit lacking, but as it goes on, the character really grows. Merqueen is standing out as always; I really love how his eyes seem like they're speaking. The 'fall in love' vibe really hits, overall I like it. Just a bit confused why in some other VT comments people say it's not good? Why?</p>
2	Fan edit	Oppositional	 <p>Translation: Dreams follow the director's budget.</p>

3	Fan edit	Dominated	
3	Fan edit	Negotiated	 <p>Translation: No need to boycott... just watch it... You'll regret not watching. This episode is super romantic 🥰. Just like when reading the novel, we're blushing again in the drama... it feels so real. Let's all support it together</p>  <p>Translation: Why do she have to be touching each other? And she's wearing tudung too...</p>
4	Drama clip	Dominated	 <p>Translation: I swear, today's episode is just... haih. I thought I'd finally get to smile, but nope. And Ridz, my god. Qas's acting is seriously insanely good. NOW FAREZ, I WANT TO PULL HIS HAIR AHHHHHH.</p>

5	Fan edit	Dominated	 <p>Translation: For the first time for me, the male lead and female lead feel so alive in this drama... their chemistry is very deep, and we really feel so attached to both of them.</p>
5	Fan edit	Negotiated	 <p>Translation: I like every character in this story. They all deliver well, it's just that the plot feels a bit lacking. Hopefully we'll get to see them work together with the same cast again, but with a stronger storyline.</p>
6	Fan edit	Dominated	 <p>Translation: Their praying scenes are all so calming, intimate and lovely. Peak marriage goal, for real.</p>
7	Fan edit	Dominated	 <p>Translation: The novel made me blush, and the drama makes me blush even more.</p>

7	Drama clip	Negotiated	 <p>Translation 1: Why do you all say they're cringe? To me, they're just cute!!! You're just not good at getting the feel of this drama.</p> <p>Translation 2: Qasrina isn't good at acting.</p>
8	Drama clip	Dominated	 <p>Translation: Finally a happy ending. Radwa belongs to Thariq forever.</p>

According to the encoding/decoding paradigm by Stuart Hall (1980), dominant readings are those of the audience that conform to what the producers want to convey. Dominated readings were notable in the case of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* especially in the first and middle weeks of the broadcast where viewers gave positive feedback in relation to the drama narrative, themes, and performances.

During the first weeks, the most common readings were reflected in comments, which appreciated the quality of the entire drama and moral messages. As an example, the statements like “*cite ni best gila-gila semua cast pun perfect je*” and “*drama ni banyak benda baik yg kita boleh jadikan sebagai pengajaran*” point at the fact that people like the cast and values presented in the plot. These reactions indicate that the audience believed in the intended

message and the frame of the drama and especially in terms of friendship, family and emotional conflicts.

This trend continued into the mid weeks along with the plot development and the growing prominence of character lines. The use of viewer annotations gradually shifted the focus to performative delivery and affections between the main characters. Comments like, “*Her acting is natural. She played this role very well*”, “*Qas nya acting mmg superb gila*” and “*chemistry yg very deep*” underline a strong connection with how the producers intended the inter-character relations to be.

Moreover, the comments which glorify emotionally intimate moments, like the ones where the viewers state that the scenes after praying are all so soothing, indicate that the audience appreciated the aesthetic and emotional atmosphere of the drama. This positive reception is also solidified by direct comparisons with the original novel as the comments include things like, “*kat novel bikin blushing kat drama lagi bikin blushing.*” These statements suggest that viewers found the televised version as having been effective in amplifying emotional appeal in a way that was not apparent in the original text. Instead of seeing the alterations of the novel as negative aspects, viewers analyzed them as adding to the romantic expression and visual intimacy, which strengthened hegemonic readings that substantiated adaptation decisions of the drama. During the final week, the majority of reader interpretations were supported by positive responses towards the conclusion of the narrative, with replies like “*Happy ending akhirnya*” indicating satisfaction with the conclusion of the narrative.

Conceptualised by Hall, negotiated readings involve a selective acceptance of the dominant discourse that accompanies the expression of criticism or reservation. Such negotiated readings, in the case of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* can be observed throughout several weeks, and often they occur in parallel with the dominant responses in the same video

segments. Such readings were particularly conspicuous as audiences were discovering positive qualities of the drama and simultaneously disclosing dissatisfaction with certain elements.

As an example, an Indonesian audience has remarked that they liked the drama overall, but that their impression of it was negative at the beginning: “*gue cukup menikmati drama ini... tapi eps 1 n 2 agak kurang.*” Likewise, remarks like “*Aku suka setiap Watak dalam cerita ni... cuma plot cerita Je mcm kureng*” indicate that the portrayals of characters were positively accepted and at the same time, were disapproved of the plot development. Negotiated readings also emerged in the comment sections wherein there were opposing opinions presented beneath the same video. An example of such reviews includes a comment on how well the performance was done and the comment was “*Qasrina xpandai berlakon*” and the other comment was “*bagi aku comel je. Korang je yg tak pandai nak amik feel drama ni.*” Such intermingling of criticism and defence shows how negotiated readings operated at all in terms of interaction between viewers instead of solitary readings.

Other negotiated responses have turned out to be in connection with cultural and religious sensitivities. The remarks like, “*kenapa kena pegang-pegang sedangkan pakai tudung*”, questioned particular scenes involving physical closeness, and hence signalled the issue of appropriateness and at the same time avoided a complete rejection of the drama. Simultaneously, other viewers also supported the continuation of the series even with these issues with comments “*mcm mn terblushing ms bc novel, kt drama ni pn kami blushing lg skli.. Real menjadi.. Sama2 support jom*”, thus suggesting a delicate balance between praise and criticism instead of an outright rejection.

Oppositional readings, literally meaning a rejection of the intended reading, were tightly relatively restricted, and they mainly emerged within the first weeks of the airing. These responses were unavoidably associated with the already existing controversy and the initial

impressions of the adaptation. Such remarks like “*apa yang cringe sangat ni*” came soon after the premiere of the drama, as the sign of instantaneous viewer uneasiness and rejection to accept the narrative before the essential development would take place. These kinds of reactions imply a conscious rejection of the tonal and aesthetic conventions of the drama at the very beginning of the performance, thus making the adaptation seem immature or unnatural to some audience members.

Additional oppositional responses focused on the perceived deviations of the source novel, with such comments as “*haih memang takde character Thariq dalam cerita ni*” and “*watak ni tak jaga ikhtilat macam dalam novel.*” These words highlight the discontent with the truthfulness of the adaptation and the ideological hopes, according to which audiences disliked the series because it fails to recreate the moral and behavioural system related to the original text. Moreover, the critical remarks made toward the public utterances of the director such as “*angan-angan ikut bajet pengarah*”, reveal a sense of resistance that goes beyond narrative critique to include the discourse of the production of the drama. These oppositional readings imply that some viewers did not accept the adaptation on ideological and contextual levels but only on narrative involvement.

In general, the discussion about TikTok in regard to *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* presents a complicated reception pattern in the form of negotiated and selectively dominant interpretations, where opposition responses are most commonly focused at the beginning of the broadcast. This distribution indicates that the use of controversy, expectations of adaptation, and cultural values have an impact on audience interpretations in TikTok fan communities.

#### **4.4.2 Audience Engagement and Participatory Practices on TikTok**

The participation of the audience on TikTok went beyond the quantitative metrics like likes and commentary, operating as a participatory media in which participants were actively involved

in the discursive construction around drama adaptation. In line with the participatory culture theory (Jenkins, 2006), the audience was not a passive consumer of content but a contributor who gave emotional reactions, judged narrative decisions, and bargained on meanings collaboratively. In both the *Hilang Dalam Rindu* and the *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*, the interaction proved to be in the sense of affective commentary, interaction with peers, as well as the content created by fans, but the scope and intensity of the interaction was quite different in the two dramas.

Throughout the screening of *Hilang Dalam Rindu*, the level of involvement among the viewers was steady and directly corresponded to the most significant interpretive readings, and one of the main concentrations was at the middle of the broadcasting schedule. Weeks three through five recorded the highest rates of engagement, as indicated in the findings section, and correspond to high spikes in average likes, comments, and video production. This intensification was matched to the key plot progressions and heightened emotional moments, which, likewise, prompted the involvement of the audience in the form of fan edits, recurrent sharing of edited scenes and emotive commentary. Such remarks like, “*Aakhir-akhir ni aku perasan, aku buka TT sebab Hilang Dalam Rindu*” je can be viewed as examples of habitual interaction and emotional involvement in watching the drama, which means that the viewers turned watching TikTok into a part of their daily routine.

Other forms of participation praised the moral and cultural representation of the drama by comments like “*yg non musium pn suka tgok crta xde scene melampau btas walaupun watak laki bini.*” These statements highlight how the audience enjoyed a reserved portrayal of intimacy, which meant that the interaction went beyond the mere enjoyment of narrative to include critical analysis of values and representation. In addition, positive comments, such as “*tak payah nak eps raya atau S2, buat cerita baru jee, pemeran jazmy tracie lagi*”, represent the ways in which participants practices were directed at the future as a promise to remain

engaged after the current drama. Taken together, these practices indicate that positive fan-based discussions supported existing patterns of interpretations and enabled a generally agreeable intake of *Hilang Dalam Rindu* on TikTok.

It is interesting to note that the involvement of the viewer with the *Hilang Dalam Rindu* was not limited to national boundaries. The Indonesian viewers were showing a highly active engagement in the comment places as seen in the comments like “*nangis banget lit videonya, kalo mereka udh tamat gatau lagi mau nonton apa, plis ini filmya bagus banget.*” This type of cross-border interaction highlights the role of TikTok as a tool of transnational fan involvement and suggests that the affective appeal of the drama extended to audiences outside its core Malaysian target audience.

Nevertheless, the participation of the audience in relation to the *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* had a significant level of variation and was mostly governed by negotiated and oppositional participatory actions. Though participation was evident during the eight weeks of broadcast, the average likes and comments were not steady, and it seems that the participation of the participants was often prompted by incidences of controversy, criticism, and discussions as opposed to enthusiasm. Initial reactions described the play as “cringe”, with remarks like “*apa yang cringe sangat ni*” beginning to be posted soon after the play premiered and were a reaction to the adaptation decisions made. However, these counteractions were not the only responses to these actions. They often came up with counter-reactions that helped push people in favour of the drama and some viewers called others not to boycott the drama and pointed out how romantic it was.

Further oppositional readings can be seen in statements like “*haih memang takde character Thariq dalam cerita ni*” and “*watak ni tak-jaga ikhtilat macam dalam novel*” which shows that the audience has rejected the characterisation of the drama and its perceived moral

stance. These criticisms had mostly been influenced by what was expected of the initial novel especially in the aspect of consistency of the characters and religious or cultural limits. These kinds of reactions are characteristic of participatory resistance in which the audiences are reactive to the creative choices made in the adaptation instead of accepting them unquestioningly.

The negotiated participation grew as the dramas continued and viewers both liked it and disliked it at the same time. There were also comments praising the performances, like, “Her acting is natural,” and “*chemistry yg very deep*,” but there were also comments about the structure of the narrative, such as “*Aku suka setiap watak dalam cerita ni, cuma plot cerita je mcm kureng.*” This tendency is characteristic of a participatory environment where viewers engaged in the active discussion of interpretations, supported their own preferences, and reacted to each other instead of reacting to the text.

Moreover, remarks of the praising emotionally intimate scenes such as “their after-praying scenes are all so soothing”, indicate affective involvement which continued to accompany a critical evaluation. These reactions demonstrate that the respondents despite their sceptical attitude to some issues presented in the adaptation remained actively involved in identifying the examples of the emotional resonance and aesthetic enjoyment. In totality, such practices are consistent with the existing body of literature on participatory culture, which suggests that online fan communities are often spaces of negotiation and contestation, especially where the adaptations are not beholden to audience expectations or source material.

Similarly to *Hilang Dalam Rindu*, *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* also made the contribution of Indonesian audiences. Transnational engagement can be observed in statements like “*as Indonesian, gue cukup menikmati drama ini*” even in responses that have been

negotiated or even critical. This fact also highlights the role of TikTok as a cross-cultural participatory environment where various audience views come together.

Overall, this section demonstrates that participatory practices on TikTok are closely shaped by audience reception and sentiment. While *Hilang Dalam Rindu* generated engagement through emotional investment, cultural affirmation, and collective support, *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* prompted participation through critique, negotiation, and moral evaluation. These findings support the research objective by showing how both positive fan-driven narratives and controversies are actively produced and circulated within TikTok fan communities, reinforcing TikTok's role as a dynamic arena for participatory audience discourse.

In general, this section indicates that the audience reception and sentiment play a significant role in participatory practices in the TikTok platform. Where the case of *Hilang Dalam Rindu* created a sense of engagement due to the emotional investment, cultural affirmation and mass support, the case of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* created a sense of engagement through criticizing, negotiation and moral judgment. The findings support the research purpose in showing how positive fan-generated content, as well as controversies, is actively created and shared in the TikTok fan communities, which supports the idea that TikTok is a vibrant space of participatory audience discourse.

#### **4.4.3 Comparing Audience Reception of *Hilang Dalam Rindu* and *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure***

In this section, the analysis of audience readings (Section 4.4.1), as well as participatory practices (Section 4.4.2), are expanded to compare the levels of audience reception of the artifact and its participation in the activity in both pieces, *Hilang Dalam Rindu* and *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*, considering the high, medium, and low levels of the foregrounding

engagement, which is a primary indicator of the participation activity on TikTok. Though the two dramas created interaction with the audience there were differences in the distribution of engagement, diversity of content and interpretations which reveal different patterns of participatory culture.

In general, *Hilang Dalam Rindu* received an overwhelming positive reaction among the viewers, which is reflected in the dominant readings and the continuation of participation. The results in Table 2 show that dominance readings were the most common interpretative position across the overall period of observation where audiences were largely believing to the narrative structure of the drama, the portrayal of the characters and loyalty to the original novel. This acceptance was exhibited through participate-oriented behaviours that were emotionally expressive and creatively involved, which includes fan edits, selective sharing of scenes and appreciative commentary. The measures of engagement further supported this trend, as most videos were in the medium to high engagement range, particularly in the middle weeks of the broadcast time. The lack of low-engagement videos in the first weeks (Weeks 1 and 2) indicate that the initial audience attention was strong, and the reception was positive at the start.

By comparison, reception of the audience towards *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* was considerably disjointed and disputed, negotiated readings and oppositional readings taking a leading role over eight weeks of the observational period, as shown in Table 4. Although more dominant interpretations became evident, the patterns of engagement helped to determine that participation was mostly facilitated by critique, debate, and moral negotiation instead of shared enthusiasm. Most TikTok videos that were related to this drama were recorded to have low engagement rates constantly, and videos with high levels of engagements were significantly lacking over a few weeks (Weeks 3, 4, 6, and 8) and thus they were indicative of lack of continued audience momentum. Creation of content was also relatively minimal, with the main

reliance being placed on drama clips and fan edits; participatory content like comparative analysis with the novel original material only existed in short during the early broadcast phase.

These differences can also be highlighted by a comparison of the levels of engagement. The example of the case of *Hilang Dalam Rindu* as shown in Table 2, that medium engagement was most common in most of the weeks especially in the middle and final parts of the broadcast, though there were high levels of engagement during critical points in the narrative. On the other hand, low engagement was attributed to most content related to *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* based on Table 4, indicating the participation was often provoked by controversy and not persistent emotional involvement. These are the differences in patterns of engagement that suggest that the audience was more stable and cumulative in its engagement in the performance of *Hilang Dalam Rindu*, but uneven and intermittent in the case of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*.

The two dramas also differ on the nature of participatory discourse. Participation of the audience in the case of *Hilang Dalam Rindu* was more reinforcing to dominant interpretations as indicated by comments in Section 4.4.1 praising the faithfulness of adaptation, restraint of emotion, and narrative logicity of the drama, including the expression of approval of scenes which softened overindulgence of physical intimacy and preserved consistency with the original novel. These reactions indicate the presence of participatory culture based on mutual appreciation and emotional congruence where TikTok was seen as a place of collective validation and emotional attachment. The appearance of supportive remarks among the Indonesian audience, such as, the displays of grief about the end of the drama, points to the fact that this positive expectation was not limited to national boundaries.

However, the participatory activities of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*, have a rather discursive and oppositional nature. As it has been shown in Section 4.4.1, remarks questioning

characterisation and moral representation, especially remarks involving expressive concern about the fact that the protagonist in the book is depicted in a way different than in the original novel and does not follow to the established standards of *ikhhtilat* are indicative of a participatory resistance, as opposed to obedience. These negative comments often provoke counter-statements in the defense of the drama and thus indicate that the process of audience engagement is based on argumentation and negotiation between the viewers. Although appreciative expressions are frequently given by viewers towards the acting, or emotional intimacy scenes, they are accompanied by dissatisfaction, either with narrative structure or with adaptation choices, and thus demonstrating to a divided reception.

In the context of participatory culture, the opposing trends are evident to the complex causes of the audience engagement, where content popularity is mediated by perceived legitimacy and adaptation faithfulness. A long-term engagement in the form of emotional investment and creative contribution, which is evident in the case of *Hilang Dalam Rindu*, supports the participatory culture theories predicting foreground meaning-making and affective engagement. In contrast, *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* depicts a participatory environment in which people engage in negotiation and contestation with audiences critically arguing, critiquing and reevaluating the adaptation rather than providing collective approval.

The comparative analysis has shown that *Hilang Dalam Rindu* developed a more unified and participatory culture of fans on TikTok that was driven by dominant interpretative frameworks, continued interaction, and diverse content production. On the other hand, *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* created a disjointed participatory environment characterized by changeable participation and opposing interpretations. Such findings satisfy the research aim of outlining the types of engagement and participation as illustrated by online fan communities on TikTok highlighting the role of divergent patterns of reception in shaping participatory behaviour in drama adaptations.

## 4.5 Conclusions

The current chapter has outlined and critically reviewed the empirical data of the audience reception and participatory practices concerning the drama adaptations on TikTok, *Hilang Dalam Rindu* and *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure*. The analysis explains the processes by which online fan communities interpret, negotiate, and actively co-create meaning with regard to these drama adaptations as seen in patterns of engagement, commentary, and user-generated content by operationalising the encoding/decoding framework proposed by Hall and applying theoretical constructs proposed in the participatory culture perspectives.

Regarding the first objective of the research, the findings reveal that online audience discourses play a significant role in the formation of perceptions and receptions related to drama adaptation. Dominating readings were the major interpretation of the drama *Hilang Dalam Rindu*, which meant the wide acceptance of the narrative structure, characterisation, and adherence to the source novel by the audience. The related audience discourse mainly supported positive interpretation thus leading to a smooth and positive reception. In contrast, the percentage of negotiated and oppositional readings in *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* is more reminiscent of a more fragmented reception that was shaped in terms of concerns about the issue of adaptation choices, characterization, and morality. These tendencies emphasize the fact that TikTok is a platform where the meaning is not absorbed but constructed, opposed, and shared.

To respond to the second research question, the results demonstrate the influence of both positive fan-created narratives and scandals on TikTok conversations about drama adaptations. Interaction with *Hilang Dalam Rindu* was largely maintained by positive commentary, emotional investment, and imaginative fan activities, thus reinforcing the positive narratives and affirming dominant readings. Conversely, the reception of the drama of *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* was more often driven by criticism, debate, and controversy, including

arguments about the faithfulness of adaptation, cultural or ethical norms. This division highlights the powerful impact of social media platforms in amplifying both support and criticism, hence informing the discourse of the masses concerning media texts.

In relation to the third research objective, the current study outlines specific forms of engagement and participation that are evident in TikTok fan communities. The fan culture in the drama of *Hilang Dalam Rindu* included a relatively stable participatory environment, with a medium to high level of engagement, a diverse range of content production, and affective fan behaviour, including edits and scene recirculation. Conversely, participation that related to *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* showed a more disjointed pattern with lower levels of engagement, limited content variety and interactions generally focused on negotiation and oppositional reactions. The implications of these results are that the strength and quality of participation activities are strongly linked to the mood of the audience, the acceptance of the narrative, and the perceived validity of the adaptation.

In this chapter, it is shown that TikTok is not only a place where people consume entertainment, but it can also be an active space of meaning-making, culture-making, and interaction with fans. Drama adaptations are perceived by the audience as a complicated combination of the narrative alignment, emotional resonance, cultural values, and platform-specific engagement practices. A comparative study of *Hilang Dalam Rindu* and *Thariq Ridzuwan: His Treasure* has substantive value to understanding how modern fan societies shape media reception in the digital arena.